

March 29, 2022

Sheleen Dumas  
Departmental PRA Officer  
Office of the Chief Information Officer  
Commerce Department  
14th and Constitution Avenue NW Washington, DC 20230

Submitted via the following website: [www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain](http://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain)

RE: Comments on Proposed Information Collection on Ask U.S. Panel

Dear Ms. Dumas:

The National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago (NORC) is an objective non-partisan research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. Utilizing our well-established surveys, we have been successful in collecting reliable data for federal agencies, private sector clients and others for over 75 years. This includes the “AmeriSpeak” online probability-based panel for rapid turnaround studies, which has been in place since 2016.

The U.S. Census Bureau (Bureau) is soliciting public comments on its proposed “Ask U.S. Panel,” which is being developed by the Bureau through a cooperative agreement to track public opinion on topics of interest to federal agencies and their partners, and to conduct experimentation on question wording and methodological approaches. The goal of the Federal Register Notice (FRN) is to allow for the additional 30-day comment period required under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) and follows the previously provided 60-day comment period on December 7, 2021.

NORC appreciates the opportunity to comment on this proposed collection. However, we continue to have concerns on several levels regarding the development of this panel and believe that the PRA package that accompanies this FRN does not adequately address our previously provided (February 4, 2022) comments. In short, the project described in the FRN is duplicative of surveys that already exist in the private sector; misjudges the methodological complexity of a robust panel design; and underestimates the associated costs and burden on the public. These concerns call into question the need for the Ask U.S. Panel as a government-developed program and its associated increase to respondent burden.

These concerns are described in more detail below, including comments in response to the PRA package.

*As proposed, the Ask U.S. Panel is duplicative of multiple similar products already available in the marketplace and from which it could obtain similar products and services at significantly lower cost and on a more immediate timeframe.* We note that the types of surveys the Bureau appears to be developing through its cooperative agreement are already offered by multiple companies – including the probability-based panels developed and maintained by Ipsos, Gallup, and NORC independently – and such studies may be purchased for as little as \$100,000. The use of a probability-based nationwide nationally representative panel for tracking public opinion would add value to government programs. However, this function exists in the private sector and is readily available at a significantly reduced cost (as the government would pay only for the marginal costs associated with the specific studies and not the costs associated with the development, maintenance, and support of a panel). Accordingly, the Bureau is investing resources to acquire access to services that are more efficiently obtained at a competitive price in the commercial marketplace.

We recognize that the Bureau attempts to address this concern on pages 3, 8, and 9 of Supporting Statement A, stating (page 3): “Existing commercial online panel alternatives typically fail to meet Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards for transparency, which require sufficient detail on data collection and estimation methods to allow reproducibility, and sufficient detail on data quality and representativeness to enable OMB to evaluate the fitness for purpose.” The Bureau further states (pages 8-9): “Several commenters suggested that the current effort is duplicative of existing products in the marketplace. According to OMB, existing commercial online panel alternatives typically fail to meet OMB’s standards for transparency, which require sufficient detail on data collection and estimation methods to allow reproducibility, and sufficient detail on data quality and representativeness to enable OMB to evaluate the fitness for purpose. This panel is not duplicative of existing commercial online panel alternatives, since it is being designed in a manner that will meet OMB’s standards for transparency by providing sufficient detail on data quality and representativeness to enable OMB to evaluate fitness for purpose.”

NORC contends that the development of this panel *is* duplicative with similar products already developed and available in the marketplace. The NORC AmeriSpeak panel has been specifically designed to meet the needs of federal agencies and has been successfully used for more than a dozen data collections, in eleven federal agencies, across nine departments – all with approval by OMB over the past 5 years. Our products, methodological statements, and documentation all meet or exceed the transparency requirements and are released with a co-branding by the AAPOR Transparency Initiative. An example of the documentation provided with an AmeriSpeak study for a federal client is included as Attachments A and B. Moreover, AmeriSpeak annually publishes an updated technical document<sup>1</sup> on sampling and other panel recruitment procedures used in constructing AmeriSpeak and provides complete documentation<sup>2</sup> on the protection of the rights of human subjects for institutional review board review.

In addition, we again comment that OMB Circular A-76 requires federal agencies to conduct an assessment of whether an activity is inherently governmental or commercial. Given that there are existing panels in the private sector, and that the Bureau has previously used similar services, more information is needed to better understand the determinants of the cost comparison analysis conducted and the rationale for the determination that this work is inherently

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<sup>1</sup> See [AmeriSpeak Technical Overview 2019 02 18.pdf \(norc.org\)](#) for more information.

<sup>2</sup> See [NORC AmeriSpeak Information for IRBs 2016 10 18.pdf](#) for more information.

governmental and should no longer be completed with the existing offerings in the marketplace. Our previously provided comment was not addressed in the PRA package submitted.

On page 5 of Supporting Statement A, the Bureau attempts to address the issue of duplication by stating: "This research does not duplicate any other data collection or research being done by the Bureau or other Federal agencies. The purpose of this clearance is to stimulate research, which would not be done under other circumstances due to time constraints." As discussed above, we contend that the development of this panel is duplicative of similar products already developed and available in the marketplace. The Bureau discounts the range of products currently available in the market when they restrict their response to that of only Federal agencies. Furthermore, the Bureau's comment that this research could not be done under other circumstances due to time constraints is a false assertion as we have demonstrated above that existing services in the marketplace could be utilized quickly. Utilizing existing services could save the federal government the time and costs associated with development and provide the needed research within weeks as opposed to the years that will be lost by the government in development of this product.

***The methodology being implemented by the Bureau is evolving, and more work will be needed to ensure the validity of the methodology and the utility of the proposed data collection.*** Over recent years the Bureau has undertaken an approach of rapid implementation of new data products and data collection programs. We applaud the Bureau's recent innovations in these areas but suggest that caution and more work may be necessary to ensure the resulting data products meet its intended use. The Bureau should also be more transparent with its users on the best fit for each of its products. Recent Bureau experiences, the Bureau's public presentations on the Ask U.S. Panel, and this PRA package indicate that the methodology is rapidly evolving. Given these changes it remains unclear whether the distinctions needed to ensure a quality product that is used appropriately are ready or available.

