

ACS Respondent Burden Testing

Cognitive Interview Protocol

Mode	Group
CAI	2

Introduction

Hello, my name is _____ and I work here at Westat. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study.

Westat is working to develop new questions for the American Community Survey, which is sponsored by the U.S. Census Bureau. The survey counts the number of people living in the U.S. to help with such things as deciding on funding for schools, roads and hospitals. Before surveys are conducted, it's important to try out questions with the help of people such as yourself. The survey asks questions about you and your household.

It is important that the questions make sense, are easy to answer, and that everyone understands the questions the same way. If you agree to take part in this study, I will read you the questions as if I were an interviewer contacting you at your home. Afterwards, I will ask you some questions about the answers you gave. There are no right or wrong answers. For this interview, I want to make clear that the purpose is not to have you be a part of the real survey. The things you and I talk about today are only meant to help us make the survey questions better. Your interview along with those of others will show us how to improve these questions for a later survey.

Informed Consent

Before we get started, there are a few things I should mention. This is a research project, and your participation is voluntary. If you prefer not to answer any questions just say so, and we'll go on to the next one. It's also okay if you change your mind after starting and would rather not participate.

All your answers, everything you say, will be kept confidential. We will not use your name in any reports. The U.S. Census Bureau is required by law to protect your information. The Census Bureau is not permitted to publically release your responses in a way that could identify you. Like all Census Bureau interviewers, I have taken an oath of confidentiality that I won't share your information. [ONLY IF NEEDED OR SEEMS LIKE IT MIGHT BE REASSURING TO R: If I were to disclose ANY information that could identify you or your family, I could go to prison for 5 years, or be fined \$250,000.]

The interview will take about 60 minutes, and you will receive \$40. We would also like to audio record our conversation. This helps me, so I can listen to what you are saying and won't have to take a lot of detailed notes while you are talking; it will also help when we write up a summary of this interview. Only those working on the project will have access to the recording and other project materials, and those materials will be stored according to Title 13 requirements for protecting the identity of individual respondents.

FOLLOW ALTERNATE PROCEDURES IF R REFUSES TO BE RECORDED

{Finally, some of the researchers developing the questions are here today observing our interview to learn if there are things that might need to be changed.}

HAND CONSENT FORMS TO RESPONDENT, This form contains more information about your rights in this interview. Please read it over and sign both copies if you are willing to take part in the study.

HAVE R SIGN TWO CONSENT FORMS, KEEP ONE AND GIVE ONE TO RESPONDENT.

TURN ON RECORDER. The date and time is _____. Now that the recorder is running, let me ask again, is it okay with you if we record this interview?

Protocol

In a moment, I am going to begin asking you the questions. I'd like you to answer them as you would if I contacted you at home. After I have finished asking you the questions, we will talk about some of the answers you gave. Before we begin, do you have any questions about the process?

BEGIN AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY ROSTER – ONLY ROSTER THOSE AGES 15+.

ASK ENTIRE ROSTER, ROW BY ROW (ASKING ALL SUB-ITEMS FOR A QUESTION BEFORE MOVING TO THE NEXT PERSON).

<p><u>SELECTION OF PERSONS TO PROBE ON:</u></p> <p>WRITE RESPONDENT'S FIRST NAME AS PERSON #1 BELOW.</p> <p>FOR P2, PRIORITIZE SPOUSE, THEN NON-RELATIVES AGE 15 OR OLDER, THEN RELATIVES AGE 15 OR OLDER FROM Q2 OF HOUSEHOLD ROSTER</p> <p>Person 1 First Name _____</p> <p>Person 2 First Name _____</p>
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CONTINUE WITH ACS ITEMS.

WEEKS WORKED: Q40A-C, PAGE 4

Research Questions:

Do respondents prefer to answer in weeks or months worked?

Does the option to answer in months lower burden for respondents?

Do respondents accurately report the number of weeks or months they worked during this reference period?

Do respondents include all jobs held throughout the year in their answers?

Do respondents report in either weeks or months, not both?

How do respondents calculate number of weeks or months they have worked?

Do respondents interpret the reference period as intended?

How easy or difficult is it to recall weeks worked during this reference period?

How do respondents interpret the difference between the terms work “trabajo” and employment “empleo”?

***40a. Durante las 52 semanas del 2016, ¿trabajó usted TODAS las semanas? Incluya las vacaciones pagadas, la licencia por enfermedad pagada y el servicio en las Fuerzas Armadas como trabajo.**

***40b. Durante las 52 semanas del 2016, ¿cuántas SEMANAS trabajó usted? Incluya los días libres pagados e incluya las semanas en las que trabajara solo unas pocas horas. Si prefiere dar una respuesta en términos de meses, hágalo.**

SI LA RESPUESTA ES ENTRE 1 Y 12, LEA:
(¿Indicó el número de semanas o meses?)

