2020 Healthy Marriage and Responsible (HMRF) Grantees

nFORM Performance Measures and Data Collection Logistics Manual

OFFICE OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE

An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

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Introduction

This data collection and logistics manual provides best practice approaches to collecting performance measure data in nFORM 2.0 and describes special data collection scenarios applicable to Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) grantees. We recommend referencing this manual as you create and revise your data collection plans using the data collection plan template provided by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). ACF recommends that, for all data collection scenarios, HMRF grantees consult with their Family Assistance Program Specialist (FPS) when developing their comprehensive plans.

Please check out the data collection plan template and, for information on how to use nFORM 2.0, the nFORM 2.0 User Manual. Both resources are located on the Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Resource Site.

A. Data collection overview

1. Sources of performance measures

Performance measures for the 2020 HMRF grant program come from a variety of sources. The table below outlines each source of data, the person or people responsible for entering data for each source, the timing of when data are collected, and where data are stored. Hint: it's all stored in nFORM!

Exhibit 1. Sources of performance measures in nFORM

What is the source?	Who enters data?	What is the timing of data collection?	Where are data stored?
Applicant Characteristics Survey	Client	Intake	nFORM
Entrance Survey	Client	First workshop	
Exit Survey	Client	Last workshop or, for shorter programs, at least 14 days after the Entrance Survey is completed	
Enrollment and participation data	Program staff	Ongoing	
Grantee program operations data	Program staff	Quarterly	

2. General principles for data collection

High quality data are essential for monitoring program outputs and outcomes, conducting continuous quality improvement (CQI), and informing partners. High quality data are:

- Timely—meaning they are entered and available when needed for monitoring, analysis, and reporting.
  - Data not collected directly through entry into nFORM – for example, client surveys completed on paper or a record of a referral made during a previous meeting with a case manager – should be entered into nFORM as soon as possible, and no later than 24 hours after the event.
- Accurate—meaning they are a valid and reliable source of information across clients.

  - Data should be collected consistently – the same way every time. Think about how you will do intake, distribute tablets/computers for client surveys, and enter participation information. Create a process using the data collection template provided at the start of your grant, and then follow it every time, revising it when necessary.
- Complete—they have information in all necessary fields or elements.
  - All data fields in nFORM should be complete. nFORM survey data should accurately represent what clients intended to input. Although grantees are required to offer nFORM surveys to all clients, clients may refuse to answer individual questions or the entire survey. Clients may, at their discretion, click through survey questions without answering some or all questions. Staff should encourage clients to complete surveys, and status a survey as Refused only after taking sufficient refusal conversion steps. For example, encourage the client at least two times to complete the survey, emphasizing the importance of the survey, the steps taken to protect the client's privacy, and the fact that clients can skip any questions they want to skip.
- Secure—they are collected and stored following best practices for data security.
  - Client privacy is paramount. Use every effort to protect your clients' privacy:
    - Identify places in your data collection processes (or your partners') where privacy could be compromised. For example: Will clients tell you private information in a place where they could be overheard? Will you use any paper files, even just attendance rosters, and are those paper files safely locked or destroyed as quickly as possible? When you are using nFORM, will anyone be able to see your screen?
    - Strategize on ways to eliminate and/or reduce risk.
    - Create a plan for what you will do if client privacy is compromised.
    - ***Please see Appendix A for important approaches to protecting personally identifiable information (PII).***

3. Establishing data collection processes: the data collection plan

A data collection plan is key to collecting high quality data. A strong plan details each step of the data collection process, including which staff are responsible for each step and when it will occur. This helps grantees complete initial setup and ongoing activities accurately in nFORM and in line with local evaluation, institutional review board (IRB), and research board requirements, if applicable.

The 2020 cohort of HMRF grantees are strongly encouraged to use the data collection plan template when developing their own plans. The structure of this logistics manual mirrors the structure of the data collection plan template; this manual provides more information about nFORM features relevant to each step of data collection to help grantees as they develop and update their plans.

The "Data collection overview" section of the data collection plan template encourages grantees to document basic information about their clients, service settings, and data collection needs. Certain scenarios described in that overview – such as virtual or school-based service provision, paper survey administration, group survey administration, or the use of nFORM's Audio Computer-Assisted Self-Interview (ACASI) feature or other assistive devices – may require special consideration. Special considerations for enrolling clients, administering surveys to clients, and recording participation in workshops and services in these scenarios are highlighted throughout this manual.

We recommend that all staff consider the processes below when developing and updating their data collection plans:

1. **Test-run the data collection process with staff**. Walk through each step of the plan to fine-tune it.
2. **Train all staff on their roles**. Grantee staff, even those who will not use nFORM, should be trained to understand their roles and expectations for client and data privacy, consistency, and completeness. Once data collection starts, check-in with staff frequently about how data collection is going: Have they run into any problems? Do they have any suggestions on improvements to the processes?
3. **Check the data collected frequently, especially until your data collection process is running smoothly**. Analyze data frequently to identify whether specific survey questions or even whole surveys are not being completed or are being completed in an odd way. (You may need to use the export function to check on Entrance and Exit Surveys.) Be sure to review client service contact and participation data as well to ensure data are being collected accurately and completely.
4. **Make changes when needed, communicate changes to your team, and update your data collection plan**. Continue checking your data and coordinating with staff to make sure changes are implemented and effective.

