

February 2022

Education/Economic Mobility Survey Summary

Produced by [Langer Research Associates](#)

The following is a summary of random-sample U.S. survey research on K-12 and postsecondary education and economic mobility released in late January and February 2022. This project is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Key Takeaways

Americans' satisfaction with the quality of public education is at a low in surveys back 21 years, district leaders have struggled with school staffing and pandemic-related challenges in education extended into this winter, newly released studies show.

Surveys also show lower (but still substantial) confidence in principals, find support for balancing views of parents with those of teachers and school officials in determining school policies and explore challenges for high school students intending to attend college.

On economic mobility, negative ratings of the economy and reports of financial hardship persist in the midst of 40-year-high inflation. New studies also delve into employment trends, teleworking, juggling work with childcare and perceived COVID risk in the workplace.

Detailed results of these and other new surveys on education and economic mobility follow.

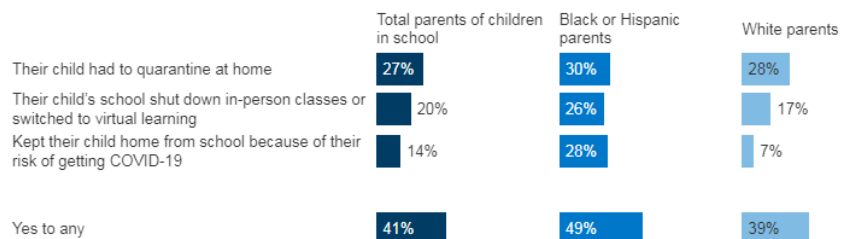
K-12 Education

Pandemic Impacts

Pandemic-related school disruptions persisted this winter, with 41 percent of K-12 parents in January saying their child missed classes since the beginning of the month for coronavirus-related reasons. That includes 27 percent who said their child needed to home-quarantine, 20 percent reporting a shutdown of in-person classes or switch to remote learning and 14 percent who kept their child home from school because they were worried about COVID-19 risks. Black and Hispanic parents were much more apt than white

Four In Ten Parents Of Children In School Say They Had A School Disruption Related To COVID-19

Percent who say the following has happened since the beginning of January this year:



NOTE: Among parents or guardians of children who are currently enrolled in school. Sample size prevents breaking out results for Black and Hispanic parents separately. See topline for full question wording.
SOURCE: KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor (January 11-23, 2022) • [Download PNG](#)

[KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor](#)

parents to say they'd kept a child home from school because of concerns about their coronavirus risk, 28 vs. 7 percent. ([KFF 1/11-1/23](#))

In another measure of disruptions, 22 percent of parents in early February said their child's school or childcare center had closed (in part or in whole) because of COVID-19 in the previous few weeks, the same as in late January ([Axios-Ipsos 2/4-2/7](#)).

Concerns about academics and well-being outstripped other issues in factors that should be considered when deciding whether to keep K-12 schools open. Two-thirds of parents in January urged a lot of consideration of the possibility that students would fall behind academically without in-person instruction; 61 percent encouraged attention to emotional impacts of missing in-person school.

About half thought a lot of consideration should be given to parents not being able to work if their children are at home. Forty-three percent emphasized attention to the risk to students of getting or spreading the coronavirus; 39 percent, the risk to teachers. Parents were least apt to think a lot of consideration should be given to the financial cost to school systems of following guidelines for safely keeping schools open, 26 percent.

At the same time, 53 percent said schools should provide a mix of in-person and online classes this winter. Thirty-seven percent favored only in-person instruction; 9 percent, online only. This differs from what children were experiencing: 71 percent, in-person instruction only; 16 percent, a mix; and 5 percent, online-only. (An additional 7 percent were homeschooled.) ([Pew Research Center 1/24-1/30](#))

Registered voters in another survey divide on whether or not it's time to remove mask mandates for students in public schools, 50-46 percent. Men are 12 percentage points more apt than women to think it's time. ([Fox News 2/19-2/22](#))

