

# American Community Survey– Data Collection Procedures

The American Community Survey is conducted using three methods of data collection:

- Mail
- Telephone
- Personal Visits

Every address selected for the ACS receives:

- A prenotice letter
- The American Community Survey questionnaire
- A reminder card
- A replacement questionnaire if the original questionnaire is not returned in a timely manner. Addresses that do not respond by mail may be contacted using phone, or personal visit, or both.

**Telephone Interviewing** - The telephone operation is conducted approximately six weeks after the questionnaire is mailed. The Census Bureau will attempt to obtain telephone numbers and conduct telephone interviews for all addresses that do not respond by mail.

Census Bureau telephone interviewing staff will conduct these interviews.

**Personal Interviewing** - Following the telephone operation, a sample will be taken from the addresses which remain unvisited. These addresses will be visited

by Census Bureau field representatives, who will conduct the interview. A sample of persons living in group quarters facilities, such as college dormitories, nursing homes, prisons and the like are also interviewed to ensure coverage of everyone in the country. The first contact with these individuals may be by personal visit.

**What You Need to Know About the ACS Data Collection Procedures** - Occasionally, your constituents may contact you asking if the survey is legitimate, why they were selected, or why the survey has so many detailed questions. In addition, they may complain that the Census Bureau interviewers called or visited their homes.

Because the information is so important, we conduct extensive follow-up at addresses from which we have not received a returned questionnaire. If we can associate a phone number with an address, we try calling. If we are not successful after numerous attempts by phone, or we have no phone number for an address, we may send a field representative to the address to complete the interview in person.