

# November 2021

## Education/Economic Mobility Survey Summary

Produced by [Langer Research Associates](#)

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

### **Key Takeaways**

Surveys on public education released in the past month gauge the public's view of schools' pandemic response policies, provide further evidence of racial/ethnic disparities in pandemic impacts on schoolchildren, delve into teachers' information sources and look at curriculum issues surrounding current events and the history of racism in the United States.

Demonstrating the wide range of education-related survey research, new studies also examine computer availability and internet connectivity in public schools, look at changes in postsecondary enrollment, evaluate rising pre-K availability and measure perceptions of the value of a four-year college degree and impediments to obtaining one.

Other new studies tackle an equally broad array of issues relating to economic conditions and opportunity in the United States. Some measure inflation-related financial hardships; others, employment trends, job-search experiences and attitudes toward the infrastructure bill just signed into law and the vast climate change/social policy measure now under debate.

Detailed results of these and other new surveys on education and economic mobility follow.

### **K-12 Education**

#### **Pandemic Impacts and Response**

An analysis of testing data adds to evidence of racial and ethnic disparities in pandemic learning loss. The share of third graders who tested below grade level in math this fall was 17 percentage points higher than pre-pandemic historical averages in majority Black schools and 14 points higher in majority Hispanic schools, compared with 6 points higher in majority white schools. In reading, it was +11 points in majority Black schools, +10 points in majority Hispanic schools and again +6 points in majority white schools. ([Curriculum Associates 11/4](#))

Overall, four in 10 parents of children younger than 18 say the pandemic has had a negative impact on their child's education. Still, fewer, 31 percent, are very or somewhat concerned about their child's ability to do well in school. (Among teens, fewer still, 25 percent, express concern about their own ability to do well.) ([FiveThirtyEight-Ipsos 10/25-11/2](#))

Asked to think back across the pandemic, 75 percent of parents say their local schools have done a good job balancing their health and safety with other priorities; results are similar among all adults ([Axios-Ipsos 11/5-11/8](#)). Measured another way, 53 percent of adults say their school district's coronavirus policies have been about right, while a quarter say they've been too strict, 16 percent, not strict enough. Parents are more apt than others to call these policies too strict, 31 vs. 22 percent ([ABC News-Washington Post 11/7-11/10](#)).

As of mid-November, 12 percent of adults reported pandemic-related local school closures in the previous few weeks, similar to late October ([Axios-Ipsos 11/19-11/22](#)). Among parents, 10 percent see sending their child to school as a large risk to their own health and well-being; an additional 34 percent call it a moderate risk ([Axios-Ipsos 11/5-11/8](#)).

### Masks in Schools

About six in 10 adults, and as many teens, support schoolwide face mask mandates. So do most parents – 60 percent in one poll, 68 percent in another. Among all adults, support ranges from 95 percent of Democrats to 29 percent of Republicans, and it's 13 points higher among women than men ([Monmouth 11/4-11/8](#); [FiveThirtyEight-Ipsos 10/25-11/2](#)).

Asked differently, support drops to about half when the question specifies vaccination status. In this approach, 49 percent favored a school mask mandate for all students, 17 percent only for unvaccinated students and 34 percent not at all. Results were similar for teachers/staff. Roughly six in 10 said a mask mandate for all is in place at their child's school; 3 percent, only for those who are unvaccinated. About four in 10 reported no mandate. ([Gallup 10/18-10/24](#))

Fifty-eight percent of five- to 11-year-olds and 53 percent of teens say teachers and administrators at their school wear masks at all times; about another quarter in each group say they do so sometimes. Results are similar for self-reported mask-wearing, but fewer – a third of teens and 38 percent of younger children – say their friends always wear masks at school. Regionally, about eight in 10 teens in the Northeast say their teachers always wear masks, compared with 57 percent in the West and fewer than half in the Midwest and South. ([FiveThirtyEight-Ipsos 10/25-11/2](#))

### Vaccination

Support for a vaccine mandate for teachers ranges from 55 to 61 percent in four polls, one among parents and separately among 12- to 17-year-olds, one among registered voters and two among all adults ([FiveThirtyEight-Ipsos 10/25-11/2](#); [Fox News 11/14-11/17](#); [Gallup 10/18-10/24](#); [Monmouth 11/4-11/8](#)).

