

Calling all Early Birds:

Testing a Deadline-Limited Incentive in a Sequential Mixed-Mode Survey

October 25, 2023

Federal Committee on Statistical Methods, College Park, MD

Michelle McNamara

Study Director, National
Household Education Surveys
Program

National Center for Education
Statistics

Rebecca Medway

Principal Researcher, American
Institutes for Research

Danielle Battle

Principal Researcher, American
Institutes for Research

Ai Rene Ong

Researcher, American Institutes
for Research

Overview

- National Household Education Survey
 - Background
 - Methods
- Early Bird experiment
- Results
- Conclusions and Next Steps

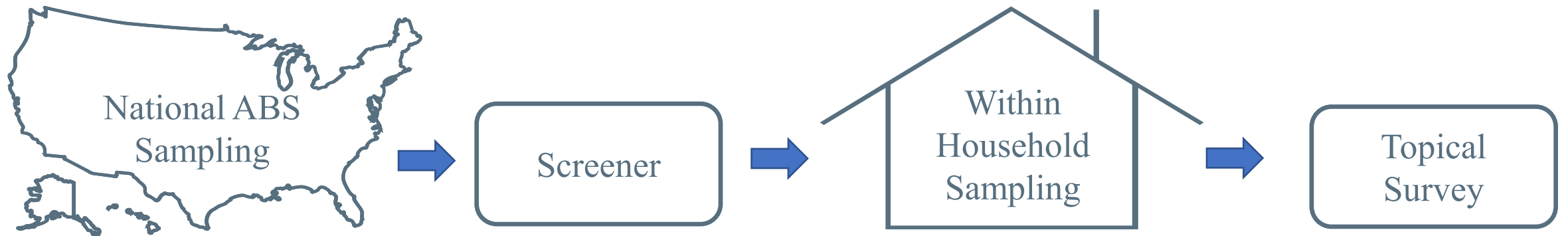
NHES:2023 - Background

- Household-based, cross-sectional, nationally representative study of children
- Collects information from parents about children's early care and education experiences and family involvement in school
- Data collection every 3-4 years
- Data are collected by Census on behalf of NCES



NHES:2023 - Methods

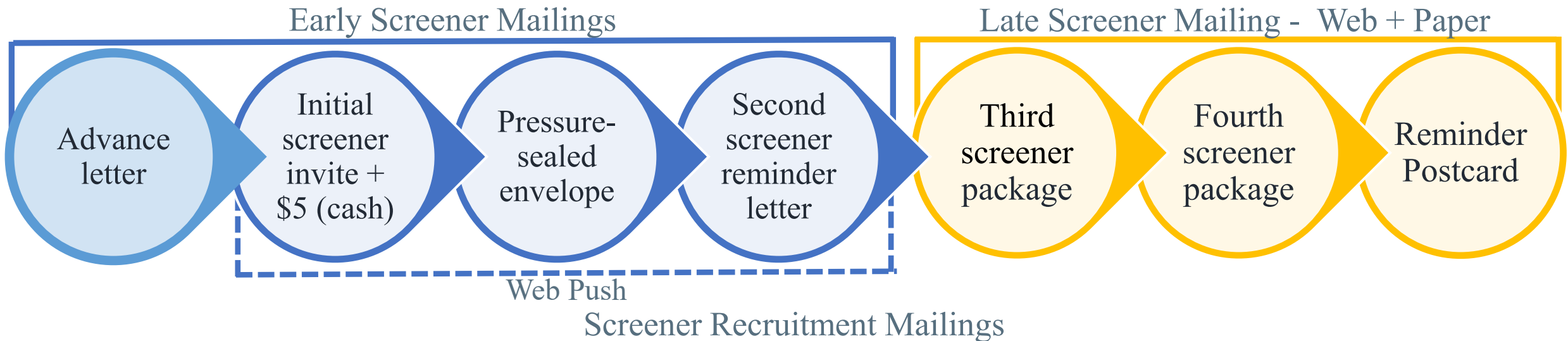
- Recruitment by mail
- Multimodal collection (web, paper, phone)
- Multiphase design



Early Bird Experiment - Inspiration

Why use a timed incentive for NHES?

