HMRF Grantee Site Visits and Community Group Listening Sessions to Support Race Equity for Fatherhood, Relationship, and Marriage Programs to Empower Black Families (REFRAME)

Formative Data Collections for Program Support

0970 – 0531

Supporting Statement

Part A

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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 Program Support (0970-0531).

- **Description of Request:** This is a new information collection request to support the Race Equity for Fatherhood, Relationship, and Marriage Programs to Empower Black Families (REFRAME) project. The REFRAME project aims to deepen understanding of the needs and experiences of Black fathers, families, couples, and youth served by Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) programs and to identify research priorities and program strategies to ensure program services can effectively support their needs. Towards this end, the project will engage HMRF grantees, program participants, community members, and other experts; conduct a literature scan; and develop practice resources for grantees.

  First, we propose to conduct conversations with HMRF grantees to gather insight into the experiences and needs of HMRF program providers and participants associated with tailoring services and content to the unique needs of Black individuals and couples. From these conversations, we hope to gain specific information about resources, technical assistance, and research priorities that speak directly to the contexts of HMRF service delivery. Next, we propose to host community group listening sessions, which will provide additional perspective on the systemic barriers and strengths associated with Black families outside of the context of HMRF programs that will help grantees understand the needs of populations they could potentially serve but are not currently serving and learn about effective strategies for serving Black families used by other entities.

  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.

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

A1. Necessity for Collection

The 2021 *Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*[1] highlights the need to advance equity across the Federal Government to equip agencies to develop policies and programs that deliver resources and benefits equitably to all. The Executive Order (EO) also specifically calls for engagement of underserved communities, including community-based organizations and civil rights organizations. Organizations funded by Administration for Children and Families' Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) grant program serve low-income families, large proportion of which identify as Black or African American[2]. The Race Equity for Fatherhood, Relationship, and Marriage Programs to Empower Black Families (REFRAME) project aims to deepen understanding of the needs and experiences of Black fathers, families, couples, and youth served by HMRF programs and identify program strategies and research needs to ensure program services are equitable and can effectively support their needs. This data collection – which includes virtual site visit conversations and community group listening sessions (CGLS) – will provide insight into the experiences and needs of HMRF program providers and participants and community groups outside of HMRF programs, to enable tailoring of program services and context to the unique needs of Black individuals and couples. These conversations are necessary to understand the perspectives and needs of grantees, participants, and communities to lay the foundation both for future ACF research priorities and for the immediate development of resources that can be used for technical assistance to ACF programs.

ACF contracted with MEF Associates and its subcontractor, Insight Policy Research, to conduct the REFRAME project, including carrying out the information collection. 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 program support (0970-0531):

- Planning for provision of programmatic or evaluation-related training or technical assistance (T/TA).
- Development of learning agendas and research priorities.

Specifically, this information collection will support the development of programmatic resources to provide technical assistance for HMRF grantees to directly address race inequity, including the effects of

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[1] https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/

[2] Racial and ethnic identity is both varied and personal to the individual and may not always coincide with official categories used for policy or in other contexts where populations are classified. In this project, we use "Black" to describe the descendants of people of the African continent, who may or may not be able to trace their lineage back to a specific African nation, tribe or ethnic group. We use "Black" to encompass those who may not identify as African or American but who still face inequities that have affected Black groups regardless of ethnicity or national origin.

historic and systemic inequity; ensure services reflect the needs and circumstances of Black families; and make programming and service delivery more equitable and relevant in addressing the barriers created by institutionalized racism. The information collection will also support planning for continued research and future technical assistance materials on these topics.

The purpose of the first set of the information collection activities, the virtual site visit conversations, is to: (1) learn about and document the strengths of Black families and how to leverage those strengths in HMRF programming; (2) identify and examine any applied strategies and methods associated with tailoring services to the realities of Black program recipients; (3) identify the needs and priorities of HMRF grantees to better serve Black individuals and couples; and (4) identify how HMRF grantees can be supported in addressing the systemic inequities impacting Black communities and program recipients. The site visits will consist of focus groups with HMRF grantee leadership, client-facing staff, and clients. The study team will ask targeted questions tailored to the attendees of scheduled sessions. We will gather information on the needs of HMRF participants and grantees and on the efforts HMRF programs have made to address systemic inequities for clients. The team will ask questions about staffing, tailored service delivery, inclusivity of family members in programming, HMRF grantee partnerships, and considerations of Black culture.

