

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**Census Bureau****Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Business Trends and Outlook Survey**

The Department of Commerce will submit the following information collection request to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and clearance in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, on or after the date of publication of this notice. We invite the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. Public comments were previously requested via the **Federal Register** on November 9, 2021 during a 60-day comment period. This notice allows for an additional 30 days for public comments.

Agency: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce.

Title: Business Trends and Outlook Survey.

OMB Control Number: 0607-1022.

Form Number(s): This online survey has no form number.

Type of Request: Regular submission, Request for a Revision of a Currently Approved Collection.

Number of Respondents: 795,000.

Average Hours per Response: 10 minutes.

Burden Hours: 132,500.

Needs and Uses: The mission of the U.S. Census Bureau (Census Bureau) is to serve as the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy; to fulfill this mission, it is necessary to innovate to produce more detailed, more frequent, and more timely data products. The Coronavirus pandemic was an impetus for the creation of new data products by the Census Bureau to measure the pandemic's impact on the economy: the Small Business Pulse Survey (SBPS) and the weekly Business Formation Statistics. Policymakers and other Federal agency officials, media outlets, and academia commended the Census Bureau's rapid response to their data needs during the largest economic crisis in recent American history. The Census Bureau capitalized on the successes that underlaid the high frequency data collection and near real time data dissemination engineered for the SBPS by creating the Business Trends and Outlook Survey (BTOS).

BTOS uses ongoing data collection to produce high frequency, timely, and granular information about current economic conditions and trends. BTOS is the only biweekly business tendency survey produced by the Federal statistical system, providing unique and detailed data during times of economic or other emergencies. The BTOS target population is all nonfarm employer businesses with receipts of \$1,000 or more in the United States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The current sample consists of approximately 1.2 million businesses split into six panels. Data collection occurs every two weeks, and businesses in each panel are asked to report once every 12 weeks for one year. Current BTOS data are representative of all employer businesses (excluding farms) in the U.S. economy and are published every two weeks. The data are available at the national and State levels, in addition to the 25 most-populous Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) sector, subsector, and State by sector are also published, as are employment size class, and sector by employment size class data, according to the same timeline.

Data from BTOS are currently used to provide timely data to understand the economic conditions being experienced by businesses; BTOS provides near real time data on key items such as revenue, paid employees, hours worked as well as inventories which was being added in for the second sample collection year. A new sample collection is conducted each year.

BTOS also provides high level information on the changing share of businesses facing difficulties stemming from supply chain issues, interest rate changes, or weather events. Previously, there had been few data sources available to policymakers, media outlets, and academia that delivered near real-time insights into economic trends and outlooks. BTOS data has been used by the Small Business Administration to evaluate the impact of regulatory changes. The use of the BTOS data (or additional requirements) is still being determined by the Economic Development Agency (EDA) to understand the impact of natural disasters on U.S. businesses. The EDA will then guide the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and/or policymakers in assisting in economic recovery support missions.

In the approved OMB package for BTOS, the Census Bureau proposed an incremental path to reach the full scope of BTOS. The first scope expansion proposed adding multi-unit businesses

(those with more than one location or establishment) to BTOS. BTOS was limited in scope to include only single-unit businesses. Despite comprising a relatively small share of the total number of businesses, multi-unit (MU) businesses are responsible for most of the employment, payroll, and revenue/sales in the United States and contribute disproportionately to economic activity. In addition, MU businesses are on average larger than single-unit businesses. Adding these businesses helped ensure BTOS results are representative of the full economy. The Census Bureau still proposes an incremental path to the final scope of BTOS to learn at each implemented stage and to allow for modifications based on lessons learned or internal/external stakeholder feedback in prior iterations.

For the first year of BTOS, the content remained unchanged at 26 questions. For the second year, the Census Bureau moved to a set of core questions and supplemental content. Core content includes measures of economic activity that are broadly applicable across non-farm sectors and are important across the business cycle and during economic or other emergencies. Core content is also complementary to key items found on other Economic surveys, such as revenues, employees, hours, and inventories. Core items may also include concepts that may become core topics, such as the artificial intelligence questions that started in the second year.

Supplemental content is added to the BTOS instrument as needed and on a periodic basis. It will be designed to provide urgently needed data on an emerging or current issue. The supplement will include a set of questions that perform a deeper dive into a focused topic that requires timely data. On average, the Census Bureau estimates the supplemental questions will impose an additional 10 minutes of burden.

Consideration for core and supplemental concepts will be based on data consistency, how the questions performed on the current BTOS, the results of cognitive testing, stakeholder feedback, and the ability to collect complementary items on monthly, quarterly, annual, or census programs to provide context and benchmarking.

For future changes, the Census Bureau will submit a request to OMB including 30 days of public comment announced in the **Federal Register** to receive approval to make any substantive revisions to the content or methods of the proposed survey, including incremental scope changes. It is likely

new supplemental content will be chosen for each year and an updated instrument will be submitted to OMB for review along with a 30-day **Federal Register** Notice.