- Increase response rates
- Increase response rates through web survey
- Design of NHES lends itself well to an early bird incentive



Early Bird Experiment - Methods

Intervention: Promise \$20 (cash) for completing the screener in the early mailing phase of screener recruitment before participants receive paper copies of the screener

Baseline Condition (control)

Early mailing contact envelopes asked for response by March 13, 2023



N=53,000

Early Bird Condition

Early mailing contact envelopes asked for response by March 13, letters in early mailings promised \$20 (cash) for response by March 13, 2023



N=53,000

Envelope featuring respond-by date



United States[®]
Census
Bureau

1201 E 10th St
Jeffersonville IN 47132-0001
OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use \$300
BC-1328(JV) (10-2022)

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

0939

Address Service Requested

PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
PERMIT NO. G-58



202340000100 10 01 #E
0939-11LBB-001952



Please respond by March 13th.
Por favor responda antes del 13 de marzo.



Excerpt from early bird letter promising incentive:

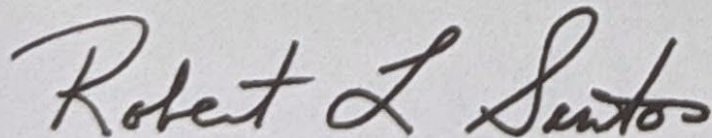
This survey will take only about 3 minutes if there are no children or youth age 20 or younger in your household. If there are children or youth, it will take about 30 minutes. We know that you are busy, and we have enclosed \$5 as a token of our appreciation for your time.

If you complete the survey by March 13, we will mail you an additional \$20 as a thank you for your prompt response.

We understand that some households do not have Internet access. **If you prefer to complete the survey by phone, have questions, or need assistance, please contact the U.S. Census Bureau toll-free at 1-888-840-8353.** Answers to frequently asked questions about the survey are included in this mailing. You can also find more information online at nces.ed.gov/nhes.

Thank you for your participation in this valuable national survey. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



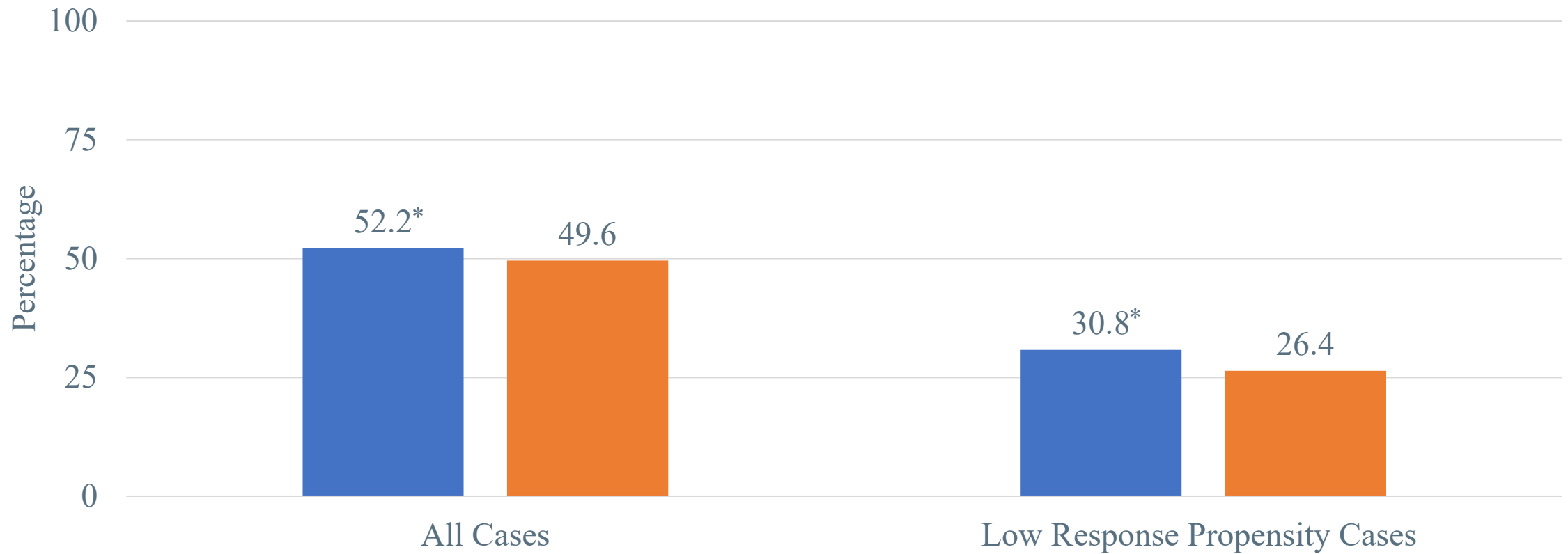
Robert L. Santos
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Early Bird Experiment - Research Questions

