Government Units Survey (GUS) Cognitive Interview Questionnaire and Protocol

We will use the following general probes (for questions where the respondents seems to be having difficulty):

What were you thinking when you were answering this question?

How did you arrive at your answer?

You reported \_\_\_\_\_\_. Can you tell me more about that?

**Mailing and Contact Information**

**Please respond within 14 days of receipt.**

**RETURN VIA MAIL TO:**

U. S. Census Bureau

1201 East 10th Street

Jeffersonville, IN 47132-0001

**Introduction and Survey Purpose:**

This survey collects descriptive information on the basic characteristics of local governments in preparation for the 2012 Census of Governments. Data from this survey will also be used to produce the official count of local government units in the United States and to update and verify the mailing addresses of government units.

**Please use a blue or black ink pen to complete the survey form.**

**A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. If your government has ceased to exist, please mark (X) the box below, enter the effective date, and return the form.

*□* My government has ceased to exist

Effective Date: *Month (MM) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Day (DD)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Year (YYYY)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

1. Is the mailing address listed above correct? *Yes No*
2. Does your government have an Internet website that contains information about your government and its activities?

*Yes* -- *Enter the web address (e.g. www.mylocalgov.state.us)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*No*

1. What is the ending date of your government’s fiscal year?

*Month (MM)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Day (DD)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

1. Is your government’s physical location the same as the location shown in the mailing address? (P.O. Box and rural route addresses are not physical locations).

*Yes*

*No* -- *Enter physical location.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

1. What year was your government was first incorporated or formed?

*Year\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

1. Does your government have a homerule charter?

*Yes – Enter the year your homerule charter was adopted \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*No*

Probes:

In your own words, what do you think this question is asking?

How did you arrive at your answer?

What does the term “homerule charter” mean to you?

**B. DEBT**

1. **Does your government have the authority to issue debt?**

*Yes*

*No – Skip to Q10*

**What type of debt does your government have the authority to issue?** (Mark “Yes” or “No” for each item)

Short-term debt *Yes No*

Long-term conduit debt *Yes No*

Long-term general purpose debt *Yes No*

General obligation *Yes No*

Revenue bond  *Yes No*

Utilized debt *Yes No*

Other debt (Specify\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) *Yes No*

Probes:

In your own words, what did you think this question was asking?

How did you arrive at your answers?

What does the term “debt” mean to you in this question?

What does the term “long-term conduit debt” mean to you?

If respondent reports “other debt,” probe that type of debt (see if it could possibly fall into another category): You said your government has the authority to issue \_\_\_\_\_ type of debt. Can you tell me more about that kind of debt?

**C. TAX AND LICENSING**

1. **What types of taxes does your government have the authority to levy?** (Mark “Yes” or “No” for each item)

Property Taxes *Yes No*

General Sales and Gross Receipts Taxes *Yes No*

Alcoholic Beverages Sales Tax *Yes No*

Amusements Sales Tax *Yes No*

Motor Fuels Sales Tax *Yes No*

Insurance Premiums Sales Tax *Yes No*

Pari-mutuels Sales Tax *Yes No*

Public Utilities Sales Tax *Yes No*

Tobacco Products Sales Tax *Yes No*

Individual Income Taxes *Yes No*

Corporation Net Income Taxes *Yes No*

Death and Gift Taxes *Yes No*

Documentary and Stock Transfer Taxes *Yes No*

Severance Taxes *Yes No*

Other taxes (Specify­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) *Yes No*

Probes:

In your own words, what did you think this question was asking?

How did you arrive at your answers?

What does the term “taxes” mean to you?

If the respondent reports some “other type of tax, probe.

If the respondent doesn’t understand other terms, probe.

1. **What types of license and permit fees does your government have the authority to impose?** (Mark “Yes” or “No” for each item)

Alcoholic Beverages License *Yes No*

Amusement License *Yes No*

Hunting and Fishing License *Yes No*

Motor Vehicles License *Yes No*

Motor Vehicle Operators License *Yes No*

Public Utilities License  *Yes No*

Occupation and Businesses License *Yes No*

Other licenses or permit fees (Specify­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) *Yes No*

Probes:

If the respondent appears to have difficulty with any of the terms, probe.

**D. RETIREMENT/PENSION PLAN.**

1. **Does your government operate a pension system for your own employees?** *Yes No*

List the plans:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Do your employees participate in the pension system of another government?** *Yes No*

List the plans:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Does your government offer other post employment benefits (e.g., health insurance, long-term care, etc.)?** *Yes No*

List other post employment benefits:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Does your government offer a defined benefit pension plan?** *Yes No*
2. **Does your government offer a defined contribution plan?**  *Yes No*
3. **Does your government offer a hybrid pension plan?** *Yes No*

