

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

A. Justification

1. Necessity of Information Collection

We request clearance for the proposed questions to be used on the 2007 American Housing Survey (AHS) for both the National (AHS-N) and the Metropolitan (AHS-MS) samples. We will collect data on both surveys at the same time between May 1 and September 30, 2007. In the past, we submitted separate supporting statements because the AHS-N (2528-0017) was conducted in odd years and the AHS-MS (2528-0016) in even years. We are moving to a joint enumeration format to reduce costs through economies of scale. We feel our dollar will go farther with a higher concentration of cases in the same geographic areas. The field representative (FR) collecting the data will complete the AHS-N and the AHS-MS cases in her/his assignment together rather than separately. We will also be able to streamline certain post data collection processing operations having the data from both surveys at the same time.

This request is a revision to the currently approved collection for the AHS-N sample under OMB Number 2528-0017. We are consolidating the AHS-MS sample into this request whose approval under OMB Number 2528-0016 expired in 2003.

The AHS-N and the AHS-MS samples will show the characteristics of the current housing inventory; costs of shelter; amount and types of changes in the inventory; the physical condition of the inventory; the characteristics of the occupants; the people eligible for and beneficiaries of assisted housing by race and ethnicity; and the number and characteristics of housing vacancies, including separate data on units for rent or sale. With a few exceptions, we will use the same questions on both surveys.

Title 12, United States Code, Sections 1701z-1, 1701z-2(g), and 1701z-10a mandate the collection of this information.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) uses the information from the AHS to prepare the President's *National Urban Policy Report* "State of the Cities" in accordance with the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1970, Public Law 91-609, as amended in 1977. The HUD also uses these data to prepare other special reports for Congress and its committees concerning the effect of legislation on the housing stock.

In our continuing efforts to improve data quality, we made the changes below that apply to the National and Metropolitan samples.

- a. Computer Software: We replaced the outdated CASES DOS software running the computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) instrument with the BLAISE for Windows system. The BLAISE for Windows system is a superior product that provides more programming options, higher quality screen displays, and user friendlier operations for the FRs conducting the interviews. As a result of the conversion, we will need more time to produce the public use file (PUF) because the post data collection processing system has to be adjusted for the new format of the instrument output.
- b. Questionnaire Content: The 2007 questions are identical to the items approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for the last AHS submission (i.e., 2005 AHS-N under OMB Clearance Number 2528-0017) except for the following changes.

We eliminated the following items to reduce respondent burden.

- No longer ask for the type of fuel used for the secondary sources of heating equipment reported in the Equipment module, nor will we determine if the equipment is a parallel or supplemental heat source.
- No longer ask the question series in the Observation module pertaining to the quality of the staircases and hallway lights in structures of 5 plus units.
- No longer ask for the city, county, state, and zip code of (1) the previous residence in the Recent Movers module, and (2) the work site in the Journey to Work module. With regard to the Recent Movers module, this includes dropping the “zone map” used on the AHS-MS to spot the location of the previous residence for moves within the metropolitan area being studied.

We added a question series on fire safety to the Equipment module.

- Do you have a working smoke detector inside your home? **(EQP18a_SMOKE)**
- Is the working smoke detector powered by electricity, batteries, or both? **(EQP18b_SMOKPWR)**
- Have the batteries in your smoke detector been replaced in the past 6 months? **(EQP18c_BATTERY)**
- Do you have a fire extinguisher in your home that was purchased or recharged in the last 2 years? **(EQP20_FIREX)**
- Do you have a sprinkler system insider your home? **(EQP21_SPRNKLR)**

- Do you have a carbon monoxide detector inside your home?
(**EQP21_MONOX**)

We revised the questions below in the Neighborhood Quality module to reduce respondent burden and improve data quality.

- Verify, rather than ask anew, that the community attributes reported in the previous interview remain.
 - Walls and fences that prevent access of non-residents.
(**NHQ0a1_GATEDV**)
 - Building access requires a special entry system.
(**NHQ0b1_ACCESSCV**)
 - Eligibility to live in the community is age restricted.
(**NHQ0d1_AGERESV**)
- Do not re-ask if the community has a golf course in returning units that answered yes in an earlier interview. (**NHQ0f2_GOLF**)
- Subdivided the personal assistance/special living question series so that you go to the more extreme levels (e.g., assistance with bathing, eating, moving about, dressing) only if an answer of “yes” is received to the less intense items (e.g., assistance offered with meals, transportation, housekeeping, finance management, phone use, or shopping). (**NHQ0i1 to 5**)
- Reduced the question series on the “specific aspects of your neighborhood” from a maximum of nine to three items. In previous surveys, we asked if the respondent’s neighborhood had (1) street noise or heavy street traffic, (2) neighborhood crime, and (3) smoke, gas, or bad smells. For each answer of “yes” received, we followed-up to find out if the respondent found the problem objectionable and, if yes, was it objectionable enough to want to move from the neighborhood. We have merged the follow-up items into the main question.
 - a) Does your neighborhood have bothersome street noise or heavy traffic? (**NHQ1a_STRN**)
 - b) Does your neighborhood have bothersome smoke, gas, or bad smells? (**NHQ1a1_ODOR**)

