

**Listening Session with Fathers and Families
Living in Rural Pennsylvania, and the Outskirts
of Urban and Suburban Communities**

**Administration for Children and Families
Generic for Engagement Efforts**

0970 – 0630

Supporting Statement Part A - Justification

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Administration for Children and Families
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A1. Necessity for the Data Collection

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Office of Regional Operations (ORO) proposes to collect information to better understand the lived experience of residential fathers, fatherhood providers, mothers, parents of special needs children, and families with incarcerated fathers from Pennsylvania's (PA) rural and surrounding communities.

Background

Currently, ACF lacks a strategy on providing grants, services, and technical assistance to meet the needs of rural communities. ORO's ten regional offices have been tasked with helping ACF to better understand rural communities. ACF's other program offices will also contribute information to inform ACF's strategy. As part of this work, ORO Region 3 will conduct two listening sessions with residential fathers, fatherhood providers, mothers, parents of special needs children, and families with incarcerated fathers from PA's rural and surrounding communities to obtain data on their lived experiences. The data will help to inform ACF's strategy on human service delivery in rural communities and increasing father involvement in ACF programs. It is part of a broader learning initiative to better understand and address the unique concerns of rural communities.

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

Overview of Purpose and Use

The primary purpose of this information collection is to help fill a gap in ACF's understanding of the lived experience of residential fathers, fatherhood providers, mothers, parents of special needs children, and families with incarcerated fathers from PA's rural and surrounding communities. This work will contribute to a broader effort by ORO's ten regional offices and other ACF program offices that have been tasked with helping ACF to better understand rural communities to inform ACF's strategy¹. A main goal of the broader learning initiative is to better understand and address the unique concerns of rural communities. The listening sessions with the five participant groups will help provide information on the following learning objectives:

- How does living in PA's rural and surrounding communities affect the human services experience of fathers?
- How does living in PA's rural and surrounding communities affect parenting?
- How does working in PA's rural and surrounding communities affect providers who serve fathers and parents?

¹ Note that any of these activities that are subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget for review and approval prior to collecting information from more than 9 individuals.

- What are the best ways to communicate with and involve fathers living in PA's rural and surrounding communities?

ORO Region 3 is partnering with the Strong Families Commission (SFC) and its network of affiliated organizations to recruit participants from rural and surrounding communities in western and central PA and to host the listening sessions in Pittsburgh and Harrisburg, PA. SFC is a well-regarded organization that works towards greater father involvement in the lives of children, families, and the systems that serve them.

To gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of fathers living in rural communities, the listening sessions will also be conducted with fatherhood providers and mothers raising children with or without fathers in the home. Additionally, sessions will be conducted with parents of special needs children and families with incarcerated fathers living in rural communities to understand and elevate their unique needs and circumstances. These parents and families are often underrepresented or inadequately addressed in human services policies, practices, or research.

The information from the listening sessions will help to inform ACF's strategy on human service delivery in rural communities and increasing father involvement. ORO Region 3 will analyze the data, identify themes, and answer the four above learning objectives. Findings will be reported in a qualitative summary on the listening sessions, which ACF will publicly publish, and in a presentation for internal use by ACF program offices and managers. ACF intends to use the information, in conjunction with information from other efforts to understand rural communities, to inform approaches to providing grants, services, and technical assistance to meet the needs of rural communities and to increase father involvement in ACF programs.

This specific request is limited to participants from rural and surrounding communities in western and central PA and information presented will be specific to these respondents. This narrow scope will be mentioned in the qualitative summary and presentation about the listening sessions.

This proposed information collection meets the goals and uses of the ACF generic clearance for engagement efforts (0970-0630):

- Gathering information from individuals with diverse experiences and perspectives to inform ACF policies and programs.
- Informing program improvements
- Informing program planning
- Informing program implementation
- Informing the development and dissemination of resources and products.

