Acceptable Sample Sizes

for Surveys Used in Needs Assessment

How Many Surveys…?

When CAHCs don't have access to risk behavior or similar survey data as part of a needs assessment for their target population, they may need to conduct their own surveys to get this information. One question often asked is, "How many surveys do we need to collect to get data we can really use?"

The table below shows the number of surveys that need to be collected based on total enrollment (student population) to get data that is within acceptable confidence intervals, simply meaning there is a small margin of error in your survey results.

For example, if your student population is 500 and you want to make sure your survey results are correct within +/- 5%, then you would need to collect 218 surveys from among the total student population of 500.

Enrollment/ Student Population	Confidence Intervals		
	1%	3%	5%
200	196	169	132
500	476	341	218
1000	906	517	278
1500	1298	624	306
2000	1656	696	323

Adapted from Guide to Conducting Youth Surveys, Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation

For more information, contact your assigned CAHC Program Consultant.

Visit our website at www.michigan.gov/cahc for more great resources!

Sample Size
The value of a survey depends partly on the proportion of the total population surveyed, known as the sample size.

Confidence Level
In smaller populations, you must collect survey data from a larger proportion of the population to get results you can rely on. The greater the confidence level, the more sure you can be that your results are true.

As the population size *increases*, the sample size needed to obtain similar confidence levels *decreases*.

Use the table on the left as a quick reference, or search the Internet for free and easy-to-use sample size calculators.