

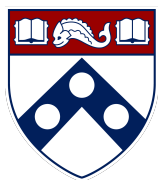
# Trust in CDC Survey

## Methods Report

Prepared for:

Ken Winneg, Ph.D.

Annenberg Public Policy Center of the  
University of Pennsylvania



**Annenberg**  
PUBLIC POLICY CENTER  
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA



November 25, 2025

Prepared by:  
SSRS  
David Rodbart  
Adam Moffitt

## Table of Contents

|                                                         |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Table of Contents .....                                 | 1 |
| Overview.....                                           | 2 |
| Sample Design: SSRS Opinion Panel .....                 | 2 |
| Survey Sampling.....                                    | 2 |
| Questionnaire Design.....                               | 2 |
| Data Collection.....                                    | 3 |
| Screening.....                                          | 3 |
| Web Contact Procedures .....                            | 3 |
| Programming, Data Processing, and Integration.....      | 3 |
| Programming.....                                        | 3 |
| Quality Control Checks .....                            | 4 |
| Weighting and Design Effects.....                       | 4 |
| Base weight (BW) .....                                  | 4 |
| Raking.....                                             | 4 |
| Trimming.....                                           | 5 |
| Effects of Sample Design on Statistical Inference ..... | 6 |
| Sample Disposition and Response Rate .....              | 7 |
| Cumulative Response Rate.....                           | 7 |
| Deliverables .....                                      | 7 |

## Overview

The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania (APPC) engaged SSRS to conduct the Trust in CDC Survey via the SSRS Opinion Panel among U.S. adults age 18 and older. Data collection was conducted from November 21-24, 2025 among a sample of 1,006 respondents.

The survey was conducted via web in English and data were weighted to represent the target population of U.S. adults ages 18 or older. See the “Weighting” section for additional information on the weighting procedures.

This report provides information about the sampling procedures and the methods used to collect, process, and weight data for this study.

## Sample Design: SSRS Opinion Panel

SSRS Opinion Panel members are recruited randomly based on nationally representative ABS (Address Based Sample) design (including Hawaii and Alaska). ABS respondents are randomly sampled by Marketing Systems Group (MSG) through the U.S. Postal Service’s Computerized Delivery Sequence File (CDS), a regularly-updated listing of all known addresses in the U.S. For the SSRS Opinion Panel, known business addresses are excluded from the sample frame. Additional panelists are recruited via random digit dial (RDD) telephone sample of cell phone numbers connected to a prepaid cell phone. This sample is selected by MSG from the cell phone RDD frame using a flag that identifies prepaid numbers. Prepaid cell numbers are associated with cell phones that are “pay as you go” and do not require a contract.

The SSRS Opinion Panel is a multi-mode panel (web and phone). Most panelists take self-administered web surveys; however, the option to take surveys conducted by a live telephone interviewer is available to those who do not use the internet as well as those who use the internet but are reluctant to take surveys online.

## Survey Sampling

All sample drawn for this study were SSRS Opinion Panelists who are U.S. adults ages 18 or older. Sample drawn was stratified by age, gender, race and ethnicity, education, Census region, and party identification to ensure adequate representation of each demographic group.

## Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was developed by APPC in consultation with the SSRS project team. SSRS reviewed the questionnaire primarily to identify potential problems in the instrument that might increase respondent burden, cause respondents to refuse or terminate the survey, create

problems with respondent comprehension, or pose practical challenges for mode-specific administration such as complex skip patterns.

## Data Collection

### Screening

All panelists age 18+ were eligible and qualified for the study.

### Web Contact Procedures

A “soft launch” inviting a limited number of panelists to participate was conducted on November 21, 2025. Soft launch data was checked to ensure functionality of the program and administration length of the survey were within the scope of work. After checking soft launch data to ensure that all questionnaire content and skip patterns were correct, additional sample was released later in the day on November 21 to ensure the final sample met the study goals.

Web panelists were emailed an invitation to complete the survey online. The email for each respondent included a unique password-embedded link. All panelists who did not respond to the email invitation received up to two reminder emails, and panelists who had opted to receive text messages from the SSRS Opinion Panel received invitations and reminders via text message.

**Table 1: Field Schedule:**

| Touchpoint  | Start      | End        |
|-------------|------------|------------|
| Soft launch | 11/21/2025 | 11/21/2025 |
| Full launch | 11/21/2025 | 11/24/2025 |

In appreciation for their participation, panelists received post-paid compensation in the form of an electronic gift card, sent via email immediately after completion of the survey. Panelists with less than a high school education were offered a larger compensation to encourage participation.

Median web survey length was approximately 4 minutes.

## Programming, Data Processing, and Integration

### Programming

Prior to the field period, SSRS programmed the study into its Forsta Plus (formerly known as Confrimit) Web/CATI platform for administration in English. Extensive checking of the program was conducted to ensure that skip patterns and sample splits followed the design of the questionnaire.

Additional steps were employed to ensure a quality experience in survey administration regardless of the device utilized by respondents, whether a desktop computer, tablet, or mobile phone. The web program was optimized for administration via smartphone or other mobile handheld devices. The web program was also checked on multiple devices, including desktop computers and handheld mobile devices, and different web browsers to ensure consistent and optimized visualization across devices and web browsers. The web survey was accessed directly by respondents, using their unique survey links with embedded passwords. This also gave them the ability to return to their survey later if they chose to suspend their survey.

