

Cognitive Testing Results for the ACS Field Flyer for Use in 2010: ACS Messaging Project Phase 3 Final Report

FINAL REPORT

**COGNITIVE TESTING RESULTS FOR THE
ACS FIELD FLYER FOR USE IN 2010: ACS MESSAGING PROJECT
PHASE 3 FINAL REPORT**

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Abstract

This second project report on the multi-phase American Community Survey (ACS) 2010 Messaging Project presents the results of cognitive testing of a new ACS flyer from Phase 3 testing in late spring, 2009. This flyer is intended for use by field representatives during personal visit interviews in the final stage of ACS data collection with ACS mail and phone nonresponders. This flyer was developed for use in 2010, when the ACS continues to be conducted monthly in the context of the massive, nationwide Census 2010 advertising and mobilization campaign. Some respondents will be confused by two questionnaires from the Census Bureau with some of the same questions and wonder if, and why, they have to do both. To address those issues, the flyer lists five frequently asked questions and answers concerning the ACS and the Census, presents four full-color pictures intended to represent visually the uses of the ACS data, and provides the Census Bureau logo and the ACS website url on one side. On the other side, it shows copies of the green ACS questionnaire and the blue Census 2010 questionnaire, to help respondents identify which form(s) they may already have completed, and includes short descriptions of the questions asked on each questionnaire. In recruiting respondents, we oversampled for renters, as research has shown they may be more likely to be ACS nonresponders, the target population for this flyer. We simulated, as much as possible in one cognitive interview, what mail nonresponders would go through by presenting them with the flyer only after they had seen the successive Census 2010 and ACS mailings, interspersed as they would be in March and April of 2010 when both data collections would be running. Respondents reacted favorably to both sides of the flyer, with some saying that they finally understood that there were two separate questionnaires they were required to complete. As a result of the testing, the ACS Messaging Group revised the flyer in three ways: 1) for the question about whether respondents have to complete both the ACS and the Census 2010 questionnaires, we supplemented the original mandatory answer with an additional sentence on the benefits of responding to the ACS to present both “stick” (mandatory message) and “carrot” (benefits message); 2) we reordered the five questions to flow better; and 3) we changed the rural picture at the bottom of the flyer. A few minor wording changes were also made to the second side of the flyer.

COGNITIVE TESTING RESULTS FOR THE ACS FIELD FLYER FOR USE IN 2010: ACS MESSAGING PROJECT PHASE 3 FINAL REPORT

Laurie Schwede and Anissa Sorokin¹

Introduction

This is the second report describing results from three phases of cognitive testing conducted on special ACS materials developed and tested for use in 2010. This research is part of the wider ACS 2010 Messaging Project, which was established to develop and test new ACS messages in letters and envelopes and on a flyer to attempt to maintain, or at least mitigate the potential decline of, ACS response rates during the massive Census 2010 advertising campaign and mobilization (Davis and Tancreto 2008). During the last census in 2000, ACS mail check-in rates fluctuated during the year. They increased between five and ten percent from January to March during the height of the Census 2000 advertising campaign and before the census forms were mailed out in mid-March, but declined by about seven percent in the peak census period of April. From May to December 2000, the ACS check-in rates declined another one to two percent before pulling up again somewhat at the end of the year (Raglin: unpublished data).

This research was developed and conducted in consultation and collaboration with the ACS Messaging Project Working Group. Members of this group were from the following Census Bureau divisions and offices: American Community Survey Office (ACSO), Decennial Statistical Studies Division (DSSD), American Community Survey Office (ACSO), Public Information Office (PIO), Field Division (FLD), Population Division (POP) and Statistical Research Division (SRD). Herman Alvarado was the project manager and Debra Klein was the chairperson of the Working Group.

The first report (Schwede and Sorokin 2009a) presented results of two phases of cognitive testing of ACS mailout materials with experimental messages. During Phase 1, we tested messages on specially designed envelopes with the name of the American Community Survey presented in a new green text box and cover letters with experimental messages in the ACS pre-notice, initial questionnaire package, and replacement questionnaire package mailings. These messages were intended to inform respondents that the ACS is separate from the census, is used for different purposes, and completion of both questionnaires is mandatory. Findings from Phase 1 suggested that another phase of cognitive testing would be useful to link the ACS more closely to the Census Bureau on the envelopes, as a substantial number of respondents were not familiar with the ACS and some said they might not open the envelope. We revised the envelopes to include “U.S. Census Bureau” above “THE American Community Survey,” in a green text box more subdued in tone than tested in Phase 1.

Two other papers present results from this project. The first presents results of iterative cognitive testing across Phases 1 and 2 of ACS envelopes with green text boxes enclosing the survey name (Schwede and Sorokin 2009b). The second documents associations found across all three phases of cognitive testing between what was on top as respondents pulled the inserts from the initial questionnaire package (questionnaire or something else) and whether they found

¹This report is released to inform interested parties of ongoing research and to encourage discussion. The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.

and appeared to read the cover letter among the inserts within the envelope (Schwede and Sorokin forthcoming).

