



The AmeriSpeak ADVANTAGE

OVERVIEW

Funded and operated by NORC at the University of Chicago, AmeriSpeak™ is a probability-based panel (in contrast to a non-probability panel). Randomly selected households are sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection. Selected households are invited to join AmeriSpeak by telephone or by web and to then participate in research studies approximately two to three times a month.

NORC surveys and other kinds of research using the AmeriSpeak panel are conducted by its own researchers and on behalf of NORC's clients such as governmental agencies, academic researchers, and media and commercial organizations.

As a probability-based panel, AmeriSpeak is designed to be a nationally representative panel of U.S. teens and adults. Its initial offering will be a general population adult panel of 10,000 households across the country, with plans to expand in later years. Future plans also include the development of custom online panels that can include specific population samples such as military veterans and low-income households.

THE AMERISPEAK ADVANTAGE

AmeriSpeak continues NORC's tradition of pioneering innovations in the research field. AmeriSpeak provides NORC's clients a highly cost-effective and efficient survey solution that is designed to be the most scientifically rigorous web panel available in the U.S. market. The AmeriSpeak advantage lies in its 1) sample representativeness, 2) response rate, and 3) measurement of sample quality.

Enhanced Sample Representativeness via the NORC National Sample Frame

AmeriSpeak households are selected initially from NORC's National Sample Frame, an area probability sample funded and managed by NORC and used for several NORC studies, including the General Social Survey funded by the National Science Foundation and the Survey of Consumer Finances sponsored by the U.S. Federal Reserve Board in cooperation with the U.S. Treasury Department.

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- EMAIL AmeriSpeak business development team at AmeriSpeak-BD@norc.org
 - CONTACT your NORC research representative

A circular orange logo with white text that reads "CONTACT NORC'S AMERISPEAK".

CONTACT
NORC'S
AMERISPEAK

NORC's National Sample Frame is designed to provide over 99 percent sample coverage by supplementing the U.S. Postal Service Delivery Sequence File (USPS DSF). To do this, NORC field staff surveyed select geographic areas, creating a supplemental list of addresses for the National Frame. As the USPS DSF systematically underrepresents addresses in rural areas, the supplemental listings included in the NORC National Frame are intended to create a more comprehensive inventory of U.S. households and enhance the sample representativeness of AmeriSpeak panel research.

Best-in-Industry Response Rates through NORC Telephone and Field Interviewing

As a multi-client panel, AmeriSpeak is unique in its investment in sample quality. Due to the rigor of its panel recruitment, AmeriSpeak surveys are designed to achieve the highest response rate of any multi-client panel solution on the market. To enhance the representativeness and response rate of the panel, the AmeriSpeak recruitment protocol includes the use of NORC telephone interviewers for encouraging sampled households to join AmeriSpeak. In the final stage of the panel recruitment process, nonresponding households are subsampled for additional refusal conversion efforts, which involves additional mailings, respondent incentives, and in-person recruitment by NORC field interviewers.

With AmeriSpeak field interviewers conducting traditional face-to-face recruitment—combined with other measures to encourage study participation—AmeriSpeak is designed to meet the data quality standards of scientific and regulatory peer review.

NORC Card™: Sample Quality Measurement

Through the NORC Card, AmeriSpeak delivers a quantitative measurement of sample quality for clients, providing an objective measure of sample representation. The NORC Card is a standard report deliverable for AmeriSpeak projects, and it documents a number of measures of sample quality, including:

- American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) response rate
- Interview break-off rate
- Representativeness of the interviewed sample compared to population benchmarks
- Quantitative assessment of self-selection bias taking into account each sampling stage (initial panel recruitment, panel retention, and custom survey)
- Custom bias measurements specific to the survey topic (consumer, health services, medical conditions, social attitudes, political behavior, etc.)

The NORC Card employs both publicly available datasets and consumer data files to profile each household selected for AmeriSpeak panel recruitment, making possible the measurement of self-selection bias at each sampling stage.

TECHNICAL NOTES ON AMERISPEAK METHODOLOGY

Target Population

AmeriSpeak provides a representative panel of civilian, non-institutional adults (age 18 and over) living in the United States. The panel will provide sample coverage of teens age 13 to 17 in the fall of 2015.

