# Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) National Evaluation: Descriptive Study of Programming in Community Settings

## Formative Data Collections for Program Support

### OMB Information Collection Request

0970-0531

# Supporting Statement

# Part A

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# Part A

## Executive Summary

- **Type of Request:** This Information Collection Request is for a generic information collection under the umbrella generic, Formative Data Collections for Program Support (0970-0531).

- **Description of Request:** The information collected under this generic information collection is intended to describe Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) programming in community settings (such as foster care group homes, juvenile justice detention centers, and mental health institutions) and identify promising practices other grant recipients could use. This work supports the broader SRAE National Evaluation, which aims to build evidence on strategies and components that have the potential to improve the delivery and/or quality of SRAE programming. To complete this formative data collection, the study contractor will conduct up to six site visits to complete interviews with provider and partner staff, and to conduct focus group sessions with youth.

  We do not intend for the data gathered to be generalized to a broader population. We also do not intend for this information to be used as the principal basis for public policy decisions or policymaking for the SRAE grant program.

  This is a one-year data collection request.

- **Time Sensitivity:** The goal is to begin data collection as soon as possible. For several proposed grant recipients for this data collection, the grant period ends in September 2026. Data collection would need to occur before they wrap up programming in summer 2026.

**Alternative Supporting Statement for Information Collections Designed for Research, Public Health Surveillance, and Program Evaluation Purposes**

## A1. Necessity for Collection

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) requests Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval for a new individual generic information collection (GenIC) to inform ACF about strategies that have the potential to improve programming and outcomes across Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) grant recipients that serve youth in community settings. This study of programming delivered by SRAE grant recipients or their providers supports the broader SRAE National Evaluation.

There are no legal or administrative requirements that necessitate this collection. ACF is undertaking the collection at the discretion of the agency. ACF has contracted with Mathematica, Inc. ("Contractor") to undertake this study.

### Study Background

As part of the federal government's ongoing efforts to support youth in making healthy decisions about their relationships and behaviors, in February 2018, Congress updated Title V, Section 510 of the Social Security Act to authorize the SRAE grant program. Administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) within ACF of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), SRAE funds programming that teaches adolescents to refrain from sexual activity. The programming also provides education on personal responsibility, self-regulation, goal setting, healthy relationships, a focus on the future, and preventing drug and alcohol use. The SRAE legislation requires conducting one or more rigorous evaluations of the education implemented by SRAE providers.[1]

Through this GenIC, ACF intends to learn about SRAE programming in community settings. The community settings in this study will focus on providers serving youth involved in the child welfare, juvenile justice, and/or behavioral or mental health systems. The GenIC uses "provider" to refer to the grant recipients and their sub-recipients that serve youth in community settings. The study aims to gather information from a range of respondents, including provider staff, partner staff, and youth.

Youth that receive SRAE programming in community settings are more likely to engage in sexual risk behaviors than their counterparts.[2] As such, ACF encourages providers to serve youth involved in community settings through its Notice of Funding Opportunity and tracks the number of youth served in community settings through the SRAE OMB-approved performance measures (OMB #0970-0536). However, little is known about the implementation experiences of SRAE programming that serves these youth, including promising strategies to serve youth and what, if any, supports may be needed.

## A2. Purpose

*Purpose and Use*

The purpose of the community settings study is to better understand implementation experiences of SRAE providers serving youth in community settings. The study aims to support program improvement

[1] Social Security Act §510

[2] Brasileiro, J., L. Widman, K. Norwalk, J. McCrimmon, and L. Mullins. "National Trends and Disparate Access to Formal and Informal Sex Education Among Youth Involved with the Child Welfare System in the USA." *Sex Education*, 2022.

Oman, R.F., S.K. Vesely, J. Green, K. Clements-Nolle, and M. Lu. "Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Among Youths Living in Group Care Homes: A Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial." American Journal of Public Health, vol. 108, no. S1, 2018, pp. S38–S44.

through identifying promising strategies for serving youth in community settings and strategies to address common challenges.

