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How the Coronavirus Outbreak Has – and Hasn’t – Changed the Way Americans Work

About half of new teleworkers say they have more flexibility now; majority who are working in person worry about virus exposure

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How we did this

Pew Research Center conducted this study to better understand how the work experiences of employed adults have changed amid the coronavirus outbreak. This analysis is based on 5,858 U.S. adults who are working part time or full time and who have only one job or have more than one job but consider one of them to be their primary job. The data was collected as a part of a larger survey conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020. Everyone who took part is a member of the Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses. This way, nearly all U.S. adults have a chance of selection. The survey is weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education and other categories. Read more about the [ATP's methodology](#).

See here to read more about the [questions used for this report](#) and the report's [methodology](#).

Terminology

References to workers or employed adults include those who are employed part time or full time and who have only one job or have more than one job but consider one of them to be their primary job.

References to White, Black and Asian adults include only those who are not Hispanic and identify as only one race. Hispanics are of any race.

References to college graduates or people with a college degree comprise those with a bachelor's degree or more. "Some college" includes those with an associate degree and those who attended college but did not obtain a degree.

"Middle income" is defined here as two-thirds to double the median annual family income for panelists on the American Trends Panel. "Lower income" falls below that range; "upper income" falls above it. See the [methodology](#) for more details.

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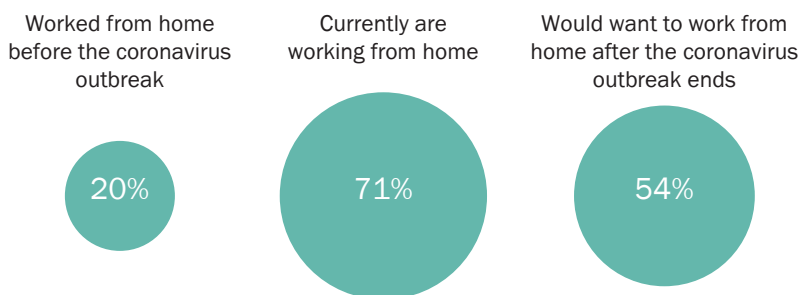
About half of new teleworkers say they have more flexibility now; majority who are working in person worry about virus exposure

The abrupt closure of many offices and workplaces this past spring ushered in a new era of remote work for millions of employed Americans and may portend a significant shift in the way a large segment of the workforce operates in the future. Most workers who say their job responsibilities can mainly be done from home say that, before the pandemic, they rarely or never teleworked. Only one-in-five say they worked from home all or most of the time. Now, 71% of those workers are doing their job from home all or most of the time. And more than half say, given a choice, they would want to keep working from home even after the pandemic, according to a new Pew Research Center survey.

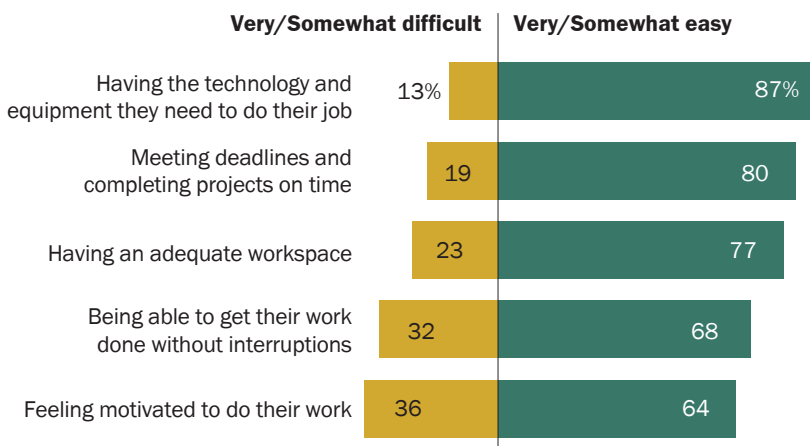
While not seamless, the transition to telework has been relatively easy for many

Many workers would like to telework after the pandemic is over; transition to working from home has been relatively easy for many

Among employed adults who say that, for the most part, the responsibilities of their job can be done from home, % saying they ___ all or most of the time



Among employed adults who are currently working from home all or most of the time, % saying that, since the coronavirus outbreak, each of the following has been ___ for them



Note: For bottom panel, share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020.

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employed adults.¹ Among those who are currently working from home all or most of the time, about three-quarters or more say it has been easy to have the technology and equipment they need to do their job and to have an adequate workspace. Most also say it's been easy for them to meet deadlines and complete projects on time, get their work done without interruptions, and feel motivated to do their work.

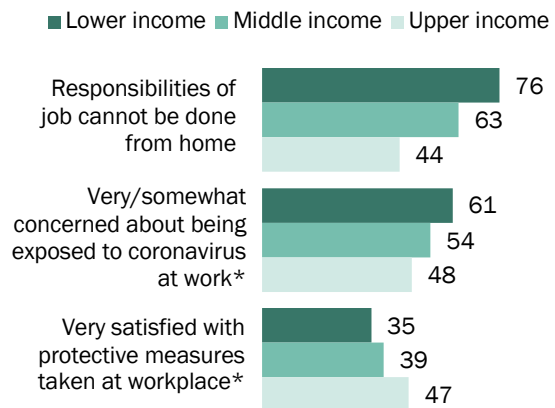
To be sure, not all employed adults have the option of working from home, even during a pandemic. In fact, a majority of workers say their job responsibilities cannot be done from home. There's a clear [class divide between workers who can and cannot telework](#). Fully 62% of workers with a bachelor's degree or more education say their work can be done from home. This compares with only 23% of those without a four-year college degree. Similarly, while a majority of upper-income workers can do their work from home, most lower- and middle-income workers cannot.²

Among those who are not currently teleworking all of the time, roughly eight-in-ten say they have at least some in-person interaction with other people at their workplace, with 52% saying they interact with others *a lot*. At least half of these workers say they're concerned about being exposed to the coronavirus from the people they interact with at work or unknowingly exposing others. Even so, these workers are largely satisfied with the steps that have been taken at their workplace to protect them from exposure to the virus.

While the coronavirus has changed the way many workers do their job – whether in person or from home – it hasn't significantly reshaped the culture of work for a majority of employed adults.

Lower-income workers less likely to have option of teleworking, more likely to be concerned about exposure to coronavirus

% of employed adults saying ...



*Based on those who are not working at home all of the time and who have at least some in-person interaction with others at their job.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020. "How the Coronavirus Outbreak Has – and Hasn't – Changed the Way Americans Work"

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¹ The analysis in this report is based on U.S. adults who are employed part time or full time and who say they have only one job or who have more than one job but consider one of them to be their primary job. These two groups constitute 97% of all workers.