**E. GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY**

**Exclude regulation of privately owned utilities when answering these questions.**

1. **Does your government operate a water supply utility?** *Yes No*
2. **Does your government operate a gas utility?** *Yes No*
3. **Does your government operate an electric utility?** *Yes No*
4. **Does your government operate a transit authority?** *Yes No*
5. **Does your government operate at least one liquor store?** *Yes No*
6. **Does your government operate an airport?** *Yes No*
7. **Does your government operate a sea or in-land port?** *Yes No*
8. **Does your government operate a hospital?** *Yes No*
9. **Does your government offer refuse collection?** *Yes No*
10. **Does your government operate a landfill?** *Yes No*
11. **Does your government operate a sewage system?** *Yes No –* skip to Q30
    1. **Is the sewer system separate from the water system?** *Yes No*
    2. **Is the sewage authority separate from the water authority?** *Yes No* – skip to Q30
    3. **Do you keep separate records for sewer and water?** *Yes No*
12. **Does your government construct, operate, or support housing and redevelopment projects?**

(For example, community development block grants)

*Yes*

*No*

Probes:

In your own words, what did you think this question was asking?

How did you arrive at your answer?

Probe these activities. Find out if the government contracts out the services.

1. **Does your government regulate industries that develop, utilize, or affect natural resources?**

(For example, irrigation, drainage, flood control, or soil conservation)

*Yes*

*No*

Probes:

In your own words, what did you think this question was asking?

How did you arrive at your answer?

Probe these activities. Find out if the government contracts out the services.

Probe any of the terms that respondents might not understand.

1. **Does your government *provide or support* recreational and cultural facilities?**

(For example, art galleries, zoos, botanical gardens, memorials, or community music programs)

*Yes*

*No*

Probes:

In your own words, what did you think this question was asking?

How did you arrive at your answer?

Probe these activities. Find out if the government contracts out the services.

Probe any of the terms that respondents might not understand.

1. **Is your government responsible for highways, streets, roads, alleys, bridges, tunnels, ferry boats, or related structures?**

*Yes*

*No*

Probes:

In your own words, what did you think this question was asking?

How did you arrive at your answer?

Probe these activities. Find out if the government contracts out the services.

Probe any of the terms that respondents might not understand.

***[We could probe these at the end of the series, revisiting each question individually.]***

**F. PUBLIC SERVICES**

1. **Is your government responsible for providing police protection services?** *Yes No*
2. **Is your government responsible for providing fire protection services?** *Yes No*
3. **Is your government responsible for providing emergency medical services (EMS)?** *Yes No –* skip to Q38
   1. **Are emergency medical services separate from the fire services?** *Yes No*

Probes:

If respondent reports EMS services, probe Q37a. Find out if they have separate funding sources.

1. **Is your government responsible for providing regulation and inspection services?**

(Include buildings and construction regulation, licensing and regulation of financial institutions, and the examination of professional occupations)

*Yes*

*No*

Probes:

In your own words, what did you think this question was asking?

How did you arrive at your answer?

Probe these activities. Find out if the government contracts out the services.

Probe any of the terms that respondents might not understand.

1. **Does your government provide welfare services?** *Yes No*
2. **Does your government provide library services?**  *Yes No –* skip to Q43
3. **What type of library services does your government provide?** (Mark “Yes” or “No” for each item)

Public regional libraries *Yes No*

Public community libraries *Yes No*

Academic libraries *Yes No*

Law libraries *Yes No*

Other library services (Specify\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) *Yes No*

**G. JUDICIAL OPERATIONS**

**If your government does not provide Judicial Operations SKIP to Section H**

1. **At what level does your government perform its judicial and legal operations?**

*County*

*Municipality*

*City*

*Town or township*

*Other level*(Specify\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

1. **Does your government operate any of the following types of correctional facilities?** (Mark “Yes” or “No” for each item)

Prison *Yes No*

Jail *Yes No*

Juvenile  *Yes No*

Other correctional facility(Specify\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) *Yes No*

**H. FINANCE**

**Estimates are acceptable.**

**Revenue**

1. **How much revenue did your government raise in the last completed fiscal year?**

(Include all taxes, charges, state or Federal grants, etc.. Exclude borrowings). If none, enter 0.

*$\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

**Expenditure**

1. **How much did your government expend in the last completed fiscal year?**

(Include salaries, wages, capital outlay, interest on debt, current operations, payments to other governments, etc.). If none, enter 0.

*$\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

**Debt**

1. **How much outstanding debt did your government have at the end of the last completed fiscal year?**

(Include general purpose long term debt, short-term debt, conduit debt). If none, enter 0.

*$\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

**Payroll**

1. **What was your government’s annual gross payroll (before deductions) in the last completed fiscal year?**

(Include salaries, wages, fees, or commissions, overtime, premium, night differential pay, bonuses and incentive payments. Excludelump sum payments, and the value of living quarters and subsistence allowances furnished for employees.)

*$\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

**I. REMARKS** (Please use this space for any explanations that may be important to understanding any of your responses)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of person to contact regarding this report Title Telephone Fax

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Internet e-mail address

**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING YOUR XXXX GUS SURVEY FORM**