

**Request for Nonsubstantive Change to the  
2020 American Community Survey (ACS)  
OMB Control No. 0607-0810  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
U.S. Census Bureau**

**Purpose**

The American Community Survey (ACS) mails survey materials to about 287,000 housing unit (HU) addresses each month. The mailing operations are conducted through the U.S. Postal Service and use first-class postage rates for all pieces. For addresses that were mailed survey materials but did not respond by mail, internet, or by calling the telephone questionnaire assistance line, the Census Bureau selects a subsample of these households and assigns them to the computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) (nonresponse follow-up) data collection mode. Unmailable household addresses are also sampled and included in the CAPI data collection mode.

**Background**

The current ACS information collection was approved on June 7, 2019 for three years, with an expiration date of June 30, 2022. The mailout contact strategy sends up to five mailings to eligible households. Due to the emergent health situation caused by the coronavirus pandemic, operations at the Census Bureau's National Processing Center (NPC) were minimized or closed, and no mailings were delivered from mid-March through June 2020. The ACS mailout operations have been negatively impacted by this reduction in operations and significant shortages of available staff. As a result, there is a change to the ACS contact strategy to lessen the impact on the survey operations and to utilize the limited NPC staff available.

**Third Mailing**

Starting on June 30, 2020, the ACS mailing contact strategy decreased from five mail contacts per household to two. Since implementing this condensed mailout strategy, NPC secured adequate staffing to reinstate the mailout of a previously approved final reminder letter. This letter was modified to add Spanish instructions at the bottom of the letter for contacting the Telephone Questionnaire Assistance line for help completing the survey. Under a normal mailing schedule, this letter is delivered as the fifth and final mailing. Under the shortened mailing schedule, this final reminder will be delivered as the third mailing. This letter will significantly improve the self-response, which will reduce the CAPI workload. The first mailing, sent to all mailable addresses in the sample, includes an invitation to participate in the ACS online and request they respond to prevent them from receiving additional mailings. The second mailing includes a paper questionnaire for those households that prefer to respond by mailing back their form. The third mailing serves as a final reminder to fill out the survey online or return a completed paper questionnaire in order to prevent a Census Bureau interviewer from coming to their home. This mailing also includes a due date, which serves to motivate the respondent to answer within the established deadline, communicate the importance of the survey, and provide a timeframe for response.

As a mitigation strategy, another version of the final reminder letter was developed in the event the NPC's staffing levels decline and they are unable to send questionnaires to each sampled address in the nonresponse universe. This alternate version removes the reference of completing and mailing back a paper questionnaire.

### **CAPI Internet Letter**

The final mode of data collection is CAPI and is used to conduct personal interviews for a sample of addresses for which the Census Bureau has not obtained a self-response (paper or internet). The CAPI interviewers have several tools available to explain the ACS to households. The CAPI Internet Letter is one of these tools used to describe how to respond to the online instrument. The key changes to the newly revised CAPI internet letter include:

- Plain language techniques such as usage of active verbs, clean design (more white space and less text), bold font for key phrases.
- New graphics to draw attention to the internet response option and user ID (which also matches the design of previous mailings).
- Spanish instructions on how to respond by internet or phone.

Upon the return to normal staffing levels, ACS will reinstate the mailing strategy prior to the coronavirus pandemic. Any changes to the mailing strategy after returning to standard resource levels will be done through a measured and intentional approach based on experimentation and proven success.

There are no substantive changes to the program resulting from these modifications.

### **Attachments:**

- A- Letter ACS-23PS(A)(2020) Final Reminder Letter with Reference to Questionnaire**
- B- Letter ACS-23PS(B)(2020) Final Reminder Letter without Reference to Questionnaire**
- C- CAPI Internet Letter – Atlanta Regional Office**
- D- CAPI Internet Letter – Chicago Regional Office**
- E- CAPI Internet Letter – Denver Regional Office**
- F- CAPI Internet Letter – Los Angeles Regional Office**
- G- CAPI Internet Letter – New York Regional Office**
- H- CAPI Internet Letter – Philadelphia Regional Office**



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Washington, DC 20233

Office of the Director

A message from the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau:

The U.S. Census Bureau has sent you several requests to complete the **American Community Survey**. If you have not already done so, now is the time to respond.

**Due:**

Respond now at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>

Log in with this user ID:

**OR** complete and mail back your paper questionnaire.

**Your response is required by law.**

Because your response is critically important to your local community and to your country, a Census Bureau interviewer may come to your home to complete the survey in person.

