

Measuring Entrepreneurial Activities in the U.S.: Introducing the Entrepreneurship in the Population Survey

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Abstract

This paper introduces the Entrepreneurship in the Population (EPOP) survey, a nationally representative data source for understanding entrepreneurial activities across the United States since 2022. The EPOP survey is distinguished by its focus on a broad set of entrepreneurial activities and collects a wealth of information on the behaviors, challenges, and resources available to entrepreneurs. This data brief provides information on the design and measurement approach of the survey, discusses how to work with EPOP data, and outlines future plans for the survey, including a longitudinal data collection to support research on trajectories of current and prospective entrepreneurs.

Keywords

entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial finance, new ventures, quantitative, research methods, self-employment

Introduction

Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in economic growth, job creation, and innovation (Acs et al., 2018). But while the importance of entrepreneurship to the U.S. economy is clear, understanding the entrepreneurial journey and how best to support entrepreneurship requires detailed data across areas, over time, and across all stages of the entrepreneurship process. Moreover, technological advancements such as digital platforms, artificial intelligence (AI) tools, and remote work have changed the entrepreneurial landscape, and it is important to understand these evolving phenomena.

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Because of all these requirements, nationally representative data that can shed light on entrepreneurial activities across diverse populations and at different stages of the entrepreneurial process remains challenging. Existing U.S. data sources often focus solely on established businesses, overlooking nascent entrepreneurs, gig workers, and those who have exited entrepreneurship (Hechavarria et al., 2025). Moreover, some of the most important data sets, such as the Panel Study of Entrepreneurial Dynamics (PSED), predate important new developments in the landscape of entrepreneurship.

To address these challenges, we introduce the Entrepreneurship in the Population (EPOP) Survey, a new, nationally representative study designed to capture the full spectrum of entrepreneurial activities in the United States. Running from 2022 to 2026, the EPOP survey aims to provide researchers, policymakers, and practitioners with a nuanced understanding of entrepreneurship across diverse demographic groups and geographic regions over time. Key features of the EPOP survey include: (a) four annual cross-sectional waves with oversampling of underrepresented groups to ensure adequate representation, enabling the analysis of trends and changes in entrepreneurial activities over time at the population level similar to the approach of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), but with greater depth; (b) a final planned wave of data collection that will include a longitudinal sample of respondents who have completed prior waves of EPOP; (c) Detailed categorization of entrepreneurial activities, including current entrepreneurs, former entrepreneurs, nascent entrepreneurs, freelancers, gig workers, and those who have withdrawn from entrepreneurial pursuits (Katz & Gartner, 1988; Reynolds et al., 2005); (d) Comprehensive data on resource acquisition, business operations, and personal characteristics, allowing for in-depth analysis of the entrepreneurial process (Aldrich & Martinez, 2001); (e) Survey content to shed light on new developments in the entrepreneurial landscape, such as digital platform work and the use of AI by entrepreneurs.

The EPOP survey's questionnaire employed consultation, cognitive testing, and pilot studies to ensure validity and reliability. Data collection for the survey employs a mixed-mode design (web and phone) and utilizes multiple sample sources, including NORC's AmeriSpeak Panel, address-based sampling, and nonprobability samples, to maximize coverage and response rates (Dillman et al., 2014). By providing a more wide-ranging view of entrepreneurial activities, including those in the informal and gig economy, EPOP data can support research on a wide range of topics. These include trends in entrepreneurial entry and exit rates (Parker, 2009), changes in patterns of resource acquisition and utilization over time (Clough et al., 2019), shifts in the composition of the entrepreneurial population (Levie & Autio, 2008), and evolving regional variations in entrepreneurship ecosystems (Stam, 2015).

In this research note, we provide a detailed description of the EPOP survey's methodology, present examples of research questions that can be addressed using EPOP data, and discuss limitations and future directions for the project. Our goal is to introduce this valuable new data source to the entrepreneurship research community and encourage its use in advancing our understanding of entrepreneurial phenomena. The EPOP survey's annual cross-sectional design allows for the analysis of population-level trends and changes in entrepreneurship at national, state, and Metropolitan statistical area (MSA) levels, and the planned longitudinal data collection will support the study of entrepreneurship transitions, such as understanding predictors of business success or closure. By utilizing this rich data source, researchers can contribute to more nuanced theories of entrepreneurship and provide evidence-based insights to inform policy and practice in supporting entrepreneurs at all stages of their journeys.

Capturing the Entrepreneurial Journey

The fluid nature of the entrepreneurial journey (McMullen & Dimov, 2013) presents unique challenges for researchers seeking to understand and analyze this dynamic process. This fluidity necessitates a diverse array of secondary data sources to aid researchers, each offering different perspectives and insights into the entrepreneurial landscape. Different data sources, summarized in Table 1, are essential to capture a fuller spectrum of entrepreneurial activity, as they vary in their focus, scope, and methodology. These sources differ in several key aspects:

1. **Data type:** Some focus on financial metrics, others on demographic characteristics, and yet others on attitudinal or behavioral measures.
2. **Unit of analysis:** Data may be collected at the individual level, firm level, or even industry or regional levels.
3. **Frequency of data collection:** Sources range from annual surveys to quarterly reports or one-time studies.
4. **Data structure:** Data differ in whether they are cross-sectional or longitudinal in nature.

Federal data sources, such as those provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau, offer several advantages for entrepreneurship research. These include broad coverage of the business landscape, regular and consistent data collection, large sample sizes allowing for robust statistical analysis, and often free accessibility to researchers. However, they also have limitations. These sources sometimes lack the granularity needed for studying individual entrepreneurs, may have reporting lags, may miss informal or nascent entrepreneurial activities, and can offer limited flexibility in terms of the variables collected.

Longitudinal data sources provide valuable insights by tracking sample members over time, revealing patterns and transitions that cross-sectional studies cannot capture. Each existing longitudinal dataset makes unique contributions while navigating inevitable trade-offs in research design. For example, the Kauffman Firm Survey provides documentation of firm-level growth trajectories and detailed organizational changes; however, its business-centric approach provides less insight into individual entrepreneurs' characteristics and decision-making (Robb & Reynolds, 2009). Similarly, the PSED offers deep insights into startup processes by following individuals who are actively trying start a new business, yet, as with all datasets focused specifically on entrepreneurs after they've begun their entrepreneurial journey, there may be left truncation issues (Yang & Aldrich, 2012). More fundamentally, PSED's data collection period (1998–2006) predates critical developments in modern entrepreneurship, including digital platforms, gig economy growth, crowdfunding mechanisms, and AI integration that now define contemporary entrepreneurial practice. The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) contributes remarkable depth to individual career trajectories across decades, though its broader economic focus necessarily limits the depth of entrepreneurship-specific variables (Fairlie, 2005). For example, detailed capital acquisition variables available in EPOP are generally not present in NLSY or other similar surveys that have such a broad focus. The EPOP survey complements these established resources by combining cross-sectional breadth with a planned individual-level longitudinal component, designed to track transitions across multiple entrepreneurial activities while maintaining specialized entrepreneurship measures.

