

Government Units Survey (GUS) Cognitive Interview Questionnaire and Protocol

We will use the following general probes (for questions where the respondents seems to be having difficulty):

What were you thinking when you were answering this question?

How did you arrive at your answer?

You reported _____. Can you tell me more about that?

Mailing and Contact Information

Please respond within 14 days of receipt.

RETURN VIA MAIL TO:

U. S. Census Bureau
1201 East 10th Street
Jeffersonville, IN 47132-0001

Introduction and Survey Purpose:

This survey collects descriptive information on the basic characteristics of local governments in preparation for the 2012 Census of Governments. Data from this survey will also be used to produce the official count of local government units in the United States and to update and verify the mailing addresses of government units.

Please use a blue or black ink pen to complete the survey form.

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. If your government has ceased to exist, please mark (X) the box below, enter the effective date, and return the form.

My government has ceased to exist

Effective Date: *Month (MM)* _____ *Day (DD)* _____ *Year (YYYY)* _____

2. Is the mailing address listed above correct? Yes No
3. Does your government have an Internet website that contains information about your government and its activities?
Yes -- *Enter the web address (e.g. www.mylocalgov.state.us)* _____
No
4. What is the ending date of your government's fiscal year?
Month (MM) _____ *Day (DD)* _____
5. Is your government's physical location the same as the location shown in the mailing address? (P.O. Box and rural route addresses are not physical locations).
Yes
No -- *Enter physical location.* _____
6. What year was your government was first incorporated or formed?
Year _____
7. Does your government have a homerule charter?
Yes -- *Enter the year your homerule charter was adopted* _____
No

Probes:

In your own words, what do you think this question is asking?

How did you arrive at your answer?

What does the term "homerule charter" mean to you?

B. DEBT

8. Does your government have the authority to issue debt?

Yes

No – Skip to Q10

What type of debt does your government have the authority to issue? (Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item)

Short-term debt	Yes	No
Long-term conduit debt	Yes	No
Long-term general purpose debt	Yes	No
General obligation	Yes	No
Revenue bond	Yes	No
Utilized debt	Yes	No
Other debt (Specify _____)	Yes	No

Probes:

In your own words, what did you think this question was asking?

How did you arrive at your answers?

What does the term "debt" mean to you in this question?

What does the term "long-term conduit debt" mean to you?

If respondent reports "other debt," probe that type of debt (see if it could possibly fall into another category): You said your government has the authority to issue _____ type of debt. Can you tell me more about that kind of debt?

C. TAX AND LICENSING

9. What types of taxes does your government have the authority to levy? (Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item)

Property Taxes	Yes	No
General Sales and Gross Receipts Taxes	Yes	No
Alcoholic Beverages Sales Tax	Yes	No
Amusements Sales Tax	Yes	No
Motor Fuels Sales Tax	Yes	No
Insurance Premiums Sales Tax	Yes	No
Pari-mutuels Sales Tax	Yes	No
Public Utilities Sales Tax	Yes	No
Tobacco Products Sales Tax	Yes	No
Individual Income Taxes	Yes	No
Corporation Net Income Taxes	Yes	No
Death and Gift Taxes	Yes	No
Documentary and Stock Transfer Taxes	Yes	No
Severance Taxes	Yes	No
Other taxes (Specify _____)	Yes	No

Probes:

In your own words, what did you think this question was asking?

How did you arrive at your answers?

What does the term "taxes" mean to you?

If the respondent reports some "other type of tax, probe.

If the respondent doesn't understand other terms, probe.

10. What types of license and permit fees does your government have the authority to impose? (Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item)

Alcoholic Beverages License	Yes	No
Amusement License	Yes	No
Hunting and Fishing License	Yes	No
Motor Vehicles License	Yes	No
Motor Vehicle Operators License	Yes	No
Public Utilities License	Yes	No
Occupation and Businesses License	Yes	No
Other licenses or permit fees (Specify _____)	Yes	No

Probes:

If the respondent appears to have difficulty with any of the terms, probe.

D. RETIREMENT/PENSION PLAN.

11. **Does your government operate a pension system for your own employees?** Yes No
List the plans:

12. **Do your employees participate in the pension system of another government?** Yes No
List the plans:

13. **Does your government offer other post employment benefits (e.g., health insurance, long-term care, etc.)?** Yes No
List other post employment benefits:

14. **Does your government offer a defined benefit pension plan?** Yes No
15. **Does your government offer a defined contribution plan?** Yes No
16. **Does your government offer a hybrid pension plan?** Yes No

E. GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY

Exclude regulation of privately owned utilities when answering these questions.

