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**Cognitive Pretesting of the American Community Survey (ACS)  
Respondent Comment/Feedback Item**

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## Abstract

The Center for Behavioral Science Methods (CBSM) conducted cognitive testing of comment/feedback items as part of the American Community Survey (ACS) respondent comment/feedback project. The purpose of testing was to develop wording that would allow ACS respondents to provide their feedback at the end of the survey rather than having to directly call the Census Bureau via phone, e-mail, or mail. Paper and web mock-up versions of the item were both tested; versions differed by wording and formatting (inclusion of black tab with word “Thank You”). Participants were asked to provide their thoughts and answer questions about the different versions.

Testing found that participants were able to understand the purpose of each of the feedback items and what type of comments they could provide. The type of comments included respondent experience, positive or negative feedback, survey questions, survey length, and any personal or privacy concerns. Participants had a positive reaction to the black tab with the word “Thank You” as they viewed it as a sign of appreciation for completing the survey. The final recommendation for the comment/feedback item wording was “You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the survey” with a black “Thank You” tab included on the page.

**Keywords:** cognitive interviews, American Community Survey, respondent feedback, reciprocity

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. COGNITIVE INTERVIEWS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
2.1 Methodology .....	1
2.1.1 Cognitive Interview Design.....	1
2.1.2 Participant Characteristics .....	3
2.1.3 Cognitive Interview Protocol .....	5
2.2 Round 1 Findings.....	8
2.2.1 Paper Comment/Feedback Items .....	8
2.2.2 Web Mock-Up Comment/Feedback Items .....	11
2.2.3 Recommendations for Round 2 .....	11
2.3 Round 2 Findings.....	12
2.3.1 Black tab with the wording “Thank You” .....	13
2.3.2 Comparison of the Comment/Feedback Pages and Preferences .....	14
2.4 Debriefing Questions .....	15
2.4.1 Required or optional items to fill out .....	15
2.4.2 How would participants want to provide feedback about the ACS?.....	15
2.4.3 Amount of write-in space for the feedback items appropriate? .....	15
2.4.4 Expect to receive a response from Census Bureau if provided feedback?...	16
<b>3. CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>4. REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Appendix A. COMMENT/FEEDBACK ITEMS TESTED .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Appendix B. ROUND 1 PROTOCOL.....</b>	<b>26</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Round 1 Participant Characteristics by Mode of Feedback Item .....	2
Table 2. Demographic Characteristics .....	3
Table 3. Round 1 Feedback Item Wording .....	6
Table 4. Round 2 Feedback Item Wording .....	8

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Recommended Comment/Feedback Item Wording .....	vi
Figure 2. Round 1 Paper Version C .....	7
Figure 3. Recommended Comment/Feedback Item Wording .....	17

Figure 4. Round 1 Paper Version A.....	19
Figure 5. Round 1 Paper Version B.....	20
Figure 6. Round 1 Paper Version C.....	21
Figure 7. Round 1 Web Version D.....	22
Figure 8. Round 1 Web Version E.....	23
Figure 9. Round 2 Version 1.....	24
Figure 10. Round 2 Version 2.....	25

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings from the cognitive testing of the American Community Survey (ACS) respondent comment/feedback project. The ACS is an annual survey that collects detailed population and housing information about our country. Currently, respondents who wish to make comments or give any feedback about the ACS must contact the U.S. Census Bureau directly by phone, email or mailed letter. The purpose of cognitive testing was to develop comment/feedback item wording that would allow ACS respondents to provide their feedback at the end of the survey instead of contacting the Census Bureau directly by phone, email, or mail.

Thirty-two cognitive interviews were conducted over two rounds of testing between March 2018 and July 2018. Cognitive interviews were conducted with participants who had completed the ACS as well as new participants who were recruited from the general population. Participants were asked to give their thoughts and answer questions about multiple versions of the comment/feedback item that were either on a paper or web mock-up. The versions of the comment/feedback item differed in the wording asking participants to provide their comments and the formatting. The goal of cognitive testing was to determine which version of the comment/feedback item would be more able to elicit comments. The three different wordings of the comment/feedback item tested were:

- “You may use the space below to share any comments.”
- “You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the American Community Survey.”
- “You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the survey.”

The inclusion of a prominent “Thank You” presented in a black tab (see Figure 1) to align with ACS paper questionnaire design formatting was also tested in both rounds. The results from cognitive testing indicate that participants understood the purpose of each comment/feedback item and what types of comments participants would fill in the write-in box. The type of comments provided as examples were about the participant’s experience or feelings, positive or negative feedback, difficulties with specific questions or the length of the survey, and any personal or privacy concerns.

Many participants associated “your experience” with how they felt about the survey and a few participants mentioned the wording “You may use the space below to share any comments” could elicit people to write comments not related to the ACS process. In both rounds of testing, participants generally preferred the wording “You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the survey”. Participants found the black tab with the wording “Thank You” to be a positive feature on the comment/feedback item.

As a result of this testing, we recommend the wording, “You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the survey” with the prominent “Thank You” black tab for the paper questionnaire.

**Figure 1. Recommended Comment/Feedback Item Wording**



**Thank You**

→ You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the survey.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The American Community Survey (ACS) serves as the premier source for detailed population and housing information about our nation, producing estimates on over 35 demographic, social, economic, and housing topics. The federal government uses ACS data to allocate over \$675 billion dollars to local communities and has countless nonfederal uses (Hotchkiss and Phelan, 2017). The Census Bureau continually conducts research to find ways to improve the ACS respondent experience while maintaining data quality (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). As part of this effort, the Census Bureau is considering adding an open-ended “comment/feedback” item at the end of the American Community Survey.

Currently, ACS respondents who want to give feedback on their survey experience need to contact the Census Bureau directly to do so. Some respondents who choose to give feedback call, email, or write letters to the Census Bureau. Phone calls and emails are typically answered by Census Bureau staff working in areas such as the telephone centers, the American Community Survey Office (ACSO), and the Office of the Respondent Advocate. Responses to letters are written by Census Bureau staff in the ACSO.

Ideally, a comment/feedback item implemented at the end of the survey can provide ACS respondents an easier pathway to give feedback that is less resource intensive. The idea of a respondent comment/feedback item is one way for the Census Bureau to show reciprocity to respondents for taking the time to complete the survey. Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014) have suggested that providing a space for feedback is a form of courtesy as respondents have the chance to voice their thoughts. One feature to communicate to respondents that their time in completing the survey was appreciated is to display a “Thank You” message.

Since a potential respondent comment/feedback item is new to the ACS, we conducted cognitive testing to inform recommendations on how to word and display this item. Additionally, we wanted to learn about participants’ perceptions about having this type of item on the ACS generally, including whether they understood its purpose and whether they would use it. In this report, we discuss the results of cognitive testing and provide a recommendation for implementation on the ACS for self-administered modes.

## **2. COGNITIVE INTERVIEWS**

### **2.1 Methodology**

#### **2.1.1 Cognitive Interview Design**

Two rounds of cognitive interviews were conducted to test multiple versions of the new comment/feedback item on self-administered modes. Seventeen participants were interviewed in Round 1, and 15 participants were interviewed in Round 2. Interviews in Round 1 were conducted in March and April 2018 and interviews in Round 2 were conducted in July 2018. Cognitive interviews were conducted by five experienced interviewers from CBSM, who were trained on the protocol before each round of testing. Each participant received \$40.

