NYCHVS
New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey

EN

Field Manual
Survey Cycle 18
2021

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Introduction

This manual provides an overview of data collection for the New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (NYCHVS) as well as details on the responsibilities of Field Representatives (FRs).

This chapter provides background information on the project, including the purpose of the survey and the structure of the project team. The information in this chapter will provide useful background information that will help FRs and supporting team members convey the importance of the research to potential respondents throughout all phases of fieldwork.

The New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (NYCHVS)

The NYCHVS is a citywide, representative survey of New York City's housing stock and population that is fielded about every three years by the US Census Bureau on behalf of the City of New York. It has been conducted since 1965, making it the longest running housing survey in the country.

The NYCHVS collects data in all of New York City's neighborhoods, in all five boroughs, and focuses on reaching all New Yorkers—regardless of what language they speak or whether they have a disability. All of this ensures that the NYCHVS represents the diversity of New York City's residents and housing stock.

The NYCHVS is *by* New York City and *for* New York City.

While other Census surveys collect data in NYC, the NYCHVS is the only NYC-specific Census survey and the only one sponsored by a local government. This enables us to customize the design of the survey in important ways.

The NYCHVS samples housing units that help users to describe different types of housing—some of which are unique to the city, such as rent control or Mitchell Lama. It also enables us to ask questions about topics that are particularly relevant to our city and its residents.

The data we collect tell the story of our city. The survey documents the challenges we have faced over the last half century and it reveals the inequalities that many now experience. The survey profiles our diversity—from the newest New Yorkers to life-long residents—and enables us to understand our differences and our shared experiences.

The survey supports those who advocate for change by providing accurate and timely information on the unmet needs of our communities. And it helps policymakers and elected officials understand how we can improve New York City, now and in the future.

The NYCHVS is used in many research reports, policy evaluations, and news articles. Findings are regularly reported to elected officials and have been shared in testimony to the New York City Council, the New York State Assembly, and the New York State Senate. In recent years, the NYCHVS has been used to:

- Strengthen the rent laws and improve tenant protections
- Expand eligibility for housing assistance programs for older adults and those with disabilities
- Petition for additional Federal funding for New York City
- Demonstrate how New York City's neighborhoods have changed, including aspects of gentrification and displacement
- Describe patterns of segregation and inequality in the city
- Understand the unique housing needs of immigrant groups

The NYCHVS is required by local and state law.

The survey is required by state and local laws that govern rent control and rent stabilization.

These laws require that the NYCHVS report:

- The net rental vacancy rate for the city
- The supply of housing
- The condition of housing
- Information regarding the continued need for rent control and rent stabilization

Although the NYCHVS is authorized by state and local law, participating in the survey is not legally required. FRs should never state or imply that participation in the NYCHVS is anything other than voluntary.

What is the legal authority for the NYCHVS?

Local authorization of the survey is pursuant to the Local Emergency Housing Rent Control Act (Chapter 8603, Laws of New York, as amended by Chapter 657; Laws of New York, 1967), Sections 26-414 and 26-415 of the Administrative Code of the City. Confidentiality of the respondents is protected under Title 13, Section 9, United States Code.

Survey Sponsor

The NYCHVS is sponsored by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).

HPD is the city agency responsible for ensuring that all New Yorkers live in a safe home as well as for helping to develop and preserve affordable housing. HPD is the largest municipal housing preservation and development agency in the nation.

www.nyc.gov/hpd

The Research and Evaluation (R&E) team is located within the Office of Policy and Strategy at HPD. Its mission is to support evidence-based policymaking and effective programming through research and evaluation, including the design and execution of the NYCHVS.

R&E supports all of the data collection, analysis, and overall field efforts for various research projects.

The City of New York assumes all survey costs.

The 2021 NYCHVS

The NYCHVS has collected key information on the city's housing stock and population for more than five decades, but the city has changed in important ways since the NYCHVS began in 1965.

At the conclusion of the 2017 NYCHVS, the survey sponsors at HPD initiated the first redesign since 1991. The goal was to identify opportunities to increase the value of the survey for current and future generations of users.

The NYCHVS redesign incorporated feedback from conversations with more than two dozen organizations, including NYCHVS users at other NYC agencies, non-profits, and academic institutions as well as ongoing conversations with multiple divisions within the Census Bureau. It also incorporated observations of the 2017 field operations and conversations—both formal and informal—with Field Representatives and Field Supervisors.

The redesign is both substantial and subtle. It includes a revised questionnaire that will be fielded for the first time in 2021, a shift from a paper-based survey to a Computer-Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) format, resources dedicated to accessibility for those that speak a language other than English and those with disabilities, and more.

The process also made it clear that as the city evolves, so too must the NYCHVS. The 2021 NYCHVS marks an important step in its history, but we remain committed to continual improvement moving forward and we actively seek feedback from FRs and others to help us make sure that the NYCHVS remains a vital source of information for another half century and beyond.

Health and Safety

Every cycle of the NYCHVS since 1965 has been conducted using in-person interviews. The 2021 NYCHVS was likewise designed to be administered in a face-to-face setting.

The NYCHVS takes the health and safety of our respondents and FRs seriously. The Census Bureau and HPD have worked closely together to institute various safety precautions and continue to adapt to current pandemic conditions. Based on guidance from public health experts, the 2021 NYCHVS field protocols will be adapted on an ongoing basis throughout the field period.

No specific pandemic protocols are referenced in this field manual due to the shifting nature of the situation and our commitment to remain responsive and adapt as needed. Current protocols are shared with FRs and with the public (including potential survey participants) through the NYCHVS website:

www.nyc.gov/nychvs

Survey Sample

The 2021 NYCHVS is the first of four surveys this decade. By law, the NYCHVS must be completed in 2021, 2023, 2026, and 2029.

As in past decades, a representative sample is drawn for the first survey cycle after the decennial. This is the “core sample” and the NYCHVS will revisit these same units in each cycle this decade.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 NYCHVS sample will be smaller than in previous years. About 12,000 housing units were selected for the 18th survey cycle.

These housing units were selected to represent the overall housing stock and population—about 3.4 million units and 8.4 million people. Each sampled unit represents about 300 similar units.

Types of Interviews

The NYCHVS includes two types of interviews: one that is completed for vacant units and a longer one that gathers information about occupied units and their current occupants.

Vacant interviews are conducted with a knowledgeable informant—someone who can answer questions about the unit and building. Sometimes, more than one informant or “respondent” is interviewed to gather all necessary information. The interview is brief, but it provides critical data about vacancies, including the count of units that are vacant and available for rent. This is used to calculate the official New York City net rental vacancy rate and determine if there is a housing emergency in our city.

Occupied interviews are conducted with a knowledgeable adult who lives in the sampled unit. In some cases, additional questions will be answered by a second occupant (referred to as a “secondary respondent”). These individuals are asked questions about their unit and building, themselves, and each person who lives with them.

Data from vacant and occupied interviews are combined to provide key measures of the overall housing stock.

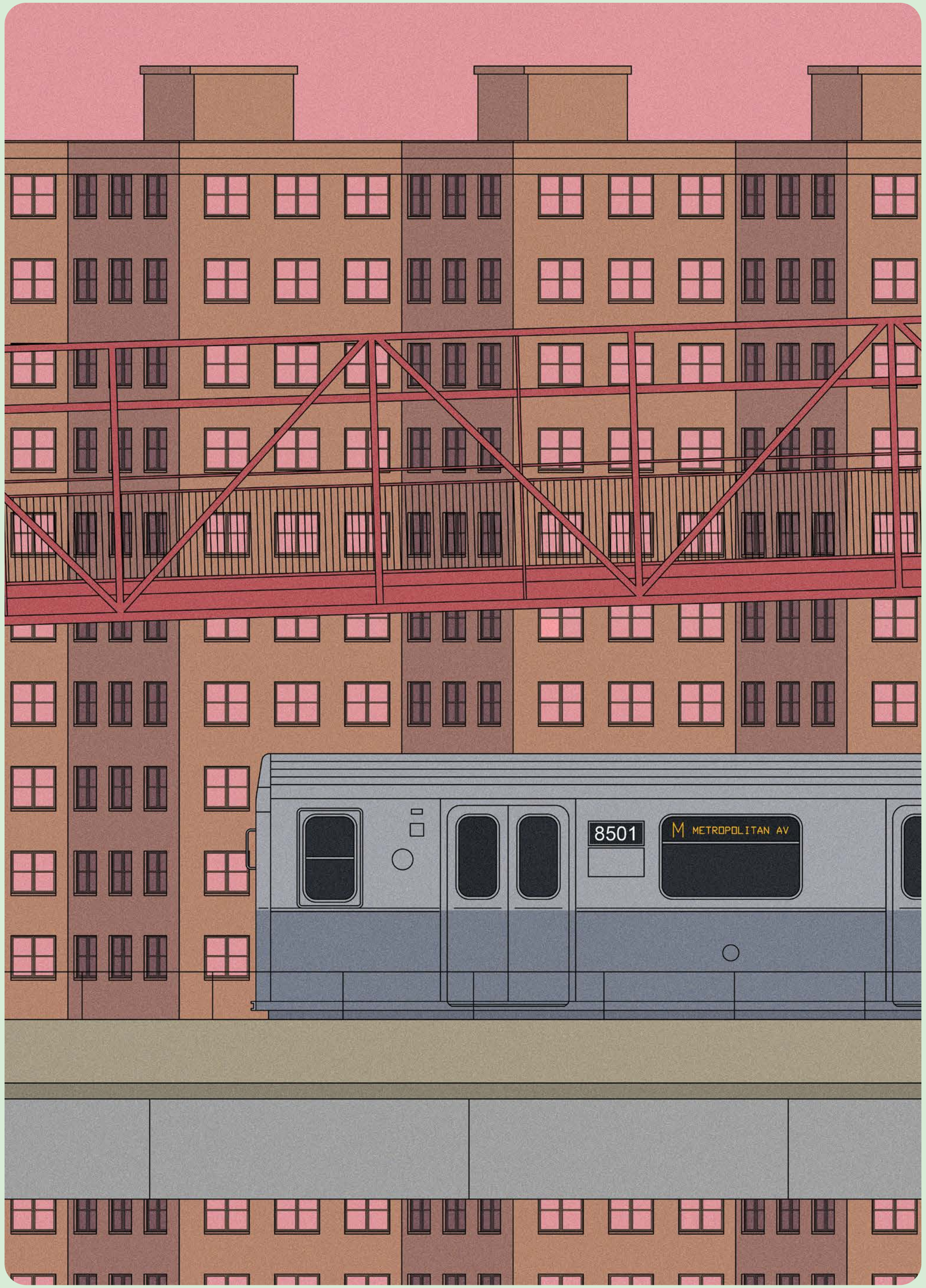
Questionnaire

The NYCHVS questionnaire or “instrument” is designed to capture information about housing units, residential buildings, households, and individuals.

Although the NYCHVS is a housing survey, the 2021 instrument gathers information on a variety of topics beyond housing alone.

Some topics are important because they directly relate to housing needs. For example, income is essential to understanding how much someone can afford to pay for housing.

In other cases, the information collected helps to better coordinate among city agencies or public programs designed to support New Yorkers. For example, it is helpful to know who receives both rental assistance and food assistance versus only one or the other.



Information on demographics, such as race or gender, help describe the conditions and needs of different populations.

In early 2020, New York City experienced a dramatic loss of life in the early phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. The economic fall-out has been severe. Recovery will likely take years.

Both the Sponsor Team at HPD and the Census Bureau recognized that the 2021 NYCHVS was a unique opportunity to gather key information on how the city has fared in the first 12 months since the onset of the pandemic. In partnership with researchers at Columbia University, additional questions about COVID-19 were added to the NYCHVS questionnaire. This will provide unique information about New Yorkers' health and well-being, including changes in employment and earnings, childcare, and residential living patterns.

The 2021 NYCHVS asks about the following topics:

- Unit Characteristics
- Housing Quality
- Household Roster
- Housing Costs
- Public Assistance
- Income and Employment
- Personal Debt
- Disability
- Demographics
- COVID-19

Language Access

The NYCHVS makes every effort to ensure that we gather information from each sampled unit and that respondents are able to participate in their preferred language.

This means that the NYCHVS provides substantial resources to ensure language access, including a specialized team of bi-lingual FRs and dedicated staff on the Sponsor Team who work together to ensure language justice throughout the survey cycle.

The 2021 NYCHVS instrument was developed to be a multi-lingual survey. Each question was reviewed, tested, and edited with this in mind. The 2021 instrument has formal translations in Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese, simplified and traditional text), Russian, Bengali, and Haitian Creole. These were programmed and integrated into the questionnaire on all Census laptops. Additional resources will ensure access in additional languages through interpretation and translation services.

