



# Dispatches from the Field

Learnings from the 2022 Survey of Consumer  
Finances

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04.16.2024

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Micah Sjoblom



# Agenda

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The 2022 Survey of Consumer Finances, like most large-scale data collection efforts, faced unprecedented operational challenges.

**Challenges present:**

- Widespread transmission of the highly contagious COVID Delta variant
- Persistent field interviewer labor shortages
- Development of a new fully remote training program presented

**Potential risks:**

- Limitations on traditional “in-person first” contacts likely to impact reaching willing eligible respondents
- Smaller workforce meant fewer locations with a local interviewer present, should fact-to-face outreach be possible
- Different training program had unknown influence on quality

Challenges required adapting approaches and new observations to pursue data collection targets

### **Adapting approaches:**

- Expand methods for initial outreach with participants
  - Contact form
  - Importance of prefield locating
- Emergence of specialized interviewer roles

### **New observations:**

- Tracking mode(s) of outreach
- Patterns of cooperation
  - Look at how we first spoke with a person in a household in relationship to cooperation

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# Contact Form

**2022 SCF Innovation**

Developed a prefield tool designed to collect information from willing participants prior to interviewer outreach.

## 2022 SCF Contact Form

- Web-based form for collecting phone numbers, email address and a preferred time to call
- Referenced in both advance mailing sent to Area Probability sampled households
- Accessed using a QR code or URL, required a unique PIN associated with sampled address to access
- Participants received a \$10 e-gift certificate for submission
- Specialization: Staffed a phone team of SCF experienced interviewers to field CF submissions

### Participate in 5 Easy Steps!

1. Go to [scfcontact.norc.org](https://scfcontact.norc.org) or use the QR code below:



2. Enter your PIN: <<PIN>>

3. Complete the Contact Form. You will receive **\$10** as a thank-you

4. Watch for a NORC team member to contact you

5. Complete your interview and receive an additional **\$75!**

## Contact Form activity

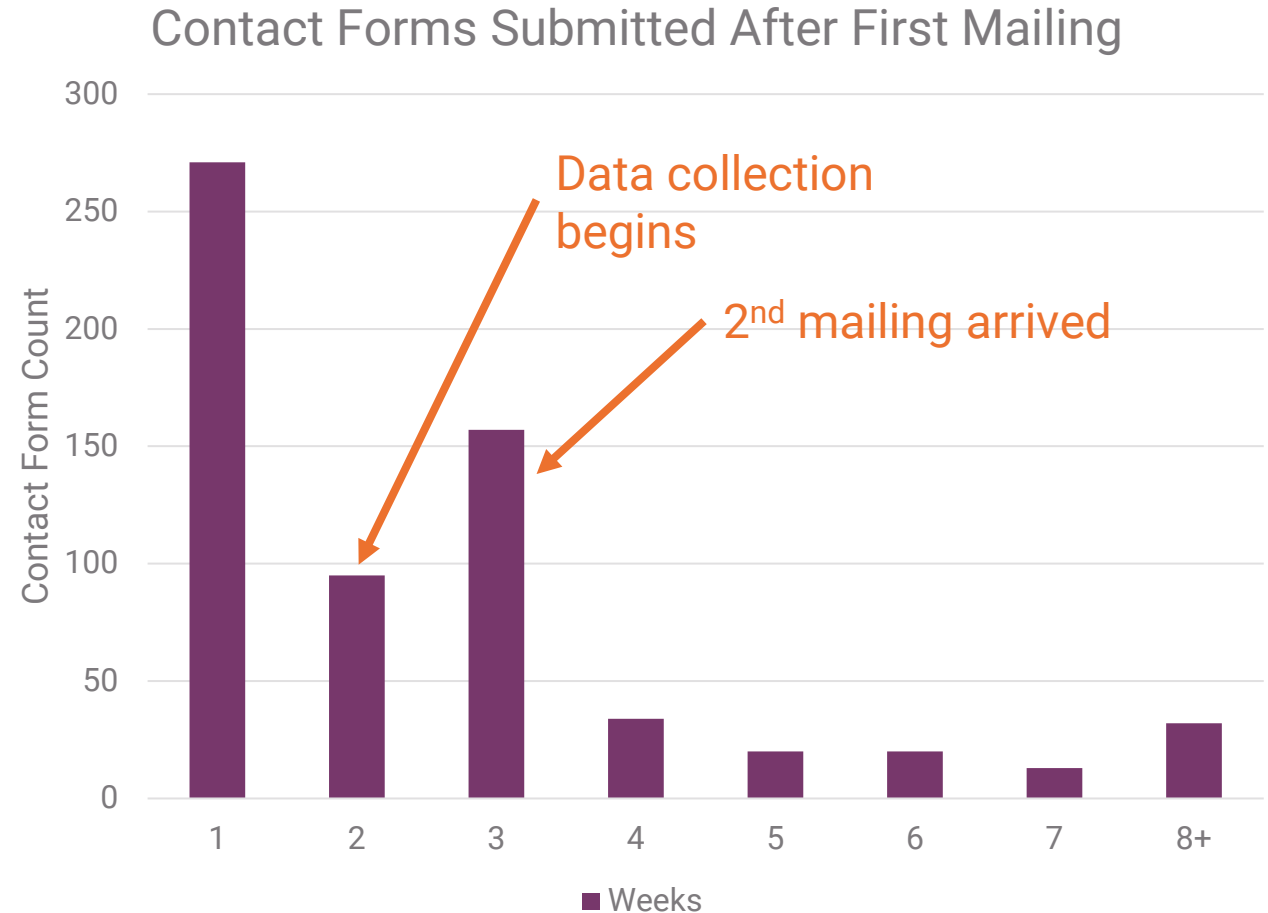
- 642 CF entries submitted (8% of households mailed)
- 82% submitted three weeks after initial mailing sent