B. Getting organized

1. nFORM setup activities

Below are brief descriptions of the setup activities grantees must complete in advance of using nFORM to collect data. The description of each setup activity references where further details for completing the step can be found in the nFORM User Manual, which is available on Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Resource Site.

a. Creating user accounts

Grantee site administrators can create user accounts for staff members who will need access to nFORM to enroll clients, administer surveys, enter service contacts, or simply view information in the system. Site administrators can create three types of user accounts – site administrator, case manager, or general user; different default and additional permissions can be selected for each type. A best practice is to limit staff permissions to only the functionality they need to perform their work. Review module IV of the User Manual for additional information about nFORM functionality by user type and adding and editing user accounts.

b. Adding grantee locations and service assignments

Site administrators are encouraged to add service locations to nFORM to accurately reflect and monitor where clients receive services. For information about how to add locations, see module III.B of the User Manual.

Site administrators at grantees conducting their own local evaluations can also add service assignments to nFORM, to be assigned to clients after enrollment. More information about adding or editing service assignments is available in module III.C of the User Manual. Site administrators can also refer to the 2020 Using nFORM 2.0 For Local Evaluations Document. This document describes how grantees may use the different service categories for their local evaluations.

c. Entering service provider information

Grantees should enter information in nFORM about all agencies and organizations to whom they will refer clients for services so referrals can be captured in as much detail as possible in client profiles. See module III.D of the User Manual for information about how to create and edit a service provider directory in nFORM.

d. Setting up workshops

Grantee staff must enter information about primary and optional workshops, session series, and session occurrences before providing group-based services to clients. Each curriculum or set of group-based classes offered by the grantee constitutes a workshop. Workshops are classified as primary if grantees consider them to be the core programming clients must attend in order to finish the program, and optional if clients can, but do not need to, attend them. You may offer one or more session series of a workshop – for example, an evening session series and a weekend session series. Each session series is made up of session occurrences, or the individual classes in a series. ACF specifies that workshop session series span at least two weeks. The figure below illustrates the workshops, session series, and session occurrence hierarchy.

Exhibit 2. Workshop, session series, and session occurrence hierarchy

Review module VI of the User Manual for a more detailed overview of workshop, session series, and session setup. In addition, you can contact the nFORM help desk with any questions.

2. Site logistics

Grantees offering in-person services to clients should ensure they have the equipment necessary for data collection. Grantees should determine the number of laptops or tablets they will need for data collection, identify how many earbuds they will need for survey administration (in order for clients who prefer or need to use the ACASI feature), and obtain wipes approved for cleaning all devices and earbuds before and after each client use. Additionally, grantees offering in-person services should check CDC and state guidelines for information on precautionary measures they should take during the public health emergency. For example, grantees should make sure to follow all personal protective equipment (PPE), ventilation, and social distance requirements when offering in-person services and provide hand sanitizer for staff and clients.

Grantees should also ensure their location(s) have sufficient Internet access. First, it is important to determine if staff can use a site's Internet connection; this use might not be permitted in schools or correctional facilities. You should check the Internet connection at each location where clients will complete surveys; staff can use Google to identify free speed tests. If the test determines the site's Internet connection is not strong, or if Internet is not available at a site, grantees should obtain Jetpacks or mobile hotspots. Finally, ensure there are security protections in place to prevent unauthorized users from accessing nFORM, such as logging off computers when not in use.

3. Special scenarios

a. Preparing for virtual services

Grantees offering virtual services should also take steps to prepare the locations where staff will be facilitating data collection or programming, and to the extent possible, gather information about technological capabilities in clients' locations. Please review the tip sheet on administering surveys virtually, available on the Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Resource Site.

- **Telephone calls.** Grantees that plan to administer surveys by phone should ensure that clients have access to a phone with enough available minutes to take surveys. Grantees should also make sure that clients are in a safe place (not driving a car) that affords some privacy. It is important to try your best to determine the most feasible option before data collection begins in order to avoid last-minute changes to data collection plans.
- **Video calls.** Grantees that plan to administer surveys to clients on video calls should ensure that both staff and clients have reliable Internet connections that can support the video call – and that staff have sufficient bandwidth that can support data entry of web survey questions while on the video call.

All grantees offering virtual services should prepare a contact strategy in case of disconnection during enrollment, survey administration, or workshop sessions.

b. Preparing for school-based services

Data collection in schools requires advance planning and coordination with schools in order to create and execute a data collection plan that will work within the constraints and resources of each school. For example, it may be necessary to ask students to complete the Applicant Characteristics Survey and the Entrance Survey during the same session occurrence, or to complete each survey in a group setting (i.e. students complete the surveys at the same time in a classroom). Multiple staff members may be needed to facilitate data collection in schools, depending on the number of students to be surveyed. Thus, it is important to coordinate with schools before data collection begins in order to ensure a smooth data collection process.

Before services begin

- **Engage schools.** Start the process of working with the school weeks before the program begins. Send advance emails or letters to schools to explain the purpose of the data collection, the basic data collection process, confidentiality procedures, the protection of personally identifiable information

(PII), and IRB approval, if applicable. Offer to answer any questions the school might have about the data collection. Highlight nFORM's security features. Account for time it may take to obtain consent from parents and assent from students so that data collection can begin on schedule.

- **Identify a point of contact at each school.** Work with this contact on planning, practicing, and conducting the data collection. Like all grantees collecting data in person, grantees offering school-based services should work with the contact to determine if grantee or school computers will be used, that there are enough earbuds for all students, and to gain Internet access of sufficient bandwidth for all students to complete surveys at the same time.
- **Obtain basic information about eligible students so you can create their nFORM client profiles.** With the help of the school contact, obtain names, dates of birth, addresses, and phone numbers and/or email addresses of students who will participate in the program. This way, staff can complete the Application Form in nFORM to create the initial profile for each student in advance.
- **When creating your data collection plan, consider school requirements.** For example, when planning to offer make-up sessions to absent students, consider a process of getting additional visits to the school approved by school officials.
- **Practice the data collection plan at the school.** Ask staff to study the data collection plan and then talk through it as a group. Answer staff questions and concerns and revise the plan, if needed. Practice the process with staff and practice connecting to the Internet at the school before data collection begins.

