

F. Small Business Pulse Survey: Communicating Data Quality and Treatment as Experimental Data Product

Communicating Data Quality

It is critical to understand the economic impacts of the response to COVID-19 on the business community, but in particular small businesses. The SBPS is intended to demonstrate the ability of the federal statistical system to respond in a timely manner and to produce relevant statistics in near real time. Communication will occur to both our survey respondents and our data users each week.

The Census Bureau plans to provide the results of the SBPS as an experimental data product. In December of 2019, the Census Bureau launched an [experimental data products site](#) allowing for the dissemination of new, innovative statistical products that may not otherwise meet all of the Census Bureau Quality Standards and would:

- benefit from feedback from data users and other stakeholders;
- benefit data users and other stakeholders in the absence of other available data; and/or
- be used to gauge demand before investing more resources in operationalizing.

In the short-term, SBPS data will be represented in a user-friendly graphical format and available at <https://www.census.gov/businesspulsedata> as a featured experimental data product. The data will be shown as a new product tile on the existing experimental data products page and will include a description of the data product, data sources, methodology, periodicity, as well as address relevance and feasibility.

Additionally, the dissemination of the SBPS product would include:

- the experimental statistics;
- methodology and supporting research about the experimental statistics;
- links to longer methodology and/or research papers that support the release of the experimental statistics; and
- a feedback mechanism for data users and other stakeholders.
- the experimental logo:



Experimental statistics should try to comply with all Quality Standards but may not meet some requirements due to their novel approach. Experimental statistics must meet all Quality Standards related to the protection of information and transparency (S1 – Protecting Confidentiality; F2 – Providing documentation to support transparency in information products).

We have presented the content for the SBSP to our Methodology & Standards Council, which sets the quality standards for the Census Bureau, and received a waiver for questionnaire pre-testing. In addition, we will do the following to comply with the Census Bureau’s statistical quality standards:

- Produce quality indicators such as response rates and measures of nonresponse bias on a timely basis. We will also publish a source and accuracy statement similar to those for other surveys, which will fully document the design and results of the survey, including limitations of the results.
- Provide standard errors with each survey and notes about data limitations. Tables of estimates will include notes that flag low quality estimates with text similar to the following: The standard error of this estimate yields a coefficient of variation greater than 30 percent, which is an indicator of potential quality issues. Caution should be used when interpreting this estimate.
- Provide text to accompany the measures of nonresponse bias to assist data users.