## Performance: initial four weeks

- 304 submitters completed the SCF questionnaire
- 72% of all initial Area Probability sample completes

## Performance: overall

- 550 submitters completed the SCF questionnaire
- 85% completion rate



Note: data collection outreach began late in the second week after the CF mailing was delivered.



Tools like the contact form offer an opportunity to incorporate across field operations on similar studies.

**The performance of the 2022 Contact Form suggests:**

- An effective tool to expedite initial engagement with interested participants
- The Contact Form is one tool in a portfolio of prefield communications deployed
- Potential to utilize more responsively across the fielding effort
- Greater need for specialized interviewers



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# Prefield Locating

**Results of batch locating on ability to connect with List sample participants**

With the uncertainty in fielding approaches during initial fielding, sourcing accurate address information was critical.

### **Identifying “best” addresses for List Sample**

- Received names and addresses from tax records
- Tax records are over two years old; for lowest wealth strata we assumed higher mover rates based on previous survey results
- Used Accurint/LexisNexis® address batch search to verify address records and identify more recent, verified addresses

Prefield Locating and lower List strata run through the batch address check to identify the “best” address

**Sampled addresses traced fell into one of three primary categories:**

- 63% of cases confirmed sampled address as “best match” (agreement between sample file and matching service)
- 27% of cases received an updated “best match” address (matching service provided a different “best address”)
- 10% of cases returned no match (sampled information returned no results)
- Advance materials were mailed to updated “best match” address or sampled addresses when confirmed or no match was found (73%)

### Differences across wealth strata:

- When addresses agree, consistency in resolving as complete
- Stratum 2 is older, more stability in residence
- Stratum 1 is younger, more likely to be mobile (higher no match rate and higher resolved as unlocatable)
- Stratum 1 cases with updated addresses performed well in terms of completion.

Match Type	Stratum	Completes	Final Unlocatable	Final Refusal
Address Confirmed (53%)	1	44.3%	6.2%	24.7%
Address Updated (25%)	1	57.8%	6.7%	17.8%
No Match (22%)	1	35.0%	25.0%	22.5%
<b>Total (100%)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>45.6%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>22.5%</b>
Address Confirmed (69%)	2	42.3%	2.4%	30.9%
Address Updated (28%)	2	37.0%	4.0%	39.0%
No Match (3%)	2	30.8%	7.7%	30.8%
<b>Total (100%)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>40.4%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>33.1%</b>

As mailing interventions become a more important component of a multi-mode contacting approach, understanding address quality matters.

