

2023 Census Survey
Submitted Under Generic Clearance for Census Bureau Field Tests and Evaluations

Request: 1The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for Field Tests (OMB #0607-0971). We will be administering an online mandatory survey with a paper questionnaire sent in the last mailing to nonresponding households to start answering some research questions posed in three project plans that are performing research for the 2030 Census.

Purpose: The 2023 Census Survey is the second iteration (previously conducted 2023 Census Test in March 2023) under the renewed Small-Scale Response Testing (SmaRT) program. The purpose of the SmaRT program is to initiate and maintain an ongoing and iterative small-scale response testing program by using nationally representative samples or small, thoughtfully selected sites starting in 2023 and continuing with at least two tests per year until 2029. Small-scale tests would allow the Census Bureau to gather initial data about proposed census enhancements while plans for any larger census tests that may take place later in the decade are being developed.

The purpose of this next iteration in the SmaRT program is to answer research questions posed in three project plans performing research for the 2030 Census. The research questions for the 2023 Census Survey were chosen to allow more time to test different iterations based on the early results (if needed), work on any necessary messaging for the 2030 Census, and inform, as well as develop, post-processing procedures.

The information collected in this survey will be used within the Census Bureau and incorporated into the efforts for the 2030 Census. The results may be reported in Census Bureau working papers or in peer-reviewed journal articles.

Population of Interest: Results will inform 2030 Census planning, so we are interested in data representing all mailable housing units in the United States (excluding Puerto Rico). Some of our research questions are for specific subpopulations such as unrelated people living in the same housing unit as reported in the 2020 Census, housing units with cell phone numbers, and housing units where the respondent self-identifies as Black or African American. We will use stratification and sorting in our sampling methods to be certain we have these subpopulations represented. The 2023 Census Survey will be available in English and Spanish.

Timeline: The internet instrument will be available to collect responses for a little over six weeks starting from the day of the first mailing scheduled as October 20, 2023, through the end of the survey period scheduled as December 6, 2023.

Experimental Panel Design: The 2023 Census Survey contains three experiments: using plain

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language on mail materials versus current language, sending text message reminders with a link in addition to mail materials versus only mail materials, and using plain language on mail materials in addition to text message reminders versus using current language and no text message reminders. All respondents will see one of two questions asking about vacant home within or outside of their neighborhood.

To summarize all panels in the 2023 Census Survey, see Table 1.

Table 1. Panels by Treatments for the Fall 2023 Census Survey

Panel Number	Panel Description	Language Treatment	Reminder Treatment	Vacant Crowdsourcing Treatment
1	Control	Modified 2020	Letters and postcards	Randomly assigned
2	Plain language	Modified plain language recommendation design	Letters and postcards with plain language recommendation design	Randomly assigned
3	Text message reminders -with link	Modified 2020	Letter, postcards, and two text message reminders with link included	Randomly assigned
4	Plain language and text message reminders – with link	Modified plain language recommendation design	Letters and postcards with plain language recommendation design and text message reminder with link included	Randomly assigned

Sample: We will select a sample of 107,000 stateside mailable housing units addresses (2020 Census Self-Response and Update Leave Type of Enumeration Area with good addresses as determined by the 2020 Census Address Composition Specification) from the 2020 Census Unedited File. The frame will exclude housing units on tribal lands, housing units sampled for The U.S. Census Bureau reviewed this data product for unauthorized disclosure of confidential information and approved the disclosure avoidance practices applied to this release. CBDRB-FY23-DSSD007-0004

the SmaRT March 2023 Census Test, housing units sampled for the 2022 period 2 and the 2023 American Community Survey, phone numbers that have opted out of the Household Pulse Survey, and phone numbers that opted out of the 2020 Census User Experience Survey.

The overall and panel sample sizes were determined based on the following assumptions:

- An alpha of 0.10, a beta of 0.20, and a design effect of 1.5.
- A detectable difference of 2 percentage points.
- A login rate of 31 percent, based on login rates from the October 2015 small-scale test.
- The rate of addresses requiring clerical matching being 16 percent, based on 2020 Census data and subject matter expertise.

Addresses will be sorted by geographic identifiers and other demographic and operational data flags. A systematic random sample will be taken, and each housing unit selected will be assigned a random number. After sorting by the random number, the housing units will be sequentially assigned to the panels. Housing units will then again be sorted by random number and sequentially assigned to one of the two occupancy status treatments.

