

DRB Clearance Number (CBDRB-FY21-ESMD006-007)

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Date: February 4, 2021

SUBJECT: Findings and Recommendations from Rounds 1 and 2 Cognitive Testing of the Phase 4 Small Business Pulse Survey

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The purpose of this memorandum is to provide major findings and recommendations (along with resolutions) from the first and second rounds of cognitive testing for the fourth phase of the Small Business Pulse Survey (SBPS), per terms of clearance from OMB. A draft of the Small Business Pulse Survey questionnaire tested in Round 1 of Phase 4 is appended as Attachment A, and the Round 2 Phase 4 test questionnaire is Appendix B. The interview protocol is appended as Attachment C. Finally, Attachment D contains the final revised questions that we recommend for Phase 4 of the SBPS.

Methodology

This section includes a brief overview of the research design used in testing these two instruments.

In Round 1 of testing, we conducted 21 interviews representing 10 industries; in Round 2 of testing, we conducted 17 interviews, representing 8 industries. In total, then, we conducted 38 interviews representing 11 industries. See Table 1 for an overview of completed interviews by sector (collapsed).

To be eligible for recruitment, companies must meet at least one of the following criteria as determined by their responses to the 2017 Economic Census¹:

- Any small business concern that meets SBA's size standards (either the industry based sized standard or the alternative size standard);
- Any business, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, 501(c)(19) veterans organization, or Tribal business concern (sec. 31(b)(2)(C) of the Small Business Act) with the greater of:
 - 500 employees, or
 - That meets the SBA industry size standard if more than 500;
- Any business with a NAICS Code that begins with 72 (Accommodations and Food Services) that has more than one physical location and employs less than 500 per location; and/or
- Sole proprietors, independent contractors, and self-employed persons.

¹ These parameters align with eligibility criteria for the first implementation of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) as outlined in Section 1102(b) of title I of division A of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (Public Law 116-136). These criteria remained in place for subsequent PPP funding; see the Small Business Administration's guidance on PPP, available: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/paycheck-protection-program>

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For this research, we targeted sample from the Phase 1 SBPS from weeks 5, 6, and 7. We chose these firms specifically because their last contact with the Census Bureau was long enough ago to minimize satisficing due to familiarity with the questions, but recent enough that the research is still salient. We included both respondents to the first round of the SBPS, and non-respondents, if they agreed to participate.

Researchers sent the first round invitation email in January 2021 to 2,300 email addresses representing businesses falling within the outlined parameters. That contact resulted in 710 opened emails and 13 scheduled interviews. We sent a second recruitment email for Round 1 a few days later to this same list, resulting in 581 opened emails, and an additional 23 scheduled interviews. These 36 scheduled interviews resulted in 21 completed interviews.

We sent the second round invitation email later in January 2021, to an additional 3,382 firms meeting the specified criteria. That contact resulted in 941 opened emails, and lead to 26 scheduled interviews, and 17 completed interviews.

Table 1: Completed Interviews by Industries (Collapsed)

Industry	Completed Interviews
Mining and Construction *	4
Manufacturing	8
Wholesale	7
Retail	8
Services	11
Total	38
* Industries collapsed to meet disclosure avoidance protocols.	

Once a respondent was on the phone, Census researchers had the respondent confirm consent to participate in the research, and then complete the entire online survey. Upon completion, the researcher then asked retrospective cognitive probes to elicit detail on the response process. The probes focused on a subset of questions that were new or revised for this round of SBPS testing. While the intent of this methodology was to ensure proper context for the target questions, it did mean that respondent responses to our cognitive probes about specific survey questions, to some degree, were impacted by their impressions of the survey as a whole.

Findings about the survey overall

Overall Pandemic Impact

Respondents want to describe the overall impact of the pandemic on their businesses and felt limited by the “In the last week” reference period. As in previous rounds of testing, when asked ‘in the last week’ some respondents became frustrated that the survey was not asking about a longer time reference. This ties into the issue seen throughout all rounds of cognitive testing of the SBPS instrument, where most respondents have a desire to share the impact that the pandemic has had on their business. Because of the strong desire to share the impact of the pandemic on their business,

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respondents may adjust their answers beyond the boundaries of the reference period to reflect a greater impact on their business. We suspect that this urge to share beyond the specified timeframe, however, has waned since the earlier rounds of testing.

RECOMMENDATION:

Continue to retain the text capture box at the conclusion of the survey to ensure that respondents have a space to record their wider concerns.

RESOLUTION:

Retain concluding text capture box.

Additional Research Topics

Asked about what we might be ‘missing’ from the small business experience of the COVID-19 novel coronavirus pandemic, **respondents were forthcoming with additional topics that may be of research interest in the future.** A few respondents mentioned that the SBPS does not ask about morale and other measures of worker engagement since the pandemic, noting that some workers are feeling increased stress since March 2020. Others brought up additional issues their businesses are facing that are not directly caused by the pandemic, but are related to the current operating environment. These included postal delays and deliveries to empty offices; changes in demand (increases and decreases) impacting revenue; impacts of fluctuations in staffing throughout the pandemic; and additional products and services developed in response to the pandemic. A few respondents mentioned that the survey does not ask about state and local ordinances related to social distancing and other pandemic prevention strategies that are negatively impacting the business. Respondents also mentioned other events of the last year that have impacted their business, including Western forest fires, a historically active hurricane season, and civil unrest. Finally, several respondents mentioned that the SBPS does not currently ask about re-opening plans. This includes plans and policies in development to keep workers and consumers safe, as well as forward-looking plans for changes in work arrangements (as in, continued telework or changes to work stations), staffing needs, and other issues as the pandemic continues to unfold.

RECOMMENDATION:

Because of the dynamic and unprecedented nature of the global pandemic, we recommend continued refinement of the SBPS instrument. The distance between construct and measurement can widen quickly in the midst of an unpredictable environment, and it is incumbent upon survey researchers to reevaluate which questions are (or are not) working at any given time in order to better understand complex social and economic phenomena.

RESOLUTION:

Pursuant to available resources and need, subject matter experts and methodologists should continue to revisit the SBPS content to update and refine questions in a timely manner.

Question-specific Findings and Recommendations:

Item 7 (Negative COVID-19 test)

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Round 1:

Q7. In the last week, did this business require employees to test negative for COVID-19 prior to working onsite?

Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable, this business did not have employees onsite in the last week.

FINDING:

Respondents struggled with “prior to working onsite,” especially those representing firms that have dispersed or variable work sites.

The concept of testing negative for COVID-19 is amorphous; respondents included health and temperature checks and logging, and monitoring for other obvious symptoms of COVID-19, e.g., coughing. Respondents also mentioned the lack of availability of testing and different types of testing (for example, rapid results tests in juxtaposition to submitted slower turnaround tests).