- c) To the best of your knowledge, have any serious crimes occurred in your neighborhood in the past 12 months. For example, burglary, robbery, theft, rape, or murder? **(NHQ1a2_CRIME)**
- Reduced the “public transportation” question series from four to two items. Before we asked if (1) there was public transportation for this area, (2) (if yes) was it satisfactory, (3) does any household member use public transportation at least once a week, and (4) (if no) does anyone ever use public transportation. The new streamlined series is as follows:
 - a) Do you or anyone in your household use public transportation regularly for commuting to work or school? **(NHQ3b_USETRN)**
 - b) (If yes) How many minutes does it take to get to the nearest bus stop, train station, or subway stop? **(NHQ3c_TIMETRN)**
- Revised the “neighborhood shopping” question series. The old questions asked if the respondent (1) had satisfactory neighborhood shopping, that is grocery stores or drug stores and, if yes, (2) were any within a mile from the respondent’s home? The new questions are as follows:
 - a) Do you have grocery stores or drug stores within 15 minutes from your home? **(NHQ4a_SHPCLS)**
 - b) Are they satisfactory? **(NHQ4b_SHP)**
- Reduced the “quality of public elementary school” question series from two items to one item. The old question series asked (1) if the public elementary school for the area is satisfactory, and, if no, (2) is it so unsatisfactory that you would like to move from the neighborhood. The new single question reads:
 - a) How do you think your public elementary school compares academically to the other public elementary schools in the area, is it: (1) Better, (2) About the same, or (3) Worse? **(NHQ6b_SCH)**

In the Income module, we made minor modifications to the person level American Community Survey (ACS) Income Receipt items introduced with the 2005 AHS-N to further enhance data quality. We improved the overall reporting of income with the ACS approach but experienced declines in interest, dividends, and other income received on a regular basis. The Census Bureau’s Cognitive Interviewing Staff for the Demographic Surveys Division attributed the problem to these sources being buried in broad multi-receipt questions and recommended returning to the pre-2005 approach of asking them individually. They also felt the earlier approach was superior because it

provided examples of the income sources being asked about. The changes made are as follows.

- Sub-divided the combined Interest/Dividend/Rental Income question into the separate income receipt items used on the survey prior to the 2005 AHS-N change.
 - a) In the past twelve months, did ... have interest from savings, money market funds, IRAs, CDs, other interest bearing accounts? **(INC3a1_QINT)**
 - b) Did ... receive dividends from stocks? **(INC3a2_QDIV)**
 - c) Did ... receive rental income? **(INC3a3_QRENT)**
- Replaced the general “other income received on a regular basis” question with the individual items used on the survey prior to 2005 AHS-N for Alimony, Child Support, and Other Regularly Received Income.
 - a) In the past twelve months, did ... receive alimony or child support? **(INC9a1_QALIM)**
 - b) Did ... receive unemployment compensation, any veteran’s payments not already mentioned, or any other income? **(INC9a2_QOTHER)**

We made the following changes to the Real Estate Module to reduce respondent burden and improve data quality.

- Do not re-ask the home tested/inspected at the time of purchase question series of returning housing units who have previously answered the questions. **(RET4a3 to RET4c)**
- Added two new questions to determine the size of the down payment at the time of purchase.
 - a) Considering all sources of money, what was the total amount of the down payment on this house? **(RET6c_DWNAMT)**
 - b) What percentage was that of your purchase price? **(RET6d2_DWNPCT)**
- Do not re-ask “if ... owns the land the mobile home sits on?” in returning housing units that previously answered “yes.” **(RET8a_OWNLOT1)**

We modified the Utility Cost questions for occupied units. Changes were made to: (1) improve the quality of data among households that do not pay individual bills for utilities/fuels, (2) reduce respondent burden for households that do not use a particular utility/fuel, and (3) improve the quality of the regression amounts generated for electricity and gas by determining whether reported bills cover 1 or more months.

In previous surveys, we used a single question to determine: (1) if the fuel being asked about was used, (2) (if yes) the monthly costs of the bill, and (3) (if no monthly cost) the alternative means of payment (e.g., paid with rent, paid with another utility, or obtained free). The FRs found the format complex and confusing. We have subdivided the question as follows using electricity as an example.

