

December 30th, 2019

NOTE TO THE REVIEWER OF: OMB CLEARANCE 1220-0141  
Cognitive and Psychological Research

FROM: Struther Van Horn  
Office of Survey Methods Research

SUBJECT: Submission of Materials for Cognitive Testing of  
the 2020 Supplement on Business Functions

Please accept the enclosed materials for approval under the OMB clearance package 1220-0141 "Cognitive and Psychological Research." In accordance with our agreement with OMB, we are submitting a brief description of the study.

The total estimated respondent burden for this study is 50 hours.

If there are any questions regarding this project, please contact Struther Van Horn at 202-691-7568.

## I. Introduction

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) QCEW Business Supplement is a new supplementary survey being designed by the BLS. The survey will be administered online, to respondents immediately following their completion of the Annual Refiling Survey (ARS). The goal of this approach is to allow the BLS to more easily collect data on emerging, timely, topics about the U.S. labor market. The overall design is summarized in this article:

<https://www.bls.gov/osmr/research-papers/2018/pdf/st180040.pdf>

In June 2019, BLS conducted a pilot test of the new survey to explore the feasibility of this type of new data collection. The initial results were promising, with between 18 and 59 percent of ARS respondents completing all of the questions, depending on the sample group. Valuable information about the ARS respondent was collected, including their relationship with the sampled establishment, occupation and ability to provide a variety of types of data. A second test was fielded in July 2019, to provide additional information about the effectiveness of modifying the sampling plan, and further explore the quality of the data collected.

Pending successful completion of the second test, as well as OMB approval of the data collection, in July 2020, BLS plans to administer the supplementary survey again, as a production survey. The planned focus is the outsourcing of business functions.

There are many ways that employers can adjust their employment to address changing economic conditions. For example, they can adjust the number of permanent employees on their payroll, the number of part time workers they employ, the number of hours of workers on their payroll, or the number of workers they obtain from temporary help agencies. They can also replace workers on their own payroll with workers from temporary help agencies or contract out for services that their staff formerly provided. BLS has a variety of data products that provide valuable information about the number and type of employees a company has, but currently does not have any measure of the alternative ways that companies may be sourcing the services they need (e.g., contracting out janitorial services rather than hiring janitors). BLS has addressed the topic from an employee perspective through the CPS Contingent Worker Supplement, which received an immense amount of media and academic attention when it was released, evidence of the significant interest in the data. We have not yet addressed the gap in the information about contracting from an employer perspective however. With the ARS supplemental platform, we have the opportunity to address this data gap in a cost efficient, low-burden way. The purpose of this survey is to obtain information about the methods employers are using to adjust to the changing economy, through outsourcing services rather than hiring additional employees.

A set of draft questions and instructions has been carefully developed (Attachment A), but cognitive testing is needed to ensure that the concepts and question wording are up-to date, and that the questions can be answered in a self-administered, online, survey by ARS respondents. The goal of this project is to yield a set of questions to be used in the next BLS Supplement on Business Functions.

## **II. Methodology**

This research includes two rounds of up to 20 cognitive interviews each. Interviewers from Westat, working with BLS via a contract, will follow the semi-scripted interview protocol (Attachment B) to gain insight into the participants understanding of the concepts and their ability to provide the desired information. Non-scripted probes will be used as needed to follow-up on participant responses. The protocol will be updated after the first round of interviews if the results indicate changes are necessary.

Establishments who responded to the ARS or MWR within the last year will be recruited to participate (See Attachment C for recruiting letter and phone script). Diversity by industry and size class will be sought. Interviews will be conducted either in person at the establishment, via WebEx, or over the telephone. BLS researchers will be observing interviews conducted in person, interviews conducted via WebEx or over the telephone. All interviews will be audio recorded if the participant gives their consent to do so.

## **III. Burden Hours**

The 40 employer participants will be recruited from a list of prior BLS survey respondents, to take advantage of recent contact information and background information on company size and industry. No burden is associated with recruitment, as only those interested in participating will contact the BLS to arrange scheduling. Confirmation of the appointment and answering any questions is expected to take 15 minutes for each of the 40 interviews (10 hours). We expect the cognitive interview will take no more than 60 minutes, for a total of 50 burden hours.

## **IV. Payment to Respondents**

Participants will not receive compensation for their participation.

