

HMRF Grantee Site Visits and Community Group Listening Sessions to Support Race Equity for Fatherhood, Relationship, and Marriage Programs to Empower Black Families (REFRAME)

Formative Data Collections for Program Support

0970 - 0531

Supporting Statement

Part B

MONTH YEAR

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Research, Public Health Surveillance, and Program Evaluation Purposes**

Part B

B1. Objectives

Study Objectives

The REFRAME project aims to deepen understanding of the needs and experiences of Black fathers, families, couples, and youth served by Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) programs and identify research priorities and program strategies to ensure program services can effectively support their needs. The HMRF programs are funded by grants administered by the Office of Family Assistance (OFA). The study will provide insight into the experiences and needs of HMRF program providers and participants associated with tailoring services and context to the unique needs of Black individuals and couples and with community groups outside of HMRF programs. The purposes of the information collection activities discussed here are to: (1) identify and examine any applied strategies and methods associated with tailoring services to the realities of Black program recipients; (2) identify the needs and priorities of HMRF grantees to better serve Black individuals and couples; and (3) identify how HMRF grantees can be supported in addressing the systemic inequities impacting Black communities and program recipients.

To advance these goals, this study includes the following data collection components:

- ***Virtual site visit focus groups with HMRF grantee leadership, client-facing staff, and clients.*** The study team will ask targeted questions tailored to the attendees of scheduled sessions. We will gather information on the needs of HMRF participants and grantees and of what efforts HMRF programs have made to address systemic inequities for clients. The team will ask questions about staffing, tailored service delivery, inclusivity of family members in programming, HMRF grantee partnerships, and considerations of Black culture.
- ***Community Group Listening Sessions (CGLS).*** The purpose of the CGLS is to: (1) provide perspectives on the broader institutional and systemic barriers impacting Black families; (2) provide insight into the resilience of Black families; and (3) inform priorities for uplifting Black communities. The CGLS will consist of focus groups and listening sessions with community member experts, who may include members of local organizations such as historically Black Colleges and Universities, local branches of national Black empowerment organizations (e.g., NAACP, National Urban League), and Black professional organizations. The CGLS will provide enhanced perspective and knowledge that the study team may not be able to gain from interactions with its expert work group (EWG) and the HMRF grantee site visits surrounding contemporary Black culture and provide information on the strengths, practices, and philosophies of Black culture as well as information on institutional barriers that impact Black individuals and couples. This context will help inform HMRF grantees about how the broader community context affects their clients and understand the needs of populations they could potentially serve but are not currently serving. In addition, these discussions may identify effective strategies for serving Black families used by other entities that HMRF grantees can learn from.

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.

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Generalizability of Results

This study is intended to present an internally valid description of the needs and experiences of Black fathers, families, couples, and youth served by HMRF programs in programs and communities chosen for the study, not to promote statistical generalization to other sites or service populations.

Appropriateness of Study Design and Methods for Planned Uses

As noted in Supporting Statement A, this information is not intended to be used as the principal basis for public policy decisions and is not expected to meet the threshold of influential or highly influential scientific information. This study is an exploratory study designed to build improve ACF's understanding of the needs and experiences of Black fathers, families, couples, and youth served by HMRF programs and identify research priorities and program strategies to ensure program services can effectively support their needs. The goal is to inform the development of materials to help HMRF program providers leverage strengths and tailor services and context to the unique needs of Black individuals and couples. It is not meant to serve as demonstration of an evidence basis for those materials.

B2. Methods and Design

Target Population

The modes of information collection and their target populations are as follows:

- **Virtual focus groups with key HMRF leadership, including executive staff and program administrators.** These will consist of group interviews with organization leadership and program administrators at selected HMRF grantee organizations. We expect there to be 5 focus groups with leaders, and 5 to 7 individuals per group (a total of up to 35 individuals).
- **Virtual HMRF site visit focus groups with client-facing staff and practitioners.** These will consist of group interviews with client-facing staff (e.g., facilitators, case managers, employment specialists) at the 5 selected HMRF grantee organizations. We expect there to be 5 site visits with 1 focus group with staff per visit, and 5 to 7 individuals per group (a total of up to 35 individuals).
- **Virtual HMRF site visit focus groups with current participants or alumni of HMRF grant programs.** These will consist of focus groups of current or recent program participants at each of the same 5 sites as the staff interviews. We expect there to be 1 to 2 focus groups per site visit with an average of 5 individuals per group (a total of up to 50 individuals).
- **Community member focus groups and listening sessions.** This will consist of virtual group discussions with members of community groups in areas where HMRF programs exist. We expect there to be 6 groups with an average of 8 individuals per group (a total of 48 individuals).

Respondent Recruitment

HMRF Site Visit Interviewees. To identify sites, the study team will review publicly available information from organizational websites, study reports, and published materials from OFA, as well as other information provided by ACF. We will consider HMRF grantee characteristics such as grantee organizations, years of experience providing HMRF programming, geographic location, region type, services offered, key partnerships, service population (i.e., fathers, mothers, couples, youth, etc.). We will use this information to identify programs we believe can best inform the project's efforts in advancing equity for Black individuals and couples. We will consider the following as priority criteria:

- Grantee serves a large proportion of Black individuals or couples

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- Grantee integrates voices of Black participants or community members into programming
- Grantee uses materials or messages that speak to the realities and culture of Black individuals, couples, and families.
- Grantee applies a strength-based approach to working with Black clients.

