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Americans Are Less Likely Than Before COVID-19 To Want To Live in Cities, More Likely To Prefer Suburbs

Nearly half say the pandemic has driven people in their community apart

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How we did this

Pew Research Center conducted this study to understand Americans' views and preferences for where they live and the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on their local communities. For this analysis, we surveyed 9,676 U.S. adults in October 2021. Everyone who took part is a member of Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses. This way nearly all U.S. adults have a chance of selection. The survey is weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education and other categories. Read more about the [ATP's methodology](#).

See here to read more about the [questions used for this report](#) and the report's [methodology](#).

Terminology

References to White, Black and Asian adults include only those who are not Hispanic and identify as only one race. Hispanics are of any race.

All references to party affiliation include those who lean toward that party. Republicans include those who identify as Republicans and those who say they lean toward the Republican Party. Democrats include those who identify as Democrats and those who say they lean toward the Democratic Party.

References to college graduates or people with a college degree comprise those with a bachelor's degree or more. "Some college" includes those with an associate degree and those who attended college but did not obtain a degree.

"Middle income" is defined here as two-thirds to double the median annual family income for panelists on the American Trends Panel. "Lower income" falls below that range; "upper income" falls above it. See the [methodology](#) for more details.

References to respondents who live in urban, suburban or rural communities are based on respondents' answer to the following question: "How would you describe the community where you currently live? (1) urban, (2) suburban, (3) rural." Throughout the report, the terms "urban" and "city" are used interchangeably.

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Nearly half say the pandemic has driven people in their community apart

In the early days of the [coronavirus outbreak](#), some wondered if city living [would lose its appeal](#), especially as remote work gave people more freedom to [choose where to live](#). About a year and a half into the pandemic, there is some evidence that Americans are less likely now than they were before to want to live in urban areas – and more likely to want to live in the suburbs, according to a new Pew Research Center survey.

About one-in-five U.S. adults now express a preference for living in a city, down from about a quarter in 2018. The share of Americans who would like to live in the suburbs has increased from 42% to 46% during this time, while preference for rural areas is virtually unchanged.¹

Regardless of where they live, nearly half of Americans (47% overall) say the pandemic has divided their communities; relatively few (13%) say it has brought people together. And many see a long road to recovery, with about one-in-five saying life in their community will never get back to the way it was before the coronavirus outbreak.

Across community types, about a quarter or more say the health and economic impacts of the pandemic remain major problems where they live, but the effects are felt most acutely in cities. More than four-in-ten urban residents (45%) say the economic impact of the outbreak is a major problem in their community, and 37% say the same about the health impact of COVID-19. By

Preference for cities has declined, while a growing share now favors suburbs

% expressing a preference for each community type

	Urban	Suburban	Rural
2021	19	46	35
2018	23	42	36

Note: Figures are based on respondents in each type of community who say they would not want to move as well as those who say they would move if they could and would want to move to/stay in each community type. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.

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¹ These findings are based on respondents in each type of community who say they would not want to move as well as those who say they would move if they could and would want to move to/stay in each community type. It excludes those who say they are not sure if they would want to move if they could.

comparison, 31% of those in the suburbs and 33% of rural dwellers say the economic impact of the pandemic is a major problem in their local area, and about a quarter each say the health impact is a major issue.

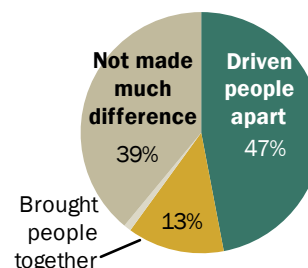
There are also racial, ethnic and income differences in these assessments. Black and Hispanic Americans are more likely than White or Asian Americans to say the pandemic's economic impact is a major problem where they live, and Black adults are more likely than other racial or ethnic groups to say this about the health impact.² Lower-income adults are also more likely than those with middle and upper incomes to say the health and economic impact of the pandemic are major problems in their local communities.³

The pandemic isn't the only issue Americans are facing in their local communities. About half of U.S. adults (49%) say the availability of affordable housing is a major problem where they live, up 10 percentage points from 2018.

At the same time, concern over drug addiction and the availability of jobs has waned. Some 35% now say drug addiction is a major problem in their community, down from 42% in 2018. And 18% say jobs are a major problem, down from 31%. About one-in-five say crime, the quality of K-12 schools and racism are major problems where they

Nearly half of Americans say the pandemic has divided their community

% saying the coronavirus outbreak has ___ in their local community



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer shown but not labeled.

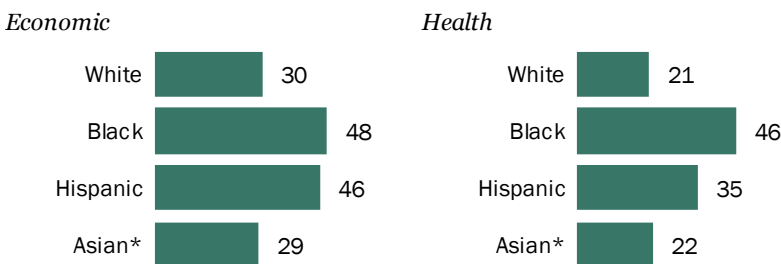
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.

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Views of the pandemic's economic and health impacts on local communities differ by race and ethnicity

% saying the ___ impact of the coronavirus outbreak is a major problem in their local community



*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.

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² Asian adults were interviewed in English only. See [Methodology](#) section of the report for more details.

³ Family incomes are based on 2020 earnings and adjusted for differences in purchasing power by geographic region and for household sizes. Middle income is defined here as two-thirds to double the median annual family income for all panelists on the [American Trends Panel](#). Lower income falls below that range; upper income falls above it. See [Methodology](#) section of the report for more details.

live – all relatively unchanged from 2018. With the exception of availability of jobs, urban residents are more likely than those in the suburbs or in rural areas to say each of the issues included in the survey is a major problem in their local community.

The nationally representative survey of 9,676 U.S. adults was conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021, before news of the omicron variant, using the Center’s [American Trends Panel](#).⁴ Among the other key findings:

More than a third of U.S. adults (36%) say it will take over two years for their local community to return to how it was before the coronavirus outbreak or that their community will never get back to normal. An even higher share (39%) say this about the economy in their local community, including 14% who say their local economy will never come back. When asked about their own lives, about a third of adults say it will take more than two years for their life to return to how it was before the pandemic or that it will never be the same again (12% and 20%, respectively).

At least half of Americans say there is a mix of views on vaccines, masks and COVID-19 restrictions in their local community. To the extent that there is more uniformity in views, 30% say most people in their community think getting a COVID-19 vaccine is important, while 12% say most people think this is not important or shouldn’t be done. On mask wearing, 23% say most people in their community think wearing a mask in stores and other businesses is important, while about the same share (22%) say most don’t think it’s important or think it shouldn’t be done. When it comes to restrictions on public activities, 13% say most people where they live think it’s important to have tight restrictions, while twice as many say most people in their community don’t think this is important or think it shouldn’t be done. These views differ substantially across community types, with rural adults less likely than those who live in urban and suburban areas to say most people in their community think these things are important.

State and local governments receive higher ratings than the federal government for their handling of the coronavirus outbreak, but no level of government is seen as doing an excellent or good job by a majority of Americans. About four-in-ten give their state (38%) and local (39%) government a positive rating, while just 29% think the federal government is doing an excellent or good job responding to the pandemic (a 39% plurality say the federal government is doing a poor or very poor job, while 32% say it is average). Republicans are particularly negative in their views of how the federal government has handled the pandemic, with

⁴ For more details, see the [Methodology](#) section of the report.

65% saying it has done a poor or very poor job, compared with 18% of Democrats who say the same.