## **V. Confidentiality**

Participants will be interviewed either in person or via WebEx or over the telephone. Participants interviewed in person will be asked to sign a consent form (Attachment D) which contains the following confidentiality statement:

In accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended (5 U.S.C. 552a), you are hereby notified that this study is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), under authority of 29 U.S.C. 2. Your voluntary participation is important to

the success of this study and will enable the BLS to better understand the behavioral and psychological processes of individuals, as they reflect on the accuracy of BLS information collections. The BLS, its employees, agents, and partner statistical agencies, will use the information you provide for statistical purposes only and will hold the information in confidence to the full extent permitted by law. In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (44 U.S.C. 3572) and other applicable Federal laws, your responses will not be disclosed in identifiable form without your informed consent. Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, Federal information systems are protected from malicious activities through cybersecurity screening of transmitted data.

Participants interviewed via WebEx or over the telephone will be read a consent form and asked to agree verbally to proceed (Attachment E).

## **Attachments**

Attachment A. Questionnaire Prototype

Attachment B. Cognitive Interviewing Protocol

Attachment C. Interview Recruitment Email and Phone Script

Attachment D. Consent Form

Attachment E. Verbal Consent Outline

## Attachment A. Supplement on Business Functions (asked after the current ARS questions)

### BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

#### BLS Supplement on Business Functions

[Logout](#)

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is exploring a new, low-cost survey option that allows us to provide additional information about the labor market. We are asking additional questions about the company you work for and the business functions that you might outsource to other businesses.

#### 1. Does your company have more than the one location you have reported for the Annual Refiling Survey?

- No, there is only one location of this company.
- Yes, this company has more than one location. When answering the next questions, please respond only for the one location you have reported for the Annual Refiling Survey.

The questions below ask about business functions at this one location, and about the outsourcing of specific functions, sometimes called contracting out. Please use the following definition and instructions when answering the questions.

**Outsourcing:** When your establishment hires another company or an independent contractor (a person or company that performs work under contract) to perform particular business functions.

#### Outsourcing includes:

- Work performed either off-site or at your location, as long as the work is done by another company or independent contractor.

#### Outsourcing does NOT include:

- Work performed by your establishment's own employees when the employees are off-site, at another location, or at their home.
- Your establishment's purchase of goods from another company.
- Work performed by another unit or location of your company

**For establishments that are part of multi-location companies:** If some or part of a function is outsourced and some is done by another unit or location of your company, please select “Yes, some of this function was outsourced.”

#### 2. In the past year, did your establishment outsource food service and/or cafeteria operations?

- Yes. All of this function was outsourced.
- Yes. Some of this function was outsourced.
- No. None of this function was outsourced.
- This function does not exist at this establishment.
- This function was performed by another unit or location of my company.
- I do not know if this function was performed by another unit or location of my company or if it was outsourced.

**3. In the past year, did your establishment outsource legal services?**

- Yes. All of this function was outsourced.
- Yes. Some of this function was outsourced.
- No. None of this function was outsourced.
- This function does not exist at this establishment.
- This function was performed by another unit or location of my company.
- I do not know if this function was performed by another unit or location of my company or if it was outsourced.

**4. In the past year, did your establishment outsource security services?**

- Yes. All of this function was outsourced.
- Yes. Some of this function was outsourced.
- No. None of this function was outsourced.
- This function does not exist at this establishment.
- This function was performed by another unit or location of my company.
- I do not know if this function was performed by another unit or location of my company or if it was outsourced.

**5. In the past year, did your establishment outsource janitorial, cleaning and/or laundry services?**

- Yes. All of this function was outsourced.
- Yes. Some of this function was outsourced.
- No. None of this function was outsourced.
- This function does not exist at this establishment.
- This function was performed by another unit or location of my company.
- I do not know if this function was performed by another unit or location of my company or if it was outsourced.

**6. In the past year, did your establishment outsource logistics, and/or transportation and delivery of goods, before or after sale?**

- Yes. All of this function was outsourced.
- Yes. Some of this function was outsourced.
- No. None of this function was outsourced.
- This function does not exist at this establishment.
- This function was performed by another unit or location of my company.
- I do not know if this function was performed by another unit or location of my company or if it was outsourced.

**7. In the past year, did your establishment outsource accounting and/or auditing services?**

- Yes. All of this function was outsourced.

- Yes. Some of this function was outsourced.
- No. None of this function was outsourced.
- This function does not exist at this establishment.
- This function was performed by another unit or location of my company.
- I do not know if this function was performed by another unit or location of my company or if it was outsourced.

**8. In the past year, did your establishment outsource bookkeeping and/or payroll services?**

- Yes. All of this function was outsourced.
- Yes. Some of this function was outsourced.
- No. None of this function was outsourced.
- This function does not exist at this establishment.
- This function was performed by another unit or location of my company.
- I do not know if this function was performed by another unit or location of my company or if it was outsourced.