Also among all adults, 59 percent favored a vaccine mandate for high school students, 56 percent for middle school students ([Gallup 10/18-10/24](#)). In another poll, 54 percent of parents and 57 percent of teens supported a vaccine mandate for children 12 and older ([FiveThirtyEight-Ipsos 10/25-11/2](#)). However, it's lower among parents in a different poll, 40 percent, and lower still, one-third, on a mandate for younger children, 5-11 ([Monmouth 11/4-11/8](#)).

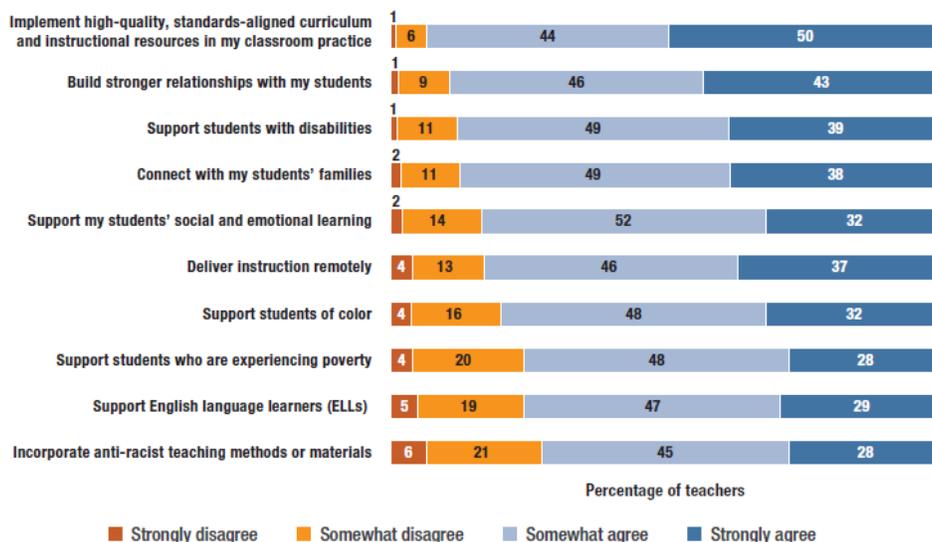
In a barrier to uptake, fewer than half of parents are confident the vaccines are safe (46 percent) or effective (47 percent) in children age 5 to 17, much lower than perceived safety and efficacy generally, as measured in September. Indeed, parents are twice as apt to have no confidence the vaccines are safe for children as to be very confident of this, 41 vs. 21 percent ([ABC News-Washington Post 11/7-11/10](#)). In another poll, 45 percent of registered voters, and 38 percent of parents who are registered to vote, see the vaccines as safe and effective in children 5-11. In both groups, that's 13 points lower than the share who think they're safe and effective in general ([Fox News 11/14-11/17](#)).

Four in 10 parents of children under 18 express vaccine hesitancy, saying they're not very likely to have their child vaccinated (12 percent) or ruling it out (28 percent) ([Axios-Ipsos 11/19-11/22](#)). In another study, it was just more than one-third of parents of 12- to 18-year-olds ([Gallup 10/18-10/24](#)). Among teens 12-17 themselves, a third say they're not likely to get a shot; this rises to 44 percent of children 5-11 ([FiveThirtyEight-Ipsos 10/25-11/2](#)).

### Teachers' Information Sources

In recently released data collected last March, large majorities of 6th- to 12th-grade public school teachers agreed that they knew where to find information on a variety of student supports. Lowest on the list, 73 percent agreed that they knew where to find information on incorporating anti-racist teaching methods or materials. It was 76 percent both for information on supporting English-language learners and students in poverty.

### Percentage of Teachers Who Know Where to Find Information on Different Types of Student Supports



NOTE: This figure reflects teacher responses to the following survey question: "If needed, I know where to find relevant, actionable information about the best ways (e.g., tools, programs, or strategies) to do the following [statements]." Teachers were asked to indicate whether they (1) strongly disagree, (2) somewhat disagree, (3) somewhat agree, or (4) strongly agree to each of the above statements. (n = 3,550)

Top cited-sources of information to improve the academic performance of struggling students were conversations with students, observation of students and teacher-created classroom tasks,

assignments and projects. Least cited were tests or quizzes provided in curriculum materials, data built into curriculum software, required grade-level tests and conversations with administrators.