² Family incomes are based on 2019 earnings and adjusted for differences in purchasing power by geographic region and for household sizes. Middle income is defined here as two-thirds to double the median annual family income for all panelists on the [American Trends Panel](#). Lower income falls below that range; upper income falls above it.

Among workers who are in the same job as they were before the coronavirus outbreak started, more than six-in-ten say they are as satisfied with their job now as they were before the pandemic and that there's been no change in their productivity or job security. Even higher shares say they are just as likely now to know what their supervisor expects of them as they were before and that they have the same opportunities for advancement.

For workers who are working from home all or most of the time now but rarely or never did before the pandemic (and are in the same job they had pre-pandemic), there have been some clear upsides associated with the shift to telework. About half (49%) say they now have more flexibility to choose when they put in their hours. This is substantially higher than the share for teleworkers who were working from home all or most of the time before the pandemic, only 14% of whom say they have more flexibility now. In addition, 38% of new teleworkers say it's easier now to balance work with family responsibilities (vs. 10% of teleworkers who worked from home before the coronavirus outbreak). On the downside, 65% of workers who are now teleworking all or most of the time but rarely or never did before the pandemic say they feel less connected to their coworkers now. Among more seasoned teleworkers, only 27% feel this way.

The nationally representative survey of 10,332 U.S. adults (including 5,858 employed adults who have only one job or have multiple jobs but consider one to be their primary) was conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020, using the Center's [American Trends Panel](#).³ Among the other key findings:

A majority (64%) of those who are currently working from home all or most of the time say their workplace is currently closed or unavailable to them; 36% say they are choosing not to go to their workplace.⁴ When asked how they would feel about returning to their workplace if it were to reopen in the month following the survey, 64% say they would feel uncomfortable returning, with 31% saying they would feel *very* uncomfortable. For those who are choosing to work from home even though their workplace is available to them, majorities cite a preference for working from home (60%) and concern over being exposed to the coronavirus (57%) as major reasons for this.

Younger teleworkers are more likely to say they've had a hard time feeling motivated to do their work since the coronavirus outbreak started. Most adults who are teleworking all or most of the time say it has been at least somewhat easy for them to feel motivated to do their work since the pandemic started. But there's a distinct age gap: 42% of workers ages 18 to 49 say this has been *difficult* for them compared with only 20% of workers 50 and older. The youngest

³ For more details, see the [Methodology](#) section of the report.

⁴ Employed adults who are working from home all or most of the time who do not have a workplace outside of their home (18% of all who are working from home) are excluded from this analysis. Half of these workers are self-employed.

workers are among the most likely to say a lack of motivation has been an impediment for them: 53% of those ages 18 to 29 say it's been difficult for them to feel motivated to do their work.

Parents who are teleworking are having a harder time getting their work done without interruptions. Half of parents with children younger than 18 who are working at home all or most of the time say it's been difficult for them to be able to get their work done without interruptions since the coronavirus outbreak started. In contrast, only 20% of teleworkers who don't have children under 18 say the same. Mothers and fathers are about equally likely to say this has been difficult for them.

Teleworkers are relying heavily on video conferencing services to keep in touch with co-workers, and there's no evidence of widespread "Zoom fatigue." Some 81% of employed adults who are working from home all or most of the time say they use video calling or online conferencing services like Zoom or Webex at least some of the time (59% use these often). And 57% use instant messaging platforms such as Slack or Google Chat (43% use these often). Among those who use video conferencing services often, 63% say they are fine with the amount of time they spend on video calls; 37% say they are worn out by it. In general, teleworkers view video conferencing and instant messaging platforms as a good substitute for in-person contact – 65% feel this way, while 35% say they are not a good substitute.

Among employed adults who are not working from home all of the time and are interacting in-person at least some with others at their workplace, concerns about coronavirus differ by gender, race and ethnicity. Women (60%) are more likely than men (48%) to be at least somewhat concerned about being exposed to the virus. And Black (70%) and Hispanic (67%) workers are more likely to be concerned than White workers (48%). In addition, Black and Hispanic workers are less likely than White workers to be very satisfied with the measures that their workplace has taken to protect them from being exposed to the coronavirus.

Employed adults with higher educational attainment and incomes are most likely to say their work can be done from home

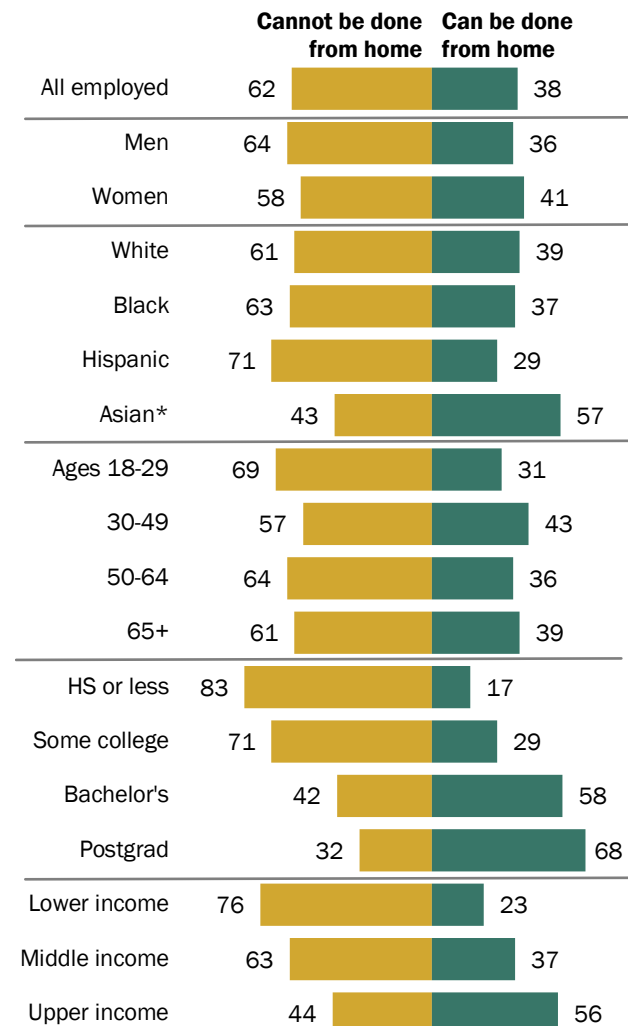
About four-in-ten U.S. adults who are employed full time or part time (38%) say that, for the most part, the responsibilities of their job can be done from home; 62% say their job cannot be done from home. Workers with higher levels of income and educational attainment are the most likely to say the responsibilities of their job can be done from home.

