



September 28, 2015

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Shelly Martinez, OMB  
**From:** Sharon Boivin, Sarah Grady, Lisa Hudson, NCES  
**Through:** Kashka Kubzdela, NCES  
**Re:** National Household Education Survey 2016 (NHES:2016) Full-scale Data Collection ATES Item Instruction Change Request (OMB# 1850-0768 v.12)

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The 2016 administration of the National Household Education Survey (NHES) was approved in August 2015 (1850-0768 v.11). The collection for this study is scheduled to begin on January 4, 2016, with printing of all materials beginning in October 2015. This submission updates the approved Adult Training and Education Survey (ATES) instrument in *Appendix 2 NHES2016 Screener and Topical Surveys.pdf* as follows:

- 1) In the English-language ATES instrument, questions 10 [19/28] will be changed to include the text in red: “Is your [second/third] most important certification or license required by a federal, state, or local government agency (such as a state board) in order to do that kind of work?”
- 2) In the Spanish-language ATES instrument, a corresponding change will be made to questions 10 [19/28]: “¿Es su [segunda/tercera] certificación o licencia más importante requerida por un gobierno federal, estatal o local (por ejemplo una junta estatal) para poder realizar ese tipo de trabajo?”

The question asking whether the certification or license is provided by a government agency is the critical ATES question used to distinguish a license (provided by the government) from a certification (provided by a non-governmental organization). In our first test of the (now) ATES instrument, the 2013 NATES asked “Who issued this certification or license?” with “Federal, state, or local government” being one response option. During cognitive testing for the 2014 NHES Feasibility Study, we learned that respondents sometimes incorrectly answer this question because they are not sure what counts as “government.” State boards were the government agencies that were most often misidentified as NOT being a government provider. Thus the 2014 NHES Feasibility Study included in parentheses examples of what constitutes government: “Was it awarded by the federal, state, or local government (for example, by a state board of education or other state board, OSHA, or FAA)?”

In the course of cognitive testing for the 2016 ATES, we revised this question to be worded more closely to that used by Morris Kleiner and Alan Krueger in their work on licensing.<sup>1</sup> Testing revealed that the Kleiner and Krueger wording is preferable, but indicated that it also needs the example of state boards to clarify that they count as “government”. We have simplified the example used in the 2014 NHES Feasibility Study to just its core part - state boards, to solve the what-counts-as-government issue while keeping the question relatively concise.

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<sup>1</sup> The exact wording used by Kleiner and Krueger is “Do you have a license or certification that is required by a federal, state or local government agency to do your job?” (Source: Kleiner, M.M. and Krueger, A.B. (2013). Analyzing the Extent and Influence of Occupational Licensing in the Labor Market. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 31(2), 173-202.