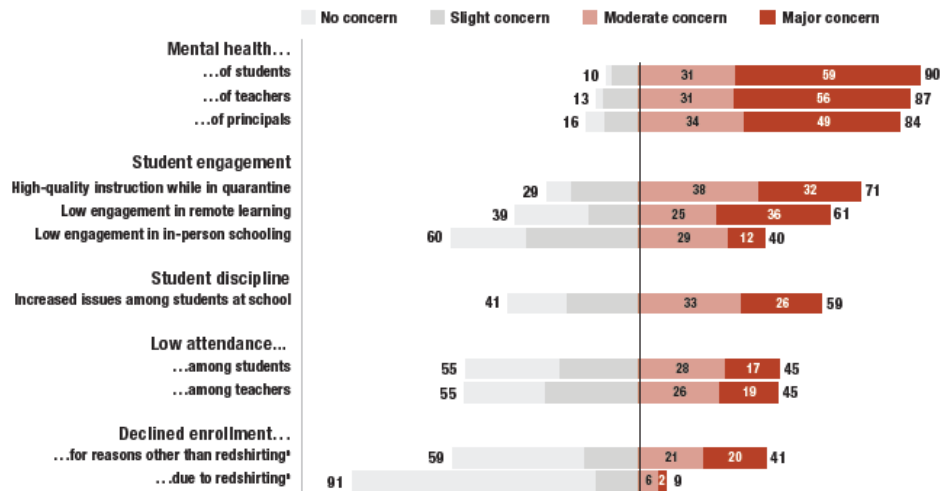
A first look at 2020-2021 National Teacher and Principal Survey results was released this month, focusing on the impact of the pandemic on education during spring 2020. Among other results, respondents in 82 percent of public charter schools, 77 percent of traditional public schools and 73 percent of private schools reported moving classes to online distance-learning formats in spring 2020. Charter school teachers were more apt than traditional public school teachers to report using scheduled audio or video calls to support or teach students in real time. Minorities of teachers strongly agreed that, at the time, they had the support and resources they needed to be effective: 37 percent among private school teachers, 25 percent for public charter school teachers and 17 percent among traditional public school teachers. ([NTPS October 2020-August 2021](#))

A recently released analysis of DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) data found more students at risk for not learning to read than two years ago, in every elementary school grade. There are signs of recovery: With the exception of those in second grade, more students currently are on track for learning to read than were in mid-year 2020-2021. But in kindergarten, first grade and second grade, the gaps between Black and Hispanic students and white students are greater than they were before to the pandemic. About 400,000 students in schools across 37 states were included in the analysis. ([Amplify 2/16](#))

The Broader K-12 Picture

Mental health topped the concerns of public school district leaders in a newly released survey produced last fall. Ninety percent expressed major or moderate concern about the mental health of students; 87 percent, teachers; and 84 percent, principals. Majorities also were concerned about providing high-quality instruction while in quarantine (71 percent), low engagement in remote learning (61 percent) and increased disciplinary issues among students at school (59 percent).

Percentage of District Leaders Reporting Levels of Concern About Widely Reported Problems, as of November 2021



NOTES: This figure depicts response data from the following survey question: "How much of a concern are the following issues in your district/CMO this school year (2021-2022)?" (n = 358). "No concern" includes respondents who said that the issue is "not applicable" to their district. Bars might not sum to totals because of rounding.

*In the survey, *redshirting* was defined for respondents as "Families keeping a child who is age-eligible for kindergarten out of school for an extra year."

Forty-five percent were concerned about low attendance by students and teachers alike, with these concerns more common in urban and high-poverty districts and those serving mostly students of color. Four in 10 were concerned about lower enrollment for reasons other than redshirting (keeping a child who is age-eligible for kindergarten out of school for an extra year) and low engagement in in-person schooling. ([RAND 10/25-12/10](#))

In another newly released survey, 64 percent of adults last fall expressed confidence in K-12 public school principals to act in the best interests of the public – down 19 points from April 2020. (Trust in other professions also was down.) ([Pew 11/30-12/12](#))

Overall, 28 percent of adults in January were very or somewhat satisfied with the quality of public education in the nation, down 7 points from last year and a numerical low in data since 2001 ([Gallup 1/3-1/16](#)). Fifty-eight percent said improving education should be a top priority for the president and Congress, up 5 points from January 2021 ([Pew 1/10-1/17](#)). Eighty-one percent of registered voters call education important in their vote for Congress next fall, including 46 percent who call it extremely important ([CNN 1/10-2/6](#)). Adults split on whether they trust the

Democrats or Republicans to do a better job handling education and schools, 44-41 percent ([ABC News-Washington Post 2/20-2/24](#)).

