

SUPPORTING STATEMENT - PART A

Understanding Service Member Experiences with Family Planning in the Military – OMB 0704-SMFP

1. Need for the Information Collection

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, Section 747 requires the Department to survey Service members on their experiences with family planning services and counseling. Under this authority, the Department sponsored the DoD Women's Reproductive Health Survey (WRHS), published in 2020. Building on the WRHS and other research on the health and health behaviors of service members (e.g., the Health Related Behaviors Survey [HRBS]), RAND National Defense Research Institute (NDRI) will conduct a series of focus groups with men and women across DoD service branches (Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Space Force) to augment this survey data and better understand how service members experience family planning both within the Military Health System and via community providers. These focus groups will also gather information on service members' experiences with any new policies related to reproductive health, further implementing the requirement outlined in the FY17 National Defense Authorization Act.

This study will highlight areas related to family planning that may threaten DoD's ability to field a ready and lethal force. It will also point to areas where DoD may need to augment or develop care, programs, services, or policies that provide needed reproductive health care and family planning services to the force in order to maintain and enhance health, readiness, retention, and lethality.

2. Use of the Information

Building on prior experience executing the DoD Women's Reproductive Health Survey (WRHS) and other research on the health and health behaviors of service members (e.g., the Health Related Behaviors Survey [HRBS]), RAND National Defense Research Institute (NDRI) will conduct a series of focus groups with men and women across DoD service branches (Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Space Force) to augment this survey data and better understand how service members experience family planning both within the Military Health System and via community providers. These focus groups will also gather information on service members' experiences with any new policies related to reproductive health.

This study will highlight areas related to family planning that may threaten DoD's ability to field a ready and lethal force. It will also point to areas where DoD may need to augment or develop care, programs, services, or policies that provide needed reproductive health care and family planning services to the force in order to maintain and enhance health, readiness, retention, and lethality.

Specifically, the purpose of the data collection effort is to better understand service members experiences with family planning services provided by both DoD and community providers. Respondents include approximately 4,800 active duty service members from all service branches (below the rank of flag officer) at 24 CONUS installations. Data will be collected via 60-minute focus group. These focus groups will be in-person, conducted separately by sex (i.e., men vs women) and rank (i.e., E1-E4, E5-E6, E7-E9/W1-W5, O1-O3, O4-O5, O6) for a total of 20 focus groups at each installation.¹ Each group will be led by one facilitator and include one notetaker. Consent will be obtained verbally at the beginning of each session and each participant will receive an information sheet containing the consent information. A recruitment flyer will be used to assist installation POCs with recruitment.

Dedicated notetakers will take verbatim notes during each focus group and discussion. These notes will be immediately cleaned to remove any identifying information (e.g., names, titles). Notes will be entered into a commercial-off-the-shelf software package for analyzing qualitative data (e.g., NVivo, Dedoose) and will be stored on RAND-issued laptops and RAND servers, both of which require two-factor authentication. A Data Safety Plan has been approved for the study.

A five-item post-focus group survey will also be given to participants to be completed during the focus groups. The purpose is to collect sociodemographic and military characteristics that will be used to understand the representativeness of participants compared to the larger active-duty force. The survey will be paper-and-pencil and is anonymous. It should take no more than two minutes to complete. Data from the survey will be hand-entered into Excel and analyzed using the same software.

The consent and information form, recruiting flyer, post-focus group survey, and IRB approvals are included in this application.

3. Use of Information Technology

Focus groups will be in-person, however notes will be taken electronically.

¹ Each installation will have a RAND team on the ground for one full day and during that day, the team will complete 20 focus groups: Male E1-E4 (2), Female E1-E4 (2), Male E5-E9/W1-W5 (2), Female E5-E6 (2), Male E7-E9/W1-W5 (1), Female E7-E9 (1), O1-O3 (2), Female O1-O3 (2), Male O4-O5 (2), Female O4-O5(2), Male O6 (1), Female O6 (1).

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

The information obtained through this collection is unique and is not already available for use or adaptation from another cleared source.

5. Burden on Small Businesses

This information collection does not impose a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small businesses or entities.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

This is a one-time data collection effort. If the data is not collected, it will not exist and DoD will not be able to use qualitative data to better understand service members' needs with respect to family planning services and their experiences with new policy.

