

Testing Global Questions for the Consumer Expenditure Gemini Recall Interview

Final Report

Authors:

Jennifer Crafts, Ph.D.
Rachel Tesler, Ph.D.
Johnny Blair, M.A.

Jessica Behm, M.A.
Karen Stein, Ph.D.

Mariel Leonard, M.A.
Jasmine Folz, M.A.



September 2015

Prepared for:
U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics
Washington, DC 20212
Kopp.Brandon@bls.gov
Douglas.Pamela@bls.gov

Prepared by:
Westat
An Employee-Owned Research Corporation[®]
1600 Research Boulevard
Rockville, Maryland 20850-3129
(301) 251-1500

This page is intentionally blank

Table of Contents

<u>Chapter</u>		<u>Page</u>
	Executive Summary.....	ES-1
	Introduction.....	ES-1
	Method	ES-1
	Conclusions and Recommendations.....	ES-3
1	Introduction and Purpose	1-1
	1.1 Background.....	1-1
	1.2 Objective of the Task.....	1-2
	1.3 Research Questions	1-3
2	Methods	2-1
	2.1 Research Design.....	2-1
	2.1.1 Iterative Testing Rounds	2-1
	2.1.2 Testing Locations	2-1
	2.2 Development of Question Clusters and Question Wording.....	2-2
	2.3 Recruitment.....	2-2
	2.4 Participants.....	2-3
	2.5 Session Procedure	2-5
	2.6 Key Metrics.....	2-5
	2.6.1 Expenditure Reports	2-5
	2.6.2 Comprehension.....	2-6
	2.6.3 Recheck of Expenditures.....	2-7
	2.7 Data Analysis	2-7
3	Results	3-1
	3.1 Cluster A: Apparel and Personal Items	3-2
	3.2 Cluster B: Repairs, Replacements, Upkeep of Home, and Home Operations	3-8
	3.3 Cluster C: Household Linens and Furnishings.....	3-14
	3.4 Cluster D: Trips and Transportation.....	3-37
	3.5 Cluster E: Recreation.....	3-51

<u>Chapter</u>		<u>Page</u>
	3.6 Cluster F: Children and Infants	3-68
	3.7 Cluster G: Electronics/Technology	3-73
	3.8 Cluster H: Events.....	3-85
4	Conclusions and Recommendations.....	4-1
	References.....	R-1
<u>Appendixes</u>		
1	Recruitment Screener.....	A1-1
2	Consent Form	A2-1
3	Session Protocol	A3-1
4	Lessons Learned and Observations on the Testing	A4-1
<u>Tables</u>		
ES-1	Question testing status at the conclusion of testing.....	ES-4
2-1	Testing rounds and locations	2-1
2-2	Question clusters and original number of questions.....	2-2
2-3	Demographic characteristics of study participants	2-4
3-1	Cluster A: Summary table of tested question wording and order	3-3
3-2	Cluster B: Summary table of tested question wording and order.....	3-9
3-3	Cluster C: Summary table of tested question wording and order.....	3-15
3-4	Cluster D: Summary table of tested question wording and order.....	3-39
3-5	Cluster E: Summary table of tested question wording and order	3-53

<u>Tables</u>		<u>Page</u>
3-6	Cluster F: Summary table of tested question wording and order.....	3-69
3-7	Cluster G: Summary table of tested question wording and order.....	3-75
3-8	Cluster H: Summary table of tested question wording and order.....	3-86
4-1	Question testing status at the conclusion of testing.....	4-2
4-2	Original wording and recommended wording when testing concluded, by cluster.....	4-5

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is redesigning the Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE), which provides data on the buying habits of American consumers. One of three interview components of the CE is the in-person interviewer-administered recall interview, in which respondents report their household's expenditures for 38 expenditure categories (Passero et al. 2013) for the preceding three month period. BLS is investigating the use "global" questions to collect these expenses as a way to potentially decrease burden for both the interviewer and respondent.

The purpose of this study was to conduct iterative testing to identify the appropriate level of aggregation and question wording for the expenditure categories to be collected in the recall interview. The specific research questions were as follows.

1. For each question, what wording is most effective to aid both recall and reporting of applicable expenses and question comprehension?
2. For each question, what is the most effective administration order (relative to other questions that will be administered)?

Method

Iterative Testing Rounds and Locations. We used cognitive interviewing techniques to gain an in-depth understanding of how test participants understood and answered the expenditure questions. Each testing round focused on testing a cluster (or subset of the cluster) of questions, with approximately 5 participants assigned to test about 20 questions within a one-hour session. We completed a total of 85 cognitive interviews over the course of 9 iterative testing rounds. The interviews were conducted in Westat's cognitive interviewing facility in Rockville, MD, as well as in Baltimore, MD; Winchester, VA; and Gettysburg, PA.

Question Development. Westat divided the 38 expenditure categories into 8 "clusters" based on similar content, then drafted an initial set of 116 questions to cover all of the categories. BLS suggested wording the questions based on definitions of the expense items to be covered, where possible. In some cases, the wording also provided examples of expenses to help cue recall and reporting. BLS reviewed and suggested revisions for the first round of testing.

Recruitment. Participants were recruited from Westat’s volunteer database and by placing ads (e.g., Craigslist and local newspaper ads, Facebook ads, Google Display ads). Potential participants were screened for eligibility by either logging into a web-based survey tool or calling a Westat recruiter to answer a series of demographic questions and questions about their household spending over the prior three-month period.

Session Procedure and Metrics. Experienced Westat cognitive interviewers conducted all 85 interviews. In conjunction with BLS, Westat developed a general session protocol (see Appendix 3) that was used in each testing round. To assess reporting accuracy, participants were first asked each expenditure question, and if they responded “Yes,” they were asked for the three-month expense total. After answering all questions, the interviewer then followed up by asking, for each “Yes” response, for the specific item(s) purchased, with cost and month. Comprehension was assessed by asking participants to name examples of expenses for each question, and (for a majority of the questions) to categorize a list of items. The comprehension activities also served to cue recall of any additional expenses; respondents were asked for any items not already reported, with cost and month of purchase. As needed, the interviewer probed to determine the reason(s) for not reporting the item(s) earlier in the interview.

Through iterative rounds, we tested the following types of revisions: (1) changing the wording; (2) merging two questions to form a higher-level expenditure question; (3) splitting an expenditure question into two (or more) questions; and (4) changing the question administration order.

Analysis and Reporting. For each question, items were judged to be accurately reported if they were both applicable for the question and purchased within the correct reference period. (Telescoping and recall issues were also noted.) We examined the reporting errors in concert with the qualitative (comprehension activity-based) data and all participant verbalizations to identify comprehension issues and possible revisions to clarify question intent and breadth.

After testing each cluster the first time, Westat analyzed the data and provided a detailed interim memo of reporting and comprehension results for each question, with recommendations for changing question wording and/or administration order. BLS provided oversight for revisions. For the clusters tested a second or third time, Westat provided a summary table with recommendations for any further revisions and supporting results.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As described above, we drafted the 116 original questions as definitions where possible. For each question, if comprehension and/or reporting issues (such as reporting items that were not applicable, or excluding items that were applicable) surfaced, we considered the following as options for revisions for a subsequent round of testing.

- Revise the wording of the definition to address specific observed reporting and/or interpretation issues that surfaced;
- Use examples instead of, or in addition to, the definition; or
- Add exclusion text (to explicitly address a misinterpretation observed with multiple participants or judged likely to be significant for the population, e.g., over- or under-reporting of large expenses).

If these options did not seem appropriate (e.g., a question was so broad that it was not possible to use a succinct and representative set of examples, adding exclusion text made the question text very lengthy) or did not lead to improved performance in subsequent testing, a last resort was to split the question into two or more questions, each with a more specific focus.

The wording changed for 65 of the 116 original questions at some point over the course of testing. Three original questions were split into 2 or 3 separate questions, and two original questions were merged into a single question. When testing concluded, the total number of questions was 119.

The evidence also resulted in changing the administration order for some questions. In these cases, participants reported expenses for a question but should have reported them for a subsequent question, and/or comprehension results showed that items were considered applicable for a question that occurred later in the administration order. We then monitored whether reporting and comprehension improved in a subsequent testing round. The main reason for ensuring reporting of expenses for the intended questions was the mapping of expenses to Expenditure Categories. If expenses are reported for the “wrong” questions, or are reported multiple times (where recall of the same expense is cued by the wording of several questions), the mapping of expenses to the Expenditure Categories will be incorrect and/or an over-estimate of total expenses for the recall interview.

Table ES-1 shows, at the conclusion of testing, the status regarding recommendations for further testing of the expenditure questions.

Table ES-1. Question testing status at the conclusion of testing

Question testing status	Number of questions
Testing considered complete	5
More testing is recommended, to monitor the performance of the question (due to wording and/or order changes to <i>other</i> questions within the cluster)	72
More testing is recommended, due to revisions to the wording and/or order of the question	42
Total	119

After concluding the last testing round, Westat provided a summary table of recommended wording and order for each cluster. That table is included as Table 4-2 in Chapter 4 of this report. Another final product of the research was a crosswalk that maps each of the 116 original questions to an Expenditure Category number and name, the question’s component Universal Classification Codes (UCCs), and the recommended question wording and ordering (within cluster) after testing concluded. For applicable individual questions, the crosswalk provides additional notes about administration order relative to questions in *other* clusters, based on the reporting and comprehension results.

The large number of questions in the recall interview created two significant limitations for testing. First, it was not possible to cover all questions with participants. Assessing both reporting accuracy and comprehension limited testing to approximately 15 questions in each one-hour session. (The protocol was modified in the later testing rounds to accommodate testing more questions, approximately 20 per hour.) Therefore, when testing concluded, we did not offer a definitive recommendation for overall order of questions. More testing will be needed to determine an optimal order for the full set of questions for the recall interview. To cover more questions with each participant will require a longer session time and/or an alternative approach (e.g., cutting elements out of the protocol).

A second limitation was the small sample size. A total of 85 participant hours was allocated for testing over the 9 rounds. This allowed testing each question in each round with approximately 5 participants. We recommend future testing with larger numbers per question and round, to collect more reporting and comprehension data for judging question performance. Information about an appropriate sample size might also come from evaluating the adequacy of samples used for other interviews that have similar characteristics to the recall interview. Testing with 20 – 30 participants per question would assist in evaluating whether decisions made to date on the basis of these small samples are sound, as well as in identifying further issues and possible revisions.

1.1 Background

The Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) provides data on the buying habits of American consumers, including both expenditures and income for the consumer unit (i.e., families and single consumers). CE respondents provide a wide range of expenditures, from monthly utility bills to irregular entertainment expenses, through the recall interview, the diary, and the records interview.

BLS is currently redesigning the CE in response to evidence of measurement error, changes in technology, changes in the types of expenses that people incur, and the need for greater flexibility in administration (Gemini Project, 2010). As part of the development process for the redesign, BLS began investigating ways to reduce burden for the recall interview. The in-person recall interview will require respondents to report their household's expenditures for a selected set of expenditure categories for the preceding three month period. To reduce the burden associated with the current recall interview, BLS set out to develop from scratch a set of "global" questions to collect data at a higher level of aggregation than data collected to date (Beatty, 2010; Goldenberg & Steinberg, 2010; Peytchev, 2010). Theoretically, asking a global question about expenses for an aggregate or high-level expenditure category (e.g., appliances) should take less time than asking a longer series of questions about the individual items (such as refrigerators, washing machines, ovens) within that category, and potentially decrease burden for both the interviewer and respondent. The reduction in burden should not be at the expense of increased measurement error, another motivation for the redesign. This approach should not significantly reduce the number or accuracy of items reported, or have a negative impact on any other measurement error factors.

Preliminary research (Edgar, 2011; Kopp & Yu, 2013) on several categories of global questions has revealed mixed results. While respondents were able to report expenses at a higher level of aggregation for some questions, recall and comprehension issues were observed for others. Recall issues can lead to under-reporting. Under-reporting of total expenditures can result from reporting fewer items, even if the costs are reported accurately. And recall can also produce over-reporting, if an item is telescoped into the three-month reference period. Comprehension issues can lead to both over-reporting and under-reporting of expenses. For reported items, recall error for the actual costs may be either too high or too low, based on either random variability or biased in one direction.

1.2 Objective of the Task

The objective of this study was to develop and test global questions for the recall interview within the redesigned CE survey. BLS prefers to use fewer questions than currently administered as the “detailed questions” in the current quarterly interview survey while not increasing measurement error. (Note that while reducing measurement error is desirable, that may be difficult to achieve when asking questions at a more global level. A realistic goal may be to not increase measurement error, while shortening the interview length.) The objective was to determine an appropriate level of aggregation and question wording for the full set of expenditure categories.

BLS identified 38 expenditure categories (provided to Westat as “Appendix A”) that will be covered in the CE recall interview¹. These 38 categories represent the highest possible level of aggregation acceptable for key stakeholders (Passero et al., 2013). Each expenditure category has one or more component Universal Classification Codes (UCCs). For each of the 38 categories, BLS staff reviewed the breadth of the content and provided a “proposed level of aggregation” – an expert judgment of how many questions may be required to capture expenditures. If one question would be developed for each of these aggregations, the number of questions for the recall interview would total to approximately 150. BLS expects to use fewer questions for some categories. However, testing may prove that aggregation for others will lead to over- or under-reporting, so more questions may need to be retained. The question wording will need to correspond with respondent recall strategies and be at a level of aggregation that resonates across respondents and is easiest to answer accurately.

Westat’s task was to conduct cognitive research to develop and evaluate new questions for the recall interview. To develop effective question wording, the questions were tested iteratively, with input and review from BLS. Westat started with an initial set of 116 questions (as described in Section 2.2).

¹ Note that additional expenditure categories that are not part of the recall interview are covered in the diary and records interviews.

1.3 Research Questions

This study addressed an overarching research question: What is the appropriate level of aggregation and question wording for the expenditure categories to be collected in the recall interview?

When the study began, we anticipated addressing this research question with not only qualitative data, but also quantitative data. For example, based on collecting data from 10 participants per round, we expected to calculate the number and percentage of participants who over- and under-reported for each question, and on average, by how much.

However, due to session time constraints, there was a need to reduce the number of questions tested within each session. That required reallocating the 116 questions (divided into 8 clusters, as explained below) across rounds, and testing with approximately 5 participants per question in each round. The reallocation allowed for testing all clusters once over the course of the first 5 rounds, and re-testing a subset of the clusters in the last 4 rounds. After discussing the results of the first testing round with BLS, the decision was to focus on qualitative data to identify any reporting and comprehension evidence that strongly indicated changing question wording and/or order.

The specific research questions were as follows.

1. For each question, what wording is most effective to aid both recall and reporting of applicable expenses and question comprehension?
2. For each question, what is the most effective administration order (relative to other questions that will be administered)?

This page is intentionally blank

2.1 Research Design

2.1.1 Iterative Testing Rounds

We used cognitive interviewing techniques to gain an in-depth understanding of how test participants understood and answered the expenditure questions. Cognitive testing was conducted iteratively, through rounds of roughly 10 interviews per round, for a total of 85 interviews. After completing each round, Westat analyzed the data, and with BLS input, revised the questions for the next round of testing.

2.1.2 Testing Locations

The cognitive interviews were conducted in Westat’s cognitive interviewing facility in Rockville, MD, and in a hotel conference room in the other locations. The testing locations were chosen for operational convenience as well as representation of urban/suburban/rural locations and some geographic representation in the states of Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. A mix of demographic characteristics related to purchase behaviors was also a factor, as discussed below. Table 2-1 shows the locations where testing occurred and the number of interviews completed for each round.

Table 2-1. Testing rounds and locations

Testing round	Location(s)
Round 1 (n = 10)	Rockville, MD
Round 2 (n = 10)	Baltimore, MD and Rockville, MD
Round 3 (n = 10)	Winchester, VA and Rockville, MD
Round 4 (n = 10)	Gettysburg, PA and Rockville, MD
Round 5 (n = 10)	Rockville, MD
Round 6 (n = 10)	Rockville, MD
Round 7 (n = 9)	Rockville, MD
Round 8 (n = 10)	Gettysburg, PA and Rockville, MD
Round 9 (n = 6)	Rockville, MD

2.2 Development of Question Clusters and Question Wording

In order to make decisions about which expenditure categories to test in each round, we divided the 38 recall interview expenditure categories into 8 clusters. The initial development process was a collaborative effort, with Westat providing draft questions and BLS staff providing feedback and suggestions.

For initial draft question wording, BLS recommended that Westat develop definitions rather than use examples (where possible). To develop draft question wording for each question to be tested, we reviewed these BLS resources: the UCC wording for each Expenditure Category, the Expenditure Category labels, the example items in the InfoBook (which field interviewers use to help cue recall of expenses during the current recall interview), and the coding of items from the diary item code files (which BLS uses to code open-ended diary items to UCCs).

Table 2-2 shows the clusters and the number of questions developed for each. BLS submitted the questions for OMB approval, as well as all participant recruitment materials and protocol for conducting the sessions.

Table 2-2. Question clusters and original number of questions

Cluster	Number of questions
A. Apparel and personal items	6
B. Repairs, replacements, upkeep of home; home operations	8
C. Household linens, furnishings, items and supplies, and appliances	34
D. Trips and transportation	21
E. Recreation	26
F. Children and infants	5
G. Electronics/technology	13
H. Events	3
Total	116

2.3 Recruitment

The objectives of the recruiting task were to:

- Identify and schedule participants who had expenditures for multiple expenditure questions;
- Obtain some representation of participants from urban, suburban, and rural locations; and

- Ensure a demographic mix within the participant pool.

We used several methods to recruit participants for each testing round. For the testing in Rockville and Baltimore, we sent an email to members of Westat’s research volunteer database that described the purpose of the study and invited them to take the next step to determine their eligibility for participation. We ran Craigslist ads for each testing location. For the non-Rockville locations, we ran newspaper ads in local papers and also placed pay-per-click Google Display Network and Facebook ads to reach people who had recently made particular types of purchases.

For all recruiting methods, the potential participants were asked to either complete a web-based screener survey tool or call a Westat recruiter to be screened for eligibility. Westat programmed an online screener survey to collect demographics and responses about various types of recent purchases, using a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) survey product that ensured secure collection and management of the recruitment data. This allowed us to expediently collect and review a large pool of screener responses and identify appropriate participants for each round of testing in advance of the scheduled dates.

Westat’s IRB reviewed and approved all recruiting and session materials. All recruiting materials were also submitted as part of BLS’ OMB package for this study. Appendix 1 provides a copy of the questions on the recruitment screener and Appendix 2 provides the BLS consent form.

2.4 Participants

For each testing round, we reviewed the list of screened survey respondents with the aim of scheduling participants representing a balance of demographic categories (gender, education, income, race, and household composition). However, in making final decisions about which ones to schedule for interviews, we more heavily weighted the number of purchases and breadth of coverage that we expected the potential participants to provide. Table 2-3 shows the demographic characteristics of the 85 study participants.

Table 2-3. Demographic characteristics of study participants

Demographic characteristics		Number of participants
All Participants		85
Age	18 - 29	21
	30 - 39	15
	40 - 49	17
	50 - 59	22
	60 - 69	6
	70+	4
Gender	Female	56
	Male	29
Race	White	36
	Black	27
	Asian	5
	Hispanic	12
	Pacific Islander	1
	American Indian	1
	No race indicated	3
Education	No diploma	2
	High school/GED	11
	Some college	28
	College degree	27
	Post graduate degree	16
	Missing	1
Household Composition	Lives alone	17
	Multiple adults	35
	Adult(s) + child (age 2 - 17)	25
	Adult(s) + infant	2
	Adult(s) + child + infant	5
	Missing	1
Marital Status	Single	34
	Married	29
	Separated	7
	Divorced	8
	Part of a couple	6
	Missing	1

We interviewed more women than men; women tended to qualify with more expenses based on the screener. The majority of participants were from 18 – 59 years old, and lived in households with multiple household members. In terms of education level, the sample was approximately evenly split between those with up to some college vs. those with a college degree or post-graduate degree.

2.5 Session Procedure

Experienced Westat cognitive interviewers conducted all 85 interviews. In conjunction with BLS, Westat developed a general session protocol (see Appendix 3) that was used in each testing round. The protocol included an overview of the project and the participant's role, the consent process (including signature and the opportunity to ask questions), and a series of questions and activities to assess reporting accuracy and comprehension. Westat developed a separate interviewer guide for each round; each guide contained the specific question wording and order to be tested for the cluster assigned to each round.

During each session, we elicited participants' verbal responses, including: (1) a 3-month expense total for each question they said they had spent money for within the reference period, (2) specific purchases/expenses, with cost and month, (3) items they named as examples of expenses for each question, and (4) responses to various probes. Using a program on a laptop computer, participants also categorized a list of items (as applicable or not applicable). (This activity was not covered for a subset of questions that were judged to be too "narrow" to provide a reasonable list of items to judge.)

Interviewers used unscripted probes as needed to clarify participants' responses. For some questions, interviewers also used scripted probes (based on the interviewer's discretion) designed to assess comprehension and whether revisions (specific terms and phrases) made between rounds improved comprehension. We encouraged participants to comment aloud about the questions, specific words, or anything else that they thought was relevant while completing the comprehension activities.

All interviews were audio-recorded. Participants received \$40 for completing a one-hour interview.

2.6 Key Metrics

2.6.1 Expenditure Reports

Each participant was first asked all questions included in the cluster assigned for the testing round. The participant answered each question with a Yes or No, and if Yes, was asked to provide an

estimate of how much money they had spent over the 3-month reporting period. The participant completed this for all questions, before moving on to the next part of the protocol.

