

The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). We will be conducting research on the proposed Voting and Civic Engagement (VCE) supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS), sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The objective of the VCE supplement is to gather information on the level of social capital and the extent to which American communities are places where persons are active citizens. CNCS's primary interest is with the types of activities that provide for a healthy and dynamic civil society in which persons communicate with one another on issues of public concern.

Between January 26 and February 3, 2008, we will conduct up to 100 telephone interviews in a split-sample field test at the Census Bureau's Hagerstown Telephone Center (HTC). Sample cases will be selected from expired CPS sample from July 2007. Results from the earlier cognitive interviewing, described in a letter to OMB dated August 8, 2007, led to recommendations for question revisions. We decided to plan for a split-sample field test rather than conduct a second round of 15 cognitive interviews in the Washington DC metropolitan area. With the split-sample field test we expect more diversity in the pool of respondents in terms of their demographic characteristics and their level of civic engagement.

Interviews will be conducted with persons 18 years of age and older. In the majority of households, questions will be asked only of the respondent. In a small number of cases (10-15), questions will also be asked about another household member in order to get a sense of what questions are answerable through proxy respondents. (So 85 interviews will be asked about only the respondent and 15 will include both self and proxy response.) Copies of the questionnaires are enclosed. Differences in items between the two questionnaires are identified by an asterisk after the item number.

To test the questions within the context of production interviewing, we will administer a skeleton set of CPS labor force items and the regular voting supplement questions prior to starting the VCE questions. These questions are included at the beginning of the enclosed questionnaires. At the end of the VCE questions both questionnaire versions include three questions that are being tested for the Volunteer Supplement to the CPS. In addition, respondent debriefing questions on selected survey items are included at the end of each questionnaire. The debriefing questions ask about responses to the original questions or new information related to those questions to better evaluate respondents' comprehension, task difficulty, perceived sensitivity/offensiveness.

One staff member from the Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division and one from the Demographic Surveys Division (DSD) will each spend one day observing interviews at the HTC. A researcher from the Bureau of Labor Statistics will also observe interviews at the HTC and spend some time conducting behavior coding of interviewer-respondent interactions during the live interviews. Staff from DSD will conduct an interviewer debriefing at the end of data collection.

Participants will be informed that their response is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential and will be seen only by employees involved in the research project. No one will be compensated for their time.

The estimated time for completion of each self-response interview is 45 minutes. The fifteen self and proxy interviews will probably take 75 minutes. Thus, the total estimated burden for this test is approximately 83 hours ((85 x .75 hours) + (15 x 1.25 hours)).

The contact persons for questions regarding data collection and statistical aspects of the design of this research are listed below:

Kathleen Creighton
Demographic Survey Division
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20233
(301) 763-3814
kathleen.m.creighton@census.gov

Theresa J. DeMaio
Center for Survey Methods Research
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20233
(301) 763-4894
theresa.j.demaio@census.gov

Sincerely yours,

Theresa J. DeMaio
Center for Survey Methods Research

Enclosures