About seven-in-ten employed adults with a postgraduate degree (68%) and 58% of those with a bachelor's degree say the responsibilities of their job can mostly be done from home. In contrast, 83% of those with a high school diploma or less education and 71% of those with some college say that, for the most part, their job *cannot* be done from home. And while a majority of upper-income workers (56%) say they can mostly do their job from home, 63% of those with middle incomes and an even larger share of those with lower incomes (76%) say they cannot.

Asian adults are more likely than those from other racial or ethnic groups to say the responsibilities of their job can mostly be done from home: 57% of Asian American workers say this, compared with 39% of White workers, 37% of Black workers and 29% of Hispanic workers. Women (41%) are more likely than men (36%) to say they can do their job from home, but majorities of both say this is not the case.

About four-in-ten workers say their jobs can mostly be done from home

% of employed adults saying that, regardless of their current work arrangement, for the most part, the responsibilities of their job ...



* Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. "Some college" includes those with an associate degree and those who attended college but did not obtain a degree. Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2019 earnings.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020.

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Workers' ability to do their job from home varies considerably by industry.⁵ For example, majorities in the information and technology sector (84%); banking, finance, accounting, real estate or insurance (84%); education (59%); and professional, scientific and technical services (59%) say their job can mostly be done from home. Among those in government, public administration or the military, 46% say their job can be done from home and 54% say it cannot.

In turn, about three-quarters or more of those employed in retail, trade, or transportation (84%); manufacturing, mining, construction, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (78%); and hospitality, service, arts, entertainment and recreation (77%) say that, for the most part, the responsibilities of their job can't be done from home. Two-thirds of those in the health care and social assistance sector say the same.

About seven-in-ten workers who say their jobs can mostly be done from home say they are teleworking all or most of the time

Amid the coronavirus outbreak, a majority of employed adults who say that the responsibilities of their job can be mostly done from home (55%) say they are currently working from home all of the time. Another 16% say they are doing so most of the time, while 12% say they are teleworking some of the time and 17% are rarely or never working from home.

This marks a significant shift for most of these workers, a majority of whom (62%) say that they rarely or never worked from home before the start of the coronavirus outbreak. Just one-in-five say they worked from home all (12%) or most (7%) of the time before the coronavirus outbreak, while 18% worked from home some of the time.

Across demographic groups, most who say their job can be done from home say they are currently teleworking all or most of the time.

Most who can do their job from home say they are currently doing so all or most of the time

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

	All of the time	Most of the time	Net
All who can do their work from home	55	16	71
Lower income	46	20	66
Middle income	52	15	67
Upper income	65	14	79

Note: Figures may not add to subtotals due to rounding. Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2019 earnings.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020.
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⁵ For more details on industry definitions, see the [Methodology](#) section of the report.

Still, those with higher levels of educational attainment and upper incomes are the most likely to say they are working from home *all* of the time. About six-in-ten workers with a bachelor’s degree or more education who say they are able to do their job from home (58%) say they are working from home all of the time, compared with 51% of those with less education. And while most of those with upper incomes (65%) say they are currently working from home all of the time, 52% of those with middle incomes and 46% of those with lower incomes say the same.

Most employed adults who have a workplace and who are teleworking all or most of the time say their workplace isn’t available to them

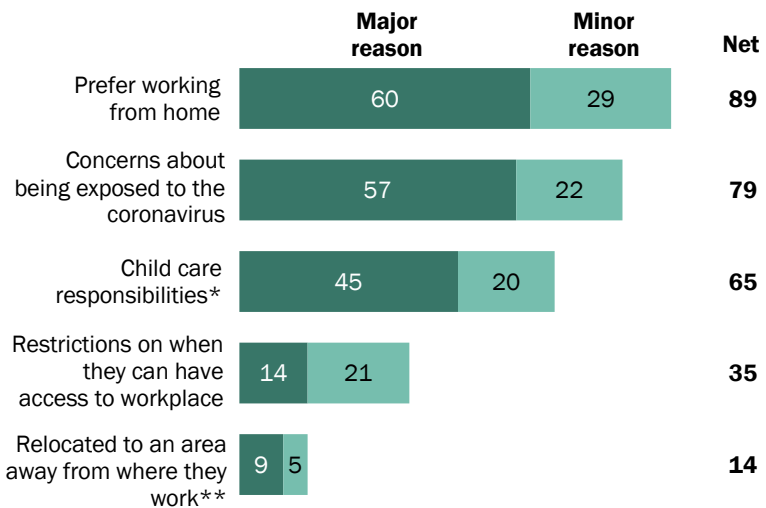
Some 18% of employed adults who are currently teleworking all or most of the time say they don’t have a workplace outside of their home (half of this group is self-employed). Among those who do have a workplace, 64% say they are working from home because their workplace is currently closed or unavailable to them, while 36% say they choose not to work from their workplace.

Asked how they would feel about working at their workplace if it were to reopen in the month following the survey, 64% of those whose workplace is currently closed or unavailable to them say they would feel uncomfortable, with 31% saying they would feel *very* uncomfortable. Some 36% say

they would feel at least somewhat comfortable working at their workplace if it were to reopen in the month following the survey. There are no significant differences across demographic groups.

For those who are working from home by choice, personal preference and concerns about coronavirus are the major reasons why

Among employed adults currently working from home all or most of the time and whose workplace is open, % saying each of the following is a ___ why they are currently working from home all or most of the time



* Among those with children younger than 18.

** Either permanently or temporarily.

Note: Figures may not add to subtotals due to rounding.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020.

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Among teleworkers who are choosing not to work from their workplace, majorities say a preference for working from home (60%) and concerns about being exposed to the coronavirus (57%) are major reasons why they are currently working from home all or most of the time. Smaller shares cite restrictions on when they can have access to their workplace (14%) or relocation (either permanent or temporary) to an area away from where they work (9%) as major reasons why they are currently working from home.

About two-thirds of parents with children younger than 18 who are working from home all or most of the time and whose workplace is open (65%) point to child care responsibilities as a reason why they're working from home; 45% say this is a *major* reason.

