How Do Different Cues Affect Proxy Reporting of Transit Use?

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Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys
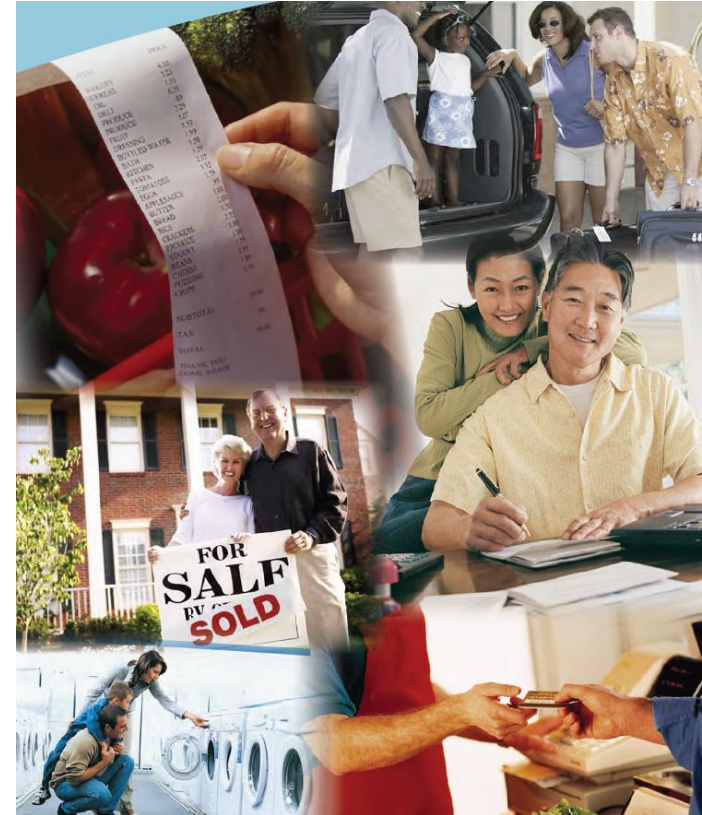
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Consumer Expenditure Survey

➢ Consumer Expenditure Quarterly Interview Survey

  ➢ Interviewer asks a HH respondent to report less-frequent and recurrent expenses

  ➢ 3-month reference period

Proxy Reporting

➢ Assumption: Proxy reports are of poorer quality

➢ Certain behaviors associated with spending can limit issues with proxy reporting (Kojetin & Miller, 1993):

  ➢ Conversation

  ➢ Participation

  ➢ Observation

Proxy Reporting (cont.)

➢ Certain expenditures more observable than others

➢ Hypothesis: Adding person-directed cues to question about less observable expense will increase reporting

Public Transportation Question Changes

2017 quarter 1

1) Do [you or any members of your household] use mass transportation services such as a bus, subway, mini-bus or train? (Do not include expenses covered by employer-provided transit subsidies. Include commuter rail, light rail, and trolleys as mass transit)

2017 quarter 2

1) Do [you/you or any members of your household] pay out-of-pocket for public transportation services such as bus, subway, train, or passenger ferry?

Public Transportation Question Changes

2017 quarter 1 - No (person) cues

1) Do [you or any members of your household] use mass transportation services such as a bus, subway, mini-bus or train? (Include … Do not include…)
2) What is the usual MONTHLY cost to use mass transit to go to - Work?
3) What is the usual MONTHLY cost to use mass transit to go to - School?
4) What is the usual MONTHLY cost to use mass transit to go to - Other places?

