

ITC Tips and Tricks

This Tips and Tricks document should be used as an aid to improve the skills of an ITC operator. The items below are a collection of helpful tips compiled from existing ITC operators over the years.

Before you Begin:

- Keep the NASDA/NDC and NASS websites open in separate tabs in case a respondent asks for information.
- It's helpful to always have the NASDA Survey site open so you can quickly locate the paper survey image for reference when collecting data in READI (located on the NDC website under Active Surveys).
- Before beginning your ITC shift, review your emails to read any important and current information.
- Have the ASK USDA phone number and website written down to provide to respondents.
- Have the ITC callback number along with the hours written down.
- Have a calculator ready to use if needed.
- Have a pencil/pen and paper ready to use if you need to do any calculations or write down any notes to yourself.

During a Call:

- Keep a cup of water to drink nearby.
- If the respondent states they received a survey in the mail, ask for the name on the label. If you still have trouble finding the record, ask them to spell it. If they have the survey in front of them, you can ask for the EDR Survey Code at the top of the page.
- Often there are multiple records returned on a search with very similar names. To authenticate we have the right person, have the respondent verify EDR code from their questionnaire label.

- Be attentive, listen and repeat to verify. Never interrupt the respondent.
- Use conversation to probe for answers when the targets answers are not clear.
- When talking with respondents, you might add a comment of empathy, like “Hope your day is going well”.
- You can gauge the feel of the call and temper your conversation accordingly.
- Write down names (if it's an odd name to pronounce or difficult to spell).
- Keep a notebook of personal notes and frequently asked questions that will help you answer respondent’s questions quickly.
- Any PII written down must be shredded and thrown away.

System Performance/Technical Issues:

- READI is a relatively young system and encounters issues periodically. To get the best experience, enumerators should get into the habit of clearing their browser cache and doing a hard refresh before they begin their shift.
- To ensure your MacBook has the latest updates and security patches, enumerators should do a ‘Restart’ at least once a week. There is no need to shut down your MacBook each time you end your shift.
- If READI is not working, it might help to try using a different browser. (Chrome is the recommended browser)
- If you get a message saying your Zoom session will expire shortly, it’s safest to log out and back in so you are not logged out in the middle of a call.