

Alternative Supporting Statement for Information Collections Designed for
Research, Public Health Surveillance, and Program Evaluation Purposes

Family Self-Sufficiency Demonstration Development Grants Evaluation Support

Formative Data Collections for ACF Research

0970 – 0356

Supporting Statement

Part A

December 2021

Submitted By:
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Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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Part A

Executive Summary

- **Type of Request:** This Information Collection Request is for a generic information collection under the umbrella generic, Formative Data Collections for ACF Research (0970-0356).
- **Description of Request:** We are requesting to conduct semi-structured discussions with program leaders and staff of 20 ACF-funded Family Self-Sufficiency Demonstration Development (FSSDD) grant recipients. The objective of these interviews is to assess grant recipients' capacity to conduct research and evaluation activities and their goals for evaluation support. The discussions will also be used to build relationships between the grant recipients and their evaluation support providers. Responses will be used to tailor the FSSDD Grants Evaluation Support (GES) activities to the grant recipients' needs and goals. Three, hour-long small group discussions will be conducted with approximately four staff per grant recipient. Data collected are not intended to be generalized to a broader population. We do not intend for this information to be used as the principal basis for public policy decisions.
- **Time Sensitivity:** We hope to begin data collection in early calendar year 2022 due to the limited time of the grant project period. The two-year FSSDD grants, of which the evaluation support is a key activity, began in September 2021. These interviews will help us tailor the evaluation support for the remainder of the two-year period.

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A1. Necessity for Collection

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) is proposing to collect information from Family Self-Sufficiency Demonstration Development (FSSDD) grant recipients. ACF awarded 20 FSSDD grant awards in 2021. The Grants Evaluation Support (GES) project will provide individualized support to the 20 FSSDD grant recipients to conduct their own evaluation activities to build evidence for an innovative intervention that is intended to improve family and economic well-being among populations with low incomes. These evaluation activities will be used to enhance the evidence base on what works to improve family and economic well-being of populations with low incomes.

The information proposed through this information collection is necessary to inform the development of appropriate, tailored evaluation support for each grantee by the contractor Mathematica and its subcontractor, The Adjacent Possible.

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

A2. Purpose

Purpose and Use

This proposed information collection meets the following goals of ACF's generic clearance for formative data collections for research and evaluation (0970-0356):

- Inform the provision of technical assistance.

The information collected is meant to contribute to the body of knowledge on ACF programs. It is not intended to be used as the principal basis for a decision by a federal decision-maker and is not expected to meet the threshold of influential or highly influential scientific information.

The purpose of this information collection is to inform the development and tailoring of evaluation support activities (which will include consultation, technical assistance, and cross-grant recipient learning) for 20 grant recipients awarded the Administration for Children and Families (ACF)-funded Family Self-Sufficiency Demonstration Development (FSSDD) grants. The ACF-funded contractor Mathematica and its subcontractor, The Adjacent Possible, will be providing the evaluation support to each grant recipient to build their research capacity and to conduct their own evaluations. Information collected during the semi-structured discussions proposed in this request will be used to determine the type of evaluation support that would benefit each FSSDD grant recipient. Specifically, the interviews will focus on the extent to which the grant recipient's intervention is evidence-based or evidence-informed, the strength and quality of intervention implementation, and past experiences with and current interests for evaluation support. The discussions will also facilitate relationship-building between grant recipients and the evaluation support provider, which is important for supporting the provision of high quality and productive technical assistance.

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Project briefs and a final report summarizing all the evaluation support activities undertaken by the FSSDD grant recipients, their accomplishments, and lessons learned will be published in approximately 2026. These briefs and the report may include summarized findings from these interviews to contextualize the information presented. In the future under new contract(s), ACF may fund evaluations of FSSDD grant recipients’ interventions that are able to get to a place where a summative evaluation is appropriate and feasible.

Guiding Questions

- Where are grant recipients starting out at in terms of the maturity of their interventions and their evaluation readiness?
- What planning and/or research and evaluation activities can the FSSDD grant recipients undertake for the purpose of advancing their interventions?
- To what extent is each grant recipient ready for a potential future evaluation of their demonstration project?
- For those grant recipients that are not yet positioned for evaluation, what are next steps they can take to move toward readiness?
- What barriers and challenges to successful evaluation of their projects do the grant recipients face or anticipate, and how can those barriers and challenges be effectively mitigated?

Study Design

Using a discussion guide, the Contractor will conduct semi-structured discussions with staff from the 20 FSSDD grant recipients to understand grant recipients’ capacity to conduct research and evaluation activities and their needs and preferences for evaluation support. The Contractor will conduct up to three, one-hour small group interviews with approximately four staff from each grant recipient over the course of about eight weeks. These qualitative, semi-structured discussions will focus on key aspects of intervention design (module 1 in the discussion guide) and implementation (module 2 in the discussion guide), as well as past research and evaluation activities (module 3 in the discussion guide). Results are not designed to be representative of or generalizable to a given subpopulation—the intent is to gather information specific to each grant recipient to develop and tailor evaluation support activities for each of them as they conduct their own evaluations during their two-year grant project period.

Data collected under this information collection are not intended to be representative of broader populations. Data will not be used to assess participant outcomes. Such limitations will be included in written products associated with this information collection.

