



The Associated Press-NORC
Center for Public Affairs Research

HOW IS THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AFFECTING THE WORKPLACE?



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The public has become more anxious in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, and workers are no exception. Most American workers say they are experiencing more stress because of COVID-19, according to a recent AP-NORC/SAP survey conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, but most workers think their employers are responding appropriately to the pandemic.

The poll explores American workers' views about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in general, how their employers are tackling its challenges, and the effect on their workplaces. For many workers, the pandemic is contributing to their stress. Fifty-four percent of employees say their stress levels are higher than usual because of the pandemic, 33% have unchanged stress levels, and 13% have less stress since the coronavirus outbreak in the United States.

Contact tracing and meeting public health guidelines are considered among the most important responsibilities of employers. Smaller majorities say expanded health care

Three Things You Should Know About the AP-NORC/SAP Poll

Among Full-time and Part-time
Employed Adults:

- 1) 43% say the coronavirus pandemic is a major source of stress, and 54% say the pandemic has increased their stress.
- 2) Most workers think their employers are doing a good job dealing with the pandemic, particularly with meeting public health guidelines and communicating with employees.
- 3) Most workers say family leave options should be extended for parents and older caregivers; less than half say their employer has done this.

benefits, paid leave, hazard pay, and mental health help are also very important. Overall, most workers say their employer is responding to the pandemic appropriately. A majority of workers say their employers are doing a good job on meeting public health guidelines, providing protective equipment, and communicating company practices during the pandemic. Opinions are less positive about the expansion of benefits, flexibility, leave, or hazard pay.

The nationwide survey of 1,015 full-time and part-time employed adults was conducted using AmeriSpeak®, the probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago. Self-employed adults are not included in the survey. Interviews were conducted between September 11 and 16, 2020, online and using landlines and cell phones. The margin of sampling error is +/- 4.2 percentage points.

Other findings from the survey include:

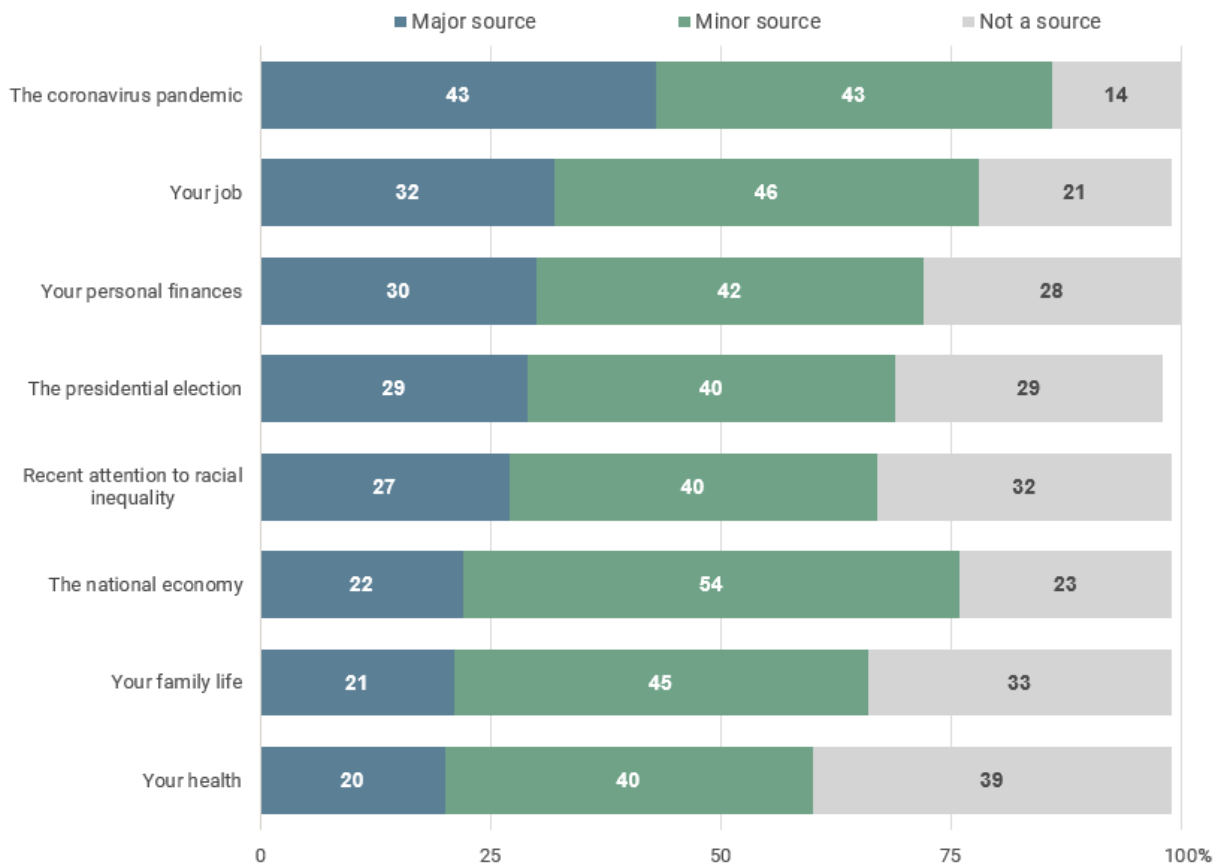
- Most workers say their employer is handling the pandemic appropriately: 57% say they're doing about the right amount, and 24% say they're going above and beyond. Only 18% say their workplaces are falling short in how they're responding to the pandemic. Thirty-five percent of people working remotely say their employers are going above and beyond in their response to the pandemic; 19% of those who leave home for work agree.
- Forty percent of parents of children in school or daycare describe balancing work with other responsibilities a major source of stress, compared with 20% of those who don't have school-age children. Parents rate their employer well on flexibility, but few say their employer is providing extended family leave options or other resources, which are considered very important.
- Sixty-two percent of Black workers call the coronavirus pandemic a major source of stress, along with 44% of Hispanic workers and 39% of white workers. Fifty percent of female workers describe the pandemic as a major source of stress compared with 36% of male workers.
- Women are more likely than men to say extended family leave options (68% vs. 45%), stipends for child care (46% vs. 29%), child care facilities (45% vs. 31%), and tutoring resources when schools are closed (46% vs. 27%) are very important for employers to provide.
- Twenty-eight percent of workers have had to cut back on hours, 25% have considered quitting their job, and 20% have taken leave as a result of the pandemic.
- Twenty-eight percent of working parents say they have taken leave from their job compared with 16% of other workers. And 37% of working parents whose children's schools or daycares were closed by the pandemic say they have taken leave, along with 23% of working parents whose children's schools remain open.
- Overall, there is not a significant gender gap in workers who have taken leave, cut back on hours, or considered quitting their job.

THE EFFECT OF THE PANDEMIC

The pandemic is the largest source of stress for workers these days. Workers' employment, personal finances, and the presidential election also cause anxiety.

Is each of the following a source of stress?

Percent of employed adults



Question: Is each of the following a major source of stress, a minor source of stress or not a source of stress?

Source: AP-NORC/SAP Poll conducted September 11-16, 2020, with 1,015 full-time and part-time employees age 18 and older nationwide.



