

# Using a Staffing Agency for Recruiting CAPI Interviewers on a Large National Study

Steve Coombs

Kerryann DiLoreto, Rae Ganci, and Nick Schultz

International Field Director's and Technology Conference, Scottsdale Arizona

May 16<sup>th</sup> 2011

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# Overview

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- The Wisconsin Longitudinal Study
- How do we staff a national CAPI study?
- Lessons learned

# The Wisconsin Longitudinal Study

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# The Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (WLS)

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- Original sample: 10,000 high school graduates interviewed in 1957
- Siblings and spouses added over the years
- UWSC collected last two waves in 1992 and 2004 via telephone and mail

# The Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (WLS)

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- WLS 2010 - 2012
- Switching mode to CAPI with follow up SAQ
- 12,232 possible participants
- Interview length = 2.5 hours
- 9 anthropometric measures
- Cognitive testing
- DNA sample collection (saliva)
- National study with a 22 month field period



# How does we staff a national CAPI study?

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# UWSC CAPI History

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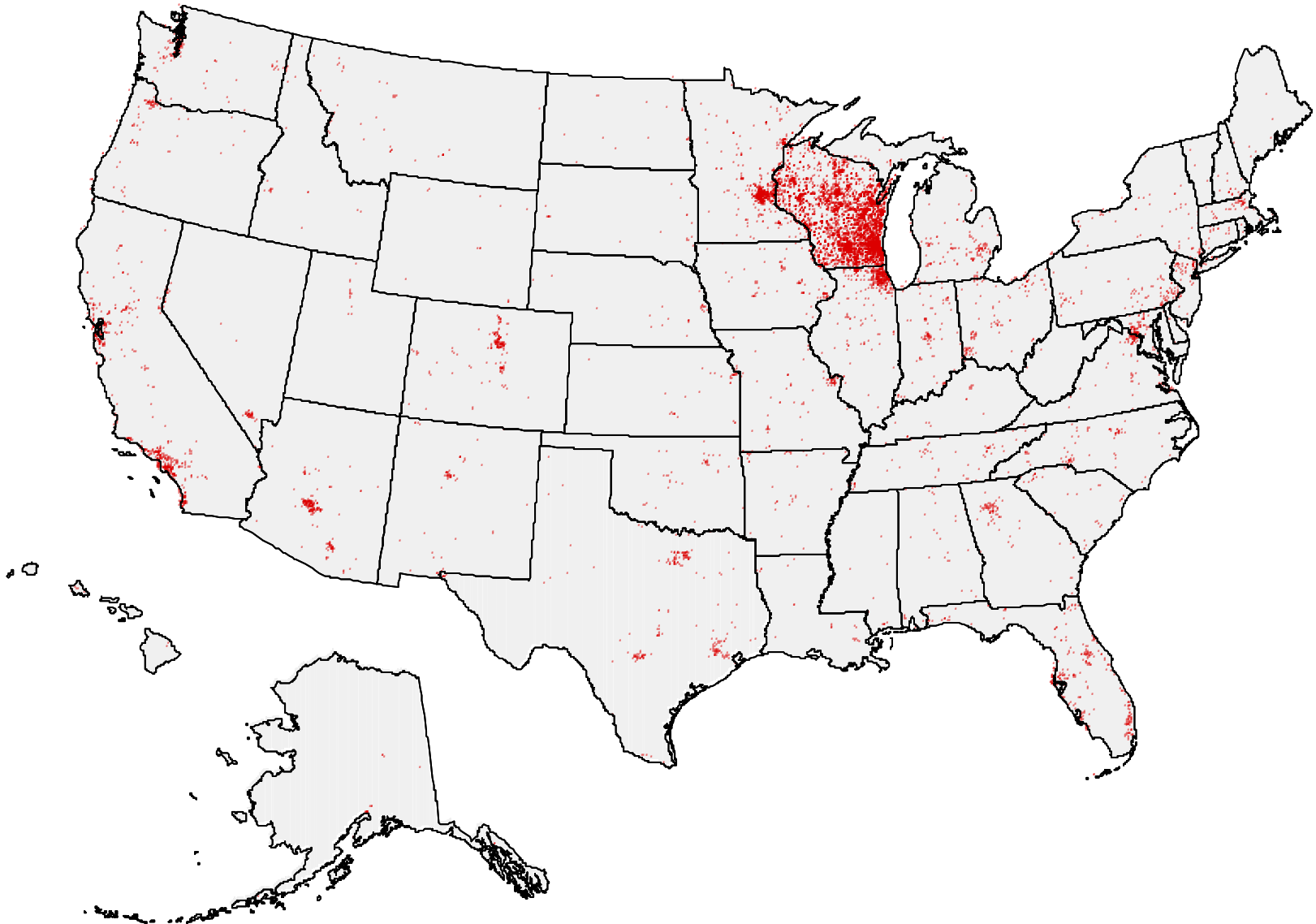
- Smaller and more local
  - Midwest Young Adult study (MYA)
    - n=600 in IL, IA and WI
    - 45 minute interview
  - Milwaukee Area Renters Study (MARS)
    - n=2,000
    - 30 minute interview
  - Mid Life in the United States (MIDUS) Oversample
    - Milwaukee area
    - N=600
    - 45 minute interview



