



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Office of the Secretary

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor (DOL) is submitting this Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)-sponsored information collection request (ICR) to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA). Public comments on the ICR are invited.

DATES: The OMB will consider all written comments that agency receives on or before [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to 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.

Comments are invited on: (1) whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) if the information will be processed and used in a timely manner; (3) the accuracy of the agency's estimates of the burden and cost of the collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (4) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information collection; and (5) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to

respond, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Anthony May by telephone at 202-693-4129 (this is not a toll-free number) or by email at DOL_PRA_PUBLIC@dol.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The QCEW program is implementing improvements to the methods used to impute data for missing employer reports starting in October 2020. The current method of imputation estimates the current month's employment or current quarterly wages by applying the change from a year earlier to the previous month's reported employment and/or quarterly wages. A drawback to this procedure is that it uses the data from a year earlier, which may not reflect current economic conditions. BLS anticipates that the number of nonresponding employers will be substantially higher than usual in the second quarter of 2020, as a result of the business response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Existing imputation methods would likely understate the impact of the pandemic on the US economy. BLS has conducted research on improvements to its imputation methodology and will implement these improvements with the first release of data for the second quarter of 2020. The QCEW program is the only Federal statistical program that provides information on establishments, wages, tax contributions and the number of employees subject to State UI laws and the Unemployment Compensation for the Federal Employees program. The consequences of not collecting QCEW data would be grave to the Federal statistical community. The BLS would not have a sampling frame for its establishment surveys; it would not be able to publish as accurate current estimates of employment for the US, States, and metropolitan areas; and it would not be able to publish quarterly census totals of local establishment counts, employment, and wages. The Bureau of Economic Analysis would not be able to publish as accurate personal income data in a timely manner for the U.S., States, and local areas. Finally, the Department of Labor's

Employment Training Administration would not have the information it needs to administer the Unemployment Insurance Program.

For additional substantive information about this ICR, see the related notice published in the *Federal Register* on October 9, 2020 (85 FR 64167).

This information collection is subject to the PRA. A Federal agency generally cannot conduct or sponsor a collection of information, and the public is generally not required to respond to an information collection, unless the OMB approves it and displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. In addition, notwithstanding any other provisions of law, no person shall generally be subject to penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information that does not display a valid OMB Control Number. *See* 5 CFR 1320.5(a) and 1320.6.

DOL seeks PRA authorization for this information collection for three (3) years. OMB authorization for an ICR cannot be for more than three (3) years without renewal. The DOL notes that information collection requirements submitted to the OMB for existing ICRs receive a month-to-month extension while they undergo review.

Agency: DOL-BLS.

Title of Collection: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

OMB Control Number: 1220-0012.

Affected Public: State, local, and tribal governments.

Total Estimated Number of Respondents: 53.

Total Estimated Number of Responses: 212.

Total Estimated Annual Time Burden: 821,500 hours.

Total Estimated Annual Other Costs Burden: \$0.

AUTHORITY: 44 U.S.C. 3507(a)(1)(D).

Dated: February 5, 2021.

Anthony May,

Management and Program Analyst.

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