



Su Experiencia nos Importa: An Experiment in Conducting a Dual-Language Household Survey

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**This research does not represent any official opinions or views of the Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Department of Treasury or any other government agency.*





Background

- Spanish is the second most prevalent language spoken in the United States after English (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019)
- 13.5% of individuals aged 5 and older speak Spanish at home. Of those, 39% speak English less than “very well” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019)
- Spanish speaking individuals’ experiences are unique (Schanzenback, 2020)
- Brick and colleagues (2012; 2019) have conducted dual-language experiments, where all communications and survey materials are in English and Spanish and have found:
 - Increase in response rates in areas high in Hispanic populations
 - Little to no effect on remaining population
- This study expands on that research by examining the effects of a dual-language protocol in a multi-mode survey.





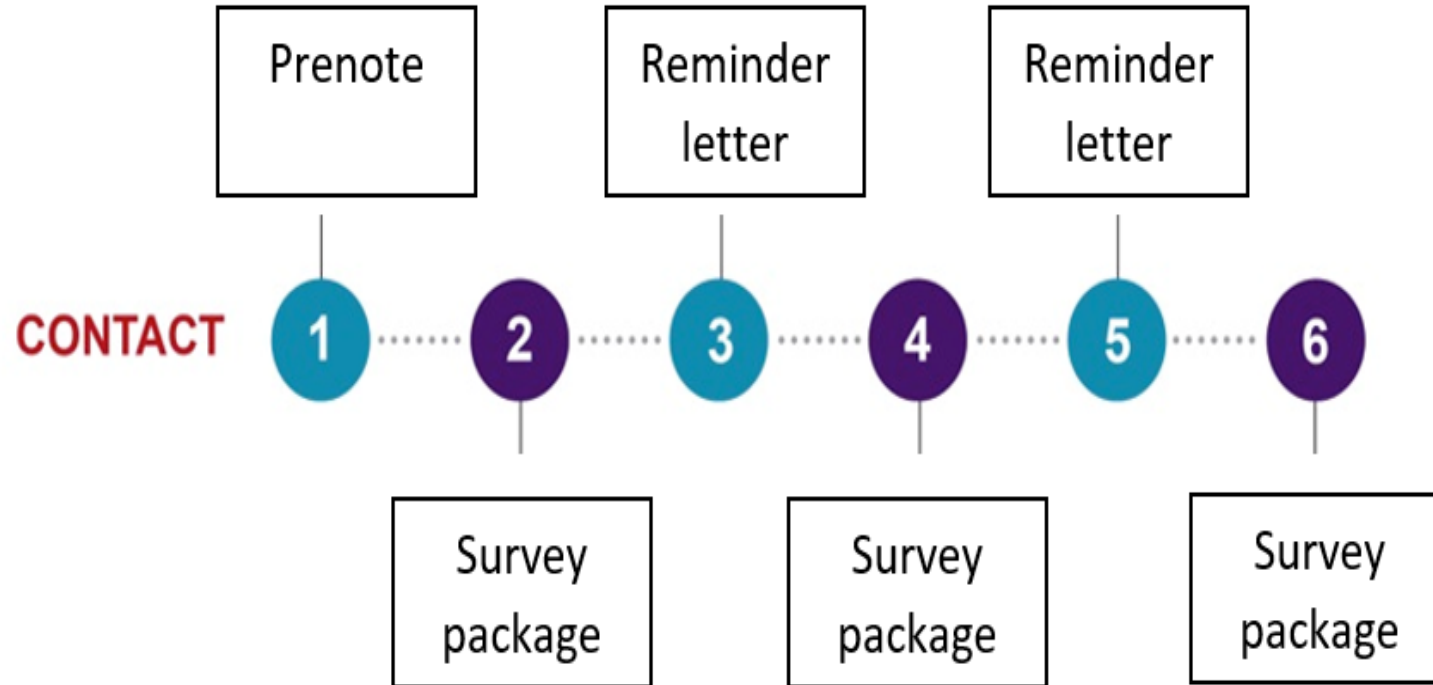
IRS Individual Taxpayer Burden (ITB) Survey

- Multi-mode survey conducted annually since 2010 with sample of 20,000 taxpayers
- Measures taxpayer burden in terms of time and money spent on:
 - Recordkeeping
 - Tax planning
 - Gathering tax materials & software
 - Professional tax help
 - Completing & submitting the tax return
- Results used as input for IRS Taxpayer Burden Model





IRS ITB Fielding Schedule

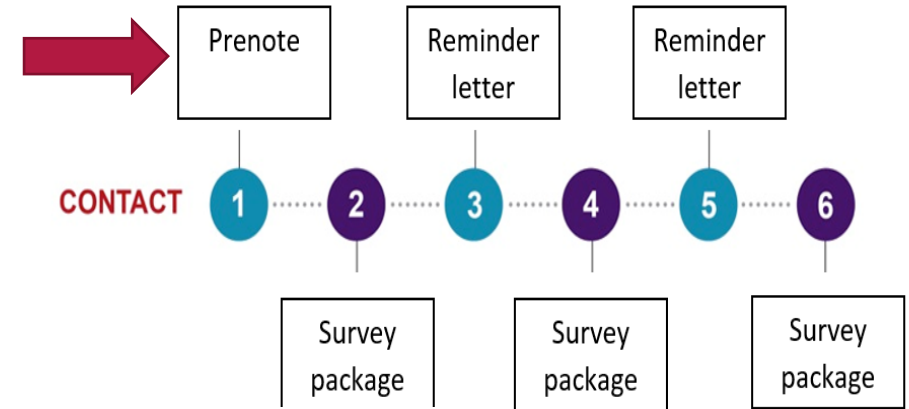


ITB20 = Survey about 2020 taxes, fielded 2021-2022





IRS ITB Fielding Materials: Prenote



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC 20224

9500001202

989-G4417-0000001
JOE TAXPAYER
PO BOX 123
ANYTOWN, DC 55555

May 5th 2021

Dear Taxpayer:

I'm writing to invite you to complete a survey about the time and money you spent doing your 2020 federal income tax return.

