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MEMORANDUM FOR

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Subject:

2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test

Attached is the American Community Survey (ACS) Research and Evaluation report entitled, *2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test*. This report provides results of an experiment conducted to assess the impact on response and cost of proposed design changes to the ACS mail materials, using the May 2017 ACS panel.

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# 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test

FINAL REPORT



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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	iii
1. Introduction .....	1
2. Background.....	2
2.1. ACS Data Collection Strategy (as of May 2017).....	2
2.2. Pressure Seal Mailers .....	2
3. Methodology.....	3
3.1. Experimental Design .....	4
3.2. Sample Design .....	5
3.3. Response Analysis .....	5
3.3.1. Self-Response Return Rate Analysis and Universe Eligibility .....	5
3.3.2. Calculation of Standard Errors .....	7
3.4. Relative Cost Analysis.....	8
4. Assumptions and Limitations .....	8
4.1. Assumptions .....	8
4.2. Limitations.....	8
5. Results .....	9
5.1. Response Analysis .....	9
5.1.1. Results from Replacing the Reminder Letter With a Pressure Seal Mailer .....	9
5.1.2. Results from Replacing the Reminder Postcard With a Pressure Seal Mailer .....	10
5.1.3. Results from Replacing the Additional Reminder Postcard With a Pressure Seal Mailer .....	11
5.1.4. Overall Self-Response Return Rate Results .....	12
5.2. Cost Analysis .....	13
5.2.1. Printing .....	13
5.2.2. Assembly .....	14
5.2.3. Postage .....	15
5.2.4. Total Annual Cost Comparisons.....	15
6. Conclusion.....	16
7. References.....	16
Appendix A: ACS Mailing Descriptions and Schedule for the May 2017 Panel .....	18
Appendix B: Trifold Pressure Seal Mailer used in the Second Mailing .....	19
Appendix C: Bifold Pressure Seal Mailer used in the Fourth Mailing .....	20

Appendix D: Trifold Pressure Seal Mailer used in the Fifth Mailing .....	21
Appendix E: Control Reminder Postcard (Top) and Control Additional Reminder Postcard (Bottom).....	22

**List of Tables and Figures**

Table E1: Experimental Design for the 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test .....	iii
Figure 1: Internet Response User ID Box Printed in the Reminder Letter (Second Mailing).....	1
Table 1: Experimental Design for the Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test .....	4
Table 2: Unweighted Counts of Sample Addresses Used for Return Rate Calculations .....	6
Table 3: Total Self-Response Return Rates for Addresses Mailed the Second Mailing, Pressure Seal vs. Reminder Letter .....	9
Table 4: Internet Return Rates for Addresses Mailed the Second Mailing, Pressure Seal vs. Reminder Letter .....	9
Table 5: Mail and TQA Return Rates for Addresses Mailed the Second Mailing, Pressure Seal vs. Reminder Letter.....	10
Table 6: Total Self-Response Return Rates for Addresses Mailed the Fourth Mailing, Pressure Seal vs. Reminder Postcard.....	10
Table 7: Internet Return Rates for Addresses Mailed the Fourth Mailing, Pressure Seal vs. Reminder Postcard .....	11
Table 8: Mail and TQA Return Rates for Addresses Mailed the Fourth Mailing, Pressure Seal vs. Reminder Postcard.....	11
Table 9: Self-Response Return Rates Before CAPI for Addresses Mailed the Fifth Mailing, Pressure Seal vs. Additional Reminder Postcard .....	12
Table 10: Self-Response Return Rates Before CAPI for All Addresses in the Initial Mailing Universe, Control vs. Each Experimental Treatment .....	12
Table 11: ACS Annual Printing Cost Comparisons Between Current Production Mailings and Pressure Seal Mailers .....	14
Table 12: ACS Annual Assembly Cost Comparisons Between Current Production Mailings and Pressure Seal Mailers .....	14
Table 13: Annual Cost Differences for Each Mailing: Current Production Mailings vs. Pressure Seal Mailers.....	15
Table 14: Annual Cost Differences for Each Experimental Treatment: Current Production vs. Treatments 2, 3, and 4 .....	16

## Executive Summary

The U.S. Census Bureau conducted the 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test to evaluate the impact on self-response and cost of replacing letters and postcards in the American Community Survey (ACS) mail materials with pressure seal mailers.<sup>1</sup> A pressure seal mailer is a one-page document with a pre-applied adhesive that is folded and sealed with pressure. This type of mailer costs less than a letter with an envelope and more than a postcard. However, pressure seal mailers can conceal personal information while postcards cannot.

Replacing a postcard with a pressure seal mailer would provide an opportunity to increase the use of the internet user ID in the text of the ACS mailings, which could lead to an increase in internet response. An increase in response large enough to avoid the more costly phases of nonresponse followup would decrease overall ACS production costs. Replacing a letter with a pressure seal mailer would reduce costs as long as it did not reduce self-response for the survey.

This test was designed with three experimental treatments to evaluate the effects on self-response and cost of replacing either one, two, or three of the current mailings with pressure seal mailers. For a sample of addresses from the May 2017 ACS production sample, pressure seal mailers replaced the Reminder Letter (second mailing), the Reminder Postcard (fourth mailing), and the Additional Reminder Postcard (fifth mailing). Table E1 contains a synopsis of the materials used in each treatment.

**Table E1: Experimental Design for the 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test**

	1st Mailing	2nd Mailing	3rd Mailing	4th Mailing	5th Mailing
Treatment 1 (Control)	Initial Package	Reminder Letter	Paper Questionnaire Package	Reminder Postcard	Additional Reminder Postcard
Treatment 2	No change	<b>Pressure seal</b>	No change	No change	No change
Treatment 3	No change	<b>Pressure seal</b>	No change	No change	<b>Pressure seal</b>
Treatment 4	No change	<b>Pressure seal</b>	No change	<b>Pressure seal</b>	<b>Pressure seal</b>

Key findings:

- Replacing the Reminder Letter in the second mailing with a pressure seal mailer would not negatively impact self-response.
- The impact of changing the fourth mailing to a pressure seal mailer, when the second and fifth mailings were also pressure seal mailers, was evaluated by comparing Treatment 3 to Treatment 4. For addresses sent the fourth mailing, the pressure seal mailing (Treatment 4) did not affect total self-response when compared with the Reminder Postcard mailing, before the start of Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI). However, mail response was lower for Treatment 4 by 0.8 percentage points (p-value = 0.07).

