



Call for Proposals Application Guidelines

Last Updated: April 7, 2021

Next Deadline: June 15, 2021

Survey Fielded: October 2021

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A. Overview.

CivicPulse’s biannual Call for Proposals invite applicants to include survey questions on our multi-collaborator, random-sample national surveys of local government policymakers along with a rotating selection of other positions. Our population of local officials represent all townships, municipalities, and counties in the United States with a population of 1,000 or more.

Proposals should be for survey content of no more than four minutes. If you would like to propose longer surveys, target a position not offered through our Calls, or field a survey outside the Call for Proposals’ timeline, please consider submitting through our Custom Surveys platform. These proposals are reviewed on a rolling basis.

B. Upcoming Surveys and Deadlines.

Apply by June 15, 2021 to survey one or more of the following positions:

- Policymakers (Governing Board Member and Top Elected Official)
- Top Appointed Officials
- Clerks

These surveys will be conducted in October 2021.

C. Proposal Options.

Each proposal is limited to no more than four minutes of survey content. Sample size and pricing options by position below. Pricing is based on the total available respondents for each position.

Survey Type	100 Respondents	200 Respondents	500 Respondents
Policymakers*	\$300 per minute	\$600 per minute	\$1500 per minute
Clerks	\$500 per minute	\$1000 per minute	NA
Top Appointed Officials	\$700 per minute	\$1400 per minute	NA

* Includes top elected officials (e.g., mayor, county executive) and governing board member (e.g. councilmember, commissioner)

D. Survey of Interest.

After considering the position and sample size options, please complete this very brief (non-binding) [survey of interest](#) to let us know you may be applying.

E. Components of a Proposal.

The proposal (single-spaced, 12-pt) should include the following two items:

- 1) 1-page cover letter. Briefly state your research question and motivation, informal citations are okay though not required. The cover letter should also specify your choice and justification of sample size.

In addition,

- i. If you are including an experiment, please include a justification for the experiment as well (experiments are permissible but not encouraged – see section F below).
 - ii. If relevant, please specify additional auxiliary data about the localities of the respondents that are not provided in the Standard Survey Variables (see section I below for a list of those variables) that you would like merged to the response file, subject to an additional fee.
- 2) Annotated questionnaire. This is the core of the proposal and should be a clearly structured word document with three subcomponents:
 - i. Fully developed questions (each enumerated with a clear heading).
 - ii. Point values for time estimation, using the Time Estimation Rubric provided in section H of this document.
 - iii. Additional specifications or details, if necessary. This could include embedded variables (e.g., `government_level` which displays “municipality,” “township,” or “county,” depending on the respondent type) or the randomization of questions, answer order, etc.

F. Content Requirements.

In our evaluation, we are primarily concerned with whether the questionnaire is engaging, user-friendly, and has a potential to benefit local governments themselves. Surveys should be:

- Easy to follow
- Neither overly provocative nor likely to induce annoyance or anger
- Relevant to the respondents' jobs as local officials
- Not designed to pursue behavior change

We also do not allow deception in our surveys. While experimental modules are permissible, they must be well-justified, non-intrusive, and grounded in content that is relevant to local government.

We encourage descriptive questions, and in particular, open-ended questions that allow respondents to explain and share their opinions. We have found that our survey-takers offer rich insight in their open-ended responses.

G. How to Submit.

Please submit your proposal by emailing info@civicpulse.org. The subject of your email should be "CP Proposal: [Last Name], [First Name]". The file name of your submission should be "LastName_FirstName_CPproposal" and saved as a Microsoft Word Document.

If you have questions about the Call for Proposals process or specific questions about your survey, please contact Nathan Lee, Managing Director, at nathanlee@civicpulse.org.

H. Time Estimation Rubric.

Below is a scoring rubric for estimating the expected time respondents will take to complete your module. This scoring system is based on analyses of past CivicPulse surveys. Using this rubric, (1) write the total point value on top of your submitted questionnaire and (2) write the point value for each question in parentheses next to each question number.

Point-to-time conversion: 1 point = 10 seconds

Please Note:

- Length of question prompts: All categories below assume a prompt of no more than 30 words (about two sentences). Each additional 10 words (rounding up) should be scored as an additional 0.5 points.
- Length of answer choices: Each answer choice is assumed to be no more than 5 words. Each additional 5 words of text (rounding up) should be scored as an additional 0.5 points.

