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2014 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT  
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MEMORANDUM FOR ACS Research and Evaluation Advisory Group

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Subject: Response Rates for the January, February, and March 2013  
American Community Survey Panels

Attached is the final American Community Survey Research and Evaluation report on the Response Rates for the January, February, and March 2013 American Community Survey Panels. This evaluation presents the 2013 response rates by mode and defines and computes additional response rates specific to the 2013 mail and Internet modes. This evaluation also compares the 2013 response rates by mode to the 2012 response rates by mode for each of the panels.

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# **Response Rates for the January, February, and March 2013 American Community Survey Panels**

FINAL REPORT

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## I. Introduction

Beginning in January 2013, the American Community Survey (ACS) introduced an Internet response option for respondents along with a new mailing strategy. Each month, all sample addresses with a complete mailing address receive information on how to access the Internet instrument to provide their response to the ACS. If we do not receive an Internet or telephone questionnaire assistance (TQA) response from the address after about two weeks, the address receives another mailing that includes a paper questionnaire. Respondents then have the choice to either access the Internet to provide a response, complete the paper questionnaire and mail it to the National Processing Center (NPC) for data capture, or provide a response via TQA. Addresses that respond by Internet, mail, or TQA constitute self-response in 2013, which is comparable to mail or TQA response in 2012 and earlier. The term ‘self-response’ indicates that the respondent took the initiative to provide a response as opposed to the interview-administered responses received from nonresponding addresses during the Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) and Computer-Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) operations. This report compares the following response rates for the January, February, and March panels:

- The 2012 mail response rate to the 2013 self-response rate (mail and Internet responses combined)
- The 2012 CATI response rate to the 2013 CATI response rate
- The 2012 CAPI response rate to the 2013 CAPI response rate
- The 2012 overall survey response rate to the 2013 overall survey response rate

In addition, this study will present response rates that are specific to the 2013 mail and Internet modes. The Census Bureau releases information about mode specific response in other formal documentation. Each year, the Decennial Statistical Studies Division (DSSD) produces the official response rates by mode. We used the same definitions in this evaluation that are used in producing those official response rates. For this reason, the 2012 rates computed as part of this evaluation are identical to the officially produced 2012 response rates (Cyffka, 2012) and we expect the 2013 rates computed as part of this evaluation to be consistent with the official 2013 response rates that DSSD will release later this year. The rates in this report that are specific to the 2013 Internet mode differ from rates presented in Davis, 2014. Those Internet self-response measures consider responses from the first month of data collection only and therefore overstate final Internet self-response that we present in this report.

## II. Background

The ACS divides an annual sample into 12 monthly sample panels. The data collection for each panel takes place over three months. In the first month, the only option for addresses to respond is through the Internet, mail, or TQA. These are all methods of self-

response. For nonresponding addresses with an available phone number, the CATI operation attempts to conduct an interview in the second month of data collection. If CATI is unsuccessful in conducting an interview or if we do not have a complete address or a valid phone number for the address, we select a sample of the nonresponding addresses for the CAPI operation in the third month. While the CATI and CAPI operations attempt to conduct interviews in the second and third month, we continue to receive self-responses during that time.

Prior to 2013, sample addresses with a valid mailing address received an initial package that included a paper questionnaire. A few days later, these same addresses received a reminder postcard. After about three weeks, nonresponding addresses received a second package with a second paper questionnaire. If still nonresponding after an additional two weeks, addresses for which we had no telephone number on file, and therefore were not eligible for the CATI operation, received a final postcard to encourage self-response.