Questions	Outcomes of interest
Does an early bird incentive increase response rates?	Final response rates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Screener response rate• Topical response rate• Overall response rate
Does an early bird incentive affect screener response timing?	Screener response after early mailings and after all screener mailings
Does an early bird incentive affect screener response mode?	Mode of screener response
Does an early bird incentive affect the representativeness of NHES screener respondents	Characteristics of screener respondents

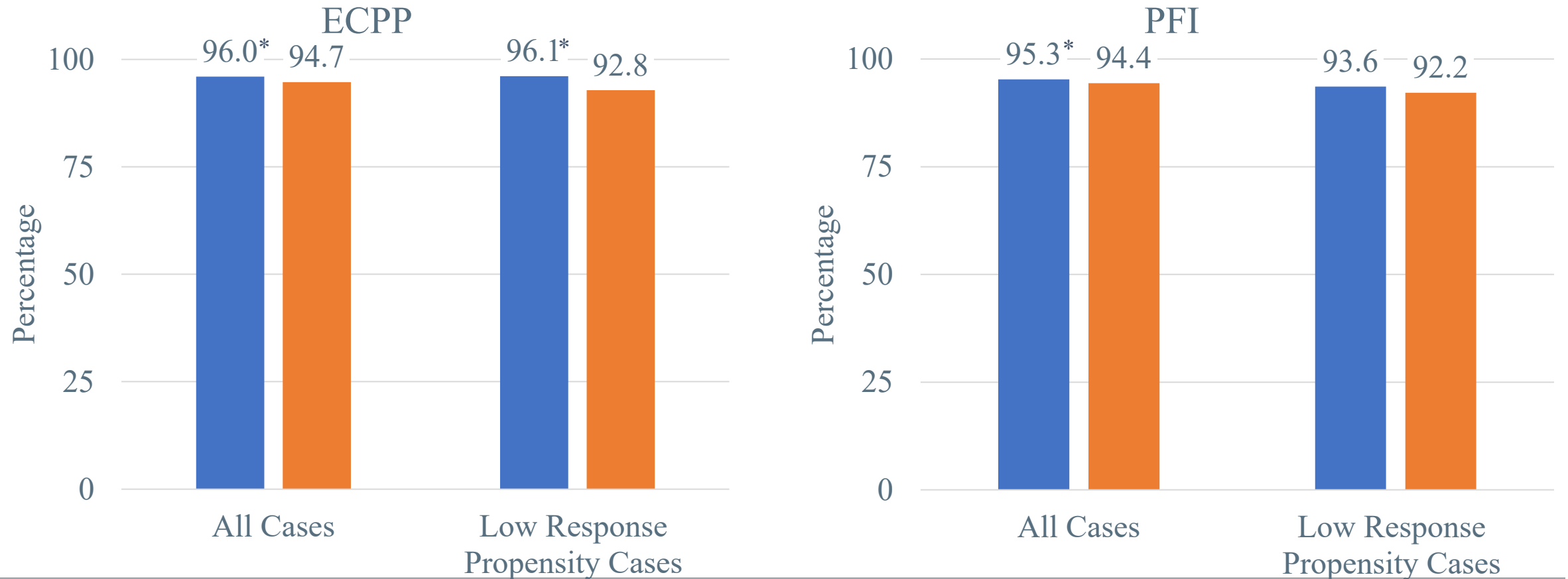
Findings - Does an early bird incentive increase the final screener response rate?

