

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR
THE CURRENT POPULATION SURVEY**

OMB CONTROL NO. 1220-0100

This ICR seeks to revise the Current Population Survey (CPS).

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

The purpose of this request for review is for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to extend and revise its clearance for monthly collection of labor force data through the Current Population Survey (CPS).

Collection of labor force data through the CPS is necessary to meet the requirements in Title 29, United States Code, Sections 1 through 9 (Attachment A). Collection of the data is also authorized by Title 13 (Attachment B), United States Code, Section 182.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

The CPS has been the principal source of the official Government statistics on employment and unemployment for over 75 years. The BLS and the Census Bureau share the responsibility for this survey and submit two separate clearance requests that reflect the way in which the two agencies divide the responsibilities for the analysis and dissemination of the data from the survey. The Census Bureau will be submitting a request for clearance for the collection of the basic demographic information on the population being sampled. BLS is requesting a renewal of Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance for the collection of the labor force information that it analyzes and publishes monthly. The basic CPS items booklet, which includes the questions used to collect both demographic and labor force information, is shown in Attachments C, D, and E.

BLS is seeking approval to remove two questions that collected information about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on where people worked. These questions, which ask about telework or work at home in February 2020, have been included on the CPS since October 2022 to measure the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labor force. BLS feels that enough time has passed since the onset of the pandemic and its impact on how people work. These questions shown in

Attachment F would not provide meaningful data going forward and BLS plans to remove them starting during the December collection period.

The labor force information gathered through the survey is of paramount importance in keeping track of the economic health of the Nation. The survey is the official source of monthly data on total employment and unemployment, and the monthly Employment Situation news release is designated as a Principal Federal Economic Indicator (PFEI). The CPS data are used monthly, in conjunction with data from other sources, to analyze the extent to which the various components of the American population are participating in the economic life of the Nation.

The labor force data gathered through the CPS are provided to users in the greatest detail possible, consistent with the demographic information obtained in the survey. In brief, the labor force data can be broken down by sex, age, race, ethnicity, marital status, family composition, educational level, certification and licensing status, disability status, veteran status, and various other characteristics. Through such breakdowns, one can focus on the employment situation of specific population groups as well as on the general trends in employment and unemployment. Moreover, the survey yields data on the characteristics of people who have stopped looking for work because they believe no jobs are available, also referred to as discouraged workers. Information of this type can be obtained only through demographically-oriented surveys such as the CPS.

In addition to being a source of much detailed data at the national level, the CPS provides information that is crucial for examining the employment situation at the sub-national level. For 48 states, the District of Columbia, Los Angeles County and the balance of California, and New York city and the balance of New York state, monthly data are produced using time-series models, which combine current and historical data from the CPS with data from other survey and administrative sources.

The basic CPS data are also used as an important platform on which to base the data derived from the various supplemental questions administered in conjunction with the survey. By coupling the basic data from the monthly survey with the special data from supplements, one can gain valuable insights on the behavior of American workers and on the social and economic health of their families. For example, recent supplements have produced data on poverty, health insurance, income, displaced workers, and veterans with service-connected disabilities.

The monthly CPS data are first published by means of a news release, The Employment Situation (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empsit.pdf>). There is wide interest in this initial release among policy makers, legislators, economists, the media, and the general public. The data are subsequently published in much greater detail on the BLS website and in a variety of publications. Special analyses of data by BLS economists often are reported in the *Monthly Labor Review*, also published by BLS.

While the data from the CPS are used in conjunction with data from other surveys—notably, the Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey—in assessing the economic health of the Nation, they are unique in various ways. They provide monthly, nationally representative measures of

total employment that include self-employed workers, farm workers, and unpaid family workers. By contrast, establishment surveys are generally restricted to the nonagricultural wage and salary sector. The CPS provides timely and detailed data on all job seekers, and on all persons outside the labor force, while payroll-based surveys cannot, by definition, cover these sectors of the population. Other national household surveys that include a few questions on employment, such as the American Community Survey, do not have sufficient space (or legal mandate) to collect information at this level of detail. Finally, the CPS data on employment, unemployment, and persons not in the labor force can be linked separately to the demographic characteristics of the many groups which make up the Nation's population, while data from other surveys often have limited demographic information.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also, describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

The Census Bureau, which is responsible for the collection of the CPS data—designing the sample, training and monitoring the interviewers, and conducting a continuous quality control program—is using methods designed to keep respondent burden as low as possible. These interviewing methods, which include the use of computer-assisted interviewing, were improved as part of a complete CPS redesign implemented in January 1994. The redesign was preceded by years of wide-ranging discussions, research, and large-scale field tests aimed at long-range improvements in the survey. The CPS and all of its supplements are collected 100 percent electronically by using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) and Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI). Since January 2007, the data collection instrument has been programmed in Blaise, a Windows-based survey processing system developed by Statistics Netherlands and licensed by Westat in the United States.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item A.2 above.