The purpose of the second set of activities, the CGLS, is to: (1) provide perspectives on the broader institutional and systemic barriers impacting Black families; (2) provide insight into the resilience of Black families; and (3) inform priorities for uplifting Black communities. The CGLS will consist of focus groups and listening sessions with community member experts, who may include members of local organizations such as historically Black Colleges and Universities, local branches of national Black empowerment organizations (e.g., NAACP, National Urban League), and Black professional organizations.

The CGLS will provide enhanced perspective and knowledge that the study team may not be able to gain from the HMRF grantee site visits surrounding contemporary Black culture and provide information on the strengths, practices, and philosophies of Black culture as well as information on institutional barriers that impact Black individuals and couples. This context will help inform HMRF grantees about how the broader community context affects their clients and understand the needs of populations they could potentially serve but are not currently serving. In addition, these discussions may identify effective strategies for serving Black families used by other entities that HMRF grantees can learn from.

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.

Research Questions

The HMRF grantee site visit focus groups and CGLS aim to inform the following research questions:
1. What are the unique assets, needs, and experiences of Black individuals and couples served by HMRF programs?

2. How have HMRF grantees incorporated race equity into their service delivery strategies to support them?
3. How does the broader community context shape experiences of Black individuals and couples serviced by HMRF programs?
4. How can the answers to the previous questions help HMRF grantees better support Black fathers, families, couples, and youth and develop program structures and curricula that better relate to their values, challenges, and experiences?

Study Design

As described above, this study uses multiple methods to bring different perspectives to bear on all research questions and to adequately answer them. Table 1 explains each information collection activity and corresponding instrument.

Table 1: Description of Instruments Involved in Information Collection

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

Data Collection Activity	Instrument(s)	Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection	Mode and Duration
Virtual focus groups with key HMRF leadership, including executive staff and program administrators	Instrument 1. Discussion Guide for REFRAME: HMRF Program Leadership Focus Groups	**Respondents**: Key leadership, including executive staff and program administrators. **Content**: • Program models and approaches that support the resilience of Black clients • Efforts to culturally tailor program services for Black clients • Culturally informed staffing and professional development **Purpose**: To gain an in-depth understanding of the needs and strengths of HMRF program participants and grantees in supporting Black clients	**Mode**: Online group discussion **Duration**: 1 hour 30 minutes (average)
Virtual HMRF site visit focus groups with client-facing staff and practitioners	Instrument 2. Discussion Guide for REFRAME: HMRF Program Client-Facing Staff Focus Groups	**Respondents**: Client-facing staff and practitioners. **Content**: • Program models and approaches that support the resilience of Black clients • Efforts to culturally tailor program services for Black clients • Culturally informed staffing and professional development • Equitable approaches to program decisions **Purpose**: To gain an in-depth understanding of the needs and strengths of HMRF participants and grantees in supporting Black clients	**Mode**: Online group discussion **Duration**: 1 hour 30 minutes (average)
Virtual HMRF site visit focus groups with current participants or alumni of HMRF grant programs.	Instrument 3. Discussion Guide for HMRF Client Focus Group	**Respondents**: Current participants or alumni of HMRF grant programs. **Content**: • Personal goals and sources of support • HMRF program's role in supporting clients' coping and resilience. • Current gaps in service delivery for Black clients • Priority areas for practitioners serving Black clients • Sources of risk/resilience for Black individuals/couples **Purpose**: To gain an in-depth understanding of the needs and strengths of HMRF participants and grantees in supporting Black clients	**Mode**: Online group discussion **Duration**: 1 hour 30 minutes (average)
Community member focus groups and listening sessions	Instrument 4. Discussion Guide for REFRAME	**Respondents**: Community members who are not staff or clients of HMRF programs. These may include members of local organizations	**Mode**: Online group discussion

