



ACHA-NCHA Web Version Frequently Asked Questions REVISED 09/07/2010

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CONTACTING STUDENTS

Q: How are the students contacted using the NCHA-Web?

A: ACHA contacts students to participate in the ACHA-NCHA through a letter of invitation/consent sent via e-mail. You provide the text of the letter of invitation to ACHA as well as the subject line you want included with the e-mail. (You'll find a letter template on page 33 of the ACHA-NCHA Users Manual.) The ACHA-NCHA Program Office staff is then responsible for programming your school's individual survey. After you decide who you wish to survey (e.g., all registered students, 10% of registered students), you must also supply ACHA with a list of student e-mail addresses in the first column of an Excel spreadsheet file. If you choose to sample only a percentage of your students, ACHA has the ability to select a random selection of students from a larger list (e.g., all student e-mails) and will do so for no additional charge. Additionally, you may want to personalize the electronic letter of invitation/consent sent to each student with the student's first name, such as "Dear Mary". If so, add the first name corresponding to each e-mail address in the second column of the spreadsheet file. This information can usually be found at your Registrar's Office or Office of Institutional Research.

Q: Does ACHA send reminder messages to all students or just those who have not responded to the survey?

A: ACHA uses email software that tracks which students use the link within the email message to view the survey as well as which students actually submit a survey – without connecting an email address to a particular set of responses. ACHA contacts only non-responders with a reminder e-mail. Although you may use your initial letter of invitation/consent and subject line to contact non-responders, many schools choose to modify their invitation/consent to indicate that it is a follow up to the initial contact and use a different subject line when doing so. Up to 3 reminder messages to non-responders are included in the price of the survey. We recommend labeling the final reminder sent with a "last chance" (or similar) subject line and including a deadline for submitting survey responses.

Q: Is it possible to contact students at a personal or “preferred” email address, rather than their campus email address?

A: Yes, ACHA-NCHA email communications may be sent to email addresses unaffiliated with campus (hotmail, gmail, aol, etc.), however doing so does present some challenges. When campus email addresses are used, it’s relatively easy to work with the campus IT department to ensure your invitations make it through the campus server to your students (see the section on SPAM AND RATE CONTROL FILTERS). This is not the case with other email service providers, so there is a greater chance of the messages not reaching your students. While ACHA takes measures to reduce the likelihood of complications from using personal or “preferred” email addresses, the process is not foolproof and message delivery errors are more common.

Q: What if my school will not allow me to provide ACHA with students’ e-mail addresses?

A: If your campus makes student e-mail addresses public via a published student directory, they will likely approve e-mail access by ACHA to administer the ACHA-NCHA. If your campus prohibits the exchange of e-mail addresses, you may still administer the NCHA-Web without providing student e-mail addresses to ACHA. ACHA will assign your institution a series of unique ID numbers based on the number of students you intend to sample and send you instructions for generating the unique URL’s. Someone on your campus will be responsible for matching each e-mail address to a unique ID and generating a unique URL to include in each student’s letter of invitation. You would be responsible for contacting non-responders with a reminder message. ACHA will provide your school with a list of submitted unique ID numbers so these students may be eliminated prior to re-contact. Just be sure to let ACHA know in advance on what days you need your list of responding ID numbers downloaded. Because the file linking a unique ID number to a student email address is held by the school and not ACHA, ACHA will destroy all data files containing unique ID numbers before sharing NCHA results with the school. Please note that there is no discount in survey pricing when using this methodology – quantity will be based on the number of unique ID numbers assigned to your school.

Q: My campus will not allow ACHA access to student e-mail addresses and my IT department has told me that they can only blast e-mail “static messages” (identical messages). The e-mail messages cannot be personalized with a unique ID imbedded in the URL nor in the greetings. Is there another way to administer the ACHA-NCHA Web?