Finally, some respondents mentioned specific employees and the company’s actions relative to that particular instance, rather than thinking of the question as asking about larger, company-wide testing policies. Many of the companies we talked to mentioned being small enough to track individual exposure to COVID-19 and react on a case-by-case basis, while others simply have not developed a company-wide testing policy.

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider changing to “before physically coming to work” to account for non-centralized worksites. Bear in mind that this question’s resultant data may include activities outside of the scope of testing, and that respondents may invoke a singular or small subset of employees specifically rather than a company-wide policy on testing.

RESOLUTION:

Tested updated language in Round 2.

Round 2:

Q7. In the last week, did this business require employees to test negative for COVID-19 before physically coming to work?

Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable, this business did not have employees physically coming to work in the last week.

FINDING:

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Using the updated question wording, respondents reported being cued to the physicality of reporting to a work site – any work site. We noted that by drawing attention to reporting to work in any location, we saw fewer instances of “testing creep” – that is, respondents were more likely with the revised wording to mention activities outside of actual formal COVID-19 testing. We also reported fewer instances of individuation in reporting, and more responses mentioning implementation – or lack – of company-wide policies. While we cannot rule out that this measurement error will persist in the updated question wording, we are confident that for some respondents, the updated wording mitigates some of this source of measurement error.

RECOMMENDATION:

Retain the Round 2 question wording for the production instrument.

RESOLUTION:

Retain Round 2 question wording for the production instrument.

Item 8 (Proof of COVID-19 vaccination)

Round 1:

Q8. In the last week, did this business require employees to have proof of vaccination for COVID-19 prior to working onsite?

Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable, this business did not have employees onsite in the last week.

FINDING:

Respondents generally pointed to two examples of proof of vaccination – either a card marking the date and type of vaccine distributed, and often including information about necessary subsequent booster shots, and/or medical records or other formal documentation from a health care provider. A couple of respondents mentioned that they might just need verbal confirmation from the employee of vaccination status; this was particularly true of very small businesses.

This question suffered from the same measurement error as the corresponding Round 1 question related to COVID-19 testing regarding worksites. For respondents representing firms with non-centralized worksites, there is ambiguity in the phrase “prior to working onsite.” At the same time, respondents also individuated their answers to this question, thinking of a particular employee or group of employees when responding, rather than a company-wide policy.

Many respondents mentioned the lack of availability of the COVID-19 vaccine at this time. This inconsistent accessibility makes this question more hypothetical for some respondents than others; that is, for those who cannot access the vaccine (whether because of prioritization to special populations or

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shortages), asking about requiring proof of vaccination is something they may need to address in the future but is not at current an issue.

Finally, several respondents mentioned that the sensitivity of the topic of this question made them uncomfortable. In most cases, this was rooted in personal opinions regarding the availability or efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine, though a few also mentioned that they would feel uncomfortable asking employees about vaccination status, citing privacy concerns.

RECCOMENDATION:

Consider changing to “before physically coming to work” to account for non-centralized worksites and to provide consistency with the immediately preceding question. Given the hypothetical and sensitive nature of this question, consider that the resultant data may include higher item non-response, missing not at random (MNAR), which could impact data quality.

RESOULTION:

Tested updated language in Round 2.

Round 2:

Q8. In the last week, did this business require employees to have proof of COVID-19 vaccination before physically coming to work?

Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable, this business did not have employees physically coming to work in the last week.

FINDINGS:

Similar to item 7, when we tested the updated language of “before physically coming to work,” we noted a reduction in respondent confusion about reporting to worksites. Note that this wording update does not ameliorate the hypotheticality or sensitivity of the item, and so the caution on the possibility for increased item non-response MNAR remains.

RECOMMENDATION:

Retain the Round 2 question wording for the production instrument.

RESOULTION:

Retain the Round 2 question wording for the production instrument.

Item 10 (Operating Capacity Impact)

Round 1 and Round 2:

10. In the last week, was this business's operating capacity affected by any of the following?

Note: Operating capacity is the maximum amount of activity this business could conduct under realistic operating conditions.

Select all that apply:

- Ability to re-hire furloughed or laid off employees and/or hire new employees
- Availability of employees to work
- Ability of employees to work remotely
- Availability of COVID-19 tests for employees
- Availability of COVID-19 vaccine for employees
- Physical distancing of employees
- Physical distancing of customers and/or limits on the number of concurrent customers
- Availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and/or related equipment or supplies
- Availability of other supplies or inputs used to provide good or services
- None of the above

FINDING:

Most respondents could easily articulate an interpretation of operating capacity that is in line with the one provided on the survey. When prompted, respondents mentioned output, employees, revenue and other indicators of operating capacity. A few mentioned that the question seemed applicable only to certain industries; note, however, that these respondents could provide appropriate data for this item. Finally, some respondents asked about additional factors impacting operating capacity outside of the provided list, including mandatory state or local closures, increased demands in certain COVID-19 related products or services, and industry-specific economic impacts beyond those directly related to COVID-19.

Researchers specifically tested two categories added to this round of SBPS testing – availability of COVID-19 tests for employees and availability of COVID-19 vaccines for employees. We found that these two categories were clear and did not increase the burden of this question for respondents. Note that because we encountered low measurement error in Round 1 of testing, we did not alter the wording for Round 2.

RECOMMENDATION:

Retain the tested question wording for the production instrument.

RESOLUTION:

Retain the tested question wording for the production instrument.

Item 12 (Square footage leased/rented)

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Round 1:

Q12. The White House declared a national emergency because of the Coronavirus pandemic on March 13, 2020.

Since March 13, 2020, did this business decrease the amount of square footage leased/rented for operations?

Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable, this business does not lease/rent space.

FINDING:

Generally, this question performed as expected. We asked respondents about the March 13th date, relative to the 'start' of the pandemic', and most agreed that this date corresponds with their own understanding of the start of the pandemic.

At the same time, some respondents mentioned that the amount of space their firm has been occupying since that date has fluctuated, with some decreasing in size and some increasing in size to accommodate their work during the pandemic. It may be useful to capture these changes by giving respondents the ability to specify whether their square footage has increased or decreased during this time.

Note that in conducting this testing, we heard from several respondents who selected 'no' when first completing, but during debriefing noticed the 'not applicable' option and said it would be a better fit for their company. The data from this question may include some response error if respondents are missing the appropriate category.

RECOMMENDATION:

Because of the inconsistent impact of the pandemic across small businesses, we recommend testing options that allow respondents to specify how their space may have changed since March 13, 2020.

RESOLUTION:

Tested updated language in Round 2.

Round 2:

Q12. The White House declared a national emergency because of the Coronavirus pandemic on March 13, 2020.

Since March 13, 2020, did this business change the amount of square footage leased/rented for operations?

Select only one:

- Yes, increased
- Yes, decreased
- No change
- Not applicable, this business does not lease/rent space.

FINDING:

Including the additional categories for increasing or decreasing space did not confuse or burden respondents. Overall, they could answer the question easily. Note that we still saw instances of respondents selecting 'no' (in this case, 'no change') when 'not applicable' may have been the more appropriate response option.

