

Methodology

DECEMBER 2018

The 2018 VOTER Survey (Views of the Electorate Research Survey) was conducted by the survey firm YouGov. In total, 6,005 adults (ages 18 and up) with internet access took the survey online between April 5 and May 14, 2018. The reported margin of error is plus or minus 2 percent.

Of this group, 4,705 respondents are long-term participants (“panelists”) in the VOTER Survey, 500 respondents comprise a new over-sample of Hispanics, and 800 respondents comprise a new over-sample of voters ages 18 to 24 (who were too young to be interviewed in the earliest survey).

The earlier waves of the VOTER Survey proceeded as follows: Panelists were first interviewed by YouGov in 2011–2012 as part of the 2012 Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project (CCAP). In that survey, 45,000 respondents were first interviewed in December 2011 and were interviewed a second time in one of the 45 weekly surveys between January 1 and November 8, 2012. After the 2012 election, 35,408 respondents were interviewed a third time. In December 2016, 11,168 panelists from 2012 CCAP were invited to respond and 8,637 of them (77 percent) completed the survey. YouGov also supplied measures of primary voting behavior from the end of the primary period (July 2016), when these respondents had been contacted as part of a different survey project. This December 2016 survey (N=8,000) constitutes the first VOTER Survey. The second survey, in July 2017, was the second VOTER Survey (N=5000). This May 2018 survey is thus the third VOTER Survey.

The table below shows how many respondents were interviewed in various combinations of these surveys. Shaded areas indicate a completed interview:

Number of respondents	December 2011	November 2012	July 2016	December 2016	July 2017	April 2018
4,052						
2,381						
948						
619						
34						
1300						

Note: The July 2016 data includes only presidential primary participation and vote choice. The N=34 are from a small subset of respondents who were originally interviewed for the December 2016 survey but were not included in the matched and weighted data for that survey. However, they were made eligible for interviewing in April 2018. The N=1300 are the over-samples of Hispanics and 18- to 24-year-olds.

The 2012 CCAP was constructed using YouGov’s sample matching procedure. A stratified sample is drawn from YouGov’s panel, which consists of people who have agreed to take occasional surveys. The strata are defined by the combination of age, gender, race, and education, and each stratum is sampled in proportion to its size in the U.S. population. Then, each element of this sample is matched to a synthetic sampling frame that is constructed from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, the Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement, and other databases. The matching procedure finds the observation in the sample from YouGov’s panel that most closely matches each observation in the synthetic sampling frame on a set of demographic characteristics. The resulting sample is then weighted by a set of demographic and non-demographic variables (in the dataset, this is the variable “weight”).

On average, YouGov’s methodology produces less bias across a series of benchmarks than do other methodologies using online samples. For more information on the process see:

- Stephen Ansolabehere and Douglas Rivers, “Cooperative Survey Research,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2013, Vol. 21: 1-23. Print.
- Courtney Kennedy, et al. “Evaluating Online Nonprobability Surveys,” Pew Research Center, May 2, 2016. Available at: <http://www.pewresearch.org/methods/2016/05/02/evaluating-online-nonprobability-surveys/>.
- Doug Rivers, “Pew Research: YouGov consistently outperforms competitors on accuracy,” YouGov, May 13, 2016. Available at: <https://today.yougov.com/news/2016/05/13/pew-research-yougov/>.

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