Table 1. Existing Data Sources for the Study of Entrepreneurship in the United States.^a

Data source	Data type	Unit of analysis	Frequency	Data structure	Years of data collection
BLS QCEW	Financial, Employment	Firm, Industry	Quarterly	National repeated cross-sectional	Ongoing
U.S. Census SBO	Demographic, Economic	Firm, Individual	Every 5 years	National repeated cross-sectional (every 5 years)	Last: 2012
PSED	Demographic, Behavioral, Attitudinal	Individual	Longitudinal	National longitudinal panel	PSED I: 1998–2000, PSED II: 2005–2006
GEM	Behavioral, Attitudinal	Individual, National	Annual	International repeated cross-sectional (annual, multiple countries)	Annual since 1999
KFS	Financial, Behavioral	Firm	Annual	National longitudinal panel	2004–2011
NLSY	Demographic, Behavioral	Individual	Annual	National longitudinal panel	NLSY79: 1979–present, NLSY97: 1997–present
U.S. Census LBD	Financial, Employment	Firm	Annual	National longitudinal panel (same firms tracked annually)	1976–present
SBA SUSB	Financial, Employment	Firm, Industry	Annual	National repeated cross-sectional	Annual since 1988
Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS) Market identifier file	Financial, Demographic	Firm	Ongoing	International continuous database/panel	Ongoing
Federal Reserve Board SSBF	Financial	Firm	Periodic	National repeated cross-sectional (periodic waves)	1987, 1993, 1998, 2003

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Data source	Data type	Unit of analysis	Frequency	Data structure	Years of data collection
EPOP survey	Demographic, Behavioral, Attitudinal	Individual	Annual	National repeated cross-sectional + planned longitudinal panel	Annual since 2022

Note. EPOP = Entrepreneurship in the Population; SSBF = Survey of Small Business Finances; SUSB = Statistics of U.S. Businesses; SBA = Small Business Administration; LBD = Longitudinal Business Database; NLSY = National Longitudinal Survey of Youth; KFS = Kauffman Firm Survey; GEM = Global Entrepreneurship Monitor; PSED = Panel Study of Entrepreneurial Dynamics; SBO = Survey of Business Owners; QCEW = Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages; BLS = Bureau of Labor Statistics.

^aWe acknowledge several important international entrepreneurship datasets that contribute valuable insights to the global entrepreneurship research landscape. Notable examples include the IAB/ZEW Start-up Survey in Germany, which provides detailed longitudinal data on startup dynamics and innovation patterns (Hottenrott & Richstein, 2020); the EU Labour Force Survey's entrepreneurship modules, which enable cross-European comparisons of self-employment and business creation; the Canadian Survey of Suppliers of Business Financing, which offers insights into entrepreneurial finance across different institutional contexts; and various national GEM implementations that provide country-specific entrepreneurship rate measurements. While these datasets make significant contributions to understanding entrepreneurship across diverse national contexts, this research note focuses specifically on entrepreneurship data collection and research applications within the United States. EPOP's design and measurement approach could potentially inform future international entrepreneurship data collection efforts, particularly for capturing contemporary phenomena such as platform-based work and technology integration that are emerging across global entrepreneurship ecosystems.

Building on the foundation established by these valuable datasets, the EPOP survey introduces several distinctive features that enhance our understanding of entrepreneurship in the contemporary economy. First, it provides comprehensive coverage of entrepreneurial activities, including nascent, withdrawn, current, and former entrepreneurship. Second, its annual cross-sectional design allows for the analysis of population-level trends and changes in entrepreneurship at national, state, and MSA levels in the United States. Relative to data sets with higher levels of aggregation, such as GEM, this geographic detail allows for examinations of how local policy environments relate to entrepreneurship. Third, the upcoming longitudinal data component will support the study of entrepreneurship trajectories and help establish causal relationships. Fourth, EPOP includes data on gig economy participation and informal entrepreneurship, capturing a broader spectrum of entrepreneurial activity than many traditional sources. This is particularly important as these evolving forms of entrepreneurship have emerged since the fielding of data sets such as PSED. Finally, both cross-sectional and longitudinal components offer detailed data on entrepreneurial motivations and challenges, providing a rich context for understanding the entrepreneurial journey. Relative to GEM, EPOP includes a wealth of data on motivations, more detailed process measurement, such as networking and business development activities, and granular information on challenges. By offering this combination of features, EPOP fills important gaps in the existing landscape of entrepreneurship data. It provides researchers with a tool to examine the full spectrum of entrepreneurial activity, from initial interest and nascent efforts to established business operations and exit experiences.

Data Collection Methodology and Quality Assurance

EPOP's sampling approach for the 2022-2024 waves draws from three sources: (a) NORC's AmeriSpeak Panel, a probability-based panel of 50,000+ active participants recruited through address-based sampling with a 22.5% cumulative recruitment response rate;¹ (b) a supplemental address-based sample (ABS) drawn from the United States Postal Service (USPS) Delivery Sequence File to enhance geographic and demographic coverage across all 50 states and top 50 metropolitan areas; and (c) targeted nonprobability samples from opt-in panels to further supplement the sample and enable estimation of entrepreneurship activities at more fine-grained geographic levels. Starting in EPOP:2025, the sample is drawn entirely from the AmeriSpeak Panel. For all waves, data collection employs a dual-mode web and telephone approach with standardized protocols and responsive design strategies that adjust collection methods based on real-time response patterns.

EPOP employs rigorous data collection protocols developed by NORC at the University of Chicago to ensure validity and reliability for entrepreneurship research.² All instruments undergo extensive pre-testing, cognitive interviewing, and validation procedures to optimize the measurement of entrepreneurship-specific concepts. Response rates for EPOP:2022 are consistent with similar surveys: AmeriSpeak Panel achieved 38.2% survey completion (4.9% overall response rate accounting for panel recruitment), while the ABS sample achieved 6.0% response rate. These response rates have further increased in recent waves. The ABS response rates for the 2023 and 2024 waves were 8.8% and 9.3%, respectively, while the AmeriSpeak response rates for the same waves yielded overall response rates of 5.4% and 6.2% after accounting for panel recruitment.

All EPOP survey waves undergo extensive quality control, including systematic item non-response monitoring, consistency checks across variables, and data editing procedures that preserve integrity while addressing irregular patterns. EPOP also implements a robust

weighting process, including separate base weights for each sample source, adjustments for unknown eligibility and non-response, and final ranking to external demographic benchmarks. Combined sample weights integrate probability and nonprobability components using NORC's proprietary statistical matching method (Yang et al., 2022). Multiple validation approaches confirm data quality, including external benchmark comparisons with Current Population Survey data shown in Appendix Table A1. For sensitivity analysis, researchers can implement probability-sample-only analyses to assess the robustness of findings to potential concerns about nonprobability sample sources. More information on how to use the multiple sample sources in EPOP is provided in Section "Using the Data."

Entrepreneurship Activities in the EPOP Survey

One of the EPOP survey's key contributions to entrepreneurship research is its multistep screening process that identifies respondents' current and past engagement in multiple entrepreneurial activities. The screener first establishes respondents' employment status, asking for detailed information on respondents' primary and secondary jobs. Following the approach of Abraham and Amaya (2019), the survey then follows up with "In the last week, did you do ANY work for pay, even for as little as one hour?" This helps identify informal and intermittent forms of work, which are common among entrepreneurs. After collecting job information, the screener collects information on respondents' participation in six entrepreneurial activities: current and past business ownership, current and past freelancing, nascent entrepreneurship, and withdrawn entrepreneurship. These activities can be tied to respondents' primary and secondary jobs or can be unrelated to their reported jobs. Respondents can also be categorized in multiple entrepreneurial activities,³ which allows researchers to examine cooccurring activities or to follow activities across time using retrospective reports. In addition, the screener ascertains whether respondents are engaged in gig work due to the gig economy's close ties to entrepreneurship (Barrios et al., 2022). National estimates from the EPOP survey are provided in Appendix Table B2.

