

The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). The ECON Hub Business Unit Harmonization Team (BUHT) plans to conduct respondent debriefings for multiple surveys, including the Economic Census, the Service Annual Survey, the Annual Wholesale Trade Survey, the Annual Retail Trade Survey, the Business Research, Development and Innovation Survey, and the Annual Capital Expenditures Survey. These surveys collect revenue, expense, employment, and a variety of other economic data.

All of the surveys identified publish, among other things, revenue at various North American Industry Classification (NAICS) levels. The method these surveys use for collecting this data from multi-unit firms is very different however. Some surveys elect to send one form to corporate headquarters and ask them to report which industries the company operates in and what the revenues were for each industry. Other surveys send a separate form to each establishment of the firm (sometimes in the thousands) and ask them what their primary business activity (industry) is and what the establishment's revenues were. The main purpose of these respondent debriefings is to identify issues or barriers that arise for the respondents as a result of the various surveys collecting data at different business unit levels. Furthermore, these debriefings will attempt to determine the respondent's preference for reporting structure, which structure most closely aligns with the company's own reporting structure, and impacts on response burden and quality of data reported if the Census Bureau were to move some or all of these surveys to a more harmonized business unit.

In order to evaluate these issues, the BUHT has profiled 52 large, multi-unit firms with operations in multiple industries. We have reviewed reported and edited data from each of the identified surveys, administrative data, SEC filings (if available), and various other company information. Additionally, we plan to request in-person debriefing interviews with all profiled companies. We anticipate approximately 15 of the companies accepting invitations to meet. Interviews will take place at the company's site.

Interviews will be conducted between June and August, 2015. Subject matter experts from the BUHT (GS grade 13 or above) will be conducting the interviews. A researcher from the Data Collection Methodology & Research Branch (DCMRB) and up to two other Census Bureau staff (either additional BUHT members or Account Managers from one of the identified surveys) may accompany the primary BUHT member on the interviews.

We will record the interviews with the participants' permission, to aid researchers in accurately reporting findings and recommendations. Before beginning the interviews, we will inform participants that their response is voluntary. We also will inform the participants that the information they provide is confidential. We will not be providing monetary incentives to participants in this study.

We estimate that it will be necessary to interview between one and four respondents at each business, with an average of 3. We estimate the length of the interviews at a maximum of ninety minutes (15 cases X 3 respondents X 90 minutes per case = 67.5 hours). Additionally, to recruit respondents we expect the recruiting calls to last on average five minutes per call (52 cases recruited X 5 minutes = 4.3 hours). Thus, the estimated burden for this project is 71.8 hours (4.3

hours for recruiting + 67.5 hours for interviews).

The results of the debriefings will aid Census Bureau leadership in determining the feasibility of harmonizing business units across surveys. Enclosed is a draft of the interview protocol as well as relevant portions of all survey forms referenced in the protocol. Note that the protocol includes a brief set of questions at the end intended to gauge large and medium-sized business' experience with and reaction to the concept of data transfers.

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

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Enclosures

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