This is a generic Information Collection to add to the umbrella Information Collection Request (ICR) for OMB Control Number 1290 – 0043.

Formative Study of Fostering Access, Rights, and Equity (FARE) Navigators

1290 – 0043

Supporting Statement

Part A

September 2023

Submitted By:

Chief Evaluation Office
U.S. Department of Labor

200 Constitution Ave. NW
Room S-4307
Washington, DC 20210

Project Officers:

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A1. Necessity for the Data Collection

The Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) seeks approval for data to be collected for the Formative Study of FARE Navigators to build evidence about the roles of Navigators more generally, and how Navigators support implementation of the FARE program. The data collected as part of the study will be used to (1) document the key components, reported challenges, and strategies related to 2022 FARE grantees' Navigator roles; (2) illuminate how participant and program contextual factors shape design, delivery, and outcomes of the program, as described by site visit respondents; (3) identify lessons about approaches to helping women understand and access employment rights and benefits; (4) consider implications for the Navigator role in other types of workforce programs; (5) inform potential future research on the effectiveness of FARE grants or future similar grant programs.

This proposed information collection meets the following goals of the Department of Labor's (DOL) generic clearance for formative data collections (1290-0043) and will:

- Inform development of DOL research
- Maintain a research agenda that is rigorous and relevant
- Ensure research products are as current as possible
- Inform provision of technical assistance

Study Background

This information request includes planned data collections for the Formative Study of FARE Navigators, which is part of a broader portfolio of projects to understand the role of Navigators in the workforce system. The components of the larger research project will be conducted over three years (2022 to 2025).

Legal or Administrative Requirements that Necessitate the Collection

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

A2. Purpose of Survey and Data Collection Procedures

Overview of Purpose and Approach

DOL will use the data collected through the instruments summarized in this request to describe implementation of FARE Navigator programs. These data and the evaluation team's descriptive and implementation analyses will provide DOL and other policymakers with important information to guide potential future research on the effectiveness of FARE Navigator grant programs, support planning efforts about such grant programs, and inform potential future research on the effectiveness of FARE Navigators.

Research Questions

The Formative Study of FARE Navigators will address key research questions outlined in Exhibit A.1.

Exhibit A.1. Research questions

- What do the 2022 FARE grantees perceive as the underlying need for navigation? What are the characteristics and perceived needs/barriers of the populations served by Navigators? What are the core components of the Navigator model?
- What are the key partnerships in the Navigator model? What are the characteristics of the organizations that offer navigation services (e.g., connections with the community, their structure, history of working with women)? Who is providing the navigation services? What are the implications of the characteristics of the organizations and Navigators for the model?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of Navigators? How are Navigators trained for their role? What are the skills, knowledge, and experience of Navigators?
- How do Navigators promote equity in access to information about workplace benefits and protections? What are women workers' experiences with Navigators? According to respondents, to what extent did navigators appear to improve access to information about rights in the workplace and other benefits and services?
- What perceived challenges did grantees face implementing navigation services? What strategies did they use to overcome them?
- How and why did FARE grantees choose their program components/focuses? What job, workplace, and sector conditions did program participants occupy, and how do grantees report those factors shaping their decisions about program design?
- What do interviewed grantees report for how and why they picked their populations of interest? How did programs and Navigators report adapting their services to be responsive to participants' (1) identity and background, (2) education and experience, and (3) employment conditions?
- What were the local low-wage labor market conditions where programs operated?
- What employment benefits/services/regulations were available locally for participants?
- With which, if any, employers, industry associations, unions, worker centers, and other community programs did grantees partner? What were the partners' roles?
- How did programs measure success in increasing participants' understanding and access to their employment rights and benefits?
- What key internal (grantee, participant) and external factors did respondents perceive as barriers and opportunities to program success?

[1] The research questions refer to Navigators and programs that participate in the discussions and interviews from 2022 FARE grantees as part of the study. The study does not generalize to all FARE Navigators and participants.

Study Design

Data collection for the Formative Study of FARE Navigators will primarily consist of in-person site visits with the six 2022 FARE grantee sites. These visits will occur in fall 2023.

During the site visits, the study team will use one of two instruments included in this request to conduct the following data collection:

- Semi-structured discussions with Navigators, administrators, and partners

The study will also include the following data collection:

- Telephone interviews with FARE participants

Universe of Data Collection Efforts

Understanding FARE Navigator programs requires collecting data from multiple sources. This clearance request includes the following data collection instruments. See Table A.1 for details on how the study team will use data from these instruments.

