

**OMB Information Collection Request  
Supporting Statement A  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
U.S. Census Bureau**

**High Frequency Surveys Program  
Household Pulse Survey Phase 4.2**

**OMB Control Number 0607-1029**

**Abstract**

The Census Bureau developed the Household Pulse Survey as an experimental endeavor in cooperation with five other federal agencies. The survey was designed to produce near real-time data in a time of urgent and acute need to inform federal and state action. Starting in March 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has introduced extraordinary social and economic changes for American households. Since its rapid launch in April 2020, the Household Pulse Survey has collected data on the experiences of American households as the coronavirus pandemic prompted business and school closures, and widespread stay-at-home orders, and later as businesses and schools started to reopen. These data were released frequently, guiding the response and recovery from the pandemic. The HPS continues to be a collaborative undertaking and is fielded in partnership with 18 federal agency partners. The High-Frequency Surveys (HFS) Program comprises surveys that provide a platform to produce estimates that support data-driven decisions in a rapid, efficient, and independent manner. More specifically, the purpose of the HFS program is to produce and disseminate data in near real time to support rapidly emerging or changing program or policy needs. The HFS includes statistical products designed to provide information on emerging issues as quickly as possible and was established as a natural progression from the creation of the Household Pulse Survey. The products under this program, including the HPS, typically have smaller sample sizes and response rates than other Census surveys, but are timelier and more flexible.

**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.**

High-frequency surveys are designed to develop and deploy data collection instruments quickly and for data to be released in near real-time. Changes in the Household Pulse Survey measures over time provided insight into individuals' experiences on social and economic dimensions during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic. It has evolved to include content on other emergent social and economic issues facing households. The Household Pulse Survey,

conducted under the auspices of the Census Bureau’s Experimental Data Series (<https://www.census.gov/data/experimental-data-products.html>), is designed to supplement the federal statistical system’s traditional benchmark data products with a new data source that provides relevant and timely information based on a high-quality sample frame, data integration, and cooperative expertise.

One of the features of the Household Pulse Survey is its ability to rapidly respond to evolving information needs. Thus, the Census Bureau has consulted closely throughout with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to ensure that the survey complies with the Paperwork Reduction Act, even on a compressed schedule. The Census Bureau commits to continuous evaluation of the usefulness of the content of the survey in consultation with OMB.

The launch of revised content described in this package will be considered a new data collection cycle under Phase 4 as approved by OMB (e.g., Phase 4.1 and Phase 4.2). As with Phase 4.1, this data collection cycle will consist of approximately four data collection periods utilizing continuous data collection. See below for the content review schedule. Changes to the schedule for Phase 4.2, including any breaks in data collection, will be submitted to OMB for review and approval. Proposed changes to the survey content for Phase 4.2 will be announced through the Federal Register along with an opportunity for public comment.

<b>Household Pulse Survey Content Review and Revision Schedule</b>			
<b>Data Collection Cycle</b>	<b>Content Review and Revision</b>	<b>Data Collection Start</b>	<b>Data Collection End</b>
Phase 4.1	January 2024	April 2024	July 2024
Phase 4.2	April-May 2024	July 2024	September 2024

The Census Bureau commits to continuous evaluation of the usefulness of the content of the survey in consultation with OMB. Depending on the continuing need for data from the Household Pulse Survey, the Census Bureau may pause or conclude data collection activities prior to the clearance expiration date.

In circumstances that meet the requirements for Emergency Clearance under 5 CFR 1320.13, Census may request OMB approval to receive public comment concurrent with the collection of new or revised items or methods.

***History of Household Pulse ICRs***

Initial clearance for the Household Pulse Survey was approved by OMB on January 2, 2024, for a period through January 31, 2027. OMB subsequently approved a revision request for Phase 4.1 of the Household Pulse Survey on March 27, 2024. To ensure that the data collected by the Household Pulse Survey continue to meet information needs as households are faced with changing social and economic conditions, the Census Bureau is submitting this Request for Revision to an Existing Collection for a revised Phase 4.2.