Before the first class

- **Create nFORM client profile for each eligible student.** Enter the basic information on each eligible student obtained from the point of contact in an Application Form to create an nFORM client profile and client ID for each eligible student.
- **Bookmark the survey URL.** In the web browser on each tablet/computer (a separate tablet/computer for each student), bookmark the survey URL so the survey is easy to launch. If you are using a school's computer lab, bookmarks may be erased – so be sure to come up with an alternative process, such as printing the URL on an index card or writing it on a whiteboard.
- **Gather/test devices and earbuds.** Make sure each student has a separate setup and that each has their own set of earbuds attached to each device to use if desired.
- **Make use of the bulk passcode generation feature**. See module D.2 of this manual for details on generating passcodes for surveys in bulk and printing out a list of client IDs and passcodes in advance of classes.

c. Preparing for services in correctional facilities

Data collection in correctional facilities also requires extensive advanced planning and cooperation of facility staff. For example, you will need to coordinate schedules with clients and staff and be prepared to be flexible if changes occur. You may also need multiple staff to facilitate data collection. It will likely be necessary to administer surveys on paper as many facilities do not allow devices to be brought in for data collection. (See below for specific instructions on preparing for paper survey administration.) It is important that you coordinate with correctional facility staff to ensure a smooth data collection process.

Before services begin

- **Engage facilities.** Start the process of working with the facility weeks before the program begins. Send advance letters to facilities to explain the purpose of the data collection, the basic data collection process, confidentiality procedures, the protection of personally identifiable information (PII), and IRB approval. Offer to answer any questions the facility might have about the data collection. Highlight nFORM's security features.
- **Identify a point of contact at each facility.** Work with this contact on planning and conducting the data collection. Work with the contact to understand facility security and incorporate security requirements into your data collection plan. Devise a make-up data collection procedure in case clients are unable to complete surveys at previously scheduled times.
- **Practice the data collection plan.** Ask staff to study the data collection plan and then talk through it as a group. Answer staff questions and concerns and revise the plan, if needed. Practice the process with staff – particularly the process of paper survey administration – in a "mock" facility, or at the facility if possible, before data collection begins.

Before the first class

- **Create nFORM client profile for each client.** Enter basic information for each eligible client in an nFORM Application Form to create an nFORM client profile and client ID before data collection begins.

d. Preparing for services for clients who speak other languages

Estimate the number of clients your program might serve who speak languages other than English or Spanish based on a community needs assessment or other demographic information about your service area. As soon as possible, think through procedures for conducting intake, delivering case management and workshop services, and administering surveys to these clients. Best practice is to translate surveys and other materials in advance for clients who speak languages other than English or Spanish to support accurate and consistent data collection. For example, identify which translation service to work with to translate surveys into different languages or which bi/multilingual case managers or facilitators could be matched to these clients to provide services.

e. Preparing for services with differently-abled clients

nFORM 2.0 is Section 508 compliant, meaning that the electronic interface meets Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for accessibility by staff and clients. Importantly, all client surveys in nFORM are programmed with audio computer-assisted self-interview technology (ACASI), which gives clients the option to listen to a recording of the questions and response options with headphones rather than having to read them on the screen. ACASI is useful for sight-impaired clients or those with literacy constraints.

All grantees should include plans for intake, service provision, and survey administration with staff and differently-abled applicants/clients in their data collection plans. Include procedures for conducting intake and administering surveys to clients who may have difficulty seeing, hearing, or otherwise using technology, such as tablets used for surveys. If clients are unable to use ACASI to take surveys, staff may need to assist differently-abled clients by reading surveys to them. Grantees may also need to assist staff and clients on navigating technology, including how different screen reader technologies interact with different components of nFORM.

Grantees should also ensure ADA-compliance of physical service locations when providing in-person services.

f. Preparing for paper survey administration

In specific situations (e.g., if clients are incarcerated) grantees may need to administer surveys on paper. If you believe your grantee might need to administer surveys on paper, you should first speak to your FPS to obtain approval for paper survey administration. Then, you should document plans for printing and administering paper surveys and entering the responses in nFORM as quickly as possible after surveys are completed. When doing so, consider how often you will need to administer paper surveys and in which language(s). Develop a plan to securely transport, administer, store, and ultimately destroy the paper surveys once data are entered in nFORM to protect client confidentiality.

More information about the process of administering paper surveys can be found in section D.4 of this manual.

C. Enrolling clients

1. Conducting intake for applicants using nFORM

Before client enrollment begins, draft an introduction script for staff to use to explain the intake process to clients and to thank clients in advance for providing their information to enroll in the program.

Ensure that applicants are eligible for your program before completing an Application Form for them in nFORM. Once the client's information is entered in nFORM, it can be edited but not be deleted. Each program should develop their own criteria for determining whether an applicant is eligible for services and review that criteria with their FPS.

To complete the intake and application process, take the client to a quiet area where your discussion will not be overheard. Read the Privacy Act statement that appears in the Application Form in nFORM and discuss applicable confidentiality or IRB procedures. A PDF copy of the Privacy Act Statement in English and Spanish is available on the Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Resource Site. Then, ask the applicant for information to complete the Application Form. Enter the answers directly into nFORM—avoid writing them down on paper.

2. Special scenarios for enrolling clients

a. Enrolling clients for virtual services

Conducting intake for applicants virtually will not differ greatly from conducting intake in person. However, grantees conducting virtual intakes should make sure their introduction script for staff is oriented to virtual data collection. For example, the script should prompt staff to make sure clients are not driving or doing anything distracting during the call; staff can tell applicants that they will call them back in case of disconnection. If you plan to conduct intake on video calls, also make sure you are using secure videoconferencing platforms and that staff and clients have strong enough Internet connections to support video calls. Staff should also make sure their background is appropriate, well lit, and free of distractions, and use neutral body language as clients provide information so as not to convey any judgment.

b. Enrolling mothers in programs that serve reentering individuals

Some Fatherhood FIRE grantees providing services to reentering individuals may also provide services to their partners. While programs serving reentering individuals may not actively recruit community mothers, individual mothers may want to participate in services alongside their partners.