About three-quarters of Americans (77%) say the pandemic has divided people in the country as a whole. Just 8% say the pandemic has brought people in the U.S. together and 13% say it hasn't made much difference. Republicans and Republican leaners are more likely than Democrats and those who lean Democratic to say the pandemic has driven people apart – both in the country and in their local communities. But at least three-quarters in both parties say this about people in the U.S., and more than four-in-ten say it about people in their community.

For the most part, what Americans are looking for in a community hasn't changed considerably since 2018. The share of U.S. adults who say it's very important to them, personally, to live in a place with a strong sense of community is up from 27% in 2018 to 32% today, and this is especially the case among those who live in urban and rural areas (up 8 and 10 percentage points, respectively). There has also been a modest 3-point increase in the share saying it's very important to them to live in a community with access to recreational and outdoor activities. Living in an area that's a good place to raise children remains the most valued feature of a community (58% say this is very important). On this and all other factors asked about in the survey – living near family; living in a community with access to art, music and theater; and living in a community that is racially and ethnically diverse or where most people share your political views – the shares who consider each a priority are virtually unchanged from 2018.

The share of Americans who are satisfied with the quality of life in their local community has dropped since 2018, but most are at least somewhat satisfied. About three-quarters of U.S. adults (74%) say they are at least somewhat satisfied with the quality of life in their local community, with 24% saying they are very satisfied. These shares are down from 79% and 27%, respectively, in 2018. The share expressing high levels of satisfaction with the quality of life in their community has dropped by 5 percentage points in urban and suburban areas (from 23% to 18% in cities and from 31% to 26% in suburbs). There has been no significant change in rural communities (26% said they were very satisfied in 2018 and 24% say this today).

Assessments of the ongoing effects of the pandemic differ by community type, race, ethnicity and income

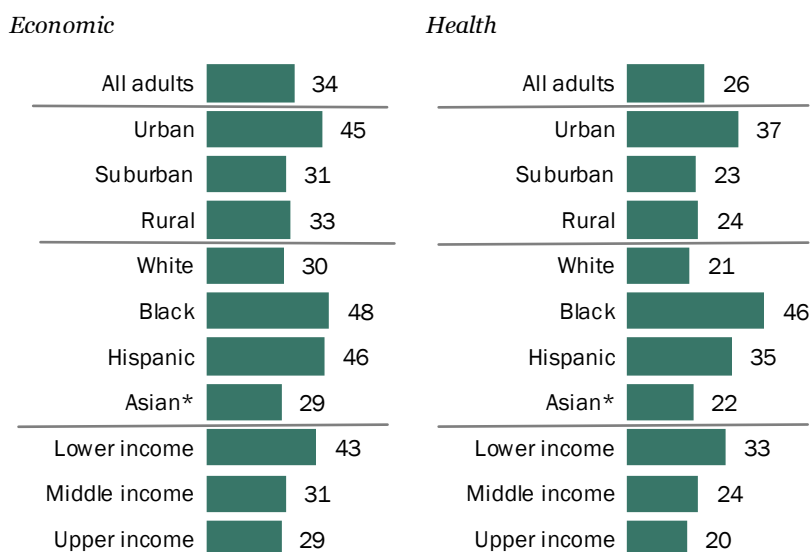
The COVID-19 pandemic may not have drastically changed people's preferences for where and how they want to live, but there's no questioning that it had a profound impact on American life at both the community and individual level. About a third or more of adults say it will be more than two years before their communities and their own lives return to normal.

More than a year and half after the start of the pandemic, majorities of Americans say the economic and health impacts of the coronavirus outbreak are either a major or minor problem in their local community. Roughly a third (34%) say the economic impact is a *major* problem, and 26% say the same about the health impact.

Across community types, the impact is felt more acutely in urban areas. Some 45% of urban adults say the economic effect of COVID-19 is a major problem in their local community. This compares with 31% of suburban and 33% of rural residents. Similarly, while 37% of adults in urban areas say the health impact of the pandemic is a major problem where they live, smaller shares of suburban (23%) and rural (24%) adults say the same.

Ongoing impact of the pandemic felt more acutely in urban areas

% saying the ___ impact of the coronavirus outbreak is a major problem in their local community



*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2020 earnings.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.

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Perceptions about the impact of COVID-19 on communities also differ by income and race and ethnicity. Adults with lower incomes (43%) are significantly more likely than middle-income (31%)

and upper-income (29%) adults to say the economic impact of the pandemic is a major problem in their community. And the pattern is similar when it comes to the health impact: A third of lower-income adults, compared with 24% of middle-income and 20% of upper-income adults, say this a major problem where they live.

These income differences are seen in suburban and rural areas. In these types of communities, lower-income adults are more likely than their middle- and upper-income counterparts to see the economic and health impacts of COVID-19 as a major problem.

Black and Hispanic adults are much more likely than White or Asian adults to say the economic impact of the pandemic is a major problem in their local community: 48% of Black adults and 46% of Hispanic adults say this, compared with 30% of White adults and 29% of Asian Americans. Black adults are the most likely among the major racial and ethnic groups to say the health impact of COVID-19 is a major problem where they live – 46% say this compared with 35% of Hispanic adults and smaller shares of White (21%) and Asian (22%) adults.

Across urban and suburban communities, higher shares of Black and Hispanic adults say the economic and health impacts of the pandemic are major problems where they live, compared with White adults. (There are too few Black, Hispanic or Asian adults in rural areas to analyze separately and too few Asian Americans in urban and suburban areas.)

Perceptions also differ by party. Democrats and those who lean Democratic (38%) are more likely than Republicans and Republican leaners (29%) to say the economic impact of the pandemic is a major problem in their community. And the gap is considerably wider in assessments of the health impact: 35% of Democrats but only 16% of Republicans say this is a major problem where they live. The partisan gap on the economic and health impact persists across urban, suburban and rural communities.

People who live in communities with a higher number of deaths related to COVID-19 in the past eight weeks are more likely than those living in communities with fewer deaths to say the health impact of the coronavirus outbreak is a major problem in their local area. About three-in-ten adults in higher impact communities (31%) say this, compared with 23% in medium-impact areas and 25% in lower-impact areas.⁵

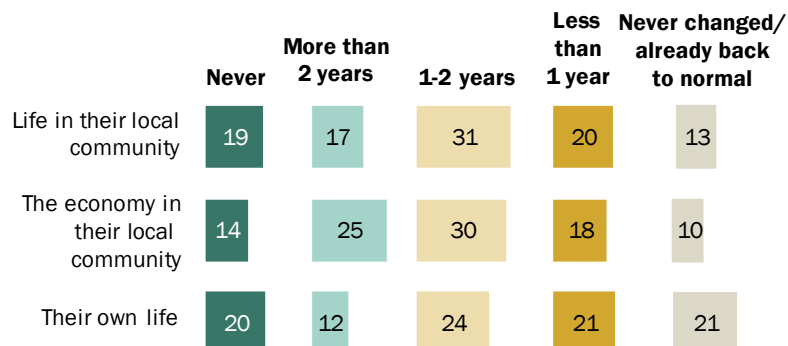
⁵ Respondents were considered to live in a “higher” impact area if there had been 25 or more deaths per 100,000 residents in the county where the respondent resides in the eight weeks prior to the survey. “Medium” counties had 10 to less than 25 deaths per 100,000 county residents, and “lower” counties had less than 10 per 100,000 residents.

Many Americans see a long road ahead until life gets back to the way it was before the pandemic

Americans have mixed views on how long it will take for life to get back to normal in their local community. Some 36% say it will be more than two years before things get back to the way they were before the pandemic, including 19% who say things will *never* get back to normal in their community. About three-in-ten adults (31%) say life will be back to normal in their community one to two years from now, and about a third say it will take less than a year (20%) or that life in their community never really changed or has already gotten back to where it was (13%).

About one-in-five Americans say life in their community will never return to how it was before the pandemic

% saying ____ will return to how it was before the coronavirus outbreak in ...



