



NATIONAL COLLEGE HEALTH ASSESSMENT

## Frequently Asked Questions REVISED August 2025

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## INTRODUCTION

The ACHA uses Qualtrics, LLC *Research Suite* to design and distribute the NCHA and to manage the online data collection. The NCHA is administered CONFIDENTIALLY (not anonymously.) Each participating campus provides to ACHA a letter of invitation/informed consent (template is provided), a subject line, the email addresses of students in your sample, a copy of your IRB approval, and an NCHA order form.

This document is organized to answer specific questions you may have around various aspects of NCHA implementation. The first portion of the document discusses the implementation of the NCHA using our standard, confidential protocol, whereby ACHA contacts the students in your sample on your behalf. If you are required to conduct the survey anonymously, or if you are unable to supply ACHA with your student email addresses, alternatives to our standard protocol are discussed at the end of the document.

**Please read this document carefully before embarking on an NCHA survey effort.**

## STUDENT/DATA PRIVACY PROTECTIONS

### **Q: What measures does ACHA take to ensure/protect student and campus data privacy?**

A: ACHA agrees to use the student email address provided by the institution for the sole purpose of requesting student participation in the NCHA. The email addresses are used only for a single survey effort and not retained for future NCHA implementations at the same school.

During data collection the email addresses are stored on a password protected secure server on the cloud with BOX. The file containing student email addresses is also uploaded into Qualtrics Research Suite software. Per both the Qualtrics and ACHA policies, student email addresses are never shared with another party nor used for any other purpose. After the data collection period ends and before NCHA results are released to the campus, the files containing student email addresses are deleted from both the Qualtrics and BOX servers. To ensure that no copy of student email addresses is retained at ACHA, the files containing student email addresses are intentionally deleted from Trash folders in Box and cannot be retrieved after a 14-day grace period through Box User Services Support Team.

### **Q: Is it possible to link a particular student email address to a set of survey responses.**

A: Yes, technically it is possible (which is why the survey is described as confidential and not anonymous), but ACHA and Qualtrics go to great lengths to make it very difficult to do so. The Qualtrics software generates a unique survey link for each student on the mailing list. The unique survey link is connected to a randomly generated Response ID number. The link between a student email address and a Response ID number is stored on the Qualtrics server, is not accessible to ACHA, and is destroyed by Qualtrics upon survey submission. Only the Response ID number for any given student is recorded with their survey responses. The NCHA survey is set to PREVENT the collection of a student's name, email address, and IP address with their survey submission.

### **Q: Is the NCHA-Web considered anonymous or confidential?**

A: The NCHA survey standard implementation protocol is confidential, not anonymous. While the student survey responses are anonymized upon survey submission, **the survey is NOT administered ANONYMOUSLY and may not be described to the students as an anonymous survey.**

**Q: How do you track which students actually submit the survey?**

A: The Qualtrics software generates a unique survey link for each student on the mailing list. The use of a unique link per student enables us to do five things: 1) prevent more than one survey submission from the same student, 2) prevent students outside your sample from submitting surveys, 3) contact only non-responders with survey reminder messages, 4) conduct a random drawing to award incentives at the close of the survey, and 5) allow the student to complete the survey in multiple sessions and from multiple devices.

As mentioned above, the connection between a student email address and a particular Response ID number is maintained behind the scenes in the Qualtrics system and is destroyed when the survey responses are submitted. ACHA does not collect students' names, email addresses, nor IP addresses with survey responses.

**Q: How do NCHA survey participants provide consent?**

A: Consent is given in two ways. First, consent is implied when a student clicks on the link within the email message to access the survey. The template letter of invitation/consent (*see Instructions for NCHA Web Surveyors* document at [www.NCHA.org](http://www.NCHA.org)) includes instructions that stipulate students who are 18 years of age or older need only click on the link to the survey to give their consent. If there is additional consent information required by your campus IRB, you may want to include a link in your invitation e-mail that will direct students to further information. It is recommended that you keep the letter of invitation/consent clear and concise. **If you choose to alter the consent language from the template letter we provide, please be sure to let the NCHA staff review your edits before you submit your IRB application.** ACHA will not send a survey invitation/consent letter that does not accurately describe our data collection methods.

Secondly, the following message is displayed on page 1 of the NCHA. It contains some additional instructions for the student and states: "By clicking the 'Begin Survey' button below, you confirm that the purpose of this study has been explained to you; you understand the types of questions being asked and that you may skip any question you're not comfortable answering; you are at least 18 years of age; and you consent to participate in the survey."



## NATIONAL COLLEGE HEALTH ASSESSMENT

### National College Health Assessment

The ACHA-NCHA asks about various aspects of your health and well-being. Your voice matters—your responses help your campus better understand and support student well-being. By participating, you're contributing to a healthier student community. Participation is **voluntary** and **confidential**. You may complete the survey in multiple sessions, use any device, and **skip any questions you do not want to answer**. When you hit the “**Submit Survey**” button at the end of the survey, the link between your email and your responses is permanently destroyed.

#### Before You Begin:

This survey includes questions on **sensitive personal experiences** such as:

- Mental health concerns (including suicidal thoughts)
- Experiences with sexual or interpersonal violence
- Use of alcohol and other drugs
- Disordered eating
- Sexual behavior
- Discrimination, exclusion, racism and harassment

Your safety and well-being are important to us. **You may skip any question, pause or exit the survey at any time.** Support resources are available — please refer to the contacts in your invitation or visit [these resources](#).

#### By clicking “Begin Survey,” you confirm that:

- The purpose of the survey has been explained to you
- You understand the types of questions being asked and that you may skip any question you're not comfortable answering
- You are at least 18 years old
- You **consent to participate in the survey**

[Begin Survey](#)

#### Q: Can we require our students to take the NCHA?

A: One of the important tenants of informed consent is that participation in the survey must be voluntary. ACHA will not administer an NCHA that is mandatory or required of students. When the NCHA is administered as part of a classroom or other academic assignment, an alternative assignment must be offered for students who choose not to participate in the NCHA.

#### Q: Is it possible to administer the NCHA anonymously?

A: Yes, it is possible to administer the NCHA survey anonymously, but it's not recommended. We can provide an anonymous static link for your NCHA survey and ACHA has disabled collection of IP addresses and other personal identifiers within the survey. When conducting an anonymous NCHA survey, the survey persistence (the ability to start the survey and come back to it later) is achieved via a web-browser cookie on the student's computer. In this case, the survey is persistent only from the computer or device where the survey was started. It's not possible to start the survey on one device and complete it on another using a web-browser cookie. If the

student disables or deletes the cookie, or if you prefer that we not enable cookies, your campus NCHA will not offer persistence, and the student will need to complete the survey in one sitting (which typically takes 20-30 minutes). Additionally, when using an anonymous survey link, we no longer have control of the sample in that we cannot prevent duplicate submissions from the same student, nor can we prevent students from outside your sample from submitting surveys. Finally, when using an anonymous, static survey link to administer the NCHA, we cannot assist you with awarding incentives.

**Q: Does ACHA host the NCHA Web internally on their servers and what kind of security is provided?**

A: ACHA administers the NCHA web survey via the Qualtrics, LLC Research Suite product. Qualtrics is an Application Service Provider (ASP) with a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) platform for creating, distributing, and collecting data from online surveys. Many colleges and universities also use Qualtrics for data collection, so it is possible that your campus IRB and other campus administrators may already be familiar with Qualtrics and the lengths that they go to secure the data. Institutions using Qualtrics will have access to Qualtrics Security Whitepaper. Please contact your campus Qualtrics Brand Administrator for more information.

The Qualtrics Security Statement is here: <http://www.qualtrics.com/security-statement/>. In summary, Qualtrics servers are protected by high-end firewall systems, and vulnerability scans are performed regularly. Complete penetration tests are performed yearly. All services have quick failover points and redundant hardware, and complete backups are performed nightly. Qualtrics uses Transport Layer Security (TLS) encryption (also known as HTTPS) for all transmitted data and also protects surveys with passwords and HTTP referrer checking. The data is hosted by third party data centers that are SSAE-16 SOC II certified. All data at rest are encrypted, and data on deprecated hard drives are destroyed by U.S. DOD methods and delivered to a third-party data destruction service. Qualtrics deploys the general requirements set forth by many Federal Acts including the FISMA Act of 2002 and meets or exceeds the minimum requirements as outlined in FIPS Publication 200.

