

Food Security Supplemental Survey (CEV) Cognitive Interviews
Generic Information Collection Request

Request: The Census Bureau plans to conduct cognitive research on the Food Security Supplement (FSS), part of the Current Population Survey (CPS), and sponsored by the Economic Research Service of the US Department of Agriculture.

Purpose: The purpose of this cognitive research is to (1) evaluate the effectiveness of switching the order of the sections in the FSS, (2) explore new questions to better capture respondents experience with food assistance programs, and (3) assess the existing questions for cognitive issues. The FSS instrument is being evaluated to make sure the language and terminology is still relevant; therefore, all questions need to be cognitively tested. Below is an overview of the survey content.

- Food Expenditures and Minimum Spending (Section 1 and 2): These questions assess how much money is spent on food for the household in a “usual” week. They do this by asking three filter questions about food purchases at places like grocery stores, then they ask about specialty food stores like “Produce stands”, and finally they ask about food purchases at restaurants, cafeterias, etc. Respondents then say how much they spent at these places in a series of follow-up questions, they also are asked how much of their purchase total was. They are then asked about the minimum amount they would need to spend to meet their food needs.
- Food Sufficiency and Security (new Section 3 formerly 4) and Food Program Participation (formerly Section 3 and new section 4): The Food Sufficiency and Security section assess whether households have sufficient money for food and if they have experienced any degree of food insecurity. The Food Program Participation section asks about food assistance program use. Cognitive testing will assess the feasibility of asking the Food Sufficiency section (now 3) before the Food Program Participation section. The sponsor is concerned that asking about Food Program Participation before asking about Food sufficiency and Security may affect the responses so they want to explore the plausibility of asking about Food Sufficiency before Program Participation.
- Community Based Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs (Section 5): This section assesses the use of non-governmental programs to deal with food insecurity. Including use of food shelves and other programs. The section is testing a set of new questions on non-governmental program usage.

The full questionnaire is attached and embedded in the cognitive interviewing protocol, this includes a core questions from the CPS used to roster the household members in order to

determine household member eligibility for certain questions in the FSS instrument. The roster will be conducted in a condensed manner from the Full CPS Roster procedure in the interest of time (see Attachment II: FSS Questionnaire and Protocol).

Because the FSS instrument has been re-organized, and some of the questions are either new or revised, we plan to cognitively test all items in the instrument using specific probes designed as part of the cognitive test (see Attachment II: FSS Questionnaire and Protocol). The cognitive testing will also evaluate the feasibility of eligible household members (either related or unrelated) to accurately provide a proxy response for all items in the survey questionnaire. We will do this by recruiting participants with varying knowledge of household expenses. We will then assess if those who report low knowledge of household expenses during recruiting have more difficulty answering questions and less certainty in their answers. The results of the cognitive testing will inform the final revised FSS instrument content that will be used in data collection in December 2020.

Population of Interest: Several survey questions are asked only asked of participants who have faced food insecurity so we will recruit participants who are 18 years or older who have household incomes below 40K a year.

Timeline: From June 2019 to October 2019, staff from the Center for Behavioral Science and Methods will conduct three rounds of cognitive interviews.

Sample: We will conduct the interviews with a total of 30 respondents using a paper version of the interviewer-administered instrument (Attachment II).

Our recruiting efforts will target respondents with the following characteristics who would be eligible for the survey supplement's food insecurity and program participation questions:

- Ages 18 years old or older
- Living in households with related adult household members with 1 or more eligible respondents, or living in households with unrelated adult household members with 1 or more eligible respondents
- Household incomes below 40k
- Presence of a child under 18 especially under 5.

Recruitment: Respondents will be recruited through fliers posted at local community organizations where individuals may gather such as food banks, churches, and libraries; advertisements on Craigslist.com; personal social networks, and broadcast messages distributed through the Census Bureau's daily online newsletter. All recruiting materials are attached (see Attachments I, IV and V).

Location of Interviews: Interviews will be conducted at the Census Bureau's Response Research Laboratory and at locations convenient to interviewees. The interviews will be

conducted in-person in the local metropolitan area (DC, Maryland, Virginia), as well as in Minnesota, and West Virginia.

Protocol: We will conduct our cognitive interviews using retrospective methods which allow the respondent to hear the questionnaire in its entirety and respond for all eligible household members before being asked probes about particular questions of interest.

Informed Consent: We will inform participants that their response is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential and will be accessed only by employees involved in the research project. The consent form will also indicate that the respondent agrees that the interview can be audio or video-taped to facilitate analysis of the results. Participants who do not consent to be audio or video-taped will still be allowed to participate.

Incentive: Participants will receive \$40 for their participation in this research. A copy of the standard consent form is attached (see Attachment III: Consent Form and Attachment VI: Voucher form).

Length of Interview: For the first three rounds of interviews, we estimate that each interview (30 interviews) will take approximately one hour (30 hours total). The pre-approved generic screening questionnaire will take approximately ten minutes per person, and the additional screening questions specific to this research will take three minutes per person (see Attachment IV: Recruitment Eligibility Screeners).

We estimate that we will screen three people for each successful recruit for each of the 30 interviews. Therefore, for the first two rounds of interviewing, we estimate a total of 90 people screened (19.5 hours). Thus, **the total estimated burden for the three rounds of this research is 49.5 hours.**

The following documents are included as attachments:

Attachment I: Recruitment Advertisements
Attachment II: CPS FSS Questionnaire and Protocol
Attachment III: Consent Form
Attachment IV: Recruitment Eligibility Screeners
Attachment V: PDF Advertisement Flyer
Attachment VI: Voucher form

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and the design of this research is listed below:

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