



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

Dominic J. Mancini  
Deputy Administrator  
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs  
Office of Management and Budget  
Washington, DC

Subject: Small Business Pulse Survey – Request for Emergency Review and Clearance

Dear Dr. Mancini:

Pursuant to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) procedures established at 5 CFR Part 1320, Controlling Paperwork Burdens on the Public, I request that the proposed information collection project, “New Small Business Pulse Survey (SBPS) to measure the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses” be processed as an Emergency Revision Request in accordance with section 1320.13, Emergency Processing.

I have determined that the information must be collected prior to the expiration of time period established under Part 1320, and that the information collected in the new Small Business Pulse Survey is essential to the Census Bureau’s emergency response and to the agency’s mission: to serve as the nation’s leading provider of quality data about its people and economy. The COVID-19 pandemic is an unanticipated event that is unprecedented in the sudden and dramatic manner in which it is impacting the social and economic well-being of American households. At this critical juncture, it is imperative for the federal statistical system to produce real-time, objective data on the impacts on American businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We thus request emergency clearance to field the SBPS effective immediately upon OMB approval. This is an urgent, albeit short-term effort: the Census Bureau requests clearance to field the survey for a maximum of 180 days.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic will be felt for months, possibly years, to come. In response, the federal statistical community is developing questions for inclusion in the government’s large, benchmark surveys. Given the urgency and rapidly changing dynamics of this situation for businesses, however, we must address this acute need for data that shed light on the situation as it is unfolding now. In these circumstances, the Census Bureau cannot reasonably comply with the normal clearance process and requests emergency clearance.

The SBPS is a collaboration across federal economic statistical agencies to measure the impact of the pandemic on businesses. Content for the SPBS was developed with input from the Small Business Administration, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Federal Reserve Board, Minority Business Development Agency, International Trade Administration, and Bureau of Economic Analysis in



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order to measure topics useful to their stakeholders and the businesses and policymakers that they serve.

The Census Bureau will field a large, Business Register-based sample to disseminate products at the state level and the top 50 Metropolitan Statistical Areas by sector. The sample of approximately one million businesses will be split so that approximately 100,000 different respondents are selected weekly to reduce burden and survey fatigue on small businesses. The content was winnowed down to 16 key questions with respondent burden estimated at five minutes or less. Respondents will be contacted via email and will respond using the Census Bureau's electronic data collection platform. Results will be issued in near real-time as experimental data products, and respondents will see how their information is being used to inform policymakers. The collection is protected under the confidentiality provisions of Title 13 U.S.C.

With your emergency approval, the Census Bureau is positioned to deploy the Small Business Pulse Survey April 19, 2020. We commit to publishing a public notice about this information collection in the Federal Register within 30 days of approval. We appreciate your understanding of this urgent request and look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Ron Jarmin  
Deputy Director  
U.S. Census Bureau