

**Information Items for the AEA Committees on Economic Statistics and Government Relations  
March 12, 2021**

1. **OMB requests comment on recommendations from the Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Standards Review Committee for changes to OMB's metropolitan and micropolitan statistical area standards**, including to increase minimum urban area population to qualify as a metropolitan statistical area from 50,000 to 100,000. Under the new proposal, 144 cities would lose their status as Metro areas (<https://apnews.com/article/wisconsin-bismarck-census-2020-north-dakota-sheboygan-ad77e15f0f8cd13b8e398d2ca8339ca7>) Comments are due by **March 19, 2021**: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/19/2021-00988/recommendations-from-the-metropolitan-and-micropolitan-statistical-area-standards-review-committee>
2. **The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) invites public comment by April 5, 2021 on its proposal to conduct periodic Quarterly Census on Employment and Wages (CEW) Business Supplements (QBS) for establishments on a variety of subjects of interest to policymakers and researchers.** The Federal Register Notice is at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/03/2021-02208/information-collection-activities-comment-request>. Andrew Reamer's summary of the issue on EconSpark (<https://www.aeaweb.org/forum/1883/business-supplement-invites-comments-desirability-surveys>) does a great job of explaining the background and the issue at hand.
3. **Executive Order on Data Equity.** This laudable EO attempts to assure that appropriate data are available for evidence-based policy on racism. It contends that "many Federal datasets are not disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, disability, income, veteran status, or other key demographic variables" and that "This lack of data has cascading effects and impedes efforts to measure and advance equity." However, the AEA/NEA session on Measuring the Economic Consequences of Systemic Racism and Discrimination (Written Summary at <https://www.aeaweb.org/content/file?id=14021>); (Audiovisual recording at <https://www.aeaweb.org/conference/2021/aea-session-recordings/player?meetingId=232&recordingId=389>) suggests that serious problems exist even as major surveys do collect racial and ethnic data in association with other factors and outcomes.
4. **COSSA Registration for its virtual social science Advocacy Day is open.** COSSA members (which includes AEA members) are invited to register for COSSA's 2021 virtual Social Science Advocacy Day on April 27 (<https://www.cossa.org/event/2021-advocacy-day/>). Social Science Advocacy Day is the only annual, coordinated advocacy day in support of all of the social and behavioral sciences. The event brings together social scientists and other science advocates from across the country to engage with policymakers. Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors, the registration fee for Advocacy Day is only \$25, but spots are limited, so register soon: <https://cossa.regfox.com/2021-social-science-advocacy-day>.
5. **Biden has appointed highly qualified economists throughout his Administration (More likely to come in future weeks).**
6. **Some interesting takeaways about how statistical agencies and units have adapted their operations under new COVID-19 circumstances:** [https://www.bea.gov/system/files/2021-01/ICSP-COVID-19-Report\\_011521.pdf](https://www.bea.gov/system/files/2021-01/ICSP-COVID-19-Report_011521.pdf)

7. **Census blog notes that identified 2020 Census anomalies provide evidence that ongoing quality evaluations are working as hoped.** [https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2021/03/finding\\_anomalies.html](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2021/03/finding_anomalies.html).