

**National Center on Afterschool and Summer
Enrichment (NCASE) Out-of-School Time
Workforce Focus Groups**

Formative Data Collections for Program Support

0970 – 0531

Supporting Statement

Part A - Justification

February 2024

Submitted By:
Office of Child Care
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

4th Floor, Mary E. Switzer Building
330 C Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

A1. Necessity for the Data Collection

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Office of Child Care (OCC) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) seeks approval for the National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment (NCASE) to conduct a series of in-person focus groups involving members of the out-of-school time (OST) workforce.

Background

Since 2015, OCC has funded NCASE to provide training and technical assistance (TTA) to state, territory, and Tribal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) lead agencies and their designated networks, which include the statewide afterschool networks, State Education Agencies, provider associations, and Child Care Resource and Referral agencies. Specifically, the goal of NCASE is to ensure that school-age children in families of low-income have increased access to high-quality afterschool and summer learning experiences that contribute to their overall development and academic achievement. Under the current contract,¹ OCC leadership has placed high priority on identifying effective strategies for supporting the OST workforce. To meet these goals, NCASE must “...*research and analyze data specific to the out-of-school time (OST) workforce, including but not limited to turnover rates, employment status, apprentice/pathways programs and participants, and other topic areas; workforce activities may include the identification and/or development of best practices for successful strategies for staff recruitment and retention.*” To date, NCASE has conducted a comprehensive literature review of existing articles, reports, and other publications addressing these workforce topics. To further inform ACF’s and NCASE’s understanding of workforce needs and experiences, NCASE proposes to conduct a series of in-person focus groups involving members of the OST workforce in an effort to hear directly from workforce members about their experiences with recruitment and retention efforts, opportunities for career advancement, and other supports that affect their ability to remain in their roles.

This data collection will help inform NCASE’s and ACF’s understanding of OST workforce needs and experiences. Information from this data collection will help NCASE develop responsive TTA offerings for CCDF administrators and other state-level audiences as well as TTA providers who work directly with OST program staff. NCASE will also use this data collection to prepare informational memos for OCC leadership.

Legal or Administrative Requirements that Necessitate the Collection

There are no legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. ACF is undertaking the collection at the discretion of the agency.

A2. Purpose of Survey and Data Collection Procedures

¹ HHS/ACF-OCC Contract #47 QRAA22D0044

Overview of Purpose and Use

The purpose of this data collection is to hear directly from members of the OST workforce about their experiences and needs to help inform NCASE’s development of responsive TA, including resources related to the topics covered in the focus groups, as well as inform OCC/ACF’s understanding of workforce needs. The focus groups will allow NCASE to gather direct input from members of the workforce that can help contextualize findings from other published data sources and reports. NCASE may use the information resulting from this data collection in developing technical assistance plans, project-specific reports, memos to federal leadership and staff, and in presentations to the OST field. In sharing findings from this data collection, we will describe the study methods and limitations regarding generalizability and as a basis for policy.

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 T/TA.
- Obtaining feedback about processes and/or practices to inform ACF program development or support.

Processes for Information Collection

This data collection will involve nine in-person 60-minute focus groups (of up to 12 members of the OST workforce in each), facilitated by NCASE staff. Respondents will include direct-service staff (e.g., those whose primary responsibilities involve working directly with school-age children) and staff in leadership positions with supervisory responsibilities (e.g., those who are involved in recruiting and retention efforts and who manage professional development opportunities available to staff). Because respondents will be self-selected (i.e., those interested in participating in the focus groups will drop in to scheduled sessions – we will not pre-identify specific respondents to attend the groups), they will not be representative of the population of OST workforce. We aim to obtain direct input from members of the OST workforce to understand their experiences with various workforce supports and recruitment and retention efforts within their programs.

Focus groups will be held during the March 2024 National AfterSchool Association (NAA) convention in Dallas, Texas. Information about focus groups will be included in convention-related communications to encourage participation, and information about the focus groups will be listed in the convention schedule.

Each respondent will attend one focus group. Focus group discussions will be guided by a semi-structured focus group protocol developed by NCASE in collaboration with its partners. Before the focus groups begin, respondents will be asked to review and sign informed consent forms outlining the goals of the focus group and explaining how the information will be used to inform NCASE’s TA and ACF’s understanding of OST workforce needs. With respondent permission, focus group discussions will be audio-recorded and then transcribed with personally identifying information removed (e.g., individuals’ first names, program names).

Following the focus groups, we will use qualitative software (Dedoose) to code the interview data and examine themes that emerge across respondent groups. As this data collection effort is not meant to result in generalizable information representative of the OST workforce as a whole, we are not planning to use statistical analyses to examine the data.

A3. Improved Information Technology to Reduce Burden

With respondent permission, we will use audio-recording devices to capture focus group discussions.

