



# Panel Study of Income Dynamics Technical Paper Series

## The PSID Sample Leaver Tracking Project

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The sample leaver tracking project began in the spring of 2006 to ascertain the vital status of a portion of PSID sample members who had left the PSID but were not known to be decedents. There were three central aims of the project. The first aim was to improve the precision of models of mortality by clarifying vital status for attritors. Panel study attritors typically have unknown mortality status, and excluding attritors from mortality models may lead to biased parameter estimates. An unambiguous determination of mortality status is a powerful solution to this problem. A second goal was to expand the existing PSID archive of decedents and link them to the National Death Index (NDI) to obtain cause of death information. A final goal was to develop and evaluate ongoing protocols for maintaining an accurate archive of vital status for sample that has attrited. The study was funded by the National Institute of Aging as part of the subproject (PI Jim Smith, RAND) of a program project (PI Bob Schoeni, University of Michigan). The project was conducted by PSID staff between the spring of 2006 and February, 2008 with oversight by PIs at RAND and the University of Michigan.

**A. Sample Description**

The PSID has interviewed the same families and their descendants annually 1968-1997 and biennially ever since. Before 1993, families that refused to participate or were not located were dropped from the active sample and not contacted in following waves. In 1993 an effort was made to recontact all families that had attrited since the survey began, with hundreds of families brought back into the study. In addition, PSID changed its following rules by attempting to contact and interview families that attrited in the prior wave; these families are called "recontact families", or simply "recons" for short. Once a family was not interviewed two consecutive waves, they were dropped from the active sample and no future interview was attempted.

Despite these attempts to retain sample members, over the course of 40 years many respondents have left the study. As will be described in this report, the sample leaver tracking project attempted to locate a portion of these leavers to determine their vital status. Specifically, the sample for this project consisted of individuals who were sample members of PSID families that first attrited in 1984 or later waves and were not part of the Latino sample nor part of the portion of the SEO sample that was discontinued starting in 1997.<sup>1</sup> The data collection year 1984 was selected for several reasons. First, excluding sample that left the study between 1968-1983 and focusing on those leaving after 1983 allowed a sample of a manageable size to be chosen on which to evaluate the effectiveness of various protocols that could then be used to inform protocol development for the pre-1984 sample as well develop an ongoing process to keep track of new attritors. Second, 1984 was the year that content on health, including general health status, was first included in the questionnaire, and many models of mortality will require this baseline health information. Third, 1984 is also the first year in which PSID collected its detailed (and ongoing as of 2009) module on wealth. Together, the content on health and wealth is of use to analysts interested in the modeling the relationships between socioeconomic status, health and mortality.

## **B. Types of Sample Leavers**

There are two types of sample leavers which led to the development of two different tracking protocols. Figure 1 graphically display the steps in the processes. The first type is “related leavers,” who are sample member who have family members (i.e., they are members of the same 1968 ID) that participated in the PSID as of 2007. The protocols developed to track this group capitalize on the genealogical design of the study where families are related to one another (i.e., “clans”) and can be asked for information about individuals within their related families who have left the study. The second type is

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<sup>1</sup> In 1990, the PSID added 2,000 Latino households, including families originally from Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. But while this sample did represent three major groups of immigrants, it missed out on the full range of post-1968 immigrants, Asians in particular. Because of this crucial shortcoming, and a lack of sufficient funding, the Latino sample was dropped after 1995. In 1997, two major changes were made to the PSID sample: 1) a reduction of the core sample and 2) the introduction of a refresher sample of post 1968 immigrant families and their adult children. The original core sample was reduced from nearly 8,500 families in 1996 to approximately 6,168 in 1997. The majority of the cuts were taken from the SEO sample.

“unrelated leavers”, who are not related to any families who were active sample in 2007. The protocol developed for this group relies on traditional tracking methods which use internet databases to find information to contact the leaver directly or an informant.

**C. Tracking Protocols and Results**

The first tracking step taken for both types of leavers was to search for them in the publicly available Social Security Death Index (SSDI). The PSID does not routinely collect Social Security Number (SSN) from respondents. Thus, after each wave of data collection, PSID systematically searches for SSN for individuals who have been reported as deceased by family members using the publicly available Social Security Death Index (SSDI) with information obtained from prior data on name, last known city and state, and date of birth. It is noteworthy that the SSDI does not include death records for everyone who has been issued a SSN (card). Common reasons for exclusion include: The death was not reported to the Social Security Administration (SSA) or occurred before 1962; non-participation in the Social Security program such as by farmers, housewives, government employees, non-employed individuals, and those with a separate retirement plan prior to 1960; children were not required to have a SSN until 1988; survivor death benefits were (are) being paid to dependents or spouse; a recent death may not yet be indexed; or human error. Despite these limitations, having an SSN greatly improves the odds of a match to cause of death and other information in the National Death Index. During the spring of 2006, PSID staff used the SSDI as the first step in searching for both types of leavers. See Appendix I for a description of the protocol used to determine a valid match in the SSDI.

