New Developments in ARSweb Collection Efforts for Unclassified Establishments in FY 2018

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Economists

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Data Collection Branch

BLS Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics
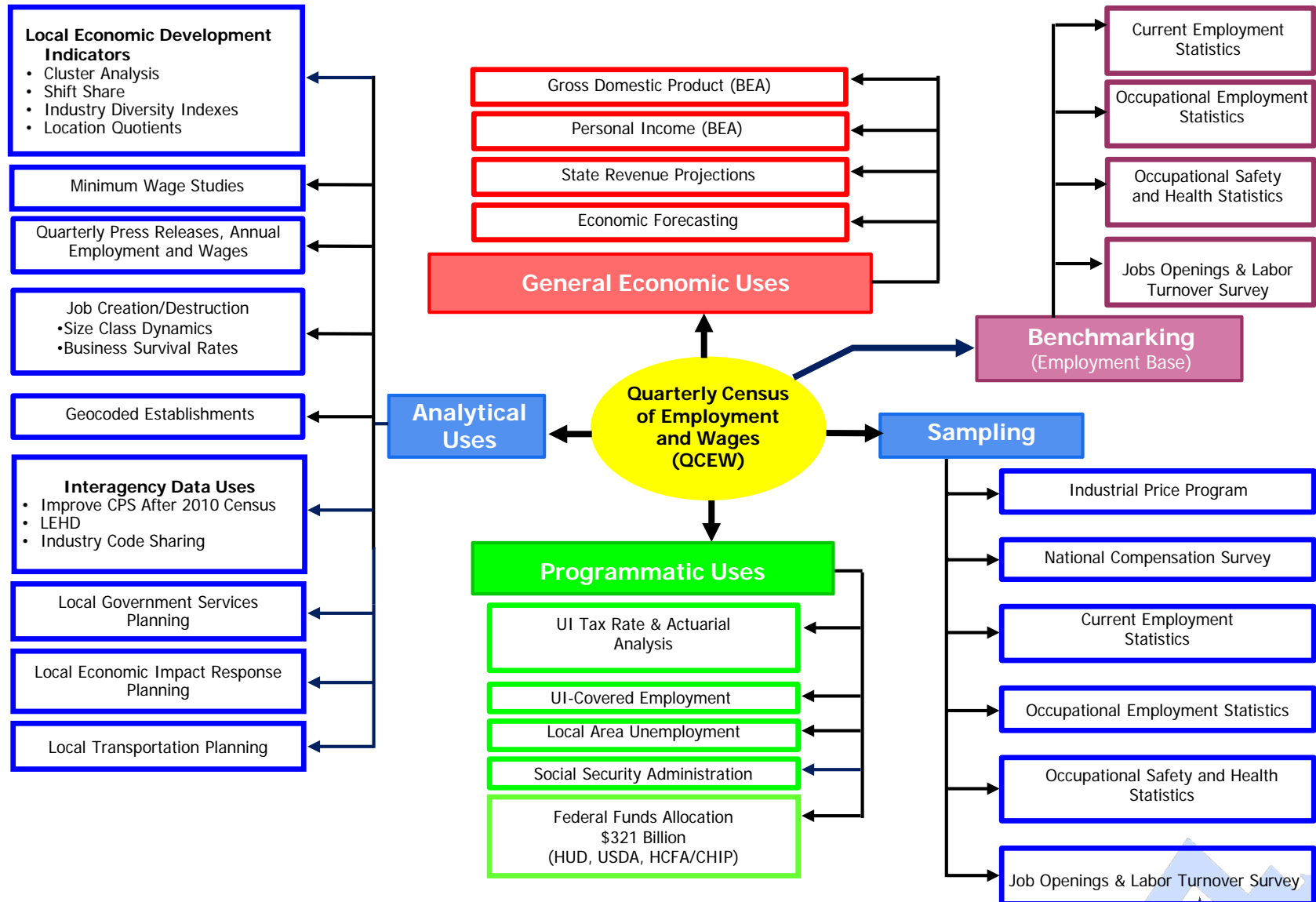
FedCASIC 2018

April 18, 2018

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Background

- The Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program is a cooperative effort involving the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the States.