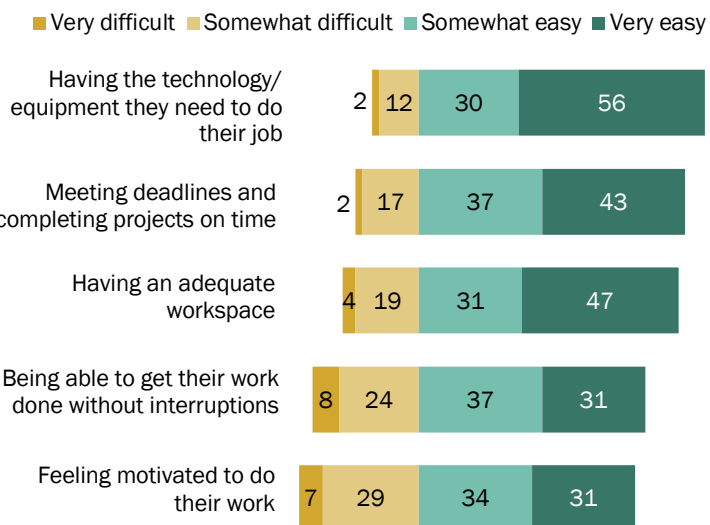
The shift to remote work has been easy for many workers; younger workers and parents more likely to have faced challenges

Overall, a majority (56%) of adults who are working from home all or most of the time say, since the coronavirus outbreak started, it has been very easy for them to have the technology and equipment they need to do their job. An additional 30% say this has been somewhat easy for them.

Those who worked from home before the coronavirus outbreak may have an advantage in this regard. About two-thirds (64%) of workers who worked from home at least some of the time before the pandemic and are doing so all or most of the time now say it's been very easy for them to have the technology

Most who are teleworking say they are well situated to work from home, but about a third say they lack motivation

Among employed adults currently working from home all or most of the time, % saying, since the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, each has been ____ for them when working from home



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020.

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and equipment they need to do their job. This compares with 50% of current teleworkers who rarely or never worked from home prior to the outbreak.

Having an adequate workspace at home has also been easy for most teleworkers – 47% of those who are now working from home all or most of the time say this has been very easy, and 31% say it's been somewhat easy. Here again, those who worked from home prior to the pandemic may have an edge over those who are newer to teleworking. While roughly half (51%) of those who worked from home at least some of the time before the coronavirus outbreak say it's been very easy for them to have an adequate workspace, a smaller share (42%) of those who didn't work from home prior to the outbreak say the same.

When it comes to their ability to meet deadlines and complete projects on time, most teleworkers say this has been easy for them, with 43% saying this has been very easy and 37% saying it's been somewhat easy.

Those working from home are finding it somewhat less easy to get their work done without interruptions and to feel motivated to do their work. While a majority say it has been very or somewhat easy for them to be able to get their work done without interruptions, roughly a third say this has been somewhat (24%) or very (8%) difficult.

Similarly, while more than six-in-ten teleworkers say it has been very or somewhat easy for them to feel motivated to do their work, more than three-in-ten say this has been difficult for them (29% somewhat difficult, 7% very difficult).

Barriers to productivity vary by age, parental status

There is a significant age gap in the extent to which workers are facing challenges in their virtual work lives. Among those working from home all or most of the time, those younger than 50 are significantly more likely than older workers to say it's been *difficult* for them to be able to get their work done without interruptions (38% for workers ages 18 to 49 vs. 18% for workers 50 and older) and feel motivated to do their work (42% vs. 20%). The youngest workers are among those most likely to say a lack of motivation has been an impediment for them: 53% of those ages 18 to 29 say it's been difficult for them to feel motivated since the pandemic began.

Among those working from home, younger workers more likely to say they face barriers to productivity

Among employed adults currently working from home all or most of the time, % saying, since the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, each has been *very or somewhat difficult* for them



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020.

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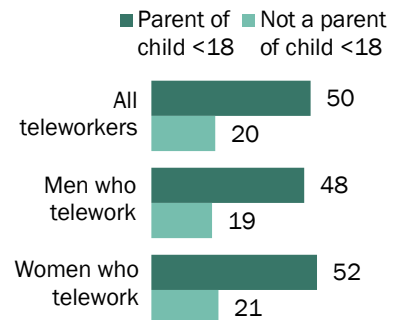
The age gap is less pronounced but still significant when it comes to having an adequate workspace and meeting deadlines and completing projects on time. In each case, workers younger than 50 are more likely than their older counterparts to say this has been difficult for them. These age gaps persist after controlling for parental status. Even among adults who do not have children, those younger than 50 are facing more difficulty in some aspects of their work.

With widespread school and daycare closures, many working parents have their children at home as they've transitioned to remote work. Half of teleworking parents with children younger than 18 say, since the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, it's been difficult for them to be able to get their work done without interruptions.⁶ A far smaller share of those who do not have minor children (20%) say the same. This difference persists across genders, with both mothers and fathers more likely than their counterparts without children to say this has been difficult for them. Mothers and fathers are about equally likely to say this has been difficult for them.

Among teleworkers, parents are somewhat more likely than adults without minor children to say it's been difficult for them to have an adequate workspace – 28% vs. 19%. In addition, parents are more likely than non-parents to say it's been difficult for them to meet deadlines and complete projects on time while working at home. Similarly, parents are somewhat more likely than non-parents to say it's been difficult for them to have the technology and equipment they need to do their job.

Half of parents working from home say it's been difficult for them to work without interruptions

*Among employed adults currently working from home all or most of the time, % saying, since the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, it has been **very or somewhat** difficult for them to get their work done without interruptions*



Note: Parents include those who have a child younger than 18 who may or may not be living in their household.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020.

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⁶ "Parents" include those with a child younger than 18 who may or may not be living in their household.

Teleworkers are taking advantage of online tools and platforms to keep in touch with co-workers, and most see them as a good substitute

For many who are working from home, online communication tools have become a vital part of the workday. Roughly eight-in-ten adults who are working from home all or most of the time (81%) say they use video calling or online conferencing services like Zoom or WebEx to keep in touch with co-workers, with 59% saying they often use these types of services. Some 57% say they use instant messaging platforms such as Slack or Google Chat at least sometimes (43% use these often).

While large majorities of workers across age groups say they use video calling or online conferencing at least some of the time, workers ages 65 and older are the least likely to say they do this often.

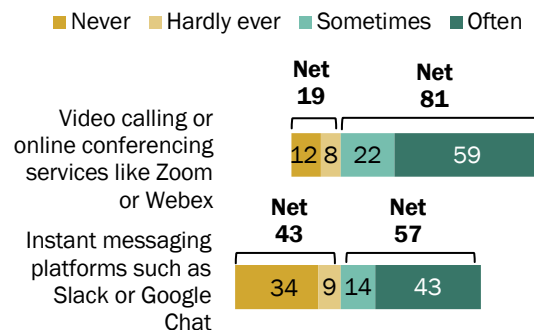
There's a significant socioeconomic divide in the use of these types of services. Among four-year college graduates who are working from home all or most of the time, 64% say they often use video calling or online conferencing. In contrast, 48% of teleworkers without a four-year college degree say they do this often. Similarly, 69% of upper-income workers often use these types of services, compared with 56% of middle-income workers and 41% of lower-income workers.

