

SUPPORTING STATEMENT - PART A

Qualitative Research to Better Understand the Experiences of Racial/Ethnic Minority Service Members (OMB Control Number 0704-0644)

Title of Collection: *Qualitative Research to Better Understand the Experiences of Racial/Ethnic Minority Service Members*

Expected Fielding Dates: 1 June 2024 – 31 July 2024

1. Need for the Information Collection

In 2021, at the direction of President Biden, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin ordered an Independent Review Commission (IRC) to review sexual assault in the military and provide recommendations to remedy the issue within the Department of Defense,

<https://media.defense.gov/2021/Feb/26/2002590163/-1/-1/0/APPROVAL-OF-MEMO-DIRECTING-IMMEDIATE-ACTIONS-TO-COUNTER-SEXUAL-ASSAULT-AND-HARASSMENT.PDF>. In issuing their report, among other recommendations, the IRC advised “the Department should commission qualitative research to better understand the experiences of racial/ethnic minority service members and their perceptions of climate, attitudes, and experiences with sexual assault and sexual harassment, and gender and racial discrimination,” (Recommendation c7.1). This proposed project is in response to that specific recommendation by the IRC to better understand the intersection of gender, race, and ethnicity and experiences of sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and racial discrimination.

Furthermore, this project will address a critical knowledge gap that exists within the DoD. The DoD is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and has conducted past studies in this area; however, there are limited data on how racial/ethnic minority Service members perceive and experience sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and racial discrimination. This gap persists despite data that indicates racial/ethnic minority Service members are at an increased risk for these unwanted experiences (Breslin et al., 2022; Daniel et al., 2019). Using data from the 2017 Workplace and Equal Opportunity Survey of Active Duty Members, it was found that Active duty Service members who reported an unhealthy diversity and inclusion climate (e.g., experienced racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination, hazing/bullying) were more likely to identify as racial/ethnic minority members, female, and/or not heterosexual (Daniel et al., 2022). As experiences of sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and racial discrimination are associated with decreased health (e.g., overall wellbeing, increased depression, anxiety), they threaten not only the health and wellbeing of individual Service members but the overall health and readiness of the military (Daniel et al., 2022). With the DoD already facing significant recruiting shortfalls the past few years, these systemic risks for racial/ethnic Service members further threaten recruitment and retention in the military.

2. Use of the Information

This data collection will provide greater insight into the lived experiences of racial and/or ethnic minority Service members and their perceptions and experiences with sexual assault, sexual harassment and gender and racial discrimination. By better understanding the perspectives, attitudes, and lived experiences of Service members from racial/ethnic minority groups, we may provide tailored recommendations for military violence preventions, mitigation, and response that addresses the needs of each minority group. Findings may also be leveraged to better understand survey findings and inform future surveys that evaluate and impact policies, programs, and procedures in this mission space. As this group faces an increased risk for experiencing these harmful behaviors, it is important to understand how the intersection of gender and race/ethnicity influences the lives of Service members (Breslin et al., 2022; Daniel et al., 2019; Daniel et al., 2022).

Focus groups will occur in-person and will be comprised of racial and/or ethnic minority Service members, segmented by gender (female or male), rank (Junior Enlisted E1-E4, Senior Enlisted E5-E9, and Officer), and racial/ethnic identity, to better illuminate the nuances of race/ethnicity in perceptions of sexual assault, sexual harassment and gender and racial discrimination. See tables A2.1 and A2.2 for participant segmentation of focus groups.

Table A2.1 Female Focus Groups

Rank & Gender	Female Officer	Female, Junior Enlisted (E1–E4)	Female, Senior Enlisted (E5–E9)	
Minority Group	Black or African American	Black or African American	Black or African American	
	Hispanic or Latino	Hispanic or Latino	Hispanic or Latino	
	Asian	Asian	Asian	
	Other; Multi-racial	Other; Multi-racial	Other; Multi-racial	
	8 Focus Groups	8 Focus Groups	8 Focus Groups	24 Total Focus Groups

Table A2.2 Male Focus Groups

Rank & Gender	Male Officer	Male, Junior Enlisted (E1–E4)	Male, Senior Enlisted (E5–E9)	
Minority Group	Black or African American	Black or African American	Black or African American	
	Hispanic or Latino	Hispanic or Latino	Hispanic or Latino	
	Other; Multi-racial	Other; Multi-racial	Other; Multi-racial	
	3 Focus Groups	3 Focus Groups	3 Focus Groups	9 Total Focus Groups

3. Use of Information Technology

We expect to conduct all of the individual interviews virtually, to increase the global reach of this project. However, if a participant is stationed at an installation that is being visited by the

project team for focus group data collection and that participant would prefer to participate in their interview in-person, that option will be made available to them.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

The information obtained through this collection is unique and is not already available for use or adaptation from another legitimate 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 qualitative data collection, without current plans to replicate soon in the future. Failure to investigate the unique experiences of multiply marginalized groups qualitatively may result in overlooking factors that may contribute to, or better improve understanding of, Service member victimization, prevention, and response. These groups are often invisible in large scale surveys due to their small size, so their concerns may not be heard or addressed. Also, without this collection, the IRC recommendation could not be fulfilled.

