

SUPPORTING STATEMENT A
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau
2023 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey
OMB Control Number 0607-0757

Abstract

The New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (NYCHVS) is sponsored by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (NYCHPD) and is conducted approximately every three years. The Census Bureau has conducted the survey for New York City (City) since 1965. The primary purpose of the survey is to measure the net rental vacancy rate, and describe the supply, condition, and continued need for rent control and rent stabilization. NYCHVS data are also used by policymakers, advocates, and researchers to inform policy and analyze housing costs and conditions in the City.

Detailed data from the survey cover many characteristics of the City's housing market, including characteristics of the City's population, households, housing stock, and neighborhoods. Data collected about each person in the household include housing costs and burden, income and employment, and key demographics, including membership in protected classes. On the household level, the NYCHVS collects data including total housing costs and income, public assistance, and residential history. Data on the City's housing stock include building and unit quality and condition, rent regulatory and homeownership status, and unit size.

Justification

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

Pursuant to the Local Emergency Housing Rent Control Act of 1962 (as amended), as implemented by Section 26-415 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the City must conduct a survey of the housing conditions in the five boroughs of New York City. The NYCHVS will help determine the supply of housing accommodations, the condition of such accommodations, the rate of vacancy of such accommodations, and other housing market characteristics as are necessary for determining the need for continuing the regulation and control of residential rents and evictions in the City. The Census Bureau has a long history and an excellent working relationship with the NYCHPD, the City agency that is charged with conducting the survey (also referred to as survey sponsor). Census is undertaking this information collection pursuant to the nineteenth contract between the Census Bureau and the City of New York to conduct the NYCHVS. Data are collected for the five boroughs of New York City (Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island).

The U.S. Census Bureau requests approval to conduct the 2023 NYCHVS on behalf of the NYCHPD. The Census Bureau conducts the NYCHVS for the City under the authority of Title 13, U.S.C., Section 8(b).

Census Bureau field representatives will conduct personal visit interviews for a sample of housing units in the City, the vast majority of which are rental units in multi-unit rental structures (apartment buildings). Single-family rental and owner-occupied units (houses), are also included in the sample. The respondents will be residents of occupied units or, in the instance of vacant units, building managers, superintendents, or rental or real estate agents. About 5 percent of the sample will be reinterviewed for quality control purposes. The reinterview instrument will ask some questions of all cases (Were you interviewed by <FR name> on <day of the interview>? Did they use a laptop? Were they polite and courteous? Type of interview (personal visit or phone)?). The instrument will allow for additional probing questions to collect additional information (for example, if the Interview length was short, reinterview will ask the respondent how long the interview was for comparison).

Included in this clearance are the cost and respondent burden estimates for the reinterview.

The NYCHVS has collected key data on the City housing stock and its resident population since 1965, with the last major revisions to the questionnaire (and survey design) in 1991 and 2021.

Based on internal testing of mock interviews with the survey instrument, we expect the average interview time of occupied housing units to be about 36 minutes, which is the same as that of the 2021 NYCHVS.

At the request of the survey sponsor and like the 2021 NYCHVS, the 2023 NYCHVS survey instrument will be translated into Spanish, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Russian, Haitian Creole and Bengali. These languages cover some of the largest non-English speaking segments of the City population.

2. Needs and Uses

The 2023 NYCHVS will be an up-to-date and comprehensive data source required by the City's rent regulation laws as well as a source of data needed to evaluate the City's housing policies. Specifically, NYCHPD will look to the 2023 survey to provide accurate and reliable estimates of the rental and homeowner vacancy rates, to measure improvements in housing and neighborhood conditions, and to provide data on low-income, doubled-up, and crowded households at risk of becoming homeless.

The NYCHPD works with affordable housing developers to use City, State, and Federal subsidies to finance the creation of thousands of affordable units every year. This includes single and multi-family housing, senior housing, and supportive housing for formerly homeless and disabled individuals.