A: If there is no way to remedy this problem on campus, ACHA can provide a “static” URL for your campus survey submissions. However, without unique IDs imbedded in the URL, ACHA cannot control for multiple submissions from the same student, cannot prevent submissions from outside your sample, nor can we identify random respondents to award incentives. While this methodology has been implemented with success, it is not recommended as it introduces a possible source of error not present in the standard methodology. If you opt to use a static link for your NCHA survey, your data will not be included in the Reference Group. Please note that there is no discount in survey pricing when using this methodology – quantity will be based on the size of the campus population.

Q: Do I have to use the ACHA letter of invitation/consent as provided in the User’s Manual?

A: ACHA offers an example letter of invitation/consent in the User’s Manual (p. 33), which you may edit to meet the specific needs of your campus or requirements of your IRB. Whether or not you choose to use the example letter of Invitation/consent, you must provide ACHA with the exact text of your letter of invitation/consent as well as the exact text you wish to use in reminder messages sent to non-responders. You must additionally provide a subject line for the e-mail containing the letter of invitation/consent or reminder letter of invitation/consent. You may want to personalize the subject line to include your school name so your students know the communication is connected with your college/university. The standard subject line used is “XYZ Student Health Survey,” where XYZ is the name of your school and/or health center.

Q: How long should I keep the survey open? How many times should we contact non-responders?

A: The scheduling of the data collection period, including reminder messages to non-responders is entirely up to the survey coordinator and must be communicated to the ACHA-NCHA Program Office. The majority on students tend to respond to a web survey invitation (or reminder message) right away (within 36 – 48 hours), or not at all. They don't typically keep the invitation and come back to it at a later date to complete; therefore it is not necessary to wait very long between email contacts with the students.

We recommend a survey data collection period of no more than 2-3 weeks, with reminder messages sent to non responders every 4-7 days. It also helps to vary the days and times that your messages are sent. All messages are scheduled by the ACHA-NCHA Program Office in advance so it is possible for you to select a specific data and time for your message delivery to begin.

STUDENT CONSENT AND PRIVACY PROTECTION

Q: How do ACHA-NCHA-Web survey participants provide consent?

A: Consent is implied when a student clicks on the link within the email message to access the survey. The template letter of invitation/consent (page 33 of the Users Manual) includes instructions that stipulate students who are 18 years of age or older need only click on the link to the survey to confirm their consent. If there is additional consent information required by your campus IRB, you may want to include a link in your invitation e-mail that will direct students to further information, such as a campus consent requirement. It is recommended that you keep the letter of invitation/consent clear and concise.

Q: Is the NCHA-Web considered anonymous or confidential?

A: The web version of the survey is confidential, not anonymous. After receiving the Excel file with the e-mail addresses from the school, ACHA generates a unique ID for each student. This unique ID number is imbedded in the survey URL sent to each student. Unique IDs are downloaded with student responses and allow us to prevent duplicate responses from the same student and also prevent students from outside your sample from submitting a survey. E-mail addresses are never stored in the same file as the survey responses. The link between email addresses and unique ID numbers is stored separately from the file containing survey responses and unique ID numbers. Once the survey results have been prepared, the spreadsheet file connected the e-mail addresses and unique IDs is destroyed. Note that the destruction of this file occurs before the survey results are made available to anyone on campus. Using the normal ACHA-NCHA implementation procedures, **the survey is NOT ANONYMOUS and may not be described to the students as an anonymous survey.**

If you would prefer to (or are required to) conduct an anonymous NCHA web survey, it is possible to do so without using the unique ID numbers. In doing so, we cannot prevent duplicate submissions from the same student, nor can we limit your responses to only students in your sample. While this methodology has been implemented with success, it is not recommended as it introduces a possible source of error not present in the standard methodology. If you opt to do an anonymous survey, your data will not be included in the Reference Group.

