

**FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY****[No. 2024–N–8]****Proposed Collection; Comment Request****AGENCY:** Federal Housing Finance Agency.**ACTION:** 60-Day notice of submission of information collection for approval from Office of Management and Budget.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) is seeking public comment on a generic information collection called the “National Survey of Mortgage Originations” (NSMO). FHFA intends to submit the information collection to OMB for review and approval of a three-year control number.

**DATES:** Interested persons may submit comments on or before August 26, 2024.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments to FHFA, identified by “Proposed Collection; Comment Request: ‘National Survey of Mortgage Originations, (No. 2024–N–8)’” by any of the following methods:

- *Agency Website:* [www.fhfa.gov/open-for-comment-or-input](http://www.fhfa.gov/open-for-comment-or-input).
- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments. If you submit your comment to the *Federal eRulemaking Portal*, please also send it by email to FHFA at [RegComments@fhfa.gov](mailto:RegComments@fhfa.gov) to ensure timely receipt by the agency.
- *Mail/Hand Delivery:* Federal Housing Finance Agency, Fourth Floor, 400 Seventh Street SW, Washington, DC 20219, ATTENTION: Proposed Collection; Comment Request: “National Survey of Mortgage Originations, (No. 2024–N–8).”

FHFA will post all public comments on the FHFA public website at <http://www.fhfa.gov>, except as described below. Commenters should submit only information that the commenter wishes to make available publicly. FHFA may post only a single representative example of identical or substantially identical comments, and in such cases will generally identify the number of identical or substantially identical comments represented by the posted example. FHFA may, in its discretion, redact or refrain from posting all or any portion of any comment that contains content that is obscene, vulgar, profane, or threatens harm. All comments, including those that are redacted or not posted, will be retained in their original form in FHFA’s internal file and

considered as required by all applicable laws. Commenters that would like FHFA to consider any portion of their comment exempt from disclosure on the basis that it contains trade secrets, or financial, confidential or proprietary data or information, should follow the procedures in section IV.D. of FHFA’s Policy on Communications with Outside Parties in Connection with FHFA Rulemakings, *see* [https://www.fhfa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Ex-Parte-Communications-Public-Policy\\_3-5-19.pdf](https://www.fhfa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Ex-Parte-Communications-Public-Policy_3-5-19.pdf). FHFA cannot guarantee that such data or information, or the identity of the commenter, will remain confidential if disclosure is sought pursuant to an applicable statute or regulation. *See* 12 CFR 1202.8, 12 CFR 1214.2. and <https://www.fhfa.gov/about/foia-reference-guide> for additional information.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****A. Need For and Use of the Information Collection**

The NSMO is a recurring quarterly survey of individuals who have recently obtained a loan secured by a first mortgage on single-family residential property. The survey questionnaire is mailed to a representative sample of approximately 6,000 recent mortgage borrowers each calendar quarter and typically consists of about 96 multiple choice and short answer questions designed to obtain information about borrowers’ experiences in choosing and in taking out a mortgage. The questionnaire may be completed either on paper (in English only) or electronically online (in either English or Spanish). FHFA is also seeking clearance to pretest future iterations of the survey questionnaire and related materials from time to time through the use of cognitive pre-testing.

The NSMO is a component of the “National Mortgage Database” (NMDB) Program which is a joint effort of FHFA and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). The NMDB Program is designed to satisfy the Congressionally-mandated requirements of section 1324(c) of the Federal Housing Enterprises Financial Safety and Soundness Act.<sup>1</sup> Section 1324(c) requires that FHFA conduct a monthly survey to collect data on the characteristics of individual prime and subprime mortgages, and on the borrowers and properties associated with those mortgages, in order to enable it to prepare a detailed annual report on the mortgage market activities of the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) and the Federal Home

Loan Mortgage Corporation (Freddie Mac) for review by the appropriate Congressional oversight committees. Section 1324(c) also authorizes and requires FHFA to compile a database of otherwise unavailable residential mortgage market information and to make that information available to the public in a timely fashion.

