Family Level Assessment and State of Home Visiting (FLASH-V) - Formative Data Collection

OMB Information Collection Request
0970-0356

Supporting Statement

Part A

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A1. Necessity for the Data Collection

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) proposes to: 1) conduct semi structured informational interviews with individuals knowledgeable about current decision-making processes influencing which families are or are not offered services through the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV) and 2) to request existing materials regarding recruitment and enrollment (e.g. program eligibility criteria, referral forms, screening forms, waitlist procedures, process diagrams, etc.) from interview participants. ACF and the Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) co-administer the MIECHV program. The activities will support ACF and HRSA's work to understand the characteristics of families from target populations who are eligible for home visiting services but do not receive them as part of the project, Family Level Assessment and State of Home Visiting (FLASH-V), which is led by ACF in collaboration with HRSA. The interviews will serve two primary purposes:

1. Determine whether there is in fact a need to study the extent and characteristics of families with unmet needs, and if there is, whether it is feasible to collect the data of interest.
2. Inform the development of data collection instruments, data agreements and data transfers.

OPRE envisions using a variety of techniques including semi-structured telephone interviews and emails in order to reach these goals. Unless it is of methodological interest, information collected is not intended for publication. However, if the information gathered in the interviews or documentation requests would be helpful to stakeholders such as funders, grantees, local implementing agencies, and/or TA providers, this information may be shared as appropriate.

Study Background

The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) supports the well-being of each state's most vulnerable parents and children. However, the program has limited resources and cannot serve all eligible families. This creates a need to understand how communities and local programs choose who is offered and who receives home visiting services. Currently, little is known about these processes. Some programs report that the number of families in need of services exceeds the number of home visiting slots in some communities. Other local implementing agencies (LIAs) have open slots on their caseloads due to circumstances such as a limited number of eligible families in a community, insufficient outreach activities to identify and engage eligible families, recent expansion in the number of home visiting slots, and multiple home visiting programs in the same area serving the same target population. However, there is little data quantifying the extent of unmet need for home visiting services.

This information collection request is to gather preliminary data to inform future studies and measurement development. It will help to determine whether there is need to study the extent and characteristics of families that could benefit from home visiting but are not offered services.

In addition, it will help us gain a better understanding of what information (e.g., family characteristics, referrals, who was or was not offered services) is already available from the management information system (MIS) data that national models, states, and LIAs collect. We will also explore whether programs use a standardized approach to make enrollment decisions.

Legal or Administrative Requirements that Necessitate the Collection

There are no legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. ACF is undertaking the collection at the discretion of the agency.

A2. Purpose of Survey and Data Collection Procedures

Overview of Purpose and Approach

The goal of the information collection is to better understand whether the need for home visiting is greater than the availability of services, and to learn about enrollment decision-making processes, including the documentation of these processes. This information is necessary to inform the need for and feasibility of a new data collection effort to understand which families are offered services and which families enroll in services. If it is feasible to conduct such a study, FLASH-V would submit a full information collection request package for future data collection, including surveys and management information system data. The results of a larger study could be used by decision-makers to prioritize serving families who need services most and can benefit most. This formative information collection will take place in 2018, to inform a potential larger study that would begin in 2019.

Research Questions

Data collected from the instruments and material requests will be used to answer the following questions:

1. What do programs report about whether the number of families in need of services exceed the number of home visiting slots in these communities?
2. How do LIAs engage in enrollment decision-making? Is this process standardized/similar enough to study systematically across LIAs?
3. What information do LIAs collect on families starting from referral and ending at enrollment? How do LIAs collect this information?

Study Design

The purpose of this information collection request is to gather preliminary data to inform measurement development and a potential larger study in the future. The bulk of the information collection will take place through semi-structured interviews with individuals knowledgeable about decision-making processes that influence which families are offered services through MIECHV. First, the Project Team will request that state grantees recommend candidate programs for inclusion in the study. After speaking with recommended programs to determine eligibility, the Project Team will conduct the semi-structured interviews with up to 30 individuals. Additional details about the study design are provided below.

Upon OMB approval of the information collection instruments, the Project Team will send up to 20 state grantees an email requesting recommendations for candidate programs (see Appendix A – Outreach to State Grantees). Attached to the email will be the project description (Appendix B – Project Description) and an Excel sheet where they can enter information about their recommended programs (1 – Eligibility Assessment Form). The email requests recommendations for two distinct groups of individuals – LIAs and centralized intake agencies (CIs). The Project Team identified these two participant groups because some home visiting programs receive referrals from a centralized intake system, while others receive referrals from community agencies and providers. We want our sample to represent the different ways in which they receive referrals.

The Project Team aims to have representation from at least six HRSA regions across the country. Therefore, the sample will need to be drawn from no less than six grantees.

