

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S Department of Commerce
U.S Census Bureau
Current Population Survey (CPS) Basic Demographic
Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Control No. 0607-0049

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

The universe for the CPS is 114 million households. From this universe, we select a sample of approximately 72,000 households each month. Of these, approximately 59,000 households will be eligible for interview.

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

Attachment A gives an overview of the CPS sample design and weighting methodology. The CPS produces demographic data, labor force data, and data from various periodic supplemental inquiries. We designed the CPS sample to produce estimates of employment and unemployment characteristics with sufficient reliability to meet the BLS' requirements for monthly data and estimates of month-to-month, quarter-to-quarter, and year-to-year changes. The coefficient of variation on estimates of unemployment is 1.9 percent monthly at the national level. It is 8.0 percent annually at the state level. This degree of accuracy is sufficient to meet the needs mandated.

In accordance with our standard practice, the CPS sample has been redesigned based on information collected in the 2010 Decennial Census. Interviewing of the redesigned sample will phase in beginning April 2014 (See Attachment A).

One of the primary goals for the CPS is to provide estimates of month-to-month change in the employment and unemployment statistics. The current rotation pattern for the CPS (4-8-4) was chosen because it provides such estimates reliably with a much smaller sample size than an annual rotation would.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

We maintain response rates and data accuracy for the CPS at high levels through interviewer instruction and training, and close monitoring of data output. (Refer to section 3 of Attachment A for a discussion of the CPS nonresponse.)

4. Testing of Procedures

An extensive program of testing was conducted on CPS methods, procedures, and content from May 1978 through December 1993 using the Methods Development Survey (MDS), and its predecessor, the Methods Test Panel (MTP).

The results of the testing have become the CPS Labor Force instrument, which uses an automated Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing/ Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing environment. For information on the results, see the [February 1994 Employment and Earnings](#) article titled, “Revisions to the Current Population Survey Effective January 1994.”

In addition, since 1994 the roster and demographic collection questions have been thoroughly vetted and reviewed on a regular basis. Any changes to the Roster Collection or Demographic Characteristic questions are reviewed at the corporate level within the U.S. Census Bureau. Following standard testing procedures, any changes are cognitively tested, then tested in the field by the survey designated to first use them, and then reviewed and incorporated in any other survey using the same mode, with a need for the same collection. The current questions covered under this clearance request were included in the most recent Decennial Census Content test, American Community Survey (ACS) content test, and ACS production.

Procedurally, each month before production each data processing system is tested for any errors. On a test platform, we mimic interviewing to collect test data. As part of the initial load of data and instruments, we test case assignments in the field as well. In the winter of 2013, as part of the sample redesign that will begin in April 2014, all systems were thoroughly tested in three rounds.

In 2010, as part of the interagency group on Measuring Relationships in Federal Household Surveys led by the OMB, the Census Bureau conducted focus groups and cognitive interviews to see how respondents viewed the relationship question categories. Key findings from this research included: 1) respondents desire new categories to reflect legal unions for same-sex couples (e.g., civil unions and domestic partnerships); 2) respondents desire to move the unmarried partner category next to spouse in the list; and 3) while some persons interpreted the term partner to apply more to same-sex intimate relationships, opposite-sex unmarried couples were generally comfortable selecting unmarried partner as their relationship category.

Within-household relationships are also defined by cohabiting couples’ legal relationship statuses. In cognitive testing, participants usually

interpreted the marital status question to be asking about a legally-defined marriage sanctioned by the state. However, same-sex couples that had been legally married anywhere tended to select now married even when the marriage was not recognized by their state of residence. Finally, respondents complained that the current categories did not accommodate same-sex couples who are not legally married but wish to indicate a committed relationship status.

Based on this work, the Census Bureau developed revised answer categories for the relationship question. These revisions are detailed in section 2 of the justification portion of the supporting statement, part A.

5. **Contacts Statistical Aspects and Data Collection**

The following individuals may be contacted on the statistical data collection and analysis operations:

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Attachments

- A - Overview of the CPS Sample Design and Methodology
- B - CPS Demographic Items
- C - CPS Supplements for 2014 and 2015
- D-1 - CPS-263(MIS-1), CPS-263(SP)(MIS-1) - Advance Letter
- D-2 - CPS-264(MIS-5), CPS-264(SP)(MIS-5) - Advance Letter
- D-3 - CPS-266 Thank You Cards
- E-1 - BC-1433, BC-1433(SP) CPS Fact Sheet
- E-2 - CPS-692 CPS Monthly Flow of CPS Data
- E-3 - BC-1428, BC-1428(SP) Confidentiality Brochures