After the initial step of searching the SSDI, the protocols applied to the two groups of leavers diverged, with family-reports being the basis of locating the related leavers, and internet tracking by a specialized tracking team the focus for locating the unrelated leavers. Thus, the results for the two groups are reported separately below.

1. Results for Related Leavers:

It is important to note that the sample sizes for each of the steps described below changed due to changes in sample disposition that occurred during this project as data were finalized from the 2005 wave. For example, the SSDI search that was conducted in the fall of 2006 (step 1a) was based on the final disposition of the sample as of 2003, as the 2005 data were not yet finalized. The steps that occurred after the initial SSDI search were based on sample dispositions from the 2005 data. Footnote two explains in detail how sample disposition changes between 2003 and 2005 changed the sample size of the groups described in step 1a and step 1b below. The sample size changed again in step 1c as decisions about which leavers to include in this treatment group were driven by considerations of respondent burden for the 2007 main PSID data collection.

The following steps were undertaken to locate the related leavers.

Step 1a) PSID staff searched SSDI for a total of n=3300 related sample leavers. A total of 2.7% of this sample was located in SSDI as deceased (n=88). This rate is comparable to the expected mortality rate as estimated from an analysis of NCHS life table data.

Step 1b) In August 2006, a postcard was mailed to n=3334 families of n=2392<sup>2</sup> related leavers (as noted, leavers were often members of more than one family) requesting information about the leaver which would allow determination of vital status. See Appendix II for the text of the mailing. Families of leavers who were identified in SSDI as decedents also received the postcards in an attempt to examine the consistency of information between SSDI and family reports. Families received a \$10 incentive for

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<sup>2</sup> The number of related leavers dropped by n=908 cases from n=3300 (step 1a) to n=2392 (step 1b) because of sample disposition changes that occurred in the time between the two steps. That is, the datafile that was created for the SSDI search step in 1a included sample that had the status of "leaver" as of 2003. By the time the sample was created for the postcard mailing described in step 1b, much of the family composition editing of the 2005 data had occurred, changing some of the sample dispositions. By far the majority of the n=908 were individuals who were non-response in 2003 but became response in 2005 and were thus no longer "sample leavers" (n=440). Of the remaining n=468 cases, n=2 had become known decedents in 2005, n=195 were in various institutions as of 2005; n=232 were non-response for the first time in 2003, and were thus at high risk for attrition from the study. The PSID attempts an interview with non-response cases for only one wave after non-response after which they are no longer followed. Study staff made a specific decision not to include sample that were at high risk of complete attrition from the study in the postcard mailing because the PSID had just unsuccessfully completed extensive steps to retain these sample members. Finally, n=39 individuals were excluded for various idiosyncratic reasons including sample dispositions that were changed due to new information obtained from processing the 2005 data.

returning the card. Of the n=3334 families that were mailed the postcard, n=588 families (18%) returned the postcard. There were n=58 individuals identified by at least one family member as deceased.

Step 1c) In March 2007, PSID Wave 35 production interviewing commenced and included questions in the interviews of n=2376 families (which is about 30% of the number of all PSID families) about the vital status of their related family members who were part of the related leavers sample – n=1825 individuals in total. Note that the number of leavers in this step (n=1825) differs by n=567 from the number of leavers in step 1b (n=2392) for these reasons: families that completed and returned the August 2006 postcard mailing (n=588 families) were not asked, eliminating all leavers who were in single 1968 families who returned postcards; if any related family provided information about a particular leaver in the August 2006 postcard mailing, then no related family received questions about this particular leaver during PSID 2007 data collection. These decisions were made in order to minimize respondent burden. During PSID 2007 data collection, most families being asked about a related leaver were asked about two individuals. The number of leavers within these families ranged from one to twenty-two. See Appendix II for the PSID 2007 instrument question sequence.

