

Appendix R
Worksheet Mailing: FAQ Brochure

What is the purpose of the Survey of Small Business Finances?

The purpose of the SSBF is to collect financial data from businesses with fewer than 500 employees. The survey is concerned with:

- ◆ Understanding the credit needs of small businesses and revising federal policy to ensure these needs are being met;
- ◆ Gaining insight into the factors such as reduced competition among financial institutions that may increase prices or reduce the availability of credit to small businesses;
- ◆ Understanding the characteristics of small businesses that experience credit problems;
- ◆ Measuring the impact of government regulations on the availability of credit to small businesses;
- ◆ Identifying the sources, other than commercial banks, to which small businesses can turn to help meet their financing needs; and
- ◆ Understanding whether financial institutions actively seek to provide credit to small businesses.

The information from this survey will be used to evaluate the impact of public policies on small businesses of different sizes, locations, and ownership characteristics. The information will also be used in the “Report to Congress on the Availability of Credit to Small Business,” produced by the Federal Reserve Board every five years.

Who is doing the survey?

The Survey of Small Business Finances is being conducted for the Federal Reserve Board by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago.

The Federal Reserve System is the central bank of the U.S. It was founded by Congress in 1913 to provide the nation with a safer, more flexible, and more stable monetary and financial system; over the years, its role in banking and the economy has expanded. Today, the Federal Reserve Board's duties fall into four general areas:

- ◆ Conducting the nation's monetary policy by influencing the money and credit conditions in the economy in pursuit of full employment and stable prices;
- ◆ Supervising and regulating banking institutions to ensure the safety and soundness of the nation's banking and financial system and to protect the credit rights of consumers;
- ◆ Maintaining the stability of the financial system and containing risk that may arise in financial markets;
- ◆ Providing certain financial services to the U.S. government, to the public, to financial institutions, and to foreign official institutions, including playing a major role in operating the nation's payments system.

The Federal Reserve Board conducts the SSBF every five years.

NORC is one of the oldest and most respected social science research organizations in the United States, and the results from many NORC studies have been used to help national policy-makers in their decision making.

What will I get out of this?

The information you provide will help the Federal Reserve Board revise federal policies to help ensure that financial services are available to small businesses of all types.

As a token of our appreciation for your time and information, we will send you a check for **\$50**, or you may choose Dun and Bradstreet's Small Business Solutions® information package, which retails for **\$199**. D&B provides you with a set of reports that can help you identify new customers and compare your business with your competitors.

Will my answers be confidential?

Absolutely. NORC and the Federal Reserve Board maintain the highest standards of confidentiality. Your identifying information will be kept strictly confidential. NORC and the Federal Reserve Board ensure the confidentiality of your responses. No information obtained in the course of this study may be disclosed in a manner in which the particular establishment or individual supplying the information is identifiable except to a very small number of authorized staff at NORC and the Federal Reserve System.

What kinds of questions will be asked?

A variety of topics will be covered during the time of the interview. The questions cover your firm's use of credit and other financial services as well as where these services were obtained. You will also be asked about your experiences in obtaining credit. Information will also be collected on the firm's assets, liabilities, income and expenses to help understand the differences among individual small businesses.

Why do you need my financial information?

Financial information is a critical element in understanding the needs of small businesses. One of the main goals of this survey is to evaluate the importance of credit availability and use relative to a firm's size and financial characteristics. The confidentiality of your responses will be maintained by NORC and the Federal Reserve Board. No information obtained in the course of this study may be disclosed in a manner in which the particular establishment or individual supplying the information is identifiable except to a very small number of authorized staff at NORC and the Federal Reserve System.

Why was I chosen to participate?

Your small business was selected from a nationally representative scientific sample of businesses throughout the United States. The group of businesses we are contacting represent the diversity of small businesses across the nation. The information you provide is essential to obtain an accurate picture of the financial needs of small businesses like yours.

Am I required to participate and answer every question?

No. Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to answer any questions to which you object. However, your participation is vital to the success of the survey. Your firm cannot be replaced. The information obtained in the interview will be held in the strictest confidence.

Is additional information available?

For additional information about the National Opinion Research Center, the Federal Reserve Board's role in the Survey of Small Business Finances, or any other topics please visit the NORC web site:

<http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/ssbf>

Follow the "studies" link from the main page.

For additional information about the Survey of Small Business Finances, please visit the FRB web site:

<http://www.federalreserve.gov/ssbf>

To contact the NORC Project Director, please call or write to:

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***To thank you for participating,
we will send you your choice of either
\$50***

***or an information package
that retails for
\$199***

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at the University of Chicago*

SSB·F

THE 2003 SURVEY OF SMALL BUSINESS FINANCES

Frequently Asked Questions

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