	Community Listening Sessions	such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, national Black empowerment organizations, and Black professional associations, or other relevant institutions. **Content**: • Existing strategies to overcoming barriers impacting Black individuals, couples and communities. • Supports that are difficult to obtain • Perceptions of HMRF grantees and programs **Purpose**: To provide the study team with additional perspective on the systemic barriers and strengths associated with Black families outside of the context of HMRF programs, with the aims of informing HMRF grantees about how the broader community context affects their clients, understanding the needs of populations they could serve but are not currently serving, and identifying effective strategies for serving Black families used by other entities that HMRF grantees can learn from.	**Duration**: 2 hours (average)

Other Data Sources and Uses of Information

The study team will also conduct a literature review of the existing empirical and theoretical literature on Black fathers, families, couples, and youth, which will culminate in a report that documents the resilience of Black communities as well as best practices for HMRF programs to promote strengths-based approaches for Black individuals and couples.

A3. **Use of Information Technology to Reduce Burden**

We will recruit participants and community groups and conduct the virtual focus groups/listening sessions entirely online. This approach maximizes our reach, prioritizes participant convenience, and minimizes burden for both participants and the research team. Burden will be reduced by scheduling the groups and sessions at convenient times for respondents. The project team will tailor the protocols to select only those questions relevant to each group of respondents. The project team will audio record the sessions with the permission of the participants, using the web conferencing technology. We will use the audio recordings to confirm the accuracy of notes taken during the sessions and will delete them once the notes are finalized.

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

This information will not duplicate information already available. The purpose of this information collection is quite specific – to learn from HMRF staff, HMRF participants, and community experts about

individual needs and the broader structural and historical contexts regarding strengths and inequities affecting Black families.

To document other existing information relevant to this project, we will conduct a literature review that will identify relevant publications rather than obtaining this information through new primary data collection.

A5.   Impact on Small Businesses

We do not expect this information collection to impact small businesses. It is possible that some small businesses may be invited to participate in the CGLS and HMRF grantee virtual site visit focus groups. Their participation would be voluntary. The project team will minimize the burden for all respondents by providing clear guidance on procedures and by requesting only the information required to achieve the study's objective as part of this one-time data collection. Focus groups with staff will be scheduled according to their availability, and no more than two hours will be required of any one individual. There should be no adverse impact for any organizations participating in this study.

A6.   Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

This is a one-time data collection.

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

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. The first notice was published on November 3, 2020 (85 FR 69627), and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. During the notice and comment period, no substantive comments were received. A subsequent notice was published on December 28, 2020 (85 FR 84343) and provided a thirty-day period for public comment. During the notice and comment period, no substantive comments were received.

On January 28, 2022, ACF a notice (87 FR 4603) providing a sixty-day period related to an extension request to this umbrella clearance. No comments were received. ACF will submit a request to extend approval and publish an additional notice allowing a thirty-day period for public comment prior to July 31, 2022.

Consultation with Experts

Throughout the project, we will engage an expert workgroup with a rotating list of members that includes members of Black empowerment organizations, HMRF practitioners, individuals with lived expertise, and academic experts with field experience in healthy relationships, fatherhood, and race

relations that can speak about the experiences of Black individuals and couples. The expert workgroup will participate in quarterly meetings consisting of up to 9 experts. To gain varied perspectives and to reduce burden on any individual, the experts will rotate. Experts engaged during the workgroup meetings will assure ongoing accountability to research goals and principles of equity, provide input on approaches to engaging HMRF grantees and community organizations, assess the interpretation of data and findings from the study efforts, and provide feedback on practice resources and summary documents.

The expert workgroup meetings are interactive meetings to gather the experts' perspective and to brainstorm approaches together. We will rotate participants in the group to reduce burden on any individual. No more than 9 experts will be engaged at each workgroup meeting, and different expertise and input is being sought from members at each meeting. Therefore these activities are not subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act.

A9. Tokens of Appreciation

We will provide a $50 token of appreciation to current and former HMRF program participants who participate in the virtual site visit focus groups. We also will provide a $50 token of appreciation to any community member engaged in the virtual CGLS. (We will not provide tokens of appreciation to staff or leadership of HMRF grantee organizations who participate in the focus groups.) We believe this amount is appropriate both to obtain sufficient participation for meaningful information and to ensure that the project is able to secure participation from community members and participants who have historically been excluded from these conversations.