# How do we staff a national CAPI study?

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- Wisconsin Longitudinal Study
  - Participants in all 50 states
  - 66% sample in WI, 75% in Midwest
  - 25% spread throughout United States
    - Urban hotspots



## Questions that needed answers...

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- What kind, and how many staff do we need?
- Do we use the UW system or private staffing agency?
- What are the quality, attrition and cost implications?

# What kind of staff do we need?

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- Full time?
  - Not in our experience, or others
  - Participants dictate Interviewer's schedule week to week
  - Difficult to manage CAPI workload @ 40 hrs every week
  - Heavy travel periods coupled with down time
- Sample flow lighter/heavier
- **Need part time ~25-28 hours/wk Interviewers**

# How many staff do we need?

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- How many completes?
  - 12,232 cases \* .9 (mortality closeouts, not found) = ~11,000 completes
  - Reflects 90% response rate (ambitious)
  - Client expecting 80% response rate
- 8 hrs/cm in state, 12 hrs/cm out of state
  - 9.3 hrs/cm overall (proportionate to sample)
  - **9.3 hrs/cm \* 11,000 completes = ~102,000 hrs**

## How many staff do we need?

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- Casework and Training time
  - 1,232 cases \* 4 hrs/resolve = ~5,000 hours
  - Interviewer Training (2 week initial training) = ~5,000
  - Interviewer Training ongoing = ~2,000
- **~115,000 Interviewing hours total to complete project**

## How many staff do we need?

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- If average is 25 hours per week, in a 22 month field period that employee will work 2,200 hours total for the project
- $115,000 / 2,200 = 52$  CAPI Interviewers
- Factoring in attrition @ **30%** = additional 16 interviewers
- **68 Interviewers to hire**

# How many staff do we need?

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- WLS Field Structure:
- Total of 68
- 8 Team Leaders @ 40 hrs/wk (25 hrs/wk interviewing)
- 60 CAPI Interviewers @ 25 hrs/wk
- 7-8 Interviewers per Team Leader
- Caseload = 180 cases per Interviewer



## How do we hire staff?

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- Through the University of Wisconsin system?
- Through a private staffing agency?
- Use both systems?

## How do we hire staff?

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- Planning committee worries and concerns
- Truly remote management with low proportion of in-person “face time”
- Biased towards the “known entity” quality of our in-house Wisconsin based staff
- Will interviewers hired by a staffing agency
  - Be good enough?
  - Experienced?
  - Trustworthy?
  - Dependable?
- Started to compare systems...

