

greater than three times that projected. Therefore, it was necessary to retroactively reduce the Fiscal Year 1995 rate from the initially announced level of \$.60 to \$.5838 in order to ensure reimbursement for all eligible Fiscal Year 1995 meals. This rate adjustment was announced via a memorandum to regional offices dated June 21, 1995. The regional offices, in turn, notified State agencies of the rate adjustment.

There are no discernible historical patterns or trends in NPE meal service from which this unprecedented increase could have been anticipated. Given this unpredictability, the Department conservatively established the adjusted rate at \$.5838 in order to virtually eliminate the possibility of a further Fiscal Year 1995 rate reduction.

Final Fiscal Year 1995 meal count data indicate that, while the program experienced unprecedented growth during the first half of the fiscal year, the number of meals served during the last two quarters fell below Departmental projections. Therefore, based on final Fiscal Year 1995 meal counts, the Department has concluded that the Fiscal Year 1995 appropriation will support an upward adjustment from the current rate of \$.5838 to a per-meal reimbursement rate of \$.5969. This final rate applies to all eligible meals served during Fiscal Year 1995 and claimed in a timely manner.

Fiscal Year 1996 Initial Level of Assistance

The Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-37) imposed, for Fiscal Year 1996, the same NPE rate management requirements as applied to Fiscal Year 1994. That is, Title IV, Domestic Food Programs, of the Appropriations Act provides that " * * * a maximum rate of reimbursement to States will be established by the Secretary, subject to reduction if obligations would exceed the amount of available funds, with any unobligated funds to remain available only for obligation in the fiscal year beginning October 1, 1996." Thus, unlike in Fiscal Year 1995, the Department cannot increase the initially announced Fiscal Year 1996 rate, and can decrease this rate only if it cannot be sustained throughout the year.

It is the Department's goal to establish the highest rate that can be sustained throughout the fiscal year so as to maximize the flow of program funds to States during the fiscal year. However, the Department wants also to minimize the possibility of a rate reduction and the hardship it causes to program

operators. In order to guard against the need for a reduction, the Department, once again, has projected a slightly higher rate of growth in meal service than occurred in the preceding fiscal year. Based on its projections, the Department announces an initial per-meal support level of \$.5864, which will not be increased, and which can be decreased only if necessary to keep expenditures within the limit of the \$150 million NPE appropriation established by Pub. L. 104-37. Any funds not paid out for Fiscal Year 1996 reimbursement will, in accordance with legislative mandate, be carried over into Fiscal Year 1997 and expended in per-meal reimbursement for that year. In the unlikely event that the rate needs to be decreased, States will be notified directly.

Dated: March 8, 1996.
William E. Ludwig,
Administrator, Food and Consumer Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bureau of the Census

1997 Economic Census Covering Utilities; Transportation; Information; Finance and Insurance; and Real Estate, Rental and Leasing Sectors

ACTION: Proposed Agency Information Collection Activity; Comment Request.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before May 17, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Linda Engelmeier, Acting Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 5327, 14th and Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20230.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument(s) and instructions should be directed to Sidney O. Marcus III, Bureau of the Census, Room 2784, Building 3, Washington, DC 20233 on (301) 457-2786.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The Census Bureau is the preeminent collector and provider of timely, relevant, and useful data about the people and economy of the United States. Economic data are the Census Bureau's primary program commitment during nondecennial census years. The economic census, conducted every five years under authority of Title 13 U.S.C., is the primary source of facts about the structure and functioning of the Nation's economy and features unique industry and geographic detail. Economic census statistics serve as part of the framework for the national accounts and provide essential information for government, business, and the general public. The 1997 Economic Census will cover virtually every sector of the U.S. economy including more than 923,000 establishments with payroll in the utilities; transportation; information; finance and insurance; and real estate, rental and leasing sectors. However, approximately thirteen percent of establishments will not be required to file separate reports because they will be included in consolidated company reports; for explanation see selection procedure for establishments of multi-establishment firms below.

II. Method of Collection

Establishments in these sectors of the economic census will be selected for mailout from a frame given by the Census Bureau's Standard Statistical Establishment List. To be eligible for selection, an establishment must be: (i) classified in the utilities; transportation; information; finance and insurance; or real estate, rental and leasing sectors; (ii) an active operating establishment of a multi-establishment firm, or a single-establishment firm with payroll; and (iii) located in one of the 50 states or the District of Columbia. Mail selection procedures will distinguish the following groups of establishments:

A. Establishments of Multi-Establishment Firms

Selection procedures will assign all eligible establishments of multi-establishment firms to the mail component of the potential respondent universe, except for those in selected industries in utilities, transportation, information, and finance and insurance. In these selected industries, where revenue and certain other operating data are not easily attributable to individual establishments, division- or firm-level organizations are asked to report kind of activity, payroll, and employment for

several establishments, and other required data at a more aggregate level on a consolidated report form.

