

Preliminary Results from the 2016 American Community Survey Content Test

Presentation for the ACS Data Users Conference,
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Objective

- Test whether changes to question wording, response categories, and definitions of underlying constructs improve the quality of data collected.

The Process

Propose Revisions

May – November 2013

- Agencies submitted requests for proposed changes or additions
- Interagency Council on Statistical Policy (ICSP) Subcommittee for the ACS reviewed proposals
- Topical subcommittees formed for approved proposals
- Topical subcommittees submitted proposed wording for cognitive testing

Cognitive Testing

January 2014 – February 2015

- Cognitive testing was conducted
- Final recommendations for question wording for field testing were provided by the Topical subcommittees and OMB Interagency Subcommittees
- Final wording for field testing was approved by OMB, in consultation with the Census Bureau and the ICSP Subcommittee for the ACS

Field Testing

March – June 2016

- Data collected for the field test via Internet, mail, CATI, and CAPI (March-May)
- Content Follow-Up Reinterview continued into June

Analysis and Results

July 2016 – May 2017

- Data analyzed and results compiled into reports
- Stakeholder briefings are underway to solicit feedback on results
- Final recommendations to be submitted for OMB approval
- *Implementation of approved changes is planned for the 2019 ACS*

Topics Tested

- Health Insurance
- Weeks Worked
- Computer and Internet Use
- Journey to Work
- Race and Hispanic Origin*
- Industry and Occupation
- Class of Worker
- Telephone Service
- Retirement Income
- Relationship*

** The final decisions for Relationship, Race, and Hispanic origin will be based on the results of the decennial tests and made in consultation with OMB.*

Overview of the Methodology of the 2016 ACS Content Test

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Outline

- Test Design
- Data Collection
- Analysis Metrics
- Limitations
- Format for Topic-Specific Results

Test Design: Experimental Design

- Split-sample experiment
 - Production version of the question (Control)
 - New version of the question (Test)
- Control differs from production version:
 - Race and Hispanic Origin
 - Telephone Service
 - Health Insurance Premiums and Subsidies

Test Design: Sample Design

- Separate sample from production ACS
- Nationally representative sample of 70,000 addresses (excluding Group Quarters, Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico)
- Oversampled low self-response areas
- Half of the sample was assigned to the control questionnaire and the other half to the test questionnaire

Data Collection

- Same data collection protocol as production
 - **Self-Response** via Internet and Mail (mid-Feb. – Mar.)
 - Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (**CATI**)(Apr.)
 - Computer-Assisted Personal Interview (**CAPI**) (May)
- English and Spanish only
- Unit response rate was 93.5% for both Test and Control

Data Collection: Content Follow-Up (CFU)

- Telephone reinterview to measure response reliability
 - Universe: all cases that completed the original Content Test interview and met eligibility criteria
 - Subset of questions, including all tested topics except Telephone, and some additional questions for context
 - Conducted over 90% of the time with the same respondent as the original interview
 - Unit response rate was 45.7% for Control and 44.8% for Test (not statistically significant)

Analysis Metrics

- Item Missing Data Rates
- Distributions of Response Categories
- Benchmark Comparisons
- Response Reliability
- Topic-Specific Metrics

Analysis Metrics:

1. Item Missing Data Rate

- Measures question clarity, respondent sensitivity, and respondent knowledge of the data needed to answer the question
- Proportion of eligible units (housing or persons) for which are required response is missing

Analysis Metrics:

2. Distribution of Response Categories

- Assesses whether question changes affected the resulting estimates
- Rao-Scott Chi-squared test for distribution
 - If significant, then conducted t-tests for each category

Analysis Metrics:

3. Benchmark Comparisons

- Measure differences from other reliable sources
- No statistical testing conducted to compare content test and benchmark estimates
 - Checked if estimate falls within the benchmark estimate's confidence interval

Analysis Metrics:

4. Response Reliability

- Measures the consistency of the answers provided in the original interview as determined by answers provided in the CFU telephone reinterview
- The larger the difference between the answers, the greater the inconsistency

Limitations

- English and Spanish only
- Not conducted in Group Quarters, Alaska, Hawaii, or Puerto Rico
- No weighting adjustments, no imputation, minimal editing
- Content Followup: telephone only, different respondent in some cases

Topic-Specific Results

- Justification for Testing
- Questions Tested
- Findings
 - Mode differences not presented unless they impact findings
- Symbols Used in Presentations
 - * Statistical results are significant
 - ✓ Finding supports the test version
 - ✗ Finding does not support the test version
 - ⚠ Results are mixed

Health Insurance

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Health Insurance: Objective

- Increase the report of Medicaid and other means-tested programs
 - Research suggests Medicaid is underreported
- Decrease the overreport of direct-purchase coverage
- Capture changes introduced by the Affordable Care Act
 - e.g. HealthCare.gov, Subsidized Marketplace coverage

Health Insurance Coverage Questions Tested

Control Version

Test Version

① Reordering

15. Is this person CURRENTLY covered by any of the

I am now going to ask you some questions about Person Two's health insurance and health coverage. Do NOT include plans that cover only one type of service, such as dental, drug or vision plans.
? [F1]

Earlier I recorded that Person One is currently covered by health insurance through an employer or union. Does Person Two have this same type of health insurance or health coverage?

♦ If the respondent says this person has health coverage through the military, mark '2' and tell them that military health insurance/coverage will be discussed later.

1. Yes

2. No

Health Ins - Introduction	<input type="text" value="2"/>	Health Ins - Premium
Health Ins - Employer	<input type="text"/>	Health Ins - Subsidy
Health Ins - Medicare	<input type="text" value="2"/>	
Health Ins - Medicaid	<input type="text" value="2"/>	
Health Ins - Direct	<input type="text" value="2"/>	
Health Ins - Military	<input type="text" value="2"/>	
Health Ins - Veteran's Administration	<input type="text" value="2"/>	
Health Ins - Indian	<input type="text" value="2"/>	
Health Ins - Other	<input type="text" value="2"/>	
Other health ins	<input type="text"/>	
Health Ins - Other	<input type="text"/>	

Health Insurance: Findings

Health Insurance Coverage 1

- ✘ Overall rate of persons with health insurance was higher in the control version (91.4%) than in the test (89.1%).
- Significant change in the distribution.