We need your help with our ongoing efforts to reduce taxpayer burden. We've heard from taxpayers that preparing and filing tax returns are time consuming and expensive. By answering the survey questions, you can help us find ways to reduce the time and money taxpayers spend filing their federal income tax returns.



RESEARCH, APPLIED ANALYTICS
AND STATISTICS

9500001202

989-G4417-0000001
JOE TAXPAYER
PO BOX 123
ANYTOWN, DC 55555

5 de Mayo de 2021

Estimado contribuyente:

Por medio de la presente quiero invitarle a completar una encuesta acerca del tiempo que dedicó y dinero que gastó para completar su declaración de impuesto federal sobre ingresos del 2020.

Necesitamos su colaboración con nuestros esfuerzos constantes para reducir el costo y el tiempo que esto representa para los contribuyentes. Los contribuyentes han expresado que la preparación y presentación de la declaración de impuestos es una actividad costosa que toma bastante tiempo. Al contestar la encuesta, usted puede ayudarnos a encontrar maneras de reducir el tiempo y dinero que representa para los contribuyentes la presentación de su declaración de impuesto federal sobre ingresos.



Contact 1 includes both English and Spanish Prenote



IRS ITB Fielding Materials: Letters



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC 20224

RESEARCH, APPLIED ANALYTICS
AND STATISTICS

9500001202

989-64417-0000001
JOE TAXPAYER
PO BOX 123
ANYTOWN, DC 55555

May 5th 2021

Dear Taxpayer:

We recently sent you the Individual Taxpayer Burden Survey. If you have already completed the survey, thank you. If not, we encourage you to do so as soon as possible.

Your responses are very important and will help the IRS reduce taxpayer burden. Your participation is voluntary.

The survey should only take 15-20 minutes to complete. You can complete the paper survey and return it in the postage-paid envelope provided or you may take it online:

1. Go to the secure website: www.IRStaxpayerburdensurvey.org
2. Enter your PIN: ITB8234225
3. Follow the instructions on the screen

If you have questions, please contact Jocelyn Newsome at 888-848-0934 or send an email to IRStaxpayerburdensurvey@westat.com. If you would like to speak with someone at the IRS, please call 888-452-0904.

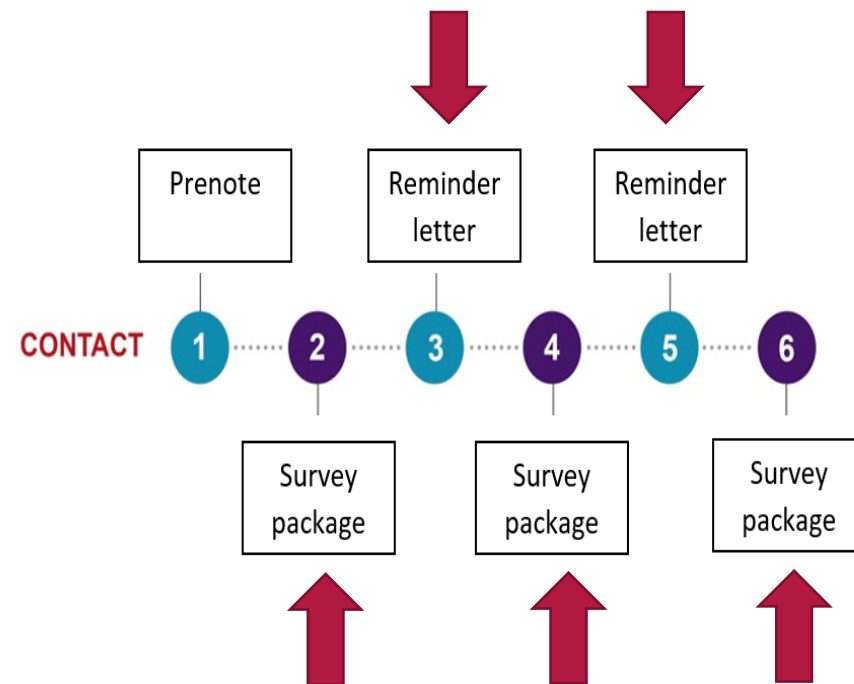
Sincerely,

Barry W. Johnson
Acting Chief, Research & Analytics Officer
Research, Applied Analytics & Statistics (RAAS)

Si desea contestar la encuesta en español, consulte la contraportada de la encuesta que recibió recientemente. La contraportada tiene las instrucciones de cómo contestar le encuesta por Internet. Si prefiere solicitar una encuesta impresa en español, puede llamarnos al 888-367-0403 o enviamos un correo electrónico a IRStaxpayerburdensurvey@westat.com.

IRS Letter 6269-A (Rev. 01-2021), Catalog Number 73544J

11B20_03.5

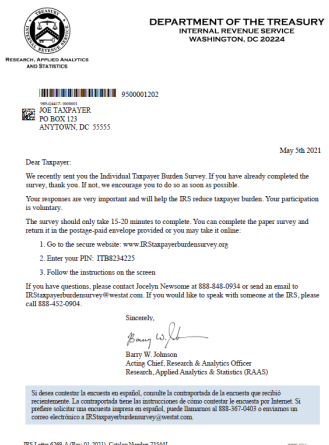


- Letter included in all contacts
- Body of letter in English
- Spanish instructions in callout box on bottom





IRS ITB Fielding Materials: Callout



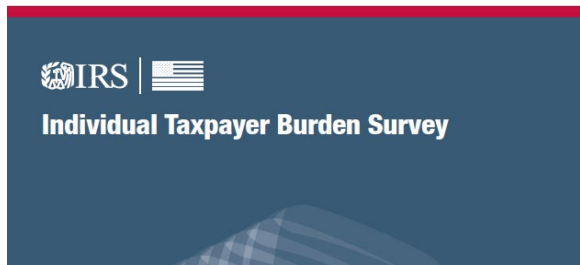
Si desea contestar la encuesta en español, consulte la contraportada de la encuesta que recibió recientemente. La contraportada tiene las instrucciones de cómo contestar le encuesta por Internet. Si prefiere solicitar una encuesta impresa en español, puede llamarnos al 888-367-0403 o enviarnos un correo electrónico a IRStaxpayerburdensurvey@westat.com.