17. **Does your government operate a water supply utility?** Yes No
18. **Does your government operate a gas utility?** Yes No
19. **Does your government operate an electric utility?** Yes No
20. **Does your government operate a transit authority?** Yes No
21. **Does your government operate at least one liquor store?** Yes No
22. **Does your government operate an airport?** Yes No
23. **Does your government operate a sea or in-land port?** Yes No
24. **Does your government operate a hospital?** Yes No
25. **Does your government offer refuse collection?** Yes No
26. **Does your government operate a landfill?** Yes No

- | | | |
|---|-----|------------------|
| 27. Does your government operate a sewage system? | Yes | No – skip to Q30 |
| a. Is the sewer system separate from the water system? | Yes | No |
| b. Is the sewage authority separate from the water authority? | Yes | No – skip to Q30 |
| c. Do you keep separate records for sewer and water? | Yes | No |

28. Does your government construct, operate, or support housing and redevelopment projects?
(For example, community development block grants)

Yes
No

Probes:

In your own words, what did you think this question was asking?

How did you arrive at your answer?

Probe these activities. Find out if the government contracts out the services.

29. Does your government regulate industries that develop, utilize, or affect natural resources?
(For example, irrigation, drainage, flood control, or soil conservation)

Yes
No

Probes:

In your own words, what did you think this question was asking?

How did you arrive at your answer?

Probe these activities. Find out if the government contracts out the services.

Probe any of the terms that respondents might not understand.

30. Does your government *provide or support* recreational and cultural facilities?
(For example, art galleries, zoos, botanical gardens, memorials, or community music programs)

Yes
No

Probes:

In your own words, what did you think this question was asking?

How did you arrive at your answer?

Probe these activities. Find out if the government contracts out the services.

Probe any of the terms that respondents might not understand.

31. Is your government responsible for highways, streets, roads, alleys, bridges, tunnels, ferry boats, or related structures?

Yes
No

Probes:

In your own words, what did you think this question was asking?

How did you arrive at your answer?

Probe these activities. Find out if the government contracts out the services.

Probe any of the terms that respondents might not understand.

[We could probe these at the end of the series, revisiting each question individually.]

F. PUBLIC SERVICES

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 32. Is your government responsible for providing police protection services? | Yes | No |
| 33. Is your government responsible for providing fire protection services? | Yes | No |
| 34. Is your government responsible for providing emergency medical services (EMS)? | Yes | No |
| – skip to Q38 | | |
| a. Are emergency medical services separate from the fire services? | Yes | No |

Probes:

If respondent reports EMS services, probe Q37a. Find out if they have separate funding sources.

35. Is your government responsible for providing regulation and inspection services?

(Include buildings and construction regulation, licensing and regulation of financial institutions, and the examination of professional occupations)

Yes
No

Probes:

In your own words, what did you think this question was asking?

How did you arrive at your answer?

Probe these activities. Find out if the government contracts out the services.

Probe any of the terms that respondents might not understand.

36. Does your government provide welfare services? Yes No

37. Does your government provide library services? Yes No – skip to Q43

38. What type of library services does your government provide? (Mark “Yes” or “No” for each item)

Public regional libraries	Yes	No
Public community libraries	Yes	No
Academic libraries	Yes	No
Law libraries	Yes	No
Other library services (Specify_____)	Yes	No

G. JUDICIAL OPERATIONS

If your government does not provide Judicial Operations SKIP to Section H

39. At what level does your government perform its judicial and legal operations?

County
Municipality
City
Town or township
Other level(Specify_____)

40. Does your government operate any of the following types of correctional facilities? (Mark “Yes” or “No” for each item)

Prison	Yes	No
Jail	Yes	No
Juvenile	Yes	No
Other correctional facility (Specify_____)	Yes	No

H. FINANCE

Estimates are acceptable.

Revenue

41. How much revenue did your government raise in the last completed fiscal year?

(Include all taxes, charges, state or Federal grants, etc.. Exclude borrowings). If none, enter 0.

\$ _____

Expenditure

42. How much did your government expend in the last completed fiscal year?

(Include salaries, wages, capital outlay, interest on debt, current operations, payments to other governments, etc.). If none, enter 0.

\$ _____

Debt

43. How much outstanding debt did your government have at the end of the last completed fiscal year?

(Include general purpose long term debt, short-term debt, conduit debt). If none, enter 0.

\$ _____

Payroll

44. **What was your government's annual gross payroll (before deductions) in the last completed fiscal year?**

(Include salaries, wages, fees, or commissions, overtime, premium, night differential pay, bonuses and incentive payments. Exclude lump sum payments, and the value of living quarters and subsistence allowances furnished for employees.)

\$ _____

I. REMARKS (Please use this space for any explanations that may be important to understanding any of your responses)

Name of person to contact regarding this report

Title

Telephone

Fax

Internet e-mail address

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING YOUR XXXX GUS SURVEY FORM