

Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps)
Current Population Survey Civic Engagement and Volunteering Supplement
OMB Control Number, 3045-0139
Justification – Part A Supporting Statement

This is a request for revision of an information collection. The current information collection expires August 31, 2026.

Overview of Information Collection:

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS, operating as AmeriCorps) requests authorization from the Office of Management and Budget for revision of the Civic Engagement and Volunteer (CEV) supplement to the September Current Population Survey (CPS). The CEV was administered in partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau in September of 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023, and 2025. The proposed 2027 CEV questionnaire is identical to the survey fielded in 2023 and 2025. No other material changes have occurred since the last approval in 2023. AmeriCorps is seeking a revision because it is seeking clearance of rephrased questions to expedite testing in the event that Census pursues introducing an internet self-response mode to the CEV before expiration of this OMB Control Number – this revision will not affect burden hours. The U.S. Census Bureau is currently field testing an internet self-response mode for the core CPS module as part of modernization efforts.

1. Need & Method for the Information Collection.

AmeriCorps has partnered with the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics to collect data and produced comprehensive national volunteering reports since 2002. AmeriCorps is also authorized by the Serve America Act (2009) to enter into an agreement to facilitate establishing a national Civic Health Assessment in partnership with the National Conference on Citizenship.

The CEV is the most robust source of nationally representative longitudinal data on the number of Americans who make a difference in their communities through organizations, informal social interaction, political engagement, and other arenas of civic life. Key measures in the survey include formal volunteering, charitable giving, organizational membership, informal helping, spending time and discussing issues with family, friends, and neighbors, and attending community meetings. Like all CPS supplemental surveys, professional interviewers administer the CEV via computer-assisted personal and telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of households. The U.S. Census Bureau is also field testing an internet self-response mode for the core CPS module, although September 2029 is the earliest it could be implemented with the CEV. The U.S. Census Bureau oversees every aspect of the information collection.

The CEV is the only source of official government measurement on the level of civic engagement in the United States over time. Failure to collect this information biennially would inhibit the ability of scholars, government officials, and policymakers to assess the nation's civic health over time and implement programs and policies that promote and sustain it. The CEV

adheres to U.S. Census Bureau policies that apply to all CPS supplements in terms of content, length, and other aspects of administration that impact burden.

Authorization for the collection of this information is provided in 13 U.S.C. 8(b) and 182; 29 U.S.C. 1; and 42 U.S.C. 12639a.

2. Use of the Information.

The purpose of collecting data on civic engagement and volunteering is to provide scholars, government officials, and policymakers with official government measurement on the level of civic engagement in the United States over time. These indicators can inform policies and practices that promote increased citizen activity in the political, civic, and social spheres at the national, state, and metro area levels. Conducting the CEV as a supplement to the CPS is ideal for these purposes because it leverages the existing infrastructure and research design innovations of one of the largest, longest running, and most reliable federal surveys in the country.

For example, CPS supplements have consistently achieved the response rates and statistical power necessary to generate reliable estimates of civic engagement rates among population subgroups. The continuity and institutional credibility of the CPS also ensures that CEV data addresses the core research question of this study: how does the civic health of America change over time? Acknowledging that federal surveys are not necessarily well suited to capture local-level variation and the social processes that drive national civic engagement trends, the CEV's biennial data collection cadence allows AmeriCorps to also invest in scholarship that takes complementary methodological approaches to create a more holistic picture of civic life in America.

AmeriCorps publishes key findings from the CEV through public agency reports such as *Volunteering and Civic Life in America* and uses the data internally to inform programmatic efforts related to the agency's mission to promote civic engagement in America. AmeriCorps also makes the de-identified dataset available to other federal agencies, scholars, government officials, policymakers, and the public in accordance with U.S. Census Bureau procedures to mitigate privacy concerns. When combined with demographic characteristics (age, sex, race, education, occupation, income), CEV data can address research questions about the relationship between these characteristics and the level of civic engagement in the United States.

