





# National Postsecondary Student Aid Study

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# What is the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)?

- Periodic cross-sectional study of students enrolled in postsecondary education, at all levels, in a specific financial aid year
- Sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the Institute of Education Sciences, U S Department of Education
- Authorized by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, 20 U.S.C. 1015(d) which charges NCES with collecting information from aid recipients in the United States

# Purpose of NPSAS

- To understand how students and their families finance postsecondary education, NPSAS provides data on:
  - Current costs of postsecondary education
  - Resources used by students to meet those costs, including financial aid received, employment, and family support
  - The student...
    - Enrollment status and history
    - Education experiences
    - Background
  - Issues specific to the longitudinal cohorts...
    - Goals, education and career plans, decision making

# Major Features of the NPSAS Design

2-stage sampling design with multiple sources of data:

- Institution sample:
  - Institution frame created from NCES' Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)
  - Up to 1,800 institutions are sampled from the frame.;
- Student sample:
  - Sampled institutions provide enrollment lists of students for a given financial aid year.
  - Students are sampled from within each institution, for a total study sample of up to 140,000 students.

# Major Features of the NPSAS Design (continued)

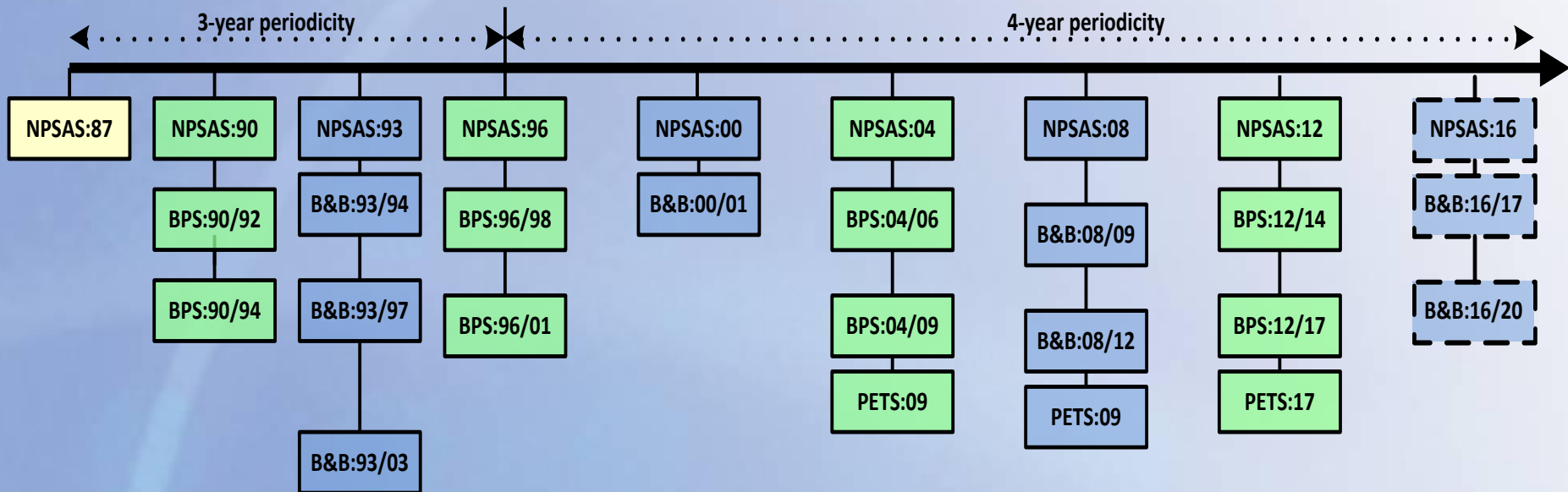
NPSAS collects data, on a flow basis, from multiple sources:

- Institutions:
  - Enrollment list
  - Student-level institution record abstraction
- Students:
  - Interview
- Federal and nonfederal administrative data bases:
  - Matching based on SSN
  - e.g., CPS, NSLDS, National Student Clearinghouse, ACT, SAT

## Major Features of the NPSAS Design (continued)

- Serves as the base year data collection for two longitudinal studies
  - The *Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study* (BPS) which follows first time college students, all levels
  - The *Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study* (B&B), following new bachelor's degree recipients, with a special focus on new teachers

# NCES Postsecondary Studies Timeline



NPSAS – National Postsecondary Student Aid Study  
 BPS – Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study  
 B&B – Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study  
 PETS – Postsecondary Education Transcript Study

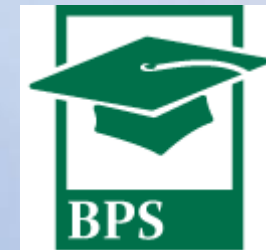


## Challenge – Declining Student Interview Response Rates

- Screening devices
- Increased use of cell phones with associated drop in use of land lines
- Unconventional schedules of the postsecondary student populations
- Concerns for disclosure
- Agency budget constraints
- Tight schedules for timely release of data
- NCES Statistical Standards

# Remedies for Declining Response Rates

1. Innovative locating and contacting strategies
2. Interviews conducted in up to 3 web-based modes – self-administered interview, telephone interview, in-person interview – across 3 phases
3. Strategic use of incentives



# Innovations in Contacting Sample Members

- Sources for student locating information
  - Enrollment lists
  - Updates via study websites
  - Student record abstractions
  - Administrative record matching
  - NCOA, FastData, and other vendors
  - Prior interviews
- Tracing conducted at multiple time points
- Data collection announcements sent via US mail and email virtually simultaneously
- Subsequent contacts alternated among various options – email and telephone prompts, letters, and postcards

# NPSAS Student Web Site

# NPSAS

National Postsecondary Student Aid Study

OMB Clearance No: 1850-0666 Exp. Date 7/31/2013

[Home](#) [Purpose of The Study](#) [Overview](#) [Previous Study Findings](#) [Confidentiality](#) [FAQs](#) [Contact Us](#)

## Welcome to the 2011-12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)

To access the NPSAS survey, enter your Study ID and password, which are printed on the letter that was recently mailed to you or included in an e-mail message you may have received. We recommend that you use Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome or Safari as your browser to complete the survey. Your password is case sensitive; please enter it exactly as it appears.

