

SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR ATUS LEAVE AND JOB FLEXIBILITIES MODULE

OMB CONTROL NO. 1220-0191

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection methods to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.

The proposed Leave and Job Flexibilities Module will directly follow the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) in 2024, and thus all respondents to the ATUS will be asked the module questions. The ATUS sample is drawn from the Current Population Survey (CPS), so the ATUS universe is the same as the CPS universe. From this universe, the Census Bureau selects a sample of approximately 70,000 households each month, of which approximately 60,000 households are eligible for interviews. The Census Bureau actually interviews individuals in about 42,500 households each month. For more information about the CPS sample, see chapters 2-1 and 2-2 of Design and Methodology: Current Population Survey, Technical Paper 77 (available at <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/methodology/CPS-Tech-Paper-77.pdf>).

Households that have completed their 8th CPS interview become eligible for selection in the ATUS. About 2,010 of these households are selected for the ATUS sample each month. Some of these cases will be identified as ineligible; designated respondents may have moved or died or the household may be ineligible for another reason. In 2022, about 1,990 households per month were eligible for selection in the ATUS. The ATUS sample is a stratified, three-stage sample. In the first stage of selection, the CPS oversample in the less populous States is reduced. In the second stage of selection, households are stratified based on the following characteristics: race/ethnicity of householder, presence and age of children, and the number of adults in adult-only households. In the third stage of selection, an eligible person from each household selected in the second stage is selected as the designated person (respondent) for the ATUS. An eligible person is a civilian household member at least 15 years of age.

The sample persons are then randomly assigned a designated reference day (a day of the week for which they will be reporting) and an initial interview week code (the week the case is introduced). In order to ensure accurate measures of time spent on weekdays and weekend days, the sample is split evenly between weekdays and weekend days. Ten

percent of the sample is allocated to each weekday and 25 percent of the sample is allocated to each weekend day. For more information about the ATUS sample see chapter 3 of the ATUS User's Guide: <http://www.bls.gov/tus/atususersguide.pdf>.

The 2017-18 Leave Module had a 95.4 percent response rate. It was completed by 10,071 total respondents. The 2024 Leave and Job Flexibilities Module is estimated to have fewer respondents than in 2017-18 due to an overall decline in ATUS response rates and because it is being fielded for only one year. In 2021, the number of ATUS respondents who were eligible for the Leave and Job Flexibilities (wage and salary workers, excluding self-employed workers) was 4,761. The number of expected respondents for the 2024 module is estimated to be 4,542.

Estimated Number of Respondents for 2024 Leave and Job Flexibilities Module

ATUS Universe (Persons)	Leave and Job Flexibilities Universe (Wage and Salary Workers)	2017-18 Leave Module Response Rate	Estimated 2024 Leave and Job Flexibilities Module Respondents	Estimated Total Leave and Job Flexibilities Module Respondents
1,990 eligible cases per month	4,761 eligible cases per year	95.4%	378 per month	4,542

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:

- **Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection,**
- **Estimation procedure,**
- **Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification,**
- **Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and**
- **Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.**

The 2024 Leave and Job Flexibilities Module is associated with the ATUS and thus the procedures for data collection are the same as those of the ATUS. All ATUS interviews are conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) technology. Interviewers from the U.S. Census Bureau's Contact Center in Jeffersonville, Indiana, conduct the interviews and assign the activity codes.

The ATUS interview is a combination of structured questions and conversational interviewing. For the household roster update, employment status questions, the CPS updates, and the proposed Eating and Health questions, Census Bureau interviewers read the question on the screen and enter the appropriate response. For the time-use diary and

subsequent summary questions on childcare, paid work, volunteering, and eldercare, the interviewer more flexibly interviews the respondent, filling in the diary grid as questions are answered.

The data collection instrument includes an edit check that ensures all cells are filled before the interviewer exits the diary. Extensive interviewer training has been provided in how to do conversational interviewing—including when to selectively probe for adequate information to code activities. Refresher training is conducted regularly. Interviews are periodically monitored by supervisors, coaches, and BLS sponsors to evaluate conversational interviewing performance. Because the interviewers are also responsible for coding activity information collected in the time diary, they understand the level of detail that must be collected during the interview. Interviewers never code data from the interviews they conducted. A coding verification and adjudication process is in place to ensure activities are accurately coded. Verification continues to be done at 100 percent to ensure high and consistent data quality.

A complete description of the estimation procedures for the ATUS can be found in chapter 7 of the ATUS User's Guide: www.bls.gov/tus/atususersguide.pdf.

3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

The proposed module will be attached to the ATUS and the transition between the two will be seamless. In 2017-18, most eligible respondents (95.4 percent) completed the Leave Module; because of this, the present discussion focuses on response to the ATUS.

