

July 11, 2012

Memorandum for: Reviewer of 1220-0175

CC: Dori Allard

From: Rachel Krantz-Kent  
Stephanie Denton

Subject: Instrument changes to the 2013 American Time Use Survey

The ATUS staff has recently undertaken several projects in an ongoing effort to increase response rates. One such project was conducting a Refusal Avoidance Workshop with ATUS interviewers. Feedback from the interviewers during the workshop revealed two areas in the survey instrument that could be improved. Based on this feedback, the following two changes are proposed for the 2013 ATUS collection instrument:

- Modify the language in the survey introduction text
- Delete a redundant follow-up question for the household roster

#### **I. Modify ATUS introduction text**

As the first contact with an ATUS interviewer, the introduction text explains the purpose of the survey and how the data are used. This information should be presented in such a way as to motivate the sampled person to participate in the survey. ATUS interviewers revealed that the current introduction text raises more questions than answers about the purpose and use of ATUS data. Based on further review by survey methodologists in the BLS Office of Survey Methods Research, ATUS proposes the following changes to the introductory text:

Hello, I'm ... from the U.S. Census Bureau. We are conducting a survey for the Bureau of Labor Statistics on how people in America spend their time. ~~Lawmakers and businesses will use t~~ *This information to develop policies that help will be used to find out how people balance work, child care, leisure, and other activities in their lives. This is a one-time only survey and will take about 20 minutes.*

Did you receive our mailing for the American Time Use Survey explaining the importance of this survey and requesting your participation?

- Yes (continue to survey)
- No (read the following):

- o ~~The American Time Use Survey measures how people balance their time between work, family and other activities. The As I mentioned, this survey will help lawmakers understand competing~~

~~demands on people's time~~ provide information about how people balance their time. I would like you to know that all the information you provide for this voluntary survey is confidential. This survey is authorized by Title 13, Section 8 and 9. The OMB number is 1220-0175.  
(continue to survey)

The current text states that ATUS data are used by lawmakers to develop policies. Interviewers say this often leads to difficult questions about how ATUS data are used to develop or impact policy, and interviewers do not have a good answer for these questions. While lawmakers do use ATUS data, we cannot answer exactly which laws and policies have been influenced by survey results. In addition, references to "businesses" raise concerns about privacy and also has the potential to confuse the ATUS with telemarketing. Because of this, we think it's important to revise the language and omit any mention of lawmakers, policy, and businesses.

Another issue that the proposed changes address is the text that interviewers read to respondents who did not receive the advance materials. The interviewers feel it is too long and potential respondents become impatient. The proposed changes shorten the paragraph and also omit references to lawmakers and policy.

## **II. Delete redundant follow-up question after household roster**

During the household roster section of the ATUS, the interviewer reviews the household roster, which includes the name, sex, birth date, and age of each household member, as well as his or her relationship to the respondent. The ATUS household roster begins with the roster recorded in month-in-sample-8 (MIS-8) of the Current Population Survey (CPS). The interviewer verifies and updates the roster to reflect any changes in the household since the final CPS interview. To collect the information, the interviewer asks three questions:

- STILLIV: "I have listed [*list of names from MIS-8 CPS interview*]... Do all these persons still live here?"
- FNAME: "Who else is living or staying here now?"
- NEWLIV: "Is anyone else living or staying here now?"

We would like to delete the question NEWLIV since this question is redundant. ATUS interviewers rarely add any new people to the household roster and it is even rarer that they add someone as a result of this question because it is preceded by two similar questions.

No additional changes to the ATUS are proposed other than the changes listed above. The current OMB inventory of burden hours will not change with the proposed changes.