Q. Does ACHA host the ACHA-NCHA Web internally on their servers and what kind of security is provided?

A. ACHA uses Vovici Corporation servers to host the web version and contact students. Vovici Corporation uses the most advanced encryption, firewalls, backup and 24-hour service support. As a major survey corporation, the security and access to information of any kind is under strict regulations and procedures that go beyond the measures taken by most organizations, agencies, and institutions of higher education.

Files stored on the servers at ACHA are password protected behind a firewall. All files, except those containing student email addresses, are back up every night. Additionally, ACHA will not share your students e-mail addresses with any other organization.

The Vovici Corporation privacy policy can be accessed at: <http://www.vovici.com/privacy.aspx>

Q: Does the ACHA hold a Certificate of Confidentiality from NIH?

A: No, NIH will not issue a blanket Certificate of Confidentiality that will apply to all participating campuses. Any campus that requires a Certificate of Confidentiality must apply for one with NIH. See the NIH Certificates of Confidentiality Kiosk at: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/coc/> for more information.

Q: How does ACHA protect student privacy in the absence of an NIH Certificate of Confidentiality?

A: As explained in various parts of this document, student survey responses are downloaded with a unique ID number which prevents multiple submissions from the same student and keeps students from outside your sample from submitting a survey. While ACHA takes numerous measures to protect the privacy of students who participate in the survey, it is still possible that we could be served with a subpoena that requires us to identify and release survey responses from a particular student.

In order to minimize the threat to student privacy ACHA employs the following techniques in managing student contact information:

- The code linking a student's email address to a particular unique ID number is stored in a file separate from the files containing survey responses. Only the unique ID number is stored with the data files.
- No survey results are made available to participating campuses until all files connecting an email address to a unique ID number have been destroyed.
- Files containing email addresses linked to unique ID numbers are never included in the routine file back up process at ACHA.

Therefore, in the unlikely event that something in the survey results might trigger a legal action, there is no way to link a specific email address or first name to a particular set of responses.

Q. My IRB wants to know what kind of training ACHA-NCHA staff has with regard to protection of human subjects in research.

A. All ACHA-NCHA staff have completed the Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams online course sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, and the Social and Behavior Sciences Course in the Responsible Conduct of Research sponsored by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative at the University of Miami. Certificates of completion are on file at ACHA and available upon request

Q: Does the emailing system offer the student the option to unsubscribe from the survey mailing list?

A: Yes, to ensure unsubscribe compliance with the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003, all ACHA-NCHA email communication with students contain the following statement at the end of the message:

“If you do not want to receive reminder messages about completing the survey, please use this link to remove yourself from the survey mailing list:
(insert unsubscribe link here)”

Any student that clicks on the link provided is automatically removed from the mailing list and will not receive any subsequent reminder messages sent to non-responders in the sample.

SAMPLE SIZE

Q: We are a school with a student population of 2,400. How many students should we contact using the ACHA-NCHA-Web?

A: The [ACHA-NCHA User's Manual](#) presents recommended sample sizes, or you can see the table of sample sizes listed below. Most ACHA-NCHA Web surveyors experience a range of 10% to 35% return. The average response proportion is about 20%. Thus, in the absence of a campus-specific history with web-based surveys, you may want to estimate the number of contacts based on a 20% return. With a school your size you should survey all 2,400 students with the aim of getting 600 submitted surveys.

The proportion of returned surveys depends in part on the following: (1) campus-wide pre-publicity, (2) timing of first contact (do not survey just before finals or breaks), (3) contact of non-responders, (4) accuracy and utilization of e-mail addresses (e.g., do the students use the campus generated e-mail addresses?), (5) coordination with campus IT department to prevent interference from spam and/or rate control filters, (6) the increase in use of handheld devices for email communication and (7) incentives.

The recommended sample sizes given below are based on a 95% Confidence Level with a Confidence Interval of +/- 3%

<u>Student Population</u>	<u>Desired Sample Size (Returned Surveys)</u>
<600	all students
600-3,000	600
3,000-9,999	700
10,000-19,999	800
20,000-29,999	900
•30,000	1,000

Note that there are a number of sample size and confidence interval calculators readily available on the internet.