In response to our February 4, 2022 comment, the Bureau states on page 9 of Supporting Statement A: "Several commenters noted that 'the methodology being implemented by the Bureau is evolving, and more work will be needed to ensure the validity of the methodology and the utility of the proposed data collection.' The Bureau agrees, thus the plans to complete the Pilot study. Very detailed methodology for the pilot is specified in this package." We appreciate the detailed information that is provided in Supporting Statement B and remain concerned about the rapid evolution and shifting design of this project since its inception in 2020. This project continues to evolve from a year 1 design phase to now a multi-year pilot. The continuous shifts and expansion in both design and methodology demonstrate that more work is needed upfront. This additional work would enable the Bureau to fully understand the complexities associated with designing, building, and maintaining a robust probability panel collection that will meet the needs of federal agencies. Without a solid foundation, the Bureau risks developing a product that fails to meet its needs at significant expense to the taxpayer. With the information provided in Supporting Statement B, the Bureau creates the perception of transparency with this PRA package but does not provide enough information to adequately assess the quality of the project or to enable the public to fully comment.

For example, Supporting Statement B is silent on the actual number of interviews that will be supported for any future "Topical Surveys." While the statement forecasts that the pilot study will yield "approximately 1,500 enrolled panelists," Supporting Statement B does not forecast the actual interviewing capacity which will result from the pilot study. The following stage of

empanelment involves the completion of an actual substantive survey, overcoming endemic non-response caused by panelists “backing out” after the recruitment survey. Back-out rates in probability panels can be 30 percent or more, with the implication that the actual Ask U.S. Panel interviewing capacity will be on the order of approximately 810 participating households supporting 1,080 completed “Topical Surveys.” This estimate of interview capacity does not take into account panel attrition that occurs monthly.

In addition, Supporting Statement B has a potentially unrealistic forecast of the sample performance rate from the Phase 1 initial recruitment for the household pilot study. Supporting Statement B forecasts that 10.6 percent of the invited ABS-sourced household units will produce at least one adult completing the baseline recruitment survey. The 10.6 percent assumption is substantially higher than the approximate 5 percent rate experienced by AmeriSpeak in recent years. The basis of our critique is that the pilot study does not plan to use outbound, telephone interviewing (CATI) for prompting sample units and for administering the baseline recruitment survey. NORC has found outbound telephone interviewing to be a substantial source of completed recruitment interviews for AmeriSpeak. Therefore, we question whether the pilot study can be approximately twice as effective as AmeriSpeak in terms of initial sample performance while not deploying a key contact and interviewing mode.

Supporting Statement B holds out the possibility that the Phase 2 Face-to-Face (FTF) recruitment methodology could be abandoned after the pilot study “if the NRFU is shown ineffective or cost prohibitive.” If the Bureau determines to use a single-stratum design post pilot (no FTF), the likely AAPOR response rate for the Ask U.S. Panel recruitment could be as low as 6 percent based on AmeriSpeak past performance for the non-NRFU initial recruitment). This figure compares unfavorably with the 34 percent weighted AAPOR response rate obtained by AmeriSpeak in those years where AmeriSpeak uses a two-stage design with FTF refusal conversion.<sup>3</sup> AmeriSpeak’s methodological program has identified specific representation benefits of FTF recruitment.<sup>4</sup> If the Bureau does retreat to single-stage design, there are known negative impacts on sample representativeness that will result.

Additionally, the FRN and the PRA package additionally specify the panel “may be used to collect national-representative rapid-respond data as a complement to that currently collected by the Household Pulse Survey.” This suggests a new use and purpose of the Ask U.S. Panel and points to the shifting and growing scope of the project. The rapid change and growth in scope further highlights the need for a robust design. It is important to note that while the Household Pulse Survey (HPS) was met with initial successes, there are potential shortcomings that need to be addressed and are not accounted for in the methodological statements provided in the PRA

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<sup>3</sup> See [AmeriSpeak Technical Overview 2019 02 18.pdf \(norc.org\)](#) for more information.

<sup>4</sup> “The examination of both whole panel and sample composition for the AmeriSpeak case studies illustrate that overall, NRFU specifically improves representation among groups who are traditionally most reluctant to respond to surveys. These segments include younger individuals (age 18-34), Hispanics, persons without a high school degree or with a high school or equivalent degree (no college). It also aids inclusion of lower income, non-internet, and renter households.” See the AmeriSpeak white paper here: [Bilgen\\_etal\\_WhitePaper1\\_NRFU\\_SampleComposition.pdf \(norc.org\)](#).

package. For example, recent analyses discussed in *Nature*,<sup>5</sup> and *The Harvard Gazette*,<sup>6</sup> indicate that the HPS significantly overestimated Covid-19 vaccine uptake by as much as 14 percentage points when compared to statistics compiled by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which are based on data from multiple sources, including immunization information systems, the Vaccine Administration Management System, and direct data submission from federal agencies and pharmacies.<sup>7</sup> This recent experience demonstrates the danger of rapidly implementing a program and the need for thoughtful and transparent discussion on the methodology. This suggests that more information from the Bureau is needed to better understand how the Ask U.S. Panel methodology is being further developed, and whether it is an effective approach for meeting its established goals.

***The Bureau underestimates the respondent burden and cost estimates of the Ask U.S. Panel.*** In response to our previously submitted comments regarding respondent burden and the anticipated cost of the Ask U.S. Panel, the Bureau states (page 9, Supporting Statement A): “The pilot will produce specific data on recruitment rates and associated cost which will allow us to refine cost estimate and make design decisions for the panel.” We appreciate the attempt to address our comment, but the response is inadequate as it does not include the information necessary to provide transparency into the development of the current cost estimates for the pilot and anticipated full panel, nor does it provide transparency into the calculation of respondent burden. Based on our experience developing and maintaining panels of this type, the information provided underestimates both the burden on the public and the required costs to the taxpayer for the development and execution of this project. From our calculation, NORC estimates that it likely would cost at least \$25 million to build an online panel capable of meeting the stated goals in the FRN and PRA package, with annual maintenance being similarly expensive and could be as much as \$2 million per year.

Further, the information provided in Supporting Statement B is specific to the methodology and design of the pilot and no additional information was provided regarding the design and plans for maintenance of the panel – a key design consideration in the development of a robust, project like this. Because of this, it is not possible to understand whether the Bureau has adequately planned and budgeted for the costs and burden associated with this large-scale effort. Maintenance of a rigorous panel of this nature can be onerous, and it is not clear whether the mechanisms the Bureau has in place will successfully ensure adequate response through the duration of the panel. Nor is it clear how the pilot will inform the design on the planned procedures to monitor and mitigate panel attrition and what its approach to refreshing the panel respondents would involve. This could be perceived as a lack of understanding of the complexities associated with designing, recruiting, and retaining a panel of this size and complexity and is an underestimate of burden.

