



COVID-19 Survey Summary: July 30, 2021

The following is a summary of social, behavioral and economic survey research on COVID-19 released in the past week, as compiled for the Societal Experts Action Network ([SEAN](#)). Most surveys cited in this report are available in the [SEAN COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

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Pandemic-related polls this week find rising public concern about catching the coronavirus as the Delta variant spreads, with lingering doubts about vaccine safety and a substantial share of Americans expressing uncertainty that the vaccines will be effective against new strains.

While a dwindling share of unvaccinated adults say they want to get a shot, new data suggest that about four in 10 may be persuaded by social appeals. Most adults overall support vaccine requirements for activities such as travel, work or school, with a split on the question of religious exemptions.

Other new polls indicate a decline in approval for Joe Biden's handling of the pandemic, continued challenges for small businesses, broad support for extending some federal provisions enacted in response to the pandemic and continued reliance on health care providers, the CDC, and friends and family for vaccine information. As the Olympics proceed, just over a third of Americans think it was a bad idea to hold the Games this year.

One study shows the pandemic's impacts on how Americans spent their time last year, with more time spent alone, providing childcare and on leisure activities, offset by decreases in time spent working, traveling and shopping. Another projects that fewer than 8 percent of Americans will experience poverty in 2021, culminating a record three-year decline in the poverty rate.

Vaccines

The vast majority of Americans who want a coronavirus vaccine have received it, leaving a shrinking share of unvaccinated adults interested in getting a shot.

In one survey, 67 percent say they've received at least one dose, up a slight 3 points from mid-June. An additional 1 percent say they'll definitely get a shot and 5 percent probably will ([AP-NORC 7/15-7/19](#)). Similarly, in a mid-June poll, 67 percent reported having received a vaccine and 4 percent said they'd get one as soon as possible ([PRRI-IFYC 6/7-6/23](#)). Slightly more in a

third survey, 74 percent, say they've received at least one dose ([ABC-Ipsos 7/23-7/24](#)). Results generally align with [CDC estimates](#) that vaccinations have flattened at just under 70 percent.

Among groups, more than eight in 10 Democrats (83 percent) and adults age 60 and older (84 percent) say they've gotten a shot, vs. about half of Republicans (51 percent) and 18- to 29-year-olds (53 percent). Vaccine uptake also remains higher among college graduates than those who do not have a degree, 76 vs. 62 percent ([AP-NORC 7/15-7/19](#)).

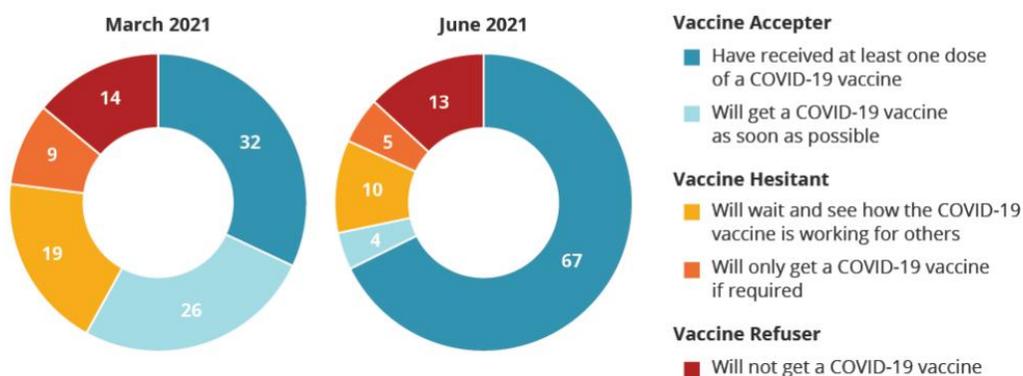
Vaccine Intentions

The AP-NORC data find 11 percent leaning against getting a shot, down from 17 percent in late January, and 15 percent ruling it out altogether, largely unchanged ([AP-NORC 7/15-7/19](#)).

Similarly, in data from June, 15 percent were hesitant – saying they'd wait to get the vaccine or would do so only if required – and 13 percent said they definitely would not get a shot. The hesitant share was nearly halved from March, while the number of refusers held steady. The rest were “vaccine accepters,” meaning they'd received a shot or wanted one as soon as possible – 71 percent, up from 58 percent in March.

