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Subject: 2017 American Community Survey Mail Design Test

Attached is the American Community Survey (ACS) Research and Evaluation report entitled, "2017 American Community Survey Mail Design Test." This report provides results of a controlled experiment to assess the impact on response and cost of three proposed design changes to the ACS mail materials using the August 2017 ACS panel.

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September 10, 2018

2017 American Community Survey Mail Design Test

FINAL REPORT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Census Bureau conducted the *2017 American Community Survey Mail Design Test* (i.e., *2017 Mail Design Test*) to evaluate three proposed redesigns of the American Community Survey (ACS) mail materials and messaging. This test was a follow-up to the *2015 Summer Mandatory Messaging Test* in which multiple designs were tested—three of which softened the mandatory language in the mail materials to varying degrees to address concerns from some members of the public. Of these three experimental treatments, the *Softened Revised Design* had the least negative impact on self-response return rates—decreasing the self-response return rates by 7.8 percentage points.

In the *Softened Revised Design*, references to the mandatory nature of the survey were removed from the reminder postcards and were changed to “your response is important to your community” on the envelopes that contained the Initial and Paper Questionnaire Package mailings. The references to the mandatory nature of the survey were kept, but softened in the Initial Mail Package letter, the Reminder Letter, and the Paper Questionnaire Package letter. These references were softened using plain text instead of bold text and were included in sentences with statements about the benefits of the survey.

We conducted the *2017 Mail Design Test* to find an alternative treatment to the *Softened Revised Design*—a treatment that would still maintain the softening of the mandatory language in the mail materials, but produce higher self-response rates than the *Softened Revised Design* treatment. The *2017 Mail Design Test* evaluated three designs of the ACS mail materials and messaging—a modification of the *Softened Revised Design* treatment from the *2015 Summer Mandatory Messaging Test* and two derivative treatments—the *Partial Redesign* and the *Full Redesign*.

The *2017 Mail Design Test* evaluated the impact on self-response, cost, and reliability of replacing the current mailing design with one of the three experimental treatments. Table E1 outlines the different designs and materials for each of these treatments as well as the control treatment. Table E1 is organized by the five possible mailings that a sample address could receive.

The *Partial Redesign* and the *Full Redesign* treatments departed from the *Softened Revised Design* treatment in the following ways:

- Removal of the “Multilingual Brochure” to reduce the number of mail pieces. This information was included on the enclosed letter.
- The addition of a “Why We Ask” pamphlet, a color pamphlet designed to engage the recipient and provide summary information about the benefits of the ACS.

- Design changes to the front page of the questionnaire to provide instruction information that would have been contained on the “instruction card.” The rationale was a standalone questionnaire that provided sufficient instructions. Hence, the instruction card was not included in the questionnaire package for these treatments.
- The use of a letter instead of a postcard for the final reminder to allow us to include login information on the letter to make internet response easier. The accompanying envelope contained a new message, “Final Notice Respond Now” to make a strong push for response.

Key findings:

Self-Response Return Rates

- The *Softened Revised Design* had higher self-response return rates than *Partial Redesign* in the beginning, with *Partial Redesign* catching up before the final reminder was sent, and then surpassing *Softened Revised Design* by the end of CATI.
 - The *Partial Redesign* had higher self-response return rates for the mail mode while the *Softened Revised Design* had higher self-response return rates for internet.
- Omitting “Open Immediately” from the envelopes and changing the size of the envelope of the *Full Redesign* may have negatively affected the response rate from the beginning.
- Including the “Why We Ask” brochure in the initial mailing resulted in significantly lower response rates than the treatments that did not include the brochure.
- The *Partial Redesign* treatment had higher self-response return rates than the *Softened Revised Design* after the fifth mailing. We believe this is due to the replacement of the final postcard with a letter containing login information. We cannot say for certain though because of the multiple differences in treatments in the earlier mailings.

Data Collection Costs and Reliability of the Estimates

Due to processing problems during data collection, we do not report data collection costs and the reliability of the estimates for the *Full Redesign* treatment. This limitation will not have a significant impact on the findings as this treatment had lower response and higher costs compared to the *Softened Revised Design* and *Partial Revised Design* treatments with respect to self-response return rates.

- When maintaining the current production sample size, both the *Partial Redesign* and *Softened Revised Design* would see an increase in costs and a loss of reliability. The *Softened Revised Design* would have a larger negative impact (higher costs and lower reliability) than the *Partial Redesign*.

- When maintaining the current reliability, both the *Partial Redesign* and *Softened Revised Design* would need a larger sample size, resulting in an increase in data collection costs. The *Softened Revised Design* would have a larger negative impact than the *Partial Redesign*.
- When maintaining current costs, both the *Partial Redesign* and *Softened Revised Design* would require a reduction in sample size, and the reliability would decrease. The *Softened Revised Design* would have a larger negative impact than the *Partial Redesign*.

Table E1. Description of Mail Materials for all Treatments in the 2017 Mail Design Test

| Mailing Classification | Mail Piece | Control (CTL) | Experimental Treatments | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | | | Softened Revised Design (SRD) | Partial Revised Design (PRD) | Full Redesign (FRD) |
| Initial Mailing | Outgoing Envelope | Your Response is Required by Law | Your Response is Important to Your Community | Your Response is Important to Your Community | Your Response is Important to Your Community |
| | | ---- | Open Immediately | Open Immediately | ---- † |
| | | 11.5 by 6 inches | 11.5 by 6 inches | 11.5 by 6 inches | 9.5 by 4.375 inches † |
| | Frequently Asked Questions Brochure | YES | NO | NO | NO |
| | Letter | No callout box ---- | Callout box Softened Wording | Callout box Softened Wording | Callout box Wording Changes † |
| | Instruction Card | YES | YES | YES ϕ | NO † |
| Multilingual Information "Why We Ask" pamphlet | Brochure included | Brochure Included * | Included in the letter | Included in the letter | |
| | NO | NO* | YES | YES | |
| Reminder Letter | Outgoing Envelope | No Message | No Message | No Message | No Message |
| | Letter | ---- | ---- | ---- | Wording Changes* |
| Questionnaire Package | Outgoing Envelope | Your Response is Required by Law | Your Response is Important to Your Community | Your Response is Important to Your Community | Your Response is Important to Your Community |
| | | ---- | Open Immediately | Open Immediately | ---- † |
| | | Current | Current* | Design Changes ø | Design Changes ø |
| | Frequently Asked Questions Brochure | YES | NO | NO | NO |
| | Letter | Current | Softened Wording | Softened Wording | Wording Changes † |
| | Instruction Card | YES | YES* | NO | NO |
| Return Envelope | YES | YES | YES | YES | |
| Reminder Postcard | Postcard | ---- | Softened Wording | Softened Wording | Wording Changes † |
| Final Reminder | | Postcard | Postcard* | Letter | Letter |
| | | ---- | Softened Wording | Softened Wording | Wording Changes † |
| | | ---- | ---- * | 'Final Notice Respond Now' on envelope | 'Final Notice Respond Now' on envelope |

† Designates where the FRD differs from the SRD and PRD

ϕ The instruction card was necessary because the letter did not have space to print both the respondent address and the login information.

* Designates where the SRD differs from the PRD and FRD

ø The front page of the questionnaire includes instruction information that would have been placed on the instruction card.

1. INTRODUCTION

Among the information included in the mailings that the U.S. Census Bureau mails to recipients of the American Community Survey (ACS) is information about the legal requirement to complete the survey. In the past, some recipients have expressed concerns that the tone of the ACS materials is too strong. In response, the Census Bureau conducted tests in 2014 (Barth et al., 2015) and 2015 (Oliver, Risley, & Roberts, 2016) to evaluate proposed changes to reduce the strength and prevalence of the messages regarding the mandatory nature of participation.

The *2015 Summer Mandatory Messaging Test* (Oliver, Risley, & Roberts, 2016) assessed the impact on response, cost, and reliability of survey estimates of four sets of proposed design changes to the ACS mail materials that modified the mandatory language in the mail materials to varying degrees. To mitigate the expected drop in self-response, these designs included changes to simultaneously bolster self-response—changes to the way the Census Bureau communicates the importance and benefits of the ACS, using an updated look-and-feel of the mail materials.

Of the four designs evaluated, the *Revised Design*, which included the use of different logos on the envelopes and letters, the use of bold lettering and boxes to highlight elements of the material, and the addition of a box that reads “Open Immediately” on the envelopes proved to be the most promising. The *Revised Design* treatment:

- Increased the self-response return rates (before the Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI)) significantly (by 3.5 percentage points) and reduced the nonresponse follow-up workload.¹
- Would (if adopted) reduce the overall data collection costs by \$7.3 million annually.²

The *Revised Design* treatment did not however address concerns by some members of the public about the strong mandatory messages in the ACS materials. Of the three remaining experimental treatments tested where the mandatory messages in the ACS materials were softened to varying degrees, the *Softened Revised Design* treatment was the best option in regards to response rates and costs.³ The *Softened Revised Design* treatment however:

- Decreased the self-response return rates (before CATI) significantly (by 7.8 percentage points).

¹ As of the 2017 October ACS panel, CATI has been discontinued.

² Using budget information from the 2015 fiscal year. See Oliver, Risley, & Roberts (2016) for more details.

³ References to the mandatory nature of the ACS were softened in the Initial Mail Package Letter, the Reminder Letter, and the Paper Questionnaire Package Letter. See Oliver, Risley, & Roberts (2016) for more details.

- Would (if adopted) increase the overall data collections costs by \$11.2 million annually to compensate for this drop in self-response.⁴

In August 2017, the Census Bureau conducted the *2017 ACS Mail Design Test* to evaluate variations of the *Softened Revised Design* that it hoped would produce higher self-response rates than the *Softened Revised Design* and still maintain the softening of the mandatory messages. The belief following the *2015 Summer Mandatory Messaging Test* was that Census Bureau would be required to soften the mandatory language in the ACS materials. This report presents results from the *2017 ACS Mail Design Test*.

2. BACKGROUND

The ACS is an ongoing, nationwide survey conducted by the Census Bureau to collect detailed social, economic, housing, and demographic information from the population living in housing units and group quarters. The ACS uses a mail contact strategy to encourage residents in sampled addresses to self-respond.

To encourage self-response, the Census Bureau sends up to five mailings to a mailable sampled address.⁵ The list of mailable sampled addresses is updated (i.e., cut) two times during this process to remove households that have already responded, minimizing the number of mail contacts received by those who have already responded.

The first mailing (initial mailing package) is sent to all mailable addresses in the sample. The initial mailing package includes an invitation to participate in the ACS online and information that a paper questionnaire will be sent in a few weeks to those who are unable to or prefer not to respond online.⁶ About seven days later, these addresses are sent a follow-up reminder letter (second mailing), which repeats the instructions to respond online or wait for a paper questionnaire.

About three weeks after the initial mailing, nonresponders are sent a third mailing—a package that includes a paper questionnaire (a new response mode option for them) and instructions for responding online. These addresses are sent a reminder postcard about four days later (fourth mailing).

⁴ Using budget information from the 2015 fiscal year. See Oliver, Risley, & Roberts (2016) for more details.

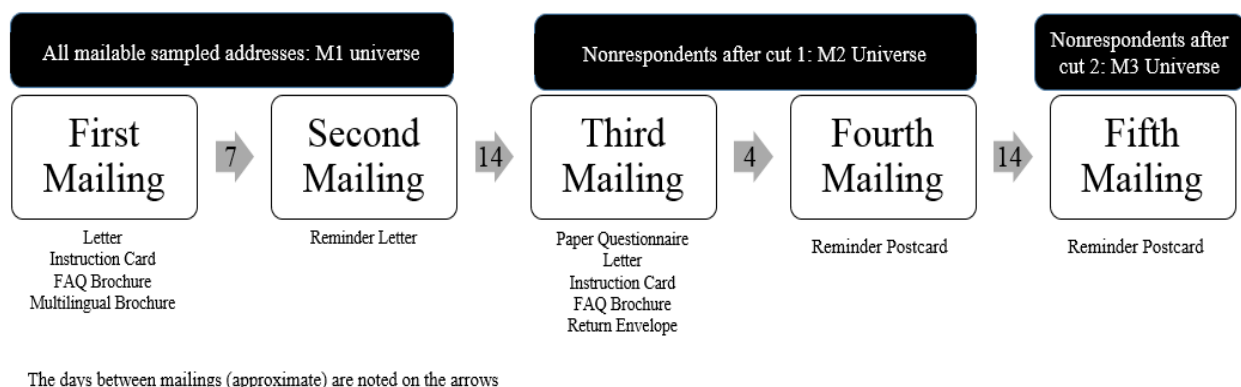
⁵ The requirement for a “mailable” address in the United States is met if there is either a complete city-style (includes a house number, street name, and ZIP Code) or rural-route address (includes a rural-route number, box number, and ZIP Code).

⁶ Although not offered as a response option, prospective respondents can complete the survey by telephone via the Telephone Questionnaire Assistance Center (TQA) during any of the ACS mailings.

After the fourth mailing, nonresponders for which we have telephone contact information are eligible for inclusion in the CATI nonresponse follow-up operation. However, only a subset of these addresses are selected for this operation.⁷ The remaining nonresponders, for whom we do not have a telephone number, are sent a reminder postcard as a last attempt to collect a self-response (fifth mailing). At the end of the CATI operation, a subsample of the nonresponders are selected for the Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) nonresponse follow-up operation.

The ACS mailing universe is updated (i.e., cut) twice during data collection, resulting in three mailing universes. The initial mailing package and follow-up reminder letter fall into the M1 universe. The responders in the M1 universe are removed to produce the M2 universe (first cut). Addresses in the M2 universe receive the paper questionnaire package and the follow-up reminder postcard. The responders in the M2 universe as well as those units eligible for CATI are removed to produce the M3 universe (second cut). Addresses in the M3 universe receive the final reminder postcard. See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Overview of the 2017 ACS Mail Contact Strategy and Mailing Universes



See the ACS Design and Methodology Report (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014) for additional information about the ACS.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Between October 2013 and November 2014, the Census Bureau collaborated with Reingold Inc. to research and propose design and messaging changes to the ACS mail materials that could potentially increase the ACS self-response rates (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). The high-level recommendations from the report are:

- Emphasize the Census brand in ACS mail materials.

⁷ The CATI operation, which was part of ACS data collection operations during this test, was discontinued beginning October 2017. Now, all remaining nonresponders are sent the final reminder postcard.

- Use visual design principles to draw attention to key messages and help respondents better navigate ACS material.
- Use deadline-oriented messages to attract attention and create a sense of urgency.
- Prioritize an official “governmental” appearance over a visually rich “marketing” approach.
- Emphasize effective “mandatory” messaging.
- Demonstrate benefits of ACS participation to local communities.
- Draw a clearer connection between objectionable questions and real-world applications and benefits.
- Streamline mail packages and individual materials.

Based on these and other recommendations, the ACS conducted five field tests in 2015 to improve the mail materials and messaging and simultaneously address respondent burden, respondent concerns about the perceived intrusiveness of the ACS, and self-response rates. A description of each of these five tests is provided below:

- ***Paper Questionnaire Package Test*** (Clark, 2015a): conducted on the March 2015 panel to examine ways to reduce the complexity of this package by removing some of the inserts and softening the response mode choice (paper or internet) in the messages included in the package. Among the key findings: removing the choice card or instruction card had no effect on self-response and would result in cost savings.
- ***Mail Contact Strategy Modification Test*** (Clark, 2015b): conducted on the April 2015 panel to examine ways to streamline the mail materials by eliminating a pre-notice and sending the initial mailing earlier, replacing the reminder postcard with a letter that explicitly provides the internet user ID, and other modifications to the mailings. Among the key findings: using a reminder letter that highlights the internet user ID and includes mandatory language significantly increased total self-response return rates as compared to a reminder postcard.
- ***Envelope Mandatory Messaging Test*** (Barth et al., 2015): conducted on the May 2015 panel to study the impact of removing mandatory messages from the envelopes. This test found that eliminating the phrase, “your response is required by law” from the two mailing envelopes significantly lowered the self-response return rate and the overall final response rate.
- ***2015 Summer Mandatory Messaging Test*** (Oliver, Risley, & Roberts, 2016): conducted on the September 2015 panel to study the impact of removing or softening the mandatory messages from the mail materials. This test found that removing or softening the mandatory language in the mail materials significantly lowered self-response, whereas enhancing the mandatory language significantly increased it.
- ***Why We Ask*** (Heimel, Barth, & Rabe, 2016): conducted on the November 2015 panel to study the impact of the new “Why We Ask” insert with and without the Instruction

Guide in the paper questionnaire mailing package. This test found no evidence that the presence or absence of the Instruction Guide affected self-response.

