

UnderStandingAmericaStudy

RECRUITMENT DATA



USC Dornsife Center for Economic and Social Research

10/05/2023

INTRODUCTION

All UAS recruitment is done through address based sampling (ABS) in which samples are acquired based on postal records. UAS recruitment follows a standardized protocol (as described in the “UAS Recruitment Protocol”) during which a variety of data is collected. These data are described in the sections below, and fall into four distinct categories:

- Status information: provides details of the status of the people targeted during recruitment, e.g. whether they became a member, are active, which recruitment batch they are from, and etceteras.
- Initial survey: contains answers to the questions asked during the initial survey filled out by people targeted during recruitment. This data will only be present for those people who filled out the initial survey.
- Experiments: gives indicators on whether people were targeted through one or more experiments or not.
- Communication: details on the efforts undertaken during recruitment to encourage people to sign up.
- Sleepers: describes activities made to encourage people to start doing surveys again after having been inactive for a prolonged period of time.

For any additional information and/or questions, contact us at uas-l@mymailists.usc.edu.

STATUS INFORMATION

The recruitment data file contains status information for all people selected in the different recruitment samples (also referred to within this document as recruitment batches). The following variables are included:

- uasid: the identifier of the person. This identifier is assigned to a person at recruitment and, if becoming a member, stays with the person throughout each and every survey he/she participates in.
- uashhid: the household identifier of the person. Every person is assigned a household identifier, stored in the variable 'uashhid'. For the primary person targeted (that is, whose name is used within the mailing) this identifier equals his or her 'uasid'. All other eligible members of the person's household (everyone who is 18 or older in the household) who become UAS respondents receive the 'uasid' of the primary person as their household identifier. The identifier 'uashhid' remains constant over time for all respondents.
- samplotype: indicates the sampling frame from which the household was recruited. All UAS recruitment is done through address based sampling (ABS) in which samples are acquired based on postal records. Currently, the variable 'samplotype' takes on three values reflecting three distinct recruitment categories (in future data sets the number of categories may increase due to the incorporation of new recruitment categories):
 1. Nationally Representative Sample
 2. Native Americans: recruited through ABS, where the probability of drawing a zip-code is a function of the percentage of Native Americans in the zip-code. Primary respondents in these zip-codes who are not Native Americans are not invited to join the UAS.
 3. LA County: recruited through ABS drawing from zip-codes in Los Angeles County.

More information about the recruitment procedures of the UAS is found in the UAS recruitment protocol.

- batch: indicates the batch from which the person was recruited. There are currently the following values this variable takes (in future data sets the number of categories may increase due to the usage of new recruitment samples):

1. ASDE 2014/01 Nat.Rep.
2. ASDE 2014/01 Native Am.
3. ASDE 2014/11 Native Am.
4. LA County 2015/05 List Sample
5. MSG 2015/07 Nat.Rep. Batch 1
6. MSG 2016/01 Nat.Rep. Batch 2
7. MSG 2016/01 Nat.Rep. Batch 3
8. MSG 2016/01 Nat.Rep. Batch 4
9. MSG 2016/02 Nat.Rep. Batch 5
10. MSG 2016/03 Nat.Rep. Batch 6
11. MSG 2016/04 Nat.Rep. Batch 7
12. MSG 2016/05 Nat.Rep. Batch 8
13. MSG 2016/08 LA County Batch 2
14. MSG 2017/03 LA County Batch 3
15. MSG 2017/11 California Batch 1
16. MSG 2018/02 California Batch 2
17. MSG 2018/08 Nat.Rep. Batch 9
18. MSG 2019/04 LA County Batch 4
19. MSG 2019/05 LA County Batch 5
20. MSG 2019/11 Nat.Rep. Batch 10
21. MSG 2020/08 Nat.Rep. Batch 11