Q. If I sample all students or an entire subset of students (such as all first-year students or all graduate students) will our data be included in the final national ACHA-NCHA Reference Group even though we didn't select a random sample?

A. The purpose of sampling a randomized subset of students is simply to eliminate the need to sample all students. Thus, sampling the universe is the same or better than selecting a random subset of students. When sampling the entire population or an entire sub-population of students, your data will be included in the Reference Group data set and reports.

AWARDING INCENTIVES TO SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Q: Can ACHA help us select random respondents to award participation incentives?

A: Yes, ACHA has a number of mechanisms in place to help with awarding incentives. Throughout the data collection process, our emailing software automatically tracks whether or not a particular student submits a survey. At the end of the data collection period, we export a list of all participants from which we randomly identify your winners. The email addresses of the random winners are sent to the campus survey administrator, who in turn contacts the students. Please note that incentives must be awarded immediately after the data collection period and before survey results are returned to the campus. Once the files linking an email address to a unique ID number are destroyed, it is impossible for ACHA to select random winners.

Q: We plan to award all survey participants a small incentive rather than (or in addition to) a drawing for a smaller number of larger value incentives. How can we tell which students participated and which ones did not?

A: There are two ways to address this issue. The first (and preferred) method is to have ACHA send a “thank-you” message to all survey participants at the end of the data collection period. Using text provided by the school, ACHA will send a email message to every student that participated. The message would serve as proof of participation in the survey as well as provide specific instructions for claiming their incentive. Please note that thank-you messages can only be sent after the data collection period closes, and will not be sent immediately upon submission of a survey. The letter of invitation/consent should explain this process to the student as well as tell them when they can expect to receive the thank-you message.

If you indicate in your letter of invitation that ACHA will provide your school with a list of all survey participants so that incentives can be awarded, then ACHA can provide you will a list of email addresses, in alphabetical order, of all students that submitted a survey. Because this option may make students feel less comfortable about participating in the survey, using the thank-you message technique mentioned above is preferred.

Q: Due to state regulations, my campus requires me to ensure that students who choose not to complete a survey are given the option to enter the drawing to win an incentive. Is there a mechanism in place so that non-participants may enter the drawing for an incentive?

A: If you must allow non-participants the opportunity to enter the drawing without submitting a survey, you need to include in your email contact an instruction for them to contact the campus survey administrator to enter the drawing. The survey administrator will maintain a list of email addresses of these students and forward the list to ACHA upon completion of the data collection period. ACHA will add these students to the pool of eligible students before identifying the random winners.

Q: How can we award incentives if we are sending the email invitations internally rather than having ACHA send the messages? (see section on CONTACTING STUDENTS regarding internal survey invitations)

A: As each student submits a survey, their unique ID number is captured in the data set, if the unique URLs were properly generated by the campus. (It’s critical that this is properly tested before data collection begins.) At the end of the data collection period, ACHA will randomly select the winners from the pool of all submitted unique ID numbers and communicate the winning numbers to the campus survey administrator who will, in turn identify the winning students. PLEASE NOTE THAT IF ACHA DOES NOT MANAGE YOUR EMAIL CONTACTS WITH STUDENTS AND THE UNIQUE ID NUMBERS DO NOT PROPERLY DOWNLOAD IN THE CASE OF YOUR INTERNALLY MANAGED SURVEY, WE WILL BE UNABLE IDENTIFY INCENTIVE WINNERS FOR YOU.

Q: Our incentive distribution plan requires that students show proof of participation in the survey. Will the “thank-you” page displayed upon survey submission serve as proof?

A: No, there is nothing unique about the survey thank-you web page that would identify a specific student (see https://members.acha.org/projects_programs/ncha_endsurvey.cfm). Multiple copies of the page may be printed or the link may be shared to extend access to this page to non-participants, so the thank-you page is not really proof of participation. Even so, some schools have made the decision to accept the thank-you page as proof of participation to distribute small incentives with very little abuse of the system.

