

COVID-19 IN AMERICA

CONCERNS ABOUT THE CRISIS, APPLICATION OF SOCIAL DISTANCING & CURRENT FINANCIAL IMPACT

SSRS Probability Panel Data Analysis

APRIL 27, 2020



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) has had a profound impact on American lives and is unlike other prior public health crises, according to U.S. adults surveyed in a recent SSRS poll conducted via the nationally representative SSRS Opinion Panel.

A significantly higher proportion of American adults say they are very (26%) or somewhat (48%) worried that they or someone in their family will contract COVID-19 compared to previous global health crises (Ebola, H1N1 or SARS). More non-white respondents (81%) compared to white respondents (72%) are very or somewhat worried that they or someone in their family will contract COVID-19. Nearly all American adults have been following news and information about COVID-19 very (60%) or somewhat (34%) closely. Network, cable or local television broadcast news (46%) and national news media online platforms (29%) are the key sources of information about COVID-19 for a majority of American adults (75%). Fewer adults turn to social media platforms such as Facebook (8%) and Twitter (3%) for news on COVID-19.

Overall, less than half (47%) of Americans are satisfied with the way President Trump is handling the COVID-19 crisis. President Trump's satisfaction on this issue is split along party lines with 85% of Republicans expressing satisfaction (very or somewhat) compared to only 17% of Democrats. Non-white Americans are significantly more dissatisfied (69%) with how President Trump is handling the COVID-19 crisis compared to white Americans (44%). A majority of Americans report they are very or somewhat satisfied with how their local community leaders (78%) and state governor (77%) have responded to COVID-19.

A majority of Americans (97%) say they are following at least some of the recommended social distancing guidelines. A little over half (55%) say they stopped meeting up in-person with family or friends who do not live in their household.

COVID-19 has had a profound impact on work and financial situations of American families. Nearly three quarters (74%) of working Americans have experienced their work situation altered in some way due to COVID-19. Americans who were employed full time prior to COVID-19 report their hours had been cut (26%), their pay cut (11%), or they have lost a job (5%) due to COVID-19. Part time workers are more impacted by COVID-19 with 39% of part-time workers reporting their hours were cut, pay was cut (16%), or they have lost their job (12%) due to COVID-19. These have significantly impacted people's ability to pay for necessities such as food, housing, and utilities. Four in ten (40%) say it is harder than usual to pay for basic necessities.

METHODOLOGY

The *Coronavirus Poll* was funded and conducted by SSRS, a public opinion and survey research company based in Glen Mills, PA. Data collection was conducted using the *SSRS Opinion Panel*. The *SSRS Opinion Panel* is a nationally representative probability-based web panel (<https://ssrs.com/opinion-panel/>). Surveys were conducted online from April 8–13, 2020 among a nationally representative sample of 1,001 U.S. adults age 18 and older. The margin of error for total respondents is +/-4.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.



THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT CONTRACTING THE VIRUS

Nearly three-quarters of adults (74%) say they are very (26%) or somewhat (48%) worried they or someone in their family will contract COVID-19. The share of Americans exhibiting concern is an increase from previous global health crises. In 2014, 41% of Americans said they were worried about exposure to Ebola, in 2009 45% said they were worried about H1N1 (or swine flu), and in 2003 35% percent were worried about SARS.¹

Those living in areas with the most COVID-19 cases are more likely to say they are worried about contracting the virus. Eighty-five percent of those in the Northeast, which includes hard-hit states such as New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, say they are worried compared to 72% in other areas of the country.