However, we may adapt this list of priority based on input from the EWG that the study team is consulting regularly during the project, and we will also consult with ACF before finalizing the selection of HMRF grantees.

The study team will work with program managers at the selected grantee sites to identify individuals for the client-facing staff and participant interviews. We aim to interview all client-facing staff at each selected grantee relevantly involved in delivering the HMRF-funded programs. Potential current and recent program participants for interviews will be identified by program managers. The study team will provide program managers with guidance for selecting individuals who have participated in HMRF programming. They will reach out to these individuals and ask if they agree to participate in the interview. In some cases, the study team will share an invitation link with program managers who will then send to the staff who agree to participate in the interview. In other cases, the study team will reach out directly to staff that are interested to schedule the interview. Whether we use one approach or the other will be based on the preferences of the grantee. Before the interview begins, the study team will confirm that all attending staff consent to participating in the interview.

The focus groups with HMRF leadership will include at least one representative from each of the sites selected for the visits. However, each group will not be limited to a single grantee; we will bring leaders from multiple grantees together to participate together as part of the same group. This will also allow us to include representatives from a broader set of grantees. The recruitment of HMRF grantee leaders from grantees not selected for the site visits will be similar, and we will identify which grantees to include as part of the same process we use for site selection.

Community Group Listening Sessions. We plan to obtain recommendations on which local community-based organizations (CBO) to approach from the EWG. The study team will also leverage their professional networks to identify organizations that may be willing to host a CGLS. We anticipate that there will be some members of the EWG that will be part of community-based organizations that are not affiliated with HMRF grantees and may also offer opportunities to host a CGLS. We will present our initial ideas to the EWG and include inquiries regarding specific local organizations to engage. Once a host is identified, we will identify points of contact within the community and will coordinate with that point person to identify times and attendees for a virtual listening session, and will encourage them to take the lead in gathering attendees for the listening session. Members of the study team will facilitate the CGLS. We will provide the POC with materials to share with attendees including consent forms and guidelines for the listening session. In some cases, we anticipate that attendees may be staff, participants, volunteers, consumers, or community partners associated with a CBO.

B3. Design of Data Collection Instruments

Development of Data Collection Instruments

The study team developed the instruments to align with topics reflecting the study research questions, as well as topics identified by the EWG. The goal is to foster a discussion among group interview participants, and we designed the instruments to allow for that discussion. Given the need to allow

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discussion among interview participants, the study team took efforts to keep the number of questions relatively low.

B4. Collection of Data and Quality Control

ACF has contracted with MEF Associates and its subcontractor Insight Policy Research to conduct this study. MEF Associates and Insight staff will be conducting each of the focus group sessions. The staff who will lead the focus groups are experienced in leading conversations about Black families and with bringing an equity lens to such conversations.

As described under B2, to engage staff interviewees and participants for focus groups during the HMRF virtual site visits, the study team will work with program managers at the selected grantee sites to identify individuals for the interviews, and will provide program managers with guidance for selecting current and recent program participants. The study team will reach out to participants after they have confirmed their interest in participating to the program managers. To engage community members for the listening sessions, the study team will work with a point of contact identified at a local community group to identify attendees.

B5. Response Rates and Potential Nonresponse Bias

Response Rates

The interviews and focus groups are not designed to produce statistically generalizable findings and participation is wholly at the respondent's discretion. Response rates will not be calculated or reported.

NonResponse

As participants will not be randomly sampled and findings are not intended to be representative, non-response bias will not be calculated.

B6. Production of Estimates and Projections

The data will not be used to generate population estimates, either for internal use or dissemination.

B7. Data Handling and Analysis

Data Handling

Data generated will consist of notes and audio recordings taken during interviews, focus groups and listening sessions. At least two study team members will be present at each information collection activity (a facilitator and a notetaker), and both will review the notes for accuracy. We will use the audio recordings to confirm the accuracy of the notes and will delete them once the notes are finalized. We do not anticipate formal coding of the information gathered.

Data Analysis

The study team will identify themes and anecdotal information from the notes. The study team will highlight recommendations, experiences, and needs raised by interview subjects and listening session and focus group participants. Together with other knowledge development activities during the study

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(e.g., a literature review), this information will inform recommendations for materials and technical assistance for HMRF programs and associated organizations.

Data Use

Data from this study will not be made available to other researchers. The study is intended to add to the understanding of the needs and experiences of Black fathers, families, couples, and youth served by Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) programs, and is not intended to produce generalizable estimates that would benefit from exact replication.

Findings from the study will inform the development of materials and technical assistance provided for HMRF programs, and will also be summarized in a public-facing report to share high level learnings from the focus groups with practitioners and other researchers.

B8. Contact Person(s)

The information for this study is being collected by MEF Associates and Insight Policy Research on behalf of ACF. Principal Investigators Bright Sarfo (bright.sarfo@mefassociates.com) and Lashawn Richburg-Hayes (lrchburg-hayes@insightpolicyresearch.com) will oversee all data collection activities. The Federal Project Officers for this study are Katie Pahigiannis and Pooja Curtin.

Attachments

Instrument 1. Discussion Guide for REFRAME: HMRF Program Leadership Focus Groups

Instrument 2. Discussion Guide for REFRAME: HMRF Program Client-Facing Staff Focus Groups

Instrument 3. Discussion Guide for HMRF Client Focus Group

Instrument 4. Discussion Guide for REFRAME Community Listening Sessions