

March 18, 2022

NOTE TO THE REVIEWER OF: OMB No. 1220-0141
Cognitive and Psychological Research

FROM: Doug Williams and Struther Van Horn
Office of Survey Methods Research
Bureau of Labor Statistics

SUBJECT: Submission of Materials for Cognitive Testing of the
American Time Use Survey's Eating and Health
Module

Please accept the enclosed materials for approval under the OMB clearance package "Cognitive and Psychological Research." In accordance with our agreement with OMB, we are submitting a brief description of the research, and the materials to be used in the research.

We plan to interview up to 28 participants. The maximum number of burden hours is estimated to be 34 hours.

If there are any questions regarding this project, please contact Doug Williams at (202)-691-5707 or Struther Van Horn at (202) 691-7568.

American Time Use Survey (ATUS) Eating and Health Module

I. Introduction and Purpose

The American Time Use Survey (ATUS) is an ongoing, nationally-representative telephone survey of the civilian non-institutional population age 15 and over, collecting data from approximately 11,800 Americans per year. Respondents are asked to sequentially describe what they did “yesterday,” from 4 a.m. of the previous day to 4 a.m. of the interview day. The sample is chosen from those households that completed the eighth (final) CPS interview, and in each of these households, one person is randomly selected to be interviewed for the ATUS. Each person is also assigned to be interviewed about activities for a particular day (e.g., Tuesday), with interviewers attempting to reach the designated person subsequent to the assigned day for up to eight weeks. About half of the respondents are interviewed on a weekday and about half on a weekend day.

In 2014-2016, BLS conducted an ATUS Eating and Health Module sponsored by the Economic Research Service (ERS) that captured information from ATUS respondents about secondary eating—that is, eating while doing another activity, soft drink consumption, grocery shopping preferences and fast food purchases, meal preparation and food safety practices, food assistance participation, general health, height and weight, exercise, and income. (See: <https://www.bls.gov/tus/ehdatafiles.htm>).

ERS has sponsored another Eating and Health Module to be administered in 2022-2023. The 2022-2023 ATUS Eating and Health Module will accomplish similar objectives as the 2014-2016 module. As the module is sponsored by ERS, measures were added, dropped, or edited based on ERS’s objectives and needs. The questions that were dropped were based on a review of use by researchers. ERS developed the new and revised questions in consultation with subject matter experts and a review of other dietary surveys (e.g. NHANES and FoodAPS). Although many questions remain the same, some have been dropped, and some have been added to obtain better information about topics including: foods eaten that people commonly forget to include in surveys (e.g., Zeballos, Todd, and Restrepo, 2019), grocery shopping and food preparation, online grocery shopping (both delivery and for pickup), and general health. See Appendix A for a complete draft of the 2022-2023 module.

The purpose of this study is to conduct cognitive interviewing of the proposed new questions for the 2022-2023 module in order to gain insight about respondents’ understanding of the terms, definitions, and concepts associated with eating and health. The tests will be conducted by BLS staff in the Office of Survey Methods Research (OSMR) and Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics (OEUS).

II. Participants

Up to 28 online participants will be recruited for this study to participate in two rounds of testing of up to 14 participants each. Individual interviews are planned for March through May. However, scheduling will depend on recruitment and participant availability.

General population study participants will be recruited from the Office of Survey Methods Research participant database consisting of those who have responded to prior recruiting announcements, and online job posting bulletin boards such as Craigslist.com. Job posting sites will be targeted in cities with higher populations (e.g., San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and Washington D.C.). During recruitment and screening over the phone, we will collect the following information to ensure that we are interviewing a cross-section of the target population: employment status, gender, age, household size, presence of children in the household, geographic spread, those who have shopped for groceries online recently (past month) versus those who have not, and those who prepare food for their household or do not. See Appendix B for the recruitment advertisements and Appendix C for the phone recruitment script.

