

# **2020 Current Population Survey- Child Support Supplement**

**OMB Information Collection Request**  
0970-0416

## **Supporting Statement Part A – Justification**

**May 2019**

Submitted By:  
Office of Child Support Enforcement  
Administration for Children and Families  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

## SUPPORT STATEMENT PART A - JUSTIFICATION

### 1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

This request is for reinstatement, with change, of a previously approved collection that has expired. The collection instrument is called the 2020 Current Population Survey-Child Support Supplement. A clean version of the instrument is attached (IC# 1). A version with track changes, to show the changes between the previously approved version and the updated version submitted with this request, is also attached (Attachment A).

This supplement will be conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau and is authorized by Title 13, United States Code, Section 182. It will be conducted in conjunction with the April 2020 Current Population Survey (CPS) (OMB #0607-0049). This supplement, which was last conducted in 2018, will continue the data series started in 1979 in response to a recommendation of the Conference on Issues in Federal Statistical Needs Relating to Women. This supplement is sponsored by the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Department of Health and Human Services and is authorized by Title IV-D of the Social Security Act.

### 2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

The Child Support Supplement is designed to obtain information on the characteristics of individuals eligible to receive child support and the types of financial arrangements made to assist in the support of such individuals and any children for whom they retain custody. To enhance the usefulness of these data, these items will be asked in the six rotation groups common to the March CPS sample to permit matching to the demographic and economic data collected in the Annual Social and Economic Supplement. (This is the same procedure used in the April 1979, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018 surveys.) The combination of data from these two supplements will yield a detailed socioeconomic picture of these individuals and their families. It will show the extent to which these families are owed and receive child support. Child support payments are a major source of income for these families, especially among those who are poor and receive it. Failure to receive these payments may be a contributing factor to poverty in this country, particularly in households maintained by women.<sup>1</sup>

The proposed questionnaire is divided into sections that address specific child support issues. The following paragraphs outline the structure of the proposed 2020 questionnaire and discuss the sections of the Social Security Act to which the OCSE must respond.

**Section 1. Universe Questions and Roster of Agreements.** The universe questions determine which children have a parent living elsewhere and create a roster of child support-eligible children. It also determines which adults, regardless of sex, are eligible respondents.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Gabe. *Welfare, Work and Poverty Status of Female-Headed Families with Children; 1987–2013*. Table C-3. Congressional Research Service.

The remainder of Section 1 assembles a roster of all agreements for all child support-eligible children beginning with the agreement covering the youngest child. The questions on the roster make distinctions between legal and other types of agreements within the household and determine which, if any, children are covered by the same agreement.

**Section 2. History of Most Recent Support Agreement.** This section asks parents a series of questions about the history of their most recent support agreement, including when it was first established and whether it has been changed.

**Section 3A. Support Agreement and Behavior.** This section asks parents about the frequency and amount of child support that was supposed to be paid in the prior year, as well as the frequency and amount of child support that was actually paid in the prior year. This section responds to Section 15 of the Child Support Enforcement Amendments of 1984 to Title IV-D of the Social Security Act, which mandates that each state set up a commission on child support, whose function is to determine the success in securing child support. The health insurance questions included in this section address Section 16 of the Child Support Enforcement Amendments of 1984 to Title IV-D of the Social Security Act, which requires that the state child support administering enforcement program petition for the inclusion of medical support as part of any child support when reasonable for the absent parent to do so.

**Section 3B. Reasons For No Agreement.** This section addresses the reasons the custodial parent may not have a legal agreement or award.

**Section 4. Help Getting Support.** This section addresses the requirement that the OCSE measure the extent that child support enforcement activities are employed. In addition, OCSE must measure the type of aid given and the additional amount of child support received in conjunction with such efforts.

**Section 5. Agreement About Custody and Visitation, and Section 6. Parent-Child Contact.** These sections respond to Section 15 of the Child Support Enforcement Amendments of 1984, where the state commission must also determine parental involvement by focusing on the issues such as the enforcement of interstate obligations and visitation by the noncustodial parent.

**Section 7. Family History.** This section collects information about the marital history of the custodial parent.

Collection of these data will provide a nationwide assessment of the effect of implementation of the above mandates. These data will assist legislators and policymakers in determining how effective their policymaking efforts have been over time in applying the various child support legislation to the overall child support enforcement picture.

These data also help measure the effect that the compliance with child support arrangements, or the enforcement or lack of enforcement of child support arrangements, has had on the

economic well-being of women and children. These data will assist the OCSE to meet one of its mandated requirements, which is to measure the effectiveness of child support enforcement efforts.

Data such as these are also of major interest to policymakers in their efforts to reduce the amount of TANF and other types of welfare payments currently being made. The effectiveness of child support enforcement has a direct bearing on the required level of such payments.