	Category	Test Percent	Control Percent	Test - Control	Adjusted p-value
	<i>Private</i>				
✘	Employer-based	51.3	55.0	-3.7*	<0.01
✓	Direct purchase	11.3	13.0	-1.7*	<0.01
	TRICARE	2.6	2.8	-0.2*	0.49
	<i>Public</i>				
⚠	Medicare	16.7	15.7	1.0*	0.07
✘	Medicaid	17.2	17.8	-0.7	0.54
	VA	1.9	2.0	-0.2*	0.54

Health Insurance: Findings

Health Insurance Coverage 2

- ✓ Test version (3.0%) had a lower proportion of write-in responses than the control version (4.5%).
- ✓ Test version (10.6%) also had a lower proportion of persons with multiple types of insurance coverage than the control version (13.6%).
- ✓ ✗ Neither item missing data rates nor response reliability metrics differed between versions.

Findings support the Control Version

Health Insurance Premium/Subsidy Questions

Control* Version

17 a. **Is there a premium for this plan?** *A premium is a fixed amount of money paid on a regular basis for health coverage. It does not include copays, deductibles, or other expenses such as prescription costs.*

- Yes
 No → SKIP to question 18a

b. **Does this person or another family member receive a tax credit or subsidy based on family income to help pay the premium?**

- Yes
 No

Test* Version

16 a. **Does this person or another family member pay a premium for this health insurance plan?** *A premium is a fixed amount of money paid on a regular basis for health coverage. It does not include copays, deductibles, or other expenses such as prescription costs.*

- Yes
 No → SKIP to question 17a

b. **Based on family income, does this person or another family member receive financial assistance through a subsidy or tax credit to help pay part or all of the cost of the premium for this plan?**

- Yes
 No

* Neither version currently appears on the ACS

Health Insurance: Findings

Health Insurance Premiums and Subsidies

- ✗ Rates of subsidized Marketplace coverage did not differ between versions, but the control version was shorter.
- ✓ The test version (2.6%) had a lower item missing data rate than the control version (3.6%) for premiums.
 - No difference for subsidies.
- ✓ Response reliability metrics did not differ between versions.

Findings support the Control Version

Weeks Worked

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Question Text History

2005 – 2007 Version

33 During the PAST 12 MONTHS, how many **WEEKS** did this person work? *Count paid vacation, paid sick leave, and military service.*

Weeks

Current Production Version

39 a. During the PAST 12 MONTHS (52 weeks), did this person work 50 or more weeks? Count paid time off as work.

Yes → SKIP to question 40

No

b. How many weeks DID this person work, even for a few hours, including paid vacation, paid sick leave, and military service?

50 to 52 weeks

48 to 49 weeks

40 to 47 weeks

27 to 39 weeks

14 to 26 weeks

13 weeks or less

Justification for Testing

- Lost the ability to provide continuous measures for the number of weeks worked, such as means, medians, and aggregates
- Stakeholders have expressed the need for these types of estimates, as well as additional specificity for weeks worked, particularly for use with hours worked, income, and occupation

Question Tested

Control Version

- 39** a. During the PAST 12 MONTHS (52 weeks), did this person work 50 or more weeks? Count paid time off as work.
- Yes → SKIP to question 40
- No
- b. How many weeks DID this person work, even for a few hours, including paid vacation, paid sick leave, and military service?
- 50 to 52 weeks
- 48 to 49 weeks
- 40 to 47 weeks
- 27 to 39 weeks
- 14 to 26 weeks
- 13 weeks or less

Test Version

- 39** a. During the PAST 12 MONTHS (52 weeks), did this person work EVERY week? Count paid vacation, paid sick leave, and military service as work.
- Yes → SKIP to question 40
- No
- b. During the PAST 12 MONTHS (52 weeks), how many WEEKS did this person work? Include paid time off and include weeks when the person only worked for a few hours.
- Weeks
-

Decision Criteria

1	The estimate of full-time year-round workers in the test version should remain consistent with that in the control version. Compare to benchmarks if inconsistent.
2	The test version should not adversely impact item missing data rates (more concerning for part A than part B).
3	The test version should not significantly impact earnings estimates.
4	The test version should not adversely impact response reliability or the distribution of weeks worked. Compare distributions to benchmarks if inconsistent.

Findings: Full-Time, Year-Round Rates

(Decision Criterion 1)

- Full-time, year-round rate higher in the test version

Category	Test Percent (n=18,851)	Control Percent (n=19,232)	Test minus Control	P-Value
Full-time, year-round	67.1 (0.6)	65.9 (0.6)	1.2 (0.8)*	0.06

- Test rate within 90% confidence interval of CPS Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC)

Category	Test Percent (n=18,851)	Control Percent (n=19,232)	2016 CPS Percent (n=91,008)
Full-time, year-round	67.1 (0.6)*	65.9 (0.6)	68.6 (1.3)

“*” and bolding indicate the estimate is within CPS ASEC's 90 percent confidence interval

Findings: Item Missing Data Rates

(Decision Criterion 2)

- Part A item missing data rates not significantly different
- Part B item missing data rate one percentage point higher

Category	Test Sample Size	Test Percent	Control Sample Size	Control Percent	Test minus Control	P-Value
Part A	21,120	2.5 (0.1)	21,524	2.4 (0.2)	<0.1 (0.23)	0.42
Part B	6,151	4.3 (0.4)	6,760	3.3 (0.4)	1.0 (0.6)*	0.04

Findings: ACS Earnings

(Decision Criterion 3)

- No significant differences in ACS-reported earnings

Category	Test Median (\$) (n=16,409)	Control Median (\$) (n=16,846)	Test minus Control (\$)	P-Value
50 to 52 weeks	43,713 (1,160)	45,064 (811)	-1,352 (1,265)	0.29
48 to 49 weeks	27,246 (3,436)	27,067 (2,192)	178 (3,894)	0.96
40 to 47 weeks	21,789(1,148)	22,459 (1,340)	-670 (1,827)	0.71
27 to 39 weeks	13,717 (1,389)	12,653 (785)	1,063 (1,478)	0.47
14 to 26 weeks	7,155 (510)	7,184 (372)	-29 (685)	0.97
0 to 13 weeks	2,295 (109)	2,128 (88)	167 (145)	0.25

Findings: LEHD Earnings

(Decision Criterion 3 continued...)

