Request for Nonsubstantive Change to the 2022 American Community Survey Revisions to Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing Respondent Materials OMB Control No. 0607-0810 U.S. Department of Commerce U.S. Census Bureau

Purpose

The American Community Survey (ACS) is requesting to revise Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) respondent materials starting in March 2022. The ACS plans to implement the change to more clearly communicate and address respondent concerns, with the goal of gaining interview cooperation.

Background:

The ACS employs a 3-month data collection process for each monthly sample. First through self-response and later through in-person and telephone interviews. During the first two months of data collection, the Census Bureau sends up to five mailings to all mailable, sampled addresses to solicit a response via the internet or paper questionnaire. After the self-response period, responding addresses are removed and the unmailable and undeliverable addresses (from the initial sample) are added to create the universe of addresses eligible for the CAPI nonresponse followup operation. Of this universe, a subsample is chosen to be included in the CAPI operation, which starts at the beginning of the month following the fifth mailing. A pressure seal reminder letter is sent to all mailable addresses sampled for CAPI at the start of the interviewing month. This letter lets respondents know that a Census Bureau field representative (FR) may call or visit them to complete the interview and encourages them to complete the survey online, if possible. Census Bureau field representatives (FRs) first attempt to interview those selected for CAPI by phone. If the FR is unable to complete a phone interview, they visit the address to conduct an in-person interview.

Among the tools FRs use to gain cooperation from respondents are a variety of letters and brochures. These materials are used to address respondent concerns and provide information about the ACS:

- Attachment A No One Home Letter (ACS-613N(L)), Stateside English
- Attachment B No One Home Letter (ACS-613N(L)), Puerto Rico English
- Attachment C Better Understanding Letter (ACS-613B(L)), Stateside English
- Attachment D Better Understanding Letter (ACS-613B(L)), Puerto Rico English
- Attachment E Internet Letter (ACS-INET), Stateside English
- Attachment F Confidentiality Letter (ACS-CON), Stateside English
- Attachment G Final Attempt Letter (ACS-FA), Stateside English
- Attachment H Final Attempt Letter (ACS-FA), Stateside English July 2022 Version
- Attachment I Refusal Letter (ACS-613R(L)), Stateside English

- Attachment J Refusal Letter (ACS-613R(L)), Puerto Rico English
- Attachment K Management Letter Building (ACS-MU-1(L)), Stateside English
- Attachment L Management Letter Gated Community (ACS-MU-2(L)), Stateside English
- Attachment M Seasonal Unit Letter (ACS-SEA), Stateside English
- Attachment N Please Call Me Letter (ACS-PCM), Stateside English
- Attachment O Please Call Me Letter (ACS-PCM), Puerto Rico English

These materials are used, as needed, based on the FR's interactions with the respondent; an individual respondent does not receive all the materials.

The Better Understanding, No One Home, and Refusal letters are currently available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Russian, and Vietnamese. The Please Call Me Letter is also available in Spanish.

Request:

In 2019, the Census Bureau began a project to revise the CAPI respondent materials. An initial assessment of the current materials indicated that they were written, on average, at the 12th grade level. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 34 percent of American adults read at less than an 8th grade level and about 14 percent read at the first-to-third grade level. The current letters are text dense, do not focus the reader on the main message of the letter, and hide the Internet User ID and respondent actions. The Census Bureau applied plain language principles to the materials to improve the readability of the materials and make them easier to understand for more respondents. The resulting materials were written, on average, at the 9th grade level.

The materials were also revised to incorporate lessons learned from a separate research project about messaging and communication, called the Strategic Framework Messaging Project.³ The messages in the revised letters were designed to address the specific concern or situation that the FR encountered. FAQs were included on the back of the letter to address general questions about the survey without highlighting them in the letter itself or distracting the respondent from the main message of the letter. The goal of these changes was to reduce the burden of reading the letters while boosting CAPI response rates.

This nonsubstantive change request includes the English versions of the revised letters. The revised translated materials in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Russian, and Vietnamese will be

¹ Reading levels were calculated using the Flesch-Kindcaid Grade Level score.