For each three-month total reported expense, the participant was asked to report each individual expense/item, along with the cost and the month of purchase for each. These reported items – both correctly reported and over-reported items – provided insight into participants’ interpretations of the aggregate question meaning and the range of items considered applicable for the question.

For questions with reported expenses, the participant was asked if there were any other expenses/items they had considered, but decided not to report. If the participant said Yes, the interviewer asked for the item(s), cost(s) and month of purchase. If needed, the interviewer probed to elicit an explanation of why the participant decided not to report it. These explanations provided insight into the perceived breadth of the question, as well as areas of uncertainty.

2.6.2 Comprehension

For most questions, the participant completed one or both of the following activities to assess understanding of the question wording and breadth. The activities were also intended to cue recall, to aid in rechecking the original expense reporting (as explained below).

- **Name 5 Examples.** Participants were asked to name 5 examples of expenses that would qualify for the question. This activity served the purpose of identifying salient examples across participants, as well as examples that came to mind aside from those that participants had actual expenses for. Commonly named examples that were not applicable provided insight into comprehension issues, such as where exclusion text might be needed.
- **Item Categorization.** Participants were shown a list that included both applicable and not applicable items (“lures”), for most questions. The participant’s errors of inclusion and exclusion helped identify general comprehension issues, as well as specific examples of errors — suggesting where question wording changes might reduce both types of error.

Some of the questions in each cluster were too “narrow” to provide a reasonable set of items for a categorization task. For these questions, participants simply viewed a list of items that were applicable.

2.6.3 Recheck of Expenditures

After completing the comprehension activity(ies) for each question, the interviewer asked if the participant had thought of any item(s) for the question that were not already reported, and if so, the item, the cost, and the month purchased. As needed, the interviewer probed to determine the reason(s) for not reporting the item(s) earlier in the interview. (Note that in some cases, participants reported an item because they had seen it listed. They had essentially been “lured” into reporting an item and expense that was not applicable for a question. These instances were not treated as under-reports during the analysis stage.)

2.7 Data Analysis

As in BLS’ prior research with global questions, we focused the analysis on level of individual expenditure questions. We set up an Access database to merge and track all data for all 8 clusters and 116 questions. After each round was completed, we entered data for each participant for all questions, including expenditure report data and qualitative comments. The categorization judgments collected during the sessions were merged into the database. Then we coded all items as (1) applicable or not applicable for the question, and (2) reported within the reference period or telescoped. BLS reviewed any outstanding coding decisions.

We analyzed the qualitative data by reviewing all comments to identify instances of reporting and comprehension issues. The analysis objective was to inform the revision of questions, increase accurate item/expense inclusion, decrease inclusion errors and improve respondent comprehension. We considered the following points in reviewing the evidence.

- **Reporting Accuracy.** Participants should have reported all of their relevant items when initially asked a question. If they decided to exclude any item(s), those should have only been items that are not applicable for the question. Forgotten items should have been rare or non-existent, if the wording performed well in cueing all applicable expenses. And there should not have been instances where respondents said No to the original expenditure question and later realized the answer should have been Yes.
- **Comprehension.** Comprehension activity results should indicate that participants were able to name primarily applicable examples, and that they achieved a high accuracy percentage (across participants) in categorizing the item lists.

To address the research questions, we focused the analysis on these points:

- In initially answering each question, to what extent did participants recall and report only applicable items?
- What did each of the following indicate about the performance of the question – in terms of its wording and order?
 - The over-reported (not applicable) items;
 - The under-reported (either forgotten or excluded based on the participants' reasoning) items;
 - The named examples; and
 - Misjudgments for both the applicable and not applicable items.

After the first testing of each cluster, Westat provided a detailed interim memo of reporting and comprehension results for each question, with recommendations for changing the question wording and/or order. For the clusters tested a second or third time, Westat provided a summary table with recommendations for any further revisions, with supporting results.

Sections 3.1 – 3.8 of this chapter present summary-level results for all questions in each cluster. At the beginning of each section, a summary table provides all questions in the cluster, in the order derived through testing of that cluster. Across all rounds, the questions retained their original assigned number. If we split a question into two or more separate questions, a new number was assigned to one part, and if two questions were combined, a new number was assigned to the combined question. The summary table also provides a column indicating testing status at the conclusion of testing, with one of the following three entries for each question:

- **Complete:** Testing may be considered complete. These questions tended to cover very specific expenses; reporting and comprehension evidence indicated good question performance.
- **Monitor:** These questions would benefit from further testing so as to monitor reporting and comprehension evidence with a larger n. In some cases, these questions performed well, but performance should be monitored within the context of changes made to the wording and/or order of questions around them.
- **Test revisions:** Due to wording changes and/or order changes that were not retested, we recommend further testing with a larger n.

After each testing round, BLS staff and Westat project staff (including consultant Johnny Blair) reviewed and discussed the results and recommendations, then decided the wording to test in the subsequent round. All sections below describe recommendations, changes, and testing that we accomplished as a group.

For each question, we provide:

- The original wording and (in bold font) the wording after testing concluded for that cluster;
- A summary statement describing the main changes, if any, over the course of the testing;
- Bulleted summary points providing the rationale for recommended wording and/or order revisions; and
- [If applicable] Remaining issues, such as what to monitor in additional testing, and why.

3.1 Cluster A: Apparel and Personal Items

This section summarizes the main results and recommendations for the 6 questions in Cluster A.

The cluster was tested three times, in these rounds:

- Rounds 1 – 4
 - In Round 1, partial data (due to session time constraints) were collected from 5 participants.
 - In Rounds 2 – 4, 6 participants completed one or more of the Cluster A questions they were eligible for (based on responses to screening questions).
- Round 7 (n = 9).
- Round 9 (n = 6).

Table 3-1 presents the question wording tested in these rounds, and the wording recommended after Round 9 concluded. For detailed results and recommendations developed after the first testing, refer to the Cluster A Interim Memo. For results and recommendations developed after subsequent rounds, refer to the Cluster A Round 7 Interim Summary Table and Cluster A Round 9 Summary Table.

Table 3-1. Cluster A: Summary table of tested question wording and order

Q #	Tested wording (rounds 1 – 4)	Tested wording (round 7)	Tested wording (round 9)	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
A. Apparel and Personal Itemsj					
A1	Jewelry, watches, or parts for them	Jewelry, watches, or accessories for them. Include items for men, women, or children.	Jewelry, watches, or parts for them. Include items for men, women, or children.	Jewelry or watches, for men, women, or children	Test revisions
A2	Watch or jewelry repair, including sizing or cleaning	Watch or jewelry care, such as repairs, sizing, cleaning, or engraving	Care for watches or jewelry, such as repairs, sizing, cleaning, or engraving	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
A3	Clothing rental or preservation, or clothing storage outside the home	Clothing rental, clothing preservation, or professional clothing storage service	Clothing rental, clothing preservation, or professional services for storing clothes	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
A5	Any uniforms or costumes for men, women, or children. Do not include costs that are reimbursed.	[Same as previous round]	Any uniforms or costumes for men, women, or children. Do NOT include shoes or costs that are reimbursed.	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
A6	Any type of dresses, for women or girls	Any type of dresses, for women or girls. Do NOT include skirts.	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
A4	Any suits, sportcoats, or tailored jackets for men, women, or children	Any suits, sportcoats, or tailored jackets for men, women, or children. Do NOT include outdoor wear or individual tops or pants.	Any suits, sportcoats, or tailored jackets for men, women, or children. Do NOT include outdoor wear or individual tops or pants.	[Same as previous round]	Monitor

A1 Jewelry, watches, or parts for them

A1 Jewelry or watches, for men, women, or children

Both the wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- The question wording changed for each testing round. Participants tended to misjudge items that males use, such as tie pins and money clips (which are applicable for this question), so we added an explicit statement to broaden interpretation to any watches or jewelry worn by men, women, or children.
- Although we tested the phrase “or accessories for them” as a substitute for “parts for them” after the initial testing, we changed back to “parts for them” for Round 9 testing. Participants had interpreted “accessories” very broadly, which resulted in over-reporting of a variety of wearable items (e.g., caps, hair accessories, headset, golf glove).
- BLS verified that this question is intended to cover only purchases of jewelry or watches. All labor and parts/replacements (such as stones, links, batteries, etc.) are to be captured in A2. Therefore, we deleted the text “or parts for them” from the wording.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- We tested this question after A2 in two of the testing rounds, to try to capture expenses for repairs and batteries first (and deter duplicate reporting of such items). After the last testing round, we moved it back to the position of first in this cluster. BLS clarified that this question is not intended to cover any replacement items or parts; those all should be reported for A2.

A2 Watch or jewelry repair, including sizing or cleaning

A2 Care for watches or jewelry, such as repairs, sizing, cleaning, or engraving

Both the wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- To broaden thinking to any type of adjustment, not just repair, as well as to adjustments anyone (other than a trained repair person) might make, we decided to replace the word “repair” with “care” and add “engraving” to help convey the question’s breadth.
- A large over-report for a watch purchase indicated the need to ensure respondents interpret “care” as applicable to watches as well as jewelry, so we moved that to the start of the question.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- Comprehension results in the first two testing rounds showed that some participants judged watch battery, applicable for this question, as applicable for A1. The decision was to move the question to precede A1, to improve comprehension and reporting for A1.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- The results of the first testing indicated a need to flip the order of A1 and A2, as described above, with the aim of cleaner reporting and comprehension for A2 (watch battery applicable for A1, not A2).

Remaining Issues

In any further testing of the question, monitor whether explicit text will be needed to capture battery replacement. Over the testing rounds, several participants had issues in reporting watch battery replacement (e.g., whether it was applicable for A1 or A2) and the majority had trouble judging it.

A3 Clothing rental or preservation, or clothing storage outside the home

A3 Clothing rental, clothing preservation, or professional services for storing clothes

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- There was some evidence of respondent confusion about “preservation” and clothing storage outside the home, which led them to name examples of unrelated expenses, e.g., public storage units and historic landmark preservation. Interpretation of “clothing preservation” also led to reporting of a mending expense, in one instance
- Clothing rental is likely to be the most common type of expense for the question and most widely understood, so the decision was to keep that as the first part of the question.
- To clarify that clothing storage outside the home is limited to clothing (no other belongings that might be stored in a storage unit), we changed the vague phrase “storage for clothing outside the home” to specify “professional” and “services.”

Remaining Issues

In any further testing of the question, it will be important to monitor the need for exclusion text such as “Do NOT include cost of storage units,” so as to avoid over-reporting of mini-storage units used for household items beyond clothes. Also monitor the need to deter reporting of clothing repairs, by narrowing the wording about preservation (e.g., to just dresses or wedding dresses).

- | | |
|----|---|
| A5 | Any uniforms or costumes for men, women, or children. Do not include costs that are reimbursed. |
| A5 | Any uniforms or costumes for men, women, or children. Do NOT include shoes or costs that are reimbursed. |

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Round 7 testing yielded some evidence (both over-reporting and comprehension) that participants thought shoes or boots – that would be worn with a uniform or costume – were applicable. Since footwear is not applicable, we decided to add text to the exclusion text to reduce the chances of over-reporting.

- | | |
|----|--|
| A6 | Any type of dresses, for women or girls |
| A6 | Any type of dresses, for women or girls. Do NOT include skirts. |

Both the wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- The initial testing results showed overly broad interpretation of the original version of this question. Based on the comprehension results, several participants considered skirts as applicable.
- In terms of reporting, several items were over-reported, including a business suit, baby dresses, and other articles of clothing that might be worn with a dress.
- We added and tested the exclusion instruction to focus comprehension on dresses that are one piece, rather than on any clothing article (e.g., skirts) that shows legs.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- To help determine if reordering improved comprehension and reporting for both this question and A4 (the suits and jackets question), we revised the order and tested A6 before A4.

A4 Any suits, sportcoats, or tailored jackets for men, women, or children

A4 Any suits, sportcoats, or tailored jackets for men, women, or children. Do NOT include outerwear or individual tops or pants.

Both the wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Reporting and comprehension results showed that participants misjudged some articles of clothing that that might be worn with a suit. This led to the decision to add wording to exclude clothing that is not part of a suit as well as clothing such as jackets that are worn outdoors (e.g., for weather protection).

Rationale for Revising the Order

- We moved this question to follow the dresses question (A6), to assess whether that improved both comprehension and reporting (e.g., eliciting costs for dresses before asking about suits, which may have multiple pieces).

Remaining Issues

In any further testing of the question, it will be important to monitor how “suit” is interpreted. Since the parts of a suit can be purchased separately, the exclusion text “individual tops and pants” might cause confusion for respondents who purchase only one piece of a suit. In addition, monitor for evidence of over-reporting of items that might be worn with a suit.

3.2 Cluster B: Repairs, Replacements, Upkeep of Home, and Home Operations

This section summarizes the main results and recommendations for the 8 questions in Cluster B. The cluster was tested once, in Round 5, with 5 participants.

Table 3-2 presents the question wording tested in these rounds, and the wording recommended after Round 5 concluded. For detailed results and recommendations developed after the first testing, refer to the Interim Memo for Clusters B and F.

Table 3-2. Cluster B: Summary table of tested question wording and order

Q #	Tested wording (round 5)	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
B. Repairs, replacements, upkeep of home; home operations			
B1	Indoor flooring installation, repair, or replacement including wood, vinyl, tile, and wall-to-wall carpeting. Do NOT include expenses that will be reimbursed by someone outside of your household.	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
B2	Materials for termite or pest control. Do NOT include professional service fees.	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
B3	Any termite or pest control professional service fees	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
B4	Housekeeping, lawn, or tree care services. Do NOT include services covered by management or maintenance fees.	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
B5	Outdoor equipment or tools, including motorized, electric, or manual	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
B6	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for any outdoor equipment or tools	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
B7	Power or non-power tools, their accessories, or hardware	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
B8	Items used for hanging or storage in the home or yard	[B9] Closet and storage items	Test revisions
		[B10] Shelving or storage in the garage or yard	Test revisions
		[B11] Other hardware not already mentioned	Test revisions

- B1 Indoor flooring installation, repair, or replacement including wood, vinyl, tile, and wall-to-wall carpeting. Do NOT include expenses that will be reimbursed by someone outside of your household.
- B1 Indoor flooring installation, repair, or replacement including wood, vinyl, tile, and wall-to-wall carpeting. Do NOT include expenses that will be reimbursed by someone outside of your household.**

The question wording and order remained the same after testing.

Comprehension results indicated participants understood the question intent, and there were no reporting issues, so we recommended retaining the wording.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, we recommend administering it at some point after Question C2, in order to first cover reporting of non-permanent flooring, the more frequently-occurring types of items.

- B2 Materials for termite or pest control. Do NOT include professional service fees.
- B2 Materials for termite or pest control. Do NOT include professional service fees.**

The question wording and order remained the same after testing.

Comprehension results were good, and there were no reporting issues, so we recommended retaining this wording for any further testing.

Remaining Issues

We suggest continuing to test both B2 and B3, to ensure that survey respondents distinguish between expenses for this question (which code to Expenditure Category 69 – Tools, hardware, outdoor equipment and supplies), vs. expenses for B3 (which code to Expenditure Category 71 – Household operations).

B3	Any termite or pest control professional service fees
B3	Any termite or pest control professional service fees

The question wording and order remained the same after testing.

We had no reporting evidence as the basis for evaluating question performance. This is likely a low-frequency type of expense, since some households do not hire a professional for termite and pest control services.

Remaining Issues

As noted above, we suggest continuing to test this question to ensure clean reporting of expenses for termite and pest control for the appropriate question.

B4	Housekeeping, lawn, or tree care services. Do NOT include services covered by management or maintenance fees.
B4	Housekeeping, lawn, or tree care services. Do NOT include services covered by management or maintenance fees.

The question wording and order remained the same after testing.

Although participants made reporting errors, these were errors based on memory or telescoping, and they seemed to understand the question intent. Applicable expenses for this question may be infrequent and/or seasonal in nature, so are perhaps more susceptible to memory issues.

B5	Outdoor equipment or tools, including motorized, electric, or manual
B5	Outdoor equipment or tools, including motorized, electric, or manual

The question wording and order remained the same after testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- The limited comprehension evidence indicated that several participants thought that plants and outdoor furniture seemed to apply for this question. Therefore, we recommended administering this question after Cluster C questions --specifically C19 (decorations and plants for indoors) and C13 (outdoor furniture), to deter respondents

from thinking that “equipment” in this question includes outdoor items other than tools.

Remaining Issues

Note that both this question (outdoor equipment and tools) and Question B7 (power tools) code to Expenditure Category 69 (Tools, hardware, outdoor equipment and supplies). There are two questions instead of one based on (1) the expectation that two questions are needed to cue reporting of all applicable items, and (2) the question following B5 only pertains to maintenance of outdoor equipment or tools (rather than to both B5 and B7). As noted above, we recommend ordering this question after C13 and C19.

B6	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for any outdoor equipment or tools
----	---

B6	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for any outdoor equipment or tools
-----------	--

The question wording and order remained the same after testing.

There was very little evidence for judging reporting accuracy and comprehension.

Remaining Issues

This question is likely to have a relatively low base frequency. This question needs further testing with a larger n to assess reporting accuracy and to monitor comprehension.

B7	Power or non-power tools, their accessories, or hardware
----	--

B7	Power or non-power tools, their accessories, or hardware
-----------	---

The question wording and order remained the same after testing.

Comprehension results were mixed. Participants were able to correctly judge very common types of power and non-power tools, but non-applicable items that would be found at a hardware store were misjudged as applicable, indicating some confusion about the conceptual boundaries for this question.

Remaining Issues

This question needs further testing with a larger n to assess reporting accuracy and to monitor comprehension.

- B8 Items used for hanging or storage in the home or yard
- B9 Closet and storage items**
- B10 Shelving or storage in the garage or yard**
- B11 Other hardware not already mentioned**

The question was split into three separate questions after testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- This question was originally worded as a definition, and was intended to collect items that map to Expenditure Category 69 (Tools, hardware, outdoor equipment and supplies), specifically to two UCCs (“Other hardware,” which includes curtain hardware – brackets, rods, tie-backs, etc., and “Closet and storage items,” which includes outdoor items such as storage sheds).
- Testing revealed significant comprehension issues, which was not surprising given the breadth of applicable items for the one question. Several participants seemed to focus on the word “hanging” within the question and over-reported tools that would be used to hang pictures, etc. Others focused on “storage” and over-reported items such as furniture (a dresser) and kitchen storage (a spice rack).
- We considered revision options such as using a definition or providing examples. Both of these would make the question longer, and not necessarily resolve the observed comprehension and reporting issues. To ensure coverage of all the items the original question was intended to capture, we suggested splitting the question into three – indoor storage, outdoor storage, and a “catch-all” question to capture other hardware not already covered by questions for Expenditure Category 69.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- The question was already tested after (and in close proximity to) the questions about tools. An additional way to reduce the potential for over-reporting would be to administer Questions B9 – B11 after the furniture questions (C8 – C17), so that survey respondents will report furniture before they hear this question.

Remaining Issues

In further testing, monitor whether respondents consider and report furniture. If so, add exclusion text such as: “Do NOT include furniture” to the indoor storage question (revised and renumbered to become Question B9). Also, BLS will need to verify that small hardware items are intended to be captured with the new question B11.

3.3 Cluster C: Household Linens and Furnishings

This section summarizes the main results and recommendations for the 35 questions in Cluster C. Although there were initially 34 questions, one was split into two questions, which led to the total of 35. The cluster was tested 3 times, in these rounds:

- Round 3 (n = 5 for each of two parts of the cluster).
 - Partial data collected from 3 participants in Round 1 were also added and reported with Round 3 results.
- Round 6 (n = 5 for each of two parts of the cluster).
- Round 8 (n = 5 for each of two parts of the cluster).

Table 3-3 presents the question wording tested in these rounds, and the wording recommended after Round 8 concluded. For detailed results and recommendations developed after the first testing, refer to the Cluster C Interim Memo. For results and recommendations developed after subsequent rounds, refer to the Round 6 Interim Summary Table and Round 8 Summary Table.