Business Ownership

The EPOP survey takes the approach of "casting a wide net" when identifying current and past business owners. The screener asks whether respondents' primary and secondary jobs involve running their own business and then asks follow-up questions on business ownership regardless of respondents' reported employment. This method is useful for capturing informal forms of business ownership, such as small businesses, emergent businesses, businesses without revenue, and "side hustles." It also captures ownership arrangements where respondents may not consider their involvement as a job, such as silent partnerships or businesses that are managed by an employee. Figure 1 shows how common these types of businesses are, showing that less than half of current business owners report business ownership as their primary job.

Using job status information to identify and categorize business owners allows researchers to choose how broad a definition of business ownership to use and examine specific subgroups of business owners if needed. Other useful ways to delineate business owners include demographic characteristics of owners (race and ethnicity, education, age), business characteristics (age of business, number of employees, legal structure), and geography. Business owners are also given content modules to collect rich information on the experiences of starting and running a business. Module topics include the following:

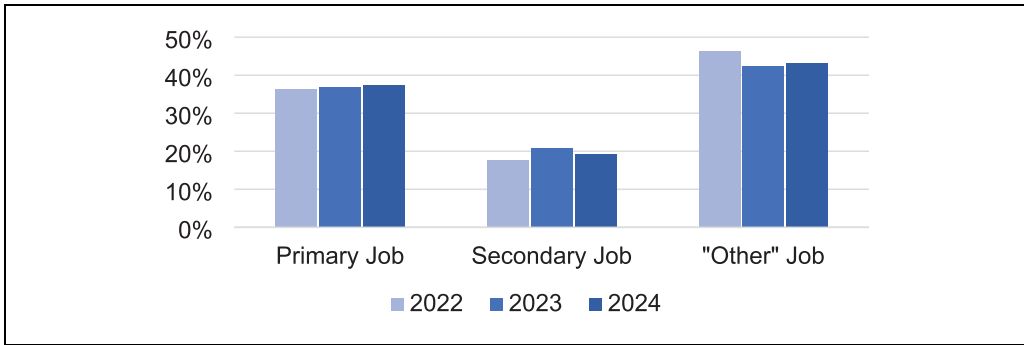


Figure 1. Reported job type associated with business ownership.

Source. EPOP:2022, EPOP:2023, EPOP:2024.

- Reasons for pursuing entrepreneurship
- Steps taken to pursue entrepreneurship
- Capital
- Day-to-day operations
- Revenue
- Challenges with business ownership
- Goals and post ownership plans
- Industry, background, and experience (starting in EPOP:2023)

The screener also identifies former business owners by asking, “Have you ever owned a business, professional practice, or farm.” Follow-up modules for former business owners are similar to those assigned to current business owners, with questions on topics such as capital, day-to-day operations, and challenges. Further, EPOP collects data on when the business ended, how it ended (sold at a loss, sold at a profit, bankruptcy, etc.), and why it ended (e.g. affording health insurance, finding professional support, and challenges with personal finances).

Nascent Entrepreneurship

While understanding the experiences of individuals currently engaged in entrepreneurial activities is important for research, equally important is understanding the unique perspectives and challenges faced by individuals currently in the process of starting a business. To measure this group, the EPOP survey defines these “nascent entrepreneurs” as individuals who respond yes to the following question: “Are you, alone or with others, currently trying to start a new business, including any form of self-employment, freelancing, consulting, or independent contracting, or selling any goods or services to others?”

Although the initial nascent entrepreneurship question in EPOP uses a very broad definition, the survey includes additional questions on what steps respondents have taken toward opening the business, which allows researchers to create more restrictive criteria for entrepreneurial planning. Specifically, EPOP asks a series of “pursuing entrepreneurship” items (PE_STEPS_1 through PE_STEPS_8) that ask about concrete steps respondents have taken when starting their own business (for current entrepreneurs) or to start their own business (for nascent entrepreneurs). The pursuing entrepreneurship items are

categorized broadly into networking steps, technical/market research steps, business development steps, financing steps, organizational planning steps, and staffing/growth steps, along with an opportunity for respondents to report open-ended steps not otherwise covered. Therefore, researchers could identify various types of nascent entrepreneurs by filtering down to those who responded “Yes” to the nascent item and filtering down to those who selected any of the various steps across the pursuing entrepreneurship items.

Narrowing the criteria for defining nascent entrepreneurs facilitates comparisons between the EPOP survey and existing data sources capturing nascent entrepreneurship. For example, the PSED and GEM restrict their definition of nascent entrepreneurship to those who have taken steps toward starting their business. A respondent who indicated they were in the process of starting a business and selected any of the pursuing entrepreneurship steps would provide the closest definition to how GEM defines a nascent entrepreneur. The GEM also restricts its definition of nascent entrepreneurs to those aged 18 to 64, which could be accomplished in the EPOP data as well by restricting the age of the respondent to less than 65 years.

Alternatively, Bennett and Chatterji (2019) use a broad definition that counts anyone who has considered starting a business in the previous 5 years as a nascent entrepreneur. Therefore, it is less likely that EPOP estimates of nascent entrepreneurs would match those produced via the Bennet and Chatterji method. The closest estimate would come from combining nascent and withdrawn entrepreneurs, as withdrawn entrepreneurs previously had plans to start a business but did not follow through. This categorization could include withdrawn entrepreneurs who were nascent more than 5 years ago, however.

Table 2 provides more detail comparing nascent entrepreneurship across data sources. The EPOP survey finds 15% to 17% of the adult U.S. population are nascent entrepreneurs, which translates to approximately 40 million adults. This is greater than estimates from the PSED and the nascent-only version of the GEM, which both require steps to have been taken to pursue starting the business. However, restricting the EPOP criteria to those who have taken at least one step toward starting their business shows a very similar estimate to GEM nascent. The EPOP survey estimates much higher rates of nascent entrepreneurship compared to the PSED, but this may reflect an increase in the prevalence of nascent entrepreneurship since the time of fielding for the PSED.

Withdrawn Entrepreneurship

In addition to identifying those who plan to start businesses, the EPOP survey identifies those who have abandoned their plans, which we call withdrawn entrepreneurs. By examining individuals who considered starting a business but ultimately decided against it, EPOP data can provide insights into the factors individuals believe are linked to business failure in latent entrepreneurship, which is often overlooked in traditional studies focused on businesses that have been established and then failed. The EPOP survey defines withdrawn entrepreneurs as individuals who considered starting a business but did not pursue the activity. More specifically, respondents are asked in S_WITHDRAW_1 “Have you, alone or with others, ever considered starting a new business, including any form of self-employment, freelancing, consulting, or independent contracting, or selling any goods or services to others but decided to wait or change your mind?” Starting with EPOP:2023, this question was asked to every respondent,⁴ allowing for an understanding of which respondents abandoned an entrepreneurial idea even if they have otherwise engaged in entrepreneurial activity.

Table 2. Comparing Rates of Nascent Entrepreneurship in EPOP and Prior Work.

