

Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for Questionnaire Testing and Research” (OMB Control Number: 1905-0186)

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: 2020 Residential Energy Consumption Survey (RECS) Questionnaire Pretesting

PURPOSE: The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) seeks to revise existing questions and add questions to the Residential Energy Consumption Survey (RECS). The RECS is a periodic series of surveys of households and their energy suppliers with the purpose of collecting and reporting energy characteristics, consumption, and expenditures data of homes in the United States. The data are widely used throughout the government and the private sector for policy analysis and are made available to the public via data tables, public-use data files, and analysis articles.

EIA is interested in updating the household characteristics questions, which are administered to sampled households via web or mail, in preparation for the 2020 RECS. Proposed changes include adding questions to collect information on new technologies and revising questions and response options to improve respondent clarity and data quality.

EIA’s survey methodologists and contractor staff from RTI International would like to conduct in-person cognitive interviews and online question pretesting. Respondents will be recruited from the general population and panelists of an online testing platform. The purpose of these efforts includes:

- Assess the ability of respondents to accurately identify heating, air conditioning, and water heating equipment and fuels used in their homes
- Assess quality of respondent reported housing unit size (i.e. square footage)
- Research evolving trends in electronic and entertainment device usage to potentially improve on existing TV, TV peripheral, and computer behavior questions and response sets
- Assess quality of existing indoor and outdoor lighting usage questions
- Pretest new questions or response options to capture new technologies, such as induction cooking and electric vehicles

Online pretest instrument 1 (30 minute duration) will ask respondents several open-ended questions specifically regarding how the participant came up with your answers to the questions on energy usage.

Online pretest instrument 2 (3.5 minute duration) will ask the respondent to sort images of household heating and cooling equipment into categories. The goal is to learn about people’s familiarity with this equipment.

Online pretest instrument 3 (30 minute duration) will ask respondents several open-ended questions specifically regarding how the participant came up with your answers to the questions on energy usage.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

Cognitive interview participants will be recruited from the general population in the Washington, D.C., Chicago, IL, and Raleigh, NC metro areas by advertising on craigslist. Online panel participants will be recruited from an existing pool of online panelists from an advertisement on Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) who are accustomed to performing similar tasks on the MTurk platform.

TYPE OF COLLECTION: (Check one)

- Online Pretest/Field Testing
- Usability Testing
- Pilot Surveys
- Respondent Debriefings

- Cognitive Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Other: _____

CERTIFICATION:

I certify the following to be true regarding the proposed collection of information:

1. It is necessary for the proper performance of agency functions.
2. It avoids unnecessary duplication.
3. It reduces burden on small entities.
4. It uses plain, coherent, and unambiguous language that is understandable to respondents.
5. Its implementation will be consistent and compatible with current reporting and recordkeeping practices.
6. It indicates the retention periods for recordkeeping requirements.
7. It informs respondents of the information called for under 5 CFR 1320.8 (b)(3) about:
 - i. Why the information is being collected;
 - ii. Use of information;
 - iii. Burden estimate;
 - iv. Nature of response (voluntary, required for a benefit, or mandatory);
 - v. Nature and extent of confidentiality; and
 - vi. Need to display currently valid OMB control number
8. It was developed by an office that has planned and allocated resources for the efficient and effective management and use of the information to be collected.
9. It uses effective and efficient statistical survey methodology (if applicable).
10. It makes appropriate use of information technology.

Name: Thomas Leckey, Assistant Administrator for Energy Statistics,
U.S. Energy Information Administration

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

Personally Identifiable Information:

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected? Yes 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] Y [] No

Cognitive Interviews: \$40 per respondent

Online Panelists: The pretesting will occur through 3 online pretests. Incentive values will vary based on the length of the interview. Participants completing 30 minute interviews in online pretest instruments 1 and 3 will receive \$5. Participants completing the 3.5 minute interview in instrument 2 will receive \$0.59.

BURDEN HOURS

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
Individuals/Householders: In-person Inst. 1	30	60 minutes	30 hours
Individuals/Householders: Online Pretest. 1	240	30 minutes	120 hours
Individuals/Householders: Online Pretest. 2	240	3.5 minutes	14 hours
Individuals/Householders: Online Pretest. 3	240	30 minutes	120 hours
Totals	750		284 hours

ESTIMATE OF RESPONDENT BURDEN HOURS AND COST – The burden to respondents is 284 hours and the cost to the respondents is estimated to be $(\$78.52 * 284) = \$22,299.68$.

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

EIA/Contractor protocol and material prep time: 70 hours * \$78.52= \$5,496.40
Contractor interviewer time: 30 hours * \$78.52=\$2,355.60
Incentive – cognitive interviews: 30 participants * \$40 incentive = \$1,200
Incentive – online (inst. 2 & 4): 480 (30 minute interview participants) * \$5 = \$2,400
Incentive – online (inst. 3): 240 (3.5 minute interview participants) * \$0.59 = \$141.60
TOTAL COST: \$11, 593.60

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 [X] 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?

RTI will recruit 30 participants for cognitive interviews, participants will travel to RTI's office for the interview. The participants will be self-selecting through advertisements published on

Craigslist from Washington, DC, Chicago, IL, and Raleigh, NC. Specific text is shown in the attachment named recruitment ads.

For online pretesting, RTI will recruit 720 participants from pre-registered panelists of the Amazon Mechanical Turk web testing platform. Users of this service will see an invitation to participate in the pretesting and are accustomed to completing similar tasks. Panelists will be selected with the goal of having 160 participants in single family dwellings and 80 participants in multifamily dwellings for each online instrument.

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

Please make sure that all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.

Instructions for completing Request for Approval under the
“Generic Clearance for Questionnaire Testing and Research”
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TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Provide the name of the collection that is the subject of the request. (e.g. Comment card for soliciting feedback on xxxx)

PURPOSE: Provide a brief description of the purpose of this collection and how it will be used. If this is part of a larger study or effort, please include this in your explanation.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS: Provide a brief description of the targeted group or groups for this collection of information. These groups must have experience with the program.

TYPE OF COLLECTION: Check one box. If you are requesting approval of other instruments under the generic, you must complete a form for each instrument.

CERTIFICATION: Please read the certification carefully. If you incorrectly certify, the collection will be returned as improperly submitted or it will be disapproved.

Personally Identifiable Information: Provide answers to the questions. Note: Agencies should only collect PII to the extent necessary, and they should only retain PII for the period of time that is necessary to achieve a specific objective.

Gifts or Payments: If you answer yes to the question, please describe the incentive and provide a justification for the amount.

BURDEN HOURS:

Category of Respondents: Identify who you expect the respondents to be in terms of the following categories: (1) Individuals or Households; (2) Private Sector; (3) State, local, or tribal governments; or (4) Federal Government. Only one type of respondent can be selected per row.

No. of Respondents: Provide an estimate of the Number of respondents.

Participation Time: Provide an estimate of the amount of time required for a respondent to participate (e.g. fill out a survey or participate in a focus group)

Burden: Provide the Annual burden hours: Multiply the Number of responses and the participation time and divide by 60.

FEDERAL COST: Provide an estimate of the annual cost to the Federal government.

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. Please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them. If the answer is yes, to the first question, you may provide the sampling plan in an attachment.

Administration of the Instrument: Identify how the information will be collected. More than one box may be checked. Indicate whether there will be interviewers (e.g. for surveys) or facilitators (e.g., for focus groups) used.

Submit all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.