

Evaluating “Strategic Framework” Designs for American Community Survey Mail Materials

Lindsay Longsine
U.S. Census Bureau

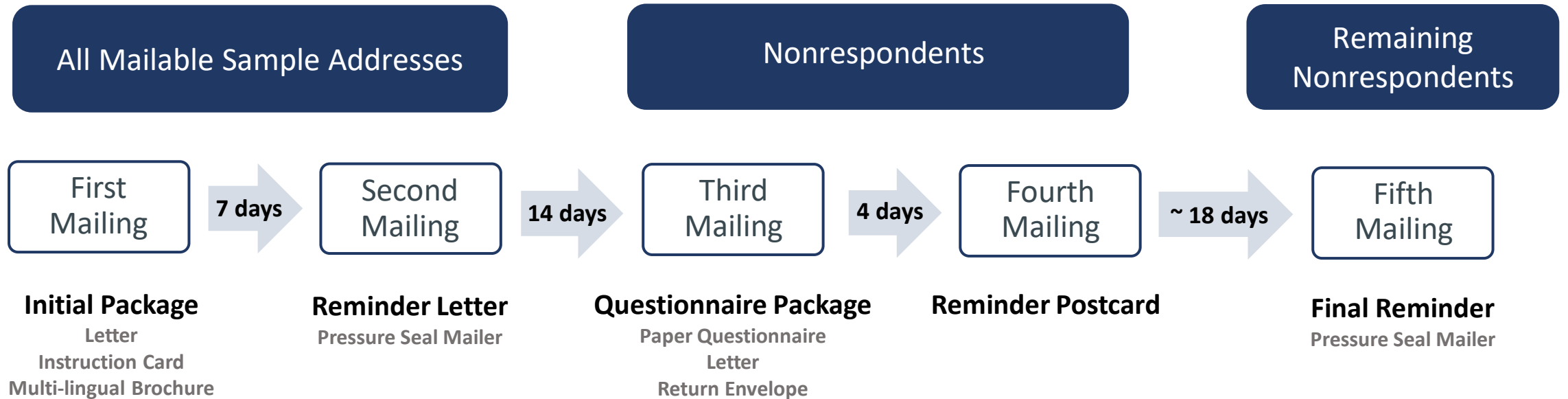
Co-authors: Dorothy Barth, Broderick Oliver, and Lauren Contard, U.S. Census Bureau

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The views expressed are those of the author
and not those of the U.S. Census Bureau.

2022 ACS self-response contact strategy

Mail contact materials



Background

Designing the materials

- Use research-based survey messaging
- Use plain language principles

➤ Survey Messaging

In mailing 1 we established legitimacy and trust.

Mailing 1: Establish legitimacy and trust

Added an FAQ to the back of the letter

Is this a legitimate survey?

Yes. The Census Bureau has been conducting this survey since 2005. Only government agencies can use an internet address with the “.gov” extension. You can verify that this is an official government survey by going to <https://www.census.gov/acs> or by calling 1-800-354-7271. Call Monday–Friday: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., or Sunday: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

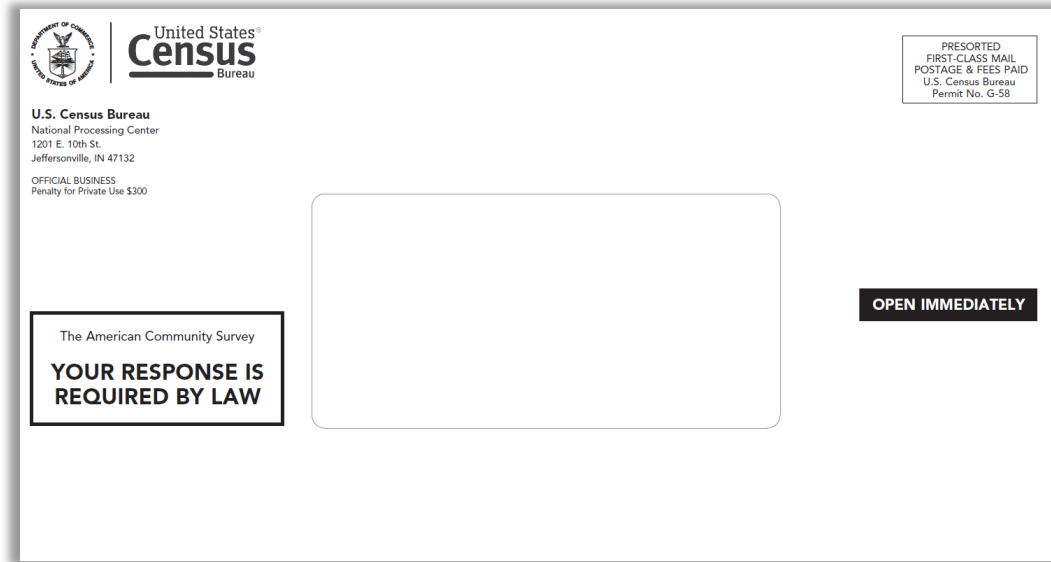
Added a tagline to the bottom of the letter

The Census Bureau serves as the leading source of quality data about the nation’s people and economy.

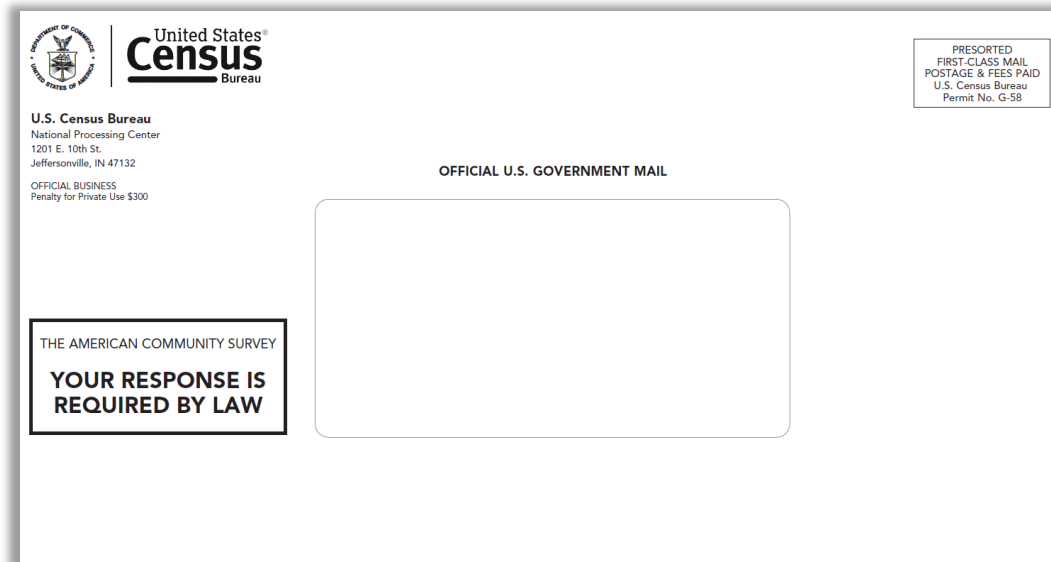
Added a phrase on the outside of the envelope

OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT MAIL

First mailing envelope



Control Treatment



Test Treatments

➤ Survey Messaging

In mailing 1 we established legitimacy and trust.

In mailing 2 we conveyed the tangible benefits of survey response.

Mailing 2: Convey tangible benefits

Control Treatment

Fire stations

Health care needs of the elderly

Hospitals

Improve roads and highways and reduce traffic

Schools

Test Treatments

Business opportunities

Health care services

High-speed internet access

Improved roads for commute

Job training

Parks and playgrounds

Services for the elderly, veterans, and the disabled

➤ Survey Messaging

In mailing 1 we established legitimacy and trust.

In mailing 2 we conveyed the tangible benefits of survey response.

In mailing 3 we used normative messaging to reduce the sense of burden caused by responding.

Mailing 3: Reduce the sense of burden

Many households across the nation have already responded to this survey. We need your response too.

Your response to the American Community Survey is required by U.S. law. Just as the law requires us to report for jury duty, pay taxes, and earn a license to drive, it also requires us to respond to this survey.

GET STARTED NOW

It's easy to get started. You can even use your smartphone.


➤ Basic Plain Language Principles

- Know your target audience
- Use simple and direct words, short sentences, and short paragraphs
- Design so the reader can easily navigate to important information
 - ✓ Use a readable font
 - ✓ Use bullet points and headings
 - ✓ Use font changes (**color**, size, **style**) strategically

Experimental Design

Treatment	Description
Control	Production materials
Icon	Color and icons draw attention to key messages
Column and Header	Color, columns, and headers draw attention to key messages
Sidebar	Color and sidebars as design elements with graphics draw attention to key messages
Minimalist	No color and minimum text draw attention to key messages

Control Treatment

 **United States Census Bureau**

U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233
Office of the Director

①

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

Your address has been randomly selected by the U.S. Census Bureau to participate in the **American Community Survey**. The Census Bureau conducts this survey each year to give our country an up-to-date picture of how we live – including our education, housing, and jobs. Communities across the country rely on information from this survey to decide where important services are needed, including:

- Improving roads and reducing traffic
- Building schools
- Planning for the health care needs of the elderly

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

Your response is required by U.S. law.
Because your household has been asked to participate on behalf of your community, it is vital that you complete this survey to help meet critical needs in your area.


If you are unable to complete the survey online, we will send you a paper questionnaire in a few weeks. The Census Bureau is using the internet to collect this information to conserve natural resources, save taxpayers' money, and process data more efficiently.

If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number (1-800-354-7271).

Thank you in advance for your prompt response.

Enclosures

American Community Survey data help determine the annual distribution of more than **\$675 billion** in federal funds to communities nationwide.

 **United States Census Bureau**

U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233
Office of the Director

②

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

A few days ago, you should have received instructions for completing the **American Community Survey** online. Local communities depend on information from this survey to decide where schools, highways, hospitals, and other important services are needed. If you have not already responded, please do so now.


Respond now at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>
Log in using this user ID:

If we do not receive your response online, we will mail a paper questionnaire to your address.

Your response to this survey is required by law.
Your response is critically important to your local community and your country. Responding promptly will prevent you from receiving additional reminder mailings, phone calls, or personal visits from Census Bureau interviewers.

If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number (1-800-354-7271).

Thank you in advance for your prompt response.

 **United States Census Bureau**

U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233
Office of the Director

③

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

The U.S. Census Bureau recently sent you a request to complete the **American Community Survey** online. If you have not already responded to this important survey, please do so now.

Complete the survey using **ONLY ONE** of the following options:

- Respond online at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>
- If you are unable to respond online, please fill out and mail back the enclosed questionnaire.

You are required by U.S. law to respond to this survey.
The Census Bureau has randomly selected your address to receive this survey as part of a nationally representative sample. Because you will be providing important information on behalf of your community, it is vital that you complete this survey to help meet critical needs in your area – including determining where to locate new schools, hospitals, and fire stations.


If you do not respond promptly, a Census Bureau interviewer may contact you to complete the survey.

The Census Bureau is required by law to keep your information confidential.
The Census Bureau is not permitted to publicly release your responses in a way that could identify you or your household.

If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number (1-800-354-7271).

Thank you for your prompt response.

Enclosures

 **United States Census Bureau**

U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233
Office of the Director

⑤

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: October 22, 2021
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. **Respond by October 22, 2021 to be removed from our schedule for a visit.**

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.

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

 **United States Census Bureau**

④

The U.S. Census Bureau has sent you repeated requests to complete the **American Community Survey**. If you have not already responded, it is imperative that you complete this survey now.

Complete and mail back your paper questionnaire now.
Or respond at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>

You are required by U.S. law to respond to this survey (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221).

If you do not respond now, a Census Bureau interviewer may contact you to complete the survey.

If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number (1-800-354-7271).

Thank you.