This study builds on a prior descriptive study that interviewed program directors about their experiences delivering SRAE programming in foster care group homes and juvenile justice detention centers during the first phase of the SRAE National Evaluation in 2023 (OMB #0970-0356). For the prior study, findings were based on data collected through asynchronous interviews with eight providers that served youth in foster care group homes and 19 providers that served youth in juvenile justice detention centers. Findings addressed the relevance of SRAE programming for youth in these settings; youth engagement in SRAE programming in these settings; partnerships; staff retention; and program fidelity. However, these findings only draw on data from program directors. The proposed study under this GenIC aims to gather deeper information by incorporating multiple perspectives from a small number of SRAE providers.

This proposed information collection meets the following goal from ACF's generic clearance for formative data collections for program support (0970-0531):

- Obtaining feedback about processes and/or practices to inform ACF program development or support. Specifically, the proposed study aims to identify practices and strategies that have the potential to improve the delivery and/or quality of services administered by SRAE grant recipients. This will help increase the evidence base on SRAE programming to inform SRAE grant recipients' implementation and program improvement efforts.

Under this GenIC, information is meant to inform ACF activities and may be incorporated into documents or presentations that are made public such as through conference presentations, websites, project specific reports, or other documents relevant to the field, such as federal leadership and staff, grant recipients, program providers, and/or training and technical assistance providers.

The information collected is meant to contribute to the body of knowledge on the implementation of SRAE programming. It is not intended to be used as the principal basis for a decision by a federal decision-maker or policymaking for the SRAE program and is not expected to meet the threshold of influential or highly influential scientific information.

*Research Questions or Tests*

The community settings study is guided by research questions addressing four topics. The research questions aim to improve ACF's understanding of how SRAE programming is implemented in community settings. The research questions, by topic, are:

1. **Topic:** Youth engagement and relevance of SRAE content, lessons, activities, or program components
    - **Research Question:** How do youth that receive SRAE programming in community settings engage with the content?
2. **Topic:** Fidelity to implementation plans
    - **Research Question:** To what extent are providers able to deliver SRAE programming in community settings according to their implementation plans to all or most youth?
3. **Topic:** Staff retention
    - **Research Question:** How have providers addressed challenges related to retaining staff that deliver SRAE programming in community settings?
4. **Topic:** Successes and challenges for partnerships

- **Research Question:** What types of partners do providers work with and what are their roles?

*Study Design*

To gather sufficient information on the array of implementation experiences, the study team plans to conduct site visits to up to six SRAE providers serving youth in community settings. Some of these providers may serve youth in more than one community setting. This study is collecting only qualitative data. For the purposes of this study, the "study team" refers to the researchers and analysts at Mathematica that will conduct data collection and complete analysis and reporting tasks.

Two experienced data collectors will conduct a multi-day site visit with each provider. We plan to conduct semi-structured interviews with staff at providers (Instrument 1); focus groups with youth (Instrument 2); and semi-structured interviews with staff at partner organizations (Instrument 3). Partner organizations may include foster care group homes, juvenile justice detention centers, healthcare institutions, local health departments, and other state or local government agencies.

Exhibit A.2 includes a study design summary. See B.3 for more information on instrument design. We do not intend for the data gathered to be generalized to a broader population.

**Exhibit A.2. Study design summary**

| Instruments | Participant, content, purpose of collection | Mode and duration |
|---|---|---|
| Instrument 1. Provider staff interview protocol | **Respondents:** Facilitators, supervisors, and managers at providers<br>**Content:** Staff experiences delivering SRAE programming to youth in community settings; youth engagement in SRAE programming; staff retention; fidelity to implementation plans; working relationships with partner organizations<br>**Purpose:** To gather qualitative data from staff that directly deliver, supervise, and manage SRAE programming | **Mode:** In-person<br>**Duration:** 50 minutes |
| Instrument 2. Youth focus group protocol | **Respondents:** Youth<br>**Content:** Youth's experiences receiving SRAE programming in community settings, including their perceptions of the content and activities, and the aspects that are most and least relevant to them<br>**Purpose:** To gather qualitative data on youth's experiences | **Mode:** In-person<br>**Duration:** 40 minutes |
| Instrument 3. Partner staff interview protocol | **Respondents:** Staff at system or community partners (such as, supervisors, program coordinators, directors, or frontline staff; the exact respondent at each partner will depend on the staff structure and organization of the partnership)<br>**Content:** Partners' experiences collaborating with providers to deliver SRAE programming to youth in community settings; youth served by the SRAE programming<br>**Purpose:** To gather qualitative data from staff at partner organizations that work with the provider to deliver SRAE programming | **Mode:** In-person<br>**Duration:** 50 minutes |

