

SUPPORTING STATEMENT A
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau
Census Household Panel
OMB Control No. 0607-1025

Abstract

Early research and development work has demonstrated the value of a high-quality panel to improve representativeness and significantly reduce burden on households in the interests of collecting high-frequency data. Census Household Panel participants responded to a baseline survey and will be asked to respond to a series of different survey requests (topical surveys). Importantly, some of these surveys will essentially function as the same survey over time to produce longitudinal data that measure change over time. Development of this Panel at the Census Bureau allows the agency to draw representative samples accurately and quickly, responding to the need for timely insights on an array of topics and improving data outputs inclusive of historically undercounted populations.

This Panel will become integral to rapidly providing insight on national events that may impact social, economic, or demographic characteristics of the population. Traditionally, Federal surveys are designed to collect and disseminate data on a slower timetable to produce statistically robust key measures of the society and economy. In keeping with growing needs for more timely information, however, the Census Bureau seeks to complement these important, established surveys with new mechanisms such as the Census Household Panel which can produce data much closer to real time as the information needs develop. The Panel will also help us research questions related to surveys. For example, this Panel will allow us to conduct nationally representative field tests to test content changes in an efficient and reliable fashion in support of other surveys.

Leveraging its experience reaching and engaging households, and its reputation for statistical rigor and transparency in the production of Federal statistics, the Census Bureau will build the Census Household Panel in-house in a manner that affords users a full understanding of the methodology in keeping with Federal statistical standards, including response rates and weighting. This

transparency into the way in which the statistics are developed will provide Federal agencies the confidence necessary to use the data in their policy making.

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 Census Household Panel is a probability-based nationwide survey panel that facilitates testing and improving methods of data collection on a variety of topics of interest, and for conducting experimentation on alternative question wording and methodological approaches. In addition to the support and development of high-quality survey content for other data collections, a significant goal of the Census Household Panel is to develop into a platform that ensures the availability of frequent data collection for nationwide estimates on a variety of topics for a variety of subgroups of the population, meeting standards for transparent quality reporting of the Federal Statistical Agencies and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

The Census Bureau conducted the initial recruitment operation for the Panel. The original goal for the size of the Panel was 15,000 panelists and households selected from the Census Bureau's gold standard Master Address File. This ensures the Panel is rooted in this rigorously developed and maintained frame and available for linkage to administrative records securely maintained and curated by the Census Bureau. This foundation and the incorporation of the Panel into the Title 13 infrastructure at the Census Bureau allows for the Census Bureau and partner agencies to leverage administrative records and other non-survey data in combination with data from the Panel to create a platform for a high-quality integrated data program. The recruitment operation resulted in 12,225 households included in the Panel. With the March sample replenishment, the new sample size is expected to increase to approximately 17,630 households. The Panel will maintain representativeness by allowing respondents who do not use the internet to respond via in-bound computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). All panelists will receive an incentive for each complete questionnaire. Periodic replenishment samples will maintain representativeness and

panelists will be replaced after a period of three years.

History of Census Household Panel ICRs

Initial clearance to develop the Census Household Panel and conduct the Baseline and first topical operation (Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Survey - CBAMS) was approved by OMB on June 29, 2023, the second and third topical operations using Household Pulse Survey content were approved on December 8, 2023, and the fourth, fifth, and six topical operations were approved on February 26, 2024, seventh through ninth operations were approved on May 14, 2024, and the tenth through twelfth operations were approved on August 16, 2024 for a period through June 30, 2026. To continue with the ongoing topical operations, the Census Bureau is submitting this Request for Revision to an Existing Collection to conduct Topical Operation 13 and Topical Operation 14.

The questionnaires that will be used for Topical Operations 13 and 14 can be found in Attachment A.

The Census Bureau will publish a notice in the Federal Register with 30 days of public comment. Previously, the Census Bureau published a Federal Register Notice informing the public of and soliciting public comments on the Census Household Panel on February 6, 2023 (88 FR 7681), January 19, 2024 (89 FR 3635), April 8, 2024 (89 FR 24425), and July 12, 2024 (89 FR 57126). Once the public comment period has closed and subject to receiving clearance from OMB, the Census Bureau will plan to deploy the Topical 13 questionnaire on or about November 19, 2024 and Topical 14 on or about December 17, 2024.

Ongoing information regarding the quality of the Census Household Panel data is available in the Source & Accuracy Statements associated with each data release.

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

The collection is authorized under Title 13 United States Code, Sections 141, 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.**

Data products for the panel are expected to be comparable to those developed for high-frequency survey programs (e.g., the Household Pulse Survey). Examples include Tables in Excel format posted on the Census Bureau's Experimental Data page, a Public Use Microdata File (PUF), and reports. Processing will include minimal edits and basic weighting.

