

Rutgers-Eagleton | SSRS

# Garden State Panel

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## Background

The **Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel** is the largest probability-based opinion sharing platform in New Jersey. It is comprised of a representative group of panelists randomly selected throughout New Jersey who have agreed to share their opinions through surveys.

The panel was established in 2023 as a joint research venture between [The Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers-New Brunswick \(ECPIP\)](#) and [SSRS](#). Both organizations are members of the AAPOR (American Association for Public Opinion Research) Transparency Initiative and committed to full compliance of AAPOR standards and transparency.

## Methodology

The Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel is a probability-based panel of New Jersey adults aged 18 or older. Members are recruited randomly based on statewide representative ABS (Address Based Sample) design. ABS sample is drawn from the Delivery Sequence File (DSF) maintained by the U.S. Postal Service. Population coverage of the DSF is in the 98%-99% range.

During the recruitment process, demographic information on panelists is collected. This data is stored securely and used to determine eligibility for specific studies (if needed). We also rely on these data to improve the survey experience for panelists by avoiding the need to re-ask some demographic questions with each survey.

## How are Garden State Panel surveys conducted?

The Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel is a **multi-mode panel (web and phone)**. Most panelists take self-administered web surveys; however, the option to take surveys conducted by a live telephone interviewer is available to those who prefer to complete surveys by phone and/or who do not use the Internet. Panelists also have the option of taking **surveys in their preferred language (English or Spanish)**. We translate and conduct surveys in Spanish as required by specific projects.

Samples are drawn among panel members to best meet the study criteria. Selected panelists are sent an email invitation to participate in the survey, including unique survey link. The link allows the respondent to complete the self-administered online survey. Our contact protocol also includes a text message survey reminder for panelists that have consented to receiving them. All telephone interviews are conducted live using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Interviewers ask to speak with the person at that number by name who is a member of the Garden State Panel.

SSRS web surveys comply with industry best practices. They are optimized for smartphone/mobile device administration and are adapted to modern operating systems and browsers.

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## How is the Garden State Panel an improvement over opt-in panels?

The Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel is a fully probability-based panel because it recruits randomly selected panelists from a probability-based sample source that reflects the New Jersey adult population (ABS). Results obtained from this panel can statistically represent the target population with a known margin of error.

**Unlike typical opt-in panels, no one can “volunteer” to be part of the Garden State Panel. They must be selected randomly and invited to participate.** By employing rigorous sampling methods, we not only reduce the risk of selection bias but also minimize susceptibility to “bots” or fraudulent panelists. This additional layer of security enhances the reliability of our survey results, providing accurate insights into New Jersey’s diverse populations.

**Embracing a probability-based model increases statistical validity, making your data more trustworthy and robust for strategic decision-making.**



## SSRS Services

Our highly experienced panel team stands ready to support both data collection and client analytic needs. We work closely with clients from the early project planning stages to developing and delivering effective customized solutions. Specific services include:

- Questionnaire design consultation that meets industry best practices
- Survey programming and hosting
- Data collection
- Methodological consultation
- Highly collaborative team that works closely in meeting client schedules
- Statistical weighting
- Data analysis and reporting

We also work with clients on the design and implementation of subpopulation-specific surveys that leverage panelist profile data, such as for surveys of Hispanics, people with specific health insurance statuses, parents, and registered voters.

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## SSRS Weighting

Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel data is weighted to be representative of the entire residential adult population in New Jersey. The first step in the weighting process is the application of a base weight that accounts for the ABS sample design and the within-household sampling of one adult. Following the base weight, the panel is calibrated to correct for differential participation among demographics such as age, race, sex, region, and education.

Benchmark distributions are obtained from the most recently available data from sources such as the Current Population Survey (CPS). Additionally, online panelists are known to be more civically engaged than the general population. To correct this potential bias, we include volunteerism and interaction with neighbors in panel calibration. These benchmark distributions are derived from the Civic Engagement and Volunteer Supplement to the Current Population Survey.



**Our Methods, Analytics and Data Science (MADS) Group also stands ready to design custom weighting schemes to fit your survey's needs.**

## SSRS Standard Deliverables

Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel standard deliverables include a **final weighted dataset** (in SPSS or other format) and an **AAPOR compliant methods statement** with response rate calculations. SSRS is a full-service non-partisan public opinion firm. In addition to standard deliverables, our deliverables and other offered services are fully customizable to client needs. This includes crosstabs, toplines, analytical reporting, and more.

## Demographics

A battery of demographics and other questions is asked during the recruitment of panelists and/or during subsequent surveys. These questions are stored securely and can be used for identifying target respondents, weighting, or just expanding what is known about respondents. **Standard Demographics** are appended to study data at no extra cost. Additional **Custom Demographics** are also available for an added cost.



## Summary of Garden State Panel Demographic Variables

Standard Demographics*	
Age	Children in HH
Gender	Children Age
Education	Parental Status
Race/Ethnicity	HH Income
Nativity	Home Ownership
Marital Status	Public Transportation Use
Employment Status	Sexual Orientation
Adults in HH	Transgender Identity
County	Gun Ownership and Access
Zip Code	Frequency of Internet Use
Voter Registration Status	Civic Engagement (Volunteerism/ Interaction with neighbors)
Party ID / Lean	2024 Recalled Vote (Presidential)
Political Ideology	2021 Recalled Vote (Governor)
Religion	

Custom Demographics**
Military Status
Health Insurance Status
Health Insurance Type
Smoking Habits
Vaping Habits
Vaccination Status
Landline/Cell Phone Use

\*Included in final data at no extra cost.

\*\*Available at an additional cost.

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## Who do I contact to find out more about the Garden State Panel?

Further information about the Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel can be found [here](#).

We are happy to answer any questions you may have and provide a quote for a study to meet your specific objectives.



[info@ssrs.com](mailto:info@ssrs.com)



1 Braxton Way, Suite 125  
Glen Mills, PA 19342



484.840.4300

## About SSRS

SSRS is a leading public opinion research firm. For more than 30 years, SSRS has specialized in healthcare, public and social policy, and non-partisan political research studies conducted via all data collection modes. Our clients are comprised of various public and private sector entities including major academic institutions, leading national media organizations, and top research institutes.

## About ECPIP

The Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers-New Brunswick was established in 1971. Now celebrating over five decades of data and publication of over 200 public opinion polls on the state of New Jersey, ECPIP is the first and longest continuously running university-based statewide public polling operation in the United States.

