

New and High Frequency Data Products – Captioning Transcript

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Good afternoon. Welcome to today's webinar. We will get started in about 10 minutes.

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Good afternoon and welcome to today's webinar New and High Frequency Data Products . We have with us today Stephanie Studds from the Census Bureau and I will turn over to you, Stephanie .

Can you hear me, Kathy and Lara? First and foremost good afternoon to everyone and welcome to the session. I would like to say thank you for inviting me today to share the exciting information about some of our nuisances data products. Let's jump in and get started. It is high-frequency and how did we get here? The Census Bureau is transforming to create timely products for all stakeholders. This is coming from a new set of products and programs. Census has been trying to do this release for some time, but the COVID-19 pandemic drove us into overdrive. We jumped in quickly to create new products and several data releases. I am going to share three of these with you today but there is many on air website. Today I will share with you the small business survey, business statistics and the household pulse survey. Census created a roadmap for the new data products we were going to produce . Previously to this it would've taken us years to release the data. This was for two reasons. Our reliance on traditional survey collection and ensuring that the data met the gold quality standards of the Census Bureau limiting their ability to release high-frequency products. We worked and collaborated with the Center for economic studies inside the Census Bureau to create a process that allows us to create products within a new category we are calling experimental. We have developed this category because products that we were creating might not meet all of our official standards for release. It could be something about the new methodology. It could be the response rates on the program. It could be looking for feedback and usefulness from data users.

As you will see today, also along with several others available on their website, we are using a new hybrid approach in the creation of our products. In some instances there is associated new methodology innovations and the hybrid approach for product creation includes the use of administrative records. That is nothing new for us. A larger use of those third-party data known as alternative data sources and some traditional survey collection. The insight and information we received provides is critical insight on whether a project moves on to the production level standard with the information provided could be providing access or insights on additional data sources that might be available for the use and creation of a product. It could be questions or comments or insight on methodology using an basic feedback if it is useful to data take user's. Before I jump into our small business pulse survey , I want to talk about the staff it takes to create these programs. The three things I will share with you today have very small team that works with us for research and collection analysis and dissemination. When you see the timelines we used to produce these well observed products, I take my hat off to each of them for what they contributed. What is our small business pulse survey? The panic set in over the pandemic and there was a huge impact on businesses and households and census realized there was a need for data. We needed to provide insight and we heard the call to action and went into overdrive to create a weekly survey on our nation's small businesses establishing the survey and 39 days and began releasing data two weeks after the onset of collection. We have completed seven phases of the program and will release facing for collection on February 14.

Just to give you an idea of the support the Census Bureau house, this is come from the Office of Management and Budget , the White House, and several agencies you see here. OMB created a method for clearing the content for the household and business pulse surveys and holders to understand the COVID assistance programs providing relief to the households and businesses. This seemed to be every changing press weather was learning about PPP or loan forgiveness and all of these programs came up very quickly with a lot of terminology. These groups assisted us in the creation of content for each phase of the pulse survey just to ensure their usefulness and each phase of data collection for small business pulse was nine weeks and then we took four weeks off. We collected the data and the business were the same across all eight phases. The businesses were all single units with employees for collection. They had to have received of \$1000 or more and were confined within the 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. Content was focused on COVID impact and operational challenges, including supply chains, which continues to be an issue. Finances and information on vaccines and COVID testing as well as future outlook and expectation the content included 15 or 21 questions. Off of the content was qualitative and took between five and six minutes for a respondent to provide their information. As far as data products, we took a different approach how we visualize the data for the small business pulse program giving users an interactive approach accepting the normal PDF version of the day today giving them national sector data and for Puerto Rico and this technology allowed users not only for media insert and papers and people using it in presentations . We have heard a lot about how much it has been used when they were presenting to superiors and others on the use of the aid , especially the small business administration.

