

Department of Commerce
United States Census Bureau
OMB Information Collection Request
2017 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey
OMB Control Number 0607-0757

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

Pursuant to the Local Emergency Housing Rent Control Act of 1962 (as amended), as well as Sections 26-414 and 26-415 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the City must conduct a survey of the housing conditions in the City. The survey, known as the New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (NYCHVS), will help determine the supply of housing accommodations, the condition of such accommodations, the rate of vacancy of such accommodations, and such other housing market characteristics as are necessary for determining the need for continuing the regulation and control of residential rents and evictions in the City. The Census Bureau has a long history and an excellent working relationship with the Department of Housing Preservations and Development (NYCHPD), the City agency that is charged with conducting the survey (also referred to as survey sponsor). This is the seventeenth contract that the Census Bureau will have entered into with the City of New York to conduct the NYCHVS. The first such survey was conducted in 1965. Data are collected for the 5 boroughs of New York City (Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island). The survey is conducted every three years to comply with New York State's and New York City's rent regulation laws. The Census Bureau also has the most complete and current record of addresses in the City in its files and is prepared to accomplish the survey most expediently and with the highest level of quality.

The U.S. Census Bureau requests approval to conduct the 2017 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (NYCHVS) on behalf of the NYCHPD. The Census Bureau has conducted this survey for the city since 1965, most recently in 2014 under the authority of Title 13 U.S.C., Section 8b.

Census Bureau field representatives will conduct personal visit interviews for a sample of housing units in the City, the vast majority of which are rental units in multi-unit rental structures (apartment buildings). Single-family rental or owner-occupied units (houses), however, are not excluded from the sample. We will interview residents (occupied units) or other knowledgeable people such as a building manager, superintendent, or rental or real estate agent (vacant units) to gather information on vacancy rates, housing costs, and the income of residents. About ten percent of the sample will be reinterviewed for quality control purposes.

The sponsor works with other New York City agencies on the content of the questionnaire. Changes to the 2017 NYCHVS were requested by the sponsor after consulting with the Department of Mental Health and Hygiene in New York City and with the U.S. Census Bureau.

At the request of the sponsor, NYCHPD, we made the following changes to the 2017 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey Questionnaire, Form H-100:

Questions added:

- 1) Did you postpone any of the following types of health care for financial reasons during the past year? (options: dental, preventive care/check-up, mental health, treatment or diagnosis of illness or health, and prescription drugs).
- 2) Do you or anyone in your household have any medical devices in your home that are important to health and that require electrical power to operate?
- 3) In the last 12 months, were any of the following services interrupted because you did not have enough money at the time? (one or more utility, land line, cell phone, cable/internet, other, none).
- 4) Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Answer choices: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree) (my apartment is affordable to me, my apartment is too expensive given its condition, my apartment is too expensive given its location).

Questions modified:

1) Two options are being added to the following question (options d and e), but the question itself will remain the same: Does anyone in this household (including children under age 15) receive public assistance or welfare payments from any of the following?

- a) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Family Assistance
- b) Safety Net Assistance
- c) Supplemental Security Income (SSI), including aid to the blind or disabled
- d) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- e) Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- f) Other - *Specify*

2) The following question will now be asked for all household members instead of just the reference person (individual who owns the mortgage or lease):

In what year did ... (reference person) move into this apartment (house)?

Questions removed:

1) Was ... in the homeless situation mainly because he/she could not afford his/her own apartment (house) or mainly for other reasons?

2) Does the fire and liability insurance for this apartment (house) also cover personal possessions?

3) In 2013, did this household receive any payments from the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) or any other federal, state, or city program to help pay for some home heating costs?

4) Altogether, how much energy assistance was received in 2013?

5) Do you have a working carbon monoxide detector inside your apartment (house)?

6) In the last 12 months, how often have you noticed any musty or moldy smells inside your apartment (house)? Would you say daily, weekly, monthly, a few times, or never?

The effects of these additions and removals of questions have an offsetting effect in the total amount of time it should take respondents to complete the questionnaire, which is, on average, 30 minutes. Based on internal testing of mock interviews, we expect the average interview time to remain approximately the

same as the 2014 NYCHVS.