III. Research Design

Research statisticians from the OSMR will interview the participants individually by Microsoft Teams or on the telephone. Other OSMR or OEUS staff may observe and assist with notetaking during these interviews. To collect feedback about the questionnaire, this study uses cognitive interviews. Cognitive interviews provide an in-depth understanding of the participant's thought processes and reactions to the questions.

Participants will first complete a shortened version of the ATUS time diary, asking them to walk through their activities starting at 4am yesterday until 4am the day of the interview. This will be done to capture the context of how respondents would experience the Eating and Health Module in the production survey and for reference during some of the module questions that cite times when respondents are eating. As a result of the pandemic, we are utilizing Microsoft Teams. The interviews will be conducted over Teams, using an interviewer administered mode, similar to methodology used by ATUS. The time diary portion is not the focus of the cognitive testing, we are asking this to create an environment that is required to test the eating and health module. Afterward, participants will complete the survey questions from the 2022-2023 Eating and Health Module. The ATUS would normally be administered over the phone but for the purposes of the cognitive testing, it will be interviewer administered over Microsoft Teams. After the survey questions are answered, participants will be asked debriefing questions of the new or revised module questions to better understand their responses and reactions to the questions. See Appendix D for the full cognitive interviewing protocol.

The findings from all the cognitive interviews will be evaluated qualitatively, and used to arrive at conclusions about the effectiveness of the proposed wording. As this is pretesting, we expect that modifications to the question wordings or response options may be made during the course of the study based on interim findings, and in between the two rounds of testing. Although the goals of the testing, and overall design, will remain the same, findings from preliminary results may be used to improve question wording and/or probes. Modifications are likely to range from slight changes to question wording to the order of the questions.

IV. Burden Hours

BLS anticipates that up to 28 individuals (two rounds of 14 participants) will each participate in 60-minute interviews, for a total of 28 burden hours. Recruitment will take approximately 5 minutes and we expect to need to contact up to 75 people to obtain 28 participants, for a total of **34.25 burden hours**.

Total expected burden for this study is 34.25 hours, as shown in the table below:

	Number Contacted	Time spent Recruiting	Screening Burden	Number of Participants	Session Length	Session Burden	Total Burden
Individual Cognitive Interview	75	5 minutes	6.25 hours	28	60 minutes	28 hours	34.25 hours
Overall Total Burden Hours							34.25 hours

V. Payment to Respondents

Respondents will be offered an electronic \$40 Visa gift card as an incentive (\$1120.00 total) to complete this study to cover the costs associated with participation including internet access and child care. Participants will be informed of the voluntary nature of the study, the maximum length of the study (60 minutes), and that they have the right to stop participating at any time.

VI. Data Confidentiality

Participants being interviewed via Teams will be shown the consent information and asked for their verbal agreement (see Appendix E). Participants interviewed on the phone will be asked for their verbal consent to participate in the study following the script shown in Appendix E.

VI. Attachments

- Appendix A: Eating and Health Module draft questionnaire
- Appendix B: Recruitment advertisements
- Appendix C: Phone recruitment script
- Appendix D: Full cognitive interview protocol
- Appendix E: Consent form (verbal for remote interviews)

Appendix A: Draft questionnaire (see attachment)

Appendix B: Recruitment advertisements

Email to solicit volunteers from the OSMR database

Subject: The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics requests your help

Dear [name],

The **Bureau of Labor Statistics** (BLS) is looking for volunteers between the ages 18 and older to give feedback on a survey about how you spend your time and general health. We want this survey to be as relevant and useful as possible. We were hoping that you might be available to talk to us about these new questions. We want to be sure that the questions are easy to understand and answer.

Participants will receive \$40, paid via an electronic Visa card.

How long will this take?

We estimate that this will take between 45 and 60 minutes. Since your participation is completely voluntary, you can end the conversation at any point.

Where will this discussion take place?

We plan to conduct this discussion remotely using the telephone or a video conferencing software called Microsoft Teams. You will not have to download any software to your computer or phone.

I'm interested. What are next steps?

Simply respond to this email indicating your interest, and we will be in touch see if you are eligible to participate and schedule a time.

