

Generic Information Collection Request: Content Debriefing Interviews for the 2022 Economic Census

Request: The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). The Census Bureau plans to conduct debriefing interviews of new content for the 2022 Economic Census instrument.

The Economic Census is a mandatory census conducted by the Census Bureau every five years. The survey collects data electronically from over 4 million business establishments (including large, medium and small companies representing most U.S. locations and industries) on a range of operational and performance questions. Data from the Economic Census are used as the official five-year measure of American business and the economy. This census is collected under the authority of Title 13, United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 131. Further information regarding the Economic Census can be found at this website: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/economic-census.html>

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to determine how typical Economic Census respondents understood several new questions and whether they were able to easily and accurately provide the requested data. We will use the company's answers to the survey as well as paradata on their response to frame our points of discussion. We will end with some probes to gain insight into their overall experience with responding to the Economic Census. We also plan to debrief with a small number of respondents from several NAICS industry groups (1151 and 1152, agriculture) that are new to the Economic Census in 2022. Results from these debriefing interviews will be recorded and a report will be produced that outlines findings and provides recommendations for improvement. This study is authorized by 13 U.S.C. Sections 131 and 193.

Staff from the Data Collection Methodology & Research Branch (DCMRB) within the Economic Statistical Methods Division (ESMD) of the Census Bureau will be conducting debriefing interviews for this testing, with support from staff from the Economy-Wide Statistics Division (EWD), and the Economic Management Division (EMD). For this testing, we will interview up to 60 respondents of the 2022 Economic Census.

Population of Interest: Large, medium and small companies from various U.S. locations and industries.

Language: Testing will be conducted in English only.

Method: Most of these interviews will be conducted via phone and video as allowed (e.g., Microsoft Teams). The Qualtrics survey design platform will be used to provide participants access to the questions to be reviewed. Participants will be sent a link for accessing Qualtrics via Teams and will follow instructions on how to screen-share with researchers. The sessions will be recorded using Camtasia Studio to facilitate post hoc analysis. These recordings will capture the actions taken on the screen as well as audio (participants' faces will not be seen or captured on recordings). For the purposes of this research, the interviewing questions and probes will be

focused on the respondents' answers to certain questions. The interviews will follow a semi-structured interview protocol (Attachments A and B). Subject area specialists from the Census Bureau may observe some of the interviews.

Sample: Staff from EMD and EWD will provide DCMRB staff with a list of recent 2022 Economic Census respondents. This listing will include contact information, a size indicator for the company, and a listing of their major industry classification. Additionally, we will utilize paradata (responses to certain questions) obtained during data collection to identify respondents to target during debriefings.

We plan to conduct up to 60 interviews across one round of testing, with revisions at the halfway mark of testing if needed. We plan to conduct interviews with a variety of company sizes (small, medium, and large) and industry classification (i.e., services, wholesale, retail, etc.).

This number of interviews was selected because it is a manageable number of interviews for the time period allotted, it should adequately cover target company sizes and classifications, and should be large enough to provide reactions to the questions in order to identify meaningful findings.

Recruitment: We will contact potential participants via email and/or phone, explain the nature of our research, and ask them to participate in our study. The sample of participants will be those who are able to be contacted and who agree to participate in the study. Participants will be informed that the interview is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential and will be seen only by Census Bureau employees and those with Special Sworn Status involved in the research project (See Attachment C).

We will not be providing monetary incentives to participants in this study. If an interview is scheduled, respondents will receive a confirmation email as well as a reminder email or phone call prior to the interview.

Enclosures: Below is a list of materials to be used in the current study:

1. **Attachment A:** Protocol for non-Agriculture industry groups used to outline how the research study will be conducted.
2. **Attachment B:** Protocol for New Agriculture industry groups used to outline how the research study will be conducted.
3. **Attachment C:** PRA/Consent form to inform participant about privacy, confidentiality and burden associated with participation and obtain consent for participation and recording of the session (Consent will be obtained in Qualtrics).
4. **Attachment D:** Sample Economic Census instrument – non-Agriculture industry groups.
5. **Attachment E:** Sample Economic Census instrument – New Agriculture industry groups.
 - a. To view all Economic Census instruments:
<https://bhs.econ.census.gov/ombpdfs2022/>

Timeline: Testing will be conducted from March 2023 through September 2023.

We expect that each interview will last no more than 30 minutes (60 cases x 30 minutes per case = 30 hours). Additionally, to recruit respondents, we expect to make up to 5 phone/email contacts per completed case. The contacts are expected to last on average 3 minutes per contact (5 attempted phone calls per completed case x 60 cases x 3 minute per case = 15 hours). Thus, the estimated burden for the entirety of this project is approximately 45 hours (30 hours for interviews + 15 hours for recruiting).

Contact: The contact person for questions regarding data collection and statistical aspects of the design of this research is listed below:

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