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April 21, 2026

Kyra Linse

Survey Director, Current Population Surveys

U.S. Census Bureau

Washington, DC 20230

Re: Response to FRN 2026-04382: Comment Request; Current Population Survey 2026 Field Test

Ms. Linse:

On behalf of the Population Association of America (PAA), we are pleased to submit comments in response to the March 5, 2026, Federal Register Notice on the Current Population Survey (CPS) 2026 Field Test of the internet self-response (ISR) option.

PAA is the premier professional scientific society for more than 3,000 behavioral and social scientists, including demographers, sociologists, economists, epidemiologists, and statisticians, who study the causes and consequences of population change. The APC is an affiliated organization comprised of the over 40 federally supported population research centers based at U.S. institutions. Many of our members use CPS data for research on the US population, labor force, and economy, with results that inform policymakers at all government levels as well as stakeholders and practitioners in the private and nonprofit sectors. Our members have a high stake in the quality of data from the CPS – especially the Annual Social and Economic Supplement that is collected in March and provides valuable detail on income and poverty.

The March 5 notice mentions the proposed reinstatement of the 2025 OMB Control Number for use in 2026 and provides little detail on the proposed Field Test. PAA has no comment on the OMB Control Number but is pleased to reinforce support for the CPS and the Field Test of the internet response option.

Given the utility of CPS data to PAA researchers and the high profile of CPS results in gauging the state of the US economy and labor force, we recommend proceeding with the 2026 Field Test – the second of two planned for the CPS modernization program. We are aware of no arguments for canceling or curtailing the test, and the success of ISR in the American Community Survey (ACS) and the decennial census, suggest potential benefits


for the CPS. For example, there is reason to expect ISR could increase CPS response rates by making it more convenient for the public to respond and reducing the burden on Census Bureau field representatives who must schedule interviews with an increasingly elusive public. Among those willing to respond, many likely expect an online option to be available. Ultimately, the hope is that ISR would reduce costs and result in CPS data that are more accurate and representative of the nation's population.

Surveys differ in content and operations, so the Field Test can help ensure that ISR is implemented in a way that is well suited for the CPS and its operation. For example, patterns of response mode bias could be different for the CPS which asks for a series of responses with some content differing by month. CPS fieldwork runs on a tight schedule so tests related to how long to wait before following up with nonrespondents could be critical to ISR success. The Field Test also could identify types of respondents for whom ISR is not preferred or feasible, or specific questions where respondents with unconventional occupations, work schedules, or household compositions might appreciate the option of seeking clarification from an interviewer.

In short, we support the Census Bureau's efforts to modernize the CPS and encourage the completion of the 2026 Field Test in pursuit of that objective. We also recommend that the Census Bureau publish results from the 2025 and 2026 Field Tests with specific attention to response rates, mode effects, and efficiency.

We appreciate your time and consideration in reviewing our comments.

Sincerely,



Dr. Marcia J. Carlson
2026 PAA President



Dr. Sarah Burgard
2025-2026 APC President