

**NCSES Response to OMB Terms of Clearance for the  
2015 National Survey of College Graduates**

June 11, 2015

On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved the collection of the 2015 National Survey of College Graduates (NSCG) under the following terms:

*Within four weeks, NCSES will submit as a nonsubstantive change request, a "decision tree" or other descriptive rendering of the way that criteria will be applied to determine which non-responding sample cases will be assigned which treatments when in the adaptive design experiment. It will be important for the record to reflect how this experiment will be carried out. OMB approves NCSES starting production activities in the interim.*

In response to these terms of clearance, NCSES is submitting the following. First is a description and graphic of the data collection flow for the 2015 NSCG. Second are the specific criteria that will be used to determine which adaptive intervention will be implemented.

2015 NSCG Data Collection Flow

All sample cases will be monitored beginning at week 0. Adaptive interventions will be reviewed and implemented as needed at weeks 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 23, and 24 of the data collection period. As part of the adaptive design experiment, we have identified certain adaptive interventions that might be implemented depending upon the case monitoring results that could help the NSCG meet its data collection goals. The decision to implement an adaptive intervention will be based on the evaluation of specific criteria associated with the data collection metrics. The specific criteria are described generally below and the specifics are provided in Table 1.

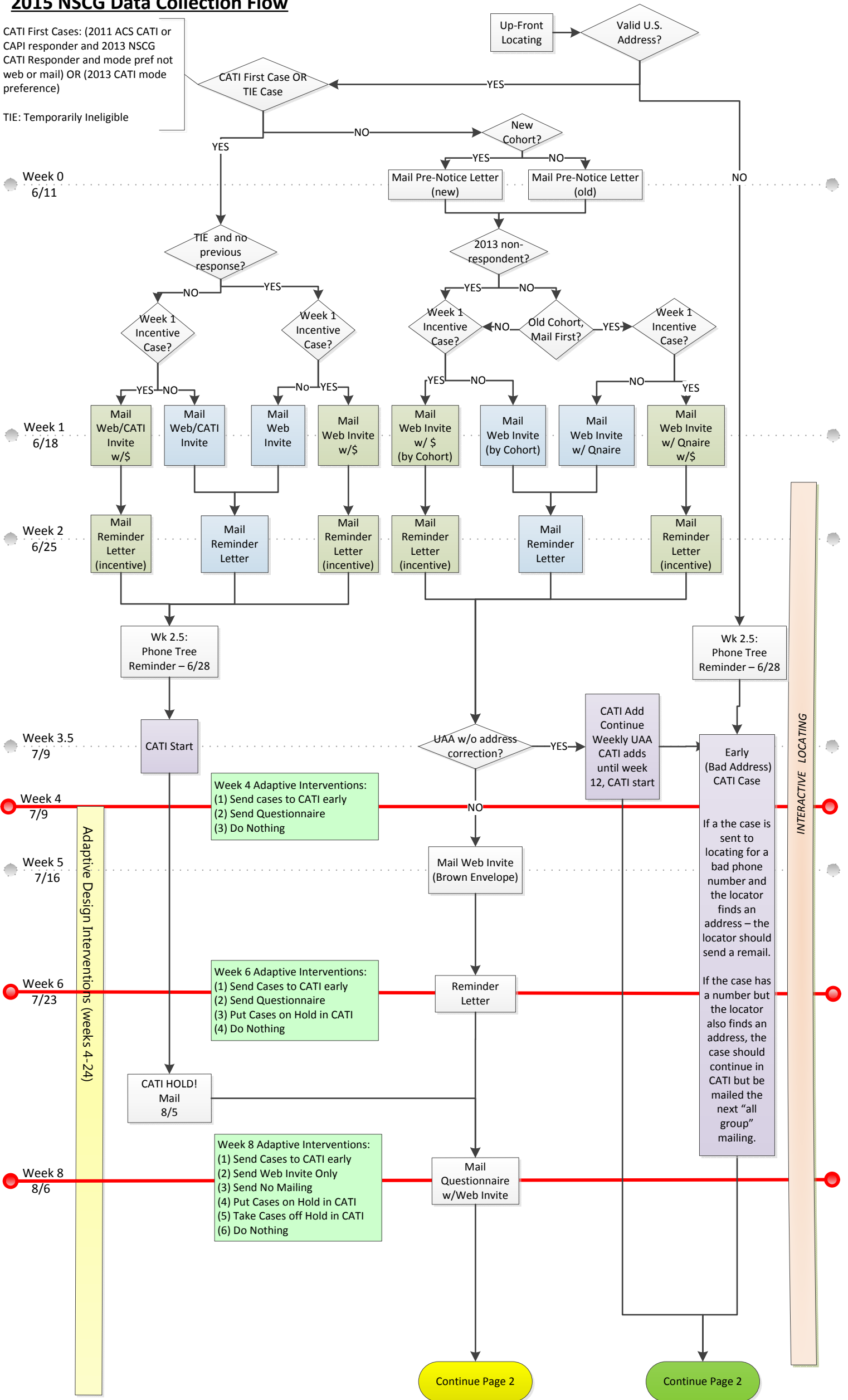
2015 NSCG Adaptive Intervention Schedule and Criteria