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<sup>1</sup> The two other ACS mailings, the Initial Package and the Paper Questionnaire Package, could not be replaced with pressure seal mailers because they each contain several inserts such as brochures, instruction cards, the questionnaire, etc.

- The impact of changing the fifth mailing to a pressure seal mailer, when the second mailing was also a pressure seal mailer, was evaluated by comparing Treatment 2 to Treatment 3.<sup>2</sup> For addresses sent the fifth mailing, the pressure seal mailing (Treatment 3), when compared to the Additional Reminder Postcard mailing (Treatment 2), increased total self-response before the start of CAPI by 1.4 percentage points (p-value = 0.02). This increase was driven by internet response which increased by 1.7 percentage points (p-value < 0.01).<sup>3</sup>
- Although there were some differences in self-response for the smaller mailing universes, there were no significant differences in self-response return rates for the initial mailing universe between the experimental treatments and the control treatment before the start of Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI). As such, the CAPI workloads were the same for all treatments and any difference in cost would be the result of a difference in printing, assembly, or postage costs of pressure seal mailing pieces compared to the current production mailing pieces.<sup>4</sup>

After conducting cost analysis on each of the experimental treatments, we project the following estimated changes in costs for implementing each treatment for an entire production year:

- Replacing only the Reminder Letter (Treatment 2) with a pressure seal mailer would result in an annual cost savings of about \$254,000.
- Replacing the Reminder Letter and the Additional Reminder Postcard with pressure seal mailers (Treatment 3) would result in an annual cost increase of about \$35,000.
- Replacing three of the mailings with a pressure seal mailer (Treatment 4) would result in an annual cost increase of about \$1,033,000.

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<sup>2</sup> Treatment 4 could not be used in this evaluation as the fourth mailing being replaced with a pressure seal mailer would have confounded the results of the comparison.

<sup>3</sup> At the time of this test, the universe of addresses that were mailed the Additional Reminder Postcard did not include addresses that were eligible for Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI). As of October 2017, CATI is no longer a mode of data collection for the ACS. Sample addresses that would have gone to CATI are now sent the fifth mailing. The increase in self-response by the use of the pressure seal mailer in this mailing may have a different impact on response if the response propensity of those in the new mailing universe differs from those in this test.

<sup>4</sup> The cost estimates do not account for sampling variability or monthly variability in production costs.

# 1. Introduction

The U.S. Census Bureau continually evaluates how the American Community Survey (ACS) mailing materials and methodology might be further refined to increase response and reduce survey costs. In 2014, the Census Bureau collaborated with Reingold, Inc., a communications and marketing firm, to conduct a comprehensive set of research aimed at enhancing the materials sent to ACS sample addresses. One of Reingold's recommendations was to use pressure seal mailers in the survey mailout materials (Reingold, 2014).

In response to this recommendation, we conducted the 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test to evaluate the impact on self-response and cost of replacing letters and postcards in the American Community Survey (ACS) mail materials with pressure seal mailers.<sup>5</sup> A pressure seal mailer is a one-page document with a pre-applied adhesive that is folded and sealed with pressure. This type of mailer costs less than a letter with an envelope and more than a postcard. However, pressure seal mailers can conceal personal information while postcards cannot.

In current production, the ACS sends up to five mailings to sample addresses: two packages, one letter, and two postcards. The letter in the second mailing contains a box with a unique internet user ID and the website for the internet response instrument (see Figure 1). The unique internet user ID cannot be printed in this manner on postcards due to Title 13 privacy restrictions.<sup>6</sup> However, because they are sealed documents, pressure seal mailers can include the box providing the user ID.

**Figure 1: Internet Response User ID Box Printed in the Reminder Letter (Second Mailing)**



Replacing a postcard with a pressure seal mailer would provide an opportunity to increase the use of the internet user ID (in the manner shown above) in the ACS mailings, which could lead to an increase in internet response. An increase in response large enough to avoid the more costly phases of nonresponse followup would decrease overall ACS production costs. Replacing a letter with a pressure seal mailer would reduce costs as long as it did not reduce self-response for the survey.

This test was designed with three experimental treatments to evaluate the effects on self-response and cost of replacing either one, two, or three of the current mailings with pressure seal mailers. For a sample of addresses from the May 2017 ACS production sample, pressure seal mailers replaced the Reminder Letter (second mailing), the Reminder Postcard (fourth mailing), and the Additional Reminder Postcard (fifth mailing).<sup>7</sup> Section 3.1 provides a detailed description of the experimental design.

<sup>5</sup> The two other ACS mailings, the Initial Package and the Paper Questionnaire Package, could not be replaced with pressure seal mailers because they each contain several inserts such as brochures, instruction cards, the questionnaire, etc.

<sup>6</sup> Postcards in production include an internet user ID, but the recipient is not aware of it until he or she signs on to the internet to respond to the survey and is told where to find the user ID. It is not prominently highlighted in the text due to privacy concerns.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix A for a detailed description of the mailings and the mailout schedule.



## 2. Background

### 2.1. ACS Data Collection Strategy (as of May 2017)

To encourage self-response in the ACS, the Census Bureau sends up to five mailings to a sample address. The first mailing, sent to all mailable addresses in the sample, includes an invitation to participate in the ACS online and states that a paper questionnaire will be sent in a few weeks to those unable to respond online. About seven days later, these same addresses receive a Reminder Letter (second mailing), which repeats the instructions to respond online, wait for a paper questionnaire, or to call with questions.

Responding addresses are removed after the second mailing to create a new mailing universe of nonresponders. In the third mailing, the remaining sample addresses are sent a package with instructions for responding online, the telephone questionnaire assistance number, and a new response option — a paper questionnaire. About four days later, these addresses receive the Reminder Postcard.