A4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

This data collection effort is designed to extend our understanding of OST workforce needs and experiences beyond what we have gleaned from published research and workforce-related reports and survey and interview efforts conducted by other organizations. We have conducted a comprehensive review of the existing published research and data related to OST workforce needs and designed the focus group protocols to address gaps in knowledge (in particular, gaps in first-hand reports from those who work directly with school-age children and their experiences with retention and recruitment strategies and the factors that affect their perceptions of OST as a long-term career pathway).

A5. Involvement of Small Organizations

No small businesses will be involved with this information collection.

A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection

This is a one-time data collection.

A7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances for the proposed data collection efforts.

A8. Federal Register Notice and 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 this information collection request to extend approval of the umbrella generic with minor changes. The notice was published on January 28, 2022, (87 FR 4603), and

provided a sixty-day period for public comment. ACF did not receive any comments on the first notice. A second notice was published, allowing a thirty-day period for public comment, in conjunction with submission of the request to OMB. ACF did not receive any comments on the second notice.

Consultation with Outside Experts

We have consulted with NAA leadership in developing the plans for this data collection effort, including logistics involved with the data collection and the development of the focus group protocol.

A9. Tokens of Appreciation for Respondents

No tokens of appreciation for respondents are proposed for this information collection.

A10. Privacy of Respondents

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. Participants will sign an informed consent agreement before the focus group begins. Informed consents will be retained and stored by NCASE staff. No personally identifiable information beyond respondent's first name and program name will be shared during the focus group. When the audio recordings of the focus groups are transcribed, respondent and program names will be removed and replaced with a generic label.

Information will not be maintained in a paper or electronic system from which data are actually or directly retrieved by an individuals' personal identifier.

A11. Sensitive Questions

There are no sensitive questions in this data collection.

A12. Estimation of Information Collection Burden

Burden Estimates

We anticipate engaging about 108 individuals. The total burden per respondent is 60 minutes (the timeframe of the focus group). Respondents will not be asked to complete any pre-focus group work or post-focus group follow-up work, thus limiting their burden to their actual participation in the 60-minute focus group they attend.

Cost Estimates

The cost to respondents was calculated using the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) job code for Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other [21-1099] and wage data from May 2022, which is \$24.82 per hour. To account for fringe benefits and overhead the rate was multiplied by two which is \$49.64.

https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_stru.htm

Instrument	Total Number of Respondents	Total Number of Responses Per Respondent	Average Burden Hours Per Response	Total Burden Hours	Average Hourly Wage	Total Annual Cost
Protocol for NCASE OST Workforce Focus Groups at NAA Convention	108	1	1 hour	108	\$49.64	\$5,361.12

A13. Cost Burden to Respondents or Record Keepers

Focus group participants will travel to Dallas to participate in the NAA convention in their professional capacity. Participation in the focus group creates an opportunity cost for these professionals who would otherwise be attending professional sessions but instead are volunteering to provide their valuable expertise during a focus group. Additionally, we aim to hear from a robust number of participants in an effort to understand the range of OST workforce needs and experiences. As such, we plan to issue a \$50 honorarium to each focus group respondent in exchange for the time they spend providing their professional expertise on OST workforce needs and experiences.

Providing honorarium to ensure involvement of a variety of people with diverse experiences and perspectives in the OST workforce supports fields for their time spent providing their expertise and experience is in line with the following priorities of the current Administration and HHS:

- Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation’s *Methods and Emerging Strategies to Engage People with Lived Experience*²
- *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (EO 13985)*³

A14. Estimate of Cost to the Federal Government

The total cost for the data collection activities under this current request is estimated to be \$85,000. This cost is covered in the NCASE contract.

A15. Change in Burden

² <https://aspe.hhs.gov/reports/lived-experience-brief>

³ <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/>

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

A16. Plan and Time Schedule for Information Collection, Tabulation and Publication

Focus groups are planned to take place from March 17-20, 2024. Audio recordings of focus groups will be transcribed. NCASE staff will review transcriptions and summarize key takeaways from the focus groups that can help inform ACF's understanding of OST workforce needs and experiences and NCASE's development of TA. Summaries based on the focus groups will be shared with other NCASE staff and OCC leadership between April – June 2024. Content from the focus groups may be shared in technical assistance plans, presentations, and project-specific reports for NCASE and/or OCC. We may also use this information to complement other content in public-facing TA products. In sharing findings, we will describe the study methods and limitations regarding generalizability and as a basis for policy.

A17. Reasons Not to Display OMB Expiration Date

All instruments will display the expiration date for OMB approval.

A18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.

Attachments

Appendix A: NCASE Out-of-School Time Workforce Focus Group Consent

Instrument 1: NCASE Out-of-School Time Workforce Focus Group Protocol