

Supporting Statement A: Arts supplement to the 2012 General Social Survey

Introduction

This request is for clearance of an arts-related supplement to the General Social Survey (GSS) to be conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) in March 2012. The supplement will ask questions about motivations and barriers associated with attending selected arts activities, which have been identified as an existing research gap. The data will be provided to the public for free through the GSS Web site, and will provide the basis for a range of NEA reports and independent research publications.

A. Justification

A.1. Necessity of Information Collection

The NEA, pursuant to its mandate “to support projects and productions that will encourage public knowledge, education, understanding and appreciation of the arts” (USC2O, Section 954 (5)) and “to develop and implement a practical system of national information and data collection and public dissemination on the arts and their audiences, including trends in audience participation” (USC 20, Section 954 (q)), has entered into an interagency agreement with the National Science Foundation to fund an arts supplement GSS.

The GSS is a nationally representative survey of non-institutionalized adults in the United States, conducted primarily via face-to-face interviews. The survey has been conducted since 1972, and is a leading source of data about societal changes and trends. The data from the proposed arts supplement will fill an existing research gap about motivations and barriers related to arts participation. The data will be collected by National Opinion Research Center. The National Science Foundation is the primary source of funding support for the GSS; other sources provide supplementary support, typically for the inclusion of topical modules. The NEA intends to support the survey in future iterations of the survey, in order to examine trends over time.

A.2. Needs and Uses of the Data

Need for the data

In 2010, the NEA undertook a comprehensive review of its priorities, goals, and accountability system for ensuring timely and effective responses to the needs of the American public. The result was a new strategic plan including outcomes-based performance metrics. Most of these metrics attempt to track direct results of the NEA’s activities, but two of the metrics involve benchmarking the public’s level of engagement

with arts activities as a whole, as a way to monitor trends affecting the work of the Agency.

Since 1982, the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) has been the nation’s largest and most representative survey of arts participation patterns in adulthood. It includes questions about arts attendance and reading, personal creation and performance of art, arts participation via electronic media, and arts learning. Yet with each successive wave of the SPPA, a core data element has been lacking. The survey is not designed to ask U.S. adults about their attitudes toward art or their motivations for arts participation. Access to this type of information has been sought repeatedly by arts and cultural researchers, not to mention arts policy-makers and program managers.

Similarly, the NEA’s strategic plan requires the Agency to develop a research agenda framing knowledge gaps and data collection strategies. Heading that list of research gaps are questions about why Americans choose to attend—or not attend—activities such as visual arts exhibits or music, dance, or theater performances.

The GSS was a strategic choice for this data collection. It is a nationally representative survey of non-institutionalized adults in the United States, conducted primarily via face-to-face interviews. The survey has been conducted since 1972, and is a leading source of data about societal changes and trends. It has consistently comparatively high response rates (above 70%), and in addition, a major advantage of the including a supplement to the GSS is the large amount of other information as part of the survey, including demographic information on all respondents. The data from the GSS is available free to the public on their website.¹ According to the NORC, “Except for the U.S. [Decennial] Census, the GSS is the most frequently analyzed source of information in the social sciences.”²

Uses of the Data

The NEA remains the primary Federal source for national data and analyses about the U.S. arts sector, and has identified the collection of this data as one of its research priorities. In addition to providing this long sought-after data to arts and cultural researchers as well as the broader public, the Agency will use the information to understand trends directly related to its goal of “engag[ing] the public with diverse and excellent art.”³ This data can be used by to document why people make choices with respect to arts activities, and ultimately, to make more informed decisions about how to effectively target arts programming. The findings will not only shed light on why people do and do not attend arts events, but also whether these barriers and motivations are correlated with demographic and other factors. While the SPPA provides a wealth of information on behavior (e.g., frequency of attendance), the data does not explain *the reasons why* people do and do not participate in arts activities. The data collected from the GSS arts

¹ <http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/GSS+Website/>

² <http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/GSS+Website/About+GSS/>

³ Identified as “Goal 2” in the NEA’s FY 2012 – 2016 Strategic Plan:
[#](http://www.nea.gov/about/Budget/NEAStrategicPlan2012-2016.pdf)

supplement will complement the SPPA data. In addition to providing new information, the questions about arts participation on the GSS may be used as an independent source of comparison to the SPPA estimates. The analyses will also benefit from the timing of the surveys – the data from the 2012 SPPA are expected to be available in December 2012, while the data from the GSS arts supplement are expected to be available within six months of that time (early to mid 2013). Further, starting in 2013, the collection for the Annual Arts Benchmarking Survey (AABS) will provide biennial estimates on arts participation (but again, do not capture the data on motivations and barriers related to attendance that the GSS can capture).⁴ The NEA intends to support future arts supplements to the GSS, in order to examine trends over time. Reports and analyses from these data will be made available to the public on the NEA’s Web site.