After the fourth mailing, responding addresses are again removed to create a new mailing universe of nonresponders. Addresses with telephone contact information are considered for inclusion in the Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) nonresponse followup operation that collects response data through telephone interviews. Addresses not eligible for CATI and without telephone contact information are sent the Additional Reminder Postcard as a last attempt to collect a self-response (fifth mailing).<sup>8</sup>

At the end of the CATI operation, responding addresses are removed to create the universe of addresses eligible for the Computer-Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) nonresponse followup operation. Of this universe, a subsample is chosen to be included in the CAPI operation. Field representatives visit addresses chosen for this operation to conduct in-person interviews.<sup>9</sup>

### 2.2. Pressure Seal Mailers

In 2014, the Census Bureau collaborated with Reingold, Inc. to research ways to improve the ACS mail materials. As part of the research, Reingold conducted focus groups and interviews asking participants to rank revised ACS mail packages in order from most to least effective at getting them to notice, open, or respond to the packages. The research participants ranked pressure seal mailers as one of the most effective. Reingold also noted that a pressure seal mailer offers additional advantages, such as conveying a sense of confidentiality and the ability to give more explicit instructions related to accessing the survey online. Also, pressure seal mailers are often used for mailings that include personal identification numbers, bill statements, report cards, or confidential results, and as such they have a more official look and feel than postcards. One expectation from this test was that the new more official look and feel of the pressure seal mailer may have enticed the respondents to open the mailer and read its contents. Since the pressure

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<sup>8</sup> CATI nonresponse followup was part of ACS data collection operations for the duration of this test. As of October 2017, CATI ceased being a part of ACS data collection and since then all remaining nonresponders are sent the Additional Reminder Postcard.

<sup>9</sup> CAPI interviewers also attempt to conduct interviews by phone when possible.

seal mailer was effective in qualitative testing, Reingold proposed sending a pressure seal mailer to all respondents as the initial reminder mailing, immediately after the initial request is mailed (Reingold, 2014).

After researching the most cost effective way to mail letters with variable image addresses and secure access codes, Statistics Canada chose pressure seal mailers for the 2016 Canadian Census (Graziadei, 2016).<sup>10</sup> They described the following benefits of pressure seal mailers:

- Eliminated the requirement for a separate envelope.
- Eliminated the need for an insertion step in the assembly process.
- Reduced paper waste — more environmentally friendly.
- Considered a more “official” presentation to the public than a traditional envelope.
- Produced more efficiently — printer had the capacity to produce 1.6 million pressure seal mailers per day.

In preparation for the 2020 Census, the Census Bureau conducted a small-scale mailout research experiment using a pressure seal mailer in 2016. The Census test differed from this test because it only tested a change to a postcard mailing.<sup>11</sup> In that test, since the pressure seal mailer was a more expensive option than a traditional postcard, it would have only been beneficial if the change to a pressure seal mailer increased self-response. Preliminary findings from the Census pressure seal test indicate no significant difference in response by replacing a postcard with a pressure seal mailer (Eggleston, forthcoming).

### **3. Methodology**

This report answers the following research questions:

1. Is there a decrease in self-response as a result of changing the Reminder Letter (second mailing) to a pressure seal mailer?
2. What is the impact on self-response of changing the Reminder Postcard (fourth mailing) to a pressure seal mailer when the Reminder Letter (second mailing) and the Additional Reminder Postcard (fifth mailing) are pressure seal mailers?
3. What is the impact on self-response of changing the Additional Reminder Postcard (fifth mailing) to a pressure seal mailer when the Reminder Letter (second mailing) is also a pressure seal mailer?
4. What would be the cost impact, relative to current production, of implementing each experimental treatment during a full ACS production year?

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<sup>10</sup> Variable imaging is a form digital printing in which elements such as text, graphics, and images may be changed from one printed piece to the next, without stopping or slowing down the printing process and using information from a database or external file.

<sup>11</sup> The Census postcards were similar to ACS postcards in that the internet user ID could not be included in the text of the postcard for privacy reasons.

### 3.1. Experimental Design

The experimental design for this test included a control treatment and three experimental treatments. The control treatment (Treatment 1) mirrored the production mail strategy while each experimental treatment replaced some subset of the mailing materials with a pressure seal mailer (see Table 1). The mailouts for this test were sent between April 20, 2017 and June 5, 2017. (See Appendix A for detailed mailout schedule.)

**Table 1: Experimental Design for the Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test**

	<b>1st Mailing</b>	<b>2nd Mailing</b>	<b>3rd Mailing<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>4th Mailing<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>5th Mailing<sup>2</sup></b>
Production	Initial Package	Reminder Letter	Paper Questionnaire Package	Reminder Postcard	Additional Reminder Postcard
Treatment 1 (Control) (~24,000 addresses)	No change	No change	No change	No change	No change
Treatment 2 (~48,000 addresses)	No change	<b>Pressure seal (trifold)</b>	No change	No change	No change
Treatment 3 (~48,000 addresses)	No change	<b>Pressure seal (trifold)</b>	No change	No change	<b>Pressure seal (trifold)</b>
Treatment 4 (~24,000 addresses)	No change	<b>Pressure seal (trifold)</b>	No change	<b>Pressure seal (bifold)</b>	<b>Pressure seal (trifold)</b>

<sup>1</sup> Sent only if a return was not received prior to the third mailing.

<sup>2</sup> Sent only if a return was not received and the sampled unit was not eligible for telephone follow-up.

The first experimental treatment, Treatment 2, tested a potential cost-savings by only replacing mailings where the pressure seal mailer cost less to produce. As such, in this treatment, only the Reminder Letter (second mailing) was replaced with a pressure seal mailer (Appendix B). The postcards in the fourth or fifth mailings were not changed for this treatment, because postcards are less expensive to produce.

Treatments 3 and 4 tested the use of pressure seal mailers in place of reminder postcards, in addition to the change to the Reminder Letter described for Treatment 2. Due to cost differences, replacing a postcard with a pressure seal mailer would only save money if it caused an increase in total self-response large enough to decrease the workloads of the more costly nonresponse followup operations. The use of pressure seal mailers also made it possible to test the ability to provide the internet user ID on the postcard mailings in the same way as the current Reminder Letter in production (see Figure 1), which we hypothesized would increase internet response.