Table 3-3. Cluster C: Summary table of tested question wording and order

Q #	Tested Wording (round 3)	Tested wording (round 6)	Tested wording (round 8)	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
C. Household Linens and Furnishings, Part 1					
C1	Any window coverings, including curtains, drapes, blinds, or shades	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Any window coverings, including curtains, drapes, blinds or shades. Do NOT include cost of hardware purchased separately.	Test revisions
C4	Bathroom linens, shower curtains, or bath mats	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Any towels or other bathroom linens, shower curtains, or bath mats	Test revisions
C5	Bed linens, blankets, or pillows, for either adults or children	Bed linens, blankets, or bed pillows, for either adults or children	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C3	Slipcovers, decorative pillows, or cushions	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C6	Kitchen, dining room, or any other room's linens or fabric items	Linens or fabric items for the kitchen, dining room, or any other rooms not already covered	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C2	Non-permanent floor or stair coverings	Non-permanent floor or stair coverings, such as mats, rugs, treads, or runners	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C28	Electric floor or carpet cleaning equipment	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Electrical equipment for floor or carpet cleaning	Test revisions
C25	Window or wall unit air conditioners	[Same as previous round]	Air conditioners installed into windows or walls	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C30	Portable cooling or heating equipment	Portable fans, heaters, humidifiers, or dehumidifiers	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Complete
C29	Indoor lamps, ceiling or wall lighting, or ceiling fans	Indoor lamps, ceiling or wall lighting, or ceiling fans. Do NOT include light bulbs.	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C26	Air purifiers, water filters, carbon monoxide detectors, or smoke alarms	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor

Table 3-3. Cluster C: Summary table of tested question wording and order (continued)

Q #	Tested Wording (round 3)	Tested wording (round 6)	Tested wording (round 8)	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Continue testing
C. Household Linens and Furnishings, Part 1					
C27	Burglar alarm equipment. Do NOT include regular security alarm service fees.	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C35	[C31] Items used to serve, consume, or store food and drink	Non-disposable containers for storing foods or drinks	Containers for storing foods and drinks. Do NOT include items you throw away.	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C36	[C31] Items used to serve, consume, or store food and drink	Non-disposable tableware for serving, eating or drinking	Tableware for serving, eating or drinking. Do NOT include items you throw away.	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C32	Nonelectric cookware	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C33	Any other nonelectric kitchen gadgets, tools, or cooking utensils	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C. Household Linens and Furnishings, Part 2					
C23	Dishwasher that is portable, not built-in	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Complete
C24	Purchase, installation, or maintenance of a built-in dishwasher, garbage disposal, or range hood	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C20	Small electrical kitchen appliances	Small electrical kitchen appliances, including microwaves	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C21	Any larger appliances for the kitchen or laundry room, excluding dishwashers. Include installation and haul-away costs.	Larger kitchen or laundry room appliances. Include installation and haul-away costs.	Larger kitchen or laundry appliances. Include installation and haul-away costs.	[Same as previous round]	Monitor

Table 3-3. Cluster C: Summary table of tested question wording and order (continued)

Q #	Tested Wording (round 3)	Tested wording (round 6)	Tested wording (round 8)	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Continue testing
C. Household Linens and Furnishings, Part 2					
C22	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for those larger household appliances	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for those larger household appliances for the kitchen or laundry room	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for those larger kitchen or laundry appliances	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C19	Potted plants, fresh cut flowers, or flowers that can be worn or carried	Live potted plants, fresh cut flowers, or flowers that can be worn or carried	Houseplants, fresh cut flowers, or flowers that can be worn or carried	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C18	Household decorative items such as clocks, art, mirrors, and seasonal decorations	Household decorative items such as artificial flowers or plants, clocks, art, mirrors, or seasonal decorations	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C8	Infants' furniture	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Test (based on resolution of category mapping)
C15	Any bedroom furniture, mattresses, or boxsprings	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C10	Living, family, or recreation room furniture	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C11	Dining room or kitchen furniture	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C12	Office furniture for home use, including filing and storage equipment	Filing cabinets, safes, or office furniture for home use	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C16	Other furniture not already mentioned, for any other areas in the house	Other furniture not already mentioned, for any other areas inside the house	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C7	Rented or leased any furniture	Rented or leased any furniture. Do NOT include TV rental.	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C17	Repairing, refinishing or reupholstering furniture, including the cost for fabric	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor

Table 3-3. Cluster C: Summary table of tested question wording and order (continued)

Q #	Tested Wording (round 3)	Tested wording (round 6)	Tested wording (round 8)	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Continue testing
C. Household Linens and Furnishings, Part 2					
C14	Barbecue grills, outdoor lighting or outdoor decorative items	Outdoor grills, lighting or other items, including decorations. Do NOT include outdoor heaters.	[Same as previous round]	[C38] Outdoor grills	Test revisions
C13	Patio, porch, or outdoor furniture and covers	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C14	Barbecue grills, outdoor lighting or outdoor decorative items	Outdoor grills, lighting or other items, including decorations. Do NOT include outdoor heaters.	[Same as previous round]	[C39] Outdoor lighting or other items including decorations	Test revisions
C34	Repair of household equipment or decorative items	Repair of any household items we've covered, except appliances or furniture	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor

- | | |
|----|---|
| C1 | Any window coverings, including curtains, drapes, blinds, or shades |
| C1 | Any window coverings, including curtains, drapes, blinds, or shades. Do NOT include cost of hardware purchased separately. |

Both the wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Both reporting and comprehension evidence indicated that participants thought curtain rods and other hardware for hanging/mounting window coverings would apply for the question. This prompted addition of the exclusion text.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- In Round 3, we tested this question first in a series of questions related to linens and fabric items. In Round 6, we tested it as the first question in Part 2 of the cluster, but found two instances of curtains reported when asking about linens in any rooms. To assist with clean reporting of curtains (for any room), we moved this question to again precede all fabric-related questions.

Remaining Issues

The hardware purchased separately is applicable for the recommended addition of Question B11 (Other hardware not already mentioned).

- | | |
|----|---|
| C4 | Bathroom linens, shower curtains, or bath mats |
| C4 | Any towels or other bathroom linens, shower curtains, or bath mats |

The question wording changed but the order remained the same over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Beach towels were both misjudged and forgotten over the testing rounds. They are applicable, but not typically thought of as bathroom linens (since they are used more in locations other than a bathroom). That led to the change to include any towels.

Remaining Issues

This question performed well, with the exception of beach towels. In further testing of the question, monitor whether there is any additional evidence that beach towels are not considered applicable for this question with the revised wording.

C5	Bed linens, blankets, or pillows, for either adults or children
C5	Bed linens, blankets, or bed pillows, for either adults or children

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- This question was one of the best performers in this cluster in terms of both accuracy and comprehension. After the initial testing, we added the word “bed” before pillows, based on the recommendation for ordering Question C3 (which asks about “decorative pillows”) after C5. This recommendation is to ensure reporting of bed pillows with bed linens and to minimize confusion about different types/functions of pillows.

Remaining Issues

After testing, BLS questioned whether this question needed to have the “for either adults or children” text. In the future, test without that phrase and monitor its performance.

C3	Slipcovers, decorative pillows, or cushions
C3	Slipcovers, decorative pillows, or cushions

The question wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- Round 3 evidence indicated some overlap with Question C5 (bed linens, etc.), so in Round 6, we tested it after that question to reduce the opportunity for reporting bedding-related items for this question. Pillows and cushions are items that could be in bedrooms or any other rooms. The question also preceded Question C6, which serves as the “catch-all” question (“... or any other room’s linens”) for linen items and is intended to be last in the series of four questions about household linens.

Remaining Issues

A qualitative comment indicated that a sham may be interpreted as an actual pillow, not just the cover. We suggest monitoring whether shams are interpreted as pillows or linens (C5) in further testing of the question.

C6	Kitchen, dining room, or any other room's linens or fabric items
C6	Linens or fabric items for the kitchen, dining room, or any other rooms not already covered

Both the question wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- This question is intended to collect linens that are not for bedrooms and bathrooms (covered by Questions C4 and C5). We saw limited evidence that participants thought too broadly about any items made from fabric, thought that this question overlapped with others (e.g., Question C3, which mentions slipcovers), or reported items (such as coffeemaker and crockpot) that would be in a kitchen.
- We decided to re-word the question to mention the types of items first, then the rooms where the items are used. This was intended to reduce the chance of survey respondents thinking too broadly and reporting non-applicable expenses.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- Due to two reports of curtains for this question in Round 6 testing, we recommended testing this question in Round 8 at some point after Question C1.

C2	Non-permanent floor or stair coverings
C2	Non-permanent floor or stair coverings, such as mats, rugs, treads, or runners

Both the question wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- The original wording was a definition. Based on some confusion in Round 3 testing about which types of floors qualify as “non-permanent,” we added examples to help clarify the question meaning.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- Comprehension results indicated that bath rugs were considered applicable for this question. We moved this question and tested it after Question C4 (bathroom linens, which includes bath mats), so that bathmats can be captured in that question instead of incorrectly captured or double-reported for this question.

Remaining Issues

In response to probing about “non-permanent,” participants clearly differentiated between movable types of floorings (e.g., carpet protectors, area rugs, doormats) and more permanent types of coverings (carpet, hardwood, tile). However, the judgment activity still showed some minor evidence of confusion about whether any flooring is truly “permanent” and about what applies. This should be monitored in further testing.

C28	Electric floor or carpet cleaning equipment
-----	---

C28	Electrical equipment for floor or carpet cleaning
------------	--

The question wording changed but the order remained the same over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- In addition to several participants forgetting items (such as vacuum cleaner or hand vacuum cleaner) at the time of initial reporting, several also reported the cleaning solutions used with cleaning equipment. Therefore, we suggested putting “electrical” and “equipment” together, which may help to clarify that only the equipment expense is applicable, not the supplies that are used in the cleaning process.

C25	Window or wall unit air conditioners
-----	--------------------------------------

C25	Air conditioners installed into windows or walls
------------	---

Both the question wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- One participant’s comment that a “wall unit” could refer to central air indicated the potential for confusion about the breadth of the question. We changed the wording to clarify that units are installed, vs. the more permanent type of heating/cooling.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- Discussion of the potential for overlap with Question C30 led to the decision to administer this question just before it, to assist interviewers in real field conditions in catching any potential double-reporting issues.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, monitor whether participants correctly interpret “installed into.” If they do not, explore “installed through” as an option. Also monitor whether participants who own window or wall dual cooling/heating equipment would report those units here or for the next question. Such dual units could be reported for either question, as long as they are not double-reported. Expenses for both C25 and C30 would be coded to Expenditure Category 67 (Appliances).

C30	Portable cooling or heating equipment
-----	---------------------------------------

C30	Portable fans, heaters, humidifiers, or dehumidifiers
------------	--

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- The word “equipment” was intended to be broad enough to cue thinking of humidifiers and dehumidifiers, in addition to fans and heaters. All of these need to be coded to appliances (Expenditure Category 67). However, based on the comprehension results, participants seemed to focus narrowly on just fans and heaters, not items which adjust the humidity of the air. Therefore, we added wording that covered the options applicable for the question – using explicit text to improve reporting accuracy.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- We placed this question after Question C25, based on the rationale provided above.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, monitor whether participants associate “portable” with heaters, not just with fans (cooling). If not, change the wording to “Portable fans, portable heaters...”

C29 Indoor lamps, ceiling or wall lighting, or ceiling fans

C29 Indoor lamps, ceiling or wall lighting, or ceiling fans. Do NOT include light bulbs.

Both the question wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Due to several instances of reporting light bulbs as well as comprehension evidence that some participants thought these were applicable for the question, we added the exclusion text “Do NOT include light bulbs.”

Rationale for Revising the Order

- After the initial testing, the decision was to test this question after C30, to avoid reporting of portable fans for this question. That change allowed asking about different types of fans (ceiling, portable) in close proximity. We also moved the question so that it would flow well within a series of questions covering the structure or systems of a house – floors, alarms, filters, etc.

C26 Air purifiers, water filters, carbon monoxide detectors, or smoke alarms

C26 Air purifiers, water filters, carbon monoxide detectors, or smoke alarms

The question wording and order remained the same over the course of testing.

Testing yielded all accurate reports over the testing rounds and no comprehension issues.

C27 Burglar alarm equipment. Do NOT include regular security alarm service fees.

C27 Burglar alarm equipment. Do NOT include regular security alarm service fees.

The question wording and order remained the same over the course of testing.

There were no reporting issues for the question. However, there were minor comprehension issues; several participants considered that other types of security system/devices, such as electric fences or medical alerts, might be applicable.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, continue to monitor whether participants understand the breadth of the question – only burglar/security alarm equipment, and no other types of security systems.

C31 Items used to serve, consume, or store food and drink

C35 Containers for storing foods and drinks. Do NOT include items you throw away.

The original question was split into two separate questions, but the administration order remained the same over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Reporting and comprehension results indicated a need to revise the question after the initial testing. Participants over-reported disposable items (e.g., plastic utensils, napkins, aluminum food containers) and exhibited some confusion in judging what qualified as a storage item (e.g., a cooler, a bowl without a cover).
- Instead of lengthening the question with examples to indicate the question’s breadth, or adding exclusion text, we decided to split the question into two new questions:
 - Question 35 – to cover expenses related to storing foods and beverages; and
 - Question 36 – to cover expenses for items used in serving and consuming foods and beverages.
- Round 6 testing of the revised questions (with the word “non-disposable”) showed some evidence of participant confusion. We tested with exclusion text “Do NOT include items you throw away” in Round 8.
- In Round 8, response to probing (to assess whether the Round 8 wording was clearer than the Round 6 wording), participants gave good examples of items that would be thrown away, e. g., Styrofoam, paper containers, disposable Ziploc bags. Judgment activity results continued to show that participant thinking does not correspond with BLS categorization: 4 of 5 participants judged both Gladware and Ziploc containers as applicable (these containers may be either disposable or non-disposable).

Remaining Issues

The item categorization scheme does not correspond well with how people think about, and report for, this question. Respondents are likely to have differing interpretations of which containers are “disposable” vs. more permanent (e.g., Gladware- and Ziploc-type items vs. “Tupperware”). In further testing, monitor whether containers intended for a single use are reported.

C31 Items used to serve, consume, or store food and drink

C36 Tableware for serving, eating or drinking. Do NOT include items you throw away.

The original question was split into two separate questions, but the administration order remained the same over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- The rationale for revising this question is explained above for Question C35.

Remaining Issues

For further testing of this question, the same caution noted for C35 applies here.

C32 Nonelectric cookware

C32 Nonelectric cookware

The question wording and order remained the same over the course of testing.

This question performed well in terms of both accuracy and comprehension, so we did not make any changes.

C33 Any other nonelectric kitchen gadgets, tools, or cooking utensils

C33 Any other nonelectric kitchen gadgets, tools, or cooking utensils

The question wording and order remained the same over the course of testing.

The reporting and comprehension data indicated that the question performed relatively well, so we did not make any revisions.

C23 Dishwasher that is portable, not built-in

C23 Dishwasher that is portable, not built-in

The question wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

None of the participants for Cluster C had any expenses to report (correctly or incorrectly) for this question. Due to the narrowness of the question, we also had no comprehension evidence to evaluate. Portable dishwashers are not purchased as often as built-in dishwashers.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- After Round 3 testing, the decision was to order the appliance-related questions by starting first with C23, the most specific question. This followed a general principle we adopted for question ordering: ask about a very specific item first within a series of related questions, then move on to more general questions. The intent is to cue a report of the specific item once, so that it will not be reported again later in response to a more general question.

Remaining Issues

This question is not likely to need further testing. It is at a more specific level than all other questions in the cluster, and those who have purchased portable dishwashers are likely to understand the question. The text “not built-in” should serve to keep people from reporting the more common type of dishwasher until the next question, where it is specifically named. This question was asked separately since portable dishwashers are coded to a different Expenditure Category. Built-in dishwashers are coded to Expenditure Category 65 (Unpriced maintenance and repair services), whereas portable dishwashers are coded to Expenditure Category 67 (Appliances).

C24 Purchase, installation, or maintenance of a built-in dishwasher, garbage disposal, or range hood

C24 Purchase, installation, or maintenance of a built-in dishwasher, garbage disposal, or range hood

The question wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- Based on the reasoning noted for C23 above, we moved this question to precede other more general appliance questions – C20 (small appliances) and C21 (larger appliances).

Remaining Issues

There was one report during the testing that indicated a potential issue. An over-the-range microwave oven may be perceived as serving a similar function to a range hood if it has a fan or ventilation system. We retained the administering order for this question (after Question C20), which asks about microwave ovens (small electrical kitchen appliances). With explicit text about microwaves in that question, an interviewer would be aware of how to treat pre-reporting of a microwave for this question.

C20 Small electrical kitchen appliances

C20 Small electrical kitchen appliances, including microwaves

Both the question wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- We added explicit text to include microwaves, to standardize reporting for this question. Since these vary widely in size, and have generally increased in capacity (as well as function, e.g., combination microwave/convection) over time, there was some uncertainty about whether they qualify as small or larger appliances. Using inclusion text for this question also avoided the need to add exclusion text to Question C21.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- Based on the reasoning noted for C23 above, we moved this question to follow questions that name specific appliances.

Remaining Issues

BLS verified that smaller versions of appliances considered to be “large appliances,” such as mini-refrigerators (and wine refrigerators) should be reported as large appliances. All appliances are coded to the same Expenditure Category 67, so survey respondents could report smaller versions of appliances for this question (as long as they are not double-reported). Odds of that happening are reduced by administering these questions in order.

C21 Any larger appliances for the kitchen or laundry room, excluding dishwashers. Include installation and haul-away costs.

C21 Larger kitchen or laundry appliances. Include installation and haul-away costs.

Both the question wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Due to confusion about applicability of appliances that may be in a laundry room but serve other purposes (e.g., an HVAC system), we decided to delete the word “room.” In addition, some laundry appliances are not in an actual room.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- Based on the reasoning noted for C23 above, we moved this question to follow questions that name specific appliances. We also retained its order after C20, so as to capture smaller appliances (including microwaves) first.

C22 Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for those larger household appliances

C22 Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for those larger kitchen or laundry appliances

The question wording changed but the order remained the same over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- This question is intended to collect service and repairs for the kinds of appliances asked about in C21. However, the wording “household appliances” in the initially tested version is broader than the appliances mentioned in C21. To avoid over-reporting of appliance repair expenses that are not applicable (e.g., for water heater, air conditioner, heater), we changed to the explicit text “kitchen or laundry appliances.”

C19 Potted plants, fresh cut flowers, or flowers that can be worn or carried

C19 Houseplants, fresh cut flowers, or flowers that can be worn or carried

Both the question wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- In Round 6, we tested an alternative wording “Live potted plants, fresh cut…” to assess whether that helped to differentiate living plants/flowers from artificial ones – which are covered in Question C18. Reporting and comprehension results showed that some participants considered items related to outdoor plants and gardening/landscaping as applicable. To capture indoor plants only (not those bought in a pot of any type – and then transplanted into the ground from those pots), we tested “Houseplants, fresh cut flowers” in Round 8.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- The decision was to test this question before Question C18 so as to capture all living flowers and plants first, before artificial flowers or plants.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, continue to monitor whether the change to “houseplants” eliminates reporting of transplantable plants for outdoors. If outdoor plants continue to be reported, consider adding exclusion text such as: “Exclude items for outdoor gardening and landscaping.” This question should follow (a) tools for outside maintenance (B5) and (b) lawn care services (B4) to minimize over-reporting of any outdoor plant-related items. In addition, BLS may need to decide whether plants on decks and porches qualify as houseplants (“indoors”) – as long as plant expenses are not double-reported.

C18	Household decorative items such as clocks, art, mirrors, and seasonal decorations
C18	Household decorative items such as artificial flowers or plants, clocks, art, mirrors, or seasonal decorations

Both the question wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- In initial testing, this question had significant reporting accuracy issues – both under- and over-reporting. One of the reasons is that decorative items may also be functional.
- We also added “artificial plants or flowers” to cue memory for those types of decorations.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- We re-ordered this question to follow Question C19, as described above, to minimize the potential for blurring and mis-reporting for these two questions.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, continue to monitor how the phrase “decorative items” is interpreted. Decorative items may also be functional, which may affect reporting.

C8 Infants’ furniture

C8 Infants’ furniture

The question wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- This question was tested within two different series of questions: with other furniture-related questions (in Cluster C), and with other questions related to children (in Cluster F). The same comprehension issues occurred with both administration placements. Participants both named examples and judged furniture items as equipment and vice-versa.

Remaining Issues

The question is problematic due to the conceptual overlap between items that are applicable for this question, which code to Expenditure Category 66 (Furniture) vs. Question C9, which code to Expenditure Category 51 (Miscellaneous personal goods). Items for infants that serve a similar purpose, are of similar size, or are equally mobile code to different category numbers. For example, the varieties of items that infants can sit or play in are coded to different categories. Options for changing the question – changing the wording to a definition, providing examples of which specific furniture items to include, and/or using exclusion text to rule out items that qualify as “infants’ equipment” – would all make the question very lengthy, and may not improve comprehension and reporting.

The CPI categorization scheme does not correspond with how people think and report for this question. It would be clearer and less burdensome in the interview context to ask respondents to report all infant-related items in one question. We strongly suggest asking about all infant-related

expenses in one question, in Cluster C, preceding other questions related to expenses for furniture. If that is not possible, test this question with the furniture questions, since they all code to Expenditure Category 66 (Furniture). Keeping two questions has the potential for over- or under-reporting, whether these questions are administered together or in two separate series of questions.

C15	Any bedroom furniture, mattresses, or boxsprings
-----	--

C15	Any bedroom furniture, mattresses, or boxsprings
------------	---

The question wording and order remained the same over the course of testing.

The reporting and comprehension data indicated that the question performed relatively well, so we did not make any revisions.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, continue to monitor whether other items that could be in a bedroom (but are not applicable) are reported here, such as decorative items, linens, and storage items.

C10	Living, family, or recreation room furniture
-----	--

C10	Living, family, or recreation room furniture
------------	---

The question wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- There was some confusion about applicability of expenses for TVs as well as for items (ping-pong or pool table) and entertainment-related activities associated with the rooms mentioned in the question wording. Therefore, we tested this question after Question C18 (decorative room items) and recommended administering it after several questions in other clusters (as noted below), so as to minimize over- and under-reporting issues.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, the following administration order recommendations need to be taken into account. Administer C10 after:

- Question G9 (from the Electronics Cluster), which specifically addresses expenditures for TVs in a home or vehicle;
- Question G8 (from the Electronics Cluster), which asks for game systems; and
- Question E10 (from the Recreation Cluster), which asks about “Ping-pong tables, pool tables, or other similar recreation room items and accessories.”