Lastly, a similar concern stems from the use of a cooperative agreement to fulfill this work. By using a cooperative agreement, under which the intellectual property developed is owned not by

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<sup>5</sup> Bradley, V.C., Kuriwaki, S., Isakov, M. *et al.* Unrepresentative big surveys significantly overestimated US vaccine uptake. *Nature* 600, 695–700 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-04198-4>

<sup>6</sup> Powell, Alvin, 2 Early Vaccination Surveys Worse Than Worthless Thanks to ‘Big Data’ Paradox, Analysts Say. *The Harvard Gazette*, December 8, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-managers/coverage/adultvaxview/pubs-resources/covid19-coverage-estimates-comparison.html> for more information.

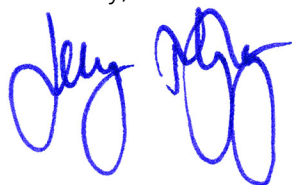
the federal government but by the awardee, the Bureau is using taxpayer funds to establish a panel that can be used by a company in the private sector for its own commercial use long after the work of the government is complete. As described in the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions (December 26, 2014, § D.03.a), the awardee “owns any work produced or purchased under a Federal award.” Thus, any company entering into this agreement is free to continue to utilize the intellectual property developed under the cooperative agreement after the agreement expires. As such, it is unclear to us whether the goals of the PRA to minimize the public’s reporting burden are in fact being upheld throughout the existence of the panel proposed by the Bureau, particularly when, as discussed above, similar probability-based panels are already available to the government at reasonable cost. Also, it is not clear whether the government’s use of this proposed panel would indeed be a best value approach to this work by the Bureau and other federal agencies. This comment was not addressed in the posted PRA package.

**Conclusion.** While the Bureau is to be lauded for its recent innovations, this announcement raises serious concerns regarding the duplication of surveys that already exist in the private sector; misjudgment of the methodological complexity; and underestimation of the associated costs and burden on the public. These concerns question the need for the Ask U.S. Panel as a government developed program.

We respectfully suggest that the Bureau consider whether existing products in the marketplace more effectively meet the needs of the Bureau and its partners. If the Bureau decides to continue, we encourage it to be fully transparent on how future iterations of this product are designed and developed in a way that is consistent with the brand of the Bureau for high quality data and to take necessary steps to decrease respondent burden. The high profile of products from the federal statistical system requires the Bureau to proceed at a pace that ensures a thoughtful, transparent, and well-designed program be developed. Failure to do so could call into question the accuracy not only of Bureau data, but that of its partner federal agencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on the Ask U.S. Panel. If you have any questions about these comments, please contact me at 301-634-9413 or [telgarsky-jeffrey@norc.org](mailto:telgarsky-jeffrey@norc.org).

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Telgarsky  
Executive Vice President for Research

Attachment A:  
AmeriSpeak NORC Card

# RANDS COVID-19 Survey 3

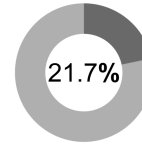
July 6, 2021

## Survey Overview

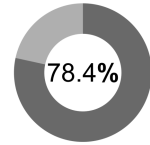
Study Population: 18+ General Population  
 Sample Units: 7852  
 Completed Units: 5458  
 Expected Eligibility Rate: 100%  
 Observed Eligibility Rate: 100%  
 Margin of Error: ±1.85 percentage points (pp)  
 Avg. Design Effect: 1.95  
 Survey Field Period: May 17, 2021 - June 30, 2021  
 Median Duration (minutes): 16 minutes  
 Prepared for: NCHS

## Panel Outcomes

Weighted HH  
Recruitment Rate

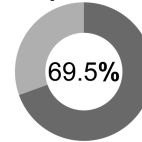


Weighted HH  
Retention Rate

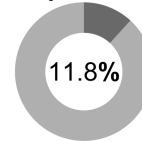


## Survey Outcomes

Survey  
Completion Rate



Weighted Cumulative  
Response Rate



## Benchmark Comparisons

	Unweighted (%)	Weighted (%)	Benchmark (%)	Difference <sup>2</sup> (pp)	
<b>Household Income</b> <sup>1</sup>					
Less than \$29,999	23.7	25.5	15.9	9.6	
\$30,000 to \$74,999	30.3	30.0	31.8	-1.8	
\$75,000 to \$124,999	31.6	29.0	25.1	3.9	
\$125,000 Plus	14.4	15.5	27.1	-11.6	
<b>Member Age</b>					
18 - 34	22.9	31.1	29.1	2.0	
35 - 49	19.5	22.2	24.2	-2.0	
50 - 64	25.7	24.7	24.7	0.0	
65 Plus	32	22.0	22.0	0.0	
<b>Member Race/Ethnicity</b>					
White	63.8	62.4	62.4	0.0	
Black	14	12.0	12.0	0.0	
Hispanic	15	16.9	16.9	0.0	
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.4	5.1	6.5	-1.4	
Others	4.8	3.6	2.2	1.4	
<b>Member Education Status</b>					
Less than High School	4.4	9.2	9.2	0.0	
High School Equivalent	19.1	28.7	28.7	0.0	
Some College/Associate Degree	47.3	27.0	27.0	0.0	
Bachelor's Degree	16.7	20.6	22.3	-1.7	
Graduate Degree	12.5	14.5	12.8	1.7	
<b>Household Ownership</b>					
Owner Occupied	68	69.6	67.8	1.8	
Renter Occupied/Other	32	30.4	32.2	-1.8	
<b>Children in Household</b>					
With 1+ Under 18 Years	17.7	19.6	32.5	-12.9	
Without Children Under 18	82.3	80.4	67.5	12.9	
<b>Household Marital Status</b>					
Currently Married	50.5	46.7	52.2	-5.5	
Currently Single	49.5	53.3	47.8	5.5	
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	45.1	48.2	48.2	0.0	
Female	54.9	51.8	51.8	0.0	

<sup>1</sup>Race/Ethnicity, Household Ownership, Income, Education, Number of Children, Marital Status, Gender, and Geographic Region benchmarks are from the February 2021 Census Bureau Current Population Survey. <sup>2</sup>The difference between the Weighted and Benchmark columns.



# Glossary

## Overview Section

*Study Population:* The total set of individuals of interest to which the researcher intends to apply their conclusions.

*Sample Units:* The number of panel members selected into the study sample.

*Completed Units:* The number of sample units that completed the interview based on the study-specific definition of what constitutes a complete interview.

*Expected Eligibility Rate:* The percentage of the sampling population who are expected to meet study eligibility criteria.

*Observed Eligibility Rate:* The percentage of the sample members who were eligible for the study among those who answered the screening questions.

*Margin of Error:* Margin of error is defined as half the width of the 95% confidence interval for a proportion estimate of 50% adjusted for design effect. It is therefore the largest margin of error possible for all estimated percentages based on the study sample.

