To: Ingrid Feustel
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA)
Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

From: Shannon Herbolsheimer, UAC Bureau Policy PRA Lead
Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)
Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

Date: November 2, 2026

Subject: Emergency Approval Request – Unaccompanied Alien Children Sponsor Application Packet (0970-0278)

ACF requests OMB's emergency review and approval of the digital sponsor application and corresponding revisions to the Authorization for Release of Information (Form SAP-2) and Sponsor Application (Form SAP-3), under OMB Control No. 0970-0278, as authorized under 5 CFR 1320.13. ACF requests approval as soon as possible and before November 30 to avoid substantial disruption to ORR's sponsor intake and assessment process while meeting the court's minute order in *Angelica S. v. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Case No. 1:25-cv-01405).*

On October 30, 2026, the court ordered that, if the online sponsorship application is not approved by OMB by November 30, 2026, the OMB-approved PDF version must be made available as the exclusive sponsorship application. Emergency approval would permit ORR to maintain its current online intake process while implementing aligned, OMB-approved digital and PDF instruments.

This information collection is essential to ACF's and ORR's responsibilities to protect the care, safety, and well-being of unaccompanied alien children and support their safe placement with suitable sponsors. Given the court's November 30, 2026, requirement, the use of normal clearance procedures under the Paperwork Reduction Act is reasonably likely to necessitate a transition to universal PDF intake, increasing government costs for manual processing, document handling, and records management.

Diverting staff from substantive sponsor assessments would necessarily delay safe placement decisions, prolong the time unaccompanied alien children remain in ORR custody in congregate care settings, and increase federal expenditures for their continued care. Prolonged stays in Federal custody and congregate care settings present significant child welfare concerns and litigation risk for ORR.

Requiring universal PDF intake would substantially change ORR's current operations, increase handling of sensitive personal information outside the secure application system, and expand manual processing and records management work beyond available staffing resources.

Essential to Mission

This collection is essential to the agency's mission (as described in 5 CFR 1320.13(a)(1)(ii)) because Forms SAP-2 and SAP-3 are necessary for ACF and ORR to carry out their responsibilities for the care, safety, and well-being of children. These forms collect and document information ORR needs to assess prospective sponsors and determine whether a child can be safely released from federal custody. They support required sponsor suitability assessments while helping ORR avoid unnecessary delays in placing children with suitable sponsors.

The forms enable ORR to carry out its responsibilities under the Homeland Security Act, 6 U.S.C. Section 279, which assigns ORR responsibility for the care and placement of unaccompanied alien children and requires consideration of children's interests in decisions concerning their care and custody.

The forms also support compliance with the **Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008, 8 U.S.C. Section 1232**, including requirements to:

- Protect children from traffickers and others seeking to victimize them or involve them in criminal, harmful, or exploitative activity.
- Promptly place children in the least restrictive setting that is in their best interests, as required by section 1232(c)(2)(A).
- Determine, before release, that the proposed custodian is capable of providing for the child's physical and mental well-being. Under section 1232(c)(3)(A), that determination must include verification of the custodian's identity and relationship to the child, if any, and an independent finding that the individual has not engaged in activity indicating a potential risk to the child.

The sponsor application and assessment requirements in **45 CFR 410.1202** directly support the need for these instruments:

- **Section 410.1202(a)** requires potential sponsors to complete a sponsor application package.
- **Section 410.1202(b)** requires ORR to conduct a suitability assessment to determine whether a potential sponsor can provide for the child's physical and mental well-being and establishes minimum assessment requirements.
- **Section 410.1202(c)** permits ORR to investigate the sponsor's living conditions, request evidence of the sponsor's ability to support the child, and interview household members. It also requires criminal records checks on sponsors.
- **Section 410.1202(d)** requires assessment of the potential sponsor's relationship to the child and the child's family.
- **Sections 410.1202(f) and (g)** require consideration of the child's functioning and needs and potential risks associated with the proposed placement, including sponsor criminal history, abuse or neglect, the physical home environment, and other child welfare concerns.

