

APPENDIX C.

Collection and Processing Procedure

CONTENTS

Interview and Residence Rules	C-1
Data Collection Procedures	C-2
Processing Procedures	C-2

INTERVIEW AND RESIDENCE RULES

In accordance with U.S. Census Bureau practice, each person was to be interviewed as an inhabitant of his or her “usual residence” in the 1997 U.S. Virgin Islands Consumer Expenditure Survey. Usual residence is the place where the person lives and sleeps most of the time or considers to be his or her usual residence. This place is not necessarily the same as the person’s legal residence or voting residence. In the vast majority of cases, however, the use of these different bases of classification would produce substantially the same statistics, although there might be appreciable differences in some areas.

The implementation of this practice has resulted in the establishment of rules for certain categories of persons whose usual residence is not immediately apparent. Furthermore, this practice means that persons were not always counted as residents of the place where they happened to be staying on the reference day (March 1, 1997).

Interview Rules

Each person in the survey sample whose usual residence was in the U.S. Virgin Islands was to be included in the survey, without regard to the person’s legal status or citizenship. As in previous surveys, persons in Virgin Islands specifically excluded from the census were foreign travelers who had not established a residence.

Persons with a usual residence outside the U.S. Virgin Islands were not enumerated in the 1997 Survey. On the other hand, residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands temporarily abroad were to be enumerated at their usual residence in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Persons living outside the U.S. Virgin Islands were enumerated on a special “Emigrants” form, but these data were incomplete.

Residence Rules

Each person included in the survey was to be counted at his or her usual residence—the place where he or she lives and sleeps most of the time or the place where the person considers to be his or her usual home. If a person had no usual residence, the person was to be counted where he or she was staying on March 1, 1997.

Persons temporarily away from their usual residence, whether in the U.S. Virgin Islands or abroad, on a vacation or on a business trip, were counted at their usual residence. Persons who occupied more than one residence during the year were counted at the one they considered to be their usual residence.

Persons who moved on or near the reference day were counted at the place they considered to be their usual residence.

Persons Away at School—College students were counted as residents of the place in which they were living while attending college. Children in boarding schools below the college level were counted at their parental home.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The 1997 U.S. Virgin Islands Survey was conducted using standard scientific techniques to obtain a sample of households.

Sample Design

Census Bureau geography divides each island in the US Virgin Islands into non-overlapping regions called Block Numbering Areas (BNAs). Each BNA is subdivided into smaller areas called Block Groups (BGs), and each BG is subdivided into even smaller areas called blocks. A two-stage sample design was used for this survey where BGs constituted the Primary Sampling Units (PSUs). The design called for the selection of an area sample in two stages, using the method of paired selection of PSUs with probabilities proportional to size measures (PPS). All the BGs were ordered geographically and then divided into 20 incipient strata. A pair of BGs was randomly selected from each stratum using systematic sampling. It was decided that the sample values should be within two percentage points of the corresponding population values with a confidence level of 95 percent. The sample that was required to achieve estimates which do not exceed this maximum error due to sampling error only, and without the adjustment for finite population sampling was 1,450.

After adjusting for refusals, vacancies, and other situations that result in non-interviews, the sample size increased to 2,180. From prior surveys conducted in the US Virgin Islands, it was estimated that both the completed interview rate and the coverage rate were about 85 percent. Also, the 1990 Census showed that approximately 18.5 percent of the households in the USVI was vacant. This figure was used as an estimate for the vacancy rate in calculating the final sample size.

Estimation of the tabulated values was derived by first applying weights to the sample values. The weight for each island is as follows: St. Croix: 24.30423; St. John: 60.88207; and St. Thomas: 38.81721.

Interviewing in Housing Units

Beginning in March 1, 1997, interviewers visited households that were randomly selected in the survey office. A personal interview was conducted in which the interviewer asked the questions as worded on the questionnaire and recorded the answers. A single questionnaire contained all questions asked of persons and housing units and expenditure. The questionnaire contained both basic and detailed items as well as items on household expenditure. Only housing information was obtained from vacant housing units.

Coverage and Edit-Failure Follow-up—Field supervisors conducted an initial check of the questionnaires for completeness and consistency. Data editors in the Survey office performed additional coverage and edit checks. Those households for which questionnaires did not meet specific

quality standards because of incomplete information, were contacted by supervisors to obtain the missing information.

PROCESSING PROCEDURES

The U.S. Virgin Islands 1997 Consumer Expenditure Survey questionnaire was designed as a keyable document. The information supplied to the interviewer by the respondent was recorded by marking the answers in the appropriate answer boxes and, in some cases, entering a write-in response. Interviewers returned all completed questionnaires to the Survey office where the questionnaires were checked in and edited for completeness and consistency of the responses. Once all data collection activities were complete, the questionnaires were coded in the Survey office. All write-in entries were coded. After all coding operations were complete, the data entry clerks keyed all the responses to the questions on all the questionnaires using CENTRY—the data-entry component of IMPS (Integrated Microcomputer Processing System), including the codes for the write-in entries. The disks containing the keyed data were then processed on microcomputers using the IMPS Consistency and Correction (CONCOR) package for editing the data and the Census Tabulation System (CENTS) for tabulating the data.