

The U.S. Census Bureau has developed new response metrics to be utilized for the 2017 Economic Census (EC). The Census Bureau collects the EC every five years from roughly four million U.S. establishments. Data collected on establishments include measures such as details on sales/receipts, number of employees, and annual payroll. Calculating GDP and establishing benchmarks for economic indicators are just a few of the uses of economic census data. Check-in has long been the proxy indicator of response for the EC, where a valid check-in indicates a mailed form was returned, but not necessarily that usable item level information was received. Additional response metrics have been developed for the 2017 Economic Census, including unit and item response rates. The reasons for developing new metrics are three-fold: to comply with Census Bureau and U.S. Office of Management and Budget statistical standards, to produce response metrics similar to those used by other economic survey programs, and to produce more meaningful information about the “quality” of EC data. However, the EC is not like other survey programs with respect to design or magnitude of information collected. To accommodate this, we have developed additional, more flexible, proxy response rate metrics more suited to the EC. Here, we describe these recently developed metrics and propose how we may use them in near real time to inform data collection. We also discuss how we may complement these measures with auxiliary information to provide a clearer picture of the EC data collection process and data quality, with an aim towards developing adaptive design strategies. We give examples using 2012 EC data.