Survey	Estimate of nascent	EPOP comparison estimate	How to create EPOP comparison
EPOP:2022	41,693,559	—	—
EPOP:2023	41,149,600	—	—
EPOP:2024	38,292,513	—	—
Bennett and Chatterji	Not provided	66,892,653	Nascent AND withdrawn entrepreneurs (those who planned to start a business in the past)
PSED	12,145,000	37,099,959	Nascent entrepreneurs who have taken any steps toward starting business
GEM	36,402,283	34,258,490	Nascent entrepreneurs aged 18 to 64 who have taken any steps toward starting business
GEM (including intents)	62,162,730	38,614,918	Nascent entrepreneurs aged 18 to 64

Source. EPOP:2022, EPOP:2023, EPOP:2024; Bennett and Chatterji (2019), PSED, GEM. EPOP = Entrepreneurship in the Population; GEM = Global Entrepreneurship Monitor; PSED = Panel Study of Entrepreneurial Dynamics.

The EPOP survey also asks a follow-up item for those who said “Yes” to the *S_WITHDRAW_1* item, gauging their interest in pursuing this abandoned business idea. Respondents rate their level of interest in starting the business on a five-point scale from “not at all interested” to “extremely interested.” Therefore, researchers can use the interest item along with other pursuing entrepreneurship items (*PE_STEPS* items) to filter down to withdrawn entrepreneurs who were more or less committed to their business idea before they decided to move on from it. For example, withdrawn entrepreneurs who reported being very interested in starting a business and taking several concrete steps may have different reasons and motivations for abandoning their business idea than a withdrawn entrepreneur who never pursued any entrepreneurial activities. In addition, withdrawn entrepreneurs are asked about the challenges they faced in pursuing their business idea and the ultimate reason why they abandoned their idea.

Freelancing

Freelancing is an important component of entrepreneurship research because it is necessary for examining the disruption of conventional work paradigms as well as understanding the transitions into and out of business ownership. EPOP defines freelancers as any respondent who reports that they are a “freelancer, consultant, or independent contractor.” And as with business ownership, the EPOP survey counts individuals as freelancers if they are engaged in any current freelance activity, including activities that were not a primary or secondary job for the respondent during the previous week. This is particularly important given that freelance activities are often a supplementary source of income. In fact, Figure 2 shows that across years, between 38% to 45% of freelancers did not report their freelancing work as their primary or secondary job.

The EPOP screener also identifies individuals who freelanced in the past and asks about when these freelance activities started and stopped. Both current and former freelancers are

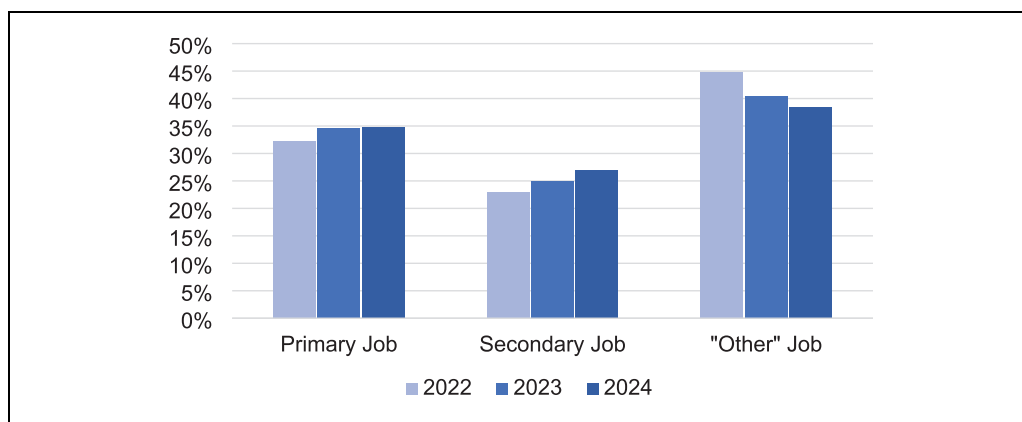


Figure 2. Reported job type associated with freelancing.

Source. EPOP:2022, EPOP:2023, EPOP:2024.

asked the same follow-up modules as current and former business owners, with only small wording changes to questions when needed.

Gig Work

A substantial amount of recent research and policy interest has focused on the “gig economy,” where workers are matched with tasks for various customers through a platform that coordinates payment for the service. Because working in the gig economy may be structurally tied to entrepreneurial activities (Barrios et al., 2022), the EPOP survey ascertains if respondents are engaged in gig work and includes a battery of follow-up questions. A full description of the measurement of gig and platform work in EPOP may be found in Atkins et al. (2025), but here we summarize relevant pieces.

EPOP respondents are asked if their job is gig work for each eligible job reported. They are then probed once more about any other gig work, regardless of whether previous jobs were reported as gig work, to ensure all gig work activities are measured. Given the ambiguity in defining gig work (Abraham et al., 2021, 2023; Bracha & Burke, 2021; Osterman, 2023), careful consideration was given to the question text to minimize confusion. In the main question text, gig work is described as money earned “through short, paid tasks or jobs online or in-person that are conducted through companies that coordinate payment for the service.” Below the main question text, extensive examples of gig work activities are provided.

Importantly, the survey also asks for the name of the online platform that “coordinates payments or relationships with clients,” and responses are coded into six categories: confirmed gig platform: services, confirmed gig platform: selling/renting of goods, confirmed gig platform: online surveys, payment provider, unconfirmed gig work, and unlikely gig work. Responses that are known online platform companies (e.g., Uber and MTurk) are considered confirmed gig work, while responses that cannot be confirmed as a platform company are coded as either a payment provider (e.g., paypal), unconfirmed, or unlikely. Table 3 shows that asking about platform name is an important contribution to understanding who participates in gig work, as many respondents who report gig work named platforms that did not align with expectations. In fact, just over half of self-reported gig

Table 3. Coded Platform for Gig Workers Who Reported Use of Online Platform.

Coded platform	Year of data collection		
	2022	2023	2024
Confirmed gig platform (%)			
Services	40.6	35.1	39.4
Selling/Renting of goods	12.3	10.1	9.8
Online surveys	2.7	3.8	7.4
Other (%)			
Payment provider (e.g. Square)	6.6	7.4	9.8
Unconfirmed or unlikely gig work	38.8	43.7	3.3
N	3,615	3,899	3,922

Source. EPOP:2022, EPOP:2023, EPOP:2024. Restricted to respondents who indicated there is an online platform that coordinates payments or relationships with clients (respondents can indicate that their work is coordinated through a company that coordinates payment but not through an online platform).

workers reported a confirmed online gig platform. This platform type variable is available in the EPOP data files, allowing users to investigate these activities separately based on these categories. In addition to platform type, all gig workers are given a 13-item select all list of reasons for engaging in gig work.

Theoretical Framework for EPOP Applications

The EPOP survey enables systematic examination of entrepreneurship through established theoretical lenses. We ground EPOP's research potential in two complementary frameworks: Shane and Venkataraman's (2000) process-based model of entrepreneurial activity and van Gelderen et al.'s (2021) delineation of key research themes in entrepreneurship. Below, we discuss key research questions enabled by EPOP. Appendix Tables B2–B5 provides key descriptive statistics supporting the analytic viability of these research questions.

