Supporting Statement B for Request for Clearance: COLLABORATING CENTER FOR QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND EVALUATION RESEARCH

OMB No. 0920-0222

Expiration Date: 01/31/2026

Contact Information:

Amanda Titus
Laboratory Manager, Collaborating Center for Questionnaire Design and Evaluation Research
Division of Research and Methodology
National Center for Health Statistics/CDC
3311 Toledo Road, Room 54515448
Hyattsville, MD 20782
301-458-4579
atitus@cdc.gov

3/09/2026

Table of Contents

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

B.1. Response Universe and Sampling Methods……3
B.2. Procedures for the Collection of Information……3
B.3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Nonresponse……9
B.4. Tests of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken.....9
B.5. Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data.....9

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Public Health Service Act
ATTACHMENT B: 60-day Federal Register Notice
ATTACHMENT C: Nondisclosure
- Template 1: Federal Employee Version
- Template 2: Contractor Version

ATTACHMENT D: Informed consent templates for CCQDER interviews
- Template 1: Adults
- Template 2: Adults offsite
- Template 3: Focus Groups
- Template 4: Virtual
- Template 5: Parental/Guardian

ATTACHMENT E: CCQDER Data Retention Policy
ATTACHMENT F: CDC Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) Approval
ATTACHMENT G: Sample screening script
- Template 1: Respondent recruited from advertisement
- Template 2: Respondent recruited from CCQDER Database

ATTACHMENT H: Thank You Letter
ATTACHMENT I: Sample Respondent data collection sheet
ATTACHMENT J: Sample Advertisement
ATTACHMENT K1 & K2: Distress Protocols
ATTACHMENT L: Sample of an advance letter sent to NHIS respondents
ATTACHMENT M: Sample CCQDER Voice mail script
ATTACHMENT N: Detailed explanation of cognitive interviewing procedure read by interviewer to respondent

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

This Supporting Statement B accompanies a request for Reinstatement of a previously approved information collection (OMB No. 0920-0222, expired 01/31/2026). Given the variety of individual collections that we anticipate will fall under this generic clearance, we will have a number of different respondent universes and employ different sampling methods, depending on the specific purpose of the collection. However, there are some generalities about the universes and how we will sample them based on whether the proposed collection uses qualitative or quantitative methodologies.

a) Qualitative Collections. Qualitative methods such as cognitive interviewing generally rely upon a relatively small sample. Unlike survey research, the primary objective of the qualitative methods the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) and the Collaborating Center for Questionnaire Design and Evaluation Research (CCQDER) employ is not to produce statistical data that can be generalized to an entire population. Rather, their objective is to provide an in-depth exploration of concepts, processes and/or patterns of interpretation. Samples used for qualitative research generally do not achieve full inclusivity of all social and demographic groups. Generally, sample definitions are based upon the content of the survey, as well as the purpose and objectives of the particular study.

b) Quantitative Collections. Both probability (i.e. based on Address Based Sampling (ABS), Random Digit Dialing (RDD), etc.) and non-probability samples may be drawn for CCQDER's quantitative data collections. Much of CCQDER's quantitative work under the RANDS program involves the use of commercial web panels, which use either probability or non-probability approaches to empanel individuals for future surveys.

2. Procedures for the Collection of Information

c) *Recruitment*. Laboratory respondents will usually be recruited by means of flyers and other advertisements posted in public places, social media or message boards, newspaper advertisements, or word-of-mouth. Our experience has shown that advertisements across social media attract a large pool of potential respondents. These recruitment mechanisms have been productive in the past for obtaining a diverse group of respondents to help us determine potential sources of error in survey questions. To test questions that are targeted toward specific subgroups, the advertisement or flyer may be developed to identify appropriate respondents. For example, if the questionnaire to be tested includes a majority of questions about asthma-related health behaviors, then the recruitment may target asthma sufferers. A sample advertisement for recruitment is enclosed as Attachments J. Direct contact to solicit support from church groups, employers, and/or social or service organizations is occasionally used as possible sources of volunteers. In these cases, a flyer is provided to a contact who either posts the flyer or distributes it to members of the organization.

As noted above, much of CCQDER's quantitative work involves the use of pre-existing, commercial survey panels. In these instances, recruitment from the panel into a CCQDER study is based on a pre-established sampling plan that has been coordinated with the panel provider. However, for some field tests/pilot interviewing studies, such as those done for NHIS, addresses will be pre-identified. Interviewers (such as those contracted through the Census Bureau, or through other outside contractors) will use the same procedures as used in the actual survey and acquire informed consent (via, for instance, the NHIS Advance Letter) using the HIS-100C Manual for NHIS Field Representatives. See Attachment L for a copy of the advance letter.