We combined the comment/feedback testing with other ACS cognitive testing projects for efficiency. The first round of comment/feedback testing was included with a project aimed at measuring respondents' perceptions of burden in the ACS (Holzberg, Katz, & Davis, report forthcoming). Interviews were conducted in Washington, D.C., and Atlanta, GA and the surrounding metropolitan areas for Round 1. We conducted the second round of testing in conjunction with ancestry testing designed to evaluate possible redundancy of questions about ancestry with race and Hispanic origin. In the second round of testing, cognitive interviews were conducted in Washington, D.C. and the surrounding metropolitan area.

For Round 1, participants were either prior ACS respondents who had completed the ACS by paper or CAPI within the previous one to two months or newly recruited participants, who were mailed a paper questionnaire and asked to complete the ACS prior to coming to the cognitive interview. These participants were interviewed as a requirement for the respondents' perceptions of burden testing.

Participants were shown either a paper or web mock-up version of the comment/feedback item. The paper version was what the comment/feedback item would look like embedded on the last page of the ACS questionnaire, which also contained a reminder that survey questions were answered and instructions on how to mail the completed questionnaire. The web mock-up was a screenshot of what the comment/feedback item would look like on the web instrument displayed on paper. The two versions varied in format, not in wording. All of the newly recruited participants were assigned to the paper versions of the comment/feedback item since they completed the ACS via paper. The prior ACS respondents were assigned to either a paper or web mock-up version. See Table 1 for more details.

**Table 1. Round 1 Participant Characteristics by Mode of Feedback Item**

<b>Mode of Feedback Item</b>	<b>Prior ACS Respondents</b>	<b>New Participants</b>	<b>Number of Interviews</b>
Paper	4	9	13
Web	4	0	4
Total	8	9	17

For Round 2, all participants were newly recruited from the general population. For this round, we had all participants complete the paper ACS questionnaire using a think-aloud approach during the cognitive interview since we needed to hear and observe real time reactions to the ancestry question. One version of the feedback item was included on the paper questionnaire.



### 2.1.2 Participant Characteristics

The primary recruitment goal was to recruit participants who handle the mail in their household and live with at least one other person..<sup>1</sup> Newly recruited participants who handle the mail were of interest because ACS contacts households via mail. We thought a participant who handles the mail in their household would be more likely respond to the ACS for their household than other household members. Participants from households with two or more people were of interest because they would have to answer more survey questions and may be more likely to provide negative feedback about the ACS. The secondary recruitment goal was to recruit participants who are diverse based on demographic and household characteristics. In Round 2 of testing, we had to balance the recruitment goals for testing of the comment/feedback items with the recruitment goals for ancestry testing..<sup>2</sup>

The majority of participants were in the \$50,000 and greater income range. Participants tended to be highly educated, as almost two-thirds of the participants held either a Bachelor's or Post-Bachelor's degree. The large number of participants in the higher education level and higher income ranges are typical of other cognitive interviewing projects conducted by CBSM. More than half of the participants were male. Participants were balanced across all the age ranges. For household size, the majority of the participants came from either two-person households or lived in households with four or more people. A quarter of the participants were of Hispanic origin. In Round 2, there was a large number of participants of Hispanic origin because of the recruitment for ancestry testing. See Table 2 for more details.

**Table 2. Demographic Characteristics**

<b>Demographic Data Type</b>	<b>Round 1</b>	<b>Round 2</b>	<b>Total</b>
N	17	15	32
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
Hispanic	1	7	8
Non-Hispanic	15	8	23
Missing	1	0	1
<b>Race</b>			
White	6	7	13

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<sup>1</sup> The question about handling the mail in the household was part of the recruitment screener for new participants. This question was not asked of prior ACS respondents.

<sup>2</sup> In Round 2 of testing, CBSM interviewed one participant that did not handle the mail because he met a target for an ancestry group that was difficult to recruit.

<b>Demographic Data Type</b>	<b>Round 1</b>	<b>Round 2</b>	<b>Total</b>
Black or African American	10	4	14
Two or More Races	0	3	3
Some Other Race	0	1	1
Missing	1	0	1
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	11	7	18
Female	6	8	14
<b>Household Income</b>			
Less than \$25,000	2	2	4
\$25,000-\$49,999	2	4	6
\$50,000-\$99,999	6	4	10
\$100,000 or more	3	4	7
<b>Educational Attainment</b>			
High School Degree or Equivalent	2	2	4
Some College, no degree	2	3	5
Associate's Degree	2	1	3
Bachelor's Degree	6	5	11
Post-Bachelor's Degree	4	4	8
<b>Age</b>			
18 to 30	2	4	6

<b>Demographic Data Type</b>	<b>Round 1</b>	<b>Round 2</b>	<b>Total</b>
31 to 45	4	5	9
46 to 55	2	3	5
56 to 65	5	1	6
65 years and older	4	2	6
<b>Number of People in Household</b>			
1	2	2	4
2	8	5	13
3	3	2	5
≥4	4	6	10

### 2.1.3 Cognitive Interview Protocol

At the beginning of the cognitive interview, participants were told that the purpose of the interview was to test new questions under consideration for inclusion in the ACS. Participants were then handed a consent form to sign that explained their rights as a participant such as their participation in the interview was voluntary, all information provided would be confidential, and the interview would be audio-recorded.

#### 2.1.3.1 Round 1 Protocol

In the first round, participants were first administered the cognitive interview protocol for the perceptions of burden followed by the comment/feedback protocol. Participants were handed the shortest version of the comment/feedback item, which was either the paper version A or web version D, depending on the mode they had been assigned (see Table 3 for the wording of all Round 1 versions of the feedback items; see Appendix A for the images of the feedback items). Participants were asked to imagine they were seeing this item immediately after completing the ACS, and were asked what they would do. Participants were allowed to write in the box if they wanted to. Interviewers then asked probing questions about the first version before showing an alternate version. Participants in the paper mode were shown Version B while participants in the web mode were shown Version E. For the paper mode only, participants were then shown and asked similar probing questions on a third version, Version C, which included a “Thank You” black tab that was above the feedback item wording (see Figure 2). We did not ask participants to provide written responses to the alternate version(s) of the feedback item.

**Table 3. Round 1 Feedback Item Wording**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Wording</b>
A/D	Paper/Web	“You may use the space below to share any comments.”
B/E	Paper/Web	“You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the American Community Survey.”
C	Paper Only	“You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the survey.”  *The black tab with the wording “Thank You” was included on this version.

Figure 2. Round 1 Paper Version C

13197280 C

## Mailing Instructions

➔ Please make sure you have...

- listed all names and answered the questions on pages 2, 3, and 4
- answered all Housing questions
- answered all Person questions for each person.

➔ Then...

- put the completed questionnaire into the postage-paid return envelope. If the envelope has been misplaced, please mail the questionnaire to:

**U.S. Census Bureau  
P.O. Box 5240  
Jeffersonville, IN  
47199-5240**

- make sure the barcode above your address shows in the window of the return envelope.

**Thank you for participating in the American Community Survey.**

## Thank You

You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the survey.


## For Census Bureau Use

POP <input type="text"/>	EDIT <input type="text"/>	PHONE <input type="text"/>	JIC1 <input type="text"/>	JIC2 <input type="text"/>
EDIT CLERK <input type="text"/>	TELEPHONE CLERK <input type="text"/>		JIC3 <input type="text"/>	JIC4 <input type="text"/>

The Census Bureau estimates that, for the average household, this form will take 40 minutes to complete, including the time for reviewing the instructions and answers. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Paperwork Project 0607-0810 and 0607-0936, U.S. Census Bureau, 4600 Silver Hill Road, AMSD - 3K138, Washington, D.C. 20233. You may e-mail comments to AMSD.Paperwork@census.gov; use "Paperwork Project 0607-0810 and 0607-0936" as the subject. Please DO NOT RETURN your questionnaire to this address. Use the enclosed preaddressed envelope to return your completed questionnaire.

