

Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission
for the Survey of Market Absorption
of New Multifamily Units (SOMA)

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

The buildings selected for SOMA are those included in the Census Bureau's Survey of Construction (SOC). For SOC, the United States is first divided into primary sampling units (PSU's) which are sampled based on population. Next, a sample of permit-issuing places is selected within each sample PSU. Finally, all buildings with five or more units within sampled places as well as a subsample of buildings with one to four units are selected for the SOC sample.

The respondent universe consists of builders, building managers, rental agents, sales agents, and landlords of newly completed real estate developments or buildings containing five or more units.

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

Each month SOMA selects its sample from the SOC records that reported five or more units. If there are more than 1,000 buildings completed in a month, a subsample of buildings is selected. The subsampling rate is dependent on the total number of buildings completed, but the total number of buildings in sample each month can never exceed 1,000.

Information is collected quarterly on the proportion of units absorbed 3, 6, 9, and 12 months after completion is obtained for units in buildings selected in a given quarter in each of the next four quarters.

Unbiased quarterly estimates are formed by multiplying the counts for each building by its base weight (the inverse of its probability of selection) and then summing over all buildings. The final estimate is then obtained by multiplying the unbiased estimate by a ratio estimate factor.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

The response rate is above 95 percent and is expected to remain at that level. Due to the high response rate, only normal data collection procedures are followed for nonresponse cases, i.e., supervisory personnel contact reluctant respondents.

4. Test of Procedures or Methods

As the instrument has been in the development stage, staff at the Census Bureau

have been testing it along each step of the way. Staff will continue to test up until the instrument goes live and be prepared to address problems that are reported afterward.

A “hot house” test of the instrument was conducted by field staff that presently work on SOMA (paper version) but will use the instrument once it’s rolled-out for full 2014 data collection.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

The individuals to contact are:

Tamara Cole
Survey Director, SOMA
Bureau of the Census
Phone: (301) 763-4665

Medell E. Ford III
Chief, Housing and Health Surveys Branch
Field Division
Bureau of the Census
Phone: (301) 763-2185

Aref N. Dajani
Lead Scientist, SOMA
Demographic Statistical Methods Division
Bureau of the Census
Phone: (301) 763-1797

List of Attachments

Form H-31 (current paper SOMA questionnaire)
H-31 Advance Letter
New SOMA Questions (screen shots)
USC 1701Z citation