

CEQ Worksheet Field Test

I. Study Overview

In 2009, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) initiated the multi-year Gemini Project for the purpose of researching, developing, and implementing an improved survey design. In addition to reducing measurement error, a secondary objective of the redesign is to address survey response rates, which have been trending downward over the past 20 years.

The CEQ worksheet is intended to help improve data quality and reduce respondent burden. The idea for the worksheet was initiated as a result of discussions heard at FR Focus Groups, where FRs expressed that it would be helpful for respondents to use in between, as well as to reference during, interviews. Since households participating in the CEQ are interviewed once every 3 months and asked to recall all of their expenses during the entire 3 month period, it may be helpful to provide them with some auxiliary worksheet that they can use during those months in between to help expedite their next interview. We are interested in evaluating the feasibility of using a worksheet and the effect of the CEQ worksheet on data quality and respondent's survey experience.

The major research questions are:

1. What is the impact of CEQ worksheet on data quality? To assess this, we plan to:
 - a. Review data quality profile
 - b. Assess impact of record use
 - c. Assess allocated and imputation rates
 - d. Evaluate number of missing's, refusals and don't knows
 - e. Evaluate the frequency of rounding
2. What is the feedback from respondent on these materials?
3. What is the impact of the addition of the CEQ worksheet on production data collection activities?

II. Study Design

1. Field period

The field period for the CEQ Worksheet will be the third quarter of 2018 (July through September 2018) and fourth quarter of 2019 (October through December 2019).

2. Sample design

There will be two independent test groups in the production sample with the remaining Quarterly Interview production sample as a control. The test group for the CEQ worksheet will be selected to have the option of using the CEQ Worksheet. The test groups shall be sampled from all Census Divisions. The sample design should be limited to Wave 1 cases for existing primary sampling units. All Wave 1 cases are eligible. There are no other eligibility requirements. Two hundred cases per month (600 cases per quarter) will be selected for the CEQ Worksheet.

3. Methodology

At the end of the 3rd Interview, the FR will have the option to offer the respondent a Worksheet based on their assessment of whether they believe the respondent should be eligible. Reasons for why they would not offer the respondent a worksheet are a good rapport has not been established, they felt the respondent would be overwhelmed/scared off by the worksheet, the respondent is concerned about privacy or distrusts the government or is hesitant to participate in the next interview. If the FR deems the respondent to be eligible, they would leave a worksheet with the respondent to use over the next 3 months. At the 4th interview, the FR would ask the respondent whether they used the Worksheet and if they did, will have the respondent reference the worksheet during the interview to help report their expenditures. At the end of the 4th interview, the FR will ask the respondent a few questions about the Worksheet.

4. CAPI Instrument Changes:

Instrument requirements for the CEQ worksheet are included as part of Attachment O(a).

5. Available Materials

CEQ Worksheet - Attachment O(b)

6. Burden Hours Estimate

BLS estimates that this field study will require a total of 18 hours for the CEQ worksheet (9 hours in CY 2018 and 9 hours in CY 2019). We consider the actual completion of the worksheet to be burden neutral as the amount of time to fill out the worksheet will be offset by the shortened interview time.

The amount of time they would have taken to reference records would not be necessary during the interview as they would have already done that in filling out the worksheet.

	Mins.	Starting Sample	Completed Interviews	Total Hours
Estimated time for respondent debriefing CEQ Worksheet, 2018 Q3	1	600	360	6
Estimated time for respondent debriefing CEQ Worksheet, 2019 Q4	1	600	360	6
Estimated time for worksheet instructions to respondent, 2018 Q3	0.5	600	360	3
Estimated time for worksheet instructions to respondent, 2019 Q4	0.5	600	360	3
TOTAL				18