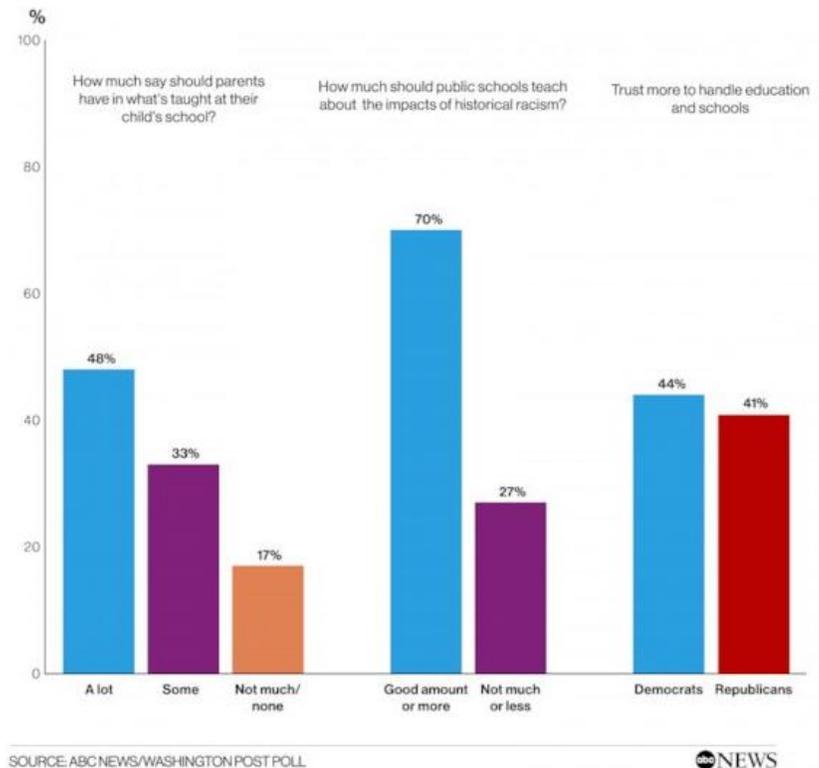
Most teachers, 57 percent, said they'd first turn to school and district colleagues to find an intervention to support their students. About a third first would look at sources online. Seven percent said they'd first develop a resource themselves and/or ask other teachers/staff to do so. ([RAND March-April 2021](#))

In the same survey, 86 percent of teachers agreed that “student voice” is respected by teachers in their school and 82 percent said it's respected by administrators. Fewer, 68 percent, said it affects what happens in the school, but 78 percent agreed that there are opportunities for students to work with adults to improve the school. ([RAND March-April 2021](#))

### Curriculum, Current Events and Teaching about Racism

Eight in 10 adults say parents should have a lot or some say in what their child's school teaches ([ABC News-Washington Post 11/7-11/10](#)). In data from August, 44 percent said the school district or board should be mostly responsible for curriculum, compared with 12 percent alike for teachers and state government; 7 percent, the federal government; and 5 percent, the principal. Twenty-two percent opted for “other.” Parents were not offered as a response option.

Three-quarters said current events should be taught in age-appropriate ways in K-12 schools, compared with 10 percent who said they shouldn't be. Seventy-eight percent said they should be taught in a way that shows multiple sides to an issue, 71 percent with historical context, 64 percent in a way that allows for criticism of the government response and 48 percent in a way that “emphasizes any role that racism plays in the issue.” ([NORC 8/12-8/16](#))



At the same time, seven in 10 in another study say public schools should teach a great deal or a good amount about how the history of racism affects America today. That includes 92 percent of Democrats and 73 percent of independents, compared with 44 percent of Republicans. It's 91 percent among Black people, 83 percent among Hispanics and 61 percent among whites. ([ABC News-Washington Post 11/7-11/10](#))

Three-quarters in another poll approved of public schools teaching about the history of racism. Approval dropped sharply to 43 percent for teaching critical race theory ([Monmouth 11/4-11/8](#)). Framed another way, 47 percent of registered voters opposed teaching critical race theory in schools, vs. 20 percent in support ([USA Today-Suffolk 11/3-11/5](#)).

Given specific topics, in August, adults were most apt to back teaching about the 9/11 attacks in age-appropriate ways in K-12 schools (71 percent). That declined to 55 percent for teaching about climate change, 46 percent for immigration enforcement or reform, 44 percent for the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, 42 percent for Black Lives Matter, 39 percent for the removal of Confederate monuments and 38 percent for police killings of Black people. ([NORC 8/12-8/16](#))

Broadly, in recently released data from September, 84 percent selected, “We should teach American history that includes both our best achievements and our worst mistakes as a country,” compared with 13 percent who chose, “We should teach American history that focuses on what makes this country exceptional and great” ([PRRI 9/16-9/29](#)).

