

The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). We will conduct usability testing of the Internet reporting application for the 2009 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey – Insurance Component (MEPS-IC). The survey is also referred to as the Health Insurance Cost Study. The MEPS-IC is sponsored by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the data are also used by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).

The MEPS-IC survey will be the first economic survey to be designed and delivered using the Census Bureau's new Centurion electronic reporting system. This system replaces the former Census Taker system. Results from the usability testing of this survey will impact the design and functionality of surveys that will be moved from the Census Taker system into the Centurion system after the administration of the 2009 MEPS-IC survey.

The Centurion system is currently under development and the electronic version of the MEPS-IC will be available for testing in April 2009. Since the time for pretesting is very tight, we are submitting early screen shots for a subset of the system screens for OMB review. Copies of the available screen shots are enclosed. We are currently in the process of working with the system programmers to finalize design elements, and final screen shots will likely differ from the enclosed screen shots as decisions affecting the system design are made and implemented during the coming weeks. When available, screen shots of the instrument to be tested will be forwarded to OMB.

Usability testing of the Internet application will focus on issues such as the layout of questions and screens, the navigation within and between screens, and edits. Special attention will be paid to the newly designed main menu, review/submission screen, and the Internet site's toolbar. Findings will be used to revise the MEPS-IC Internet application.

From mid-April through May, 2009, staff from the Establishment Survey Methods Staff within the Economic Directorate of the Census Bureau will conduct two rounds of usability interviews with respondents from up to 30 businesses in three major cities to be determined. We will attempt to obtain interviews with businesses that vary in size and complexity.

Interviews will be conducted at the business site and subject area specialists from the MEPS-IC staff will accompany the usability tester on most, if not all, of the interviews. They will assist with respondent debriefing, especially in cases where additional clarification of the subject matter is required. Interviews will be audio recorded, with the participants' permission, to aid researchers in accurately reporting findings and recommendations.

After businesses are recruited, participants will receive follow-up reminders about their appointments by fax, telephone, or e-mail via the Census Bureau's Secure Messaging Center (SMC). Participants will be informed that their response is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential and will be seen only by Census Bureau or special sworn employees involved in the research project. We will not be providing monetary incentives to participants in this study.

Since we are unable to tailor an interview protocol to the final test screen shots, we enclose a

boilerplate usability protocol which will be later tailored to the final MEPS-IC instrument. The final detailed protocol will be delivered to OMB along with the final screen shots.

We estimate that it will be necessary to interview only one respondent at each company. We estimate the length of the interviews will average 1 hour. Thus, the maximum estimated burden for this research is 30 hours.

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

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