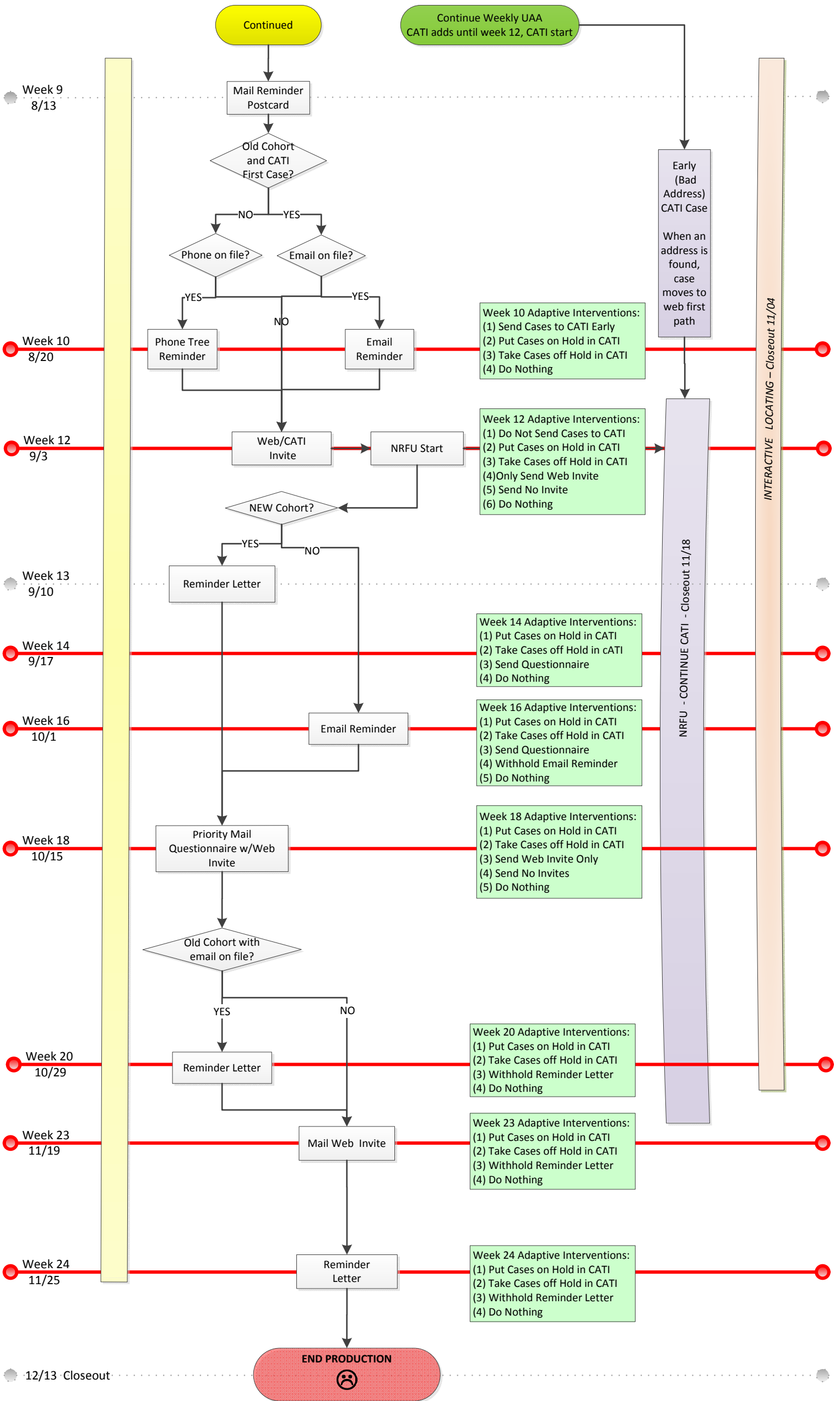
The interventions that are considered at a given week are designed to address specific data collection goals. Early in the data collection, the adaptive interventions attempt to increase the representativeness of the responding sample by reducing under-representativeness in certain subgroups. During the middle of the data collection, some of the interventions attempt to address under-representation concerns, for example with extra questionnaire mailings to the specific groups, while others focus more on trying to increase representativeness by reducing over-representation through the reduction of contacts to certain subgroups. Finally, near the end of the data collection, using metrics such as the number of trips to locating, response propensities, and the number of call attempts, the interventions attempt to control data collection costs. The list of potential interventions for each week is shown in Table 1 which includes information about metrics and criteria used and adaptive interventions by week.

