

# Establishment Survey Expertise



Surveys of business establishments and other organizations pose special challenges. With a thorough understanding of potential difficulties and the most effective survey methods for overcoming them, RTI International achieves high response rates and obtains high-quality data.

RTI has in-depth expertise in designing and carrying out successful surveys of commercial businesses, government agencies, health care organizations, and educational institutions and the employees, patients, faculty, staff, and students associated with them. Our experience includes study design, sample design, instrument development and evaluation, pretests and pilot studies, mail surveys, telephone surveys, face-to-face field surveys, record abstraction, focus groups, health registries, and mixed-mode designs. Several recent survey projects are highlighted here.

## Occupational Information Network (O\*NET)

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and the National Center for O\*NET Development, O\*NET is an ongoing data collection program designed to populate and maintain a current database of the detailed characteristics of workers and occupations in the U.S. workforce. The O\*NET database replaces the Dictionary of Occupational Titles as the most comprehensive standard source of occupational information in the United States. RTI is responsible for sampling, data collection, data processing, and data analysis using a two-stage design: (1) businesses are selected at the primary stage with probability proportional to the expected number of employed workers in the specific occupations being surveyed, and (2) a sample of workers is selected from the occupations within the sampled businesses. The selected workers are then asked to

complete one of three randomly assigned questionnaires. Since data collection began in June 2001, RTI has surveyed over 800 occupations and collected data from 87,000 businesses and 115,000 employees.

## World Trade Center Health Registry

Sponsored by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and in collaboration with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, RTI contacted businesses in the area affected by the World Trade Center disaster for lists of employees who may have been in one of the damaged or destroyed buildings during the attack. The Registry is a central, unified database of persons most highly exposed to the smoke, dust, and debris of the disaster. Developing comprehensive lists of potential registrants was the first and most critical sample-building step in establishing the Registry. Four broad sets of individuals—building occupants, residents, rescue/recovery workers, and student and school staff—were enrolled. We contacted more than 800 businesses by phone and, in some instances, in person, and collected 76 lists of building occupants representing approximately 105,000 individuals.

## National Study of Faculty and Students (NSoFaS)

NSoFaS combined two major data collection activities conducted by RTI for the National Center for Education Statistics: the National Postsecondary Student Aid



Study (NPSAS) and the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF). NPSAS collected detailed information on how students and their families pay for postsecondary education. The study involved a two-stage sample design in which 120,000 students were selected for participation from a sample of almost 1,400 less-than-2-year, 2-year, and 4-year colleges and universities. Student-level data were collected from abstracted institution records with 96% of institutions participating and records abstracted for 92% of eligible students. NSOPF profiled faculty and instructional staff in public and private not-for-profit 2-year and 4-year postsecondary institutions. A subset of 1,070 NPSAS institutions was selected and over 34,000 faculty identified for participation. Among eligible institutions, 91% provided faculty lists and 84% completed the institution questionnaire; 76% of eligible faculty responded.

### **Evaluation of the Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program (FFFIPP)**

For the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, RTI conducted a survey of fire departments and a series of focus groups with active fire fighters. RTI created the sampling frame, developed the sampling strategy, developed the questionnaires, tested and validated the mail survey instrument, administered the survey, conducted and analyzed focus groups, analyzed and interpreted the data, and prepared a summary findings report. We achieved a response rate of 55%, which far exceeded previous response rates with this population. We also conducted a nonresponse follow-up telephone survey and a nonresponse analysis.

### **Livestock and Meat Marketing Study**

For the U.S. Department of Agriculture Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration, RTI conducted industry surveys and key informant interviews at multiple levels of production and marketing in the fed cattle, hog, and lamb industries to obtain data for analyzing the effects of alternative marketing arrangements. We also collected procurement and sales transactions data from a sample of packers and processors. Econometric models were developed to determine whether the use of alternative marketing arrangements has implications for the pricing of livestock and meat, to estimate consumer and producer surplus changes associated with alternative arrangements, and to simulate the effects of restrictions on the ownership of livestock by establishments that slaughter cattle, hogs, and lambs.

### **National Survey of Residential Care Facilities**

Under contract to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), RTI designed this national survey, including sample frame development, sample design, questionnaire development, and field procedures. RTI was awarded a separate contract with the National Center for Health Statistics to conduct the survey of 2,250 residential care facilities. RTI recently completed the pretest and is preparing for the national data collection in early 2010.

### **Cash Payments Study**

The Cash Payments Study (CPS) Pilot Study, conducted for the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, collected data from establishments and enterprises on the number and value of cash transactions, along with secondary data for other payments types and cash handling processes. The CPS Pilot Study involved a design phase, which developed the anticipated sample design, data collection methodology, and instrumentation for the CPS Main Study; questionnaire development activities, including expert review, key informant interviews, and cognitive interviews; a mixed-mode pretest, consisting of telephone establishment recruitment, paper-and-pencil questionnaire mailing with a Web response option, telephone nonresponse prompting, and telephone item nonresponse follow-up; and documentation of the pretest results as well as RTI's final recommendations for the CPS Main Study.

### **Work Organization Predictors of Depression in Women**

For the CDC, RTI contacted approximately 300 businesses across the country to interview 2,500 workers. In-person visits were made to the businesses to collect company policy information and to select participants. Data were collected using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) and telephone audio computer-assisted self-interviewing (T-ACASI) technology.

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#### **For more information about RTI's capabilities in survey research, contact**

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