

Supporting Statement  
2008 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey

**A. Justification**

**1. Necessity of Information Collection**

The U.S. Census Bureau requests approval to conduct the 2008 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (NYCHVS). The Census Bureau will conduct this survey for the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (NYCHPD). Pursuant to the Local Emergency Housing Rent Control Act (Chapter 8603, Laws of New York, 1963, as amended by Chapter 657, Laws of New York, 1967) and Sections 26-414 and 26-415 of the Administrative Code of the City, a survey is required in order to determine the supply, condition, and vacancy rate of housing in the city. The NYCHPD must take this survey every three years. The Census Bureau has conducted this survey for the city since 1962, most recently in 2002 under the authority of Title 13 USC, section 8b.

Census Bureau interviewers will conduct personal visit interviews for a sample of housing units in the City, the vast majority of which are rental units in multi-unit rental structures (apartment buildings). Single-family rental or owner-occupied units (houses), however, are not excluded from the sample. We will interview residents (occupied units) or other knowledgeable people such as a building manager, superintendent, or rental or real estate agent (vacant units) to gather information on vacancy rates, housing costs, and the income of residents. About ten percent of the sample will be reinterviewed for quality control purposes. We will also determine primarily by observation whether a separate sample of units previously lost from the City's housing inventory have been reconverted for residential use.

**2. Needs and Uses**

The 2008 NYCHVS will be an up-to-date and comprehensive data source required by rent control laws as well as a source of data needed to evaluate the city's housing

policies. Specifically, the city will look to the 2008 survey to provide accurate and reliable estimates of the rental and homeowner vacancy rates, to measure improvements in housing and neighborhood conditions, and to provide data on low-income, doubled-up, and crowded households at risk of becoming homeless. The city will use the results to develop programs and policies that aim to improve housing conditions.

Information quality is an integral part of the pre-dissemination review of the information disseminated by the Census Bureau (fully described in the Census Bureau's Information Quality Guidelines). Information quality is also integral to the information collections conducted by the Census Bureau and is incorporated into the clearance process required by the Paperwork Reduction Act.

### **3. Efforts to Minimize Burden**

The completed questionnaires will be checked-in and accounted for utilizing the latest computer technology. Each form will be assigned a unique identification number which allows it to be tracked throughout all phases of the operation. This will substantially reduce the level of unnecessary personal visit follow-up, thereby reducing respondent burden.

### **4. Efforts to Identify Duplication**

This survey was most recently conducted in 2005. No similar information in this detail and level of reliability has been collected since that time by New York City or the Census Bureau.

Any other available existing information cannot be used because the city is required by law (see Section A.1) to conduct its own periodic survey to determine the vacancy rate. Any other such information would not include the "rent-control" status of each unit. The city has to know this in order to enact its policies.

### **5. Methods to Minimize Burden on Small Businesses**

The 2008 NYCHVS is primarily a household survey, however some rental agents and realtors may be

interviewed concerning vacant units.

**6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection**

This survey is not applicable to Federal programs and policies.

**7. Special Circumstances**

This survey does not have any special circumstances as all guidelines are met.

**8. Consultations Outside the Agency**

The notice required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d) appeared in the Federal Register on January 30, 2007, page 4236. No comments were received in response to that notice.

All other outside consultation for this survey is with the NYCHPD. Based upon their recommendations, we have developed the questions to collect on Form H-100. Additionally, the NYCHPD will make recommendations on the interviewer instruction manuals to be developed and on many other aspects of the survey. The reinterview form, H-108 is used for internal analysis purposes only. Form H-105, used to determine returning losses (residential units previously lost from the housing inventory that have returned), won't change from the prior version. The city had no recommendations on the content of these two forms.

The NYCHPD consults independently of the Census Bureau with outside individuals and organizations concerning the NYCHVS.

a. Persons Consulted

Dr. Moon Wha Lee is the primary representative for the NYCHPD. The Census Bureau has been in contact with him and members of his staff concerning the 2008 survey since March 2006. He can be reached on (212)863-7940.

