

# Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for Questionnaire Testing and Research” (OMB Control Number: 1905-0186)

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## Web/Mail Cities Pilot Test of Form EIA-457A, “Residential Energy Consumption Survey”

**PURPOSE:** The Residential Energy Consumption Survey (RECS) is a periodic series of surveys of households and their energy suppliers with the purpose of collecting and reporting energy characteristics, consumption, and expenditures data of homes in the United States. The data are widely used throughout the government and the private sector for understanding current and future U.S. energy needs and are made available to the public via data tables, public-use data files, and analysis articles.

The Household Survey phase of EIA’s RECS program (Form 457A) has been conducted primarily using in-person interviews since its inception in the late 1970s. Since 1997, EIA and its contractors have used computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) as the means to collect critical household and structural characteristics related to energy use in the residential sector. With the rising cost of in-person interviews and the time lapse between each RECS cycle, EIA seeks to test the feasibility, cost effectiveness, time efficiency, and response validity of conducting the RECS Household Survey in self-administered (Web and mail) modes. If proven successful, these new modes of collection will make data collection more sustainable, flexible, and cost effective for the RECS program. Using Web and mail modes of data collection may also allow EIA to extend program capacities in the future to cover special topics and data gaps, as well as develop estimates for small areas.

EIA will conduct a Cities Pilot test of the Household Survey using data collection modes other than CAPI. It will also test the use of open ended responses to specific appliance usage questions. Results of the Cities Pilot should inform EIA on the feasibility and cost to produce key statistical measures at the same level of quality that are produced from the CAPI data collection mode. EIA will evaluate response propensity and data quality by Web and mail respondents to determine optimal mode mix, contact strategies, and statistical methodologies for future RECS studies. EIA will also evaluate open-ended responses to the appliance usage questions to inform optimal question-response strategies in follow-on tests and future RECS household survey cycles.

This pilot test will be conducted in five U.S. cities – Worcester, MA; Chicago, IL; Jacksonville, FL; Seattle, WA; and San Diego, CA. EIA estimates a total of 2,200 completed household surveys and an average of 25 minutes per complete. (See note below regarding per response burden estimate.) All responses will be collected from self-administered (Web or mail mode) questionnaires. The total respondent burden to conduct the Cities Pilot is estimated to be 917 hours.

*Note about burden estimate:* The questionnaire burden estimates per response are based on a household energy use study conducted in 2014 by the Joint Program in Survey Methodology (JPSM) at the University of Maryland. This study fielded a RECS-like household survey with input from EIA. Respondents answered an average of 97 questions and median web response

was 22 minutes for an average item response of 13.6 seconds. We applied this estimate to determine the per response burden estimate for the questionnaire being used for the Cities Pilot.

The questionnaire used for this pilot test will include updates from the CAPI instrument used for the most recent survey, the 2009 RECS. This includes new questions requested by stakeholders and key data users, as well as modified questions and response options to adapt to self-administered modes of collection. Some of the Cities Pilot questions and response options are informed by feedback from recently completed cognitive testing. EIA will analyze the quality of these new or modified items and apply lessons learned to future studies. For example, the Cities Pilot questionnaire will include revised appliance usage questions with open-ended response options for dishwasher, stove use, cooktop use, oven use, microwave use, dishwasher use, clothes washer use, dryer use, most-used TV weekday watching use, most-used TV weekend watching use, second most-used TV weekday watching use, and second TV most-used TV weekend watching use. EIA will analyze responses for these items to determine which Cities Pilot methodologies should be used in future rounds of testing.

**DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:** The Household Survey Cities Pilot sample of households will be drawn from a frame of housing units using the U.S. Postal Service Delivery Sequence File (DSF). Respondents will represent the general population.

**TYPE OF COLLECTION:** (Check one)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field Testing            | <input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive Interviews |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Usability Testing        | <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Groups         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pilot Surveys | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respondent Debriefings   |   |

**CERTIFICATION:**

I certify the following to be true regarding the proposed collection of information:

1. It is necessary for the proper performance of agency functions.
2. It avoids unnecessary duplication.
3. It reduces burden on small entities.
4. It uses plain, coherent, and unambiguous language that is understandable to respondents.
5. Its implementation will be consistent and compatible with current reporting and recordkeeping practices.
6. It indicates the retention periods for recordkeeping requirements.
7. It informs respondents of the information called for under 5 CFR 1320.8 (b)(3) about:
  - i. Why the information is being collected;
  - ii. Use of information;
  - iii. Burden estimate;
  - iv. Nature of response (voluntary, required for a benefit, or mandatory);
  - v. Nature and extent of confidentiality; and
  - vi. Need to display currently valid OMB control number
8. It was developed by an office that has planned and allocated resources for the efficient and effective management and use of the information to be collected.
9. It uses effective and efficient statistical survey methodology (if applicable).