Workers who play a supervisory role in their organization (70%) are more likely than those who don't (55%) to say they often use video calling or online conferencing. Across industries, those working in education and information technology are among the most likely to say they often use video conferencing.

When it comes to instant messaging platforms such as Slack or Google Chat, usage patterns are somewhat different. Again, age matters: 49% of teleworkers younger than 50 say they use these types of platforms often compared with 30% of those 50 and older. But there is no gap along educational lines, and the income gap is more modest. Workers who are employed in the

Majorities of remote workers use video conferencing, instant messaging platforms to keep in touch with co-workers

Among employed adults currently working from home all or most of the time, % saying they ____ use each of the following



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Figures may not add to subtotals due to rounding.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020.

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information technology industry are more likely than those in most other industries to rely on these platforms.

Among all who are working from home, those who do so all of the time (47%) are much more likely than those who work from home most of the time (28%) to say they use these platforms often.

Most see online tools as a good substitute for in-person contact

Most teleworkers (65%) who at least sometimes use remote technologies such as video conferencing or instant messaging say these online tools are a good substitute for in-person contact, while 35% say they are not a good substitute. Views on this differ by gender, with women (70%) more likely than men (60%) to view these tools as a good substitute. There is also a difference by education: 70% of teleworkers without a bachelor's degree see these online tools as a good substitute for in-person contact, compared with 62% of those with a four-year college degree.

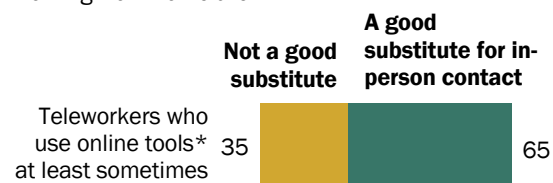
While these technologies have helped companies and organizations operate effectively during the pandemic, there has been widespread concern that video calls in particular are [taking a toll on workers](#). Among teleworkers who say they use video calling or online conferencing services often, most (63%) say they are fine with the amount of time they spend on these platforms; 37% say they are worn out by it.

Younger teleworkers (ages 18 to 49) who use these platforms often are more likely than their older counterparts to say they feel worn out by the amount of time they spend on video calls (40% vs. 31%). Feeling worn out is also more prevalent among those with a bachelor's degree or higher (41%) than among those with less education (27%). In addition, supervisors who use these platforms often are more likely than those who don't supervise others (but also use video

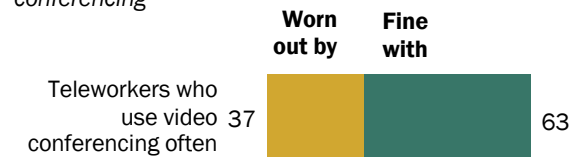
Most teleworkers see online tools as a good substitute for in-person contact; relatively few have 'Zoom fatigue'

Among employed adults currently working from home all or most of the time, % saying ...

Online tools used to keep in touch with co-workers while working from home are ...



They feel ___ the amount of time they spend on video calls or online conferencing



*Refers to instant messaging platforms and video conferencing services

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

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platforms often) to say they feel worn out by the amount of time they spend on these types of calls (47% vs. 33%).

Looking ahead, a majority of those who say their job can be done from home say they'd like to telework all or most of the time post-pandemic

More than half of employed adults who say that their job responsibilities can mostly be done from home (54%) say that, if they had a choice, they'd want to work from home all or most of the time when the coronavirus outbreak is over. A third say they'd want to work from home some of the time, while just 11% say they'd want to do this rarely or never. Some 46% of those who rarely or never teleworked before the coronavirus outbreak say they'd want to work from home all or most of the time when the pandemic is over.

Men and women who can do their work from home are about equally likely to say they'd want to work from home all or most of the time after the pandemic, but women are more likely than men to say they'd want to work from home *all* of the time (31% vs. 23%). This is the case whether they have minor children or not. In fact, the shares of workers with and without children younger than 18 who say they would want to work from home all of the time when the outbreak is over are nearly identical.

Similar shares across age, income and racial and ethnic groups say they'd want to work from home all or most of the time after the coronavirus outbreak is over if they had a choice. Among employed adults with some college or less education who say they can do their job from home, 60% say they would want to work from home all or most of the time post-pandemic, compared with half of those with at least a bachelor's degree.

Women are more likely than men to say they'd want to work from home all of the time when the pandemic is over

Among employed adults who say that, for the most part, the responsibilities of their job can be done from home, % saying that, if they had a choice, they would want to work from home ___ when the coronavirus outbreak is over

	All of the time	Most of the time	Net
All who can do their work from home	27	27	54
Men	23	29	52
Women	31	25	56

Note: Figures may not add to subtotals due to rounding.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020.
"How the Coronavirus Outbreak Has - and Hasn't - Changed the Way Americans Work"

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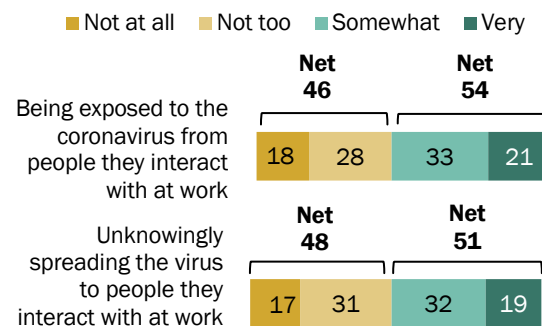
For those workers who are spending time at their workplace and interacting with others, at least half are concerned about being exposed to – or spreading – the coronavirus

Most employed adults don't have the option of working from home, and some of those who do are still spending some time in the office or at their workplace. For many of these workers, the pandemic has brought a new concern about their health. Among those who are not working exclusively from home and who have at least some in-person interactions with other people at their workplace, a majority say they are at least somewhat concerned about being exposed to the coronavirus at work (21% say they are very concerned). About half are concerned that they might unknowingly spread the virus to the people they interact with at work (19% are very concerned).

