

The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). We will be conducting cognitive research on the Current Population Survey's Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) supplement questionnaire. This supplement, sponsored by the Census Bureau, is conducted during February through April each year.

The purpose of this research is to identify deficiencies in the existing ASEC data collection instrument and how the sensitivity of some questions may result in the under reporting or misreporting of participation in Government transfer programs, property income, and other income sources data. Cognitive interviews will be used to identify the optimal sequence of questions and question wording to minimize or eliminate the under reporting or misreporting of participation in Government transfer programs, property income, and other income sources; reduce the non-response for those items; and tailor the questions to the specific demographic characteristics of the household. These areas of focus in the ASEC instrument were selected because they have been demonstrated to have problems based on analysis of previous ASEC data.

The results will be used to develop a modernized BLAISE ASEC data collection instrument that corrects the deficiencies in the existing ASEC instrument and that fully utilizes all of the capabilities of Computer Assisted Interviewing (CAI). The goal is to implement this redesigned instrument in the 2013 ASEC.

In March and April 2011 WESTAT Inc., under contract to the Census Bureau, will conduct approximately 50 cognitive interviews. The recruiting will focus on three types of participants for the cognitive interviews:

- Approximately 18 people who received TANF in 2010;
- Approximately 18 people who received asset income; and
- Approximately 14 people who received Social Security for part (not all) of 2010.

Recruiting will target groups of participants from nine states (California, Florida, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, and Virginia) over two rounds and will be conducted by experienced focus group facilities under the direction of WESTAT. These nine states were selected based on the diversity of naming conventions for TANF programs. Using focus group facility staff in each location will allow better access to local organizations where eligible people may be found. Recruiting will be done from the facilities databases and canvassing local service organizations, such as food stamp and public assistance offices, and organizations that serve retired and/or disabled people.

Cognitive interviews will be conducted at the focus group facilities. The interviews will be conducted using a paper questionnaire that is a condensed version of the automated ASEC instrument. The interviews will use retrospective probing methods to test how well the survey questions work. Interviewers will read a series of questions about program participation, sources of income receipt, and amounts. Interviewers will ask how the respondent reacts to these questions, how they interpret key words in the questions, and how they chose their answers over other possible answers. An income source flashcard, probes, and answer sheet will also be used. A copy of each of these materials is attached. A copy of the protocol used to conduct the interviews is also attached. A copy of the consent form used by the contractor is also attached.

Interviews will be audio-taped, with respondent permission, to facilitate analysis of the results. Participants will be informed that their response is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential and will be seen only by employees involved in the research project. Participants will receive \$40 for their participation.

Interviews will take approximately one hour. Thus, the total estimated burden for this research is 50 hours.

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and statistical aspects of the design of this research is listed below:

Edward Welniak  
 Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division  
 U. S. Census Bureau

4600 Silver Hill Road  
Washington, DC 20233  
Room 7H173  
301-763-5533  
edward.j.welniak.jr@census.gov