

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Computer and Internet Use Supplement to the Census Bureau's
Current Population Survey
OMB Control No. 0660-0021

A. JUSTIFICATION

This is a request for reinstatement with change of a previously approved collection. NTIA is requesting approval by August 1, 2012 (or as soon as possible after the thirty-day comment period ends-July 25, 2012), which will allow Census the necessary time to incorporate the questions into the survey.

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

President Obama has established a national goal of universal, affordable broadband access for all Americans.¹ To that end, the Administration is working with Congress, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and other stakeholders to develop and advance economic and regulatory policies that foster broadband deployment and adoption. Current, systematic, and comprehensive data on broadband use and non-use by U.S. households are critical to allow policymakers not only to gauge progress made to date, but also to identify problem areas with a specificity that permits carefully targeted and cost effective responses.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) proposes to include 12 questions as a supplement to the U.S. Census Bureau's October 2012 Current Population Survey (CPS) in order to gather reliable data on broadband (also known as high-speed Internet) use by U.S. households. These proposed questions are a subset of the larger CPS Computer and Internet Use Supplement conducted during July 2011, with a few minor modifications. The Census Bureau is widely regarded as a superior collector of data based on its centuries of experience and its scientific methods. Collection of NTIA's requested broadband usage data, moreover, will occur in conjunction with the Census Bureau's scheduled October 2012 Current Population Survey (CPS), thereby significantly reducing the potential burdens on the Bureau and on surveyed households. Further, because these questions were asked in a previous CPS Supplement, the Bureau does not need to expend the considerable resources it would take to perform additional cognitive testing. Questions on broadband and Internet use were included in ten previous CPS surveys.

The U.S. government has an increasingly pressing need for comprehensive broadband data. The General Accountability Office (GAO), NTIA, and the FCC recently issued reports noting the lack of useful broadband data for policymakers, and Congress passed legislation – the Broadband Data Improvement Act in 2008 and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2009 –

¹ See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/20091217-recovery-act-investments-broadband.pdf> (last viewed January 30, 2012).

wholly or partly in response to such criticisms. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has ranked the United States low in the number of households with broadband access over the past several years despite a period of rapid growth in the technology's penetration. Moreover, the OECD looks to Census Bureau data as an important input into their inter-country benchmark analyses. Modifying the October 2012 CPS to include NTIA's requested broadband data will allow the Commerce Department and NTIA to respond to Congressional concerns and directives, and to work with the OECD on its broadband methodologies with more recent data.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.

The Census Bureau will collect the desired information during its October 2012 CPS and potentially on an annual basis thereafter on varying dates (e.g., July 2013) and with updated survey instruments. NTIA will use the data collected to assist the President, the Congress, and the FCC to develop targeted, sound, and cost-effective policies to foster the deployment and adoption of broadband and other Internet services throughout the United States. The data collected will also be available to the public to further policy research on broadband and other communications issues, and will be used on an international level at the OECD to better inform their broadband studies and methodologies. A prominent use for the data may be as an input into a national broadband map that NTIA continues to maintain as required by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

NTIA has made extensive use of all previous data collections. The *Digital Nation* series of reports, and the *Falling Through the Net* series that preceded it, rely heavily on the datasets produced through previous collections. Additionally, NTIA provides the survey results to the OECD for use in its global broadband metrics, and references the data to update the Census Bureau's Statistical Abstract. Our CPS-based research provides the vital backdrop against which NTIA and the Administration make informed decisions about Internet and telecommunications policy.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.

The Census Bureau will conduct personal visits and telephone interviews, using computer-assisted telephone interviewing and computer-assisted personal interviewing, and considers these techniques the most appropriate collection methodology, given existing available information technology.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

Adding the NTIA's proposed questions to the Census Bureau's October 2012 CPS will generate official geographic and demographic statistics on broadband and Internet usage in the United States that is unavailable with such attributes from any other source. To NTIA's knowledge, there are no other current data sources that can provide the depth and reliability of information on broadband adoption and usage that is available from the CPS.

5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.

Not Applicable.

6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

If the information collection is not conducted, comprehensive and reliable data that are essential to the development of sound and cost-effective government policies regarding broadband adoption and usage and, more broadly, the Internet, would be unattainable.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

Not Applicable.

8. Provide information of the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

The Federal Register Notice soliciting public comment was published on April 4, 2012 (Vol. 77, pg. 20367). No comments were received.

NTIA consulted with the following person(s) concerning the development of the proposed questions:

Christopher Laskey, Census Bureau, (301) 763-5312
Lisa Clement, Census Bureau, (301) 763-5482
Gregory Weyland, Census Bureau, (301) 763-3790
Robert Kominski, Census Bureau, (301) 763-2120

The result of these consultations is NTIA's 12 proposed supplemental questions. The advance letter referred to in response to Question 10 provide respondents with an address at the Census Bureau and at the OMB to which they can submit general comments on the survey, specifically those regarding respondent burden.

9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

Not Applicable.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

The Census Bureau will collect CPS data (including NTIA's proposed supplemental questions) in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974. Each sample household will receive an advance letter approximately one week before the start of the initial CPS interview. The letter includes the information required by the Privacy Act, informs each respondent of the voluntary nature of the survey, and states the estimated time required for participating in the survey.

Additionally, interviewers must ask each respondent if he/she received the advance letter and, if not, will provide a copy of the letter to each respondent and allow sufficient time for him/her to read its contents. Upon request, interviewers also provide households with the pamphlet on "How the Census Bureau Keeps Your Information Strictly Confidential," which reaffirms the confidentiality assurances and mentions the Census Bureau's past performance in assuring confidentiality. All information given by respondents to Census Bureau employees is held in strict confidence under Title 13, United States Code, Section 9. Each Census Bureau employee has taken an oath to that effect and is subject to a jail penalty and/or a substantial fine if he/she discloses any information given to him/her.

Advance Letter and Pamphlet are Supplementary Documents in ROCIS.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

NTIA's proposed supplemental questions are not of a sensitive nature.

12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.

The Census Bureau estimates that the total annual respondent burden for NTIA's proposed 12 new questions is **2,700** hours (3 minutes per household X 54,000 households in the CPS sample).

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).

None.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.

The Census Bureau is charging NTIA \$300,000 to include the 12 supplemental questions in this year's CPS and produce summary tables and a Microdata file based on the results.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

This request is a reinstatement with change: NTIA has revised the survey questions based on feedback from previous collections, as well as to keep up with the changing technological landscape surrounding computer and Internet use.

16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.

The Census Bureau will conduct the CPS in October 2012. During the months that follow, the Bureau will produce summary tables and a Microdata file for NTIA, and ultimately a public use file for the dataset that will be posted online. NTIA will use the results to produce an in-depth research report, and will publish it and post the summary tables online. The final report will be produced during calendar year 2013, and will likely make use of complex statistical techniques such as regression analysis. A copy of NTIA's most recent *Digital Nation* report, which analyzed the results of the information collected from the previous inclusion of broadband questions in the CPS, is available in ROCIS as a supplementary document.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.

Not Applicable.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

There are no exceptions to the certification.