

## **2015 Response Rates**

INTERVIEW SURVEY AND DIARY SURVEY  
CONSUMER EXPENDITURE  
PUBLIC USE MICRODATA

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U.S. Department of Labor  
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Division of Consumer Expenditure Survey

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### Response Rates Interview and Diary Survey

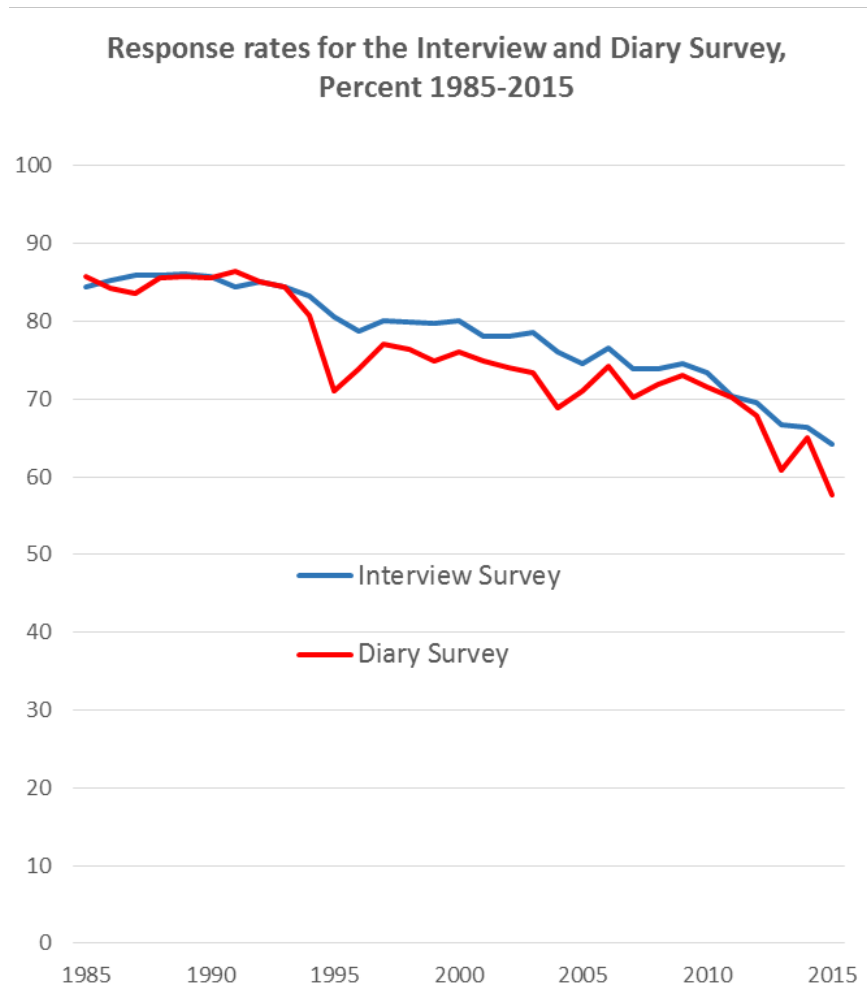
Surveys need to reach a certain number of respondents to produce quality results. This document summarizes the historical trends of the response rates for the Interview Survey and the Diary Survey by the Consumer Expenditure Survey and explains the related terms.

#### Historical trend

Before 1990, the response rate of the Interview Survey and Diary Survey hovered around 85 percent. Since 1990, their response rates have been declining.

For the Interview Survey, the trend has been declining fairly evenly. For the Diary Survey, the overall trend has been similar to that of the Interview Survey.

However, the Diary Survey decline has been more volatile. During government shutdowns the participation rate declined strongly and then after the shutdown recovered partially.



## Interview Survey

For the Interview Survey, the quarterly target sample size for national estimates is 7,050 participating sample units. In 2015, CE contacted 11,100 sample units per quarter to reach that target, which allows for refusals, vacancies, or nonexistent sample unit addresses. The terminology is explained below.

