

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau
Current Population Survey (CPS) Voting and Civic Engagement Supplement
OMB Control No. 0607-0466

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

We will conduct the November 2008 Voting and Civic Engagement supplement in conjunction with the Current Population Survey (CPS), for which the universe is 118 million households. From this universe, we select a sample of approximately 72,000 households each month, of which approximately 59,000 households are eligible for interview. We actually interview about 54,000 households each month. We will ask the items in the Voting and Civic Engagement supplement, as appropriate, for members of these households. Those eligible for the voting and registration questions include all civilian household members age 18 and up who are U.S. citizens. All civilian household members age 15 and up (citizens and non-citizens) are eligible for the civic engagement questions.

The Civic Engagement portion of the supplement represents a new collection, however the Voting portion is an ongoing collection typically achieving a response rate of approximately 93 percent.

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

The Voting and Civic Engagement supplement is a supplemental survey associated with the CPS in November 2008. Attachment D gives an overview of the CPS sample design and weighting methodology and response rates. The statistical properties of these supplemental items will fall within those associated with the CPS itself.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

We maintain response rates and data accuracy for the CPS at high levels through interviewer instruction, self-study training, and follow-up of refusal interviews with more experienced senior interviewers. Additionally, we closely monitor data output. (Refer to Item 5 of Attachment D for a discussion of the CPS nonresponse.)

4. Testing of Procedures

The Census Bureau's Statistical Research Division (SRD) conducted two rounds of cognitive testing of the Voting and Civic Engagement supplement questions. The tests began in September 2007, and concluded in February 2008. The goal of each round was to test respondents' comprehension of the new questions, to test the flow of the different supplemental sections, to find major recall difficulties, to ascertain the sensitivity or inappropriateness of any questions, and to gauge the operational feasibility of the supplement. For certain questions, multiple versions of the same

question, or differing answer categories were tested. The final form of the questionnaire appears in Attachment A1.

The first round consisted of cognitive interviews with fifteen respondents recruited from the Washington, DC/Baltimore metropolitan area. The tests included both telephone and personal interviewing, and included probing questions embedded within and at the end of the questionnaire. When the respondents were asked about their overall opinion of the survey questions, their responses were overwhelmingly positive. Only one respondent indicated that they found a particular question sensitive or offensive. The question was eventually dropped from consideration for the questionnaire. Four of the fifteen participants indicated they found some of the questions difficult to answer. When probed about which questions were difficult, the participants mentioned the questions about federal laws and friendships. All fifteen participants responded “no” when asked if there was anything about the questions that might cause them to discontinue their participation in Census Bureau surveys.

A detailed summary report of Round 1 testing is provided in Attachment A2, and the accompanying instruments are provided in Attachments A3 and A4. Revisions to the questionnaire resulting from this test led to the need for another round of testing.

The second round of testing was conducted at the telephone center in Hagerstown, Maryland. There were again two versions of the questionnaire, which are provided in Attachments A5 and A6. Four methods were used to evaluate the supplemental questions: a) behavior coding; b) interviewer debriefings; c) respondent debriefings; and d) split-panel interviewing. Interviews were conducted with approximately 100 households, with one respondent selected from each household. For twelve households, a second person was selected to interview, making for a total of 112 persons.

Results from the two rounds of testing revealed, in general, respondents had little difficulty interpreting the supplement’s concepts. One notable exception was the concept of trust. Testing revealed very low respondent comprehension for the trust questions’ purpose and intent. As a result, these questions were omitted from the final version of the supplement. Other results from testing included rephrasing of certain question fragments, omission of words, and re-ordering of answer categories to make the questions more understandable. While some respondents were uncomfortable with certain questions, overall, the respondents received the questions in a positive manner.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

The Census Bureau will collect and process the data. Within the Census Bureau, the following individuals may be contacted for further information on data collection, operations, and analysis:

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ATTACHMENTS

- A1. Voting and Civic Engagement supplement questionnaire
- A2. *Cognitive Testing (Round 1) Summary Report on the Voting and Civic Engagement Supplement to the CPS*, Revised Draft Nov. 6, 2007
- A3. Cognitive testing instrument (Round 1), Version A, *Voting and Civic Engagement Supplement to the CPS*.
- A4. Cognitive testing instrument (Round 1), Version B, *Voting and Civic Engagement Supplement to the CPS*.
- A5. Cognitive testing instrument (Round 2), Version A, *Voting and Civic Engagement Supplement to the CPS*.
- A6. Cognitive testing instrument (Round 2), Version B, *Voting and Civic Engagement Supplement to the CPS*.
- B. CPS-263 (MIS-1) Advance Letter
- C. BC-1428 Confidentiality Brochure
- D. Overview of CPS Sample Design and Methodology