Respondents are not required to respond to any information collection unless it displays a valid approval number from the Office of Management and Budget. This 8-digit number appears in the bottom right on the front cover of this form.

Form ACS-1(2017) (03-14-2016)

28 

Next, participants were asked to look at the different versions at one time. They were asked probing questions comparing the different versions of the comment/feedback item. After the probing questions comparing the different versions, participants were asked final debriefing questions (see Appendix B for the Round 1 protocol).

### 2.1.3.2 Round 2 Protocol

In the second round of testing, the comment/feedback protocol was administered followed by race/ancestry testing. Participants completed the ACS during the cognitive interview. In this round, two paper versions, Version 1 and Version 2, were tested (see Table 4 for the wording).

**Table 4. Round 2 Feedback Item Wording**

Version	Mode	Wording
1	Paper	You may use the space below to share any comments.
2	Paper	You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the survey.

One version of the comment/feedback item was on the back of the ACS questionnaire (see Appendix A for the placement of the question on the back page for each version). This allowed us to observe whether participants noticed the comment/feedback item unprompted, and if so, how they reacted to it. Participants were taking the survey as they would at home, and were able to write down their feedback if they saw the item and chose to do so.

After participants completed the questionnaire, we directed their attention to the comment/feedback item on the back of the questionnaire. As in the first round of testing, interviewers administered probing questions to participants. Participants then looked at an alternate version and were asked similar probing questions. The order of the versions was randomized. We did not ask participants to provide written responses to the alternate version of the feedback item.

Next, participants were able to look at both versions at the same time. They were asked probing questions comparing the two versions of the comment/feedback item. Following the probing questions comparing the two versions, participants were asked debriefing questions. Race/ancestry probing was conducted after the comment/feedback probing.

## 2.2 Round 1 Findings

### 2.2.1 Paper Comment/Feedback Items

In Round 1, 13 participants saw the paper feedback item versions (see Table 3 for the wording). All of the participants except one seemed to understand the intent of the feedback items. This participant was not able to articulate what type of comments were appropriate to write in the space provided.

Participants provided a variety of responses on what type of comments would be appropriate to write. Responses included their feelings about the survey, their experience with the survey, concerns about the length of the survey, problems with questions on the survey, and any personal or privacy concerns:

*“Write how you feel about the survey if you have any comments.”*

*“Share any comments I had about filling out the form, so you know, any concerns. That [includes] everything, from wording of the questions [to] any privacy concerns. Also, just pretty much anything I wanted to say to the Census Bureau.”*

*“If you got any beefs, gripes, any complaints, write them here.”*

*“I think that I can write here that the survey was long.”*

Participants who said they could use this space to comment on questions on the ACS said this might include comments on the difficulty or relevance of the questions, and also any clarifying information a participant may want to provide pertaining to particular questions. For example, one participant said he would have written down that he had difficulty answering questions for Person 2 in the household since he did not have a lot of information about this person. Participants who were prior ACS respondents generally did not mention using this space to provide feedback about the nature of the contact attempts to complete the survey.

When participants were shown and asked to review the first comment/feedback page, they were asked what they would do if they had just finished completing the ACS at home. Five of the 13 participants noticed and chose to answer the comment/feedback item. Two participants wrote about a particular question from the ACS that they did not like. One of those two participants also wrote down how he inadvertently had not skipped a question he was supposed to skip. The third participant wrote about asking how the information he provided would be used, how it would be beneficial to the Census Bureau, and how long the information would be kept. The fourth participant wrote how useful the survey was and that he enjoyed it. The fifth participant wrote a joke in the white space.

Overall, the paper feedback items performed very well in Round 1 and the participants generally understood what the feedback items were asking them to do.

#### **2.2.1.1 Black tab with the wording “Thank You”**

During probing of Version C, participants were asked if they had noticed the black tab with the “Thank You” (see Figure 2). Only six of the 13 participants mentioned noticing this black tab. However, participants generally seemed to view the “Thank You” tab as a positive feature, with a couple participants mentioning liking it because it made them feel appreciated for completing the survey:

*“It’s a good concept because they appreciate your time and effort in completing the survey.”*

Another participant who immediately noticed the “Thank You” black tab said that this may lead someone to say something positive in the comment box.

Two participants commented on the location of this black tab. One participant mentioned it was “oddly placed” while another said “it’s like in a desert by itself.”

### **2.2.1.2 Comparison of the Comment/Feedback Pages and Preferences**

After viewing each page individually, participants were shown all three versions and asked if they saw differences, if any, between the versions. The majority of participants mentioned the “Thank You” tab was only on Version C. Three participants compared the differences in wording in detail.

Two participants mentioned liking the wording for Version C. One participant mentioned that he liked Version C because it was more specific than Version A, but also less bureaucratic than Version B:

*“The more specifically you ask the question, the more likely you are to get feedback. The more generally you ask it, in my experience, the less likely you are.”*

The third participant mentioned that the wording in Version A was simple and asks participants to just share comments but that Version B and Version C also ask to share comments but also how it affected the participant’s feelings on the ACS.

Before we specifically asked participants to compare versions against each other, five participants made comments while viewing Version B about how it differed from Version A. Three of the five participants mentioned liking the wording of Version B more than Version A:

*“This is a lot easier to interpret what exactly they would like for me to do in the comments section, because it specifically says that I can comment about my experience while taking the survey.”*

One of these three participants also mentioned liking Version B compared to Version C when viewing Version C. The participant said Version B was more formal because of the wording “American Community Survey” used in the comment/feedback item text.

Participants were asked to choose the feedback page they preferred among the ones they saw in testing. Eight of the thirteen preferred Version C, three preferred Version A, and one preferred Version B. One preferred either Version B or Version C over Version A.

Participants preferred Version C because of the “Thank You” black tab and the item wording was specific. Participants who preferred Version A liked that the wording was short and that they interpreted it as being able to comment about anything. The one participant who preferred Version B was the same participant mentioned earlier who said the wording for this version was more formal. However, this participant mentioned he would add the black tab with the wording “Thank You” to Version B.



### **2.2.2 Web Mock-Up Comment/Feedback Items**

All four participants who saw the web comment/feedback mock-up versions understood the intent of the feedback items (see Table 3 for the wording). All of the participants said that it was asking them about their comments on the survey. Two of the four participants said the following about Version D:

*“It’s asking for my opinion about the survey, about what I thought of it.”*

*“It’s asking me additional comments and thoughts, perhaps to put down your experience, what you went through and what you like about it.”*

The type of comments that participants thought would be appropriate for these items were similar to those made by participants answering the paper comment/feedback items. For example, participants might comment on the length of the survey, usefulness of the survey, and the participant experience. Similar to prior ACS respondents who were administered the paper comment/feedback item, participants here generally did not mention using this space to provide feedback about the nature of the contact attempts to complete the survey.

#### **2.2.2.1 Comparison of the Comment/Feedback Pages and Preferences**

Three of the four participants said there was a difference between the two versions. One of the three participants who said they were different mentioned the Version D wording being short and to mean any comments regarding the survey, while Version E was limited to someone’s personal experience with the survey; this participant preferred Version D for that reason. A second participant said that Version D was clearer but could not articulate why; this participant also preferred Version D for this reason. The third participant found Version E to be clearer and she preferred that version for this reason. The lone participant who found no differences between the two versions had no preference.

