# Certifiable? Certification Test Results for the 2014 SIPP

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U.S. Census Bureau

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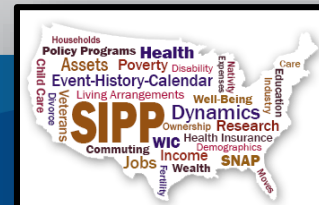
The SIPP Mission

The mission of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is to provide a nationally representative sample for:

- evaluating annual and sub-annual dynamics of income,
- movements into and out of government transfer programs,
- family and social context of individuals and households, and
- interactions between these items.

How are SIPP Data Used?

Government agencies

SIPP is used by many government agencies to measure the effectiveness of government programs, to anticipate effects of program changes, and to aid in program budget projections.

- **DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE:** model food stamp eligibility and measure food stamp receipt
- **DEPARTMENT of HEALTH and HUMAN SERVICES**: measure the economic effect of disabling conditions on children and adults; measure outcome and participation of disabled women on TANF; measure the effect of welfare reform on the disabled
- **SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION**: model SSI benefits; model the restructuring of Social Security and effects of benefits for couples vs. surviving spouses; project retirement income
  - NEW for 2014 SIPP: Reimbursable Supplement on Retirement and pensions, disability, and marital history
- **DEPARTMENT of LABOR**: research and simulations to identify characteristics of workers with and without pensions and health plan coverage
- **CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE**: measure actual counts of participants and non-participants and dollars associated with major government programs
- **CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE**: conduct policy research and microsimulations for spells of unemployment, spells without health insurance, participation rates for programs such as AFDC and Medicaid
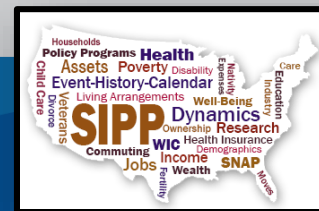
Academics and Others

- labor force characteristics and dynamics   - welfare duration and correlates   - migration
- family structure and stability   - child support and child care   - work schedule
- economic well-being of children - utilization of health care services   - poverty studies
- assets, wealth and retirement   - marital status changes
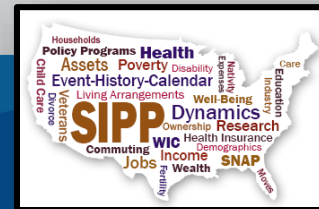
Goals for SIPP Re-engineering

- The Re-engineering
  - includes a new household survey data collection,
  - modernized the data collection instrument,
  - reduced respondent burden,
  - requires fewer resources than the current SIPP program,
  - improves processing efficiency,
  - will be releasable to the public in a timely manner,
  - integrates survey data and administrative records data

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Notes on the New Design

Scope
- Similar to SIPP
- Broader than core / includes key topical module content in each wave

Better integration of concepts
- EHC generates integrated reporting across domains
- Topics previously implemented as add-on modules now integrated
- Facilitate 'hooks' to enable supplements for additional content

Increased efficiency in processing and producing data products
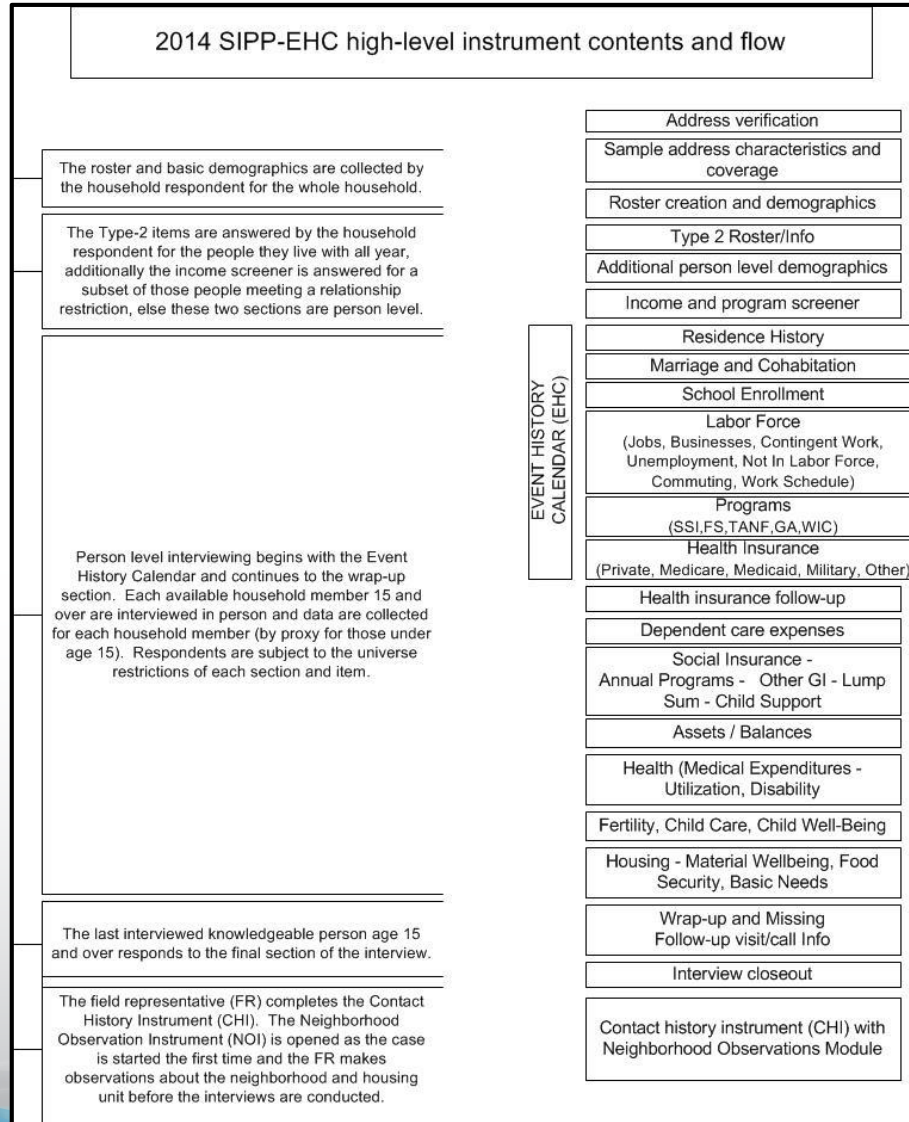Flexibility in administration (dynamic interview month and reference period)
Dependent data incorporation into EHC instrument

Reduced cost and burden through annual administration

Improve management through realigned structure and improved monitoring using all available tools – especially paradata

SIPP–EHC 2014 Contents

2014 SIPP-EHC high-level instrument contents and flow

The roster and basic demographics are collected by the household respondent for the whole household.

The Type-2 items are answered by the household respondent for the people they live with all year, additionally the income screener is answered for a subset of those people meeting a relationship restriction, else these two sections are person level.

Person level interviewing begins with the Event History Calendar and continues to the wrap-up section. Each available household member 15 and over are interviewed in person and data are collected for each household member (by proxy for those under age 15). Respondents are subject to the universe restrictions of each section and item.

The last interviewed knowledgeable person age 15 and over responds to the final section of the interview.

The field representative (FR) completes the Contact History Instrument (CHI). The Neighborhood Observation Instrument (NOI) is opened as the case is started the first time and the FR makes observations about the neighborhood and housing unit before the interviews are conducted.

Address verification

Sample address characteristics and coverage

Roster creation and demographics

Type 2 Roster/Info

Additional person level demographics

Income and program screener

EVENT HISTORY CALENDAR (EHC)

Residence History

Marriage and Cohabitation

School Enrollment

Labor Force (Jobs, Businesses, Contingent Work, Unemployment, Not In Labor Force, Commuting, Work Schedule)

Programs (SSI,FS,TANF,GA,WIC)

Health Insurance (Private, Medicare, Medicaid, Military, Other)

Health insurance follow-up

Dependent care expenses

Social Insurance - Annual Programs - Other GI - Lump Sum - Child Support

Assets / Balances

Health (Medical Expenditures - Utilization, Disability

Fertility, Child Care, Child Well-Being

Housing - Material Wellbeing, Food Security, Basic Needs

Wrap-up and Missing Follow-up visit/call Info

Interview closeout

Contact history instrument (CHI) with Neighborhood Observations Module

2014 SIPP-EHC Completed Calendar – Showing Dependent Data
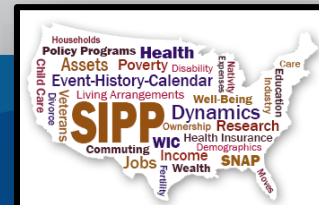
Managing SIPP with Paradata and Dashboards

- Field data collection costs
  - new instrument
  - new field procedures with a four-month interview window
  - new training procedures
  - new management structure and high interest in efficiencies
  - super tight budget environment

- Data quality
  - instrument evaluation and improvement
    - length
    - excessive (DK/RF/BKSPC/Help)
  - training evaluation and improvement

- Response and progress
  - examining data collection flow characteristics by interviewer, team, region
    - non-response
    - partial rates
    - contact characteristics and strategies
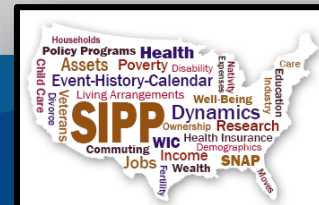
Innovation

- Integration of paradata streams for management and evaluation (sources currently used in SIPP)
  - Audit trail data from the Blaise/C# instrument
  - Certification test for interviewer training
  - Interviewer characteristics
    - Census experience
    - Prior SIPP experience
    - Supervisory status
    - Demographics
  - Contact history instrument
  - Mileage, case load, supervisor observation, hours billed
  - Neighborhood observation
  - Regional office progress management application data
  - Interviewer debriefing