Success. We absolutely felt like we had success with the small business pulse survey button 39 days of really Senate we had a ton of lessons learned . What we heard came from data stakeholders and users. We had quite the insight on how we would move forward. We had decided to put in a budget initiative for the FY 22 to provide new and dedicated funding to the Census Bureau allowing us to plan and execute a new business pulse survey. The plan is to expand our program to include a spectrum of business to provide a data product in near real time for stakeholders. We are going to include single unit companies . We focused on small businesses and this would take into account any single unit business, regardless of size. Later we will expand to include establishments of multiunit organizations to include geographic detail. The intent is to produce a one year frame and a sample would be 1.5 million businesses per year and we will collect the data on a biweekly basis. You collect nine weeks and take four weeks off. We really want to see something that has more content that is forward-looking and how the economy is progressing. We took this very much to heart. Content will include core questions close we will put on situational questions if we have trigger events like natural disasters, a health emergency or economic crisis. Census is developing content and working with OMB on this. Content will encompass employment, operational changes impact on the business, and we would look at full with Outlook. All of your data collection will be done electronically. We will disseminate what we had before for the U.S. in the states as well as all territories. The other big goal is work to include demographic characteristics consistent with the businesses, providing even more detail to our users.

Onto the business formation statistics. I want to share a little bit about this and as I did the keynote address for beyond the numbers a few years ago, so many people said I remember it was therefore its inception and it has been an incredibly important program during the pandemic and I wanted to bring it back to share how much growth has happened. They focus on measuring the early stages of business activity and because they had arrived from IRS applications, it allows us to provide more frequent updates to data users. Again we have been extremely fortunate to have such great partners in collaboration with the University of Notre Dame, University of Maryland, and the board of governors.

This timeline shows how much they have evolved in a short period of time since the transition to production in 20 maintain. It was on Valentine's Day noting we went from two releases to over 70 in 2021 providing data on a weekly level, monthly, and then annual . The area with the most potential for improvement was the efficiency of how we processed data, allowing us to pivot to a weekly and as all of us here know this data needed to be timely and was critical globally.

We first publish the weekly BFS April 9, 20 and 20 and every week five days after the weeks and this is the fastest thing the Census Bureau publishes that we have been publishing BFS to get feedback to make sure methodology was so , which has given us much needed flexibility. We have been adaptable to means hiding in industry granularity that the data users let us know is important to them. Monthly BFS was moved from the experimental data product and this is a second example and Kevin for transitioning to production data product. What is at the current BFS product suite looks like? BFS has four application series based on tabulations of application counts there featured in weekly, monthly, and annual publication. They also have eight formation theories that lead businesses with employees. These series are featured in monthly publication, which includes industry counts of the national level.

Eric Kohr Tom Kline number is the subset of all applications received by the IRS goes could be trust and estates and things of that nature. You can see how all the series are related. This is probably the one that has garnered the most attention . It identifies those applications that have a high likelihood of becoming employer businesses. And includes applications that indicate their hiring employees for planning to pay some form of wage. To of these application series are their own . Another way to be considered high propensity if it is exhibiting the strong likelihood of becoming employer businesses. For this reason, having these classifications is important and one area of improvement has been taking advantage of classification machine learning technologies and signed the Census Bureau wait for hard to improve our assignment on all applications. We are now supplementing with the census auto quarter learning method to provide previously unclassified records or to add more detail allowing census to produce high quality application counts. We began releasing the data in 2021 . This was wanting a hand really asked us for. We updated the criteria were updated during the 2021 data release for HBA consideration.

