

## Generic Information Collection Request

**Request:** The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for the collection of routine customer feedback (OMB number 0690-0030). We propose to conduct and seek approval for an online cognitive test of behavioral survey questions that contain reference periods.

**Purpose:** This planned research is an online cognitive test of survey questions about behaviors in a “typical week” as well as “last week.” The goal is to capture how respondents understand the reference periods in regards to each behavior, and how respondents formulate their answers, including when they do not have a “typical” week in regards to one or more behaviors. The planned research will focus on assessing and improving behavioral survey questions with reference periods.

**Population of Interest:** The planned cognitive testing will focus on assessing and improving behavioral survey questions for the general population.

**Timeline:** Testing will be conducted over 1-2 weeks in either March 2017 or April 2017, depending on when approval is received, with a maximum of 500 testers.

**Language:** Testing will be conducted in English only.

**Sample:** Staff from the Center for Survey Measurement (CSM) will sample 5,000 email addresses from the Affinity Panel. This panel is comprised of people who have opted to participate in research studies for the Census Bureau; currently there are over 42,000 email addresses in the panel. We expect to achieve a 10% response rate, determined by experience with other recent studies, with a goal of 500 completes for this study.

**Recruitment:** Participants will be recruited by email through GovDelivery. Participants will receive up to three emails:

- An initial email,
- A reminder email three days after the initial email (if they have not yet clicked on the link to the survey), and
- A final reminder email seven days after the initial email (if they have not yet clicked on the link to the survey) with the survey closing eleven days after the initial email.

Depending upon when OMB approval is received, the data collection period may decrease from two weeks to one week, and the second of these three emails would be eliminated. Copies of these emails are included in Enclosure 1.

Participants can respond to the voluntary research study at a time convenient for them. They can also opt-out at any time.

**Method:** Participants will be invited to participate in the study via a link sent by email as described above. They will use their own smartphones, tablets, or desktop/laptop devices to complete the study. The study will be open for 1 or 2 weeks.

CSM will host the study using SurveyMonkey and will collect no personally identifiable data. The questions and tasks asked and messages shown to respondents are shown in Enclosure 2.

**Protocol:** All respondents will receive the same questions.

First, respondents will receive a randomized block of questions about the frequency of four key behaviors in a “typical week;” each behavioral question will be followed by an open-ended question asking how the respondent arrived at their answer. At the end of this block respondents will be asked what a “typical week” meant in the previous questions and whether this meant the same thing in each question.

Second, respondents will receive a randomized block of questions about the frequency of these same four behaviors “last week;” each behavioral question will be followed by an open-ended question asking how the respondent arrived at their answer, with a direction to include the days of the week they engaged in the behavior.

Third, respondents will receive a final randomized block of questions; these include whether the previous questions about a “typical week” were just as easy as about “last week” for each behavior, and whether the respondent engages in the behavior the same number of days each week. Each of these will be followed by an open-ended question allowing for more detailed responses.

Fourth, respondents will receive a few demographic questions.

**Consent:** Participants will be informed of the OMB number and the voluntary nature of the study in the recruitment emails (see Enclosures).

**Use of Incentive:** No incentives will be used in this research.

Below is a list of materials to be used in the current study:

1. Emails sent to respondents inviting them to participate (Enclosure 1)
2. Questions/tasks from study (Enclosure 2)

**Length of interview:** We estimate 10 minutes per respondent, overall. We estimate one minute for each of the three emails that each sampled case will receive.

In order to meet project deadlines for this work, we need to receive OMB approval no later than March 21, 2017.

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and statistical aspects of the design of this research is listed below:

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