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 30-Day Federal Register Notice for the collection published on Monday, March 11, 2024. The 30-Day FRN citation is 89 FR 17443.

Subject matter experts within the DoD consulted on the study design and the protocols content. DoD policy offices including the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) and the Office for Diversity Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) were also consulted in developing the study protocols.

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.

The data collection are covered by a PIA (Survey Database, [December 18, 2020], DHRA/OPA). PIA is published at:

<https://www.dhra.mil/Portals/52/Documents/Privacy/PIA/OPA%20-%20Survey%20Database.pdf>

The current approved disposition authority for all survey records is DAA-0330-2021-0008 that has a temporary retention of 30 years for confidential data, permanent retention of 30 years for public use data, and permanent retention of 30 years for reports.

11. Sensitive Questions

The purpose of this project is to learn about the experiences of racial and ethnic minority Service members and their perceptions of sexual assault, sexual and racial harassment, and gender and racial discrimination. The individual interviews will also be conducted with Service members who have experienced unwanted sexual contact, sexual assault, and/or sexual harassment while in the military. As such, some of the questions may be upsetting in nature because they ask participants about their experiences with these unwanted behaviors. These questions are necessary given that purpose of the study is to inform and improve military policy, procedures, and practices related to the sexual assault response and accountability systems. Obtaining some level of detail regarding Service member's experiences will be necessary to better inform improvements. Resources to obtain support, namely the DoD Safe HelpLine, Military Crisis Line, and both Service-level and installation-level SHARP/SAPR offices and MEO offices, will be presented at the start of the focus groups and interviews.

12. Respondent Burden and its Labor Costs

Part A: ESTIMATION OF RESPONDENT BURDEN

1) Collection Instrument(s)

Focus Groups

- a) Number of Respondents: 264
- b) Number of Responses Per Respondent: 1
- c) Number of Total Annual Responses: 264
- d) Response Time: 1.5 hours
- e) Respondent Burden Hours: 396 hours

Interviews

- a) Number of Respondents: 50
- b) Number of Responses Per Respondent: 1
- c) Number of Total Annual Responses: 50
- d) Response Time: 1 hours
- e) Respondent Burden Hours: 50 hours

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

- a) Total Number of Respondents: 314
- b) Total Number of Annual Responses: 314
- c) Total Respondent Burden Hours: 446 hours

Part B: LABOR COST OF RESPONDENT BURDEN

1) Collection Instruments

Focus Groups

- a) Number of Total Annual Respondents: 264
- b) Response Time: 1.5 hours
- c) Respondent Hourly Wage: \$27
- d) Labor Burden per Response: \$40.50
- e) Total Labor Burden: \$10,692

Interviews

- a) Number of Total Annual Respondents: 50
- b) Response Time: 1 hour
- c) Respondent Hourly Wage: \$27
- d) Labor Burden per Response: \$27
- e) Total Labor Burden: \$1,350

2) Overall Labor Burden

- a) Total Number of Annual Respondents: 314
- b) Total Labor Burden: \$12,042

The Respondent hourly wage was determined by using the Hourly Rate Based on 2023 pay:
<https://militarypay.defense.gov/Portals/3/Documents/2023%20Basic%20Pay%20Table.pdf>

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

1) Collection Instrument(s)

Focus Groups

- a) Number of Total Annual Responses: 264
- b) Processing Time per Response: 1 hour
- c) Hourly Wage of Worker(s) Processing Responses: \$89.92
- d) Cost to Process Each Response: \$89.92
- e) Total Cost to Process Responses: \$23,738.88

2) Individual Interviews

- a) Number of Total Annual Responses: 50
- b) Processing Time per Response: 5 hours
- c) Hourly Wage of Worker(s) Processing Responses: \$89.92
- d) Cost to Process Each Response: \$449.60
- e) Total Cost to Process Responses: \$22,480

- 2) Overall Labor Burden to the Federal Government
 - a) Total Number of Annual Responses: 314
 - b) Total Labor Burden: \$46,218.88

Part B: OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE COSTS

- 1) Cost Categories
 - a) Equipment: \$0
 - b) Printing: \$0
 - c) Postage: \$0
 - d) Software : \$0
 - e) Licensing Costs: \$2,000
 - f) Other (Travel): \$85,129
- 2) Total Operational and Maintenance Cost: \$87,129

Part C: TOTAL COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- 1) Total Labor Cost to the Federal Government: \$46,218.88
- 2) Total Operational and Maintenance Costs: \$87,129
- 3) Total Cost to the Federal Government: \$133,347.90

15. Reasons for Change in Burden

This is a new collection with a new associated burden.

16. Publication of Results

A report summarizing the findings from the project will be developed following data collection providing recommendations to policymakers to improve the experiences of racial/ethnic minority Service members and their perceptions of climate, attitudes, and experiences with sexual assault, sexual and racial harassment, and gender and racial discrimination.

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.