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Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

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Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

**Date:** January 12, 2021

**Subject:** NonSubstantive Change Request – Phase II Evaluation Activities for Implementing a Next Generation Evaluation Agenda for the Chafee Care Independence Program (OMB #0970-0489)

This memo requests approval of nonsubstantive changes to the approved information collection, Phase II Evaluation Activities for Implementing a Next Generation Evaluation Agenda for the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (OMB #0970-0489).

***Background***

The Phase II Evaluation Activities for Implementing a Next Generation Evaluation Agenda for the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program study includes formative evaluations of programs that include, but are not limited to, employment and postsecondary education for youth transitioning to adulthood from foster care. The data collection for the study consists of qualitative interviews with program leaders, program partners and stakeholders, front-line program staff, focus groups with program participants, and administrative data collection.

All qualitative interviews were intended to take place over the phone or in-person and all focus groups were intended to take place in-person. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, we now need to have the option to conduct our interviews and focus groups virtually or in-person, depending on how COVID-19 develops. The primary goal of the interviews and focus groups is to understand the components of programs in the evaluation and how participants experience these programs.

We also plan to include focus group participants who are youth with a history of foster care who have received Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs) in the past two years and propose adding procedures to engage staff from organizations serving foster care alumni to help with recruiting these youth. This collection falls under currently approved data collection from participants in college success programs. However, due to the nature of ETV programs, which have diverse administrative structures and often minimal consistent staff contact with youth, the addition of new recruitment procedures is necessary to reach the target population.

Note that the current approval for data collection under OMB #0970-0489 expires on March 31, 2021 and we are in the process of requesting an extension. We anticipate publishing a 60 day Federal Register Notice within the next couple weeks.

***Overview of Requested Changes***

Virtual Interviews and Focus Groups

The first set of requested changes are to accommodate for virtual interviews and focus groups due to COVID-19. We propose updates to the Supporting Statements to adjust the description of interview and focus group procedures to include an option to conduct these virtually. The in-person interview and focus group procedures remain the same.

Recruitment Strategy

We also propose to recruit program participants through alumni groups of youth formerly in foster care. These new recruitment procedures will be necessary to recruit youth who have received ETVs as part of the currently approved information collection with college success program participants.

We have created the following additional outreach and informational material and have updated the Supporting Statements to reflect this recruitment strategy.

* New outreach email to foster care alumni organizations and front-line staff (Added to *Appendix B: Outreach Emails for Focus Group Recruiters)*
* Updated outreach email to front-line staff recruiting focus group participants (Updated *Appendix B: Outreach Emails for Focus Group Recruiters)*
* Outreach email from the alumni organization staff to youth alumni (Added to *Appendix B: Outreach Emails for Focus Group Recruiters)*
* Focus group recruitment flyer (New document: *Additional Project Materials - Focus Group Recruitment Flyer*).
* One-page project overview and a frequently asked questions document to be shared with alumni organizations and alumni (Added to document: *Additional Project Materials*).

Other minor edits

All instruments (Appendices A-F) were updated to include the OMB # and current expiration date. No content changed.

The titles of the discussion guides and focus group guides (Appendices C-F) were updated to match the titles listed in the burden table. No content changed.

***Time Sensitivities***

This work is time sensitive. We are planning our virtual interviews as soon as possible, to prevent any additional delays to data collection for this project.