

household (Person Question No. 20) and their relationships to each other (Person Question No. 2), the Census Bureau remains sensitive to these criticisms

More than 100 supporters of retaining the marital history questions mentioned their utility for research into marital status changes over time and they correctly noted that there is currently no other national source of the marital history information. As a result, many commenters felt they would not be able to compare marriage characteristics and patterns with other nations in the same depth that is possible today. Similarly, without these questions, the commenters felt that the analysis of changes in marriage events (especially those due to changing societal values and pressures or policy changes) would be less robust. In particular, comments focused on 6 research areas that would be more difficult to analyze without the marital history questions:

- Family formation and stability (23)
- Patterns/trends of marriage and divorce (168)
- Marital effects on earnings, education and employment (45)
- Marital effects on child wellbeing (6)
- Same-sex marriages, civil unions and partnerships (70)
- New government policy effects on marriage (9)

Because the initial analysis of Person Question Nos. 21–23 on marital history did not uncover any evidence that data from these questions were “Required” for federal use at sub-state geographies, those questions received a lower benefit score than many other ACS questions. However, in deference to the very large number (1,367) of comments received on the Census Bureau proposal to eliminate those questions, the Census Bureau plans to retain those questions on the 2016 ACS.

The Census Bureau takes very seriously respondent concerns and recognizes that the Content Review and the resulting, proposed question changes discussed above are only initial steps to addressing them. The Census Bureau has implemented an extensive action plan on addressing respondent burden and concerns. The work completed, and the comments received, on the 2014 Content Review provide a foundation for ongoing and future efforts to reduce burden and concerns. In addition to the immediate content changes (proposed above), the Census Bureau is also currently testing the language on the survey materials that may cause concern such as reminding people that their responses are required by law. In order to be responsive to these concerns about the prominence of

the mandatory message on the envelopes, we are conducting research with a subset of ACS respondents in May 2015. Over the summer, we will work with external methodological experts to test other revisions of the ACS mail materials to check respondent perceptions of the softened references to the mandatory nature of participation in the ACS. The preliminary results of those tests will be available in the fall, and the Census Bureau will make changes to the 2016 ACS mail materials based on those results.

Concurrently we also are identifying additional questions that we may only need to ask intermittently, rather than each month or year. The current ACS sample design asks all of the survey questions from all selected households in order to produce estimates each year for small geographies and small populations. However, during the Content Review we learned about over 300 data needs that federal agencies require to implement their missions. We see several potential opportunities to either include some questions periodically, or ask a smaller subset of ACS respondents in cases where those agencies do not need certain data annually. The Census Bureau plans to engage the federal agencies and external experts on this topic during 2015. In addition, we need to assess the operational and statistical issues associated with alternate designs. The alternate designs will result in a reduction in the number of questions asked of individual households.

We are also conducting research on substituting the direct collection of information with the use of information already provided to the government. It is possible that the Census Bureau could use administrative records from federal and commercial sources in lieu of asking particular questions on the ACS.

Lastly, we are examining our approaches to field collection to reduce the number of in-person contact attempts while preserving data quality. For example, based on research conducted in 2012, we implemented changes in 2013 which led to an estimated reduction of approximately 1.2 million call attempts per year, while sustaining the 97 percent response rate for the survey overall. For the person visit operation, we are researching a reduction in the number of contact attempts. We plan to field test this change in August 2015. If successful we would implement nationwide in spring 2016.

We will continue to look for other opportunities to reduce respondent burden while maintaining survey quality. Taken together, these measures

will make a significant impact on reducing respondent burden in the ACS. *Affected Public:* Individuals or households.

*Frequency:* Response to the ACS is on a one-time basis.

*Respondent's Obligation:* Mandatory. *Legal Authority:* Title 13, United States Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221.

This information collection request may be viewed at [www.reginfo.gov](http://www.reginfo.gov). Follow the instructions to view the 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](mailto:OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov) or fax to (202)395–5806.

Dated: April 22, 2015.

**Glenna Mickelson,**

*Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.*

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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 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35).

*Agency:* Bureau of Industry and Security.

*Title:* Miscellaneous Short Supply Activities.

*Form Number(s):* N/A.

*OMB Control Number:* 0694–0102.

*Type of Request:* Regular.

*Burden Hours:* 201 hours.

*Number of Respondents:* 1 respondent.

*Average Hours Per Response:* 201 hours per response.

*Needs and Uses:* This information collection is comprised of two rarely used short supply activities: “Registration Of U.S. Agricultural Commodities For Exemption From Short Supply Limitations On Export”, and “Petitions For The Imposition Of Monitoring Or Controls On Recyclable Metallic materials; Public Hearings.” These activities are statutory in nature and, therefore, must remain a part of BIS’s information collection budget authorization.

*Affected Public:* Businesses and other for-profit institutions.

*Frequency:* On occasion.

*Respondent's Obligation:* Required to obtain benefits.

