

FOR RELEASE AUG. 4, 2020

# Coronavirus Economic Downturn Has Hit Latinos Especially Hard

*Even before the pandemic, Hispanics said they felt downbeat about their finances*

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**RECOMMENDED CITATION**

Pew Research Center, August 2020  
"Coronavirus Economic Downturn Has Hit Latinos Especially Hard"

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## How we did this

For this report, we analyzed trends in unemployment rates among U.S. Hispanics as well as how Hispanics view the national economy and their personal financial situations both amid the coronavirus outbreak and prior to COVID-19.

Estimates of the unemployment rate are from the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). The bureau has noted that the official unemployment rate [likely understated the actual state of unemployment](#) in March, April, May and June 2020. The understatement was greater for women, immigrants and several other groups, [according to a Pew Research Center analysis](#).

For Hispanics' views amid the coronavirus outbreak, we drew primarily on a June 2020 survey of U.S. adults – see [here](#) and [here](#) for more – and an [April 2020 survey](#) of U.S. adults. Both drew on Pew Research Center's [American Trends Panel](#) (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses.

For Hispanic views from before COVID-19, we drew on the Center's National Survey of Latinos, which surveyed 3,030 U.S. Hispanic adults in December 2019. This includes 2,094 Hispanic adults who were members of the ATP. It also includes an oversample of 936 respondents sampled from Ipsos' KnowledgePanel, another online survey panel also recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses. The survey was conducted in both English and Spanish.

Recruiting panelists by phone or mail ensures that nearly all U.S. adults have a chance of selection. This gives us confidence that any sample can represent the whole population (see our [Methods 101 explainer](#) on random sampling), or in this case, the whole U.S. Hispanic population. To further ensure that this survey reflects a balanced cross-section of the nation's Hispanic adults, the data is weighted to match the U.S. Hispanic adult population by gender, nativity, Hispanic origin group, education and other categories. Read more about [the ATP's methodology](#).

Here are the [questions used for the report](#) from the National Survey of Latinos, along with responses, and its [methodology](#).

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## Terminology

The terms **Hispanic** and **Latino** are used interchangeably in this report.

The term **U.S. born** refers to people who are U.S. citizens at birth, including people born in the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico or other U.S. territories, as well as those born elsewhere to at least one parent who is a U.S. citizen.

The terms **foreign born** and **immigrant** are used interchangeably in this report. They refer to people who are not a U.S. citizen at birth – in other words, those born outside the U.S., Puerto Rico or other U.S. territories and whose parents are not U.S. citizens.

# Coronavirus Economic Downturn Has Hit Latinos Especially Hard

*Even before the pandemic, Hispanics said they felt downbeat about their finances*

The coronavirus outbreak has significantly harmed the finances of U.S. Hispanics. As the nation's economy [contracted at a record rate](#) in recent months, the group's unemployment rate rose sharply, particularly among Hispanic women, and remains higher among Hispanic workers than U.S. workers overall. With Hispanic households absorbing lost jobs and wages, many have said they may not be able to pay their bills. Yet even before the outbreak, Hispanics were concerned about their economic situation despite near record low levels of unemployment through the end of 2019.

As the United States locked down amid COVID-19, the unemployment rate for Hispanics increased from 4.8% in February to a peak of 18.5% in April before dropping to 14.5% in June, nonseasonally adjusted.<sup>1</sup> This exceeds levels from the Great Recession of 2007-2009, when the unemployment rate peaked at 13.9% in January 2010. Hispanic women have experienced an especially steep rise in their unemployment rate, which jumped from 5.5% to 20.5% between February and April 2020.<sup>2</sup> By comparison, the unemployment rate for Hispanic men rose from 4.3% to 16.9% during this time. In June, the unemployment rate of U.S.-born Hispanics (15.3%) was higher than that of foreign-born Hispanics (13.5%), after the rates for both groups peaked at more than 18% in April.

