

CALL FOR PROPOSALS TO ADD QUESTIONS TO THE 2020 GSS

Summary. The General Social Survey invites proposals to add questions to its 2020 survey. Proposals will be accepted on the basis of scientific quality and scholarly interest; outside funding is not necessary. The deadline for submissions is January 30, 2019.

The GSS is a nationally representative survey of non-institutionalized adults in the United States, conducted primarily via face-to-face interviews. The General Social Survey (GSS) project plans to include some items or short topical modules designed by users in its 2020 survey. We solicit proposals for possible additions on two separate tracks:

1. Proposals on any substantive topic.
2. Proposals that address the “big ideas” of the National Science Foundation (NSF):

1) The Future of Work at the Human-Technology Frontier, -
https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/big_ideas/human_tech.jsp

2) Harnessing the Data Revolution -
https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/big_ideas/harnessing.jsp , and

3) Navigating the New Arctic
https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/big_ideas/arctic.jsp.

Due to instrument constraints, proposals for new items on Track #1 may propose no more than 3 items, and proposals for Track #2 may propose no more than 15 items. (Proposals involving outside funding are a different matter, as we discuss shortly.)

Proposals submitted in response to this call will be included based on assessments of their scientific merit. In all cases, inclusion is contingent on the NSF funding the 2020 GSS.

GSS data are collected every two years, and made available to the research community and the public as soon as possible after data collection is complete.

While the most recent National Science Foundation (NSF) award that funds the core GSS survey includes support for some user-contributed survey items, the GSS project must also raise additional support from other sources. Outside-funded proposals for inclusion in the GSS may be submitted for consideration outside of this competition. Investigators who have obtained, or might wish to seek, outside funding for their items should consult the document “Guidelines for Prospective GSS Module Proposals” available on the GSS website: see <http://gss.norc.org/Documents/other/Paid%20Supplements%202015.pdf> , and they should contact Tom W. Smith, the Principal Investigator and Director of the GSS at NORC (smitht@norc.uchicago.edu; phone 773-256-6288). [Such proposals will be considered as part of a separate, but parallel, process.]

For additional information about the GSS and its study design, please consult the official NORC/GSS website at <http://gss.norc.org>.

Proposals for New Content

Users are encouraged to think broadly and flexibly when considering what kinds of items to propose. They may, for example, propose to collect data from some subset of GSS respondents (e.g. employed persons, currently married persons, or persons who have attended religious services in the past year). Proposals for survey experiments that administer alternative question wordings to randomly designated subsets of respondents are also welcome; such experiments may address substantive social science questions, issues of survey methodology, or both. Statistical power considerations are relevant, since items can be measured for all GSS respondents or for some randomly drawn subsample of them. Proposals therefore should consider how large a sample is required to draw conclusions.

Generally, questions on the GSS are fixed choice survey items that are asked in a face-to-face context. Other formats are also possible (e.g., self-administered items, open-ended items, card sort tasks, or stimulus materials provided via audio or video), but such variations often increase interview and development time, complexity and cost (coding costs are substantial for open-ended items, for example). Hence, items with such formats must serve an important scientific purpose in order to justify the additional effort required; proposals to add items using such formats should address this consideration.

Criteria for Choosing Content

The GSS provides high quality data in a timely manner to a large, interdisciplinary social science user community. Proposals to add content will be evaluated with this objective in mind by the GSS Board of Overseers and GSS principal investigators.

The Board and PIs will use the following criteria in selecting and developing new content for the GSS:

1. Above all, new content must be of high scientific quality, appropriate to the GSS, and justified on substantive, theoretical, or methodological grounds. For track #2 proposals, a clear statement of how the proposal addresses the NSF “big ideas” is important.
2. New content must be useful to a wide range of users (e.g., researchers, teachers, policymakers, etc.) that extends beyond the investigator(s) making a proposal. New content ideally will enhance the understanding and/or usefulness of GSS items in the replicating core (<http://gss.norc.org/Documents/other/Replicating%20Core.pdf>), GSS

data previously collected as part of a topical module, or data from other sources (e.g., to be used for comparisons).

3. A primary mission of the GSS is to study social change in the United States over time through replication of survey items. Items that contribute to this mission because they have previously been administered in nationally representative studies of US adults (including past GSSs) will be of interest for this reason.
4. Similarly, the GSS seeks to understand the US by comparison with other world societies. Proposals to compare and contrast the US with other societies by including items that have been administered in recent nationally representative studies conducted in other societies will be of interest for this reason.
5. New content must meet human subjects protections, in compliance with the GSS project's IRB approval, NSF and NORC policies. Investigators should determine whether they must also obtain IRB approval at their own institutions.
6. New content must fit within the overall time framework of the survey and must not interfere with respondent cooperation and/or the integrity of responses to questions later in the survey.

Timeline for Proposals and Development of Items

To be considered for inclusion in the 2020 GSS, investigators should submit proposals to Tom W. Smith, the Principal Investigator and Director of the GSS at NORC (smitht@norc.uchicago.edu; phone 773-256-6288) no later than **January 30, 2019**.

Proposals submitted in response to this call will be reviewed by the GSS Board at its Spring 2019 meeting. At that meeting, some proposals will be selected for subsequent development, which can entail the exchange of advice and ideas between the Board, the GSS PIs, and the proposer(s), informed by both cognitive and conventional pretesting of items by NORC. The Board and PIs will select some items for inclusion in a conventional pretest that would be conducted in the summer of 2019, which will establish (among many other things) the actual interview time requirements of the proposed items. At its Fall 2019 meeting, the Board will make final decisions about the items to be included in the 2020 GSS.

It is important that investigators understand that inclusion of items in the GSS is not assured until the items have undergone the full cycle of development described above, and until the GSS Board has decided to include them in the GSS at its Fall 2019 meeting. Space on GSS interview schedules is always limited. The Board and PIs may require changes in the wording of proposed survey items based on pretest evidence or other considerations, though such changes will be made in consultation with proposers. Likewise, due to the scarcity of interview time, the Board and PIs may elect to include only a subset of the items suggested in any given proposal. After data are collected, they will be made publicly available to all GSS users along with the rest of the 2020

GSS, roughly six months after 2020 data collection is complete. Proposers will not have exclusive access to data collected using their items for any period of time.

Proposal Length and Format

Proposals submitted in response to this call should be roughly 2-5 pages in length, and should address the following points:

1. The background and the scientific, theoretical, or methodological motivation for inclusion of the topic in the GSS;
2. The specific survey items or questions that would be included in the GSS, together with available evidence of data quality;
3. Previous knowledge about the appearance of the items, or items on similar topics, in the GSS or other surveys, and their use in published research;
4. The appropriateness of the GSS for the proposed items, to include any synergies they may involve with GSS project objectives or existing GSS items;
5. Proposals to measure a given concept using multiple items should indicate priorities among the items.

Proposals from groups of investigators as well as individual investigators are welcomed.

The open calls for proposals for past GSS surveys have resulted in *many* more proposals for new content than it could accommodate. The Board and PIs will review and discuss proposals submitted in response to this call, and then notify investigators as to whether or not their proposals were selected for further development. At that point, the Board and PIs may request that investigators provide additional information, and may suggest that separate groups of proposers with interest in similar topics collaborate as part of working groups to develop a topical module. The Board usually provides investigators who submit unsuccessful proposals with brief summaries of reasons that their proposals were not selected, but we cannot offer detailed critiques.