

Response to questions from OMB:

1. We have worked closely with all of the Federal agencies with cognitive labs and also with many other collections requesting clearance for cognitive interviews to ensure that each is offering a consistent amount for cognitive interviews. The standard rate for Census, NCHS, EIA, BLS (and NCES) has been \$40 for a one hour cognitive interview. Please:
 - a. Justify why this amount is insufficient in this case.
 - b. Also, please provide a list of collections referenced in the following statement:
“The amount offered is consistent with honorariums offered by Westat for cognitive interviews on other Federally sponsored projects and is consistent with NCES practice.”

Our proposed incentives (\$50 for the one hour screener and \$75 for the 1.5 hour extended interview) are warranted by the unique requirements on the NHES interviews. The other studies that have used \$40 may differ in substantial ways from the NHES. Many of the respondents targeted for participation in the NHES cognitive interviews will have young children and may need to arrange childcare in order to participate in the interviews. The interviews will be conducted at Westat’s facility in Rockville, MD. Westat is not easily accessible by public transportation. Participants will need to arrange private transportation or take a time consuming trip on public transportation to reach the location. Additionally, we want to ensure that the incentive is appealing to people at both ends of the household income spectrum to recruit a wide variety of childcare arrangements and household situations. The Westat studies mentioned in the original request did not focus on preschool and school-aged children so are not the best examples for this request.

2. Have the cognitive testing results and instruments been included in the new federal “Q Bank,” housed at NCHS yet? If not, is there any reason that NCES wouldn’t be able to do that timely?

The instruments have not been included in the Q Bank. We will evaluate the feasibility of contributing the results from this cognitive interviewing to Qbank.

3. Please clarify that you are testing a larger list of opinion questions that you ultimately plan to use.

That is correct. We are testing a large number of items in the cognitive lab to see which generate the most interest across a variety of demographic characteristics. Ultimately, a subset of these items will be included in the pilot test.

4. The current “Privacy Act” statement at the bottom of the first page of the questionnaire seems like a good place to also discuss ESRA, NCES’s authorization and confidentiality statute. If not there, where is that information on the instruments?

We will add the following statement to the questionnaires: Your answers may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) Public Law 107-279, Section 183].

5. Why is the "Head Start" question in the portion of the ECPPS questionnaire that is about relative care providers?

This is to address home-based Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Children in relative care can be in care that is home-based Head Start. Please see <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/Head%20Start%20Act/headstartact.html#636>

for details on home-based head start.

6. Does NCEs always treat pre-kindergarten as day care rather than school? Why?

NHES surveys generally look at the population of children in two ways, school-aged and not yet in Kindergarten. Preschool programs of all kinds (including day care) often employ a wide range of educational activities. There is evidence that parents report the type of program their child is in according to what the center calls itself. If the child is in a "child development center" that's what the parent will report. If the child is in something that calls itself a preschool, that's what the parent will report. The child development center may call itself that because it provides care for infants and toddlers, but the program it has for its 4-year-olds, might be very similar to what a 4-year old experiences in a center that says it has a pre-K or preschool program. So, we could make a false distinction in terms of the child's experiences if we called pre-K school but care in a center not school.

7. How well do the parental involvement questions sync up with those on the HSLs?

Some of the HSLs items on parental involvement were based on the NHES items and the HSLs design started with the NHES items. We will monitor the HSLs to ensure our items remain synched whenever possible.

8. Has NCEs considered moving to a point-in-time question regarding receipt of benefits from federal social programs given the findings of the past few years about survey misreporting in the CPS and NHIS?

We are aware of study findings that show that surveys misreport participation in government assistance programs. However, we are concerned about moving to a point in time question. We think this might limit the utility of the information given that it is used in conjunction with family income questions that focus on income in the past year and on education and care questions that focus on longer time periods. We also have concerns

about moving to a point-in-time concept given that benefit use can change in non-random ways over the course of a year. That said, we do ask questions about welfare support for current care arrangements in other parts of the instrument to help more clearly associate current arrangements with current support receipt.

The analytic purpose of asking about government assistance in the past 12 months is to find out about government assistance within the survey's reference period. We have contacted the Census Bureau about this issue. They informed us that they are not planning on changes at this time. They are still asking about the past 12 months in the American Community Survey.