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Introduction

This report outlines the methodology used for the annual Empire State Poll (ESP), a general survey of New York State residents who are at least 18 years of age, that is conducted by the School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR) Survey Research Institute. Since its inception in 1996, the Survey Research Institute (SRI) has grown into a premier survey research facility and now comprises more than 60 staff and nearly 20 computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) stations.

The ESP 2004 marks the second annual poll in an ongoing survey series that will probe residents' views on the workplace and on other social, political, and economic issues. The data derived from this yearly poll will be of particular interest to government officials, business and labor leaders, journalists, academics, and representatives from special interest groups. The data should also help guide policy making, raise issues for civic dialogue, and suggest avenues of future research

The ESP 2004 contains three sections: the "core" survey of topics and questions that appears annually; a section on topical political, social, and/or economic issues; and a series of special interest questions ("omnibus modules") that were developed by third parties.

ESP Core Instrument

The core survey instrument is a mix of questions about the work-place, work organizations, communities, and governmental and economic issues that reflect the specific research focus of Cornell faculty and the general needs of policy makers, the news media, and social scientists.

The core topics are broken down into the following categories:

- Employment/Working Conditions
- Compensation and Benefit Trends
- Education and Vocational Training
- Unionization and Workplace Associations
- Work/Life Expectations and Satisfaction
- Community Satisfaction and Mobility

- Political and Civic Engagement
- Institutional and Personal Trust
- State and Local Government and Politics
- Economic Perceptions
- Media Use and Exposure
- Resident and Household Demographics

ESP Omnibus Modules

The ESP is structured to allow for the insertion of questions developed by third-party organizations/researchers who are interested in surveying New York State residents on special topics. The SRI charges a nominal fee for this service. The data collected from these "omnibus" modules are the property of the sponsor and are not reported in the general statewide poll results, nor are they made publicly available without the express permission of the sponsor. For more information on the omnibus section of the poll, please contact the SRI directly.
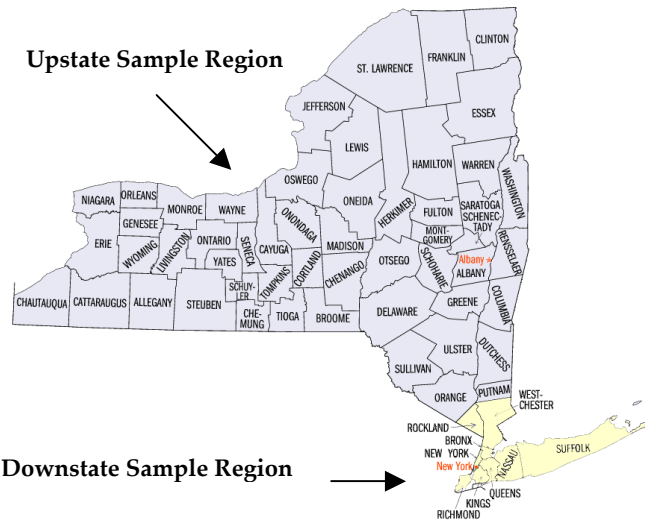
ESP Special Topic Areas

Each year, the SRI selects three or four special topics of interest on which to survey New York State residents. Topics are selected to reflect current political, social, or economic issues or events, and to provide opportunities to compare and contrast New York State residents' opinions to those revealed in recent national polls. In 2004, the SRI selected public support for guest-worker programs and issues in the 2004 presidential election for New Yorkers.

Sampling Methodology

The ESP sample consists of households randomly selected from all publicly listed New York State telephone exchanges. Genesys Sampling of Fort Washington, PA supplied the household list, which excluded known business telephone numbers, disconnected numbers, and non-household numbers. The listed household sample is proportional to the upstate-downstate population totals. "Downstate" was defined as New York, Rockland, Kings, Richmond, Westchester, Suffolk, Queens, Nassau, and Bronx counties, with the remaining counties of the state defined as "upstate." Households from

black and Hispanic neighborhoods were slightly over-sampled to ensure proper representation in the final sample of respondents.

Upstate Sample Region

Downstate Sample Region

Selection of individual respondents came in two steps: a household was randomly selected and then a household member who was at least 18 years old was randomly selected from within the household using the "most recent birthday" selection method. An additional eligibility requirement was that all respondents had to be legal residents of New York State.

These selection procedures ensured that every household in the state with a listed telephone number had an equal chance of being included in the survey; and once a household was selected, each adult in the household had an equal chance of being chosen for the ESP 2004.

ESP Data Collection

The data collection for the ESP 2004 began on Feb 3, 2004 and was completed on April 21, 2004. All interviews were conducted by telephone.

The SRI is staffed primarily by Cornell students who come from a wide range of disciplines and academic backgrounds. Interviewers are employed throughout the academic year and are selected through a rigorous interview process. All interviewers undergo training by the SRI training staff and then complete two to three weeks of probationary interviewing and follow-up training.

