

Coordinated Collection Experiment

Debriefing Interviews

DRAFT PROTOCOL

Winter 2020 – Summer 2020

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(NOTE: This protocol is a guide – the questions presented here will not necessarily be asked exactly as worded in the protocol or in this order. Not all questions will be asked in every interview. As much information about interview participants and enterprise/establishments should be obtained prior to the interview as possible. Conduct background research on each enterprise/establishment prior to each interview. In some cases, probing may need to be adjusted based on the background research that was conducted.)

Expected Length of Interview: 30 minutes maximum

General probes that may be used throughout the interview:

- Reflect back on respondent's answer: "you said..."
- In your own words, what is this question asking?
- How did you arrive at this number/answer this question?
- Were these data easy to access?
- Would you consult other people to obtain this answer?

Required Materials:

- Copy of Pre-Notice – note: ensure that the proper pre-notice is used
- Copy of Initial Letter – note: ensure that the proper initial letter is used
- Information on firms' survey responses
- Screenshots of the response portal

Introduction:

- Thank respondent, both for completing the survey and for taking time to talk today

- Introduce all attendees and include a brief overview of the purpose of the call

The Census Bureau conducts many different types of surveys throughout the year. Currently, we are in the process of evaluating the ways that we reach out to businesses across the country, especially those that are in more than one Census Bureau survey.

Today, I am going to ask you a few questions about your recent experience with being a contact for the [SURVEY NAME(S)]. Please be candid and frank – all of your responses are confidential, and neither your name nor the name of your company will be included in our reports.

Firm Background/Primary Contact Questions:

- Tell me a little bit about your business. What types of goods or services does this business provide?
- What is your role in the company? How long have you been with the company?
- What was your role in the process for responding to Census Bureau surveys?
 - Examples: gathering data, entering data, consulting with data providers, etc.

Pre-Notice Contact:

- [INSTRUCT RESPONDENT TO OPEN PRE-NOTICE CONTACT LETTER]
- Did you receive this letter?
 - If needed: Do these requests typically come directly to you, or does it take time for it to show up on your desk?
- Looking at it now, what is the first thing you notice about this letter? What is your initial reaction?
 - In your own words, what do you think this letter is trying to communicate to you?
 - What do you consider to be the most important pieces of information in this letter?
 - For which surveys has your firm been selected to participate? How do you know this?
- To the best of your memory:
 - What was your reaction to this letter?
 - In what ways, if any, did receiving this letter impact the way you responded to the Census Bureau surveys?
 - What actions, if any, did you take as a result of this letter?
- Now, take a look at the bottom of the letter – we have included the names and contact information for previous respondents of your business to these surveys.
 - Did you find this listing helpful? Why or why not?
 - Is any information missing from this letter?
 - Did you communicate with any of the listed people about this letter? Why or why not? If so, how and what did you communicate?

⇒**For Account Manager Firms:**

- We listed the name and contact information for a person here at the Census Bureau in case you needed support completing your surveys.
 - Have you had any contact with this person?
 - How likely are you to reach out to this person with issues? Why?

Initial Letter:

- Now, let's turn our attention to another letter we sent to you. [INSTRUCT RESPONDENT TO OPEN INITIAL CONTACT LETTER]
- Did you receive this letter?
- Looking at it now, what is the first thing you notice about this letter? What is your initial reaction?
- What actions, if any, did you take as a result of this letter?

⇒**For Staggered Firms:**

- Look at bolded text, "due dates." Did you notice those dates when you first looked at this letter?
- In this case, each survey has a deadline for response. How, if at all, did these different dates inform the way you answered your surveys?
- Do you think that providing different due dates for each survey:
 - Is helpful or not helpful? Why?
 - Is it confusing or not confusing? In what ways?
- Some businesses had all of their surveys due on the same date. Do you think that having all surveys due on the same date:
 - Makes it easier or more difficult to respond? Why?
 - Would encourage or discourage you to respond? Why?

⇒**For Combined Firms:**

- Did you notice the due date when you first looked at this letter?
- In this case, each survey had the same deadline for response. How, if at all, did this inform the way you answered your surveys?
- Do you think that providing the same due date for each survey:
 - Is helpful or not helpful? Why?
 - Is it confusing or not confusing? In what ways?

- Some businesses had all of their surveys due on different due dates. Do you think that having all surveys due on different due dates:
 - Makes it easier or more difficult to respond? Why?
 - Would encourage or discourage you to respond? Why?