Per the Terms of Service with Qualtrics, ACHA owns all survey content and data produced and collected with Qualtrics Research Suite. Qualtrics considers data collected by ACHA confidential and will only access the data for technical support and with the express permission of ACHA. This is discussed in detail in the Qualtrics Terms of Service: <http://www.qualtrics.com/terms-of-service/> and the Qualtrics Privacy Statement: <http://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/>.

Likewise, files stored on the servers at BOX are password protected. ACHA and Qualtrics, LLC will use the student email addresses provided by your campus only for a single NCHA administration. The addresses will not be used for any other purpose, retained after the data collection period, nor shared with any other organization.

**Q: Does the ACHA hold a Certificate of Confidentiality from NIH for the NCHA?**

A: No, NIH will not issue a blanket Certificate of Confidentiality that will apply to all participating campuses. Any campus that requires a Certificate of Confidentiality must apply for one with NIH. See the NIH Certificates of Confidentiality Kiosk at: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/coc/> for more information.

**Q: How does ACHA protect student privacy in the absence of an NIH Certificate of Confidentiality?**

A: As explained in various parts of this document, student survey responses are connected to a unique Responder ID number which prevents multiple submissions from the same student and keeps students from outside your sample from submitting a survey. While both Qualtrics and

ACHA take numerous measures to protect the privacy of students who participate in the survey, it is still possible that either organization could be served with a subpoena that would require us to identify and release survey responses from a particular student.

In order to minimize the threat to student privacy ACHA employs the following techniques in managing student contact information:

- The link between a Responder ID number and a particular student email address is made within the Qualtrics platform and is not stored at ACHA.
- The only identifying information stored with survey responses is the randomly generated unique Responder ID number. IP addresses are not recorded with survey responses.
- Files containing student email addresses are never included in the routine file back-up process at ACHA.
- No survey results are made available to participating campuses until all files containing student email addresses are removed from the servers at both BOX and Qualtrics. Therefore, in the unlikely event that something in the survey results might trigger a legal action, there is no way to link a specific email address or first name to a particular set of responses.

*Please note that the procedures outlined above only apply when using the normal NCHA survey methodology where ACHA provides the survey links directly to the students via the Qualtrics system, and schools are not provided access to identifiable data. If the school is providing the survey links directly to the student, or if the school has IRB approval to collect identifiable data, the privacy procedures differ from those described above.*

**Q. My IRB wants to know what kind of training NCHA staff has with regard to protection of human subjects in research.**

A. All NCHA staff have completed the Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams online course sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, and the Social and Behavior Sciences Course in the Responsible Conduct of Research sponsored by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative at the University of Miami. Certificates of completion are on file at ACHA and available upon request.

**Q: Does the emailing system offer the student the option to unsubscribe from the survey mailing list?**

A: Yes, to ensure unsubscribe compliance with the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003, all NCHA email communication with students contain the following statement at the end of the message:

“If you do not want to receive reminder messages about completing the survey, please use this link to remove yourself from the survey mailing list: (insert unsubscribe link here)”

Any student that clicks on the link provided is automatically removed from the mailing list and will not receive any subsequent reminder messages sent to non-responders in the sample.

## CONTACTING STUDENTS

**Q: How are the students contacted using the NCHA?**

A: ACHA contacts students to participate in the NCHA through a letter of invitation sent via e-mail. This email message also serves as an informed consent. As indicated in the letter, consent is provided when the student uses the link within the email message to access the survey.

You provide the text of the letter of invitation to ACHA as well as the subject line you want included with the e-mail. (You'll find a letter template available on our website.) You must also supply ACHA with a list of student e-mail addresses in the second column of an Excel spreadsheet file. Additionally, you may want to personalize the electronic letter of invitation/consent sent to each student with the student's first name, such as "Dear Mary" (Customization charges apply. See order form for details). If so, add the **preferred** first name corresponding to each e-mail address in the first column of the spreadsheet file. This information can usually be found at your Registrar's Office or Office of Institutional Research. If you don't want us to personalize the survey invitations with first names, simply leave the first column of the spreadsheet blank. (If you are unable to access preferred first names, we suggest not personalizing the survey invitations to reduce the risk of deadnaming a student).

**Q: Does ACHA send reminder messages to all students or just those who have not responded to the survey?**

A: ACHA contacts only non-responders with a reminder e-mail. Up to 5 reminder messages to non-responders are included in the price of the survey. We recommend labeling the final reminder sent with a "last chance" (or similar) subject line and including a deadline for submitting survey responses.

**Q: How can I tell if our survey invitations or reminder messages have been sent?**

A: There are a couple of ways for you to monitor what's happening with your NCHA email messages. We encourage you to use both methods to double-check that everything is running smoothly. First, we add you (the campus contact person) to the mailing list once we receive it from you. This will enable us to send you a test message and it will also ensure that you will receive all messages going to your students in real time – AS LONG AS YOU DO NOT USE THE SURVEY LINK PROVIDED IN THE MESSAGE TO SUBMIT A SURVEY. It's OK for you to use the survey link to view the survey and review any extra questions programmed at the end of the survey, but please do not ever hit the "submit survey" button. Not only do we not want your responses mixed in with student responses, but if you submit a survey, you will no longer receive the reminder messages sent to non-responders.

The second way you can monitor whether your messages are being sent is to monitor the number of responses. You will receive a URL from the NCHA staff shortly after the launch of your NCHA survey. This link will allow you to see the number of responses submitted for your survey daily. If you are monitoring this link regularly, you will notice a jump in the number of responses for the 24-36 hours each message we send to students. When you see the number of submissions changing rapidly, you can be sure that an email has recently been sent to your students. Please notify the NCHA staff if you were expecting a reminder message to go out, but do not notice an increase in responses within 24 hours.

**Q: Is it possible to contact students at a personal or "preferred" email address, rather than their campus email address?**

A: Yes, NCHA email communications may be sent to email addresses unaffiliated with campus (Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo, etc.), however doing so does present some challenges. When campus email addresses are used, it's relatively easy to work with the campus IT department to ensure your invitations make it through the campus server to your students (see the section on SPAM AND RATE CONTROL FILTERS). This is not the case with other email service providers, so there is a greater chance of the messages not reaching your students. While ACHA takes



measures to reduce the likelihood of complications from using personal or “preferred” email addresses, the process is not foolproof and message delivery errors are more common when personal email addresses are used.

**Q: What if my school will not allow me to provide ACHA with students’ e-mail addresses?**

A: If your campus prohibits the release of e-mail addresses to ACHA, you may still administer the NCHA via an “INTERNAL” NCHA survey. See the section on INTERNAL surveying for more details. Note that there is no discount in survey pricing when using this methodology – quantity will be based on the number of unique survey URL’s assigned to your school.

**Q: My school will not allow me to transfer student email addresses to ACHA via email. Is there an alternative, more secure way to provide the file to the NCHA staff?**

A: Many schools simply email the file containing student email addresses to ACHA – some of them choose to send the file as a password protected document and provide us with the password separately. If your campus has a secure file sharing system and you can add one of the NCHA staff as a user, then we are willing to download your file from the campus system. Another option is to exchange files using a third-party secure file sharing service, such as Dropbox ([www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com)).

**Q: My campus will not allow ACHA access to student e-mail addresses and my IT department has told me that they can only blast distribute static (identical) messages to students. The e-mail messages cannot be personalized with a unique survey URL for each student. Is there another way to administer the NCHA?**

A: If there is no way to remedy this problem on campus, ACHA can provide a static survey URL for your campus NCHA survey implementation. See the section on ANONYMOUS surveying for more details. Please note that there is no discount in survey pricing when using this methodology – quantity will be based on the size of the campus population.

**Q: Does ACHA provide a template I can use for letters of invitation/informed consent?**

A: Yes, ACHA offers a template letter of invitation/consent that you may edit to meet the specific needs of your campus (local campus contact, incentives) or requirements of your IRB. You’ll find a copy of the template document on our website.

