

2026 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
Wave 198: Views of Economic Inequality
August 24-30, 2026

TOPLINE
N=5,166

Note: All numbers are percentages unless otherwise noted. Percentages less than 0.5% are replaced by an asterisk (*). Rows/columns may not total 100% due to rounding. The questions presented below are part of a larger survey conducted on the American Trends Panel.

"No answer" includes web respondents who do not answer the question as well as telephone respondents who refuse to answer or who say they don't know how to answer. In cases where "not sure" was offered as an explicit option to web and telephone respondents, the "no answer" category includes only web skips and telephone refusals.

This survey was conducted primarily online, with some interviews conducted by live telephone. This topline shows the programming language for online administration. For details on how questions were slightly modified for phone administration, visit the questionnaire.

American Trends Panel surveys conducted between October 2016 and June 2024 were conducted fully online (with tablets and data plans provided to adults without home internet).

PN = Programming note

	Sample size	Margin of error at 95% confidence level
U.S. adults	5,166	+/- 1.6 percentage points

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE OR PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

INEQ1

ASK ALL:

[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-2/2-1, HOLDING 3, 98, AND 99 LAST; INCLUDE ROTATION IN DATA FILE]

Thinking about the level of economic inequality in the country these days, would you say there is...

	Too much economic <u>inequality</u>	Too little economic <u>inequality</u>	About the right amount of economic <u>inequality</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Aug 24-30, 2026	61	13	23	3
Sep 16-29, 2019	61	13	23	3

INEQ2**ASK IF THINKS THERE IS TOO MUCH ECONOMIC INEQUALITY (INEQ1=1) [n=3,227]:****[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-2/2-1, HOLDING 98 AND 99 LAST; INCLUDE ROTATION IN DATA FILE]**

Do you think that...

	Some amount of economic inequality is acceptable	No amount of economic inequality is acceptable	No answer
Aug 24-30, 2026	64	35	1
Sep 16-29, 2019	70	29	1

INEQ1/INEQ2 COMBO TABLE BASED ON TOTAL:

Aug 24-30, 2026		Sep 16-29, 2019
61	NET Too much economic inequality	61
39	Some amount of economic inequality is acceptable	42
21	No amount of economic inequality is acceptable	18
*	No answer to INEQ2	*
13	Too little economic inequality	13
23	About the right amount of economic inequality	23
3	No answer to INEQ1	3

INEQ3**ASK IF THINKS THERE IS TOO MUCH ECONOMIC INEQUALITY (INEQ1=1) [n=3,227]:**

In order to address economic inequality in this country, do you think our economic system...

	Requires only minor changes	Requires major changes	Needs to be completely rebuilt	No answer
Aug 24-30, 2026	12	63	24	1
Sep 16-29, 2019	19	67	14	1

INEQ1/INEQ3 COMBO TABLE BASED ON TOTAL:

Aug 24-30, 2026		Sep 16-29, 2019
61	NET Too much economic inequality	61
7	Requires only minor changes	11
38	Requires major changes	41
15	Needs to be completely rebuilt	8
*	No answer to INEQ3	*
13	Too little economic inequality	13
23	About the right amount of economic inequality	23
3	No answer to INEQ1	3

ECONSYS_CONF

**ASK IF SYSTEM REQUIRES MAJOR CHANGES OR NEEDS TO BE COMPLETELY REBUILT
(INEQ3=2,3) [n=2,805]:**

**[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-5/5-1 IN SAME ORDER AS ROTATION_GEN, HOLDING
98, AND 99 LAST; INCLUDE ROTATION IN DATA FILE]**

How confident are you that our economic system can be effectively changed to address economic inequality?

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2026

3	Extremely confident
7	Very confident
25	Somewhat confident
42	Not too confident
24	Not at all confident
*	No answer

INEQ4

ASK IF THINKS THERE IS TOO MUCH ECONOMIC INEQUALITY (INEQ1=1) [n=3,227]:

[PN: RANDOMIZE ITEMS; INCLUDE RANDOMIZATION IN DATA FILE]

How much responsibility, if any, should each of the following have in reducing economic inequality in our country?