*Design Effect* The design effect is the variance under the complex design divided by the variance under a SRS (simple random sampling) design of the same sample size. Design effect is variable-specific and the reported value is the median design effect calculated for a set of key survey variables.

*Survey Field Length:* the period from the earliest to the latest contact dates of cases sampled for the survey.

*Duration:* Length of time for completed interviews. Interview length is calculated differently depending upon whether the interview was conducted over the phone or via web. For telephone mode, it is the time from when the respondent picks up the telephone until they hang up the telephone. For web interviews, it is the time from when they first connect to the web system to the time they log off the system or become

inactive. In the case of multiple contacts, this number represents the sum of those contacts.

## Benchmark Comparison Section

We compare demographics (from the CPS) to those of our survey respondents, both on a weighted and unweighted basis, to show how closely AmeriSpeak respondents represent the demographics of the study population overall.

We also compare study specific benchmarks (not available on all surveys) to those of our survey respondents to show how closely survey responses to key questions match to benchmarks from external surveys.

## Panel Outcomes

*Weighted Household (HH) Recruitment Rate:* The weighted AAPOR RR III for the AmeriSpeak panel recruitment corresponding to the recruitment cohorts sampled for the study. A recruited household is a household where at least one adult successfully completed the recruitment survey and joined the panel.

*Weighted Household (HH) Retention Rate:* The weighted percent of recruited households that are still available for sampling for this survey among the recruitment cohorts sampled for the study.

## Survey Outcomes

*Survey Completion Rate:*

- The percent of sample members who completed the survey interview (for studies without screener)
- The percent of eligible sample members who completed the survey interview (for studies with screener).
- For a follow-up study: it is the percent of follow-up respondents among baseline respondents.

*Weighted Cumulative Response Rate:* The overall survey response rate that accounts for survey outcomes in all response stages including panel recruitment rate, panel retention rate, and survey completion rate. It is weighted to account for the sample design and differential inclusion probabilities of sample members.

Attachment B:  
AmeriSpeak Project Report



**RANDS COVID-19 SURVEY 3  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH  
STATISTICS (NCHS)**

**AMERISPEAK PROJECT REPORT**

July 9, 2021

**Client Contact:**

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**NORC Account Manager:**

J. Michael Dennis | [Dennis-Michael@norc.org](mailto:Dennis-Michael@norc.org)

**NORC Project Manager:**

John Dombrowski | [Dombrowski-John@norc.org](mailto:Dombrowski-John@norc.org)



## STUDY INTRODUCTION

NORC conducted the RANDS COVID-19 Survey 3 on behalf of NCHS using NORC's AmeriSpeak® Panel for the sample source. This research is a continuation of previous RANDS projects during COVID-19, with an added emphasis on beliefs and attitudes towards vaccines and behaviors and plans specifically for the COVID-19 vaccine. Several methodological experiments were also embedded into the survey to better understand ways to improve questions that are used on other federally-funded, nationally-administered surveys.

This study was offered in English only, and it was administered via online web survey and phone interview.

This AmeriSpeak Project Report supplements the information provided in the *NORC Card*, which provides an in-depth profile of sample quality metrics for the study, the data collection field period, interview sample size, response rate statistics, the design effect, and sampling margins of error, among other statistics. Please refer to the NORC Card for information useful for compliance with the AAPOR Transparency Initiative, in addition to information provided in this AmeriSpeak Project Report.

For more detailed information on the AmeriSpeak panel recruitment and management methodology, please see the Appendix ("Technical Notes on AmeriSpeak Methodology") attached to this AmeriSpeak Project Report.

## STUDY-SPECIFIC DETAILS

### Sampling

A general population sample of U.S. adults age 18 and older was selected from NORC's AmeriSpeak Panel for this study. For additional details on the selection of the sample, please see the memo on sampling prepared for NCHS, "NORC Memo Covid-19 RANDS Sampling 2021.07.09.docx".

The sample for a specific study is selected from the AmeriSpeak Panel using sampling strata based on age, race/Hispanic ethnicity, education, gender, and household income (96 sampling strata in total). The size of the selected sample per sampling stratum is determined by the population distribution for each stratum. In addition, sample selection takes into account expected differential survey completion rates by demographic groups so that the set of panel members with a completed interview for a study is a representative sample of the target population. If panel household has one more than one active adult panel member, only one adult in the household is eligible for selection (random within-household sampling). Panelists selected for an AmeriSpeak study earlier in the business week are not eligible for sample selection until the following business week.

For technical information about the AmeriSpeak Panel, including recruitment process and panel management policies, please see the Appendix.

### Field

A small sample of English-speaking AmeriSpeak web-mode panelists were invited on Monday April 12<sup>th</sup> for a pretest. In total, NORC collected 89 pretest interviews. The initial data (plus full sample) from the pretest was reviewed by NORC and a delivered to NCHS on Friday April 16<sup>th</sup>.

No changes were made before fielding the Main survey to collect the 5,200 interviews.

In total NORC collected 5,458 interviews, 4,181 by web mode and 1,277 by phone mode.

Please see NORC Card for field period, sample sizes, and the AAPOR response rate documentation.

## Response Rate Reporting for AmeriSpeak sample

Weighted AAPOR RR3 Recruitment rate: 21.7%

Weighted Household retention rate: 78.4%

Survey completion rate: 69.5%

Weighted AAPOR RR3 cumulative response rate: 11.8%

## Gaining Cooperation of AmeriSpeak Panelists for the Study

To encourage study cooperation, NORC sent email reminders and SMS text messages to sampled web-mode panelists and custom email reminders to phone-mode panelists on the following dates:

- Monday, May 17<sup>th</sup> (Initial Soft-launch Email Invitations for Web-preference sample)
- Tuesday, May 18<sup>th</sup> (Initial Soft-launch for Phone-preference sample/dialing begins)
- Thursday, May 20<sup>th</sup> (Email Invitations for Remainder of Web-preference sample; Reminder for Soft-launch sample)
- Friday, May 21<sup>st</sup> (Begin Dialing Remainder of Phone-preference sample)
- Sunday, May 23<sup>th</sup> (Email Reminder to Web-preference sample)
- Wednesday, May 26<sup>th</sup> (Email Reminder to Web-preference sample)
- Tuesday, June 1<sup>st</sup> (Email Reminder to Web-preference sample)
- Thursday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> (SMS Reminder to Web-preference sample)
- Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup> (Email Reminder to Web-preference sample)
- Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup> (Custom Email Reminder for Phone-preference sample)
- Friday, June 11<sup>th</sup> (Email Reminder to Web-preference sample)
- Sunday, June 13<sup>th</sup> (Email Reminder to Web-preference sample)
- Monday, June 14<sup>th</sup> (Additional Sample to-be-dialed invited, mix of Web- and Phone-preference)
- Friday, June 25<sup>th</sup> (Last Additional Sample to-be-dialed invited, High Completion Rate Web-preference panelists)

To administer the phone-survey, NORC dialed the sampled phone-mode panelists throughout the field period. In addition, starting on Monday June 14<sup>th</sup>, AmeriSpeak web-mode panelists for whom AmeriSpeak had a phone number were also called to encourage response after consultation with and approval from NCHS. These web panelists were allowed to complete the survey via phone if convenient.

