

**Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission
Rental Housing Finance Survey (RHFS)
OMB number 2528-0276**

Part B: Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. Description of Universe and Sample Selection

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has requested that the Census Bureau produce estimates of selected characteristics of existing rental housing properties in the United States.

These estimates will be based on data collected from a representative sample of rental housing units in the United States in 2021. These rental units will be used to identify rental housing properties. The owners and/or property managers of the structure containing the sampled units will be contacted and asked about specific financing and property-related characteristics.

The sample universe consists of rental units from the 2019 American Housing Survey (AHS) Sample. The AHS provides a single frame covering both the single units and units in buildings with 2 or more units. With the exception of public housing units and group quarters (military, etc.) all rental units (vacant for rent and rented units) are eligible for the sample. Public housing units are removed using screening variables from AHS.

A sample of these units will be selected in several steps. First, the rental units will be assigned to one of five strata based on the number of units in the structure as reported by AHS respondents. These strata are: 1 unit, 2-4 units, 5-24 units, 25-49 units, and 50 or more units. The units within each stratum will be sorted by geographic variables, including state, urban/rural status, and county. A representative sample of these ordered units will then be selected within each stratum. The minimum sample size allocation per stratum will be determined to result in an expected coefficient of variation of 6% at the national level by strata. An oversample rate will be applied to each stratum based on the percentage of non-respondents and ineligible structures from the 2018 iteration of this survey. This oversample is needed for two reasons; a high non-response rate and a large number of ineligible properties. Estimated sample sizes are shown below.

Sample Part Description	Estimated Sample Size Including Oversample
1 unit	2,390
2-4 units	900
5-24 units	5,833
25-49 units	1,133
50 or more units	1,200
TOTAL	11,457

2. Procedures for Collection of Information and Estimation Procedures

Prior to RHFS data collection, the Census Bureau will collect the contact information for the rental property owner by conducting Internet research and address matching to administrative records when possible.

The RHFS data collection will begin with an advance letter to the rental property owner which invites their participation in the survey using a web-based instrument.

Respondents that do not complete their survey after approximately five weeks will continue into the field follow-up operation. Field representatives (FRs) will either call or visit the respondents in an attempt to conduct the interview.

Based on the available contact information, the FRs may be contacting either property owners or managers. In some instances, the owner will refer staff to the manager (or the manager will refer the staff to the owner) due to one party not having sufficient knowledge to answer certain questions.

During the interview, respondents may provide contact information for an additional respondent (i.e., property manager, owner, or accountant). This person will be contacted if the data already provided do not qualify as a sufficient partial interview. In addition, an effort will be to determine if different questionnaires are being referred to the same owner (which can occur if one individual owns multiple properties). In these situations, questionnaires will be consolidated and administered during a single follow-up attempt.

The survey estimates will be based on weighted data. The weights for producing these estimates will be calculated using a three step procedure. First, the base weight (BW), which is the product of the AHS sample weight and the inverse of the probability of selecting a unit, will be calculated and assigned to each sample unit in the stratum.

Next, a property adjustment factor (PAF), which adjusts the base sample weight so that it represents properties and not sample units.

Next, a nonresponse adjustment factor (NRF), which is the ratio of the sample properties divided by the interviewed sample properties, will be calculated and assigned to the interviewed sample properties. Separate NRFs will be computed for each stratum.

Finally, a population adjustment factor (POP) is applied to align the total units with rental unit estimates from the American Housing Survey (AHS).

The weight for each interviewed structure will be the product of these factors as expressed by the following formula:

$$\text{Weight} = \text{BW} * \text{PAF} * \text{NRF} * \text{POP}$$

3. **Methods to Maximize Response**

The estimated response rate for the 2021 RHFS is 41 percent of eligible cases. This response rate is estimated based on the 2018 RHFS response rate. HUD and the Census Bureau will adjust final 2021 RHFS estimates to account for non-response. The anticipated method for non-response adjustment is described in the Methodology section of the Census Bureau's RHFS website. HUD and the Census Bureau assume non-response is randomly distributed both geographically and across property sizes. HUD and the Census Bureau have not conducted additional non-response analysis.

The Census Bureau will maintain high levels of data accuracy and response rates through FR instruction, professional training, and close monitoring of the data. FRs will be educated on proper interviewing techniques as well as methods for dealing with reluctant respondents.

In addition, respondents who still refuse to participate during the field follow-up operation may receive a Refusal Letter. These letters will be generated at the Regional Office level and sent in order to educate individuals about the importance of our survey and the Census Bureau's commitment to confidentiality.

In addition, Unable to Contact Letters will be sent to respondents whom the FRs are having trouble reaching. This letter will inform respondents that a Census Bureau representative has been attempting to locate them and will ask them to call a Census Regional Office for further instruction.

4. **Testing Procedures**

The Census Bureau will cognitively test the two new survey items.

1. What is the estimates capital reserves balance for this rental property?
2. Some properties have a policy of not accepting HUD rental vouchers. Does this property accept HUD rental vouchers?

The Census Bureau plans to conduct this research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretest research (OMB number 0607-0725). The testing will be conducted from September through November 2020.

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

The Census Bureau will collect and process these data. Within the Census Bureau, the following individuals should be consulted for further information on their area of expertise.

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Attachments