Grantees should work with their FPSs to decide which populations to assign to these mothers, based on the needs of their programs. In some cases, grantees may want to enroll mothers as community individuals; this would allow mothers to take the surveys specifically designed for community mothers. If the mother is reentering, grantees may want to enroll the mother using the reentering individual population; these mothers would take reentering fathers surveys and would need special guidance on how to answer questions that are tailored to fathers. We recommend reviewing both versions of the surveys – available in English and Spanish on the Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Resource Site. If you plan to enroll mothers as reentering individuals, please see section D.4 of this manual for information about survey administration in this scenario.

D. Administering surveys to clients: Applicant Characteristics, Entrance, and Exit Surveys

1. General survey administration process

Exhibit 3. nFORM Survey Timing

All three of these surveys must be completed in nFORM, or in special scenarios, completed on paper and data entered into nFORM by a grantee staff member. **Due to federal security requirements, grantees <u>cannot</u> reproduce the surveys in another system (e.g. SurveyMonkey) and transfer the data later.**

Administer the Applicant Characteristics Survey at intake or soon afterwards. For most clients, completion of the Applicant Characteristics Survey triggers nFORM to recognize a client as enrolled. For local evaluation clients, enrollment is complete after the Applicant Characteristics Survey is completed and the client's survey assignment is selected and saved.

Conduct the Entrance Survey at the beginning of the first class, before any instruction occurs (ideally right after introductions).

ACF requires that the Exit Survey be administered at least 14 days after the Entrance Survey. Generally, the Exit Survey should be administered at the end of the last workshop session occurrence in which the client is enrolled, or, if a client does not attend the last session occurrence, as soon as possible afterwards. In addition, if the workshop spans less than 14 calendar days from first to last session occurrence, grantees must develop an alternate data collection strategy to administer the Exit Survey. Strategies for following up with these clients could include, for example, making appointments for a case manager to meet a client outside at a time and place convenient to the client (e.g. at the client's home) to administer the survey.

Grantees can generate passcodes for an individual client's Applicant Characteristics, Entrance, or Exit Survey by navigating to a client's profile, clicking the "Action" button next to the desired survey, and selecting the "Passcode" option. Passcodes are valid for 96 hours. See module VII.A.7 of the User Manual for more information about the survey administration process with individual clients. Grantees administering surveys to a group of clients at once can use the bulk process in nFORM to generate passcodes for all the clients at once. This process is described in section D.2 of this manual.

Following are some tips for in-person survey administration:

- Ensure that all equipment has been cleaned with disinfecting wipes.
- Set up the survey on a separate tablet/computer for client use. Clients should not take surveys on tablets/computers used by grantee staff.
- Hand the tablet/computer to the client.
- Have the client sit in a quiet place where their answers won't be seen by others.
- Offer earbuds/headphones to clients so that they can use ACASI to listen to the survey questions, if they wish. Show the client how to play the audio and adjust the volume on the device.
- Clients who complete the surveys on iPads and Samsung Galaxy tablets will need to play the audio for each individual survey item. Recent changes to tablet operating systems disable the auto-play on tablets only. Please advise clients who complete the surveys on tablets that they can select the triangular play button on each survey item if they would like audio of the item.
- Tell the client that if they have questions to let you know; stay visible to the client so that if they have questions, they can easily ask you.
- When the client is done, ask whether they have clicked "Submit." Confirm submission by going into nFORM (on your staff computer) and confirming that the status of the survey is "Complete."
- Clean all equipment with disinfecting wipes and charge devices.

2. Group-based survey administration

Grantees who plan to administer surveys to clients in a group – for example, to administer the Entrance Survey to a group of 20 clients at the first workshop session or the Exit Survey to a group of 30 students at the last class – should follow the same in-person survey administration tips as above. However, in these scenarios, grantees have the option to generate passcodes in bulk rather than individually by client. Navigate to the Clients tab, then select the Bulk Update option and the Passcode Generation option. From there, select the appropriate survey, search for and select clients, and generate a PDF of client IDs and passcodes for those selected clients. Each client's ID and passcode will be listed on a separate page, making it possible for you to hand out a page to each client with their ID and passcode, keeping other client's IDs and passcodes private. Grantees should take precautions to ensure that each client is given the proper ID and passcode. For more information on bulk passcode generation, see module VII.A.8 of the nFORM 2.0 User Manual.

Below are the recommended steps for survey administration to a cohort, whether staff are administering the Applicant Characteristics Survey, Entrance Survey, or Exit Survey:

- Ensure that all equipment has been cleaned with disinfecting wipes.
- Briefly introduce the surveys at the beginning of class, using a script to ensure that the introduction is provided consistently for each class.
- Hand out the tablets/computers to clients or have them turned on and placed at each location at which clients will sit, with earbuds connected. Hand out the appropriate piece of paper with the client's nFORM client ID and passcode to each client. Ask clients to insert their earbuds, click on the bookmark to navigate to the survey log-in screen, and then enter the information from the piece of paper. The tablets/computers could also be opened to the survey login webpage if the devices are already placed where the clients will sit.
- Ask clients to confirm after log-in that their identity appears correctly. If there are any mix-ups, it may be necessary to regenerate passcodes.
- Ask clients to complete the survey. Keep in mind that after logging-in to the survey, a client will be logged out after 30 minutes of inactivity.
- Instruct clients that, when they have finished the survey, they should click "Submit" and bring the device back to the grantee staff.
- At the front of the room, with each individual client, take the tablet/computer and confirm in nFORM on a staff computer that the client has completed the survey. Reassure the clients that you are not checking their responses, just that the survey was submitted. Alternatively, clients could raise their hand at their desk to signal to the program staff that they have completed their survey.
- Plan a short activity or ask clients to read quietly until all clients finish their surveys.
- Collect the pieces of paper with client IDs and passcodes from clients and shred them when finished.
- Clean all equipment with disinfecting wipes and charge devices.

