

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau
Census Partnership Program Focus Groups and Interviews
OMB Control Number 0607-XXXX

Part A – JUSTIFICATION

1. Necessity of the Information Collection

For the 2010 Census, the Census Bureau also conducted the Partnership Program, involving commercial entities of national scope; state, local and tribal governments; and regional and local corporations and organizations. The purpose of the Partnership Program was to target historically “hard-to-count” (HTC) areas in hopes of increasing census form mail-back rates. Over 800 National Partners participated in the 2010 Census Partnership Program. The program will continue to be an integral part of future intercensal year promotional activities. The proposed data collection for Partnership Program Research will assist the Census Bureau by (1) identifying the enhancers, incentives, and barriers to maintaining partner relationships over time; (2) investigate the rationales behind organizations refusing to participate in the Partnership Program; and (3) identify the specific improvements to the Partnership Program that will lead to more engagement by Partnership organizations.

The Census Bureau needs to collect and analyze qualitative data to address the following research questions:

- a) How can the Partnership program be improved and the partnerships be maintained in the future during the intercensal years as well as for the 2020 Census?
- b) What metrics can be used to monitor and assess the impact of the Partnership Program in the intercensal years and for the 2020 Census?

Essentially, the research for which data collection approval is being sought seeks to inform the future direction, composition, and maintenance of this outreach program for the next eight or nine years, in preparation for the 2020 Census.

The legal authority under which this information is being collected is the general authority of the Census Bureau to undertake the decennial Census in 2010 (Title 13 U.S.C. Section 141) and the authority to collect supplemental information after the Census is conducted (Title 13 U.S.C., Section 193).

2. Needs and Uses

The Census Bureau proposes to collect qualitative data via six focus groups and 30 individual interviews among national Partnership Program participant organizations. The Census Bureau intends to ask program participants about ways the program can be improved, and ways in which their own participation can be enhanced in future years. The resulting qualitative data will be used by Census Bureau management staff to create recommendations for program redesign in order to improve the program in the years leading to the next Census.

Information quality is an integral part of the pre-dissemination review of the information disseminated by the Census Bureau (fully described in the Census Bureau's Information Quality Guidelines). Information quality is also integral to the information collections conducted by the Census Bureau and is incorporated into the clearance process required by the Paperwork Reduction Act.

3. Use of Information Technology

This data collection effort will obtain descriptive qualitative data, including respondents' recommendations for future activities that can most easily be obtained by gathering program participants in a group and creating an environment for free discussion. For those Partnership Program participants who are not able to attend focus group sessions, supplemental data will be collected via telephone interviews. The type of information being sought here is qualitative in nature, and thus is normally not gathered electronically. We will meet in person with each group and record notes on a laptop computer during the focus group session. We will conduct telephone interviews with representatives of Partnership Program organizations to gain additional insights during which the interviewers will transcribe notes on a computer-based system to record and summarize participant answers. The focus group sessions will not be recorded, nor will the telephone interviews.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

ICF International, the contractor hired to conduct the research, has worked with the Census Bureau to review all prior research that may have collected data from Partnership Program participants. The paragraphs below describe the prior research and data collection:

Data Collection Prior to 2010

This small body of work includes two evaluations related to the 2000 Census, the "Partnership and Marketing Program Evaluation" and the "Report of Survey of Partners."

The previous survey conducted among partners for the 2000 Census focused on the partner's experiences in the program with questions on the demographics of the partner organization, the number of contacts with the Program Point of Contact, and the partner's goals for participation, among other items.

The data collected prior to 2010 cannot be used to address the research questions posed in this collection request. The data collected focused on events that had already transpired and sought to assess those events. The research questions posed here are oriented toward improving program operations and participant experience in the future.

Data collected in 2010

Other research includes a "U.S. Census Partnership Survey" conducted under the aegis of the 2010 National Partnership Assessment and Evaluation Study Plan and the "2010 Census Integrated Communication Program Evaluation." Data on partners are also contained in the 2010 Integrated Partner Contact Database (IPCD), a database designed to help Partnership Program staff track interactions with the participating partner organizations.

As with data collected prior to 2010, the "U.S. Census Partnership Survey" surveyed partners, but the survey consists of closed-ended questions that are not forward-looking (i.e. they do not ask the Partner to talk about potential enhancements to the program). The IPCD database is administrative in nature and does not provide information on participant experiences with the program. The Integrated Communication Program Evaluation does not allow for breakout of data related to partners as compared to more general communication efforts to the public.

In summary, there is no duplication or significant overlap of information already collected with that which is needed here.

5. Minimizing Burden

The focus groups and interviews will not be held with participants from small businesses or other small entities. As an integral part of this effort, the Census Bureau needs to understand the process by which large businesses would structure their participation in the Census programs; thus, respondents from small organizations would not be able to provide useful information on this question. We will screen out small organizations by selecting only “National Partners” from the IPCD database.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

No comparable data are currently available either from published sources or from Census Bureau research studies. The current information collection is necessary to obtain program participants’ suggestions for program enhancements. The study was designed to minimize burden to the greatest extent possible by inviting participants to only one focus group session or telephone interview; no technical or legal obstacles to this minimization exist.

7. Special Circumstances

There are no such special circumstances. This is a one-time only data collection.

8. Consultations Outside the Agency

There were no consultations outside the agency. The focus group and interview protocols were developed after extensive discussion with Census Bureau staff who are most knowledgeable of the Partnership Program.

A notice seeking comment on this proposed collection was published on January 20, 2011, on pages 3609 and 3610 of the Federal Register. We have received no comments thus far.