Step 1d) During the course of PSID production interviewing, the data being collected about the sample leavers from their families were periodically reviewed. Examination of these data revealed that the vital status remained unknown for n=748 related leavers. This was due to two main reasons. First, sample leavers and the families that were asked about their vital status were sometimes loosely or distantly connected, resulting in family members who didn't know the leaver's vital status. Second, there was some ambiguity in the questions being used; some respondents may have responded "don't know" about the specific items asked including contact information even if they knew whether the person was alive. This pattern was discovered roughly half way through the interview period, and the protocol was then modified so that vital status could be recorded even if the remaining questions about contact information, etc were not answered. These n=748 related sample leavers were subsequently moved to the tracking protocol developed for the "unrelated leavers", described in Step 2c) below. The outcome for these n=748 related leavers is described in 3 below.

## 2. Results for Unrelated Leavers:

As mentioned above, unrelated leavers are individuals who had no family members active in the PSID as of 2007. Thus, the protocols developed for this group did not include the postcard mailing or asking families directly about their related sample leaver and relied instead on administrative searches via SSDI and the internet. As with the sample sizes of the steps for the related leavers, it is important to note that some of the sample sizes for each of the steps described below for the unrelated leavers changed due to new information about the sample disposition that occurred during this project as data were finalized for 2005. For example, the SSDI search that was conducted in the fall of 2006 (step 2a) was based on final disposition of sample as of 2003, as the 2005 data were not yet finalized. The steps that occurred after the initial SSDI search were based on sample dispositions from the 2005 data.

The following steps were taken to locate the unrelated leavers:

Step 2a) During the fall of 2006, a search of the SSDI for n=2121 unrelated sample leavers meeting the eligibility criteria described above was conducted. A total of 5.2% of this sample was located in SSDI as deceased (n=110). These leavers tended to have attrited longer ago than the related leavers and were also older, yielding higher mortality rates.

Step 2b) In July 2007, tracking protocols were developed in a collaborative effort between the PIs and trackers from the National Tracking Team who are employed by the Survey Research Operations (SRO) unit of the Michigan Survey Research Center. These protocols were pretested using a sample of n=100 leavers.

Step 2c) Main tracking efforts for “unrelated leavers” started in August 2007 and were ongoing through December 2007. Thirteen trackers participated in the study. The sample consisted of n=2188 unrelated leavers. This number differs from n=2121 in step 2a because it was based on the final disposition of the 2005 data, while the SSDI search was based on the final disposition of the 2003 data. Specifically, sample were excluded from tracking if they were: found in SSDI, “recons” from 2005 (i.e., would be contacted again during 2007 data collection), found to be strong refusers in 2005, or returned to the study in 2005 after having the status of recontact in 2003. Sample were added if they were found to have left the study after 2005 – i.e., they were recontacts for 2003 that were non-response in 2005 and therefore had attrited.

Because a substantial number of these leavers left the study before contact information was stored electronically (i.e., 1994), the last telephone number used to contact the respondents was not available to trackers. Thus, trackers attempted to locate current telephone numbers for the leaver and/or their family members using internet databases. Once preliminary information was obtained for these individuals, the SRO tracking interviewers attempted to make contact in order to confirm the information found from on-line searches or other databases. The contact attempts were done over the phone and interviewers used a script for the introduction and interaction with the individuals (see Appendix III for the tracker script). Where no viable phone number was located but an address was located, a tracking letter was mailed requesting the respondent call the toll free SRO number to make contact with an interviewer.

In order to deem an individual as “alive,” an eligible informant needed to confirm the leaver’s name and agree with the leaver’s age or date of birth. If there was a discrepancy in these fields, then the informant was asked to confirm the last known address. Eligible informants included the leavers themselves, or a related family member. Information from an internet database, including SSDI, was not sufficient information for confirming vital status. Informants who reported that a leaver was deceased were asked to provide information on the date of death and state where died. This information was then entered by the tracker in the publicly available Social Security Death Index (SSDI) to obtain a social security number. These data were then provided to the PSID staff member who conducted the initial SSDI searches in 2006 in order to ascertain the reason that the decedent was not located at that time in an attempt to review this step of the protocol, improve the success of the search, and add this information to the mortality archive in preparation for the file to be sent to the National Death Index for linking of cause of death information.

At the conclusion of tracking efforts by the SRO tracking team, 85% of n=2188 unrelated leavers were confirmed as alive, 3.6% (n=79) were confirmed as deceased, and approximately 11% remained unknown.

