

OMB Control Number: 0990-0281
ODPHP Generic Information Collection Request: Prevention
Communication and Formative Research

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
Pilot Study for Understanding Economic Risk for Low Income
Families Survey

Supporting Statement — Section A

November 15, 2021

Section A — Justification

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) requests to conduct new research titled *Pilot Study for Understanding Economic Risk for Low Income Families Survey* under the ODPHP/OWH Generic Information Collection Request: Preventive Communication and Formative Research (OMB No. 0990-0281). The requested pilot study will inform survey instrument design for a final study that examines how low-income working families think about and weigh various economic risks when faced with a decision about increasing earnings.

This pilot study will inform the survey instrument to be used in a final study. ASPE will submit a separate ICR package for the final study. Final study findings would provide information about how to reduce risk for families facing a decision about increasing earnings

2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

The Full Study

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) will be conducting a study about economic risk faced by low-income families. When current benefit recipients are faced with an opportunity to increase earnings, many considerations come into play, including: “How much will my benefits be reduced? How stable and reliable are these new earnings? If I lose my current benefits and then, later, also lose my new earnings, how easily can I get my benefits back?” This study will examine how program participants think about these considerations.

The study will use a *discrete choice experiment* (also known as a *stated preference survey*) to explore the importance of these considerations when low-income individuals are presented with a hypothetical opportunity to increase earnings.

Participants will be presented with five vignettes in which a person is faced with an earnings increase. For each vignette, participants are to choose “yes” or “no” to indicate whether the person should take the earnings increase or not. The following three factors will vary (a 2 x 2 x 3 factorial):

1. Dollar value of earnings increase (2 levels: moderate vs. large)
2. Risk of earnings loss (2 levels: moderate risk vs. no risk)
3. Loss and recovery of benefits (3 levels: loss of benefits with automatic and guaranteed recovery of benefits if earnings drop; loss of benefits, recovery of benefits is uncertain and challenging if benefits drop; no loss of benefits)

Participants should be familiar with benefits from one or a combination of the following programs, which will be discussed by name in the vignettes: SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), Medicaid/CHIP, and child care subsidies. The study will also explore subgroup differences by race and ethnicity.

A separate ICR package will be submitted for the full study.

The Pilot Study (current ICR request)

The current study (and the current generic ICR) will be a pilot test of the survey instrument. We hope to answer questions such as the following:

1. Are one or more factors not generating meaningfully different responses from pilot participants?
2. What are the most appropriate dollar levels to set for earnings increases and benefit loss? Do the different high versus dollar amounts result in meaningfully different responses? Please note that the dollars shown in the survey instrument are placeholder values; we will be testing different dollar values.
3. What is the best way to describe replacing Medicaid with a healthcare.gov plan? Should we mention costs and deductibles, or not? Both mentioning and not mentioning costs and deductibles will be tested.
4. Are any of the vignettes problematic to some respondents? The survey instrument (Attachment A) includes six total vignettes, but each participant will only see five randomly-selected vignettes. This allows us to drop a vignette if one is found to be problematic.
5. Given responses to the pilot study, is a full study likely to generate useful findings?

3. Use of Improved Information Technology and Burden Reduction

We will use advanced technology to collect and process data to reduce respondent burden and make data processing and reporting more timely and efficient. All participants will be invited to complete the survey online via the web. NORC's AmeriSpeak survey software system supports an integrated sample management and data collection platform. The NORC AmeriSpeak survey software system also provides opportunities to participate in a web-mode using smartphones; for these panelists, the web-based system renders an optimized presentation of the questions. For all participants regardless of mode, the AmeriSpeak survey technology includes tailored skip patterns and text fills, which allows respondents to move through the questions more easily and minimizes respondent burden.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication and Use of Similar Information

This study is the first data collection opportunity of this kind that will collect data from working persons about the risks of increasing earnings. We are not aware of any similar studies

conducted by other agencies or non-government entities. The information that will be gathered has not been identified in any other research and thus necessitates the need for the current study.

The current pilot study is necessary to increase the likelihood that a full study would yield meaningful results.

5. Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities

No small businesses will be impacted or involved in this data collection.

6. Consequences of Collecting the Information Less Frequently

This request is for a one-time data collection. These data have not previously been collected elsewhere.

7. Special Circumstances Relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5

There are no special circumstances with this information collection package. This request fully complies with the regulation 5 CFR 1320.5 and will be voluntary.

8. Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice and Efforts to Consult Outside the Agency

This data collection is being conducted using the Generic Information Collection mechanism through ODPHP/OWH — OMB No. 0990-0281.

