

NORC Launches Valuable New Resource on U.S. Entrepreneurship



Entrepreneurs are essential drivers of the U.S. economy, but details on their paths to entrepreneurship are limited. That’s why the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation tapped NORC to conduct the Entrepreneurship in the Population (EPOP) Survey Project. EPOP is a five-year study of U.S. entrepreneurial activities—including interest in business ownership—using an annual survey of U.S. adults.

For the first survey, launched in February 2022, NORC recruited over 32,000 current and former business owners, prospective entrepreneurs, freelancers, gig workers, and people who never considered opening a business via an address-based frame built from the U.S. Postal Service, opt-in panels, and AmeriSpeak®. We asked participants why they chose to pursue self-employment or start a business (or not), their future

employment plans, and other questions that provide insights for policymakers and researchers.

Initial findings indicate that while men and women are equal in their desire to start a business, men are more entrepreneurial. Sixteen percent of men currently own businesses, and 22 percent freelance, compared to 13 percent and 20 percent of women. Entrepreneurial activities also vary geographically.

These and other findings are publicly available on EPOP's website, where visitors can compare data by state and metropolitan area using an interactive dashboard.

"What makes the EPOP design unique is that we want to hear from everyone, even those who have never owned a business, have closed a business, or just have the first glimmer of an entrepreneurial idea. This way, we can better understand the paths to new business development. That understanding is essential to cultivating and supporting entrepreneurship."

Quentin Brummet

Senior Research Methodologist & EPOP Principal Investigator

NORC