Information quality is an integral part of the pre-dissemination review of the information disseminated by the Census Bureau (fully described in the Census Bureau's Information Quality Guidelines). Information quality is also integral to the information collections conducted by the Census Bureau and is incorporated into the clearance process required by the Paperwork Reduction Act.

Conducting the NYCHVS and producing important statistics is consistent with the Census Bureau's mission of providing quality data on housing, population, and the economy. Survey results are also compared to other Census Bureau surveys, such as the Current Population Survey/Housing Vacancy Survey (CPS/HVS) and the American Community Survey (ACS). One important benefit is the ability to compare key estimates from the NYCHVS to these other surveys. These estimates include the rental vacancy rate, homeownership rate, and housing inventory estimates for the City. These comparisons and analysis may lead to improved estimation methodologies for each survey. Discrepancies in data between surveys can also lead to improved data collection procedures, improved editing, and ultimately higher quality data for all surveys.

3. Use of Improved Information Technology and Burden Reduction

The 2023 NYCHVS will be the second time this survey is administered to respondents via computer-assisted personal interview, which has streamlined field operations. As in previous years, each sample unit interview will be assigned a unique identification number, which allows it to be tracked throughout all phases of the operation. This substantially reduces the level of unnecessary personal visit follow-up, thereby reducing respondent burden.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

This survey was most recently conducted in 2021. No similar information in this detail and level of reliability has been collected since that time by the City or the Census Bureau.

Pursuant to the Local Emergency Housing Rent Control Act and the Administrative Code of the City of New York, a survey must be conducted in order to determine housing conditions in the City. Such survey should determine the supply of housing accommodations, the condition of such accommodations, the rate of vacancy of such accommodations, and such other housing market characteristics as are necessary for determining the need for

continuing the regulation and control of residential rents in the City.

5. Methods to Minimize Burden on Small Businesses

The 2023 NYCHVS is primarily a household survey; however, some rental agents, managers, superintendents and realtors may need to be interviewed for vacant units.

The survey is designed to obtain the required information with minimal respondent burden possible. The proposed survey instrument and interviewer procedures have been developed as a result of consultation between the Census Bureau and the NYCHPD, who also has had consultations with other New York City government agencies, outside individuals and organizations. Further, there are no legal issues that influence respondent burden.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

The survey is required by New York State law as part of the rent control and rent stabilization laws and regulations that apply to about 1 million housing units and 2.5 million tenants. The timing of data collection for the 2023 NYCHVS is determined by statutory deadlines set forth by NY State law, specifically Local Emergency Housing Rent Control Act of 1962 (as amended), as well as Sections 26-414 and 26-415 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York. More information about the Local Emergency Housing Rent Control Act of 1962 and Sections 26-414 and 26-415 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York can be found in Attachment D, *Legal Citations of NYC*.

Estimates from the 2023 survey must be delivered to the NYC City Council in February, 2024, and presented at a City Council hearing in early March, 2024. The City Council must convene and vote on rent control and stabilization measures before the expiration of the current State Law on April 1, 2024.

7. Special Circumstances

Data for the 2023 NYCHVS will be collected in a manner consistent with OMB guidelines.

8. Consultations Outside the Agency

The notice required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d) appeared in the Federal Register on December 15, 2021, Volume 86, pages 71231-71232. No comments were received in response to the notice.

In some cases, the NYCHPD received specific suggestions for questions from stakeholders or subject matter experts. In other cases, the team reviewed questionnaires from other

surveys to identify candidate questions. In all cases, priority was given to validated questions from other Census surveys first (e.g., AHS, ACS, SIPP), followed by other widely used sources such as national surveys (e.g., PSID, Fragile Families, GSS), specialized surveys that are commonly used by the research community (e.g., PHDCN, MARS), or relevant New York City surveys that have been fielded successfully (e.g., CHS, HANS). For content where either no existing question(s) could be found or where the existing body of survey questions did not provide a viable option, new questions were drafted by NYCHPD and refined through a combination of expert review and cognitive testing.

a. Persons Consulted

Elyzabeth Gaumer, Chief Research Officer for NYCHPD, is the primary representative for the NYCHPD and for the NYCHVS. The Census Bureau has been in contact with her and members of her staff concerning the 2023 survey since July 2021. She can be reached on (212)863-5145.