Government agency analysts and private, state, and local leaders may use these data to compare levels of civic engagement in their area of interest with national figures – and to link CEV data to other measures of civic health in order to formulate policies that foster healthy communities. In addition, these data can be linked to other federal surveys or administrative data to empirically assess the relationship between civic behaviors and economic, social, or health outcomes. For example, data from the CEV has been linked to employment data to assess the relationship between labor force behaviors and volunteering behavior over time. Other federal agencies could use the data to assess the relationship between civic engagement and other outcomes of programmatic interest such as social connection.

Administering the CEV as a supplement to the CPS also has the advantage of minimizing respondent burden. Since households selected to participate in the CPS experience the same beginning-to-end experience each month they are in the rotating sample, respondents develop familiarity with the interviewing procedures such that any learning costs marginally decrease over time.

3. Use of Information Technology.

The proposed 2027 CEV administration will use a mix of computer-assisted personal and telephone interviewing, a proven and appropriate data collection methodology. The U.S. Census Bureau is also field testing an internet self-response mode for the core CPS module, although September 2029 is the earliest it could be implemented with the CEV supplement. Consideration has also been given to the use of social media and administrative data, but these methods are not feasible for a complex demographic survey such as the CPS. Given the scope and nature of the information collection, the proposed method constitutes the least amount of burden.

4. Non-duplication.

In 2014, the National Academy of Sciences published a report titled “Civic Engagement and Social Cohesion: Measuring Dimensions of Social Capital to Inform Policy” that included a comprehensive review of the literature about measuring civic engagement, social cohesion, and social capital as well as other information collected about the level of civic engagement in the United States (Attachment A4). The panel of expert authors confirmed that a longitudinal federal survey with a comprehensive set of behavioral civic engagement indicators is the only viable way to obtain the information needed for the purposes outlined in section 2 above.

The CEV does not duplicate any other single information collection with respect to topic and content, scope, or population of interest. There is no comparable data that can be replicated, substituted, or modified for use as described in sections 1 and 2 above.

5. Burden on Small Business.

The collection of the CEV does not involve small businesses or other small entities.

6. Less Frequent Collection.

AmeriCorps administers the CEV biennially (every other year). Previous data from annual administrations of the September CPS Volunteer supplement and November Civic Engagement supplement did not generate substantial variation over a yearly period, but CEV estimates of key measures from 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023, and 2025 are sufficiently varied to warrant continued information collection every other year. For example, during COVID-19, the national rate of talking with neighbors dropped 4.4 percentage points from 2017 to 2019 and the formal volunteering rate dropped 6.8 percentage points from 2019 to 2021.

During intervening years AmeriCorps conducts research in communities across the United States. Findings from these community-based research studies complement the biennial CEV

supplement and provide additional information about civic activity that is measured at the local level using methodologies that are appropriate for this scale.

7. Paperwork Reduction Act Guidelines.

There are no special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner contrary to Paperwork Reduction Act Guidelines.

8. Consultation and Public Comments.

The 60-day *Notice* soliciting comments was published on Thursday, May 14, 2026 at 91 Fed. Reg. 27309. Two comments were received.

Both comments emphasized the utility of the CEV for both research and practice, as well as the importance of AmeriCorps' continued investment of meaningful time and energy into the analysis and reporting of the supplement data. For example, one commenter described the CEV Dashboard AmeriCorps published in 2024 as "exceedingly helpful for increasing access and usage" related to "goal setting, strategy development, State Service Plan, and communications."

Commenters' primary concerns were related to the reduction in the number of questions regarding formal volunteering activity in the CEV relative to the previous Volunteering supplement. Both commenters proposed reinstating questions from the 2017 CEV, adding questions that had been in the previous CPS Volunteering supplement, adding completely new questions about formally volunteering through an organization, and combining existing CEV measures about other forms of civic engagement.