The Census Bureau is requesting the addition of a new question to the core set. This question expands on an existing core question that currently asks whether the business experienced any monetary issues due to an extreme weather event. The new question will ask about the type of extreme weather event, offering thirteen different options plus a write-in choice. This new question will only be asked if the response to the previous question indicates that monetary issues were experienced. The addition of this question aims to enhance our understanding of how various weather-related events impact business operations, including identifying specific weather disruptions and associated financial losses. This change was requested by the Small Business Administration.

In 2024, the second supplemental questionnaire will address work-from-home (WFH) from the business perspective. Similar to the 2023 BTOS core questions on artificial intelligence (AI), a core WFH question will be included in all cycles. This core question will be a yes/no format designed to capture potential seasonal variations in WFH at the business level. Establishing this baseline is crucial for understanding seasonal patterns, as preliminary cognitive testing indicated that seasonality could significantly affect certain industries.

The Coronavirus pandemic emphasized the importance of remote work for economic continuity. Post-pandemic, work from home (WFH) remains significant in many workplaces but its extent at businesses and businesses' plans for the future of remote work are not measured in a timely fashion. Currently, WFH data from a worker perspective is available through 2024 via the Current Population Survey (CPS), but business-level data is only available through 2022 from the Business Response Survey (BRS), which is currently on hiatus. Results from the Annual Business Survey through 2022 will be released in fall 2024. Timely measures of WFH from the business perspective will be valuable to policymakers at all levels due to its potential impact on housing markets, commercial real estate, and urban planning.

For sample year 3, we propose changes to the content as detailed in Attachments A and B of the Information Collection Request (ICR) submitted to

OMB for review. Attachment A outlines the core questions for cycles 2 through 4 and includes the core plus supplemental content for cycle 2. Based on cognitive testing results, the burden estimate for the core questions has increased from approximately 9 minutes to 10 minutes. The WFH supplement is estimated to add an additional 10 minutes of burden to the core questions.

Frequency: Bi-weekly.

Respondent's Obligation: Voluntary.

Legal Authority: Title 13 U.S.C. 131 and 182.

This information collection request may be viewed at <https://www.reginfo.gov>. Follow the instructions to view the Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be submitted within 30 days of the publication of this notice on the following website <https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain>. Find this particular information collection by selecting "Currently under 30-day Review—Open for Public Comments" or by using the search function and entering either the title of the collection or the OMB Control Number 0607–1022.

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Department PRA Clearance Officer, Office of the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, Commerce Department.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Foreign-Trade Zones Board

[B–17–2024]

Foreign-Trade Zone (FTZ) 21; Authorization of Production Activity; Patheon API Inc.; (Pharmaceutical Products); Florence, South Carolina

On April 26, 2024, Patheon API Inc. submitted a notification of proposed production activity to the FTZ Board for its facility within Subzone 21J, in Florence, South Carolina.

The notification was processed in accordance with the regulations of the FTZ Board (15 CFR part 400), including notice in the **Federal Register** inviting public comment (87 FR 36753, May 3, 2024). On August 26, 2024, the applicant was notified of the FTZ Board's decision that no further review of the activity is warranted at this time. The production activity described in the notification was authorized, subject to

the FTZ Act and the FTZ Board's regulations, including section 400.14.

Dated: August 26, 2024.

Elizabeth Whiteman,
Executive Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2024–19428 Filed 8–28–24; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Foreign-Trade Zones Board

[B–18–2024]

Foreign-Trade Zone (FTZ) 90; Authorization of Production Activity; PPC Broadband, Inc.; (Fiber Optic Conduit); East Syracuse, New York

On April 26, 2024, PPC Broadband, Inc. submitted a notification of proposed production activity to the FTZ Board for its facility within Subzone 90C, in East Syracuse, New York.

The notification was processed in accordance with the regulations of the FTZ Board (15 CFR part 400), including notice in the **Federal Register** inviting public comment (89 FR 37174, May 6, 2024). On August 26, 2024, the applicant was notified of the FTZ Board's decision that no further review of the proposed activity is warranted at this time. The FTZ Board authorized the production activity described in the notification, subject to the FTZ Act and the Board's regulations, including section 400.14. Polyester pull cord must be admitted in privileged foreign status (19 CFR 146.41).

Dated: August 26, 2024.

Elizabeth Whiteman,
Executive Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2024–19429 Filed 8–28–24; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bureau of Industry and Security

[Docket No. 240816–0219]

XRIN: 0694–XC107

Request for Public Comments on the Potential Market Impact of the Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Materials Plan From the National Defense Stockpile Market Impact Committee

AGENCY: Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of inquiry; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The National Defense Stockpile Market Impact Committee, co-chaired by the Departments of