



**National Household Education  
Survey 2023 (NHES:2023)  
Full-scale Data Collection**

**OMB# 1850-0768 v.19  
Part A**

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## JUSTIFICATION

### NHES Program - Request for Clearance

The National Household Education Survey (NHES) is a data collection program of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) designed to provide descriptive data on the education activities of the U.S. population, with an emphasis on topics that are appropriate for household surveys rather than institutional surveys. Such topics have covered a wide range of issues, including early childhood care and education, children's readiness for school, parents' perceptions of school safety and discipline, before- and after-school activities of school-age children, participation in adult and career education, parents' involvement in their children's education, school choice, homeschooling, and civic involvement. This request is to conduct the NHES:2023 full scale data collection, as described in this submission.

Additionally, in conjunction with NHES:2023, NCES plans to conduct a debriefing study with respondents to the NHES who reported their child was enrolled in virtual classes. This debriefing study is designed to provide insight about virtual school experiences that can help plan future survey administrations. This study is described in detail in Appendix 4 of this submission, including the study's contact materials and interview protocols.

#### A.1 Circumstances Necessitating Collection of Information

NCES is authorized to conduct NHES by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543), which defines the legislative mission of NCES to collect, report, analyze, and disseminate statistical data related to education in the United States and in other nations. NHES is specifically designed to support this mission by providing a means to investigate education issues that cannot be adequately studied through the Center's institution-based data collection efforts. For example, some school-age children are homeschooled rather than attending a public or private school. There is no available sample frame that includes all homeschooled students across the United States. Similarly, it is more efficient and economical to interview parents about their children's participation in child care programs and about family participation in school and other education activities through a household-based approach than to incur the cost and nonresponse involved in enlisting schools, obtaining lists of parents, and sampling parents from those lists.

Repeating the NHES:2019 child surveys will provide trend data from the 2012, 2016, and 2019 NHES administrations. Tracking trends in education topics on a regular, repeated basis is a key research goal of the NHES program.

#### A.2 Purposes and Uses of the Data

The NHES:2023 data collection will provide policymakers and researchers with data on early childhood education, parent and family involvement in education, and homeschooling that are not available elsewhere. Researchers nationwide rely on NHES data for important policy analyses. Survey data from NHES have been used for a large number of descriptive and analytic reports and articles, including NCES education indicators, reports, and statistical abstracts; publications of other Federal agencies; policy analyses; theses and dissertations; conference papers; and journal articles. A list of NHES publications issued by NCES can be found on the NHES website at <https://nces.ed.gov/nhes/publications.asp>. A list of NHES publications from non-NCES researchers can be found on the NCES website at <https://nces.ed.gov/bibliography/>.

#### NHES Program

NHES uses a two-stage design in which sampled households complete a screener questionnaire to enumerate likely eligible household members and their key characteristics. Within-household sampling based on the screener data determines which household member is sampled for each topical survey. NHES typically fields 2 to 3 topical surveys at a time, although the number has varied across its administrations. Surveys are administered in English and in Spanish. Data from NHES are used to provide national cross-sectional estimates on populations of special interest to education researchers and policymakers.

Beginning in 1991, NHES was administered approximately every other year as a landline random-digit-dial (RDD) survey. During a period of declining response rates in all RDD surveys, NCES decided to conduct a series of field tests to determine if a changing to self-administered mailed questionnaires would improve response rates. A feasibility test of the new design was conducted in 2009, followed by a field test in 2011. The field test results helped to inform the final design of a full-scale NHES mail-based collection in 2012 (OMB# 1850-0768 v.9), which included the Early Childhood Program Participation (ECPP), the Parent and Family Involvement in Education-Enrolled (PFI-E), and the Parent and Family Involvement in Education-Homeschooled (PFI-H) topical surveys.

NHES:2016 fielded the same child surveys as those fielded in 2012 and also fielded the Adult Training and Education Survey (ATES) (OMB# 1850-0768 v.11). NHES:2016 continued the mail-based collection methodology, while also experimenting with the use of web survey collection. In 2016, a subsample of 25,000 addresses were sent an invitation to complete the survey by web, with one follow-up letter asking them again to complete it by web. Two additional follow-up mailings included the paper survey and asked the sample members to complete the survey by paper. The overall response rate (the screener response rate multiplied by the topical response rate) for the 25,000 addresses in the web experiment exceeded the overall response rate for the main NHES:2016 collection because of the gain in topical response realized from web survey respondents, who were able to complete the topical surveys in the same sitting as the screener survey. NHES:2019 continued the mail-based collection methodology and used the same methodology developed in the NHES:2016 web experiment for the majority of the sampled addresses (OMB# 1850-0768 v.17). In 2019, 57 percent of cases responded by web, 36 by paper, and 7 percent by inbound phone. Also in 2019, PFI surveys for parents of enrolled and homeschooled students were merged into one survey instrument.

NHES:2023 will again field the ECPP and the combined PFI survey used in the NHES:2019. NHES:2023 will use the same methodology developed in the NHES:2019 for the majority of sampled addresses, but will incorporate lessons learned from NHES:2019's methodological experiments.

### **NHES:2019 Methodological Experiments**

NHES:2019 included several experiments intended to continue to improve the implementation of the mixed-mode, web-push design inaugurated in the 2016 administration. From among the options that were tested for the web-push screener-phase mailing procedures, sending an advance letter, sending a pressure-sealed envelope reminder mailing, and sending the second screener package via FedEx led to the greatest increase in response to the early screener mailings and in the screener response rate by web. Based on these results, the baseline web-push condition that will be used in NHES:2023 will include an advance letter, will send a pressure-sealed envelope reminder, and will use FedEx for the second screener package.

