

The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). The objective of this research is to conduct cognitive interviews to test a change in instructions for the Food Stamps question in the American Community Survey (ACS) self-administered form.

The Food Stamp program is undergoing a change that involves changing the program name to "Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program" or SNAP. This change went into effect on October 1, 2008, but is being adopted by different states at different times. There will be a transition period where people will slowly become more familiar with the new program name, and the Census Bureau is working to identify appropriate changes to each survey's food stamps questions. In the ACS, the first modification to be implemented will be a respondent instruction on the self-administered form and an interviewer instruction on the interviewer-administered automated instruments.

In April, 2009, staff from the Center for Survey Methods Research (CSMR) will conduct a maximum of 16 cognitive interviews. The cognitive interviews will be semi-structured interviews with respondents who either are currently, or have been, in the Food Stamps program or are in a program like WIC or the National School Lunch Program (who might falsely answer positively to the food stamps question). We will recruit respondents in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia so that a range of state-specific issues may be examined. We will recruit respondents primarily through state welfare agencies so that we can identify people in each program without expressly advertising what our topic of interest is. The interviews will be conducted at the cognitive lab in Suitland, or at a place more convenient to the respondent, like a welfare office.

All participants will be observed completing a revised 2010 ACS form up until the point that they have completed the food stamps question – Q 12. (A copy of the 2009 questionnaire and the revised wording of Q. 12 are attached.) At that point, the respondent will be engaged in a semi-scripted retrospective debriefing about his or her understanding of the question and associated instruction. (A copy of the protocol is attached.)

Cognitive interviews will be tape-recorded, with the participants' permission, to facilitate summary of the results. All participants will be informed that their response is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential. Respondents will receive \$40 for their participation in the interview.

The estimated time for completion of each of these interview is an hour. Thus, the estimated burden for this research is 16 hours.

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

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