



Committee on Economic Statistics

Federal Data Collection Comment Opportunity for AEA Members

Quarterly Services Survey

Census Bureau

Comments Due March 30, 2018

The Census Bureau plans to ask OMB to approve the continued implementation of the [Quarterly Services Survey](#) (QSS), a principal economic indicator series that produces, for selected service industries, quarterly estimates of total operating revenue and the percentage of revenue by class of customer (government, business, consumers, and individuals). The survey also produces estimates of total operating expenses from tax-exempt firms in industries that have a large not-for-profit component. In addition, for hospital services, the survey estimates the number of inpatient days and discharges. The sample includes approximately 19,500 service businesses with paid employees that operate in the covered sectors.

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).

Census indicates “The submission for 2018 should be very similar with minor changes to reflect the removal of some forms and their associated detail revenue items. . . .”

AEA members are encouraged to:

- provide opinions on the value of the QSS 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 29, 2018](#) (includes instructions for submitting comments)

- [Current survey forms](#) and [Supporting Statement](#)
 - Due date for comments: March 30, 2018
 - Point of contact: Aidan Smith, U.S. Census Bureau, 8K175, Washington, DC 20233-6500, 301-763-2972, or Aidan.D.Smith@census.gov
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Information on Information Collection Request (ICR) Process:

- By law, each data collection carried out by a federal agency must be cleared by OMB. Through this *Federal Register* notice, BLS is announcing that it intends to submit a request to OMB for clearance to conduct a revised LAUS Program and offers the public a 60-day opportunity to submit comments.
- After the close of the 60-day comment period, BLS will prepare and submit its request to OMB. That request will summarize and respond to each of the public comments it received.

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 BLS 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 BLS 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 AEASTat 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.