



COVID-19 Survey Summary: October 30, 2020

The following is a summary of social, behavioral and economic survey research on COVID-19 released in the past week, as compiled for the Societal Experts Action Network ([SEAN](#)). Most surveys cited in this report are available in the [SEAN COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

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Two-thirds of Americans personally know someone who has tested positive for the coronavirus, a new high, and more continue to think the worst of the pandemic is still to come. Yet despite rising cases, the number who are staying home and avoiding others has dropped to a new low.

Other results from newly released COVID-19 surveys show disruptions in Halloween and winter holiday plans, challenges and concerns relating to K-12 education, divided views about in-person college classes, continued economic pessimism and widespread discontent with the federal response, with many saying it's made the recovery worse.

Contact and Concern

The share of Americans who personally know someone in the United States who has tested positive for the virus is up 5 percentage points in the past week to a high, 66 percent. That's risen most sharply in the West, up 9 points to 63 percent. Overall, three in 10 have been tested and 23 percent know someone who has died, both essentially unchanged ([Axios/Ipsos 10/23-10/26](#)).

Echoing results [last week](#), more say the worst of the pandemic is yet to come than behind us, 50-44 percent. This essentially reverses the result, 43-51 percent, in late August and early September ([CNN 10/23-10/26](#)).

Eight in 10 are at least somewhat concerned about the outbreak in general and three-quarters are that concerned specifically about the possibility of getting sick ([Axios/Ipsos 10/23-10/26](#)). Similarly, 78 percent are somewhat or very concerned that they or someone they know will get infected ([ABC/Ipsos 10/23-10/24](#)).

Daily Life

Even with cases rising sharply across the country, the share of Americans who say they stayed at home and avoided others as much as possible in the past week dropped 5 points in a week to 69 percent, a new low in data since mid-April.

Other behaviors are little changed in recent weeks, including the share who say they always wear a mask when leaving home (66 percent) or, in the past week, have visited friends or relatives (49 percent) or gone out to eat (42 percent) ([Axios/Ipsos 10/23-10/26](#)).

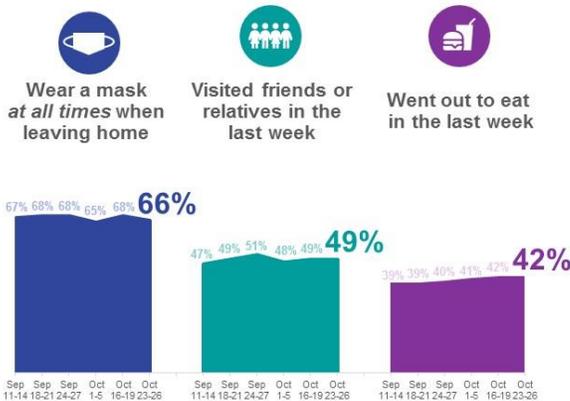
Further, the public divides, 50-48 percent, in feeling comfortable or uncomfortable returning to their regular routines based on what they know right now about the coronavirus outbreak in the area where they live. That’s essentially the same as in June ([CNN 10/23-10/26](#)).

Two-thirds see traveling for the upcoming fall and winter holidays as at least a moderate risk to their health and well-being. Just over half have started making plans; among them, just 18 percent plan to see family and friends as they would normally. Thirty percent plan to celebrate at home with immediate family/people they live with and 6 percent plan to celebrate with a group of people outside of their household who will self-isolate together ([Axios/Ipsos 10/23-10/26](#)).

Despite COVID-19 spike, few individual behaviors are changing

However, celebrating upcoming holidays seen as somewhat risky

Percentage of Americans who...



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COVID-19 and the upcoming holidays



