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Subject: NonSubstantive Change Request – Strengthening the Implementation of Responsible Fatherhood Programs (SIRF) Formative Data Collection for Program Support (OMB #0970-0531)

This memo requests approval of nonsubstantive changes to the approved generic information collection GenIC, Strengthening the Implementation of Responsible Fatherhood Programs (SIRF) Formative Data Collection for Program Support (OMB #0970-0531).

Background

The SIRF GenIC was approved on April 27, 2021 under the ACF umbrella generic for Formative Data Collections for Program Support (OMB #0970-0531). The programs in the SIRF study will launch study activities in early July 2021, and information collection will begin then. Since OMB approval, the SIRF team worked with each of the 10 programs selected to participate in the SIRF study to finalize the design of the interventions they will implement and the research design that will be used to study changes in outcomes. This design work made it clear that some wording within the original instruments was not appropriate for the specific interventions or the tests as designed. Additionally, the SIRF team received input about the questions in both instruments from the 10 programs selected to participate in the SIRF study which prompted the SIRF team to make additional adjustments. As a result, this request is to make responsive changes to two currently approved instruments (Instrument #2: SIRF End of Learning Cycle Site Reflections for Staff and Instrument #3: SIRF Reflections from Fathers). In both cases, the changes requested do not affect the level of burden estimated in the approved package.

Furthermore, programs in the SIRF study noted a desire to have a vehicle to collect some of the program monitoring information that the study is requesting. As a result, the team developed an optional tool for programs to use to support their monitoring of program activities. It is designed as a vehicle to assist with the collection of information that was described and approved through the currently approved GenIC and the Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Performance Measures and Additional Data Collection (OMB# 0970-0566); it is not a new information collection, nor does it add burden. We are submitting the optional template as a supplementary document at this time.

Overview of Requested Changes

Instrument #2: SIRF End of Learning Cycle Site Reflections for Staff

Since the referenced package was submitted and approved by OMB the SIRF team finalized the study design and program implementation plan for SIRF. The SIRF study identified three types of interventions that will be tested; these are coaching, outreach, and peer supports. As a result, some of the original questions in Instrument #2 do not apply to the study interventions or how they will be tested. Specifically, the outreach and peer support study design will involve random assignment of participants into one of two intervention groups: “Group A” or “Group B”. The coaching intervention does not involve a random assignment study design. Therefore, several questions needed to be individualized for each of the three types of interventions being tested. The spirit of the questions is not different, but the wording has been adjusted to better fit each intervention and study design scenario.

Additionally, for programs testing the peer supports interventions, employees of the organizations will oversee the implementation of the intervention, but seasoned participants or alumni of the programs (peers) will be delivering the intervention to new program participants. Not all original questions are appropriate for those delivering the intervention, so the SIRF team identified several questions to ask just the peers to respond to. The SIRF team would limit the collection of responses from peers and staff, combined, to stay within the original burden estimates.

Other edits are being suggested to improve the readability or interpretation of questions.

Instrument #3: SIRF Reflections from Fathers

The SIRF Team solicited input from each of the 10 programs selected for the study. They suggested we add 2 questions to Instrument #3 SIRF Reflections from Fathers. The SIRF team found their additions meaningful, and we suggest these changes be made. Other changes to simplify the response patterns of the survey eliminated unnecessary questions, so the addition questions do not change the overall burden for respondents.

Other edits are being suggested to improve the readability or interpretation of the question.

Program management tools

The program management tool, developed at the request of programs in the SIRF study, was not included in the original OMB package. Programs testing each of the three types of intervention in the SIRF study have their own personalized program management tool, each of which will be used by no more than four program employees. The tools are optional for programs to use to support their monitoring of program activities. It is designed as a vehicle to collect the information that prior OMB-approved packages have already accounted for and therefore is not adding any additional burden.

Time Sensitivities

Data collection activities for the SIRF study will start July 6, 2021. Programs will want to start using the program management tools they requested on that date. To maximize the number of responses, the first reflections from fathers will need to be fielded by July 16, 2021. The first learning cycle site reflections for staff will need to be fielded around September 1, 2021.