



To: Susan Minson, Desk Officer, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, OMB
From: Kyle Brees, Research Analyst, Office of Research and Evaluation
Andrea Robles PhD, Research and Evaluation Manager, Office of Research and Evaluation
Date: August 18, 2023
Re: Generic IC for Pilot Study under OMB Control Number 3045-0163

This memo requests clearance for a generic information collection, Race and Ethnicity Pilot Study, in accordance with the “Procedures for Clearance” set out in the Supporting Statement A for the approved Generic Information Collection Request for Test and Pilot Data, OMB Control No. 3045-0163. See Appendix at the end of this memo for the excerpt.

Need for This Pilot

The OMB Interagency Technical Working Group (ITWG) on Race and Ethnicity Standards is presently testing a new question that will combine race categories and ethnicity into one question for federal minimum requirements standards. A subcommittee of the larger working group, the ITWG Bridging Programming Groups, is in the process of gathering data to create estimates that will be used when historically comparing the current race and ethnicity categories to the new federal minimum requirement standards that is currently in development. The ITWG Bridging Programming Group has also been working with the U.S. Census economic division, Department of Defense (DOD), and National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

For the past two months, the AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation has been in conversation with the ITWG Bridging Programming Group about conducting some of the pilot testing with our AmeriCorps members, which can be advantageous for both groups. The ITWG Bridging Programming Group seeks to pilot test the materials and develop additional records of peoples’ demographic information using the two-step question.

AmeriCorps is uniquely positioned to provide this data as three AmeriCorps programs (NCCC, VISTA, and AmeriCorps State and National) have already collected demographic information from all its members when they first entered their service. Having these existing records along with the pilot test questions is vital for the ITWG Bridging Programming Group as they work to create the estimates.

Additionally, AmeriCorps is seeking ways to improve its data gathering around key demographics of members including race and ethnicity and is in the process of modernization. Pilot testing this question will allow AmeriCorps to test out the newest combined race and ethnicity question in advance of other federal agencies with the collection of this data on members. This will be advantageous for the modernization process and AmeriCorps’s mission of advancing equity within the agency. The agency will also be helping a long-term partner for the agency and will be recognized for doing so in the technical documentation for the question.





Proposed Pilot Study

The proposed pilot study will consist of sending out a single question (see below for questions and response categories) to current AmeriCorps members in AmeriCorps State and National, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), and National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) via the Qualtrics account owned by AmeriCorps.

This study will randomly select approximately 20,000 members that are marked as active in the Analytical Reporting System Enterprise Production (ARESPOD) database, then send them the survey link via email. This survey will be completely voluntary and should take 1 minute or less to complete. The total burden is therefore estimated to be 20,000 hours.

The response will be compared to their response to the race and ethnicity questions provided to members when they enrolled in AmeriCorps. The data will then be aggregated and sent to the ITWG Bridging Programming Group. The aggregate table will include their current answers to the ethnicity and race question, collected during creation of their MyAmeriCorps login or acceptance of a year of service with an organization, along with their responses to the pilot question. This will help the ITWG Bridging Programming Group create estimates from the old race and ethnicity categories to the new categories.

In partnership with the ITWG Bridging Programming Group, the group responsible for testing the new race and ethnicity federal minimum requirement standards, AmeriCorps is asking programs for consent to pilot test the new short-form question on race/ethnicity with members.

Instrument for Information Collection

Question

What is your race or ethnicity? Select all that apply.

- White
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American
- Asian
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian

Consent form language

The Census is interested in revising the race and ethnicity question for future surveys. We have an opportunity to be part of testing a new question which may be asked of every resident in the United States for years to come. Please answer the one question which will take one minute or less.

This is voluntary and confidential. The information that is provided to Census will be aggregated and no single individual or program will be identified.

If you have any questions, please contact Kyle Brees, Research Analyst, AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation, kbrees@cns.gov.





Briefing material

The briefing material will include providing aggregate data to Census to create estimates for the new categories to the old categories of the race and ethnicity. This data will be given in the format requested by ITWG Bridging Programming Group from AmeriCorps. If requested, the data and findings can be presented to interested parties within the agency.

Appendix: Procedures for Clearance for Generic ICs under OMB Control No. 3045-0163

Before testing activity is undertaken, AmeriCorps will provide OMB with a memo describing the study to be conducted and a copy of instrumentation and debriefing materials that will be used. Depending on the stage of instrumentation development, this may be a printed questionnaire, a set of prototype items showing each item type to be used and the range of topics to be covered by the questionnaire, or an interview script. When split sample experiments are conducted, either in small group sessions or as part of a field test, the different versions of the questionnaires to be used will be provided. For a test of alternative procedures, the description and rationale for the procedures will be submitted. A brief description of the planned field activity will also be provided.

Data collection for this project is permitted under the authorizing legislation for the questionnaire being tested. In most cases, data collection activities conducted by AmeriCorps will be authorized under the AmeriCorps enabling legislation, the National Community Service Act of 1995, as amended, and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act. At this time, it is not known whether other titles will be referenced for specific projects, as we do not know all of the survey questionnaires or data collection protocols that will be pretested during the course of the clearance. The authorizing statute will be specified in each information clearance.