Sincerely,
Struther Van Horn

Struther Van Horn, Ph.D.
Office of Survey Methods Research
Bureau of Labor Statistics
202-691-7528



Online bulletin board advertisement

Volunteers needed to give feedback on a survey [\$40 for 1 hour]

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is looking for volunteers to give feedback on a survey about how you spend your time and general health.

Participation is **virtual** using telephone or video conferencing. Sessions take up to 45 to 60 minutes. You'll answer questions about how you spend your time and general health, then provide some feedback on those questions.

Participants will receive \$40, paid via an electronic Visa card. Additional eligibility screening may apply.

Please contact Research@bls.gov.

Appendix C: Phone recruitment script

Outgoing Calls

Hello, my name is [FILL recruiter name] calling on behalf of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. May I speak with [FILL name]?

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is looking for volunteers to give feedback on a survey about how you spend your time and general health. We would like your feedback to be sure the questions are easy to understand and answer.

Sessions will take place over the next few weeks, on phone or on video conference, and take about an hour. Participants will receive \$40, paid via an electronic Visa card.

[Then proceed with screening questions]

Incoming Calls

Thanks for calling about the study. This is a pre-test of new survey questions about how people spend their time and general health. We want to test the questions to be sure the questions are easy to understand and answer.

[Then proceed with screening questions]

Screening questions

I have a couple of questions to check if you are eligible to participate.

1. How old are you?

____ Years

2. How many people currently live in your household?

(If Q2 > 1) 2a. How many of those are under 16?

3. Do you consider yourself:
 - Employed
 - Unemployed and looking
 - Unemployed and not looking

4. **Ask only if necessary*
 - Male
 - Female

5. Have you done any online grocery shopping in the past month?
 - Yes
 - No

(If yes to Q5):

- 5a. Were the groceries delivered to your home, did you pick them up, or did you do both?
 - Delivered
 - Pickup
 - Both

(if no to Q5)

6. Have you ever done any online grocery shopping?
 - Yes
 - No

7. Do you prepare meals in your household?
 - Yes
 - No

Check their responses against the recruiting list. If they meet the criteria for a group that we still need representation from, schedule them. If not, thank them for the information and let them know that we'll call them back within a day or two after we confirm availability. Aim to schedule participants representing a mix of these characteristics – e.g., some who do online grocery shopping and some who have never done so, who prepares food or not, and for geographic dispersion.

Appendix D: Full cognitive interview protocol

(See attachment)

Appendix E: Consent form (verbal for remote interviews)

Upon beginning a remote testing session, participants will be read this information (if being interviewed over the phone) or shown the following information through screen sharing on Microsoft Teams, and asked for their verbal consent prior to beginning the study.

- We estimate the session will last 45 to 60 minutes. If you have any comments regarding this estimate or any other aspect of this study, send them to BLS_PRA_Public@bls.gov.
- Your participation in this research project is voluntary, and you have the right to stop at any time.
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics is conducting this voluntary study under OMB No. 1220-0141, which expires on April 30, 2021. Without this currently approved number, we could not conduct this research. Your responses are also protected by law:

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, its employees, agents, and partner statistical agencies, will use the information you provide for statistical purposes only and will hold the information in confidence to the full extent permitted by law. In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (44 U.S.C. 3572) and other applicable Federal laws, your responses will not be disclosed in identifiable form without your informed consent. Per the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, Federal information systems are protected from malicious activities through cybersecurity screening of transmitted data.

In accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 as amended (5 U.S.C. 552a), this study is being conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), under the authority of 29 U.S.C. 2. Your voluntary participation is important to the success of this study and will enable the BLS to better understand the behavioral and psychological processes of individuals, as they reflect on the accuracy of BLS information collections. The information will only be used by and disclosed to BLS personnel and contractors who need the information for activities related to improving BLS information collection. Information on routine uses can be found in the system of records notice, DOL/BLS – 14, BLS Behavioral Science Research Laboratory Project Files (81 FR 47418).

Do you have any questions before we proceed?

Do you agree to participate?