- Median LEHD earnings only higher for “0 to 13 weeks”

Category	Test Median (\$) (n=15,115)	Control Median (\$) (n=15,309)	Test minus Control (\$)	P-Value
50 to 52 weeks	42,512 (546)	42,413 (583)	100 (798)	0.90
48 to 49 weeks	19,254 (2,625)	25,198 (2,625)	-5,944 (3,712)	0.11
40 to 47 weeks	18,521 (1,272)	21,889 (2,321)	-3,368 (2,646)	0.20
27 to 39 weeks	13,296 (1,473)	11,371 (656)	1,926 (1,613)	0.23
14 to 26 weeks	8,956 (905)	8,675 (969)	281 (1,326)	0.83
0 to 13 weeks	4,939 (492)	3,651 (352)	1,288 (605)*	0.03

Findings: Response Reliability

(Decision Criterion 4)

- Response reliability either improved for the test version or was not significantly different between versions
- Analysis also showed the test version to be more consistent overall

Findings: Distributions

(Decision Criterion 4 continued...)

- Full-year rate (“50 to 52 weeks”) higher in test version

Category	Test Percent (n=19,233)	Control Percent (n=19,676)	Test minus Control	Adjusted P-Value
50 to 52 weeks	78.8 (0.5)	77.0 (0.5)	1.9 (0.7)*	0.02
48 to 49 weeks	1.6 (0.1)	2.4 (0.2)	-0.8 (0.2)*	<0.01
40 to 47 weeks	5.3 (0.2)	5.5 (0.2)	-0.2 (0.3)	0.94
27 to 39 weeks	4.1 (0.2)	5.6 (0.2)	-1.5 (0.3)*	<0.01
14 to 26 weeks	5.0 (0.3)	4.2 (0.2)	0.8 (0.3)*	0.03
0 to 13 weeks	5.3 (0.2)	5.3 (0.2)	-0.1 (0.3)	0.94

Findings: Benchmarking to CPS ASEC

(Decision Criterion 4 continued...)

- Most test group rates fell within 90% confidence intervals of CPS ASEC

Category	Test Percent (n=19,233)	Control Percent (n=19,676)	2016 CPS Percent (n=91,008)
50 to 52 weeks	78.8 (0.5)*	77.0 (0.5)	79.2 (1.2)
48 to 49 weeks	1.6 (0.1)*	2.4 (0.2)*	1.9 (0.4)
40 to 47 weeks	5.3 (0.2)*	5.5 (0.2)*	5.1 (0.6)
27 to 39 weeks	4.1 (0.2)*	5.6 (0.2)	4.1 (0.6)
14 to 26 weeks	5.0 (0.3)*	4.2 (0.2)	5.5 (0.6)
0 to 13 weeks	5.3 (0.2)	5.3 (0.2)	4.3 (0.6)

“*” and bolding indicate the estimate is within CPS ASEC's 90 percent confidence interval

Summary

1	The estimate of full-time year-round workers in the test version should remain consistent with that in the control version. Compare to benchmarks if inconsistent.	
2	The test version should not adversely impact item missing data rates (more concerning for part A than part B).	
3	The test version should not significantly impact earnings estimates.	
4	The test version should not adversely impact response reliability or the distribution of weeks worked. Compare distributions to benchmarks if inconsistent.	

Summary

- The Content Test results suggest that changing part B of *weeks worked* to an open-ended response, along with changes to the question text, will allow for greater specificity without adversely affecting data quality

Computer and Internet Use

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Computer and Internet Use: Objective

- Revise computer and Internet use questions to keep up with the rapid changes in technology and terminology
- Improve measurement of households with handheld devices reporting an Internet subscription or a mobile broadband subscription
- *The test questions were implemented in 2016 ACS production, so this test serves as a validation of the early implementation decision.*

Computer and Internet Use: Questions Tested

Types of Computers

Control Version

9 At this house, apartment, or mobile home – do you or any member of this household own or use any of the following computers?

- *EXCLUDE GPS devices, digital music players, and devices with only limited computing capabilities, for example: household appliances.*

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Desktop, laptop, netbook, or notebook computer | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Handheld computer, smart mobile phone, or other handheld wireless computer | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Some other type of computer
<i>Specify</i> ↴ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Test Version

9 At this house, apartment, or mobile home – do you or any member of this household own or use any of the following types of computers?

- | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Desktop or laptop | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Smartphone | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Tablet or other portable wireless computer | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Some other type of computer
<i>Specify</i> ↴ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Computer and Internet Use: Questions Tested

Internet Access

Control Version

- 10** At this house, apartment, or mobile home – do you or any member of this household access the Internet?
- Yes, with a subscription to an Internet service
 - Yes, without a subscription to an Internet service → *SKIP to question 12*
 - No Internet access at this house, apartment, or mobile home → *SKIP to question 12*

Test Version

- 10** At this house, apartment, or mobile home – do you or any member of this household **have access to the Internet?**
- Yes **by paying a cell phone company** or Internet service provider
 - Yes **without paying a cell phone company** or Internet service provider → *SKIP to question 12*
 - No access to the Internet at this house, apartment, or mobile home → *SKIP to question 12*

Computer and Internet Use: Questions Tested

Internet Subscription

Control Version

11 At this house, apartment, or mobile home - do you or any member of this household subscribe to the Internet using -

	Yes	No
a. Dial-up service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. DSL service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Cable modem service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Fiber-optic service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Mobile broadband plan for a computer or a cell phone?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Satellite Internet service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Some other service? <i>Specify service</i> ↘	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Test Version

11 Do you or any member of this household have access to the Internet using a -

	Yes	No
a. Cellular data plan for a smartphone or other mobile device?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Broadband (high speed) Internet service such as cable, fiber optic, or DSL service installed in this household?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Satellite Internet service installed in this household?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Dial-up Internet service installed in this household?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Some other service? <i>Specify service</i> ↘	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Computer and Internet Use: Findings

Types of Computers 1

- Significant change in the distribution.