Process-Based Framework

As shown in Table 4, EPOP provides data that enable research across the entrepreneurship process from Shane and Venkataraman (2000), from the discovery and existence of entrepreneurship opportunities to opportunity recognition and eventual exploitation. By capturing activities across this entire entrepreneurial journey, researchers can examine process dynamics and transitions. EPOP provides measures of the existence of entrepreneurship opportunities through entrepreneurial motivations, prior experience that shapes recognition capabilities, and preliminary market research activities. Critically, EPOP also captures withdrawn entrepreneurship, enabling comparison of pursued versus abandoned opportunities—impossible with datasets capturing only active entrepreneurs. Opportunity Evaluation encompasses assessing opportunities' feasibility, attractiveness, and resource requirements. Examples of EPOP's measurement related to opportunity evaluation include financial feasibility assessments, business operations challenges, and business development steps, which can be related to subsequent entrepreneurial outcomes such as revenue and the number of employees. Opportunity Exploitation represents the actual pursuit and development of entrepreneurial opportunities through resource assembly and

organizational creation, which EPOP captures through measures such as detailed capital acquisition data and business financing steps.

Contemporary Research Themes

Table 4 also highlights potential new avenues of entrepreneurship research available using EPOP data that speak to emerging research themes in van Gelderen et al. (2021). First, EPOP adds to a greater understanding of “who” acts entrepreneurially. This includes a better understanding of “everyday-everyone” entrepreneurship by shedding light on the reasons individuals engage in entrepreneurship, the ability to examine the evolution of the demographics of current and prospective entrepreneurs, and better measuring the extent to which entrepreneurs are engaged in the gig economy. Critically, EPOP allows for an examination of how these characteristics relate to experiences as an entrepreneur. For example, researchers could investigate how emerging finance mechanisms might change capital acquisition for prospective entrepreneurs and how this varies based on the background of the entrepreneur.

EPOP offers valuable insights into the motivations behind entrepreneurial ventures. For instance, items related to environmental and social entrepreneurship highlight the growing recognition of entrepreneurship as a tool for addressing societal challenges. In addition, EPOP provides extensive data on “necessity entrepreneurship,” including self-reported motivations and household income. This enables researchers to better understand why individuals pursue entrepreneurship and how these motivations and individual circumstances shape the eventual success of their ventures.

A core feature of EPOP is its broad geographic coverage, reflecting diverse institutional contexts. By offering detailed local-level geographic data, researchers can explore the potentially evolving location of entrepreneurship across the U.S. and investigate how local policy and economic conditions interact with entrepreneurial dynamics.

It is important to note that while EPOP provides valuable data to address these research questions, it may not be able to answer complex, multifaceted inquiries on its own. Instead, EPOP data can offer crucial insights into specific aspects of these broader questions, potentially identifying important relationships or trends that can guide further research. To address ambitious research questions, researchers may need to complement EPOP data with other sources or methodologies, either directly through linkage to geographic areas or 2-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes or through complementary analyses with unlinked data. Still, the amount of detail the survey collects on topics such as challenges, finances, and day-to-day operations, paired with its large, nationally representative design, positions EPOP as a powerful tool for advancing our understanding of entrepreneurship. By providing rich, contextual data on various aspects of the entrepreneurial journey, EPOP enables researchers to examine nuanced aspects of these broader research questions, contributing valuable pieces to the larger puzzle of entrepreneurship research.

Using the Data

Public-Use and Restricted-Use Data

EPOP survey data are available via both a restricted-use data file (RUF) and a public-use data file (PUF). Both data files can be accessed through the EPOP survey project website at EPOP.norc.org. To obtain the RUF, data file users must undergo training on disclosure

Table 4. Research Applications Using EPOP Data.

Domain/theme	Research question	Primary EPOP variables ^a
Process framework		
Existence of entrepreneurial opportunities	How does prior experience influence opportunity identification patterns?	ENTR_EXPERIENCE_1 (Similarity to prior employment), ENTR_EXPERIENCE_2 (Prior experience starting/operating business), ENTR_EXPERIENCE_3 (Years of experience), PE_REASONS_1—PE_REASONS_3 (Reasons for pursuing entrepreneurship)
	What factors distinguish opportunity recognition from abandonment?	PE_CHALLENGE_1 Series (Financial and economic security challenges for pursuing entrepreneurship), PE_STEPS_2 Series (Market research steps), PE_REASONS_1—PE_REASONS_3 (Reasons for pursuing entrepreneurship), DOV_WITHDRAW (Withdrawn entrepreneurship)
Opportunity discovery	How do evaluation activities predict venture progression?	PE_STEPS_2 Series (Market research steps), PE_STEPS_3 Series (Business development steps), PE_STEPS_5 (Organizational planning steps), PE_CHALLENGE_1 Series (Financial and economic security challenges for pursuing entrepreneurship), PE_CHALLENGE_2 Series (Business operations challenges for pursuing entrepreneurship), PE_CHALLENGE_3 Series (Customer reach challenges for pursuing entrepreneurship), PE_CHALLENGE_4 Series (Resource/support challenges for pursuing entrepreneurship)
	What role does systematic evaluation play in venture outcomes?	PE_STEPS_2 Series (Market research steps), PE_STEPS_3 Series (Business development steps), PE_STEPS_5 (Organizational planning steps), BO_REVENUE_1_RUF (Revenue), BO_NUMEMPLOY_1 (Employees)
Opportunity exploitation	How do resource acquisition strategies affect venture performance?	PE_CAPITAL_1 Series (Types of capital used), PE_CAPITAL_WS Series (Amount of capital by source), PE_CAPITAL_3 Series (Types of capital pursued but not successfully obtained.), PE_STEPS_4 (Business financing steps), BO_REVENUE_1_RUF (Revenue), BO_NUMEMPLOY_1 (Employees)
Contemporary research themes		
Everyday-everyone entrepreneurship	What are the characteristics of ventures characterized by “everyday-everyone” entrepreneurship?	PE_REASONS_1—PE_REASONS_3 (Reasons for pursuing entrepreneurship), BO_REVENUE_1_RUF (Revenue), BO_NUMEMPLOY_1 (Employees)
Gig economy	How do platform-based business models differ from traditional ventures?	DOV_GIGWORK (Overall gig work), S_GIGPLATFORM_Y2_DRV (Type of digital platform work), DOV_FREELANCE (Freelance work), BO_REVENUE_1_RUF (Revenue)

(continued)

Table 4. (continued)