3. Refusals

If a client refuses to take the Applicant Characteristics or Entrance Surveys but is interested in continuing with the program, grantee staff should encourage the client multiple times to complete the survey. Ask the client to describe their reservations about survey completion and respond accordingly – for example, emphasizing that their information will be kept private or that they can skip any question they don't want to answer.

If a client refuses to take the Applicant Characteristics Survey, take the opportunity to reiterate that this is the first of just three surveys that provide a chance for clients to share their stories so that case managers can provide them with appropriate services and supports. In addition, let clients know that they are contributing to research that will help improve the program for others going forward. If the client refuses to complete the survey at intake, you can encourage completion again at the start of the first session occurrence, before the Entrance Survey is administered.

If a client still refuses to take the Applicant Characteristics Survey, you may status the survey as “Refused” by navigating to the “Action” button next to the survey and selecting “Refuse Survey.” This will generate a passcode to enter into the survey, as with regular administration. However, after you confirm the name of the client refusing the survey, you will see a screen on which to enter the refusal date and refusal reason and submit the refusal.

You can encourage Entrance Survey completion during the first two session occurrences (the exact timing and number of follow-up attempts could vary by program). If after the second session the client still refuses, you may status the Entrance Survey as “Refused” as described in the paragraph above. If a client refuses the Applicant Characteristics and/or Entrance Surveys, you can still offer the client an Exit Survey at the end of the program. If the client drops out of the program before completing the Entrance Survey, you should leave the Entrance Survey as incomplete.

If the client refuses to take the Exit Survey, you should similarly encourage the client to complete the survey. Once a client has been designated as no longer in the program (e.g. “drop out,” “moved out of the area”) grantees should still pursue the client to complete the Exit Survey, even if the client did not finish all programming. If the client still refuses after staff engage in refusal conversion attempts, the Exit Survey status can be set to “Refused” via the steps described in the paragraph above. If the client cannot be reached to complete or refuse the Exit Survey, you should leave the Exit Survey as incomplete.

4. Special scenarios for survey administration

Grantee processes for administering surveys in special scenarios must adhere to nFORM’s security requirements and must protect client’s Personally Identifiable Information (PII) (see Appendix A).

5. Virtual survey administration

ACF has approved three ways to administer surveys to clients remotely – via telephone call, via video call, and via email if neither of those two options are possible. See the tip sheet on administering surveys virtually on the Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Resource Site for details

6. Programs without Internet access

In some places, Internet is not accessible. There are two options for administering surveys without Internet access.

a. Applicants/clients can complete paper surveys, and grantee staff can enter the information into nFORM later.

If your grantee will use this option, you will need to determine in advance how to help applicants/clients navigate the paper surveys. There are “skip patterns” that are seamless in nFORM but that may be hard to follow on paper. Also, carefully guard any paper copies with client information following your organization’s best practices for data security; for example, secure the copies in locked cabinets and shred them when specified by your organization or, if applicable, the designated institutional review board (IRB).

When you enter the paper surveys into nFORM, you will be able to back-date the survey administration date to the date on which the client actually completed the survey. Rather than selecting the “Passcode” option after clicking the “Action” button next to the name of the survey on the client’s profile page, you can select “Paper Copy.” This will allow you to enter the survey completion date prior to entering survey data. The survey status will display "Paper Complete" and its completion date will be the date you entered.

b. *Via a phone conversation, grantee staff can ask the questions of applicants/client and record the information in nFORM 2.0 as they go.*

You should follow the same best practices outlined in the section on virtual survey administration above.

7. Programs with differently-abled clients

If clients are not able to respond to surveys using a tablet/computer survey, visually or using ACASI's audio assistance, grantee staff can ask clients the questions and input the data as the client provides answers.

8. Programs with clients who do not speak Spanish or English

For programs with clients who do not speak English or Spanish, the grantee should work closely with a professional translation service to create paper versions of translated surveys to ensure that all translations are accurate and appropriate for the grantee's population. As needed, grantee staff may verbally ask clients the questions from these translated surveys. This will allow clients with literacy issues to complete the surveys.

As described above, when you enter these paper surveys into nFORM, you will be able to back-date the survey administration date to the date on which the client actually completed the survey. Rather than selecting the "Passcode" option after clicking the "Action" button next to the name of the survey on the client's profile page, select "Paper Copy." This will allow you to enter the survey completion date prior to entering survey data. The survey status will display "Paper Complete" and its completion date will be the date you entered. Remember to destroy the paper survey copies after data are entered into nFORM 2.0.

9. Programs that enroll mothers as reentering individuals

As described in section C.2 of this manual, Fatherhood FIRE programs that choose to enroll mothers as reentering individuals will administer the Entrance and Exit Surveys designed for reentering individuals. Many questions on the surveys are applicable to individuals who are not reentering their community from incarceration, and many are gender-neutral. However, a few questions on each survey are tailored to reentering fathers, so grantees will need to provide guidance to mothers who are taking the surveys.

Be sure to include in your program's written data collection plans, survey introduction scripts, and staff training: (a) general guidance to give mothers before taking the Reentering Fathers Entrance and Exit Surveys, and b) specific questions tailored to reentering fathers, for which mothers will need additional guidance.