In July 2016, the Census Bureau also held a series of meetings with Don Dillman who provided a critique of the current mail materials and messaging and offered suggestions for improvement.⁸ Dillman (2016) recommended a communications strategy that:

- Places greater emphasis on the benefits to respondents.
- Makes the messaging between mailings more distinct, but mutually supportive.
- Attaches the response request to the Census Bureau.

Building upon this research and expert recommendations, we developed two mail treatments for testing that are derivatives of the *Softened Revised Design* treatment from the *2015 Summer Mandatory Messaging Test*—the *Partial Redesign* and the *Full Redesign*. These two new treatments were largely inspired by recommendations from our meeting with Dillman. These treatments were designed to increase engagement with the recipient through a more conversational communication style, make information about the survey more visible through placement on a letter and on the questionnaire, and reduce the number of materials included in the mailings, especially the initial mailing package and the paper questionnaire package.

Our principal objective in conducting the *2017 Mail Design Test* was to provide an improvement to the *Softened Revised Design* treatment from the *2015 Summer Mandatory Messaging Test*, for which the softening of the mandatory language had a negative impact on the self-response rates. We sought an alternative treatment that would still maintain the softening of the mandatory language, but produce higher self-response rates than the *Softened Revised*.

4. METHODOLOGY

This report answers the following research questions:

- 1) What is the impact on self-response of placing the multilingual information on a letter instead of a brochure and including a “Why We Ask” pamphlet? (Is there a difference between the *Softened Revised Design* and the *Partial Redesign*?)
- 2) What is the impact on self-response of placing the multilingual information on a letter instead of a brochure; including a “Why We Ask” pamphlet; and using a conversational tone? (Is there a difference between the *Softened Revised Design* and the *Full Redesign*?)

⁸ Don Dillman is Regents Professor of the Department of Sociology and Deputy Director for Social and Economic Sciences Research (SESRC) at Washington State University. He previously served as the senior survey methodologist in the Office of the Director at the U.S. Census Bureau.

- 3) What is the impact on self-response of using a conversational tone? (Is there a difference between the *Partial Redesign* and the *Full Redesign*?)
- 4) What is the overall impact of each of the experimental treatments on final response rates, data collection costs, and reliability of survey estimates? (Is there a difference between Control and *Softened Revised Design*, *Partial Redesign*, or *Full Redesign*?)
- 5) What is the impact on item missing data rates of moving the date field to the second page of the questionnaire of the *Partial Redesign* and the *Full Redesign*?

The following sections explain the experimental design, the sample design, and the statistics employed to compare treatments.

4.1 Experimental Design

For the *2017 Mail Design Test*, we evaluated three experimental treatments: a modification of the *Softened Revised Design* treatment from the *2015 Summer Mandatory Messaging Test* and two derivative treatments—the *Partial Redesign* and the *Full Redesign*. The test also included a control treatment, for which the materials were the same as production.

Modifications to the *Softened Revised Design* included the addition of the phrase, “our toll free number” preceding the toll free number provided; an updated confidentiality statement; and a new Reingold-inspired design for the outgoing envelope containing the reminder letter.⁹

The *Partial Redesign* and the *Full Redesign* treatments departed from the *Softened Revised Design* treatment in the following ways:

- Removal of the “Multilingual Brochure” to reduce the number of mail pieces. This information was included on the enclosed letter.
- The addition of a “Why We Ask” pamphlet, a color pamphlet designed to engage the recipient and provide summary information about the benefits of the ACS.
- Design changes to the front page of the questionnaire to provide instruction information that would have been contained on the “instruction card.” The rationale was a standalone questionnaire that provided sufficient instructions. Hence, the instruction card was not included in the questionnaire package for these treatments.
- The use of a letter instead of a postcard for the final reminder to allow us to include login information on the letter to make internet response easier. The accompanying envelope contained a new message, “Final Notice Respond Now” to make a strong push for response.

⁹ In 2013, the Census Bureau contracted with Reingold, Inc. to conduct messaging and mail package assessment research.

The *Full Redesign* differs from the *Partial Redesign* in the manner in which we communicate with the ACS recipients in the letters and postcards. The communication in the *Full Redesign* (per Dillman’s recommendation) is conversational and friendly (see Dillman et al. (2014) to learn more about this approach). In the *Full Redesign* treatment, the Instruction Card was omitted from the initial mailing package, as the initial mailing letter in this treatment contained sufficient information. Consequently, we were able to use a smaller outgoing envelope.

Table 1 provides an inventory of the mail materials used for all treatments. The mail materials are organized by the five ACS mailings that a sampled address could possibly receive—Initial Mailing, Reminder Letter, Questionnaire Package, Reminder Postcard, and Final Reminder.

The Initial Mailing and Reminder Letter are in the M1 mailing universe. The Questionnaire Package and the Reminder Postcard are in the M2 mailing universe. The Final Reminder is in the M3 universe. The mailout dates for the mail materials are:

- Initial Mailing, 7/20/17
- Reminder Letter, 7/27/17
- Questionnaire Package, 8/10/17
- Reminder Postcard, 8/14/17
- Final Reminder, 9/5/17

The CATI operation ran from 9/1/17-9/30/17 and the CAPI operation ran from 10/1/17-11/3/17.

See Appendices A – D for facsimiles of the mail materials listed in Table 1. The Appendices are presented in the following order:

- Appendix A: Current Production Treatment Materials
- Appendix B: Softened Revised Design Treatment Materials
- Appendix C: Partial Redesign Treatment Materials
- Appendix D: Full Redesign Treatment Materials

Table 1. Description of Mail Materials for all Treatments in the 2017 Mail Design Test

| Mailing Classification | Mail Piece | Control (CTL) | Experimental Treatments | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| | | | Softened Revised Design (SRD) | Partial Revised Design (PRD) | Full Redesign (FRD) |
| Initial Mailing | Outgoing Envelope | Your Response is Required by Law ---- 11.5 by 6 inches | Your Response is Important to Your Community Open Immediately 11.5 by 6 inches | Your Response is Important to Your Community Open Immediately 11.5 by 6 inches | Your Response is Important to Your Community ---- † 9.5 by 4.375 inches † |
| | Frequently Asked Questions Brochure | YES | NO | NO | NO |
| | Letter | No callout box ---- | Callout box Softened Wording | Callout box Softened Wording | Callout box Wording Changes † |
| | Instruction Card | YES | YES | YES φ | NO † |
| | Multilingual Information | Brochure included | Brochure Included * | Included in the letter | Included in the letter |
| | "Why We Ask" pamphlet | NO | NO* | YES | YES |
| Reminder Letter | Outgoing Envelope | No Message | No Message | No Message | No Message |
| | Letter | ---- | ---- | ---- | Wording Changes* |
| Questionnaire Package | Outgoing Envelope | Your Response is Required by Law ---- | Your Response is Important to Your Community Open Immediately | Your Response is Important to Your Community Open Immediately | Your Response is Important to Your Community ---- † |
| | Questionnaire | Current | Current* | Design Changes θ | Design Changes θ |
| | Frequently Asked Questions Brochure | YES | NO | NO | NO |
| | Letter | Current | Softened Wording | Softened Wording | Wording Changes † |
| | Instruction Card | YES | YES* | NO | NO |
| | Return Envelope | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Reminder Postcard | Postcard | ---- | Softened Wording | Softened Wording | Wording Changes † |
| Final Reminder | | Postcard | Postcard* | Letter | Letter |
| | | ---- | Softened Wording | Softened Wording | Wording Changes † |
| | | ---- | ---- * | 'Final Notice Respond Now' on envelope | 'Final Notice Respond Now' on envelope |

† Designates where the FRD differs from the SRD and PRD

φ The instruction card was necessary because the letter did not have space to print both the respondent address and the login information.

* Designates where the SRD differs from the PRD and FRD

θ The front page of the questionnaire includes instruction information that would have been placed on the instruction card.

4.2 Sample Design

The monthly ACS production sample of approximately 295,000 addresses is divided into 24 nationally representative groups, referred to as methods panel groups. Each methods panel group consists of approximately 12,000 addresses. This test was carried out in the August 2017 ACS production sample. In total, approximately 96,000 addresses were used for the four treatments, which includes the current production treatment group. Two randomly selected groups were assigned to each treatment (including the control treatment) meaning each treatment had a sample size of approximately 24,000 addresses. The remaining 16 panel groups received production materials and were not part of this analysis.

4.3 Analysis Rates

We evaluated the effect of the experimental treatments on self-response by comparing their self-response return rates at specified points in time during the self-response phase of data collection. We evaluated the effect of the experimental treatments on overall response by comparing their final response rates, data collection costs, and the effect on survey estimates (reliability) to that of the control at closeout.

Table 2 provides a summary of these comparisons. The rationale for the points in time (i.e., cut-off point) during data collection when we compared treatments is provided below.

- The **date the questionnaire package was mailed** (cut-off point) helped us determine the effect of each treatment on self-response for households provided with one mode for self-response (internet) and a reminder letter.
- The **date the final reminder was mailed** (cut-off point) helped us determine the cumulative effect of each treatment on self-response for nonrespondent households that had two choices for self-response (internet and mail) and received a reminder postcard.
- **The date CATI ended** (cut-off point) helped us determine the cumulative effect of each treatment on self-response for the households that received a final reminder postcard or letter.
- The **closeout date** (cut-off point) helped us determine the overall effectiveness of the experimental treatments versus the control treatment.

Table 2. Experimental Design for the 2017 Mail Design Test

| Research Question | Treatment Comparison | When Compared |
|--|--|--|
| What is the impact of placing the multilingual information on a letter instead of a brochure and including a “Why We Ask” pamphlet on <i>self-response return rates</i> ? | Partial Redesign vs Softened Revised Design | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Date Questionnaire Package is mailed ▪ Date final reminder postcard/letter is mailed ▪ Date CATI ends* |
| What is the impact on self-response of placing the multilingual information on a letter instead of a brochure; including a “Why We Ask” pamphlet; and using wording that conveys a deferential tone? | Full Redesign vs Softened Revised Design | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Date Questionnaire Package is mailed ▪ Date final reminder postcard/letter is mailed ▪ Date CATI ends* |
| What is the impact on self-response of using wording that expresses a deferential tone? | Full Redesign vs Partial Redesign | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Date Questionnaire Package is mailed ▪ Date final reminder postcard/letter is mailed ▪ Date CATI ends |
| What is the overall impact of the experimental treatment vs the control treatment on <i>final response rates, data collection costs, and reliability of survey estimates</i> ? | All Experimental Treatments vs Control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Closeout* |
| Is the <i>item missing data rate</i> for the month/day fields of the “please print today’s date” question the same? | Partial and Full Redesign Treatments vs. Control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Closeout* |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*Only units with no apartment designations will be compared. See Section 4.3.4 for details.

The inclusion of additional information on the front of the redesigned questionnaire used in the *Partial* and *Full Redesign* treatments resulted in the shifting of the date field from the front of the questionnaire to the second page of the questionnaire. Because we were concerned that the shifting of the date field could possibly negatively affect response in this field, we compared the item missing data rates for this field for the *Partial* and *Full Redesign* treatments to that of the control.

The formulas for the self-response return rate, the final response rate, and the item missing data rate are defined in Sections 4.3.1, 4.3.2, and 4.3.3, respectively.

4.3.1 Self-Response Return Rates

Self-response return rates were calculated for total self-response and separately for internet and mail response. They were calculated using the base weights—the inverse of the probability of selection for a unit.

$$\text{Self-Response Return Rate} = \frac{\text{Number of mailable and deliverable sample addresses that provided a non-blank}^{10} \text{ paper questionnaire via mail or TQA OR a complete or sufficient partial Internet response}^{11}}{\text{Total number of mailable and deliverable sample addresses}} \times 100$$

Note: For the comparisons of return rates by mode, the small number of returns obtained from Telephone Questionnaire Assistance (TQA) were classified as mail returns.

Addresses designated as “undeliverable-as-addressed” (UAA) by the United States Postal Service (USPS) and for which no response was received, and unmailable addresses were excluded from all return rate calculations. If more than one response was received from a single address (i.e., the survey was completed online and a paper questionnaire was mailed back), the response received first was considered the mode of response for this test.

Due to a processing error, the UAAs for the *Full Redesign* treatment were not captured correctly after the initial mailing and before the address file creation for the third and fourth mailings. As a result, about 2,300 addresses were incorrectly sent the third and fourth mailings for the *Full Redesign* treatment. We detected this error after the self-response rates were already calculated. Using postal tracking files, we simulated what would have happened to these UAA cases had they been properly identified and corrected the self-response return rates. None of the initial findings changed as a result of this correction.

4.3.2 Final Response Rates

Final response rates were calculated overall and separately by mode. They were calculated using the base weights for self-responses; CAPI cases were weighted by multiplying a subsampling factor by the initial base weight.

$$\text{Final Response Rate} = \frac{\text{Number of the addresses that provided a complete or sufficient partial response}}{\text{Total number of mailable and deliverable sample addresses}^{12}} \times 100$$

¹⁰ A return is considered “blank” if there are no persons with sufficient response data and there is no telephone number listed on the form by the respondent.

¹¹ A “sufficient partial response” is one that is complete up to the first question in the detailed person question section for the first person in the household.

¹² Excluding nonrespondent addresses that were not sampled for CAPI and addresses that were out-of- scope (e.g., demolished homes, homes under construction, relocated houses or trailers)

4.3.3 Item Missing Data Rates

We compared the item missing data rates for the date field on the front of the questionnaire used in the *Partial Revised Design* and *Full Revised Design* treatments to the production questionnaire used in the *Control* treatment.

$$\text{Item Missing Data Rate} = \frac{\text{Number of eligible housing units that did not provide a required response for the item}}{\text{Total number of eligible housing units required to provide a response to the item}} \times 100$$

4.3.4 Issue with M3 Universe

There was an error when printing the addresses for the two treatments—the *Control* treatment and the *Softened Revised Design* treatment—that sent ACS recipients a reminder postcard in the final mailing (M3 universe). If an address in these treatments had a unit designation (i.e., apartment number), it was not printed on the reminder postcard in the M3 universe. This error did not occur for the two treatments—the *Partial Redesign* and the *Full Redesign*—that used a reminder letter instead of a postcard; therefore, these two treatments were not affected by this printing error.

Across the four treatments, there were 14,500 cases in the M3 universe with a unit designation (35.1 percent of the M3 universe). Of these 14,500 cases, 47.2 percent were affected by the printing error (22.4 percent, *Control*; 24.8 percent, *Softened Revised Design*). These affected cases accounted for 16.6 percent of the M3 universe.

Because of this issue, we adjusted some of our calculations to make comparisons of the treatments comparable. We removed the cases in the M3 universe that had a value for unit designation. We refer to this new universe as the Partial Universe. It not necessary to use the Partial Universe for our return rates calculated prior to the M3 universe.

4.4 Standard Errors

All variances were estimated using the Successive Differences Replication (SDR) method with replicate weights, the standard method used for the ACS. The standard error of the estimate (X_0) is the square root of the variance:

$$\text{Var}(X_0) = \frac{4}{80} \sum_{r=1}^{80} (X_r - X_0)^2$$

Where:

X_r = the estimate calculated for replicate r

X_0 = the estimate calculated using the full sample

4.5 Cost and Reliability Analysis

A reduction in self-response incurs additional costs because we send more mailings and have higher CAPI workloads. The reliability of the ACS estimates is also affected by a reduction in self-response. To report the likely impact of implementing each experimental treatment we consider our ability to

- Maintain current sample size
- Maintain current reliability
- Maintain costs

4.5.1 Calculating Costs

For this analysis, we included the cost of collecting data through self-response modes (mail and internet) and through a personal visit mode (CAPI). We did not include costs for a telephone mode (CATI) in this analysis. At the time of the test, the ACS was transitioning from a telephone mode, making the CATI costs derived from this test unrepresentative of future ACS data collection costs.

Data collection costs for both the self-response modes and the personal visit mode were based on the Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) budget allocations and estimated yearly workloads, but the self-response cost incorporates some additional factors. The self-response cost estimate for each treatment accounts for the difference in data collection costs between internet and mail responses. Because mail questionnaire data capture is a more manual operation than internet data capture, it is more expensive, and a treatment with more mail responses than internet responses will have a higher self-response cost than a treatment with the same total self-response but more internet responses.

The self-response cost estimates also incorporated changes in cost due to changes in the questionnaire mailing and final mailing workloads. The lower the self-response rate for a given treatment during the M1 (M2) mailout period, the greater the number of households sent a follow-up mailing during the M2 (M3) mailout period—increasing total mailout costs. Conversely, higher self-response rates reduce subsequent mailing costs. The number of cases placed in the personal visit (CAPI) universe are affected by the total response rates at the end of the mail contact period.

