



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
U.S. Census Bureau
Office of the Director
Washington, DC 20233-0001

April 15, 2020

Dominic J. Mancini
Deputy Administrator
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, DC

Subject: Covid-19 Household Pulse Survey - Request for Emergency Review and Clearance

Dear Dr. Mancini:

Pursuant to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) procedures established at 5 CFR Part 1320, *Controlling Paperwork Burdens on the Public*, I request that the proposed information collection project, "The Covid-19 Household Pulse Survey" be processed as an Emergency Revision Request in accordance with section 1320.13, Emergency Processing.

I have determined that the information must be collected prior to the expiration of time period established under Part 1320, and that this information is essential to fulfill the Census Bureau's mission as the nation's leading source of data on the nation's people and economy. The Covid-19 pandemic is an unanticipated event that is unprecedented in the sudden and dramatic manner in which it is impacting the social and economic well-being of American households. At this critical juncture, it is imperative for the federal statistical system to produce real-time, objective data on the impacts on American households as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. We thus request emergency clearance to field a Covid-19 Household Pulse Survey effective immediately upon OMB approval. This is an urgent, albeit short-term effort: the Census Bureau requests clearance to field the survey for a maximum of 90 days.

The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic will be felt for months, possibly years, to come. The federal statistical community is developing questions for inclusion in the government's large, benchmark surveys for later this year. However, given the rapidly changing dynamics of this situation, we must respond to the acute need for data on the situation as it is unfolding now. These rapid response data will provide federal, state and local agencies critical information to guide real-time response and interventions. In order to respond to these needs, the Census Bureau cannot reasonably comply with the normal clearance process and requests emergency clearance.

The Covid-19 Household Pulse Survey represents the coordination of six federal agencies – the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the National Center for Health Statistics, the National Center for Education Statistics, and the USDA Economic Research Service. The Census Bureau will serve as the collection agency, and the data will be collected and protected under Title 13 U.S.C. However, the questionnaire represents content contributed by each of these agencies to address their mission-related needs. By collecting these data in one instrument and as one coordinated multi-agency effort, we will produce these data quickly, efficiently and with a minimum of burden.

The Census Bureau will field a large sample drawn from the Master Address Frame (MAF) sufficient to derive state-level estimates and estimates for the 15 largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). The questionnaire will be fielded longitudinally to capture changes in the household experience through the period of the pandemic. With contributions from each of the agencies named above, the questionnaire has been designed to capture changes across multiple sectors, including employment status, consumer patterns (including use of the economic stimulus), physical and mental health, access to care, food security, housing, and educational disruption.

By necessity we will collect these data online, via a Qualtrics platform that can be deployed quickly and securely. Qualtrics operates in the Gov Cloud, is FedRAMP authorized at the moderate level, and has an Authority to Operate from the Census Bureau to collect personally identifiable and Title 13-protected data.

With your emergency approval, the Census Bureau is positioned to deploy the Covid-19 Household Pulse Survey the week of April 20, 2020. We commit to publishing a public notice about this information collection in the Federal Register within 30 days of approval. We appreciate your understanding of this urgent request and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Ron Jarmin
Deputy Director