

August 6, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR: Reviewer of 1220-0050

FROM: JAY RYAN, Acting Chief
Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys
Bureau of Labor Statistics

SUBJECT: Non-substantive Change Request for the Consumer
Expenditure Surveys (CE) – 2009 Questionnaire Updates

Periodically, the Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys (DCES) updates the CE Diary and Interview Surveys to clarify question wording, to remove unnecessary questions, or to create a new item category to capture a type of expenditure made up of items currently spread out among several different item codes. We now seek OMB approval to make these types of modifications to the CE Diary Survey starting in January 2009, and to the CE Interview Survey in April 2009.

CE Diary Survey Changes

The following changes are proposed for the CAPI portion of the CE Diary Survey beginning in January 2009:

- Discontinue asking for a CU member's day of birth. Only ask for the month and year of birth.
- Add an introduction to the income section and simplify the wording of the "how many weeks did you work" question.
- Clarify the question that collects personal property taxes.
- Improve the wording of the question asking for an alternate phone number.
- Remove the CAPI recall questions asking if the CU made any purchases at vending machines or for alcohol at restaurants, for tobacco, or for gasoline. The Field Representative only asks these questions when no reports for these items occur in the Diary. The FRs rarely ask these questions and the removal of these questions will result in no real impact to burden hours.
- Reformat the Diary Information Booklet to match the user friendly design of the Interview Information Booklet.

DCES does not propose any changes to the Diary form itself. Please see Attachment A for more details on the proposed Diary changes.

CE Interview Survey Changes

The following changes are proposed for the CE Interview Survey beginning in April 2009:

- Discontinue asking any questions about the Federal Economic Stimulus Payments as planned.
- Discontinue asking for a CU member's day of birth. Only ask for the month and year of birth.
- Add an introduction to the survey and to the clothing section (Section 9A) reminding the respondent to refer to bills during the interview.
- Clarify or simplify the wording of several questions throughout the survey (see Attachment B for details).
- Delete the question that asks about the CU financing a mortgage for a buyer of a CU's property. This question rarely results in the collection of any data.
- Create a separate item code in Section 6 for expenditures on "portable media" (see Attachment B for details). Currently, we capture the expenditures for these items under several different item codes. CPI requested a single code to capture these expenses.
- Move the item codes for "Care for invalids, convalescents, handicapped, or elderly persons in the home" and for "Adult day care centers" from Section 19 to Section 15 so we can also capture reimbursements for these items, as requested by CPI.
- Discontinue asking for member names in Section 16, the education expenses section. Simply ask if the expenditure was for someone inside the CU or outside the CU.
- Create a separate item code in Section 16 for "test preparation or tutoring services" (see Attachment B for details). Currently, we capture the expenditures for these items under the "other school related expenses" category. CPI requested a single code to capture these expenses.
- Add an introduction to the income section.
- Introduce a new respondent brochure encouraging participation in the survey by highlighting interesting published CE data. We will provide a copy of the brochure as soon as a final draft is ready.

Please see Attachment B for more details of the proposed Interview changes.

Burden hours will go down by 147 hours and return to 72,614 hours -- the burden hour level prior to asking the Economic Stimulus Payment.

As previously requested, we are also enclosing a copy of "*Assessing nonresponse bias in the CE Interview Survey: A summary of four studies*".

OMB approved the current questionnaire in the Notice of Action dated March 9, 2007. Current OMB approval of the CE surveys expires on, March 31, 2010.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Jay Ryan, acting CE Division Chief, at 202-691-5139 or e-mail at ryan.jay@bls.gov or Carolyn Pickering at 202-691-6876 or e-mail at Pickering.Carolyn@bls.gov.

Attachment A - Proposed 2009 CE Diary Question Wording Changes

Variable Name	Current Question Text	2009 Question Text	Change Detail
WKS_WRKD	In the last 12 months, how many weeks did [fill: you/NAME] work either full time or part time, not counting work around the house? Include paid vacation and paid sick leave. * If CU member did not work, enter zero.	In the past 12 months, including paid vacation and sick leave, how many weeks did you work? * If CU member did not work, enter zero.	Change the question wording
S4A_INTRO	NA	The next few questions are about income. We know people aren't used to discussing their income, but please be assured that, like all other information you have provided, these answers will be kept strictly confidential.	Add introduction to Section 4A, the income questions
ADDOTH	During the last 12 months, did [fill: YOU_ANY] PAY any of the following- Personal property taxes and other taxes not reported elsewhere? Do not include Social Security tax for the self-employed.	During the last 12 months, did [fill: YOU_ANY] PAY any of the following- Personal property taxes and other taxes not reported elsewhere? Do not include Social Security tax for the self-employed or real estate taxes.	Add "do not include real estate taxes" to the question.
PHONENUMBER2	What is your secondary number?	Do you have another phone number where I can reach you?	Change the question wording
SEC3AINT/ SEC3BINT/	We have found that certain types of expenses are often forgotten. I would like to ask you a few questions concerning some of these items.	NA	Delete this question.
VEND1/VEND2	Did [fill: YOU_ANY] buy candy, drinks, or other snacks from vending machines during the past week?	NA	Delete this question.
ALCOHOL1/ ALCOHOL2	Did [fill: YOU_ANY] buy alcoholic beverages at a full-service restaurant during the past week? *Do not include alcoholic beverages bought in places where you pay before you eat or drink.	NA	Delete this question.

