

Appendix C: Methodology

The Opportunity Survey was conducted Feb. 4–March 10, 2014, among a random national sample of 2,055 respondents, including oversamples for a total of 500 black men, 200 adults with annual incomes less than 50 percent of the federal poverty level, and 100 Asian Americans.

The survey's results have a theoretical margin of sampling error of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points for the full sample, with oversamples weighted to their correct proportions of the national population, including a design effect of 1.27.

Questionnaire design, project oversight, and data analysis were produced by Langer Research Associates of New York, N.Y., which wrote this report.

Field work, data tabulation, and weighting were carried out by the GfK Group, with interviews conducted via GfK's KnowledgePanel®, a panel of Americans randomly recruited via address-based sampling to take surveys via the internet. (Random telephone sampling was used until 2009.) Respondents who agree to participate are provided with internet access and a netbook computer, if needed, and may be enrolled in prize raffles. GfK seeks to assign panelists no more than one survey per week.

A total of 3,499 panelists were sampled for the Opportunity Survey, with standard e-mail reminders sent Feb. 8, 9, and 10, 2014, and custom reminders sent Feb. 20 and March 2. Of the initial sample, 2,160 panelists (62 percent) completed the survey; 2,054 of these were retained after quality-control review. Median completion time was 23 minutes.

Weighting

Sample weighting procedures included the GfK panel's base weight to correct for known deviations from a pure equal-probability-of-selection sample design; a Spanish-language base weight incorporating selection and language adjustments for Spanish-speaking respondents; and a demographic post-stratification weight to correct for departures from known population values because of noncoverage and nonresponse, with weighting targets for sex, age, race/Hispanic ethnicity, education, Census region, household income, home ownership, metropolitan area status, internet access, and primary language by Census region.

Study-specific post-stratification weights were constructed to adjust for the study's specific design. The total sample of 2,054 respondents was weighted to correct for the oversampling of black men, low-income adults, and Asian Americans. Separate weights also were produced for the 1,500 general population respondents and for each oversampled population. Results reported were computed using the total sample weight.

Quality control

Quality-control analysis was performed using preliminary survey data based on 1,651 interviews.

Variables examined included:

- Interview duration, flagging the 132 respondents (8 percent of the sample) who completed the survey in less than 50 percent of the median interview time.
- Item refusal, in which 36 respondents (2.2 percent) were flagged for having refused more than one-third of all survey items presented.
- Straight-lining, meaning respondents who entered the same response for all items on the same grid in at least six of 11 grid questions (Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25, and Q30). This resulted in 379 flags, or 23 percent of respondents.

GfK created a composite score in which each respondent received one point for each measure on which he or she was flagged. No points were assigned to 1,216 respondents (73.7 percent), 1 point to 350 (21.2 percent), 2 points to 58 (3.5 percent), and 3 points to 27 (1.6 percent). After an evaluation of impacts on sample diversity, respondents scoring 2 or 3 points were removed from the dataset. This ultimately totaled 106 of the full complement of completed questionnaires.

Response rate

As noted, 62 percent of invited panelists completed the survey. However, there are additional stages of nonresponse in the survey design, including noncontact and nonparticipation in the initial recruitment study, not agreeing to join or not actually joining the panel, or nonresponse to GfK's survey of panelists' demographic profiles. Adding contact and cooperation rates across all stages, GfK computes a response rate of 5.5 percent using the AAPOR RR3 definitions produced by the American Association for Public Opinion Research.