FIGURE 1.1 Most Americans Report They Are Vaccinated And Hesitancy Is Down, But No Decline in Refusers

subtitle: Percent who:



Source: PRRI-IFYC March 2021 Survey, June 2021 Survey.

Acceptance was highest among Americans with a postgraduate degree (92 percent), age 65 and older (+86 percent) and Democrats (+85 percent), while lowest among rural residents (59 percent), those with no more than a high school diploma (61 percent), those younger than 50 (64 percent), Republicans (63 percent) and Black adults (63 percent). Acceptance grew among all racial demographic groups by at least 10 percentage points from March, with the largest gains among Hispanic adults (+19 points), Republicans (+18 points) and Black people (+17 points).

Among religious groups, Jews (85 percent), Hispanic Catholics (80 percent), white Catholics (79 percent) and those in other non-Christian religions (78 percent) had the highest levels of vaccine acceptance. It was lowest, at 56 percent apiece, among evangelical white Protestants and Hispanic Protestants. Hispanic Catholics saw the largest gains, up 24 points from March to June.

While the bulk of changes in vaccine acceptance came from decreases in hesitancy, there was some movement among groups in outright refusal to get a vaccine. Thirteen percent of Black Protestants ruled it out in June, down from 19 percent in March, as did 19 percent of Republicans, down from 23 percent. Evangelical white Protestants remained the most vaccine resistant, with 24 percent refusing to get a jab ([PRRI-IFYC 6/7-6/23](#)).

Motivators & Deterrents

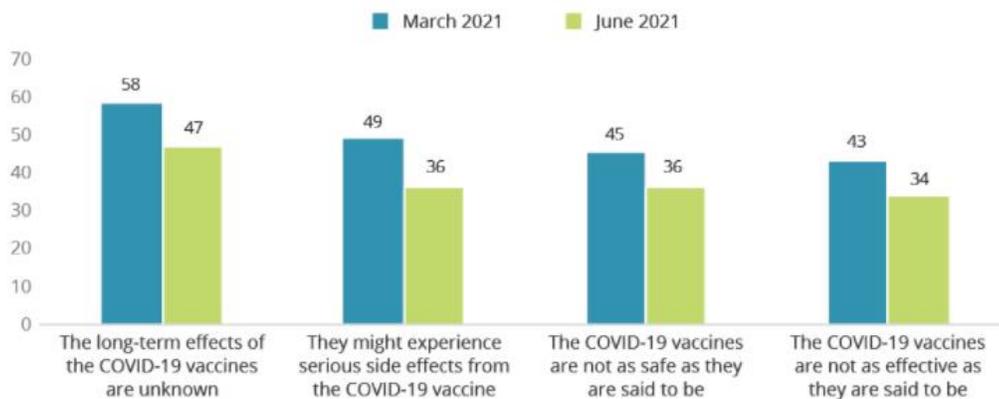
In June, sizable minorities of unvaccinated adults indicated that potential benefits of getting the vaccine would make them more likely to get a shot. About four in 10 said “making a decision that protects human life” and “helping to protect the most vulnerable members of your community” would make them more likely to get vaccinated. Thirty-five percent were receptive to being able to visit safely with family and friends; it was 27 percent for no longer needing to wear a face mask and 18 percent for participating safely in religious activities.

Chosen from a list, top reasons for not getting vaccinated were thinking that the seriousness of COVID-19 was overblown (24 percent) and distrust in the health care system (23 percent). About one in 10 selected lack of time to get vaccinated or to deal with possible side effects, or inability to get vaccinated because of a health condition. Fewer than 5 percent selected inability to get childcare or not having a reliable way to get to a vaccination site.

Doubts about the safety and efficacy of the vaccines eased but remained substantial. Among all adults, in June, 47 percent expressed at least some worry that long-term effects were unknown, 36 percent said they worried about experiencing serious side effects or that the vaccines are not as safe as expected and a third were worried that the vaccines are not as effective as they’re said to be. These were down by 9 to 13 points from March. Worry on each was far higher among vaccine-hesitant people ([PRRI-IFYC 6/7-6/23](#)).

FIGURE 4.1 Americans’ Concerns About Potential Complications From COVID-19 Vaccines, March-June 2021

Percent who are at least somewhat worried that:



Sources: PRRI-IFYC March 2021 Survey, June 2021 Survey.