The NYCHVS translation team was central to the survey redesign. We worked to ensure that each question was accurately translated into our core languages. But we went one step further and edited our English questions based on feedback from our language experts. The NYCHVS is the first Census survey to use this “advance translation” process.

Use of This Manual

This manual is designed to act as a reference throughout FR training and the field period. This manual is not meant to be a singular source of information, nor should it represent the only information FRs will acquire or need to be successful. Each FR will continue to learn from their own experiences and those of their colleagues, and part of their job as an FR is to continue to learn and refine their skills over time.

Phases of Fieldwork

One of the most important aspects of fieldwork is recognizing that it is a process that encompasses many different phases leading to a completed interview with a respondent.

Ideally, each phase of fieldwork will be continuous and transition smoothly from one phase to the next. However, it’s important to understand that each case is different and no two cases will likely move from one phase to the next in the same way. FRs will encounter challenges and setbacks. The goal is to have a full understanding of each phase and anticipate what strategies are most useful in overcoming those setbacks.

There are five phases of fieldwork:

- Outreach
- Classification
- Recruitment
- Interview
- Documentation

Each phase has corresponding goals to be met; once goals for a particular phase are achieved, FRs will be able to move on to the next phase of fieldwork for a given case.

Cases are worked collaboratively. Each FR has unique strengths and talents that they bring to each case. To maximize effectiveness throughout all phases of fieldwork, multiple FRs or other resources may help to complete an individual case.

Cases are assigned to an FR based a number of factors, including the disposition of the case, contact information available, a case’s history, and geographic proximity to other cases. FRs should be prepared to seamlessly step into a case at any point of any phase, no matter what has happened before in its history.

FRs must always document their activities so that the case can be efficiently transferred to others as needed. This is also vital for the NYCHVS team to track progress and improve field operations in future cycles of the survey.

Outreach

Outreach begins prior to the start of fieldwork and continues throughout the field period. This is done through a variety of materials, both printed and electronic.

Most outreach focuses on engagement with potential survey participants—residents of occupied sampled units as well as owners of vacant units. The NYCHVS also conducts outreach to others, through conversations with members of the public, the media, and community groups.

Goal

Inform respondents about the NYCHVS and how they can participate before they are contacted by an FR, educate the general public, and generate support for the NYCHVS.

Outreach to Sampled Units

Sampled units receive two mailings at the beginning of the field cycle. These are intended to introduce current residents to the NYCHVS.

Advance Letter

All units will be sent a letter from the US Census stating that their address has been selected for the 2021 NYCHVS. It contains basic information about the survey, including its legal authority.

The letter contains directions on how to access more information on the public-facing website. The letter is in English, but the information directing them to the website is included in 13 languages.

Informational Packet

A second mailing, the NYCHVS Informational Packet, includes more information about the survey, its value for improving our communities, and how to reach out to the Census Bureau's New York Regional Office ("NYRO") to schedule an interview.

These materials integrate information in English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), Bengali, and Haitian Creole.

Outreach to the Broader Community

The support of various community groups is essential to the NYCHVS in a variety of ways. It ensures that FRs are able to enter buildings and gain access to sampled units. It assures vulnerable populations that the NYCHVS is a legitimate survey that honors its commitment to privacy and confidentiality. This buy-in is achieved through various outreach and engagement activities.

Community Groups

The NYCHVS partners with many local organizations to communicate the value and confidentiality of the NYCHVS to community members.

Community-based organizations (CBOs) help us to engage with respondents who may otherwise be hard to reach. Many groups provide direct support by conducting independent outreach and education campaigns on behalf of the NYCHVS. These take many forms, including information on their websites and email blasts.

During the field period, the Sponsor Team takes every opportunity to speak with local organizations, attend tenant and community meetings, and engage with neighborhood groups.

Landlords

The Sponsor Team at HPD sends an advance letter to every owner of a multi-family building that is registered with the City. This formal letter notifies owners and landlords that one or more unit in their building may be selected for the 2021 NYCHVS and asks for their cooperation in assisting FRs.

Media Relations

Each cycle of the NYCHVS includes a press release announcing that data collection has begun. Typically, there are additional media pushes throughout the field period, including those to local and non-English outlets. The HPD Communications office fields press inquiries and assists with social media on behalf of the Sponsor Team.

Classification

Each sampled address is assigned to an FR who is responsible for working that case and using best practices to complete an NYCHVS interview with a knowledgeable adult or informant. The NYCHVS includes two types of interviews: one for sampled units that are identified as occupied and one for those identified as vacant. For this reason, each sampled unit must be properly classified before recruiting a respondent or completing an interview. It is also essential to identify any sampled unit where an interview *cannot* be completed, such as if the address does not exist or if the sampled address is not a housing unit. These cases are considered Out of Scope for the NYCHVS. All of these steps are part of the classification stage of fieldwork for the NYCHVS.

Classification consists of five important steps: 1) locating the sampled unit, 2) verifying that the sampled unit is a housing unit, 3) determining the unit's current occupancy status, 4) gathering information for necessary follow-up, including how to reach contacts and notes about the case, and 5) collecting key information about the sampled case based on FR observation of the building and unit.

Goal

Identify whether the sampled unit is vacant or occupied and establish the foundation for accurate and efficient data collection in the later phases.

Classifying a Sampled Unit

1. Can the sampled address be located?

Sampled units or cases are selected from a complete list of all residential addresses in New York City. The units sampled for the NYCHVS were selected specifically because they met certain criteria, including the characteristics of the unit or of the building, and/or the unit's location. Each case represents other similar units in the city, so it is crucial to verify and track the status of each case so that adjustments can be made as necessary and records can be updated for future surveys.

All units sampled for the NYCHVS must be visited in person at least once. This personal visit (or "PV") is a requirement of the NYCHVS. The first PV is an essential step to ensure that the sampled address is correct and that an FR can visit the unit.

In most cases, this includes both a street address (e.g., 123 Maple Avenue) and a unit designation (e.g., Apt 2). The FR must verify the specific address that was selected for the NYCHVS, including the unit designation.

For example, if an FR goes to 123 Maple Avenue and finds only Apt 2A and no Apt 2, this is not a match.

Differences in abbreviations are acceptable. For example, if a sampled address is “APT 2” and the buzzer or door indicates “Apartment 2” or just “2,” this is a match.

If an FR is unable to locate the sampled unit, the case should be escalated to their FS and the attempt should be appropriately documented in case notes, MCM, and CHI. In these situations, the FS will direct the FR on next steps for that case.

If the FR is able to locate the sampled address, they continue to the next step outlined here.

2. Is the case a housing unit?

Once an FR has located the sampled address, they must confirm that a sampled unit is a housing unit. Most assigned cases will be housing units, but in some cases a housing unit has been converted to another use, was demolished, or the Census Bureau record indicating the address is a residential unit is not correct.

What is a housing unit?

A housing unit is an apartment, a house, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied or intended for residential use.

A housing unit can exist within, above, or below a structure that appears to be non-residential or commercial. Housing units must meet both of the following qualifications:

- Be separate, meaning occupants live separately from any other occupants in the building, and
- Have direct access, meaning that the entrance must be directly from the outside of the building or through a common hall.

Generally, it is assumed that a case is a housing unit until there is evidence to the contrary. Gathering useful information about any case that is not a housing unit is important in order for the FR to review it with their FS.

- For example, if a street address exists but a sampled unit does not, the FR should confirm with a superintendent or another building informant.
- If the unit or building was demolished or is boarded up, the FR should capture relevant phone numbers if there is paperwork or signs with contact information at the site.
- If the address is that of a college dormitory, or nursing home, or hotel, the FR should investigate to make sure the sampled unit is not a housing unit.
- If the address is that of a business or hospital, the FR should document contact information before leaving the case.
- In cases where a sampled unit is not a housing unit, it should be escalated to a Field Supervisor (FS) who will determine the next steps for that case and if it should be classified as Out of Scope.

What is an Out of Scope case?

Cases that are Out of Scope are those where a housing unit does not exist at the sampled address. Out of Scope cases will not be interviewed for the NYCHVS and FRs will work with their FS to determine how to code these cases.

Examples of Out of Scope casess include:

- **Demolished:** The unit was demolished, or is in the process of being demolished.
- **Commercial:** The unit is a commercial unit, not a housing unit. This includes units that have been temporarily or permanently converted to a business or commercial storage. The unit is used entirely for business or commercial purposes.
- **Merged:** Mark a case as merged with another unit when two or more sampled units have combined into a larger unit so that they are no longer distinguishable as individual units.
- **Damaged by fire:** Any unoccupied sampled unit that shows signs of being so severely damaged by fire that occupancy is impossible.
- **Building boarded-up:** An unoccupied sampled unit in a building where the windows and doors are covered by wood, metal, or other materials that prevent entry into the building.
- **List procedure applied:** A list procedure is an actual listing of the units in a sampled building that is taken when the sampled unit designations do not match the actual unit designations, or when a single-unit sampled address includes more than four extra units.
- **The street address does not exist:** The building cannot be located. If the building exists, but the apartment cannot be located, see the section above entitled “List procedure applied.”
- **Other:** Any case that is not a housing unit and would be considered Out of Scope but does not fit into the categories above should be marked as “Other” and details should be recorded in the associated box.

3. Is this an occupied or a vacant unit?

For the purposes of the NYCHVS, each housing unit is classified as either occupied or vacant. Although this may seem straightforward, the NYCHVS has relied on specific definitions of occupancy status for many decades and it is essential that the designation of each sampled unit be consistent with these practices.

Survey rules mandate that each sampled unit must be classified as occupied or vacant within 30 days of release. FRs must work quickly and diligently to ensure that this goal is met for all cases.

What is a vacant unit?

- A unit with no residents
- A unit with residents who only live there some of the time

What is an occupied unit?

- A unit with residents who live there most or all of the time

For the 2021 NYCHVS, we recognize the unique conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. To address these novel situations, we classify a unit with residents who are living elsewhere at the time of the survey *because* of the pandemic, but who have maintained the sampled unit while they are away, as occupied. This ensures that the survey gathers comprehensive information about these households as part of the occupied interview.

In most situations, the occupancy status is clear, but some cases require additional information to properly determine the status of a unit. For example, just because someone answers the door of the sampled unit when the FR visits, it is not necessarily occupied. The person who answers the door could be a temporary resident, a real estate broker, or someone from the managing agent for the building.

Skill Building: Protecting Residents and Informants

When speaking to an informant about the sampled unit, the FR will avoid leading questions and assumptions. Residents may not want information about their unit to be disclosed, since it may affect their housing and their relationship with the landlord or managing agent.

Landlords also may be sensitive to disclosure of information. In some situations, the unit may be used illegally and may result in fines or vacate orders for the owner if disclosed.

For example:

The FR knocks on a door and hears a dog bark, but no one answers. They may try to talk to the Super to get more information. When talking to the Super, it is better to refer to the unit only by the floor or unit number. Saying something like, “Who lives in the unit on the 4th floor with a dog?” could get the residents in trouble if pets are not allowed in the building. Instead, the FR could say, “It’s important that I talk with the occupant of the 4th floor apartment. Do you know the best way to contact them?”

4. Gather contact information and other important information about the case

It is the responsibility of the FR to use their first PV to gather any information that may help them (or others) in future attempts both to determine the occupancy status of the unit and to complete an occupied or vacant interview.

Informants in the building can provide details that may help to determine whether the unit is occupied or vacant. Door attendants or superintendents ("Supers") should know if anyone lives in the sampled unit. Neighbors may know if there is a better time to reach someone who lives in the unit or if they are away temporarily. Any information collected, including follow-up contact information, should be documented.

If the unit is vacant, the FR will need to identify and get contact information for the person(s) best be able to complete the vacant interview.

Usually, landlords and managing agents are most qualified to answer these questions.

Information in the lobby of the building may provide useful phone numbers for the landlord or management company. The Super may also help the FR to get in contact with the right person. In some cases, the Super may be able to answer some or all of the vacant interview questions when the landlord cannot be reached.

It is important to record the contact information of any informants and potential respondents as well as their relationship to the unit.

5. Complete the Front questions based on observations during the PV

The first items in the questionnaire are completed by the FR during the first PV to all units that are not Out of Scope. The following items are completed based on observation and additional information gathered by the FR:

- The number stories in the building
- The floor of the sampled unit
- The number of units in the building (including the sampled unit)
- If there is an elevator and, if so, whether the elevator can be accessed without going up or down any steps or stairs
- Whether the sampled unit can be reached without going up or down any steps or stairs, regardless of whether there is an elevator or not
- Whether the unit Occupied or Vacant

Together, these items are referred to as the "Front" questions in the instrument.