As a means of fulfilling those and other statutory requirements, as well as to support policymaking and research regarding the residential mortgage markets, FHFA and CFPB jointly established the NMDB Program in 2012. The Program is designed to provide comprehensive information about the U.S. mortgage market and has three primary components: (1) the NMDB; (2) the NSMO; and (3) the American Survey of Mortgage Borrowers (ASMB).

The NMDB is a de-identified loan-level database of closed-end first-lien residential mortgage loans that is representative of the market as a whole, contains detailed loan-level information on the terms and performance of the mortgages and the characteristics of the associated borrowers and properties, is continually updated, has an historical component dating back to 1998, and provides a sampling frame for surveys to collect additional information. The core data in the NMDB are drawn from a random 1-in-20 sample of all closed-end first-lien mortgage files outstanding at any time between January 1998 and the present in the files of Experian, one of the three national credit repositories, with a random sample of mortgages newly reported to Experian added each quarter.

The NMDB draws additional information on mortgages in the NMDB datasets from other existing sources, including the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) data that are maintained by the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC), property valuation models, and administrative data files maintained by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and by federal agencies. FHFA also obtains data from the ASMB, which historically solicited information on borrowers’ experience with maintaining their existing mortgages, including their experience maintaining mortgages under financial stress, their experience in soliciting financial assistance, their success in accessing federally-sponsored programs designed to assist them, and, where applicable, any challenges they may have had in terminating a mortgage loan.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 12 U.S.C. 4544(c).

<sup>2</sup> OMB has assigned the ASMB control no. 2590–0015, which expires on July 31, 2025.

While the ASMB focused on borrowers' experience with maintaining existing mortgages, the NSMO solicits information on newly-originated mortgages and the borrowers' experiences with the mortgage origination process. It was developed to complement the NMDB by providing critical and timely information—not available from existing sources—on the range of nontraditional and subprime mortgage products being offered, the methods by which these mortgages are being marketed, and the characteristics of borrowers for these types of loans. In particular, the survey questionnaire is designed to elicit directly from mortgage borrowers information on the characteristics of the borrowers and on their experiences in finding and obtaining a mortgage loan, including: their mortgage shopping behavior; their mortgage closing experiences; their expectations regarding house price appreciation; and critical financial and other life events affecting their households, such as unemployment, expenses or divorce. The survey questions do not focus on the terms of the borrowers' mortgage loans because these fields are available in the Experian data. However, the NSMO collects a limited amount of information on each respondent's mortgage to verify that the Experian records and survey responses pertain to the same mortgage.

Each wave of the NSMO is sent to the primary borrowers on about 6,000 mortgage loans, which are drawn from a simple random sample of the newly originated mortgage loans that are added to the National Mortgage Database from the Experian files each quarter. Because the volume of originations varies across time, the sampling rate for the 6,000 sampled loans also varies from one quarter to the next. On average, the NSMO sample represents an approximately 1-in-15 sample of loans added to the National Mortgage Database and an approximately 1-in-300 sample of all mortgage loan originations. By contract with FHFA, the conduct of the NSMO is administered through Experian, which has subcontracted the survey administration through a competitive process to Westat, a nationally-recognized survey vendor.<sup>3</sup> Westat also carries out the pre-testing of the survey materials.

## B. Need For and Use of the Information Collection

FHFA views the NMDB Program as a whole, including the NSMO, as the monthly "survey" that is required by section 1324 of the Safety and Soundness Act. Core inputs to the NMDB, such as a regular refresh of the Experian data, occur monthly, though NSMO itself does not. In combination with the other information in the NMDB, the information obtained through the NSMO is used to prepare the report to Congress on the mortgage market activities of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac that FHFA is required to submit under section 1324, as well as for research and analysis by FHFA and CFPB in support of their regulatory and supervisory responsibilities related to the residential mortgage markets. The NSMO is especially critical in ensuring that the NMDB contains uniquely comprehensive information on the range of nontraditional and subprime mortgage products being offered, the methods by which these mortgages are being marketed and the characteristics—and particularly the creditworthiness—of borrowers for these types of loans.

Since November 2018 FHFA and CFPB have periodically released loan-level datasets collected through the NSMO for public use. Each release incrementally adds loans collected from additional waves of the survey. The most recent release was in March 2023 covering loans originated through 2020.<sup>4</sup> Prior to each release, FHFA and the CFPB implement a series of disclosure avoidance analyses and protections to ensure that the confidentiality of study participants is protected. The loan-level datasets provide a resource for research and analysis by federal agencies, by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and by academics and other interested parties outside of the government.

