

Response to OMB Question: How does ED respond to the prior terms of clearance, which state: "ED agrees to continue to be transparent regarding methods used to maximize response rates in earlier waves of data collection activities."

Response rates for Waves 1 and 2 are provided on page 23 of the PEELS Wave 2 Overview Report (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncser/pdf/20083011.pdf>). Subsequent reports will also contain comparable information on response rates.

There are two key aspects to maximizing the number of sample members for whom data are collected: minimizing the number of sample members lost through attrition and completing data collection with the maximum number of sample members who are retained in the sample.

To maintain the number of LEAs participating each wave, we contacted the districts that recruited the families in Wave 1, confirmed the continuing participation of all districts, and confirmed the name of a returning or new Site Coordinator in all districts.

To minimize sample attrition over the waves of data collection, ED used aggressive tracking mechanisms to maintain accurate and up-to-date contact information for sample members. Site Coordinators received an incentive for returning the CSR in Waves 2, 3 and 4. For each child enrolled in the study, the Site Coordinator confirmed that the participating child was still enrolled at the school, provided the name of the child's current teacher, and/or identified the school where the child had transferred. In addition, the parent interviews included information that facilitated tracking of parents/guardians, such as additional work and home telephone numbers for the respondents, location information for one or more friends or relatives who would know where the family had moved, and e-mail addresses.

Maximizing the number of sample members for whom data are collected can be achieved in several ways. Regarding the parent interview, which is administered through CATI, the following procedures were used to maximize the completion rate:

- Mailed families a letter indicating that an interviewer would call soon to conduct or schedule a telephone interview. This letter included a \$20 incentive and the toll-free number for Westat's Telephone Research Center (TRC), so the family could call to schedule an interview.
- Provided a toll-free number for respondents to call to verify the study's legitimacy or to ask other questions about the study. Those without phones in their homes could also call this number from any location and have the interview conducted at that time.
- Required many unsuccessful call attempts to a number without reaching someone before considering whether to treat the case as "unable to contact."
- Drew a core of interviewers with experience working on telephone surveys of households, particularly interviewers who have proven their ability to obtain cooperation from a high proportion of sample members.
- Required all interviewers to successfully complete training specific to this study, including discussions of how to avoid inviting a refusal, approaches that will help in addressing questions respondents are likely to ask, and how to counter objections.

- Used call scheduling procedures that are designed to call numbers at different times of the day and week, to improve the chances of finding a respondent at home.
- Made every reasonable effort to obtain an interview at the initial contact, but allowed respondents flexibility in scheduling appointments to be interviewed.
- Closely supervised interviewers during data collection.
- Implemented refusal conversion efforts for first-time refusals and used interviewers who were skilled at refusal conversion.
- Conducted silent monitoring of interviews to identify and promptly correct behaviors that could be inviting refusals or otherwise contributing to low cooperation rates.
- Left a message on answering machines when such machines had been repeatedly encountered in order to let the respondent know the call was not a marketing effort but a research study.
- Sent emails and mailed postcards to the families that interviewers were unable to reach with information on how to complete the telephone interview.

To increase response rates for questionnaires, we sent reminder postcards, remailed questionnaires, and called to follow up with nonrespondents on a fixed schedule that was tied to the date the initial questionnaire was mailed. In addition, postage-paid pre-addressed envelopes were included with all mailings to facilitate return of completed forms. Incentives for teachers, principals, program directors, and district officials were also used to contribute to improved response rates.

Because the response rate for the Program Director and Principal Questionnaires was so low in Waves 1 and 2 the field period was reopened in Waves 2 and 3. By reopening the data collection for program directors and principals who did not respond during the first and second rounds of data collection, we were able to increase the effective school administrator response rates.

For the child assessments, assessments were conducted in the schools as well as the child's home or another location in the community in order to increase response rates. In addition, the low sample attrition is attributed to extensive efforts to locate families that moved from their originally sampled districts. Children whose families moved outside of their original district were assessed if an assessor lived within 50 miles or a traveling assessor could reasonably reach the family's new location.