Administrative Data

Administrative records from the City of New York are used in the NYCHVS survey instrument to increase efficiency and reduce respondent burden. The CAPI pre-populates fields based on that information and asks relevant questions while skipping over others. These records include information about whether the unit is a condo, in a coop building, or neither; whether the building contains an elevator; and the number of units in the building. Because administrative records may sometimes have errors, FRs or respondents are sometimes asked to confirm certain information.

In some cases, the CAPI will show a suggested number of units in the building. The FR will enter that number if it seems correct, or enter a corrected number based on their own observation.

If the FR is unable to answer one or more of these questions during the attempt, they should leave the question(s) unanswered. On subsequent attempts, the six Front questions about the unit and building can be completed or corrected.

How to talk to informants

- Say who you are (from the Census Bureau) but do not specify the survey name
- Be succinct and to the point, while maintaining occupant's privacy
- Be friendly, polite, and professional
- Remember this may be a continuing relationship for you and other FRs
- Provide your business card if it would be helpful to establish your legitimacy

Summary

This chapter discussed the basics of classifying sampled units as housing units and determining whether they are occupied or vacant. The goal of this phase is to properly determine the occupancy status of the sampled unit and gather information to ensure that it is worked by the correct person. This, along with the gathering of supporting information, is essential for all phases that follow and leads to a better experience for FRs, respondents, and informants and reduces the overall time and resources needed to complete a case.

This phase consists of five steps: 1) locating the sampled unit, 2) verifying that the sampled unit is a housing unit, 3) determining whether the unit is occupied or vacant, 4) gathering more information for follow-up, and 5) collecting key information about the sampled case based on FR observation of the building and unit.

Each case needs to be visited in person, regardless of any information collected beforehand. During the first PV, the FR will take steps to properly classify the case. This may require various forms of information gathering, including knocking on the unit's door, looking for signs in the building, and talking to the Super.

If the sampled unit is demolished, uninhabitable, commercial, merged, damaged by fire, boarded up, or the unit or building does not exist, it is Out of Scope and will not be interviewed. These cases will always be escalated to an FS. If the sampled unit is a housing unit, the FR will have to determine whether it is occupied or vacant. If the unit is vacant, they will get contact information for potential respondents (such as the landlord) for the vacant interview. If the unit is occupied, the FR will gather important information about the case, such as whether anyone in the household speaks a language other than English or whether the case may require a modification, or if the current residents are staying elsewhere due to the pandemic.

This chapter focused on classifying sampled units, but there are many skills necessary to gather the necessary information. The FR must know how to communicate with respondents, door attendants, neighbors, Supers, and other informants. The FR will determine who the best respondent will be for a vacant interview and collect contact information for multiple potential respondents. The FR will note any language needs or accommodations that must be made to successfully complete an interview. They must be able to protect residents while still collecting the necessary information. When the FR correctly classifies sampled units, they are more likely to find success in later phases of fieldwork.

Skill building: Collecting Contact Information for Vacant Interviews

- Whose information to collect: landlord, building manager or managing agent, Super (superintendent), or realtor
- What to collect: Name, phone number or numbers, best time to call, relationship to housing unit
- When to collect: Letter recipient calls NYRO, at the first PV
- How: From informants who are able to provide this information (which may include other potential respondents), signs in building lobby, building exterior, foyer
- Where to record it: MCM and case notes
- Why: To confirm the unit's status and allow the NYRO to successfully contact an appropriate person and complete a vacant interview

DOs

- Do always confirm housing units, even when they are in buildings that aren't residential
- Do always escalate cases that are Out of Scope to the FS
- Do gather contact information for multiple potential respondents
- Do note any important information about the case that will help get to a completed interview later on
- Do keep all information private
- Do complete as many of the Front as possible during the first PV
- Do check case notes before every attempt

DON'Ts

- Don't assume occupancy based solely on whether someone is staying in the unit
- Don't assume vacancy without speaking to a knowledgeable informant
- Don't leave a PV without noting important elements of the case
- Don't leave the Front blank just because one or more items cannot be determined

Recruitment

Recruitment is a process that should lead to the completion of either an occupied or vacant NYCHVS interview. This stage of fieldwork is critical for achieving high response rates and ensuring that our study participants reflect New York City's diverse population. FRs are responsible for identifying a knowledgeable adult or key informant to serve as a respondent and using various strategies and tools to gain their cooperation.

This chapter provides information on best practices for identifying who can serve as an NYCHVS respondent, recruiting potential respondents, interacting with informants and gatekeepers, overcoming reluctance, and addressing barriers to participation.

Goal

Identify and persuade a knowledgeable adult to complete an occupied interview or identify and persuade an appropriate informant to complete a vacant interview.

Screening

The FR must identify the most appropriate individual to serve as a respondent. Screening is the process of determining who knows the most about the unit (and the residents of the unit when occupied) so they can accurately complete the interview.

For occupied units, this is a knowledgeable adult who lives in the housing unit and who is willing and able to answer questions about the housing unit, themselves, and others who live with them. In some cases, multiple adults in a household meet these requirements.

For vacant units, this is a knowledgeable informant who knows about the sampled unit and is willing and able to answer questions. In some cases, the FR will need to recruit multiple informants to gather sufficient information.

Recruitment and screening are often part of a fluid process that involves speaking with residents and informants. As the FR gains more information, they may transition seamlessly into recruiting the person for an interview.

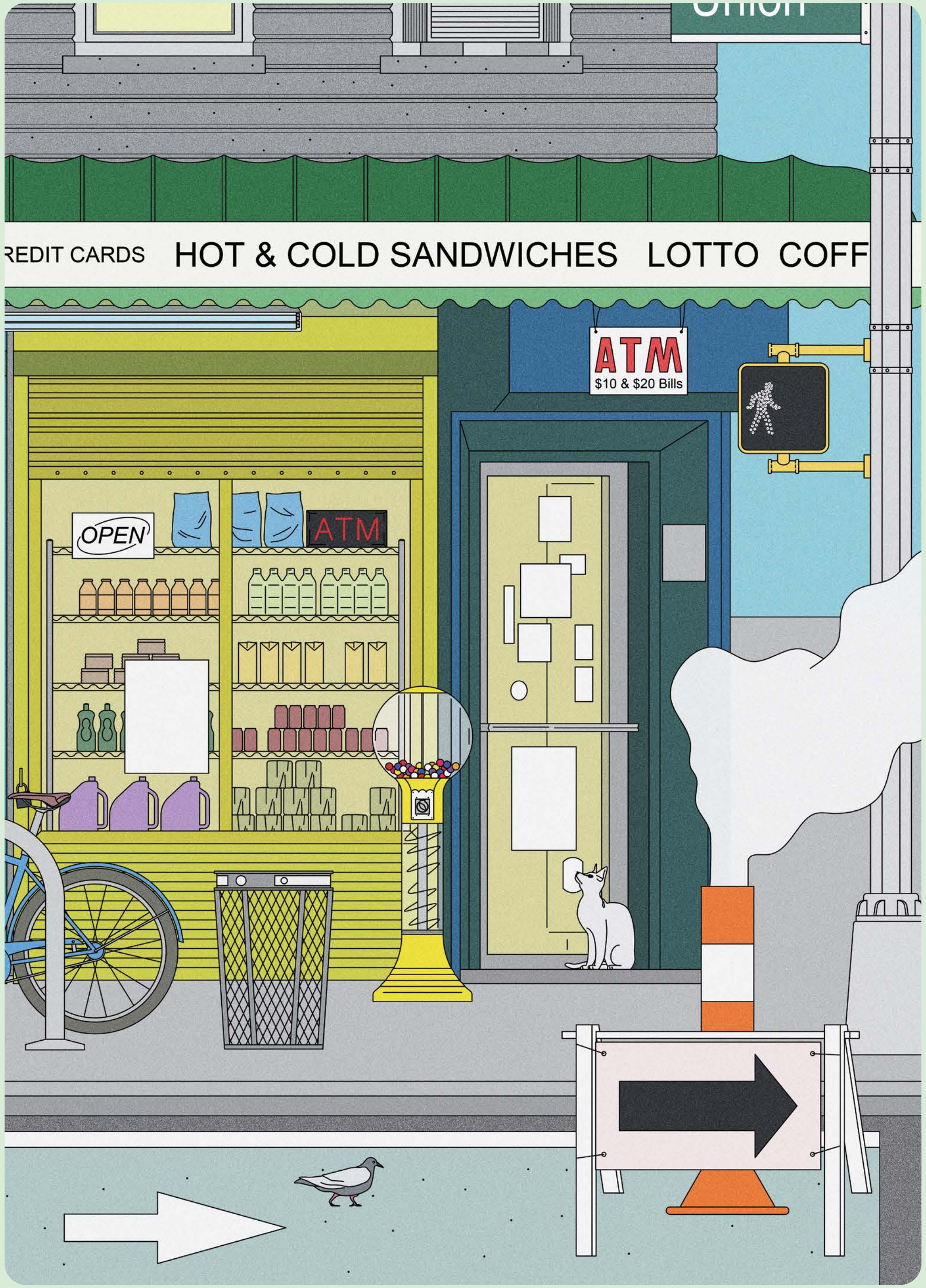
Who can serve as a respondent for an occupied interview?

- The person must be an adult (age 15 or older)
- They must be a resident of the unit (they must consider the unit their primary place of residence)
- They must be able to answer questions about housing quality and cost of the unit and about the demographics and employment situation of other household members (if any)

The best person is not necessarily the oldest person or the person who has lived in the unit the longest. The FR should not select someone because they appear to be the "head of the household." FRs should remain aware of any assumptions about who is best to answer questions on behalf of the household.

FRs should never pass over someone that has a disability or speaks another language for another resident who may be less knowledgeable.

If there is more than one person who can provide complete and accurate answers to the questions in the survey, any one of the them can complete the interview.



Who can serve as a respondent for a vacant interview?

- The person must be an adult (age 15 or older)
- They must be knowledgeable about the vacant unit and the building, including the unit's asking price or rent, its availability, how long it has been vacant, and basic information about its size and amenities

The best person is often someone who works for the building or its management company. Superintendents may know the size of a unit and how long it has been empty, but they may not be able to speak to when it was formally vacated or how much it costs.

Managing agents may serve as respondents for vacant units, but they are less likely to be located on site. FRs should use the information gathered during classification to follow-up with various informants. The FR can use multiple informants to complete a vacant interview. Vacant interviews may always be conducted on the phone.

Skill building: Screening for the best vacant respondent

- Keep in mind what topics the vacant interview covers and what questions the respondent will need to answer.
  - Basic information about the unit and building (what floor it's on, is it accessible without stairs)
  - The number of rooms, bedrooms, and type of appliances
  - How long the unit has been vacant and whether the last occupant was evicted
  - Cost of the unit such as asking rent, last rent, listing sale price or maintenance fees
  - If the unit is available, and if not, why
- Ask potential vacant respondents if they would be able to answer questions like these. If they cannot, ask who would be better able to answer them and get that person's contact information.
- The more contacts the better! If it's possible to get phone numbers for several potential vacant respondents, do so. This will make it easier and more likely that whoever conducts the vacant interview will be able to contact the best respondent later on.
- Each case is different. The best vacant respondent may be the landlord, Super, or managing agent. In many cases, multiple respondents will be required to complete a vacant interview.

NYCHVS Guidelines for Recruitment

Successful FRs understand the purpose and value of the NYCHVS so that they can convey this information to potential respondents. This also helps FRs respond to questions or concerns and adapt to different conditions with confidence and ease.

Recruitment relies on more than information. FRs should use soft skills, such as deep listening and body language, in all interactions with the public. This is particularly important during recruitment. They should be able to address reluctances, identify barriers to participation (such as language or disability), and work to reduce any assumptions or judgements in their approach that may introduce bias. FRs should treat each person they encounter with respect and actively work to support participation through problem-solving and collaboration with other NYCHVS team members.

In training, FRs develop their own standard recruitment script that is refined over time through experience and by incorporating feedback from colleagues. This script can be adapted to various conditions, but must include five elements:

1. Introduction (FR's name and affiliation with the Census Bureau)
2. Confirmation of the sampled unit
3. What the NYCHVS is
4. Why the NYCHVS is important
5. What participation involves

In this chapter, we've provided some standard phrases that some FRs use to create their own individualized scripts. There's also a dedicated space for you to draft your own.

Every interaction should help to inform potential study participants about the survey, its use, and its importance. Scripts can be longer or shorter, depending on the person with whom the FR is speaking, but every interaction should:

- Establish rapport
- Convey the legitimacy of the survey
- Move toward a completed interview

Every interaction should also emphasize the steps FRs take to ensure COVID-19 safety during an interview, as outlined on the NYCHVS website.