- The QCEW program is a comprehensive and accurate source of monthly employment and quarterly wages data, by industry, at the national, State, and county levels.

QCEW Data Uses

Local Economic Development Indicators
- Cluster Analysis
- Shift Share
- Industry Diversity Indexes
- Location Quotients

Minimum Wage Studies

Quarterly Press Releases, Annual Employment and Wages

Job Creation/Destruction
- Size Class Dynamics
- Business Survival Rates

Geocoded Establishments

Interagency Data Uses
- Improve CPS After 2010 Census
- LEHD
- Industry Code Sharing

Local Government Services Planning

Local Economic Impact Response Planning

Local Transportation Planning

Gross Domestic Product (BEA)

Personal Income (BEA)

State Revenue Projections

Economic Forecasting

General Economic Uses

Current Employment Statistics

Occupational Employment Statistics

Occupational Safety and Health Statistics

Jobs Openings & Labor Turnover Survey

Benchmarking
(Employment Base)

Analytical Uses

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

Sampling

Programmatic Uses

UI Tax Rate & Actuarial Analysis

UI-Covered Employment

Local Area Unemployment

Social Security Administration

Federal Funds Allocation
$321 Billion
(HUD, USDA, HCFA/CHIP)

Industrial Price Program

National Compensation Survey

Current Employment Statistics

Occupational Employment Statistics

Occupational Safety and Health Statistics

Job Openings & Labor Turnover Survey

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Annual Refiling Survey (ARS) Background

- Approximately 10.1 million establishments on file
  - Used in conjunction with the Unemployment Insurance (UI) tax-reporting system in each State
- Captures changes in the industrial and geographical compositions of our economy in a timely manner
- Reported in BLS statistical programs

Annual Refiling Survey (ARS) Background - Continued

- Roughly one-third of private sector establishments are reviewed and updated each year, if necessary.
  - ▶ Verify and update mailing addresses, physical locations including counties, and main business activities
- Unclassified establishments are those for which there is no information regarding industrial activities.
  - ▶ Employers asked to provide detailed descriptions of economic activities

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BLS Data Collected

- Address information
  - ▶ Business mailing address and physical location address
- County and Township information
- NAICS code
- New establishments within a State are identified
  - ▶ Single establishments to multiple worksites

ARS Collection Mode

- BLS conducted the FY 2017 and FY 2018 using email blasts and single-page letters exclusively.

- Correspondence explains purpose of the ARS and includes a unique Web ID and password.

- Respondents are directed to the secure BLS online collection system, ARSweb (https://idcfars.bls.gov)

  - Less burdensome for employers to use ARSweb

  - By FY 2016, virtually all responses submitted via ARSweb – 552,552 out of 557,180 total NVS responses received!

BLS Google Analytics Report

Top 10 BLS Pages and # of Views (July-September 2017)

■ Total views across all BLS pages: 44,752,081

▶ Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) – 2,346,193

▶ BLS.gov – 1,452,727

▶ OOH A-Z Index – 732,812

▶ Data Tools Tab – 547,826

▶ Home Tab – 486,704

▶ Consumer Price Index – 423,566

▶ Subjects Tab – 399,804

▶ **IDCF Annual Refiling Survey Logon – 387,010**

▶ **IDCF Logon – 367,947**

▶ Students Page – Career Exploration – 356,453

Initial Industry Code Assignment

- Employers that have not provided sufficient information for a six-digit NAICS code are assigned NAICS 999999 (unclassified).

  - ▶ State-specific Status Determination Forms sent to new employers.

  - ▶ Information on forms assists with assigning codes.

    - – Missing information makes it difficult to contact.

    - – Reasons vary why they lack sufficient information.