RECOMMENDATION:

Retain the Round 2 question wording for the production instrument.

RESOLUTION:

Retain the Round 2 question wording for the production instrument.

Item 13 (Permanently add pickup/carryout/delivery)

Round 1:

Q13. Since March 13, 2020, did this business permanently add pickup/carryout/delivery as a means of providing goods/services to its customers?

Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- This business already used pickup/carryout/delivery as a means of providing goods/services to its customers prior to March 13, 2020.

FINDING:

During testing, respondents indicated that they understood the meaning of the question overall. However, some respondents noted that the question felt industry-specific, and that their particular work would not accommodate pickup, carryout, or delivery. These respondents struggled to select a response, noting that their issue is not that they already had pickup, carryout, or delivery (as captured in category 3), but that the question is asking about adding a feature that is inappropriate for their business. These respondents indicated that they would prefer an option of "not applicable" or equivalent, and categorized themselves in the 'no' response category. While that may be the intended functionality for this question, note that it does cause some cognitive burden to respondents who are looking for a "not applicable" option.

Asked about whether the change is temporary or permanent, most respondents indicated that they could tell if the change was only for the duration of the pandemic or not. A few respondents noted that their company added protocols for contactless delivery or pickup of their product or service, and asked if this was in-scope; these companies provided these delivery modes prior to the pandemic, but added in the option for no-contact. A few others mentioned that they had added "curbside" pickup as a new feature of delivering goods and services.

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RECOMMENDATION:

To reduce instances of missing newly added capabilities, we recommend refining the question wording to include “contactless” and “curbside” pickup.

RESOLUTION:

Updated language tested in Round 2.

Round 2:

Q13. Since March 13, 2020, did this business permanently add curbside or contactless pickup, carryout, or delivery as a means of providing goods/services to its customers?

Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- This business already used curbside or contactless pickup, carryout, or delivery as a means of providing goods/services to its customers prior to March 13, 2020.

FINDING:

The inclusion of “contactless” and “curbside” in the question stem encouraged businesses that have permanently added these capabilities to select “yes.” However, the issue of those wanting a “not applicable” option remains. Note that resultant data will not indicate whether the business has not added pick-up, carryout, or delivery or whether the business is not capable of adding such modalities.

RECOMMENDATION:

Retain the Round 2 question wording for the production instrument.

RESOLUTION:

Retain the Round 2 question wording for the production instrument.

Item 14 (Changes to capital expenditures)

Round 1:

Q14. Since March 13, 2020, what changes did this business make to its budgeted capital expenditures for 2020?

Select all that apply:

- Canceled budgeted capital expenditures
- Postponed budgeted capital expenditures
- Decreased budgeted capital expenditures
- Increased budgeted capital expenditures
- Introduced new unbudgeted capital expenditures
- This business had no changes to budgeted capital expenditures for 2020.

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FINDING:

In testing this question, we noted that respondents are not using a unified definition for capital expenditures. A few noted that this is a technical accounting term, and responded to the question using that epistemology. However, others took capital expenditures to encompass any large purchase made on behalf of their company. Note that the resultant data will include this difference.

At the same time, we noted that businesses – and particularly very small businesses – consider “budgeted” more rigid than alternatives, like “planned.” A few commented that they simply do not include capital expenditures in their annual budgeting; instead, they handle these expenditures as they arise. This could lead respondents to exclude capital expenditures because they are taking the word ‘budgeted’ too literally.

RECOMMENDATION:

Test “planned” as an alternative to “budgeted” to mitigate possible underreporting error.

RESOLUTION:

Updated language tested in Round 2.

Round 2:

Q14. Since March 13, 2020, what changes did this business make to its planned capital expenditures for 2020?

Select all that apply:

- Canceled planned capital expenditures
- Postponed planned capital expenditures
- Decreased planned capital expenditures
- Increased planned capital expenditures
- Introduced new unplanned capital expenditures
- This business had no changes to planned capital expenditures for 2020.
- This business had no planned capital expenditures for 2020.

FINDING:

On average, respondents were more comfortable with the word “planned” in this question, as opposed to “budgeted,” noting that planned is generally more flexible in orientation. We continued to hear from respondents who used disparate definitions of a capital expenditure, so this response error is still embedded in this question and will be present in data resulting from this question.

RECOMMENDATION:

Retain the Round 2 question wording for the production instrument.

RESOLUTION:

Retain the Round 2 question wording for the production instrument.

Item 15 (Emergency paid sick leave) and Item 16 (Expanded family and medical leave)

Round 1 and Round 2:

Q15. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) went into effect on April 1, 2020.

Since April 1, 2020, did any of this business's employees use COVID-19 related emergency paid sick leave as offered through provided by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)?

Select only one:

- Yes
- No, no eligible employees requested or had a qualifying reason for FFCRA emergency paid sick leave
- No, all of this business's employees were exempted as health care providers or emergency responders
- No, this business used the small business exemption (for employers below 50 employees where providing paid leave would have jeopardized the viability of the business as a going concern).

Q16. Since April 1, 2020, did any of this business's employees use COVID-19 related expanded family and medical leave provided by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)?

Select only one:

- Yes
- No, no eligible employees requested or had a qualifying reason for FFCRA expanded family and medical leave
- No, all of this business's employees were exempted as health care providers or emergency responders
- No, this business used the small business exemption (for employers below 50 employees where providing paid leave would have jeopardized the viability of the business as a going concern).

FINDING:

The results of testing these questions indicate high measurement error. As a general, underlying concept, we found many respondents who are simply unfamiliar with the FFCRA. This was particularly true of smaller businesses, but even some of the larger small businesses noted that they may have to reach out to someone else at the firm to answer this question, and doubted that this would be systematically tracked at all. Respondents entangled FFCRA with other federal leave legislation – like the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) – as well as their own internal leave policies, both before COVID-19 and ad hoc as a result of the pandemic.

Some respondents are not delineating between these two questions: FFCRA for sick leave vs. FFCRA leave for family and medical leave. Not only did businesses indicate that they do not believe that these

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data are being tracked, they further noted that if anyone is tracking this information, they are not doing it at this level of detail.

Additionally, respondents found three categories of “no” to be cognitively burdensome. Some noted that the three categories are not mutually exclusive: a company can both use the small business exemption and at the same time have had no eligible employees request or have qualifying reasons to exercise this leave. Respondents struggled to categorize themselves into one or the other response option, suggesting that the data resulting from this question may not reflect accurately how FFCRA is (or is not) being implemented.

RECOMMENDATION:

Because of the high cognitive burden, ambiguity in response categories, and general inconsistencies in familiarity with FFCRA, we recommend dropping this question from the production SBPS instrument.

RESOLUTION:

These two items have been dropped from the Round 4 SBPS production instrument.

Item 17 (Requested financial assistance)

Round 1:

Q17. On December 27, 2020, the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021 was enacted providing additional Coronavirus pandemic relief.

