Supporting Statement A: Arts Basic Survey

Introduction

This request is for clearance to conduct the 2027 Arts Basic Survey (ABS) (formally titled Annual Arts Benchmarking Survey, and Annual Arts Basic Survey). This survey will be conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau as a supplement to the Bureau of Labor Statistic's Current Population Survey. The ABS will be conducted in February 2027 and serves as a supplement when the National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) is not conducted. To date, the ABS was conducted seven times from 2013 to 2025. One of the strengths of the ABS is that it will complement and supplement the information collected in the SPPA. The SPPA is the field's premiere repeated cross-sectional survey of individual attendance and involvement in arts and cultural activities, and is conducted approximately every five years. The ABS is much shorter than the SPPA, consisting of 12 to 14 questions per module that will be used to track arts participation over time.

As with the SPPA, the ABS data will be circulated to interested researchers and will be the basis for a range of NEA reports and independent research publications. Reports on these data will be made publicly available on the NEA's website[1] or NEA-designated websites. The ABS will provide primary knowledge on the extent and nature of participation in the arts in the United States.

A. Justification

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

The NEA, pursuant to its mandate "to support projects and productions that will encourage public knowledge, education, understanding and appreciation of the arts" (USC2O, Section 954 (5)) and "to develop and implement a practical system of national information and data collection and public dissemination on the arts and their audiences, including trends in audience participation" (USC 20, Section 954 (q)), has entered into an interagency agreement with the U.S. Census Bureau to conduct the Arts Basic Survey (ABS). The U.S. Census Bureau is authorized to collect data under Title 13, United States Code, Section 182 (see Attachment A).

As a national survey, the ABS will serve as a sound basis on which to make regular estimates of participation rates in the various art forms asked on the survey. National data from the ABS, along with the SPPA, has appeared regularly in the Social Indicators chapter of the Analytical Perspectives, Budget of the United States Government. The ABS data will also provide information on the characteristics of the population participating in the arts. In addition, the ABS gathers information on the characteristics of adults who do not participate in the arts. The ABS will provide trend data that will help policymakers and arts administrators make decisions using reliable and recent information.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

The ABS will provide measures of participation in the arts from a nationally representative sample of adults ages 18 and older. The information to be collected from adults include attendance at live arts

[1] https://arts.gov/artistic-fields/research

events, participation in the arts through performing or creating art, reading, and art museums or galleries. Since access to the arts is a major Agency goal, measuring the wide range of possible ways the American public can participate in the arts is of critical importance.

The sample design is such that, in addition to the capability of making national estimates, it will be possible to generate estimates for subregions of the nation and for approximately 32 individual states and 11 large metropolitan areas. Thus, policymakers and arts administrators at the national, regional, state, and local levels will be able to study the patterns of participation across various population subgroups and to look for correlates of participation in artistic and other cultural activities. The data from this study will better enable arts administrators to make essential policy decisions based on such things as the size and characteristics of current audiences. Publications based on this data will be available to the public on the NEA's website or NEA-designated websites, where studies on the SPPA data can also be found.[2] This includes the Agency's National Arts Statistics and Evidence-based Reporting Center.[3]

The ABS is a study that complements the ongoing assessment of the arts activities that began with the 1982 SPPA and was followed with the 1985, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2008, 2012, 2017, and 2022 SPPA surveys. The first seven years of the ABS were conducted in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2025. Previously, odd years focused on arts attendance and arts learning, and even years focused on arts creation and performance. These data allow arts administrators to assess how the demand for the arts changes over time, and how the nature of adults' participation in the arts changes over time.

Data from previous SPPA surveys have been widely used by policymakers and scholars because of their unique scope and statistical precision. The estimates from the ABS will help users of SPPA data assess whether changes in the SPPA participation estimates are more likely a short-term phenomenon (based, for instance, on the economy or a major current event) or a long-term shift in participation.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

The ABS questions are designed to obtain the required information while keeping respondent burden to a minimum. The proposed items and interviewer procedures were developed over years of consultation with the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and other government agencies. The use of computer-assisted personal and telephone interviewing is deemed the most appropriate collection methodology.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

Preexisting surveys, such as the General Social Survey (sponsored by the National Science Foundation), periodically include a handful of arts participation questions. However, there is no existing nationally representative survey outside of the ABS and SPPA that allows for tracking of public participation in the arts on a regular basis and for analysis by demographic and geographic subgroups.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

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[2] https://arts.gov/artistic-fields/research
[3] https://www.arts.gov/impact/research/NASERC

Not applicable. The collection of public participation in the arts information does not involve small businesses or other small entities.

6. Describe the consequence to federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The goal of NEA is to conduct the ABS at least once between years that the SPPA is conducted in order to enable policymakers and arts administrators to make decisions using reliable and recent information.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- **requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- **requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**
- **requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
- **requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years;**
- **in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**
- **requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
- **that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statue or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or**
- **requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

There are no special circumstances that apply to the ABS.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years--even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

A notice was published in the Federal Register (Document #2026-10462) on May 21, 2026 to solicit comments on the benchmarking survey prior to submission of this OMB clearance request. (A copy of this notice is in Attachment B.) The second Federal Register Notice was published on September 2, 2026 (Document #2026-17974). (A copy of this notice is in Attachment C.)