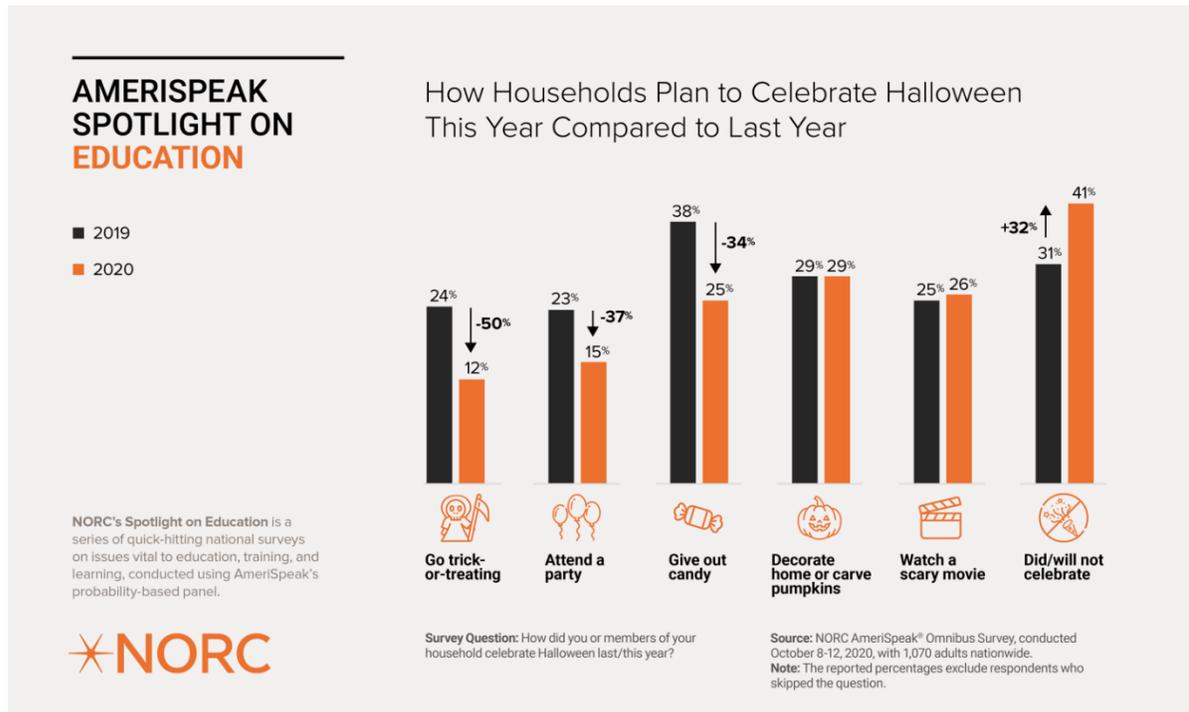
Halloween

Specifically in terms of Halloween, many fewer plan to take part in some traditional activities:

- Twelve percent plan on trick-or-treating this year, half as many as say they did last year.
- A quarter say they’ll give out candy to trick-or-treaters, vs. 38 percent last year.
- Fifteen percent plan on attending a Halloween party; 24 percent said they did so last year.
- Thirty-six percent of parents of school-aged children say their child will not celebrate Halloween at school; 27 percent say this was the case last year. Four in 10 say their child

is disappointed or angry about the changes to Halloween this year, but about as many, 43 percent, say it doesn't matter much to them (and 16 percent are happy/excited about it).

- Some traditions are safe despite the pandemic – three in 10 say they will decorate their home or carve pumpkins and a quarter plan to watch a scary movie – about the same as say they did so last year ([NORC 10/8-10/12](#)).



Kids and the Coronavirus

In a new report from the Pew Research Center, 46 percent of K-12 parents say their children are receiving online instruction only from their school. Of the rest, 20 percent are attending fully in-person classes and 23 percent report a mix of online and in-person instruction. (Four percent say they have different situations for different children.)

Nearly two-thirds express concern about their children falling behind because of disruptions caused by the pandemic, including three in 10 who are very concerned about this. Concerns are highest among parents whose children are getting a mix of online and in-person classes (74 percent) followed by those in online-only classes (65 percent). Even among those with fully in-person classes, 56 percent express at least some worries about their children falling behind.

That said, satisfaction is higher among parents whose children are receiving in-person instruction only – nine in 10 are at least somewhat satisfied with the way their school has been handling instruction this fall, including 54 percent who are very satisfied. Among those who are receiving at least some online instruction, 76 percent are satisfied, including 29 percent very satisfied. (Satisfaction is similar regardless of whether instruction is fully or partially online.)

Among parents with children who are fully or partially in-person, 62 percent are at least somewhat concerned about their children being exposed to the coronavirus at school. Eighty-six percent are satisfied with the steps the school is taking to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, although many fewer, 45 percent, are very satisfied.

Two-thirds overall say they or another adult in their household is providing some (46 percent) or a lot (20 percent) of additional instruction or resources to their children beyond what is being provided by the school, including seven in 10 parents of children receiving online instruction, compared with 52 percent of those attending fully in-person classes.