### **2.2.3 Recommendations for Round 2**

Based on the findings from Round 1, we recommended to remove Version B from testing as the wording was very similar to Version C. We felt Version B did not need to be further tested in Round 2 as participants seemed to correctly interpret the word “survey” in Version C to be the American Community Survey. We recommended testing Version A in Round 2 and adding the black tab with the wording “Thank You” to be consistent with Version C. While Version A was less preferred among participants in Round 1, we wanted to see how this version would perform with the design change in case participant preferences for Version C were driven primarily by the “Thank You.”

Other recommended changes included adding white arrows in black circles to the comment/feedback pages to draw the participant’s eyes towards the feedback item wording. The white arrows in black circles are used throughout the paper questionnaire. Also, the font size for the wording “Thank You” was recommended to be resized to match the font for the black tab

“Mailing Instructions” on the same page (see Appendix A for the images of the Round 2 feedback items).

The two web mock-up comment/feedback versions were also recommended to be removed from testing in the second round. We did not see any differences in the interpretation of the feedback wording based on whether it was on paper or a web mock-up. In addition, all participants for Round 2 completed the ACS on a paper questionnaire during the cognitive interview, and we wanted the feedback item to be placed on the back of the questionnaire. This allowed us to better simulate the experience a participant would have completing the questionnaire with the feedback item attached at home.

### **2.3 Round 2 Findings**

In Round 2, eight participants were given an ACS questionnaire with Version 1 on the back of the questionnaire, while seven participants were given a questionnaire with Version 2 (see Table 4 for the wording).

Only one participant wrote something in the white space under the comment/feedback item after completing the questionnaire. This participant was assigned to Version 2 and wrote about a question from the ACS that was confusing. There are many reasons why only one participant wrote something in the white space in this round. One possible reason is some participants did not complete the entire questionnaire as instructed by the interviewers due to time constraints. As a result, some participants did not see the comment/feedback page until they were instructed to turn to the back page of the questionnaire. A second possible reason is participants who did see the comment/feedback page when completing the questionnaire may not have interpreted answering the comment/feedback item as a task they had to complete compared to participants in Round 1. The last reason is some participants may not fill this out in cognitive testing as they would not fill it out at home.

Participants made similar statements as in Round 1 on what the comment/feedback item was asking them to do. Participants thought this space could be used for the participant’s experience or feelings, positive or negative feedback, and any privacy or confidentiality concerns. Other type of comments participants thought this space could be used for was questions from the survey (e.g., difficulty) and the length of the survey. Below are a few quotes from participants on what Version 1 was asking them to do:

*“Make any comments, positive or negative, after having completed the form. Gives me the opportunity to give the people who put the survey together some feedback.”*

*“Asking do you have any comments about the survey itself, the questionnaire itself, so like it was too long, was it, like, very specific.”*

Similar types of comments were provided by participants when asked what Version 2 was asking them to do:

*“It’s asking me to say that the survey was too long, or like, describe whatever I was confused with.”*

*“Asking me to talk about things that I might have objected to being asked. That I don’t know this information is going to be used. Can I really trust that it’s going to remain confidential? That I had some confusion about some questions. That it feels weird to ask these questions about people living with me temporarily.”*

Participants were probed about what the phrase “your experience” meant in Version 2. Almost half of the participants seemed to interpret “experience” to mean how they felt about the survey:

*“How do I feel taking the survey.”*

*“What I’m going through since I started filling out the questionnaire, so how do I feel, how it was.”*

*“It connotes my emotions. How did I feel during this.”*

Others thought “your experience” had a different meaning:

*“How comfortable were you with the questions...my reaction to some of the questions I read.”*

*“It kind of narrows it down to what did I actually do.”*

### **2.3.1 Black tab with the wording “Thank You”**

As in Round 1, participants were probed about the “Thank You” tab as this was on both versions. In Round 2, participants were probed about the “Thank You” tab during the administration of the alternate version that was not attached to the questionnaire. Participants were asked if they noticed the “Thank You” tab and 11 of the 15 participants noticed it. As in Round 1, participants viewed the “Thank You” tab as a positive feature. In this round, many participants saw the “Thank You” as a sign of appreciation since they took the time to complete the survey:

*“It goes a long way.”*

*“It shows you appreciating me taking 40 minutes of my time. It wasn’t for a loss. Thank you. I feel appreciated.”*

A couple participants noted that the “Thank You” tab was standard and appropriate:

*“I mean it seems pretty standard. I mean any company that brings you in to do a survey at the end, there’s either an interviewer or maybe....a form that just says ‘Thank You for giving us an hour of your time to do this,’ so yeah it’s normal.”*

### 2.3.2 Comparison of the Comment/Feedback Pages and Preferences

As in Round 1, participants were asked if there were differences, if any, between the two versions. Three participants mentioned that Version 1 could be used for off-topic comments not relevant to the ACS:

*“Hypothetically speaking, if someone is a jokester and they want to fill out [Version 1], they write you a joke or something like that. You know, something sarcastic. [Version 2] is more specific so it doesn’t give anyone any bright ideas.”*

*“They could use this for...junk. Junk comments. Trolling or something comments.”*

*“You know if you use [Version 1] that just says any comments, you’re going to get a lot of crazy antigovernment nuts and ‘what are you doing with my tax dollars?’ and crazy stuff like that probably. So [Version 2] is more specifically asking [for] comments on the survey.”*

As in Round 1, many participants said that the added text of “about your experience with the survey” was more specific than the wording without it. Before the side by side comparison, a few participants noticed differences between the two pages. For participants who saw Version 2 on the back of the questionnaire, three participants said that Version 1 was not as clear as Version 2:

*“[Version 1] isn’t really asking me to do anything. It’s giving me permission to use the space below to share any comments.”*

However, all three of these participants still seemed to understand what type of comments would be appropriate to write in the space for Version 1. A couple participants who saw Version 1 on the back of questionnaire first also seemed to find Version 2 more specific compared to Version 1. Again, both these participants seemed to understand what type of comments would be appropriate for Version 1.

Participants were asked to choose their preference among the two versions of the paper comment/feedback page. As in Round 1, the longer wording (Version 2) was more preferred, with 10 participants choosing this version. Participants said it was because they liked the phrase “about your experience with the survey,” the specificity of the wording, and that it would not be used for off-topic comments as often as Version 1. One other participant mentioned that Version 2 encompassed both the survey experience and other aspects of the survey.

For the five participants who preferred the shorter wording in Version 1, two participants said the wording was simple and short. One participant mentioned that this encompassed both the survey experience and other aspects of the survey, as a participant preferred Version 2 for the similar reason mentioned above. One participant said he could comment both about the survey and anything else not relating to the survey. The last participant preferred this version because she did not think of a survey as being an “experience.”

## **2.4 Debriefing Questions**

### **2.4.1 Required or optional items to fill out**

Across the two rounds of testing, participants were asked if the comment/feedback pages were required or optional items to fill out. Only one participant thought providing comments on the comment/feedback page was required. However, this participant may have misinterpreted the probing question and been thinking about survey response being required generally. Earlier, the participant said he would not fill out the feedback pages, as he had no comments to provide.

