

April 7, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR: Reviewer of 1220-0050

FROM: ADAM SAFIR, Chief
Division of Consumer Expenditure (CE) Surveys
Bureau of Labor Statistics

SUBJECT: Non-substantive Change Request for the
Consumer Expenditure Surveys (CEQ) –
Modification of Stimulus Questions

Because the Federal government began issuing rebates through the Recovery Rebate credit when filing 2020 taxes, CE requests to modify two of the stimulus questions that were added in response to stimulus payments made by the Federal Government in response to the coronavirus pandemic. These changes will be implemented beginning in July and continue through September.

These modifications are necessary to ensure all stimulus payments are collected including those issued through a tax credit. This will allow CE to measure the effect of the stimulus payments in response to the coronavirus pandemic and will facilitate a timely and effective collection of expenditure data resulting from the stimulus. Economic data are used to evaluate the intended effect of the stimulus and to adequately explain changes in expenditure patterns that result from the coronavirus pandemic.

The modifications include 1) adding wording to the introduction screen stating ‘Others have received it through the Recovery Rebate credit when filing their 2020 federal income taxes,’ 2) adding a fourth response option to the question “Was the stimulus payment received by” to allow for receipt ‘as a credit on 2020 federal income taxes?’ and 3) removing “refunds on annual income taxes,” from the informational text “Do not include refunds on annual income taxes, unemployment compensation, or payments from an employer.” For a full list of all questions, see Attachment A.

BLS estimates that no change in burden hour will result from this change.

Current OMB approval of the CE surveys is scheduled to expire November 30, 2023.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Adam Safir at 202-691-5175 or e-mail at Safir.Adam@bls.gov or Peggy Murphy at 202-691-6186 or e-mail at Murphy.Peggy@bls.gov.