



Fundamentals and Data Collection

The General Social Survey (GSS) is a nationally representative survey of adults in the United States that has been conducted since 1972. The GSS is primarily funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and conducted by the non-partisan and objective research organization NORC at the University of Chicago.

The GSS is the single best source for sociological and attitudinal trend data covering the United States. It allows researchers to examine the structure and functioning of society in general, as well as the role played by relevant subgroups and to compare the United States to other nations.

The GSS collects data on a variety of topics in contemporary American society to monitor and explain trends in opinions, attitudes, and behaviors such as:



Civil Liberties



Crime and Violence



Psychological Well-being



Morality



Social Mobility

Data Collection



Households are randomly selected to participate in the GSS survey and are notified via invitation mailings or a field interviewer knocking on their door or leaving invitation materials at the address. The GSS sample is representative of the nation's population.



Some GSS questions are kept the same to see trends over time. New questions may be added based on input from the research community and old questions can be removed if no longer relevant.



The GSS questions and questionnaire design are rigorously tested to make sure they are clear and can be easily understood in the same way by all participants. The survey interview may be completed online or over the phone to make the experience as accessible as possible.

Data Dissemination



Data is compiled in the GSS Data Explorer, which is a public online database that houses all years of GSS data.



The GSS aims to make high-quality data easily accessible to scholars, students, policymakers, journalists, and others to explore, analyze, extract, and share GSS data.



The GSS is conducted every two years and is consistently releasing data, producing informational materials, and interacting with the community.

Learn More



gss.norc.org



gssdataexplorer.norc.org



gss.norc.org/faq.html

Connect with the GSS



The General Social Survey



NORC