

2030 Census – Administrative Data Cognitive Interview Protocol

Introduction

The U.S. Census Bureau is requesting your help to test survey questions about data collection and privacy. *If you agree to take part in this interview, you will answer questions asking about your opinions on data collection and data privacy. I will share my screen with you where you will see the survey questions. Do you have any questions at this point?*

You will be asked to “think aloud” as you answer each question. This may feel a little unnatural, but it will help us understand how you think about and answer each question. Here’s an example:

Suppose this were a survey about your home and one of the questions asked, “How many windows are there in your home?” Someone thinking aloud as they respond might say, “What do you mean by windows – I have sliding doors out to the back yard, so I am not sure whether to count those as windows or not. There are two windows in the kitchen, one in the living room, and two in each bedroom. So perhaps we have 7 windows. But I am not sure whether to count the sliding doors. I think I won’t count them, so I’ll answer 7 windows.”

In this example it’s clear that “windows” is not a term everyone understands in the same way. This process of thinking out loud lets me understand how you came up with your answer.

After you read each question aloud, tell me your response. Then I will ask you some follow-up questions to get your feedback. For example, I might ask you what a particular term or phrase means or ask you to put the question in your own words. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions that I might ask. I am not trying to test or quiz you about these terms. We just want to make sure that everyone is understanding these survey questions in the same way. We also want to know if the questions are worded clearly and, if they are not, what changes should be made. Your participation is important because it will help the Census Bureau improve these questions.

Before we begin, do you have any questions?

[Interviewer action: Answer questions, as needed.]

Survey Introduction

The questions in this survey ask about your opinions on government data collection and data use. Thank you for agreeing to participate.

This voluntary survey is being conducted under the authority of Title 13 U.S. Code, Sections 141, and 182. Federal law requires that your answers are kept confidential (Title 13, U.S. Code, Section 9) and protects your privacy under the Privacy Act (Title 5 U.S. Code, Section 552a). Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, your data are protected from cybersecurity risks through screening of the systems that transmit your data.

The purpose of this survey is to improve future censuses and Census Bureau surveys. Routine uses of these data are limited to those identified in the Privacy Act System of Record Notice titled "COMMERCE/CENSUS-5, Decennial Census Programs."

Furnishing this information is voluntary; however, failure to do so will limit the Census Bureau's ability to gather information used in the development of survey instruments, and other communication materials in order to produce materials that are clear and easy for people to understand.

Personally Identifiable Information collected includes name, telephone/cellular phone number, DOB or age, email address, race, or ethnicity. The information provided to us may be shared with other Census Bureau staff, contractors and those who have a need to know for work-related purposes who are sworn to uphold the confidentiality of the data. The Census Bureau can use your responses only to produce statistics and is not permitted to publicly release your responses in a way that could identify you, your business, organization, or institution.

We estimate that completing these screening questions will take 10 minutes on average. This information collection has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). You can validate that this survey is a legitimate using the Office of Management and Budget's approval number 0607-0725, which expires 12/31/2025. We are required to tell you this number to conduct this survey. Send comments regarding this estimate or any other aspect of this survey, including suggestions for reducing the time it takes to complete this survey to adrm.pra@census.gov.

[page break]

[Decennial census questions]

DEC1. Every 10 years, the Census Bureau counts the U.S. population. The next census will be in 2030. As far as you know, what questions are asked on the census forms? *Select all that apply.*

- Name
- Age
- Phone Number
- Number of People in Household
- Race
- Hispanic ethnicity
- Sex/Gender
- Date of birth
- Whether your home is owned or rented

Probes

None

DEC2. How important do you think it is for the Census Bureau to ask the questions they do on the census form?

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ A little important
- ☐ Not at all important

Probes

Tell me more about your answer. What makes it <ANSWER TO DEC2>?

DEC3. If the census were held today, how likely would you be to fill out the census form?

- ☐ Extremely likely
- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Somewhat likely
- ☐ Not too likely
- ☐ Not at all likely

Probes

Tell me more about your answer.

DEC4. If the census were held today, how would you prefer to respond?

- ☐ By mailing back a paper form
- ☐ Online
- ☐ By speaking with an interviewer at home
- ☐ By telephone

Probes

Why would you prefer to respond that way?