Women (60%) are more likely than men (48%), and workers younger than 50 (56%) are more likely than older workers (50%), to be at least somewhat concerned about being exposed to the virus. And Black (70%) and Hispanic (67%) workers are more concerned about this than White workers (48%). These patterns are similar when it comes to potentially passing the virus along to others at work. In addition, lower-income workers (61%) express a higher level of concern than those with upper incomes (48%) about being exposed to the virus (similar shares across income groups are concerned about spreading the virus to others).

At least half of workers who interact with others while on the job worry about exposure to COVID-19

Among employed adults who are not working from home all of the time and who interact in person with others at work at least sometimes, % saying they are _____ concerned about each



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Figures may not add to subtotals due to rounding.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020.

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Most workers are satisfied with the steps that have been taken in their workplace to keep them safe from COVID-19

Among those who either cannot do their work from home or can but are not working from home all of the time, about eight-in-ten say they are very (39%) or somewhat (42%) satisfied with the measures that have been put in place to protect them from being exposed to the coronavirus. About one-in-five say they are not too (13%) or not at all (6%) satisfied.

White workers who are spending some time at their workplace are more satisfied than Black or Hispanic workers with the steps that have been taken to ensure their safety: 45% of White workers, compared with 31% of Black and 29% of Hispanic workers, say they are very satisfied. Workers ages 50 and older are also more likely than their younger counterparts to be very satisfied (50% vs. 34%). There is an income gap as well: Lower-income workers (33%) are significantly less likely than middle-income (39%) and upper-income (49%) workers to say they are very satisfied with the measures put in place where they work.

Lower-income workers who are not exclusively teleworking are less likely to be very satisfied with safety measures

Among employed adults who are not working from home all of the time, % saying they are ___ with the measures their workplace has put in place to protect them from being exposed to coronavirus

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Net
All who are not working from home all of the time	39	42	81
Lower income	33	45	78
Middle income	39	41	80
Higher income	49	39	87

Note: Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2019 earnings. Figures may not add to subtotals due to rounding.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020.

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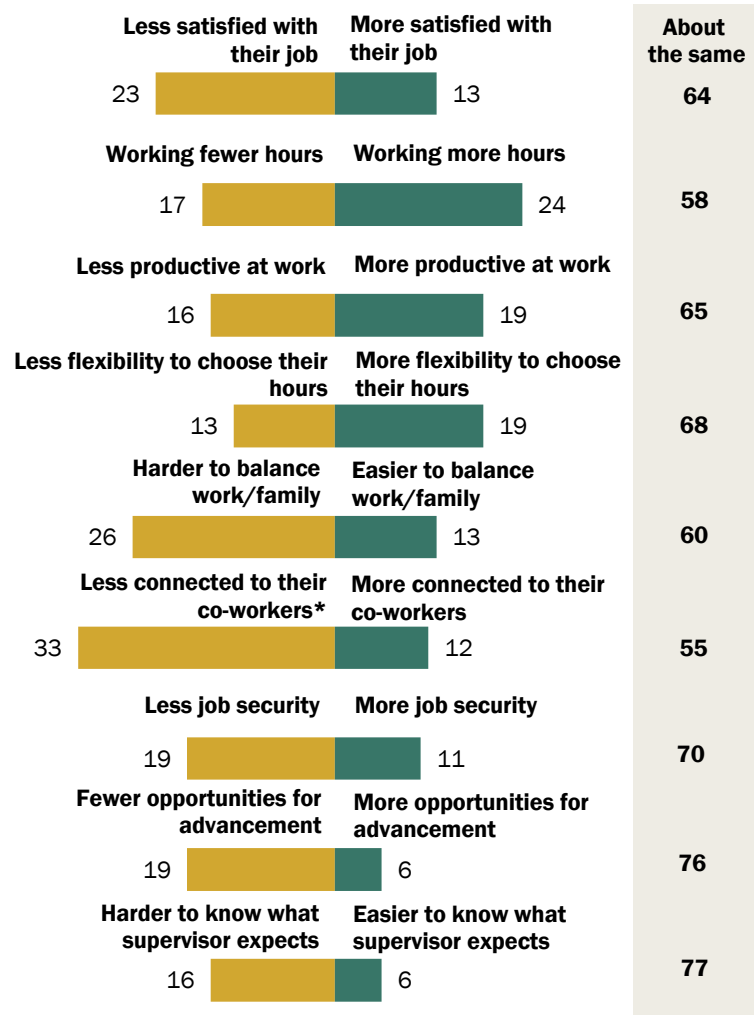
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About a quarter of workers say they are less satisfied with their job than they were before the coronavirus outbreak

While the coronavirus outbreak has changed how Americans work in some ways, from increased telework to health concerns among those who can't or choose not to work from home, majorities of workers say they have seen little change in various aspects of their work lives compared with before the outbreak. For example, about three-quarters of those who are in the same job as before the outbreak started say they have about the same opportunities for advancement (76%) and that there has been no change in how easy or hard it is to know what their supervisor expects of them (77%). About seven-in-ten say they have about as much job security (70%) and flexibility to choose when they put in their hours (68%) as they did pre-pandemic.⁷ Still, some workers have noted a change in the way things are going for them at work.

Amid COVID-19, majorities of workers say they have seen little change in various aspects of their work lives compared with before the outbreak

Among employed adults who are working in the same job as before the coronavirus outbreak, % saying that, compared with before the coronavirus outbreak, they are/they have/it is ...



*This question was not asked of those who are self-employed and do not have any employees.

Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020.

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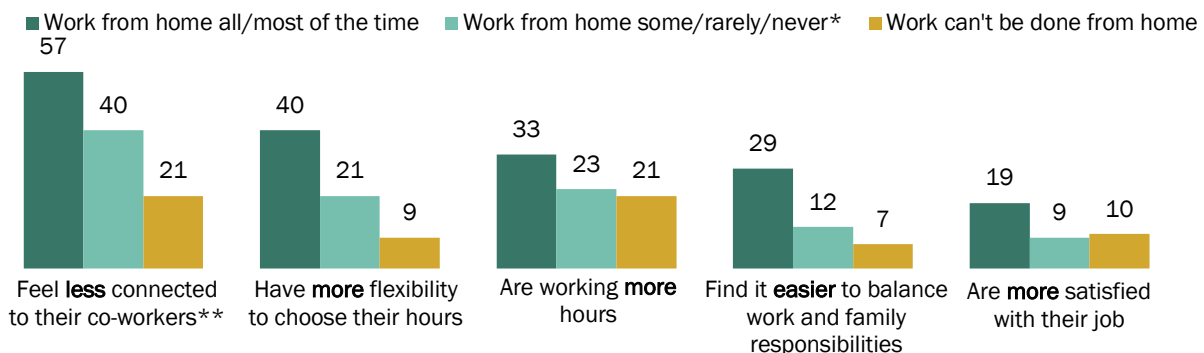
⁷ More than eight-in-ten employed adults (86%) say they are in the same job as before the coronavirus outbreak, while 10% have changed jobs, and 4% say they were not employed before the coronavirus outbreak.