ACS-29(2020) (05-21-2019)

Icon Treatment

United States[®] Census Bureau
U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

①


Dear Resident:


Your household has been selected to participate in the **American Community Survey**. Since 2005, the U.S. Census Bureau has been conducting this survey to provide our nation with an up-to-date picture of how we live. This survey helps determine the needs of communities like yours, covering topics like education, employment, and housing.


Follow the steps below to complete the survey:

1) Go to respond.census.gov/acs

2) Log in with your 10-digit user ID found on the enclosed card.

 Use your computer, smartphone, or tablet to log in to our secure website and respond today.

 The information that you provide is so important that **your response is required by law** (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221).

 Questions? Please call 1-800-354-7271 if you have questions or if you need help completing the survey.

We appreciate your prompt online response. If you are unable to respond online, we will send you a paper questionnaire in a few weeks. Thank you for your participation.


Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

The Census Bureau serves as the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy.





United States[®] Census Bureau
U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

②

Reminder: Please complete the American Community Survey

 Respond now at respond.census.gov/acs
Log in with this user ID:

Why should you respond to the American Community Survey? Responses to this survey help your local government, businesses, and nonprofit organizations understand the needs of your community. Your community may need new or improved:

 Roads to help your work commute	 Services for disabled veterans and the elderly
 Opportunities for local businesses	 Access to high-speed internet service

This survey is so important that your response is required by U.S. law.

Respond now to save taxpayers' money and conserve natural resources. If you are unable to respond online, we will send you a paper questionnaire in about two weeks. If you have questions or need help completing the survey, please call 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you for helping your community.

Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office


United States[®] Census Bureau
U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

③


Dear Resident:

Recently, we contacted you about participating in the **American Community Survey**. If you have already responded, thank you. If not, we appreciate your response at this time.

Please choose **ONE** way to complete the survey.

 Respond online at respond.census.gov/acs with your computer, smartphone, or tablet.

OR

 Fill out the questionnaire and mail it back in the enclosed postage-paid return envelope.

Many households across the nation have already responded to this survey. We need your response too. Your response helps provide the most accurate picture possible of your community. Together we can help prepare for a better future.

Your response is required by U.S. law. Just as the law requires people to report for jury duty, file taxes, or earn a license to drive, it also requires people to respond to this survey. Please call 1-800-354-7271 if you have questions or need help with the survey.

We very much appreciate the effort taken to respond to this survey. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

Nota: Vea al otro lado para responder en español.

United States[®] Census Bureau
U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

⑤


Due Date:


An important message from the U.S. Census Bureau:


Time is running out. We have sent you several requests to complete the American Community Survey, and we have not received your response. **You are required by U.S. law to respond to this survey.** If you do not respond by the due date, a Census Bureau interviewer may visit your home to help you complete the survey.

How will you complete the survey by

Choose **ONE** way to respond:

 **ONLINE:** Go to respond.census.gov/acs Log in with this user ID:

 **BY MAIL:** Fill out and return the survey form in the postage-paid envelope you received in the mail a few weeks ago.

 **BY PHONE:** Call 1-800-354-7271 to complete a phone interview. Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Sunday: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Thank you for your time. Your response is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

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

Please respond to the **American Community Survey**

HOW? Respond online at respond.census.gov/acs - OR - Fill out the questionnaire we recently sent you and mail it back. If you need help, call 1-800-354-7271.

WHEN? Respond now. A U.S. Census Bureau interviewer may call or visit your home to help you complete the survey if we don't receive your response soon.

④ **WHY?** Your response is required by U.S. law. Our nation depends on accurate information to prepare for the future. Your response can help your community.

United States[®] Census Bureau Thank you for your participation. census.gov/acs

Column and Header Treatment

United States **Census** Bureau

U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

1

Dear Resident:

Your household has been selected to participate in the **American Community Survey**. Every year, the U.S. Census Bureau contacts households across the country to participate in this important, mandatory survey. Follow the two steps below to respond online with your computer, smartphone, or tablet.

1) Go to respond.census.gov/acs
2) Log in with your 10-digit user ID found on the enclosed card.

ABOUT THE SURVEY Your response to the American Community Survey helps your community plan for projects such as new schools, health clinics, and playgrounds as well as services for the elderly and veterans.

DO I HAVE TO RESPOND? Yes. This survey is so important to your community and the nation that **your response is required by law** (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221).

NEED A PAPER FORM? If you are unable to respond online, we will send you a paper questionnaire in about three weeks.

If you need help filling out the survey or have any questions, please call us at 1-800-354-7271. We are available to answer any questions or concerns you have.

Thank you for helping your community.

Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

United States **Census** Bureau

U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

2

Reminder: Please complete the American Community Survey

Dear Resident:

Did you know that the **American Community Survey** helps your local government, businesses, and nonprofit organizations determine the needs of your community? These might include:

- Services to help the elderly, veterans, and the disabled
- Opportunities for new businesses in your area
- Parks and playgrounds for enjoyment and recreation
- Access to high-speed internet service

If you've already responded to our recent request to complete this survey online, thank you. If not, please respond now using your computer, smartphone, or tablet.

Respond now at respond.census.gov/acs
Log in with this user ID:

Your response is so important that it is required by U.S. law. If you are waiting to respond by paper questionnaire, you will receive one in about two weeks. If you need help with this survey or have questions, call us at 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you for helping your community.

Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

United States **Census** Bureau

U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

3

Dear Resident:

As we promised in an earlier letter, a paper questionnaire for the **American Community Survey** is enclosed. If you've already answered the survey online, thank you. If not, we greatly appreciate your response at this time.

Please choose **ONE** way to respond:

Option 1: Go to respond.census.gov/acs and respond on your computer, smartphone, or tablet today.
Option 2: Fill out the **paper questionnaire** and mail it back in the postage-paid envelope.

YOUR RESPONSE COUNTS Your response, along with others in your area, represents your community. Many households have already responded. We need your response too.

WE NEED YOUR RESPONSE This survey is so important to your community and our nation that **your response is required by U.S. law.** Just as we are required to report for jury duty, file taxes, and earn a license to drive, we are also required to respond to this survey.

GET STARTED NOW It's easy to get started. You can even use your smartphone.

If you need help filling out the survey or have any questions, please call us at 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you for helping your community.

Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

Nota: Vea al otro lado para responder en español.

United States **Census** Bureau

U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

5

Due Date:

An important message from the U.S. Census Bureau:

Time is running out. We have sent you several requests to complete the American Community Survey, and we have not received your response. **You are required by U.S. law to respond to this survey.** If you do not respond by the due date, a Census Bureau interviewer may visit your home to help you complete the survey.

How will you complete the survey by?

Choose **ONE** way and respond:

ONLINE: Go to respond.census.gov/acs Log in with this user ID:
 BY MAIL: Fill out and return the survey form in the postage-paid envelope you received in the mail a few weeks ago.
 BY PHONE: Call 1-800-354-7271 to complete a phone interview. Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Sunday: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Thank you. Your response is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

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

The American Community Survey
**Helping Communities
Make Informed Decisions**

Dear Resident:

If you've already responded to the American Community Survey, thank you. If not, please:

Respond now using your computer, smartphone, or tablet at respond.census.gov/acs **OR** Fill out the questionnaire that we sent you and mail it back in the postage-paid return envelope.

Your response is required by U.S. law. Census Bureau staff may call or visit you to help you complete the survey if we don't receive your response soon. If you need help filling out the survey or have questions, call 1-800-354-7271. We are happy to help you.

Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

census.gov/acs

4

Sidebar Treatment

United States[®] Census Bureau

U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

1

Dear Resident:

Your household has been selected to participate in the **American Community Survey**. The Census Bureau has conducted this survey since 2005. This survey provides an up-to-date picture of how we live, and it helps local leaders determine the needs of your community.

Please respond now at respond.census.gov/acs
Log in with your 10-digit user ID found on the enclosed card.

When you respond to this survey, you are doing your part to ensure that decisions about your community can be made using the best data available. The information that you provide is so important that **your response is required by law** (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221).

If you are unable to complete the survey online, we will send you a paper questionnaire in a few weeks. If you need help or have questions, please call us at 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

The American Community Survey (ACS) is the premier source for detailed population and housing information about our nation.

The ACS helps local officials, community leaders, and businesses understand the changes taking place in their communities.

You can help your community by responding today!

United States[®] Census Bureau

U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

2

Dear Resident:

A few days ago, you should have received a notice to complete the American Community Survey online. **If you have already responded, thank you. If not, please do so now.**

Respond now at respond.census.gov/acs
Log in with this user ID:

Your answers help identify local needs such as job training, highway construction, and health care services.

Your response is so important that it is required by U.S. law.

If you are unable to answer online, you will receive a paper questionnaire in about two weeks. If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you for helping your community.

Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

Non-profit groups use the American Community Survey to plan and build parks and playgrounds in communities across the country.

The American Community Survey helps direct more than \$675 billion in federal funding every year to communities nationwide.

You can help your community by responding today!

United States[®] Census Bureau

U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

3

American Community Survey Form Enclosed

About two weeks ago, you should have received a letter asking you to respond to the American Community Survey. As promised, we are sending you a survey form.

If you have already responded, thank you. If not, you now have two ways to respond—please choose the one that works best for you:

Respond today at respond.census.gov/acs on your computer, smartphone, or tablet.

OR

Fill out the survey form and mail it back in the postage-paid envelope.

Your response to the American Community Survey is required by U.S. law. Just as the law requires us to report for jury duty, pay taxes, and earn a license to drive, it also requires us to respond to this survey.

If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call 1-800-354-7271.

We look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

Did you know?

Millions of households participate in the American Community Survey every year.

When you respond to this survey, you are helping your community make decisions using the best data available.

Thank you for being the voice of your community.

Nota: Vea al otro lado para responder en español.

United States[®] Census Bureau

U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

5

Due Date:

An important message from the U.S. Census Bureau:

Time is running out. We have sent you several requests to complete the American Community Survey, and we have not received your response. **You are required by U.S. law to respond to this survey.** If you do not respond by the due date, a Census Bureau interviewer may visit your home to help you complete the survey.

How will you complete the survey by

Choose **ONE** way to respond:

ONLINE: Go to respond.census.gov/acs
Log in with this user ID:

BY MAIL: Fill out and return the survey form in the postage-paid envelope you received in the mail a few weeks ago.

BY PHONE: Call 1-800-354-7271 to complete a phone interview.
Monday–Friday: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Sunday: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Thank you. Your response is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

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

We need your response.

4

If you are one of the thousands of people who have already responded to the American Community Survey, we thank you.

If you have not completed the survey, please do so right away:

- You can complete the survey online at respond.census.gov/acs
- OR -
- Fill out and return the form we sent you a few days ago.

Your response is so important that it is required by U.S. law.

U.S. Census Bureau staff may call or visit you to help you complete the survey if we don't receive your response. If you have questions or need help completing the survey, call 1-800-354-7271.


The American Community Survey

Your participation helps ensure that community leaders have the information they need to make decisions that affect our lives.

United States[®] Census Bureau

census.gov/acs

Minimalist Treatment

 **United States Census Bureau**
U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

①

Dear Resident:

Your household has been selected to participate in the **American Community Survey**, which is a survey conducted by the **U.S. Census Bureau**.

Your response matters. The survey helps your local government, businesses, and nonprofit organizations meet the needs of your community. As a representative of your community, you are the voice that informs us about these needs.

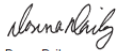
You are required by law to complete this survey (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221). Follow the two steps below to provide your response to this survey:

- 1) Go to respond.census.gov/acs to respond.
- 2) Log in with your 10-digit user ID found on the enclosed card.


You can complete the survey online using a computer, smartphone, or tablet. If you are unable to respond online, we will send you a paper questionnaire in a few weeks.

If you have questions or need help completing the survey, please call 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you. Your response is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

The Census Bureau serves as the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy.

