Pooled Fund Quarterly Report

For: January-March 2016

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In January 2016, NHTS staff attended Transportation Research Board’s Annual Meeting. Updates to the 2016 NHTS were presented, the NHTS Task Force continued planning for a 2nd circular and a poster session once again revealed many of the various uses of the NHTS.

The NHTS team has completed the planning and design phase for the 2016 survey. Pretesting ran from November 2015 through January 2016 with pretest results submitted to FHWA in late February. During this time NHTS staff spent several weeks testing the online instrument and provided feedback to the contracting firm Westat on the program structure and efforts to reduce respondent burden. This review process also allowed NHTS staff to perform QAQC data checks for the questionnaire and provide content expectations for future data submissions.

On March 31, 2016, the first 2016 NHTS recruitment mailings were sent out to the public across the nations. A total of 16,736 recruitment survey packages were included in this initial mailing. . This represents another major milestone for the 2016 NHTS program. Over the last few decades, travel survey methods have been accelerated by technological advancement, resulting in a move away from traditional data collection approaches and embracing efforts like address-based sampling and internet surveys. With a growing number of cell phone only households, research dictates that higher response rates will be associated with a move away from CATI and towards address based sampling.

All add-on partners have transferred their commitments to the Transportation Pooled fund as the deadline was in December 2015. The FHWA NHTS website has been updated to include contact information and cover letters from add-on partners. Those who have yet to submit their information can still do so. This will aid local residents in better understanding the partnership between the USDOT and the participating local/state agencies.

Add-on sample designs and questions have all been submitted to FHWA and are currently live as the official survey effort has begun.  Currently there are nine states and 4 MPO add-on partners resulting in an additional 100,000 samples to the 26,000 national sample. The first respondents will have likely received recruitment package mailings in the first few days of April. The NHTS will proceed for the next 12 months with regular updates provided to the add-ons. The GPS component of the survey will not be included due to cost constraints.