

# FAQs

about the  
American  
Time Use  
Survey

U.S. Department of Labor  
Bureau of Labor Statistics  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
U.S. Census Bureau



## What is this survey about?

It measures how people in the United States divide their time among work, leisure, family responsibilities, and community commitments.

## Why is this survey important?

The information that you provide will help legislators, employers, and researchers to develop programs and policies that will ultimately help you.

## What kinds of questions will I be asked?

You'll be asked to recall how you spent your time during the 24-hour period on the day before your interview. You'll also be asked a few additional questions about your employment status.

## What types of questions does this survey answer?

A partial list includes:

- How much time do Americans spend working and commuting to work?
- How much time is spent caring for children?
- How are Americans spending their leisure time?

## What have we learned so far?

A sample of first-year findings:

- On days they worked, nearly 1 in 5 employed people did some or all of their work at home
- Women who were employed full-time report spent about 1.43 more hours per day doing housework and providing child care than men who were employed full-time
- Parents with children under 6 spent about 2 hours per day providing childcare as their main activity
- About half of Americans' leisure time was spent watching television

## Have any survey results been published?

Yes. Time use data have been featured in The Wall Street Journal, The Chicago Tribune, The New York Times, The Washington Post, CNN Money, CBS News, National Public Radio, and many other newspapers and media across the country.

## Why me? Why not interview someone else?

You were carefully selected to represent thousands of other people with demographic characteristics similar to yours. We need to talk with you because only you can report accurately how you use your time.

## What if I am retired or don't hold a job right now?

We're interested in how all Americans use their time. Your circumstances and choices are just as important as those of someone who has a job. We can only have a complete picture if we talk to people with different situations.

## What if I am old, or ill, or just don't do much?

Sometimes, increasing age or illness can limit one's activities. It's still very important to know how people use their time at different ages and in different circumstances.

## I just participated in the CPS. Why was I selected for another survey?

Because you participated in the CPS, we save time and money because we don't have to ask the same questions over again.

## How long will this take?

About 15 minutes.

## Why are you interviewing teenagers?

It's important to find out how teens balance the demands of school, work, household activities, and extracurricular activities.

## Why must I be interviewed on a specific day?

The activities people engage in vary from day to day. In order to capture a full picture of time use on all days of the week, we need to assign interview days in advance.

## Where can I find out more about this survey?

You can learn more about the American Time Use Survey at:  
[www.bls.gov/tus](http://www.bls.gov/tus)  
You may also contact the Census Bureau with further questions.  
**E-mail:** [ATUSinfo@census.gov](mailto:ATUSinfo@census.gov) **Phone:** 1-800-331-4706



# where?



# how?



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