

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT**  
**U.S. Department of Commerce**  
**U.S. Census Bureau**  
**Government Units Survey**  
**OMB Control Number 0607-0930**

**Part B – Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods**

**1. Universe and Respondent Selection**

The 2021 Government Units Survey (GUS) will target townships in 14 states, special districts in 40 states, and all independent school districts and educational service authorities (ESA). The scope for 2021 GUS collections is scaled back in comparison to the 2016 GUS collection operation. For greater efficiency, the 2021 GUS seeks information only from government units for which this information is difficult to collect via other methods, such as Internet research. The Census Bureau uses information from the 2021 GUS to update its universe list of public sector entities prior to mailing the other CoG components. Each of the estimated 43,454 local governments to be contacted, including independent school districts, will receive login information to complete the questionnaire online (Attachment A). The expected response rate for the 2021 GUS is 74 percent. This expected response rate is based on 2017 Census of Governments response rates, recent annual survey response rates for public sector surveys, eliminating the options of reporting by paper questionnaire, and targeting entities that typically are not included in the GUS, such as independent school district governments.

**2. Procedures for Collecting Information**

Respondents have the option of responding via the Internet or by telephone (Attachment B). The GUS collection operation is scheduled to begin in mid-February 2021. However, we have identified approximately 5,800 GUS units that will also be mailed in the 2021 Annual Survey of Public Employment and Payroll (ASPEP), which is practically one month later in mid-March 2021. ASPEP is an annual survey that is the only source of comprehensive information on employment and payroll for state and local governments in the United States. Both of these public sector surveys are necessary for producing the Census Bureau’s public sector statistics. Due to the close mail dates and efforts to mitigate respondent confusion, the Bureau will mail the 5,800 overlap GUS units in mid-March on the scheduled ASPEP mail date. Overlap units in both surveys will be mailed together and will include clear instructions explaining to respondents the two different surveys, and the specific due dates for completing each survey (Attachment C).

The two groups of GUS respondents (e.g., overlap units versus non-overlap units) will have two different due dates for completing the survey, along with different dates when they will receive follow-up reminders to complete the survey. GUS and ASPEP respondents will see their due date within the secure web portal upon login. The online survey portal will display only one due date based on the designated respondent type we have specified (programmed) in the online reporting instrument. For example, a respondent assigned to the “overlap” group upon login into the online portal will only see April 27, 2021 as their due date. While a respondent assigned to the “non-overlap” group upon login into the online portal will only see the April 1, 2021 as their due date. The mail letters are also separated into either the overlap vs non-overlap category. As a result,

respondents in the overlap group will only receive letters specifically designed for the government units that we have assigned to the overlap group.

### **3. Methods to Maximize Response**

The Census Bureau seeks advice from various public and professional groups that use Census of Governments published statistics or supply source information. These groups endorse survey efforts and encourage participation by their members. Survey publicity appears in state organization publications distributed to member governments. State Data Centers and Census Bureau regional offices also encourage local governments to respond to the GUS by stressing the importance of the data collection.

All respondents will receive the Initial letter (Attachment D) informing them about the upcoming GUS collection and reporting electronically via the online Centurion instrument. Approximately one month later, respondents who have not reported will receive a Reminder Email (Attachment E). After receiving the first reminder, any remaining non-respondents will receive a reminder email and phone calls.

Staff will conduct telephone follow-up to confirm respondents have received reminder letters, to encourage response, and to obtain any necessary clarifying information about a response.

### **4. Test Procedures or Methods**

The Census Bureau has used basic definitions and reporting instructions applicable to the public sector since the 1957 Census of Governments. Ongoing contact with local governments indicates that present methods of data collection are effective. The Census Bureau's Data Collection Methodology and Research Office within the Economic Statistical Methods Division conducted questionnaire cognitive testing. We implemented recommendations from this research when designing the 2021 GUS Centurion instrument.

### **5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection**

Statistical procedures, data collection, and analysis:

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### **List of Attachments**

- A. 2021 GUS Screenshots of Respondent Log-In page, Burden Statement, and FAQs
- B. 2021 GUS Questionnaire
- C. 2021 GUS Initial Overlap Units Letter
- D. 2021 GUS Initial Mail Letter
- E. 2021 GUS Reminder Email