



The 2012 Economic Census:

A Toolkit for Members of the House and Senate

Introduction

The three pillars of the Census Bureau's economic statistics programs are the Census of Governments, the Economic Census and the Economic Indicators. Together these surveys provide an economic and financial snapshot of U.S. business and industry, and of state and local governments, that is essential for economic planning and decision-making.

This toolkit is a resource for members of Congress, and their staff. It contains information to help you answer constituent questions and encourage their participation in the 2012 Economic Census. It also highlights the importance of other economic programs and serves as an introduction to the work done by the U.S. Census Bureau to measure the American economy.

The U.S. Census Bureau measures the nation's people, places and economy.

People: The Census Bureau is the leading source of statistical information about the nation's people. We provide not only snapshots of our growing and increasingly diverse population, but also detailed portraits of our communities' characteristics. Key socioeconomic and housing statistics are available through the American Community Survey (ACS) and other annual household surveys.

Places: The Census Bureau provides a wealth of statistics at the local level, giving even the smallest communities accurate, timely information that are essential for decision-making for both the public and private sectors.

Economy: The Census Bureau provides critical, timely information on the health of the U.S. economy through key measures on:

- Employment, output, and location of activity
- Public Pensions
- Retail Sales
- Foreign Trade
- New Home Construction

Overview of the 2012 Economic Census



Every five years, in years ending in “2” and “7”, the economic census provides reliable business statistics that serve as the cornerstone for measuring U.S. businesses and their economic impact. These data help federal, state, and local agencies gauge the effectiveness of their programs and provide the information needed to create jobs, foster sustainable growth and promote a strong economic recovery.

The economic census is the only comprehensive source for data on products associated with business activity that are essential for policymaking, economic development, and business planning.

As part of the U.S. Census Bureau’s mission to measure America’s economy, nearly 4 million forms will go out to all but the smallest employer businesses. Starting late 2013 (budget pending), the published data will cover most industries and all geographic areas of the United States.

Businesses will receive forms tailored to their primary business activity. Businesses can report electronically, and for the first time, small businesses will have a web-based form to complete online.

Business response is important for the nation, industries, communities, and businesses. Response is required by law (Title 13, US Code), and the US Census Bureau has provided a toll free helpline (1-800-233-6136) and online business help site (econhelp.census.gov) to provide assistance to businesses that need it.

**Nearly 4 million
businesses with
paid employees
will receive
census forms.**

Important Dates:

Oct - Dec 2012	Forms mailed to businesses/companies in the U.S.
Jan 24, 2013	Economic Census informational webinar
Feb 12, 2013	Forms due
Late Dec 2013	2012 Economic Census Advance Report published
Spring - Fall 2014	National level data published
Fall 2014 - Summer 2015	State and local data published
Late 2015 - Summer 2016	Other census reports published

Publishing dates are budget pending

Why Have an Economic Census?

- Statistics from the economic census provide policy makers with the information they need for programmatic decisions.
- Federal agencies rely on economic census data as the basis for key measures of economic activity, such as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), monthly retail sales, and the producer price index.
- Federal, state, and local governments use data for economic development and regional planning. State and local governments set small business procurement guidelines based on the economic census data.
- Analysts at the state and local level use economic census data to conduct in depth analyses of industry structure, competitiveness, demand for skilled labor and entrepreneurship; and to determine where they have a comparative advantage to attract new business.
- Trade and business associations, along with chambers of commerce, rely on economic census data to measure key business facts they can use to gauge organizational structure and product trends. The data also helps guide their government relations strategy.
- Individual businesses use the economic census to make decisions about operating sites, capital investment, and product development.
- Private and public data users rely on the detailed sales, employment, payroll, and other data that cover all types of businesses across all sectors of the U.S. economy from the national to local levels regardless of geographic or industry size.

Let your constituents know that their response is important to the national economy, their local community and their business!

Six Things You Can Do to Help Promote the 2012 Economic Census!

Visit business.census.gov.

This innovative site provides the information you need to understand and promote the economic census with examples of how the data are used. You can get profiles of industries and local areas important to you and your constituents; messaging and graphics for your website and newsletters... and more!

Talk It Up!

In your meetings with businesses, let them know the 2012 Economic Census is coming. Use talking points (business.census.gov/media/talking_points.html) to tell them how the economic census benefits economic development in your state and local community.

Utilize your communication tools. Adapt drop-in text, or use these story ideas to develop your own articles for business newsletters, and link to our website – business.census.gov.

Assure them!

