

**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 (July)**  
**OMB Control No. 0660-0021**

**JUSTIFICATION**

This expedited review request revision will clarify certain previously approved questions and update others used as a supplement to the Bureau of the Census' Current Population Survey. The proposed questions will reflect rapidly changing broadband device technology. The requested date for approval is June 14, 2013, 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

For example, in accordance with the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) released in January 2013, its initial study of the potential use of up to 195 megahertz (MHz) of spectrum in the 5 gigahertz (GHz) band by Unlicensed-National Information Infrastructure (U-NII) devices that offer short-range, high-speed unlicensed wireless connections for such applications as Wi-Fi local area networks and wireless Internet service providers' fixed broadband transceivers. Unlicensed wireless broadband systems are essential complements to commercial mobile and fixed wireline broadband networks. Consequently, the revised survey addressed by this request seeks information about how and where consumers use mobile devices, such as smartphones, laptops, tablets, and netbooks, at home or anywhere. The resulting data will provide important longitudinal information for the Administration, the FCC, Congress, and broadband service providers about the growing demand for wireless broadband. While NTIA introduced survey questions on mobile broadband in 2010, eleven previous CPS supplements have included questions on home Internet use.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/20091217-recovery-act-investments-broadband.pdf> (last viewed March 25, 2013).

Further, in reforming the Lifeline universal service program, which now subsidizes telephone service for qualified low income consumers, the FCC launched on February 1, 2013, an 18-month pilot program to explore extending the program to increase broadband adoption among economically disadvantaged telephone subscribers. Past Computer and Internet Use supplements have periodically identified the expense of broadband service as one of the most significant deterrents to broadband adoption at home. Therefore, NTIA urges expedited processing of this revised supplement to obtain certain baseline information as the FCC pilot projects begin. Questions on use of bundled or standalone broadband service will yield data from approximately 40,500 households to inform the FCC's decision about the appropriate subsidy type and level as it modernizes the Lifeline program. In addition, questions for non-users regarding their concerns about the cost of service, hardware, and installation will allow public and private organizations to tailor future broadband adoption programs to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency.

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 – wholly or partly in response to such criticisms. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation 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 its inter-country benchmark analyses. Modifying the October 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.

The need for comprehensive broadband data has become more pressing in recent months and necessitated this request for expedited review. The availability of nationwide broadband data has increased since the Broadband Data Improvement Act in 2008 and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2009 required NTIA and the FCC to establish the National Broadband Map. NTIA launched the map in February 2011, and updates it semi-annually. In 2012, NTIA contracted the Census Bureau to merge data from the map with the results of the July 2011 Computer and Internet Use Supplement to obtain more granular Census block data. While NTIA looks forward to the possibility of a similar data merger with July 2013 CPS survey data, it will require OMB's expedited review of this data collection request to enable NTIA and Census to begin the necessary planning. Finally, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has ranked the United States a disappointing number 14 or higher in household broadband access for several years despite a period of rapid growth in the technology's penetration. The OECD looks to Census data as an important input into its inter-country benchmark analyses.

Revision: NTIA proposes to add one question to the U.S. Census Bureau's July 2013 Current Population Survey (CPS) in order to gather reliable data on broadband (also known as high-speed Internet) use by U.S. households, totaling 53 for the new supplement. These questions are taken from the 2011 Broadband Subscription and Usage Survey, which expired December 31,

2011, and the 2012 Computer and “Internet Use Supplement, which will expire on September 30, 2015. A chart of the changes is included. .

The Census Bureau (“the 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 Bureau’s scheduled July 2013 Current Population Survey (CPS), thereby significantly reducing the potential burdens on the Bureau and on surveyed households.

**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.**

NTIA will use the data collected to assist the President, the Congress, the FCC, and the States 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 its broadband studies and methodologies. A prominent use for the data will include matching this adoption data with corresponding household broadband availability data of a similar vintage from the NTIA National Broadband Map (NBM). NTIA must maintain the NBM 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 *Nation Online* and *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 proposed questions to the Census Bureau's July 2013 basic 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 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 Census Bureau does not collect the requested information, the 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 will publish subsequent to the submission of this request to the Office of Management and Budget.

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

Lisa Clement, Census Bureau, (301) 763-5482  
Greg Weyland, Census Bureau, (301) 763-3790  
Robert Kominski, Census Bureau, (301) 763-2120

The result of these consultations is NTIA's 53 proposed supplemental questions. The advance letter referred to in response to Question 10 below (submitted as part of this request), provides respondents with an address at the Census Bureau 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 of 1974, 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. Census Bureau employees hold all respondents' information 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. The pamphlet is included with this submitted request.

**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.**

Not Applicable.

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

The Census Bureau estimates that the response time for NTIA's proposed 53 questions is 10 minutes per household for the 40,500 households in the CPS sample for a total burden of **6,750 hours**.

**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).**

Not Applicable.

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

The Census Bureau is charging NTIA \$600,000 to include the 53 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.**

Program Increase and Decrease: The response time to complete the supplement in the CPS increased to 10 minutes and the the number of responses has decreased from 54,000 to 40,500. This has resulted in an increase of 4,050 burden hours and a decrease of 13,500 responses.

The survey instrument has been revised based on feedback from previous collections, as well as to keep up with the changing technological and economic 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 July 2013. 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 it will post online. NTIA will use the results to produce an in-depth research report, and will publish it and post the summary tables online. NTIA will produce the final report during calendar year 2014, 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 included as part of this request.

**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.**

Not Applicable.