

The Economic Directorate of the U.S. Census Bureau has a three-pronged approach to respondent-interfacing activities: Outreach and Promotion, Contact Strategies, and Respondent Advocacy. As we transition to an all-electronic collection environment, this management team will continue to explore appropriate ways to communicate -- indirectly and directly -- with survey respondents to identify and resolve their response challenges. The newly created Respondent Advocate position works to reduce burden by providing direct customer service to the nation's largest businesses and indirect outreach to provide the latest information relevant to our surveys. This Respondent Advocate work is integrated into the design of a robust Contact and Outreach strategy for our survey and census activity.

A key component of our Contact and Outreach Strategy is our continually expanding Account Manager Program. This program, previously employed only for the five-year Economic Census, was designed to advocate on behalf of large companies by developing relationships with data providers and creating customized response plans with a focus on electronic response. To leverage the success of the program, we are introducing an Account Manager Program into our work for more frequently occurring surveys. An advantage of this approach will be to streamline communications with the companies, providing one contact for all data collection activities.

We are also developing the Respondent Contract Management System, a tracking tool to monitor interactions with large companies across all surveys. The tool will provide a centralized resource for Census staff to view all historical interactions with specific respondents. This will fundamentally change our approach to interacting with respondents and provide a unified approach to coordinating response.

We continue to develop and maintain relationships with key trade associations to help guide us in developing outreach strategies. Future initiatives include direct, electronic communication with respondents, coinciding with the all-electronic effort for the 2017 Economic Census.