### **An adaptive survey design for mailing to participants can include**

- Looking at a combination of demographics and types of address matches returned
- Apply advance modeling that looks at sample address, address matches, and address information provided at the time of the interview to understand agreement
- Consider the benefits of mailing invitations to multiple addresses
  - Younger participants may reside in several locations where mail is received
  - Older participants with multiple addresses, but also rates indicate greater stability in their primary address

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# Speaking with Someone

**Understanding cooperation when first speaking with a household member.**

With less certainty in 2022, fielding protocols were adapted to allow initial contact attempts by phone.

**Preparations for fielding the Area Probability sample included:**

- Matching addresses to electronic databases to identify likely phone numbers (viable phone matches identified for nearly half of all sampled addresses)
- Training interviewers in phone approach
- Adapting screening protocols to verify addresses
- Using paradata to track success in speaking with household members

**Contact Attempts by Mode:**

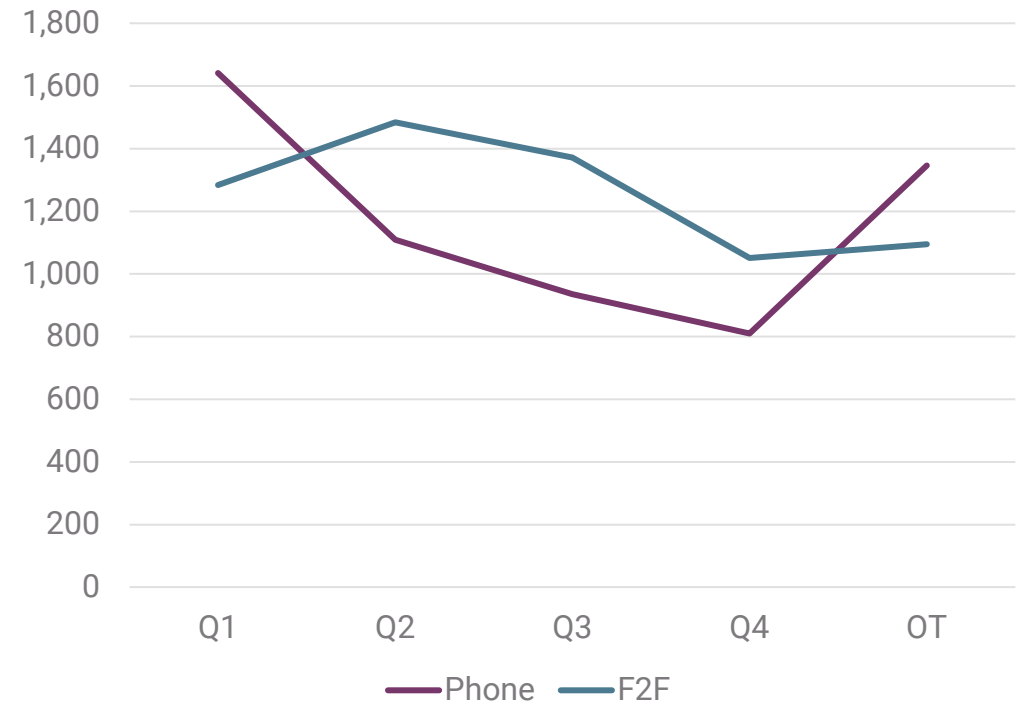
- Approximately 42K phone attempts recorded overall
- Over 38K face-to-face attempts recorded



### Speaking with individuals at a households:

- Critical component of the contacting strategy
- Initial connection with individuals by phone declined over time, until closedown
- In-person outreach rose during the summer
- See similar patterns of speaking with people across modes