### **2.4.2 How would participants want to provide feedback about the ACS?**

Across the two rounds of testing, participants were asked if they would prefer to give any feedback they had about the ACS on the feedback pages they saw or in some other way. In Round 1, seven of the 13 participants preferred to respond on the paper survey. One participant indicated that they would want to call on the telephone and another would prefer giving feedback via telephone or email. A third participant mentioned she would want to have a phone call if she was angry but otherwise indicated providing feedback on the back of the survey form would be fine.

One participant mentioned he would likely not want to write anything but also seemed to indicate that if there was a link to do something online, he would want to provide feedback that way. A second participant mentioned she would prefer to provide comments via email or text. One participant mentioned not having any preference and another participant said she did not have a preference because she would not write anything down.

Three of the four participants who were assigned the web-mock ups in Round 1 said they would prefer giving feedback on the web, with one of these participants saying that would be her preference if she knew the feedback would be read. The fourth participant mentioned having no preference on how she would give feedback.

In Round 2, 14 participants were asked how they wanted to provide feedback on the ACS. Seven of the 14 participants said they would prefer to give feedback on the paper questionnaire, four participants wanted to give feedback online, and two participants did not really have a preference and could provide feedback via any method (e.g., mail, email, phone). One participant mentioned he would prefer to email or call with his feedback because he does not like writing.

### **2.4.3 Amount of write-in space for the feedback items appropriate?**

In Round 2 only, participants were asked if the amount of write-in space was appropriate. All but one participant found the amount of write-in space to be appropriate. The one participant who said it was not appropriate said it would not be enough for someone with large handwriting. Two participants said it was more than enough space. A third participant mentioned that it was appropriate for the version with the longer wording, “You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the survey,” while it would be more than enough space for the version with the shorter wording, “You may use the space below to share any comments.”

#### **2.4.4 Expect to receive a response from Census Bureau if provided feedback?**

In both rounds of testing, participants who wrote in something for the feedback item were asked if they would expect a response from the Census Bureau. If they did not write anything in, they were asked if other people providing feedback would expect a response from the Census Bureau.

Most of the participants mentioned they would not expect a response. Only three participants (two in Round 1 and one in Round 2) expected to receive a response. Another participant in Round 2 mentioned someone may expect a response if the survey asked about participants' "experience."

A couple participants mentioned that a response would be appreciated but not necessary:

*"No, it would have been nice and appreciated, but I would not have necessarily expected it."*

*"I'd like to think so but that depends on how many people are doing this. It would be kind of hard to read through 13,000 or 14,000 forms. It may be difficult to have the manpower, resources to do that. As long as they were read and dealt with, I don't think a response is necessary."*

A couple participants mentioned in Round 2 that if they were to receive a response from the Census Bureau about their feedback, they would expect a letter.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS**

Across the two rounds of testing, participants generally were able to interpret what the feedback items were asking them to do and give examples of relevant feedback on the ACS, such as their experience completing the ACS and positive and negative feedback. In Round 1, participants seemed to like both Version B, "You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the American Community Survey," and Version C, "You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the survey." However, participants ultimately preferred Version C because of the black tab with the wording "Thank You."

Because Version B and Version C were similar, we felt Version B did not need to be tested further in Round 2. Participants seemed to correctly interpret the word "survey" in Version C to be the American Community Survey. However, we did want to test Version A, "You may use the space below to share any comments," in Round 2 again because we wanted to see how the shorter comment/feedback item wording performed with the "Thank You" black tab. The web mock-up versions were not included in Round 2 because every participant would be filling out a paper questionnaire with the back page containing the comment/feedback item and during Round 1, there were not any differences in interpretation of the feedback item wording between the paper and web mock-ups.

In Round 2, a few participants noted the possibility that people could be more likely to write off-topic comments in Version 1. The majority of participants preferred Version 2 over Version 1,

even with the “Thank You” black tab implemented on both versions. The wording “your experience” and the perceived specificity of the comment/feedback item wording were the major reasons participants preferred the longer wording, Version 1.

Given the findings across the two rounds of testing, we recommend the following comment/feedback item shown in Figure 3:

**Figure 3. Recommended Comment/Feedback Item Wording**

13197280 2

## Mailing Instructions

➔ **Please make sure you have...**

- listed all names and answered the questions on pages 2, 3, and 4
- answered all Housing questions
- answered all Person questions for each person.

➔ **Then...**

- put the completed questionnaire into the postage-paid return envelope. If the envelope has been misplaced, please mail the questionnaire to:  
**U.S. Census Bureau  
P.O. Box 5240  
Jeffersonville, IN  
47199-5240**
- make sure the barcode above your address shows in the window of the return envelope.

**Thank you for participating in the American Community Survey.**

## Thank You

➔ **You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the survey.**

### For Census Bureau Use

POP <input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	EDIT <input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	PHONE <input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
EDIT CLERK <input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	TELEPHONE CLERK <input style="width: 150px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	

JIC1 <input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	JIC2 <input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
JIC3 <input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	JIC4 <input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>

The Census Bureau estimates that, for the average household, this form will take 40 minutes to complete, including the time for reviewing the instructions and answers. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Paperwork Project 0607-0810 and 0607-0936, U.S. Census Bureau, 4600 Silver Hill Road, AMSD – 3K138, Washington, D.C. 20233. You may e-mail comments to AMSD.Paperwork@census.gov; use “Paperwork Project 0607-0810 and 0607-0936” as the subject. Please DO NOT RETURN your questionnaire to this address. Use the enclosed preaddressed envelope to return your completed questionnaire.

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Although Version 1 also performed well in testing, a few participants thought there was a possibility the feedback item wording for this version would elicit more off-topic comments. In addition, many participants in Round 2 seemed to associate “your experience” in Version 2 with how they felt about the survey. For these reasons, Version 2 seemed like it best met the goal of developing a feedback item where participants feel they have the space to give feedback about the ACS.

#### 4. REFERENCES

- Dillman, D.A., Smyth, J.D., & Christian, L.M (2014). *Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
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- Hotchkiss, M., & Phelan, J. (2017). “Uses of Census Bureau Data in Federal Funds Distribution.” Retrieved from <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/program-management/working-papers/Uses-of-Census-Bureau-Data-in-Federal-Funds-Distribution.pdf>>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2017). “Agility in Action 2.0: A Snapshot of Enhancements to the American Community Survey.” Retrieved from <<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/programs-surveys/acs/operations-and-administration/2015-16-survey-enhancements/Agility%20in%20Action%20v2.0.pdf>>



## Appendix A. COMMENT/FEEDBACK ITEMS TESTED

Figure 4. Round 1 Paper Version A

13197280 A

### Mailing Instructions

➔ Please make sure you have...

- listed all names and answered the questions on pages 2, 3, and 4
- answered all Housing questions
- answered all Person questions for each person.

➔ Then...

- put the completed questionnaire into the postage-paid return envelope. If the envelope has been misplaced, please mail the questionnaire to:  
**U.S. Census Bureau**  
**P.O. Box 5240**  
**Jeffersonville, IN**  
**47199-5240**
- make sure the barcode above your address shows in the window of the return envelope.

**Thank you for participating in the American Community Survey.**

**You may use the space below to share any comments.**

#### For Census Bureau Use

POP <input type="text"/>	EDIT <input type="text"/>	PHONE <input type="text"/>	JIC1 <input type="text"/>	JIC2 <input type="text"/>
EDIT CLERK <input type="text"/>	TELEPHONE CLERK <input type="text"/>		JIC3 <input type="text"/>	JIC4 <input type="text"/>

The Census Bureau estimates that, for the average household, this form will take 40 minutes to complete, including the time for reviewing the instructions and answers. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Paperwork Project 0607-0810 and 0607-0936, U.S. Census Bureau, 4600 Silver Hill Road, AMSD - 3K138, Washington, D.C. 20233. You may e-mail comments to AMSD.Paperwork@census.gov; use "Paperwork Project 0607-0810 and 0607-0936" as the subject. Please DO NOT RETURN your questionnaire to this address. Use the enclosed preaddressed envelope to return your completed questionnaire.