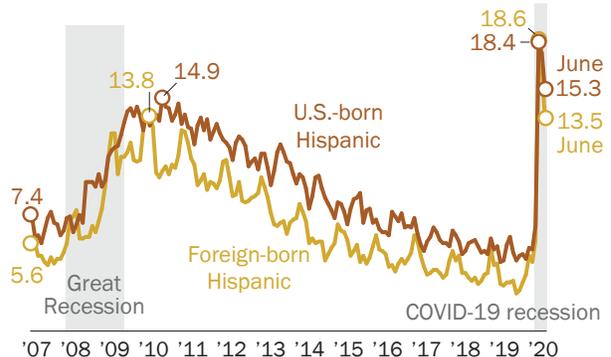
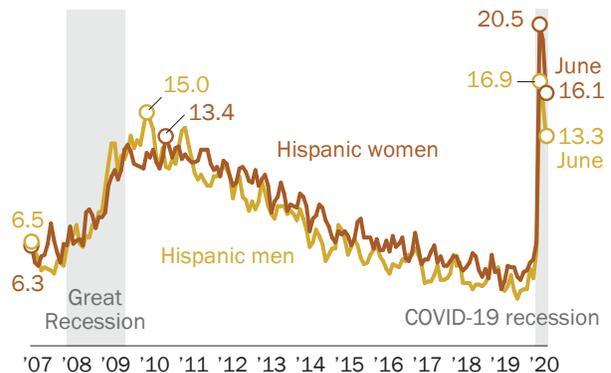
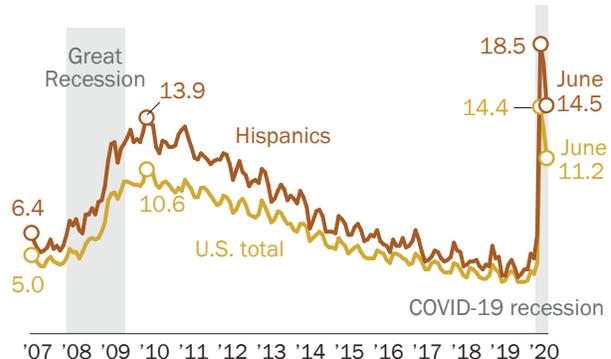
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<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has noted the official unemployment rate [likely understated the level of unemployment](#) in March, April and May, and to a lesser extent in June. As a result, the actual unemployment rate was likely higher this spring, in particular among women, Asian Americans, immigrants and workers without a bachelor's degree. For more, see "[Unemployment rate is higher than officially recorded, more so for women and certain other groups.](#)"

<sup>2</sup> The unemployment rate of Hispanic women during the coronavirus outbreak has exceeded that of women of other racial and ethnic groups. For more, see "[Unemployment rose higher in three months of COVID-19 than it did in two years of the Great Recession.](#)"

## Hispanic unemployment rate has spiked during COVID-19, with women seeing a bigger increase than men

*Unemployment rate, nonseasonally adjusted (%)*



Note: The unemployment rate is the share of workers in the labor force actively looking for work. Estimates refer to workers ages 16 and older, nonseasonally adjusted. The Great Recession began in December 2007 and ended in June 2009; current recession started in February 2020, as defined by the National bureau of Economic Research.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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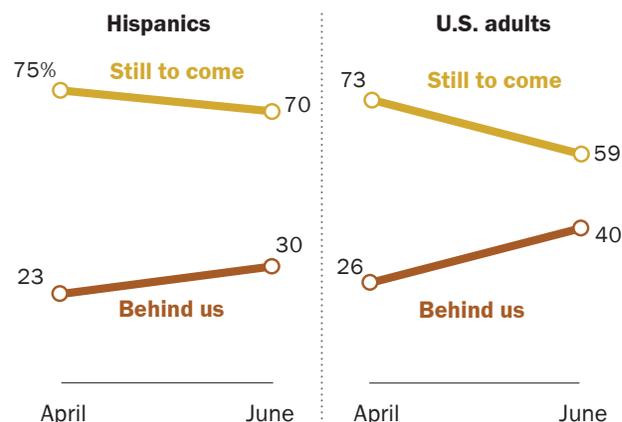
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Latinos say they have had a hard time making ends meet during the outbreak, according to Pew Research Center surveys. About six-in-ten Latinos (59%) in May said they live in households that have experienced job losses or pay cuts due to the coronavirus outbreak, with a far lower share of U.S. adults (43%) saying the same. As Latino incomes dwindled, most in April said they [do not have emergency funds](#) to cover three months of expenses, and half or more said they worry daily or nearly every day about financial issues like paying their bills, the amount of debt they carry and the cost of health care.<sup>3</sup>

Latinos have a bleaker view than the U.S. overall about the coronavirus, according to a [June survey of U.S. adults](#). Among Latinos, 70% say the worst of the problems due to the coronavirus outbreak are still to come, and a similar share said so in an April survey. By comparison, 40% of U.S. adults say the worst of the coronavirus is behind us, up from 26% in April.