FHFA is also seeking OMB approval to continue to conduct cognitive pre-testing of the survey materials. The Agency uses information collected through that process to assist in drafting and modifying the survey questions and instructions, as well as the related communications, to read in the way that will be most readily understood by the survey respondents and that will be most likely to elicit usable responses. Such information is also used to help the Agency decide on how best to organize and format the survey questionnaires.

FHFA previously maintained a standard clearance for this information collection, the OMB control number for that clearance was 2590–0012.

## C. Burden Estimate

FHFA has analyzed the hour burden on members of the public associated with conducting the survey (10,080 hours) and with pre-testing the survey materials (50 hours) and estimates the total annual hour burden imposed on the public by this information collection to be 10,130 hours. The estimate for each phase of the collection was calculated as follows:

### I. Conducting the Survey

FHFA estimates that the NSMO questionnaire will be sent to 24,000 recipients annually (6,000 recipients per quarterly survey  $\times$  4 calendar quarters). Although, based on historical experience, the Agency expects that only 20 to 30 percent of those surveys will be returned, it has assumed that all of the surveys will be returned for purposes of this burden calculation. Based on the reported experience of respondents to prior NSMO questionnaires, FHFA estimates that it will take each respondent 25 minutes to complete the survey, including the gathering of necessary materials to respond to the questions. This results in a total annual burden estimate of 10,080 hours for the survey phase of this collection (24,000 respondents  $\times$  25 minutes per respondent = 10,080 hours annually).

### II. Pre-Testing the Materials

FHFA estimates that it will pre-test the survey materials with 50 cognitive testing participants annually. The estimated participation time for each participant is one hour, resulting in a total annual burden estimate of 50 hours for the pre-testing phase of the collection (50 participants  $\times$  1 hour per participant = 50 hours annually).

## D. Comment Request

FHFA requests written comments on the following: (1) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of FHFA functions, including whether the information has practical utility; (2) the accuracy of FHFA's estimates of the burdens of the collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use

<sup>3</sup> The Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*, requires that the survey process, because it utilizes borrower names and addresses drawn from credit reporting agency records, must be administered through Experian in order to maintain consumer privacy.

<sup>4</sup> The March 2023 NSMO public use dataset can be accessed here: [https://www.fhfa.gov/DataTools/Downloads/Pages/NMDB\\_Data\\_Sets.aspx](https://www.fhfa.gov/DataTools/Downloads/Pages/NMDB_Data_Sets.aspx).

of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

**Shawn Bucholtz,**

*Chief Data Officer, Federal Housing Finance Agency.*

[FR Doc. 2024–13902 Filed 6–24–24; 8:45 am]

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## FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY

[No. 2024–N–7]

### Proposed Collection; Comment Request

**AGENCY:** Federal Housing Finance Agency.

**ACTION:** 30-Day notice of submission of information collection for approval from the Office of Management and Budget.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA, or Agency) is seeking public comment concerning an information collection known as the “American Survey of Mortgage Borrowers (ASMB),” which has been assigned control number 2590–0015 by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). FHFA intends to submit the information collection to OMB for review and approval of a three-year extension of the control number, which is due to expire July 31, 2025.

**DATES:** Interested persons may submit comments on or before July 25, 2024.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of the Office of Management and Budget, Attention: Desk Officer for the Federal Housing Finance Agency, Washington, DC 20503, Fax: (202) 395–3047, Email: [OIRA\\_submission@omb.eop.gov](mailto:OIRA_submission@omb.eop.gov). Please also submit comments to FHFA, identified by “Proposed Collection; Comment Request: ‘American Survey of Mortgage Borrowers, (No. 2024–N–7)’” by any of the following methods:

- *Agency Website:* [www.fhfa.gov/open-for-comment-or-input](http://www.fhfa.gov/open-for-comment-or-input).
- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments. If you submit your comment to the *Federal eRulemaking Portal*, please also send it by email to FHFA at [RegComments@fhfa.gov](mailto:RegComments@fhfa.gov) to ensure timely receipt by the agency.
- *Mail/Hand Delivery:* Federal Housing Finance Agency, Fourth Floor, 400 Seventh Street SW, Washington, DC 20219, ATTENTION: Proposed Collection; Comment Request:

“American Survey of Mortgage Borrowers, (No. 2024–N–7).” Please note that all mail sent to FHFA via U.S. Mail is routed through a national irradiation facility, a process that may delay delivery by approximately two weeks. For any time-sensitive correspondence, please plan accordingly.