# How do we hire staff?

Issue	UW System	Staffing Agency
Interviewer Wage	Inflexible – single wage that is unchangeable	Flexible – four tiers and freedom to reward raises
Cost	Mostly fixed, although health insurance varies	Range from 6% less to 33% more than UW
Hours	Inflexible – either 20 or 40 hours a week	Flexible – work as much or as little as needed
Interviewer Bonuses	Not allowed	Allowed
Benefits	Health insurance and vacation for full time	No health, no vacation
Expense reimbursement	4-6 weeks	1 week
Auto	UW or DOA Fleet, gas cards, travel cards	Use own car

## How do we hire staff?

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- Far more flexibility in staffing agency model
- Moreover, we needed help with the task at hand
  - Posting, screening, hiring interviewers all over the US
  - Physical locations to meet in person, check IDs, perform background check, etc

# How do we hire staff?

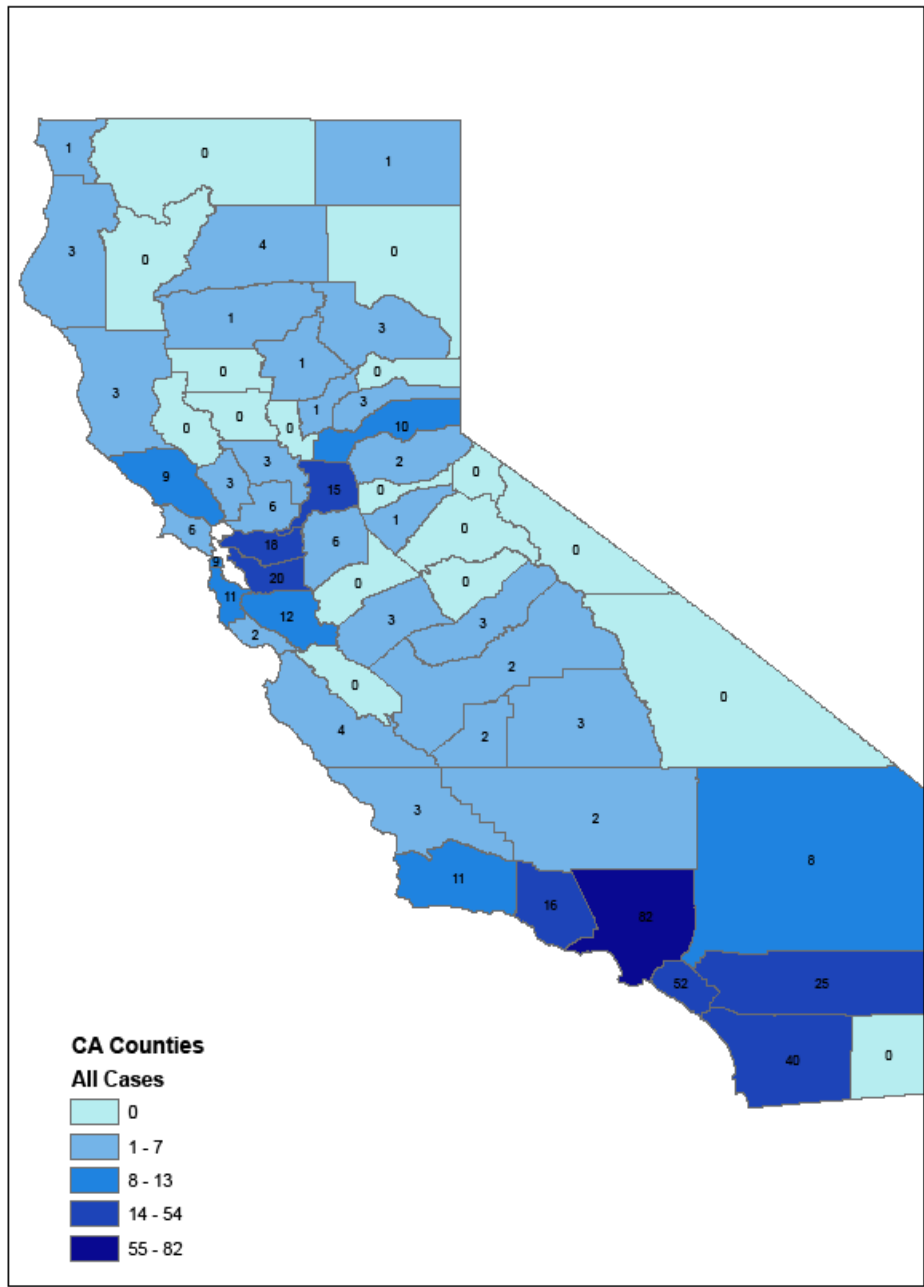
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- However...
  - RFP process time consuming
    - Met with UW purchasing starting in 2008
    - Hours of meetings
  - RFP development, editing, and re-editing, took significant amount of several high level staff's time
    - Proposals considered, counter-proposals offered
    - Interviews granted, re-interviews with companies
    - Scoring process
  - Process drawn out over a year and a half
  - Labor intensive

