

September 25, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR : Reviewer of 1220-0163

FROM : W. John Layng, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Consumer Prices and Price Indexes

SUBJECT : CPI Housing Survey Questions

The CPI program requests approval for three non-substantive changes to its housing survey questions. CPI plans to implement the changes for the next scheduled housing computer assisted data collection (CADDC) collection instrument (CI) software update in January 2018.

The proposed changes to the CPI housing survey questions are listed in Appendix 1 of this memo and involve changes to the 1) rental period, 2) type of structure and 3) lease period concepts in the survey. The proposed changes will clarify question wording and response options as well as provide the program with greater insight into the reasons for rent price change.

The Office of Survey Methods Research (OSMR) studied the CPI housing survey questions. OSMR agreed with concerns that the questions as currently worded could be confusing. OSMR recommend use of the proposed wording.

We do not expect the proposed revisions to the CPI housing survey questions will have any effect on respondent burden.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact W. John Layng at 202-691-6955 or e-mail at Layng.John@bls.gov or Crystal Konny at 202-691-6972 or e-mail at Konny.Crystal@bls.gov.

APPENDIX 1

Proposed Changes to CPI Housing Survey

“Rental period” question

Current “rental period” question:

What is the rental period?

- Monthly
- Weekly
- Two Weeks
- Daily

Proposed “rental period” question:

What period of time does that rent cover?

- One month
- Two weeks
- One week
- Daily

“Type of structure” response options--“observation” only screen (no respondent required)

Current “type of structure” response options:

- Single Detached
- Single Attached
- Mobile Home Trailer
- Multi - Unit with elevator
- Multi - Unit without elevator
- Other - Specify

Proposed “type of structure” response options:

- Single Detached
- Single Attached
- Mobile Home Trailer
- Multi, 2 units
- Multi, 3 to 4 units
- Multi, 5 to 9 units
- Multi, 10 to 19 units
- Multi, 20 to 49 units
- Multi, 50 or more units
- Other - Specify

Addition of “type of structure” question:

Does this “type of structure” have an elevator?

- Yes
- No

APPENDIX 1 (con't) Survey

Proposed Changes to CPI Housing

“Lease period” questions

Proposed “lease period” questions:

Do you have a lease or other rental agreement?

Yes

No

Don't know

How long is the current lease agreement?

Month-to-month

6 months

12 months

24 months

Other – months

In what month and year did the current lease start?

(MM / YYYY)