FHFA will post all public comments on the FHFA public website at <http://www.fhfa.gov>, except as described below. Commenters should submit only information that the commenter wishes to make available publicly. FHFA may post only a single representative example of identical or substantially identical comments, and in such cases will generally identify the number of identical or substantially identical comments represented by the posted example. FHFA may, in its discretion, redact or refrain from posting all or any portion of any comment that contains content that is obscene, vulgar, profane, or threatens harm. All comments, including those that are redacted or not posted, will be retained in their original form in FHFA’s internal file and considered as required by all applicable laws. Commenters that would like FHFA to consider any portion of their comment exempt from disclosure on the basis that it contains trade secrets, or financial, confidential or proprietary data or information, should follow the procedures in section IV.D. of FHFA’s *Policy on Communications with Outside Parties in Connection with FHFA Rulemakings*, see [https://www.fhfa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Ex-Parte-Communications-Public-Policy\\_3-5-19.pdf](https://www.fhfa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Ex-Parte-Communications-Public-Policy_3-5-19.pdf). FHFA cannot guarantee that such data or information, or the identity of the commenter, will remain confidential if disclosure is sought pursuant to an applicable statute or regulation. See 12 CFR 1202.8, 12 CFR 1214.2. and <https://www.fhfa.gov/about/foia-reference-guide> for additional information.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jonathan Spader, Manager, National Mortgage Database Program, [Jonathan.Spader@fhfa.gov](mailto:Jonathan.Spader@fhfa.gov), (202) 649–3213; or Angela Supervielle, Senior Counsel, [Angela.Supervielle@fhfa.gov](mailto:Angela.Supervielle@fhfa.gov), (202) 649–3973, (these are not toll-free numbers), Federal Housing Finance Agency, 400 Seventh Street SW, Washington, DC 20219. For TTY/TRS users with hearing and speech disabilities, dial 711 and ask to be connected to any of the contact numbers above.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

### A. Need for and Use of the Information Collection

FHFA is seeking OMB clearance under the PRA for a collection of information known as the “American Survey of Mortgage Borrowers” (ASMB). The ASMB, conducted annually or biennially, is a voluntary survey of individuals who currently have a first mortgage loan secured by single-family residential property.

FHFA is also seeking clearance to conduct cognitive testing interviews that pre-test iterations of the survey questionnaire and related materials from time to time. The Agency uses information collected through that process to assist in drafting and modifying the survey questions and instructions, as well as the related communications, to read in the way that will be most readily understood by the survey respondents and that will be most likely to elicit usable responses. Such information is also used to help the Agency decide on how best to organize and format the survey questionnaires.

The American Survey of Mortgage Borrowers is a component of the “National Mortgage Database” (NMDB®) Program, which is a joint effort of FHFA and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) (jointly, “the agencies”). The NMDB Program is designed to satisfy the Congressionally-mandated requirements of section 1324(c) of the Federal Housing Enterprises Financial Safety and Soundness Act.<sup>1</sup> Section 1324(c) requires that FHFA conduct a monthly survey to collect data on the characteristics of individual prime and subprime mortgages, and on the borrowers and properties associated with those mortgages, in order to enable it to prepare a detailed annual report on the mortgage market activities of the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (Freddie Mac) for review by the appropriate Congressional oversight committees. Section 1324(c) also authorizes and requires FHFA to compile a database of otherwise unavailable residential mortgage market information and to make that information available to the public in a timely fashion.

As a means of fulfilling those and other statutory requirements, as well as to support policymaking and research regarding the residential mortgage markets, FHFA and CFPB jointly established the NMDB Program in 2012. The Program is designed to provide comprehensive information about the

<sup>1</sup> 12 U.S.C. 4544(c).