

**TPOPS-1(R)(L)**  
**(11-2016)**



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**Economics and Statistics Administration**  
**U.S. Census Bureau**  
Washington, DC 20233-0001  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

A message from the Director, U.S. Census Bureau...

Recently, a representative from the U.S. Census Bureau contacted you on behalf of the Bureau of Labor Statistics to participate in the Telephone Point of Purchase Survey (TPOPS). I understand you have some concerns about the survey.

I am writing to encourage you to participate. Your input is critical for ensuring that our survey results are representative of the entire country. In addition, I want to emphasize that all information you provide will be confidential and used for statistical purposes only.

How does this survey impact you? It plays a key role in updating the Consumer Price Index, or CPI, which measures how quickly prices are changing. This measure of the national inflation rate directly affects:

- Cost-of-living increases for Social Security
- Private wage contracts
- Pensions

The survey questions ask about purchases you have made and you can choose to skip any question you don't want to answer.

We hope that you will participate in this short survey. Answers to questions you may have about the survey are on the back of this letter, and more information can be found on the TPOPS respondent website at: [www.bls.gov/trops/](http://www.bls.gov/trops/).

If you have any questions, please call the Census Bureau between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m. Eastern Time on its toll-free number: 1-800-681-3012.



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Why is the Census Bureau calling me? I thought they only operated every ten years.**

In addition to the decennial census, we collect data on a monthly basis. We collect these data to provide up-to-date information on topics such as unemployment, spending, family income, housing, manufacturing, and business activities to track the country's economy.

### **What is this survey about?**

The Telephone Point of Purchase Survey (TPOPS) provides information on the stores and businesses where people shop and on the products they buy. This information updates the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the "cost of living index."

### **How will the information be used?**

In order for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to update the CPI, it is necessary to maintain an up-to-date list of the stores and businesses where people shop. The U.S. Census Bureau conducts TPOPS to provide statistical data needed to update this list. Your voluntary response is essential for ensuring that this survey's results are complete and accurate.

### **Why was I selected? Why not interview someone else?**

Through a scientific sampling process, a phone number associated with your household was selected randomly from a list of phone numbers. We did not select you personally. Your household represents hundreds of other households in your region, so your participation in the survey is important.

### **What confidentiality protection do I have?**

The confidentiality of the information you provide is assured to the full extent permitted by law in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (Title 5 of Public Law 107-347). The information you provide will only be used for statistical purposes.

### **What laws authorize you to conduct this survey?**

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved this survey and assigned it Control Number 1220-0044. Title 29, Section 2 of the United States Code (U.S.C.) authorizes the BLS to conduct household studies. Title 13, Section 8 of the U.S.C. authorizes the Census Bureau to conduct surveys for other federal agencies.

### **How long does the interview take?**

You will be interviewed once a quarter for     quarters; the typical interview lasts between 10 and 20 minutes.

If you have any comments regarding the burden estimates or any other aspect of this survey, including suggestions for reducing this burden, please send them to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Division of Consumer Price Index, Room 3615, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20212. Additional contact information can be found at [www.bls.gov/tpops/](http://www.bls.gov/tpops/).