Included on a list of seven problems, just 3 percent identify education as the most important issue facing the country today ([CNN 11/1-11/4](#)). The public splits which political party they trust more to handle the issue ([ABC News-Washington Post 11/7-11/10](#)).

### Education Technology

In recently released data from the 2019-20 school year (i.e., pre-pandemic), 45 percent of public schools had a computer for each student; an additional 37 percent had one for each student in some grades or classrooms. About nine in 10 reported that it was always or usually easy for teachers to find enough computers to use with their students and that their computers met the school’s teaching/learning needs to a large or moderate extent. The quality of instructional computers and software was rated positively by most, but “poor or fair” by 18 and 16 percent, respectively.

Fifteen percent of schools let all students take school-provided computers home. Eight percent allowed this in some grades; 15 percent allowed it on a short-term basis. Nine percent gave students mobile hotspots or web-enabled devices with paid data plans to take home.

While 64 percent said the internet connection in instructional areas was very reliable, 29 percent said it was somewhat reliable and 7 percent less so. Despite high reported reliability, only two in 10 said they didn’t have any internet problems when large numbers of students were online. Fifty-two percent reported such problems to a small extent, 24 percent to a moderate extent and 4 percent to a large extent ([NCES November 2021](#)). (The FCC in early November [said](#) it would commit an additional \$421 million to support schools and libraries with connected devices and broadband.)

### State Results

**New York.** Assessment data for students in grades 3-8 last spring underscore the pandemic's disparate impacts. State exams were administered to students attending in person; those learning fully remotely were not required to take the exams. Just 42 percent of students took the English language arts exams and 40 percent took the math exams, compared with more than 80 percent participation in a typical year. In English language arts, participation was twice as high among white students (56 percent) as among Black students (27 percent); Hispanic (30 percent), American Indian and Alaska Native (33 percent), Asian and Pacific Islander (43 percent) and multiracial students (47 percent) fell in between. Participation also was notably low among students with disabilities (29 percent), current English learners (33 percent), ever English learners (34 percent) and economically disadvantaged students (35 percent). Results were similar in math. ([NYSED 10/28](#))

An analysis of New York State Education Department data finds that at least 101,000 pre-K-12 students in New York City were homeless during the 2020-21 school year. Of them, about 28,000 lived in shelters, about 65,000 were doubled up with friends or family and 3,860 were unsheltered. The total number of homeless students declined 9 percent from 2019-20, partially attributable to a 3.3 percent decline in public school enrollment. Homelessness ranged from roughly one in 30 students on Staten Island to about one in seven in the Bronx. ([Advocates for Children 11/8](#))

**Washington.** An analysis of school job postings in Washington state found that rural and high-poverty districts are facing greater staffing shortages than other districts. Special education teachers had the greatest vacancy rate, outpacing elementary teacher postings (the group with the lowest vacancy rate) by eight to one. The analysis was based on data scraped from school district websites Oct. 26, accounting for about three-quarters of districts in the state, with more than 98 percent of students. ([Center for Education Data & Research 11/9](#))

### **Early Learning**

A new analysis highlights gradually rising availability and enrollment in public school pre-kindergarten. In 2019-20, an estimated 57 percent of public elementary schools offered pre-K, up an average of 1.5 points per year in available data since 1986. Still, enrollment was just 37 percent that of kindergarten enrollment, though up about 1 point per year since 1988. Elementary schools that offer pre-K were more apt to be Title I schools than those that did not offer it, 81 vs. 76 percent. Black students were a larger share of pre-kindergarteners than kindergarteners, 18 vs. 14 percent, while it's the opposite for white students, 43 vs. 46 percent. Shares were within 1 point among other groups. ([Urban Institute 11/5](#))

### **Post-secondary Success**

Fifty-four percent in a recently released September poll said a college education is more of a risky investment that may not pay off, vs. 45 percent calling it a smart investment. That's a 10-point shift from 2016, when 55 percent saw a college education as a smart investment.