As noted above, the labor force data generally obtained through the CPS are not available with the same degree of quality from any other source. This is particularly the case in terms of the timeliness, comprehensiveness, versatility (through supplements), and reliability of the data. There is, therefore, no significant duplication of effort between the CPS and other surveys.

While other surveys provide data that serve as valuable complements to those obtained in the CPS, these surveys cannot substitute for the CPS as they are generally much more limited in scope, they are not conducted as frequently, or there is a greater lag between data collection and publication.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

The data are collected from households; their collection does not involve any small businesses or other small entities.

6. Describe the consequence to federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

Section 2 of Title 29, United States Code, mandates BLS to publish, at least once a month, complete statistics on levels and month-to-month changes in employment and unemployment.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- **requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- **requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**
- **requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
- **requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;**
- **in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**
- **requiring the use of statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
- **that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or**
- **requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

The CPS data are collected monthly as part of the requirement in 29 USC, Chapter 1, relating to the Collection, Collation, and Reports of Labor Statistics.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the *Federal Register* of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years -- even if the collection-of-information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

One comment was received as a result of the Federal Register notice published in 88 FR 34543 on May 30, 2023.

The comment, which was emailed to BLS on May 30, 2023, was out of scope. The mission of the BLS is to measure labor market activity, working conditions, price changes, and productivity in the U.S. economy to support public and private decision making. This particular information collection aims to gather labor force information that is of paramount importance in keeping track of the economic health of the Nation.

Outside Consultation

The following people have been in continuous consultation concerning the development of the survey:

Bureau of the Census
Kyra Linse
Survey Director
Current Population Survey
Bureau of the Census
Department of Commerce
(301) 763-9280

In addition to the above, a statement soliciting comments for improving CPS data is prominently placed in all Census Bureau publications that cite CPS data. A similar statement is included in the technical documentation that accompanies the microdata files. Finally, the CPS advance

letter (Attachment G) provides respondents with an address at the Census Bureau to which they can submit general comments on the survey, specifically those regarding respondent burden.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

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

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

The Census Bureau will collect the data in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974 and OMB Circular A-130. Each sample household will receive an advance letter (Attachment G) approximately one week before the start of the initial CPS interview. The letter includes the information required by the Privacy Act of 1974, explains the voluntary nature of the survey, and states the estimated time required for participating in the survey. Field representatives must ask each respondent if he/she received the advance letter and, if not, must provide a copy of the letter to each respondent and allow sufficient time for him/her to read the contents. Also, interviewers provide households with the pamphlet "The U.S. Census Bureau Respects Your Privacy and Keeps Your Personal Information Confidential," which further states the confidentiality assurances associated with this data collection effort (Attachment H).

All information given by respondents to Census Bureau employees is held in strict confidence under Title 13, United States Code, Section 9 (Attachment B). Each Census Bureau employee has taken an oath to that effect and is subject to a jail penalty and/or substantial fine if he/she discloses any information given to him/her.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

No sensitive questions are asked in this survey.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:

- **Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden, and explain the reasons for the variance. General, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.**
- **If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form**
- **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here. Instead, this cost should be included in Item 14.**

The respondent burden for the CPS labor force section is estimated at 68,850 hours for 2024. This annual estimate is based on interviewing 42,500 households on a monthly basis.

The estimated length of the labor force portion of each interview is 8.1 minutes. The time estimate for the monthly labor force questions is derived from the average respondent time that has been required to complete the labor force questions and reinterview in an average household across all months-in-sample for the past few years. This includes the time required to answer the disability questions and the certification questions. The actual respondent burden is dependent on the size of the household and the characteristics of its occupants. Generally, one respondent answers for the household. Each month, about 3 percent of all CPS households are reinterviewed for quality control purposes. Depending on the interviewer's experience level and position, a selected interviewer is in the reinterview program at least once, but no more than four times within a 15-month cycle. Errors uncovered during the reinterview are discussed with the original interviewer and remedial action is taken.