Sample Frame

In order to provide a nationally representative sample, AmeriSpeak leverages the NORC National Sample Frame, constructed by NORC to cover over 99 percent of U.S. households. The 2010 National Frame used a two-stage probability sample design to select a representative sample of households in the United States. The first stage—the sampling unit—is a National Frame Area (NFA), which is either an entire metropolitan area (made up of one or more counties) or a county (some counties were combined so that each NFA contains a population of at least 10,000). The largest NFAs with a population of at least 1,543,728 (0.5 percent of the 2010 Census U.S. population) were selected with certainty; these areas have a high-population density, and are dominated by tracts with street-style addresses. These areas contain 56 percent of the population within 8 percent of the geographic area of the United States. The remaining areas were stratified into areas where street-style addresses predominate, and the remaining areas, which are less likely to have street-style addresses. The latter stratum (“rural” areas) comprises 81 percent of the geographic area, but only 14 percent of the population.

Within the selected NFAs, the second stage sampling unit is a segment, defined either in terms of Census tracts or block groups, containing at least 300 housing units according to the 2010 Census. A stratified probability sample of 1,514 segments was selected with probability proportional to size. For most of the 1,514 segments, the USPS DSF provided over 90 percent coverage of the segment in terms of city-style addresses that are geocodeable. For the 123 segments where the DSF provided insufficient coverage, we enhanced the DSF address list with in-person listing. The National Sample Frame contains almost 3 million households, including over 80,000 rural households added through the in-person listing.

Sample Selection for Panel Recruitment

The 2015 AmeriSpeak panel sample consists of nationally representative housing units drawn from the 2010 NORC National Sample Frame. The panel sample of households includes an oversample of housing units in segments (Census tracts or block groups) higher in young adults and/or Hispanics and non-Hispanic African-Americans.

Recruitment Methodology

The recruitment process for AmeriSpeak occurs in two stages: 1) initial recruitment and 2) nonresponse follow-up recruitment (NRFUR).

With respect to initial recruitment, NORC contacts sampled households by a variety of means to make the household aware of their eligibility to join AmeriSpeak. The contact methods are email (when available), U.S. mail, and telephone (when available). Sampled households are mailed a 6"x11" pre-notification postcard alerting the household of their selection for AmeriSpeak.

Approximately a week later, the sampled household receives a USPS recruitment package in a large 9"x12" envelope with a cover letter, a summary of the privacy policy and FAQs, and a study brochure. Afterwards, there are two reminder postcards (measuring at least 6"x9") and email campaigns. In addition to the USPS mailings, NORC telephone interviewers call sampled households where a residential and/or cell phone number can be matched to the sampled address.

Beginning with the recruitment package, sampled households are provided the information necessary to register online at the AmeriSpeak panel portal or by calling the study's toll-free telephone number for phone-based registration.

Spanish-language recruitment will be added later in 2015.

The initial recruitment stage lasts approximately 10 weeks. At its conclusion, the nonresponders to the initial recruitment are identified and randomly subsampled for the next and final stage of the recruitment process, the NRFUR. Sample units selected for the NRFUR are sent a new recruitment package by express mail, with an enhanced incentive offer for joining AmeriSpeak. NORC field interviewers then make personal visits to the respondent's homes to encourage participation in AmeriSpeak. NORC field interviewers, during their personal visits, answer any questions about study participation and provide assistance as needed (e.g., provide log-in instructions to the AmeriSpeak panel web portal, the toll-free AmeriSpeak phone number, etc.).

Consenting and Initial Profiling

NORC obtains and documents informed consent and agreement to the study's Privacy Policy and Terms and Conditions during the registration process. After registration is completed, AmeriSpeak panel members first complete an introduction survey of about 15 minutes by web

or by telephone asking questions about the household's composition and the person's background and interests. The introduction survey provides an initial profile of the panelist and the household. Upon completion of the registration process and introduction survey, the respondent is an active AmeriSpeak panel member eligible for client studies and additional profile surveys.

After one adult in the household becomes an active AmeriSpeak panel member, other adults in the household are invited to join AmeriSpeak. These additional adults are required to complete the same registration and introduction survey before becoming an active AmeriSpeak panel member.

After the initial profiling is completed via the introduction survey, subsequent NORC surveys invite the panelist to provide additional background information about public affairs, health services, health conditions, financial services, and computer and internet usage (among other topics).

Panel Member Study Participation

AmeriSpeak panel members typically participate in AmeriSpeak web-based or phone-based studies two to three times a month. Surveys are usually 10 to 20 minutes in length; however, longer surveys are permitted with the allowance for additional incentives to recognize the time spent by AmeriSpeak panelists.