NHES:2019 also included choice-plus conditions that used a concurrent mixed-mode design in which sample members were offered web, paper, and inbound telephone response options in all screener-phase mailings. Sample members in these conditions also were offered a promised incentive for responding by web or by inbound telephone; most were offered \$10, but some were randomly assigned to be offered \$20. Among all experimental conditions tested in NHES:2019, the choice-plus conditions were the most successful at maximizing both the screener and overall response rates – for all cases and specifically for subgroups that otherwise tend to have lower-than-average response rates. However, the choice-plus conditions also were among the most expensive conditions included in NHES:2019, suggesting that their use for the full sample in future NHES administrations is likely to be cost prohibitive. An experiment included in NHES:2023 will assess whether this choice-plus protocol should be targeted specifically to low-response-propensity cases. Moreover, as discussed later in this document, another experimental condition that incentivizes early response under a web-push protocol (that is response, prior to the response mode switch to paper) will also be tested to see if it can offer a less costly approach to encouraging web response.

### **NHES Cognitive Interviews**

Several cognitive interview studies led to changes to improve the survey items and contact materials used in NHES:2023 (OMB# 1850-0803 v. 265, v. 268, v. 287, v. 289, v. 290, and v. 296). The ECPP survey was revised to add additional items about the child's early development. The PFI survey was revised to add language specifying the grades the child is homeschooled and to remove items asking about homeschool resources. Along with these revisions, the Spanish translations were reviewed and revised. These Spanish translation revisions were tested in cognitive interviews to ensure there were no misunderstandings of the revised translations; these translations will be used for the NHES:2023. The results of these studies, summarized in Appendix 5, informed the development of the instruments and contact materials in this submission.

### **Overview of NHES:2023 Target Population**

As in NHES:2019, the NHES:2023 will include the PFI and ECPP topical surveys. Children from birth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade who are ages 20 years or younger will be eligible for these child-focused surveys. The ECPP samples children ages 6 or younger who are not yet enrolled in kindergarten. The PFI samples children and youth ages 20 or younger enrolled in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and children and youth ages 20 or younger who are homeschooled for the equivalent grades. An adult knowledgeable about the care and education of the sampled child is asked to respond to these surveys. Only one child per household will be sampled.

This submission includes several letters and postcards for each stage of the study, with each contact material tailored for the screener or topical phase, and for the specific topical survey being administered. All respondent contact materials, text for the NHES web survey login page (including text for corresponding links within that page), and example pages of the web survey, are provided in Appendix 1.

### NHES:2023 Screener Instrument

The 2023 NHES screener is similar to the screener instrument used in NHES:2019. The screener is a 5-person child-only screener. English and Spanish versions of the paper screener are provided in Appendix 2, and the web screener versions are provided in Appendix 3.

### NHES:2023 Topical Surveys

Each administration of NHES has included multiple topical surveys. Exhibit 1 shows the years in which different NHES topical surveys were administered between 1991 and 2019. NHES:2023 will include two child-focused topical surveys (PFI and ECPP). The paper and web versions of the surveys are provided in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3, respectively; both appendices include English and Spanish versions. The NHES:2023 administration of the PFI and ECPP surveys is a repeat of the child-focused topics that were administered for the first time by mail as part of NHES:2012 and again in both mail and web formats in NHES:2016 and NHES:2019. Tracking changes in these populations over time is a key research goal of the NHES program.

Exhibit 1. Topical surveys conducted under the NHES Program, by years administered: 1991–2019

Topical survey	NHES survey administration year											
	1991	1993	1995	1996	1999 <sup>1</sup>	2001	2003	2005	2007	2012	2016	2019
<b>Young children</b>												
Early childhood education/ program participation	X		X		X	X		X		X	X	X
School readiness		X			X				X			
<b>School-aged children</b>												
School safety and discipline		X										
Parent and family involvement in education and homeschooling				X <sup>2</sup>	X		X		X	X <sup>3</sup>	X <sup>3</sup>	X
After-school programs and activities			X <sup>4</sup>		X	X <sup>5</sup>		X				
<b>Adults</b>												
Adult education Credentials for work	X		X		X	X	X	X				X
Civic involvement				X	X							
Household library use				X								

<sup>1</sup> NHES:1999 was a special end-of-decade administration that measured key indicators from the surveys fielded during the 1990s

<sup>2</sup> Homeschool items were not included in the Parent and Family Involvement Survey in 1996.

<sup>3</sup> NHES:2012 and NHES:2016 had two separate Parent and Family Involvement surveys--one for those whose children were enrolled in school and one for those whose children were homeschooled.

<sup>4</sup> The After-School Programs and Activities Survey of NHES:1995 only collected data about children in the first through third grades.

<sup>5</sup> The After-School Programs and Activities Survey of NHES:2001 also included items on before-school programs.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), 1991–2019.

### *The Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey (PFI)*

The PFI, previously conducted in 1996, 2003, 2007, 2012, 2016 and 2019, surveys families of children and youth enrolled in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade or homeschooled for these grades, with an age limit of 20 years. It addresses specific ways that families are involved in their child’s school, school practices to involve and support families, involvement with children’s homework, and involvement in education activities outside of school. Parents of homeschoolers are asked about their reasons for choosing homeschooling and resources they used in homeschooling.

Since 2016, content was added to the PFI about online and virtual coursetaking. For 2019, parents of children enrolled in online or virtual courses were asked about their reasons for choosing online or virtual courses and the cost of those courses. Information about child, parent, and household characteristics is also collected. NHES:2019 was the first administration that combines the enrolled student and homeschooling surveys into one instrument. The NHES:2023 will use the same “combined” PFI instrument used in the NHES:2019.

