

Methodology for Springtide Research Institute's 2024 Study of Young People and Civic Life

The 2024 Study of Young People and Civic Life was a mixed-methods research study conducted by Springtide Research Institute between December 18th, 2023, and March 5th, 2024. The study explored young people’s civic identities and engagement using two primary data sources.

First, Springtide surveyed a sample of 6,669 young people residing in the United States between the ages of 13 and 25. The survey was open between January 4th and February 25th, 2024, and consisted of 72 questions regarding political identities, behaviors, and engagement as well as religious identity, beliefs, and practices.

Springtide used an online panel provider, Alchemer, to administer our survey. Alchemer crowdsources panels through several online suppliers for a total of about 2 million U.S. panelists between the ages of 13 and 25. To participate in a panel, individuals must create user profiles requiring yearly verification and updates. Alchemer distributed the survey to a random subsample of these panelists, guided by quotas to match census demographics for age, gender, and region. Springtide added parental consent as a requirement for minors.

Though Alchemer’s panel is nationally representative, it and all online “opt-in” samples can suffer from phony respondents motivated by cash incentives. To offset this risk and maximize data quality, Springtide eliminated all identifiable phony responses from the dataset using various techniques. First, we excluded responses from individuals with IP addresses outside of the United States. Second, we excluded those who completed the survey too quickly (“speeders”), who responded with non-random patterns (“straightlining”), or who offered gibberish for the survey’s open-ended questions.

Survey Respondent Demographics

Age	
13 to 17	48%
18 to 25	53%
Gender	
Female	51%
Male	46%
Nonbinary	3%
Other	1%
Race or Ethnicity	
American Indian or Alaska Native	2%
Asian	5%
Black or African American	13%
Hispanic or Latino	14%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	< 1%
White	61%
Two or more races / ethnicities	3%
Other	1%
Region	
Midwest	22%
Northeast	17%
South	40%
West	21%

Third, we asked a set of “red herring” questions to identify and exclude disengaged respondents (e.g., those who said that they had no pets but later said they had three pets). Finally, we made logic-based exclusions, such as removing responses from those who reported being 14 and having full-time employment or a graduate degree.

The sample margin of error is +/-1.2%. Standard errors may be higher than estimated in statistical models because we do not use a simple random sample.

Second, Springtide interviewed in-depth 76 US residents ages 13 to 25. Interview questions explored understandings of civic life, identity, engagement, and conversation as well as the intersection of religion and politics.

To recruit interviewees, we employed three strategies: (1) A mailer sent to 10,000 households providing a link to an informed consent form and screening survey online. To capture political diversity, and informed by voting patterns from the last presidential election, we randomly selected zip codes from “blue” and “red” counties across 20 states in the continental US and Washington, D.C.—five states from each Census-designated region (Northeast, Midwest, West, and South). Age-targeted mailers went to a randomly selected sample of 250 households per zip code—125 households with teens between the ages of 13 to 17 and 125 households of young adults between the ages of 18 to 25. (2) Ads on social media targeting young adults ages 18 to 25 and parents of teens ages 13 to 17 describing the study’s purposes, inclusion criteria, compensation information, and link to an online screening survey. (3) Panel recruitment via RepData, in which respondents to a brief screener were invited to share contact information to participate in an interview. In total, Springtide interviewed 76 participants on Zoom between December 2023 and March 2024. Interviews lasted approximately one hour. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and subsequently coded using Atlas Ti.

Interview Respondent Demographics

Age	
13 to 17	11%
18 to 25	89%
Gender	
Female	71%
Male	26%
Nonbinary	3%
Race or Ethnicity	
Asian	11%
Black or African American	13%
Hispanic or Latino	9%
White	51%
Two or more races / ethnicities	14%
Other	1%
Region	
Midwest	29%
Northeast	25%
South	34%
West	12%

Other notes: An external institutional review board (“IRB”) called Sterling IRB reviewed and approved this study on October 6th, 2023 (IRB ID#1348). Sterling IRB operates under federal regulations established by the US Department of Health and Human Services to protect the rights of research participants. Across all methods, Springtide secured parental consent for minors.

This study was funded solely by Springtide Research Institute, founded in 2019 under the umbrella of Lasallian Educational and Research Initiatives (LERI), a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) member organization in the State of Minnesota, whose publishing roots date back to 1943. LERI is an expression of the Christian Brothers of De La Salle or the Lasallians, a Catholic lay religious congregation founded by Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the patron saint of teachers and a fierce advocate of the young. Our work draws inspiration from De La Salle’s passion for building communities oriented toward the good of young people, especially those on the margins. Our research findings and conclusions are never altered to accommodate other interests, including those of the Christian Brothers, churches, or government bodies and officials.

About Springtide

Compelled by the urgent desire to listen and attend to the lives of young people (ages 13-25), Springtide Research Institute is committed to understanding the distinct ways new generations experience and express community, identity, and meaning. We combine quantitative and qualitative research to reflect and amplify the lived realities of young people as they navigate shifting social, cultural, and religious landscapes.