Specific data products will be negotiated with topical survey sponsors. As with all Census Bureau products and public use data files, data will be reviewed and approved for release by the Census Bureau Disclosure Review Board (DRB). Census Bureau staff with appropriate business need to know can receive raw data if requested.

The topical survey that will field in November (Topical 13) will include three split-ballot experiments. The first will test the usage of dependent interviewing for health insurance and social isolation questions previously administered on the panel. The second experiment will test the usage of "Don't know" options on sensitive or difficult questions. The third experiment will evaluate whether people are willing to upload information such as resumes, mortgage statements, or escrow analysis statements and whether it is preferred to answering survey questions.

The December topical questionnaire (Topical 14) will include content from the Household Pulse Survey (HPS).

- 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 will conduct this information collection primarily online using Qualtrics as the data collection platform. Qualtrics provides the necessary agility to deploy the Census Household

Panel 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. Survey invitations for the Census Household Panel will be distributed to sampled participants via letter, email, and SMS, and data collection will occur on the web (via self-response or with the assistance of a CATI operator). 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 for the purposes described in Question 2.

This research does not duplicate any other data collection or research being done by the Census Bureau or other Federal agencies. The purpose of this clearance is to stimulate additional research, which would not be carried out under other circumstances due to time constraints. If the collection or research involved other Federal agencies, then all efforts would be collaborative in nature, and no duplication in this area is anticipated.

To the maximum extent possible, we will make use of previously-collected data by agencies, external data sources, and results from previous collections of survey.

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

While this research may encounter small business owners as members of the population, the target population is neither small businesses nor other small entities. We designed the survey questions to obtain the required information with minimal respondent burden. Further, there are no legal issues that influence respondent burden.

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.

This Census Household Panel will become integral to rapidly providing insight on national events that may impact social, economic, or demographic characteristics of the population. Without

mechanisms such as the Panel, the Census Bureau will miss out on the many benefits of a Panel survey, including the ability to produce data close to real time as the events develop, research questions related to surveys, and enhance data with administrative and other external data sources. The Bureau would also lose a critical platform for developing adaptive design procedures that use auxiliary data sources, a method proven to reduce costs, improve data quality, and maintain and improve representativeness in the data we collect and use.

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 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.**

Respondents are not required to participate as participation is voluntary. The panel will be

designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the intended universe, or it will be clearly noted otherwise. The panel will not require the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB. The information to be collected is protected under the confidentiality provisions of Title 13 U.S.C. No respondents will be asked to submit proprietary trade secret information. All data will have all applicable, legally required confidentiality protections applied.

Justification for Implementation Timing of SPD15

The U.S. Census Bureau realizes the need for a justification explaining a plan for when a revision request will be submitted to update the Census Household Panel per the Statistical Policy Directive (SPD) Number 15. Our content experts have thoroughly reviewed the SPD15 updates and have collaborated 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 have engaged with stakeholders and kept them posted as we developed our implementation plans.

The Census Household Panel will transition into the Household Trends and Outlook Pulse Survey (HTOPS) in January 2025. Our plan is to implement the new race/ethnicity standards as we transition and these changes will be included in the High Frequency Surveys Program OMB package (0607-1029). We are planning to proceed with the first option of the SPD15 implementation, which includes the Race and Ethnicity Question with Minimum Categories, Multiple Detailed Checkboxes, and Write-In Response Areas with Example Groups.

Given the considerations above, the HTOPS 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 publications 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.**

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.

The Census Bureau published Federal Register Notices informing the public of and soliciting public comments on the Census Household Panel on February 6, 2023 (88 FR 7681). There were no substantive or relevant comments to this data collection.

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

Because retention is critical to a longitudinal panel design, incentives will be offered to respondents. As incentives remain one of the most effective ways to encourage survey participation, we informed our panel incentive structure by reviewing existing longitudinal surveys and panels (Table 4.1) and adjusting based on burden.

The current incentive design for the Census Household Panel includes the following:

- Invitation: \$5 visible prepaid incentive with the initial and panel replenishment invitation to complete the baseline questionnaire.
- Baseline Questionnaire: \$20 baseline contingent incentive after initial recruitment field period.
- Topical Surveys: \$10 for each topical survey.

Respondents will be mailed cash or digital incentives (see digital incentives test description in Supporting Statement B) for survey completion. The incentive structure could be amended to facilitate ongoing engagement of panelists, particularly for groups of panelists that are rare or historically undercounted.

