General Information Collection Request
2017 American Community Survey Respondent Burden Testing: Cognitive Testing of the "Weeks Worked," "Income," "Year of Naturalization," and "Year of Entry" Series of Questions on the American Community Survey: Spanish Round of Testing

Request: The U.S. Census Bureau, in its continuing effort to reduce respondent burden on the American Community Survey (ACS), plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). Specifically, the U.S. Census Bureau will cognitively test proposed changes to the "Weeks Worked," "Income," "Year of Naturalization," and "Year of Entry" series of questions on the ACS. For the "2017 ACS Respondent Burden Testing," the U.S. Census Bureau has contracted with Westat, a statistical survey research corporation headquartered in Rockville, Maryland, to perform cognitive testing on the proposed changes.

Purpose: This round of cognitive testing is similar to previous cognitive tests conducted on the English-speaking population. For this round of testing, however, we will cognitively test changes to the Weeks Worked, Income, Year of Naturalization, and Year of Entry series of questions on the monolingual Spanish-speaking population. The purpose of this testing is to examine whether this population interprets the questions and perceived respondent burden in the same way as the English-speaking population. While the last round of testing included paper/internet and computer-assisted interview (CAI) modes, the Spanish testing will only employ the CAI mode, as it is the prevalent method of ACS response for this population. The revised questions, developed under the auspices of the OMB Interagency Group on the ACS and related subject-area subcommittees, are designed to facilitate respondent comprehension, reduce respondent burden, and where possible, streamline wording.

The chief purpose of the "Weeks Worked" series of questions is to set a time-period for studying earnings data in the ACS. An especially important function within the question is to identify those who worked year-round in the past 12 months. Similar to the English testing, we will cognitively test a Spanish version of the "Weeks Worked" questions that does the following:

- Change the sequence of "Hours Worked" and "Weeks Worked", asking "Hours Worked" before "Weeks Worked".
- Months Worked: Evaluate the explicit option to respond to "Weeks Worked" in months in the interviewer-administered mode.
- Reference Period: Examine modifications to the reference period to align with the proposed changes to the reference period for the "Income" questions (changing the reference period from "the past 12 months" to "last year").

Similar to the English testing, we would like to know:

- if respondents choose the option of answering in months rather than weeks;
- if the option of responding in months rather than weeks lessens burden;
- if respondents report accurately when reporting in months rather than in weeks (We are concerned that respondents who work 2 weeks a month will incorrectly report 12 months of work instead of 24 weeks.);
- if respondents comprehend the revised reference period;
- if respondents report accurately based on this reference period; and

- if the revised reference period affects respondent burden.

In addition, the Spanish testing is intended to answer the following questions:
- Do respondents accurately report the number of weeks they worked during this reference period at all jobs held?
- How do the findings compare to the prior (English language) test?
- How do respondents interpret terms related to work and employment? We are particularly interested in the difference between the interpretation of the terms job ("trabajo") and employment ("empleo").

For the "Income" question, the current version of the ACS asks respondents to provide between 8 and 10 components of income (recipiency (i.e., source) and amount), the sum of which provides the respondent's "total income" for the past 12 months. The number of components asked depends upon the mode of data collection and previous survey responses. The ACS asks respondents for the individual components of income such as wages, self-employment income, and supplemental security income to ensure that respondents provide all sources of income necessary for them to derive the total income component. A number of respondents report that answering these income questions is difficult, burdensome, and sensitive. For these reasons, we are exploring using administrative records data to replace or supplement income questions on the ACS.

One idea being pursued is to restructure the income questions to only collect recipiency of income (by source) as well as total income and then use administrative records data and modeling to provide the full level of information required. Therefore, we plan to cognitively test a version of the "Income" question that asks the recipiency questions, but does not ask the respondent for specific amounts, while still collecting total income. We would like to (1) study if respondents include all of the income that they replied "yes" to in their calculation of total income; (2) probe respondents about whether they could have given specific amounts for each of the income sources and if they would have used references (such as tax forms or pay stubs) to look up their income information; and (3) evaluate whether respondents read and understand the changed wording and placement of instructions.

