



TECHNICAL OVERVIEW of the AmeriSpeak PANEL

NORC's Probability-Based Research Panel

Overview. Funded and operated by NORC at the University of Chicago, AmeriSpeak® is a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. Randomly selected US households are sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Frame, and then contacted by U.S. mail, telephone interviewers, overnight express mailers, and field interviewers (face to face). AmeriSpeak panelists participate in NORC studies or studies conducted by NORC on behalf of NORC's clients.

To date, the AmeriSpeak Panel has provided the sample source for over thirty completed studies funded by Federal agencies, foundations, non-profit policy and media organizations, and private sector commercial clients. AmeriSpeak supports the AmeriSpeak Omnibus service, a monthly general population survey solution (see AmeriSpeak.NORC.org). In 2016, the AmeriSpeak Panel is expanding to 20,000 households, with a large oversample of young African-American, Hispanic, and Asian adults (age 18 to 30). AmeriSpeak will expand further in 2017 – to 30,000 households.

Sampling Methodology for the AmeriSpeak Panel Recruitment. The sample frame is the NORC National Frame, an area probability sample frame constructed by NORC providing sample coverage of 97 percent of U.S. households for AmeriSpeak, the General Social Survey, the Survey of Consumer Finances, etc. The National Frame contains almost 3 million households, including over 80,000 rural households added through the in-person listing of households that were not recorded on the USPS Delivery Sequence File. For the 2014-2015 AmeriSpeak recruitment, a stratified random sampling approach was used to select sample units from the National Frame. In 2016, AmeriSpeak introduced a supplement of address-based sample for US States where the National Frame. Also, in 2016, AmeriSpeak gained additional survey capacity via a new GenForward panel in collaboration with the University of Chicago. The Gen Forward panel is a national probability oversample of young non-white adults (age 18 to 30). GenForward attempts to recruit all English- and Spanish-speaking members age 18 and older in the sampled households; householders between the ages of 13 to 17 are eligible for AmeriSpeak surveys with the consent of the parent or legal guardian.

AmeriSpeak Panel Recruitment Procedures. Recruitment is a two-stage process: initial recruitment using less expensive methods and then non-response follow-up using personal interviewers. For In the initial recruitment, sample units are invited to join AmeriSpeak online by visiting the panel website AmeriSpeak.org or by telephone (in-bound/outbound supported). English and Spanish language are supported for both online and telephone recruitment. Study

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AmeriSpeak PANEL

TECHNICAL OVERVIEW

invitations are communicated via an over-sized pre-notification postcard, a USPS recruitment package in a 9"x12" envelope (containing a cover letter, a summary of the privacy policy, FAQs, and a study brochure), two follow-up post cards, and also follow-up by NORC's telephone research center for matched sample units. The second-stage non-response follow-up targets a stratified random sub-sample of the non-responders from the initial recruitment. Stratification is based on consumer vendor data and stratification variables from the initial recruitment stage in order to increase sample representation of young adults, non-Hispanic African Americans, and Hispanics. Units sampled for the non-response follow-up are sent by Federal Express a new recruitment package with an enhanced incentive offer. NORC field interviewers then make personal, face-to-face visits to the respondents' homes to encourage participation. NORC field interviewers administer the recruitment survey in-person using CAPI or else encourage the respondents to register at AmeriSpeak.org or call the toll-free AmeriSpeak telephone number to register.

Recruiting Non-Internet and "Net Averse" Households. Under certain conditions, AmeriSpeak gives respondents a choice regarding their preferred mode for future participation in AmeriSpeak surveys. For the 2014-2015 recruitment, 76% of the recruited panelists elected to receive online AmeriSpeak surveys while 24% of the recruited adults stated a preference for the telephone mode. For the 2016 recruitment, respondents provided an option of online or telephone modes include: persons without internet access, persons whose only internet access is via a smartphone, and persons with internet access but unwilling to share an email address. A recruited household can consist of both web-mode and phone-mode panelists.

Impact of Non-Response Follow-up. The non-response follow-up improves the representativeness of the AmeriSpeak sample with respect to certain demographic segments, including but not limited to rural and/or lower income households, cell-phone only households, persons age 18 to 34, African Americans, Hispanics, and persons without a high school degree or have only a high school degree (no college). Compared to panelists recruited in the initial stage, panelists recruited via the non-response follow-up campaign are more politically conservative, are less knowledgeable about science, report less interest in current events and topics in the news (such as climate change), and are less likely to read a print newspaper.

AmeriSpeak Panel Recruitment Response Rate and Other Sample Metrics. Between October 2014 and August 2015, 7,752 households were recruited to the AmeriSpeak Panel. The AAPOR RR3 (response rate) for the panel recruitment during this time frame is 36.6% (weighted to take into account selection probabilities). The estimated cumulative AAPOR RR3 for client surveys is 13% to 20% (varying according to study parameters and taking into account all sources of non-response including panel recruitment, panel household attrition, and survey participation). In early 2016, AmeriSpeak conducted a NASA-funded general population survey with an 18.5% AAPOR RR3 taking into account all possible sources of non-response in the panel recruitment, panel retention, and survey cooperation stages. Key statistics with respect to the 2014-2015 recruited households are as follows: 48% recruited via the non-response follow-up recruitment using overnight Federal Express mailers and face-to-face methodology (with NORC field staff visiting households); 24% indicated a preference for the telephone mode of data collection for participating in AmeriSpeak studies; 22% of the recruited households are non-Internet; 71% are cell-phone only or cell-phone mostly; 18% are African-American and 13% Hispanic; and 34% have household income below \$30,000 (compared to ACS benchmark of 29%).