Lastly, the self-response cost estimates included increases or decreases in cost based on required postage and printing and assembling various mail pieces. Some treatments included less expensive mail pieces—reducing self-response costs.

4.5.2 Calculating Reliability

To assess the potential impact of softening the messaging and other design changes to the ACS mail materials on the reliability of the estimates, we calculated a reliability of the estimates

metric. The metric, a ratio of the sum of the squared weights for the interviews under an experimental treatment as compared to the control, estimates the overall impact on the reliability of the estimates rather than the impact on specific characteristics. The weights were then adjusted to take into consideration the effect of the increased nonresponse, as well as the shift in mode distribution due to lower self-response. Additionally, we explored alternative sampling and subsampling approaches that could be implemented to offset a reduction in self-response to maintain costs.

To address the issue of the M3 mailing (see Section 4.3.4), the reliability analysis measured the difference between the control treatment and each experimental treatment, and then applied those changes to the 2016 data to model what the change in reliability would be under each treatment. To perform the reliability analysis, we accounted for the missing M3 cases in the *Control* and *Softened Revised Design* treatment by using prior production data to help produce an estimate of how many of the M3 cases would have responded had they had the opportunity to. We then applied the increased M3 response to the response data for the affected treatments and adjusted the CAPI workloads and interview counts to account for the increased M3 response. Since this only affected records with a unit designation in the M3 universe, it was not a large change, and did not change overall results, just some of the particular comparisons.

5. ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1 Assumptions

- A single ACS monthly sample is representative of an entire year (twelve panels) and the entire frame sample with respect to both return rates and cost.
- A single methods panel group (1/24 of the full monthly sample) is representative of the full monthly sample.
- We assume that there is no difference in mail delivery timing or subsequent response time across samples of similar size using the same postal sort and mail out procedures, as we have chosen sample sizes of the experimental treatments considering postal procedures.

5.2 Limitations

- Group quarters and sampled housing unit addresses from remote Alaska and Puerto Rico were not included in the sample for the test.
- The M2 and M3 universes from treatment to treatment are different, and some caution should be given in drawing conclusions about those mailings from treatment comparisons.
- During the time that this test was conducted, the CATI operation was a part of the nonresponse follow-up operations. The CATI operation was discontinued as of October

2017. Extrapolations of the results to the new data collection should consider this limitation.

- The estimates used to make cost projections for the cost analysis do not account for sampling variability in return rates or monthly variability in production costs such as changes in staffing, production rates, or printing price adjustments.
- Due to an error on the address file for the Control and the Softened Revised Design treatments, addresses for these treatments in the M3 universe with a unit designation (i.e., apartment number) were sent a final reminder postcard where the unit designation was omitted. This likely resulted in these cases not receiving the fifth mailing. We are unsure if we would have gotten a response from these addresses if they had received the mailing. See Section 4.4.4 for more information.
- The calculations of self-response return rates exclude cases returned to the post office that are UAA. UAAs are also excluded from the address file for subsequent mailings. Due to a processing error, the Full Redesign treatment UAAs were not captured correctly after the initial mailing and before the address file creation for the third and fourth mailings. As a result, about 2,300 addresses were sent the third and fourth mailings for the Full Redesign treatment that otherwise would not have been sent those mailings. UAAs were correctly identified for all other mailings. To closely simulate what should have happened with the UAAs for the initial mailing, we used postal tracking files to identify the *Full Redesign* treatments cases that should not have received the third and fourth mailings. We eliminated those cases from our calculations of self-response return rates for the Full Redesign treatment. However, depending on the timing of a mailing, sometimes we get a response from address determined to be a UAA and we keep those cases in the return rates. However, the Full Redesign UAAs were removed completely.

6. RESULTS

6.1 Self-Response Return Rates

We used self-response return rates to determine if either the *Partial Redesign* or *Full Redesign* was an improvement over the *Softened Revised Design*.

We calculated self-response return rates at three points in time:

- The date the questionnaire package was mailed
- The date the final reminder postcard/letter was mailed
- The date CATI ended

6.1.1 Self-Response Return Rates – Partial Redesign versus Softened Revised Design

What is the impact on self-response of placing the multilingual information on a letter instead of a brochure and including a “Why We Ask” pamphlet?

To answer this question, we compared the self-response return rates of the *Partial Redesign* and *Softened Revised Design* treatments. See Tables 3 through 5. An explanation of the results follows.

Table 3. Total Self-Response Return Rates for Partial Redesign vs Softened Revised Design

| Point in Data Collection Cycle | Partial Redesign | Softened Revised Design | Difference | P-value |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Date Questionnaire Package mailed | 19.0 (0.3) | 20.3 (0.3) | -1.3 (0.5) | 0.01* |
| Date Final Reminder Postcard/Letter mailed | 39.2 (0.5) | 39.4 (0.4) | -0.1 (0.7) | 0.83 |
| Date CATI ended (Partial Universe) | 52.9 (0.4) | 51.5 (0.5) | 1.4 (0.7) | 0.05* |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

Table 4. Internet Self-Response Return Rates for Partial Redesign vs Softened Revised Design

| Point in Data Collection Cycle | Partial Redesign | Softened Revised Design | Difference | P-value |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|------------|---------|
| Date Questionnaire Package mailed | 18.8 (0.3) | 20.1 (0.3) | -1.3 (0.5) | <0.01* |
| Date Final Reminder Postcard/Letter mailed | 25.8 (0.3) | 27.0 (0.4) | -1.1 (0.5) | 0.04* |
| Date CATI ended (Partial Universe) | 34.0 (0.4) | 34.1 (0.4) | -0.1 (0.6) | 0.82 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

Table 5. Mail Self-Response Return Rates for Partial Redesign vs Softened Revised Design

| Point in Data Collection Cycle | Partial Redesign | Softened Revised Design | Difference | P-value |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------|---------|
| Date Questionnaire Package mailed | 0.3 (<0.1) | 0.2 (<0.1) | <0.1 (<0.1) | 0.37 |
| Date Final Reminder Postcard/Letter mailed | 13.4 (0.3) | 12.4 (0.3) | 1.0 (0.4) | 0.01* |
| Date CATI ended (Partial Universe) | 18.9 (0.3) | 17.4 (0.3) | 1.6 (0.5) | <0.01* |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

For the total self-response return rates (internet and mail combined), the rate for the *Softened Revised Design* was significantly higher than the *Partial Redesign* treatment in the beginning (by 1.3 percentage points). At the point in time when the final reminder was sent, there was no significant difference between the rates for the two treatments. However, by the end of CATI, the total self-response return rate for the *Partial Redesign* surpassed that of the *Softened Revised Design* (by 1.4 percentage points).

The research question asks about the impact of the inclusion of the “Why We Ask” pamphlet and moving multilingual information on self-response. These changes only pertain to the initial mailing package. To understand the impact of changes to the initial mailing package we looked at the return rates when the paper questionnaire package was mailed. As seen in Tables 3-5, these changes did not boost self-response in the *Partial Redesign* treatment during this first mailing. In fact, for overall and internet self-response they had a detrimental effect.

Although there were multiple differences between the contents of the first mailing for the *Partial Redesign* and *Softened Revised Design* treatments, we believe that the addition of the “Why We Ask” pamphlet in the *Partial Redesign* treatment is the main cause of the difference between the self-response return rates. However, the *Partial Redesign* did perform better later, which suggests that elements in the later mailings of that treatment may be beneficial and

warrant further testing (specifically, replacing the final reminder postcard with a letter). We recommend that the “Why We Ask” pamphlet not be incorporated into production.

6.1.2 Self-Response Return Rates – Full Redesign versus Softened Revised

What is the impact on self-response of placing the multilingual information on a letter instead of a brochure; including a “Why We Ask” pamphlet; and using wording that conveys a deferential tone?

To answer this question, we compared the self-response return rates of the *Softened Revised Design* and *Full Redesign* treatments. See Tables 6 through 8. An explanation follows.

Table 6. Total Self-Response Return Rates for Full Redesign vs Softened Revised

| Point in Data Collection Cycle | Full | Softened | Difference | P-value |
|--|------------|----------------|------------|---------|
| | Redesign | Revised Design | | |
| Date Questionnaire Package mailed | 16.5 (0.2) | 20.3 (0.3) | -3.9 (0.4) | <0.01* |
| Date Final Reminder Postcard/Letter mailed | 34.2 (0.3) | 39.4 (0.4) | -5.2 (0.5) | <0.01* |
| Date CATI ended (Partial Universe) | 48.3 (0.4) | 51.5 (0.5) | -3.1 (0.6) | <0.01* |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

Table 7. Internet Self-Response Return Rates for Full Redesign vs Softened Revised Design

| Point in Data Collection Cycle | Full | Softened | Difference | P-value |
|--|------------|----------------|------------|---------|
| | Redesign | Revised Design | | |
| Date Questionnaire Package mailed | 16.2 (0.2) | 20.1 (0.3) | -4.0 (0.4) | <0.01* |
| Date Final Reminder Postcard/Letter mailed | 21.5 (0.3) | 27.0 (0.4) | -5.5 (0.5) | <0.01* |
| Date CATI ended (Partial Universe) | 29.7 (0.4) | 34.1 (0.4) | -4.4 (0.6) | <0.01* |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

Table 8. Mail Self-Response Return Rates for Full Redesign vs Softened Revised Design

| Point in Data Collection Cycle | Full Redesign | Softened Revised Design | Difference | P-value |
|--|---------------|-------------------------|------------|---------|
| Date Questionnaire Package mailed | 0.3 (<0.1) | 0.2 (<0.1) | 0.1 (0.1) | 0.30 |
| Date Final Reminder Postcard/Letter mailed | 12.7 (0.3) | 12.4 (0.3) | 0.3 (0.3) | 0.38 |
| Date CATI ended (Partial Universe) | 18.6 (0.3) | 17.4 (0.3) | 1.3 (0.5) | 0.01* |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

The *Softened Revised Design* had significantly higher self-response return rates than the *Full Redesign* in the beginning (by 3.9 percentage points) and at the two subsequent points in time considered. In the mail mode, there was no significant difference between the return rates for the *Full Redesign* and the *Softened Revised Design* until the end of CATI with the *Full Redesign* treatment having higher return rates (by 1.3 percentage points).

The overall (total) and internet return rates are lower for the *Full Redesign*. However, the difference decreased by the time CATI ended. Since we saw an increase in return rates for *Partial Redesign* as well after the fifth mailing, there may be evidence that supports replacing the final reminder postcard with a letter.

6.1.3 Self-Response Return Rates – Full Redesign versus Partial Redesign

What is the impact on self-response of using wording that expresses a deferential tone?

To answer this question, we compared the self-response return rates of the *Full Redesign* and *Partial Redesign*. See Table 9 through 11. An explanation follows.

Table 9. Total Self-Response Return Rates for Full Redesign vs Partial Redesign

| Point in Data Collection Cycle | Full Redesign | Partial Redesign | Difference | P-value |
|--|---------------|------------------|------------|---------|
| Date Questionnaire Package mailed | 16.5 (0.2) | 19.0 (0.3) | -2.6 (0.4) | <0.01* |
| Date Final Reminder Postcard/Letter mailed | 34.2 (0.3) | 39.2 (0.5) | -5.1 (0.5) | <0.01* |
| Date CATI ended (Partial Universe) | 48.3 (0.4) | 52.9 (0.4) | -4.6 (0.6) | <0.01* |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

Table 10. Internet Self-Response Return Rates for Full Redesign vs Partial Redesign

| Point in Data Collection Cycle | Full Redesign | Partial Redesign | Difference | P-value |
|--|---------------|------------------|------------|---------|
| Date Questionnaire Package mailed | 16.2 (0.2) | 18.8 (0.3) | -2.6 (0.4) | <0.01* |
| Date Final Reminder Postcard/Letter mailed | 21.5 (0.3) | 25.8 (0.3) | -4.4 (0.4) | <0.01* |
| Date CATI ended (Partial Universe) | 29.7 (0.4) | 34.0 (0.4) | -4.3 (0.6) | <0.01* |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

Table 11. Mail Self-Response Return Rates for Full Redesign vs Partial Redesign

| Point in Data Collection Cycle | Full Redesign | Partial Redesign | Difference | P-value |
|--|---------------|------------------|-------------|---------|
| Date Questionnaire Package mailed | 0.3 (<0.1) | 0.3 (<0.1) | <0.1 (<0.1) | 0.63 |
| Date Final Reminder Postcard/Letter mailed | 12.7 (0.3) | 13.4 (0.3) | -0.7 (0.4) | 0.05* |
| Date CATI ended (Partial Universe) | 18.6 (0.3) | 18.9 (0.3) | -0.3 (0.5) | 0.49 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

For total self-response, the *Partial Redesign* produced higher self-response return rates than the *Full Redesign*. This seems to be driven by the internet mode. We are not convinced that the more conversational wording is what hurt the *Full Redesign* treatment. It is hard to say whether the *Full Redesign* would have fared poorly if “Open Immediately” had been printed on the envelopes or if the envelope was the same size as the other treatments.

6.2 Final Response Rates

What is the overall impact of each of the experimental treatments on final response rates, data collection costs, and reliability of survey estimates?

To answer the question of the impact on final response rates, we compared the final response rates and final response rates from each mode of all three experimental treatments to that of the *Control* treatment (production). See Tables 12-16. The impact on cost and reliability is covered in Section 6.3.

As displayed in Table 12, the *Softened Revised Design*, *Partial Redesign*, and *Full Redesign* treatments all had lower final response rates than the *Control* treatment.

Table 12. Final Response Rates (Partial Universe)

| Treatment | Rate | Experimental – Production | P-value |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|---------|
| <i>Production (Control)</i> | 94.3 (0.3) | — | — |
| <i>Softened Revised Design</i> | 93.3 (0.3) | -1.0 (0.4) | 0.02* |
| <i>Partial Redesign</i> | 93.0 (0.3) | -1.3 (0.4) | <0.01* |
| <i>Full Redesign</i> | 92.6 (0.4) | -1.7 (0.5) | <0.01* |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

Table 13 shows the final response rates from the self-response modes (mail and internet rates combined). All three experimental treatments had lower rates than that of the *Control*.

Table 13. Final Proportion of Eligible Cases Responding Via the Self-Response Modes (Partial Universe)

| Treatment | Rate | Experimental – Production | P-value |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|---------|
| <i>Production (Control)</i> | 57.3 (0.6) | — | — |
| <i>Softened Revised Design</i> | 50.1 (0.6) | -7.2 (0.8) | <0.01* |
| <i>Partial Redesign</i> | 51.3 (0.5) | -6.0 (0.8) | <0.01* |
| <i>Full Redesign</i> | 48.6 (0.6) | -8.7 (0.9) | <0.01* |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

The same results in Tables 13 hold when we examine the rates by mode, as displayed in Tables 14 and 15.

Table 14. Final Proportion of Eligible Cases Responding Via the Mail Mode (Partial Universe)

| Treatment | Rate | Experimental – Production | P-value |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|---------|
| <i>Production (Control)</i> | 20.5 (0.4) | — | — |
| <i>Softened Revised Design</i> | 16.2 (0.3) | -4.3 (0.5) | <0.01* |
| <i>Partial Redesign</i> | 17.7 (0.3) | -2.8 (0.5) | <0.01* |
| <i>Full Redesign</i> | 17.9 (0.4) | -2.7 (0.5) | <0.01* |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

Table 15. Final Proportion of Eligible Cases Responding Via the Internet Mode (Partial Universe)

| Treatment | Rate | Experimental – Production | P-value |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|---------|
| <i>Production (Control)</i> | 36.8 (0.5) | — | — |
| <i>Softened Revised Design</i> | 33.8 (0.5) | -2.9 (0.7) | <0.01* |
| <i>Partial Redesign</i> | 33.6 (0.4) | -3.1 (0.7) | <0.01* |
| <i>Full Redesign</i> | 30.7 (0.5) | -6.1 (0.7) | <0.01* |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

Table 16 shows the proportion of eligible cases that had a CATI response. There was no significant difference between the final rate for the *Control* and that of any of the experimental treatments.

Table 16. Final Proportion of Eligible Cases Responding Via the CATI Mode (Partial Universe)

| Treatment | Rate | Experimental – Production | P-value |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|---------|
| <i>Production (Control)</i> | 0.7 (0.1) | — | — |
| <i>Softened Revised Design</i> | 0.9 (0.1) | 0.1 (0.1) | 0.19 |
| <i>Partial Redesign</i> | 0.8 (0.1) | 0.1 (0.1) | 0.18 |
| <i>Full Redesign</i> | 0.8 (0.1) | 0.1 (0.1) | 0.31 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

Table 17 shows the proportion of eligible cases that had a CAPI response. *Control* had significantly lower rates than all of the experimental treatments. This is likely due to the fact that the *Softened Revised Design*, *Partial Redesign*, and *Full Redesign* had many more CAPI cases.