The Census Bureau will publish a notice in the Federal Register with 30 days of public comment. Once the public comment period has closed and subject to receiving clearance from

OMB for Phase 4.2, the Census Bureau would plan to deploy the revised questionnaire on or about July 23, 2024.

Ongoing information regarding the quality of the Household Pulse Survey data is available in the Source & Accuracy Statements associated with each data release (see Attachment B for example).

The proposed revised questionnaires can be reviewed in Attachment A. The statement to respondents related to the Privacy Act and Paper Reduction Act is included in Attachment C. The language we propose to use to contact respondents, including invitations to participate via email and SMS text, is in Attachment D.

The collection is authorized under Title 13 United States Code, Sections 8(b), 182, and 193.

**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.**

Household Pulse Survey Phase 4.2 will serve as an experimental endeavor in cooperation with other federal agencies to produce near real-time data to understand the effects of current events, including health events, natural disaster events, or other social or economic events facing the nation or a significant portion of the nation. The Household Pulse Survey has been developed in close consult with the following agencies: the Census Bureau (Census); the Office of Management and Budget (OMB); the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS) and Food and Nutrition Service (FNS); the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS); the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA/MCHB); the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES); the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS); the Department of Defense (DOD); the National Institute on Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH); the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD); the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA); the White House Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) and Domestic Policy Council (DPC); the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB); the Department of Health and Human Services, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (HHS/ASPE), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

Data collected in the Household Pulse Survey demonstrate the ability respond quickly to collect and disseminate high-frequency data products that inform the public in urgent circumstances. Data products will include public-use data files, detailed data tables, and in interactive data tool, which can be used by federal, state, and local agencies; academics and non-government organizations; the media; and the public.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the**

**basis for the decision of adopting this means of collection. Also, describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

The Census Bureau will conduct this information collection online using Qualtrics as the data collection platform. Qualtrics is currently used at the Census Bureau for research and development surveys and provides the necessary agility to deploy the Household Pulse Survey quickly and securely. It operates in the Gov Cloud, is FedRAMP authorized at the moderate level, and has an Authority to Operate from the Census Bureau to collect personally identifiable and Title 13-protected data.

Qualtrics is an online data collection platform that allows survey invitations to be distributed electronically via email and/or SMS. Currently, all survey initiations for the Household Pulse Survey will be distributed to sampled participants via email and SMS, and data collection will occur entirely on the web. The data collection platform is optimized for use on a mobile device, so may be used via any type of internet access.

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

The Household Pulse Survey Phase 4.2 does not duplicate any other data collection or research being conducted by the Census Bureau or other Federal agencies. First, the combination of the speed of data collection, processing, and release with the large sample of the Household Pulse, sufficient in size to produce estimates at the state level as well as for 15 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), is unique. Secondly, the sample frame is the Master Address File (MAF), which is the gold standard frame for U.S. statistics and provides sampled respondents all of the strict confidentiality protections afforded them under Title 13 U.S.C. The statistical infrastructure at the Census Bureau, and within the federal statistical system, enables the use of the MAF coupled with auxiliary and administrative data to allow for extensive procedures to ensure the ability to understand and improve the representativeness of the survey results. Thirdly, the questionnaire has been designed with input from multiple federal agencies. As such, it is a comprehensive, omnibus instrument that efficiently produces data on the effect of social and economic events on U.S. households. Lastly, the data will carry the imprimatur of the federal statistical system and its standards for data stewardship, objectivity and transparency.

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

The collection of this information does not involve small businesses or other small entities.

**6. Describe the consequences 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.**

The Household Pulse Survey is integral to providing insight on how emergent social and economic events affect U.S. households. Without the Household Pulse Survey, the Bureau would lose a critical platform for providing relevant and timely information based on a high-quality sample frame, data integration, and cooperative expertise. The Census Bureau commits to continuous evaluation of the content of the survey in consultation with OMB, other agencies, and stakeholders.

The Census Bureau proposes a data collection cycle that allows publication of results on a monthly basis. As discussed above, the frequency and timeliness of the Household Pulse Survey is a key component of its ability to meet the needs of policymakers. The Census Bureau will review all existing and new items to ensure that the burden created by this frequency of collection is justified by the value of producing monthly estimates. Changes to the needs of policymakers in the future may result in less frequent (monthly) data releases or pauses in data collection.

