

August 2021

Education/Economic Mobility Survey Summary

Produced by [Langer Research Associates](#)

The following is a summary of random-sample U.S. survey research on K-12 and post-secondary education and economic mobility released from late July to late August 2021. This project is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Key Takeaways

Education

A new study finds that declines in public school enrollment during the pandemic peaked in districts with remote-only learning, and, for kindergarten, in lower-income areas. Another finds teens almost three times as apt to say the pandemic has had a negative impact on their academics as a positive one.

More encouragingly, seven in 10 school districts plan to offer mental health programming this fall, and majorities will offer computing devices and hotspots or internet subsidies, with both more widespread than they were pre-pandemic.

With the surge in cases caused by the coronavirus Delta variant still ongoing, next steps for schools are far from clear. Polls released in the past month find that most parents expect their child to return to mainly in-person classes, but six in 10 want more information about what specific COVID-19 safety measures their school is enacting. Mask mandates win broad support, with more mixed results on vaccine mandates and intended uptake.

Among results on post-secondary education, a vast majority of 14- to 18-year-olds, 82 percent, see graduating from college as important to them personally. Fewer, six in 10, say it's definitely or probably worth the cost, with just two in 10 saying this definitely is the case, demonstrating a gap between college desirability and affordability.

Economic Mobility

Separately, surveys on economic mobility continue to show a mix of progress and challenges. In one study, the share of Americans rating their personal finances positively reached its highest in the pandemic era and essentially matched its peak in 35 years of ongoing weekly data, in accord with improved employment figures and strong stock market results.

At the same time, high housing costs and inflation concerns persist. One study suggests that affordable housing is out of reach for many individual U.S. workers; in another, 15 percent of

current renters report being behind on their rent payments. Majorities of registered voters say they face financial hardship given increasing housing, gas and grocery expenses.

In terms of government action, 62 percent support a \$3.5 trillion spending bill “on social programs such as child care, education, family tax breaks, and expanding Medicare for seniors.”

Detailed results of these and other new surveys on K-12 and post-secondary education and economic mobility follow.

K-12 Education

Additional analyses of K-12 public school enrollment data enlarge upon findings reported [last month](#). Districts that chose fully remote learning saw disenrollment rates 42 percent steeper than those with fully in-person learning, -3.7 percent vs. -2.6 percent. In all, an estimated 1.1 million disenrolled; the authors attribute 300,000 of these to remote-only classes.

About 10,000 public schools saw kindergarten enrollment drop by at least 20 percent. Declines were 28 percent larger in neighborhoods with average household incomes of \$35,000 or less, compared with others. That means students in poorer neighborhoods will be more likely either to miss kindergarten or to enroll later in larger-than-usual class sizes with mixed-age cohorts. ([Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis 8/7](#); [The New York Times 8/7](#))

While student disenrollment has been substantial, teacher attrition has not been worse overall than it was before the pandemic. Six percent of public school teachers and principals retired or resigned at the end of the 2020-2021 school year, commensurate with pre-pandemic levels. Two in 10 districts reported higher-than-normal teacher turnover, while 15 percent said it decreased.

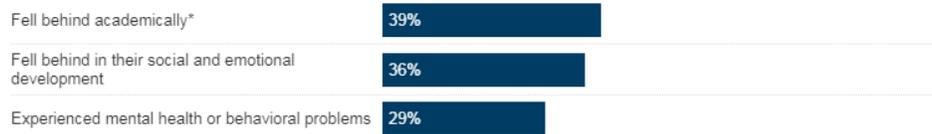
Seven in 10 also reported that pandemic-related federal aid has had a net positive impact on 2021-2022 funding compared with before the pandemic; 31 percent called this a large impact, 40 percent a small one. (The rest divide about evenly between having the same funding, less, or being unsure.) Still, relief is assumed to be temporary: Thirty-seven percent expect their district to hit a fiscal cliff after federal pandemic aid expires. ([RAND 6/1-7/2](#))

Pandemic Effects on Learning

In data mostly from mid- to late July, 55 percent of parents said that their child experienced at least one of four challenges in the past year as a result of the pandemic, including falling behind academically (39 percent), falling behind in social and emotional development (36 percent), experiencing mental health or behavioral problems (29 percent) or having to take on new duties caring for siblings or family members (20 percent). Parents whose child attended school at least partially online were more apt to say their child fell behind or had mental health or behavioral problems than were parents whose child attended school all or mostly in person.

