

CPS Labor Force: Interview Protocol

Introduction

PARTICIPANT ID #: _____ DATE: ____ / ____ / ____

INTERVIEWER'S NAME: _____

START TIME: ____: ____ AM / PM

My name is [INTERVIEWER NAME] and I will be conducting our research session today. I work for [CONTRACTOR], a survey research company, and I am talking to you on behalf of the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. <I also have my colleague [COLLEAGUE/OBSERVER NAME] who will be [taking notes for us today/observing our session].>

Thanks for agreeing to help us today. The purpose of today's session is to help us see how well our questions work in an online survey. We're interested in how people understand these questions and how you come up with your answers. We are not evaluating you, so there are no right or wrong answers. We are looking to see what works and what we can improve.

Consent

Before we start, I want to talk about the consent form I shared with you via email. Did you have a chance to review and sign this form? [IF NO: Can you please open the link to this form in your email?] I just want to review some of the important information that was included in that consent document:

- With your permission, I would like to audio-record our conversation. This will allow me to concentrate on what you are saying instead of taking a lot of notes while you are talking. It will also help me write a summary of the interview.
- All your responses and everything you say will be kept strictly confidential, and only researchers working on this project will see your answers or hear the recording. Your name will not be used in any of our reports. Nothing you tell us today will be shared with other federal agencies or with anyone else.
- Your participation is voluntary, and you may stop at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions you don't want to answer.
- The interview should take about 1 hour.
- The form also has the contact name and telephone number of the project director, should you have any additional questions about the study. It also contains information about how to get in touch with the Institutional Review Board representative if you have any questions about your rights as a research participant in this study.
- As a thank you for your time today, you will receive a \$40 electronic gift card immediately after we complete the interview.

[IF OBSERVER IS PRESENT: I also wanted to let you know that this interview is being observed by someone from the Census Bureau/someone from the Bureau of Labor Statistics/someone else who works on this study. They are observing the interview because they are also interested in learning how our surveys work, and whether we need to change something that does not work.]

Do you agree to participate?

- Yes, I agree.
- No - terminate

Do you agree to our recording our session?

- Yes, I agree (obtain consent after starting recording)
- No (state that this session will not be recorded)

[IF PARTICIPANT HAS NOT ALREADY SIGNED FORM]: Please go ahead and sign and date both sections of the form and click "Submit."

(If agreeing to participate) Great, let's get started.

Web Interview – Labor Force

Think aloud instruction/practice

I would like you to complete the survey on your own and as you go through the survey to tell me what you are thinking – we call this thinking aloud, let's do a quick practice. Please think aloud as you come up with your answer to the following question.

PRACTICE: How many rooms are in your home?

Don't worry about putting in too much thought as you go through the survey. If an answer just pops into your head, that is fine too. The key is to do what you would normally do while telling me about it.

For today's session, I'm going to first ask you to complete the survey online. I'd like you to share your screen so that I can follow along.

1. DIRECT PARTICIPANT TO SHARE THEIR SCREEN
2. PROVIDE PARTICIPANT WEB LINK & CREDENTIALS FOR ACCESSING SURVEY

Observing the Web Interview

OBSERVE THE PARTICIPANT AS THEY COMPLETE THE WEB SURVEY:

- MAKE NOTE OF ANY BEHAVIORS THAT IMPLY CONFUSION OR DIFFICULTY
 - o PAUSING AT A QUESTION
 - o BACKING UP IN THE SURVEY, AND/OR CHANGING RESPONSES
- MAKE NOTE OF ANY PARTICIPANT COMMENTS (THOUGHTS) THAT IMPLY CONFUSION OR DIFFICULTY
 - o STATEMENTS THAT THEY ARE UNSURE WHAT SOMETHING MEANS
 - o STATEMENTS THAT CONTRADICT THE RESPONSE OPTION SELECTED

REFRAIN FROM PROVIDING ANY GUIDANCE OR EXPLAINING ANYTHING THE RESPONDENT STATES IS CONFUSING

- INSTRUCT THE PARTICIPANT TO SOLVE INDEPENDENTLY
 - o "What does it mean to you?"
 - o "What would you do if you were doing this on your own?"