If you want to complete the survey in the Spanish language consult the survey's back page. The instructions on how to complete the survey are included in the back page of the survey. If you prefer to request the printed version in the Spanish language, feel free to contact us, at 888-367-0403 or you can send us an email to IRStaxpayerburdensurvey@westat.com.





IRS ITB Fielding Materials: Survey



Web Survey Instructions

If you would prefer to complete this survey on the web, please follow the instructions below. Web responses are processed more quickly and you won't receive follow-up mail.

- Go to the website.**
To take the secure online survey, go to: www.IRStaxpayerburdensurvey.org
- Log in.**
Use this PIN to access the survey: **PIN:** ITB8234225

Problems?
If you have any technical difficulties, including problems with the website, please call 888-848-0934 or send an email to IRStaxpayerburdensurvey@westat.com.

Instrucciones para contestar la encuesta por Internet

Si prefiere contestar la encuesta por Internet, puede hacerlo siguiendo las instrucciones a continuación. Las respuestas en Internet se procesan más rápido y ayudarán a asegurar que usted no reciba más comunicados.

- Vaya a la página de Internet.**
Para contestar la encuesta segura en Internet, vaya a la página: www.costosencestaIRS.org
- Ingrese a la encuesta.**
Para ingresar a la encuesta, necesitará el siguiente PIN: **PIN:** ITB8234225

¿Dificultades?
Si tiene alguna dificultad técnica, incluyendo problemas con la página de Internet, puede llamarnos al 888-367-0403 o enviarnos un correo electrónico a IRStaxpayerburdensurvey@westat.com.

Want to take the survey on the web? See the back cover for instructions.

IRS Individual Taxpayer Burden Survey Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Individual Taxpayer Burden Survey?
This survey provides Congress with estimates of the time and money you, your spouse (if you filed jointly), relatives, business employees, friends, or unpaid volunteers spent to complete your 2020 individual federal income tax return.

You won't be asked about specific income or other financial information.

How will my answers be used?
We'll use your responses for research purposes only. Participation is voluntary, but the information you provide will ensure that households like yours are represented.

Who should complete this survey?
The person in your household most involved in the completion of your 2020 individual federal income tax return should complete this survey. This may be you or your spouse (if you filed jointly). You may need to ask others who helped you complete your 2020 individual federal income tax return for input.

Your individual federal income tax return refers to Form 1040, as well as any associated forms, schedules, and worksheets that you completed or filed. It does not include forms associated with state and local income taxes, partnerships, corporations, estates, employment taxes, excise taxes, or anyone else's individual federal income tax return.

What if someone else did my taxes?
You may need to consult with others when completing this survey, and we encourage you to do so. However, please do not have your tax professional complete this survey for you, and do not include the time spent by a tax professional on your behalf. We are interested in your experience.

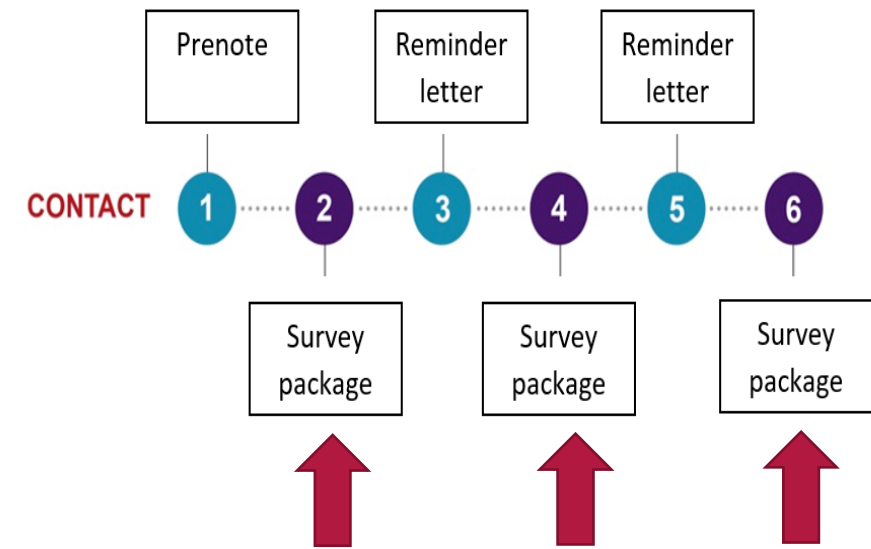
How long will this survey take?
This survey should take about 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

Questions?
If you have questions about how to complete this survey, please contact Jocelyn Newsome at 888-848-0934 or send an email to IRStaxpayerburdensurvey@westat.com.

If you would like to speak with someone at the IRS, please call 888-452-0904.

To read the official IRS announcement regarding this survey, please visit www.irs.gov/statistics/itb20.

Si desea contestar la encuesta en español, por favor vaya a la contraportada para ver las instrucciones de cómo contestar la encuesta por Internet. Si prefiere solicitar una encuesta impresa en español, puede llamarnos al 888-367-0403 o enviarnos un correo electrónico a IRStaxpayerburdensurvey@westat.com.



- Paper Spanish survey available by request
- FAQ includes Spanish Callout
- Web instructions are bilingual
- Web survey is bilingual (via togg





ITB Responses by Language

| | ITB 2018 | ITB 2019 |
|--|----------|----------|
| Sample Size | 20,000 | 20,000 |
| Response Rate | 33% | 36% |
| Total Completes | 6,603 | 7,128 |
| Total Spanish Completes | 37 | 64 |
| <i>Spanish Paper Completes</i> | 9 | 3 |
| <i>Spanish Web Completes</i> | 27 | 61 |
| Percent of responses in Spanish | 0.6% | 0.9% |

- Less than 1% of surveys are completed in Spanish
- Can we increase Spanish completes by including all materials in Spanish?