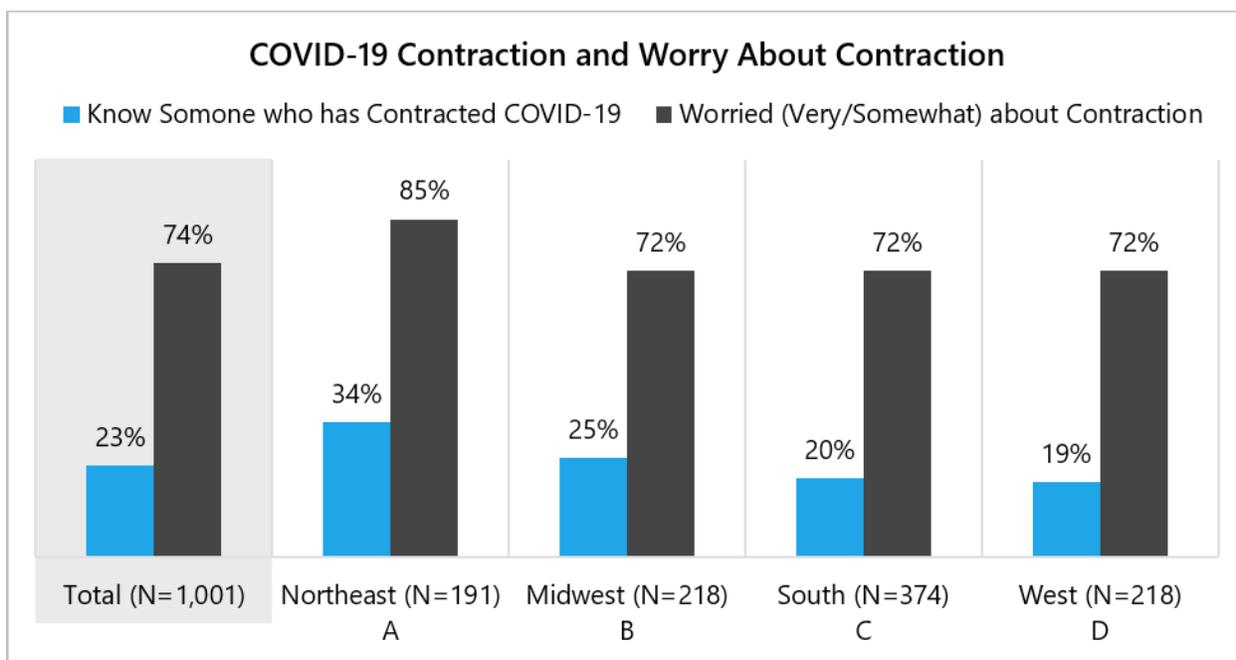
Minorities are more worried about COVID-19. Significantly more non-white respondents (81%) are very or somewhat worried they or someone in their family will contract COVID-19, compared to white respondents (72%).

Fewer Republicans (61%) than independents (75%) or Democrats (85%) say they are worried that they or someone in their family will contract COVID-19. Eighty-three percent of those who know someone who has contracted the virus say they are worried compared to 72% of those without such a personal relationship.

Contrary to what one might expect given the emphasis on older adults being most susceptible, those age 60 or older are the least likely to say they are worried that they or someone in their family will become infected. Seventy percent of those age 60 and older say they are worried about themselves or someone in their family contracting COVID-19, compared to 77% of those age 18 to 59.

About one in four (23%) Americans say either they personally have contracted or know someone who has contracted the virus. Not surprisingly, those in the Northeast are more likely to report having a friend or acquaintance who contracted COVID-19 compared to other regions in the country (27% in the Northeast versus 18% in the Midwest, 14% in the South, and 13% in the West).

¹ Trends comparison from the Pew Research Center. <https://www.people-press.org/2014/10/21/ebola-worries-rise-but-most-are-fairly-confident-in-government-hospitals-to-deal-with-disease/>



MANY AMERICANS ARE CLOSELY FOLLOWING NEWS REPORTS ABOUT COVID-19

Ninety-four percent (94%) of Americans say they have been very or somewhat closely following news and information about COVID-19 over the past four weeks. Three in five (60%) say they are very closely following reports, far more than reported the same level of interests in past global health crises, such as Ebola, H1N1 or swine flu, and SARS.²

The degree of attention paid to COVID-19 news and information varies by age, education, and party identification. As age increases, so does paying attention to the COVID-19 pandemic. While 78% percent of those age 60 and older are monitoring news and information very closely, just 39% of those under age 30 say the same. College graduates (67%) are more likely to say they are following news very closely than those without four-year college degrees (56%). Additionally, Democrats are more likely than Republicans and Independents to be following COVID-19 news very closely (68% v. 55% v. 57% respectively).