### GET STARTED!

Study ID:  Password:

[Need your Study ID number or password?](#)

If you need assistance, send an e-mail to [npsas@rti.org](mailto:npsas@rti.org) or call the Help Desk at 1-877-NPSAS-NOW (1-877-677-2766).



### Need Assistance?



[✉ npsas@rti.org](mailto:npsas@rti.org)  
[☎ 1-877-677-2766](tel:1-877-677-2766)

### About NPSAS



Purpose of the study

### Get the FAQs!



Learn more about the study

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this voluntary information collection is 1850-0666. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 38 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this survey, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202-4537. If you have any comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this survey, write directly to: The 2011-12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12), National Center for Education Statistics, 1990 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006.

# Personalized Contacting Materials

## 2011-12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study

Christopher,  
complete a 25 minute  
interview and receive  
**\$30** for your time!



→ To complete the **web interview** over our secure website, log on to <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas/>

Your Study ID is: ABCabc

Your Password is: XYZxyz

(Please enter uppercase and lowercase letters as they appear.)

→ To complete the **telephone interview** with a professional interviewer, or for help completing the web interview, please call **1-877-NPSAS-NOW (1-877-677-2766)**.

# Experimenting with Contacting Procedures



- Use of Federal Express and US Express Mail
- Envelope sizes
- Telephoned reminders
- Sources of passwords for web survey
- Prepaid incentives (cash and check)
- Inclusion of non-monetary gifts
- Frequency of prompts

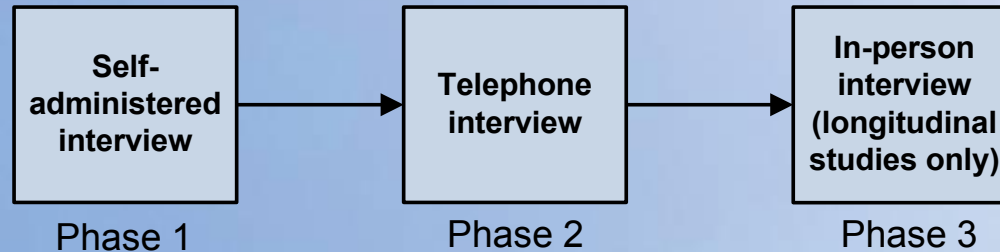
## The Latest... Stop Action *You Tube* Video

- Highlights purposes of NPSAS:12 and ways to participate;
- Offers college-age sample an alternative to letters, emails, and other mailings; and
- Establishes a common visual element for “brand recognition” as sample members move into the longitudinal follow up studies.



# A Multimode Approach to Interviewing

- Beginning with the 2003 data collection for the B&B longitudinal study, a self-administered survey option, developed on the web, was added to all student data collections, including NPSAS
- Same interview programmed for use across modes
- Adopted a 3-phase, sequential approach to data collection intended to minimize costs while maximizing responses per unit of time





# Phases in Multimode Interviewing

- **Phase 1 – Self-Administered Interview**
  - Offered at the start of data collection to the greatest number of sample members
  - Specially-trained Help Desk staff troubleshoot web survey and computer problems
  - Primary mode of data collection for first X weeks of data collection
  - Telephone interviews can be completed by Help Desk staff at sample member's request – “call ins”
  - Sample prompted by regular mail, email, and sometimes with telephoned messages
  - Least expensive option

# NPSAS Interview : Sample Question



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Logout  
**John Public (jennifer)**  
Financial Aid/N12APPAID

Overall Progress: 

Section Progress: 

Did you apply for financial aid for the 2010-2011 school year?


Yes

No

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# NPSAS Interview: Use of Preloads, Prior Responses, and Real Time Data Checks



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Logout  
**Jennifer Wine (NAS-2011)**  
Education Experiences/N12AP3B

Overall Progress:

Section Progress:

For how many of the 6 AP exams on which you scored a 3 or greater did UNC-Chapel Hill...

Place you in a higher level course, but not award you any academic credit	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="2"/>
Award you academic credit	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="2"/>
Neither place you in a higher level course nor award you any academic credit	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="2"/>
<b>Total</b>	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="6"/>

# NPSAS Interview: Response Coding

# NPSAS


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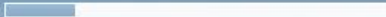
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Logout

Jennifer Wine (NAS-2011)

Education Experiences/N12MAJ1

Overall Progress: 

Section Progress: 

What is your major or field of study at UNC-Chapel Hill?

1. **FIRST** type in your major or field of study:

2. **THEN** click :

Please click the "Select" button next to the major/field of study listed below that most closely describes your field of study: **Statistics**. If your field is not listed, click on the "None of the Above" button at the bottom of the screen to see more choices.