A more detailed examination of the reasons for cases remaining lost was undertaken in an attempt to improve future protocols. Of those unrelated leavers whose vital status remained unknown at the conclusion of the tracking effort, no phone number could be found for nearly 85%. Of those for whom

phone numbers were found using internet databases, contact with a knowledgeable informant was unsuccessful.

A detailed examination was also carried out for the deceased cases. PSID staff examined the source of the information and attempted to ascertain the reason the case was not located in Step 2a. This follow-up step provides information on the utility of the various tracking protocols weighed against their costs and will inform the use of various protocols in the future. If attempts to track and call leavers identifies only a small number of decedents over and above searches in the SSDI administrative data base, then it may be cost effective to search the SSDI rather than track and call leavers, which is much more expensive. In addition, the SSDI might be a cost effective way to identify the vital status of the sample of leavers that were not included in this project, i.e., pre-1984 leavers, and leavers who were part of the Latino or dropped SEO sample.

For those n=79 related leavers found deceased, the source of the confirmatory information was the family member in 84% of the cases, and the SSDI in 69% of the cases. Both sources confirmed the death in 54% of the cases. About two-thirds (n=54) were subsequently confirmed after tracking by PSID staff as a correct match in SSDI; n=25 could not be confirmed by PSID staff as a correct match. PSID staff attempted to ascertain why they did not locate these decedents during the initial 2006 SSDI search.

Of this first group of n=54 who were confirmed as good matches, 56% (n=30) were new decedents that were added to the SSDI's administrative after PSID's original 2006 search. These n=30 would eventually have been found by the routine SSDI search undertaken by PSID staff. Of the remaining n=24 of the n=54 cases that had dates of death preceding the 2006 SSDI search, most of them (84%, n=21) were not originally found in SSDI because PSID data were missing or outdated, such as the spelling of a last name or the change of last name since last interview due to marriage. Finally, there were n=3 cases (12%) that were not found in SSDI due to project staff error. It is likely that these last n=3 would have been found during the next routine SSDI search. This yields a total of n=21 deaths out of n=2188 leavers that likely would have been found only by making direct contacts with informants via tracking efforts instead of relying solely on searches in the SSDI administrative files.

The second group of n=79 unrelated decedents included n=25 identified by trackers that PSID staff could not confirm in SSDI. These n=25 consisted of two groups, one which is "probably dead" and

one which should be recategorized as “unknown.” First, there were n=16 who were reported as deaths from family members, but did not have records in the SSDI. Three of the n=16 were children who may never have obtained an SSN. All of these cases were born after 1931, suggesting that the n=13 adults should have an SSN. However, based on family report, if we include these n=16 as probable deaths, this adds a total of  $21+16 = 37$  decedents of 2188 or 1.6% that were found as a consequence of tracking. The other n=9 were individuals that PSID staff believe were incorrectly coded as deceased by trackers and recategorized them as unknown.

Thus, the vital status of this group was as follows: 85% were alive, 3.2% were dead (79-9=70) and 11% remained unknown.

### 3. Results for Additional Tracking of n=748 Related Leavers:

The n=748 related leavers who received the tracking protocol carried out by the National Tracking Team all had family members still active in the PSID, who had just been asked to report information about their vital status. Thus, a special database was created for the trackers that included a “do not call” list of all related PSID family members. For many of these sample leavers, this was a comprehensive listing of all relatives that existed. This left very few other relatives to contact which made tracking more challenging for this group than the unrelated leavers.

At the conclusion of efforts by the tracking team, 89% of these n=748 leavers were confirmed alive, 11% remained lost, and <1% (n=2) were found to be deceased.

A detailed examination of the cases remaining lost was undertaken. Of the related leavers whose vital status remained unknown at the conclusion of the tracking effort, no phone number could be found for about 82%. Of those for whom phone numbers were found using internet databases, interviewers were unsuccessful in actually contacting the leaver or someone who knows the leaver. Information about a relative was unavailable for nearly all the cases due to the “do not call” list of active PSID families. For the n=11 cases who did have information about a relative available who was not a PSID participant, no phone number was found for the majority. A small portion did have a relative with a phone number, but either contact could not be made or the relative refused to provide information. There were n=8 cases

where a contact was found for a non-relative, but there was either no answer or the non-relative refused to provide information.

Two of the related leavers were confirmed as deceased. The post-hoc examination of SSDI showed that one case was not found in the original 2006 search of SSDI because of the recency of death, September 2007. The other case was a female who changed her name after she left the study. Thus, PSID staff would not have located this case without the tracking project.

