



NORC⁷⁵

at the UNIVERSITY of CHICAGO

75 YEARS OF
INSIGHT,
INNOVATION,
AND IMPACT



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The Evolution of Insight: NORC at 75



In 1941, founder Harry Field established NORC with the help of President Roosevelt to gain a better understanding of American opinions on war.



From its early days, NORC has been at the forefront of understanding attitudes towards race and their influence on society.

Over the course of 75 years, NORC has become a pivotal organization for national and global exploration and reflection. Working closely with our partners and clients, NORC has shaped the questions, gathered and analyzed the data, and derived the insights that have allowed governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and citizens around the world to make more informed public and personal decisions about issues ranging from health care and education to economic development and the workforce. In the process, NORC has also been one of the leading innovators in research methodology and the adoption of new technologies that have helped shape the field of modern research and set the standard for rigorous, culturally sensitive, transparent, and unbiased inquiry into the most pressing issues facing society.

NORC's role as a social science innovator and standard-bearer has never been more important. Thanks to ongoing advances in digital technology, the world is awash in data. Basic data gathering and analysis tools that were once the purview of a limited number of researchers are now available to almost anyone with a mobile device or an internet connection. And while this democratization of data has great potential to generate information on a huge range of subjects, there is also a risk that this information could be used in ways that make the insights derived from the data inaccurate or even manipulative. NORC will continue to play a vital role in informing society's most important decisions due to our deep, respected, and wide-ranging expertise in designing complex studies; collecting, harmonizing, and securely managing many different types of data; conducting sophisticated analysis of the data; creating meaningful visualizations of the results; and releasing the results through powerful dissemination channels.

Over the years and continuing today, NORC researchers have used proven methods and emerging techniques to illuminate topics across the spectrum of human and social experience. We have explored the structural and personal factors that contribute to overall health and well-being over the entire life course. We have examined what it means to learn, how we best learn at different stages of development, and how our education and the systems that provide it contribute to positive and negative outcomes. Our studies have charted the nature of employment and work and created deep knowledge about the state of the national economy and our relationship with money and income. We have helped governments both domestically and around the world design, implement, and evaluate programs to improve the human condition. And we have looked into the heart of the American psyche to understand our sometimes conflicting views as we mutually shape the future of the country. The amazing breadth of what NORC has studied over 75 years is tied together in its entirety by the shared importance of the topics to our collective well-being.

NORC's role as one of the world's leading research institutions began at its founding in 1941 with the goal of providing citizens and leaders with information that was free of filters and biases. Its first federal project, a survey of public opinion about the possibility of war, was conducted for the Office of Facts and Figures. That study was followed in rapid succession by the first-ever national study of racial attitudes (1942), an NORC-sanctioned survey of inmates of Japanese internment camps (1943), interviews with doctors about their experiences treating cancer (1945), an exploration of Americans' reading habits (1945), and an examination of American attitudes toward the newly formed United Nations (1948). Together these projects established several NORC hallmarks: the breadth of our subject

matter expertise, our ability to engage diverse and often hard-to-reach audiences, a commitment to the deep relationships we have built with a number of government and nongovernmental agencies, and a knack for conducting first-of-a-kind studies.

Shortly after its founding, NORC defined itself with two significant developments: our move to the University of Chicago and our contributions to the founding of the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR). These crucial steps not only established NORC's core identity but also enhanced the field of social science research more generally. Our University of Chicago affiliation has made us part of a prestigious intellectual community as well as a member of a select group of leading university-based research centers around the world. AAPOR is the preeminent professional association in the United States for researchers, academicians, government leaders, and policy experts who conduct and use public opinion surveys, survey research, market research, and emerging methods for understanding society. To this day, AAPOR members develop and promote uniform standards and practices as well as new technologies and approaches.

Our first decade of work also produced another NORC hallmark: our leadership and innovation in survey design and research methodology. In 1942, NORC pioneered rapid-response surveys, using telegrams to send questions and receive immediate responses for interviews in the field. In 1948, we championed probability sampling over the more popular quota sampling. And the following year, we led the Denver Validity Study, at the time the most comprehensive examination of survey validity, which measured why people are motivated to lie on surveys.

UNDERSTANDING AND REVEALING THE HUMAN CONDITION

The heart of NORC's work lies in revealing the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors that shape the way different populations across the United States and around the world make decisions while at the same time investigating the social, economic, educational, and health factors that influence the trajectories of their lives. Each new study adds to NORC's subject matter expertise—encompassing areas ranging from race relations to sexual behavior to crisis response. And each new innovation—from conducting extensive research into how survey participants interpret questions and formulate answers to using the latest sensor technology to corroborate self-reported data to unlocking the knowledge hidden within big data—enhances the quality of the data NORC is able to harvest and the insights that can be derived from that data.

The 1950s and 1960s saw NORC expand its research breadth with groundbreaking studies on mental health attitudes, the lives of Chicago's Skid Row residents, how students choose colleges, and the factors that contribute to people describing themselves as "happy." At the same time, NORC continued to shape both the theory and practice of social science and public opinion research. In 1954, NORC researchers co-authored the book *Interviewing in Social Research*, which explored the ways an interviewer may inadvertently influence a subject's answers and highlighted new techniques for mitigating that effect. In 1963, NORC, with National Science Foundation (NSF) support, established the Survey Research Service (SRS), which made NORC's sampling frame and interviewing staff available to other researchers. The goal of the SRS was to democratize social science research by offsetting the advantage of being in a university that could afford its own survey research center.



NORC researchers have contributed to and helped create the methodological and scientific foundation of modern social science research.



The work of NORC has illuminated the intersections and interrelations of physical and mental health and the systems that provide care.

Perhaps no studies better symbolize the ever-evolving scope and impact of NORC's survey work than two major studies that continue to influence the trajectory of both the organization and the field.

In 1972, NORC launched the General Social Survey (GSS), with support from the NSF and the Russell Sage Foundation. The GSS has since become NORC's longest-running project, and one of our most important. The GSS has provided the nation and the world with a clear and unbiased perspective on what Americans think and feel about a variety of important social issues, including national spending priorities, crime and punishment, race relations, quality of life, and confidence in institutions. With each biennial data collection, the GSS questions shift subtly to reflect emerging trends. Recent rounds of the GSS have included questions on national priorities, religious and racial identity, work-life balance, participation in the arts, gay marriage, and social isolation. GSS data have been the basis of more than 27,000 scholarly papers, books, and PhD dissertations and are used by more than 400,000 students in their classes each year—making the GSS the most widely analyzed source of social science information after the U.S. Census. To make the GSS even more useful and accessible to ever more stakeholders, NORC launched the GSS Data Explorer in 2015, an online compendium that allows journalists, educators, and researchers to sort, analyze, and compare more than 40 years of GSS data.

In 1979, NORC partnered with The Ohio State University and began conducting the National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth (NLSY) for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The NLSY provides the most thorough and reliable data available on how Americans age through the workforce and how factors such as education, marriage, health, and geography influence or are influenced by a person's

employment prospects and earning power. The NLSY79 comprised in-depth interviews with Americans who were between the ages of 14 and 21 in 1979. The survey was repeated every year until 1994 and biannually since. A companion study, NLSY97, surveyed a cohort of 12- to 16-year-olds annually from 1997 through 2012 and biennially since. The biggest challenge with any longitudinal study, especially one that begins with a young cohort, is maintaining contact with the subjects as they progress through life. By constantly remaining sensitive to the evolving communication needs of their subjects and employing text messaging and social media when appropriate, NLSY researchers have managed to maintain a cumulative participation rate of nearly 80 percent. Researchers across the country have used NLSY data to study a variety of subjects, including the value of teen employment, gender differences in educational attainment, and the impact of parental financial stress on children's health.

The experience and methodological insights NORC continues to derive from the GSS and NLSY have informed the success of other landmark studies, including *High School and Beyond*, which was launched in 1982 to examine the long-range impact of various high school attributes on social, professional, and academic success, and the National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project, which began in 2003 to study the interactions among aging, social relationships, and health outcomes.

NORC continues its long tradition of conducting major national surveys and producing the national datasets from these surveys that inform central aspects of public policy. In 2014, NORC took over the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey, which has been facilitating a better understanding of the Medicare program and the

populations it serves since 1991. For many years, NORC has been conducting the NSF's Survey of Doctoral Recipients, tracking educational attainment in the United States. For the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, NORC runs the National Immunization Surveys, the nation's primary source of immunization data. And for the Federal Reserve Board, NORC conducts the Survey of Consumer Finances, which provides key information on the financial condition of families in the United States.

INTERSECTIONS AMONG KNOWLEDGE, POLICY, AND ACTION

The subject matter NORC has explored, the diverse and often hard-to-reach national and international audiences it has surveyed, and the perpetual innovation in survey methodology and use of technology are extraordinary—as is the unsurpassed depth, quality, and transparency of the data NORC has gathered. But our clients come to us not just for information and insights but for evidence-based strategic counsel and technical support to inform governance and actions in the world around us. We have evaluated the effectiveness of their programs and policies, advised them on program design and policy development, and even helped them implement programs. In the process, we have enabled them to pursue their missions backed by real-world evidence and to do so with greater effectiveness and cost-efficiency.

NORC's program evaluation work began in the 1960s and continues today with its landmark assessment of the Perry Preschool Study's HighScope Curriculum, which was designed to improve the social and academic outcomes of low-income children in Ypsilanti, Michigan, and provided the foundation for much of the early

childhood education programming used today. Program evaluation, particularly in education, has been a staple of NORC's work and the organization's expertise and influence in this area expanded greatly in the 2000s and 2010s.

In 2002, NORC was hired by the Annie E. Casey Foundation to assess the impact of Making Connections, its initiative to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and their families. As part of the assessment, NORC worked with community groups in 10 different poor urban neighborhoods to field surveys in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, and Hmong—once again demonstrating the organization's capacity for collaboration and cross-cultural fluency. Data from NORC's Making Connections evaluation continue to be used by policymakers and social scientists who study poverty and families. In 2009, NORC began an evaluation of the State Health Information Exchange Program, an initiative established under the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act designed to foster state-level innovation and investment in the digital exchange of health information and the use of electronic health records.

NORC's international program evaluation work accelerated in 2010 when NORC became a key partner in the United States Agency for International Development's USAID Forward, an ambitious reform agenda designed to maximize program effectiveness and promote sustainable development. NORC's deep international experience and its ability to employ digital technology to make data collection faster and more accurate were invaluable in helping evaluate the impact of initiatives like the Uganda School Health and Reading Program, which combined reading intervention and HIV/AIDS



NORC has researched the effects of education over time and at all levels of schooling to create insights on career and life outcomes.