² See National Center for Education Statistics (2014). *Literacy, Numeracy, and Problem Solving in Technology-Rich Environments Among U.S. Adults: Results from the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies 2012: First Look.* Washington DC: Institute of Education Science, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved on December 16, 2021 from https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2014/2014008.pdf

³ See Oliver, Heimel, and Schreiner (2017). Strategic Framework for Messaging in the ACS Mail Materials. Retrieved on December 16, 2021 from https://www.census.gov/library/working-papers/2017/acs/2017 Oliver 01.html

included in a subsequent nonsubstantive change request and/or will be included in the upcoming information collection request.

The Census Bureau also conducted refresher training with the FRs to explain the intent of each letter and what situations the letters were designed to address, as follows:

Letters	Purpose
No One Home	Sent to an address when the FR is unable to
Letter	make contact with anyone at the sample
	address but thinks someone lives there. It
	emphasizes the confidentiality of the survey
	data and the benefits of the survey to
	motivate response. The respondent is told to
	call the FR or go online to respond.
Better	Used when a respondent requests more
Understanding	information about the ACS but hasn't refused.
Letter	The letter emphasizes the confidentiality of
	the survey data and the benefits of the survey
	to motivate response. The respondent is told
	to call the FR or go online to respond.
Internet Letter	This letter is nearly identical to the letter sent
	at the beginning of the CAPI month. It is
	intended primarily to be used for non-
	mailable addresses.
Confidentiality	Used when a respondent indicates they have
Letter	specific concerns about their response being
	kept confidential or their data being secure.
Final Attempt	Used at the end of data collection. The letter
Letter	is short; it expresses the uniqueness of being
	selected for the survey, the legal requirement
	for participation, and the different ways to
	respond.
Refusal Letter	Used when a respondent explicitly refuses to
	participate in the survey. The letter is short
	and to the point regarding confidentiality and
	the legal requirements to participate. It
	provides response options and emphasizes
	that the respondent will be contacted again
	soon to complete the interview.
Management	This letter is used to help FRs gain access to
Letter for Multi-	multi-unit buildings when they can't directly
Unit Buildings	access the sampled address
Management	This letter is used to help FRs gain access to
Letter for Gated	addresses located in a gated community.
Communities	

Seasonal Unit	Used when the FR suspects that the sampled
Letter	address is only used seasonally and cannot
	make contact with anyone at the sample
	address. FRs may send this letter to someone
	who may be able to verify that the unit is
	seasonal.
Please Call Me	This letter is used to help FRs who can only
Letter	reach respondents by phone.

Use of Incentives: None.

Burden: There is no change in response burden to the public associated with this change. Materials are given to respondent on an as needed basis.

Attachments:

- An Excel file ("ACS_NSC_CAPI_English Letters Jan 2022 Materials Attachment") that shows old and new materials, and a summary of changes.
- Copies of all the letters in Stateside English and Puerto Rico English.

Contact Information:

Please contact Dameka Reese for further information about this change:

Dameka Reese
American Community Survey Office
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20233
Dameka.M.Reese@censu.gov
301-763-3804

Attachment A – No One Home Letter (ACS-613N(L)), Stateside English Front

< <f_respname>> <<address>></address></f_respname>			
Dear < <f_respname>>:</f_respname>			
	NAME>>, recently		erican Community Survey. A U.S. Co to interview you for the survey. We
WHAT IS THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY?		uestions ab	ey conducted by the Census Bureau out a variety of topics such as educa
HOW DOES MY RESPONSE HELP?	information t	o plan for p	s, and communities use the survey rojects like new schools and health elderly and veterans.
ARE MY ANSWERS CONFIDENTIAL?		dividual res	uired to protect your information. V ponses to the survey. We can only statistics.
	Please complete	the survey o	nline or call for an interview.
YOUR RESPONSE MATTERS!		п г	BY PHONE
YOUR RESPONSE MATTERS! ONLINE			211110112
		OR	Call < <frphone>></frphone>
ONLINE	sus.gov/acs	OR	
ONLINE Go to: respond.cen	sus.gov/acs user ID:	OR	Call < <frphone>></frphone>
ONLINE Go to: respond.cen: Log in with your < <inetuser a="" contact="" few<="" in="" td="" we="" will="" you=""><td>sus.gov/acs user ID: ID>> days if we don't h</td><td>ear from yo</td><td>Call <<frphone>> to schedule an interview w</frphone></td></inetuser>	sus.gov/acs user ID: ID>> days if we don't h	ear from yo	Call < <frphone>> to schedule an interview w</frphone>

