

1The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). We will be conducting cognitive interviews for the 2012 Business Sample Revision (BSR-12). There are seven survey programs included in this project: Annual Retail Trade Survey (ARTS), Annual Wholesale Trade Survey (AWTS), Services Annual Survey (SAS), Monthly Advance Retail Trade Survey (MARTS), Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS), Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey (MWTS), and the Quarterly Services Survey (QSS). These programs collect information about the services, retail, and wholesale sectors of the economy.

The seven programs represented in this redesign project are ongoing annual, quarterly, or monthly surveys. The Services Sector Statistics Division would like to redesign the forms so that they will have a more consistent look and feel.

To evaluate the updated questionnaires, staff from the Response Improvement Research Staff within the Census Bureau's Office of Economic Planning and Innovation will be conducting cognitive interviews. From January to May 2011, we plan to conduct unstructured interviews with approximately 60 different companies in the retail, wholesale, and services industries. Ten to 12 interviews will be conducted with respondents in the services industries. The remaining interviews will be split among the retail and wholesale industries. During each interview, the annual survey and its corresponding quarterly or monthly survey(s) will be covered, as a way of maximizing efficiency. Interviews will be conducted in the Richmond, VA/Washington, DC/Baltimore, MD region. After we recruit companies, we will email or fax them follow-up reminders about their appointments.

Interviews will take place at the company's site. The cognitive interviewing will especially focus on the following topics:

- Respondents' ability to follow skip instructions;
- Respondents' ability to correctly identify and report the address, Employer Identification Number, and date in the organizational change question;
- SAS and QSS respondents' ability to accurately report the number of establishments on the questionnaire;
- Respondents' comprehension of the term "e-commerce," as defined for each survey program; and
- Reactions to question order and potential detrimental question order effects.

Subject area specialists from the Census Bureau will accompany the researcher on most, if not all, of the interviews. They will assist with respondent debriefing, especially in cases where additional clarification of the subject matter is required.

We will record the interviews with the participants' permission, to aid researchers in accurately reporting findings and recommendations. Before beginning the interviews, we will inform participants that their response is voluntary. We also will inform the participants that the information they provide is confidential. We will not be providing monetary incentives to participants in this study.

We estimate that it will be necessary to interview only one participant at each business. We estimate the length of the interviews will average 1 hour. Therefore, the maximum estimated burden for this research is 60 hours.

Enclosed are a draft copy of one questionnaire from each survey program and the protocol we will be using for pretesting.

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

Rebecca L. Morrison
Response Improvement Research Staff
7K130A
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20233
(301) 763-7595
rebecca.l.morrison@census.gov