

SSRS Opinion Panel Omnibus Methodology



Methods Report
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Table of Contents

Overview	1
Sample Design: SSRS Opinion Panel.....	1
Survey Sampling	1
Questionnaire Design	2
Data Collection.....	2
Web Contact Procedures	2
Phone Contact Procedures.....	2
Programming, Data Processing, and Integration	3
Programming.....	3
Quality Control Checks	3
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
Table 2: Completion Rate/Response Rate:.....	7
Cumulative Response Rate	7

Overview

This study was conducted by SSRS on its Opinion Panel Omnibus platform. The SSRS Opinion Panel Omnibus is a national, twice-per-month, probability-based survey. Data collection was conducted from January 3 – January 5, 2025 among a sample of 1,077 respondents. The survey was conducted via web (n=1,047) and telephone (n=30) and administered in English (n=1,048) and Spanish (n=29). The margin of error for total respondents is +/-3.8 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. All SSRS Opinion Panel Omnibus data are weighted to represent the target population of U.S. adults ages 18 or older.

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

The SSRS Opinion Panel Omnibus is conducted on the SSRS Opinion Panel. SSRS Opinion Panel members are recruited randomly based primarily 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 was selected to ensure representation by age, gender, race and ethnicity, education, Census region, party identification, and preferred survey language.

Questionnaire Design

The SSRS Opinion Panel Omnibus includes a series of question inserts contracted by our clients. These inserts may range from a single question to a several minute battery of open and closed-ended questions. Our staff reviews each insert to ensure that the questions, as worded, will provide clients with the desired information. SSRS reviews questions to identify potential problems 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. For each wave, clients are given exclusivity for their subject area and inserts may be randomized to reduce bias.

Data Collection

Web Contact Procedures

A “soft launch” inviting a limited number of panelists to participate was conducted on Friday, January 3, 2025. After checking soft launch data to ensure that all questionnaire content and skip patterns were correct, additional sample was released 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 three reminder emails, and panelists who had opted into receiving text messages from the SSRS Opinion Panel received up to three text message reminders.

In appreciation for their participation online, 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 or who completed the survey in Spanish were offered a larger compensation to encourage participation.

Phone Contact Procedures

Interviewers asked to speak with the person at that number who is a member of the SSRS Opinion Panel by name. Interviewers verified that the person was on the phone and in a safe place before administering the survey.

All telephone interviews were completed in English using the Forsta Plus (formerly known as Conformat) CATI system. The CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system ensured that complete dispositions of all call attempts were recorded.

CATI interviewers received written materials about the survey instrument and received formal training for this particular project. The written materials were provided prior to commencement of data collection and included an annotated questionnaire that contained information about the goals of the study, detailed explanations about why questions were being asked, the meaning and pronunciation of key terms or names, potential obstacles to overcome in getting good answers to questions, and respondent problems that could be anticipated ahead of time, as well as strategies for addressing the potential problems.

All respondents who completed the survey via telephone were offered post-paid compensation via a mailed check.

Programming, Data Processing, and Integration

Programming

Prior to the field period, SSRS programmed the study into its Forsta Plus (formerly known as Conformat) Web/CATI platform for administration in English or Spanish. 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. These quality control measures include checks for speeders, high item non-response, and the administration of up to two trap questions.

For telephone surveys, interviews are closely monitored by interviewing staff for quality control. In addition, select recordings are reviewed by supervisors to monitor quality and interviewer procedures.

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 Omnibus accounts for the panelists' probability of selection into the current week's Omnibus 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 1. Calibration Variable Sources

DIMENSIONS	SOURCE
Sex	2024 Current Population Survey ¹
Age	
Education	
Race	
Hispanic Nativity	
Census Region	
Home Tenure	
Number of adults per household	
Population Density	Claritas Pop-Facts Premier 2023 ²
Religion Affiliation	Pew Research Center’s National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS) ³
Internet Frequency	
Party ID	
Civic Engagement ⁴	September 2023 CPS Volunteering and Civic Life Supplement ⁵
Voter Registration	CPS 2022 Voting and Registration Supplement ⁶

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 are included on the Omnibus questionnaire each week.

Trimming

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

¹ Sarah Flood, Miriam King, Renae Rodgers, Steven Ruggles, J. Robert Warren, Daniel Backman, Annie Chen, Grace Cooper, Stephanie Richards, Megan Schouweiler, and Michael Westberry. IPUMS CPS: Version 12.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D030.V12.0>

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

³ <https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/fact-sheet/national-public-opinion-reference-survey-npors/> - Feb 1 to Jun 10, 2024.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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>

⁶ Sarah Flood, Miriam King, Renae Rodgers, Steven Ruggles, J. Robert Warren, Daniel Backman, Annie Chen, Grace Cooper, Stephanie Richards, Megan Schouweiler and Michael Westberry. IPUMS CPS: Version 11.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D030.V11.0>

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 1.59.

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

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

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 ± 3.8 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 3.8 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.

⁷ 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 2 details the completion and response rates for this study.

Table 2: Completion Rate/Response Rate:

Completion Rates/Composite Response Rates	Total
Total Sample (Invited to participate)	2,585
Screen-outs	0
Total Eligible	2,585
Quality control removals	1
Incompletes	177
Quota full	57
Completions*	1,077
Incidence/Eligibility rate	100.0%
Survey Completion rate (Completions/Total invited to participate)	41.7%
Weighted Survey RR3	42.9%

**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 the Omnibus survey response rate. The cumulative RR3 comes to 2.1%.