Attachment A – No One Home Letter (ACS-613N(L)), Stateside English Back

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I tell if the person who contacts me really works for the U.S. Census Bureau? There are two ways to verify that a representative works for us.

BY PHONE: Call our regional office at <<OFFICEPHONE>>.

ONLINE: Search our staff database at census.gov/staffsearch
It is easiest to search using only the last name.

What is the American Community Survey?

The American Community Survey is an ongoing survey that provides vital information on a yearly basis. When governments, businesses, and community leaders need to make important decisions that affect our lives, they often turn to the American Community Survey for help.

To learn how real people use the data to make informed decisions visit: census.gov/acs-data-stories

Why does the American Community Survey ask these questions?

The American Community Survey only asks questions when there is a government need and if the information is not available anywhere else.

To learn why we ask each question visit: census.gov/acswhyweask

Why was I selected to participate in the survey?

The Census Bureau randomly selects about 3.5 million addresses throughout the country each year to respond to this survey. Your address was selected through scientific sampling and represents thousands of other households like yours.

Am I required to fill out the survey?

Yes. We are conducting this survey under the authority of Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221. Your response to this survey is required by law. To create an accurate picture of your community, it is critical that you respond.

Will my response be confidential?

Attachment B – No One Home Letter (ACS-613N(L)), Puerto Rico English

Front

< <date>></date>	
< <f_respname>> <<address>></address></f_respname>	
Dear < <f_respname>>:</f_respname>	
	ted to participate in the Puerto Rico Community Survey. A U.S. Cen AME>>, recently attempted to interview you for the survey. We are ation.
WHAT IS THE PUERTO RICO COMMUNITY SURVEY?	This survey is conducted by the Census Bureau. The survey asks questions about a variety of topics such as education, employme and more.
HOW DOES MY RESPONSE HELP?	Governments, businesses, and communities use the survey information to plan for projects like new schools and health clini and services for the elderly, veterans, and victims of natural disa
ARE MY ANSWERS CONFIDENTIAL?	The Census Bureau is required to protect your information. We publish individual responses to the survey. We can only use survanswers to create statistics.
	YOUR RESPONSE MATTERS!
Please call < <fi< td=""><td>RPHONE>> to schedule an interview with << FRNAME>>.</td></fi<>	RPHONE>> to schedule an interview with << FRNAME>>.
We will contact you in a few da	ays if we don't hear from you. If you have any questions, please call
Thank you for responding to th	ne Puerto Rico Community Survey.
Sincerely,	

Attachment C – Better Understanding Letter (ACS-613B(L)), Stateside English Front

< <date>></date>		
< <f_respname>> <<address>></address></f_respname>		
Dear < <f_respname>>:</f_respname>		
A U.S. Census Bureau representative, < <fi the American Community Survey. I am wr survey and how your response can make a</fi 	iting to tell	you more about the importance of th
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Attachment C – Better Understanding Letter (ACS-613B(L)), Stateside English Back

Frequently Asked Questions

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ONLINE: Search our staff database at census.gov/staffsearch
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What is the American Community Survey?

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The Census Bureau randomly selects about 3.5 million addresses throughout the country each year to respond to this survey. Your address was selected through scientific sampling and represents thousands of other households like yours.

Am I required to fill out the survey?

Yes. We are conducting this survey under the authority of Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221. Your response to this survey is required by law. To create an accurate picture of your community, it is critical that you respond.

Will my response be confidential?