	Category	Test Percent	Control Percent	Test minus Control	Adjusted P-value
✗	Desktop or laptop	78.6	80.7	-2.1 *	<0.01
✓	Smartphone/tablet vs. Handheld	82.4	79.8	2.6 *	<0.01
✓	Other computer	4.6	7.9	-3.3 *	<0.01

Computer and Internet Use: Findings

Types of Computers 2

- ✓ The test version increased reliability of responses to the handheld (smartphone or tablet in test) and other type of computer categories.
- ✓ There was no difference in item missing data rates between the treatments.

Findings support proceeding with the Test Version, validating the decision to implement these changes on the 2016 ACS.

Computer and Internet Use: Findings

Internet Access 1

✓ Significant change in the distribution

Category	Test Percent	Control Percent	Test minus Control	P-value
Access with subscription	83.8	82.3	1.5 *	<0.01
No subscription	16.2	17.7	-1.5*	<0.01

✓ Proportions, households with smartphone/tablet or handheld

Category	Test Percent	Control Percent	Test minus Control	P-value
Access with subscription	92.4	90.5	1.9 *	<0.01

Computer and Internet Use: Findings

Internet Access 2

- ✓ Test version also increased reliability in responses for those with Internet access with or without a subscription.
- ✓ Test version (2.0%) had a lower missing data rate than the control (2.3%).
- ✓ There was no impact on multiple responses in mail mode.

Findings support proceeding with the Test Version, validating the decision to implement these changes on the 2016 ACS.

Computer and Internet Use: Findings

Internet Subscription Type 1

- Significant change in the distribution

	Category	Test Percent	Control Percent	Test minus Control	Adjusted P-value
x	High speed vs. DSL/Cable/Fiber-optic	81.4	85.0	-3.6 *	<0.01
✓	Cellular data plan vs. Mobile broadband	79.9	39.7	40.2 *	<0.01

- ✓ Proportions, households with smartphone/tablet or

Category	Test Percent	Control Percent	Test minus Control	P-value
Cellular data plan vs. Mobile broadband	85.4	43.3	42.2 *	<0.01

Computer and Internet Use: Findings

Internet Subscription Type 2

- ✓ Test version of the cellular data plan category had greater response reliability than the control version of the mobile broadband category.
- ✓ Test version (0.8%) of the cellular data plan category had less missing data than the control version (1.2%) of the mobile broadband category.

Findings support proceeding with the Test Version, validating the decision to implement these changes on the 2016 ACS.

Journey to Work & Commute Mode

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Journey to Work: Objective

- Commute Mode:
 - Update and clarify the terminology
- Time of Departure:
 - Address privacy concerns by phrasing the question in a less intrusive way

Journey to Work: Questions Tested

Commuter Mode

Control Version

32 How did this person usually get to work **LAST WEEK**? *If this person usually used more than one method of transportation during the trip, mark (X) the box of the one used for most of the distance.*

<input type="checkbox"/> Car, truck, or van	<input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycle
<input type="checkbox"/> Bus or trolley bus	<input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle
<input type="checkbox"/> Streetcar or trolley car	<input type="checkbox"/> Walked
<input type="checkbox"/> Subway or elevated	<input type="checkbox"/> Worked at home → <i>SKIP to question 40a</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Railroad	<input type="checkbox"/> Other method
<input type="checkbox"/> Ferryboat	
<input type="checkbox"/> Taxicab	

Test Version

31 How did this person usually get to work **LAST WEEK**? *Mark ONE box for the method of transportation used for most of the distance.*

<input type="checkbox"/> Car, truck, or van	<input type="checkbox"/> Taxicab
<input type="checkbox"/> Bus	<input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycle
<input type="checkbox"/> Subway or elevated rail	<input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-distance train or commuter rail	<input type="checkbox"/> Walked
<input type="checkbox"/> Light rail, streetcar, or trolley	<input type="checkbox"/> Worked from home → SKIP to question 39a
<input type="checkbox"/> Ferryboat	<input type="checkbox"/> Other method

Journey to Work: Questions Tested

Time of Departure

Control Version

34 What time did this person usually leave home to go to work **LAST WEEK**?

Hour

Minute

:

a.m.
p.m.

Test Version

33 **LAST WEEK**, what time did this person's trip to work usually begin?

Hour

Minute

:

a.m.
p.m.

Journey to Work: Findings

Commute Mode

- ✓ The test did not impact the overall response distribution, the item missing data rate, the response reliability, or any metrics specific to Mode of Commute.
- ✓ The test version performed well in cognitive testing, provides refined language, and shortens instructions to reduce burden.

Findings support proceeding with the Test Version

Journey to Work: Findings

Time of Departure

- ✓ The test did not impact the overall response distribution, the item missing data rate, the response reliability, or how often respondents rounded their response.
- ✓ The test version performed well in cognitive testing and is believed to address some of the perceived sensitivity to the question.

Findings support proceeding with the Test Version

Race & Hispanic Origin

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Standards for Data Collection on Race and Ethnicity

- Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards for race categories:
 - White
 - Black or African American
 - American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN)
 - Asian
 - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (NHPI)
- An additional category is used, Some Other Race (SOR)
- OMB standards for ethnicity categories:
 - Hispanic or Latino
 - Not Hispanic or Latino

Concerns with Current Questions

- Growing number of groups find the race and Hispanic origin questions confusing
- Increasing responses of Some Other Race
- Organizations and community advocates lobbying for changes to the race and Hispanic origin questions, including MENA
- Led to testing of alternative questions in 2015 National Content Test (2015 NCT)

2015 National Content Test (Decennial)

- Tested a combined question format (Hispanic origin and race asked together in one question)
- Tested a distinct Middle Eastern or North African (MENA) category
- Goals were to lower nonresponse, improve accuracy and reliability, and collect detailed data for all major groups
- Nationally-representative sample of 1.2 million households, including Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico
- NCT is the primary content test leading to the 2020 Census

Race and Hispanic Origin: Objective

- Opportunity to test alternative questions in the ACS environment and examine other data not available in the 2015 NCT
 - Evaluate self-administered data collection modes
 - Assess the race and ethnicity questions against demographic and socioeconomic data
 - Compare the race and ethnicity results to data from the ancestry question

Mail

Control (Separate Questions)

→ **NOTE:** Please answer **BOTH** Question 5 about Hispanic origin and Question 6 about race. For this survey, Hispanic origins are not races.