## Strong majority of Latinos say ‘the worst is yet to come’ in coronavirus outbreak

*% who say, in thinking about the problems the country is facing from the coronavirus outbreak, the worst is ...*



Note: Hispanics are of any race. No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

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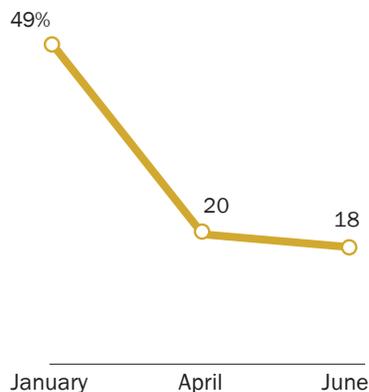
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<sup>3</sup>In September 2019, about half or more of Hispanic adults said they worried every day or almost every day about paying their bills (55%), being able to save for retirement (55%), the amount of debt they have (51%), and the cost of health care (50%). For more, see dataset from report, [“Most Americans Say the Current Economy Is Helping the Rich, Hurting the Poor and Middle Class.”](#)

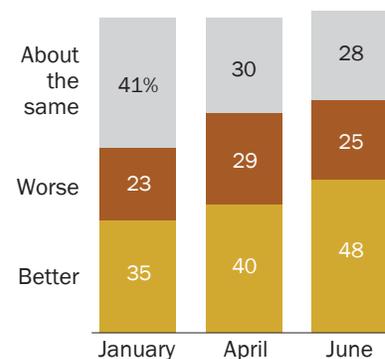
Reflecting [national trends](#), Hispanics also hold grim views of the economy, with only 18% rating U.S. economic conditions as excellent or good in June, down from 49% in January. Yet some Hispanics express optimism about the economy's future. About half of Hispanics (48%) say they expect U.S. economic conditions to be better a year from now, with smaller shares saying they expect conditions to be about the same (28%) or worse (25%). In January, a lower share of Hispanics (35%) said they expected U.S. economic conditions to be better a year from now, while 41% expected them to be about the same and 23% expected them to be worse.

### Hispanics have a grim view of nation's economy, but about half expect conditions to improve in the next year

*% who rate U.S. economic conditions as excellent/good*



*% who say they expect economic conditions in the country as a whole will be \_\_\_ a year from now*



Note: Hispanics are of any race. No answer responses not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.  
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While Americans overall are [deeply unhappy](#) with the nation's direction, satisfaction has dropped more among U.S. adults than Hispanic adults. In June, more Hispanics (20%) than Americans overall (12%) said they were satisfied with how things are going in the country, down from 29% and 31% in April, respectively.

As for the economic prospects of future generations, [Hispanics have grown more optimistic](#) about their prospects, though it's still a minority that hold this view. About one-in-four Hispanics (26%) said life will be better for future generations of Americans, according to the June survey, up from 16% in September 2019.

## Hispanics support broad set of proposals for economic aid due to coronavirus

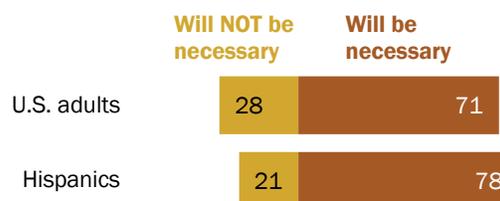
Hispanics say the coronavirus outbreak is among the most serious issue facing the nation, with 70% saying it is very big problem, somewhat comparable with the 60% who said unemployment, according to the June survey. Lower shares of U.S. adults overall said the same about the coronavirus outbreak (58%) and unemployment (50%).

About three-quarters of Latinos (78%) say it will be necessary for Congress to pass another economic relief bill in addition to the \$2 trillion economic assistance package passed by Congress in March and signed by President Donald Trump.

When it comes to policies to address economic problems resulting from the coronavirus outbreak, large majorities of Latinos favor every option presented: 90% support preventing evictions and foreclosures on renters and homeowners who have lost jobs or income; 88% support providing financial assistance to state and local governments; 86% support providing additional tax cuts and loans to businesses that keep workers on payroll; 72% support extending the \$600-per-week increase in unemployment benefits beyond July 31; 67% support temporarily cutting workers' payroll taxes that go toward Social Security and Medicare.