**9. In the past year, did your establishment outsource computer/IT services? For example, purchasing and maintaining computers, cloud storage and/or security of networks.**

- Yes. All of this function was outsourced.
- Yes. Some of this function was outsourced.
- No. None of this function was outsourced.
- This function does not exist at this establishment.
- This function was performed by another unit or location of my company.
- I do not know if this function was performed by another unit or location of my company or if it was outsourced.

**10. In the past year, did your establishment outsource maintenance of buildings, machinery, or equipment other than IT equipment (computers/printers etc.)?**

- Yes. All of this function was outsourced.
- Yes. Some of this function was outsourced.
- No. None of this function was outsourced.
- This function does not exist at this establishment.
- This function was performed by another unit or location of my company.
- I do not know if this function was performed by another unit or location of my company or if it was outsourced.

**11. In the past year, did your establishment outsource data processing and/or analysis services?**

- Yes. All of this function was outsourced.
- Yes. Some of this function was outsourced.

- No. None of this function was outsourced.
- This function does not exist at this establishment.
- This function was performed by another unit or location of my company.
- I do not know if this function was performed by another unit or location of my company or if it was outsourced.

**12. In the past year, did your establishment outsource sales and/or customer service (including call centers)?**

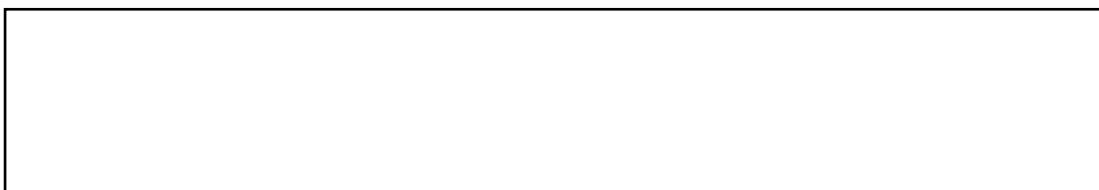
- Yes. All of this function was outsourced.
- Yes. Some of this function was outsourced.
- No. None of this function was outsourced.
- This function does not exist at this establishment.
- This function was performed by another unit or location of my company.
- I do not know if this function was performed by another unit or location of my company or if it was outsourced.

**13. In the past year, did your establishment outsource marketing, advertising, or sales services, including e-commerce or website design?**

- Yes. All of this function was outsourced.
- Yes. Some of this function was outsourced.
- No. None of this function was outsourced.
- This function does not exist at this establishment.
- This function was performed by another unit or location of my company.
- I do not know if this function was performed by another unit or location of my company or if it was outsourced.

**14. Are there any other business functions that your establishment fully or partially outsourced to other companies or independent contractors in the past year?**

- No.
- Yes. Please describe these functions in the space below.



**Attachment B. Cognitive Interviewing Protocol**

## Round 1 Interview Guide

### Outsourcing Questions

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#### ***Materials to Take to In-Person Interviews***

- Interview Guide
- Consent form (2 copies)
- ARS/QBS Questionnaires (2 copies)
- Audio Recorder

#### ***WebEx Session Setup***

##### Prior to interview day

- Interviewer will send WebEx invitation approximately 2 – 3 days in advance

##### On interview day, just prior to interview time

- Start WebEx session
- Open documents:
  - BLS consent form (have it showing on screen to start session)
  - Mock-up of ARS form appropriate for respondent's state; have it available in bottom rail to pull up after closing consent form); forms are available through these links:  
Single (example for MD is here: <https://www.bls.gov/respondents/ars/forms/nvs-md.pdf>  
Multi (example for MD is here; which has a separate page for the additional sites):  
<https://www.bls.gov/respondents/ars/forms/nvm-md.pdf>
  - QBS form; have it available in bottom rail to pull up after respondent finishes ARS

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I work for Westat, a survey research company in Rockville, Maryland. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. We know you are busy and we appreciate your time and willingness to help. We expect that our interview with you today will take no more than 60 minutes.

Westat is working with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to test new questions for the BLS Supplement on Business Functions , a short supplement to the {based on the frame source: Annual Refiling Survey, or ARS / Multiple Worksite Report or MWR}.

Before new survey questions are asked, it's important to test them out with the help of people such as yourself, to make sure that they make sense, are easy to follow, and that everyone understands them in the same way. Outcomes from our discussion will enable us to improve the questions and the instructions to capture the most accurate data possible. There are no right or wrong answers; we're looking for your reactions and honest feedback.

## CONFIDENTIALITY and INFORMED CONSENT

Before we get started, there are a few things I want to mention. Your participation is voluntary. If you prefer not to answer a question, either on the survey form or during the discussion afterwards, just say so and we'll go on to the next question. You have the right to stop the interview at any time.

