

American Stimulus

Between March 25-30, 2020, APCO Worldwide conducted four separate polls of the U.S. public to understand the effect of COVID-19 on society, businesses and institutions. In this latest tracking, APCO Worldwide, a global advisory and advocacy communications firm, is exploring how the pandemic is impacting American's attitudes, behaviors and preferences.

Most American workers (53%) report that the coronavirus has already had negative impacts on their employer, including pay cuts, furloughs, hiring freezes and shifting workers to hourly or part-time status.

A quarter of employees of small businesses are not confident

in their employer's ability to weather a downturn in sales and stay in business; 10% of employees at large companies say the same.

Only 14% say their company has seen positive impacts, like an uptick in business activity or more hiring.

Americans agree that the federal government should provide stimulus support to the private sector, with 58% supporting aid to small business. Only 22% support benefits for large companies.

66% support government aid to hospitals and healthcare providers and 53% support aid for restaurants.

Americans think federal support should be targeted towards small businesses (58%), the unemployed (50%) and city and state services like schools and hospitals (50%).

There is less support for financial assistance for travel and tourism sectors, such as airlines (36%), hotels (35%) and cruise ships (18%).

Americans are less likely to support benefits for large companies (22%) and banks who lend to businesses (19%).

Most Americans think the current stimulus response is adequate for now, but that more will be needed in the coming months (52%), while another 15% think the current stimulus is insufficient.

Americans are most likely to believe they will be helped from the stimulus

by receiving a check from the government (59%) or through more funding for local hospitals and healthcare services (43%).

Only 15% are very confident that the stimulus aid will be delivered quickly enough to have a meaningful impact, with another 43% who are somewhat confident.

Roughly one in four believe they will be helped by enhanced unemployment benefits (26%),

support for their employer to stay in business (23%), and postponement of loan repayments (23%).

Only 18% think the current package is sufficient and no more is needed.

Americans have improved sentiment towards healthcare providers, and most Americans feel those providers and institutions will be made stronger because of it.

Two-thirds of U.S. adults have a more positive image of healthcare providers (68%)

and hospitals and health systems (65%) because of how they've reacted to the pandemic. Similarly, more than half have a more positive view of public health departments (56%) and their state government (55%).

Nearly half of Americans say

hospitals and health systems (48%), healthcare providers (45%) and medical testing companies (42%) will be made stronger because of their actions related to the pandemic.

However, most have unchanged perceptions of insurance companies (55%)

and pharmaceutical companies (48%) as a result of their actions around the pandemic. Yet, those who did change their view are two-times more likely to feel more positive toward each.

Also notable, the majority of Americans believe at least one group or sector would come out of this pandemic stronger;

less than a quarter (23%) said no one will come out stronger.

In addition to nurses and doctors, a majority of Americans support enhanced benefits for “essential workers,” including police officers, grocery store workers, delivery workers and care-givers—during the COVID-19 crisis.

Six-in-ten support (59%) extra pay and 69% believe essential workers should be provided personal protective equipment.

46% believe employers should take on additional staff, and 44% of Americans support additional paid time off for essential workers.

57% of Americans say unions are needed to speak up for these workers and protect their rights.

Two-in-three individual investors believe their finances and investments will recover within the next two years.

A majority of individual investors (60%) think the \$2 trillion federal economic stimulus will improve their finances.

41% of investors believe their financial picture will recover over time, but they may need to scale back their expectations.

Americans are increasingly worried about COVID-19, with half now saying it is extremely or very serious.

Up 12 points from two weeks ago, 79% of Americans now are worried about COVID-19 (“extremely”, “very” or “somewhat”) compared to 67% on March 13.

And while worry is rising across the country, older Americans, those with children and those with full-time jobs are more concerned than their counterparts, particularly, younger, Midwestern and lower income Americans.



APCO Worldwide is an advisory and advocacy communications consultancy helping leading public and private sector organizations build and protect organizational reputations, relationships and brands, and act with agility in handling dynamic marketplace and social issues. APCO has more than 800 employees based in more than 30 global markets. More information can be found at apcoworldwide.com.

Methodology note: APCO Worldwide conducted a poll of n=1,000 American adults on March 25-30, 2020. The study is based on a national sample provided by Dyna-ta, balanced by age, gender and region. Visit apcoworldwide.com/coronavirus for more information.