Six in 10 people with postgraduate degrees saw college as a smart investment, as did a narrow majority, 52 percent, of those with four-year degrees. This fell to four in 10 of those with less

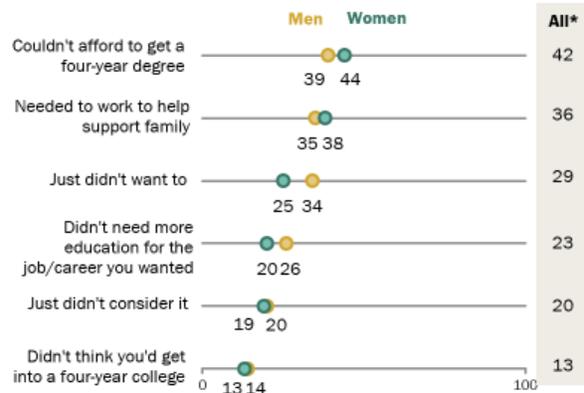
education. It was higher among Democrats, 58 percent, than independents, 42 percent, or Republicans, 37 percent. ([PRRI 9/16-9/29](#))

Among people without a four-year college degree (and not currently enrolled in college), 42 percent cited affordability as a major reason and 36 percent said they needed to work to help support their family. Others didn't want a four-year degree (29 percent), felt they didn't need one (23 percent), hadn't considered it (20 percent) or didn't think they'd be accepted (13 percent).

Men and white people were more likely than others to say they didn't want or didn't need a degree. Women and Hispanics were more apt than others to cite not being able to afford it. And Hispanic and Black adults were more apt than whites to say they needed to work.

**About a third of men who haven't completed four years of college say they 'just didn't want to' get a degree**

*Among adults who do not have a bachelor's degree and are not enrolled in school, % saying each is a major reason why they did not receive a four-year degree*



\*All adults who don't have a bachelor's degree and are not enrolled in school. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.

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Eight in 10 graduates said their college education was extremely or very useful in helping them grow personally and intellectually, seven in 10 for opening doors to job opportunities and about two-thirds for developing specific skills and knowledge that could be used in the workplace. ([Pew Research Center 10/18-10/24](#))

Roughly two months into the fall semester, postsecondary enrollment is 2.6 percent below last year's level. While graduate enrollment has grown 2.1 percent, undergraduate enrollment is down 3.5 percent and community college enrollment is down 6 percent. Compared with 2019, undergraduate enrollment is down 7.8 percent and community college enrollment is down 14.8 percent. ([NSCRC 11/18](#))

**Pathways**

**California.** An analysis of dual-enrollment program data finds that rising participation rates have improved racial equity, albeit with remaining gaps. Among the three primary state programs, College and Career Access Pathways now has equitable representation of Hispanic students; Early College High Schools, equitable representation of Black students; and Middle College High Schools, equitable representation of Black students and nearly so for Hispanic students. ([PPIC 11/22](#))

**Economic Mobility**

The national economy or economic conditions are rated negatively by 70 to 76 percent of the public in three surveys ([ABC News-Washington Post 11/7-11/10](#); [Fox News 11/14-11/17](#);

[Quinnipiac 11/11-11/15](#)). It's 55 percent in another, in which the question is asked first, rather than after questions on political issues ([Consumer Comfort Index 10/26-11/21](#)).

Given the following options, 46 percent of registered voters say the economy is in a depression (20 percent) or recession (26 percent); 27 percent, in stagnation; and 23 percent, in recovery ([USA Today-Suffolk 11/3-11/5](#)).

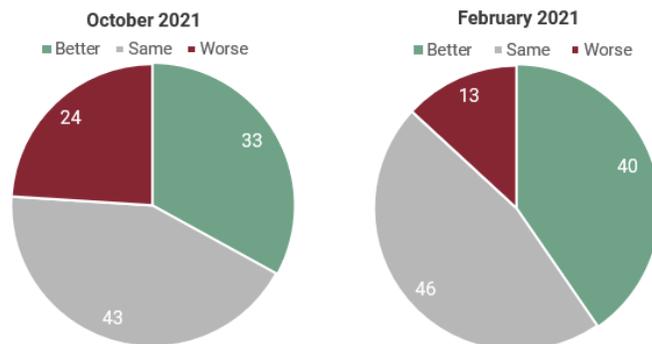
By almost 4-1, people are more apt to think the nation's economy is getting worse than better, 61 vs. 16 percent. (The rest say it's staying the same.) Thirty-four percent said it was getting better last spring ([Quinnipiac 11/11-11/15](#)). Given just the options of better or worse, 70 percent say it's getting worse, 26 percent, better ([Gallup 11/1-11/16](#)). In data from October, similarly, 65 percent said the economy was on the wrong track, up 16 points since May to the most since October 2013 ([Fannie Mae 10/1-10/23](#)). Further, more think the economy will get worse in the next year (47 percent) than get better (30 percent) or stay the same (23 percent) ([AP-NORC 10/21-10/25](#)).