We tested the full potential of the pressure seal mailers in Treatment 4, replacing the Reminder Letter (second mailing), the Reminder Postcard (fourth mailing, Appendix C), and the Additional Reminder Postcard (fifth mailing, Appendix D) with pressure seal mailers. The current production postcards are different sizes and printed on different colored card stock to help distinguish them from the other mailings a respondent may receive, as well as from each other (see Appendix E for a graphic of the current production postcards). Because printing on colored paper would have been too expensive for the pressure seal mailers, the variation in pressure seal mailer design was mimicked by changing the way the mailer was folded. Two of the pressure seal mailers, the second mailing and the fifth mailing, had a trifold design. The mailer that

replaced the fourth mailing had a bifold design. As stated previously, we hoped to increase internet response with this treatment.

Because pressure seal mailers cost more than postcards, we also tested a treatment that replaced only one of the current postcards with a pressure seal mailer. Because the Reminder Postcard is sent out shortly after the paper questionnaire, we hypothesized that highlighting the user ID would not be as effective in the fourth mailing as it would be in the fifth mailing. By the time the fifth mailing is sent, several weeks later, we expected that respondents would be less likely to still have the paper questionnaire mailing. In Treatment 3, the Reminder Letter and the Additional Reminder Postcard (fifth mailing) were changed to pressure seal mailers (see Appendix D), while all other mailings remained unchanged.

### **3.2. 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 May 2017 ACS production sample. The total sample size for the experimental test was approximately 144,000 addresses. Treatments 1 and 4 used two randomly assigned methods panel groups each (approximately 24,000 mailing addresses per treatment) and Treatments 2 and 3 used four randomly assigned methods panel groups each (approximately 48,000 mailing addresses per treatment). The experimental difference between Treatments 2 and 3 was the change of the Additional Reminder Postcard, which was sent to nonrespondents that were not in the CATI universe. Since so few addresses are sent this mailing piece, a larger sample size was needed in order to detect any potential significant differences between the two treatments. Treatment 1 served as the experimental control, using the same mail materials as current production but was sorted and mailed at the same time as the experimental treatment materials to account for differences in shipping due to treatment size. The remaining 12 panels received production materials, were sorted normally, and were not part of this analysis.

### **3.3. Response Analysis**

To assess the effect of the pressure seal mailers on self-response, we calculated the self-response return rates at selected points in time in the data collection cycle. The selected points in time reflect the dates of additional mailings or the end of the data collection periods. To evaluate the impact of specific mailings, the mailing universes change for each research question to include only sample addresses that received the mailing being evaluated.

#### **3.3.1. Self-Response Return Rate Analysis and Universe Eligibility**

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

The calculations were made using the following formula:

$$\text{Self-Response Return Rate} = \frac{\text{\# of mailable and deliverable sample addresses that provided a non-blank return by mail, TQA, or a complete or sufficient partial response by internet}}{\text{Total \# of mailable and deliverable sample addresses}^{12}} * 100$$

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. 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. Addresses designated as “undeliverable” (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.

There were three universes of interest for the analyses to evaluate how replacing each mailing with a pressure seal mailer affected self-response: (1) Reminder Letter mailing universe, (2) Reminder Postcard mailing universe, and (3) Additional Reminder Postcard mailing universe.

An increase in self-response presents a cost savings for each subsequent phase of the mailing process by decreasing the number of mailing pieces that need to be sent out. A significant increase in self-response before CATI and CAPI decreases the number of costly interviews that need to be conducted.<sup>13</sup> Calculating the return rates at different points in the data collection cycle gives us an idea of how the experimental treatments would affect operational and mailing costs if they were implemented into a full ACS production year.

Table 2 contains the unweighted number of addresses in each of the mailing universes for the treatments used in the return rates that were calculated to answer the research questions.

**Table 2: Unweighted Counts of Sample Addresses Used for Return Rate Calculations**

Mailing Universe	Comparison	(Control) Treatment 1	Treatment 2	Treatment 3	Treatment 4
Reminder Letter	Treatments 2 and 3 (Combined) vs. Control	19,689	39,540	39,508	N/A
Reminder Postcard	Treatment 4 vs. Treatment 3	N/A	N/A	31,676	16,099
Additional Reminder Postcard	Treatment 3 vs. Treatment 2	N/A	14,463	14,498	N/A

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test

<sup>12</sup> Addresses designated as “undeliverable” (UAA) by the United States Postal Service (USPS) for which no response was received and addresses in remote Alaska and Puerto Rico were excluded from the universes for this analysis.

<sup>13</sup> The data collection process, including the three mailing universes, is described in Section 2.1.

### **3.3.1.1. Reminder Letter Mailing Analysis**

To assess the impact of changing the second mailing to a pressure seal mailer, the control treatment (Treatment 1) was compared to Treatments 2 and 3 combined. This comparison was done for the universe of all sample addresses mailed the Reminder Letter. This is the largest mailing universe since it contains all addresses in the initial sample, excluding unmailable and undeliverable addresses. The return rate calculations were made just before the third mailing and immediately before the start of CATI. The two experimental treatments were able to be combined for this comparison because at these selected points of time the two treatments had received the same materials. It was not until a later point (the fifth mailing), that the two treatments differed. Because of the potential cost savings of changing the Reminder Letter to a pressure seal mailer, one-tailed hypothesis tests were used to determine whether the experimental treatments had lower self-response return rates than the control treatment at the  $\alpha = 0.1$  level.

### **3.3.1.2. Reminder Postcard Mailing Analysis**

To evaluate the effect of changing the fourth mailing to a pressure seal mailer, when the Reminder Letter and the Additional Reminder Postcard are also pressure seal mailers, Treatment 3 was compared to Treatment 4. The universe for the comparison were all addresses that were mailed the Reminder Postcard (the fourth mailing). This universe is smaller than the Reminder Letter universe because addresses that responded previously were removed from the mailing list. The return rates were calculated immediately before the start of CATI and immediately before the start of CAPI. The rates were compared using two-tailed hypothesis tests at the  $\alpha = 0.1$  level.

