



## Committee on Economic Statistics

# Federal Data Collection Comment Opportunity for AEA Members

## Consumer Expenditure Surveys: Quarterly Interview and Diary

### U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Comments Due January 17, 2018

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](mailto:cexinfo@bls.gov)

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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 AEASat staff Andrew Reamer at [areamer@gwu.edu](mailto: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.