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.

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When asked about their local economy, Americans have similar responses. About four-in-ten (39%) say it will be more than two years before the economy in their area returns to how it was before the coronavirus outbreak, including 14% who say it will never come back. Three-in-ten say it will take one to two years for the economy to recover, 18% say the economy will be back to where it was before COVID-19 in less than a year, and 10% say things never really changed or are already back to normal.

Adults who live in urban and rural communities have more pessimistic views than those living in the suburbs when it comes to both life in their community and their local economy returning to normal. For example, 41% of city dwellers and 37% of those in rural areas say it will take their community more than two years to recover – with about one-in-five saying it will never get back to the way it was. Among those living in the suburbs, 32% say it will take more than two years to return to normal (17% say it never will).

The differences by race and income level in perceptions of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic are echoed in views about the recovery. Black adults and those with lower incomes are particularly likely to say the return to normal for their community will be a long process. Among Black adults, 43% say it will take more than two years for life to return to normal in their community or it never will. Smaller shares of White (35%), Hispanic (36%) and Asian (28%) adults say the same. Even so, White (19%), Black (22%) and Hispanic (17%) adults are about equally likely to say things will never return to the way they were before the coronavirus outbreak, while Asian adults (5%) are much less likely to say this.

About four-in-ten lower-income adults (41%) say it will take more than two years for life in their local community to return to how it was before the pandemic. This includes 22% who say their community will never get back to how it was. By comparison, 34% of middle-income adults and 28% of those with upper incomes say it will take more than two years for their communities to return to normal.

The patterns are similar for the economic recovery: 46% of lower-income adults say it will take two years or more for their local economy to come back from the pandemic, compared with 38% of middle-income and 31% of higher-income adults. Income gaps in assessments of the economic recovery are seen across community types, with lower- and middle-income adults more likely than those with upper incomes to see a longer road to recovery in cities and suburbs. In rural areas, those with lower incomes stand out as the most likely to see the recovery lasting two or more years.

There are partisan differences as well. Republicans (17%) are much more likely than Democrats (9%) to say life in their community never changed or has already returned to normal. Even so, Republicans (37%) are more likely than Democrats (34%) to say it will take more than two years

Lower-income adults more likely to say it will take longer for their local economy to recover

*% in each income tier saying the **economy in their local community** will return to how it was before the coronavirus outbreak in ...*

	More than 2 years/ Never	1-2 years	Less than 1 year	Never changed/ already back to normal
Lower income	46	25	16	11
Middle income	38	32	18	9
Upper income	31	34	23	11

Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2020 earnings.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021

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for their communities to get back to the way they were before the pandemic. Similarly, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say it will take more than two years for the local economy to return to normal.

Americans see a somewhat quicker return to normalcy when it comes to their own lives, with 42% saying either their life never really changed or has already returned to how it was before the pandemic (21%) or that it will be back to normal in less than a year (21%). About one-in-four adults (24%) say life will be back to normal for them in one to two years. Still, a substantial share (32%) say it will take more than two years for their lives to return to how they were before, including 20% who say things will never get back to normal.

Urban residents (36%) are somewhat more likely than those who live in suburban or rural areas (31% each) to say it will take two or more years for their lives to return to normal. There are income gaps as well, with higher shares of lower-income adults saying it will take more than two years to get back to normal, compared with middle- and upper-income adults.

While roughly equal shares of Republicans and Democrats say it will take more than two years for their lives to get to the way they were before the pandemic, Republicans (28%) are much more likely than Democrats (15%) to say their lives never changed or are already back to normal.

Most Americans say the pandemic drove people in the U.S. apart

Regardless of how they view the lingering impacts of the pandemic or the extent to which they believe their lives have returned to normal, there's one thing most Americans agree on: The coronavirus outbreak has been a divisive event in the country. Fully 77% of all adults say the pandemic has driven people in the U.S. apart. Only 8% say it's brought people together, and 13% say it hasn't made much of a difference.

Large majorities across major demographic and political groups say the pandemic has driven Americans apart, including 73% or more in

urban, suburban and rural communities. White adults (83%), four-year college graduates (83%) and upper-income adults (84%) are among the most likely to say the pandemic has driven people apart at the national level. Republicans (81%) are more likely than Democrats (75%) to express this view.

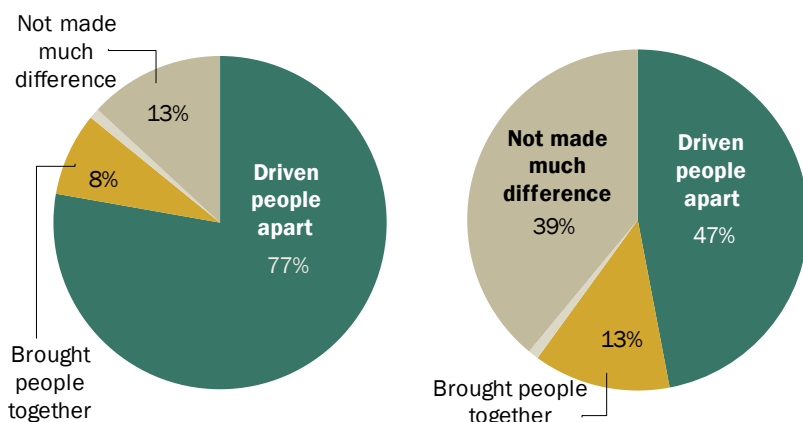
Americans are more ambivalent about whether the pandemic has united or divided people in their local communities. Overall, 47% say the coronavirus outbreak has driven people in their community apart, 13% say it has brought people together and 39% say it hasn't made much of a difference.

Perceptions on this question are relatively consistent across community types. Similar shares of those living in urban (45%), suburban (48%) and rural (46%) areas say the pandemic has driven people in their local community apart. White adults (49%) are more likely than Black (41%) or Asian (33%) adults to say COVID-19 has been divisive within their community. Asian adults (52%) are more likely than other racial or ethnic groups to say it hasn't made much of a difference. And,

Public says pandemic divided the country but not necessarily their community

% saying the coronavirus outbreak has ___ **in the U.S.**

% saying the coronavirus outbreak has ___ **in their local community**



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer shown but not labeled.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.

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as with views on the country, Republicans (50%) are more likely than Democrats (45%) to say the pandemic has divided people in their local community.

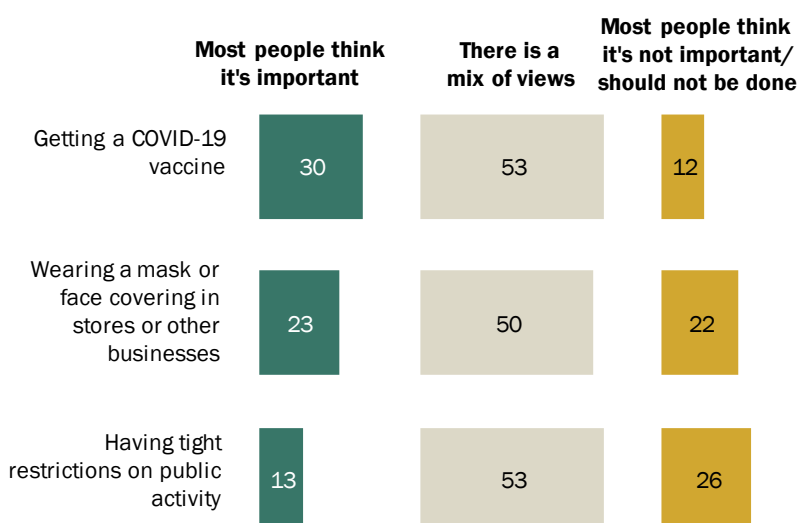
There's a diversity of views within many communities on vaccines, masks and COVID-19 restrictions

Some of the most divisive aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic have involved vaccines, mask wearing and restrictions on public activity. About half of Americans say they live in an area where there is a mix of views on these issues.