### Three-quarters of Latinos say more COVID-19 economic aid will be needed

*% who say it \_\_\_ for the president and Congress to pass an additional economic assistance package*

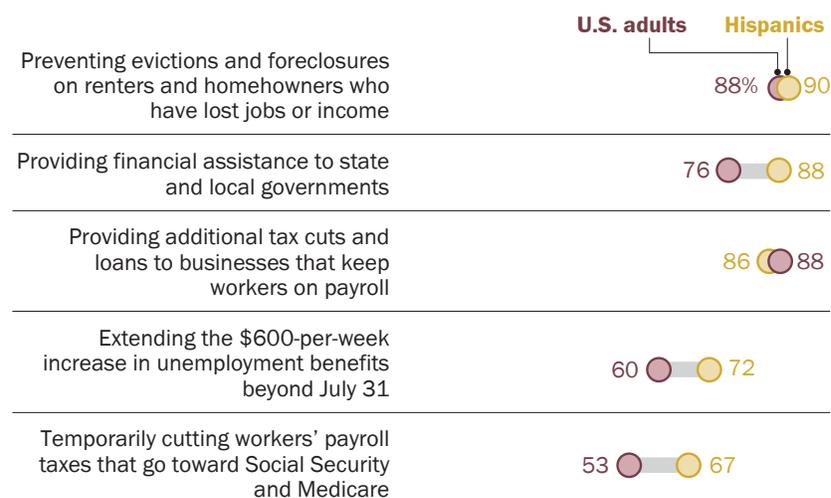


Note: Hispanics are of any race. No answer responses not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.  
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### Large majority of Latinos support providing economic aid to businesses and individuals affected by coronavirus

*% who say they favor each of the following proposals to address the economic problems resulting from the coronavirus outbreak*



Note: Hispanics are of any race.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.  
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unemployment benefits beyond July 31; and 67% support temporarily cutting workers' payroll taxes that go toward Social Security and Medicare. U.S. adults support assistance that prevents evictions and foreclosures for individuals (88%) and provides tax cuts and loans for businesses (88%) at similar levels as Hispanics. By contrast, fewer Americans overall favor providing financial assistance for state and local governments (76%), extending unemployment benefits (60%) and cutting workers' payroll taxes (53%).

Latinos generally favor a [more active government](#). A strong majority (74%) said government should do more to solve problems, while 22% said government is doing too many things that are better left to business or individuals, according to a December survey of U.S. Latinos. By comparison, [55% of U.S. adults](#) in a September 2019 survey said government should do more to solve problems.

## Before coronavirus, Latinos said immigration and the economy were the most important problems facing the U.S.

Even before the coronavirus outbreak, Hispanics found themselves on unsteady financial ground, despite near record low [levels of unemployment](#). The Great Recession hit Hispanics particularly hard, and households saw significant declines in [wealth](#) and [income](#). The economic recovery was uneven, with some groups faring better than others. By 2017, the median household income for Hispanic immigrants had returned to and exceeded pre-recession levels, while those for the U.S. born still lagged pre-recession levels.

When asked about the most important problem facing the U.S., Hispanics most often cited issues related to immigration (18%) and the economy (17%), according to a December survey of Latino adults. Smaller shares said race relations or racism (10%), health care (7%), dissatisfaction with government or politics (6%), crime (6%), political polarization or national divisions (5%), gun control (5%) and President Donald Trump (5%).

While Hispanic Democrats and Hispanic Republicans both cited immigration and the economy among the most important problems facing the

nation, their views differed on Trump. For Hispanic Democrats, Trump (8%) is cited about as often as race relations and racism (11%) as the most important problem facing the country. By contrast, far lower shares of Hispanic Republicans cited Trump (2%) as the nation's top problem.

### Before coronavirus, Hispanics cited immigration and the economy as nation's most important problems

*% in December who said \_\_\_ is the most important problem facing the country today*

	All Hispanics	Dem/ Lean Dem	Rep/ Lean Rep
Immigration (NET)	18	19	17
Economy (NET)	17	19	15
Race relations/Racism	10	11	8
Health care	7	7	7
Dissatisfaction with government/politics	6	4	7
Crime	6	5	6
Political polarization	5	5	8
Gun control	5	6	4
President Donald Trump	5	8	2

Note: Categories of "economy" and "immigration" are net figures that combine responses related to each respective issue. Other responses not shown. See topline for full results.

Source: National Survey of Latinos conducted Dec. 3-23, 2019.

