

SUPPORTING STATEMENT A
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau
Census Military Panel
OMB Control No. 0607-1027

Abstract

Early research and development work has demonstrated the value of a high-quality panel to improve representativeness and significantly reduce burden on respondents in the interest of collecting high-frequency data. The Census Military Panel is a national survey panel by the U.S. Census Bureau (Census) and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). Data collected from service members and their spouses on a variety of topics through the Panel will be used to improve military life and policies affecting active-service members and their families. The panel consists of active-duty service members and spouses of active-duty service members that have agreed to be contacted and invited to participate.

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.**

Other large-scale DoD surveys collect definitive data on an annual or biannual basis. However, due to rigorous statistical methodology, findings lag data collection up to 18 months. Access to a pool of pre-recruited panel active-duty service members and spouses of active-duty service members allows the Census to rapidly gather data on indicators for key issues, including retention and readiness.

Panel survey methodology has a faster turn-around than one-time independent surveys of the population. Providing DoD leadership with near “real-time” data to respond to issues, such as food insecurity, housing, financial well-being, and trust in government, aligns the mission of the Department of Defense.

The goal for the overall panel project is to recruit at least 2,000 panel members (1,000 service members and 1,000 spouses), with data collection taking place once every two months, through fiscal year 2025. During the Baseline operation, the panel recruited 1,141 panel members.

History of Census Military Panel ICRs

Initial clearance to develop the Census Military Panel and conduct the Baseline and first topical operation (Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Survey - CBAMS) was approved by OMB on August 31, 2023 for a period through August 31, 2026. Topicals 2 and 3 operations were subsequently approved by OMB on July 15, 2024. To continue with the ongoing topical operations, the Census Bureau is submitting this Request for Revision to an Existing Collection to conduct Topical Operation 4.

The questionnaire that will be used for the Topical 4 operation can be found in Attachment A.

The Census Bureau has published 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, the Census Bureau will plan to deploy the Topical 4 questionnaire on or about January 28, 2025.

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

The proposed questionnaire can be reviewed in Attachment A. The statement to respondents related to the Privacy Act and Paper 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.

- 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 will include tabulations of findings, white papers, and briefings to be

used internally by DoD leadership and program areas and/or externally by Congress to assess and adjust policies/programs to support military resilience, readiness, and retention. Upon DoD leadership approval, results may also be released to 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 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 Military 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 Military Panel topical surveys will be distributed to sampled participants via 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 the DoD. The purpose of this clearance is to stimulate additional research, which would not be carried out under other circumstances due to time constraints. This research will involve collaboration with staff from other agencies. All efforts would be collaborative in nature, and no duplication in this area is anticipated.

- 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.

If not conducted, DoD will continue to depend solely on findings from annual/biennial surveys that may lag in response to critical issues of well-being, retention and readiness of military members and families. DoD also runs the risk of having quick-turn advocacy-driven data collections (e.g., straw polls) dominating the landscape of policy decision-making, such as the DoD's response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on military members and families. 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, and research questions related to surveys.

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 has been designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the intended universe, or it will be clearly noted otherwise. The Panel does not require the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB. The Panel imposes confidentiality requirements that are authorized by statute or regulation and will follow any policies consistent with such statutes or regulations. No respondents will be asked to submit proprietary trade secret information. All data will have all applicable, legally required confidentiality protections applied.

- 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 a notice in the Federal Register Notices informing the public of and soliciting public comments on the Census Military Panel on February 6, 2023 (88 FR 7683). There were no substantively related comments to this data collection.

The Census Military Panel is conducted on behalf of the U.S. Department of Defense, and all decisions regarding content, contact strategies, and data product development are made in consultation with DoD.

- 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 making adjustments commensurate with burden.

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

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

Respondents will be mailed cash incentives 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 book	none
NLSY	\$40	\$70 \$100 early bird	none
NSCAW	\$50 caregiver \$10-20 children	\$10-20 children \$50 young adults	none
ANES 2008-2009	\$2 prepaid + \$10 promised \$5 NRFU	\$10/month + free internet access if needed	Unknown

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 \$15 promised \$15 welcome package	\$20/survey (30 min) \$10 bonus for sleepers	none

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 will not be made available in any way that would personally identify them and that their participation is voluntary. This disclosure will be made prior to any data collection. The panel is being conducted under the authority 10 U.S.C. Section 1782.

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 respondent, each survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. This includes the time for reviewing the instructions and answers. For each bi-monthly collection period, we anticipate receiving 799 responses every other month (total responses = 4,794) with a burden of 1,596 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 ($\25.72×0.333). The estimated total annual respondent cost burden based on these hours is \$41,059.

Information Collection Instrument	Type of Respondent	Expected Number of Respondents	Average Burden per Response	Total Burden Hours	Hourly Wage Rate	Total Respondent Cost
Bi-Monthly Survey	Military Member or Spouse	4,794	0.333	1,596	\$25.72	\$41,059

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 Military Panel is approximately \$2.5M per year. This assumes data collection would continue bi-monthly starting in May 2024. Census Military Panel costs include subscriptions costs for Qualtrics and costs of monetary incentives.

Annualized Costs	Total
Project Management	\$ 414,019
Incentives	\$ 80,000
Sample Design, Management and Estimation	\$ 244,507
Instrument Design and Development	\$ 436,044
Data Product Development and Review	\$ 231,584
Data Processing and Dissemination	\$ 513,044
Mailout Operations	\$ 243,734
Telephone Operations	\$ 314,126
	\$ 2,477,058

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

The Census Military Panel is designed to conduct bi-monthly topical data collection operations to rapidly provide insight on national events that may impact social, economic, or demographic characteristics of the military 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 include Tables in Excel format, a Public Use Microdata File (PUF), an Internal Use Microdata File (IUF), and an executive summary.

Processing will include minimal edits and basic weighting. All data products will be transmitted to the Department of Defense for internal use and dissemination prior to the start of the next data collection. The tables displaying aggregated data, the PUF, and the executive summary may all be distributed internally within DoD to assess and adjust policies/programs to support military resilience, readiness, and retention.

The IUF will be stored in a secure file location, with minimal access by project team members. Use of the IUF can only be performed after review and approval to ensure identifying information is not released. Access to these datasets will only be allowed on a need-to-know basis with an approved data sharing agreement in place. Researchers approved for access to these datasets must adhere to strict procedures, including—but not limited to—data sharing agreements, secure transfers of data, destruction of files upon completion of research, and authorization to reuse data. In addition, receipt and use of these datasets must adhere to all DoD information assurance, security, and other data use policies.

Upon DoD leadership approval, products may also be released to the public. If approved, all products will undergo DoD disclosure procedures prior to public release.

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 Military Panel Topical 4 Questionnaire

Attachment B: Privacy Act/Paper Reduction Act Statement

Attachment C: Respondent Contact Language

Attachment D: Guiding Principles for Experimental Statistical Products