

Afghan Arrivals Influx Assessment Guides

Formative Data Collections for Program Support

0970 – 0531

Supporting Statement

Part A - Justification

March 2022

Submitted By:
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Administration for Children and Families
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A1. Necessity for the Data Collection

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) seeks approval for an Afghan Arrivals Influx Assessment.

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

- Delivery of targeted assistance related to program implementation or the development or refinement of program and grantee processes.
- Planning for provision of programmatic or evaluation-related training or technical assistance (T/TA).

Background

Since August 2021, the U.S. has resettled over 70,000 Afghan individuals. This rapid influx is unprecedented and is made more challenging by the reduction in resettlement capacity over the past several years. In fiscal year (FY) 2022, Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) recipients received substantial levels of federal funding to deliver benefits and services to tens of thousands of Afghan evacuees.

With the influx of evacuees and the increased demand for services, ORR needs relevant and up-to-date information to inform appropriate and targeted T/TA and internal decision making. ORR proposes to conduct the Afghan Arrivals Influx Assessment (AAIA), a geographically-focused assessment of the recipient and community response to Afghan arrivals in states with a higher projected impact. The data gathered via this assessment is necessary for ORR to provide appropriate support for program implementation.

Legal or Administrative Requirements that Necessitate the Collection

There are no legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. ACF is undertaking the collection at the discretion of the agency.

A2. Purpose of Survey and Data Collection Procedures

Overview of Purpose and Use

AAIA is designed to hear from service providers involved with the delivery of ORR programs as well as clients enrolled in ORR programs. The purpose is to inform changes and improvements to ORR's programs and services. The data collected will help ORR identify training and technical assistance needs as well as service gaps and redundancies that can be addressed through program improvements.

Learning Questions

The key learning questions this assessment aims to answer are:

- How are recipients and sub-recipients using ASA and other ORR funds?
- What types of training, technical assistance, and resources are needed?

- Are there systematic challenges across impacted communities that require ORR programmatic action or changes?
- What are the underlying or unmet needs of Afghan evacuees?
- What barriers to self-sufficiency to Afghan evacuees face?

Study Design

The AAIA will collect qualitative data via client and stakeholder focus groups and semi-structured discussions with state and resettlement agency staff. The use of focus groups and semi-structured discussions will enable ORR to hear directly how clients experience ORR programs and activities as well as the motivations and perspectives of service providers, clients, and other stakeholders.

Using a qualitative approach enables ORR to obtain information about refugee programs and grantee processes or needs without consuming excessive amounts of recipient time with the administrative tasks involved in a typical monitoring. Moreover, this approach enables timely feedback from recipients, sub-recipients, clients, and other stakeholders that can inform changes and improvements to ORR programs and services for Afghan evacuees.

Data will be collected in states with the highest impact of Afghan arrivals (California, Oklahoma, Texas, and Virginia). Respondents will be recruited from a range of areas and backgrounds. See Supporting Statement B for more information about respondent selection.

Universe of Data Collection Efforts

<i>Data Collection Activity</i>	<i>Instruments</i>	<i>Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection</i>	<i>Mode and Duration</i>
Focus Group	AAIA Client Focus Group Guide	<p>Respondents: Afghan evacuees who are clients of ORR programs.</p> <p>Content: Questions about the resettlement experience, challenges, and any unmet or ongoing needs.</p> <p>Purpose: Gather information from individuals enrolled in ORR program that can be used to make changes and improvements to ORR’s programs and services.</p>	<p>Mode: Virtual</p> <p>Duration: 1 hour</p>
Focus Group	AAIA Stakeholder Focus Group Guide	<p>Respondents: Refugee service providers and community partner organizations involved in the delivery ORR programs.</p> <p>Content: Questions about Afghan client needs and the delivery of ORR programs and services.</p> <p>Purpose: Gather information from service providers involved in the delivery of ORR</p>	<p>Mode: Virtual</p> <p>Duration: 1.5 hours</p>