This series identifies employer burst from the application. Because the birthdate is available in a lag do publish from most recent years and during the annual update, which was applied during the data relief, we incorporated the business database data for 2019, which allows us to publish 2017 we are exploring avenues to get the formation data out the door sooner but it is in the early scenes in. Again with a small team doing the very best we can to put at the forefront of the new research and work that is being done. President Biden opened his news conference January 19 and I just wanted to cite it because it was so exciting at the Census Bureau . We created 6 million new jobs. More jobs in one year than any time before. The appointment rate dropped to 3.8%. Child property dropped. New business applications grew by 30%. It was awesome to see the president cite the business formation statistics in his news conference during his speech. BFS has also been included in the 2021 economic report to the president. It is interesting to see the data and how it is being used. This product has only been around a few years but has grown exponentially. The weekly BFS is really popular putting a spotlight on the program. The president is using it . It is also been used by the congressional budget office and Federal Reserve. The data has been cited in over 400 media articles and news events since April 2020, which is amazing for a new product at the Census Bureau. Her deputy director was and if you don't have the statistics are being created inside the Census Bureau. BFS was the product used and how we really move forward to do research for statistics and how we release them and get stakeholder feedback and how we move them from being experimental onto standard statistics.

The third program I wanted to share today is the sister program to our business pulse program . This comes from the demographic side of the census . What is the household pulse survey? It measures the effect of the pandemic on people's lives been looking at how it impacted households . We set up these surveys critical at the onset of the pandemic. People ask us all the time will there be more collaboration? The answer is yes. As we both start to pivot to having surveys and the pandemic that would measure the economy as a whole for the household business. The demographic director was fortunate in their group of support and had the same group who actually helped them prepare and work hand-in-hand with them to understand the needs and with the important time frames were for that. Also the CDC and the executive suite the president. Many names heard on the economic side. The Census Bureau randomly selected address is and they were scientifically selected to represent the population relying on the master address file. 75% of the ID had at least one email address and 62% had a cell phone number with an effort to collect data by text messaging. It took respondents 25 minutes to complete the survey. They had more extensive topic collection . It included childcare, education, and other topics. They would have more of the continued collection in the future. It gives you a sense of the visualization at the household pulse did collecting data faster than the normal surveys. It was similar to the small business pulse . They felt the need for the data during the pandemic. I think driving home here providing data to policymakers and it is available in the segment of the economy either from the private or the public. It really did bring us into the environment to provide data for recovery as well as assistance. We had many businesses that were impacted and closed during the shutdowns. Some of them came back online but some of them did not. What we found during these programs is that these individuals really wanted to talk to government entities. They wanted us to understand that to government entities that might be able to assist them. We did a lot to the Department of Commerce as well as covered entities. In these three programs, you really see three groups that came together that transition quickly to provide data that both the private and public sectors needed in order to make decisions and aid that was given out. It really was a transformational moment for the Census Bureau . We strive hard to get her and have been planning this but the COVID-19 pandemic rocketed us forward quickly into producing this data. As a result, the Census Bureau has been given budget initiatives past the continuing resolution to continue data collection and continuing to evolve. Also more granularity and more timely. The pressure is on to continue to do this as we move forward. Really it is our successes and we all really dated come together to stripped-down how we typically do business through traditional collection, a lot of innovation, and a lot of creativity. With it was through texting or email to get the data and then putting it out there within a week or two weeks of collection so it is in is near real time as possible. Last, here are three resources. I'm including the links to all three of the programs that I discussed today. These are just three of many that were put together by a team at census I take my hat off to every day working together to make sure that was the best quality it can be and the problem or stakeholders . I'm going to open it up for questions, if there is any come about the programs.

Stephanie, we do have a couple questions for Daniel like to know what a single business unit is or do you have a glossary that you can point everyone to?

Absolutely. A single unit business for us is a one location business. During the small business pulse survey come with a limited those single unit locations. There is a business on the corner. Joe's hat shop opens up and has five employees. The single unit could've had up to 499 employees and he or she fell into the sample of being collected. Moving forward, Joe could've had an incredible couple of years and now has 1000 employees. Is not included potentially in the sample for the pulse survey. Before we really did take it down to 499 employees we are now opening it up to full single units and was doing that it adds about 3000 more locations to the sample possibility.

Okay. You might have RD answer this, but James said he loves the agility of the census . Will these be available on data.census.gov or from their own pulse sites ?