Table 4.1 Incentive Structure in Longitudinal Federal Surveys and Nonprofit Panels

Survey	Enrollment Incentive/Wave 1	Panel	
		Incentive	Maintenance
SIPP (historical)	\$40*	\$40	none
PSID	\$75-150	\$1/minute	Unknown
ECLS-B	\$50	\$30/survey + children's	none

		book	
NLSY	\$40	\$70	none
		\$100 early bird	
NSCAW	\$50 caregiver	\$10-20 children	none
	\$10-20 children	\$50 young adults	
ANES 2008-2009	\$2 prepaid + \$10 promised	\$10/month + free internet access if needed	Unknown
	\$5 NRFU		
HRS	\$100	\$80	Unknown
American Trends (Pew)	\$10	\$10/survey	none
National Survey Project Cohort of the American Life Panel (RAND)	\$200	\$25/month	none
FDA Tobacco Panel	\$35	\$15/survey	none
GALLUP	none	none	none
Understanding America (USC)	\$5 prepaid	\$20/survey (30 min)	none
	\$15 promised	\$10 bonus for sleepers	
	\$15 welcome package		

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy. If the collection requires a systems of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.

All respondents who participate in research under this clearance will be informed that the information they provide are protected from disclosure by 13 U.S.C. Section 9. This disclosure will be made prior to any data collection. The creation of the baseline panel and the collection of Census Bureau-sponsored topical surveys is authorized by Title 13, United States Code, Sections 141, 182 and 193. The collection authority for the Census Bureau to collect data for topical surveys sponsored by other federal agencies may differ depending on the agency. Respondents will be informed of the applicable authorities for each topical survey prior to data collection for that topical survey.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or 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.

Most of the questions that are included on the panel questionnaires are not of a sensitive nature and should not pose a problem to the respondents. However, it is possible that some potentially sensitive questions may be included in questionnaires that are tested under this clearance. One of the purposes of the testing is to identify such questions, determine sources of sensitivity, and alleviate them insofar as possible before a larger production survey (independent of the Panel) is administered.

For information collections involving questions of race/ethnicity, the agency will ensure that the OMB Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity are followed, unless we are specifically testing these questions. In that situation, OMB will be made aware of the proposed changes and the related research agenda.

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

- **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. Generally, 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 and aggregate the hour burdens.**
- **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 under 'Annual Cost to Federal Government' (Item #14).**

The Census Bureau estimates that, for the average household, each survey will take about 20

minutes to complete. This estimate includes the time for reviewing the instructions and providing answers. For each monthly collection period, we are seeing 10,354 responses per month (total responses = 124,248) with an estimated total burden of 41,375 for one year.

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. The estimated total annual respondent cost burden based on these hours is \$1,064,154.

Burden Estimates

Information Collection Instrument	Type of Respondent	Expected Number of Respondents	Average Burden per Response	Total Burden Hours	Hourly Wage Rate	Total Respondent Cost
Monthly Survey	Household Member	124,248	0.333	41,375	\$25.72	\$1,064,154

- 13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected on the burden worksheet).**

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. 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), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.**

The government cost for the Census Household Panel is approximately \$4.7M per year. Census Household Panel include subscriptions costs for Qualtrics and costs of monetary incentives.

Annualized Costs	Total
Project Management	\$ 416,579
Incentives	\$ 885,521
Sample Design, Management and Estimation	\$ 394,093
Instrument Design and Development	\$ 190,606

Data Product Development and Review	\$ 443,813
Data Processing and Dissemination	\$ 327,247
Mailout Operations	\$ 282,946
Telephone Operations	\$ 1,754,242
	\$ 4,695,047

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in ROCIS.

The Census Household is designed to conduct monthly topical data collection operations to rapidly provide insight on national events that may impact social, economic, or demographic characteristics of the population. Therefore, topical content will vary across the months. As topical content changes, the Census Bureau will request approval for the changes from OMB and deploy approved changes through the topical operations. At this time, we seek approval of the questionnaires included in Attachment A.

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

Data products for the panel are expected to be comparable to those developed for high-frequency survey programs (e.g., the Household Pulse Survey). Examples include Tables in Excel format posted on the Census Bureau's Experimental Data page, a Public Use Microdata File (PUF), and reports. Processing will include minimal edits and basic weighting.

Specific data products will be negotiated with topical survey sponsors. As with all Census Bureau products and public use data files, data will be reviewed and approved for release by the Census Bureau Disclosure Review Board (DRB).

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 "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."

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

1320.8(b)(3)

Attachment A: Census Household Topical 13 and 14 Questionnaires

Attachment B: Privacy Act/Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

Attachment C: Respondent Contact Language