5 **Is Person 5 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?** Mark all boxes that apply **AND** print origins. Note, you may report more than one group.

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 details, for example, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, etc. ↗

6 **What is Person 5's race?** Mark all boxes that apply **AND** print origins in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.

White – Print details, for example, German, Lebanese, Egyptian, etc. ↗

Black or African Am. – Print details, for example, African American, Jamaican, Nigerian, etc. ↗

Jamaican

American Indian or Alaska Native – Print name of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo Nation, Mayan, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, etc. ↗

<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese	<input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian
<input type="checkbox"/> Filipino	<input type="checkbox"/> Korean	<input type="checkbox"/> Samoan
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Japanese	<input type="checkbox"/> Chamorro
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian – Print details, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc. ↗	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander – Print details, for example, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc. ↗	

Some other race – Print race(s) or origin(s). ↗

New

New

Test (Combined Question)

5 **Which categories describe Person 2?** Mark all boxes that apply **AND** print details in the spaces below.

White – Print details, for example, German, Irish, English, etc. ↗

Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin – Print details, for example, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Colombian, etc. ↗

Black or African Am. – Print details, for example, African American, Jamaican, Nigerian, etc. ↗

Asian – Print details, for example, Chinese, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, etc. ↗

American Indian or Alaska Native – Print name(s) of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo Nation, Mayan, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, etc. ↗

Middle Eastern or North African – Print details, for example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, etc. ↗

Algerian

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – Print details, for example, Native Hawaiian, Chamorro, Fijian, etc. ↗

Some other race, ethnicity, or origin – Print details. ↗

Internet

Control (Separate Questions)

6 What is T L MMMM's race? Select all boxes that apply AND enter origins in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group. (Help)

White - Enter details, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Lebanese, Egyptian, etc.

Black or African Am. - Enter details, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.

American Indian or Alaska Native - Enter details, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.

Chinese

Filipino

Asian Indian

Vietnamese

Korean

Japanese

Other Asian - Enter details, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc.

Native Hawaiian

Samoan

Chamorro

Other Pacific Islander - Enter details, for example, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.

Some other race - Enter race or origin.

Test (Combined Question)

5 Which categories describe rrr? Select all boxes that apply. Note, you may report more than one group. (Help)

White - For example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc.

Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin - For example, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, etc.

Black or African Am. - For example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.

Asian - For example, Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.

American Indian or Alaska Native - For example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.

Middle Eastern or North African - For example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc.

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander - For example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.

Some other race, ethnicity, or origin

→ Select all boxes that apply and/or enter details in the space below. MIDDLE EASTERN OR NORTH AFRICAN (Help)

Lebanese

Iranian

Egyptian

Syrian

Moroccan

Algerian

Enter, for example, Israeli, Iraqi, Tunisian, etc.

Race and Hispanic: Findings (1)

- ✓ Hispanic origin reporting was not significantly different between the versions.
- ✓ Race reporting differed only for White, AIAN, and SOR. Other groups were not affected.

Percentage Reporting Each Race and Ethnicity Category

Race	Test	Control	Test-Control	Adjusted P-value
White	67.7	74.0	-6.3*	<0.01
Hispanic	17.7	17.1	0.5	0.92
Black	12.0	12.8	-0.8	0.71
Asian	6.6	6.9	-0.3	0.92
AIAN	3.1	4.1	-1.0*	0.03
MENA	1.4	1.1	0.3	0.71
NHPI	0.3	0.4	-0.2	0.72
SOR	2.3	8.2	-5.9*	<0.01

Race and Hispanic: Findings (2)

- ✓ The results for demographic and socioeconomic groups generally reflected the results for the total population (age, sex, educational attainment, and housing tenure groups).
- ✓ There was higher detailed reporting in the test treatment than in control (81% compared with 75%).
- ✓ Item missing data rates were lower for the test (0.6%) compared to control (1.4%).

Race and Hispanic: Findings (3)

- ✓ There appear to be no problems with collecting the test question in CATI and CAPI.
- ✓ In the test version, the consistency of race and ethnicity responses with ancestry was higher (74% compared with 73%).
- ✗ In the test version, ancestry missing data rates were higher than control (16% compared with 13%).
- ✓ Reporting patterns in the ACS Content Test support the findings of the 2015 National Content Test.

Final decisions will be made based on consultations with OMB.

Class of Worker and Industry & Occupation

Anthony Martínez

Social, Economic, and Housing
Statistics Division

Background

- The Class of Worker question has been asked in its current version since the 1970 Census
- Class of Worker question revision goals:
 - **Clarify the intent**
 - **Improve the question layout**
 - **Clarify the definition of unpaid family worker**
 - **Improve Active Duty military definition**

Class of Worker: Questions Tested

Control Version

M Answer questions 42 – 47 if this person worked in the past 5 years. Otherwise, SKIP to question 48.

42 – 47 CURRENT OR MOST RECENT JOB ACTIVITY. Describe clearly this person's chief job activity or business last week. If this person had more than one job, describe the one at which this person worked the most hours. If this person had no job or business last week, give information for his/her last job or business.

42 Was this person – Mark (X) ONE box.

- an employee of a PRIVATE FOR-PROFIT company or business, or of an individual, for wages, salary, or commissions?
- an employee of a PRIVATE NOT-FOR-PROFIT, tax-exempt, or charitable organization?
- a local GOVERNMENT employee (city, county, etc.)?
- a state GOVERNMENT employee?
- a Federal GOVERNMENT employee?
- SELF-EMPLOYED in own NOT INCORPORATED business, professional practice, or farm?
- SELF-EMPLOYED in own INCORPORATED business, professional practice, or farm?
- working WITHOUT PAY in family business or farm?

43 For whom did this person work?

If now on active duty in the Armed Forces, mark (X) this box →

and print the branch of the Armed Forces.