WHEN RECORDING OBSERVATIONS, MAKE NOTE OF THE QUESTION AND THE BEHAVIOR OBSERVED, OR DIFFICULTY ARTICULATED BY THE PARTICIPANT FOR LATER FOLLOW-UP.

Debriefing/Follow-up Probing

Thank you for answering those questions. Now I want to get some of your reactions and follow-up some to learn more about how you came up with your answer.

ASK OF ALL RESPONDENTS

REFERENCE PERIOD

1. Throughout the questionnaire, you were asked to think about a specific period of time. Do you recall what that was? [IF NEEDED: What was it?]
[SPECIFICALLY CHECK FOR DATES MENTIONED FOR CPS REFERENCE WEEK.]

BUS

2. [SHOW BUS] Can you say in your own words what this question is asking?
 - [IF NEEDED: Did you have any difficulty determining your answer to this question?]

ISSUES NOTED DURING OBSERVATION

3. FOLLOW-UP AS NEEDED FOR ISSUES OBSERVED OR ARTICULATED DURING THE WEB QUESTIONNAIRE
[SHOW QUESTION AS/IF NEEDED]
 - At the question asking <INSERT QUESTION> you did <INSERT BEHAVIOR>. Can you tell me more about what you were thinking when coming up with your answer?
 - o [IF NEEDED: How did you decide on what to do?]
 - At the question asking <INSERT QUESTION> you said <INSERT COMMENTS>. Can you say more about that?

IF EMPLOYED (ANY WORK/EMPLOYMENT)

QUESTIONS: WORK, D_ANYWORK, ABSNT

4. You reported that you were working. Can you tell me more about what you do for work?
[IF NEEDED: Tell me about your job or jobs.]
[IF NEEDED (AND NOT A BUSINESS OWNER): Do you consider yourself self-employed?]
 - How long have you been doing this work [I.E. WORKING AT THIS JOB]?
[IDENTIFY ANY CONFUSION WITH DETERMINING WHAT THEY DO AS ELIGIBLE WORK]
 - Would you consider what you do to be your job? [IF NEEDED: Why or Why not?]
[IDENTIFY ANY CONFUSION BETWEEN THE CONCEPTS OF 'WORK' (RE:WORK), AND JOB (RE:ABSNT)]

QUESTIONS: ABSRSN1 (AND ABSNT) – AND ABSRSN2 (WORKED AND ACTUAL HOURS=0)

5. [IF REPORTED ABSENT FROM WORK] You said you did not work for pay last week and were absent from work. Can you tell me more about that?
 - [IF NEEDED: SHOW/READ QUESTIONS [WORK AND ABSNT]]
6. [SHOW ABSRSN1/ABSRN2]
 - Was it easy or difficult to find the option that best fit for you?

- Did these options make sense to you, or do you feel anything is missing? [IF NEEDED: Why or Why not?; What is missing?]

QUESTIONS: MJ, MJNUM

7. [IF REPORTED MORE THAN ONE JOB]

- [IF NOT ALREADY COLLECTED] You said you had <NUMBER OF JOBS>. Can you tell me more about these?
- PROBE FOR SEPARATE EMPLOYERS; DIFFERENT CLIENTS; SAME OR DIFFERENT TYPE OF WORK
- How did you determine which job is your “main” job?

QUESTIONS: HRUSL1_1, HRUSL1_2

8. [IF REPORTED AT LEAST ONE JOB] How did you determine the number of hours per week that you usually work? [IF MULTIPLE JOBS, PROBE FOR AT MAIN AND OTHER JOBS]

- Was it easy or difficult for you to determine this? [IF NEEDED: Why is that?]
 - i. [IF NEEDED and HAVE MULTIPLE JOBS: Was it easy or difficult to determine usual hours worked for your jobs separately? (THIS MAY BE MORE RELEVANT FOR PEOPLE WITH INFORMAL WORK ARRANGEMENTS)]
- Does your schedule vary from week to week?
 - i. [IF YES: How so?]
 - ii. [IF NEEDED: How did you determine your usual hours?]

