

AEASat
Annual Refiling Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics
Public Comment Opportunity

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) proposes to for revisions to the [Annual Refiling Survey](#) (ARS). The primary purpose of the ARS is to verify or to correct the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code assigned to establishments as well as to obtain accurate mailing and physical location addresses of establishments.

BLS proposes to increase efforts to collect information from more establishments that are in NAICS Code 999999. These are unclassified establishments (NCA) for which there is no information currently available about their industrial activities. Online collection has made it easier to pursue data from unclassified establishments.

Work is proceeding on a text analysis tool called the NAICS autocoding tool. The tool will utilize inputs such as Legal and Trade Names, employer-provided information submitted via ARS, web-written descriptions, and other pertinent items to determine the likelihood of a particular NAICS code appropriate for an establishment.

AEA members are encouraged to describe the value of the ARS for economic research; comment on the proposed revision; and suggest additional changes that would enhance data quality, value, and accessibility and lower respondent burden and federal cost.

Federal Register notice: [December 1, 2017](#) (includes instructions for submitting comments)

- [Information Collection Request](#) (ICR) submitted to OMB, including:
 - [Survey instruments](#)
 - [Supporting Statement](#)
- Due date: January 2, 2018
- More information: Larry Huff, Chief, Statistical Methods Division, Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics, 202-691-6362, Huff_L@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, BLS is announcing that it has submitted a request to OMB for clearance to conduct the ARS 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 on Preparing Comments:

- AEA members may 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.
- AEA members may frame their comments on specific topics in any way, such as:
 - assessments – identifying what they 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
- AEA members may consider proposing that OMB incorporate a request in its “terms of clearance.” For instance, a member 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.

For assistance in preparing comments, feel free to contact AEASat staff—Andrew Reamer (Research Professor, George Washington Institute of Public Policy, George Washington University) at areamer@gwu.edu or (202) 994-7866.