

Supporting Statement – Part B
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau
Survey of Residential Building or Zoning Permit Systems (C-411)
OMB Control No. 0607-0350

B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. Description of Universe and Respondent Selection

There are about 40,000 active governments in the United States and about 20,000 of those have building permit offices. Building permits are issued by other jurisdictions for most of the active governments which do not have a building permit office (for example, a county may issue permits for all cities in the county), and some jurisdictions do not require building permits. Form C-411 is sent to jurisdictions when the Census Bureau's Manufacturing and Construction Division (MCD) has reason to believe that a new permit system has been established or an existing one has changed. This is based on information from a variety of sources including survey respondents, regional councils and Census' Geography Division which keeps abreast of changes in corporate status. Responses typically approach 85 percent.

2. Statistical Methodology - Estimation Procedures

The collection of this information does not employ statistical methods. There is no sampling or estimation performed. Every new or changed permit-issuing place is in the survey universe.

3. Efforts to Maximize Responses

To maximize response rates, the Census Bureau follows up with nonrespondents by telephone. The Census Bureau also works with local Councils of Government and other state and local government agencies to obtain updated information about local building permit systems.

4. Tests of Methods

The C-411 questionnaire was redesigned in 2005. At that time we conducted internal testing of the questionnaire and incorporated feedback from survey respondents into its design. Since 2005, our use of the questionnaire has shown that respondents from different types of jurisdictions (municipalities with existing permit systems, municipalities where a new permit system may have been established, and counties where new permit systems may have been established) were sometimes unclear about what information was needed for us to properly

classify their jurisdiction in our survey universes, and followup communication was often necessary to clarify the information provided. This led us to create three versions of the questionnaire. We plan to review data from each version to confirm that the questions being asked are providing the information needed for us to understand the jurisdictions' building permit requirements.

5. **Contacts**

The contact person for questions relating to the statistical aspects of the survey is Mr. Paul L. Hsen, Assistant Division Chief for Research and Methodology. He can be reached on (301) 763-4586.

The contact person for questions relating to the collection and analysis of the data is Ms. Erica M. Filipek, Assistant Division Chief for Economic Indicator Programs. She can be reached on (301) 763-5161.

Attachments

- A. Form C-411(V) for verification of coverage for jurisdictions with existing permit systems
- B. Form C-411(M) for municipalities where a new permit system may have been established
- C. Form C-411(C) for counties where new permit systems may have been established
- D. C-411(L) (letter to respondents)