At the request of the survey sponsor, we recently translated the questionnaire into Spanish to be used by interviewers for Spanish-speaking respondents. Spanish speaking respondents are the largest non-English speaking segment of the NYC population. The Spanish-language questionnaire is currently in draft and will undergo cognitive testing between March and July of 2016 with plans to finalize the questionnaire by September, 2016.

2. Needs and Uses

The 2017 NYCHVS will be an up-to-date and comprehensive data source required by rent regulation laws as well as a source of data needed to evaluate the city's housing policies. Specifically, the city will look to the 2017 survey to provide accurate and reliable estimates of the rental and homeowner vacancy rates, to measure improvements in housing and neighborhood conditions, and to provide data on low-income, doubled-up, and crowded households at risk of becoming homeless.

The NYCHPD works with affordable housing developers to use City, State, and Federal subsidies to finance the creation of thousands of affordable units every year. This includes single and multi-family housing, senior housing, and supportive housing for formerly homeless and disabled individuals. There is a Five-Borough Ten-Year Plan to build and preserve 200,000 affordable units over the coming decade for households, to support New Yorkers with a range of incomes, from the very lowest to those in the middle class. This is a plan to get ahead of the curve, to protect neighborhoods and build the City's next generation of affordable housing. Current housing statistics specific to New York City are critical for this plan.

Information quality is an integral part of the pre-dissemination review of the information disseminated by the Census Bureau (fully described in the Census Bureau's Information Quality Guidelines). Information quality is also integral to the information collections conducted by the Census Bureau and is incorporated into the clearance process required by the Paperwork Reduction Act.

Conducting the NYCHVS and producing important statistics is consistent with the Census Bureau's mission of providing quality data on housing, population, and the economy (in this case, for the City of New York). Survey results are also compared to other Census Bureau surveys, such as the Current Population Survey/Housing Vacancy Survey (CPS/HVS) and American Community Survey (ACS), as well to the Decennial Census. Discrepancies in data between censuses and surveys can lead to improved data collection procedures, improved editing, and ultimately higher quality data for all surveys.

3. Use of Improved Information Technology and Burden Reduction

The completed questionnaires will be checked-in and accounted for utilizing the latest computer technology. Each form will be assigned a unique identification number, which allows it to be tracked throughout all phases of the operation. This will substantially reduce the level of unnecessary personal visit follow-up, thereby reducing respondent burden.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

This survey was most recently conducted in 2014. No similar information in this detail and level of reliability has been collected since that time by New York City or the Census Bureau.

Pursuant to the Local Emergency Housing Rent Control Act and the Administrative Code of the City of New York, a survey must be conducted in order to determine housing conditions in the City. Such survey should determine the supply of housing accommodations, the condition of such accommodations, the rate of vacancy of such accommodations, and such other housing market characteristics as are necessary for determining the need for continuing the regulation and control of residential rents in the City.

5. Methods to Minimize Burden on Small Businesses

The 2017 NYCHVS is primarily a household survey; however, some rental agents, managers, superintendents and realtors may need to be interviewed for vacant units.

We designed the survey to obtain the required information with minimal respondent burden. The proposed questionnaire and interviewer procedures have been developed over many years as a result of consultation between the Census Bureau and the NYCHPD, who also has had consultations with other outside individuals and organizations. Further, there are no legal issues that influence respondent burden.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

The NYCHVS has to be conducted every three years in order to comply with currently existing New York City laws related to rent regulation.

7. Special Circumstances

These data will be collected in a manner consistent with OMB guidelines.

8. Consultations Outside the Agency

The notice required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d) appeared in the Federal Register on November 5, 2015, Volume 80, page 68499. No comments were received in response to the notice.

All other outside consultation for this survey is with the NYCHPD. Based upon their recommendations, we have developed the questions to collect on the 2017 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey Questionnaire, Form H-100. Additionally, the NYCHPD will make recommendations on the interviewer instruction manuals to be developed and on many other aspects of the survey.

The 2017 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey Reinterview Questionnaire, Form H-108, is used for internal analysis purposes only. The sponsor had no recommendations on the content of the H-108.

The NYCHPD consults independently of the Census Bureau with other New York City government agencies, outside individuals and organizations concerning the planning and design of the NYCHVS.

a. Persons Consulted

Elyzabeth Gaumer is the primary representative for the NYCHPD and for the NYCHVS. The Census Bureau has been in contact with her and members of her staff concerning the 2017 survey since July 2015. She can be reached on (212)863-5145.