Lower-income parents are more apt than others to say their children’s instruction is online only, to be concerned that their children are falling behind and to say they’re supplementing their children’s education with additional instruction or resources beyond what is provided by the school. At the same time, higher income parents are more likely to say they’ve hired someone to provide additional instruction or resources for their children.

Parental worries extend beyond educational concerns. Majorities say that, compared with before the pandemic, they are more concerned about their children having too much screen time (63 percent), maintaining social connections and friendships (60 percent), their emotional well-being (59 percent), having access to extracurricular activities (58 percent) and not getting enough exercise (52 percent). Three in 10 say they are more worried now than they were previously about their children spending too much time unsupervised. These concerns are especially acute among parents whose children are receiving all or some of their instruction online.

Parents with children who are not yet school aged also have worries about pandemic disruptions. Forty-seven percent say they’re more concerned now about their children falling behind in social skills than before the pandemic, three in 10 are more concerned about their children falling behind in language skills and 24 percent are more concerned about physical or motor skill development.

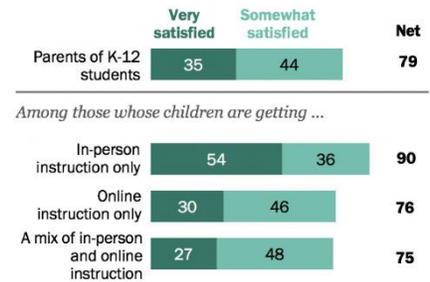
Thirty-six percent of parents with preschool-age or younger children say their children currently are attending day care or preschool. Among them, eight in 10 are at least somewhat satisfied with the steps their day care or preschool is taking to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, with 47 percent very satisfied – similar to the ratings for K-12 schools ([Pew 10/13-10/19](#)).

Economic Impacts

Despite [record growth last quarter](#), four in 10 Americans think the economy still is in a downturn because of the pandemic, up 5 points since the beginning of the month. The rest divide between

Parents of K-12 students who are getting in-person instruction only are the most satisfied

% of parents of K-12 students saying they are ___ with the way their children’s school has been handling instruction this fall



Note: Based on parents with children in elementary, middle or high school in their household who are not being home-schooled and are all getting the same type of instruction (among those with more than one child in K-12 schools). Figures may not add to subtotals due to rounding.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020. "Most Parents of K-12 Students Learning Online Worry About Them Falling Behind"

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whether the economy has stabilized but not yet started to recover or is starting to recover, 29 percent apiece ([CNN 10/23-10/26](#)).

Social Vulnerability

A CDC report finds that counties with greater [social vulnerabilities](#) (e.g., higher poverty, more crowded housing, larger senior or minority populations) were more likely to become COVID-19 hotspots last summer. Using county-level case data from June and July, the report shows that areas with a higher proportion of racial and ethnic minority residents, greater density of housing per structure and more crowded housing units were particularly likely to become hotspots, especially in less urban settings ([CDC 6/1-7/25](#)).

Higher Education

Americans split, 50-48 percent, on whether colleges and universities that are providing in-person instruction did or did not make the right decision to bring students back to campus. This reflects competing concerns about safety and the quality of online-only classes. Nearly seven in 10 think a course taken only online does not provide equal educational value compared with an in-person classroom course.

Data from the Census Bureau's [Current Population Survey](#) indicates a slight decline in college enrollment among 18- to 24-year-olds this fall, from 11.5 million last year to 11.2 million. Declines in enrollment were largest among men, Black, Asian and foreign-born students ([Pew 10/13-10/19](#)).

Youth Poll

In a survey of adults age 18-29, seven in 10 think the government should be doing more than it does now to address the economic consequences of the pandemic, and two-thirds think it should be doing more to reduce the number of COVID-19 cases. Seven in 10 disapprove of how President Trump is handling COVID-19. At the same time, young adults divide on who is primarily to blame for its spread in the United States – 31 percent say Trump, 27 percent China and a quarter Americans in general.

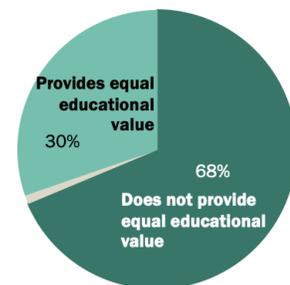
Four in 10 under-30s say they've had a friend or family member who has been diagnosed with or tested positive for COVID-19. A quarter say they've had to isolate from others because of possible exposure ([Harvard Youth Poll 9/23-10/11](#)).

