

Family Self-Sufficiency Demonstration Development Grants Evaluation Support: Data Collection for Final Report

Formative Data Collections for ACF Research

OMB Control Number: 0970-0356

Supporting Statement

Part A

October 2023

Submitted By:
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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

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).
- **Progress to Date:** The Family Self-Sufficiency Demonstration Development (FSSDD) Grants Evaluation Support project was previously approved for an information collection (OMB Control #0970-0356) to conduct our initial capacity assessment. We completed that information collection in early 2022.
- **Description of Request:** The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation within the Administration for Children and Families plans to conduct semi-structured discussions and a survey with staff of FSSDD grant recipients toward the end of their grant period. The objectives of the information collection are to 1) describe the type and frequency of coaching and support activities grant recipients participated in; 2) understand grant recipients' perceptions of the support they received; and 3) assess the extent to which grant recipients developed their capacity to conduct research and evaluation activities during the grant period. Responses will be used to assess the grant recipients' needs and capabilities for further evidence building and their readiness for a future rigorous evaluation of their demonstration project. Responses will also be used to document the work of the FSSDD Grants Evaluation Support project and share lessons learned about the provision of technical assistance to build evidence capacity. 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:** For grant recipients whose grants ended in September 2023, we plan to begin data collection in October 2023. For grant recipients who requested and received a no-cost extension, we will time our data collection to align with the final months of their extended grant periods, which will extend the data collection period through the end of 2024.

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A1. Necessity for Collection

The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) contracted with Mathematica and The Adjacent Possible to provide coaching and technical assistance to human services programs who received Family Self-Sufficiency Demonstration Development (FSSDD) grant funding. This support was critical for grant recipients (GR) and OPRE now proposes to collect information about the experiences, achievements, benefits, and challenges from current FSSDD grant recipients. This information is necessary for ACF to make informed decisions about the future structure of grants and supports provided to grant recipients.

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

The purpose of this information collection is to understand FSSDD grant recipients experiences with coaching and technical assistance provided. The information collection will help to 1) describe the type and frequency of coaching and support activities grant recipients participated in; 2) understand grant recipients' perceptions of the support they received; and 3) assess the extent to which grant recipients developed their capacity to conduct research and evaluation activities during the grant period. Responses will be used to assess the grant recipients' needs and capabilities for further evidence building and their readiness for a future rigorous evaluation of their demonstration project. Responses will also be used to document the work of the FSSDD Grants Evaluation Support project and share lessons learned about the provision of technical assistance to build evidence capacity. The goal is to inform ACF decision making related to the development of future grant opportunities and to incorporate feedback into future support provided to grant recipients.

This information will contribute to an internal report to ACF documenting the work of the FSSDD Evaluation Support team and sharing lessons learned for building grant recipients' capacity to conduct research and evaluation activities through the provision of technical assistance to support future work. The data will also be used to develop summaries for FSSDD grant recipients to support their plans for after the grant period. These summary memos will recap each grant recipient's plans for research and evaluation activities after the grant period and provide recommendations for how grant recipients can continue to build their evaluation capacity in the future. Contractor staff will deliver these summaries to each grant recipient within two months of the end of their grant periods. This information will also inform briefs for the field about grant recipient achievements, challenges, and experiences around specific topics related to evidence capacity building. These briefs, with anticipated publication in 2025, will be informational for TA providers who are working with community-based organizations to improve their capacity to conduct research and use evidence.

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

- Inform the provision of technical assistance.
- Inform the development of ACF research
- Maintain a research agenda that is rigorous and relevant

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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

- During the grant period, what activities did grant recipients take part in? How did they make use of evidence capacity building technical assistance support from the FSSDD Evaluation Support project?
- What were grant recipients' expectations of and experiences with evidence capacity building support?
- How did grant recipients allocate resources during the grant period?
- What did grant recipients learn during the grant period?
- What can ACF and its Contractor learn from this project? What might ACF and its Contractor do differently for future evidence capacity building projects?

Study Design

The Contractor will use a combination of data collection activities to collect information from FSSDD grant recipient team members. Using a semi-structured discussion guide (Instrument 1), the Contractor will conduct a one-hour small group discussion with each grant recipient team, with approximately one to four individuals from each grant recipient team participating. These individuals could include leaders and staff from the grant recipient organization, as well as external evaluators working with the grant recipient during the period of the grant. These qualitative, semi-structured discussions will focus on (1) the type of coaching and support utilized during the grant period; (2) how grant recipients' expectations of evidence capacity building support matched the support they received in practice; (3) the grant recipient's use of research and evaluation methods; (4) successes and challenges grant recipients faced; and (5) the extent to which grant recipients' capacity to conduct research and evaluation activities changed during the grant period.