Background

The objective of this Phase 3 research was to conduct cognitive testing of a new flyer intended for use by field representatives attempting to conduct face-to-face ACS interviews during 2010 within the context of the Census 2010 environment. This flyer will only be used by field representatives who are conducting personal visit interviews at the homes of ACS nonresponders who have not mailed back the ACS form in either their initial or replacement packages, and have not been interviewed by phone. Because Census 2010 and the ACS will both be conducted in 2010, we anticipate that respondents may experience some confusion about the ACS and the 2010 Census if the two questionnaires are received around the same time. The flyer was designed to answer frequently asked questions about the ACS and Census 2010.

Description of the flyer

This flyer has been designed as a tool to help field interviewers answer respondents' questions, if any arise, and to show them the differences between the green ACS questionnaires and the blue Census 2010 questionnaires. The flyer measures 8 ½ inches by 11 inches and is printed on two sides [see Figures 1 (side 1) and 3 (side 2) for the image of the version we tested]. One side of the flyer carries the title, "The American Community Survey and the 2010 Census" in large blue letters with drop shadowing. In blue ink and large text, it lists five frequently asked questions, such as, "What is the difference between the 2010 Census and the American Community Survey?" The answers are printed in black ink under each question. Below the questions and answers at the bottom of the page is a set of four color pictures—row houses, a hospital, a farm, and a school bus—intended to present a visual depiction of the uses of ACS data, as well as the agency logo in the bottom left corner and the ACS website url in the bottom right.

The other side of the flyer features minimized, full-color copies of the front pages of both questionnaires, along with brief descriptions of the types of questions asked on each questionnaire. If respondents believe they have completed a questionnaire, the interviewer may ask them to look at this side to determine which questionnaire they completed. A Spanish version of this flyer has also been developed.

We conducted testing with the laminated version of the flyer that field representatives will use during interviews. In the debriefing, we also showed respondents an unlaminated version that field representatives would give respondents to keep, should they want a copy of it.

Methods

Ten respondents were recruited for this round of testing. Interviews were conducted at the Census Bureau headquarters in Suitland, Maryland, and other places convenient to respondents in the Washington DC metropolitan area, during May and early June 2009. Since personal visit interviews will only be conducted with those who have not responded to four ACS attempts to reach them by mail and possibly also by phone, we over-sampled renters in our recruitment, since they have been shown to be less likely to mail back questionnaires than homeowners. The audiotaped interviews lasted about an hour or less and respondents were paid a small honorarium for their time.

Ideally, to simulate the intended use of this flyer, we would have observed field representatives as they used the flyer during interviews in the 2010 Census environment, which would also mean that the respondents would have received eight different pieces of mail (four from Census 2010² and four from ACS) and a phone call (if we had their phone number) before having an interviewer come to their door in the third month (if they were selected for the personal visit sample). Obviously, such a test scenario is impossible to recreate in cognitive testing, so we are somewhat limited by the test design.

Still, in order to give respondents some familiarity with the materials they would have received in the mail, we began the cognitive interview by presenting them with four successive mailings, in the order in which they would arrive at persons' homes during the height of the census: the Census 2010 prenotice, the Census 2010 initial package, the ACS prenotice, and the ACS initial package.

We asked respondents to treat these materials as they would at home, observing their handling of the materials and writing down any comments or questions they had. When they had finished viewing the four items, we debriefed them. We then showed them the final four mailings they would receive if they had not yet responded: the Census, then ACS, reminder cards and the Census, then ACS replacement questionnaire packages.

Then, we moved on to the second portion of the cognitive interview, where we asked them to imagine that for one reason or another they had not sent in the questionnaire, and that they were suddenly faced with an ACS field interviewer at their door. At this point, we asked respondents to recall any questions they had about the mailings they had seen, and then presented them with the flyer. After they had a chance to look it over, we asked them a series of questions about the flyer to get feedback about its content, design, and potential use by field representatives.

Findings and Analysis

Likelihood of Completing ACS questionnaire

Because this research was focused on testing the ACS flyer which will only be used during personal visit interviews with mail and phone nonresponders, we aimed to select respondents who might be less likely to send in mailout forms in order to try to test the flyer with the population for which it is intended. Previous research on ACS response patterns has shown that renters are less likely to submit mailout forms so we deliberately sought as many renters as we could find during the short recruiting period.

Thus, to try to determine whether or not the respondents we recruited might be likely to receive a personal visit and have the opportunity to see the flyer in a real-world setting, we asked respondents, "The last mailing you received was an American Community Survey questionnaire. If you received this at your home, how likely would you be to complete it: very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, very unlikely?" Despite having a majority of renters as cognitive respondents in our study, no one said he/she would be unlikely to send in the mail questionnaire. Four said they would be somewhat likely to send in their forms during an actual ACS data collection while six said they would be very likely to do so. It should be noted that while they may say at this point that they would submit their forms, in real life and during a real ACS data

² After completion of this cognitive testing, the Census Bureau decided to develop and send out a new additional postcard to inform respondents how to get a census questionnaire in another language. As a result of this change after our testing, we cannot assess what effect, if any, this additional mailing will have on ACS responses.

collection, particularly during the 2010 Census, some of them might be mail nonresponders. Nonetheless, our respondents did give us useful information on the performance of the flyer.