AmeriSpeak PANEL

TECHNICAL OVERVIEW

Mixed-Mode Data Collection. Panelists may participate in 2 to 3 AmeriSpeak Panel studies per month via online (computer, tablet, or smartphones) or by CATI phone. CATI phone mode respondents represent a population currently under-represented in web panels that exclude non-internet households or “net averse” persons. NORC’s telephone interviewers administer the phone mode of survey questionnaires using a data collection system supporting both the CATI phone and web modes of data collection, providing an integrated sample management and data collection platform. For panelists using smartphones for web-mode AmeriSpeak surveys, the NORC survey system renders an optimized presentation of the survey questions for these mobile users. For general population client studies, approximately 20% of the completed interviews are completed by the telephone mode.

2014 Pilot Study. The AmeriSpeak Pilot Study was conducted in October-November 2014 in a test of study procedures. In total, 406 households were recruited. For the reported results below, the analysis is restricted to the 352 recruited households where the two-stage recruitment design was implemented. The AAPOR RR3 weighted response rate was 26%. Fifty percent of the initially recruited household registered and completed the introductory survey by CATI phone (half by web). Consistent with expectations, the households recruited by the non-response follow-up (by overnight mailers and field interviewers) provided enhanced representation of typically hard-to-contact and recruit populations. Compared to the panelists recruited during the initial stage, the panelists recruited by the non-response follow-up had higher percentages of non-white racial groups (34% v. 28%), persons with only a high school degree or less (28% v. 19%), younger adults age 18-34 (31% v. 22%), household income less than \$35,000 (27 % v. 25%), cell-phone only (40% v 27%), home renters (32% v. 26%), those not reading a newspaper regularly (55% v. 47%), and those who did not get news online yesterday (45% v. 35%), among other results.

NORC Card: Sample and Data Quality Metrics. For all AmeriSpeak studies, a sample quality analysis is provided called NORC Card. AmeriSpeak researchers designed the NORC Card to accomplish two goals for NORC clients: (i) to provide quantitative insights into sources of bias that could potentially be present in the interviewed samples; and (ii) to facilitate compliance with the reporting requirements of the AAPOR Transparency Initiative. NORC Card is based on a quantitative measurement of sample representativeness based on auxiliary consumer data file information and statistical benchmarks of the study population. In addition, the NORC Card documents the AAPOR response rate, sampling margin of error, the design effect, the interview break-off rate, and other metrics of sample and data quality. In addition, the NORC Card provides key summary information about the survey process itself, including documenting the definition of the target population, study name, field period begin and end dates, interview survey length, and other information.

Appended Profile Data for Surveys. NORC collects extensive background information on AmeriSpeak Panelists with respect to person-level demographics, household characteristics, political behaviors and public affairs, health conditions and health services, financial services, and other topics. AmeriSpeak provides clients a standard data append of profile data for each interviewed respondent completing a client-funded survey, shown in the table below. These data are provided at no additional charge to the client (approximately five minutes of survey questions).

AmeriSpeak PANEL

TECHNICAL OVERVIEW

AmeriSpeak Panel Profile Data Variables: Standard Data Appends for Client Surveys

| Gender | State of Residence |
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| Age (in years) | No. of Householders Total |
| Age (4 and 7 categories) | No. of Household members, age 0-1 |
| Educational obtainment (4 and 14 categories) | No. of Household members, age 2-5 |
| Race & Hispanic Ethnicity | No. of Household members, age 6-12 |
| Housing Type (single family home, etc.) | No. of Household members, age 13-17 |
| Ownership of Living Quarters (rent/own) | No. of Household members, age 18+ |
| Household Income (18 categories) | Current Employment Status |
| Marital Status | Survey Start (date/time) |
| Internet Access at Home (Yes/No) | Survey End (date/time) |
| Home Phone Service (landline and/or cell) | Survey Duration (minutes) |
| Metropolitan Statistical Area (urban/rural) | Survey Mode of (online/phone) |
| Region (US Census - 4 and 9 categories) | Device Type used for Online Survey Taking (desktop/tablet/smartphone) |

Selected AmeriSpeak Projects. In the January through June 2015 time frame, AmeriSpeak fielded NORC-designed surveys collecting background data from panelists with respect to political attitudes and behavior, public affairs, health conditions, use of health services, and financial status. In June, 2015, AmeriSpeak began client studies with the launch of AmeriSpeak Omnibus. AmeriSpeak has completed or is currently conducting studies either commissioned or funded by the Associated Press, Consumer Reports, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Kaiser Family Foundation, NASA, National Science Foundation, New York Times, Northwestern University, Stanford University, the University of Chicago, the University of Michigan, and the US Department of Justice. NORC is currently including AmeriSpeak as a sample source in proposals to RFPs issued by Federal agencies. For low-incidence and small area studies, AmeriSpeak Calibration is NORC's sample and weighting solution that extends the reach of the probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel by including non-probability online panel sample.

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