If you would like to complete the survey by telephone or need assistance, please call our toll-free number (1-800-354-7271).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Steven D. Dillingham

*Mensaje Importante:* Si tiene preguntas o necesita ayuda para llenar la encuesta, llámenos al 1-877-833-5625 para hablar con un empleado de la Oficina del Censo que habla español.



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Atlanta Regional Office  
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Resident:

A U.S. Census Bureau employee may have recently contacted you to help you complete the **American Community Survey**. If you have responded, thank you. If you have not responded, then your response is past due. A Census Bureau employee will contact you soon.

**Please complete the survey today to avoid an in-person interview:**



Go to: **[respond.census.gov/acs](https://respond.census.gov/acs)**

Log in with your user ID:

Enter the user ID letters and numbers exactly as you see them above.

**You are required by U.S. law to respond to this survey.** The Census Bureau is required by law to keep your information confidential.

If you are visited by Census Bureau staff, he or she will present a photo ID that includes their name, a Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date. He or she will have a laptop and will contact you between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. You may also be contacted by phone.

The information from this survey helps identify needs such as affordable housing, job training, and emergency planning. Your response makes a difference! Thank you for helping your community prepare for a better future.

If you have any questions call us at 1-800-424-6974. We are happy to help you.

Sincerely,

George Grandy Jr.  
Regional Director

**Por favor complete la encuesta hoy para evitar una entrevista en persona.**

Por internet: Vaya a [respond.census.gov/acs](https://respond.census.gov/acs). Haga clic en "Para completar en español, oprima aquí."

Por teléfono: Llame al 1-877-833-5625 para hablar en español con un empleado de la Oficina del Censo.

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U.S. Census Bureau  
Chicago Regional Office  
Oak Brook, IL 60523

Dear Resident:

A U.S. Census Bureau employee may have recently contacted you to help you complete the **American Community Survey**. If you have responded, thank you. If you have not responded, then your response is past due. A Census Bureau employee will contact you soon.

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The information from this survey helps identify needs such as affordable housing, job training, and emergency planning. Your response makes a difference! Thank you for helping your community prepare for a better future.

If you have any questions call us at 1-800-865-6384. We are happy to help you.

Sincerely,

Marilyn A. Sanders  
Regional Director

**Por favor complete la encuesta hoy para evitar una entrevista en persona.**

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Denver Regional Office  
Lakewood, CO 80235

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The information from this survey helps identify needs such as affordable housing, job training, and emergency planning. Your response makes a difference! Thank you for helping your community prepare for a better future.

If you have any questions call us at 1-800-209-7659. We are happy to help you.

Sincerely,

Cathy L. Lacy  
Regional Director

**Por favor complete la encuesta hoy para evitar una entrevista en persona.**

Por internet: Vaya a [respond.census.gov/acs](https://respond.census.gov/acs). Haga clic en "Para completar en español, oprima aquí."

Por teléfono: Llame al 1-877-833-5625 para hablar en español con un empleado de la Oficina del Censo.

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U.S. Census Bureau  
Los Angeles Regional Office  
Burbank, CA 91504

Dear Resident:

A U.S. Census Bureau employee may have recently contacted you to help you complete the **American Community Survey**. If you have responded, thank you. If you have not responded, then your response is past due. A Census Bureau employee will contact you soon.

**Please complete the survey today to avoid an in-person interview:**



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The information from this survey helps identify needs such as affordable housing, job training, and emergency planning. Your response makes a difference! Thank you for helping your community prepare for a better future.

If you have any questions call us at 1-800-992-3530. We are happy to help you.

Sincerely,

Julie Lam  
Regional Director

**Por favor complete la encuesta hoy para evitar una entrevista en persona.**

Por internet: Vaya a [respond.census.gov/acs](https://respond.census.gov/acs). Haga clic en "Para completar en español, oprima aquí."

Por teléfono: Llame al 1-877-833-5625 para hablar en español con un empleado de la Oficina del Censo.

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U.S. Census Bureau  
New York Regional Office  
New York, NY 10005

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If you have any questions call us at 1-800-991-2520. We are happy to help you.

Sincerely,

Jeff Behler  
Regional Director

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Por teléfono: Llame al 1-877-833-5625 para hablar en español con un empleado de la Oficina del Censo.

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U.S. Census Bureau  
Philadelphia Regional Office  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Resident:

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If you have any questions call us at 1-866-238-1374. We are happy to help you.

Sincerely,

Julie Lam  
Regional Director

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Por teléfono: Llame al 1-877-833-5625 para hablar en español con un empleado de la Oficina del Censo.

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