SAP-2 provides authorization and identifying information used to obtain and evaluate sponsor, household member, and alternate caregiver background information. SAP-3 collects information

concerning the sponsor, household, financial support, prior sponsorships, criminal history, and alternative caregiving arrangements. Together, these instruments support the assessments and findings ORR must make before approving a sponsor and releasing a child.

The proposed revisions are essential to the consistent and timely implementation of these requirements. Aligning the PDF and digital instruments and organizing related questions and conditional follow-up fields support accurate collection, review, and documentation of information needed for sponsor assessments. The approved respondent burden remains unchanged.

Timely completion of these assessments also supports responsible use of Federal resources. Avoidable administrative delays can prolong children's time in ORR-funded care and extend expenditures for housing, supervision, education, medical care, mental health services, and case management. Substantial increases in manual processing and records management would consume additional government resources and divert staff from substantive sponsor assessments. Maintaining an efficient application process therefore supports both child safety and timely placement decisions while limiting avoidable administrative and continued-care costs.

Potential Public Harm

ACF cannot reasonably comply with the normal clearance procedures under this part because public harm is reasonably likely to result if normal clearance procedures are followed, as provided in 5 CFR 1320.13(a)(2)(i). Universal PDF intake would increase the handling of sensitive personal information outside the secure application system. Additional transmissions, copies, and handling steps create more opportunities for misdirected disclosures and inconsistent handling of sensitive information. Extending this process across virtually all sponsor applications would substantially expand those risks.

The resulting workload could also delay application review and sponsor assessments. Delays in completing those assessments can postpone release decisions and prolong children's time in ORR custody, residing in congregate care settings. Extended stays in Federal custody present significant child welfare concerns and expose ORR to increased litigation risks. Emergency approval would support continuity in application processing while allowing staff to remain focused on evaluating prospective sponsors and protecting children's safety and well-being.

Universal PDF intake would also substantially increase records management work. Application emails, photographs, completed PDFs, and associated records must be captured, associated with the correct case, and maintained. Direct submission through the online application reduces the need to separately capture and track application materials transmitted through multiple channels.

Consultation

ORR has taken steps to consult with technical staff developers and ORR field staff to identify ways to minimize burden for sponsors, improve the application process, and reduce opportunities for user error.

- **Division of Tech:** Consultation focused on opportunities to autopopulate fields with information already available in the system, reduce repeated data entry, and support

consistent responses. These features are intended to simplify completion for sponsors and reduce typographical errors and inconsistencies that could require follow-up.

- **ORR Field Staff:** Consultation focused on the clarity of questions and instructions, the organization of related information, and the placement of conditional follow-up questions. These discussions informed efforts to make requirements easier for sponsors to understand and reduce the need for separate requests for missing or incomplete information.

The revisions align the PDF and digital application processes and improve the organization and collection of information. The approved respondent burden remains unchanged.

Timing and Time Period

The November 30, 2026, court-ordered deadline establishes a specific point at which ORR must use the approved PDF application exclusively if online approval has not been obtained. Transitioning to universal PDF intake would require changes to staff procedures, sponsor instructions, document handling, and records management. A subsequent approval of the online application could require another transition, imposing substantial implementation work for an interim process of limited duration. This timing constraint aligns with 5 CFR 1320.13(a)(2)(iii), whereby the normal clearance procedures are likely to prevent or disrupt the collection of information, and is reasonable likely to cause a statutory or court ordered deadline to be missed.

ACF therefore requests approval as soon as possible and before November 30, 2026, for 180 days. During that period, ACF will pursue continued approval through normal PRA clearance procedures, as applicable.

Emergency approval would allow ORR to avoid a substantial disruption to sponsor intake, limit unnecessary handling of sensitive information, and maintain staff capacity for sponsor assessment and application processing. If approval is not obtained by November 30, 2026, ORR must implement the PDF-only requirement unless the court modifies its order.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the forms included in this information collection is to allow ORR to achieve compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and other legal requirements related to the assessment of potential sponsors for unaccompanied alien children. Information specific to each form follows.

