

Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback” (OMB Control Number 0690-0030)

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: American Community Survey (ACS) Strategic Framework Mailing Materials Cognitive Interviews

PURPOSE: The ACS program regularly conducts research to test changes to data collection methods intended to increase response rates, reduce respondent burden, and improve data quality. ACS staff initiated the Strategic Framework project to evaluate the current suite of survey mail contact materials, identify issues that might be improved, and develop new materials intended to increase self-response rates. The interdivisional project team developed three unique treatments of five mailing packages each. While each treatment follows a distinct design, all treatments use strategies to minimize the amount of text, prioritize messages, use visually pleasing elements (color, images), etc. A team of researchers outside of the Census Bureau designed a fourth treatment, and this treatment will also be included in the cognitive testing. The goals for this cognitive interviewing test are two-fold: (1) detect concerns respondents may have with regard to the materials, and (2) identify improvements that can be made in advance of the planned 2021 field test.

We attached the full set of materials (see Enclosure I: ACS Strategic Framework Mailing Materials). Because each treatment of the mailing materials embraces a new design, we plan to cognitively test all four treatments of mailing materials using probes specifically targeted to elements unique to each design. The cognitive testing will focus on elements of the mailing materials intended to draw respondents’ attention, facilitate reading, and encourage response to the survey, while also looking for aspects that respondents find confusing or concerning. In order to get a sense of how the new materials might affect public perceptions and response rates for the ACS, we will recruit individuals who typically handle the mail for their households. We will also recruit respondents with diverse demographic characteristics and household composition, to the extent possible. The results of the cognitive testing will inform the final, revised ACS mail materials that will be used in a field test in 2021.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS: General population

TYPE OF COLLECTION: (Check one)

Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form Customer Satisfaction Survey

Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software) Small Discussion Group

Focus Group Other: Cognitive Interviews

CERTIFICATION:

I certify the following to be true:

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low-burden for respondents and low-cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other federal agencies.
4. The results are not intended to be disseminated to the public.
5. Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions.
6. The collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the future.

Name: _____

To assist review, please provide answers to the following question:

Personally Identifiable Information:

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected? [] Yes [x] No
2. If Yes, will any information that is collected be included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974? [] Yes [] No
3. If Yes, has an up-to-date System of Records Notice (SORN) been published?
[] Yes [] No

Gifts or Payments:

Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants? [x] Yes [] No

BURDEN HOURS

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
Screening	240	1 minutes	4 hours
Cognitive Interviews	80	60 minutes	80 hours
Totals			84 hours

FEDERAL COST: The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is minimal.

If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:

The selection of your targeted respondents

1. Do you have a customer list or something similar that defines the universe of potential respondents and do you have a sampling plan for selecting from this universe? Yes No

If the answer is yes, please provide a description of both below (or attach the sampling plan)? If the answer is no, please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them?

Respondents will be recruited through fliers posted at local community organizations, advertisements on Craigslist.com, and broadcast messages distributed through the Census Bureau’s daily online newsletter. All recruiting materials are attached (see Enclosure II). Our recruiting efforts will target respondents who are most likely to handle the mail and react to it in a household. We will recruit respondents who read at different literacy levels, using education as a proxy measure. We will also recruit respondents with diverse demographic characteristics and household composition to the maximum extent possible.

Administration of the Instrument

1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)

Web-based or other forms of Social Media

Telephone

In-person

Mail

Other, Explain

2. Will interviewers or facilitators be used? Yes No

1. Line of Business – General Government
2. Subfunction - Central Records and Statistical Mgt.
3. Number of Respondents for small entity - 0
4. Affected Public – Individuals and Households
5. Percentage of respondents reporting electronically - 0

Please submit all instruments, instructions, correspondences (emails, letters, etc.) to respondents, and scripts as separate documents along with this request document.

Every instrument must have the following displayed -

OMB Control No. 0690-0030

Expiration Date: 7/30/20