



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

July 23, 2020

Dominic J. Mancini
Deputy Administrator
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, DC

Subject: Request to Extend Current Emergency Clearance for the Household Pulse Survey

Dear Dr. Mancini:

On April 19, 2020, the Office of Management and Budget provided emergency clearance to the U.S. Census Bureau for the administration of the *Household Pulse Survey* (OMB No. 0607-1013, expiration July 31, 2020). The Household Pulse Survey was conceived to produce near real-time data on the experiences of American households during the course of the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. Given the circumstances, the Census Bureau requested the emergency clearance in accordance with OMB procedures established under 5 CFR Part 1320, *Controlling Paperwork Burden on the Public*, Section 1320.13, Emergency Processing.

While an emergency clearance may be authorized for up to 180 days, we initially sought clearance only for 90 days for the Household Pulse Survey. Our initial request was made with certain assumptions at the time about the potential duration of usefulness of these data and with certain unknowns about the success of the survey because it was a brand new survey design for the Census Bureau. The current emergency clearance expires on July 31, 2020. However, we find that the initial launch of the Household Pulse Survey was a success and these data have been widely valued by officials at all levels of government and others working on pandemic response and recovery efforts. We also have identified that the duration of need is longer than our original assumptions, and there is a need to continue to produce these data. We therefore request the ability to extend the emergency clearance so the survey may benefit from the full 180 days allowed under Section 1320.13.

Ongoing demand for the Household Pulse Survey data indicates the Census Bureau is fulfilling its mission as the leading source of data on the nation's people and economy. Furthermore, since its inception the number of agencies collaborating with the Census Bureau on survey content has expanded from five to ten: the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and the National Center for Health Statistics; the National Center for Education Statistics; the USDA Economic Research Service; the Department of Housing and Urban Development; the Bureau of Labor Statistics; the Social Security Administration, the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; and the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. These agencies

provided questionnaire content based on their respective areas of expertise and the data they deem necessary to fulfill their respective missions during the ongoing Covid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. The result is one data collection effort that covers a range of issues efficiently and with minimal burden, including on topics of employment and income loss, spending patterns, housing and food security, application and receipt of benefits, health and access to care, capacity to telework, travel practices, behavioral changes in response to the pandemic, and disruptions in K-12 and post-secondary education.

As part of this Information Collection Request to extend the expiration date for another 90 days to use the remaining possible balance allowed for an emergency clearance, we have worked across these agencies to remove questions that are no longer relevant and add new content that reflects households' experiences as they move through this historically unprecedented period. We have also worked to reevaluate the sampling design, the frequency of data release, respondent messaging and contact strategies, and other aspects of the survey to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of stakeholders while minimizing burden on respondents.

In fulfilling a condition of the April 19, 2020 approval, we published a 60-day Federal Register Notice (publication date May 19, 2020) to provide public notification of the Household Pulse Survey. Soon after, we realized an extension of the current expiration date might be necessary, and we published another 60-day notice (publication date June 3, 2020) to communicate the potential for this extension. Because of the timing of that 60-day notice (for which the comment period would end on August 2, 2020), there is not adequate time to issue a follow-on 30-day notice prior to the current expiration date of July 31, 2020. Therefore, we seek emergency clearance to extend the current clearance so the survey may benefit from the full 180 days allowed under Section 1320.13 without interruption. We commit to reviewing the comments received from both 60-day notices to help inform any future changes to the survey and also commit to publish a follow-on 30-day notice within 30 days of clearance of this extension request.

We appreciate the support of OMB as we respond to data needs in this extraordinary period, and we look forward to your response to this request for continuance.

Sincerely,

Ron Jarmin
Deputy Director