

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of plans to conduct cognitive testing of envelopes for the American Community Survey (ACS). These mailings are intended to be used in ACS operations during the 2010 Census year.

During our previous round of cognitive testing on this project (described in a letter to you around September 16, 2008) we found that respondents were unfamiliar with the American Community Survey name they saw on the envelopes, did not notice the U.S. Census Bureau name and address in the return address area, and were sometimes reluctant to open envelopes for an unknown survey. However, respondents overwhelmingly recognized the identity of the Census Bureau when it was pointed out to them. Therefore, we have revised the outgoing envelopes to link the American Community Survey directly to the Census Bureau. The PDF version of the revised envelopes is attached.

From late February to late March, 2009, staff from the Statistical Research Division will conduct cognitive testing of revised versions of an outgoing ACS pre-notice envelope, an outgoing ACS initial package envelope, and an outgoing ACS replacement package envelope. We will present participants in the study with 8 mailings: the ACS and decennial census pre-notices, initial questionnaire packages, reminder cards, and replacement questionnaire packages. The census and ACS materials will be interspersed according to the order in which they will be received in households in March and April, 2010. We will use the results of cognitive testing to determine whether or not the respondents understand that the ACS mailings are coming from the Census Bureau, and also whether they would be likely to open the envelopes and respond. A copy of the protocol used to conduct the interviews is attached. We will compare our results with our previous round of testing to see whether the revised envelope design makes a difference in respondents' understanding of that link, and use this information to decide whether to feature the U.S. Census Bureau name more prominently on the envelopes for ACS mailings during 2010.

We plan to conduct 7-10 cognitive interviews in the Washington, D.C. area. We will recruit respondents who would be likely to respond to a mail-back form. People who own their own residence and live in a single unit fit this criteria, according to the 2005 ACS Respondent Characteristics Evaluation.

Prospective respondents will be informed that their participation is voluntary and that information that could identify individuals will be held strictly confidential. The information will be used only for research purposes. Interviews will be audiotaped with the permission of the respondents. Respondents will be paid \$40 as an honorarium.

The estimated time for completion of the interview is one hour. Thus, the maximum estimated burden is 10 hours.

The contact person for questions regarding this data collection is:

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