 **United States Census Bureau**
U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

②

Dear Resident:

A few days ago, you should have received a notice from the **U.S. Census Bureau** asking you to complete the **American Community Survey**.

You are required by law to complete this survey (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221). The survey helps your local government, businesses, and nonprofit organizations meet the needs of your community.


If you've already responded, thank you. If not, **please do so today** by following these two steps:


- 1) Go to respond.census.gov/acs
- 2) Enter your 10-digit user ID:

If you are unable to respond online, we will send you a paper questionnaire in about two weeks.

If you have questions or need help completing the survey, please call 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you. Your response is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

 **United States Census Bureau**
U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

③

Dear Resident:

We are following up with you because we have not received a response to the **American Community Survey** from your household.

You are required by law to complete this survey (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221).

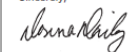
Please respond now. Either:

Fill out the paper survey in this mailing and send it back in the postage-paid envelope
OR
Fill out the online survey by following these two steps:


- 1) Go to respond.census.gov/acs
- 2) Log in with the 10-digit user ID printed on the front of your questionnaire.

If you have questions or need help completing the survey, please call 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you. Your response is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

Nota: Vea al otro lado para responder en español.

 **United States Census Bureau**
U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

⑤

Due Date:

Dear Resident:

Your household has been selected to participate in the **American Community Survey**, which is a survey conducted by the **U.S. Census Bureau**.

You are required by law to complete this survey (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221).

Please respond now. If you do not respond by the due date, a Census Bureau interviewer may come to your home to complete the survey in person.

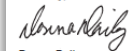
How will you complete the survey by
Select **ONE** way to respond:

ONLINE: Go to respond.census.gov/acs and enter your 10-digit user ID:


BY MAIL: Fill out the paper survey you received in the mail a few weeks ago and send it back.

BY PHONE: Call 1-800-354-7271 to complete a phone interview.
Mon to Fri: 9 a.m.–9 p.m., Sat: 9 a.m.–7 p.m., Sun: 11 a.m.–9 p.m.

Thank you. Your response is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

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

 **United States Census Bureau**
The American Community Survey
Helping communities make informed decisions

④

Dear Resident:

If you've already responded to the **American Community Survey**, thank you. If not, please complete it now. **Your response is required by U.S. law.**

EITHER fill out the paper survey we sent you a few days ago and return it in the postage-paid envelope

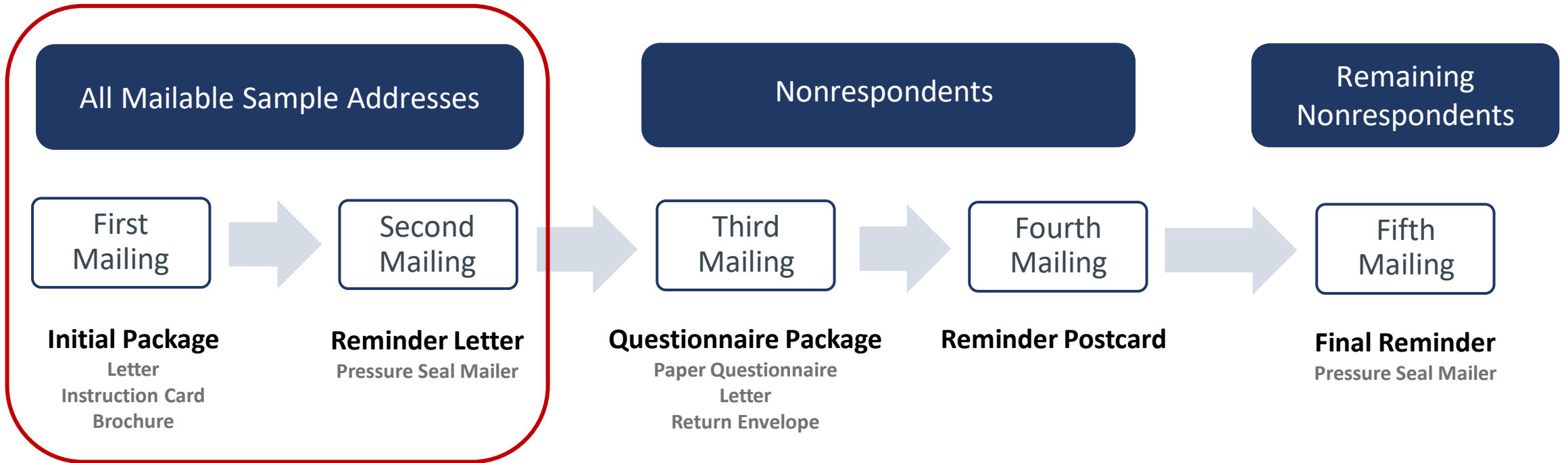
OR respond online at respond.census.gov/acs with the 10-digit user ID that appears on the materials we sent you.

If you have any questions or need help filling out the survey, please call us at 1-800-354-7271. We are happy to help you.

census.gov/acs

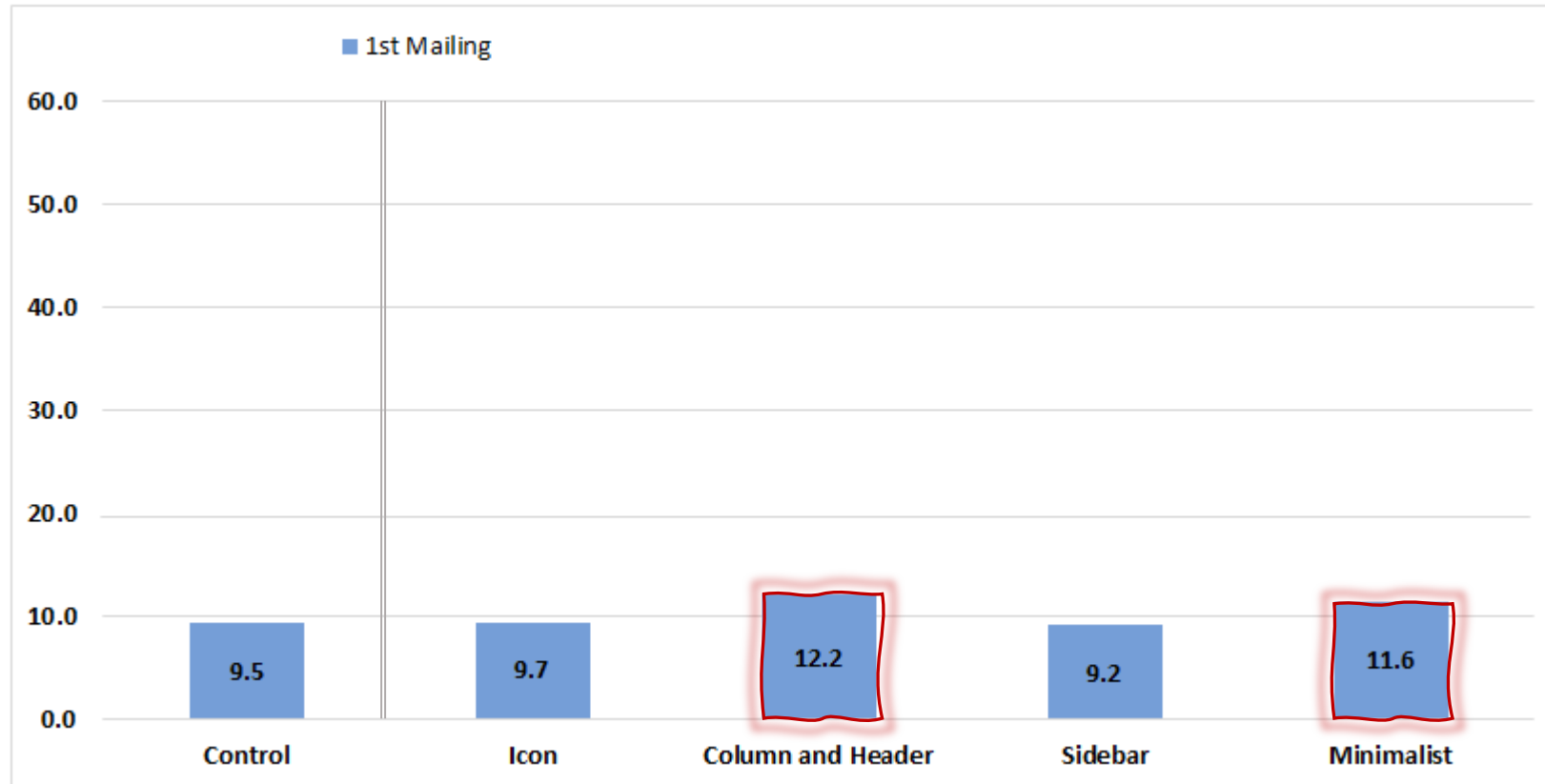
2022 ACS self-response contact strategy

Mail contact materials



Results

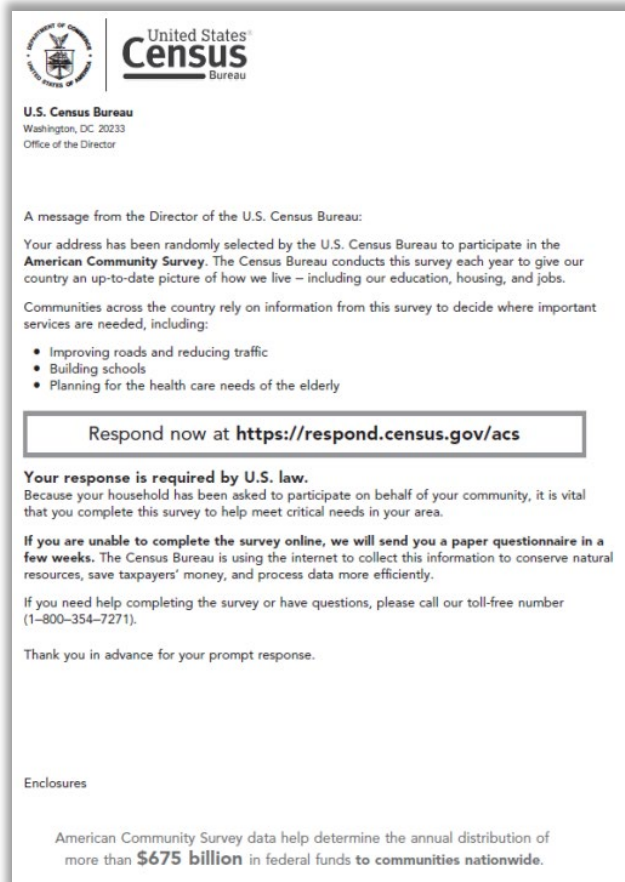
Self-Response Return Rates by Mailing



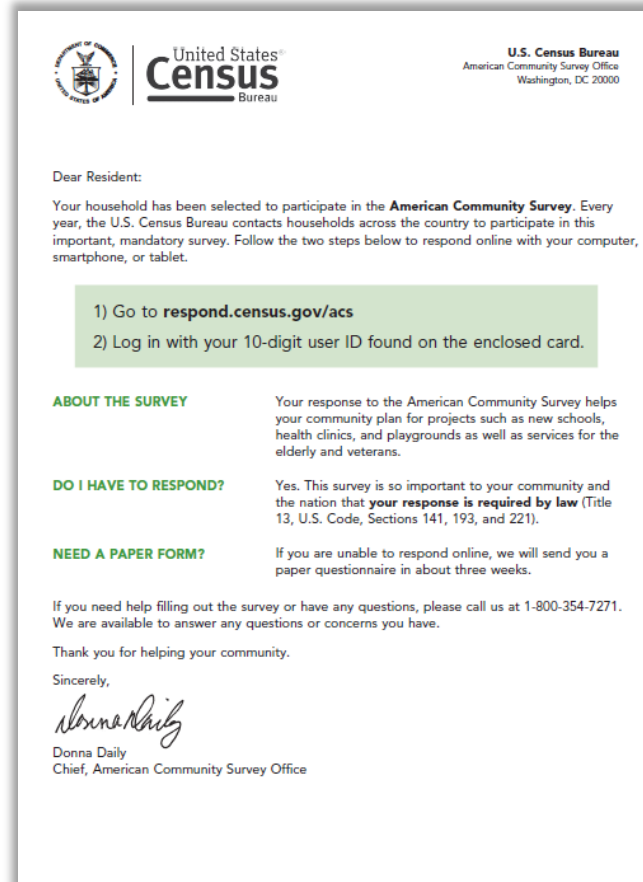
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2021 Strategic Framework Mail Materials Test, DRB Approval Number: <insert approval #>

Note: Rates significantly higher than Control are highlighted in red. Significance was tested based on a two tailed t-test at the $\alpha=0.1$ level.