# 2015 NSCG Data Collection Flow

CATI First Cases: (2011 ACS CATI or CAPI responder and 2013 NSCG CATI Responder and mode pref not web or mail) OR (2013 CATI mode preference)

TIE: Temporarily Ineligible





**Table 1. 2015 NSCG Adaptive Intervention Schedule and Criteria**

Intervention Week	Adaptive Interventions	Metric to Track	Initial Intervention Criteria	Supplemental Intervention Criteria
4	Send Cases to CATI early	R-Indicators	- Review the 3-5 most under-represented subgroups for intervention.	- If the subgroups are very large, consider moving all cases to CATI or use response propensity for these cases and intervene only for "higher" propensity cases.
	Send Questionnaire	Propensity to Respond by Mode	- If the probability to respond by mail > probability to respond by web	- If cases are in over-represented groups or if they are in low interest groups (e.g., non-S&E), we will not use this intervention.
	Do Nothing		- All other	
6	Send Cases to CATI early	R-Indicators	- Review the 3-5 most under-represented subgroups that haven't already been sent to CATI for intervention.	- If these subgroups are low interest groups (e.g., non-S&E) we will not use this intervention. - If the subgroups are very large, consider moving all cases to CATI or use response propensity for these cases and intervene only for "higher" propensity cases.
	Send Questionnaire	Propensity to Respond by Mode	- If the probability to respond by mail > probability to respond by web	- If cases are in over-represented groups or if they are in low interest groups (e.g., non-S&E), we will not use this intervention.
	Put Cases on Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Trips to Locating Total Number of Calls Response Propensity	- Review the 3-5 most over represented subgroups for intervention. - If a case has been to locating 4+ times, put case on hold. - If the number of unsuccessful calls is high, put case on hold. - If response propensity is in the lowest decile of the subgroup, put case on hold.	-If key estimates of interest have not stabilized in the experimental group, we will not use this intervention. - If case with many trips/calls or low propensity is in a high interest group, we will not use this intervention until later in data collection.
	Do Nothing		- All other	
8	Send Cases to CATI early	R-Indicators	- Review the 3-5 most under-represented subgroups for intervention.	- If these subgroups are low interest groups (e.g., non-S&E) we will not use this intervention. - If the subgroups are very large, consider moving all cases to CATI or use response propensity for these cases and intervene only for "higher" propensity cases.
	Send Web Invite Only	R-Indicators Propensity to Respond by Mode Stability of Estimates	- Review the 3-5 most under-represented subgroups for intervention.	- If probability of responding by mail > probability of responding by web, we will not apply this intervention to all cases in these subgroups. - If the most over-represented subgroups are not much different than other groups, we will not use this intervention. - If key estimates of interest have not stabilized for the experimental group, we will not use this intervention.
	Send No Mailing/Invite	R-Indicators Overall Response Propensity	- Review the 1-2 most over-represented subgroups for intervention.	- If the top two most-overrepresented subgroups are not much more over-represented than the next groups, we will not use this intervention.
	Do Nothing		- All other	
	Put Cases on Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Trips to Locating Total Number of Calls Response Propensity	- Review the 3-5 most over represented subgroups for intervention. - If a case has been to locating 4+ times, put case on hold. - If the number of unsuccessful calls is high, put case on hold. - If response propensity is in the lowest decile of the subgroup, put case on hold.	-If key estimates of interest have not stabilized in the experimental group, we will not use this intervention. - If case with many trips/calls or low propensity is in a high interest group, we will not use this intervention until later in data collection.

