

Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance to Conduct Pre-Testing of Surveys” (OMB Control Number: 3137-0125)

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Cognitive Testing for FY 2025/26 Public Libraries Survey

PURPOSE:

In preparation for the FY 2025/26 Public Library Survey (PLS), the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and Activate Research, Inc. (Activate) have developed and will test new and revised survey items. The items cover topics and revisions identified by the Library Statistics Working Group (LSWG), a panel of state data coordinators, chief officers of state library agencies, and library researchers, as requiring clarification, requiring placement change, or missing from the current PLS. As part of the survey development process, AIR and Activate will conduct 12 cognitive interviews with library administrators to test and improve the draft survey items.

Cognitive interviewing involves a set of techniques (e.g., think-aloud method, verbal probes) that enable researchers to analyze how participants understand survey questions and whether the questions measure what they were intended to measure.¹ Conducting cognitive interviews to test new and revised PLS survey questions will help ensure that the final survey questions are easier to understand, less burdensome, more relevant to respondents, and result in higher quality data overall.

The research will be iterative, in that the survey item wording and format are expected to change during the testing period in response to problems identified during the interviews. However, it is not anticipated that the survey items or format will change substantially during this process, particularly in light of the groundwork already completed to develop the questionnaire.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

Respondents will be library administrators. Members of the LSWG will provide the names and contact information for volunteers interested in participating. If necessary, AIR/Activate will use the FY 2022 PLS universe (the most recent available) to identify additional libraries from which to recruit participants in an effort to meet recruitment goals.

TYPE OF COLLECTION: (Check one)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form | <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Satisfaction Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software) | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Discussion Group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Cognitive Interviews</u> |

CERTIFICATION:

I certify the following to be true:

¹ Tourangeau, R, Rips, L. J., and Rasinski, K. (2000). *The psychology of survey response*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low burden for respondents and low cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is noncontroversial and does not raise issues of concern to other Federal agencies.
4. The results are not intended to be disseminated to the public.
5. Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions.
6. The collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the future.

Name: Marisa Pelczar, Office of Research and Evaluation

To assist review, please provide answers to the following question:

Personally Identifiable Information:

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected? Yes No
2. If yes, will any information that is collected be included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974? Yes No
3. If yes, has an up-to-date System of Records Notice (SORN) been published? Yes No

AIR/Activate will receive personally identifiable information (PII) for recruitment and scheduling purposes only. Interview notes will not contain PII, and the interviews will be recorded for research purposes only. Interview recordings and notes will be stored on AIR and Activate secure data servers for the duration of the study and destroyed after the final report is submitted. All materials will be accessible only through password-protected laptops with disk encryption, and only AIR/Activate research team members working on the cognitive interviews will have access. AIR/Activate will not provide IMLS with any PII collected as a part of this study, and all PII will be destroyed by AIR/Activate following the project’s reporting.

Gifts or Payments:

Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants? Yes No

BURDEN HOURS

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time (Hours)	Burden
Private sector (cognitive interview)	12	1	12
Total	12	1	12

Burden Cost Estimate: \$373.68 based on 12 hours x \$31.14/hr (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (May 2022). Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics. National wage rate for occupation 25-4022, Librarians and Media Collections Specialists. <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes254022.htm>.

FEDERAL COST: The estimated cost to the Federal Government for this information collection is \$35,000 (cost of contractor survey development tasks and federal employee time spent on project).

If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:

The selection of your targeted respondents

1. Do you have a customer list or something similar that defines the universe of potential respondents and do you have a sampling plan for selecting from this universe?
 Yes No

If the answer is yes, please provide a description of both below (or attach the sampling plan)?
If the answer is no, please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them.

AIR/Activate will use convenience sampling to identify and recruit library administrators for the study. Members of the LSWG will provide the names and contact information for volunteers who are interested in participating in the interviews. If necessary, AIR/Activate will use the FY 2022 PLS universe (the most recent available) to identify additional libraries from which to recruit participants to meet recruitment goals. As needed, AIR/Activate will conduct internet searches of the additional libraries to identify the names and contact information of library administrators for recruitment purposes.

AIR/Activate will recruit participants on a rolling basis using a mixed-mode strategy, consisting of email invitations and telephone calls to non-respondents. All library administrators who are willing and able to participate will be scheduled for a cognitive interview until 24 interviews are completed.

Administration of the Instrument

1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)
 Web-based or other forms of social media
 Telephone
 In-person
 Mail
 Other, Explain – Virtual interviews via Zoom or Microsoft Teams
2. Will interviewers or facilitators be used? Yes No

Please make sure that all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.

Attachment A FY25_26 PLS Cognitive Interview Guide.docx

Attachment B FY25_26 PLS Cognitive Interview Recruitment Emails.docx