

# **SURVEY DESIGN AND ANALYSIS**

**The Association for Criminal Justice  
Research**

*San Diego Association of Governments  
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# Why Conduct a Survey?

- ▶ To supplement existing information
- ▶ To find out about a specific population group
- ▶ To get opinions about a specific topic or issue

# Survey Topics

- ▶ Public opinion
- ▶ Customer satisfaction (city departments, law enforcement services, etc.)
- ▶ Needs assessment (senior center, library, etc.)
- ▶ Internal employee satisfaction
- ▶ General Plan updates

# Survey Methodologies

- ▶ Telephone
- ▶ Mail-out, mail back
- ▶ Personal interview
- ▶ Focus groups

# Telephone Surveys

## ▶ Pros:

- Generally considered to be most statistically reliable
- Can be conducted quickly

## ▶ Cons:

- Difficult to get people to pick up the phone
- Complexity of questions is limited

# Mail-Out, Mail-Back Surveys

## ▶ Pros:

- Gives many people the opportunity to be part of the decision-making process
- Can be used as an educational tool
- Easy to administer

## ▶ Cons:

- Low response rate
- Unable to measure statistical reliability

# Personal Interviews

## ▶ Pros:

- Opportunity for in-depth questions
- Most direct way to reach a specific group

## ▶ Cons:

- Time consuming and costly
- Possible interviewer bias

# Focus Groups

## ▶ Pros:

- Allows for in-depth interaction between moderator and participants
- Forum to generate ideas, issues, concerns

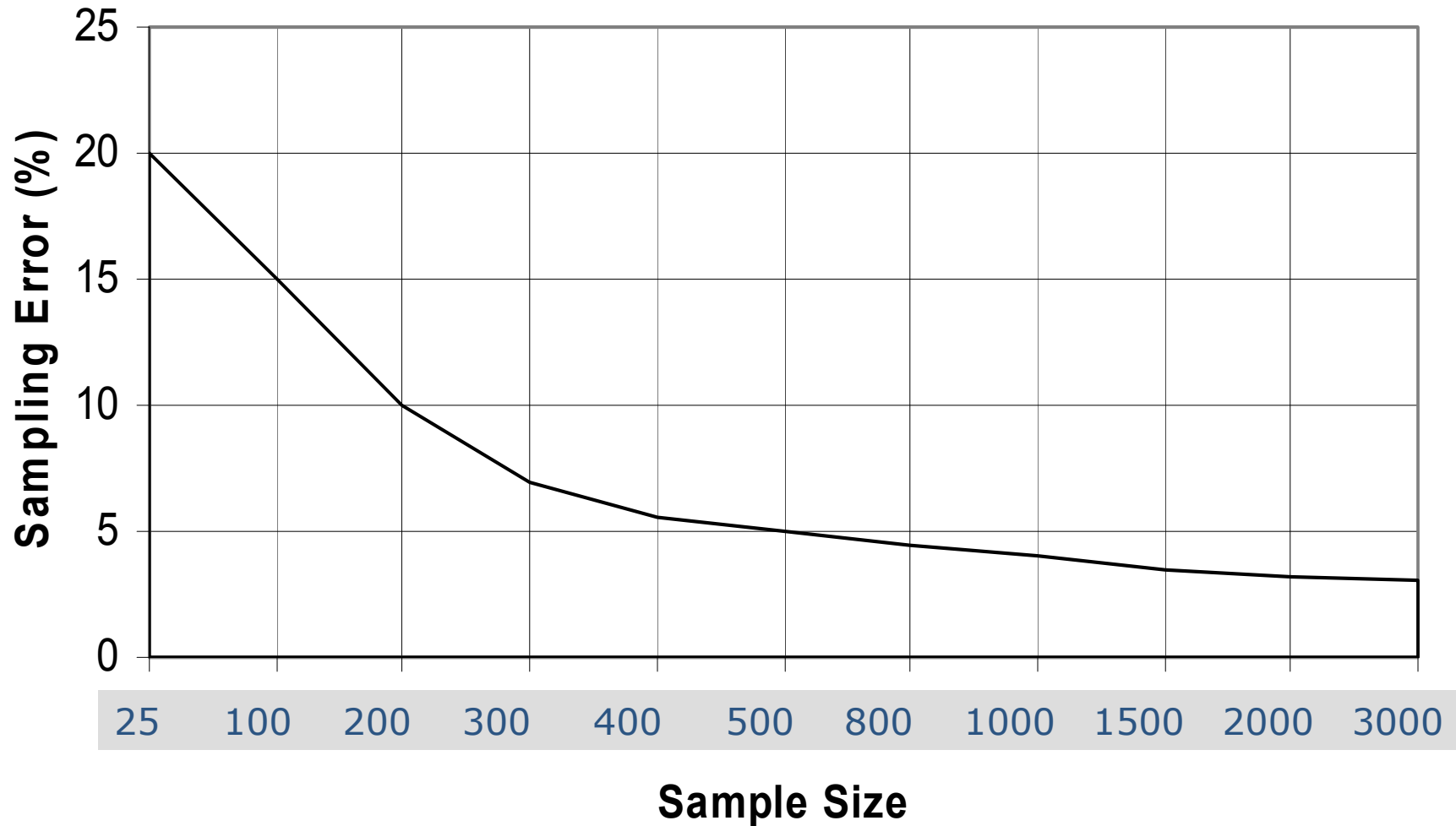
## ▶ Cons:

- Can't generalize results to entire population group
- Expensive

# Designing the Questionnaire

- ▶ Meet with people who will use the results
- ▶ Avoid “surveys by committee”
- ▶ Eliminate “nice to know” questions
- ▶ Make sure wording is clear and unbiased
- ▶ Mutually exclusive response categories

# How Many People Do I Need in My Sample? (95% Confidence Level)



# Improving Response Rates

- ▶ Send pre-survey postcard or letter
- ▶ Keep it short!

# Mail-Out Surveys

- ▶ Make survey visually appealing
- ▶ Make it easy to complete/return questionnaire
- ▶ Conduct follow-up survey of non-respondents

# Telephone Surveys

- ▶ Use trained interviewers
- ▶ Keep individual questions brief
- ▶ Avoid “ranking” questions
- ▶ Caller ID issues

# Regardless of the Type of Survey...

- ▶ Begin at the end
- ▶ How much money do I have?
- ▶ How much time do I have?
- ▶ How important is statistical reliability?
- ▶ What info can I get from other sources?
- ▶ Who will be surveyed & how will I reach them?

# When You're Ready to Start

- ▶ Meet with end users
- ▶ Determine the most appropriate methodology
- ▶ Design the questionnaire
- ▶ Get the 'right' sample and size
- ▶ Pretest



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