C11 Dining room or kitchen furniture

C11 Dining room or kitchen furniture

The question wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- A reporting error revealed that since a refrigerator is a large item in a kitchen, it might be interpreted as furniture, especially if a respondent has not already reported about appliances. We moved this question after the large appliances question (Question C21).

C12 Office furniture for home use, including filing and storage equipment

C12 Filing cabinets, safes, or office furniture for home use

Both the question wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- The comprehension results, as well as the number and type of mis-reports, showed that several participants thought more broadly than intended about this question. The words “filing and storage” and “equipment” seemed to bleed over to computer-related equipment and office supplies. We changed the wording to use examples of categories of furniture (safes and cabinets), to emphasize furniture rather than equipment or supplies.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- We moved this question based on the reasoning that if respondents have already reported computers (Question G5), they may be less likely to consider those expenses here.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, ensure that this question is administered after Question G5. Also continue to monitor whether office supplies are over-reported for this question.

C16 Other furniture not already mentioned, for any other areas in the house

C16 Other furniture not already mentioned, for any other areas inside the house

Both the question wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- To differentiate more clearly between questions about furniture in the house (Questions C7 – C12 and C15) vs. furniture outdoors, we modified this question slightly to “... any other areas inside the house.”

Rationale for Revising the Order

- We moved this question to precede the two questions about outdoor items: C13 (outdoor furniture) and C14 (grills, lighting, décor).

C7 Rented or leased any furniture

C7 Rented or leased any furniture. Do NOT include TV rental.

Both the question wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Limited comprehension evidence showed that participants considered TVs to be furniture. We added exclusion text to address that, since TV rental may be a common type of rental expense.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- BLS noted that in the current recall interview, furniture rental is asked last. The intent of that order is to ensure that respondents are cued about all types of furniture (purchases)

before they are asked to report about renting or leasing furniture. The decision was to apply that convention here, as well.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, consider administering this question after H1 (catered events) to minimize the potential for respondents to report rental of furniture (such as tables for catered affairs) for this question.

C17 Repairing, refinishing or reupholstering furniture, including the cost for fabric

C17 Repairing, refinishing or reupholstering furniture, including the cost for fabric

The question wording and order remained the same over the course of testing.

Reporting and comprehension evidence indicated good comprehension.

C14 Barbecue grills, outdoor lighting, or outdoor decorative items

C38 Outdoor grills

C39 Outdoor lighting or other items including decorations

This question was split into two separate questions; the order also changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- In group discussion of this item, the decision was to re-word the question to start with the word “outdoor,” so as to clearly indicate what kinds of items to report.
- Across the rounds, grills were both reported and named as examples for outdoor furniture when C13 was asked first, and furniture was reported for C14 when it was asked first. The decision was to separate this question into two parts: grills (alone) and other outdoor items such as lighting and decorations.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- This question followed C13 in Round 3 testing. Reporting evidence (grills thought of as “outdoor furniture” and reported for C13) led to the decision to test C14 first in Round 6. In Round 6, the opposite occurred – reporting of furniture for this question.

- The decision to break the question into two parts allows for asking first about grills (the most specific expense), then furniture, then other outdoor items.

Remaining Issues

Items collected with this question are to be coded to Expenditure Category 66 (Furniture). Items collected with C13 are to be coded to Expenditure Category 69 (Tools, hardware, outdoor equipment and supplies). The categorization scheme does not correspond well with how people think and report. The potential for reporting errors (e.g., double-reporting) should be minimized by breaking the question up and administering in the revised order.

C13 Patio, porch, or outdoor furniture and covers

C13 Patio, porch, or outdoor furniture and covers

The question wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- In initial testing, there was evidence of over-reporting of items such as grills that were applicable for question C14. Comprehension evidence corresponded with this finding. Survey respondents may report grills as outdoor furniture due to their size and widespread use.
- This question will be administered after the new C38 and before the new C39.

Remaining Issues

Monitor through further testing whether the revisions to both wording and order for C38, C13, and C39 lead to improved comprehension and reporting.

C34 Repair of household equipment or decorative items

C34 Repair of any household equipment or decorative items

The question wording changed but the order remained the same over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- This question is intended to serve as a catch-all for any repairs not explicitly covered by the appliance repair (C22) and furniture repair (C17) questions. We did not have a true

test of the performance of this item, due to the need to administer Cluster C in two parts. We tested the question last at the end of Part 1 and Part 2, to see what types of repairs were reported and considered to be applicable based on the wording.

- “Equipment” repair was nebulous; participants interpreted it to include appliances, major household systems (plumbing and electrical), furniture, and the structure of the house itself (drywall, flooring). Based on the participants thinking too broadly about the types of repair to be included, we revised the question and tested it in a way that applied for testing each half of the cluster. There was very little data to evaluate its performance.

Remaining Issues

In further testing, this question will need to be administered at the end of all the Cluster C questions, with test participants completing all questions within the cluster.

Under real field conditions, this question will be:

- Repair of household equipment or decorative items.

If there is evidence that participants double-report appliance and/or furniture repairs, add exclusion text: “Do NOT include furniture or appliance repairs.”

3.4 Cluster D: Trips and Transportation

This section summarizes the main results and recommendations for the 5 in-town questions and 16 out-of-town travel questions in Cluster D.

After answering the in-town questions, participants were asked:

- Did you take any out-of-town trips since the first of [the reference month 3 months prior]?
- During the period from [start of reference month – end of reference period], did you pay for anything related to any out-of-town trips?

All participants had screened in as eligible for some type of out-of-town trip in the three months preceding the interview date, so all answered yes to either or both of these questions. Then they were told: “For the following questions, please think about money spent since the first of [the reference month 3 months prior] for out-of-town trips. Please do not include any costs that:

- You will be reimbursed for *OR*
- Were covered by a package deal.

The CE current interview includes text: “Sometimes when people take a trip they have some sort of package deal that covers some or all of the costs. Was all or part of this trip/these trips covered by a package deal?” If the respondent replies yes, they are asked a series of yes/no questions about what types of expenses (e.g. food and beverages, lodging, transportation) the package deal included. In the testing, we focused on testing comprehension of the wording of the out-of-town trips questions; we did not collect judgments about what a package deal covered. In further testing of the questions, after or in concert with testing comprehension, the interview approach could be extended to ask about the allocation of costs to a package deal (if applicable).

The cluster was tested in the following rounds:

- Rounds 1 – 2
 - In Round 1, partial data were collected from 7 participants (the number who completed each question varied due to session time constraints).
 - In Round 2 (n = 5).
- Round 5 (n = 5).

Table 3-4 presents the question wording tested in these rounds, and the wording recommended after Round 5 concluded. For detailed results and recommendations developed after the first testing, refer to the Cluster D Interim Memo. For results and recommendations developed after Round 5, refer to the Cluster D Summary Table.

Table 3-4. Cluster D: Summary table of tested question wording and order

Q #	Tested wording (rounds 1-2)	Tested wording (round 5)	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
D. Trips and Transportation: In-town questions (limited Round 1 data)				
D1	Automobile service clubs such as AAA, or vehicle services such as OnStar and LoJack	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Complete
D3	Local tolls or electronic toll passes	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
D5	Any travel items, luggage, or any type of bags for carrying belongings	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
D4	Any membership costs or other expenses related to vacation clubs or timeshare dues	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Test revisions
D. Trips and Transportation: Out-of-town travel questions				
Transition text	<p>Did you take any out-of-town trips since the first of [the ref month 3 months prior]? During the period from [start of ref month – end of ref period], did you pay for anything related to any out-of-town trips?</p> <p>IF YES TO EITHER: For the following questions, please think about money spent since the first of [the ref month 3 months prior] for out-of-town trips. Please do not include any costs that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will be reimbursed for <i>OR</i> Were covered by a package deal. 			
D10	Lodging. Do not include expenses previously reported for vacation clubs and timeshares.	Cost of hotel or any lodging, including taxes. Do NOT include expenses previously reported for vacation clubs and timeshares.	Cost of hotel or any lodging, including taxes. Do NOT include optional costs, such as parking, food, and Internet service.	Test revisions
D6	Airfare, including baggage and change fees	Airfare, including baggage and change fees. We'll ask about other transportation costs next.	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
D7	Bus or train fare to reach your destination	[D97] Transportation such as shuttles, taxis, buses, subways, trains, or ferries, at any time during a trip	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
D9	Local transportation during a trip, such as shuttles, taxis, buses, subways or trains, and ferries			

Table 3-4. Cluster D: Summary table of tested question wording and order (continued)

Q #	Tested wording (rounds 1-2)	Tested wording (round 5)	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
D. Trips and Transportation: In-town (limited Round 1 data)				
D8	Fares or tips for cruise ships or ferries	Tickets, tips, or service charges for cruise ships	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
D13	Rented vehicles for recreational use. Do not include fuel.	Cost to rent an RV, boat, trailer, or any kind of vehicle for outdoor recreation	Cost to rent an RV, boat, trailer, or any kind of vehicle for outdoor recreation. Do NOT include fuel.	Test revisions
D12	Rental vehicles for getting around. Do not include fuel.	Cost to rent a car, truck, motorcycle, or plane	Cost to rent a car, truck, motorcycle, or plane. Do NOT include fuel.	Test revisions
D11	Gasoline, diesel, or any other vehicle fuels	Gasoline, diesel, or any other vehicle fuels	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
D14	Parking fees	Parking fees	[Same as previous round]	Complete
D15	Any tolls	Any tolls	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
D16	Meals, snacks, or drinks at restaurants, bars, or fast food places	Meals, snacks, or drinks at restaurants, bars, or fast food places	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
D17	<i>[Follow-up question to D16]: How much of that amount was for alcohol?</i> Alcohol at restaurants, bars, or fast food places	<i>[Follow-up question to D16]: How much of that amount was for alcohol?</i> Alcohol at restaurants, bars, or fast food places	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
D18	Food or beverages at grocery or convenience store	Food or beverages from grocery or other stores	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
D19	<i>[Follow-up question to D18]: How much of that amount was for alcohol?</i> Alcohol at grocery or convenience stores	<i>[Follow-up question to D18]: How much of that amount was for alcohol?</i> Alcohol from grocery or other stores	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
D21	Admission fees, tickets, tours, or other entertainment	Admission fees, tickets, tours, or other entertainment	Tours, admission fees, or tickets for entertainment	Test revisions
D20	To play sports, exercise, or rent any sports equipment	To play sports, exercise, or rent any sports equipment	[Same as previous round]	Test revisions
D2	Mass transportation, commuter, or carpool services. Do NOT include expenses covered by your employer. [Note: this is an in-town transportation question, but was moved here based on results and recommendations (below)]	Mass transportation, commuter, or carpool services. Do NOT include expenses covered by your employer.	[Same as previous round]	Test revisions

D1	Automobile service clubs such as AAA, or vehicle services such as OnStar and LoJack
D1	Automobile service clubs such as AAA, or vehicle services such as OnStar and LoJack

The wording and order remained the same over the course of testing.

Limited comprehension results were positive. This question covers very specific expenses and is a low priority for further testing.

D3	Local tolls or electronic toll passes
D3	Local tolls or electronic toll passes

The wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- Due to overlaps with comprehension for D2 (described below), the decision was to administer this more specific question before D2.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, monitor whether the order change for this question results in cleaner reporting (for D2, as well).

D5	Any travel items, luggage, or any type of bags for carrying belongings
D5	Any travel items, luggage, or any type of bags for carrying belongings

The wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- Due to decisions about moving questions that originally preceded and followed this question, the question order changed.

Remaining Issues

Both reporting and comprehension provided some evidence of confusion about the breadth of the question. “Luggage” seemed to be clear, but both “travel items” and “bags for carrying belongings” are vague and led to some differential interpretation. However, the decision was to retain the question wording. For further testing of the question, we suggest monitoring evidence of a need to split this into 2 questions. If needed, re-test: one question to cover luggage or travel items, and a separate question to cover the types of items used to carry personal belongings (briefcases, backpacks, duffels, totes, gym bags not counted as equipment for a specific sport).

D4 Any membership costs or other expenses related to vacation clubs or timeshare dues

D4 Any membership costs or other expenses related to vacation clubs or timeshare dues

The wording and order remained the same over the course of testing.

D10 Lodging. Do not include expenses previously reported for vacation clubs and timeshares.

D10 Cost of hotel or any lodging, including taxes. Do NOT include optional costs, such as parking, food, and Internet service.

The wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- The testing showed that it was important to be more directive about what lodging includes or excludes. Westat offered several wording alternatives. The wording tested in Round 5 was decided in discussion with BLS. We substituted the phrase “hotel or other lodging” for “lodging,” based on the judgment that “hotel” is the most common term for any type of overnight stay.
- The change in order (described below) allowed deleting the initial exclusion wording. Based on Round 5 testing, the decision was to add new exclusion text to help deter reporting of costs that have been considered here, such as food at a hotel restaurant, room service, parking, WiFi, etc.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- We first moved the question to follow questions about other types of incidental costs (such as meals that might be eaten at a hotel, room service, mini-bar, and parking) with the aim of improving reporting for this question.

- A later suggestion was to administer D4 right before D10, so that the current exclusion text would not be needed.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, monitor whether the order change for this question has any effects on reporting for all other questions in the cluster related to food, parking, WiFi, etc.

D6	Airfare, including baggage and change fees
D6	Airfare, including baggage and change fees. We'll ask about other transportation costs next.

The wording changed but the order remained the same over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- The issues with this question were due to reporting items too soon, rather than not comprehending the wording of the question. (Two of 9 participants who answered this question reported taxi or shuttle expenses for getting to an airport when they heard this question.) As a result of discussions with BLS, the decision was to add a statement (“We’ll ask about other transportation costs next”) to alert survey respondents that not all trip expenses need to be reported for the first question.

Remaining Issues

Expenses for this question code to an Expenditure Category 107 (Airline fares) – separate from other travel-related expenses, so must be captured cleanly, without reporting of other types of travel expenses.

D7	Bus or train fare to reach your destination
D9	Local transportation during a trip, such as shuttles, taxis, buses, subways or trains, and ferries
D97	Transportation such as shuttles, taxis, buses, subways, trains, or ferries, at any time during a trip

After initial testing, two separate questions were combined into one, and the order was based on the administration order of the first question.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- There was evidence of some confusion about the words “rail” vs. “train.” The word “train” caused one participant to think more broadly about commuting, not just an out-of-town trip, and several others thought of various transportation methods travelers might take after leaving home to reach a destination.
- After discussion with BLS, the decision was to combine Questions D7 and D9, for broader coverage of any transportation that is not airfare. All expenses for transit via intercity and intra-city bus, rail, taxi, etc. code to the same Expenditure Category 108 (Other public transportation), so can be collected in one question.

Remaining Issues

In future testing, it will be important to monitor the need to add text about including expenses for these types of transportation that may be needed to get to a destination as well as expenses incurred while at a destination.

D8 Fares or tips for cruise ships or ferries

D8 Tickets, tips, or service charges for cruise ships

The wording changed but the order remained the same over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- We modified the wording for Round 2 testing based on qualitative comments in the first round of partial testing. Several participants thought the original wording (“Ship fares or tips”) was asking about the costs (“fares”) for shipping items.
- We decided to use the wording “tickets” or “boarding fares” in place of “fares” to see if that might make the wording clearer and alert participants to the breadth of the question. However, there may be differences in interpretation of the word “tickets” – as physical entities vs. electronic payment or passes.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, monitor whether there are differences in interpretation of the word “tickets” – as physical entities vs. electronic payment or passes.

D13 Rented vehicles for recreational use. Do not include fuel.

D13 Cost to rent an RV, boat, trailer, or any kind of vehicle for outdoor recreation. Do NOT include fuel.

Both the question wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Participants did not demonstrate understanding of this question. Westat suggested options to clarify and differentiate between D12 and D13. In discussion with BLS, the decision was to use examples and the phrase “outdoor recreation.” Another decision was to delete mention of gasoline or fuel in the vehicle questions and to ask about gas expenses in the following question. The rationale was that survey respondents will consider the full range of vehicles for which they might have purchased gas.
- The exclusion text was taken out for testing in Round 5, but the decision was to put it back after comprehension results showed that participants considered a gas expense to be applicable for a car rental.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- The decision was to ask about recreational use (D13) first, with the expectation that this order will provide cleaner reporting for both questions.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, monitor whether respondents distinguish between D13 and D12 in their reporting.

D12 Rental vehicles for getting around. Do not include fuel.

D12 Cost to rent a car, truck, motorcycle, or plane. Do NOT include fuel.

Both the question wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- In Round 2 testing, the decision was to use a definition (instead of examples), with the word “vehicle” intended to function as a broader term covering any sort of vehicle. But that term did not seem to clearly indicate to participants the breadth of the vehicles to think about. Participants seemed to perceive some overlap between the two questions

D12 and D13, based on the examples they named. Also in Round 2 testing, there was some confusion about what to include as a car rental expense. Despite the instruction to exclude fuel, several participants named “gas” as an example of a car rental expense.

- Expenses for the two questions code to different Expenditure Category numbers: 95 (Leased and rented vehicles) for D12, and 84 (Boats, RVs, and other recreational vehicles) for D13. They cannot be combined into one question as a way to make reporting easier for interview respondents (e.g., to report for any kind of rented vehicle, whether for transportation or recreational purposes).
- One potential revision considered and accepted was to revise the wording to use examples rather than a definition in Round 5 testing.
- The exclusion text was taken out for testing in Round 5, but the decision was to put it back after comprehension results showed that participants considered a gas expense to be applicable for the question.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- The question was moved to after the recreational vehicles question, so as to avoid pre-reporting of those types of vehicles for this question.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, it will be important to monitor whether the question is capturing only the rental costs, not other expenses as well, such as gas.

D11 Gasoline, diesel, or any other vehicle fuels

D11 Gasoline, diesel, or any other vehicle fuels

The wording remained the same, but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- In discussion about the two vehicle questions (D12 and D13), the decision was to move the gas/fuel question to follow them instead of precede them. The rationale was that gas might be purchased for any type of rented vehicle, so it would be best to cue recall of the possible range of rented vehicles first, then ask about fuel for them.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, monitor whether expenses for gas are reported for this question, rather than for the prior questions.

D14	Parking fees
D14	Parking fees

The wording and order remained the same over the course of testing.

Remaining Issues

In Round 2 testing, there was limited evidence that a parking expense applicable for this question was misreported for the lodging question (D10), which preceded it. In further testing, monitor whether delivering the lodging question after this question improves the performance of this question.

D15	Any tolls
D15	Any tolls

The wording and order did not change over the course of testing.

Reporting and comprehension evidence indicated participants understood the question intent.

D16	Meals, snacks, or drinks at restaurants, bars, or fast food places
D16	Meals, snacks, or drinks at restaurants, bars, or fast food places

The wording and order did not change over the course of testing.

This question was one of the better performing questions in the cluster, based on both reporting and comprehension evidence.

Remaining Issues

In future testing, BLS might consider asking about all food purchases in one question, if those expenses could all be mapped to the same category. This would reduce two questions to one.

D17 was asked as a follow-up question to D16, with this wording: “How much of that amount was for alcohol?”

D17 Alcohol [at restaurants, bars, or fast food places]

D17 Alcohol [at restaurants, bars, or fast food places]

The wording and order did not change over the course of testing.

Although there was evidence of minor under-reporting, this question was also one of the better performing questions in the cluster.

Remaining Issues

If this will ever be administered as a standalone question rather than a follow-up to the food question (D16), the wording may be changed to “Alcohol at restaurants, bars, or fast food places.”

D18 Food or beverages at grocery or convenience stores

D18 Food or beverages from grocery or other stores

The wording changed but the order remained the same over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Participants seemed to have a good understanding of this question, based on both reporting and comprehension results. During discussions with BLS, the decision was to broaden the type of stores from just convenience stores to “or other stores.”

There is a potential for over-reporting of items bought at gas stations, etc. that might be considered fast food instead of “other stores.” However, those two food questions map onto different categories. BLS may want to consider having both food and beverage questions map onto the same category, to reduce burden of asking for these separately.

Remaining Issues

In future testing, BLS might consider asking about all food purchases in one question, if those expenses could all be mapped to the same category. This would reduce two questions to one, which also means that there would only need to be one alcohol follow-up question instead of two.

D19 was asked as a follow-up question to D18, with this wording: “How much of that amount was for alcohol?”

D19 Alcohol [at grocery or convenience stores]

D19 Alcohol [from grocery or other stores]

The wording changed but the order remained the same over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Based on the decision for re-wording Question D18, we also made the same minor wording change for this question for further testing.

Remaining Issues

If this will ever be administered as a standalone question rather than a follow-up to the food question (D18), the wording may be changed to “Alcohol at liquor, grocery, or other stores.” As noted above, in future testing, BLS might consider asking about all alcohol purchases in one standalone question, if those expenses could all be mapped to the same category. This would reduce two questions to one.

D21 Admission fees, tickets, tours, or other entertainment

D21 Tours, admission fees, or tickets for entertainment

The wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- There were some minor comprehension issues, and one participant’s comment indicated a conceptual overlap with D20. The decision was to use the same wording recommended for the comparable in-town question (E20): “Tours, admission fees, or tickets for entertainment.”

Rationale for Revising the Order

- The decision was to administer D21 before D20, to collect entertainment-related expenses before participation expenses.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, monitor whether ordering D21 first “cleans up” reporting. There may be some overlap for expenses while on a trip for entertainment and sports (watching vs. engaging in), as well as for sports and exercise (which may require paying admission fees).

