

SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
U.S. Census Bureau  
Generic Clearance for 2010 Census Communication Campaign Testing Activities  
OMB Control #0607-XXXX

A. Justification

1. Necessity of Information Collection

Every ten years, the U.S. Census Bureau is congressionally mandated to count everyone (citizens and non-citizens) residing in the United States. An accurate count is critical for many reasons including but not limited to:

- Congressional reapportionment,
- Redistricting congressional boundaries;
- Community planning; and
- Distribution of public funds and program development.

To facilitate the data collection effort for the 2010 Census, the Census Bureau is developing an Integrated Communications Campaign (ICC). The role of the ICC is to increase public awareness and motivate people to respond to the census promptly, saving millions of taxpayer dollars. The specific objectives of the ICC are:

- Increase mail response;
- Improve cooperation with enumerators; and
- Improve overall accuracy and reduce differential undercount

From 1970—the first year questionnaires were mailed to households—to 1990, the mail response rate declined from 78 percent to 65 percent. To help halt the declining mail response rate, the Census Bureau ran a paid advertising campaign to support data collection activities for the 2000 Census. The resulting mail response rate in 2000 was 67 percent -- two percentage points above 1990. This campaign was considered a very successful initiative and one of several reasons cited with helping to reverse declining mail response rates.

In order to support the aforementioned objectives, the ICC will be based on behavioral learnings during the 2000 Census as well as information that will come from new research. All messaging and communications that will be developed as part of the 2010 Census integrated communications will be supported by primary research among a wide range of target audiences. Research will serve to support campaign direction and decisions made at each stage of message and communications development. Such research has already commenced in late 2007 and in 2008 (covered as part of Generic OMB Clearance 0607-0725). That research covered the development of a unifying idea (Only You Can Make the Census Ours) and creative expression (It's in Our Hands) which will be reflected across all communications under the campaign.

This research provided valuable guidance for the next stages of development. Going

forward, additional research must be conducted in order to support these next stages. At this time, the Census Bureau is seeking a generic clearance for conducting research to gain respondent feedback to specific messaging, a variety of creative executions, and to track the campaign progress once launched. This will enable the Census Bureau to continue providing support for research activities as part of the Census 2010 ICC.

The specific methods proposed for coverage by this clearance are described below. Also outlined are the procedures currently in place for keeping OMB informed about the nature of the research activities being conducted.

The proposed quantitative and qualitative methods are as follows:

One-on-one interviews. One-on-one interviews can be conducted for several purposes. In cognitive interviews, the method involves intensive, one-on-one interviews in which the respondent is typically asked to "think aloud" as he or she answers survey questions. A number of different techniques may be involved, including asking respondents to evaluate creative materials, asking probing questions to determine how respondents came up with their answers, and so on. The objective is to identify problems of ambiguity or misunderstanding and determine whether campaign messages and visuals are effective in motivating intended populations. One-on-one interviews are also conducted in usability studies. In this type of research, recruits are seated in front of a computer and are asked to complete tasks, navigate websites or perform other online functions on website prototypes. They are asked questions regarding both content, nomenclature, design and functionality for the purpose of ensuring that online communications/experiences are both easily comprehended and accessed. Responses will be used to improve usability and overall appeal of websites built to support the 2010 ICC. At a maximum, we estimate approximately 500 qualitative one-one-surveys at 2 hours each for a total 1000 estimated burden hours.

Focus groups. This method involves group sessions guided by a moderator, who follows a topical outline containing questions or topics focused on a particular issue, rather than adhering to a standardized questionnaire. Focus groups are useful for surfacing and exploring issues (e.g., confidentiality concerns) which people may feel some hesitation about discussing. Focus groups are likely to be used as part of copy testing in order to gain deeper understanding about how communications are working through detailed discussion around responses. We estimate no more than 5000 focus group respondents at 2 hours each for a total of 10,000 burden hours.