We estimate that the census mail canvass for 1997 will include approximately 230,000 establishment and consolidated reports for multi-establishment firms in these sectors.

B. Single-Establishment Firms With Payroll

In selected industries, small single-establishment firms are selected for the mail canvass on a sample basis. As an initial step in the selection process, we will conduct a study of the potential respondent universe. The study of potential respondents will produce a set of industry-specific payroll cutoffs that we will use to distinguish large versus small single-establishment firms within each industry or kind of business. This payroll size distinction will affect selection as follows:

1. Large Single-Establishment Firms

Selection procedures will assign large single-establishment firms having annualized payroll (from Federal administrative records) that equals or exceeds the cutoff for their industry to the mail component of the potential respondent universe. We estimate that the census mail canvass for 1997 will include approximately 340,000 firms in this category.

2. Small Single-Establishment Firms

Selection procedures will assign a sample of small single-establishment firms having annualized payroll below the cutoff for their industry to the mail component of the potential respondent universe. Sampling strata and corresponding probabilities of selection will be determined by a study of the potential respondent universe conducted shortly before mail selection operations begin. We estimate that the census mail canvass for 1997 will include approximately 32,000 firms in this category.

All remaining single-establishment firms with payroll will be represented in the census by data from Federal administrative records. Generally, we will not include these small employers in the census mail canvass. However, administrative records sometimes have fundamental deficiencies that make them unsuitable for use in producing detailed industry statistics by geographic area. When we find such a deficiency, we will mail the firm a census short form to collect basic information needed to resolve the problem. We estimate that the census mail canvass for 1997 will include

approximately 198,000 firms in this category.

III. Data

This information collected from businesses in these sectors of the economic census will produce basic statistics by kind of business for number of establishments, revenue, payroll, and employment. It also will yield a variety of subject statistics, including revenue by source and other industry-specific measures. Primary strategies for reducing burden in Census Bureau economic data collections are to reengineer program methods and requirements, and to increase electronic reporting through broader use of computerized self-administered census questionnaires, electronic data interchange, and other electronic data collection methods.

OMB Number: Not Available.

Form Number: The forms used to collect information from businesses in these sectors of the economic census are tailored to specific business practices and are too numerous to list separately in this notice. You can obtain information on the proposed content of the forms by calling Sidney O. Marcus III on (301) 457-2786.

Type of Review: Regular Review.

Affected Public: Businesses or Other for Profit Institution, Non-Profit Institutions, Small Businesses or Organizations, and State or Local Governments.

Estimated Number of Respondents:

Utilities (Standard form)—23,800
Utilities (Short form)—(none)
Transportation (Standard form)—131,900
Transportation (Short form)—10,500
Information (Standard form)—78,100
Information (Short form)—(none)
Finance and Insurance (Standard form)—156,300
Finance and Insurance (Short form)—75,800
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (Standard form)—154,500
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (Short form)—83,200
Estimated total number of respondents for these five sectors: 714,100

Estimated Time Per Response:

Utilities (Standard form)—1.8 hours
Utilities (Short form)—(none)
Transportation (Standard form)—1.1 hours
Transportation (Short form)—0.2 hours
Information (Standard form)—1.5 hours
Information (Short form)—(none)
Finance and Insurance (Standard form)—1.4 hours
Finance and Insurance (Short form)—0.3 hours

Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (Standard form)—1.2 hours

Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (Short form)—0.2 hours

Estimated Total Burden Hours:

Utilities (Standard form)—42,800

Utilities (Short form)—(none)

Transportation (Standard form)—145,100

Transportation (Short form)—2,100

Information (Standard form)—117,200

Information (Short form)—(none)

Finance and Insurance (Standard form)—218,800

Finance and Insurance (Short form)—22,700

Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (Standard form)—185,400

Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (Short form)—16,600

Estimated total burden hours for these five sectors: 750,700

Estimated Total Cost: The cost to the government for this work is included in the total cost over five years of the 1997 Economic Census, estimated to be \$218 million.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: March 13, 1996.

Linda Engelmeier,

Acting Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Office of Management and Organization.

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