Policies and Curriculum

Majorities of Americans say the views of parents and those of teachers or school officials should be equally important in determining public school policies on a range of topics, including virtual learning (63 percent), how race in America is taught (62 percent), which books are in school libraries (60 percent), how American history is taught (58 percent), mask wearing (53 percent) and teaching math (52 percent).

Prioritizing teachers' and school officials' views peaks for teaching math (at 36 percent) and is lowest for teaching about race and policies on virtual learning in response to the coronavirus, both 16 percent. Anywhere from 7 to 19 percent prioritize parents' attitudes on the issues listed. ([CNN 1/10-2/6](#))

Two-thirds think what they were taught about American history fell short of a full and accurate account of the role of African Americans. Nine in 10 Black adults say so, as do 66 percent of Hispanics and 61 percent of whites. It's 88 percent among Democrats vs. 46 percent among Republicans. Seventy-nine percent think efforts to ban certain books in schools and libraries are more about politics than about the books' contents. ([Quinnipiac 2/10-2/14](#))

Seventy-four percent of district leaders last fall agreed that political polarization about COVID-19 safety or vaccines was interfering with their ability to educate students. Fewer said this about polarization involving critical race theory, 43 percent. ([RAND 10/25-12/10](#))

In data from last summer, majorities of parents of college-bound juniors and seniors favored teaching each of nine financial topics in high school: paying for college, student loans, using credit cards, savings accounts, managing credit, how much college costs, investing, mortgages and retirement funds. How to pay for college was most widely supported, 77 percent, with mortgages (54 percent) and retirement funds (53 percent) last on the list. ([Sallie Mae 8/19-9/20](#))

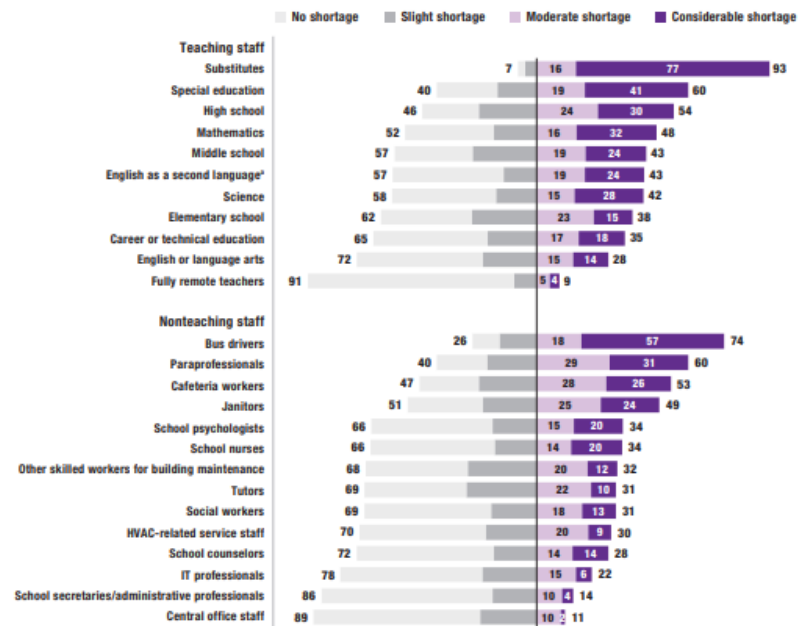
Among English language arts teachers evaluating the 2020-2021 school year, 56 percent said their instructional systems felt less coherent than the previous year. ELA teachers were most likely to have received guidance on content emphasis, least on addressing equity. Three in 10 ELA teachers received no guidance or were not assessed via teacher evaluation; nearly a quarter said the same of state-mandated summative assessments. ([RAND March 2021](#))

Staffing

A recently released analysis of survey data from the 2017-2018 school year finds that 51 percent of Black teachers worked in a city school, compared with 31 percent of all teachers. Higher shares of Black teachers were new to the classroom, had post-master's education, had an alternative path to certification and taught in city schools with majority-minority enrollment. ([NCES 2/3](#))

The RAND survey of district leaders conducted last fall found widespread pandemic-related staffing shortages. Nearly all agreed that the pandemic has caused a shortage of substitute teachers in their district or organization, with 77 percent reporting a “considerable” shortage. Problems finding substitutes were similar across district types, poverty levels, locations and student racial and ethnic compositions. By contrast, while more than two-thirds noted a shortage of teachers generally, this was more common in urban and high-poverty districts, as well as among charter school organizations.