The Serve America Act (2009) directs AmeriCorps to collect data that captures the broader concept of civic engagement (which includes but is not limited to formally volunteering through organizations). The AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation also recognizes that certain stakeholders would value more detailed data on formal volunteering. At this time, however, AmeriCorps cannot add questions that would increase the length of the CEV due to a policy Census introduced in 2022. The policy requires that 90% of completed supplement interviews last less than 10 minutes, which means that the supplement must be designed to average no more than 5-7 minutes per household. The average CEV administration time is currently 6.67 minutes. Combining existing measures in the CEV to make space for additional formal volunteering questions would reduce reliability by creating double-barreled questions. Cutting existing questions would inhibit longitudinal analysis of CEV measures that are crucial for other stakeholders and run counter to recommendations from the National Academy of Sciences (see Attachment A4) and other experts to measure civic engagement in a holistic way.

If Census recommendations change and resources allow AmeriCorps to add formal volunteering questions suggested by commenters in future rounds of data collection, the agency would seek a revision to reinstate two questions from the 2017 CEV that were cut in 2019 due to Census concerns about response rates and respondent burden. The Office of Research would prioritize adding these questions about types of volunteer organizations (Q16b) and activities (Q16c) because they underwent cognitive testing and validation as part of the original CEV design

process and the AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation agrees with commenters that they would generate valuable knowledge about formal volunteering. In contrast, other questions suggested by commenters have not been validated, would substantially increase respondent burden, violate the 2022 Census supplement policy requiring CPS supplements to utilize behavioral measures, and/or are inconsistent with National Academy of Sciences recommendations that alternative data collections are better suited for attitudinal and outcome measures (see Attachment A4).

The AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation also consulted with individuals in institutions both internal and external to the federal government including the AmeriCorps Volunteer Program, the National Conference on Citizenship, Points of Light, the University of North Carolina, and the Brennan Center. These stakeholders unanimously endorsed continuing biennial data collection with the questions and instructions in the proposed 2027 questionnaire and affirmed that our estimates of the respondent and cost burden are reasonable. Several individuals suggested reinstating questions about types of volunteer organizations (Q16b) and activities (Q16c) from the 2017 CEV. Others suggested adapting questions from the previous Volunteering Supplement about how people became involved in volunteering, and others suggested adding new questions about protest participation and religiosity if Census policy and resources allow in the future. These additional questions will be requested as part of a revision if Census recommendations change.

9. Gifts or Payment.

There are no payments or gifts to respondents.

10. Privacy & Confidentiality.

Interviewers provide the pamphlet, “The U.S. Census Bureau Respects Your Privacy and Keeps Your Personal Information Confidential,” to households whenever necessary (see Attachment A1). An advance letter is also sent to potential survey respondents (see Attachment A2). All information given by respondents to Census Bureau employees is held in the strictest confidence as guaranteed by Title 13, United States Code, Section 9. Each interviewer has taken an oath to this effect and is subject to a jail penalty and/or a fine if he/she discloses any information. Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, all data are protected from cybersecurity risks through screening of the systems that transmit data.

AmeriCorps publishes only public use data that contains no personal information and has been coded to shield potential identification of participants.

11. Sensitive Questions.

The information collection does not include questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Burden Estimate.

The proposed 2027 CEV contains 22 questions and will be administered to approximately 50,000

households (due to decreasing response rate for the basic CPS) with approximately 60,000 respondents (due to random selection) in each biennial data collection (in 2027, 2029, etc.). Based on analysis of CEV time stamps in trace files for previous data collections, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that each interview will take 6.67 minutes, resulting in total burden of 6,670 hours per data collection and annual burden of 6,670 hours. Even though the collection is only done biennially, we have included the estimate of 60,000 because they will likely occur within one year.

The estimated annual respondent burdens and labor costs are shown in the following table.

Estimation of Annual Respondent Burden	
Number of respondents	60,000
Responses per respondent	1
Number of responses	60,000
Hours per response	6.67 minutes
Total estimated hours (number of responses multiplied by hours per response)	3,335
Cost per hour (hourly wage)	\$67.20
Cost per response	\$7.47
Annual public cost burden (estimated hours multiplied by cost per hour)	\$224,112

Note: The cost per hour is based on the March 2026 Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics hourly wage rate (see BLS Employer Costs for Employee Compensation – March 2026 (USD L-26-0827, released June 12, 2026, [Employer Costs for Employee Compensation News Release - 2026 Q01 Results](#)), wages and salaries for civilian workers (\$49.32) plus the 36.25% civilian personnel full fringe benefit rate from OMB memorandum M-08-13. The hourly rate is \$49.32 + \$17.88 (\$49.32 hourly rate x 36.25% fringe) = \$67.20 (rounded to the nearest penny).