ITB20 Dual Language Experiment Design

Standard Condition

- Sample size = 18,464
- Two prenotes: Spanish & English
- All other letters in English with Spanish callout box
- English survey included in packets
- Spanish survey available by request
- Web survey in English & Spanish

Dual Condition

- Sample size = 18,465
- Two prenotes: Spanish & English
- **All other letters two-sided in English & Spanish (no callout box)**
- **English & Spanish Survey included in packets**
- Web survey in English & Spanish

At time of analyses only Wave 1 was complete. All analyses presented is on Wave 1 on





ITB20 Dual Language Experiment Design

- Data for analysis retrieved 3/2/2022
- Only Wave 1 was complete
- All analysis presented is on Wave 1 only

| Wave | n | Mail Dates | |
|------|--------|------------|----------|
| | | Start | End |
| 1 | 27,101 | 9/7/20 | 11/12/21 |
| 2 | 7,598 | 1/6/22 | 4/1/22 |
| 3 | 2,230 | 2/10/22 | 5/6/22 |





Research Questions

1. Does the dual-language condition have any impact on overall response rate compared to the Standard condition?
2. Of the completes, is there an increase in Spanish responses with a dual-language condition?
3. Is it possible for the dual-language condition to have a negative impact on response rates?
4. Are additional Spanish completes picked up due to the dual-language condition different from Spanish completes in standard condition?