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2011 Interviewer Progress Curve for Interview Length by Certification Exam Score
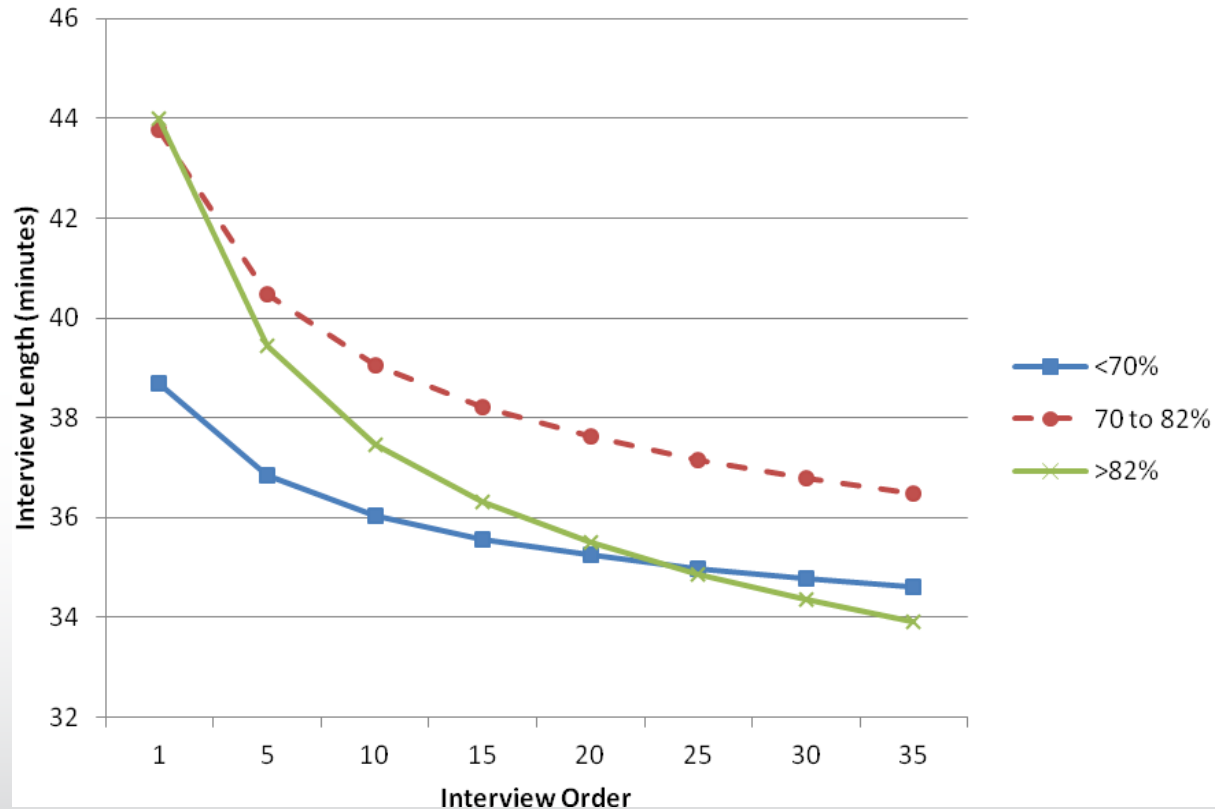
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation
Event History Calendar (SIPP-EHC), 2011.
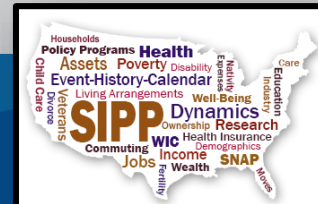
2011 Interviewer Progression Curve for Person Non-Response by Certification Exam Score
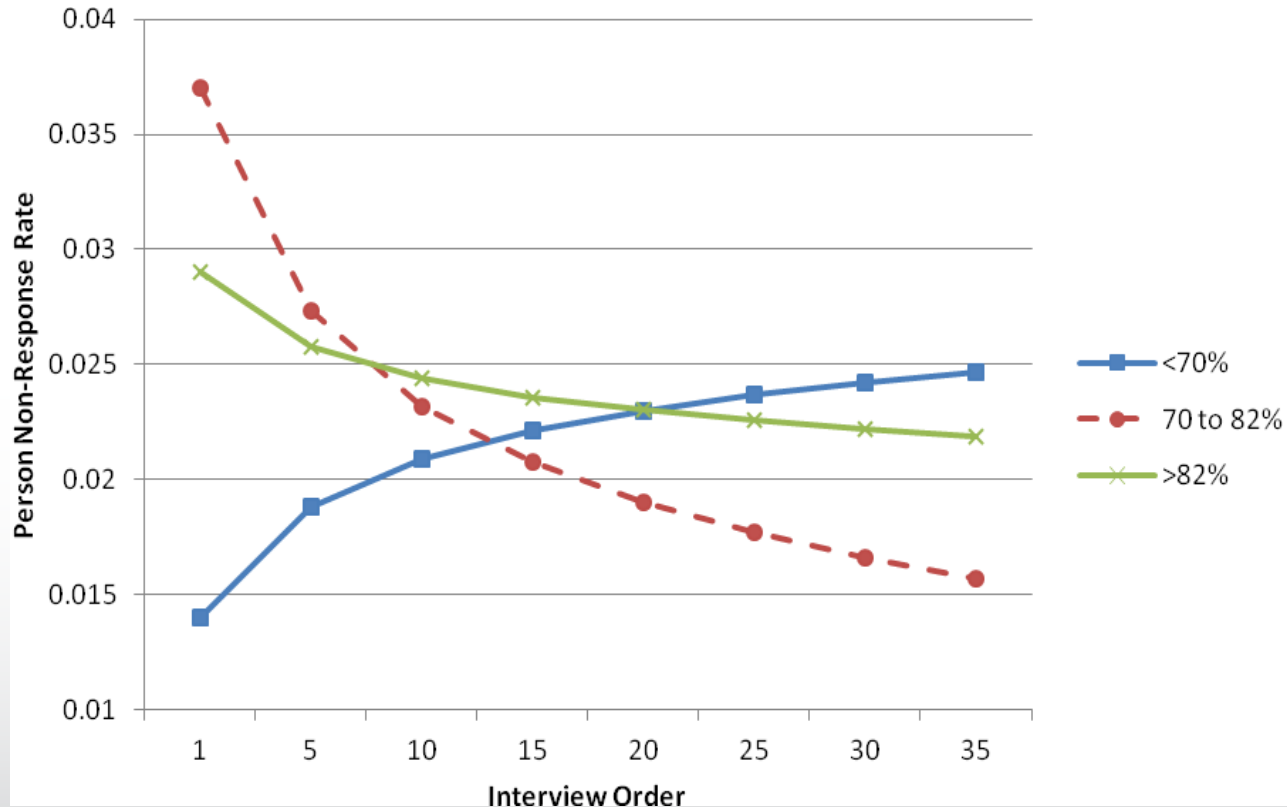
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation Event History Calendar (SIPP-EHC), 2011.
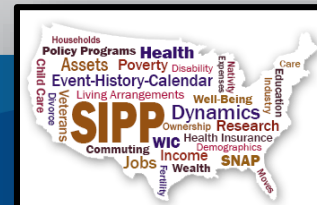
2014 Interviewer Cert Test Structure

- Blaise survey instrument

- Administered to interviewers (FRs) before fieldwork

- Transmitted from FR laptop and processed in SAS

- Results sent back to regions for managers to determine supplemental observations
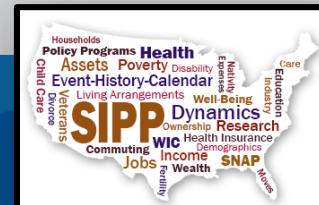
2014 Interviewer Cert Test Structure

- 47 questions, divided into 7 sections:

1. Field Procedures (11)

2. Event History Calendar (5)

3. Programs (6)

4. Content (9)

5. Noninterviews (4)

6. Medicare vs. Medicaid (7)

7. Blaise/Instrument navigation (5)

Completed Tests by Week (Cumulative)