		program that can be used to make changes and improvements to ORR’s programs and services.	
Interview	AAIA National Resettlement Agency Interview Guide	<p>Respondents: A representative from the national resettlement agency that provided ORR programs and services to Afghan evacuees in one or more of the four states.</p> <p>Content: Questions about Afghan client needs and the delivery of ORR programs and services.</p> <p>Purpose: Gather information from service providers involved in the delivery of ORR program that can be used to make changes and improvements to ORR’s programs and services.</p>	<p>Mode: Virtual</p> <p>Duration: 1 hour</p>
Interview	AAIA State Refugee Coordinator Interview Guide	<p>Respondents: The state refugee coordinator or replacement designee assigned in each state.</p> <p>Content: Questions about Afghan client needs and the delivery of ORR programs and services.</p> <p>Purpose: Gather information from service providers involved in the delivery of ORR program that can be used to make changes and improvements to ORR’s programs and services.</p>	<p>Mode: Virtual</p> <p>Duration: 1 hour</p>
Interview	AAIA Affiliate Program Administration Interview Guide	<p>Respondents: Affiliate program staff involved with implementing ORR programs for Afghan evacuees in each state.</p> <p>Content: Questions about Afghan client needs and the delivery of ORR programs and services.</p> <p>Purpose: Gather information from service providers involved in the delivery of ORR program that can be used to make changes and improvements to ORR’s programs and services.</p>	<p>Mode: Virtual</p> <p>Duration: 1.5 hours</p>

A3. Improved Information Technology to Reduce Burden

Focus groups and interviews will occur virtually. Using a virtual platform reduces the administrative burden on participants. With respondent permission focus groups will be recorded. The recordings will serve as a back-up tool to ensure ORR captures comments accurately. Once the project is complete, all recordings will be destroyed.

A4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

ORR is sensitive to the time constraints of recipients in highly impacted geographic regions. AAIA data collection instruments were developed in coordination with other ORR data collection and reporting activities to avoid duplicative efforts.

A5. Involvement of Small Organizations

Within the states selected for this assessment, sub-recipients (also referred to as local affiliate organizations) involved in the provision of services to Afghan evacuees will be asked to participate in stakeholder focus groups. Sub-recipients range in size and include small nonprofit organizations. All focus groups will be scheduled at times convenient for participants.

A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection

This assessment requires a one-time data collection effort to provide ORR with timely information related to services provided for Afghan evacuees. Less frequent data collection would result in little to no data on whether Afghan evacuees are benefitting from ORR's programs or the extent recipients, private entities, and community stakeholders are addressing their needs.

A7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances for the proposed data collection efforts.

A8. Federal Register Notice and 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 the overarching generic clearance for formative information collection. This notice was published on October 13, 2020, Volume 85, Number 198, page 64480, and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. During the notice and comment periods, no substantive comments were received.

Consultation with Experts Outside of the Study

ORR consulted with Hamid Khan, Senior Policy Advisor at the Office of Refugee Resettlement. Mr. Khan was appointed by the Biden-Harris Administration to play an integral, advisory role in the resettlement and integration of vulnerable Afghans via the Operation Allies Welcome effort. Mr. Khan provided insights on Afghan culture and input on the assessment structure and instruments related to the client focus groups.

A9. Incentives for Respondents

No incentives for respondents are proposed for this information collection.

A10. Privacy of Respondents

Information collected will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. 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. With respondent permission focus groups will be recorded. The recordings will serve as a back-up tool to ensure ORR captures comments accurately. Once the project is complete, all recordings will be destroyed.

ORR shall protect respondent privacy to the extent permitted by law and will comply with all Federal and Departmental regulations for private information. ORR 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. ORR shall securely generate and manage encryption keys to prevent unauthorized decryption of information, in accordance with the Federal Processing Standard. Data will be collected using only agency-issued laptop computers and 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.