Since December 27, 2020, has this business requested financial assistance from any of the following sources?

Select all that apply:

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
- Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
- Small Business Administration (SBA) Loan Forgiveness
- Main Street Lending Program
- Deferral of Federal Employment Tax Deposits and Payments
- COVID-19 Related Federal Paid Sick and Expanded Family and Medical Leave Tax Credits
- Federal Employee Retention and Rehiring Tax Credit
- Other Federal programs
- State or local government programs
- Banks or other financial institutions
- Owner(s)
- Family or friends
- Other sources
- This business has not requested financial assistance from any source since December 27, 2020.

FINDING:

For the most part, respondents can answer this question easily. However, one issue that was prevalent through testing was respondent confusion and frustration over the timeframe of this question. Looking back through interview notes, we note that almost half of respondents noted the date correctly, and about half of respondents answered for the entirety of the pandemic, not limiting to December 2020 and beyond. This led to an abundance of “false positives” for this question, with respondents indicating programmatic requests, but including requests outside of the specified time period.

In tandem, respondents struggled to differentiate between the first round of programming in response to the pandemic – which took effect in the spring of 2020 – and this second round of legislation – which took effect in December 2020. Some of this, we suspect, is a result of the recency of the new legislation; indeed, our first interviews were completed before respondents were even capable of requesting financial assistance through the second round of PPP legislation. At the same time, though, we heard from respondents planning on applying once it became available, and they too struggled with how to identify that this was their second round of application.

We also noted that a number of response options did not resonate with respondents. They found some of the categories awkward and could not identify the program being referenced, or the referenced program had low or no salience for them.

We included the category “Owners” – a change from the previous round category of “Self” – which performed as expected in testing. Respondents were able to identify that this category referred to the owners of the company putting personal financial resources into the business.

RECOMMENDATION:

Given the confusion over the various rounds of legislation tied to these programs, we recommend delineating between round 1 and round 2, or otherwise drawing attention to the intent of the question – requests in round 2. This may also ameliorate some of the issues around noticing the timeframe, as well.

In consultation with subject matter experts, we recommend dropping the following categories:

- Main Street Lending Program
- Federal Employee Retention and Rehiring Tax Credit (to be reworded)
- Deferral of Federal Employment Tax Deposits and Payments
- COVID-19 Related Federal Paid Sick and Expanded Family and Medical Leave Tax Credits (to be reworded)

RESOLUTION:

Tested updated wording in Round 2.

Round 2:

Q17. On December 27, 2020, the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021 was enacted providing a second round of Coronavirus pandemic relief.

Since December 27, 2020, has this business requested financial assistance from any of the following sources?

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Select all that apply:

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), first time applicant
- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), second time applicant
- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan forgiveness
- Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
- Paid Sick Leave and Paid Family Leave Credit
- Employee Retention and Rehiring Credit
- Other Federal programs
- State or local government programs
- Banks or other financial institutions
- Owners
- Family or friends
- Other sources
- This business has not requested financial assistance from any source since December 27, 2020.

FINDING:

In Round 2, we broke out first time and second time applications to PPP as response categories and we added “second round” in the introductory sentence to help respondents cue in on the timeframe and the legislation. In prompting respondents to differentiate between being a first time or second time applicant, we noticed that they were more likely to reference the date. Respondents seemed to understand the concept of the second round of available funds and whether or not a company was applying for the first time or the second time. Note that while we noted a decrease in error related to the time frame, we still had a number of respondents who missed the date and reported financial requests inappropriately. There will be response error in the resultant data.

Additionally, this question is a ‘select all that apply’ capture type. However, two of the categories in the revised Round 2 question are now mutually exclusive: a business cannot be both a first time and a second time applicant to PPP.

RECCOMENDATION:

We recommend programming the production instrument such that the first two categories of the Round 2 revision are mutually exclusive; that is, if a respondent selects one, he cannot select the other. Likewise, in subsequent Pulse testing, we may want to consider asking about both rounds of funding separately, as discrete questions, to help respondents differentiate between the two. However, we have not tested this question series, so we cannot recommend including both questions on the Round 4 production instrument.

RESOLUTION:

Retain the Round 2 question wording for the production instrument.

Item 18 (Received financial assistance)

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Round 1:

Q18. Since December 27, 2020, has this business received financial assistance from any of the following sources?

Select all that apply:

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
- Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
- SBA Loan Forgiveness
- Main Street Lending Program
- Deferral of Federal Employment Tax Deposits and Payments
- COVID-19 Related Federal Paid Sick and Expanded Family and Medical Leave Tax Credits
- Federal Employee Retention and Rehiring Tax Credit
- Other Federal programs
- State or local government programs
- Banks or other financial institutions
- Owner(s)
- Family or friends
- Other sources
- This business has not received financial assistance from any source since December 27, 2020.

FINDING:

Like Item 17, some categories for Item 18 proved to be not salient or unclear to respondents in testing. One additional issue unique to Item 18, though, is the concept of “receiving” financial assistance. We heard from a few respondents that they had gotten notice of approval of financial assistance, but that the actual assistance had not yet been disbursed. We suspect that as the updated legislation ages – that is, as we move further into 2021 – this specific situation will become increasingly rare.

RECOMMENDATION:

Update the categories to match Item 17.

RESOLUTION:

Tested updated wording in Round 2.

Round 2:

Q18. Since December 27, 2020, has this business received financial assistance from any of the following sources?

Select all that apply:

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan forgiveness
- Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
- Paid Sick Leave and Paid Family Leave Credit
- Employee Retention and Rehiring Credit

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- Other Federal programs
- State or local government programs
- Banks or other financial institutions
- Owners
- Family or friends
- Other sources
- This business has not received financial assistance from any source since December 27, 2020.

FINDING:

We found that the updated categories exhibited fewer instances of confusion and low salience compared to Round 1.

RECOMMENDATION:

Retain the Round 2 question wording for the production instrument.

RESOLUTION:

Retain the Round 2 question wording for the production instrument.

Item 19 (Business travel expenditures)

Round 1 and Round 2:

19. In the next 6 months, do you think this business will have business travel expenditures for air, rail, car rental, or lodging?

Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable, this business does not usually have business travel expenditures.

FINDING:

Item 19 performed as testing staff expected. Respondents used the examples listed – air, rail, car rental, and lodging – to cue them to non-local travel related to business activities. Even the few respondents who mentioned additional sources of business travel expenditures, including meals and incidentals, fuel reimbursement for non-local travel, and others, responded to the question invoking non-local, business related travel expenditures.

Asked about the time frame, most respondents agreed that June/July of 2021 is the scope of the question. While some mentioned that they were being ‘optimistic’ or ‘pessimistic’ in their answers (as the question asks them to predict future behavior based on current knowledge), they were able to provide appropriate responses to this question.

RECOMMENDATION:

Retain tested question wording.

RESOLUTION:

Retain tested question wording.