Because we conduct the economic census only once every 5 years, businesses may not recall the last census taken. Please reassure them that it is an important survey, and provides the foundation for most of our nation's economic statistics.

Make a statement!

Your public statement endorsing the benefits of the economic census will have impact in your community.

Issue a press release, blog or write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.

Prepare your staff!

Your staff can better assist your constituents with our fact sheet (business.census.gov/pdf/factsheet_agencies.pdf) about the economic census.

Stay in touch!

Follow us on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/uscensusbureau>) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/uscensusbureau>).

Business.Census.Gov

YOUR GUIDE TO THE 2012 ECONOMIC CENSUS

An Early Look at Forms



Answers to Top Questions

Key Dates

U.S. Department of Commerce
United States Census Bureau

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People | Business | Geography | Data | Research | Newsroom

You are Here: Census.gov > Economic Census
Economic Census
business.census.gov

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New for 2012
Preview Forms
FAQs
Información en español

Join our Webinar on October 11th
GET INFO >

Let's Get the Word Out
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The Census Bureau Measures America
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United States Census Bureau
Economic Statistics

The data you provide improves our statistics.
The information we provide benefits your business. [Learn More >](#)

- What is the Economic Census?
- Why is it important to respond?
- How can I use Census Bureau economic statistics?

Industry and Local Business Snapshots

Video Testimonials

Key Dates

Oct - Dec 2012
Forms mailed out
February 12, 2013
2012 forms due
December 2013
First statistics available
[Full Schedule >](#)

YOUR RESPONSE MAKES A DIFFERENCE FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

2012 Economic Census

Tools for Organizations



Data Visualizations

Economic Census: Industry Snapshot

Full-Service Restaurants (NAICS 7224)

Did You Know?
Full-service restaurants in the District of Columbia reported the highest sales per business in 2007 (\$1.7 million), while businesses in South Dakota reported the lowest (\$565 thousand). The national average was \$607 thousand.

SALES (\$ BILLIONS)

Year	2002	2007	% Change
Number of establishments	10,005	22,089	12.0%
Sales (\$ billions)	14,020	102,209	12.9%
Annual payroll (\$ billions)	16,986	62,296	27.5%
Total employees	3,264,020	4,022,747	17.7%
Sales per establishment (\$1,000)	709	614	-13.2%
Sales per employee (\$1,000)	\$37	\$42	12.7%
Payroll per employee (\$)	51	51	0.0%
Employees per establishment	11,727	13,741	16.5%
Payroll per establishment	1,602	2,817	44.6%
Sales per capita (\$)	523	638	21.8%
Payroll per establishment	1,670	1,390	-16.8%

SALES PER EMPLOYEE (\$1,000)

THE ECONOMIC CENSUS IS THE OFFICIAL 5-YEAR MEASURE OF AMERICAN BUSINESS FOR MORE DETAILS ON THE INDUSTRY, VISIT BUSINESS.CENSUS.GOV
Source: Economic Census, Economic White Paper Statistics File

Using Economic Census Data

Compare your business to industry averages for Furniture and related product manufacturing (NAICS 337)

Enter your annual revenue amount in whole dollars: \$252478
Enter your annual payroll in whole dollars: \$54789
Enter your total number of employees: 19
Enter the number of establishments you have: 1

Calculate Your Ratios

Industry Ratios	Your Business	Industry Average 2007	Industry Average 2002
Value of shipments per Establishment (\$)	2,525,478	3,911,027	3,372,762
Value of shipments per Employee (\$)	132,913	166,465	127,476
Value of shipments per \$ of Payroll	3.86	4.84	4.37
Annual Payroll per Employee (\$)	24,463	24,159	28,159
Employees per Establishment	19.0	23.9	28.5

Your Response Makes a Difference Videos



Visit business.census.gov to learn more about the 2012 Economic Census
Or Contact Us at: econ@census.gov



Economic Census FAQs for Members of Congress

1. What is the Economic Census?

The economic census is the U.S. Government's official five-year measure of American business and the economy. The U.S. Census Bureau conducts it for years ending in "2" and "7". The economic census is the most comprehensive source of information about American businesses from the national to the local level. Published data cover more than 1,000 industries, 15,000 products, every state and metro area, over 3,000 counties, 15,000 cities and towns.

2. Why does the government take the Economic Census?

Good public policy depends on accurate information. The economic census provides official measures of output for industries and geographic areas, and serves as the cornerstone of the nation's economic statistics. It also provides key source data for the GDP and other indicators of economic performance.

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3. Who will receive an Economic Census form?