Table 17. Final Proportion of Eligible Cases Responding Via the CAPI Mode (Partial Universe)

| Treatment | Rate | Experimental – Production | P-value |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|---------|
| <i>Production (Control)</i> | 36.3 (0.6) | — | — |
| <i>Softened Revised Design</i> | 42.4 (0.6) | 6.1 (0.9) | <0.01* |
| <i>Partial Redesign</i> | 40.8 (0.6) | 4.5 (0.8) | <0.01* |
| <i>Full Redesign</i> | 43.2 (0.7) | 6.9 (1.0) | <0.01* |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

6.3 Cost and Reliability

Due to a procedural error, sampled addresses in *the Full Redesign* treatment identified as UAAs in the initial mailing were not captured at the Census Bureau’s National Processing Center. Consequently, these addresses were sent the M2 mailing (see Section 4.3.1). Since the *Full Redesign* treatment was not a viable option based on the response rate results discussed in Sections 6.1 and 6.2, we only report cost and reliability information for the *Control* (Production), *Softened Revised Design* (SRD), and *Partial Redesign* (PRD) treatments.

Table 18 shows the differences in workloads for the initial, questionnaire, and final mailings used to calculate the costs for each mailing.

Table 18. Workload Estimates

| Universe | Production Workload (millions) | Production % of Initial Sample | SRD# Workload (millions) | SRD# % of Initial Sample | PRD# Workload (millions) | PRD# % of Initial Sample |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Initial Sample | 3.540 | 100.0 | 3.540 | 100.0 | 3.540 | 100.0 |
| Initial Mailing | 3.442 | 97.2 | 3.442 | 97.2 | 3.442 | 97.2 |
| Questionnaire Mailing | 2.559 | 72.3 | 2.628 | 74.2 | 2.637 | 74.5 |
| Final Mailing | 1.899 | 53.7 | 2.108 | 59.5 | 2.118 | 59.8 |
| Personal Visit | 0.806 | 22.8 | 0.876 | 24.7 | 0.873 | 24.7 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

Softened Revised Design (SRD), Partial Redesign (PRD), and Full Redesign (FRD)

To report the likely impact of implementing each experimental treatment we consider three scenarios:

- Maintain current sample size
- Maintain current reliability
- Maintain costs

6.3.1 Maintaining the Current Sample Size

As shown in Table 19, implementing any of the experimental treatments into a full ACS production year while maintaining the current sample size would increase costs due to lower return rates. Because it had the best self-response return rate when compared to the other experimental treatments, implementing the *Partial Redesign* would lead to the smallest increase in total cost with \$7.8 million additional expenditure. The *Softened Revised Design* would result in a greater increase in total cost, \$8.2 million.

Table 19. Data Collection Cost for each Experimental Treatment when Maintaining the Current Sample Size (in millions)

| | Production Workload | Production Cost | SRD# Workload | SRD# Cost | PRD# Workload | PRD# Cost |
|--|------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Initial Sample | 3.540 | -- | 3.540 | -- | 3.540 | -- |
| Initial Mailing | 3.442 | \$35.300 | 3.442 | \$34.400 | 3.442 | \$34.400 |
| Personal Visit | 0.806 | \$104.300 | 0.876 | \$113.400 | 0.873 | \$113.000 |
| Subtotal | -- | \$139.600 | -- | \$147.800 | -- | \$148.400 |
| Difference from Production | -- | -- | -- | \$8.200 | -- | \$7.800 |
| Percent Change from Production† | -- | -- | -- | 3.7% | -- | 3.5% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

† This is the percent increase from the FY 17 total ACS budget of approximately \$219 million.

Softened Revised Design (SRD), Partial Redesign (PRD), and Full Redesign (FRD)

The experimental treatments would also have a negative impact on reliability when maintaining the current sample. Table 20 shows that when maintaining the current sample, the *Partial Redesign* yields the highest expected completed interviews (2.103 million) and the lowest change in the margins of error (2.9 percent).

Table 20. Reliability for each Experimental Treatment when Maintaining the Current Sample Size (in millions)

| | ACS Production Methodology | Softened Revised Design | Partial Redesign |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Initial Sample | 3.540 | 3.540 | 3.540 |
| Expected Completed Interviews | 2.272 | 2.083 | 2.103 |
| Change in Completed Interviews | -- | -0.189 | -0.169 |
| Estimated Change in Variance | -- | 7.3% | 5.9% |
| Estimated Change in Margin of Error | -- | 3.6% | 2.9% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

6.3.2 Maintaining Current Reliability

To maintain the current ACS reliability, the experimental treatments would need an increase in initial sample size (due to decreased self-response), as shown in Table 21. The *Partial Redesign* would require the fewest additional cases (around 217,000).

Table 21. Sample Size (in millions) for each Experimental Treatment when Maintaining the Current Reliability

| | ACS Production Methodology | Softened Revised Design | Partial Redesign |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Initial Sample | 3.540 | 3.809 | 3.757 |
| Difference from Current Sample | -- | 0.269 | 0.217 |
| % Difference from Current Sample | -- | 7.6% | 6.1% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

The increase in initial sample size would increase the cost for all treatments (Table 22). The *Partial Redesign* would require the smallest increase in cost—with an increase in expenditure of \$16.8 million. The *Softened Revised Design* would cost an additional \$19.4 million.

Table 22. Data Collection Cost (in millions) for each Experimental Treatment when Maintaining the Current Reliability

| | Production Workload | Production Cost | SRD# Workload | SRD# Cost | PRD# Workload | PRD# Cost |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| Initial Sample | 3.540 | -- | 3.809 | -- | 3.757 | -- |
| Initial Mailing | 3.442 | \$35.300 | 3.704 | \$37.000 | 3.654 | \$36.500 |
| Personal Visit | 0.806 | \$104.300 | 0.942 | \$122.000 | 0.926 | \$119.900 |
| Subtotal | | \$139.600 | -- | \$159.000 | -- | \$156.400 |
| Difference from ACS Production | | -- | -- | \$19.400 | -- | \$16.800 |
| Percent change from ACS Production | | -- | -- | 8.8% | -- | 7.7% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test
Softened Revised Design (SRD), Partial Redesign (PRD), and Full Redesign (FRD)

6.3.3 Maintaining Current Data Collection Costs

To maintain the current ACS data collection costs, all experimental treatments would require using a smaller initial sample size than ACS production, as shown in Table 23. Because the *Partial Redesign* treatment costs the least, it has the smallest reduction in sample size—around 187,000 fewer cases. The *Softened Revised Design* would have a reduction of around 196,000 cases.

Table 23. Sample Size (in millions) for each Experimental Treatment when Maintaining the Current Data Collection Costs

| | ACS Production Methodology | Softened Revised Design | Partial Redesign |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Initial Sample | 3.540 | 3.344 | 3.353 |
| Difference from Current Sample | -- | -0.196 | -0.187 |
| % Difference from Current Sample | -- | -5.5% | -5.3% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

Decreasing the initial sample size to maintain costs decreases the number of completed interviews, which adversely affects reliability of the estimates for the experimental treatments. Similar to the situation of maintaining the current sample, implementing the *Partial Redesign* treatment results in the best reliability of the experimental treatments, as shown in Table 24.

When maintaining data collection costs, the *Partial Redesign* yields the highest expected completed interviews, 1.995 million, and the lowest change in the margins of error, 5.6 percent, due to it having the highest overall return rates of the experimental treatments. The *Softened Revised Design* results in 1.971 million completed interviews and an estimated change in the estimates' margins of error of 6.4 percent.

Table 24. Reliability for each Experimental Treatment when Maintaining the Current Data Collection Costs

| | ACS Production Methodology | Softened Revised Design | Partial Redesign |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Initial Sample | 3.540 | 3.344 | 3.353 |
| Expected Completed Interviews | 2.272 | 1.971 | 1.995 |
| Change in Completed Interviews | -- | -0.301 | -0.277 |
| Estimated Change in Variance | -- | 13.3% | 11.5% |
| Estimated Change in Margin of Error | -- | 6.4% | 5.6% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

6.3.4 Summary of Each Experimental Treatment’s Impact on Cost, Reliability, and Sample

As summarized in Table 25, maintaining the current sample while using the *Softened Revised Design* treatment would result in increased data collection costs (around \$8.2 million annually) as well as an increased margin of error (3.6 percent). To maintain current levels of reliability, this treatment would require a larger sample (7.6 percent) which would increase costs by around \$19.4 million annually. To maintain current costs, this treatment would need reduced workloads, decreasing the sample by 5.5 percent. This decrease in sample would increase the margin of error (by 6.4 percent).

Table 25. Softened Revised Design Compared to ACS Production

| | Maintain Current Sample | Maintain Current Reliability | Maintain Current Costs |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Change in Data Collection Cost (in millions) | \$8.200 | \$19.407 | -- |
| Percent Change in Sample | -- | 7.6% | -5.5% |
| Estimated Change in Margin of Error | 3.6% | -- | 6.4% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

Maintaining the current sample while using the *Partial Redesign* treatment would result in increased data collection costs (by around \$7.8 million annually) as well as an increased margin of error (by 2.9 percent), as shown in Table 26. To maintain current levels of reliability, this treatment would require a larger sample (by 6.1 percent) which would increase costs by around \$16.8 million annually. To maintain current costs, this treatment would need reduced workloads, decreasing the sample by 5.3 percent. This decrease in sample would increase the margin of error (by 5.6 percent).

Table 26. Partial Redesign Compared to ACS Production

| | Maintain Current Sample | Maintain Current Reliability | Maintain Current Costs |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Change in Data Collection Cost (in millions) | \$7.800 | \$16.800 | -- |
| Percent Change in Sample | -- | 6.1% | -5.3% |
| Estimated Change in Margin of Error | 2.9% | -- | 5.6% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

None of the experimental treatments performed better than the *Control* treatment. Comparing the experimental treatments by the end of the self-response period, *Partial Redesign* treatment performed best across all cost-related metrics. However, it is important to note that up until the final mailing, the *Softened Revised* Design was outperforming the *Partial Redesign* treatment in terms of response rate (not accounting for costs).

6.4 Item Nonresponse Rates

What is the impact on item nonresponse rates of moving the date field to the second page of the questionnaire of the Partial Redesign and the Full Redesign?

Table 27. Item Nonresponse Rates (Partial Universe) – Date Field

| Treatment | Rate | Experimental – Production | P-value |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|---------|
| <i>Production (Control)</i> | 7.6 (0.5) | — | — |
| <i>Partial Redesign</i> | 7.0 (0.5) | -0.6 (0.7) | 0.42 |
| <i>Full Redesign</i> | 6.6 (0.5) | -0.9 (0.7) | 0.18 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

There was no impact on item nonresponse of moving the date field from the first page of the questionnaire to the second. However, since the comparison is made using the paper questionnaire (sent in the third mailing), the comparisons may be affected by differences in the universe of each treatment.

After further review of the revised questionnaire, we were concerned about the potential item nonresponse rates of a few additional variables

- Respondent name
- Respondent telephone number
- Number of people

These are included on the first page of both questionnaires, but may not have been noticeable on the revised version in the *Partial Redesign* and *Full Redesign* treatments due to the design changes. Tables 28-30 show the item nonresponse rates for each of these variables separately. Table 31 shows when all three are missing.

Table 28. Item Nonresponse Rates (Partial Universe) – Name Field

| Treatment | Rate | Experimental – Production | P-value |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|---------|
| <i>Production (Control)</i> | 0.9 (0.2) | — | — |
| <i>Partial Redesign</i> | 1.7 (0.3) | 0.8 (0.3) | 0.01* |
| <i>Full Redesign</i> | 1.6 (0.2) | 0.7 (0.3) | 0.01* |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

Table 29. Item Nonresponse Rates (Partial Universe) – Telephone Number Field

| Treatment | Rate | Experimental – Production | P-value |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|---------|
| <i>Production (Control)</i> | 5.3 (0.4) | — | — |
| <i>Partial Redesign</i> | 6.7 (0.5) | 1.4 (0.6) | 0.03* |
| <i>Full Redesign</i> | 6.1 (0.5) | 0.8 (0.6) | 0.19 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

Table 30. Item Nonresponse Rates (Partial Universe) – Number of People Field

| Treatment | Rate | Experimental – Production | P-value |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|---------|
| <i>Production (Control)</i> | 2.8 (0.3) | — | — |
| <i>Partial Redesign</i> | 3.0 (0.3) | 0.2 (0.4) | 0.60 |
| <i>Full Redesign</i> | 3.1 (0.4) | 0.3 (0.5) | 0.46 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

The *Partial Redesign* and *Full Redesign* have higher item nonresponse rates for the name field. The *Partial Redesign* has a higher item nonresponse for the telephone number field.

Table 31 shows the nonresponse rate when all three fields (name, telephone, and number of people) were not filled in on the front of the redesigned questionnaire employed in the *Partial Redesign* and *Full Redesign* treatments. The significantly higher nonresponse rate compared to production, suggests that more respondents skipped the redesigned front page.

Table 31. Item Nonresponse Rates (Partial Universe) – Name, Telephone, and Number of People Fields

| Treatment | Rate | Experimental – Production | P-value |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|---------|
| <i>Production (Control)</i> | 0.4 (0.1) | — | — |
| <i>Partial Redesign</i> | 1.0 (0.2) | 0.6 (0.2) | 0.01* |
| <i>Full Redesign</i> | 1.0 (0.2) | 0.6 (0.2) | <0.01* |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Mail Design Test

*P-value is significant based on a two-tailed t-test at $\alpha=0.1$ level

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The Partial Universe excludes addresses on the M3 file with a unit designation. See Section 4.3.4.

These results suggest there could potentially be a problem with the redesigned questionnaire. If we were to further test the redesigned questionnaire, a revision should be considered to ensure the questions on the front page are seen and reduce nonresponse to these items.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The *Softened Revised Design* treatment from the *2015 Summer Mandatory Test*, which softened the mandatory messaging in the ACS mail materials, reduced self-response significantly. For the 2017 ACS Mail Design Test, we tested two newly proposed treatments—the *Partial Redesign* and the *Full Redesign* that we hoped would produce higher self-response return rates than the *Softened Revised Design*, but still maintain the softening of the mandatory messages.

The *Softened Revised Design* had significantly higher self-response return rates than the *Partial Redesign* treatment at the beginning of data collection (by 1.3 percentage points). However, by the end of CATI, the self-response return rate for the *Partial Redesign* surpassed that of the *Softened Revised Design* (by 1.4 percentage points). Because the *Full Redesign* fared poorly in comparison to both *Softened Revised Design* and *Partial Redesign* treatments, we focus the remaining discussion on these two treatments.

The *Softened Revised Design* and *Partial Redesign* treatments produced significantly lower self-response return rates than the *Control* treatment, where the mail materials were the same as production. The consequences of this reduction in self-response are explained in terms of sample size, reliability, and costs in the paragraphs below.

- If we wanted to maintain the current sample size, both the *Softened Revised Design* and the *Partial Revised Design* would increase the data collection costs due to reduced self-response. However, the *Softened Revised Design* would increase the data collection costs more than the *Partial Revised Design* (\$8.2 million annually versus \$7.8 million annually).

- If we wanted to maintain the current levels of reliability, both the *Softened Revised Design* and the *Partial Revised Design* would require larger sample sizes due to reduced self-response. However, the *Softened Revised Design* would require a larger increase in the sample than the *Partial Revised Design* (7.6 percent versus 6.1 percent, respectively). These increases would increase data collections costs by \$19.4 million annually and \$16.8 million annually, respectively).
- If we wanted to maintain the current costs, the *Softened Revised Design* would result in a 5.5 percent decrease in the initial sample, resulting in a 6.4 percent increase in the margin of error. The *Partial Redesign* would result in a 5.3 percent decrease in the initial sample, resulting in a 5.6 percent increase in the margin of error.

Looking at some of the components of the different treatments we have concluded that:

- Omitting “Open Immediately” from the envelopes and changing the size of the envelope in the *Full Redesign* treatment may have negatively impacted the response rate from the beginning.
- Including the “Why We Ask” brochure in the initial mailing resulted in significantly lower response rates.
- The replacement of the final postcard with a letter appears to have boosted return rates and warrants further testing.

