

# **ConnectHome Use and Benefits Telephone Survey**

## **Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission, Part A**

**Submitted to:**

**U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)**

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## ConnectHome Use and Benefits Telephone Survey

### **Part A: Justification**

This supporting statement provides information on the data collection activities associated with the baseline survey for the White House and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) ConnectHome initiative.

#### **A.1 Circumstances that make the collection of information necessary**

President Barack Obama and Secretary Julián Castro announced ConnectHome on July 15, 2015 as the next step in the Obama Administration's efforts to increase access to high-speed Internet access for all Americans. The ConnectHome initiative builds on ConnectED, which aims to connect 99 percent of K-12 students to high-speed Internet in schools and libraries by 2018. ConnectHome will bring the opportunity for high-speed home Internet access to low-income families across the nation, including an estimated nearly 200,000 children. Through public-private partnerships, nonprofits, businesses, and Internet service providers (ISPs) ConnectHome will offer high-speed Internet service, devices, technical training, and digital literacy programs to residents of HUD assisted housing in 28 pilot communities, including the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. To date, local government executives have already committed to reallocate local funds, leverage local programming, and use regulatory tools to support this initiative and the expansion of broadband access in low-income communities.

ConnectHome responds to an urgent need in our communities. As a recently released report from the President's Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) illustrates, some Americans are still unable to benefit from high-speed internet access, especially America's lower-income children.<sup>1</sup> The report highlights that while nearly two-thirds of households in the lowest-income quintile own a computer, less than half have a home internet subscription. While many middle-class U.S. students go home to Internet access, allowing them to do research, write papers, and communicate digitally with their teachers and other students, too many lower-income children go unplugged every afternoon when school ends. This "homework gap" runs the risk of widening the achievement gap, denying hardworking students the benefit of a technology-enriched education.

HUD selected the twenty-seven cities and one tribal nation to participate in ConnectHome. HUD selected these communities through a competitive process that took into account local commitment to expanding broadband opportunities; presence of place-based programs; and other factors to ensure all are well-positioned to deliver on ConnectHome:

Albany, GA; Atlanta, GA; Baltimore, MD; Baton Rouge, LA; Boston, MA; Camden, NJ; Choctaw Nation, OK; Cleveland, OH; Denver, CO; Durham, NC; Fresno, CA; Kansas City, MO; Little Rock, AR; Los Angeles, CA; Macon, GA; Memphis, TN; Meriden, CT; Nashville, TN; New Orleans, LA; New York, NY; Newark, NJ; Philadelphia, PA; Rockford, IL; San Antonio, TX; Seattle, WA; Springfield, MA; Tampa, FL; and Washington, DC.

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<sup>1</sup> White House Council of Economic Advisors. July 2015. *Mapping the Digital Divide*. [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/wh\\_digital\\_divide\\_issue\\_brief.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/wh_digital_divide_issue_brief.pdf).

HUD is also taking major steps to provide communities across the nation with tools to improve digital opportunity for its residents:

- Rulemaking that requires HUD-funded new residential construction and substantial rehabilitation projects to support broadband internet connectivity.
- Providing communities with the flexibility to spend portions of their Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grants on local broadband initiatives and associated connectivity enhancements, including approximately \$150 million dedicated to the current competition.
- Rulemaking to include broadband planning as a component of the Consolidated Planning process, which serves as a framework for a community-wide dialogue to identify housing and municipal development priorities.
- Providing guidance and share best practices with HUD-funded grantees on how to more effectively utilize HUD funding to support broadband connectivity.
- Integrating digital literacy programming and access to technology into related initiatives.

HUD is partnering with an external research team (Insight Policy Research) to evaluate the ConnectHome program and administer the ConnectHome Internet Subscribers Telephone Survey. The survey is part of the evaluation of the HUD ConnectHome pilot initiative to increase high-speed Internet access among families with school-aged children in public housing. Results of this survey will be a critical component of assessing the effect of the ConnectHome pilot initiative in 28 communities across the United States. The purpose of the survey is to collect contextual information about subscribers' Internet experiences, including use of the Internet to improve subscribers' quality of life and to potentially create opportunities that did not exist without Internet access.