A number of efforts have been undertaken to maximize ATUS survey response rates.

- A. *Field Test*. The 2001 field test examined the effectiveness of incentives, sending advance materials by priority mail, doubling the number of eligible interviewing days by using a day-of-week substitution methodology, calling in advance to set interview appointments, “recycling” cases for field visits, and extending the field period from 4 to up to 8 weeks.
1. *Use of Incentives and recycling cases to the field*. The 2001 field test showed that incentives significantly increased response rates. “Recycling” cases to the field—that is, turning nonresponse cases over to interviewers to conduct face-to-face interviews in the respondent’s home—was also effective in maximizing response rates, particularly for no-telephone-number households. However, incentives to all respondents and recycling were both cost prohibitive.
 2. *Appointment setting*. Calling in advance to set an appointment (“proactive appointment setting”) did not improve response and completed interviews using that strategy required 70 percent more contact attempts than other completed interviews. As a result, advance appointment setting was rejected.
 3. *Day-of-week substitution*. Allowing day-of-week substitution increased response rates by about 4 percentage points over 8 weeks; however, this practice led to a disproportionately high number of completed interviews on Wednesdays and a disproportionately low number on Fridays. To maintain integrity in the day-of-week distribution of the sample, substitution was also rejected.
 4. *Use of priority mail*. Consistent with survey methods literature, priority mail appears to have increased response rates in the ATUS field test—by over 10 percentage points. It is relatively low cost to implement (\$6.19 per mailing as of July 2023) and is currently used for sending advance materials.

5. *Fielding period.* The optimal field period length varies depending on incentive use. Without an incentive, the field test showed that an 8-week fielding period was required to approach 70 percent (69 percent was achieved in the field test). As a result, this 8-week fielding period was adopted for full production. To even out workload and measure time use across days of the month, one quarter of the monthly sample is introduced each week for 4 weeks. Active cases are called up to 7 times per day on one eligible day each week for 8 weeks.

B. *Incentive expansions.* Two OMB-approved incentive expansions were implemented over the years. As of 2013, incentives are sent to individuals in no-telephone-number households as well as individuals for whom the Census Bureau assigned call outcome codes of: *108 Number not in service; 109 Number changed, no new number given; 124 Number could not be completed as dialed; and 127 Temporarily not in service* after the first week of collection. The use of incentives has helped to boost response among difficult-to-reach populations. Individuals who are sent incentives are more likely to be black, of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, to have less education, and to have lower household incomes than members of households that provide phone numbers.

Prior to January 2020, BLS provided a prepaid debit card to incentive cases. In January 2020, BLS began a study examining the use of cash incentives instead of prepaid debit cards as a cost-savings measure. The ATUS cash incentive study had two goals. The first goal tested the effectiveness of using \$0, \$5, and \$10 cash incentives, where effectiveness was measured in terms of survey response. The second goal tested whether a \$5 or \$10 cash incentive could boost survey response among certain underrepresented populations (in the study, the focus was on sampled persons who were 15 to 24 years old). Data for the incentive study were collected starting with the December 2019 sample through the September 2021 sample. Based on the results of the study and with OMB approval, starting in April 2023, \$10 cash incentives are now sent to sampled individuals in households with no listed or working telephone number as well the hard-to-reach population of 15- to 24-year-olds (see Attachment F).

C. *Toll-free number provided to DPs.* To maximize response, a toll-free number is provided to all eligible respondents in the advance materials. They can use the number to call in and set an appointment for an interview or, if they call on their interview day, to complete the interview.

D. *Advance materials revised.* In 2005, an examination of the ATUS advance materials was undertaken and the advance materials were subsequently revised. The advance materials were reviewed and updated again in 2012-13. The advance letters were revised to include information commonly asked by respondents during their first contact with interviewers. The ATUS brochure was updated and redesigned to appeal to more respondents. The debit card and instruction sheet also were redesigned to appear more prominently in the advanced mailer envelope

(Note: debit cards were replaced with cash incentives in April 2023. See Section 3.B). These materials were modified based on feedback received from expert reviewers and focus groups of ATUS interviewers who examined existing materials.

- E. Respondent Web site.* BLS developed a website to address common respondent questions about the survey. Its web address is included in the advance letters (<http://www.bls.gov/respondents/tus/home.htm>).