Domain/theme	Research question	Primary EPOP variables ^a
Demographics	How are the demographics and backgrounds of entrepreneurs changing over time?	DEM_RELAOWN (Relatives owning a business), RACE (Race/Ethnicity), DEM_GENDER (Gender), DEM_EDU_RUF (Education), DOV_ Entrepreneurship Measures (Key entrepreneurship activities)
Investors—Finance	How do emerging finance mechanisms change access to capital for prospective entrepreneurs?	PE_CAPITAL_1 Series (Types of capital used), PE_CAPITAL_WS Series (Amount of capital by source), PE_CAPITAL_3 Series (Types of capital pursued but not successfully obtained.), BO_CHALLENGE_4 Series (Resource/support challenges for business ownership), PE_STEPS_4 Series (Business financing steps)
Social entrepreneurship	What is the prevalence of environmental and social entrepreneurship, and how does this relate to the characteristics of business ventures?	BO_IMPACT_1 (Business is mission driven), BO_IMPACT_2 (Mission of Business), BO_STARTBIZ_1_Y3_PUF (Year business started), BO_REVENUE_1_RUF (Revenue), BO_NUMEMPLOY_1 (Employees)
Necessity	How do resource constraints shape entrepreneurial strategies?	PE_CHALLENGE_1 Series (Financial and economic security challenges for pursuing entrepreneurship), PE_CAPITAL_2 Series (Types of capital for which entrepreneur did not receive as much as requested), PE_CAPITAL_3 Series (Types of capital pursued but not successfully obtained.), BO_LEGALSTAT_1 (Legal form of organization), BO_BIZTYPE_1 (Business type)
Location	What geographic factors predict entrepreneurial activity patterns?	DEM_STATE (State), COUNTY_DRV (County), MSA, RUCC_DRV (Rural/urban measure), PE_CHALLENGE_5 Series (Economy/market challenges for pursuing entrepreneurship), BO_CHALLENGE_5 Series (Economy/market challenges for business ownership), DOV_ Entrepreneurship Measures (Key entrepreneurship activities)

Note. EPOP = Entrepreneurship in the Population; MSA = Metropolitan statistical area.

^aFor a complete list of items in EPOP please see NORC at the University of Chicago (2023).

and publishing considerations and sign a data use agreement. The PUF is available on the project website and does not require a formal data use agreement.

The RUF provides more detail on respondent geography and demographics, and for entrepreneurs, more detail on sensitive information such as financials. While the PUF provides Census Region or Division, the RUF also provides county, MSA, and state. The RUF also provides more detailed information on the demographic measures race, age, marital status, education, household income, and military service. Lastly, the RUF

provides more detailed information on sensitive questions for current and former business owners and freelancers. For example, questions regarding business capital are provided via a continuous (top-coded) measure in dollars in the RUF, while in the PUF, these variables are presented as categorical variables.

Similar to previous data sources, such as the PSED, data users should use survey weights in the EPOP survey to ensure appropriate statistical inference. Because data is collected across probability- and nonprobability-based sources, weights for using the probability samples (AmeriSpeak and Address-Based) as well as the full sample are provided.⁵ Information on respondents' sample type is available in the RUF for EPOP:2022 and is made available in both the RUF and PUF starting in 2023. For more information on the weighting process, see the "Weights" section of EPOP:2022 User Guide (EPOP Research Team, 2023), which also provides sample code using Stata and R for recommended implementation of variance estimation.

Key Changes to EPOP across Waves

While EPOP maintains consistency in its core entrepreneurial classification measures, strategic refinements have been implemented to enhance the survey's analytical capabilities. Following the initial EPOP:2022 data collection, several important modifications were made to the screening process to enable more overlap across activity participation. The first modification involved asking current business owners about previous business ownership and current freelancers about previous freelancing experiences. The second change implemented a universal withdrawn entrepreneurship assessment, with all respondents now being asked about withdrawn entrepreneurship regardless of their participation in other entrepreneurial activities—previously this was limited to those without other reported activities. The third enhancement added questions to identify serial entrepreneurs by measuring how many businesses current owners operate and how many freelance jobs they maintain. These modifications, implemented in EPOP:2023 and maintained in subsequent waves, improve the survey's ability to capture overlapping entrepreneurial activities while affecting national estimates of former business ownership, former freelancing, and withdrawn entrepreneurship. For researchers conducting comparative analyses, data from EPOP:2023 and later waves can be recoded to align with EPOP:2022 estimation approaches.

Longitudinal Data Collection in EPOP:2026

EPOP:2026 is the last annual survey in the grant-funded EPOP survey project funded, with data collection scheduled for the first quarter of 2026. Importantly, this wave will implement a new sample design where roughly three-quarters of the sample will be comprised of respondents who participated in EPOP:2024 or EPOP:2025, enabling robust longitudinal analyses at the individual level while still maintaining the ability to produce nationally representative cross-sectional estimates. By following individuals from previous years to 2026, EPOP:2026 will allow researchers to examine entrepreneurial pathways with greater depth and nuance.

This longitudinal component will support a wide range of research applications. For example, researchers will be able to identify the early actions and decisions taken by nascent entrepreneurs that are predictive of successfully launching a business in subsequent years. The data will also enable studies of business owners' trajectories, highlighting the factors and challenges most associated with business growth versus closure. In addition,

EPOP:2026 will provide critical insights into how access to capital—both for aspiring entrepreneurs and current business owners—relates to business outcomes, offering evidence to inform policy and program design aimed at improving financial inclusion and entrepreneurial success.

Another key area of exploration will be the future entrepreneurial activities of freelancers and gig workers. Researchers will be able to assess whether and how these individuals transition into more formal business ventures, and what conditions support or hinder that evolution. This will make EPOP:2026 a valuable resource for understanding the complex and evolving landscape of entrepreneurship in the U.S.

Discussion and Conclusion

By capturing a wide range of entrepreneurial experiences, from nascent entrepreneurship to established business ownership, and including often-overlooked categories such as gig work and withdrawn entrepreneurship, EPOP provides researchers with a novel tool to examine the full spectrum of entrepreneurial activity. EPOP also includes broad subject matter coverage, including information on the gig economy and informal entrepreneurship, and detailed data on motivations and challenges. This approach allows for a more holistic understanding of entrepreneurship as a dynamic process rather than a static state. The longitudinal wave anticipated to be released in 2026 will further enable researchers to track changes over time for current and prospective entrepreneurs, gain insight into individual entrepreneurial trajectories, and potentially establish causal relationships.

Methodologically, EPOP's design offers several strengths. Its use of a multistep screening process and detailed follow-up modules provides a depth of information not typically available in large-scale surveys. The combination of probability and nonprobability samples, with appropriate weighting procedures, allows for both representative estimates and the ability to oversample key subgroups of interest and provide estimates for low levels of geography. Despite its strengths, EPOP has certain limitations. Its focus on the United States limits direct international comparisons while enabling rich analysis within a specific institutional environment. In addition, as a relatively new dataset, EPOP lacks the historical depth of established sources. This recency allows it to capture contemporary entrepreneurship phenomena that existing surveys cannot address, however. Therefore, EPOP's content and methodological approach could inform future U.S.-based and international entrepreneurship data collection efforts, particularly as phenomena such as platform-based work and AI adoption become increasingly relevant.

Appendix A

Entrepreneurship Measures in EPOP

Table A1. EPOP:2024 Comparison to CPS.

Variable	EPOP:2024			2024 CPS benchmark
	N	Unweighted mean	Weighted mean	Weighted mean
Female	12,461	0.5833	0.513	0.513
Black	12,492	0.1223	0.113	0.120
White	12,492	0.6744	0.615	0.608
Hispanic	12,492	0.1158	0.172	0.179
HS diploma or less	12,022	0.1789	0.374	0.376
Some college	12,022	0.3065	0.292	0.265
BA+	12,022	0.5146	0.335	0.359
Age 18–29	12,434	0.1124	0.194	0.197
Age 30–49	12,434	0.3756	0.339	0.336
Age 50–64	12,434	0.2529	0.246	0.239
Age 65+	12,434	0.2591	0.221	0.228
Married	12,170	0.5233	0.520	0.517
Has children	12,231	0.2746	0.278	0.239
HH income <\$50,000	11,811	0.329	0.357	0.309
HH Income \$50,000–\$99,999	11,811	0.3161	0.295	0.308
HH income \$100,000+	11,811	0.3549	0.348	0.384

Source. EPOP:2024 and February 2024 CPS. CPS = Current Population Survey.

