

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**Bureau of Labor Statistics****Proposed Collection; Comment Request****ACTION:** Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, conducts a pre-clearance consultation program to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA95) (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). This program helps to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. Currently, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is soliciting comments concerning the proposed revision of the "Mass Layoff Statistics (MLS) Program Survey." A copy of the proposed information collection request (ICR) can be obtained by contacting the individual listed below in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted to the office listed in the **ADDRESSES** section below on or before September 6, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Amy A. Hobby, BLS Clearance Officer, Division of Management Systems, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Room 4080, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE., Washington, DC 20212. Ms. Hobby can be reached on 202-691-7628. (This is not a toll free number.)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Amy A. Hobby, BLS Clearance Officer, telephone number 202-691-7628. (See **ADDRESSES** section.)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**I. Background**

Section 309(2)(a)(1)(A)(iii) of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) states that the Secretary of Labor shall oversee development, maintenance, and continuous improvements of the program to measure the incidence of, industrial and geographical location of, and number of workers displaced by, permanent layoffs and plant closings. Prior to the WIA, section 462(e) of Public Law 97-300, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), provided that the Secretary of Labor develop and maintain statistical data relating to

permanent mass layoffs and plant closings and issue an annual report. The report includes, at a minimum, the number of plant closings and mass layoffs, and the number of workers affected. The data are summarized by geographic area and industry.

The Mass Layoff Statistics (MLS) program uses a standardized, automated approach to identify, describe, and track the impact of major job cutbacks. The program utilizes, to the greatest degree possible, existing Unemployment Insurance (UI) records and computerized data files, supplemented by direct employer contact. Its major features include:

- The identification of major layoffs and closings through initial UI claims filed against the identified employer;
- The use of existing files on claimants to obtain basic demographic and economic characteristics on the individual;
- The telephone contact of those employers meeting mass layoff criteria to obtain specific information on the nature of the layoff and characteristics of the establishment;
- The identification of the continuing impact of the mass layoff on individuals by matching affected initial claimants with persons in claims status;
- The measurement of the incidence of the exhaustion of regular state UI benefits by affected workers; and,
- The identification and quantifying the effects that extended mass layoffs have on the movement of work.

In the program, State Workforce Agencies (SWAs) submit one report each quarter, and a preliminary, summary report each month. These computerized reports contain information from State administrative files and information obtained from those employers meeting the program criteria of a mass layoff.

Congress has provided for the implementation of the MLS program by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) through the Fiscal Years 1984-1992 appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and related agencies. The program was not operational in Fiscal Years 1993 and 1994. Program operation resumed in Fiscal Year 1995 with funds provided by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA). Beginning in fiscal year 2004, funding for the MLS program became part of the Bureau of Labor Statistics permanent budget. Also in 2004, the scope of the MLS program was redefined to cover only the private nonfarm economy for extended mass layoffs due to budget constraints.

In addition to the BLS uses of MLS data, such data are used by Congress, the Executive Branch, the business, labor, and academic communities, SWAs, and the U.S. Department of Labor for both macro- and microeconomic analysis.

A Congressionally mandated use of mass layoff data includes the WIA, which replaces Title III of the JTPA. Section 133 of the WIA encourages the use of MLS data in substate allocations relating to dislocated worker employment and training activities.

State agencies use the MLS data in various ways, including the identification of geographic areas in need of special manpower services; ailing or troubled industries; specific employers needing assistance; and outreach activities for the unemployed.

There is no other comprehensive source of statistics on either establishments or workers affected by mass layoffs and plant closings; therefore, none of the aforementioned data requirements could be fulfilled if this data collection did not occur.

At the present time, all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico are participating in the program.

II. Current Action

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance is being sought for the Mass Layoff Statistics (MLS) Program.

The difference between the Current OMB inventory and the total annual hours requested results from a decrease of 6,000 employer respondents. This decrease is largely due to the result of the scope of the MLS program being redefined in January 2004 to cover only the private nonfarm economy for extended mass layoff events.

III. Desired Focus of Comments

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other

technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submissions of responses.

Type of Review: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Agency: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Title: Mass Layoff Statistics Program.

OMB Number: 1220-0090.

Affected Public: Business or other for profit; not-for-profit institutions; Farms; Federal government; State, Local or Tribal government.

Total Respondents: 17,052.

Frequency: SWAs report quarterly and monthly. Affected employers report on occasion.

Total Responses: 17,832.

Average Time Per Response: 60 minutes for SWAs and 20 minutes for employers.

Estimated Total Burden Hours: 72,587 hours.

Total Burden Cost (capital/startup): \$0.

Total Burden Cost (operating/maintenance): \$0.

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

Signed in Washington, DC, this 24th day of June, 2005.

Cathy Kazanowski,

*Chief, Division of Management Systems,
Bureau of Labor Statistics.*

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Bureau of Labor Statistics

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properly assessed. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is soliciting comments concerning the proposed revision of the "Telephone Point of Purchase Survey." A copy of the proposed information collection request (ICR) can be obtained by contacting the individual listed below in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted to the office listed in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice on or before September 6, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Amy A. Hobby, BLS Clearance Officer, Division of Management Systems, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Room 4080, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE., Washington, DC 20212, telephone number 202-691-7628. (This is not a toll free number.)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Amy A. Hobby, BLS Clearance Officer, telephone number 202-691-7628. (See **ADDRESSES** section.)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

The purpose of this survey is to develop and maintain a timely list of retail, wholesale, and service establishments where urban consumers shop for specified items. This information is used as the sampling universe for selecting establishments at which prices of specific items are collected and monitored for use in calculating the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The survey has been ongoing since 1980 and also provides expenditure data that allows items that are priced in the CPI to be properly weighted.

II. Current Action

Office of Management and Budget clearance is being sought for the Telephone Point of Purchase Survey (TPOPS).

Since 1997, the survey has been administered quarterly via a computer-assisted-telephone-interview. This survey is flexible and creates the possibility of introducing new products into the CPI in a timely manner. The data collected in this survey are necessary for the continuing construction of a current outlet universe from which locations are selected for the price collection needed for calculating the CPI. Furthermore, the TPOPS provides the weights used in selecting the items that are priced at these establishments. This sample design produces an overall CPI market basket that is more reflective of the prices faced and the establishments visited by urban consumers.

For this clearance, the BLS and the Census Bureau have completed a sample redesign based on the 2000 Census to be implemented for the TPOPS in 2006. While the new sample is introduced, there will be some overlap of old and new samples in some primary sampling units (PSUs) or areas in which TPOPS data are collected. In addition, each new PSU will have an increased sample to be able to field a full outlet sample to collect prices for the CPI.

III. Desired Focus of Comments

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submissions of responses.

Type of Review: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Agency: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Title: Telephone Point of Purchase Survey.

OMB Number: 1220-0044.

Affected Public: Individuals or households.

Total Respondents: 22,627.

Frequency: Quarterly.

Total Responses: 59,964.

Average Time Per Response: 12 minutes.

Estimated Total Burden Hours: 11,993 hours.

Total Burden Cost (capital/startup): \$0.

Total Burden Cost (operating/maintenance): \$0.

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