22. MSG 2020/10 Nat.Rep. Batch 12
23. MSG 2021/02 Nat. Rep. Batch 13
24. MSG 2021/08 Nat. Rep. Batch 15
25. MSG 2021/08 Nat. Rep. Batch 16
26. MSG 2022/02 Nat. Rep. Batch 17 (priority sticker)
27. MSG 2022/02 Nat. Rep. Batch 17 (regular priority)
28. MSG 2022/08 Nat. Rep. Batch 18
29. MSG 2022/11 LA County Batch 6
30. MSG 2022/11 Nat. Rep. Batch 20
31. MSG 2023/01 Nat. Rep. Batch 21
32. MSG 2023/06 Nat. Rep. Batch 22
33. MSG 2023/09 Native Am. Batch 3
34. MSG 2023/11 Nat. Rep. Batch 23

- primary_respondent: indicates if the respondent was the initial person targeted within the household (that is, the initial mailing was in this person's name). A household in this regard is broadly defined as anyone living together with the primary respondent. That is, a household comprises individuals who live together, e.g. as part of a family relationship (like a spouse/child/parent) or in context of some other relationship (like a roommate or tenant). If this is 0, then it means that another person in the household decided to become an UAS member.
- member: indicates if the person became an UAS member. A person is considered to be a member if they filled out the initial survey AND completed the My Household.
- memberstart: provides the date and time on which a person filled out the My Household survey, and so at which point they officially became an UAS member. It is empty if a person is not a member.

- memberend: gives the date and time on which a person stopped being an UAS member. It is empty if a person is still a member (status is not equal to “2 Stopped”).
- status: reflects the current status of a person taking one of four values: 0 Not a member, 1 Active, 2 Stopped, and 3 Inactive. A person is considered to be an active member if they completed one or more UAS surveys other than the My Household survey within the last year.
- stopreason: identifies the reason an UAS member stopped participating falling into: 0 Not stopped, 1 Too busy, 2 Health problems, 3 Cannot locate or contact, 4 Other reason, and 5 Unknown. Note that a stop reason is only present if the UAS member contacted us with an explicit request to stop participating. If they do not and instead simply stop filling out surveys, they will have a status of inactive (rather than stopped).
- badaddress: indicates if the initial address for the targeted person was correct or not. This takes a value of 1 ONLY if an explicit notification was received that the initial mailing was not successful.
- needshardware: reflects whether the targeted person indicated that they would need hardware to participate in the UAS.
- needsinternet: reflects whether the targeted person indicated that they would need internet to participate in the UAS.

INITIAL RECRUITMENT SURVEY

The recruitment data file also contains responses to questions in the initial recruitment survey sent to people. These are a few of the key variables:

- start_date, start_year, start_month, start_day, start_hour, start_min, start_sec: the date and time on which a person started the initial survey (if signing up directly on the web site, see below) or the date and time on which the person's initial paper survey was entered through data entry (if receiving the initial survey by mail).
- end_date, end_year, end_month, end_day, end_hour, end_min, end_sec: the date and time on which a person completed the initial survey (if signing up directly on the web site, see below) or the date and time on which the entry of the person's initial paper survey was completed (if receiving the initial survey by mail).
- q28: indicates whether the person is open to filling out more surveys (version 1, see below).
- q28_r2: indicates whether the person wants to become an UAS member (version 2, see below).
- returntype: indicates the manner in which the initial recruitment survey was returned (filled out online versus returned by mail on paper).
- qrcode: indicates if the person used the QR code to start the initial survey (value=1) or not (value=0). Applicable since June 2023. Missing prior to June 2023.

Two different versions of the survey have been administered. The first version, described in the "UAS Initial Recruitment Survey Version 1" document, was in use from January 2014 to December 9, 2019. From December 10, 2019 onwards the second version, described in the "UAS Initial Recruitment Survey Version 2" document, is used.

The key differences between the two versions are:

- 1) Questions q7, q17, and q18 are asked in version 1, not in version 2.
- 2) Questions q6_r2 and q7_r2 are asked in version 2, not in version 1.
- 3) In the data the value of 7 (no internet at home) for q8 is deduced for people responding "No" to q7_r2s1 in version 2.