***The Early Childhood Program Participation Survey (ECPP)***

The ECPP, previously conducted in 1991, 1995, 2001, 2005, 2012, 2016, and 2019, surveys families of children ages 6 or younger who are not yet enrolled in kindergarten. It provides estimates of children’s participation in care provided by relatives, by non-relatives in private homes, and by staff in center-based daycare or preschool programs (including Head Start and Early Head Start). Additional topics addressed in the ECPP include family learning activities; out-of-pocket expenses for nonparental care; factors related to parental selection of care; child health and disability; and child, parent, and household characteristics.

**NHES:2023 experimental conditions**

NCES is planning to include six experimental conditions as part of the NHES:2023 administration in addition to a baseline/control condition. The goals of the experimental conditions are shown in exhibit 2 below. This section provides additional details about each of the planned experimental conditions. In addition, exhibit 3 shows how the sample size is allocated for each of the conditions.

**Exhibit 2. Overview of NHES:2023 experimental conditions**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Goal</b>
Targeted choice-plus	Experiment with targeted use of the successful (but costly) NHES:2019 choice-plus methodology
Early bird incentive	Experiment with another—ideally less costly—method of encouraging sample members to respond by web
Alternate contact materials	Experiment with communicating differently about the survey in contact materials
Targeted renter mailings	
ECPP updated health items	Experiment with revised health items designed to be more relevant to ECPP target population
ECPP grouped format for care-type items	Experiment with new format for care-type items, to simplify flow and reduce double-counting of care arrangements

***Targeted choice-plus condition***

The results from the NHES:2019 administration showed that the choice-plus condition, which used a concurrent mixed-mode design and provided an additional promised incentive to respondents who responded by web or inbound telephone call, resulted in a higher screener response rate than the baseline web-push condition but was also cost prohibitive for use in the full NHES sample. In 2023, the *targeted* choice-plus condition will test the feasibility and utility of limiting choice-plus to relatively low-response-propensity cases while using web-push for the remaining cases. Each sampled address’s response propensity (RP) score will be determined using a logistic regression model estimated on NHES:2019 data. Approximately 89,500 randomly selected cases will be assigned to this condition. Among cases assigned to this condition, all cases whose RP is below approximately the 57<sup>th</sup> percentile (“the treated cohort”) will receive a choice-plus protocol that uses a concurrent mixed-mode design and provides a \$20 cash incentive for web or inbound telephone response, in addition to the NHES’s standard \$5 prepaid incentive. Cases whose RP is above approximately the 57<sup>th</sup> percentile will receive the baseline web-push protocol. The 57<sup>th</sup> percentile cut point was chosen to meet NCES’s goal—due to budget constraints—of using choice-plus for approximately 25 percent of the total sample. For 25 percent of the *total sample* to receive choice-plus, about 57 percent of the *targeted choice-plus condition* will need to receive choice-plus. To assess the utility of limiting the use of choice-plus to low-RP cases (those whose RP is below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile) in future NHES administrations, analyses of this condition will include an examination of survey outcomes among low-RP cases in the targeted choice-plus condition and low-RP cases in the baseline condition.

***Early bird incentive condition***

The early bird incentive condition will test the utility of a promised incentive contingent on response by a specified deadline, within a web-push protocol. Other researchers have had some success using this approach to improve early and/or final response rates (e.g., LeClere et al. 2012; Coopersmith et al. 2016; Fomby et al. 2016), but it has not yet

been tested in the context of the NHES. The promised incentive will be \$20 cash, which will be offered in addition to the \$5 prepaid incentive that is sent with the initial screener package. To receive the incentive, sample members will need to respond to the survey online or over the phone prior to the pull date for the third screener package. A total of 53,000 cases will be randomly assigned to this condition. The deadline for obtaining the promised incentive will be communicated in the first two screener packages and the pressure-sealed envelope (see Appendix 1).

### ***Alternate contact materials and targeted renter mailings conditions***

NHES:2023 will include two experimental conditions that attempt to increase the response rate by modifying how NCES communicates about the survey with sample members. Both will use a web-push protocol.

