

Justification for Implementation of SPD15
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau
Current Population Survey (CPS) Basic Demographic Items
OMB Control Number 0607-0049

The Current Population Survey is the primary source of monthly labor force statistics. It is used to keep the Nation informed of the economic and social well-being of its people. This survey measures how the economy and labor force are doing across the country and in your community. The U.S. Census Bureau conducts this survey in partnership with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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 CPS per the Statistical Policy Directive (SPD) Number 15. Our race/ethnicity research team is thoroughly reviewing the SPD15 updates and collaborating with colleagues across the Census Bureau as we begin 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 CPS program is currently developing an internet self-response (ISR) data collection instrument, by which respondents will be able to complete on their own rather than using interviewers. This project also includes work necessary to adapt to new systems for pre- and post-data collection activities. The long-term plan calls for implementation of this collection mode in 2027. Any resources needed to implement the updated SPD15 standards will compete with those necessary for the ISR project.

Another factor to consider is the implementation of a new sample into the CPS. The CPS will be phasing in new sample, based on the 2020 Decennial Census, beginning in April 2025. The sample will be fully phased in by August 2026. We prefer to wait until the sample is fully phased in before implementing the SPD15 standards.

The CPS program will use the revised race and ethnicity questions implemented by the American Community Survey Office (ACSO). Once the questions are obtained from ACSO, and prior to implementing the updated standards in the CPS, the following tasks are required:

1. Incorporate the changes into the CPS data collection instrument, and fully test the instrument to ensure accurate data.
2. Revise and update the edit procedures associated with the race and ethnicity data, to include a test of resulting edits to ensure expected results.
3. Revise and update associated technical documentation.
4. Allow our sponsoring agency, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), to prepare tabulations for bridging weighted race and ethnicity estimates. These tabulations will provide data users with a bridge of the estimates pre- and post-updated standards.

Given the considerations and tasks required above, we believe the CPS program will be able to implement the new SPD15 standards within the required five-year period requested by OMB.