Internet Tests conducted in April 2011 (Tancreto et al., 2012) and November 2011 (Matthews et al., 2012) tested not only an Internet instrument but also different strategies in which respondents were informed of their options to self-respond to the ACS. The strategy ultimately implemented for the 2013 ACS removes the paper questionnaire from the initial package and provides instructions to access the Internet instrument. The 2013 strategy follows up with a reminder card a few days later and sends a second package that includes a paper questionnaire for nonresponding addresses after about two weeks (previously there was a three week lag between the initial and second packages). The new strategy also includes a new reminder postcard for addresses sent the second package and, like the strategy used previously, sends a final postcard to nonresponding addresses without phone numbers. Therefore, differences observed between 2013 self-response data and self-response data from previous years reflect the addition of the Internet mode to the survey and changes to the mailing strategy. The addition of the Internet mode did not affect the implementation of the CATI and CAPI operations.

Research to reduce respondent burden conducted in early 2013 identified changes to the contact rules used in the CATI operation. Starting in April 2013 (March panel CATI cases), we implemented these changes which reduced the maximum number of total contact attempts and limited the number of unproductive contact attempts. Because of these changes, we expected fewer completed CATI interviews and an increase in the workload for the CAPI operation (Griffin, 2013).

### **III. Methodology**

Using data from the ACS control file, the ACS sample weight file, and the ACS CATI case status files, we answer the following research questions:

- What are the response rates by mode (mail/TQA, Internet, CATI, CAPI) and the total response rate for the January through March 2013 panels?



- How do the January 2013, February 2013, and March 2013 panel response rates by mode and total response rate compare to the January 2012, February 2012, and March 2012 panel response rates respectively?

### Computation of 2013 Response Rates

We compute the following rates for the January 2013, February 2013, and March 2013 panels at closeout for the panel:

- Early Internet response rate
- Internet response rate
- Self-response rate
- Late (Second Mailing) Internet response rate
- Late (Second Mailing) Self-response rate
- Mail response rate (based on second package mailing universe)
- CATI response rate
- CAPI response rate
- Total response rate

The weights of all cases reflect the initial sample selection and CAPI sample selection. We select a sample of nonresponding addresses after the second month of data collection for the CAPI operation. To account for this, we define a subsampling factor to apply to the base weight when weighting the CAPI data. The CAPI subsampling factor varies based on the sampling rate applied to the geographic area in which the address resides. We use this adjusted weight to weight CAPI interviews and CAPI eligible cases.

If an address responds in multiple modes, we will count the responses in each of the modes for all rates with the exception of the self-response rate and the total response rate.

For the mail, Internet (including early and late), and self-response (including late) rates, addresses deemed as Undeliverable as Addressed (UAA) are excluded from the denominator. If the postal service indicates that the initial mail package is a UAA prior to the mailing of the second mail package, the address will not receive the second package and we consider the address a UAA. If we mail a second package to an address and either mail piece (initial or second mailing) is a UAA, we consider the address a UAA as long as there is not a response received from the address.

Below are the specific details for each response rate.

#### **Early Internet, Internet, and Self-response Rates**

The early Internet response rate allows us to measure the proportion of the eligible mail out universe that responded before they received the second mailing package. For this ‘early’ response rate, we count in the numerator only those Internet interviews received by the day after the mail out of the second mailing package containing the paper questionnaire. The Internet response rate shows the proportion of the eligible mail out

universe that responds using the Internet over the three-month data collection period for the panel. The self-response rate measures the proportion of the eligible mail out universe that provide an Internet, mail, or TQA response. For this response rate, we combine responses from the mail, TQA, and Internet modes into a single self-response mode. For addresses providing a response in more than one of these modes, we count only one response in the self-response rate.

The denominator for each of these rates contains all sample addresses sent the initial mail package except for addresses:

- deemed a UAA by the postal service, or
- determined to be a business, or
- determined to not exist during the CAPI operation, or
- determined to be vacant or temporarily occupied during the CAPI operation, or
- subsampled out of the CAPI universe,

unless a response (for the specific rate) is received for the address (represented in the numerator of the rate). If we count an address in the numerator for a rate, it will be included in the denominator for that rate regardless of the above reasons for exclusion.

