

---

# **An Overview of the August 2008 CPS Migration Supplement**

G. Patricia de la Cruz, Luke J. Larsen, and Elizabeth M. Grieco  
Foreign-Born Population Branch  
Population Division  
U.S. Census Bureau  
Working Paper No. 95

Issued May 2012

*This paper is released to inform interested parties of ongoing research and to encourage discussion of work in progress. Any views expressed on statistical, methodological, technical, or operational issues are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.*

## **Abstract**

In August 2008, the U.S. Census Bureau sponsored a supplement to the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS) questionnaire. The Immigration/Emigration Supplement, also referred to as the Migration Supplement, included questions on five topics – citizenship, year of entry, residence one year ago, residents and emigrants abroad, and monetary transfers. The purpose of this paper is to provide data users with additional information about the Migration Supplement that is not found in other published sources. This paper begins with a short overview of the Current Population Survey, providing some basic information necessary to understand the structure of the Migration Supplement questionnaire and the advantages and limitation of the data collected by this instrument. It then discusses the goals and content of the Migration Supplement and briefly reviews the dates and method of administration, universe, sequencing of the five sections, information about the number of eligible and interviewed households, and overall survey response rates. The remainder of the paper discusses each section, explaining the goals, questions, universes, and skip patterns within and among the sections. This paper concludes with information about the availability of the public use microdata files and other related metadata documentation.

## **Introduction**

In August 2008, the U.S. Census Bureau sponsored a supplement to the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS) questionnaire. The Immigration/Emigration Supplement (referred to in this paper as the Migration Supplement or simply the Supplement) focused on five topics – citizenship, year of entry, residence one year ago, residents and emigrants abroad, and monetary transfers – and included questions not commonly found on other surveys. The overall purpose of the Migration Supplement was to provide the Census Bureau with additional data to aid its mission of improving knowledge on the size and characteristics of the foreign-born population in the United States.

As a new source of data on several migration-related topics, the purpose of this paper is to provide summarized, easily-accessible information about the Migration Supplement to researchers interested in using the data for their own research. For each of the five sections of the Supplement questionnaire, this paper will review: the goals of each section; the questions included; the concepts and definitions used to define section and question universes; the skip patterns among the questions within sections; and the flow of the questionnaire from one section to the next. By including information not readily-available in other published sources, this overview provides researchers and others interested in learning more about the Migration Supplement with a good starting point for understanding the data.

## **The Current Population Survey**

The Current Population Survey (CPS), sponsored jointly by the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, is the primary source of labor force statistics for the population of the United States. The CPS is the source of numerous high-profile economic statistics, including the national unemployment rate, and provides data on a wide range of issues relating to employment and earnings. Although labor market information is central to the CPS, the survey provides a wealth of other demographic, social, and economic data that are widely used in both the public and private sectors.

The CPS is administered by the Census Bureau using a probability selected sample. Approximately 72,000 housing units are selected from the sampling frame, resulting in a sample of about 60,000 occupied housing units eligible for interview.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 55,000

---

<sup>1</sup> A housing unit is a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of homes, or a single room that is occupied (or if vacant, is intended for occupancy) as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live and eat separately from any other persons in the building and which have direct access from the outside of the building or through a common hall.

households are interviewed each month.<sup>2</sup> The universe is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in housing units in the 50 states and the District of Columbia and members of the Armed Forces living in civilian housing units on a military base or in a household not on a military base. People in institutions, such as prisons, long-term care hospitals, and nursing homes, are ineligible to be interviewed in the CPS. One person generally responds for all eligible members of the household. The CPS is administered via telephone by means of computer assisted telephone interview (CATI) or in person by means of computer assisted personal interview (CAPI) only. There is no mail out or paper version of the questionnaire. Households are in the survey for 4 consecutive months, out for 8 months, and then return for another 4 months before leaving the sample permanently.

In addition to the regular labor force questions, the CPS often includes supplemental questions on a wide range of topics, such as tobacco use, computer use, and voting patterns. The CPS interview is divided into three basic parts: 1) household and demographic information, 2) labor force information, and 3) supplement information. Supplemental questions are added to the CPS in most months. Perhaps the most well known supplement is the Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) supplement, fielded in February, March, and April of each year.