Item 20 (Six months, business needs)

Round 1:

20. In the next 6 months, do you think this business will need to do any of the following?

Select all that apply:

- Obtain financial assistance or additional capital
- Identify new supply chain options
- Develop online sales or websites
- Increase marketing or sales
- Learn how to better provide for the safety of customers and employees
- Identify and hire new employees
- Make a capital expenditure
- Cancel or postpone a budgeted capital expenditure
- Permanently close this business

FINDING:

Item 20 performed as the testing staff expected. However, since Item 20 echoes Item 14 (changes to capital expenditures), we found the same differentiation between “budgeted” and “planned”.

RECOMMENDATION:

Update category to “Cancel or postpone a planned capital expenditure.”

RESOLUTION:

Updated category tested in Round 2.

Round 2:

Q20. In the next 6 months, do you think this business will need to do any of the following?

Select all that apply:

- Obtain financial assistance or additional capital
- Identify new supply chain options
- Develop online sales or websites
- Increase marketing or sales
- Learn how to better provide for the safety of customers and employees
- Identify and hire new employees
- Make a capital expenditure
- Cancel or postpone a planned capital expenditure
- Permanently close this business

DRB Clearance Number (CBDRB-FY21-ESMD006-007)

- None of the above

FINDING:

Updated wording performed as expected.

RECOMMENDATION:

Retain the Round 2 question wording for the production instrument.

RESOLUTION:

Retain the Round 2 question wording for the production instrument.

Attachment A:

Small Business Pulse Survey, Round 4: Cognitive Testing Instrument – Round 1

Welcome to the Small Business Pulse Survey

The U.S. Census Bureau is requesting your assistance in understanding the effect of changing business conditions due to the Coronavirus pandemic on your business. Your response is especially important right now as it helps policy makers, government officials, and businesses like yours understand these effects. Please complete this short 20 question survey; it will take approximately 5 minutes.

This survey asks about the experience of your business over the last week, but also about the experience of your business since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic. The White House declared a national emergency because of the Coronavirus pandemic on March 13, 2020.

Q1. Overall, how has this business been affected by the Coronavirus pandemic? Select only one:

- Large negative effect
- Moderate negative effect
- Little or no effect
- Moderate positive effect
- Large positive effect

Q2 In the last month, what were the total operating revenues/sales/receipts for this business, not including any financial assistance or loans? Select only one:

- \$0 - \$500
- \$501 - \$2,500
- \$2,501 - \$5,000
- \$5,001 - \$15,000
- \$15,001 - \$50,000
- \$50,001 - \$125,000
- \$125,001 - \$200,000
- \$200,001 - \$500,000
- \$500,001 or more
- Don't know

Q3. In the last week, did this business have a change in operating revenue/sales/receipts, not including any financial assistance or loans? Select only one:

- Yes, increased
- Yes, decreased
- No

Q4. In the last week, did this business do any of the following? Select only one:

- Open a previously closed location
- Temporarily close a location
- Permanently close a location
- None of the above

Q5. In the last week, did this business have a change in the number of paid employees? Select only one:

- Yes, increased
- Yes, decreased
- No change

Q6. In the last week, did this business have a change in the total number of hours worked by paid employees? Select only one:

- Yes, increased
- Yes, decreased
- No change

Q7. In the last week, did this business require employees to test negative for COVID-19 prior to working onsite? Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable, this business did not have employees onsite in the last week.

Q8. In the last week, did this business require employees to have proof of vaccination for COVID-19 prior to working onsite? Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable, this business did not have employees onsite in the last week.

Q9. In the last week, did this business have any of the following? Select all that apply:

- Domestic supplier delays
- Foreign supplier delays
- Difficulty locating alternate domestic suppliers
- Difficulty locating alternate foreign suppliers
- Production delays at this business
- Delays in delivery/shipping to customers
- None of the above

Q10. In the last week, was this business's operating capacity affected by any of the following?

Note: Operating capacity is the maximum amount of activity this business could conduct under realistic operating conditions. Select all that apply:

- Ability to re-hire furloughed or laid off employees and/or hire new employees
- Availability of employees to work
- Ability of employees to work remotely
- Availability of COVID-19 tests for employees
- Availability of COVID-19 vaccine for employees
- Physical distancing of employees
- Physical distancing of customers and/or limits on the number of concurrent customers
- Availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and/or related equipment or supplies
- Availability of other supplies or inputs used to provide good or services
- None of the above

Q11. How would you describe this business's current operating capacity relative to one year ago? *Note: Operating capacity is the maximum amount of activity this business could conduct under realistic operating conditions.* Select only one:

- Operating capacity has increased 50% or more
- Operating capacity has increased less than 50%
- No change in operating capacity
- Operating capacity has decreased less than 50%
- Operating capacity has decreased 50% or more

Q12. The White House declared a national emergency because of the Coronavirus pandemic on March 13, 2020.

Since March 13, 2020, did this business decrease the amount of square footage leased/rented for operations? Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable, this business does not lease/rent space.

Q13 Since March 13, 2020, did this business permanently add pickup/carryout/delivery as a means of providing goods/services to its customers? Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- This business already used pickup/carryout/delivery as a means of providing goods/services to its customers prior to March 13, 2020.

Q14. Since March 13, 2020, what changes did this business make to its budgeted capital expenditures for 2020? Select all that apply:

- Canceled budgeted capital expenditure(s)
- Postponed budgeted capital expenditure(s)
- Decreased budgeted capital expenditure(s)
- Increased budgeted capital expenditure(s)
- Introduced new unbudgeted capital expenditure(s)
- This business had no changes to budgeted capital expenditure(s) for 2020.

Q15. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) went into effect on April 1, 2020. Since April 1, 2020, did any of this business's employees use COVID-19 related emergency paid sick leave provided by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)? Select only one:

- Yes
- No, no eligible employees requested or had a qualifying reason for FFCRA emergency paid sick leave.
- No, all of this business's employees were exempted as health care providers or emergency responders.
- No, this business used the small business exemption (for employers below 50 employees where providing paid leave would have jeopardized the viability of the business as a going concern).

Q16. Since April 1, 2020, did any of this business's employees use COVID-19 related expanded family and medical leave provided by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)? Select only one:

- Yes
- No, no eligible employees requested or had a qualifying reason for FFCRA expanded family and medical leave.
- No, all of this business's employees were exempted as health care providers or emergency responders.
- No, this business used the small business exemption (for employers below 50 employees where providing paid leave would have jeopardized the viability of the business as a going concern).

Q17. On December 27, 2020, the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021 was enacted, providing additional Coronavirus pandemic relief.