All your answers, everything you say, will be kept confidential. Neither you, nor your company will be identified in any reports.

I would like to audio record our conversation. This helps me so that I can listen to what you are saying and won't have to take a lot of detailed notes while you are talking. It will also help when I write up a summary of this interview. Only project staff will have access to the recording and other project materials and those materials will be stored in a secure location at Westat. I expect the interview to take about an hour, and really appreciate your time. Any questions before we begin?

*[Administer consent form/ read: The BLS, its employees, agents, and partner statistical agencies, will use the information you provide for statistical purposes only and will hold the information in confidence to the full extent permitted by law. In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (44 U.S.C. 3572) and other applicable Federal laws, your responses will not be disclosed in identifiable form without your informed consent. Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, Federal information systems are protected from malicious activities through cybersecurity screening of transmitted data. This voluntary study is being collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics under OMB No. 1220-0141. We will use the information you provide for statistical purposes only. Your participation is voluntary, and you have the right to stop at any time. We estimate it will take 60 minutes to complete this research study.]*

[IF OBSERVERS: Finally, some of the researchers involved in revising the form are here today observing our interview to learn if there are things that might need to be changed.]

**[FOR REMOTE INTERVIEWS: ALLOW TIME FOR RESPONDENT TO READ THE BLS CONSENT FORM SHOWING ON THE SCREEN.]** Do you have any questions about the consent form? Do I have your consent to participate?

**[FOR IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS: HAND TWO COPIES OF THE BLS CONSENT FORM TO RESPONDENT.]** This form contains all of the things I just told you about your rights in this interview. Please read it over and sign one copy if you are willing to take part in the study. You can keep the other copy for your records. **[RESPONDENT SIGNS ONE CONSENT FORM FOR PROJECT AND CAN KEEP OTHER COPY.]**

**[FOR BOTH IN-PERSON AND WEBEX OR TELEPHONE: TURN ON AUDIO RECORDER.]** (WE ARE NOT USING WEBEX TO RECORD THE SESSION, ONLY THE SEPARATE AUDIO

**RECORDER.]** The date and time is \_\_\_\_\_. Now that the recorder is running, let me ask again; is it okay with you if we record this interview?

## **II. QUESTIONNAIRE COMPLETION**

Now I would like you to first complete the ARS/MWR and then go on to the new questionnaire. Please fill them out as if you are alone and I am not {HERE WITH YOU/ONLINE WITH YOU}. Once you are finished, we will talk about the survey questions and your answers.

**[IF IN PERSON: HAND THE {ARS/MWR} (A COPY OF THE ONLINE VERSION), THE TRANSITION PAGE, AND THE QBS FORM TO THE RESPONDENT. IF MULTI-LOCATION COMPANY: OBSERVE WHETHER RESPONDENT SEEMS TO COMPLETE FORMS BASED ON BLS' SAMPLED LOCATION. WE WILL PROBE ON THAT LATER.]**

**[IF WEBEX: SHOW ARS/MWR ONSCREEN, PROVIDE MOUSE CONTROL TO RESPONDENT, AND ASK HER/HIM TO INDICATE ANSWERS. THEN SHOW QBS QUESTIONS AND DO THE SAME.]**

## **III. DEBRIEFING**

### **A. Background on Company**

A1. Can you give me a brief description of what [FILL WITH LEGAL COMPANY NAME] does?

[IF NEEDED]

- What is the main business activity of [COMPANY NAME]?
- What kinds of goods and/or services does [COMPANY NAME] provide?

A2. Can you please briefly describe for me the structure of the company?

**[WE WILL NOT PROBE ON ARS/MWR; IF RESPONDENT STATES SOMETHING RELATED TO ARS/MWR, SIMPLY NOTE THAT ISSUE, AND ONLY PROBE IF WHAT THE RESPONDENT SAYS IS RELATED TO THE QBS CONCEPTS OR QUESTIONS (e.g., terminology).]**

### **B. QBS Question 1**

Now let's talk about the specific questions, starting with Question 1.

B1. How did you decide on your answer?

[IF NEEDED]

- Can you say more about why you chose [No/Yes]?

For Question 1, I'm interested in hearing how you define several of the terms, within the context of your company. It would also be very helpful for you to provide me with examples, if any come to mind.

B2. In your own words, what does “company” mean?

[IF NEEDED]

- [IF MORE THAN ONE LOCATION] For [FILL WITH COMPANY NAME], does “company” make you think of just one location, or of all the locations as a whole?
- Do you use that term when you think of/describe [NAME OF ORGANIZATION], or not? (Why?)
- What term, if any, do you use instead?

B3. In your own words, what does “location” mean? (What is an example of a location for your company?)