Not only are many Americans following news about COVID-19, they are also spending a fair amount of time consuming news. A majority of Americans (53%) say they are spending two or more hours each day reading news articles or watching news related to COVID-19.

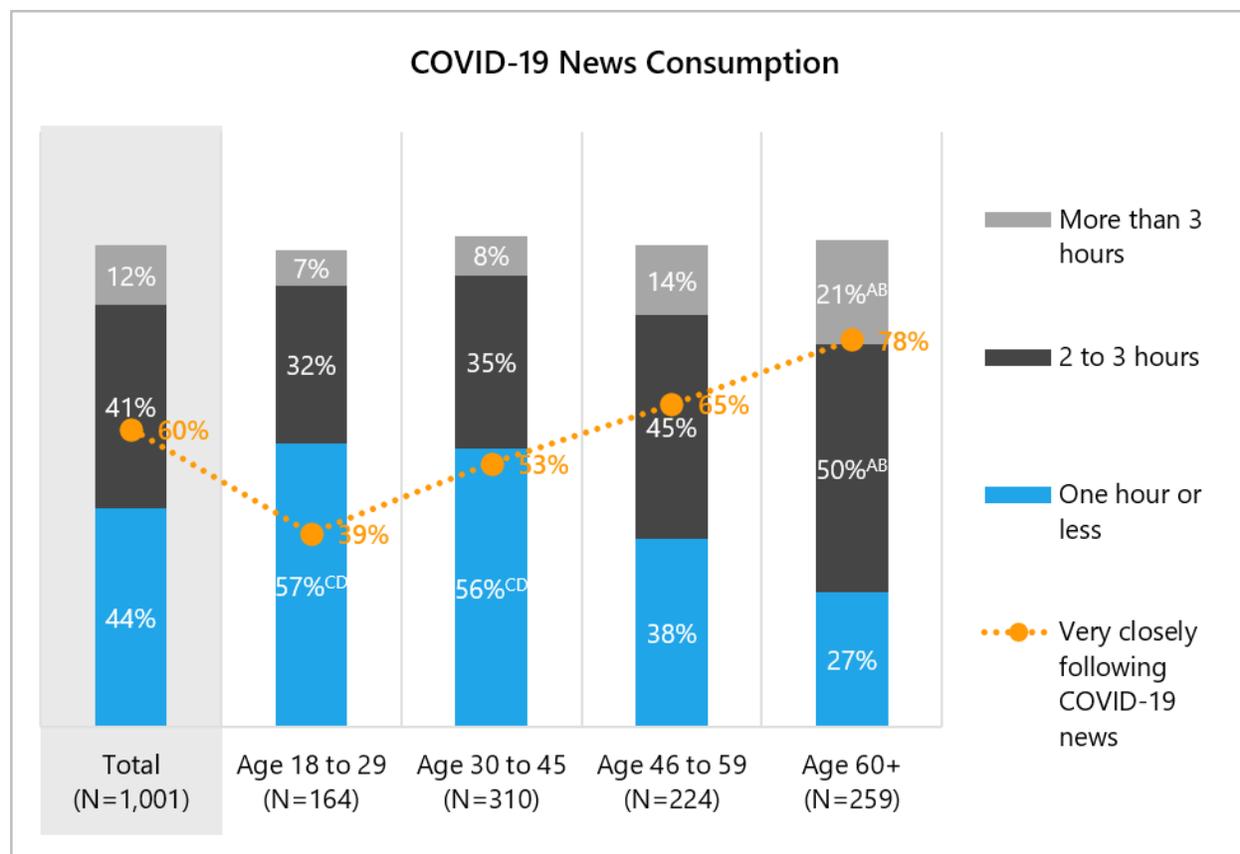
² Trend comparisons from Pew Research Center. <https://www.people-press.org/2014/10/21/ebola-worries-rise-but-most-are-fairly-confident-in-government-hospitals-to-deal-with-disease/>

As age increases, so does the amount of time spent following news about the pandemic. Seven in ten (70%) of those age 60 or older spend two or more hours a day reading or watching COVID-19 news, compared to four in ten (40%) of those age 18 to 29.