Intervention Week	Adaptive Interventions	Metric to Track	Initial Intervention Criteria	Supplemental Intervention Criteria
8 (Continued)	Take Cases off Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Response Rate	- If previously over-represented cases are now under-represented or approaching being under-represented, take cases off hold. - If response rate for subgroup is 10% less than control, take cases off hold.	- If estimates are not significantly different from the control group, we will not use this intervention. - If estimate have stabilized, we will not intervene. - If benchmarking to frame totals shows that we are accounting for nonresponse of both controlled for and uncontrolled for variables, we will not intervene.
	Do Nothing		- All other	
10	Send Cases to CATI early	R-Indicators	- Review the 3-5 most under-represented subgroups that haven't already been sent to CATI for intervention.	- If these subgroups are low interest groups (e.g., non-S&E) we will not use this intervention. - If the subgroups are very large, consider moving all cases to CATI or use response propensity for these cases and intervene only for "higher" propensity cases.
	Put Cases on Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Trips to Locating Total Number of Calls Response Propensity	- Review the 3-5 most over represented subgroups for intervention. - If a case has been to locating 4+ times, put case on hold. - If the number of unsuccessful calls is high, put case on hold. - If response propensity is in the lowest decile of the subgroup, put case on hold.	-If key estimates of interest have not stabilized in the experimental group, we will not use this intervention. - If case with many trips/calls or low propensity is in a high interest group, we will not use this intervention until later in data collection.
	Take Cases off Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Response Rate	- If previously over-represented cases are now under-represented or approaching being under-represented, take cases off hold. - If response rate for subgroup is 10% less than control, take cases off hold.	- If estimates are not significantly different from the control group, we will not use this intervention. - If estimate have stabilized, we will not intervene. - If benchmarking to frame totals shows that we are accounting for nonresponse of both controlled for and uncontrolled for variables, we will not intervene.
	Do Nothing		- All other	
12	Do Not Send Cases to CATI	See Next Row	See Next Row	- This is effectively the same as putting cases on hold in CATI for nonrespondents in Week 12
	Put Cases on Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Trips to Locating Total Number of Calls Response Propensity	- Review the 3-5 most over represented subgroups for intervention. - If a case has been to locating 4+ times, put case on hold. - If the number of unsuccessful calls is high, put case on hold. - If response propensity is in the lowest decile of the subgroup, put case on hold.	-If key estimates of interest have not stabilized in the experimental group, we will not use this intervention. - If case with many trips/calls or low propensity is in a high interest group, we will not use this intervention until later in data collection.
	Take Cases off Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Response Rate	- If previously over-represented cases are now under-represented or approaching being under-represented, take cases off hold. - If response rate for subgroup is 10% less than control, take cases off hold.	- If estimates are not significantly different from the control group, we will not use this intervention. - If estimate have stabilized, we will not intervene. - If benchmarking to frame totals shows that we are accounting for nonresponse of both controlled for and uncontrolled for variables, we will not intervene.
	Send Web Invite Only	R-Indicators Propensity to Respond by Mode Stability of Estimates	- Review the 3-5 most over-represented subgroups for intervention.	- If probability of responding by mail > probability of responding by web, we will not apply this intervention to all cases in these subgroups. - If the most over-represented subgroups are not much different than other groups, we will not use this intervention. - If key estimates of interest have not stabilized for the experimental group, we will not use this intervention.