Additionally, we will test changing the reference period from "the past 12 months" to "last year". The purpose of this change is to align the ACS reference date to the administrative records data. Moreover, we believe that respondents may be able to provide total income easier as this approach aligns with tax reporting as well. We would like to know (1) if respondents can comprehend the reference period; and (2) if the revised reference period affects respondent burden (Is reporting income for the last full calendar year easier than income for the past 12 months?).

The Spanish testing will also answer these additional questions:
- How do the findings compare to the prior (English language) test?
- How do respondents interpret the term, income (Spanish translation equivalent)?

For the "Year of Naturalization/Year of Entry" series of questions, the ACS asks for a respondent to (1) answer a question about his or her citizenship status, where one of the choices for a response asks the respondent to provide the year of naturalization, if applicable; (2) provide the year he or she came to live in the United States if born outside of the United States. Some respondents find the related concepts "come to live in the United States" and "naturalization" confusing. Two versions of the "Year of

Naturalization" and "Year of Entry" questions will be tested. Both versions will test categorical responses for the year of entry and the year of naturalization, as compared to the current version which requires a write-in response. One version will provide a wider set of year ranges in the categories; the other version will have narrower year ranges and therefore more categories.

Similar to the English testing, the Spanish testing will answer the following questions:
- Does respondents' narrative history of their immigration and naturalization correspond with the answers they give for year of naturalization and year of entry?
- Which alternative version is easier for respondents to understand and answer why?
- Can respondents provide the exact year of naturalization/year of entry for the household member they are reporting for? Would they prefer to respond in that way?
- For those respondents who have moved into and out of the U.S. more than once, do they provide the most recent year of entry?

The Spanish testing will also address these additional questions:
- How do respondents understand the concept of "naturalization" and what does the term mean to them?
- How do respondents understand the phrase "move to live"?
- When answering this question, how often do respondents first give a specific year and then pick a range?
- Can respondents provide the exact year of naturalization/year of entry for themselves? Would they prefer to respond in that way?
- How do the findings compare to the prior (English language) test?
- Would it have been easier for respondents to report how many years ago they came to the U.S./were naturalized for themselves and household members?
- Would it have been easier for respondents to report how old they were/how old household members were when they came to the U.S./were naturalized?

Population of Interest: The planned cognitive testing will focus on assessing and improving the experience for the monolingual Spanish-speaking population.

Timeline: Cognitive interviewing will take place during late July and early August 2017.

Language: Testing will be conducted in Spanish only.

Method: We will test one version of the Weeks Worked and Income questions (one CAI script) and two versions of the Year of Naturalization and Year of Entry questions (two CAI scripts). All interviews will be administered in the CAI mode. Per the Census Bureau's request, Westat will conduct testing in Houston, Texas and Los Angeles, California. As part of the cognitive interview process, Westat interviewers will probe the respondents' understanding and perception of the questions. Each cognitive interview will last approximately 60 minutes. The interviews will be audiotaped and may be subject to one-way observation from designated sworn employees of Westat and the U.S. Census Bureau.

Westat will recruit enough respondents to complete 24 cognitive interviews with monolingual Spanish speakers or those who are Spanish dominant. Topics will be broken into two groupings, with 12

respondents receiving the Year of Naturalization/Year of Entry topics, and 12 respondents receiving the Weeks Worked items and Income series.

The questions will be tested on respondents who vary in region of origin, age, sex, and level of education. Table 1 presents the respondent characteristics required by the U.S. Census Bureau for each survey topic. All respondents will be monolingual Spanish speakers or will be Spanish dominant speakers.

- For Weeks Worked and Income topics, we will strive for respondents to meet the requirements for both survey topics.
- For the income series recruitment requirements, we will strive to recruit individuals who have more than one of the desired types of income.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics for ACS Respondent Burden Testing: Spanish