Some 53% of all adults say, in their local community, there is a mix of views when it comes to the importance of COVID-19 vaccines. Three-in-ten say most people in their community think getting a vaccine is important, and 12% say most think this is not important or should not be done (5% aren't sure).

For many Americans, there's a mix of views in their community on key approaches for mitigating COVID-19

% saying, in their community, ____ when it comes to each of the following



Note: Share of respondents who said they are not sure or didn't offer an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.
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Similarly, half of all adults say there is a mix of views in their community on the importance of wearing masks or face coverings in stores or other businesses. Others see more consistency of views in their community: 23% say most people think wearing a mask is important, and a similar share (22%) say most think this is not important or should not be done.

When it comes to the importance of tight restrictions on public activity, 53% of all adults say there is a mix of views in their community on this issue. About one-in-four (26%) say most people in their area think having tight restrictions is not important or should not be done, and 13% say most people think having tight restrictions is important.

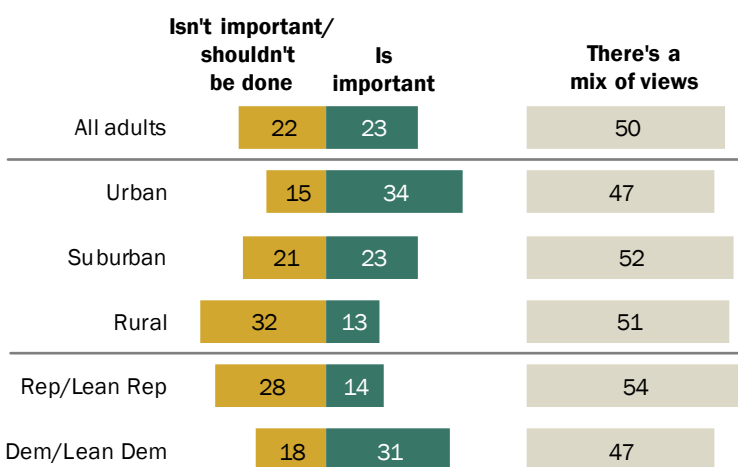
Perceptions on these issues differ by community type, some key demographic variables and political party identification. Rural residents are less likely than those living in urban or suburban areas to say most people in their community think each of the steps aimed at mitigating the virus is important – getting vaccines, wearing a mask and having tight restrictions on public activity. And, in turn, rural residents are more likely to say most people in their area think these things are not important or should not be done.

For example, on mask wearing, only 13% of rural residents (compared with 23% of those in the suburbs and 34% in cities) say most people in their communities think it's important to wear a mask. About a third (32%) of people from rural areas (compared with 21% in the suburbs and 15% in urban areas) say most people in their community think wearing a mask is not important or shouldn't be done. Roughly half in rural (51%) and suburban areas (52%) and 47% in cities say there's a mix of views on this where they live.

There are also differences by race and ethnicity in people's perceptions of how those in their community feel about these issues. On mask wearing, Asian (49%), Black (29%) and Hispanic (32%) adults are more likely than White adults (18%) to say most people in their community think wearing a mask is important. White adults are more likely than other groups to say most people where they live think it's not important to wear a mask or that masks shouldn't be worn. Still, 54% of White adults and pluralities of Black (47%) and Hispanic (44%) adults say there's a mix of views in their community. The racial and ethnic patterns are similar on the issues of vaccines and restrictions on public activity.

Views on how fellow community members feel about mask wearing differ by community type and party

% saying, when it comes to wearing a mask or face covering in stores or other businesses, most people in their community think this ...



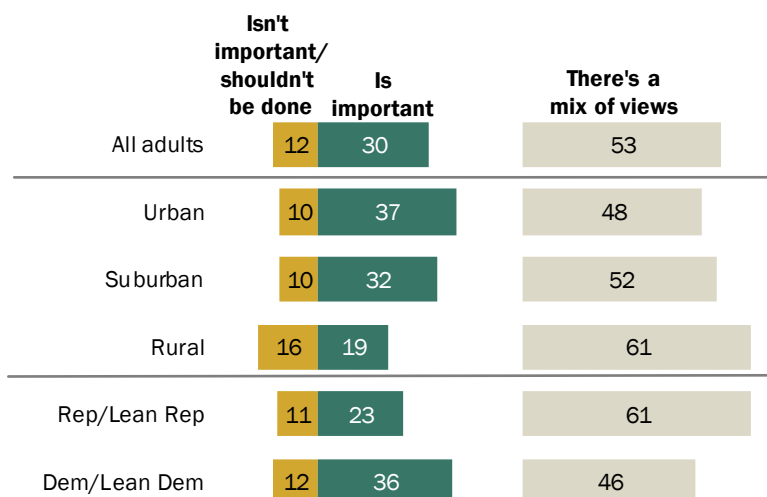
Note: Share of respondents who said they are not sure or didn't offer an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.
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Views also differ by income and education, particularly when it comes to vaccines. College graduates and upper-income adults are much more likely than those with less education or income to say most people in their community think getting a COVID-19 vaccine is important. Four-in-ten adults with a bachelor's degree or more education say this, compared with 25% of those with less education. Similarly, 40% of upper-income adults – compared with 27% of middle-income and 28% of lower-income adults – say most people in the area where they live think it's important to get a vaccine.

Most Republicans say there's a mix of views on COVID-19 vaccines where they live

% saying, when it comes to getting a COVID-19 vaccine, most people in their community think this ...



Note: Share of respondents who said they are not sure or didn't offer an answer not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.

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Partisan gaps on these issues are substantial. Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say they live in an area where most people think vaccines, masks and tighter restrictions are important, while Republicans are more likely to say most people where they live think masks and tighter restrictions are not important or should not be imposed. For example, 31% of Democrats but only 14% of Republicans say most people in their area think wearing masks is important. And 28% of Republicans but only 18% of Democrats say most in their community think this is not important or should not be done.

On vaccines, a higher share of Republicans than Democrats say there is a mix of views in their community. Even so, a plurality of Democrats say they live in an area where views on this issue are mixed.

Adults who live in communities with a higher number of recent COVID-19-related deaths say there's less support where they live for vaccines, masks and tight restrictions

Americans who live in communities that have been hit hard with COVID-19 deaths in recent weeks report less support among their fellow community members for vaccines, mask wearing and tight restrictions on public activity. Only 17% of those living in areas with a higher number of COVID-19-related deaths in the eight weeks prior to the survey say most people in their local community think getting a COVID-19 vaccine is important.⁶ By contrast, 28% of those living in areas with a medium number of recent COVID-19 deaths and 43% of those with a lower number of deaths say the same.

Similarly, while only 14% of those in areas with a higher number of recent deaths say most people in their community think wearing a mask or face covering in stores or other businesses is important, higher shares in communities with a medium (20%) or a lower (34%) number of deaths say the same.

The pattern is similar when it comes to views on having tight restrictions on public activity – those in areas with the highest number of COVID-19-related deaths in the past eight weeks are the least likely to say most people in their community think this is important.

These patterns are not driven by the partisan makeup of communities, as they can be seen among Republicans and Democrats.

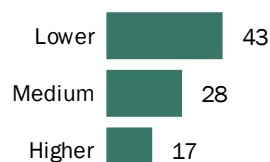
Higher ratings for state and local government than federal government on COVID-19 response

Public assessments of the job government has done responding to the coronavirus outbreak are mixed and vary depending on the level of government. On balance, views of the federal government's response to the pandemic are negative. About one-in-three adults say the federal government has done an excellent (5%) or

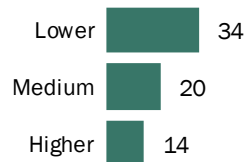
In communities with fewer recent COVID-19 deaths, support for vaccines and masks is more widespread

% in communities with lower/medium/higher number of COVID-19-related deaths in the last eight weeks saying most people in their community think ...