About Four In Ten Parents Say Their Child Fell Behind Academically Due To The Pandemic, About Three In Ten Say Their Child Experienced Mental Health Or Behavioral Problems

Percent of parents who say that, as a result of the pandemic, at least one of their children...



NOTE: *Asked of parents or guardians of children ages 5 to 17. See topline for full question wording.
SOURCE: KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor: Parents And The Pandemic (Jul. 15-Aug. 2, 2021). • [Download PNG](#)

[KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor](#)

Twenty-seven percent of parents also reported that their child experienced difficulty concentrating on schoolwork or completing assignments in the past year as a result of the pandemic. (Falling behind academically and having to take on new duties were asked of parents of children age 5-17; the other questions, of any child under 18.) ([KFF 7/15-8/2](#))

In May-June data, teens themselves were much more likely to say the pandemic has had a negative rather than a positive impact on their academics. Forty-nine percent of 14- to 18-year-olds cited a negative impact; 18 percent, a positive impact. A third reported no impact either way. ([Washington Post-Ipsos 5/7-6/15](#))

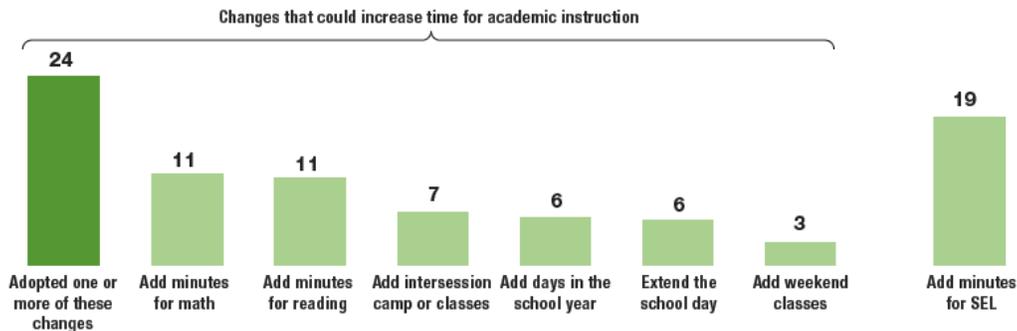
In terms of economic impacts, a study estimates that pandemic-related learning loss among K-12 students will reduce GDP by 3.6 percent by 2050. It says extending the 2021-2022 school year by one month would limit that to 3.1 percent, a \$75 billion expense with a net present value gain of \$1.2 trillion over three decades, for a \$16 return for every \$1 invested. ([Penn Wharton Budget Model 5/17](#))

As things stand, 8 percent of adults in households with a public school student report that a child attended a summer school program specifically to help catch up with lost learning time during the pandemic, and 4 percent worked with a private tutor for pandemic catch-up. Six percent attended a traditional summer school program because of poor grades; 6 percent, a school-led summer camp for subjects like math, science or reading. ([U.S. Census Bureau 8/4-8/16](#))

More broadly, 91 percent of school districts offered some summer programming. Twenty-four percent offered families a “do-over” year, in which students would stay in the same grade from 2020-2021 for the 2021-2022 school year. That rises to 35 percent in high-poverty districts.