Using the information provided by the state grantees, the Project Team will reach out to recommended LIAs and centralized intake agencies via email to request a phone meeting to discuss the program characteristics, program capacity, and existing data systems, with the purpose of assessing its eligibility for FLASH-V eligibility and enrollment interviews. Attached to this outreach email will be the project description (Appendix B – Project Description). Based on the information gathered in the call, the Project Team will select up to 20 LIAs and 10 CIs for study inclusion. The Project Team will send these programs a second email to schedule the semi-structured interview and request relevant documents about their program's recruitment, enrollment, and referral processes (note that this request does not impose burden, as the request is only for existing materials in their current format). The communications and protocols for this component of the study are included in 2 - Outreach to LIAs and CIs, Assessing Eligibility, and Scheduling Interviews. There are separate materials for LIAs and CIs.

Finally, the Project Team will conduct semi-structured interviews over the phone with the selected LIAs (see 3 – Interview Protocol - LIA) and CIs (see 4 – Interview Protocol – Centralized Intake Agency). The Project Team will go through a consent process with all individuals (Appendix C – Informed Consent) before conducting the interviews.

We selected a semi-structured interview approach that includes a mix of closed- and open-ended questions. The interview questions are designed to elicit nuanced responses, and the project team will need to probe appropriately, which requires direct person-to-person communication. There are no quantitative components to this study.

A limitation of the study design is that it will not yield a representative sample of home visiting programs; however, it will identify a set of programs that have fewer open slots than families who need services, so we can learn in detail from these programs how they make decisions about who is and is not offered services. This information potentially will be used to inform a larger study. Another limitation of the study is the availability of MIS data. Through work on other projects, such as MIHOPE-Strong Start, we have learned that the comprehensiveness of MIS variables varies across national models, states, and LIAs. Not all MIS track variables of interest to the study. Data obtained from MIS in conjunction with brief surveys will help address these gaps.

Universe of Data Collection Efforts

Data collection methods to address the evaluation questions are outlined below.

<u>Attachment 1 – Eligibility Assessment Form</u>

State grantees will be asked to provide information about LIAs and/or CIs in their state to help the Project Team identify candidate programs for inclusion in the study. The email (see Appendix A – Outreach to State Grantees) asks them to either complete Attachment 1 – Eligibility Assessment Form, or to provide the information requested in that form in a phone call with the Project Team. Requested information includes each program's capacity to serve families interested in services, whether the LIA is part of a centralized intake system, and contact information for the primary contact at the LIA/CI.

<u>Attachment 2 – Outreach to LIAs and CIs, Assessing Eligibility, and Scheduling Interviews</u>

- This attachment includes four components: Initial email outreach to candidates (separate versions for LIA and CI): Requests a meeting to discuss the program in more detail and assess eligibility for the study.
- Protocol for assessing eligibility (separate versions for LIA and CI): Protocol for the phone call during which the Project Team will gather information to assess program characteristics, program capacity/referrals, and existing data systems.
- Email to schedule an interview and request materials: This email will be sent to LIAs and CIs that are selected for the study. It requests to set up a time for the interview, and asks programs to provide relevant materials on recruitment, enrollment, and referrals. (The request for materials does not impose burden, as the request is only for existing materials in their current format.)
- Interview outline (separate versions for LIA and CI): This will be included as an attachment to the above email; it presents a general outline for the full interview.

Attachment 3 – Interview Protocol – LIA

One trained interviewer from the Project Team will conduct the telephone interview with the LIAs, which will take approximately 1 hour to complete. The interview covers the following topics: program characteristics, community characteristics, incoming referral sources, eligibility assessment of referred families, and prioritization of eligible families.

Attachment 4 – Interview Protocol – Centralized Intake Agencies

One trained interviewer from the Project Team will conduct the telephone interview with the CIs, which will take approximately 1 hour to complete. The interview covers the following topics: centralized intake system characteristics, incoming referral sources, eligibility assessment of referred families, and outgoing referral allocation.

A3. Improved Information Technology to Reduce Burden

The study will use semi-structured interviews. Interviews will be recorded so that participants do not need to repeat responses or wait for the interviewer to document detailed responses. Direct person-to-person communication is required. It is possible that computer-assisted data collection could reduce burden by allowing the participant to respond on their own time. However, we are asking participants to describe what could be a complex process that may be difficult and time-consuming to capture by hand. A phone interview allows the interviewer to probe as necessary and to move through lower priority questions at a faster pace depending on how long the interview is running.

A4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

The information collected will not duplicate information that is already available. The Project Team will review supporting materials in advance and use the interviews to fill in missing information, making the interviews more efficient. The study is designed to gather details about whether the need for home visiting is greater than the availability of services in selected communities, to learn about enrollment decision-making processes, and the documentation of these processes. No other studies are exploring LIA and centralized intake agencies processes with these goals in mind or have collected the information the Project Team needs to make their assessment.

A handful of centralized intake agencies have been highlighted in technical assistance briefs and/or at home visiting conferences. However, the purpose has typically been to provide insights and lessons learned to other programs contemplating implementing a centralized intake system.