Additionally, Lucy Joffe, Assistant Commissioner of Housing Policy, NYCHPD, also has first-hand knowledge of the NYCHVS requirements and can be reached on (212)504-4115.

b. Major Problems

There are no points of contention between the Census Bureau and the NYCHPD. All work to be performed will be by mutual agreement and specified in a formal contract to be signed by both parties.

c. Other Public Contacts

All other public contacts have been coordinated by NYCHPD.

9. Payment or Gifts to Respondents

The Census Bureau does not make any payments or provide any gifts to individuals participating in the NYCHVS.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

Respondents are informed that the information they provide will be held in strict confidence, and that participation in the survey is voluntary. A letter, Form H-100(L), is sent to every selected housing unit prior to the survey. It explains, in addition to the confidential

nature of the data, that a field representative will visit to conduct the survey and how long the interview will require. The letter displays the OMB control number and date of expiration.

As part of the introduction for personal-visit households, the Census Bureau FRs will ask the respondents if they received the Advance Letter. If not, the FRs will give the letter to the respondents and allow them sufficient time to read the contents. We also display the program website and the toll-free phone number of the regional office for which the FR works as a way for the respondent to authenticate her/his employment with the Census Bureau.

The Privacy Act does apply to this collection under System of Record Notice (SORN) number COMMERCE/Census-3, Special Censuses, Surveys, and Other Studies. The FRN citation is 86 FR 71231. Title 13, Section 9, United States Code assures that no information that could identify any individual person or household will be released to any other government agency (Federal, state, or local) or to any private organization or individual. All information from the survey will be used strictly for statistical purposes.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

This survey does not contain any questions that are of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimate of Respondent Burden

The Census Bureau will conduct the survey by personal interview using the 2023 NYCHVS CAPI Instrument. The average time for an occupied unit interview is 36 minutes. As a means of quality control, we will reinterview 5 percent of all sample units using the 2023 NYCHVS Reinterview Instrument, which requires 10 minutes to complete. For occupied units we will be reinterviewing their residents, while for vacant units we will be reinterviewing owners, building managers, real estate or rental agents, superintendents, or neighbors (as a last resort only). These estimates of respondent burden are based on previous experience conducting the survey and internal testing of the new 2023 NYCHVS instrument.

The total estimated number of respondents for the 2023 NYCHVS is 16,485. The estimated number of respondent burden hours is 9,891.

Table 1. Estimated Annual Hour and Cost Burden to Respondents

Type of Respondent	Expected Number of Respondents	Average Burden per Response (in hours)	Total Burden Hours	Hourly Wage Rate ¹	Total Respondent Cost
NYCHVS Production					
Householder or household member (Occupied Units)	14,130	0.6	9,467	\$17.10	\$161,886
Owner, superintendent, rental/office agent, real estate agent/broker, etc. (Vacant Units)	1,570	0.17	267	\$17.10	\$4,566
Reinterview (5% of sample units)	785	0.17	133	\$17.10	\$2,274
Total	16,485		9,891		\$168,726

¹ We tabulated median person income (from the 2017 NYCHVS results), adjusted for inflation, and computed the hourly rate of pay. NOTE: Details may not sum to totals due to rounding of partial hours.

13. Estimates of Other Total Cost Burden to Respondents

There are no capital/start-up or ongoing operation/maintenance costs associated with this information collection.

14. Cost to the Federal Government

This survey will be conducted at no cost to the Federal Government. The total estimated cost of \$12,900,000 is funded completely by the survey sponsor, the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development. This amount includes full-loaded labor rates for Census Bureau staff that work on the survey.