Name of company, business, or other employer

Test Version

1

M Answer questions 41a – f if this person worked in the past 5 years. Otherwise, SKIP to question 42.

41 DESCRIPTION OF EMPLOYMENT

The next series of questions is about the type of employment this person had last week.

If this person had more than one job, describe the one at which the most hours were worked. If this person did not work last week, describe the most recent employment in the past five years.

a. Which one of the following best describes this person's employment last week or the most recent employment in the past 5 years? Mark (X) ONE box.

2

PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYEE

- For-profit company or organization
- Non-profit organization (including tax-exempt and charitable organizations)

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE

- Local government (for example: city or county school district)
- State government (including state colleges/universities)
- Active duty U.S. Armed Forces or Commissioned Corps
- Federal government civilian employee

SELF-EMPLOYED OR OTHER

- Owner of non-incorporated business, professional practice, or farm
- Owner of incorporated business, professional practice, or farm
- Worked without pay in a for-profit family business or farm for 15 hours or more per week

3

4

b. What was the name of this person's employer, business, agency, or branch of the Armed Forces?

Class of Worker – Higher Item Missing Data Rates in Mail Mode

Category	Test Percent (n=22,712)	Control Percent (n=22,973)	Test minus Control	P-Value
✓ Overall	5.3	4.9	0.3	0.32
✗ Mail	14.0	10.4	3.6*	<0.01

- Multiple marks on the mail form for Class of Worker are considered missing data

Class of Worker – Increase in Multiple Marks

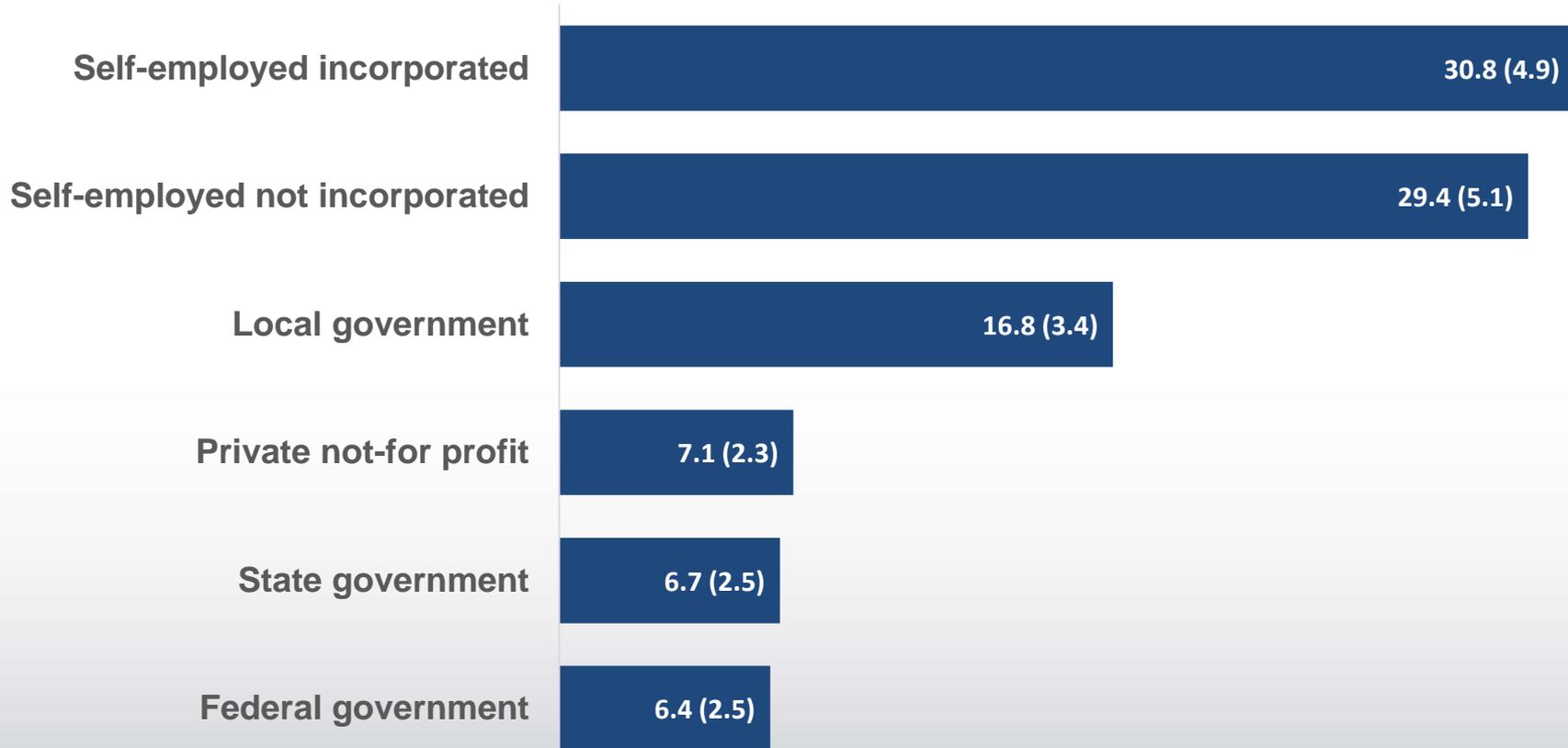
Eligible Respondents Marking Multiple Boxes (applicable to MAIL mode only)

Category	Test Percent (n=4,811)	Control Percent (n=5,126)	Test minus Control	P-Value
x Mail	4.4	0.6	3.8*	<0.01

- Multiple marks on the mail form for Class of Worker are considered missing data

Class of Worker – Multiple Marks

Second Marked Response Among those Who Selected
“Private for-profit worker” – Mail Form Only



n=168

Note: Standard errors are shown in parentheses. Chart does not add up to 100% due to suppressed categories not shown

Class of Worker – Higher Proportion of Unpaid Family Workers working 15 hours or more per week

Percent of Unpaid Family Workers Whose Usual Hours Worked per Week is 15 Hours or More

Category	Test Percent (n=76)	Control Percent (n=135)	Test minus Control	P-Value
✓ Overall	63.6	39.9	23.7*	0.02