To select respondents for the client focus group, ORR will work with SRCs and national resettlement agencies to identify Afghan evacuees enrolled in ORR programs with varied demographic characteristics for potential participation. Requests will be sent to 80 Afghan evacuees (20 per state). After client consents to participate in focus group, national resettlement agencies will send client names and contact information to ORR using encryption and/or via a password-protected file. Additionally, ORR is asking for the name and organization for stakeholders, SRCs, national resettlement agency representative, affiliate program staff. Information will not be maintained in a paper or electronic system from which data are actually or directly retrieved by an individuals' personal identifier.

A11. Sensitive Questions

There are no sensitive questions in this data collection.

A12. Estimation of Information Collection Burden

Estimated Burden and Costs

The estimated burden to respondents is 693 annual burden hours. Respondents will be asked to participate in one interview. The annual burden hours is calculated by the amount of time each respondent is asked to participate, as listed below. All interview guides include questions that are

lower priority and will only be asked if time permits. These are labeled as optional questions in the guides.

- 80 clients will participate for one hour.
- 320 stakeholders will participate for one and a half hours.
- Nine (9) national resettlement agency representatives will participate for one hour.
- Four (4) SRCs will participate for one hour.
- 80 affiliate program staff will participate for one and a half hours.

The estimated annual cost to respondents to AAIA Client Focus Group Guide is calculated using the U.S. Department of Labor federal minimum wage of \$7.25.¹ To account for fringe benefits and overhead, the rate was multiplied by two, totaling \$14.50.

The estimated annual cost to respondents to AAIA Stakeholders Focus Group Guide, AAIA National Resettlement Agency Interview Guide, AAIA State Refugee Coordinator Interview Guide, and AAIA Affiliate Program Administration Interview Guide is calculated using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) job code for Social and Human Services Assistants [21-1093] and wage data from May 2020², which is \$18.38 per hour. To account for fringe benefits and overhead, the rate was multiplied by two, totaling \$36.76 per hour.

Instrument	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Responses Per Respondent	Average Burden Hours Per Response	Annual Burden Hours	Average Hourly Wage	Total Annual Cost
AAIA Client Focus Group Guide	80	1	1	80	14.50	\$1,160
AAIA Stakeholder Focus Group Guide	320	1	1.5	480	36.76	\$17,645
AAIA National Resettlement Agency Interview Guide	9	1	1	9	36.76	\$330
AAIA State Refugee Coordinator Interview Guide	4	1	1	4	36.76	\$147
AAIA Affiliate Program Administration Interview Guide	80	1	1.5	120	36.76	\$4,411
				693		\$23,693

¹ U.S. Department of Labor, *Minimum Wage*, <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/wages/minimumwage> (last visited February 24, 2022).

² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2020, 21-1093 Social and Human Service Assistants*, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211093.htm> (last visited February 16, 2022).

A13. Cost Burden to Respondents or Record Keepers

There are no additional costs to respondents.

A14. Estimate of Cost to the Federal Government

The total cost to the federal government for the data collection activities under this current request will be \$192,000.

A15. Change in Burden

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

A16. Plan and Time Schedule for Information Collection, Tabulation and Publication

Data collection will occur following OMB approval, for about 4 months. Focus group and interview data will be analyzed using the qualitative software program NVivo. Upon completion of data collection and analysis, reports detailing the assessment findings for each state will be developed for ORR Division Directors and Program Officers. These internal state reports are expected to be completed by September 30, 2022. The reports are for internal planning and programmatic purposes and not for any kind of public dissemination, even if deidentified.

A17. Reasons Not to Display OMB Expiration Date

All instruments will display the expiration date for OMB approval.

A18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.

Attachments:

1. AAIA Client Focus Group Guide
2. AAIA Stakeholder Focus Group Guide
3. AAIA National Resettlement Agency Interview Guide
4. AAIA State Refugee Coordinator Interview Guide
5. AAIA Affiliate Program Administration Interview Guide