

APPENDIX G

Incentive Timing Study Proposal

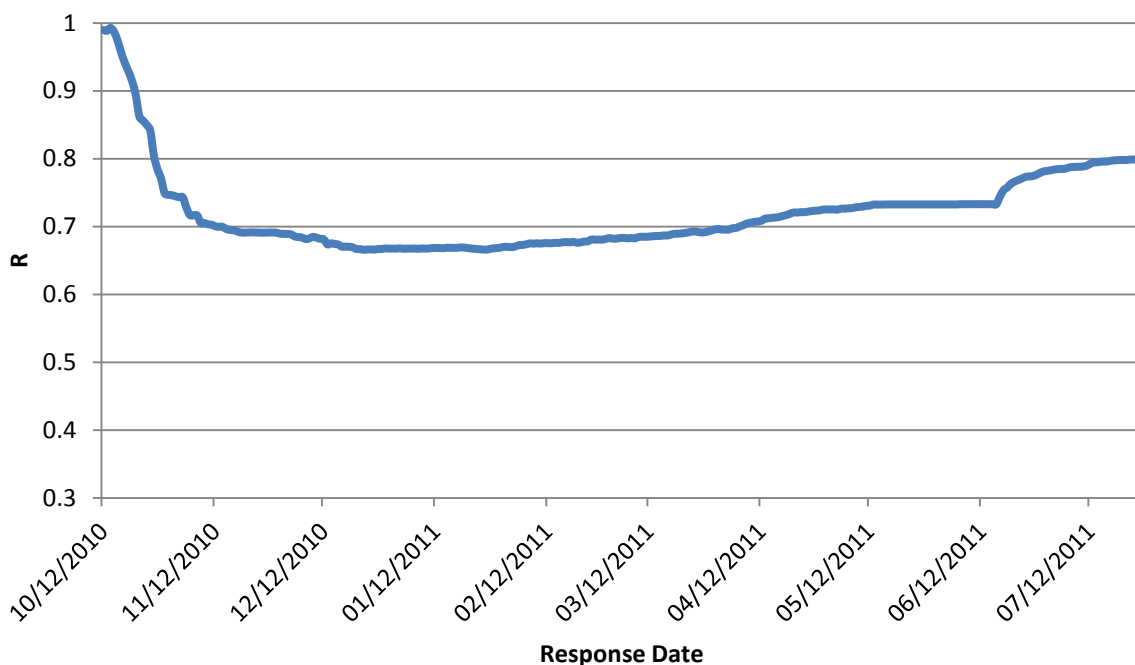
Incentive Timing Study Proposal

Description: In the 2010 NSCG new cohort data collection effort, a sample of cases identified as hard to enumerate cases had not responded to the 2010 NSCG after numerous contact attempts. These cases were of high analytical interest to the NSCG because they tended to have large sampling weights and tended to include a large proportion of minority cases.

To encourage response among these cases, we conducted an incentive study to examine the impact of a late-stage \$20 and \$30 incentive against a control group that receive additional contacts but no incentive. As expected, the use of the incentive led to an increase in response for these hard to enumerate cases. Final responses rates for the cases included in the late-stage incentive were 6.4% for the control group, 24.1% for the \$20 incentive treatment group, and 29.5% for the \$30 incentive group.

In addition to the incentive resulting in a response rate increase, the use of the incentive also had a profound effect on the overall representation of the responding sample. The attached graphic shows the R-indicator value throughout the data collection period. The R-indicator is a representativity indicator that provides insight on how similar the demographic composition of the responding sample is to the overall set of sample cases. The R-indicator ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating complete representation. The incentive was offered in June 2011 and the immediate impact on the increased representation of the responding sample is evident in the graphic. This increased R-indicator means that the incentive was successful in bringing in respondents that were demographically different from the set of respondents prior to the incentive stage.

R-Indicator by Date for 2010 NSCG



As we consider the plans for interviewing the hard-to-enumerate cases in the 2013 survey cycle, questions exist about whether the late-stage timing is the optimal way to use the incentive in future survey cycles. By offering an incentive at an earlier stage of data collection, we could increase the response rate for these hard to enumerate cases and decrease the need for nonresponse follow-up efforts. However, the question remains of whether the cost of offering the incentive to a larger number of cases exceeds the nonresponse follow-up costs had the incentive not been offered at an earlier stage. In order to explore the issue of optimal incentive timing, we propose an incentive timing study as part of the 2013 data collection effort. The 2013 NSCG incentive timing study will include cases identified as hard to enumerate using a model-based approach that examines a case's weighted response influence. The use of the weighted response influence metric should enable this study to achieve gains in both response and bias reduction. These cases identified as hard to enumerate will be randomly allocated to five treatment groups as part of the 2013 NSCG data collection effort:

- No incentive
- Incentive offered at week 1 of data collection
- Incentive offered at week 7 (coincides with the introduction of a mail response option)
- Incentive offered at week 12 (coincides with the introduction of a telephone response option)
- Incentive offered at week 25 (coincides with the final contact phase)

Research Questions: This study is designed to provide insight on the following questions:

- What incentive timing approach provides the optimal balance of response and cost?
- Are there differences in the demographic composition of the respondents across the treatment group when examining those that responded before the incentive offer and examining those that responded after the incentive offer?