Final Screener Response Rate, by Condition and Response Propensity



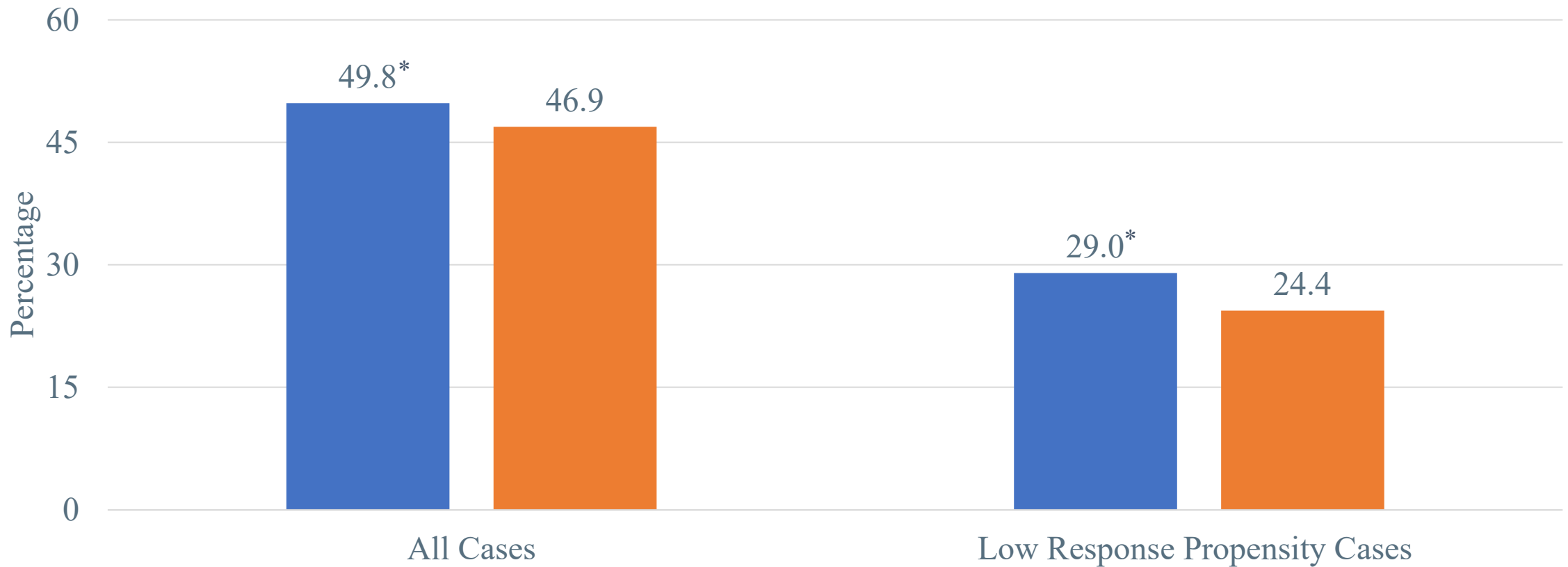
Findings - Does an early bird incentive increase the final topical response rate?

Final Topical Response Rate by Topical Survey, Condition, and Response Propensity



Findings - Does an early bird incentive increase the final overall response rate?