Since the 1960s, NORC has studied international issues and has worked in over 40 countries around the globe.



NORC has studied a broad array of complex financial systems and behaviors that inform job creation, income attainment, and economic policies.



Since its inception, an ability to reach and understand communities and special populations has been central to NORC's work.

awareness, and Yes Youth Can!, a program to combat political violence in Kenya by organizing young people into multiethnic community groups.

For the Honduran government and the Inter-American Development Bank, NORC designed and implemented an impact evaluation of a conditional cash transfer program intended to improve access to health services and education, and to improve education, nutrition, and health status of beneficiary household members—especially children and women—and eventually reduce poverty levels in these low-income households.

On the domestic front, NORC has developed a productive relationship with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) through a wide variety of survey, evaluation, and technical assistance projects led by our experts in health and health care. Our work for CMS involves evaluating over 40 initiatives funded through the Health Care Innovation Awards Program and the Next Generation Accountable Care Organization Model Program. NORC also provides operational support and technical assistance to states working to improve public and private health care delivery through the State Innovation Models Initiative and the Financial Alignment Initiative for populations enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid. Each of these programs is ultimately working to increase quality of care, reduce costs, and improve health outcomes.

Assessing the impact of such a wide variety of programs and policies has given NORC researchers extensive insight into how successful interventions are structured and administered, and our clients have relied on those

insights as they develop new policies and interventions. In the 1970s, NORC was tasked by the White House to measure real-time public reaction to the national change to year-round daylight savings time to inform necessary policy modifications. More recently, NORC has helped the U.S. Department of Education assess the effectiveness of key provisions of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind). And in the wake of Superstorm Sandy, the Rockefeller Foundation partnered with NORC to study the social factors and community characteristics that support or impede resilience in regions struck by catastrophic events. The work is being used to inform discussions on how community resilience and disaster preparedness can be improved at the community and national levels.

On the communications front, NORC has committed its time, resources, and energy to ensuring that data and knowledge created during the research lifecycle find their way into the hands of the stakeholders, individuals, communities, and decision-makers who can make the most of those insights. From emerging data visualization capabilities to proven data dissemination methods, NORC is committed to ensuring that the information we create spurs healthy dialog, deliberation, and decisions on the pressing issues we face in an increasingly complex world. As just one example, NORC's innovative media partnership with The Associated Press (AP) through The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research has led to increased research capacity for AP and increased media exposure and dialog on some of the most timely and critical topics of the day.

ILLUMINATING THE FUTURE

For 75 years, NORC at the University of Chicago has been at the forefront of research on society, and now looks ahead to its next 75 years in a context of accelerating change within the industry, growing amounts and types of data, dramatic shifts in technology, a dynamic population, and a growing and diversifying set of players in the research and data industries. Within this environment, NORC must chart a course of evolutionary yet bold changes that will build upon and expand its traditional strengths to ensure a future of increased relevance, deeper impact, and long-term sustainability.

Evolution means creating and honing new scientifically rigorous, transparent, and cost-effective ways to understand citizens through web-based data collection as NORC is doing with its AmeriSpeak platform—the first to combine the speed and efficiencies of web surveys with the accuracy and sound science typical of more traditional approaches like in-person and telephone interviewing. It means developing methods and tools that allow for researchers around the world to collaborate and learn from highly sensitive data in a secure environment, which is made possible by NORC's revolutionary Data Enclave. And, it means embracing the changing nature of how data are created, and investing in researchers and technologies at the forefront of understanding social media. And these only scratch the surface. Ultimately, NORC's vigorous and deliberate evolution is rooted in its very nature: a passionate and unapologetic culture of learning, testing, and adaptation and a fascination for understanding what comes next.

But while much in our field and within the organization itself will continue to change, our core principles will remain the same:

- an unswerving commitment to the highest standards of scientific and academic inquiry, including the transparency of both methods and outcomes those standards demand
- a relentless drive to innovate, to bring to bear the most effective uses of the latest technological tools, and to be a learning organization that constantly strives to advance the theory and practice of research
- a belief in the value of collaboration and collegiality, because the best solutions to the most daunting (and exciting) challenges are found when researchers, data scientists, technologists, and policymakers bring the best of themselves to the table and work together toward a common goal

We live in an increasingly data-saturated world, one that is daunting to understand and one that is prompting profound and necessary questions about how data can be properly created, gathered, mined, understood, and trusted. Governments, businesses, academics, and the general public are turning to NORC to answer these questions and address their most critical challenges. NORC's core principles—and the hard-gained wisdom of the past—will continue to guide us as we pursue our mission to provide insight for informed decisions.



The enduring partnership between NORC and the University of Chicago is the foundation of our mutual commitment to scientific excellence, innovation, and collegiality.

ECONOMICS, MARKETS, AND THE WORKFORCE

Our perception of the economy exerts a profound influence on our sense of personal and national well-being. It affects how we vote, how we save and spend money, and whether we see the future as bright or foreboding. During NORC's 75-year history, few things have changed as much as the economy. The rationing during World War II. The economic expansion of the 1950s and 1960s. The energy- and inflation-driven retrenchment of the 1970s. The growth spurt that came with the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the digital revolution. The upheavals and opportunities of globalization and the lingering effects of the Great Recession. NORC has stayed abreast of these changes with major studies like the Survey of Consumer Finances, the only fully representative source of information on the financial state of American households; the National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth (1979 and 1997 cohorts), which tracked Americans as they traveled through the workforce; and groundbreaking explorations of aging and work and the interactions among health, education, and employment. In the process, NORC has provided citizens, policymakers, and business leaders with the thorough, unbiased data and analysis they need to respond to the challenges and opportunities of a constantly evolving economy.

MAPPING THE EVOLUTION OF WORK IN AMERICA

The modern workplace—and the modern workforce—is vastly different than it was when NORC was founded. After peaking in the 1970s, manufacturing jobs as a percentage of nonfarm payroll have steadily declined, even though the United States remains the world's second largest producer of manufactured goods after China. While manufacturing employment has declined, jobs in retail, information technology, financial services, health care, and other areas of the service sector have grown. At the same time, the shift from “defined benefit” pensions to “defined contribution” programs like 401Ks have changed the way workers plan for retirement. NORC's research has helped policymakers, other researchers, and workers themselves better understand the nature and impact of working in America.

In 1947, NORC created the sociological idea of “job prestige” with its seminal survey, *Jobs and Occupations: A Popular Evaluation*, which asked participants to rate the social standing of 90 different occupations, from Supreme Court justice to garbage collector. The findings were used to create the influential Duncan Socioeconomic Index that correlates the relationships among education, income, and occupation. It has become the standard for measuring occupational prestige in the United States.

For more than 50 years, the National Longitudinal Surveys have been providing the most thorough and reliable data available on how Americans age through the workforce and how factors such as education, marriage, health, and geography influence or are influenced by a person's employment prospects and earning power.

Since 2013, The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research has pursued an ongoing exploration of the intersection of aging and work. Its first study, *Working Longer: The Disappearing Divide between Work Life and Retirement*, found that the majority of Americans over the age of 50 plan to work well past the traditional retirement age. The second survey, *Retirement Planning in America: Anxiety, Inequality, and the Role of Social Security*, focuses on attitudes and planning behaviors around retirement. Data from another AP-NORC Center study, *America's Lower Wage Workforce: Employer and Employee Perspectives*, are being used by a number of stakeholders to improve workforce development and education programs and to identify business practices that benefit both workers and employers.

Exploring the Dynamics of Wealth, Poverty, and Inequality

Much as the nature of work has changed over the course of NORC's 75-year history, so have income, wealth, and poverty. From the end of World War II through the 1970s, the gap between the nation's richest and poorest steadily narrowed. That trend then reversed itself. Today, issues of wealth, poverty, and inequality have become topics of increasingly heated debate across the political spectrum. As government officials and other stakeholders attempt to better understand the dynamics of wealth and poverty and develop policies that respond to the challenges of a changing economy, NORC's research, which has addressed a broad range of income levels, has been a primary source of objective, nonpartisan data on Americans' economic well-being.



Rooting Out the Causes of Homelessness

The 1958 Skid Row Study is a dramatic example of the lengths to which NORC researchers will go to collect thorough and reliable data in a way that is respectful of the needs and sensibilities of the subjects being studied. A team of researchers led by sociologists from the University of Chicago lived incognito for several days among the residents of Chicago's skid row. The data they collected in this first-of-a-kind study shed a valuable light on the intersections of age, poverty, substance abuse, and mental illness.

By the 1980s, the nature of urban poverty had begun to change, with many of the nation's homeless living on the streets rather than in skid row housing, much of which had been razed. For the 1985 Chicago Homeless Study, a team of investigators designed a modified area probability study that allowed researchers to produce an unbiased sample of the truly "street homeless," as well as those with some form of shelter. They then took to the streets of Chicago to count and interview the city's homeless in the sheltered spaces that individuals had found and used as places to sleep. Interviews were conducted under bridges, in alleys, and in doorways. Insights from both studies continue to inform how cities across the country develop policies to address homelessness.

**Developing
Reliable
Measures of
Poverty**

The policymakers and agencies working to improve the economic welfare of poor families need accurate measures of poverty in order to develop the most effective interventions and deploy their resources efficiently. To meet that need, NORC is evaluating and suggesting refinements to the U.S. Census Bureau's new Supplemental Poverty Measure. Designed in 2010 to more accurately reflect the household incomes of the U.S. working poor—whose finances are often further depleted by work-related, non-discretionary costs such as child care, transportation, and taxes—the new measure augments the official poverty measure that has been in place since the 1960s.



**Assessing the
Financial State of
American
Households**

Since 1992, NORC has conducted the triennial Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF)—the Federal Reserve Board's main source of information on the financial state of American households. The survey includes 6,500 participants from across the income spectrum and covers topics ranging from debt and savings to taxes and charitable giving. The Federal Reserve uses SCF data to help inform tax and monetary policy and refine consumer protection laws, while journalists and social scientists use the data for independent research into a variety of topics related to the economic health of the nation.

**Tracking the Opinions
of Economically
Successful Americans**

While the views of economically successful Americans are often discussed in the media, they have actually received little in the way of rigorous scholarly study. The Survey of Economically Successful Americans and the Common Good, piloted in 2010, examines how wealthier Americans define the challenges facing the country and explores their positions on taxes, spending, and economic regulation, as well as market-based and philanthropic solutions to social problems.