PERSON 1 PROBES

Earlier I asked some questions about the weeks you work. First, I asked, “During the 52 weeks covering 2016, did you work EVERY week? Count paid vacation, paid sick leave, and military service as work.” And you said [REPEAT R’S ANSWER TO 40A].

How did you decide on your answer here?

Was it easy or difficult to answer this question? What made it {easy/difficult}?

What time period were you thinking of when you answered this question?

IF ANSWERED 40B: Next I asked you, “During the 52 weeks covering 2016, how many WEEKS did you work? Include paid time off and include weeks when you only worked for a few hours.” And I said “If you would rather give your answer in months, you may do so.” And you answered [REPEAT R’S ANSWER FOR Q40B AND WHETHER IT WAS IN WEEKS OR MONTHS].

First of all, how did you decide whether you wanted to answer in weeks or months?

How did you come up with your answer to the number of [weeks/months] you worked?

IF NEEDED: How did you decide what [weeks/months] to include or exclude from your answer?

IF NEEDED: Did you include part-time jobs? Did you include paid time off?

IF NEEDED: Were you thinking about all of the jobs you worked at in 2016?

[IF R ANSWERED IN WEEKS] Would it have been easier or more difficult to answer this question in months instead of weeks? What makes you feel that way?

[IF R ANSWERED IN MONTHS] Would it have been easier or more difficult to answer this question in weeks instead of months? What makes you feel that way?

How confident are you in the answer you gave? Explain.

This question asked about the number of weeks you worked in 2016. Would it have been easier or more difficult to answer about the past 12 months, rather than about last year? What makes you feel that way?

This question uses the word “trabajo.” Another word we are thinking about using is “empleo.” Would you have answered differently if the question used the word “empleo”? Do these words mean the same thing or do they mean different things? IF SAME, in your opinion, what do they both mean? IF DIFFERENT, in your opinion, what do they each mean? How are they different from each other?

PERSON 2 PROBES (PAGE 11)

Now I'd like to ask about (PERSON 2). You answered [REPEAT PERSON 2'S ANSWER FOR Q40B/C] for (PERSON 2). How easy or difficult was this for you to answer the number of weeks worked for (PERSON 2)? What made it {easy/difficult}?

IF ANSWERED 40B for (PERSON 2): How did you decide whether to answer in weeks or months for (PERSON 2)?

How confident are you in the answer you provided for (PERSON 2)?

INCOME: Q47, PAGES 6-8

Research Questions:

Do respondents interpret the reference period as intended?

Can respondents respond accurately in the middle of the year about the previous calendar year?

Do respondents perceive reporting income for the prior calendar year to be less burdensome than reporting for the past 12 months?

Do respondents include all applicable income types in total income?

Could respondents have provided dollar amounts for each yes response in Q47?

Would respondents reference tax documents if responding at home?

How closely did respondents pay attention to the instructions in Q48, and are there any comprehension difficulties?

How easy or difficult is it to provide total income in this format?

When reporting income for a spouse, how do respondents handle joint income?

How do respondents interpret the word “income”?

(INCOME: 47a - 48)

Las siguientes preguntas son acerca de los ingresos recibidos en el 2016, es decir, del 1 de enero de 2016 al 31 de diciembre de 2016...

***47a. ¿Recibió algún sueldo o salario?**

SI LA RESPUESTA ES “SÍ” A LA PREGUNTA 47a, LEA:

***47b. ¿Recibió propinas, bonificaciones o comisiones adicionales en el 2016?**

SI LA RESPUESTA ES “NO” A LA PREGUNTA 47a, LEA:

***47b. ¿Recibió propinas, bonificaciones o comisiones en el 2016?**

***47c. ¿Recibió ingresos de trabajo por cuenta propia en el 2016, incluyendo trabajo por el cual recibió pagos en efectivo? Tenga en cuenta los ingresos de negocios propios (tanto agrícolas como no agrícolas) incluyendo empresas individuales y sociedades.**

***47d. ¿Fueron una pérdida estos ingresos?**

***47e.**

SI “HACE MÁS DE 5 AÑOS QUE NO TRABAJA O NUNCA TRABAJÓ” EN LA 38, LEA:
Las siguientes preguntas son acerca de los ingresos recibidos en el 2016, es decir, del 1 de enero de 2016 al 31 de diciembre de 2016...

¿Recibió ingresos por intereses o dividendos? Tenga en cuenta incluso pequeñas cantidades acreditadas a una cuenta.