#### **D. Next Steps and Future Protocols**

The next step in this project is to examine the 2007 production data for the related leavers and add all confirmed decedents from this group, as well as from the tracking protocols just described, to the PSID mortality file which will be sent to the NCHS National Death Index for matching to cause of death. The datafile made available to users under restricted contract will contain a variable that indicates the source of the information about the decedent: relative during 2007 production, relative during telephone tracking, SSDI, or postcard mailing.

Project staff will continue to search for SSN in the SSDI for known decedents that the study learns about as a consequence of its usual interviews with family members. In addition, project staff will search SSDI for the remaining leavers (i.e., leavers who left prior to 1984, and leavers who were part of the dropped SRC sample in 1997 or the Latino sample) as well as for new sample leavers on a routine basis. Thus, once an individual has been out of the study for two waves, PSID staff will search for them in the SSDI periodically, most likely every 3-5 years. This consists of searching for the entire stock of leavers. A database will be created and maintained for all leavers that provides information on wave of attrition, and last known address and telephone number, so that in the future the data will be ready to use without additional processing needed.

Finally, the PSID is considering tracking and interviewing respondents even if they have not completed an interview for two more consecutive waves; an exception would be made for so called "hard" refusals, which are individuals who adamantly tell interviewers that they never want to be interviewed again. Our current policy is to drop individuals who have not completed an interview for two consecutive waves. If instead we keep these cases as part of the active sample, the components of the special

tracking exercise described in this document would take place each and every wave. We would, however, need to undertake periodic searches for the cases that were hard refusals.

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**APPENDIX I:****Steps Undertaken to Search for Social Security Number in the Social Security Death Index****Dennis Kloska, Panel Study of Income Dynamics**

Searches of the publicly available Social Security Death Index were conducted throughout 2006 by a research associate who had worked on the PSID staff for many years and who had available the following data fields from the most recent wave of PSID: last name, first name, middle name; last residence zip, state, city; birth year, month, day. The criteria used to judge that a match was successful varied with the prevalence of the last name. For “common” last names that resulted in 40 or more records, the match criteria were strict with a match being made only after a last name, first name, year of birth, and city and state were found to be exactly the same. For last names that were less common, and resulted in between 5 and 40 records, a match was determined to be made after finding equivalence on last name, first name, year born, and state. For this group, not matching on city was deemed to be acceptable given the matching on the other fields. For uncommon names that resulted in less than five matches, an exact match on the last name and state continued to be required. The first name could have a slightly different spelling (Jon vs. John), and the date of birth could have varied by plus or minus one year. When only one record was received, a match was determined when there was an exact match on last name, a near match as described above on first name, and no more than a one-year variation on date of birth.

**Contingency Rules****For search with “common name” (Search on last & first name alone would bring up more than 40 matches)**

- 1) Must match on Last name exactly.
- 2) Must match on First name exactly.
- 3) Year born must match exactly.
- 4) City of last known residence must match exactly.
- 5) State of last known residence must match exactly.

**For search with “un-common name” (Search on last & first name alone would bring 5 to 40 matches)**

- 1) Must match on Last name exactly.
- 2) Must match on First name exactly.
- 3) Year born must match exactly.

- 4) State of last known residence must match exactly.

**For search with “rare name” (Search on last & first name alone would bring less than five matches)**

- 1) Must match on Last name exactly.
- 2) First name might be spelled slight different, but must be obvious that it is the same name...
- 3) Year born must be with-in one year of our listed DOB.
- 4) State of last known residence must match exactly.

**For search where only one hit on first and last name.**

- 1) Must match on Last name exactly.
- 2) First name might be spelled slight different, but must be obvious that it is the same name.
- 3) Year born must be with-in one year of our listed DOB.
- 4) State of last known residence match would depend on how old our data is.

**Appendix II:**

**Mailing To Families of Sample Leavers, August 2006**

Date

Name

Address

City, ST Zip

## **Can you help us find lost study participants?**

The *Family Economics Study* values each and every one of its study participants. In order to make our files more accurate, we would like to ask for your help finding out what happened to family members who were once participants in the study, but haven't participated recently. We would appreciate any information you can provide to us about the person or people listed on the following pages. If you have details about one or more of these people, such as an address or phone number, please fill out his/her block of information and return it to us in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. We will send you a \$10.00 check as a token of appreciation for your assistance.

