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The COVID Impact Survey: Methodological Approach

The COVID-19 Household Impact Survey is a philanthropic effort to provide national and regional statistics about physical health, mental health, economic security, and social dynamics in the United States. The COVID Impact Survey is funded by the Data Foundation. NORC at the University of Chicago is conducting the survey.

The survey is designed to provide weekly estimates of the U.S. adult household population nationwide and for 18 regional areas including 10 states (CA, CO, FL, LA, MN, MO, MT, NY, OR, TX) and 8 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (Atlanta, Baltimore, Birmingham, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbus, Phoenix, Pittsburgh). Data collection is occurring over a week long period. Interviews are conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents are offered a small monetary incentive for completing the survey. The questionnaire is available at: <https://www.covid-impact.org/>. And for additional information on the study, please contact covidimpactsurvey@datafoundation.org.

National Survey

Data for the national estimates are collected using the AmeriSpeak Panel®, NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. During the initial recruitment phase of the AmeriSpeak panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, 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.

Interviews are conducted with adults age 18 and over representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Panel members are randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak. In households with more than one adult panel member, only one is selected at random for the sample. Invited panel members may complete the survey online or by telephone with an NORC telephone interviewer.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data have been collected and made final, an iterative raking process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any noncoverage or under and oversampling resulting from the study specific sample design. Raking variables include age, gender, census division, race/ethnicity, education, and county groupings based on county level counts of the number of COVID-19 deaths. Demographic weighting variables were obtained from the 2020 Current Population Survey. The count of COVID-19 deaths by county was obtained from USA Facts. The weighted data reflect the U.S. population of adults age 18 and over.

Region Surveys

Data for the regional estimates are collected using a multi-mode address-based (or ABS) approach that allows residents of each area to complete the interview via web or with an NORC telephone interviewer. The sampling frame is based on an extract of the U.S. Postal Service delivery-sequence file (DSF). The DSF 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. Addresses are stratified by the Census propensity to respond metric and then randomly selected within each target region.

All sampled households are mailed a postcard inviting them to complete the survey either online using a unique PIN or via telephone by calling a toll-free number. Postcards are addressed to: [CITY] HOUSEHOLD. There is no within household selection for households with multiple adults. Interviews are conducted with adults age 18 and over.

In four states (CA, FL, NY, and TX), the AmeriSpeak panel design yields representative state samples. As such, AmeriSpeak panelists who reside in each of these four states are combined with the ABS sample to generate region level estimates. These panelists’ sampling weights are then raked with the ABS to external population targets for each state.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data have been collected and made final, an iterative raking process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any noncoverage or under and oversampling. Raking variables include age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, and county groupings based on county level counts of the number of COVID-19 deaths. Demographic weighting variables were obtained from the 2018 American Community Survey. The count of COVID-19 deaths by county was obtained from USA Facts. The weighted data reflect the population of adults age 18 and over in each region.

A Note on Applying the Weights

The dataset contains 4 weight variables. When generating national estimates, the NATIONAL_WEIGHT or NATIONA_WEIGHT_POP should be applied. When generating estimates for a geographic region, the REGION_WEIGHT or REGION_WEIGHT_POP should be applied. NATIONAL_WEIGHT and REGION_WEIGHT are normalized weights that total to the sample size. NATIONA_WEIGHT_POP and REGION_WEIGHT_POP are population weights that total to size of the adult population nationally or in the regions. Any analyses that aggregate all 18 regions together should apply REGION_WEIGHT_POP.

Data Collection Metrics for April 20-26, 2020

AmeriSpeak Sample Performance Summary

Sampled/Invited Panelists	No. Screening Interviews Completed	Screener Completion Rate	No. Panelists Eligible for Interview	Incidence / Eligibility Rate	No. Survey Interviews Completed	No. Completed Online	No. Completed by Phone	Interview Completion Rate	AAPOR RR3
11,133	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	2,190	2,053	137	19.7%	4.1%

ABS Sample Performance Summary

Sampled/Invited Households	No. Screening Interviews Completed	Base-Weighted Screener Completion Rate	No. Panelists Eligible for Interview	Incidence / Eligibility Rate	No. Survey Interviews Completed	No. Completed Online	No. Completed by Phone	Interview Completion Rate	Base Weighted Yield
264,740	7,127	2.5%	7,127	100%	6,600	6,086	514	92.7%	2.3%

Margins of Sampling Error

	No. Completed Interviews Sourced from ABS	No. Completed Interviews Sourced from AmeriSpeak	Design Effect	Margin of Sampling Error (incl. design effect) +/- percentage points
National	0	2190	2.00	3.0
CA	354	263	2.15	5.8
CO	425	0	1.94	6.6
FL	327	162	2.25	6.7
LA	330	0	1.79	7.2
MN	395	0	1.74	6.5
MO	327	0	1.87	7.4
MT	418	0	1.76	6.4
NY	364	95	1.93	6.4
OR	426	0	1.85	6.5
TX	224	147	2.13	7.4
Atlanta	362	0	1.75	6.8
Baltimore	369	0	1.88	7.0
Birmingham	358	0	1.46	6.3
Chicago	431	0	1.87	6.5
Cleveland	423	0	1.79	6.4
Columbus	391	0	2.00	7.0
Phoenix	271	0	2.32	9.1
Pittsburgh	405	0	1.73	6.4

Research publications that use microdata from the COVID Impact Survey should cite as:

Abigail Wozniak, Joe Willey, Jennifer Benz, and Nick Hart. COVID Impact Survey: Version 1.1 [dataset]. Chicago, IL: National Opinion Research Center, 2020.

Media articles and other publications should attribute as:

COVID-19 Impact Survey, conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago for the Data Foundation.