It is possible for ACHA to email all participants after the data collection period closes with a thank you message containing instructions for obtaining their incentive. A student can print this email message, which was specifically sent to their email address as proof of participation in the survey. In addition, ACHA can provide the campus survey administrator with an alphabetical list of survey participant’s email addresses. This list can serve as a roster as

incentives are distributed. PLEASE NOTE THAT A THANK YOU MESSAGE MAILING MUST BE SCHEDULED IN ADVANCE WITH THE ACHA-NCHA PROGRAM OFFICE AND NEEDS TO OCCUR IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE DATA COLLECTION PERIOD CLOSES AND BEFORE THE EMAIL ADDRESS FILES ARE DESTROYED. The campus has the option of sending a thank you message in lieu of a 3rd reminder message to non-responders, or paying an additional fee for the thank you message.

Q: Is it possible to do a random drawing for incentive winners if we are using a static survey link? (see section on CONTACTING STUDENTS regarding static link surveys)

A: There are two ways to address a random drawing for incentives when using a static survey link rather than the standard email or unique ID systems. You could instruct the student to print out the thank you message that appears in their web browser window upon survey submission, add their contact info to the page, and then submit it to be entered in a drawing. As discussed in the question above, this use of this method carries some disadvantages.

Another way to enter students into a random drawing for incentives is to design your own web page to thank the student for their participation and to collect their information to enter them in the drawing. This information would be submitted directly to the campus rather than attached to their ACHA-NCHA responses. Your ACHA-NCHA survey would be programmed to redirect the student to your page rather than one of the standard ACHA pages upon survey submission. Your custom thank you page must be hosted on a secure server, such that the URL begins with "https://" rather than "http://".

CUSTOMIZING THE SURVEY

Q: Can we delete, move, or reword questions on the ACHA-NCHA?

A: No, it is not possible to alter existing items on the ACHA-NCHA survey.

Q: Can we add extra questions to the ACHA-NCHA Web?

A: Yes, it is possible to add additional questions to the end of your campus ACHA-NCHA survey. The cost varies depending on the number of discrete variables the question will add to your data set. Each additional variable is counted as a separate question, regardless of how the questions are numbered. If the respondent is instructed to "select the best response" then the overall question results in one variable. (Individual questions may not have more than 10 response categories.) If the respondent is instructed to "select all that apply", then each item on the list of responses is individually counted as a variable or question. For example, the following question is actually five additional variables on the ACHA-NCHA:

In the last 12 months, did a medical professional ever prescribe you the following narcotics? (Select all that apply)

- a. Codeine
- b. Hydrocodone
- c. Oxycodone
- d. Tramadol
- e. Morphine

The costs for adding extra variables are as follows:

Up to five unique variables - \$700

All 5 programmed into the survey, the SPSS data set, and the institutional frequency report

Up to 15 unique variables - \$700

All variables programmed into the survey and SPSS data set only, none of the variables will appear in the institutional frequency report

More than 15 unique variables - \$1500
All variables programmed into the survey and SPSS data set only, none of the variables will appear in the institutional frequency report

To request an estimate for the cost of your extra questions, please send a copy of the questions to Mary Hoban at mhoban@acha.org. Please allow three weeks to program the additional questions.

Q: Do you offer a Canadian version of the ACHA-NCHA?

A: Yes, we do offer a version of the ACHA-NCHA that has been adapted for use specifically at Canadian institutions. Specifically, the Canadian version of the survey eliminates the health insurance question and offers racial and ethnic categories that are more commonly measured in Canada.

Q: Is it possible to customize the thank-you page that students see upon survey submission?

