

UnderStandingAmericaStudy

RECRUITMENT PROTOCOL VERSION 3



USC Dornsife Center for Economic and Social Research

07/31/2023

RECRUITMENT PROTOCOL

UAS recruitment procedures were revised in 2018 (version 2), and again in 2022 (version 3). A pdf version of UAS recruitment procedure version 1, associated with sample batches prior to batch 17 is available [here](#). A pdf of UAS recruiting procedure version 2, associated with batches sample batches 17 (MSG 2018-08) to 26/27 (MSG 2022-02), is available [here](#). Current UAS recruiting procedures are provided below (a pdf version is available [here](#)):

- a. Buy post office delivery sequence files from a commercial vendor; apply the sampling algorithm currently in use to select addresses for a given recruitment batch.
- b. Send an advance notification postcard to the selected households^{1,2}.
- c. One week later the selected household receives, by Priority Mail, an invitation package which includes a cover letter from CESR Director Arie Kapteyn which explains the project, a \$5 cash incentive, and a promise of \$15 to someone in the household who logs in and completes a 10 minute intake survey using either a supplied log-in code, or an included paper survey with a return postage-paid envelope. Included in the packet is a return postage-paid postcard with a short survey that may be returned to indicate a reason why they do not want to participate, and an indicator if they prefer not to be contacted again. On the landing page for the intake survey, we have also provided a link to an explanatory UAS video.
- d. The intake survey asks about labor market status; computer use; educational attainment; various questions about the household's financial situation and the respondent's assessment of the economy as a whole; health and health insurance; life satisfaction. At the end of the questionnaire, the survey asks for interest in study participation in other research projects.
- e. To non-responders who have not opted out via the postcard after two weeks, send a package that includes another cover letter referencing the first package, along with a paper version of the intake survey and the promise of \$15 if they return the paper survey to the UAS in the enclosed postage-paid return envelope (or complete the survey online).
- f. Contact those who have indicated on either the return postcard or on the paper survey that they do not have access to the internet or a computer; offering to provide the household with an internet-connected tablet in return for doing at least one survey per month. Ship a tablet, pre-loaded with email address and UAS app to participants who return a signed tablet agreement and consent form.
- g. Two weeks after the paper survey mailing, continuing non-responders are mailed a reminder letter, thanking them if they have already completed the survey online or on paper. Includes login code.
- h. Four weeks after the reminder is mailed, send a second paper survey package, with last chance letter, and a login code.
- i. Households who have completed the intake survey via web or paper, and have agreed to be contacted again to do more surveys, receive a "welcome package" which includes:

¹ All recruitment correspondence is provided in English and Spanish

² Until 2018, correspondence was addressed to a named addressee when possible; Letters to "current resident" were only used in cases where we only had an address but no other information. Beginning with recruitment of batch XX in 2019, all correspondence was addressed to "Family living at [address]"

- a. Welcome brochure
 - b. Prepaid card with \$15 loaded
 - c. Welcome letter with login information and a notice we will accept all household members 18+ into study if we are provided with their contact information (preferably name, telephone number, and email address). The letter indicates that the first time they log in and answer the first brief socio-demographic survey ("My Household"), they will earn a bonus of \$20. The letter also indicates that any other household member who would join the panel and answers "My Household" will also receive \$20. If no email was provided, the letter also includes a request for email address or offer to assist in setting up an email account.
 - d. A form for additional household members to provide their name and email address and a return envelope.
- j. If an intake survey respondent is not interested in participating in future research, a \$15 one-time payment and thank you letter is mailed. The letter includes the offer for other household members to join UAS, even if the primary respondent refuses. A form for the other household members to provide their contact information and a return envelope are included.
 - k. Households who log into the UAS web-site are asked to agree to an online consent before they take the first demographic survey ("My Household"). Households with at least one member who has answered "My Household" are considered UAS panel members. Household members who are 18 and older are also eligible to become panel members. The respondent's log-in page has a "other household member may be interested" button they may click on to enter the other household member's email address. This triggers an automatic email invitation to the other household member to become a UAS panel member.
 - l. Household respondents who have agreed to become panel members, but next fail to log on to the UAS web-site, are contacted by email if we have their email address or mail if they refuse to give us their email. If they don't respond (or if their email address is not available/valid) they are contacted by phone (whenever possible) to encourage them to log on, and to offer help if there are any barriers to logging on (such as a user name and password that may have been lost). They are told once again they will receive \$20 upon finishing the first brief survey ("My Household").
 - m. Participating household members are paid for the surveys they take at a rate of \$20 per 30 minutes (and proportionately less if a survey is shorter). The \$15 incentive card provided to those who have indicated they would like to join the UAS panel is a refillable research payment card, to which new money is added every month based on incentives earned by taking surveys that month.
 - n. The final stage is an "end-game", whereby the households who have internet access, who have not logged in four weeks after last contact (either the My Household email/letter reminder or the phone follow-up where that was feasible), receive a FedEx envelope (or Priority Mail envelope if we are delivering to a post office box) with an offer of \$40 for logging in and answering "My Household". We have a one-week deadline printed in the endgame letter with a due date.