8. REFERENCES

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Appendix A. Control Treatment Materials

Control Treatment: Initial Mailing – Outgoing Envelope

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
1201 East 10th Street
Jeffersonville IN 47132-0001
OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use \$300
ACS-46IM(2013) (12-2012)

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
U.S. Census Bureau
Permit No. G-58

The American Community Survey
**YOUR RESPONSE IS
REQUIRED BY LAW**



Initial Mailing - FAQ Brochure (Inside)



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the American Community Survey?

The American Community Survey collects information about population and housing characteristics for the nation, states, cities, counties, metropolitan areas, and communities on a continuous basis. Based on the American Community Survey, the Census Bureau can provide up-to-date data about our rapidly changing country more often than once every 10 years when the census is conducted.

How do I benefit by answering the American Community Survey?

Communities need data about the well-being of children, families, and the older population to provide services to them. By responding to the American Community Survey questionnaire, you are helping your community to establish goals, identify problems and solutions, and measure the performance of programs.

The data are also used to decide where to locate new highways, schools, hospitals, and community centers; to show a large corporation that a town has the workforce the company needs; and in many other ways.

Do I have to answer the questions on the American Community Survey?

Yes. Your response to this survey is required by law (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221). Title 13, as changed by Title 18, imposes a penalty for not responding. We estimate this survey will take about 40 minutes to complete.

How will the Census Bureau use the information that I provide?

The Census Bureau can use the information you provide for statistical purposes only and cannot publish or release information that would identify you and your household. Your information will be used in combination with information from other households to produce data for your community. Similar data will be produced for communities across the United States.

We may combine your answers with information that you gave to other agencies to enhance the statistical uses of these data. This information will be given the same protections as your survey information. Based on the information that you provide, you may be asked to participate in other Census Bureau surveys that are voluntary.

Will the Census Bureau keep my information confidential?

Yes. All of the information the Census Bureau collects for this survey about you and your household is confidential by law (Title 13, U.S. Code, Section 9). By law, every Census Bureau employee—including the Director as well as every field representative—has taken an oath and is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both if he or she discloses ANY information that could identify you or your household.

Where can I find more information about the American Community Survey or get assistance?

You may visit our Web site census.gov/acs or call 1-800-354-7271 if you need assistance or more information.

Control Treatment: Initial Mailing – Letter

ACS-13(L)(2017)
(6-2016)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233-0001
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

A message from the Director, U.S. Census Bureau ...

Your household has been randomly selected to complete a very important national survey, the American Community Survey. The U.S. Census Bureau conducts this survey to give our country an up-to-date picture of how we live—our education, employment, housing, and more. Using the enclosed instructions, please complete the survey online as soon as possible at:

<https://respond.census.gov/acs>

The Census Bureau is using the Internet to collect this information in an effort to conserve natural resources, save taxpayers' money, and process your data more efficiently. If you are unable to complete the survey online, there is no need to contact us. We will send you a paper questionnaire in a few weeks.

This survey collects critical information used to meet the needs of communities across the United States. For example, results from this survey are used to decide where new schools, hospitals, and fire stations are needed. This information also helps communities plan for the kinds of emergency situations that might affect you and your neighbors, such as floods and other natural disasters.

The Census Bureau chose your address, not you personally, as part of a randomly selected sample. You are required by U.S. law to respond to this survey. The Census Bureau is required by U.S. law to keep your answers confidential. The enclosed brochures answer frequently asked questions about the survey.

If you need help completing the survey, please call our toll-free number (1-800-354-7271).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

John H. Thompson
Director

Enclosures



census.gov

Control Treatment: Initial Mailing - Instruction Card

| |
|--|
|  American Community Survey |
| U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration |
| Go to https://respond.census.gov/acs to complete the American Community Survey online. |
| <i>(Vea el otro lado para español.)</i> |
| IMPORTANT: You will need information from the address label on this card to log in. If you need help or have questions about the American Community Survey, call the toll-free number 1-800-354-7271. |

| |
|--|
|  American Community Survey |
| U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration |
| Vaya a https://respond.census.gov/acs para completar la Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense por Internet en español. |
| ATENCIÓN: Necesitará información que aparece en la etiqueta en el otro lado de esta tarjeta para iniciar la sesión. Si usted necesita ayuda para llenar la encuesta o tiene preguntas acerca de la Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense, llame sin cargo al 1-877-833-5625. |
| <i>See other side for English.</i> |

ACS-34 IM (08/08/2013)

Control Treatment: Initial Mailing - Multilingual Brochure (backside when unfolded)

The U.S. Census Bureau is conducting the American Community Survey

In a few days you will receive an American Community Survey questionnaire in the mail. Because you are living in the United States, you are required by law to respond to this survey. If you have questions about the form, please call us toll-free at 1-800-354-7271.

What is the American Community Survey?

The American Community Survey is an important survey conducted by the Census Bureau. It is designed to give communities current information about its people and housing. In order to make well-informed decisions, a community needs accurate and reliable information. By responding to this survey, you are helping your community to get this kind of information.

Will my answers to this survey be kept confidential?

Yes. All of the information the Census Bureau collects for this survey about you and your household is confidential by law (Title 13, United States Code).

La Oficina del Censo de los Estados Unidos está realizando la Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense

En unos días, recibirá por correo un cuestionario de la Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense. Como usted está viviendo en los Estados Unidos, la ley exige que usted responda a esta encuesta. Si tiene preguntas sobre el cuestionario, llámenos al 1-877-833-5625 para hablar con uno de nuestros empleados que habla español. La llamada es gratis. El empleado podrá contestar sus preguntas o usted podrá completar la encuesta por teléfono.

¿Qué es la Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense?

La Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense es una encuesta importante realizada por la Oficina del Censo de los Estados Unidos. Está diseñada para brindar información actual a las comunidades sobre las personas y las viviendas. Para poder tomar buenas decisiones, una comunidad necesita información precisa y confiable. Al responder a esta encuesta, usted está ayudando a su comunidad a obtener este tipo de información.

¿Serán confidenciales mis respuestas a esta encuesta?

Así es. Toda información que la Oficina del Censo de los Estados Unidos obtenga durante esta encuesta sobre usted y su vivienda es confidencial según la ley (Título 13, Código de los Estados Unidos).

Important Information From the U.S. Census Bureau

Información Importante de la Oficina del Censo de los Estados Unidos

美国人口普查局 重要通知

Thông tin quan trọng từ Văn phòng Thống kê Dân số Hoa Kỳ

Важная информация от Бюро переписи населения США

미국 인구조사국에서 전해드리는 중요한 정보



U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
census.gov

Issued August 2013
ACS 9 (2014)

QR code and social media icons (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, RSS).



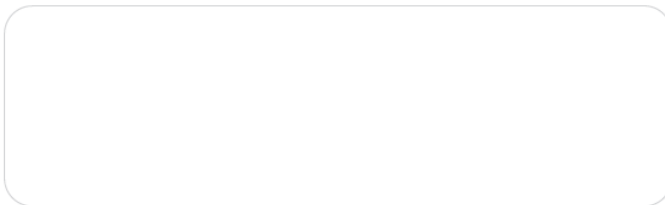
Reminder Letter – Outgoing Envelope

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
1201 East 10th Street
Jeffersonville IN 47132-0001

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use \$300
ACS-40(2012) (6-2011)

PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
U.S. Census Bureau
Permit No. G-58



Control Treatment: Reminder Letter

ACS-20(L)(2015)
(5-2015)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233-0001
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

A message from the Director, U.S. Census Bureau ...

A few days ago, you should have received instructions for completing the **American Community Survey** online. Local communities depend on information from this survey to decide where schools, highways, hospitals, and other important services are needed. If you have not already responded, please do so now.

Respond now at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>
Log in using this user ID:

If we do not receive your response online, we will mail a paper questionnaire to your address.

Your response to this survey is required by law. Your response is critically important to your local community and your country. Responding promptly will prevent your receiving additional reminder mailings, phone calls, or personal visits from Census Bureau interviewers.

If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you in advance for your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Thompson".

John H. Thompson
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

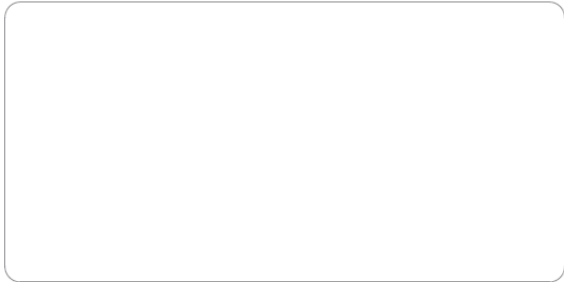
Control Treatment: Questionnaire Package – Outgoing Envelope

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
1201 East 10th Street
Jeffersonville IN 47132-0001
OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use \$300
ACS-46(2012) (5-2011)

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
U.S. Census Bureau
Permit No. G-58

The American Community Survey
Form Enclosed
**YOUR RESPONSE IS
REQUIRED BY LAW**



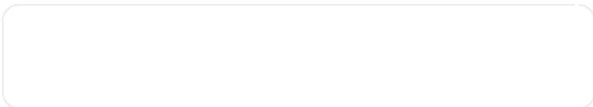
Questionnaire Package – Return Envelope

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use \$300
6385-47(2014) (10-2013)



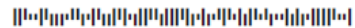
NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 16081 WASHINGTON DC

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

DIRECTOR
US CENSUS BUREAU
PO BOX 5240
JEFFERSONVILLE IN 47199-5240



Control Treatment: Questionnaire Package – Letter

ACS-14(L)(2017)
(6-2016)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233-0001
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

A message from the Director, U.S. Census Bureau...

About two weeks ago, the U.S. Census Bureau sent instructions for completing the American Community Survey to your address. We asked you to help us with this very important survey by completing it online. But we have not received your response yet.

If you have already completed the survey, thank you very much. If you have not, please complete the survey soon using ONE of the following two options.

- Option 1:** Go to <https://respond.census.gov/acs> to complete the survey online.
- Option 2:** Fill out and mail back the enclosed questionnaire.

This survey is so important that a Census Bureau representative may attempt to contact you by telephone or personal visit if we do not receive your response.

The information collected in this survey will help decide where new schools, hospitals, and fire stations are needed. The information also is used to develop programs to reduce traffic congestion, provide job training, and plan for the health care needs of the elderly.

The Census Bureau chose your address, not you personally, as part of a randomly selected sample. You are required by U.S. law to respond to this survey. The Census Bureau is required by U.S. law to keep your answers confidential. The enclosed brochure answers frequently asked questions about the survey.

If you need help completing the survey, please call our toll-free number (1-800-354-7271).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Thompson".

John H. Thompson
Director

Enclosures



census.gov

Control Treatment: Questionnaire Package – Instruction Card



American Community Survey

U.S. Department of Commerce | Economics and Statistics Administration

Two Ways to Complete the American Community Survey:



Option 1 – Go to <https://respond.census.gov/acs> to complete the survey online. **IMPORTANT:** You will need information from the address label on the enclosed questionnaire to log in.



Option 2 – Fill out the enclosed questionnaire and mail it back in the postage-paid envelope.

Please choose **ONLY** one way to respond. If you need help or have questions about the American Community Survey, call the toll-free number 1-800-354-7271.

Vea el otro lado para español.

ACS-34RM (04/04/2013)



American Community Survey

U.S. Department of Commerce | Economics and Statistics Administration

Hay dos maneras para completar la Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense:



Opción 1 – Vaya a <https://respond.census.gov/acs> para completar la encuesta por Internet en español. **ATENCIÓN:** Necesitará información que aparece en la etiqueta del cuestionario adjunto para iniciar la sesión.



Opción 2 – Llene y devuelva **por correo** el cuestionario adjunto en el sobre de envío incluido.

Por favor, escoja **SOLAMENTE** una manera de responder. Si usted necesita ayuda para llenar la encuesta o tiene preguntas acerca de la Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense, llame sin cargo al 1-877-833-5625.

See other side for English.

ACS-34RM (04/04/2013)



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

THE American Community Survey

Start Here

Respond online today at:
<https://respond.census.gov/acs>

OR

Complete this form and mail it
back as soon as possible.

This form asks for information about the people who are living or staying at the address on the mailing label and about the house, apartment, or mobile home located at the address on the mailing label.



If you need help or have questions about completing this form, please call **1-800-354-7271**. The telephone call is free.

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD):
Call 1-800-582-8330. The telephone call is free.

¿NECESITA AYUDA? Si usted habla español y necesita ayuda para completar su cuestionario, llame sin cargo alguno al **1-877-833-5625**. Usted también puede completar su entrevista por teléfono con un entrevistador que habla español. O puede responder por Internet en: <https://respond.census.gov/acs>

For more information about the American Community Survey, visit our web site at: <http://www.census.gov/acs>

➔ **Please print today's date.**

Month Day Year

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|

➔ **Please print the name and telephone number of the person who is filling out this form.** We will only contact you if needed for official Census Bureau business.

Last Name

First Name MI

Area Code + Number

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | - | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
|----------------------|----------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|

➔ **How many people are living or staying at this address?**

- **INCLUDE** everyone who is living or staying here for more than 2 months.
- **INCLUDE** yourself if you are living here for more than 2 months.
- **INCLUDE** anyone else staying here who does not have another place to stay, even if they are here for 2 months or less.
- **DO NOT INCLUDE** anyone who is living somewhere else for more than 2 months, such as a college student living away or someone in the Armed Forces on deployment.

Number of people

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
|----------------------|----------------------|

➔ **Fill out pages 2, 3, and 4 for everyone, including yourself, who is living or staying at this address for more than 2 months. Then complete the rest of the form.**

FORM **ACS-1(2017)**
(03-14-2016)

OMB No. 0607-0810
OMB No. 0607-0936

Control Treatment: Questionnaire Package - FAQ Brochure (inside)



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the American Community Survey?

The American Community Survey collects information about population and housing characteristics for the nation, states, cities, counties, metropolitan areas, and communities on a continuous basis. Based on the American Community Survey, the Census Bureau can provide up-to-date data about our rapidly changing country more often than once every 10 years when the census is conducted.

How do I benefit by answering the American Community Survey?

Communities need data about the well-being of children, families, and the older population to provide services to them. By responding to the American Community Survey questionnaire, you are helping your community to establish goals, identify problems and solutions, and measure the performance of programs.

The data are also used to decide where to locate new highways, schools, hospitals, and community centers; to show a large corporation that a town has the workforce the company needs; and in many other ways.

Do I have to answer the questions on the American Community Survey?

Yes. Your response to this survey is required by law (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141,193, and 221). Title 13, as changed by Title 16, imposes a penalty for not responding. We estimate this survey will take about 40 minutes to complete.

How will the Census Bureau use the information that I provide?

The Census Bureau can use the information you provide for statistical purposes only and cannot publish or release information that would identify you and your household. Your information will be used in combination with information from other households to produce data for your community. Similar data will be produced for communities across the United States.

We may combine your answers with information that you gave to other agencies to enhance the statistical uses of these data. This information will be given the same protections as your survey information. Based on the information that you provide, you may be asked to participate in other Census Bureau surveys that are voluntary.

Will the Census Bureau keep my information confidential?

Yes. All of the information the Census Bureau collects for this survey about you and your household is confidential by law (Title 13, U.S. Code, Section 9). By law, every Census Bureau employee—including the Director as well as every field representative—has taken an oath and is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both if he or she discloses ANY information that could identify you or your household.

Where can I find more information about the American Community Survey or get assistance?

You may visit our Web site census.gov/acs or call 1-800-354-7271 if you need assistance or more information.

Control Treatment: Reminder Postcard

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economic and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
1001 E 10th Street
Jeffersonville IN 47130-0001
ACS-2000-100 (7-00-10)
OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use \$300



432 (update) (7-00-10)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economic and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20540
2010-07-10 10:00:00

A message from the Director, U.S. Census Bureau . . .

Within the last few weeks, the U.S. Census Bureau sent you several requests to complete the American Community Survey. **Now is the time to complete the survey if you have not already done so.** Please complete the questionnaire and return it now OR go to <https://respond.census.gov/acs> to respond online.

Your response to this survey is required by U.S. law. If you do not respond, a Census Bureau interviewer may contact you to complete the survey. Local and national leaders use the information from this survey for planning schools, hospitals, roads, and other community needs.

If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number (1-800-354-7271).

Thank you

John H. Thompson

Control Treatment: Final Reminder Postcard

ACS-23(2015) (7-2015)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233-0001
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

A message from the Director, U.S. Census Bureau . . .

Within the last few weeks, the U.S. Census Bureau mailed an American Community Survey questionnaire package to your address. **You are required by U.S. law to respond to this survey.** The Census Bureau is required by U.S. law to keep your answers confidential. If you have already responded, thank you. If you have not, please complete the questionnaire and send it now, or complete the survey online now at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>.

Your response is critically important to your local community and to your country. If you do not respond, a Census Bureau interviewer may contact you by personal visit to complete the survey.