While we define the denominators for these three measures similarly, the actual denominators differ slightly due to responses from an address that would otherwise be excluded from the denominator. This occurs most often in the case of addresses subsampled out of the CAPI universe from which we receive a late response. For example, if we receive a late Internet response for an address that has been subsampled out of the CAPI universe, this address would not be in the denominator for the early Internet response rate but would be in the denominator for the Internet response rate and self-response rate.

Below are the descriptions of the numerators for each of these rates.

**a. Early Internet response rate**

$$\frac{\text{Addresses with Internet interviews received by the day after the mail out of the paper questionnaire}}{\text{Eligible addresses sent the initial mail package}}$$

We define addresses with Internet interviews as sample addresses with an Internet response except for those determined to be non-housing units (e.g., businesses) and those with limited data (defined as an insufficient partial<sup>1</sup>) when there exists a

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<sup>1</sup> We consider Internet responses ‘insufficient partials’ if the respondent did not progress through the instrument to the detailed person questions. Addresses with insufficient partial Internet responses are eligible for subsequent non-response operations. For this research, we only count Internet insufficient partials as a response if there is not a response for the address from another mode. When calculating response rates in the future, we should revisit the decision to include Internet insufficient partials in this way.

response from another mode. Internet interviews include vacant Internet responses confirmed during the telephone failed-edit follow-up (FEFU) operation. For this rate, the Internet interview is considered a response only if it is received by the day after the mail out of the paper questionnaire.

**b. Internet response rate**

$$\frac{\text{Addresses with Internet interviews}}{\text{Eligible addresses sent the initial mail package}}$$

We define addresses with Internet interviews as sample addresses with an Internet response except for those determined to be non-housing units (e.g., businesses) and those with limited data (defined as an insufficient partial) when there exists a response from another mode. Internet interviews include vacant Internet responses confirmed during the FEFU operation.

**c. Self-response rate**

$$\frac{\text{Addresses with a Mail, TQA OR Internet interview}}{\text{Eligible addresses sent the initial mail package}} * 100$$

We define addresses with mail or TQA interviews as sample addresses with a mail or TQA response except for those determined to be non-housing units (e.g., businesses). Mail interviews include vacant mail responses confirmed during the FEFU operation. TQA interviews include vacant TQA responses.

We define addresses with Internet interviews as sample addresses with an Internet response except for those determined to be non-housing units (e.g., businesses) and those with limited data (defined as an insufficient partial) when there exists a response from another mode. Internet interviews include vacant Internet responses confirmed during the FEFU operation.

**Late Internet and Late Self-response Rates**

The late Internet response rate measures the proportion of the eligible mail out universe that responded via the Internet after they received the second mailing package. For this late response rate, we count as responses only those Internet interviews received two days or more after the mail out of the second mailing that included the paper questionnaire. The late self-response rate estimates the proportion of the eligible mail out universe that provided an Internet, mail, or TQA interview after they received the second mailing package. For this rate, we combine Internet, mail, and TQA responses received two days or more after the mail out of the paper questionnaire into a single late self-response mode. For addresses providing a response in more than one of these three modes, we count only one response in the late self-response rate.

The denominator<sup>2</sup> for both of these rates contains all sample addresses sent the initial mail package except for addresses:

- deemed a UAA by the postal service, or
- determined to be a business, or
- determined to not exist during the CAPI operation, or
- determined to be vacant or temporarily occupied during the CAPI operation, or
- subsampled out of the CAPI universe, or
- with an Internet or TQA response received by the day after the mail out of the paper questionnaire

unless a response (for the specific rate) is received for the address (represented in the numerator of the rate). If we count an address in the numerator for a rate, it will be included in the denominator for that rate regardless of the above reasons for exclusion.

While we define the denominators for these two measures similarly, the actual denominators differ slightly due to responses from an address that would otherwise be excluded from the denominator. This occurs most often in the case of addresses subsampled out of the CAPI universe from which we receive a late response. For example, if we receive a late mail response for an address that has been subsampled out of the CAPI universe, this address would not be in the denominator for the late Internet response rate but would be in the denominator for the late self-response rate.