## Determining where we would hire

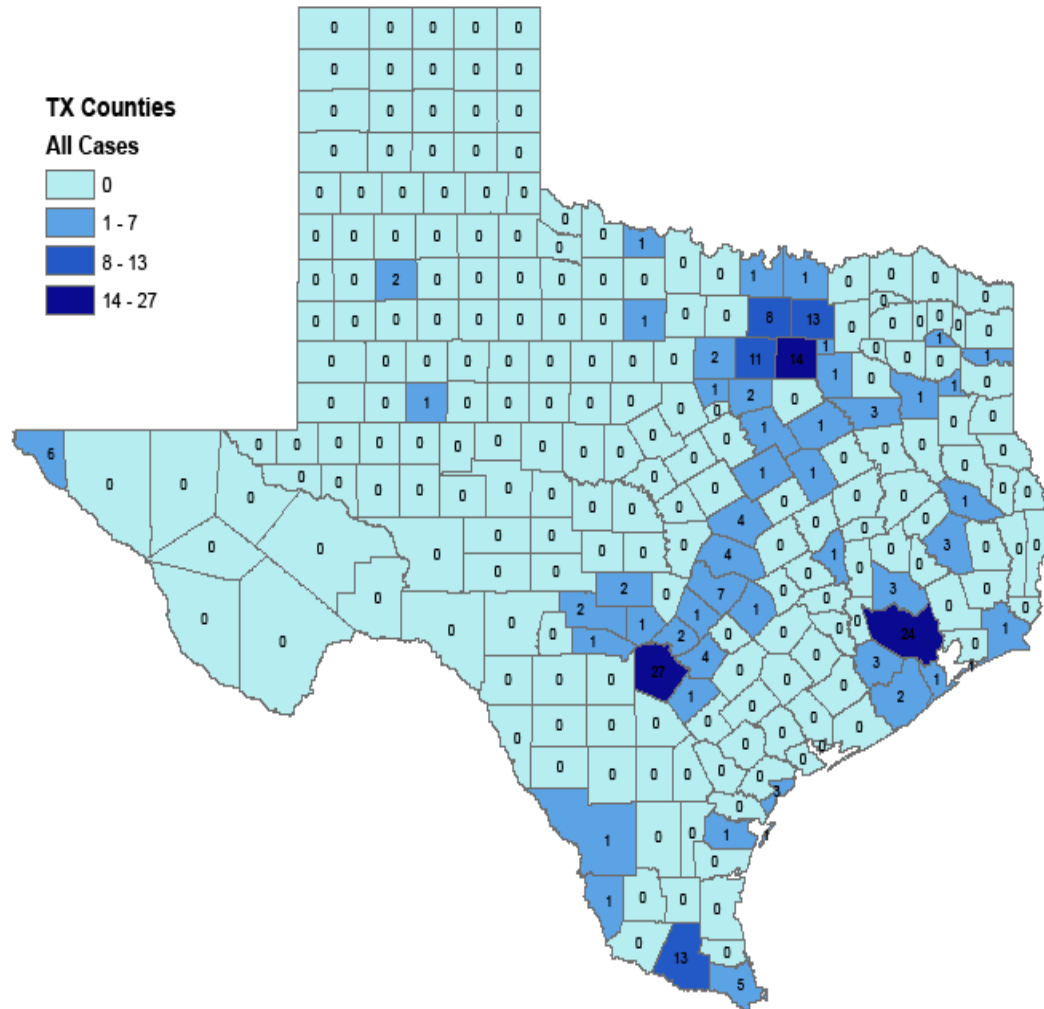
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- Work with Applied Population Lab on UW campus
  - Identified participant-dense areas using GIS software
- Areas that were in excess of ~200 participants within a ~300 mile radius = 1 CAPI Interviewer in the area
  - Rest of sample in “blitz” areas
- Developed list of cities where we needed Interviewers

