

Partnering with the private sector to increase the utility of government data collection and reporting – lessons from the National Center for Education Statistics

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NCES Partnerships

- The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), works regularly with private sector firms and researchers
 - Collaboration has been to address NCES research needs
 - Primarily through contracts to obtain study design advice, data collection resources, and data preparation and release
 - Input from the research field typically occurs during study design
- Limited collaboration with research teams seeking to meet their own research goals

Two Recent Forays into Researcher-led Initiatives

- Research team from the Universities of Texas at Austin, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, and NORC proposed a follow-up to High School and Beyond (HS&B)
- Research teams at the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), and a team with members from Temple, Dartmouth, and the Universities of Virginia and Pittsburgh proposed using National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) students to study ways to improve applications for federal student aid

High School and Beyond (HS&B)

- HS&B started in 1980 with nationally representative cohorts of 10th and 12th graders
- Purpose was to study transitions from high school into postsecondary education and the work force
- Last follow-up conducted by NCES was in 1992
- Researchers sought to study how high school and initial postsecondary education experiences related to later education, work, and health as the cohorts entered their 50s in 2014

High School and Beyond (HS&B)

- Team approached NCES in 2012
- NCES considered 4 factors
 - What had NCES promised respondents about recontact?
 - What approach would maximize protection of resulting respondent information?
 - Would the research further our mission to provide information about the condition of education in the U.S?
 - How would the resulting data be managed?

High School and Beyond (HS&B)

- Factor considerations
 - NCES had left the possibility of recontact open communications with HS&B members
 - NCES decided collection had to be conducted by a firm experienced in collecting data for NCES
 - Research directly met NCES' responsibility to provide information about the condition of education
 - NCES will distribute the resulting data as part of the HS&B datasets under restricted-use license

High School and Beyond (HS&B)

- Research team secured funding from
 - Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
 - National Science Foundation
 - Institute for Education Sciences
 - Spencer Foundation
- NCES is currently working with the team on data release
- We are working with NORC on a possible follow-up for the National Longitudinal Study of 1972

National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)

- NPSAS work differed from HS&B
 - NCES initiated by posting notice that we were making available NPSAS sample for researchers to work with after the NPSAS collection was complete
 - Only NPSAS sample not needed for NCES longitudinal follow-up studies were made available
 - Funded directly by our parent organization, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), through existing grant procedures

National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)

- Proposals focused on experimental interventions as opposed to the broader goals of the HS&B extension
- NBER is studying if letters and emails reminding students to fill out FASFA and benefits of full-time enrollment affect aid attainment and graduation
- University team is studying if reminders, or reminders plus on-line assistance boost FASFA completion and eventual graduation

National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)

- NCES considered 4 factors
 - What had NCES promised respondents about recontact?
 - What approach would maximize protection of resulting respondent information?
 - Would the research address IES grant priorities?
 - How would the resulting data be managed?

National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)

- Factor considerations
 - We directly ask NPSAS participants if they can be recontacted
 - NCES decided collection had to be conducted by a firm experienced in collecting data for NCES
 - Research met IES research grant priority to develop scalable postsecondary graduation interventions
 - NCES will distribute the resulting data as under restricted-use license

Issues to Consider

- Already noted issues of pledges to respondents, protection of data collected by private teams, purpose, and data distribution
- Other considerations
 - Vetting processes
 - Office of Management and Budget and other clearances
 - Time research team has with data before NCES distribution

Thank You