

June 26, 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR: Reviewer of 1220-0050

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

SUBJECT: Non-substantive Change Request for the  
Consumer Expenditure Diary Survey (CED) –  
2013 Questionnaire Changes and Web Diary  
Feasibility Study

CE is involved in an ongoing effort to improve data quality, maintain or increase response rates, and reduce data collection costs. As part of this effort, the Diary Questionnaire has been revised to reduce respondent burden while maintaining CE data needs. Additionally, a Web Diary Feasibility (WDF) study will examine alternative data collection modes for the CED as referenced in the 2011 CE clearance package.

In order to reduce respondent burden, questions from the Control Card (Attachment A) and Income (Attachment B) sections were streamlined or deleted. Changes include those to questions on others residing at the sample address, educational attainment, and income categories. The FAQ on the Diary form will be updated as respondents will no longer be asked to separate shipping and handling costs from purchased items. As a result of these changes the total burden hour is estimated to decrease by 411 hours to 8402 hours. This estimate was obtained from a production audit trail by calculating average time per question, then multiplying the average time by the number of questions asked for that household in the new section.

Also proposed, the WDF study will test the feasibility and impact of using a web diary to collect CE Diary expenditures. (See the WDF study overview - Attachment C.) The test group will use a modified instrument (Attachment D) for the in-person first visit, telephone reminder (instead of visit two), and in-person third visit. Respondents will use a Web Diary to record expenditures. (See Attachment E – Web Diary Screenshots). Two questions on internet access will be added to both the production and research instruments.

The control group will consist of production sample from the study's field period, and will be administered using the production diary and procedures. The test will run for three months, January through March 2013 with some cases closing out in April due to placement dates. The total burden hour estimate for the study is 535.

The overall change in burden is a decrease of 226 hours. This includes the 411 decrease for the diary changes, the 350 hour decrease due to the completion of the records study, and the 535 hour increase due to the WDF study.

Current OMB approval of the CE surveys is scheduled to expire April 30, 2014.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Jay Ryan at 202-691-5139 or e-mail at [Ryan.Jay@bls.gov](mailto:Ryan.Jay@bls.gov) or Peggy Murphy at 202-691-6186 or e-mail at [Murphy.Peggy@bls.gov](mailto:Murphy.Peggy@bls.gov).