# SURVEY OF INCOME AND PROGRAM PARTICIPATION 

INFORMATIONAL BOOKLET 1985 PANEL (Waves 1-8) 1986 PANEL (Waves 1-7)

The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)
A
1986 Panel Control Card (SIPP-6001): Waves 1-7 .....  $A$
1985 and 1986 Panels Income Source Summary: All Waves .....  B
1985 Panel Callback Summary: Waves 1, 2, 4 and 6 ..... C
1985 Panel Callback Summary: Waves 3 and 7 ..... C
1985 Panel Callback Summary: Waves 5 and 8 ..... C
1986 Panel Callback Summary: Waves 1, 2, 3 and 6 ..... C
1986 Panel Callback Summary: Waves 4 and 7 ..... C
1986 Panel Callback Summary: Wave 5 ..... C
1985 Panel Core Questionnaire (SIPP-5100): Wave 1 ..... D
1986 Panel Core Questionnaire (SIPP-6100): Wave 1 ..... D
1985 Panel Core Questionnaire (SIPP-5800): Waves 2-8 ..... E
1986 Panel Core Questionnaire (SIPP-6700): Waves 2-7 ..... E
1985 Panel Pre-interview Transcription Items: Waves 2-8 ..... F
1986 Panel Pre-interview Transcription Items: Waves 2-7 ..... F
1985 Panel Missing Wave Section: Waves 3-8 ..... G
1986 Panel Missing Wave Section: Waves 3-5 ..... G
1985 Panel Topical Module Sections

1. Assets and Liabilities, Real Estate Property and Vehicles (SIPP-5300): Wave 3 ..... H
2. Support for Nonhousehold Members/Work-Related Expenses; Marital History; Migration History; Fertility History; Household Relationships (SIPP-5400): Wave 4 ..... I
3. Annual Income and Retirement Accounts; Taxes; School Enrollment and Financing (SIPP-5500): Wave 5 .....  J
4. Child Care Arrangements/Child Support Agreements; Support for Nonhousehold Members; Job Offers; Health Status and Utilization of Health Care Services; Long-Term Care;Disability Status of Children (SIPP-5600): Wave 6K
5. Assets and Liabilities; Retirement Expectations and Pension Plan Coverage; Real Estate Property and Vehicles (SIPP-5700): Wave 7 ..... L
6. Annual Income and Retirement Accounts; Taxes; School Enrollment and Financing (SIPP-5800): Wave 8 ..... M
1986 Panel Topical Module Sections1. Recipiency History; Employment History; Work Disability History; Education and TrainingHistory; Family Background; Marital History; Migration History; Fertility History; HouseholdRelationships (SIPP-6200): Wave 2. N
7. Child Care Arrangements/Child Support Agreements; Support for Nonhousehold Members; Job Offers; Health Status and Utilization of Health Care Services; Long-Term Care;Disability Status of Children (SIPP-6300): Wave 30
8. Assets and Liabilities; Retirement Expectations and Pension Plan Coverage; Real Estate Property and Vehicles (SIPP-6400): Wave 4 ..... P
9. Annual Income and Retirement Accounts; Taxes; School Enrollment and Financing (SIPP-6500): Wave 5 ..... 0
10. Child Care Arrangements/Child Support Agreements; Support for Nonhoushold Members;Work-Related Expenses; Shelter Costs/Energy Usage (SIPP-6600): Wave 6 R
11. Assets and Liabilities; Pension Plan Coverage; Real Estate Property and Vehicles (SIPP-6700): Wave 7 .....  S
85 and 86 Panels Respondent/Interviewer Flashcards ..... T
12. Card A: "From the Director Letters"
a. SIPP-5004: Wave 11985 Panelb. SIPP-5204: Wave 21985 Panel
c. SIPP-5304: Wave 31985 Panel
d. SIPP-5404: Wave 41985 Panel
e. SIPP-5504: Wave 51985 Panelf. SIPP-5604/6304: Wave 61985 Panel/Wave 31986 Panel
g. SIPP-5705/6405: Wave 71985 Panel/Wave 41986 Panel
h. SIPP-5805/6505: Wave 81985 Panel/Wave 51986 Panel
i. SIPP-6004: Wave 11986 Panelk. SIPP-6605: Wave 61986 Panel
l. SIPP-6705: Wave 71986 Panel
13. Card A: Letter to Respondent - Continued: 1985 Panel
Card A: Letter to Respondent - Continued: 1986 Panel
14. Card B: Common Questions and Suggested Answers: 1985/1986 Panels
Card B: Continued: 1985/1986 Panels
15. Card C: Privacy Act Statement: 1985/1986 Panels
16. Card D: Respondent Rules: 1985/1986 Panels
17. Card E: Summary Table for Determining Who Is To Be Included As A Member of the Household:1985/1986 Panels
18. Card F: Relationship to Reference Person: 1985 Panel
Card F: Relationship to Reference Person: 1986 Panel
Card F: Entered and Left Codes for Control CardItem 23: Wave 71985 Panel/Wave 41986 Panel
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# The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP): Background 

## Introduction

The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is a new nationwide survey designed to provide comprehensive information on the economic situation of households and persons in the United States; the first SIPP interviews of 20,000 households were conducted in October 1983. This survey collects detailed information on cash and noncash income, eligibility and participation in various government transfer programs, labor force status, assets and liabilities, and many other topics on a regular basis to learn how changes in people's lives affect their economic well-being. Data from the survey provide a multi-year perspective on changes in income, and their relationship to participation in government programs, changes in household composition and so forth. The data are also useful for studying federal government programs including their cost and effectiveness, and the effect that proposed changes in program regulations and benefit levels have on recipients. Studies of other important national issues, such as tax reform, social security program costs, and national health insurance also can be enhanced by the information from this survey.

