

AIES Pilot Study  
Respondent Debriefing Interview Protocol  
Phase II

Winter/Spring 2023

This protocol is a guide – the questions here will not necessarily be asked exactly as worded in the protocol or in this order. Not all questions will be asked in every interview. As much information about interview participants and enterprises/establishments should be obtained prior to the interview as possible. In some cases, probing may need to be adjusted based on the background research that has been conducted and/or in response to participants' insights.

These interviews will be guided by four research questions, each with sub-questions:

**Research Question 1:** Do respondents recall receiving the various communications?

**Research Question 2:** Did respondents comprehend the initial request?

- Did respondents understand that the pilot was mandatory?
- Did respondents understand that the pilot was replacing some annual surveys?
- Were respondents able to access their surveys based on instructions embedded in the communications?

**Research Question 3:** What component of the messaging, if any, motivated respondents to start the survey?

**Materials:** Protocol, consent form, mailings/emails

**Method:** We will conduct the interviews by phone, Microsoft Teams, or we will conduct the interviews in person, depending on availability and federal employee travel restrictions.

**Expected length of interview:** 1 hour (60 minutes) maximum

**General probes that may be used throughout the interview:**

- What else can you tell me about this?
- Can you tell me more about that?
- What looked unclear or is confusing here?

## I. Introduction

*If necessary:* I sent you a consent form in an email today – did you get a chance to sign that? If not, please do so now, and then we'll get started.

Thank you so much for agreeing to talk with me today!

As part of the pilot program for the new Annual Integrated Economic Survey, we are following up with some companies to learn more about your experience while participating.

I am part of a group within the Census Bureau that makes sure that our surveys are performing as expected and provides feedback to other parts of the Bureau about ways to improve the overall experience. I'm talking with you today because of your unique role in testing out the new AIES survey.

Remember, my job is to improve the survey experience. Please be candid and frank in your responses. Our interview is being conducted under the authority of Title 13, which means that your responses are confidential, and neither your name nor the name or identifying information about your company will be included in any of our findings.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

I'd like to record our session today so that when I go to analyze the results of these interviews, I can use the recording to pick up on anything I may have missed in my notes. Do I have your permission to record our session today?

<<Turn on recorder>>

## II. **Company Background**

1. Tell me a little bit about your business. What types of goods or services does this business provide?
  - How many locations does your business currently operate? In how many states? In how many countries?
  - Is this a foreign or domestic company?
  - Are there related companies?
  - Did you have any confusion about which parts of the company to include when answering the survey?
2. What is your role in the company? How long have you been with the company?
3. What is your role in the process for responding to Census Bureau surveys?
  - Examples: gathering data, entering data, consulting with data providers, etc.

4. Are you typically the person within your company that receives survey requests?
  - Can you tell me about that process?
  - Do the Census Bureau letters typically go directly to you, or do they have to get routed to you by others? How long does that process generally take?
  - Do the Census Bureau emails typically go directly to you, or do they have to get routed to you by others? How long does that process generally take?

### **III. Communication Materials**

(Each respondent will only have received and be asked about a subset of the following communications. Respondents will be provided with copies of each communication they are being asked about.)

#### **Advanced Mailing**

5. Do you recall receiving this letter? What were your first impressions?
6. Does anything about this letter stand out to you?
7. What do you think the purpose of this letter was?
8. Based on this letter, what do you think the Annual Integrated Economic Survey is?
9. Is there anything in this letter that was confusing to you, or might be confusing to others?
10. Do you recall taking any action after receiving this letter? If so, why did you decide to do that?

#### **Advanced Email**

11. Do you recall receiving this email? What were your first impressions?
12. Does anything about this email stand out to you?
13. What do you think the purpose of this email was?
14. Based on this email, what do you think the Annual Integrated Economic Survey is?

15. Is there anything in this email that was confusing to you, or might be confusing to others?
16. Do you recall taking any action after receiving this email? If so, why did you decide to do that?
17. Do you recall if the subject line grabbed your attention? Do you feel the subject line was appropriate?

### **Advanced Phone Call**

18. Do you recall receiving a phone call in early February? What were your first impressions?
19. Did anything about that phone call stand out to you?
20. Do you recall the purpose of that phone call?
21. Do you recall taking any action after receiving that phone call? If so, why did you decide to do that?