A plurality says their primary source for COVID-19 information is network, cable, or local TV broadcast news (46%), while three in ten (30%) rely on national news media’s online platforms. Far fewer cite a social media platform, such as Facebook (8%) or Twitter (3%), as their primary news outlet. Just 4% of adults turn to national or local print media as their primary source of information.

Adults who spend more time reading or watching COVID-19 news turn to different sources compared to those who spend less of their time following news on the pandemic. Those who say they spend more than three hours keeping up to date prefer television news (68%) compared to 44% of those who spend less time consuming COVID-19 news. In addition, 20% of those engaging for more than three hours daily primarily use online national news outlets for information, compared to 31% of those who spend less time monitoring news and information about COVID-19.

Satisfaction with the news media’s response to COVID-19 is split: 53% say they are satisfied, while 47% say they are dissatisfied.



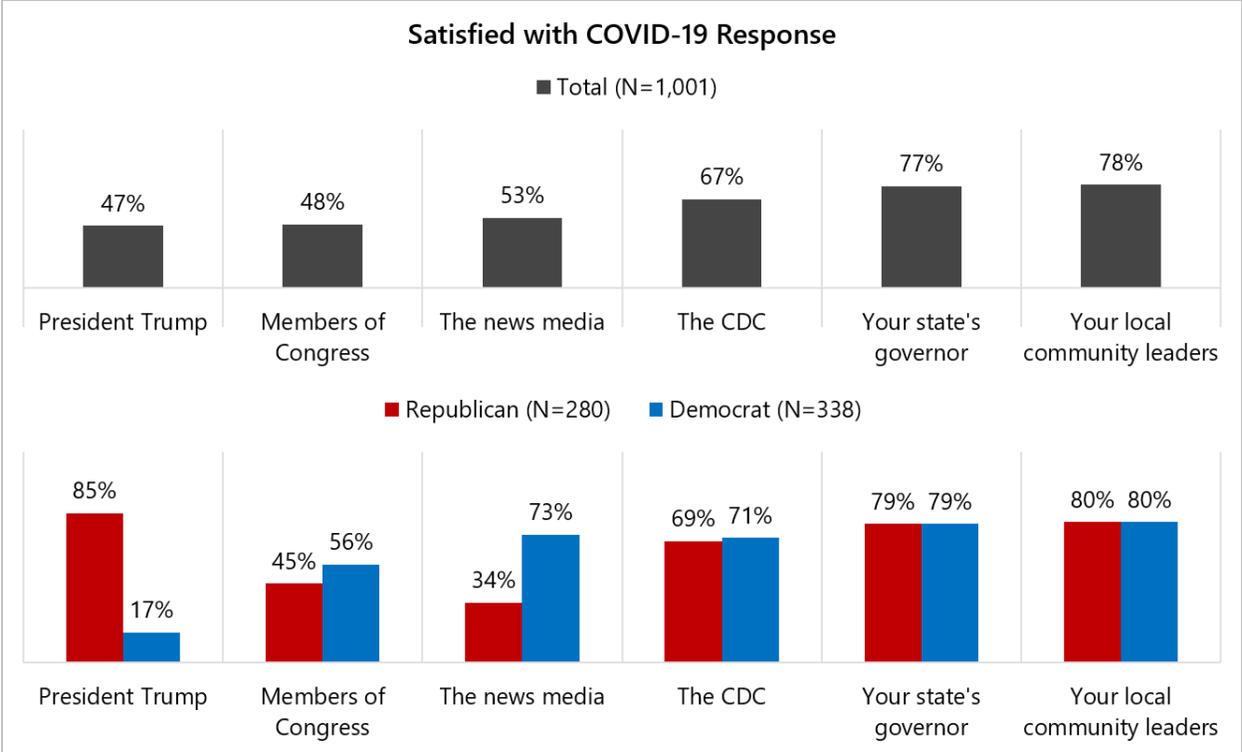
AMERICANS ARE MORE SATISFIED WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND STATE GOVERNOR'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK THAN FEDERAL ELECTED OFFICIAL RESPONSE