	Requested	Program Change Due to New Statute	Program Change Due to Agency Discretion	Change Due to Adjustment in Agency Estimate	Change Due to Potential Violation of the PRA	Previously Approved
Annual Number of Responses for this IC	60,000	0	0	0	0	60,000

Annual IC Time Burden (Hour)	6,670	0	0	0	0	6,670
Annual IC Cost Burden (Dollars)	448,200	0	0	-1,714,200	0	2,162,400

The following tables show that these burden hours consist of time required for reporting:

Burden per Response:			
	Time Per Response	Hours	Cost Per Response
Reporting	6.67 minutes	0.111166666	\$7.47
Record Keeping	0	0	0
Third Party Disclosure	0	0	0
Total	--	.11	\$7.47
Annual Burden:			
	Annual Time Burden (Hours)	Annual Cost Burden (Dollars)	
Reporting	6.670	\$448,200	

Record Keeping	0	0
Third Party Disclosure	0	0
Total	6,6700	\$448,200 (rounded)

13. Estimated nonrecurring costs.

AmeriCorps does not estimate any annual cost burden to respondents apart from the hourly burden already reflected in section 12 above.

14. Estimated cost to the Government.

AmeriCorps estimates that the 2027 CEV will cost \$1,000,000.

15. Reasons for changes.

The CEV was last administered in 2025. The 2027 instrument submitted for review is the same. The only change since the last approval in 2023 is a new section at the very end called “Self-response questions to be cleared.” We request that these questions, which are slightly rephrased from the core 2027 instrument, be cleared now to expedite testing of an internet self-response mode for the CEV that may be implemented as early as September 2029. These changes do not affect the number of responses or burden hours. The Agency has adjusted the estimate for the annual cost burden based on the updated Bureau of Labor Statistics hourly wage rate and to address an apparent math error in the prior submission.

16. Publicizing Results.

The U.S. Census Bureau posts public (de-identified) CEV datasets on its website in ASCII and .csv formats along with layout files and replicate weights. To facilitate public use of CEV data, AmeriCorps staff write data definition and read-in files to convert the de-identified datasets into formats that are compatible with commonly used statistical programs such as Stata. AmeriCorps posts these user-friendly, de-identified datasets along with complete documentation on data.americorps.gov. In addition, AmeriCorps publishes topline findings and more in-depth analysis on the Volunteering and Civic Life in America section of its website and in the AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange. AmeriCorps also publishes summary statistics (rates of all CEV measures at the national, state, and largest 12 metro area levels) on data.americorps.gov.

For the 2027 CEV, we anticipate data collection will occur in mid-September and that the U.S. Census Bureau will provide the de-identified dataset and documentation to AmeriCorps in the

summer of 2028. AmeriCorps anticipates coordinating with the U.S. Census Bureau to release the de-identified dataset and topline findings in the fall of 2028, with additional summary statistics and in-depth analysis to be released throughout 2029.

17. OMB Not to Display Approval.

The Civic Engagement and Volunteering Supplement is administered as part of the CPS monthly interview each September. However, the supplement (as well as all the CPS supplements) bears the OMB control number and expiration date, which is different from the CPS basic interview. The OMB control number and expiration date for the CPS basic interview is included in the advance letter we give respondents. Because of the difficulties and anticipated respondent confusion involved with expressing a separate control number and expiration date to respondents for the supplement questions, the Census Bureau does not wish to display the OMB control number and expiration date for the CPS September supplement.

18. Exceptions to "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Submissions."

There are no exceptions to the certification statement in the submitted ROCIS form.

19. Surveys, Censuses, and Other Collections that Employ Statistical Methods.

Please see supporting statement Part B.