Attachment D – Better Understanding Letter (ACS-613B(L)), Puerto Rico English Front

< <p><<date>> <f_respname>> <address>> Dear <<f_respname>>: A U.S. Census Bureau representative, <<frname>>, recently attempted to interview you for the Puerto Rico Community Survey. I am writing to tell you more about the importance of this survey and how your response can make a difference. The Puerto Rico Community Survey is conducted by the Census Bureau. Your community can use statistics created from this survey to determine where to build new schools, health clinics or businesses. We are serious about protecting your privacy. We can only use survey answers to create statistics. By law, we keep your answers confidential and secure. <<frname>> is a Census Bureau employee and is sworn to protect your information and keep it confidential. Your response matters. Please call <<frphone>> to schedule an interview with <<frname>>. We will contact you in a few days if we do not hear from you. If you have additional questions please call <<officephone>>. Thank you for your participation. Sincerely, Program Supervisor <<controlnumber>></controlnumber></officephone></frname></frphone></frname></frname></f_respname></address></f_respname></date></p>		
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Program Supervisor < <controlnumber>></controlnumber>	Sincerely,	
	Program Supervisor	< <controlnumber>></controlnumber>

Attachment E – Internet Letter (ACS-INET), Stateside English Front

< <date>></date>		
< <f_respname>> <<address>></address></f_respname>		
Dear < <f_respname>>:</f_respname>		
Your household has been selected to parti- information from this survey helps identify emergency planning. Your response can m Please choose how you will complete the	needs suc ake a diffe	h as affordable housing, job training, and
ONLINE]	BY PHONE
Go to: respond.census.gov/acs	OB	Call < <frphone>></frphone>
Log in with your user ID:	OR	to schedule an interview with
< <inetuserid>></inetuserid>		< <frname>></frname>
We will contact you soon by phone or in- in-person visit the Census Bureau represen name, a Department of Commerce watern You are required by law to respond to the necessary because it provides detailed info determine where to locate critical services	ntative will nark, and a e American ormation th	present a photo ID that displays his or her n expiration date. Community Survey. This survey is nat communities like yours use to
If you have any questions, please call < <of a="" community="" for="" helping="" l<="" prepare="" td="" your=""><td></td><td></td></of>		
Sincerely,		

Attachment E – Internet Letter (ACS-INET), Stateside English Back

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Will my response be confidential?

Attachment F – Confidentiality Letter (ACS-CON), Stateside English Front

< <date>> <f_respname>> <address>> Dear <<f_respname>>: A U.S. Census Bureau representative recently attempted to interview you for the American Community Survey. I am writing to assure you of our commitment to keep all survey information confidential and secure. We will protect your privacy. We can only use survey answers to create statistics. We are n permitted to publicly release your responses in a way that could identify you. Your answers are protected by law (Title 13, U.S. Code, Section 9). Any employee who violathis law can be punished by imprisonment, a fine of up to \$250,000, or both. Your data are protected from cybersecurity risks. Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancem Act of 2015, your data are protected from cybersecurity risks through screening of the systethat transmit your data. Your response matters. Please complete the survey online or call for an interview. ONLINE Go to: respond.census.gov/acs Log in with your user ID: <<index or<="" p=""> Call <<frphone>> to schedule an interview with <<frname>> If you have additional questions, please call <<officephone>>. Thank you for participating the American Community Survey. Sincerely,</officephone></frname></frphone></index></f_respname></address></f_respname></date>			
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Attachment F – Confidentiality Letter (ACS-CON), Stateside English Back

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Am I required to fill out the survey?

Yes. We are conducting this survey under the authority of Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221. Your response to this survey is required by law. To create an accurate picture of your community, it is critical that you respond.

Will my response be confidential?