*Other Data Sources and Uses of Information*

To identify potentially eligible providers for the community settings study, the study team will review various extant data sources for each provider, including grant application materials, annual reports, SRAE performance measures data (OMB Control No. 0970-0536), and data on program plans and implementation experiences collected under the first phase of the SRAE National Evaluation (OMB Control No. 0970-0530 and 0970-0596). The community settings study will also draw on information gathered under the prior study of SRAE programming in foster care and juvenile justice settings (OMB Control No. 0970-0356).

## A3. Use of Information Technology to Reduce Burden

ACF is using technology to collect and process data to reduce respondent burden and make data processing and reporting faster and more efficient.

Interviews and focus groups will be conducted during in-person site visits and audio-recorded to facilitate faster processing of t for analysis. As possible, the study team may use AI-assisted tools for creating the de-identified notes, to make data processing and reporting as efficient as possible. The study team will ensure that all AI use follows ACF's guidance on responsible AI use.

## A4. Use of Existing Data: Efforts to reduce duplication, minimize burden, and increase utility and government efficiency

The study team has done a careful review to determine what information is already available from existing studies and grant recipient documents to inform this work and what will likely need to be collected for the first time. None of the instruments for the community settings study ask for information that can be reliably obtained through other sources.

## A5. Impact on Small Businesses

The providers and partner organizations participating in the community settings study may be small, non-profit organizations. The SRAE National Evaluation team will request information required only for the intended use. We will schedule data collection at times and locations convenient for respondents during the in-person visits.

## A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

This is a one-time data collection.

## A7. Now subsumed under 2(b) above and 10 (below)

## A8. Consultation

*Federal Register Notice and Comments*

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR Part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), ACF published a notice in the Federal Register announcing the agency's intention to request an OMB review of this information collection request to extend approval of the umbrella generic with minor changes. The notice was published on April 28, 2025 (90 FR 17603) and provided a sixty-day period for public

comment. ACF did not receive any comments on the first notice. A second notice was published, allowing a thirty-day period for public comment, in conjunction with submission of the request to OMB. ACF did not receive any comments on the second notice.

*Consultation with Experts Outside of the Study*

The study team has not consulted with experts outside of the team.

## A9. Tokens of Appreciation

Focus group data are not intended to be representative in a statistical sense, in that they will not be used to make statements about the prevalence of experiences of youth participating in SRAE. However, it is important to secure enough participants to provide quality data and capture the experiences of youth participating in a range of SRAE programming in community settings. To ensure recruitment of a sufficient number of youth and to recognize the importance of information provided by program participants, we propose offering participants $40 for their participation in the focus groups. Youth will be asked to participate on their own time outside of regular programming and may have to travel to a central location to participate. As such, providing a token of appreciation should facilitate participation. The amount proposed is informed by several recent OMB-approved data collection efforts conducted with youth for ACF. For instance, on the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) and SRAE pretest data collection (approved under the ACF generic for pretesting instruments, 0970-0355 in 2025), youth were provided $50 for completing two surveys and participating in a 60-minute focus group about the instruments. On the ACF-funded Adulthood Preparation Subjects (APSs) Study of Dosage and Cultural Relevance (approved under this generic clearance, 0970-0531 in 2023), youth participating in adolescent pregnancy prevention programming at a community-based organization outside of school hours received $40 for participating in a 75-minute focus group.