Additionally, Shaun Donovan, Commissioner, NYCHPD,

also has first-hand knowledge of the survey requirements and can be reached on (212)863-6100.

b. Major Problems

There are no points of contention between the Census Bureau and the NYCHPD. Everything to be done will be by mutual agreement and spelled out in a formal contract.

c. Other Public Contacts

There have not been any other public contacts regarding the survey. All consultation is with the NYCHPD.

**9. Payments to Respondents**

There are no plans to pay survey respondents.

**10. Assurance of Confidentiality**

Respondents are informed that the information they provide will be held in strict confidence, and that participation in the survey is voluntary. A letter, H-100(L), is sent to every selected housing unit prior to the survey. It explains, in addition to the confidential nature of the data, that an enumerator will visit to conduct the survey and how long the interview will require. The letter will also be available in Spanish.

Title 13, Section 9, United States Code assures that no information that could identify any individual person or household will be released to any other government agency (Federal, state, or local) or to any private organization or individual. All information from the survey will be used strictly for statistical purposes.

**11. Justification for Sensitive Questions**

This survey does not contain any questions that are of a sensitive nature.

**12. Estimate of Respondent Burden**

We will conduct the survey by personal interview, using Form H-100. The average time for an occupied unit interview is 30 minutes. We expect between 6 to 7 percent of the 20,500 sample units to be vacant, resulting in a 10-minute interview with building managers, real estate or rental agents, or superintendents. Additionally, as a means of quality control, we will reinterview the agent/landlord at all vacant units and the resident at 5 percent of occupied units using Form H-108, which requires 10 minutes to complete. These estimates are based on previous experience conducting the survey. Note however that these numbers are higher than what was part of the OMB pre-submission estimate as the sponsor requested that we increase the sample to improve reliability.

The city also needs to measure the impact of units that were lost for residential purposes, some of which tend to return over time. We will use Form H-105 to make this determination. The sample will involve some 820 units originally lost from the housing inventory from the 1999 Survey. We expect about 100 of these units to be reclassified as residential. No questions will be asked at these units as it is primarily a drive-by/observation check.

	<b>H-100</b>		Occupied	Vacant
	Units	Units		
Regular Phase	19,100	1,400		
Avg. Time/Unit	30 min	10 min		
Hours	9,550	233		

	<b>H-108</b>		
Reinterview	955	1,400	
Avg. Time/Unit	10 min	10 min	
Hours	159	233	
Survey Totals	9,709	466	= 10,175

**13. Cost to Respondents**

There is no monetary cost to respondents for replying

to the survey.

**14. Cost**

This survey will be conducted at no cost to the Federal Government. The total initial estimated cost, \$6,275,000, is funded completely by the sponsor. An additional \$500,000 will be added to this amount to account for the extra sample requested by the sponsor.

**15. Reason for Change in Burden**

The estimated respondent burden for occupied units, as well as vacant units is higher than the estimate from the 2005 survey due a request from the survey sponsor to increase the reliability of the survey estimates.

**16. Project Schedule**

The enumeration is scheduled to begin in mid-January 2008. The units selected for reinterview will be enumerated shortly after the initial interview. We expect that all interviewing will conclude by May 30, 2008.

The Census Bureau does not publish the results of the NYCHVS in a formal manner as it does for other surveys. NYCHPD will receive specified tabulation outlines by December 30, 2008, and a public use microdata file containing nonidentifiable individual records by January 10, 2009. Other interested parties may obtain survey results through the Internet.

**17. Display of OMB Approval Information**

The Census Bureau will print the OMB approval number and expiration date on each outgoing letter, H-100(L). This information also appears on the H-100 and H-108, however, these forms are not typically viewed by the respondent.

**18. Exceptions to the Certification**

There are no exceptions.