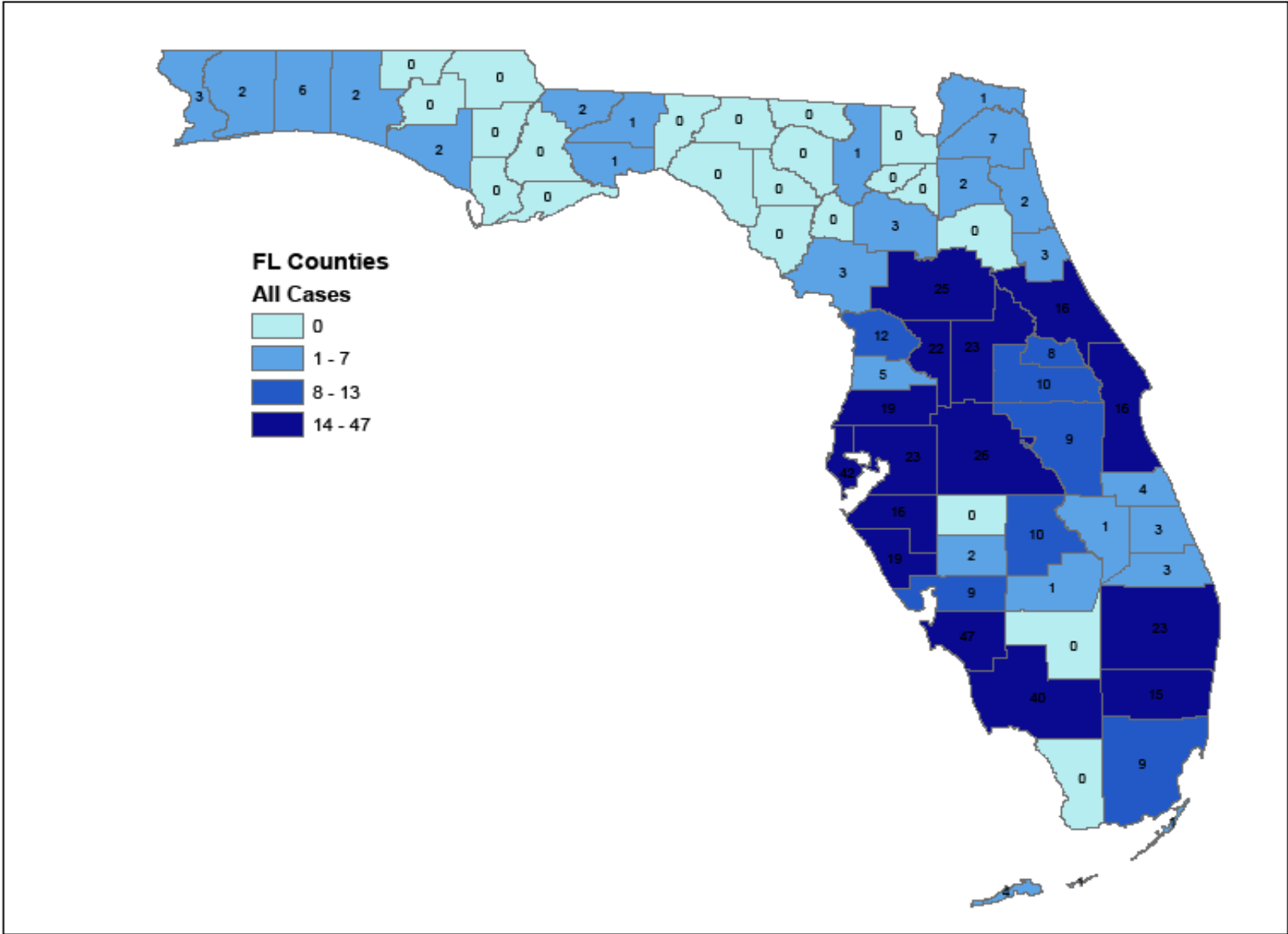


**TX Counties**  
**All Cases**

- 0
- 1 - 7
- 8 - 13
- 14 - 27

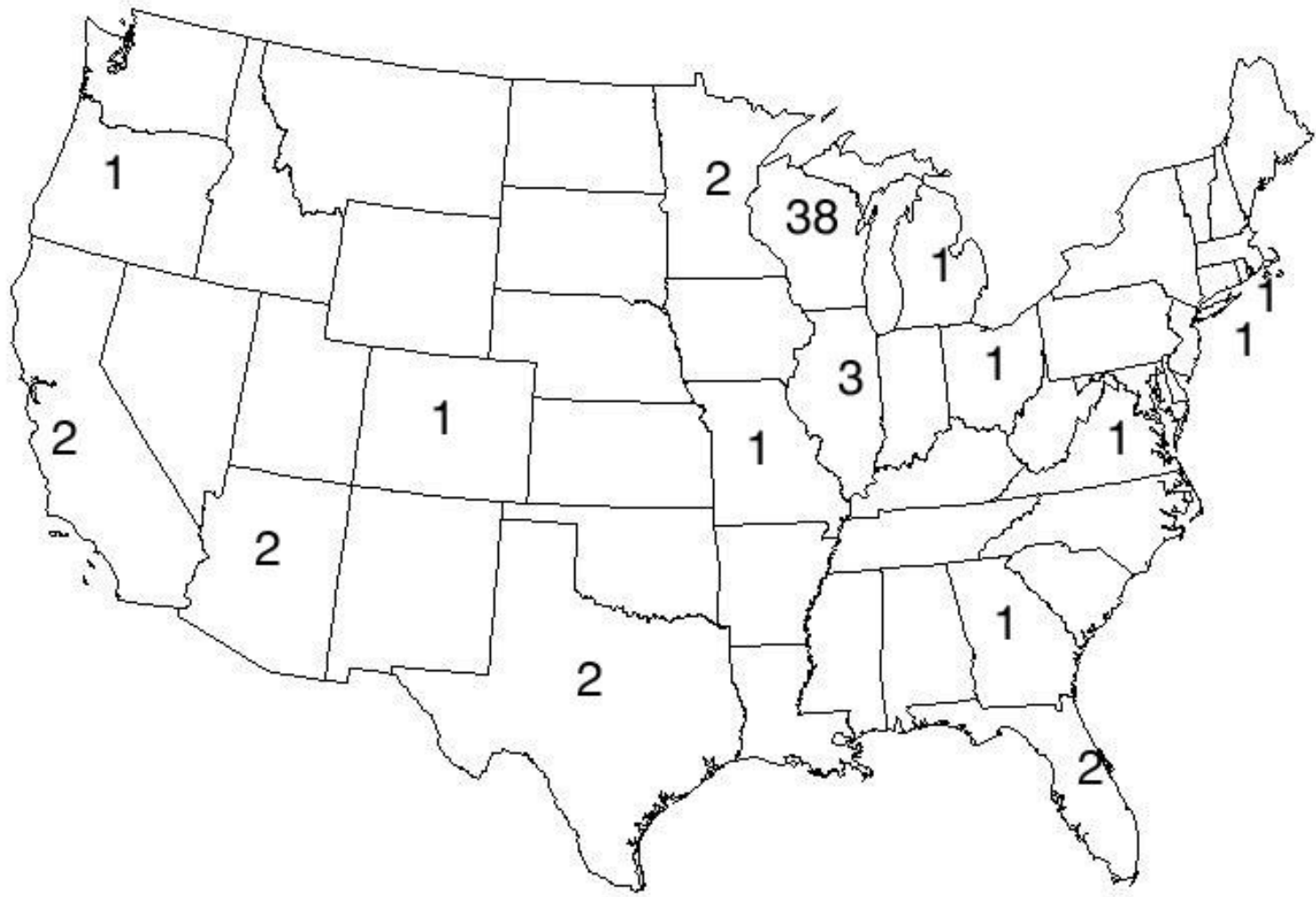






# Determining where we would hire

Location	Number of Interviewers
Minneapolis or St. Paul MN	2
Cincinnati, Columbus, or Indianapolis OH or IN	1
Lansing or Detroit, MI	1
Orlando, St. Petersburg, or Miami FL	2
Los Angeles, CA	1
San Francisco, CA	1
Milwaukee or Waukesha County, WI	8



## Who we hired

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- We hired 65 Interviewers and Team Leaders through the staffing agency
- We hired 3 Team Leaders through the UW System

# Hiring process

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- Staffing agency uses national network to find matches
- Screened and interviewed by staffing agency
- UWSC interview
- In-person/Skype videoconference/phone
- Back to staffing agency to offer/decline
- We put a premium on hiring experienced interviewers

# Lessons learned

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## Lessons learned – Interviewing candidates

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- Overall experience has been positive after 14 months
- Key to success
  - Insist on interviewing all candidates
  - A lot of work – over 100 hours
- Via Skype
  - Helped us make better informed choices
  - Body language, expressions, conduct
  - Detailed feedback as to why the candidate wasn't a good fit for CAPI Interviewing