## A10. Privacy: Procedures to protect privacy of information, while maximizing data sharing

*Personally Identifiable Information (PII)*

Data collection will include PII from provider and partner staff (names, work email addresses, and telephone numbers) to arrange data collection (including scheduling and sending invitations/reminders for data collections). Data collection will occur in person but scheduling and sending invitations will likely happen virtually via email or phone. Therefore, the study team will collect contact information for adult respondents (provider and partner staff). For youth respondents, the only PII that will be collected is the name of the youth and their parent or guardian on the completed consent and assent forms.

No PII will be shared outside of the study team. The study team may use AI-assisted tools or may share recordings from interviews and focus groups with an outside partner to transcribe the recording into notes. Before sharing the recording with an AI tool or outside partner, the study team would ensure that no PII is present in the recording.

The notes and recordings for all interviews and focus groups will not include PII and will be saved under ID codes, rather than respondents' names. Any information linking ID codes and respondents' PII will be saved on Mathematica's secure restricted drive and will be password-protected. This identifying information will be kept separate from the qualitative data in the notes and recordings, ensuring that no PII is included in the notes and recordings.

*Assurances of Privacy*

As specified in the contract, Mathematica (hereafter referred to as the "Contractor") will comply with all Federal and Departmental regulations for private information. Information collected will be kept private to the extent permitted by law, including the Privacy Act (5 USC 552a). In particular, the study team will report a youth's name to legal authorities if the study team suspects the youth is the victim of child abuse or neglect, or the youth shares something that suggests they are likely a harm to themselves or another person, or that someone else is likely to harm the youth. 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. The Contractor will obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for all study activities before collecting any data.

For all data collection activities, respondents will be informed that their participation is voluntary, that they have the right to discontinue participation at any time without impacting any services they receive, and of the risks and benefits of participation. Informed consent will be obtained from all respondents participating in interviews and focus groups. For youth under age 18, Mathematica will seek consent from a parent, legal guardian, or legally authorized representative. We will follow state and local laws for who can provide consent for youth to participate in a research study.

Respondents will be assured that their individual responses will be anonymized and reported only in the aggregate. Any quotes from interviews or focus groups used in reporting will not be identifiable.

*Data Security and Monitoring*

As specified in the contract, the Contractor shall protect respondents' privacy to the extent permitted by law and will comply with all Federal and Departmental regulations for private information. The Contractor has developed a Data Safety and Monitoring Plan that assesses all protections of respondents' PII. The Contractor shall ensure that 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. The Contractor will follow all ACF policies regarding responsible AI use, including not providing PII to AI models.

As specified in the contract, the Contractor shall use Federal Information Processing Standard 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 the Federal Processing Standard. The Contractor shall: ensure that this standard is incorporated into the Contractor's property management/control system; 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 Departmental regulations. In addition, the Contractor must submit a plan for minimizing to the extent possible the inclusion of sensitive information on paper records and for the protection of any paper records, field notes, or other documents that contain sensitive or PII that ensures secure storage and limits on access. For the focus groups, parental consent and youth assent may be completed on hard copy, paper forms. In this case, the study team will ensure the paper records are destroyed using a cross-cutting shredder.

## A11. Sensitive Information [3]

The instruments in the community settings study do not include questions about sensitive information.

## A12. Burden

*Explanation of Burden Estimates*

The total/annual burden hours requested under this GenIC is 103 hours. This package assumes a one-year study period, so annual burden hours are the same as total burden hours.

We expect up to 48 provider staff to participate in a staff interview (Instrument 1). There would be up to 8 staff per provider that participate in an interview, in each of the six providers. Each respondent would be interviewed once, and interviews would last approximately 50 minutes.

We expect up to 72 youth to participate in a focus group (Instrument 2). There would be up to 8 youth participating in each focus group. For providers serving youth in only one community setting, there would be one focus group. For providers serving youth in two community settings, there would be a focus group in each of the two settings. We assume that three of the six providers will serve youth in two community settings (and the other three providers will serve youth in only one community setting). Therefore, there would be 9 focus groups total. Each focus group will last approximately 40 minutes. All youth will participate in a focus group one time.