Faith-Based Approaches

Minorities of unvaccinated people express openness to faith-based initiatives. Seventeen percent of hesitant adults and 8 percent of refusers said they'd be more likely to get a vaccine if a healthcare professional from a trusted local religious community addressed concerns about it. About one in 10 hesitant adults, and 5 percent of refusers or fewer, were open to other approaches, including encouragement from a religious leader, finding out that a trusted religious leader received a shot or a trusted religious community holding a forum on vaccine safety. In all, 26 percent of vaccine-hesitant Americans found any one of 10 faith-based initiatives in the survey persuasive, reaching 38 percent of those who attend religious services at least a few times a year. Among refusers, 12 percent were open to one or more of these approaches ([PRRI-IFYC 6/7-6/23](#)).

Concerns & Outlooks

Infection worries have grown, though remain below their springtime levels. One survey finds 27 percent extremely or very worried that they or someone in their household will catch the coronavirus, up from a pandemic low of 21 percent in mid-June. An additional 27 percent are somewhat worried, leaving 45 percent not too or not at all worried, down 9 points from last month.

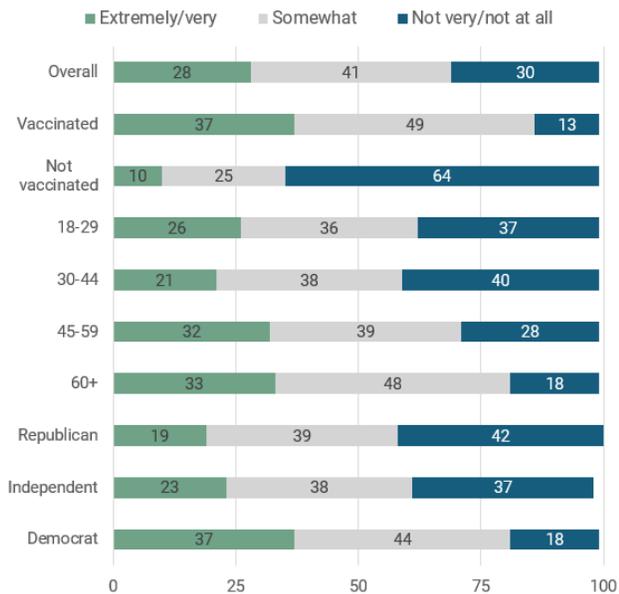
Confidence that vaccines will be effective against new variants of the coronavirus is muted. Just 28 percent are extremely or very confident in this; an additional 41 percent are somewhat confident, with 30 percent doubtful.

Even among vaccinated adults, just 37 percent express a high degree of confidence in the vaccines' effectiveness against new variants; that drops to 10 percent of the unvaccinated. Confidence is higher among Democrats and older Americans vs, Republicans and younger adults ([AP-NORC 7/15-7/19](#)).

Two other studies used scales with four rather than five response options, and differing reference groups. In one, six in 10 say they're very or somewhat concerned that "you or someone you know" will be infected. In the other, 45 percent in June (before the July surge) were very or somewhat worried that "you or someone in your family" would be infected. Both were down from March ([ABC-Ipsos 7/23-7/24](#), [PRRI-IFYC 6/7-6/23](#)).

How confident are you that COVID-19 vaccines will be effective against new variants?

Percent of adults



Questions: How confident are you that COVID-19 vaccines will be effective against new variants?
Source: AP-NORC poll conducted July 15-19, 2021 with 1,308 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

AP | NORC

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Seventeen percent in an open-ended question call the pandemic their most pressing worry, down from 57 percent in March 2020 and 39 percent in August 2020. While sharply lower, it's still the top concern, followed by paying bills and the economy, each cited by 11 percent. Fewer, 5 to 7 percent, mention health care costs, job security or inflation ([Monmouth 7/21-7/26](#)).

Olympics

Thirty-six percent of Americans express less interest in the Tokyo Olympics than in the 2016 games. Among them, in an open-ended question, 30 percent cite a pandemic-related reason and 34 percent mention politics.

Fifty-five percent overall think it was a good idea to hold the Olympics this year, Of the rest, 24 percent say the Games should have been postponed again and 11 percent think they should have been cancelled ([Monmouth 7/21-7/26](#)).