10. It makes appropriate use of information technology.

Name: Nanda Srinivasan, Director, Office of Survey Development and Statistical Integration  
U.S. Energy Information Administration

To assist review, please provide answers to the following questions:

**Personally Identifiable Information:**

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected?  Yes  No
2. If Yes, will any information that is collected be included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974?  Yes  No
3. If Yes, has an up-to-date System of Records Notice (SORN) been published?  Yes  No

**Gifts or Payments:**

Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants?  Yes  No

The Cities Pilot will use a \$2 unconditional incentive included with the survey request and a \$10 promised incentive for those who complete the survey.

**BURDEN HOURS**

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
Individuals/Householders: Web/Mail Cities Pilot	2,200	25 minutes	917 hours
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,200</b>		<b>917 hours</b>

**FEDERAL COST:** The estimated cost to the Federal government is \$1,500,000. This includes the entire cost of designing the Cities Pilot, sample design, building Web and paper instruments, data collection, respondent incentives, post collection statistical activities, analysis, documentation, and reporting.

**If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:**

**The selection of your targeted respondents**

1. Do you have a customer list or something similar that defines the universe of potential respondents and do you have a sampling plan for selecting from this universe?  
 Yes  No

If the answer is yes, please provide a description of both below (or attach the sampling plan)? If the answer is no, please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them?

The population of interest for the Cities Pilot is all occupied housing units within the five cities. The sampling approach is to select a systematic sample of housing units from an address-based

sampling frame within each of the five cities. The frame will be stratified by city and energy related characteristics. Equal sample will be allocated to each city.

**Administration of the Instrument**

1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)

Web-based or other forms of Social Media

Telephone

In-person

Mail

Other, Explain

2. Will interviewers or facilitators be used?  Yes  No

**Please make sure that all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.**

Instructions for completing Request for Approval under the  
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**TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:** Provide the name of the collection that is the subject of the request. (e.g. Comment card for soliciting feedback on xxxx)

**PURPOSE:** Provide a brief description of the purpose of this collection and how it will be used. If this is part of a larger study or effort, please include this in your explanation.

**DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:** Provide a brief description of the targeted group or groups for this collection of information. These groups must have experience with the program.

**TYPE OF COLLECTION:** Check one box. If you are requesting approval of other instruments under the generic, you must complete a form for each instrument.

**CERTIFICATION:** Please read the certification carefully. If you incorrectly certify, the collection will be returned as improperly submitted or it will be disapproved.

**Personally Identifiable Information:** Provide answers to the questions. Note: Agencies should only collect PII to the extent necessary, and they should only retain PII for the period of time that is necessary to achieve a specific objective.

**Gifts or Payments:** If you answer yes to the question, please describe the incentive and provide a justification for the amount.

**BURDEN HOURS:**

**Category of Respondents:** Identify who you expect the respondents to be in terms of the following categories: (1) Individuals or Households; (2) Private Sector; (3) State, local, or tribal governments; or (4) Federal Government. Only one type of respondent can be selected per row.

**No. of Respondents:** Provide an estimate of the Number of respondents.

**Participation Time:** Provide an estimate of the amount of time required for a respondent to participate (e.g. fill out a survey or participate in a focus group)

**Burden:** Provide the Annual burden hours: Multiply the Number of responses and the participation time and divide by 60.

**FEDERAL COST:** Provide an estimate of the annual cost to the Federal government.

**If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:**

**The selection of your targeted respondents.** Please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them. If the answer is yes, to the first question, you may provide the sampling plan in an attachment.

**Administration of the Instrument:** Identify how the information will be collected. More than one box may be checked. Indicate whether there will be interviewers (e.g. for surveys) or facilitators (e.g., for focus groups) used.

**Submit all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.**