

1The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional survey work under the generic clearance for Data User Evaluation Surveys (OMB number 0607-0760). Planning has begun for the Census Bureau's 2017 Economic Census which is the U.S. Government's official five-year measure of American business and the economy. The initial focus is being directed towards response promotion and data collection efforts. Building upon successful strategies developed for the 2012 Economic Census, the Census Bureau faces new challenges to creating awareness and increased participation among the business community. Most notable is the transition for the first time to 100% electronic reporting.

The research plan for 2016 seeks to build on the findings from the first phase of research which was conducted among small business owners during the summer of 2015. The plan calls for expanding the scope to include a wider range of the business community and include not only small businesses, but medium and large size firms as well. The research will begin to obtain reaction to materials and messaging developed from insights coming directly from the participants of the 2015 research efforts. It will explore potential barriers to completing the Economic Census with special attention given to determining concerns or issues associated with submitting data electronically. Messaging and communications strategies will be tested to determine what approaches best convey: generating awareness of the Economic Census among the business community, why it is important for them to respond, how to complete and submit their data, where to go for help and assistance, etc.

Beginning in early 2016, our contractor WBA will conduct up to 20 focus group sessions with a range of business persons in private sector companies around the country who are responsible for completing government requests for information. These may be held as traditional "behind the glass" focus groups or as conference room roundtables. We will strive to achieve a well-rounded mix of participants. The majority of the recruiting of participants will be done by professional telephone interviewers. We anticipate the recruitment effort to take 5 minutes per recruitment questionnaire. We plan on calling 5,600 potential focus group participants (estimate calling 280 for each focus group to recruit 8 - 10 qualified participants x 20 focus groups) for a total of 467 burden hours. We will hold groups in at least four markets to gain insights from different regions around the country. The markets have been selected based on analysis of response rates from the 2012 Economic Census. We plan three focus group sessions will be held in each market.

The 2017 Census Business Response Promotion team has reviewed and internally tested the moderators guide for these discussions for content appropriateness. Each focus group or

roundtable discussion will include 8 - 10 participants. We estimate that each focus group or roundtable session will last 2 hours each for a total respondent burden of 400 hours.

Therefore, between the respondent burden for the recruiting process (467 hours) and participation in the focus groups sessions (400 hours) the total anticipated respondent burden will be 867 hours.

Attached are copies of the screening questionnaire to be used for recruiting the focus group participants, as well as the moderator's guide that will be used to lead the discussion to generate reactions to and impressions of the issues and materials presented.

In accordance with Census Bureau standards, participants will be given \$75 to offset the cost of participation.

For further information about this study, please contact Charles Brady at 301-763-6707 or [charles.f.brady@census.gov](mailto:charles.f.brady@census.gov).