Staying Abreast of Evolving Markets



As the national and global economies have grown increasingly complex and interconnected, so have the various markets in which American goods and services are rendered. Businesses and governments alike need to clearly understand the social, economic, and political trends that influence those markets so that they can make sound policy and investment decisions. NORC's reputation for innovative data collection and rigorous, unbiased analysis has made it a valued partner to market stakeholders of all kinds.



Keeping Tabs on Energy Consumption

Energy consumption has an important influence on national issues, including security, economic and agriculture policy, and the ongoing debate over climate change. Since NORC's initial examinations of food and gas rationing during World War II, our researchers have played an integral role in studying energy consumption and informing energy policy.

Gas prices affect almost every American citizen and a huge swath of American businesses, particularly those in or dependent upon the shipping and transportation industries. NORC's weekly Motor Gasoline Price and On-Highway Diesel Fuel Price surveys, sponsored by the U.S. Energy Information Administration, provide the most accurate and timely reporting available on national fuel price trends. Businesses rely on the data to create budgets and expense forecasts. Policymakers use it to analyze the impact of new laws and regulations.

Providing Context for Economic Measures

Businesses, journalists, policymakers, and concerned citizens rely on a variety of economic measures, including monthly and quarterly reports on everything from housing starts and job creation to retail sales and gross domestic product. The extensive expertise of NORC economists and the foundational data provided by NORC's General Social Survey, the National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth, and other NORC studies allow us to provide context and nuance to conversations about the state of the national and global economies that blunter measures often lack. NORC's research capacity is especially valuable, as what businesses and consumers think about the economy can have as much influence on spending, investment, and other economic activity as do salaries, savings, and prices.



Making Sense of Rapid Health Insurance Changes

The passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act transformed the private health insurance market in the United States, creating millions of new customers and adding new mandates and regulations. NORC researchers include nationally recognized experts on private health insurance. They have been among the lead investigators who gather and analyze baseline data on health insurance providers and consumers for a variety of state and federal agencies, as well as health care providers and insurers. Their work includes the Kaiser Family Foundation/Health Research and Educational Trust Survey of Employer-Sponsored Health Benefits, which is among the most widely quoted sources of information about trends in employer-based health insurance. NORC researchers are also examining the use and impact of price data by persons with high-deductible health plans and analyzing health insurance premiums in the individual and small group insurance markets.

EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND LEARNING

The perpetual debates around education that argue over what should be taught, who should teach it, and how it should be paid for testify to education's fundamental importance to national success. When the nation needed to integrate World War II veterans back into the economy, it turned to the GI Bill. In response to the Soviet launch of Sputnik, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act to support education in scientific and technical fields. In the 1960s and early 1970s, education was an integral tool for social change, with a series of acts meant to guarantee equal access to education regardless of race, gender, or disability. Today, through both public and private funding, Americans invest more than a trillion dollars a year in primary, secondary, and higher education. Throughout that history, NORC has been an invaluable resource, providing the data, analysis, and program expertise that educators and policymakers rely on to ensure the accessibility and quality of education throughout a learner's lifecycle.



IDENTIFYING EFFECTIVE PATHS TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Informing the connections among the amount, kind, and quality of education people receive and the personal, professional, and health outcomes they experience later in life is of great importance for education and economic policymakers and other stakeholders. NORC has been exploring the entire learning lifecycle since 1945, when it launched a groundbreaking study on Americans' reading habits for the American Library Association. Today, NORC provides vital information on the needs and experiences of learners of all ages, and the training and resources available to them. NORC's findings shed light on the impact education has on our lives, and provides those working to improve existing educational programs with the information needed to develop promising new ones.

Three high-profile studies for the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) form the cornerstone of NORC's exploration of student achievement. The National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS-72) surveyed 23,000 high school seniors, along with school administrators and counselors, to compile a complete picture of young adults as they transition from high school through post-secondary education and the workplace. The NCES called NLS-72 "probably the richest archive ever assembled on a single generation of Americans." NORC also assumed responsibility for the NLS-72's Fifth Follow-Up Survey, which had been initiated and carried forward by other organizations. NORC labor economists also added a supplement concerning the respondents' histories in the areas of cohabitation, marriage, and fertility. The supplement also includes items designed to elicit information on the allocation of resources within households, including the flow of money and time from the respondents to their children, with special attention to divorced noncustodial parents.

Begun in 1980, High School and Beyond: A National Longitudinal Study of High School Sophomores and Seniors (HS&B) was the first NORC study to begin in students' sophomore year and follow them into young adulthood. Follow-up studies were conducted throughout the 1980s and again in 1992 as students progressed from high school into the early stages of their adult life. In 2014, NORC and the University of Texas contacted the sophomore cohort members again, just before most of them turned 50, to collect current information on their work experiences, health status, family composition, and expectations for retirement. HS&B data have helped social scientists and policymakers better understand a variety of issues, including the causes and effects of dropping out, how race and gender influence educational quality and outcomes, and the effects of education on earnings.

The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 surveyed a nationally representative sample of eighth-graders on topics including school, work, and home experiences; educational resources and support; the role of parents and peers in their educations; their educational and occupational aspirations; and related student perceptions. NORC conducted follow-up surveys in 1990, 1992, 1994, and 2000. Survey data were supplemented with results from achievement tests in reading, social studies, mathematics, and science and with surveys of teachers, parents, and school administrators.

These seminal studies laid the foundation for much of the longitudinal education research carried out today, and the data they provide continue to inform innovation in the assessment and later-life outcomes of student performance.

Keeping America Competitive in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)



One of the best ways to keep the United States competitive in the innovative industries supported by science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) is to encourage more students—particularly women and minorities—to enter STEM fields. NORC has been a pioneer in tracking STEM students, their career outcomes, and the economic and educational policy decisions that influence their success. NORC also hosts the National Science Foundation's Center for Advancing Research and Communication in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, which supports education research in these important fields.



Deepening Our Understanding of Careers in STEM Research

Two surveys that NORC conducts for the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health provide a benchmark for our understanding of who is pursuing careers in STEM research and their career trajectories. The Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED), which NORC conducted for 18 years beginning in 1997, is an annual census of all new research doctorate recipients in the United States. The SED has been especially useful in helping track the entrance of women and underrepresented minorities into STEM research fields. The Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR) is the only source of data on the career outcomes of people who earned doctorate degrees in science, engineering, or health-related fields from U.S. academic institutions. The SDR has run biennially since 1973 and has been conducted continuously by NORC since 2002.

Examining Gender Differences in STEM Degree Completion

In 2015, NORC conducted a pilot project for the National Science Foundation to better understand why young women who choose to major in computer science are not persisting to degree completion. Over a period of two weeks, NORC used a smartphone app to send survey questions to male and female computer science majors at two leading research universities. Early review of the data suggested that among the many dynamics at play is that women tend to view computer science as one career option among many, whereas men tend to have a stronger personal commitment to the field in general.

Ensuring More PhDs Enter STEM Fields

To encourage more students—especially women and minorities—to pursue advanced STEM degrees, the National Science Foundation launched the Graduate Research Fellowship Program, which awards approximately 2,000 fellowships annually for students who are pursuing research-focused master's and doctoral degrees at accredited U.S. institutions. NORC's evaluation report of the program, released in 2014, found that fellowship recipients were more likely than their peers to complete a PhD within 10 years. They also published more frequently and received more research grants.



Assessing Mathematics and Science Achievement in K-12 Education

One of the biggest challenges of assessing student performance in math and science at the K-12 level is reconciling differences in the way individual states track student progress. Responding to a request from Congress, the National Science Foundation asked NORC and other research organizations to help them develop improved indicators for measuring and tracking progress in math and science performance. With advice from a panel of national experts, NORC is designing and implementing an online instrument to collect and report assessment policy information by state. The enhanced indicators and new online reporting tool will help educators, leaders, and policymakers at the national, state, and local levels better understand the most effective ways to measure student performance and determine the degree to which assessment methods are aligned to state and national content standards.



Improving Education through Evaluation and Innovation

Few areas of human endeavor have been subject to more attempts at reform than education. That dynamic is a testament to both the passion of all stakeholders to “get education right,” as well as the myriad challenges of providing a quality education to all children in a country as socially, economically, and politically diverse as the United States. The depth of NORC’s expertise in the education arena has made it a key participant in the evolution of education, providing the data and analysis to develop innovative new programs and the assessment tools needed to measure their impact.



Pioneering the Use of Technology in Learning Assessment

Digital and sensor technologies have become an integral part of how we work, shop, socialize, and—increasingly—how we learn. NORC has been at the forefront of the development and evaluation of technology as both a learning and assessment tool in the home and in the classroom.

To help researchers more accurately assess the amount of time parents spend reading to their children, NORC has prototyped two programmable sensor devices that measure the time a book is open, closed, and moved, all of which are proxies for the time parents and children spent reading.

In partnership with the University of Chicago Medicine, NORC developed an innovative “word pedometer” called LENA that provides feedback to parents on the number of new words their young children encounter and allows them to set and monitor personal goals. NORC used the pedometer in its evaluation of Thirty Million Words®, a 12-week in-home intervention that harnesses multimedia technology to teach parents of one-year-old children about language development and gives them evidence-based techniques for enhancing their children’s language skills. The program is based on earlier research that showed low-income children are exposed to as many as 30 million fewer words than their upper-income peers by the time they reach kindergarten. This word gap puts them at a significant academic disadvantage that can persist and even deepen in later grades.

NORC is also conducting a psychometric evaluation of assessment tools developed by ABCmouse.com, one of the nation’s largest providers of online educational enrichment programs for children age two to six. NORC researchers are conducting the analysis via a series of rolling evaluations. The insights each evaluation reveals will inform refinements to the site’s current programming, as well as future versions of the assessment. ABCmouse.com’s subscriber base constitutes a ready-made panel of millions of users. Each iteration of the evaluation will generate tens of thousands of responses, creating a uniquely large and detailed body of data while measuring the effectiveness of early childhood enrichment programming used by a significant percentage of the nation’s children.

Informing and Validating Early Childhood Learning Interventions

There is a growing consensus among education specialists and policymakers that high-quality early childhood education enhances overall academic success and even improves social and health outcomes. NORC is a go-to partner for school systems, nongovernmental organizations, and other stakeholders looking to develop and evaluate early childhood learning strategies.