Collection Year	CUs Designated for the Survey	Type B or C Non-responses	Total Eligible CUs	Type A Non-responses	Interviews	Response Rate for Eligible CUs
1985	30,903	5,299	25,604	3,994	21,610	84.4%
1986	33,189	5,814	27,375	4,055	23,320	85.2%
1987	33,156	5,779	27,377	3,841	23,536	86.0%
1988	29,009	5,128	23,881	3,374	20,507	85.9%
1989	28,826	5,198	23,628	3,290	20,338	86.1%
1990	29,064	5,135	23,929	3,412	20,517	85.7%
1991	28,754	4,763	23,991	3,469	20,522	85.5%
1992	29,341	4,992	24,349	3,650	20,699	85.0%
1993	29,760	5,014	24,746	3,869	20,877	84.4%
1994	29,775	5,143	24,632	4,115	20,517	83.3%
1995	29,956	5,409	24,547	4,770	19,777	80.6%
1996	30,671	5,454	25,217	5,335	19,882	78.8%
1997	33,594	5,913	27,681	5,498	22,183	80.1%
1998	33,906	6,138	27,768	5,591	22,177	79.9%
1999	46,305	8,627	37,678	7,622	30,056	79.8%
2000	47,498	8,752	38,746	7,736	31,010	80.0%
2001	47,998	9,158	38,840	8,527	30,313	78.0%
2002	49,501	9,336	40,165	8,839	31,326	78.0%
2003	50,596	9,357	41,239	8,841	32,398	78.6%
2004	50,509	9,626	40,883	9,798	31,085	76.0%
2005	49,242	9,254	39,988	10,184	29,804	74.5%
2006	46,789	9,080	37,709	8,842	28,867	76.6%
2007	45,996	8,980	37,016	9,681	27,335	73.8%
2008	46,546	9,244	37,302	9,757	27,545	73.8%
2009	46,846	9,223	37,623	9,594	28,029	74.5%
2010	48,036	9,318	38,718	10,289	28,429	73.4%
2011	47,561	9,213	38,348	11,358	26,990	70.4%
2012	47,756	8,921	38,835	11,842	26,993	69.5%
2013	47,524	8,382	39,142	13,034	26,108	66.7%
2014	47,529	8,526	39,003	13,095	25,908	66.4%
2015	44,295	7,603	36,692	13,118	23,574	64.2%

## Diary Survey

For the Diary Survey, the annual target sample size for national estimates is 7,050 participating sample units. In 2015, CE contacted 12,500 sample units to reach that target, which allows for refusals, vacancies, or nonexistent sample unit addresses. The terminology is explained below.

Collection Year	CUs Designated for the Survey	Type B or C Nonresponses	Total Eligible CUs	Type A Nonresponses	Interviews	Response Rate for Eligible CUs
1985	17,146	3,203	13,943	1,982	11,961	85.8%
1986	18,650	3,338	15,312	2,405	12,907	84.3%
1987	18,817	3,629	15,188	2,493	12,695	83.6%
1988	16,599	3,272	13,327	1,914	11,413	85.6%
1989	16,670	3,292	13,378	1,908	11,470	85.7%
1990	16,934	3,229	13,705	1,970	11,735	85.6%
1991	17,203	3,402	13,801	1,882	11,919	86.4%
1992	17,315	3,546	13,769	2,056	11,713	85.1%
1993	17,137	3,481	13,656	2,127	11,529	84.4%
1994	17,063	3,583	13,480	2,596	10,884	80.7%
1995	17,270	3,419	13,851	4,002	9,849	71.1%
1996	18,219	3,613	14,606	3,830	10,776	73.8%
1997	19,062	3,788	15,274	3,492	11,782	77.1%
1998	18,810	3,394	15,416	3,635	11,781	76.4%
1999	24,784	4,486	20,298	5,103	15,195	74.9%
2000	24,916	4,763	20,153	4,826	15,327	76.1%
2001	25,600	5,037	20,563	5,159	15,404	74.9%
2002	26,438	5,274	21,164	5,473	15,691	74.1%
2003	26,884	5,333	21,551	5,723	15,828	73.4%
2004	27,385	5,746	21,639	6,722	14,917	68.9%
2005	26,054	4,745	21,309	6,183	15,126	71.0%
2006	24,320	4,844	19,476	5,021	14,455	74.2%
2007	24,642	5,047	19,595	5,848	13,747	70.2%
2008	24,856	5,146	19,710	5,531	14,179	71.9%
2009	25,211	5,187	20,024	5,400	14,624	73.0%
2010	25,158	5,170	19,988	5,692	14,296	71.5%
2011	25,258	5,435	19,823	5,898	13,925	70.2%
2012	25,356	5,058	20,298	6,537	13,761	67.8%
2013	25,362	5,066	20,296	7,961	12,335	60.8%
2014	25,606	5,130	20,476	7,170	13,306	65.0%
2015	24,961	4,444	20,517	8,676	11,841	57.7%

## **Explanation of terms**

- **Designated CUs** are housing units that were selected to participate in the CE survey.
- **Type B or C ineligible CUs** are housing units that are vacant, nonexistent, or ineligible for interview.
- **Potential CUs** are the remaining housing units after type A and B ineligible CUs have been subtracted.
- **Type A ineligible CUs** are housing units that the interviewers were unable to contact or the respondents refused to participate in the survey.
- **Total interviewed CUs** represents the households that participated in the survey.
- **Response rate** is derived by dividing the successfully interviewed CUs by the number of potential CUs.
- **Participation rate** is derived by dividing the successfully interviewed CUs by the number of designated CUs.