- Do you use electricity in your home? (**UTIL8_USELECT**)
- Are you billed separately for electricity? (**UTIL9_EMPT**)
- (If no) Is that because the electricity is (1) included in the rent, condominium fee, site rent, or other fee, (2) combined with another utility cost, or (3) obtained free? (Mark the first that applies.) (**UTIL10_EBILL**)
- (Electric bill combined with another utility) What else is included in the electricity bill? (**UTIL11_EGROUP**)
- How many months does each bill usually cover? (**UTIL12_EFREQ**)

Where the respondent reports having records, we will continue with the current format of recording utility costs for the months of January, April, August, and December. If the respondent cannot or refuses to provide the amounts, or the respondent can only provide an amount for one of the four months, we added a new follow-up question to obtain a reliable estimate.

- How much was your most recent electric bill? (**UTIL15_LASTELEC**)

The same question pattern is repeated for gas, oil, and a broad category consisting of wood, coal, kerosene, or any other fuel in your home, however only electricity and gas include specific months or the “most recent bill” questions.

We updated the Renter Subsidy question series to stay current with the programs being used. We based the changes on the findings from the ORC Macro study followed by cognitive testing on select items by the Census Bureau’s Center for Survey Methods Research (CSMR). The new and revised questions are as follows.

- Some rental agreements include a re-certification process. Re-certification means a renter is required to report everyone who lives with them, all jobs, all savings and sources of income, and this determines the amount of rent they have to pay. Do you have to re-certify to determine the amount of rent you pay? **(SUBRENT01_RENEW)**
- Is your rent lower because you are in a federal, state, or local government-housing program? **(SUBRENT02_SUBRNT1)**
- (Where one or both of the above items is yes) A housing voucher gives the renter the right to choose where they live and it helps pay for the rent. Does your household have a housing voucher? **(SUBRENT03_VCHER)**
- (Where the renter has a voucher) Can you use the voucher to move to another location? **(SUBRENT04_VCHRMOV)**
- (Where the renter does not have a voucher) Is the housing authority your landlord? **(SUBRENT05_PROJ1)**
- (Where the housing authority is not the landlord or the respondent cannot use the housing voucher to move to another location) Was your household assigned to this specific unit, or were you allowed to choose it yourself? **(SUBRENT06_APPLY)**
- (Where the housing unit is in a state and county where rent control exists and the answers to the preceding questions do not indicate that a renter subsidy is being received) Does the government limit the rent on your unit through rent control or rent stabilization? **(SUBRENT07_RCNTL1)**

Where the respondent reports in the Mortgage module that the mortgage includes home owners insurance **(MORT12b_INSPMT)**, we set without asking that the unit has home owners insurance in the Taxes and Fees module **(TXFEES_BUYI1)**.

We added dependent interviewing to the Observation module to streamline the neighborhood attributes question series that addresses the characteristics in the area within a half block of the respondent's home.

- For returning occupied units who reported having lake front property the previous interview, we skip them over the "...bodies of water within a half block..." question and verify that this condition remains. **(OBR3b1_WFPROPV)**

- For each of the nearby land uses not likely to change below, we verify that the condition reported the previous interview remains rather than ask the question anew.
 - Railroads, airports, or four lane highways **(OBR5a_ETRANSV)**
 - Parking lots **(OBR6a_EPRKGV)**
 - Single family houses **(OBR7a_ESFDV)**
 - Single family town houses or row houses **(OBR8a_ELOW1V)**
 - Apartment buildings **(OBR9a_EAPTBLV)**
 - Businesses or institutions, such as stores, restaurants, schools, hospitals **(OBR11a_ECOM1V)**
 - Factories or other industrial centers **(OBR12a_ECOM2V)**
 - Buildings with metal bars on the windows **(OBR17a_EBARCL1V)**
 - More than one building with metal bars on the windows **(OBR18a_EBARCL2V)**

We also carried the three actions taken below to improve the 2005 AHS-N into the 2007 AHS survey.

- 1) **County Reconfiguration:** The Census Bureau worked with the HUD to modify the areas in the AHS-MS sample to stay consistent with the Office of Management and Budget's 2003 Metro Area Definitions. As a result, new counties have been added to the sample and old counties no longer in the definition have been dropped.
- 2) **Manufactured/Mobile Home Replacement:** We replaced about 865 old manufactured/mobile homes with new ones selected from the Census 2000. We feel this action will correct known deficiencies among manufactured/mobile homes in the AHS-MS.
- 3) **Addition of Special Living Units:** We will introduce about 440 special living units in the 2007 AHS-MS. A special living unit is where the resident is self-sufficient and lives independently but can get help with certain services like meals, transportation, finances, and personal care. A special living unit meets the Census 2000 definition of a housing unit in that the resident lives separately from others on the property and has direct access from outside or a common hallway. These units had no chance of coming into sample between 1990 and 2000 due to sampling limitations. Most are age-restricted communities but some serve the disabled of all ages.

