

U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau
OMB Information Collection Request
Quarterly Survey of Public Pensions
OMB Control Number 0607-0143
(F10)

Section B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

The 100 largest public retirement systems, as determined by their total cash and security holdings reported in the 2012 Census of Governments, account for about 87.2 percent of the total assets of all state and local government retirement systems. These 100 systems are the universe for the survey. The panel will be updated in 2019 based on the results of the 2017 Census of Governments.

After a census has been taken, a new universe of the largest 100 retirement systems is selected. The second quarter for 2014 presented data from the new universe of the 100 largest public retirement systems, while the first quarter for 2014 presented data from the old universe. Three of the 100 units from the old universe were replaced with new retirement systems. The Census Bureau released a report online that bridged the old and new universe for the first and second quarter of 2014.

The sample will be redrawn during 2019 to reflect the most recent data from the 2017 Census of Governments

2. Sampling Methodology and Estimating Procedures

The data in this survey are from all 100 units in the target population. Therefore, all weights are 1.0000, and the estimates are simple aggregations of reported and imputed data. On average, 70-72% of data are reported initially, with late responses pulling the response rate into the low 80% range by the time the revision period closes.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

We send email reminders to all respondents encouraging them to report online.

In addition, Census Bureau staff have initiated the following:

- a. Improved telephone follow-up:

Staff use prior response rate analysis to determine which units report when, focusing follow-up efforts on the early reporting respondents in the early weeks and later reporting respondents in the later weeks, thereby attaining response rate goals methodically and more efficiently.

b. Efficient data compilation:

Staff research which public pensions publish financial data on the Internet and maintain a record of these systems. If these systems do not report by data collection closeout, staffs compile data from the Internet for these particular units. Late reporting units use the option to submit late data for prior quarters as well as submit revisions to prior quarter data. Revisions are made to the prior quarter data releases to incorporate these late receipts and revisions.

4. Testing of Procedures

The frequency, limited scope, flexibility, and continuity of this survey make it essentially self-testing. The Census Bureau has conducted this survey since 1968 and the content has changed very little over the past 23 years. Conversations with respondents and data providers have identified areas of improvement that would align content with existing industry practices and areas of data user interest.

The updated content has been reviewed by data providers and deemed feasible and easy to provide. Data users have reviewed the content and expressed support that the updated content will meet their programmatic needs.

Between 10-15 systems will be contacted for formal cognitive testing during November and December 2018. This testing will include a review of the survey questions, verification of concepts asked about and verification of the time involved to complete the survey. This testing will take place in person and over the telephone as availability and budget allow.

5. Contact

Contact the person listed below for statistical aspects and data collection:

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Attachments

1. Proposed redesigned questions on asset holdings
2. Initial Request Email
3. Reminder Email
4. Existing Collection Instrument Screenshots
5. BEA Letter of Support