Overall, about a quarter (23%) of workers who are in the same job say they are less satisfied with their job compared with before the coronavirus outbreak, while 13% say they are now more satisfied. When asked about specific aspects of their job, a third say they feel less connected to their co-workers, 26% say it's harder for them to balance their work and family responsibilities, about one-in-five say they have less job security and fewer opportunities for advancement (19% each), and 16% say it's harder to know what their supervisor expects of them. On each of these, smaller shares note an improvement in the way things are going compared with before the coronavirus outbreak. In turn, a higher share say they now have more flexibility to choose when they put in their hours (19%) than say they have less flexibility (13%).

Assessments of how some elements of work life have changed compared with before the coronavirus outbreak vary by work arrangements. Among employed adults who have not changed jobs since the pandemic began, four-in-ten of those who are working from home all or most of the time say they have more flexibility to choose when they put in their work hours than they did before the coronavirus outbreak. That compares with 21% of those who can do their job from home but are doing so only some of the time, rarely, or never, and an even smaller share (9%) of those whose work can't be done from home who say they have more flexibility. Workers who are working from home all or most of the time are also more likely than other workers to say that it's

Four-in-ten adults working from home all or most of the time say they have more flexibility to choose their hours now than before the coronavirus outbreak

Among employed adults who are working in the same job as before the coronavirus outbreak, % saying that, compared with before the coronavirus outbreak, they ...



* Based on those who say that, for the most part, the responsibilities of their job can be done from home.

** This question was not asked of those who are self-employed and do not have any employees.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020.

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now easier for them to balance work and family responsibilities and that they are more satisfied with their job than before the coronavirus outbreak.

At the same time, workers who haven't changed jobs and are working from home all or most of the time (57%) are more likely to say they feel less connected to their coworkers than those who can do their job from home but are doing so less often or not at all (40%) and those whose job can't be done from home (21%). They are also more likely to say they have fewer opportunities for advancement than they did before: 23% of those who are working from home all or most of the time say this, compared with 18% of those who can do their job from home but are not doing so all or most of the time and 17% of those who can't do their job from home.

When it comes to the number of hours workers are putting in, a third of those who are working from home all or most of the time say they are working more hours than they did before the coronavirus outbreak. Smaller shares of those who can do their job from home but aren't doing so all or most of the time (23%), and those who can't do their job from home (21%), say they're working more hours. Workers whose job can't be done from home are the most likely to say they are now working fewer hours (20% vs. 13% of those who can do their job from home but are doing so some of the time or less often and 14% of those who are working from home all or most of the time).

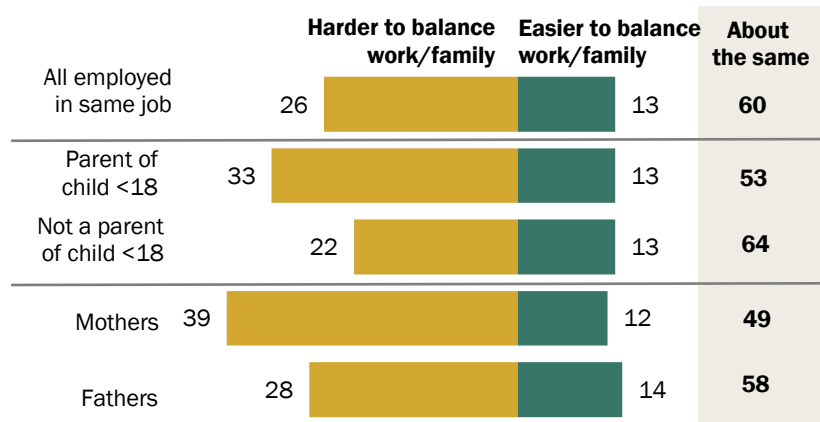
These assessments also vary to some extent across demographic groups, largely mirroring demographic divides in work arrangements. For example, those in upper-income families and those with a bachelor's degree or more education – groups that are among the most likely to be working from home all or most of the time – are more likely than those with middle or lower incomes and those without a bachelor's degree to say they have more flexibility to choose their hours and that they feel less connected to their co-workers.

Still, even when accounting for the fact that work arrangements vary widely across demographic groups, some differences remain. Among workers who are in the same job as before the pandemic and who are currently working from home all or most of the time, those with at least a bachelor's degree are more likely than those with some college or less education to say they now have more flexibility to choose when they put in their hours (46% vs. 28%, respectively) and that they feel less connected to their co-workers (62% vs. 45%). And these differences also persist when looking at workers with and without a bachelor's degree who say that, for the most part, the responsibilities of their job can't be done from home.

Among working parents with children younger than 18 who are in the same job as before the coronavirus outbreak started, a third say it's now harder for them to balance work and family responsibilities; 22% of those who do not have minor children say the same. Mothers (39%) are more likely than fathers (28%) to say it's harder for them to balance work and family responsibilities compared with before the coronavirus outbreak.

About four-in-ten working mothers say it's harder now to balance work and family responsibilities

Among employed adults who are working in the same job as before the coronavirus outbreak, % saying that, compared with before the outbreak, it is ...



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020.

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Acknowledgments

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Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

Overview

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report is drawn from the panel wave conducted Oct. 13 to Oct. 19, 2020. A total of 10,332 panelists responded out of 11,779 who were sampled, for a response rate of 88%. This does not include three panelists who were removed from the data due to extremely high rates of refusal or straightlining. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 5%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 1%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 10,332 respondents is plus or minus 1.6 percentage points.

Panel recruitment

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 9,942 (50%) agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a random, address-based sample of households selected

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	2,188
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	1,246
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	622
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS/web	9,396	8,778	5,909
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS/web	5,900	4,720	2,337
June 1 to July 19, 2020	ABS/web	1,865	1,636	1,276
	Total	36,879	25,076	13,578

Note: Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

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from the U.S. Postal Service’s Delivery Sequence File. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2019 and 2020, respectively. Across these three address-based recruitments, a total of 17,161 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 15,134 (88%) agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. In each household, the adult with the next birthday was asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. Of the 25,076 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 13,578 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service’s Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.⁸ The American Trends Panel never uses breakout routers or chains that direct respondents to additional surveys.