Right there on the pulse sites as experimental products , but we are working long-term as the program matures into the new platforms later in 2022, that is on the radar for us to put that into the platform.

Okay. Chain would love to know if there's any plans to include Puerto Rico and the household pulse survey?

Yes . That is in discussion with them now.

Okay. We saw plenty of time for more questions. Go ahead and submit them or if you have any comments you can submit them as well. Chris asks does the census have suggestions how we can teach our students to use these surveys in conjunction to or as a complement to the ACS?

Are we talking about just the business surveys? Were just webinars in general to help the students use the products?

Chris says the household survey .

Okay. I can find out from the demo site about webinars. I know there was discussion about doing webinar. I can raise that to their leadership that there is a need for those. Writing myself a note right now.

Okay. If you want to send that to me, Stephanie, I will see that it gets added to the archive .

Great.

Okay. How would they look at data from household and the ACS?

Combining those two together. There is no one tool that is allowing those two right now. What I can do is take that back to ACS and household as well and get back to you on that, Kathy.

Okay . Still plenty of time for questions. All right. To to push out the survey, Lara? Please complete our survey for us. It helps us deliver content. Chris asks you know if social explores plan on including pulse survey data?

I do not. I can certainly find out . That when I do not know on the household side.

Okay.

Sorry. I came from the econ side. I can find out for the household. That is not an issue.

Okay.

Several takeaways, Kathy, and I will send the information back to to be distributed.

Okay. Will do.

Any of the questions?

I do not believe. One more. How geographically specific can we get?

On the business side we are doing the national level, the state level, and then to the side of that and then Puerto Rico and that in the new pulse survey , we are going to do the same thing that also include all of the territories and not just Puerto Rico.

And Joseph comments city and County would be great as well.

Okay. So there is some discussion about doing that. It goes back to disclosure for the businesses. We are looking at a large base sample. They are looking at it from an industry perspective as well as the geographic. I know in the future there is discussion once we get the platform stable to be able to the lower geography. Right now the business formation statistics would be the one with the lowest level of geography to it.

And many are commenting that they questions that they get are usually about smaller areas .

Got it. We're trying to do small area estimates. That is high on the radar for these programs. Especially the business pulse. It is just working through those details .

Okay. Another comment is questions from city government and nonprofit actors who care a lot more about Dallas than Texas.

Can you read that one more time, Kathy?

It says are most common questions will be from city government and nonprofit actors who care a lot more about Dallas than Texas .

Absolutely. To be honest, I will take the says formation statistics is the example. When the pandemic hit and there is another program that I didn't talk about today called monthly state retail sales we only retail sales was hit hard during the pandemic people started opening up online shops so we saw a lot of transition the business statistics. There was this huge, we need this at a much lower geography and detail. That team jumped in from a research to get it to production and get the methodology approved to disseminated. They heard the call to action. We are trying to do that now with the other programs we talked about today.

I do have a question. Do you have other resources that you would like to present in a second webinar?

Sure. We can do that.

We will talk later. Thank you .

Absolutely. There is a ton of new programs and products and possibilities that census . We love these opportunities because we are getting to hear from a different segment of stakeholder community. People who are teaching and using this part of the curriculum and also the library groups and things like

that. Is it different look at how people are using data. We are interested to hear what is needed here not just from the other government entities.

Okay. I think everybody has the questions answered. Is there a web page or somewhere in the census program service by geography?

I cannot absolutely send you the most up-to-date link. We can send this out to everybody, Kathy. Absolutely. They would love to share that and they have added tools also . If that is something we want to, we could add and have them come to demonstrate some of the tools as well, if that would be of interest to the group.

Okay. Last call for questions. It looks like everybody has other questions and we are sharing the survey link one more time. Stephanie will get a copy of the survey so it would be helpful to her as well.

Yes. Absolutely.

All right. We will wrap this up. Thank you for attending today. We hope to see you in another webinar soon .

Awesome. Thank you, Kathy. Thank you so much.

[Event Concluded]