



September 21, 2016

Margo Schwab, Ph.D.
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Dr. Schwab:

The staff of the NCHS Center for Questionnaire Design and Evaluation Research (CQDER) (OMB No. 0920-0222, exp. 07/31/2018) plans to continue to evaluate the labor force module of persons with disabilities for the International Labor Organization (ILO) for a second round. Round 1 testing of the labor force module of persons with disabilities was previously approved in 2015.

We propose to start recruiting for volunteer participants as soon as we receive clearance and to start testing as soon as possible after that.

Background Information about Cognitive Testing of Questionnaires

The methodological design of this proposed study is consistent with the design of typical cognitive testing research. As you know, the purpose of cognitive testing is to obtain information about the processes people use to answer survey questions as well as to identify any potential problems in the questions. The analysis will be qualitative.

Proposed project: Cognitive testing of Labor Force Module of Persons with Disabilities

Currently most labor force surveys around the world either ignore disability or ask a limited number of questions. This short module will be used by the ILO to monitor employment outcomes of people with disabilities and to make international comparisons along two dimensions. The first purpose is to be able to disaggregate standard labor force indicators by disability status. The module will use the Washington Group questions (disability identification, disability onset) that have previously been tested by NCHS (and others) for that purpose. Those questions will be asked for context and will not to be cognitively tested. The second purpose is to learn more about the various barriers and facilitators that exist in regards to disability, to help in the design of efforts to promote the employment of people with disability, and then to monitor their participation moving forward. The questions on employment, barriers, accommodations, attitudes, social protection, and disability onset will serve this purpose.

The Labor Force Module of Persons with Disabilities we are evaluating is included as Attachment 1. The testing procedure conforms to the cognitive interviewing techniques that have been described in CQDER's generic OMB clearance package (No. 0920-0222, exp. 07/31/2018).

We propose to recruit 20 English speaking adults (aged 18 to 65 years) in order to test the Labor Force Module of Persons with Disabilities. Recruitment will include adults with various types of employment statuses including full-time, part-time, or unemployed. We will also recruit adults with a broad range of disabilities with various levels of ability including: with sensory problems (seeing, hearing); problems with memory, learning, concentrating or making decisions; physical problems (such as with standing, walking, lifting, using their hands, washing, dressing); and emotional problems. In addition, we will also recruit respondents who do not indicate experience with any of the above characteristics. In addition, we will also recruit adults who have an adult living in the household who may have sensory problems (seeing, hearing); problems with memory, learning, concentrating or making decisions; physical problems (such as with standing, walking, lifting, using their hands, washing, dressing); and emotional problems. Sample selection will also ensure demographic variety, particularly in terms of gender, education, race/ethnicity and income. The sampling plan is intended to be used as a guide for respondent recruitment; it is not meant to be used as an established set of criteria with specific quotas. Experience from previous studies indicates that this type of sampling plan is adequate for identifying patterns of interpretation among adults with disabilities.

Recruitment will be carried out through a combination of newspaper advertisements, email advertisements, flyers, and word-of-mouth. The newspaper advertisements/flyers used to recruit respondents are shown in Attachments 2a-c. The 5 minute screener used to determine eligibility of individuals responding to the newspaper advertisements/flyers is shown in Attachment 3. Note that wording of the template has been approved and is contained within our umbrella package. Only project specific information has been added to the document. It is anticipated that as many as 48 individuals may need to be screened in order to recruit 20 participants.

Interviews averaging 60 minutes (including the completion of a Respondent Data Collection Sheet) will be conducted by CQDER staff members with English speaking respondents. All interviews conducted in the Questionnaire Design Research Laboratory will be video and audio recorded to allow researchers to review the behaviors and body language of the respondents. Interviews conducted offsite will only be audio recorded. These recordings will allow researchers to insure the quality of their interview notes. In the rare case that a study participant initially agrees to audio recording during the telephone screening, but changes their mind and checks “no” to allowing the interview to be recorded on the informed consent document the interview will proceed without audio recording. In this case the interviewer will depend on their handwritten notes when conducting analysis. In addition, individuals who select “yes” for allowing the audio recording on the informed consent form, but “no” for retaining the recording for future research (final text before signatures on informed consent form), will be allowed to participate in the study.

After respondents have been briefed on the purpose of the study and the procedures that CQDER routinely takes to protect human subjects, respondents will be asked to read and sign an Informed Consent (Attachment 4). Only project specific information has been added to the document. Respondents will also be asked to fill in their demographic characteristics on the Respondent Data Collection Sheet (Attachment 5). This document is contained in our umbrella package. The burden for completion of this form is captured in the interview.

The interviewer will then ask the respondent to confirm that he/she understands the information in the Informed Consent, and then state that we would like to record the interview. The recorder will be turned on once it is clear that the procedures are understood and agreed upon.

The interviewer will then orient the respondent to the cognitive interview with the following introduction:

[Fill name] may have told you that we will be working on some questions that will eventually be added to national surveys. Before that happens, we like to test them out on a variety of different people. The questions we are testing today are about employment and health. We are interested in your answers, but also in how you go about making them. I may also ask you questions about the questions—whether they make sense, what you think about when you hear certain words, and so on.

I will read each question to you, and I'd like you to answer as best you can. Please try to tell me what you are thinking as you figure out how to answer. Also, please tell me if:

*there are words you don't understand,
the question doesn't make sense to you,
you could interpret it more than one way,
it seems out of order,
or if the answer you are looking for is not provided.*

The more you can tell us, the more useful it will be to us as we try to develop better questions. Okay? Do you have any questions before we start? If yes, answer questions. If not, let's get started.

After the interview, respondents will be given the thank-you letter (document contained in umbrella package) signed by Charles J. Rothwell, Director of NCHS (Attachment 6), a copy of the informed consent, and \$40. After the cognitive interview is over, respondents will be asked to read the Special Consent for Expanded Use of Video and Audio Recordings (Attachment 7). There will be no coercion and the respondents will be told that they can call and reverse the decision at any time if they change their minds. If respondents do sign the special consent form they will be given a copy of that as well.

Extreme care will be taken with all recordings and paperwork from the interviews conducted off-site. Recordings and identifying paperwork will be stored in a secured travel case until returned to NCHS, at which point they will be transferred to the usual secured locked storage cabinets.

We propose giving participants \$40 incentives, which is our standard incentive. In total, for this project, the maximum respondent burden will be 24 hours. A burden table for this project is shown below:

Form Name	Number of Participants	Number of Responses/ Participant	Average hours per response	Response Burden (in hours)
Screenener	48	1	5/60	4
Questionnaire	20	1	1	20

Attachments (7)

cc:

V. Buie

T. Richardson

DHHS RCO