**U.S. Department of Labor**  Bureau of Labor Statistics

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October 9, 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR: DAVID C. SWANSON, Supervisory Mathematical Statistician

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Division of Price Statistical Methods

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FROM: SHARON L. KRIEGER, Mathematical Statistician

Branch of Consumer Expenditure Surveys

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SUBJECT: 2018 Response Rates for the Interview and Diary Surveys

The response rate for eligible Consumer Units (CUs) in the 2018 Interview survey was 57.4% as shown below. The table also shows response rates from 2014 thru 2017 as a comparison.

## Interview Survey

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Collection Year | CUs Designated for the Survey | Type B or C Nonresponses | Total Eligible CUs | Type A Nonresponses | Interviews | Response Rate for Eligible CUs |
| 2014 | 47,529 | 8,526 | 39,003 | 13,095 | 25,908 | 66.4% |
| 2015 | 44,295 | 7,603 | 36,692 | 13,118 | 23,574 | 64.2% |
| 2016 | 48,253 | 7,878 | 40,375 | 14,934 | 25,441 | 63.0% |
| 2017 | 47,949 | 7,756 | 40,193 | 15,714 | 24,479 | 60.9% |
| **2018** | **48,018** | **7,652** | **40,366** | **17,207** | **23,159** | **57.4%** |

The counts for 2014 are for interviews 2 through 5, which excludes the bounding interviews. The bounding interview was discontinued at the beginning of 2015 so no bounding interviews are in 2015 or later years.[[1]](#footnote-1) Also, there was a sample design change in 2015. The Interview survey counts for 2015 are for the “2010-based” sample design. There were no cases in January 2015 in that sample design, which is the reason the number of CUs designated for the survey dropped from 47,529 in 2014 to 44,295 in 2015.

The response rate for eligible Consumer Units (CUs) in the 2018 Diary survey was 55.0% as shown below. The table also shows response rates from 2014 thru 2017 as a comparison.

### Diary Survey

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Collection Year | CUs Designated for the Survey | Type B or C Nonresponses | Total Eligible CUs | Type A Nonresponses | Interviews | Response Rate for Eligible CUs |
| 2014 | 25,606 | 5,130 | 20,476 | 7,170 | 13,306 | 65.0% |
| 2015 | 24,961 | 4,444 | 20,517 | 8,676 | 11,841 | 57.7% |
| 2016 | 24,666 | 4,275 | 20,391 | 8,839 | 11,552 | 56.7% |
| 2017 | 24,696 | 4,586 | 20,110 | 8,452 | 11,658 | 58.0% |
| **2018** | **24,522** | **4,389** | **20,133** | **9,054** | **11,079** | **55.0%** |

Type B or C nonresponses are housing units that are vacant, nonexistent, or ineligible for interview. Type A nonresponses are housing units which the interviewers were unable to contact or the respondents refused to participate in the survey. The response rates stated above are based only on the eligible housing units (i.e., the designated sample less type B and C nonresponses).

OPLC/SMD/Krieger/slk/10092019/A19032

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1. The bounding interview, which recorded recent major expenditures for comparison with subsequent purchases, was determined to be unnecessary, and was dropped at the beginning of 2015 to save money and reduce respondent burden and collection costs. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)