

OMB Passback Questions

RE: BJS Request for OMB Clearance for Cognitive Testing under the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) Redesign Generic Clearance, OMB Number 1121-0325.

July 21, 2011

For both screener questionnaires:

1. Many of the screener items include a middle “neither agree or disagree” option. It would seem likely that these could be confounded by their use to indicate “don’t know,” which is not currently an option. What is the justification for including the neutral category? Will use of this category be probed in the cognitive labs?

Response: We agree that this confounding is likely. The agree/disagree questions about the neighborhood come from the Social Cohesion scale from the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (Sampson R, Raudenbush S, Earls F (1997). Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy. *Science*, 277 (5328): 918-924.) In their analysis they in fact treated the “neither agree nor disagree” responses the same as responses of “don’t know” (these two categories were combined in their analyses). Yes, the use of this category will be probed: “You marked “~~~.” What does that mean?”

2. And is there a reason that the instructions use the 4 category Likert scale rather than the 5 in the actual response options?

Response: The instructions have been changed to include the middle category. **Please note the instruction for 2C still needs to be made but a note identifying that edit has been placed in the PDF.

For Screener 2 C only:

3. Question 10 seems like it may confound home ownership with the incidence of burglary. Will this be probed during the cog labs?

Response: Reword to “In the last 12 months, did anyone break into or attempt to break into your residence, or a garage, shed, or storage room that you own **or rent?**”

4. Question 11 may suffer from the same problem (vehicle ownership) although this may be less of a concern.

Response: No change, we agree ownership is less of a concern here.

5. Question 12 seems like it needs to be fixed now even before the cog lab, as it reads like it could be about any vehicle you may know about, not necessarily affiliated with you at all.

Response: reword to “. . .any parts from a vehicle **owned by anyone in this household**, like . . .”

6. What is the rationale behind the job categories in Question 22?

Response: These have been shown to be high-risk occupations for victimization.

Protocols -- these mention that you may go over letters if there's time. So far, we have the consent form and the questionnaires. Please provide ANY other materials that will be shown to the respondent during the cog lab.

Response: Please see attachment below: Appendix- Auxiliary Materials.

Appendix

Auxiliary Materials

- Advance letters, 2B and 2C Mail Screener
- Cover letters, 2B and 2C Mail Screener
- Frequently Asked Questions, Mail Screeners

2C Screener Advance Letter

The U.S. Department of Justice is conducting a survey of [CITY] area residents to obtain information on neighborhood safety in the [CITY] area. The Department of Justice has asked Westat to administer this survey for us. Westat will be mailing a brief survey to you in the following weeks. Some households will be asked to complete a somewhat longer survey later. Results from this survey (and similar surveys conducted by The U.S. Department of Justice) are used by local citizens, by legislators, and by policymakers to develop programs to aid crime victims and to help prevent crime.

Your address is part of a scientifically selected sample of addresses chosen throughout the [CITY] area for participation in this survey. Because this is a sample survey, your answers represent not only you and your household, but also hundreds of households like yours. For this reason, your voluntary cooperation is very important. I hope you will answer all the survey questions as completely and accurately as possible. Your answers will only be used to prepare statistical summaries, and no information about your household or you as an individual can be identified from these summaries. The law completely protects your confidential answers from disclosure.

Answers to the most frequently asked survey questions are on the reverse side of this letter. If you would like further information, you can contact Westat at 1-800-xxx-xxxx, or you can visit the DOJ website at www.xxxx.gov.

Thank you for your cooperation. The U.S. Department of Justice appreciates your help.

Sincerely,

James P. Lynch, Director
Bureau of Justice Statistics
U.S. Department of Justice

Content of a Spanish version of the letter

The content will be the same as the English language letter, but with two additional sentences in paragraph 3:

Answers to the most frequently asked survey questions are on the reverse side of this letter. If you would like a copy of the survey in Spanish, or to complete the survey over the telephone, please call 1-800-xxx-xxxx. This is a free call.

2B Screener Advance Letter

The U.S. Department of Justice is conducting a survey of [CITY] area residents to obtain information about neighborhood safety. The Department of Justice has asked Westat to administer this survey for us. Westat will be mailing a brief survey to you in the following weeks. The information you provide will help inform us about your local emergency services and about your neighborhood. Results from this survey (and similar surveys conducted by The U.S. Department of Justice) are used by local citizens, by legislators, and by policymakers to develop programs to better understand neighborhood needs.

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2C Mail Screener - cover letter

About a week ago your household was mailed a letter notifying you that The U.S. Department of Justice is conducting a survey of [CITY] area residents to obtain information on neighborhood safety in the [CITY] area.

Results from this survey (and similar surveys conducted by The U.S. Department of Justice) are used by local citizens, by legislators, and by policymakers to develop programs to aid crime victims and to help prevent crime.

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FAQ List for the back of all Mail Screener Letters

U.S. Department of Justice Survey of Neighborhoods

What is the U.S. Department of Justice Survey of Neighborhoods?

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Survey of Neighborhoods (SON) is a survey of households in the [CITY] area to obtain information about safety in [CITY] area communities.

Who is the sponsor of this study?

The survey is sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). The survey is conducted under the authority of Title 42, United States Code, Section 3732. To learn more about BJS, you can visit them on the web at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs.

How long will it take to complete this survey?

We anticipate that most households will be able to complete the mailed survey in about 5-6 minutes. Some households may be contacted later for a more detailed survey.

Am I required to complete this survey?

Participation is voluntary and there are no penalties for refusing to answer. However, your household was randomly selected for this scientific sample survey, and you cannot be replaced with another household. Your cooperation is extremely important to help ensure the completeness and accuracy of this much needed information.

Who will use this information?

Results from this survey (and similar surveys conducted by The U.S. Department of Justice) are used by local citizens, by legislators, and by policymakers to develop programs to aid crime victims and to help prevent crime.

Who can I call with questions?

If you would like further information, you can contact Westat at 1-800-xxx-xxxx.

How was my household chosen for this study?

Households were selected at random from all [CITY]-area residential addresses. By selecting households randomly, we will be able to create scientific estimates about households in the [CITY] area. It's important to participate, so that we have an accurate picture of the [CITY] area community.

How do I know you'll keep my information confidential?

We are required by law to keep your information confidential to the full extent protected by law. After all the study is completed, any identifying information - your address and phone number - are removed from the data file and destroyed.