Americans are divided in their views of the response of federal elected officials such as the president and members of Congress to the COVID-19 outbreak. While 47% say they are satisfied with President Trump's response, 53% say they are dissatisfied. A similar assessment is given to members of Congress (48% satisfied v. 52% dissatisfied).

Unsurprisingly, satisfaction with President Trump's response varies widely by party identification. Fifty-five percent of those who identify as Republicans say they are very satisfied, compared to just 4% of Democrats. Additionally, non-white Americans are significantly more dissatisfied (69%) with how President Trump is handling the COVID-19 crisis compared to white Americans (44%).

In contrast, the vast majority of Americans report they are very or somewhat satisfied with how their local community leaders (78%) and their state governor (77%) have responded to the COVID-19 outbreak. Governor satisfaction is consistent across key demographics such as age and political party affiliation.

Additionally, two-thirds of Americans are content with the response by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to the current public health crisis. This is consistent across key demographics such as age and political party affiliation.



NEARLY ALL AMERICANS ARE FOLLOWING THE SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES

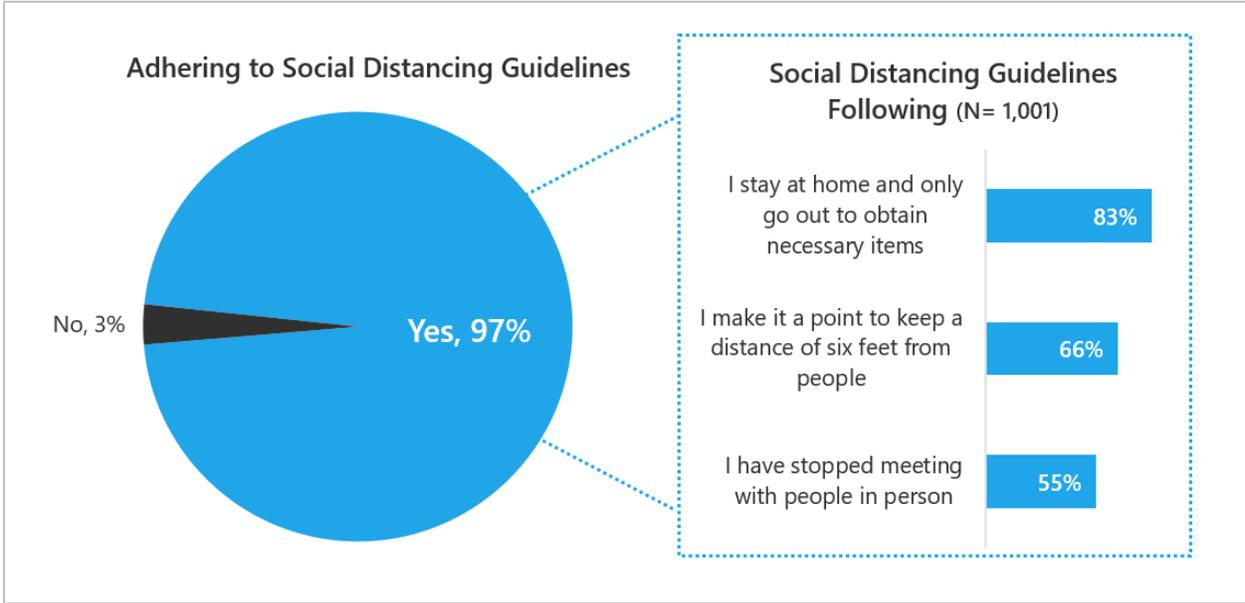
Nearly everyone (97%) report following at least one of the social distancing precautions recommended by health experts:

- Staying at home and only going out for food or medicine (83%)
- Staying six feet away from others who I don't live with (66%)
- Stopped meeting up in-person with family or friends who I don't live with (55%)

Though almost all Americans are adhering to recommendations by health experts, Americans with more education are more likely than those with less education to follow recommended social distancing guidelines.