2017 quarter 2 - Person cues

1) Do [you/you or any members of your household] pay out-of-pocket for public transportation services such as bus, subway, train, or passenger ferry?
2) What are the names of all household members who use mass transit?
3) What is [your/NAME's] usual out-of-pocket cost?
4) (-Select time period)
   1) Day (to Q5)
   2) Week
   3) Month
5) How many days per week usually?
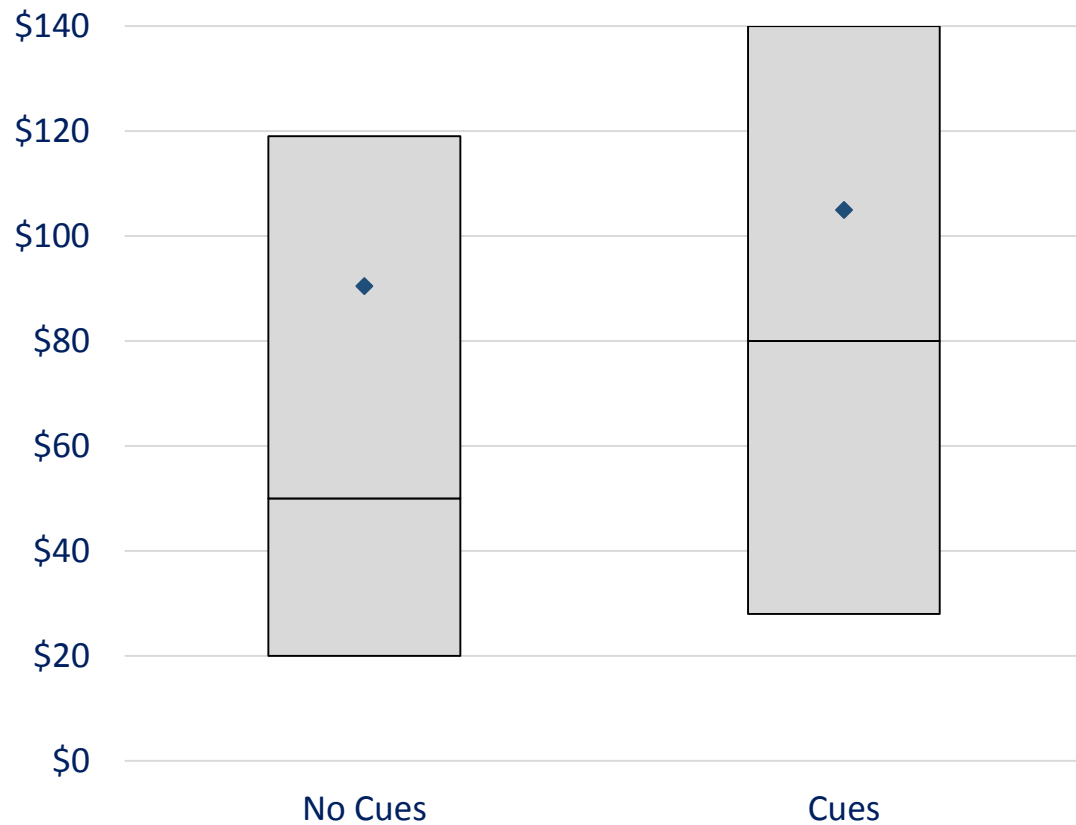
Findings: Fewer Reporting, but Increased Amounts

➢ Overall proportion of HHs reporting (non-subsidized) public transportation expenses declined [not significant]

➢ Amounts reported (for HHs reporting amount) increased

	No Cues (N=495)	Cues (N=443)
Mean*	$75.13	$89.45
Median*	$40.00	$50.00

*Significant difference; Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney; Z=2.56, Pr>Z = 0.011)

Findings: Large Change in Amounts for 2+ HHs

Multi-member HHs (N=591)

