

## Memorandum

Subject: Request for a non-substantive change in translation resources provided to Spanish-language interviewers in the Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement (OMB Control No. 0536-0043).

Date: May 14, 2013

From: Mark Nord, ERS Sociologist

To: Jennifer Park, Statistical and Science Policy, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget

The Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement (CPS-FSS) is conducted annually by the U.S. Census Bureau for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service (ERS). The survey is the primary data source for ERS's annual report series, *Household Food Security in the United States*. CPS-FSS Data are also used for research on food security measurement and determinants of food security.

Prior to 2012, bilingual interviewers translated into Spanish "on the fly" for households that could not be interviewed effectively in English. Psychometric analysis of food security response data suggested that the results of this process were reasonably comparable with results from interviews conducted in English, but there was some evidence of differential item function (DIF) for several items that could introduce mild biases into comparisons of prevalence rates of food insecurity between Hispanic and non-Hispanic households.

In order to improve and standardize interviewing in Spanish, ERS has taken two steps. The first step, implemented in December 2012, provided a Spanish translation of the CPS-FSS questions that are used to determine the food security status of interviewed households. The second step, to be implemented in December 2013, will provide a Spanish translation of the rest of the supplement, comprising questions on food spending, food spending required to meet household needs, and the use of Federal and community food and nutrition assistance programs. The Census Bureau does not currently load translations of CPS supplements into the computerized interviewing instrument (CAPI/CATI), but they are able to provide ERS-authorized translations to interviewers as a reference in order to standardize Spanish-language interviews.

Translations of the core food security questions—those used to classify households as to food security status—were drawn from earlier validated Spanish translations, including Harrison et al. (“Development of a Spanish-Language Version of the U.S. Household Food Security Survey Module,” by Gail G. Harrison, Ame Stormer, Dena R. Herman, and Donna M. Winham, *Journal of Nutrition* 133(4): 1192-1197, April 2003), the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (National Center for Health Statistics), and the National Health Interview Survey (National Center for Health Statistics). Translations were harmonized by bilingual staff at ERS and the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, and reviewed by a food security researcher at the University of Puerto Rico and by bilingual Census Bureau interviewers. (Please see attachment: “USDA Spanish Language Food Security Module.”)

The translation was used in almost 500 interviews in the December 2012 CPS-FSS. The sample is too small to support definitive psychometric analysis, but preliminary analysis by ERS suggests that the questions were understood consistently, although it is not clear that the extent of differential item function was reduced.

The translation and cognitive testing of the rest of the Supplement was conducted by Mathematica Policy Research under a contract with ERS. Details of the translation process and cognitive testing, along with the final translation, are provided. (Please see attachment: “Cognitive Testing of a Translation of Part of the Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.”)