**Q: Do I have to use the ACHA letter of invitation/consent as provided in *Instructions for Web Surveyors* document?**

A: It is recommended that you stick as closely as you can to the template letter provided by ACHA. The letter describes the methodology we use to administer the survey and collect the data. **If you need to make changes to our standard template letter, you are encouraged to share them with the NCHA staff for feedback BEFORE you submit your IRB application.** ACHA will not send a survey invitation/consent letter that does not accurately describe our data collection methods.

**Q: The template for the letter of invitation/consent is rather long. Is it possible to shorten the letter?**

A: By default, the survey invitation email contains the bulk of the consent information and is unique to your campus, and page 1 of the survey briefly highlights some generic key points about the survey. (See graphic on page 4.) Instead of providing the more detailed information within the body of the survey invitation email, it is possible to send a shorter email to the students and provide the bulk of the consent information as the first page of the survey (Customization charges



apply. See order form for details). In this case, you would need to provide the NCHA staff with two separate documents – the text for the email survey invitation and the text for the consent language on page one of the survey.

**Q: The NCHA survey has launched on my campus, and I just learned that there are students that I need to add to our sample. Is it possible to do this after the survey launches?**

A: Yes, it's possible, but not easy. We cannot add students to an NCHA survey campaign after the initial invitations are sent to your students. We encourage schools to spend time on the front end of the survey to ensure an accurate and inclusive sample and do their best to avoid this problem. If you find that you have students that must be surveyed after the initial invitations have been sent, we are willing to add a supplemental mailing list to your NCHA survey. Charges apply. See fee schedule for details.

**Q: Do I have to provide a separate "reminder letter" to the NCHA staff?**

A: It's not necessary that you provide a separate reminder letter for follow up messages to non-responders, unless there are changes necessary to the original letter. In the absence of a separate reminder letter, we will simply adjust the greeting in your original letter to indicate that it is a follow up. If you choose to send separate reminder letters, customization charges apply. See order form for details.

**Q: Can we designate a subject line to accompany the survey invitation and reminder emails to the students?**

A: Yes, you may specify a subject line for the survey invitations. It's helpful to personalize the subject line to include your school name so your students know the communication relates to your college/university. If you do not provide a specific subject line, we will use the default subject line "XYZ Student Health Survey," (where XYZ is the name of your school and/or health center.) Reminders to non-responders typically include the word "Reminder:" added to the start of the original subject line. Beware of "spammy" sounding subject lines such as "Win prizes!" or "Earn a chance to win \$100!" It's helpful to mention the school and/or health center name in the subject line to offer legitimacy to the effort (e.g., "XYZU Student Health Survey"). Please see the section on Spam Filters for tips on avoiding a "spammy-sounding" subject line:

<http://www.qualtrics.com/university/researchsuite/misc-pages/misc/avoid-being-marked-as-spam/>

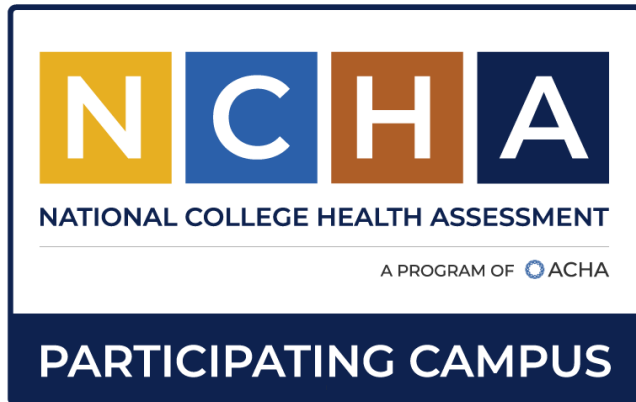
**Q: How long should I keep the survey open? How many times should we contact non-responders?**

A: The scheduling of the data collection period, including reminder messages to non-responders is entirely up to the survey coordinator and must be communicated to the NCHA staff. The majority of students tend to respond to a web survey invitation (or reminder message) right away (within 36 – 48 hours), or not at all. They don't typically keep the invitation and come back to it at a later date to complete; therefore, it is not necessary to wait very long between email contacts with the students.

We recommend a survey data collection period of no more than 3 weeks, with reminder messages sent to non-responders every 3-4 days. It also helps to vary the days and times that your messages are sent. All messages are scheduled by the NCHA staff in advance, so it is possible for you to select a specific date and time for your message delivery to begin.

**Q: Can we use the NCHA logo in our marketing materials?**

A: No, use of the NCHA logo is not permitted. As an alternative, we have developed an NCHA Participating Campus Badge that can be used in your marketing materials, survey invitation letter, or displayed on your campus website. The [NCHA badge](#) is shown below.



## THE STUDENT SURVEY EXPERIENCE

**Q: How do my students access the survey?**

A: ACHA will email each of your students their own unique URL for the survey. The students need only to click on the survey link within the email (see template in Web Survey Instructions document) and page 1 of the survey will be displayed in their browser window as shown below.



## NATIONAL COLLEGE HEALTH ASSESSMENT

### National College Health Assessment

The ACHA-NCHA asks about various aspects of your health and well-being. Your voice matters—your responses help your campus better understand and support student well-being. By participating, you're contributing to a healthier student community. Participation is **voluntary** and **confidential**. You may complete the survey in multiple sessions, use any device, and **skip any questions you do not want to answer**. When you hit the “Submit Survey” button at the end of the survey, the link between your email and your responses is permanently destroyed.

#### Before You Begin:

This survey includes questions on **sensitive personal experiences** such as:

- Mental health concerns (including suicidal thoughts)
- Experiences with sexual or interpersonal violence
- Use of alcohol and other drugs
- Disordered eating
- Sexual behavior
- Discrimination, exclusion, racism and harassment

Your safety and well-being are important to us. You may **skip any question, pause or exit the survey at any time**. Support resources are available — please refer to the contacts in your invitation or visit [these resources](#).

#### By clicking “Begin Survey,” you confirm that:

- The purpose of the survey has been explained to you
- You understand the types of questions being asked and that you may skip any question you're not comfortable answering
- You are at least 18 years old
- You consent to participate in the survey

[Begin Survey](#)

#### **Q: How long does it take to complete the survey? Does the student need to complete the survey in one sitting?**

A: The NCHA takes about 20-30 minutes to complete. The survey is “persistent,” in that a student may begin the survey, take a break, and return to the survey to complete it in another session. Persistence for the NCHA is achieved via a web session ID embedded in the survey URL and maintained by the Qualtrics server. This feature ensures that each survey link is used only once and allows a student to pick up where they left off if they leave the survey and come back to it later. Each time the student encounters a page break in the survey, their responses up to that page break are saved and will remain populated the next time they use the survey link. Because persistence is managed on the Qualtrics server (rather than placing a “cookie” on the student’s computer) it is possible for the student to begin taking the survey on one device and finish it on another.

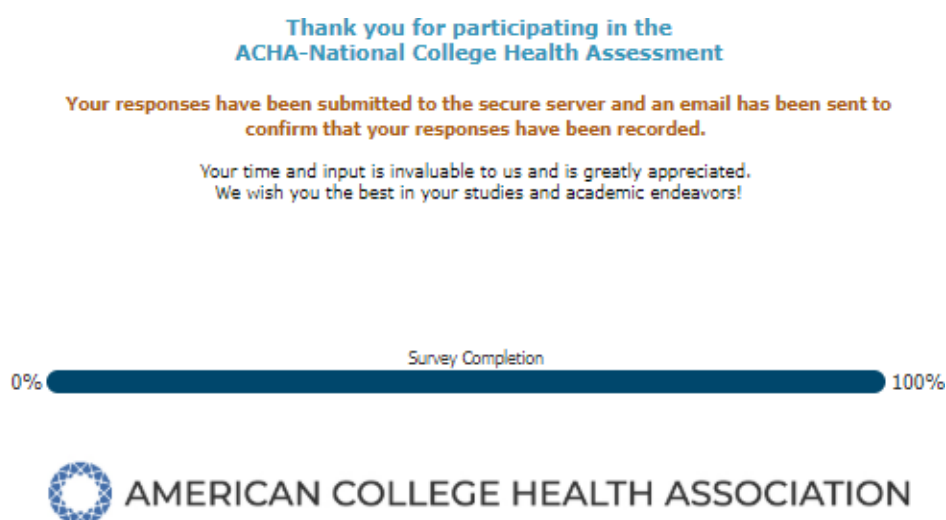
#### **Q: Is it possible to take the NCHA on a mobile device?**

A: Yes, the survey is formatted to display on a mobile device such as a mobile phone or tablet. On smaller devices, it's best to view the survey in horizontal or landscape orientation rather than vertical or portrait.