At the confirmation screen, click "OK" to accept your selection or "Cancel" to select another major.

General Description	Specific Description	
Mathematics and Statistics	Statistics, General	Select
Mathematics and Statistics	Mathematical Statistics and Probability	Select
Mathematics and Statistics	Mathematics and Statistics	Select
Mathematics and Statistics	Mathematics and Statistics, Other	Select
Mathematics and Statistics	Statistics, Other	Select
Education	Educational Statistics and Research Methods	Select
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	Biostatistics	Select
Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services	Business Statistics	Select

# NPSAS Interview: Nonresponse Conversion Text

# NPSAS

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Logout

Jennifer Wine (NAS-2011)

Income and Expenses/N12PARNC

Overall Progress: 

Section Progress: 

**Please consider answering this important question as best you can. Information you provide gives us the unique opportunity to learn more about the ability of students and their families to pay for college.**

What was your parents' or guardians' combined income in calendar year 2010 (January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010)? If your parents are divorced and the parent you lived with more during the past 12 months is remarried, tell us about the combined income of that parent and the person he or she is married to.

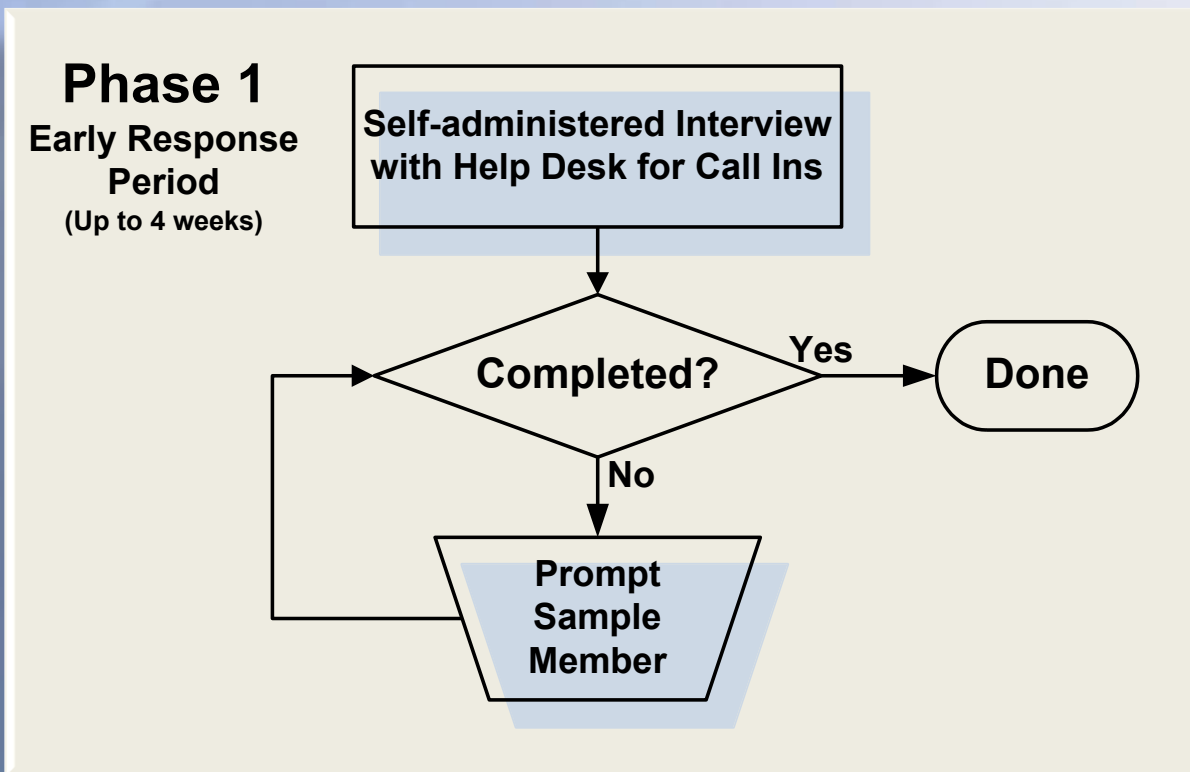
- Under \$30,000
- \$30,000 to \$59,999
- \$60,000 to \$89,999
- \$90,000 to \$119,999
- \$120,000 and above
- Don't know
- Parents (or guardians) are deceased

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# Phase 1: Multimode Interviewing Process



# Phases in Multimode Interviewing (continued)

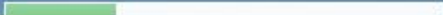
- **Phase 2 – Outbound Telephone Interviewing**
  - Traditional telephone interviewing or Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) with specially-trained interviewers
  - Uses same HTML-based instrument as web survey, with embedded interviewer instructions
  - Often serves to prompt sample members to complete the web survey
  - Sample members can switch between modes to complete the survey
  - More costly than web surveys


# NPSAS Telephone Interview: Interviewer Instruction – Read Until...



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Logout  
**Jennifer Wine (NAS-2011)**  
Education Experiences/N12GPAEST

Overall Progress: 25% 

Section Progress: 

**INTERVIEWER: READ RESPONSE OPTIONS UNTIL SM SELECTS A CATEGORY.**

Overall, which best describes your grades at UNC-Chapel Hill?

