

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

Request: The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for Field Tests (OMB #0607-0971). 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.

In light of the severe impacts caused by Hurricanes Milton and Helene, the U.S. Census Bureau is seeking to conduct a trial survey that will test the functionality of GSA's Notify.gov to facilitate measurement of the effects of these storms on households and communities across the Southeast and will test in revised methodologies to do similar targeted geographic studies in the future. This survey is modeled after the rapid-response approach we successfully implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, which provided real-time data to guide federal, state, and local responses to a rapidly evolving crisis. The Hurricane Pulse is different in that it is localized to a specific geography.

Purpose: Initial clearance for the Household Pulse Survey (0607-1029) 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, and Phase 4.2 on July 22, 2024. Those collections were all "production" collections for the High Frequency program. The current request is to modify and test new methods for potential "pulse" collections in the future. The Census Bureau will publish a notice in the Federal Register concurrent with the data collection to collect public comment on the modification of methods for a regional "Pulse."

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 B. The language we propose to use to contact respondents, including invitations to participate via email and SMS text, is in Attachment C.

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The collection is authorized under Title 13 United States Code, Section 182.

The HPS: Hurricane Pulse has been developed in consultation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS); and 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); the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS); the Department of Defense (DOD); the White House Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) and Domestic Policy Council (DPC); and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

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. This Hurricane Pulse is modeled after that success but targeted to the specific affected geographic area.

Population of Interest and Sample: The universe for the Hurricane Pulse is all housing units in disaster declared counties in the states of FL, GA, NC, SC, TN and VA. We will sample 60,000 households in FL and 60,000 in the other states. For operational efficiency, only housing units linked to one or more email addresses or cell phone numbers will be eligible for the sample. One respondent from each housing unit is selected to respond for him or herself.

As a result of the impact of the hurricanes on infrastructure and impacts to families and households, we are lowering the response rate estimate from that typically seen in the most recent household pulse surveys. We are assuming a 2.5% percent response rate and expect to receive approximately 3,000 responses.

Timeline: The internet instrument will be available to collect responses for 2 weeks starting from the day of the first invitation scheduled on December 2, 2024 through the end of the survey period scheduled as December 16, 2024.

Survey Administration: Housing units linked to one or more email addresses or cell phone numbers are eligible for the sample. Samples cases will be matched to the Census Bureau's Contact Frame to assign email addresses and cell phone numbers.

A sampled address may have up to five associated email addresses and up to five cell phone numbers. Only one of each will be used to contact the sampled units. Email invitations will be sent in the morning and an SMS invitation in the afternoon. Phone contacts may receive an initial

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invitation and one reminder. Email addresses may receive an initial invitation and up to two reminders. Once a unit has responded, they will no longer receive contacts.

SMS invitations will be sent via Notify.gov, a new pilot program offered by the GSA. This is one of the novel aspects of this data collection.

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 and production 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.

Questionnaire: 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 B. The language we propose to use to contact respondents, including invitations to participate via email and SMS text, is in Attachment C.

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.

Our plan is to implement the new race/ethnicity standards as we transition to the Household Pulse Survey to a longitudinal design in calendar year 2025. We are planning to proceed with first option of the SPD15 implementation for the longitudinal Household Pulse, providing examples with write-in fields.

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.

Informed Consent: The collection is authorized under Title 13 United States Code, Section 182. All respondents who participate in the Hurricane Pulse Survey will be informed that the information they provide is confidential under Section 9 of that law. All identifiable information collected 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.

Respondent Burden: 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. For this data collection, we anticipate receiving 3,000 responses. The total burden is estimated to be 999 hours (3,000 x 0.333 hours).

Table 1. Total Estimated Burden

Type of Respondent	Expected Number of Respondents	Average Burden per Response (in hours)	Total Burden Hours
Householder or household member (Occupied Units)	3,000	0.333	999

Dissemination: The Census Bureau will release these data under the auspices of its Experimental Statistical Product Series. Information on the Series is available at <https://www.census.gov/data/experimental-data-products.html#>.

The following documents are included as attachments:

- Attachment A: Hurricane Pulse Survey Questionnaire
- Attachment B: Privacy Act/Paper Reduction Act Statement
- Attachment C: Respondent Contact Language

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

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