Attachment A - Proposed 2009 CE Diary Question Wording Changes

Variable Name	Current Question Text	2009 Question Text	Change Detail
TBAC1/TBAC2	Did YOU_ANY buy any cigarettes, cigars, pipes, or tobacco during the past week?	NA	Delete this question.
GAS1/GAS2	Did YOU_ANY buy gasoline during the past week?	NA	Delete this question.
VENDX1/VENDX2 ALCX1/ALCX2 TBACX1/TBACX2 GASX1/GASX2	How much was spent during the past week? *Enter Dollars and Cents (example: 0.75; 2.75) *Use Decimal to separate Dollars and Cents	NA	Delete this question.

Attachment B - Proposed 2009 Interview Question Wording Changes

Variable Name	Current Question Text	2009 Question Text	Change Detail
CE_INTRO	<p>As we start, please understand that we ask the same questions of everybody we talk to. I realize some of these questions may not apply to your CU.</p> <p>Most questions that I will be asking refer to a specific time period. During this interview, the time period, unless I state otherwise is for the Past [fill: month/three months], that is, from the 1st day of [Fill: REF_MONTH] to today.</p>	<p>As we start, please understand that we ask the same questions of everybody we talk to. I realize some of these questions may not apply to your CU.</p> <p>Most questions that I will be asking refer to a specific time period. During this interview, the time period, unless I state otherwise is for the Past [fill: month/three months], that is, from the 1st day of [Fill: REF_MONTH] to today.</p> <p>Most of my questions are about expenses your CU had or bills you've received. You will find it helpful to have your checkbook register, credit card statements and other records as you answer the questions.</p>	Add reminder for using bills or other records.
MAJCODE	How many sound components, component system, or compact disc sound systems [fill: do/does] [fill: YOU_YRCU] have?	How many stereo or sound systems [fill: do/does] [fill: YOU_YRCU] have?	Simplify the question wording
MORTHOLD	Did you finance any part of the sale (trade) for the buyer? What was the amount of the mortgage that [Fill: YOU_YRCU] financed?	NA	Delete this question.
MINAPPLY	7. Other office machinery	7. Office machines including fax machines and calculators.	Clarify the question wording.
MINAPPLY	10 - Computer software or accessories for non-business use	10 - Computer software, including computer games, or accessories, for non-business use	Change the precode to explicitly include computer games.
MINAPPLY	11. Video and computer game hardware, software, Gameboys, and accessories	11. Video game hardware, video games and accessories	Change question wording.
MINAPPLY	NA	29. Portable memory, such as flash drives, memory cards, and recordable discs and tapes	Add a new item code.

Attachment B - Proposed 2009 Interview Question Wording Changes

Variable Name	Current Question Text	2009 Question Text	Change Detail
FURNPURY	<p>Have you purchased any household linens?</p> <p>* IF YES - Read each item on list</p> <p>Have you purchased any --</p> <p>27. Bedroom linens? 28. Bathroom linens? 29. Kitchen or dining room linens? 30. Other linens?</p> <p>31. Slipcovers, decorative pillows or cushions?</p>	<p>Have you purchased any slipcovers, decorative pillows, or household linens such as towels, sheets, or blankets?</p> <p>* IF YES - Read each item on list</p> <p>Have you purchased any --</p> <p>27. Bedroom linens? 28. Bathroom linens? 29. Kitchen or dining room linens? 30. Other linens?</p> <p>31. Slipcovers, decorative pillows or cushions?</p>	<p>Change the screener question to explicitly mention items included in this group.</p>
FURNPURY	19 - Travel items	19 - Travel items including luggage	Clarify question wording
FURNPURY	36. Venetian blinds, window shades, other window coverings?	36. Blinds, shades, other window coverings?	Simplify question wording
S9A_INTRO	Now I am going to ask you about clothing purchases.	Now I am going to ask you about clothing expenses. You may find it helpful to refer to receipts, credit card statements or other records to answer the questions.	Add reminder for using bills or other records.
VOPARK	<p>Since the first of [fill: REF_MONTH], have [fill: YOU_ANYMEM] had expenses for - Parking, including garage rental, metered parking, and parking lot fees, except any expenses included in property ownership or rental costs? Do not include parking expenses that are totally reimbursed or paid entirely for business.</p>	<p>Since the first of [fill: REF_MONTH], have [fill: YOU_ANYMEM] had expenses for - Parking, such as parking meters, garage rental, or parking lot fees? Do not include expenses that are part of your property ownership or rental costs, a business expense, or expenses that will be totally reimbursed.</p>	Clarify question wording.
VOPTOLL	<p>Since the first of [fill: REF_MONTH], have [fill: YOU_ANYMEM] had expenses for -</p> <p>Tolls or electronic toll passes?</p> <p>* Do not include tolls incurred on a trip.</p>	<p>Since the first of [fill: REF_MONTH], have [fill: YOU_ANYMEM] had expenses for -</p> <p>Local tolls or electronic toll passes?</p> <p>* Do not include tolls incurred on a trip.</p>	Clarify question wording.