When the Kenneth Rainin Foundation committed itself to ensuring that all school children in Oakland, California, were reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade, it turned to NORC to conduct a literature review of existing early reading programs and extensive in-home surveys of families in Oakland's diverse neighborhoods. Informed by this research, NORC is recommending reading interventions and adaptations that meet the needs of Oakland families. In addition, NORC and Rainin have established the Early Childhood Research and Practice Collaborative, which will conduct quick-response, small-scale research studies and promptly disseminate the results of that research to researchers, practitioners, and other stakeholders.

Focused on giving actionable insight to teachers, as part of the Getting on Track for Early School Success project, NORC developed and piloted a variety of tools with the goal of creating statistically reliable pre-K literacy and mathematics assessments. The assessments provided preschool teachers with the data they need to enhance individual, small-group, and whole-class instruction. The assessments also served as the core of a coherent system of instruction NORC developed that begins in pre-K and reliably enables children of all social, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds to attain high levels of academic achievement by third grade.

Providers of early childhood care and education run the gamut from large for-profit companies to independent in-home caregivers and grandmothers spending regular time with their grandchildren, so creating a representative sample and developing rubrics that allow valid comparisons of the providers' qualifications and caregiving is challenging. NORC met that challenge as part of the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE), one of the largest and most complex data collections in NORC's history, which surveyed families looking for and who might need or were already using early childhood care and education, as well as providers. Data from the NSECE have given researchers and policymakers their first clear picture of the early childhood care and education marketplace on both a national and community level.



Choosing a College

The ballooning student debt crisis and the increasing pressure students feel to choose—and get into—the “right” college have become important contemporary issues for families and educators. But NORC has been exploring the factors influencing college choice and the impact of those choices for more than 50 years. In 1958, as part of the Choosing a College project, NORC researchers interviewed 8,700 Illinois high school students about the factors that might lead them to go to college, their perceptions of college, and the sources of guidance available to them. The researchers compared the students' ideal colleges with the schools they actually applied to and attended, laying the groundwork for future studies that measured college choice as a marker for success after high school. The Plans and Experiences of the June 1961, College Graduating Class examined how and why high school students and college students chose their paths of study. It provided national estimates of how many graduating college seniors planned careers that required additional study, followed the graduates yearly for the next four years, and culminated in a final survey seven years after their graduation—a prime example of NORC's use of longitudinal data to study change at the individual level.

In partnership with the University of Virginia and funded by America Achieves, NORC is conducting College Point—a longitudinal evaluation of a virtual advising program offered to high-achieving, low-income high school students as they transition from high school to college. The study tracks the effect of virtual advising on which schools students apply to, where they are accepted, and, ultimately, which school they attend. College Point has also developed innovative uses of Short Message Service technology, using texting to reach this important young adult population.

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

Global development takes many forms—from individual governments launching programs to improve the health, economic, and educational outcomes of its citizens to nongovernmental organizations pursuing efforts to strengthen civil society and fight poverty and disease. In 2014, the world's richest nations spent \$135 billion on development assistance. Development aid is an important foreign policy tool. Improving health and promoting economic and educational opportunity can enhance political stability and make it easier to combat terrorism, drug trafficking, and other societal ills. NORC researchers couple extensive expertise in areas such as education, health care, and economic development with a finely tuned cultural literacy that comes from decades of international experience. That experience includes a close partnership with the United States Agency for International Development and a wide range of international aid agencies that turn to NORC to understand the impact their projects are having on target populations, and to hone in on what does and does not work among the myriad interventions being implemented in the development field.

HELPING TO STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Few areas of international development are as challenging as democracy and governance. Countries recovering from war or lacking the traditions or institutions that support civil society have been prone to political violence and corruption. Garnering insight to support the development and evaluation of programs that address violence and corruption can be complicated by the need to deal sensitively with victims, to provide anonymity to witnesses, and to work effectively and efficiently in environments where both the social and physical infrastructure may be compromised. Political and cultural differences can make something as seemingly simple as gathering public opinion data a challenge. NORC researchers have demonstrated the cultural sensitivity, subject matter expertise, and innovative technical skills necessary to meet these challenges.

NORC first studied public opinion on international affairs in 1948 with a survey of Americans' evolving opinions about the United Nations. In 1960, NORC conducted the U.S. portions of the Civic Culture Study, a five-country study of political attitudes that included Germany, Italy, Mexico, and the United Kingdom. Approximately 1,000 respondents in each country shared their views about the police, political parties, various government offices and agencies, and how well they thought their governments worked.

In 1985, NORC co-founded the International Social Survey Program, a worldwide social indicator research program that facilitates cross-national comparisons of social behavior and trends, which has grown to include more than 50 member nations.

To get a better understanding of Russian public opinion and how it is influenced by—and influences—Russian leadership, The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research surveyed Russians' opinions on a wide range of social, economic, and political issues, including their sense of Russia as a global power and their attitudes toward the United States and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.

NORC has also deployed its data gathering and public outreach expertise to help governments fight political corruption and improve the electoral process. In Peru, NORC partnered with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the University of Wisconsin to evaluate a program to combat the electoral influence of money from drug traffickers and other illegal sources. The program included a number of public outreach activities designed to educate voters about the mechanisms and negative impacts of political

corruption. NORC will conduct an evaluation after Peru's 2016 general election to assess the effectiveness of the public outreach efforts to influence voting behavior and attitudes about corruption. As part of the USAID Democracy and Governance Project in Paraguay, NORC developed an interview and survey methodology designed to protect the anonymity of government employees asked about graft and political corruption.

In one of its more logistically challenging projects, NORC conducted the Liberia Electoral Access and Participation (LEAP) survey for USAID and Liberia's National Election Commission. LEAP, the first national survey conducted on tablet PCs in Liberia, comprised interviews with 2,000 participants in 15 different counties conducted shortly after the 2014 Senate elections. The goal was to provide actionable information that would help the National Election Commission improve voter registration and election procedures and carry out more effective voter education campaigns, especially among subsectors of the population that are traditionally least likely to register and to vote. The survey was also intended to assist political parties to better understand how they are perceived by voters overall and by various groups, including women, youth, and regional and ethnic subgroups. Data collection was complicated by flooding and an Ebola outbreak. Locally hired enumerators had to use boats to reach villages cut off by swollen rivers and coordinate with local leaders to avoid areas affected by the epidemic.

Beyond political corruption, NORC has also helped governments tackle human rights issues. NORC researchers are developing a series of surveys on human trafficking in Cambodia, Honduras, and the Philippines. The International Labor Organization estimates that between 12 and 27 million people are victims of sexual or labor trafficking. The range of that estimate reveals one of the principle obstacles in combating human trafficking—accurately measuring its prevalence and identifying the factors that put people at risk of being trafficked. Designing the surveys posed several unique challenges, including the fact that many victims of trafficking are unaware that they have been victimized or are reluctant to admit it. To more accurately identify victims of trafficking, the surveys posed questions such as, "Have you ever been forced to work without pay?" or "Has anyone ever taken your passport and not returned it?" which are some of the conditions that can characterize trafficking.

Focusing on Children, Families, and Communities



Donor governments and nongovernmental organizations have often emphasized improving education and social well-being as a means of fueling broader social and economic development. Improved educational outcomes in particular have been linked to greater political stability and more vibrant economic activity. NORC researchers have evaluated, as well as helped design and conduct, a variety of global education and community development programs, addressing concerns like curriculum development and child welfare.



Combating Political Violence with Youth Development

Much of the violence after Kenya's 2007 presidential election was driven by young people whose political and economic marginalization was exacerbated by interethnic tensions. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) responded with Yes Youth Can! (YYC), a program to improve relationships among ethnic groups by organizing young people into multiethnic community groups. NORC's evaluation of the program included an innovative self-efficacy scale that measured self-esteem and empowerment in cross-cultural settings. The evaluation found that YYC was important in fostering civic engagement, promoting more informed political views, and facilitating engagement with political leaders. USAID used the evaluation findings to develop follow-up programming in Kenya.

Building a Better Education System in Qatar

In 2002, the State of Qatar charged its Supreme Education Council with the creation of a reformed K-12 education system that would better prepare its young people to compete in the 21st century. To help in this endeavor, NORC designed and implemented systems to gather, organize, and analyze educational data from a wide range of sources, including surveys with teachers and principals and databases containing student test scores. NORC also prepared Qatari officials to take over the data collection and analysis once the new procedures had been established.

Evaluating Literacy Programs in Conflict Zones

NORC has greatly expanded its portfolio of international projects related to education and recently launched impact evaluations of USAID-funded early-grade reading programs in Ethiopia, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia, where conflict affects the daily lives of families. Uganda's literacy interventions focus on curriculum, instructional materials, and teacher training. The interventions in Ethiopia, Zambia, and South Africa emphasize community and parental involvement in improving children's reading. For all of these programs, NORC is using randomized controlled trial designs to evaluate the impact on reading skills and other intermediate outcomes. NORC is also initiating a new evaluation in Mali to assess the impact of an accelerated education program on access to education among students who have dropped out of school because of conflict and security concerns. NORC will use this opportunity to test tools and methodologies that will allow it to conduct evaluations and collect associated data safely in unsecure environments. In 2016, NORC completed an impact evaluation of a five-year pilot project designed to improve reading and math skills in 122 schools in the former Soviet state of Georgia. The program provided in-service training and ongoing support for teachers and principals, including student assessment tools.



Addressing Poverty in Honduras

The Honduran government took an innovative approach to tackling poverty. In a conditional cash transfer program called Bono 10,000, it established criteria for school attendance and children's doctors' visits and awarded cash grants to the families that met the criteria. It then asked NORC to assess the program's impact. NORC trained local contractors to conduct a baseline survey at the program's inception and then conduct follow-up surveys three years later. The surveys showed that children in participating families attended school and completed ninth grade at significantly higher rates than their peers. They also reported less anemia and were healthier overall.



Reducing Abusive Child Labor Practices in Africa

More than half of the world's cocoa comes from Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, much of it produced through child labor. Various interventions have been attempted over the years, and in 2010, the U.S. Department of Labor, the cocoa industry, and the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana signed a joint declaration of action aimed at reducing the worst forms of child labor by 70 percent by 2020. To help them achieve this goal, NORC is creating a web-based mapping and analytical platform that provides detailed geographical and program information on the interventions, that have already taken place. NORC will also assess the impact of the various interventions, as well as develop population estimates for the prevalence of working children and child labor in all its forms to use as a benchmark for the 2020 goal.