As I mentioned earlier, we are experimenting with different ways of contacting business respondents such as yourself. This year, we combined requests for a few surveys into one letter. We also sent two initial letters. One letter was sent out notifying respondents of the changes we were making before the surveys were available to answer, the other one was sent out once the surveys were available to answer.

- Was the earlier letter helpful or not helpful when preparing to respond to these surveys?
- Are there other ways you prefer we contact you to inform you that the surveys require your response? (phone call, email, etc...)
- Was it clear or not clear from the letters that your company would be responsible for completing multiple surveys?
 - If we keep this survey structure (multiple surveys in one request), is there some way we could communicate this change more clearly?

Portal Use:

- [INSTRUCT RESPONDENT TO OPEN THE SCREENSHOT OF THE PORTAL LANDING PAGE]
- This is what we call our respondent portal. Do you remember if you needed to create a new account, or did you already have an account on our respondent portal?
 - [IF CREATED ACCOUNT] Can you tell me about that process?
- Once you were logged in, how easy or difficult was it to enter the authentication code from the letter?
- Did you notice the squares with the different surveys on them popup?
 - Was it clear or unclear that each of these was a different survey you were required to complete?
 - Did you click on the 'options' tab on any of the squares?
 - [IF YES]: Did you use any of the options?
 - What information, if any, is missing from these squares?

⇒For Complete Respondents:

- Once you had access to your surveys, how did you proceed?
- How did you decide which survey to answer first?
- How easy or difficult was it for you work on these surveys simultaneously?
- What additional information, if any, would you have liked to have known before answering your surveys? What additional information might you have wanted on this screen?

⇒For Partial Complete Respondents:

- Once you had access to your surveys, how did you proceed?
- I noticed that you answered [SURVEY NAME] but not [SURVERY NAME]. Can you tell me about why that is?
 - Did you see that there was more than one survey?
 - Did you understand that you had to complete each one separately?
 - What, if anything, could we at the Census Bureau do to support you in responding to [BOTH/ALL] surveys?

⇒For Respondents with Delegation:

- Did you need to coordinate with other people in your company?
- I noticed that you used the 'share survey' function. How easy or difficult was it to use this function?
- Why did you use the delegate function?
 - Did you find it to be helpful or not helpful?

⇒For Respondents without Delegation:

- Did you answer the surveys or did someone else at your firm answer the surveys?
 - How did you communicate what data were needed with the other people/person?
- On the website, we have a 'share survey' feature that allows you to share access to the survey with others in your company. I noticed that you did not use the 'share survey' function. Why is that?
- [INSTRUCT RESPONDENT TO OPEN THE FLYER]
 - Do you remember seeing this flyer?
 - In your own words, what is this document trying to communicate to you?
 - What actions, if any, did you take as a result of reviewing this flyer?
 - Were you aware that there is a 'share survey' function that is available within the instrument?
 - [IF NO]: would this feature have been helpful to you? Why or why not?
 - How can we make this function more obvious on the website?

⇒For Non-Respondents:

- I noticed that your firm did not participate in [EITHER/ANY] survey. Why is that?
- What, if anything, could we at the Census Bureau do to support you in responding to [BOTH/ALL] surveys?

Process:

As I mentioned earlier, the Census Bureau is looking for ways to streamline our data collection from businesses across the country.

- Did getting access to the surveys all at once change the way you typically respond to our surveys?
- Did the timing of the surveys make a difference in the way your firm responded to the surveys?

End/Wrap up

- Overall, what do you think of the process we discussed today?
- Did you contact the Census Bureau with any questions while completing the surveys? Did you call? Did you use the secure messaging center in the portal?
- Would you say that someone in your role was the appropriate person to answer questions like these? If not, who would be the best person to answer questions like these?
- Do you have any other comments, questions or suggestions for us?

Thank the respondent for his/her time and attention.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
U.S. Census Bureau
Office of the Director
Washington, DC 20233-0001

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(Draft)

A Message from the Director, U.S. Census Bureau:

We request your participation with the **2019 Annual Retail Trade Survey, 2019 Annual Wholesale Trade Survey, and 2019 Annual Services Report**. Data compiled from these surveys provide part of the official statistics used to measure economic performance in the United States, and provide the nation's policymakers and business leaders like you with measures of these important economic sectors.

Account Manager:
Authentication Code:
Due Date:

1. **Sign in OR register** at <https://portal.census.gov>
2. **Add** your authentication code.
3. **Report** by clicking on each survey's "REPORT NOW" button. You can return to your account over multiple sessions to complete these surveys.

