

# **Building and Sustaining the Early Care and Education (BASE) Workforce**

**Formative Data Collections for ACF Research**

**0970 – 0356**

## **Supporting Statement**

### **Part A**

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**Alternative Supporting Statement for Information Collections Designed for  
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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:** This is a new information collection request for in-depth semi-structured interviews with key informants to build a knowledge base of strategies currently underway in the U.S. to build, retain, and advance the early care and education (ECE) workforce. These key informant interviews will also aim to illuminate existing data sources that may contain information about the ECE workforce, and strategies and the factors, that can shape the employment dynamics of the ECE workforce (e.g., recruitment, advancement, and retention) that have not yet been addressed by prior research. Data collected through these key informant discussions are not intended to be generalized to a broader population. Rather, these discussions will help ACF to gather information that is not publicly available about ECE workforce strategies and existing data sources. We do not intend for this information to be used as the principal basis for public policy decisions.
- **Time Sensitivity:** Our timeline for key informant interviews is linked to the project timeline. The key informant interviews will need to be launched in June 2021 because subsequent phases of the project are dependent on the information that will be collected via these discussions. Specifically, we will use this information to direct time-sensitive decisions related to design of case studies and evaluations of strategies aimed at building and retaining a qualified ECE workforce.

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### A1. Necessity for Collection

The proposed information collected as part of the *Building and Sustaining the Early Care and Education Workforce* project (BASE project) is needed to gather details that are not publicly available about strategies that aim to build, retain, and advance the early care and education (ECE) workforce. Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is currently conducting a broad scan of state, community, and provider strategies underway in the United States to build, advance, and retain ECE workers. In our current scan efforts, we have found that existing data sources do not offer complete or detailed information on all the aspects of interest related to current ECE workforce strategies. More specific information is needed for a fuller understanding of strategies that are of greatest interest to ACF (e.g., implemented in multiple contexts, previously evaluated, widely known, or promising and/or innovative). Key pieces of information relevant to these strategies is lacking or may be incomplete (e.g., core components of the strategy's model, funding sources, intended outcomes, size and scale, staging, implementing agency(ies), years of implementation, target population and ECE setting(s), location). The key informant interviews aim to uncover details about the strategies that are not publicly available.

In addition, this collection is necessary to identify existing data sources that can inform questions about ECE workforce employment dynamics and the factors that shape these dynamics. 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 development of ACF research;
- Maintain a research agenda that is rigorous and relevant; and
- Ensure that research products are as current as possible.

The purpose of the information collection is to 1) contribute to the ACF Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation's (OPRE's) understanding of strategies currently underway to build, retain, and advance ECE workers in the United States, 2) gather information that is not publicly available about a range of strategies to build, retain, and advance the ECE workforce, 3) identify existing data sources that have relevant information for analyses to advance understanding of ECE workforce employment dynamics and the strategies and factors that shape these dynamics; and, 4) inform the conceptual framework and theory of change of drivers of ECE workforce turnover.

Information will be collected through interviews with key informants. The data collected will provide a deeper understanding of strategies and data sources identified in a scan of publicly available information (i.e., websites and published literature). Once the initial review of publicly available information is complete, we will select a set of strategies to explore in greater depth through key informant interviews. Conducting key informant interviews will allow the study team to collect complete descriptive information about key components of the strategies (e.g., intended models, implementation infrastructure and supports, and surrounding contexts) and about any existing data sources.

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The study team will use this information to contribute to a report that aims to describe the landscape of strategies underway in the U.S. to build, advance, and retain the ECE workforce. The study team will also summarize the information in an internal reference memo that assesses the potential of existing data sources to support analyses addressing questions about ECE workforce employment dynamics and the strategies and factors that shape these dynamics. The team will also use this information to inform and refine a conceptual framework and theory of change of drivers of ECE workforce turnover. In combination, these products will inform future project research activities, such as secondary analysis of existing data sources and evaluation of these strategies. Selected information may be shared publicly to describe the landscape of strategies currently underway to build, retain, and advance the ECE workforce.