- “Hit rate” for staffing agency started at 60% but improved to 80%

## Lessons learned – Vetting of the staffing agency

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- Ask tough questions during RFP process
  - How many offices do you have in WI? In the US?
  - Do you have experience finding people for this type of work?
  - How many CAPI Interviewers do you currently have on staff? In WI? On the East and West coasts?
  - How many projects do you have of this size?
  - How big is your company, how many on your payroll?
  - Provide resumes of staff who meet our screening requirements



## Lessons learned – Have thorough screening requirements

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- Must be able to work at least ~25 hours per week, including eves/weekends
- Must have own car, auto insurance, valid driver's license
- Must be flexible, willing and enthusiastic to travel
- Must have credit card and ability to charge \$1,000
- Must have high speed internet access from home
- Must be able to lift 40 lbs on a continual basis
- Must pass pre-employment credit check
- Must pass background check
- Tested by staffing agency:
  - Type at least 35 wpm
  - Computer software/hardware savvy

# Lessons learned

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- Other key points:
  - Double check staffing agency's work
  - Hiring in right areas, check applicant addresses
  - Terms of the contract
    - Motivation on part of staffing agency
      - Find us a good Interviewer
      - Having interviewers stay for entire project is more profitable for them (and keeps us satisfied)
      - The more experienced the Interviewer the higher rate they can bill us

# Lessons learned

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- What about quality, experience, trustworthiness and dependability?

## Lessons learned - Quality

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- Quality of Interviewers overall is high
  - Many social workers, teachers, other professionals hired
  - College degrees
  - Compare well and in some cases outpace our preexisting CAPI staff

## Lessons learned - Quality

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- Staff we hired transition well to other CAPI studies – have developed sense of UWSC loyalty
- Several have jumped to working on multiple studies for us
- CAPI Interviewers report liking this agency, happy with interactions on payroll and other questions
- We have given regular performance-based raises at 6 month intervals

## Lessons learned - Quality

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- Several bad experiences
  - Terminated four Interviewers for various performance concerns
  - Difficulty getting equipment returned from some
  - Staffing agency helped us with recovery
    - 100% quality control audio monitoring and verification for selected Interviewers