Since December 27, 2020, has this business requested financial assistance from any of the following sources? Select all that apply:

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
- Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
- Small Business Administration (SBA) Loan Forgiveness
- Main Street Lending Program
- Deferral of Federal Employment Tax Deposits and Payments
- COVID-19 Related Federal Paid Sick and Expanded Family and Medical Leave Tax Credits
- Federal Employee Retention and Rehiring Tax Credit
- Other Federal programs
- State or local government programs
- Banks or other financial institutions
- Owner(s)
- Family or friends
- Other sources
- This business has not requested financial assistance from any source since December 27, 2020

Q18. Since December 27, 2020, has this business received financial assistance from any of the following sources? Select all that apply:

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
- Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
- SBA Loan Forgiveness
- Main Street Lending Program
- Deferral of Federal Employment Tax Deposits and Payments
- COVID-19 Related Federal Paid Sick and Expanded Family and Medical Leave Tax Credits
- Federal Employee Retention and Rehiring Tax Credit
- Other Federal programs
- State or local government programs
- Banks or other financial institutions
- Owner(s)
- Family or friends
- Other sources
- This business has not received financial assistance from any source since December 27, 2020.

Q19. In the next 6 months, do you think this business will have business travel expenditures for air, rail, car rental, or lodging? Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable, this business does not usually have business travel expenditures.

Q20. In the next 6 months, do you think this business will need to do any of the following? Select all that apply:

- Obtain financial assistance or additional capital
- Identify new supply chain options
- Develop online sales or websites
- Increase marketing or sales
- Learn how to better provide for the safety of customers and employees
- Identify and hire new employees
- Make a capital expenditure
- Cancel or postpone a budgeted capital expenditure
- Permanently close this business
- None of the above

Q21. In your opinion, how much time do you think will pass before this business returns to its usual level of operations? Select only one:

- 1 month or less
- 2-3 months
- 4-6 months
- More than 6 months
- I do not believe this business will return to its normal level of operations.
- This business has permanently closed.
- There has been little or no effect on this business's normal level of operations.
- This business has returned to its normal level of operations.

Attachment B:

Small Business Pulse Survey, Round 4: Cognitive Testing Instrument, Round 2

Welcome to the Small Business Pulse Survey

The U.S. Census Bureau is requesting your assistance in understanding the effect of changing business conditions due to the Coronavirus pandemic on your business. Your response is especially important right now as it helps policy makers, government officials, and businesses like yours understand these effects. Please complete this short 20 question survey; it will take approximately 5 minutes.

Q1. Overall, how has this business been affected by the Coronavirus pandemic? Select only one:

- Large negative effect
- Moderate negative effect
- Little or no effect
- Moderate positive effect
- Large positive effect

Q2. In the last month, what were the total operating revenues/sales/receipts for this business, not including any financial assistance or loans? Select only one:

- \$0 - \$500
- \$501 - \$2,500
- \$2,501 - \$5,000
- \$5,001 - \$15,000
- \$15,001 - \$50,000
- \$50,001 - \$125,000
- \$125,001 - \$200,000
- \$200,001 - \$500,000
- \$500,001 or more
- Don't know

Q3. In the last week, did this business have a change in operating revenue/sales/receipts, not including any financial assistance or loans, relative to the previous week? Select only one:

- Yes, increased
- Yes, decreased
- No

Q4. In the last week, did this business do any of the following? Select only one:

- Open a previously closed location
- Temporarily close a location
- Permanently close a location
- None of the above

Q5. In the last week, did this business have a change in the number of paid employees? Select only one:

- Yes, increased
- Yes, decreased
- No change

Q6. In the last week, did this business have a change in the total number of hours worked by paid employees? Select only one:

- Yes, increased
- Yes, decreased
- No change

Q7. In the last week, did this business require employees to test negative for COVID-19 before physically coming to work? Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable, this business did not have employees physically coming to work in the last week.

Q8. In the last week, did this business require employees to have proof of vaccination for COVID-19 before physically coming to work? Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable, this business did not have employees physically coming to work in the last week.

Q9. In the last week, did this business have any of the following? Select all that apply:

- Domestic supplier delays
- Foreign supplier delays
- Difficulty locating alternate domestic suppliers
- Difficulty locating alternate foreign suppliers
- Production delays at this business
- Delays in delivery/shipping to customers
- None of the above

Q10. In the last week, was this business's operating capacity affected by any of the following?

Note: Operating capacity is the maximum amount of activity this business could conduct under realistic operating conditions. Select all that apply:

- Availability of employees to work
- Ability of employees to work remotely
- Availability of COVID-19 tests for employees
- Availability of COVID-19 vaccine for employees
- Physical distancing of employees
- Physical distancing of customers and/or limits on the number of concurrent customers
- Availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and/or related equipment or supplies
- Availability of other supplies or inputs used to provide good or services
- None of the above

Q11. How would you describe this business's current operating capacity relative to its operating capacity prior to the Coronavirus pandemic? *Note: Operating capacity is the maximum amount of activity this business could conduct under realistic operating conditions. Select only one:*

- Operating capacity has increased 50% or more
- Operating capacity has increased less than 50%
- No change in operating capacity
- Operating capacity has decreased less than 50%
- Operating capacity has decreased 50% or more

Q12. The White House declared a national emergency because of the Coronavirus pandemic on March 13, 2020.

Since March 13, 2020, did this business change the amount of square footage leased/rented for operations? Select only one:

- Yes, increased
- Yes, decreased
- No change
- Not applicable, this business does not lease/rent space.

Q13. Since March 13, 2020, did this business permanently add curbside or contactless pickup, carryout, or delivery as a means of providing goods/services to its customers? Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- This business already used curbside or contactless pickup, carryout, or delivery as a means of providing goods/services to its customers prior to March 13, 2020.

Q14. Since March 13, 2020, what changes did this business make to its planned capital expenditures for 2020? Select all that apply:

- Canceled planned capital expenditures
- Postponed planned capital expenditures
- Decreased planned capital expenditures
- Increased planned capital expenditures
- Introduced new unplanned capital expenditures
- This business had no changes to planned capital expenditures for 2020.
- This business had no planned capital expenditures for 2020.

Q15. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) went into effect on April 1, 2020. Since April 1, 2020, did any of this business's employees use COVID-19 related emergency paid sick leave provided by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)? Select only one:

- Yes
- No, no eligible employees requested or had a qualifying reason for FFCRA emergency paid sick leave.
- No, all of this business's employees were exempted as health care providers or emergency responders.
- No, this business used the small business exemption (for employers below 50 employees where providing paid leave would have jeopardized the viability of the business as a going concern).

Q16. Since April 1, 2020, did any of this business's employees use COVID-19 related expanded family and medical leave provided by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)? Select only one:

- Yes
- No, no eligible employees requested or had a qualifying reason for FFCRA expanded family and medical leave.
- No, all of this business's employees were exempted as health care providers or emergency responders.
- No, this business used the small business exemption (for employers below 50 employees where providing paid leave would have jeopardized the viability of the business as a going concern).

Q17. On December 27, 2020, the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021 was enacted, providing a second round of Coronavirus pandemic relief.

