

# Waiver of Quality Standard

**Standard:** Quality Requirements for Releasing Data Products

**Requirement(s):** The standard requires a response rate of 70% on key items.

**Program:** The Annual Public Employment Survey.

**Effective Date:** February 2007

**Expiration Date:** December 2008

## Background:

The Annual Employment Survey is a voluntary survey of State and local governments. For 23 states, the weighted response rate for total local government full time employees (FTE) and/or payroll was less than 70%, which is required by the Census Bureau's Quality Requirements for Releasing Data Products. Additionally, for 6 states, the weighted response rate for total State and local government FTE and/or payroll was also less than 70%. In all cases, the States passed the required 60% unit response rate. In all but two States, the nonresponse could be assumed to be missing at random, thus validating the imputation methods that were used. Due to hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the nonresponse in two states (Mississippi and Louisiana) could not be assumed to be missing at random, and traditional imputation methods were invalid.

## Justification:

This is a new standard. There is not enough time to become compliant with the standard before the publication deadline. There were significant increases in the response rates from 2005 to 2006. Since the response rates for most of the country are at or above their historic levels, we do not anticipate any adverse reactions except possibly in hurricane-affected areas where missing at random imputation methods provide inadequate adjustments for missing data.

## Corrective Action:

The program will take the following steps to mitigate the effects of the noncompliance:

- Place the appropriate warnings/disclaimers on the tables.
- Place item response rates on the tables.
- Include special text about the nonresponse in LA and MS.

The program will take the following steps to become compliant in the future (subject to funding):

- Work with experts on nonresponse to increase response on a voluntary survey.
- For 2007 and beyond prioritize the nonresponse followup.
- Contact a prioritized list of NR prior to the census to solicit their cooperation and ensure that we have correct respondent names and addresses.
- During NR followup, do more personal visits, particularly to large nonrespondents and the hurricane-affected areas.
- Conduct a nonresponse bias analysis for each affected area to determine patterns of missingness.

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## M&S Council

**M&S Council Recommendation:**

Approve Waiver

Deny Waiver

**Justification for Recommendation:**

The M&S Council recommends approving the waiver for the 25 states tables excluding Mississippi and Louisiana. A nonresponse bias study needs to be conducted and the metadata required by the standard, "Quality Requirements for Releasing Data Products," must be provided.

The M&S Council recommends against approving the waiver for Mississippi and Louisiana for detailed estimates because the imputation procedure is not valid for the pattern of nonresponse exhibited in these two states. For those two states, we recommend releasing only key totals. Explanatory notes will be included on the tables and in the text.