"Spoke with Someone" by Mode

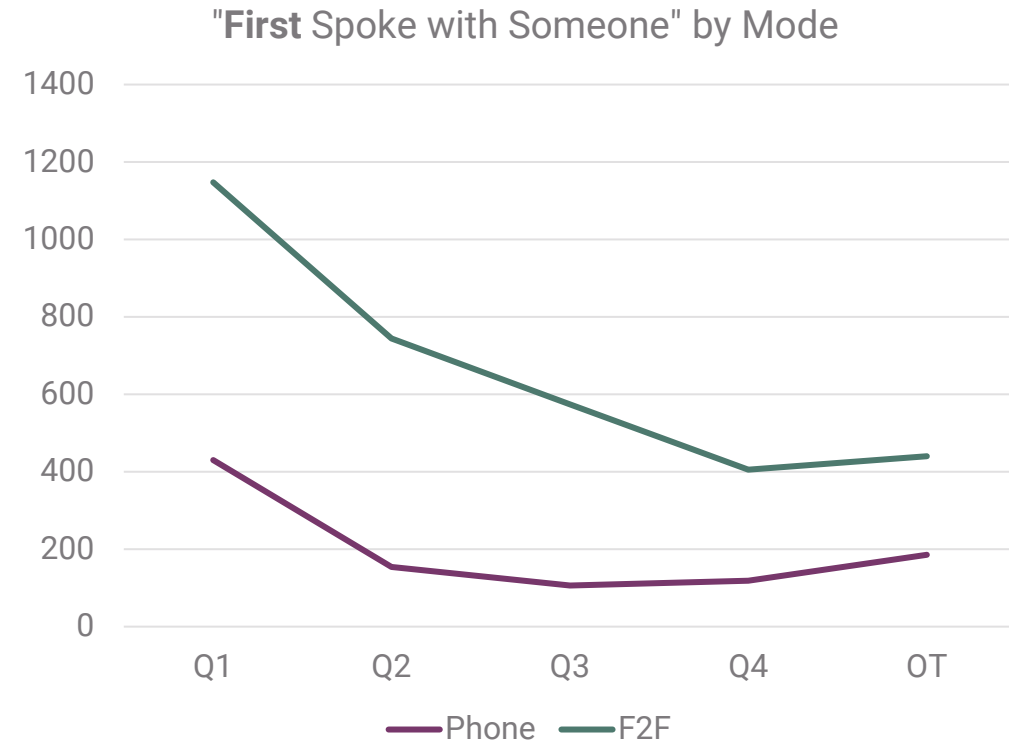


Mode	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	OT	Total
Phone	1,641	1,109	935	810	1,346	5,841
F2F	1,284	1,484	1,372	1,051	1,095	6,286
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,925</b>	<b>2,593</b>	<b>2,307</b>	<b>1,861</b>	<b>2,441</b>	<b>12,127</b>



## First time speaking with individuals at a household

- Protocol change from previous rounds: initial contact by phone permitted
- Resulted in first contacts speaking with individuals
- In-person contact still prominent mode of first contact speaking with someone
- Look to understand any differences in final outcomes, depending upon first opportunity to speak with someone at the household.



Mode	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	OT	Total
Phone	430	154	106	118	185	993
F2F	718	590	468	287	255	2,318
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,148</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>3,311</b>

## Results in terms of case finalization

- Slightly higher completion rates for cases where initial conversation was held in-person
- Even higher for initial conversations held in-person early on in the data collection period (Q1)

### Mode of first “spoke to” resolved as complete

First Spoke to Person	Complete	%
By phone	299	30.1%
In-Person	829	35.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,128</b>	<b>34.1%</b>

First Spoke to Person in Q1	Complete	%
By Phone	164	38.1%
In-Person	315	43.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>41.7%</b>

Combined mode approach can be useful, but more research is needed.

### **Establishing contact and speaking with household members requires flexibility**

- Face-to-face outreach appears to yield more positive outcomes
- Initially speaking to participants by phone does not appear to dramatically impact outcomes
- Greater need to assess adaptive design and mode recommendation across a wide array of factors:
  - Phone matching results and quality of numbers
  - Location and availability of staff
  - Low effort of phone outreach versus high benefit of in-person outreach
  - Progression of contacts by mode
- Potential to utilize more sophisticated modeling to refine responsive design methods
- Also need to account for cases without successful contact.

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# Recommendations

**Understanding cooperation when first speaking with a household member.**

The 2022 SCF offers several areas of further investigation to further enhance large-scale data collection efforts.

- **Web-based contact form tools:**
  - expedite engagement with potential participants
  - require specialized workforce to ensure engagement is responsive
- **Prefield locating and electronic batch searches**
  - Provide useful comparisons to assess current locations of a List sample
  - New leads are not the end result: consider adaptive approaches to test and assess address leads
- **Mode of contact and speaking with potential participants**
  - In-person outreach still matters
  - Phone works as well
  - Apply comprehensive approaches that include all cases, including those who we have not spoken with

# Thank you.

**Micah Sjoblom**  
**Vice President**  
Sjoblom-Micah@norc.org

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 **NORC** at the  
University of  
Chicago