

COVID-19 Links
United States Census Bureau
June 9, 2020

This brief resource document was prepared in response to a request from the United Nations for a special online meeting (June 16-18) of the UN Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics on COVID-19.

Below are links to publicly available data products and data user notes related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the U.S. Census Bureau is working with data users, survey sponsors, and the Office of Management and Budget, which provides oversight for national statistical agencies, to propose additional questions about the pandemic and its effects on the business community for some of its surveys.

General Information: COVID-19 Resource Page

A new COVID-19 Resource Page was released on census.gov to help federal agencies, businesses, and communities make decisions and understand impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It features a new interactive data hub centralizing data of over 100 economic and demographic variables including data from the American Community Survey, County Business Patterns, and Nonemployer Statistics. Additional data will continue to be added.

<https://www.census.gov/topics/preparedness/events/pandemics/covid-19.html>

Business Formation Statistics

The Business Formation Statistics (BFS) provide timely and high frequency data on business applications and employer business formations. The BFS measure business initiation activity (Business Application Series) as indicated by applications for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) on the IRS Form SS-4. The BFS also provides information on actual and projected employer business formations (Business Formation Series) that originate from these applications, based on the record of first payroll tax liability for an EIN. In addition, BFS contains measures of delay in business starts as indicated by the average duration between the application for an EIN and the transition to an employer business.

The BFS currently covers the period starting from the third quarter of 2004 (2004q3) onwards at a quarterly frequency. The data are available nationally and by individual states. For a limited time, BFS business application data will be provided weekly at the national, regional, and state levels.

<https://www.census.gov/econ/bfs/index.html>

<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2020/business-formation-statistics.html>

<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2020/weekly-bfs-april16.html>

Small Business Pulse Survey

The weekly Small Business Pulse Survey (SBPS) provides high frequency data about the challenges small businesses are facing due to COVID-19. SBPS captures information on small business operations, challenges, finances, and expectations. These weekly data tabulations and user-friendly visualizations will be disseminated in near real-time as experimental data products, which started May 14, 2020.

<https://www.census.gov/data/experimental-data-products/small-business-pulse-survey.html>

<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/data/experimental-data-products/small-business-pulse-survey/small-business-pulse-survey-questionnaire.pdf>

https://www.census.gov/library/working-papers/2020/adrm/CES-WP-20-16.html?utm_campaign=&utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

Economic Indicators

The Economic Indicators Page provides links to each of the economic indicators released by the U.S. Census Bureau, where Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) regarding COVID-19 can be found for each indicator.

As examples, following are links to FAQs for some of the economic indicators produced by the U.S. Census Bureau. Note that FAQs for all economic indicators are not shown below, but are available from the Economic Indicators Page referenced above. Also note that FAQs are provided for the most recent reference period available at the time this document was prepared.

Economic Indicators Page

<https://www.census.gov/economic-indicators/>

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

<https://www.census.gov/retail/marts/www/covid19retailaprilfaq.pdf>

Monthly Wholesale Trade – Sales and Inventories

<https://www2.census.gov/wholesale/pdf/mwts/covid19wibfaq.pdf>

Quarterly Services

<https://www.census.gov/services/qss/covid19qssfaq.pdf>

International Trade

<https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/notices/COVIDFAQSFT900.pdf>