

Design Considerations when Adding a New Mode: Steps in the Current Population Survey Modernization

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CPS Overview

- CPS is used to produce major labor force estimates, including the unemployment rate, labor force participation rate, and employment-population ratio
- Conduct the Housing Vacancy Survey
- Base for the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) – collects income, health insurance and migration Data
- Base for many federal agency supplements

CPS Data Collection

- 10 Days of Interviewing – starting Sunday after reference week (typically the week containing the 12th of the month)
- 8 Months of data collection over 16 months (4-8-4)
- In person visits first month
- In person or phone data collection following months
- Follow up months dependent interviewing using previous responses

Need for Modernization

- Address the trend of declining response rates:
 - Lower respondent burden
 - Reach respondents who are otherwise unwilling to report/hard to count
- Manage survey costs:
 - Data collection costs continue to rise rapidly as response rates decline
 - Need to reduce long-term costs to maintain sample size
 - Improve operational efficiencies

Internet Self Response (Web) as the Solution

- Goals of new mode:
 - Reduce respondent burden
 - Reach respondents unwilling to report by other methods
 - Limit the growth of collection costs
 - Re-direct field-collection resources to harder-to-collect cases
 - Improve data quality
 - Help sustain response rates

Things to consider/leverage

- Workload Management –
 - ISR preferable but CAPI needed – Balancing time and costs
 - Push to ISR even in CAPI
- Data Quality –
 - No replacing interviewer for help in response and engagement
 - Wording changes and Help screens
 - Mode effects
- Leverage New Technology
 - Contact strategies
 - Digital incentives
 - Coding

Overview of Field Test

- May to September 2025
- Sample
 - 8,000 cases in “full” test
 - Interviewed 2-4 times
 - 8,000 retired cases invited to ISR only
 - Interviewed once
- Interview procedures
 - Month 1: CAPI
 - Month 2+: ISR first (if eligible) with CAPI follow-up
 - About 70% of Cases ended up eligible for ISR

Source: US Census Bureau, CPS 2025 Field Test

The Field Test

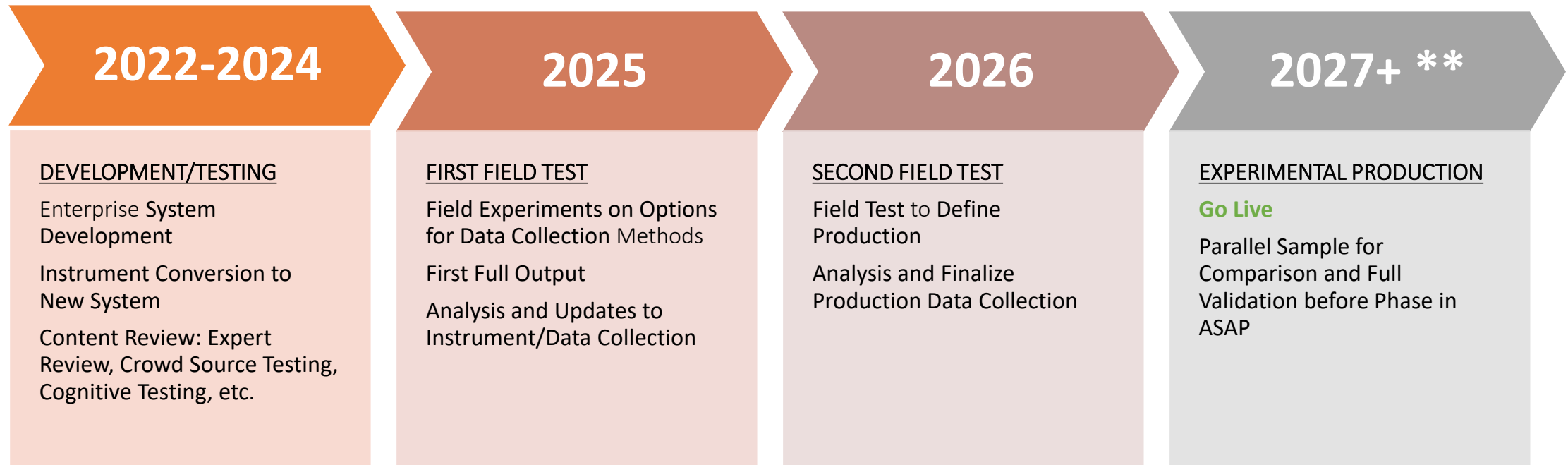
- One Main Goal – Will web collection work for CPS?
- Limitations
 - First Time Testing New Survey Data Collection System in Census
 - Interviewing was only 7 days
 - Week before regular production
 - Limited Sample

Key Early Results

- ISR Workload too big – Interviewers losing time on working cases
- People did respond by ISR
 - ISR response rate for full sample averaged 21%
 - The MIS 9 sample averaged 26%
 - Need to target better and encourage typical nonresponders
- Incentives are promising
- Need to do more to balance cost versus response rate

Source: US Census Bureau, CPS 2025 Field Test

Next Steps



** Timing Based on Budget, Resources, and Test Results

Contact Information

- Updates and future webinars at census.gov/cps
- Email us to provide feedback, ask questions, and to be notified of future updates at DEMO.CPS@census.gov
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