This information collection request may be viewed at [www.reginfo.gov](http://www.reginfo.gov). Follow the instructions to view Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

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

Dated: April 23, 2015.

**Glenna Mickelson,**

*Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### International Trade Administration

#### Establishment of a Ready Applicant Pool for Department of Commerce Trade Missions

**AGENCY:** International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Department of Commerce (Department), International Trade Administration (ITA), is establishing a Ready Applicant Pool initiative, the Ready Applicant Pool (RAP), for organizations and companies that would like to receive information directly from the Department, when it organizes a trade mission aligned with the products, services, technologies, sectors, target markets or goals of the applicant. Applicants willing and interested to send a high-level representative to participate on an expedited trade mission to any location, at any time, on very short notice are especially encouraged to apply for the RAP. Applications to join the RAP can be found at [http://www.export.gov/trademissions/eg\\_main\\_023185.asp](http://www.export.gov/trademissions/eg_main_023185.asp) and will be accepted at any time.

**DATES:** The RAP is established as of April 28, 2015. Applications may be submitted at any time at [http://www.export.gov/trademissions/eg\\_main\\_023185.asp](http://www.export.gov/trademissions/eg_main_023185.asp). Applications will be evaluated quarterly and those accepted will be notified as soon as possible. Applicants will be selected for the current RAP term and will need to reapply when the term ends on December 31, 2016. Each term will last two years.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

The United States Department of Commerce (the Department),

International Trade Administration (ITA), is establishing a Ready Applicant Pool (RAP) initiative for companies and organizations that would like to receive information directly from the Department when it organizes a trade mission aligned with the products, services, technology, sectors, target markets or goals of the applicant. The program is entitled the Ready Applicant Pool (RAP).

One of the primary goals of the RAP is to provide a fast and efficient method for the Department to recruit for expedited trade missions. Expedited trade missions will utilize expedited procedures, web-based notification, and will have short application deadlines. Because of their expedited nature, the Department will rely heavily on the members of the RAP for recruitment, especially those RAP members that are willing to send a high-level representative to participate on a mission to any location, at any time, on very short notice. The Department may also rely on appropriate RAP members in its recruitment for other trade missions. Specifically, the Department intends to directly contact those RAP members with products, services, technologies, target sectors, target markets or goals that align with a particular trade mission.

The benefits of joining the RAP are: (1) To ensure the Department will contact the current point-of-contact when it organizes a trade mission that it determines is aligned with the RAP member's products, services, technologies, target sectors, target markets or goals; (2) to speed up the trade mission selection process by providing the Department with the information necessary for pre-screening with respect to participation generally in its trade missions and (3) to indicate in advance a willingness to apply for and potentially participate in expedited trade missions to any location at any time, possibly on very short notice.

Any member of the U.S. business community may apply to become a member of the RAP. The U.S. business community consists of corporations, partnerships, and other business associations created under the laws of the United States or of any state; U.S. citizens; state or local economic development or international trade office or agency; trade association and other non-profit organizations that represent a sector or sectors of the U.S. economy; university competitiveness programs; and any other U.S. entity seeking to promote United States business interests abroad.

The criteria for evaluating applicants for selection for the RAP are:

- Whether the applicant will be a suitable representative of the U.S. industry sector in which it operates;
- The applicant's potential for helping to advance Department of Commerce strategic priorities;
- The applicant's past, present, and prospective business activities abroad;
- The applicant's conduct on past trade missions; and
- Whether the applicant is willing to send a high-level representative to participate on an expedited trade mission to any location, at any time, on very short notice.

The last criterion will not be dispositive for RAP selection but it will be weighted significantly in selection for the RAP. Applicants that cannot fulfill this criterion will not be excluded from the RAP.

Applicants selected for the RAP will be contacted directly by the Department when it organizes a trade mission aligned with the products, services, technologies, target sectors, target markets or goals of the applicant. The Department will have up-to-date contact information for RAP members, ensuring that trade mission information reaches the correct company contact. When contacted, RAP members will be given step-by-step instructions on how to apply for the mission. Selection for the RAP does not guarantee or assure selection for a particular trade mission. But, RAP members are pre-screened with respect to participation generally in Department trade missions.

Applications for the RAP may be submitted at any time at [http://www.export.gov/trademissions/eg\\_main\\_023185.asp](http://www.export.gov/trademissions/eg_main_023185.asp). They will be evaluated on a quarterly basis and those accepted will be notified as soon as possible. Once selected, the Department will reach out to the RAP member for updated contact information every six months. This ensures that the Department has current information about the applicant's products, services, technologies, target sectors, target markets and goals. The RAP term will end every two years. The first RAP term will begin immediately and conclude on December 31, 2016. At that time, all members will be required to reapply in order to gain membership for the following term (January 1, 2017—December 31, 2018). Applications received after July 1, 2016 will be reviewed for both the first and second cohorts of the RAP.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Frank Spector, Acting Director, Trade