



AMERISPEAK TEEN PANEL OVERVIEW PROBABILITY-BASED SURVEY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR POLLING U.S. TEENS

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Background

AmeriSpeak probability panels are 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 Master Sample as well as other frame sources, and then recruited by mail, telephone, and in-person field interviews.

The AmeriSpeak Teen Panel is constructed by recruiting teens 13 to 17 years of age from AmeriSpeak households that have children in that age range. AmeriSpeak Teen is created to facilitate the timely collection of nationally representative survey data from teens. We call the set of teen panelists “empaneled teens.”

Teen Recruitment Procedures

Prior to the creation of the AmeriSpeak Teen Panel, parental/legal guardian consent would have to be obtained before every survey. This process was of course unwieldy, increased respondent burden, lengthened data collection field periods, compromised privacy, and likely reduced response rates. Getting parental and teen consent once at the point of empanelment is not only a much more efficient and lower burden process but also allows NORC to collect other information on the teens and gives us a way to contact the teens directly in the future (for studies with non-sensitive topics, as we will discuss below).

While teen recruitment is generally an ongoing process, significant and supplementary teen recruitment efforts were undertaken in 2018 and 2020 wherein all likely parents from the then-current AmeriSpeak Panel were re-invited to nominate teens living in their household at least 3 months in a year. In all recruitments, once consent is attained, parents and legal guardians provide contact information for the teens they nominate. Teens nominated by their parents and legal guardians are then invited to complete the

teen recruitment survey, and those who complete the recruitment survey become members of the AmeriSpeak Teen Panel. Every two months, new adult panelists that are likely parents and legal guardians who have completed at least 3 client surveys on the AmeriSpeak Panel are invited to nominate teens to the AmeriSpeak Teen Panel.

In 2024 a major special recruitment campaign was conducted. Whereas typical consent to recruit outreach to parents and recruitment of teens is typically conducted via email. The 2024 utilized a multi-modal campaign including mail, telephone, e-mail, and texting.

Once a teen panelist reaches age 18, they are “aged-out” of the teen panel and invited to join the AmeriSpeak Panel as an adult panelist.

Sampling for Teen Studies

AmeriSpeak Teen panelists can be invited directly to all non-sensitive surveys. Parents or legal guardians are nevertheless notified when their teens are invited to a new survey. For surveys with sensitive topics, parental consent is still required prior to inviting the empaneled teens to that specific study.

The NORC institutional review board (IRB, an independent group of researchers who ensures that all NORC research protects the rights of the participants of our studies) determines whether a teen survey is “sensitive” or “non-sensitive” based on the content of the questionnaire. Sensitive survey content typically involves illegal or risky behaviors, crime victimization, or topics that could result in potential harm such as embarrassment, psychological distress, or discomfort, while non-sensitive surveys do not have such content.

Additional teen samples may be included from commercial opt-in panels. Such samples are nonprobability samples because their representation and inclusion mechanisms are unknown. NORC offers TrueNorth, a special weighting and estimation method for such studies to account for the inclusion of nonprobability samples (see <https://truenorth.norc.org>).

Teen Study Weighting Procedures

Teen study weighting procedures depend on the overall study sample design. For non-sensitive studies that are based entirely on the empaneled teens, panel weights associated with the nominating households in the AmeriSpeak Panel serve as the teen sample base weights. The base weights are first adjusted for nonresponse through a weighting class adjustment procedure. The nonresponse adjusted weights are then calibrated to population benchmarks through raking ratio adjustments. The raking dimensions are typically defined by the following:

- Age: 13-15, 16-17.
- Age by Parent Education: Some college or less vs. bachelor's degree or above.
- Age by Gender
- Age by Race/ethnicity: NH-White, NH-Black, Hispanic, NH-Other.
- Race/ethnicity by Gender: NH-White vs. All other.
- Age by Region: Northeast, Midwest, South, and West.

Weighting procedures for sensitive studies are more complex because the extra step of parental/legal guardian consent introduces an additional source of survey nonresponse that must be taken into account in the weighting process. A teen sample unit cannot participate in the survey unless the parent or legal guardian provides consent. In this context, the parent or legal guardian is part of the data collection process. A parent is considered a survey complete if they provide consent to their teens to participate in the survey. The teen base weights are calculated such that parent panel weights and parent-level nonresponse are accounted for. Once the base weights are determined, nonresponse adjustments and raking ratio adjustments are performed to derive the final teen weights, as described above.

AmeriSpeak Teen Services and Capabilities

AmeriSpeak Teen offers two services: (i) AmeriSpeak Teen and (ii) AmeriSpeak Teen with TrueNorth.

AmeriSpeak Teen currently includes 1,310 probability-based, nationally representative teens age 13 to 17.

AmeriSpeak Teen with TrueNorth can support larger sample sizes by supplementing the AmeriSpeak Teen probability sample with cost efficient nonprobability samples. NORC's TrueNorth weighting method produces combined sample weights to support approximately unbiased population estimates. See www.truenorth.norc.org.

AmeriSpeak Teen Sample Representativeness

AmeriSpeak Teen provides a representative sample of U.S. teens aged 13-17 for our AmeriSpeak clients. Based on recent study experience using AmeriSpeak Teen, the demographic distribution of the interviewed teens is reasonably close to census population benchmarks. On an unweighted basis, our interviewed teens have approximately the following distributions in our AmeriSpeak Teen surveys.

Demographic		AmeriSpeak Teen	Census Benchmark
Gender	Male	47%	51%
	Female	53%	49%
Age	13	4%	20%
	14	12%	21%
	15	19%	20%
	16	22%	20%
	17	43%	20%
Race/Ethnicity	White-NH/ELSE	57%	61%
	Black-NH	18%	13%
	Hispanic	25%	26%
Household Income	<\$40k	35%	19%
	\$40k to <\$75k	25%	21%
	\$75k to <\$125k	21%	25%
	>\$125k	19%	36%