



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Billing Code 3510-07-P

Census Bureau

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Quarterly Services Survey

AGENCY: Census Bureau, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of Information Collection, request for comment.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, invites 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. The purpose of this notice is to allow for 60 days of public comment on the proposed revision of the Quarterly Services Survey, prior to the submission of the information collection request (ICR) to OMB for approval.

DATES: To ensure consideration, comments regarding this proposed information collection must be received on or before *[Insert date 60 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER]*.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments by email to Thomas.J.Smith@census.gov. Please reference Quarterly Services Survey in the subject line of your comments. You may also submit comments, identified by Docket Number USBC-2020-0022, to the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. All comments received are part of the public record. No comments will be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> for public viewing until after the comment period has closed. Comments will generally be posted without change. All Personally Identifiable Information (for example, name and address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential

Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. You may submit attachments to electronic comments in Microsoft Word, Excel, or Adobe PDF file formats.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or specific questions related to collection activities should be directed to Kathryn Nelson, U.S. Census Bureau, Economic Indicators Division, 301-763-7052 or Kathryn.L.Nelson@census.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The U.S. Census Bureau plans to request a revision of the current Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance of the Quarterly Services Survey (QSS). The QSS covers employer firms with establishments located in the United States and classified in select service industries as defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The QSS coverage currently includes all or parts of the following NAICS sectors: utilities (excluding government owned); transportation and warehousing (except rail transportation and postal); information; finance and insurance (except funds, trusts, and other financial vehicles); real estate and rental and leasing; professional, scientific, and technical services (except offices of notaries); administrative and support and waste management and remediation services; educational services (except elementary and secondary schools, junior colleges, and colleges, universities, and professional schools); health care and social assistance; arts, entertainment, and recreation; accommodation; and other services (except public administration). The primary estimates produced from the QSS are quarterly estimates of total operating revenue and the percentage of revenue by source. The survey also produces estimates of total operating expenses from tax-exempt firms in industries that have a large not-for-profit component. For hospitals, the survey produces estimates of the number of inpatient days and discharges, and for select industries in

the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector, the survey produces estimates of admissions revenue.

Firms are selected for the QSS using a stratified design with strata defined by industry, tax status, and estimated size based on annual revenue. The sample consists of approximately 19,500 firms and is a subsample of firms from the larger Service Annual Survey (OMB# 0607-0422). Each quarter the QSS sample is updated to reflect the addition of new businesses and the removal of firms that have gone out-of-business.

The Bureau of Economic Analysis uses the survey results as input to its quarterly Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and GDP by industry estimates. The estimates provide the Federal Reserve Board and Council of Economic advisors with timely information to assess current economic performance. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services use the QSS estimates to develop hospital-spending estimates for the National Accounts. Other government and private stakeholders also benefit from a better understanding of important cyclical components of the U.S. service economy.

Starting in 2021, we may ask for additional data on the electronic instrument on a temporary basis to address a new module of business expectations. This request will not be added to the paper forms. Respondents will be asked for forecasts with two different time horizons - a single point estimate one quarter ahead and a one year ahead estimate with five points and corresponding probabilities. For the 2021 Quarter 1 reporting period, QSS respondents would see questions similar, but possibly not identical, to the following drafted questions:

- What is the approximate expected dollar value of revenue you would anticipate for this firm during the quarter ending June 30, 2021?

- Looking ahead to the quarter ending March 31, 2022, what is the approximate dollar value of revenue you would anticipate for this firm during that quarter and what likelihood do you assign to that value?

Leading indicators and forward-looking measures such as forecasts and projections are highly valued for their ability to help decision-makers, businesses, and individuals plan and adjust policies if necessary. Responses to these questions will provide a better understanding of business uncertainty and insight on future business activity. Initially, this pilot collection will request data for four consecutive quarters with the possibility of continuing collection for an additional four quarters.

II. Method of Collection

We will collect this information by Internet, mail, and telephone follow-up. A significant number of QSS respondents receive an initial email with their username and authentication code for submission by Internet. The remaining respondents are either mailed only their username and authentication code for submission by Internet or mailed a full form. Respondents that report via the Internet in any given quarter now have the option to choose how they want to receive forms in the future, i.e. email or mailed form. It should be noted that we phased out the use of facsimiles.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0607-0907.

Form Number(s): QSS-1A, QSS-1E, QSS-1PA, QSS-1PE, QSS-2A, QSS-2E, QSS-3A, QSS-3E, QSS-3SA, QSS-3SE, QSS-4A, QSS-4E, QSS-4FA, QSS-4FE, QSS-4SA, QSS-4SE, QSS-5A, QSS-5E.

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

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations; Not-for-profit institutions.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 19,500 respondents filing a total of 90,000 reports a year. (Some respondents file more than one report quarterly).

Estimated Time Per Response: 20 minutes: QSS-1A, QSS-1E, QSS-1PA, QSS-1PE, QSS-2A, QSS-2E, QSS-3A, QSS-3E, QSS-3SA, QSS-3SE, QSS-5A, QSS-5E.

15 minutes: QSS-4A, QSS-4E, QSS-4FA, QSS-4FE, QSS-4SA, QSS-4SE.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 26,800 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$0. (This is not the cost of respondents' time, but the indirect costs respondents may incur for such things as purchases of specialized software or hardware needed to report, or expenditures for accounting or records maintenance services required specifically by the collection.)

Respondent's Obligation: Voluntary.

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

IV. Request for Comments

We are soliciting public comments to permit the Department/Bureau to: (a) Evaluate whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the time and cost burden for this proposed collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) Evaluate ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) Minimize the reporting burden on those who are to respond, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. We

will include, or summarize, each comment in our request to OMB to approve this ICR. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Sheleen Dumas,

*Department PRA Clearance Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Commerce
Department.*

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