Studying Sexual Behavior in China

In 1999, China was on the edge of a sexual revolution, with industrialization, urbanization, and internal migration upending many traditional mores. To create a baseline against which to track changes in Chinese sexual behavior, NORC researchers conducted interviews in 18 widely dispersed provinces to query topics such as attitudes toward marriage and sex, sexual dysfunction, sexual harassment, and sexually transmitted diseases.



EVALUATING INVESTMENTS IN AGRICULTURE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Agriculture is a primary source of income in many developing countries and for much of the world's poor. Investment in transportation, energy, communication, and sanitation infrastructure is an important development tool that can drive economic growth and entrepreneurship and improve public health. NORC's work in agriculture and infrastructure has included the evaluation and design of a variety of programs addressing water treatment, livestock management, microlending, and a host of other agriculture and infrastructure needs.

For the German development bank DEG and international aid agency GIZ, NORC has evaluated programs to help cashew, coffee, and cotton farmers become more productive and to grow their crops in a more sustainable fashion. For the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation, NORC is evaluating programs that provide training, financing, and supply chain improvements to Rwandan maize and soy farmers and raise the productivity of Malawian mango growers. The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) supports agriculture and infrastructure programs throughout the developing world and frequently turns to NORC to evaluate the impact of those programs. In Honduras, NORC assessed an MCC rural development project that provided training and financing to small farmers and upgraded roads to improve their access to markets. In Morocco, NORC used a matched-pair survey design to evaluate the effectiveness of techniques meant to improve the productivity of olive farms. The survey was conducted in Arabic, Berber, and French languages.

In the Republic of Georgia and Honduras, NORC determined the influence of MCC-funded road improvements on the incomes of nearby households and communities. In a related project, NORC

used geographic information systems to construct national accessibility indices for road networks in Georgia and Honduras; this allows evaluators and development program personnel to calculate travel times to points of interest such as schools, health care facilities, and markets. NORC is also examining the impact of MCC investments in the main ports in Benin and Cape Verde on the speed at which freight passes through the port, the costs to shippers, and the security of goods. In Côte d'Ivoire, NORC was engaged by the Dutch development bank FMO to evaluate the effects of a new bridge across Abidjan harbor. The evaluation found that the new bridge reduced vehicle travel times, leading to reductions in fuel consumption, vehicle emissions, and traffic flows over older harbor bridges. In Bangladesh, NORC is evaluating the extent to which FMO-financed investments in river transport are reducing truck traffic and improving road safety.

Microfinancing—or loaning small sums of money to farmers and entrepreneurs in developing countries to start or grow their enterprises—has been a hot topic in the development community for many years. Unfortunately, there have been few rigorous impact evaluations to validate their effectiveness. Anecdotal evidence suggests that because most microfinancing recipients are in an economically precarious state, money often goes to pay for emergency medical care or to fix other crises rather than the farm or business they were meant to start. NORC is collecting data on an innovative approach to microfinancing being conducted by Opportunity International that loans seed and fertilizer rather than cash to farmers in Ghana.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The history of health care in America has been a history of change. New drugs, surgical techniques, medical devices, and screening procedures have dramatically improved outcomes for many patients and drawn many new businesses into the sector. Coupled with this innovation has been a growing understanding of the impact of income, ethnicity, and other socioeconomic factors on individual health and public health systems. This evolution has not been inexpensive. In 1950, shortly after NORC's founding, health care expenditures accounted for 4.6 percent of the gross domestic product—those expenditures now account for more than 17 percent. The rise of employment-based medical insurance, the creation of Medicare and Medicaid, and the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act have changed how we pay for care, who has access to what types of services, and the quality of that care. NORC has been an integral resource in this evolution—first with in-person interviews and self-administered questionnaires and punch cards, and today using social media and environmental sensors to gather and analyze the data that providers, policymakers, government agencies, and other stakeholders need to make health care increasingly effective, accessible, and affordable.

INFORMING CHANGE AND INNOVATION IN THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Ever since conducting the 1953 National Study on Family Medical Costs and Voluntary Health Insurance, NORC has studied and informed the profound and ongoing changes in how health care in America is delivered and funded.

In 1971, NORC began data collection for the RAND Health Insurance Experiment (HIE), a 15-year study that is still the largest health policy survey of its kind. The study examined two key questions: 1) How much more medical care will people use if it is provided free of charge? and 2) What are the consequences in terms of health outcomes? The results showed that shifting more health care expenses on to consumers reduced the use of nearly all health services. This and other findings from the RAND HIE have informed multiple rounds of health care reform and are still regularly cited by policymakers and researchers.

In 1973, NORC worked with the National Center for Health Statistics and a national panel of medical and public health experts to launch the National Ambulatory Medical Survey, the first national study of the care provided during doctors' office visits. Today, this annual survey is run by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as part of its National Health Care Survey. Data from the survey have shaped everything from the delivery of services at health care facilities to the training provided to future physicians.

NORC's extensive and growing experience collecting and analyzing data related to health care costs and outcomes has led to a series of important projects for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Among them are a series of innovations and improvements to the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey, which has been providing CMS with the information it needs to better understand health care costs and accurately forecast Medicare beneficiaries' needs. NORC's

innovative improvements allow for more efficient data collection and improved data quality, and provide new tools and datasets for researchers and policymakers. NORC also conducts rapid-cycle evaluations for the CMS' Health Care Innovation Awards programs, which are designed to achieve better care for individuals, better health for populations, and lower health care costs through improvements in care delivery. Findings from these evaluations help the government decide when and how to scale pilot projects into broader demonstrations and whether to initiate program changes affecting health care for millions of Americans.

NORC is also active at the state level, where its data storage and management expertise have been instrumental in designing All-Payer Claims Databases (APCDs), which archive claims from insurance companies, Medicaid, and other health care benefit providers. APCDs are an essential vehicle for understanding the cost and distribution of medical care within states and provide transparency into how state health care systems work. NORC is assisting the Maine Health Data Organization, which founded the nation's first APCD, and has helped revamp its entire system to improve accessibility of the data while better protecting patient privacy. NORC also conducted a nationwide program evaluation to identify factors that contributed to states' making progress in setting up health information exchanges, an initiative funded by Congress as part of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act. Because many health care delivery and financing reform initiatives rely on secure exchange of clinical data across provider settings, findings from this evaluation offer important lessons for improving health care services in the United States.

Improving Health Equity across Disparate Populations

Men and women, children and adults, rich and poor, all have different health needs and outcomes. Incidence of chronic and infectious diseases—and even responses to different treatments—also vary by race, ethnicity, geography, and environment. Understanding how differences in the human condition and life circumstances influence our health is crucial to making sound policy and clinical decisions, as well as informed personal choices.

NORC has been a pioneer in surveying disparate and often difficult-to-reach populations. Our researchers constantly find new and innovative ways to overcome cultural, language, and economic barriers to gather reliable data on a variety of health issues, including access to care, environmental factors that influence health, and opinions about the health care system.



Analyzing the Health Care Needs of HIV/AIDS Patients

In 1984, just one year after the AIDS retrovirus was identified, NORC conducted the Needs Assessment of Persons with AIDS in northern New Jersey, which explored everything from the quality and availability of care to the impact the disease had on relationships. Results of the study helped the New Jersey State Department of Health prioritize services for AIDS patients and their caregivers. In 1994, NORC partnered with the RAND Corporation to launch the HIV Cost and Services Utilization Study, the largest, most comprehensive study ever undertaken on health care for persons infected with HIV.

Employing Novel Methods to Reach Young Black Men Who Have Sex with Men

Younger black men who have sex with men have the highest rate of new HIV infection of any risk group despite evidence that their individual-level risk practices are similar to or even lower than their white counterparts. As part of a study of the social and sexual network dynamics in this vulnerable population, NORC designed a Facebook app that, with the participants' permission, directly gathered information on their Facebook friends. This rich data on multiple overlapping social networks is being used to gain insight into the social structural components of HIV risk and inform public health prevention efforts to reduce and eventually eliminate HIV.

Measuring Drug Use among Vietnam War Veterans

Amid public concern over reports of widespread drug use by U.S. soldiers in Vietnam, NORC helped lead the Vietnam Veterans Drug Interview Survey. A random sampling of army enlistees were surveyed just before deployment and again three years later. The study provided previously unavailable data about the extent and persistence of drug use among returnees and informed the planning of support services.

Exploring the Social Ecology of Maternal Substance Abuse

With funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, NORC investigated the role that neighborhood environment and social circles play in maternal smoking and alcohol consumption from preconception through their child's birth and early childhood. Efforts to provide pregnant women with tobacco and alcohol prevention and cessation resources appear to be most effective when focused on individual characteristics, rather than on neighborhood characteristics or measures of social integration or support.



Identifying Health Disparities

At the turn of the 21st century, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tapped NORC to conduct a series of annual surveys in communities across the nation for the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program, which helps communities reduce health disparities among racial and ethnic minority groups. The REACH surveys provided community-based programs, researchers, and policymakers with rich data to identify and evaluate evidence-based health interventions.

Monitoring Rural Health

NORC's research into rural health issues began with the 1952 Rural Health Conditions Survey. In 2003, the Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis joined NORC, along with a team of talented researchers and analysts with special expertise in the needs of rural patients and the health care providers, health departments, and other entities attempting to meet those needs. Among its many initiatives, the Walsh Center researches the implications of health reform on rural providers, communities, and residents; explores inequities in rural health care access and outcomes for the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy; helps the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services design new models of integrated, coordinated health care in the most sparsely populated rural counties; and assesses disparities in substance abuse and mental health in Appalachian communities. Data and insights from Walsh Center projects drive refinements to community-based grant programs designed to improve health care access and outcomes in rural areas.

Promoting the Screening and Prevention of Disease

No matter how one becomes sick—an infectious agent, a genetic predisposition, a response to an environmental factor—early screening and treatment typically allow for the most effective and cost-efficient means of treating physical and mental illness. For much of its history, NORC has been monitoring Americans’ health, keeping tabs on attitudes about various health issues and treatments, and assessing the effectiveness of screening, prevention, and outreach measures. These efforts have informed health policy and produced an extensive knowledge base for future public health research.



Creating a Baseline Understanding of Americans’ Health

In the 1950s, NORC led the fieldwork and data analysis for the National Commission on Chronic Illness’s field study on the prevalence of chronic illness in the community. The research was the first to compare individuals’ self-reported health conditions with the clinical findings of their physicians. The impact and effectiveness of the study elevated the standing of social science research within the medical and epidemiological communities.