D20	Play sports, exercise, or rent any sports equipment
-----	---

D20	Play sports, exercise, or rent any sports equipment
------------	--

The wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- The decision for D21 (above) affected the order for D20 (to collect entertainment-related expenses before participation expenses).

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, monitor whether the revises ordering improves reporting for both D20 and D21.

- D2 Mass transportation, commuter, or carpool services. Do NOT include expenses covered by your employer.
- D2 Mass transportation, commuter, or carpool services. Do NOT include expenses covered by your employer.**

The wording remained the same, but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- Qualitative comments showed some evidence of confusion about both what qualifies as mass transportation (planes, subways, and trains carry many people) and what qualifies as a “commuter” expense (e.g., an electronic toll pass is a commuter expense but applies for Question D3). The decision about resolving the confusion was to administer D2 both:
 - At some point after D3, the most specific question in this set of in-town questions (to fist capture tolls that might be part of commuting costs); and
 - After the out-of-town trip questions (D6 – D21), to help clarify that airline and train

Placing this question last in the series about trips and transportation means that it will follow the out-of-town travel questions. Therefore, transition text will be needed before this question, to broaden respondents’ thinking to mass transportation at any time, not just while on a trip. For example: “For the next question, think about transportation at any time.”

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, monitor whether the order change results in clearer comprehension and accurate reporting, and whether the transition text broadens respondent thinking to transportation while household members are “at home” as well as while on a trip.

3.5 Cluster E: Recreation

This section summarizes the main results and recommendations for the 26 questions in Cluster E. The cluster was tested one time, in Round 4, with 5 participants completing one of two parts of the

cluster. Where session time permitted, one or more additional participants completed one or more questions from the other part of the cluster.

This text preceded Questions E23, E24, E25, and E26, which were the last four questions administered in the cluster:

The next 4 questions ask about membership fees. Please do NOT include contributions to or membership in religious, professional, business, or other tax deductible organizations.

Please do NOT include contributions to or membership in religious, professional, business, or other tax deductible organizations.

Table 3-5 presents the question wording tested in these rounds, and the wording recommended after Round 4 concluded. For detailed results and recommendations developed after the first testing, refer to the Cluster E Interim Memo.

Table 3-5. Cluster E: Summary table of tested question wording and order

Q #	Tested wording (round 4)	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
E. Recreation			
E1	Pets and their supplies, medical care, or other pet services. Do NOT include pet food.	Pets, pet medical care, other pet services, or pet supplies. Do NOT include pet food.	Test revisions
E3	Any equipment used for camping, hunting, or fishing. Include guns.	Equipment for camping, hunting, or fishing, including guns. Do NOT include vehicles or boats.	Test revisions
E4	Winter sports equipment or gear	Equipment for snow or ice sports. Do NOT include clothing.	Test revisions
E5	Water sports equipment or gear	Water sports equipment or gear. Do NOT include swimsuits or boats.	Test revisions
E2	Protective eyewear or visual goods for magnification	Protective goggles, binoculars, microscopes, or magnifying glasses	Test revisions
E6	Bicycles, parts, equipment, or gear	Bicycles, including parts or equipment for them	Test revisions
E8	Health and exercise equipment	Home exercise or workout equipment or machines	Test revisions
E7	Sports and recreation goods or equipment	Sports and recreation goods or equipment. Do NOT include shoes.	Test revisions
E9	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for any sport or recreational equipment	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
E12	Docking or landing fees for boats or planes	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
E13	Any outboard motors	Any outboard boat motors	Test revisions
E17	Toys, games, or arts and crafts supplies	Toys, games, or arts and crafts materials for adults or children. Do NOT include video or computer games.	Test revisions
E10	Ping-pong, pool tables, or other similar recreation room items and accessories	Ping-pong tables, pool tables, or other similar recreation room items or their accessories	Test revisions
E11	Playground equipment, sand boxes, or inflatable pools	Playground equipment, sand boxes, or portable pools	Test revisions
E14	Photography-related equipment, products, or professional services? Do NOT include computer software such as Photoshop.	Photography equipment, products, or professional services. Do NOT include phones, picture frames, or computer software.	Test revisions
E15	Stamp or coin collecting	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
E16	Sewing, knitting, or quilting machines, materials, or supplies	[Same as previous round]	Monitor

Table 3-5. Cluster E: Summary table of tested question wording and order (continued)

Q #	Tested wording (round 4)	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Continue testing
E. Recreation			
E19	Any recreational or instructional classes or lessons	Any recreational classes or lessons	Yes
E18	Musical instruments, supplies, or accessories, including repairs	[Same as previous round]	No
E20	In-town admission fees, tickets, or tours	Tours, admission fees, or tickets for entertainment	Yes
E21	Any souvenirs or memorabilia, purchased either in town or on a trip	[Same as previous round]	Yes
	For questions E23, E24, E25, E26, this text preceded the question wording: The next [4] questions ask about membership fees. Please do NOT include contributions to or membership in religious, professional, business, or other tax deductible organizations.		
E23	Membership or entrance fees at golf courses, country clubs, health and fitness centers, or pools	[Same as previous round]	Yes
E22	Fees for participating in leisure, recreational, or organized sports	[Same as previous round]	Yes
E24	Membership fees for online or in-store shopping clubs	Membership fees required for online or in-store shopping clubs	Yes
E26	Any matchmaking, speed dating, or online dating services	[Same as previous round]	No
E25	Membership or other expenses related to any social, civic, fraternal, or service clubs, such as Boy Scouts, Kiwanis, AARP, fraternities, and honor societies	For the next question, please do NOT include contributions to or membership in religious, professional, business, or other tax deductible organizations. Membership for any social, civic, fraternal, or service clubs	Yes

E1 Pets and their supplies, medical care, or other pet services. Do NOT include pet food.

E1 Pets, pet medical care, other pet services, or pet supplies. Do NOT include pet food.

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- After discussion with BLS, the decision was that since pet food is one type of “supplies,” it should be moved to be closer to the end of the sentence, so that it will be the last word participants will hear just before the exclusion text.

Remaining Issues

Future testing should monitor whether costs to purchase or adopt a pet are reported. At least one participant in this round had considered that, since they reported an adoption fee, but it also happened to be telescoped.

E3 Any equipment used for camping, hunting, or fishing. Include guns.

E3 Equipment for camping, hunting, or fishing, including guns. Do NOT include vehicles or boats.

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- We removed the word “any” and moved the inclusion text “include guns” into the first sentence to make the overall question shorter and easier to follow.
- The comprehension results (all 5 participants misjudged the following not applicable items: boat, fishing/hunting license, and RV), and the fact that boats, campers, and RVs are large expenses that are commonly used when camping and fishing, led to a wording change. Specifically, we added the exclusion text of “Do NOT include vehicles or boats.” This makes the question longer, with multiple parts (“including” and “Do NOT include”), but the potential for over-reporting and the high cost of such over-reported items seemed to necessitate the exclusion text.

E4 Winter sports equipment or gear

E4 Equipment for snow or ice sports. Do NOT include clothing.

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- There were over-reported costs dealing with school sports that typically take place in the winter, such as wrestling. In addition, the interpretation of “winter sports” may vary based on geographic location. Avoiding that term should help to prevent comprehension errors. Since the sports that apply for this question have to do with snow or ice, we suggested using these terms to more clearly establish boundaries of applicable expenses.
- Accuracy and comprehension results showed that participants incorrectly considered some types of apparel, particularly outerwear such as coats, scarves, and gloves, as applicable. Therefore, we added the exclusion text of “Do NOT include clothing.”

E5 Water sports equipment or gear

E5 Water sports equipment or gear. Do NOT include swimsuits or boats.

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Swimsuits may be the most common purchase that people think of when asked about water-related sports and are likely purchased yearly since they wear out. All 5 participants in this round judged it as applicable, and several named it as an example, so we suggested adding swimsuits to the exclusion text.
- Four participants incorrectly marked boat trips as applicable. Since boats are commonly used for water sports and would represent very large over-reported expenses, we also suggested adding boats to the exclusion text.

Remaining Issues

Participants seemed to judge this question more broadly than intended, likely due to the vagueness of the phrase “equipment and gear.” Other word options that might be substituted – such as “items” – are equally vague so might not improve comprehension. In further testing of the question,

larger sample sizes will help determine whether the exclusion text is necessary, and/or if additional expenses should be added to the exclusion statement.

E2 Protective eyewear or visual goods for magnification

E2 Protective goggles, binoculars, microscopes, or magnifying glasses

The question wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Comprehension and accuracy results were mainly negative, as the question was interpreted more broadly than intended. For example, sunglasses may have been thought of as offering protection from the sun. One alternative would have been to add exclusion text, e.g., “Do NOT include glasses and contacts that are worn to correct vision” but that would make the wording longer. Since the question is intended to cover four main types of goods (goggles like those used in a lab, magnifying glasses, binoculars, and microscopes), we suggested using those, to improve clarity and to make the wording shorter.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- Reporting for this question might be cleaner if it follows the questions related to sports, or at the very least, is administered after the questions about winter sports (since ski goggles are applicable for that question) and water sports (since swimming goggles are applicable for that question).

E6 Bicycles, parts, equipment, or gear

E6 Bicycles, including parts or equipment for them

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Participants broadened the interpretation of this question to clothing or shoes worn for biking, which was likely due to the word “gear.” Leaving off “gear” may help to narrow the focus to the bike itself.

Remaining Issues

We suggest testing this revised wording, to see: (1) whether test participants still report and consider items such as helmets and body reflectors (which are applicable, but may not necessarily be thought of as “equipment”) and (2) whether there is still a need to add exclusion text such as “Do NOT include clothing or shoes.”

E8	Health and exercise equipment
----	-------------------------------

E8	Home exercise or workout equipment or machines
-----------	---

Both the wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Only 50 percent of the named examples were correct. This question is expected to focus on expenses such as weights, ellipticals, stationary bikes, treadmills, mats, and other equipment that might be in a home gym, but participants named and/or misjudged not applicable examples such as exercise programs/DVDs, water bottles, jogging suits, athletic shoes, and jump ropes.
- “Workout” is a common term, and may improve comprehension due to being more specific than the word “health.”

Rationale for Revising the Order

- We also suggest testing this before Question E7, to cover reporting of machines and equipment before sporting goods.

Remaining Issues

In addition to the wording changes, in future testing we suggest monitoring the need for any exclusion text for items such as shoes or clothes.

E7	Sports and recreation goods or equipment
----	--

E7	Sports and recreation goods or equipment. Do NOT include shoes.
-----------	--

Both the wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Participants showed, as for other questions in this cluster, a tendency to think of shoes worn for sports activities.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- We suggested placing this question second-to-last in the series about physical recreation activities, followed only by E9 (service contracts for sport or recreational equipment). That may reduce the opportunity for duplicate reporting of expenses that are more specific – such as water sports, winter sports, and biking – but might be judged as goods or equipment for this question.

Remaining Issues

“Sport uniforms” is an applicable expense for this question, but shoes are not. Otherwise, if all questions about sports and physical activities in this cluster exclude the same expenses of clothing and shoes worn for them, we would suggest using introductory text to exclude them, e.g., “For the next X questions, do NOT include expenses for shoes or clothing worn during the sport or activity.”

E9	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for any sport or recreational equipment
E9	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for any sport or recreational equipment

After testing concluded, the question wording and order remained the same.

Remaining Issues

There were no expenses reported for this question and comprehension results were sparse. We recommend further testing to collect more data for gauging comprehension and reporting accuracy. Also, the question should remain last in a series of the questions about equipment for exercise and recreation.

E12	Docking or landing fees for boats or planes
E12	Docking or landing fees for boats or planes

After testing concluded, the question wording and order remained the same.

Remaining Issues

Since this is a narrow question with a low base rate of occurrence, there are currently no data for judging the performance of this question. We recommend retaining the wording and continuing to test.

E13 Any outboard motors

E13 Any outboard boat motors

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- The 2 over-reported items were moped helmet and moped maintenance. Although the participant did not offer any insights into these mis-reported expenses, one possibility is that the word “motors” reminded them of any transportation with a motor or wheels, such as a motorcycle or moped. Since this is a very narrow question that refers to boat motors, we added the word “boat” to avoid misinterpretation.

Remaining Issues

Since this is a narrow question with a low base rate of occurrence, there are currently no reported expenses data for judging the performance of this question. We recommend retaining the wording and continuing to test.

E17 Toys, games, or arts and crafts supplies

E17 Toys, games, or arts and crafts materials for adults or children. Do NOT include video or computer games.

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Since video and computer games were reported by participants as applicable for this question even though they are not, we added the exclusion wording above. There was some discussion of the potential for respondents to think the question only applies to

children. The final decision was to explicitly mention both adults and children, and to use the word “materials” in place of “supplies.”

Remaining Issues

The largest concern with this question is its conceptual overlap with E16 (“Sewing, knitting, or quilting machines, materials, or supplies”). Some items could conceivably apply for both questions, depending on how those items are used (for example, beads). Reversing the order of this question and the one on sewing materials (E16) likely will not be helpful in eliminating the conceptual overlap. Furthermore, the arts and crafts portion of the question cannot be combined with the sewing question because they map onto different Item Categories: #88 (Sewing) for E16 and #87 (Other recreational goods) for E17.

Based on the evidence of consistent misjudgments about the applicability of basketballs to this question, participants may not clearly distinguish between common recreational sports items and toys. We recommend monitoring the need to put this question immediately after the more specific question about sporting goods (E7); to date these questions have not been tested together in the same interview.

There was some discussion of separating this into two questions, one about toys and games, and one about arts and crafts. The final decision was to leave it as one question, but the need to rethink this decision should be monitored in future testing.

E10 Ping-pong, pool tables, or other similar recreation room items and accessories.

E10 Ping-pong tables, pool tables, or other similar recreation room items or their accessories.

Both the wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- BLS recommended a slight revision to ensure that “tables” applies to ping-pong as well as pool.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- Testing of this question revealed that participants may include a variety of games that are out of scope, such as video games, card games, and board games. This is

understandable if these games are played in a recreation room. To help avoid inaccurate reporting, we recommended testing Question E10 as follows:

- After Question E17 (Toys and games), and
- Before the questions related to furniture (C9 through C16), since answering E10 first should prevent double- or mis-reporting of ping-pong and pool tables as furniture (which BLS found in prior testing of furniture questions).

Remaining Issues

The categorization results suggest that participants may think of a broader range of recreational equipment than what is found in a recreation room. We suggest continuing to monitor results after this change to determine if inaccurate reporting is an issue.

E11	Playground equipment, sand boxes, or inflatable pools
-----	---

E11	Playground equipment, sand boxes, or portable pools
------------	--

Both the wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Based on discussion that some kiddie pools are hard (not inflatable), BLS and Westat decided to substitute “portable” for “inflatable.”

Rationale for Revising the Order

- There were numerous not applicable examples named such as volleyball, roller skates, hula hoops, and chalk. This suggests that participants may not distinguish between playground equipment and other outdoor toys. Therefore, we recommended moving this question after E17 (toys and games) to help avoid misreporting.

Remaining Issues

Two participants named pool supplies such as cleaning products, air pump for an inflatable pool, and chlorine. This suggests that participants may not distinguish between pools themselves and supplies for pools. Based on the joint BLS and Westat discussion that pool supplies would only apply to more permanent pools, the decision was to not use the originally proposed exclusion text of “Do NOT include pool supplies.” However, the need for this text should be monitored in future testing of the question.

E14 Photography-related equipment, products, or professional services. Do NOT include computer software such as Photoshop.

E14 Photography equipment, products, or professional services. Do NOT include phones, picture frames, or computer software.

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- In the judgment task, most participants incorrectly judged digital picture frames as being applicable, and a couple also incorrectly judged cell phones as being applicable. We extended the exclusion statement within the question to reference picture frames and phones. We also took out the example of computer software so as to limit the length of the exclusion text and be more inclusive of other photography software.
- We decided to remove the word “related;” it may not add any utility for the question.

Remaining Issues

Remaining potential areas for concern are distinguishing camera products and services from video camera products and services, as well as the incorrect inclusion of memory cards. We suggest administering this question after the Cluster G questions on camcorders (G10) and portable memory (G3) to deter double-reporting of video cameras and memory cards. In addition, one participant each incorrectly judged sports photos and class photos to be not applicable. In further testing, it will be important to monitor whether these types of expenses are reported.

E15 Stamp or coin collecting

E15 Stamp or coin collecting

The question wording and order remained the same after testing.

Remaining Issues

The item appeared to perform as intended. Although there were no purchases reported for this question, participants named 91% applicable examples. Based on the comprehension results, we recommend continued monitoring of the question’s performance, especially if participants have

applicable purchases to report. However, due to the narrow scope of this question, this particular question may not be of high priority for testing.

E16 Sewing, knitting, or quilting machines, materials, or supplies

E16 Sewing, knitting, or quilting machines, materials, or supplies

After testing concluded, the question wording and order remained the same.

Remaining Issues

Overall the item seemed to perform as intended, although as noted earlier, its overlap with E17 (Toys, arts and crafts materials) is not easily solved due to their mapping to different categories. In addition, a quilting class and knitting lessons were each inaccurately named as examples for this question. We recommend continued monitoring of the question's performance, particularly to determine if there are further mentions of lessons or classes and to assess the need to reorder the question to E19 (Recreational lessons).

E19 Any recreational or instructional classes or lessons

E19 Any recreational classes or lessons

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Half of the participants named some sort of educational or tuition-based course (e.g., night school, trade school, tutoring), indicating a problem with distinguishing between “instructional” classes (applicable) and more formal “educational” classes (not applicable). We simplified and modified the question to eliminate the “instructional” wording and instead focus on the word “recreational.”

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, we recommend monitoring the need for adding exclusion wording such as: “Do NOT include college or trade school classes.” In addition, participants named not applicable items such as home study guide, softball team, and soccer team. Participants may have thought that self-guided lessons belonged here instead of with book purchases, and perhaps sports team membership includes some form of instruction. If testing reveals additional evidence that

participants think of sport teams, then this question could be positioned after Question E22 (organized sports fees).

E18 Musical instruments, supplies, or accessories, including repairs

E18 Musical instruments, supplies, or accessories, including repairs

The question wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- About half of the participants incorrectly judged music lessons as applicable, which is understandable since both are highly related to musical instruments. Given that many people, especially children, who purchase or rent musical instruments also take lessons, we recommended keeping the wording the same, but placing it after Question E19, which covers instructional lessons such as music lessons.

E20 In-town admission fees, tickets, or tours

E20 Tours, admission fees, or tickets for entertainment

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- There was some confusion over the wording of “in-town.” One participant wasn’t sure if “in-town” meant in any town or if it meant local. Two other participants thought that “in-town” meant “where I live” and since they live in a rural town, they considered everything to be out-of-town. We recommended dropping the phrase “in-town.” Expenses for similar types of entertainment when away from home on a trip are covered in the series of questions about out-of-town travel.
- There was also some uncertainty about the inclusion of movie and theater tickets. We recommended revising the question wording to specify that tickets are for entertainment.

E21 Any souvenirs or memorabilia, purchased either in town or on a trip

E21 Any souvenirs or memorabilia, purchased either in town or on a trip

After testing concluded, the question wording and order remained the same.

Remaining Issues

Souvenirs are intended to be mementos of significant events or trips, so this question presented more difficulties for participants. As one participant put it during the Name 5 task, “It could be anything, a souvenir is anything.” Classification of an object as a souvenir is somewhat subjective. We suggest continuing to test and monitor this question as-is, but guidance from BLS on the definition of a souvenir for the purposes of this survey may help in crafting a more focused question.

E23	Membership or entrance fees at golf courses, country clubs, health and fitness centers, or pools
E23	Membership or entrance fees at golf courses, country clubs, health and fitness centers, or pools

The question wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- We recommended positioning this question before Question E22 so that gym/fitness memberships will be reported before fees for types of organized sports.

Remaining Issues

There were various expenses that were incorrectly named or judged as applicable, such as golf lessons, personal trainer fees, and sport equipment rental, which indicated that participants tended to lump associated costs in with membership and entrance fees. Future testing should monitor whether this is an issue that requires changes to the question wording.

E22	Fees for participating in leisure, recreational, or organized sports
E22	Fees for participating in leisure, recreational, or organized sports

The question wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- There was some confusion regarding gym memberships and whether they belong with this question. We recommend monitoring the question’s performance with the same

wording, but moving it to follow Question E23 (which includes health and fitness center membership) to see if repositioning it results in cleaner reporting.

Remaining Issues

Participants seemed to have difficulty distinguishing between fees for participating in sports and expenses related to sports in general. For instance, they all incorrectly judged sport equipment rental and team uniforms as applicable. Participants were asked about sporting goods and equipment in the interview about the other half of the cluster; this may not be an issue with all Cluster E questions in a full interview.

E24 Membership fees for online or in-store shopping clubs

E24 Membership fees required for online or in-store shopping clubs

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- The results showed high comprehension for membership fees for in-store shopping clubs. However, 2 participants out of 5 incorrectly suggested buying items from either the internet or television shopping networks that do not require a membership fee. We added the word “required” to clarify that only clubs that require membership fees are applicable for this question.

E26 Any matchmaking, speed dating, or online dating services

E26 Any matchmaking, speed dating, or online dating services

After testing concluded, the question wording and order remained the same.

Participants demonstrated strong comprehension of this question.

E25 Membership or other expenses related to any social, civic, fraternal, or service clubs, such as Boy Scouts, Kiwanis, AARP, fraternities, and honor societies

E25 Membership for any social, civic, fraternal, or service clubs

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- While participants showed good comprehension of fees for membership, the wording “other expenses related to” led them to include additional related expenses that are covered in other clusters, such as Boy/Girl Scouts uniform, trip fees, and a beer keg for a fraternity party. Therefore, we removed that wording.
- BLS and Westat decided to remove the list of examples to shorten the question wording, and to instead include the examples in the Infobook.