Focus group data will not be representative in a statistical sense in that they will not be used to make statements about the prevalence of experiences for the entire service populations. Without offsetting the direct costs incurred by respondents for attending the focus groups, such as arranging child care, the research team increases the risk that only individuals able to overcome financial and time barriers to attend will participate in the study, which would reduce the overall quality of the qualitative data collection. Previous studies have found tokens of appreciation ranging from $25-$75 effective in increasing willingness to participate in qualitative research. For example, one study found that amounts in that range increased willingness to participate in a 90-minute qualitative interview.[3] (It did not find race to affect willingness to participate.) Further, it found that "those offered those offered US$50 were more willing to participate than those offered US$25" but did not find further effect in going up to $75. In addition, rapid inflation over the past few years suggests that some increase over incentives amounts that would have been used just a few years ago are warranted. In particular, grantees have informed their federal project officers within Office of Family Assistance that the higher costs associated with inflation has been causing challenges for their participants; therefore, their time is currently very valuable. Given that, we believe $50 is a reasonable amount for the time and cost associated with participation in these data collection activities but is not so high as to appear coercive for potential participants.

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

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[3] Bridget, Kelly, Marjorie Margolis, Lauren McCormack, Patricia LeBaron, and Dhuly Chowdhury. (2017). What Affects People's Willingness to Participate in Qualitative Research? An Experimental Comparison of Five Incentives. *Field Methods*, 29:4, 333-350.

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Personally Identifiable Information

We will have contact information for interviewees in order to arrange data collection but will not maintain their contact information as part of the data collected. This information will likely be publicly available "business PII", such as work emails for contacts at HMRF grantees. All notes related to identification of subjects for focus groups and listening sessions will be stored on MEF's Office 365 server. We will remove any personally identifiable information (PII) from the notes stored on our servers. Information will not be maintained in a paper or electronic system from which data are actually or directly retrieved by an individuals' personal identifier.

Assurances of Privacy

All members of the research team involved in program staff focus groups will sign the contractor's confidentiality pledge before collecting data. Participants in group discussions will also be asked to participate from a private location where they will not be overheard, such as a personal office or room with a closed door, in order to protect the privacy of their answers and others', in the case of a focus group.

Information collected will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. Respondents will be informed of all planned uses of data, that their participation is voluntary, and that their information will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. As specified in the contract, the Contractor will comply with all Federal and Departmental regulations for private information. IRB approval is being sought from Health Media Labs (see Appendix).

Data Security and Monitoring

MEF Associates maintains a System Security Plan for its information system handling Controlled Unclassified Information, aligned with National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Special Publication (SP) 800-171, Rev 2, Protecting Controlled Unclassified Information in Nonfederal Systems and Organizations. MEF does not have an Authority to Operate (ATO). Instead MEF leverages cloud-based solutions (Microsoft Office 365 GCC, Box.com) which are FedRAMP Moderate authorized and 800-171 compliant.

MEF Associates limits system access to authorized users, processes acting on behalf of authorized users, and devices (including third-party systems), through such steps as use of privileged and non-privileged user accounts, segregation of information, and conditional access policies. MEF's subcontractor, Insight Policy Research team members will have limited access to MEF's system, which will allow them to save data collected to the system and to pull deidentified focus group notes saved from the system. When user access is no longer required, MEF restricts/removes access to data for those users.

MEF will ensure that all of its employees, subcontractors (at all tiers), and employees of its subcontractor, who perform work under this contract/subcontract, are trained on data privacy issues and comply with the above requirements. All project staff will sign confidentiality pledges.

A11.   **Sensitive Information** [4]

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[4] 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

We do not anticipate the collection of sensitive information as part of this study. However, given the topic of the study, there may be some sensitive discussions about race and experiences of Black fathers, families, couples, and youth. Focus groups will be led by facilitators experienced in conducting discussions related to such topics. They will inform discussion participants in advance of the types of topics that will be discussed, inform respondents that participation is voluntary and they may refuse to answer individual items or stop the focus group, including after the group discussion has started, and remind them that the study team will keep their responses private, to encourage their candid responses.