b) *Screening and scheduling procedures*. The first contact with potential qualitative research respondents occurs in response to flyers or advertisements. Currently, interested people leave contact information (name and telephone number) on the CCQDER voice mail system. Additionally, CCQDER is transitioning to an online screening process through the Qualtrics platform. The CCQDER Recruiter/CCQDER Staff person then calls the person back, gives a brief description of the nature of the study, i.e., one-on-one interview (face-to-face, telephone, self-administered) or focus group, where the interview/focus group takes place, video/audio recording procedures, and the incentive to be offered. First, the CCQDER Recruiter/CCQDER Staff person determines through a brief series of questions (Attachment G) whether the volunteer possesses the desired research characteristics (e.g., we ask for gender and age to avoid interviewing people with very similar demographic characteristics). If the person does possess the desired research characteristics and would like to participate, he/she is scheduled for an interview/focus group. Otherwise, the volunteer is asked whether he/she would be interested in participating in future laboratory interviews. Telephone numbers and the minimal demographic information listed earlier are obtained for all scheduled volunteers and for those who would like to be contacted in the future. For those callers who are ineligible for the study and do not want to be contacted in the future, only demographic characteristics will be maintained for future analysis of successful recruitment efforts. Attachment M contains a sample CCQDER voice mail script.

It is possible that the CCQDER may be asked to conduct quantitative research or a field test on a specialized population (practicing doctors, for instance). In this case, a screening plan will be developed and included in that project's data collection package. In practice, this will typically involve the use of screening questions at the beginning of a survey instrument.

c) Qualitative Methods.

i) *Cognitive Interviewing Methods*. Respondents will receive the assurance of confidentiality and the legislative authority for the research by email during scheduling. Respondents are instructed to read the consent form and contact CCQDER recruiter if

any questions arise before the interview. The form is designed at an 8th grade reading level.

For in-person interviews, respondents are first oriented to the interview procedures by a CCQDER staff member and asked to read a brief description of the study as captured in the consent form, which includes assurances of confidentiality and the legislative authority for the research (Attachment D). The need for recording the interview (audio or video) is explained and the respondent is asked to sign a consent form. The form is designed at an 8th grade reading level. In the rare instance that consent is not granted, the session is not recorded in audio or video, depending upon the individual's concern area. If the respondent grants consent to record the interview but changes his/her mind while the session is being recorded, the interviewer will ask for verbal consent to retain the interviewing materials and the portion already recorded. The interviewer will get verbal consent from the respondent to do so prior to turning off the machine. If the respondent does not give consent to retain the recording, the recording will be deleted. A note will be placed in the hardcopy file and the CCQDER database indicating that particular recording (identified by the unique identification number assigned to the respondent) has been destroyed.

For virtual interviews, a recruiter will give the respondent access to the video conferencing platform at the time of the appointment and will make sure the respondent is prepared for the interview and that the application is working properly. The recruiter will go over the informed consent document (Attachment D, template 4) and collect the information from the Respondent Data Collection Sheet (Attachment I). The purpose of this sheet is to collect recruitment and sociodemographic information on the respondent.

On occasion, sponsors requesting cognitive testing on sensitive topics (e.g., HIV testing behaviors, smoking behaviors in American Indians) require that we do not collect personal identifiers (name, and address) which the CCQDER routinely collects in order to 1) give incentives to respondents and 2) to acquire informed consent. It is the sponsor's belief that collection of these identifiers would put the respondent at risk of potential harm resulting from breach of confidentiality. In these cases, the CCQDER requests a waiver of signed informed consent from the NCHS ERB. The consent form is modified to include a statement that the interviewer witnessed the respondent reading the informed consent document. The interviewer signs the statement. In addition, the IAA or MOU Statement of Work will contain the date that the testing sponsor wishes the recordings to be destroyed. Additionally, testing of sensitive can cause undue stress for respondents. In such cases, interviewers will be able to provide respondents with support in the form of help lines they can call. CCQDER interviewers have received training from the Worklife Wellness Office (WWO) on recognizing Secondary Trauma and were provided with an Interviewer Distress Guide (Attachment K1 & K2) that details resources to handle distressed respondents.

Interviewers begin the interview by reading a more detailed explanation of the purpose of the interview and the procedures to be used (see Attachment N). The interviewer will then ask the respondent to confirm that he/she understands the information in the Informed Consent (Attachment D, template 4) and then state that we would like to record the interview. The recorder will be turned on once it is clear that the procedures are understood and agreed upon. Once the recording has started, the interviewer will confirm that the respondent has agreed to be recorded. The interviewer then begins the interview by reading a more detailed explanation of the purpose of the interview and the procedures to be used (see Attachment N).

Interviewing procedures vary depending on the specific laboratory technique to be applied. The selection of the laboratory technique is in turn determined by the nature of the project, or the stage of development of the questionnaire or set of questions under study. The most commonly used method is cognitive interviewing with concurrent probing. In these interviews, respondents are presented with draft survey questions and asked to explain how and why they answered as they did. The interviewer usually probes extensively to ascertain the degree of comprehension and the recall processes involved. The interviewer may also ask the respondent to think aloud while answering.