Appendix B

Descriptive Statistics and Analytical Feasibility for EPOP Research Applications

This appendix provides descriptive statistics supporting key research questions outlined in Section “Theoretical Framework for EPOP Applications” of the main text. Section “Sample Composition by Entrepreneurship Status” provides an overview of the sample composition of key entrepreneurship categories across EPOP rounds, and Section “Key EPOP Variables & Sample Size Considerations” provides sample sizes for the key variables highlighted in Table 4. All analyses use data from the third wave of EPOP (EPOP:2024, $N = 33,514$) unless otherwise specified.

Sample Composition by Entrepreneurship Status

Table B2. Distribution of Respondents by Primary Entrepreneurship Category (EPOP:2022–2024).

Entrepreneurship status	EPOP:2022 (%)	EPOP:2023 (%)	EPOP:2024 (%)	Research applications
Current business owner	14.1	14.7	13.2	Analyzing established entrepreneurship patterns
Current freelancer	21.1	22.2	21.6	Gig economy and flexible work arrangements
Nascent entrepreneur	16.9	16.4	15.1	Opportunity recognition and venture creation
Former business owner	15.1	15.6	15.7	Exit patterns and re-entry studies
Former freelancer	21.9	23.1	22.2	Gig work transition analysis
Withdrawn entrepreneur ^a	10.2	34.4	35.8	Failed venture and discontinuation research
Non-entrepreneur	35.1	36.9	36.7	Comparison group and potential future entrepreneurs
Gig worker	18.9	22.0	19.4	Platform economy research

Source. EPOP:2022, EPOP:2023, EPOP:2024. Categories are not mutually exclusive.

^aThe question universe for withdrawn entrepreneurship was updated starting in 2023. The original universe includes only withdrawn entrepreneurs who have not participated in another entrepreneurial activity at some point. Starting with the 2023 wave, questions about withdrawn entrepreneurship are asked of all respondents, including respondents who currently engage in an entrepreneurial activity or have done so in the past.

Key EPOP Variables & Sample Size Considerations

All variables and sample sizes below are drawn from EPOP:2024 data.

Table B3. Process Framework Key Independent Variables.

Variables	Sample size considerations
Existence of opportunities	
Entrepreneurial experience	$n = 4,653$ current entrepreneurs, $4,397$ current freelancers, $1,667$ nascent entrepreneurs, $3,249$ withdrawn entrepreneurs; $n = 5,204$ with prior similar experience
• Similar entrepreneurial experience (ENTR_EXPERIENCE_1)	
• Years of similar entrepreneurial experience (ENTR_EXPERIENCE_1)	
Reasons for pursuing entrepreneurship	$n = 4,653$ current entrepreneurs, $4,397$ current freelancers, $1,667$ nascent entrepreneurs, $3,249$ withdrawn entrepreneurs
• Series of 15 yes/no questions (PE_REASONS_1)	
• Most important reason (PE_REASONS_2)	
• Second most important reason (PE_REASONS_3)	
Challenges faced when pursuing entrepreneurship	$n = 1,667$ nascent entrepreneurs, $3,249$ withdrawn entrepreneurs
• Series of eight yes/no questions on financial challenges (PE_CHALLENGE_1)	
• Series of six yes/no questions on business operations challenges (PE_CHALLENGE_2)	

(continued)

Table B3. (continued)

Variables	Sample size considerations
- Series of four yes/no questions on customer reach challenges (PE_CHALLENGE_3) - Series of eight yes/no questions on resource challenges (PE_CHALLENGE_4) - Series of five yes/no questions on economy or market challenges (PE_CHALLENGE_5) - Other challenges (PE_CHALLENGE_6)	
Opportunity evaluation	
Steps taken toward entrepreneurship	<i>n</i> = 4,653 current entrepreneurs, 4,397 current freelancers, 1,667 nascent entrepreneurs, 3,249 withdrawn entrepreneurs
- Series of five yes/no questions on networking steps taken (PE_STEPS_1) - Series of seven yes/no questions on technical or market research steps taken (PE_STEPS_2) - Series of three yes/no questions on business development steps taken (PE_STEPS_3) - Series of five yes/no questions on business financing steps taken (PE_STEPS_4) - Series of seven yes/no questions on organizational planning steps taken (PE_STEPS_5) - Series of five yes/no questions on staffing and growth steps taken (PE_STEPS_6) - Other steps taken (PE_STEPS_7)	
Challenges faced when pursuing entrepreneurship	<i>n</i> = 1,667 nascent entrepreneurs, 3,249 withdrawn entrepreneurs
- Series of eight yes/no questions on financial challenges (PE_CHALLENGE_1) - Series of six yes/no questions on business operations challenges (PE_CHALLENGE_2) - Series of four yes/no questions on customer reach challenges (PE_CHALLENGE_3) - Series of eight yes/no questions on resource challenges (PE_CHALLENGE_4) - Series of five yes/no questions on economy or market challenges (PE_CHALLENGE_5) - Other Challenges (PE_CHALLENGE_6)	
Opportunity exploitation	
Types of capital used	<i>n</i> = 4,653 current entrepreneurs
Series of yes/no questions on 14 types of capital (PE_CAPITAL_1)	
Amount of capital by source used for startup	<i>n</i> = 4,653 current entrepreneurs
Series of amount of capital used by capital type, in dollars (PE_CAPITAL_VWS)	
Types of capital pursued but not successfully obtained	<i>n</i> = 4,653 current entrepreneurs
Series of yes/no questions on 8 capital source types (PE_CAPITAL_3)	
Business financing steps taken	<i>n</i> = 4,653 current entrepreneurs, 4,397 current freelancers, 1,667 nascent entrepreneurs, 3,249 withdrawn entrepreneurs
Series of five yes/no questions (PE_STEPS_4)	

Table B4. Contemporary Research Themes Key Independent Variables.

