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Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

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Date: March 3, 2021

Subject: Non-Substantive Change Request – Phase II Evaluation Activities for Implementing a Next Generation Evaluation Agenda for the Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood: A Study of the Use of the Family Unification Program (FUP) for Youth who have Experienced Foster Care (OMB #0970-0544)

This memo requests approval of non-substantive changes to the approved information collection, Phase II Evaluation Activities for Implementing a Next Generation Evaluation Agenda for the Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful transition to Adulthood: A Study of the Use of the Family Unification Program (FUP) for Youth who have Experienced Foster Care (OMB #0970-0544).

Background

The FUP for Youth study is a descriptive study that builds on prior research to increase our understanding of the procedures, successes, and challenges of implementing FUP to support the housing needs of youth previously and currently in foster care. This study is intended to provide an updated view of how FUP is used to serve youth in practice after substantial changes to program requirements.

Project activities involve a web-based survey of public housing authorities (PHAs), public child welfare agencies (PCWAs), and Continuums of Care (CoCs) that were awarded FUP Housing Choice Vouchers in 2018 and 2019. It also includes site visits with a subset of sites that use FUP to serve youth, including interviews and focus groups with key staff and focus groups with youth who have leased up with FUP vouchers. To date, the team has administered the web-based survey to the 2018 FUP grantees and has selected eight diverse sites for the proposed site visits.

The activities included in the FUP for Youth study have not altered. We are requesting a non-substantive change to our proposed plan for the site visits. All interviews and focus groups included in these site visits were intended to take place in-person. However, due to the COVID pandemic, we now need to have the option to conduct the interviews and focus groups virtually or in person, depending on how COVID-19 develops. This non-substantive change will allow our team to comply with the travel and safety recommendations present at the time of the site visits.

Overview of Requested Changes

Virtual Site Visits (Interviews & Focus Groups)

Given travel restrictions and ongoing safety concerns related to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), we are requesting approval to conduct project activities virtually to ensure compliance with current recommendations. Data collection activities impacted by this change include site visits with programs, as well as interviews and focus groups with youth and the key stakeholders responsible for implementing FUP.

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. These changes include:

- Site visits - focus groups
 - o Mode has changed to include an option to conduct focus groups via video conference or phone.
- Site visits - interviews
 - o Mode has changed to include an option to conduct interviews via video conference or phone.
- Site visits - focus group incentives
 - o Should a focus group be conducted virtually, participants will be given a \$25 e-gift card.

Language contained in the required protocols have been updated to include explanations relevant to conducting these interviews and focus groups virtually. These updates can be found in Appendices E, F, G, and H. Should in-person interviews and focus groups become feasible in later months, the previously approved procedures will be followed and remain listed in the Supporting Statements. No changes were required for the instruments included in the study as these materials did not contain commentary on the mode of delivery (i.e., in-person vs. virtual).

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.