Failure to collect up-to-date data accurately on child support could result in the misapplication of child support enforcement efforts into areas that have little or no return for the resources used. Such actions would not only waste the resources used on such efforts but also would preclude the allocation of resources to more successful enforcement efforts. Such misallocation would make it more difficult for TANF and other welfare applicants to become self-sufficient, a primary goal of the child support enforcement effort.

### **3. Use of Improved Information Technology and Burden Reduction**

The Census Bureau deems the use of personal visits and telephone interviews using computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) and computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI), the most appropriate collection methodology given existing available information technology. It is examining the Internet as a reporting option, but have not yet determined whether the Internet is feasible for a complex demographic survey such as the CPS, and CPS supplements such as the Child Support Supplement.

### **4. Efforts to Identify Duplication and Use of Similar Information**

The OCSE has consulted with other Government agencies, such as the Census Bureau, and has determined that the April CPS supplement is the only source of current national data that meets the mandated information as described in section 2 above. The March Annual Social and Economic Supplement does collect information on receipt of child support and TANF; however, it falls well short of obtaining the depth and scope of the information collected by this supplement. In order to avoid duplication of data collection and reduce respondent burden, this supplement is only collected in households that were interviewed in both March and April. The information collected in April is then matched to that obtained in March. The combined computer file maximizes the amount of data available to analysts while minimizing costs and respondent burden.

There is no other survey that replicates the degree of statistical reliability and depth of child support content associated with the CPS April/March supplement data file.

### **5. Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities**

The supplement questions are asked of individual households, not small businesses or other small entities.

6. **Consequences of Collecting the Information Less Frequent**

Twenty seven percent of all children and nearly 50 percent of poor children live in custodial families.<sup>2</sup> Such large numbers of children living in these families requires that up-to-date information on such families and their economic situation be available. Less frequent collection of these data would delay analysis and could result in improper allocation of enforcement resources and increased TANF payments.

7. **Special Circumstances Relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5**

There are no special circumstances. The CPS and Child Support Supplement are collected in a manner that is consistent with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines.

8. **Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice and Efforts to Consult Outside the Agency**

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR Part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), ACF published a notice in the Federal Register announcing the agency's intention to request an OMB review of this information collection activity. This notice was published on March 19, 2019, Volume 84, Number 53, page 10095, and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. We did not receive any comments regarding the CPS-CSS.

We developed the proposed items and interviewer procedures over the years as a result of consultation among the Census Bureau, OCSE, and other Government agencies. The following person has been in continuous consultation concerning the development of the 2020 supplement:

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Assistant Survey Director  
Current Population Surveys  
Associate Directorate Demographic Programs  
U.S. Census Bureau  
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<sup>2</sup> Grall, Timothy, "Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support: 2015," *Current Population Reports*, P60-262, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2018.

In addition to the above, a statement soliciting comments for improving CPS data is predominantly placed in all Census Bureau publications that cite CPS data. A similar statement is included in the technical documentation that accompanies the microdata files.

#### 9. **Explanation of Any Payment or Gift to Respondents**

The Census Bureau does not make any payments or provide any gifts to individuals participating in the CPS or any of the CPS supplements.

#### 10. **Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents**

The Census Bureau will collect the supplement data in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974 and OMB Circular A-130. Each sample household receives an advance letter approximately 1 week before the start of the initial CPS interview (see Attachments B and C). The letter includes the information required by the Privacy Act of 1974, explains the voluntary nature of the survey, and states the estimated time required for participating in the survey.

Field representatives must ask if the respondent received the letter and, if not, provide a copy and allow the respondent sufficient time to read the contents. Also, field representatives now provide households with the pamphlet, How the Census Bureau Keeps Your Information Strictly Confidential (see Attachments D and E). All information given by respondents to Census Bureau employees is held in strict confidence under Title 13, United States Code, Section 9. Each Census Bureau employee has taken an oath to that effect and is subject to a jail penalty and/or substantial fine if he/she discloses any information given to him/her.

#### 11. **Justification for Sensitive Questions**

The April 2020 Child Support Supplement does not include questions of a sensitive nature.

#### 12. **Estimates of Annualized Burden Hours and Cost**

It is estimated that an average of 1.8 minutes will be required to ask these questions across all 41,300 sample households, resulting in a total of 1,239 hours of respondent burden. This estimate is based on the time required to answer similar questions in previous April surveys. The actual interview time is dependent upon the number of eligible parents in the household and their marital and child support status. Those households where there are no parents, or the parents do not serve as custodial parents, have very few questions posed. Those households where the parent serves as a custodial parent have more questions posed to them.

