

Advocating on behalf of Survey Respondents

*Presentation for
Census Bureau National Advisory Committee
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The Respondent Advocate's Role

- **Advocate** for and represent the respondent's perspective throughout the survey lifecycle, including survey design and data collection.
- **Resolve** household survey respondent concerns.
- **Improve** key stakeholder experience in relation to respondent concerns.

Began 11 Months Ago

- **The American Community Survey is my focus**
 - 3.54 million households in ACS each year
 - Most respond on their own (**59.76%**)
 - Phone and field interviews boost response (**97.38%**)
 - Less than 8,000 refusals in 2012
 - 233 Congressional letters on behalf of constituents since April 2012 (**0.00343%**)
- **Activities include**
 - Providing direct assistance to respondents
 - Meeting with Congressional offices
 - Fine-tuning data collection procedures to reduce respondent burden
 - Involvement in the ACS Content Review
 - Engagement with ACS messaging research

Putting Respondents First
Census Bureau Survey Help

Public cooperation is vital to ensuring that the Census Bureau provides accurate statistics about our nation's people, places and economy to help all levels of government operate efficiently and enable entrepreneurs and businesses to make informed decisions that grow the economy and create jobs. The Census Bureau is committed to making its surveys user-friendly and serving respondents' needs.

STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR SURVEY EXPERIENCE

- Appointing a Respondent Advocate within the Census Bureau
- Reviewing every question on the American Community Survey (ACS) to reduce time needed to reply
- Putting the American Community Survey (ACS) and 60 other surveys online to reduce the need for follow-up contacts

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

TIM OLSON, RESPONDENT ADVOCATE

Tim is your advocate throughout the survey design and data collection process. He collects feedback from people who receive surveys, as well as Congressional staff and stakeholder groups, to ensure that your needs are met, your concerns are addressed, and questions are answered.

TELEPHONE HELP

Census Bureau staff are available to answer questions, assist with completing questionnaires, provide information on protecting the security and privacy of your personal information, and explain the purpose of every question.

CENSUS BUREAU REGIONAL OFFICES

Census Bureau Regional Office staff are available to help you. For more information, please visit www.census.gov/regions.

CENSUS BUREAU WEBSITE

For FAQs related to our surveys and other information, please visit census.gov.

How to Get Help

Constituents with concerns about any Census Bureau survey can contact the Census Bureau's Respondent Advocate with their questions by phone or email. Our goal is to reply to individual requests within 24 hours.

Tim Olson,
Respondent Advocate
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ACS Help Line
For help completing the form, from 9 a.m. to midnight Eastern time, call 1.800.354.7271

Census Call Center
For information about Census Bureau surveys and data, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time, call 1.800.923.8282

ACS Website
Census.gov/acs

Census Regional Offices
For information on contacting your regional office, go to census.gov/regions

United States Census Bureau
U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Respondent Interaction

- I engage with respondents on all demographic surveys, though primarily ACS
- Most people have never heard of the American Community Survey
 - They remember the 2010 decennial census
 - They don't know what the ACS is and have never heard of it
 - ACS messaging focus groups in January 2014 confirmed this
- Sometimes there has been a bad experience with an interviewer
- Some have exceptionally strong and expressive political views
- Simple Process with resolution in 24 hours or less
 - Listen to respondent and figure out their concern
 - Research with sponsor to determine exactly what stage of survey respondent is in
 - Seek a resolve with respondent that often includes survey participation
- Nine out of ten agree to participate

Congressional Interaction

- I have met with 90 Congressional offices since position began
 - Most indicate 5-6 constituent calls per year regarding ACS
 - Most understand value of ACS data and use it for policy making and speeches
 - Most are impressed at the high response rates in their district
 - There are 52 co-sponsors of HR 1078 that would make the ACS voluntary (in the last Congress there were 70).
 - I discuss the impact of a voluntary ACS on smaller geographic areas, particularly rural areas, referencing Statistic Canada's recent experience in 2011, as well as the Census Bureau's 2003 study regarding impact of a voluntary ACS.
 - All express strong appreciation at having a "go to" Census person for difficult constituent situations
- Ongoing meetings with Congressional offices and other key stakeholders

“Are You In A Survey?”

An improved website coming in Spring 2014

- Can you easily find information from www.census.gov if you are in a survey? Information that clearly answers WHY you were chosen, WHAT you have to do, WHERE your personal information goes, and WHO you can complain to?

The screenshot shows the Census Bureau homepage in a Windows Internet Explorer browser. The page layout includes a top navigation bar with links for People, Business, Geography, Data, Research, and Newsroom. A main content area features a 'Data Visualization of the Week' section with a map of sub-Saharan Africa. Below this are 'QuickFacts' and 'Census News' sections. The footer contains a list of links, with 'Are You in a Survey?' circled in red. Red arrows point from the top of the page down to the footer, indicating the need to scroll to find this information.

- CURRENT SITE REQUIRES ONE TO SCROLL TO BOTTOM OF HOME PAGE TO FIND HELP IF IN A SURVEY
- DIFFICULT TO NAVIGATE
- NO SURVEY SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Beta View of New Respondent Website

U.S. Department of Commerce | Blogs | Index A-Z | Glossary | FAQs

U.S. Census Bureau

Search

Topics: Population, Economy, Geography: Maps, Data, Resources, Library: Infographics, Publications, Data: Tools, Developers, About: Research, Surveys, Newsroom: News, Events, Slips

Topics Population, Economy, Geography, Library, Data, About, Newsroom

Population Clock

U.S. Population: 317,494,247

World Population: 7,145,611,811

Feb 07, 2014 19:46 UTC (Eastern+5) [Learn More >>](#)

QuickFacts

Quick, easy access to facts about people, business, and geography.

Select a state to begin

U.S. Census Bureau Economic

International Trade Data: December 2013 Report, Released 6:30 AM EST

Manufacturers' Goods: December 2013 Report, Released 10:00 AM EST

Construction Spending

Stat of the Day

Homeownership

The homeownership rate was 65.2 percent, down 0.4 points from the four percent.

[Read More](#)

Are You in a Survey?

[Learn more >>](#)

The Week Ahead

Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur
Feb 7	Feb 10	Feb 11	Feb 12	Feb 13

Tip Sheet: List and Description of Upcoming Census Bureau Releases and Products

- NEW SITE INCLUDES HOME PAGE NAVIGATION TO EASILY FIND HELP IF IN A SURVEY
- CONTENT UPDATED
- SURVEY SPECIFIC INFORMATION PROVIDED
- CLEAR ANSWERS TO THE WHY, HOW, WHO, WHEN, AND WHAT FOR EACH SURVEY

Questions for Committee

- What do you think causes low self-response in certain areas of the nation?
- How can self-response be improved?
- How can the Census Bureau positively communicate the mandatory requirement of the ACS?