Discussion guides for Navigators, administrators, and partners. The study team will conduct 60 semi-structured discussions with 2022 FARE grant administrators, and grantee staff serving in participant-facing roles such as Navigators, partner managers, and partner frontline staff. Partner discussions are likely to include employers, worker centers, unions, associations, and/or other employment-supporting service providers. We will have semi-structured discussions with, on average, 10 staff or partners per grantee, although the number of each type of staff may vary across grantees. These discussions will be conducted using a master protocol to ensure similar topics are discussed with all respondents. The discussions will last up to 60 minutes.

FARE participant interview guide. The study team will conduct 45 telephone interviews with FARE program participants about their experience with workforce Navigators—including access to services and barriers faced within the program. These interviews will take place after the program site visits and will last up to 60 minutes. The study team will work with Navigators and FARE staff to recruit participants for the interviews. The team will provide live translation if a participant's preferred language is not English or Spanish.

Table A.1. Data collection instruments and type of data collected

Instrument	Mode and respondents	Purpose
1. Discussion guides to use with Navigators, administrators, and partners	*Mode: Semi-structured discussions* Respondents: FARE grantee staff, state and local WIOA Dislocated Worker staff, grantee partners, other local American Job Centner staff	Document core components of Navigator services and context. Discussions will include roles and activities, including how they have spent their time over the most recent week and month.
2. FARE participant interview guide	*Mode: Telephone interviews* Respondents: FARE participants	Document experiences of FARE participants as they relate to barriers to access and their experiences with Navigators. The information will be used to understand program participant experience with FARE Navigators.

A3. Improved Information Technology to Reduce Burden

This project will use the application of information technology to reduce burden.

For the semi-structured discussions, if an in-person discussion cannot be conducted during the site visit, the discussion will be conducted virtually, as a conference call, using the same protocol to ensure similar topics are discussed with all respondents.

A4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

This project will not involve collecting information that is available from other sources, as there has been no information collected on FARE Navigators through other research studies or administrative reporting required by the relevant federal agency (DOL Women's Bureau and Employment and Training Administration).

A5. Involvement of Small Organizations

Employer partners will participate in discussions as part of study site visits. Some of these employers may be small businesses. To minimize burden on any small businesses that participate, we will request only information required for the intended use of the data collected by each instrument, and will minimize burden by restricting the length of discussions and interviews to the minimum required time needed to collect the required information based on respondent characteristics and data available on Navigator activities from grantees—such as FARE manuals, any outreach materials developed by Navigators, and FARE grantee data. We will also consider the employers' schedules when making decisions about the timing and locations of the discussions, and will conduct discussions as conference calls as needed to further reduce burden. As with all data collection activities, we will remind participants that their participation is completely voluntary.

A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection

The is a one-time data collection. This formative study represents an important opportunity for DOL to understand the current implementation of FARE Navigator models and inform potential future research on the effectiveness of FARE Navigators.

A7. Special Circumstances

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

A8. Federal Register Notice and Consultation

No public comments are requested for this information collection.

Consultation with Experts Outside of the Study

The study team is coordinating consultation on the research design and data needs. A list of study team members is presented as Table A.2.

Table A.2. Formative Study of FARE Navigators study team

Organization	Individuals
Mathematica P.O. Box 2393 Princeton, NJ 08543-2393 (609) 799-3535	Dr. Jillian Berk Project Director and Principal Investigator (202) 264-3449
	Ms. Jeanne Bellotti Director, Employment Research (609) 275-2243 Ms. Kristen Joyce Deputy Project Director (617) 715-6963 Ms. Alicia Harrington Senior Survey Researcher (609) 945-3350
Rutgers School of Social Work 390 George St., Rm. 809 New Brunswick, NJ 08901	Dr. Anna Haley FARE Navigator Principal Investigator (848) 932-5385

A9. Incentives for Respondents

Navigators, administrators, and partners will not receive any payments or gifts because activities will be carried out in the course of their employment, with no additional compensation outside of their normal pay.

FARE program participants who complete an interview will receive a $45 incentive. FARE participants who are willing to complete the interview will provide information on their lived experience with the FARE Navigator program. Interviews will be completed outside of their working hours. These respondents may also be less interested in the research on the FARE program. Increasing response rates for populations not motivated to participate otherwise[1], improves equity in research, addressing and mitigating nonresponse bias, and providing fair compensation to the participants for their willingness to accept the burdens related to participating in research.[2]

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 to the extent permitted by law.

As specified in the contract, the Contractor shall protect respondent privacy to the extent permitted by law and will comply with all federal and DOL regulations for private information. The Contractor has developed a Data Safety and Monitoring Plan that assesses all protections of respondents' personal identifiable information (PII). The Contractor shall ensure all of its employees, subcontractors (at all tiers), and employees of each subcontractor who perform work under this contract/subcontract are trained on data privacy issues and comply with the above requirements. All staff must sign an agreement to (1) maintain the privacy of any information from individuals, businesses, organizations, or families participating in any projects; (2) complete online security awareness training when they are hired; and (3) participate in annual refresher training.