<i>Data Collection Activity</i>	<i>Instrument(s)</i>	<i>Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection</i>	<i>Mode and Duration</i>
Semi-structured discussions	Instrument 1_FSSDD Discussion Guide	Respondents: Staff of FSSDD grant recipients Content: Extent to which intervention being implemented by grant recipient is evidence-based or evidence-informed; information about quality and strength of implementation; information about past research and evaluation	Mode: Videoconference or telephone small group interviews

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		<p>activities and current evaluation support needs</p> <p>Purpose: To gather information to help Contractor develop and tailor evaluation support activities to meet the needs of each FSSDD grant recipient</p>	<p>Duration: 3 hours per grant recipient (3, 60-minute interviews)</p>
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Other Data Sources and Uses of Information

The information collected will be combined with information from the FSSDD grant recipients' grant applications and publicly available information about grant recipients (such as their websites, past evaluation reports, promotional materials, etc.) to develop and tailor evaluation support activities for each grant recipient. No prior information collections will be used.

A3. Use of Information Technology to Reduce Burden

The semi-structured discussions will be audio-recorded, which can reduce burden on the respondent, as it prevents the need to go back to respondents to repeat information. Respondents will be informed about the audio-recording and asked for their permission before recording occurs.

A4. Use of Existing Data: Efforts to reduce duplication, minimize burden, and increase utility and government efficiency

Before conducting interviews with the FSSDD grant recipients, Contractor staff will review grant recipients' grant applications and publicly available information about the grant recipient. Contractor staff will use this information to tailor the discussion guide for each grant recipient to account for information that is already known. This will reduce the burden associated with this information collection and ensure no information collected is duplicative of what was already shared with ACF and the Contractor. The interviews will allow ACF and the Contractor to delve into the design and implementation of each grant recipient's intervention and evaluation support needs more deeply than review of the grant applications and publicly available background information allows.

A5. Impact on Small Businesses

To minimize burden on FSSDD grant recipients that are considered to be small entities, data collection will be scheduled at times and in modes (videoconference or telephone calls) that are convenient for respondents. Contractor staff will also review grant applications and tailor the discussion guide for each interview so that grant recipients are not asked to repeat information already shared in their grant application.

A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

This is a one-time data collection.

A7. Now subsumed under 2(b) above and 10 (below)

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A8. 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 two notices in the Federal Register announcing the agency's intention to request an OMB review of the overarching generic clearance for formative information collection. This first notice was published on November 3, 2020, Volume 85, Number 213, page 69627, and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. The second notice published on January 11, 2021, Volume 86, Number 6, page 1978, and provided a thirty-day period for public comment. ACF did not receive any substantive comments.

Consultation with Experts Outside of the Study

We have not consulted with experts outside of this study.

A9. Tokens of Appreciation

No tokens of appreciation will be offered in this information collection.

A10. Privacy: Procedures to protect privacy of information, while maximizing data sharing

Personally Identifiable Information

Personally Identifiable Information will not be collected as part of this information collection effort.

Assurances of Privacy

Collected information will focus on the design and implementation of grant recipients' interventions, past evaluation activities, and needs and priorities for future evaluation activities. Respondents will be informed of the purpose of the information collection and planned uses of the information provided. Interviews will be audio-recorded. Respondents will be informed about the audio-recording and asked for their permission before recording occurs.

Data Security and Monitoring

With respondent consent, interviews will be recorded using the WebEx conferencing system and notes will be typed up by a Contractor staff member. All recordings and notes will only be accessed by evaluation support team members and be stored on a secure network storage environment maintained by the Contractor.

A11. Sensitive Information ¹

¹ Examples of sensitive topics include (but not limited to): social security number; sex behavior and attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close relationships, e.g., family, pupil-teacher, employee-supervisor; mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to respondents; religion and indicators of religion; community activities which

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No sensitive information will be collected.

A12. Burden

Explanation of Burden Estimates

Approximately four staff from each of the 20 FSSDD grant recipients will be interviewed in three, one-hour interviews using the discussion guide. Most of the staff respondents will be managerial or administrative leaders of grant recipient organizations (typically community or social service nonprofit organizations) or program staff. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as of May 2020, the average hourly wage rate for “Social and Community Service Managers” is \$36.13 (see <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes119151.htm>). The average hourly wage rate for Community and Social Service Specialists is \$23.85 (see <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211099.htm>).

Estimated Annualized Cost to Respondents

Instrument	No. of Respondents (total over request period)	No. of Responses per Respondent (total over request period)	Avg. Burden per Response (in hours)	Total/ Annual Burden (in hours)	Average Hourly Wage Rate	Total Annual Respondent Cost
Instrument 1_FSSDD Discussion Guide	80	1	3	240	\$36.13	\$4,336
					\$23.85	\$2,862
Total	80	1	3	240		\$7,198

A13. Costs

There are no additional costs to respondents.

A14. Estimated Annualized Costs to the Federal Government

Cost Category	Estimated Costs
Field Work	\$15,000
Publications/Dissemination	\$0
Total costs over the request period	\$15,000

A15. Reasons for changes in burden

This is for an individual information collection under the umbrella formative generic clearance for ACF research (0970-0356).

indicate political affiliation and attitudes; legally recognized privileged and analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians and ministers; records describing how an individual exercises rights guaranteed by the First Amendment; receipt of economic assistance from the government (e.g., unemployment or WIC or SNAP); immigration/citizenship status.

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A16. Timeline

The information collection will last for about eight weeks after approval is received. Interviews are estimated to occur in approximately mid-January through mid-March 2022. The Contractor will develop tailored evaluation support plans and then provide grant recipients with evaluation support for the remaining time in the two year grant period. Project briefs and a final report summarizing all the evaluation support activities undertaken by the FSSDD grant recipients, their accomplishments, and lessons learned will be published in approximately 2026. These briefs and the report may include summarized findings from these interviews to contextualize the information presented.

A17. Exceptions

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.

Attachments

Instrument 1_FSSDD Discussion Guide