A12. Burden

Explanation of Burden Estimates

Burden estimates presented below reflect the following data collection activities, which will take place over a period of approximately three to six months.:

- **Virtual focus groups with key HMRF leadership, including executive staff and program administrators.** We expect there to be 5 focus groups with leaders, and 5 to 7 individuals per group (a total of up to 35 individuals). Each focus group will last about 90 minutes.
- **Virtual HMRF site visit focus groups with client-facing staff and practitioners.** We expect there to be 5 site visits with 1 focus group with staff per visit, and 5 to 7 individuals per group (a total of up to 35 individuals). Each focus group will last about 90 minutes.
- **Virtual HMRF site visit focus groups with current participants or alumni of HMRF grant programs.** We expect there to be 1 to 2 focus groups per site visit with an average of 5 individuals per group (a total of up to 50 individuals). Each focus group will last about 90 minutes.
- **Community member focus groups and listening sessions.** We expect there to be 6 groups with an average of 8 individuals per group (a total of 48 individuals). Each session will last about 120 minutes.

Table 3, below shows the estimated burden and costs associated with these activities.

Estimated Annualized Cost to Respondents

We estimated hourly wages from the May 2021 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wages (OEW). We fully loaded the wages at 33% to account for benefits. For HMRF grantee leadership, we used the mean wages for the Social and Community Service Managers category. For HMRF grantee client-facing staff and practitioners, we used the Community and Social Services category. For HMRF program participants, under the assumption that program participants overall have somewhat lower incomes than average, we took the average wage across all occupations and reduced it by 20 percent. Since we have not yet determined the specific groups from which we will draw the community group members who will participate in the CGLS, we used the simple "all occupations" average. Table 2 shows the OEW categories and wages used. We estimate the total annual cost burden to be $10,252.

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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.

Table 2: Estimated Hourly Wages of Focus Group Participants

Focus group participant	OEW Category	OEW Mean Hourly Wage	Loaded Wage (Mean Hourly Wage * 1.33)
HMRF Grantee Key Leadership (Executive Staff and Program Administrators)	Social and Community Service Managers (11-9151)	$36.92	$49.10
HMRF Grantee Client-Facing Staff and Practitioners	Community and Social Services Occupations (21-0000)	$25.94	$34.50
HMRF Program Participants	80% of All Occupations (00-0000)	$22.41	$29.80
Community Group Members	All Occupations (00-0000)	$28.01	$37.25

Table 3: Total Burden and Costs Under this Information Collection Request

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. Discussion Guide for REFRAME: HMRF Program Leadership Focus Groups	35	1	1.5	53	$49.10	$2,602
Instrument 2. Discussion Guide for REFRAME: HMRF Program Client-Facing Staff Focus Groups	35	1	1.5	53	$34.50	$1,829
Instrument 3. Discussion Guide for HMRF Client Focus Group	50	1	1.5	75	$29.80	$2,235
Instrument 4. Discussion Guide for REFRAME Community Listening Sessions	48	1	2	96	$37.35	$3,586
Total	168			277		$10,252

A13. Costs

There are no additional costs to respondents.

A14. Estimated Annualized Costs to the Federal Government

Cost Category	Estimated Costs
Data collection activities	$248,190
Programmatic resources to provide technical assistance for HMRF grantees	$263,454

(developed based on information collection	
Total costs over the request period	$511,644

Note: Project management activities are prorated across tasks.

A15. Reasons for changes in burden

This is for an individual information collection under the umbrella formative generic clearance for program support (0970-0531).

A16. Timeline

We aim to conduct HMRF site visits, focus groups, and CGLS beginning in Summer 2022. We will begin scheduling the visits as soon as we receive clearance from OMB. We assume that focus groups and listening sessions will begin in July and continue through October. Follow-up activities including memos and briefs will continue into December of 2022.

A17. Exceptions

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.

Attachments
Instrument 1. Discussion Guide for REFRAME: HMRF Program Leadership Focus Groups

Instrument 2. Discussion Guide for REFRAME: HMRF Program Client-Facing Staff Focus Groups

Instrument 3. Discussion Guide for HMRF Client Focus Group

Instrument 4. Discussion Guide for REFRAME Community Listening Sessions