

The U.S. Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) No. 0607-0725. We are currently beginning the process of conducting unstructured early stage scoping (ESS) interviews with respondents who responded to the 2012 Economic Census within the Wholesale Trade, Manufacturing, and Management of Companies and Enterprises subject areas. A previous letter requesting approximately 44 burden hours for early stage scoping on Establishment Factoryless Goods Producers (FGP) was approved on October 31, 2014. Due to unforeseen delays and the involvement of different stakeholders, we were unable to begin conducting these interviews when we had originally anticipated, but have recently begun this research. The involvement of these stakeholders facilitated additional discussions regarding the planned interviews. During these discussions, we recognized the need to reach out to additional respondents at the enterprise level in order to gain a better understanding of where information on this concept may be located within companies. This is a request for additional burden hours to expand the sample population to include enterprises. We expect that in some cases FGP data may be located at the enterprise level and want to be sure we are collecting information about this concept at all levels of the company. By including enterprise respondents, we are able to gain insight into how new content would be received by both enterprises and establishments.

The overall goal of the research is the same, and aims to explore the availability and reportability of FGP information, with the hope of collecting data at the establishment level. This research focuses on learning how enterprise and establishment records are kept, with an eye toward the creation of a new series of questions to collect FGP data. Specifically, testing is being conducted to determine: a) whether data on FGP activity is available at the establishment or enterprise level; b) how respondents describe and think about FGP-related content in the context of the establishment or enterprise they are reporting for; c) which types of respondents (i.e., positions, titles, etc.) have access to and understand FGP-related business information; d) how FGP-related content is handled in company records; and e) ways we can frame the content of FGP-related items to reflect respondent understanding.

This research intends to add to existing research regarding factoryless goods producers (FGPs) in the United States. FGPs control the design, production, and sale of products but contract with unaffiliated firms or establishments to perform transformation activities. The current research will explore the availability of information regarding the business practices, terminology, and record management associated with contracting out the production of goods.

At this time we are beginning the previously approved research, and would like to request additional burden hours to be sure we are able to meet with enough respondents in various levels of companies to determine if FGP data are available at either the establishment or enterprise level. In addition to the burden hours previously approved, we would like to request an additional round of testing with 15-20 respondents throughout the United States from August through November 2015. All other aspects of the research will remain the same as presented in the October 20, 2014 letter. Drafts of the establishment and enterprise protocols and corresponding attachments to be used for testing are attached.

Researchers from the Data Collection and Methodology Research Branch (DCMRB) will conduct these interviews at respondents' workplaces as funding for travel permits. Staff from other areas in the Economic Directorate will help identify locations for testing, assemble recruiting lists, and may participate as observers in the interviews as they are able. We will recruit companies from various industries that responded to the 2012 Economic Census and the 2014 Report of Organization survey with the goal of testing the different designs across the different industries that are part of one or both of these surveys. After we recruit them, we will give participants a follow-up reminder (phone, email, or fax) of their appointments.

All interviews may be audio-recorded, with the participants' permission, to facilitate accurate summarization of the results. We also will inform participants that their response is voluntary, the information they provide is confidential, and that only employees involved in the research project will see that information. We will not be providing monetary incentives to participants in this study.

We still estimate that it will be necessary to interview up to two respondents at each business. We estimate the length of the interview will at most be 2 hours. Thus, the maximum estimated additional burden for this research is 80 hours (i.e., 2 hours per interview x 2 respondents x 20 interviews). Additionally, to recruit respondents who are willing to participate we expect to make up to 5 phone contacts per completed case. The recruiting calls are expected to last on average five minutes per call (5 attempted phone calls per completed case X 20 cases X 5 minutes = 8.33 hours). Thus, the estimated additional burden for this project is 88.33 hours (80 hours for interviewing + 8.33 hours for recruiting interviews).

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

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Enclosures

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