Nearly 4 million businesses with paid employees will receive census forms, most in the middle of December 2012.

Economic census forms go out to all but the smallest employer businesses in nearly every industry in the private, non-farm economy, and every geographic area of the United States.

4. What's new about the 2012 Economic Census?

Electronic Reporting. All single location businesses now have the option to report directly online. Businesses with more than one location will still download software with a spreadsheet interface to facilitate the preparation of responses.

New statistics. New statistics are introduced to profile key company-wide characteristics of U.S. enterprises, such as innovation and globalization.

Classification update. New industry categories are introduced for solar, wind, and geothermal electric power generation. Selected manufacturing and other industries are consolidated and new product classifications are introduced within some industries. See business.census.gov/new_for_2012.html for more information.

5. Can businesses report electronically?

Yes! Businesses with only one location will be able to report directly through an online questionnaire. Businesses with more than one location can download special software with a spreadsheet-style look and feel, and return their data by uploading a file to a secure Census Bureau Web site.

6. Are business responses to the Economic Census kept confidential?

Yes! Business responses are protected by federal law (Title 13, US Code), under penalty of fines or imprisonment for those who misuse the data. Individual responses are seen only by persons sworn to uphold the confidentiality of Census Bureau information and may be used only for statistical purposes. Individual responses added together to produce summary statistics which do not divulge data about individual companies. Confidential information on census forms is exempt from the Freedom of Information Act. No business competitor can obtain the responses of another company, and even copies retained in respondents' files are immune from legal process.

7. What is the penalty for not responding?

The census law (Title 13, United States Code, Section 224), coupled with the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984 (Title 18, Sections 3551, 3559, and 3571), provides for penalties of up to \$5,000 for failure to report, and \$10,000 for intentionally providing false information.

8. Why do we need an Economic Census when surveys provide more timely figures?

The economic census provides comprehensive details about the United States economy, from the national to the local level. Surveys, like Monthly Retail Sales, provide timely information, but only for particular industries or sectors. Since surveys are based on samples that include only a small fraction of all businesses, they cannot supply the geographic and industry details that are unique to the census.

Economic census data about industries, their inputs and outputs, and how they relate to each other, are available nowhere else. Census totals also serve as benchmarks to keep our surveys accurate.

9. Why would a business not receive a form?

To reduce the burden on American businesses, the Census Bureau does not send economic census forms to most very small firms. Businesses without paid employees never receive a form, and forms are sent to just a sample of smaller businesses. At companies with more than one location, forms are sent to the company headquarters; so most staff of the business will never see a form.

A few industries are not covered by the economic census, such as railroads, colleges and universities, labor unions, and religious organizations. For a complete list, visit econhelp.census.gov and click on “Information by Industry”.

Take the Pulse of America's Economy



10. What kind of data does the Economic Census collect?

The economic census collects information from individual business establishments on physical location, type of business activity (industry), employment, payroll, and revenue by type of service or product. Specialized inquiries on some forms, such as types of food served at restaurants, apply to particular industries.

11. What happens to the data?

Statistics from the economic census provide key source data for indicators of economic performance and are used by trade associations, business organizations, economic development agencies, and individual businesses to assess and improve business performance. See the Snapshots Center for examples of the kinds of data available.

12. When will people see the results of the 2012 Economic Census?

The first census results will be available in late 2013 (budget pending) when the “Advance Report” provides preliminary totals for all economic sectors. Additional results will be published over the next few years.

13. How can Members of Congress use Economic Census results?

Economic census data help federal, state, and local agencies gauge the effectiveness of their programs. Members of Congress may use the data to learn about most parts of the nonfarm private economy. Economic statistics gathered from the 2012 Economic Census include the number of locations, employment, payroll, total revenue, and products sales for every industry.

The first census
results will
be available
late 2013

2012 Economic Census Promotional Materials

Visit business.census.gov, your one-stop shop for information about the 2012 Economic Census.

Economic Census: How it Works for You brochure:

business.census.gov/pdf/ec_brochure.pdf

Talking Points:

business.census.gov/media/talking_points.html

Examples of 2012 Economic Census forms:

business.census.gov/preview_forms

Fact Sheet for Public Agencies:

business.census.gov/pdf/factsheet_agencies.pdf

Fact Sheet for Business Associations:

business.census.gov/pdf/factsheet_associations.pdf

Fact Sheet for Local Businesses:

business.census.gov/pdf/factsheet_businesses.pdf

Snapshot Center:

business.census.gov/snapshots_center

America's Economy Mobile App:

census.gov/mobile