Intervention Week	Adaptive Interventions	Metric to Track	Initial Intervention Criteria	Supplemental Intervention Criteria
12 (continued)	Send No Mailing/Invite	R-Indicators Overall Response Propensity	- Review the 1-2 most over-represented subgroups for intervention.	- If the top two most-overrepresented subgroups are not much more over-represented than the next groups, we will not use this intervention.
	Do Nothing		- All other	
14	Put Cases on Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Trips to Locating Total Number of Calls Response Propensity	- Review the 3-5 most over represented subgroups for intervention. - If a case has been to locating 4+ times, put case on hold. - If the number of unsuccessful calls is high, put case on hold. - If response propensity is in the lowest decile of the subgroup, put case on hold.	-If key estimates of interest have not stabilized in the experimental group, we will not use this intervention. - If case with many trips/calls or low propensity is in a high interest group, we will not use this intervention until later in data collection.
	Take Cases off Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Response Rate	- If previously over-represented cases are now under-represented or approaching being under-represented, take cases off hold. - If response rate for subgroup is 10% less than control, take cases off hold.	- If estimates are not significantly different from the control group, we will not use this intervention. - If estimate have stabilized, we will not intervene. - If benchmarking to frame totals shows that we are accounting for nonresponse of both controlled for and uncontrolled for variables, we will not intervene.
	Send Questionnaire	Propensity to Respond by Mode	- If the probability to respond by mail > probability to respond by web, review for intervention.	- If these cases are in over-represented groups or if they are in low interest groups (e.g., non-S&E), we will not use this intervene. - If overall response propensity is among the lowest decile, we will not use this intervention.
	Do Nothing		- All other	
16	Put Cases on Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Trips to Locating Total Number of Calls Response Propensity	- Review the 3-5 most over represented subgroups for intervention. - If a case has been to locating 4+ times, put case on hold. - If the number of unsuccessful calls is high, put case on hold. - If response propensity is in the lowest decile of the subgroup, put case on hold.	-If key estimates of interest have not stabilized in the experimental group, we will not use this intervention. - If case with many trips/calls or low propensity is in a high interest group, we will not use this intervention until later in data collection.
	Take Cases off Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Response Rate	- If previously over-represented cases are now under-represented or approaching being under-represented, take cases off hold. - If response rate for subgroup is 10% less than control, take cases off hold.	- If estimates are not significantly different from the control group, we will not use this intervention. - If estimate have stabilized, we will not intervene. - If benchmarking to frame totals shows that we are accounting for nonresponse of both controlled for and uncontrolled for variables, we will not intervene.
	Send Questionnaire	R-Indicators	If the probability to respond by mail > probability to respond by web, review for intervention.	- If these cases are in over-represented groups or if they are in low interest groups (e.g., non-S&E), we will not use this intervene. - If overall response propensity is among the lowest decile, we will not use this intervention.
	Send No Email Reminder (Old Cohort Only)	R-Indicators Overall Response Propensity	Review the 1-2 most over-represented subgroups for intervention.	- If the top two most-overrepresented subgroups are not much more over-represented than the next groups, we will not use this intervention.
	Do Nothing		- All other	