DE OTRA MANERA, LEA:

¿Recibió ingresos por intereses o dividendos en el 2016? Tenga en cuenta incluso pequeñas cantidades acreditadas a una cuenta.

***47f. 1¿Recibió ingresos netos de alquileres en el 2016?**

***47g. ¿Fueron una pérdida estos ingresos?**

***47h. ¿Recibió ingresos por regalías o ingresos por herencias y fideicomisos en el 2016?**

***47i. ¿Recibió beneficios del Seguro Social o del Retiro Ferroviario en el 2016?**

***47j. ¿Recibió pagos de Seguridad de Ingreso Suplementario (SSI) en el 2016?**

***47k. ¿Recibió pagos de asistencia o bienestar público de parte del estado u oficina local de bienestar en el 2016?**

***47l . ¿Recibió pensiones por retiro, supervivencia o discapacidad en el 2016?**

(No incluya el Seguro Social.)

***47m. ¿Recibió ingresos REGULARMENTE de algunas otra fuente, como por ejemplo, pagos del Departamento de Asuntos de Veteranos (VA), compensación por desempleo, manutención de hijos o pensión alimenticia en el 2016?**

(No incluya pagos de sumas globales, tales como dinero de una herencia o por la venta de una casa.)

Next let's talk about the question in which I asked you about different types of income that you received last year.

[IF YES TO Q47a] You said yes to wages or salary. Tell me how you decided on your answer to this question.

What time period were you thinking about? [IF NEEDED: From what date to what date?]

[IF YES TO Q47b] You said yes to tips, bonuses or commissions. Tell me how you decided on your answer to this question.

What time period were you thinking about? [IF NEEDED: From what date to what date?]

You said [READ RESPONSE FROM Q47c] to the question that asked if you received any self-employment income in 2016, including work that was paid for in cash? I also said to consider income from your own businesses (farm or non-farm) including proprietorships and partnerships. Tell me how you decided on your answer to this question.

IF NEEDED: What type of income were you thinking about here?

[IF YES TO Q47c] What time period were you thinking about? [IF NEEDED: From what date to what date?]

IF YES TO 47c: What do you think was meant by the follow-up question I asked about self-employment income, “Was this income a loss?”

You said [READ RESPONSE FROM Q47e] to the question that asked if you received any interest or dividends in 2016 and to consider even small amounts credited to an account. How did you decide on your answer to this question?

IF NEEDED: What type of income were you thinking about here?

IF NEEDED: Do you have a checking or savings account? [IF YES: Do you earn interest on that/those account(s)?] [IF YES: Were you thinking about that type of interest when you answered this question? (Explain)]

What time period were you thinking about? [IF NEEDED: From what date to what date?]

You said [READ RESPONSE FROM Q47f] to the question that asked if you received any net rental income in 2016. How did you decide on your answer to this question?

IF NEEDED: What type of income were you thinking about here?

[IF YES TO Q47f] What time period were you thinking about? [IF NEEDED: From what date to what date?]

IF YES TO 47f: What do you think was meant by the follow-up question I asked, "Was this income a loss?"

[IF YES TO Q47h] You said yes to royalty income or income from estates and trusts. Tell me how you decided on your answer to this question.

What time period were you thinking about? [IF NEEDED: From what date to what date?]

[IF YES TO Q47i] You said yes to Social Security or Railroad Retirement benefits. Tell me how you decided on your answer to this question.

What time period were you thinking about? [IF NEEDED: From what date to what date?]

[IF YES TO Q47j] You said yes to Supplemental Security Income payments. Tell me how you decided on your answer to this question.

What time period were you thinking about? [IF NEEDED: From what date to what date?]

[IF YES TO Q47k] You said yes to public assistance or public welfare payments from the state or local welfare office. Tell me how you decided on your answer to this question.

What time period were you thinking about? [IF NEEDED: From what date to what date?]

[IF YES TO Q47I] You said yes to retirement, survivor, or disability pensions. Tell me how you decided on your answer to this question.

What time period were you thinking about? [IF NEEDED: From what date to what date?]

[IF YES TO Q47m] You said yes to any other income sources such as Department of Veterans Affairs payments, unemployment compensation, child support, or alimony. Tell me how you decided on your answer to this question.

What time period were you thinking about? [IF NEEDED: From what date to what date?]

In 2016, were there any other types of income that you earned that I did not ask you about?

How easy or difficult is it for you to remember what types of income you had in 2016? [IF NEEDED, REPEAT YES CATEGORIES.] What made it {easy/difficult} for you?

Would it have been easier or more difficult to answer about the types of income you had in the past 12 months, rather than asking about 2016? What makes you feel that way?

How certain are you of your answers to these questions? What makes you {certain/uncertain}?