- Staying at home and only going out for food or medicine: 88% for college graduates vs. 82% for some college vs. 78% for high school graduate or less
- Staying six feet away from others who I don't live with: 77% for college graduates vs. 66% for some college vs. 56% for high school graduate or less
- Stopped meeting up in-person with family or friends who I don't live with: 65% for college graduates vs. 57% for some college vs. 44% for high school graduate or less

Those without concerns about contracting the virus (8%) are more likely to say their behavior has not changed due to COVID-19, compared with those who are worried about becoming infected (1%).



WORKING AMERICANS ARE FEELING IMPACTS IN THEIR WORK AND FINANCIAL SITUATIONS

About three-quarters of working Americans (74%) have had their typical work situation altered in some way due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Among those who are employed, more than one-third (35%) report they now work at home due to the impacts of COVID-19.

Many Americans are experiencing job loss and smaller paychecks, with those working in part-time situations particularly impacted. Due to COVID-19, one-quarter of all those who are currently employed who have had their hours cut (26%), have had their pay cut (11%), and have lost a job (5%). Compared to Americans employed full-time, those who are employed part-time are nearly twice as likely to say they have had their work hours cut (39% vs. 21%), had their pay cut (16% vs. 10%), or lost their job (12% vs. 3%).

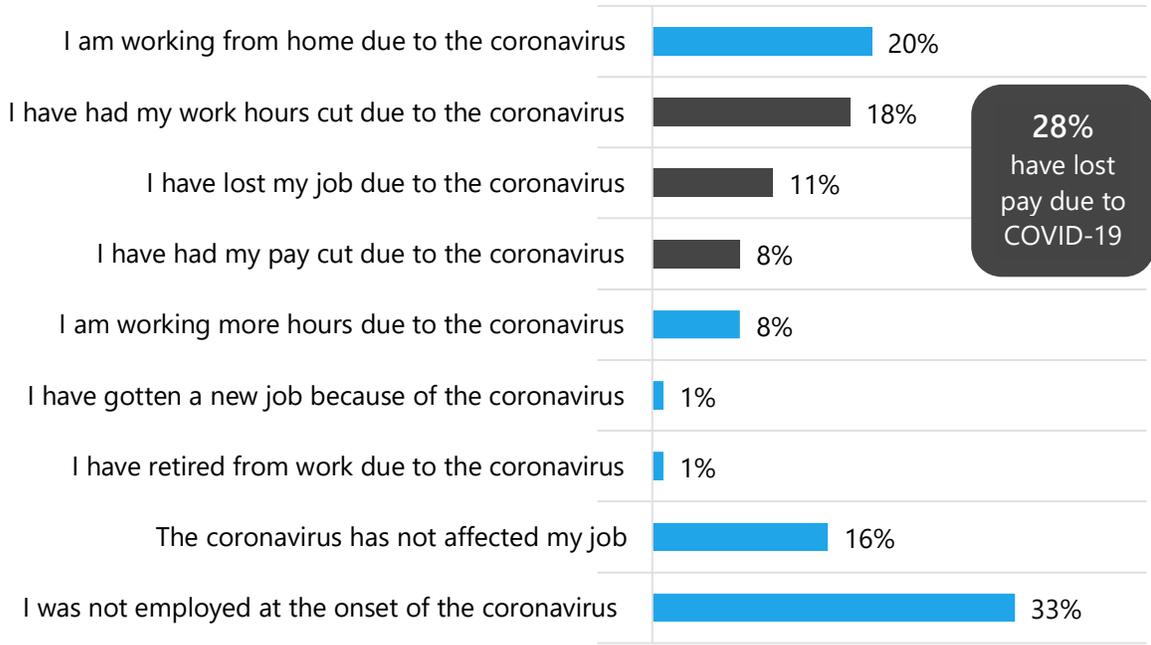
In contrast, one in six (16%) Americans who are employed full-time report they are actually working more now due to COVID-19.

