

The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). The objective is to conduct cognitive testing on the 2010 Census Mailout Materials as part of the 2010 Census Program for Evaluations and Experiments (CPEX). Specifically, we will test the deadline messages planned for the different mailout pieces in the CPEX panels. We also plan to test a revised return envelope which resulted after cognitive testing of the census 2010 materials (submitted to you for approval on September 19, 2006, and just recently completed).

For the 2010 CPEX, there will be eight panels, controlling for four different deadline message treatments and two different mailing strategies. The goal of these experiments is to determine whether a particular deadline message and mailout strategy improves response rates. The goal of the cognitive testing is to determine whether respondents see and understand each of the deadline messages. The four different deadline message treatments are labeled: Control, Mild, Progressive Urgency, and NRFU Motivation. The Control treatment does not include any due dates or deadline. The Mild treatment uses messages that simply indicates the date that the form should be mailed back by. The Progressive Urgency treatment uses a stricter wording that emphasizes the “deadline” date and also provides a reminder that the census response is required by law. The NRFU Motivation treatment is similar to the mild messages, but also notes the inconvenience of having an interviewer come to the house if the form is not returned.

Each treatment has a message on the advanced letter, outgoing envelope for the initial questionnaire, cover letter for the initial questionnaire and reminder postcard. Sometimes the deadline message is the same across the other three panels in a mailing. For example, the deadline message in the advanced letter, “When you receive your form, please fill it out and mail it in by April 5<sup>th</sup>.” is the same in the Mild, Progressive Urgency and NRFU Motivation treatments. See the attachments for the different deadline messages.

The recently-completed testing of Census 2010 mailing materials showed that respondents had problems inserting their completed census forms into the return envelope correctly. Based on these results, three changes have been made to the envelope: 1) the instruction on the front of the envelope is in a different, more readable font; 2) the instruction on the back of the envelope is placed lower; and 3) there is a box around the instruction on the back of the envelope. (The instruction text does not differ between the envelope tested earlier and the revised envelope.) The goal of the return envelope testing is to see if these changes make the instructions more visible and increase respondents’ likelihood of inserting the census form correctly.

During October and November 2008, staff from the Center for Survey Methods Research in the Statistical Research Division’s will conduct 20 cognitive interviews in the metropolitan Washington DC area. Interviews will be conducted in the cognitive laboratory at the U.S. Census Bureau and at locations convenient for the respondents.

All interviews will be tape recorded with the respondents’ permission, to facilitate summarization of results. 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. Participants will be paid \$40 for assisting with the research.

Each cognitive interview session is expected to take between one and one-and-a-half hours, thus the total burden is 30 hours.

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and study design is:

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