- *Alternate contact materials condition.* In this condition, various aspects of the screener-phase materials will be modified, with the goal of more clearly communicating with households about the purpose and nature of the survey request. An experimental condition in NHES:2019 tested an “opt-out” screener designed to encourage response from households without children by noting that the survey is low-burden for households without children and by putting the question about the presence of children on the front cover of the paper questionnaire booklet (instead of inside the booklet). Contrary to expectation, these materials increased the response rate among households with children. These results suggest that more clearly communicating the purpose of the screener could improve response rates, even among households with children. In addition, the NHES:2019 nonresponse follow-up study results suggest that some households without children do not respond because they think the survey is not relevant to them or that it might have been sent to them by mistake. All alternate contact materials will be more explicit about the ways in which the NHES survey request differs for households with children and those without children. In addition, the fifth mailing used for this condition (which is a sealed postcard) will include the screener questionnaire gate question that asks whether there are any children living in the household (instead of including the address’s web login information, as it will in the other conditions); this postcard will provide NCES with information about how many of the households that do not respond to the earlier mailings include children or youth age 20 or younger. Finally, the paper questionnaire used for this condition will be an “opt-out” screener that will include the screener gate question on the cover of the paper questionnaire booklet. Households without children only need to answer that one screener question and placing that item on the cover of the survey should allow them to more easily see that they only need to answer this one question. There will be 9,500 cases randomly assigned to the alternate contact materials condition.
- *Targeted renter mailings condition.* The targeted renter mailings condition will modify the addressee line and salutation used for renter addresses, with the goal of encouraging response from this typically underrepresented subgroup. The primary motivation for conducting this experiment comes from a NHES:2019 nonresponse study finding that—because they were accustomed to regularly receiving mail for the property owner—some renters assumed that the standard NHES screener-phase addressee line and salutation indicated that the mailings were meant for the property owner and not for them. This experiment will be fully crossed with all the other mailing experiments. As a result, the whole NHES:2023 sample of 205,000 cases will be evenly split between a targeted renter mailings condition and a non-targeted renter mailings condition. Within the targeted renter mailings condition, cases that are flagged on the sampling frame as being a renter household will receive mailings that include a tailored addressee line and salutation that attempt to make it clearer that the NHES mailings are intended for the person *currently living at* the address (versus the owner of the address). Non-renters in this condition will receive mailings that include the standard addressee line and salutation. Among all cases assigned to the targeted renter mailings condition, about 22,600 cases are expected to be renters and receive the targeted mailings. This estimate is based on the percentage of addresses on the NHES:2019 frame that were flagged as renters, adjusted to reflect the plan to oversample households with children in NHES:2023. However, analysis of the result of this experiment will focus on cases in the baseline condition because that is the main NHES:2023 design; the other conditions are experimental and thus may not be incorporated into future administrations.

### ***ECPP split-panel experiments***

The ECPP will include two split-panel experiments that test (1) an updated version of the child’s health items in both the web and paper instruments and (2) a grouped format for asking about the type of child care arrangements in the web instrument only.

- Updated version of child’s health items:* This condition will test a new version of the ECPP Child’s Health section. Half of the NHES:2023 sample (i.e., 102,500 cases) will be randomly assigned to the updated items condition, and the other half will be assigned to the NHES:2019 version (which will serve as the control condition). The primary change is to the grid that asks about the child’s health conditions. The NHES:2019 version of the item asks about a list of conditions that qualify students for special education services (e.g., learning disability, serious emotional disturbance). The updated version takes into account that preschool-aged children are more often diagnosed with “development delays” rather than with medical conditions that are usually only diagnosable in older children. The goal of this updated version is to make the health items more relevant to the ECPP target population. However, this is being tested experimentally (in a split panel design) to see how estimates based on the updated version of the item compare to estimates based on the NHES:2019 version of the item. Other changes that will be tested for this section include moving the placement of these items within the questionnaire, adding two new items that ask about the parent’s concerns about the child’s development, and changing the response options for another grid from yes/no to a frequency scale. The new ECPP items that will be tested are included in Appendices 2 and 3. Part C also includes a table that provides the questions in the updated version that differ from the NHES:2019 version. This experiment will be fully crossed with the mailing protocol/contact materials experiments and the second ECPP experiment discussed below.
- Grouped format for type of child care arrangements:* This condition will test—in the ECPP web instrument only—a new format for asking about the types of care the child receives. A total of 40,000 cases will be randomly assigned to this condition. The control condition will use the interleaved format from NHES:2019, which asks a filter question about whether the child is in a specific type of child care arrangement (e.g., care with a relative) and then, for children who have that type of care arrangement, asks a series of follow-up items about that care arrangement before asking the filter item for another type of care. In the experimental condition, the survey will use a grouped format (that is, the filter items will be asked as a single grid item at the start of the survey) instead of the NHES:2019 interleaved format. Based on responses to the new grid item, respondents will be routed to follow-up questions about the different types of care the child receives; these follow-up questions will not be changed in the experimental condition. The goal of this experiment is to make the care arrangement items easier to answer and to reduce the double-counting of care arrangements. However, this is being tested experimentally (in a split panel design) to see how estimates from a grouped format compare to previous estimates based on the NHES:2019 interleaved format. This experiment will also be fully crossed with the mailing protocol/contact materials experiments and the other ECPP experiment discussed above.

Exhibit 3 below shows the sample allocation for the NHES:2023 sample between the various experimental conditions.

**Exhibit 3. Allocation of NHES:2023 sample between experimental conditions**

<b>Mailing conditions</b>			
<b>Other mailing conditions</b>	<b>Targeted renter mailings conditions</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>Non-targeted renter mailings</b>	<b>Targeted renter mailings</b>	
Baseline	26,500	26,500	<b>53,000</b>
Targeted choice-plus	44,750	44,750	<b>89,500</b>
Early bird incentive	26,500	26,500	<b>53,000</b>
Alternate materials	4,750	4,750	<b>9,500</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>102,500</b>	<b>102,500</b>	<b>205,000</b>
<b>ECPP versions</b>			
<b>ECPP split panels</b>	<b>Control ECPP</b>	<b>Experimental ECPP</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Child’s health items split panel	102,500	102,500	<b>205,000</b>
Childhood care and programs split panel	165,000	40,000	<b>205,000</b>

### **Debriefing Study of NHES:2023 Parents of Virtual Education Students**

Given the potential change in the education landscape since COVID-19, particularly for online coursework, NCES plans to conduct a debriefing project with respondents during the NHES:2023 administration. The goal of the study is to gain greater insight about respondents who indicate that their child was enrolled in online courses. The debriefing



interviews are designed to understand the true schooling experiences of these children and how well the survey functioned in capturing the context of these children's virtual education experiences. The debriefing interviews will provide information that will assist NCES in understanding the NHES:2023 data on virtual education and in crafting items for future NHES administrations that will more accurately capture the details of virtual education.