### **CPS Migration Supplement**

In August 2008, the U.S. Census Bureau sponsored and fielded the Migration Supplement to the CPS monthly questionnaire. Broadly speaking, the purpose of the Supplement was to provide the Census Bureau with additional data to aid its mission of improving knowledge of the size and characteristics of the foreign-born population in the United States. The Supplement had four specific purposes: 1) to inform – and possibly improve – estimates of net international migration used in the postcensal population estimates produced annually by the Census Bureau’s Population Division; 2) to provide additional information on current migration patterns and the accuracy of various measurements of years lived in the United States by the foreign born; 3) to determine if accurate and reliable data on monetary transfers could be collected by a nationally representative, government sponsored survey; and 4) to evaluate if rates of naturalization could be reliably estimated using household survey data.

The Migration Supplement included questions on the following topics:

- changes in citizenship status;
- year of first arrival, subsequent exits and entries, and time spent outside the United States;

---

<sup>2</sup> A household is defined as all individuals (related family members and all unrelated individuals) whose usual place of residence at the time of the interview is the housing unit. Individuals who are temporarily absent and who have no other usual address are still classified as household members even though they are not present in the household during the survey week. College students compose the bulk of such absent household members, but people away on business or vacation are also included. (Not included are individuals in institutions or the military.)

- residence one year ago, either inside or outside the United States;
- movement by household members outside the United States within the last year and basic demographic information on those who emigrated; and
- money sent to or received from family and friends living outside the United States.

The content of the questionnaire was developed and cognitively tested by the Census Bureau in the fall of 2007. The Supplement was administered August 17-26, 2008. Both CATI and CAPI were used to administer the Supplement. CATI interviews were fielded August 17-20 and CAPI interviews were fielded August 17-26. After data collection was completed, focus group debriefings of telephone interviewers and field representatives were conducted to evaluate the Migration Supplement (de la Cruz and Logan, forthcoming).

The Migration Supplement universe consists of every CPS household member, of all ages, including those in the Armed Forces. Additionally, the Migration Supplement collected information on people who lived in the household during the previous 12 months but no longer did so. Since typically only one person per household is interviewed, most of those included in sample had their information provided by proxy.

The five sections of the Migration Supplement were, with some exceptions due to modified universes for each section, administered in this order: 1) Citizenship, 2) Year of Entry, 3) Residence One Year Ago, 4) Residence and Emigrants Abroad, and 5) Monetary Transfers. A question on citizenship status is included on the monthly CPS questionnaire to determine the current citizenship status of all persons in a household. This question is asked only during the first month in sample and is not asked again in subsequent interviews unless a new person is added to the household roster.<sup>3</sup> The Supplement citizenship question, which asks about change in citizenship status, was asked only if a household was in its second or subsequent interview and if one or more members on the roster indicated they were noncitizens during the first interview. Questions from the Year of Entry section were asked only of all foreign-born household members (i.e., naturalized U.S. citizens and noncitizens). Questions from the last three sections – Residence One Year Ago, Residents and Emigrants Abroad, and Monetary Transfers – were asked of all members of all households. Most households were only asked the questions from the last three sections. In all sections of the Migration Supplement, the definition of the “United States” includes only the 50 states and Washington, D.C.; Puerto Rico and the U.S. Island Areas, such as Guam and American Samoa, are considered to be outside the United States.

---

<sup>3</sup> A household roster is a list of all individuals who live or stay at the sample unit and whose usual place of residence at the time of the interview is the sample unit. Individuals who are temporarily absent and who have no other usual address (e.g., college students) are still included on the roster even though they may not be present in the household during the survey week. The household roster is created during the first month in interview and is updated as necessary in subsequent interviews.

## **Households in Universe**

The August 2008 CPS sample included 71,573 housing units of which 58,821 were eligible and 12,752 ineligible households.<sup>4</sup> Of the 58,821 eligible households, 54,282 were interviewed. The response rate was 92.3 percent, which was comparable to the response rates for the three previous monthly surveys (May, June, and July 2008) and the survey in August 2007. Response rates varied by regional office, from a low of 86.2 percent (New York) to a high of 94.9 percent (Atlanta).