For each survey project, including the ESP, interviewers are given a survey-specific orientation in addition to training on the survey instrument. The typical SRI interviewer for the ESP has extensive interviewing experience across dozens of survey research projects and questionnaire types.

All interviewing staff are monitored and supervised at all

times by a nine-member SRI supervisory team. The SRI employs an electronic proxy system that allows for audio and video monitoring of all interviewer stations. All supervisors regularly monitor interviewers to maintain data collection quality, provide feedback, and troubleshoot issues as they arise.

The SRI utilizes a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system called CASES. CASES is developed, distributed and supported by the Computer-Assisted Survey Methods (CSM) Program at the University of California, Berkeley and commissioned by the U.S. Census Bureau. For more than 20 years, CASES has been one of the most widely used interviewing systems by survey centers in the United States. The SRI employs two full-time computer programmers to support the CATI software and survey operations and to ensure data collection quality.

For the ESP 2004, 820 respondents completed the survey out of a sample list of 4,357. The response rate was 25.7% and the cooperation rate was 56.5%. Additional data is detailed below in Table 1.

Table 1 Final Sample Status for ESP 2004

Status	Number	Percent
Completed Survey	820	18.8
Refusal	633	14.5
Active	1995	45.8
Physical/Language Problem	209	4.8
Ineligible/Not a Household	700	16.1
Total	4,357	100
Response Rate[1]	-	25.7
Cooperation Rate[1]	-	56.5
Average Number of Contact Attempts [2]	8	-

[1] *American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) response rate and cooperation rate calculations. The response rate is the total number of survey completions divided by the total eligible sample (total sample minus all ineligible, non-households, and estimated proportion of households where eligibility was not determined). Cooperation rate is the total number of survey completions divided by the number of potential interviews (this includes all instances where contact was made with a properly selected person, but not including those instances where the respondent was incapable of cooperating due to language or physical limitations).*

[2] *Average number of contact attempts made to all eligible respondents, excluding Not in Service, Non-Household, and Physical or Language Problem households.*

Sampling Error

The margin of error for a simple random sample of listed households the size of the ESP 2004 (820 respondents) is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points when respondents are asked yes/no questions and an even distribution of responses is assumed (i.e., 50% say "yes" and 50% say "no"). The sampling error assumes the traditional 95% confidence level, which is equivalent to a "significance level" of .05. This means there is no more than a one in twenty chance that variations in the respondent sample will cause the overall ESP 2004 results to deviate by more than 3.5 percentage points from the answers that would have been obtained if all New York State residents had been interviewed.

Sampling error is determined by the assumed distribution of responses and by the size of the sample. An extreme distribution of question responses has a smaller error range. If the distribution of responses were 80/20, for example, the sampling error would be 2.8%. See Chart A for additional distributions and sampling error calculations. The size of the sample or subpopulation is also important because the margin of sampling error increases as the sample size decreases.

Thus, the margin of error from responses of demographically distinct subgroups within the ESP 2004 will vary depending on the size of the group in question. Again, Chart A provides some standard sampling errors for different size groups.

Chart A Sampling Error Margins by Question Response Distribution and Sample Size

		Size of Sample (N)				
		800	600	400	200	100
Question Response Distribution (Percent)	50/50	3.5	4.0	4.9	6.9	9.8
	60/40	3.4	3.9	4.8	6.8	9.6
	70/30	3.2	3.7	4.5	6.4	9.0
	80/20	2.8	3.2	3.9	5.5	7.8
	90/10	2.1	2.4	2.9	4.2	5.9

Lastly, besides the possible sample error mentioned above, all public opinion polls may incur other sources of error associated with telephone data collection procedures, including the sampling error from the systematic exclusion of households without telephones, question wording, question order, and interviewer-induced bias.

Respondent Demographics

The accuracy of the ESP 2004 can be evaluated by comparing selected characteristics of the survey respondents to data from the 2000 Census. A weighted variable was developed based on geography (upstate vs. downstate) in order to approximate actual population distribution within New York State. All substantive results described within any ESP 2004 report are weighted using this constructed variable.

Table 2 below compares the unweighted distribution of the ESP 2004 respondents' characteristics with the actual statewide distributions based on the 2000 U.S. Census and 2002 Bureau of Labor Statistics reports.

Table 2 Key Respondent Demographics for ESP 2004

Characteristics	ESP 2004 Respondent Distribution %	Actual Distribution %
Geography		
Upstate	50	38
Downstate	50	62
Gender		
Male	47	48
Female	53	52
Race		
White	71	70
Non-white	29	30
Employment Status		
In workforce	70	65
Not working	30	35
Annual Household Income		
Less than $35k	31	41
$35k-$75k	41	33
More than $75k	28	26
Union Membership (working only)		
Union member	29	25
Not a union member	71	75

For More Information

If you are interested in directly accessing data from the Empire State Poll, have questions regarding the methodology, or wish to discuss other services provided by the ILR Survey Research Institute, please contact the SRI representative listed below or go to *www.sri.cornell.edu.*

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Director, Survey Research Institute
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Citing Results from the ESP

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