Score Distribution

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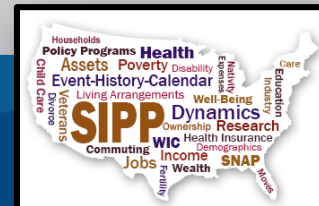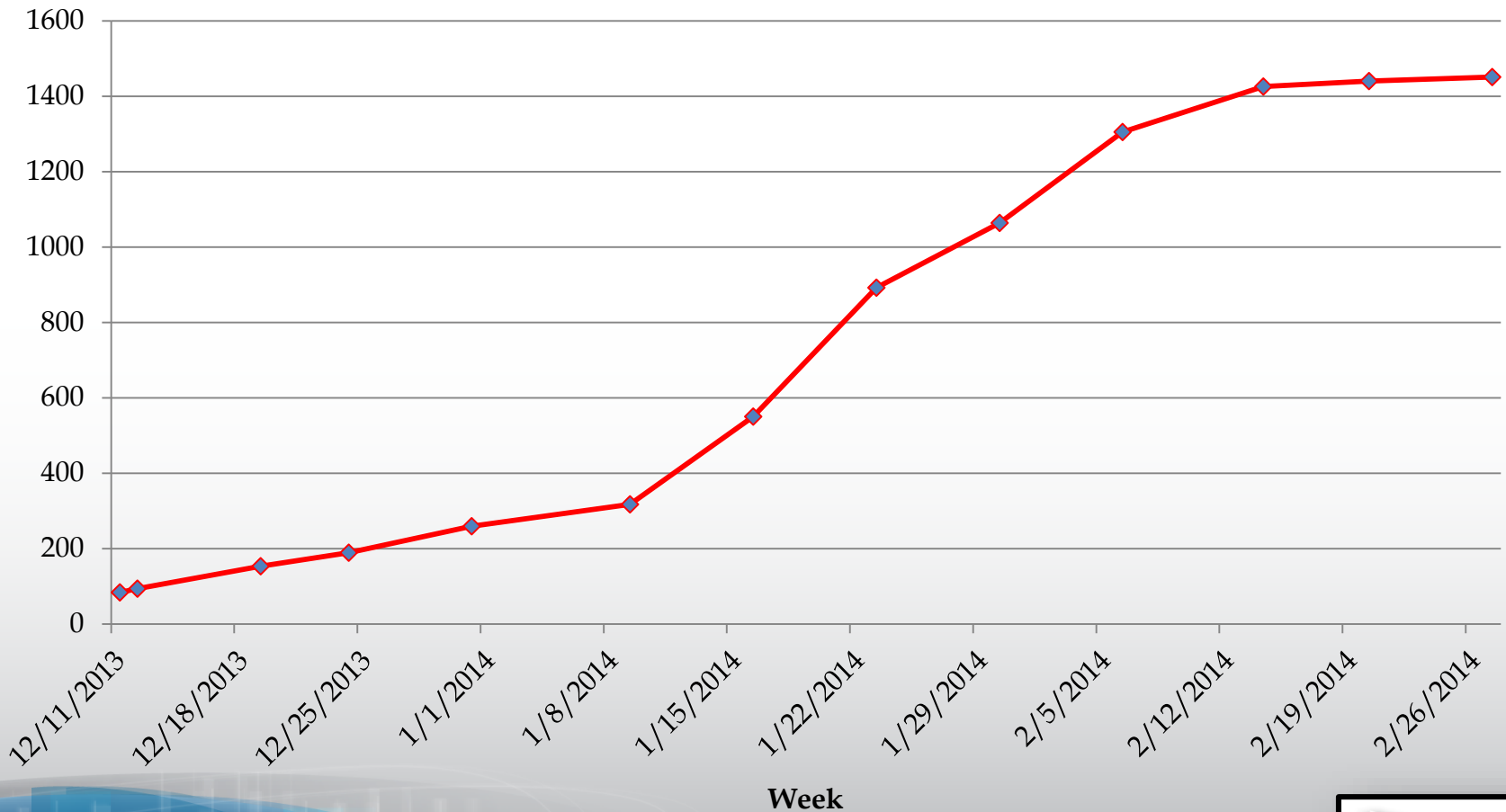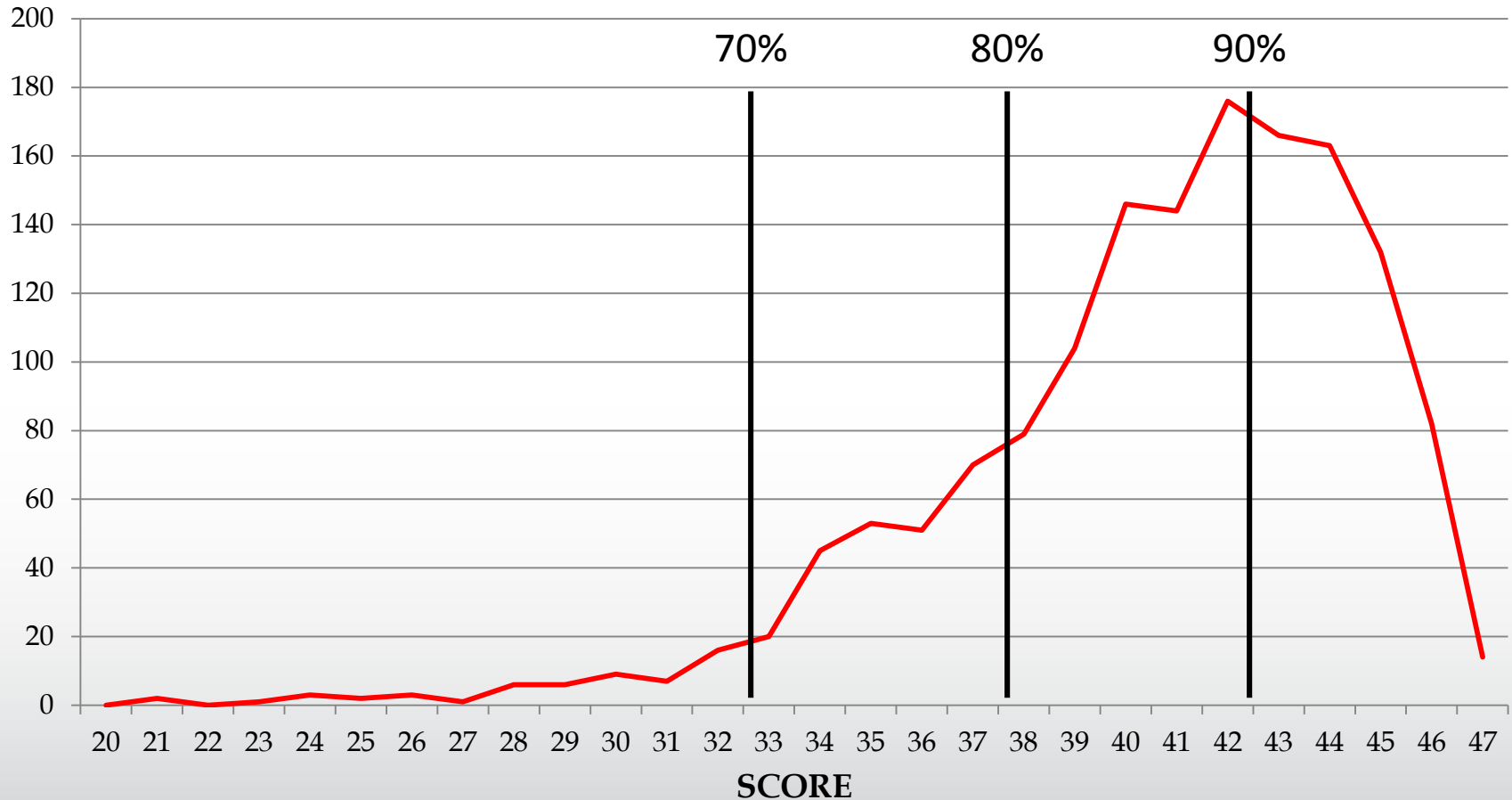
Field Procedures

- 11 questions about how we conduct surveys

- Examples:
  - Authority under which we collect data (Title 13)
  - Criteria for determining unit eligibility
  - Type 2 people

  (people interviewed household members lived with during the year who aren't in the interviewed household now)
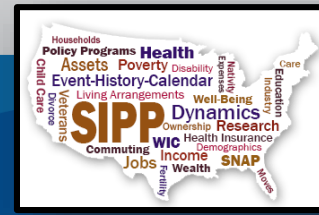
Field Procedures