### **3.3.1.3. Additional Reminder Postcard Mailing Analysis**

The impact of changing the fifth mailing to a pressure seal mailer, when the Reminder Letter (second mailing) was also a pressure seal mailer, was evaluated by comparing Treatment 2 to Treatment 3. The universe for the comparison were all addresses that were mailed the Additional Reminder Postcard (the fifth mailing). Because this mailing universe did not include addresses that had already responded to the survey or addresses that were included in the CATI operation, it was very small compared to the other two mailing universes. The return rates were calculated immediately before the start of CAPI. The rates were compared using two-tailed hypothesis tests at the  $\alpha = 0.1$  level.

## **3.3.2. Calculation of Standard Errors**

All variances were estimated using the Successive Differences Replication (SDR) method with replicate weights, the standard method used for the ACS.<sup>14</sup> The variance for each rate and difference was calculated using the formula below.

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<sup>14</sup> See Chapter 12 of the ACS Design and Methodology document for details and references regarding the SDR method for variance estimation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

The standard error of an estimate is the square root of the variance:

$$Var(RR_0) = \frac{4}{80} \sum_{r=1}^{80} (RR_r - RR_0)^2$$

where:

$RR_0$  = the return rate or difference estimate calculated using the full sample base weights,

$RR_r$  = the return rate or difference estimate calculated for replicate  $r$ .

### 3.4. Relative Cost Analysis

The cost differences, relative to current production, for each experimental treatment were calculated to determine how each treatment would affect costs for the ACS program. A significant change in the self-response return rates, could affect printing, assembly, and postage costs, as well as costs for data capture and nonresponse follow-up activities.

All costs presented in this report were derived from fiscal year 2018 estimates. We used these estimates to calculate printing, assembly, and postage costs for each mailing, which were extrapolated for an annual production workload.

## 4. Assumptions and Limitations

### 4.1. Assumptions

- 1) 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, as designed.
- 2) A single methods panel group (1/24 of the full monthly sample) is representative of the full monthly sample, as designed.
- 3) 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 mailout procedures, as we have chosen sample sizes of the experimental treatments considering postal procedures.<sup>15</sup>

### 4.2. Limitations

- 1) Group quarters and sample housing unit addresses from remote Alaska and Puerto Rico were not included in the sample for the test.
- 2) When this test was conducted there was a CATI operation as part of the nonresponse followup. As of October 2017, there is no longer a CATI operation and extrapolations of results to new data collection methods should be done with this in mind.
- 3) The cost analysis uses estimates to make cost projections. These estimates 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. The cost analysis also does not account for the difference in data capture costs between an internet response and a mail response.

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<sup>15</sup> Previous research indicates that in ACS experiments using methods panel groups, postal procedures alone could cause a difference in response rates at a given point in time between smaller experimental treatments and larger control treatments, with response for the small treatments having a negative bias. See Heimel (2016) for more information.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Response Analysis

#### 5.1.1. Results from Replacing the Reminder Letter With a Pressure Seal Mailer

*Is there a decrease in self-response as a result of changing the Reminder Letter (second mailing) to a pressure seal mailer?*

To answer this research question we compared Treatment 1 (control letter) with Treatments 2 and 3 combined (pressure seal mailers). The calculations were done using the universe of all sample addresses that were sent the second mailing.

For Treatments 2 and 3 combined, self-response return rates were not significantly lower than the control treatment before the third mailing, nor before the start of CATI operations (Table 3). Self-response return rates were not significantly lower for the internet (Table 4) or mail (Table 5) modes separately either. This implies that implementing the change to the Reminder Letter would not be expected to result in increased workloads for subsequent mailings. Because the cost of the pressure seal mailer is less expensive than the current Reminder Letter (described in Section 5.2), this is an acceptable result.

**Table 3: Total Self-Response Return Rates for Addresses Mailed the Second Mailing, Pressure Seal vs. Reminder Letter**

Point in Data Collection Cycle	Pressure Seal (T2 and T3) (n=79,048)	Letter (Control) (n=19,689)	Difference	P-values
Before the Third Mailing	24.2 (0.2)	24.4 (0.3)	-0.2 (0.3)	0.31
Before CATI	43.8 (0.2)	43.6 (0.4)	0.3 (0.4)	0.73

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Significance was tested based on a one-tailed t-test (test < control) at the  $\alpha=0.1$  level.

**Table 4: Internet Return Rates for Addresses Mailed the Second Mailing, Pressure Seal vs. Reminder Letter**

Point in Data Collection Cycle	Pressure Seal (T2 and T3) (n=79,048)	Letter (Control) (n=19,689)	Difference	P-values
Before the Third Mailing	23.8 (0.2)	23.9 (0.3)	-0.1 (0.3)	0.38
Before CATI	30.4 (0.2)	30.4 (0.4)	-0.1 (0.4)	0.45

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Significance was tested based on a one-tailed t-test (test < control) at the  $\alpha=0.1$  level.



**Table 5: Mail and TQA Return Rates for Addresses Mailed the Second Mailing, Pressure Seal vs. Reminder Letter**

Point in Data Collection Cycle	Pressure Seal (T2 and T3) (n=79,048)	Letter (Control) (n=19,689)	Difference	P-values
Before the Third Mailing <sup>†</sup>	0.4 (<0.1)	0.5 (0.1)	-0.1 (0.1)	0.11
Before CATI	13.5 (0.1)	13.1 (0.3)	0.3 (0.3)	0.84

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test

Note: This symbol (†) indicates that these rates only include TQA returns. Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Significance was tested based on a one-tailed t-test (test < control) at the  $\alpha=0.1$  level.

### 5.1.2. Results from Replacing the Reminder Postcard With a Pressure Seal Mailer

*What is the impact on self-response of changing the Reminder Postcard (fourth mailing) to a pressure seal mailer when the Reminder Letter (second mailing) and the Additional Reminder Postcard (fifth mailing) are pressure seal mailers?*

To answer this research question we compared Treatment 3 (control postcard) with Treatment 4 (pressure seal mailer). The calculations were done using the universe of all sample addresses that were sent the fourth mailing.