[Decennial uses of admin data block]

ADMIN1. For you personally, if you did not respond to the next census in 2030, would you rather the Census Bureau get your information from your neighbors or the Census Bureau get your information from other government agencies?

- ☐ Get information from neighbors
- ☐ Get information from other government agencies

ADMIN2. If you have to choose, for the next census in 2030 would you prefer that the Census Bureau gets your household's information from other government agencies or that the Census Bureau send an interviewer to your home to ask for it?

- ☐ Get information from other government agencies
- ☐ Get information from interviewer at home

Universe: 50% of respondents get this intro on a separate page

ADMININTRO. The next section asks questions about how the Census Bureau may use existing data to improve the next Census in 2030. Existing data can come from other government agencies, private companies, or other surveys you may have answered in the past. The Census Bureau has done extensive research to make sure any existing data we use is accurate, and up-to-date.

ADMIN3. For the 2030 Census, the Census Bureau may decide to use existing data to reduce the number of mail reminders and other ways to urge participation when people do not submit their forms. If existing data for your household is adequate, we would use that data to count your household.

To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau using use existing data to reduce the number of times households are contacted?

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it

- ☐ Strongly against it

Probes

Tell me more about your answer.

What kinds of data did you think of when they mentioned “existing data” here?

ADMIN4. For the 2030 Census if your household has adequate existing data, the Census Bureau may decide to count your household without asking for your response directly. Instead, we would use existing data to count your household.

To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau using existing data to count your household?

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

ADMIN5. For the 2030 Census, the Census Bureau may decide to use existing data to fill in missing data when people do not fully complete their forms. If existing data for your household is adequate, we would use that data to complete your form.

To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau using existing data for your household to complete your form if that data is adequate?

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it

- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

ADMIN6. The Census Bureau is planning on using existing data to help with counting the population for the 2030 Census. Existing data would come from other government agencies, government surveys you may have answered in the past, and private companies.

The use of this existing data would [FRAME]. The data would only be used to help count the population.

To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau using existing data?

FRAME 1: mean that you would not have to spend time answering the 2030 Census

FRAME 2: save the government money

FRAME 3: make the 2030 Census more efficient

FRAME 4: improve the accuracy of the 2030 Census

FRAME 5: control [delete frame sentence]

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

ADMIN7. For the 2030 Census, the Census Bureau may use existing data to identify communities for targeted messages that appeal to that community. For example, if existing data shows that your household has young children, we might send a message that highlights how the census can support funding for education.

To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau using existing data to identify communities for targeted messages?

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

Probes

What does the phrase “targeted messages” mean to you in this question?

How do you envision the Census Bureau might “identify communities for targeted messages”?

ADMIN8. For the 2030 Census, the Census Bureau may use existing data to adjust information provided by households. For example, a parent may not include a young child in their household count and existing data shows the presence of a child. We could add the child to the household count.

To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau using existing data to adjust information provided by households?

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

ADMIN9. Individuals provide information about themselves to the federal government for a variety of reasons - including when they apply for passports, participate in programs such as Medicare, or submit their tax forms. Being able to use information you provide for additional purposes can improve the delivery of government benefits and services and save taxpayer money.

To what extent are you in favor of or against the information you provided for one purpose being used by the government in additional ways?

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

Probes

In your own words, what is this question is asking?

This question asks about using data for additional purposes, what are some examples of what an additional purpose might be?

ADMIN10. The Census Bureau is planning to use information about individuals, available from private companies, such as your contact information or age. This information would only be used to produce statistics.

To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau obtaining your information from private companies?

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

Probes

In your own words, can you tell me what this question is asking?

What does the phrase “only be used to produce statistics” mean to you in this question?

Universe: Follow-up to up to two 4 or 5 responses to ADMIN 3-10

ADMINFU. You said that you were somewhat or strongly against the use of existing data. Please say more about why you are against it. [open-end]

Universe: Follow-up for those who did not see ADMININTRO and answered somewhat/strongly against for any of ADMIN3-10.

ADMINACC. You said that you were somewhat or strongly against the use of existing data. If the Census Bureau could confirm the accuracy of existing data, would you be more in favor of using existing data for the 2030 Census?