Event History Calendar

- 5 questions about navigating through the Event History Calendar (EHC)
- Examples:
  - How to edit a spell
  - What the EHC looks like for different people (spouse, child, etc.)
  - How to delete a spell
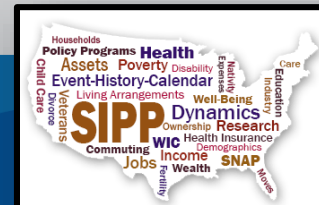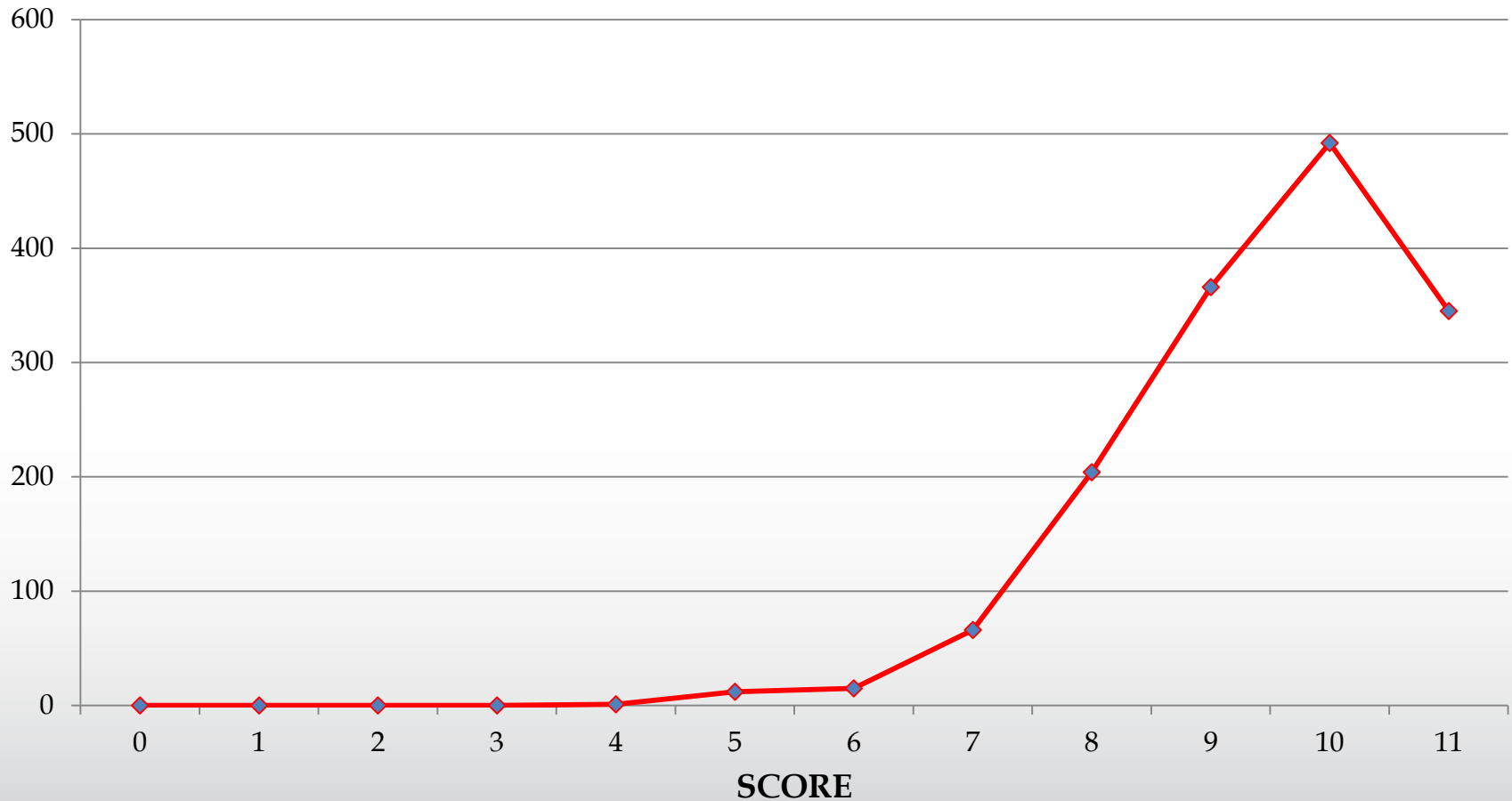
Event History Calendar
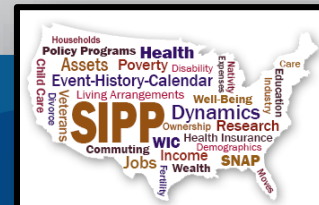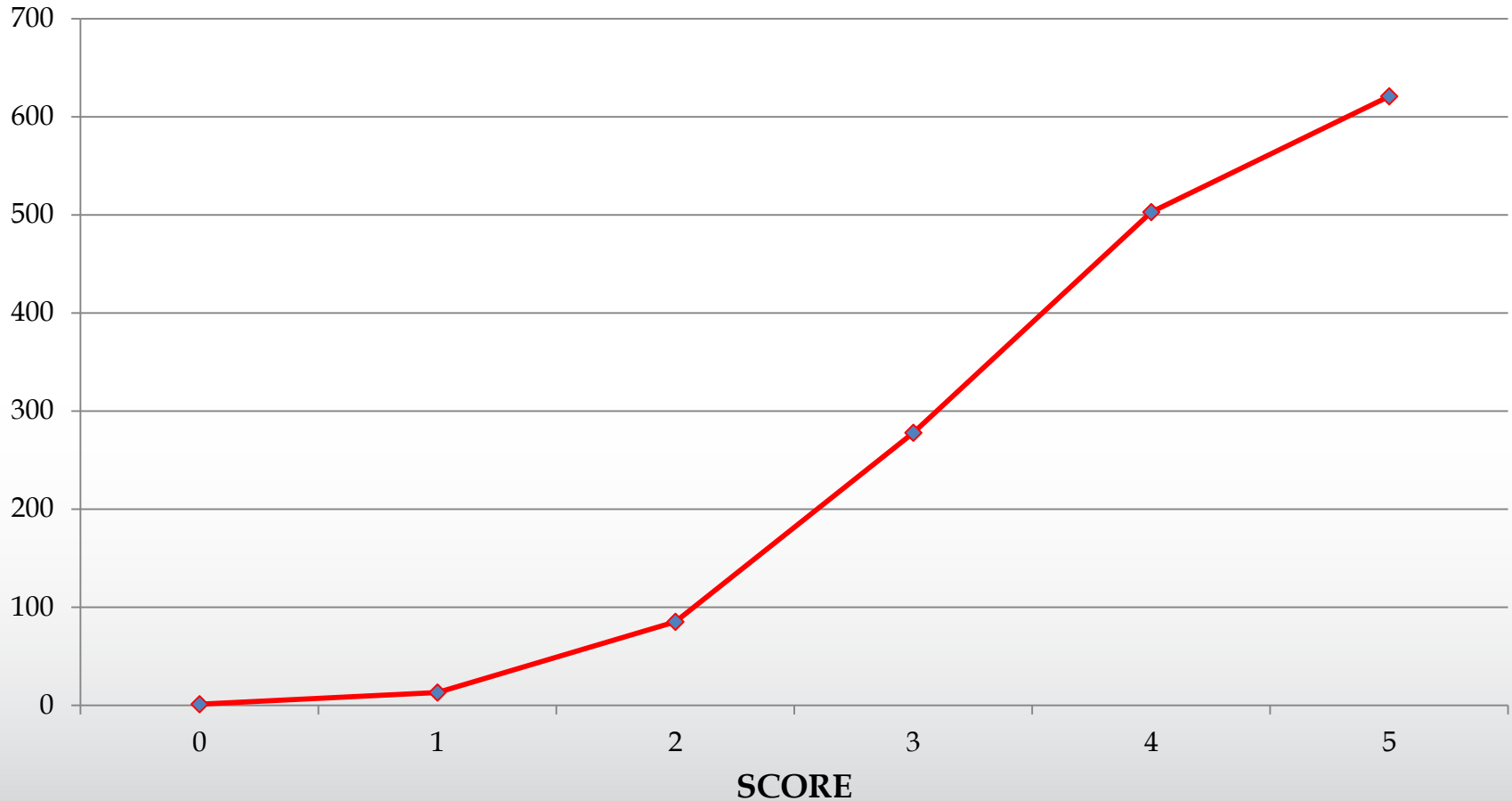
Programs

- 6 questions about social programs
- Examples:
  - Difference between social insurance and social welfare
  - Social Security vs. SSI
  - Characteristics of TANF

Programs

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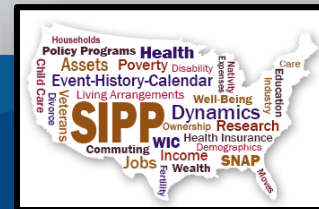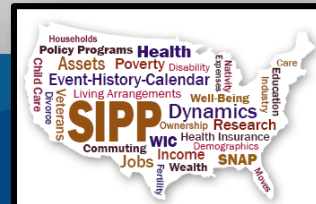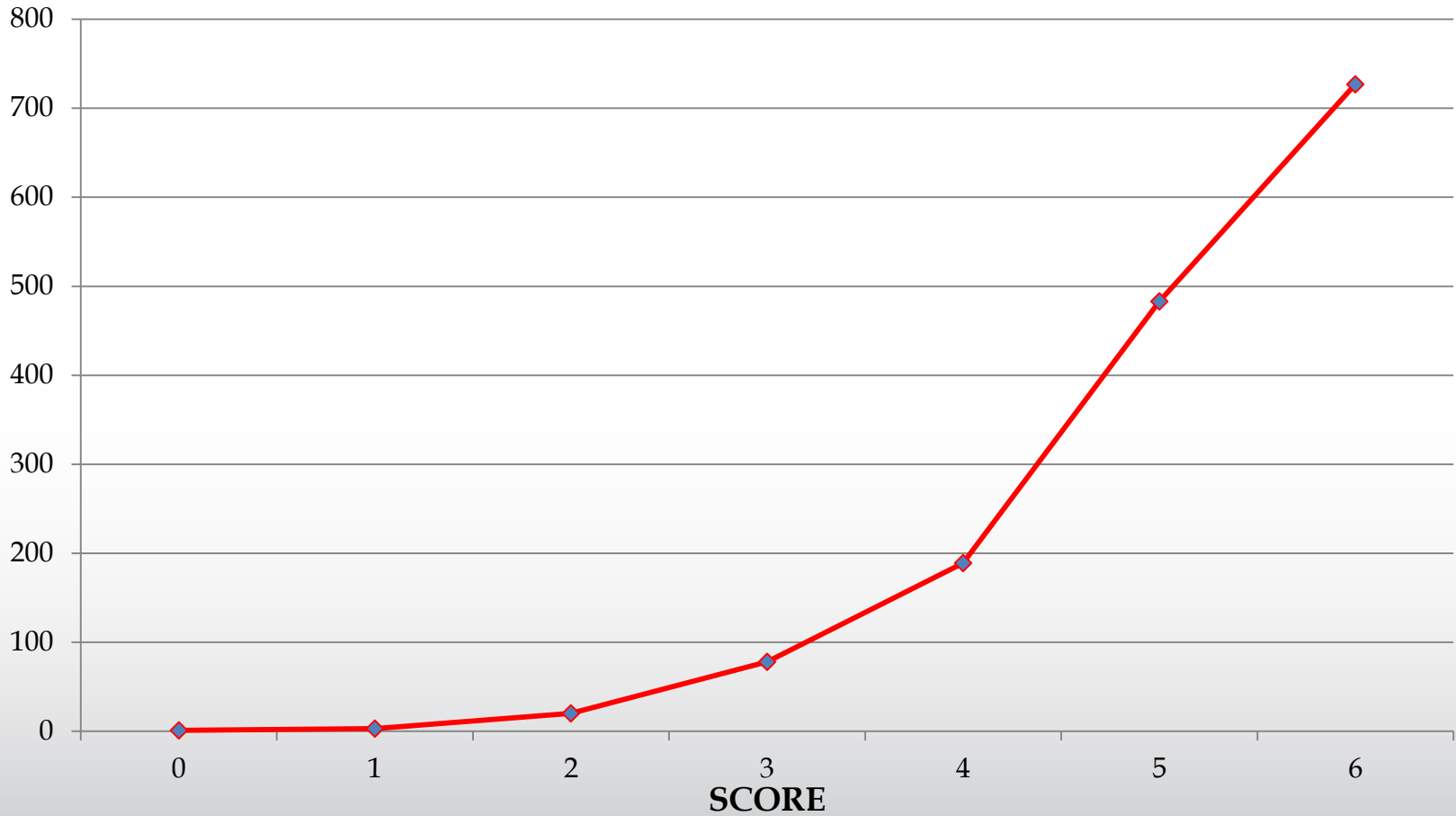
Content