Insight drafted the survey instrument, drawing on existing survey questions that have been implemented in other surveys of Internet use and digital literacy and incorporating feedback from HUD, ConnectHome stakeholders, and pretest participants. The survey will be administered by Insight's subcontractor ICF International (ICF), a major provider of telephone surveys for Federal agencies, including HUD.

This research is conducted under the authority of the Secretary of HUD to undertake programs of research, studies, testing and demonstration related to the mission and programs of HUD (12 USC 1701z-1 et seq.).

## **A.2 Purpose of the Information Collection**

The draft ConnectHome Internet Subscribers Telephone Survey includes approximately 80 questions. Initial estimates suggest the instrument should take roughly 15–20 minutes to complete, but this estimate will be confirmed during the pretest phase in March. The survey covers the following topics: households’ use of Internet and technology in general; households’ use of Internet for education, employment, and health purposes; digital literacy; and demographic characteristics. HUD will translate the survey into Spanish. The draft survey instrument is shown in appendix B.

HUD—or a partner of HUD, such as a PHA in a participating community—will provide Insight the sampling frame of phone numbers and names for the heads of household for households that have recently obtained high-speed Internet access in their homes through ConnectHome. If possible, a secondary phone number for these households will be provided to increase the likelihood of reaching selected households.

The survey will be fielded to a sample of up to 2,500 households, which HUD will identify through its partnerships with Public Housing Agencies as recent ConnectHome Internet subscribers. PHAs will provide Insight with a frame of telephone numbers, and Insight will sample from that frame as needed. ICF will conduct the telephone surveys using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) software. At HUD’s discretion, PHAs may conduct outreach to sampled households to encourage their participation in the survey.

The materials used to administer the ConnectHome Internet Subscribers Telephone Survey will include an advance notification letter (Appendix A) and the survey instrument, which will be available in English and Spanish (Appendix B).

This Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) submission includes the instrumentation required for use under the ConnectHome Evaluation Study.

## **A.3 Improved technology.**

The survey instrument will use a screener question at the beginning of the survey to identify appropriate respondents. ICF International’s (ICF) CATI software package will release sample records as needed throughout fielding of the phone survey to allow for up to 10 attempts by telephone to reach each sample household. The CATI software will be programmed to adhere to the following best practice dialing protocols:

- Setting allowable calling times
- Defining maximum number of contact attempts
- Rotating the day of the week call attempts are made
- Prioritizing scheduled callback appointments
- Suspending interviews as necessary
- Calling busy lines back at a minimum of 10-minute intervals

- Automatically attempting a second call for partial completes
- Disposing of fax lines

ICF will employ a proven strategy for achieving excellent response rates. Tactics will include the following:

- Displaying caller identification
- Prioritizing scheduled appointments
- Allowing appointments outside usual calling hours
- Focusing on completing first contacts
- Streamlining interviewer screens
- Ongoing training
- Tracking response and cooperation rates
- Using an optimal interviewing protocol

#### **A.4 Efforts to identify duplication.**

There is no existing data source that can readily be analyzed to document the implementation of the ConnectHome Program. Similarly, there is no existing data source that can be analyzed to document residents' views and experiences in the program since the program is being implemented newly in the target developments.

#### **A.5 Impact on small businesses or other small entities.**

Small businesses are not part of this information collection effort and thus we do not anticipate that this study will burden small businesses.

#### **A.6 Consequences if information is collected less frequently.**

This is three-year information collection request. The telephone survey will explore ConnectHome subscribers' previous broadband access, current and planned patterns of use, and current and anticipated benefits of their at-home high-speed Internet access. Questions will emphasize educational Internet use such as completing homework, connecting parents with educators, and applying to college. In addition, the telephone survey will explore barriers to signing up for ConnectHome, securing devices, and using the Internet.

If the telephone survey for ConnectHome is not administered and the data not collected, analyzed, reported, and disseminated, Federal program or policy activities will not be informed by high quality evidence on a variety of outcomes of internet connection through ConnectHome. Limiting analysis to only those outcomes available through the baseline survey and focus groups will complicate critical decisions regarding future investments in internet connection in public housing households.