Four in 10 districts surveyed in June reported changes to school schedules or calendars for 2021-2022. Nineteen percent were increasing time for social and emotional learning. Eleven percent planned to add time for math, 11 percent for reading. Seven percent were adding intersession camp or classes; 6 percent were adding days in the school year, 6 percent extending the school day and 3 percent, adding weekend classes. ([RAND 6/1-7/2](#))

Percentage of Districts Planning Schedule Changes for 2021–2022



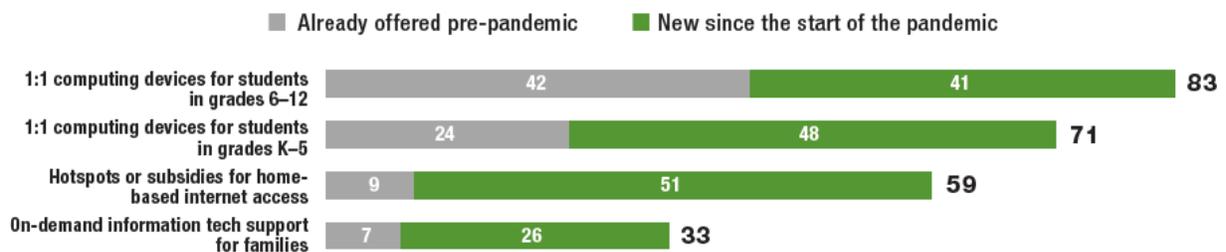
NOTES: This figure depicts response data from the survey question: "Which of the following changes, if any, to the school schedule or calendar will one or more of your schools adopt for 2021–2022? In your responses, please note the 2021–2022 school schedule offerings that you did not already have in place in 2019–2020 before the pandemic began" (n = 291).

School Offerings

Seven in 10 districts in June reported plans to offer mental health programming. Half overall did so pre-pandemic; it's new since the start of the pandemic for 19 percent. Such programming is more prevalent in suburban districts (81 percent) than in urban (74 percent) or rural (64 percent) ones.

School districts are especially more likely to offer personal computing devices and technology-related services for their students now than they were pre-pandemic. Eighty-three percent planned to offer computing devices for students in grades 6–12; for half of them, this is new since the start of the pandemic. Seventy-one percent planned to offer devices for students in grades K–5, new for two-thirds of them. Fifty-nine percent planned to provide hotspots or subsidize families' purchases of home internet service, something just 9 percent did pre-pandemic, and 33 percent planned to offer on-demand information tech support for families, up from 7 percent.

Percentage of Districts Offering Technology-Related Services in 2021–2022 and Whether These Services Are New Since the Start of the Pandemic



NOTES: This figure depicts response data from the survey questions: "Which of the following services, if any, do you plan to offer to families in 2021–2022?" and "Which of these services has your [district/CMO] newly offered since the start of the pandemic (i.e., that you did not offer in 2019–2020 prior to the pandemic)?" (n = 289). Bars may not sum to total because of rounding.

Among other services, 22 percent of districts planned to offer weekend meals for students or families. As many will offer school-based health clinics and 14 percent will offer telehealth sessions for students. ([RAND 6/1-7/2](#))

Next Steps for Schools

In data collected in July, 76 percent of K-12 parents expected their children to return to the same school schedule they had before the pandemic began. Seventeen percent were unsure and 7 percent expected not. ([Gallup 7/19-7/26](#))

Asked another way, among parents of 12- to 17-year-old pupils, 87 percent expected their child to attend at least mostly in person in the new school year. Eight percent expected a mix of online and in-person learning; 5 percent, at least mostly online. Results were similar among parents of five- to 11-year-olds. ([KFF 7/15-8/2](#))

Similarly, in another study, 89 percent of parents of children age 5-18 planned to send their child to school in person at least one day per week this fall, up 5 points from May to July. It was about as high (90 percent) among parents of children under 12 not yet eligible to be vaccinated. White parents (94 percent) were more apt to say so than Hispanic (83 percent) or Black (82 percent) parents. ([RAND 7/16-7/29](#))

That said, the share of registered voters who think their local public schools should reopen fully in person as usual dropped from 51 percent in May to 36 percent in early August. A third said they should open in person with social distancing and masks and 21 percent favored a combination of in-person and remote learning. Seven percent volunteered that they should be fully remote, up from 1 percent in May. ([Fox News 8/7-8/10](#))

Only 27 percent of parents of school-age children said in late July that they knew in detail what COVID-19 safety measures their youngest child's school was enacting this fall; an additional 42 percent knew somewhat about this, with three in 10 unaware. Six in 10 wanted to know more.