As soon as you know you will be administering reentering fathers surveys to mothers, you should prepare standalone copies of the guidance below titled "For Mothers in the Program: Entrance Survey" and "For Mothers in the Program: Exit Survey." Before mothers take each survey, you should hand them a paper copy of the appropriate guidance, or, if the survey is administered virtually, mail or email a copy.

Then, when introducing the survey, please do the following:

1. Say to the client: "The survey you are about to take includes a few questions that were written from the perspective of men, as fathers. For example, the questions ask about the mother of your child. For these questions, please follow these instructions in order to answer from your perspective. We thank you in advance for considering these wording changes. Your answers will help us support you during the program."

2. Ask the client to review the guidance applicable to the survey they are about to take (either "For Mothers in the Program: Entrance Survey" or "For Mothers in the Program: Exit Survey").
3. Read the guidance aloud to clients as they are reviewing it and ask if they have any questions.
4. Make yourself available to the client while they complete the survey, in case they have any questions.

For Mothers in the Program: Entrance Survey
There are three wording changes to keep in mind while taking the Entrance Survey. 1) If you answer survey questions about a child who is not your biological child, you will receive a question that asks about your relationship to your child (A1d), which is repeated if you have a second child (A5c). For these questions, in your mind, you should replace the word "father" with "mother." So, you should answer whether you are a mother figure or foster mother, rather than father figure or foster father. 2) There is a set of questions that asks about your child's coparent (A8a through A8h), repeated if you have a second child (A9a through A9h). The beginning of each of these questions contains the wording "The mother of my child…" For these questions, in your mind replace the word "mother" with "father." For example, for question A8a, you will provide an answer to "The father of my child contradicts the decisions I made about my child." 3) There is a question that you will be asked if you have more than one child, that asks if those children have the same mother (A10). For this question, replace "mother" with "father." Finally, there is a question you will receive if you are employed that asks if the job is a work release job (B2b). This question is tailored specifically for individuals who are currently incarcerated, so if you are a mother living in the community, you should answer 'no' or skip the question.

For Mothers in the Program: Exit Survey
There are four wording changes to keep in mind while taking the Exit Survey. 1) If you answer survey questions about a child that is not your biological child, you will receive a question that asks about your relationship to your child (A1d), which is repeated if you have a second child (A5c). For these questions, in your mind, you should replace the word "father" with "mother." So, you should answer whether you are a mother figure or foster mother, rather than father figure or foster father. 2) There is a set of questions that asks about your child's coparent (A8a through A8h), repeated if you have a second child (A9a through A9h). The beginning of each of these questions contains the wording "The mother of my child…" For these questions, replace the word "mother" with "father." For example, for question A8a, you will read "The father of my child contradicts the decisions I made about my child." 3) There is a question that you will be asked if you have more than one child, that asks if those children have the same mother (A10). For this question, replace "mother" with "father." 4) There is a question that asks how helpful the program was for helping you work together as parents with the mother or mothers of your child or children (E4). For this question, replace "mother" with "father." In addition, there is a question you will receive if you are employed that asks if the job is a work release job (B2b). This question is tailored specifically for individuals that are currently incarcerated, so if you are a mother living in the community, you should answer 'no' or skip the question.

E. Recording participation in workshops and services

1. Entering workshop participation information in nFORM

Use nFORM's registration feature to register clients in advance for workshops that have an advance registration requirement. For all workshops, send clients the dates, times, and locations or virtual connection information. Before each session, send clients reminders of the logistics and encourage them to attend. Generate the attendance roster from nFORM and use it to record attendance at the beginning of each class. Immediately after each class, enter the session attendance from the roster in nFORM, then securely shred the paper roster. Further details about these steps are available in module VI.D of the User Manual.

2. Entering participation in individual services in nFORM

Record individual service contacts in nFORM at the time of each contact and referrals in nFORM at the time of each referral. Check in with clients to remind and encourage them to contact the service providers they have been referred to. Record whether clients follow up with referrals, and record incentives and program supports in nFORM whenever they are offered to clients. Keep in mind that the ACF-approved maximum dollar amount of incentives/program supports per client (or per couple) is $350. Grantees should review their overall plans for providing incentives and program supports with their FPSs to make sure they align with ACF guidance. More information about entering service contacts, referrals, and incentives/program supports in nFORM is available in module VII.B of the User Manual.

If staff write down case notes or other information during service contacts, they should make sure it is securely stored. Paper notes should be shredded or kept in a locked cabinet after entering into nFORM.

Clients may continue to receive individual services, like case management, after completing their last workshop and the Exit Survey. Participation in those services may be entered into nFORM.

F. Monitoring data collection and reporting on performance

Grantee staff can use individual client profiles in nFORM to confirm that clients have the correct client status and have completed the surveys they are expected to have completed. Staff can also view the client's participation in workshops and individual services.

To more easily monitor client statuses, survey completion, and program participation across all clients served, grantees can use nFORM's data tools and reports. Broadly, there are four types of tools available in nFORM. All four are described in Module VIII of the User Manual.

- Operational reports can be filtered on specific start dates and end dates and provide information on enrollment, survey completion, workshop attendance, case manager assignment, and other client information for all enrolled clients with activity during that time period.
- The Query Tool visually displays enrollment, participation, and outcomes data.
- The Data Export, a file of all nFORM data associated with your grantee except for PII, can be generated for your own detailed analyses.
- Quarterly and semi-annual performance progress reports (QPRs and PPRs) summarize key performance metrics of interest to ACF and can be used by grantees to monitor performance as well

G. Tracking client progress

Grantees define their programs in their grant applications and approved non-competing continuations, including the extent of individual services and group-based programming to be provided to each client. The QPRs and PPRs measure client enrollment, participation in, and completion of a grantee's defined program based on dates and hours of client participation captured in nFORM. (Module VIII of the user manual describes QPR/PPR reporting in more detail.) These quantitative performance measures help track progress towards the targets that grantees have established for client enrollment and participation. However, a focus on targets alone can short-circuit learning. Thoughtful use of nFORM's extensive tools for monitoring and improving performance can help grantees and ACF develop a fuller picture of how a grantee is serving its clients, including successful practices to replicate and areas to improve.