Approximately 700 PFI web respondents who report their child is enrolled in some or all online courses will be sampled for this study. These respondents will be asked at the end of the web instrument if they are interested in participating in this debriefing study and, if they are interested, how they would like us to contact them to schedule an interview (email or phone). From those who report they are interested in the study, 75 debriefing interviews will be scheduled and conducted, with about 25 each whose child is: a full-time virtual school student, a homeschooled student, or a brick-and-mortar enrolled student. Interviews will be 60 minutes in length and conducted online through Zoom. All interviewees will receive \$40 cash by certified mail through USPS. Interviews will be conducted in both English and Spanish. The debriefing interview will be devoted to understanding the sampled child's online learning experience and how that interacts with any other type of schooling they receive.

Appendix 4 of this submission discusses the importance of conducting this study and provides the study materials including, the contact materials and interview protocol.

### **A.3 Use of Improved Information Technology**

NHES:2023 responses to paper and pencil instruments will be collected by the Census Bureau on behalf of NCES using four complementary survey systems - (1) Amgraf One Form Plus, (2) Docuprint, (3) Inkjet, and (4) integrated Computer Assisted Data Entry (iCADE), chosen for their efficiency and accuracy in the data collection process.

- **Forms Design.** Questionnaires will be created using Amgraf One Form Plus. Completed hardcopy forms can be processed by iCADE to capture responses through optical mark recognition (OMR), optical character recognition (OCR), and keying from image (KFI). Topical questionnaires will be printed, trimmed, and stitched through an in-house print on-demand process using a Docuprint system which allows personalization of some survey items. Screener questionnaires are produced by an outside vendor with variable data printed on the form using an Inkjet system. The data from the questionnaires will be captured by the iCADE technology/software, which automatically extracts all check box entries (OMR) and all character and numeric write-in entries (OCR), and captures and displays an image of all other entries to an operator for KFI.
- **Image Preprocessing.** iCADE applies image preprocessing to the forms in their image format in order to correct any skewing at the time of scanning, and the iCADE software performs registration to align the individual questionnaire page template with the appropriate scanned image. The scanner despeckles the image to remove unwanted pixels.
- **Data Capture.** iCADE reads the form image files, checks the presence of data, processes all check box fields through OMR and OCR, and presents an image of the handwritten fields to an operator for KFI.
- **Verification.** Extracted KFI data are subject to 100% field validation according to project specifications. If a data value violates validation rules, the value is flagged for review by verifiers who interactively review the images and the corresponding extracted data, and resolve validation errors.
- **Archiving.** Images will be scanned and archived to magnetic storage located on a secured server in case they are needed later. This eliminates the need to save paper copies of the completed questionnaires.

The NHES:2023 web-based instruments are designed to minimize respondent burden by eliminating the cumbersome skip patterns required in the paper instruments and by allowing respondents to complete both the screener and a topical survey in one sitting. The instruments will be securely hosted on the Census Bureau's server.

### **A.4 Efforts to Identify Duplication**

**Population:** Most other surveys do not address the topics covered in NHES for the populations of interest. For example, the National Survey of Parents of Public School Students, sponsored by the National Parent Teacher Association, and the Survey of Family and School Partnerships in Public Schools, a one-time Fast Response Survey

System survey sponsored by NCES, focus on parents of children in public schools; those whose children attend private or virtual schools or are homeschooled (groups included in the PFI) are not represented. For younger children, the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES), sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services, focuses on children in Head Start, whereas all children who have not yet started kindergarten are of interest in the ECPP survey. The National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE), sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services, was fielded in 2012 and 2019, and there are plans to field the household component of this collection again in 2024. Finally, the NCES early childhood longitudinal studies (Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort (ECLS-B); the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-1999 (ECLS-K); the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 2010-11 (ECLS-K:2011); the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 2024 (ECLS-K:2024)) focus on single-year cohorts that are followed over time and therefore do not provide nationally representative data on different age groups. The NHES surveys are designed to complement these longitudinal collections with more frequent and more inclusive cross-sectional data.

**Survey Content:** Extant studies are limited in the content that they include relative to the goals of the NHES surveys. Studies such as the National Survey of America’s Families and the National Study of the Changing Workforce have collected some information on child care or program participation, but their primary emphasis is on other topics, and the depth of information on early care and education experiences is limited. The Head Start FACES project collects information on Head Start program participation and some family measures, but that study does not account for all nonparental care and programs. The Current Population Survey October Education Supplement is limited to a relatively small number of items on education participation and does not address the roles that parents play in their children’s school, schoolwork, and home activities. Also, no nationally representative study other than NHES collects detailed data on homeschooling or virtual education.

**Current Estimates and Measuring Change Over Time.** Many of the extant surveys are cohort-based (e.g., the ECLS-K, Head Start FACES, NSECE) or are no longer conducted (e.g., the National Survey of Parents of Public School Students and the Survey of Family and School Partnerships in Public Schools). As a result, they cannot meet the NHES goal of providing up-to-date cross-sectional estimates and measures of change over time for all children who have not started kindergarten or for children in kindergarten through 12th grade, as is provided by NHES.

#### **A.5 Collection of Data from Small Businesses**

Not applicable.

#### **A.6 Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection**

Topics covered in the two NHES:2023 topical surveys have been addressed in previous NHES administrations. Repeating the surveys on a regular basis allows for analysis of trends over time. In the past, NHES has been administered on a biennial cycle. The last full NHES study was conducted in 2019. Due to staffing and funding constraints, NCES delayed the NHES collection by one year. NCES believes that this is the maximum periodicity that will allow NHES to maintain its purpose of tracking changes in key education estimates over time.