Overview of Information Collections

Information Collection Title	Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection	Mode and Duration
Semi-structured Protocol for Residential Fathers	<p>Respondents: Residential fathers</p> <p>Content: Prompts to facilitate conversation about residential father’s experiences with living in a rural or surrounding community, parenting, engaging with human services, and finding and obtain help when needed.</p> <p>Purpose: Learn about lived experiences of residential fathers who live in rural communities.</p>	<p>Mode: In-person</p> <p>Duration: 1.5 hours</p>
Semi-structured Protocol for Fatherhood Service Providers	<p>Respondents: Fatherhood service providers</p> <p>Content: Prompts to facilitate conversation about working with fathers, providing services in rural communities, administering fatherhood grants, and identifying policy changes to help them better serve fathers and families.</p> <p>Purpose: Learn about the experiences of service providers who work with fathers living in rural communities.</p>	<p>Mode: In-person</p> <p>Duration: 1.5 hours</p>
Semi-structured Protocol for Mothers	<p>Respondents: Mothers</p> <p>Content: Prompts to facilitate conversation about parenting and co-parenting, what challenges they have, how they overcome them, what services they receive and how was that experience, what are their unmet needs and experiences living in a rural or surrounding community.</p> <p>Purpose: Learn about the impacts on mothers living in rural communities raising children with or without fathers in the home</p>	<p>Mode: In-person</p> <p>Duration: 1.5 hours</p>
Semi-structured Protocol for Parents/Caregivers of Special Needs Children	<p>Respondents: Parents/caregivers of special needs children</p> <p>Content: Prompts to facilitate conversation about parenting a special needs child, what challenges they have, how they overcome them, what services they receive and how was that experience, what are their unmet needs and experiences living in a rural or surrounding community.</p> <p>Purpose: Learn about lived experiences of parents/caregivers of special needs children who live in rural communities.</p>	<p>Mode: In-person</p> <p>Duration: 1.5 hours</p>

Semi-structured Protocol for Families of Incarcerated Fathers	<p>Respondents: Families of incarcerated fathers</p> <p>Content: Prompts to facilitate conversation about the impacts of an incarcerated father, what challenges they have, how they overcome them, what services they receive and how was that experience, what are their unmet needs and experiences living in a rural or surrounding community.</p> <p>Purpose: Learn about lived experiences of families of incarcerated fathers who live in rural communities.</p>	<p>Mode: In-person</p> <p>Duration: 1.5 hours</p>
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Processes for Information Collection

ORO Region 3 will conduct two listening sessions with residential fathers, fatherhood providers, mothers, parents of special needs children, and families with incarcerated fathers from rural or surrounding communities in PA. SFC will help recruit participants and host the listening sessions. Participants recruited from western PA will attend the listening session in Pittsburgh. Participants recruited from central PA will attend the listening session in Harrisburg. The SFC’s western PA network includes an organization that works with parents of special needs children. Similarly, the SFC’s central PA network includes an organization that works with families of incarcerated fathers.

Each listening session site will recruit 36 participants (15 fathers, 7 providers, 7 moms, and 7 parents from a subpopulation) from the rural and surrounding communities. The semi-structured instruments will be used to facilitate the conversations with the participant groups for 1.5 hours. ACF staff will transcribe the conversations using an audio recorder.

A3. Improved Information Technology to Reduce Burden

Listening sessions will take place in-person. This will help to strengthen relationships with parents and fatherhood providers from rural and surrounding communities. It will demonstrate that ACF values their experiences and opinions and wants to increase father involvement in ACF programs. It will also help to increase responses to personal questions about parenting and living in rural and surrounding communities.

A4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

Although ACF issued a 2023 report on human services in rural contexts, the report did not address the topics and groups or fulfill the exact purpose of ORO’s listening sessions.

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 for a new umbrella generic clearance. The notice was published on December 11, 2023, (88 FR 85890), 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 (89 FR 12352), in conjunction with submission of the request to OMB. ACF did not receive any comments on the second notice.

Consultation with Outside Experts

ORO Region 3 is partnering with the SFC and its network of affiliated organizations to recruit participants from rural and surrounding communities in western and central PA and to host the listening sessions in Pittsburgh and Harrisburg, PA. SFC is a well-regarded organization that works towards greater father involvement in the lives of children, families, and the systems that serve them.

A9. Tokens of Appreciation for Respondents

It is extremely important to provide those with lived experience, experts, staff, and others providing their feedback for these efforts with equitable compensation or tokens of appreciation for participation. As noted in a 2022 report by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation² this “helps ensure a diverse population with varied views can participate.” As such, we plan to provide Honoraria to respondents, as described in section A13.

A10. Privacy of Respondents

² chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/230a8fe8986f162910b9f29f6d050f35/Recruiting-Lived-Experience.pdf

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. Respondents will sign a consent form to participate in the listening sessions (see Appendix A). With respondent consent, there will be an audio recording to create a transcript and analyze the information shared.