Since December 27, 2020, has this business requested financial assistance from any of the following sources? Select all that apply:

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), first time applicant
- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), second time applicant
- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), loan forgiveness
- Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
- Paid Sick Leave and Paid Family Leave Credit
- Employee Retention and Rehiring Credit
- Other Federal programs
- State or local government programs
- Banks or other financial institutions
- Owners
- Family or friends
- Other sources
- This business has not requested financial assistance from any source since December 27, 2020

Q18. Since December 27, 2020, has this business received financial assistance from any of the following sources? Select all that apply:

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan forgiveness
- Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
- Paid Sick Leave and Paid Family Leave Credit
- Employee Retention and Rehiring Credit
- Other Federal programs
- State or local government programs
- Banks or other financial institutions
- Owners
- Family or friends
- Other sources
- This business has not received financial assistance from any source since December 27, 2020.

Q19. In the next 6 months, do you think this business will have business travel expenditures for air, rail, car rental, or lodging? Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable, this business does not usually have business travel expenditures.

Q20. In the next 6 months, do you think this business will need to do any of the following? Select all that apply:

- Obtain financial assistance or additional capital
- Identify new supply chain options
- Develop online sales or websites
- Increase marketing or sales
- Learn how to better provide for the safety of customers and employees
- Identify and hire new employees
- Make a capital expenditure
- Cancel or postpone a planned capital expenditure
- Permanently close this business
- None of the above

Q21. In your opinion, how much time do you think will pass before this business returns to its usual level of operations? Select only one:

- 1 month or less
- 2-3 months
- 4-6 months
- More than 6 months
- I do not believe this business will return to its usual level of operations.
- This business has permanently closed.
- There has been little or no effect on this business's usual level of operations.
- This business has returned to its usual level of operations.

Attachment C:

Small Business Pulse Survey, Round 4: Cognitive Interviewing Protocol

Introduction:

Name: \${e://Field/CONTACT_NAME}

Phone: \${e://Field/COCALL}

Hello. Thank you for your time today!

We are looking to obtain feedback on a revised version of a short survey that has been designed to learn more about the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic on small businesses.

Our purpose for speaking with you today is to see how respondents answer the survey questions, to evaluate how the questions work or don't work. We are not testing you– we only want to evaluate the questionnaire.

Today, we will have you complete the short questionnaire, then we will review some of the questions with you to get your feedback. I sent you an email with a link to the survey. Can you please click on the link and read over the first page?

This study is being conducted under the authority of Title 13 USC, which means that I will not share your name or the name or any identifying information about your business. We plan to use your feedback to improve the survey questions and make sure they make sense to respondents like you.

Do you agree to participate?

Thank you.

Please click on the checkbox at the bottom of the screen. Do not advance the screen; I'll let you know when to press the next button.

Warm-Up Questions:

Before we begin, could you tell me a little bit about your business? What types of goods or services does this business provide?

And, what is your role in the business? What kind of responsibilities do you have? What is your title?

Instrument Completion:

Ok! Now I'd like for you to go through the survey question by question. Please tell me your answer to each question as you go along. After you are done, we will go back and discuss some of the questions in more detail.

Interviewer: Encourage the respondent to tell you his/her answers to the questions, but do not probe.

Debrief:

Thank you for completing the survey. On your screen should be a summary of your responses. You can use this as we talk a little bit more about some of the questions you have just answered. We may go out of order, just so you know.

But first, what is your overall impression of this survey?

Item 7:

Let's start with item 7.

Please tell me in your own words what this question is asking.

How did you come up with your answer to this question?

What does "prior to working onsite" mean to you?

What does the word "prior" mean to you in the context of this question? What time frame did you consider here?

How recent would a test have to be to 'count'?

How easy or difficult was this question to answer?

Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this question?

How do you think others in your industry might interpret this question?

Item 8:

And now to Item 8.

Please tell me in your own words what this question is asking.

How did you come up with your answer to this question?

What does "proof of vaccination" mean to you?

How easy or difficult was it to answer this question?

How do you think others in your industry might interpret this question?

Item 10:

Ok, now lets look back at Item 10.

Please tell me in your own words what this question is asking.

How did you come up with your answer to this question?

Would you consult any records or would you estimate?

Would you need to reach out to anyone else in your firm to answer this question?

What does "operating capacity" mean to you?

Do the answer categories seem appropriate?

What does "Availability of COVID-19 tests for employees" mean to you?

What does "Availability of COVID-19 vaccine for employees" mean to you?

How easy or difficult was this question to answer?

Item 12:

Now on to Item 12.

Please tell me in your own words what this question is asking.

How did you come up with your answer to this question?

What does "amount of square footage leased/rented for operations" mean to you?

Is "amount of square footage" the same as "amount of space" to you?

What time period were you thinking about?

What does "Since March 13" mean to you?

How well do you remember this time (March 2020)?

Do you consider that the start of the pandemic, or do you think of some other date or other time frame when thinking about the beginning of the pandemic?

How easy or difficult was this question to answer? If difficult, why?

Item 13:

Next let's look at Item 13.

Please tell me in your own words what this question is asking.

How did you come up with your answer to this question?

How would you answer this question if you were not sure if it will be temporary or permanent?

How easy or difficult to answer this question? If difficult, why?

Item 14:

Thank you! Let's look at Item 14.

Please tell me in your own words what this question is asking.

How did you come up with your answers to this question?

What does "budgeted capital expenditures for 2020" mean to you?

Would "planned capital expenditures for 2020" be more or less clear?

What would you include and what would you exclude when answering this question?

Do the answer categories seem appropriate?

How easy or difficult was this question to answer?

Item 15:

Next up is Item 15

Please tell me in your own words what this question is asking.

How did you come up with your answers to this question?

Would you need to consult with anyone else at your business to answer this question? Who?

Were you familiar with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act?

Did you think of other sick leave policies your business may have put into place in response to the pandemic?

Has your business advertised or otherwise informed workers that this paid sick leave is available?

How easy or difficult was this to answer?

Item 16:

Let's look at item 16.

What is this question asking you about?

How did you come up with your answer to this question?

How easy or difficult was this question to answer? Why?

How is this question different from Item 15, if at all?

Who would you include for this question? Exclude?

Would you need to talk to anyone else at your company to answer this question?

Would you need to look at company records?

Item 17:

And now, on to Item 17.

Please tell me in your own words what this question is asking.

How did you come up with your answers to this question?

How easy or difficult was it for you to answer this question?

What time period were you thinking about when you answered this question?

Did you notice that this question is asking about the most recent Coronavirus relief legislation?

Would your answer be different if we did not put that date, or if we asked this question based on a different date?

What does the category "Owner(s)" mean here?

What would this include? Exclude?

What do you think of when you read the word 'Owner(s)' as a response category here?

How many of these programs are you familiar with?

How easy or difficult was it to answer this question?

Item 18:

And now Item 18.

Please tell me in your own words what this question is asking.

How did you come up with your answers to this question?

How easy or difficult was this question to answer?

If difficult, why?