15. Reasons for Program Changes and Adjustments Change in Burden

Program Changes:

- Reinterview: Prior reinterview processes randomly pre-selected percent of the sample for reinterview at the beginning of data collection. This resulted in many FRs not being reinterviewed unless the RO assigned the FR to supplemental reinterview. To rectify this shortcoming, cases will be flagged as they are completed for supplemental reinterview. The criteria to flag cases for reinterview will include that every working FR will be flagged a minimum number of times, and within specific timeframes (i.e., first two weeks of work, mid-point of data collection, cases completed near the end of data collection). Identifying the completed cases will be done using the Bureau's Unified Tracking System, and the regional office will manually assign the cases for reinterview using established processes.
- Reinterview: Prior reinterview processes required that all vacant interviews go through the reinterview process, but this is not the case anymore. Only 5% of all cases (occupied and vacant) will be interviewed this time.

Questionnaire Changes between 2021 and 2023

The 2023 NYCHVS questionnaire content is like the 2021 survey with the following exceptions:

Removal of COVID Module: The purpose of this module in 2021 was to gather time-sensitive and relevant information on the pandemic. A few questions from the 2021 COVID module were revised and incorporated into the core instrument.

Removal of Second Respondent Module: The purpose of this module was to follow-up with a different respondent when the primary respondent was unable to provide information about certain household costs or individuals. Data gathered in 2021 from these secondary interviews did not generally provide substantial additional information

beyond what was collected during the first respondent interview.

Addition of New Questions into the following Occupied Interview Modules:

1. Unit Characteristics – added questions pertaining to tenure, the presence of appliances, and shared facilities
2. Housing Quality – added questions on air conditioning, renovations, the frequency of extermination, and the respondent’s rating of their housing unit
3. Household Composition – added questions to verify the household roster
4. Residential History – added questions on lease terms, the respondent’s previous living situation and rating of their neighborhood
5. Renter Costs – added questions on past due rent and sources of rental assistance
6. Education – added a question on post-secondary education
7. Race / Ethnicity – added to the list of Asian heritage groups

Redesign of the Front Module: The primary purpose of the redesign was to make it easier to determine and record the occupancy status of the unit and the interview type, i.e., occupied, vacant, or usual residence elsewhere.

Redesign of the Household Language Series: Modified the series of questions on the language(s) spoken in the household. The list of languages was expanded significantly, and we will now collect which household member speaks which language, as well as the respondent’s assessment of how well non-English speaking household members speak English.

Addition of a Usual Residence Elsewhere (URE) Interview Type: While sample units occupied by people who live someplace else for most of the year will still be treated to the vacant interview, the path through the questionnaire will be tailored to address the difference between how the NYCHVS defines URE and vacant units.

Other Module Modifications:

1. Income – removed question on emergency expenses from the occupied interview
2. Vacant – removed questions pertaining to the number of stories, unit floor, the accessibility of the unit, and extermination service, and revised questions pertaining to tenure

Adjustments: The estimated respondent burden for the 2023 NYCHVS is a bit higher than that 2021 NYCHVS due to a survey sample size increase. The survey sample size was increased from 12,000 to 15,700 to maximize the longitudinal sample and increase the sample of certain housing types to reduce measurements of error, which in turn increased the estimated respondent burden from 7,804 hours to 9,891 hours.

16. Project Schedule

Survey interviewing is scheduled to begin on November 7, 2022. The units selected for reinterview will be enumerated shortly after the initial interview. All interviewing will conclude by May 31, 2023 and reinterview will be complete in June 2023. The NYCHPD will receive tabulations by January 2024, in order to fulfill reporting requirements. Remaining products, including a microdata file, tabular estimates, and the table creator will be available in 2024 on the Internet at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/nychvs.html>.

The data being disseminated and released are not individually identifiable and will have been cleared for release/dissemination by the Census Bureau's Disclosure Review Board.

17. Display of OMB Approval Information

The Census Bureau will print the OMB approval number and expiration date on each outgoing 2023 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey Letter, Form H-100(L). This information also appears on the 2023 NYCHVS Instrument, and on the 2023 NYCHVS Reinterview Instrument; however, these forms are not typically viewed by the respondent.

18. Exceptions to the Certification

The agency certifies compliance with [5 CFR 1320.9](#) and the related provisions of [5 CFR 1320.8\(b\)\(3\)](#)