

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau
November 2013 Email Address Collection Test Supplement
OMB Control Number 0607 - XXXX

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Necessity of the Information Collection

The Census Bureau requests clearance for the collection of data concerning the November 2013 Email Address Collection Test Supplement. The Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) sponsor the Current Population Survey (CPS) which has been conducted for over 70 years.

The CPS has collected data on household employment for decades. Through the years, survey improvements were made to keep the data quality and survey response rates high. Over the last few years, CPS, like many surveys, has seen response rates declining slowly. A review of paradata has found one of the main reasons for this decline is not just refusals but also respondent avoidance (i.e. the interviewers are unable to make contact with the respondent). This has led to an effort to think of new ways to contact respondents and reduce respondent burden so that they may be more likely to answer CPS over the many months needed.

One of the solutions recommended is to research the possibility of using the Internet as a data collection mode as well as a tool to help increase response rates. We foresee that in the future, we could collect email addresses from our respondents. For those that are eligible, we could then send an email to the respondent with a secure link allowing the respondent to complete the CPS the next month over the Internet and in turn, keep up response rates while lowering costs of interviewing. Internet is not limited to just a survey data collection mode. These emails could be used for other contacts as well. We could allow the respondent to set up a time to meet with the interviewer at their convenience and save on travel costs associated with the multiple personal visits. The email could also serve as a "Thank You" with information that lets respondents know their participation is helping improve the quality of our data.

This supplement is the first step in the review of the feasibility of this plan. It will test the ability of collecting email addresses and collecting interest in being contacted by email or answering the survey through the Internet for possible future enhancements to CPS.

Title 13, United States Code, Sections 141, 181, and 182 and Title 29, United States Code, Sections 1-9 authorize the collection of this information by the US Census Bureau. Title 29, United States Code, Sections 1-9, authorizes the collection of labor force data in the CPS for BLS.

2. Needs and Uses

The information collected during this field test will primarily be used to determine the ability to collect email addresses for respondents and review characteristics of those respondents. We will review to see what factors or characteristics of the household, respondent or the interview effect the ability to collect a valid address.

We will also use the data to see how the respondents respond on interest in other modes. Again, we will look at this data across housing, person and interview characteristics to see if they impact the responses.

The results of this test will inform us whether there are enough respondents willing to do CPS by self-administered web that we could contact through email to pursue the next steps in development and testing of new modes of contact and collection for CPS. The overall combination of results of email address collection and opinions given will be used in determining next steps.

Information quality is an integral part of the pre-dissemination review of the information disseminated by the Census bureau (fully described in the Census Bureau's Information Quality Guidelines). Information quality is also integral to the information collections conducted by the Census Bureau and is incorporated into the clearance process required by the Paperwork Reduction Act.

3. Use of Information Technology

Since January 1984, we have collected the CPS data using computer-assisted interviewing. We designed the supplemental questions to obtain the required information with minimal respondent burden. The proposed items and interviewer procedures were developed over years of consultation among the Census Bureau, BLS, and other government agencies. The use of computer-assisted personal and telephone interviewing is deemed the most appropriate collection methodology given existing available information technology.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

There are other tests going on within the Census Bureau to identify ways to contact respondents by email, but there have been only a few tests of collecting email addresses. All of these so far have been self-administered situations (either on a paper form in the American Community Survey or in Decennial experiments on web surveys). None have been in an interviewer administered setting or have been for a survey with multiple contacts such as CPS.

5. Efforts to Minimize Burden on Small Business

The collection does not involve small businesses or other small entities.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

This will be a one-time collection. Without this data collection, any future development of this mode or contact method would be ill informed.

7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances. We collect the CPS data in a manner that is consistent with the OMB guidelines.

8. Consultations Outside the Agency

The following person has been in frequent consultation concerning the development of this supplement:

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BLS has a vested interest in collection of the email addresses and any future enhancements to CPS either by new contact methods or a new mode. The result of these consultations is the final set of questions and definition of analysis. In addition, a statement soliciting comments for improving the CPS data is prominently placed in all the Census Bureau publications that cite the CPS data. Also, we published a notice of our intent to ask the email address test questions in the July 30, 2013, edition of the Federal Register (see Vol. 78 pg 45910). We have received one comment to date and it has been deemed irrelevant to the collection. The CPS advance letter (see attachment D) provides respondents with an address at the Census Bureau to which they can submit general comments

on the survey and specifically those comments regarding respondent burden.

9. Paying Respondents

The Census Bureau does not make any payments or provide any gifts to individuals participating in the CPS.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

The Census Bureau will collect the November 2013 Email Address Collection Test data in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974 and the OMB Circular A-130. Each sample household receives an advance letter approximately one week before the start of the initial CPS interview (see Attachment D). The letter includes the information required by the Privacy Act of 1974, explains the voluntary nature of the survey, and states the estimated time required for participating in the survey. Interviewers must ask if the respondent received the letter and, if not, provide a copy and allow the respondent sufficient time to read the contents. Also, interviewers provide households with the pamphlet *The U.S. Census Bureau Respects Your Privacy and Protects Your Personal Information*, which further states the confidentiality assurances associated with this data collection effort and the Census Bureau's past performance in assuring confidentiality (see Attachment C). All information given by respondents to Census Bureau employees is held in strict confidence under Title 13, United States Code, Section 9. Every Census Bureau employee has taken an oath to that effect and is subject to a jail penalty or substantial fine if they disclose any information given to them.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

The November 2013 Email Address Collection Test Supplement does not include any questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimate of Hour Burden

The estimated respondent burden is 1,375 hours. This is based on an average three-minute interview for each of the 27,500 households in the supplement universe. This estimate was based on the time testing of the questions during cognitive interviewing.

13. Estimate of Cost Burden

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

14. Cost to Federal Government

The estimated cost to the government for the CPS program is \$92 million in FY 2013. The costs are to be borne by the Census Bureau, the BLS, and other government agencies, if involved. We estimate the cost of the supplement on email address collection to be \$300,000, all in FY 2014.

15. Reasons for Change in Burden

The change in the burden is as a result of this collection being submitted as new.

16. Project Schedule

The November CPS, of which this supplement is a part, will be conducted during the week of CPS interviewing. Processing of this supplement will commence in December. There will be no Public Use data release. Final reports will follow in late 2014.

17. Request to Not Display Expiration Date

The November Supplement is administered as part of the CPS monthly interview. However, this supplement (as well as all the CPS supplements) bears an OMB control number and expiration date which is different from the basic CPS interview. The OMB control number and expiration date for the CPS basic interview is included in the advance letter we give respondents (see Attachment D). Because of these complexities and the anticipated respondent confusion involved with expressing a separate control number and expiration date to respondents for the supplement questions, we do not wish to display the OMB control number and expiration date for the CPS November Supplement.

18. Exceptions to the Certification

There are no exceptions to the certification.