

2022 Richland County Rural Broadband Cost Proposal July 27, 2021

Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls

Since 1990, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls has provided statistically sound, low-cost information gathering services for academics, local units of government, non-profit groups, school districts, and other organizations. The Center conducts between 20 and 30 surveys a year on a wide variety of topics. The SRC is directed by Dr. Shaheer Burney, and employs two staff (Denise Parks and Dr. David Trechter) and six student assistants.

Adam Hady of University of Wisconsin, Madison Extension has requested a cost estimate from the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin–River Falls to conduct a survey to gather information about broadband issues in rural portions of Richland County, Wisconsin. The project would consist of developing a questionnaire, administering a mail-out survey, compiling and analyzing the results, and providing a report. This proposal lays out the assumptions used, tasks to be completed, and costs associated with this project.

Protocol

SRC protocols must be reviewed and approved by the University of Wisconsin – River Falls Institutional Review Board (IRB) according to the standards of the *Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research*, The National Commission for the Protection Of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, April 18, 1979; and the Code of Federal Regulations, 45 CFR 46 (March 8, 1983) and the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects: Notices and Rules (June 18, 1991). All surveys are assigned an IRB # that is included in the survey document.

Project Assumptions

Mr. Hady estimates that there are roughly 5,200 households in rural Richland County. For estimates to be accurate to within plus/minus 5% with 95% confidence, the SRC would need to receive feedback from 358 randomly selected households in the study area. Past broadband surveys done by the SRC have widely varying response rates; ranging from a low of 26% of those asked to participate in the survey to a high of 60%. For the purposes of this cost estimate, the SRC has assumed a response rate of 33%.

Other assumptions used in this cost estimate include:

- The survey will be three 8" X 11" pages plus a cover letter that will be printed, double-sided, on one 11" X 17" sheet of paper.
- The SRC will purchase a mailing list of addresses from MARC publishing.
- There will be one open-ended question in the survey to compile and categorize; other questions may include an "other, please specify" option.
- The survey will take place sometime in 2022.

Project Tasks

The project includes the following tasks:

- SRC staff will work with Mr. Hady/Richland County officials to develop a questionnaire.
- The survey instrument will be compatible with the SRC's scanning software.
- Upon request, the SRC will draft cover letters to fit the survey population, objectives, and to help improve response rates.
- Richland County will decide if cover letters will be printed on a specific letterhead and, if so, will provide an electronic or physical copy of the letterhead to the SRC.
- The SRC will provide all the work associated with the preparation and mailing of the surveys. This includes copying and stuffing envelopes and mailing a survey to a sample of 1,074 households in rural Richland County, sending post card reminders to non-respondents two to three weeks after the initial mailing and mailing a second survey to non-respondents two to three weeks after the reminder post card is sent. The SRC uses multiple mailings in order to increase response rates and allow for non-response statistical testing.
- The SRC will collect, input/scan, and clean data from the returned questionnaires and tabulate the data.
- The SRC will provide a draft report to Mr. Hady/Richland County officials in electronic format for review and approval. Richland County will decide if they would like a full report of the results (statistical analysis of the data, executive summary and full write-up of the results), or a summary (graphs showing response distributions and bullet points – no statistical analysis and no narrative summary of results).
- The SRC will send a final report and the data (with identifying information removed) to Mr. Hady/Richland County officials in an electronic format.
- Upon completion of the surveys, the data and report, and questionnaire will be the property of Mr. Hady/Richland County officials. The report may, with the client's approval, be posted on the SRC Internet web site.

Estimated/Projected Costs

The following is an estimate based on the project description included above. The SRC may need to create a revised cost proposal if changes occur to the project's dimensions, as we understand them.

Study	Mailing size	Sample Size <i>Needed/Expected</i>	Min. Cost Full Report
Full Report	1,074	358	\$8,100
Summary Report	1,074	358	\$7,000

The SRC will process surveys in addition to the 358 assumed for this cost estimate for \$3.30 per survey. Processing additional surveys improves the accuracy of the results but does add to the overall expense. Mr. Hady/Richland County officials will specify the maximum number of surveys to be processed.

Tentative Survey Timeline and Delivery of Results

The SRC expects to start this project in 2022. Data gathering will take approximately two months from the first mailing and the SRC expects to deliver the draft report within six weeks of completion of the data-gathering phase. **The questionnaire and cover letter will need to be finalized at least 20 working days prior to the mail-out date to allow for printing and preparation for mailing.**

If you have any questions or comments, please contact:

- Shaheer Burney, shaheer.burney@uwrf.edu, 715-425-4226, or
- David Trechter, david.d.trechter@uwrf.edu 715-425-3129, or
- Denise Parks, denise.parks@uwrf.edu, 715-425-0701.