Below are the descriptions of the numerators for each of these rates.

#### **d. Late (Second Mailing) Internet response rate**

$$\frac{\text{Addresses with Internet interviews received two days or more after the mail out of the paper questionnaire}}{\text{Eligible addresses sent the initial mail package}^3}$$

We define addresses with late Internet interviews as sample addresses with an Internet response received two days or more after the mail out of the paper questionnaire except for those determined to be non-housing units (e.g., businesses) and those with limited data (defined as an insufficient partial) when there exists a response from another mode. Internet interviews include vacant Internet responses confirmed during the FEFU operation.

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<sup>2</sup> This denominator differs from the denominator defined for the early Internet, Internet, and self-response rates. Therefore, adding the early Internet response rate to the late Internet response rate will not equal the Internet response rate.

<sup>3</sup> Based on the description above which excludes addresses with an Internet or TQA response received by the day after the mail out of the paper questionnaire.

**e. Late (Second Mailing) Self-response rate**

$$\frac{\text{Addresses with a Mail, TQA, OR Internet interview received two days or more after the mail out of the paper questionnaire}}{\text{Eligible addresses sent the initial mail package}^4} * 100$$

We define addresses with mail or TQA interviews as sample units with a mail or TQA response resulting from the replacement mailing except those deemed as non-housing units (e.g., businesses). Mail interviews include vacant mail responses confirmed during the FEFU operation. TQA interviews include vacant TQA responses.

We define addresses with Internet interviews as sample addresses with an Internet response received two or more days after the mail out of the paper questionnaire except for those determined to be non-housing units (e.g., businesses) and those with limited data (defined as an insufficient partial) when there exists a response from another mode. Internet interviews include vacant Internet responses confirmed during the FEFU operation.

**Remaining Response Rates**

**f. Mail response rate (based on second package mailing universe)**

This mail response rate describes our success in obtaining a paper questionnaire from the universe of eligible cases that did not respond by Internet and received the second mailing package. These addresses had the choice to respond via the Internet or complete the paper questionnaire. This rate shows how often this subset of sample addresses chose to return the paper questionnaire.

$$\frac{\text{Addresses with mail or TQA interviews}}{\text{Addresses eligible to respond by mail}}$$

We define addresses with mail or TQA interviews as sample addresses with a mail or TQA response resulting from the second mailing except those deemed as non-housing units (e.g., businesses). Mail interviews include vacant mail responses confirmed during the FEFU operation. TQA interviews include vacant TQA responses.

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<sup>4</sup> Based on the description above which excludes addresses with an Internet or TQA response received by the day after the mail out of the paper questionnaire.

The denominator contains all addresses eligible to respond by mail, which we define as all sample addresses sent a second mail package except for addresses:

- deemed a UAA by the postal service, or
- determined to be a business, or
- determined to not exist during the CAPI operation, or
- determined to be vacant or temporarily occupied during the CAPI operation, or
- subsampled out of the CAPI universe, or
- with an Internet or TQA response received by the day after the mail out of the paper questionnaire

unless a mail response is received for the address (represented in the numerator of the rate). If we count an address in the numerator, it will be included in the denominator regardless of the above reasons for exclusion.

**g. CATI response rate**

$$\frac{\text{Addresses with CATI interviews}}{\text{Addresses eligible to respond by CATI}}$$

We define addresses with CATI interviews as sample addresses that complete an interview during the CATI operation.

The denominator contains all addresses eligible to respond by CATI which we define as all addresses that are in universe for CATI except for addresses:

- determined to be a business, or
- determined to be ineligible for CATI<sup>5</sup>, or
- determined to not exist during the CAPI operation, or
- determined to be vacant or temporarily occupied during the CAPI operation, or
- subsampled out of the CAPI universe.