Also during the 1950s, NORC conducted the Public Understanding of Mental Health Problems surveys, the first major study of American attitudes toward people with mental illness. The surveys, which included psychiatric case studies within the questionnaire, provided much-needed social and cultural information that policymakers and community health practitioners could use to create programs for helping people with mental illness. The data collected in this study are still used as a baseline for comparison in studies being conducted today. The General Social Survey carried this tradition forward with a series of studies on mental health stigma from 1996 to 2006, and in 2006 coordinated the Stigma in Global Context - Mental Health Study in the United States and 16 other countries.

More recently, NORC has helped the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services develop, implement, and evaluate Healthy People 2020, this decade’s set of objectives for improving the health of all Americans. NORC’s research reports have been integral to establishing the framework and process for Healthy People 2020 and understanding how the initiative drives stakeholder action.

Finding More Cost-Effective Testing for Hepatitis C

The hepatitis C virus (HCV) is a chronic infection of the liver that, when left untreated, leads to liver failure or cancer in 30 to 40 percent of those infected. Newly developed treatments can eliminate the virus in most infected patients, but the treatments are most effective if they are administered before patients develop symptoms. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 50 to 75 percent of Americans with HCV are unaware of their infection. To improve the rate of case identification, NORC developed and led the Birth-Cohort Evaluation to Advance Screening and Testing for Hepatitis C, a randomized control trial that compared the current standard of testing and care to a new intervention recommended by the CDC that includes the testing of all Americans born between 1945 and 1965. Previous NORC research estimated that a conservative implementation of the new birth-cohort testing followed by treatment could prevent more than 320,000 deaths.



Helping Identify and Treat Substance Abuse

NORC researchers play a prominent role in helping government agencies, schools, health care providers, and other stakeholders combat risky and dangerous substance use. In 1981, NORC conducted Women and Drinking, the first national survey of women's drinking, which included an exploration of the effects of long-term alcohol consumption. The 1996 Twin Study of the Vulnerability to Alcoholism surveyed 400 pairs of twins to understand psychological and biological factors that contribute to alcohol use. NORC's Transition to Nicotine Dependence study, begun in 2003, describes the history of smoking from adolescence through young adulthood and identifies factors that contribute to nicotine dependence. Data from NORC's Alcohol Risk Perceptions Survey, conducted from 2001–2005, informed an investigation of how media coverage influences adolescents' decisions about alcohol use.



Most recently, NORC and leading partners in the field developed the Substance Use Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) online training systems to help health care professionals identify, intervene, and recommend treatment for patients at risk for substance abuse. The U.S. Department of Defense is using SBIRT to train primary care and behavioral health providers in 91 military clinics worldwide to help combat heavy drinking among active duty service members. Since January 2016, dozens of nursing and social work schools have integrated SBIRT virtual patient simulation training into their curriculum; more than 1,500 health professionals have been trained to quickly identify signs of substance abuse among adolescents and other patients.

Tracking Immunization and Infection Rates

Launched by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1994 and administered by NORC since 2005, the National Immunization Surveys (NIS) are considered the gold standard for public health information on vaccination rates and a critical contributor to the prevention of childhood diseases. The CDC and state and local public health agencies use the data to monitor the potential for disease outbreaks at the community level and to allocate resources for the Vaccines for Children Program, which ensures that all children in the United States have access to vaccinations regardless of financial status. NORC also conducted a series of surveys designed to report real-time rates of influenza vaccination during the 2009 H1N1 flu pandemic, which allowed NORC to leverage its rapid response resources to complete 38,000 household interviews in just 14 days.



EXPLORING AND DEFINING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING THROUGHOUT THE CYCLE OF LIFE

NORC's research has helped create, frame, and expand conversations on how physical and psychological factors interact to affect our overall health and well-being. Our work has also explored how health is fundamentally measured and defined and how it can change over the life course.

In the early 1960s, investigators at NORC and at the University of Chicago conducted a groundbreaking study that helped launch a new era in public health research—creating a social-psychological framework in which to view the relationship between individuals' life circumstances and their psychological reactions to them. The work, known then as the "happiness studies," was the precursor of today's research on well-being and quality of life. The Bradburn Affect Balance Scale, developed in that initial study, was the first to demonstrate the independence of positive and negative affect, which has become a widely used framework for studies of psychological well-being.

As the Baby Boom generation moves into retirement and the percentage of older Americans continues to grow, it is important that government agencies, policymakers, and providers understand the evolving health needs and expectations of our aging population. At the

same time, a growing body of research suggests that healthy childhood leads to healthy adulthood, and to improved social, academic, and professional outcomes as well. NORC provides unique, valuable data and analysis on human development from midlife to old age.

One of the richest sources of these data is the National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project (NSHAP), the first nationally representative study of the relationship between social and intimate relationships and health and well-being at older ages. Recently, researchers at NORC and the University of Chicago used NSHAP data to propose nothing less than a redefinition of what it means to be healthy in old age. The research proposes replacing the traditional disease-based view of health with a more comprehensive view. Instead of looking only at chronic diseases, such as heart disease, and the decline of the body's most important systems, the comprehensive model includes dimensions such as psychological state, mobility, and health behaviors that collectively yield six new classes of well-being for judging the health of older individuals. NSHAP and the wealth of research enabled by its robust dataset demonstrate the critical role that social health, in addition to cognitive and physical health, plays in the lives of older Americans.



SOCIETY, MEDIA, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

For almost 75 years, NORC has been tapping into the public consciousness to provide government agencies and other organizations with the data and insights needed to serve citizens in a world of accelerating change. And while NORC's research capabilities have grown to include methods of inquiry beyond surveying public opinion, finding out what people think and examining how their opinions shape their behavior is still critical to what NORC does and what decision-makers need. Through the General Social Survey, NORC's largest and longest-running opinion survey, we have traced the evolution of American views on employment and work, civil liberties, spending priorities, and a host of other issues. In 1985, we helped found the International Social Survey Program, which gathers public opinion data from 60 countries around the world. To help citizens, policymakers, and the media that serve them stay abreast of public attitudes and perceptions on emerging social and political issues, as well as to advance NORC's commitment to disseminating research, we partnered with The Associated Press to create the groundbreaking AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.



KEEPING GOVERNMENT IN TOUCH WITH THE CITIZENRY

In its earliest work in the 1940s for the Office of Facts and Figures and later the Office for War Information, NORC was tasked with monitoring civilian morale, assessing the effects of wartime regulations, and collecting data on public attitudes toward the war. In 1942, NORC conducted one of its first surveys on race relations, asking white participants about their awareness of African-Americans' participation in the war effort and asking black participants about how they best could contribute to that effort. In 1943, NORC trained Japanese-American graduate students to conduct surveys in the Arizona internment camp where they were being held. Since then, examining the intersection between public opinion and public policy has been at the heart of much of NORC's work and is the focus of one of our largest academic research centers, the Center for the Study of Politics and Society. The Center houses the General Social Survey, which since 1973 has tracked the public's views on government spending priorities on a wide range of programs.

The beginning of the Cold War and the growing fear of a Soviet attack on American soil ushered in a period of rampant suspicion and investigation of individuals within the entertainment industry, federal government workers, and academics suspected of having communist sympathies.

In the 1950s, concerned that rising anti-communist sentiment might be undermining the public's support for civil liberties, sociologist Samuel Stouffer of Harvard University and a team of NORC researchers led what is widely considered the most comprehensive survey of American attitudes toward communism and civil liberties.

Fast forward to 2011. The American populace was grappling with longstanding fears about the threat of terrorism, even as some were raising concerns about the government's growing capacity to conduct digital surveillance. The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research explored those issues in *Civil Liberties and Security*, a landmark study of how the September 11 attacks changed American attitudes about their privacy and safety.

In 1996, NORC provided survey support for the Public Broadcasting Service's National Issues Convention. The project included a "deliberative poll" in which a cross-section of American voters were surveyed twice: once before and once after three days of small-group conversations with each other, policy experts, and presidential candidates. Respondents' attitudes toward several topics shifted notably after the discussions, including a 17 percent increase in those agreeing strongly that the nation should cooperate militarily with other nations to deal with trouble spots around the world. The convention was called "a microcosm of the whole country changing its mind."

Pursuing the Causes and Effects of Crime and Violence

Explorations into the multifaceted issues surrounding crime and violence make up one of the deepest and most varied areas of NORC's research portfolio. NORC has assembled a group of talented researchers whose areas of expertise include law enforcement, crime prevention, courts and sentencing, prisoners and ex-offenders, drug markets, and intimate partner violence. They have used that expertise to survey prosecutors about their policies and practices, to assess the impact of programs to reintegrate ex-offenders into society, and to examine the dynamics of methamphetamine markets, among many other initiatives.



Stopping Teen Dating Violence

Dating violence is a significant problem among young people, and many first experience abuse as early as middle school. Once victimized, teens are significantly more likely to experience intimate partner violence as adults. To address this problem, NORC is leading several studies that explore both the causes of teen dating violence and effective intervention methods. In a study funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), NORC found that low-cost interventions like Shifting Boundaries—which uses antiviolence posters, heightened security guided by student mapping of violent spots on school grounds, and school-based restraining orders—can reduce teen dating violence by about 50 percent.

Also for the NIJ, NORC conducts the National Survey of Teen Relationships and Intimate Violence (STRiV), a longitudinal study of both the prevalence of teen dating violence and the characteristics that might make a young person more likely to become a victim or perpetrator. The nationally representative STRiV data indicate that teen dating violence rates are the same across household income, geographic region, ethnicity, and other demographic variables. It also suggests that girls perpetrate dating violence at the same rate as boys.

NORC is also evaluating the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Dating Matters program, which focuses on evidence-based programming and partnerships among schools, public health agencies, and community organizations to combat teen dating violence in high-risk urban communities.

Tracking Online Bullying

The prevalence of digital communications and social media platforms in the lives of teens and young adults raises questions about young people's online behavior and whether they are emboldened to say hurtful things online that they would never say face-to-face. To explore this issue in more depth, The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research partnered with MTV and asked more than 1,300 young people between the ages of 14 and 24 about their experiences with and attitudes toward digital abuse and bullying. The survey found that online bullying has declined, young people are making better digital decisions, and more are seeking help from their families when they do encounter abusive online behavior.