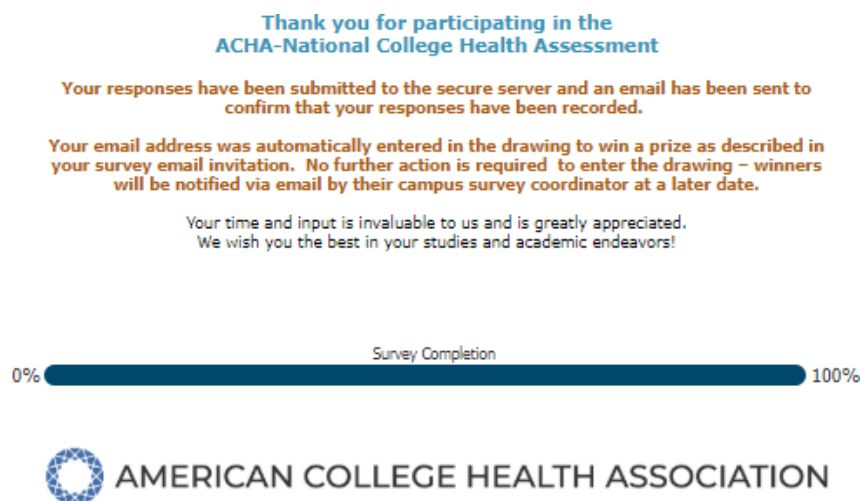
Q: How will my students know if their survey has been successfully submitted?

A: There are two things a student will see upon successful survey submission. First, when they hit the "submit survey" button at the end of the survey, one of the following messages will be displayed in their web browser window.

If the school is not offering an incentive, the students' web browser will display this message:



If the campus is offering incentives through a random drawing, the students' web browser will display this message instead:



Second, the student will receive an email from the Qualtrics system as shown below. Note that because the email message is addressed to a specific person, it can also serve as proof of survey participation.



**Thank you for participating in the  
ACHA-National College Health Assessment!**

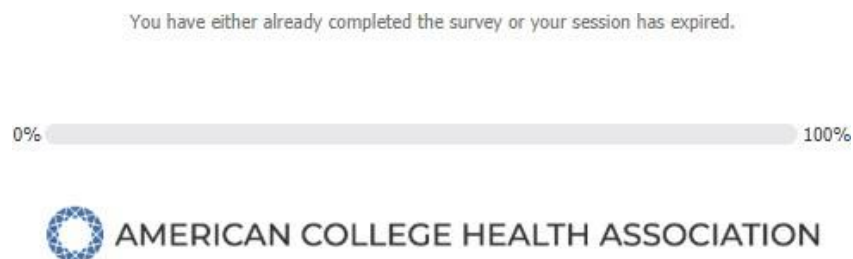
**Your survey responses have been recorded.**

If you have questions about the NCHA, please direct them to your campus contact identified in the survey invitation email message. Please do not reply to this message nor the survey email invitation, as they are sent from an unattended mailbox.

If you would like to talk with someone about the issues addressed in this survey, you are encouraged to reach out to the campus or local resources identified in your survey invitation or to contact one of these [national resources](#).

Your time and input is invaluable to us and is greatly appreciated.  
We wish you the best in your studies and academic endeavors!

Finally, if a student clicks on the survey link after they've submitted the survey, they will see a message telling them they have already taken the survey.



**Q: Is the NCHA Section 508 Compliant?**

A: The Federal Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility and Compliance Act (1998) is Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and establishes requirements that information technology systems may be operated in a variety of ways and do not rely on a single sense or ability of the user. The NCHA is Section 508 compliant and accessible to the visually

impaired via screen reader software. A copy of the Qualtrics Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) is available upon request if required by your campus.

**Q: What resources are available for the students who experience distress while taking the survey?**

A: Students are provided a link to a list of national resources available to them in the invitation letter, on the first page of survey, and in the thank-you email sent to them upon completion of the survey. You can review the list of national resources on our website [here](#). Additionally, any student who is identified as at-risk for suicide or has reported experiencing sexual violence based on their survey responses will see the following messages displayed within the survey:

Your safety and well-being are important to us. If you are currently experiencing suicidal thoughts or wish to discuss your past experience with suicidal thoughts with someone, please refer to the campus/local resources identified in your survey invitation. The hotline listed below is also available 24/7 for free, confidential help.

### **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline**

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Call or text 988

TTY: dial 711 then 988

Chat with lifeline: <https://988lifeline.org/chat/>

[Additional Resources](#)

Your safety and well-being are important to us. If you would like to talk with someone with someone about your experience with sexual violence or an abusive relationship, please refer to the campus/local resources identified in your survey invitation. The hotline listed below is also available 24/7 for confidential help.

### **National Sexual Assault Hotline**

Chat now: [National Sexual Assault Online Hotline \(online.rainn.org\)](#)  
1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

[Additional Resources](#)

## **SAMPLE SIZE**

**Q: We are a school with a student population of 2,400. How many students should we contact using the NCHA?**

A: Recommend sample sizes based on student population are offered below. Most NCHA Web surveyors experience a range of 10% to 35% return. The average response is 13-14%. Thus, in the absence of a campus-specific history with web-based surveys, you may want to estimate the number of contacts based on a 12% return. With a school your size you should survey all 2,400 students with the aim of getting 600 surveys submitted.

We would recommend that a school with a population of 20,000 students survey at least 8,000 students if they expect a 12% response. They should survey more students if they expect a lower response.

The proportion of returned surveys depends in part on the following: (1) campus-wide pre-publicity, (2) timing of first contact (do not survey just before finals or breaks), (3) follow up with non-responders (five are included in the participation fee), (4) accuracy and utilization of e-mail addresses (e.g., do the students use the campus generated e-mail addresses?), (5) coordination with campus IT department to prevent interference from spam and/or rate control filters, and (6) the desirability of incentives.

The larger your sample size, the higher your confidence level and more narrow your confidence interval within a given confidence level, both of which give you more confidence that your data represents your target population. The recommended sample sizes given below are based on a 95% Confidence Level with a Confidence Interval of +/- 3%

<u>Student Population</u>	<u>Desired Sample Size (Returned/Completed Surveys)</u>
<600	all students
600-3,000	600
3,000-9,999	700
10,000-19,999	800
20,000-29,999	900
≥30,000	1,000

Note that there are several sample size and confidence interval calculators readily available on the internet.

**Q. If I sample all students or an entire subset of students (such as all first-year students or all graduate students) will our data be included in the final national NCHA Reference Group even though we didn't select a random sample?**

A. The purpose of sampling a randomized subset of students is simply to eliminate the need to sample all students. Thus, sampling the universe is the same or better than selecting a random subset of students. When sampling the entire population or an entire sub-population of students, your data will be included in the Reference Group data set and reports.

**Q. Is it possible for the NCHA staff to draw a random sample from a list of our student population?**

A. Yes, it's possible, but not recommended. Most schools would prefer not to release any more information about their students than is absolutely necessary and therefore do the random sampling on campus.

If you are unable to draw the random sample on campus, it is possible for ACHA to draw a simple random sample for you. Be sure that this is communicated clearly to the NCHA staff when submitting your survey materials. Unless otherwise instructed, we will consider the mailing list you send to us final and invite all students on the list to take the survey and adjust the quantity on the order form accordingly.