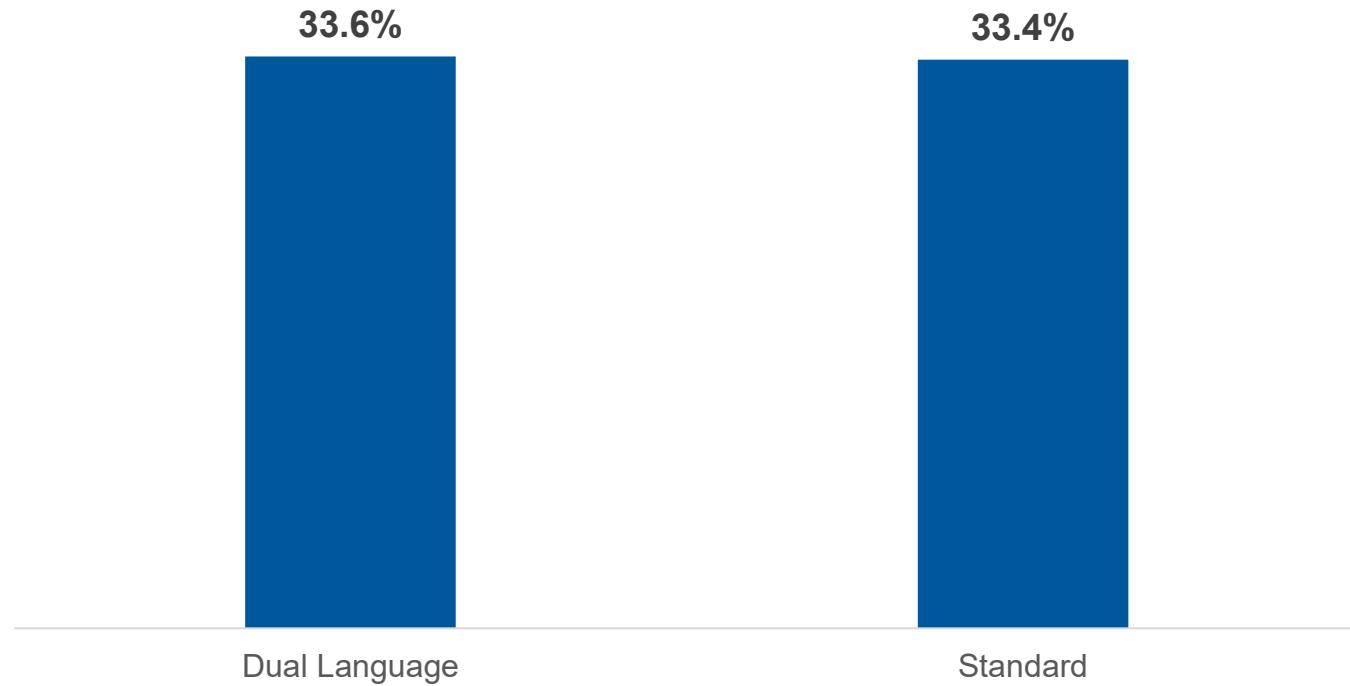




Overall Response

There was no significant difference in overall response rate by condition

Overall Response Rate by Condition

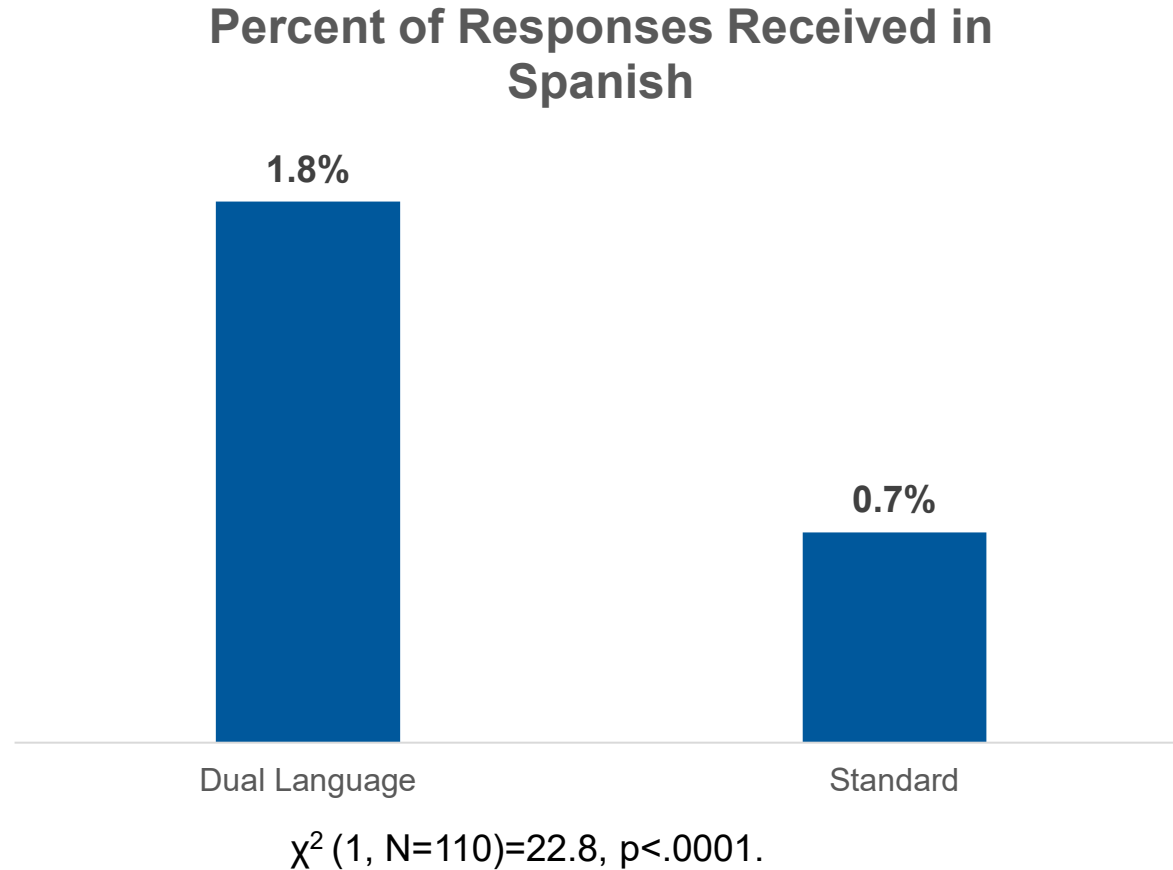


$\chi^2 (1, N=27,101)=0.09, p=0.77$





Responses Received in Spanish



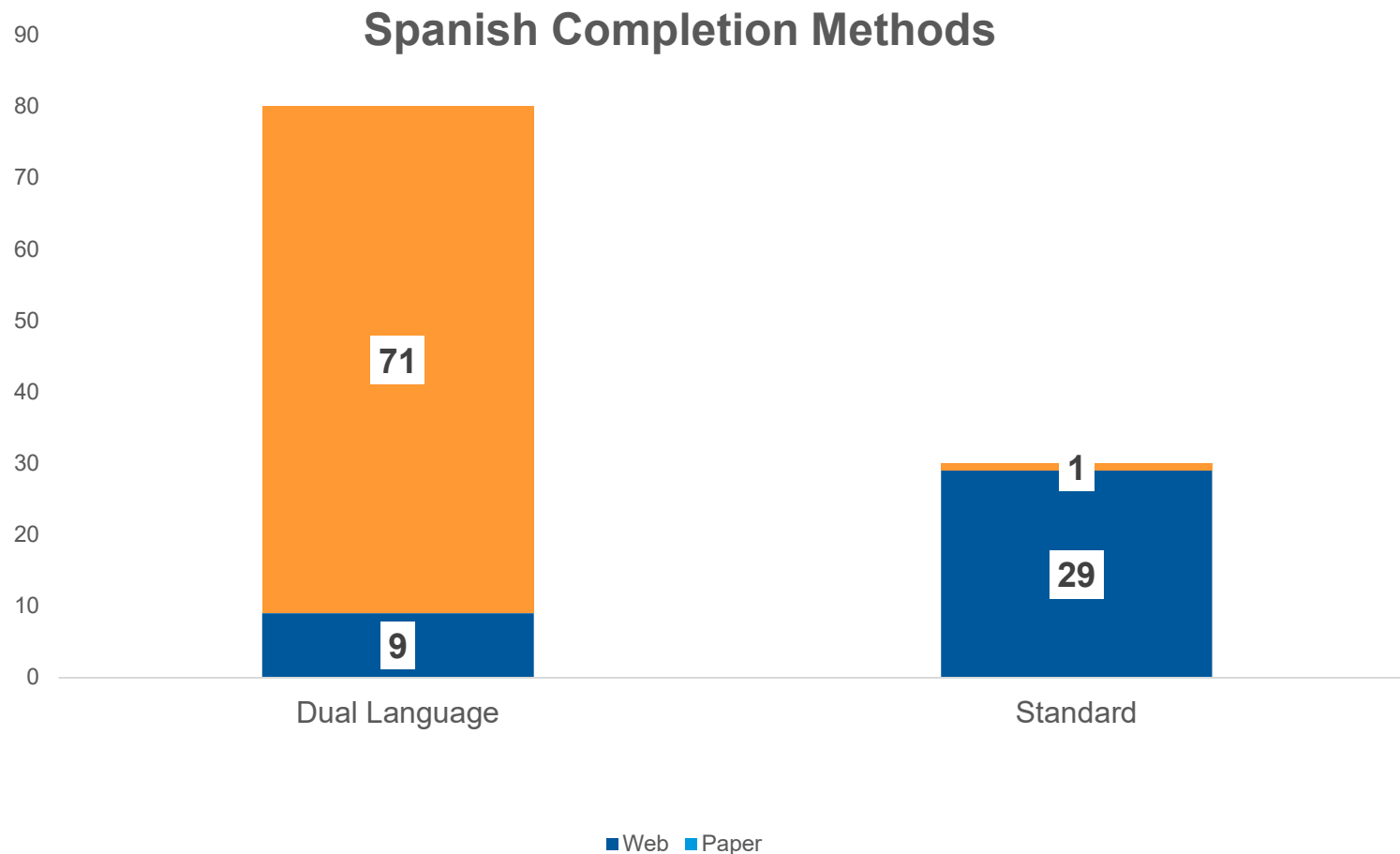
More than 1.5x Spanish (n=80) responses in dual-language condition compared to standard (n=30)





Responses Received in Spanish by Mode

- Individuals prefer responding to ITB on paper
- Providing paper survey in Spanish overcomes barrier of having to request it