Online quantitative surveys. This method involves self-administered surveys taken by respondents, guided by online instructions via onscreen or a pop-up window. If necessary, respondents would also have the option to contact the vendor if something

were not clear in the instructions via email (their survey would be suspended and could resume at a later time). Online surveys have become a very common way to collect data among a large sample of people due: its cost efficiency, quickness of the data collection process, easier sample management, and easy ability to visually and audibly present creative materials in a less intrusive manner. This methodology is likely to be used as part of an in-market tracking study to monitor responses to the campaign once it is live. This information will be used to assess the overall campaign exposure and the degree to which it is reaching target audiences. While difficult to say with certainty, we estimate at this time a maximum of 6,000 respondents at .5 hours each for 3,000 burden hours.

Telephone quantitative surveys. This method involves the use of an interviewer, with the assistance of a computer program, asking direct questions to respondents via the telephone. While this method has decreased in popularity over the recent years, it is still an effective way to obtain certain populations which may not be as web savvy (e.g. respondents 65+). In addition, the availability of an interviewer gives the respondent real-time possibility to obtain clarification if something is not understood by a person. This methodology could also be used as part of an in-market tracking study to supplement the online portion. While difficult to say with certainty, we estimate at this time a maximum of 30,000 respondents at .5 hours each for 15,000 burden hours.

In-person quantitative surveys. In this method the interviewer sits with the respondents and would either record answers with a pen and paper or a hand-computer. In monitoring live in-market responses to the campaign, this data collection method could be utilized in order to reach hard-to-count populations, i.e., those whom we do not expect to be able or willing to respond to an online or telephone survey. In-person quantitative surveys will be utilized as part of copy testing communications prior to launch. Copy testing will likely involve the use of hand-computers to record responses to survey questions asked about advertising ideas and executions. Interviews are likely to occur in group settings to optimize resources such as time and costs. Data collected will be used to make improvements to the materials. At this time, we estimate a maximum of 5,000 in person quantitative respondents at 2 burden hours each for a total of 10,000 burden hours.

#### Procedures for Clearance

Since the types of studies included under the umbrella of the clearance are so varied, it is impossible to specify at this point what kinds of activities would be involved in any particular activity. But at a minimum, we expect to use in-person group interviews, focus groups, usability tests, and tracking surveys.

We will provide OMB with a copy of questionnaires, moderator guides, creative materials, and debriefing materials in advance of any testing activity. Depending on the stage of creative development, this may be rough mock-ups of printed materials or story boards. A brief description of the planned field activity will also be provided.

The Census Bureau will send OMB an annual report at the end of each year summarizing the number of hours used, as well as the nature and results of the activities completed under this clearance.

Data collection for this project is authorized under Title 13, U.S.C., Sections 141 and 193.

## 2. Needs and Uses

The information collected in this program will be used by staff from the Census Bureau and its contractors to evaluate and improve the quality of the communications, advertising, and messages that are produced as part of the campaign. None of the data collected under this clearance will be published for its own sake.

Data from the research will be included in research reports prepared for sponsors inside the Census Bureau. In addition, results may also be presented before external stakeholders at Census advisory committee meetings with the understanding that the data were produced for strategic and tactical decision making to guide the 2010 communications campaign and not for official estimates. However, methodological research results may be prepared for presentation at professional meetings or in publications in professional journals.

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. Use of Information Technology

In order to reach certain populations and increase response, we may incorporate Web-based surveys as part of the research. We also anticipate using hand-held computers to capture respondent evaluations of campaign materials and messages as part of the in-person group interviews. We may also conduct interviews via cell phone to ensure representation among subgroups not assessable via traditional landline (e.g., younger persons, minorities).

## 4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

This research does not duplicate any other research being done by the Census Bureau or other Federal agencies. The purpose of this clearance is to optimize communications as part of the 2010 Census ICC which would not be done under other circumstances.

## 5. Minimizing Burden

This research will be designed as relatively small-scale data collection efforts. This will minimize the amount of burden required to test new messages and refine or improve upon positive or unclear results from previous tests.

#### 6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

For the most part, this clearance involves one-time development activities for each activity that is connected with the clearance. In these cases, if the project were not carried out, the quality of 2010 ICC would suffer. In the case of tracking surveys, we will likely request that they be repeated at several intervals in order to track campaign awareness over time and during different phases. In this case, the consequence of less frequent collections would compromise the core objective of the data collection – to monitor the campaign reach and effectiveness over time.