Identifying Human Traffickers and Their Victims

Conducted in 2007 on behalf of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), NORC's Finding Victims of Human Trafficking research collected data on the trafficking of women and children by the illegal commercial sex industry. In NORC interviews with trafficking victims and criminal justice officials, researchers uncovered types of victimization not often reported to police and revealed deficiencies in states' abilities to distinguish among a range of trafficking activities. In 2014, NORC developers and data scientists worked with the DOJ to develop software that scrapes and analyzes data from traffickers' public social media posts. The software allows law enforcement officials to identify and geolocate individual posters and responders and track their relationships across jurisdictions.

Surveying Prison Inmates on Sexual Victimization

Beginning in 2006, NORC began surveying former prison inmates about the experience of sexual victimization while incarcerated. NORC developed a survey instrument that used touch-screen technology, supported by recorded questions audible only to the respondent, to ease respondent concerns on this highly sensitive subject.

Mapping the Dynamics of the Methamphetamine Market

In a groundbreaking 2007 study sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, NORC researchers surveyed police agencies in every state and conducted in-depth interviews with narcotics detectives, informants, meth users and dealers, drug treatment and prevention workers, family service providers, and others whose lives intersect with the methamphetamine industry in more than 28 cities and towns across the United States. The study found the meth industry to be a complex transnational business. At one extreme, meth is produced in small batches for use and sale to just a few people. At the other, it is a major business operated by international cartels. But regardless of those two extremes of production, the retail sale of meth is still driven by personal relationships, with the vast majority of buyers getting the drug from someone they know. The study also found that attempts to regulate ingredients used in meth production created huge opportunities for international drug cartels that could source the ingredients overseas.



MONITORING PROGRESS ON CIVIL RIGHTS AND RACE RELATIONS

NORC's research has also included several studies on the issue of race. During the height of the Civil Rights Movement, NORC conducted the Mississippi Voting Rights study, which explored African-Americans' low voting rates in Mississippi, with particular attention paid to the issue of voter intimidation. This was followed in 1967 by *Integrated Neighborhoods*, an examination of the economic and social conditions in neighborhoods with black and white residents, and respondents' attitudes toward their neighbors. It was the first systematic study of its kind aimed at understanding the factors that helped keep integrated neighborhoods stable. Adopting items from these previous NORC studies on race relations and formulating new questions, the *General Social Survey* has monitored intergroup relations from 1972 to the present. Particularly innovative were items it developed starting in 1989 on ethnic images to measure prejudices and stereotypes.

Truly integrated neighborhoods were rare. It was much more common for members of different racial and ethnic groups to live in their own enclaves. NORC explored the impact of residential segregation in the landmark *Urban*

Poverty and Family Life Survey (UPFLS) in 1986. Led by the University of Chicago, the UPFLS focused on four ethnic groups—African-Americans, Caucasians, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans—to learn how each group's cultural characteristics interacted with economic factors to affect family stability and economic outcomes.

Recent incidents in which police killings of black men have been captured on video have further strained an already difficult relationship between police and African-Americans and spawned ongoing and often heated conversations about race, policing, and the use of force. To shed light on the attitudes shaping—and being shaped by—that conversation, The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research surveyed more than 1,200 adults, including 311 African-Americans. While the survey found a number of racial divisions in Americans' attitudes toward law enforcement and the criminal justice system, it also found agreement across racial groups on many of the causes of police violence, as well as a broad consensus that a number of policy changes could reduce tensions between minorities and police and limit violence against civilians.

IDENTIFYING THE FACTORS THAT MAKE COMMUNITIES STRONGER

Building socially cohesive, economically vibrant communities and driving sustainable urban development are concerns for emerging and industrialized nations alike. Data gathered and interpreted by NORC researchers help governments and nongovernmental agencies around the world enhance their community development policies and initiatives.

In 2002, NORC partnered with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to evaluate Making Connections, an initiative to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and their families in 10 poor urban communities. The study identified the characteristics—including mobility, social capital, and networks, and the availability and utilization of services—that most effectively contributed to individual and community success. Results have been used by community groups, government agencies, and other stakeholders in developing policies and programs related to poverty and family well-being.

Between 2002 and 2011, as part of the city of Chicago's Plan for Transformation, NORC interviewed residents, at four points in time, who had relocated from dilapidated public housing to private market housing, new mixed-income housing, or rehabilitated public housing. The survey findings informed the Chicago Housing Authority's broader efforts to transform public housing.

Working with a variety of partners, NORC has also assessed housing needs in the tribal areas of the United States and studied the impact that social mobility, economic opportunity, and other factors have on early childhood development. In addition, NORC has conducted impact evaluations on rural and urban housing initiatives and other community development programs in Rwanda, Azerbaijan, and a host of other countries.



MEASURING PUBLIC RESPONSE TO CRISIS AND TRAGEDY

One of the primary functions of government is keeping the public safe. Much of the planning required to fulfill that function is informed by predictions of how the public will respond when they feel threatened. Since its earliest days, NORC has been a leader in disaster and resilience-related research and has provided a variety of government agencies and relief organizations with the data and insights they need to respond to crises more effectively.

NORC conducted its first disaster- and resilience-related surveys in 1952 when the U.S. Army asked NORC to study human reactions to events such as plane crashes, earthquakes, mine explosions, and tornadoes. NORC also surveyed public anxiety at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis and conducted more than 1,300 interviews within a week of the Kennedy assassination. The U.S. Army asked NORC for help understanding how the population might react to a national disaster.

Two weeks after the 9/11 attacks, NORC conducted a study of its social, psychological, and political impact on the American public. More recent studies include an evaluation of the American Red Cross Community Resilience Pilot Project, an assessment of hospital bioterrorism readiness, and several projects conducted by the Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis, including predictions of the evacuation routes people would most likely use in the event of a disaster and the impact an influx of survivors might have on the communities to which they relocate.

In 2013, The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research surveyed the residents of 12 communities hit by Superstorm Sandy to assess their levels of recovery and identify the social factors that most contributed to or hindered that recovery. The study found that neighborhoods with strong social connections before the storm were more resilient than neighborhoods that lack those bonds. Further, these social resources especially bolstered lower-income neighborhoods, leading to greater resilience and preparedness should another disaster strike.

ADVANCING THE SCIENCE OF RESEARCH

The history of NORC is a story marked by innovation. Our collaborations with other research centers and organizations helped establish the modern foundation of social science research. Our advancements in survey design methodologies have allowed researchers to ask increasingly nuanced questions of ever more diverse audiences. And the novel-yet-pragmatic ways in which we have invented, adopted, and adapted technology have made data collection, analysis, and dissemination more rigorous, more cost efficient, more accessible, and more secure.



A FOUNDING PARTNER IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

Since its founding in 1941 as the world's first nonprofit survey organization, NORC has been committed to advancing the rigor and capacity of social science research through methodological innovation, collaboration, and the sharing of ideas.

NORC founder and director Harry Field organized the 1946 Central City Conference on Public Opinion Research that directly led to the 1947 founding of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR), the preeminent organization in the United States for researchers, academicians, government leaders, and policy experts who participate in public opinion surveys, survey research, and market research. To this day, AAPOR members develop and promote uniform standards and practices, as well as new technologies and sampling approaches, to meet emerging research challenges.

In an innovation that opened NORC's resources to universities and nonprofit organizations all over the country, NORC established the Survey Research Service (SRS) in 1963. Through the SRS, other researchers could use NORC's sampling frame and interviewing staff to execute their own surveys; they would then receive the data to analyze.

Today, NORC continues to help strengthen the intellectual infrastructure of social science research through collaborations with partners such as The Associated Press to create The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. NORC also created the scientifically rigorous panel-based research platform, AmeriSpeak, and the GSS Data Explorer, a web-based tool that gives academics, researchers, and journalists access to decades of data generated by the General Social Survey (GSS).

Driving the Evolution of Research Design

In NORC's early days, the field of social science research was in its infancy. Surveying the public about their opinions was a new phenomenon, and methods of data collection and statistical data analysis were being developed. Face-to-face interviews were the dominant data collection mode, the interviewer labor force tended to be married women with employed spouses, and response rates were often higher than 90 percent.

The three decades between 1960 and 1990 saw a vast increase in the use of telephone surveys, a data collection mode fueled by rapid growth in the installation of landline home telephones. The U.S. federal government began monitoring the effects of investments in human and physical infrastructure, and interest in the use of quantitative and qualitative measures grew.

In the early 1990s, the Omnibus Reconciliation Budget restrained government spending, and overall downward pressure on wages and increasing economic disparity also had major impacts on the field. Changes in the survey environment and technology into the 2000s led to further advances in survey methodology. Survey participation rates declined, alternative modes of data collection were created, and landline telephone use decreased while

cell phones proliferated, and the advent of big data began—fueled by computerized datasets and vast amounts of self-created consumer data. By then, insights from rigorous survey research were valued, and stakeholders wanted even more data gathered and analyzed even faster.

This trend continues today. NORC researchers continually adapt and expand research methods to correspond with changes in society, to update preferences for contact and communication, and to incorporate technological advancements that could benefit the field with faster turnaround times and lower costs. NORC has used small-area estimation to develop finer geographic detail of published statistics, such as those for state-level hepatitis C prevalence. Geographic information systems analysis and geo-spatial mapping are used for major NORC projects, including the General Social Survey; the National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project; and the Survey of Consumer Finances. Most recently, NORC introduced AmeriSpeak, an innovative multi-client, panel-based research platform that combines speed, cost effectiveness, and statistical rigor with an enhanced representation of the U.S. population.



Illuminating Difficult-to-Reach Populations

One of the biggest challenges in conducting rigorous social science research is reaching the subjects you wish to study. Geographic, socioeconomic, and cultural factors, and, in the case of longitudinal studies, time, can make subjects hard to find and interview. NORC researchers have sometimes had to work amidst floods and epidemics to finish their data collection. But 75 years of careful planning and thoughtful execution have imbued NORC with the ingenuity, the cultural sensitivity, and the tenacity to get the job done.

The National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth, which NORC has conducted with partner The Ohio State University for the Bureau of Labor Statistics since 1979, now has 30,000 participants spread across two generations. As their communications preferences have changed, NORC has made inventive use of social media and tools like Skype to keep in touch and keep respondents engaged.

The original participants in the High School and Beyond sophomore and senior cohorts are now in their 50s and were last contacted before 1986 or 1992. In 2014 and 2015, NORC researchers managed to connect with well over 60 percent of each cohort, adding important new data to this long-term study of the interaction between high school education and social, professional, and health outcomes.