- Mostly A's
- A's and B's
- Mostly B's
- B's and C's
- Mostly C's
- C's and D's
- Mostly D's or below
- Don't know my grades
- I would describe my grades differently than what is listed here

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# NPSAS Telephone Interview: Interviewer Instruction – Probe

# NPSAS

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Logout

Jennifer Wine (NAS-2011)

Education Experiences/N12GPATYP

Overall Progress: 25% 

Section Progress: 

**INTERVIEWER: PROBE AS NECESSARY.**

Is your grade point average (GPA) at UNC-Chapel Hill measured on a 4.00 scale?

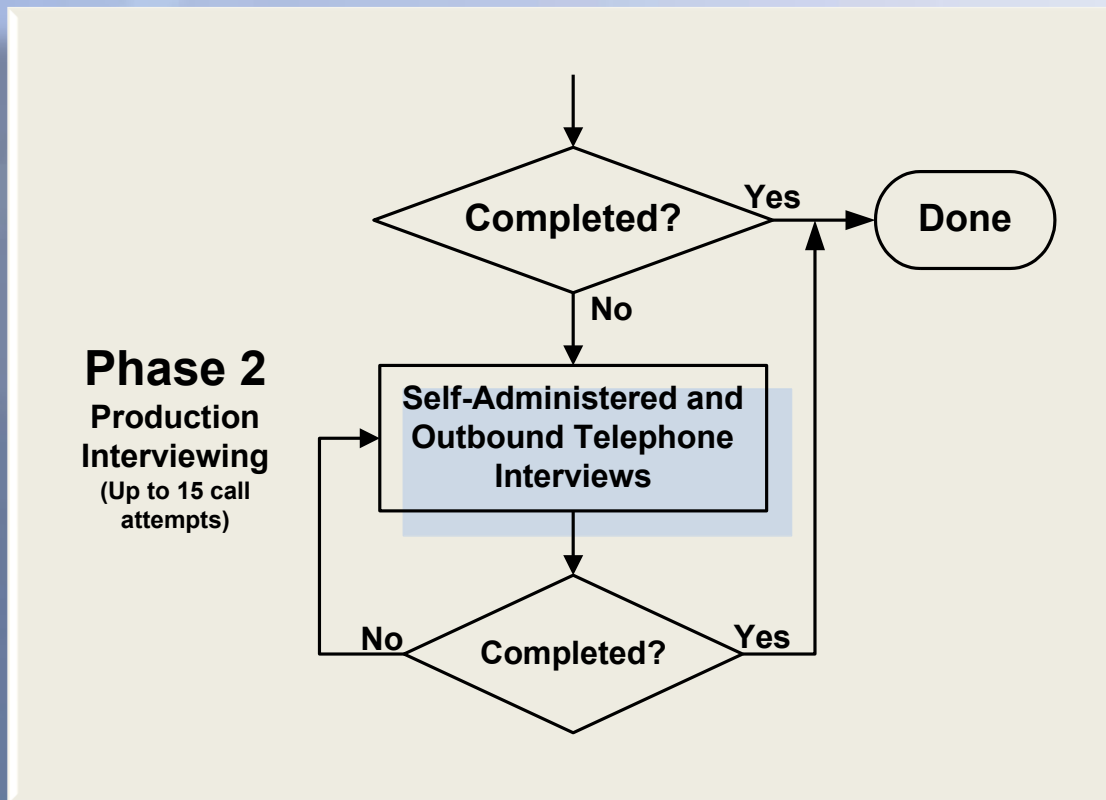
- Yes
- No, it is measured on another grading scale (for example, percentages)
- No, the school does not award grades
- No, it is pass/fail
- Don't know

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## Phase 2: Multimode Interviewing Process