- 9 questions about the survey's content
- Examples:
  - What defines a business?
  - Who is a proxy respondent?
  - What instrument design features are being used to shorten the survey for respondents?
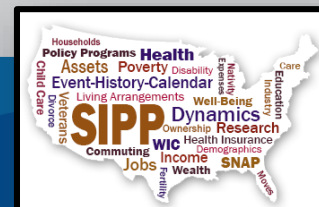
Content
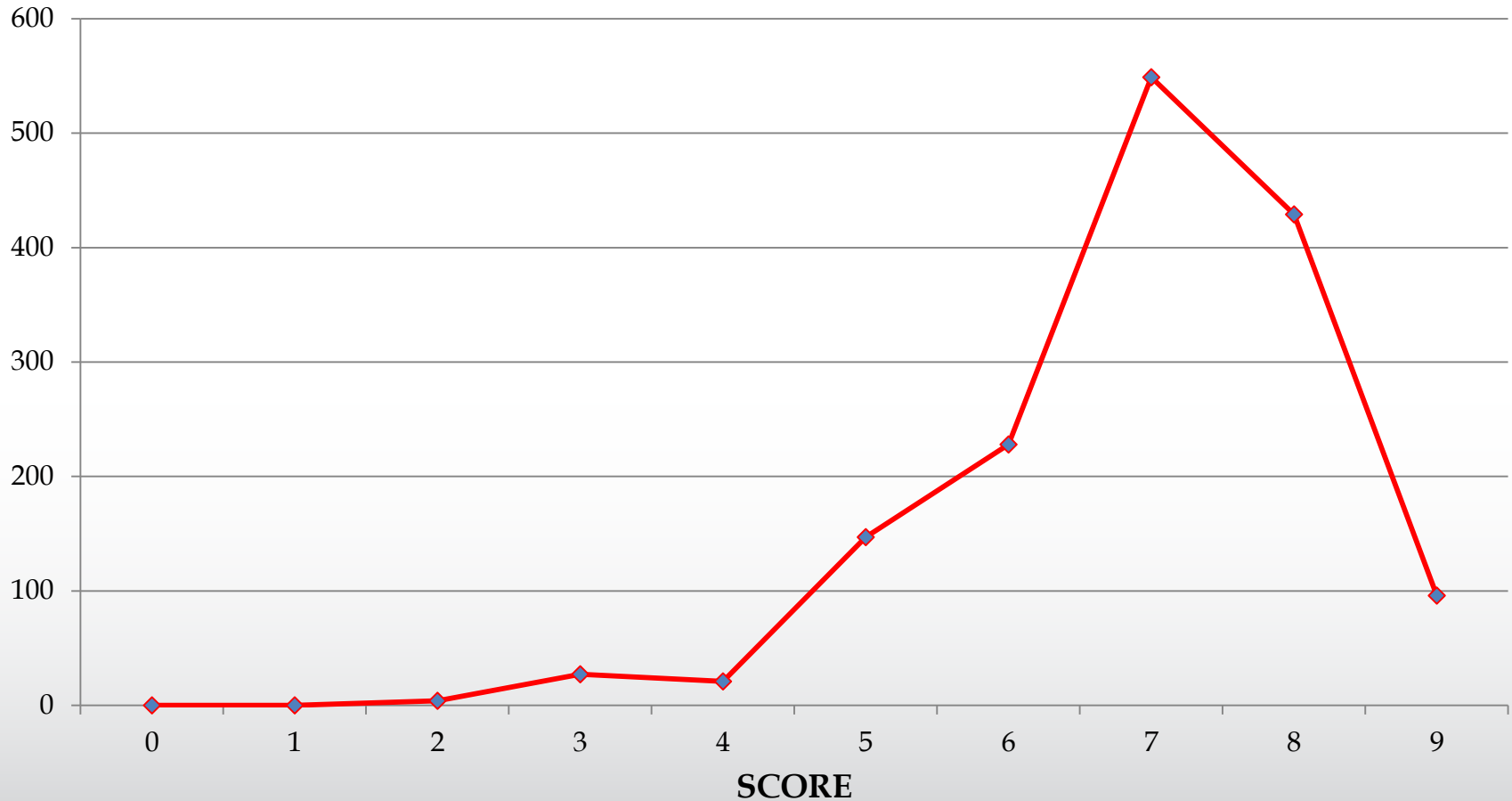
Noninterviews

- 4 questions about noninterviews
- Examples:
  - A respondent who only speaks Russian and there is no translator
  - Entire household on active duty
  - Everyone in household on vacation
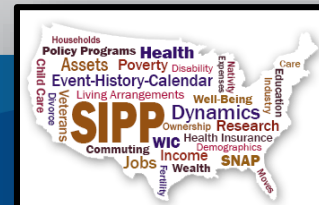
Noninterviews
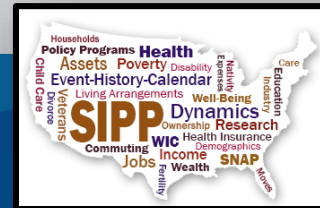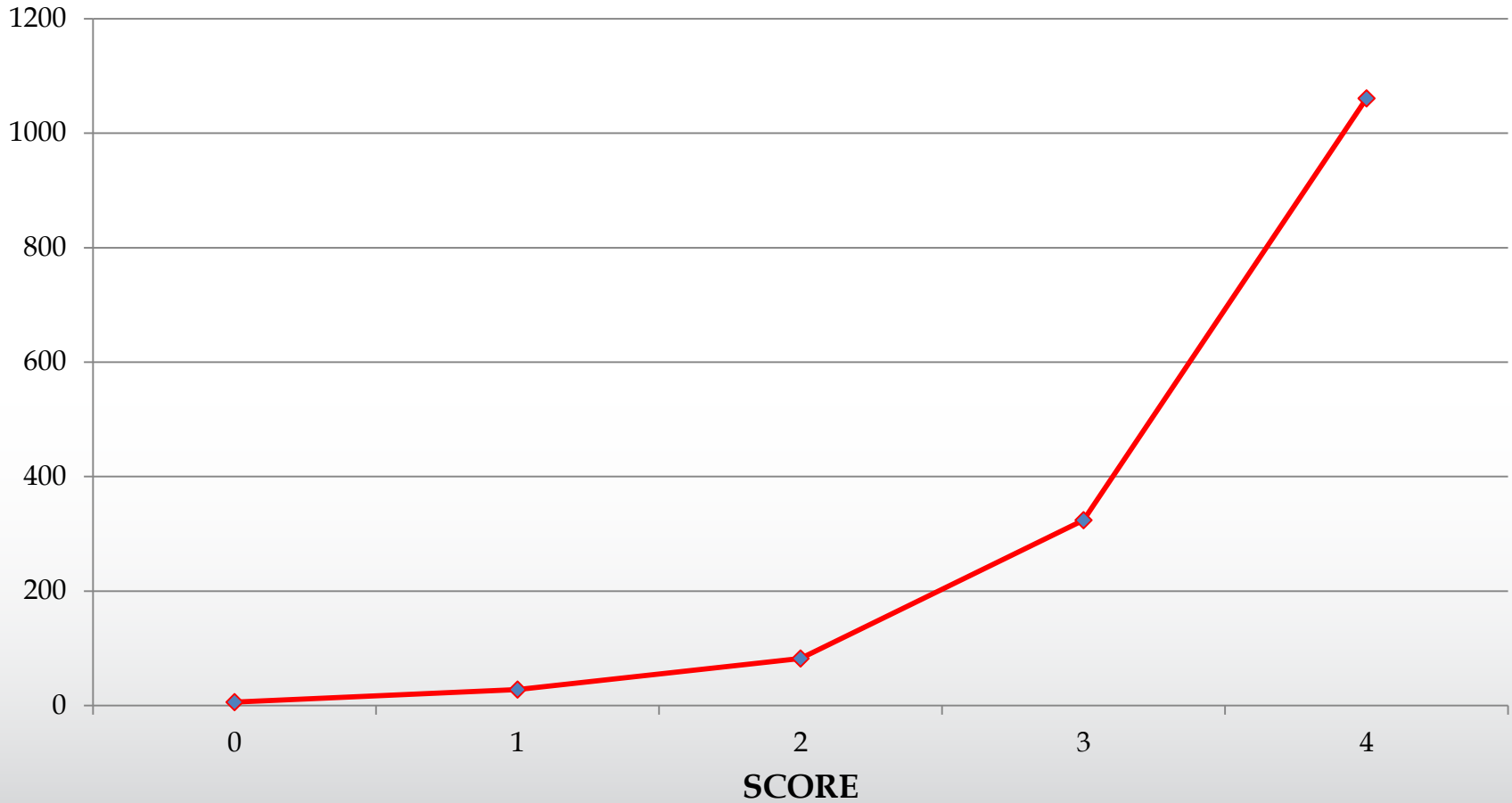
Medicare vs. Medicaid