As specified in the evaluator's contract, the Contractor shall use Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) compliant encryption (Security Requirements for Cryptographic Module, as amended) to protect all instances of sensitive information during storage and transmission. The Contractor shall securely generate and manage encryption keys to prevent unauthorized decryption of information in accordance with FIPS. The Contractor shall (1) ensure this standard is incorporated into its property management/ control system, and (2) establish a procedure to account for all laptop computers, desktop computers, and other mobile devices and portable media that store or process sensitive information. Any data stored electronically will be secured in accordance with the most current National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) requirements and other applicable federal and DOL regulations. In addition, the Contractor must submit a plan for minimizing to the extent possible the inclusion of sensitive information on

[1] Singer, E. and C. Ye. "The Use and Effects of Incentives in Surveys." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 645, 2013, pp. 112-141.
[2] Gelinas, L., E. Largent, G. Cohen, S. Kornetsky, B. Bierer, and H. Fernandez Lynch. "A Framework for Ethical Payment to Research Participants." *New England Journal of Medicine*, vol. 378, February 2018, pp. 766-771.

paper records, and for protection of any paper records, field notes, or other documents that contain sensitive or PII that ensures secure storage and limits on access.

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

A11. Sensitive Questions

There are no sensitive questions in this data collection.

A12. Estimation of Information Collection Burden

Table A.3. Total burden requested under this information collection

Activity	Annual Number of Respon-dents	Number of Responses Per Respon-dent	Total Respon-ses	Average Burden Hours Per Response	Annual Burden Hours	Average Hourly Wage [1]	Monetized value of Time
Discussions with Navigators, administrators, and partners	20	1	20	1	20	$30.21	$604
FARE participant interviews	15	1	15	1	15	$30.21	$453
TOTALS	**35**		**105**		**35**		**$1,057**

Note: Numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number for all columns other than the "Hourly wage rate" columns.

[1] The average hourly wages is an average of the mean hourly wages for social scientists ($43.70), state government officials ($24.82), local government officials ($26.36), and social service occupation ($25.94), from Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, May 2021 Occupation Profiles https://www.bls.gov/oes/2021/may/oes_nat.htm . (120.82/4 = $30.21)

Total Cost

Table A.3 includes assumptions about the total number of respondents expected, average number of responses per respondent, average hours of burden per response, total burden hours estimated, time value assumed for respondents, and total monetary burden hours for the semi-structured discussions with Navigators, administrators, partners, and telephone interviews with FARE participants. Here, we summarize the burden estimates rounded to the nearest whole number for each data collection activity:

- **Semi-structured discussions with Navigators, administrators, and partners.** The study team will conduct semi-structured discussions with Navigators, administrators, and partners. We estimate the discussions will take about 60 minutes to complete. The total burden is approximately 60 hours.

- **FARE participant interviews.** The study team will conduct telephone interviews with participants during the program site visits. We estimate the interviews will take about 60 minutes to complete. The total burden is approximately 45 hours.

The total annual cost (35 respondents x $30.21) is $1,057.

A13. Cost Burden to Respondents or Record Keepers

There are no additional costs to respondents.

A14. Estimate of Cost to Federal Government

The estimated total cost to the federal government for the Contractor to carry out the data collection activities included in this request is $82,250.

A15. Change in Burden

This is for an individual information collection under the umbrella formative generic clearance for DOL research (1290-0043).

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

Analysis plan

Analysis of discussion and interview data will involve coding and triangulating across data sources. The study team will begin by writing up detailed field notes from in-person discussions and telephone interviews in a structured format. To code the qualitative data for key themes and topics, a coding scheme will be developed according to key research questions and topics following a directed approach to content analysis[3] that attends to themes that are predetermined by program goals and research questions as well emergent themes. The study team will then code the data using qualitative analysis software. To ensure reliability across team staff, all coders will code an initial set of documents and compare codes to identify and resolve discrepancies. These data will be used to explore implementation challenges and promising practices.

Publications

Findings from the Formative Study of FARE Navigators will inform internal DOL decisions about future research and will be summarized in a report about the implementation of FARE Navigator models for 2022 FARE grantees. The findings will also be used in a larger research effort to understand the functions of Navigators in multiple DOL programs that aims to improve the effectiveness of such programs. The findings from this collection will likely be used in developing new research, but also in informing providers, program administrators, and other interested parties about what has been learned to date about Navigators. For this reason, the findings will likely be provided in reports made available publicly, though such publication is not the primary purpose of the data collection.

[3] Hsieh, H.F., and S. Shannon. "Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis." *Qualitative Health Research,* vol. 15, no. 9, November 2005, pp. 1277–1288.

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.