

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

**High Frequency Surveys Program  
Household Trends and Outlook Pulse Survey**

**OMB Control Number 0607-1029**

**Abstract**

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 program 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 (HPS). The products under this program, typically have smaller sample sizes and response rates than other Census surveys but are timelier and more flexible. The original Census Bureau High Frequency Survey, the HPS, was an experimental endeavor coordinated 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. It since evolved into a vehicle that produces data on various critical social and economic dynamics affecting American households, while continuing to be a collaborative undertaking in partnership with 20 federal agency partners.

As part of the Census Bureau's efforts to ensure these vital data are produced in an efficient, less burdensome manner that enhances their richness for informing policy, the Census Bureau will be incorporating new methods for conducting the survey. The former HPS data collection ended September 16, 2024, with the final data released on October 3, 2024. Beginning in October 2024, the HPS content was incorporated into the longitudinal design of the Census Household Panel (CHP), with data collected every other month and released at a national level (see OMB 0607-1025). The longitudinal design benefits HPS data by allowing direct measurement of change over time in critical elements like spending, inflation and other social and economic indicators of wellbeing.

In January 2025, the HPS and CHP were relaunched as the **Household Trends and Outlook Pulse Survey (HTOPS)**. The HTOPS continues the strong tradition of the HPS by rapidly providing insight into national events that have social and economic impacts on U.S. households. It complements more traditional federal surveys by producing data much closer to real time as the events develop and with the new longitudinal design, have the ability to track changes over time. Along with HPS content, the survey enables the Census Bureau to

address research and content development needs for its census and survey programs. The HTOPS is one more tool among the Census Bureau's data collection efforts to provide the nation with quality, up-to-date information that informs our future.

## 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.**

The HTOPS 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 HTOPS is to develop into a platform that ensures the availability of frequent data collection for producing nationwide estimates on various 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 HTOPS via the Census Household Panel (0607-1025). 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 12,211 households included in the Panel. In March of 2024, the Census Bureau conducted a sample replenishment, which increased the Panel size to approximately 17,917 households. The Panel maintained representativeness by allowing respondents who do not use the internet to respond via in-bound and out-bound computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI).

In February 2025, the Census Bureau conducted a sample replenishment, with the goal of increasing the HTOPS recruited panel size to 36,748 households. The replenishment resulted in 11,296 additional panel members, increasing the panel size to 29,213. While below our initial goal, this recruited sample size will still allow us to release data at a sub-national level. The HTOPS will maintain representativeness by allowing respondents who do not use the internet to respond via in-bound or out-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.

The HTOPS is 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 HTOPS which can produce data much closer to real time as the information needs develop. The HTOPS will also help us research questions related to surveys. For example, the HTOPS will allow the Census Bureau to conduct

nationally representative field tests to test content changes in an efficient and reliable fashion in support of other surveys.

### ***History of Household Pulse Survey and Census Household Panel ICRs***

Initial clearance for the Household Pulse Survey was approved by OMB on January 2, 2024,

Clearance for the Household Trends and Outlook Pulse Survey (HTOPS) recruitment operation, January topical operation and February topical operation was approved by OMB on January 15, 2025 and the revision request for the March, April, and May topical operations was approved on April 11, 2025. To continue with ongoing topical operations, the Census Bureau is submitting this Request for Revision to an Existing Collection to conduct the June and August topical operations.

Previously, the Census Bureau published a Federal Register Notice informing the public of and soliciting public comments on the Household Trends and Outlook Pulse Survey on December 9, 2024 (89 FR 97582) and February 28, 2025 (90 FR 10879). Once the public comment period has closed and subject to receiving clearance from OMB, the Census Bureau will plan to deploy the June Topical on June 17, 2025, and the August Topical on August 19, 2025.

Ongoing information regarding the quality of the HTOPS data will be available in the Source & Accuracy Statements associated with each data release (see Attachment B for example).

The proposed 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 proposed respondent contact language, including invitations to participate via letter, email and SMS text, is in Attachment D.