Replacing the Reminder Postcard (fourth mailing) with a pressure seal mailer, when the Reminder Letter (second mailing) and the Additional Reminder Postcard (fifth mailing) are pressure seal mailers, had no statistically significant effect on the self-response return rates before the start of the CATI operation (see Table 6). Although there was no significant difference in the internet return rates between treatments by the start of the CAPI operation (Table 7), the mail return rate was significantly lower for Treatment 4 by 0.5 percentage points (Table 8), though there was still no difference in the overall self-response return rates. This suggests that some respondents who would have responded by mail, if they had received the traditional postcard, may have instead responded by internet. However, the difference in internet return rates was not significant so the results remain inconclusive.

**Table 6: Total Self-Response Return Rates for Addresses Mailed the Fourth Mailing, Pressure Seal vs. Reminder Postcard**

Point in Data Collection Cycle	Pressure Seal (T4) (n=16,099)	Postcard (T3) (n=31,676)	Difference	P-values
Before CATI	30.0 (0.4)	29.9 (0.3)	<0.1 (0.5)	0.97
Before CAPI	41.3 (0.4)	41.7 (0.3)	-0.3 (0.5)	0.53

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. An asterisk (\*) indicates a statistically significant result. Significance was tested based on a two-tailed t-test at the  $\alpha=0.1$  level.

**Table 7: Internet Return Rates for Addresses Mailed the Fourth Mailing, Pressure Seal vs. Reminder Postcard**

	Pressure Seal (T4) (n=16,099)	Postcard (T3) (n=31,676)	Difference	P-values
Point in Data Collection Cycle				
Before CATI	13.9 (0.4)	13.4 (0.2)	0.5 (0.5)	0.29
Before CAPI	17.7 (0.4)	17.2 (0.3)	0.5 (0.5)	0.32

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. An asterisk (\*) indicates a statistically significant result. Significance was tested based on a two-tailed t-test at the  $\alpha=0.1$  level.

**Table 8: Mail and TQA Return Rates for Addresses Mailed the Fourth Mailing, Pressure Seal vs. Reminder Postcard**

	Pressure Seal (T4) (n=16,099)	Postcard (T3) (n=31,676)	Difference	P-values
Point in Data Collection Cycle				
Before CATI	16.1 (0.3)	16.5 (0.2)	-0.5 (0.4)	0.21
Before CAPI	23.7 (0.3)	24.5 (0.3)	-0.8 (0.5)	0.07*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. An asterisk (\*) indicates a statistically significant result. Significance was tested based on a two-tailed t-test at the  $\alpha=0.1$  level.

### 5.1.3. Results from Replacing the Additional Reminder Postcard With a Pressure Seal Mailer

*What is the impact on self-response of changing the Additional Reminder Postcard (fifth mailing) to a pressure seal mailer when the Reminder Letter (second mailing) is also a pressure seal mailer?*

To answer this research question, we compared Treatment 2 (control postcard) with Treatment 3 (pressure seal mailer). The calculations were done using the universe of all sample addresses that were sent the fifth mailing.

For those mailed the fifth mailing and a pressure seal mailer for the Reminder Letter, changing the Additional Reminder Postcard to a pressure seal mailer had the statistically significant effect of raising self-response return rates by 1.4 percentage points (see Table 9). The change was driven by the statistically significant increase of the internet return rate by 1.7 percentage points, while mail return rates were not significantly different. The significant increase in internet response and the lack of an increase in mail response suggests that the pressure seal mailer's ability to include the user ID in the fifth mailing drove this increase.

**Table 9: Self-Response Return Rates Before CAPI for Addresses Mailed the Fifth Mailing, Pressure Seal vs. Additional Reminder Postcard**

Response Mode	Pressure Seal (T3) (n=14,498)	Postcard (T2) (n=14,463)	Difference	P-values
Total Self-Response	19.3 (0.4)	17.9 (0.4)	1.4 (0.6)	0.02*
Internet	11.2 (0.3)	9.6 (0.3)	1.7 (0.5)	<0.01*
Mail	8.0 (0.3)	8.3 (0.3)	-0.3 (0.4)	0.45

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test

Note: Minor additive discrepancies are due to rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. An asterisk (\*) indicates a statistically significant result. Significance was tested based on a two-tailed t-test at the  $\alpha=0.1$  level.

At the time of this test, the universe of addresses that were mailed the Additional Reminder Postcard did not include addresses that were eligible for CATI. Since CATI is no longer a mode of data collection for the ACS, sample addresses that would have gone to CATI are now sent the fifth mailing. The increase in self-response by the use of the pressure seal mailer in this mailing may have a different impact on response if the response propensity of those in the new mailing universe differs from those in this test.

#### 5.1.4. Overall Self-Response Return Rate Results

To show how each experimental treatment compares to the control (Treatment 1) overall, we calculated self-response return rates for the initial mailing universe of each treatment. The initial mailing universe includes all sample addresses that were mailed the Initial Mailing Package and the Reminder Letter, excluding unmailable and undeliverable addresses. Even though the pressure seal mailers did show some effect on self-response for the smaller mailing universes, none of the experimental treatments had a statistically significant effect on overall total self-response return rates prior to CAPI (see Table 10). Since there was no increase or decrease in the CAPI workload for any of the experimental treatments, the only potential cost impact from the experimental treatments would come from the materials themselves, as described in Section 5.2.

**Table 10: Self-Response Return Rates Before CAPI for All Addresses in the Initial Mailing Universe, Control vs. Each Experimental Treatment**

Response Mode	Treatment 1 (Control) (n=19,689)	Treatment 2 (n=39,540)	T1 vs. T2 P-values	Treatment 3 (n=39,508)	T1 vs. T3 P-values	Treatment 4 (n=19,871)	T1 vs. T4 P-values
Total Self-Response	53.0 (0.4)	52.7 (0.3)	0.57	53.4 (0.3)	0.45	52.6 (0.4)	0.46
Internet	33.0 (0.4)	32.9 (0.3)	0.76	33.6 (0.3)	0.30	33.3 (0.4)	0.64
Mail	19.9 (0.4)	19.8 (0.2)	0.76	19.8 (0.3)	0.78	19.3 (0.3)	0.20

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. The p-value column indicates the p-values obtained from the hypothesis testing of the difference between the experimental treatment and the control treatment. Significance was tested based on a two-tailed t-test at the  $\alpha=0.1$  level.

