The General Social Survey

GSS

2024 GSS
(Cross-section
Study)

What's New in 2024 – The Latest on GSS Methodology
Release 1

NORC at the University of Chicago

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the General Social Survey (GSS)

The General Social Survey (GSS) has been tracking trends in public opinion since 1972. To keep every aspect of the survey as comparable as possible, the GSS generally minimizes changes to its design over time. This includes maintaining the same sampling approach over long periods of time and not altering question wording for questions that have been previously asked on the GSS. The goal is always the same: enabling the cleanest comparison to show changes in public opinion in the United States.

The GSS continued methodological changes in the 2024 Cross-section survey, that were introduced in the 2022 Cross-section survey. The changes relate to shifts in the mode of data collection, experiments related to mode of data collection, oversamples of Hispanic, Black, and Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) respondents, and a new design which allowed for follow-on studies. Most notably, the 2022 and 2024 GSS Cross-sections are multi-mode studies, with respondents able to complete via a face-to-face interview, a web self-administered questionnaire, or, if necessary, a phone interview.

We recommend our users include one of the following statements when reporting on the GSS 2021, 2022, and 2024 Cross-section data:

Total Survey Error Summary Perspective for the GSS Cross-section:

Changes in opinions, attitudes, and behaviors observed in 2021, 2022, and 2024 relative to historical trends may be due to actual change in concept over time and/or may have resulted from methodological changes made to the survey methodology during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Suggested Statement to Include in Articles and Reports That Use GSS Data

Changes in opinions, attitudes, and behaviors observed in 2021, 2022, and 2024 relative to historical trends may be due to actual change in concept over time and/or may have resulted from methodological changes made to the survey methodology during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Research and interpretation done using the 2021, 2022, and 2024 GSS data should take extra care to ensure the analysis reflects actual changes in public opinion and is not unduly influenced by the change in data collection methods. For more information on the 2021, 2022, and 2024 GSS methodology and its implications, please visit https://gss.norc.org/Get-The-Data.

What is New About the 2024 GSS Release 1: Frequently Asked Questions

What are the new elements of the 2024 GSS Cross-Section?

The 2024 GSS includes new elements which all users should be aware of:

- SPSS cumulative datafile (1972-2024) and single-year SPSS datafiles for GSS years 2021, 2022, and 2024;
- An update to FAMILY16 and the MA-/PA- series to include same-sex parents;
- New modules on digital societies, national identity and citizenship, mental health stigma; and
- Perception of femininity and masculinity experiment (FEMSEE1, MASCSEE1, FEMSELF1, MASCSELF1).

What historical variables have been renamed?

- MARHOMO has been renamed MARSAME;
- MARHOMO1 has been renamed MARSAME1;
- RACOPENY has been folded into RACOPENV;
- CHNGTIME has been folded into CHNGTME; and
- ETHREGION96 has been renamed ETHREGION95 (removing the duplicate variable for Jamaica).

What are the returning, updated, and new modules of the 2024 GSS Cross-Section?

- *American National Election Studies*: In the 2024 GSS, the American National Election Studies (ANES) questions were included for the first time in the cross-sectional questionnaire. It focuses on voting behaviors and attitudes and opinions about politics, government, and the economy.
- *ISSP National Identity and Citizenship*: This module combines two previous ISSP modules: National Identity (1995, 2003, 2013) and Citizenship (2004, 2014). It focuses on ways of belonging to and participating in civic life in order to belong to a nation, or act as a good citizen. As it combines two previous ISSP modules, five-sixths of the items are repeated from previous rounds, while one-sixth are new.
- *ISSP Digital Societies*: This is the first time this module has been conducted. It focuses on attitudes and opinions on internet use and attitudes and opinions about technology and media usage.
- *Mental Health Stigma (Adult)*: This module has previously been asked three times, beginning in 1996. It contains two parts; a vignette about a hypothetical person suffering from some sort of problem, and a series of questions about what the respondent thinks that person should do. The vignettes included are randomized by gender, race, education, and condition. The module also includes several questions on individual mental health.
- *Mental Health Stigma (Child)*: Returning after 20 years, this module has been previously asked in 2002 and has three new conditions added in 2024. It contains two parts: a vignette about a hypothetical child suffering from sort of problem, and a series of questions about what the respondent thinks the child should do. The vignettes included are randomized by race, gender, and age, as well as condition. The module also includes several questions on respondent mental health, as well as respondent family background.
- *High-Risk Behaviors:* High-Risk Behaviors, developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is a self-administered module that has been in use with modifications since 1988. It includes items on recent sexual history as well as sexual history since the age of 18, as well as drug use, HIV testing, and sexuality. This module has been substantially redesigned in 2024 and also includes a new set of questions on self-reported perceptions of femininity and masculinity.

What is the data collection design of the 2024 GSS?

- The 2024 GSS replicated the data collection design of the 2022 GSS conducting via face-to-face interview, web self-administered questionnaire, and computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI). The 2024 design also duplicated the 2022 multi-mode assignment experiment randomly assigning all cases to be initially offered either the web questionnaire or a face-to-face interview.
- The 2024 GSS continues to help bridge the traditional face-to-face design (from 1972-2018), the web self-administered design necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic (2021), and the introduction of the multi-mode design (2022).
- The GSS still cautions its data users to be mindful of potential sensitivities to mode of administration. The GSS is intended to be used as a whole sample and so analyzing the data by a single mode is not recommended. Mode-specific experiments (e.g., volunteered response experiment) were maintained in 2024 and are necessarily sensitive to mode of administration.
- Details regarding the design can be found in the 2024 GSS Codebook. Additional information on the impetus for the design can be found in the 2022 GSS Codebook.

Do recent changes in the GSS disclosure review process have an impact on how I use the data?

- NORC has enhanced privacy protections in the GSS and developed a plan for the 2024 data release to reduce identification risks, especially in demographic variables. This plan does not affect past data and focuses on safer data sharing in the future. The GSS has always been committed to ensuring the confidentiality of respondents and has engaged in various forms of disclosure review over its 50-year history. As recent advances in statistical disclosure analysis lead to increasing risks for respondent identification, the GSS team has chosen to make a variety of changes to the 2024 GSS, limiting or restricting more disclosive variables, beginning with the 2024 data release. This change affects released variables in three ways – new policies on Default Variable Names and Historical Variable Preservation, as well as an expansion of what variables will only appear in Restricted Data.
    - *Default Variable Names*: The GSS will always use the cleanest, historical variable name for the active trend, which will include recoding back to the start of the trend where possible. Documentation will highlight when variables are shifting in this fashion. As of R1 of the 2024 GSS data, this policy affects the following variables: EARNRS, HISPANIC, NUMEMPS, RACECEN1, RACECEN2, RACECEN3, SIBS, USCITZN. For more details, see Appendix E in the 2024 GSS Codebook.
    - *Historical Variable Preservation*: When a multi-year variable is no longer being maintained, it will now be amended with _XXYY, which will designate the years where the trend was active (e.g., _0022 designates the trend was active from 2000 through 2022). As of R1 of the 2024 GSS data, this policy leads to the creation of the following variables: EARNRS_7222, HISPANIC_0022, NUMEMPS_0422, RACECEN1_0022, RACECEN2_0022, RACECEN3_0022, SIBS_7222, USCITZN_0822, USCITZNV_2122, USCITZNNV_2122.
    - *Restricted Data*: Some variables will be moved to restricted data if they cannot be safely preserved in the public datafile, including additional sensitive topics, (e.g. drug use) and overlapping or complementary measures of similar concepts (e.g. race, place). These variables will be made available upon request via the sensitive data process.