

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

# Technical Assistance Listening Sessions

Formative Data Collections for ACF Research

0970 – 0356

## 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 ACF Research (0970-0356).
  
- **Description of Request:**

The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) plans to conduct a series of virtual listening sessions designed to gather the input and perspectives of multiple constituency groups to inform ACF's understanding of the technical assistance (TA) needs, challenges, and opportunities in the field. Groups include current TA providers; academic and other researchers; state, local, and tribal TANF administrators; organizations serving TANF-eligible populations through human services programs (particularly employment and training programs); and practitioners and frontline staff. Through these sessions, ACF seeks to broaden its understanding of both programmatic TA and research- and evaluation-related TA for TANF agencies and human services programs that can improve programming and services. Sessions will be structured to facilitate group discussion and the ability to obtain detailed feedback from all participants. Information shared during these listening sessions will inform strategies for ACF's future provision of technical assistance. We do not intend for this information to be used as the principal basis for public policy decisions.
  
- **Time Sensitivity:** To fit within project and contract timeline restraints, the first listening session must be held by mid-February 2023, and all sessions must be completed by July 2023. The final internal-facing synthesis report and a brief public-facing summary will be provided to ACF in August 2023.

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### **A1. Necessity for Collection**

Technical Assistance (TA) is an ongoing support provided to TANF agencies and other human services programs serving people with low incomes through funding from OPRE and the Office of Family Assistance (OFA). In order to make informed decisions related to TA investments, OPRE and OFA need current information on the experiences, needs, challenges, and opportunities for programmatic TA and research- and evaluation-related TA from a wide range of perspectives. Through these sessions, OPRE and OFA will be better positioned to design and deliver TA projects that will be effective in supporting agencies to improve programming, services, and outcomes for their clients.

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 purpose of the listening sessions is to identify programmatic and research- and evaluation-related technical assistance (TA) needs, challenges, and opportunities among state and local TANF agencies and other human services programs that serve individuals with low incomes.

The listening sessions will allow ACF to hear directly from multiple constituency groups, including TA providers, researchers, TANF administrators and other program providers, and practitioners. Discussions will be tailored to the specific constituency groups to obtain detailed participant feedback. The information collected will be used by OPRE and OFA to guide a field-informed approach to TA provision.

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.

#### *Guiding Questions*

1. How do participants define and conceptualize programmatic TA and research- and evaluation-related TA?
2. What are existing approaches to programmatic TA and research- and evaluation-related TA in TANF agencies and human services programs?
3. How do participants describe the effectiveness of the TA provided?
4. What factors hinder and facilitate TA implementation and effectiveness?
5. What types of TA do agencies and programs need to better serve their clients? Are there existing TA efforts that are successfully meeting these needs?
6. How can TA providers reach and serve a wide range of agencies and programs?

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7. What do leaders and staff within agencies and programs need to successfully engage in TA (level of effort, supports, and other important factors)? What do TA providers need to successfully provide TA?
8. How might an ideal TA model be structured?

The discussion questions will be provided to the listening session participants in advance of the session for preparation. To facilitate discussion, the discussion questions may be tailored to each audience. The virtual format and use of meeting collaboration tools will allow participants to provide feedback in multiple formats. The audiences’ responses to the guiding questions and additional feedback gathered throughout the discussions will be collected and synopsised within the session summary reports.

A limitation of the virtual listening session format is that it does not gather information from everyone in the field. To be productive, the sessions will be limited to approximately 20 people per session, resulting in information based on experiences of representatives of each interested group rather than gathering comprehensive information about all experiences of all members of the target constituency groups. Limitations will be noted in all publicly available materials.

*Information Collection Procedures and Processes*

<i>Data Collection Activity</i>	<i>Instrument(s)</i>	<i>Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection</i>	<i>Mode and Duration</i>
Series of 8-10 Listening Sessions with: 1) Current TA providers 2) Academic and other researchers 3) State, local, and tribal TANF administrators 4) Organizations serving TANF eligible populations through human services programs (particularly employment and training programs) 5) Practitioners and frontline staff	TA Listening Session Discussion Guide	<b>Respondents:</b> 1) 40 TA providers 2) 20 academic and other researchers 3) 40 state, local, and tribal TANF administrators 4) 40 representatives from organizations serving TANF eligible populations through human services programs (particularly employment and training programs) 5) 40 practitioners and front-line staff  <b>Content:</b> Discussion session based on guiding questions listed above.  <b>Purpose:</b> To identify needs, challenges, lessons, and opportunities for programmatic TA and research- and evaluation-related TA; and to inform ACF’s approach and provision of future TA.	<b>Mode:</b> Virtual group discussions with approximately 20 participants per session.  <b>Duration:</b> 90 minutes for each listening session and approximately 30 minutes of preparation.

*Other Data Sources and Uses of Information*

This information will not be used in concert with other federal data collection activities.

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

The listening sessions will be held virtually via Zoom, which reduces burden on participants to travel. The listening sessions will also be recorded, with participants’ consent, which reduces the time needed to

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take detailed notes or repeat discussion points and comments. The recordings will be utilized internally to provide comprehensive summaries of the discussions and findings.