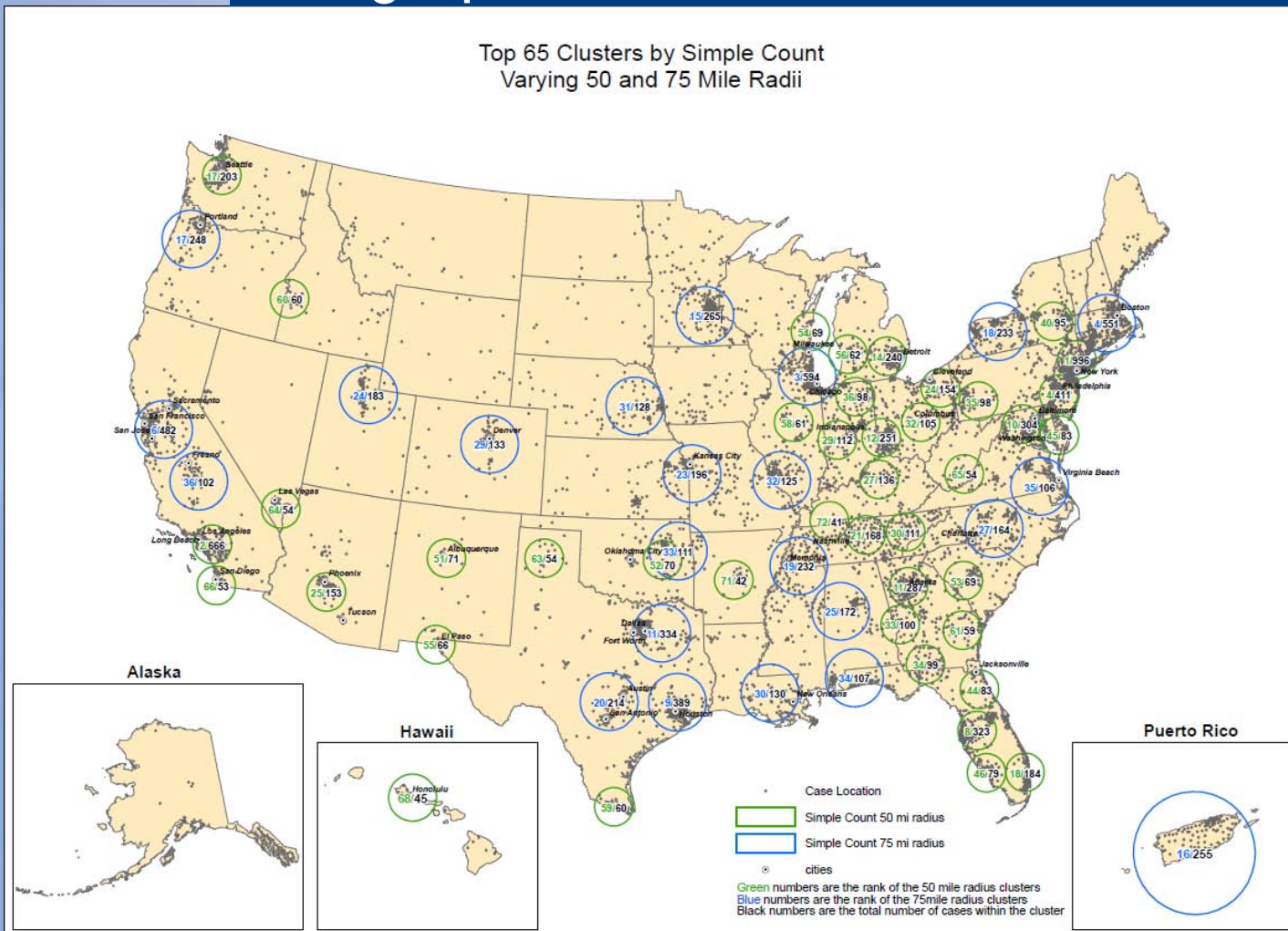


## Phases in Multimode Interviewing (continued)

- **Phase 3 – Nonresponse Conversion and Field Interviewing**
  - NPSAS Cross-sectional Study:
    - Traditional telephone interviewing with specially-trained refusal converters
  - BPS and B&B Longitudinal Studies:
    - Traditional telephone interviewing with specially-trained refusal converters
    - In-person interviewing or Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) with specially-trained field staff
  - Uses same HTML-based instrument as web survey, with embedded interviewer instructions
  - Once moved to the field, sample members cannot easily switch between modes to complete the survey
  - Most costly data collection method

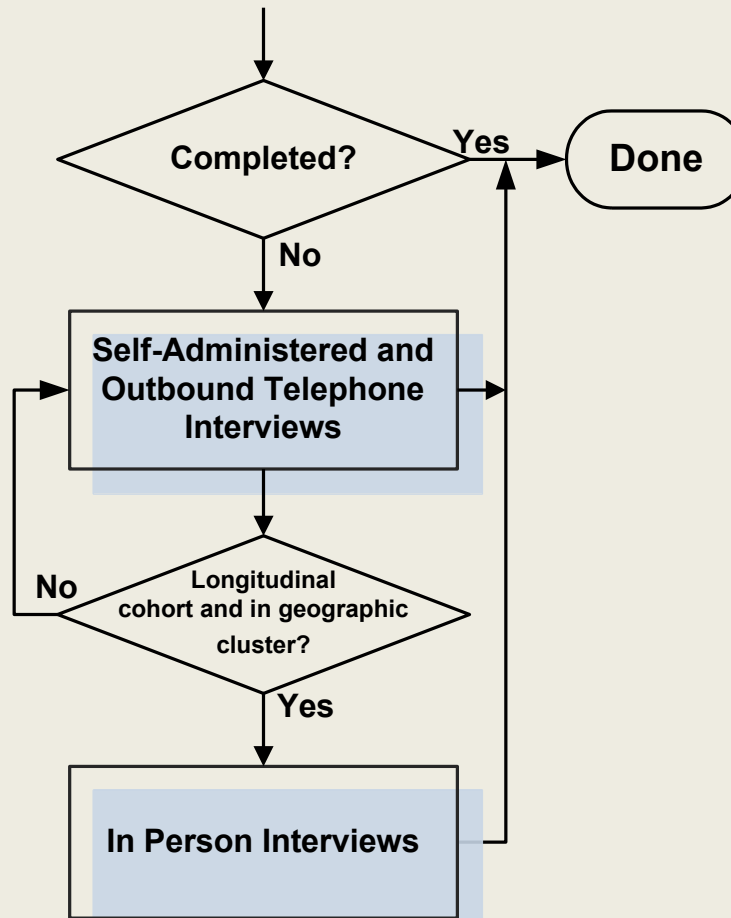
# Assignment of Field Interviewers by Geographic Cluster: BPS:04/06

Top 65 Clusters by Simple Count  
Varying 50 and 75 Mile Radii



# Step 3: Multimode Interviewing Process

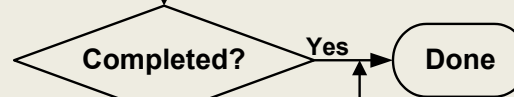
## Phase 3 Nonresponse Conversion (With refusal or call criteria met)