### **A.7 Special circumstances.**

The proposed data collection activities are consistent with the guidelines set forth in 5 CFR 1320 (Controlling Paperwork Burdens on the Public). There are no special circumstances that require deviation from these guidelines. The following below are “**Not Applicable**” to this collection:

- \* requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly; “**Not Applicable**”
- \* requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it; “**Not Applicable**”
- \* requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document; “**Not Applicable**”
- \* requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years; “**Not Applicable**”
- \* in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study; “**Not Applicable**”
- \* requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB; “**Not Applicable**”
- \* that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or “**Not Applicable**”
- \* requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law. “**Not Applicable**”

### **A.8 Federal Register Notice/Consultations outside the agency.**

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, HUD published a 60-Day Notice of Proposed Information Collection in the *Federal Register* on February 4, 2016. The Docket No. FR-5915-N-01 and the notice appeared on page 6036. No public comments on the proposed information collection were received. A copy of the notice is included as Appendix C.

### **A.9 Payment or gifts.**

Residents who participate in telephone survey will receive compensation of \$15 gift card for their time. This amount is comparable to compensation HUD has offered in similar studies. Three factors helped to determine the incentive amounts for the telephone survey: 1) participant burden; 2) costs associated with the amount of time that the telephone survey participant will commit to survey and 3) other studies of comparable populations and burden.

**A.10 Assurance of confidentiality.**

HUD has entered into a cooperative agreement with an independent research team to conduct this research effort. HUD and the research team does promise confidentiality as stated in the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a), Records Maintained on Individuals. All respondents included in the study will be informed that information they provide will be used only for the purpose of this research. Individuals will not be cited as sources of information in prepared reports. Findings will be publicly reported only at the aggregate level in the final report.

**A.11 Sensitive questions.**

The telephone questionnaire will only ask for the study participant’s name and the contractor will be provided their telephone number. The questions in the questionnaire are not considered sensitive. The findings from the study will be publicly reported only at the aggregate level: individual residents will not be identified in any subsequent reports.

**A.12 Provide an estimate of the burden, in hours and cost, of the collection of information.**

The hour burden estimates for data collection for the process study is outlined in Table 1. We have assumed the maximum possible number of study participants. The estimates included in Table 1 are based on experience with previous implementation studies involving similar populations and data collection instruments.

**Table 1: Data Collection Activities and Anticipated Burden**

<b>Information Collection (instruments)</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Frequency of Response</b>	<b>Responses Per Annum</b>	<b>Burden Hour Per Response</b>	<b>Annual Burden Hours</b>	<b>Hourly Cost Per Response</b>	<b>Annual Cost</b>
Telephone Survey Instrument (Appendix B)	2,500	1	2,500	.33 (15-20 minutes)	825	\$15.00	\$12,375.00
<b>Total Burden Hours</b>	<b>2,500</b>				<b>825</b>	<b>\$15.00</b>	<b>\$12,375.00</b>

**A.13 Estimate of additional total costs to respondents**

This data collection effort involves no recordkeeping or reporting costs for respondents other than the time burden to respond to questions on the data collection instruments as described in item 12 above. There is no known cost burden to the respondents since residents who participate in telephone survey will receive compensation of \$15 gift card for their time.

**A.14 Provide estimate of annualized cost to Federal Government**

The data collection activities to be supported by the Federal Government total \$277,076 over one year for this research effort, resulting in an annualized cost of \$277,076 to the Federal government. Included are costs associated with the draft household selection for internet subscribers (\$22,014), final household selection for internet subscribers (\$22,014), draft survey administration plan for internet subscribers (\$22,014) final survey administration plan for internet subscribers (\$22,014) draft monthly response tallies (\$94,510) and final monthly response tallies (\$94,510).

**A.15 Explanation of Program Changes / Adjustments**

This submission is a new request for approval; there is no change in burden.

**A.16 Publication of Results**

HUD will publish results of the telephone survey in a final report in December 2016.

**A.17 Display of the Expiration date for OMB Approval of the Information Collection**

The expiration date for OMB approval will be displayed on any forms completed as part of the data collection.

**A.18 Explanation of Each Exception to the Certification Statement**

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.