***48.**

SI “SÍ” SOLAMENTE A LA 47A O 47B (UNA O AMBAS), LEA:

¿Cuál fue el TOTAL de sus ingresos en el 2016?

Incluya la suma de todos los trabajos antes de los impuestos y otras deducciones.

SI “SÍ” SOLAMENTE A LA 47C, LEA:

¿Cuál fue el TOTAL de sus ingresos de trabajo por cuenta propia en el 2016, incluyendo los pagos recibidos en efectivo? Indique los ingresos después de deducir los gastos operacionales.

SI “SÍ” SOLAMENTE A LA 47C Y 47D (AMBAS), LEA:

¿Cuál fue el TOTAL de sus ingresos de trabajo por cuenta propia en el 2016, incluyendo los pagos recibidos en efectivo? Indique los ingresos después de deducir los gastos operacionales e indique las pérdidas como monto negativo.

DE OTRA MANERA, CONTINÚE CON LO SIGUIENTE:

¿Cuál fue el total de sus ingresos en el 2016 de todas las fuentes que ha mencionado?

SI LA RESPUESTA ES “SÍ” A LA PREGUNTA 47A O 47B, LEA:

Incluya la suma de todos los trabajos antes de los impuestos y otras deducciones.

SI LA RESPUESTA ES “SÍ” A LA PREGUNTA 47C, LEA:

Para los ingresos de trabajo por cuenta propia, incluya los pagos recibidos en efectivo e indique el total después de deducir los gastos operacionales.

SI LA RESPUESTA ES “SÍ” A LA PREGUNTA 47D O 47G, LEA: Reste la pérdida del total.

SI LA RESPUESTA ES “SÍ” A LA PREGUNTA 47E, 47F O 47H, LEA:

Para los ingresos recibidos conjuntamente con otra persona, incluya solamente la porción que le corresponda a usted en el total.

Next I asked you to tell me what your TOTAL income was in 2016. And I said [READ APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONS THAT WERE READ WITH THE QUESTION]. Tell me how you came up with your answer of [READ RESPONSE TO Q48].

What time period were you thinking about? [IF NEEDED: From what date to what date?]

What do you think the word “income” means in this question?

How easy or difficult was it to come up with your answer? What made it {easy/difficult}?

How accurate would you say your answer is? What makes you say that?

If you were answering these questions at home, how might you have come up with your answer?

[IF MORE THAN ONE “YES” RESPONSE IN Q47] What types of income did you include in your total income answer?

[IF R DOES NOT MENTION ALL OF THE CATEGORIES THAT WERE YES IN Q47] Earlier, you mentioned (SOURCES OF INCOME). How did you decide whether or not to include that income in your answer for total income?

[IF R MENTIONED ANY OTHER TYPE OF INCOME NOT LISTED IN Q47] A few minutes ago, you mentioned that you also earned income from a source that I hadn’t asked you about before. Did you include that amount in your answer for total income?

IF NEEDED: If we had asked for it, could you have given a dollar amount for each of the types of income you said yes to?

[IF Q47d or 47g="Yes" (Loss)] Earlier you said you had a loss in (CATEGORY). How did you account for that when you were coming up with the total income amount? (Explain)

Would you prefer to provide income amounts for each of the different types of income categories that you said yes to, and then add them up to get a total, or would you prefer to just provide the total income amount? What makes you say that?

This question asked about your total income in 2016. Would it have been easier or more difficult to report your total income over the past 12 months, rather than your total income for 2016? What makes you feel that way?

PERSON 2 PROBES (PAGES 13-15)

Now I'd like to ask about (PERSON 2). You answered [REPEAT PERSON 2'S YES ANSWERS FOR Q47, AND PERSON 2'S ANSWER FOR Q48] for (PERSON 2). How easy or difficult was this for you to answer the income questions for (PERSON 2)? What made it {easy/difficult}?

[IF Q47d or 47g="Yes" (Loss)] Earlier you said [PERSON 2] had a loss in (CATEGORY). How did you account for that when you were coming up with [PERSON 2's] total income amount? (Explain)

How confident are you in the answers you provided for (PERSON 2)? What makes you say that?

IF NEEDED (AND P2 IS R'S SPOUSE): How did you decide where to report joint income that you and (PERSON 2) earned together?

Closing and Incentive

IF OBSERVERS ARE PRESENT, CHECK TO SEE IF THEY HAVE FURTHER QUESTIONS.

Those are all the questions I have for you. Is there anything we haven't discussed that you would like to mention?

DISCUSS ANY RESPONDENT COMMENTS.

Thank you for your time.

STOP TAPE RECORDER.

GIVE INCENTIVE AND HAVE RESPONDENT SIGN RECEIPT.