We expect up to 18 partner staff to participate in an interview. There would be up to three partner staff per provider that participate in an interview, in each of the six providers. Each respondent would be interviewed once, and interviews would last approximately 50 minutes.

*Estimated Annualized Cost to Respondents*

Estimated costs per respondent were estimated using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics (May 2024)[4]. The exact locations for the community settings study are not yet determined, so the estimates assume the federal minimum wage for youth over the age of 18 in the community settings study. The study estimates that 15 percent of the participants will be over the age of 18. Exhibit A.3 details median hourly wage for respondent types. Exhibit A.4 details estimated total annuals costs per information collection.

**Exhibit A.3: Median hourly wages for respondents**

| Respondent | Occupation | SOC Code | Mean Hourly Wage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Youth over the age of 18 | Federal minimum wage | -- | $7.25 |
| Provider and partner staff | Social and Community Services Manager | 11-9151 | $41.39 |

[3] Examples of sensitive topics include (but not limited to): social security number; sex behavior and attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close relationships, e.g., family, pupil-teacher, employee-supervisor; mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to respondents; religion and indicators of religion; community activities which indicate political affiliation and attitudes; legally recognized privileged and analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians and ministers; records describing how an individual exercises rights guaranteed by the First Amendment; receipt of economic assistance from the government (e.g., unemployment or WIC or SNAP); immigration/citizenship status.

[4] https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_stru.htm

**Exhibit A.4: Estimated burden and costs to respondents for the study**

| Instrument | No. of Respondents (total over request period) | No. of Responses per Respondent (total over request period) | Avg. Burden per Response (in hours) | Total/ Annual Burden (in hours) | Average Hourly Wage Rate | Total/ Annual Respondent Cost |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Provider staff protocol (Instrument 1) | 48 | 1 | 0.83 | 40 | $41.39 | $1,655.60 |
| Youth focus group protocol (Instrument 2) | 72 | 1 | 0.67 | 48 | $7.25 | $53.43 |
| Partner staff protocol (Instrument 3) | 18 | 1 | 0.83 | 15 | $41.39 | $620.85 |
| **Totals** | **138** | **1** | **Avg.: 0.746** | **103** | **-** | **$2,329.88** |

Note: For Instrument 2, the study team assumes 15 percent of youth in the sample will be over age 18 and receive the hourly wage of $7.25. This assumes that 11 youth would be over 18, resulting in a total cost of $53.43.

## A13. Costs

There are neither capital nor startup costs, nor are there any operations or maintenance costs. There are no additional total annual cost burdens to respondents or record-keepers beyond the labor cost of burden-hours described in A12.

## A14. Estimated Annualized Costs to the Federal Government

| Cost Category | Detail | Estimated Costs |
|---|---|---|
| Data collection | • FTE time<br>• Operational expenses (such as travel, equipment, overhead, incentives, and staff support)<br>• Other expenses which would not have been incurred without this collection of information | $228,488 |
| Analysis and reporting | • FTE time<br>• Operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, and staff support)<br>• Other expenses which would not have been incurred without this collection of information | $49,101 |
| | **Total costs over the request period** | **$277,589** |

## A15. Reasons for changes in burden

This is for an information collection under the umbrella formative generic clearance for program support (0970-0531).

## A16. Timeline

The study team will begin data collection for the community settings study once OMB approval is received. Several of the providers that work in community settings have grants that end in September 2026, so the study team would need to complete data collection before they conclude programming this summer. The study team plans to analyze data and report findings in 2026.

## A17. Exceptions

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.

**Alternative Supporting Statement for Information Collections Designed for Research, Public Health Surveillance, and Program Evaluation Purposes**

**Attachments**

Instrument 1: Provider staff interview protocol

Instrument 2: Youth focus group protocol

Instrument 3: Partner staff interview protocol

Appendix A: Parental consent and youth assent forms

Appendix B: Outreach materials