7. Paperwork Reduction Act Certification

This collection of information does not require collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the guidelines delineated in 5 CFR 1320.5(d)(2).

8. Solicitation of Comments

A 60-Day Federal Register Notice for the collection published on Tuesday, July 29, 2025. The 60-Day FRN citation is 90 FRN 35674.

Two comments were received during the 60-Day Comment Period. They are included below and in the order they were received, with our Agency's response to the comment.

Comment 1: Received on July 31, 2025

I am the Founder, CEO & President of Building Military Families Network, a military spouse, and an IVF mom. After more than eight years of experiencing infertility while moving five times in the last seven years, I can offer unique insights, ensuring this project's success. My nonprofit also recently published our comprehensive report following our 2024 Military Family Building Survey, which also highlights some key areas that should be considered for this project.

This project is something that is needed for military families, and I would recommend that the team leading this project consult with subject matter experts, like myself, to strengthen the questions being asked of participants. I have a deep understanding not only of the experiences but also of the current and needed policies. With more than six years of experience on the advocacy side of these issues, I also have connections with several other individuals and organizations that can offer this team valuable information.

I would be honored to consult on this project, to bring my own experience and knowledge to the table to serve the DoD community so that the next generation of military families doesn't face the same barriers and struggles that I did.

Response: The research team consulted with DoD subject matter experts to develop the protocols and other study materials. The study design will allow the Department to gather information from both men and women at all ranks, across the Services. The protocols are designed to gather information about current understanding of what family planning services are offered, as well as unmet needs and potential impacts of those unmet needs. The research team will review the Building Military Families Network report as part of their research.

Comment 2: Received on August 1, 2025

As a public health student and concerned citizen, I strongly support the development and protection of regulations that ensure equitable access to comprehensive women's health services. Women's health is essential to the well-being of families and communities, and federal policies must reflect that by safeguarding access to reproductive care, preventive screenings, maternal health support, and affordable contraception.

Policies that restrict these services not only endanger individual health but also increase long-term healthcare costs and health disparities. I urge decision-makers to prioritize evidence-based health policies that protect the rights, dignity, and health of all women, regardless of income, race, or geography.

Thank you for considering public input in this important matter.

Response: The Department remains committed to understanding the family planning needs of Service members and their families. This study will assist the Department in making policy and programmatic changes that further support Service members' family planning needs.

A 30-Day Federal Register Notice for the collection published on Wednesday, January 28, 2026. The 30-Day FRN citation is 91 FRN 3712.

No additional consultation apart from soliciting public comments through the Federal Register was conducted for this submission. The two public comments received expressed support for the focus groups and ongoing efforts to address the reproductive health care needs of Active duty Service members.

9. Gifts or Payment

No payments or gifts are being offered to respondents as an incentive to participate in the collection.

10. Confidentiality

A Privacy Act Statement is not required for this collection because we are not requesting individuals to furnish personal information for a system of records.

A System of Record Notice (SORN) is not required for this collection because records are not retrievable by PII.

A Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) is not required for this collection because PII is not being collected electronically.

Maintain for 30 years in accordance with DAA-0330-2021-0008-0001.

De-identified data (notes from focus groups) will be kept on the project Teams site. These data will be stored on a secure password protected RAND computing infrastructure, access to the specific directory requiring username and password and will be limited to study team members. All data will be destroyed three years after all study reports are submitted and manuscripts published.

11. Sensitive Questions

We are asking participants about their experiences with family planning, including use of contraceptives and assisted reproductive technologies, which some individuals may find sensitive. The purpose of the focus groups is to better understand service members' needs and experiences with these services, in light of recently enacted DoD policies on reproductive health care. Respondents will be reminded that RAND will keep their information confidential, but also that RAND cannot control what other individuals in the session may do with the information that is revealed. If participants are uncomfortable talking about these topics and the risk of disclosure, they will be repeatedly reminded that do not have to participate. Also, the consent and information sheet will contain contact information for organizations that can provide assistance should participants become upset. These procedures have been approved by both RAND and DoD's IRBs.

