



NORC
at the UNIVERSITY of CHICAGO

Insight for Informed Decisions



SOCIAL SCIENCES
RESEARCH

Dedicated to the public interest for 70 years, NORC has helped a wide range of clients identify and address society's most urgent challenges.

Understanding our society—and taking action on the issues that confront it—requires insight gained through objective, high-quality social science research. That’s why decision makers and policy leaders turn to NORC at the University of Chicago, an independent research organization known for excellence, innovation, and effective collaboration. Working with NORC experts, clients obtain the data and analysis needed to drive evidence-based decisions and improve public policy. Dedicated to the public interest for 70 years, NORC has helped a wide range of clients identify and address society’s most urgent challenges.

A Tradition of Excellence

As one of the oldest not-for-profit, academic research organizations in the United States, and through its affiliation with the University of Chicago, NORC maintains the highest standards of professional excellence and scientific rigor, and is committed to broad dissemination of its findings.

A Passion for Innovation

NORC’s subject matter experts and survey professionals develop and employ innovative study designs, research methods, and technical applications to derive meaningful and accurate results.

A Commitment to Collegiality

NORC cultivates an interdisciplinary culture of achievement in which senior investigators from diverse fields and professional backgrounds collaborate with the next generation of researchers in an open, collegial environment.

A Long and Rich History, an Exciting Future

Founded in 1941, NORC has helped establish and continues to strengthen the rapidly evolving field of social science research. Numerous data collection and analytical tools that now set the industry standard were pioneered at NORC. Since its early years—when wartime opinion polling first brought the organization to prominence—NORC has enriched public policy debate and decision making by gathering and distilling critical information and contributing to the creation of entirely new bodies of knowledge. Committed to serving the public good, NORC’s work continues to inform decision makers and provides the foundation for effective solutions.

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Advanced Capabilities and Expertise

NORC's research expertise—including conceptualization, design, implementation, and evaluation—grows out of its long history of working with government agencies, academic institutions, foundations, and a wide range of other organizations. NORC's staff includes rigorously trained and widely published leaders from a diverse array of fields such as economics, education, medicine, political science, psychology, public health, public policy, sociology, statistics, and the physical sciences.

With locations in Chicago and the DC Metro area, NORC's work is enhanced by its strong collaborative relationships with prominent experts, senior government officials, and leading scholars. In addition to its significant public policy expertise, NORC also maintains a large and flexible field staff and call center to support a variety of long-term and quick-response national and international projects.

NORC's Core Capabilities

- 1. Study Design and Conceptualization.** At the critical early stages, research projects are defined and scoped by highly skilled NORC staff members who often collaborate with University of Chicago faculty and scholars.
- 2. Quantitative Data Collection and Data Management.** NORC has long been an innovator in survey design and operations, adept at data collection across multiple modes—landline, cell phone, paper, the web, and in-person interviews, as well as non-interview data sources. NORC fields studies of all sizes and configurations, from surveys with 200 respondents to longitudinal and cross-sectional research with more than 90,000 respondents. A trusted manager of sensitive data, NORC maintains the Data Enclave, which archives, curates, and indexes sensitive data, allowing them to be shared securely within closed communities of researchers who can, in turn, access the data remotely.
- 3. Qualitative Data Collection.** When more nuanced information is needed, techniques for qualitative data collection include structured interviews, focus groups, cognitive interviews, and site visits.
- 4. Analytic Research.** NORC's extensive analytical capabilities are as varied as its data collection techniques. NORC statisticians perform the most complex statistical analyses, while its policy analysts identify key research questions and hypotheses at the project outset and then assess the implications of both qualitative and quantitative research findings.
- 5. Evaluation Research and Performance Management.** NORC is a widely respected leader in the field of program evaluation, with demonstrated expertise in measuring and shaping the overall impact of government programs, whether by mounting large-scale, multi-year experimental designs or conducting mixed-method assessments of grants and other efforts that are already underway.
- 6. Technical Assistance.** NORC has extensive experience developing needs assessments, providing training, facilitating peer-to-peer learning, crafting communications strategies, and working with clients to solve unforeseen problems.
- 7. Dissemination and Policy Recommendation.** Serving the public interest and advancing effective policy is a defining characteristic of NORC and central to its mission. Often collaborating with scholars from the University of Chicago and other universities and research centers, NORC's staff regularly communicates research findings in the broad media, in peer-reviewed journals, and in reports to federal and state governmental bodies.
- 8. Auxiliary and Support Services.** NORC offers translation of survey instruments and other documents, website development and maintenance, financial management, and publication development and production. All of the work that NORC conducts is enhanced by a fundamental commitment to following standard operating procedures, adhering to financial controls, and the use of quality-assurance tools.

NORC also provides expertise in secondary data analysis, cost-benefit analysis, market assessments, and financial analysis.

Where NORC Makes its Mark

NORC has delivered numerous influential research studies, typically focusing on society's most acute challenges. NORC researchers study a broad range of topics, often generating results that transcend the confines of specific disciplines. But within certain important areas—education, health, economics, crime, justice, energy, security, and the environment to name a few—NORC has had an especially noteworthy and lasting impact.

Several past projects represent its groundbreaking work in these areas, such as the National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth, one of the most successful large-data resources in the social sciences, and the National Immunization Survey, one of the largest telephone surveys in the United States. The General Social Survey, which marks its 40th anniversary in 2011, is routinely used by policy makers and has been cited in thousands of publications. Other representative, timely projects include the National Resource Center for Health Information Technology; the Growth Model Pilot Program Under No Child Left Behind; and Technical Assistance to Support Implementation of Healthy People 2020.

NORC's Integrated Core Services and Research Departments





With its innovative methods and tools, flexible and collaborative approach, and tradition of excellence, NORC provides clients of all types and sizes with highly accurate, objective results and actionable insights.

Benefits for a Broad Range of Clients

Drawing on its portfolio of capabilities, NORC has helped a broad range of clients gain vital perspectives on the issues and problems they face, and make real progress on their agendas. Some representative clients include the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the Census Bureau, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Education, the Energy Information Administration, the Federal Reserve Board, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC), the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC), the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and TRICARE Management Activity.

NORC also provides research support to organizations such as the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Child Trends, the Commonwealth Fund, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, the City of New York, the states of California and Illinois, the Urban Institute, the World Bank—and national governments in Ghana, Honduras, Morocco, Spain, Qatar, and the United Kingdom. At any given time, NORC is also conducting research studies led by academic investigators from more than a dozen universities and colleges.

Partner with NORC—and Unlock Vital Data

In addition to working with large and well-known organizations, NORC has created research models that help many small and mid-size businesses and institutes gain access to the data and insights that they need to make informed decisions and craft effective solutions. NORC employs an interdisciplinary, team-based approach and offers many ways for clients to collaborate with its experts on projects of varying degrees of complexity, scope, and budget. NORC can also serve as a project coordinator or one of several research partner organizations to either lead or participate in collaborative research efforts.

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