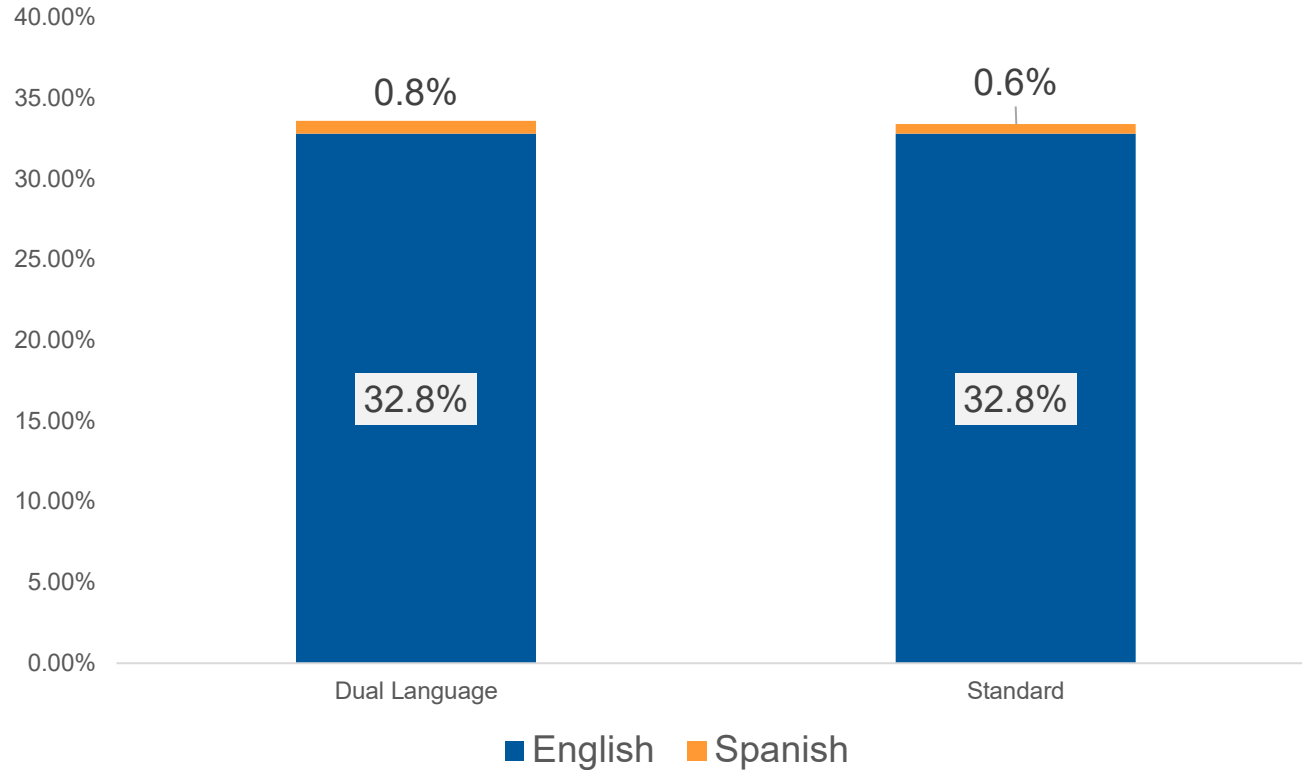
$\chi^2 (3, N=110)=110.0, p<.0001.$





Responses Received in English

Response Rate by Condition and Language



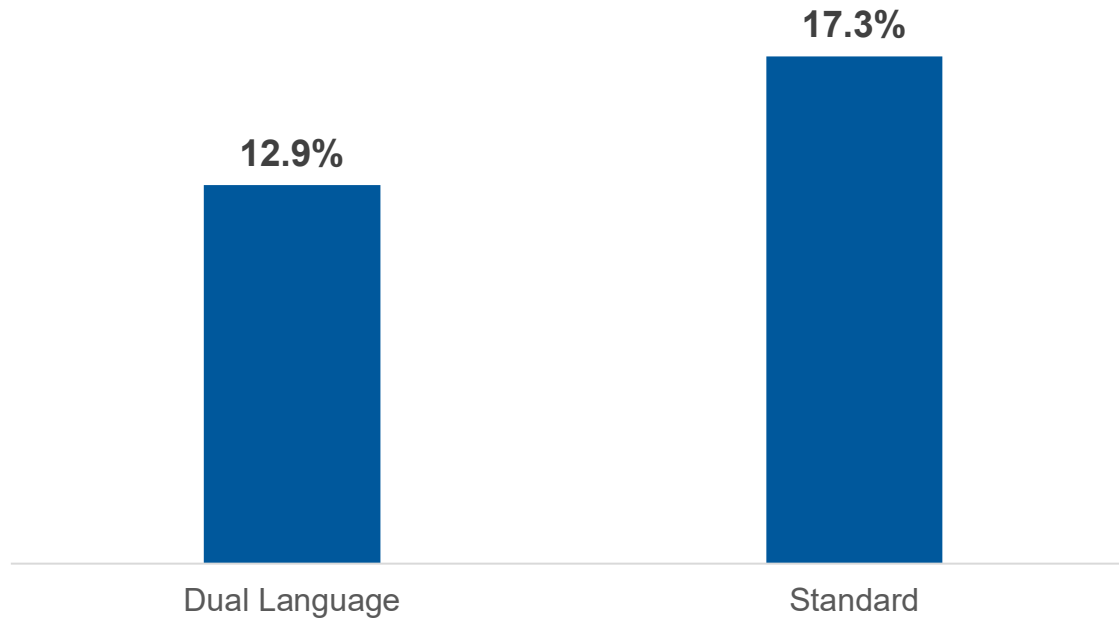
- Overall, no impact of dual-language and standard conditions by language of survey completion





Responses Received in English: Depressed Response

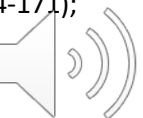
Response Rate in Zip Codes with 1% or Less Hispanic or Latino Population



$\chi^2 (1, N=1721)=6.6, p=.01.$

- Using U.S Census and H.U.D data we determined the racial and ethnic composition of respondents' zip codes
- Data showed in zip codes where less than 1% of the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino, responses in the dual-language condition are significantly lower than the standard condition
- These zip codes represent 6.4% of the whole ITB sample

Data sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Decennial Census, 2020 Decennial Redistricting Data (PL 94-171); U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; HUD-USPS ZIP Crosswalk Files





Are Spanish Completes in Dual-Language Different by Tax Return Characteristics?