Majorities of parents said schools need ventilation in classrooms (71 percent), most teachers vaccinated (61 percent) and a minimum of three feet of distancing (53 percent) for their youngest school-age child to be safe.

Half of parents supported their child getting tested if there were voluntary, free, weekly COVID-19 testing at their school, steady since May; three in 10 would not support this and two in 10 were unsure. ([RAND 7/16-7/29](#))

Masks in Schools

Americans by more than a 2-1 margin support their local school district requiring everyone in schools to wear masks, 69-30 percent. There's essentially no difference between parents and non-parents, but a wide partisan divide – 92 percent of Democrats support a mask mandate, compared with 44 percent of Republicans. ([Axios-Ipsos 8/13-8/16](#))

Asked another way, about six in 10 favor requiring teachers and students age 12 and older to wear masks while in person at K-12 schools. Support is higher among non-parents than parents. ([AP-NORC 8/12-8/16](#))

In another study, 55 percent in late July said the CDC's recommendation that all public school students, staff and teachers wear masks in school regardless of vaccination status was a good idea. It was the same among K-12 public school parents. ([Quinnipiac 7/27-8/2](#))

In a survey fielded before the CDC recommendation, two-thirds of adults and 60 percent of K-12 parents supported a mask mandate in schools for unvaccinated teachers and staff. Support was slightly lower for requiring masks of unvaccinated students, 64 percent among all adults and 57 percent among K-12 parents ([Gallup 7/19-7/26](#)). In another survey, 63 percent of K-12 parents favored a mask mandate for unvaccinated students and staff. ([KFF 7/15-8/2](#)).

Vaccination status is linked to such views. Among parents of 12- to 18-year-olds who have been vaccinated, 84 percent supported a mask mandate for unvaccinated students, compared with 35 percent of those whose child has not been vaccinated ([Gallup 7/19-7/26](#)). Similarly, another poll found 40-point gaps between vaccinated adults and unvaccinated adults on teacher and student mask mandates alike ([AP-NORC 8/12-8/16](#)).

Fifty-four percent of registered voters say schools should be allowed to require teachers and students to wear a mask or provide proof of a vaccine for in-person learning. An additional 13 percent volunteer that it depends, with 31 percent opposed. ([Fox News 8/7-8/10](#))

Seventy-seven percent oppose state governments withholding funding from school districts or local governments that implement mask requirements; 22 percent support this. Fifty-seven percent are strongly opposed. ([Axios-Ipsos 8/13-8/16](#))

An analysis of reopening guidance in the 50 states and Washington, D.C., in early August found that 29 were recommending masks for students in schools. Ten mandated masks, 9 banned mask mandates and three had a different or no mask policy. ([CRPE 7/29-8/6](#))

Coronavirus Vaccination

Majorities of adults favor requiring teachers (59 percent) and students (55 percent) to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to work in or attend K-12 schools in person. Parents are less apt to favor each, with sharp gaps between non-parents and parents on vaccine mandates for teachers (63 vs. 44 percent) and students 12 and older (60 vs. 42 percent) alike. ([AP-NORC 8/12-8/16](#))

A similar pattern appeared in a July survey; 47 percent of parents of K-12 students supported requiring vaccines of high school students, vs. 60 percent of all adults ([Gallup 7/19-7/26](#)). Asked another way, among parents of 12- to 17-year-olds, 42 percent said their child's school should require students to be vaccinated. It was about the same, 44 percent, assuming full FDA vaccine approval.

In terms of current measures, just 7 percent of parents of 12- to 17-year-olds in July said their child's school required vaccination for in-person learning. Eleven percent said the school asked about their child's vaccination status. About four in 10 alike were encouraged by their school to get their child vaccinated or were given information on how to do so. ([KFF 7/15-8/2](#))

Just 4 percent of school districts reported in June that district staff were required to disclose their vaccination status; 38 percent encouraged but didn't require this and 28 percent weren't collecting data. Forty-six percent said their district collected records only for staff vaccinated at a district site. ([RAND 6/1-7/2](#))

Parents' intentions to have their child vaccinated remain low. In a July study, 57 percent of parents of school-age children agreed they'd get their child vaccinated when it's authorized and available for their age group; 28 percent disagreed and 15 percent were noncommittal. Eight in 10 vaccinated parents said they'd do so, compared with one in 10 unvaccinated parents. ([RAND 7/16-7/29](#))

Among parents of five- to-11-year-olds, 26 percent in July planned to get them vaccinated right away when there's a vaccine authorized and available for their age group. Four in 10 planned to wait and see, one in 10 said they'd act only if required and a quarter ruled it out entirely.