Remaining Issues

Despite the instructions preceding the group of questions on membership fees, two participants were not certain whether to include donations and one mentioned professional association dues. With the instructions now immediately preceding this question and targeted specifically for this question, we recommend monitoring future testing results to see if donations and professional association dues are still incorrectly reported.

3.6 Cluster F: Children and Infants

This section summarizes the main results and recommendations for the 5 questions administered in Cluster F (plus C9, also tested in Cluster C). The cluster was tested once, in Round 5, with 5 participants.

Table 3-F presents the question wording tested and the wording recommended after BLS staff and Westat project staff (including consultant Johnny Blair) reviewed and discussed the results. For detailed results and recommendations developed after the first testing, refer to the Interim Memo for Clusters B and F.

Table 3-6. Cluster F: Summary table of tested question wording and order

Q #	Tested wording (round 5)	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
F. Children and infants			
F4	Any child care services inside or outside the home	[Same as previous round]	Test revisions
F3	Overnight camps, including transportation to and from the camps	Overnight camps	Test revisions
F1	Instructional day camps, such as basketball camp or acting camp	Day camps that teach specific skills, such as basketball camp or acting camp	Test revisions
F2	General, non-instructional day camps	Any other day camps not already mentioned	Test revisions
C9	Infants' equipment	[Same as previous round]	Test (based on resolution of category mapping)
F5	Any meals at school for preschool through high school age children	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
C8*	Infants' furniture	Infants' furniture	Test (based on resolution of category mapping)

* The recommendation is to test Question C8 with Cluster C questions, in the series of other furniture-related questions.

F4	Any child care services inside or outside the home
F4	Any child care services inside or outside the home

The question wording remained the same but the order changed after testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- After reviewing the other questions in this cluster, we recommended putting this question first, since it is likely to be the most common type of expense for households with children of any age that require supervision.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, it will be important to monitor whether respondents consider this question to be asking about after-school activities or camps and report those types of expenses. If so, the question could be moved after the questions about camps.

The question would benefit from testing at points during the year where children are in school, and at points when they are on summer vacation. This would reveal whether there are seasonal variations in how the question is interpreted and in what expenses are reported.

F3	Overnight camps, including transportation to and from the camps
F3	Overnight camps

Both the question wording and the order changed after testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Expenses for this question code to out-of-town trips, so must be collected separately from other types of camps. There was limited evidence of over-reporting, specifically money spent for clothes to wear while attending camp.
- In discussion with BLS, the decision was to simplify the question to just “overnight camps.”

Rationale for Revising the Order

- Overnight camps are likely the most salient type of camp for parents to report about; it is a memorable experience when children are away from home. We recommended

ordering this question first in the series of three camp questions, to get those expenses reported before moving on to expenses for day camps.

Remaining Issues

Consider administering this question with the out-of-town travel questions (Cluster D). The exact placement within that cluster would need to be assessed during testing.

If this question remains in Cluster F, administer it first in the series of camp questions (before F1 and F2). In further testing, we recommend administering the camp-related questions after Cluster E (Recreation) questions, which collect expenses for recreational activities such as dance classes. This may minimize over-reporting of recreational expenses for children's after-school activities.

F1	Instructional day camps, such as basketball camp or acting camp
----	---

F1	Day camps that teach specific skills, such as basketball camp or acting camp
-----------	---

Both the question wording and the order changed after testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Reporting evidence indicated a comprehension issue: one participant over-reported expenses for several after-school activities (e.g., gymnastics, soccer). These expenses are applicable for Cluster E (Recreation).

Rationale for Revising the Order

- We recommend moving this to follow the question about overnight camps. Overnight camp is likely the easiest type of camp to ask parents about first. With camp fees for this question coded to Expenditure Category 89 (Recreation services), the concern is to guard against double-reporting of camps in two questions. Therefore, we also recommend asking these camp questions after Cluster E.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, monitor the need to add exclusion text, e.g., “Do NOT include after-school activities” in order to minimize double-reporting.

F2 General, non-instructional day camps
F2 Any other day camps not already mentioned

Both the question wording and the order changed after testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- The intent of this question is to be a catch-all to collect general camp-related expenses that are not overnight camps (because those qualify as out-of-town trips) and are not for a specific recreational activity (because those qualify as Recreation services). We suggested revising the wording to accomplish this purpose.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- Based on the limited comprehension and reporting data, we recommended asking this question: after F3 (overnight camp expenses code to out-of-town trips) and after F1 (day camps for skills instruction, which code to Expenditure Category 89 – Recreation services). The expectation is that remaining camps could be more cleanly coded to their appropriate Expenditure Category 11 (Child care).

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the camp questions, monitor respondents' comprehension of three separate questions. If needed, revise the wording and order. Another option would be to cover all childrens' camp expenses – except for those related to out-of-town trips – in one question and coding to one category. Although this would require changing the categorization, it would likely reduce interviewer and respondent burden and minimize the potential for double-reporting.

C9 Infants' equipment
C9 Infants' equipment

The question wording remained the same but the order changed after testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- We provided specific recommendations for ordering the other questions (which all relate to children's care or activities) in this cluster. This question and F5 (meals at school) differ from the others, so we suggested placing them at the end.

Remaining Issues

We did not recommend a wording change, based on the assumption that the Expenditure Category 51 (Miscellaneous personal goods) cannot be changed. However, if the categorization can be changed, we recommend revising the question to cover both furniture and equipment for infants in one question: “Any furniture or equipment for infants” and administering it first within the furniture question series.

In further testing of the question as currently worded, monitor how well this placement works within the flow of questions about children.

F5	Any meals at school for preschool through high school age children
F5	Any meals at school for preschool through high school age children

The question wording and remained the same after testing.

The limited evidence we collected in testing did not indicate a need for any changes.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the Cluster F questions, continue to monitor performance of this wording and order.

3.7 Cluster G: Electronics/Technology

This section summarizes the main results and recommendations for the 13 questions in Cluster G.

The cluster was tested 3 times, in these rounds:

- Rounds 1 – 2
 - In Round 1, partial data (due to session time constraints) were collected from 5 participants.
 - Round 2 (n = 5).

- Round 7 (n = 9).
- Round 9 (n = 6).

Table 3-7 presents the question wording tested in these rounds, and the wording recommended after Round 9 concluded. For detailed results and recommendations developed after the first testing, refer to the Cluster G Interim Memo. For results and recommendations developed after subsequent rounds, refer to the Round 7 Interim Summary Table.

Table 3-7. Cluster G: Summary table of tested question wording and order

Q #	Tested wording (rounds 1 and 2)	Tested wording (round 7)	Tested wording (round 9)	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
G. Electronics/Technology					
G1	Cell or landline phones or accessories. Do NOT include phone service fees.	Cell or landline phones or their accessories. Do NOT include phone service fees.	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
G4	Digital book readers or tablets	Digital book readers or tablets. Do NOT include download or subscription fees.	Tablets or digital book readers. Do NOT include download or subscription fees.	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
G2	Internet services away from home, such as internet cafes, and WiFi access fees in hotels, airports, or planes	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
G3	Portable memory storage for computers and other electronic devices	Portable memory, such as flash drives, memory cards, or blank CDs or DVDs	[Same as previous round]	Portable memory, such as flash drives, external hard drives, memory cards, or blank CDs or DVDs	Test revisions
G5	Laptops or desktop computers, or equipment that you use with the computer. Do NOT include expenses for business use.	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Computers or equipment that you use with the computer. Do NOT include expenses for software or expenses for business use.	Test revisions
G13	Office devices for non-business use, such as calculators, fax machines, or paper shredders	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Fax machines, paper shredders, calculators or other office devices for non-business use	Test revisions
G6	Any installations, repairs, or service contracts for personal use computers or equipment	Any installations, repairs, or service contracts for computers, phones, digital book readers, or tablets	Setup, service, repairs, or warranty for computers, phones, tablets, or digital book readers	Setup, service, repairs, or warranties for computers, phones, tablets, or digital book readers	Monitor
G7	GPS devices, aside from those on cell phones or built into cars	GPS devices or their accessories, aside from those on cell phones or built into cars	GPS devices or their accessories. Do NOT include GPSs built into cell phones or cars.	[Same as previous round]	Complete
G10	Video cameras or small personal music players	Camcorders or small personal music players	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor

Table 3-7. Cluster G: Summary table of tested question wording and order (continued)

Q #	Tested wording (rounds 1 and 2)	Tested wording (round 7)	Tested wording (round 9)	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
G. Electronics/Technology					
G11	Stereos, radios, speakers, or sound components, including those installed in vehicles. Include charges for installation or setup.	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
G9	Any televisions for a home or vehicle, including equipment that you can use with them. Include charges for installation or setup.	Any televisions for a home or vehicle, including equipment that you can use with them. Include charges for installation or setup. Do NOT include subscription fees for cable or satellite.	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
G8	Any video game systems or accessories. Do NOT include actual video games.	[Same as previous round]	Any video game systems or their accessories. Do NOT include actual video games.	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
G12	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for any audio or video electronic equipment	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	[Same as previous round]	Monitor

G1 Cell or landline phones or accessories. Do NOT include phone service fees.

G1 Cell or landline phones or their accessories. Do NOT include phone service fees.

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Round 1 and 2 testing yielded some evidence of respondent confusion in interpreting the word “accessories” too broadly, including other devices that can access the internet, similar to a smart phone. We added the word “their” before accessories to tighten comprehension.
- In terms of reporting, several items were forgotten, including cell phones, cell phone cases, and chargers. These were memory issues and did not have any bearing on the question wording. High accuracy in categorization across all testing rounds indicated that participants seemed to have a clear understanding of the question meaning.

G4 Digital book readers or tablets

G4 Tablets or digital book readers. Do NOT include download or subscription fees.

Both the wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- The initial testing results showed overly broad interpretation of the question to include the costs of activities conducted with a tablet or reader. Based on the comprehension results and reporting, several participants considered costs for books or movies, head phones, or internet service fees as applicable. In reporting, one person excluded an iPad, thinking it belonged under computers.
- We added and tested the exclusion instruction to focus comprehension on the devices themselves and to reduce the chance of double-counting associated expenses.
- We changed the wording to put tablets before digital book readers for emphasis and to reduce the likelihood of misreporting tablets as computers.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- We moved the question about digital book readers or tablets in order to group together two questions about devices that use mobile internet services. G4 was also moved to

precede G2 about internet service away from home since these devices are often used with such services.

Remaining Issues

Monitor for evidence of a need to add more explicit exclusion text, e.g., Do NOT include fees for downloading books or music.

G2	Internet services away from home, such as internet cafes, and WiFi access fees in hotels, airports, or planes
G2	Internet services away from home, such as internet cafes, and WiFi access fees in hotels, airports, or planes

The question wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- In Round 1 testing, after hearing the words hotel and airplanes, one participant interpreted the question to include expenses related to travel and lodging and so offered a substantial misreport for hotel and airfare. There was also a misreport in Round 7 of a hot spot device.
- Based on a low number of overall reports for this item, we kept the wording the same in order to continue monitoring performance over multiple rounds.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- The order of this question was revised to improve flow, so that it followed both questions G1 and G4 about mobile devices that use internet services away from home.

Remaining Issues

Monitor in future testing whether to administer this question before the travel questions (if needed to deter respondents from reporting Wi-Fi fees with a hotel expense).

- G5 Laptops or desktop computers, or equipment that you use with the computer. Do NOT include expenses for business use.
- G5 Laptops or desktop computers, or equipment that you use with the computer. Do NOT include expenses for software or expenses for business use.**

After testing concluded, the question wording and order remained the same.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- The word “equipment” was intentionally used to lead participants to rule out software. However, results from the categorization activity suggested this was not effective. Multiple participants over the testing rounds judged software to be applicable, so the decision was to add software to the exclusion text.
- In multiple rounds, a computer table (which qualifies as furniture) was also judged to be an applicable item.

Remaining Issues

We recommend administering this question after the furniture questions, to deter reporting of computer-related furniture for this question.

- G3 Portable memory storage for computers and other electronic devices
- G3 Portable memory, such as flash drives, memory cards, or blank CDs or DVDs**

Both the wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- When reporting, several participants forgot blank CDs or DVDs.
- Comprehension results indicated that participants did not have a clear or uniform understanding of either “portable memory storage” or “computers and other electronic devices.” Participants miscategorized portable items that included memory storage or held an SD card, such as digital cameras or photo frames.
- We added examples to the wording to clarify the meaning of portable memory storage and reduce under-reporting of CD and DVDs.
- At the beginning of testing, hard drives were not considered applicable for this question and instead were assigned to question G5. This coding accounted for over-reports and

difficulty in the comprehension activity. This was especially the case for external hard drives, which many participants considered to be portable. BLS decided that hard drives will now be counted as applicable for this question instead of G5; this will reduce the potential for over-reporting.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- The order of this question was not intentionally moved; it changed due to decisions about surrounding questions.

G13	Office devices for non-business use, such as calculators, fax machines, or paper shredders
G13	Fax machines, paper shredders, calculators or other office devices for non-business use

The question wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Comprehension results demonstrated a lack of understanding of “office devices,” as participants miscategorized not applicable items such as paper clips, rubber bands, pens, paper, calendars, and pencils. Participants seemed to be thinking more about “office supplies” than “office devices.”
- Reporting results indicated that the inclusion of “fax machines” as an example led to the over-report of charges associated with commercial faxing or fax services.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- We reordered this question in order to improve flow and combine it with other items coded in Expenditure Category 15 (Information and information processing other than internet services). The new order allows administering it before moving on to questions about audio and visual items. It was also moved to precede question G6 about setup, installation or repair of office devices covered by this question.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question it would be helpful to monitor whether “fax machines” as an example leads to any over-reporting of fax charges (there was an instance of this in testing). Also monitor the need for exclusion text: “Do NOT include office supplies or furniture.”

G6	Any installations, repairs, or service contracts for personal use computers or equipment
G6	Setup, service, repairs, or warranties for computers, phones, tablets, or digital book readers

Both the wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Reporting and comprehension results were limited. Reporting in Rounds 1 and 2 yielded one accurate report. In Round 7 there were several over-reports of WiFi set up and no accurate reports. We added examples to the question text to increase accurate reports.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- In addition to other setup service costs, this question is meant to apply to office devices for non-business use, covered in G13. We revised the order, so that G6 will follow G13 to deter under-reporting of associated costs.

Remaining Issues

BLS confirmed that this question needs to capture both installation and repairs and service contracts for items covered in G13. In future testing, monitor reporting of applicable costs for office devices for non-business use to determine effectiveness of the question reordering.

G7	GPS devices, aside from those on cell phones or built into cars.
G7	GPS devices or their accessories. Do NOT include GPSs built into cell phones or cars.

The question wording changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- We changed the question wording of “aside from” to “do NOT” to make the wording consistent with other questions and to reduce potential language comprehension issues with “aside from.”
- We added the wording “or their accessories” since GPS devices that are not built into cars or phones may have separate chargers.

G10 Video cameras or small personal music players

G10 Camcorders or small personal music players

Both the wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- In naming examples, participants accurately named Mp3/Mp4 player, iPod charger, GO Pro, and video camera as applicable. Participants also incorrectly named digital cameras and headphones.
- We changed “video cameras” to “camcorders” to reduce the potential for misreporting digital cameras and other devices that record video.
- There was some evidence of confusion – several participants mentioned phones and digital cameras as examples of expenses for this question.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- The order of this question changed only due to order decisions about surrounding questions.

Remaining Issues

In further testing, monitor whether phones and digital cameras are actually over-reported.

G11 Stereos, radios, speakers, or sound components, including those installed in vehicles. Include charges for installation or setup.

G11 Stereos, radios, speakers, or sound components, including those installed in vehicles. Include charges for installation or setup.

The question wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- There was evidence across testing rounds that participants were not clear where to report satellite radio subscriptions. In comprehension activities, these expenses were judged as applicable.

- In all testing rounds, computer speakers were unanimously incorrectly judged as applicable. Since question G5 (computers and their equipment) precedes this question and is in the same Expenditure Category 81 (Video and Audio), we are not as concerned about the judgment results. Because of the length of the question in its current form, we are hesitant to lengthen it with additional exclusion text.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- To help determine if reordering reduced the potential for multiple reports of speakers, we revised the order so that this question would precede questions G9 and G8, about the various types of electronics with which speakers can be used, and follow G5 about computers and their equipment.

Remaining Issues

BLS indicated that satellite radio subscription fees will likely be captured in this category. In further testing of the question, monitor the need for exclusion text for satellite radio subscriptions, if these costs are decided to be captured in a different category.

G9 Any televisions for a home or vehicle, including equipment that you can use with them.

Include charges for installation or setup.

G9 Any televisions for a home or vehicle, including equipment that you can use with them. Include charges for installation or setup. Do NOT include subscription fees for cable or satellite.

The question wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- The comprehension results showed evidence that the phrase “including equipment that you can use with them” is too vague and caused a few participants to think too broadly about what should be included for this question. Items judged applicable for this question included smartphones, speakers, TV stand, and mounting kit. The decision was to suggest a change in order (see below) and to monitor the comprehension evidence in subsequent testing.
- Results also showed that participants interpreted the phrase “installation or set up” too broadly, leading to confusion over the applicability of cable TV installation or cable service fees. We added exclusion text to reduce the possibility of over-reporting cable installation and fees.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- We revised the order to position G9 after question G11, to reduce the likelihood of multiple reports of speakers.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, monitor whether there is a need to reduce the question length. The current wording includes both inclusion and exclusion text, leading to several participants asking for the full question to be repeated during testing. Also monitor the need to revise order to place this question after furniture questions in Cluster C.

G8 Any video game systems or accessories. Do NOT include actual video games.

G8 Any video game systems or their accessories. Do NOT include actual video games.

Both the wording and order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Wording

- Results for the categorization activity yielded evidence of participant confusion over applicable items for this question. In Rounds 1 and 2 this question had the highest percentage of “Don’t know/Not sure” judgments and one of the lowest percentages of accurately categorized items. Gaming furniture, television, and video game cartridge were judged applicable. We added “their” before accessories to help tighten wording.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- To reduce over-reporting of expenses for items associated with televisions and computers that could be considered video game system accessories, we moved this question to follow both G5 about computers, and G9 about televisions.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question we suggest administering G8 after questions about televisions and furniture to reduce multiple reports of these items. We hesitated to add text to an already long question, so suggest continuing to monitor the need to add more exclusion text about furniture.

- G12 Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for any audio or video electronic equipment.
- G12 Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for any audio or video electronic equipment.**

The question wording remained the same but the order changed over the course of testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- The order of this question was not intentionally moved but changed because of decisions made about surrounding questions. We suggest that the reordering of previous questions in this cluster will allow for a clearer understanding of this question in relation to others, and limit reporting to applicable expenditures.

Remaining Issues

We observed that a few participants reported expenses that overlapped with G6 (for installation repairs, or service contracts for personal computers or their equipment). The vague phrase “any audio or video electronic equipment” may have led them to over-report those expenses for this question. In further testing of the question, we suggest closely monitoring to see if reporting is more accurate due to the change in administration order.

3.8 Cluster H: Events

This section summarizes the main results and recommendations for the 3 questions in Cluster H. The cluster was tested over the course of Rounds 2 – 4. Unlike testing for the other clusters, these 3 questions were tested as “floaters” rather than together as a set. Participants scheduled (for other clusters) in Rounds 2 – 4 and also eligible for one of these questions completed it during their session. Per question, the number of participants was:

- Question 1 (Catered affairs) n = 8;
- Question 2 (Cemetery lots or vaults) n = 4; and
- Question 3 (Funeral services) n = 4.

Table 3-8 presents the question wording tested and the wording recommended after Round 4 concluded. For detailed results and recommendations developed after the first testing, refer to the Cluster H Interim Memo.

Table 3-8. Cluster H: Summary table of tested question wording and order

Q #	Tested Wording (Rounds 2 – 4)	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
H. Events			
H1	Catered affairs, including purchases, rentals, or entertainment	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
H3	Purchase or upkeep of cemetery lots or vaults	[Same as previous round]	Monitor
H2	Funeral services, burials, or cremation	[Same as previous round]	Monitor

H1 Catered affairs, including purchases, rentals, or entertainment

H1 Catered affairs, including purchases, rentals, or entertainment

The question wording and order remained the same after testing.

Remaining Issues

We recommended retaining the wording for additional testing, to evaluate its performance when administered to participants who have already answered questions about clothing and flowers.

To prevent double-reporting of clothing and flowers, we recommended administering this question after questions about clothing (questions A3, A4, and A6) and flowers (question C19) in a real recall interview context. These participants did not have a clear understanding of which wedding-related items fit the question. One participant excluded weddings altogether until she started the judgment task, which prompted her to think more broadly than her initial interpretation (which she limited to galas, fundraisers, and children's events).

H3 Funeral services, burials, or cremation

H3 Funeral services, burials, or cremation

The question wording remained the same but the order changed after testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- In the comprehension activities, participants tended to lump together anything related to funerals or burial as applicable for this question. Although costs associated with purchase and upkeep were to be captured in H2), participants still named them as examples for this question, so we recommended reordering it to ask before H2.

Remaining Issues

In further testing of the question, monitor the need to add exclusion text, e.g., for items that should be reported elsewhere, such as food or clothing.