### **Initial Request Mailing**

22. Do you recall receiving this letter? What were your first impressions?
23. Does anything about this letter stand out to you?
24. What do you think the purpose of this letter was?
25. Is there anything in this letter that was confusing to you, or might be confusing to others?
26. Do you recall taking any action after receiving this letter? If so, why did you decide to do that?
27. (If the respondent used their authentication code) Were you able to follow the instructions in the letter to access your survey?
28. Did you notice any reasons for doing the survey?
  - What were they?
  - What did you think about these reasons?
29. Did you think you had to do this survey?
30. Is there any information missing from this letter that you would have found helpful?

### **Initial Request Email**

31. Do you recall receiving this email? What were your first impressions?
32. Does anything about this email stand out to you?
33. What do you think the purpose of this email was?
34. Is there anything in this email that was confusing to you, or might be confusing to others?
35. Do you recall taking any action after receiving this email? If so, why did you decide to do that?

36. (If the respondent used their authentication code) Were you able to follow the instructions in the email to access your survey?
37. Did you notice any reasons for doing the survey?
  - What were they?
  - What did you think about these reasons?
38. Did you think you had to do this survey?
39. Is there any information missing from this email that you would have found helpful?

### **Reminder Phone Call (Live)**

40. Do you recall receiving a phone call in early March? What were your first impressions?
41. Did anything about that phone call stand out to you?
42. Do you recall the purpose of that phone call?
43. Do you recall taking any action after receiving that phone call? If so, why did you decide to do that?

### **Due Date Reminder Email**

44. Do you recall receiving this email? What were your first impressions?
45. Does anything about this email stand out to you?
46. What do you think the purpose of this email was?
47. Is there anything in this email that was confusing to you, or might be confusing to others?
48. Do you recall taking any action after receiving this email? If so, why did you decide to do that?
49. Do you recall if the subject line grabbed your attention? Do you feel the subject line was appropriate?

### **Reminder Phone Call (Automated)**

50. Do you recall receiving a phone call in early March? What were your first impressions?
51. Did anything about that phone call stand out to you?
52. Do you recall the purpose of that phone call?
53. Do you recall taking any action after receiving that phone call? If so, why did you decide to do that?

### **1<sup>st</sup> Past Due Follow-up Email**

54. Do you recall receiving this email?
55. What do you think the purpose of this email was?

56. Is there anything in this email that was confusing to you, or might be confusing to others?
57. Do you recall taking any action after receiving this email? If so, why did you decide to do that?

### **1<sup>st</sup> Past Due Follow-up Call**

58. Do you recall receiving a phone call in early April?
59. Do you recall the purpose of that phone call?
60. Do you recall taking any action after receiving that phone call? If so, why did you decide to do that?

### **1<sup>st</sup> Past Due Follow-up Mailing**

61. Do you recall receiving this letter? What were your first impressions?
62. Does anything about this letter stand out to you?
63. What do you think the purpose of this letter was?
64. Is there anything in this letter that was confusing to you, or might be confusing to others?
65. Do you recall taking any action after receiving this letter? If so, why did you decide to do that?

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Past Due Follow-up Email**

66. Do you recall receiving this email?
67. What do you think the purpose of this email was?
68. Is there anything in this email that was confusing to you, or might be confusing to others?
69. Do you recall taking any action after receiving this email? If so, why did you decide to do that?

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Past Due Follow-up Call**

70. Do you recall receiving a phone call in early April?
71. Do you recall the purpose of that phone call?
72. Do you recall taking any action after receiving that phone call? If so, why did you decide to do that?

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Past Due Follow-up Mailing**

73. Do you recall receiving this letter? What were your first impressions?
74. Does anything about this letter stand out to you?
75. What do you think the purpose of this letter was?
76. Is there anything in this letter that was confusing to you, or might be confusing to others?

77. Do you recall taking any action after receiving this letter? If so, why did you decide to do that?

#### **IV. Overall Impressions**

78. In general, how likely are you to read these letters and emails when/if you receive them?
79. How did you feel about the number of communications you received for this survey?
80. What types of communications do you generally prefer (i.e. letters, emails, phone calls)?

#### **V. In-Person Possibility**

81. In the past, we've found some types of interviews get results that are more true to how you might fill out a survey when we do those interviews in person. How would you feel about that?
82. Would there be certain requirements on our end that would make you more comfortable? Such as knowing the interviewer's vaccination status? What about a recent negative test?
83. Would you have a preference between in-person or virtual interviews?
84. Does your company currently have a physical office?
- How often are you in that office?
  - Is that somewhere we would hypothetically be able to conduct an interview?
  - Are there any protocols around visitors? Is your company meeting with visitors?
85. Is there anything else we should think about when considering in-person interviews as an option?

86. **Wrap-up**

- That's all the questions I have for you today! Do you have any other comments, questions, or suggestions for us?

Thank you so much for your time today.