Panelists were offered the cash equivalent of \$5 for completing via web and \$10 for completing via phone interview. On Tuesday, June 15<sup>th</sup> the incentive for phone-preference (and cases that were included after this date for sample to-be-dialed) was increased to \$24.

Lastly, NORC sent out a custom letter on Thursday, June 17<sup>th</sup> with a non-contingent \$5 incentive (i.e., in addition to the \$24 for completing the survey) to those sampled phone-preference panelists to encourage them to call in and complete the survey.

## Data processing

NORC prepared a fully labeled data file of respondent survey data and demographic data for NCHS.

NORC applied standard cleaning rules to the survey data for quality control. In total, 156 cases were removed from the final data set of completed interviews based on two cleaning rules. Descriptions of the cleaning criteria and the counts from each are below (counts are overlapping).

- Removing Speeders (i.e., those that completed the survey in less than 1/3 the median duration)

- n=147 removed for speeding.
- Removing Respondents with High Refusal Rates (i.e., those that skip or refused more than 50% of the eligible questions)
  - n=46 removed for high refusal rates.

Of those 156 cases removed:

- n=119 were marked with one of the two flags above
- n=37 were marked with both of the flags above

Because the behavior of these respondents indicated they did not meet the criteria to be eligible for the main study interview, the survey responses from these respondents were removed from the final data set prior to post-stratification weighting. These respondents were not counted toward the total number of interviews delivered.

### Statistical Weighting

Statistical weights for the study eligible respondents were calculated using *panel base sampling weights* to start.

*Panel base sampling weights* for all sampled housing units are computed as the inverse of probability of selection from the NORC National Frame (the sampling frame that is used to sample housing units for AmeriSpeak) or address-based sample. The sample design and recruitment protocol for the AmeriSpeak Panel involves subsampling of initial non-respondent housing units. These subsampled non-respondent housing units are selected for an in-person follow-up. The subsample of housing units that are selected for the nonresponse follow-up (NRFU) have their panel base sampling weights inflated by the inverse of the subsampling rate. The base sampling weights are further adjusted to account for unknown eligibility and nonresponse among eligible housing units. The household-level nonresponse adjusted weights are then post-stratified to external counts for number of households obtained from the Current Population Survey. Then, these household-level post-stratified weights are assigned to each eligible adult in every recruited household. Furthermore, a person-level nonresponse adjustment accounts for non-responding adults within a recruited household.

Finally, panel weights are raked to external population totals associated with age, sex, education, race/Hispanic ethnicity, housing tenure, telephone status, and Census Division. The external population totals are obtained from the Current Population Survey. The weights adjusted to the external population totals are the *final panel weights*.

#### Panel Weighting Variables & the Variable Categories

**Age:** 18-24, 25-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-64, and 65+

**Gender:** Male and Female

**Census Division:** New England, Middle Atlantic, East North Central, West North Central, South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central, Mountain, and Pacific

**Race/Ethnicity:** Non-Hispanic White, Non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, and Non-Hispanic Other

**Education:** Less than High School, High School/GED, Some College, and BA and Above

**Housing Tenure:** Home Owner and Other

**Household phone status:** Cell Phone-only, Dual User, and Landline-only/Phoneless

**Age x Gender:** 18-34 Male, 18-34 Female, 35-49 Male, 35-49 Female, 50-64 Male, 50-64 Female, 65+ Male, and 65+ Female

**Age x Race/Ethnicity:** 18-34 Non-Hispanic White, 18-34 All Other, 35-49 Non-Hispanic White, 35-49 All Other, 50-64 All Other, 50-64 All Other, 65+ Non-Hispanic White, and 65+ All Other

*Study-specific base sampling weights* are derived using a combination of the final panel weight and the probability of selection associated with the sampled panel member. Since not all sampled panel members respond to the survey interview, an adjustment is needed to account for and adjust for survey non-respondents. This adjustment decreases potential nonresponse bias associated with sampled panel members who did not

complete the survey interview for the study. Thus, the *nonresponse adjusted survey weights* for the study are adjusted via a raking ratio method to general population totals associated with the following topline socio-demographic characteristics: age, sex, education, race/Hispanic ethnicity, and Census Division.

### **Study-Specific Post-Stratification Weighting Variables & the Variable Categories**

**Age:** 18-24, 25-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-64, and 65+

**Gender:** Male and Female

**Census Division:** New England, Middle Atlantic, East North Central, West North Central, South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central, Mountain, and Pacific

**Race/Ethnicity:** Non-Hispanic White, Non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, and Non-Hispanic Other

**Education:** Less than High School, High School/GED, Some College, and BA and Above

The weights adjusted to the external population totals are the *final study weights*.

At the final stage of weighting, any extreme weights were trimmed based on a criterion of minimizing the mean squared error associated with key survey estimates, and then, weights re-raked to the same population totals.

Raking and re-raking is done during the weighting process such that the weighted demographic distribution of the survey completes resemble the demographic distribution in the target population. The assumption is that the key survey items are related to the demographics. Therefore, by aligning the survey respondent demographics with the target population, the key survey items should also be in closer alignment with the target population.

### **Design Effect and Sampling Margin of Error Calculations**

Study design effect: 1.95

Study margin of error: +/- 1.85%

### **Deliverables**

The following files were created for NCHS as part of the study deliverables:

- Survey interview data file in both SPSS and Excel formats
- Codebook in Excel format
- Final questionnaire - programming format, in Word document
- Final questionnaire - simple format, in Word document
- Project report documenting study procedures
- NORC Card

### **HOW TO DESCRIBE AMERISPEAK AND NORC @ THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**

For purposes of publication, when describing AmeriSpeak and its panel methodology, we recommend using the following language:

Funded and operated by NORC at the University of Chicago, **AmeriSpeak®** is a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the US household population. Randomly selected US households are sampled using area probability and address-based sampling, with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame. These sampled households are then contacted by US mail, telephone, and field interviewers (face to face). The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from

the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings. While most AmeriSpeak households participate in surveys by web, non-internet households can participate in AmeriSpeak surveys by telephone. Households without conventional internet access but having web access via smartphones are allowed to participate in AmeriSpeak surveys by web. AmeriSpeak panelists participate in NORC studies or studies conducted by NORC on behalf of governmental agencies, academic researchers, and media and commercial organizations.