A: When a student hits the "submit" button at the end of the ACHA-NCHA survey, the students' web browser will redirect to one of two different web pages. If the school is not offering an incentive, the browser will redirect to this page:

https://members.acha.org/projects_programs/ncha_endsurvey.cfm. If the campus is offering incentives through a random drawing, then the browser will redirect to this page:
https://members.acha.org/projects_programs/ncha_endsurvey_draw.cfm.

If you would prefer (or your IRB requires you) to customize the thank-you page specifically for your students, you may request this through the ACHA-NCHA Program Office. This is sometimes done to further explain the incentive process or to offer students campus and local resources for addressing some of the issues that might arise from taking the survey.

You may also choose to have us program your ACHA-NCHA survey to redirect students to a campus-created thank-you message page upon survey submission. A campus will sometimes create their own thank you page when they need to collect additional data from a student **disconnected from the ACHA-NCHA data collection process**. This allows the campus to collect student information to use in a drawing for incentives (in the event that a static survey link is used) or to direct students to a supplemental survey. Your campus-created thank you page must be hosted on a secure server, such that the URL begins with "https://" rather than "http://".

ADDITIONAL DATA DOWNLOADS

Q: I have access to additional information from the registrar's office about the students in my sample. Is it possible to have these data merged with my NCHA data set for each subject?

A: No, beginning with the Fall 2009 survey period, ACHA will no longer automatically add additional variables to the NCHA data set. Any additional data about the students that you want included in your NCHA data set must be collected in the form of an extra question added to the end of the survey. (See above). Excel files sent to ACHA containing student contact information should include only an email address and a first name (if you'd like your email invitations personalized with first names.) Please be sure to delete any additional student information from the Excel file before forwarding it to ACHA.

COSTS

Q: What is the cost of implementing the ACHA-NCHA Web?

A: The cost is less for the survey if your school is an ACHA Institutional Member — see the pricing chart at http://www.acha-ncha.org/docs/ACHA-NCHA_Participation_Processing_Fees.pdf

Please note that prices are subject to change. The costs for participating in the ACHA-NCHA Web is based on the quantity of students invited to take the survey. ACHA Institutional Members pay \$0.43/student, while non-member institutions pay \$0.86/student. The basic participation fee includes the initial survey invitation, up to 3 follow up contacts with the students (3 reminder messages to non-responders **OR** 2 reminder messages to non-responders plus a “thank-you” message to all participants), processing all submissions, and the report package. Additional fees will be applied for additional report packages, additional student contacts, and extra questions added to the ACHA-NCHA Web survey.

If your contact list is 4,000, your costs for the basic survey administration would be \$0.43 x 4000 or \$1,720.

Please note that there are no discounts given for schools that opt use a static survey link or opt to do an internal survey process where all students are contacted by the campus.

SURVEY RESULTS

Q: In what format can I expect to receive my results?

A: Included in the basic participation fee is Institutional Executive Summary (17 pages of salient results selected by the ACHA-NCHA Advisory Committee), Institutional Data Report (61 pages of frequency distributions for every variable in the survey for all subjects, and by each sex, with a bar graph), and your institutional data on a CD (SPSS system file with built in codebook). After the survey period is completed for all schools involved, you will receive the Reference Group Executive Summary and Reference Group Report for the survey period. Spring Reference Group reports are typically available the November following the survey period, the Fall Reference Group documents are typically available by March of the following year.

Q: Is it possible to get extra report packages for a subset of my students, and if so, how much does it cost?

A: Many institutions choose to have ACHA generate extra report packages for a subset of their students (e.g., graduates, undergraduates, residents, first-year students, students on only one of multiple campuses). Each additional Reports package is \$300 (\$150 each for the Executive Summary and Institutional Report). The non-institutional member price is \$500 (or \$250 per document.) Please contact Mary Hoban at mhoban@acha.org if you are interested in purchasing extra reports for your school.

Q: Is it possible to order a special Reference Group Report Package using student and/or campus demographic variables that are more relevant to our population?