Sample design

This study featured a stratified random sample from the ATP. The sample was allocated according to the following strata, in order: tablet households, U.S.-born Hispanics, foreign-born Hispanics, high school education or less, foreign-born Asians, not registered to vote, people ages 18 to 34, uses internet weekly or less, non-Hispanic Black adults, nonvolunteers and all other categories not already falling into any of the above.

Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with Ipsos. The web program was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the Ipsos project management team and Pew Research Center researchers. The Ipsos project management team also populated test data which was analyzed in SPSS to ensure the logic and randomizations were working as intended before launching the survey.

Incentives

All respondents were offered a post-paid incentive for their participation. Respondents could choose to receive the post-paid incentive in the form of a check or a gift code to Amazon.com or could choose to decline the incentive. Incentive amounts ranged from \$5 to \$20 depending on whether the respondent belongs to a part of the population that is harder or easier to reach. Differential incentive amounts were designed to increase panel survey participation among groups that traditionally have low survey response propensities.

⁸ AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. “[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling.](#)”

Data collection protocol

The data collection field period for this survey was Oct. 13 to Oct. 19, 2020. Postcard notifications were mailed to all ATP panelists with a known residential address on Oct. 13, 2020.

On Oct. 13 and Oct. 14, invitations were sent out in two separate launches: Soft Launch and Full Launch. A total of 150 panelists were included in the soft launch, which began with an initial invitation sent on Oct. 13, 2020. The ATP panelists chosen for the initial soft launch were known responders who had completed previous ATP surveys within one day of receiving their invitation. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking panelists were included in the full launch and were sent an invitation on Oct. 14, 2020.

All panelists with an email address received an email invitation and up to one email reminder if they did not respond to the survey. All ATP panelists that consented to SMS messages received an SMS invitation and up to two SMS reminders.

Invitation and reminder dates

	Soft Launch	Full Launch
Initial invitation	Oct. 13, 2020	Oct. 14, 2020
First reminder	Oct. 16, 2020	Oct. 16, 2020
Final reminder	Oct. 19, 2020	Oct. 19, 2020

Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, the Center's researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing clear patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for very high rates of leaving questions blank, as well as always selecting the first or last answer presented. As a result of this checking, three ATP respondents were removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

Weighting

The ATP data was weighted in a multistep process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of selection for their initial recruitment survey (and the probability of being invited to participate in the panel in cases where only a subsample of respondents were invited). The base weights for panelists recruited in different years are scaled to be proportionate to the effective sample size for all active panelists in their cohort.

To correct for nonresponse to the initial recruitment surveys and gradual panel attrition, the base weights for all active panelists are calibrated to align with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table to create a full-panel weight.

For ATP waves in which only a subsample of panelists are invited to participate, a wave-specific base weight is created by adjusting the full-panel weights for subsampled panelists to account for any differential probabilities of selection for the particular panel wave. For waves in which all active panelists are invited to participate, the wave-specific base weight is identical to the full-panel weight.

In the final weighting step, the wave-specific base weights for panelists who completed the survey are again calibrated to match the population benchmarks specified above. These weights are trimmed (typically at about the 1st and 99th percentiles) to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and test of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age x Gender	2018 American Community Survey
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
Race/Ethnicity x Education	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanics and Asian Americans	
Years lived in the U.S.	
Census region x Metro/Non-metro	
Volunteerism	2017 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2016 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	Average of the three most recent Pew Research Center telephone surveys
Frequency of internet use	ATP 2020 ABS recruitment survey
Religious affiliation	

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. The 2016 CPS was used for voter registration targets for this wave in order to obtain voter registration numbers from a presidential election year. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total U.S. adult population. The ATP 2020 ABS recruitment survey featured 1,862 online completions and 2,247 mail survey completions.

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The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	10,332	1.6 percentage points
Employed adults	6,019	2.0 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Dispositions and response rates

Final dispositions	AAPOR code	Total
Completed interview	1.1	10,332
Logged onto survey; broke-off	2.12	78
Logged onto survey; did not complete any items	2.1121	95
Never logged on (implicit refusal)	2.11	1,270
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	1
Completed interview but was removed for data quality		3
Screened out		N/A
Total panelists in the survey		11,779
Completed interviews	I	10,332
Partial interviews	P	
Refusals	R	1,446
Non-contact	NC	1
Other	O	
Unknown household	UH	
Unknown other	UO	
Not eligible	NE	N/A
Total		11,779
AAPOR RR1 = $I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)$		88%

Cumulative response rate	Total
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	11%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	73%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 77	65%
Response rate to Wave 77 survey	88%
Cumulative response rate	5%

Adjusting income and defining income tiers

To create upper-, middle- and lower-income tiers, respondents' 2019 family incomes were adjusted for differences in purchasing power by geographic region and for household size. "Middle-income" adults live in families with annual incomes that are two-thirds to double the median family income in the panel (after incomes have been adjusted for the local cost of living and for household size). The middle-income range for the American Trends Panel is about \$38,900 to \$116,800 annually for an average family of three. Lower-income families have incomes less than roughly \$38,900, and upper-income families have incomes greater than roughly \$116,800 (all figures expressed in 2019 dollars).

Based on these adjustments, among respondents who provided their income and household size, 31% are lower income, 45% are middle income and 19% fall into the upper-income tier. An additional 4% either didn't offer a response to the income question or the household size question.

For more information about how the income tiers were determined, please see [here](#).

Coding of industries

Employed respondents with one job or who have more than one job but consider one of them to be their primary job were asked what industry or field they work in. The response options were based on the latest U.S. Census Bureau codes using the net categories for [industry](#), as reported by IPUMS. "Other" responses were backcoded into these industry categories when possible.

Due to small sample size for analysis, some industries were further collapsed into larger net categories as follows: The arts, entertainment and recreation industry was combined with hospitality or service; the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industry was added to manufacturing, mining, or construction; and transportation was included in the retail and trade industry.

A note about the Asian sample

This survey includes a total sample size of 332 Asian Americans. The sample includes English-speaking Asian Americans only and, therefore, may not be representative of the overall Asian American population (73% of our weighted Asian American sample was born in another country, compared with 77% of the Asian American adult population overall). Despite this limitation, it is important to report the views of Asian Americans on the topics in this study. As always, Asian Americans' responses are incorporated into the general population figures throughout this report. Because of the relatively small sample size and a reduction in precision due to weighting, we are not able to analyze Asian American respondents by demographic categories, such as gender, age or education. For more, see ["Polling methods are changing, but reporting the views of Asian Americans remains a challenge."](#)

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