When speaking with informants, such as building staff or neighbors, FRs must not reveal that they are working on the NYCHVS or on behalf of HPD and/or New York City government. Instead, they should use a more generic script that references an "important study", "a different Census survey (than the Decennial)", or something similar. Only after the FR establishes that the person they are speaking with is eligible to act as an NYCHVS respondent should they include the name and sponsor of the survey.

An example of a recruitment script with each of the five required components

Who you are

Hello, my name is _______ and I am with the United States Census Bureau

Confirmation of the sampled unit

Is this 123 Main St?

What the NYCHVS is

I am a field representative conducting the New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey. This citywide survey is conducted about every three years and gathers key information about the city's housing stock and population

Why the NYCHVS is important

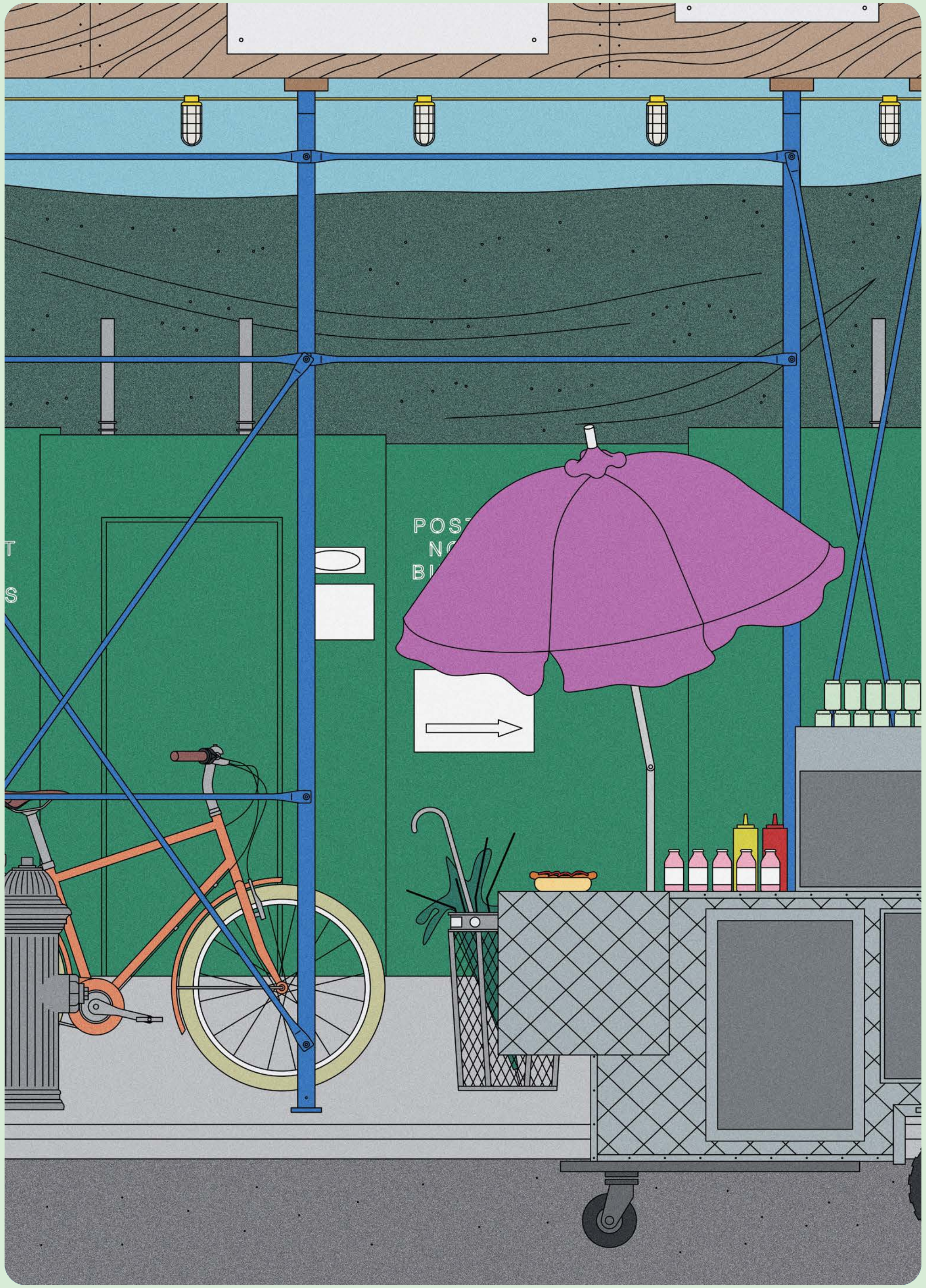
The NYCHVS is used by policymakers, researchers, and community groups to make important decisions for the City

What participation involves

It is a 30 minutes face to face interview

Additional phrases that FRs may incorporate include:

- You represent 300 other New Yorkers like you. Your participation is critical to making sure every New Yorker's experience is captured.
- The survey has been conducted by the US Census Bureau for the City of New York since 1965. It is the longest running housing survey in the US.
- You can also call 311 for more information about the NYCHVS.
- We will work around your schedule, day or night. You can do the interview anywhere that is convenient for you.
- We need your help to make sure every New Yorker is represented.
- Your participation helps to make sure that your community is represented.
- We are collecting information about New Yorker's experience during the pandemic to help us understand how they have been affected.



Overcoming reluctance

Most people who understand what the NYCHVS is and why their participation is important will be willing to complete an interview. In some cases, individuals require more information or assurances.

Common reasons for reluctance include:

- They are too busy
- There are privacy concerns (including sensitivity about immigration status)
- There are health concerns related to COVID-19
- They think the NYCHVS is the same as the Decennial Census, which they already completed
- They are concerned the survey or FR is not legitimate

FRs should address any concerns using a combination of resources available to them.

Skill building: Strategies for overcoming reluctance

Be responsive

- Directly respond to explicit concern(s)
- Prioritize concerns to respond to
- Respond with adjacent topic
- Respond with your strongest pitch

Be empathetic

- Restate concern based on your own experience
- Relate concern to issues common to many

Be proactive

- Provide solution that addresses concern
- Use supporting materials to reinforce message to best advantage

Be realistic

- Recognize that some cases need multiple visits
- Understand when another FR will have more success and manage up appropriately

Addressing barriers to participation

In some situations, an individual may be willing to participate in the NYCHVS but there is a barrier that prevents them from doing so. This should not be confused with reluctance, which indicates that someone is not (yet) willing to participate.

Barriers to participation come in many forms. For example:

- A language barrier
- A disability that requires a reasonable accommodation
- Discomfort with an FR entering their home
- The FR cannot get into a building because there is no buzzer or intercom
- A gatekeeper that prevents an FR from reaching a sampled unit

FRs should actively work to identify barriers to participation and utilize all available resources to address them. This includes escalating the case to their FS, re-assigning the case to a bi-lingual FR, or requesting a reasonable accommodation on behalf of the respondent.

The initial interactions with the sampled unit are an opportunity to identify any barriers to participation; document the situation appropriately, and engage with other team members to facilitate participation.

Tip Box

HPD has information on most buildings in the city. If you cannot gain access to a sampled unit, the Sponsor Team may be able to help you. Your Supervisor will help coordinate.

Language Access

The NYCHVS team has resources to enable any knowledgeable adult to complete an interview and do so confidently and in their preferred language.

There is a dedicated NYCHVS bi-lingual team based out of the NYRO. This includes a senior team member who is responsible for coordinating language resources. It also includes bi-lingual FRs who are able to conduct interviews in a variety of languages, including those that have NYCHVS formal translations as well as other languages that require interpretation or additional translation.

It is important that FRs remember that the NYCHVS relies on a variety of team members and resources to accomplish our shared goal of collecting comprehensive and accurate information on New York City's housing and population.

Reasonable Accommodations

Persons with disabilities are less likely to be represented in many surveys because of field practices or procedures that exclude them. This includes common practices such as widespread use of proxy interviews, selection of respondents within a sampled unit based on pre-conceived notions of "ability," and reliance on survey materials that cannot be read or understood by persons with disabilities, among others.

The NYCHVS requires that everyone who is sampled be able to participate. Inclusion of persons with disabilities is an essential part of ensuring that the NYCHVS is representative of the New York City population.

FRs should actively work to ensure that respondents can do so comfortably and with confidence. This means that some respondents will need a reasonable accommodation.

A reasonable accommodation is any adjustment to the process or environment that allows a person with a disability equal access as people without disabilities.

Examples of reasonable accommodations include:

- Providing extra time to complete an interview
- Patience and a quiet space for better concentration and understanding
- Assistance during the interview, including large print flash cards, use of a hearing loop, or an FR who is fluent in American Sign Language (ASL)
- Information about the survey that is accessible to all through the NYCHVS informational website

The NYCHVS provides resources to ensure equal participation of persons with disabilities. This includes a senior team member at the NYRO who is responsible for coordinating accommodations and training for every FR. The Sponsor Team has access to additional resources through the City of New York and can also help. FRs should coordinate with their FS to request support as needed.

The NYCHVS does not utilize proxy interviews unless requested and approved by the NYRO senior staff member responsible for reasonable accommodations.

COVID-19 Modifications

Any respondent may request a reasonable modification due to COVID-19. Modifications may include an interview via telephone, an alternative location for a face-to-face interview, additional PPE, or other items as needed.

Additional Recruitment Tools

FRs have access to various resources to help them gain cooperation. These include reference materials that offer additional information, resources to verify the legitimacy of the FR and/or the survey, and staff resources to overcome barriers to participation.

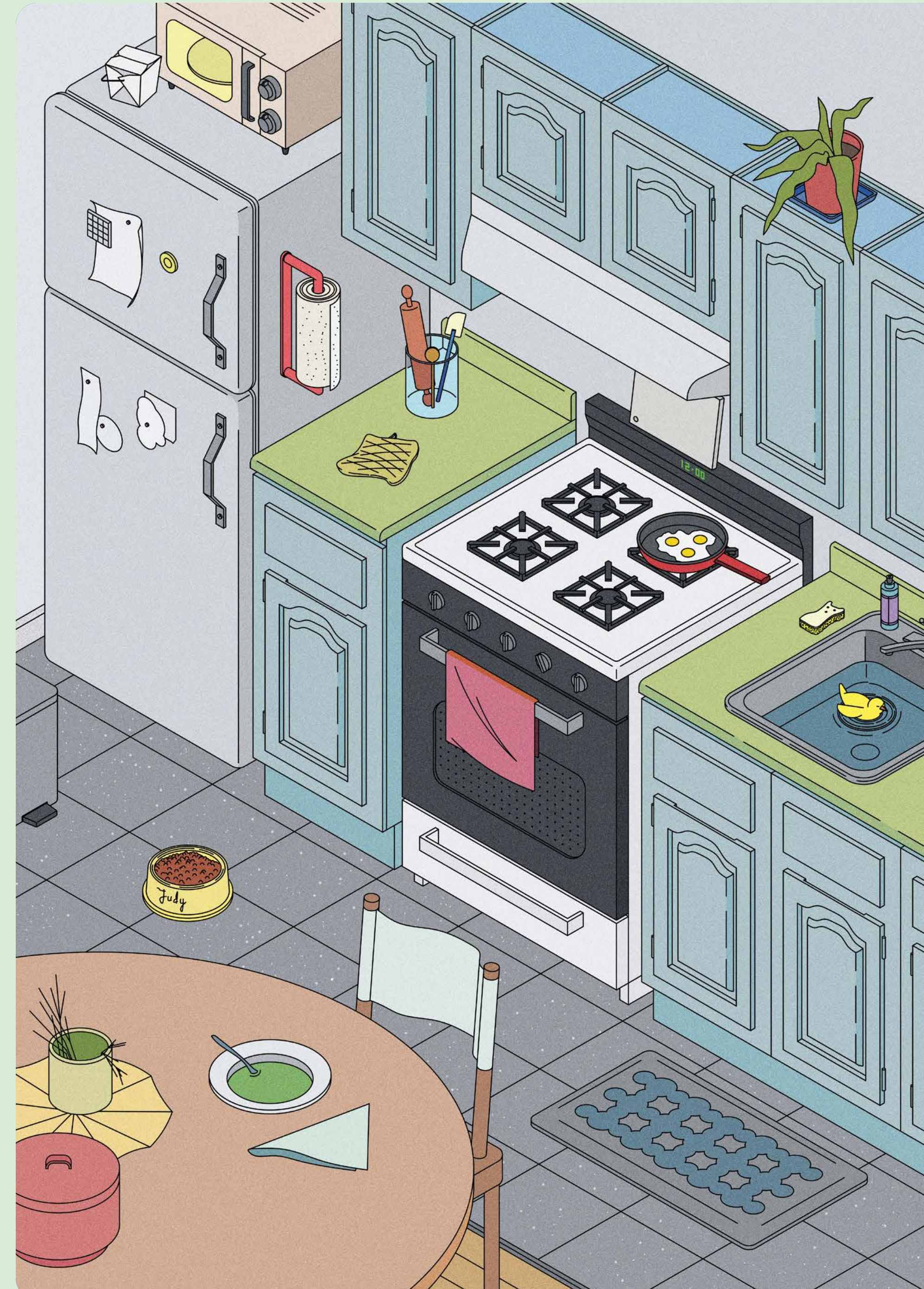
NYRO Letters

FRs may request that the NYRO send one or more letter to a sampled unit as part of the recruitment process. These are valuable resources to be used as part of a broader strategy for overcoming reluctance.