- Test treatment – higher percentage of unpaid family workers also reported working at least 15 hours a week

Industry & Occupation (I&O)

Anthony Martínez

Social, Economic, and Housing
Statistics Division

Background

- The Industry and Occupation questions have been asked in their current versions since 1960
- Industry and Occupation question revision goals:
 - **Improve Occupational specificity**
 - **Increase clarity of Industry and Occupation questions**
 - **New and consistent examples, expanded character limit for job duties write-in**
 - **Entire series modified**

I&O: Questions Tested

Control Version

43 For whom did this person work?
If now on active duty in the Armed Forces, mark (X) this box → and print the branch of the Armed Forces.
 Name of company, business, or other employer

44 What kind of business or industry was this?
Describe the activity at the location where employed. (For example: hospital, newspaper publishing, mail order house, auto engine manufacturing, bank)

45 Is this mainly – Mark (X) ONE box.

manufacturing?
 wholesale trade?
 retail trade?
 other (agriculture, construction, service, government, etc.)?

46 What kind of work was this person doing?
(For example: registered nurse, personnel manager, supervisor of order department, secretary, accountant)

47 What were this person's most important activities or duties? *(For example: patient care, directing hiring policies, supervising order clerks, typing and filing, reconciling financial records)*

Test Version

b. What was the name of this person's employer, business, agency, or branch of the Armed Forces?

c. What kind of business or industry was this?
Include the main activity, product, or service provided at the location where employed. (For example: elementary school, residential construction)

d. Was this mainly – Mark (X) ONE box.

manufacturing?
 wholesale trade?
 retail trade?
 other (agriculture, construction, service, government, etc.)?

e. What was this person's main occupation?
(For example: 4th grade teacher, entry-level plumber)

f. Describe this person's most important activities or duties. *(For example: instruct and evaluate students and create lesson plans, assemble and install pipe sections and review building plans for work details)*

I&O: Questions Tested cont.

Control Version:

M Answer questions 42 – 47 if this person worked in the past 5 years. Otherwise, SKIP to question 48.

42 – 47 CURRENT OR MOST RECENT JOB ACTIVITY. Describe clearly this person's chief job activity or business last week. If this person had more than one job, describe the one at which this person worked the most hours. If this person had no job or business last week, give information for his/her last job or business.

Test Version:

M Answer questions 41a – f if this person worked in the past 5 years. Otherwise, SKIP to question 42.

41 DESCRIPTION OF EMPLOYMENT

The next series of questions is about the type of employment this person had last week.

If this person had more than one job, describe the one at which the most hours were worked. If this person did not work last week, describe the most recent employment in the past five years.

- Renumbered the series

I&O: Questions Tested cont.

Control Version:

43 For whom did this person work?

If now on active duty in the Armed Forces, mark (X) this box → and print the branch of the Armed Forces.

Name of company, business, or other employer

Test Version:

b. What was the name of this person's employer, business, agency, or branch of the Armed Forces?

- Active Duty check box dropped from employer name question

I&O: Questions Tested cont.

Control Version:

44 **What kind of business or industry was this?**
*Describe the activity at the location where employed.
(For example: hospital, newspaper publishing, mail
order house, auto engine manufacturing, bank)*

Test Version:

c. What kind of business or industry was this?
*Include the main activity, product, or service
provided at the location where employed. (For
example: elementary school, residential
construction)*

- Modified text and business/industry examples to get more specificity

I&O: Questions Tested cont.

Control Version:

45 Is this mainly - Mark (X) ONE box.

- manufacturing?
- wholesale trade?
- retail trade?
- other (agriculture, construction, service, government, etc.)?

Test Version:

d. Was this mainly - Mark (X) ONE box.

- manufacturing?
- wholesale trade?
- retail trade?
- other (agriculture, construction, service, government, etc.)?

- Verb tense consistency

I&O: Questions Tested cont.

Control Version:

46 What kind of work was this person doing?
(For example: registered nurse, personnel manager, supervisor of order department, secretary, accountant)

Test Version:

e. What was this person's main occupation?
(For example: 4th grade teacher, entry-level plumber)

- Text and examples modified
- Examples selected based on cognitive testing, and input from stakeholders

I&O: Questions Tested cont.

Control Version:

47 What were this person's most important activities or duties? *(For example: patient care, directing hiring policies, supervising order clerks, typing and filing, reconciling financial records)*

Test Version:

f. Describe this person's most important activities or duties. *(For example: instruct and evaluate students and create lesson plans, assemble and install pipe sections and review building plans for work details)*

- Text and examples modified
- Expanded write-in space to capture more characters

I&O – Overall, no difference in the Item Missing Data Rates

Industry:

	Test Percent (n=22,712)	Control Percent (n=22,973)	Test minus Control	P-Value
✓ Overall	5.4	5.2	0.2	0.58
✗ Internet	5.3	4.6	0.6*	0.08

Occupation:

	Test Percent (n=22,712)	Control Percent (n=22,973)	Test minus Control	P-Value
✓ Overall	5.4	5.2	0.2	0.51

I&O – Codeable Data Rates

Industry:

	Category	Test Percent (n=21,446)	Control Percent (n=21,694)	Test minus Control	P-Value
✓	Overall	99.1	99.2	-0.1	0.25
✗	Mail	98.3	98.8	-0.5*	0.07

Occupation:

	Category	Test Percent (n=21,446)	Control Percent (n=21,694)	Test minus Control	P-Value
✗	Overall	98.3	98.7	-0.4*	0.02
✗	Mail	97.7	98.5	-0.8*	0.06

I&O – Increase in Mean Character and Mean Word counts for Job Duties

Mean Character Count:



Mode	Test Mean (n=19,964)	Control Mean (n=20,834)	Test minus Control	P-Value
Overall	31.3	21.0	10.3*	<0.01

Mean Word Count:



Mode	Test Mean (n=19,964)	Control Mean (n=20,834)	Test minus Control	P-Value
Overall	4.5	2.9	1.6*	<0.01