The Contractor will use a separate discussion guide to conduct 30-minute discussions (Instrument 2) with one to two individuals from each grant recipient team. These qualitative, semi-structured discussions will focus on learning about resource use during the grant period, including how grant recipients used their grant resources, whether they leveraged other fiscal or in-kind resources to support grant activities, and how grant recipients managed their grants. Respondents for these discussions will be those most knowledgeable of the grant recipient's budget, which could include a grant recipient leader or fiscal staff. The Contractor will ask the grant recipient if they would like to share all or part of their grant budget and/or budget narrative (with personally identifiable information, like staff salaries, redacted, if they prefer) ahead of the information collection. The Contractor will make clear that the grant recipient is not required to share their budget or budget narrative, but by sharing those documents, it may shorten the amount of time the Contractor would need for the discussion. If the grant recipient chooses to share their budget and/or budget narrative, the Contractor will streamline the discussion guide to only focus on the items that were not answered by reviewing the budget or budget narrative.

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The Contractor will also field a survey (Instrument 3) to collect grant recipients' feedback on specific supports provided by the FSSDD Evaluation Support team, including grant recipients' assessment of the quality and usefulness of different activities and grant recipients' perception of their organization's growth and learning as a result of support activities. The Contractor will field the survey with any members of the grant recipient's FSSDD team who regularly participated in FSSDD Evaluation Support.

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 (see Supporting Statement B for more information about the appropriateness of these methods and potential limitations).

<i>Data Collection Activity</i>	<i>Instruments</i>	<i>Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection</i>	<i>Mode and Duration</i>
Semi-structured discussions	Instrument 1_SEEDS Discussion Guide GR Final Research and Eval Capacity	Respondents: FSSDD grant recipient organization leaders, staff, and external evaluator partners; Estimating 1-4 individuals participating per grant recipient team Content: Experiences with specific FSSDD Evaluation Support activities (individualized consultations, Road Test Challenge, leaning communities); application of project learnings to other parts of the organization; evolution of project goals over time; grant recipient achievements; successes and challenges grant recipients face around evidence use; extent to which grant recipients' capacity to conduct research and evaluation activities has changed during the grant period across five dimensions (leadership, organizational culture, evidence infrastructure, staff capabilities, and engagement and communication). Purpose: To gather information on how and to what extent each grant recipient developed their capacity to undertake research and evaluation activities during the grant period.	Mode: Videoconference or telephone small group discussions hosted by a different person than the grant recipient's regular coach Duration: 1 hour per grant recipient team
	Instrument 2_SEEDS Discussion Guide GR Resource Allocation	Respondents: FSSDD grant recipient organization leader(s) and/or fiscal staff who are most familiar with the grant's resources; Estimating 1-2 individuals participating per grant recipient Content: Use of grant resources; planned versus actual grant-related costs; grant structure and management; allocation of staff time to grant activities Purpose: To gather information on how grant recipients used grant resources and whether they leveraged any internal or in-kind resources to support grant activities.	Mode: Videoconference or telephone individual or small group discussions hosted by a different person than the grant recipient's regular coach Duration: 30 minutes per

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			grant recipient team
Surveys	Instrument 3_SEEDS Survey to Collect GR Feedback	Respondents: FSSDD grant recipient organization leaders, staff, and external evaluation partners; Estimating 2-4 individuals participating per grant recipient team Content: Types of supports utilized during the grant period; use of research and evaluation methods; change in grant recipient knowledge around specific topics; grant recipient perception of quality and usefulness of coaching and support Purpose: To gather information about support grant recipients received; grant recipients' assessment of the quality and usefulness of support activities; grant recipients' perception of their individual growth and learning as a result of support activities.	Mode: Collected via web-based survey platform Duration: 10 minutes per respondent

Other Data Sources and Uses of Information

The information collected will be combined with information gathered via FSSDD grant recipients' original capacity assessment conducted at the beginning of the grant period (OMB Control #0970-0356), information from the grant recipients' FSSDD grant applications, other publicly available information shared by grant recipients (such as their websites, past evaluation reports, promotional materials, etc.), and information collected by the Contractor staff throughout the provision of individualized support over the grant period. These other data sources will provide additional context for each grant recipient.

A3. Use of Information Technology to Reduce Burden

The information collection will be held virtually or by phone, which reduces burden on participants to travel. The survey will be administered electronically through a web-based survey platform.