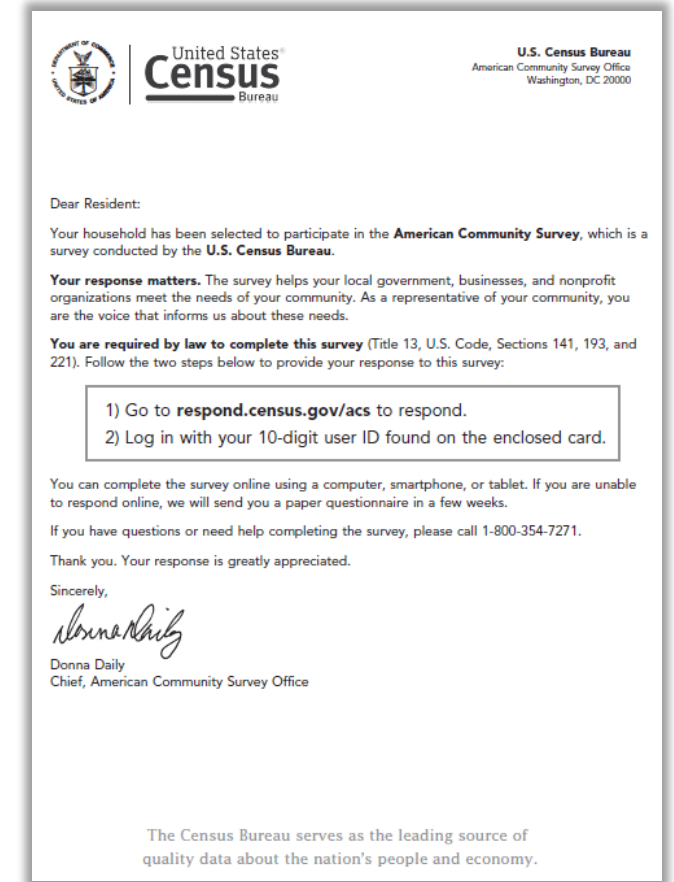
First mailing – front of the letters



Control



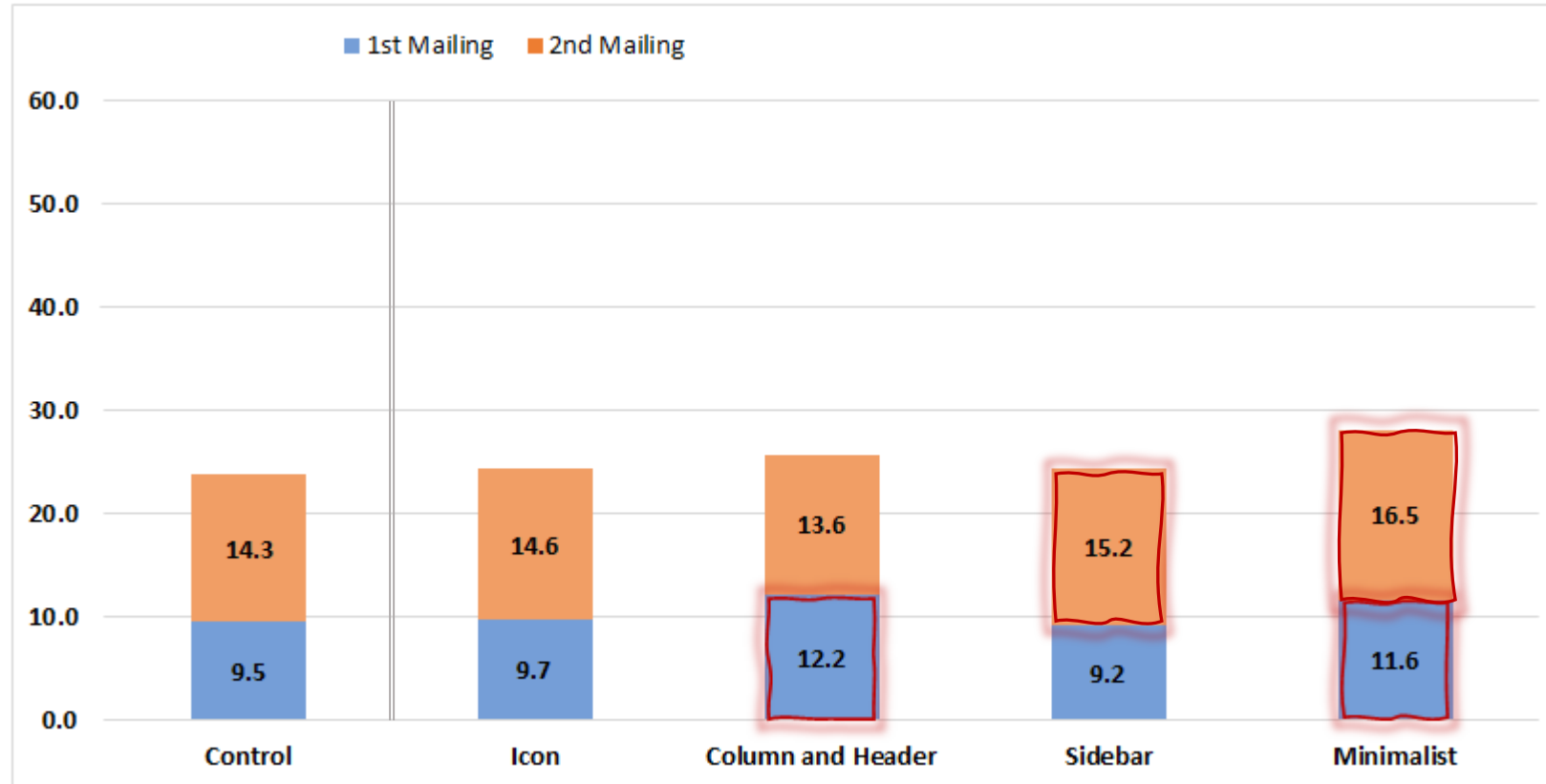
Column and Header



Minimalist

Results

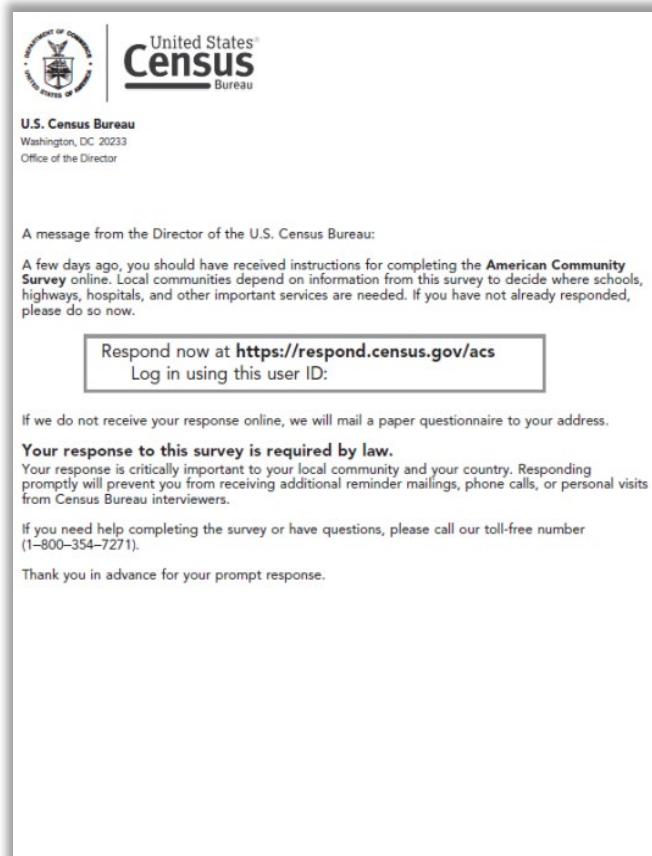
Self-Response Return Rates by Mailing



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2021 Strategic Framework Mail Materials Test, DRB Approval Number: <insert approval #>

Note: Rates significantly higher than Control are highlighted in red. Significance was tested based on a two tailed t-test at the $\alpha=0.1$ level.

Second mailing – inside of the mailer



United States[®]
Census
Bureau

U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233
Office of the Director

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

A few days ago, you should have received instructions for completing the **American Community Survey** online. Local communities depend on information from this survey to decide where schools, highways, hospitals, and other important services are needed. If you have not already responded, please do so now.

Respond now at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>
Log in using this user ID:

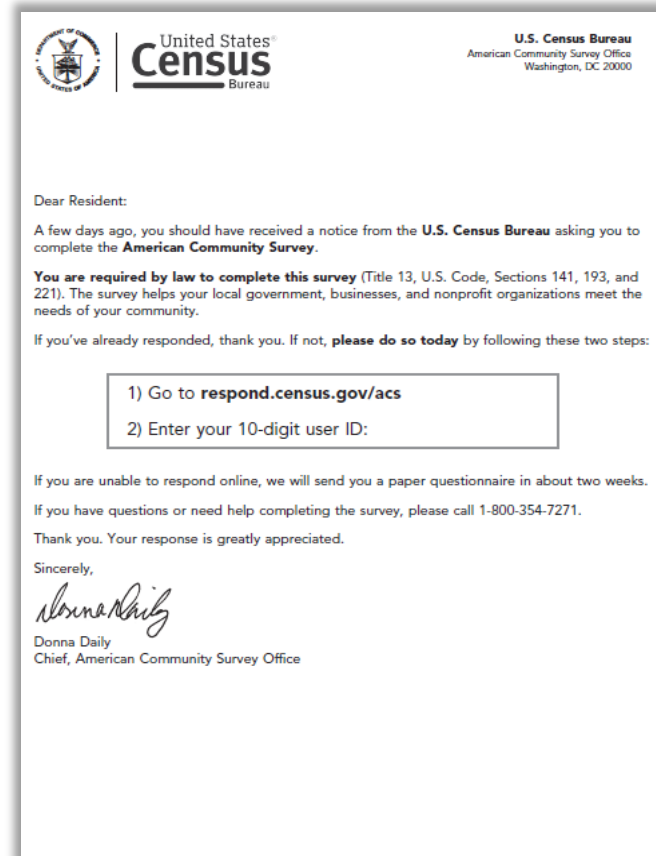
If we do not receive your response online, we will mail a paper questionnaire to your address.

Your response to this survey is required by law.
Your response is critically important to your local community and your country. Responding promptly will prevent you from receiving additional reminder mailings, phone calls, or personal visits from Census Bureau interviewers.

If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number (1-800-354-7271).

Thank you in advance for your prompt response.

Control



United States[®]
Census
Bureau

U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

Dear Resident:

A few days ago, you should have received a notice from the **U.S. Census Bureau** asking you to complete the **American Community Survey**.

You are required by law to complete this survey (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221). The survey helps your local government, businesses, and nonprofit organizations meet the needs of your community.