- 7 questions about differentiating between Medicare and Medicaid

- Examples:
  - Which includes four parts?
  - Which is for people 65 and older?
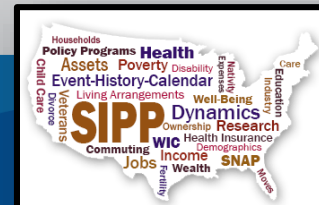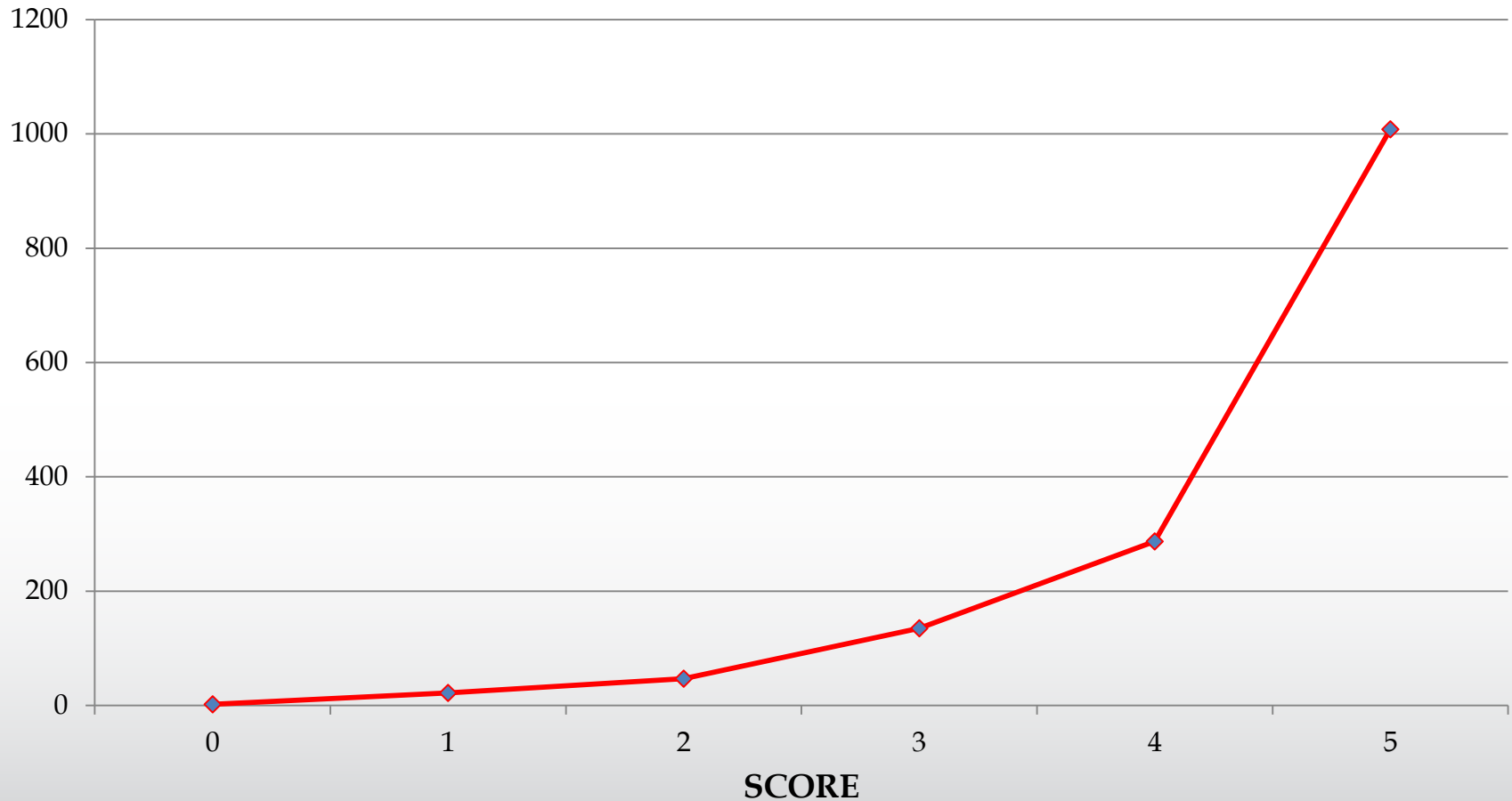 - Which name varies by state?
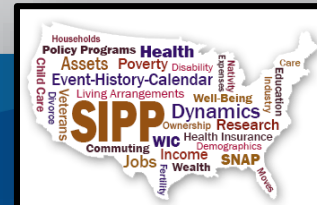
Medicare vs. Medicaid
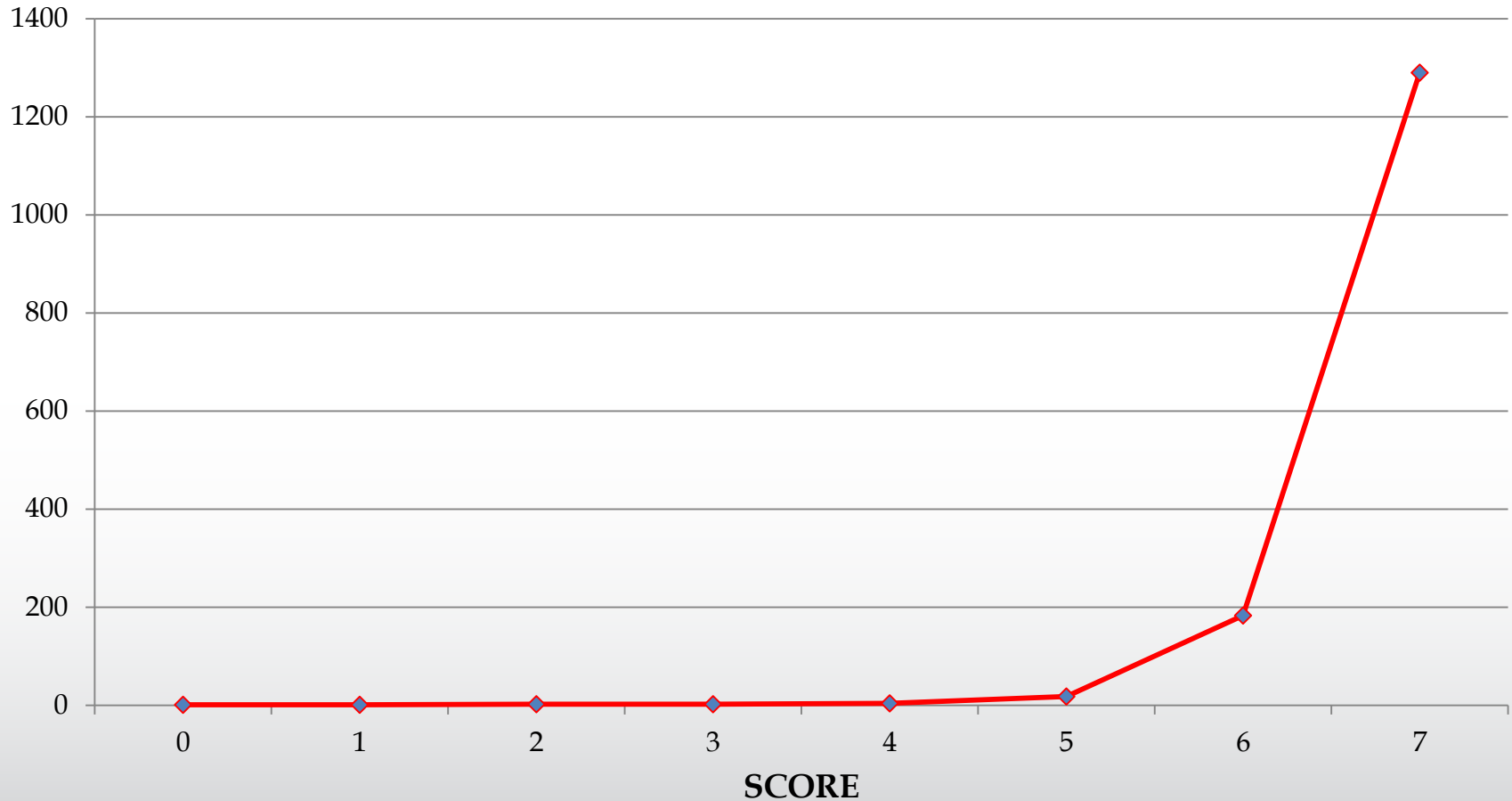
Blaise/Instrument

- 5 questions about operating and navigating the instrument
- Examples:
  - How to bring up a help screen
  - When you know to present a flashcard to respondent
 - What denotes required vs. optional question text

Blaise/Instrument

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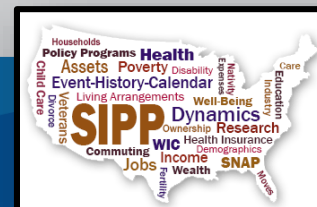
FR Position