YOUR RESPONSE IS REQUIRED BY LAW and will be kept strictly **CONFIDENTIAL**. We estimate the time to complete the Annual Retail Trade Survey will take an average of 37 minutes. We estimate the time to complete the Annual Wholesale Trade Survey will take an average of 31 minutes. We estimate the time to complete the Annual Services Report will take an average of 1 to 3 hours. Additional information about the authority, confidentiality, and burden of this data collection can be found on the back of this letter.

For assistance with completing these surveys, please sign into your Census Bureau account or call our customer help line at 1-877-787-9860, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern time.

Thank you in advance for your time and participation, and for helping the U.S. Census Bureau measure America's people, places, and economy.

Sincerely,

Steven D. Dillingham
Director



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(Draft)**

OMB Number

This collection has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Without this approval, we could not conduct these surveys. The eight-digit OMB approval number for the Annual Retail Trade Survey is 0607-0013, for the Annual Wholesale Trade Survey is 0607-0195, and for the Annual Services Report is 0607-0422. The applicable number will appear in the top right corner of each reporting screen.

Authority and Confidentiality

Title 13, United States Code, Sections 131 and 182, authorizes these collections. Sections 224 and 225 require your response. The U.S. Census Bureau is required by Section 9 of the same law to keep your information confidential and use your responses only to produce statistics. The Census Bureau is not permitted to publicly release your responses in a way that could identify your business, organization, or institution. Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, your data are protected from cybersecurity risks through screening of the systems that transmit your data.

Burden Estimate Statement

We estimate the time to complete the Annual Retail Trade Survey will take an average of 37 minutes, including the time to review instructions, search existing data sources, gather and maintain the data needed, and complete and review the survey.

We estimate the time to complete the Annual Wholesale Trade Survey will take an average of 31 minutes, including the time to review instructions, search existing data sources, gather and maintain the data needed, and complete and review the survey.

We estimate the time to complete the Annual Services Report will take an average of 1 to 3 hours, including the time to review instructions, search existing data sources, gather and maintain the data needed, and complete and review the survey.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233-0001

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(Draft)

Green highlighting indicates section is imprinted.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval number for the Annual Services Report is 0607-0422, the Annual Wholesale Trade Survey is 0607-0195, and the Annual Retail Trade Survey is 0607-0013.

REMINDER OF REPORTING OBLIGATION

Recently, the U.S. Census Bureau mailed you a letter asking you to complete the **2019 Annual Services Report, 2019 Annual Wholesale Trade Survey, and the 2019 Annual Retail Trade Survey**. If you have submitted any or all of these surveys in the past few weeks, **thank you**. If you have not yet reported, please do so before the due dates noted below.

Due Dates: February 25, 2020 - Annual Services Report
March 24, 2020 - Annual Wholesale Trade Survey
April 28, 2020 - Annual Retail Trade Survey

Please check the status of each survey by following these steps:

1. **Sign in OR register** at <https://portal.census.gov>
2. **Add** your authentication code OR **locate** your surveys under “My Surveys”
Authentication Code: XXXX-XXXX-XXXX **Designed as white space for 2 lines.**
(if code was used, space used to provide message stating code used and to log in)
3. **View** the reporting status for each survey
4. **Report** by clicking on “REPORT NOW” for any survey **not** showing a “Complete” status

For assistance with completing these surveys, please sign into your Census Bureau account or call our customer help line at 1-877-787-9860, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern time. **Designed as white space for 5 lines (3 for text and 2 for spacing).**

Thank you in advance for your time and participation, and for helping the U.S. Census Bureau measure America’s people, places, and economy.

Sincerely,

Kimberly P. Moore
Chief, Economy-Wide Statistics Division
U.S. Census Bureau

U.S. Census Bureau Respondent Portal

Share Survey Access

What is “Share Survey Access”?

“Share Survey Access” is an option in the Respondent Portal that allows you to grant access to your survey(s) to others in your organization. Entering the survey authentication code provided to you by the Census Bureau grants you access to your survey(s) so that you can report online. If you want or need other colleagues in your organization to complete (or assist with completing) a survey, then you can share your access in just a few simple steps.

How do I share survey access?

After you have signed into your Respondent Portal account at <https://portal.census.gov> and entered the authentication code assigned to you:

1. Identify the survey card for the survey that you want to share access to.
2. Expand the “Options” menu to the right of the “Report Now” button (see picture below) and select “Share Survey Access.”