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is important



Wearing a mask or face covering in stores/other businesses is important



Note: Lower number of deaths is less than 10 per 100,000 county residents in the past eight weeks, medium is 10 to less than 25, higher is 25+.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021. COVID-19 deaths based on Pew Research Center analysis of Johns Hopkins University COVID-19 Data Repository, accessed Nov. 5, 2021.

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⁶ Data for deaths attributed to COVID-19 by county are taken from the 2019 Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 (2019-nCoV) Data Repository maintained at John Hopkins University (downloaded on Nov. 5, 2021).

good (24%) job, while 39% say it has done a poor (20%) or very poor (19%) job. Roughly a third (32%) say the federal government has done an average job responding to the coronavirus outbreak.

Views are somewhat more positive when it comes to the job state governments have done in responding to the pandemic: 38% say their state government has done an excellent (9%) or good (28%) job, and 31% say their state has done a poor (17%) or very poor (14%) job; 31% say their state has done an average job.

A similar share of adults have positive views of their local government's handling of the pandemic: 7% say it has been excellent and 32% say it has been good. Views of local government are less negative than those of state and federal government, with 12% saying their local government has done a poor job and 8% saying very poor. Four-in-ten adults say their local government has done an average job.

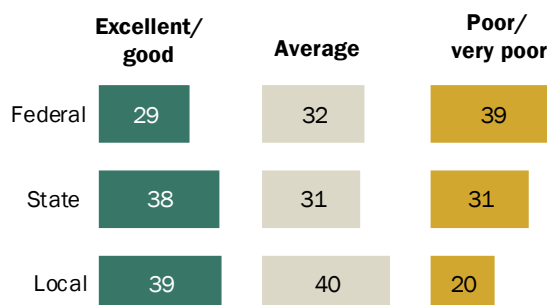
Rural adults are less likely to give positive ratings to each level of government. The differences are sharpest on assessments of the federal government. For example, only 21% of rural residents give the federal government an excellent or good rating for its handling of the pandemic, compared with 30% of those in the suburbs and 36% of those in urban areas.

These views are driven in part by partisanship, as rural adults are disproportionately Republican, and Republicans are especially critical of the federal government's handling of the coronavirus outbreak. Roughly two-thirds (65%) of Republicans say the federal government has done a poor or very poor job; only 18% of Democrats say the same. The party gap is significant, though not as wide, when it comes to the performance of state and local governments.

There are demographic differences in these ratings as well. Black, Hispanic and Asian adults give higher ratings to the federal government than do White adults. And college graduates give higher ratings to each level of government compared with non-college graduates.

About four-in-ten Americans give the federal government poor or very poor ratings for its COVID-19 response

% saying each level of government is doing a ___ job responding to the coronavirus outbreak



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.
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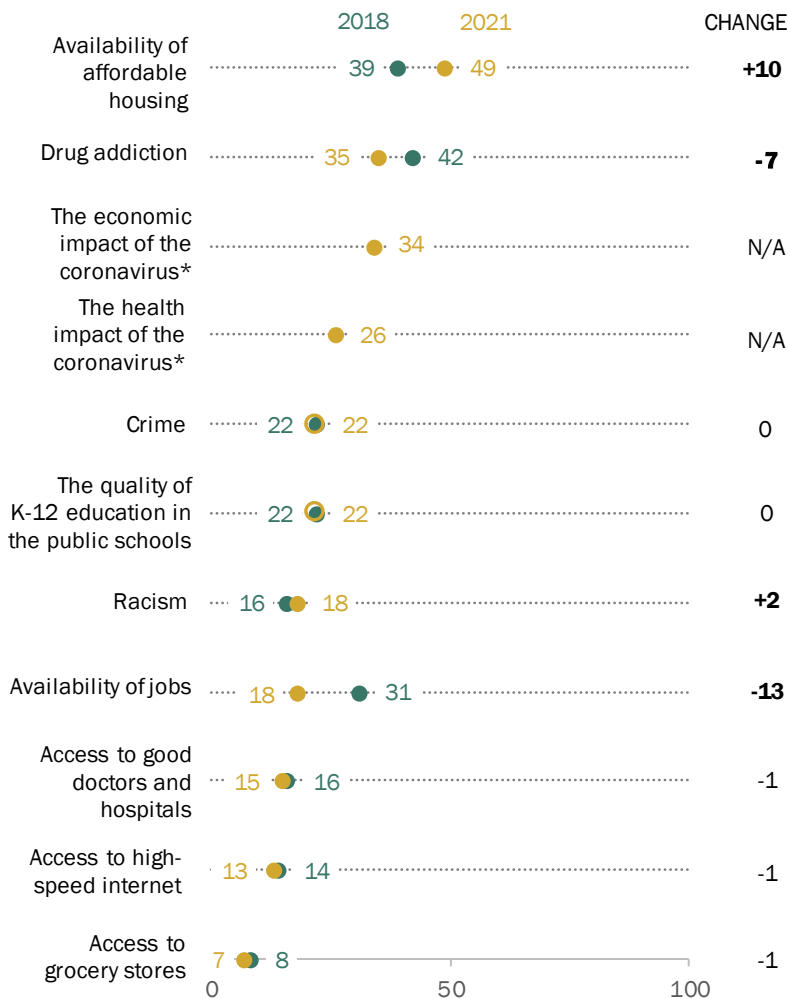
Rising share of Americans say availability of affordable housing is a major problem in their area

Beyond the economic and health impacts of the coronavirus, many Americans see a variety of other problems in their area. About half (49%) say the availability of affordable housing is a major problem in their local community, while a smaller but substantial share say the same about drug addiction (35%). About one-in-five see crime (22%), the quality of K-12 education in local public schools (22%), racism (18%), and the availability of jobs (18%) as major problems, while smaller shares say access to good doctors and hospitals (15%), high-speed internet (13%) and grocery stores (7%) are major problems.

The share who consider the availability of affordable housing a major problem has increased 10 percentage points since the question was last [asked in 2018](#). In turn, the shares saying drug addiction and the availability of jobs are major problems fell significantly. The availability of jobs saw the largest drop in the share saying it is a major problem – down 13 points from 31% in 2018. This change is particularly notable in rural areas, where the share saying the availability of

About half of Americans say availability of affordable housing is a major problem in their area

% saying each of the following is a *major* problem in their local community



*Item only asked on 2021 survey.

Note: Statistically significant differences in change column shown in **bold**.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.

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jobs is a major problem dropped 19 percentage points, compared with a 12-point drop in urban areas and a 9-point drop in the suburbs.

On some issues, while the share of Americans saying each is a major problem in their area has only seen modest or no change, there has been greater movement in particular community types. For example, while the overall shares of U.S. adults who see crime and racism as major problems have not increased by more than 2 percentage points since 2018, this increase is much larger across urban areas. Some 43% of urban residents now say crime is a major problem in their community, compared with 35% in 2018. And 27% in urban areas now say this about racism, up from 21% in 2018.

Urban residents voice more concern across a broad range of issues. Fully 63% of urban residents say the availability of affordable housing is a major problem; 46% of suburban and 40% of rural residents say the same. About half of urban residents (49%) say drug addiction is a major problem in their area, compared with 40% of rural residents and an even smaller share in the suburbs (27%). In turn, rural residents are more likely to say access to good doctors and hospitals (22%) and high-speed internet (26%) are major problems; about one-in-five or fewer urban and suburban residents say the same. These patterns were similar in 2018.