B4. [IF MORE THAN ONE LOCATION] How many locations does [COMPANY NAME] have?

- What is the relationship between the one location you just answered about and the other/different locations of the company?
- Can you tell me about how the different locations (of the company) are affiliated?
- Do the other locations do the same types of activities or different activities than the location you reported about? (Can you say more about how the different locations are the same/different?)
- Do the other locations do anything for your location? For example, is there one location that does payroll for all the locations?

B5. In your own words, what does “contracting out” (which is used in the sentence just above the “**Outsourcing**” definition) mean?

[IF NEEDED]

- What is an example of something your company contracts out?

## C. “Outsourcing” Definition

C1. What is your reaction to the definition of “Outsourcing” provided here?

[IF NEEDED]

- To you, what does “outsourcing” mean? (What is an example of something your company outsources?)
- For your company, are “outsourcing” and “contracting out” the same or different things?
- Can you give me some examples of when something would be outsourced vs. contracted out?

C2. In your company, what other term, if any, is used for outsourcing?

[IF NEEDED]

- How easy or difficult is it to understand this definition? [IF DIFFICULT] Tell me more about why it is difficult.
- What, if anything, is confusing about it?
- In what ways is this definition {similar to /different from} how outsourcing applies for your company?
- Is there some other term we should consider using?

C3. In your own words, what does “establishment” mean?

[IF NEEDED]

- What is an example of an establishment?
- Is this a term that [FILL WITH COMPANY NAME] uses, or not? Why?
- Is there some other term we should consider using?

C4. What is your reaction to the bullets indicating what outsourcing includes?

[IF NEEDED]

- Based on the definition here, what types of outsourcing functions do you think would be included?
- In your own words, what is an “independent contractor?” Do you consider using an independent contractor a type of outsourcing, or not?
- To you, are “contractor” and “independent contractor” the same or different? (How are they the {same/different}?)
- Does the location file IRS 1099s, or not? Can you say more about that?
- [IF APPLICABLE] Are the workers who get 1099s independent contractors for your company?)

C5. What is your reaction to the bullets indicating what outsourcing excludes?

[IF NEEDED]

- Based on the definition here, what types of outsourcing functions do you think would be excluded?
- Which, if any, of the bullets are confusing? Why?

## D. Multi-Location Instruction

### **[IF NECESSARY, POINT TO INSTRUCTION FOR MULTI-LOCATION COMPANIES]**

D1. In your own words, what is this saying to do?

D2. Does this apply to this location, or not? (Why?)

[IF NEEDED]

- What, if anything, is confusing about this statement?
- What is an example of a function that might be partly outsourced and partly done by another location of a company?

D3. [IF MULTI-LOCATION COMPANY] In your view, do other locations of the company do any outsourcing?

[IF SO]: What {do/does} {the/those} location(s) outsource?

## E. Reference Period

E1. When you answered Questions 2 through 13, what period of time were you thinking about? (From when to when?)

[IF NEEDED]

- What does “the past year” mean to you?
- What years or months were you thinking about? (Were you thinking about a calendar year, a fiscal year, or something else?)

## F. Response Options (for Q2 – Q13)

Let’s talk about the different answer choices you had for each of Questions 2 – 13.

F1. In your own words, what does “Yes. All of this function was outsourced” mean to you?

- Can you give me an example of a function that would qualify as “all outsourced?” It could be either from the company we are talking about, or a hypothetical company.

F2. In your own words, what does “Yes. Some of this function was outsourced” mean to you?

- Can you give me an example that might qualify for this? It could be either from the company we are talking about, or a hypothetical company.

F3. In your own words, what does “No. None of this function was outsourced” mean to you?

- Can you give me an example of a function that is not outsourced? (It could be either from the company we are talking about, or a hypothetical company.)

F4. What does “This function does not exist at this establishment” mean to you?

- Can you give me an example of a function that qualifies as not existing? (It could be either from the company we are talking about, or a hypothetical company.)

F5. What does “This function was performed by another unit or location of my company” mean to you?

- Can you give me an example of a function that would qualify as performed at another location? (It could be either from the company we are talking about, or a hypothetical company.)
- [IF SINGLE LOCATION] Does this answer choice apply to [FILL WITH COMPANY NAME] or not? Why?

F6. What, if anything, is confusing about the answer choices?

#### G. Question 2: Food Service and/or Cafeteria Operations

Now let's talk through your answers to the rest of the questions, starting with Question 2: food service or cafeteria operations.

G1. How did you decide on your answer?

[IF NEEDED]

- Please tell me a little more about how you decided [FILL WITH ANSWER] for the location.
- How easy or difficult was it to decide on your answer for food service and/or cafeteria operations? (What made it {easy/difficult})?