Sincerely,

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Frank P. Stafford  
Director, Family Economics Study

**Family Economics Study** ▪ Survey Research Center ▪ Institute for Social Research ▪ University of Michigan  
P.O. Box 1248 ▪ Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248 ▪ **1-800-759-7947**

Should you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, 540 East Liberty Street, Suite 202, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210, 734-936-0933, email: [irbhsbs@umich.edu](mailto:irbhsbs@umich.edu)

**Appendix III:**

**Questions Asked of Families with Related Sample Leavers in the PSID 2007 Interview**

RPAY7C. As you know, each participant in the Family Economic Study is very important to us. In order to make our files more accurate, we are asking for your help in finding out what happened to family members who once were original participants in the study. We would appreciate any information you can provide to us about them, such as an address or phone number.

ENTER "1" TO CONTINUE

1. Continue..... GO TO RPAY7D

RPAY7D. [First, / (Next)] can you give me any information regarding [LEAVER] such as an address or phone number?

1. Yes, R knows current address
  2. Yes, R only knows current phone
  3. Yes, R says this person is deceased
  5. No, R has no information
- DK/RF

RPAY7D2. (IF RPAY7D=1, 2: Is "[LEAVER]" (his/her) legal name? / IF RPAY7D=3: Was "[LEAVER]" (his/her) legal name? / IF RPAY7D=5, DK, RF: Can you tell me if "[LEAVER]" is (his/her) legal name?)

1. Yes ..... GO TO RPAY7D COMPUTER CHECKPT
  3. No, but R knows legal name ..... GO TO RPAY7D3
  5. No, but R doesn't know or refuses to give legal name ... GO TO RPAY7D COMPUTER CHECKPT
- DK/RF ..... GO TO RPAY7D COMPUTER CHECKPT

RPAY7D3. Could you give me (his/her) legal name?

EDIT name as needed

[LEAVER FIRST NAME] [LEAVER LAST NAME]

RPAY7D CHECKPOINT

- IF RPAY7D= 1, GO TO RPAY7D INCO - COUNTRY
- IF RPAY7D= 2, GO TO RPAY7F
- IF RPAY7D= 3, GO TO RPAY7J
- IF RPAY7D= 5, GO TO RPAY7P CHECKPOINT
- IF RPAY7D= DK/RF, GO TO RPAY7P CHECKPOINT

INCO. (What is that address?)

ADDR1. Address 1 of Leaver

ENTER P. O. Box in "ADDR2"

APTSTE. Is there an apartment, suite, or building number?

IF NONE, PRESS ENTER TO CONTINUE

ADDR2. Address 2 of Leaver

ENTER P. O. Box here

IF NONE, PRESS ENTER TO CONTINUE

CITY. City of Leaver

STATE. State of Leaver

ENTER "FOR" TO SELECT "Foreign Country"

ZIP. Zip of Leaver

ENTER ALL 0's FOR FOREIGN COUNTRY

COUNTRY. Country of Leaver if different from USA

RPAY7E. Is there a phone number for [LEAVER]? Remove parens from entire question

1. Yes

5. No ..... GO TO RPAY7P COMPUTER CHECKPT

RPAY7F. (What is the area code and phone number?) Add parens around entire question

Area Code and Phone Number

IF FOREIGN PHONE, ENTER ALL 0's AND PUT FOREIGN NUMBER IN NEXT FIELD

RPAY7G. Extension?

Extension

ENTER FOREIGN PHONE NUMBER IN THIS FIELD

IF NO EXTENSION, PRESS ENTER TO CONTINUE

RPAY7H. In whose name is this phone listed?

IF PHONE NUMBER IS NOT LISTED, ENTER "UNLISTED"

RPAY7I. Is this a home phone, work phone, or cell phone?

1. Home

2. Work

3. Cell

**Appendix IV:**

**Telephone Script Used by Survey Research Operations Tracking Team**

Hello, my name is INTERVIEWER NAME and I'm calling from the University of Michigan. Your family was once part of the Family Economics Study and I'm calling in order to update our files. We appreciate your family's past participation in the study, and we are not trying to recruit members back in the study. We are just looking for information on what happened to study participants.

Interviewers then tell the informant the name and DOB/age of the attritor, and ask whether the person is alive.

If the individual is alive, the informant / attritor must confirm name and agree with the DOB/age. If there is a discrepancy in these fields then the address is confirmed.

If the individual is deceased, the informant must confirm place of death (state) and date (year).

Confirmation that someone is alive or dead can only be made by talking to someone on the phone, not by internet information

Figure 1. Schematic of Steps Taken to Track Vital Status of PSID Sample Leavers During 2006-2007