Perceptions of these problems differ by race and ethnicity. For example, 42% of Black adults say crime is a major problem in their community, compared with 30% of Hispanic adults, 24% of Asian adults and 17% of White adults. And while about four-in-ten Black (42%) and Hispanic (41%) adults see drug addiction as a major problem in their area, 34% of White adults and an even smaller share of Asian adults (20%) say the same. In urban areas, where the issues included in the survey tend to be seen as more of a problem than in other community types, Black adults are more likely than their White and Hispanic counterparts to see drug addiction, crime and racism as major problems in their communities.⁷

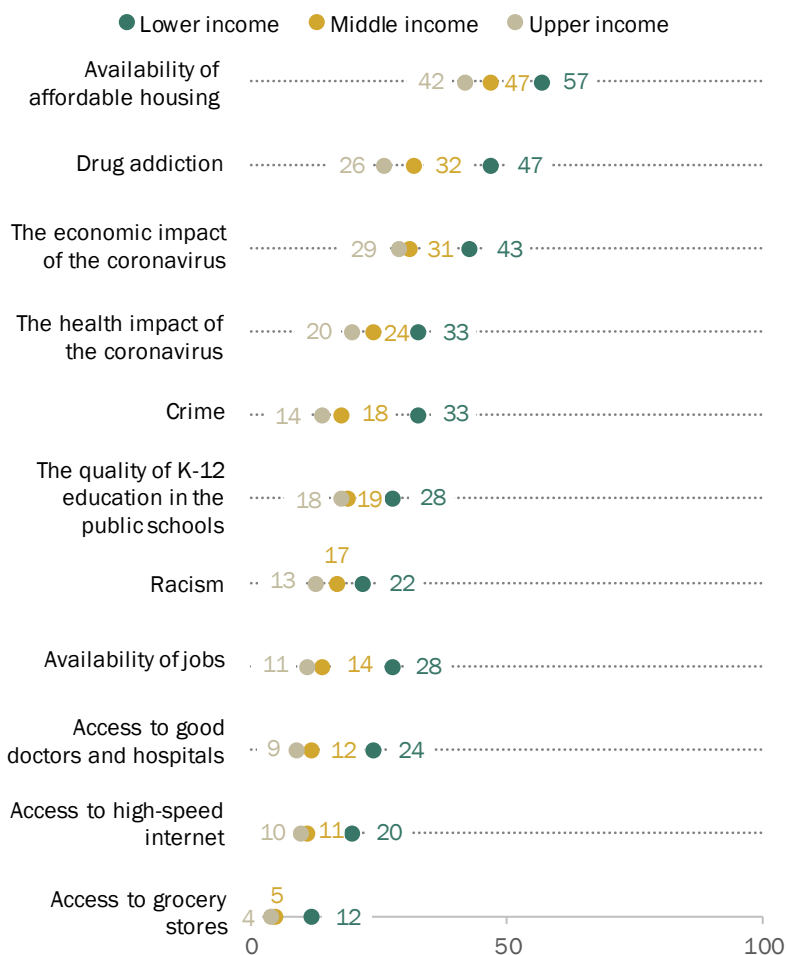
⁷ Because of the relatively small size of the Asian American sample and a reduction in precision due to weighting, results for Asian Americans cannot be analyzed by community type.

Views on these issues also differ by income. Lower-income adults are significantly more likely than those with middle and upper incomes to see each of these issues as a major problem in their area. For example, a majority of lower-income adults say the availability of affordable housing is a major problem in their local community. Lower-income adults are also particularly likely to say drug addiction, crime and the availability of jobs are major problems.

These income differences are evident across community types, but lower-income adults in urban areas are even more likely to see drug addiction (59%) and crime (51%) as major problems. This is significantly more than the shares of lower-income adults in suburban and rural areas. In turn, lower-income adults in rural areas are more likely than those in urban and suburban areas to say access to high-speed internet (33%) is a major problem.

Lower-income adults more likely than those with higher incomes to see major problems in their community

% in each income tier saying each of the following is a **major** problem in their local community



Note: Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2020 earnings.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.

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Americans less likely now to want to live in cities, more likely to prefer suburbs compared with 2018

About a third of U.S. adults (34%) say they would want to move to a different community if they could, and those in urban areas are particularly likely to say this. Some 43% of urban dwellers say they would like to move, compared with 35% in suburbs and an even smaller share of those in rural areas (25%). Urban residents are also more likely than they were in 2018 to say they would want to move to a different community if they could: 37% said this in the earlier survey.

In contrast, the share of adults in suburban and rural communities who say they would want to move is virtually unchanged. Adults in these types of communities are now more likely than in 2018 to say they would *not* want to move (40% now vs. 36% in 2018 in the suburbs and 50% vs. 43% in rural areas). These changes reflect a drop in the shares in each of these community types who say they aren't sure if they'd want to move if they could.

About three-in-ten adults in urban areas who say they would want to move (28%) say they would want to stay in an urban area, while 48% would want to move to the suburbs and 23% say they would want to move to a rural area. These responses have not changed significantly from 2018.

Among suburban residents who say they would want to move if they could, 37% would want to stay in the suburbs, while 43% would want to move to a rural area and just 19% would want to move to an urban community. The share saying they would want to move to a rural area (among those who would want to move) is up from 35% in 2018, while there was no significant change in the shares saying they'd want to stay in the suburbs or move to an urban area.

Rural dwellers who say they would want to move are the most likely to say they'd want to stay in the same community type: 46% would want to stay in a rural area. A third of rural residents who

A growing share of urban dwellers say they would move if they could

% saying they would ___ to a different community if they could

All adults	Want to move	Not want to move	Not sure
2021	34	41	24
2018	32	37	31
<i>Among those who live in an urban area</i>			
2021	43	31	24
2018	37	31	32
<i>Among those who live in a suburban area</i>			
2021	35	40	24
2018	34	36	29
<i>Among those who live in a rural area</i>			
2021	25	50	24
2018	25	43	31

Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.
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would move if they could say they would want to move to a suburb, while 19% would move to an urban area. Similar shares expressed these preferences in 2018.

Overall, the share of U.S. adults who express a preference for living in an urban area has dropped from 23% in 2018 to 19% in 2021. This includes urban dwellers who do not want to move or who want to move but still live in an urban area, as well as those from the suburbs and rural areas who say they'd like to move to a city.⁸

At the same time, the share who would prefer living in the suburbs (either staying put or moving to the suburbs) is up 4 percentage points, from 42% to 46%. Some 35% prefer living in a rural area, virtually unchanged from the 36% who did so three years ago.

Across most age groups, more prefer suburbs to cities or rural areas; the exception are adults ages 50 to 64, similar shares of whom prefer suburban (44%) and rural (40%) communities. Still, adults younger than 30 who express a preference are more likely than those in older age groups to prefer living in an urban area: 31% of adults ages 18 to 29 would prefer to live in a city, compared with 18% of those ages 30 to 49, 16% of those ages 50 to 64 and 14% of adults ages 65 and older. Substantial shares in each age group would like to live in a suburban community, including 45% of those younger than 30 and 48% of those 65 and older.

About six-in-ten Black (58%) and Asian (60%) adults who express a preference would want to live in a suburban area, compared with 47% of Hispanic adults and 43% of White adults. Hispanic adults (31%) are more likely than Black (20%) and White (15%) adults to express a preference for urban areas, and Asian adults (30%) are more likely than those who are White to do so.⁹ In turn, White adults are the most likely to express a preference for rural areas: 42% do so, compared with 22% each of Black and Hispanic adults and just 10% of Asian adults.

The share of Americans who would prefer to live in a city has dropped, while a growing share prefers the suburbs

% expressing a preference for each community type

	Urban	Suburban	Rural
2021	19	46	35
2018	23	42	36

Note: Figures are based on respondents in each type of community who say they would not want to move as well as those who say they would move if they could and would want to move to/stay in each community type. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021. "Americans Are Less Likely Than Before COVID-19 To Want To Live in Cities, More Likely To Prefer Suburbs"

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⁸ These findings exclude those who say they are not sure if they would want to move if they could.