G2. In your own words, what was this question asking for?

[LISTEN CAREFULLY FOR INTEPRETATION OF TENSE. DOES R THINK QUESTION IS ASKING IF OUTSOURCING BEGAN DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, OR WAS IN EFFECT DURING THE PAST 12-MONTH PERIOD?]. [IF STILL NEEDED, FOLLOW UP] To you, is it asking if in the past year, your establishment started outsourcing, was still outsourcing (due to starting to outsource during some prior time), or something else?

[IF NEEDED]

- What, if anything, is confusing about the wording?
- What, if anything, would you suggest changing?

G3. In your own words, what does the function “food service and/or cafeteria operations” mean to you?

- Can you tell me more about what you consider to qualify as food service and/or cafeteria operations? (It can be from the location we are talking about, or a hypothetical company.)

G4. [IF THE COMPANY HAS MORE THAN ONE LOCATION] When you answered, which location(s) of the company were you thinking about? (All your company's locations, the sampled location, or something else?)

- [IF RESPONDENT SAYS S/HE WAS ONLY THINKING ABOUT THEIR ONE PHYSICAL LOCATION] Do any locations of your company handle this function differently? (Do they outsource this function, have another location do that, or something else? (Can you say more about that?)

G5. [IF SINGLE LOCATION, BUT RESPONDENT CHOSE “This function was performed by another unit or location of my company,” PROBE TO DETERMINE IF R MISUNDERSTOOD THE QUESTION, MISUNDERSTOOD THE RESPONSE OPTION, OR THE COMPANY HAS AN UNUSUAL STRUCTURE.] Can you tell me more about why you chose that answer?

**[INTERVIEWER: FOR SECTIONS H – R, COVER THE FOLLOWING STANDARD PROBES AS NEEDED TO ASSESS RESPONDENT COMPREHENSION, EASE OF RESPONSE, AND ACCURACY OF RESPONSE FOR THE ONE LOCATION RESPONDENT IS SUPPOSED TO REPORT ABOUT.]**

### STANDARD PROBES

How did you decide on your answer?

[IF NEEDED]

- Please tell me a little more about how you decided [FILL WITH ANSWER] for the location.
- How easy or difficult was it to decide on your answer? (What made it {easy/difficult})?
- In your own words, what does [FILL WITH FUNCTION] mean to you? Can you tell me more about what you consider to qualify here? (It can be from the location we are talking about, or a hypothetical company.)
- What, if anything, is confusing about the wording?
- What, if anything, would you suggest changing?
- [If respondent answers “No”: has this location ever outsourced [FILL WITH FUNCTION]? If yes to ever outsourcing [function], probe on when the outsourcing stopped

[IF THE COMPANY HAS MORE THAN ONE LOCATION] When you answered, which location(s) of the company were you thinking about? (All your company’s locations, the sampled location, or something else?)

- o [IF RESPONDENT SAYS S/HE WAS ONLY THINKING ABOUT THEIR ONE PHYSICAL LOCATION] Do any locations of your company handle this function differently? (Do they outsource this function, have another location do that, or something else? (Can you say more about that?)

IF SINGLE LOCATION, BUT RESPONDENT CHOSE “This function was performed by another unit or location of my company,” PROBE TO DETERMINE IF R MISUNDERSTOOD THE QUESTION, MISUNDERSTOOD THE RESPONSE OPTION, OR THE COMPANY HAS AN UNUSUAL STRUCTURE.] Can you tell me more about why you chose that answer?

**ADDITIONAL EXPLICIT PROBES ARE LISTED WITHIN SECTIONS K, N, P, AND R. USE EMERGENT PROBES AS NEEDED FOR EACH BUSINESS FUNCTION.]**

**H. Question 3: Legal Services**

**[COVER THE STANDARD PROBES.]**

**I. Question 4: Security Services**

**[COVER THE STANDARD PROBES.]**

**J. Question 5: Janitorial, Cleaning and/or Laundry Services**

**[COVER THE STANDARD PROBES.]**

**K. Question 6: Logistics, and/or Transportation and Delivery of Goods, Before or After Sale**

K1. In your own words, what does “logistics” mean?

K2. In your own words, what does “before or after sale” mean?

**[COVER THE STANDARD PROBES.]**

**L. Question 7: Accounting and/or Auditing Services**

**[COVER THE STANDARD PROBES.]**

**M. Question 8: Bookkeeping and/or Payroll Services**

**[COVER THE STANDARD PROBES.]**

**N. Question 9: Computer/IT Services**

N1. In this question, what is your reaction to the three examples provided?

