

Guide for Prospective Investigators Proposals, Prices, and Responsibilities

The American Panel Survey

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About The American Panel Survey (TAPS)

TAPS is a monthly online survey of a national probability sample of about 2,000 adults in the United States. A variety of social science investigators use the panel. Most studies concern the economic and political attitudes and behavior of the American public.

The panel was recruited in late 2011, using an address-based sampling (ABS) frame. That is, from a random selection of residential addresses, stratified using ancillary data on age and ethnic group, a panel of 2,000 was recruited. Replenishment efforts were completed in mid-2012 and early 2013. TAPS surveys are administered online; selected panelists who do not have a computer or on-line service are provided access by TAPS.

TAPS surveys are conducted for the Weidenbaum Center by GfK/Knowledge Networks, a leading online survey research firm located in Palo Alto, California.

The panel results in a minimum of 1,550 completed interviews per month.

Instrument Design

The directors of TAPS, in consultation with other scholars, have established a battery of demographic and other questions that are asked of all panelists. In addition, a large set of recurring questions is asked about economic and political subjects. Research modules of up to 15 minutes may be placed on each month's survey. TAPS directors work with investigators to schedule research modules taking into account research needs and the necessity of maintaining the panel.

Prices (January 2015)

Fees. Scholars may apply (see below) for time on TAPS. The fee has two parts: a base fee and a fee based upon survey time. The base fee is \$1,500. The fee for survey time is \$1500 per minute. With typical Likert-type questions, about four questions per minute may be asked. Time may be distributed over multiple waves.

Base fees include the following deliverables:

1. Data in a standard format (STATA, SPSS, Excel), a codebook in Word, weights, and documentation on sample details.
2. Up to 15 variables of demographic and other variables (party identification), to be arranged on a case-by-case basis.
3. Responses to questions asked in previous surveys are available when the data are not committed to other investigators.
4. Data from previous public releases.

Panel Designs. TAPS has a panel design that should be exploited by investigators. The base prices apply to both cross-sectional and panel designs. For example, a five-minute battery of questions that is repeated at four different times is a 20-minute survey.

Special Fees. TAPS directors work with investigators to establish prices for projects that require special programming or other staff support, such as projects that involve streaming media.

Pre-Proposals and Proposals for Research Modules

Investigators should submit pre-proposals for research modules to the TAPS directors as early as possible but no later than 6 months before they hope to be in the field.

A pre-proposal should be 3-4 single spaced pages and include (a) a statement of the importance of the work, (b) the major hypotheses, (c) a discussion of the number and type of questions that are expected to be used, and (d) a proposed date for the survey(s).

A successful pre-proposal review will result in a request for a longer proposal that includes a draft questionnaire.

Research modules will be scheduled to account for several considerations: The purposes of the research, other TAPS research modules and priorities, and panel maintenance.

Investigators' Responsibilities

Each investigator is responsible for the following steps in the research process—

1. successful completion of the IRB process required by a funding agency or home university at least one month before the scheduled survey (documentation must be provided);
2. delivery of a draft questionnaire to TAPS directors at least six weeks before the scheduled survey;
3. analysis of pre-test data;
4. revision of the questionnaire and approval of TAPS directors at least four weeks before the scheduled survey;
5. half payment of the fees at least two weeks before the scheduled survey;
6. full payment of the fees within one month following delivery of data and codebook.

IRB Review

The Washington University IRB process has been completed for core features of TAPS. TAPS is given an “exempt” status as a survey project on which the identifiers are not provided to TAPS directors or investigators and proper protocols to acquire informed consent and preserve confidentiality are in place.

Upon request, TAPS directors can provide information that may be useful to investigators who must complete IRB review for funding agencies and home universities.