Same-Sex relationships: Updates to Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education programming (SUHMRE)

OMB Information Collection Request
New Collection

Supporting Statement

Part B

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B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

B1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

This study consists of a purposive sample of approximately four Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education (HMRE) programs (the final number may be greater or smaller, but the total number of respondents will not exceed approved burden). In each program, we plan to interview (a) the program manager and (b) approximately two program facilitators for a total of three interviews per HMRE program. In addition we plan to conduct:

- (a)a focus group of 5-6 adult applicants,
- (b) a focus group of 5-6 adult attendees,
- (c) a focus group of 5-6 youth attendees
- (d) Recruitment interviews with up to 90 individuals to recruit youth and adult applicants and participants in HMRE programs

We also will interview approximately 12 experts in HMRE programming. We expect a total of no more than 212 respondents and a total respondent burden of no more than 190 hours.

The universe of programs includes all HMRE grantees (46 grantees were awarded in September 2015). The universe of different individual respondent types is well-defined by their descriptions and will differ for each program. The universe of HMRE experts is defined as those who have conducted research into HMRE programming or worked in program administration.

Plans for data collection include telephone calls and on-site visits to the HMRE programs. These sites will vary in the populations served (age, race, etc.) as well as program delivery model.

Based on recommendations from national experts and information from the Web, the contractor compiled a list of potential sites. We will select sites for data collection from this list. In selecting programs, we will take into account such criteria as whether the program:

- Has experience with serving and/or interest in serving same-sex couples and/or LGB youth
- Serves geographically diverse regions
- Serves racially and ethnically diverse populations (individual sites may serve homogenous populations but we want diversity between sites)
- Is eager to participate in the study

Once a program has been selected and the program director agrees to participate in the study, the contractor will ask the program director to identify appropriate staff for categories a and b (described above). We also will work with program staff in advance of the site visit to identify participants for the focus groups (please see Attachment A-8 for guidance we will provide to program staff, for inviting focus group participants).

B2. Procedures for Collection of Information

Collection of qualitative data will occur through telephone calls and/or through site visits to selected programs. A team of two experienced, qualitative researchers (one senior researcher lead and one research assistant) will conduct each call or visit. The interviews and focus groups will follow approved discussion guides with key topics and open-ended questions. The approach will allow flexibility to capture key aspects of the experiences across diverse programs.

The researchers plan to conduct interviews at the program's central office with the program manager and program facilitators, as time allows. We will schedule the interviews at times that are flexible for the staff, with transitions between each session .

The researchers will schedule the focus groups with participants and applicants. The focus groups will be scheduled in two hour blocks, allocating time for set up, explanation and signature of the consent forms, and wrap up. The actual duration of the focus group is estimated to be 90 minutes.

The senior researcher will lead the interviews and focus groups, and with the permission of the respondent, will audio record the interviews and the focus groups solely for the purpose of creating full transcriptions. If permission to record is not provided, both researchers will take detailed notes and later create an extensive summary of the interview/focus group and the key information provided. The research assistant will be responsible for supporting the quality of data collection (e.g., ensure informed consent forms are collected, etc.).

When interviewing experts, program managers, and facilitators, the researchers will use a laptop to type (close to verbatim) interview responses and later create *targeted transcripts* capturing the key information provided. If permission is received, the interviews also will be recorded so that transcript information can be verified.

B3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Nonresponse

Expected Response Rates

Based on past experience with similar studies, we anticipate that at least four programs can be successfully recruited to participate. Once the program has agreed to participate, we expect high response rates from the staff who are identified by program leadership as willing and available to be interviewed.

Program applicants will be recruited through flyers in the community as well as recruitment from program staff and others in the community. Flyers can be found in the appendix. For people directly contacted, we expect a response rate of 50 percent, based on previous research.