Observation of Respondent Reactions to the Flyer

When we first presented the flyer to respondents, we simply asked them to think out loud and share any thoughts they were having with us. During this first-look period, some respondents volunteered information about certain questions without any prompting from the researcher. Four did volunteer that until they read the answer to the first question/answer on the flyer, which details the difference between the census and the ACS, they had not known the differences. It became clear that three of these simply had not realized until this late point in cognitive testing of the census and ACS envelopes and letters that they had actually been handed materials from two different data collections earlier. Thus, this particular question/answer set is very useful.

Several said they now understood from the flyer that they have to do both forms because they have different purposes and because they are required by law to do so. When they first read this, two of the ten saw the answer that they were required by law to complete it and wondered aloud what would happen to them if they did not complete it. (This question comes up occasionally during cognitive interviews when respondents note the mandatory message). Finally, several appreciated learning how they were selected—through a random sample.

Assessment of the Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

After respondents had a chance to look at the flyer and give us their spontaneous observations, we asked them to look at each question/answer set on the flyer individually and assess their clarity. This section presents each question, the respondents' answers, and our recommendations regarding the question.

1. *Question and answer:*

“What is the difference between the American Community Survey and the Census?”

- *The American Community Survey (ACS) is conducted every year to provide up to date information about the social and economic needs of your community. The ACS shows how people live – our education, housing, jobs, and more. For example, results may be used to decide where new schools, hospitals, and fire stations are needed.*
- *The Census is conducted once every 10 years to provide an official count of the entire U.S. population to Congress.*

Cognitive question: Do you think the answer to this question is clear or not?

All ten respondents said that the answer to this question was either clear or very clear. As noted above, this text was enlightening to some respondents; after reading this, three of the ten now seem to realize for the first time that they had gotten materials from two different data collections in the previous part of the interview. One of these, a professional with a college degree, said,

“Ooohhh, so I WAS right! There was more than one! Then I would say that I do recall reading something like that in one of the letters and of course, it’s usually, silly me, I just skimmed over it! It’s a survey, how hard could it be?”

Another respondent mentioned it was good to see the differences. Several pointed out that the census is every 10 years, but the ACS is every year, and others said one is to count the people, while the other is for the community.

One respondent thought this was incomplete, and explained that it should say more about the separate purposes of the two data collections, including what is being done with the data that are collected.

Recommendation: No change in wording; for all but one respondent, this was fine. Recommend a grammatical change. “Up to date” should have hyphens inserted because it is used as a multi-word adjective.

2. *Question and answer:*

“Didn’t I already answer the Census?”

You may have answered the Census, but your address has already been chosen to be part of a randomly selected sample for the American Community Survey.

Cognitive question: Do you think the answer to this question is clear or not?

Eight said that the answer to this is clear. One had a problem with the first part of the answer, “You may have answered the Census...” He pointed out,

“I know I did the census. Don’t YOU know I answered it? You are the government and you’re at my door. Why are you here asking me these questions if you don’t really know if I sent in the census form or not?”

The other respondent suggested we repeat the different purposes again here for emphasis. However, this would be redundant and there isn’t enough room.

One respondent thought he was selected in the ACS random sample *because* he had sent in his census form. He said he shouldn’t have sent in that census form. This seemed to be an idiosyncratic response and we’re not sure what we could do to fix it, and if we should, for just one person.

Recommendation: No change.

3. *Question and answer:*

“Do I have to answer both the American Community Survey and the Census?”

Yes. Your response to both is important and required by law (Title 13, U.S. Code).

Cognitive question: Do you think the answer to this question is clear or not?

All ten said that this was clear and one said “The elderly like to see [the Title 13 information].” She added, “This is DC: How many people are, like, you can’t tell me what to do.” She added that you need to explain exactly why you are doing this. Another asked why the ACS and census are required by law, and a third wanted to know the penalty for not sending it in. A fourth

thought we should add a “carrot” (more formally called the benefits appeals approach) type statement to also say that participants are doing something beneficial by providing the data. Previous research with a new ACS reminder postcard and experimental letter aimed at this same ACS mail nonresponder population showed that a mixture of carrot and stick messages seems more effective than just a stick or carrot message alone (Schwede 2008a, 2008b).

Recommendation: Considering that the people being interviewed at this time and seeing this flyer are mail and phone nonresponders, the mandatory message should be stressed to push them to participate. However, adding in a positive message as well might help soften this message for those nonresponders who bristle when told they must do something, for those in households who do not understand or speak English well, and those who just forgot to send it in, by saying something like, “Your responses will also help provide local and national leaders with information they need for planning and for programs.” (Language similar to this was cognitively tested in the ACS Additional Mailing Project). This would likely add one extra line of text.

4. *Question and answer:*

“Why was I chosen for the American Community Survey?”

The Census Bureau chose this address—not you personally—as part of a randomly selected sample.

Do you think the answer to this question is clear or not?