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Form ACS-1(2017) (03-14-2016)

28



ACS-1(2017), Page 28, Base (Black)

ACS-1(2017), Page 28, Green Pantone 354 (18, 50, 100%)

Figure 5. Round 1 Paper Version B

13197280 B

## Mailing Instructions

**➔ Please make sure you have...**

- listed all names and answered the questions on pages 2, 3, and 4
- answered all Housing questions
- answered all Person questions for each person.

**➔ Then...**

- put the completed questionnaire into the postage-paid return envelope. If the envelope has been misplaced, please mail the questionnaire to:  
**U.S. Census Bureau  
P.O. Box 5240  
Jeffersonville, IN  
47199-5240**
- make sure the barcode above your address shows in the window of the return envelope.

**Thank you for participating in the American Community Survey.**

**You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the American Community Survey.**

### For Census Bureau Use

POP <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	EDIT <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	PHONE <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	
EDIT CLERK <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	TELEPHONE CLERK <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>		

JIC1 <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	JIC2 <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
JIC3 <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	JIC4 <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>

The Census Bureau estimates that, for the average household, this form will take 40 minutes to complete, including the time for reviewing the instructions and answers. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Paperwork Project 0607-0810 and 0607-0936, U.S. Census Bureau, 4800 Silver Hill Road, AMSD - 3K138, Washington, D.C. 20233. You may e-mail comments to AMSD.Paperwork@census.gov; use "Paperwork Project 0607-0810 and 0607-0936" as the subject. Please DO NOT RETURN your questionnaire to this address. Use the enclosed preaddressed envelope to return your completed questionnaire.

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Form ACS-1(2017) (03-14-2016)



Figure 6. Round 1 Paper Version C

13197280 C

## Mailing Instructions

➔ Please make sure you have...

- listed all names and answered the questions on pages 2, 3, and 4
- answered all Housing questions
- answered all Person questions for each person.

➔ Then...

- put the completed questionnaire into the postage-paid return envelope. If the envelope has been misplaced, please mail the questionnaire to:

**U.S. Census Bureau**  
**P.O. Box 5240**  
**Jeffersonville, IN**  
**47199-5240**

- make sure the barcode above your address shows in the window of the return envelope.

**Thank you for participating in the American Community Survey.**

## Thank You

You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the survey.

### For Census Bureau Use

POP <input type="text"/>	EDIT <input type="text"/>	PHONE <input type="text"/>	JIC1 <input type="text"/>	JIC2 <input type="text"/>
EDIT CLERK <input type="text"/>	TELEPHONE CLERK <input type="text"/>		JIC3 <input type="text"/>	JIC4 <input type="text"/>

The Census Bureau estimates that, for the average household, this form will take 40 minutes to complete, including the time for reviewing the instructions and answers. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Paperwork Project 0607-0810 and 0607-0936, U.S. Census Bureau, 4600 Silver Hill Road, AMSD - 3K138, Washington, D.C. 20233. You may e-mail comments to AMSD.Paperwork@census.gov; use "Paperwork Project 0607-0810 and 0607-0936" as the subject. Please DO NOT RETURN your questionnaire to this address. Use the enclosed preaddressed envelope to return your completed questionnaire.

Respondents are not required to respond to any information collection unless it displays a valid approval number from the Office of Management and Budget. This 8-digit number appears in the bottom right on the front cover of this form.

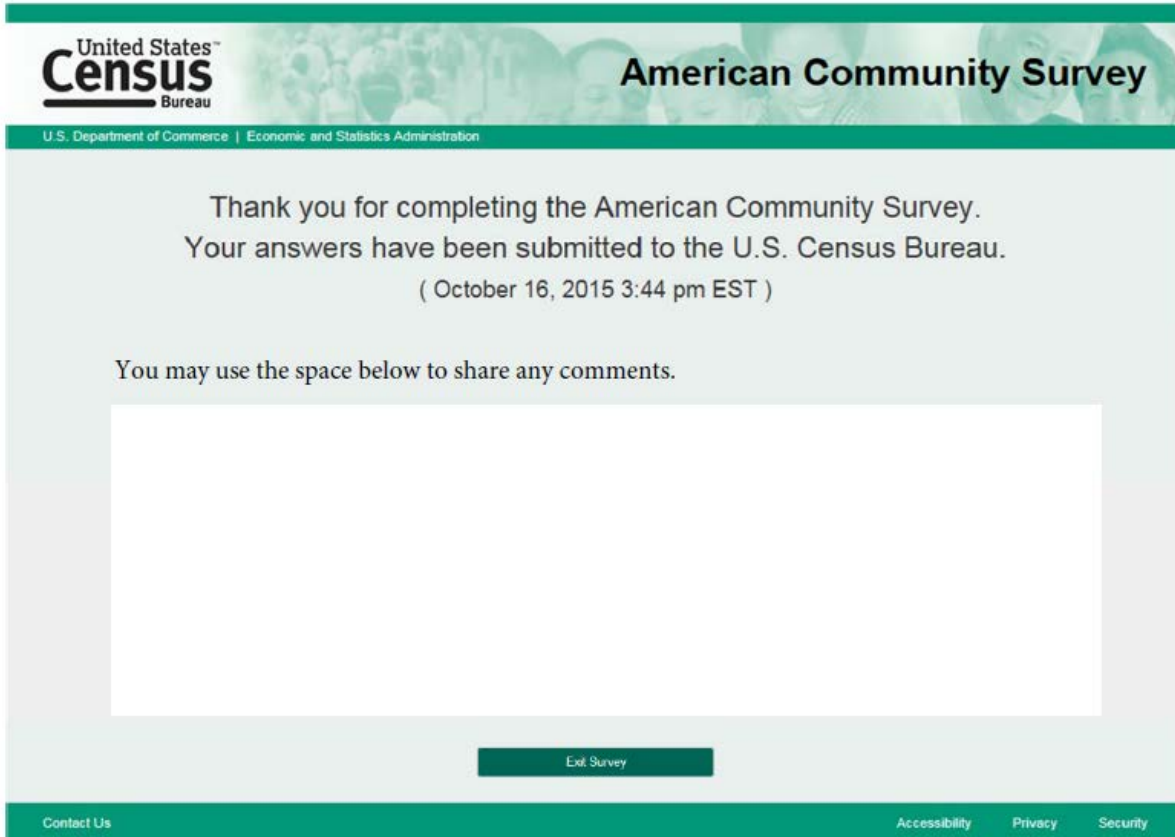
Form ACS-1(2017) (03-14-2016)

28



**Figure 7. Round 1 Web Version D**

D



The screenshot shows the completion page of the American Community Survey. At the top, there is a green header bar. On the left side of the header is the United States Census Bureau logo. On the right side is the text "American Community Survey". Below the header bar, there is a green bar with the text "U.S. Department of Commerce | Economic and Statistics Administration". The main content area has a light gray background. It contains the following text: "Thank you for completing the American Community Survey. Your answers have been submitted to the U.S. Census Bureau. ( October 16, 2015 3:44 pm EST )". Below this text is a large white rectangular box for comments, preceded by the text "You may use the space below to share any comments.". At the bottom of the main content area is a green button labeled "Exit Survey". The footer is a green bar with the text "Contact Us" on the left and "Accessibility Privacy Security" on the right.