Item 19:

Ok, let's look at Item 19.

Please tell me in your own words what this question is asking.

How did you come up with your answers to this question?

What does "business travel expenditures" mean to you?

What would you include when answering this question? Exclude?

Are there things other than air, rail, car rental, or lodging that you would want to include?

What time period were you thinking about when answering this question?

What does "in the next six months" mean to you?

How easy or difficult was this question to answer?

Item 20:

And finally, let's look at Item 20.

Please tell me in your own words what this question is asking.

How did you come up with your answer to this question?

What does "make a capital expenditure" mean to you?

Is there another way to word that to make more sense?

What does "cancel or postpone a budgeted capital expenditure" mean to you?

Is there another way to word that to make more sense?

Think about the list as a whole - how easy or difficult was it for you to read through this list?

Do the categories make sense? Are any of them unclear?

What about the order of the categories? Do they make sense as is, or do you think that they should be reordered? In what way?

Wrap-Up

We are almost done. I just have a few more questions.

Do you have any suggestions for other issues related to the Coronavirus pandemic's effect on small businesses? What are we missing?

Overall, how easy or difficult was it to answer these questions?

Do you have any other comments or suggestions about anything we have discussed today?

That's all the questions I have for today! Thank you so much for your time today. We really appreciate the help!

Attachment D:

Small Business Pulse Survey, Round 4: Final Revised Questionnaire

Welcome to the Small Business Pulse Survey

The U.S. Census Bureau is requesting your assistance in understanding the effect of changing business conditions due to the Coronavirus pandemic on your business. Your response is especially important right now as it helps policy makers, government officials, and businesses like yours understand these effects. Please complete this short 20 question survey; it will take approximately 5 minutes.

Q1. Overall, how has this business been affected by the Coronavirus pandemic? Select only one:

- Large negative effect
- Moderate negative effect
- Little or no effect
- Moderate positive effect
- Large positive effect

Q2. In the last month, what were the total operating revenues/sales/receipts for this business, not including any financial assistance or loans? Select only one:

- \$0 - \$500
- \$501 - \$2,500
- \$2,501 - \$5,000
- \$5,001 - \$15,000
- \$15,001 - \$50,000
- \$50,001 - \$125,000
- \$125,001 - \$200,000
- \$200,001 - \$500,000
- \$500,001 or more
- Don't know

Q3. In the last week, did this business have a change in operating revenue/sales/receipts, not including any financial assistance or loans, relative to the previous week? Select only one:

- Yes, increased
- Yes, decreased
- No

Q4. In the last week, did this business do any of the following? Select only one:

- Open a previously closed location
- Temporarily close a location
- Permanently close a location
- None of the above

Q5. In the last week, did this business have a change in the number of paid employees? Select only one:

- Yes, increased
- Yes, decreased
- No change

Q6. In the last week, did this business have a change in the total number of hours worked by paid employees? Select only one:

- Yes, increased
- Yes, decreased
- No change

Q7. In the last week, did this business require employees to test negative for COVID-19 before physically coming to work? Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable, this business did not have employees physically coming to work in the last week.

Q8. In the last week, did this business require employees to have proof of vaccination for COVID-19 before physically coming to work? Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable, this business did not have employees physically coming to work in the last week.

Q9. In the last week, did this business have any of the following? Select all that apply:

- Domestic supplier delays
- Foreign supplier delays
- Difficulty locating alternate domestic suppliers
- Difficulty locating alternate foreign suppliers
- Production delays at this business
- Delays in delivery/shipping to customers
- None of the above

Q10. In the last week, was this business's operating capacity affected by any of the following?

Note: Operating capacity is the maximum amount of activity this business could conduct under realistic operating conditions. Select all that apply:

- Availability of employees to work
- Ability of employees to work from home
- Availability of COVID-19 tests for employees
- Availability of COVID-19 vaccine for employees
- Physical distancing of employees
- Physical distancing of customers and/or limits on the number of concurrent customers
- Availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and/or related equipment or supplies
- Availability of other supplies or inputs used to provide good or services
- None of the above

Q11. How would you describe this business's current operating capacity relative to its operating capacity prior to the Coronavirus pandemic? *Note: Operating capacity is the maximum amount of activity this business could conduct under realistic operating conditions. Select only one:*

- Operating capacity has increased 50% or more
- Operating capacity has increased less than 50%
- No change in operating capacity
- Operating capacity has decreased less than 50%
- Operating capacity has decreased 50% or more

Q12. The White House declared a national emergency because of the Coronavirus pandemic on March 13, 2020.

Since March 13, 2020, did this business change the amount of square footage leased/rented for operations? Select only one:

- Yes, increased
- Yes, decreased
- No change
- Not applicable, this business does not lease/rent space.

Q13. Since March 13, 2020, what changes did this business make to its planned capital expenditures for 2020? Select all that apply:

- Canceled planned capital expenditures
- Postponed planned capital expenditures
- Decreased planned capital expenditures
- Increased planned capital expenditures
- Introduced new unplanned capital expenditures
- This business had no changes to planned capital expenditures for 2020.
- This business had no planned capital expenditures for 2020.

Q14. On December 27, 2020, the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021 was enacted, providing a second round of Coronavirus pandemic relief.

Since December 27, 2020, has this business requested financial assistance from any of the following sources? Select all that apply:

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), first time applicant
- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), second time applicant
- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), loan forgiveness
- Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
- Paid Sick Leave and Paid Family Leave Credit
- Employee Retention and Rehiring Credit
- Other Federal programs
- State or local government programs
- Banks or other financial institutions
- Owners
- Family or friends
- Other sources
- This business has not requested financial assistance from any source since December 27, 2020

Q15. Since December 27, 2020, has this business received financial assistance from any of the following sources? Select all that apply:

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan forgiveness
- Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
- Paid Sick Leave and Paid Family Leave Credit
- Employee Retention and Rehiring Credit
- Other Federal programs
- State or local government programs
- Banks or other financial institutions
- Owners
- Family or friends
- Other sources
- This business has not received financial assistance from any source since December 27, 2020.

Q16. In the next 6 months, do you think this business will have business travel expenditures for air, rail, car rental, or lodging? Select only one:

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable, this business does not usually have business travel expenditures.

Q17. In the next 6 months, do you think this business will need to do any of the following? Select all that apply:

- Obtain financial assistance or additional capital
- Identify new supply chain options
- Develop online sales or websites
- Increase marketing or sales
- Learn how to better provide for the safety of customers and employees
- Identify and hire new employees
- Make a capital expenditure
- Cancel or postpone a planned capital expenditure
- Permanently close this business
- None of the above

Q18. In your opinion, how much time do you think will pass before this business returns to its usual level of operations? Select only one:

- 1 month or less
- 2-3 months
- 4-6 months
- More than 6 months
- I do not believe this business will return to its usual level of operations.
- This business has permanently closed.
- There has been little or no effect on this business's usual level of operations.
- This business has returned to its usual level of operations.