The triennial Survey of Consumer Finances is the only fully representative source of information on the broad financial circumstances of American households. NORC

researchers recently conducted a series of experiments that pointed to new ways to get members of the 80th income percentile to respond to survey invitations more promptly. In 2011, NORC successfully completed the Survey of Economically Successful Americans and the Common Good, the first study of its kind meant to explore the social and political attitudes of the richest 1 percent of Americans.

In 2012, NORC conducted a highly sensitive multilingual, web-based survey of approximately 650 journalists in four former Soviet-bloc countries to assess the effectiveness of media-freedom training programs. Ensuring the confidentiality of the source of the web survey and the personal security of respondents were key components in designing and employing this survey. Despite these privacy and security concerns, NORC achieved outstanding response rates of 65–68 percent.

Because of issues related to tribal sovereignty and a history of being exploited by less culturally sensitive researchers, conducting member studies of Native American tribes and tribal organizations requires tact and a willingness to listen and collaborate. Those are skills NORC researchers have ably demonstrated through a number of studies, including an assessment of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian housing needs, and a study of the coordination of tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Child Welfare Services.

Discovering
Innovative Uses for
New Technologies

NORC's use of technology for data collection and analysis has been a productive and often exciting blend of the pragmatic and entrepreneurial.

In a novel application of what even then was "old" technology, NORC used telegrams in 1945 to wire questions to interviewers, allowing them to conduct the first ever "quick turnaround" surveys, gathering data within 24–48 hours.

During the 1950s, NORC used punch card counter-sorters to do data tabulation. The process speeded up considerably when NORC purchased one of the first widely available scientific computers, the IBM 1620, in 1961.

The 1970s saw the pervasiveness of telephones in American households rise to 95 percent, and the development of rapid digit dialing and computer-assisted telephone interviewing technology, which NORC used to conduct ever more thorough and accurate data collection.

Today, NORC researchers use tablet computers to conduct surveys in remote African villages, and employ environmental sensors and biometrics to gather data to enhance health studies. They are using social media to keep in touch with millennial participants in longitudinal surveys and developing smartphone apps to put a digital spin on the experience sampling method and deliver "in the moment" surveys to a wide variety of audiences.



Innovation in
Practice

As NORC's innovation hub, NORC Labs is adapting cutting-edge technology to create new tools for its clients and partners. The tools include:

NORC Data Enclave

The Data Enclave enables clients to store, manage, and facilitate the remote analysis of highly secure data, unlocking the power of large, complex datasets while preserving data privacy.

AmeriSpeak

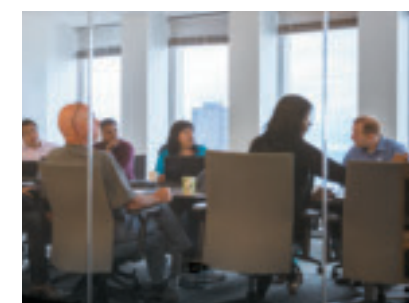
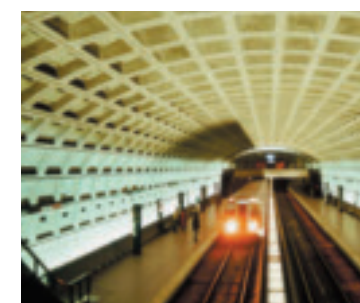
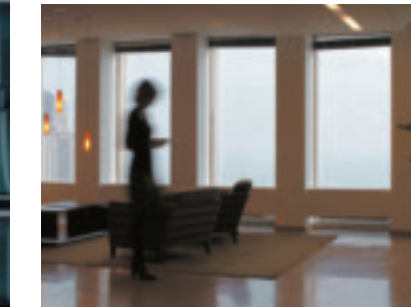
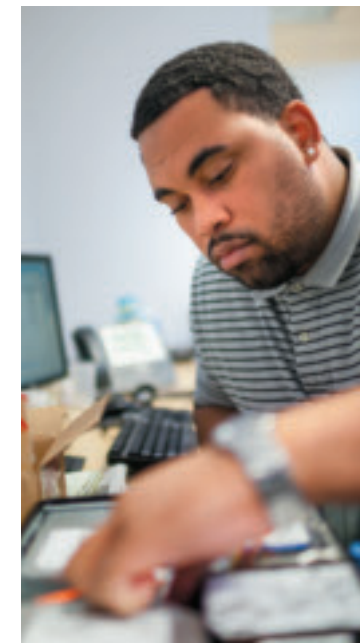
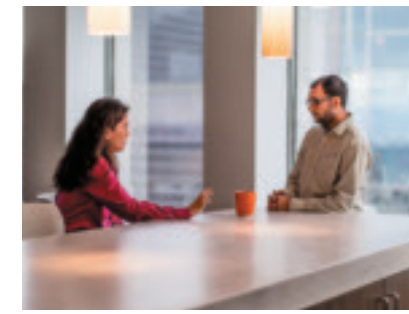
AmeriSpeak gives clients access to a representative, probability-based sample of prerecruited participants who have agreed to take part in regular online and telephone surveys regarding a wide variety of topics.

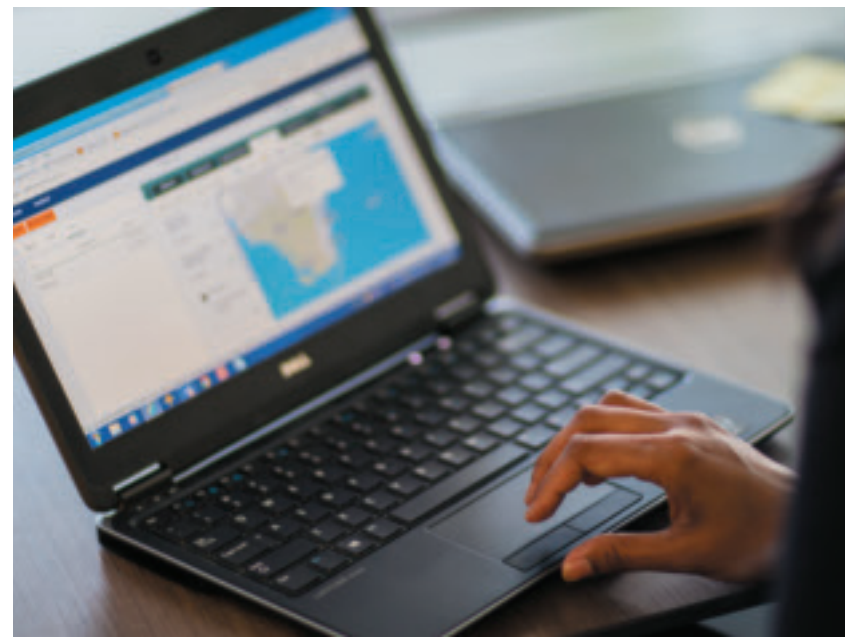
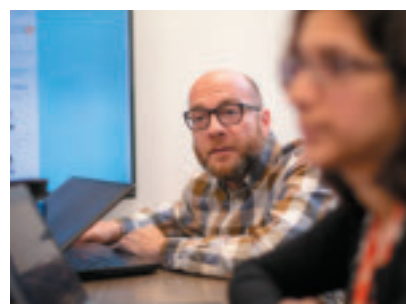
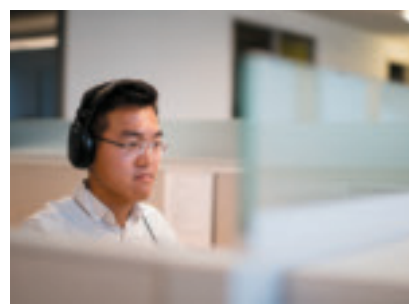
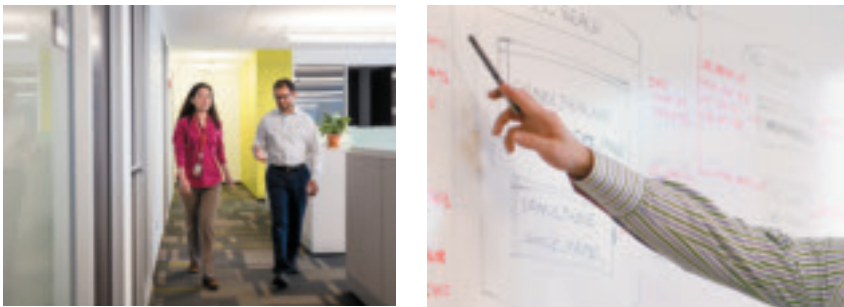
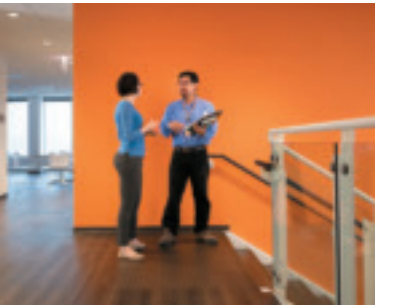
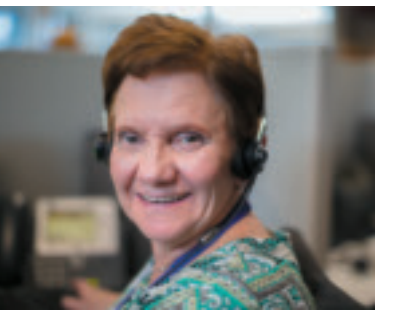
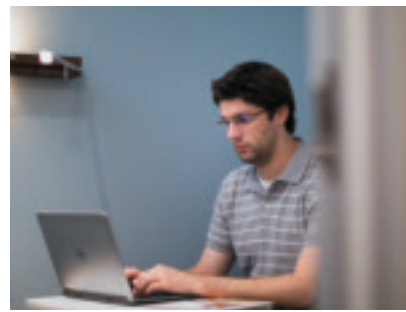
GSS Data Explorer

NORC's General Social Survey (GSS) was already one of the nation's most referenced datasets. The GSS Data Explorer makes that data even more accessible, allowing users to search, analyze, and save the data online; share their work with others; and download entire datasets or limited extracts for analysis in any statistical software program.

THE FUTURE OF NORC

In every corner of NORC and the research industry, change is afoot. But perhaps more important is what has not changed. At NORC, our mission remains clear and consistent—we transform data into knowledge by conducting groundbreaking studies on the critical issues of the day. To succeed, this vision requires a commitment to helping NORC's staff excel and a focus on the human elements of the subjects we study. It demands that NORC look beyond its traditional portfolio of clients and partners to drive insight and impact in an interconnected world. And it demands an innovative spirit and deeply held commitment to help chart the horizons of modern research.





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