Tax return and filing characteristics:

1. Complexity of tax return
2. Filing status (single, married, head of household)
3. Filing method (paid preparer, self using software, self using paper)

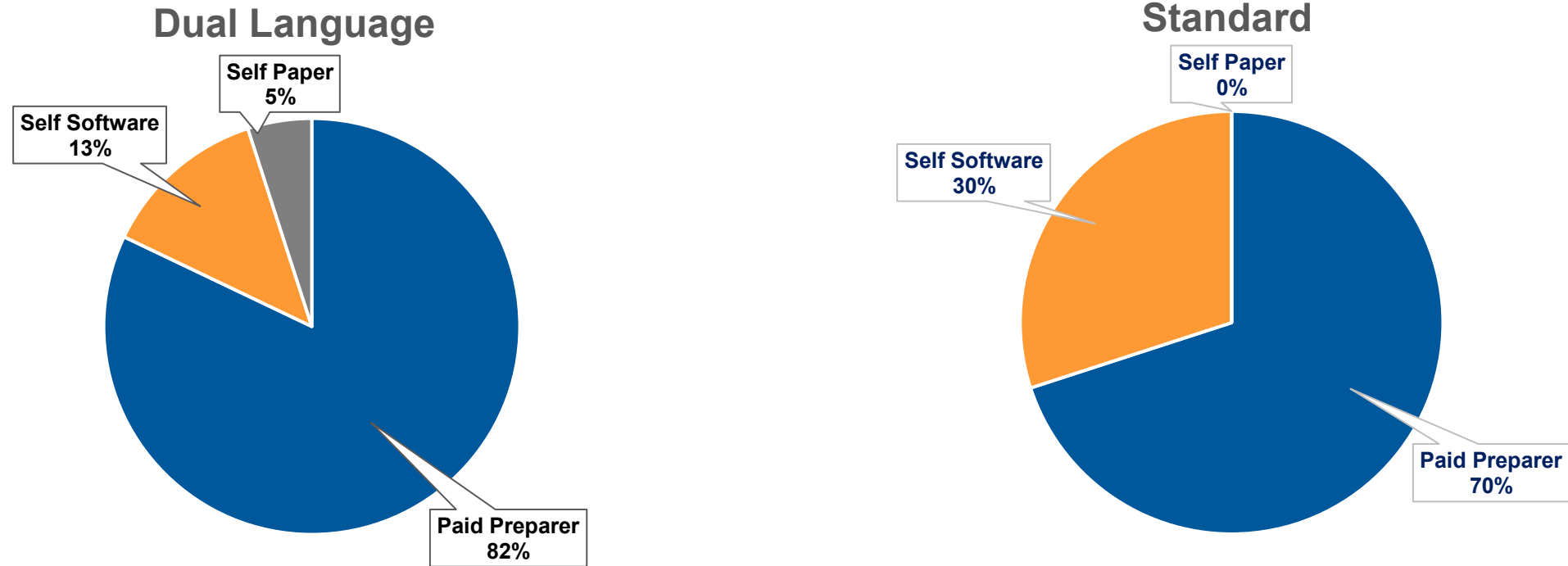
Results:

- No significant differences based on return complexity or filing status
- Significant differences by filing method





Filing Method of Spanish Completes by Condition



Not providing a Spanish-language paper survey is a barrier to survey response for paper filers





Are Spanish Completes in Dual-Language Different by Demographics?

Demographics

1. Age
2. Income
3. Density of Hispanic & Latino Population by Zip code

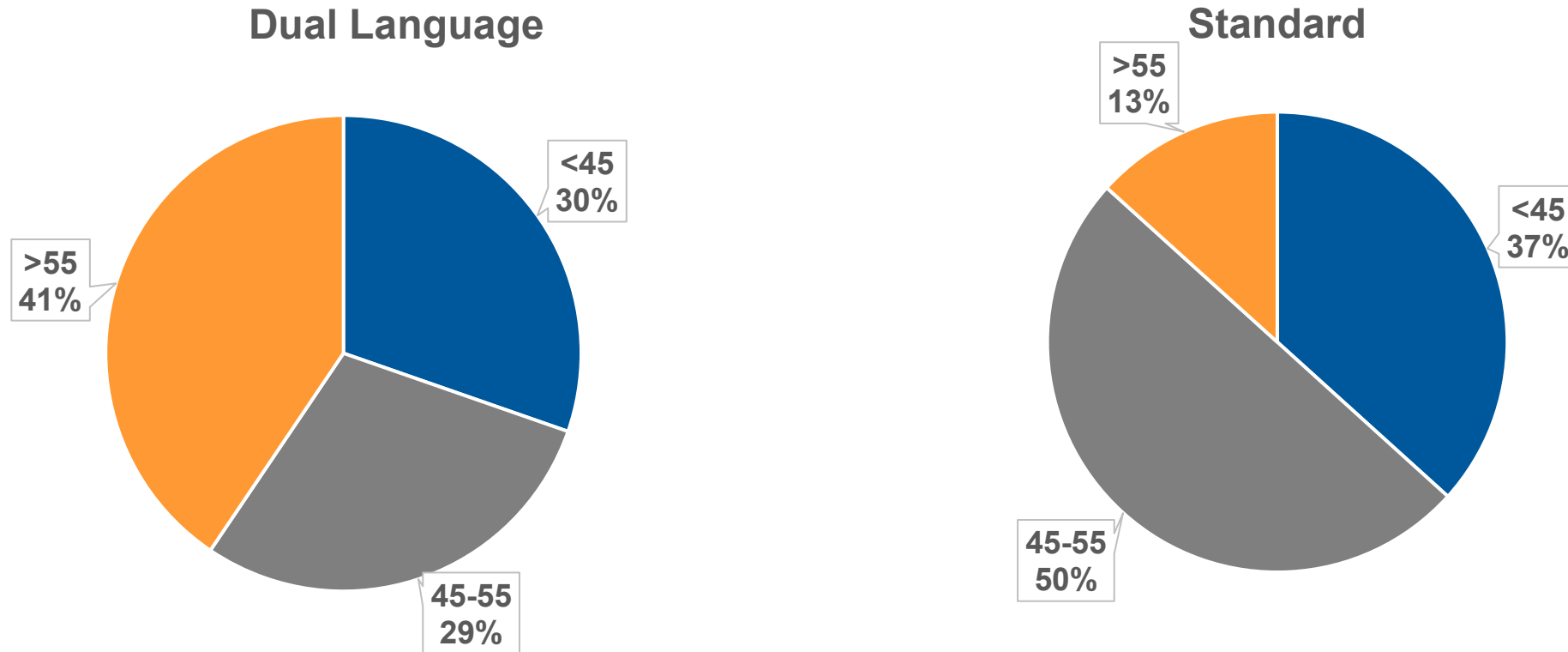
Results:

- Significant differences for age and income
- No significant difference for density of Hispanic & Latino Population





Age of Spanish Completes by Condition



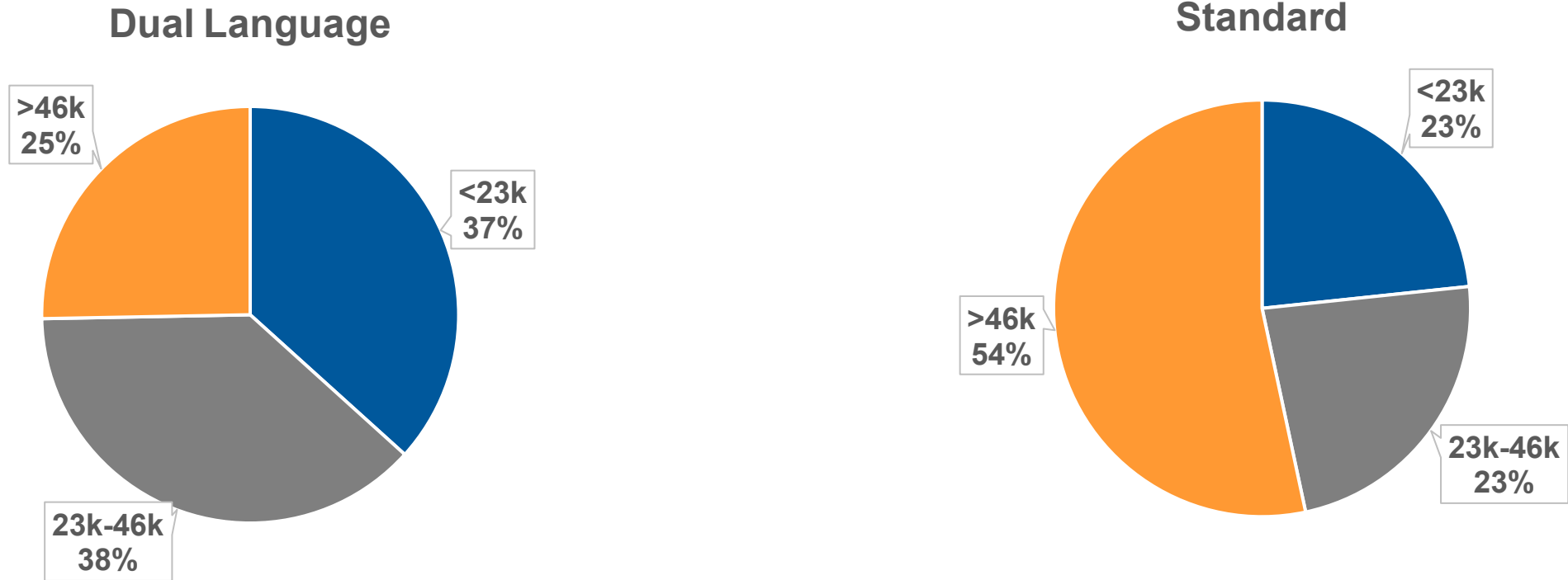
Dual-language condition picks up significantly more individuals over the age of 55 (41%) compared to the standard condition (13%)

$\chi^2 (2, N=109)=7.8, p=.02.$





Income of Spanish Completes by Condition



Spanish completes in the dual-language condition include significantly more individuals from lower-income groups compared to Spanish completes in the standard condition





Cost-Benefit Analysis of Dual-Language condition

- **Sending dual-language survey to all respondents significantly increase cost. For wave 1:**
 - Additional cost of Spanish surveys: \$27,900
 - **Increase in overall cost per complete \$5.43**
- **What if we “tailored” dual-language to those most likely to respond?**
 - Goal: Maximize Spanish Completes while minimizing costs
 - Tailor survey to:
 - Older individuals
 - Lower income brackets
 - Those using paid preparers
 - Other combinations?





Summary and Conclusions

1. There is no difference in the overall response rate
2. Dual-language increased Spanish response by more than 150%, from 30 to 110 responses
3. Extremely limited negative impact on response rate
4. Calling or emailing to request a survey is a barrier to response
5. Compared to the standard condition Spanish completes in the dual-language condition are more likely to be older and from lower income groups. They are less likely to file their taxes on their own using software
6. Sending dual-language materials to entire sample is costly, however tailored approaches can significantly reduce additional cost while still increasing response rate





Thank You!

Questions?





References

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- U.S. Census Bureau; Decennial Census, 2020 Decennial Redistricting Data (PL 94-171), Table P2; generated by Scott Leary; using data.census.gov; < <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>>; (3 March 2022).
- U.S. Census Bureau; Decennial Census, 2019 American Community Survey, Table S1601; generated by Scott Leary; using data.census.gov; < <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>>; (3 March 2022).
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; HUD-USPS ZIP Crosswalk Files, TRACT-ZIP 4th Quarter 2021; generated by Scott Leary; using [huduser.gov](https://www.huduser.gov); < https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/usps_crosswalk.html#data>; (3 March 2022).