3. Enter the email address for any colleague(s) you wish to share access to the survey.
4. Submit your request by clicking on the “Submit Request” button.

Your colleague(s) will then receive an email asking them to create a Respondent Portal account (if they have not already created one). When they successfully create or sign into their account they will see the survey on their dashboard.

Can I remove survey access?

If you wish to remove someone who has access to the survey (i.e., person leaves the company or is no longer responsible for reporting) you can follow these steps:

1. Go to “Options” and select “Share Survey Access.”
2. Click on the trash icon that appears next to the person who no longer needs access to the survey.

Still need help?

If you have any questions or need assistance, click on the “How do I” button in the top right corner of the Respondent Portal dashboard.

*About
the Respondent Portal*

The U.S. Census Bureau created the Respondent Portal to assist businesses with reporting online. Some key security and time-saving features of the Respondent Portal include:

Unique Passwords: You create your own unique passwords, which provides an added layer of privacy.

Self-Service Options: You may perform several survey actions from a single site: Report online, share survey access, check your filing status, request a time extension, and contact the Census Bureau via secure email.

My Surveys

[HOW DO I?](#)

No surveys associated with this user

[Report Now](#)

[History](#)

VIEW: [GRID](#) [LIST](#)

New Survey Request

Received a new survey request? Add it with your Authentication Code to get started.

[+ ADD AUTHENTICATION CODE](#)

My Surveys

HOW DO I?

Report Now

History

VIEW: GRID LIST

Survey Name

Status: Incomplete

Due: March 24, 2020

Company: ABC COMPANY 1,
ELECTRONIC COMPANY 1
Company ID: 11330088

REPORT NOW

+ OPTIONS



Survey Name

Status: Incomplete

Due: March 24, 2020

Company: ABC COMPANY 1,
ELECTRONIC COMPANY 1
Company ID: 11330088

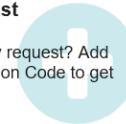
REPORT NOW

+ OPTIONS



New Survey Request

Received a new survey request? Add it with your Authentication Code to get started.



+ ADD AUTHENTICATION CODE

My Surveys

HOW DO I?

Report Now History

VIEW: GRID LIST

Survey Name

Status: Incomplete

Due: March 24, 2020

Company: ABC COMPANY 1,
ELECTRONIC COMPANY 1
Company ID: 11330088

REPORT NOW

OPTIONS



Request Extension

Share Survey Access

Filing Status

Survey FAQs

Send Message

Call Survey Support: 1-877-787-9860

Survey Name

Status: Incomplete

Due: March 24, 2020

Company: ABC COMPANY 1,
ELECTRONIC COMPANY 1
Company ID: 11330088

REPORT NOW

OPTIONS



New Survey Request

Received a new survey request? Add it with your Authentication Code to get started.

ADD AUTHENTICATION CODE



CONSENT FORM

The U.S. Census Bureau routinely conducts research on how we, and our partners, collect information in order to produce the best statistics possible.

You have volunteered to take part in a study of data collection procedures. In order to have a complete record of your comments, your interview will be audio-recorded. We plan to use your feedback to improve the design and layout of survey forms for future data collections. Only staff involved in this product design research will have access to the recording.

This study is being conducted under the authority of Title 13 U.S. Code, Sections 131 and 182. Federal law requires that your answers are kept confidential (Title 13, U.S. Code, Section 9), and protects your privacy under the Privacy Act (Title 5 U.S. Code, Section 552a). Routine uses of these data are limited to those identified in the Privacy Act System of Record Notice titled "COMMERCE/CENSUS-4, Economic Survey Collection." The Census Bureau can use your responses only to produce statistics, and is not permitted to publicly release your responses in a way that could identify you, your business, organization, or institution. Additionally, per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, your data are protected from cybersecurity risks through screening of the systems that transmit your data.

We estimate that completing this interview will take *XX* minutes on average, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. You may send comments regarding this estimate or any other aspect of this survey, including suggestions for reducing the time it takes to complete this survey to ewd.surveys@census.gov.

This collection has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). This eight-digit OMB approval number, 0607-0725, confirms this approval and expires on 12/31/2022. Without this approval, we could not conduct this study.

I have volunteered to participate in this U.S. Census Bureau study, and I give permission for my audio recordings to be used for the purposes stated above.

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

Printed Name

Printed Name

Date

Date