More parents of 12- to 17-year-olds, 41 percent, said their child had received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine; an additional 6 percent intended to get their child vaccinated right away. Of the rest, 23 percent said they'd wait and see; 9 percent, act only if required and 20 percent said no. ([KFF 7/15-8/2](#))

In terms of actual uptake, as of Aug. 30, 58 percent of 16- to 17-year-olds and 49 percent of 12- to 15-year-olds had received at least one dose in CDC data. ([CDC 8/25](#))

The Broader K-12 Picture

Given nine items to consider when moving to another community, high-quality public schools was second-most apt to be rated as extremely or very important, cited by 61 percent overall and 83 percent among parents with minor children. ([Washington Post-Schar School 7/6-7/21](#))

Sixty-one percent also said K-12 public schools have a positive effect on the way things are going in the country. Seventy-seven percent of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents said so, vs. 42 percent of Republicans and GOP leaners. ([Pew Research Center 7/8-7/18](#))

State Results on Education

Florida. Six in 10 Florida adults support requiring students, teachers and staff to wear masks in schools. Offered an alternative proposition, 54 percent said schools should be able to require masks while 44 percent said parents should decide.

Seven in 10 say Gov. Ron DeSantis's proposal to withhold school leaders' salaries for requiring students to wear masks is a bad idea, including majorities of Democrats (91 percent), independents (70 percent) and Republicans (52 percent) alike. Six in 10 support requiring teachers to be vaccinated, including 89 percent of Democrats, dropping to 58 percent of independents and 43 percent of Republicans. ([Quinnipiac 8/17-8/21](#))

Tennessee. 2021 Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program results show declines in the share of K-12 students meeting grade-level expectations. This year, 38 percent were proficient in science (down 19 points from 2018, the most recent year science exams were administered); a quarter were proficient in math (down 12 points from 2019); three in 10, English language arts (down 5 points from 2019) and 36 percent, social studies (down 3 points from 2019). (No TCAP tests were administered in 2020.) Students with fully in-person learning were more likely than those with fully remote learning to be proficient; those in hybrid models were in between. ([Tennessee Department of Education 8/2](#))

Texas. Seventy-two percent of Texans support mask requirements in Texas K-12 schools, including a majority (54 percent) who strongly support this. At the same time, half approve of the way Gov. Greg Abbott, a mask mandate opponent, is handling plans for sending children back to school.

For the upcoming school year, about two-thirds of parents feel that their child would be safe attending school in person. Large majorities support requiring schools to notify parents if a child or teacher in their child's classroom (94 percent) or school (88 percent) tests positive for the coronavirus. Eighty percent support providing virtual learning as an option; 68 percent, requiring teachers and administrators to be vaccinated before returning in person and 60 percent, requiring vaccination for students 12 and older. About eight in 10 favor requiring students to quarantine if they test positive.

Substantial shares of Texas parents say their child's mental health has suffered (47 percent) or that they've fallen behind in school (40 percent) because of the pandemic. Half don't have time during the day to help their child with remote learning.

Separately, about seven in 10 Texas adults and parents alike support teaching high school students about racism and its impact in the United States. ([Spectrum News/Ipsos 8/6-8/13](#))

Post-secondary Success

Two late July surveys differed on vaccine mandates for college students. In one, 63 percent of adults supported requiring college students to be vaccinated against the coronavirus, with 37 percent opposed ([Gallup 7/19-7/26](#)). In another, adults divided 48-49 percent, support-oppose, on universities requiring their students to receive a COVID-19 vaccine ([Quinnipiac 7/27-8/2](#)). The difference may come down to question wording, with higher support for requirements of students than requirements from universities.