Demands for this type of information surfaced in the late 1960 s and early 1970 s when many government programs were expanded and reorganized. To carry out this work, policy researchers developed microsimulation models to measure the distributional impacts of various alternative program proposals. These models, however, required detailed data to ensure the reliability of the model estimates and since no single survey collected such information, analysts made many assumptions and imputations based on data from surveys designed for other purposes. The most widely used source of income data was the March Income Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS). These income data, however, suffered from underreporting and misclassification by respondents. The only feasible way of obtaining improved measures of cash and noncash income and previously unavailable program-related data was to start a new survey specifically for this purpose.

Consequently, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare initiated a research program in 1975, the Income Survey Development Program (ISDP), to design a survey to meet these data requirements. Based on experience obtained in the ISDP, planning began in 1982 for implementation in 1983 of the new survey now known as SIPP.

## Design Features

The primary goal in designing SIPP was to improve reporting of income and other program-related data and to do it in a way that would allow the analysis of changes over time at a microlevel. This goal was met principally by using a survey design in which the same people are interviewed at relatively short intervals, once every four months, for approximately $21 / 2$ years.

The reference period for most survey items is the four month period preceding the month of the interview. Sample persons are interviewed at new addresses if they move, and any other persons that they move in with, or vice versa, are also interviewed. In this way, a highly detailed record is built up over time for each person and household in a sample panel. This design minimizes the need for sample persons to recall most of the information for longer than a few months and reduces the number of questions asked in one interview.

To further enhance the estimates of change, particularly year to year change, a new sample panel of approximately 12,000 households is introduced every year. Consequently, two or sometimes three panels are in the field concurrently. Since portions of the sample are the same from one year to the next, year to year change estimates can be based in part on a direct comparison across two years for the same individuals. The overlapping panel design also allows crosssectional estimates to be produced from a larger, combined sample that is about double in size when two panels overlap and triple with three overlapping panels.

## Survey Content

Each interview is planned to take about thirty minutes of a respondent's time and includes content that is divided into three main groups of questions. The substance of two of these groups should be essentially the same for each interview and for each panel. The third group of questions covers topics that will change in each interview of a panel allowing for the inclusion of some new content, although many of the topics will be repeated across all the panels.

The first group of questions is contained on the control card, a separate document from the questionnaire, which records basic social and demographic characteristics for every person residing at an address (age, race, sex, etc.) as well as some information relating to the housing unit or household. The card has information on each source of income received and the name of each job or business so that this information can be used at the next interview.

The second major group of questions form the core portion of the questionnaire, which is divided into five sections. The core set of questions is asked at the first interview and then updated in each subsequent interview. The first section of the core collects the basic labor force participation data weekly for all jobholders for the four reference months. In addition, this first section of the core collects much of the information on the receipt of income from various sources during the four month reference period. This includes income from government sources such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Supplemental Security Income, General Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, and Workers' Compensation. Respondents are also asked about Social Security, pensions, and other retirement income, about miscellaneous sources