All 10 said that this was clear. One respondent who has a marketing background suggested that this question/answer set be moved up to the number two spot, just under “What is the difference between the ACS and the 2010 Census?” He said that once readers have seen this, you do not have to mention the census again in subsequent questions. He pointed out that “You are here to talk to me about the ACS, so we should just ease away from the census and leave that out of there [after question 1].

Recommendation: We suggest leaving this as is. The card is intended to be used as a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) reference, so that the field representative can just point at the respondent’s question and let him/her quickly read the response.

5. *Question and answer:*

“Why can’t you use my Census answers for the American Community Survey?”

The American Community Survey includes questions that are not asked by the Census, and the two serve different purposes.

Do you think the answer to this question is clear or not?

Eight respondents say this is clear. One says that this mentions “two different purposes” but does not go into details, so it is incomplete. He wants to know what the two different purposes are, and says that since the interviewer is standing in front of him on his doorstep, that he would ask the interviewer about this and engage in a discussion about it. He wants more information on purposes than is in the answer to question 1.

Another respondent thought that this item should be moved up to be the second question on the flyer.

Recommendation: A few respondents did ask for more information on either the purpose of the ACS or why it is so important that it is required by law. Maybe one more sentence on the beneficial purposes of the ACS would be good – perhaps the line from the reminder package letter, “The information is used to develop programs to reduce traffic congestion, provide job training, and plan for the healthcare needs for the elderly.” To limit adding more than one new line of text, we could delete the current last phrase, “and the two serve different purposes.” Another suggestion is to move this item up to follow either “Do I have to answer both” or “Didn’t I already answer the Census?” Right now, it seems somewhat out of place following “Why was I chosen for the ACS.”

Effect of Flyer on Respondents’ Willingness to be Interviewed

After observing respondents’ initial interactions with the flyer and having them answer questions about the clarity of the FAQs, we asked respondents some directed probes to learn more about their perceptions of the flyer and how it might be useful in the field.

Two questions we asked were, “To what extent would the information on this flyer affect your decision about whether to go ahead with the ACS interview? To a large extent, some extent, wouldn’t affect decision,” and, “After reading this flyer would you be more or less likely to do the interview, or would it not make a difference?”

We received clear answers from four respondents that the flyer would positively affect their willingness to go ahead with the interview to a large extent. Three said that the flyer would not affect their willingness to go ahead with the interview—one of those respondents said he would do it anyway because it was required by law, and for another, other factors such as a legitimate badge presentation would be more important. The remaining three respondents provided somewhat contradictory answers; for instance, one first stated that the information on the flyer would affect his decision to go ahead with the interview to a large extent, but then reported that there would be no difference in his likelihood to go ahead with the interview after reading the flyer.

Pictures

The next set of questions concerned the pictures at the bottom of the flyer. First, we asked respondents if they happened to notice the pictures at the bottom of the page. Nine out of ten respondents answered that they did. The respondent who did not took a moment to look at the pictures at that point in the interview.

We continued by asking them, “What came to mind when you looked at the pictures?” Six responded to this question by explaining what they thought each picture was. One respondent, looking at the pictures from right to left, said, “Children, food, healthcare, housing.” In fact, seven of the ten respondents spontaneously mentioned the words children/school/busing, and seven also mentioned the words healthcare/hospitals.

When asked if the pictures shown were connected to the ACS in some way or simply there to make the flyer more appealing, six of ten respondents felt that the pictures at the bottom of the flyer did pertain to the ACS. One said, “I think it seems intentional, like it definitely has

something to do with the surveys,” while another commented, “The survey stated the questions that we answer will determine how many schools they put in my community, hospitals, housing...”

However, four did not see any link between the pictures and the ACS. Of these four, one said, “I don’t know why these pictures are there. Nothing there relates to ‘community.’ There are no people so it has no effect on me.” Echoing this, another respondent noted, “There are good pictures, but I’d like to see some pictures with people in them. Of all walks of life.”

Next, we asked respondents to tell us whether or not they liked the pictures. Nine out of ten respondents answered either that they liked the pictures or thought they were okay. One said, “They’re nice pictures, they really are,” and another said, “I think they’re pretty.” Some respondents didn’t seem too concerned about the pictures’ impact on the flyer—one stated, “They’re okay, it’s a flyer, it’s no big deal, you know? It’s not that serious,” while another said, “They are fine. I feel somewhat neutral about them.” The only respondent who did not like the pictures felt that they were “drab.” Six respondents felt that other people would also like or have no objections to the pictures, three felt they could not gauge others’ reactions, and one felt they would not (this is the same respondent who did not like them herself.)

Finally, we asked respondents if the pictures would have any impact on their likelihood to be interviewed by a field representative. Seven out of ten respondents reported that the pictures would have no effect on their likelihood to agree to be interviewed by a field representative. Three reported that they would be more likely to be interviewed because of the pictures.

Usefulness of Copies of ACS and Census Surveys on Opposite Side of Flyer

Nine respondents felt that the minimized copies of 2010 Census and ACS forms on the back were helpful. One respondent felt they would be useful for “people to identify the forms that they may have received in the mail, and another noted,

“They bring up in my memory exactly what I did. I remember the blue form. I filled it out. I remember the green form, which is why you are here as an interviewer, because I forgot to fill it out.”