## **AWARDING INCENTIVES TO SURVEY PARTICIPANTS**

**Q: Can ACHA help us select random respondents to award participation incentives?**



A: Yes, ACHA has a number of mechanisms in place to help with awarding incentives. Throughout the data collection process, our emailing software automatically tracks whether a particular student submits a survey. At the end of the data collection period, we export a list of all participants from which we randomly draw your winners. The email addresses of the random winners are sent to the campus survey administrator, who in turn contacts the students. Please note that incentives must be awarded immediately after the data collection period and before survey results are returned to the campus. Once all files containing email addresses are destroyed, it is impossible for ACHA to select random winners.

**Q: We plan to award all survey participants a small incentive rather than (or in addition to) a drawing for a smaller number of larger value incentives. How can we tell which students participated and which ones did not?**

A: There are two ways to address this issue. The first (and preferred) method is to customize the auto-generated thank-you email message set up for your NCHA survey. By default, all survey responders will receive an automatic, generic thank-you email message immediately upon survey submission – see example below. It is possible to pay an additional fee to customize the message with instructions to students about claiming their incentive. Because the message is transmitted via email and is addressed to a particular student, the message can serve as proof-of-participation for that student. (This method can also serve to remind students about campus resources relevant to the topics raised in the survey.)

If you indicate in your letter of invitation that ACHA will provide your school with a list of all survey participants so that incentives can be awarded, then ACHA can provide you will a list of email addresses, in alphabetical order, of all students that submitted a survey. The school would then contact the students about their incentives directly. Because this option may make students feel less comfortable about participating in the survey, using the customized thank-you email message mentioned above is preferred. Customization charges apply. See order form for details.

**Q: Due to state/campus regulations/policies, my campus requires me to ensure that students who choose not to complete a survey are given the option to enter the drawing to win an incentive. Is there a mechanism in place so that non-participants may enter the drawing for an incentive?**

A: The survey software does not provide a mechanism for students to opt in or out of the survey incentives. All students who submit a survey are included in the random drawing for incentives. If your campus requires you to offer non-responders the opportunity for an incentive, you can include an instruction in your survey email for these students to contact the campus survey administrator directly. The survey administrator will maintain a list of email addresses of these students and forward the list to ACHA upon completion of the data collection period. ACHA will add these students to the pool of eligible students before drawing the random winners.

**Q: In prior NCHA survey administrations we were able to award incentives based on the order the survey was submitted (e.g., every 10<sup>th</sup> responder, every 50<sup>th</sup> responder.) Is it still possible to use this type of incentive structure?**

A: No. Data Collection via the Qualtrics platform offers the opportunity to provide the survey responders a higher level of privacy by stripping all identifiers from survey data upon survey submission. This means we no longer have a record of the order of the submissions. If you choose to continue this type of incentive structure, you will need to develop another system for tracking the order of student submissions.

One option would be for you to set up a separate online survey to collect student info for awarding incentives. If your supplemental survey is set up on a secure server (<https://>) we can program your NCHA survey to redirect the student to it upon NCHA survey submission. You could then award your incentives based on the order the students submit their info in the second database – which will be entirely separate from the NCHA responses. Customization charges apply. See order form for details.

Another option would be to utilize the confirmation email that each student is sent upon survey submission to give the students instructions for entering the drawing for incentives. You may offer a link to a supplemental survey on this page or instruct them to forward the email to someone who will be managing the incentives. There is an additional charge to customize the confirmation email. See order form for details.

Note that both options give the survey coordinator the opportunity to award incentives throughout the data collection period as they will have access to this information in real-time.

**Q: We'd like to award incentives throughout the data collection period in an effort to better promote the survey among students. Is this possible?**

A: It is possible, but not something the NCHA staff can help you with. We can only draw random winners for you after the survey period closes. If you need to be able to award incentives throughout the data collection period, you will need to use one of the two options mentioned in the question above.

**Q: Our incentive distribution plan requires that students show proof of participation in the survey. Will the "thank-you" page displayed upon survey submission serve as proof?**

A: No, there is nothing unique about the survey generic thank-you web page that would identify a specific student (see section on THE STUDENT SURVEY EXPERIENCE). Multiple copies of the page may be printed or the URL for the page may be shared to extend access to non-participants, so the thank-you page is not really proof of participation. Even so, some schools have made the decision to accept the thank-you page as proof of participation to distribute small incentives with very little abuse of the system.

A better "proof of participation" would be the automatic, generic thank-you message that all survey responders receive via email upon survey submission. Because this message is sent as an email addressed to a specific student, it can serve as a proof of participation uniquely for each participating student. The generic message included in the NCHA participation fee is offered below as an example. This message may be customized for an additional fee if necessary.



Fri 12/13/2019 10:27 AM

Survey Response Thank You <noreply@qemailserver.com>

Thank You For Completing the NCHA Survey

To Valerie Hartman

Click here to download pictures. To help protect your privacy, Outlook prevented automatic download of some pictures in this message.

**Thank you for participating in the  
ACHA-National College Health Assessment!**

**Your survey responses have been recorded.**

If you have questions about the NCHA, please direct them to your campus contact identified in the survey invitation email message. Please do not reply to this message nor the survey email invitation, as they are sent from an unattended mailbox.

If you would like to talk with someone about the issues addressed in this survey, you are encouraged to reach out to the campus or local resources identified in your survey invitation or to contact one of these [national resources](#).

Your time and input is invaluable to us and is greatly appreciated.  
We wish you the best in your studies and academic endeavors!

**Q: How can we award incentives if we are sending the email invitations internally rather than having ACHA send the survey invitations to students?**

A: See section on INTERNAL surveying methodology.

**Q: Is it possible to do a random drawing for incentive winners if we are administering the NCHA anonymously with a static survey link?**

A: See section on ANONYMOUS surveying methodology.

## CUSTOMIZING THE SURVEY

### **Q: Can we delete, move, or reword questions on the NCHA?**

A: No, it is not possible to alter existing items on the NCHA survey.

### **Q: Can we add extra questions to the NCHA?**

A: Yes, it is possible to add additional questions to the end of your campus NCHA survey. The cost varies depending on the number of discrete variables the question will add to your data set. Each additional variable is counted as a separate question, regardless of how the questions are numbered. If the respondent is instructed to “select the best response” then the overall question results in one variable. If the respondent is instructed to “select all that apply”, then each item on the list of responses is individually counted as a variable or question. For example, the following question is actually four additional variables on the NCHA:

In the last 12 months, did a medical professional ever prescribe you the following narcotics? (Select all that apply)

- a. Codeine
- b. Hydrocodone
- c. Oxycodone
- d. Tramadol

The costs for adding extra variables follows. Prices are based on ACHA Institutional Membership status and are presented as Member/Non-Member prices.

Adding one unique variable that will be used to create a custom report – No charge.  
This variable will be added free of charge, but the custom report charge will still apply (\$400/\$600).

Up to five unique variables - \$700/\$1000  
All 5 programmed into the survey, the SPSS data set, and the institutional frequency report.

You may add more than 5 extra questions, but in doing so NONE of the variables will appear in the institutional frequency report. Variables will be programmed into the survey and the SPSS data file only. You would need to use the SPSS raw data file to report the results of your extra questions.

Prices are as follows:  
Up to 15 unique variables - \$700/\$1000  
16 – 50 unique variables - \$1500/\$2000  
51 – 75 unique variables - \$2250/\$3000  
76 – 100 unique variables - \$3000/\$4000  
(Each additional 25 variables is \$750/\$1000)

To request an estimate for the cost of your extra questions, please send a copy of the questions to the NCHA staff. Please allow **three weeks** to program the additional questions.

Surveyors are discouraged from adding any questions that are not absolutely necessary. The NCHA is already a very long survey. Please consider this when adding additional questions, as

excessive length can deter participation.

Custom questions will only appear in one report package. If additional report packages are ordered, please specify which report you want your 5 (or fewer) variables included on. If you want your custom questions included on the additional report packages the cost is \$150 for members/\$225 for non-members for each additional report.

**Q: Is it possible to add items from another survey as extra questions at the end of the NCHA?**

A: Yes, but for items that are copy written, you must document the copy write-holders expressed permission to use the items.