⁹ The 10-point difference between Asian and Black adults is not statistically significant due, in part, to the relatively small size of the Asian sample.

There are also differences by partisanship. Among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents who express a preference, half would prefer to live in the suburbs, while the rest are split between those who would prefer living in cities (26%) and those who would prefer a rural area (24%). Among Republicans and Republican leaners, similar shares express a preference for rural (47%) and suburban areas (43%), while just 10% would prefer to live in an urban community.

People's priorities for what they are looking for in a community are largely unchanged compared with before the pandemic

While the survey shows some changes in the shares of Americans who would prefer to live in cities and suburbs compared with 2018, there is little evidence that people's priorities in terms of what they consider important in a community have shifted considerably during this time. In particular, the shares saying it is very important to them to live in a community that is a good place to raise children; where they have family nearby; with access to art, music and theater; that is racially and ethnically diverse; or where most people share their political views have changed by no more than 2 percentage points between 2018 and 2021.

The share of Americans who see living in a community with access to recreational and outdoor activities as a high priority has seen a modest but statistically significant increase: 45% now say this is very important to them, compared with 42% in 2018. And there has also been a rise in the share saying it is very important to them to live in a place with a strong sense of community (32% say this today vs. 27% in 2018).

Community type preferences vary by race and ethnicity, age and partisanship

% expressing a preference for each community type

	Urban	Suburban	Rural
All adults	19	46	35
White	15	43	42
Black	20	58	22
Hispanic	31	47	22
Asian*	30	60	10
Ages 18-29	31	45	25
30-49	18	47	35
50-64	16	44	40
65+	14	48	38
Rep/Lean Rep	10	43	47
Dem/Lean Dem	26	50	24

*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Note: Figures are based on respondents in each type of community who say they would not want to move as well as those who say they would move if they could and would want to move to/stay in each community type. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.

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Adults in urban and rural communities are more likely than they were in 2018 to see living in a place with a strong sense of community as a high priority. Some 37% of city dwellers and 35% of those in rural areas now say this is very important to them, compared with 29% and 25%, respectively, in 2018. However, there has been no significant change among those in the suburbs: 29% say it's very important to them to live in a place with a strong sense of community, similar to the 27% who said this in the earlier survey.

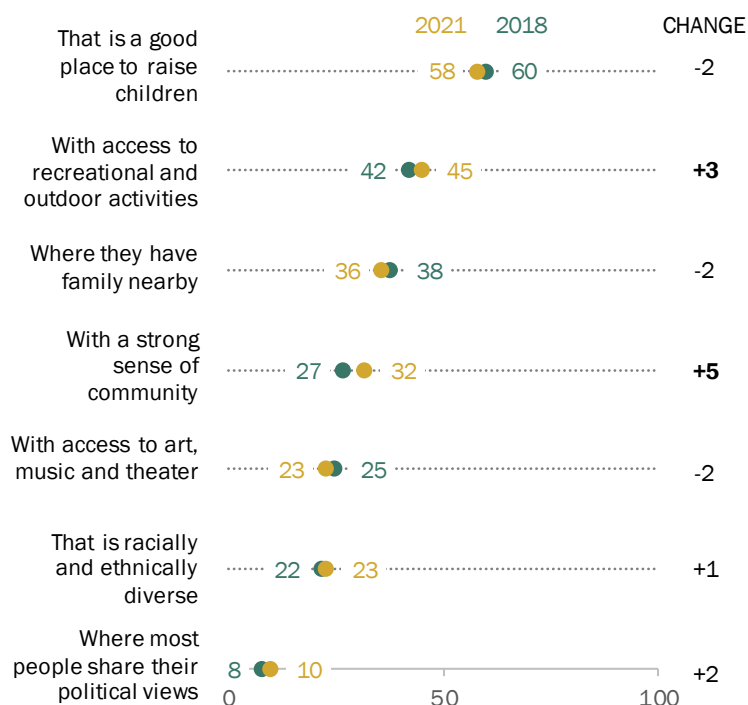
Overall, about six-in-ten U.S. adults (58%) say it's very important to them, personally, to live in a community that is a good place to raise children.

Smaller shares say the same about living in a place with access to recreational and outdoor activities (45%), where they have family nearby (36%), with a strong sense of community (32%), with access to art, music and theater (23%), that is racially and ethnically diverse (23%), or where most people share their political views (10%).

These preferences vary to some extent by age, race and ethnicity, and partisanship. For example, Black adults (49%) are more likely than Hispanic (33%), White (30%) or Asian (29%) adults to say it's very important to them, personally, to live in a place with a strong sense of community. And Black (44%), Asian (35%) and Hispanic (32%) adults are more likely than White adults (16%) to see living in a community that is racially and ethnically diverse as a priority.

For the most part, what Americans are looking for in a community has not changed since 2018

% saying it is very important to them, personally, to live in a community ...



Note: Statistically significant differences in change column shown in **bold**.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.

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Adults younger than 30 are also more likely than older adults to say it's very important to them to live in a racially and ethnically diverse community: 33% of those ages 18 to 29 say this, compared with 25% of adults ages 30 to 49, 21% of those ages 50 to 64 and just 16% of adults ages 65 and older. In turn, adults ages 65 and older are the most likely to say living in a community where they have family nearby is very important to them (44% say this vs. 38% of those ages 50 to 64, 31% of those 30 to 49 and 33% of adults younger than 30).

When it comes to partisan differences, Democrats and those who lean toward the Democratic Party are more likely than Republicans and Republican leaners to say it would be very important to them, personally, to live in a community with each of these characteristics: access to recreational and outdoor activities (50% of Democrats vs. 39% of Republicans), racial and ethnic diversity (36% vs. 9%) and access to art, music and theater (32% vs. 12%). There are no significant differences in the shares of Republicans and Democrats who see the other items asked in the survey as very important.

Share of U.S. adults who live near family is largely unchanged from 2018

A quarter of U.S. adults [say they have moved since the coronavirus outbreak](#), including 6% who say they moved for reasons related to the pandemic, but the share of adults who live near family members is unchanged. Some 55% say at least some members of their extended family live within an hour's drive from them, including 28% who say all or most of their family members do (in 2018, these figures were 55% and 29%, respectively).

Adults in rural areas (62%) are more likely than those in cities (50%) or suburbs (54%) to say at least some of their family members live within an hour's drive from them. In turn, about one-in-five adults in urban (20%) and suburban (21%) communities say none of their family members live nearby, compared with 16% in rural areas.

About three-in-ten Americans live within an hour's drive of all or most of their extended family

% saying ___ of their extended family members who don't live with them live within an hour's drive of where they live now

	All or most	Some	Only a few	None
All adults	28	27	24	20
Urban	28	22	27	20
Suburban	27	27	24	21
Rural	31	30	21	16

Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer or who said they don't have extended family not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 18-24, 2021.

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Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

Overview

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report is drawn from the panel wave conducted from Oct. 18 to Oct. 24, 2021. A total of 9,676 panelists responded out of 11,340 who were sampled, for a response rate of 85%. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 3%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 1%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 9,676 respondents is plus or minus 1.6 percentage points.

Panel recruitment

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 9,942 (50%) agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	1,604
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	939
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	470
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS	9,396	8,778	4,433
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS	5,900	4,720	1,627
June 1 to July 19, 2020; Feb. 10 to March 31, 2021	ABS	3,197	2,812	1,699
May 29 to July 7, 2021	ABS	1,085	947	726
	Total	39,296	27,199	11,498

Note: Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel. The 2021 recruitment survey was ongoing at the time this survey was conducted. The counts reflect completed recruitment interviews up through July 7, 2021.