### Financial Situation

In rosier results than national economy ratings, 77 percent in one poll, and about two-thirds in three others, rate their personal finances positively ([Axios-Ipsos 11/19-11/22](#); [AP-NORC 10/21-10/25](#); [Consumer Comfort Index 10/26-11/21](#); [Quinnipiac 11/11-11/15](#)).

Twenty-three percent in October said their household income was significantly higher than 12 months earlier, down a slight 4 points in a month to its lowest since April. Twelve percent said their income has decreased; 62 percent reported no change, up 5 points from September. Looking ahead, 41 percent expected their financial situation to get better over the next year, vs. 21 percent worse. Still, pessimism was double its September 2020 level and its highest in monthly data since November 2013 ([Fannie Mae 10/1-10/23](#)). Fewer in another study, one-third, think their personal finances will get better in the next year, 24 percent worse – the latter a numerical high in data since March 2018 ([AP-NORC 10/21-10/25](#)).

**Do you think your personal finances will get...?**  
Percent of adults



Question: In the next year, do you think your personal finances will get...?  
Source: AP-NORC poll conducted February 25-March 1, 2021, with 1,434 adults and October 21-25, with 1,083 adults nationwide.



APNORC.org

In another measure, many more in late October said they were getting ahead (30 percent) or staying where they were financially (45 percent) rather than slipping behind or falling backward (each 12 percent) ([NBC News 10/23-10/26](#)).

Americans split on whether they expect to increase their spending and/or investments (22 percent) or decrease them (18 percent) in the next year, with a majority saying they'll stay about the same ([NPR-Marist 11/16-11/19](#)).

In August to early September data, 70 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds reported adding to their savings in the past year. Fewer said they'd mapped out financial goals (29 percent), contributed to retirement accounts or invested in the stock market (both 26 percent). Perceived barriers to financial success included insufficient income (46 percent), lack of job stability (23 percent) and inability to save (21 percent).

Broad majorities felt knowledgeable about saving generally (85 percent), managing money (82 percent) and budgeting (77 percent); far fewer, saving for retirement (38 percent), investing (30 percent) or buying a home (26 percent). Overall, 34 percent rated their financial knowledge as low. Just 33 percent learned about finances in school. ([Bank of America 8/12-9/7](#))

### *Inflation/Expenses*

Consumer prices saw their largest 12-month increase (from October 2020 to October 2021) since the period ending November 1990, up 6.2 percent ([U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 11/10](#)). Sixty-eight percent of Americans say increased prices for things such as food and gasoline have caused them to change their spending habits ([Quinnipiac 11/11-11/15](#)).

Inflation tops lists of most important economic issues. In one poll, 39 percent select it as the top concern for the U.S. economy, followed by wages (17 percent), labor shortages (11 percent), unemployment (10 percent), housing costs and gas prices (9 percent alike) and interest rates (1 percent) ([NPR-Marist 11/16-11/19](#)). In another, 45 percent of registered voters pick it over government spending and jobs/unemployment (15 percent alike), income inequality (13 percent) and taxes (4 percent).

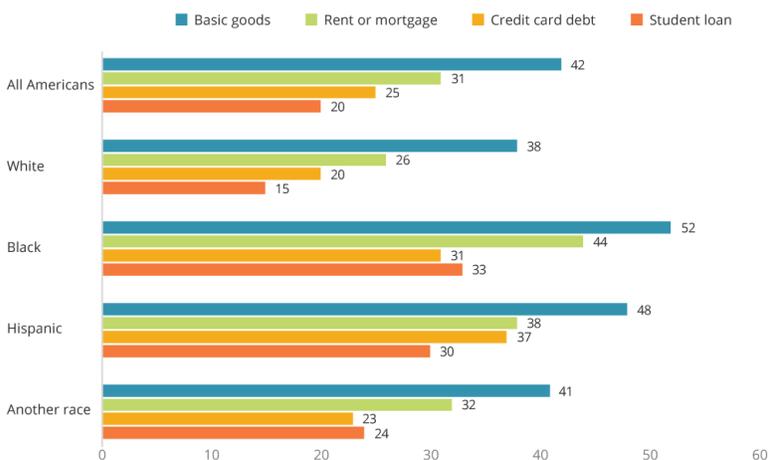
Seventy-three percent report financial hardship because of increases in grocery prices; 72 percent say the same of gas prices and 53 percent, housing costs. It rises to the level of serious hardship for one-third for grocery prices and 35 percent for gas prices, 5- and 6-point increases since August. Increasing housing costs are a serious financial hardship for 28 percent. ([Fox News 11/14-11/17](#))

Eighty-five percent in September agreed that "The costs of housing and everyday expenses are rising faster than my income." Forty-two percent were at least somewhat concerned about their ability to pay for basic goods for daily life that are increasing in cost due to inflation. Three in 10 said they were concerned about paying their rent or mortgage, as did 25 percent for credit card bills and 20 percent for student loans.

