

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of our plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). In late March-April 2015, we plan to conduct respondent debriefing interviews for the purpose of exploring response processes related to electronic reporting for the 2014 Report of Organization and the 2014 Annual Survey of Manufactures (RO and ASM, respectively), which began earlier this year. This research will supplement ongoing research and development of a new electronic collection system for the 2017 Economic Census (EC; pretesting clearance received November 2, 2014). The EC, RO, and ASM are related programs: they collect similar establishment-level data (as opposed to strictly enterprise-level) and use the same electronic collection system, and the EC replaces the RO and ASM in the years ending in -2 and -7.

The EC, RO and ASM have been collected electronically for several years using Surveyor, an application that respondents must download and install on their own computers. Surveyor will be replaced with a web-based reporting instrument. This exploratory research will identify additional requirements for the new system through debriefing questions about respondents' recent experiences using Surveyor in the completion of the RO and ASM. In particular, this research will focus on smaller multi-unit (MU) companies (those with 2-50 establishments) to gauge the need for more flexible reporting options besides a downloadable/uploadable spreadsheet template (intended for large MUs), such as the ability to report for multiple establishments individually using an interface similar to that being developed for single-unit companies. Findings from this research will contribute to the further enhancement of the prototype instrument currently in development.

We plan to conduct up to 30 telephone debriefing interviews with respondents to the 2014 RO/ASM. Interviews will be conducted by researchers from the Data Collection Methodology and Research Branch (DCMR). Staff from the Economic Management Division and the Economy-Wide Statistics Division will participate as observers in the interviews as they are able.

Companies from various industries will be contacted by DCMR researchers shortly after their survey responses are received to schedule a debriefing interview. After they are recruited, participants will receive a follow-up reminder of their interview by fax, telephone or e-mail. Interviews may be audio-recorded with the participants' permission, to facilitate accurate summarization of the results. Participants will be informed that their response is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential and will be seen only by employees involved in the research project. We will not be providing monetary incentives to participants in this study.

The length of the interviews is expected to average 0.5 hours and will likely include one respondent per company. The estimated burden for the interviews is 15 hours. In addition, we expect to make up to five recruiting calls for every interview scheduled, and each recruiting call will last an average of five minutes. The estimated burden associated with recruiting is 12.5 hours (150 calls X 5 minutes). The total estimated burden for this research is 27.5 hours.

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and statistical aspects of the design of this research is listed below:

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A debriefing interview protocol is attached.

Sincerely yours,

Jennifer Hunter-Childs
Center for Survey Methods Research

Enclosures

cc:

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D. Stempowski	(EMD)	“	”
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J. Moody	(EWD)	“	”
J. Studds	(ASD)	“	”
C. Caldwell	(ESMD)	“	”
C. Hogue	(ESMD)	“	”
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A. Anderson Riemer	(ESMD)	“	”
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D. Norman	(PCO)	“	”