We also recommend, as noted below for Question H2, considering combining H2 and H3 into one (longer) question if further testing warrants that.

H2 Purchase or upkeep of cemetery lots or vaults

H2 Purchase or upkeep of cemetery lots or vaults

The question wording remained the same but the order changed after testing.

Rationale for Revising the Order

- The order change was based on the recommendation to ask H3 first.

Remaining Issues

We suggested collecting more data and monitoring performance with additional participants. Participants had difficulty separating costs associated with the funeral and burial from those of purchase or upkeep. Among this set of participants, however, none had had upkeep expenses within the past three months. If the confusion persists, one option is to create one question to cover all content that is currently separated into Questions H2 and H3. The disadvantage of that option is potentially lengthy wording (to ensure coverage of all items), which may be more confusing for respondents than the current two shorter questions.

This page is intentionally blank

Conclusions and Recommendations

4

Westat completed a total of 85 cognitive interviews over the course of 9 rounds of testing. Chapter 3 provided a high-level summary of those cognitive testing results.

Summary of the question revisions. As described in Chapter 2, we drafted the 116 original questions as definitions where possible. For each question, if comprehension and/or reporting issues (such as reporting items that were not applicable, or excluding items that were applicable) surfaced, we considered the following as options for revisions for a subsequent round of testing.

- Revise the wording of the definition to address specific observed reporting and/or interpretation issues that surfaced;
- Use examples instead of, or in addition to, the definition; or
- Add exclusion text (to explicitly address a misinterpretation observed with multiple participants or judged likely to be significant for the population, e.g., over- or under-reporting of large expenses).

If those options did not seem appropriate (e.g., a question was so broad that it was not possible to use a succinct set of examples, adding exclusion text made the question text very lengthy), or did not lead to improved performance in subsequent testing, a last resort was to split the question into two or more questions, each with a more specific focus.

Through the iterative interview rounds, we tested the following types of revisions:

- As described above, changing the wording of expenditure questions
- Merging two questions to form a higher-level expenditure question;
- Splitting a questions into two or more questions; and
- Changing the order of administration of questions.

End result of the testing. Over the course of testing, of the 116 original questions, the wording changed (at some point) for 65 of the questions. Three questions were split into 2 or 3 separate questions, and two original questions were merged into a single question. When testing concluded, the total number of questions was 119.

For some questions, we observed one or both of the following:

- Participants reported an expense “too soon;” they thought of an item and did not know that it would be more appropriate to report it for a later question; or
- Comprehension results showed that a majority of participants judged items as applicable for a question, when they were actually applicable for a question that occurred later in the administration order.

In these cases, we recommended changing the administration order for a question and monitored whether reporting and comprehension improved in a subsequent testing round. The main concern with trying to ensure reporting of expenses for the intended questions was because of the mapping to Expenditure Categories. If expenses are reported for the “wrong” questions, or are reported multiple times (because recall of the same expense is cued by the wording of several questions), the mapping of expenses to the Expenditure Categories will be incorrect and/or an over-estimate of total expenses for the recall interview.

Question testing status. Table 4-1 shows, at the conclusion of testing, the status regarding recommendations for further testing of the expenditure questions. Over half of the questions (72) are considered to need more testing in order to monitor reporting accuracy and comprehension with a larger sample size and/or because questions around them changed in the last round they were tested. A significant number (42) are considered to need testing because changes were suggested for the wording or order when testing concluded for their cluster. Five of the questions are marked as not needing additional testing due to yielding strong reporting accuracy and/or comprehension evidence. These questions tend to ask about very specific expenses, such as GPSs that are not built into phones or cars.

Table 4-1. Question testing status at the conclusion of testing

Question testing status	Number of questions
Testing considered complete	5
More testing is recommended, to monitor the performance of the question (due to wording and/or order changes to <i>other</i> questions within the cluster)	72
More testing is recommended, due to revisions to the wording and/or order of the question	42
Total	119

Recommendations for moving forward with expenditure questions. Assuming that BLS will proceed with using fewer, more general questions for the recall interview, there are a few cautions for the interview context that will improve reporting accuracy.

- Interviewers will need to be familiar with the full set of questions. The question order has been, and will likely continue to be, revised on the basis of empirical evidence. However, interviewers will need to be aware of questions that are most likely to provide overlapping item reports, so as to assign the items to correct Expenditure Category numbers and minimize over-reporting.
- The interview respondent instructions should clearly indicate that an item should be reported only once. This will also help to deter over-reporting. All respondents and interviewer instructions should be reviewed in light of recommended changes that are adopted.

We also recommend a field experiment to compare performance of the original and revised interview. Problematic questions identified in a field test could be subjected to further cognitive testing to pinpoint issues and improve their performance. Another alternative is to use a “bridge sample” – where respondents would report for both versions of the interview in order to assess the impact of expenditure question changes.

Crosswalk. An additional final product of the testing was the creation of a crosswalk between the 119 questions and the 38 Item Categories they are intended to measure. The crosswalk is provided as a separate document in Excel format.

Lessons learned in testing. BLS requested that Westat comment on the methods used in the sessions (e.g., which tasks worked best to assess comprehension), and to comment on which types of items seemed to work better with examples vs. definitions. Appendix 4 provides these observations.

Recommended question wording and order. Table 4-2 shows the tested clusters, with questions within each cluster ordered on the basis of the last time the cluster was tested. Clusters B, E, and F, and H were tested once. Cluster D was tested in two rounds and Clusters A, C, and G were each tested in a total of 3 rounds.

For each question, Table 4-2 also indicates whether more testing is recommended. Mainly due to the small n for testing, we recommend further testing for the majority of the questions. Even if the wording and/or order of an individual question did not change over the course of testing, reporting

and comprehension may be affected by changes made to preceding questions. Some questions had very little reporting and/or comprehension evidence to evaluate, so we recommended continuing to test them to judge their performance.

We offer a caveat: due to the large number of questions in the recall interview, it was not possible to cover all questions with participants. Therefore, we do not have a definitive recommendation for overall order of the questions. More testing will be needed to determine an optimal order for the full set of questions for the recall interview. Further testing will require a longer session time and/or an alternative approach that will allow covering more questions with each participant.

Table 4-2. Original wording and recommended wording when testing concluded, by cluster

Q #	Original wording	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
A. Apparel and Personal Items			
A1	Jewelry, watches, or parts for them	Jewelry or watches, for men, women, or children	Test revisions
A2	Watch or jewelry repair, including sizing or cleaning	Care for watches or jewelry, such as repairs, sizing, cleaning, or engraving	Monitor
A3	Clothing rental or preservation, or clothing storage outside the home	Clothing rental, clothing preservation, or professional services for storing clothes	Monitor
A5	Any uniforms or costumes for men, women, or children. Do not include costs that are reimbursed.	Any uniforms or costumes for men, women, or children. Do NOT include shoes or costs that are reimbursed.	Monitor
A6	Any type of dresses, for women or girls	Any type of dresses, for women or girls. Do NOT include skirts.	Monitor
A4	Any suits, sportcoats, or tailored jackets for men, women, or children	Any suits, sportcoats, or tailored jackets for men, women, or children. Do NOT include outerwear or individual tops or pants.	Monitor
B. Repairs, replacements, upkeep of home; home operations			
B1	Indoor flooring installation, repair, or replacement including wood, vinyl, tile, and wall-to-wall carpeting. Do NOT include expenses that will be reimbursed by someone outside of your household.	Indoor flooring installation, repair, or replacement including wood, vinyl, tile, and wall-to-wall carpeting. Do NOT include expenses that will be reimbursed by someone outside of your household.	Monitor
B2	Materials for termite or pest control. Do NOT include professional service fees.	Materials for termite or pest control. Do NOT include professional service fees.	Monitor
B3	Any termite or pest control professional service fees	Any termite or pest control professional service fees	Monitor
B4	Housekeeping, lawn, or tree care services. Do NOT include services covered by management or maintenance fees.	Housekeeping, lawn, or tree care services. Do NOT include services covered by management or maintenance fees.	Monitor
B5	Outdoor equipment or tools, including motorized, electric, or manual	Outdoor equipment or tools, including motorized, electric, or manual	Monitor
B6	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for any outdoor equipment or tools	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for any outdoor equipment or tools	Monitor
B7	Power or non-power tools, their accessories, or hardware	Power or non-power tools, their accessories, or hardware	Monitor
B8	Items used for hanging or storage in the home or yard	[B9] Indoor closet and storage items	Test revisions
		[B10] Items for storage in the garage or yard	Test revisions
		[B11] Other hardware not already mentioned	Test revisions

Table 4-2. Original wording and recommended wording when testing concluded, by cluster (continued)

Q #	Original wording	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
C. Household Linens and Furnishings			
Part 1			
C1	Any window coverings, including curtains, drapes, blinds, or shades	Any window coverings, including curtains, drapes, blinds or shades. Do NOT include cost of hardware purchased separately.	Test revisions
C4	Bathroom linens, shower curtains, or bath mats	Any towels or other bathroom linens, shower curtains, or bath mats	Test revisions
C5	Bed linens, blankets, or pillows, for either adults or children	Bed linens, blankets, or bed pillows, for either adults or children	Monitor
C3	Slipcovers, decorative pillows, or cushions	Slipcovers, decorative pillows, or cushions	Monitor
C6	Kitchen, dining room, or any other room's linens or fabric items	Linens or fabric items for the kitchen, dining room, or any other rooms not already covered	Monitor
C2	Non-permanent floor or stair coverings	Non-permanent floor or stair coverings, such as mats, rugs, treads or runners	Monitor
C28	Electric floor or carpet cleaning equipment	Electrical equipment for floor or carpet cleaning	Test revisions
C25	Window or wall unit air conditioners	Air conditioners installed into windows or walls	Monitor
C30	Portable cooling or heating equipment	Portable fans, heaters, humidifiers, or dehumidifiers	Complete
C29	Indoor lamps, ceiling or wall lighting, or ceiling fans	Indoor lamps, ceiling or wall lighting, or ceiling fans. Do NOT include light bulbs.	Monitor
C26	Air purifiers, water filters, carbon monoxide detectors, or smoke alarms	Air purifiers, water filters, carbon monoxide detectors, or smoke alarms	Complete
C27	Burglar alarm equipment. Do NOT include regular security alarm service fees.	Burglar alarm equipment. Do NOT include regular security alarm service fees.	Monitor
C31	Items used to serve, consume, or store food and drink	[C35] Containers for storing foods and drinks. Do NOT include items you throw away.	Monitor
		[C36] Tableware for serving, eating, or drinking. Do NOT include items you throw away.	Monitor
C32	Nonelectric cookware	Nonelectric cookware	Monitor
C33	Any other nonelectric kitchen gadgets, tools, or cooking utensils	Any other nonelectric kitchen gadgets, tools, or cooking utensils	Monitor

Table 4-2. Original wording and recommended wording when testing concluded, by cluster (continued)

Q #	Original wording	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
C. Household Linens and Furnishings			
Part 2			
C23	Dishwasher that is portable, not built-in	Dishwasher that is portable, not built-in	Complete
C24	Purchase, installation, or maintenance of a built-in dishwasher, garbage disposal, or range hood	Purchase, installation, or maintenance of a built-in dishwasher, garbage disposal, or range hood	Monitor
C20	Small electrical kitchen appliances	Small electrical kitchen appliances, including microwaves	Monitor
C21	Any larger appliances for the kitchen or laundry room, excluding dishwashers. Include installation and haul-away costs.	Larger kitchen or laundry appliances. Include installation and haul-away costs.	Monitor
C22	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for those larger household appliances	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for those larger kitchen or laundry appliances	Monitor
C19	Potted plants, fresh cut flowers, or flowers that can be worn or carried	Houseplants, fresh cut flowers, or flowers that can be worn or carried	Monitor
C18	Household decorative items such as clocks, art, mirrors, and seasonal decorations	Household decorative items such as artificial flowers or plants, clocks, art, mirrors, or seasonal decorations	Monitor
C8*	Infants' furniture	Infants' furniture	Test (based on resolution of category mapping)
C15	Any bedroom furniture, mattresses, or boxsprings	Any bedroom furniture, mattresses, or boxsprings	Monitor
C10	Living, family, or recreation room furniture	Living, family, or recreation room furniture	Monitor
C11	Dining room or kitchen furniture	Dining room or kitchen furniture	Monitor
C12	Office furniture for home use, including filing and storage equipment	Filing cabinets, safes, or office furniture for home use	Monitor
C16	Other furniture not already mentioned, for any other areas in the house	Other furniture not already mentioned, for any other areas inside the house	Monitor
C7	Rented or leased any furniture	Rented or leased any furniture. Do NOT include TV rental.	Monitor
C17	Repairing, refinishing, or reupholstering furniture, including the cost for fabric	Repairing, refinishing, or reupholstering furniture, including the cost for fabric	Monitor

Table 4-2. Original wording and recommended wording when testing concluded, by cluster (continued)

Q #	Original wording	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
C. Household Linens and Furnishings			
Part 2			
C14	Barbecue grills, outdoor lighting, or outdoor decorative items [Question was split into C38 and C39]	[C38] Outdoor grills	Test revisions
C13	Patio, porch, or outdoor furniture and covers	Patio, porch, or outdoor furniture and covers	Monitor
C14	Barbecue grills, outdoor lighting, or outdoor decorative items [Question was split into C38 and C39]	[C39] Outdoor lighting or other items including decorations	Test revisions
C34	Repair of household equipment or decorative items	Repair of any household items we've covered, except appliances or furniture	Monitor
D. Trips and Transportation			
D1	Automobile service clubs such as AAA, or vehicle services such as OnStar and LoJack	Automobile service clubs such as AAA, or vehicle services such as OnStar and LoJack	Complete
D3	Local tolls or electronic toll passes	Local tolls or electronic toll passes	Monitor
D5	Any travel items, luggage, or any type of bags for carrying belongings	Any travel items, luggage, or any type of bags for carrying belongings	Monitor
D4	Any membership costs or other expenses related to vacation clubs or timeshare dues	Any membership costs or other expenses related to vacation clubs or timeshare dues	Test revisions
	<p>Did you take any out-of-town trips since the first of [the ref month 3 months prior]?</p> <p>During the period from [start of ref month – end of ref period], did you pay for anything related to any out-of-town trips?</p> <p>IF YES TO EITHER: For the following questions, please think about money spent since the first of [the ref month 3 months prior] for out-of-town trips. Please do not include any costs that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will be reimbursed for OR Were covered by a package deal. 		
D10	Lodging. Do not include expenses previously reported for vacation clubs and timeshares.	Cost of hotel or any lodging, including taxes. Do NOT include optional costs, such as parking, food, and Internet service.	Test revisions
D6	Airfare, including baggage and change fees	Airfare, including baggage and change fees. We'll ask about other transportation costs next.	Monitor

Table 4-2. Original wording and recommended wording when testing concluded, by cluster (continued)

Q #	Original wording	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
D. Trips and Transportation			
D7	Bus or train fare to reach your destination	[D97] Transportation such as shuttles, taxis, buses, subways, trains, or ferries, at any time during a trip	Monitor
D9	Local transportation during a trip, such as shuttles, taxis, buses, subways or trains, and ferries		
D8	Fares or tips for cruise ships or ferries	Tickets, tips, or service charges for cruise ships	Monitor
D13	Rented vehicles for recreational use. Do not include fuel.	Cost to rent an RV, boat, trailer, or any kind of vehicle for outdoor recreation. Do NOT include fuel.	Test revisions
D12	Rental vehicles for getting around. Do not include fuel.	Cost to rent a car, truck, motorcycle, or plane. Do NOT include fuel.	Test revisions
D11	Gasoline, diesel, or any other vehicle fuels	Gasoline, diesel, or any other vehicle fuels	Monitor
D14	Parking fees	Parking fees	Complete
D15	Any tolls	Any tolls	Monitor
D16	Meals, snacks, or drinks at restaurants, bars, or fast food places	Meals, snacks, or drinks at restaurants, bars, or fast food places	Monitor
D17	<i>[Follow up question to D16]: How much of that amount was for alcohol?</i> Alcohol at restaurants, bars, or fast food places	<i>[Follow-up question to D16]: How much of that amount was for alcohol?</i> Alcohol [at restaurants, bars, or fast food places]	Monitor
D18	Food or beverages at grocery or convenience stores	Food or beverages from grocery or other stores	Monitor
D19	<i>[Follow up to D18]: How much of that amount was for alcohol?</i> Alcohol [at grocery or convenience stores]	<i>[Follow up to D18]: How much of that amount was for alcohol?</i> Alcohol [from grocery or other stores]	Monitor
D21	Admission fees, tickets, tours, or other entertainment	Tours, admission fees, or tickets for entertainment	Test revisions
D20	Play sports, exercise, or rent any sports equipment	To play sports, exercise, or rent any sports equipment	Test revisions
D2	Mass transportation, commuter, or carpool services. Do NOT include expenses covered by your employer.	Mass transportation, commuter, or carpool services. Do NOT include expenses covered by your employer.	Test revisions
E. Recreation			
E1	Pets and their supplies, medical care, or other pet services. Do NOT include pet food.	Pets, pet medical care, other pet services, or pet supplies. Do NOT include pet food.	Test revisions
E3	Any equipment used for camping, hunting, or fishing. Include guns.	Equipment for camping, hunting, or fishing, including guns. Do NOT include vehicles or boats.	Test revisions
E4	Winter sports equipment or gear	Equipment for snow or ice sports. Do NOT include clothing.	Test revisions

Table 4-2. Original wording and recommended wording when testing concluded, by cluster (continued)

Q #	Original wording	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
E. Recreation			
E5	Water sports equipment or gear	Water sports equipment or gear. Do NOT include swimsuits or boats.	Test revisions
E2	Protective eyewear or visual goods for magnification	Protective goggles, binoculars, microscopes, or magnifying glasses	Test revisions
E6	Bicycles, parts, equipment, or gear	Bicycles, including parts or equipment for them	Test revisions
E8	Health and exercise equipment	Home exercise or workout equipment or machines	Test revisions
E7	Sports and recreation goods or equipment	Sports and recreation goods or equipment. Do NOT include shoes.	Test revisions
E9	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for any sport or recreational equipment	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for any sport or recreational equipment	Monitor
E12	Docking or landing fees for boats or planes	Docking or landing fees for boats or planes	Monitor
E13	Any outboard motors	Any outboard boat motors	Test revisions
E17	Toys, games, or arts and crafts supplies	Toys, games, or arts and crafts materials for adults or children. Do NOT include video or computer games.	Test revisions
E10	Ping-pong, pool tables, or other similar recreation room items and accessories	Ping-pong tables, pool tables, or other similar recreation room items or their accessories	Test revisions
E11	Playground equipment, sand boxes, or inflatable pools	Playground equipment, sand boxes, or portable pools	Test revisions
E14	Photography-related equipment, products, or professional services. Do NOT include computer software such as Photoshop.	Photography equipment, products, or professional services. Do NOT include phones, picture frames, or computer software.	Test revisions
E15	Stamp or coin collecting	Stamp or coin collecting	Monitor
E16	Sewing, knitting, or quilting machines, materials, or supplies	Sewing, knitting, or quilting machines, materials, or supplies	Monitor
E19	Any recreational or instructional classes or lessons	Any recreational classes or lessons	Test revisions
E18	Musical instruments, supplies, or accessories, including repairs	Musical instruments, supplies, or accessories, including repairs	Test revisions
E20	In-town admission fees, tickets, or tours	Tours, admission fees, or tickets for entertainment	Test revisions

Table 4-2. Original wording and recommended wording when testing concluded, by cluster (continued)

Q #	Original wording	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
E. Recreation			
E21	Any souvenirs or memorabilia, purchased either in town or on a trip	Any souvenirs or memorabilia, purchased either in town or on a trip	Monitor
	For questions E23, E24, E25, E26, this text preceded the question wording: The next [4] questions ask about membership fees. Please do NOT include contributions to or membership in religious, professional, business, or other tax deductible organizations.		
E23	Membership or entrance fees at golf courses, country clubs, health and fitness centers, or pools	Membership or entrance fees at golf courses, country clubs, health and fitness centers, or pools	Monitor
E22	Fees for participating in leisure, recreational, or organized sports	Fees for participating in leisure, recreational, or organized sports	Monitor
E24	Membership fees for online or in-store shopping clubs	Membership fees required for online or in-store shopping clubs	Test revisions
E26	Any matchmaking, speed dating, or online dating services	Any matchmaking, speed dating, or online dating services	Monitor
E25	Membership or other expenses related to any social, civic, fraternal, or service clubs, such as Boy Scouts, Kiwanis, AARP, fraternities, and honor societies	For the next question, please do NOT include contributions to or membership in religious, professional, business, or other tax deductible organizations. Membership for any social, civic, fraternal, or service clubs	Test revisions
F. Children and infants			
F4	Any child care services inside or outside the home	Any child care services inside or outside the home	Test revisions
F3	Overnight camps, including transportation to and from the camps	Overnight camps	Test revisions
F1	Instructional day camps, such as basketball camp or acting camp	Day camps that teach specific skills, such as basketball camp or acting camp	Test revisions
F2	General, non-instructional day camps	Any other day camps not already mentioned	Test revisions

Table 4-2. Original wording and recommended wording when testing concluded, by cluster (continued)

Q #	Original wording	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
F. Children and infants			
C9*	Infants' equipment	Infants' equipment	Test (based on resolution of category mapping)
F5	Any meals at school for preschool through high school age children	Any meals at school for preschool through high school age children	Monitor
G. Electronics/Technology			
G1	Cell or landline phones or accessories. Do NOT include phone service fees.	Cell or landline phones or their accessories. Do NOT include phone service fees.	Monitor
G4	Digital book readers or tablets	Tablets or digital book readers. Do NOT include download or subscription fees.	Monitor
G2	Internet services away from home, such as internet cafes, and WiFi access fees in hotels, airports, or planes	Internet services away from home, such as internet cafes, and Wi-Fi access fees in hotels, airports, or planes	Monitor
G3	Portable memory storage for computers and other electronic devices	Portable memory, such as flash drives, external hard drives, memory cards, or blank CDs or DVDs	Test revisions
G5	Laptops or desktop computers, or equipment that you use with the computer. Do NOT include expenses for business use.	Computers or equipment that you use with the computer. Do NOT include expenses for software or expenses for business use.	Test revisions
G13	Office devices for non-business use, such as calculators, fax machines, or paper shredders	Fax machines, paper shredders, calculators or other office devices for non-business use	Test revisions
G6	Any installations, repairs, or service contracts for personal use computers or equipment	Setup, service, repairs, or warranties for computers, phones, tablets, or digital book readers	Monitor
G7	GPS devices, aside from those on cell phones or built into cars	GPS devices or their accessories. Do NOT include GPSs built into cell phones or cars.	Complete
G10	Video cameras or small personal music players	Camcorders or small personal music players	Monitor
G11	Stereos, radios, speakers, or sound components, including those installed in vehicles. Include charges for installation or setup.	Stereos, radios, speakers, or sound components, including those installed in vehicles. Include charges for installation or setup.	Monitor

Table 4-2. Original wording and recommended wording when testing concluded, by cluster (continued)

Q #	Original wording	Recommended wording (when testing concluded)	Testing status
G. Electronics/Technology			
G9	Any televisions for a home or vehicle, including equipment that you can use with them. Include charges for installation or setup.	Any televisions for a home or vehicle, including equipment that you can use with them. Include charges for installation or setup. Do NOT include subscription fees for cable or satellite.	Monitor
G8	Any video game systems or accessories. Do NOT include actual video games.	Any video game systems or their accessories. Do NOT include actual video games.	Monitor
G12	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for any audio or video electronic equipment	Service contracts, maintenance, or repairs for any audio or video electronic equipment	Monitor
H. Events			
H1	Catered affairs, including purchases, rentals, or entertainment	Catered affairs, including purchases, rentals, or entertainment	Monitor
H3	Purchase or upkeep of cemetery lots or vaults	Purchase or upkeep of cemetery lots or vaults	Monitor
H2	Funeral services, burials, or cremation	Funeral services, burials, or cremation	Monitor

* At the conclusion of testing, Question C8 remains in Cluster C, and C9 remains in Cluster F. If BLS will be able to change the categorization scheme to code all infant-related items together, and ask in one question, then the placement of the combined question would need to be tested. We suggest starting with a combined question in Cluster C, where C8 is currently positioned.