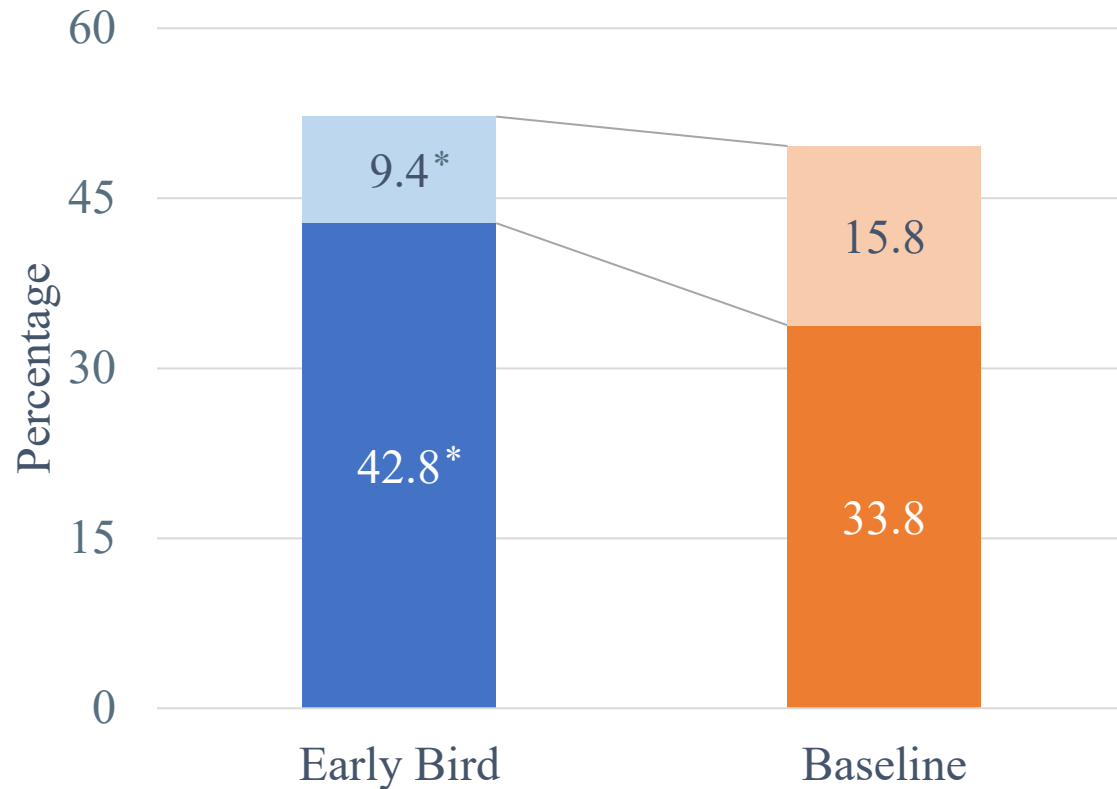
Final Overall Response Rate, by Condition and Response Propensity