- F. Fax letters.* BLS worked with Census to develop "we've been trying to reach you letters" to fax to telephone numbers that reach fax machines. Like an answering machine message, the fax letters ask the sampled person to call the Census Bureau and complete an interview.
- G. Interview Operations Analysis.* In 2004, telephone call center operations were examined to determine if measures could be taken to increase response rates, and three basic operations were changed. First, the ATUS staff learned that while many surveys set calling goals for interviewers, the call center management was not providing ATUS interviewers with daily or weekly goals. Beginning in the summer of 2004, the telephone center management set daily goals for ATUS interviewers, providing concrete guidelines for how many completed calls are desired. Although the interviewers do not always meet their goals, these goals assist the telephone center management to measure daily progress and to motivate the interviewers. Second, it was discovered that because of the way call blocks (times) were scheduled, many calls were made between about 4:30 pm and 5:00 pm, before many people were home from work. Methods for calling were changed so that more calls would be made after 5:30 pm, when people who work regular 9-5 hours would be more likely to be home. Finally, the Census Bureau conducted more research into invalid phone numbers in an attempt to find valid phone numbers for the contact person.
- H. Interviewer job aids.* Interviewers have job aids—answers to frequently asked questions—designed to help answer questions about the survey and to assist them in gaining respondents' cooperation to participate.
- I. Interviewer incentives.* An interviewer incentive study was considered but subsequently rejected as the reality of implementing interviewer incentives was determined to be cost prohibitive.
- J. Newsletters.* In cooperation with Census, BLS periodically produces newsletters that are designed to motivate and inform interviewers.
- K. Interviewer training.* BLS and Census have conducted workshops for interviewers on techniques to gain cooperation from respondents, and much of the material developed for this training was incorporated into other interviewer training courses. Interviewer operations also have been scrutinized and revised to increase the probability of completed interviews, such as redesigning the call blocks to add more call attempts during evening hours.
- L. Envelope Test.* In 2019, studies done by the American Community Survey determined that the use of new, updated "Census Branding" envelopes increased the visibility of Census materials and surveys. In 2022, the ATUS tested the use of Census branding on First Class envelopes against USPS Priority mail

envelopes to determine if a change in the mailout material improves response and if it would be more cost effective to use. Results of both studies are forthcoming.

- M. Studies to understand nonresponse and possible nonresponse bias.* In addition to the efforts listed above, a number of studies have been done to understand nonresponse in the ATUS. See Attachment G for a summary of ATUS nonresponse bias studies.
- N. Web collection of ATUS diary.* BLS is exploring a mixed mode design for the ATUS. A move to a mixed-mode design could potentially help ATUS improve response rates and be prepared for the survey climate of the future. While some of these projects have been completed, this work is ongoing. See Attachment H for a summary of ATUS Web Diary Development to date.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of test may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.

Many of the questions appearing on the proposed module were cognitively tested in 2010 before becoming a part of the 2011 Leave Module (see Attachment I). In 2016, some questions were deleted and some questions were added and cognitively tested for the 2017-18 Leave Module (see Attachment J).

As in the 2017-2018 module, the proposed 2024 questionnaire will include five sections:

1. Access to Paid Leave
2. Access to Unpaid Leave
3. Leave taken in the last week
4. Job flexibility and work schedules
5. Non-use of leave

Although many questions remain the same, some have been dropped and some have been added or modified to obtain better information about the availability and use of flexible and alternative work schedules. The proposed changes appear in Section 4 on Job flexibility and work schedules. Unlike the 2017-18 Leave Module, the 2024 Module will not include a question on whether workers' flexible work schedules are part of a formal program or policy offered by their employer. The 2024 Module will also not collect the number of days workers usually work at their main job. The proposed 2024 Leave Module includes three additional questions that were not included in the 2017-18 Module. These include a question to collect the greatest number of hours workers have worked at their jobs in the last month, the fewest number of hours workers have worked in the last month, and how difficult it would be for workers to take an hour or two off during a regular workday to take care of family or personal matters. These questions were

added to provide additional information about the instability of the workers' schedules and the ability of workers to take time off with little notice if needed. Two questions had a minor question wording change or optional interviewer probe added for clarity. The new questions and modifications were reviewed by survey methods experts and cognitively tested. See the Cognitive Testing Results for the 2024 Leave Module (Attachment E) for more information.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

The following individuals may be consulted concerning the statistical data collection and analysis operation:

ATUS Leave and Job Flexibilities Module
OMB Control Number 1220-0191
OMB Expiration Date: Reinstatement

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Beth Capps
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Attachments:

- A. 2024 ATUS Leave and Job Flexibilities Module Questionnaire
- B. Legal Authority
- C. ATUS Advance Materials
- D. Table A7 Median Hourly Earnings
- E. Cognitive Testing Results for the 2024 ATUS Leave Module
- F. ATUS Cash Incentive Analysis Report
- G. Summary of ATUS Nonresponse Bias Studies
- H. ATUS Web Development Summary
- I. Cognitive Testing Results for the 2011 ATUS Leave Module
- J. Cognitive Testing Results for the 2017 ATUS Leave Module