Another felt it was helpful because she is a visual person. She said,

“Personally, I work visually like that. If I can visualize something, I can probably find it in my house. That would be helpful for me.”

The one respondent who said it was not helpful felt that way because he felt it presented information of which he was already aware. He said,

“I understood the package very well. I know we’re filling out two complete forms for two different reasons, and the information on the back of this card is the same thing that I see on the forms.”

Suggestions for Improvement

Two respondents had no suggestions for improvements. Of the eight who did, four suggested enlarging the forms on the back, saying that the font was too small for them to read, or that it

might be too small for others to read. (It should be noted that having respondents read the font was not purpose of including the facsimilies of the questionnaires on the flyer.)

In general, people seemed to like the colors and the layout and two mentioned the drop shadow positively. We may want to consider separating the title from the questions a bit more. One respondent suggested, “You could bold the ACS and the Census and it gives it a pop,” while another said,

“On the front, the top just kind of jumps into title. I feel like usually there is some kind of header or US Census Bureau logo. Usually if you’re looking at an official form with a letter you would see something with letterhead on the top and this doesn’t have that.”

When we asked respondents if there were any other questions that they would have liked to see answered on the flyer, seven did not suggest any other questions. Three did, and wanted to know the same thing: the penalty for not completing the survey.

The Flyer in the Field

To get a better understanding of what respondents in the field might think when interacting with a field representative who had a flyer, we asked respondents if they would think that an unlaminated flyer handed to them during the interview was to be given back, or was theirs to keep. Only seven respondents were asked this question, but all seven said that they would think that an unlaminated flyer handed to them would be intended as theirs to keep. Four respondents were asked if they would think a laminated flyer was theirs to keep or to give back, and all four said they would think they were supposed to give it back to the field representative.

Next, we asked respondents if they would want to keep the flyer if an interviewer used it in an interview. Out of nine respondents asked this question, five answered that they would not want to keep it (though one of these five did state that he would want to keep a laminated version.) The other four would want to keep it. One told us he would want to do so “so I know the information they gave me.” Another said he would “just to have something to read and know I participated. Memorabilia,” and a third told us she “just always keep[s] stuff like this.”

Another issue we wanted to consider was whether respondents would rather hold the flyer themselves, or have an interviewer hold it and point out relevant details. Eight out of ten respondents stated strongly that they would want to hold it themselves. One woman felt that it would be insulting for an interviewer to hold the information for her. Another said strongly, “I don’t need you to hold my paper for me!” Two other respondents were okay with interviewers holding the flyers initially in order to point out specific things, but both talked about wanting to be given the option to hold it and read it for themselves as well.

Considerations and Recommendations

Potential Issue with a Picture

Though most respondents were able to identify the intended themes of housing, healthcare, and busing from the pictures, five respondents had some difficulty in discerning what the picture of the field was supposed to be, saying things like, “Maybe agriculture area?” and “One on a farm with a garden or whatever it is.” They also spontaneously made comments voicing their questions about the purpose of the picture. One stated,

“Now I don’t understand where the farming—cause this looks like a farm to me—where that would come in. Is it a farm? I’m thinking in my head food, grocery stores...”

Another said, “I’m not sure about this farm either, what it would have to do with the Census. On the other hand, the comments about this picture may be primarily due to the fact that our respondents are mostly familiar with urban environments. One respondent who had a rural background as a farmer in the South recognized the picture as a cotton field immediately, saying, “And bein’ that I was a farmer, that damn field is real cotton.” So, perhaps while this picture may not be one that urban populations identify with, it might be easily recognized by respondents who live in rural areas, at least those in the South.

Recommendation: Reconsider using a farm picture altogether, or replace the current picture with a more broadly recognized representation of farm/rural life.

Design Feature

A couple of respondents suggested creating a better sense of definition between the title and the body of the FAQ section. We recommend doing this so that the flyer is easier for respondents to read, particularly if they are not holding it.

Recommendation: Separate the title from the body of the text by moving the title up a few lines. That would give us the separation of title from body, as well as give us two extra lines for positive motivational messages in answers 3 and 5.

Laminated and Unlaminated Flyers

Respondents seem to understand that laminated flyers are to be given back to an interviewer while unlaminated ones are theirs to keep, if they choose to do so. Half of respondents wanted to keep the flyer, while the other half did not.

Recommendation: Have field representatives use laminated flyers primarily, but carry some unlaminated flyers to give out to respondents who express an interest in keeping one. In this small, non-random sample, about half of our respondents said they would want a copy to keep, but this was after we asked them a direct question about it. While we cannot say that the same proportion would hold in the actual data collection in 2010, the results suggest we do not need to print unlaminated copies for all persons contacted during the personal visit phase.

Hold up flyer or give to respondent?