The ABS questions are essentially from the SPPA questionnaire and were selected by a team internal to the NEA. The SPPA questionnaire was developed by extensive advisory panels of academicians and users of national arts data. The ABS survey instruments are included in the appendix (Attachment D). Half of the respondents will receive Form 1, which includes questions on arts creation, performance, and learning, and the other half will receipt Form 2, which includes questions on arts attendance.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than renumeration of contractors or grantees.

The Census does not make any payments or provide any gifts to individuals participating in the CPS.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

The U.S. Census Bureau will collect the supplement data in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974 and the OMB Circular A-130. Each sample household receives an advance letter approximately one week before the start of the initial CPS interview (see Attachment E). The letter includes the information required by the Privacy Act of 1974, explains the voluntary nature of the survey, and states the estimated time required for participating in the survey. Interviewers must ask if the respondent received the letter and, if not, provide a copy and allow the respondent sufficient time to read the contents. Also, interviewers provide households with the pamphlet The U.S. Census Bureau Respects Your Privacy and Protects Your Personal Information (Attachment F) and Fact Sheet for the Current Population Survey (Attachment G), which further states the confidentiality assurances associated with this data collection effort and the U.S. Census Bureau's past performance in assuring confidentiality).

All information given by respondents to U.S. Census Bureau employees is held in strict confidence under Title 13, United States Code, Section 9 (see Attachment A). Every U.S. Census Bureau employee has taken an oath to that effect and is subject to a jail penalty and/or substantial fine if they disclose any information given to them.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

The ABS does not include any questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:

- **Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden, and explain the reasons for the variance. Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.**

- **If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens.**
- **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here. Instead, this cost should be included in Item 14.**

The estimated respondent burden is 1,146 hours. Approximately 25,000 persons are actually interviewed for the supplement. With each person interview, on average, being two minutes and forty-five seconds long, this amounts to an hour burden of 1,146 hours for these questions.

The estimated total annual respondent cost burden based on these hours is $43,091. For individuals, the wage rate is $37.62 per hour based on hourly earnings for employees as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

12A. Estimated Annualized Burden Hours

Type of Respondent	Expected Number of Respondents[1]	Number of Responses per Respondent	Average Burden per Response (in hours)	Total Burden Hours
CPS Household Respondent	25,000	1	.04583	1,146

12B. Estimated Annualized Burden Costs

Type of Respondent	Total Burden Hours	Hourly Wage Rate	Total Respondent Costs (rounded to nearest dollar)
Household Respondent	1,146	$ 37.62	$ 43,091
Total	**1,146**		**$ 43,091**

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected on the burden worksheet.)

- **The cost estimate should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component (annualized over its expected useful life) and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component. The estimates should take into account costs associated with generating, maintaining, and disclosing or providing the information. Include descriptions of methods used to estimate major cost factors including system and technology acquisition, expected useful life of capital equipment, the discount rate(s), and the time period over which costs will be incurred. Capital and start-up costs include, among other items, preparations for collecting information such as purchasing computers and software; monitoring, sampling, drilling and testing equipment; and record storage facilities.**

- **If cost estimates are expected to vary widely, agencies should present ranges of cost burdens and explain the reasons for the variance. The cost of purchasing or contracting out information collection services should be a part of this cost burden estimate. In developing cost burden estimates, agencies may consult with a sample of respondents (fewer than 10), utilize the 60-day pre-OMB submission public comment process and use existing economic or regulatory impact analysis associated with the rulemaking containing the information collection, as appropriate.**
- **Generally, estimates should not include purchases of equipment or services, or portions thereof, made: (1) prior to October 1, 1995, (2) to achieve regulatory compliance with requirements not associated with the information collection, (3) for reasons other than to provide information or keep records for the government, or (4) as part of customary and usual business or private practices.**

There are no costs to respondents other than that of their time to respond.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information. Agencies may also aggregate cost estimates from Items 12, 13, and 14 in a single table.

The estimated cost to the government of the supplement on public participation in the arts is $420,000 in FY 2026, which will be borne by the NEA. The estimated cost to the government is expected to be $100 million in FY 2026 for the full CPS data collection program. Those costs are borne by the U.S. Census Bureau, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and other government agencies.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported on the burden worksheet.

This information collection does not represent any program change.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

Previous ABS instruments from FY 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2025 serve as the basis for the 2027 survey. The finalized survey modules and instructions were delivered to the U.S. Census Bureau in September 2026. Main data collection for the ABS is expected to occur in February of 2027, as a supplement to the February 2027 CPS. Processing of this supplement will begin following data collection. The public use files as well as summary reports are expected to be released in the following year after data collection.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

The NEA does not wish to display the assigned expiration date of the information collection. The CPS requires two OMB control numbers and two expiration dates because the survey consists of two parts: the basic questionnaire and a supplemental questionnaire, which differ from month to month. The OMB control number and expiration date for conducting the Basic CPS are included in the survey's advance letter (Attachment E). To avoid confusion, the expiration date of the supplemental questionnaire is not included in the letter.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."

There are no exceptions to the certification.