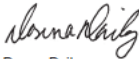
If you've already responded, thank you. If not, **please do so today** by following these two steps:

1) Go to respond.census.gov/acs
2) Enter your 10-digit user ID:

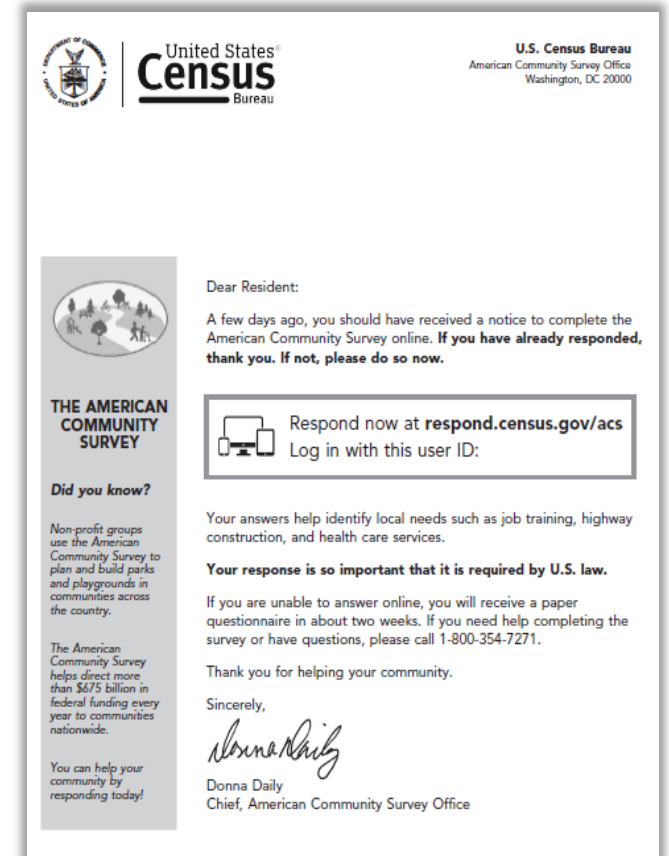
If you are unable to respond online, we will send you a paper questionnaire in about two weeks.

If you have questions or need help completing the survey, please call 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you. Your response is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

Minimalist



United States[®]
Census
Bureau

U.S. Census Bureau
American Community Survey Office
Washington, DC 20000

Dear Resident:

A few days ago, you should have received a notice to complete the **American Community Survey** online. **If you have already responded, thank you. If not, please do so now.**


Respond now at respond.census.gov/acs
Log in with this user ID:

Your answers help identify local needs such as job training, highway construction, and health care services.

Your response is so important that it is required by U.S. law.

If you are unable to answer online, you will receive a paper questionnaire in about two weeks. If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you for helping your community.

Sincerely,

Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

Did you know?

Non-profit groups use the American Community Survey to plan and build parks and playgrounds in communities across the country.

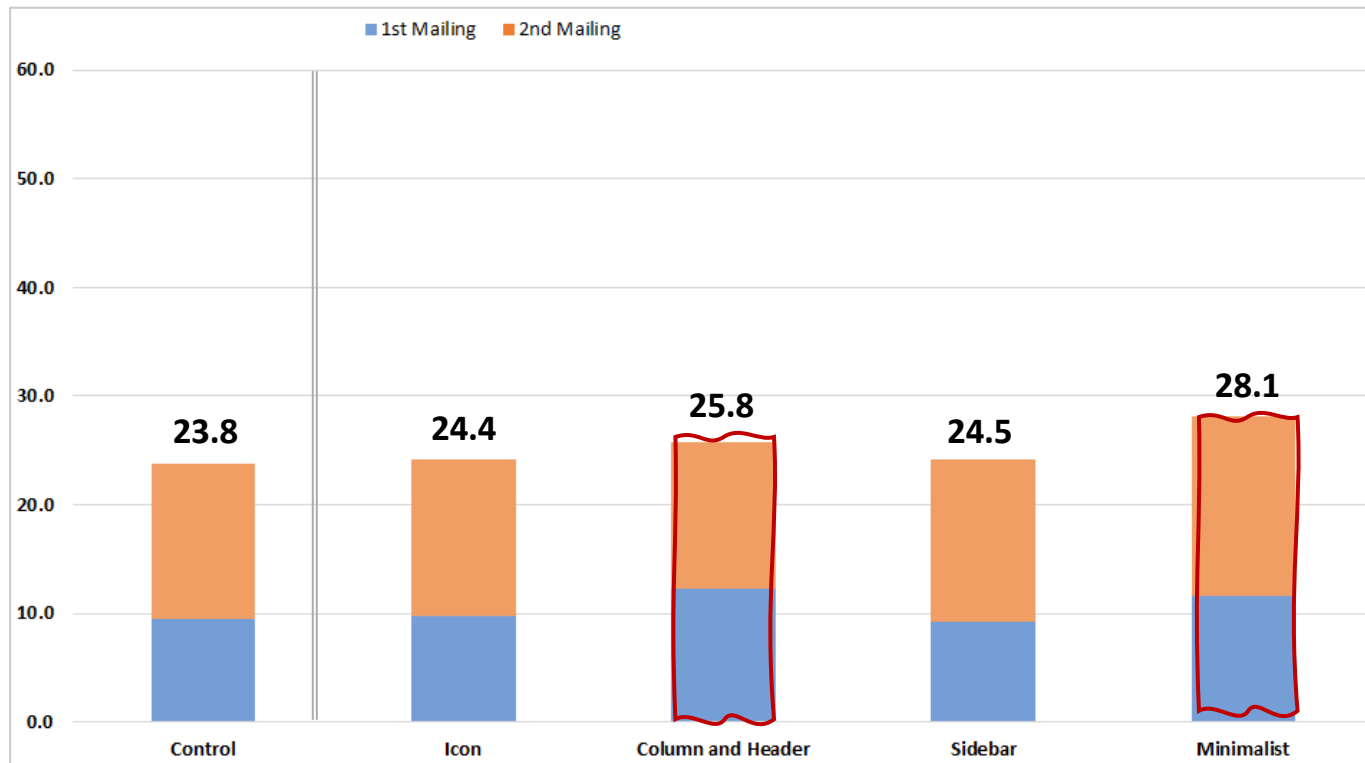
The American Community Survey helps direct more than \$675 billion in federal funding every year to communities nationwide.

You can help your community by responding today!

Sidebar

Results

Self-Response Return Rates

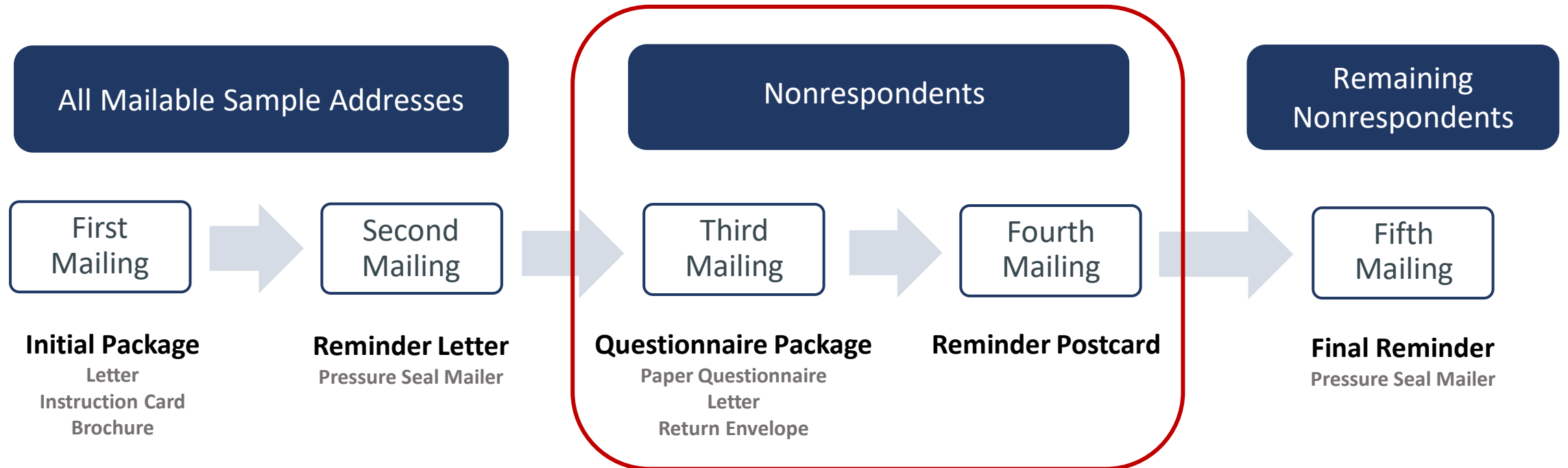


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2021 Strategic Framework Mail Materials Test, DRB Approval Number: <insert approval #>

Note: Rates significantly higher than Control are highlighted in red. Significance was tested based on a two tailed t-test at the $\alpha=0.1$ level.