- **Authorization for Release of Information (Form SAP-2):** This instrument collects respondents' written consent to background investigations with Federal, state or local law enforcement and/or child welfare agencies, and information to allow ORR to make a determination of whether the child will be safe in the custody of the potential sponsor, as well as other adult household members. After the information is collected, it may be sent electronically to HHS/Program Support Center (PSC) for review and processing. The expected respondents of this instrument are potential sponsors, adult household members, and adult caregivers. This form is available as a PDF and as part of a web-based application.
- **Sponsor Application (Form SAP-3):** This instrument collects information related to the potential sponsor's ability to provide for the child's mental and physical well-being. ORR uses the information collected to determine the suitability of a potential sponsor as a custodian of a child. After the information is collected, it is transmitted electronically to the ORR official

responsible for approving the release. The expected respondents of this form are potential sponsors. This form is available as a PDF and as part of a web-based application.

- **Fingerprinting Instructions (Form SAP-5):** This instrument informs potential sponsors, adult household members, and adult caregivers of the steps they must take to be fingerprinted. Fingerprints are collected electronically at grantee or contractor-operated digital fingerprinting sites or submitted via mail using FBI fingerprint cards (form FD-258, OMB Ctrl. No. 1110-0046). The expected respondents of this instrument are potential sponsors, adult household members, and adult caregivers.
- **Letter of Designation for Care of a Child (Form SAP-6):** This instrument is filed by a child's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to specify a potential sponsor to whom they wish to grant caregiving authority for their child. The form is optional (not required for release) but helps non-parent sponsors access community resources or answer questions from government authorities about the nature of their relationship with a child in their care.
- **Affidavit of Financial Support (Form SAP-8):** This instrument may be used by sponsors to fulfill the proof of income requirement in Form SAP-3. The instrument is used as evidence that the sponsor receives financial support from another individual, thereby demonstrating that there are sufficient financial resources to provide for the physical and mental well-being of the child. The expected respondents of this form are individuals financially supporting the sponsor and sponsors.
- **Sponsor Application for Ms. L Separation Cases (Form SAP-9):** This form is a shorter version of the *Sponsor Application* (Form SAP-3) that is used as part of the streamlined reunification process required under the Ms. L Settlement Agreement. The form mostly collects the same information about the sponsor as Form SAP-3, except that fields asking for information about household members or alternate caregivers are not included. The expected respondents of this form are Ms. L class members (generally, parents and legal guardians who were separated from their child when taken into custody by the Department of Homeland Security for a reason that is not permissible under the Settlement).
- **DNA Testing Instructions (Form SAP-10)** – This instrument informs potential sponsors of ORR's DNA testing requirement. ORR requires DNA testing to support proof of relationship between the potential sponsor and the child when the sponsor purports to be biologically related to the child. ORR requires DNA results that confirm biological parentage, biological grand-parentage, avuncular relationship (when an uncle or aunt is a full sibling to a parent), or siblingship (full or half), to establish biological relationship with the child. The expected respondents of this instrument are potential sponsors.

The instruments are available in English and Spanish. English is the official language and authoritative version of all federal information.

Information collected from potential sponsors, adult household members, and adult caregivers using these instruments may be shared with HHS' contractors; grantees; Federal, state or local law enforcement and/or child welfare agencies; and federal partners, including FBI and DHS, for the purpose of conducting background checks to determine the potential sponsor's and their home's suitability, and as otherwise permitted under the Privacy Act.

In addition to the regulations mentioned in the Legal Authority Section above, please also see UAC Policy Guide Section 2.2.3 The Sponsor Application, Section 2.2.4 Required Documents for Submission with the Sponsor Application, Section 2.10.4 *Ms. L* Reunification Process, and Section 2.5.1 Background Check Requirements for related sub-regulatory guidance.

OVERVIEW OF REQUESTED CHANGES

ORR plans to make the following revisions to various sections of existing forms in this information collection:

1. All instruments

- Reordered questions, where possible, to align with the information groupings in the digital sponsor application.
- Incorporated selected information already requested through the Sponsor Assessment (Form S-5), Home Study Assessment (S-6), and Affidavit of Financial Support (Form SAP-8) into SAP-3. Organized related questions and conditional follow-up fields within the application to simplify completion for sponsors and support consistent collection and review of information by ORR. These revisions include both previously requested information and additional detail, as described below.
- Digital versions provide pre-populated dropdown options of the listings found in the paper copies.