9. Paying Respondents

Focus group participants will receive \$50 to partially compensate them for their time and local travel expenses, and to provide an incentive to participate. Persons who will be interviewed will not receive any remuneration.

The American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) in its recommendations for best practices indicates that “Specific procedures designed explicitly to stimulate survey cooperation or participation should also be considered, such as (where possible) sending advance letters to sample households or individuals to inform them of the pending survey, offering monetary (i.e., cash) or non-monetary (some other valued reward) incentives to encourage participation, and sending reminders or making follow-up calls to those who do not respond initially.”¹ The theory of survey participation indicates that a study employing a variety of motivational techniques, including incentives, is more likely to yield a more representativeness research sample than a study relying on a single motivational technique.² Incentives have been found to boost response rates for mail, telephone, and in-person surveys.³ In order to ensure a sufficient response rate by educational and business professionals, we

¹ American Association of Public Opinion Research (May, 2010). Best Practices. (http://www.aapor.org/Best_Practices.htm - accessed 1/24/2011).

² Groves Robert, Singer Eleanor, Corning Amy. Leverage-Saliency Theory of Survey Participation Description and an Illustration. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 2000;64:299-308.

³ See, for example, Church Allan. Estimating the Effect of Incentives on Mail Survey Response Rates: A Meta-Analysis. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 1993;57:62-79; Singer Eleanor, van Hooyk John, Maher Mary. Does the Payment of Incentives Create

believe that providing sufficient monetary incentives is an essential aspect of this project. This will enable us to obtain sufficient cooperation in a study that requires respondents come to a centralized location to spend 90 minutes in a focus group.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

Before the focus group session begins, participants will be informed that the researchers comply with Institutional Review Board requirements by respecting and protecting their confidentiality. Researchers will record what they say, but will not link their statements to their names. Participants also will be informed that it is important for focus group participants to agree to respect and protect each other’s privacy by refraining from discussing anything about the focus group with anyone outside of the group. If participants are concerned about confidentiality, they will be advised to limit their participation in the group to what they are comfortable discussing, or decline to participate. We will emphasize that participation is voluntary and inform them that they do not have to answer every question. They may stop participating at any time with no consequences.

Additionally, each focus group participant will be assigned a letter (e.g., participant "A") that will be visible on a placard in front of them, and on their name tag and neither first names nor last names will be used during the sessions. In the analysis phase, the contractor will use these letter designations only to understand the body of statements made by each participant (e.g., person "A" said that he did not think more contact would be needed). These letter designations will not be used to link comments back to individual names in the reporting phase of the study.

Individual telephone interviewees will be given the same protection of confidentiality. This will be explained to them during the introduction to the interview. We will not identify material from individual interviews in a way that the material can be traced back to the respondent. We will not do any audio recording of the interview.

The Census Bureau collects and maintains data, including data collected from this collection of information, in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 552a Public Law 93-579, the Privacy Act of 1974.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

Focus group respondents will not be asked to discuss any questions or topics of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

12. Estimate of Hour Burden

The estimated burden hours are listed in the following tables:

Partnership Focus Group Protocol				
Number of Focus Groups	Participants Per Group	Total Participants	Focus Group Time Per Participant	Total Burden All Participants
6	15	90	1.5 Hours	135 Hours

Partnership Interviews

Expectation Effects? *Public Opinion Quarterly* 1998;62:152-64; and Willimack Diane, Schuman Howard, Pennell Beth-Ellen, Lepkowski James. Effects of a Prepaid Nonmonetary Incentive on Response Rates and Response Quality in a Face-to-Face Survey. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 1995;59(1):78-92.

Number of Respondents	Interview Time Per Respondent	Total Burden All Participants
30	0.5 Hour	15 Hours

Burden Summary		
<i>Protocol</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Total Burden</i>
Partnership Program Focus Groups	90	135 Hours
Partnership Program Interviews	30	15 Hours
Grand Total	120	150 Hours

The estimated cost burden to participants and respondents are listed in the tables below.

The cost burden for the Partnership Program focus groups and interviews is calculated based on per-hour median wage obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2009 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates for “Managers, All Other” (\$44.52 median hourly wage); downloaded on January 13, 2011 from http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm#11-0000, with 50% per hour added as an average overhead rate for benefits and taxes.

Partnership Program Focus Group Protocol		
Number of Respondents	Frequency of Response	Annual Cost Burden
90 respondents	One time	\$9,015.30

Partnership Telephone Interview		
Number of Respondents	Frequency of Response	Annual Cost Burden
30 respondents	One time	\$1,001.70

Total cost burden: \$10,017.00

13. Estimate of Cost Burden

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

14. Cost to Federal Government

An estimate of costs to the Census Bureau is \$124,919.

Except payments to respondents, the costs above are estimates of the labor cost required to conduct the activities related to this data collection. This is a one-time data collection so this cost will be incurred only once.

15. Reason for Change in Burden

Not applicable. This is a new collection request.

16. Project Schedule

To the extent consistent with Federal information disclosure law, the Census Bureau does not intend to publish the results, and plans to use the results only for internal purposes.

The schedule for the data collection is provided in the Table below:

Date	Action
May 31, 2011	Receive OMB approval
June 1, 2011	Begin data collection
June 15, 2011	Begin data analysis (initial groups / interviews)
July 29, 2011	Conclude data collection
August 31, 2011	Conclude data analysis
September 15, 2011	Submit draft Report
September 27, 2011	Submit final Report

17. Request to Not Display Expiration Date

No such exemption is being requested. We will display the expiration date on all information collection forms.

18. Exceptions to the Certification

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.