FIGURE 2
Percentage of District Leaders Reporting Levels of Staff Shortages as of Fall 2021



NOTES: This figure depicts response data from the following survey questions: “For which subject areas, if any, does your [district/GMO] currently have teacher shortages?” “For which school levels, if any, does your [district/GMO] currently have shortages of teacher shortages [sic]?” and “For which types of non-teaching staff does your [district/GMO] currently have shortages, if any?” (n = 349). This figure excludes respondents who said “not applicable” because they do not employ teachers in that subject area, teachers in that grade level, or nonteaching staff in that job category. Bars might not sum to 100 percent because of rounding. HVAC = heating, ventilation, and air conditioning. IT = information technology.
* Includes bilingual education.

Majorities of district leaders also reported at least moderate shortages of special education and high school teachers and support staff such as bus drivers, paraprofessionals and cafeteria workers. Demand was high: Nearly nine in 10 districts expanded hiring in non-classroom teacher roles in fall 2021, including 55 percent hiring more substitute teachers and 53 percent hiring more paraprofessionals. ([RAND 10/25-12/10](#))

The staffing situation overall impacted districts’ ability to make use of federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds. Given a list of 11 items, district leaders were most apt to cite staff shortages as a barrier to spending these funds, 57 percent, compared with 30 percent or fewer for each of the other barriers listed. ([RAND 10/25-12/10](#))

Spending

Analyses of school district plans for spending the latest round of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds find that higher-poverty and rural schools planned to make more tangible investments in academics, such as purchasing updated instructional materials. Lower-poverty and city schools were more likely to direct funds to after-school and summer programs intended to make up for lost learning.

Spending on mental health supports and socio-emotional learning were higher priorities in urban and low-poverty districts. Rural districts were more apt to set aside funds for transportation,

higher-poverty districts for physical plant upgrades and repairs, notably HVAC. Prioritization of funds to hire and pay teachers and staff was common across districts regardless of poverty levels. ([FutureEd 2/1, 2/15](#))

Parents and Homework

Forty-eight percent of parents helped their child with homework or a school assignment in the previous week, per data from last fall. Nineteen percent did so in the previous month, 9 percent in the preceding six months and 7 percent in the preceding 12 months. Five percent said it'd been longer than a year and 12 percent had never done this. ([AEI 11/23-12/14](#))

State Results

California. Five percent in California in January named education/schools/teachers as the most important issue for the governor and state legislature to work on this year, ranking sixth in a list of 15 items ([PPIC 1/16-1/25](#)).

Florida. By 49-40 percent, more registered voters in Florida disapprove than approve of a bill that “would prohibit school districts from encouraging discussion about sexual orientation or gender identity in grades K-5, or in a way that is age or developmentally inappropriate.” Approval ranges from 54 percent of Republicans to 26 percent of Democrats.

Voters by 49-32 percent also oppose amending the state Constitution to require school board candidates to run in partisan elections (with 16 percent unsure). Twelve percent call education the most important problem facing Florida today, ranking third of 10 items. ([UNF 2/7-2/20](#))

In another Florida survey, 8 percent of likely voters said schools/education were the most important issue to them, ranking sixth of 10. And 53 percent said critical race theory should not be taught in the state’s public schools. ([USA Today-Suffolk 1/26-1/29](#))

Twenty-five percent of Florida high school students took an AP class during the 2017-2018 school year, ranging from 15 percent of Black students to 50 percent of Asian students. About one in 10 AP students did not take any AP tests, despite Florida subsidizing the test fee; this ranged from 15 percent of Black students to 4 percent of Asian students. ([Urban Institute 2/17](#))

New York. Enrollment declined in about three-quarters of New York City public schools this year, down 5.6 percent overall in the city’s traditional public schools. Enrollment fell by nearly 8 percent for students with disabilities, about 7.5 percent for Black and white students alike and nearly 7 percent among low-income students. The average enrollment decline was 10 percent for the city’s roughly 50 transfer high schools (i.e., small, full-time high schools designed to re-engage students who have dropped out or fallen behind in credits). ([Chalkbeat 1/28](#))

