

## INCREASING RESPONSE RATE FOR SURVEYS

- Prepare Notification Letter or Cover Letter:
  - Present purpose of the survey
  - Explain value of survey to respondent
  - Establish importance of participation to the outcome of the survey
  - Tell how results will be used
  - Prepare respondent for what will be involved
  - Assure confidentiality
  - Assure that responses will not negatively impact services
  - Indicate appreciation for participation
  - Prepare Notification or Cover Letter on Agency letterhead
  - Send with signature of highest authority possible  
(Agency Director of Research and Evaluation or higher)
  - Include Phone/Fax/E-mail address for questions/verification etc.
  - Send letter about a week before calls begin depending on season
- Notify AAAs of pending survey so that they will be prepared when they receive calls asking questions or seeking verification. Let them know the “who, what, when, how, etc.” of the survey. Include copy of notification letter, cover letter, and sometimes a copy of the survey.
- Mail Surveys
  - Produce professional looking instructions and questionnaire
  - Give preferred date for return
  - Enclose stamped self-addressed envelope
  - Assign code to survey to identify respondent and link to database as necessary
  - Use code to follow-up non-respondents
    - Follow-up with call or letter
    - Encourage return
    - Send duplicate copy or
    - Complete survey over phone
- Telephone Interviews
  - Prepare interviewers to answer preliminary questions that may be asked
  - Evaluate the best day/time to reach target group
  - Communicate with pleasant but professional tone
  - Be prepared for special communication issues  
(Hearing or speech problems, impatience, rambling, language, style, memory, confusion, anger, etc.)
  - Remind respondent of letter sent to establish legitimacy of call
  - Consider using a proxy if client cannot participate
  - Ask if this is a good time to talk or schedule a better time
  - Follow-up unanswered calls on different day and/or time of day
  - Have background information related to the survey to help focus the respondent (e.g. name of agency, case worker, service provided)
  - Move on. If potential respondent is clearly not interested or able to participate in the survey, thank them and move on, call next client.

**Always be prepared for special cases and emergencies. If interviewer encounters a client in a bad situation, such as a medical emergency or abusive environment, disregard the interview and concentrate on assisting the client immediately.**