For more information, email [AmeriSpeak-BD@norc.org](mailto:AmeriSpeak-BD@norc.org) or visit [AmeriSpeak.norc.org](http://AmeriSpeak.norc.org).

If editors or reviewers are requesting anything more specific or any other detail, please reach out to us to make certain you are using accurate language.

NORC at the University of Chicago is best described as follows:

**NORC at the University of Chicago** is an independent research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. Since 1941, NORC has conducted groundbreaking studies, created and applied innovative methods and tools, and advanced principles of scientific integrity and collaboration. Today, government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world partner with NORC to transform increasingly complex information into useful knowledge. Please visit [www.norc.org](http://www.norc.org) for more information.



## APPENDIX

# TECHNICAL OVERVIEW OF THE AMERISPEAK® PANEL NORC'S PROBABILITY-BASED HOUSEHOLD PANEL

Updated June 16, 2020

This technical overview provides the basic information about AmeriSpeak®, a large probability-based panel funded and operated by NORC at the University of Chicago. AmeriSpeak is designed to be representative of the U.S. household population, including all 50 states and the District of Columbia. U.S. households are randomly selected with a known, non-zero probability from the NORC National Frame as well as address-based sample (ABS) frames, and then recruited by mail, telephone, and by field interviewers face to face. AmeriSpeak panelists participate in NORC studies or studies conducted by NORC on behalf of governmental agencies, academic institutions, the media, and commercial organizations.

The construction of the AmeriSpeak panel started in 2014 with pilot samples. In 2015, about 7,000 households were recruited from a sample of around 60,000 addresses. In 2016, about 128,000 addresses were sampled to expand the panel to around 20,000 recruited households. About 51,000 addresses were selected for the 2017 recruitment, which led to the expansion of the regular AmeriSpeak panel to 23,000 recruited households. The AmeriSpeak Panel expanded to approximately 30,000 households in 2018 and 35,000 households in 2019 through further recruitment efforts. The 2020 recruitment is expected to expand the panel by another 5,000 households. The current panel size is 48,900 panel members age 13 and over residing in over 40,000 households.

In addition to the regular panel for general population studies, AmeriSpeak also contains sub-panels to support studies of special populations, including AmeriSpeak Latino, AmeriSpeak Teen, and AmeriSpeak Young Adult 18-34 (which features an oversample of African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians). AmeriSpeak is also the probability sample source for TrueNorth®, the NORC calibration solution for combining probability and non-probability samples for estimation through small area modeling that leverages data from AmeriSpeak, the American Community Survey, Current Population Survey, and other data sources for improved statistical efficiency.<sup>1</sup>

### Panel Sample Frame

The primary sampling frame for AmeriSpeak is the 2010 NORC National Frame, a multistage probability sample that fully represents the U.S. household population. We provide a brief description of how the National Frame was constructed after the 2010 Census.

The primary sampling units (PSUs) in the first stage sample selection are 1,917 National Frame Areas (NFAs), each of which is an entire metropolitan area (made up of one or more counties), a county, or a group of counties with a minimum population of 10,000. A total of 126 NFAs are selected in the first stage, including 38 certainty NFAs, 60 urban NFAs, and 28 non-urban NFAs. The largest 38 NFAs, those with a population of at least 1,543,728 (0.5 percent of the 2010 Census U.S. population), were selected into the National Frame with certainty. The certainty NFAs consist of areas with high population density and are dominated by census tracts with city-style mailing addresses. These areas contain 56 percent of the U.S. household population while only accounting for about 8 percent of the geographic area of the United States. The remaining 1,879 NFAs are stratified into urban areas where city-style addresses predominate, and rural areas that are less likely to have city-style addresses. The latter stratum comprises 81 percent of the geographic area, but only 14 percent of the population. A sample of 60 and 28 NFAs is selected systematically

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about TrueNorth, see <http://amerispeak.norc.org/our-capabilities/Pages/TrueNorth.aspx>.

from the urban and rural stratum, respectively, with selection probability proportional to size (PPS) where the measure of size is the number of housing units per NFA.

Within the 126 selected NFAs, the secondary sampling units (SSUs) are segments defined from Census tracts or block groups, where each segment contains at least 300 housing units according to the 2010 Census. Within the certainty NFAs, a sample of 896 segments was selected using systematic PPS sampling, where the size of a segment is the number of housing units. Implicit stratification was achieved by sorting the segments by location (NFA, state, and county), by principal city indicator, by ethnic and income indicators. From each urban and rural NFA, a sample of 8 and 5 segments was selected, respectively, using systematic PPS sampling where the measure of size is the number of housing units per segment. A total of 618 segments are selected from the non-certainty NFAs<sup>2</sup>. Overall, a stratified probability sample of 1,514 segments was selected into the National Frame in the second stage sampling.

Within the selected segments, all housing units are listed using the U.S. Postal Service Delivery Sequence File (DSF). In the 123 segments where the DSF coverage is deemed inadequate, the DSF address list is enhanced with in-person field listing to improve coverage. The final National Frame, consisting of all listed households in the sample segments, is estimated to provide over 97 percent coverage of the U.S. household population. It contains almost 3 million households, including over 80,000 rural households that are added through in-person listing. In addition to NORC's National Frame, the DSF is used as a supplemental sample frame in four states. Although nationally representative, the National Frame does not include households from Alaska, Iowa, North Dakota, and Wyoming. Since 2016, the annual panel recruitment sample has included a small address-based sample (ABS) from these four states to assure AmeriSpeak presence in all U.S. States and Washington, D.C.

In 2017, an enhanced DSF frame was also used to develop a new Latino Panel with adequate representation of Spanish-language-dominant Hispanics. Census tracts with high incidence (at least 30%) of Spanish-dominant Hispanics were targeted for this recruitment. Furthermore, within these Census tracts, households that were flagged as Hispanic based on consumer vendor data (that are typically used for direct-mail marketing) were oversampled. This new AmeriSpeak Latino Panel contains approximately 5,400 Hispanic panelists with 24% of those panelists being Spanish-language dominant. As of February 2020, 63.4% of the recruited adults in the AmeriSpeak Panel were sourced from the National Frame, 27.1% from targeted ABS frames, and 9.5% from voter registration files<sup>3</sup>. Proper weights allow the full use of the combined sample.