To be eligible for the Supplement, the CPS labor force questions had to be completed before the Supplement questions were administered. There were 51,292 households in universe for the Migration Supplement. Less than one-half of 1 percent refused to participate after the Supplement introduction was read to them.<sup>5</sup> The 51,275 households that were both in universe and answered Supplement questions represented 127,079 unweighted individuals or a weighted population estimate of 299.3 million persons.

## **Questionnaire Structure by Section**

The Migration Supplement questionnaire was more complex than many other supplements to the CPS, for several reasons. First, its structure included five distinct sections focusing on different yet related issues associated with migration and the foreign born. Second, the sequencing of the questions shifted between the individual and household instead of focusing on just one level of analysis. Third, the questions – even within sections – often focused on different universes (e.g., only foreign-born household members, only households with a member living abroad, only households in the second or later interview, etc.). Finally, when combined, the structure, sequencing, and question universes resulted in complicated skip patterns. To assist data users to better understand the CPS Migration Supplement, the following will discuss the purpose, universe, questions, and skip patterns for each of the five sections.

### ***Citizenship***

A question on citizenship status is included on the CPS monthly questionnaire to determine the citizenship status of all persons in a household. The question is asked only during the first month in sample and is not asked again in subsequent interviews unless a new person is added to the

---

<sup>4</sup> Ineligible households include those housing units in the sample that are vacant or demolished units, housing units converted to businesses, etc.

<sup>5</sup> The introductory statement was: “This month we are asking questions about time spent in and outside of the United States.”

household roster. The citizenship question on the monthly questionnaire focuses on current status:

[Are/Is][you/NAME] a citizen of the United States?

However, the citizenship status of noncitizen household members could change between the first and subsequent interviews. The Citizenship section was included on the CPS Migration Supplement to determine if any noncitizen household members had naturalized during the period of survey participation. The citizenship question on the Supplement asks about recent transitions in status:

[Have/Has][you/NAME] become a citizen of the United States?

The Supplement citizenship question was asked only if a household was in its second or subsequent interview and if one or more members on the roster indicated they were noncitizens during the first interview. Persons new to the household roster during interviews two through eight who reported they were noncitizens were not asked the Supplement citizenship question. The next section of the Supplement, the Year of Entry section, included questions asked of household members who were foreign born (i.e., both naturalized citizens and noncitizens).

If a household was in the first interview month, all members – both native and foreign born – were asked the citizenship question on the CPS monthly questionnaire. If all persons in the household were native born, the Supplement skipped the citizenship and year of entry questions and proceeded to the Residence One Year Ago section. If anyone on the household roster was foreign born, the Supplement skipped the citizenship question and proceeded to the Year of Entry section.

If the household was in the second or later interview month and all persons on the roster were native born, the Supplement skipped the citizenship and year of entry questions and began with the Residence One Year Ago section. However, if one or more persons on the roster were not U.S. citizens, the Supplement began with the citizenship question for all noncitizens then continued to the questions on year of entry for all foreign born in the household.

### ***Year of Entry***

In the monthly CPS questionnaire, a single question asks foreign-born household members what year they “came to live” in the United States:

When did [you/NAME] come to live in the United States?

This question, often referred to as the “year of entry” question, provides information used by researchers as a proxy for time spent in the United States, assuming a single entry and continuous residency. Unfortunately, modern migration patterns are characterized by more frequent movement, making this assumption untenable and the information collected a poor reflection of the actual migration phenomenon. Additional questions on the year of first arrival, subsequent exits and entries, and time spent outside the United States were included on the CPS Migration Supplement to provide further data on current migration patterns and to assess the accuracy of our measurement of years lived in the United States by the foreign born.

The Migration Supplement included the same year of entry question as the CPS questionnaire, but included additional questions to measure circular migration. For example, several questions ask about a possible earlier “year of first entry,” which would be the first entry and residence in the country for two months or more before “coming to live” in the United States, as determined by the original year of entry question. The Supplement also asked about a possible “most recent year” outside the United States (for two months or more) and a person’s “year of most recent entry” (which would occur after the person left the United States for two months or more).<sup>6</sup>

The Migration Supplement included nine questions in the Year of Entry section. The following questions were administered in the order shown, with some exceptions due to skip patterns:

1. When did [you/NAME] come to live in the United States?
2. Before [answer to question 1], did [you/NAME] ever come to the United States for 2 months or more?
3. What year did [you/NAME] FIRST come to the United States for two months or more? (Your best guess is fine.)
4. Since (answer to question 1/answer to question 3), [have/has] [you/NAME] ever been outside the United States? Please count all work-related or personal travel of any length.
5. Now adding up ALL those TIMES [you/NAME] spent outside the United States since (answer to question 1/answer to question 3), would you say it is more or less than one year? (Your best guess is fine.)
6. Since (answer to question 1/answer to question 3), about how many years IN TOTAL [have/has] [you/NAME] spent outside the United States? (Your best guess is fine.)
7. Since (answer to question 1/answer to question 3), were any of [your/NAME’s] trips outside the United States two months or longer?
8. Now think of the MOST RECENT time [you/NAME] [were/was] OUTSIDE of the United States for two months or more. What year was that? (Your best guess is fine.)
9. What year did [you/NAME] come back? (Your best guess is fine.)

---

<sup>6</sup> These concepts were not explicitly named during the interview, but it is not difficult to see how they are derived from the set of questions in the Year of Entry section of the Migration Supplement.



Foreign-born household members during their first month in interview are asked the year of entry question (*When did you come to live in the United States?*) from the monthly CPS questionnaire. In the Migration Supplement, if the household was in its first interview month, all foreign-born members skipped to the second question (*Before [answer given to CPS question], did you ever come to the United States for 2 months or more?*). Only foreign-born household members in their second or subsequent interview were asked the first then second Supplement questions (*Before [answer given to question 1], did you ever come to the United States for two months or more?*). In this way, all foreign-born household members were asked the year of entry question once and only once throughout the entire interview. Those who answered “no” to the second question skipped to the fourth question. Those who answered “yes” to the second question moved to the third question (*What year did you FIRST come to the United States for two months or more?*), and then to the fourth (*Since [reference year], have you ever been outside the United States?*). If a valid response was provided to the third question, then the fourth and subsequent questions, where applicable, used the year the respondent first came to live in the United States for 2 months or more as the reference year. Otherwise, the respondent’s earlier year of entry response – either from the question included in the CPS questionnaire or the first question of the Supplement’s Year of Entry section – was used as the reference year.

Those who answered “no” to the fourth question skipped the remaining five questions and continued to the Residence One Year Ago section. Those who answered “yes” to the fourth question were divided onto two paths, depending on their years of residence in the United States. If the reference year was 15 or fewer years prior to the survey, the respondent answered the fifth question (*Now adding up all those times you spent outside the United States since [reference year], would you say it was more or less than one year?*). Those who responded “one year or more” continued to the sixth (*Since [reference year], about how many years in total have you spent outside the United States?*) then seventh (*Since [reference year] were any of your trips outside the United States two months or longer?*) questions. Those who responded “less than one year” to the fifth question skipped the sixth but answered the seventh question (*Since [reference year] were any of your trips outside the United States two months or longer?*). If the reference year was more than 15 years prior to the survey, the respondent skipped from the fourth to the seventh question. For both paths, if the answer to the seventh question was “no,” the remaining questions were skipped and the household continued to the Residence One Year Ago section. Otherwise, the respondent moved to the eighth (*Now think of the most recent time you were outside of the United States for two months or more. What year was that?*) and ninth (*What year did you come back?*) questions, then continued to the next section of the Supplement.

### ***Residence One Year Ago***

Questions on place of residence one year ago were included in the CPS Migration Supplement to provide estimates of the number of both native and foreign-born in-migrants. Those household

members who were currently residing in the housing unit but were living outside the United States one year before the survey are considered in-migrants. Estimates of in-migrants can be combined with estimates of out-migrants derived from the Residents and Emigrants Abroad section to produce estimates of net international migration.

The structure of the residence one year ago question set relies heavily on the concept of the “reference person.” During the first month in interview when the roster is created, one member of the household – usually the person who either owns or rents the housing unit – is designated as the reference person. The respondent then reports each household member’s relationship to this person. Note that the household respondent and the reference person are not necessarily the same. For the Migration Supplement, the reference person is the same member of the household identified as such during the first interview.