**h. CAPI response rate**

$$\frac{\text{Addresses with CAPI interviews}}{\text{Addresses eligible to respond by CAPI}} * 100$$

We define addresses with CAPI interviews as sample addresses that complete an interview (including occupied and vacant complete and partial interviews) during the

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<sup>5</sup> Includes addresses from which we receive a late self-response response and addresses for which the telephone number is not in service or does not reach the sample address.

CAPI operation.

The denominator contains all addresses eligible to respond by CAPI which we define as all sample addresses that completed an interview in CAPI (including occupied and vacant complete and partial interviews) and those classified as Type A or Type B non-interviews. Type A non-interviews includes addresses that cannot be found and addresses for which an eligible respondent is not located, unavailable or otherwise unwilling to conduct an interview. Type B non-interviews occur when an address is not accessible due to a natural disaster. Type B non-interviews are not common.

**i. Total response rate**

$$\frac{\text{Addresses with Mail, TQA, Internet, CATI, or CAPI interviews}}{\text{Addresses eligible to respond to the survey}}$$

We define addresses with mail or TQA interviews as sample addresses with a mail or TQA response except those deemed as non-housing units (e.g., businesses). Mail interviews include vacant mail responses confirmed during the FEFU operation. TQA interviews include vacant TQA responses.

We define addresses with Internet interviews as sample addresses with an Internet response except for those determined to be non-housing units (e.g., businesses) and those with limited data (defined as an insufficient partial) when there exists a response from another mode. Internet interviews include vacant Internet responses confirmed during the FEFU operation.

We define addresses with CATI and CAPI interviews as sample addresses that complete an interview during the CATI or CAPI operations, respectively.

We count addresses that responded in multiple modes only once in the numerator and we weight them using the base weight. We weight addresses with only a CAPI interview by the base weight adjusted by the CAPI sub-sampling factor.

The denominator contains all addresses that responded via any of the modes plus those eligible to respond by any of the modes. See the above sections for the specifics on addresses that are eligible to respond in each mode.

We weight addresses in the denominator for the total response rate in order as follows (when an address satisfies a condition, use the corresponding weight):

- a. If the address responded by Mail, TQA, Internet, or CATI, use the base weight.
- b. Else, if the address was selected for CAPI (including CAPI interviews), use the base weight multiplied by the CAPI subsampling factor.
- c. Else, use the base weight.

## Computation of 2012 Response Rates

We compute the following rates for the January 2012, February 2012, and March 2012 panels at close-out for the panel:

- a. Mail response rate
- b. CATI response rate
- c. CAPI response rate
- d. Total response rate

The weights of all cases reflect the initial sample selection and CAPI sample selection. We select a sample of nonresponding addresses after the second month of data collection for the CAPI operation. To account for this, we define a subsampling factor to apply to the base weight when weighting the CAPI data. The CAPI subsampling factor varies based on the sampling rate applied to geographic area in which the address resides. We use this adjusted weight to weight CAPI interviews and CAPI eligible cases.

Below are the specific details for each response rate.

### a. Mail response rate

$$\frac{\text{Addresses with Mail or TQA interviews}}{\text{Addresses eligible to respond by mail}}$$

We define address with mail or TQA interviews as sample addresses with a mail or TQA response except those deemed as non-housing units (e.g., businesses). Mail interviews include vacant mail responses confirmed during the FEFU operation. TQA interviews include vacant TQA responses.

The denominator contains all addresses eligible to respond by mail which we define as addresses sent an initial mail package except for addresses:

- deemed a UAA by the postal service, or
- determined to be a business, or
- determined to not exist during the CAPI operation, or
- determined to be vacant or temporarily occupied during the CAPI operation, or
- subsampled out of the CAPI universe

unless a mail or TQA response is received for the address (represented in the numerator of the rate). If we count an address in the numerator, it will be included in the denominator regardless of the above reasons for exclusion.



**b. CATI response rate**

See description above on the computation of the 2013 CATI response rate.

**c. CAPI response rate**

See description above on the computation of the 2013 CAPI response rate.