I&O – Qualitative Review

- Expert qualitative coding review
 - 39 different Occupation code categories as well as Active Duty and National Guard
 - Write-in data for all modes
- Test treatment write-ins more detailed
 - ✓ More specific types of management and teaching
 - ✓ Occupation write-ins helped inform coding for Industry

Summary

- Cognitive testing indicated respondents preferred the Class of Worker test treatment format
- The most notable improvement for Class of Worker – consistency between Unpaid Family Workers and Usual Hours Worked
- The test treatment of the Industry and Occupations questions
 - Improved question clarity
 - Increased Occupational specificity
 - Higher quality write-in data assists with overall coding process and improves the overall quality of the data

Telephone Service

Jennifer Ortman

American Community Survey Office

Telephone Service: Objective

- To better measure telephone service by updating the question to:
 - Reflect changes in how Americans view and use telephones in a household
 - Improve question wording and instructions so respondents (and interviewers) understand what types of telephones and equipment respondents should include when answering the question

Telephone Service

CURRENT PRODUCTION

Telephone service question among a battery of plumbing and kitchen facilities questions

7 Does this house, apartment, or mobile home have -

	Yes	No
a. hot and cold running water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. a bathtub or shower?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. a sink with a faucet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. a stove or range?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. a refrigerator?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. telephone service from which you can both make and receive calls? <i>Include cell phones.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CONTENT TEST

Control Version*

8 Can you or any member of this household both make and receive phone calls when at this house, apartment, or mobile home?

Yes
 No

Test Version

8 Can you or any member of this household both make and receive phone calls when at this house, apartment, or mobile home? *Include calls using cell phones, land lines, or other phone devices.*

Yes
 No

Telephone Service: Findings

- ✓ A larger proportion of households in the test version (98.3%) reported having telephone service than control (96.5%).
- ✓ There was no difference in item missing data rates between treatments.
- ✓ Most reliability metrics showed no difference between treatments.
- ✓ The control was less reliable in one analysis that showed more control respondents (65.0%) owned a smartphone, but reported no telephone service than the test respondents (54.9%).

Findings support proceeding with the Test Version

Retirement Income

Jennifer Ortman

American Community Survey Office

Retirement Income: Objective

- To better measure retirement income data by:
 - Improving income reporting
 - Increasing item response rates
 - Reducing reporting errors
 - Updating questions on retirement income and the income generated from retirement accounts and all other assets

Retirement Income: Findings 1

- ✓ The proportion of people who reported receiving retirement, survivor, and disability income was higher in the test version (14.5%) than in the control (10.6%).
- ✓ The overall retirement, survivor, and disability aggregate income amount was higher in the test version (\$564.2 billion) than in the control (\$426.0 billion).
- ✓ There was no difference in item missing data rates between versions for either the reciprocity question or the amount question.
- ✓ The test version results were more reliable than the control.

Retirement Income: Findings 2

✓ Significant change in the distribution.

Category	Test Percent	Control Percent	Test minus Control	Adjusted P-value
\$1 to \$2,499	15.9	13.1	2.8	0.06
\$2,500 to \$19,999	46.3	45.5	0.8	1.00
\$20,000 to \$39,999	21.3	22.8	-1.5	0.60
\$40,000 to \$64,999	10.1	12.6	-2.5	0.03
\$65,000 or more	6.4	6.0	0.4	1.00

Findings support proceeding with the Test Version

Relationship

Jennifer Ortman

American Community Survey Office

Relationship: Objective

- Improve couple household estimates, especially same-sex couple household estimates, by revising the relationship question to:
 - Provide explicit same-sex and opposite-sex spouse and same-sex and opposite-sex partner response categories
 - Implement an automated consistency check in electronic modes to verify responses when responses to relationship and sex are inconsistent

Relationship: Questions Tested

Control Version

2 How is this person related to Person 1? Mark (X) ONE box.

<input type="checkbox"/> Husband or wife	<input type="checkbox"/> Son-in-law or daughter-in-law
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological son or daughter	<input type="checkbox"/> Other relative
<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted son or daughter	<input type="checkbox"/> Roomer or boarder
<input type="checkbox"/> Stepson or stepdaughter	<input type="checkbox"/> Housemate or roommate
<input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister	<input type="checkbox"/> Unmarried partner
<input type="checkbox"/> Father or mother	<input type="checkbox"/> Foster child
<input type="checkbox"/> Grandchild	<input type="checkbox"/> Other nonrelative
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent-in-law	

Test Version

2 How is this person related to Person 1? Mark (X) ONE box.

<input type="checkbox"/> Opposite-sex husband/wife/spouse	<input type="checkbox"/> Grandchild
<input type="checkbox"/> Opposite-sex unmarried partner	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent-in-law
<input type="checkbox"/> Same-sex husband/wife/spouse	<input type="checkbox"/> Son-in-law or daughter-in-law
<input type="checkbox"/> Same-sex unmarried partner	<input type="checkbox"/> Other relative
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological son or daughter	<input type="checkbox"/> Roomer or boarder
<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted son or daughter	<input type="checkbox"/> Housemate or roommate
<input type="checkbox"/> Stepson or stepdaughter	<input type="checkbox"/> Foster child
<input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister	<input type="checkbox"/> Other nonrelative
<input type="checkbox"/> Father or mother	

Relationship: Findings

- ✓ Overall, there was no impact to the distribution or item missing data rates.
- ✗ The test version decreased response reliability for the Unmarried Partner category.
- ✓ Results were similar to the 2015 National Content Test (NCT).

Final decisions will be based on the results of the decennial tests.

Summary of Findings

Based on the decision criteria defined for each topic, the findings support the implementation of the Test version in all instances except Health Insurance.

Topic	Control	Test
Telephone Service		X
Computer and Internet Use		X
<i>Test was implemented in 2016 Production ACS</i>		
Health Insurance*	X	
<i>Includes premiums and subsidies</i>		
Journey to Work		X
Weeks Worked		X
Class of Worker		X
Industry and Occupation		X
Retirement Income		X

*The control version of the Health Insurance differs from current production as it included questions on premiums and subsidies, which are not included in production.

Note: Decisions on relationship, race, and Hispanic origin will be based on results of the decennial tests and made in consultation with OMB.

Contact Information

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