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## Before coronavirus, most Latinos viewed their personal finances in a more negative than positive light

In December 2019, about two-thirds of Hispanics (64%) rated their personal financial situation only fair (45%) or poor (20%), compared with about a third who said good (31%) or excellent (4%).<sup>4</sup> The share who rated their finances in only fair or poor shape is comparable with the 66% of Hispanics who said so in September 2018, and up from 59% in November 2015.

Latino Democrats and Republicans hold substantially different views. A majority of Democrats (69%) said their financial situation is in only fair or poor shape, compared with about half of Republicans (53%). Latino views also differed by educational attainment, with strong majorities of those who had not completed high school (73%) and high school graduates (68%) saying their finances were in only fair or poor shape, compared with 57% of those with some college education.

Younger Hispanics tended to give their finances lower marks than older Hispanics, though the differences were relatively modest. About two-thirds of Hispanics (68%) ages 18 to 29 said their personal financial situation was in only fair or poor shape, compared with 60% of those ages 50 and older.

## Before coronavirus, most Hispanics said their personal finances were in only fair or poor shape

*% in December who said their personal financial situation was ...*

	Only fair	Poor	NET
All	45	20	64
Men	41	21	62
Women	48	18	66
Ages 18-29	42	27	68
30-49	46	20	66
50+	46	14	60
Some college+	41	17	57
H.S. grad	47	21	68
Less than H.S.	49	24	73
U.S. born	40	25	64
Foreign born	49	15	64
Dem/Lean Dem	47	21	69
Rep/Lean Rep	36	17	53

Note: "Some college+" includes those who attended college but did not obtain a degree, those with an associate degree or those with a bachelor's degree or more. Other responses not shown.

Source: National Survey of Latinos conducted Dec. 3-23, 2019. "Coronavirus Economic Downturn Has Hit Latinos Especially Hard"

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<sup>4</sup> In July 2019, less than half of U.S. adults rated their personal financial situation as only fair (27%) or poor (17%). For more, see "[Public's Views of Nation's Economy Remain Positive and Deeply Partisan.](#)"

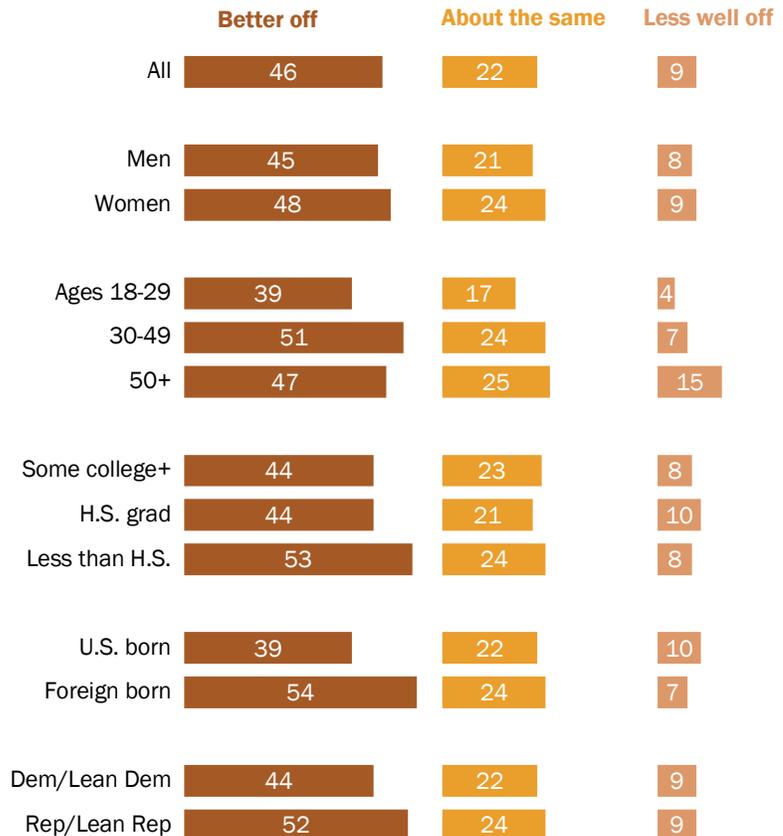
Fewer than half of Hispanics (46%) said their children will one day be better off financially than they are, according to the December survey.

More than half of immigrants (54%) said their children will be better off financially than they are, compared with 39% of the U.S. born. Meanwhile, about half of Hispanics ages 30 to 49 (51%) and those 50 and older (47%) said so, compared with 39% of Hispanics ages 18 to 29.