Program staff will recruit adult and youth participants on our behalf. Since facilitators have already built rapport with the couples and individuals they serve, having staff contact participants on behalf of the research team likely will produce a higher response rate than would be achieved by recruiting participants on our own. Recruitment will not require that staff interview participants. Based on prior experience, we anticipate that program staff will need to contact 8-9 adult participants for each focus group to allow for a total of 5-6 participants to actually participate in the focus group; we expect a slightly lower response rate for youth participants, and assume that program staff will need to contact 10-11 youth participants for each focus group to allow for a total of 5-6 participants to actually participate in the youth focus group.

Dealing with Nonresponse

If an HMRE program recommended for inclusion in the study declines to participate in the research, the team will discuss the case, the concerns the program has about participating, and attempt to address the concerns. If it is ultimately determined that a selected program cannot or will not participate in the research, we will select a program with as similar characteristics as possible from a list of alternate programs.

Maximizing Response Rates

Once a set of potential study programs is identified, a high participation rate can be supported by implementing a careful plan for recruiting those programs into the study. Urban Institute researchers have a proven track record of successfully engaging HMRE program staff and clients in research studies. Based on past experience, we plan that the first contact with programs will be a letter addressed to the program director, which introduces the study, invites participation, and indicates that someone from the research team will contact them soon (see Attachment A-1).

The recruitment letter will be followed by a phone call to each program director to discuss any questions he or she may have about the research, obtain agreement to participate in the study, and if possible, schedule the timing of phone call(s) and/or the site visit. The phone call will be individualized so no script for the conversation will be developed.

Our experience suggests that most program administrators indicate a willingness to participate in this type of data collection when the burden is not too heavy on their staff, the research does not disrupt their normal program activities, and they are able to learn from our findings. We will work with program directors or a designee to schedule and plan for the phone call(s) and/or visit, and make all attempts to reduce burden and schedule the interviews at a convenient time for each targeted respondent.

In advance of site visits, the researchers will work with program staff to identify participants and ask facilitators working with those families to invite them to participate in a focus group as a part of the study. Since client information is confidential and can only be released with client consent, and facilitators have already built rapport with the individuals and couples in their programs, having staff contact participants generally produces a higher response rate than would be achieved by first obtaining consent to contact and having the research team recruit participants. A member of the research team will then follow up with the participant by telephone to address any questions the participant might have, confirm their participation, and schedule the focus group. The script can be found in the appendix.This contact with the researchers will help to build rapport with the participants prior to the focus group and increase the focus group completion rate, while not placing the burden of scheduling on the program staff.

To further support a high rate of study participation, we will offer monetary tokens of appreciation to focus group respondents. (see question A9).

B4. Tests of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken

This data collection will involve qualitative interviews and focus groups using topical guides with probes that will vary depending on the respondent. Interview and focus group guides were not formally pretested given the flexibility of the tools to capture direct responses from respondents rather than having restricted response categories. The guides were reviewed by senior advisors on the project to ensure clarity and coverage. Before data collection begins, the researchers who will conduct telephone interviews and on-site visits will complete a full-day training to review the guides, practice interviewing techniques, and address any questions they have about the purpose and intent of the questions.

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

The study design plan and data collection protocols were developed by the following project staff with experience conducting similar studies using similar data collection strategies:

- Nan Astone, Urban Institute; former Co-Principal Investigator, former Co-Lead on Study Design[1]
- Rich Batten, Public Strategies; Co-Principal Investigator, Co-Lead on Study Design
- Maeve Gearing, Urban Institute; Co-Lead on Instrument Design

Three internal senior advisors at the Urban Institute, Public Strategies, and the Williams Institute provided support on the study design and instrument development:

- Bob Lerman, Urban Institute; expert on HMRE programming
- Mary Myrick, Public Strategies; expert on HMRE programming
- Gary Gates, Williams Institute; expert on LGB adults and youth

[1] H. Elizabeth Peters replace Nan Astone as Co-Principal Investigator in October 2015.