The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) uses the Consumer Expenditure Surveys to gather information on expenditures, income, and other related subjects. BLS requests permission from OMB to make changes to the two Consumer Expenditure (CE) Surveys: The Quarterly Interview Survey (CEQ) and the Diary Survey (CED). Several changes will be implemented in CEQ including the addition of a veterans question, outlet questions, and two studies. In one study, CE will test the effect of providing respondents with a Spending Summary Report (SSR) on respondent cooperation and survey experience. In the other study, CE will test the addition of a CEQ Worksheet to be fielded April through May 2018 and October through December 2019.

AEA members are encouraged to:

- provide opinions on the value of the CEQ and CED for economic research;
- comment on the data collection instruments and methods; and
- suggest changes that would enhance data quality, value, and accessibility and lower respondent burden and federal cost.

Federal Register notice: January 10, 2017 (includes instructions for submitting comments)

- Information Collection Request (ICR) submitted to OMB, including:
  - Survey instruments
  - Supporting Statement
- Due date: January 17, 2018
- More information: Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Office of Prices and Living Conditions, (202) 691-6900; cexinfo@bls.gov

Information on ICR Process:

- By law, each data collection carried out by a federal agency must be cleared by OMB. Through the Federal Register notice, Census is announcing that it has submitted a request to OMB for clearance to conduct the 2017-19 ABS and offers the public a 30-day opportunity to submit comments to OMB.
- After the close of the 30-day comment period, OMB will make its decision.
Guidance to AEA Members on Preparing Comments:

- Can comment on any aspect of the proposed data collection. Possible topics, for instance, include needs, uses, methodology, design, cost, schedule, and consultation with data users.
- May frame comments on specific topics in any way, such as:
  - assessments – identifying what you do and do not like and support
  - suggestions – for how Census might proceed in this or future collections
  - requests – for example, for a change in the design of the survey instrument, to be consulted in the future, to carry out research on an alternative approach
  - observations – for example, implications of the sample size for statistical reliability
- May propose that OMB incorporate a request in its “terms of clearance.” For instance, you could suggest as a term of clearance that Census research the efficacy of an alternative set of questions and report back to OMB in a year on the results.

Additional AEA Resources:

- [A Primer on How to Respond to Calls for Comment on Federal Data Collections](#)
- After reviewing materials, you may provide your observations, critiques, and requests to AEASstat staff Andrew Reamer at areamer@gwu.edu and he will organize them into a draft letter for your review. Prof. Reamer is experienced in crafting comment letters for impact.