12. Respondent Burden and its Labor Costs

Part A: ESTIMATION OF RESPONDENT BURDEN

1) Collection Instrument(s)

Junior enlisted focus groups and post-focus group survey (E1-E4)

a) Number of Respondents: 960

- b) Number of Responses Per Respondent: 1
 - c) Number of Total Annual Responses: 960
 - d) Response Time: 60 minutes/1 hour
 - e) Respondent Burden Hours: 960 hours
- 2) Collection Instrument(s)
Junior officer focus groups and post-focus group survey (01-03)
 - a) Number of Respondents: 960
 - b) Number of Responses Per Respondent: 1
 - c) Number of Total Annual Responses: 960
 - d) Response Time: 60 minutes/1 hour
 - e) Respondent Burden Hours: 960 hours
- 3) Collection Instrument(s)
Mid-level enlisted focus groups and post-focus group survey (E5-E6)
 - a) Number of Respondents: 960
 - b) Number of Responses Per Respondent: 1
 - c) Number of Total Annual Responses: 960
 - d) Response Time: 60 minutes/1 hour
 - e) Respondent Burden Hours: 960 hours
- 4) Collection Instrument(s)
Mid-level officer focus groups and post-focus group survey (04-05)
 - a) Number of Respondents: 960
 - b) Number of Responses Per Respondent: 1
 - c) Number of Total Annual Responses: 960
 - d) Response Time: 60 minutes/1 hour
 - e) Respondent Burden Hours: 960 hours
- 5) Collection Instrument(s)
Senior enlisted focus groups and post-focus group survey (E7-E9)
 - a) Number of Respondents: 480
 - b) Number of Responses Per Respondent: 1
 - c) Number of Total Annual Responses: 480
 - d) Response Time: 60 minutes/1 hour
 - e) Respondent Burden Hours: 480 hours
- 6) Collection Instrument(s)
Senior officer focus groups and post-focus group survey (06)
 - a) Number of Respondents: 480

- b) Number of Responses Per Respondent: 1
- c) Number of Total Annual Responses: 480
- d) Response Time: 60 minutes/1 hour
- e) Respondent Burden Hours: 480 hours

7) Total Submission Burden (Summation or average based on collection)

- a) Total Number of Respondents: 4,800
- b) Total Number of Annual Responses: 4,800
- c) Total Respondent Burden Hours: 4,800 hours

Part B: LABOR COST OF RESPONDENT BURDEN

1) Collection Instrument(s)

Junior enlisted focus groups and post-focus group survey (E1-E4)

- a) Number of Total Annual Responses: 960
- b) Response Time: 60 minutes/1 hour
- c) Respondent Hourly Wage: \$14.70
- d) Labor Burden per Response: \$14.70
- e) Total Labor Burden: \$14,112.00

2) Collection Instrument(s)

Junior officer focus groups and post-focus group survey (O1-O3)

- a) Number of Total Annual Responses: 960
- b) Response Time: 60 minutes/1 hour
- c) Respondent Hourly Wage: \$37.33
- d) Labor Burden per Response: \$37.33
- e) Total Labor Burden: \$35,836.80

3) Collection Instrument(s)

Mid-level enlisted focus groups and post-focus group survey (E5-E6)

- a) Number of Total Annual Responses: 960
- b) Response Time: 60 minutes/1 hour
- c) Respondent Hourly Wage: \$23.20
- d) Labor Burden per Response: \$23.20
- e) Total Labor Burden: \$22,272.00

4) Collection Instrument(s)

Mid-level officer focus groups and post-focus group survey (O4-O5)

- a) Number of Total Annual Responses: 960
- b) Response Time: 60 minutes/1 hour

- c) Respondent Hourly Wage: \$44.97
- d) Labor Burden per Response: \$44.96
- e) Total Labor Burden: \$43,171.20

5) Collection Instrument(s)
Senior enlisted focus groups and post-focus group survey (E7-E9/W1-W5)

- a) Number of Total Annual Responses: 480
- b) Response Time: 60 minutes/1 hour
- c) Respondent Hourly Wage: \$32.60
- d) Labor Burden per Response: \$32.60
- e) Total Labor Burden: \$15,648.00

6) Collection Instrument(s)
Senior officer focus groups and post-focus group survey (O6)

- a) Number of Total Annual Responses: 480
- b) Response Time: 60 minutes/1 hour
- c) Respondent Hourly Wage: \$54.52
- d) Labor Burden per Response: \$54.52
- e) Total Labor Burden: \$26,169.60

7) Overall Labor Burden

- a) Total Number of Annual Responses: 4,800
- b) Total Labor Burden: \$157,210

The participant/respondent hourly wage was determined by using the 2025 Active Duty Pay Table (<https://www.dfas.mil/MilitaryMembers/payentitlements/Pay-Tables/>).

