

Form Number(s): ABS–1 Worksheet, ABS–2 Worksheet.

Type of Request: New collection.

Number of Respondents: 850,000.

Average Hours per Response: 52 minutes.

Burden Hours: 735,934.

Needs and Uses: In an effort to improve the measurement of business dynamics in the United States, the Census Bureau plans to conduct the Annual Business Survey (ABS). The ABS is a new survey designed to combine Census Bureau firm-level collections to reduce respondent burden, increase data quality, reduce operational costs, and operate more efficiently. The ABS replaces the five-year Survey of Business Owners (SBO) for employer businesses, the Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs (ASE), and the Business R&D and Innovation for Microbusinesses (BRDI–M) surveys. ABS estimates will include the number of firms, sales/receipts, annual payroll, and employment by gender, ethnicity, race, and veteran status as well as R&D and Innovation and various other relevant topics. The ABS will be conducted jointly by the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) within the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Census Bureau for five reference years (2017–2021).

The ABS universe includes all nonfarm employer businesses filing Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax forms as individual proprietorships, partnerships, or any type of corporation, and with receipts of \$1,000 or more. The ABS will sample approximately 850,000 employer businesses in 2017 and approximately 300,000 employer businesses in years 2018–2021. The sample is stratified by state, frame, and industry. The Census Bureau selects certain companies with certainty based on volume of sales, payroll, number of paid employees or NAICS. All certainty cases are sure to be selected and represent only themselves.

The ABS is designed to incorporate new content each survey year based on topics of relevance. Each year a new module of questions is submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for approval. Topics for the 2017 ABS include: Owner & Business Characteristics; R&D from microbusiness; Innovation; and Technology.

The ABS collection is electronic only. Those selected for the survey receive an initial letter informing the respondents of their requirement to complete the survey as well as instructions on accessing the survey. The 2017 ABS initial mailout is scheduled for June

2018. Responses will be due approximately 40 days from initial mailout. Select respondents will receive a due date reminder approximately one week before responses are due. Additionally, there will be two follow-up letter mailings to nonrespondents after the due date. Select nonrespondents may receive a certified mailing for the second follow-up if needed. Closeout of mail operations is scheduled for December 2018. Upon the close of the collection period, the response data will be processed, edited, reviewed, tabulated, and released publicly.

Statistics from the ABS will be used by government program officials, industry organization leaders, economic and social analysts, business entrepreneurs, and domestic and foreign researchers in academia, business, and government. Estimates produced on owner demographic data may be used to assess business assistance needs, allocate available program resources, and create a framework for planning, directing, and assessing programs that promote the activities of disadvantaged groups; to assess minority-owned businesses by industry and area and to educate industry associations, corporations, and government entities; to analyze business operations in comparison to similar firms, compute market share, and assess business growth and future prospects. Estimates produced on research and development and innovation may be used to compare R&D costs across industries, determine where R&D activity is conducted geographically, and identify the types of businesses with R&D; to contribute to the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) system of national accounts; to increase investments in research and development, strengthen education, and encourage entrepreneurship; and to compare business innovation in the United States to that of other countries, including those in the European Union.

Additionally, the data will help provide insight into the technology sector based on how businesses respond to questions about technology usage and approximate costs of technology usage.

Historical ASE and SBO data have been widely used by private firms and individuals to evaluate their own businesses and markets. The ABS will be able to provide most of the same continuity as previous statistics, with enhanced content, to provide a more comprehensive view of domestic employer businesses, their owners and corresponding characteristics and activities. Additional examples of data use include:

- The Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) to assess business assistance needs and allocate available program resources.

- Local government commissions on small and disadvantaged businesses to establish and evaluate contract procurement practices.

- Federal, state and local government agencies as a framework for planning, directing and assessing programs that promote the activities of disadvantaged groups.

- The National Women's Business Council to assess the state of women's business ownership for policymakers, researchers, and the public at large.

- Consultants and researchers to analyze long-term economic and demographic shifts, and differences in ownership and performance among geographic areas.

- Individual business owners to analyze their operations in comparison to similar firms, compute their market share, and assess their growth and future prospects.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit.

Frequency: Annually.

Respondent's Obligation: Mandatory.

Legal Authority: Title 13 United States Code, Sections 8(b), 131, and 182, Title 42 United States Code, Section 1861–76 (National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended), and Section 505 within the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 authorize this collection. Sections 224 and 225 of Title 13 United States Code requires response from sampled firms.

This information collection request may be viewed at www.reginfo.gov. Follow the instructions to view Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov or fax to (202) 395–5806.

Sheleen Dumas,

Departmental PRA Lead, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 2017–28012 Filed 12–27–17; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce will submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of

information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act.

Agency: U.S. Census Bureau.

Title: Survey of Housing Starts, Sales & Completions.

OMB Control Number: 0607-0110.

Form Number(s): SOC-Q1/SF.1, SCO-Q1/MF.1.

Type of Request: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Number of Respondents: 19,440.

Average Hours per Response: 5 minutes.

Burden Hours: 150,066.