As a result of these three steps, the 2007 AHS-MS sample will have a significantly higher proportion of incoming new housing units than usual. We project that incoming units will constitute about twenty percent of the total sample where the average rate in previous surveys is about five percent.

We also request clearance for the reinterview questions to be used in conjunction with this survey. We will conduct a second interview at approximately 7 percent of the total addresses in the survey for the purpose of interviewer quality control. The reinterview content includes selected questions from the original interview. We included in this clearance the cost and respondent burden estimates for the reinterview.

2. Needs and Uses

The AHS interviews both occupied and vacant housing units intended for occupancy. At occupied units, the respondents are household members age 16 and older for which the unit is their regular place of residence. The preference is to interview the “householder,” the person who owns or rents the home. At vacant units, the respondents are the owners of the home or their designated spokespersons like rental agents, attorneys, friends, or family members. If the owner cannot be identified, the respondent may be a neighbor who is knowledgeable about the unit.

National and local policy analysts, program managers, budget analysts, and Congressional staff use the AHS data to advise executive and legislative branches about housing conditions and the suitability of policy initiatives. Academic researchers and private organizations also use the AHS data in efforts of specific interest and concern to their respective communities. The Census Bureau maintains a bibliography on the Internet that lists analytical reports. The bibliography was last updated in June 2003. This site can be found at:

<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/ahs/bib.html>.

The matrix below outlines the eight categories of the AHS questions and specific HUD (Office of Policy Development and Research) applications of the data produced under each category.

AHS QUESTIONNAIRE CONTENT CATEGORIES								
HUD	Building and Unit Characteristics	Quality	Utilities	Neighborhood	Housing Mobility	Household Costs	Characteristics	Income
Worst case/ Housing Needs	!	!	!		!			!
Fair Market Rents	!	!	!		!	!		
GSE Reports	!			!	!	!	!	!
Civil Rights Data Report							!	
Tax Policy			!		!	!	!	!
General Research and Policy Support	!	!	!	!	!	!	!	!
House Ownership Goals	!		!			!	!	!

"HUD" refers to the Office of Policy Development and Research - Application of AHS Data: Reports, Programs, and Issues.
 "Building and Unit Characteristics" includes size, type, and location.
 "Quality" includes breakdowns, equipment, repairs, and improvement.
 "Utilities" includes cost and fuel.
 "Neighborhood" includes quality.
 "Housing Mobility" includes household formations and housing consumption patterns.
 "Housing Costs" includes subsidies and financing.
 "Household Characteristics" includes age, race, sex, and other demographic data.
 "Income" includes wage and salary income, sources of non-wage income, and family and household income.

The HUD needs the AHS data on building and unit characteristics, prices, and on housing and income characteristics for a wide variety of subgroups for two important basic uses. First, with these data, policy analysts can monitor the interaction among housing needs, demand, and supply, as well as changes in housing conditions and costs, to aid in the development of housing policies and the design of housing programs appropriate for different groups. Second, program support staff can analyze changes affecting housing conditions of particular subgroups, such as low-income female householders, minorities, first-time home buyers, and the elderly, to assess the continuing usefulness of programs when economic conditions in the housing market change.

In addition, these data can be used to evaluate, monitor, and design the HUD programs to improve efficiency and effectiveness. The HUD also uses these data for identifying issues for future programs; evaluating the diversity among housing markets in supply, costs, and affordability; identifying where, and for whom, remedial federal programs may be most needed; and other purposes.

From a HUD policy perspective, the AHS data probably have proved most valuable in analyzing the potential effects of program design and redesign proposals. Past data

have enabled the HUD, for instance, to determine under what conditions a moderate income, multifamily construction program might be needed and feasible; to examine the effect of low vacancy rates on housing maintenance and quality; and to evaluate how housing assistance programs help welfare recipients.

The AHS plays an important role in enabling the HUD to fulfill its requirement to monitor the lending activities of the government-sponsored enterprises (GSEs) Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. The GSEs are required to meet certain goals with respect to minorities, low-income households, and underserved areas. Tabulations from the AHS are used to establish the composition of the primary mortgage market with respect to race, income, ethnicity, and first-time buyer status. These tabulations are compared with GSE-supplied data on the composition of their lending activities to measure the extent to which these corporations are meeting their goals.

