Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

Overview

Data in this report comes from Wave 199 of the American Trends Panel (ATP), Pew Research Center's nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. The survey was conducted from Sept. 14 to Sept. 20, 2026. A total of 5,193 panelists responded out of 6,031 who were sampled, for a survey-level response rate of 86%.

The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 3%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 1%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 5,193 respondents is plus or minus 1.6 percentage points.

The survey includes oversamples of non-Hispanic Asian and Jewish adults in order to provide more precise estimates of the opinions and experiences of these smaller demographic subgroups. These oversampled groups are weighted back to reflect their correct proportions in the population.

SSRS conducted the survey for Pew Research Center via online (n=4,917) and live telephone (n=276) interviewing. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish.

To learn more about the ATP, read "About the American Trends Panel."

Panel recruitment

Since 2018, the ATP has used address-based sampling (ABS) for recruitment. A study cover letter and a pre-incentive are mailed to a stratified, random sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Computerized Delivery Sequence File. This Postal Service file has been estimated to cover 90% to 98% of the population.[1] Within each sampled household, the adult with the next birthday is selected to participate. Other details of the ABS recruitment protocol have changed over time but are available upon request.[2] Prior to 2018, the ATP was recruited using landline and cellphone random-digit-dial surveys administered in English and Spanish.

A national sample of U.S. adults has been recruited to the ATP approximately once per year since 2014. In some years, the recruitment has included additional efforts (known as an "oversample")

[1] AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. "AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling."
[2] Email pewsurveys@pewresearch.org.

to improve the accuracy of data for underrepresented groups. For example, Hispanic adults, Black adults and Asian adults were oversampled in 2019, 2022 and 2023, respectively.

Sample design

The overall target population for this survey was noninstitutionalized persons ages 18 and older living in the United States. It featured a stratified random sample from the ATP in which non-Hispanic Asian and Jewish adults were selected with certainty. The remaining panelists were sampled at rates designed to ensure that the share of respondents in each stratum is proportional to its share of the U.S. adult population to the greatest extent possible. Respondent weights are adjusted to account for differential probabilities of selection as described in the Weighting section below.

Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with SSRS. The web program used for online respondents was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the SSRS project team and Pew Research Center researchers. The SSRS project team also populated test data that was analyzed in SPSS to ensure the logic and randomizations were working as intended before launching the survey.

Incentives

All respondents were offered a post-paid incentive for their participation. Respondents could choose to receive the post-paid incentive in the form of a check or gift code to Amazon.com, Target.com or Walmart.com. Incentive amounts ranged from $5 to $20 depending on whether the respondent belongs to a part of the population that is harder or easier to reach. Differential incentive amounts were designed to increase panel survey participation among groups that traditionally have low survey response propensities.

Data collection protocol

The data collection field period for this survey was Sept. 14 to Sept. 20, 2026. Surveys were conducted via self-administered web survey or by live telephone interviewing.

For panelists who take surveys online:[3] Postcard notifications were mailed to a subset on Sept. 14.[4] Survey invitations were sent out in two separate launches: soft launch and full launch.

[3] The ATP does not use routers or chains in any part of its online data collection protocol, nor are they used to direct respondents to additional surveys.

[4] Postcard notifications for web panelists are sent to 1) panelists who were recruited within the last two years and 2) panelists recruited prior to the last two years who opt to continue receiving postcard notifications.

Sixty panelists were included in the soft launch, which began with an initial invitation sent on Sept. 14. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking sampled online panelists were included in the full launch and were sent an invitation on Sept. 15.

Invitation and reminder dates for web respondents, ATP Wave 199

	Soft launch	Full launch
Initial invitation	Sept. 14, 2026	Sept. 15, 2026
First reminder	Sept. 17, 2026	Sept. 17, 2026
Final reminder	Sept. 19, 2026	Sept. 19, 2026

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Panelists participating online were sent an email invitation and up to two email reminders if they did not respond to the survey. ATP panelists who consented to SMS messages were sent an SMS invitation with a link to the survey and up to two SMS reminders.

For panelists who take surveys over the phone with a live interviewer: Prenotification postcards were mailed on Sept. 11. Soft launch took place on Sept. 14 and involved dialing until a total of three interviews had been completed. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking sampled phone panelists' numbers were dialed throughout the remaining field period. Panelists who take surveys via phone can receive up to six calls from trained SSRS interviewers.

Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, Center researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for whether respondents left questions blank at very high rates or always selected the first or last answer presented. As a result of this checking, no ATP respondents were removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

Use of artificial intelligence (AI)

Survey responses to some open-ended questions were initially coded using AI-assisted text classification. Human researchers reviewed, validated, and, where necessary, corrected AI-generated codes prior to analysis.

Weighting

The ATP data is weighted in a process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the panel survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of recruitment into the panel. These weights are then calibrated to align with the population benchmarks in the accompanying table to correct for nonresponse to recruitment surveys and panel attrition. If only a subsample of panelists was invited to participate in the wave, this weight is adjusted to account for any differential probabilities of selection.

Among the panelists who completed the survey, this weight is then calibrated again to align with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table and trimmed at the 1st and 99th percentiles to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

American Trends Panel weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age (detailed) Age x Gender Education x Gender Education x Age Race/Ethnicity x Education Race/Ethnicity x Gender Race/Ethnicity x Age Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanics and Asian Americans Years lived in the U.S. Census region x Metropolitan status	2024 American Community Survey (ACS)
Volunteerism	2023 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Frequency of internet use Religious affiliation Party affiliation x Race/Ethnicity Party affiliation x Age	2026 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Validated 2024 presidential election turnout and vote choice	Candidate vote share is based on official results from the Federal Election Commission. Turnout is based on estimates from the Election Lab at the University of Florida. The size of the voting-eligible population is based on the 2023 ACS.

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on noninstitutionalized adults. For weighting to the 2024 presidential election results, panelists are considered validated voters if their self-report of having voted was confirmed after matching to a national voter registry.

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The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

Sample sizes and margins of error, ATP Wave 199

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	5,193	1.6 percentage points
Subgroup 1		percentage points
Subgroup 2		percentage points
Subgroup 3		percentage points

Note: This survey includes oversamples of non-Hispanic Asian and Jewish adults. Unweighted sample sizes do not account for the sample design or weighting and do not describe a group's contribution to weighted estimates. See the Sample design and Weighting sections above for details.

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Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Dispositions and response rates

Final dispositions, ATP Wave 199

	AAPOR code	Total
Completed interview	1.1	5,193
Logged in (web) / Contacted (CATI), but did not complete any items	2.11	155
Started survey; broke off before completion	2.12	48
Never logged on (web) / Never reached on phone (CATI)	2.20	635
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	0
Other non-interview	2.30	0
Completed interview but was removed for data quality	2.90	0
Total panelists sampled for the survey		**6,031**
Completed interviews	I	5,193
Partial interviews	P	0
Refusals	R	203
Non-contact	NC	635
Other	O	0
Unknown household	UH	0
Unknown other	UO	0
Not eligible	NE	0
Total		**6,031**
AAPOR RR1 = I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)		86%

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Cumulative response rate, ATP Wave 199

	Total
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	12%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	74%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 199	40%
Response rate to Wave 199 survey	86%
Cumulative response rate	**3%**

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