A: It may be possible to have ACHA generate special Reference Group Report Packages for a subset of students (e.g., graduates, undergraduates, residents, first-year students) and/or a subset of campuses (e.g., 4 year, public, research institutions, with 20,000 or more students). Whether or not such a request can be depends on whether or not enough students or schools meet the criteria you identify. ACHA will not identify data for a specifically requested institution (or group of institutions), nor will we identify the identity of the institutions included in the Reference Group. Each additional Reference Group Reports package is \$300 (\$150 each for the Executive Summary and Institutional Report). The non-institutional member price is \$500 (or \$250 per document.) Please contact Mary Hoban at mhoban@acha.org if you are interested in purchasing extra Reference Group Reports for your school.

Q: My school is part of a consortium of schools that would like to participate in the ACHA-NCHA at the same time with the intention of producing a special Reference Group Report that is specific to our group. How can we make this happen?

A: This is not an unusual request and can be done for a number of different types of groups: by state or other geographic region, by type of institution (e.g. 2-year, Ivy League, Art Schools), or implementation across an institution with multiple campuses. There is no discount available for this sort of ACHA-NCHA participation – each school will be charged NCHA fees based on their institutional membership in ACHA. There is an addition charge of \$300 to generate the special Reference Group Report Package for the group. This charge may be added to one school's invoice, or portioned among the participating schools. You must indicate with your NCHA order if you are participating as part of a multi-campus consortium or group.

Q: I am working on a grant application and it would be very helpful if I had access to some of our ACHA-NCHA results before the survey period has closed. Is it possible for me to access preliminary results before the survey is officially closed?

A: No, because the link between a student email address and unique ID number must be destroyed before the campus has access to any survey results, it is not possible for the school to have access to the results during the data collection period. Results are typically ready 4-6 weeks after the data collection period closes. Please time your data collection so that you have results in time to meet such needs as grant applications and presentation deadlines.

ACHA-NCHA II vs. ORIGINAL ACHA-NCHA

Q: My school used the original ACHA-NCHA a few years ago as a pretest or baseline measure for a research project we are doing. Is it possible to continue to use the original survey for our post-test measure?

A: A revised version of the ACHA-NCHA, the ACHA-NCHA II, was introduced in Fall 2008. Beginning in Fall 2008 all new ACHA-NCHA customers have used the ACHA-NCHA II. Because the results of the two versions of the survey are not comparable, ACHA-NCHA customers that have used the original survey in the past may elect to continue to use the original ACHA-NCHA survey. Keep in mind that if you choose to use the original survey, you will not have a Reference Group for comparison with your results, as all other participating schools are using ACHA-NCHA II. Schools that have opted to continue to use the original ACHA-NCHA are typically in the middle of funded research projects and have made the decision that comparing with the older NCHA data is more important to them than comparing to a Reference Group.

Before you make the decision to continue with the original survey, please consider the other issues related to replicating your methodology. Using the same survey is critical, but not the only issue to consider. ACHA recommends that results only be compared if the survey methodology remains exactly the same as the previous survey implementation. Surveying at a different time of the school year, or a change in the sampling technique may introduce bias and prevent you from comparing your results. If you are unable to replicate the exact methodology of your prior survey implementation(s), it might make more sense to switch to the ACHA-NCHA II and beginning a new trend line for your results.

SPAM FILTERS & RATE CONTROL SYSTEMS

Q: My school uses rate control systems and spam filters that can intercept and block mass e-mailings from outside organizations. What can we do to prevent our invitations to participate in ACHA-NCHA Web from being blocked?

A: It is important that you work closely with your IT department to try to prevent this problem. Spam filters often look for specific words in the subject line and body of a message in an effort to decrease unsolicited e-mail messages. Words such as "win," "prizes," "last chance," "drawing," or even the use of multiple "!!!!!" in a message can trigger a spam filter and prevent the

distribution of the messages. It's important to test messages against your spam filter before the survey period begins. Rate control filters tend to block messages from a single IP address once a predetermined limit has been exceeded.