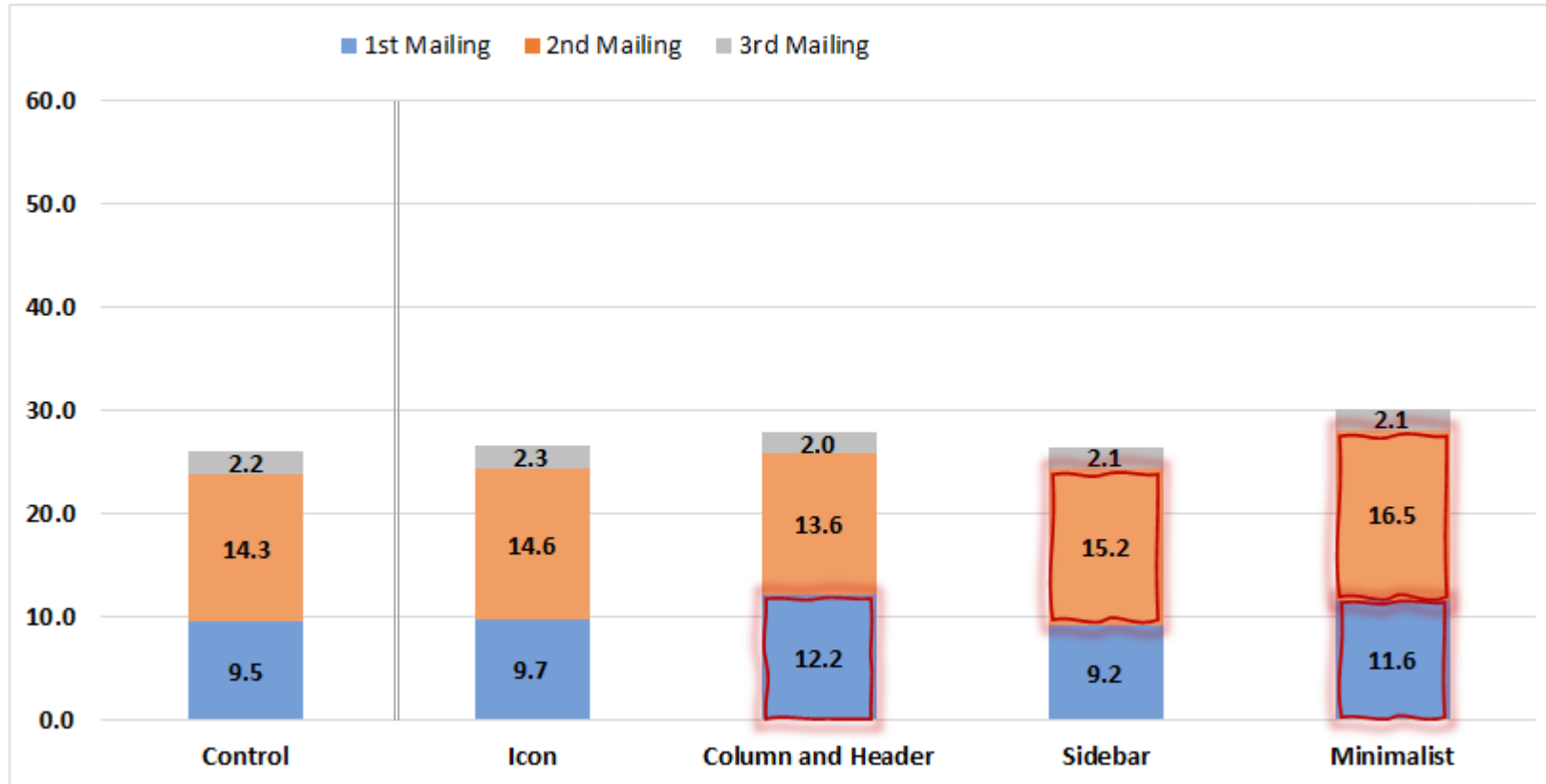
2022 ACS self-response contact strategy

Mail contact materials



Results

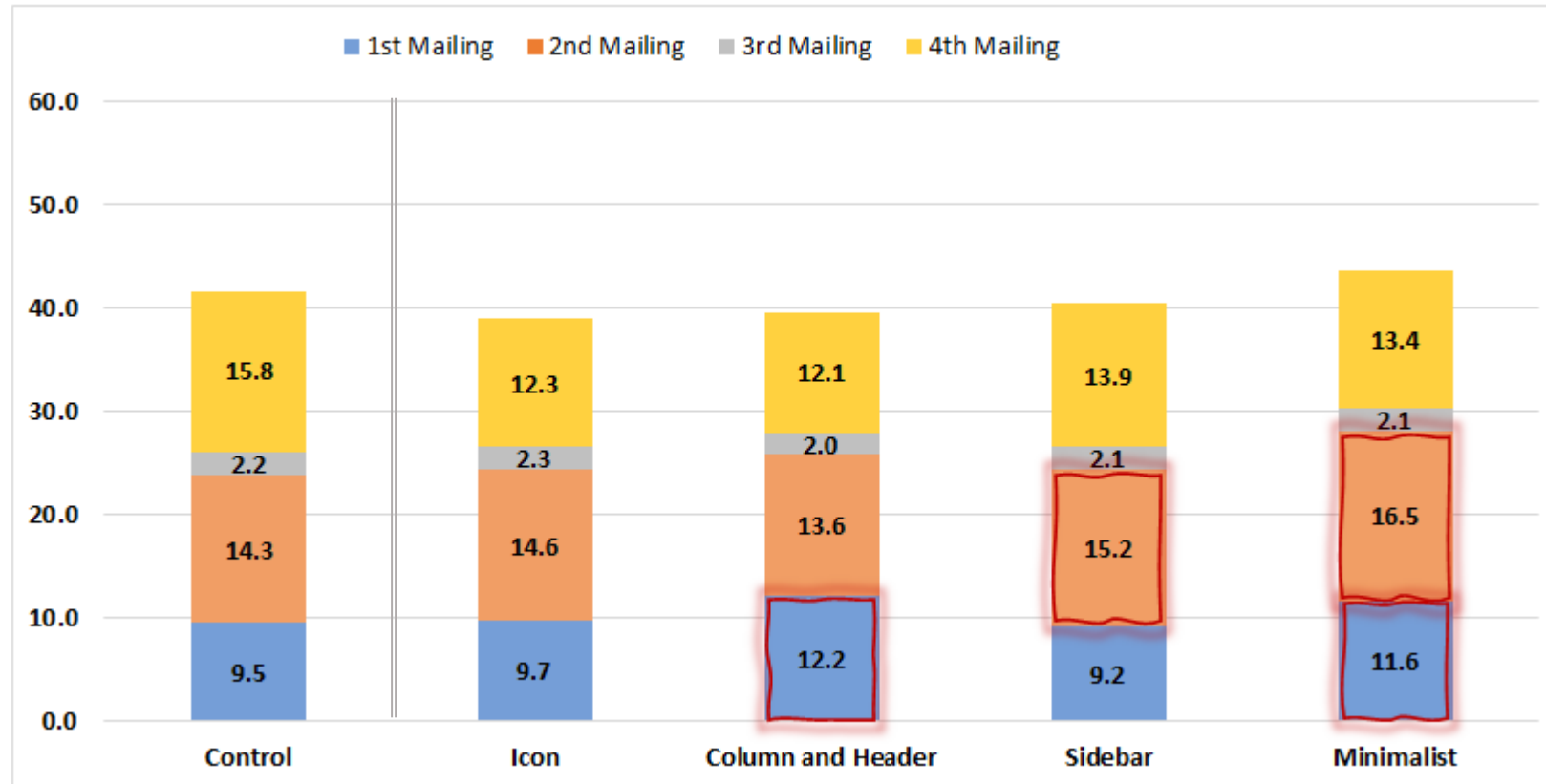
Self-Response Return Rates by Mailing



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2021 Strategic Framework Mail Materials Test, DRB Approval Number: <insert approval #>
Note: Rates significantly higher than Control are highlighted in red. Significance was tested based on a two tailed t-test at the $\alpha=0.1$ level.

Results

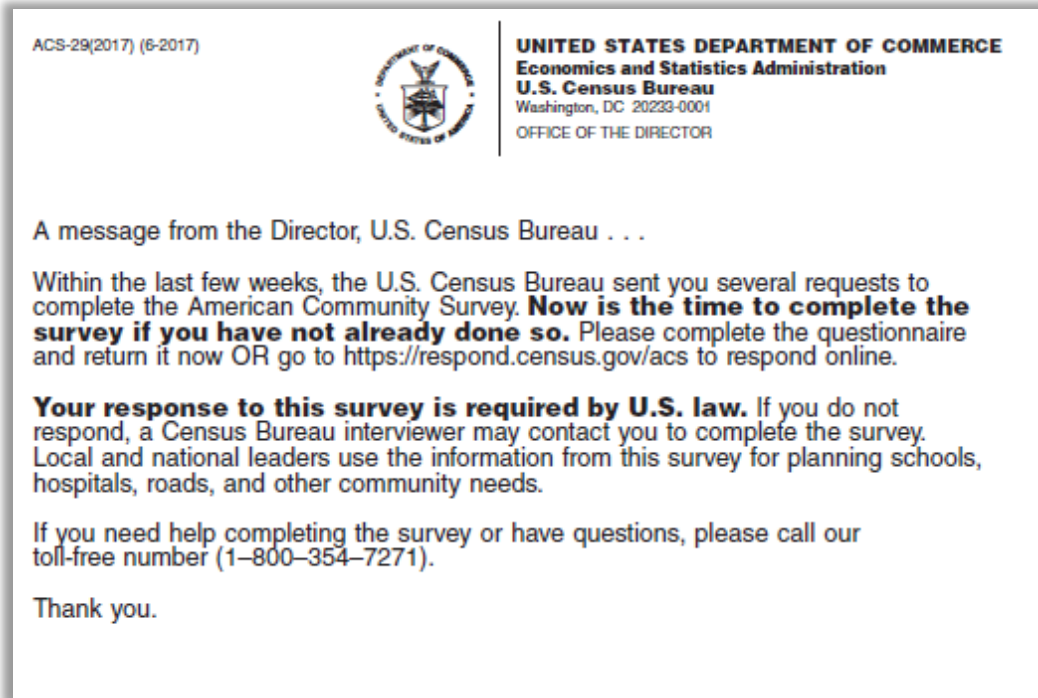
Self-Response Return Rates by Mailing



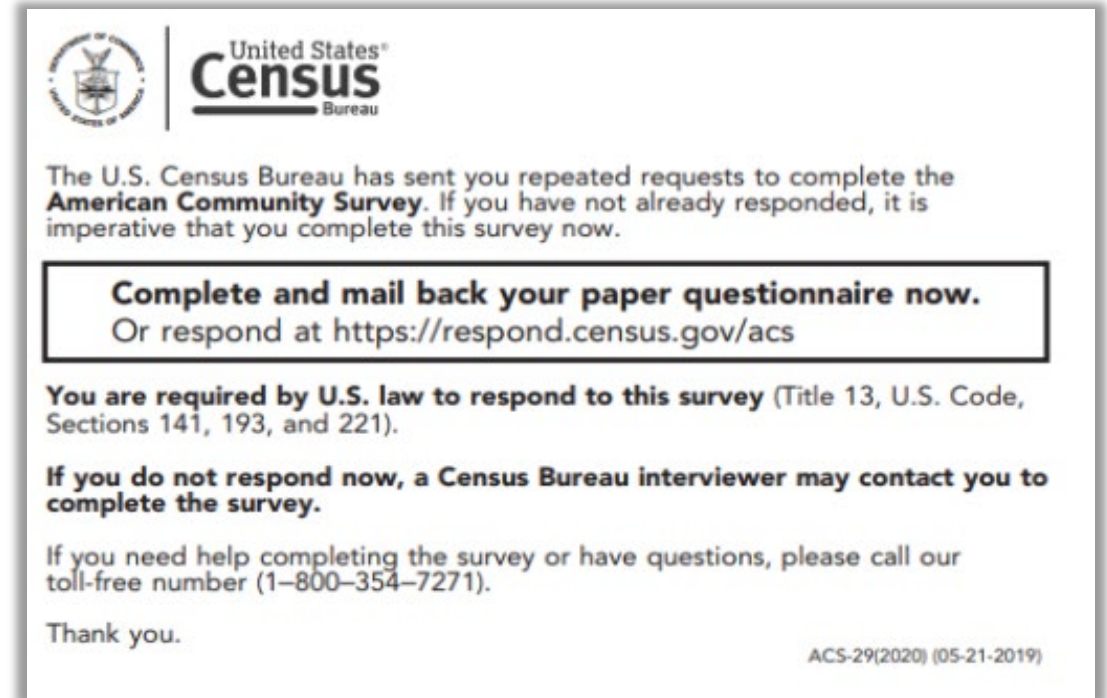
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2021 Strategic Framework Mail Materials Test, DRB Approval Number: <insert approval #>

Note: Rates significantly higher than Control are highlighted in red. Significance was tested based on a two tailed t-test at the $\alpha=0.1$ level.

2018 production postcard vs. 2020 production postcard




2018



2020

Fourth mailing – postcard



The U.S. Census Bureau has sent you repeated requests to complete the **American Community Survey**. If you have not already responded, it is imperative that you complete this survey now.

Complete and mail back your paper questionnaire now.
Or respond at <https://respond.census.gov/acs>

You are required by U.S. law to respond to this survey (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221).

If you do not respond now, a Census Bureau interviewer may contact you to complete the survey.

If you need help completing the survey or have questions, please call our toll-free number (1-800-354-7271).

Thank you.

ACS-29(2020) (05-21-2019)

Control

Please respond to the
American Community Survey

HOW? Respond online at respond.census.gov/acs
- OR - Fill out the questionnaire we recently sent you and mail it back. If you need help, call 1-800-354-7271.

WHEN? Respond now. A U.S. Census Bureau interviewer may call or visit your home to help you complete the survey if we don't receive your response soon.

WHY? Your response is required by U.S. law. Our nation depends on accurate information to prepare for the future. Your response can help your community.

United States[®]
Census
Bureau

Thank you for your participation. census.gov/acs

We need your response.

The American Community Survey

If you are one of the thousands of people who have already responded to the American Community Survey, we thank you.

If you have not completed the survey, please do so right away:

- ▶ You can complete the survey online at respond.census.gov/acs
- OR -
- ▶ Fill out and return the form we sent you a few days ago.

Your response is so important that it is required by U.S. law.

U.S. Census Bureau staff may call or visit you to help you complete the survey if we don't receive your response. If you have questions or need help completing the survey, call 1-800-354-7271.

United States[®]
Census
Bureau

Your participation helps ensure that community leaders have the information they need to make decisions that affect our lives. census.gov/acs

The American Community Survey
Helping Communities Make Informed Decisions


Dear Resident:

If you've already responded to the American Community Survey, thank you. If not, please:


Respond now using your computer, smartphone, or tablet at respond.census.gov/acs **OR** Fill out the questionnaire that we sent you and mail it back in the postage-paid return envelope.