## 5.2. Cost Analysis

*What would be the cost impact, relative to current production, of implementing each experimental treatment into a full ACS production year?*

To determine the cost impact, relative to current production, of implementing each experimental treatment into ACS production, we considered the return rates and the associated costs of data collection. Significant difference in the return rates could affect printing, assembly, and postage costs, as well as costs for data capture and nonresponse followup activities. However, none of the treatments had significantly different total self-response rates from the control treatment, as shown in Table 10. Therefore, there were only differences in the printing, assembly, and postage costs for each treatment as compared to the control treatment.<sup>16</sup>

The cost analysis uses estimates to make cost projections. These estimates do not account for sampling variability or monthly variability in production costs such as changes in staffing, production rates, or printing price adjustments. The cost analysis also does not account for the difference in data capture costs between an internet response and a mail response.

The printing, assembly, and postage cost differences for each mailing piece if implemented into a full ACS production year are presented below.

### 5.2.1. Printing

Printing costs include the cost of paper, ink, and labor. The Census Bureau has contracts with printers that determine the cost of printing certain mail materials, including envelopes, for the ACS. The Census Bureau typically prints ACS materials three times per year and orders ten percent extra volume to account for spoilage during assembly. The Census Bureau's National Processing Center (NPC) also prints certain ACS mail materials onsite. Any ACS mail material that contains variable information, such as an internet user ID or an address, must be printed at NPC. The control Reminder Letter, both reminder postcards, and all pressure seal mailers were printed at NPC.

Taking into account costs for paper, ink, and labor, it is more expensive to print pressure seal mailers than control envelopes or postcards (see Table 11). The control postcards and pressure seal mailers are all printed on two sides, but the control postcards are printed two or four to a sheet, which is more cost-effective. Another contributing factor to the higher cost of printing pressure seal mailers is the cost of paper, because the pressure seal paper is more expensive than the control production paper. The pressure seal machine requires paper with a pre-applied adhesive on it, so that the letter can be sealed. This special paper has a six- to twelve- month shelf life and must be stored in a temperature-controlled environment, which limits the amount of paper that can be ordered at any given time.

A cost-savings of the pressure seal mailer instead of the Reminder Letter is that it eliminates the need for envelopes and hence the cost associated with envelopes. However, the overall printing

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<sup>16</sup> The cost analysis took into account the fact that, as of October 2017, there is an increased size of the Additional Reminder Postcard mailing universe.

costs (including paper, ink, and labor) for pressure seal mailers are still higher than all three control mail pieces. Table 11 shows the annual printing cost comparison between control and pressure seal mail pieces.

**Table 11: ACS Annual Printing Cost Comparisons Between Current Production Mailings and Pressure Seal Mailers**

Mailing	Pressure Seal Cost Difference From Production
Reminder Letter	\$184,000
Reminder Postcard	\$282,000
Additional Reminder Postcard	\$150,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test

Note: Printing costs include ink, paper, and labor.

### 5.2.2. Assembly

The projected annual assembly cost comparisons between the control mailings and pressure seal mailers are shown in Table 12. Assembly costs include the quality assurance (QA) inspections conducted at NPC, production rates of the machines, and labor to support the assembly process. Cost savings for pressure seal mailers are mainly obtained from a more efficient assembly process driving a decrease in labor costs.

**Table 12: ACS Annual Assembly Cost Comparisons Between Current Production Mailings and Pressure Seal Mailers**

Mailing	Pressure Seal Cost Difference From Production
Reminder Letter	(\$438,000)
Reminder Postcard	\$191,000
Additional Reminder Postcard	\$139,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test

Note: Numbers in parentheses denote negative numbers indicating a cost savings.

Assembly costs for the pressure seal mailer are less than the Reminder Letter. The pressure seal machine has a higher assembly rate than the machine used to assemble the Reminder Letter. As a result, more pressure seal mailers are produced each hour, driving the lower assembly costs for pressure seal mailers. The postcards have direct labor costs from cutting the postcards. However, the cost difference for direct labor between running the pressure seal machine and running the cutting machine for the control postcards is negligible.

Another component of the assembly costs are the QA inspections that include measures like checking print quality and verifying sequence numbers before mailout. QA costs for the control Reminder Letter are the same as the pressure seal Reminder Letter, because the same amount of QA steps are involved. However, the control postcards have fewer QA steps, reducing the overall QA costs.

This analysis does not take into account any future acquisitions of pressure seal machines with enhanced technology capable of automated quality assurance checks, which would reduce QA costs and yield higher capacity and production rates. The use of these pressure seal machines would further impact the assembly cost differences.

### 5.2.3. Postage

Because the Reminder Letter and the pressure seal mailer both meet the same USPS size and weight restrictions of a first-class letter, the postage costs for the two are the same. There is also no cost differential for postage between the Additional Reminder Postcard and the pressure seal mailer, since the Additional Reminder Postcard is large and meets the USPS size and weight restrictions of a first class letter. However, the postage for the pressure seal mailer is more expensive than the Reminder Postcard. The Reminder Postcard is smaller than the Additional Reminder Postcard. The smaller postcards qualify for a lower USPS postcard rate, whereas the pressure seal mailers are at the first class letter rate. This lends to projected additional costs of about \$525,000 for a full production year.

### 5.2.4. Total Annual Cost Comparisons

#### 5.2.4.1. Annual Cost Differences Between Current Production Mailing Pieces and Pressure Seal Mailers

Table 13 shows the total annual cost differences of mailing a pressure seal mailer instead of a control Reminder Letter, a Reminder Postcard, or an Additional Reminder Postcard. These are the projected cost differences of including the pressure seal mailers in a full year of ACS production, as compared to current production costs. The most noticeable cost difference is in the assembly cost of the pressure seal mailer as a replacement for the current Reminder Letter, netting a total cost savings. However, using pressure seal mailers in place of postcards did not yield cost savings in printing, assembly, or postage, and so the total pressure seal costs were higher for these mailings.

