



---

# Brand Messaging Guide

10/27/2021

---

# Brand Definition

---

## **INSTRUCTIONS:**

Use these boilerplate descriptions in personal interactions, proposals, info briefs, reports, press releases, and any other communications where you need a succinct description of NORC.

Please see the [NORC Brand Style Guide](#) for information on how to use NORC logos, colors, and other brand assets.

## ***ELEVATOR SPEECH***

NORC at the University of Chicago is an objective, nonpartisan research organization that delivers insights and analysis decision-makers trust.

## ***BOILERPLATE***

NORC at the University of Chicago conducts research and analysis that decision-makers trust. As a nonpartisan research organization and a pioneer in measuring and understanding the world, we have studied almost every aspect of the human experience and every major news event for more than eight decades. Today, we partner with government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world to provide the objectivity and expertise necessary to inform the critical decisions facing society.

# Brand Tagline

---

## **INSTRUCTIONS:**

It's important that you understand the message the tagline is meant to convey. Though this tagline is new to NORC, the idea behind it is not. Every time we talk about rigor and expertise, every time we talk about our objectivity and independence, every time we talk about our mission and values, we are giving clients reasons to trust the quality and integrity of our work. *Research You Can Trust* simply takes those addends and gives them a sum.

With a little elaboration, you can even use the tagline as an alternate elevator speech:



## ***NORC CONDUCTS RESEARCH YOU CAN TRUST***

- Clients hire us because they know they can trust our work.
- We earn that trust through rigorous methodology and exceptional expertise.

# Brand Talking Points

---

## **INSTRUCTIONS:**

Use this language verbatim or as inspiration for your own variations when you need to write about NORC's key selling points. The project and people descriptions under Expertise, Impact, and Innovation are samples of how such descriptions should be written. You should choose examples of our staff members, projects, or innovations to fit the interests of your audience.

## ***OUR FOUNDATION***

We're a nonprofit with the capabilities of a large corporation.

- We are driven by our mission and values.
- We have clients and partners, not owners or shareholders.
- We were founded in 1941 and helped create the field of opinion research.
- We're affiliated with the University of Chicago, a beacon for rigorous inquiry and intellectual freedom and a source of additional subject matter expertise on many of our projects.

## ***OUR OBJECTIVITY***

We're objective and nonpartisan — a value needed now more than ever and an essential reason why clients trust us.

- Information is ubiquitous and misinformation abounds.
- Our clients need information they can trust.
- We let the data lead, always guarding against preconceived notions or bias in our work.
- Our goal is not to reach a prescribed answer but to deliver reliable, actionable insights.

## ***OUR EXPERTISE***

Our clients hire our people, and our people's expertise is the reason clients come back. Our team includes world-renowned subject-matter experts and methodologists, including:

- **René Bautista** is Director of the General Social Survey and a nationally recognized expert on nonresponse, measurement error, interviewer effects, mixed modes, and data collection methods.
- **Caroline Pearson**, an expert on public and private health insurance, has helped Fortune 500 health care companies solve complex business and policy problems.
- **John Roman** has helped government agencies at all levels evaluate innovative criminal justice policies and programs, answering whether they reduce recidivism and disparities.

## *OUR INNOVATION*

NORC works at the forefront of research and analytics at a time of great change in the industry. We are constantly developing new techniques and technologies that meet our clients' evolving need for flexible, affordable, trustworthy solutions. Our innovations include:

- **VoteCast**, developed by NORC and The Associated Press, overcomes the limitations of traditional exit polling by using a probability-based sample of registered voters to calibrate a very large sample from opt-in, online panels. Launched just before the 2018 midterm elections, the reliability of VoteCast data allowed The Associated Press and Fox News to accurately call race outcomes and to explain the mood of the electorate in their election-night coverage.
- **NORC's AmeriSpeak® Panel** combines the affordability and speed of panel-based surveys with the accuracy, response rates, and sample quality typical of more traditional survey methods. Since its founding in 2015, AmeriSpeak has produced more than 700 surveys, been cited by dozens of media outlets, and become the primary survey partner of The Associated Press.
- **NORC's Data Enclave** is a highly secure, high-performance computing environment that provides authorized users remote access to confidential microdata and cutting-edge analytic and visualization tools.

## *OUR IMPACT*

Our work has informed what society knows about itself. We've studied almost every aspect of the human experience and every major news event of the last eight decades. Some of our most impactful work includes:

- **The General Social Survey** records Americans' feelings about important issues, such as civil liberties, morality, and crime and punishment. It started in 1972 and is the single best source for tracking trends on American attitudes.
- **The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research** surveys Americans on key issues of the day. These nonpartisan polls get high-profile news coverage from The Associated Press and other media outlets.
- With the **National Immunization Surveys**, NORC helps monitor vaccination rates in American children and teens. The surveys report local and state estimates of vaccination coverage.

# Brand Keywords

---

## **INSTRUCTIONS:**

NORC relies on a series of nouns and adjectives inspired by the basic brand description and the supporting pillars. NORC also avoids certain words and phrases that, while accurately descriptive of NORC, have negative connotations with certain audiences.

## ***USEFUL ADJECTIVES FOR DESCRIBING NORC***

- Independent
- Objective
- Nonpartisan
- Innovative
- Pioneering
- Industry-leading
- Mission-driven

## ***USE “RIGOROUS” CAREFULLY***

One of NORC’s biggest communication challenges is that to some audiences, our most distinguishing characteristics—our 80 years, our methodological rigor, our affiliation with UChicago—make us sound big, slow, and expensive. While it’s still okay to refer to call NORC rigorous, it’s good to couple that adjective with words like “flexible” or “innovative.”

## ***AVOID CALLING NORC “THE LARGEST”***

Many organizations in our sector are larger. Also avoid calling NORC “the oldest.” Longevity by itself conveys little value, and to many audiences, “oldest” just makes NORC sound old. NORC can, however, make a legitimate claim to having shaped the industry, so words like “pioneering” and “leading” are fine.

### *USEFUL NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES FOR NORC'S PEOPLE*

- Experts
- Thought leaders
- Nationally recognized
- Internationally recognized
- Accomplished
- Skilled
- Collegial
- Collaborative
- Professional

### *USEFUL NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES FOR NORC'S CULTURE*

- Collegial
- Collaborative
- Inclusive
- Increasingly diverse (It's best not to separate these words, as we are not yet as diverse as we want to be.)
- Innovative

# Brand Voice

---

## **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Write in the first person plural, using “we” and “our” to refer to NORC.
- Write in direct address, using “you” and “your” to refer to the reader.

## ***NORC'S VOICE IS CLEAR***

Our brand is trustworthiness, and trustworthiness demands clarity. So NORC uses the simplest language possible to convey even our most complex ideas. Think of how you apply parsimony to a theory, model, or experiment design. You should apply parsimony to your language as well, and for the same reason.

## ***NORC'S VOICE IS HUMAN***

For all our academic background and scientific rigor, our communication is personal. That's as it should be. Real people at NORC gathered the data and developed the insights, and real people at our client organizations need to understand that data and analysis in order to put it to use.