Government Response

More than six in 10 Americans think the federal government is making the country's recovery from the pandemic worse, essentially unchanged since August. More also think the government has gotten worse rather than better at handling the pandemic since the beginning of the outbreak, 46-26 percent. For state governments, it's a 32-35 split on whether they're handling things worse

Most Americans say online classes don't provide same value as in-person instruction

*% saying a course taken only online
— compared with a course taken
in person in a classroom*



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer shown but not labeled.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020.

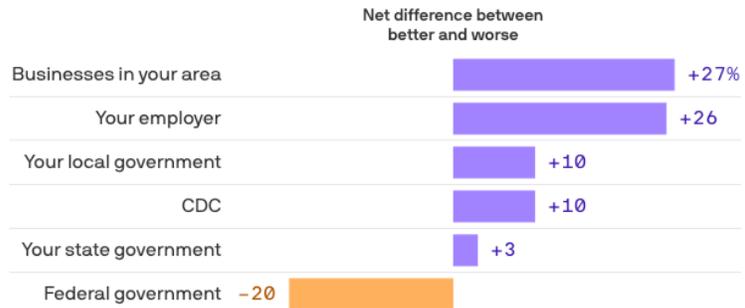
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or better now. By contrast, more think their local government, the CDC, their employer and businesses in their area have gotten better rather than worse at handling the pandemic ([Axios/Ipsos 10/23-10/26](#)).

Six in 10 continue to disapprove of how Donald Trump is handling the response to the coronavirus ([ABC/Ipsos 10/23-10/24](#)). By an 18-point margin, more likely voters trust Joe Biden over Trump to handle the outbreak, 57-39 percent ([CNN 10/23-10/26](#)).

How are the following handling the COVID-19 pandemic now, compared to the beginning?

Survey of 1,079 U.S. adults, Oct. 23-26, 2020



Data: Axios/Ipsos poll; Note ±3.3% margin of error for the total sample size; Chart: Andrew Witherspoon/Axios

State and Regional Results

In Florida, views of Gov. Ron DeSantis' handling of the outbreak have improved – 55 percent of registered voters say he has done a good job and 41 percent say he's done a bad job, compared with 48-47 percent last month. Fifty-two percent personally worry a lot about the pandemic and more trust Biden over Trump to handle it, 48-38 percent. Nearly six in 10 registered voters have already cast their ballot and just 17 percent now say they plan to vote in person on Election Day, down from 33 percent in September ([Monmouth 10/24-10/28](#)).

Georgia results are similar - 55 percent of registered voters personally worry a lot about the coronavirus pandemic, and by 49-37 percent, more trust Biden over Trump to handle it. As in Florida, nearly six in 10 say they've already cast their ballot and just 18 percent intend to vote in person on Election Day ([Monmouth 10/23-10/27](#)).

In Michigan, seven in 10 registered voters support the state's current rules on masks and restrictions on businesses and public gatherings. Fifty-six percent say they're at least somewhat worried that they or someone in their family will catch the coronavirus. Fifty-five percent disapprove of how Trump is handling the outbreak and more trust Biden than Trump to handle it, 53-39 percent. Thirty-eight percent of likely voters have already voted, 18 percent plan to vote early or by mail and 43 percent plan to vote on Election Day.

In Wisconsin, which has seen a particularly steep surge in coronavirus cases, 63 percent of registered voters say they're worried that they or someone in their immediate family will catch the coronavirus. Similar to Michigan, nearly seven in 10 (68 percent) support the state's current coronavirus regulations. More disapprove than approve of Trump's handling of the pandemic by a 20-point margin, 59-39 percent, up from a 10-point split in September, 54-44 percent. More also trust Biden than Trump to handle the outbreak, 57-37 percent, up from 49-42 percent. The share of likely voters who intend to vote on Election Day has dropped from 51 percent in mid-

September to 39 percent now; 37 percent say they've already voted and an additional 23 percent plan to vote early or by mail ([ABC/Post 10/20-10/25](#)).

In another Wisconsin poll, 57 percent of registered voters are at least somewhat worried about personally experiencing the coronavirus. This includes a 5-point decline from early October in the share saying they're very worried. Despite the rise in cases in the state, 52 percent say they're comfortable eating inside at a restaurant, up from 42 percent in May when the case count was far lower. Sixty-four percent say they always wear a mask when in a public place. Disapproval of Trump's handling of the coronavirus pandemic is 58-40 percent, while Gov. Tony Evers ekes out a positive 52-45 percent approval rating on the outbreak ([Marquette Law School 10/21-10/25](#)).