2. Authorization for Release of Information (Form SAP-2)

Background

- Replaced "Information Required for a Background Check" with "About the child (children)" and added an "About you, the Sponsor" heading.
- Added a "Child's Country of Origin" column and separated the child's name into first and last name fields. S-5 already records the child's first and last names separately and collects related information under "Country of Birth."
- Replaced the sponsor's combined name field with separate first and last name fields and removed the instruction to include a middle name. S-5 already records the sponsor's first and last names separately.
- Moved the existing date-of-birth, citizenship, and Social Security number/tax identification number fields earlier in the form.
- Removed "County" and "State" from the sponsor's place-of-birth information, retaining city and country. Added instructions to copy birthplace information from the sponsor's birth certificate.
- Updated "TIN" to "ITIN."
- Expanded the citizenship section to accommodate up to three countries of citizenship.
- Updated "Other names you have used" to "Your previously used name(s)" and instructed respondents to leave the section blank if they have not used other names.

Contact Information

- Grouped existing phone and email fields under "Your contact information," changed "Primary Phone" to "Mobile phone number," and labeled the secondary phone number and email address as optional.

Address Information

- Grouped existing phone and email fields under “Your contact information,” changed “Primary Phone” to “Mobile phone number,” and labeled the secondary phone number and email address as optional.

Address Information

- Added a separate “Your current address” block with an address start month and year. Address and start-date information was previously collected through the address-history table. S-5 also records the sponsor’s current address and length of residence.
- Added a Yes/No question asking whether the sponsor currently has a fixed home or physical address, with conditional prompts to provide the address or explain living arrangements, such as moving between homes or having no place to stay.
- Used international address components in the separate current-address block, consistent with the city/locality, state/province, postal-code, and country information already requested in the address-history table.
- Renamed “Addresses” to “Your past addresses” and updated the instructions to expressly include addresses in the sponsor’s home country and direct sponsors not to leave gaps in their address timeline.
- Updated instructions to direct sponsors who cannot recall a street address to enter “Unable to Recall Address” while still providing the city, state, or country and applicable dates.
- Directed sponsors who lacked a fixed address to enter “No Fixed Address,” provide the country and dates, and explain their living arrangements. Replaced the general incomplete-address-history explanation prompt with a prompt specifically addressing periods without a fixed home.

3. Sponsor Application (Form SAP-3)

Sponsor Information

- Updated “About You—the Sponsor—and the Child(ren)” to “Sponsor Information” to Updated “About you—the sponsor—and the child(ren)” to “About you, the sponsor.”
- Added a “Your relationship to the child (children)” heading to organize the existing child-name and relationship questions.
- Removed the questions about previously used names and country of origin, along with the sponsor’s phone and email fields. SAP-2 retains previously used names, place-of-birth information, and sponsor contact information.

Sponsor’s Income and Employment Information

- Moved “Financial Information,” formerly Item 13, earlier in the application and renamed it “Sponsor’s Income and Employment Information.” Replaced the broad narrative financial-support prompt with structured questions and conditional fields.

- Added questions about court-ordered child support paid, employment status, and ability to meet expenses. These topics are already covered in S-5. SAP-8 also requests employment status.
- Added a specific question about receiving child support, providing additional detail within the income-source information previously requested generally through Item 13 and SAP-8.
- Added a conditional follow-up asking how sponsors earn money if they do not have a job. This provides a specific prompt for income information previously requested through Item 13 and SAP-8.
- Added conditional "My Job" fields for employment type/position title/job title; average weekly income and annual income; employer name, street address, city, state/territory, country, postal code, and telephone number; employment start month and year; length of employment; average weekly hours; days worked using weekday checkboxes; and comments.
- Incorporated information already requested through S-5 concerning annual income and employer name, address, city, state, ZIP code, and telephone number. S-5's general work-schedule question is addressed through more specific weekly-hours fields and weekday checkboxes. SAP-8 already requests employment status, occupation, employer name, annual employment income, and related comments. Weekly income was previously requested through Item 13. Employer country, employment start date, and length of employment add explicit detail.
- Added a question about financial support from household members, a partner, an alternative caregiver, or a spouse, with conditional "My Supporter's Job" fields requesting the same employment information. These prompts organize support from others previously requested through Item 13 and SAP-8. SAP-8 already requests the financial supporter's employment status, occupation, employer name, annual income, monthly support contribution, and related comments; SAP-3 adds more detailed supporter-employment fields.
- Added fields for other income sources; average monthly food, rent, clothing, and school-needs expenses; total monthly expenses; total monthly income; and total annual income. Other income sources and total annual income are already requested through SAP-8. The itemized expenses and monthly totals provide additional reporting detail.