### Panel Sample Selection

For panel sample selection between 2014 and 2018, National Frame segments are stratified into six sampling strata based on the race/ethnicity and age composition of each segment, as below:

- Hispanic, high youth segments
- Hispanic, not high youth segments
- Non-Hispanic Black, high youth segments
- Non-Hispanic Black, not high youth segments
- Other, high youth segments
- Other, not high youth segments

Hispanic segments are those where Hispanics make up at least a third of the population and the Hispanic share in the population is greater than that of non-Hispanic Black. Similarly, non-Hispanic Black segments are

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<sup>2</sup> A sample of 5 segments was selected from each of the 28 non-urban NFAs. However, 2 sample segments were later subsampled out in Montana due to cost.

<sup>3</sup> Voter registration files were used as supplemental sample source for the AmeriSpeak Young Adult Panel.

those where non-Hispanic Black make up at least a third of the population and the non-Hispanic Black share in the population is greater than that of Hispanic. Finally, High Youth refers to segments in which 18-24 year old adults are at least 12% of the total adult population. The above stratification is used to oversample housing units in areas with higher concentration of young adults, Hispanics, and non-Hispanic African-Americans. The resulting household sample is referred to as the initial AmeriSpeak sample or sample for initial panel recruitment.

To support the second stage of panel recruitment, initially sampled but nonresponding housing units are subsampled for a nonresponse follow-up (NRFU)<sup>4</sup>. At this stage, consumer vendor data are matched to the pending housing units, and housing units that are flagged as having a young adult<sup>5</sup> (18-34 years of age) or minority (Hispanic<sup>6</sup>, non-Hispanic Black<sup>7</sup>) are oversampled for the NRFU sample. Overall, approximately one in five initially nonresponding housing units are subsampled for NRFU using the same six sampling strata defined above. Due to NRFU, these initially nonresponding housing units have a much higher selection probability compared to the housing units that were recruited during the first stage of panel recruitment.

A 2-phase state-based ABS sample design was used for the 2019 AmeriSpeak recruitment. NORC's National Frame is designed to represent the U.S. household population nationally. At the state level, however, the panel may have more significant clustering effects from the use of the National Frame, especially for states with a small population. The primary objective of the 2019 design is to improve state-level representation by selecting the recruitment sample mostly from areas that are outside the National Frame. A stratified systematic sample was selected in the first phase, where each state constitutes a sampling stratum and the sample was allocated to the strata proportional to the square root of the state population. In the second phase, young adults, Hispanic, non-Hispanic Black, and conservatives are oversampled based on commercial data sources to improve their representation in the panel. Because the 2019 design did not use NRFU face-to-face recruitment, the 2019 design did not involve geographic clustering.

The overall AmeriSpeak Panel sample design reflects the cumulative design features of the NORC National Frame and the annual recruitment samples thus far. These design features are captured in the final panel weight for each recruited household and each panelist. There are mainly two reasons why the sampling design for AmeriSpeak Panel recruitment deviates from EPSEM (Equal Probability of Selection Method) sampling: (a) oversampling of housing units in segments with a higher concentration of young adults and minorities results in the sample selection probabilities being higher for housing units in these segments; and (b) NRFU subsampling results in initially nonresponding housing units having a much higher selection probability. Furthermore, within the NRFU samples, selection probabilities vary for housing units depending on the appended commercial data flags to target specific demographics for improved efficiency. The initial and NRFU sampling procedures are examined and possibly modified each year to more efficiently recruit subpopulations who are less likely to respond to the recruitment survey.

### Panel Recruitment Procedures

The highly efficient recruitment procedures set AmeriSpeak apart from other national panels. AmeriSpeak Panel recruitment is a two-stage process: (i) an initial recruitment using USPS mailings, telephone contact, and

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<sup>4</sup> A small fraction of initially nonresponding housing units are not eligible for NRFU, including “hard refusals” and those with an appointment for a call back from NORC.

<sup>5</sup> A young adult flagged household refers to a household where MSG or TargetSmart indicated there was an 18-24 year old adult in the household. In 2016 and 2017, a slightly different definition was used, and a young adult flagged household was defined as having an 18-34 year old adult in the household by MSG or 18-30 year old adult by TargetSmart.

<sup>6</sup> A Hispanic flagged household refers to a household where MSG or TargetSmart indicated the presence of a Hispanic adult in the household.

<sup>7</sup> A non-Hispanic Black flagged household refers to a household where MSG or TargetSmart indicated the presence of a non-Hispanic Black adult in the household.

modest incentives, and (ii) a more elaborate NRFU recruitment using FedEx mailings, enhanced incentives, and in-person visits by NORC field interviewers.

For the initial recruitment, sample households are invited to join AmeriSpeak online by visiting the panel website AmeriSpeak.org or by calling a toll-free telephone line (in-bound/outbound supported). Both English and Spanish languages are supported for online and telephone recruitment. The initial recruitment data collection protocol features the following: 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 contact by NORC's telephone research center for sample units with a matched telephone number.

For the second-stage NRFU recruitment, a stratified random sample is selected from the nonrespondents of the initial recruitment. Units sampled for NRFU are sent a new recruitment package by Federal Express with an enhanced incentive offer. Meanwhile, NORC field interviewers make personal, face-to-face visits to the pending cases to encourage participation. Once the households are located, the field interviewers administer the recruitment survey in-person using CAPI or else encourage the respondents to register online or by telephone.

### Panel Recruitment Response Rate and Other Panel Statistics

A sample household is considered recruited or responded if at least one adult in the household joins the panel. The weighted household response rate (AAPOR RR3) is about 6% for initial recruitment and 28% for NRFU recruitment. We report two recruitment response rates: one for all the panel recruitment years (2014-2019) and one for the recruitment years with NRFU (2014-2018). For all recruitment years, the cumulative weighted household response rate is 24.1%; for recruitment years with NRFU, and the cumulative weighted household response rate is 34.2%. For client studies requiring a panel recruitment response rate exceeding 30%, the sampling frame may be restricted to the panelists recruited in the NRFU years. The panel recruitment response rate calculation methodology is consistent with AAPOR guidelines and fully documented.<sup>8</sup> The annual panel retention rate is about 85%.

