



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

June 9, 2020

TO: Desk Officer for the U.S. Census Bureau  
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs/OMB

FROM: Victoria Velkoff, Associate Director for Demographic Programs, U.S. Census Bureau

SUBJECT: Request for Approval for Non-Substantive Change: Household Pulse Survey

The Census Bureau is writing to request approval of a Non-Substantive Change to the questions administered on the Household Pulse Survey questionnaire approved on April 19, 2020 (OMB No. 0607-1013). This notice is in keeping with the Census Bureau's commitment to foster transparency in its efforts to produce new, relevant and timely data on the social and economic experiences individuals are having during this period of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The revisions to the Household Pulse Survey questions in this request are designed to collect new relevant information.

This request presents the result of extensive revisions and discussions around content related to the Economic Impact Payments (EIP/Stimulus) made available through the CARES act and other legislation. The attached two items represent the minimum essential content to understand how the receipt of an EIP is used, and if spent, in which areas it is used. These two items in combination with the recently approved question about the sources of funding to cover expenses will provide enough information to understand how the stimulus payments are assisting the population in meeting their basic needs during this period.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics has been an active partner in the design and development of these questions. The two questions represent the minimum content that we feel is necessary. The first question will be useful for economic analysis, while the second allows for a cleaner comparison to CE expenditure data. The first proposed question on the HPS is slightly different from a similar question that is being prepared for the CEQ. The differences reflect our attempt to ensure that the question can be collected via a self-administered, web survey (vs. an interviewer administered phone interview). In the second question, spending is differentiated from paying off or paying down debt because from a CE perspective this separation acknowledges that paying off or paying down debt has a focus on liabilities, which differs from other expenditures. The Survey of Consumer Finance uses a similar distinction. Our

web probing evaluation indicated that participants were correctly understanding the phrase “credit card, student loans or other debts” so we included clarifying examples. We expect these questions to remain active through the end of the current phase of HPS data collection, unless situations suggest that we revisit them and consider adjusting or extending the items. Please see Attachment NSC-2 for documentation of these proposed changes. Thank you for your consideration. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

June 5th Proposed BLS Economic Impact Payment Questions

PROPOSED (Revised June 9, 2020)

NEW: (Q15 + 18):

If you, or anyone in your household, already received, or plan to receive a “stimulus payment,” that is the Coronavirus related Economic Impact Payment from the Federal Government, did or will you use it to:

*Select only one answer.*

- Mostly to pay for expenses (food, clothing, shelter, etc.)
- Mostly to pay off debt (car loans, student loans, credit cards)
- Mostly to add to savings
- Not applicable, I did not and do not expect to receive the stimulus payment

(Q19. Asked if New Q15/18 doesn't equal NA:) What did, or will, you and your household spend the “stimulus payment” on?

*Select all that apply.*

- Food (groceries, eating out, take out)
- Clothing (clothing, accessories, shoes)
- Household supplies and personal care products
- Household items (TV, electronics, furniture, appliances)
- Recreational goods (sports and fitness equipment, bicycles, toys, games)
- Rent
- Mortgage (scheduled or monthly)
- Utilities and telecommunications (natural gas, electricity, cable, internet, cellphone)
- Vehicle payments (scheduled or monthly)
- Paid down credit card, student loans, or other debts
- Charitable donations or giving to family members
- Saved or invested
- Other, specify