Vaccine Requirements

In June data – again, before the current surge in cases – 56 percent supported requiring proof of vaccination for people to participate in activities such as travel, work or school, with 42 percent opposed. This ranged from seven in 10 vaccine-acceptant Americans to 24 percent of the vaccine hesitant and 7 percent of refusers. It was 77 percent among Democrats, 56 percent among independents and 37 percent among Republicans.

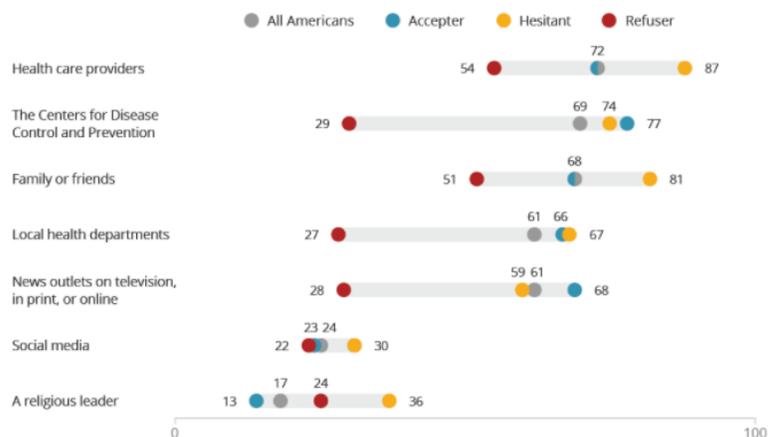
Fifty-two percent overall favored allowing people to refuse to get a vaccine if it violated their religious beliefs, down a slight 4 points from March. At the same time, Americans opposed religious exemptions for public school students, 57-42 percent ([PRRI-IFYC 6/7-6/23](#)).

Sources of Vaccine Information

Again in newly released polling from June, about seven in 10 adults said they turned to their health care providers, the CDC and family or friends for information on the vaccines. Six in 10 looked to local health departments and news outlets (online, print or TV). Far fewer, 24 percent, used social media as a source of information and just 17 percent turned to a religious leader.

Among more persuadable unvaccinated Americans (those who wanted to wait and see or who would get a shot if

FIGURE 3.3 Americans Turning to Various Sources for Vaccine Information
Percent who would or did turn at least a little to the following sources for vaccine information:



Source: PRRI-IFYC June 2021 Survey.

required), 87 percent looked to their healthcare provider for information, 81 percent their family or friends and 74 percent the CDC. This group also was more apt than the general public to turn to a religious leader (36 percent) or social media (30 percent) for information.

Vaccine refusers were far less apt to use any of these for vaccine information, whether health care providers (54 percent), family or friends (51 percent) the CDC (29 percent), local health departments (27 percent) or news outlets (28 percent). ([PRRI-IFYC 6/7-6/23](#))