The AHS data are also used to estimate the size of the market, by measuring the number of affordable rental units in the housing stock. The AHS provides information on the degree to which rents are affordable to low- and moderate-income families and to very-low-income families; these are two of the most important parameters in the HUD's market sizing models for the housing goals.

The HUD's field offices find the AHS an important source of information to update decennial census data relating to housing assistance needs of individual localities. The HUD developed a computer system now in use that permits comparison of current AHS data with the 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 decennial censuses in order to determine changes in low-income household characteristics and housing conditions. The estimates developed through the use of this system have enabled them to identify significant trends in family size, composition, income levels, and tenure of occupancy. The HUD makes these estimates available to communities for use in developing needs assessments for their local housing plans. The HUD field office economists also use them to evaluate market feasibility of assisted-housing proposals.

Data from the survey are the major source of estimates of the space-rental value of housing (a component of personal consumption expenditures) and of the rental income of persons (a component of both personal income and national income). The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) uses the AHS data in preparing metropolitan income and product accounts. The specific data that the BEA uses are those defining farm or nonfarm location, type of housing unit, occupancy status, tenure of the occupant, and the expenditures related to housing (rent, utilities, mortgage, and so on). Another use of the AHS data is to evaluate the housing program benefits reported on the Current Population Survey (CPS) and the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). The Energy Information Administration of the Department of Energy issues an annual report "Annual Energy Review" using the heating fuel data collected in AHS.

Information quality assessment is an integral part of the predissemination review of information disseminated by the Census Bureau (fully described in the Census

Bureau's Information Quality Guidelines). Information quality assurance is also integral to information collections conducted by the Census Bureau and is incorporated into the clearance process required by the Paperwork Reduction Act.

3. Use of Information Technology

a. Data Collection

The U.S. Census Bureau began conducting all the AHS interviewing with computers with the 1997 AHS-N enumeration. A Census Bureau FR conducts the interview and enters the respondent's answers on a laptop computer. The use of computers allows greater use of dependent interviewing, which means that a few questions, such as year built and the presence of a basement, will not have to be asked in future enumerations and that a larger number of questions can be verified rather than asked directly. This will decrease respondent burden for households in sample for future enumerations. We deem the use of computer-assisted personal interviewing the most appropriate collection methodology given existing available information technology. As mentioned earlier, we are upgrading the programming software used on the survey from CASES DOS to the BLAISE for Windows system to stay current with computer technology. The BLAISE for Windows system will improve the quality of the screen displays and the ability of the FRs who collect the data to navigate through the instrument.

The AHS does not collect data via the Internet or through the Electronic Data Interchange because of the significant investment in time and research needed to establish these types of electronic reporting in an ongoing survey. The Census Bureau tested an Internet reporting option in the SIPP Methods Test Panel. The Census Bureau coded an instrument in Java script that was made available to a selected group of respondents to the first field test undertaken for the August/September 2000 data collection period. College graduates were asked if they were willing to participate in a Web-based study. Those who answered "yes" were contacted in early 2001 and provided with an identification code and password to access the questionnaire via the Web. The Census Bureau concluded from the results that the technology is not currently sophisticated enough to handle the complexity of a large scale demographic survey instrument and the complicated skip patterns and rostering that it entails. The low response rate combined with the technological challenges and limitations indicate that the costs of converting a complex questionnaire to an online survey far outweigh the benefits even in a multimode environment. The Census Bureau continues researching the matter as new technology becomes available. If it proves to be feasible at some point, the Census Bureau will have to plan a statistically sound method of assessing the effects of a new mode of data collection on AHS estimates, as was done when the AHS questionnaire was redesigned and became fully automated in 1997.

b. Data Dissemination

The HUD currently makes the information collected on the AHS available to the public on their Internet Web site. The Census Bureau has a Web site that complements the HUD's and allows the public to access and use the AHS data via the Federal Electronic Research and Review Extraction Tabulation Tool (FERRETT) system. The Census Bureau's Web site also contains an extensive set of tables for the users' convenience. We will also make these data available on CD-ROMs and printed publications.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

The HUD consulted with other government agencies and determined that the AHS is the only data source with detailed information on the physical condition of the housing inventory and of rents of housing units. Although housing data are collected as part of the American Community Survey (ACS) (Census Bureau), Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES) (Bureau of Labor Statistics), and the Residential Energy Consumption Survey (RECS) (Department of Energy), these surveys provide neither the longitudinal data over a period of years nor the extensive level of detailed information available from the AHS. The CES collects housing costs data but does not collect detailed information on vacant units. The RECS does not collect mortgage or detailed housing cost data. Neither the ACS nor the RECS have detailed information on the physical condition of housing units or information on vacant units. Thus, these datasets could not serve as substitutes for the measures produced by the AHS that detail worst case housing needs, fair market rents, the lending activities of GSEs, or progress toward homeownership goals to cite a few.