Category	Base Point Estimate	Other Comments
Multiple-choice, choose one	1 point	No more than seven answer choices
Multiple-choice, choose multiple	1 point for every three answer choices	
Grid	1 point + 0.5 points per row	No more than five answer choices (columns); No more than six items (rows)
Open-ended question (single-line answer)	2 points	Intended for responses that only require a few words
Open-ended question (multi-line answer)	4 points	2-3 sentence responses ¹
Ranking	1 point for every two answer choices	
Numerical response	1.5 points	
Slider	1 point	

¹ We add a standard statement after all multi-line open-ended questions that says, "Please limit your answer to 2–3 sentences." In the past, we have found this encourages a higher question completion rate - the current rate is approximately 60-70%. The 4-point score is "discounted" to reflect this partial completion rate.

I. Standard Survey Variables.

Below is a summary of the standard variables provided in our Call for Proposals surveys. These variables consist of five categories: (1) survey metadata, (2) demographics for policymaker positions only, (3) demographics for all positions, (4) constituent demographics, and (5) survey weights.

Survey Metadata Variables

StartDate

The time and date when the survey was started.

EndDate

The time and date when the survey was completed. For respondents that did not complete the survey, this variable records the time of their last activity on the survey.

Finished

1 = Respondent completed the survey

0 = Respondent did not complete the survey

Gov_type

A variable indicating the government position of the respondent. Its values are: "county," "municipality," and "township."

State

A variable indicating which state the respondent resides in.

Demographics for Policymaker Positions Only

Ideo_5

In general, do you think of yourself as:

- Very conservative
- Somewhat conservative
- Moderate, middle of the road
- Somewhat liberal
- Very liberal
- Not sure

Party

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a ...

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent
- Other party (please specify): ____

Party_indep

Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?

- Democratic Party
- Republican Party
- Neither

Demographics for All Positions

Sex²

What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

Age

In what year were you born?

- (1910 or earlier, 1911-1915, ... , 2006 or later)

² We use first-name matching to historical Social Security Administration data to determine respondent sex. Respondents who cannot be matched with at least 95% confidence are given this question.

Education

What is the last grade of school you completed?

- Less than high school
- High school graduate
- Technical/trade school
- Some college
- College graduate
- Some graduate school
- Graduate degree

White_nonhispanic

Respondents are asked their race and ethnicity using questions taken from the US Census (see below). To maintain respondent confidentiality, the original answers to these questions are not provided. Instead, we construct 'White_nonhispanic' which takes on a '1' if they indicate being non-Hispanic and White, and '0' if they identify as Hispanic or non-white.

Ethnicity

Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- Yes, Puerto Rican
- Yes, Cuban
- Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

Race

Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity? Please check all that apply.

- White
- Black/African American
- Asian/Asian American (includes East Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islander)
- Native American
- Other (please specify):_

Constituent Demographics

To provide additional information about the constituents which respondents represent, we match respondents' geographic locations to the U.S. Census (97% match rate). Using this method, we provide four variables about respondents' constituents: the proportion of the population that is college-educated (College_prop), the proportion living in an urban area (Urban_prop), the population size (Population), and the county-level presidential vote share (Voteshare_pres_2020). To ensure confidentiality of the respondent, each variable is binned into terciles.

College_prop

The proportion of 25-years-or-older residents in the given geographic unit who have completed a 4-year, post-secondary degree. This data is taken from American Community Survey.

Urban_prop

The proportion of residents in the given geographic unit who reside in an urban area. This data is taken from the 2010 Census.

Population

The total number of residents living in the given geographic unit. This data is taken from the American Community Survey.

Voteshare_pres_2020

The proportion of the votes, by county, for Joe Biden in the 2020 Presidential election.

Note: Each sub-county government is matched to the relevant county in which it is contained.

Survey Weights

Unlike with surveys of the U.S. mass public--which rely on Census demographic data about the aggregate U.S. population to generate weights--we do not have demographic data about the aggregate population of elected local government officials (with the exception of gender, which we can code based on first names). However, we can mitigate some of the possible survey sample bias by reweighting based on the demographics of *constituent areas*. To this end, we employ a conventional post-stratification raking procedure using the Census variables listed in the previous section. We follow the methodology outlined in DeBell and Krosnick (2009) for the American National Election Study (ANES).³

³ <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/26b8/ab6c0dd7e50c09c6af32a3c7469b080b63af.pdf>