**d. Total response rate**

$$\frac{\text{Addresses with Mail, TQA, CATI, or CAPI interviews}}{\text{Addresses eligible to respond to the survey}}$$

We define addresses with mail interviews as sample addresses with a mail or TQA response except those deemed as non-housing units (e.g., businesses). Mail interviews include vacant mail responses confirmed during the FEFU operation. TQA interviews include vacant TQA responses.

We define addresses with CATI and CAPI interviews as sample addresses that complete an interview during the CATI or CAPI operations, respectively.

We count addresses that responded in multiple modes only once in the numerator and we weight them using the base weight. We weight addresses with only a CAPI interview by the base weight adjusted by the CAPI sub-sampling factor.

The denominator contains all addresses that responded via any of the modes plus those eligible to respond by any of the modes. See the above sections for the specifics on addresses that are eligible to respond in each mode.

We weight addresses in the denominator for the total response rate in order as follows (when an address satisfies a condition, use the corresponding weight):

- a. If the address responded by Mail, TQA, or CATI, use the base weight.
- b. Else, if the address was selected for CAPI (including CAPI interviews), use the base weight multiplied by the CAPI subsampling factor.
- c. Else, use the base weight.

### Comparison of 2012 and 2013 Response Rates

To determine if there are statistically significant differences between the 2012 and 2013 response rates by mode and overall, we calculated differences between the 2013 and 2012 rates and used replicate weights<sup>6</sup> to produce standard errors of the differences for each the following comparisons:

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<sup>6</sup> See U.S Census Bureau (2009), chapter 12, for more information on variance estimation.

- January 2012 mail response and January 2013 self-response
- February 2012 mail response and February 2013 self-response
- March 2012 mail response and March 2013 self-response
- January 2012 CATI response and January 2013 CATI response
- February 2012 CATI response and February 2013 CATI response
- March 2012 CATI response and March 2013 CATI response
- January 2012 CAPI response and January 2013 CAPI response
- February 2012 CAPI response and February 2013 CAPI response
- March 2012 CAPI response and March 2013 CAPI response
- January 2012 total response and January 2013 total response
- February 2012 total response and February 2013 total response
- March 2012 total response and March 2013 total response

## IV. Results

### **What are the response rates by mode (mail/TQA, Internet, CATI, CAPI) and the total response rate for the January through March 2013 panels?**

Table 1 shows the 2013 ACS response rates for the January, February, and March panels. See the Methodology section for a full description of each rate. All rates except for the CATI response rate, are fairly consistent across these three panels. The early Internet response rate captures the response via the Internet after receiving only the initial package and first reminder postcard (mailed three days after the initial package). These households (about 26 percent of addresses eligible to respond) did not receive a questionnaire and accessed the Internet in a timely manner to respond to the survey. The overall Internet response rate is about 36 percent while the overall self-response rate is about 62 percent.

The late Internet response shows that about 13 percent of the nonresponding addresses responded via the Internet after receiving the second mailing package. For these households, the second package likely served as a reminder to respond and they chose to use the Internet to respond rather than the paper form. The late self-response rate shows that, on average, more than 48 percent of those receiving the second mailing package responded via the Internet, TQA, or mailed the paper form back.

The mail response rate shows how many of the addresses that received the second mailing package responded by mailing in the paper form contained in that package. On average for these panels, about 36 percent of those receiving the second mailing package responded by mail.

The CATI response rate for the January and February panels is about 46 percent but then drops to about 39 percent in the March panel. This statistically significant decrease in the CATI response rate is expected and is the result of a change to the CATI contact rules

based on research to reduce respondent burden (Griffin, 2013). The CAPI response rate and total response rate remain consistent across these three panels at 94 percent and 98 percent respectively.