13. Respondent Costs Other Than Burden Hour Costs

There are no annualized costs to respondents other than the labor burden costs addressed in Section 12 of this document to complete this collection.

14. Cost to the Federal Government

Part A: LABOR COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

1) Collection Instrument(s)

] Junior enlisted focus groups and post-focus group survey (E1-E4)

- a) Number of Total Annual Responses: 960
- b) Processing Time per Response: 1 hour
- c) Hourly Wage of Worker(s) Processing Responses: \$14.70

- d) Cost to Process Each Response: \$14.70
- e) Total Cost to Process Responses: \$14,112.00

2) Collection Instrument(s)

Junior officer focus groups and post-focus group survey (O1-O3)

- a) Number of Total Annual Responses: 960
- b) Processing Time per Response: 1 hour
- c) Hourly Wage of Worker(s) Processing Responses: \$37.33
- d) Cost to Process Each Response: \$37.33
- e) Total Cost to Process Responses: \$35,836.80

3) Collection Instrument(s)

Mid-level enlisted focus groups and post-focus group survey (E5-E6)

- a) Number of Total Annual Responses: 960
- b) Processing Time per Response: 1 hour
- c) Hourly Wage of Worker(s) Processing Responses: \$23.32
- d) Cost to Process Each Response: \$23.32
- e) Total Cost to Process Responses: \$22,387.20

4) Collection Instrument(s)

Mid-level officer focus groups and post-focus group survey (O4-O5)

- a) Number of Total Annual Responses: 960
- b) Processing Time per Response: 1 hour
- c) Hourly Wage of Worker(s) Processing Responses: \$44.97
- d) Cost to Process Each Response: \$44.97
- e) Total Cost to Process Responses: \$43,171.20

5) Collection Instrument(s)

Senior enlisted focus groups and post-focus group survey (E7-E9/W1-W5)

- a) Number of Total Annual Responses: 480
- b) Processing Time per Response: 1 hour
- c) Hourly Wage of Worker(s) Processing Responses: \$32.60
- d) Cost to Process Each Response: \$32.60
- e) Total Cost to Process Responses: \$15,648.00

6) Collection Instrument(s)

Senior officer focus groups and post-focus group survey (O6)

- a) Number of Total Annual Responses: 480
- b) Processing Time per Response: 1 hour
- c) Hourly Wage of Worker(s) Processing Responses: \$54.52

- d) Cost to Process Each Response: \$54.52
- e) Total Cost to Process Responses: \$26,169.60

- 7) Overall Labor Burden to the Federal Government
 - a) Total Number of Annual Responses: 4,800
 - b) Total Labor Burden: \$157,317

Part B: OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE COSTS

- 1) Cost Categories
 - a) Equipment: \$0
 - b) Printing: \$0
 - c) Postage: \$0
 - d) Software Purchases: \$0
 - e) Licensing Costs: \$0
 - f) Other: \$0
- 2) Total Operational and Maintenance Cost: \$0

Part C: TOTAL COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- 1) Total Labor Cost to the Federal Government: \$157,317
- 2) Total Operational and Maintenance Costs: \$0
- 3) Total Cost to the Federal Government: \$157,317

15. Reasons for Change in Burden

This is a new collection with a new associated burden.

16. Publication of Results

The results of this information collection are intended to be published as a peer-reviewed RAND publication. The projected title of publication is *Understanding Service Members Needs and Experiences with Family Planning* and the projected publication date March 2027. Depending on the receipt of all necessary approvals, data collection is expected to occur between April 2026 and July 2026. Data analysis will occur between May and August 2026. Final report writing will occur between July 2026 and September 2026. A draft final report will be delivered in September 2026. Peer and sponsor reviewer will occur between September and October 2026. These dates are all estimates.

17. Non-Display of OMB Expiration Date

We are not seeking approval to omit the display of the expiration date of the OMB approval on the collection instrument.

18. Exceptions to “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Submissions”

We are not requesting any exemptions to the provisions stated in 5 CFR 1320.9.