A5. Involvement of Small Organizations

Interviews will include staff at LIAs and centralized intake agencies. LIAs are contracted by state, territorial, and non-profit grantees to provide home visiting services and may be small businesses. The requested information is the absolute minimum necessary for the intended use of the data.

The Project Team will minimize the burden on program staff by keeping the interview as short as possible, scheduling the interviews at a time most convenient for respondents, and not requesting written responses. The interviews will be one-time only.

A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection

Respondents will participate in one interview. The information obtained from these interviews will provide ACF and HRSA critical information regarding the characteristics of families who are eligible for and could benefit from home visiting services but do not receive services.

A7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances for the proposed data collection efforts.

A8. Federal Register Notice and Consultation

Federal Register Notice and Comments

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR Part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), ACF published a notice in the Federal Register announcing the agency's intention to request an OMB review of this information collection activity. This notice was published on September 15, 2014, Volume 79, Number 178, page 54985, and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. During the notice and comment period, the government did not receive any comments in response to the Federal Register notice.

A9. Incentives for Respondents

No incentives for respondents are proposed for this information collection.

A10. Privacy of Respondents

Information collected will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. Respondents will be informed of all planned uses of data, that their participation is voluntary, and that their information will be kept private to the extent permitted by law.

As specified in the contract, the Contractor shall protect respondent privacy to the extent permitted by law and will comply with all Federal and Departmental regulations for private information. The Contractor shall ensure that all of its employees, subcontractors (at all tiers), and employees of each subcontractor, who perform work under this contract/subcontract, are trained on data privacy issues and comply with the above requirements. Project Team members are required to read and sign a confidentiality pledge.

The Project Team will maintain participants' privacy by not sharing respondents' identities with anyone outside of the research team or federal staff. Interviews will be recorded with the consent of participants (see Appendix B), and those recordings will be saved on a secured drive. Once the interviews have been transcribed, the recordings will be destroyed. The transcriptions will not contain the full name of the participant. The information the Project Team collects will not be released publicly. Respondents will be informed that their responses will be kept private

As specified in the evaluator's contract, the Contractor shall use Federal Information Processing Standard compliant encryption (Security Requirements for Cryptographic Module, as amended) to protect all instances of sensitive information during storage and transmission. The Contractor shall securely generate and manage encryption keys to prevent unauthorized decryption of information, in accordance with the Federal Processing Standard. The Contractor shall: ensure that this standard is incorporated into the Contractor's property management/control system; establish a procedure to account for all laptop computers, desktop computers, and other mobile devices and portable media that store or process sensitive information. Any data stored electronically will be secured in accordance with the most current National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) requirements and other applicable Federal and Departmental regulations. In addition, the Contractor must submit a plan for minimizing to the extent possible the inclusion of sensitive information on paper records and for the protection of any paper records, field notes, or other documents that contain sensitive or personally identifiable information that ensures secure storage and limits on access.

Information will not be maintained in a paper or electronic system from which data are actually or directly retrieved by an individuals' personal identifier.

A11. Sensitive Questions

There are no sensitive questions in this data collection.

A12. Estimation of Information Collection Burden

Total Burden Requested Under this Information Collection

Instrument	Total/Annual Number of Respondents	Number of Responses Per Respondent	Average Burden Hours Per Response	Annual Burden Hours	Average Hourly Wage	Total Annual Cost
1 – Eligibility Assessment Form	20	1	.5	10	$33.38	$333.80
2 - Outreach to LIAs and CIs, Assessing Eligibility, and Scheduling Interviews	68	1	.25	17	$33.38	$567.46
3 – Interview Protocol – LIA	20	1	1	20	$22.19	$443.80

4 – Interview Protocol – Centralized Intake Agency	10	1	1	10	$22.19	$221.90
			Totals:	57		$1,566.96

Total Annual Cost

The estimated total cost to respondents is approximately $1,566.96 (see burden table above). This cost to respondents is based on the average wage of community and social service staff persons for LIA and centralized intake respondents and on the average wage of social and community services managers for the state grantee and national model developer participants. Estimates come from the 2015 Bureau of Labor Statistics report on Wage Estimates (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016).

A13. Cost Burden to Respondents or Record Keepers

There are no additional costs to respondents.

A14. Estimate of Cost to the Federal Government

The total cost for the data collection under this request is $90,979.49. The estimate includes the costs of Project Team staff time on drafting the interview guides, collecting the information, analyzing the responses and writing the results.

A15. Change in Burden

This is a new generic information collection under OMB#0970-0356.

A16. Plan and Time Schedule for Information Collection, Tabulation and Publication

The data collection, tabulation and publication will occur over the next 8 months. The Project Team will develop an internal report summarizing the interviews to be completed around May 2018. Although the document is intended to be used internally, if the information collected would be useful to the field, then information from the report may be shared with stakeholders as appropriate. The report will not be formally published and ACF will not release any of the interview transcripts publicly.

A17. Reasons Not to Display OMB Expiration Date

All instruments will display the expiration date for OMB approval.

A18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.