Sixty-eight percent of Black and Hispanic people alike were concerned about paying for at least two of those four major household expenses, compared with 48 percent of whites. ([PRRI 9/16-9/29](#))

In another poll, 43 percent lacked confidence that they'll have enough savings for retirement, 39 percent that they'd be able to pay an unexpected medical expense, 32 percent that they'd be able to pay an unexpected bill of \$1,000 and 20 percent that they can keep up with their expenses ([AP-NORC 10/21-10/25](#)).

**FIGURE 2.1 Concerns About Ability to Pay for Household Expenses, by Race and Ethnicity**  
Percent who are somewhat or very concerned about being able to pay for:



Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.

### Employment

The unemployment rate edged down 0.2 point in October to 4.6 percent, its lowest since March 2020, though still up from 3.5 percent in February 2020 ([U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 11/5](#)). Weekly initial unemployment claims hit their lowest since November 1969, at 199,000 ([U.S. Department of Labor 11/24](#)).

An estimated 4.4 million people quit their jobs in September, up by 164,000 to a high in data since December 2000; there were 10.4 million job openings ([U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 11/12](#)). In one measure of labor pool departures, a study finds that 50.3 percent of adults 55 and older were retired in the third quarter of 2021, up 2.2 points from the third quarter of 2019 ([Pew Research Center 11/4](#)).

Twenty-eight percent of adults say they or someone in their household is planning to change jobs soon for better pay or conditions ([Quinnipiac 11/11-11/15](#)). Seven percent are themselves actively looking for a new job; one in four is open to a new job but not actively looking ([Ipsos 11/12-11/15](#)). Thirty-six percent are extremely or very confident they'd be able to find a job if they wanted to ([AP-NORC 10/21-10/25](#)).

A new analysis finds that employment among self-employed workers has fully recovered from a 14.2 percent decline from the second quarter of 2019 to the second quarter of 2020. Employment among other workers remains 4.3 percent short of its 2019 level. ([Pew Research Center 11/3](#))

Eighty-four percent of employed adults in an October survey were not concerned about losing their job, largely steady since July but down from its nearly two-year peak of 88 percent in June ([Fannie Mae 10/1-10/23](#)).

Fifty-four percent of employed adults rate their pay as very good or good; 58 percent say the same of their benefits. Sixteen percent alike rate them as very poor or poor; the rest say they're acceptable or not important to them. Thirty-two percent say their ability to be promoted to a higher position at their current job is good, while as many say it's poor. Of the rest, 21 percent say it's acceptable and 11 percent, not important to them. ([Ipsos 11/12-11/15](#))

### State-specific Results

**California.** A recently released October survey measured a range of economic attitudes among Californians:

- Sixty-nine percent said the gap between the rich and the poor in their part of the state is getting larger.
- Seven in 10 said racial and ethnic discrimination contributes a great deal or a fair amount to economic inequality in this country.
- Thirty-seven percent said the American Dream – that if you work hard you'll get ahead – still holds true. Forty-seven percent said it once held true but does not anymore; 16 percent, that it never held true.
- Sixty-three percent expected that when today's children in California grow up, they'll be worse off financially than their parents, vs. 36 percent better off.

Most, 57 percent, said the availability of well-paying jobs in their part of the state is somewhat of a problem, the midpoint choice. The rest divided essentially evenly between calling it a big problem or not a problem. Likewise, 57 percent were somewhat satisfied with their household's financial situation, with the rest dividing between very satisfied and not satisfied. And 62 percent said their finances were about the same as a year ago, with the rest divided between better off and worse off. But twice as many think they'll be better off as worse off a year from now, 29 vs. 15 percent.

Sixty-two percent said it wouldn't be too difficult to pay an emergency \$1,000 expense. Of the rest, 22 percent would find it somewhat difficult, 10 percent very difficult and 7 percent nearly impossible.

Twenty-eight percent said they or someone in their household had their work hours reduced or pay cut in the last 12 months and 19 percent said someone lost a job. Twenty-seven percent said they or someone in their household received unemployment benefits; 17 percent alike were unable to pay a monthly bill or had difficulty paying the rent or mortgage; 16 percent received food from a food bank.