Washington. Top priorities at Washington state’s 13 charter schools at the beginning of the pandemic were maintaining student engagement (91 percent), transitioning instructional models (86 percent), providing internet access to students and providing social-emotional support (73 percent alike). The most-cited change to academic programs in 2019-2020 was adjusting course

goals (89 percent); in 2020-2021, reduced course content (50 percent) and dropped courses (42 percent). Schools on average reported considerable or major learning loss since March 2020 for about three in 10 students.

Schools reported on average that about three-quarters of students experienced feelings of isolation, half lacked access to physical activities and about four in 10 apiece lacked access to mental health services or experienced the coronavirus themselves or in their family. The schools reported that on average, six in 10 students experienced economic instability. ([CREDO 2/15](#))

Pathways

In an August-September survey of high school juniors and seniors planning to continue their education, and parents of such students, three-quarters overall said they had started thinking about how to pay for college; just 42 percent felt confident about financing that education.

Twenty-eight percent of parents and 52 percent of students said they lacked knowledge about ways to pay for college. Forty-seven percent overall thought they would need to borrow money; an additional 31 percent were unsure about this. About four in 10 agreed that there are too few resources to help pay for education, they didn't know where to go for help and available options were overwhelming.

Parents and students were most apt to say a scholarship (77 percent) would help make college more affordable. Many fewer said so about finding out earlier how much they'll need to pay (46 percent); having tools to help them research colleges, majors and financial aid (43 percent); an increase in Pell grants (37 percent); need-based financial aid (37 percent) and more classes about finances in high school (27 percent).

Asked what programs would be helpful in the transition from high school to college, 59 percent of students cited college prep workshops; 45 percent, financial literacy programs; 41 percent, both one-to-one access to teachers or counselors and tools that help them budget their money; and 32 percent, mentor programs.

Thirty-three percent of students were considering attending a public college/university only, 2 percent only a private school and 51 percent both. Fourteen percent were unsure.

Asked their main reason for planning on college, 52 percent of students said it would offer better opportunities in the long run; 29 percent, that it would lead to a good job. Other responses were in the single digits, including family expectations, to be in a position to help others, to experience independence and to be the first in their family to get a higher education. ([Sallie Mae 8/19-9/20](#))

Postsecondary Success

The national six-year college completion rate for fall 2015 first-year students reached 62.2 percent, up 1.2 points from the fall 2014 cohort. Completion rates increased for students from all starting institution sectors, with the largest gain among community college starters (1.5 points), reversing the previous year's slight decline (0.5 points). The six-year completion rate increased

by at least 1 point in two-thirds of states analyzed (32 out of 46) and fell in 3 states, compared with increases in 12 states and decreases in 8 states the prior year.

Rates increased for Black (1.9 points), Latinx (1.2 points) and white (1.1 points) students, while Asian student completion rates remained steady (+0.3 points). Rates increased across age groups, with the largest rise among students older than 24 at the time of entry, 2.5 points. Their rate of completion, 50.5 percent, remains well below that of traditional age students, 64.1 percent. ([NSCRC 2/3](#))

In recently released data from last fall, 54 percent of adults agreed that “in order to get ahead in life these days, it’s necessary to get a college education.” Forty-three percent said that growing up in their family it was expected they would go to a four-year college; an additional 30 percent said their family didn’t talk about it. ([AEI 11/23-12/14](#))

Seventy-one percent in a newly released survey from October said paying for college is harder for young adults today compared with their parents’ generation. Forty-one percent said getting into college is easier for younger people today; 33 percent think it’s harder. ([Pew 10/18-10/24](#))

People in January divided 52-47 percent, favor-oppose, on requiring proof of COVID-19 vaccination to attend a public college or university in person. Support for a vaccine mandate was down 5 points since August. ([Pew 1/24-1/30](#))

Economic Mobility

Given 40-year-high inflation, three-quarters rate the economy negatively ([ABC News-Washington Post 2/20-2/24](#); [Fox News 2/19-2/22](#), among registered voters; [Quinnipiac 2/10-2/14](#)). Fifty-nine percent think the nation’s economy is getting worse ([Quinnipiac 2/10-2/14](#)). Sixty-six percent in January said the economy was on the wrong track, essentially the same as in December ([Fannie Mae 1/1-1/24](#)).