For individual client surveys based on the AmeriSpeak Panel, the AAPOR RR3 response rate is between 10% to 20% depending on specific study parameters such as target population, survey length, time in the field, salience of subject, and the like. This response rate takes into account panel recruitment rate, panel retention rate, and survey participation rate.<sup>9</sup>

Other important panel statistics with respect to the 2014-2019 recruited households are as follows: 62% are recruited in the initial stage and 38% are recruited via NRFU; 85% of the active panelists prefer to do web or online surveys, while 15% prefer to participate in telephone surveys; 21% of the recruited households are

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<sup>8</sup> See [http://amerispeak.norc.org/research/Pages/WhitePaper\\_ResponseRateCalculation\\_AmeriSpeak\\_2016.pdf](http://amerispeak.norc.org/research/Pages/WhitePaper_ResponseRateCalculation_AmeriSpeak_2016.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> A properly calculated cumulative AAPOR response rate for panel-based research takes into account all sources of non-response at each stage of the panel recruitment, management, and survey administration process (see [https://www.aapor.org/AAPOR\\_Main/media/publications/Standard-Definitions20169theditionfinal.pdf](https://www.aapor.org/AAPOR_Main/media/publications/Standard-Definitions20169theditionfinal.pdf), page 48-9). A common misapplication of the term "response rate" in online panel surveys is to represent the survey-specific cooperation rate as the "cumulative survey response rate." See "Response Rate Calculation Methodology for Recruitment of a Two-Phase Probability-Based Panel: The Case of AmeriSpeak" authored by Robert Montgomery, J. Michael Dennis, N. Ganesh. The paper is available at <https://amerispeak.norc.org/research/>.

non-Internet<sup>10</sup>; 82% are cell-phone only or cell-phone mostly; 19% are African-American and 20% Hispanic; and 33% have household income below \$30,000 (compared to CPS benchmark of 26%).<sup>11</sup>

### Impact of Non-Response Follow-Up

NRFU is instrumental in producing the industry-leading response rate for AmeriSpeak Panel recruitment. Moreover, due to the more intensive effort, NRFU recruitments better represent hard to reach groups and are therefore more representative of the target population. For example, initial recruitment tends to under-represent young adults 18-34 years of age. NRFU recruitment corrects for this bias by bringing the age distribution of the panel closer to ACS benchmarks.

Overall, NRFU recruitment significantly improves the representation of the panel with respect to demographic segments that are under-represented among the respondents to the initial recruitment, including young adults (persons 18 to 34 years of age), African Americans, Hispanics, lower income households, renters, cell-phone only households, and persons with lower educational attainment (e.g., no college degree). To the extent that these demographic characteristics are correlated with substantive survey variables, NRFU helps to reduce potential non-response bias in the sample estimates. NORC's research indicates that NRFU respondents are indeed somewhat different from initial respondents for many common survey variables. For example, compared to the panelists recruited during the initial stage, NRFU panelists tend to be more conservative politically, more likely to attend church, less interested in current events or topics in the news report, less knowledgeable about science, less likely to be in favor of gun control policies, less likely to read a print newspaper (more likely to read the news online and use social media), more likely to eat at fast food restaurants and so on<sup>12</sup>. These observations illustrate that NRFU recruitment is critical for achieving a more balanced panel and for making the substantive estimates in AmeriSpeak studies more accurate. Even though NRFU panelists are more reluctant to complete surveys, the addition of NRFU panelists reduced total absolute bias on average 5 to 21 percentage points when compared to the initial stage recruits (among examined surveys).<sup>13</sup>

### Mixed-Mode Data Collection

The AmeriSpeak Panel supports mixed-mode data collection to improve response rate and the representativeness of the complete surveys. During the recruitment survey, AmeriSpeak panelists are offered an opportunity to choose their preferred mode—web or phone—for future participation in AmeriSpeak surveys. A recruited household can consist of both web- and phone-mode panelists residing in the same household. Panelists predominantly prefer web over phone mode. As of February 2020, 85% of the active panelists prefer to do web or online surveys, while 15% prefer to participate in telephone surveys. The telephone mode encompasses panelists without internet access, panelists whose only internet access is via a smartphone, and panelists with internet access but are unwilling to share an email address.

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<sup>10</sup> The non-internet households (HHs) are those that do not select “High-speed, broadband internet at home (such as cable or DSL)” or “Dial-up internet at home” response options when they are asked “What kind of internet access do you have? Please select all that apply” item in the recruitment survey. The non-internet HHs include those that only use internet on a cell connection or mobile phone.

<sup>11</sup> For transparency purposes, unweighted percentages are presented in this section. Hence, these results do not take into account selection probabilities. The base weighted distributions that take into account selection probabilities can be provided upon request.

<sup>12</sup> See “The Undercounted: Measuring the Impact of ‘Nonresponse Follow-up’ on Research Data and Outcome Measures” authored by Ipek Bilgen, J. Michael Dennis, N. Ganesh. The paper will be soon available at <https://amerispeak.norc.org/research/>.

<sup>13</sup> See “Nonresponse Follow-up Impact on AmeriSpeak Panel Sample Composition and Representativeness” authored by Ipek Bilgen, J. Michael Dennis, N. Ganesh. The paper is available at <https://amerispeak.norc.org/research/>.

To the extent that non-internet households or “net averse” persons are different from the rest of the population, mixed-mode surveys have better population coverage and produce more accurate population estimates. NORC’s telephone interviewers administer the telephone surveys using a data collection system supporting both the phone and web modes, providing an integrated sample management and data collection platform. For panelists using smartphones for web-mode surveys, the NORC survey system renders an optimized presentation of the survey questions for these mobile users.

### **Panel Management and Maintenance**

Panel management and maintenance are crucial for panel health and efficiency. NORC maintains strict panel management rules to limit respondent burden, reduce panel attrition, and minimize the risk of panel fatigue. On average, AmeriSpeak panelists are invited to participate in client studies two to three times a month. AmeriSpeak works with NORC clients to create surveys that provide an appropriate user experience for AmeriSpeak panelists. AmeriSpeak will not field surveys that in our professional judgment will result in a poor user experience for our panelists. AmeriSpeak also has a designated website and a telephone number for panelist communications.

Panel maintenance is a dynamic process because the AmeriSpeak Panel is supplemented and refreshed regularly over time to grow the panel, compensate for panel attrition, and improve panel representation for specific subpopulations. For example, the Latino Panel and Teen Panel are created to support studies of Hispanics and teenagers, respectively; the 2019 recruitment is primarily designed to improve sample representation at the state level. As panelists are added or/and removed from the panel, the panel refreshment process takes place to ensure that the refreshed panel fully represents the corresponding target population.

### **ABOUT NORC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**

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

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

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

To learn more about AmeriSpeak or to share an RFP, please contact AmeriSpeak at [AmeriSpeak-BD@norc.org](mailto:AmeriSpeak-BD@norc.org). Information about AmeriSpeak capabilities and research papers are available online at [AmeriSpeak.NORC.org](http://AmeriSpeak.NORC.org).