9. Explanation of Any Payment or Gift to Respondents

Participants in the pilot have voluntarily registered with the AmeriSpeak panel, and per the AmeriSpeak model, rather than being offered cash remuneration, they will be offered survey choice “points” to redeem for rewards which are commonly provided to survey panel respondents who complete online surveys. The points are delivered via the online panel provider to respondents who complete the survey.

Providing points to panelists is positively associated with response rates and helps to build trust, and points to help encourage high levels of participation are extremely beneficial to the project, which would otherwise be expected to experience a greater challenge in recruiting and high attrition.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents

The proposed data collection will have little or no effect on participants’ privacy. This survey does not collect any personally identifiable information such as name, home address, personal

telephone number, date of birth, social security number. The survey information is not transferred to an information system where the survey information is then retrieved by a personal identifier. ASPE will only use the pilot responses to inform the development of the final survey instrument.

All procedures have been developed, in accordance with Federal, State, and local guidelines, to ensure that the rights and privacy of respondents are protected.

Every AmeriSpeak panelist is provided a privacy and consent statement (see page 2 of Attachment A), which outlines the information that will be collected, study procedures, and how the information will be used. The statement also provides assurance that participation is voluntary and that panel members may withdraw their participation in at any time; and that the information collected by the survey is secure.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

Participants will be asked to provide information regarding their household income and health status, which could be determined to be sensitive in nature by some people. No other sensitive questions will be asked as part of this effort.

Household income is necessary to ask because this survey seeks to understand how low-income persons familiar with federal benefit programs think about economic risk. Persons with income above \$40,000 will be screened out because they are unlikely to be familiar with SNAP, Medicaid, and/or CCDF.

Health is necessary to ask because persons with poor health, or with family members in poor health, may be more sensitive to the risk of losing Medicaid and having to replace it with a plan from healthcare.gov. This would be important to know in the final study.

12. Estimates of Annualized Burden Hours and Costs

We estimate that each prospective participant will spend a total of 20 minutes participating in the survey. Table A-12 shows estimated burden and cost information.

Table A-12: Estimated Annualized Burden Hours and Costs to Participants

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden hour
Individuals	200	20/60	67
Totals	200	20/60	67

13. Estimates of Annualized Burden Hours and Costs

ASPE expects that participants will incur no costs beyond the burden hours required to answer screening questions and participate in the interview.

14. Annualized Cost to the Government

FEDERAL COST: The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is \$12,916 in labor costs (using the 2021 OPM Washington DC locality salary schedule) and \$140,000 for contractor costs. Managing the project will require the expertise of one ASPE staff.

Included in these costs are: 1) Programming the surveys for web administration; 2) administering the web-based survey; 3) cleaning the data and providing data to the federal government in a machine-readable format; 4) examining the data and recommending changes to the final survey instrument, based on pilot responses; 5) final survey development, based on pilot study; 6) translation of survey instrument into Spanish

Exhibit Section A — Justification.1: Annualized Cost to the Government

Expense Type	Expense Explanation	Annual Costs (dollars)
Cost of USAID staff time	ASPE staff hours	\$12,916.00
	Subtotal, Direct Costs	\$12,916.00
Contract Costs	Professional Services	\$100,000.00
	Direct Costs for NORC Panel and Survey	\$40,000.00
	Subtotal, Contract Costs	\$140,000.00
	Total Cost to the Government	\$152,916.00

15. Explanation for Program Changes or Adjustments

This is a new data collection.

16. Plans for Tabulation and Publication and Project Time Schedule

After the data collection, the contractor will examine the pilot responses and create a summary memo highlighting recommendations for the final survey instrument. The results of the collection will be used for internal purposes only, to inform the development of the final survey instrument. No names or other personal information will be reported in the summaries.

Proposed Timeline

Completion Date	Major Tasks/Milestones
8/6	Draft pilot survey instrument provided to ASPE for review.
8/27	Pilot survey instrument approved by ASPE.
11/23 - 12/17	OMB review
1/3	Data collection begins
3/18	Submit pilot data to ASPE
3/18	ASPE submits 60-day FRN to begin OMB ICR review process for final study
4/22	Submit memo and recommendations for final survey instrument to ASPE
5/20	Final survey instrument (English version) submitted to ASPE
6/3	Final survey instrument (Spanish version) submitted to ASPE
6/17	Submit 30-day FRN and Supporting Statements A and B for OMB ICR review
9/17	OMB approval received
9/17	Begin data collection for final study

17. Reason(s) Display of OMB Expiration Data is Inappropriate

We are requesting no exemption.

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

There are no exceptions to the certification. These activities comply with the requirements in 5 CFR 1320.9.

Section A — List of Attachments

- **Attachment A: Economic Risk Study Instrument (Pilot of Survey Instrument)**