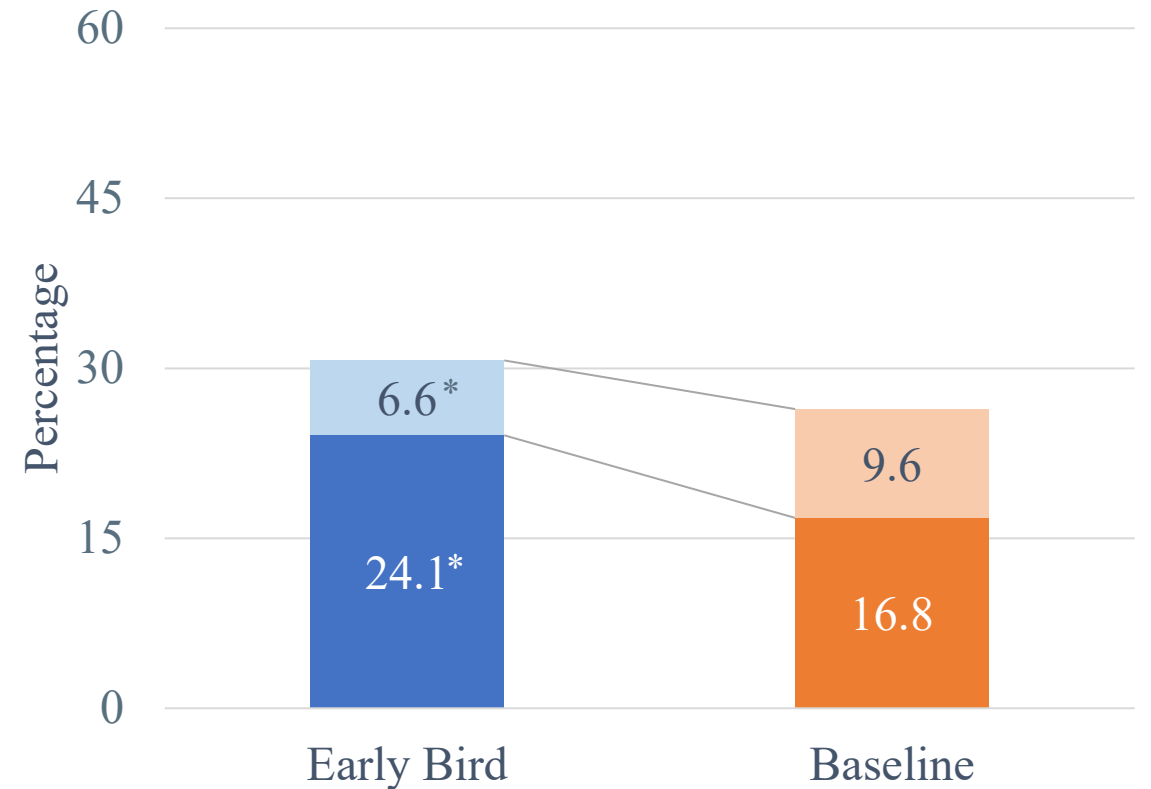
Findings - Does an early bird incentive affect response timing?

