B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1.   Circumstances necessitating the collection of information.
1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection methods to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g. establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.

The HUBZone Program will conduct a survey of all SBCs in its portfolio; and those that were awarded contracts during the previous fiscal year. The average number of certified HUBZone SBCs receiving contracts last year was 1325, representing 26.5% of the HUBZone portfolio. Expected response rate will be 80%.

2. *Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:*
    *Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection,
    *Estimate procedure
    *Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification,
    *Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and
    *Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.

The entire HUBZone portfolio (currently numbering over 5,000 small business concerns) are directed via e-mail, facsimile or hard copy communication to respond to this request for updated information. The existing HUBZone database system, which accepts information via the Internet, will be adjusted so that virtually all respondents will be able to enter the requested data into a pre-cast, online form. No strata will be used in this instance. The purpose is to obtain an estimate of the average number of jobs retained and created and on estimate an average level of capital expenditures generated by the HUBZone certification. The degree of accuracy will be 95% meaning that for 100 samples the real population will be located in the calculated confidence interval in 95 of them.

3. *Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses.*

We will use an online design for the survey. The design will include asking clear questions, definitions and guidance. We will populate information to be reviewed by the participants, reducing their time to answer the questionnaire.

With respect to non-response, we will address the issues by stages: first, with a targeted campaign with emails. Second a resource will be assigned to call the firms that did not answer after a few weeks. Specialists will be available to answer questions via help desk email.

An acceptable rate of response will be 80 percent for obtaining the data that will allow the program to complete its economic impact analysis. However the program will do its best to obtain a larger rate of response.

4. *Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Test must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information,*

There has been no substantial change to the information collection. SBA does not see a need for additional testing at this time.

5. *Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted in statistical aspects of the design, and the name of the agency, units contractor, grantee, or other persons who will actually collect or analyze the information.*

Jorge Laboy-Bruno, Economist, Office of GCBD, Jorgr.Laboy-Bruno@sba.gov.