AmeriSpeak panel members who do not have internet access for survey taking are enrolled in the telephone mode for client studies and profile surveys, while the internet users are enrolled in the web mode. NORC's telephone interviewers administer the phone mode of survey questionnaires using a data collection system supporting both the phone and web modes of data collection, providing an integrated sample management and data collection platform. For phone-mode panelists selected for studies requiring the web mode of data collection, such panel members are permitted to use their smartphones for web-mode surveys. For panelists using smartphones for web-mode AmeriSpeak surveys, the survey system renders an optimized presentation of the survey questions for these mobile users.

Panel Management Policies

NORC maintains strict rules to limit respondent burden and reduce the risk of panel fatigue. On average, AmeriSpeak panel members typically participate in AmeriSpeak web-based or phone-based studies two to three times a month.

Because the risk of panel attrition increases with the fielding of poorly constructed survey questionnaires, the AmeriSpeak team works with NORC clients to create surveys that provide an appropriate user experience for AmeriSpeak panelists. During the pretesting phase of AmeriSpeak survey projects, AmeriSpeak researchers provide clients consulting on best

practices for the design of survey questions. AmeriSpeak will not field surveys that in our professional opinion will result in a poor user experience for our panelists and in panel attrition.

AmeriSpeak's recruitment procedures for protecting the rights of human research subjects have been reviewed and approved by NORC's Institutional Review Board (IRB). For publicly funded research, NORC's IRB will review the proposed research, typically completing the review within 48 hours. AmeriSpeak's research staff will manage the IRB review process on behalf of its clients.

Response Rate Calculations

As a supporter of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR), NORC follows AAPOR standards for response rate reporting as published by AAPOR in its *Standard Definitions*. NORC will report the AAPOR response rate in its NORC Card deliverable provided to AmeriSpeak clients. The AmeriSpeak response rate is properly calculated to take into account each stage of the respondent participation process (recruiting, retaining, and surveying AmeriSpeak panelists).

NORC will calculate the response rate consistent with the weighted response rate methodology used in the American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

AMERISPEAK RESEARCH SERVICES AND PRODUCTS

- **Custom Surveys:** Statistical surveys of AmeriSpeak panel households, including general population surveys, studies targeting low-incidence groups, longitudinal surveys, and large sample size surveys and local area studies combining AmeriSpeak sample with non-probability samples.
- **Omnibus Surveys:** AmeriSpeak Omnibus provides a monthly vehicle for collecting survey data for custom survey questions from a representative AmeriSpeak sample of 1,000 adults.
- **Custom Proprietary Panels:** New client-owned household panels created and operated by AmeriSpeak.
- **Digital Measurement:** Measurement of panelists' exposure to online advertising campaigns to complement self-report survey data.
- **Data Science Services:** Data services for linking AmeriSpeak custom survey data to geocoded or household-matched administrative and public sector databases.
- **Statistical Consulting:** Custom solutions for sampling, weighting, estimation, and analysis for AmeriSpeak studies.
- **Survey Design Consulting:** Sampling and data collection solutions to optimize cost-effectiveness, data quality, and schedule.

PRICING AND PROPOSAL SUPPORT FOR NEW STUDIES

AmeriSpeak's business development team is available to provide early-stage assistance in conceptualizing survey design solutions, as well as in pricing and proposal support for new studies. The team includes researchers with experience in federal and foundation grant applications, prime awards with federal agencies, MOBIS, and commercial market research in financial services, retail, and technology.

Send an email to AmeriSpeak-BD@NORC.org to learn more about AmeriSpeak or explore a new study concept, or contact your NORC representative.

ABOUT NORC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

As one of the world's foremost independent research institutions, NORC at the University of Chicago delivers objective data and meaningful analysis to help decision-makers and leading organizations make informed choices and identify new opportunities. Since 1941, NORC has applied sophisticated methods and tools, innovative and cost-effective solutions, and the highest standards of scientific integrity and quality to conduct and advance research on critical issues. Today, NORC expands on this tradition by partnering with government, business, and nonprofit clients to create deep insight across a broad range of topics and to disseminate useful knowledge throughout society.

Headquartered in downtown Chicago, NORC works in over 40 countries around the world, with additional offices on the University of Chicago campus, the DC metro area, Atlanta, Boston, and San Francisco.