

**Request for Non-Substantive Change to 2017 American Community Survey (ACS)  
Methods Panel- Group Quarters Definition Field Test  
OMB Control No. 0607-0936  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
U.S. Census Bureau**

**Purpose**

This request concerns the Census Bureau's 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) Methods Panel program covered under OMB clearance 0607-0936. Specifically, the Census Bureau is requesting approval to conduct a methods panel test consisting of debriefing questions with Group Quarters (GQ) facilities contact persons regarding proposed revisions to the definitions for student housing.

**Background**

The ACS covers the U.S. population in both households and GQs. GQs are places where people live or stay, in a group living arrangement, that are owned or managed by an entity or organization providing housing and/or services for the residents. Data collection in GQs is conducted via a computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) operation. The CAPI operation for GQs consists of interviewing at the GQ facility level (e.g., the college/university dormitory) and at the resident level (e.g., the college students living in the dormitory). In the past, most college/university student housing has been enumerated using the group quarters method. Students in housing such as residence halls/dormitories and fraternity or sorority houses are contacted by interviewers and generally asked to fill out their own individual forms. However, in recent years, the types of places where students live have been changing. There are increasingly more unique arrangements, including apartments and apartment-style housing, especially near or off campus. Assignment of this apartment-style housing where students live to either the housing unit (HU) or GQ enumeration method is based on whether the housing fits the GQ definition for student housing.

The definition of college/university student housing was written more than 10 years ago, and does not necessary cover all of the new student housing options. The Census Bureau convened a GQ Working Group to address this issue, and that Working Group decided that it was the appropriate time to address possible refinement of the definition, especially since the Census Bureau is preparing for the next decennial census. After discussions with subject-matter experts and visits to and interviews with college/university administrators and owners of privately-owned student housing across the nation, the Census Bureau developed a proposed revision to the definition of college/university student housing, including an additional GQ Type:

**Revised Current (GQ type 501)--College/University Student Housing (College/University owned/leased/managed):**

College/university student housing includes residence halls, and other buildings, **including apartment-style student housing, designed primarily** to house college and university students

in a group living arrangement **either on or off campus**. These facilities are owned, leased, or managed either by a college, university, or seminary, and fraternity and sorority housing recognized by the college or university are included as college student housing.

**New Definition (GQ type 502)--College/University Student Housing (Privately owned/leased/managed):**

College/university student housing includes privately-owned, leased, or managed buildings designed primarily to house college and university students in a group living arrangement either on or off campus. This category includes apartment-style student housing. Residents typically enter into single-liability leases (“by the bed”).

The Census Bureau requires a rigorous testing protocol prior to implementing any significant changes to the ACS, so the Census Bureau is proposing a methods panel field test for this proposed revision to the definition of student housing. This field test will involve conducting debriefing sessions with a sample of GQ facility contact persons at college/university student housing facilities to determine how well they understand the new definitions and if the new definitions help the contact persons to distinguish between the various student housing options. The proposed debriefing questions are provided in the attachment.

**Burden**

There is a nominal increase in the burden to the public due to this change request. Approximately 120 GQ contact persons, out of about 20,000 annually nationwide, will be asked to participate in the debriefing, which is expected to take about 10 minutes. So, the additional burden to the public (GQ facility contact persons only) would be approximately 20 hours, increasing the total annual burden to GQ facilities from 5,000 hours to 5,020 hours.

## Attachment – Proposed Debriefing Questions

1. Who owns or manages this building/place/facility?

*(If needed:)*

- Is it managed by a college/university?
- By a private entity or organization?

### **SKIP PATTERN:**

**If managed by college/university – skip to 3**

**If not managed by college/university – continue to 2**

2. Does this building/place/facility have any sort of affiliation or association with a college/university?

**If no: skip to 3**

**If yes:**

- Please tell me how it is affiliated with the college/university?

#### **Probe:**

What does “affiliation” mean to you?

What does “association” mean to you?

3. What types of leases are available at this building/place/facility?

*(If needed:)*

- Does this building/place/facility offer individual liability leases?
- Is the lease by-the-bed?
- What is the length of the lease (9-month or 12-month)?
- Do students apply through the college/university or directly through the management company?

4. Does this building/place/facility only house college/university students?

**If yes:**

- If the building/place/facility were not filled to capacity, would you accept non-students?

**If no:**

- Approximately what percentage of your residents are students?

- (If needed: Is it more than 90%?)
- Approximately what percentage of your residents are married students with spouses/families?
  - What percentage are married students w/o their spouse/family?
  - Who else lives here?

5. What types of rooms, suites, and apartments are available to rent at this building/place/facility?

Mark all that apply:

- Single rooms
- Rooms shared by two or more people
- Suites (common room w/eating and bathroom, attached to 2 or more bedrooms)
- Apartments (studio, 1 bedroom, 2 + bedrooms)
- Some other type of housing option (specify :\_\_\_\_\_)

6. Please look at this flashcard and tell me which category best describes this building/place/facility?

[GIVE RESPONDENT FLASHCARD]

(If needed:)

- Do you see any categories on this flashcard that capture your building/place/facility?
- Tell me more about that.

7. The Census Bureau is planning to use this definition to classify student housing. [HAND RESPONDENT DEFINITION]. Please take a minute to read it.

[INSERT PROPOSED DEFINITION]

- a. Based on this definition, would you classify this building/place/facility as student housing?
- b. What words or examples in this definition helped you classify it?

- c. What would you want added, revised or deleted from the definition to make it easier for you to classify this building/place/facility?