This page is intentionally blank

References

- Beatty, P. (2010). Considerations Regarding the Use of Global Survey Questions. Downloaded September 1, 2015, from http://www.bls.gov/cex/methwrkshp_pap_beatty.pdf
- Edgar, J. (2011). Global Questions Cognitive testing results. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Downloaded July 1, 2014, from: http://www.bls.gov/cex/cesrvmeth_cloth.pdf
- Gemini Project. (2010). Global Questions in the Consumer Expenditure Surveys Program.” Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Division of Consumer Expenditures Surveys. Internal Document.
- Goldenberg, K., and Steinberg, B. (2010). Global Questions Report Final. Internal Document.
- Kopp, B. (2013). Use of financial records in the CE Survey. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Downloaded July 1, 2014, from: http://www.bls.gov/cex/ce_symp2013_brandon.pdf
- Kopp, B., and Yu, E. (2013). Summary report of the 2013 global questions cognitive testing study. Internal Report.
- Passero, B., Ryan, J., Cage, R., Stanley, S., and Garner, T. (2013). OPLC Requirements for the Consumer Expenditure Survey. Downloaded September 1, 2015, from http://www.bls.gov/cex/ce_gemini_oplc.pdf
- Peytchev, A. (2010). Global versus Specific Questions for the Consumer Expenditure Survey. Downloaded September 1, 2015, from http://www.bls.gov/cex/methwrkshp_pp_peytchev.pdf

This page is intentionally blank

Appendix 1

Recruitment Screener

This page is intentionally blank

Appendix 1 Recruitment Screener

Screener (in format for telephone screening; web survey screener has same items)

Thank you for your interest in our study. We need people to participate in an interview about things they have spent money on over the past 3 months. We are going to ask you some questions about yourself since we need to make sure that we include people with varying backgrounds. This will only take a few minutes.

1. What is your age?

|__| |__|
AGE

IF AGE 17 OR YOUNGER(GO TO END STATEMENT ABOUT INELIGIBILITY DUE TO AGE)

AGES 18+ (GO TO 2)

NO NEED TO ASK IF OBVIOUS:

2. Are you male or female?

Male1
Female2

3. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

YES1
NO2

4. What is your race? Please select one or more.

White1
Black or African American2
Asian3
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander4
American Indian or Alaska Native5

5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

1st – 8th grade, some high school, but not a diploma1
12 grade/high school diploma or GED2
Some college, Associate’s degree3
Bachelor’s degree4
Master’s degree or higher5

6. What is your marital status?
- Single1
 - Married.....2
 - Divorced3
 - Separated.....1
 - Widowed.....1
 - A member of an unmarried couple.....1
7. Do you live alone?
- YES.....1 (GO TO Question 9)
 - NO.....2
8. In your household...
- a. How many other adults are there, besides you?
_____ (number)
 - b. How many infants (2 years old or under) are there?
_____ (number)
 - c. How many other children (2 to 18 years old) are there?
_____ (number)
9. In the last 3 months, **have you [or anyone in your household] purchased...**
[List of expenditure categories with “common wording” and lures goes here, with Yes/No answer choices for each]
10. What is your income – above \$50,000 or below \$50,000?
- Below \$50,000.....1
 - Above \$50,0002
 - Rather not say3
11. What is your name? _____
12. What is your address? _____

13. What is your e-mail address? _____
14. What is your phone number? _____

[IF PHONE SCREENING]

We will be conducting interviews in [TESTING LOCATION, NAME AND ADDRESS OF FACILITY] during the days of [FROM WHEN TO WHEN]. Would you be available to meet at that location for a one-hour time slot on one of those days?

YES.....1
NO.....2

[Thank you for your interest. {IF EARLY ROUND} We will be conducting interviews at that location again within the next few months. Would you be available to meet at that location for a one-hour time slot in the future?

YES.....1
NO.....2

Where did you see our ad for volunteers?

IF ELIGIBLE, AND DESIRABLE FOR SCHEDULING: It appears you are eligible for our study. We'd like to schedule you at **XXXX**. Let me read you the days and times I have available, and you can tell me what would be best for you. This will take about 1 hour of your time and we will pay you \$40 cash. [We will send directions to the venue to you at [VERIFY – FROM SCREENER SURVEY – THE FULL NAME AND EMAIL OR REGULAR ADDRESS]. (It will include a map that shows you exactly where the room is).

I will send the directions out to you shortly. If you have to cancel your interview, please call back so that we can schedule someone in your place, OK? You can reach me at: [Recruiter's Phone Number].

If you have any friends, relatives or acquaintances – who do not live with you – who would be interested in participating, please give them our contact information: studies@Westat.com or call **1-800-XXX-XXXX**.

IF NOT ELIGIBLE: Thank you so much for answering our questions. We will get back to you once we figure out how many people we will actually need for this study.

If you have any friends, relatives or acquaintances who do not live in your household, and would be interested in participating, please give them our contact information: studies@Westat.com or all **1-800-XXX-XXXX**.

END STATEMENT (INELIGIBLE)

IF NOT AGE 18+: It appears that you are not eligible for our study. Thank you very much for your interest and willingness to help out.

This page is intentionally blank

Appendix 2

Consent Form

This page is intentionally blank

Appendix 2 Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

The BLS, its employees, agents, and partner statistical agencies, will use the information you provide for statistical purposes only and will hold the information in confidence to the full extent permitted by law. In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (Title 5 of Public Law 107-347) and other applicable Federal laws, your responses will not be disclosed in identifiable form without your informed consent. The Privacy Act notice on the back of this form describes the conditions under which information related to this study will be used by BLS employees and agents.

During this research you may be audio and/or videotaped, or you may be observed. If you do not wish to be taped, you still may participate in this research.

We estimate it will take you an average of 45 minutes to participate in this research (ranging from 30 minutes to 60 minutes).

Your participation in this research project is voluntary, and you have the right to stop at any time. If you agree to participate, please sign below.

Persons are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. OMB control number is 1220-0141, and expires February 28, 2015.

I have read and understand the statements above. I consent to participate in this study.

Participant's signature

Date

Participant's printed name

Researcher's signature

OMB Control Number: 1220-0141
Expiration Date: February 28, 2015

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

In accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended (5 U.S.C. 552a), you are hereby notified that this study is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), under authority of 29 U.S.C. 2. Your voluntary participation is important to the success of this study and will enable the BLS to better understand the behavioral and psychological processes of individuals, as they reflect on the accuracy of BLS information collections. The BLS, its employees, agents, and partner statistical agencies, will use the information you provide for statistical purposes only and will hold the information in confidence to the full extent permitted by law. In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (Title 5 of Public Law 107-347) and other applicable Federal laws, your responses will not be disclosed in identifiable form without your informed consent.

Appendix 3
Session Protocol

This page is intentionally blank

Appendix 3

Session Protocol

CE Recall Interview: Cognitive Testing Protocol

INTERVIEW PREP STEP

- Have laptop with Access form ready; enter the session number

I. Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to help us out today. My name is [and this is my colleague () who will be taking notes for us today. We also have () from the Bureau of Labor Statistics who is observing the session.]

II. Purpose and Consent Procedure

First, I'll give you a little background about what we'll be doing.

I will be asking you a series of questions from the Consumer Expenditure Survey, an ongoing survey that BLS conducts. The survey provides information about the buying habits of American consumers. This information is used for a lot of things, but its primary purpose is to help calculate inflation.

I'll be asking you to answer the questions and share your reactions to them. The purpose of this session is to find out what you think each question is asking about, and how easy or hard it is to answer. We are not evaluating you. We are looking to improve the questions, so there are no right or wrong answers. All the information you give us will be kept completely confidential, and will be used to improve the survey questions.

Please read this consent form, and I'll answer any questions you may have. [ANSWER QUESTIONS, IF ANY.] Please sign the form.

[START RECORDER AND GET ORAL PERMISSION TO RECORD; WHICH RECRUITER EXPLAINED AT TIME OF SCHEDULING CALL.] With your permission, I would like to record the interview in case I miss anything while taking notes. Do you give your permission to participate in this interview and to be recorded?

Do you have any [other] questions before we begin?

General Probes, etc.

If a participant asks “What does that mean?” “Does that include...?” etc.:

[Neutral responses]:

- “What does it mean to you?”
- “Whatever it means to you.”
- “What do you think it includes?”
- “Whatever you think it includes.”

If a participant hesitates for long time or says nothing when a response is needed:

- What are you thinking about here?

If a participant doesn’t know what cost to report:

- Your best estimate is fine.

If a participant appears to be waffling/having trouble:

- What makes it hard to [decide/answer]?

If a participant asks whether a certain item qualifies for reporting for an expenditure question:

- [There are no right or wrong answers.] What do you think?

If a participant goes into excruciating detail when giving details for items, costs OR has trouble remembering specifics:

- [Can you describe for me] **how** you would figure this out?
- **How** would you figure out what to say – for what you [bought/paid for], and how much it cost?

Part V lead-in for the Recheck: For any questions with no “Name 5” activity (and no judgment or list to show):

“Did talking about various recreation expenses for the past three months remind you of [any/other] recreation-related expenses for [question wording]?”

[INTERVIEWER: GO THROUGH THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS III – V BASED ON THE CLUSTERS OF EXPENDITURE QUESTIONS DESIGNATED FOR TESTING IN THE PARTICULAR TESTING ROUND]

III. Expenditure Questions: If Applicable, Total Expenditures
(REPORTING ACCURACY)

- FOLLOW ASSIGNED CLUSTER ORDER.
- ASK EVERY expenditure question designated for CLUSTERS IN testing round, to determine applicable expenditures.
 1. Since the first of [the reference month 3 months prior], have you or any members of your household [FILL ADVANCE TEXT] [FILL QUESTION WORDING]?
- [FOR ANY “YES ANSWER”]; RIGHT AWAY ASK
 - a. How much did you spend? [We’re now asking for one total across the three months]

IV. Details for Expenses (REPORTING ACCURACY AND ESTIMATION ACCURACY)

A. [START BACK WITH P'S FIRST YES AND GO THROUGH EACH YES, ONE AT A TIME]. ASK:

1. You said you [or others in your household] spent money on [FILL].
 - a. What was **one [item you (others) bought?/thing you (others) spent money on on/expense you (others) had]?**
 - b. How much did it **cost?**
 - c. In what **month** was it [bought/paid for]?
2. Any other items?

[IF YES, REPEAT a. – c. UNTIL PARTICIPANT HAS NO MORE ITEMS TO REPORT FOR QUESTION]

- a. What was **another [item you (others) bought?/thing you (others) spent money on on/expense you (others) had]?**
- b. How much did it **cost?**
- c. In what **month** was it [bought/paid for]?

Etc. for item(s) 3 – X

B. Was there anything you thought of, but decided not to [include/say] for [FILL]?

[IF YES]:

1. Can you say more about why you decided not to mention [FILL]?
 - a. What was **one item** [you/others spent money on]?
 - b. How much did it **cost?**
 - c. In what **month** was it [bought/paid for]?
2. Any other items?

[IF YES, REPEAT a. – c. UNTIL PARTICIPANT HAS NO MORE ITEMS TO REPORT FOR QUESTION]

- a. What was **another [item you (others) bought?/thing you (others) spent money on on/expense you (others) had]?**
- b. How much did it **cost?**
- c. In what **month** was it [bought/paid for]?

[IF NEEDED] Etc. for item(s) 3 – X

Part B may be difficult for respondent. Move on quickly if respondent cannot answer readily.

V. Comprehension

A. Name 5 Examples (COMPREHENSION)

[FOR INDICATED EXPENDITURE QUESTIONS], ASK:

1. What are 5 examples of expenses for... [FILL]?

[FOR THE VERY FIRST QUESTION TESTED WITH THIS PARTICIPANT, USE PROBE]: These can be either things you have bought or have never bought before.

[IF NEEDED]:

- What examples of expenses can you think of for ...[FILL]?

Make notes about whether participant has difficulty thinking of 5 examples.

B. Task, List (or only name 5) Then Recheck of Expenditures
(RECHECK REPORTING ACCURACY AND ESTIMATION ACCURACY)

[FOR EACH QUESTION, USE ACCESS PROGRAM TO FIRST:

- COLLECT INCLUDE/EXCLUDE JUDGMENT,
- SHOW LIST OF EXAMPLES, *OR*
- JUST SEE A PLACEHOLDER SCREEN]

[ONLY For questions that have INCLUDE/EXCLUDE JUDGMENT, say]:

- 1a. Please review this list and mark whether these belong, do not belong, and which you are not sure of.

[PARTICIPANT MAY SAY THINGS WORTH PROBING ON]

OR

[FOR QUESTIONS THAT HAVE A LIST, SAY]:

- 1b. This is a list of items that apply for what's in the box.

[PARTICIPANT MAY SAY THINGS WORTH PROBING ON]

OR

- 1c. [THERE WILL JUST BE A PLACEHOLDER SCREEN. IF THE NAME 5 TASK WAS COMPLETED, SIMPLY CONTINUE TO #2A BELOW. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO #2B BELOW.]

[FOR ALL QUESTIONS WITH NAME 5, JUDGMENT, OR SHOW LIST, SAY]:

- 2a. Did/Does [looking at this list/thinking of 5 examples] remind you of [any/other] {expenses/items you've [bought/rented]} since [the first of the reference month 3 months prior] that you didn't previously tell us about?

OR

[FOR QUESTIONS WITHOUT NAME 5, JUDGMENT, AND SHOW LIST, SAY]:

- 2b. Do you remember [any/other] {expenses/items you've [bought/rented]} since [the first of the reference month 3 months prior] that you didn't previously tell us about?

[FOR ANY "YES"], ASK:

3. Can you say more about that? [TRY TO ELICIT CAUSE SO WE CAN DETERMINE IF IT WAS A RECALL, COMPREHENSION, OR OTHER ISSUE]
- a. What was the [item you (others) bought?/thing you (others) spent money on on/expense you (others) had]?
 - b. How much did it **cost**?
 - c. In what **month** was it [bought/paid for]?
4. Any other items/things?

[IF YES, REPEAT a. – c. UNTIL PARTICIPANT HAS NO MORE ITEMS TO REPORT AS PREVIOUSLY NOT REPORTED]

V. Closing

We appreciate your help today. Thank you for your time.

[PROVIDE THE \$40 INCENTIVE.]

Appendix 4

Lessons Learned and Observations on the Testing

This page is intentionally blank

Appendix 4

Lessons Learned and Observations on the Testing

BLS requested feedback from Westat about (1) which tasks worked well for diagnosing problematic question wording and (2) any insights into wording of the questions. These are provided below.

Feedback About Usefulness of Tasks

We found these tasks to provide useful data for diagnosing question issues:

1. Checking exclusions: After itemizing expenses for a question, participants were asked if there were any expenses they thought about reporting. While most participants said “No” for most of the questions, the exclusions they did mention were helpful in identifying:
 - What they correctly excluded (indicating the wording was working); and
 - Why they decided to exclude things they should not have (indicating an issue with the question wording).
2. Cued expenditure re-check: After completing the comprehension activity(ies) for each question, participants were asked if they had thought of any expense(s) they had not already told us about. Participants did have some forgotten items to report at this stage, which helped to identify if there was a question wording issue (that we might need to address) vs. purely a recall issue (that might or might not be addressed with a wording change to enhance recall).
3. Probing: In the later rounds where we were trying to assess whether a specific wording change improved comprehension (or not), we found that probing about comprehension of specific phrases or words within the question was especially helpful. This provided direct evidence about the revisions, and we could look for similarities across participants in their verbalizations as well as identify misunderstandings. We also probed for examples (“What are some expenses that come to mind for this question [FILL]?”). This seemed to work better across participants – more like a natural conversation – and less like a “test” than the Name 5 Examples activity that we used in the earlier rounds of testing.
4. Judgment task: One advantage of the judgment task was that it was possible to compare across participants, and across rounds, to see if there were improvements. Looking at these judgments helped to identify the types of expenses that were problematic. If “central” types of items were misjudged (vs. relatively more obscure or obsolete items), we attended to those in making wording changes or adding exclusion text.

The ability to complete this task (as the Name 5 examples task below) was subject to individual differences; some participants carefully considered each item in making their assignments, while others tended to work quickly and judge most or all of the items as applicable. But this

task is inherently less cognitively burdensome for participants since it is a “recognition” task, vs. a “recall” task.

A disadvantage of the judgment task was that participants had to judge for one question at a time. They could judge items that were listed for more than one question as applicable for those questions; they were not limited to assigning applicability for just one question. A card sort approach could limit respondents – by requiring them to assign expenses to just one expenditure question. However, that approach would require more session time.

We found this task to provide relatively less useful data for diagnosing question performance issues:

1. Name 5 examples: Participants tended to name items they had purchased themselves, despite hearing the instruction that examples could be things they had not bought. There were also individual differences; some participants were just better at naming examples than others (due to the cognitive burden of producing examples (vs. a recognition-type task).

We also found that for some of the participants, it was hard to switch back and forth from thinking about any examples of purchases (basically an “ever” reference period) to focusing on the past 3 months (for the expenditure re-check). For the first testing of each question, the flow in the comprehension section of the protocol was:

1. Name 5 examples (ever, anytime)
2. Complete the judgment task (if the question had one)
3. Re-check expenditures (report of any other item expenses within the past 3 months not already reported for the question)

Then the participant repeated these steps for the next question. This required participants to switch between reference periods (ever, then 3 months) and the interviewer needed to keep participants on track.

Insights for Question Wording

The process for creating initial wording for the questions was described in the report, along with revision options/strategies. We found that each question needed to be evaluated individually; what seemed to work best for one question did not necessarily apply to other questions. However, in general, we found that:

- Examples worked well where the expenditure category is limited in breadth and the wording remained succinct. For example:

“Portable cooling or heating equipment” was changed to “Portable fans, heaters, humidifiers, or dehumidifiers.” This wording was not much longer but also helped

participants realize that equipment to condition the air was applicable for the question.

- Definitions tended to work where:
 - There is a wide variety of possible purchases;
 - Using examples would have made the question wording very long; and/or
 - Instead of a standard word, respondents may use different words for the items.

For example, there are many possible words for types of lights and many varieties of items used to decorate, so the wording was left as more of a definition for: “Lighting or other decorative items.”

- Negatives are hard for people in an interviewer-administered interview. To train respondents, we placed exclusion text as a separate phrase, at the end of the question.

We also applied a rule of thumb for question order, based on BLS input about that approach in the current recall interview: Order the questions that ask about more specific expenses first, to try to deter double-reporting that might occur if these were considered to be applicable for a more general question as well.

For example, questions about dishwashers precede the questions about all other appliances, since portable and built-in dishwashers are asked about separately and should not also be reported for the questions about kitchen appliances.