QUESTIONS: HROFF1, HROT1, HRACT1, HRACT2

9. [IF REPORTED AT LEAST ONE JOB] How did you determine the number of hours per week that you actually worked between [REFERENCE PERIOD START AND END DATES]? [IF MULTIPLE JOBS, PROBE FOR AT MAIN AND OTHER JOBS]

- Did you feel this question was the same or different from the question asking about your usual hours worked? [SHOW HRACT1; IF NEEDED: How so?]
- What type of work activities did you include? [PROBE FOR ANY UNPAID WORK, WORK TO SUPPORT FAMILY BUSINESS, COMMUTING, TRAVEL, ETC.
 - i. [PROBE FOR ANY DISTINCTION BETWEEN “USUAL” EXTRA VS “UNUSUAL” EXTRA WORK ACTIVITIES (E.G., USUALLY CHECK EMAIL IN THE EVENING – DOES THAT COUNT AS USUAL HOURS WORKED OR EXTRA HOURS NOT USUALLY WORKED)]
- Was there any time that you excluded where you did something for your job or business? [PROBE FOR ANYTHING THE RESPONDENT WAS UNCERTAIN IN INCLUDING.]

IF EMPLOYED PART-TIME

QUESTIONS: HRRSN1 [WANTS TO WORK FULL-TIME]

10. You reported that you want to work full-time instead of part-time, can you tell me more about that?

- We asked you to select from a list of reasons to tell us your MAIN reason for working part-time instead of full-time.

- i. How easy or difficult was it to select a reason from this list? [IF NEEDED: You selected <INSERT RESPONSE>.]
- ii. How well does this fit your reasons for working part- instead of full-time?
- iii. Was there anything in this list that doesn't make sense, or is there anything you feel that is missing? [IF NEEDED: Why or why not?]

QUESTIONS: HRRSN2 [DOES NOT WANT TO WORK FULL-TIME]

11. You reported that you DO NOT want to work full-time, can you tell me more about that?
- Can you tell us more about they you do not want to work full-time?
 - i. [IF NEEDED: We had a list of reasons [SHOW HRRSN2] and you selected <INSERT RESPONSE>. Did this seem the best fit for you?]
 - ii. How easy or difficult was it to select a reason from this list?
 - iii. Was there anything in this list that doesn't make sense, or is there anything you feel that is missing? [IF NEEDED: Why or why not?]

NOT EMPLOYED/NOT LOOKING FOR WORK

QUESTIONS: LK (ALSO: BUS, WORK, ABSNT)

12. You reported that you were not working last week and were not looking for work.
- Is there anything you did at all last week that might be considered work, even if for just an hour? [IF NEEDED: What about something like this survey? Did you do anything like this last week?]
 - [IF NEEDED: Did you receive any pay or compensation for that?]
 - And thinking about the last 4 weeks, is there anything at all that you've done that could be considered as "looking for work"? [IF NEEDED: And what did you do?]
 - What is the reason that you do not work and are not looking for a job?
 - i. [PROBE FOR IF WANTS TO WORK – SEE LK OR DWWNT]

QUESTIONS: DWRSN [IF WANTS WORK AND NOT LOOKING FOR WORK]

13. You reported that you were not looking for work because <INSERT DWRSN RESPONSE>. Can you tell me more about that?
- [SHOW DWRSN] Was it easy or difficult to select the MAIN reason? [IF NEEDED: Does this best fit why you are not looking for work?] [Why or Why not?]

LOOKING FOR WORK

QUESTIONS: LK, LKM

14. You reported doing the following activities <INSERT LKM RESPONSES> to look for work. Can you tell me more about these activities, or what you did to look for work?
- [SHOW LKM] Was it easy or difficult to find what you did to look for work in this list?
 - Is there anything in this list that is not clear?
 - Is there anything you feel is missing from this list?