The Migration Supplement included six questions on residence one year ago. The following questions were administered in the order shown with some exceptions due to skip patterns:

1. [Was reference person’s NAME/Were you] living in this house (or apartment) one year ago?
2. What country did [reference person’s NAME/you] live in one year ago?
3. There are [#] other persons in this household ages 1 year or over. Did [this person/ALL of these persons] live with [reference person’s NAME/you] [in this house/in that house/outside the United States/BLANK] one year ago?
4. Which of the other members of this household did NOT live with [reference person’s NAME/you] one year ago?
5. [Were/Was][you/NAME] living in this house (or apartment) one year ago?
6. What country did [you/NAME] live in one year ago?

These questions are identical to several questions included in the migration section of the CPS Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) supplement.

The first three questions in the Residence One Year Ago section focused on the reference person to determine both the location of the household and its composition one year before the survey. The last three questions focused on individual members of the household who did not live with the reference person one year ago.

The reference persons of all households were asked the first question (*Were you living in this house or apartment one year ago?*), which had three response options: “Yes, this house or apartment;” “No, different house in the United States;” and “No, outside the United States.” The second question (*What country did you live in one year ago?*) was asked only if the response to the first question was “No, outside the United States.” The third question (*Did this person/all of*

*these persons live with you in this house/in that house/outside the United States one year ago?*) was asked only of those households with at least one person other than the reference person that was age 1 or older. If no one else in the household was age 1 or older, or if the response to the third question was “Yes, all lived with the reference person,” then the Supplement skipped the remaining three questions and continued to the Residents and Emigrants Abroad section.

The fourth question (*Which of the other members of this household did not live with you one year ago?*) was asked of all households that answered “No, some or all did not live with the reference person” to the third question. Only those persons who were identified in the fourth question as not living with the reference person were asked the fifth question (*Was [NAME] living in this house or apartment one year ago?*), which had the same three response options as the first question: “Yes, this house or apartment;” “No, different house in the United States;” and “No, outside the United States.” The sixth question (*What country was [NAME] living in one year ago?*) was asked only of those persons in the household whose response to the fifth question was “No, outside the United States,” then the Supplement continued to the Residents and Emigrants Abroad section.

### ***Residents and Emigrants Abroad***

The questions included in the Residents and Emigrants Abroad section were derived from several questions included on the CPS Emigration and Americans Living Abroad Supplements fielded by the Census Bureau in July 1987, June 1988, November 1989, and June 1991. These questions were included on the Migration Supplement for two reasons. First, identifying current and past household members as residents and emigrants abroad provides an estimate of the number of out-migrants during the previous 12 months. These estimates of out-migrants can be combined with estimates of in-migrants derived from the Residence One Year Ago section to produce estimates of net international migration. Second, by combining the additional data collected on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of emigrants with that already collected on residents abroad by the CPS questionnaire, the characteristics of the entire population (i.e., both residents and emigrants abroad) can be analyzed, along with the characteristics of their households.

The difference between “residents living abroad” and “emigrants living abroad” is a matter of household membership. If a person living outside the United States was a member of the household being interviewed, then that person was categorized as a “resident.” One example of a resident living abroad would be someone who had lived with the household at the beginning of the CPS interview cycle but had since moved to another country. This person would still be on the household roster, so various demographic data would be available from prior CPS interviews. On the other hand, if a person living outside the United States used to live in the same housing unit as the household being interviewed but was not a part of the household at the beginning of the CPS interview cycle, then that person would be categorized as an “emigrant.” Because the

emigrant was not a household member when the CPS interviews began and was not on the household roster, no demographic information would be available from prior CPS interviews.

As with the Residence One Year Ago section, the questions included in this section focus on the relationship of the residents and emigrants abroad to the reference person. The term was defined and used in both sections in the same manner.

The Migration Supplement included 17 questions on residents and emigrants living abroad. The first four questions identified residents and emigrants living abroad that were linked to the household. The next six questions gathered basic demographic information about the identified emigrants only (as the CPS monthly questionnaire already would have collected this information for residents living abroad). The final seven questions gathered additional information about both residents and emigrants living abroad, including country of current residence. The following questions were administered in the order shown but with some exceptions due to skip patterns:

1. This survey listed [READ ALL ROSTER NAMES of CURRENT MEMBERS ONLY] as members of this household. Are any of them living outside the United States now? <sup>7</sup>
2. Who is it? Anyone else?
3. Other than the people we have listed as household members, did anyone else live or stay here one year ago (about August 12, 2007) but is now living outside the United States?
4. Can you tell me who that was? What are these persons' names?
5. Is [NAME] male or female?
6. How old is [NAME]? (Your best guess is fine.)
7. How is [NAME] related to [reference person's NAME/you]? [NAME] is [reference person's NAME/your] ...
8. In what country was [NAME] born?
9. Is [NAME] a citizen of the United States?
10. Did [NAME] become a citizen of the United States through naturalization?
11. In what country is [NAME] living now?
12. Is [NAME] a member of the U.S. Armed Forces?
13. Is [NAME] a civilian employee of the U.S. Government?
14. Is [NAME] a dependent of a member of the U.S. Armed Forces?
15. Is [NAME] a dependent of a civilian employee of the U.S. Government?
16. What is [NAME]'s main activity? Is [NAME]...
17. Please specify main activity.

---

<sup>7</sup> If any persons in the household were reported as currently living abroad in the last question of the Year of Entry section (*What year did you/NAME come back?*), then the question *Are any of them living outside the United States now?* was modified to include the names of these people (i.e., *Are any of them living outside the United States now, other than NAME(S)?*)

Inclusion in the universe for the Residents and Emigrants Abroad section depended on the responses of household members to certain questions in the Residence One Year Ago section. If at least one person in the household was living in the same house (or apartment) one year ago, then all members of the household were in universe for the Residents and Emigrants Abroad section. However, if all members of the household were living elsewhere (or not yet born) one year ago, then this question set was skipped entirely and the interview continued to the Monetary Transfers section. The reason for this condition was to ensure that at least one household member would be able to respond with certainty about the existence and status of any previous residents living abroad.

If the household was included in the Residents and Emigrants Abroad universe, then the first question (*Are any members of this household living outside the United States now?*) was asked only when the household had more than one current member. If the response to the first question was “yes,” then the survey moved to the second question (*Who is it? Anyone else?*); otherwise, the second question was skipped. In the second question, the names of household members that were living abroad were identified from the household roster. The first two questions were skipped if the respondent lived alone. The third question (*Other than the people we have listed as household members, did anyone else live or stay here one year ago but is now living outside the United States?*) was asked of every household in the Residents and Emigrants Abroad universe. If the response to the third question was “Yes,” then the survey moved on to the fourth question (*Can you tell me who that was? What are these persons’ names?*); otherwise, the fourth question was skipped. In the fourth question, emigrants known to be currently living abroad were identified by a name or initials supplied by the respondent.

After the fourth question, the survey followed different paths depending on one of three conditions: (1) if the respondent reported the name or initials of any emigrants living abroad in question four, then the survey moved to questions on the characteristics of those emigrants (questions 5 to 11); (2) if the respondent did not report any emigrants but reported residents living abroad in question two, then the survey skipped to questions on characteristics of those residents abroad (questions 12 to 17); and (3) if the respondent did not report either residents or emigrants living abroad, then the survey skipped the remaining questions in the section and proceeded to the Monetary Transfers section.

At this point in the questionnaire, the focus shifted from the household level to the person level, and the remaining questions in this section asked about the characteristics of the residents or emigrants living abroad. Those households that were asked the fifth question (*Is [NAME] male or female?*) continued to the sixth, seventh, and eighth questions (*How old is [NAME]? How is [NAME] related to you? In what country was [NAME] born?*). If the response to the eighth question was the United States, Puerto Rico, or one of the U.S. Island Areas, then the ninth and tenth questions (*Is [NAME] a citizen of the United States? Did [NAME] become a citizen of the*

*United States through naturalization?*) were skipped; otherwise, the respondent moved to the ninth question. If the response to the ninth question was “Yes,” then the respondent moved on to the tenth question; otherwise, the tenth question was skipped. The tenth question itself does not contain any skips, so any response moved the respondent to the eleventh question (*In what country is [NAME] living now?*), at which point any households that met condition (2) above resumed the question set.