Prior Sponsorship Information

- Added a dedicated section to align with the digital application and incorporate prior-sponsorship information already requested through S-5.
- Added a question about previous sponsorship attempts, with conditional fields for the sponsorship date; the child's UAC Portal ID, A-number, first and last name, date of birth, and sex; and the sponsor's relationship to the child. S-5 already requests previous sponsorship attempts and records the previously sponsored child's name, A-number, date of birth, and relationship to the sponsor. SAP-3 separates the combined name field into first and last names.
- Added questions about the previously sponsored child's school enrollment or attendance, receipt of post-release services, and continued residence with the sponsor. S-5 currently requests these topics.

- Added questions about immigration court attendance and the date of the hearing attended, together with wording about case-manager contact within the post-release-services question. S-5 already asks about post-release services and an upcoming court date; SAP-3 requests additional information about actual attendance and case-manager contact.
- Added questions about previous ORR home studies; withdrawn or discontinued sponsorship applications and the reasons; previous sponsorship denials and the reasons; relatives currently in ORR care; and whether a child was previously removed from the sponsor's custody, with an explanation. These topics, including explanations for withdrawal, denial, and custody removal, are currently requested through S-5.

Household Information

- Added a "Household Information" section heading.
- Updated "Who else currently lives at this address?" to "Household members."
- Updated "Household Member Name" to "Household Member First and Last Name." S-5 already records household members' first and last names separately.
- Added a country field and updated the proposed-residence address labels to accommodate addresses outside the United States.
- Added a prompt asking sponsors to explain when the proposed residence differs from their current address.

Health Information

- Moved the existing Health Information section after Household Information without changing the questions.

Criminal History

- Moved the section after Health Information and expanded the existing questions to cover both the sponsor and household members. Changed "a child" to "a minor" in the abuse/neglect/abandonment question.
- Moved and expanded existing Item 15(c) to include household members in the question about crimes or offenses committed, agreed to, solicited, assisted with, or attempted for which the person was not arrested. The original question addressed the sponsor alone.
- Moved incident-detail requests from the Legal Records instructions into conditional follow-up fields for affirmative responses to the criminal-charge/conviction and abuse/neglect/abandonment questions. These fields request the name of the household member(s) involved, incident location and date, explanation, and disposition, such as charges dropped, a fine, imprisonment, or probation. The existing Legal Records instructions already requested incident details. Retained the requirement to submit applicable supporting records.

Adult Who Will Care for the Child(ren) If You Cannot

- Added email and country fields for the alternative caregiver and updated address labels to accommodate addresses outside the United States.

- Updated Item 12(f) to clarify how the alternative caregiver will care for the child if the sponsor becomes unable to do so. This clarifies the existing care-plan question. S-5 also currently requests an alternate adult caregiver plan.

Supporting Documents and Uploads

- Expanded the Proof of Identity heading and instructions to expressly include the sponsor, each adult household member, and the alternative caregiver.
- Organized the identity instructions into “Identification Documents” and “Photo (selfie)” subsections.
- Extended the requirement to provide at least one listed identification document to the alternative caregiver. S-5 already records verification of the alternative caregiver’s identity and supporting identity documents.
- Added a request for current, legible, full-color photos of the sponsor, each adult household member, and the alternative caregiver, with each person holding their identification document next to their face.
- Retained the accepted formats for government-issued identification documents—legible, full-color photocopies, digital scans, high-resolution digital photos, or original documents—and the instruction that expired documents will not be accepted.