

Part B

Statistical Methods (used for collection of information employing statistical methods)

This section provides supporting statements for each of the five points outlined in Part B of the OMB guidelines, in order to collect information for Phase 1: Demonstration Site Selection of the *Innovative Strategies for Increasing Self-Sufficiency (ISIS)* demonstration and evaluation. As noted in Part A, the study will be carried out in two phases. This submission seeks clearance for the Phase 1 activities only. A subsequent OMB submission will seek clearance for Phase 2 activities.

B1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

The *Innovative Strategies for Improving Self-Sufficiency (ISIS)* demonstration and evaluation is designed to test a range of promising strategies to promote employment and self-sufficiency, and to reduce dependence on cash welfare among low-income families. In order to produce findings that will be of maximum use, the selected strategies must be of high priority to policymakers at the federal, state, and local level and to state and local TANF administrators. Phase 1 data collection activities involve interviews with stakeholders in order to obtain their feedback about strategies they believe are worth studying in terms of effectiveness and impact on families and individuals. Three groups of stakeholders will be interviewed:

- Practitioners—administrators or staff of state agencies, local agencies, and programs with responsibility for employment-related services or activities for welfare and other low income families;
- Researchers—individuals who study and/or are experts on issues related to welfare policy and/or the conditions affecting poverty, economic self-sufficiency, and low-wage labor markets;
- Policy community—policy analysts and policy makers who are instrumental in applying research on poverty and on employment and social welfare policy to inform and, in some cases, craft public policies related to employment services or activities for welfare and other low income families.

Respondents will be identified through several means. A literature review of published and unpublished articles and reports from the social science, evaluation, and policy literature will identify individuals involved in relevant research. Members of national organizations, including the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), National Governors Association (NGA), and National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) will be important stakeholders from the practitioner and policy communities. Finally, we will use a “snowball” sampling technique, that relies on referrals from initial respondents to generate additional respondents. Thus, we anticipate that stakeholders identified either through the literature or national organizations will recommend other individuals who should be interviewed.

B2. Procedures for Collection of Information

Stakeholder interviews will be conducted by telephone and in-person. Interviews will be conducted commencing with the receipt of OMB clearance (expected June 2008) and will continue until approximately the end of December, 2008. Interviews will be conducted by senior members of the Abt Associates Inc. team, that has been awarded the contract to conduct the *Innovative Strategies for Improving Self-Sufficiency (ISIS)* demonstration and evaluation.

We anticipate that the interviews will be approximately one-half hour and that not more than 400 respondents will be interviewed.

B3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Nonresponse

We expect to obtain a very high response rate (95 percent) among stakeholders who will be interviewed. Several factors will help ensure a high rate of cooperation among respondents. First, senior staff members of the study team who are familiar with the issues will conduct the interviews. Second, staff conducting the interviews will personally know many of the respondents through their professional connections. Finally, the stakeholders who will be interviewed are all heavily invested in the issues surrounding employment and self-sufficiency for low-income persons and thus will be interested in contributing to the development of the interventions to be tested in the study.

B4. Tests of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken

As discussed in Section A12, the interview was pre-tested with nine potential respondents and the burden was estimated from these tests.

B5. Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data

The information for this study is being collected by Abt Associates, a research consulting firm, and its subcontractors, on behalf of the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). With HHS oversight, Abt Associates is responsible for the study design, data collection, analysis, and report preparation. Key input to the statistical aspects of the design was received from the following individuals:

Abt Associates Team

David Fein, Project Director, Abt Associates Inc.

Howard Rolston, Co-Principal Investigator, Abt Associates Inc.

Rebecca Maynard, Co-Principal Investigator, Affiliate Scholar Abt Associates Inc.

Hans Bos, Subcontract Director, Berkeley Policy Associates

Demetra Nightingale, Subcontract Director, Johns Hopkins University

Department of Health and Human Services

Brendan Kelly, Project Officer, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

Naomi Goldstein, Director, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

Inquiries regarding statistical aspects of the study design should be directed to:

David Fein

Abt Associates

4550 Montgomery Ave

Suit 800 North

Bethesda, MD 20814

301-634-1851

The HHS project officer, Brendan Kelly, has overseen the design process and can be contacted at:

Brendan Kelly

Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

Administration for Children and Families

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.

Washington, DC 20477

202-401-5695