Respondents overwhelmingly preferred being able to hold the flyers for themselves, and a few indicated that they felt it would be rude for a field representative to hold it in front of them and point out things. Therefore, if a field representative chooses to point something out to a person, he or she should also offer to let the person hold the flyer to look at it as well. (However, field interviewers should also take into account respondents’ individual situations and watch for any cues that might indicate sight difficulties or low levels of literacy, and potentially avoid handing flyers to such individuals with the expectation that they read the information, so as not to embarrass them.)

Recommendation: Have interviewers point first to relevant section of flyer, but then hand it directly to the respondent so that he or she may read it.

Summary of Changes Made to the Final Flyer for Use in 2010

In July 2009, after cognitive testing had been completed, the ACS Messaging Project Working Group met to discuss the results of the testing and decide what, if any, changes should be made to the flyer. Three significant changes were made (see Figures 2 and 4 for revised Sides 1 and 2 of the flyer for use in the field in 2010).

The first change is that an additional sentence was added to the answer for Question 3, following the suggestion of a respondent to soften the statement the current answer that “your response is important and required by law.” That respondent suggested adding a positive message about how your answers are beneficial. We agreed with his suggestion, thinking that a positive message could also be helpful with persons who do not like to be told what they have to do, for those in linguistically-isolated households and for those who just forgot to send it in. As it turned out, we had just recently developed, tested, and finalized “carrot” type language for a new third ACS postcard and new third cover letter intended for the same population we are targeting for this flyer: mail nonresponders for whom we had no phone numbers who fell into the final nonresponder pool from which the final personal visit sample would be drawn for the final followup (Schwede 2008a, 2008b). We took the wording from that cognitive testing and added it after the existing text (new sentence is in italics):

Yes. Your response to both is important and required by law (Title 13, U.S. Code). *Your responses will also help provide local and national leaders with the information they need for planning and for programs.*

Second, the group decided to re-order the sequence of the questions presented on the flyer. The order used in cognitive testing was:

- 1.) What is the difference between the American Community Survey and the Census?
- 2.) Didn't I already answer the Census?
- 3.) Do I have to answer both the American Community Survey and the Census?
- 4.) Why was I chosen for the American Community Survey?
- 5.) Why can't you use my Census answers for the American Community Survey?

The order was changed to:

- 1.) Didn't I already answer the Census?
- 2.) What is the difference between the American Community Survey and the Census?
- 3.) Do I have to answer both the American Community Survey and the Census?
- 4.) Why can't you use my Census answers for the American Community Survey?
- 5.) Why was I chosen for the American Community Survey?

The group anticipated that this change might place respondents' most frequently asked questions nearer to the top of the page, and be generally more reflective of a respondent's thought process as he or she learned about the ACS.

The third change that was made involved the picture at the bottom of the flyer of a rural area with a cotton field and some buildings that appear to be farm houses or barns. Many respondents

had trouble determining what this picture was supposed to represent, perhaps due to the fact that they found it difficult to tell what is growing in the field in the foreground. Thus, the picture was changed to a graphic with a much larger farm-like building with a less distracting and ambiguous field in front, with the hope that the new graphic is a more iconic and recognizable version of the rural scene the ACS wishes to convey.

Additionally, some minor wording changes were made in the captions on side 2 of the flyer. The revised, updated flyer for 2010 is shown in Figures 2 and 4.

References:

Davis, M. C. and J. Tancreto. 2008. Developing an American Community Survey Plan to Test Messages to Use in 2010. Internal document, June 17, 2008.

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Figure 1: Side 1 of the Version of the ACS Flyer that was Cognitively Tested

The American Community Survey and the 2010 Census

What is the difference between the American Community Survey and the Census?

- The American Community Survey (ACS) is conducted every year to provide up to date information about the social and economic needs of your community. The ACS shows how people live – our education, housing, jobs, and more. For example, results may be used to decide where new schools, hospitals, and fire stations are needed.
- The Census is conducted once every 10 years to provide an official count of the entire U.S. population to Congress.

Didn't I already answer the Census?

You may have answered the Census, but your address has also been chosen to be part of a randomly selected sample for the American Community Survey.

Do I have to answer both the American Community Survey and the Census?

Yes. Your response to both is important and required by law (Title 13, U.S. Code).

Why was I chosen for the American Community Survey?

The Census Bureau chose this address—not you personally—as part of a randomly selected sample.

Why can't you use my Census answers for the American Community Survey?

The American Community Survey includes questions that are not asked by the Census, and the two serve different purposes.



Figure 2: Side 1 of the Revised, Final Version of the ACS Flyer for 2010

The American Community Survey and the 2010 Census

Didn't I already answer the Census?

You may have answered the Census, but your address has also been chosen to be part of a randomly selected sample for the American Community Survey.

What is the difference between the American Community Survey and the Census?

- The American Community Survey (ACS) is conducted every year to provide up-to-date information about the social and economic needs to your community. The ACS shows how people live – our education, housing, jobs, and more. For example, results may be used to decide where new schools, hospitals, and fire stations are needed.
- The Census is conducted once every 10 years to provide an official count of the entire U.S. population to Congress.

Do I have to answer both the American Community Survey and the Census?

Yes. Your response to both is important and required by law (Title 13, U.S. Code). Your responses will also help provide local and national leaders with the information they need for planning and for programs.