This 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 collected in the Household Trends and Outlook Pulse Survey demonstrate the ability to quickly collect and disseminate high-frequency data products that inform the public in urgent circumstances. Data products for the HTOPS are expected to be comparable to those typically developed for high-frequency survey programs. Examples include Tables in Excel format posted on the Census Bureau's Experimental Data page, a Public Use Microdata File (PUF), and reports, which can be used by federal, state, and local agencies; academics and non-government organizations; the media; and the public. Processing will include minimal edits and weighting. Specific data products will be negotiated with topical survey content partners. 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 June and August topical surveys will include content from the Household Pulse Survey. Utilizing Household Pulse Survey content continues to 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, and other social or economic events facing the nation or a significant portion of the nation. The June content will focus on economic issues and events and the August issue will have health-focused content. June will also include a test to compare item non-response for the two types of questions, select all that apply or forced choice format.

The HTOPS program will not collect data in July in order to make some operational updates to our systems and processes.

- 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 an internet self-response platform.

All survey initiations for the HTOPS 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.**

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. Similarly, for modules that are carried out in collaboration with other Federal agencies 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 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 Trends and Outlook Pulse Survey (HTOPS) 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 HTOPS, the Census Bureau will miss out on the many benefits of a high-frequency, longitudinal 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 Census 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.

The Census Bureau proposes a data collection cycle that allows publication of results on a bi-monthly basis. As discussed above, the frequency and timeliness of the HTOPS 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 bi-monthly estimates.

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 impedes 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.**

Respondents are not required to participate as participation is voluntary. The HTOPS 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 HTOPS 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.

- 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 and soliciting public comments on Household Trends and Outlook Pulse Survey, on December 9, 2024 (89 FR 97582) and February 28, 2025 (90 FR 10879). There were no substantive or relevant comments to these data collections.

With regard to consult with outside agencies, the content and design of the Household Pulse Survey collection months was coordinated 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.**

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 incentive design for the Household Trends and Outlook Pulse Survey includes the following:

- Invitation: \$2 visible prepaid incentive with the panel replenishment invitation to complete the baseline questionnaire.
- Baseline Questionnaire: \$10 baseline contingent incentive after initial recruitment field period.
- Topical Surveys: \$5 for each topical survey.

Respondents will be offered digital contingent incentives for survey completion. Cash will be available for those respondents unable or unwilling to utilize digital incentives. 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	\$200	\$25/month	none

the American Life Panel (RAND)

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.**

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. 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 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.**

Most of the questions that are included in the HTOPS 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 HTOPS) is administered.

The questions asked during Household Pulse Survey months include topics like employment status, spending, food security, housing, health, vaccine receipt, 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.

For information collections involving questions of race/ethnicity, the agency will ensure that the OMB's Statistical Policy Directive No. 15: Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting 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.**

For the June and August topical collections, the Census Bureau estimates that, for the average household, each survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. These estimates include the time for reviewing the instructions and providing answers. For each collection, we expect roughly 16,000 responses per month (192,000 annually). Burden hours for the collections are estimated to total approximately 5,328 per month or 63,936 annually.

For individuals, the wage rate is \$25.72 per hour based on hourly earnings for employees as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The estimated total annual respondent cost burden based on these hours is \$1,644,434 or \$137,036 per month.

**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	192,000	0.333	63,936	\$25.72	\$1,644,434

**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 annualized government cost for the Household Trends and Outlook Pulse Survey is approximately \$8.9M.

Annualized Costs	Total
Project Management	\$ 528,211
Incentives	\$ 1,475,693
Qualtrics	\$ 2,000,000
Sample Design, Management and Estimation	\$ 586,350
Instrument Design and Development	\$ 274,720
Data Product Development and Review	\$ 975,296
Data Processing and Dissemination	\$ 1,125,949
Mailout Operations	\$ 684,818
Telephone Operations	\$ 1,296,086

	<b>\$ 8,947,123</b>
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**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.**

The HTOPS 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 as well as to address research and content development needs for its census and survey programs. 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.**

Data products for the HTOPS 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).

The Census Bureau plans to release Household Pulse data bi-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.

**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 and on the survey website.

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

The agency certifies compliance with 5 CFR 1320.9 and the related provisions of 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3)

- Attachment A: HTOPS June and August Questionnaires
- Attachment B: Sample Source & Accuracy Statement
- Attachment C: Privacy Act/Paper Reduction Act Statement
- Attachment D: Respondent Contact Language
- Attachment E: Federal Register Notices – Public Comments
- Attachment F: Guiding Principles for Experimental Statistical Products