**Table 1. 2013 ACS Response Rates**

<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>2013 Panel</b>		
	<b>January</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>March</b>
Early Internet	25.7	26.2	26.2
Internet	35.6	36.0	35.7
Self-response	62.6	62.2	61.4
Late Internet	13.6	13.6	13.2
Late Self-response	49.5	48.8	47.5
Mail	36.7	36.0	34.9
CATI	46.3	45.5	39.2
CAPI	94.0	94.4	94.0
Total	98.0	97.9	97.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, January 2013 through March 2013 panels

**How do the January 2013, February 2013, and March 2013 panel response rates by mode and total response rate compare to the January 2012, February 2012, and March 2012 panel response rates respectively?**

Table 2 shows the comparisons between the 2012 and 2013 response rates. We compared the 2012 mail response rates to the 2013 self-response rates for the January, February, and March panels. In 2012, the mail response rate was about 61 percent and in 2013, the self-response rate was about 62 percent. For all panels, the increase in the self-response rate in 2013 was statistically significant.

The CATI response rates for the January through March 2012 panels averaged about 49 percent. For the first two months of 2013, the CATI response rates were about 46 percent. As noted previously, the change to the CATI contact rules in April 2013 (March panel CATI cases) accounts for the much lower CATI response rate for the March panel. Compared to 2012, the 2013 CATI response rates are significantly lower for all three panels.

The 2012 CAPI response rates range between 94 and 95 percent while the 2013 rates are about 94 percent. The difference between the 2012 and 2013 CAPI response rates was significant for the January and February panels only. The total response rates for these 2012 and 2013 panels are about 98 percent. The 2013 total response rates for these panels are all nominally higher than the corresponding 2012 panel and the increase is statistically significant for the January and February panels. This suggests that even though the 2013 CATI and CAPI response rates decrease for the January and February

panels, the increase in the 2013 self-response rates compensate to result in a 2013 total response rate that is higher for the January and February 2013 panels.

**Table 2. Comparison of 2012 and 2013 ACS Response Rates**

Rate Comparison	Panel	2012		2013		Difference (2013-2012)	SE of Difference
		Response Rate	SE	Response Rate	SE		
Mail/Self-response	January	61.2	0.1	62.6	0.1	1.5*	0.2
	February	61.0	0.1	62.2	0.2	1.2*	0.2
	March	60.9	0.2	61.4	0.2	0.5*	0.2
CATI	January	49.7	0.4	46.3	0.4	-3.4*	0.6
	February	48.3	0.4	45.5	0.4	-2.8*	0.6
	March	49.7	0.3	39.2	0.3	-10.6*	0.5
CAPI	January	94.9	0.1	94.0	0.1	-0.9*	0.2
	February	94.7	0.1	94.4	0.1	-0.3*	0.2
	March	94.3	0.1	94.0	0.1	-0.3	0.2
Total Response	January	97.8	0.1	98.0	0.1	0.2*	0.1
	February	97.7	0.1	97.9	0.0	0.2*	0.1
	March	97.6	0.1	97.7	0.1	0.1	0.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, January 2012 through March 2012 panels and January 2013 through March 2013 panels

\* Statistically different at the  $\alpha=0.10$  level.

## Conclusions

The introduction of an Internet option for ACS respondents along with a new mailing strategy in 2013 resulted in an Internet response rate of about 36 percent. Most of the Internet respondents responded quickly with only the instructions on how to access the Internet instrument. Of nonresponding addresses that received the second mailing package including the paper questionnaire, only 13 percent chose to use the Internet to respond; about 36 percent chose to respond by mail. Combined, nearly half of those that received the second mailing package responded via the Internet, TQA, or mailed back the paper questionnaire.

Overall, the 2013 self-response response rate for the January, February, and March panels were about 62 percent and each was significantly higher than the comparable 2012 mail response rates. Even with lower CATI and CAPI response rates in 2013, the 2013 total response rates were higher than the 2012 total response rates for the January and February panels. The addition of the Internet mode and new mailing strategy produced positive results for these early panels in 2013 and we continue to monitor these rates for subsequent panels.

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