## Quality Control Checks

For web surveys, quality checks were incorporated into the survey. Respondents who failed the quality checks were not included in the final data set. This included:

1. Failed sincerity check and trap question (n=1)
2. Finished the survey under 1 minute (n=8)

A total of n=9 completed surveys were removed after applying these cleaning standards.

## Weighting and Design Effects

Data were weighted to represent adults 18+ in the United States. The data were weighted by first applying a base weight then balancing the demographic profile of the sample to target population parameters.

### Base weight (BW)

The base weight for the SSRS Opinion Panel accounts for the panelists' probability of selection into the current study's sample using the following formula:

$$BW = W_{hi} \times (N_h/n_h)$$

...where  $W_{hi}$  is the panelist weight,  $N_h$  is the size of stratum h and  $n_h$  is the number of panelists selected from stratum h.

### Raking

With the base weight applied, the data were weighted to balance the demographic profile of the sample to the target population parameters.

Data were weighted to distributions of: sex by age, sex by education, age by education, race/ethnicity, census region, home tenure, number of adults per household, civic engagement, population density, frequency of internet use, voter status, religious affiliation, and party ID. The following table shows the data sources used for calibration totals.

**Table 2. Calibration Variable Sources**

| DIMENSIONS                     | SOURCE                                                                              |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sex                            | 2025 Current Population Survey <sup>1</sup>                                         |
| Age                            |                                                                                     |
| Education                      |                                                                                     |
| Race                           |                                                                                     |
| Census Region                  |                                                                                     |
| Home Tenure                    |                                                                                     |
| Number of adults per household |                                                                                     |
| Population Density             | Claritas Pop-Facts Premier 2023 <sup>2</sup>                                        |
| Religion Affiliation           | Pew Research Center's National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS) <sup>3</sup> |
| Internet Frequency             |                                                                                     |
| Party ID                       |                                                                                     |
| Civic Engagement <sup>4</sup>  | September 2023 CPS Volunteering and Civic Life Supplement <sup>5</sup>              |
| Voter Registration             | CPS 2024 Voting and Registration Supplement <sup>6</sup>                            |

Panelist demographics used for weighting are those collected on the most recent Opinion Panel registration survey with the exceptions of education and voter registration, which were asked in the survey.

## Trimming

Final calibrated weights are trimmed at the 2nd and 98th percentiles to prevent individual surveys from having too much influence.

<sup>1</sup> Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0>

<sup>2</sup> <https://environicsanalytics.com/data/demographic/pop-facts-premier>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/fact-sheet/national-public-opinion-reference-survey-npors/> - Feb 5 to Jun 18, 2025.

<sup>4</sup> Civically engaged respondents are defined as those who have volunteered in the past 12 months or who talk to / spend time with their neighbors daily.

<sup>5</sup> Sarah Flood, Miriam King, Renae Rodgers, Steven Ruggles, J. Robert Warren, Daniel Backman, Annie Chen, Grace Cooper, Stephanie Richards, Megan Schouweiler, and Michael Westberry (2024). Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 12.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D030.V12.0>

<sup>6</sup> Current Population Survey, November 2024: Voting and Registration Supplement [machine-readable data file] conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. - Washington: Bureau of the Census [producer and distributor], 2024.

## Effects of Sample Design on Statistical Inference

Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. SSRS calculates the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect" or *deff* represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from a disproportionate sample design and systematic non-response. The total sample design effect for this survey is 1.21.

SSRS calculates the composite design effect for a sample of size  $n$ , with each case having a weight,  $w$ , as:<sup>7</sup>

$$deff = \frac{n \sum w^2}{(\sum w)^2}$$

The survey's margin of error is the largest 95% confidence interval for any estimated proportion based on the total sample — the one around 50%. For example, the margin of error for the entire sample is  $\pm 3.4$  percentage points. This means that in 95 out of every 100 samples drawn using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 3.4 percentage points away from their true values in the population. Margins of error for subgroups will be larger. It is important to remember that sampling fluctuations are only one possible source of error in a survey estimate. Other sources, such as respondent selection bias, questionnaire wording, and reporting inaccuracy, may contribute additional error of greater or lesser magnitude.

---

<sup>7</sup> Kish, L. (1992). Weighting for Unequal Pi. *Journal of Official Statistics*, Vol. 8, No.2, 1992, pp. 183-200.



## Sample Disposition and Response Rate

Table 3 details the completion and response rates for this study.

**Table 3: Completion Rate/Response Rate:**

| Completion Rates/Composite Response Rates                         | Total  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Total Sample (Invited to participate)                             | 2525   |
| Screen-outs                                                       | 0      |
| Total Eligible                                                    | 2525   |
| Quality control removals                                          | 9      |
| Incompletes                                                       | 190    |
| Quota full                                                        | 119    |
| Completions*                                                      | 1006   |
| Incidence/Eligibility rate                                        | 100.0% |
| Survey Completion rate (Completions/Total invited to participate) | 39.84% |
| Survey RR3                                                        | 39.85% |

*\*Excludes screen-outs or data quality removals that completed the survey*

## Cumulative Response Rate

Cumulative response rate that takes into consideration the response rate for the panel recruitment survey, percent of recruitment survey respondents that agree to join the panel, and this survey's response rate. The cumulative RR3 comes to 1.9%.

## Deliverables

Final deliverables for this study were as follows:

- Weighted SPSS dataset
- Methods report