Six in 10 are satisfied with “the opportunity for a person to get ahead by working hard”; three in 10, with “the way income and wealth are distributed in the U.S.” These have fallen by 12 and 13 points, respectively, since 2020. Twenty-one percent are satisfied with the nation’s efforts to deal with poverty and homelessness ([Gallup 1/3-1/16](#)). Sixty-five percent agreed that “the American economy is rigged to advantage the rich and powerful” in recently released data from September ([Ipsos 9/15-9/22](#)).

Eighty-nine percent of registered voters say the economy will be extremely or very important in their vote for Congress this year, a 10-point increase since February 2018. Eighty-three percent say the same of inflation. ([CNN 1/10-2/6](#))

Financial Situation

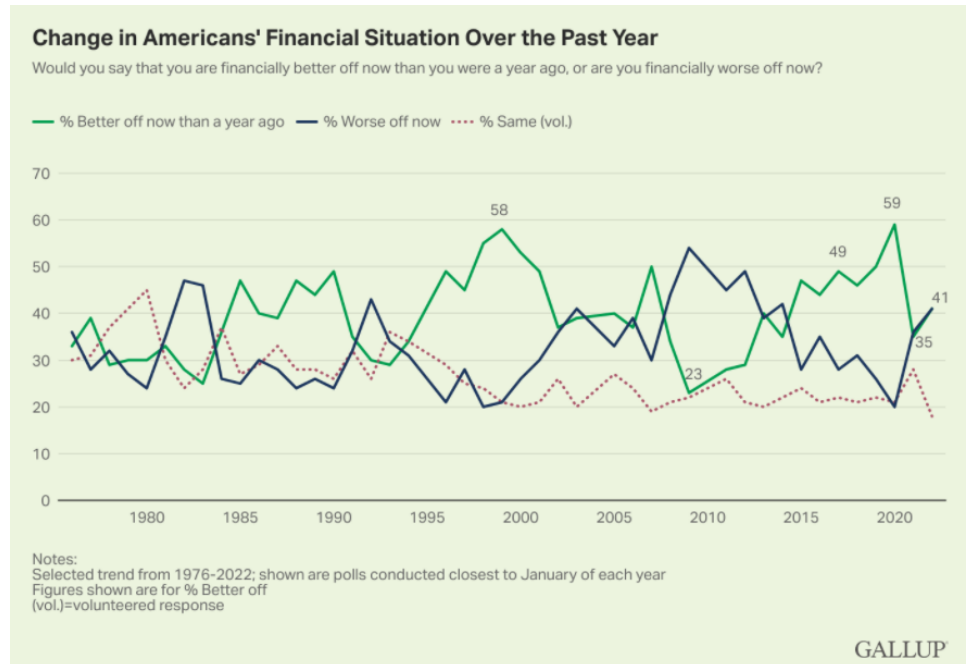
Sixty-eight percent describe their financial situation as excellent (13 percent) or good (55 percent) ([Quinnipiac 2/10-2/14](#)). Thirty-eight percent in January expected their finances to get better in the next 12 months, a 5-point drop from December ([Fannie Mae 1/1-1/24](#)). And 59

percent in a new survey are concerned a long conflict in Ukraine will hurt their family financially ([Quinnipiac 2/25-2/27](#)).

Americans divided 41-41 percent in feeling financially better off or worse off in January than a year earlier, compared with 35-36 percent in January 2021. A record 59 percent said they were better off in January 2020.

“Better off” ratings were up 24 points in the past year among people with household incomes less than \$40,000, while steady among those with incomes of \$40,000 or more.

“Worse off” ratings rose about 15 points among those with incomes more than \$40,000.