Your response is required by U.S. law. Census Bureau staff may call or visit you to help you complete the survey if we don't receive your response soon. If you need help filling out the survey or have questions, call 1-800-354-7271. We are happy to help you.

Sincerely,



Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office census.gov/acs



The American Community Survey
Helping communities make informed decisions

Dear Resident:

If you've already responded to the **American Community Survey**, thank you. If not, please complete it now. **Your response is required by U.S. law.**

EITHER fill out the paper survey we sent you a few days ago and return it in the postage-paid envelope

OR respond online at respond.census.gov/acs with the 10-digit user ID that appears on the materials we sent you.

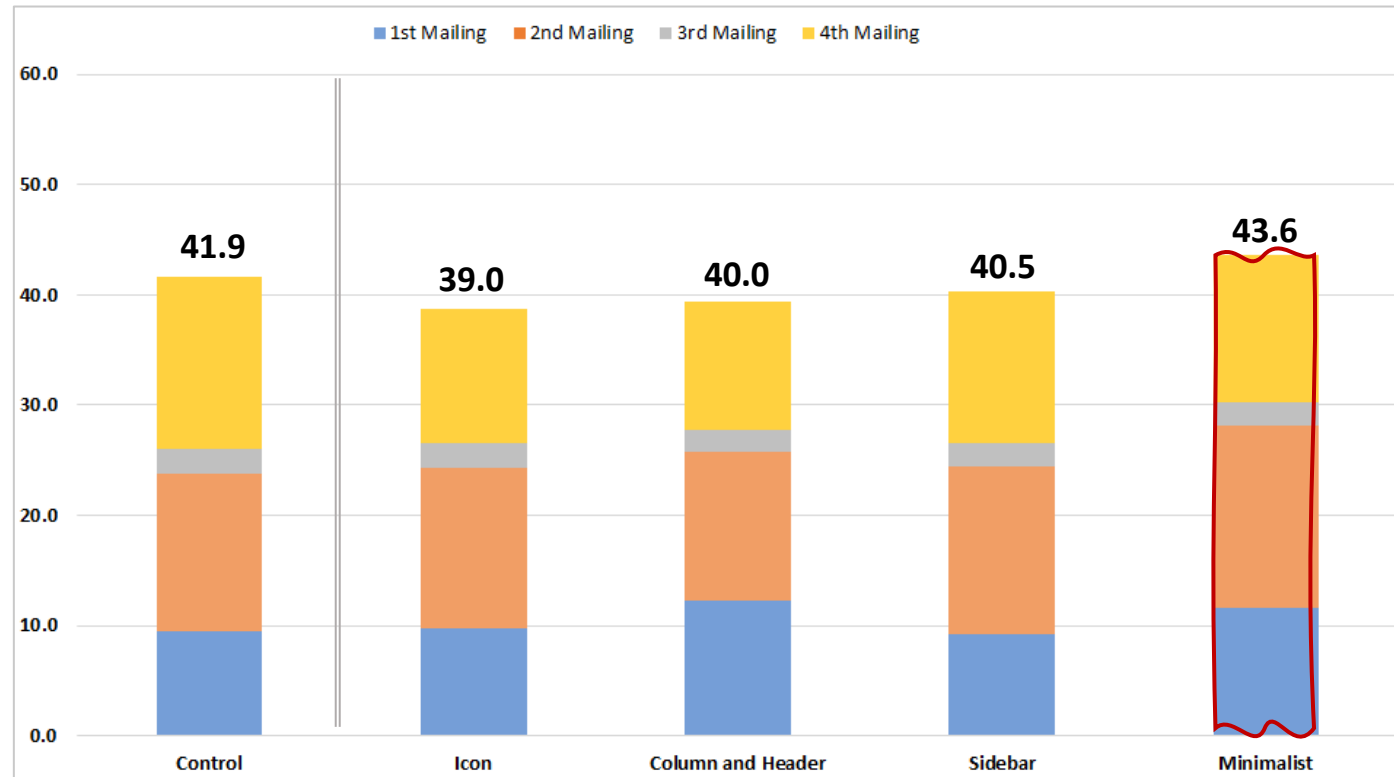
If you have any questions or need help filling out the survey, please call us at 1-800-354-7271. We are happy to help you.

census.gov/acs

Test Treatments

Results

Self-Response Return Rates

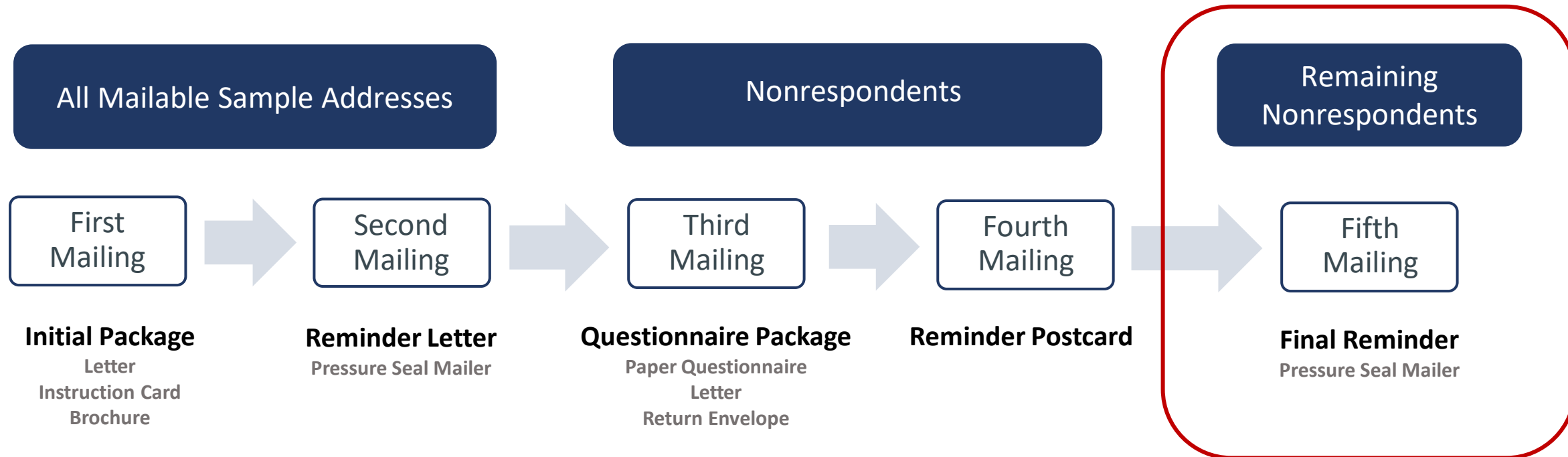


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2021 Strategic Framework Mail Materials Test, DRB Approval Number: <insert approval #>

Note: Rates significantly higher than Control are highlighted in red. Significance was tested based on a two tailed t-test at the $\alpha=0.1$ level.