United States  
**Census**  
Bureau

American Community Survey

U.S. Department of Commerce | Economic and Statistics Administration

Thank you for completing the American Community Survey.  
Your answers have been submitted to the U.S. Census Bureau.  
( October 16, 2015 3:44 pm EST )

You may use the space below to share any comments.

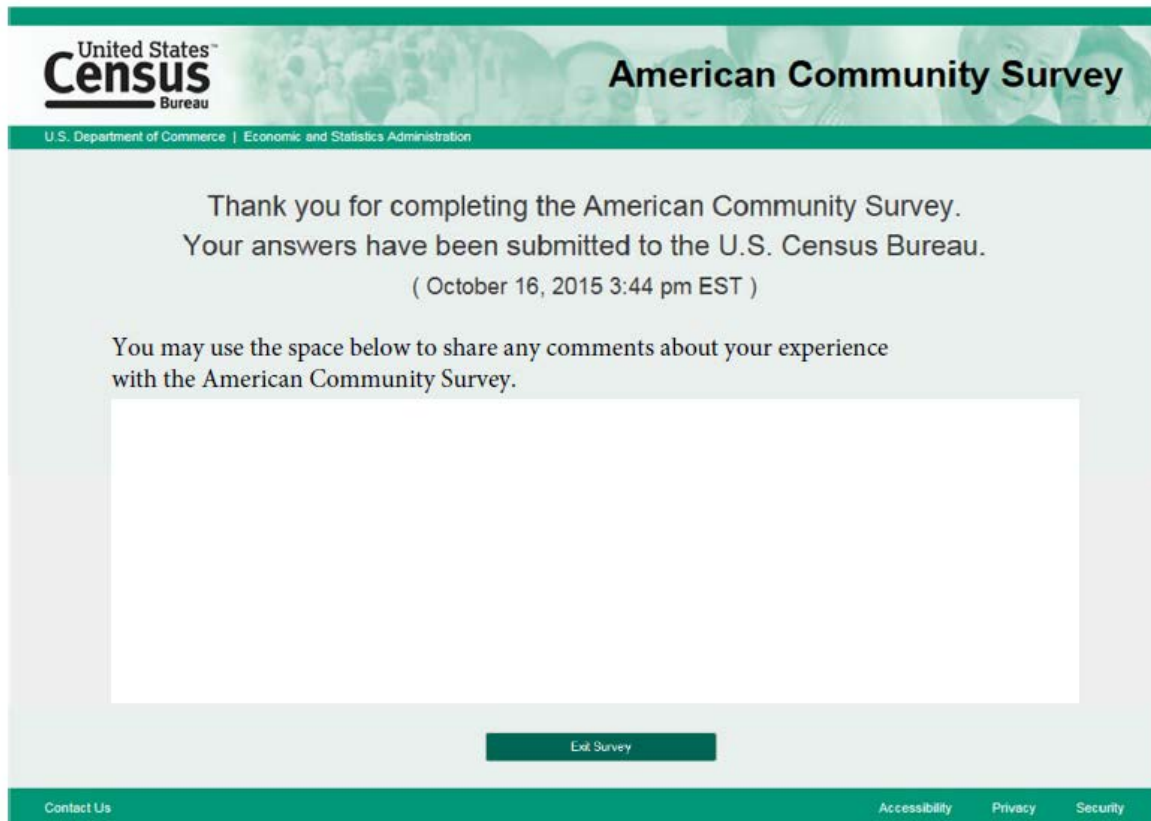
Exit Survey

Contact Us Accessibility Privacy Security

[Return to Top](#)

Figure 8. Round 1 Web Version E

E



The screenshot shows the completion page of the American Community Survey. At the top, there is a green header bar. On the left, the United States Census Bureau logo is displayed. On the right, the text "American Community Survey" is written in a large, bold font. Below the header, a green bar contains the text "U.S. Department of Commerce | Economic and Statistics Administration". The main content area has a light gray background. It begins with a thank-you message: "Thank you for completing the American Community Survey. Your answers have been submitted to the U.S. Census Bureau. ( October 16, 2015 3:44 pm EST )". Below this, there is a prompt: "You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the American Community Survey." followed by a large, empty white rectangular box for comments. At the bottom center of this box is a green button labeled "Exit Survey". The footer is a green bar with four links: "Contact Us", "Accessibility", "Privacy", and "Security".

United States<sup>™</sup>  
**Census**  
Bureau

**American Community Survey**

U.S. Department of Commerce | Economic and Statistics Administration

Thank you for completing the American Community Survey.  
Your answers have been submitted to the U.S. Census Bureau.  
( October 16, 2015 3:44 pm EST )

You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience  
with the American Community Survey.

Exit Survey

Contact Us Accessibility Privacy Security

[Return to Top](#)

Figure 9. Round 2 Version 1

13197280 1

## Mailing Instructions

➔ Please make sure you have...

- listed all names and answered the questions on pages 2, 3, and 4
- answered all Housing questions
- answered all Person questions for each person.

➔ Then...

- put the completed questionnaire into the postage-paid return envelope. If the envelope has been misplaced, please mail the questionnaire to:

**U.S. Census Bureau  
P.O. Box 5240  
Jeffersonville, IN  
47199-5240**

- make sure the barcode above your address shows in the window of the return envelope.

**Thank you for participating in the American Community Survey.**

## Thank You

➔ You may use the space below to share any comments.

### For Census Bureau Use

POP <input type="text"/>	EDIT <input type="text"/>	PHONE <input type="text"/>	JIC1 <input type="text"/>	JIC2 <input type="text"/>
EDIT CLERK <input type="text"/>	TELEPHONE CLERK <input type="text"/>		JIC3 <input type="text"/>	JIC4 <input type="text"/>

The Census Bureau estimates that, for the average household, this form will take 40 minutes to complete, including the time for reviewing the instructions and answers. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Paperwork Project 0607-0810 and 0607-0936, U.S. Census Bureau, 4600 Silver Hill Road, AMSD - 3K138, Washington, D.C. 20233. You may e-mail comments to AMSD.Paperwork@census.gov; use "Paperwork Project 0607-0810 and 0607-0936" as the subject. Please DO NOT RETURN your questionnaire to this address. Use the enclosed preaddressed envelope to return your completed questionnaire.

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Form ACS-1(2017) (6-5-2016)

28



ACS-1(2017), Page 28, Base (Black)

ACS-1(2017), Page 28, Green Pantone 354 (18, 50, 100%)

Figure 10. Round 2 Version 2

13197280 2

## Mailing Instructions

➔ Please make sure you have...

- listed all names and answered the questions on pages 2, 3, and 4
- answered all Housing questions
- answered all Person questions for each person.

➔ Then...

- put the completed questionnaire into the postage-paid return envelope. If the envelope has been misplaced, please mail the questionnaire to:

**U.S. Census Bureau**  
**P.O. Box 5240**  
**Jeffersonville, IN**  
**47199-5240**

- make sure the barcode above your address shows in the window of the return envelope.

**Thank you for participating in the American Community Survey.**

## Thank You

➔ You may use the space below to share any comments about your experience with the survey.