**Q: Do you offer a Canadian version of the NCHA?**

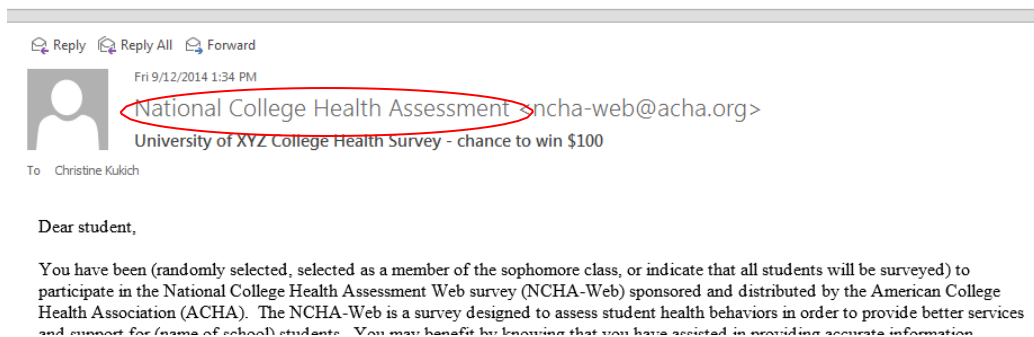
A: Yes, we do offer a version of the NCHA that has been adapted for use specifically at Canadian institutions. Specifically, the Canadian version of the survey eliminates the health insurance question, offers racial/ethnic categories that are more commonly measured in Canada, and asks about service in the Canadian Armed Forces.

**Q: Is it possible to customize the thank-you page that students see upon survey submission?**

A: If you would prefer (or your IRB requires you) to customize the thank-you page specifically for your students, you will need to create your own website and provide the URL to the NCHA staff. Your NCHA survey will be programmed to automatically redirect to your campus-specific page, rather than one of our generic pages upon survey submission. This allows the campus to collect student information to use in a drawing for incentives (in the event that a static survey link is used), to provide additional information to survey participants, or to direct students to a supplemental survey disconnected from the NCHA data collection process. Your campus-created thank you page must be hosted on a secure server, such that the URL begins with "https://" rather than "http://". Customization charges apply. See order form for details.

**Q: Is it possible to change the "from" address of the survey invitation email?**

A: The survey invitation and reminder messages will appear to come from "National College Health Assessment <ncha-web@acha.org>" (see example below) unless otherwise requested. It is possible to change the name associated with that address. For example, we could make your survey messages appear to come from "Jane Smith, Dean of Students <ncha-web@acha.org>," or "Bailey Student Health Center <ncha-web@acha.org>," or "Healthy Tigers <ncha-web@acha.org>."



If you would like to change the "from address" ([ncha-web@acha.org](mailto:ncha-web@acha.org)), the following steps would need to occur.

- First, verify with your IT department that they are willing to set up a DKIM record allowing

ACHA to send messages that appear to be from a campus domain. (It's impossible to change the "from address" without the help of your IT department.) You can share this information from the [Qualtrics Support Page](#) with your IT department.

- Confirm with your IT department which domain (everything after the @ in an email address) and email address should be used as the "from address." Many campuses prefer to set up an NCHA-specific domain for this project rather than giving ACHA access to the main campus domain. For example, you may prefer to set up a subdomain like "ncha.northstar.edu" rather than using "northstar.edu." Your IT department will make this determination.
- Once your IT department confirms what domain they want to use, share that information with your NCHA Coordinator at ACHA. We'll then submit a request to activate that domain through our Qualtrics account. Unless you specify otherwise, we'll submit the request using the default DKIM Selector key 'qualtricsacha.'
- Qualtrics will generate specific information that you will share with your IT department to complete the next tasks.
- Once your IT department completes their tasks, ACHA will be able to activate the domain for use in our Qualtrics account. Note that there can be a delay of up to 24 hours between the time the DKIM record is put in place by your IT Team and when the domain will be available for use in the ACHA Qualtrics account. Identify the "reply to" address you want associated with your survey invitations. Should it be the same as the "from address?" Will that mailbox be monitored? If not, we can use the default "[ncha-web@acha.org](mailto:ncha-web@acha.org)" as the "reply to" address. It's important you clarify this point with your IT department and your NCHA Coordinator at ACHA.

Successful adaptation of a custom "from address" for your survey takes time and should involve early communication with your IT department. Please allow at least 2 weeks for domain activation and thorough testing. Customization charges apply. See [order form](#) for details.

Note that the confirmation email that a student receives after submitting the NCHA survey is always from "Survey Response Thank You <noreply@qemailserver.com>" and cannot be changed.

Upon survey closing, your custom domain will be deactivated from the ACHA Qualtrics account permanently.

## ADDITIONAL DATA DOWNLOADS

**Q: I have access to additional information from the registrar's office about the students in my sample. Is it possible to have these data merged with my NCHA data set for each subject?**

A: Generally, ACHA will not automatically add additional variables to the NCHA data set. The best way to collect any additional data about the students that you want included in your NCHA data is in the form of an extra question added to the end of the survey. (See section on CUSTOMIZING THE SURVEY). This method offers complete transparency to the student taking the survey.

Excel files sent to ACHA containing student contact information should include only an email address and a preferred first name (if you'd like your email invitations personalized with first names.) Please be sure to delete any additional student information from the Excel file before forwarding it to ACHA.

The only condition in which we are willing to pass additional variables through your mailing list to connect with your NCHA data is 1) if the process is explicitly explained in your IRB application, and 2) it is made clear to the students in the survey consent that such information is automatically captured about them if they choose to submit a survey. Because this explanation can become lengthy and may actually discourage students from participating in the survey, it is not recommended.

## **COSTS**

### **Q: What is the cost of implementing the NCHA Web?**

A: The cost is less for the survey if your school is an ACHA Institutional Member — see the pricing chart at <https://www.acha.org/ncha/participate/pricing/>. **Please note that prices are subject to change.**

Prices are as follows (ACHA Institutional Member/Non-Member rate):

Up to 5,000 students - \$2500/\$3750

5,001 – 10,000 students - \$3500/\$5250

10,001 – 20,000 students - \$4500/\$6750

20,001 students or more - \$5500/\$8250

Community Colleges, HBCU's, and Tribal Colleges qualify for special pricing at \$1500/\$2250 (ACHA Institutional Member/Non-Member rate)

The basic participation fee includes the initial survey invitation, up to 5 reminder messages to non-responders, an automatically generated email confirmation of survey submission, processing of all submissions, and one report package. Additional fees will be applied for additional report packages, additional reminders to non-responders beyond the 5 included in the participation fee, any survey customizations, and extra questions added to the NCHA Web survey.

Please note that there are no discounts given for schools that opt to use a static survey link or opt to do an internal survey process where all students are contacted by the campus.

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

### **Q: In what format can I expect to receive my results?**

A: Included in the basic participation fee is Institutional Executive Summary (18 pages of salient results, and computed variables), Institutional Data Report (118 pages of frequency distributions for every variable in the survey for all subjects, and by gender, with a bar graph), and your institutional data (SPSS system file with built in codebook). The report documents are provided in PDF format and are print-ready. As long as all required paperwork has been submitted and the survey invoice has been paid, the PDF report documents, and SPSS raw data file are typically emailed to the campus contact noted on the order form within 4-6 weeks survey closing.

After the survey period is completed for all schools involved, the Reference Group Executive Summary and Reference Group Data Report for the survey period will be compiled and posted to the NCHA website. Separate Undergraduate and Graduate Reference Group Report Packages will also be generated for each survey period. Campus contacts will be notified directly once the Reference Group report documents for their participation period are posted. Spring Reference Group reports are typically available the October following the survey period, and the Fall Reference Group documents are typically available by March of the following year.



**Q: Is it possible to get extra report packages for a subset of my students, and if so, how much does it cost?**

A: Many institutions choose to have ACHA generate extra report packages for a subset of their students (e.g. residents, first-year students, students on only one of multiple campuses). Each additional Reports package is \$400 (\$200 each for the Executive Summary and Institutional Report). The non-institutional member price is \$600 (or \$300 per document.) Please contact Christine Kukich at [ckukich@acha.org](mailto:ckukich@acha.org) if you are interested in purchasing extra reports for your school.