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Only a little</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. The federal government					
Aug 24-30, 2026	72	21	5	2	*
Sep 16-29, 2019	66	27	5	2	*
b. State governments					
Aug 24-30, 2026	57	36	5	2	1
Sep 16-29, 2019	52	40	5	2	1
c. Large businesses and corporations					
Aug 24-30, 2026	57	30	8	4	1
Sep 16-29, 2019	62	29	6	3	*
d. Churches and other religious organizations					
Aug 24-30, 2026	13	27	27	32	1
Sep 16-29, 2019	13	29	26	32	*
e. Wealthy individuals					
Aug 24-30, 2026	47	32	12	8	1
Sep 16-29, 2019	46	36	11	6	*

INEQ5**ASK ALL:****[PN: RANDOMIZE ITEMS; INCLUDE RANDOMIZATION IN DATA FILE]**

How much, if at all, do you think each of the following contributes to economic inequality in this country?¹

		Contributes a <u>great deal</u>	Contributes a <u>fair amount</u>	Contributes <u>not too much</u>	Contributes <u>not at all</u>	No <u>answer</u>
a.	ASK IF FORM 1 (X_FORM=1) [n=2,594]: The outsourcing of jobs to other countries					
	Aug 24-30, 2026	39	38	18	4	1
	Sep 16-29, 2019	45	37	13	4	1
b.	ASK IF FORM 2 (X_FORM=2) [n=2,572]: Our current trade policies with other countries					
	Aug 24-30, 2026	32	38	22	6	2
	Sep 16-29, 2019	29	42	22	5	2
c.	ASK IF FORM 2 (X_FORM=2) [n=2,572]: The automation of jobs					
	Aug 24-30, 2026	29	41	23	4	2
	Sep 16-29, 2019	30	43	21	4	2
[PN: NO ITEM d]						
e.	ASK IF FORM 1 (X_FORM=1) [n=2,594]: Not enough regulation of major corporations					
	Aug 24-30, 2026	35	33	20	9	3
	Sep 16-29, 2019	37	31	19	11	1
f.	ASK IF FORM 1 (X_FORM=1) [n=2,594]: Some people work harder than others					
	Aug 24-30, 2026	29	33	26	10	2
	Sep 16-29, 2019	34	32	22	11	1
g.	ASK IF FORM 2 (X_FORM=2) [n=2,572]: Our tax system					
	Aug 24-30, 2026	48	34	13	4	1
	Sep 16-29, 2019	45	35	14	5	1
h.	ASK IF FORM 2 (X_FORM=2) [n=2,572]: The different life choices people make					
	Aug 24-30, 2026	42	37	16	4	2
	Sep 16-29, 2019	42	36	16	5	1
i.	ASK IF FORM 1 (X_FORM=1) [n=2,594]: Some people start out with more opportunities than others					
	Aug 24-30, 2026	36	39	17	6	1
	Sep 16-29, 2019	40	37	17	5	1
j.	ASK IF FORM 2 (X_FORM=2) [n=2,572]: Problems with our educational system					
	Aug 24-30, 2026	40	39	16	4	2
	Sep 16-29, 2019	44	40	12	3	1
k.	ASK IF FORM 1 (X_FORM=1) [n=2,594]: Discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities					
	Aug 24-30, 2026	27	30	24	18	2
	Sep 16-29, 2019	32	30	24	13	1

[PN: NO ITEM l]

¹ Items d, l and m were asked in 2019 but not in 2026. Items n and o are new items asked in 2026.

INEQ5 CONTINUED ...

		Contributes a <u>great deal</u>	Contributes a <u>fair amount</u>	Contributes <u>not too much</u>	Contributes <u>not at all</u>	No <u>answer</u>
[PN: NO ITEM m]						
n.	ASK IF FORM 2 (X_FORM=2) [n=2,572]: The number of immigrants working in the U.S.					
	Aug 24-30, 2026	22	26	32	17	2
o.	ASK IF FORM 1 (X_FORM=1) [n=2,594]: The growing role of artificial intelligence (AI) in jobs					
	Aug 24-30, 2026	26	36	27	8	3

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE OR PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics today, do you consider yourself a...

ASK IF INDEP/SOMETHING ELSE (PARTY=3,4 OR REFUSED) [n=2,123]:

PARTYLN	As of today do you lean more to... ²					
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Something else</u>	<u>No answer</u>	<u>Lean Rep</u> <u>Lean Dem</u>
	27	28	29	14	2	16 20

² PARTY and PARTYLN asked in a prior survey.