Client status codes in nFORM can help grantees develop this fuller picture of client progress. There are 15 client status codes available in nFORM, described in Table 2 below, and client statuses appear on most operational reports to aid in monitoring.

As clients progress through the program, it is important to edit their client status to accurately reflect their experiences. After clients complete the Applicant Characteristics Survey (and if your grantee is conducting a local evaluation, after they receive a service assignment) their status automatically changes from "Applicant pending enrollment" to "Active." As clients engage in core programming, their status remains "Active."

However, clients may stop engaging in services for a number of reasons or complete the program and stop attending services. Their status in nFORM should be changed accordingly to help grantee staff monitor client progress, identify ways to maintain or improve recruitment and completion, and allocate staff time and resources effectively. (The QPR/PPR performance calculations include clients with most status codes; only clients who are categorized as pending enrollment or as duplicates (either pending or confirmed), or who are assigned to a local evaluation control group with no services, are excluded from QPR/PPR calculations.)

Exhibit 4. Client status codes in nFORM 2.0

Status code	Definition
Applicant pending enrollment	nFORM automatically sets this status after the client completes the Application Form.
Active	nFORM automatically sets this status after the client completes the Applicant Characteristics Survey, and, if the client is in a local evaluation, after a service assignment is selected. At this point the client has completed enrollment in the grantee's program.
Duplicate pending	nFORM automatically sets this status; it cannot be selected by grantee staff. When the completed Application Form is saved, nFORM automatically runs a duplicate check against existing client records (as described in Module V). If a match is found, the client status is set to Duplicate pending. The client status will automatically change to Applicant pending enrollment if the duplicate is overridden by the grantee site administrator.

Status code	Definition
Duplicate confirmed	Site administrators and case managers can confirm a record as a duplicate on the Possible Duplicate(s) Found screen. Only site administrators can edit the status of clients with a status of Duplicate confirmed. Individual services, referrals, and incentives, and participation in workshops cannot be recorded in nFORM for records with this status.
Completed/graduated	Client has completed all required or recommended services. Program completion, which services are recommended/required, and the level of participation that is expected before a client is considered to have completed or graduated is defined per a grantee's approved grant application and any modifications approved by OFA through non-competing continuations. For example, a program may define completion as when a client has attended 100 percent of the workshop sessions and participated in 2 meetings with a case manager. Clients who have completed/graduated may still be eligible for other services in a program.
Consent revoked	Client has declared that she or he no longer wants to participate in the grantee's program or the grantee's local evaluation, and the client's consent to participate is revoked. Individual services, referrals, and incentives, and participation in workshops cannot be recorded in nFORM for clients with this status. If a client subsequently decides to participate, grantee staff must change the client's status back to Active before the client completes the Entrance survey. Otherwise, the client status will remain as Consent revoked. Clients with a status of Consent revoked will not be able to take surveys.
Deceased	Client passed away.
Drop out	Client has indicated that s/he is no longer interested in services or will not/cannot attend. At the program's discretion, staff may also classify a client as a drop out if s/he has not attended services for a certain amount of time as designated by the program (such as six months). This status could be used for clients who attended and then stopped as well as those who never attended services.
Incarcerated	Client is in prison or jail.
Moved out of area	Client has moved out of service area or the grantee's service area has changed.
Non-responsive	Client is not regularly attending services and does not respond to outreach efforts, as defined by the grantee.
Primary complete/optional active	Client has reached primary workshop participation target for his/her population but is still participating in optional programming provided by grantee.
Removed from program	Grantee has determined that client cannot or should not attend the program, for example, because of illness preventing further participation, inappropriate behavior, violation of policy, or safety concerns for staff or other clients.
State of emergency	Client's participation is affected by a local or national emergency, such as a natural disaster or public health emergency.
Temporary hold	Client is not currently participating in services but may return, for example, because of a temporary change in work schedule or illness. This may include clients who are responsive to outreach but not attending services.

1. When clients stop engaging

When a client stops engaging for a reason known to grantee staff – for example, the client has revoked consent or advised their case manager that they are moving out of the area and can no longer participate – their status should be changed in nFORM accordingly as soon as possible. Other clients may not ever engage in services or may stop engaging in services for reasons unknown to grantee staff. The statuses for these clients should be updated based on how long grantee staff have attempted to reach the clients.

- **Status after initial attempts to engage or re-engage client: Non-responsive.** When clients are not responsive after multiple engagement attempts over a certain period of time, their status should be changed from “Active” to “Non-responsive.” Grantees should discuss with their FPSs how many attempts, using which methods, and over what period of time they should try to engage clients, and incorporate this into data collection plans and staff training to make sure the approach is consistently applied. For example, a grantee and its FPS may decide that a client should be changed from “Active” to “Non-responsive” after six engagement attempts over at least two months, using telephone calls, text messages (if the client has agreed to this), and in-person visits.
- **Status after further attempts to re-engage client: Drop out.** If a client with a status of “Non-responsive” does not engage after additional attempts or time across multiple methods, grantee staff may change the client’s status to “Drop out”. For example, a grantee and its FPS may decide that a client should be changed from “Non-responsive” to “Drop out” after three additional engagement attempts over four additional months, using telephone calls, text messages (if permitted), and in-person visits. In this scenario, grantee staff have attempted to reach the client a total of nine times over at least six months using multiple methods.

