

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Reviewer of 1220-0042

FROM:

Tyra Fails
Bureau of Labor Statistics
Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections
Division of Occupational Employment Statistics

SUBJECT:

Revised materials for November 2019

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Program is seeking OMB approval to make several small changes to its collection in advance of the November panel. These changes aim to improve the respondents' experience by clarifying the states' role in the collection, improving the clarity and flow of information provided/instructions, and giving the respondents a way to provide their contact information online. In Supporting Statement Part B, Item #4, the OES program noted it maintains ongoing efforts to reduce respondent burden. Part of that effort includes continuous feedback which asks for improvements in questionnaire and instructions. These changes are a result of that feedback. While there is no change in the burden, the OES program hopes these changes will simplify reporting and improve response rates.

The OES Program seeks OMB approval to revise the following solicitation materials, beginning with the November 2019 panel:

Unstructured form – English and Spanish versions:

The unstructured form is being revised to update the hourly and annual wages ranges. In addition, the form has also undergone some formatting changes. State letterhead will now be displayed on the top of the page. OES National Office staff have received suggestions from state office staff about the presence, or lack thereof, of state government information on the unstructured forms. State office staff believes that respondents become confused when they receive letters from the federal government, asking them to submit data to their state governments. We believe that including official state government letterhead and information will enhance the focus on the state government's role, and will encourage more responses. The text has been rearranged to improve the flow of information within the document. With these changes, OES hopes to make the document less cumbersome for respondents to read.

Fax Form:

The fax form is being revised to update the hourly and annual wage ranges.

Standard prenote letter:

The standard prenote letter is being revised in order to reduce respondent burden by simplifying the text within the letter. The updated prenote letter displays pertinent information in bullet point/numbering format, rather than heavy text paragraphs for an easier read. The instructions have been separated into two steps to improve the flow of the document. Step 1 "verify the company name" will ensure that the correct establishment is receiving the form and returning their information. Additional state information will be included throughout the letter (highlighted in green on the template). Providing more state contact information (state agency name, state phone number, state email, and state fax number) will give respondents more options for submission. A simple chart is

included at the bottom of the page to assist respondents in recording and submitting the required information easily.

Weblite “Dear Employer” letter and Contact Only module:

OES is adding a Contact Only module to the Weblite collection instrument, which will allow employers to update their contact information online prior to completing the survey. The “Dear Employer” letter is being revised for this module, to only include the instructions for reporting respondent contact information. Respondents who log into Weblite prior to beginning of the collection cycle for their reference date will be prompted to complete ONLY the Contact Only module, and will be notified that they will be asked to complete the entire survey in the near future. OES believes that the Weblite Contact Only module will encourage respondents to update their contact information prior to data collection mailings/emails. Doing so will reduce the amount of time that state office staff have to spend handling email and mail bounce backs, due to incorrect addresses and contact information during the collection period.