

**Generic Information Collection Request:
Cognitive Interviews for the Annual Survey of Manufactures –
Payroll, Employment and Coronavirus Questions**

Request: The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725) for the Annual Survey of Manufactures (ASM). These activities will include cognitive interviews with respondents to the 2020 ASM to learn whether these respondents are able to answer proposed new questions related to changes in activity due to the Covid pandemic. The testing will also evaluate the revised order for the Payroll and Employment questions.

Further information regarding the Annual Survey of Manufactures can be found at this website: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/asm.html>

The ASM is planning to collect additional information from manufacturers related to changes they may have experienced as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The ASM would like to collect detailed information regarding the number of days during 2020 that each manufacturing establishment was forced to close due to the coronavirus pandemic. Additionally, the ASM would like to collect information about the value of any donated products that were made during 2020 as well as expand instructions to ensure that this value is included in the total Sales, Shipments, Receipts and Revenue question on the form.

The ASM currently collects detailed sales values for six North American Product Classification System (NAPCS) descriptions which cover products that were necessary during the coronavirus pandemic. In the past, these six product descriptions were only offered to a subset of manufacturing industries. Because many manufacturers shifted their traditional production in response to the pandemic, the 2020 ASM will be asking all six of these NAPCS product descriptions to all manufacturing industries. We plan on reaching out to industries that have likely shifted their manufacturing production during the pandemic to evaluate their ability to report values for these new products. We also plan on reaching out to industries that would likely not have shifted their production to ensure that they would not provide responses to these new categories that they will be seeing during the 2020 ASM.

Additionally, the ASM has reorganized how their Payroll and Employment questions are asked and have expanded the question to now ask quarterly payroll for production workers as opposed to just annual payroll collected previously. We plan on having respondents review these questions to ensure that the revised layout and collection of quarterly production worker payroll is not overly burdensome.

Purpose: The purpose of this evaluation is to explore whether respondents to the ASM understand a proposed new questions related to the coronavirus pandemic and are able to provide the requested data. Additionally researchers want to explore the effects of the reorganized Payroll and Employment questions on respondents' understanding of and interaction with the form.

The results from these cognitive interviews will be consolidated into a report that outlines the findings and suggestions for next steps.

Population of Interest: U.S. manufacturing companies, both single and multi-units, across a variety of sizes, industries, and locations, focusing on those industries that did and did not shift their typical production as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Timeline: Testing will begin in September 2020 and will likely conclude by October 2020.

Language: Testing will be conducted in English only.

Method: We plan to conduct phone cognitive interviews with up to 25 respondents. We will be asking cognitive questions which have a broader focus on the respondents' understanding and familiarity with the concepts and questions being asked, how respondents expect to retrieve the information, respondent's perception of difficulty of the question and the what level of burden might be associated with data retrieval. The cognitive interviews will follow a semi-structured interview protocol (Attachment A).

Sample: We plan to conduct a maximum of 25 interviews. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents will be from industries where companies likely shifted their manufacturing operations due to the pandemic. One-third of the interviews will be with respondents that likely did not shift their manufacturing operations due to the pandemic. This number of interviews was selected because it is a manageable number of interviews for the time period allotted, and should be large enough to provide reactions to the questions and definitions that are representative of the survey population. We plan to conduct interviews with a variety of sizes and types (i.e., industries) of manufacturing establishments. Efforts will be made to sample respondents across industries representative of companies that participated in the ASM and with an emphasis on those that might be in multiple industry categories. The sampling frame for these interviews comes from a list of establishments that participated in the 2019 ASM.

Recruitment:

We will contact potential interviewees via phone or email, explain the nature of our research, and ask them to participate in our study. The sample of participants will be those who are able to be contacted and who agree to participate in the study. Participants will be informed that their response is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential and will be seen only by Census Bureau employees involved in the research project. We will not be providing monetary incentives to participants in this study. Once interviews are scheduled, researchers will send respondents a confirmation via email.

Protocol: The draft protocol for the study is enclosed (see Attachment A). We anticipate that each interview will take 30 minutes to complete.

Use of Incentive: Monetary incentives for participation will not be offered.

Below is a list of materials to be used in the current study:

1. **Attachment A:** Protocol used to outline how the research study will be conducted
2. **Attachment B:** Draft 2020 ASM questions (Item 5 Sales on page 8, Item 7 Payroll and Employment on pages 9-11, Item 29 Donations on pages 26-27, and Item 30 Days Closed on page 28.
3. **Attachment C:** 2019 ASM Payroll and Employment Question
4. **Attachment D:** Draft North American Product Classification codes that will be added to all forms on Item 22 (Detail of Sales, Shipments, Receipts or Revenue) for the 2020 ASM.

Length of interview: For the cognitive testing, we expect that each interview will last no more than 30 minutes (25 cases x 30 minutes per case = 12.5 hours). Additionally, to recruit respondents we expect to make up to 5 phone contacts per completed case. The recruiting calls are expected to last on average 3 minutes per call (5 attempted phone calls per completed case x 40 cases x 3 minute per case = 10 hours). Thus, the estimated burden for this project is 22.5 hours (12.5 hours for interviews + 10 hours for recruiting).

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and statistical aspects of the design of this research is listed below:

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