Recruitment: We plan to conduct this test with a Census Day of November 1, 2023, and a maximum of four mailings to each housing unit. The first mailing is the initial letter. The second mailing is a reminder letter. The third mailing is a reminder postcard. The fourth and final mailing will be a letter that contains a paper questionnaire and return envelope. The content will differ by treatment group. Additionally, two panels will receive a text message reminder on October 30 (the Monday after the second mailing is received) and on November 15 (the Wednesday after the fourth mailing is received). The survey will close out December 6, 2023, approximately seven weeks after the first mailing. All mailing materials and the response instrument will be bilingual in English and Spanish. See Appendix 2 through 25 for all contact materials.

Survey Administration: All sampled housing units will be mailed invitations to respond online, and a paper questionnaire will be sent in the fourth mailing to nonresponding households. The online questionnaire will be administered using the survey platform Qualtrics. Qualtrics has a FedRAMP Moderate approval and a Census Authority to Operate to collect T13 data. Respondents will receive the link to the online survey on all mailing materials.

Questionnaire: The online instrument specification and the paper questionnaires are attached (see Attachment 1 and Attachments 20-23) with branching identified in the comments for the online questionnaire. This questionnaire is a version of the 2020 Census questionnaire where demographics are asked for Person 1 through 6 with the addition of a question asking about the

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occupancy status of homes inside or outside the neighborhood. The online instrument has an extra question to determine if the respondent is counting everyone in the household.

Informed Consent: The Census Bureau will conduct the 2023 Census Survey under the authority of Title 13 United States Code Sections 141 and 193. All respondents who participate in the 2023 Census Survey will be informed that the information they provide is confidential under Section 9 that law. Additionally, respondents will be advised that Section 221 of this same law makes participation mandatory. All collected information that identifies individuals will be held in strict confidence according to the provisions of Title 13 United States Code, Section 9.

Incentive: There is no incentive in this survey.

Length of Interview: We plan on contacting a sample of 107,000 addresses with up to contacts each. We estimate users will spend 10 minutes on average completing the survey and approximately 5 minutes reading contact materials. The burden estimates in the table below are an upper bound and based on a theoretical 100 percent response, rather than our expected response rate. The total estimated respondent burden for this study is approximately 53,500 hours, assuming everyone reads the contact materials and answers the survey.

Table 2. Total Estimated Burden

	Max Number of Respondents	Max Number of Occurrence	Time for each Occurrence	Estimated Burden
Reading mail invitations	107,000	4	5 minutes	35,667 hours
Completing survey	107,000	1	10 minutes	17,833 hours
Maximum Total Estimate				53,500 hours

The following documents are included as attachments:

Attachment 1: 2023 Census Survey Online Questionnaire Specification (abbreviated)

Attachment 2: FAQ insert for Mailing 1

Attachment 3: FAQ insert for Mailing 4

Attachment 4: Invitation letter for Panel 1 (Mailing 1)

Attachment 5: Invitation letter for Panel 2 (Mailing 1)

Attachment 6: Invitation letter for Panel 3 (Mailing 1)

Attachment 7: Invitation letter for Panel 4 (Mailing 1)

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Attachment 8: Reminder letter for Panel 1 (Mailing 2)
Attachment 9: Reminder letter for Panel 2 (Mailing 2)
Attachment 10: Reminder letter for Panel 3 (Mailing 2)
Attachment 11: Reminder letter for Panel 4 (Mailing 2)

Attachment 12: Reminder postcard for Panel 1 (Mailing 3)
Attachment 13: Reminder postcard for Panel 2 (Mailing 3)
Attachment 14: Reminder postcard for Panel 3 (Mailing 3)
Attachment 15: Reminder postcard for Panel 4 (Mailing 3)

Attachment 16: Final letter for Panel 1 (Mailing 4)
Attachment 17: Final letter for Panel 2 (Mailing 4)
Attachment 18: Final letter for Panel 3 (Mailing 4)
Attachment 19: Final letter for Panel 4 (Mailing 4)

Attachment 20: Questionnaire for Panel 1 (Mailing 4)
Attachment 21: Questionnaire for Panel 2 (Mailing 4)
Attachment 22: Questionnaire for Panel 3 (Mailing 4)
Attachment 23: Questionnaire for Panel 4 (Mailing 4)

Attachment 24: Text message reminder for Mailing 2
Attachment 25: Text message reminder for Mailing 4

Attachment 26: Recorded FAQ phone script for English
Attachment 27: Recorded FAQ phone script for Spanish

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and the design of this research is listed below:

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