A majority in a July poll supported making tuition at public colleges and universities free for all U.S. students, 63 percent, with 36 percent opposed. Support for free tuition was higher among younger adults, racial and ethnic minorities, women and those with a high school education or less compared with older adults, whites, men and college graduates. There's a partisan divide as well, with support at 85 percent among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents vs. 36 percent among Republicans and Republican leaners. ([Pew Research Center 7/8-7/18](#))

There's also a wide partisan gap in perceptions of college and universities' effects on how things are going in the country. Seventy-six percent of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents say they have a positive effect, compared with 34 percent of Republicans and Republican leaners. Overall, 57 percent of adults think colleges and universities have a positive effect; 41 percent, a negative one. ([Pew Research Center 7/8-7/18](#))

Teens themselves see graduating from college as important to them personally; 48 percent called it very important while another 34 percent called it fairly important in May-June data.

Whether it's worth the cost is another question. Eighteen percent of teens said getting a four-year college degree definitely is worth the cost, as did 21 percent of their parents. About four in 10 teens and parents alike said it's probably worth the cost, about three in 10 said probably not and about one in 10 definitely not. (Five percent of the teens surveyed were in college at the time; 2 percent were not currently in school.) ([Washington Post-Ipsos 5/7-6/15](#))

State Results

California. Declines in financial aid applications submitted by Californians underscore potential long-term pandemic impacts. In 2021, Free Application for Federal Student Aid applications are down 3 percent from their 2019 level, while Dream Act applications are down 16 percent. Declines are among both prospective first-time and returning students. ([PPIC 8/20](#))

Pathways

State and Local Results

California. A new analysis of career education students at California community colleges from 2007 to 2019 finds that just 28 percent overall completed their credential within six years. It was a majority only among students in health programs, 53 percent. Completion was 30 percent among Asian students, 29 percent among white students, 27 percent among Hispanic students and 23 percent among Black students. Pell grant funding recipients were slightly more apt than others to complete a credential. ([PPIC 7/28](#))

New York City. A study finds mixed results in employment among City University of New York certificate and associate degree graduates. Six months out, roughly similar shares held jobs related to their field of study, approximately 30 percent, with 35 percent in unrelated jobs (and 23 percent unemployed and still seeking work). About half of those working said their CUNY education prepared them for their current job. Just four in 10 reported an annual salary of \$30,000 or more. Ninety-one percent were working in New York City. CUNY enrolled nearly half of the city's high school graduates in 2019. ([Manhattan Institute 7/15](#))

Economic Mobility

Financial Situation

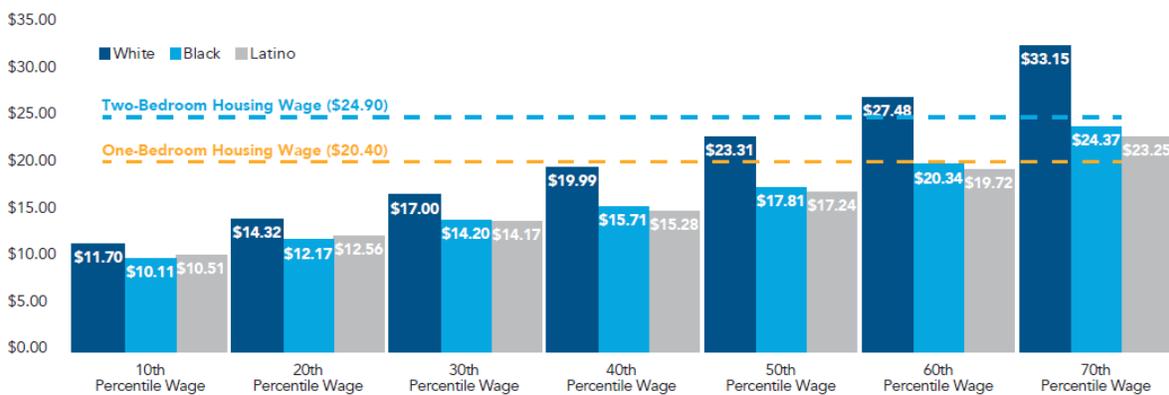
In a sign of progress, 71 percent of Americans now rate the state of their personal finances positively, up 8 points in six weeks to its highest in the pandemic era; that essentially matches its peak in 35 years of ongoing weekly data ([Consumer Comfort Index 7/27-8/22](#)).