A.3. Use of Information Technology

The supplemental questions are designed to obtain the required information while keeping respondent burden to a minimum. Most of the interviews are conducted face-to-face, with the use of computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI).

A.4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

There are a few surveys with some questions regarding participation in the arts. The Survey of Public Participation in the Arts captures information about a range of participation, creation, and learning activities; however, data is lacking on motivations for and barriers to attendance. The General Social Survey has included periodic modules on arts and culture, but again, has not collected information on motivations and barriers for attendance.

A.5. Minimizing Burden in Small Businesses or Small Entities

Not applicable. The collection of public participation in the arts information does not involve small businesses or other small entities.

A.6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection

This data will fill an existing research gap about the motivations and barriers for attendance. This data will make it possible to further inform policy decisions and assist

⁴ Like the SPPA, the AABS will be conducted as a supplement to the Current Population Survey. The AABS will be an abbreviated version of the SPPA (only 12 questions), and will be conducted in years the SPPA is not. (The SPPA is conducted approximately every five years.) The AABS will have two rotating modules: in the first year (2013), the questions are related to arts attendance and arts learning, while in alternate years, the questions will be related to arts creation and arts performance. The data from the AABS, among other uses, will be reported as part of the Agency’s performance measures.

researchers to answer questions related to access to the arts, among other issues.

A.7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances that apply to the 2012 GSS.

A.8. Public Comment and Consultations Outside the Agency

A notice was published in the Federal Register (pages 32992-32993) on June 7, 2011, to solicit comments on the 2012 GSS prior to submission of this OMB clearance request. A copy of this request is included in Attachment A. The second Federal Register Notice was published on November 15, 2011 (page 70765). No public comments were received in response to these notices.

In designing the proposed series of questions for the 2012 GSS, the NEA's Office of Research & Analysis did the following: consulted the survey questionnaire and methodology employed by Francie Ostrower, formerly of the Urban Institute, in a pioneering study of motivational and socialization factors affecting arts attendance; reviewed extensive literature of arts participation surveys conducted in the U.S., U.K. and Australia; and convened sociologists, statisticians, and survey methodologists, both for a November 2010 event and for a slate of post-event teleconferences.

A copy of the proposed 2012 GSS arts-related supplement is included in Attachment C.

A.9. Paying Respondents

There are no payments to respondents specifically for participation in this supplement; however, NORC may provide payments to individuals participating in the GSS as part of its overall survey administration procedures.

A.10. Assurance of Confidentiality

The GSS geographic identification code files are made available only to researchers under special contract with NORC. Under contract, the GSS will provide data on State, Primary sampling unit, County, & Census tract, but in no circumstances will individually identifying information (name, address, etc.) be provided.⁵

⁵ More details can be found at: <http://www3.norc.org/NR/rdonlyres/BE763862-7197-4883-B36C-062196F40C74/1805/ObtainingGSSSensitiveDataFiles2.pdf>

A.11. Questions of a Sensitive Nature

The arts supplement will ask no questions of a sensitive nature.

A.12. Estimate of Hour Burden

The estimated respondent burden is 165 hours. This is based on an average 3.5 minute interview for each of the 2,830 persons in the 2010 and 2008 panels (combined total). This estimate was based on pretesting conducted in the summer of 2011 by NORC.

A.13. Estimate of Cost Burden

There are no costs to respondents other than that of their time to respond.

A.14. Cost to Federal Government

The estimated cost to the government of the supplement is \$181,445, which will be borne by the NEA.

A.15 Reasons for Program Changes

The arts-related supplement to the 2012 GSS is a new data collection that will provide data about why Americans choose to attend—or not attend—activities such as visual arts exhibits or music, dance, or theater performances. The collection of this data has been identified through the NEA strategic plan as a critical goal.

A.16. Project Schedule

Data collection will occur in March 2012. Processing of this supplement is expected to commence in August 2012, and a public use file will be released in the spring of 2013. A summary report from NEA will be available in the fall of 2013.

A.17. Request to Not Display Expiration Date

We do not wish to display the assigned expiration date of the information collection. There are no printed questionnaires for the GSS. The survey is conducted by face-to-face interviews, and in very limited cases, by telephone.

A.18. Exceptions to the Certification

There are no exceptions to the certification.