While work situations have been impacted, the majority of Americans (60%) say their ability to pay for necessities, such as food, housing, and utilities, has not been impacted as a result of COVID-19. That said, about one in three (36%) Americans say it is harder than usual to pay for these expenses, and 4% say they cannot afford to pay their expenses.

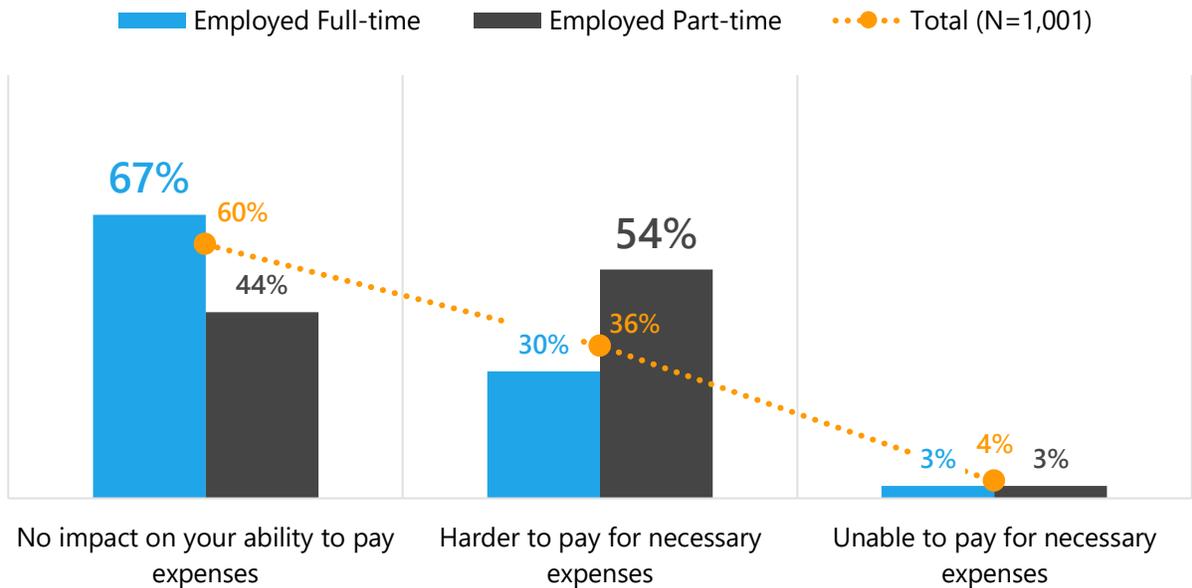
Part-time workers (54%) are nearly twice as likely as full-time workers to say it is becoming harder to pay for necessities (30%). Not surprisingly, twice as many of those with annual incomes less than \$75,000 say it is becoming harder to pay their expenses, compared to those with higher annual incomes (44% vs. 21%). Nearly half of minorities (47%) report it is becoming harder to pay their expenses, significantly more than white Americans (30%).

Interestingly, Americans living in the Midwest are more likely to say there has not been an impact on their ability to pay for necessities, compared to the rest of the country (71% in the Midwest vs. 62% in the Northeast, 57% in the West, and 54% in the South).