Attachment B - Proposed 2009 Interview Question Wording Changes

Variable Name	Current Question Text	2009 Question Text	Change Detail
HHIPOS	If, except in the case of an emergency, you go to a doctor other than one in the group center or your primary care doctor, without a referral, will the plan pay any of your expenses?	Under normal circumstances, if you go to a doctor who is not part of your plan without a referral, will your insurance pay for the cost?	Clarify question wording.
MEDPCARY	11. Prescribed medicines or prescribed drugs	11. Prescription drugs	Simplify question wording.
EDUGFTC	Display list of active CU members . . 55. Non-CU member	Was this expense for - 1. someone inside the CU? 2. someone outside the CU?	Discontinue collecting names associated with education expenses.
EDUNAME	* Enter name of non-CU member:	NA	Discontinue collecting names associated with education expenses.
EDSCHL_A	* Ask if not apparent. What kind of school was it? 1. College or university 2. Elementary or high school 3. Child day care center 4. Nursery school or preschool 5. Vocational or Technical School 6. Other school	* Ask if not apparent. What kind of school or facility was it? 1. College or university 2. Elementary through high school 3. Child day care center 4. Nursery school or preschool 5. Vocational or Technical School 6. Other	Clarify question wording - Add "or facility" to the question and delete "school" from precode 6.
EDUC_AY	NA	7. Test preparation or tutoring services	Add a new item code.
LNDROMAT	Since the first of [fill: REF_MONTH], not including [fill: CUR_MONTH] have [fill: YOU_ANYMEM] had any expenses for coin operated laundry or dry cleaning machines?	Since the first of [fill: REF_MONTH], not including [fill: CUR_MONTH] have [fill: YOU_ANYMEM] had any expenses for self-service laundry machines?	Modernize question wording.

Attachment B - Proposed 2009 Interview Question Wording Changes

Variable Name	Current Question Text	2009 Question Text	Change Detail
SALARYST	During the last 12 months, did [fill: you/NAME] receive any money in wages or salary? Include all wages, salaries, commissions, tips, allowances, Armed Forces pay, severance pay, teaching fellowships, etc.	During the last 12 months, did [fill: you/NAME] receive any money in wages or salary? Include all bonuses and overtime pay, commissions, tips, allowances, Armed Forces pay, severance pay, teaching fellowships, etc.	Clarify question wording - Add bonuses and overtime pay to the examples and remove wages and salaries from the examples.
INCWEEKQ	In the last 12 months, how many weeks did [fill: you/NAME] work either full time or part time, not counting work around the house? Include paid vacation and paid sick leave. * If CU member did not work, enter zero.	In the past 12 months, including paid vacation and sick leave, how many weeks did you work? * If CU member did not work, enter zero.	Simplify question wording.
S22A_INTRO	NA	The next few questions are about income. We know people aren't used to discussing their income, but please be assured that, like all other information you have provided, these answers will be kept strictly confidential.	Add introduction to Section 22A, the income questions.
MISCTAX	During the last 12 months, did [fill: YOU_ANYMEM] PAY any of the following - Personal property taxes and other taxes not reported elsewhere? Do not include Social Security tax for the self-employed.	During the last 12 months, did [fill: YOU_ANYMEM] PAY any of the following - Personal property taxes and other taxes not reported elsewhere? Do not include Social Security tax for the self-employed or real estate taxes.	Clarify question wording.
PHONENUMBER2	What is your secondary number?	Do you have another phone number where I can reach you?	Simplify question wording.