Ten letters are available to FRs and cover a variety of topics, including:

- Too Busy
- Confidentiality
- Pandemic Concerns
- Immigration Concerns
- Language Access
- Alternate Location
- Secondary Respondent
- No Access / No One Home
- Refusal
- Generic Survey Outreach

While letters can be helpful, they are also easier to ignore than an FR who is standing at the doorstep, and letters can't answer additional questions. FRs should attempt to address concerns before requesting a letter. FRs should supplement their own engagement with letters, rather than rely on letters to replace FR interaction with the potential respondent.



NYCHVS website

Throughout the field period, the NYCHVS will maintain a public-facing website at www.nyc.gov/nychvs. This information is designed for respondents or others that may be recruited to participate in the 2021 NYCHVS, but it also contains useful information for FRs and the public.

This site includes information about the survey and provides support for accessibility such as alternate text or those who use screen readers. It also provides content in several languages.

Updated health and safety procedures are posted online so that FRs and the public can reference pandemic protocols as they change to respond to current conditions.

311

Anyone who wants to verify that the NYCHVS is being conducted on behalf of the City of New York can call 311. Operators have basic information that can be shared with any interested member of the public and help connect them directly to the NYCHVS project office at the NYRO.

Verifying FR credentials

Anyone who would like to verify the identity of an FR may do so by visiting:

https://staff.commerce.gov/

All FRs working on the NYCHVS are registered in this system.

"Sorry I Missed You"

New Yorkers are busy people and an important part of the FR's job is to identify the best day and time to reach a knowledgeable adult in the sampled unit.

FRs may attempt to contact a respondent and find no one at home. In these situations, it is appropriate to leave a business card and a "Sorry I Missed You" note. This is referred to as a "SIMY."

The NYCHVS provides a SIMY for FR use in the field. To ensure the SIMY does not disclose the name of the survey to others who are not eligible to act as respondents, FRs are also provided with envelopes in which to seal the SIMY and business card. This sealed envelope may be left with a Door Attendant or slipped under the door of the sampled unit.

SIMYs should always be sealed prior to leaving them at the sampled unit.

Tip Box

Make sure that you include a brief, personal note that helps to build rapport. SIMYs are part of the recruitment process and should be used in concert with other approaches.

SIMYs should be left in a secure location (such as under a sampled unit's front door) or with someone who is responsible for delivery it to the intended recipient (such as a Door Attendant).

SIMYs should not be left outside the front door of a sampled unit or in a public hallway or mail area where others may access it or where it may identify that no one is home at the sampled unit.

Summary

This chapter discussed the basics of identifying and recruiting an eligible respondent, overcoming reluctance, and addressing barriers to participation.

FRs should be knowledgeable about the NYCHVS to effectively communicate the purpose and value of the survey and gain cooperation. Recruitment may happen in a single attempt or over the course of multiple attempts. It may require the use of additional information that is sent by mail or left behind for potential study participants to review.

FRs should implement a recruitment strategy that utilizes additional supports, including referral to 311 or the NYCHVS website, verification of their identity with Census, and/or other staff resources at the NYRO. They should adapt their approach based on the history of a given case and in response to their interaction with potential study participants.

DOs

- Do identify knowledgeable adults who are eligible to complete an occupied or vacant interview
- Do record contact information for as many potential vacant respondents as possible
- Do write down a compelling recruitment script and practice delivering it so that it will sound natural
- Do listen deeply to respondents' concerns and address them in a responsive, empathetic, proactive, and realistic way
- Do note any barriers to participation and inform a supervisor so it can be addressed quickly and effectively
- Do familiarize yourself with additional recruitment materials and use them to best effect

DON'Ts

- Don't assume that the first person you speak with will be the best respondent
- Don't select a respondent based on anything other than their willingness and ability to answer the survey questions completely and accurately
- Don't give up if a respondent seems reluctant to do an interview; think creatively to help them complete an interview!
- Don't waste a personal visit if no one is home. Leave a personal note on a SIMY and don't be surprised when they call you back!

Interviewing

The Occupied Interview

The occupied interview is designed to be administered to one knowledgeable adult who can answer all or most of the questions we ask. This person is referred to as the “primary” or “first” respondent.

In some cases, the primary respondent will have limited information about one or more person who lives with them, such as the income of a roommate. In these situations, the NYCHVS allows an FR to follow-up with an additional adult to provide this information. This person is identified at the end of the occupied interview and is referred to as a “secondary” respondent.

FRs administer the survey following the procedures and best practices that ensure the efficient and effective capture of data. This requires that FRs actively support the respondent throughout the interview and work to ensure consistency from one interview to the next.

The interview experience should be positive for respondents, conveying a sense of responsibility and the value of their contribution as well as encouraging repeated participation throughout the decade.

Goal

Collect accurate and complete information about a sampled unit and the people who live there.

Mode

For decades, the NYCHVS has primarily been completed through in-person interviews, with a smaller portion completed over the phone. In-person interviewing is the preferred mode because it allows FRs to build rapport through face-to-face interaction and results in fewer skipped questions and higher response rates.

The 2021 NYCHVS was designed to be administered in-person. FRs are trained to conduct occupied interviews in this mode. However, the pandemic may require that a larger share of NYCHVS interviews be conducted over the phone this cycle. The Sponsor Team and Census Bureau monitor conditions continuously and may implement modifications to field procedures as necessary to minimize risk in every way possible. FRs are expected to comply with NYCHVS guidelines and procedures at all times.

Questionnaire

Beginning in 2021, the NYCHVS is administered as a Computer-Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) on Census Bureau laptops. This allows more questions to be asked in a shorter amount of time and reduces human error relative to a paper-and-pencil format.

The instrument was programmed in Blaise version 4.8 and guides the FR through all survey logic, including skips and loops. Said another way, the laptop tells FRs which questions to ask based on information entered earlier in the interview. It also verifies certain answers that are entered into the laptop to make sure they are correct.

Interview Materials

The NYCHVS provides a set of materials to support an occupied interview from start to finish. This includes:

- Flash cards
- Roster card (bound with flash cards)
- Pen
- A Thank You letter
- NYC Resource Guide

All printed materials are available in English, Spanish, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Bengali, and Haitian Creole.

When completed in-person, these materials are provided to the respondent at the beginning of the interview as an "NYCHVS Interview Kit" that has been pre-assembled and provided to FRs.

Each kit is used only once to reduce the number of people who will touch these materials.

When completed over the phone, the FR should make every attempt to facilitate access to flash cards for the interview appointment. This could mean that the FR leaves an NYCHVS Interview Kit at the respondent's building or mails one to them from the NYRO in advance.

An electronic set of flash cards is available on the NYCHVS website if the respondent is able to access the internet and has a device available (smart phone, tablet, or computer) during the interview.

In situations where the respondent did not receive a physical kit, the FR should follow-up and ensure that the close-out materials, including the Thank You letter and NYC Resource Guide, are delivered or mailed to the respondent after the interview has completed.

FRs must comply with all health and safety guidelines that are in effect at the time of an interview. This may vary over time as the NYCHVS team updates its procedures in response to current pandemic conditions.

Flash Cards

Flash cards are used throughout the occupied interview to support the respondent and FR. For select questions, the respondent is presented with a physical (or electronic) card that allows them to select their answer from a set of possible answers.

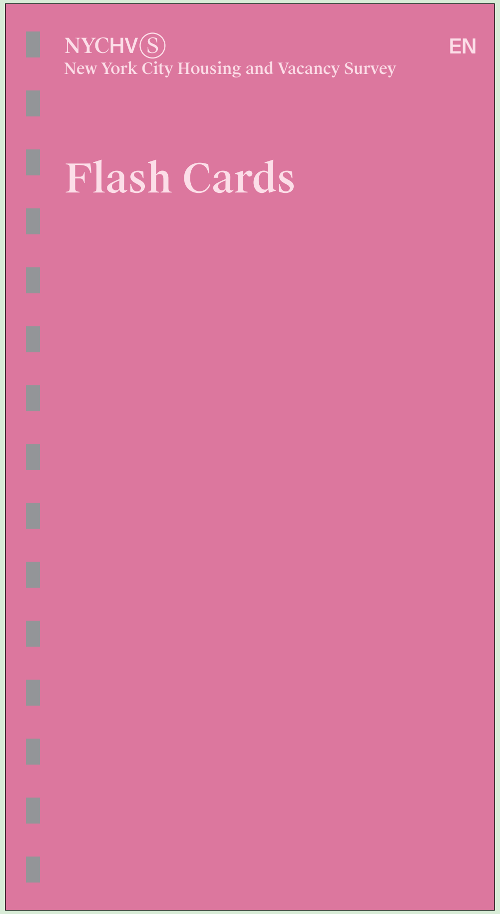
Flash cards are an important part of the NYCHVS interview and offer several benefits. They allow the respondent to see all possible options for questions with multiple or complex answer choices, rather than an FR having to read these aloud. They allow a respondent to report their answer as a number, which may reduce sensitivity or ensure privacy. Flash cards also allow for a more interactive experience than just listening to questions and giving answers.

Flash cards must be used in all interviews unless a reasonable accommodation precludes their use. For each question that has an associated flash card, the CAPI screen indicates which flash card should be used. The FR directs the respondent to turn to the appropriate flash card from the book.

The 2021 NYCHVS includes twenty flash cards. These are bound into a single book with tabs for each card.

Use of Flash Cards

Each card shows the possible answer choices and corresponding answer numbers. Respondents may either read the answer or say the number that appears to the left of the answer choice. Answer numbers match the entry the FR must type into the CAPI.



01 Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher
02 Shelter Allowance/CityFHEPS
03 SCRIE/DRIE
04 Other assistance that pays part of your rent
05 None

100 **A Food Assistance**
101 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/Food Stamps/EBT
102 Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

200 **B Cash Assistance**
203 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
204 Safety Net Assistance (SNA)
205 Shelter Allowance
206 Public Assistance

300 **C Disability Benefits**
307 Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
308 Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
309 Disability Pension

400 **D Other Benefits**
410 Another HRA program
411 Another City program
412 Another State program
413 Another Federal program

994 **E No Benefits**

100 Ⓐ Income from a job
101 Salary
102 Wages
103 Tips
104 Income from self-employment
105 Income from a business

200 Ⓑ Additional Income
206 Bonuses or commissions
207 Stipends
208 Income from renting some or all of your home
209 Income from renting a property that isn't your home

300 Ⓒ Retirement
310 Social Security
311 Pension
312 Railroad retirement
313 Other retirement income

400 Ⓓ Disability and Leave
414 Workers' compensation
415 Paid Family Leave (PFL)
416 Paid Family Medical Leave (FMLA)
417 Cash payment from Supplemental Insurance

500 Ⓔ Interest and Payments
518 Interest of $500 or more
519 Dividends
520 Annuities
521 Estates and trusts
522 Royalties

600 Ⓕ Other
623 Unemployment
624 Child support and alimony
625 Survivor benefits
626 Veterans' payments
627 Other regular source of income

994 Ⓖ No Income

CIVIL COURT HOUSING PART, TRIBUNAL DE VIVIENDAS

Index No. (Núm. de índice) ____________________

Your landlord has started a court case against you for the nonpayment of rent. Come to the Landlord & Tenant Clerk's Office in the Civil Court right away to answer the landlord's papers. If you didn't get any papers, bring this card.

Important! If you don't come to court, you may be evicted.

For information on evictions and court forms in different languages, go to nycourts.gov/housingnyc. It is helpful to speak to an attorney.

For information on accommodations for a disability, call (646) 386-5300 or 711 (TTY).

