



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Census Bureau

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

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 extension of the surveys known as the Report of Building or Zoning Permits Issued for New Privately-Owned Housing Units (C-404) and the Survey of Residential Building or Zoning Permit Systems (C-411), 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 Matthew.J.Tucker@census.gov. Please refer to the Building Permits Survey Program in the subject line of your comments. You may also submit comments, identified by Docket Number USBC-2026-0694, 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 William Abriatis, Branch Chief, Residential Construction Branch, 301-763-3686, and william.m.abriatis@census.gov

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The Census Bureau plans to request an extension of the current Office of Management and Budget clearance for the Building Permits Survey Program. This program includes two surveys: the Survey of Residential Building or Zoning Permit Systems (C-411) and the Report of Building or Zoning Permits Issued for New Privately-Owned Housing Units (C-404), also known as the Building Permits Survey (BPS). The C-411 and the C-404 are related collections sharing the same universe called the Active Governments File (AGF). The C-411 is utilized to update the permit issuing status of all jurisdictions in the AGF. The C-404 is primarily used to collect both monthly and annual data on the number of new housing unit permits issued in permit issuing jurisdictions.

The universe of permit-issuing places serves as the universe for the Building Permits Survey (BPS) and the sampling frame for the Survey of Construction (SOC). These two surveys provide widely used measures of construction activity, including the Principal Federal Economic Indicators: New Residential Construction (NRC) and New Residential Sales (NRS). For New Residential Construction, Form C-404 directly collects the data on the number of housing units authorized by building permits. The number of housing units authorized by building permits is also a key component used to estimate other data items in the NRC and NRS releases such as housing units started, housing units completed, and housing units sold. Additionally, building

permits for new private housing units are a component of The Conference Board's Leading Economic Index.

The Building Permits Survey is the only source of statistics on residential construction for states and smaller geographic areas. The Census Bureau uses the detailed geographic data collected from state and local officials on new residential construction authorized by building permits in the development of annual population estimates. These estimates are used by government agencies to allocate funding and other resources to local areas. Policymakers, planners, businesses, and others also use this data to monitor growth, plan for local services, and to develop production and marketing plans.

The Census Bureau uses the C-411 survey, or individual questions from the survey as needed, to obtain information from state and local building permit and zoning officials to update the universe of permit-issuing places. The questions pertain to the legal requirements for issuing building or zoning permits in local jurisdictions and gather information on items such as geographic coverage and types of construction for which permits are issued.

The Census Bureau uses Form C-404 to collect information on changes to the geographic coverage of permit-issuing places, the number and valuation of new residential housing units authorized by building permits, and additional details on residential permits valued at \$2 million or more, including site address and type of building.

II. Method of Collection

Survey of Residential Building or Zoning Permit Systems (C-411):

One of three versions of the survey is sent to a jurisdiction when the Census Bureau needs to verify whether a new permit system has been established or an existing one has changed. The selection is based on the length of time since the jurisdiction last verified their permit issuing status, or on information the Census Bureau obtains from a variety of sources including survey respondents, regional planning councils, and data from the Census Bureau's

Geography Division on newly incorporated jurisdictions. Since 2024, reporting has been done primarily via standard online collection instrument (Centurion).

There are three versions of the survey:

- C-411(M) for municipalities where a new permit system may have been established.
- C-411(C) for counties where new permit systems may have been established.
- C-411(V) for verification of coverage for jurisdictions with existing permit systems.

Prior to 2022, the universe of permit issuing places was updated every 10 years. Before each universe update, The C-411 survey was sent to approximately 20,000 jurisdictions that were designated in our records as non-permit-issuing jurisdictions or permit issuing jurisdictions that needed verification of coverage. In January 2023, the universe began to be updated annually, and more frequent updates are incorporated for non-permit issuing jurisdictions. As a result, the C-411 survey is sent to about 3,200 of the 20,000 jurisdictions that do not issue permits on an annual basis, prioritizing those that have not responded in at least five years.

Report of Building or Zoning Permits Issued for New Privately-Owned Housing Units (C-404):

Respondents may submit their data via Internet or a mailed or faxed form. Some respondents choose to report over the phone or to send proprietary files containing permit information in lieu of returning the form.

The survey universe is comprised of approximately 20,000 local governments that issue building permits. Due to resource availability and the time required to complete the data review and analysis, the Census Bureau collects data from a selection of permit-issuing jurisdictions monthly, and the remainder of the jurisdictions annually. We collect this information monthly for approximately 8,600 permit-issuing jurisdictions. We collect this information annually for the remaining 11,400 permit-issuing jurisdictions.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0607-0094.

Form Number(s): C-404, C-411.

Type of Review: Regular submission, Request for an Extension, without Change, of a Currently Approved Collection.

Affected Public: State and Local governments.

Estimated Number of Respondents: C-404 – 19,987; C-411 – 3,200.

Estimated Time Per Response: C-404 - 8 minutes for the approximately 8,395 monthly respondents who report online, 23 minutes for the approximately 10,307 annual respondents who report via online or physical form. An additional 243 monthly respondents and 1,042 annual respondents choose to report by phone or by sending us custom files and printouts from their permit systems, which we estimate takes only 3 minutes. C-411 – 15 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: C-404 – 17,581 hours; C-411 – 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. Sections 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,

*Departmental PRA Compliance Officer, Office of the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs,
Commerce Department.*

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