

1The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). Staff from the Data Collection Methodology and Research Branch within the Census Bureau's Economic Statistical Methods Division will be working with staff from the Economy-wide Statistics Division to conduct usability testing for the annual Survey of Business Owners (SBO), which will be renamed the Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs (ASE).

The Minority Business Development Agency, an agency of the Department of Commerce that promotes the growth and competitiveness of minority-owned businesses, and the Kauffman Foundation, a non-profit organization focusing on business and entrepreneurship, are partnering with the Census Bureau to conduct the ASE, which will contain core content and include additional supplements. Some content is carried over from the 2012 SBO, but in addition, the Kauffman Foundation plans to collect detailed information on specific business activities.

In March of 2015, we conducted one round of cognitive interviews to evaluate and refine the proposed additional core questions and a supplement on research and development activities. Results of this testing were incorporated into the Web questionnaire. This current round of testing will evaluate how the questions work in the Web environment.

In August 2015, we plan to recruit and conduct usability interviews with approximately 15 respondents. We will recruit interview participants from a list of respondents to the 2012 SBO (the predecessor to this survey); and we will place emphasis on finding respondents who may perform R&D activities, for the purposes of testing the supplemental survey material on R&D.

Staff will conduct the interviews, with staff from program area observing. The interviews will take place in locations yet to be determined, at the respondents' place of business. During the testing, respondents will walk through the Web questionnaire. We will use concurrent and retrospective probes to assess their ability to navigate the Web instrument and how the questions work in the Web response mode.

During recruitment and before beginning the interviews, we will inform participants that their response is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential. We will remind respondents about their appointments by phone. We will not be providing respondents with monetary incentives to participate in this research. We will audio-record interviews with the participants' permission, to aid researchers in accurately reporting findings and recommendations.

We estimate that it will be necessary to interview only one participant at each business for each round of interviewing. We estimate the length of the interviews will average one hour. We also expect to make up to five recruiting calls for every interview scheduled, and each recruiting call will last an average of five minutes. Therefore, the total estimated burden for this research is approximately 21.25 hours ((15 interviews x 1 hour) + (75 phone calls x 5 minutes)).

Enclosed are a copy of the draft interview protocol and screen shots from the 2012 Web instrument, which includes mock-ups of the new questions.

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Enclosures

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