Why can't you use my Census answers for the American Community Survey?

The American Community Survey includes questions that are not asked by the Census, and the two serve different purposes.

Why was I chosen for the American Community Survey?

The Census Bureau chose this address—not you personally—as part of a randomly selected sample.



U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

<www.census.gov/acs>

Census 2010 Form

Every address receives a Census form

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

This is the official form for all the people at this address. It is quick and easy, and your answers are protected by law.

Use a blue or black pen.
Start here

The Census must count every person living in the United States on April 1, 2010.

Before you answer Question 1, count the people living in this house, apartment, or mobile home using our guidelines.

- Count all people, including babies, who live and sleep here most of the time.
- The Census Bureau also conducts counts in institutions and other places, so:
 - Do not count anyone living away either at college or in the Armed Forces.
 - Do not count anyone in a nursing home, jail, prison, detention facility, etc., on April 1, 2010.
 - Leave these people off your form, even if they will return to live here after they leave college, the nursing home, the military, jail, etc. Otherwise, they may be counted twice.

The Census must also include people without a permanent place to stay, so:

- if someone who has no permanent place to stay is staying here on April 1, 2010, count that person. Otherwise, he or she may be missed in the census.

1. How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2010?

Number of people =

2. Were there any additional people staying here April 1, 2010 that you did not include in Question 1? Mark if that apply.

Children, such as newborn babies or foster children
 Relatives, such as adult children, cousins, or in-laws
 Nonrelatives, such as roommates or live-in baby sitters
 People staying here temporarily
 No additional people

3. Is this house, apartment, or mobile home —
Mark ONE box.

Owned by you or someone in this household with a mortgage or loan? Include home equity loans.
 Owned by you or someone in this household free and clear? (without a mortgage or loan?)
 Rented?
 Occupied without payment of rent?

4. What is your telephone number? We say it if we don't understand an answer.

Area Code + Number
 - -

OMB No. 0907-0019-C; Approval Expires 12/31/2011.
 Form ID: 510-0000

5. Please provide information for each person living here. Start with a person living here who owns or rents this house, apartment, or mobile home. If the owner or renter lives somewhere else, start with any adult living here. This will be Person 1.

What is Person 1's name? First name below.

Last Name

First Name M

6. What is Person 1's sex? Mark ONE box.

Male Female

7. What is Person 1's age and what is Person 1's date of birth? Please report babies as age 0 when the child is less than 1 year old.

Age on April 1, 2010

Print numbers in boxes.
 Month Day Year of birth

→ NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 8 about Hispanic origin and Question 9 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.

8. Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
 Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
 Yes, Puerto Rican
 Yes, Cuban
 Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — *Provide by example: Argentinian, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.*

9. What is Person 1's race? Mark one or more boxes.

White
 Black, African Am., or Negro
 American Indian or Alaska Native — *Provide of ancestry/people.*

Asian Indian Japanese Native Hawaiian
 Chinese Korean Guamanian or Chamorro
 Filipino Vietnamese Samoan
 Other Asian — *Print race by example: Filip, Bangla, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.*

Other Pacific Islander — *Print race by example: Fijian, Tongan, and so on.*

Some other race — *Print race.*

10. Does Person 1 sometimes live or stay somewhere else?

No Yes — Mark if that apply.

In college housing For child custody
 In the military In jail or prison
 At a seasonal In a nursing home or second residence For another reason

→ If more people were counted in Question 1, continue with Person 2.

The 2010 Census asks questions on: age, sex, Hispanic origin, race, relationship, home: owned or rented.

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

American Community Survey Form

A random sample of addresses also receive an ACS form

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

THE American Community Survey

Please complete this form and return it as soon as possible after receiving it in the mail.

This form asks for information about the people who are living or staying at the address on the mailing label and about the house, apartment, or mobile home located at the address on the mailing label.

Start Here

1. Please print today's date.
 Month Day Year

2. Please print the name and telephone number of the person who is filling out this form. We may contact you if there is a question.

Last Name

First Name M

Area Code + Number
 -

3. How many people are living or staying at this address?
 • INCLUDE everyone who is living or staying here for more than 2 months.
 • INCLUDE yourself if you are living here for more than 2 months.
 • INCLUDE anyone else staying here who does not have another place to stay, even if they are here for 2 months or less.
 • DO NOT INCLUDE anyone who is living somewhere else for more than 2 months, such as a college student living away or someone in the Armed Forces on deployment.

Number of people

4. Fill out pages 2, 3, and 4 for everyone, including yourself, who is living or staying at this address for more than 2 months. Then complete the rest of the form.

If you need help or have questions about completing this form, please call 1-800-368-7271. The telephone call is free.

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD): Call 1-800-368-4930. The telephone call is free.

¿NECESITA AYUDA? Si usted habla español o necesita ayuda para completar su cuestionario, llame sin cargo alguno al 1-877-835-6225. Usado también puede pedir un cuestionario en español o completar su entrevista por teléfono con un intérprete que habla español.

For more information about the American Community Survey, visit our web site at <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
 FORM ACS-112009KFI
 OMB No. 1607-0170

The ACS asks additional questions on topics such as: education, employment, health insurance, heating costs, transportation.