Su casero ha iniciado un caso judicial en su contra por falta de pago de la renta. Venga de immediato a las oficinas de la Secretaría del Tribunal de Caseros e Inquilinos, en el Tribunal Civil, para contestar los documentos del casero. Si no recibió ningún documento, traiga esta tarjeta postal.

¡Importante! Si no viene al tribunal, usted puede ser desalojado/a.

Para información sobre desalojos y formularios en diferentes idiomas, vaya a nycourts.gov/housingnyc. Puede serle útil hablar con un abogado.

Para información sobre acomodaciones para discapacitados llame al (646) 386-5300 o al 711 (TTY).

Information on Evictions: (646) 386-5750

Enfòmasyon Konsènan Degèpisman · 迫遷相關資訊 · 迫迁相关信息 · Информация о выселении · بے دخلیوں کی معلومات · معلومات بشأن حالات الطرد · Informations concernant les expulsions · বেদখলের তথ্য · Información sobre desalojos

NYCHVS
New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey

Roster Card

NYCHVS
New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey

1 ______________________
2 ______________________
3 ______________________
4 ______________________
5 ______________________
6 ______________________
7 ______________________
8 ______________________
9 ______________________
10 ______________________
11 ______________________
12 ______________________
13 ______________________
14 ______________________
15 ______________________

Special Flash Cards

The NYCHVS asks about many topics. Among the most important are sources of public assistance and sources of income. Respondents who rent their home will also be asked about eviction. These items have flash cards that are based on substantial testing and review and are designed to help more respondents accurately answer these questions.

Assistance Sources

There are many different public assistance programs that provide benefits to low-income New Yorkers. Sometimes an individual receives assistance; other times, benefits are given to a family or household. Some receive help from multiple programs at the same time; others receive help from only one program or have benefits that start and stop. Program names change over time. All of these factors make it difficult for some people to accurately report what public benefits they receive (the name of the program or "source").

The NYCHVS asks about whether one or more people in the household receives assistance and the source. An Assistance Sources flash card helps respondents by showing multiple names for different benefit programs and grouping programs by type. The card is flexible and can be used in several ways.

Skill-building: How to Use the Assistance Sources Flash Card

- Respondents may select one or more program **by name**. These are indicated with numbers such as "101" or "307."
  - The program names on the flash card are not mutually exclusive. That is, they include different names for the same program. This helps respondents pick the name that they associate with their benefits, even if the program now goes by another name.
- Respondents who are uncertain of a specific program may give a **broad category** or type. On the card, these are indicated with "100," "200," "300," and "400."
  - Categories are shown in large, bold letters and have both a number and letter.
  - It is better to get a general type of assistance program rather than no information. For this reason, respondents can give either the number or letter or the category.
- If the respondent does not see the source of assistance on the left side, they can answer "Other Benefits" with "400."
  - When possible, FRs should help the respondent narrow the other type of assistance to one or more agency—"410" through "413."
- Respondents may give a combination of specific program names and broad categories.
  - When this happens, the FR should verify that the respondent is not reporting benefits from the same source twice.

As with all NYCHVS flash cards, the numbers on the card correspond with the entries the FR will type in the CAPI.

Housing assistance is asked separately from public assistance and is covered earlier in the questionnaire. Respondents should not include these programs here.

Income Sources

It is important to not only know how much New Yorkers earn, but where their income comes from. There are many sources of income and it is sometimes difficult or sensitive for respondents to answer these questions.

The NYCHVS asks about the sources and amounts of income by source that each person in the household received in the previous year. As with the Assistance Sources card, the NYCHVS developed a special flash card based on testing and review to help more respondents answer this question accurately and minimize missing answers.

The Income Sources card is structured the same way as the Assistance Sources card.

NYCHV(S)
New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey

EN

100 A **Income from a job**
101 Salary
102 Wages
103 Tips
104 Income from self-employment
105 Income from a business

200 B **Additional Income**
206 Bonuses or commissions
207 Stipends
208 Income from renting some or all of your home
209 Income from renting a property that isn't your home

300 C **Retirement**
310 Social Security
311 Pension
312 Railroad retirement
313 Other retirement income

400 D **Disability and Leave**
414 Workers' compensation
415 Paid Family Leave (PFL)
416 Paid Family Medical Leave (FMLA)
417 Cash payment from Supplemental Insurance

500 E **Interest and Payments**
518 Interest of $500 or more
519 Dividends
520 Annuities
521 Estates and trusts
522 Royalties

600 F **Other**
623 Unemployment
624 Child support and alimony
625 Survivor benefits
626 Veterans' payments
627 Other regular source of income

994 G **No Income**

Incone Sources

Skill-building: How to Use the Income Sources Flash Card

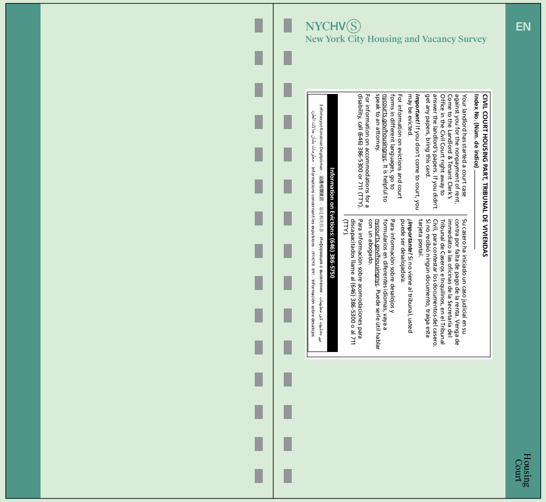
- Respondents may give one or more **specific income source** ("101" or "417").
  - The income sources on the flash card are not mutually exclusive.
- Respondents who do not know the specific income source, may give a **broad type of income** ("100" or "300").
  - This may be particularly helpful when they are asked about the income sources of others who live with them. Any information is better than no information.
  - Categories are shown in large, bold letters and have both a number and letter.
  - It is better to get a general type of income rather than no information. For this reason, respondents can give either the number or letter or the category.
- Respondents may give a variety of "Other Income Sources" by answering "600."
  - When possible, FRs should help the respondent narrow the answer—"623" through "627."
- Respondents may give a combination of specific income sources and broad categories.
  - When this happens, the FR should verify that the respondent is not reporting income from the same source twice.

As with all NYCHVS flash cards, the numbers on the card correspond with the entries the FR will type in the CAPI.

Housing Court

The NYCHVS asks questions about eviction, including whether the respondent or anyone they live with have gone to housing court or had an “eviction proceeding started against them.” Research shows that many people who are asked about this issue are unsure how to answer.

In New York City, most tenants who experience this problem will have received a notice to appear in housing court. The NYCHVS therefore provides a special flash card with an image of such a notice that acts as a visual cue for respondents.



The Household Roster

When a sampled unit has two or more occupants, the NYCHVS asks about each person in the household. This allows the survey to gather complete data on all current residents in the city.

When the CAPI captures a list of each individual in the household, this is referred to as the “Household Roster”, or simply the “Roster.” This allows the interview to be customized to the respondent who is being interviewed. Information from the roster is used in multiple ways:

- To determine which questions are asked later about each person
- To fill the person’s name in questions that are specific to them
- To determine possible answer choices to questions such as “which of the people who live with you...”

The CAPI allows the FR to enter a first and last name for each person in the household; however, this information is not required as part of the NYCHVS.

To respect the privacy of those they live with, respondents may provide any name or other designation that allows the FR to refer to that person later in the interview. This may be a first name, initials, or nickname. Any of these are acceptable so long as the respondent knows who it refers to and that each person has a unique designation.

The FR should also be mindful that the way they enter the names into the CAPI will determine how this person is referred to later on. The respondent may prefer to have the FR refer to someone as “Mr” or “Ms” and this should be captured according to such preference.

Tip Box: Filling out the roster in the CAPI

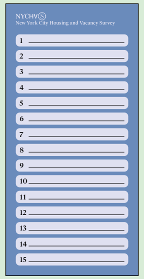
FRs should work with the respondent to ensure they understand why they are being asked to provide this information.

They should also verify that the names or other designations are not used more than once for different people.

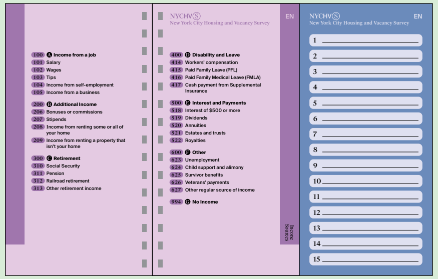
For example, “J” to indicate “John” and “J” to indicate “Jane” is confusing for both the FR and respondent in follow-up questions. One or the other should be changed so that it is clear who is being referred to when the FR asks about “J.” In this case, one option may be to designate “J” for John and “J Doe” for Jane.

Roster Card

For households with four or more people, the NYCHVS utilizes a Roster Card to assist with answering questions about each person. The Roster Card serves as a custom flash card for items that ask about household members. This is particularly helpful for respondents who provide initials or nicknames for each person that are different from how they usually refer to these people. It also allows the respondent to answer questions with the number of the person, rather than their name.



The Roster Card is a fold-out located at the back of the flash card book.



Other flash cards can be viewed at the same time as the Roster Card.

When the FR asks for the names of each person who lives with the respondent, they should direct the respondent to unfold the Roster Card from the back of the flash card book and use the pen provided in their NYCHVS Interview Kit to write the names on the card. One name should be written on each line next to the printed number. Person 1 should indicate the respondent.

Each name should be written in the same way and in the same order as it is typed into the CAPI. This ensures that the person number(s) on the card and in the laptop match.

At the conclusion of the interview, the FR should ask the respondent to tear off the Roster Card and give it to the FR. The FR will make sure it is disposed of properly.

Additional Roster Cards are provided to FRs in case a mistake is made or the card is damaged.

FRs must follow the Roster Card guidelines:

- The Roster Card is only used for households with 4 or more people, including the respondent.
- The Roster Card must be used for all households with 4 or more people, including the respondent.
- The FR helps the respondent to fill out the Roster Card at the right time during the interview.
- The FR makes sure the names or nicknames are written the same way on the Roster Card and in the CAPI. Because the FR will read these names in other questions, it is important that the respondent's preferred reference name(s) are entered and used throughout.
- The FR must make sure that the same identifier is not used multiple times to indicate different people.
- For questions that ask the respondent to identify household members, the FR reminds the respondent that they should reference the Roster Card.
- The FR must take any Roster Card that was filled out with them at the end of the interview.

Setting up for the interview

In-person interviews are generally conducted at the respondents' home; however, NYCHVS interviews may be conducted anywhere that the respondent wishes so long as the FR can ensure privacy and protect the health and safety of the respondent and themself. Different settings require adaptation of the general guidelines described below, which focus on interviews conducted in the sampled unit.

The FR conducts the interview in any space in the home the respondent prefers but may suggest a place where they and the respondent can comfortably sit together while practicing appropriate safety precautions related to COVID-19. This generally means at least 6-feet apart, with both FR and respondent wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as a face-mask.

The FR should be respectful of the respondent's home and follow the respondent's lead in deciding where to conduct the interview, while making sure that they feel safe and confident. The space chosen should facilitate an engaging interview experience and should not hamper the FR's ability to use body language to build and maintain rapport. The FR must be positioned to use the laptop and the respondent should be able to navigate flash cards comfortably.

Tip Box

- If there is a TV on, the FR should try to sit in a seat that directs the respondent's attention away from the TV.
- If there is not sufficient seating, the FR should offer to sit on the floor or stand.
- The FR should avoid sitting directly across from the respondent when possible.
- If there are other people in the room, the FR should tell the respondent that they can say the numbers on the flash cards/ Roster Card so their answers are more private.

The FR should do their best to conduct the interview in a room alone with the respondent, but it is ultimately up to the respondent to decide who else is present. If the space does not permit a completely private interview, the FR should adjust their positioning and the volume of their voice to maintain confidentiality.

Even if discussed as part of recruitment, the FR must take time to explain the practical details of the interview process to the respondent. This helps the respondent know what to expect over the course of the interview and provides a soft lead-in to the interview. The FR must mention the key points listed below.

- The survey asks about the respondent, their home, and others they live with.
- The FR reads questions and enters answers into the computer.
- Flash cards are used for some questions (the FR should ask them to open the book and they should understand how to flip from one card to the next).
- The respondent can ask questions at any time.

Conducting the interview

The FR reads the text shown in black type from the CAPI, question by question, exactly as written. The FR may read optional or "IF NEEDED" text in gray as appropriate.

The FR accurately records the respondent's answers to each question in the bottom panel of the CAPI screen, probing as necessary.

