

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

This will be our third round of cognitive interviewing on the ACS Messaging Project. Two previous rounds of testing (described in letters to you around September 16, 2008 and February 11, 2009) focused on the ACS envelope. In this third round of testing, the research focus shifts to testing a new flyer that ACS field representatives (FRs) will hand to mail nonresponders during the personal visit phase of ACS data collection, IF the sample person asks a question related to completing both the ACS and the census form in 2010. The new flyer is an 8 ½ by 11 inch piece of paper printed on two sides, with the title in large blue letters, “The American Community Survey and the 2010 Census.” The first side lists five Frequently Asked Questions (FAQS) that include:

- What is the difference between the American Community Survey and the Census?
- Didn't I already answer the Census?
- Do I have to answer both the American Community Survey and the Census?
- Why was I chosen for the American Community Survey?
- Why can't you use my Census answers for the American Community Survey?

The first side also includes four color pictures at the bottom, intended to show the relevance of the ACS for housing, services (hospitals), farming, and schools. The back of the flyer contains facsimiles of the first page of both the census and the ACS forms, to allow respondents to identify which of the forms they might already have completed and mailed. A copy of the flyer is attached.

It is not possible to test this flyer under the ideal conditions of a census environment, so we plan to approximate the conditions under which the flyer will be used, to see how potential mail nonresponders react to the FAQs and the facsimile questionnaires. Our aims are to find out if: 1) the FAQs are answering the right questions; 2) the answers are clear; 3) the pictures are suitable; and 4) the facsimiles of the questionnaires are helpful to respondents.

Since respondents must know something about the ACS and the census to be able to frame questions on the flyer, we plan to introduce them to selected pieces of our census and ACS mailout materials that would have been sent to their houses, had they been in a real ACS sample. As we have done in the two preceding rounds of testing, we propose to give these new respondents, one at a time, the census and ACS prenotice letters and the census and ACS questionnaire packages and allow them to look through these materials as if they had received them at home. We will listen very carefully for any questions they ask as they go through the materials and think aloud. (Our experience with the last two phases of ACS messaging research suggests that many will ask one of the questions listed on the flyer). We can ask them then if they have any more questions or comments. A copy of all these materials is attached.

After they finish looking at these four mailings, we will ask respondents about their likelihood to complete or not complete the ACS form. For those who say they would be likely to mail in the form, we will ask them to imagine the following scenario. They had

thought they would complete the ACS form at home, but a family emergency came up and took their time. It's now six weeks later and an FR from the Census Bureau has just knocked on their door to ask them to participate in the ACS. The interviewer will remind the respondent of the question(s) (if any) they asked during the previous portion of the interview.

The interviewer will then hand the flyer to the respondent and observe, listen and probe on whether he/she thinks that the FAQs and/or facsimile form answers their questions fully, partially, or not at all. (For those respondents who didn't raise any question of their own during the first part of the interview, we can just ask them to look through the FAQs and tell us whether they think the answers are adequate or not.) We will also ask about their likelihood to complete the interview after having seen the flyer.

A copy of the protocol is attached.

We plan to conduct 7-10 cognitive interviews in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area in late April and May. We will select respondents who are more likely to be ACS mail nonresponders who would be the ones to receive this flyer during an ACS personal visit by an FR. We will over-recruit for renters and try to get some on public assistance. The 2005 ACS Respondent Characteristics Evaluation shows these groups are more likely to fall into this pool.

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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