EXPERIMENTS

During the different recruitment phases of the UAS a variety of experiments have been conducted to test strategies for increasing recruitment effectiveness. Whether or not a person was in an experiment is reflected in the following indicators:

- experiment37: persons in this experiment received an initial mailing survey in an envelope with a label listing both the person's name and the phrase 'Current resident'.
- experiment38: persons in this experiment received an initial recruitment survey in an envelope with a label listing only the phrase 'Current resident'.
- experiment39: persons in this experiment received the initial recruitment survey in an envelope with a colorful label. (what kind of label?)
- experiment43: persons in this experiment were offered the option to directly join the UAS after the initial recruitment survey on the last page of the booklet.
- experiment46: persons in this experiment received the initial mailing survey in a Priority Mail envelope.
- experiment49: persons in this experiment group received a postcard, which stated \$5 would be enclosed with the initial recruitment survey. This experiment only involved people from the MSG 2016-02 Nat.Rep. Batch 5 (batch = 9).
- experiment51: persons in this experiment received a personalized postcard, which stated \$5 would be enclosed with the initial recruitment survey. The other side of the postcard contains a personalized hello. This experiment only involved people from the MSG 2016-03 Nat.Rep. Batch 6 (batch = 10).
- experiment55: persons in this experiment received a personalized postcard modified from experiment 49 and 51 prior to receiving the initial mailing survey. This postcard has reorganized/rewritten text, with the mentioning of the \$5 bill and now also the \$15 in bold black letters on a white background, between two horizontal black lines. Also, this postcard uses 80% of the space for the English text and only has a short, bold, Spanish statement mentioning the \$5 and \$15 and saying that they can do surveys both in English and Spanish. This experiment only involved people from the MSG 2016-04 Nat.Rep. Batch 7 (batch = 11).

- experiment56: persons in this experiment received a modified personalized postcard prior to receiving the initial mailing survey. It is the same postcard as described for experiment 55. This experiment only involved people from the MSG 2016-05 Nationally Representative Batch 8 (batch = 12).
- experiment185: persons in this experiment received a revised invitation letter (value=1) versus the non-revised invitation letter. This experiment involved people from the MSG 2022-11 LA County Batch 6 (batch = 29) and the MSG 2022-11 Nationally Representative Batch 20 (batch = 30).
- experiment187: persons in this experiment received the invitation letter in a standard envelope with a priority mail sticker and visible cash (value=1) versus an envelope with a priority mail sticker and no visible cash (value=0). This experiment involved people from the MSG 2022-08 Nationally Representative Batch 18 (priority sticker and visible cash) (batch = 28) and from the MSG 2022-02 Nationally Representative Batch 17 (priority sticker and no visible cash) (batch = 26).
- experiment189: persons in this experiment received a regular priority mail envelope (value=1) versus an envelope with a priority mail sticker (value=0). This experiment involved people from the MSG 2022-02 Nationally Representative Batch 17 (regular priority) (batch = 27) and from the MSG 2022-02 Nationally Representative Batch 17 (priority sticker) (batch = 26).
- experiment190: persons in this experiment received a paper/online (value=1) versus an online-first (value=0) intake survey. This experiment involved people from the MSG 2021-08 Nationally Representative Batch 15 (batch = 24) and from the MSG 2021-08 Nationally Representative Batch 16 (online-first) (batch = 25).
- experiment197: persons in this experiment received an envelope addressed to 'Name or Current Resident' (value=1) versus 'To the Family Living at' (value=0). This experiment involved people from the MSG 2023-06 Nationally Representative Batch 22 (batch = 32). Note: due to an error a small subset of respondents in the treatment group (value=1) received an envelope addressed with 'Name only (incorrect)' (variable error197 with value=1) versus 'Name OR Current Resident (correct)' (variable error197 with value=0).

- `burden_level`: persons in this experiment are only invited to UAS core surveys with one group being invited in the regular core surveys schedule (`value=0`) and the other group being invited in a slower, once-per-month, schedule (`value=1`). This experiment involved people from the MSG 2023-10 Nationally Representative Batch 23 (`batch = 34`).