- ☐ Yes, I would be more in favor of it
- ☐ No, I would remain against it

[Vacancy Question Block]

VACATE1. To properly count the population, the Census Bureau must determine if houses and buildings are occupied or vacant. For the next census in 2030, the Census Bureau may use data from other sources to help determine if a house or building is occupied or vacant.

One example is using data from utility companies, like water and electricity companies.

To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau using data from utility companies to determine if a house or building is occupied or vacant?

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

Universe: Follow-up to up to 3, 4, or 5 responses to VACATE1

VACATE1FU: You answered that you are [neither/somewhat/strongly against] the Census Bureau using data from utility companies to determine if a house or building is occupied or vacant.

Please tell us more about your answer. [open-end]

[INTERVIEWER: NOTE IF USE OF HOUSE OR BUILDING IS NECESSARY OR HOUSE ALONE WOULD SUFFICE. PROBE ON IT IF NEEDED.]

VACATE2. Another example is using real estate data from companies like Zillow or Redfin.

To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau using data from real estate data companies to determine if a house or building is occupied or vacant?

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

Universe: Follow-up to up to 3, 4, or 5 responses to VACATE2

VACATE2FU: You answered that you are [neither/somewhat/strongly against] the Census Bureau using data from utility companies to determine if a house or building is occupied or vacant.

Please tell us more about your answer. [open-end]

Probes

What do you think of asking here if a home is occupied or vacant? Would that mean the same to you as asking if “a house or building is occupied or vacant”?

VACATE3. Another example is using cell phone location data. The data would **not** be linked to individuals and would only be used to help determine whether a house or building was occupied or vacant.

To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau using cell phone location data to determine if a house or building is occupied or vacant?

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

Universe: Follow-up to up to 3, 4, or 5 responses to VACATE3

VACATE3FU: You answered that you are [neither/somewhat/strongly against] the Census Bureau using cell phone location data to determine if a house or building is occupied or vacant.

VACATE4. Another example is asking neighbors.

To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau asking neighbors if a house or building is occupied or vacant?

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

Universe: Follow-up to up to 3, 4, or 5 responses to VACATE4

VACATE4FU: You answered that you are [neither/somewhat/strongly against] the Census Bureau asking neighbors if a house or building is occupied or vacant.

Please tell us more about your answer. [open-end]

[Types of Admin data block]

TYPE1. To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau getting the following types of information from other government agencies?

Your contact information, such as phone numbers and email addresses

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

TYPE2. To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau getting the following types of information from other government agencies?

Whether your address was occupied or vacant on a particular date

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

TYPE3. To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau getting the following types of information from other government agencies?

Your demographic information, such as your age or marital status, reported on other government agency forms

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

Probes

What does the word “vacant” mean to you in this question?

[IF NEEDED]: Do you think this question is asking whether you happened to be away from your home on a particular date, or whether no one was living in your home at all on a particular date, or something else?

TYPE4. To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau getting the following types of information from other government agencies?

Your race and ethnicity you reported on other government agency forms

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

TYPE5. To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau getting the following types of information from other government agencies?

Your gender you reported on other government agency forms

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

TYPE6. To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau getting the following types of information from other government agencies?

The number of people in your household

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

[Admin data sources block] **consider probes by source**

SOURCE1. To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau getting your information from the following sources?

The Social Security Administration (SSA)

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

SOURCE2. To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau getting your information from the following sources?

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

SOURCE3. To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau getting your information from the following sources?

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

SOURCE4. To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau getting your information from the following sources?

United States Postal Service (USPS)

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

SOURCE5. To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau getting your information from the following sources?

Other Census Bureau surveys, such as American Community Survey (ACS) or past decennial censuses

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

SOURCE6. To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau getting your information from the following sources?

State data, such as data from the Department of Motor Vehicles or utility companies

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it
- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

SOURCE7. To what extent are you in favor of or against the Census Bureau getting your information from the following sources?

A credit reporting company, such as Experian or Equifax

- ☐ Strongly in favor of it
- ☐ Somewhat in favor of it

- ☐ Neither in favor nor against it
- ☐ Somewhat against it
- ☐ Strongly against it

Probes

[PROBE IF R HESITATES WHEN ANSWERING SOURCE6 DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES TO UNDERSTAND IF DMV IS NEEDED]

In general, why might someone be in favor of the Census Bureau collecting information from these other sources?

And why might someone be against the Census Bureau collecting information from these other sources?

