

Questions Measuring the Effects of Coronavirus for the Current Population Survey (CPS)

Below are the proposed Current Population Survey (CPS) questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Note that interviewer instructions, which are shown in parentheses after the question, appear on the screen for interviewers but are not read to respondents.

Intro

I now have a few questions related to work activities affected by the Coronavirus-COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts to contain the Coronavirus have included business and school closures, social distancing, and other disruptions. The following questions refer to the last 4 weeks. By the last 4 weeks I mean the 4 week period ending last Saturday.

Telework - asked about all employed persons age 16 and over

1. At any time in the LAST 4 WEEKS, did (you/name) telework or work at home for pay BECAUSE OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC?
(Enter No if person worked entirely from home before the Coronavirus pandemic)
0 Yes
0 No

Uses of these data: Data from this question will provide insight into the number of people who are able to continue working at their jobs due to accommodations allowing for social distancing. In conjunction with information about work hours and absences already collected in the CPS, these data will facilitate the understanding of how different industry sectors were impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic. Combined with the extensive demographic information collected in the CPS, these data may inform policy decisions about how to facilitate telework options for various subpopulations.

Workplace closures/cutbacks – asked about all persons age 16 and over

2. At any time in the LAST 4 WEEKS, were (you/name) unable to work because (your/his/her) EMPLOYER CLOSED OR LOST BUSINESS due to the Coronavirus pandemic?
(Enter Yes for the self-employed who lost work or customers because of the Coronavirus pandemic)
0 Yes (go to 3)
0 No (go to 4)

Uses of these data: Data from these questions will provide insight into the number of people who have been displaced from jobs due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The data collected in the CPS will allow for analysis of which industries, occupations, subpopulations, and regions of the country were most affected. It also may inform policy decisions about job training programs and programs to assist heavily impacted subpopulations.

Note that the question asked in the May CPS will be slightly different in that it will exclude the word "pandemic." This word will be added to the question prior to fielding in June and will appear in the question thereafter.

3. Did (you/name) receive any pay from (your/his/her) EMPLOYER for the hours (you/he/she) DID NOT work in last 4 weeks?
(Enter No if self-employed and received no pay from customers)
0 Yes
0 No

Uses of these data: Data from these questions will provide insight into the number of people who were paid for time not worked. They will provide policy makers with information on the prevalence and types of workers who received paid leave during the Coronavirus pandemic. They may also help identify particular industries, occupations, and subpopulations who have little access to paid leave.

Job search – asked about persons age 16 and over who are not in the labor force

4. Did the Coronavirus pandemic prevent (you/name) from looking for work in the LAST 4 WEEKS?

0 Yes
 0 No

Uses of these data: Data from this question will provide insight into unemployment. Because a necessary condition of unemployment (except in the case of persons on temporary layoff) is active job search, it is important to have data on the number of people who are not actively looking for work specifically because of the Coronavirus pandemic. Coupled with the information already collected in the CPS—specifically, demographic characteristics and the industry and occupations of individuals' last job—data from this question can provide a more complete picture of the groups that might have particular needs. It also may inform policy decisions about how to facilitate job search for heavily impacted industries or subpopulations. In addition, it will contribute to interpreting differences between the closely watched CPS unemployment statistics and the unemployment insurance (UI) claims data.

Access to care – asked about everyone (all household members, including children)

5. At any time in the last 4 weeks, did you or anyone in your household need medical care for something other than Coronavirus, but not get it because of the Coronavirus pandemic? Please include all adults and children in the household.

(Enter NO if all persons in the household voluntarily cancelled or delayed medical care for themselves or another household member.)

0 Yes (go to 5a)
 0 No

5a. Who was that?

(Mark all that apply)

Uses of these data: Access to health care is a fundamental determinant of health, and its equitable distribution across the population is a critical issue of health services research and policymaking. Unmet needs are generally the result of cost-related barriers, accessibility problems (lack of transportation or lack of availability in area), and acceptability (personal preferences). The Coronavirus pandemic has the potential to greatly exacerbate these causes, especially accessibility problems (for example, due to doctor's offices limiting in-person appointments, urgent care clinics focusing on COVID symptoms and excluding others, or public transportation systems cutting back on service). The inclusion of this question on the CPS provides an opportunity to examine the prevalence of persons with recent unmet needs, whether that prevalence changes over time, and whether historic demographic inequities in access to care are widening.