We designed the survey questions to obtain the required information with minimal respondent burden. Further, there are no legal issues that influence respondent burden.

## **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 a 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 impede s sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or**

- **requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, 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.**

Collection of these data is conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5. We note two special circumstances related to this collection, specifically:

- 1) Due to the design of the Household Pulse Survey and its purpose in providing data on a near-time basis to inform on changes in social and economic conditions, survey respondents are asked to complete the survey during the month of data collection. The data collected in that period is processed and released two weeks after data collection ends. For Phase 4.2, a new sample of households will be released once every month.
- 2) The Census Bureau randomly selects households in numbers sufficient to produce and disseminate statistics at a state level. Generally speaking, the sample is selected in a manner such that most households would not be selected to participate in the Household Pulse Survey more than once; however, it is possible that this may occur in states with small populations in order to continue producing data for those states. In those limited cases, it is possible that a given household may be asked to respond to the survey more than once, but not within a year of the previous response.

#### Justification for Implementation Timing of SPD15

The U.S. Census Bureau realizes the need for a justification explaining a plan for when a Non-substantive Change will be submitted to update the HPS per the Statistical Policy Directive (SPD) Number 15. Our content experts are thoroughly reviewing the SPD15 updates and collaborating with colleagues across the Census Bureau to develop an action plan to implement the updated standards within the OMB’s required five-year period. Throughout this process, we will engage with stakeholders and keep them posted as we develop our implementation plans.

The Household Pulse Survey is beginning the process of transitioning to a longitudinal design. Phase 4.2 will be the last collection in the series before we transition methodologies. Our plan is to implement the new race/ethnicity standards as we transition to the longitudinal design in calendar year 2025. We are planning to proceed with middle option of the SPD15 implementation for the longitudinal Household Pulse, providing examples, but not write-in fields. This is consistent with the high frequency programs focus on utilizing only light processing.

Given the considerations above, we believe the HPS program will be able to implement the new SPD15 standards well ahead of the required five-year period requested by OMB.

**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 the 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 instruction and record keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.**

The Census Bureau published a Federal Register Notice informing the public of the Household Pulse Survey on August 17, 2023 (88 FR 55998-56000), October 31, 2023 (88 FR 74146), and February 15, 2024 (89 FR 11812). In response to the Notices published to date, the Census Bureau received comments from organizations and private citizens. The comments are summarized as follows:

- The 60-day FRN yielded 4 public comments.
  - 1 comment asked for a draft of the ICR
  - 2 comments were in support of the continuation of the Household Pulse Survey
  - 1 comment asked that we consider replicating the questions related to energy bills for water bills
- The first 30-day FRN yielded 2 public comments, which both supported the continuation of the Household Pulse Survey, asked that we continue to include questions on child care in future phases, made recommendations on improving the child care items, and suggested additional child care items to include. We will consider these new and revised items for the next phase of the survey.

The Census Bureau appreciates the feedback received and will take the important comments and recommendations under advisement. We will evaluate the content and propose deletions, additions, and revisions to the questionnaire in light of evolving data needs expressed in any comments received and from other agencies and stakeholders. It is the goal of the Census Bureau and its Federal agency partners contributing to this effort that the survey meet as broad a range of data needs as possible while managing household burden.

With regard to consult with outside agencies, the content and design of the Household Pulse Survey was developed in partnership with the Census Bureau and multiple Federal agencies, including the Office of Management and Budget (OMB); the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS) and Food and Nutrition Service (FNS); the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS); the Health Resources and Services Administration’s Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA/MCHB); the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES); the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS); the Department of Defense (DOD); the National Institute on Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH); the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD); the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA); the White House Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) and Domestic Policy Council (DPC); the

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB); the Department of Health and Human Services, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (HHS/ASPE); the Food and Drug Administration (FDA); and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

**9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

There are no payments or gifts provided to respondents.

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

The information to be collected is protected under the confidentiality provisions of Title 13 U.S.C. Respondents are informed of the nature and extent of the confidentiality of the information they report in the emails they receive and in the information collection instruments.