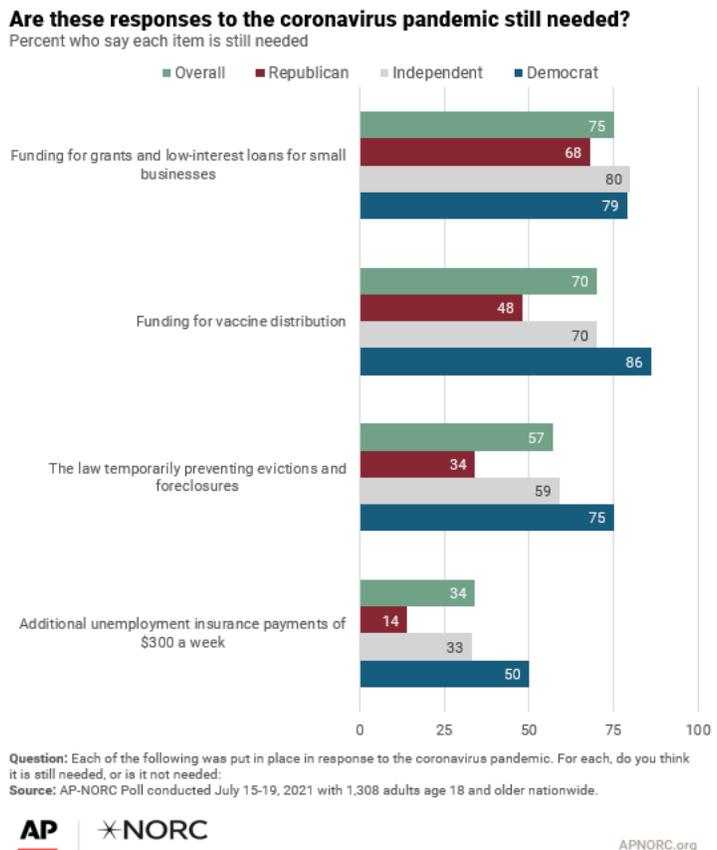
Government Response

While a majority, 66 percent, approve of Joe Biden’s handling of the pandemic, that is down 6 points since March to a low since he took office ([AP-NORC 7/15-7/19](#)). In another survey, a similar 63 percent approve, down 9 points since late March ([ABC-Ipsos 7/23-7/24](#)).

More than twice as many adults pick the Democratic Party over the Republican Party in trust to do a better job handling the pandemic, 46-20 percent. The rest split between trusting both equally (15 percent) or neither (18 percent).

Majorities favor continuing some provisions that were enacted in response to the pandemic, with extended unemployment benefits an exception. Seventy-five percent think funding for grants and low-interest loans for small businesses still are needed, 70 percent say the same for funding for vaccine distribution, as do fewer, but still 57 percent, for temporarily suspending evictions and foreclosures. Conversely, 65 percent say additional \$300 weekly unemployment insurance payments no longer are needed.

Continued support for small businesses earns bipartisan backing, seen as necessary by 79 percent of Democrats and 68 percent of Republicans. Views on other measures are divided, with Democrats 41 points more apt than Republicans to favor extending a nationwide moratorium on evictions, 75 vs. 34 percent; 38 points more likely to view funding for vaccine distribution as necessary, 86 vs. 48 percent; and 36 points more apt to think additional unemployment insurance still is needed, 50 vs. 14 percent ([AP-NORC 7/15-7/19](#)).



Another study finds that the effects of several measures put in place during the pandemic, particularly federal stimulus checks, increased food stamps and expanded unemployment insurance, should contribute to a sharp decline in poverty. It projects that the poverty rate will fall to 7.7 percent in 2021, down from 13.9 percent in 2018, a nearly 45 percent decrease. If so, the decline would be nearly three times the previous three-year record. The authors used the Supplemental Poverty Measure as the threshold for poverty and incorporated expected levels of employment, income, safety-net benefits, taxes and stimulus checks into their model ([Urban Institute 7/28](#)).

Daily Life in the Pandemic

The pandemic changed how Americans typically spent their day. Adults spent an average of 10 waking hours a day at home in 2020, compared with fewer than eight hours in 2019. Time spent alone rose by about one hour per day, to an average of 7.0 hours. People spent more time on leisure and sports (+32 minutes to an average of 5.5 hours), including more time watching TV (+19 minutes to an average 3.1 hours), while spending less time traveling (-26 minutes to 47 minutes) and shopping (-5 minutes to 17 minutes). Americans also devoted, on average, 17 fewer minutes a day working in 2020, chiefly because of the sharp rise in unemployment. Employed adults spent about the same amount of time working in 2020 as in 2019.

People older than 55 were especially apt to be alone in their waking hours, averaging about 8 hours or more per day by themselves, more than any other age group.

Parents were particularly affected. Those with children age 6-12 spent an additional 1.6 hours a day looking after their kids while also doing other things, such as work or household chores, to an average of 6.0 hours in 2020. On days when parents worked on educational activities for their children, time spent on these activities rose by about an hour to an average of 2.2 hours ([Bureau of Labor Statistics 5/20-12/31 2020](#)).

Educational Impacts

A new study reveals significant impacts of the pandemic in achievement in reading and math among students in third through eighth grade during the last school year. Using assessment data from about 5.5 million public school students, it found that advancements in both subjects and across all grades advanced by smaller margins than in 2018-2019. What gains occurred were chiefly in the first half of the year, stalling as setbacks accrued. While all students were impacted, learning losses were larger among Black, Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native students compared with their Asian and white peers ([NWEA 7/28](#)).

Small Business Impacts

A weekly tracking poll of small businesses finds that while impacts of the pandemic have eased substantially since the start of the year, progress has stalled and challenges remain.