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Page 48b








| CALLBACK SUMMARY |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| CHECKITEM C1 Are any items marked on |  |  | ```\(1 \square\) Yes - Mark appropriate item(s) below, then SKIP to Check Item C2 \({ }_{2} \square\) No - SKIP to Check Item C2``` |  |  |
| $\square$ | 1. Social Security Number (Enter in cc item 33a) |  | - $\square$ $\square$ |  | $\square \underset{\substack{x_{1} \square \mathrm{DK} \\ \mathrm{x}_{2} \square \text { Ref. }}}{\mathrm{x}_{3} \square \text { None }}$ |
| $\square$ | 2. Medicare claim number (Item 23b, page 8) |  |  |  | $\square$ |
| $\square$ | 3. EMPLOYER <br> a. Employer \#1 (Item 8a, page 15) What was the total amount of pay received before deductions on this job in ...? | 5006 <br> 5008 <br> 5010 <br> 5012 | $\$$ $\cdot 00$ <br> $\$$ 00 <br> $\$$ 00 <br> $\$$ 00 <br> 0 00 | Last month <br> 2 months ago <br> 3 months ago <br> 4 months ago | $\mathrm{x}_{1} \square \mathrm{DK} \mathrm{x}_{2} \square$ Ref. $\mathrm{x}_{3} \square$ None <br> $x_{1} \square D K \times 2 \square$ Ref. $x_{3} \square$ None <br> $x_{1} \square D K x_{2} \square$ Ref. $x_{3} \square$ None <br> $x_{1} \square D K x_{2} \square$ Ref. $x_{3} \square$ None |
| $\square$ | b. Employer \#2 IItem 16a, page 17) <br> What was the total amount of pay received before deductions on this job in....? | 5014 <br> 5016 <br> 5018 <br> 5020 | $\$$ .00 <br> $\$$ $\cdot 00$ <br> $\$$ 00 <br> $\$$ 00 | Last month <br> 2 months ago <br> 3 months ago <br> 4 months ago | $x_{1} \square D K x_{2} \square$ Ref. $x_{3} \square$ None <br> $x_{1} \square \mathrm{DK} \mathrm{x}_{2} \square$ Ref. $\mathrm{x}_{3} \square$ None <br> $x_{1} \square \mathrm{DK} \mathrm{x}_{2} \square$ Ref. $\mathrm{x}_{3} \square$ None <br> $x_{1} \square \mathrm{DK} \mathrm{x}_{2} \square$ Ref. $\mathrm{x}_{3} \square$ None |
| $\square$ | 4. SELF-EMPLOYMENT <br> a. Self-employment \#1 (Item 7, page 19) What was the total amount of income received from this business in . . .? | 5022 <br> 5024 <br> 5026 <br> 5028 | $\$$ .00 <br> $\$$ .00 <br> $\$$ 00 <br> $\$$ 00 | Last month <br> 2 months ago <br> 3 months ago <br> 4 months ago | $\mathrm{x}_{1} \square \mathrm{DK} \mathrm{x}_{2} \square$ Ref. $\mathrm{x}_{3} \square$ None <br> $\mathrm{x}_{1} \square \mathrm{DK} \mathrm{x}_{2} \square$ Ref. $\mathrm{x}_{3} \square$ None <br> $x_{1} \square D K x_{2} \square$ Ref. $x_{3} \square$ None <br> $x_{1} \square D K x_{2} \square$ Ref. $x_{3} \square$ None |
| $\square$ | b. Self-employment \#2 (Item 18, page 22) <br> What was the total amount of income received from this business in ...? | 5030 <br> 5032 <br> 5034 <br> 5036 | $\$$ .00 <br> $\$$ 00 <br> $\$$ 00 <br> $\$$ 00 <br> 00 00 | Last month <br> 2 months ago <br> 3 months ago <br> 4 months ago | $x_{1} \square D K x_{2} \square$ Ref. $x_{3} \square$ None <br> $x_{1} \square D K \times 2 \square$ Ref. $x_{3} \square$ None <br> $x_{1} \square \mathrm{DK} \mathrm{x}_{2} \square$ Ref. $\mathrm{x}_{3} \square$ None <br> $x_{1} \square D K x_{2} \square$ Ref. $x_{3} \square$ None |
|  | Amounts as of Month/day/year |  | (the last day | of the referenc | period) |
| $\square$ | 5. SELF-EMPLOYMENT <br> a. What was the total value of this business before figuring in any debts that might be owed against it? | 8850 <br>  <br>  <br> 8851 | Business 1  <br> $\$ \quad 00$  <br> (Item 11b, page 20)  <br> $\times 1 \square \mathrm{DK}$  <br> $\times 2 \square$ Ref.  <br> $\times 3 \square$ None  <br> $1 \square$ Office Use Only  | 8852 <br> 8853 | Business 2 <br> $\$ \quad .00$ <br> (Item 22b, page 23) <br> x1 $\square \mathrm{DK}$ <br> ×2 $\square$ Ref. <br> x3 $\square$ None <br> $1 \square$ Office Use Only |
| $\square$ | b. What was the total debt owed against this business? |  | $\$$ $\square$ <br> (Item 11d, page 20) <br> $\times 1 \square \mathrm{DK}$ <br> $\times 2 \square$ Ref. <br> $\times 3 \square$ None <br> $1 \square$ Office Use Only | 8856 <br> 8857 | \$ $\square$ <br> (Item 22d, page 23) <br> $\times 1 \square \mathrm{DK}$ <br> $x_{2} \square$ Ref. <br> $\times 3 \square$ None <br> $1 \square$ Office Use Only |
| $\square$ | 6. What was the total amount in savings/Money market deposit accounts/CD's/Interestearning checking accounts held jointly by husband and wife? (Item 2c, page 42) |  | $s$ $\square$ . 00 DK $\square$ Ref. None |  |  |
| $\square$ | 7. What was the total amount in savings/Money market deposit accounts/CD's/Interest-earning checking accounts in own name? (Item 3c, page 42) |  | $\square$ <br> \$ . 00 चDK DRef. $\square$ None |  |  |
| $\square$ | 8. What was the total amount in Money market funds/securities/ bonds held jointly by husband and wife? (Item 2c, page 43) | 5042 | s $00$ DDK $\square$ Ref. <br> $\times 3 \square$ <br> $\square$ None |  |  |


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