[Privacy block]

PRIV1. Do you think federal government agencies share a single central database of the name, address, and date of birth of U.S. residents?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

PRIV2. Do you think federal government agencies **SHOULD** share a single central database of the name, address, and date of birth of U.S. residents?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Probes

In your own words, what does “a single central database” mean to you?

[IF PARTICIPANT EXPRESSED UNCERTAINTY WHEN ANSWERING]: Would it be helpful if there was a “don’t know” option?

You answered [yes/no] to the second question on the screen. Tell me more about your answer.

PRIV3. In general, how concerned would you say you are about your personal privacy?

- ☐ Very concerned

- ☐ Somewhat concerned
- ☐ A little concerned
- ☐ Not at all concerned

Probes

What does it mean to you to be “concerned” about your personal privacy?.

In your opinion, what is the difference between “a little concerned” and “somewhat concerned”, as they are used in these response options?

Universe: 50% of respondents see PRIV4 and 50% get PRIV5.

PRIV4. Which of the following statements comes the closest to your opinion?

- ☐ The **benefits** the government can provide by collecting data **about me** are greater than the **risks**
- ☐ The **risks** of the government collecting data **about me** are greater than the **benefits** it can provide

Universe: 50% of respondents see PRIV4 and 50% get PRIV5.

PRIV5. Which of the following statements comes the closest to your opinion?

- ☐ The **benefits** the government can provide by collecting data **about me** are greater than the **risks**
- ☐ The **benefits** and **risks** of the government collecting data **about me** are the same
- ☐ The **risks** of the government collecting data **about me** are greater than the **benefits** it can provide

Probes (PRIV4 or PRIV5)

How did you come up with your answer?

PRIV6. How much risk do you think the Census bureau using existing data presents to your privacy?

- ☐ A lot of risk

- ☐ Moderate risk
- ☐ A little risk
- ☐ No risk

Probes

Tell me more about your answer.

PRIV7. How concerned are you, if at all, about how the government is using the data it collects about you?

- ☐ Very concerned
- ☐ Somewhat concerned
- ☐ A little concerned
- ☐ Not at all concerned

Probes

When you read this question, what kind of data did you think about?

[IF ANSWER IS VERY CONCERNED, SOMEWHAT, OR A LITTLE AND NEEDED]: You answered [FILL RESPONSE]. How did you come up with your answer to this question?

PRIV8. Which of the following have you ever done to protect your data or maintain your privacy?

[PROGRAMMING NOTE: GRID ITEMS SHOULD BE PRESENTED IN RANDOM ORDER AND QUESTION STEM SHOULD STAY ON SCREEN WHILE PARTICIPANTS SCROLL THROUGH GRID]

	Yes	No
Signed up for the Do Not Call Registry, which removes your phone number from marketing call lists		
Blocked a smartphone app from tracking your location, contacts, or accessing other details to protect your privacy		
Changed the settings on your computer or internet browser to increase your privacy		
Avoided or stopped using a social media service to protect privacy		
Changed the privacy settings on your social media accounts		
Refused to answer a survey due to privacy concerns		
Used more secure methods of communication, such as encrypted emails, to protect your privacy		

Asked a government department, public service, or private company to delete any information they hold about you		
Froze your credit or requested a notification when a credit check is performed on you		
Maintained separate email accounts or alternative phone numbers, to protect your privacy		
Regularly cleared browser history or deleted cookies		
Blocked a website from installing cookies		
Asked a government department, public service, or private company what information they hold about you		

Probes

Were any of these items confusing or difficult to understand or are all the items clear?

[INTERVIEWER NOTE: REVIEW THESE INDIVIDUAL ITEMS AS NEEDED]

Let's look at a few of the items individually. What do you think they mean by "blocked a smartphone app"?

What about the mention of "encrypted emails" in the item that starts with "Used more secure methods..." – What do you think is meant here by "encrypted emails"?

What does "froze your credit" mean to you? [IF NEEDED: Item 9 in the grid]

In your own words, what does "cookies" mean to you as mentioned in multiple items? [IF NEEDED: Item 11 and 12]

[IF PARTICIPANT SKIPPED ANY ITEMS] Why did you choose not to answer this item?

Are there any actions that are missing from this list that you have taken to protect your data or maintain your privacy?