ACS-54 (July 2009)

Figure 3: Side 2 of the Version of the ACS Flyer that was Cognitively Tested

Census 2010 Form

Every address receives a census form

This is the official form for all the people at this address. It is quick and easy, and your answers are protected by law.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Start here

The Census must count every person living in the United States on April 1, 2010. Before you answer Question 1, count the people living in this house, apartment, or mobile home using our guidelines.

- Count all people, including babies, who live and sleep here most of the time.

The Census Bureau also conducts counts in institutions and other places, so:

- Do not count anyone living away either at college or in the Armed Forces.
- Do not count anyone in a nursing home, jail, prison, detention facility, etc., on April 1, 2010.
- Leave these people off your form, even if they will return to live here after they leave college, the nursing home, the military, jail, etc. Otherwise, they may be counted twice.

The Census must also include people without a permanent place to stay, so:

- If someone who has no permanent place to stay is staying here on April 1, 2010, count that person. Otherwise, he or she may be missed in the census.

1. How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2010?

Number of people =

2. Were there any additional people staying here April 1, 2010 that you did not include in Question 1? Mark all that apply.

Children, such as newborn babies or foster children
 Relatives, such as adult children, cousins, or in-laws
 Nonrelatives, such as roommates or live-in baby sitters
 People staying here temporarily
 No additional people

3. Is this house, apartment, or mobile home — Mark ONE box.

Owned by you or someone in this household with a mortgage or loan? Includes home equity loans.
 Owned by you or someone in this household free and clear (without a mortgage or loan)?
 Rented?
 Occupied without payment of rent?

4. What is your telephone number? We may call if we don't understand an answer.

Area Code + Number - -

OMB No. 0607-0219-C. Approval Expires 12/31/2011.
Form D-1 (2-2008)

5. Please provide information for each person living here. Start with a person living here who owns or rents this house, apartment, or mobile home. If the owner or renter lives somewhere else, start with any adult living here. This will be Person 1.

What is Person 1's name? Print name below.

Last Name

First Name MI

6. What is Person 1's sex? Mark ONE box.
 Male Female

7. What is Person 1's age and what is Person 1's date of birth? Please report babies as age 0 when the child is less than 1 year old. Print numbers in boxes.

Age on April 1, 2010

Month Day Year of birth

→ NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 8 about Hispanic origin and Question 9 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.

8. Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
 No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
 Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
 Yes, Puerto Rican
 Yes, Cuban
 Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — *Print name or example: Argentine, Guatemalan, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.*

9. What is Person 1's race? Mark one or more boxes.

White
 Black, African Am., or Negro
 American Indian or Alaska Native — *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.*

Asian Indian Japanese Native Hawaiian
 Chinese Korean Guamanian or Chamorro
 Filipino Vietnamese Samoan
 Other Asian — *Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.* Other Pacific Islander — *Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.*

10. Does Person 1 sometimes live or stay somewhere else?
 No Yes — Mark all that apply.

In college housing For child custody
 In the military In jail or prison
 At a seasonal or second residence In a nursing home
 For another reason

→ If more people were counted in Question 1, continue with Person 2.

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

The 2010 Census asks questions on: age, sex, Hispanic origin, race, relationship, and home (owned or rented).

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

American Community Survey Form

A random sample of addresses also receive an ACS form

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

THE American Community Survey

Please complete this form and return it as soon as possible after receiving it in the mail.

This form asks for information about the people who are living or staying at the address on the mailing label and about the house, apartment, or mobile home located at the address on the mailing label.

If you need help or have questions about completing this form, please call 1-800-354-7271. The telephone call is free.

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD): Call 1-800-582-8330. The telephone call is free.

¿NECESITA AYUDA? Si usted habla español y necesita ayuda para completar su cuestionario, llame sin cargo alguno al 1-877-833-5625. Usted también puede pedir un cuestionario en español o completar su entrevista por teléfono con un entrevistador que habla español.

For more information about the American Community Survey, visit our web site at: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Form ACS-1(2010)KFI (2-12-2009)

OMB No. 0607-0210

Start Here

→ Please print today's date.

Month Day Year

→ Please print the name and telephone number of the person who is filling out this form. We may contact you if there is a question.

Last Name

First Name MI

Area Code + Number -

→ How many people are living or staying at this address?
 • INCLUDE everyone who is living or staying here for more than 2 months.
 • INCLUDE yourself if you are living here for more than 2 months.
 • INCLUDE anyone else staying here who does not have another place to stay, even if they are here for 2 months or less.
 • DO NOT INCLUDE anyone who is living somewhere else for more than 2 months, such as a college student living away or someone in the Armed Forces on deployment.

Number of people

→ Fill out pages 2, 3, and 4 for everyone, including yourself, who is living or staying at this address for more than 2 months. Then complete the rest of the form.

The ACS asks additional questions on topics such as: education, employment, health insurance, heating costs, and transportation.

ACS-54 (August 2009)

Figure 4: Side 2 of the Revised, Final Version of the ACS Flyer for 2010