

# The CE Program: Dedicated to Improvement

---

Jay T. Ryan

June 21, 2010



[www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)

---

# Welcome & Thank you



2

## Outline

---

- Reason for this forum
- The CE Program
- Recent survey improvements
- Rationale for survey redesign
- Gemini project



3

## Reason for this forum

---

This forum is the first milestone of the CE Survey redesign project (Gemini)



## Reason for this forum

---

Gather information that will inform the redesign

- ▶ For what purpose do you use the data?
- ▶ What specific data do you use?
- ▶ What problems or limitations have you identified with using the data?
- ▶ What changes would you like to see in the data?



## CE Program

---

- Budget: FY10 \$43 million
- Staffing: 60 positions at BLS
  - ▶ Economists
  - ▶ IT Specialists
  - ▶ Statisticians
  - ▶ Survey Methodologists
  - ▶ Cognitive Psychologists
- Census Bureau



6

## Mission

---

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.



7

## Vision

---

*From straightforward surveys  
Through efficient processing  
To continuous dissemination  
The CE Program will provide the nation  
Valuable, accurate, and complete  
Information on consumer spending*



8

## Interview & Diary Improvements

---

Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI)

- Interview (2003)
- Diary demographics and income (2004)

Other data collection improvements

- Contact History Instrument (2005, 2006)
- Field training
- User friendly diary form and auto-coding system (2005)



## Interview & Diary Improvements

---

- Biennial Interview questionnaire revisions
- Timely and relevant Interview questionnaire revisions
  - ▶ Medicare prescription drug program (2006)
  - ▶ Tax stimulus: amount and how used (2008, 2009)



## Interview & Diary Improvements

---

Statistical methods improvements

- Income imputation (2004)
- Selection of Diary or Interview data for best publication estimates (2007, 2009)

Data Dissemination

- CE Microdata Users' Workshop (since 2006)
- CE Anthologies (2003, 2005, 2008)
- More timely release (October 2009)



## Rationale for Survey Redesign

---

Despite all these improvements

- Basic design has been the same since 1980
- Burdensome surveys
- Data quality issues
- Declining response rates



## Rationale for Survey Redesign

- Challenges in the social, consumer, and data collection environments, such as
  - ▶ lack of time or willingness
  - ▶ competing surveys
  - ▶ language barriers
  - ▶ gated communities
  - ▶ confidentiality concerns
  - ▶ automatic bill paying
  - ▶ large general merchandise stores



## Gemini: Survey Redesign

The overall mission of the Gemini Project to redesign the CE surveys is to improve data quality through a verifiable reduction in measurement error, with a particular focus on under-reporting

<http://www.geminiproject.org>



## Gemini: Survey Redesign

### 2009

- Establish project and teams
- Budget initiative
- Executive management group
- Expert Panel of advisors
- Research Project Tracking System report
- Data Quality definition report



## Gemini: Survey Redesign

### 2010

- Survey Redesign Panel Discussion
- Data Capture Technology Forum
- AAPOR Panel on Respondent Record Use
- Data User Needs Forum & report
- Methods Workshop & report
- Field research (Order effects, Measurement Issues)
- Disseminate research results



## Gemini: Survey Redesign

---

### 2011

- Household Survey Data Producer Workshop
- Redesign Options for CE Workshop
- CNSTAT consensus panel
- Continue with field research (Web diary, Individual diary, Records Study)
- Disseminate research results



## Gemini: Survey Redesign

---

### 2012

- CNSTAT report
- Develop high level plan (roadmap) to the implementation of a new design
- Continue with field research (Records based interviewing, Bounding study)
- Disseminate research results



## Gemini: Survey Redesign

---

### 2013 and later

- Continue with field research
- Disseminate research results
- Propose redesign model
- Meet with users
- Select redesign model
- Development projects
- Implementation



## Contact Information

---

**Jay T. Ryan**

Division Chief

Consumer Expenditure Survey

[www.bls.gov/cex](http://www.bls.gov/cex)

202-691-5139

[ryan.jay@bls.gov](mailto:ryan.jay@bls.gov)



[www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)