# Multimode Interviewing Process

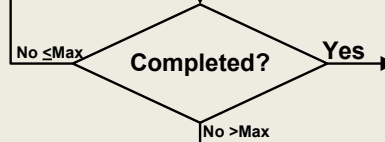
**Phase 1**  
Early Response  
Period  
(Up to 4 weeks)

Self-administered Interview  
with Help Desk for Call Ins



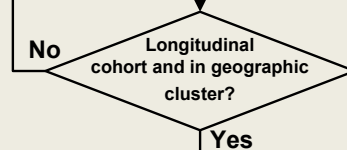
**Phase 2**  
Production  
Interviewing  
(Up to 15 call  
attempts)

Self-Administered and  
Outbound Telephone  
Interviews



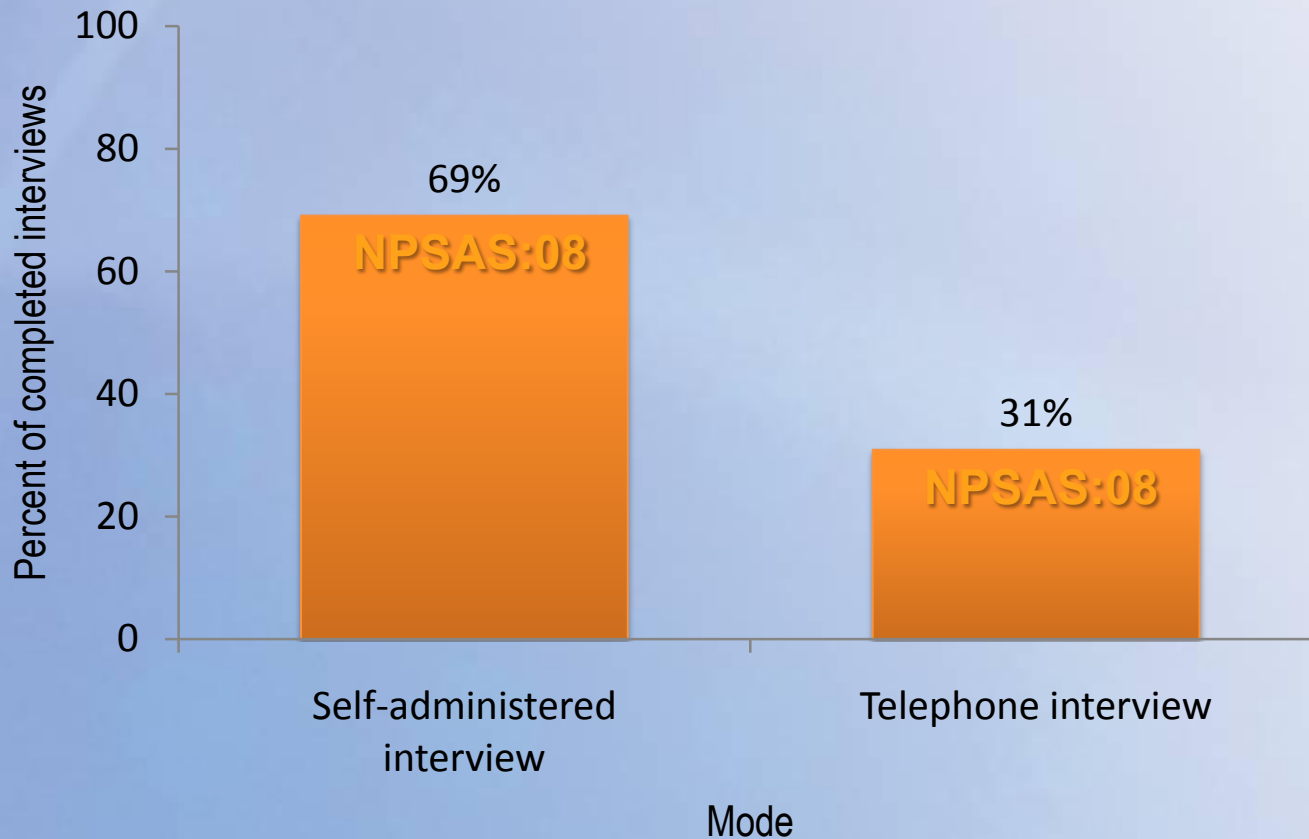
**Phase 3**  
Nonresponse  
Conversion  
(With refusal or  
call criteria met)