Topic	Characteristics	Target
Group 1: Year of Naturalization/ Year of Entry (n=12)	Born in Mexico	6
	Born in South America, Central America, or Spanish-speaking Caribbean nation (excluding Puerto Rico)	6
	Household size 3+	12
	Naturalized citizen	6
	Non-citizen	6
	Live with household members who are unrelated (age 13+)	4-6
	Extended family (ex: cousins, aunts or uncles, grandparents who may have come a long time ago) (age 13+)	4-6
	Immediate family age 18+ who came to US at a different time or were naturalized at a different time.	2-4
	Arrived in US (Respondent or other household adult)	
	Before 1985	1-2
	1985-1996	2-4
	1997-2004	2-4
	2005 or later	1-2
	Have come to US multiple times/multiple entries	2-3
Group 2: Weeks Worked and Income (n=12)	Born in Mexico	6
	Born in South America, Central America, or Spanish-speaking Caribbean nation (including Puerto Rico)	6
	Households of size 2+ who are ages 15+	12
	Worked in regular jobs with regular schedules in 2016	4-6
	Irregular workers (such as partial year workers, irregular schedules, multiple jobs) in 2016	6-8
	Married	6
	Were self-employed in 2016	3
	Earned commission or tips (e.g. wait staff) in 2016	3
	Some other source of income (public assistance, SSI, unemployment, child support, alimony) in 2016	3-4
	Have retirement income (such as pension, 401k, social security)	No quota
	Have net rental income (at least half married)	No quota

Sample: A total of 24 completed interviews. See Table 1 above for a description of the sample composition.

Recruitment: Westat will recruit enough respondents to complete 24 cognitive interviews with monolingual Spanish speakers or those who are Spanish dominant. Recruiting will take place between July 17 and August 3, 2017. Recruitment plan is found in Attachment A.

General recruitment requirements: All topics have the same top three recruiting requirements, as listed below. In addition, each topic has specific recruiting requirements as listed for the individual topic.
- Language
  - Recruit as many monolingual Spanish-speaking respondents as possible.
  - All respondents must be dominant Spanish-speakers, at minimum.
- Recruit people who have entered the U.S. from a variety of Latin American countries.
  - We would like half to be of the Mexican population.
  - We would like half to be of the Central and South American population.
  - We will recruit Puerto Rico for Weeks Worked and Income only.

Recruiters will use their facility databases as a starting point for recruiting. Email blasts will be sent only to those who have not participated in any research study or focus group in the past six months. Facilities will also make use of their networks in the Hispanic community to recruit these participants. As needed, we may make use of Spanish versions of the OMB-approved flyer (see Attachment A) templates to target the specific characteristics needed. Depending on the recruiting need and if appropriate, disparate characteristics may be combined into one ad. All those who respond to any recruiting advertisement, regardless of whether they are in the facility database or not, will be screened to ensure they have not participated in any research study or focus group in the past six months (whether conducted by Westat or any other organization). Recruitment screener and consent form are found in Attachments A and B.

Westat will be in frequent communication with the Census Bureau on recruiting progress. Should Westat be unable to find certain types of respondents, Westat will implement additional contingency plans, approved by the Census Bureau, such as making slight changes to the recruiting criteria or quotas.

Protocol: The testing protocols are found in Attachments C, D, and E. The cognitive test interviewer-administered survey and roster questions are found in Attachments F, G, and H.

Use of Incentive: Respondents who are selected and complete an interview will receive $40 to offset the cost of participation (e.g., transportation, childcare costs).

Materials to be used for this Project:
- **A:** American Community Survey Respondent Burden Testing – Spanish: Year of Naturalization/Year of Entry; Weeks Worked; and Income Recruitment Plan, Recruitment Screener, Recruitment Advertising Flyer
- **B:** ACS Respondent Burden Testing – Spanish: Consent Form
- **C:** ACS Respondent Burden Testing – Spanish: Cognitive Interview Protocol (Group 1, Version 1)
- **D:** ACS Respondent Burden Testing – Spanish: Cognitive Interview Protocol (Group 1, Version 2)
- **E:** ACS Respondent Burden Testing – Spanish: Cognitive Interview Protocol (Group 2)

- **F:** ACS Respondent Burden Testing – Spanish: Interviewer-Administered Survey Questions
- **G:** ACS Respondent Burden Testing – Spanish: Interviewer-Administered Roster Questions (Group 1)
- **H:** ACS Respondent Burden Testing – Spanish: Interviewer-Administered Roster Questions (Group 2)

Length of interview: We estimate that we will need to screen about 200 people to achieve 24 completed interviews. Screening will take approximately 10 minutes per person. Therefore, the initial screening of 200 people will take approximately 34 hours. An interview will take approximately 60 minutes per respondent. Therefore, the total number of hours to interview 24 respondents is 24 hours. The maximum burden is approximately 58 hours.

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and study design is:

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