Among parents, 30 percent said they, someone in their household or both had left their job or changed their work schedule to take care of their children in the past year. Among those who experienced this, 41 percent said it had a major impact on their family's finances.

Among employed adults, 80 percent said their job provided paid sick leave, 75 percent health coverage, 70 percent retirement savings and 51 percent educational or training assistance. ([PPIC 10/12-10/31](#))

### **Government Action**

In four November surveys, 57 to 65 percent of Americans supported the \$1 trillion infrastructure bill ([ABC News-Washington Post 11/7-11/10](#); [Monmouth 11/4-11/8](#); [Quinnipiac 11/11-11/15](#); [USA Today-Suffolk 11/3-11/5](#), among registered voters). Support dropped to 43 percent among registered voters in a fifth poll, in which the bill was simply referred to as “the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package passed by Congress on Nov. 5” ([Fox News 11/14-11/17](#)). (The other polls mentioned what the plan would be spent on – i.e., roads, bridges and the like.)

Support for the \$2 trillion climate change and social policy bill ranged from 58 to 62 percent in three surveys ([ABC News-Washington Post 11/7-11/10](#); [Monmouth 11/4-11/8](#); [Quinnipiac 11/11-11/15](#)). It was lower, 47 percent among registered voters, when described as “the \$1.85 trillion reconciliation bill before Congress to fund clean energy programs, pre-kindergarten, healthcare initiatives and other soft infrastructure” ([USA Today-Suffolk 11/3-11/5](#)), and 44 percent among registered voters asked if they “favor or oppose the federal government increasing spending on these social programs by more than a trillion dollars” ([Fox News 11/14-11/17](#)).

Thirty-two percent said the bills in Congress to increase spending on infrastructure and social programs would hurt people like them, 25 percent said they’d help, 18 percent expected no effect and 24 percent were unsure ([ABC News-Ipsos 10/29-10/30](#)).

Considering just the infrastructure package, 28 percent of registered voters think it’ll hurt their family, 23 percent think it’ll help and 37 percent think it won’t make much difference ([Fox News 11/14-11/17](#)). Three in 10 registered voters think the social spending bill will hurt their family, while about one in four think it’ll help ([Fox News 11/14-11/17](#); [USA Today-Suffolk 11/3-11/5](#)).

Adults split on whether the bills would help or hurt the economy, 34-34 percent ([ABC News-Ipsos 10/29-10/30](#)). Asked separately, more registered voters think the social spending bill will hurt than help the economy, 40 vs. 34 percent, while they split on the infrastructure bill ([Fox News 11/14-11/17](#)).

There’s also a division on whether a significant reduction in “the part of the [social policy] bill that expands support programs” is a good thing or a bad thing, 42-46 percent. Most Republicans see the cuts as good, 62 percent; most Democrats as bad, 64 percent. ([Monmouth 11/4-11/8](#))

In September data, people were more apt to say “investing in government programs to help American families and rebuild infrastructure” was more important than “reducing government spending to lower the national debt,” 58 vs. 40 percent ([PRRI 9/16-9/29](#)).

In recently released July data, 38 percent said the government should provide more assistance to people in need, 32 percent said it should provide less and 29 percent said it’s providing about the

right amount. Fifty-three percent sided with a statement saying “government aid to the poor does more good than harm, because people can’t get out of poverty until their basic needs are met,” while 45 percent opted for “government aid to the poor does more harm than good, by making people too dependent on government assistance.” ([Pew Research Center 7/8-7/18](#))

Six in 10 say poor families have benefited from Biden’s policies so far, a drop from two-thirds in July. About half say the same about middle class and wealthy families. ([Monmouth 11/4-11/8](#))

An analysis finds that a recent revision to the Thrifty Food Plan results in SNAP benefits falling short of the cost of a meal in 21 percent of U.S. counties – a vast improvement from 96 percent of counties pre-pandemic and 41 percent of counties during the temporary increase in SNAP benefits earlier in the pandemic ([Urban Institute 11/2](#)).

### State-specific Results

**California.** Seventy-six to 81 percent of Californians supported government programs described as ones “that could improve the economic well-being of Californians.” This includes job training programs “so that more workers have the skills they need for today’s jobs,” Medicare-style health insurance and making childcare available to more lower-income working parents.

Seventy-two percent supported expanding the earned income tax credit for lower-income people, 65 percent free public college tuition and 60 percent eliminating college debt. Fewer, 48 percent, favored the federal government providing a guaranteed income of about \$1,000 a month for all adult citizens whether or not they work. ([PPIC 10/12-10/31](#))