**[IF NEEDED]**

- What does IT mean to you? (Should it be spelled out, or not? Why?)
- What, if anything, is confusing about the examples?
- What other examples, if any, would you suggest for computer/IT services?
- What do you think about the order of the three examples?

- What is your reaction to the term “cloud storage?” Is there anything you would suggest instead of that term? What about “cloud services” – what does that mean to you?

**[COVER THE STANDARD PROBES.]**

**O. Question 10: Maintenance of Buildings, Machinery, or Equipment Other than IT Equipment (Computer/Printers etc.)**

**[COVER THE STANDARD PROBES.]**

**P. Question 11: Data Processing and/or Analysis Services**

P1. What does “analysis services” mean to you, within the context of your company?

**[COVER THE STANDARD PROBES.]**

**Q. Question 12: Sales and/or Customer Service (Including Call Centers)**

**[COVER THE STANDARD PROBES.]**

**R. Question 13: Marketing, Advertising, or Sales Services, Including e-Commerce or Website Design**

R1. What is your reaction to the wording of this function?

[IF NEEDED]

- To you, do these – marketing, advertising, sales services (with e-commerce and website design) -- belong together, or not? Why?

**[COVER THE STANDARD PROBES.]**

**S. Question 14: Other Business Functions**

S1. [IF ANSWERED “Yes”] Can you tell me more about your answer?

[IF NEEDED]

- Did you consider including [FILL WITH ANSWER] with any of the functions above this (questions 2 – 13)?
- Can you talk me thorough how this is different from [FILL WITH ANY FUNCTION THAT SEEMS RELATED TO ANSWER TO Q14.]?

S2. [IF ANSWERED “No”] Did you consider adding something here, and then decided not to?

[IF YES] What were you thinking about adding? Why did you decide on “No” instead?

## IV. Closing Probes

IV.1. Now that we’ve talked in detail about your answers to questions 2 – 13, which, if any, of them would you change your answer to?

[IF NEEDED]

- What would you change your answer to?
- Can you tell me more about why you would want to change that answer?

IV.2. [IF NO TO ALL OF THE FUNCTIONS] Has your company discussed outsourcing or contracting out? Or is outsourcing/contracting out an option that your company might consider in the future? (Can you say more about that?)

IV.3. Would you recommend removing any of the business functions (Questions 2 – 13)? [IF SO] Which ones and why?

IV.4. Would you recommend adding any business functions? (What?)

IV.5. Which questions, if any, would you need to consult with company records in order to answer?

IV.6. How confident did you feel about answering questions related to outsourcing? (Why?)

IV.7. Are you the one who has filled out the {ARS/MWR} form in the past for your company?

[IF SO] Can you tell me more about why you’re the one who completed the {ARS/MWR}?

[IF NOT] Who completed the {ARS/MWR} for [COMPANY NAME]? Can you tell me {more about} why that person completed it?

IV.8. Do you typically fill out government surveys for [COMPANY NAME]?

[IF SO] What type(s) of government surveys have you filled out? (Can you say more about why you are the one who does government surveys for [COMPANY NAME]?)

[IF NOT] Who does typically complete government surveys for [COMPANY NAME]? (Can you say more about why s/he does the government surveys?)

Thank you very much for that background information.

## **V. WRAP UP AND CLOSING**

Those are all of the questions that I have for you today.

Is there anything that we have not already discussed that you would like to share?

Thank you for your time.

**[IF IN PERSON: COLLECT FORMS FROM RESPONDENT. IF WEBEX: CLOSE WEBEX.]**

## Attachment C. Employee Interview Recruitment Letter and Recruitment Script

### Recruitment Letter

U.S. Department of Labor

Bureau of Labor Statistics  
2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Room 1950  
Washington, DC 20212



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Thank you for your recent participation in the {Annual Refiling Survey /Multiple Worksite Reports} for the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). To more fully understand the forces impacting the current labor market, the Bureau of Labor Statistics is conducting a study on new questions for the BLS Supplement on Business Functions. The study is seeking your help to test questions to be sure that they are easy to understand and answer. We routinely ask businesses to help us during the survey design process to assure that we collect the best survey data possible.

To make sure we collect accurate data, we need to better understand:

- Whether the survey instructions and definitions are clear;
- How easy or difficult it is to answer questions about the past year; and
- The types of business functions that are contracted out.

The study involves a researcher either visiting you at your establishment or scheduling an online conference meeting, completing a one-page survey, and then discussing your feedback about the survey. Westat, the contractor for the study, will contact you by phone in the coming week to request an appointment with you. The interview will take 60 minutes or less of your time.

