

The Census Bureau plans to conduct new research under the Generic Clearance for Internet Nonprobability Panel Pretesting (OMB number 0607-0978). We plan to conduct testing to study a methodology we could use to promote the 2020 Census. The research question is whether people will forward a census email to friends and family to encourage them to participate in a survey and, if so, how far this could spread. This test is part of the iterative testing strategy that we are using to supplement the 2020 Census research program. Specifically, this test focuses on whether the U.S. public is willing to encourage others to respond electronically.

This “Friends and Family” test will use two samples to test a range of responses to this contact method:

- The Census Bureau’s Contact Frame is a list of emails purchased from commercial vendors covering approximately 77 million U.S. housing units. These emails are available within the Census Bureau for research and production purposes. Staff from the Center for Administrative Records Research and Administration will select a random sample of 10,000 housing units from the Contact Frame. If the housing unit has more than one email associated with it, the sample will include a maximum of four emails from each housing unit selected. The sample will not contain any addresses in the 2015 National Content Test, the 2015 Census Test site areas, sample selected for the American Community Survey in 2015, nor sample from previous tests under this clearance in March or May 2015. We estimate the click rate for this sample to be between 3 and 4 percent based on previous testing and the response rate to be close to 3 percent.
- The opt-in nonprobability panel is a list of emails from people who come to the Census Bureau website and want to participate in research studies. Staff from the Center for Survey Measurement will select 3,000 emails from the nonprobability frame. We estimate the response rate for this sample to be 10 percent based on previous testing.

We expect approximately 300 completed cases in each frame for the original sample. We hypothesize that 10% of the completed cases will forward the email to at least one family or friend. Thus, we would expect 60 additional completed interviews from family or friends. In order to control possible burden, we will set a maximum response at 1200.

In this test, we want to determine how many people will complete a Census Bureau survey because they were asked by a friend or family member to do so. Because of this, we need a survey that does not require authentication to gain access. We will use the third-party provider Survey Monkey to host the survey. That provider does not require authentication. The survey will not collect any PII information to identify the individual, but it will ask whether the respondent received the email directly from the Census Bureau or whether a friend or family member forwarded them the email. Respondents will not be barred from answering the survey more than once due to the desire to capture responses from forwards.

All email panels will receive the same initial email. In the first reminder email, those who have clicked a link in the first email will receive an email with the subject line: “Remember:

Encourage your friends and family to complete the U.S. Census Survey” while those who have not clicked a link will receive an email with the subject line “Reminder: Complete the U.S. Census Survey.” For the final reminder email, those who have clicked a link in either the first or second email will receive an email with the subject line “Reminder: Encourage your friends and family to complete the U.S. Census Survey” while email addresses that haven’t clicked any link will receive an email with the subject line, “Final reminder for the U.S. Census Survey.”

Each email address in the sample will receive three notification emails:

- one initial email -“10-minute U.S. Census Survey to Help your Community,”
- a reminder email three days later, and
- a final reminder email one week later.

The survey will close at midnight the day following the final reminder.

We estimate that

- all 13,000 email recipients will spend 5 minutes reading emails;
- the 600 respondents will spend 5 minutes on average completing the survey; and
- a maximum of 600 friends and family will spend 10 minutes reading our emails and answering the survey questions.

Thus, the total estimated respondent burden for this study is 1233 hours.

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

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