Twice as many overall expect they'll be better off rather than worse off a year from now, 60 vs. 27 percent. The share who expect to be better off is down from its pre-pandemic high, 74 percent, but slightly above its average, 56 percent, in annual data since 1977. ([Gallup 1/3-1/16](#))

Income is related to satisfaction with the way things are going in one's personal life: Thirty-nine percent of those with household incomes less than \$40,000 are very satisfied, rising to 52 percent of those making \$40,000-\$99,999 and 61 percent in the \$100,000-plus bracket. ([Gallup 1/3-1/16](#))

Half of registered voters say they have less money in their pocket compared to a year ago, while 14 percent say they have more ([Fox News 2/19-2/22](#)). Nineteen percent of adults report that their household experienced a loss of employment income in the past four weeks, a slight increase from 17 percent in late December and early January ([U.S. Census Bureau 1/26-2/7](#)).

About seven in 10, in October data, said it's harder for young people today to save for the future and buy a home compared with their parents' generation. The public split on whether it's easier or harder for young adults today to find a job, 40-39 percent. ([Pew 10/18-10/24](#))

Also in October results, 60 percent of Black adults said their household finances met basic needs with at least a little left over for extras, compared with 71 percent of all adults. One in 10 Black adults said they didn't have enough to meet basic needs. ([Pew 10/4-10/17](#))

Inflation/Expenses

Inflation rose to 7.5 percent in the 12 months ending in January, the fastest pace in nearly 40 years. Prices rose 0.6 percent in January alone, driven by food, electricity and shelter costs. ([U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2/10](#))

Seventy-seven percent of registered voters say recent increases in grocery prices have caused them financial hardship, rising to the level of serious hardship among 36 percent. Increases in gas prices have caused hardship for 72 percent, utility costs for 70 percent and housing costs for 57 percent. The shares reporting hardship due to grocery prices and housing costs are up a slight 4 points since November ([Fox News 2/19-2/22](#)). Asked more generally, 59 percent of adults say price increases have caused them hardship, rising to serious hardship for three in 10 ([ABC News-Washington Post 2/20-2/24](#)).

Seventy-two percent say increased prices for things such as food and gasoline have caused them to change their spending habits, up a slight 4 points from November ([Quinnipiac 2/10-2/14](#)). Thirty-two percent found it very or somewhat difficult to pay for usual household expenses in the last seven days ([U.S. Census Bureau 1/26-2/7](#)).

Twenty-two to 27 percent select inflation as the most urgent or most important problem facing the country, topping lists in three studies ([CNN 1/10-2/6](#); [Fox News 2/19-2/22](#), among registered voters; [Quinnipiac 2/10-2/14](#)). Thirty-eight percent in another survey said it should be Biden's top priority, first of nine issues provided ([NPR-PBS NewsHour-Marist Poll 2/15-2/21](#)).

Employment

The economy added 467,000 jobs in January, with unemployment generally steady at 4.0 percent. An updated estimate puts average monthly job gains in 2021 at 555,000. Employment has increased by 19.1 million since April 2020 but remains 2.9 million off pre-pandemic February 2020.

The unemployment rate for people with a disability was 10.1 percent in 2021, down 2.5 points from 2020 but still higher than its pre-pandemic level, 7.3 percent. That compares with 5.1 percent unemployment in 2021 among people without a disability. ([BLS 2/24](#))

The share of workers who teleworked because of the pandemic increased from 11.1 percent in December to 15.4 percent in January. Almost twice as many reported being unable to work because their employer closed or lost business due to the pandemic, 6.0 million in January vs. 3.1 million in December. Among people not in the labor force, 1.8 million were prevented from looking for work because of the pandemic, up from 1.1 million in December. ([BLS 2/4](#))

Among workers with jobs that can mainly be done from home (39 percent of those with a primary job), 59 percent in January were working from home all or most of the time, down from 71 percent in October 2020 but far above the 12 percent who worked from home all or most of the time before the pandemic.

Among those with a workplace outside their home who are working from home all or most of the time, 61 percent were working from home because it was their choice, vs. 38 percent who said their workplace was closed or unavailable. In October 2020 the reverse held: 64 percent mainly worked from home by necessity, 36 percent out of choice.