Eligibility, Treatment Groups, and Sample Size: In the 2013 NSCG new cohort sample of 83,000 cases, we expect to have approximately 18,000 cases that meet our criteria of hard to enumerate. Within the set of hard to enumerate cases, the cases with a mailable address will be eligible for the incentive timing study. The eligible cases will be randomly allocated across the five treatment groups with each incentive group being allocated the approximately same sample size that meets our statistical significance testing detection level requirements. The balance of the eligible cases will then be allocated to the no incentive treatment group.

Additional Methodology/Implementation Information: Both \$20 and \$30 incentives were offered in the 2010 NSCG incentive study with the \$30 incentive leading to a slightly higher response as noted above. For the incentive timing study, we will only use the \$30 incentive amount for all cases. The incentive for this study will be a \$30 prepaid debit card incentive that is similar to the debit card incentive used in the 2010 NSCG survey cycle. These debit cards will have a six month usage period at which time the cards will expire and the unused funds will be returned to Census and NSF (minus the predetermined per card fee).

The cases included in this study will follow the default data collection pathway proposed for the 2013 NSCG new cohort cases which uses a web first data collection methodology.

Assuming a 3,000 case sample for each incentive treatment group and the use of a \$30 incentive, the maximum additional data collection cost associated with this study is in the range of \$420,000 (\$30 incentive + \$5 per card processing fee for cases that would receive an incentive). However, please note that the groups that are offered an incentive at a later stage will not require an incentive be sent to all 3,000 cases since some cases will response in an earlier data collection phase prior to the incentive being offered. Furthermore, please note that any unused funds associated with the incentive debit cards will be returned to Census and NSF.

The attached table shows the proposed data collection methodology for the incentive timing study.

2013 NSCG New Cohort Data Collection Methodology

Data Collection Phase	Web First (DEFAULT)	Hard to Enumerate Cases
Web Invitation Phase (Weeks 1-3)	<u>Week 0 (01/25/13)</u> Prenotice letter <u>Week 1 (02/01/13)</u> Web invite letter <u>Week 2 (02/08/13)</u> Reminder postcard	<u>Week 0 (01/25/13)</u> Prenotice letter <u>Week 1 (02/01/13)</u> Web invite letter *\$30 Incentive for Treatment Group #2 (TG2) <u>Week 2 (02/08/13)</u> Reminder letter
Web Reminder Phase (Weeks 4-6)	<u>Week 4 (02/22/13)</u> PRIORITY Web invite letter <u>Week 5 (03/01/13)</u> Automated phone call	<u>Week 4 (02/22/13)</u> PRIORITY Web invite letter <u>Week 5 (03/01/13)</u> Automated phone call
Mail Invitation Phase (Weeks 7-11)	<u>Week 7 (03/15/13)</u> Web/Mail invite letter and questionnaire <u>Week 8 (03/22/13)</u> Reminder postcard <u>Week 10 (04/05/13)</u> Automated phone call	<u>Week 7 (03/15/13)</u> Web/Mail invite letter and questionnaire *\$30 Incentive for TG3 <u>Week 8 (03/22/13)</u> Reminder letter <u>Week 10 (04/05/13)</u> Automated phone call
Production CATI Phase (Weeks 12-25)	<u>Week 12 (04/19/13)</u> Web/Telephone Invite Letter <u>Week 12 (04/19/13) –Week 25 (07/05/13)</u> Telephone calls <u>Week 18</u> PRIORITY Web/Mail invite letter and questionnaire	<u>Week 12 (04/19/13)</u> Web/Telephone Invite Letter *\$30 Incentive for TG4 <u>Week 12 (04/19/13) –Week 25 (07/05/13)</u> Telephone calls <u>Week 13 (04/26/13)</u> Reminder letter <u>Week 18</u> PRIORITY Web/Mail invite letter and questionnaire
Final Contact Phase (Weeks 25-28)	<u>Week 25 (07/05/13)</u> Web invite letter	<u>Week 25 (07/05/13)</u> Web invite letter *\$30 Incentive for TG5 <u>Week 26 (07/12/13)</u> Reminder letter

Notes: (1) In the Hard to Enumerate methodology, Treatment Group #1 will not receive an incentive
(2) The bolded text in the “hard to enumerate” column identifies differences from the default pathway