As on many issues, views differed among Hispanics by political party affiliation. Roughly half of Republicans (52%) said their children will be better off financially than they are, compared with 44% of Democrats.

## Before COVID-19, fewer than half of Hispanics said their children will be better off financially than they are

*% in December who said their children will be \_\_\_ financially than they are*



Note: "Some college+" includes those who attended college but did not obtain a degree, those with an associate degree or those with a bachelor's degree or more. "Do not have children" and "no answer" responses not shown.

Source: National Survey of Latinos conducted Dec. 3-23, 2019.

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## Acknowledgments

This report was written by Jens Manuel Krogstad, Senior Writer and Editor, and Mark Hugo Lopez, Director of Global Migration and Demography Research.

Editorial guidance was provided by Neil G. Ruiz, Associate Director of Global Migration and Demography Research; and Rakesh Kochhar, Senior Researcher.

The report was number-checked by Luis Noe-Bustamante, Research Analyst. Travis Mitchell, Digital Producer, copy edited and produced the report. Charts were designed by Michael Keegan, Senior Information Graphics Designer, and Jens Manuel Krogstad.

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## Methodology

### The American Trends Panel survey methodology

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. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

#### American Trends Panel surveys of U.S. adults used in this report

Survey dates	U.S. adults overall		U.S. Hispanic adults	
	Sample size	Margin of error at 95% confidence level	Sample size	Margin of error at 95% confidence level
June 16-22, 2020	4,708	+/- 1.8% pct. points	742	+/- 5.4% pct. points
April 7-12, 2020	4,917	+/- 2.1% pct. points	558	+/- 6.9% pct. points

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This report is based on three surveys. Surveys of U.S. adults conducted on [June 16 to June 22, 2020](#), and [April 7 to April 12, 2020](#), used the ATP and include a sample of Hispanics. The third survey, the National Survey of Latinos (NSL), primarily used the ATP and was conducted Dec. 3 to Dec. 23, 2019.

For the NSL, a total of 3,030 panelists responded out of 5,395 who were sampled, a response rate of 56%. This includes 2,094 from the ATP and an oversample of 936 respondents sampled from Ipsos' KnowledgePanel. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 2.4%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged onto the survey and completed at least one item is 0.4%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 3,030 respondents is plus or minus 2.9 percentage points.

#### 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	2,307
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/cell RDD	6,004	2,976	1,335
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/cell RDD	3,905	1,628	684
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS/web	9,396	8,778	6,407
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS/web	5,900	4,720	4,682
	<b>Total</b>	<b>35,014</b>	<b>23,440</b>	<b>15,478</b>

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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The ATP sample for the NSL consisted of all current panel members that previously identified as being Hispanic. For the KnowledgePanel sample, Hispanics who were either born in Mexico or had no more than a high school education were oversampled relative to those who had more than a high-school education and were born outside of Mexico.

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 which 9,942 agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a random, address-based sample (ABS) of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service’s Delivery Sequence File. 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. For a random half-sample of invitations, households without internet access were instructed to return a postcard. These households were contacted by telephone and sent a tablet if they agreed to participate. A total of 9,396 were invited to join the panel, and 8,778 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. The same recruitment procedure was carried out on August 19, 2019, from which a total of 5,900 were invited to join the panel and 4,720 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. Of the 23,440 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 15,478 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.<sup>5</sup>

## Weighting

The ATP data were weighted in a multistep process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents’ original selection probability. The next step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on the dimensions listed in the accompanying table. For this wave, additional weighting parameters were added to adjust for citizenship, years in the U.S., country of birth and Hispanic origin.

Sampling errors and test of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish.

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## Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Gender	2018 American Community Survey
Age	
Education	
Country of birth	2019 CPS March Metropolitan status Supplement
Home internet access	
Citizenship	
Years in U.S.	2017 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Hispanic origin	
Region	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Metropolitan status	
Volunteerism	Average of the three most recent Pew Research Center telephone surveys.
Voter registration	
Party affiliation	

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized Hispanic adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total US Hispanic adult population.

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<sup>5</sup> AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. “AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling.”

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.

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:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	3,030	2.9 percentage points
Foreign born (excluding Puerto Rico)	1,668	4.2 percentage points
U.S. born (including Puerto Rico)	1,333	4.1 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	1,826	3.7 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	1,004	5.4 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

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