Among those with a primary job and the option to work from home, six in 10 said they'd choose to work from home all or most of the time when the pandemic is over; 28 percent, some of the time; 6 percent rarely; and 3 percent never. ([Pew 1/24-1/30](#))

In recently released data from July through September, 35 percent of private-sector establishments reported increasing telework for some or all of their employees as a result of the pandemic. Among them, 60 percent expected to keep the increases permanent when the pandemic ends. ([BLS 7/27-9/30](#))

About half of employed parents of children younger than 12 say it's been difficult to handle childcare responsibilities recently because of the pandemic. Working mothers are 15 points more apt than working fathers to say it's been difficult. ([Pew 2/7-2/13](#))

Nineteen percent of parents last fall took time off work to care for their child in the prior week. Twenty-one percent did so in the preceding month, 19 percent in the previous six months and 10 percent in the previous 12 months. Fourteen percent said they'd never done this; 16 percent had, but not in the past 12 months. ([AEI 11/23-12/14](#))

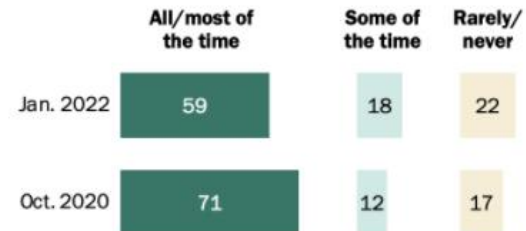
COVID and the Workplace

Half of workers see working in an office as a large or moderate risk to their health and well-being, vs. four in 10 in December ([Axios-Ipsos 2/4-2/7](#)).

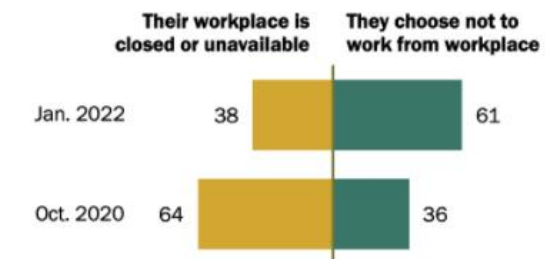
Similarly, among workers who interact with other people at their workplace, about half are very or somewhat concerned about being exposed to the coronavirus at work. Still, most workers not working remotely all the time, 77 percent, are satisfied with their workplace's measures to protect them from exposure to the coronavirus. Twenty-two percent say their employer required them to get a COVID-19 vaccine; more, 30 percent, favor this mandate. As many think their

Majority of workers with jobs that can be done from home are teleworking, even as more workplaces have become available

Among employed adults who say, for the most part, the responsibilities of their job can be done from home, % saying they are currently working from home ...



Among employed adults with a workplace outside their home who are working from home all or most of the time, % saying they are doing so because ...



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 24-30, 2022. "COVID-19 Pandemic Continues To Reshape Work in America"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

employer should neither require nor encourage vaccination; the rest say it should be encouraged but not required. ([Pew 1/24-1/30](#))

State Results

California. About half of Californians in January rated their financial situation negatively. Six in 10 said recent price increases had caused their household financial hardship; two in 10 called it severe, rising to one-third of those with incomes less than \$40,000. About half said the state was in a recession and 54 percent expected the country to have bad times financially during the next 12 months. Top problems for the state, after COVID-19, included homelessness (13 percent), jobs/economy/inflation (12 percent) and housing costs/availability (7 percent). ([PPIC 1/16-1/25](#))

Florida. Half of likely voters in Florida rated economic conditions there negatively in January. A third called jobs/economy or inflation their top issue ([USA Today-Suffolk 1/26-1/29](#)). Twenty-one percent of registered voters in another poll say the economy/jobs/unemployment are the most important problem facing Florida today, topping a list of 10 ([UNF 2/7-2/20](#)).

Government Action

Twenty-eight percent of registered voters think Biden should keep fighting for the “\$2 trillion Build Back Better legislation for social spending programs and climate initiatives,” down from 34 percent in late December. Twenty-three percent said he should try to scale it back further; 41 percent, move on. ([USA Today-Suffolk 2/16-2/20](#))

Seventy-one percent in January said strengthening the nation’s economy should be a top priority for the president and Congress this year, first of 18 issues listed, albeit down 9 points from a year previous. Among other economic-related items, 61 percent said reducing health care costs should be a top priority; 57 percent, making Social Security financially sound; 52 percent, improving the job situation (down 15 points); and 44 percent, addressing poverty (down 9 points). ([Pew 1/10-1/17](#))

In recently released data from September, 41 percent disagreed that “the U.S. government should cut social programs in order to lower taxes.” Twenty-eight percent agreed. ([Ipsos 9/15-9/22](#))