#### **A.7 Special Circumstances of Data Collection**

None of the special circumstances apply to NHES:2023.

#### **A.8 Consultations Outside the Agency**

A Technical Review Panel (TRP) comprising leading experts in survey methodology was established to provide input to the initial redesign of the NHES system. Most members of the panel met in February 2010 to discuss the proposed design for the 2011 field test, and their comments and suggestions led to changes reflected in the NHES redesign that took place from 2007 to 2012; such design changes carry into the NHES:2023 design and are reflected in this submission.

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The content of the NHES:2023 child-focused topical surveys builds upon the content developed for the NHES:2019 and prior NHES administrations. As a result, the PFI and ECPP surveys reflect the cumulative input of many experts in the field and past NHES TRPs. There were two expert panel meetings prior to 2019. The first, in December 2016, discussed the homeschool and virtual school measures with experts in the field. The second expert panel meeting, in January 2017, discussed the content of the ECPP survey with early childhood experts. Their comments and suggestions led to changes reflected in the NHES:2019; such content changes carry into the NHES:2023 and are reflected in this submission. These experts included persons in government agencies, academe, and research organizations.

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Additionally, Dr. Paul Lavrakas, a research methodologist, has provided independent consultation on the NHES survey design and operations since 2016, particularly on nonresponse follow-up and participant contact strategies and design. Finally, Dr. Jolene Smyth from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, a questionnaire design expert, has provided recommendations on the NHES questionnaire design for the paper and web instruments since 2020.

A 60-day notice was published in the Federal Register on February 14, 2022 (87 FR 8240). One public comment was received that was not substantive. A 30-day notice will be published.

**A.9 Payments to Respondents**

*Screener incentives.* Based on NHES:2003 experiments, small cash incentives were used in NHES:2005 and NHES:2007 to improve response rates. Based on NHES:2011 Field Test experiments, a \$5 cash incentive included in the initial screener mailing was used in NHES:2012, 2016, and 2019. NHES:2016 also contained an incentive experiment that tested differential incentive amounts of \$0, \$2, \$5, or \$10 based on response propensity. Results from this experiment showed high response rates for \$0 or \$2 among addresses predicted to respond at high rates to the screener and there was no additional effect for the \$10 incentive for those addresses predicted to respond at high rates. The tailored incentive protocol appeared to slightly underperform a uniform \$5 incentive, but clearly outperformed a uniform \$2 incentive at the screener phase. The \$5 versus \$2 incentive experiment was repeated for the NHES:2017 web test and, as in 2011, the \$5 screener was associated with higher response rates than the \$2 incentive. We will thus continue to use a \$5 cash incentive in the NHES:2023 first screener survey package mailing.

*Topical surveys incentives.* NHES:2012 included an incentive experiment at the topical level to further refine an optimal strategy for the use of incentives in NHES. For those households in which a child was selected as the subject of an ECPP or PFI questionnaire, cases that responded to the first or second mailing of the screener were not part of the experiment and received a \$5 cash incentive with the initial topical survey mailing. In addition, based on evidence from the 2011 Field Test indicating that topical response rates could benefit significantly by providing later screener respondents with a larger topical incentive, NCES subsampled late screener respondents (those responding to the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> questionnaire mailing) to receive either a \$5 or \$15 cash incentive with their first topical survey mailing. The results from NHES:2012 indicate that, among later screener responders, the \$15 incentive was associated with higher topical response rates compared to the \$5 incentive. Based on these findings, NCES used an incentive model that provides a \$5 incentive for early-screener responders and a \$15 incentive for late-screener respondents for NHES:2016 and NHES:2019, and will continue with this approach in NHES:2023 (except for households allocated to treatment groups with incentive experiments, as described in section A-2 above). On the web, a respondent can complete both the screener and topical in one sitting and will not receive a separate topical incentive.

*Debriefing Study of NHES:2023 Parents of Virtual Education Students.* All cases who are recruited to complete a virtual education debriefing interview will be offered an additional \$40 in cash for completing the 60-minute virtual interview. These incentives are designed to demonstrate to participants that their time and participation is valued (see Appendix 4 for additional discussion of the incentive amount).

**A.10 Assurance of Confidentiality**

Data security and confidentiality protection procedures have been put in place for NHES:2023 to ensure that all contractors and agents working on NHES:2023 comply with all privacy requirements including, as applicable:

1. The Inter-agency agreement with NCES for this study and the statement of work in the NHES contract;
2.  *Family Educational and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974* (20 U.S.C. §1232(g));

3. *Privacy Act of 1974* (5 U.S.C. §552a);
4. *Privacy Act Regulations* (34 CFR Part 5b);
5. *Computer Security Act of 1987*;
6. *U.S.A. Patriot Act of 2001* (P.L. 107-56);
7. *Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002* (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9573);
8. *Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015* (6 U.S.C. §151);
9. *Foundations of Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018*, Title III, Part B, Confidential Information Protection;
10. The U.S. Department of Education General Handbook for Information Technology Security General Support Systems and Major Applications Inventory Procedures (March 2005);
11. The U.S. Department of Education Incident Handling Procedures (February 2009);
12. The U.S. Department of Education, ACS Directive OM: 5-101, Contractor Employee Personnel Security Screenings;
13. NCES Statistical Standards; and
14. All new legislation that impacts the data collected through the inter-agency agreement for this study.