Needs and Uses: The U.S. Census Bureau is requesting a revision and extension of the currently approved collection for the Survey of Housing Starts, Sales, and Completions, otherwise known as the Survey of Construction (SOC). Government agencies and private companies use statistics from SOC to monitor and evaluate the large and dynamic housing construction industry. Data for two Principal Federal Economic Indicators are produced from the SOC: New Residential Construction (housing starts and housing completions) and New Residential Sales. In addition, a number of other statistical series are produced, including extensive information on the physical characteristics of new residential buildings, and indexes measuring rates of inflation in the price of new buildings. The collection of data on housing units sold and completed and physical characteristics is funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) via a reimbursable agreement with the Census Bureau. HUD uses data on housing market conditions to inform its policies. These statistics are based on a sample of residential buildings in permit-issuing places and a road canvass in a sample of land areas not covered by building permit systems.

The respondents are homebuilders, real estate agents, rental agents, or new homeowners of sampled residential buildings. Field Representatives contact respondents multiple times based on the number of projects in the sample and the number of months required to complete the project (usually about 8 months).

After discussions with HUD and other key data users, we identified one new data item on ceiling height to be added to the single-family questionnaire.

The Census Bureau uses the information collected in the SOC to publish estimates of the number of new residential housing units started, under construction, completed, and the number of new houses sold and for sale. The Census Bureau also publishes many financial and physical characteristics of

new housing units. Government agencies use these statistics to evaluate economic policy, measure progress towards the national housing goal, make policy decisions, and formulate legislation. For example, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System uses data from this survey to evaluate the effect of interest rates in this interest-rate sensitive area of the economy. The Bureau of Economic Analysis uses the data in developing the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The private sector uses the information for estimating the demand for building materials and the many products used in new housing and to schedule production, distribution, and sales efforts. The financial community uses the data to estimate the demand for short-term (construction loans) and long-term (mortgages) borrowing.

Affected Public: Individuals; Businesses.

Frequency: Monthly.

Respondent's Obligation: Voluntary.

Legal Authority: Title 13, United States Code, Sections 131 and 182.

This information collection request may be viewed at www.reginfo.gov. Follow the instructions to view Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov or fax to (202) 395-5806.

Sheleen Dumas,

Departmental PRA Lead, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bureau of Industry and Security

In the Matter of: Joseph Esequiel-Gonzalez, Inmate Number: 04655-479, FCI Bastrop Federal Correctional Institution, P.O. Box 1010, Bastrop, TX 78602; Order Denying Export Privileges

On August 30, 2016, in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas, Joseph Esequiel-Gonzalez (“Esequiel-Gonzalez”) was convicted of violating Section 38 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2778 (2012)) (“AECA”). Specifically, Esequiel-Gonzalez was convicted of knowingly and willfully exporting, attempting to export, and causing to be exported from the United States to Mexico a .380 caliber pistol, which was designated as

a defense article on the United States Munitions List, without the required U.S. Department of State license. Esequiel-Gonzalez was sentenced to 55 months in prison, three years of supervised release, and a special assessment of \$100.

Section 766.25 of the Export Administration Regulations (“EAR” or “Regulations”)¹ provides, in pertinent part, that “[t]he Director of the Office of Exporter Services, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Export Enforcement, may deny the export privileges of any person who has been convicted of a violation of the EAA [Export Administration Act], the EAR, or any order, license, or authorization issued thereunder; any regulation, license or order issued under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701-1706); 18 U.S.C. 793, 794 or 798; section 4(b) of the Internal Security Act of 1950 (50 U.S.C. 783(b)); or section 38 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2778).” 15 CFR 766.25(a); *see also* Section 11(h) of the EAA, 50 U.S.C. 4610(h). The denial of export privileges under this provision may be for a period of up to 10 years from the date of the conviction. 15 CFR 766.25(d); *see also* 50 U.S.C. 4610(h). In addition, Section 750.8 of the Regulations states that the Bureau of Industry and Security’s Office of Exporter Services may revoke any Bureau of Industry and Security (“BIS”) licenses previously issued pursuant to the Export Administration Act (“EAA” or “the Act”) or the Regulations in which the person had an interest at the time of his/her conviction.

BIS has received notice of Esequiel-Gonzalez’s conviction for violating Section 38 of the AECA, and has provided notice and an opportunity for Esequiel-Gonzalez to make a written submission to BIS, as provided in Section 766.25 of the Regulations. BIS has not received a submission from Esequiel-Gonzalez.

Based upon my review and consultations with BIS’s Office of Export Enforcement, including its Director, and the facts available to BIS, I have decided to deny Esequiel-

¹ The Regulations are currently codified in the Code of Federal Regulations at 15 CFR parts 730-774 (2017). The Regulations issued pursuant to the Export Administration Act (50 U.S.C. 4601-4623 (Supp. III 2015) (available at <http://uscode.house.gov>)) (“EAA” or “the Act”). Since August 21, 2001, the Act has been in lapse and the President, through Executive Order 13222 of August 17, 2001 (3 CFR, 2001 Comp. 783 (2002)), which has been extended by successive Presidential Notices, the most recent being that of August 15, 2017 (82 FR 39005 (Aug. 16, 2017)), has continued the Regulations in effect under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701, *et seq.* (2012)).