Attachment G – Final Attempt Letter (ACS-FA), Stateside English

*This updated version of the letter will be in production until the June 2022 interview month. It will then switch, from July onward, to a version with updated Spanish to reflect forthcoming changes to the ACS Landing Page for consistency. *

Front

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Attachment G – Final Attempt Letter (ACS-FA), Stateside English Back

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Attachment H – Final Attempt Letter (ACS-FA), Stateside English July 2022 Version

*This updated version of the letter will be in production beginning with the July 2022 interview month. It has updated Spanish to reflect forthcoming changes to the ACS Landing Page for consistency. *

Front

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< <f_respname>> <<address>></address></f_respname>		
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Sincerely,		
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Attachment H – Final Attempt Letter (ACS-FA), Stateside English July 2022 Version Back

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Attachment I – Refusal Letter (ACS-613R(L)), Stateside English Front

< <date>></date>		
< <f_respname>> <<address>></address></f_respname>		
Dear < <f_respname>>:</f_respname>		
I understand you have concerns about com letter addresses your concerns.	npleting th	e American Community Survey. I hope thi
Your answers are confidential. The U.S. Ce information. In fact, any employee who vio fine of up to \$250,000, or both.		
Your response is so important that it is recand 221). Communities across the country to determine where to build new schools, I	depend or	n facts and figures created from this surve
Your response ma	tters! Ple	ase respond today.
ONLINE Go to: respond.census.gov/acs	OR	BY PHONE Call < <frphone>></frphone>
Log in with your user ID: < <inetuserid>></inetuserid>		to schedule an interview with < <frname>></frname>
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We will contact you in a few days if we do		
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What is the American Community Survey?

The American Community Survey is an ongoing survey that provides vital information on a yearly basis. When governments, businesses, and community leaders need to make important decisions that affect our lives, they often turn to the American Community Survey for help.

To learn how real people use the data to make informed decisions visit: census.gov/acs-data-stories

Why does the American Community Survey ask these questions?
The American Community Survey only asks questions when there is a government need and if the information is not available anywhere else.

To learn why we ask each question visit: census.gov/acswhyweask

Why was I selected to participate in the survey?

The Census Bureau randomly selects about 3.5 million addresses throughout the country each year to respond to this survey. Your address was selected through scientific sampling and represents thousands of other households like yours.

Am I required to fill out the survey?

Yes. We are conducting this survey under the authority of Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221. Your response to this survey is required by law. To create an accurate picture of your community, it is critical that you respond.

Will my response be confidential?

Attachment J – Refusal Letter (ACS-613R(L)), Puerto Rico English Front

< <date>></date>	
< <f_respname>> <<address>></address></f_respname>	
Dear < <f_respname>>:</f_respname>	
I understand you have concerns about co this letter addresses your concerns.	ompleting the Puerto Rico Community Survey. I hope
	Census Bureau is required by law to protect your violates this law can be punished by imprisonment, a
	required by law (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, munities create education and job training programs or es and hurricanes.
Your response ma	atters! Please respond today.
Please call < <frphone>> to</frphone>	schedule an interview with < <frname>>.</frname>
We will contact you in a few days if we	do not receive your response.
If you have other questions or concerns, help you. Thank you for your participatio	please call me at < <officephone>>. I am happy to on.</officephone>
Sincerely,	
Program Supervisor	< <controlnumber>></controlnumber>

Attachment K – Management Letter Building (ACS-MU-1(L)), Stateside English Front

<<DATE>> <<BMC_MANAGER>> <<BMC_COMPLEX_NAME>> <<BMC_ADDRESS>> Dear << BMC_MANAGER>>: A U.S. Census Bureau employee recently attempted to interview a resident(s) of your building for one of our surveys, but they were not allowed access. The Census Bureau conducts this mandatory survey by law (Title 13, U.S. Code). Please allow our Field Representative to enter your building at << BMC_BUILDING_ADDRESS>>. Please know that every Census Bureau employee takes an oath to protect the information they collect. Any employee who violates this law can be punished by imprisonment, a fine of up to \$250,000, or both. All survey information remains completely private and confidential. How can you tell if an interviewer is a legitimate Census Bureau employee? . IN PERSON: The interviewer will present a photo ID that displays his or her name, a Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date. ONLINE: Search <<FRNAME>> in our staff database at census.gov/staffsearch. It is easiest to search using only the last name. BY PHONE: Call our regional office at <<OFFICEPHONE>>. Our staff will return soon to conduct interviews. Because our surveys are ongoing, staff may also need to return in the future to conduct interviews with different residents. If you have any questions, please call <<OFFICEPHONE>>. We are happy to help. Sincerely, Program Supervisor <<CONTROLNUMBER>>