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

The guiding questions are based on learning from current and past OPRE and OFA technical assistance projects. However, no existing information includes the variety of perspectives on TA needs, challenges, and opportunities that the listening sessions will provide and that are necessary to sufficiently inform ACF's approach to future TA provision.

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

No small businesses will be involved with this information collection, with the exception of some participating constituency group representatives who may be involved in small businesses. Discussions will be held virtually, allowing more flexibility for those who choose to participate.

### **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. 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*

No external experts were consulted in preparation for this data collection activity.

### **A9. Tokens of Appreciation**

No tokens of appreciation will be provided to participants. Honoraria will be provided for participants to share their expertise and experiences in the area of TA needs and delivery. See section A13 for additional information.

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

*Personally Identifiable Information*

The only personally identifiable information that will be collected is name, organization, job title, and email. This information will be used to register participants for the listening sessions.

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*

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*

Recordings will be password protected and housed on a secure MS Teams space. The recordings will be for the summary writers only and able to be accessed only by the very limited group of staff whose access is required. All recordings will be destroyed once the summary reports are submitted and approved by ACF.

**A11. Sensitive Information <sup>1</sup>**

No sensitive information will be collected as part of this data collection activity.

**A12. Burden**

*Explanation of Burden Estimates*

Each listening session will be 90 minutes in length to allow sufficient time for discussion with participants. This is based on prior experience with gathering information virtually from groups of this size on projects of similar scope.

*Estimated Annualized Cost to Respondents*

Average hourly wage rate calculated as follows:

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<sup>1</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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- TA Providers; 40 respondents; Social Scientists and related workers: [May 2021 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates \(bls.gov\)](#); BLS Job Code 19-3000; May 2021: \$43.66/hr x 80 = \$3492.80
- Researchers; 20 respondents; Economists [Economists \(bls.gov\)](#); BLS Job Code: 19-3011: \$58.09/hr x 40 = \$2323.60
- TANF Administrators; 40 respondents; State Government – Social and Community Service Managers (40); [State Government, excluding schools and hospitals \(OEWS Designation\) - May 2021 OEWS Industry-Specific Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates \(bls.gov\)](#); BLS Job Code 11-9151; May 2021: \$38.16/hr x 80 = \$3062.80
- Program Providers; 40 respondents; Social and community service managers (40); [Social and Community Service Managers \(bls.gov\)](#); BLS Job Code 11-9151: \$36.92/hr x 80 = \$2953.60
- Practitioners; 40 respondents; Social Workers, All Other; [Social Workers, All Other \(bls.gov\)](#) BLS Job Code 21 – 1029; May 2021; \$30.29/hr x 80 = \$2423.20

Overall Average Hourly Wage: \$39.57

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
TA Listening Session Discussion Guide	180	1	2	360	\$39.57	\$14,246.00
<b>Total</b>					\$39.57	\$14,246.00

**A13. Costs**

Executive Order (EO), *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government* (EO 13985)<sup>2</sup> emphasizes consulting with communities that have been historically underserved by Federal policies and programs. The Presidential Memorandum on *Restoring Trust in Government through Scientific Integrity and Evidence-Based Policy Making*<sup>3</sup>, as well as the *ACF Evaluation Policy*<sup>4</sup> discuss community engagement and inclusion in research. Consistent with these guidance documents, and to ensure involvement with a variety of people with diverse experiences and perspectives on technical assistance, we plan to offer all participants an honorarium of \$100 in recognition of their time spent providing their expertise and input during the listening sessions. In the listening sessions, the individuals will be participating in their professional capacities as experts representing their views and understanding of the field’s needs related to programmatic TA and research- and evaluation-related TA. Participants will hold a range of positions, including researchers

<sup>2</sup> <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/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/memorandum-on-restoring-trust-in-government-through-scientific-integrity-and-evidence-based-policy-making/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/acf-evaluation-policy>

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from research firms, TA providers, TANF administrators, directors of employment and training programs, and practitioners (supervisors and frontline staff). We expect participants to review the discussion questions in advance of their session for approximately 30 minutes, and to spend 90 minutes attending a listening session. We intend to provide the same amount to all participants because we value each participant’s expertise equally. This approach is supported by a recent brief from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Methods and Emerging Strategies to Engage People with Lived Experience.<sup>5</sup>

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

<b>Cost Category</b>	<b>Estimated Costs</b>
Conduct listening sessions and post-session follow-up work (estimated contractor staff time: 530 hours)	\$108,000
Analyze and summarize findings from each session, plus provide final formatted cohesive summary of all sessions (estimated contractor staff time: 150 hours)	\$30,600
<b>Total/Annual costs over the request period</b>	<b>\$138,600</b>

**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**

- Preparation for listening sessions: 3 months
- Conduct listening sessions (after OMB approval): 5 months
- Production of report summarizing discussions from listening sessions: 6 months

**A17. Exceptions**

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.

**Attachments**

- Instrument 1 - Technical Assistance Listening Session Discussion Guide
- Respondent Recruitment - Technical Assistance Listening Session Opportunity

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<sup>5</sup> [Methods and Emerging Strategies to Engage People with Lived Experience: Improving Federal Research, Policy, and Practice \(hhs.gov\)](#)