**Table 13: Annual Cost Differences for Each Mailing: Current Production Mailings vs. Pressure Seal Mailers**

Mailing	Printing	Assembly	Postage	Total
Reminder Letter	\$184,000	(\$438,000)	\$0	(\$254,000)
Reminder Postcard	\$282,000	\$191,000	\$525,000	\$998,000
Additional Reminder Postcard	\$150,000	\$139,000	\$0	\$289,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test

Note: Numbers in parentheses denote negative numbers indicating a cost savings.

#### 5.2.4.2. Annual Cost Differences Between Current Production and Experimental Treatments

Each experimental treatment had either one, two, or three pressure seal mailers replacing current production mailing materials. Treatment 2 replaced only the Reminder Letter, Treatment 3 replaced the Reminder Letter and the Additional Reminder Postcard, and Treatment 4 replaced the Reminder Letter, the Reminder Postcard, and the Additional Reminder Postcard with pressure seal mailers. This section describes the cost differential, relative to current production costs, of each of these treatments being implemented in a full ACS production year.

**Table 14: Annual Cost Differences for Each Experimental Treatment: Current Production vs. Treatments 2, 3, and 4**

Treatment and Mailing Pieces Replaced with Pressure Seal Mailers	Printing	Assembly	Postage	Total
Treatment 2 (RL)	\$184,000	(\$438,000)	\$0	(\$254,000)
Treatment 3 (RL, ARP)	\$334,000	(\$299,000)	\$0	\$35,000
Treatment 4 (RL, RP, ARP)	\$616,000	(\$108,000)	\$525,000	\$1,033,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017 Pressure Seal Mailing Materials Test  
 Note: Numbers in parentheses denote negative numbers indicating a cost savings. RL means Reminder Letter, RP means Reminder Postcard, and ARP means Additional Reminder Postcard.

Based on the costs of printing, assembly, and postage as detailed above (Table 14), we project that Treatment 2 would result in a cost savings of about \$254,000 or 0.11 percent of the fiscal year 2017 ACS budget of \$221.6 million. However, Treatment 3 would result in an additional cost of about \$35,000 or 0.02 percent and Treatment 4 would result in an additional cost of about \$1,033,000 or 0.47 percent of the annual budget.

## 6. Conclusion

In an effort to increase self-response and decrease ACS data collection costs, this test was conducted to evaluate the use of pressure seal mailers in place of current ACS mailing materials. Pressure seal mailers cost less than letters with envelopes and more than postcards. However, pressure seal mailers also offer a number of benefits that traditional postcards do not have. Pressure seal mailers have a more official look and feel than postcards as they are often used for mailings that include personal identification numbers, bill statements, report cards, or confidential results. The expectation was that the new look and feel may have enticed respondents to open the mailer and read its contents. The increased privacy of a pressure seal mailer allowed us to highlight the internet user ID, as in the Reminder Letter, in more mailings. The expectation was that internet response would increase enough to overcome the increased cost of replacing a postcard with a pressure seal mailer.

The results of this test show that replacing the Reminder Letter with a pressure seal mailer would not negatively impact self-response and would be a cost-saving change. The projected annual cost savings for Treatment 2 is about \$254,000. Replacing the postcards with pressure seal mailers would have some effect on self-response, but not enough to overcome the increase in costs, which are projected to be about \$35,000 for Treatment 3 and about \$1,033,000 for Treatment 4.

## 7. References

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## Appendix A: ACS Mailing Descriptions and Schedule for the May 2017 Panel

Mailing	Description of Materials	Mailout Date
Initial Mailing Package	A package of materials containing the following: Introduction Letter, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Brochure, Multi-Lingual Informational Brochure, and Internet Instruction Card. This mailing urges housing units to respond via the internet.	04/20/2017
Reminder Letter*	A reminder letter sent to all addresses that were sent the Initial Mailing Package, reiterating the request to respond. <i>Trifold pressure seal mailer for Treatments 2, 3, and 4.</i>	04/27/2017
Paper Questionnaire Package	A package of materials sent to addresses that have not responded. Contains the following: Introduction Letter, Paper Questionnaire, Return Envelope, Internet Instruction Card, and FAQ Brochure.	05/11/2017
Reminder Postcard*	A reminder postcard sent to all addresses that were also sent the Paper Questionnaire Package, reiterating the request to respond. <i>Bifold pressure seal mailer for Treatment 4.</i>	05/15/2017
Additional Postcard*	An additional reminder postcard sent to addresses that have not yet responded and are ineligible for telephone follow-up. <i>Trifold pressure seal mailer for Treatments 3 and 4.</i>	06/05/2017

Note: Items marked with an asterisk (\*) were changed to a pressure seal mailer for some treatments as part of the test. See Table 1 for the details.

## Appendix B: Trifold Pressure Seal Mailer used in the Second Mailing

ACS-20(LX)PST  
(12-2016)



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 ...

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

Security Security Security Security Security

census.gov

## Appendix C: Bifold Pressure Seal Mailer used in the Fourth Mailing

ACS-29(LX)PST  
(12-2016)



**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...

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 respond online.

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

**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.

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

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

Security Security Security Security Security

census.gov

## Appendix D: Trifold Pressure Seal Mailer used in the Fifth Mailing

ACS-23(LX)PST  
(04-2017)



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 U.S. Census Bureau is required by law to keep your information confidential. The Census Bureau is not permitted to publicly release your responses in a way that could identify you. 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>.

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

**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  
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Security Security Security Security Security

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

# Appendix E: Control Reminder Postcard (Top) and Control Additional Reminder Postcard (Bottom)

ACS-29(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 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

ACS-29(2017) (4-2017)



**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 U.S. Census Bureau is required by law to keep your information confidential. The Census Bureau is not permitted to publicly release your responses in a way that could identify you. 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.



John H. Thompson  
Director