BLS would appreciate your cooperation with Westat. This is an important study that will provide useful information to better measure important facets of the US economy. If you would like additional information, please contact the Westat Project Director, Gina Shkodriani, at 240-453-2904.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that appears to read "Emily Thomas".

Emily Thomas  
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



## BLS Business Survey: Recruitment Script

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling on behalf of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor about a study for the Business Survey. Based on BLS records, your company responded to the {Annual Refiling Survey/Multiple Worksit Report\*} at some point during the past year. \_\_\_\_\_ ([You/name of contact person](#)) are/is currently the contact person for that survey. We recently sent you an email requesting your participation in this study.

**[IF THIS IS NOT THE CORRECT PERSON:](#)** Who would be most knowledgeable about completing the {Annual Refiling Survey/Multiple Worksit Report} for BLS?

\_\_\_\_\_ May I please speak to him/her?

**[\[IF RESPONDENT IS NOT AVAILABLE, ASK FOR CONTACT INFORMATION AND DOCUMENT BELOW\]](#)**

BLS is interested in finding out how easy or difficult it is for companies to provide information about the services their company outsources. Specifically, we would like your feedback on some new questions so that the questions will be easy to understand and answer for your company and others. We would greatly appreciate it if you would participate in the study. If you agree to participate, one of our researchers will visit your establishment or schedule an online conference appointment lasting no more than 60 minutes. During the appointment, you will complete a one-page survey and then discuss your feedback with the researcher. We will be interested in learning your thoughts and opinions about the survey.

Would you be willing to schedule a time for a call or for us to visit?

Yes       No      \_\_\_\_\_ Date      \_\_\_\_\_ Time

Does your establishment have any contractors or temporary workers?

Yes       No

Do you work directly for [FILL WITH LEGAL COMPANY NAME] or for another company?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your title/role in [COMPANY NAME]? \_\_\_\_\_

Establishment Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Establishment Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Respondent's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Respondent's Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Respondent's Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Respondent's Email address \_\_\_\_\_  
Respondent's Division/Department \_\_\_\_\_

\*If asked for explanation:

ARS: The main purpose of the Annual Refiling Survey (ARS) is to verify or correct the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes assigned to establishments. Other important purposes of the ARS are to verify or update establishments' mailing and physical location addresses and geographic codes such as county and township.

MWR:

The Multiple Worksite Report (MWR) collects information showing the distribution of the employment and wages of business establishments by industry and geographic area. Information on the MWR form is used to more accurately classify employment and wage data of multiple establishment employers by industry and by location within a State.

## **Attachment D: Consent Form**

### **Consent Form**

OMB Control Number: 1220-0141

Expiration Date: March 31, 2021

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is conducting research to increase the quality of BLS surveys. This study is intended to suggest ways to improve the procedures the BLS uses to collect survey data.

The BLS, its employees, agents, and partner statistical agencies, will use the information you provide for statistical purposes only and will hold the information in confidence to the full extent permitted by law. In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (44 U.S.C. 3572) and other applicable Federal laws, your responses will not be disclosed in identifiable form without your informed consent. Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, Federal information systems are protected from malicious activities through cybersecurity screening of transmitted data. The Privacy Act notice on the back of this form describes the conditions under which information related to this study will be used by BLS employees and agents.

During this research you may be audio and/or videotaped, or you may be observed. If you do not wish to be taped, you still may participate in this research.

We estimate it will take you an average of 60 minutes to participate in this research.

Your participation in this research project is voluntary, and you have the right to stop at any time. If you agree to participate, please sign below.

Persons are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number is 1220-0141 and expires March 31, 2021.

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I have read and understand the statements above. I consent to participate in this study.

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Participant's signature

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Date

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Participant's printed name

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Researcher's signature

#### PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

In accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 as amended (5 U.S.C. 552a), this study is being conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), under the authority of 29 U.S.C. 2. Your voluntary participation is important to the success of this study and will enable the BLS to better understand the behavioral and psychological processes of individuals, as they reflect on the accuracy of BLS information collections. The information will only be used by and disclosed to BLS personnel and contractors who need the information for activities related to improving BLS information collection. Information on routine uses can be found in the system of records notice, DOL/BLS – 14, BLS Behavioral Science Research Laboratory Project Files (81 FR 47418).

## **Attachment E: Verbal Consent Outline**

Upon beginning a remote testing session, participants will be told the following information and asked for their verbal consent prior to beginning the study:

- During this research you will be recorded. If you do not wish to be recorded, you still may participate in this research.
- We estimate it will take you an average of 60 minutes to participate in this research.
- Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you have the right to stop at any time.
- Persons are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. OMB control number is 1220-0141 and expires March 31, 2021.