Registered voters are split on whether they’d rather ask the federal government to “leave me alone” (47 percent) or “lend me a hand” (44 percent). There’s a clear divide by income: Fifty-eight percent of those with household incomes less than \$50,000 would ask for government help, compared with 35 percent of those making \$50,000 or more. ([Fox News 8/7-8/10](#))

Fifteen percent of renters are behind on rent payments, at risk of eviction as the federal eviction moratorium ends. Of those behind on rent, 43 percent think it’s very or somewhat likely they’ll be evicted in the next two months. Black (25 percent), Hispanic (17 percent) and Asian (17 percent) renters are more apt than white renters (10 percent) to be behind. And households with children are more likely than those without to be behind on rent, 18 vs. 12 percent. ([U.S. Census Bureau 8/4-8/16](#))

Affordable housing is out of reach for many individual U.S. workers. Using federal estimates of fair market rent and allocating no more than 30 percent of income to housing, the study says that renting a modest two-bedroom home on a single income requires an average full-time hourly wage of \$24.90, or \$20.40 for a one-bedroom. That exceeds minimum wage in all jurisdictions for a two-bedroom and meets it in just 7 percent of counties for a one-bedroom. More than 40 percent can’t afford a one-bedroom rental on a single income and a two-bedroom is out of reach for 60 percent. Black and Latino workers are disproportionately affected. ([National Low Income Housing Coalition July 2021](#))

FIGURE 5: HOURLY WAGE PERCENTILES VS. ONE- AND TWO-BEDROOM HOUSING WAGES



Source: Housing wages based on HUD Fair Market Rents. The hourly wages by percentile from the Economic Policy Institute State of Working America Data Library 2020. Adjusted to 2021 dollars.

In terms of assistance, two in 10 adults report that someone in their household received a Child Tax Credit payment in the last four weeks. Among them, 39 percent plan to use it mostly to pay off debt, 31 percent to save and 29 percent to spend. ([U.S. Census Bureau 8/4-8/16](#))

Looking ahead, 43 percent of adults in July expected their personal financial situation to get better in the next year, essentially steady after a 6-point drop from March to June. Sixteen percent expected it to get worse, also steady. ([Fannie Mae National Housing Survey 7/1-7/25](#))

At the same time, prices in July grew 0.5 percent in a month and 5.4 percent in the past 12 months, the latter matching a nearly 13-year high set in June ([U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 8/11](#)). Inflation and higher prices top a list of 13 potential concerns among registered voters, with 53 percent extremely concerned and 33 percent very concerned ([Fox News 8/7-8/10](#)).

Indeed, seven in 10 report financial hardship because of increasing grocery prices; 67 percent say the same of gas prices, 53 percent of housing costs. Each rises to the level of serious hardship among at least one in four. Among those with household incomes less than \$50,000 a year, 34 to 38 percent face a serious financial hardship because of higher grocery, gas or housing costs. ([Fox News 8/7-8/10](#))