After the eleventh question, the survey followed different paths, depending on three conditions based on the characteristics of the residents and emigrants living abroad: (1) if the resident/emigrant was between 17 and 64 years old, then the survey continued with the twelfth question (*Is NAME a member of the U.S. Armed Forces?*); (2) if the resident/emigrant was 15, 16, or greater than 64 years old, then the survey skipped to the thirteenth question (*Is NAME a civilian employee of the U.S. Government?*); and (3) if the resident/emigrant was less than 15 years old, then the survey skipped to the fourteenth question (*Is NAME a dependent of a member of the U.S. Armed Forces?*). For the next three questions (fifteen through seventeen), the skip pattern was the same: if the response was “Yes,” then the survey skipped the remaining questions and continued to the Monetary Transfers section; otherwise the survey moved to the next question in line. If the respondent answered the sixteenth question (*What is NAME’s main activity?*), the survey moved to the seventeenth and final question (*Please specify main activity.*), but only if the response did not match one of the following categories: “working,” “taking care of house or family,” “going to school,” or “retired” (or a don’t know / refusal).

In the United States, the amount of emigration is relatively small. Without oversampling households with residents and emigrants abroad, household surveys – even those with relatively large samples, such as the CPS – may not include enough households in sample to produce reliable estimates of out-migrants. Data users are urged to exercise caution when drawing conclusions based on the data derived from this section.

### ***Monetary Transfers***

The purpose of the Monetary Transfers section was to collect data about the frequency and amount of money sent and received by households in the United States to and from friends and relatives living outside the United States. The CPS Migration Supplement represents the first time that questions on monetary transfers were included on a federally sponsored, nationally representative survey in the United States.

In the Migration Supplement, “monetary transfers” refer to personal transfers of money to and from relatives or friends, regularly or occasionally, for support or as a gift. They do not include transfers of money to or from organizations, such as donations to charities; the transfer of goods or services (i.e., in-kind transfers); or loans. Monetary transfers include transfers of money

between someone staying or living in a household and someone staying or living anywhere outside the United States at the time of the transfer.

The Migration Supplement included six questions on monetary transfers, three questions on the money sent and three questions on the money received by the household during the previous 12 months. The following questions were asked in the order shown, with some exceptions due to skip patterns:

1. In the last 12 months, did anyone in this household give or send money to relatives or friends living outside the United States? Please include all gifts of money. Do not include loans.
2. About how many times in total over the last 12 months was money given or sent? (Your best guess is fine.)
3. In the last 12 months, about how much in total dollars was given or sent? (Your best guess is fine.)
4. In the last 12 months, did anyone in this household receive money from relatives or friends living outside the United States? Please include all gifts of money. Do not include loans.
5. About how many times in total over the last 12 months was money received? (Your best guess is fine.)
6. In the last 12 months, about how much in total dollars was received? (Your best guess is fine.)

All questions were asked at the household level, so single transfers by anyone in the household to or from anyone outside the United States during the previous 12 months were aggregated, creating a single total for the entire household. The Monetary Transfers section was asked of all households participating in the Supplement, including those with no foreign-born members. If the household respondent answered “yes” to the question on anyone sending money to relatives or friends outside the United States, questions on the frequency and amount of money were asked, then the survey skipped to the question on receiving money from relatives and friends outside the United States. If the household respondent answered “no” to anyone sending money abroad, the survey skipped to the question about receiving money. If the household respondent answered “yes” to receiving money, questions on the frequency and amount of money received were asked, and then the Supplement concluded. If the household respondent answered “no” to anyone receiving money, the Supplement concluded.

## Summary

The August 2008 CPS Migration Supplement is a new source for data on several migration-related topics not commonly covered by surveys, including changes in citizenship status, year of first entry and subsequent exits and reentries, residence one year ago, residents and emigrants abroad, and monetary transfers. The public-use microdata file was released in April 2011 and can be downloaded for analysis from the U.S. Census Bureau's Web site at [http://www.bls.census.gov/cps\\_ftp.html#cpssupps](http://www.bls.census.gov/cps_ftp.html#cpssupps). The data are also available for analysis through the Data Ferrett tool available at <http://dataferrett.census.gov>. For additional information on the Migration Supplement, see *Source of the Data and Accuracy of the Estimates for the August 2008 CPS Microdata File on Migration* available at <http://www.census.gov/aprd/techdoc/cps/cps-main.html>. For additional information on the Current Population Survey, see *Current Population Survey Design and Methodology* (Technical Paper 66) available at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2006pubs/tp-66.pdf>.