Attachment L – Management Letter Gated Community (ACS-MU-2(L)), Stateside English Front

< <date>> <bmc_manager>> <bmc_complex_name>> <bmc_address>></bmc_address></bmc_complex_name></bmc_manager></date>	
Dear < <bmc_manager>>:</bmc_manager>	
community for one of our surveys, but t	y attempted to interview a resident(s) of your gated they were not allowed access. The Census Bureau (Title 13, U.S. Code). Please allow our Field LEX_NAME>>.
collect. Any employee who violates this	employee takes an oath to protect the information they law can be punished by imprisonment, a fine of up to in remains completely private and confidential.
How can you tell if an interviewer is a le	gitimate Census Bureau employee?
 IN PERSON: The interviewer will a Department of Commerce wat 	present a photo ID that displays his or her name, ermark, and an expiration date.
 ONLINE: Search <<frname>> in easiest to search using only the l</frname> 	our staff database at census.gov/staffsearch. It is ast name.
BY PHONE: Call our regional office	ce at < <officephone>>.</officephone>
Our staff will return soon to conduct int also need to return in the future to cond	erviews. Because our surveys are ongoing, staff may duct interviews with different residents.
If you have any questions, please call <<	OFFICEPHONE>>. We are happy to help.
Sincerely,	
Program Supervisor	< <controlnumber>></controlnumber>

Attachment M – Seasonal Unit Letter (ACS-SEA), Stateside English Front

< <date>></date>	
Name of Person < <address>></address>	
Dear Sir or Madam:	
_	rvey authorized by Title 13, U.S. Code (Sections 141, randomly selected to participate in the survey.
Unfortunately, we have not been able to o property may be occupied only occasional	contact anyone living at this address. We think this lly or only during some seasons.
Do you know if this residence is vacant or < <frphone>> to let us know the status or</frphone>	r if someone lives there? Please call < <frname>> at of this residence.</frname>
easiest to search using only the last name	sus Bureau employee at census.gov/staffsearch. It is . In person, all employees are required to show a Department of Commerce watermark, and an
If you have any questions or concerns call cooperation.	us at < <officephone>>. We greatly appreciate your</officephone>
Sincerely,	
Program Supervisor	< <controlnumber>></controlnumber>

Attachment N – Please Call Me Letter (ACS-PCM), Stateside English Front

< <date>></date>		
< <f_respname>> <<address>></address></f_respname>		
Dear < <f_respname>>:</f_respname>		
Your household has been selected by the U Community Survey.	J.S. Census	Bureau to participate in the American
The survey helps your local government, buneeds of your community. Your response n		and nonprofit organizations meet the
Please respond	online or	by phone today.
ONLINE		BY PHONE
Go to: respond.census.gov/acs	OR	Call < <frphone>></frphone>
Log in with your user ID:	O.K	to schedule an interview with
< <inetuserid>></inetuserid>		< <frname>></frname>
If you have any questions, please call << OF survey at census.gov/acs.	FICEPHON	E>>. You can also learn more about the
Thank you for your participation.		
Sincerely,		
Regional Director		< <controlnumber>></controlnumber>

Attachment O – Please Call Me Letter (ACS-PCM), Puerto Rico English Front

< <date>></date>	
< <f_respname>> <<address>></address></f_respname>	
Dear < <f_respname>>:</f_respname>	
Your household has been selected by Community Survey.	the U.S. Census Bureau to participate in the Puerto Rico
	nt, businesses, and nonprofit organizations meet the nce for the elderly, veterans, and victims of hurricanes or
You	ır response matters!
Please call < <frphone>></frphone>	to schedule an interview with < <frname>>.</frname>
If you have any questions, please call survey at census.gov/prcs.	< <officephone>>. You can also learn more about the</officephone>
Thank you for your participation.	
Sincerely,	
[Name]	
Regional Director	< <controlnumber>></controlnumber>