The purposes of the AHS and the other surveys cited above also differ according to the agency's goals and objectives. Certainly the HUD surveys would involve personal/household behavior with respect to housing and community development issues. But human behavior in general is conditional on fundamental familial, demographic, housing, and economic variables. As a general rule, the HUD is not interested in the levels of individual variables, but in the relationships among variables. Therefore, they must observe the values of the variables for the same individuals in the same sample to capture covariance structure. (All multivariate statistical procedures rely on the covariance structure.) The AHS asks about the same fundamental variables, but goes further and asks numerous detailed questions about other aspects of housing consumption, finance, moving, and neighborhoods. In order to understand human behavior and detailed housing information, the HUD needs to know how the fundamental housing variables impact or are related to the more detailed housing variables. It would make no sense to collect detailed information about housing cost burdens and mortgage financing if we had no idea about fundamental housing attributes such as size, value, or rent of the housing unit.

5. Minimizing Burden

We have designed the AHS questions to obtain the required information, while keeping respondent burden to a minimum. The data are collected only from individual households not small businesses or other small entities. We have also increased the usage of dependent interviewing in a way that decreases respondent burden but improves data consistency.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

As a longitudinal survey, we interview our samples periodically to provide intermittent readings between decennial censuses. The length of time between interviews is two years on the AHS-N sample and six to eight years on the AHS-MS sample. Less frequent enumerations would impair HUD's ability to monitor GSE goal compliance on a timely basis. It would also reduce the HUD's ability to detect changes in severe housing needs. Without this ability, the Administration and Congress would be unable to formulate policy on housing assistance.

7. Special Circumstances

We collect the data in a manner consistent with OMB guidelines, and there are no special circumstances.

8. Consultations Outside the Agency

Attachment 1 is a copy of the *Federal Register Notice (July 24, 2006, Volume 71, page 41826, docket no. FR-5043-N-05)* required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d). The notice covered both the AHS-N and AHS-MS data collections. The HUD did not receive any comments to the notice.

The HUD discussed plans for the joint 2007 AHS-N and AHS-MS surveys with the following people:

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During the development of the 1984 AHS-MS questionnaires, which were precursors to the 2007 AHS questionnaires, we consulted with approximately 250 prospective data users who comprised diverse areas of interest. Responses received from these data users had considerable effect on the content. There were no major problems that could not be resolved during consultation.

The HUD listed and addressed the majority of the comments received during the development of the core questionnaire with the clearance package submitted for the 1984 AHS-MS. Subsequent to the 1984 AHS-MS submission, the BEA raised a series of suggested modifications, some of which would result in improvements to the BEA's estimates and others that were suggested to improve the clarity and consistency of the forms. Further discussions involving representatives from the BEA and the Census Bureau resulted in agreements to make several modifications to the core questionnaire.

The HUD and the Census Bureau conducted a major review of the questionnaire content in the summer of 2004 paying special attention to suggestions submitted by data users. This was an interactive session in that the HUD used their Web site to involve the data user community in the review and final decisions made on the proposals considered. We will review the subject matter areas affected in Section B-4, Testing Procedures.

9. Paying Respondents

The AHS does not give respondents payments or gifts.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

The Census Bureau collects these data in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974 and OMB Circular A-108. The Census Bureau will send each sample address a letter in advance of the interview containing the information required by this act. Returning housing units in the AHS-N will receive the AHS-27 letter. The new incoming units in the AHS-N and all units in the AHS-MS will receive the AHS-26/66 letter. The only difference between the letters is the mode of contact mentioned. The AHS-27 letter indicates the contact is more likely to be by telephone to update the information collected two years ago. The AHS-26/66 letter indicates that the contact is more likely to be in-person.

The Advance Letter informs the respondents of the voluntary nature of this survey and states that there are no penalties for failure to answer any question. The letter

explains why the information is being collected, how it will be used, and that it will take approximately 30 minutes to complete the interview. The letter displays the OMB control number and date of expiration.

As part of the introduction for personal-visit households, the Census Bureau FRs will ask the respondents if they received the advance letter; and, if not, the FRs will give the letter to the respondents and allow them sufficient time to read the contents. For interviews conducted by telephone, if the respondents inquire as to the purpose of the survey, the FR will provide an oral explanation that includes the information required by the Privacy Act. We have also added the address and toll-free phone number of the regional office for which the FR works as a way for the respondent to authenticate her/his employment with the Census Bureau.