In Virginia, 42 percent of registered voters plan to get a COVID-19 vaccine if it becomes available, with 38 percent unsure and 19 percent rejecting a vaccine. Most-cited objections are concerns about side effects and about the development and approval process.

Sixty-two percent say the bigger priority for their community is using restrictions to prevent the coronavirus from spreading, even if it hurts the economy; 35 percent instead prioritize removing restrictions in order to help the economy, even if more people get the virus. Three-quarters think the government is not doing enough to help the financial situation of small businesses and seven in 10 think it's not doing enough to help individual Americans. By a 15-point margin, more think a Biden administration would handle the coronavirus outbreak extremely or very well than say the same of a second Trump administration, 42-27 percent.

Six in 10 intend to vote before Election Day this year, far more than the 13 percent who say they typically have voted early in past years ([Hampton/AP-NORC 10/6-10/12](#)).

International Results

In Mexico, views that pandemic still is in the growth stage in the country have jumped sharply, from 38 to 60 percent in two weeks to a new high in data since May. Just two in 10 think the number of infections is decreasing, half the number who said so two weeks ago. Six in 10 support maintaining restrictions and isolation measures in the country, up from 52 percent last month to the most since mid-August. Fifty-nine percent know someone who has been infected with the coronavirus, 38 percent know someone who has died and 17 percent personally have been tested ([El Financiero 10/24](#)).

In Greece, seven in 10 are worried about the pandemic, the most since April. The public roughly divides on whether the measures being taken to reduce the spread are appropriate (36 percent) or should be stricter (32 percent); 21 percent say they're too strict ([Pulse RC 10/21-10/23](#)).

In Chile, conversely, the number worried about the possibility of catching the coronavirus is its lowest since mid-March, 55 percent. Six in 10 agree with the lifting of quarantine in their area and relaxing confinement rules. Forty-three percent approve of the way the government is handling the situation, up 8 points in two weeks ([Cadem 10/21-10/23](#)).

In South Korea, after concern rose in the late summer amid a surge in cases, the share who are at least somewhat worried about getting infected has declined to 72 percent, from 80 percent in September and 83 percent in August. Three-quarters think the government is doing well in responding to the pandemic, up 7 points in the past month ([Gallup Korea 10/20-10/22](#)).

In Great Britain, which has reintroduced restrictions amid surging cases, 20 percent say they've left their home to eat or drink at a restaurant, café, bar or pub in the past week, down 6 points since last week and 18 points since the late-August peak. When asked to think of the largest group they had met up with indoors in the past week, 14 percent said they had not met up with anyone, 82 percent said they'd met with a group of 2 to 6 people and 4 percent said they'd met with a larger group. Those living in local lockdown areas were more likely to report not meeting up with anyone, 17 vs. 11 percent.

Seventy-six percent say they're at least somewhat worried about the effect COVID-19 is having on their life right now, up from 64 percent at the end of August. Main concerns include disruptions of personal travel plans and a lack of freedom and independence. A quarter of adults with school-aged children say the coronavirus is significantly affecting their child's feelings about going to school. Eight percent report their child has been sent home from school or college due to a coronavirus outbreak; 41 percent of those whose child has not been sent home nevertheless say there's been an outbreak this term. Seventy-four percent agree that the school or college has done a good job handling the outbreak ([Office for National Statistics 10/14-10/18](#)).

In Ukraine, 57 percent do not think it is necessary to introduce strict quarantine throughout the country; 28 percent think such a step is justified and 15 percent are undecided. There's no consensus on the country's use of four levels of quarantine zones based on criteria such as infection rates, testing and hospital capacity; a third call quarantine zoning justified, a quarter do not and 44 percent hold mixed views or are undecided. ([R&B Group 10/8-10/18](#)).

In Hungary, 85 percent express concern over the spread of the virus. Fifty-two percent think the spread is stagnant, 37 percent think the rate of infection is accelerating and 7 percent think it's slowed or stopped. In fighting a second wave, 77 percent think masking, testing and quarantine for those infected are necessary steps, but just 17 percent think additional restrictions are warranted. Nine in 10 agree that the government should make a coronavirus vaccine free. Six in 10 are satisfied with the way the government has handled the situation so far and seven in 10 express confidence that Hungary will again be able to curb the spread of cases ([Századvég](#)).

Additional U.S. and international poll results are available at the [COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

Summary for SEAN by [Langer Research Associates](#).