

December 10, 2014

Brian Harris-Kotejin

Senior Statistician, Statistical and Science Policy Branch

Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs

Office of Management and Budget

Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Harris-Kotejin:

The U.S. Census Bureau requests your assistance and cooperation in submitting to OMB the attached request for emergency clearance of an information collection request, “Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey (ASEC Parallel Survey).” We are requesting OMB conclude its review as soon as possible, but no later than February 28, 2015.

This data collection will be completely separate and independent from the ASEC conducted in February, March, and April. This data collection will employ the questionnaire used in survey year 2013, prior to the recent redesign of income and health insurance questions in 2014. The resulting data will serve to provide a baseline for comparison to a scheduled data collection in February, March, and April from the 2015 ASEC, which will consist of the redesigned questions.

For this data collection, information on work experience, personal income, noncash benefits, current and previous year health insurance coverage, employer-sponsored insurance take-up, and migration is collected economic forces, such as inflation, recession, recovery, and so on, and their differential effects on various population groups.

A prime statistic of interest is the classification of people in poverty and how this measurement has changed over time for various groups. Researchers evaluate ASEC income data not only to determine poverty levels but also to determine whether government programs are reaching eligible households.

With regard to the circumstances necessitating an emergency clearance, the Census Bureau learned of pending Congressional legislation in late 2014 requiring the Census Bureau to collect data on health insurance in 2015, using the data collection instrument employed in March 2013. Given the timing of this determination, we are requesting a waiver of the 60-day federal register notice so that OMB clearance is obtained in time to avoid the delay of data collection for this congressionally-mandated survey.

We request that your office expedite review and approve of this request. If you have any questions or need more information regarding this request, contact Lisa Clement or Tim Marshall at 301-763-3806.