**Attachment L**

**Department of Commerce**

**United States Census Bureau**

**OMB Information Collection Request**

**2017 Economic Census**

**OMB Control Number 0607-XXXX**

**Contract Strategies Testing**

| Component of the Collection Strategy | Survey Collection and Treatment(s) Tested | Summary of Results | Implementation Decision |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Advance notice 1* | 2012 Economic Census:* Advance letter tested among SUs in industries with historically low response rates.
* Advance request to verify contact information tested among MUs with fewer than 1,000 employees.
 | Differences in check-in rates were not statistically significant for either experiment. | No. However, Account Managers will contact selected large MUs in advance of mailout. (See Section 3 subsection on “Outreach”) |
| *Full-scale pilot of later mailout and due date* | 2015 ASM: * Initial mailout date moved to Late January of year following reference year rather than Late December of reference year.
* Selected large MUs were offered a later due date (in May 2016) than SUs and smaller MUs, whose due date was mid-March 2016.
 | May 2016 due date for large MUs resulted in later 2015 ASM responses compared to 2014 ASM reporting.  | Partial implementation, consisting of late January mailout and mid-March due date for all units. |
| *Due date reminder 2* | Quarterly Survey of Business Professional & Classification (SQ-CLASS) (reference period = 2014 2nd qtr):* Reminder letter mailed 3 weeks prior to survey due date

2014 ARTS:* Reminder letter mailed 2 weeks prior to survey due date
 | Improved timeliness and statistically significant increase in response maintained through to the end of the collection period. | Yes. Improved check-in rate and increased timeliness of response provides data collection cost savings since fewer cases require more expensive follow-up techniques (e.g., certified mail and telephone follow-up). |
| *Accelerated follow-up with and without due date reminder 2* | 2014 ARTS:* 1st nonresponse post-due-date follow-up reminder letter mailed 2 weeks earlier than traditional mail follow-up
 | Improved timeliness and statistically significant increase in response maintained through to the end of the collection period. | Yes. Improved check-in rate and increased timeliness of response provides data collection cost savings, reducing number of cases requiring more expensive follow-up (e.g., certified mail and telephone). |
| *Red ink on envelopes 2* | 2014 AWTS:* Using red ink versus standard black ink for imprinted due date / past due notice on the envelope. Applied in initial mail and all NR follow-up reminders.
 | Overall difference in check-in rates not statistically significant. However, statistically significant interaction effects of red ink treatment with selected subgroups:* Increased check-in rate among prior nonrespondents compared to prior respondents
* Increased check-in rate among selected industries
 | Yes. Using red ink for imprinted due date / past due notices on envelopes appears to improve response rates among certain subgroups, particularly prior NRs, without reducing response from other subgroups, and it is cost neutral. |
| *Half-page envelope size 2* | 2015 ARTS:* Findings from focus groups with past EC respondents suggested that a larger envelope may get respondents’ attention more effectively.
* Half-page-sized envelopes compared with standard letter-sized envelopes used in all mail contacts.
 | Some statistically significant results, but of no practical significance:* Statistical significance in check-in rates only at due date, but not at close-out of data collection.
* Statistically significant difference of ½ day, on average, between mail-out and receipt.
 | No. Differences, if any, in overall or subgroup response of no practical significance. |
| *Messaging* | 2014 COS/ASM:* Emphasis on electronic reporting options versus standard messaging in letters
* Emphasis on electronic. reporting options explained in letters versus placed in flyers.
 | General improvement in uptake of electronic mode and decrease in requests for paper forms; statistical significance varies depending on whether cases are in COS only, in both COS and ASM, as well as employment size. | Yes. Electronic reporting will be emphasized in letters, along with mandatory requirement, confidentiality pledges, purpose & uses of data collected, per OMB requirements. |
| *Flyers 2* | 2015 SAS:* Three treatments consisted of different flyers, each with a different type of motivational message, enclosed with initial and follow-up mailings.
 | * No statistically significant effect of flyers on check-in rates amongst prior NR or respondents.
* Some small statistically significant, but inconsistent, improvements in check-in rates or response times for different flyers amongst different subgroups.
 | No. Including flyers in all mail contacts did not improve overall response. Mixed results of different flyers with different industry subgroups is inefficient and not cost effective to implement in production. |
| *Certified mail for targeted subsample of SU nonrespondents3* | 2015 ASM: * Compare use of certified mail follow-up amongst a targeted subsample of SU nonrespondents with non-targeted SU NR follow-up using regular 1st-class mail.
* Compare approach that combines the two approaches (targeted certified plus regular mail for the remainder) with full SU NR follow-up using regular 1st-class mail only.
 | The combined approach improved data quality.  | A one-time, targeted certified mail follow-up will be implemented amongst SU NRs for the 2017 Econ Census.  The nonresponding SUs not selected to receive a certified follow-up will be sent follow-up letters using regular 1st-class mail.  |
| *Pressure-sealed envelopes* | 2016 SQ-Class, Refile, and ASM:* Proposed use for due-date reminders and NR follow-up mailings. They will not be used for initial mailout / contact.
* Using pressure-sealed will reduce time lag between producing mailing lists and mailout, improving ability to remove responding cases prior to mailout.
* Concern that pressure-sealed envelopes may be perceived as “junk” mail and discarded or ignored, reducing effectiveness of mail contacts.
 | TBD | TBD, pending results of SQ-Class, Refile, ASM research |

**1** Marquette, Erica, Michael E. Kornbau, and Junilsa Toribio. 2015. Testing Contact Strategies to Improve Response in the 2012 Economic Census.  In *JSM Proceedings*, Government Statistics Section. Alexandria, VA: American Statistical Association. 2212-2225.

**2** Tuttle, Alfred D. 2016. Experimenting with Contact Strategies to Aid Adaptive Design in Business Surveys. In JSM Proceedings, forthcoming. Alexandria, VA: American Statistical Association.

**3** Kaputa, et al., 2016 ICES-V