Final Screener Response Rate by Timing, Condition, and Response Propensity

All Cases



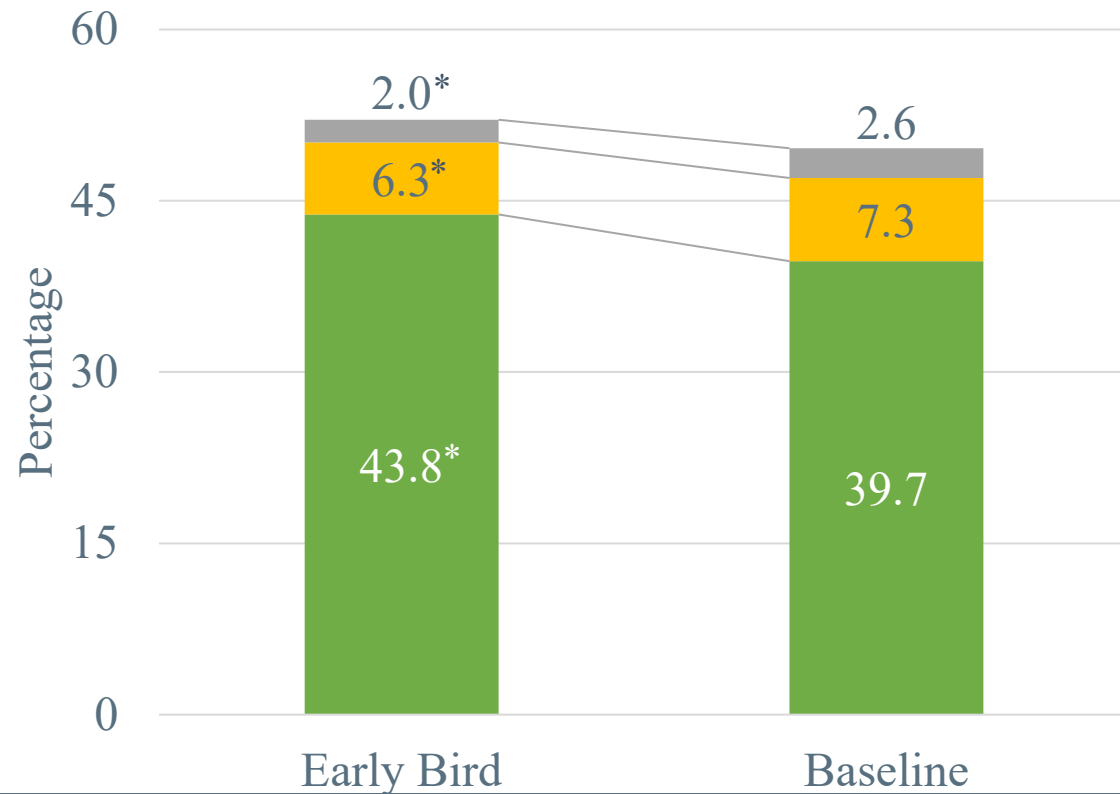
Low Response Propensity



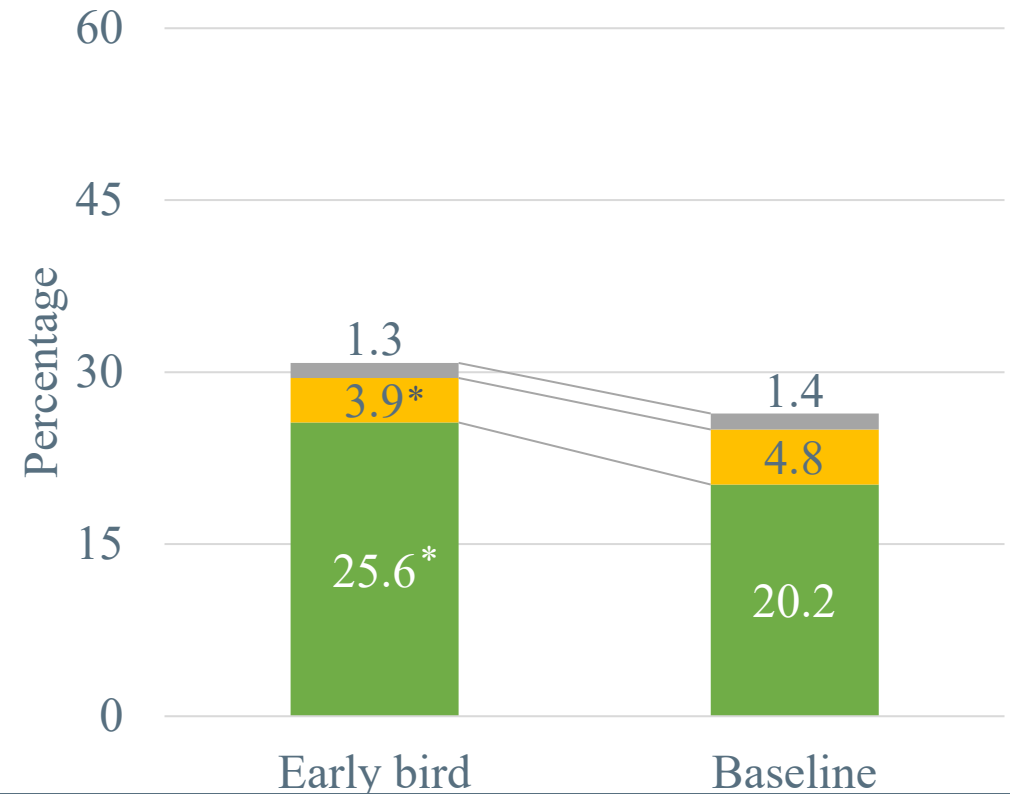
Findings - Does an early bird incentive affect screener response mode?

