
Household Survey Producers Workshop

Opening Remarks

Household Survey Producers Workshop
CNSTAT Panel on the
Redesign of the CE
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Mission of the CE

The mission of the Consumer Expenditure Survey program (CE) is to collect, produce, and disseminate information that presents a statistical picture of consumer spending for the Consumer Price Index, government agencies, and private data users.

The mission encompasses analyzing CE data to produce socio-economic studies of consumer spending, and providing CE data users with assistance, education, and tools for working with the data.

CE supports the mission of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and therefore CE data must be of consistently high statistical quality, relevant, timely, and must protect respondent confidentiality.

CNSTAT Tasks

Summary of Work Statement

- National Research Council – CNSTAT Expert “Consensus” Panel
 - ▶ Data User Needs Forum
 - ▶ Survey Methods Workshop
 - ▶ Household Survey Producers Workshop
 - ▶ Workshop on Redesign Options
 - Two independent contracts with redesign recommendations
- Consensus report

CNSTAT Tasks

Summary of Work Statement

■ Consensus Report

- ▶ Menu of comprehensive and concrete redesign options that can be implemented
- ▶ Build in design flexibility in an uncertain budget environment
- ▶ Recommendations for future research

CNSTAT Tasks

Summary of Work Statement

- ▶ Redesign should focus on:
 - Underreporting of expenditures
 - Fundamental changes in the social environment for collection of survey data
 - Fundamental changes in the retail environment (e.g., online spending, automatic payments)
 - The potential availability of large amounts of expenditure data from a relatively small number of intermediaries such as credit card companies
 - Declining response rates at the unit, wave and item levels

CNSTAT Tasks

Summary of Work Statement

- Balanced evaluation of costs/benefits of:
 - ▶ Feasible data collection technologies
 - ▶ Availability of efficacy of using administrative and external data sources
- Two roads to Redesign
 - ▶ Redesign from scratch
 - Pro active approaches
 - ▶ Changes within the current design

CNSTAT Tasks

Summary of Work Statement

- Current CE research
 - ▶ Web diaries
 - ▶ Individual diaries
 - ▶ Streamlining the Interview Survey
 - ▶ Reducing the length of the bounding interview
 - ▶ Double placement of diaries
 - ▶ Reconciliation of expenditures and income/assets

What we know

- Need to stay within budget
- Need to maintain the value of the survey to taxpayers and data users
- Need to support the needs of CPI
- Need to support other data users as much as possible as long as the design meets the needs of the core CE mission
- What makes CE unique is the complete picture of spending, in all categories, at the household level, with household income, assets and demographics.
- CE data priorities

What we don't know

- The final level of expenditure detail that will be needed to support CPI's needs after redesign
 - ▶ CE has a very detailed set of current technical requirements from CPI.
 - ▶ In cases where CE does not provide enough detail to meet CPI's needs, CPI adopts alternative approaches.
 - Example: Level of detail in the CE for gasoline
 - ▶ Possible future CPI information needs that could be provided by a redesigned CE?
 - Example: collection of the name of the outlet where purchases were made.

What we don't know

- What are the possible administrative data sources that could be used to replace some of the data CE collects, or could be used to model data?
- What are the feasible technological solutions for data collection?
- What will be data users' reaction to collecting less than the complete picture of spending and using more imputed/modeled data to create that missing data.

Consensus on the redesign so far

- CE needs to publish a complete picture of spending, but we do not need to collect all of those data directly from respondents. Possible approaches include:
 - ▶ Multiple matrix design
 - ▶ Imputation of missing data
 - ▶ Use of a split sample
- To reduce burden and improve data quality, CE is interested in moving away from a retrospective recall based design to one that is more proactive
 - ▶ Use of records, electronic data collection tools

FY 2012 Budget

- The FY 2011 budget provides funding for the CE program that will allow for a research sample to conduct field tests of redesign options.
- If this initiative is not funded, CE will continue to use its existing resources, which includes the ability to conduct field tests on production sample units, to explore redesign options.
- Receipt of the FY 2012 CE funding initiative will place the work of redesign on a faster track.

Agenda for the Workshop

- Alternative ways of measuring consumer expenditures with special focus on international examples.
- Designs that add flexibility in data collection mode.
- Designs that effectively mix data from multiple surveys and/or external/administrative data to produce estimates

Agenda for the Workshop

- Designs that effectively mix global and detail information to reduce burden and measurement error.
- Designs that use event history methodology to improve recall and reduce measurement error in recall surveys.
- Diary surveys that effectively utilized technology to facilitate recordkeeping or recall.

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