Clients may face many barriers to program participation and grantees should therefore develop multiple strategies to keep clients engaged and encourage them to return if they have been nonresponsive. For example, grantees may offer clients the opportunity to re-initiate programming with a new cohort of clients. Grantees should discuss with their FPS how to use approved incentives and program supports to engage and reengage clients in programming.

2. When clients complete programming

When a client has completed ***all*** of their primary workshop participation hours, grantee staff should change the client’s status in nFORM from “Active” to “Completed/Graduated.” Services such as ongoing case management should still be entered in nFORM for a client designated as “Completed/Graduated.”

H. Training staff on data collection procedures

1. Creating your data collection plan

When creating (or updating) your grantee’s data collection plan, consider how the plan can include and assist all staff involved in the data collection process. Use the plan format that works best for your staff (for example, Word, PowerPoint, or another format). Include specific steps for each physical location at which you provide services and for each client population your grantee serves. Consider creating checklists for processes like intake or survey administration that staff can use to make sure all steps have been completed. Data collection plans should also include a table on staff roles and responsibilities – like the example presented below.

Exhibit 5. Example of staff roles and responsibilities table

Name	Role	Responsibilities
Staff 1	Project director	Overall responsibility for client services and performance
Staff 2	Data manager	Work with sites to plan data collection; run survey completion operational report to confirm clients are enrolled
Staff 3	Data collection lead	Test Internet and nFORM access Set up surveys
Staff 4	Facilitator	Run workshop and record workshop attendance in nFORM

2. Training staff on the data collection plan

The training approach you select for your staff should consider the size and experience of your team. For example, staff who are less familiar with data entry will need more detailed training on recording data in nFORM than those who are more experienced with data entry.

Consider modes that will work best for your staff – virtual, in-person, or using pre-recorded videos. Incorporate the resources provided by the nFORM Team, including the nFORM User Manual, training videos, and monthly office hours, into your training. Before training, ask staff to study the data collection plan. Talk through the plan as a group not only to answer staff questions but also to incorporate staff feedback about ways processes might be improved. Practice data collection processes, like survey administration, with staff.

Make sure to train new hires on the data collection plan as a part of onboarding. You should provide refresher trainings to existing staff regularly as well to ensure that the data collection processes outlined in the plan meet current needs and staff remain familiar with them. If current needs are not being met, update the data collection plan using feedback from staff responsible for different parts of data collection – the plan is a living document and will likely need adjustments once staff are collecting data on the ground.

Appendix A

Protecting Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

Over the course of working with clients, many grantee staff will ask for and have access to confidential personal information, such as names, dates of birth, addresses, and phone numbers. The confidentiality of this information—called "personally identifiable information" or "PII" for short—must be preserved. While you are working within nFORM or in any other capacity, be sure to safeguard applicants' PII. nFORM has been authorized to operate by the federal government; this means that the government has thoroughly reviewed nFORM to ensure that required security safeguards are built into the system to protect PII.

Many of these safeguards for protecting PII are described in the nFORM User Manual. <u>However, grantees will need to build additional safeguards into their data collection processes as described in this appendix.</u>

The Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines PII as "information which can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as their name, social security number, biometric records, etc. alone, or when combined with other personal or identifying information which is linked or linkable to a specific individual, such as date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, etc." The most common forms of PII are social security number, name, address, phone, and date of birth, but PII can also involve other information. You must use your judgment in deciding whether information you work with is confidential; some information that would not appear to be PII on its own may in fact be PII when combined with additional information. For example, a client's first name, when combined with the address of a grantee service location, could be considered PII as unauthorized individuals may be able to identify that client with this information. If you have any questions about whether information you work with is considered confidential PII, please contact your program director or FPS.

To safeguard PII and other sensitive information, you should control access to these data. There are many ways to maintain the confidentiality of PII and you probably already use some of these methods.

- Under no circumstances should you email PII to anyone, including other program staff.
- Discussions, including phone calls, about individuals must remain confidential. When discussing individuals with other staff or evaluation team members, please do so in a private room, if possible, or a restricted area out of earshot of unauthorized people.
- Keep all paper project materials such as letters, printouts, and other documents with PII out of sight and locked up in appropriate locking storage (such as a file cabinet) when not in use.
- Keep all work surfaces and open storage areas (such as bookcases) clear of information containing PII. Never leave paper documents containing PII and other sensitive information unattended.
- When displaying screens with PII on your computer monitor, ensure that unauthorized persons cannot see the information (for example, by looking over your shoulder from a hallway or through a window). When possible, shut office doors, close window blinds, or position your computer monitor so that it is not visible to others.
- Whenever you leave your computer, lock it. If possible, set your screen saver to auto-activate after a short time period of inactivity on your computer.
- Do not allow any other person to use your computer accounts, and always keep your passwords secure. This is intended to prevent unauthorized users from having access to restricted files by using your account.
- PII should not appear on any unencrypted device including shared network drives or unencrypted portable media such as CDs, flash/thumb drives, tablets, phones or a laptop.

- Establish clear procedures for what staff should do if client confidentiality is compromised. Ensure these procedures align with ACF, IRB, and organizational guidelines. Train all staff on these procedures.

It is essential to take additional steps to maintain client confidentiality when services are virtual. Carefully review the three ACF-approved options for administering surveys during virtual services – via phone, via video call, or via email – and ensure your survey administration plan aligns. A tip sheet detailing these options is available on the Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Resource Site. As mentioned above, establish procedures for what staff should do if client confidentiality is compromised during virtual survey administration.

Be sure to consult with your governing organization and, if applicable, your local evaluator, to determine if you need to seek institutional review board (IRB) exemption or approval. This process will involve review of your grant's specific procedures for protecting client confidentiality. The IRB guidance document on the Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Resource Site provides further information about IRB review for HMRF grantees.

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