FRs for the NYCHVS use a technique known as verbatim interviewing, the practice of reading all words exactly as they are written in the CAPI. This ensures that all respondents are asked the same questions in the same way no matter who the FR is.

FRs must follow the verbatim interviewing guidelines:

- Interview questions must be read exactly as they appear in the CAPI instrument.
- Each question must be read. This applies even when the FR may know the answer based on what the respondent has already shared.
- Questions must be read in the order in which they appear.
- Questions can be repeated if the respondent asks the FR to repeat the question or generally shows hesitance or confusion. But the FR must read the whole question when repeating it.
- Some questions include grey "IF NEEDED" text. This optional text should only be read when required to clarify or assist the respondent. When used, the FR should read the text verbatim to the respondent.
- Some questions include blue text. This indicates an instruction or reminder for the FR. FRs should never read this text out loud.

Skill building: Probing

- Probing is a tool used by FRs where they ask follow-up questions that help respondents arrive at a final answer.
- Do not ask leading questions. Instead, use neutral probes:
    - "I am only able to enter one answer, which of those do you think best describes your situation?"
    - "What is your best estimate?"
    - "Was that in [reference period]?"
- Respondents should be asked to give their "best guess" only if they have an approximate idea of the answer but are struggling to settle on one exact answer.
- If respondents are struggling to answer *when* something happened, for example, when a household member moved in, use calendaring cues to help them think about the time of year:
    - "What time of year was it? What season?"
    - "Was it close to any holidays?"
    - "How old were your kids at the time?"

Skill building: "I don't know" responses

- If the respondent replies "I don't know" to a question, probe to find out if the respondent truly does not know the answer, is unsure of their answer, doesn't understand the question, or doesn't want to answer.
  - If the respondent truly does not know the answer to the question, do not pressure them to make up a response or guess. In order to maintain data quality, respondents should not be encouraged to provide answers they don't have just for the sake of recording any answer. In this situation, mark "Don't know" by pressing Ctrl+D and move on.
  - If the respondent is unsure of their answer, some neutral probing may help them to get to their answer.
  - If the respondent does not understand the question, repeat the question, making sure to read slowly and to emphasize words that might help the respondent understand.
- Some respondents who do not want to answer the question will answer "Don't know" rather than explicitly refusing to answer. You may need to probe neutrally to figure this out. Remind the respondent that they may refuse and that the NYCHVS is confidential—their information is protected under Title 13. This may help the respondent feel more at ease answering questions throughout the interview.
- The NYCHVS is a voluntary survey. Similarly, respondents are not required to answer questions that they do not want to. If a respondent is not willing to answer the question, the FR can mark the response as "Refused" and continue with the survey.

Completing the Back

The last questions in the CAPI are referred to as the "Back" questions. This includes information about the interview that the FR must complete.

It also captures the name and contact information from the respondent that will be used during Reinterview. If specific items were skipped when asking about other household members, the CAPI will also request additional name(s) and contact information for those who may serve as a secondary respondent.

Skill building: Overcoming reluctance

FRs can use tools developed for recruitment to address reluctance throughout the interview.

- Confidentiality: This information will not be shared with family, friends, landlords, employers, or anyone else outside the Census Bureau. Any reporting of data will be done in a way that protects the confidentiality of responses.
- Relevance: The NYCHVS collects information not just about housing but also about things that are related to their housing needs, such as income and employment.
- Embarrassment: FRs for the NYCHVS speak with a wide variety of New Yorkers every day. There are no judgements, we're looking to capture the diversity of experiences in the city.

Secondary Respondents

When a respondent is unable to answer certain questions about another household member, an FR will follow up with that other household member as a secondary respondent. Only one secondary interview will be conducted even though the secondary respondent may not know the answer to every unanswered question.

When following up, the secondary interview should be conducted by the initial FR when possible. The FR should maintain Title 13 confidentiality and not share responses from the initial interview with the secondary respondent.

Close-Out

At the end of the occupied interview, the FR should thank the respondent and direct them to the leave-behinds in the NYCHVS Interview Kit. This includes a Thank You letter from the NYCHVS Sponsor and the NYC Resource Guide.

The NYC Resource Guide includes useful information on various programs and resources that the respondent may find helpful. It is organized by topic.

If any issues were raised during the interview, the FR may direct the respondent to specific sections of the Guide they may find helpful. The purpose of this booklet is to ensure the respondent feels supported and that they are able to find help if they need it. This is valuable because FRs, while representing the City of New York, cannot give advice or offer assistance directly to respondents.

Modifications

Some interviews may require modifications to ensure that the respondent is comfortable and supported in participating in the NYCHVS. This section describes common types of modifications to the Occupied interview.

Location

Interviews will usually take place in respondents' homes but will sometimes need to be conducted outside the home. If the respondent prefers not to do the interview in their home, the FR should work with them to identify an alternate location where both the respondent and the FR will feel safe and comfortable. As described in the section about setting up for the interview, the interview space should be chosen to facilitate an engaging interview experience while allowing the FR to use body language to build and maintain rapport. It is best practice to discuss alternate interview locations and logistics in advance with supervisors to make sure the interview space is well planned.

Doorway

Interviews can be administered in the doorway if the respondent would rather not have the FR in their home. Doorway interviews are challenging because the FR must be able to hold and use their laptop, while still staying engaged with the respondent.

FRs must follow doorway interview guidelines:

- Remind the respondent of the length and content of the survey before starting an interview in the doorway.
- Hold the laptop while administering the interview.
- Look up from the laptop and maintain engagement with the respondent throughout the interview.
- Avoid looking into the respondent's home.
- Stand at an appropriate distance to maintain social distancing and other health and safety protocols.
- Ensure privacy by not asking questions while neighbors are passing in the hallway.
- Speak at an appropriate volume so that the respondent can hear the questions but neighbors in other apartments cannot. This is especially important in buildings with thin walls.

Community room

Some interviews may take place in a community room or other communal space in the respondent's building. These spaces may provide convenient privacy without entering the respondent's home.

FRs must follow community room guidelines:

- Set up in a private area of the community room and position the interview as far from others as possible when necessary.
- Ensure respondent comfort by leaving the community room directly at the end of the interview with the respondent.

Public space

Some respondents may feel most comfortable participating in the NYCHVS in a public space, such as a café or park. Public interviews should be conducted at convenient location where privacy can be maintained and the FR and respondent can stay for the necessary amount of time.

FRs must follow public space guidelines:

- For appointments made in advance, arrive at least 15 minutes before the meeting time.
- Pick a spot that is not too loud and that allows some privacy.
- Make sure Census ID and Census laptop are clearly visible to help the respondent identify the FR as they approach.
- Stay alert, appear approachable, and look out for the respondent, who may be nervous or confused.
- Do not allow the respondent to purchase anything for the FR.
- Allow the respondent to leave before packing up and leaving the location.

Community Based Organizations (CBO) offices

The NYCHVS team has partnered with CBOs throughout the city to provide interview locations for those that may prefer to do an interview outside of their home. These trusted CBOs may provide comfort and security for respondents that may be nervous about participating and/or interacting with the government.

FRs must follow CBO offices guidelines:

- All appointments conducted in CBO offices must be scheduled in advance through an FS who will coordinate with the Sponsor Team and CBO.
- Arrive at least 30 minutes before the meeting time.
- Introduce yourself to the designated CBO representative.
- Make sure that there is a private space designated for the interview.
- Confirm that the respondent will not have to sign-in to enter the CBO office and ensure the respondent does not provide any name of other identifying information to the CBO.
- Wait at the entrance of the CBO office for the respondent.
- Allow the respondent to leave before packing up and leaving the CBO office.
- Thank the designated CBO representative for their help and leave the interview space as it was before.

Language

Many NYCHVS respondents will choose to participate by completing an interview in a language other than English. The NYCHVS has been formally translated into six languages: Bengali, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), Haitian Creole, Russian, and Spanish. Interviews in other languages will be translated by bi-lingual FRs from the English instrument. All interviews in languages other than English will be conducted by bi-lingual FRs who are specially trained and are approved to conduct these interviews.

Languages with formal translations

For the six languages with formal translations, FRs will conduct the interview using the translated survey instrument on the computer. As in English interviews, translated questions must be read verbatim—exactly as they have been translated. FRs will guide respondents through translated answer choices on dedicated flash cards for each language. If there is confusion about a translation, bi-lingual FRs may help to clarify the meaning but may not rephrase the question.

Languages without formal translations

Interviews conducted in languages other than English that do not have formal translations will be translated by the bi-lingual FR based on the English instrument. Each question must be translated and asked in the respondent's preferred language. Approved bi-lingual FRs will have already prepared for this type of interview by reviewing the questionnaire and considering potential translations.

Reasonable Accommodations

As discussed earlier in this manual, the NYCHVS ensures that everyone is able to participate. This includes reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities, such as large-text or use of an ASL interpreter. The NYRO has senior staff dedicated to coordinating any requests and cases that require such modifications should be discussed with the FS prior to completing an interview to ensure all necessary resources are available.

The NYCHVS takes the health and safety of all New Yorkers, including respondents and FRs, seriously and have taken appropriate steps to ensure that everyone is safe. Any respondent who would like to request a reasonable accommodation due to COVID-19 may do so through the NYRO.

Summary

This chapter discussed the basics of conducting an occupied interview for the NYCHVS. The goal of the occupied interview is to collect complete and accurate data from an appropriate respondent or respondents about the selected unit and its resident(s). Respondents should have a positive interview experience and feel a sense of responsibility and satisfaction that will encourage them to participate repeatedly throughout the decade.

Before starting an occupied interview, all of the essential steps needed to prepare for the interview have already been taken, including reading case notes, preparing materials, and identifying and recruiting the (primary) respondent. The FR's first step is to establish the interview space and explain the practical details of the interview to the respondent. The FR then conducts the interview, reading questions verbatim and recording answers accurately, and guiding the respondent to use the flash cards and Roster Card as required.

Review the DOs and the DON'Ts on the next page before moving on to the next chapter!

DOs

- Do make sure pre-interview steps are done and your materials are in order so you are prepared to conduct an interview
- Do make sure that your respondent is a knowledgeable adult who is willing to participate
- Do create a comfortable and private setting for the interview
- Do read every question and script word-for-word in the order presented in the CAPI
- Do read optional text if needed
- Do record accurately the answers provided by the respondent
- Do probe neutrally as appropriate
- Do use flash cards throughout every interview even if the respondent is rushed or reluctant to use them
- Do use the Roster Card for households with 4+ people and refer to it where appropriate
- Do identify secondary respondents, if needed
- Do monitor body language, tone, and pace throughout the interview
- Do ensure the respondent feels respected and comfortable as you collect high quality data

DON'Ts

- Don't attempt to interview a respondent with a language barrier—escalate it to the FS!
- Don't conduct an interview through an interpreter if the respondent has a language barrier—escalate it to the FS!
- Don't conduct an interview with a proxy who does not live in the household—escalate it to the FS!
- Don't answer for the respondent or make any assumptions about their answers
- Don't press too hard for answers when the respondent refuses or does not know an answer

The Vacant Interview

The vacant interview was designed to be administered to one or more knowledgeable informant who can answer questions about the vacant sampled unit.

Vacant interviews are much shorter than occupied interviews and do not require the use of flash cards. They may be done over the phone without any further request for a modification.

FRs must actively work to gather accurate and complete data when conducting an NYCHVS vacant interview. This information is vital to many of the survey's key estimates and this part of the NYCHVS is subject to substantial oversight and scrutiny. Every vacant interview is re-interviewed to ensure data quality and accuracy.

Goal

Collect accurate and complete information about a vacant unit as of the date when its occupancy status was determined.

Reference Period

In many cases, the vacant interview will be completed at the same time and with the same informant(s) who enabled the FR to determine the unit was vacant. In some cases, the vacant interview will happen at a later time.

It is important that all information about the vacant unit be as of the time it was determined to be vacant. In New York City, vacant units generally do not remain empty for long. If needed, FRs should make it clear to the respondents what the reference date is and that they are gathering information on the unit as of that time.

Questionnaire

The 2021 NYCHVS vacant interview is administered via CAPI on Census laptops.

Unlike the occupied interview, the vacant interview is only available in the CAPI in English. Any language barrier should be documented and escalated to an FS so that a bi-lingual FR can be assigned the case as needed.

Conducting the interview

The FR reads the text shown in black type from the CAPI, question by question, exactly as written. The FR may read optional or “IF NEEDED” text in gray as appropriate. The FR accurately records the respondent’s answers to each question in the bottom panel of the CAPI screen, probing as necessary. Verbatim interviewing is essential to make sure every interview is conducted in a similar way.