#### 7. Special Circumstances

All the guidelines listed in the OMB guidelines are met. There are no special circumstances.

#### 8. Consultations Outside the Agency

Consultation with Census advisory committee members and other external expert consultants may occur as part of joint research efforts. These consultations will include discussions concerning potential response problems, clarity of questions and instructions, cultural sensitivities, and other aspects of respondent burden. Additional efforts to consult with potential respondents to obtain their views on clarity of instructions, content and meaning of messages, etc., may be undertaken as part of the testing that is conducted under this clearance.

A notice was published in the Federal Register on August 21, 2008 (vol. 73, no. 163, p.49407, inviting public comment on our plans to submit this request. In response to this notice, we received no comments.

#### 9. Paying Respondents

Respondents for activities conducted in the laboratory or other professional facilities under this clearance will receive a small stipend (e.g., cognitive interviews, one-on-one interviews, in-person group interviews, and focus groups). This practice has proven necessary and effective in recruiting subjects to participate in this small scale research. The incentive for participation in one-on-one interviews is \$40 and for a focus group is \$75 (unless otherwise specified and approval is granted by OMB). Other research, such as online survey panels, may receive incentives via a participation reward system based on survey length. In this system, points may be earned and redeemed for rewards such as movie tickets, restaurant vouchers, DVDs, or other gifts valued under \$20. Telephone respondents will not receive payment unless there are extenuating

circumstances that warrant it and approval is granted by OMB.

#### 10. Assurance of Confidentiality

The information being collected constitutes attitudes and opinions and are not, therefore, confidential data protected by Title 13 U.S.C. No personally identifiable information will be retained. Respondents who participate in one-on-one interviews, focus groups, usability tests and cognitive research under this clearance will be informed that their participation is voluntary. All participants in in-person qualitative research will be required to sign written notification concerning the voluntary nature of their participation. An example of an in-person group interview consent form is attached.

For tracking surveys, respondents who participate will be informed that the information they provide is voluntary. This information will be conveyed verbally by interviewers or in the case of a self-administered survey, on the questionnaire or the instructions.

#### 11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

Most of the test materials that are included in the ICC campaign research are not of a sensitive nature and should not pose a problem to respondents. However, it is possible that some potentially sensitive topics (e.g. immigration) may be tested in messages and materials under this clearance. One of the purposes of the testing is to identify such topics, determine sources of sensitivity, and alleviate them insofar as possible before the material is put into production.

#### 12. Estimate of Hour Burden

We estimate a maximum of 13,000 annual burden hours with around 8,000 respondents.

This estimate is based on plans to conduct extensive copy testing of ICC materials among many diverse subgroups, to conduct usability test of websites supporting the ICC, and to conduct a series of repeated tracking surveys before, during, and after the campaign. The actual number of burden hours and respondents will vary depending upon the specific activity.

A variety of materials and questionnaires will be used in conducting the research under this clearance. The exact number of subjects/respondents per form or test material are unknown at this time.

#### 13. Estimate of Cost Burden

There is no cost to respondents for participating in the research being conducted under

this clearance, except for their time to complete the questionnaire.

14. Cost to Federal Government

There is no way to anticipate the actual number of participants, length of interview, and/or mode of data collection for the surveys and tests to be conducted under this clearance. Thus, it is impossible to estimate in advance the cost to the Federal Government. Costs will be covered by divisions conducting the research from their data collection budgets.

15. Reason for Change in Burden

This is new collection.

16. Project Schedule

Projects conducted under this clearance are slated to begin January 2009 and continue through August 2010. Known studies and timing include quantitative copy testing which will take place January-February 2009; Website Usability testing interviews in March 2009, and quantitative tracking September 2009-June 2010. The information collected in this effort will not be the subject of any printed Census Bureau reports; however, it might be included as a methodological appendix or footnote in a report containing data from a larger data collection effort. The results of this research may, however, be prepared for presentation at professional meetings or publication in professional journals.

17. Request to Not Display Expiration Date

No exemption is requested.

18. Exceptions to the Certification

There are no exceptions to the certification.