The overall annualized dollar cost to the respondents for collection of the labor force information is \$1,247,562. This estimate assumes a wage rate of \$18.12 an hour (this figure was the median hourly wage for 2022) for all respondents regardless of whether they are employed, unemployed, or not in the labor force. The annual cost per household would be roughly \$10.00, since an individual household would be in the survey at most 4 times a year for a total of about 32 minutes.

Estimated Annualized Respondent Cost and Hour Burden

| Activity | No. of Respondents | No. of Responses per Respondent | Total Responses | Average Burden (Hours) | Total Burden (Hours) | Hourly Wage Rate | Total Burden Cost |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| CPS Basic Monthly Data Collection | 510,000 (42,500 per month) | 1 | 510,000 | 8.1 | 68,850 | \$18.12 | \$1,247,562 |

**Costs are rounded to the nearest dollar and calculated using 2022 median hourly wages from the Current Population Survey.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in Items 12 and 14).

- **The cost estimate should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start up cost component (annualized over its expected useful life); and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of service component. The estimates should take into account costs associated with generating, maintaining, and disclosing or providing the information. Include descriptions of methods used to estimate major cost factors including system and technology acquisition, expected useful life of capital equipment, the discount rate(s), and the time period over which costs will be incurred. Capital and start-up costs include, among other items, preparations for collecting information such as purchasing computers and software; monitoring, sampling, drilling and testing equipment; and record storage facilities.**
- **If cost estimates are expected to vary widely, agencies should present ranges of cost burdens and explain the reasons for the variance. The cost of purchasing or contracting out information collection services should be a part of this cost burden estimate. In developing cost burden estimates, agencies may consult with a sample of respondents (fewer than 10), utilize the 60-day pre-OMB submission public comment process and use existing economic or regulatory impact analysis associated with the rulemaking containing the information collection, as appropriate.**
- **Generally, estimates should not include purchases of equipment or services, or portions thereof, made: (1) prior to October 1, 1995, (2) to achieve regulatory compliance with requirements not associated with the information collection, (3) for reasons other than to provide information or keep records for the government, or (4) as part of customary and usual business or private practices.**

a. Capital start-up costs: \$0

b. Total operation and maintenance and purchase of services: \$0

14. Provide estimates of the annualized cost to the Federal Government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information. Agencies also may aggregate cost estimates from Items 12, 13, and 14 into a single table.

The estimated cost to the federal government was \$95 million in fiscal year 2022 for the full CPS data collection program as administered by the Census Bureau. The BLS contributed approximately \$61 million through an interagency transfer of funds to the Census Bureau that covers costs associated with the labor force and disability data collected in the survey. A direct appropriation of \$19 million from Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) legislation also contributes to the CPS program to fund the additional sample that is required for the precision requirements of health insurance data from the Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the CPS. The Census Bureau contributed \$15 million for the collection of demographic data in fiscal year 2022. The remaining funds are received from various agencies to fund supplements and other projects.

In fiscal year 2022, the BLS spent an additional approximately \$9 million for review and dissemination of labor force data from the CPS.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

Total respondent burden for the collection of labor force information will be lower than in previous years at 68,850 hours due to a reduction in the number of interviews and the removal of two questions that collected information about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on where people worked.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulations, and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

A large portion of the labor force data obtained through the CPS is published on a monthly basis. Other data from the survey, such as those on earnings, are published on a quarterly basis. Still other data, such as the detailed information on employment by detailed occupation and industry, are published on an annual basis. The monthly data are released soon after collection, the usual lag averaging 19 days after the start of interviewing.

Monthly data are published in the Employment Situation news release. This release can be found on the BLS website at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>, and a schedule of the release dates is available at www.bls.gov/schedule/news_release/empsit.htm. BLS also publishes

a variety of other news releases and reports using CPS data, which are posted on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/cps/news.htm.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

The Census Bureau does not wish to display the assigned expiration date of the information collection because the instrument is automated and the respondent, therefore, would never see the date. The advance letter sent to households by the Census Bureau contains Census's OMB clearance number for the CPS and Census's version of the failure to comply notice (Attachment G). Copies of this advance letter are stockpiled by the Census Bureau for use as needed; changes to the letter would make the current inventory of letters unusable.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

There are no exceptions to the certification.