##### **Estimated Annualized Burden Hours**

INSTRUMENT	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	AVERAGE BURDEN	TOTAL BURDEN
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		PER RESPONDENT	HOURS PER RESPONSE	HOURS
Survey	41,300	1	0.03	1,239

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 1,239

### **Estimated Annualized Burden Cost**

Type of RESPONDENTS	Total Burden Hours	Hourly Wage Rate	TOTAL Respondent Costs
Individuals	1,239	\$53.48	\$66,262

For individuals, the wage rate is \$26.74 per hour based on hourly earnings for employees as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. To account for fringe benefits and overhead the rate is multiplied by two which is \$53.48.

### **13. Estimate of Other Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents and Record Keepers**

Other than providing their time to answer the questions, the CPS does not impose any cost burden on respondents.

### **14. Annualized Cost to the Federal Government**

The cost of including the April supplement questions is estimated to be \$550,000 in fiscal year 2020 and is borne by the OCSE.

### **15. Explanation for Program Changes or Adjustments**

The Child Support Supplement has not been significantly altered since 1994, providing important trend data for the child support program and policymakers. The proposed changes to the 2020 Supplement will not change the key features of the supplement or interfere with the collection of important trend data, but it will streamline and update the supplement. We describe the changes below. We propose deleting 25 questions and adding 10. These proposed changes will reduce the number of questions in the supplement by about 10 percent.

- Replace the sex-specific references to the nonresident parent as “mother” or “father” with the sex-neutral term “other parent”. Interviewers do not know the sex of the other parent. Assuming that they are a mother or father based on the sex of the person they were talking to is inappropriate.

- Update the language used in the supplement, such as replacing A.F.D.C and A.D.C. with TANF.
- Revise a few questions to improve their readability (PRESUPP, 400, 401).
- Simplify terminology regarding child support orders to court orders and legal agreements.
- Eliminate 11 questions that ask respondents to provide further information if they answer “other” to a question. These verbatim answers are not publicly available and the U.S. Census Bureau has never examined them.
- Eliminate 14 questions that are no longer necessary (103b3, 103c, 258, 271, 273, 275, 376, 406B, 702, 705-709).
- Add a screener question that asks whether any household member who doesn’t already have an age recorded in the survey is under the age of 21. If a household member is under 21 and he/she meets the other eligibility criteria for the supplement, then one of the two universe questions for the supplement (102PR, 103a) will be asked. A small percent of the individuals in the CPS are being excluded from the supplement because their age is missing.
- Add four questions that give respondents the opportunity to indicate a range regarding the amount of child support owed and paid if the respondent can’t remember the exact amount (313c, 318c, 336, and 347a). Many respondents answer “don’t know” to questions that ask the amount of child support owed and paid and the Census Bureau has found these additional questions helpful in obtaining further information in other surveys.
- Add two questions to limit the universe for subsequent questions about receiving child support while on welfare (326pre, 343pre). Given the small number of custodial parents who currently receive welfare, asking all custodial parents these questions is unnecessary.
- Add two questions to help clarify subsequent questions (256, 262).
- Add three questions to capture child support payments beyond those associated with the youngest child (376a, 376b, 376c). Right now the supplement only captures child support payments associated with the youngest child and any other children in the family covered by the same child support order. Given the rise in multiple partner fertility, OCSE would like the supplement to capture child support received by all children in the family, not just the youngest child and any other children in the family covered by the same order.
- Add a question about whether respondents are aware that the government helps families obtain child support. The child support program has been experiencing a decline in its caseload for many years, driven largely by the decline in the welfare caseload which is a major referral source for the child support program. This new question will be asked of respondents who have never been in contact with the government about child support and will help the child support program understand whether custodial parents are aware of the program.

Attachment A provides track changes to show the changes between the previously approved version and this April 2020 version.



**16. Plans for Tabulation and Publication and Project Time Schedule**

The Census Bureau will conduct the CPS, of which this supplement is a part, during the period of April 19 through 25, 2020. A report based on these data will be published and posted here: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/about.html>. The expected publication date for this report has not been established yet.

**17. Reason(s) Display of OMB Expiration Date is Inappropriate**

As approved for previous fieldings of this supplement (for example, see the approved nonsubstantive change request from January 2016), we do not wish to display the assigned OMB number and expiration date of the information collection.

The April CPS-CSS Supplement is administered as part of the CPS monthly interview. However, this supplement (as well as all the CPS supplements) bears an OMB control number and expiration date that is different from the basic CPS interview. The OMB control number and expiration date for the CPS basic interview is included in the advance letter we give respondents. Because of these difficulties and anticipated respondent confusion involved with expressing a separate control number and expiration date to respondents for the supplement questions, we do not wish to display the OMB control number and expiration date for the CPS-CSS April Supplement.

**18. Exceptions to the Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions**

There are no exceptions to the certification.