Variables	Sample size considerations
Everyday-everyone entrepreneurship	
Reasons for pursuing entrepreneurship	<i>n</i> = 4,653 current entrepreneurs, 4,397 current freelancers, 1,667 nascent entrepreneurs, 3,249 withdrawn entrepreneurs
• Series of 15 yes/no questions (PE_REASONS_1) • Most important reason (PE_REASONS_2) • Second most important reason (PE_REASONS_3)	
Revenue	<i>n</i> = 4,653 current entrepreneurs, 4,397 current freelancers, 2,667 former entrepreneurs, 2,682 former freelancers
• Amount from income, sales, and operating revenue during 2023 (BO_REVENUE_1_RUF) • Amount from income, sales, and operating revenue during last year business was running (BO_REVENUE_2_RUF)	
Employees	<i>n</i> = 4,653 current entrepreneurs, 4,397 current freelancers
• Series of yes/no questions on 8 types of employees used (BO_EMPLOYEES_1) • Number of workers used (BO_NUMEMPLOY_1_Y2_RUF)	
Gig economy	
Gig work	<i>n</i> = 7,142 gig workers
• Respondent qualifies as a gig worker by responding yes to S_GIGCHECK_1, S_GIGCHECK_2, S_GIGCHECK_3 (DOV_GIGWORK)	
Type of digital platform work	<i>n</i> = 7,507 valid codes
Respondents' platform responses coded into 5 categories, including confirmed services, selling/renting of goods, and online surveys	
Freelance work	<i>n</i> = 7,067 current freelancers
• Respondent qualifies as freelance worker (DOV_FREELANCE)	
Revenue	<i>n</i> = 4,653 current entrepreneurs, 4,397 current freelancers, 2,667 former entrepreneurs, 2,682 former freelancers
• Amount from income, sales, and operating revenue during 2023 (BO_REVENUE_1_RUF) • Amount from income, sales, and operating revenue during last year business was running (BO_REVENUE_2_RUF)	
Demographics	
Education (DEM_EDU_PUF)	Full sample (<i>n</i> = 33,514)
Relatives owning a business (DEM_RELAWN)	Full sample (<i>n</i> = 33,514, 4,943 respondents reporting "yes")
Race (RACE)	Full sample (<i>n</i> = 33,514)
Gender (DEM_GENDER)	Full sample (<i>n</i> = 33,514)
Investors—Finance	
Types of capital used	<i>n</i> = 4,653 current entrepreneurs
• Series of yes/no questions on 14 types of capital (PE_CAPITAL_1)	

(continued)

Table B4. (continued)

Variables	Sample size considerations
Amount of capital by source used for startup	$n = 4,653$ current entrepreneurs
• Series of amounts of capital used by capital type, in dollars (PE_CAPITAL_VVS)	
Types of capital pursued but not successfully obtained	$n = 4,653$ current entrepreneurs
• Series of yes/no questions on 8 capital source types (PE_CAPITAL_3)	
Financial challenges faced when pursuing entrepreneurship	$n = 1,667$ nascent entrepreneurs, 3,249 withdrawn entrepreneurs
• Series of eight yes/no questions (PE_CHALLENGE_4)	
Business financing steps taken toward entrepreneurship	$n = 4,653$ current entrepreneurs, 4,397 current freelancers, 1,667 nascent entrepreneurs, 3,249 withdrawn entrepreneurs
• Series of five yes/no questions (PE_STEPS_4)	
Social entrepreneurship	
Mission-driven business (BO_IMPACT_1)	$n = 2047$ microbusinesses
Mission of business (BO_IMPACT_2)	$N = 770$ microbusinesses reporting yes to being a mission-driven business
Necessity	
Financial challenges faced when pursuing entrepreneurship	$n = 1,667$ nascent entrepreneurs, 3,249 withdrawn entrepreneurs
• Series of eight yes/no questions (PE_CHALLENGE_4)	
Types of capital used	$n = 4,653$ current entrepreneurs
• Series of yes/no questions on 14 types of capital (PE_CAPITAL_1)	
Types of capital pursued but not successfully obtained	$n = 4,653$ current entrepreneurs
• Series of yes/no questions on 8 capital source types (PE_CAPITAL_3)	
Location	
State (DEM_STATE)	Full sample ($n = 33,514$), available in restricted-use file
County (COUNTY_DRV)	Full sample ($n = 33,514$), available in restricted-use file
Top 50 MSA	$n = 16,882$ located in one of the 50 largest MSAs in the U.S.
Urbanicity measure (RUCC_DRV)	Full sample ($n = 33,514$);
Region (REGION_DRV)	Full sample ($n = 33,514$) available in the public-use file

Note. MSA = Metropolitan statistical area.

Table B5. Key Outcomes of Interest: Entrepreneurial Activities, Revenue, Legal Status.

Variable(s)	Sample size consideration
Overlapping entrepreneurial activities	<i>n</i> = 4,653 current entrepreneurs, 7,067 current freelancers, 5,387 nascent entrepreneurs, 4,780 former entrepreneurs, 6,820 former freelancers, 10,904 withdrawn entrepreneurs, 7,142 gig workers
• Non-mutually exclusive indicators, see B.1 for more information (DOV_CUR_ENTR, DOV_CUR_FREE, DOV_NASCENT, DOV_FORM_ENTR, DOV_FORM_FREE, DOV_WITHDRAW, DOV_GIGWORK)	
Revenue	<i>n</i> = 4,653 current entrepreneurs, 4,397 current freelancers, 2,667 former entrepreneurs, 2,682 former freelancers
• Amount from income, sales, and operating revenue during 2023 (BO_REVENUE_1_RUF) • Amount from income, sales, and operating revenue during last year business was running (BO_REVENUE_2_RUF)	
Employees	<i>n</i> = 4,653 current entrepreneurs, 4,397 current freelancers
• Series of yes/no questions on 8 types of employees used (BO_EMPLOYEES_1) • Number of workers used (BO_NUMEMPLOY_1_Y2_RUF)	
Legal status (BO_LEGALSTAT_1)	<i>n</i> = 4,653 current entrepreneurs, 2,667 former entrepreneurs
• Sole proprietorship, LLC, C-Corporation, S-Corporation, Partnership, Non-profit, or Other	
Business type (BO_BIZTYPE_1)	<i>n</i> = 4,653 current entrepreneurs, 2,667 former entrepreneurs
• Independent business, Purchase/takeover of an existing business, Franchise, Multi-level marketing initiative, Other	
Year business started (BO_STARTBIZ_1_Y3_PUF)	<i>n</i> = 4,653 current entrepreneurs, 4,397 current freelancers, 2,667 former entrepreneurs, 2,682 former freelancers

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Notes

1. More information on the methodology of the AmeriSpeak Panel may be found at <https://amerispeak.norc.org/content/dam/amerispeak/about-amerispeak/pdf/amerispeak-technical-overview.pdf>.
2. Complete technical specifications are available in: NORC at the University of Chicago (2022).

3. There are some exceptions to overlapping activities for Year 1 of EPOP data (EPOP:2022), which does not capture former entrepreneurship activity when an individual is currently engaged in the activity, and withdrawn entrepreneurship status is only measured among those without any other reported activities.
4. In EPOP:2022, the withdrawn question was only asked to respondents who were not identified as current or former business owners, freelancers, or nascent entrepreneurs.
5. Because sample type is not available in EPOP:2022, this wave does not include probability sample weights.

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Diana Hechavarria is a professor of entrepreneurship at Babson College who researches nascent entrepreneurship. Her work examines the intricate dynamics people encounter during the early stages of launching new ventures, with a particular emphasis on gender and minority perspectives. Diana's research has been published in leading journals, including the *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, and *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, among others. She is recognized within the top 2% of scientific authors for 2020–2022 single-year impact by the Stanford study of citation impact. Currently, she serves as an Action Editor at *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, Editor at *Small Business Economics*, and as an Editor at the *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*.

Katie Johnson is a research methodologist in the Methodology and Quantitative Social Sciences department at NORC at the University of Chicago. She works across key stages of survey research, including design, quality monitoring, analysis, and reporting. Trained as a quantitative sociologist, her substantive work focuses on social inequality, labor, and health.

Anthony Washburn is a senior research methodologist in the Methodology and Quantitative Social Sciences department at NORC at the University of Chicago. His work includes survey design, data collection production and quality monitoring for national surveys, and quantitative methods for causal inference in program evaluation. Anthony's work spans several topic areas including public policy, labor, criminal justice, health care, and public opinion.

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