Please notify the IT department of your survey plans and let them know that that the invitations to participate will originate from webemailer.net (IP address 206.132.28.57). Although the e-mail messages will originate from the webemailer.net domain, they will appear to be from NCHA-WEB@acha.org (IP address 67.151.72.91). Both IP addresses and domains should be "whitelisted" to prevent the rate control system or spam filter from blocking our invitations. Likewise, the IT department may be able to "lift a quarantine" on e-mails originating from, webemailer.net, and acha.org. Lastly, the predetermined limit on rate control systems might need to be increased during your survey period.

REQUIRED PAPERWORK & ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Q: Why do I need to fill out an Institution of Higher Education Demographic Survey?

A: All colleges and universities that participate in the ACHA-NCHA are required to complete a demographic survey. The Demographic Survey, which can be found at <http://www.acha-ncha.org/order.html>, contains questions specific to your school, such as number of students, campus location, Basic Carnegie classification, and survey methodology. ACHA uses this information to report on the aggregate dataset from each survey period. As ACHA will not process your school's dataset or reports until this information is on file, it is recommended that you complete this survey as soon as possible once surveying has commenced.

Q: Am I required to obtain IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval for conducting the ACHA-NCHA?

A: Each surveyor is responsible for securing approval for conducting research involving human subjects from the appropriate campus office, prior to implementing the ACHA-NCHA. The body that grants approval for such surveys on your campus may be referred to as an Institutional (or Internal) Review Board, Human Subjects Committee, Grant Review Board, Research Review Board, or something similar. Many campuses will determine that the ACHA-NCHA presents minimal risk to the participants and grant an exemption or offer an expedited review of the project. Other campuses will require a full review of your proposed research with the ACHA-NCHA. Whatever the case, you are responsible for securing approval for the ACHA-NCHA, any additional questions added by the campus, and any additional variables you are providing to ACHA for automatic download into your dataset. A copy of such approval must be provided to ACHA before your dataset and reports are processed.

Q: What do I do if my IRB indicates that their review/approval is not required for the ACHA-NCHA?

A: If your IRB determines that the administration of the ACHA-NCHA is exempt from review, you will need to submit documentation to this effect as well as a letter of administrative approval as described in the next item.

Q: Our school does not have an IRB, how can we meet this requirement?

A: If your campus does not have an IRB, we will accept written permission to survey from a campus administrator (e.g., Vice President/Vice Chancellor, Dean of Students). ACHA must have this information on file prior to inviting your students to participate in the ACHA-NCHA. A short statement on letterhead indicating the absence of an IRB and giving ACHA permission to administer the ACHA-NCHA Web to your students will suffice.

Q: What do I need to send to ACHA to implement the NCHA-Web?

A: The following materials must be sent to ACHA at least two weeks prior to the desired survey launch date:

- The NCHA Order form with payment, available at <http://www.acha-ncha.org/order.html>.
- An Excel file of student e-mail addresses in the first column of the file, the student's first name in the second column (if the greetings are to be personalized),
- The letter of invitation/consent and subject line.
- The reminder letter of invitation/consent that is sent to non-responders. To do this version, simply add to the initial invitation letter a phrase such as, "Recently you were contacted to participate in the ACHA-NCHA. Please consider..."
- Your IRB or Administrative approval to survey (including approval of any additional questions).

Please note that if you choose to add additional questions to the ACHA-NCHA, a final list of questions and all materials listed above must be sent to ACHA **at least three weeks** prior to the desired survey date.

Q: What do I need to send ACHA to process the ACHA-NCHA Web and receive my reports?

A:

- The Demographic Survey (http://www.acha-ncha.org/docs/Demographic_Survey.pdf)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ACHA-NCHA Website (www.acha-ncha.org)
- ACHA-NCHA Users Manual
- Mary T Hoban, PhD, CHES
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