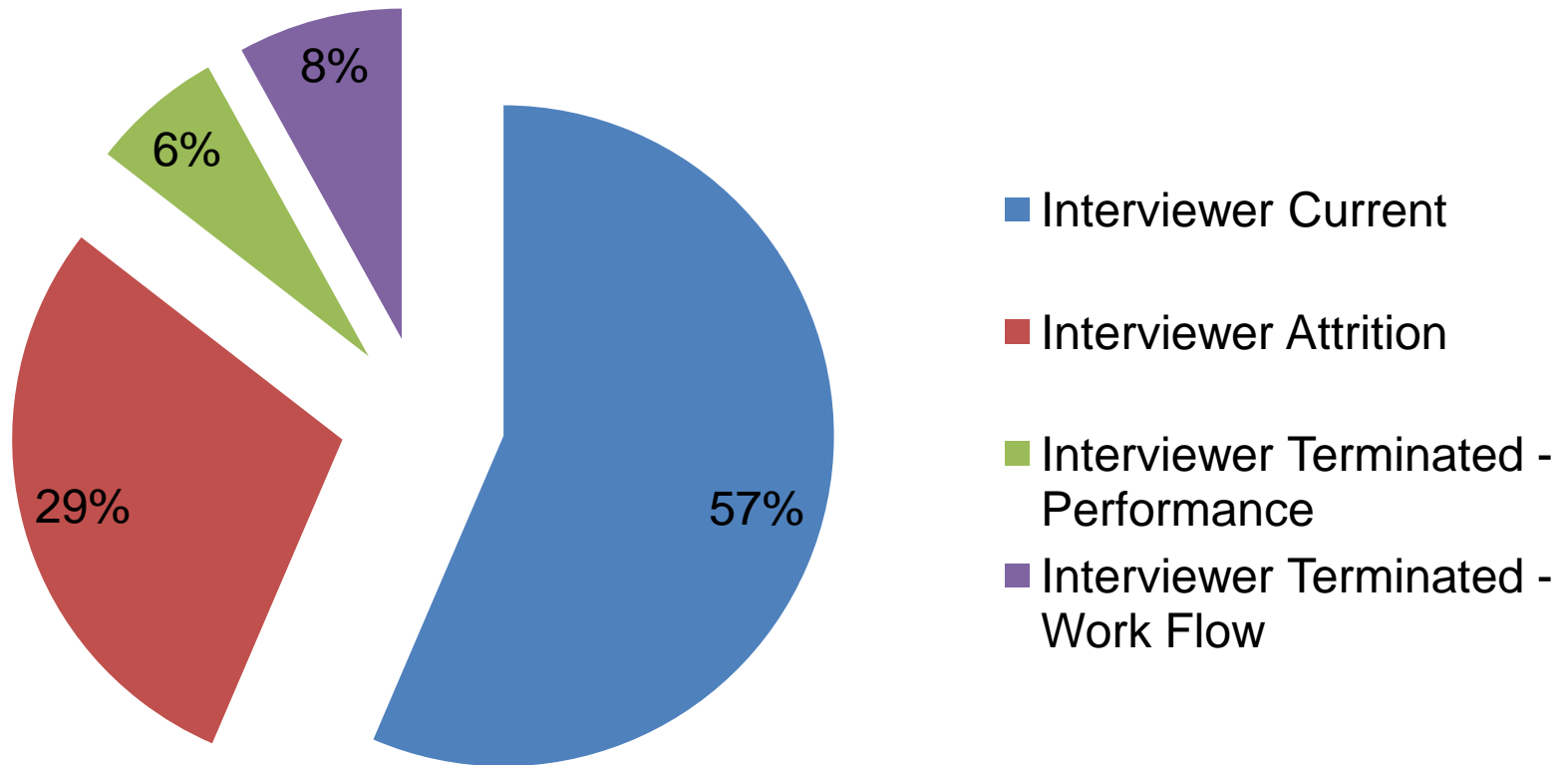
# Experience, Trustworthiness, Dependability

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- Experienced
  - Nearly 40% had previous CAPI or Census experience
- Trustworthy
  - No data falsification
  - No incidents of theft
- Dependable...somewhat
  - Our 30% attrition rate? We are nearly there with 10 months left in the study
  - (But...some of this is our fault)

# WLS staffing after 14 months in the field

## Interviewers





Thank You!

For copies of this presentation or more information, contact:

Steve Coombs  
scoombs@ssc.wisc.edu

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