**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. The 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.**

The questions in the Household Pulse Survey include employment status, spending, food security, housing, health, natural disasters, vaccine receipt, COVID-19 diagnosis and treatment, shortage of critical products, disability, income, and childcare arrangements. A number of these questions could be considered sensitive by some people. However, these measures are necessary to understand the social and economic impacts of current events on American households. The content included on program use and mental health are central to the survey as these data are critical aspects of the data provided for assisting government and the public understand and meet the ongoing material and non-material needs.

The Census Bureau collects racial and ethnic data in accordance with the 1997 OMB standards on race and ethnicity. Information on race and Hispanic origin is required for many federal programs and is critical in making policy decisions, particularly for civil rights. States use these data to meet legislative redistricting principles. Potentially sensitive demographic variables, such as racial and ethnic statistics, are used in planning and evaluating government programs and policies to ensure they fairly serve the needs of each community and to monitor against discrimination in these programs and in society. Race and Hispanic origin data are also used to promote equal employment opportunities and to assess racial and ethnic disparities in health and environmental risks.

**12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.**

The Census Bureau estimates that, for the average household, this survey will take about 20 minutes to complete based on average time in the instrument metrics collected during previous cycles of the survey. This includes the time for reviewing the instructions and answers. We will release new sample once per month across 12 sample groups, with each group starting at different points throughout the month. For each monthly collection period, we anticipate receiving 66,150 responses (total responses = 264,600). The total burden is estimated to be 88,112 hours (66,150 x 4 x 0.33 hours).

For individuals, the wage rate is \$25.72 per hour based on hourly earnings for employees as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. We calculate the cost of a respondent’s time to complete this survey to be \$8.49 (\$25.72/3). The estimated total respondent cost burden for Phase 4.2 based on these hours is \$2,266,235.

Type of Respondent	Expected Number of Respondents	Average Burden per Response (in hours)	Total Burden Hours	Hourly Wage Rate	Total Respondent Cost
Householder or household member (Occupied Units)	264,600	0.333	88,112	\$25.72	\$2,266,235

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information.**

We do not expect respondents to incur any costs other than that of their time to respond.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.**

The government cost for the Household Pulse Survey Phase is approximately \$1.16M. This assumes data collection for Phase 4.2 would continue for roughly 4 monthly cycles starting April 2024. Household Pulse Survey costs associated with Phase 4.2 include subscriptions costs for Qualtrics and fees for SMS messaging.

Data Collection Platform (Qualtrics + SMS)	\$ 800K
Instrument Design and Development	\$ 48K
Sample Design, Management and Estimation	\$ 30K

Data Product Development and Review	\$ 150K
Data Processing and Dissemination	\$ 90K
Project Management	\$ 40K

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

N/A

**16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.**

The Census Bureau plans to release data monthly. Data and analysis products will be released in collaboration with the participating agencies. Tabular data and access to disclosure protected microdata through [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) are expected.

Data from this survey will be released as experimental. Experimental data products are innovative statistical products created using new data sources or methodologies that benefit data users. Census Bureau experimental data may not meet all of our quality standards. Because of this, we clearly identify experimental data products and include methodology and supporting research with their release. For further discussion of the Household Pulse Survey experimental data products and how the resulting data and corresponding quality will be messaged to the public, including Census Bureau “Guiding Principles: Experimental Statistical Products,” see Attachment G, “Guiding Principles for Experimental Statistical Products.”

**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 OMB expiration date will be displayed within the data collection instrument.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in the Certification of Paperwork Reduction Act.**

There are no exceptions to the certification.

Attachment A: Phase 4.2 Household Pulse Survey Questionnaire

Attachment B: Sample Source & Accuracy Statement (*Data Collection Period April 2 – April 29, 2024*)

Attachment C: Privacy Act/Paper Reduction Act Statement

Attachment D: Respondent Contact Language

Attachment E: Public-Facing Information on the Household Pulse Survey on [census.gov](http://census.gov)

Attachment F: Federal Register Notices – Public Comments

Attachment G: Guiding Principles for Experimental Statistical Products