If you would like to complete the survey by telephone or need assistance, please call our toll-free number (1-800-354-7271).

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Thompson".

John H. Thompson

Appendix B. Softened Revised Design Treatment Materials

Softened Revised Design Treatment: Initial Mailing – Outgoing Envelope



U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
National Processing Center
1201 E. 10th St.
Jeffersonville, IN 47132-0001

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use: \$300

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
ACS-46IMQ05MS (12-2016)

PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
U.S. Census Bureau
Permit No. G-58

**YOUR RESPONSE
IS IMPORTANT TO
YOUR COMMUNITY.**



OPEN IMMEDIATELY

Softened Revised Design Treatment: Initial Mailing – Letter



United States[™]
Census
Bureau

U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233

A Message From John H. Thompson, Director of the U.S. Census Bureau:

Your address has been randomly selected by the U.S. Census Bureau to participate in the **American Community Survey**. The Census Bureau conducts this survey each year to give our country an up-to-date picture of how we live – including our education, housing, and jobs.

Communities across the country rely on information from this survey to decide where important services are needed, including:

- Improving roads and reducing traffic
- Building schools
- Planning for the health care needs of the elderly

Respond now at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>

Because your household has been asked to participate on behalf of your community, it is vital that you complete this survey to help meet critical needs in your area. Your response is required by U.S. law.

If you are unable to complete the survey online, we will send you a paper questionnaire in a few weeks. The Census Bureau is using the Internet to collect this information to conserve natural resources, save taxpayers money, and process data more efficiently.

If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you in advance for your prompt response.

Sincerely,

John H. Thompson
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Enclosures

American community survey data help determine the annual distribution of more than **\$400 billion** in federal funds to **communities nationwide**.

ACS-13(U)SMS (2-2017)

census.gov

Will my response be confidential?

Yes. The information you provide will help create a picture of your community, but it cannot be used to identify you. By law (Title 13, U.S. Code, Section 9), all of the information the Census Bureau collects for this survey is completely confidential, and millions of people securely participate in the survey each year. Census Bureau employees are subject to a \$250,000 fine and/or up to five years in prison if they disclose any information that could identify you.

Am I required to fill out this survey?

Yes. Your response to this survey is required by law (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221). As a randomly selected representative of your community, you are the voice of your neighbors and peers. To create an accurate picture of your community, it is critical that you respond.

How will the Census Bureau use the information I provide?

Your confidential response will be aggregated with information from other nearby households to produce a portrait of your community. This information is made freely accessible to government leaders, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and the public at large.

Based on the information you provide, you may be asked to participate in other Census Bureau surveys that are voluntary. We may combine your answers with information that you gave to other agencies to enhance the statistical uses of these data. This information will be given the same protection as your survey response.

Softened Revised Design Treatment: Initial Mailing – Instruction Card



Complete la Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense en Internet.

<https://respond.census.gov/acs>

Si usted necesita ayuda o tiene preguntas acerca de la encuesta, por favor llame al **1-877-833-5625**.

Guarde esta tarjeta.

Necesitará la información de la etiqueta de dirección en el otro lado de esta tarjeta para iniciar la sesión en Internet.

See the other side for English.



Complete the American Community Survey online.



Keep this card.

You will need information from the address label on this card to log in.

Vea el otro lado para español.

<https://respond.census.gov/acs>

If you need help or have questions, please call 1-800-354-7271.

ACS-34IM(X)SM (05/2015)

Softened Revised Design Treatment: Initial Mailing – Multilingual Brochure (backside when unfolded)

The U.S. Census Bureau is conducting the American Community Survey

In a few days you will receive an American Community Survey questionnaire in the mail. Because you are living in the United States, you are required by law to respond to this survey. If you have questions about the form, please call us toll-free at 1-800-354-7271.

What is the American Community Survey?

The American Community Survey is an important survey conducted by the Census Bureau. It is designed to give communities current information about its people and housing. In order to make well-informed decisions, a community needs accurate and reliable information. By responding to this survey, you are helping your community to get this kind of information.

Will my answers to this survey be kept confidential?

Yes. All of the information the Census Bureau collects for this survey about you and your household is confidential by law (Title 13, United States Code).

La Oficina del Censo de los Estados Unidos está realizando la Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense

En unos días, recibirá por correo un cuestionario de la Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense. Como usted está viviendo en los Estados Unidos, la ley exige que usted responda a esta encuesta. Si tiene preguntas sobre el cuestionario, llámenos al 1-877-833-5625 para hablar con uno de nuestros empleados que habla español. La llamada es gratis. El empleado podrá contestar sus preguntas o usted podrá completar la encuesta por teléfono.

¿Qué es la Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense?

La Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense es una encuesta importante realizada por la Oficina del Censo de los Estados Unidos. Está diseñada para brindar información actual a las comunidades sobre las personas y las viviendas. Para poder tomar buenas decisiones, una comunidad necesita información precisa y confiable. Al responder a esta encuesta, usted está ayudando a su comunidad a obtener este tipo de información.

¿Serán confidenciales mis respuestas a esta encuesta?

Así es. Toda información que la Oficina del Censo de los Estados Unidos obtenga durante esta encuesta sobre usted y su vivienda es confidencial según la ley (Título 13, Código de los Estados Unidos).

Important Information From the U.S. Census Bureau






Información Importante de la Oficina del Censo de los Estados Unidos

美国人口普查局重要通知


Thông tin quan trọng từ Văn phòng Thống kê Dân số Hoa Kỳ

Важная информация от Бюро переписи населения США


미국 인구조사국에서 전해드리는 중요한 정보

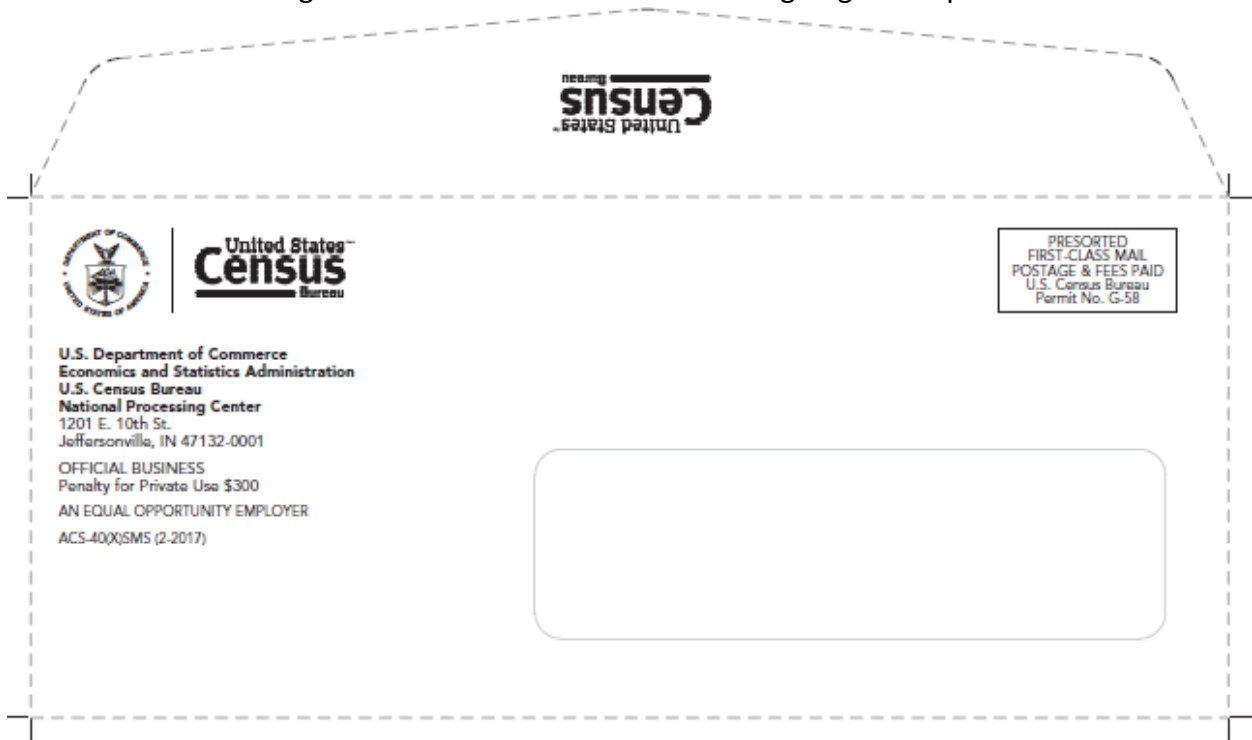
U.S. Department of Commerce
Economic and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
census.gov



Issued August 2013
ACS 9 (2014)



Softened Revised Design Treatment: Reminder Letter – Outgoing Envelope



Softened Revised Design Treatment: Reminder Letter



U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233

A Message From John H. Thompson, Director of the U.S. Census Bureau:

A few days ago, you should have received instructions for completing the **American Community Survey** online. Local communities depend on information from this survey to decide where schools, highways, hospitals, and other important services are needed. If you have not already responded, please do so now.

Respond now at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>
Log in using this user ID:

If we do not receive your response online, we will mail a paper questionnaire to your address.

Your response is critically important to your local community and your country and is required by law. Responding promptly will prevent your receiving additional reminder mailings, phone calls, or personal visits from Census Bureau interviewers.

If you need help in completing the survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you in advance for your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Thompson".

John H. Thompson
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

ACS-209,05MS (2-2017)

[census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

Softened Revised Design Treatment: Questionnaire Package – Outgoing Envelope



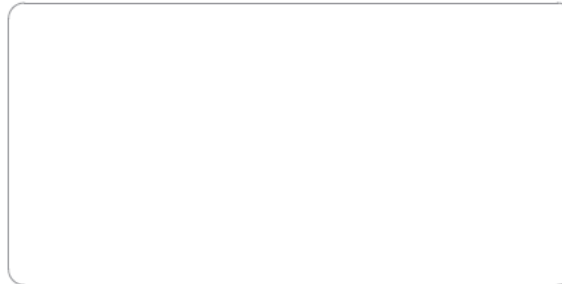
United States[™]
Census
Bureau

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
National Processing Center
1201 E. 10th St.
Jeffersonville, IN 47132-0001

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use: \$300

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
ACS-46005MS (12-2016)

U.S. CENSUS FORM ENCLOSED
**YOUR RESPONSE
IS IMPORTANT TO
YOUR COMMUNITY.**



PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
U.S. Census Bureau
Permit No. G-58

OPEN IMMEDIATELY

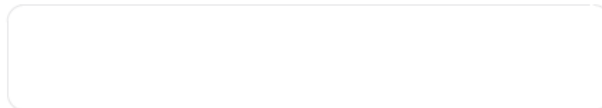
Questionnaire Package – Return Envelope

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use \$300
6385-47(2014) (10-2013)



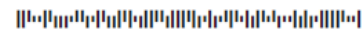
NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 16081 WASHINGTON DC

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

DIRECTOR
US CENSUS BUREAU
PO BOX 5240
JEFFERSONVILLE IN 47199-5240





U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233

A Message From John H. Thompson, Director of the U.S. Census Bureau:

The U.S. Census Bureau recently sent you a request to complete the **American Community Survey** online. If you have not already responded to this important survey, please do so now.

Complete the survey using ONLY ONE of the following options:

- Respond online at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>
- If you are unable to respond online, please fill out and mail back the enclosed questionnaire.

Your response is important to your community.

The Census Bureau has randomly selected your address to receive this survey as part of a nationally representative sample. You are required by U.S. law to respond to this survey. Because you will be providing important information on behalf of your community, it is vital that you complete this survey to help meet critical needs in your area – including determining where to locate new schools, hospitals, and fire stations.

If you do not respond promptly, a Census Bureau interviewer may contact you to complete the survey.

Your answers are completely confidential.

By law, the Census Bureau cannot publish or release information that would identify you or your household.

If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you for your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Thompson".

John H. Thompson
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Enclosures

ACS-14102SMS (2-2017)

census.gov

Softened Revised Design Treatment: Questionnaire Package – Instruction Card



Two ways to respond: Select only one.



Option One (recommended)

Go to ***<https://respond.census.gov/acs>***

Important: You will need information from the address label on the enclosed questionnaire to log in.



Option Two

Complete and return the enclosed questionnaire.

Vea el otro lado para español.

If you need help or have questions about the American Community Survey, please call 1-800-354-7271.



Hay dos maneras de responder: Seleccione sólo una.



Opción Una (recomendada)

Vaya a ***<https://respond.census.gov/acs>***

Importante: Usted necesitará la información de la etiqueta de dirección en el cuestionario adjunto para iniciar la sesión de Internet.



Opción Dos

Complete y devuelva el cuestionario adjunto.

See other side for English.

Si usted necesita ayuda o tiene preguntas acerca de la Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense, por favor llame al 1-877-833-5625.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

THE American Community Survey

Start Here

Respond online today at:
<https://respond.census.gov/acs>

OR

Complete this form and mail it
back as soon as possible.

This form asks for information about the people who are living or staying at the address on the mailing label and about the house, apartment, or mobile home located at the address on the mailing label.



If you need help or have questions about completing this form, please call **1-800-354-7271**. The telephone call is free.

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD):
Call 1-800-582-8330. The telephone call is free.

¿NECESITA AYUDA? Si usted habla español y necesita ayuda para completar su cuestionario, llame sin cargo alguno al **1-877-833-5625**. Usted también puede completar su entrevista por teléfono con un entrevistador que habla español. O puede responder por Internet en: <https://respond.census.gov/acs>

For more information about the American Community Survey, visit our web site at: <http://www.census.gov/acs>

➔ **Please print today's date.**

Month Day Year

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|

➔ **Please print the name and telephone number of the person who is filling out this form.** We will only contact you if needed for official Census Bureau business.

Last Name

First Name MI

Area Code + Number

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | - | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
|----------------------|----------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|

➔ **How many people are living or staying at this address?**

- **INCLUDE** everyone who is living or staying here for more than 2 months.
- **INCLUDE** yourself if you are living here for more than 2 months.
- **INCLUDE** anyone else staying here who does not have another place to stay, even if they are here for 2 months or less.
- **DO NOT INCLUDE** anyone who is living somewhere else for more than 2 months, such as a college student living away or someone in the Armed Forces on deployment.

Number of people

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
|----------------------|----------------------|

➔ **Fill out pages 2, 3, and 4 for everyone, including yourself, who is living or staying at this address for more than 2 months. Then complete the rest of the form.**

FORM **ACS-1(2017)**
(03-14-2016)

OMB No. 0607-0810
OMB No. 0607-0936

Softened Revised Design Treatment: Reminder Postcard

ACS 2009M1 (12/2010)



U.S. Department of Commerce
Economic and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
National Processing Center
1201 E. 10th St.
Jeffersonville, IN 47132-0001

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use: \$300

PRESORTED
FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES
PAID
U.S. Census Bureau
Permit No. G-58



Dear resident:

The U.S. Census Bureau has sent you repeated requests to complete the **American Community Survey**. If you have not already responded, it is imperative that you complete this survey now.

Complete and mail back your paper questionnaire now.
Or respond at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>

If you do not respond now, a Census Bureau interviewer may contact you by personal visit to complete the survey. If you would like to complete the survey by telephone or need assistance, please call our toll-free number **1-800-354-7271**.

Thank you,

John H. Thompson
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Softened Revised Design Treatment: Final Reminder Postcard



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U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
National Processing Center
1201 E. 10th St.
Jeffersonville, IN 47132-0001

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use: \$300



Now is the time to respond.

The U.S. Census Bureau has sent you several requests to complete the **American Community Survey**. If you have not already responded, it is imperative that you complete this survey now.

Complete and mail back your paper questionnaire now.
Or respond at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>

If you do not respond promptly, a Census Bureau interviewer may contact you to complete the survey.

If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number **1-800-354-7271**.

Thank you,

John H. Thompson
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Appendix C. Partial Redesign Treatment Materials

Partial Redesign Treatment: Initial Mailing – Outgoing Envelope



United States™
Census
Bureau

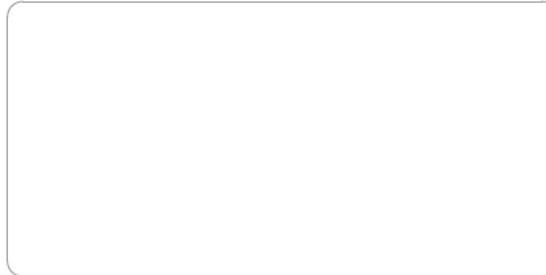
U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
National Processing Center
1201 E. 10th St.
Jeffersonville, IN 47132-0001

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use: \$300

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
ACS-46IM005MS (12-2016)

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FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
U.S. Census Bureau
Permit No. G-58

**YOUR RESPONSE
IS IMPORTANT TO
YOUR COMMUNITY.**



OPEN IMMEDIATELY



How Your Responses Help America

The American Community Survey (ACS) provides vital information that public officials, planners, and entrepreneurs use to assess the past and plan the future. When you respond to the ACS, you are doing your part to help your community plan hospitals, support school lunch programs, improve emergency services, build bridges, inform businesses looking to add jobs and expand to new markets, and more. Respond at <https://respond.census.gov/acs> today.

