

SUPPORTING STATEMENT B
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau
2026 Operational Test in Support of the 2030 Census
OMB Control No. 0607-0936

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

- 1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.**

The U.S. Census Bureau will conduct 2026 Operational Test in Support of the 2030 Census (hereafter “Test”) as an iteration of the American Community Survey (ACS) Methods Panel, with appropriate adjustments, to test data collection methods for the 2030 Census. Participating in the Test will be mandatory for those units in the selected areas. The Test will include only housing units. The Test will employ two response methods: internet self-response (ISR) on a secure website and Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) during in-field enumeration. Both response methods will be available in English.

The Census Bureau will conduct self-response for approximately 154,600 housing units. The Test In-Field Enumeration (IFE) operation will cover approximately 77,300 housing units (based on the projected self-response rate, described below).

The Census Bureau estimates a self-response rate of 50 percent in the test. This estimate is based on analyses of prior mid-decade census testing and ACS check-in rate 5-year estimates, including the 2012 National Census Test, the 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 Census Tests, the 2018 End-to-End Census Test, and ACS check-in rate 5-year estimates from 2013-2017 to 2018-2022.

- 2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:**
 - **Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection,**
 - **Estimation procedure,**
 - **Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification,**
 - **Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and**
 - **Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.**

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Self-Response

Self-Response covers how HU respondents actively respond. Respondents can self-respond via the internet which is facilitated by the test ISR instrument which is available online. This activity is the cornerstone of HU self-response. In the 2020 Census, the first decennial census to make online response widely available, nearly 80 percent of all self-response was collected through the ISR instrument. For the 2030 Census, the ISR instrument will be further refined to make it even easier for the public to respond online. As was done for the 2020 Census, the 2030 Census will allow people to respond with or without a Census ID.

In-Field Enumeration

In-Field Enumeration (IFE) will start between May 2026 and June 2026 and conclude, at the latest, in September 2026. During this time enumerators (Census Bureau and USPS staff) will contact the nonresponding HUs in an attempt to receive a completed interview. Finding ways to reduce the number of visits (or contacts) can result in smaller field workloads, leading to fewer enumerators and/or less time in the field, and therefore lower costs.

- 3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.**

Self-Response

One of the objectives during the Test is to implement a contact strategy designed to increase the number of households that respond online. This strategy has been tested and refined based on the results of previous Census Bureau tests. Results from this test will provide additional data about maximizing self-response rates.

- 4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an**

effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.

In developing the Test, the Census Bureau consulted with a variety of stakeholders. Our approach for optimizing self-response in the Test is largely built on findings and lessons learned from the 2020 Census, the 2030 Census Research Projects, and small-scale tests held since 2020, with the goal of optimizing the rate at which the public self-responds to the census. The Census Bureau is refining our approach to mail contact and internet response strategies.

In addition, the systems and procedures supporting the Test are subject to a testing framework that includes user acceptance testing, integration testing, output testing, and operational readiness testing efforts that are reviewed as part of three significant phase gates: Test Readiness Review, Production Readiness Review, and Operational Readiness Review.

The results from this test will be shared with stakeholders.

- 5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.**

For information regarding the statistical aspects and/or data collection for the Test, contact Michael Snow, Supervisory Program Analyst, Decennial Census Management Division, 301-763-9912 or dcmd.pra@census.gov.