

The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). The purpose of this cognitive research is to conduct qualitative interviews with student housing experts at both colleges/universities and private apartment complexes to learn how these experts think of “apartment style” student housing. The results of this research will be used to refine the Census Bureau’s “student housing group quarters” definition. The testing is sponsored by the Census Bureau Student Housing Definition Group Quarters Team (SHDGQT). This letter contains two protocols for the research (see Attachments A and B).

Between March and June 2016, staff from the Center for Survey Measurement (CSM) will conduct up to 30 qualitative interviews over three rounds, with no more than 10 interviews per round. The interviews will encompass two types of student housing experts – those employed by colleges or universities and those who manage private apartment complexes. Each of the attached protocols corresponds to one of the types of student housing experts. The first round of interviews will provide information needed to refine the current definition of student housing group quarters, while the second round (and third, if necessary) will be used to evaluate the refined definition.

In these qualitative interviews, researchers will ask the participants about the various types of housing available to students at nearby colleges or universities and they will ask for them to describe the characteristics of these housing options. We will ask participants to describe details of the properties such as the types of leases available to residents, how access to the units is obtained, what amenities are available, and what proportion of the residents are students. Subsequently, we will ask questions about other nearby properties and request that the participants describe how the housing buildings they manage are similar or different. Finally, we will explicitly introduce the concept of “group quarters” (see Attachment C) and probe to find out how participants define the concept of “student housing group quarters.” At the end of the interview, we will show participants the current student housing definition and ask for feedback (see Attachment D)

CSM staff will recruit for these qualitative interviews using a list of potentially problematic properties identified by the SHDGQT (some because their group quarters status is difficult to determine while others have changed housing type status across data collections). A scheduling script will be used to arrange an interview time. When an email address is available, we will first send an email message to schedule an interview time. The email message will be followed by one or more telephone calls to finalize meeting plans. Apartment complex participants need to be a property manager (or in a similar role) for one or more of the identified problematic properties. Meanwhile, college / university housing participants need to work in a Housing Office on campus and have knowledge of their college/university’s residential housing inventory. Participants may not be employed by the Federal government and must speak English. The scheduling script is also attached to this memo (see Attachment E).

Qualitative interviews will be conducted in person, and over the telephone, as necessary. In order to increase the specificity and accuracy of the information provided by participants, in-person

interviews will be conducted on site at the properties managed by the participants. This will also reduce participant burden by removing the need for them to travel to a meeting location.

All interviews will be tape-recorded to facilitate a summary of the results. Participants will be asked to sign consent forms and give permission to be recorded (see Attachment F). All participants will be informed that their response is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential. Participants will not receive any payment for their participation.

We estimate that five contacts will be necessary to schedule one participant. Each contact (telephone or email) lasts approximately three minutes. Therefore, we will use approximately 7.5 hours to schedule 30 respondents. We estimate that 60 minutes is necessary to conduct one qualitative interview, regardless of mode of administration (telephone, in-person). Thus, the total estimated burden for this project is 37.5 hours.

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and study design is:

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