

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

# Self-Regulation Training Approaches and Resources to Improve Staff Capacity for Implementing Healthy Marriage Services for Youth (SARHM)

Formative Data Collections for Program Support

0970 - 0531

## Supporting Statement

### Part B

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## Part B

### **B1. Objectives**

#### *Study Objectives*

The objectives of the focus groups are to answer two research questions.

1. How do adolescents and youth participating in ACF-funded HMRE programs describe self-regulation in their own words?
2. How salient do adolescents and youth participating in ACF-funded HMRE programs see self-regulation skills to the events and activities in their lives?

#### *Generalizability of Results*

This study is intended to present an internally-valid description of the service population in chosen sites, not to promote statistical generalization to other sites or service populations.

#### *Appropriateness of Study Design and Methods for Planned Uses*

Focus groups are an appropriate study design because this prospective information collection is designed to understand socially-defined language that youth collectively use to talk about self-regulation processes and enactment, and is intended for program improvement purposes. Focus groups use a group interview setting to explore concepts, attitudes, and behaviors that are defined in a social context (Robinson 1999). Focus groups are commonly used in formative research for program improvement and for basic knowledge development (Robinson 1999). Furthermore, a focus group mirrors the typical HMRE program setting which occurs either in the form of monthly group meetings or in a classroom setting at a school.

As noted in Supporting Statement A, this information is not intended to be used as the principal basis for public policy decisions and is not expected to meet the threshold of influential or highly influential scientific information.

### **B2. Methods and Design**

#### *Target Population*

This will be a multisite study. In September 2015, ACF awarded five-year grants to 46 HMRE grantees; 31 of these grantees serve youth. The target population are youth that participate in HMRE programs. Youth in these programs are between the ages of 14-24. HMRE programs disproportionately serve underrepresented, high-risk youth including racial and ethnic minorities, youth living in high-poverty neighborhoods, and teenage parents (Scott et al. 2017). These disadvantaged youth may be enrolled in school or they may be served in a community setting. We plan to involve up to three sites in the study, with a maximum of 60 youth between the sites.

#### *Sampling and Site Selection*

The SARHM project will conduct focus groups in up to three sites chosen from among the 31 youth-serving grantees referenced above.

To select sites from this pool, we first asked federal program specialists to provide input on programs' grant performance and their perceptions of programs' capacity to recruit a focus group of 8-10 youth. The project team, including the contractors and federal Contracting Officer's Representatives, then reviewed the list of recommended programs and purposively chose five to contact to learn more about their programs and interest and willingness in hosting a focus group. Out of the five, we selected four programs to engage in further discussions. The four programs, and their service locations are:

- Central Nassau Guidance and Counseling Services (Long Island, New York)
- Youth and Family Services, Inc. (Rapid City, South Dakota)
- Public Health Institute (Central Valley, California)
- Bethany Christian Services (Grand Rapids, Michigan)

We selected these four to reflect a range of program types and service populations, using data available in grant applications and other program documents to identify a purposive sample of programs. In particular, we sought to include programs serving high-risk and disadvantaged youth in school-based and community locations; programs that served younger youth (14-18 years old) and older youth (18-24 years old); and diversity in the demographic characteristics of the service population. Our list includes two school-based programs, one community-based program, and one that operates in both school- and community-based settings. Together, the programs serve youth from ages 14-24. The programs operate in a mix of urban, suburban, and rural settings and serve varied populations of vulnerable and at-risk youth, including underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities, disconnected youth, and youth living in high-poverty areas.

We will reach out to these four programs to ascertain their interest and capacity to participate in the study. Based on these calls, we will choose up to three programs with the greatest interest in participating and ability to recruit youth to be in a focus group.

### **B3. Design of Data Collection Instruments**

#### *Development of Data Collection Instrument(s)*

The contract teams (Mathematica and Public Strategies) and ACF worked together to design the focus group protocol (Instrument 1) and worksheet (Instrument 2). The instruments were reviewed internally by the project team to streamline them and ask only questions necessary to achieve the objectives of data collection. All of the questions were created specifically for the study; there are no scales or items that required psychometric testing.

### **B4. Collection of Data and Quality Control**

Two Mathematica SARHM project team members will collect the data. Mathematica will work with selected sites to recruit youth to participate in the focus groups.

The data collection mode is a focus group. The Mathematica researcher who will lead the focus group has extensive experience interviewing youth at focus groups and has undergone interviewer training. Focus groups will be audio-recorded, with participants' permission. Youth will use the worksheet (Instrument 2) to help organize their thinking; these worksheets will be collected at the end of the focus group.

No data evaluation activities are currently planned. The same Mathematica project team members will conduct all of the focus groups.

## **B5. Response Rates and Potential Nonresponse Bias**

### *Response Rates*

The focus groups are not designed to produce statistically generalizable findings and participation is wholly at the respondent's discretion. Response rates will not be calculated or reported.

### *NonResponse*

As participants will not be randomly sampled and findings are not intended to be representative, non-response bias will not be calculated.

## **B6. Production of Estimates and Projections**

We will not be producing estimates or weights for this project.

## **B7. Data Handling and Analysis**

### *Data Handling*

Focus groups will be audio recorded and transcribed; transcripts will be reviewed, and any typographical errors will be corrected; no substantive information will be altered. After this review, the transcripts will be used as needed to supplement, correct, or clarify information in the images of the key words and phrases diagrammed during the focus group. We will use the worksheets that youth completed during the focus group to add detail to the key words and phrases.

### *Data Analysis*

The project team will use standard qualitative procedures to analyze and summarize information from the focus groups and worksheets. Analysis will involve coding and theme identification. We will begin analysis with an initial set of codes based on the instruments and allow for the creation of additional codes based on emerging themes. No other data sources will be used in this study. The results will be used to describe themes, messages, key words, and phrases that focus group respondents use to describe self-regulation processes. They will be summarized in a memo to ACF and used to inform messages and training materials designed to enhance ACF-funded HMRE programs' capacity to support youth self-regulation skill development by providing examples of language programs can use in working with youth.

### *Data Use*

The information collected under this clearance will not be the primary subject of any published ACF reports; however information may be made public through future training materials. This study is intended to present an internally-valid description of the service population in chosen sites, not to promote statistical generalization to other sites or service populations. When necessary, results will be labeled as exploratory in nature.

## **B8. Contact Person(s)**

For questions about these materials, please contact:

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## **Attachments**

Instrument 1: Understanding Youth Perceptions of Self-Regulation

Instrument 2: Responding to the Scenario (worksheet)

Appendix A: SARHM Legislative Authority

## **Sources**

Robinson, Nicola. "The use of focus group methodology—with selected examples from sexual health research." *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 905-913, 1999.

Scott, Mindy, Elizabeth Karberg, Ilana Huz, and Mary Jo Oster. "Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Programs for Youth: An In-Depth Study of Federally Funded Programs." OPRE Report #2017-74: Washington, DC. Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2017.