

Appendix UU
Interviewer Letter for Sections P-S Conversions

To: All SSBF Interviewers

From: Bob Bailey

Date: September 30, 2004

Re: Section III, Income and Expenses, and Section IV, Balance Sheet

Copy: Mireya, Troy, Bob, Jessie, Tim, Sadia, Terri, Tony, Shehzad, Mindy, Trish

The folks who do data review, editing, and delivery have reported the results of the completeness check. You may remember from training that the FRB has very specific limits on how many questions can be answered DK or RF in a case and still have it qualify as a completed interview with useful data. About 10% of the cases we complete are failing the check. Most of the cases that have failed the check have too much missing data in sections P, R, and S, that is, Income and Expenses, Assets, and Liabilities and Equity, where 75% of the questions have to be answered to pass the check. With the end so close, it's painful to realize that we've made it through the difficult sections and yet we're unable to collect the data we need in these last few sections.

When you encounter a respondent who is reluctant to report these amounts,

- Remind respondent about our assurance of confidentiality. Owner names and firm names will be removed from the data prior to public release. In the public data, firms are identified only by general characteristics such as "manufacturer in the Northeast." Only a handful of analysts at the FRB, literally 5 or 6 people, see the data with the identifiers attached, and they have signed extremely rigorous confidentiality agreements. They are prevented by law from revealing these data to unauthorized persons.
- Confidently ask for estimates and ranges as presented in the CATI questionnaire. Use all your skills as an interviewer to make the respondent comfortable with reporting at least an estimate or range. If respondent refuses, don't just accept that as the last word. It is true, they are allowed to refuse any questions they choose, but by this time they have invested quite a bit of time and energy in participating. We need to try to gently but firmly leverage that investment. One or two missing items in these sections will not be fatal, but routine repeated refusals to these questions will be. Make sure respondent is hearing each question and considering it, not just refusing on principle throughout a section.
- If respondent answers "Don't Know" to item after item in these sections, try to find out if there's a better respondent for these questions at the firm. We would prefer to interview a more knowledgeable respondent rather than push on to the finish and close the case with too much missing data.