Intervention Week	Adaptive Interventions	Metric to Track	Initial Intervention Criteria	Supplemental Intervention Criteria
18	Put Cases on Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Trips to Locating Total Number of Calls Response Propensity	- Review the 3-5 most over represented subgroups for intervention. - If a case has been to locating 4+ times, put case on hold. - If the number of unsuccessful calls is high, put case on hold. - If response propensity is in the lowest decile of the subgroup, put case on hold.	-If key estimates of interest have not stabilized in the experimental group, we will not use this intervention. - If case with many trips/calls or low propensity is in a high interest group, we will not use this intervention until later in data collection.
	Take Cases off Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Response Rate	- If previously over-represented cases are now under-represented or approaching being under-represented, take cases off hold. - If response rate for subgroup is 10% less than control, take cases off hold.	- If estimates are not significantly different from the control group, we will not use this intervention. - If estimate have stabilized, we will not intervene. - If benchmarking to frame totals shows that we are accounting for nonresponse of both controlled for and uncontrolled for variables, we will not intervene.
	Send Web Invite Only	R-Indicators Propensity to Respond by Mode Stability of Estimates	- Review the 3-5 most over-represented subgroups for intervention.	- If probability of responding by mail > probability of responding by web, we will not apply this intervention to all cases in these subgroups. - If the most over-represented subgroups are not much different than other groups, we will not use this intervention. - If key estimates of interest have not stabilized for the experimental group, we will not use this intervention.
	Send No Mailing/Invite	R-Indicators Overall Response Propensity	- Review the 1-2 most over-represented subgroups for intervention.	- If the top two most-overrepresented subgroups are not much more over-represented than the next groups, we will not use this intervention.
	Do Nothing		- All other	
20	Put Cases on Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Trips to Locating Total Number of Calls Response Propensity	- Review the 3-5 most over represented subgroups for intervention. - If a case has been to locating 4+ times, put case on hold. - If the number of unsuccessful calls is high, put case on hold. - If response propensity is in the lowest decile of the subgroup, put case on hold.	-If key estimates of interest have not stabilized in the experimental group, we will not use this intervention. - If case with many trips/calls or low propensity is in a high interest group, we will not use this intervention until later in data collection.
	Take Cases off Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Response Rate	- If previously over-represented cases are now under-represented or approaching being under-represented, take cases off hold. - If response rate for subgroup is 10% less than control, take cases off hold.	- If estimates are not significantly different from the control group, we will not use this intervention. - If estimate have stabilized, we will not intervene. - If benchmarking to frame totals shows that we are accounting for nonresponse of both controlled for and uncontrolled for variables, we will not intervene.
	Send No Reminder Letter	R-Indicators Overall Response Propensity	- Review the 1-2 most over-represented subgroups for intervention.	- If the top two most-overrepresented subgroups are not much more over-represented than the next groups, we will not use this intervention.
	Do Nothing		- All other	
23	Put Cases on Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Trips to Locating Total Number of Calls Response Propensity	- Review the 3-5 most over represented subgroups for intervention. - If a case has been to locating 4+ times, put case on hold. - If the number of unsuccessful calls is high, put case on hold. - If response propensity is in the lowest decile of the subgroup, put case on hold.	-If key estimates of interest have not stabilized in the experimental group, we will not use this intervention. - If case with many trips/calls or low propensity is in a high interest group, we will not use this intervention.

Intervention Week	Adaptive Interventions	Metric to Track	Initial Intervention Criteria	Supplemental Intervention Criteria
23 (continued)	Take Cases off Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Response Rate Benchmarking to Frame Totals	- If previously over-represented cases are now under-represented or approaching being under-represented, take cases off hold. - If response rate for subgroup is 10% less than control, take cases off hold. - If benchmarking to frame totals shows we may be inducing bias by not contacting individuals in a subgroup, take cases off hold.	- If estimates are not significantly different from the control group, we will not use this intervention. - If estimate have stabilized, we will not intervene. - If benchmarking to frame totals shows that we are accounting for nonresponse of both controlled for and uncontrolled for variables, we will not intervene.
	Send No Web Invite	R-Indicators Overall Response Propensity	- Review the 1-2 most over-represented subgroups for intervention.	- If the top two most-overrepresented subgroups are not much more over-represented than the next groups, we will not use this intervention.
	Do Nothing		- All other	
24	Put Cases on Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Trips to Locating Total Number of Calls Response Propensity	- Review the 3-5 most over represented subgroups for intervention. - If a case has been to locating 4+ times, put case on hold. - If the number of unsuccessful calls is high, put case on hold. - If response propensity is in the lowest decile of the subgroup, put case on hold.	-If key estimates of interest have not stabilized in the experimental group, we will not use this intervention. - If case with many trips/calls or low propensity is in a high interest group, we will not use this intervention until late in data collection.
	Take Cases off Hold in CATI	R-Indicators Response Rate	- If previously over-represented cases are now under-represented or approaching being under-represented, take cases off hold. - If response rate for subgroup is 10% less than control, take cases off hold.	- If estimates are not significantly different from the control group, we will not use this intervention. - If estimate have stabilized, we will not intervene. - If benchmarking to frame totals shows that we are accounting for nonresponse of both controlled for and uncontrolled for variables, we will not intervene.
	Send No Final Reminder Letter	Existing Restrictions Response Propensity	- Review cases that were previously on hold in CATI or previously did not receive mailings for intervention.	- If we have any subgroups that we would like to have one last attempt at conversion, we will intervene.
	Do Nothing		- All other	