**Q: Is it possible to order a special Reference Group Report Package using student and/or campus demographic variables that are more relevant to our population?**

A: It may be possible to have ACHA generate special Reference Group Report Packages for a subset of students (e.g., graduates, undergraduates, residents, first-year students) and/or a subset of campuses (e.g., 4 year, public, research institutions, with 20,000 or more students). Whether or not such a request can be accommodated depends on whether or not enough students or schools meet the criteria you identify. ACHA will not identify data for a specifically requested institution (or group of institutions), nor will we identify the identity of the institutions included in the Reference Group. Each additional Reference Group Reports package is \$400 (\$200 each for the Executive Summary and Institutional Report). The non-institutional member price is \$600 (or \$300 per document.) Please contact Christine Kukich at [ckukich@acha.org](mailto:ckukich@acha.org) if you are interested in purchasing extra Reference Group Reports for your school.

**Q: My school is part of a consortium of schools that would like to participate in the NCHA at the same time with the intention of producing a special Reference Group Report that is specific to our group. How can we make this happen?**

A: This is not an unusual request and can be done for a number of different types of groups: by state or other geographic region, by type of institution (e.g., 2-year, Ivy League, Art Schools), or implementation across an institution with multiple campuses. There is no discount available for this sort of NCHA participation – each school will be charged NCHA fees based on their institutional membership in ACHA. There is an additional charge of \$400 to generate the special Reference Group Report Package for the group. This charge may be added to one school's invoice or portioned among the participating schools. You must indicate with your NCHA order if you are participating as part of a multi-campus consortium or group. Each campus must also submit the required NCHA Consortium Agreement document.

**Q: I am working on a grant application and it would be very helpful if I had access to some of our NCHA results before the survey period has closed. Is it possible for me to access preliminary results before the survey is officially closed?**

A: No, access to results requires that ACHA destroy the survey mailing list, which cannot be done during data collection. Results are typically ready 4-6 weeks after the data collection period closes. Please time your data collection so that you have results in time to meet such needs as grant applications and presentation deadlines.

## SPAM FILTERS & RATE CONTROL SYSTEMS

**Q: My school uses rate control systems and spam filters that can intercept and block mass e-mailings from outside organizations. What can we do to prevent our invitations to participate in NCHA from being blocked?**

A: It is important that you work closely with your IT department to try to prevent this problem. Spam filters often look for specific words in the subject line and body of a message in an effort to decrease unsolicited e-mail messages. Avoid using words and phrases commonly used by spammers such as “free,” “discount,” “opportunity,” “money back,” “incredible,” “targeted,” “offer,” and any words or phrases that could be construed as pornographic. These words can trigger a spam filter and prevent the distribution of the messages. Other things to avoid: excessive Caps and punctuation (e.g. PLEASE FILL OUT THIS SURVEY!!!), bright green or red fonts, and saying “This isn’t spam!” in the subject line. It’s important to test messages against your spam filter before the survey period begins. Rate control filters tend to block messages from a single IP address once a predetermined limit has been exceeded.

Please notify the IT department of your survey plans and let them know your survey dates, the number of students we will be emailing, and that the invitations to participate will originate from the Qualtrics server [noreply@qemailserver.com](mailto:noreply@qemailserver.com) (IP Ranges: 139.60.152.0/22, 162.247.216.0/22, 192.41.90.160/27, 66.35.37.96/27, and 98.97.252.0/24). Although the e-mail messages will originate from the Qualtrics server, they will appear to be from [ncha-web@acha.org](mailto:ncha-web@acha.org). All Qualtrics IP addresses and both domains (qemailserver.com and acha.org) should be “whitelisted” to prevent the rate control system or spam filter from blocking our invitations. Lastly, the predetermined limit on rate control systems might need to be increased during your survey period. Note that if you are providing ACHA with **personal** student email addresses (gmail, hotmail, yahoo, etc.) rather than campus addresses, **OR** if you are unable to release student email addresses to ACHA, whitelisting is not necessary.

## REQUIRED PAPERWORK & ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

### **Q: Why do I need to fill out an Institution of Higher Education Demographic Survey?**

A: All colleges and universities that participate in the NCHA are required to complete a campus demographic survey. A link to your semester's demographic survey will be sent to you upon survey closing. ACHA uses this information to report on the aggregate dataset from each survey period. As ACHA will not process your school's dataset or reports until this information is on file, it is recommended that you complete this survey as soon as possible once surveying has commenced. It is recommended that you download a copy of your responses to the demographic survey for your records.

### **Q: Am I required to obtain IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval for conducting the NCHA?**

A: Each surveyor is responsible for securing approval for conducting research involving human subjects from the appropriate campus office, prior to implementing the NCHA. The body that grants approval for such surveys on your campus may be referred to as an Institutional (or Internal) Review Board, Human Subjects Committee, Grant Review Board, Research Review Board, Research Ethics Board or something similar. Institutions will typically fall into one of three categories:

- **IRB indicates that their review/approval is not required for the NCHA.** On many campuses, the IRB has made the determination that the NCHA does not meet the federal definition of "research" (from 45 CFR 46.102) and is exempt from IRB review. (These campuses would describe the NCHA as a needs assessment or program planning/evaluation tool, rather than "research.") If your IRB determines that the administration of the NCHA is exempt from IRB review, you will need to submit documentation to this effect, in addition to a letter of administrative approval. The administrative approval letter should be on letterhead from a senior campus administrator (Vice President/Vice Chancellor, Dean of Students, or equivalent) and 1) stating that the IRB has determined that the NCHA is not research and 2) giving ACHA permission to administer the NCHA to your students.
- **IRB will determine that the NCHA is research and needs to be reviewed.** Most of the campus IRB's that do consider the NCHA to be research will determine that it is low risk to subjects and qualifies for the "exempt" or "expedited" review categories. A few campuses have determined that the NCHA involves greater than minimal risk to subjects and require a "full" committee review. In any of these cases, a copy of the IRB approval needs to be submitted to ACHA.
- **Institution does not have an IRB.** If your campus does not have an IRB, you must submit a letter of administrative approval. The administrative approval letter should be on letterhead from a senior campus administrator (Vice President/Vice Chancellor, Dean of Students, or equivalent) and 1) stating that the institution does not have an IRB and 2) giving ACHA permission to administer the NCHA to your students.

### **Q: Can we submit a letter of administrative approval rather than getting IRB approval?**

A: ACHA will only accept a letter of administrative approval in lieu of IRB approval under two circumstances: if your campus does not have an IRB, or if your IRB has determined that the NCHA is not “research.” Any letters of administrative approval must state one or the other reasons explicitly.

**Q: What do I need to send to ACHA to implement the NCHA?**

A: The following materials must be sent to ACHA at least two weeks prior to the desired survey launch date:

- The NCHA Order form.
- An Excel file containing the student e-mail addresses. If the survey email invitations are to be personalized, please put the preferred first names in the first column of the spreadsheet, the corresponding email address in the second column. Please be sure to select this customization option on your order form. Charges apply.
- The letter of invitation/consent and subject line.
- Your IRB and Administrative approval (if applicable) to survey (including approval of any additional questions).

Please note that if you choose to add additional questions to the NCHA, a final list of questions and all materials listed above must be sent to ACHA at least three weeks prior to the desired survey date.

**Q: What is the best way to submit the required documents to the NCHA staff?** A: Once you reach out the NCHA staff, you will be assigned a primary contact here at ACHA. Please email all materials directly to your assigned ACHA contact.

**Q: When will I receive my campus NCHA results?**

A: NCHA results (report documents and SPSS raw data file) are typically ready for schools 4-6 weeks after data collection ends. Results will only be released if the complete Campus Demographic Survey has been submitted via the Qualtrics link and the NCHA invoice has been paid.

**The following sections of this document discuss options for campuses that are unable to use the standard methodology for implementing the NCHA.**

## **INTERNAL SURVEYING**

**Q. What is an INTERNAL NCHA Survey administration?**

A. The INTERNAL NCHA survey administration is used when a school is prohibited from releasing the student email addresses to ACHA. In this case, ACHA will provide the school with a file containing the unique survey links and an on-campus survey administrator will distribute the links to the students. Note that there is no discount in survey pricing when using this methodology – quantity will be based on the number of unique survey URL’s assigned to your school.