QUESTIONS: D_LKACTIVE

15. [SHOW D_LKACTIVE] We asked you if you have “actively been looking for work”? What does this mean to you?

QUESTIONS: LKDR1, LKDR2, LKDR3

16. You said that you have been looking for work for <INSERT LKDR RESPONSE>. Can you tell me more about how you came up with that number?

- [IF NEEDED: Have you been doing the same activities during this time, or did you do different things to find work at different periods?]
- Was there any period of time where you took a break, or couldn't look for work? [IF NEEDED: How long was that?; Did you include or exclude that time?]

INDUSTRY/OCCUPATION (IF ASKED IO1xx SERIES) – FOR EMPLOYED, ABSENT, LAYOFF, AND IF WORKED IN LAST 12 MONTHS

IO1IND AND IO1OCC (RESPONDENT OCCUPATION AND USUAL DUTIES)

17. [SHOW IO1IND] How easy or difficult was it for you to come up with an answer for this question? [IF NEEDED: Why is that?]

- Can you tell me more about what the business you work for does? [COLLECT MORE DETAIL IF RESPONDENT'S ANSWER TO IO1IND IS BRIEF]

18. [SHOW IO1OCC] Can you tell me more about what you do at your job?

- [PROBE TO SEE IF RESPONSE COVERS USUAL ACTIVITIES REPORTED IN QUESTION, IF NOT PROBE FOR WHY THESE WERE NOT REPORTED]
- What about the example provided, was this helpful or not?
- Are there other examples that would be helpful?

QUESTION SPECIFIC PROBING (FOR GROUPS NOT ORIGINALLY ASKED)

Next, I'm going to show you some questions from the survey that you did not see.

ABSRN1 (ASK IF WORKED IN LAST 12 MONTHS, BUT WAS NOT ASKED ABSRSN1)

19. For the next question, I want you to think about the last time you were absent from work. That is a day or time you were supposed to work, but you did not for any reason. Keeping that in mind, please take a look and answer the question below thinking about that time.

[SHOW ABSRSN1]

What was the main reason you were absent from work LAST WEEK?

- On layoff or furlough
- Business was slow
- Accepted a job offer and waiting to start
- Vacation or personal time off
- Sick, injured, or had other medical reason, including being pregnant
- Child care problems
- Caring for family or personal obligation

- h. Maternity/paternity leave
- i. Labor dispute
- j. Weather conditions
- k. School or training
- l. Civic/military duty
- m. Other (specify)

20. Tell me how you came up with your answer to this question? [IF NEEDED: Was it easy or difficult to find the option that best fit for you?]

21. [SHOW ABSRSN1] Did these options make sense to you, or do you feel anything is missing? [IF NEEDED: Why or Why not?; What is missing?]

LKM (ASK IF EVER WORKED, OR CHANGED JOBS IN LAST 12 MONTHS, BUT NOT ASKED LKM)

22. For the next question, I want you to think about the last time you looked for work. That is the last time you did something to find a job or work, whether you had a job or not. Keeping that in mind, please take a look and answer the question below thinking about that time.

[SHOW LKM]

What are all of the things you have done to find work during the last 4 weeks?

- a. Interviewed for a job
- b. Applied for a job or answered a job ad
- c. Checked a union/professional register
- d. Posted a resume or an ad/listing
- e. Contacted employment agency/school employment center
- f. Asked friends, relatives, network about job leads
- g. Looked at job ads
- h. Participated in a job training course or other activity to improve job skills
- i. Worked on resume
- j. Other (please specify)

23. Was it easy or difficult to find what you did to look for work in this list?

24. Is there anything in this list that is not clear?

25. Is there anything you feel is missing from this list?

26. I asked you to think about the last time you looked for work. When was that? [COLLECT ENOUGH DETAIL TO CATEGORIZE AS WITHIN THE LAST 4 WEEKS; LAST 6 MONTHS; LAST 2 YEARS; OR LONGER AGO]

CLOSING

Thank you, those are all the questions that I have. Do you have any other thoughts or comments that I did not cover, that you would like to share now?