Final Screener Response by Mode, Condition, and Response Propensity

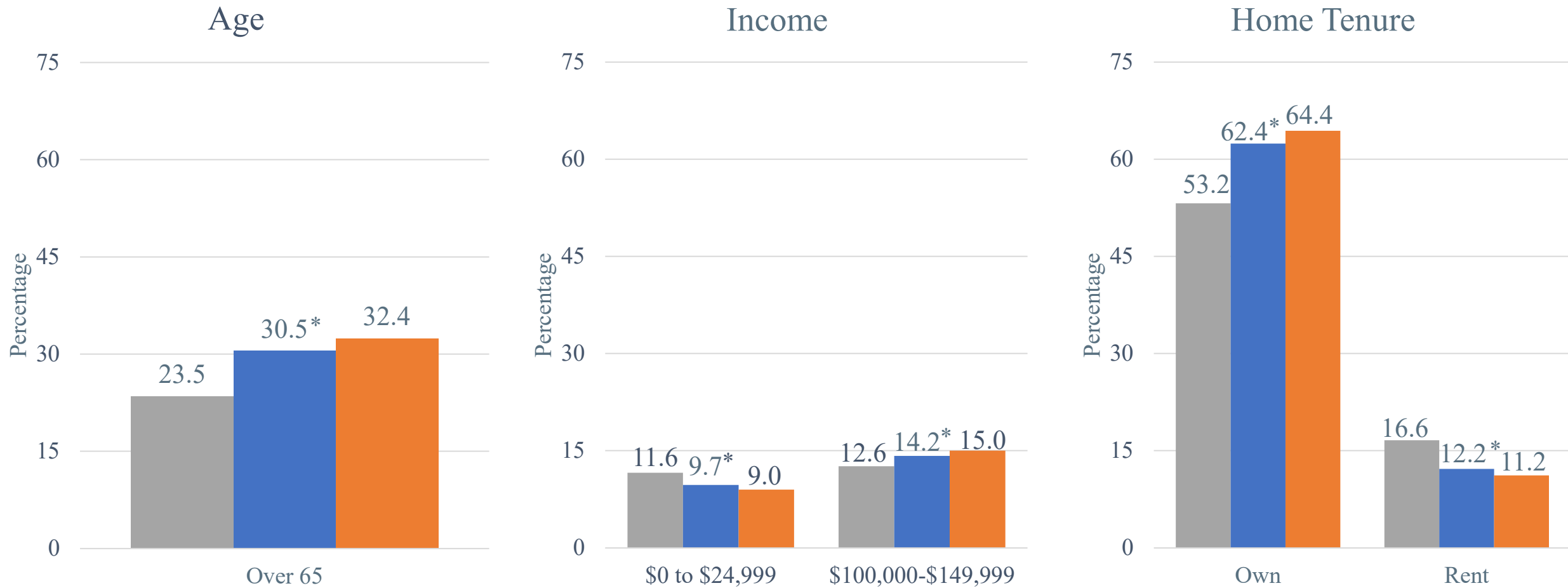
All Cases



Screener Response Mode



Findings - Does an early bird incentive affect the representativeness of NHES screener respondents?



Conclusions and Next Steps

The Early Bird Incentive...



... increased response rates



... encouraged earlier screener responses



... encouraged screener response by web, and



... has respondents that are as or more so representative than the baseline condition

Next Steps



Verify findings with final weighted data



Compare Early Bird Incentive with other methodological experiment results



Compare cost of Early Bird Incentive condition to other NHES:2023 conditions

Questions?

michelle.mcnamara@ed.gov

rmedway@air.org

dbattle@air.org

aong@air.org