

TRACING AND REPRESENTATIVENESS OF RESPONSES

Attached are two different but related papers. These are:

- Contract and Tracing Master List for the 1998 W-2 (Wisconsin Works) Leavers surveys.
- Analysis of Second Quarter 1998 Leavers Survey Response

The importance of the Contact and Tracing process is to ensure that there are sufficient survey responses to provide representative results for the sampled leavers. It provides techniques that were essential in Wisconsin achieving a 75% response rate in its 1998 Second Quarter Leavers survey. For further information about the attached paper, contact Holly Yu at 608 261-4893 or Karen Viegut at 608 267-8985

The importance of the Analysis of Survey Responses paper is to provide evidence that a survey response rate of less than 80% or even less than 75% may be sufficient for the survey results to be representative. This Analysis was done with 71% of the survey results and provides evidence that those who leave assistance and don't return have a response rate very similar to those who do return. For further information about this paper, contact Jan Van Vleck at 608 266 -6722 or Francine Horton at 608 261-8861.

Contract and Tracing Master List 1998 W-2 Leavers Study

1. Departmental Information to UWSC

The Division of Economic Support (DES) provides the University of Wisconsin Survey Center (UWSC) with the most recent address, phone number, gender, date of birth information of the 550 respondents in each quarterly sample in the Department's CARES system.

2. UWSC Mailing

UWSC send a first class mail letters to all Leavers in the sample starting the purpose of the study, that they will be paid \$25 for responding to the survey, and are asked to return reply forms with prepaid postage envelopes. The reply forms are to confirm their addresses and phone numbers or provide new addresses and/or phone numbers. An 800 number is also provided for the Leaver to contact UWSC directly to complete the interview.

- A Undeliverable letters are returned with the reason stamped such as "no such street number", "forwarding order expired", "no forwarding order on file", "addressee unknown", "refused", "deceased", etc. These cases are sent back to DES for additional information or sent to the UWSC Tracing Division for tracing.
- B Letters with forwarding addresses are returned with the forwarding addresses printed on them. Letters are then resent to the updated addresses.

3. UWSC Interviewing

Shortly after the initial mailing, UWSC interviewers begin calling Leavers. Phone calls are made at various times of the day (daytime & evenings) as well as various days of the week (weekdays & weekends). Up to 15 calls are made to each Leaver before that Leaver is sent to UWCS Tracing to determine if the address and phone numbers are valid or invalid.

4. UWSC Tracing

The UWSC uses the following methods to locate Leavers

- A. Address correction requests placed with the United States Postal Services and are returned whenever the post office had successfully forwarded the letters. UWSC updates the addresses.
- B. For Address and phone numbers:
 - 1. CD-ROM Phone Disks – "POWERFINDER," issued by INFOUSA (updated twice a year).
 - 2. Internet – AT&T's FINDAMERICA site (an online phone directory)
 - 3. "411" directory assistance
 - 4. A nationwide credit bureau database check.

5. DES Central Office Tracing

Leavers UWSC is unable to trace are returned to DES for further tracing through:

- A. State administrative databases which are checked or rechecked for more current addresses, phone numbers or other information which may assist in locating the Leaver:
 - 1. CARES - State of Wisconsin's automated eligibility and case management system for W-2, Child Care Assistance (includes information on the name of the child care provider and the county child care office), Food Stamps, Food Stamps & Employment Training (FSET), Medical Assistance/BadgerCare and LIEAP.
 - 2. CARES interfaces with other administrative databases including
 - a) State New Hire
 - b) Social Security data
 - c) Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage and benefit records
 - d) JSIS - State of Wisconsin's Job Service Information System
 - e) Department of Motor Vehicles for driver's license information
- B. Additional searches on Internet sites such as INFOUSA and the White Pages to obtain respondents' updated addresses and phone numbers.
- C. Vital Statistics
 - 1. Social Security Death Index on the Internet
 - 2. The State of Wisconsin Vital Statistics records for deaths and name changes as a result of marriages or divorces.

6. DES Local Tracing of Leavers

Those Leavers the Central Office is unable to trace are forwarded to DES field staff who are primarily current or former quality assurance staff. The Leavers they receive to trace and interview are typically those who have recently or repeatedly moved, who do not have telephones, or who do not respond to the UWSC request for telephone interviews. In all instances, checks are made discretely so as not to embarrass or inadvertently bring unwanted attention to the Leaver or his/her family. These field staff may conduct the interviews by phone or in-person depending on the circumstances. The methods used are:

- A. Recheck the department's administrative databases as identified in 5 above including checking for information on family members to identify alternate sources of contact.
- B. Visit Leavers last known residences at various times of the day, evening, and weekends, and on different days of the week.
- C. Check with neighbors to ascertain if the Leaver still lives at the last known residence, when around, and any additional information useful for tracing. Need to go at various times, late afternoon, evening, weekends, early morning-sometimes 4 or 5 visits are needed.
- D. Contact Leaver's children's schools, relatives, employers or previous employers, landlords or former landlords, court records, driving records, post office, request prisoner verification with state Corrections and similar resources.

