

November 14, 2007

Memorandum for: Reviewer of 1220-0175

CC: Amy Hobby  
Diane Herz

From: Dori Allard

Subject: Extending the Eating and Health Module

During 2006 and 2007, the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) has fielded the Eating and Health Module, which contains questions about food stamp receipt, eating behavior, grocery shopping, and meal preparation. This module, sponsored by the Economic Research Service (ERS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was originally scheduled to be fielded for two years. At this time, we are proposing to extend the fielding period of the Eating and Health Module by a year so that data are collected through September 2008.

The 2006 Eating and Health data have been collected and are in the early stages of analysis. Preliminary analysis shows that the data collected contain information valuable to researchers, including information about secondary eating, grocery shopping and meal preparation, and households receiving food stamps.

Fielding the Eating and Health Module in 2008 will allow for more detailed analyses of several important subpopulations. Time-use patterns change little year to year, so multiple years of the Module data can be pooled, providing a sufficient number of observations of for subgroups to expand the number of meaningful and detailed analyses. For example, while much useful analysis can be done with 2 years' data on households receiving food stamps, the cell sizes become small when looking at households by composition types, such as single-parent households and households with teenagers. Analyses of low-income households that do not receive food stamps would also benefit from additional sample.

In addition, the ERS plans to analyze secondary eating patterns over the three years to see if there have been any changes. This analysis will help determine how frequently the ERS will field the Module. For example, if eating patterns do not show any change over three years, then the Eating and Health Module may be repeated every five years in order to capture changes in eating patterns.

By fielding the Module for three consecutive years, the ERS will be able to get the most benefit from the survey data. No changes to the Eating and Health Module are proposed other than changing the fielding period. The current OMB inventory of burden hours and responses will not change with the extension of the module.