Additionally, Matthew M. Wambua, Commissioner, NYCHPD, also has first-hand knowledge of the NYCHVS requirements and can be reached on (212)863-6100.

b. Major Problems

There are no points of contention between the Census Bureau and the NYCHPD. All work to be performed will be by mutual agreement and specified in a formal contract to be signed by both parties.

c. Other Public Contacts

There have not been any other public contacts regarding the survey. All consultation has been with the NYCHPD.

9. Payments to Respondents

The Census Bureau does not make any payments or provide any gifts to individuals participating in the NYCHVS.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

Respondents are informed that the information they provide will be held in strict confidence, and that participation in the survey is voluntary. A letter, Form H-100(L), is sent to every selected housing unit prior to the survey. It explains, in addition to the

confidential nature of the data, that a field representative will visit to conduct the survey and how long the interview will require. The letter will also be available in Spanish. Title 13, Section 9, United States Code assures that no information that could identify any individual person or household will be released to any other government agency (Federal, state, or local) or to any private organization or individual. All information from the survey will be used strictly for statistical purposes.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

This survey does not contain any questions that are of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimate of Respondent Burden

We will conduct the survey by personal interview using the 2017 New York City Housing and Vacancy Questionnaire, Form H-100. The average time for an occupied unit interview is 30 minutes. We expect about 8 percent of the 19,000 sample units to be vacant. As a means of quality control, we will reinterview owners, building managers, real estate or rental agents, superintendents, or neighbors (as a last resort only) at all vacant units and the residents at 5 percent of occupied units using the 2017 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey Reinterview Questionnaire, Form H-108, which requires 10 minutes to complete. These estimates are based on our previous experience conducting the survey.

Table 1. Estimated Annual Hour and Cost Burden to Respondents

Type of Respondent	Expected Number of Respondents	Average Burden per Response (in hours)	Total Burden Hours	Hourly Wage Rate ¹	Total Respondent Cost
NYCHVS Production					
Householder or					

¹ We tabulated median person income (from the 2014 NYCHVS results), adjusted for inflation, and computed the hourly rate of pay. NOTE: Details may not sum to totals due to rounding of partial hours.

household member (Occupied Units)	17,500	0.5	8,750	\$14.72	\$128,800
Owner, superintendent, rental/office agent, real estate agent/broker, etc. (Vacant Units)	1,500	0.17	250	\$14.72	\$3,680
Reinterview (Occupied Units)	875	0.17	146	\$14.72	\$2,149
Reinterview (Vacant Units)	1,500	0.17	250	\$14.72	\$3,680
Total	21,375		9,396		\$138,309

13. Estimates of Other Total Cost Burden to Respondents

There are no direct costs to respondents, other than their time, for participating in the survey.

14. Cost to the Federal Government

This survey will be conducted at no cost to the Federal Government. The total estimated cost of \$9,818,000 is funded completely by the survey sponsor, the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

15. Reason for Change in Burden

The estimated respondent burden is slightly higher than the estimate from the 2014 NYCHVS due to anticipated additional sample for new construction units built between October 1, 2013 and September 30, 2016. For the 2014 NYCHVS, we sampled primarily from the 2010 Decennial Census Address files and supplemented that with newly constructed units built between April 1, 2010 and September 30, 2013.

16. Project Schedule

Survey interviewing is scheduled to begin in mid-January 2017. The units selected for reinterview will be enumerated shortly after the initial interview. We expect that all interviewing will conclude by May 30, 2017. The Census Bureau does not publish the results of the NYCHVS in a formal manner as it does for other surveys. The NYCHPD will receive hard-copy tables by December 15, 2017, in order to fulfill internal City and State reporting

requirements. The NYCHPD will also receive a public use microdata file by January 2, 2018. Other interested parties may obtain survey results through the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/housing/nychvs/>.

17. Display of OMB Approval Information

The Census Bureau will print the OMB approval number and expiration date on each outgoing 2017 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey Letter, Form H-100(L). This information also appears on the 2017 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey Questionnaire, Form H-100, and on the 2017 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey Reinterview Questionnaire, Form H-108; however, these forms are not typically viewed by the respondent.

18. Exceptions to the Certification

There are no exceptions.