If the respondent consents to being video recorded and then changes their mind after the interview has begun, the interview will proceed with audio-only recording. In this case, the interviewer will instruct the respondent to turn off their camera and explain that only audio will be recorded as long as the respondent's camera remains off. In the event that the respondent's camera is turned back on, the interviewer will remind the respondent to turn the camera off if they do not want to be recorded. If the respondent does not want to be recorded but is unable to turn their camera off, the interview will be terminated.

NCHS government-issued encrypted laptops will be used to video and audio record the interviews conducted off-site or virtually by both CCQDER researchers and contractors. NCHS government issued encrypted laptops will be used to video and audio record the interviews conducted off-site or virtually by both CCQDER researchers and RSS contractors. Interviewers can then securely upload their interview into CDC's Secure Access Management Services (SAMS) which has been approved by the ISSO to securely exchange electronic files containing confidential information. Interviews can then be transferred to the CCQDER LAN or NCHS CIPSEA Server. The recordings will then be deleted from SAMS. Alternatively, interviewers can use their NCHS government issued encrypted flash drive to transfer the recordings from the interviewer's laptop to the CCQDER's secure LAN or the NCHS CIPSEA Server. The encrypted flash drive is FIPS 140-2 compliant and approved for use by OCISO.

Extreme care will be taken with all recordings and paperwork from the interviews conducted off-site. Recordings and identifying paperwork will be stored in a secured travel case until returned to NCHS, at which point they will be transferred to the usual secured locked storage cabinets. Once the video and audio recordings are transferred to

the CCQDER LAN or NCHS CIPSEA Server, the recordings will be deleted from encrypted flash drive. Once deleted, the files are no longer available for use.

ii) Focus Group Methods. Respondents generally need to travel to the focus group location, which could be at NCHS, another Federal agency, or a room at another institution.

When respondents arrive, they are greeted by staff working on the project and directed to the focus group room where they are individually greeted by the CCQDER Recruiter/CCQDER Staff person. Respondents are given a packet containing the Assurance of Confidentiality and Informed Consent for focus groups (Attachment D, Template 3), the Respondent Data Collection Sheet (Attachment I) and instructed to fill them out. Once the forms have been completed, they will be returned to a CCQDER staff member.

Respondents then each receive a separate packet containing a thank-you letter signed by the Director of NCHS, their incentive, and a copy of the Assurance of Confidentiality and Informed Consent for focus groups (Attachment D, Template 3). Respondents are then ushered into the focus group room and are seated around a table. In the rare instance that consent is not granted, respondents will still receive an incentive.

A CCQDER staff member or person working on the project, as outlined in the Assurance of Confidentiality and Informed Consent, will moderate the focus group. Before discussion begins, the moderator will distribute name tags and will tell respondents to pick a name to put on the name tag. Respondents will be told that they do not have to use their real names. The moderator will then describe the process of the focus group and ask if there are any questions. After all questions are answered, the moderator will then begin the focus group discussion following the moderator guide designed for that particular study.

d) Survey Methods.

Interviewer-administered field tests, professional field interviewers (Census Bureau Field Representatives or other interviews who are contracted for the tested survey or have experience administering the surveys to be tested) will conduct the interviews using a standardized script that includes the consent, Paperwork Reduction Act, and ethics language. For self-report field tests, respondents will be shown screens with the Paperwork Reduction Act and ethics review language before proceeding to the rest of the survey instrument.

For pilot interviews conducted by professional field interviewers, and as time and resources allow a subset of the behaviors of both interviewers and survey respondents may be observed by NCHS staff or staff of the agency sponsoring the questionnaire and observations manually recorded to allow for systematic analysis.

3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Nonresponse

Our experience has shown that advertisements on social media platforms such as Reddit, Facebook and Craigslist attract a large pool of potential laboratory research respondents. These recruitment mechanisms have been productive in the past for obtaining a diverse group of respondents to help us determine potential sources of error in survey questions. For those questionnaires that target specific subgroups, special recruitment procedures will be developed to identify respondents. Direct contact to solicit support from church groups, employers, and/or social or service organizations will be explored as possible recruitment methods. Also, the offer of incentives to help cover out of pocket expenses has been a proven motivation for volunteers to participate in the study.

After interview respondents have been recruited, the probability of the respondent failing to show is minimized by making reminder phone calls to volunteers.

4. Tests of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken

This submission is a request for authorization to conduct tests of procedures and methodologies typical in cognitive testing research and to build on this research through field tests/pilot interviews. The purpose of questionnaire evaluation is not to obtain survey data, but rather to obtain information about the processes people use to answer questions as well as to identify any potential problems in the questions. This work has been effective for enhancing the quality of data of CDC, NCHS, and other Federal surveys cognitively tested by the CCQDER for over 30 years.

5. Individual Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals and/or Analyzing Data

The person with overall responsibility for the methodological and technical aspects of the described activities is:

Meredith Massey, Ph.D.
Acting Director, Collaborating Center for Questionnaire Design and Evaluation Research
National Center for Health Statistics
3311 Toledo Road
Hyattsville, Maryland
(301) 458-4275
wnx6@cdc.gov