- Twenty-two percent say the unavailability of employees is affecting their operating capacity, up 8 points since late March to match its high in data since August 2020.
- Fifteen percent say the availability of supplies is impacting their business's operating capacity, up 5 points since March to match its high.
- Twenty percent saw decreased revenues in the past week, up slightly from 18 percent in early July, though still less than half its level in early January.
- A quarter report large negative effects of the pandemic on their business, largely steady since May, albeit half what it was in April 2020 ([U.S. Census Bureau 7/12-7/18](#)).

State Results

In California, newly released results from March and April add to evidence of broad disparities in pandemic impacts. Fifty-seven percent of Californians said they'd been tested for the coronavirus at some point, with 15 percent of them saying they tested positive. Hispanic adults (25 percent) were far more apt than whites (8 percent) and Asians (6 percent) to have tested positive. (There was an insufficient sample of Black people who'd been tested for analysis.) Those with household incomes below the federal poverty level were twice as likely as those in top-income households to test positive, 25 vs. 12 percent. Among adults who had or thought they had COVID-19, insured Californians were twice as likely as those without health insurance to have contacted a health professional about it, 62 vs. 31 percent.

Results also indicate comparatively low vaccine hesitancy among California adults. Twelve percent said they would not get vaccinated against the coronavirus. This peaked among Black people (22 percent), those of multiple racial or ethnic backgrounds (21 percent), those with household incomes below the federal poverty level (18 percent) and those who have a high school diploma but have not attended college (18 percent) ([UCLA Center for Health Policy Research 7/20](#)).

In New Hampshire, 76 percent approve of Gov. Chris Sununu's handling of the pandemic, up 11 points in three months to the most since October. Just one in 10 thinks the coronavirus is the most important problem facing the state today, from a list of nine items offered; that's down 26 points since March to a pandemic low in data since July 2020. Twice as many (19 percent) now cite jobs/economy as the most important, up 7 points ([UNH 7/15-7/19](#)).

International Results

Ninety percent of Chileans say they've received at least one dose of a vaccine, unchanged this week, with 82 percent receiving two doses. Concern about catching the coronavirus is down 14 points since early July, including 8 points just this week, to 47 percent, a low since March 2020. After falling in mid-May, approval of the government's handling of the coronavirus is rising: It's now at 53 percent, up 10 points in a month ([Cadem 7/21-7/23](#)).

In Great Britain, 96 percent say they've received a vaccine or likely would get a one if offered, up 18 points since the beginning of the country's vaccination program in mid-December 2020. This poll was conducted in the days before the country lifted most remaining coronavirus legal restrictions July 19. Despite the loosening rules, the number who expected that life would not return to normal for more than a year increased 4 points in a week to 32 percent, while the number who felt that life would return to normal in six months or fewer fell 5 points to 15 percent. Nine in 10 continue to consider it important to wear a mask while shopping and to socially distance outside their bubble ([Office for National Statistics 7/14-7/18](#)).

Brazilians' outlook has improved significantly since January; half think life will improve in the next six months, up 14 points, while 11 points fewer think life will get worse, now 9 percent. Ninety-four percent say they wear a mask when leaving the home, fairly steady since March. Though the coronavirus situation in the country has improved since May, there still are more than 1,000 [deaths](#) per day (on a rolling seven-day average). Half the country blames the situation on President Jair Bolsonaro; second-most mentioned (at 24 percent) is people who don't follow the rules ([PoderData 7/19-7/21](#)).

Sixty percent of Mexicans think a new wave of coronavirus infections is coming, up 16 points since June. Twenty-three percent call the pandemic the country's main problem, double what it was in June. Sixty-two percent don't think students should be returning to in-person classes, while 36 percent approve of the return to school ([El Financiero 7/15-7/16](#)).

In Bulgaria, just two in 10 have gotten at least one dose of a vaccine; 27 percent say they intend to get vaccinated and about four in 10 do not plan to get the shot. Hesitancy is slightly lower than its level in mid-February, 48 percent ([Gallup International Bulgaria 6/30-7/7](#)).

In Kenya, the pandemic ranks third in a list of problems facing the country, cited by 16 percent as the main problem, after the cost of living and unemployment, 27 percent each. A comparison of current and pre-pandemic monthly income shows losses across all income levels, especially among those with lower earnings. Two-thirds of those in the lowest income bracket were earning more before the pandemic ([Tifa 6/24-6/28](#)).

Additional U.S. and international poll results are available at the [COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

Summary for SEAN by [Langer Research Associates](#).