COVID-19 Impact on Work (Total N=1,001)



COVID-19 Impact on Paying Expenses

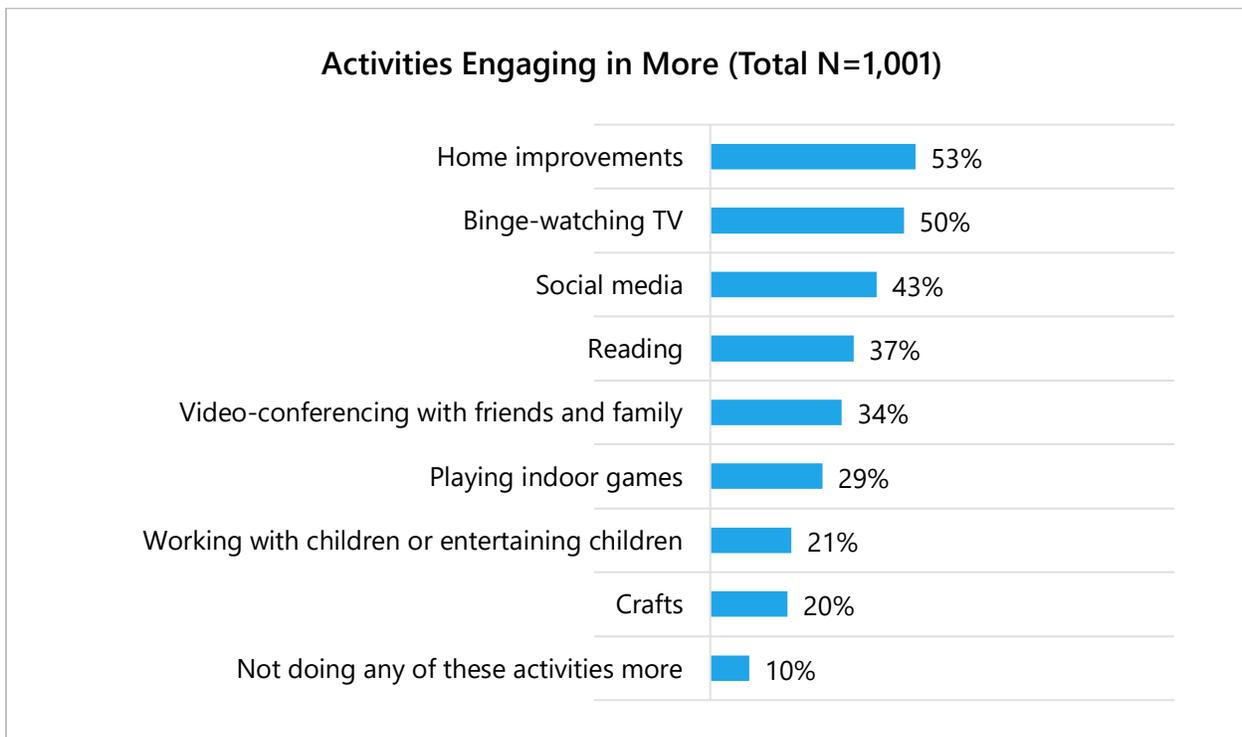


MORE TIME FOR HOUSEHOLD PROJECTS AND CATCHING UP ON TV

Americans are turning to a variety of activities to occupy their days at home. Nine in ten (90%) Americans report engaging in at least one activity³ more often as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. One-half say they are doing more home improvements, such as organizing, painting, or household repairs (53%), or binge-watching TV (50%). About four in ten say are using social media (43%) or reading (37%).

Not surprisingly, the types of activities in which people are engaging vary by age. Those under 30 are most likely to report binge watching TV and social media activities, while those 60 and older most likely to be reading.

Parents are spending their time somewhat differently than non-parents. Nearly six in ten parents of children under age 18 say they are working with or entertaining children more frequently than pre-COVID-19 (57%). Parents also more likely than non-parents to say they are video conferencing with family or friends (51% parents vs. 28% non-parents), playing indoor games (41% parents vs. 24% non-parents), and working on crafts (28% parents vs. 17% non-parents). Non-parents (12%) are twice as likely as parents (6%) to say they are not engaging in any of these “at home” activities.



³ Activities included reading, crafts, playing indoor games, home improvements (e.g., organizing, painting, fixing needed repairs), binge-watching TV, social media, video-conferencing with friends and family, or working with or entertaining children.