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Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

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Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

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Subject: Nonsubstantive Change Request – Building Evidence on Employment Strategies for Low-Income Families (OMB #0970-0537)

This memo requests approval of nonsubstantive changes to the approved information collection, Building Evidence on Employment Strategies for Low-Income Families (OMB #0970-0537).

Background

The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) has funded the Building Evidence on Employment Strategies (BEES) study. BEES will include separate studies of up to 21 programs (or “sites”) aimed at improving employment outcomes and economic security for low-income individuals and families. OMB initially approved data collection instruments for this project on November 8, 2019. Since approval, BEES has begun formally planning evaluations with some programs while continuing recruitment of additional programs.

The approved OMB package (OMB #0970-0537) included drafts of certain data collection instruments – referred to as the “Phase II instruments” – with the understanding that updated versions of these instruments would be submitted at a later date once we had recruited sites and identified domains of the programs being evaluated. The current request is to seek approval for 1) the Phase II instruments, and 2) edits to already-approved (Phase I) instruments.

Overview of Requested Changes

The requested changes will not result in any changes in burden assumptions. An overview of the Phase II materials and requested edits to approved Phase I instruments is included below. Please refer to the updated Supporting Statements and attachments for how these changes have been implemented.

Phase II Instruments

Details on how each Phase II instrument differs from the draft version submitted under OMB #0970-0537 are included below.

1. Impact study instruments
 - a. 6-month follow-up survey (Attachment J)
 - Added question about non-employment services

- Edited response options in several places for relevance to BEES and to ensure quality data collection
 - Re-ordered certain questions (e.g. about services related to substance use disorder)
 - Added child support specific questions to Section B
- b. 12- to 18-month follow-up survey (Attachment K)
- Changed the title of this instrument from “12-month follow-up survey,” per approved change to the timing of this follow-up survey
 - Added question about non-employment services
 - Edited response options in several places for relevance to BEES and to ensure quality data collection
 - Added questions related to online education
 - Re-ordered certain questions (e.g. about services related to substance use disorder)
 - Added questions about timing of service receipt
 - Made edits to skip patterns and programming instructions throughout the survey, where needed, to ensure quality data collection
 - Added child support specific questions to Section B
 - Added questions to understand housing stability
 - Added question about health insurance in Section F
2. Implementation study instrument
- a. Program managers, staff, and partners interview guide (Attachment L)
- Updated the timing of the interviews
 - Added a few details to the target population and program services sections
 - Made minor grammatical edits throughout the document
 - Added specific questions related to COVID-19
- b. Participant case study interview guide (Attachment M)
- Added questions about housing instability and employment benefits
 - Updated some program participation questions to mention justice involvement related needs, housing needs, substance use, mental health, and peer support activities
 - Made minor grammatical edits throughout the document
- c. Program staff case study interview guide (Attachment N)
- Edited the introductory language and updated the list of barriers to employment mentioned in the questions.
- d. Program staff survey (Attachment O)
- Added response options to question B1, B2, B3
 - Edited and added questions to C1, and added questions to C2
3. Supplementary materials
- a. 6- and 12-month survey advance letter (Attachment P)
- Edited language at the beginning of the letter to clarify the interview process.
 - Added language about respondent’s right to refuse to answer any question.
- b. 6- and 12-month survey email reminder (Attachment Q)
- Changed the sender of the email to the field manager rather than the

- interviewer, and edited language to reflect this change
- Included placeholder for link for web-based survey completion, when appropriate
- c. 6- and 12-month survey flyer (Attachment R)
 - Slight edits to text.

Edits to approved Phase I materials

Edits are being requested for the following approved Phase I material:

1. Participant informed consent form (Attachment H)
 - Updated language to note that the Social Security Administration will do research through 2040
 - Edited language about the Certificate of Confidentiality

Time Sensitivities

We request OMB's review by mid-September in order to begin using the updated informed consent form.