ANALYSIS OF LEAVERS SURVEY RESPONSE SECOND QUARTER 1998

For the April-June Leavers Survey, Wisconsin achieved a response rate of 75%. That is, Wisconsin had 413 responses out of 548 Leavers surveyed. The original sample was 550 Leavers, but a cross-match with vital statistics determined that two had died. The sample was of those who left assistance during April-June 1998 and who were off assistance for at least two months. It included those who remained off assistance and those who returned to assistance prior to or at the time of the survey interview.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The University of Wisconsin Survey Center (UWSC), in addition to doing the vast majority of telephone interviews using CATI, keyed all the hand done surveys completed by phone or in person by others either. The UWSC reviewed the demographics of the responders against the sample. Demographics such as age, ethnicity and location were representative of the sample. A review of responses indicated that the demographics of the responders were the same as that of the sample. The only exception was a small but significant difference in the male responses. Due to the very small sample of males in the survey, UWSC contracted research survey recommended against weighting the survey results.

NUMBER OF MONTHS OF ASSISTANCE BETWEEN LEAVING ASSISTANCE AND AUGUST, 1999

There is a continuing debate whether demographics are sufficient to determine if the sample is representative. A particular concern of those critical of Leavers survey results is the concern that those who you can't find are the worst off. A variation of this concern is that if Leavers have returned to assistance, we know how they are doing.

In determining how to analyze our survey results, we reviewed how many months of assistance our sampled and interviewed Leavers had received between leaving assistance and August 1999. We found:

- The response rate for those who had not returned to assistance within 6 months was very similar to our sample universe.
- The response rates for those who did return and received one or more months of cash assistance were also very similar to the sample universe.
- The slight differences in response rates decreased as the respondent collected more months of cash assistance after having left for at least 2 months.

Following is the information for these the sample and the interviewed leavers. Be careful not to misread this information. The information is for how many months assistance was received in the intervening period, not how many months after leaving assistance the Leavers returned to assistance.

Since this information was tabulated prior to completing the fielding of the survey, the number of responses presented is for the first 390 Leavers. In that the theory is more difficult Leavers to contact would be those last persons contacted, we feel that the results from the first 390 are sufficient to conclude that our survey responders are representative of the sample. Note that we tabulated this information prior to removing the two Leavers who had died so the sample size is shown as 550.

EXPLANATION OF TABLES

Below are the frequencies for a set of two constructed variables. The first set is for the entire sample. The last set of frequencies is for the 390 responses completed by early September 1999. The following two variables are shown for each of the two sets.

- 1) Number of months of payments within the first six months of leaving and after six months through August 1999 and
- 2) Total months of payments from the month of leaving through August 1999.

MONTHS WITHIN 6 OF LEAVING

FULL SAMPLE - 550

AFTR6	Freq	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Percent
0	426	77.5	426	77.5
1	36	6.5	462	84.0
2	36	6.5	498	90.5
3	31	5.6	529	96.2
4	21	3.8	550	100.0

COMPLETED SURVEYS ONLY - 390

AFTR6	Freq	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Percent
0	295	75.6	295	75.6
1	24	6.2	319	81.8
2	26	6.7	345	88.5
3	26	6.7	371	95.1
4	19	4.9	390	100.0

TOTAL MONTHS RETURNED

FULL SAMPLE – 550

AFTR	Freq	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Percent
0	368	66.9	368	66.9
1	21	3.8	389	70.7
2	28	5.1	417	75.8
3	24	4.4	441	80.2
4	19	3.5	460	83.6
5	16	2.9	476	86.5
6	12	2.2	488	88.7
7	13	2.4	501	91.1
8	10	1.8	511	92.9
9	9	1.6	520	94.5
10	6	1.1	526	95.6
11	10	1.8	536	97.5
12	5	0.9	541	98.4
13	3	0.5	544	98.9
14	4	0.7	548	99.6
15	2	0.4	550	100.0

COMPLETED SURVEYS ONLY - 390

AFTR	Freq	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Percent
0	251	64.4	251	64.4
1	13	3.3	264	67.7
2	19	4.9	283	72.6
3	19	4.9	302	77.4
4	13	3.3	315	80.8
5	14	3.6	329	84.4
6	10	2.6	339	86.9
7	8	2.1	347	89.0
8	8	2.1	355	91.0
9	7	1.8	362	92.8
10	6	1.5	368	94.4
11	9	2.3	377	96.7
12	5	1.3	382	97.9
13	2	0.5	384	98.5
14	4	1.0	388	99.5
15	2	0.5	390	100.0