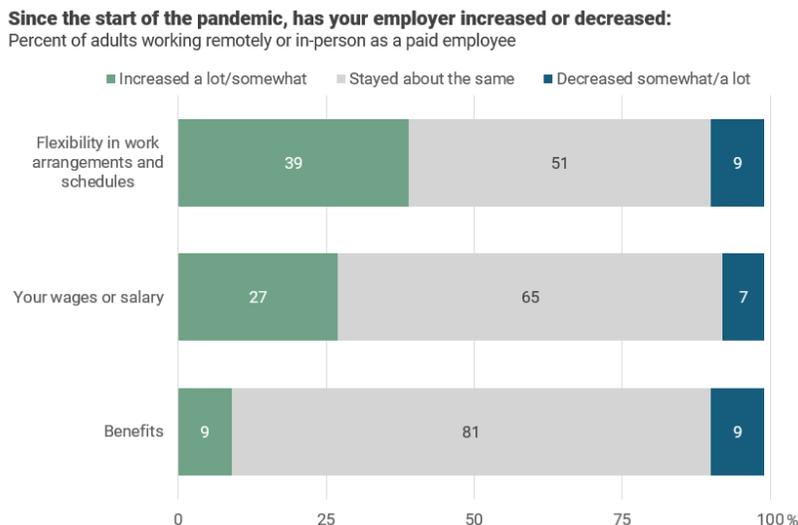
In other measures of financial hardship, recently released data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services show a 16 percent increase in Medicaid enrollment during the pandemic, with 10.3 million Americans added to the rolls from March 2020 to March 2021, for a total of 74.9 million enrollees. The Children's Health Insurance Program saw a smaller 2 percent rise, to 6.8 million, though this may also reflect children newly eligible for Medicaid leaving the program. The increases are a turnaround from declining enrollment figures in 2018 and 2019, likely reflecting both economic conditions and additional requirements for state Medicaid programs imposed by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. ([KFF 8/16](#); [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#))

Employment

Fifteen percent of adults report that their household experienced a loss of employment income in the last four weeks ([U.S. Census Bureau 8/4-8/16](#)). In another measure, 14 percent had significantly lower household incomes in July than a year ago, essentially steady since May. Twenty-seven percent reported significantly higher incomes, essentially the same as its pandemic high two months before. ([Fannie Mae National Housing Survey 7/1-7/25](#))

Overall, 13 percent of employed adults in July were concerned about losing their job, essentially unchanged from June’s pandemic low, 11 percent ([Fannie Mae National Housing Survey 7/1-7/25](#)). Seventy-one percent of registered voters were concerned about unemployment across the country ([Fox News 8/7-8/10](#)). Still, in a sign of recovery, the unemployment rate declined 0.5 points to 5.4 percent in July, with the number of jobless people down by 782,000 to 8.7 million ([U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 8/6](#)).

Twenty-seven percent of paid employees report that their employer increased their wages since the start of the pandemic, compared with 7 percent who say they decreased. Nine percent say their benefits also are up, but as many say they’ve been cut. ([AP-NORC 8/12-8/16](#))



Questions: Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, has your employer increased or decreased each of the following, or kept them about the same?
Source: AP-NORC poll conducted August 12-16, 2021 with 1,729 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

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State Results

California. In results from July, 54 percent of Californians think the state will have good times financially in the next 12 months; 44 percent, bad times. And about six in 10 think stricter environmental laws and regulations in California are worth the cost; 37 percent think they cost too many jobs and hurt the economy. ([PPIC 7/6-7/14](#))

Assessing the role of housing prices on poverty in California, a new analysis estimates that if housing costs had remained constant at 2013 levels after their Great Recession slump, about 800,000 fewer Californians would have been in poverty in 2019. That adjustment – an estimated 2.2-point decrease in the poverty rate – is greater than the number of Californians moved out of poverty by other safety-net programs, such as the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (600,000), CalFresh (500,000) and CalWORKs and General Assistance combined (290,000). Poverty rates would have fallen an estimated 3.0 points among Hispanic people, 2.7 points among Black people, 2.0 points among Asian people and 1.3 points among white people. ([PPIC 8/13](#))

Government Action

Two-thirds of adults think poor families have benefited from Joe Biden’s policies so far. About six in 10 say the same about middle class families; about half think wealthy families have benefited. ([Monmouth 7/21-7/26](#))

Americans by nearly a 2-1 margin support a \$3.5 trillion spending bill “on social programs such as child care, education, family tax breaks, and expanding Medicare for seniors,” 62-32 percent.

That includes nearly all Democrats (94 percent) and about six in 10 independents, falling to 27 percent of Republicans. ([Quinnipiac 7/27-8/2](#))

In similar results, 63 percent of adults in July supported Biden’s proposed multi-trillion dollar spending plan “to expand access to healthcare and childcare, and provide paid leave and college tuition support.” Thirty-five percent were opposed, both steady since June. ([Monmouth 7/21-7/26](#))