A11. Sensitive Questions

In the semi-structured instruments, we ask personal questions regarding parenting, dealing with challenges, and receiving services which participants might view as sensitive. These are necessary to understand the lived experience of fathers, families, and providers in rural communities. Participants do not need to respond to a question or prompt if they choose and to take a break as needed to deal with any emotional reactions.

A12. Estimation of Information Collection Burden

Burden Estimates

Each listening session will be 1.5 hours. The semi-structured protocols provide a universe of prompts from which the facilitator will choose to guide the discussion. Participants will participate in one session each. For each site, we aim to recruit 15 fathers, 7 providers, 7 moms, and 7 parents from a subpopulation through our partnership with SFC’s extensive network of affiliated organizations.

Cost Estimates

Most of the parental respondents will be earning a low-income. To calculate the cost to these respondents, we used the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) job code for Food Preparation Workers [35-2021] as a proxy and wage data from May 2022, which is \$14.77 per hour. To account for fringe benefits and overhead the rate was multiplied by two which is \$29.54.

To calculate the cost to fatherhood service providers, we used the BLS job code for Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other [21-1099] and wage data from May 2023, which is \$25.97 per hour. To account for fringe benefits and overhead the rate was multiplied by two which is \$51.94.

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
Residential Fathers	30	1	1.5	45	\$29.54	\$1,329
Fatherhood Service	14	1	1.5	21	\$51.94	\$1,091

Providers						
Mothers	14	1	1.5	21	\$29.54	\$620
Parents/Caregivers of Special Needs Children	7	1	1.5	11	\$29.54	\$325
Families of Incarcerated Fathers	7	1	1.5	11	\$29.54	\$325
Total Burden and Cost Estimates:				109		\$3,690

A13. Cost Burden to Respondents or Record Keepers

Directly engaging the communities ACF serves and including these individuals in ACF research is in line with the following priorities of the current Administration and HHS:

- Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (EO 13985)
- Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government
- ASPE’s Methods and Emerging Strategies to Engage People with Lived Experience (2021)
- ASPE’s Recruiting Individuals with Lived Experience (2022)

Consistent with the guidance documents referenced, we propose to offer participants an honorarium for their time spent providing their expertise and experience. Specifically, we propose to offer \$50 honoraria for participation in the listening sessions to ensure a diverse representation of participants from rural or surrounding communities in PA.

Equitable compensation is in line with leading practices for ethical engagement of those with lived expertise and advancing equity for populations who have been historically underserved (as noted in section A1, advancing equity is a priority, as highlighted in the referenced EOs in that section). Providing equitable compensation recognizes the value of the time provided by participants, helps to remove barriers to participation, and affirms that the contributions from those with lived experience are as valuable as those from other experts.

As noted in the 2022 report by ASPE this “helps ensure a diverse population with varied views can participate.” Additionally, in an earlier report it was noted that “Providing [those with lived experience] with compensation commensurate with the rates that other experts—i.e., experts engaged based on their expertise as practitioners or researchers, rather than lived experience—receive helped recognize the valuable and unique expertise that people with lived experience lend, which promoted meaningful engagement.” The report goes on to specify that not doing so could result in “unintended consequences...when lived experience engagements have scarce resources and experts are undercompensated, which can undermine, disregard, and/or marginalize people with lived experience.”

A14. Estimate of Cost to the Federal Government

The total cost for the data collection activities under this current request will be \$9,670.

A15. Change in Burden

This is for an individual information collection under the umbrella generic clearance for ACF engagement activities (0970-0630).

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

ORO Region 3 will analyze the data, identify themes, and answer the four learning objectives mentioned in A2. Findings will be reported in a qualitative summary on the listening sessions, which ACF will publicly publish and in a presentation for internal use by ACF program offices and managers. The summary and presentation will be clear that the information from these listening sessions is limited to a small number of participants from rural and surrounding communities in western and central PA. However, the data is part of a broader learning initiative to better understand rural communities and may be discussed in connection with findings from other work. We aim to develop these materials by fall 2024.

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 – Listening Session Consent Form

Instrument 1 – Residential Fathers Semi-Structured Listening Session Instrument

Instrument 2 – Fatherhood Service Providers Semi-Structured Listening Session Instrument

Instrument 3 – Mothers Semi-Structured Listening Session Instrument

Instrument 4 – Parents/Caregivers of Special Needs Children Semi-Structured Listening Session Instrument

Instrument 5 – Families with Incarcerated Fathers Semi-Structured Listening Session Instrument