

The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725) for the One-Unit Nonconstruction Cost Evaluation (OUNCE). The OUNCE, sponsored by the Census Bureau, has previously been conducted once every 10 years using a mailout/mailback data collection method, and is designed to measure the nonconstruction costs for new homes (such as land and appliances) collected by the Survey of Construction (SOC). Results from the OUNCE are used in the estimation of the Value Put-in-Place (VIP) series.

We need to determine whether the OUNCE information can be collected as part of the SOC interview. More specifically, respondent debriefing interviews will be conducted to determine whether or not SOC respondents are able to provide OUNCE information at the time of the SOC interview and to identify potential problems with question wording. If OUNCE information can be collected as part of the SOC interview, then response rates for the OUNCE will likely increase while respondent burden is reduced. In addition, nonconstruction factors that are used to adjust sales and contract prices reported for SOC can be updated more frequently (probably annually), thus improving the quality of the VIP estimates.

During August and September, 2008, Field Representatives (FRs) will conduct personal visit interviews with selected SOC respondents such as home builders, real estate agents, rental agents, or new home owners to administer the proposed OUNCE questions and to conduct debriefing interviews. The interviews will be done in the field throughout the U.S. as part of the normal monthly SOC interview. For purposes of this testing, two paper versions of the questionnaires will be used. One questionnaire (Form OUNCE-C) will be administered for single-family house constructed by a contractor for the landowner, where construction has been completed. The other (Form OUNCE-S) will be administered for single-family house that was built for sale, where construction has been completed and a sales contract has been signed. Both versions are enclosed.

Cases (i.e., properties) already being included for SOC in August and September will be included in the test, with a maximum of 500 cases for each questionnaire version. For the houses that were constructed by contractors for the landowners, FRs will be asked to complete Form OUNCE-C for all eligible cases obtained during both months of testing to arrive at the 500-case goal. For the houses that were built for sales, each FR will complete Form OUNCE-S for two eligible cases with two different respondents (if possible) during August and just one eligible case during September to arrive at the 500-case goal. The choice of cases for the OUNCE-S interviews is left to the discretion of the FRs.

Findings from the debriefing interviews will be used to determine the respondent's ability to report OUNCE data during a SOC interview. They will also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of question wording and to identify areas for improvement. Using these results, the Manufacturing and Construction Division of the Census Bureau will decide whether the OUNCE will be administered as a recurring supplement to SOC or as a separate OUNCE survey.

Participants will be informed that their response to the OUNCE debriefing questions is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential and will be seen only by employees involved in the research project. We will not be providing monetary incentives to participants in

this inquiry.

The time for the SOC interview has been approved under OMB number 0607-0110. We estimate the length of the respondent debriefing interview will average 15 minutes. Thus, the maximum estimated burden for this research is 250 hours.

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and statistical aspects of the design of this research is:

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