### For Census Bureau Use

POP <input type="text"/>	EDIT <input type="text"/>	PHONE <input type="text"/>	JIC1 <input type="text"/>	JIC2 <input type="text"/>
EDIT CLERK <input type="text"/>	TELEPHONE CLERK <input type="text"/>		JIC3 <input type="text"/>	JIC4 <input type="text"/>

The Census Bureau estimates that, for the average household, this form will take 40 minutes to complete, including the time for reviewing the instructions and answers. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Paperwork Project 0607-0810 and 0607-0936, U.S. Census Bureau, 4600 Silver Hill Road, AMSD - 3K138, Washington, D.C. 20233. You may e-mail comments to AMSD.Paperwork@census.gov; use "Paperwork Project 0607-0810 and 0607-0936" as the subject. Please DO NOT RETURN your questionnaire to this address. Use the enclosed preaddressed envelope to return your completed questionnaire.

Respondents are not required to respond to any information collection unless it displays a valid approval number from the Office of Management and Budget. This 8-digit number appears in the bottom right on the front cover of this form.

Form ACS-1(2017) (6-5-2016)

28



ACS-1(2017), Page 28, Base (Black)

ACS-1(2017), Page 28, Green Pantone 354 (18, 50, 100%)

## **Appendix B. ROUND 1 PROTOCOL**

**AFTER ADMINISTERING THE PROTOCOL IN “ATTACHMENT ROUND 1 BURDEN PROTOCOL,” INTERVIEWER WILL CONTINUE WITH THIS PROTOCOL.**

### **Respondent Comment/Feedback (Question Administration and Probing)**

**IF ASSIGNED TO PAPER, HAND RESPONDENT VERSION A. IF ASSIGNED TO WEB, HAND RESPONDENT VERSION D.**

- Now I would like you to take a moment and review this page. Imagine you had just finished completing the ACS at home [on paper/on the Internet]. Please tell me what you would do.
  - [IF R INDICATES THEY WOULD ANSWER FEEDBACK ITEM BUT DOESN'T FILL IT OUT] If you would answer this item [POINTING TO FEEDBACK ITEM], please write down what you would say.

**IF ASSIGNED TO PAPER, PROCEED TO VERSION A PROBES. IF ASSIGNED TO WEB, SKIP TO VERSION D PROBES ON PAGE 2.**

#### **Version A Probes:**

- In your own words, what is this asking you to do? [POINT TO FEEDBACK ITEM]
- IF FEEDBACK ITEM IS FILLED: How did you decide what to write here?
- IF FEEDBACK ITEM IS NOT FILLED: How did you decide to leave this blank? What kind of comments do you think would be appropriate to write here?
- Would you have filled this item out if this were part of the ACS questionnaire?

FROM THIS POINT ON IN PROTOCOL UNTIL COMPARING THREE PAPER VERSIONS, ONLY ALLOW RESPONDENT TO LOOK AT ONE VERSION. THEY WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY LATER TO COMPARE.  
TAKE BACK VERSION A.

#### **Version B Probes:**

HAND RESPONDENT VERSION B. I would like you to take a moment and review this page. Please do not fill this out.

- In your own words, what is this asking you to do? [POINT TO FEEDBACK ITEM]
- What kind of comments do you think would be appropriate to write?
- *If needed:* Did you notice the black heading with the word “thank you”? [POINT TO BLACK HEADING ON VERSION C]
  - *If needed:* What do you think of this?
  - *If needed:* Did you notice a statement that said “thank you” in the other versions?
  - *If needed:* Was it in the same place or somewhere else?



### **Version C Probes:**

HAND RESPONDENT VERSION C. I would like you to take a moment and review this page. Please do not fill this out.

- In your own words, what is this asking you to do? [POINT TO FEEDBACK ITEM]
- What kind of comments do you think would be appropriate to write?
- *If needed:* Did you notice the black heading with the word “thank you”? [POINT TO BLACK HEADING ON VERSION C]
  - *If needed:* What do you think of this?
  - *If needed:* Did you notice a statement that said “thank you” in the other versions?
  - *If needed:* Was it in the same place or somewhere else?

### **Comparing the three paper versions:**

HAND RESPONDENT THE THREE PAPER VERSIONS.

- Thinking about all three versions of this page you saw today, [POINT TO EACH OF THE THREE VERSIONS], what do you see as the difference, if any, between these pages?
- Do you think these are required items or optional items to fill out?
- IF RESPONDENT THINKS IT’S REQUIRED: Would you write anything if it were optional?
- Which one do you prefer, if any?
  - *If needed:* Tell me more about that
- Is there one that you think is easier to answer than the others?
  - *If needed:* Tell me more about that

### **PROCEED TO DEBRIEFING QUESTIONS ON PAGE 3.**

### **Version D Probes:**

- In your own words, what is this asking you to do? [POINT TO FEEDBACK ITEM]
- IF FEEDBACK ITEM IS FILLED: How did you decide what to write here?
- IF FEEDBACK ITEM IS NOT FILLED: How did you decide to leave this blank? What kind of comments do you think would be appropriate to write here?
- Would you have filled this item out if this were part of the ACS questionnaire/instrument?

FROM THIS POINT ON IN PROTOCOL UNTIL COMPARING THE TWO WEB VERSIONS, ONLY ALLOW RESPONDENT TO LOOK AT ONE VERSION. THEY WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY LATER TO COMPARE.  
TAKE BACK VERSION D.

### **Version E Probes:**

HAND RESPONDENT VERSION E. I would like you to take a moment and review this page. Please do not fill this out.

- In your own words, what is this asking you to do? [POINT TO FEEDBACK ITEM]
- What kind of comments do you think would be appropriate to write?

### **Comparing the two Web versions:**

HAND RESPONDENT THE TWO WEB VERSIONS.

- Thinking about the two versions of this page you saw today, [POINT TO EACH OF THE TWO VERSIONS], what do you see as the difference, if any, between these pages?
  - Do you think these are required items or optional items to fill out?
  - IF RESPONDENT THINKS IT'S REQUIRED: Would you write anything if it were optional?
  - Which one do you prefer, if any?
    - *If needed:* Tell me more about that
  - Is there one that you think is easier to answer than the others?
    - *If needed:* Tell me more about that
- 

### **Debriefing Questions**

CAN LEAVE PAPER OR WEB VERSIONS IN FRONT OF THEM.

We are almost finished with the interview.

- 1) Each of the versions you saw today had a space to provide comments. If you wanted to give feedback about the ACS, would you prefer to do it here, or in some other way?

*If needed:* By sending an email or giving feedback online? By calling someone?

- 2) IF FEEDBACK ITEM FILLED OUT: Would you expect to receive a response to what you wrote here? IF FEEDBACK ITEM NOT FILLED OUT: Do you think other people who write something here would expect a response?

- 3) Thinking about the items you looked at today, were there any you think some people might find confusing or difficult? [MAKE SURE THEY ARE THINKING ABOUT FEEDBACK ITEMS.]

- 4) What kinds of things do you think other people might write if they were asked to answer any of these statements?

*If needed:* Do you think people would write positive or negative comments here? Do you think people would use this space to complain about the ACS? Do you think people would use this space to complain about the government more generally? Do you think people would interpret this item as a way of opting out of the survey?

- 5) Was there anything else that stood out to you about your experience that we didn't talk about today?

Those are all of the questions that I had for you today. Thank you very much for your participation.

[TURN OFF THE RECORDER.]

Here is an envelope containing your \$40, and a voucher form that verifies I gave you the money. Please complete the information in the highlighted areas and sign and date.

[HAND THE CASH INCENTIVE TO THE PARTICIPANT AND COLLECT VOUCHER FORM.]