

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau
Construction Progress Reporting Surveys
OMB Control Number 0607-0153

Part A. - Justification

1. Necessity of Information Collection

The U.S. Census Bureau is requesting an extension of a currently approved collection for forms C-700, Private Construction Projects; C-700 (R), Multi-family Residential Projects, C-700 (SL), State and Local Governments Projects and C-700 (F), Federal Government Projects (Attachments A - D).

These forms are used to conduct the Construction Progress Reporting Surveys (CPRS) to collect information on the dollar value of construction put in place on building projects under construction by private companies or individuals, private multi-family residential buildings, and on building projects under construction by federal and state and local governments. The CPRS are authorized under Title 13, United States Code, Section 182.

The Census Bureau uses the information collected on these forms to publish estimates of the monthly value of construction put in place: (1) for nonresidential projects owned by private companies or individuals; (2) for projects owned by state and local agencies; (3) for multi-family residential building projects owned by private companies or individuals; and (4) for projects owned by the federal government. Statistics from the CPRS become part of the monthly “Value of Construction Put in Place” or “Construction Spending” series, a principal economic indicator that is used extensively by the Federal Government in making policy decisions and used to estimate the gross domestic product (GDP). The private sector uses the statistics for market analysis and other research. Construction now accounts for more than five percent of GDP.

2. Needs and Uses

The C-700 is used to collect data on industrial and manufacturing plants, office buildings, retail buildings, service establishments, religious buildings, schools, universities, hospitals, clinics, and miscellaneous buildings. The C-700 (SL) is used to collect data on public schools, courthouses, prisons, hospitals, civic centers, highways, bridges, sewer systems, and water systems. The C-700 (R) is used to collect data on residential buildings and apartment projects with two or more housing units. The C-700 (F) is used to collect data on residential buildings and nonresidential projects that include office buildings, conservation and development, public safety and health care. Published statistics are used by all levels of government to evaluate economic policy, to

measure progress toward national goals, to make policy decisions, and to formulate legislation. For example, Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) staff uses the data to develop the construction components of gross private domestic investment in the gross domestic product. The Federal Reserve Board and the Department of the Treasury use the value in place data to predict the gross domestic product, which is presented to the Board of Governors and has an impact on monetary policy. Private businesses and trade organizations use the data for estimating the demand for building materials and to schedule production, distribution and sales efforts

Information quality is an integral part of the pre-dissemination review of information disseminated by the Census Bureau (fully described in the Census Bureau's Information Quality Guidelines). Information quality is also integral to information collections conducted by the Census Bureau and is incorporated into the clearance process required by the Paperwork Reduction Act.

3. Use of Information Technology

We use a computer- assisted interview process identified as Call Scheduler to collect data over the telephone for approximately 15 percent of the total responses. This is part of a database system that not only alerts the Census interviewer to call a respondent at a predetermined date and time, but also allows them to enter responses via the database at which time the data are electronically edited for accuracy and consistency.

As of February 1, 2012 respondents can also use the Business Help site to report data online. Forms will continue to be sent to respondents who report online for the near future in order to present every available option. Approximately 20 percent of the total responses come from online reporting.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

The C-700, C-700 (R), C-700 (SL) and C-700 (F) have existed since 1961, 1975, 1976 and 2002, respectively. Frequent informal discussions with people in and out of government who use these statistics and are knowledgeable about the construction statistical sources, indicate that the monthly value put in place series for private nonresidential construction, state and local government construction, and private multi-family residential buildings is unavailable elsewhere.

5. Minimizing Burden

Data for these surveys are collected on a sample basis from federal, state and local agency officials, owners of private nonresidential projects, and owners of private multi-family residential building projects. Total projected cost estimates are requested the first month and monthly progress reports are requested until the project is completed. Respondents are told that if actual values are not readily available from records,

estimates are acceptable. Information on projects valued under \$75,000 is not collected for federal, state and local, or private nonresidential building projects.

Many respondents are called by a Census interviewer and report the data over the phone. The Call Scheduler schedules each respondent's contact time as requested by the respondent. Having the information available from a database at the time of the scheduled call helps reduce the time respondents spend on the telephone, therefore reducing the respondent burden.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

Many policies, decisions, and analyses are formulated and updated monthly using information collected from CPRS. Month-to-month changes in construction activities are erratic due to unusual weather conditions, material shortages, labor shortages, changes in the availability of funds and interest rates, and shifts in government grant programs. Less frequent collection of these data would miss these short-term changes.

7. Special Circumstances

We ask respondents to report within ten days because of our programming needs and the scheduling of nonresponse follow-up caseloads.

8. Consultations Outside the Agency

Comments are received on a continuing basis from representatives of state and local agencies, private nonresidential projects, and multi-family residential projects who were asked to review the report forms for clarity and ease of reporting. These consultations are informal, and comments were not solicited for purposes of reaching a consensus opinion. Based on comments received, the survey form does not require any changes at this time.

On January 14, 2013, we published a notice in the Federal Register (78 FR, page 2656) inviting the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on the report forms and/or the program to which it relates. We received one letter from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). The BEA strongly supports this data collection, because these data are critical in preparing estimates for key components of BEA's economic statistics.

9. Paying Respondents

Respondents are not paid or provided gifts for their participation.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

The following statement of confidentiality is printed on the top of report forms C-700 and C-700 (R) (see Attachments A and B): “Notice-Your report to the Census Bureau is confidential by law (title 13, U.S. Code). It may be seen only by persons sworn to uphold the confidentiality of Census Bureau information and may be used only for statistical purposes. The law also provides that copies retained in your files are immune from legal process.” The respondents are informed that these are voluntary surveys in the letter from the Director of the Census Bureau (Attachment E).

The C-700 (SL) and C-700 (F) are also voluntary. A letter from the Director of the Census Bureau informs respondents of this (Attachments F and G). The data provided come from government agencies and are public in nature and are therefore not protected by our confidentiality law.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

The survey forms contain no sensitive questions.

12. Estimate of Hour Burden

We estimate responses from approximately 12,500 state and local government projects, 4,500 private nonresidential projects, 2,000 federal projects, and 2,000 multi-family residential projects annually. The respondents will each complete 12 monthly reports on average. The total number of annual responses is 252,000. We estimate it will take 30 minutes to complete the survey the first month and 10 minutes each remaining month that the project is under construction, regardless of reporting format. These estimates are based upon previous experiences and conversations with respondents. The total annual burden is 49,000 hours.

13. Estimating Cost Burden

We do not expect respondents to incur any cost other than their time to respond. The information requested is of the type and scope normally carried in company records. No special hardware, accounting software, or system is necessary to provide answers to this information. Respondents are not expected to incur any increase in capital, startup, or systems maintenance cost in responding.

14. Cost to Federal Government

The total cost in FY 2012 for the CPRS program was \$4.7 million, all borne by the

Census Bureau.

15. Reason for Change in Burden

We adjusted the burden downward due to a re-evaluation of the estimated time per response for electronic collection methodologies.

16. Project Schedule

The monthly value in place data are collected during the first three weeks of the month following the survey month. Data are edited and keyed on a flow basis during this period. A tabulation follows during the early days of the fourth week. Statistics are published in press release format on the first workday of the following month under the monthly press release "U.S. Census Bureau News," U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, DC 20233. Data are published showing the dollar amount of construction work done during the month in the United States by type of construction. Detailed data are available online at www.census.gov/constructionspending. Data are shown in actual and seasonally adjusted dollars.

17. Request to Not Display Expiration Date

The expiration date is displayed on the data collection forms.

18. Exceptions to Certification

There are no exceptions.