The U.S. Census Bureau will collect data under an interagency agreement with NCES, and will maintain the individually identifiable questionnaires per the agreement, including:

1. Provisions for data collection in the field;
2. Provisions to protect the data-coding phase required before machine processing;
3. Provisions to safeguard completed survey documents;
4. Authorization procedures to access or obtain files containing identifying information; and
5. Provisions to remove printouts and other outputs that contain identification information from normal operation (such materials will be maintained in secured storage areas and will be securely destroyed as soon as practical).

U.S. Census Bureau and contractors working on NHES:2023 will comply with the Department of Education’s IT security policy requirements as set forth in the Handbook for Information Assurance Security Policy and related procedures and guidance, as well as IT security requirements in the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA), Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) publications, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) standards and guidance. All data products and publications will also adhere to: the revised NCES Statistical Standards, as described at the website: <http://nces.ed.gov/statprog/2012/>.

By law (20 U.S.C. §9573), a violation of confidentiality restrictions is a felony, punishable by imprisonment of up to 5 years and/or a fine of up to \$250,000. All government or contracted staff working on NHES:2023 and having access to the data, including NHES field staff, are required to sign an NCES Affidavit of Nondisclosure and to have received public-trust security clearance. These requirements include the successful certification and accreditation of the Census Bureau operating system before it can be implemented. Appropriate memoranda of understanding and interconnection security agreements will be documented as part of the certification and accreditation process.

From the initial contact with the participants in this survey through all of the follow-up efforts, potential survey respondents will be informed that (a) the U.S. Census Bureau administers NHES on behalf of NCES; (b) NCES is authorized to conduct NHES by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543); (c) all of the information they provide may only be used for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S.C. §9573 and 6 U.S.C. §151); and (d) that their participation is voluntary.

The following language will be included in respondent contact materials and on data collection instruments:

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the U.S. Department of Education, is authorized to conduct the National Household Education Survey (NHES) by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543). The U.S. Census Bureau is administering this voluntary survey on behalf of NCES. There are no penalties should you choose not to participate in this study. All of the information you provide may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S.C. §9573 and 6 U.S.C. §151).

The language above, plus the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) statement text shown below, will be used on the covers of the paper screener and topical surveys and on the login screen of the web survey:

#### Web Instrument:

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this voluntary information collection is 1850-0768. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average between 3 and 30 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate, suggestions for improving this survey, or any comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this survey, please e-mail: [nhes@census.gov](mailto:nhes@census.gov) or write directly to: Michelle McNamara, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), PCP, 550 12th St., SW, 4th floor, Washington, DC 20202

#### Paper Screener:

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this voluntary survey is 1850-0768. The time required to complete this survey is estimated to average 3 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, gather the data needed, and complete and review the survey. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate, suggestions for improving this survey, or any comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this survey, please e-mail: [nhes@census.gov](mailto:nhes@census.gov) or write directly to: Michelle McNamara, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), PCP, 550 12th St., SW, 4th floor, Washington, DC 20202.

#### Paper Topical (ECP/PFI):

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this voluntary information collection is 1850-0768. The time required to complete this survey is estimated to average 20 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, gather the data needed, and complete and review the survey. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate, suggestions for improving this survey, or any comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this survey, please e-mail: [nhes@census.gov](mailto:nhes@census.gov) or write directly to: Michelle McNamara, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), PCP, 550 12th St., SW, 4th floor, Washington, DC 20202.

In addition, on the login screen of the web survey, the following text is shown below the PRA statement:

You are accessing a United States Government computer network. Any information you enter into this system is confidential. It may be used by the Census Bureau for statistical purposes and to improve the website.

Use of this system indicates your consent to collection, monitoring, recording, and use of the information that you provide for any lawful government purpose. So that our website remains safe and available for its intended use, network traffic is monitored to identify unauthorized attempts to access, upload, change information, or otherwise cause damage to the web service. Use of the government computer network for unauthorized purposes is a violation of Federal law and can be punished with fines or imprisonment (PUBLIC LAW 99-474).

### **A.11 Sensitive Questions**

NHES is a voluntary survey, and no persons are required to respond to it. In addition, respondents may decline to answer any question in the survey. Respondents are informed of the voluntary nature of the survey in the cover letters that are sent to the household, as well as on the actual questionnaire. At the same time, some items in the surveys may be considered sensitive by some respondents:

Child development and education experts consider economic disadvantage and children's disabilities to be important factors in children's school experiences and their activities outside of school. As a result, the PFI and ECPP surveys contain measures of these characteristics, including: household income; participation in public assistance such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Women, Infants, and Children program (WIC); and children's disability conditions.

Measures of household income and public assistance are important because access to early childhood programs by disabled and disadvantaged children and the educational involvement of families from different socioeconomic backgrounds is of interest to policymakers, child development specialists, and educators. These items are important in identifying children in these at-risk groups and have been administered successfully in previous NHES studies.

The 2019 response rates for these items were very high. For total household income, the 2019 PFI survey had an item response rate of 95.6 percent; for WIC, 96.0 percent; for SNAP, 96.9 percent; and for the set of child disability questions, 100 percent. Response to a question asking parents to rate the child's health was 99.5 percent and for Individualized Education Program (IEP) services, it was 99.0 percent.



The PFI survey also includes items concerning children’s school performance and difficulties in school. Among these are items asking about children’s school grades, grade retention, suspensions, and expulsions. These items concerning school performance and difficulty are important to the PFI survey as they are correlates of parent and family involvement in children’s education. These items were asked in the NHES:2019 PFI and item response rates for these items were high: 99.3 percent for children’s grades, 98.8 percent for out-of-school suspension, and 98.0 percent for expulsion.