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

Before conducting data collection activities with the FSSDD grant recipients, Contractor staff will review grant recipients' grant applications, information collected from the initial capacity assessment, and internal notes from two years of individualized coaching meetings. Contractor staff will use this information to indicate in the discussion guide which information 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.

A5. Impact on Small Businesses

Some of the 20 FSSDD grant recipients are small businesses. To minimize burden on those 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.

A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

This is a one-time data collection.

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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

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

Information collected will be kept private. Respondents will be informed of all planned uses of data, that their participation is voluntary, and that their information will be kept private. As specified in the contract, the Contractor will comply with all Federal and Departmental regulations for private information. Data collectors will ask respondents for permission to audio-record interviews before the interview begins; for those that consent to the audio-recording, data collectors will indicate that the recording will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project. Raw data will be destroyed at the conclusion of the contract.

Data Security and Monitoring

Sensitive information is not being collected under this information collection. All interviews will be recorded (if respondents consent to this) using the WebEx conferencing system and notes will be typed up by a Contractor staff member. All recordings, notes, and survey data will be stored on a secure network storage environment maintained by the Contractor and will be destroyed after analysis and reporting is completed.

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A11. Sensitive Information ¹

No sensitive information is being collected.

A12. Burden

Explanation of Burden Estimates

For the purposes of estimating burden, we assume approximately four members from each of the 20 FSSDD grant recipient teams will participate in one-hour discussions using the semi-structured discussion guide to assess their final evidence capacity. We assume two staff from each of the 20 FSSDD grant recipients will participate in the 30-minute discussion focused on resource allocation. We assume up to four members per FSSDD grant recipient team will complete the 10-minute web-based survey.

Estimated Annualized Cost to Respondents

Most of the respondents will be managerial or administrative leaders of grant recipient organizations (typically community or social service nonprofit organizations) or program/research staff. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as of May 2022, the average hourly wage rate for “Social and Community Service Managers” is \$38.13 (see <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes119151.htm>). The average hourly wage rate for Community and Social Service Specialists was \$24.82 (see <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211099.htm>). Some respondents may be external evaluators hired by the grant recipients. The average hourly wage rate for Social Scientists was \$45.46 (see <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 Burden (in hours)	Average Hourly Wage Rate	Total Annual Respondent Cost
Instrument 1_SEEDS Discussion Guide GR Final Research and Eval Capacity	35 administrators	1	1	35	\$38.13	\$1,334.55
Instrument 1_SEEDS Discussion Guide GR Final Research and Eval Capacity	35 program/ research staff	1	1	35	\$24.82	\$868.70
Instrument 1_SEEDS Discussion Guide GR Final Research and Eval Capacity	10 external evaluators	1	1	10	\$45.46	\$454.60
Instrument 2_SEEDS Discussion Guide GR Resource Allocation	40 administrators	1	.5	20	\$38.13	\$762.60

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 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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Instrument	No. of Respondents (total over request period)	No. of Responses per Respondent (total over request period)	Avg. Burden per Response (in hours)	Total Burden (in hours)	Average Hourly Wage Rate	Total Annual Respondent Cost
Instrument 3_SEEDS Survey to Collect GR Feedback	35 administrators	1	0.17	5.95	\$38.13	\$226.87
Instrument 3_SEEDS Survey to Collect GR Feedback	35 program/ research staff	1	0.17	5.95	\$24.82	\$147.68
Instrument 3_SEEDS Survey to Collect GR Feedback	10 external evaluators	1	0.17	1.7	\$45.46	\$77.28
Total Burden and Costs:				113.6 hours		\$3,872.28

A13. Costs

There are no additional costs to respondents.

A14. Estimated Annualized Costs to the Federal Government

The total cost for data collection under this current request will be \$103,000.

Cost Category	Estimated Costs
Data collection	\$ 28,000
Reports and briefs	\$ 75,000
Total costs over the request period	\$103,000

A15. Reasons for changes in burden

This is a new information collection request under the umbrella generic, Formative Data Collections for ACF Research (0970-0356).

A16. Timeline

After approval is received, we will immediately begin data collection with any grant recipients whose grants ended in September 2023. For grant recipients who are extending their grants through a no-cost extension, data collection will occur within the final months of their grants, with all data collection ending by September 2024. A final report summarizing all the evaluation support activities undertaken by the FSSDD grant recipients, their accomplishments, and lessons learned will be developed at the end of the project period in June 2025.

A17. Exceptions

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.

Attachments

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List of instruments

- Instrument 1_SEEDS Discussion Guide GR Final Research and Eval Capacity
- Instrument 2_SEEDS Discussion Guide GR Resource Allocation
- Instrument 3_SEEDS Survey to Collect GR Feedback