What we ask about

How your responses help

Employment

- Unemployment
- Not in labor force
- Weeks and hours worked
- Industry and occupation

- Develop programs to boost employment.
- Pinpoint areas of growth to help businesses choose new locations.
- Help governments plan unemployment programs and services.



Education

- School enrollment, private vs. public
- Information on students, at all educational levels
- Completed level of education

- Help communities measure how well educational resources are serving their populations.
- Identify the educational and training needs of adults.
- Bridge gaps between the levels of education completed by workers and educational requirements for employers.



Veterans

- Military service
- Veteran period of service
- VA service-connected disability rating

- Help the government and communities plan for the future health care of veterans.
- Plan and fund job training for veterans.
- Improve the home loan guarantee program for veterans.








Income and Housing Costs


- Income sources
- Living expenses

- Help gauge the need for economic and housing assistance.
- Provide the only source of community data on the population and characteristics of people who live in poverty.
- Provide a measure of housing affordability.




Partial Redesign Treatment: Initial Mailing – Why We Ask Brochure (back)

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Commuting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where people work Commuting time to work Mode of transportation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide precise data crucial for planning improvements to roads and mass transit. Help develop transportation networks and services. Create emergency response strategies. |  |
| <p>Disability and Health Insurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty with specific daily living tasks Health insurance enrollment and type | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help communities plan transportation, employment programs, and public service accessibility for people with disabilities. Attract businesses that serve people with disabilities. Show which groups are at risk for limited health care access and poor health outcomes. |  |
| <p>Housing Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plumbing, kitchen facilities, and other housing features Housing size and age | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help identify areas with substandard housing. Identify which communities are eligible for housing programs that help people afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing. Help communities plan recovery efforts after disasters. |  |
| <p>Owners and Renters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Own vs. rent home Amount of monthly rent Property value | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze housing affordability and allocate assistance programs. Help governments understand local housing market changes and monitor affordability. Supply businesses with data to design and market homes. |  |
| <p>People and Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age Sex Race Hispanic origin Relationship to household members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help monitor the well-being and discrimination of people. Administer funds and services to people needing assistance. Help businesses evaluate local market demands for products and services. |  |



U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
census.gov



ACS-8IM(X)DTR (10-2016)



U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233

A Message From John H. Thompson, Director of the U.S. Census Bureau:

Your address has been randomly selected by the U.S. Census Bureau to participate in the **American Community Survey**. The Census Bureau conducts this survey each year to give our country an up-to-date picture of how we live – including our education, housing, and jobs.

Communities across the country rely on information from this survey to decide where important services are needed, including:

- Improving roads and reducing traffic
- Building schools
- Planning for the health care needs of the elderly

Respond now at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>

Because your household has been asked to participate on behalf of your community, it is vital that you complete this survey to help meet critical needs in your area. Your response is required by U.S. law.

If you are unable to complete the survey online, we will send you a paper questionnaire in a few weeks. The Census Bureau is using the Internet to collect this information to conserve natural resources, save taxpayers money, and process data more efficiently.

If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you in advance for your prompt response.

Sincerely,

John H. Thompson
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Enclosures

American community survey data help determine the annual distribution of more than **\$400 billion** in federal funds to **communities nationwide**.

ACS-13(L)05M52 (3-2017)

census.gov

Will my response be confidential?

Yes. The U.S. Census Bureau is required by law to protect this information. The Census Bureau is not permitted to publicly release your responses in a way that could identify you. We are conducting this survey under the authority of Title 13, United States Code, Sections 141 and 193. Federal law protects your privacy and keeps your answers confidential (Title 13, United States Code, Section 9). Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, your data are protected from cybersecurity risks through screening of the systems that transmit your data.

Am I required to fill out this survey?

Yes. Your response to this survey is required by law (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221). As a randomly selected representative of your community, you are the voice of your neighbors and peers. To create an accurate picture of your community, it is critical that you respond.

How will the Census Bureau use the information I provide?

Your confidential response will be aggregated with information from other nearby households to produce a portrait of your community. This information is made freely accessible to government leaders, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and the public at large.

Based on the information you provide, you may be asked to participate in other Census Bureau surveys that are voluntary. We may combine your answers with information that you gave to other agencies to enhance the statistical uses of these data. This information will be given the same protection as your survey response.

It is important that we hear from all respondents. If you would rather respond in a different language, please use the following resources:

Complete la Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense en Internet:
<https://respond.census.gov/acs>

Si tiene preguntas sobre el cuestionario, llámenos al 1-877-833-5625 para hablar con uno de nuestros empleados que habla español. La llamada es gratis.

这个调查问卷只有英文版。请拨打我们的免费电话：1-800-638-5945，我们将有会说中文的工作人员回答您的问题，或者您能够在用中文回答调查的问题。

Nếu quý vị có thắc mắc về mẫu đơn, xin gọi chúng tôi theo số điện thoại miễn phí 1-877-221-9436. Bản câu hỏi khảo sát chỉ có bằng tiếng Anh.

Анкета составлена только на английском языке. Позвоните по бесплатному номеру 1-866-225-2297, и Вам ответит русскоговорящий сотрудник.

설문지는 영어로만 되어 있습니다. 한국어로 설문지를 작성하고 싶은 시거나 질문이 있으시면, 무료 전화 1-800-772-6728 직무로 전화 부탁드립니다. 한국어 담당 직원과 통화하실 수 있습니다.

Partial Redesign Treatment: Initial Mailing – Instruction Card



Complete the American Community Survey online.



Keep this card.

You will need information from the address label on this card to log in.

Vea el otro lado para español.

<https://respond.census.gov/acs>

If you need help or have questions, please call our toll-free number 1-800-354-7271.

ACS-34IM(X)SM (03/2017)



Complete la Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense en Internet.



<https://respond.census.gov/acs>

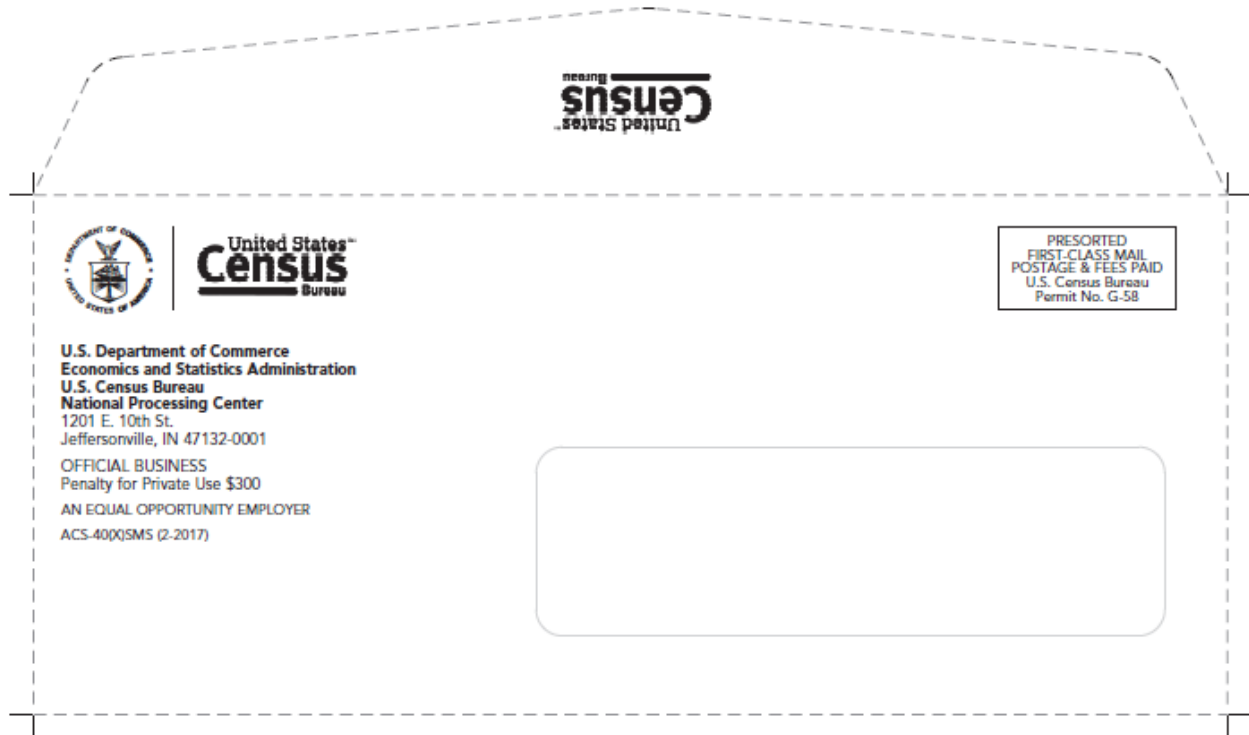
Si usted necesita ayuda o tiene preguntas acerca de la encuesta, por favor llame sin cargo al **1-877-833-5625**.

Guarde esta tarjeta.

Necesitará la información de la etiqueta de dirección en el otro lado de esta tarjeta para iniciar la sesión en Internet.

See the other side for English.

Partial Redesign Treatment: Reminder Letter – Outgoing Envelope



Partial Redesign Treatment: Reminder Letter



U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233

A Message From John H. Thompson, Director of the U.S. Census Bureau:

A few days ago, you should have received instructions for completing the **American Community Survey** online. Local communities depend on information from this survey to decide where schools, highways, hospitals, and other important services are needed. If you have not already responded, please do so now.

Respond now at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>
Log in using this user ID:

If we do not receive your response online, we will mail a paper questionnaire to your address.

Your response is critically important to your local community and your country and is required by law. Responding promptly will prevent your receiving additional reminder mailings, phone calls, or personal visits from Census Bureau interviewers.

If you need help in completing the survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you in advance for your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Thompson".

John H. Thompson
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Partial Redesign Treatment: Questionnaire Package – Outgoing Envelope



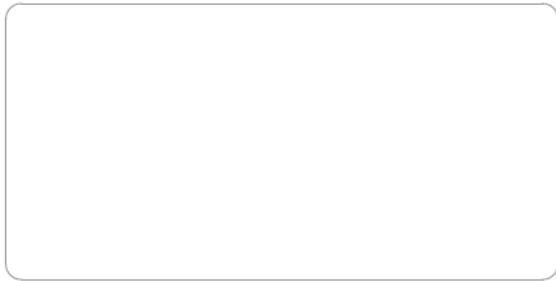
United States
Census
Bureau

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
National Processing Center
1201 E. 10th St.
Jeffersonville, IN 47132-0001

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use: \$300

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
ACS-46(05MS) (12-2014)

U.S. CENSUS FORM ENCLOSED
**YOUR RESPONSE
IS IMPORTANT TO
YOUR COMMUNITY.**



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U.S. Census Bureau
Permit No. G-58

OPEN IMMEDIATELY

Questionnaire Package – Return Envelope

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use \$300
6385-47(2014) (10-2013)



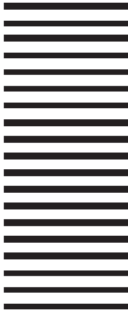
BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 16081 WASHINGTON DC

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

DIRECTOR
US CENSUS BUREAU
PO BOX 5240
JEFFERSONVILLE IN 47199-5240



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



Partial Redesign Treatment: Questionnaire Package – Letter



United States[™]
Census
Bureau

U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233

A Message From John H. Thompson, Director of the U.S. Census Bureau:

The U.S. Census Bureau recently sent you a request to complete the **American Community Survey** online. If you have not already responded to this important survey, please do so now.

Complete the survey using ONLY ONE of the following options:

- Respond online at **<https://respond.census.gov/acs>**
- If you are unable to respond online, please fill out and mail back the enclosed questionnaire.

Your response is important to your community.

The Census Bureau has randomly selected your address to receive this survey as part of a nationally representative sample. You are required by U.S. law to respond to this survey. Because you will be providing important information on behalf of your community, it is vital that you complete this survey to help meet critical needs in your area – including determining where to locate new schools, hospitals, and fire stations.

If you do not respond promptly, a Census Bureau interviewer may contact you to complete the survey.

Your answers are completely confidential.

By law, the Census Bureau cannot publish or release information that would identify you or your household.

If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you for your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Thompson".

John H. Thompson
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Enclosures

ACS-146(X)SMS (2-2017)

census.gov



The American Community Survey

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



ACS 919 990 097 05 111 1601 10

80000-00110

SEQ003-000017



TO THE RESIDENT OF:

123 ANY ST
ANY TOWN US 00123-9999

How to respond to this survey:

We wrote to you earlier with a request to respond online. We are sending this paper questionnaire to all households that have not yet responded because we realize not everyone can or wants to respond over the Internet. If you would rather complete this survey online, please go to <https://respond.census.gov/acs>

If you need help or have questions about completing this form, please call toll-free 1-800-354-7271. Telephone Device for Deaf (TDD) call toll-free 1-800-582-8330.
¿Necesita ayuda? Llame sin cargo alguno al 1-877-833-5625.

How this survey is done:

Each month we survey thousands of randomly selected addresses in every region of the U.S. to learn how communities are changing.

The American Community Survey (ACS) is one of only a few surveys for which all recipients are required to respond. The Census Bureau and its staff are also required by law to protect the confidentiality of responses, and no individual can be identified in the statistics produced from this survey. An explanation of the ACS is available at <http://www.census.gov/acs/>

Let's get started:

First, please print the name and telephone number of the person who is filling out this form. We will only contact you if needed for official Census Bureau business.

Last Name

First Name

MI

Area Code + Number

 -

Next, tell us how many people are living or staying at this address.

- **Include** everyone who is living or staying here for more than 2 months.
- **Include** yourself if you are living here for more than 2 months.
- **Include** anyone else staying here who does not have another place to stay, even if they are here for 2 months or less.
- **Do not include** anyone who is living somewhere else for more than 2 months, such as a college student living away or someone in the Armed Forces on deployment.

Number of people

Fill out pages 2, 3, and 4 for everyone, including yourself, who is living or staying at this address for more than 2 months. Then complete the rest of the form.

FORM ACS-1(X)DMM
(09-26-2016) Draft 7

OMB No. 0607-0810
OMB No. 0607-0936



Partial Redesign Treatment: Reminder Postcard

 United States™
Census
Bureau

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
National Processing Center
1201 E. 10th St.
Jeffersonville, IN 47132-0001

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use: \$300

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FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES
PAID
U.S. Census Bureau
Permit No. G-58

United States™
Census
Bureau

Dear resident:

The U.S. Census Bureau has sent you repeated requests to complete the **American Community Survey**. If you have not already responded, it is imperative that you complete this survey now.


Complete and mail back your paper questionnaire now.
Or respond at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>


If you do not respond now, a Census Bureau interviewer may contact you by personal visit to complete the survey. If you would like to complete the survey by telephone or need assistance, please call our toll-free number 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you.


John H. Thompson
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Final Reminder Letter – Outgoing Envelope



 United States™
Census
Bureau

FINAL NOTICE
Respond Now

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U.S. Census Bureau
Permit No. G-58

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
National Processing Center
1201 E. 10th St.
Jeffersonville, IN 47132-0001

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use \$300

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
ACS-41(Q)SMS2 (2-2017)

Partial Redesign Treatment: Final Reminder Letter



U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233

The U.S. Census Bureau has sent you several requests to complete the **American Community Survey**. If you have not already responded, it is important that you complete this survey now.

Complete and mail back your paper questionnaire now.
Or respond at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>
Log in using this user ID:

If you do not respond promptly, a Census Bureau interviewer may contact you to complete the survey.

If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number **1-800-354-7271**.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Thompson".

John H. Thompson
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Now is the time to respond.

ACS-23(X)SMS2 (2-2017)

census.gov

Appendix D. Full Redesign Treatment Materials

Full Redesign: Initial Mailing – Outgoing Envelope



United States™
Census
Bureau

**YOUR RESPONSE
IS IMPORTANT TO
YOUR COMMUNITY.**

PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
U.S. Census Bureau
Permit No. G-58

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
National Processing Center
1201 E. 10th St.
Jeffersonville, IN 47132-0001

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use \$300
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
ACS-46IM(X)DTR (10-2016)





How Your Responses Help America

The American Community Survey (ACS) provides vital information that public officials, planners, and entrepreneurs use to assess the past and plan the future. When you respond to the ACS, you are doing your part to help your community plan hospitals, support school lunch programs, improve emergency services, build bridges, inform businesses looking to add jobs and expand to new markets, and more. Respond at <https://respond.census.gov/acs> today.