**Q. How does an INTERNAL NCHA Survey administration work?**

A. The NCHA staff will generate a set of unique survey links (one for each student contact ordered) with corresponding unique ID numbers and provide this list to the on-campus survey administrator. The on-campus person is responsible for assigning a unique survey link to each student in the sample and distributing the links to the assigned student.

When a student submits survey responses, their corresponding unique ID number will be stored with their survey responses. We will periodically download the submitted data throughout the data collection process to isolate the unique ID numbers that have been used to date. The list of used ID numbers can be used to omit survey responders from the reminder messages going to non-responders. At the end of the data collection period, the list of used ID numbers will also assist in awarding survey incentives. Note that the only info ACHA can provide to the school is the list of unique ID numbers submitted – it's up to the school to maintain the code linking a unique ID and survey link to a particular student.

*PLEASE NOTE THAT IN THE CASE OF AN INTERNAL NCHA SURVEY, IT IS IMPORTANT TO TEST THE SURVEY URL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM PRIOR TO THE SURVEY LAUNCH TO ENSURE THAT THE SURVEY LINKS ARE WORKING PROPERLY AND THE SURVEY SYSTEM IS ACCURATELY DOWNLOADING THE UNIQUE ID NUMBERS WITH SURVEY RESPONSES. IF THE SURVEY URLS ARE NOT PROPERLY INSERTED INTO THE EMAIL INVITATIONS AND TRANSMITTED TO THE STUDENTS, WE WILL BE UNABLE IDENTIFY NON-RESPONDERS AND INCENTIVE WINNERS.*

Detailed instructions for system testing will be provided to all INTERNAL NCHA surveyors with the unique survey URLs.

**Q: How can we award incentives if we are using the INTERNAL NCHA survey method?**

A: ACHA will randomly select the number of winners needed from the pool of used unique ID numbers and provide the numbers, in the order they were drawn, to the campus survey coordinator. It's up to the campus survey coordinator to be able to connect an ID number to the corresponding student. See warning above about the importance of testing the survey links prior to survey launch.

**Q. How does an INTERNAL NCHA survey administration differ from the standard NCHA methodology?**

A. The INTERNAL survey methodology is in some ways similar and in some ways different than the standard NCHA methodology.

- The INTERNAL survey methodology is a confidential survey administration and **not anonymous**.
- ACHA staff does not have access to student email addresses and no student contact info is stored on ACHA's BOX cloud servers.
- Unlike the standard NCHA methodology, the INTERNAL survey method requires us to collect identifiable data from the student. ACHA staff can link a particular set of survey responses to a specific survey URL used to submit those responses.
- The on-campus administrator can link a specific survey URL to a particular student in the sample.
- Because each student is provided with a unique survey URL, survey persistence is managed by the Qualtrics server. This means that a student can access the survey in multiple sessions, from multiple devices and/or browsers – without having to use internet "cookies."

- Survey participants **will not receive** the auto-generated thank you email message upon survey submission.
- Instead of providing the email addresses of random winners for incentives, ACHA can only provide the randomly selected unique ID numbers. The on-campus survey administrator is responsible for connecting the winning ID number to a particular student and notifying the incentive winners.
- ACHA will destroy the link between survey responses and a unique survey URL before results are shared with the school. ACHA will not release to the school NCHA data containing any student identifiers.

**Q. If no student contact information is stored at ACHA with the INTERNAL NCHA methodology, why can't we describe the survey as anonymous?**

A. An anonymous data collection, by definition, is one in which it is impossible to link a particular set of survey responses with the individual that provided the responses. In the case of an INTERNAL NCHA survey, the NCHA staff holds half of the information to identify an individual's responses and the campus holds the other half. While it is against our policy to do so, it is technically possible for ACHA and the school to share information that could facilitate responder identification. We will not do this, but doing so is not impossible, so the INTERNAL survey methodology must be described as confidential.

**Q. The INTERNAL data collection method offers more privacy for the students than the standard NCHA data collection procedures, right?**

A. Actually, no. When the data is collected using our standard methodology, ACHA uploads the student email addresses into the Qualtrics system. The Qualtrics system has the ability to track which students respond so that only non-responders are contacted with survey reminders and incentives can be awarded to survey participants – *without connecting a particular student to their survey responses*. When using the standard survey methodology, the link between a particular student and their survey responses is destroyed upon survey submission. This is not the case with an INTERNAL survey implementation.

While ACHA does not have access to student email addresses in an INTERNAL data collection process, the survey responses must be collected with a unique identifier in order to award incentives and recontact only non-responders. Though it is our policy not to do so, it would be possible for the campus survey coordinator and the NCHA staff to work together to match a particular student to a particular set of responses. Providing ACHA with the student email addresses offers BETTER privacy protection to students with regard to their survey responses, than does the INTERNAL survey method. It's important that schools understand this difference when making these survey implementation decisions.

## ANONYMOUS SURVEYING

**Q: My school will only permit an anonymous NCHA data collection. Is this an option?**

A. Yes, ACHA can provide an anonymous static survey URL for your campus NCHA survey effort. However, without using unique survey URLs, ACHA cannot control for multiple submissions from the same student, cannot prevent submissions from outside your sample, nor can we identify responders to award incentives. While this methodology has been implemented with success, it is not recommended as it introduces a possible source of sampling error not present in the standard NCHA methodology. In addition, only limited survey persistence can be achieved when using a

static survey link by placing a “cookie” on the student’s computer. This will allow a student to access the survey in multiple sessions, but only from one web browser on one device. Please note that there is no discount in survey pricing when using this methodology – quantity will be based on the size of the campus population.

**Q: Is it possible to do a random drawing for incentive winners if we are using a static survey link?**

A: There are two ways to address a random drawing for incentives when using a static survey link. You could instruct the student to print out the generic thank you message that appears in their web browser window upon survey submission (example on page 10), add their contact info to the page, and then submit it somewhere to be entered in a drawing. Note that there is nothing unique about the survey thank-you web page that would identify a specific student. Multiple copies of the page may be printed or the URL for this page may be shared to extend access to non-participants, so the thank-you page is not really proof of participation and is vulnerable to abuse. Even so, some schools have made the decision to accept the thank-you page as proof of participation to distribute incentives with very little abuse of the system.

Another way to enter students into a random drawing for incentives is to design your own web page to thank the student for their participation and to collect their information to enter them in the drawing. Your NCHA survey would be programmed to redirect the student to your page rather than one of the standard ACHA pages upon survey submission. In this case, the information necessary for the random drawing would be submitted directly to the campus rather than attached to their NCHA responses. Your custom thank-you page must be hosted on a secure server, such that the URL begins with “https://” rather than “http://”. This method also has the potential for abuse in that once the NCHA redirects to the campus website to collect the student’s contact info, the URL for that website can be shared beyond your sample and with students that did not take the survey. Customization charges apply. See order form for details.

**Q. How does an ANONYMOUS NCHA Survey administration differ from the standard NCHA methodology?**

A. The ANONYMOUS survey methodology is in some ways similar and in some ways different than the standard NCHA methodology.

- The NCHA staff cannot assist with awarding incentives to random winners.
- Survey participants will not receive the auto-generated thank you email message upon survey submission.
- With the use of a static URL it is impossible to prevent the survey link from being shared beyond your sample.
- Survey persistence is achieved via a “cookie” placed on the student’s computer, rather than on the data collection server side. This may present a problem if your IRB will not allow the use of cookies in data collection, or if the student disables or deletes “cookies” from their computer.
- Preventing a student from submitting more than one survey may be achieved by the use of another type of “cookie.” As with the persistence cookie, it must be allowed by your IRB, and can be disabled/deleted by the student, so it is not foolproof protection against multiple submissions from the same student.



- Because survey persistence is achieved via a “cookie,” the survey is only persistent when using a single web browser on one device.
- The survey must be completed using only one device. It’s not possible to begin the survey on one device and complete it on another.

## CONTACT US

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