After the interview is completed, the FRs will give the respondents a "Thank You" Letter (AHS-28/68(L)). Both the "Advance Letter" and the "Thank You" letters state that all information respondents give to the Census Bureau employees is held in strict confidence by Title 13, United States Code. Each FR has taken an oath to this effect and is subject to a jail term, fine, or both, if he/she discloses any information given him/her.

The data collected under this agreement are confidential under Title 13, U.S.C., Section 9. Should the HUD staff require access to Title 13 data from this survey to assist in the planning, data collection, data analysis, or production of final products, those staff members are required to obtain Census Bureau Special Sworn Status (SSS). They must demonstrate that they have suitable background clearance and they must take Title 13 Awareness Training.

Any access to Title 13 data at the HUD is subject to prior approval by the Census Bureau's Data Stewardship Executive Policy Committee upon assurance that the HUD facility and information technology security meet Census Bureau requirements.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

The survey does not include any questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimate of Hour Burden

We estimate the respondent burden hours to be 40,099 for the combined AHS-N and AHS-MS samples. Please refer to the table below for more detailed information.

Interview Type		Total Addresses			Respondent Burden Combined	
(A) Name	(B) Definition	(C) AHS-N	(D) AHS-MS	(E) Combined	(F) Avg Min Per Intv	(B) Total Hours
Occupied	Sampled addresses with one or more residents	40,127	15,759	55,886	39	36,326
Vacant	Sampled addresses intended for occupancy but currently without residents	6,596	2,074	8,670	20	2,890
Noninterview	Sampled addresses not intended for occupancy or occupants refuse to participate	8,245	2,903	11,148	0	0
Total Addresses For Data Collection (DC)		54,968	20,736	75,704		
Reinterview	Second quality control check interview at 7 percent of the above sampled addresses	3,848	1,442	5,299	10	883
Total DC and Reinterview Addresses/Burden Hours		58,816	22,188	81,003		40,099
Computations						
Total Hours = (Average Minutes Per Case*Total Addresses)/60						

13. Estimate of Cost Burden

The annualized cost estimate to respondents for burden hours is \$0. There are no costs to respondents other than that of their time to respond.

14. Cost to Federal Government

The HUD estimates the annual costs to the government for the AHS programs (including the AHS-N and the AHS-MS) to be about \$17 million. This is a savings of about \$4 million since the last OMB submission for the 2005 AHS-N. We performed the following to accomplish this: reduced the number of Metro areas in AHS-MS sample from eleven to seven and the sample size within each area from 4,800 to 3,000 housing units; reduced the AHS-N sample by about 5,000 housing units; and moved to a joint data collection format where the AHS-N and the AHS-MS samples are enumerated at the same time. In the past, we conducted the AHS-N in odd years and the AHS-MS in even years. The new format allows us to benefit from economies of scale in that we have national FR coverage on the AHS-N survey that can assist with the AHS-MS. We will hire significantly fewer FRs on the AHS-MS than in the past. The annual figure provided represents the average of a two-year cycle consisting of a data collection year followed by a public use file products processing year. The figure is based on the following factors.

- Actual money spent adjusted for inflation to complete past data collection and release public use files for the AHS-N and the 7 metropolitan areas in the AHS-MS.
- Projected costs to complete the necessary conversion of the computer assisted interviewing (CAI) system from DOS to Windows to stay current with technology. The CAI system includes the questionnaire instrument loaded to the laptop computers used to conduct the interviews, the case management system used to relay work back and forth to the FRs in the field, and the post data collection system used to process the data and produce the public use files.
- Actual money spent adjusted for inflation to maintain the AHS-N and AHS-MS samples in a non-data collection year. Maintenance includes completing the work to release the public use file for the AHS-N sample and the seven metropolitan areas in the AHS-MS.

The HUD will bear these costs. The collection was developed by an office that has planned and allocated resources for the effective and efficient management of the information.

15. Reason for Change in Burden

This is a revision of a currently approved collection. The burden hours have increased due to a program change where the AHS-MS sample is being submitted with the AHS-N sample for OMB approval. The AHS-MS sample was previously collected under OMB number 2528-0016 which expired in 2003.

16. Project Schedule

The Census Bureau has scheduled the 2007 joint field enumeration for the AHS-N and AHS-MS surveys to begin in May and continue through September. While many of the operations to tabulate and publish the data will be performed together, the Census Bureau will release the AHS-N public use file (PUF) followed by the AHS-MS file. The projected release dates are September 2008 and January 2009, respectively. We will release the AHS-N about four months later than in a typical year due to the extra time needed to adjust to the new joint enumeration format and review the data more intensively to identify the effects of the instrument software conversion from DOS to Windows. We expect this to be a single survey cycle delay. We also expect the period between the AHS-N and AHS-MS releases to narrow as the Census Bureau learns to take advantage of the new joint data collection format.

