

Benchmark sources

This analysis featured 26 benchmarks. For Yes/No type questions, we measure accuracy by examining the share of adults reporting in the affirmative (Yes). For other questions, we measure accuracy by examining the share of adults reporting the most common answer. For example, when the American Community Survey asks, “Which best describes the building where you currently live? A mobile home; A one-family house detached from any other house; A one-family house attached to one or more houses; A building with two or more apartments; Boat, RV, van, etc.” most Americans report living in a one-family house detached from any other house.

See the table on the next page for details.

Benchmarking questions and sources

Benchmark	Source	Question wording
English proficiency	2019 American Community Survey	Do you speak a language other than English at home? [Ask if speaks a language other than English at home] How well do you speak English? Very well; Well; Not well; Not at all
Citizenship	2019 American Community Survey	Are you a citizen of the United States?
Voting	United States Elections Project (Michael P. McDonald)	Which of the following statements best describes you? I did not vote in the 2020 presidential election; I planned to vote but wasn't able to; I definitely voted in the 2020 presidential election
Parent of child in household	2020 National Health Interview Survey	Are you the parent or guardian of any children under age 18? [Ask if parent or guardian of child under age 18] Are any of those children under 18 now living in your household?
Marital status	2021 Current Population Survey March Supplement	Which of these best describes you? Married; Living with a partner; Divorced; Separated; Widowed; Never been married
Number of adults in household	2019 American Community Survey	How many people, including yourself, live in your household? [Ask if more than one person in household] How many, including yourself, are adults, ages 18 and older?
Number of children in household	2019 American Community Survey	How many people, including yourself, live in your household? [Ask if more than one person in household] How many, including yourself, are adults, ages 18 and older?
Health insurance	2020 National Health Interview Survey	Are you currently covered by any form of health insurance or health plan?
Retirement account	2021 Current Population Survey March Supplement	At any time during 2020 did you have any retirement accounts such as a 401(k), 403(b), IRA, or other account designed specifically for retirement savings?
Received food stamps	2021 Current Population Survey March Supplement	At any time during 2020, did you or anyone in your household receive benefits from SNAP (the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program) or the food stamp program, or use a SNAP or food stamp benefit card?
Received social security	2021 Current Population Survey March Supplement	During 2020 did you receive any Social Security payments from the U.S. Government?
High blood pressure	2020 National Health Interview Survey	Have you ever been told by a doctor or other health professional that you had hypertension, also called high blood pressure?
Food allergy	2009-2010 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey	Do you have any food allergies?
Smoking history	2020 National Health Interview Survey	Have you smoked at least 100 cigarettes in your entire life? [Ask if ever smoked 100 cigarettes] Do you now smoke cigarettes ... Every day; Some days; Not at all
Vaping history	2020 National Health Interview Survey	Have you ever used an e-cigarette or other electronic vaping product, even just one time, in your entire life? [Ask if ever used e-cigarette] Do you now use e-cigarettes or other electronic vaping products ... Every day; Some days; Not at all
Moved in last year	2021 Current Population Survey March Supplement	Were you living in this house or apartment one year ago?
Type of residence	2019 American Community Survey	Which best describes the building where you currently live? (Include all apartments, flats, etc., even if vacant.) A mobile home; A one-family house detached from any other house; A one-family house attached to one or more houses; A building with two or more apartments; Boat, RV, van, etc.

Home ownership	2019 American Community Survey	Which of the following describes the house, apartment or mobile home where you live? Owned by you or someone in your household with a mortgage or loan (include home equity loans); Owned by you or someone in your household free and clear (without a mortgage or loan); Rented; Occupied without payment of rent
Number of cars	2019 American Community Survey	How many automobiles, vans, and trucks of one-ton capacity or less are kept at home for use by members of your household?
Job status last week	2021 Current Population Survey March Supplement	Last week, did you do any work either for pay or profit? [Ask if did not work last week or refused] Last week, did you have a job either full or part time? Include any job from which you were temporarily absent.
Work affected by Covid-19	2021 Current Population Survey March Supplement	At any time in the last four weeks, were you unable to work because your employer closed or lost business due to the coronavirus?
Union membership	2021 Current Population Survey March Supplement	Are you a member of a labor union or of an employee association similar to a union?
Received unemployment compensation	2021 Current Population Survey March Supplement	At any time during 2020, did you receive any state or federal unemployment compensation?
Received worker's compensation	2021 Current Population Survey March Supplement	During 2020 did you receive any worker's compensation payments or other payments as a result of a job-related injury or illness?
Military/veteran status	2019 American Community Survey	Have you ever served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, Reserves, or National Guard?
COVID-19 vaccination status	Centers for Disease Control estimates as of June 29, 2021	Have you received a vaccine to prevent COVID-19? Yes, have had all the shots needed to be fully vaccinated; Yes, have had one shot but still need one more; No, have not received a vaccine

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