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 or Tests*

The key informant interviews aim to address the following research questions:

- 1) What strategies (including what combinations of strategies) are currently being implemented to build, retain, or advance the ECE workforce?
  - a) What strategies are being implemented by state and local ECE systems?
  - b) Which strategies are being implemented in various ECE settings, such as Head Start and subsidized child care programs, family child care?
  - c) How are these approaches implemented and financed (i.e., program- and system-level mechanisms)?
  - d) Which current strategies target or aim to address the risks and opportunities facing the ECE workforce with specific racial, ethnic, immigrant, linguistic, or economic backgrounds?
- 2) How might the strategies employed differ across states, systems, settings, and populations?
  - a) How might the strategies employed differ by ages of children served, worker characteristics and roles, program context (e.g., HS, child care, subsidies, other funding sources & sponsors)?
  - b) How might the strategies employed differ by community and state context (e.g., urban/rural, policies and regulations, social & economic conditions)?
  - c) How might the strategies employed address the unique risks and opportunities facing different racial, ethnic, immigrant, and linguistic groups of workers in the ECE workforce?
- 3) What might be critical combinations of strategies, or critical features of strategies, being implemented to build, retain, and advance the ECE workforce?
  - a) What might be critical components of strategies that aim to address risks and opportunities facing racial, ethnic, immigrant, or linguistic subgroups of workers?
- 4) What data sources exist to examine ECE workforce employment dynamics and the factors that shape them?

### *Study Design*

We will hold semi-structured discussions by phone or video conference with up to 60 key informants. Selected for their first-hand knowledge about strategies of interest, key informants will include representatives of regional, state, or local agencies (e.g., social scientists, postsecondary educators, service providers) that are implementing strategies to build, retain, and advance the ECE workforce and of organizations collecting data about the ECE workforce. Some key informants may be able to provide information about more than one strategy or data source. Their collective expertise will be critical as the

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project team seeks to develop a thorough understanding of the landscape of available strategies and data sources. The discussions, facilitated by one or more members of the research team, will solicit information about strategies and data sources the project team has initially identified and found relevant but could not glean enough detail on from publicly available materials and sources. Discussions will be tailored according to the key informants' first-hand knowledge and experience to best elicit information about the specific strategies or data sources of interest. The interviews will likely include discussions about the intended model of a strategy and its implementation, evidence about the strategy, contextual features of the strategy, and other strategies that are similar. With regard to existing data sources, the interviews will likely include discussions about the sampling frame, how the data was collected, available measures, and plausibility of accessing the data for further analysis.

Information from key informant discussions will be captured in detailed written notes taken by a member of the research team; content will be used to complement information about the strategy or data source that was collected through publicly available sources and synthesized across interviews. With regard to strategies, the information will be used to develop a thorough understanding of the breadth of strategies in use, to distinguish the degree to which some strategies may be more promising than others for specific ECE settings, and to identify contextual policies, practices, and supports that appear to be important for their design. With regard to existing data sources, the information will be used to assess the potential of the data source for describing the ECE workforce employment dynamics and the predictors that might shape these dynamics (such as ECE system, contextual, and worker characteristics).

<i>Data Collection Activity</i>	<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection</i>	<i>Mode and Duration</i>
Key Informant Interview (KII)	KII Protocol (see Instrument 1)	<p><b>Respondents:</b> Up to 60 staff that oversee, research, and/or are familiar with strategies to build, retain, and advance the ECE workforce and existing data sources that can describe the ECE workforce dynamics and factors that shape these dynamics.</p> <p><b>Content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model specifications and implementation infrastructure</li> <li>• Evidence about strategy</li> <li>• Contextual features</li> <li>• Similar strategies</li> <li>• Data source elements and characteristics</li> </ul> <p><b>Purpose:</b> To build knowledge on the landscape of state, community, and provider strategies currently underway in the United States to build, advance, and retain ECE workers and to assess the viability of existing data sources for further analysis to address unanswered questions about ECE workforce dynamics and the factors that shape them.</p>	<p><b>Mode:</b> Phone or Video Conference</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> Up to 60 minutes</p>

*Other Data Sources and Uses of Information*

The data collected through KIIs will be used to address the research questions in concert with other available sources of information such as published literature, websites, public resources and user guides

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for existing datasets, and relevant databases (e.g., CCDF Policies database, ACF 801 data<sup>1</sup>). The key informant interviews will supplement the other available sources and contribute information that was not available in other sources about strategies underway to build, retain, and advance the ECE workforce and existing data sources that can inform questions about ECE workforce employment dynamics and the factors that shape these dynamics.

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

Invitations to participate in discussions will be sent by e-mail, and discussions will be facilitated by phone or video call. Our data collection approach aims to obtain this information efficiently while minimizing respondent burden.

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

As noted in A1, ACF is also currently conducting a broad scan of state, community, and provider strategies underway in the United States to build, advance, and retain ECE workers. The scan includes examinations of: existing published compendia of ECE workforce strategies, case studies, and profiles; websites of advocacy, special interest, or national technical assistance and monitoring entities conducting activities related to the ECE workforce; strategies identified through a literature review; strategies suggested in response to a general solicitation of information from the public; strategies described in recent conference and public presentations; and discussions with project advisors, experts and federal stakeholders to identify gaps in the information these searches yield. The scan includes in-depth reviews of up to 100 websites and publicly available sources to generate descriptive information about key aspects of the strategies underway. In our current scan efforts, we have found that existing publically available data do not offer complete or detailed information on all the aspects of interest related to current ECE workforce strategies.