➤ Increase in median amounts from $50 to $80
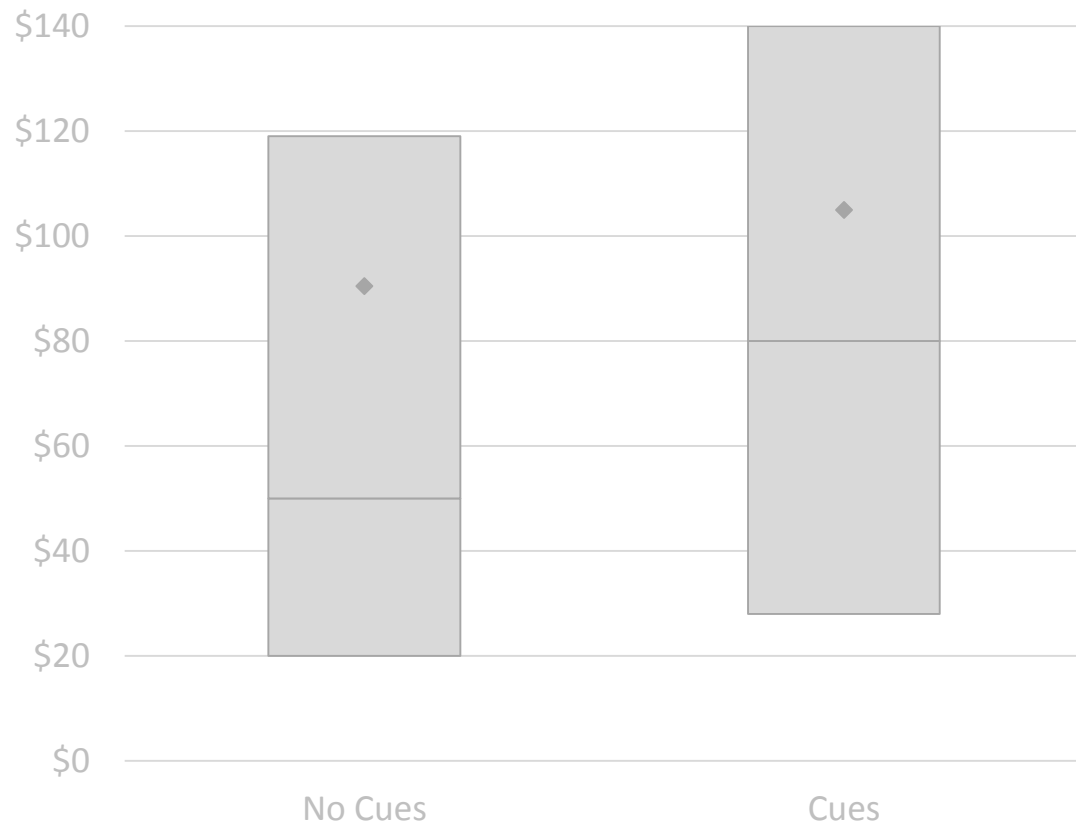
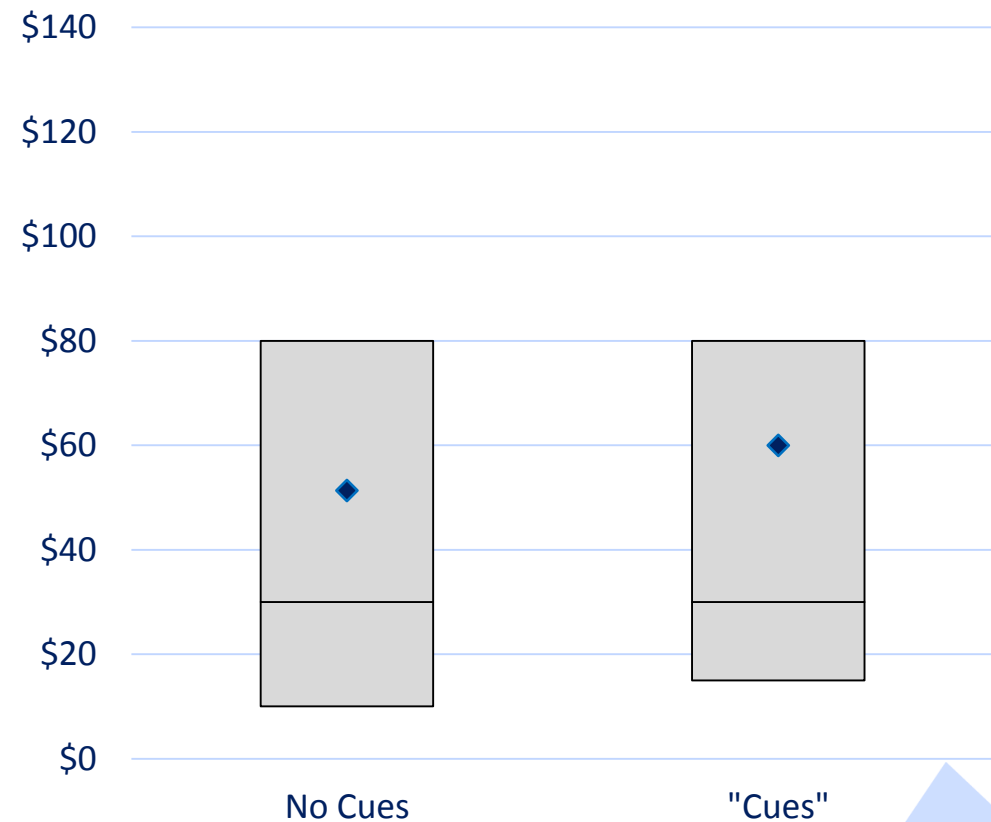# Findings: Large Change in Amounts for 2+ HHs

Multi-member HHs (N=591)

- ➢ Increase in median amounts from $50 to $80
- ➢ Within multi-member HHs getting cues (for HHs reporting amount), 36% proxy reported an amount

Findings: Limited Change in Amounts for Single HHs

Multi-member HHs (N=591)

Single-member HHs (N=347)

Summary

➤ Proportion of HHs reporting any public transportation expense did not change after person cues added to question

➤ Amounts reported by HHs with expenses significantly higher after person cues added

➤ Examining change in amounts by HH size, increase attributable to higher amounts in HHs with multiple members

Conclusion

Caveats

➢ Analysis did not control for other factors

➢ Unclear if increase in amounts reported for others (2+ HHs) led to the overall increase in amounts reported

– Proxy reporting was occurring in multi-member HHs

Take Away

➢ Person cues a potential tool to improve accuracy of proxy reporting

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