What we ask about

How your responses help

Employment

- Unemployment
- Not in labor force
- Weeks and hours worked
- Industry and occupation

- Develop programs to boost employment.
- Pinpoint areas of growth to help businesses choose new locations.
- Help governments plan unemployment programs and services.

Education

- School enrollment, private vs. public
- Information on students, at all educational levels
- Completed level of education

- Help communities measure how well educational resources are serving their populations.
- Identify the educational and training needs of adults.
- Bridge gaps between the levels of education completed by workers and educational requirements for employers.

Veterans

- Military service
- Veteran period of service
- VA service-connected disability rating

- Help the government and communities plan for the future health care of veterans.
- Plan and fund job training for veterans.
- Improve the home loan guarantee program for veterans.







Income and Housing Costs

- Income sources
- Living expenses

- Help gauge the need for economic and housing assistance.
- Provide the only source of community data on the population and characteristics of people who live in poverty.
- Provide a measure of housing affordability.



Full Redesign: Initial Mailing – Why We Ask Brochure (back)

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Commuting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where people work Commuting time to work Mode of transportation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide precise data crucial for planning improvements to roads and mass transit. Help develop transportation networks and services. Create emergency response strategies. |  |
| <p>Disability and Health Insurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty with specific daily living tasks Health insurance enrollment and type | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help communities plan transportation, employment programs, and public service accessibility for people with disabilities. Attract businesses that serve people with disabilities. Show which groups are at risk for limited health care access and poor health outcomes. |  |
| <p>Housing Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plumbing, kitchen facilities, and other housing features Housing size and age | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help identify areas with substandard housing. Identify which communities are eligible for housing programs that help people afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing. Help communities plan recovery efforts after disasters. |  |
| <p>Owners and Renters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Own vs. rent home Amount of monthly rent Property value | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze housing affordability and allocate assistance programs. Help governments understand local housing market changes and monitor affordability. Supply businesses with data to design and market homes. |  |
| <p>People and Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age Sex Race Hispanic origin Relationship to household members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help monitor the well-being and discrimination of people. Administer funds and services to people needing assistance. Help businesses evaluate local market demands for products and services. |  |
| <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div> <p>United States™ Census Bureau</p> </div> <div> <p>U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration U.S. CENSUS BUREAU census.gov</p> </div> <div>  </div> </div> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">ACS-8IM(X)DTR (10-2016)</p> | | |

Full Redesign: Initial Mailing – Letter



U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233

I am writing to request your help with the American Community Survey. The Census Bureau conducts this survey each year to give our country an up-to-date picture of how we live – including information about our education, housing, and jobs. Communities across the country rely on information from this survey to decide where important services are needed, including roads, schools, hospitals, and veterans' services. Your address has been selected to represent your community.

The Census Bureau would prefer that you answer this survey online using the secure website and User ID provided below. Answering online saves taxpayer money, conserves natural resources, and makes processing the results quicker and more efficient.

Respond at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>
Log in using this User ID:

I would appreciate you completing this survey for all people living at this address to help identify critical needs in your area. I realize that not everyone is comfortable responding online. If you are unable to complete the survey online, the Census Bureau will send you a paper questionnaire in about 3 weeks. Your response is required by law (Title 13, U.S. Code).

The enclosed brochure, "How Your Responses Help America," explains more about why particular questions are included in this survey. If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you in advance for your prompt response.

Sincerely,

John H. Thompson
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Enclosure

The American Community Survey helps determine the annual distribution of more than **\$400 billion** in federal funds to communities nationwide.

ACS-13(X)OTR (3-2017)

census.gov

Will my response be confidential?

Yes. The U.S. Census Bureau is required by law to protect this information. The Census Bureau is not permitted to publicly release your responses in a way that could identify you. We are conducting this survey under the authority of Title 13, United States Code, Sections 141 and 193. Federal law protects your privacy and keeps your answers confidential (Title 13, United States Code, Section 9). Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, your data are protected from cybersecurity risks through screening of the systems that transmit your data.

Am I required to answer this survey?

Yes. Your response to this survey is required by law (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221). As a selected representative of your community, you are the voice of your neighbors and peers. To create an accurate picture of your community, it is critical that you respond.

How will the Census Bureau use the information I provide?

Your confidential response will be combined with information from other nearby households to produce a portrait of your community. This combined information is made freely accessible to government leaders, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and the public at large.

Based on the information you provide, you may be asked to participate in other Census Bureau surveys that are voluntary. We may combine your answers with information that you gave to other agencies to enhance the statistical uses of these data. This information will be given the same protection as your survey response.

It is important that we hear from all respondents. If you would rather respond in a different language, please use the following resources:

Complete la Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense en Internet:
<https://respond.census.gov/acs>
 Entre a su cuenta usando esta indentificación de usuario:

Si tiene preguntas sobre el cuestionario, llámenos al 1-877-833-5625 para hablar con uno de nuestros empleados que habla español. La llamada es gratis.

这个调查问卷只有英文版。请拨打我们的免费电话：1-800-638-5945。我们将有会说中文的工作人员回答您的问题。或者您能够在用中文回答调查的问题。

Nếu quý vị có thắc mắc về mẫu đơn, xin gọi chúng tôi theo số điện thoại miễn phí 1-877-221-9436. Bản câu hỏi khảo sát chỉ có bằng tiếng Anh.

Анкета составлена только на английском языке. Позвоните по бесплатному номеру 1-866-225-2297, и Вам ответит русскоговорящий сотрудник.

설문지는 영어 로만 되어 있습니다 한국어 로 설문 을 작성 하고 싶은 시거나 질문 이 있으시면 , 무료 전화 1-800-772-6728 직무 로 전화 를 주십시오 . 한국어 담당 직원 과 통화 하실 수 있습니다 .

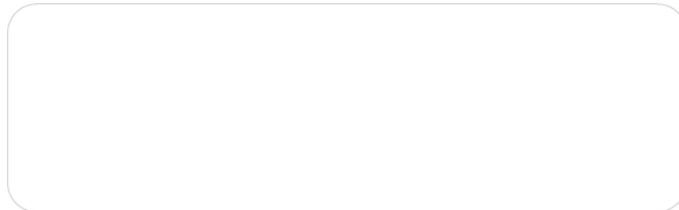
Full Redesign: Reminder Letter – Outgoing Envelope



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POSTAGE & FEES PAID
U.S. Census Bureau
Permit No. G-58

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
National Processing Center
1201 E. 10th St.
Jeffersonville, IN 47132-0001

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
ACS-40(X)DTR (10-2016)





U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233

A few days ago, I sent you a request to complete the American Community Survey, which helps communities and businesses throughout the U.S. plan for the future of our country. Local communities depend on information from this important Census Bureau survey to decide where schools, highways, hospitals, and other important services are needed. If you have already responded, I want to thank you. If not, I would really appreciate receiving your response soon.

**Respond at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>
Log in using this User ID:**

If you are not able to answer online or prefer to answer by mail, the Census Bureau will mail a paper questionnaire to your address in about 10 days.

Just as people are required to respond to jury duty, get a driver's license, pay their taxes, and report their income, they also have the obligation to respond to this survey. The survey asks for information about your housing and each person living at this address.

I very much appreciate your help in completing this Census Bureau survey. If you have any questions about the survey, I invite you to call our toll-free number 1-800-354-7271, so a Census Bureau representative can answer them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Thompson".

John H. Thompson
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Full Redesign: Questionnaire Package – Outgoing Envelope



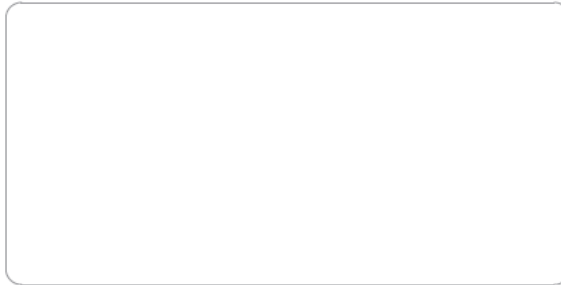
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U.S. CENSUS FORM ENCLOSED

**YOUR RESPONSE
IS IMPORTANT TO
YOUR COMMUNITY.**



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Permit No. G-58

Questionnaire Package – Return Envelope

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6385-47(2014) (10-2013)



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

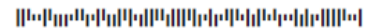
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 16081 WASHINGTON DC

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

DIRECTOR
US CENSUS BUREAU
PO BOX 5240
JEFFERSONVILLE IN 47199-5240



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



Full Redesign: Questionnaire Package – Letter



United States[™]
Census
Bureau

U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233

Dear Resident:

As promised, I am sending an American Community Survey questionnaire to you and others from whom a response has not yet been received. I hope this will make it easier for you to respond.

Those who receive this request are required by a national law (Title 13, U.S. Code) to complete the American Community Survey. Responses from people in every state provide an understanding of how communities differ with regard to housing, education, transportation, health, and other issues. Your answers assist in identifying local needs such as job training, highway construction, and the building of health care facilities.

I also want to let you know that if you prefer to respond online instead of sending back the paper questionnaire, you can do so by going to <https://respond.census.gov/acs> and using information from the cover of the enclosed questionnaire to log in. Some online respondents may find it helpful to see the questions before starting the online version. If you complete the survey online, please do not send back the paper questionnaire. Answering this survey online saves taxpayer money, but I appreciate receiving your response by whichever method is most convenient for you.

You will see in the questionnaire that questions are asked about your housing and each person living at this address.

If you need help completing this survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number 1-800-354-7271.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Thompson".

John H. Thompson
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Enclosures



The American Community Survey

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



ACS 919 990 097 05 111 1601 10
80000-00110
SEQ003-000017



TO THE RESIDENT OF:
123 ANY ST
ANY TOWN US 00123-9999

How to respond to this survey:

We wrote to you earlier with a request to respond online. We are sending this paper questionnaire to all households that have not yet responded because we realize not everyone can or wants to respond over the Internet. If you would rather complete this survey online, please go to <https://respond.census.gov/acs>

If you need help or have questions about completing this form, please call toll-free 1-800-354-7271. Telephone Device for Deaf (TDD) call toll-free 1-800-582-8330.
¿Necesita ayuda? Llame sin cargo alguno al 1-877-833-5625.

How this survey is done:

Each month we survey thousands of randomly selected addresses in every region of the U.S. to learn how communities are changing.

The American Community Survey (ACS) is one of only a few surveys for which all recipients are required to respond. The Census Bureau and its staff are also required by law to protect the confidentiality of responses, and no individual can be identified in the statistics produced from this survey. An explanation of the ACS is available at <http://www.census.gov/acs/>

Let's get started:

First, please print the name and telephone number of the person who is filling out this form. We will only contact you if needed for official Census Bureau business.

Last Name

First Name

MI

Area Code + Number

 -

Next, tell us how many people are living or staying at this address.

- **Include** everyone who is living or staying here for more than 2 months.
- **Include** yourself if you are living here for more than 2 months.
- **Include** anyone else staying here who does not have another place to stay, even if they are here for 2 months or less.
- **Do not include** anyone who is living somewhere else for more than 2 months, such as a college student living away or someone in the Armed Forces on deployment.

Number of people

Fill out pages 2, 3, and 4 for everyone, including yourself, who is living or staying at this address for more than 2 months. Then complete the rest of the form.

FORM ACS-1(X)DMM
(09-26-2016) Draft 7

OMB No. 0607-0810
OMB No. 0607-0936

| Person 1 | Person 2 |
|--|--|
| <p>(Person 1 is the person living or staying here in whose name this house or apartment is owned, being bought, or rented. If there is no such person, start with the name of any adult living or staying here.)</p> <p>→ Please print today's date. Month <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Day <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Year <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p> <p>1 What is Person 1's name? Last Name (Please print) <input type="text"/> First Name <input type="text"/> MI <input type="text"/></p> <p>2 How is this person related to Person 1? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Person 1</p> <p>3 What is Person 1's sex? Mark (X) ONE box. <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female</p> <p>4 What is Person 1's age and what is Person 1's date of birth? Please report babies as age 0 when the child is less than 1 year old. Print numbers in boxes. Age (in years) <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Month <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Day <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Year of birth <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p> <p>→ NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 5 about Hispanic origin and Question 6 about race. For this survey, Hispanic origins are not races.</p> <p>5 Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin? <input type="checkbox"/> No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Puerto Rican <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Cuban <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin – Print origin, for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on. <input type="text"/></p> <p>6 What is Person 1's race? Mark (X) one or more boxes. <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African Am. <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name of enrolled or principal tribe. <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Korean <input type="checkbox"/> Guamanian or Chamorro <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese <input type="checkbox"/> Samoan <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian – Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on. <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander – Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on. <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Some other race – Print race. <input type="text"/></p> | <p>1 What is Person 2's name? Last Name (Please print) <input type="text"/> First Name <input type="text"/> MI <input type="text"/></p> <p>2 How is this person related to Person 1? Mark (X) ONE box. <input type="checkbox"/> Husband or wife <input type="checkbox"/> Son-in-law or daughter-in-law <input type="checkbox"/> Biological son or daughter <input type="checkbox"/> Other relative <input type="checkbox"/> Adopted son or daughter <input type="checkbox"/> Roomer or boarder <input type="checkbox"/> Stepson or stepdaughter <input type="checkbox"/> Housemate or roommate <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister <input type="checkbox"/> Unmarried partner <input type="checkbox"/> Father or mother <input type="checkbox"/> Foster child <input type="checkbox"/> Grandchild <input type="checkbox"/> Other nonrelative <input type="checkbox"/> Parent-in-law</p> <p>3 What is Person 2's sex? Mark (X) ONE box. <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female</p> <p>4 What is Person 2's age and what is Person 2's date of birth? Please report babies as age 0 when the child is less than 1 year old. Print numbers in boxes. Age (in years) <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Month <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Day <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Year of birth <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p> <p>→ NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 5 about Hispanic origin and Question 6 about race. For this survey, Hispanic origins are not races.</p> <p>5 Is Person 2 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin? <input type="checkbox"/> No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Puerto Rican <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Cuban <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin – Print origin, for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on. <input type="text"/></p> <p>6 What is Person 2's race? Mark (X) one or more boxes. <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African Am. <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name of enrolled or principal tribe. <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Korean <input type="checkbox"/> Guamanian or Chamorro <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese <input type="checkbox"/> Samoan <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian – Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on. <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander – Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on. <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Some other race – Print race. <input type="text"/></p> |

2



Full Redesign: Reminder Postcard



U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
National Processing Center
1201 E. 10th St.
Jeffersonville, IN 47132-0001

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use \$300



I have asked for your help in completing the American Community Survey. If you have already responded, I want to thank you. If you have not, I would really appreciate it if you would complete the survey soon.

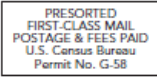

Complete and mail back your paper questionnaire now.
Or respond at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>

Census Bureau interviewers will start calling or visiting those who don't respond soon. The interviewers will, of course, identify themselves as employees of the U.S. Census Bureau and will be pleased to respond to any questions you have about the American Community Survey. If you like, you can also call our toll-free number 1-800-354-7271 to respond by phone.



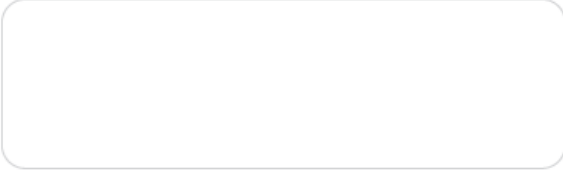
Thank you,

John H. Thompson
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Final Reminder Letter – Outgoing Envelope



FINAL NOTICE
Respond Now



U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
National Processing Center
1201 E. 10th St.
Jeffersonville, IN 47132-0001

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ACS-41(X)DTR (2-2017)

Full Redesign: Final Reminder Letter



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Bureau

U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233

Soon, Census Bureau interviewers will be attempting to contact households who have not yet responded to the American Community Survey. We do this in-person follow-up as part of our effort to produce the most accurate results possible. There is still time to respond online, and I would appreciate it if you would respond now because it saves the cost of sending someone to your home.

Respond at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>
Log in using this User ID:

Responding to the survey helps national, state and local officials make informed decisions with timely and accurate data. Your response is critically important to your local community and your country and is required by law (Title 13, U.S. Code).

If you are unable to respond online, please call our toll-free number 1-800-354-7271 to complete the survey.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Thompson".

John H. Thompson
Director, U.S. Census Bureau