The Census Bureau will issue press releases and/or product announcements when releasing the public use micro-data file, as well as reports containing a summary of the data collected as agreed upon with the HUD. The summary reports will provide selected statistics at the national or metropolitan sample level involved. The Department of Commerce or the HUD may release other publications.

AHS-N: The Census Bureau is scheduled to release the final reports 12 to 14 months after data collection. This is several months later than usual due primarily to the extra work required for identifying the effects of the instrument software conversion. This is expected to be a one-survey delay.

AHS-MS: The Census Bureau is scheduled to release the final reports 5 to 6 months after the AHS-N release. The interval will narrow in future years as the new joint data collection processing procedures become more routine.

17. Request to Not Display Expiration Date

The OMB number and expiration date are included on the AHS-26/66(L) and AHS-27(L) Advance Letters. Because the questionnaire is an automated instrument, the respondent will not see the OMB number and expiration date.

18. Exceptions to the Certificate

There are no exceptions.

B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

a. AHS-N

The 2007 AHS-N sample will consist of about 54,968 sample units. This includes the majority of units enumerated in the 2005 AHS-N and about 1,990 new construction units. The returning sample was selected primarily from the 1980 census sample files by variables, such as owner-occupied housing units, renter occupied housing units, vacant units for rent, and mobile homes. The Census Bureau updates the sample with new construction each AHS-N survey. These updates include new construction units selected from permits issued since the most recent decennial Census. Starting with the 2005 AHS-N, the updates are from new construction units selected from permits issued since Census 2000. New construction selection is based on the same criteria detailed for the core sample. The Census Bureau designed the sample to provide 0.4, 0.7, 3.0, and 3.0 percent standard error on estimates of the above variables, respectively.

b. AHS-MS

The 2007 AHS-MS sample will consist of approximately 20,736 sample addresses. The Census Bureau selected the sample from the 1990 decennial census addresses. The Census Bureau will update the sample to include new construction units built since the last survey year. As mentioned earlier, the Census Bureau is taking additional steps to insure the sample remains representative of the current housing market. This includes (1) adding about 440 special living units and (2) replacing about 865 returning manufactured/mobile homes with units selected from the Census 2000. Special living units are housing units in complexes with five or more units where services are offered to the self-sufficient residents.

The estimated workloads per metropolitan area are detailed in the table below.

TABLE 1 – Based On The 1990 Census Of Population And Housing

MS AREA	TOTAL HOUSING UNITS IN MS AREA*	ESTIMATED HOUSING UNITS IN SAMPLE	APPROXIMATE RESPONSE RATE LAST ENUMERATION (PERCENT)
Baltimore, MD	1,028,200	3,000	92
Boston, MA	1,345,900	2,906	87
Houston, TX	1,547,300	3,019	93
Minneapolis, MN	1,150,300	3,021	91
Miami-Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,638,700	2,940	94
Tampa, FL	1,138,300	2,940	89
Washington, DC	1,817,400	2,910	93

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

The sample for each metropolitan area represents the households included in the area as it was defined in 2003.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

The Census Bureau expects the response rate to be between 88 and 90 percent on the AHS-N and the AHS-MS. If an occupant is reluctant to participate, the FR informs the regional office staff, who sends a follow-up letter explaining the survey in greater detail and urging the occupant's cooperation. A Census Bureau FR or supervisory FR will contact the occupant again.

4. Testing Procedures

The Census Bureau conducted a test of the interview forms and procedures in September 1983 and again in 1994 and 1995. Based on the results of the tests, the HUD made modifications and changes in preparation for the 1984 through 2006 AHS-MS and the 1985 through 2007 AHS-N.

In preparation for the change to computer-assisted personal interviewing beginning with the 1997 survey, the HUD and the Census Bureau staff reviewed the current survey questions and decided to test different versions of questions for rooms, heating

equipment, and housing quality items to improve the quality of this information. We made changes to all these areas as a result of this research.

The HUD and the Census Bureau conducted a major review of the survey questions in the summer of 2004 to review the data user suggestions received and identify areas where updates should be made to stay current with new housing conditions. The CSMR at the Census Bureau tested different versions of questions for neighborhood quality, income, utility costs, and renter subsidies to improve the quality of this information. We made changes to all of these areas as a result of their research. In October 2005, we tested these changes in a live hot house test held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

The HUD consulted the following individuals on the statistical data collection and analysis operation:

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Attachment