Another element of the PFI survey that may be sensitive to some parents is the identification of the child’s school. This feature allows analysts to link the NHES data to other NCES datasets containing additional information about schools, greatly enhancing analysts’ ability to examine the relationships between students’ and families’ experiences and the characteristics of schools. The item response rate for the identification of the child’s school was 88.4 percent in NHES:2019.

The ECPP survey includes additional questions about assistance to pay for child care. This measure is important to understand families’ access to early childhood programs. The item response rate for the item about who helped pay for the child’s center-based care was 94.9 percent in NHES:2019.

## A.12 Estimated Response Burden

The response burden per instrument and the total response burden are shown in Table 1. The administration times for the main study are based on practice administrations and past experience. The expected number of respondents and number of responses are based on the expected numbers of completed surveys of each type, as discussed in section B.1.3 of the Supporting Statement Part B.

**Table 1. Estimated response burden for NHES:2023**

Interview Form	Number Sampled	Anticipated Response Rate	Estimated Number of Respondents	Estimated Number of Responses	Average Time Per Response (minutes)	Total Time (hours)
<b>Main study<sup>1</sup></b>						
Screeners	205,000*	57.757%*	108,262	108,262	3	5,414
ECPP questionnaire	9,443	90.456%	8,542	8,542	27	3,844
PFI questionnaire	22,807	87.192%	19,886	19,886	27	8,949
<b>Virtual School debriefing study</b>						
Interview recruitment screener	700	55.000%	385	385	2	13
	385	19.481%	75	75	60	75
<b>Study Total</b>			<b>108,262<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>137,150<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>18,295</b>

\* Approximately 9% of addresses are expected to be returned by USPS as invalid, reducing the final sample size to 187,445 addresses. Calculations of the number of screener respondents and the response rate are based on 187,445 addresses rather than 205,000.

<sup>1</sup>The estimated number of respondents for the screener in the main study is different than the number of topical (ECPP and PFI) respondents because it is expected that 70% of households that complete the screener will not have an eligible child to complete the topical surveys.

<sup>2</sup>The “number of respondents” total counts each respondent as one, regardless of the number of surveys or interviews each respondent completes; the “number of responses” total counts each completed survey or interview as a separate response.

*Note:* Eligibility and response rates for the national sample are estimated based on NHES:2019, and represent rounded weighted averages of the rates expected within each experimental treatment group. The maximum possible burden is the estimated number of respondents. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.

NHES:2023 sampling frame will start with 205,000 households. An expected screener response rate of approximately 57.8 percent and an address ineligibility<sup>1</sup> rate of approximately 9 percent are assumed, bringing the total number of expected screeners to 108,262.<sup>2</sup> From these completed screeners, it is expected that approximately 30 percent will contain an eligible child. A detailed description of the planned sampling design is provided in this submission in Supporting Statement Part B. This submission assumes an hourly wage rate of \$26.85, based on the average for all civilian workers from the June 2021 National Compensation Survey (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecec.t02.htm>). For NHES:2023, a total of 18,295 burden hours are anticipated, resulting in a total burden time cost to respondents of

<sup>1</sup> Ineligible addresses are those that are undeliverable. Screener mailings for an address where one or more mailings are returned as a postmaster return (PMR) and no mailings are returned completed or refused will lead to an address being coded as ineligible.

<sup>2</sup> Address eligibility and response rates are estimated based on NHES:2019 and are calculated to account for child oversample design, expected differential response rates within sampling strata and experimental treatment groups.

approximately \$491,221.

**A.13 Cost to Respondents**

There are no recordkeeping requirements associated with NHES and no costs to respondents beyond the time to participate, as presented in table 1 above.

**A.14 Cost to the Federal Government**

The total cost of NHES:2023 to the federal government is approximately \$19.4 million over a period of 20 months, with an annualized cost of \$11.64 million. This includes all direct and indirect costs of the design, data collection, analysis, and reporting phases of the study, and the creation of data sets. Detail is provided below.

NHES:2023 component	Cost
NHES:2023 survey design, statistical design, and planning	\$3.4 million
NHES:2023 collection	\$14.8 million
Collection and analysis of NHES:2023 Virtual Education Debriefing Study	\$0.2 million
NHES:2023 data dissemination	\$1 million

**A.15 Reasons for Program Changes**

The NHES:2019 had a burden estimate of 18,295 burden hours, resulting in a total burden time cost to respondents of approximately \$491,221. The decrease in burden from that approval is due to the fact that the NHES:2019 request included the NHES:2019 Study of Nonresponding Households, which will not be fielded in NHES:2023.

**A.16 Publication Plans and Project Schedule**

Exhibit 2 presents the schedule of project activities for NHES:2023, including the production of datasets, statistics, and reports. The following are the planned outcomes of NHES:2023:

- A fully documented public-use data set that will be available for download from the NCES website;
- A fully documented restricted-use data set that will be available for restricted-use data license holders only;
- A codebook with weighted and unweighted frequencies of all variables; and
- First Look Reports that highlight key findings from the study.

**Exhibit 2. NHES:2019 schedule of major activities**

Task	Date of Scheduled Conduct/Completion
Survey Letters and Instruments Formatting and Printing	July-December, 2022
Data Collection Begins (advance letter mailing)	January 5, 2023
Data Collection Ends	August 8, 2023
First Look Reports Released	August 8, 2024
Public and Restricted-use Data Files Released	December 31, 2024

**A.17 Approval to Not Display the Expiration Date for OMB Approval**

The OMB authorization number and expiration date will be displayed on the contact materials, paper questionnaires, and web instrument.

**A.18 Exceptions to the Certification Statement**

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

## REFERENCES

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