

1 Supporting Statement
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Computer and Internet Use Supplement to the Census Bureau's Current Population
Survey
OMB Control No. 0660-0021

A. Justification

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) respectfully requests OMB's review and approval of a revision of a currently approved collection by June 15, 2015. OMB's decision by that date will allow the U.S. Census Bureau (Census or the Bureau) the necessary time to incorporate questions on computer and Internet use as a supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS) it plans to administer in mid-July 2015. The subject information collection updates the 2012 CPS supplement (OMB Control No. 0660-0021, expiration September 30, 2015) and the 2013 CPS supplement (OMB Control No. 0660-0021, expiration December 31, 2013). (See Attachment A-1 for a side-by-side comparison of the 2013 and 2015 supplements).

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

President Obama has established a national goal of universal, affordable broadband access for all Americans.¹ To that end, the Administration is working with Congress, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and other stakeholders to develop and advance economic and regulatory policies that foster broadband deployment and adoption. Current, systematic, and comprehensive data on broadband use and non-use by U.S. households are critical to allow policymakers not only to gauge progress made to date, but also to identify problem areas with a specificity that permits carefully targeted and cost effective responses.

NTIA proposes to add 61 questions to Census' July 2015 CPS to gather reliable data on broadband (also known as high-speed Internet) use by U.S. households. Census is widely regarded as a superior collector of data based on its centuries of experience and its scientific methods. Coordinating NTIA's requested collection on broadband usage data with the Bureau's scheduled July 2015 CPS will significantly reduce the potential burdens on the agency and on surveyed households. Census has included questions on broadband and Internet use in 12 previous CPS surveys.

The U.S. government's critical need for comprehensive broadband data continues to increase as high-speed Internet access and the skills to use the technology are becoming essential to Americans' daily lives and to the nation's economy. The U.S. Government Accountability Office

¹ See Remarks by President Obama on the State of the Union (Jan. 20, 2015) at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/01/20/remarks-president-state-union-address-january-20-2015>.

(GAO), NTIA, and the FCC have issued reports noting the lack of useful broadband data for policymakers, and Congress passed legislation – the Broadband Data Improvement Act in 2008 and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2009 – to address this challenge. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has ranked the United States low in the number of households with broadband access over the past several years despite a period of rapid growth in the technology’s penetration domestically. Moreover, the OECD relies on Census Bureau data as an important input into its inter-country benchmark analyses. Modifying the July CPS to include NTIA’s requested broadband data will enable the Commerce Department and NTIA to respond to congressional concerns and directives, and to work with the OECD on its broadband methodologies with more recent data.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

The Census Bureau will collect the desired information during its July 2015 CPS, and potentially on a biennial basis thereafter beginning in November 2017, using updated survey instruments. NTIA will use the data collected to assist the President, the Congress, and the FCC in developing targeted, sound, and cost-effective policies to foster the deployment and adoption of broadband and other Internet services throughout the United States. The data collected will also be available to the public to further policy research on broadband and other communications issues, and will be used internationally at the OECD to inform its broadband studies and methodologies. In addition, state officials can use the collected data to develop policies and programs to increase broadband access and use in their respective jurisdictions.

NTIA has made extensive use of all previous data collections. The *Digital Nation* series of reports, and the *Falling Through the Net* series that preceded it, rely heavily on the datasets produced through previous collections for time-series analyses. Additionally, NTIA provides the survey results to the OECD for use in its global broadband metrics, and references the data to update the Census Bureau’s Statistical Abstract. Our CPS-based research provides vital support for more informed decisions about Internet and telecommunications policy by NTIA and the Administration.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

The Census Bureau will conduct personal visits and telephone interviews, using computer-assisted telephone interviewing and computer-assisted personal interviewing, and considers these techniques the most appropriate collection methodology, given existing available information technology.

- 4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.**

Adding the NTIA's proposed 61 questions to the Census Bureau's July 2015 CPS will generate official geographic and demographic statistics on broadband and Internet usage in the United States that is unavailable with such attributes from any other source. To NTIA's knowledge, there are no other current data sources that can provide the depth and reliability of information on broadband adoption and usage that is available from the CPS.

- 5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.**

Not Applicable.

- 6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.**

If NTIA is unable to conduct the information collection, comprehensive and reliable data that are essential to the development of sound and cost-effective government policies regarding broadband adoption and usage and, more generally, the Internet, would be unattainable.

- 7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.**

Not Applicable.

- 8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden. Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported. Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years - even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.**

The Federal Register Notice soliciting public comment was published on February 4, 2015 (Vol.80, p. 6056). Two comments were received. (See Attachment A-2, NTIA's comment summary and response).

NTIA consulted with the following person(s) concerning the development of the proposed questions:

Lisa Clement, Census Bureau, (301) 763-5482
Greg Weyland, Census Bureau, (301) 763-3790

The result of these consultations is NTIA's 61 proposed supplemental questions. The Census Director's advance letter (see Attachment A-3) referred to in response to Question 10 below provides respondents with an address at the Census Bureau to which they can submit general comments on the survey, as well as those regarding respondent burden.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

Not Applicable.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

The Census Bureau will collect CPS data (including NTIA's proposed supplemental questions) in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974. Each sample household will receive an advance letter approximately one week before the start of the initial CPS interview. The letter includes the information required by the Privacy Act of 1974, informs each respondent of the voluntary nature of the survey, and states the estimated time required for participating in the survey.

Additionally, interviewers must ask each respondent if he/she received the advance letter and, if not, will provide a copy of the letter to each respondent and allow sufficient time for him/her to read its contents. Upon request, interviewers also provide households with the pamphlet "The Census Bureau Respects Your Privacy and Protects Your Personal Information" (see Attachment A-4), which reaffirms the confidentiality assurances and mentions the Census Bureau's past performance in assuring confidentiality. All information given by respondents to Census Bureau employees is held in strict confidence under Title 13, United States Code, Section 9. Each Census Bureau employee has taken an oath to that effect and is subject to a jail penalty and/or a substantial fine if he/she discloses any information given to him/her.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

NTIA's proposed supplemental questions are not of a sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should: (1) Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. Unless directed to do so,

agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden, and explain the reasons for the variance. Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices. (2) If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens. (3) Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here. Instead, this cost should be included under ‘Annual Cost to Federal Government’.

The Census Bureau estimates that the total annual respondent burden for NTIA’s proposed 61 questions is 9,000 hours (10 minutes per household for each of the 54,000 households in the CPS sample).

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).

None.

14. Provide estimates of annualized costs to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The Census Bureau is charging NTIA \$725,000 to include the 61 supplemental questions in this year’s CPS, to produce summary tables, and to create a public use microdata file for use by NTIA, which will also be provided for public release.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

We are revising the survey instrument based on feedback from previous collections, as well as to reflect the changing technological landscape of computer and Internet use.

16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

The Census Bureau will conduct the CPS in July 2015. During the months that follow, the Bureau will produce summary tables and a public use microdata file for NTIA, the latter of which will ultimately be posted online for public use. To provide analysis on U.S. households’ broadband and computer use more quickly than NTIA’s past in-depth reports have allowed, we

will use the collected data to produce and publish several shorter reports or blogs that NTIA will post online, along with charts and summary data tables. NTIA intends to issue the reports during calendar year 2016, and will likely use complex statistical techniques such as regression analysis to produce them. A copy of NTIA's most recent *Digital Nation* report, which analyzed the results of the information collected from the previous inclusion of broadband questions in the October 2012 CPS, is available in ROCIS as a supplementary document.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.

Not Applicable.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

There are no exceptions to the certification.