

Children's Bureau address, Attention: Penelope L. Maza.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**AFCARS Background**

In recent years, the Adoption and Foster Care Reporting System (AFCARS) has become the principal data source for information about State foster care and adoption populations. It was created, in part, due to concerns raised about the lack of national information available on children in foster care, their families, foster care settings and adopted children. In 1986, Congress amended title IV-E of the Social Security Act (the Act) by adding section 479, which requires the Federal government to institute a foster care and adoption data collection system. In response to the law, in 1993, final rules for the Adoption and Foster Care Reporting System (AFCARS) were published and codified in Federal regulations at 45 CFR 1355.40 with requirements for States to report adoption and foster care data to a Federal system. As of October 1, 1994, States were required to collect and submit the AFCARS data to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

The AFCARS data are submitted semi-annually, in May and November. The Department aggregates the data both by State and nationally and makes it publicly available on the web at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/>. The appendices to the regulation, technical bulletins, and other AFCARS related resources are also located on the web at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/dis/index.htm>.

**AFCARS Current Uses**

The purpose of the AFCARS is twofold: to address policy development and program management issues. Currently, AFCARS data is used in:

- Providing data for the calculation of the performance measures, statewide assessment and program improvement plans for the Child and Family Services (CFS) reviews;
- Drawing samples for the CFS reviews and the title IV-E eligibility reviews conducted by ACF;
- Providing data for the Child Welfare Outcomes Annual Report;
- Providing the primary data in the formula to distribute funds to States for the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) under section 477 of the Act;
- Identifying the number of finalized adoptions for which a State may be awarded adoption incentive funds under the Adoption Incentive Program under section 473A of the Act;

- Targeting areas for greater or potential technical assistance efforts, for discretionary service grants, research and evaluation, and regulatory change;
- Generating short and long-term budget projections;
- Conducting trend analyses and short and long-term program planning;
- Responding to Congressional requests for current data on children in foster care or those who have been adopted;
- Responding to questions and requests from other Federal departments and agencies, including the General Accounting Office (GAO), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the DHHS Office of Inspector General (OIG), national advocacy organizations, States, and other interested organizations and individuals.

**Future of AFCARS**

At the time AFCARS was first implemented, the Children's Bureau committed to revisiting AFCARS to assure that the system was producing data that were useful to Federal and State governments and to the child welfare field. We are beginning the process of revising AFCARS to consider improvements that may make the data more accurate and useable by soliciting comments from interested parties. Please comment on any aspects of AFCARS that you wish. We are particularly interested in obtaining input on:

- The specific strengths of the AFCARS;
- The specific weaknesses of the AFCARS or suggestions for areas of improvement, including ideas about how the suggested improvement could be made and how the Federal government could facilitate the changes;
- Data elements currently in the AFCARS that could be deleted and any elements that should be added;
- Strategies to improve data quality for AFCARS, including the use of incentives.

We also invite comments based on your specific experience and use of:

- (1) Demographic and other information on foster children, adopted children, foster parents, adoptive parents, birth parents, child descriptors such as disability status, prior adoption status, foster care information on current and previous foster care episodes and discharge;
- (2) Financial information;
- (3) How the data files are structured and how data are submitted.

Upon receipt of comments within 60-day comment period, ACF will analyze the comments and utilize them in

determining the necessary next steps to improve AFCARS.

Dated: April 18, 2003.

**Joan E. Ohl,**

*Commissioner, Administration on Children, Youth and Families.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**Food and Drug Administration**

[Docket No. 03N-0065]

**Agency Information Collection Activities; Announcement of OMB Approval; Fiscal Year 2003 MDUFMA Small Business Qualification Certification (Form FDA 3602)**

**AGENCY:** Food and Drug Administration, HHS.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is announcing that a collection of information entitled "Fiscal Year 2003 MDUFMA Small Business Qualification Certification (Form FDA 3602)" has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Peggy Robbins, Office of Information Resources Management (HFA-250), Food and Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857, 301-827-1223.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In the **Federal Register** of March 26, 2003 (68 FR 14664), the agency announced that the proposed information collection had been submitted to OMB for review and clearance under 44 U.S.C. 3507. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. OMB has now approved the information collection and has assigned OMB control number 0910-0508. The approval expires on October 31, 2003. A copy of the supporting statement for this information collection is available on the Internet at <http://www.fda.gov/ohrms/dockets>.

Dated: April 17, 2003.

**Jeffrey Shuren,**

*Assistant Commissioner for Policy.*

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