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address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a stratified, random sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. Sampled households receive mailings asking a randomly selected adult to complete a survey online. A question at the end of the survey asks if the respondent is willing to join the ATP. Starting in 2020 another stage was added to the recruitment. Households that do not respond to the online survey are sent a paper version of the questionnaire, \$5 and a postage-paid return envelope. A subset of the adults returning the paper version of the survey are invited to join the ATP. This subset of adults receive a follow-up mailing with a \$10 pre-incentive and invitation to join the ATP.

Across the four address-based recruitments, a total of 19,578 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 17,257 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. In each household, the adult with the next birthday was asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. Of the 27,199 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 11,498 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.¹⁰ The American Trends Panel never uses breakout routers or chains that direct respondents to additional surveys.

Sample design

The overall target population for this survey was non-institutionalized persons ages 18 and older, living in the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii.

This study featured a stratified random sample from the ATP. The sample was allocated according to the following strata, in order: tablet households, foreign-born Hispanics, U.S.-born Hispanics, not registered to vote, high school education or less, foreign-born Asian Americans, people ages 18 to 34, non-Hispanic Black Americans, people who use the internet weekly or less, nonvolunteers and all other categories not already falling into any of the above. Respondent weights are adjusted to account for differential probabilities of selection as described in the Weighting section below.

Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with Ipsos. The web program was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the Ipsos project management team and Pew Research Center researchers. The Ipsos project management team also populated

¹⁰ AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. "[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling](#)."

test data that was analyzed in SPSS to ensure the logic and randomizations were working as intended before launching the survey.

Incentives

All respondents were offered a post-paid incentive for their participation. Respondents could choose to receive the post-paid incentive in the form of a check or a gift code to Amazon.com or could choose to decline the incentive. Incentive amounts ranged from \$5 to \$20 depending on whether the respondent belongs to a part of the population that is harder or easier to reach. Differential incentive amounts were designed to increase panel survey participation among groups that traditionally have low survey response propensities.

Data collection protocol

The data collection field period for this survey was Oct. 18 to Oct. 24, 2021. Postcard notifications were mailed to all ATP panelists with a known residential address on Oct. 18.

Invitations were sent out in two separate launches: Soft Launch and Full Launch. Sixty panelists were included in the soft launch, which began with an initial invitation sent on Oct. 18, 2021. The ATP panelists chosen for the initial soft launch were known responders who had completed previous ATP surveys within one day of receiving their invitation. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking panelists were included in the full launch and were sent an invitation on Oct. 19.

All panelists with an email address received an email invitation and up to one email reminder if they did not respond to the survey. All ATP panelists that consented to SMS messages received an SMS invitation and up to one SMS reminder.

Invitation and reminder dates

	Soft Launch	Full Launch
Initial invitation	Oct. 18, 2021	Oct. 19, 2021
Reminder	Oct. 21, 2021	Oct. 21, 2021

Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, the Center's researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing clear patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for very high rates of leaving questions blank, as well as always selecting the first or last answer presented. As a result of

this checking, three ATP respondents were removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

Weighting

The ATP data is weighted in a multistep process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of selection for their initial recruitment survey. The base weights for panelists recruited in different years are scaled to be proportionate to the effective sample size for all active panelists in their cohort and then calibrated to align with the population benchmarks in the accompanying table to

correct for nonresponse to recruitment surveys and panel attrition. If only a subsample of panelists was invited to participate in the wave, this weight is adjusted to account for any differential probabilities of selection.

Among the panelists who completed the survey, this weight is then calibrated again to align with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table and trimmed at the 1st and 99th percentiles to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

Some of the population benchmarks used for weighting come from surveys conducted prior to the coronavirus outbreak that began in February 2020. However, the weighting variables for panelists recruited in 2021 were measured at the time they were recruited to the panel. Likewise, the profile variables for existing panelists were updated from panel surveys conducted in July or August 2021.

Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age x Gender	2019 American Community Survey (ACS)
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
Race/Ethnicity x Education	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanics and Asian Americans	
Years lived in the U.S.	
Census region x Metro/Non-metro	2020 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2019 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	2021 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Frequency of internet use	
Religious affiliation	

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total U.S. adult population.

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This does not pose a problem for most of the variables used in the weighting, which are quite stable at both the population and individual levels. However, volunteerism may have changed over the intervening period in ways that made their 2021 measurements incompatible with the available (pre-pandemic) benchmarks. To address this, volunteerism is weighted using the profile variables that were measured in 2020. For all other weighting dimensions, the more recent panelist measurements from 2021 are used.

For panelists recruited in 2021, plausible values were imputed using the 2020 volunteerism values from existing panelists with similar characteristics. This ensures that any patterns of change that were observed in the existing panelists were also reflected in the new recruits when the weighting was performed.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	9,676	1.6 percentage points
Urban	2,172	3.6 percentage points
Suburban	5,157	2.2 percentage points
Rural	2,299	3.2 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Dispositions and response rates

Final dispositions	AAPOR code	Total
Completed interview	1.1	9,676
Logged onto survey; broke off	2.12	121
Logged onto survey; did not complete any items	2.1121	100
Never logged on (implicit refusal)	2.11	1,438
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	2
Completed interview but was removed for data quality		3
Screened out		0
Total panelists in the survey		11,340
Completed interviews	I	9,676
Partial interviews	P	0
Refusals	R	1,662
Non-contact	NC	2
Other	O	0
Unknown household	UH	0
Unknown other	UO	0
Not eligible	NE	0
Total		11,340
AAPOR RR1 = $I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)$		85%

Cumulative response rate	Total
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	12%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	69%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 98	42%
Response rate to Wave 98 survey	85%
Cumulative response rate	3%

Adjusting income and defining income tiers

To create upper-, middle- and lower-income tiers, respondents' 2020 family incomes were adjusted for differences in purchasing power by geographic region and household size. "Middle-income" adults live in families with annual incomes that are two-thirds to double the median family income in the panel (after incomes have been adjusted for the local cost of living and household size). The middle-income range for the American Trends Panel is about \$42,000 to \$125,900 annually for an average family of three. Lower-income families have incomes less than roughly \$42,000, and upper-income families have incomes greater than roughly \$125,900 (all figures expressed in 2020 dollars).

Based on these adjustments, 31% of respondents are lower income, 47% are middle income and 16% fall into the upper-income tier. An additional 6% either didn't offer a response to the income question or the household size question.

For more information about how the income tiers were determined, please see [here](#).

A note about the Asian sample

This survey includes a total sample size of 329 Asian Americans. The sample includes English-speaking Asian Americans only and, therefore, may not be representative of the overall Asian American population (75% of our weighted Asian American sample was born in another country, compared with 77% of the Asian American adult population overall). Despite this limitation, it is important to report the views of Asian Americans on the topics in this study. As always, Asian Americans' responses are incorporated into the general population figures throughout this report. Because of the relatively small sample size and a reduction in precision due to weighting, we are not able to analyze Asian American respondents by demographic categories, such as gender, age or education. For more, see "[Polling methods are changing, but reporting the views of Asian Americans remains a challenge](#)."

Categorization of COVID-19 county health impact

This report uses the number of deaths attributed to COVID-19 in each respondent's county in the eight weeks prior to the survey as a measure of the scale of the health impact of the outbreak for each individual in the survey. Some small counties have been combined into single reporting units in the data. Deaths recorded in these aggregate units are assigned to each constituent county proportional to that county's population. County death totals are then adjusted for differences in county population (per 100,000 residents). Counties are categorized as having a higher, medium, or lower rate of COVID-19 deaths.

Counties are classified as “higher” if they had 25 deaths or more per 100,000 people in the eight weeks prior to Oct. 18, 2021. “Medium” counties had between 10 and 24.99 deaths per 100,000 people. “Lower” counties had fewer than ten deaths per 100,000 people during this eight-week period.

Data for deaths attributed to COVID-19 by county are taken from the 2019 Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 (2019-nCoV) Data Repository maintained at John Hopkins University (downloaded on Nov. 5, 2021).

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