COMMUNICATION

As part of the UAS recruitment protocol outreach to potential UAS members takes in place in order to increase the chances of recruiting them into the UAS panel. Specifically, the following actions are undertaken depending on a person's circumstances (a value of 1 denotes the action was taken):

- action13: indicates whether the person received a second mailing of the invitation letter and survey booklet after not responding to the initial outreach.
- action21: indicates whether the person did not respond to the initial outreach and completed the recruitment survey on the phone after being called.
- action22: indicates whether the person was send a reminder letter after they had indicated that they were willing to participate but then never completed the My Household survey.
- action23: indicates whether the person was send a reminder email after they had indicated that they were willing to participate but then never completed the My Household survey.
- action25: indicates whether the person received a "Finish My Household" email/contact.
- action30: indicates whether the person received a letter via Priority mail or FedEx offering either \$40 or \$80 if they would log in and complete the My Household survey. The letter was send to people who completed the initial recruitment survey and indicated they were willing to participate, but then never completed the My Household survey online. The results of their response is captured in the endgame variable.
- action60: indicates whether the person received a one-time \$15 payment on a ClinCard after filling out the initial recruitment survey, but declining to become an UAS member.
- action74: indicates whether the person received a pre-notification postcard/letter informing them they have been selected to participate in the UnderStanding America Study. The mailing of the actual initial recruitment survey typically follows within 2-3 weeks after the pre-notification.
- action80: indicates whether the person received a pre-notification postcard/letter informing them they have been selected to participate in the UnderStanding America Study. The mailing of the actual initial recruitment survey typically follows within 2-3 weeks

after the pre-notification. This postcard/letter only went to the MSG 2017/11 California Batch 1 (batch = 15) and MSG 2018/02 California Batch 2 (batch = 16)

- action91: indicates whether the person received a letter with a \$20 bonus incentive after taking the My Household survey in order to encourage them to participate in other surveys.
- endgame: indicates whether the person received an endgame reward to encourage them to become an UAS member. It takes one of four values: 1 \$40, 2 \$80, 3 Offered, not used, and 4 Not offered.

SLEEPERS

The Understanding America Study has adopted a protocol for when panel members become so-called “sleepers”. In the UAS, a sleeper is a person who has not completed a survey for three months or more when during this period there have been at least two surveys offered in addition to the My Household quarterly update. The exact protocol is described in the “UAS Sleeper Protocol”. In context of the recruitment data this is reflected in the following action variables (a value of 1 denotes the action was taken):

- action65: indicates whether the person received a letter by Priority Mail asking them to start taking surveys again. This 3-month letter is send to people who did not do a survey for 3 months and who can not be reached by phone. They are offered a one-time \$10 bonus incentive for completing a survey by the end of the month. Priority mail was only used the first time the sleeper protocol was executed.
- action70: indicates whether the person received a letter by normal mail (or an email) asking them to start taking surveys again. This 3-month letter is send to people who did not do a survey for 3 months and who can not be reached by phone. They are offered a one-time \$10 bonus incentive for completing a survey by the end of the month.
- action67: indicates whether the person received a letter (or an email) thanking them for starting to take surveys again after they had indicated their intent to do so during the phone call. To express gratitude they are offered a one-time \$10 bonus incentive for completing a survey by the end of the month.
- action68: indicates whether the person received a follow-up letter (or an email) asking why they did not start taking surveys again, even though they had indicated they would do so when reached by phone or letter (action65). They are offered a one-time \$10 bonus incentive after completing a survey. This 4-month letter is send after 4 months of a person not having done a survey.
- action69: indicates whether the person received a final thank you letter (or an email) after they indicated they do not want to participate in the UAS anymore. This letter is send once the person expressed their desire to stop taking surveys.
- action81: indicates whether the person received a letter (or an email) asking them to start taking surveys again. They are offered a \$25 bonus after completing a survey. This 10-month letter is send after 10 months of a person not having done a survey.

- action106: indicates whether the person received a termination letter (or an email) informing them that their UAS membership has been ended. It is send approximately 6 weeks after the 10-month letter is send.