- Several different positions can take the test:
    - Field Representative (FR)
    - Field Supervisor (FS)
    - Lead Field Representative (LFR)
    - Supervisory Field Representative (SFR)
    - Survey Supervisor, Office (SSO)
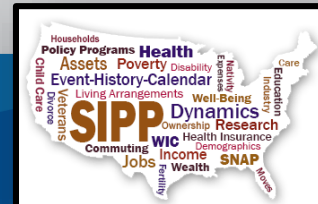- Would expect more senior people to perform better on test
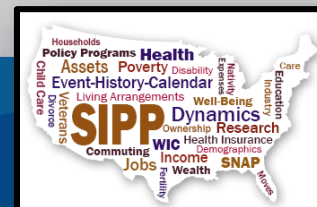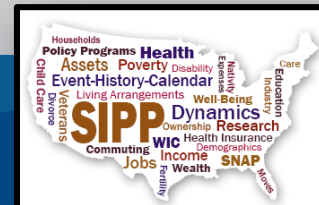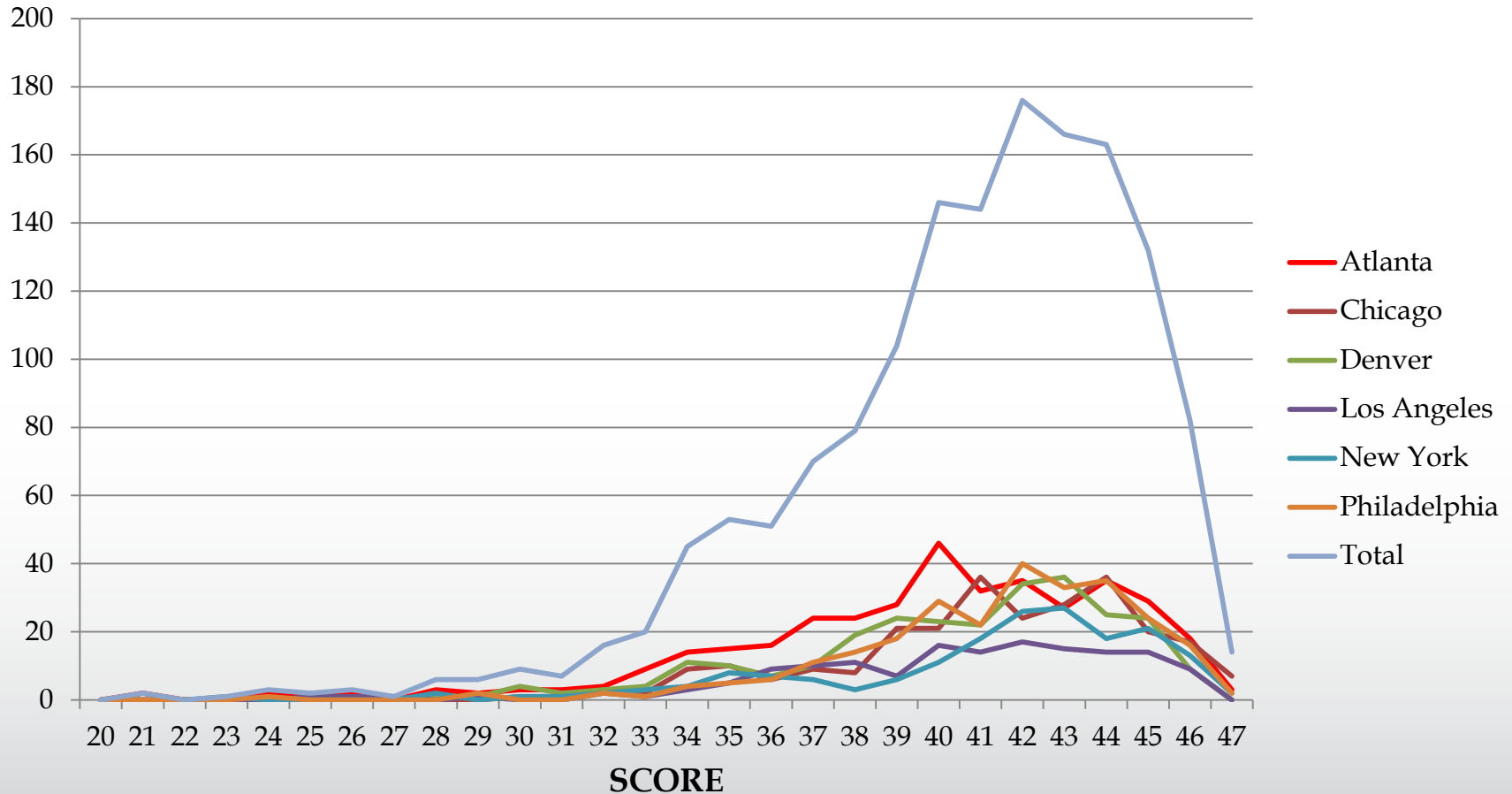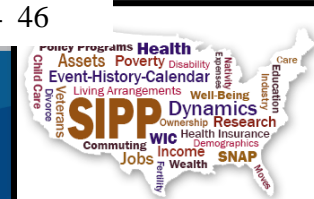
Scores by Position
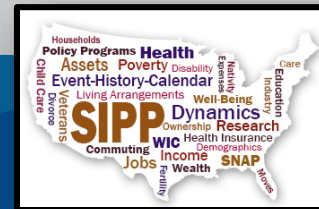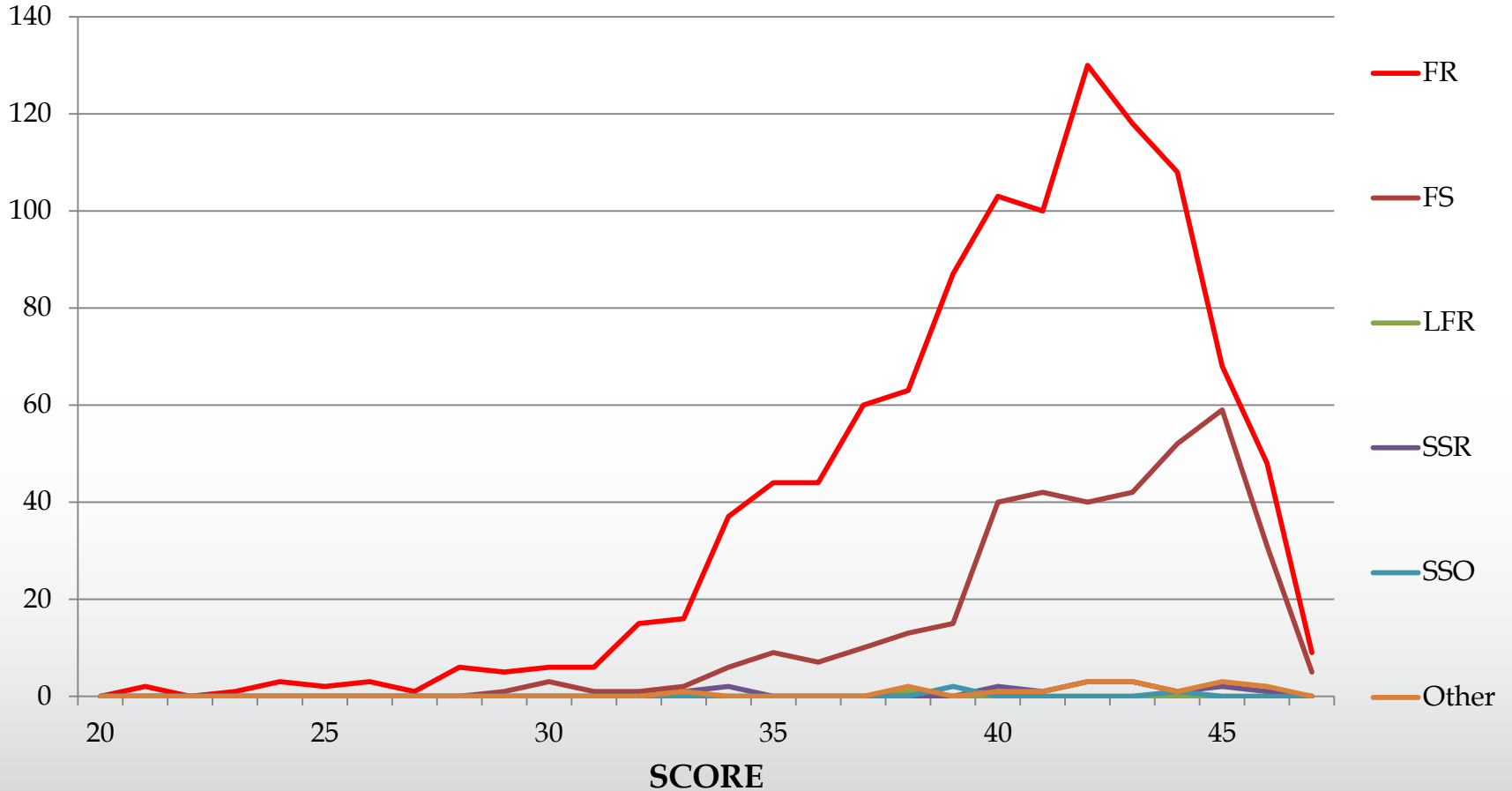
Scores by Position

Position	N	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
FR	1085	41	40.15	4.14	21	47
FS	379	42	41.90	3.35	29	47
LFR	1	38	38		38	38
SFR	16	42	41.07	4.04	33	46
SSO	3	39	40.67	2.89	39	44
Other	17	43	42.12	3.39	33	46
Total	1501	41	40.62	4.01	21	47

Region

- FRs from six different regions completed the test:

1. Atlanta
2. Chicago
3. Philadelphia
4. Los Angeles
5. Denver
6. New York

Scores by Region
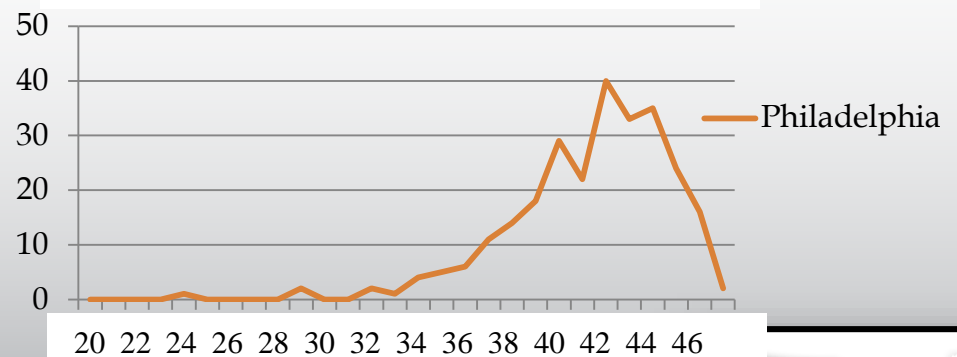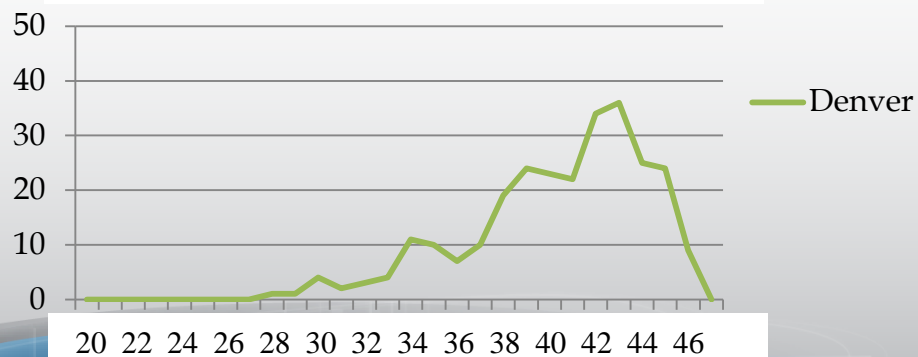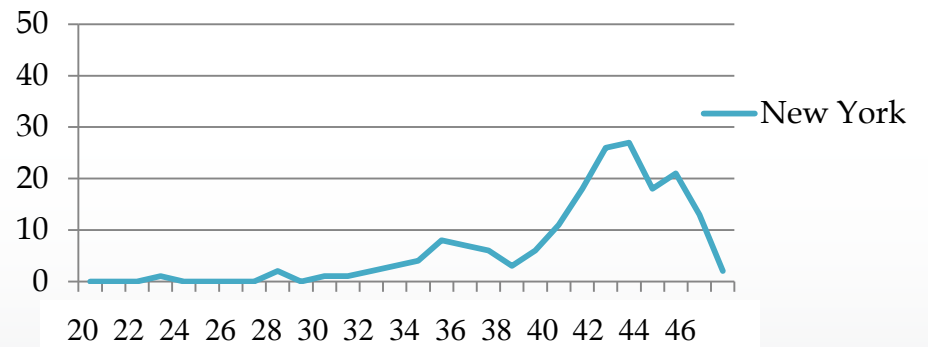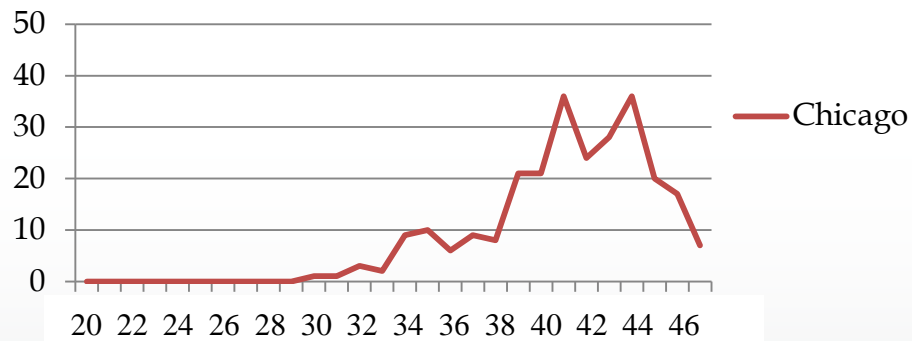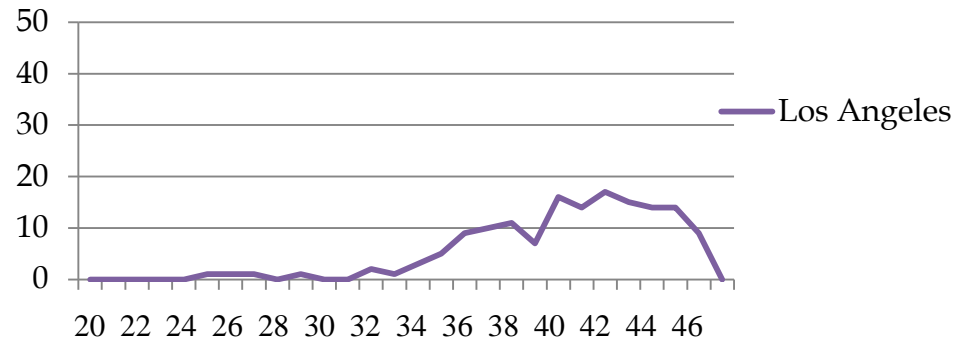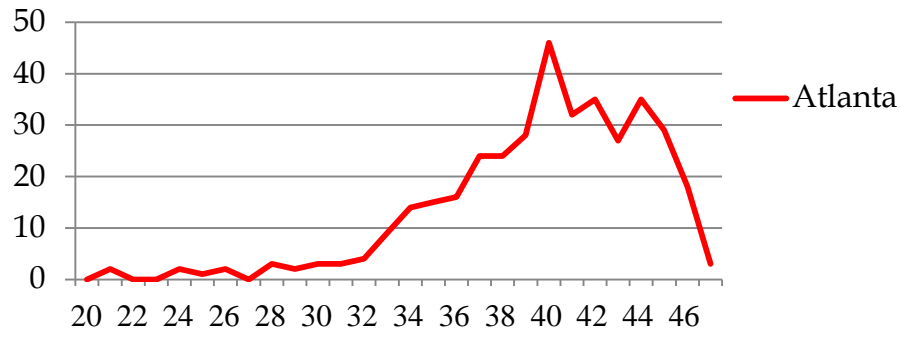
Scores by Region

Scores by Region

| Region	N	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Atlanta	377	40	39.74	4.53	21	47
Chicago	259	42	41.21	3.58	30	47
Denver	269	41	40.38	3.83	28	46
Los Angeles	151	41	40.39	4.08	25	46
New York	180	42	41.12	4.15	23	47
Philadelphia	265	42	41.35	3.39	24	47
Total	1501	41	40.62	4.01	21	47
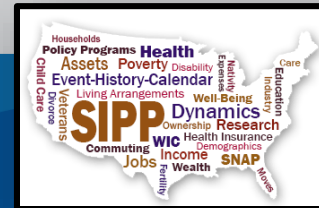
Next Steps – Contacts and Outcomes

- Last make-up training sessions are this week

- Contact History Instrument (CHI) data starting to come in

- Initial deliveries of instrument data also here

- Review relationship between test and instrument performance

- Refine test for next year (wave 2 adds movers)
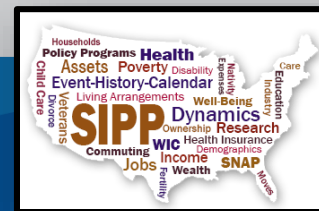
Thank you.

Contact SIPP:
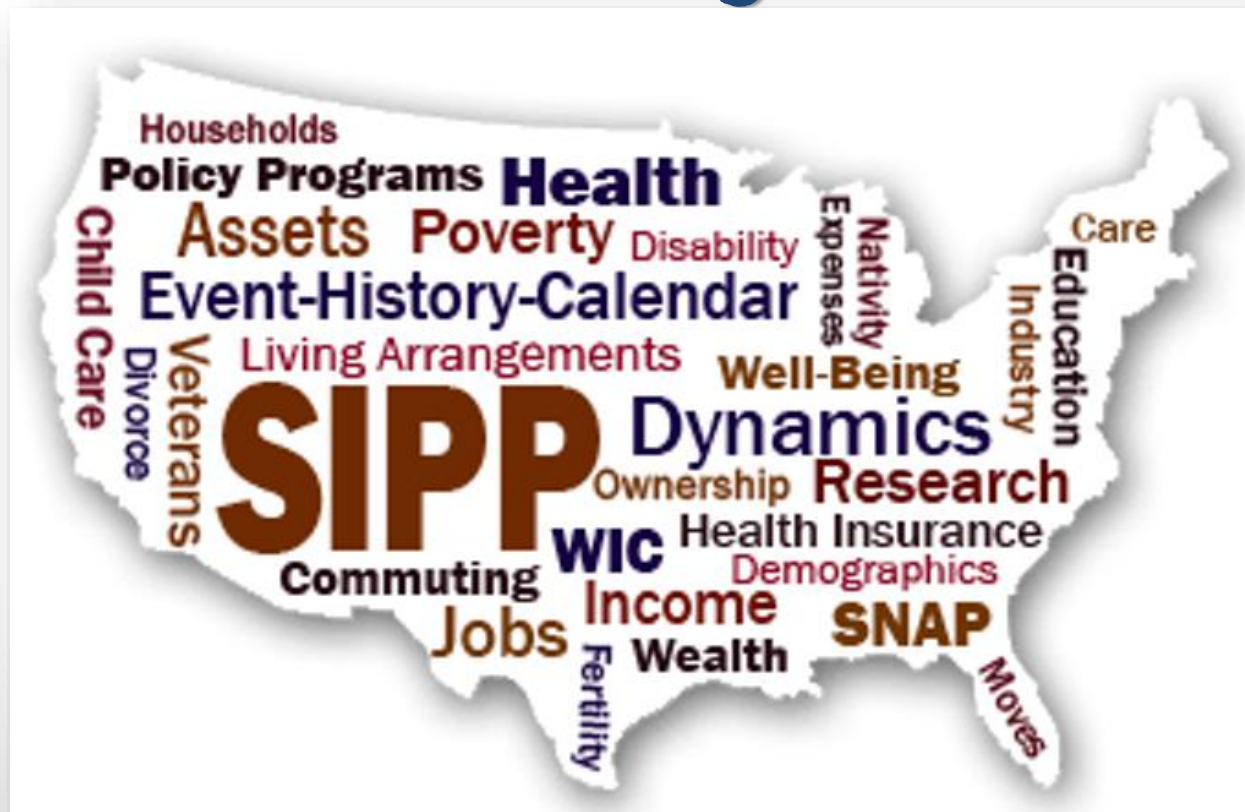
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