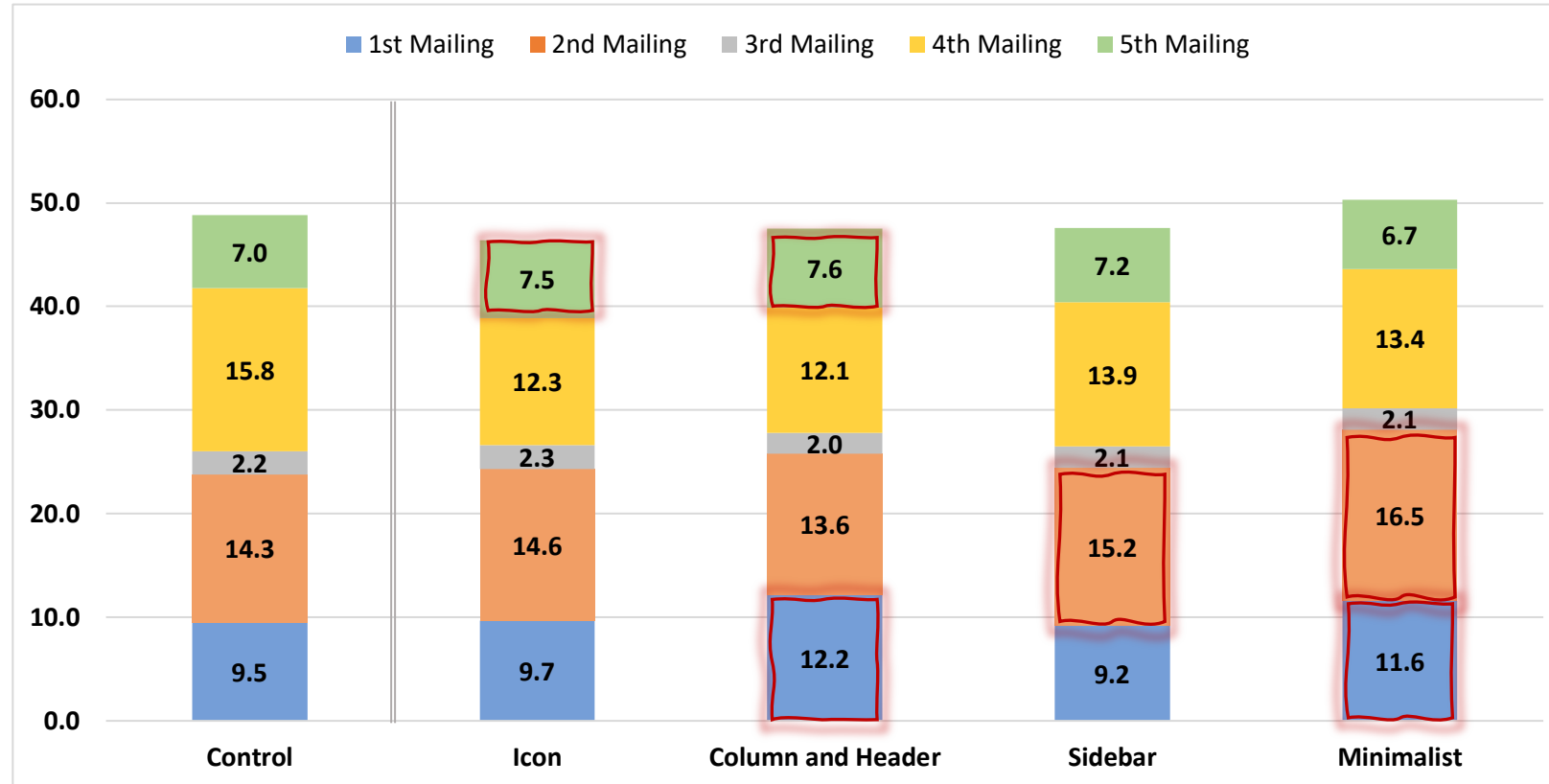
2022 ACS self-response contact strategy

Mail contact materials



Results

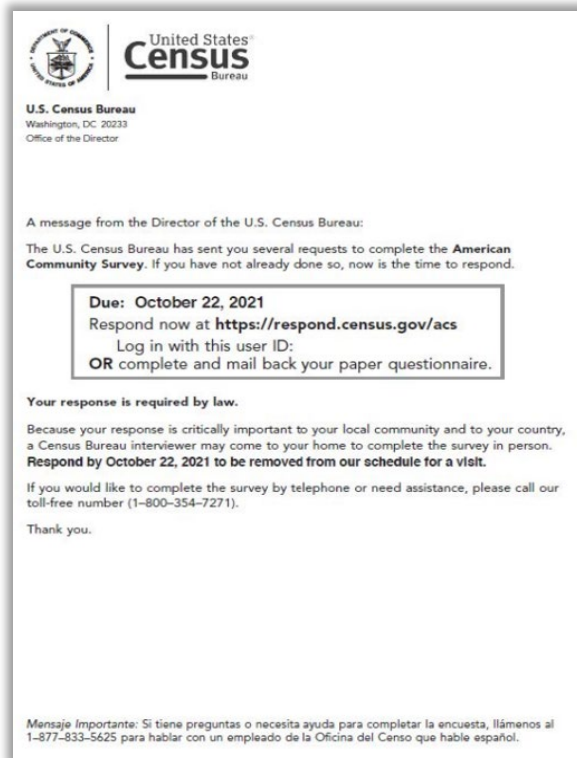
Self-Response Return Rates by Mailing



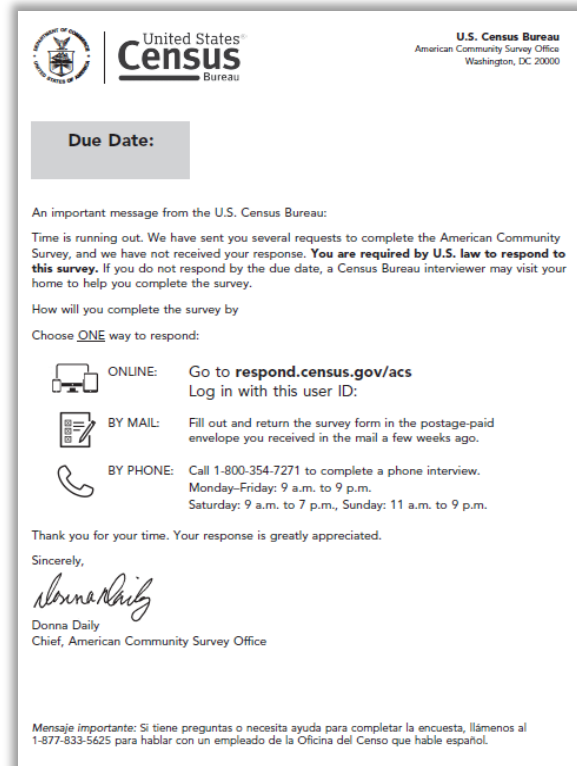
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2021 Strategic Framework Mail Materials Test, DRB Approval Number: <insert approval #>

Note: Rates significantly higher than Control are highlighted in red. Significance was tested based on a two tailed t-test at the $\alpha=0.1$ level.

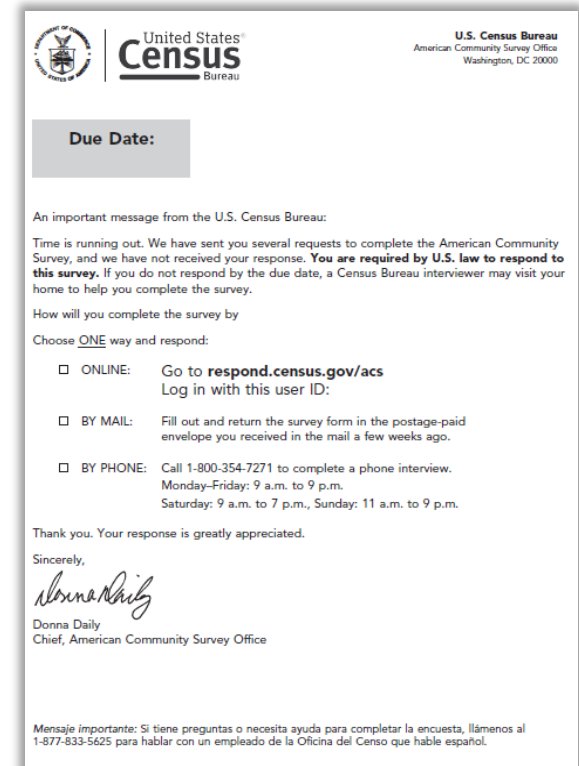
Fifth mailing – inside of mailer



Control



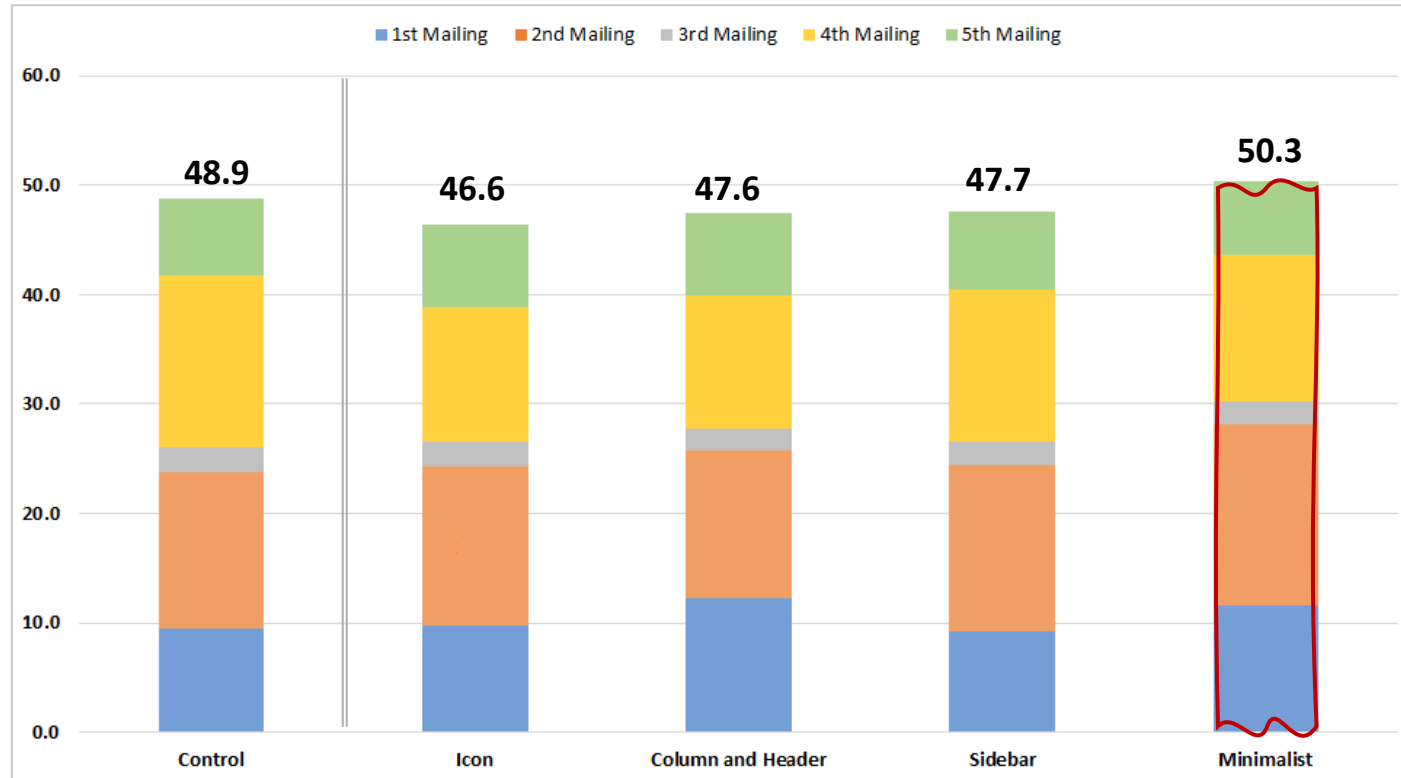
Icon



Column and Header

Results

Self-Response Return Rates



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2021 Strategic Framework Mail Materials Test, DRB Approval Number: <insert approval #>

Note: Rates significantly higher than Control are highlighted in red. Significance was tested based on a two tailed t-test at the $\alpha=0.1$ level.

Conclusion


What led to higher response?

- Plain Language
 - Minimal text
 - Active verbs
 - Clear instructions
 - Highlighted key information
- Simple design and “government-look”
- Direct, forceful language

Next Steps

- Finish the research analysis for the field test.
- Publish our findings.
- Continue testing.

Some ideas for further testing



U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233
Office of the Director

1

Dear Resident:

Your household has been selected to participate in the **American Community Survey**. Every year, the U.S. Census Bureau contacts households across the country to participate in this important, mandatory survey. Follow the two steps below to respond online today.

1) Go to respond.census.gov/acs
2) Enter your user ID:

YOUR RESPONSE MATTERS The survey helps your local government, businesses, and nonprofit organizations meet the needs of your community. You are the voice that informs us about these needs.

DO I HAVE TO RESPOND? Yes. This survey is so important to your community and the nation that **your response is required by law** (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221).


QUESTIONS? If you need help filling out the survey or have any questions, please call us at 1-800-354-7271. We are available to answer any questions or concerns you have.

Thank you for helping your community.

Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

We are conducting this survey under the authority of Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141 and 193, Title 13, Section 221, as changed by Title 18, imposes a penalty for not responding. Federal law protects your privacy and keeps your answers confidential (Title 13, U.S. Code, Section 9). The Census Bureau is not permitted to publicly release your responses in a way that could identify you. Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, your data are protected from cyberattacks by rigorous screening of the systems that transmit your data. Disclosure of the information provided to us is prohibited under the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. § 552a) and may be shared with Census Bureau staff for work-related purposes. Disclosure of this information is also subject to the published notice (as identified in the Privacy Act System of Records Notice COMBREG-CENREG-01, December Census Programs). By law, the Census Bureau can only use your response to produce statistics. Based on the information that you provide, you may be asked to participate in other Census Bureau surveys that are voluntary.

census.gov



U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233
Office of the Director

2

Dear Resident:

A few days ago, you should have received a notice from the **U.S. Census Bureau** asking you to complete the **American Community Survey**.

You are **required by law to complete this survey** (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221). The survey information helps your community plan for projects such as new schools, health clinics, and playgrounds as well as services for the elderly and veterans. Your response matters!

If you've already responded, thank you. If not, **please do so today** by following these two steps:


1) Go to respond.census.gov/acs
2) Enter your user ID:

If you are unable to respond online, we will send you a paper questionnaire in about two weeks. If you have questions or need help completing the survey, please call 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you. Your response is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

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



U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233
Office of the Director

3

Dear Resident:

Recently, we contacted you about participating in the **American Community Survey**. If you have already responded, thank you. If not, we appreciate your response at this time.

Please choose **ONE** way to complete the survey.

Respond online at respond.census.gov/acs with your computer, smartphone, or tablet.
OR
Fill out the questionnaire and mail it back in the enclosed postage-paid return envelope.


Many households across the nation have already responded to this survey. We need your response too. Your response helps provide the most accurate picture possible of your community. Together we can help prepare for a better future.

You are **required by U.S. law to complete this survey**. Just as the law requires people to report for jury duty, file taxes, or earn a license to drive, it also requires people to complete this survey. Please call 1-800-354-7271 if you have questions or need help with the survey.

We very much appreciate the effort taken to respond to this survey. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

Nota: Vea al otro lado para responder en español.



U.S. Census Bureau

4

The U.S. Census Bureau has sent you repeated requests to complete the **American Community Survey**. If you have not already responded, it is imperative that you complete this survey now.

Complete and mail back your paper questionnaire now.
Or respond at respond.census.gov/acs


You are **required by U.S. law to respond to this survey** (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193, and 221).

If you do not respond now, a **Census Bureau interviewer may contact you to complete the survey**.

If you need help completing the survey or have questions, call 1-800-354-7271.

Thank you.

ACS-29(2020) (05-21-2019)



U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233
Office of the Director

5

Due Date:

An important message from the U.S. Census Bureau:

We have sent you several requests to complete the American Community Survey, and we have not received your response. **You are required by U.S. law to complete this survey.**

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. **Respond by November 23, 2022 to be removed from our schedule for a visit.**

Choose **ONE** way to respond:

ONLINE: Go to respond.census.gov/acs
Enter your user ID:

BY MAIL: Fill out and return the survey form in the postage-paid envelope you received in the mail a few weeks ago.

BY PHONE: Call 1-800-354-7271 to complete a phone interview.
Monday–Friday: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Sunday: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Thank you. Your response is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Donna Daily
Donna Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

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

Questions?

lindsay.longsine@census.gov