Self-Administered and  
Outbound Telephone  
Interviews

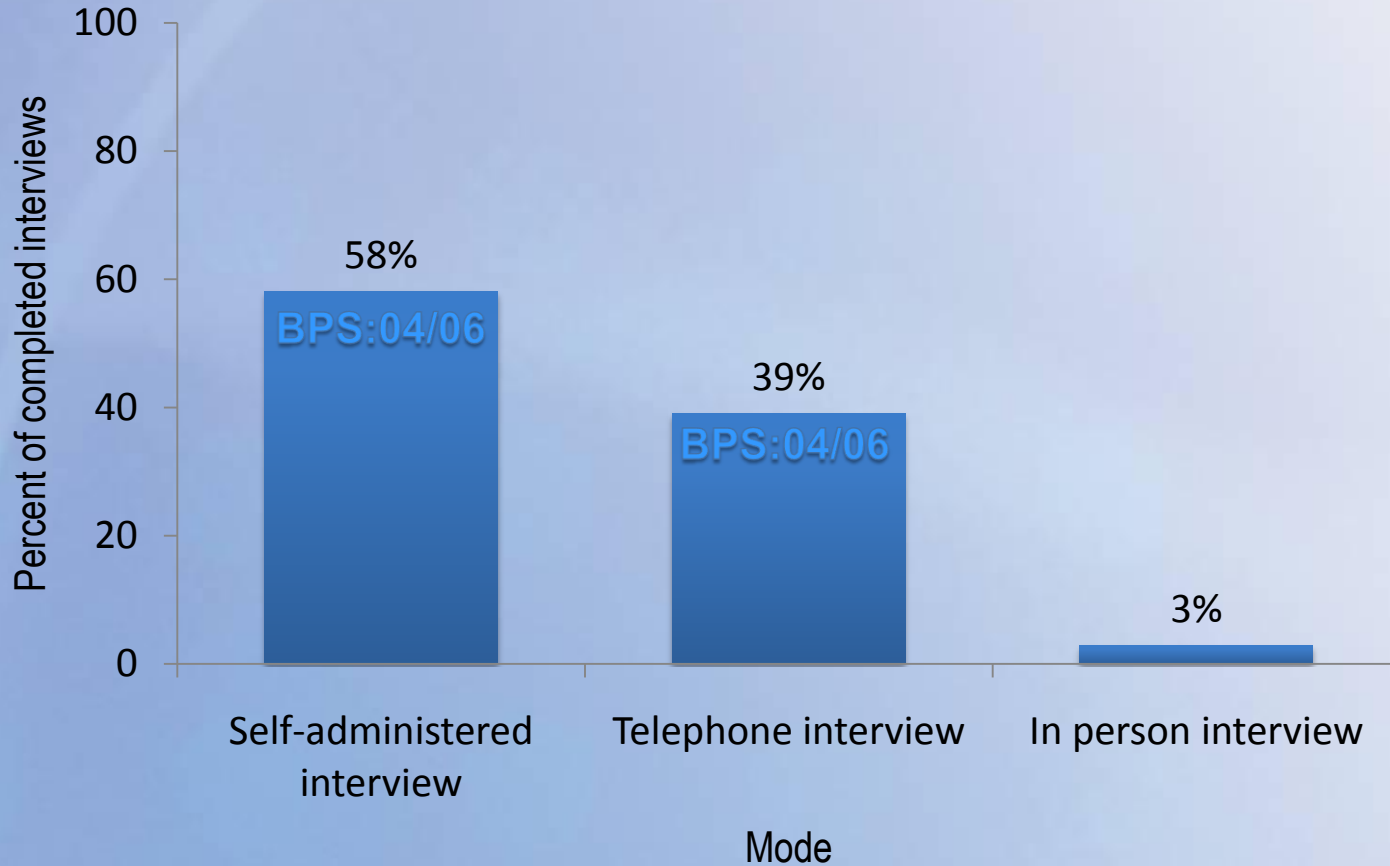


In Person Interviews

# Percent of Completed Interviews, by Mode: NPSAS:08



# Percent of Completed Interviews, by Mode: BPS:04/06

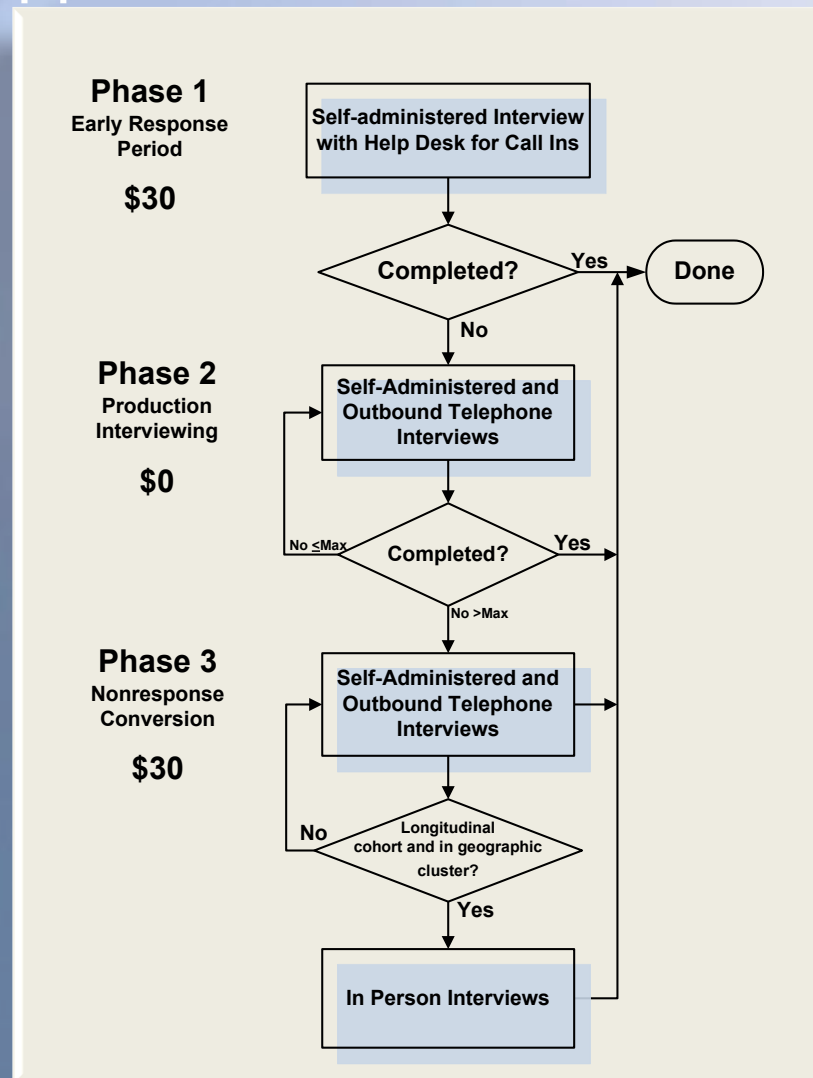




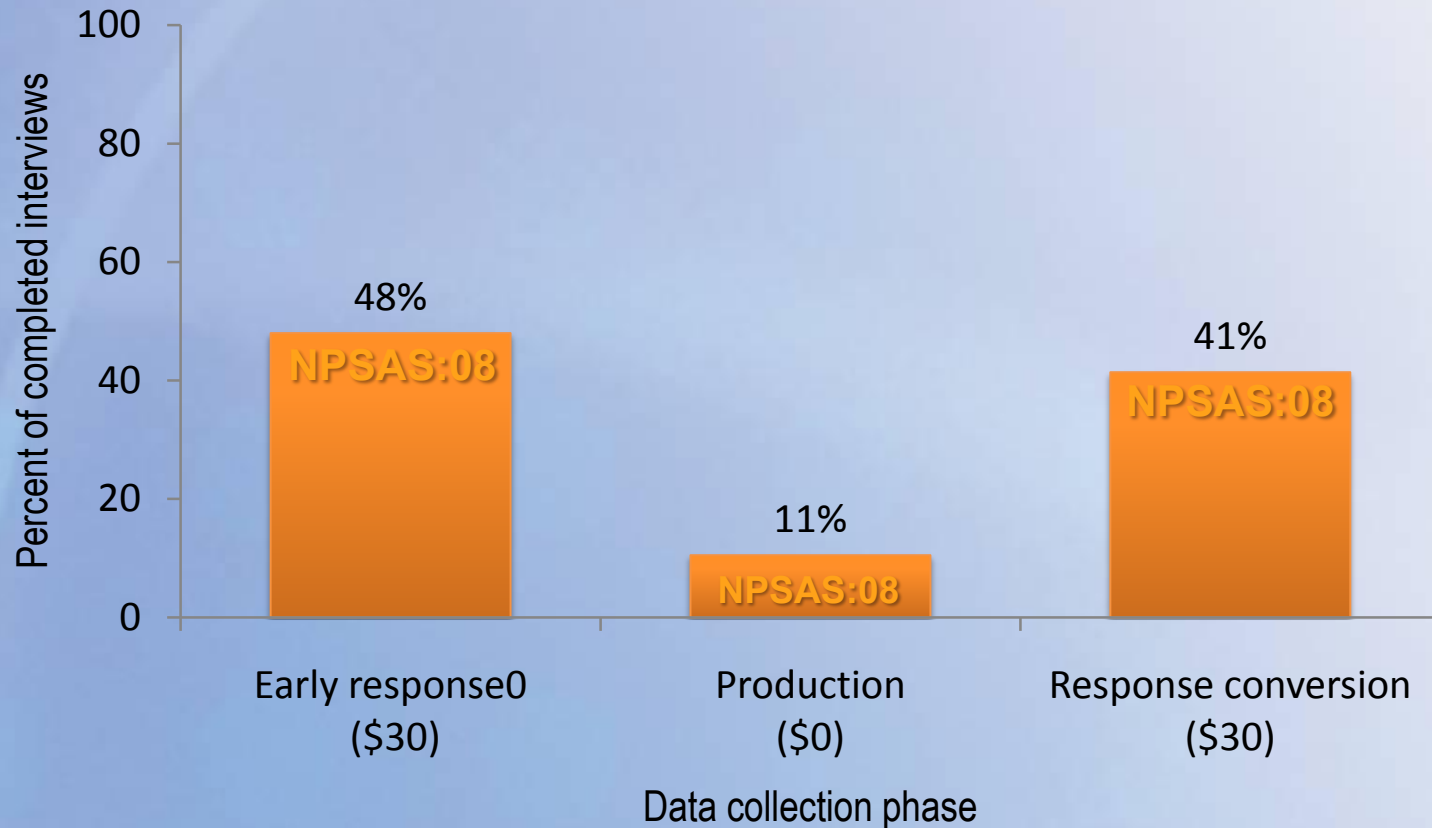
# Strategic Use of Incentives

- Beginning with the 2003 data collection for the B&B longitudinal study, an incentive was offered for interviews completed during the early response and nonresponse conversion phases
- Each of the postsecondary studies has experimented with approaches to incentives, including:
  - Larger dollar amounts for early completion and nonresponse conversion, with no incentive or smaller dollar amounts during production interviewing
  - Gift certificates as alternatives to checks
  - Prepaid incentives – cash and check
  - Lower/higher incentives paid according to modeled propensity to respond

# Incentive Plan with Multimode Survey Approach: NPSAS:08



# Percent of Completed Interviews, by Data Collection Phase: NPSAS:08



# Recent Interview Response Rates

- NPSAS
  - 2004 – 70.6 percent
  - 2008 – 71.1 percent
  
- Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study
  - 2003 – 83.4 percent
  - 2009 – 78.3 percent\*
  
- Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study
  - 2006 – 77.2 percent
  - 2009 – 80.2 percent\*

\*Preliminary rates, not for release.

## More Information

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