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Description of Targeted Unclassified Establishments

- Small percentage of all establishments on file
  - Below 3%

- Concentrated on small businesses
  - Average Monthly Employment (AME) < 3

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Targeting Unclassified Establishments

- Create unclassified file using the States own files
  - ▶ Helps ensure consistency between State and BLS data
- Criteria for records:
  - ▶ Status = Active or Pending
  - ▶ Single establishments
  - ▶ Ownership = All or Private only
  - ▶ NAICS code = 999999
- Contains the latest information and eliminates need for States to create and transmit their own files

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Excerpt from "Unclassified" Letter

Dear Employer,

Every three years, the Utana Department of Labor and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) request that you complete the Annual Refiling Survey to verify or provide general business information about your firm.

Your cooperation is essential so that we are able to produce data that are complete, accurate and timely.

To reduce costs and save tax dollars, this survey has been moved online and can be completed in 5 to 10 minutes. Please use the Web ID and password provided below to log into the secure BLS website: https://idcfars.bls.gov

WEB ID: 100000000001   PASSWORD: Zz000143

This survey is authorized by 29 U.S. Code, Section 2.

The BLS-3023 form is approved with O.M.B. No. 1220-0032, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor. The information collected by the Utana Department of Labor and BLS will be used for statistical and Unemployment Insurance program purposes and other purposes in accordance with law. Additional information and instructions for this survey can be found at: www.bls.gov/respondents/ars

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NAICS Information

Searching for Correct NAICS Code

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
Annual Refiling Survey

Logout

Main Business Activity Selection

Company Name:	SOPS INC
UI Account Number:	1111111111
State :	Connecticut

Step 1: Search for your Main Business Activity.

Type in a key word, click "Search", and select the Main Business Activity that most accurately reflects your business. Simple key words work best (ex. If your business is a fast food restaurant, type "restaurant" into the search box.) The results displayed will be a general description and may not be an exact match. There may be activities listed in which you do not participate, and some of your business's activities may not be listed. If the description is generally correct for a majority of your business, please check "YES" in Step 2, and if it is incorrect for a majority of your business, please check "NO" in Step 2 and proceed to Step 3.

Type your key word search: [   ] [Search]

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Verifying Business Activity

Step 2: Verify your Main Business Activity.

*While your business may not be engaged in all of the activities listed above, and some activities may be slightly different, does the selection above generally describe your main business activity during the past 12 months?

○ YES, the Main Business Activity selected above accurately represents my business.

○ NO, I am unable to find an applicable Main Business Activity description.

Step 3: Describe your Main Business Activity.

*Please help us verify your selection in Step 2 by entering a brief description of your main business activities, goods, products, or services in this State, as though you were telling a prospective employee what you do. In addition, please provide the approximate percentage of sales or revenues resulting for each description. Percentages should total 100%. (Maximum 255 Characters)

[Previous] [Save and Continue]

If you have questions or comments, please send e-mail to: AnnualRefilingSurvey@bls.gov   Version: 2.0.4

If you have questions about the Annual Refiling Survey, please contact:

Connecticut Dept of Labor
Office of Research - QCEW Unit
200 Folly Brook Blvd

Wethersfield CT 06109-1153
(860) 263-6300   FAX: (860) 263-6263

Other Tools Used to Decrease Unclassifieds

- Expand use of email contacts

- Utilize different address information

- Use of "auto-coding" tool being studied

Benefits from Reducing Unclassified Records

- Better data and information about the economic profile of the States and the nation

- State and federal efficiency gains and improved use of limited resources

- Employers may gain in these ways:
  - ▶ Small Business Administration contracts
  - ▶ Qualification for loans
  - ▶ Specific tax deductions
  - ▶ Health insurance premiums and risk

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Observations and Ramifications

- ARS data collection timeline was expedited.
  - ▶ Many activities centralized

- Data collection costs were reduced.
  - ▶ Successful transition to ARSweb
  - ▶ Autocoding tool potential

- Reliance on paper forms was eliminated.
  - ▶ No forms mailed; email blasts and one-page letters

- Online collection provides a low-cost platform for conducting quick-response surveys.
  - ▶ Currently testing supplemental survey, Business Research Survey (BRS), in conjunction with 2018 ARS

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