FRs may have to speak to more than one person to answer all required questions. This is common and can be done by the FR as needed without escalating the case. It is important to gather all information in a precise way. If one respondent can only guess at an answer, the FR should seek another informant to provide complete and accurate information.

Close-Out

At the end of the vacant interview, the FR should thank the respondent(s). There are no leave-behinds for the vacant interview.

Summary

This chapter discussed the basics of conducting a vacant interview for the NYCHVS. The goal of the vacant interview is to collect complete and accurate data from one or more respondent regarding the vacant unit at the time when its occupancy status was determined, even if this reference period is in the past.

Much of the work involved in completing an interview for a vacant sampled unit was done prior to reaching the interview phase. The occupancy status of the unit was already determined. In most cases, the names and contact information of potential respondents were documented. In this phase, the focus is on gathering all of the necessary information, asking and recording answers in a precise way, and thanking the individual(s) who assisted.

Review the DOs and the DON'Ts on the next page before moving on to the next chapter!

DOs

- Do make sure pre-interview steps are done and your materials are in order so you are prepared to conduct an interview
- Do make sure that your respondent is a knowledgeable adult who is able to provide information about the vacant unit
- Do read every question and script word-for-word in the order presented in the CAPI
- Do read optional text if needed
- Do record accurately the answers provided by the respondent
- Do probe neutrally as appropriate
- Do ensure the respondent feels respected and comfortable as you collect high quality data

DON'Ts

- Don't attempt to interview a respondent with a language barrier—escalate it!
- Don't conduct an interview through an interpreter if the respondent has a language barrier—escalate it!
- Don't answer for the respondent or make any assumptions about their answers
- Don't accept best guesses—find another person to gather the correct and complete information

Documentation

Documentation of every attempt is an essential part of fieldwork. This information helps FRs work their cases efficiently and effectively. It also ensures a smooth transition in situations where a case has to be reassigned to another FR.

This information also helps improve the NYCHVS for the future. The same units sampled for the 18th cycle will be part of the core sample for the 19th, 20th, and 21st cycles. Details captured now may help make recruitment of those cases in future cycles easier. The Sponsor Team also relies on documentation to help make decisions about how to improve the survey design.

Goal

Maintain clear and accurate project records for use by FRs, FSs, NYCHVS project staff, and the Sponsor Team.

Types of Documentation

There are several types of documentation and it is entered and maintained in several different places. The three primary ways that FRs document their work activities are:

- Mobile Case Management (MCM)
- Case Notes
- Contact History Instrument (CHI)

Sometimes information entered into one system may be entered in a slightly different way somewhere else. While this may feel redundant, these systems are designed to ensure the right information is available and recorded in the most useful way. The NYCHVS uses additional reporting tools that rely on data feeds from these sources.

All entries should be recorded in a timely way using language that other team members can understand (i.e., avoiding abbreviations or short-hand that only the recording FR knows).

Mobile Case Management (MCM)

Mobile Case Management (MCM) is a dashboard that FRs use to access each of their assigned cases. From MCM, the FR is able to start an interview, fill out a CHI, and request letters. FRs can also write case notes and view the case history.

Some documentation is captured directly in MCM for easy access by field staff. This includes:

- Phone numbers
- Building management information
- Appointment information
- Preferred language

This information should be captured in MCM even if some or all of it is recorded in case notes.

The preferred language is particularly valuable since the list of possible languages is much more comprehensive in MCM than it is in other systems, such as the CAPI. It also allows us to gather information about language needs for cases that don't result in a completed interview. This information supports the NYCHVS bi-lingual team, but it also helps the Sponsor Team identify what languages should be prioritized for a formal translation in the 2023 NYCHVS and beyond.

Case Notes

Case notes are text entries that can be used to record qualitative information on a case, including tips or reminders for anyone who may work a case.

This form of documentation is useful for FRs because they can record any information, including longer notes or narrative documentation that is not possible in MCM or CHI. FRs should make sure that they record any information that will be useful in completing a case; however, they should not include extra information. Case notes should also be written in a style and form that is useful not only to the recording FR, but anyone else who is assigned that case.

Case notes do not replace other forms of documentation, such as the CHI and MCM, since case notes have limited use. They are generally not retained from one NYCHVS cycle to the next and therefore any information that may benefit the survey in the future must be captured in other ways.

Contact History Instrument (CHI)

The Contact History Instrument (CHI) is a short survey (about a minute or two) that is filled out after each attempt, regardless of the outcome of the attempt.

The survey asks the FR about:

- Mode of contact
- Date and time of attempt
- Whether contact was made
- Interview status
- Reluctances
- Strategies

The CHI is an important and brief way to document all relevant information about the attempt. It asks the same questions and provides structured answer choices for everyone working on the NYCHVS (as well as other Census Bureau surveys).

Each case may result in multiple completed CHIs. Each FR will submit many CHIs across all of their attempts on all of their assigned cases. Together, all of the CHIs collected from FRs tell the entire story of the field period for a given survey.

Just as we complete interviews to gather information on New York City overall, we use CHIs to understand the progress during the field period. The Sponsor Team uses this information to consider ways to improve the field effort for future cycles of the NYCHVS.

For example, it enables the Sponsor Team to evaluate the effectiveness of the RO Letters or use of a SIMY. It also helps to identify how common some concerns are and how they have changed over time. In turn, these issues can be addressed through more proactive outreach in the future. It also enables the NYCHVS to be compared to other Census Bureau surveys that are fielded in New York City to identify best practices and improve all of our work.

Using Documentation

FRs should review all documentation before each attempt to remind themselves of the case history. Documentation should be used in developing or modifying the strategy for working a case.

For example, what days of the week and times of day has the case been worked in the past? Did these result in contact with the knowledgeable adult who will serve as the respondent? If so, the FR should consider making their next attempt at that day/time. If not, the FR should consider making the attempt at another day or time.

What reluctances did the respondent express? Was there a gatekeeper who prevented the FR from reaching the unit?

If you have been assigned a case that another FR worked before, spend time to review all documentation and get accustomed to the details of the case.

FRs should use whatever information is most useful for them.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the different types of documentation and the various locations where it is entered. Mobile Case Management (MCM), Case Notes, and Contact History Instruments (CHIs) work together to make sure the right information is captured in the most useful way.

Documentation is essential to ensuring that each FR has the information they need to complete a case. It is also a vital source of information for project leadership and for the Sponsor Team. It is not only useful for the current NYCHVS, but also for future cycles. Documentation may help the next FR who has to work a sampled unit in future cycles. And it helps the NYCHVS ensure that the survey is a success, now and in the future.

DOs

- Do make sure to document every attempt in MCM, Case Notes, and CHI
- Do make sure to record case notes in a way that helps move the case toward a completed interview
- Do use language that another FR or team member will understand

DON'Ts

- Don't wait to complete a CHI, update case notes, or enter information into MCM—you may forget important information!
- Don't skip entering information in multiple systems just because you wrote it in case notes
- Don't assume no one is using the documentation you keep

The Role of the FR

FRs are the public face of the NYCHVS. They represent the survey, the City of New York, and the Census Bureau. Every interaction should convey the importance of the survey and show respect for the New Yorkers it represents.

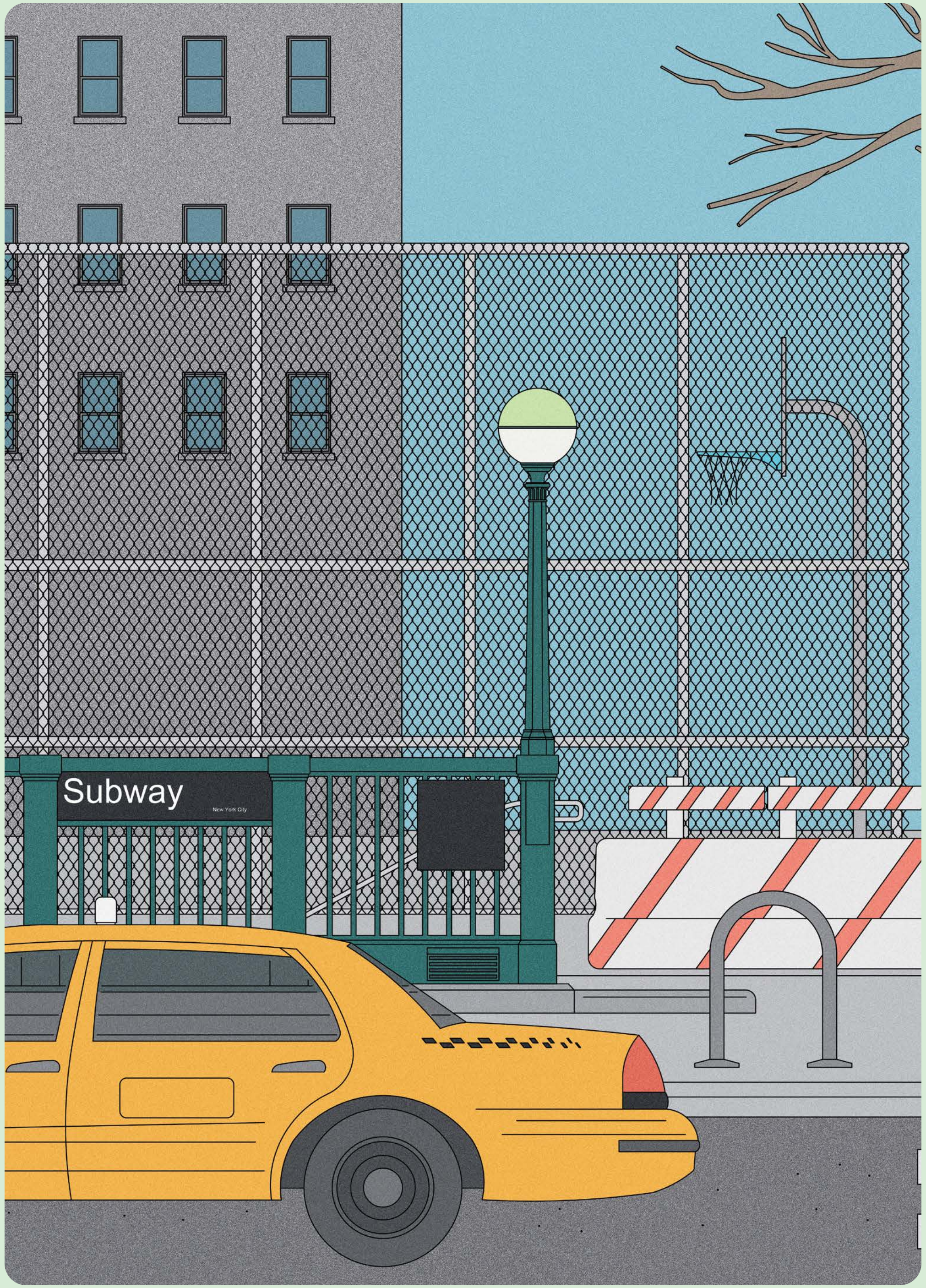
FRs work individual sampled cases that are selected to represent specific types of housing units and their resident population. FRs visit each unit and work to classify them as vacant or occupied. They screen for a knowledgeable adult who may serve as a respondent for an occupied or vacant interview.

FRs recruit these individuals and use the CAPI instrument to ask all applicable questions and record the respondent's answers. FRs document all of their field work at each phase.

FRs carry a great responsibility. They must understand and follow all survey procedures. They must interpret these requirements based on the specific conditions of each sampled unit and each survey respondent. They must work every case they are assigned using best practices.

They must be responsive, empathetic, proactive, and realistic in the field. They must overcome reluctance and address barriers to ensure high response rates. They must support every respondent and gather accurate and comprehensive information, one interview at a time.

They must support other NYCHVS team members and know when and how to ask for help. They must continue to learn throughout the field period and share lessons learned to help others improve. And they must never lose sight of the goal: to collect high-quality data that enables us to learn about our city and make it better.



Teamwork

FRs don’t work alone. The NYCHVS relies on the entire team to work together to accomplish our goal.

Each FR works under the direct supervision of an FS who is responsible for everyday help and assistance. It is the job of the FS to address challenges and solve problems.

The NYCHVS project team at the NYRO, Census Bureau staff at headquarters, and the Sponsor Team support each FR and each FS.

Together, it is our responsibility to ensure that each FR has the knowledge and tools to do the job effectively. We protect the health and safety of our field team, our survey participants, and the public and work to minimize risk in every way possible.

We maintain open communication and provide ongoing support and advice. We conduct outreach and education with various stakeholders. We provide resources to ensure that everyone can participate.

And we take our responsibility seriously to use the data that FRs collect in a responsible way.

Credits

Design: Wkshps, WeShouldDoItAll

Illustrator: Carolina Moscoso

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