To identify relevant data sources that can inform questions about ECE workforce employment dynamics and the factors that shape these dynamics, the project team is using similar methods to the scan of strategies mentioned above (i.e., discussions with advisors and experts, a literature review, web searches, and open call). We expect that some data sources, especially those associated with particular jurisdictions or strategies, are less likely to be publicly available or widely known, which is why we propose to include questions related to data sources during the key informant interviews. Including these questions as a supplement to the key informant interviews will not significantly increase the length or burden of these interviews but will provide an important check on the comprehensiveness of the data sources we identify.

### **A5. Impact on Small Businesses**

As we will be selecting key informants that are employed at organizations that vary in size, we expect that a small number will be employed in small businesses that research or implement strategies focused on ECE workforce development. Burden will be reduced for all participants, including employees of small organizations, by scheduling discussions at times convenient to respondents and restricting discussions to 60 minutes.

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<sup>1</sup> ACF-801 data are monthly case-level child care program information reported by States and Territories for the Child Care and Development Fund (OMB #0970-0167).

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**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 a notice in the Federal Register announcing the agency's intention to request an OMB review of the overarching generic clearance for formative information collection. This notice was published on November 3, 2020, Volume 85, Number 213, page 69627, and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. During the notice and comment period, no substantive comments were received.

*Consultation with Experts Outside of the Study*

We consulted with multiple experts and stakeholders to learn about potential sources for information about strategies to strengthen the ECE workforce, on the project's initial conclusions from the scan of publicly available information, and on plans for identifying and collecting additional information.

Experts and organizations we have or plan to consult with about the proposed data collection include:

- Lea Austin, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
- Allyson Dean, National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning at ZERO TO THREE
- Harriet Dichter, ICF
- Lanette Dumas, National Association of Family Child Care

We also consulted with our liaisons in the Office of Child Care to ensure that the Key Informant Interview protocol addressed their interests and aligned with other research activities to learn about the effects of both federal administrative flexibilities and federal supplemental funding that was given as a result of COVID-19, including American Rescue Plan funds.

**A9. Tokens of Appreciation**

We will not offer any tokens of appreciation.

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

*Personally Identifiable Information*

This project does not involve the collection of quantitative data and no individual level information about human subjects is being collected. The only information that will be collected are names and email addresses for contact purposes to schedule the interviews only. This information will not be used for any other purposes.

*Assurances of Privacy*

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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.

*Data Security and Monitoring*

As specified in the contract, the Contractor shall protect respondent privacy to the extent permitted by law and will comply with all Federal and Departmental regulations for private information. The information collected will be stored on a restricted, password protected project folder for which only those who work on the project have access. There are no plans for disseminating identifiable data.

**A11. Sensitive Information**<sup>2</sup>

No sensitive information will be collected.

**A12. Burden**

*Explanation of Burden Estimates*

All calls will take place within 6 months.

We estimate up to 60 key informants will participate in discussions that will be limited to 60 minutes. Each key informant will participate in one discussion. The attached protocol is designed to allow the interviewer to tailor the discussion based on the respondent’s background and expertise; not all questions will be asked of all respondents.

*Estimated Annualized Cost to Respondents*

We assume that respondents will work as representatives of state or local agencies and institutions implementing strategies to strengthen the ECE workforce. According to the salary averages reported in May 2020 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates by the Bureau of Labor Statistics the average hourly wage for social scientists is \$43.88 (<https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes193099.htm>).

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
KII Protocol	60	1	1	60	\$43.88	\$2,6,32.80
Total	60			60		\$2,632.80

**A13. Costs**

<sup>2</sup> 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 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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There are no additional costs to respondents.

**A14. Estimated Annualized Costs to the Federal Government**

There will be no costs beyond the normal labor costs for staff.

**A15. Reasons for changes in burden**

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

**A16. Timeline**

The following table articulates the timeline for the information collection:

Activity	Targeted Start*	Anticipated Duration
OMB Approval of Generic Clearance package	Prior to discussions	N/A
Discussions with key informants	Upon OMB approval, estimated June 2021	6 months

**A17. Exceptions**

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.

**Attachments**

Instrument 1: KII Protocol

Appendix A: Key Informant Outreach and Invitation Language

Appendix B: BASE Project Description