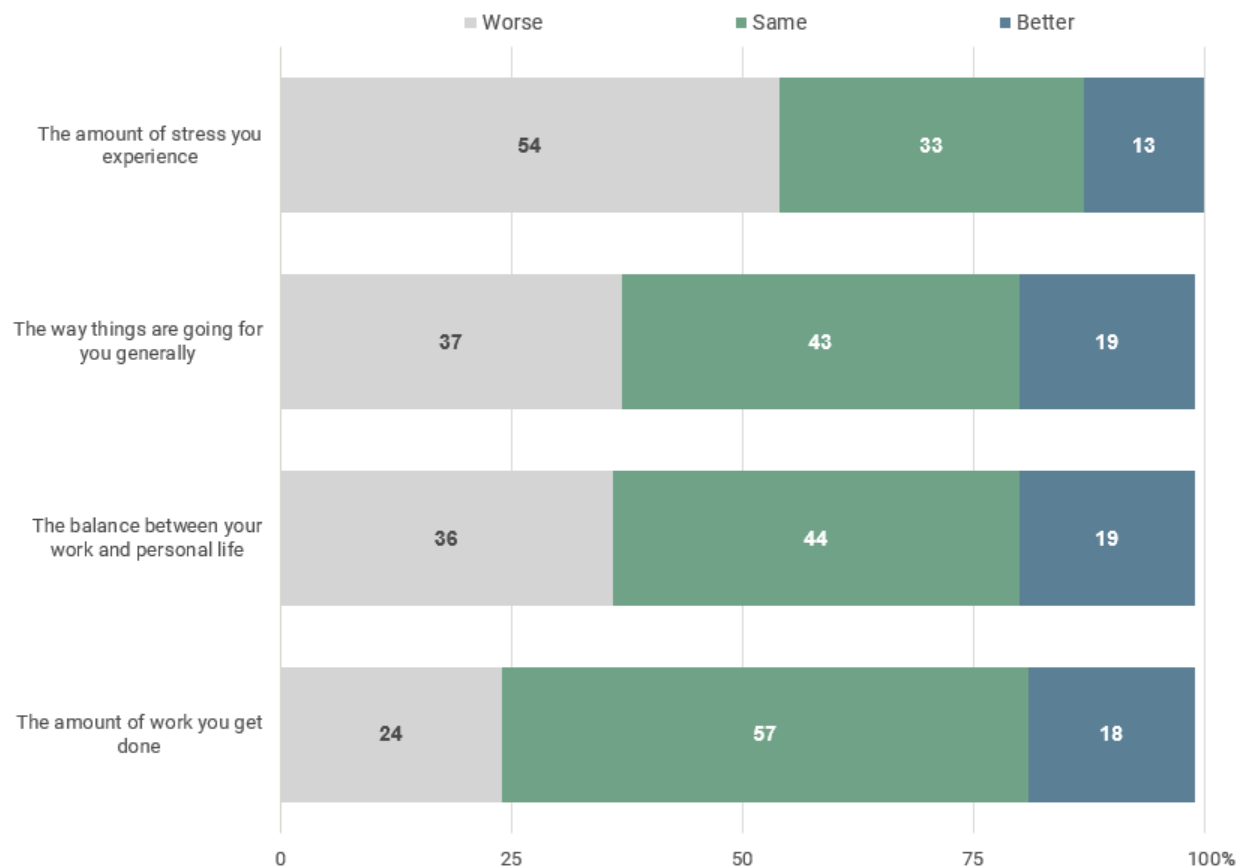
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Fifty-four percent of workers say their stress level has worsened because of the pandemic. Nearly 4 in 10 say the way things are going for them in general and their work-life balance have deteriorated. Fifty-seven percent say the amount of work they accomplish hasn't changed because of the pandemic. Parents of children in daycare or K through 12 are more inclined to say family life is a source of stress than other workers (33% vs. 15%).

Women are more likely to say the pandemic is a major source of stress and express concern about exposure to the virus.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, has each of the following gotten...

Percent of employed adults



Question: Would you say that each of the following has gotten better, stayed the same or gotten worse as a result of the coronavirus pandemic?
Source: AP-NORC/SAP Poll conducted September 11-16, 2020, with 1,015 full-time and part-time employees age 18 and older nationwide.



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While the economy and their own finances are the source of at least some stress, 51% of workers say they are not concerned about their job security. Sixty-eight percent have at least a minor amount of anxiety about balancing responsibilities in and out of the workplace.

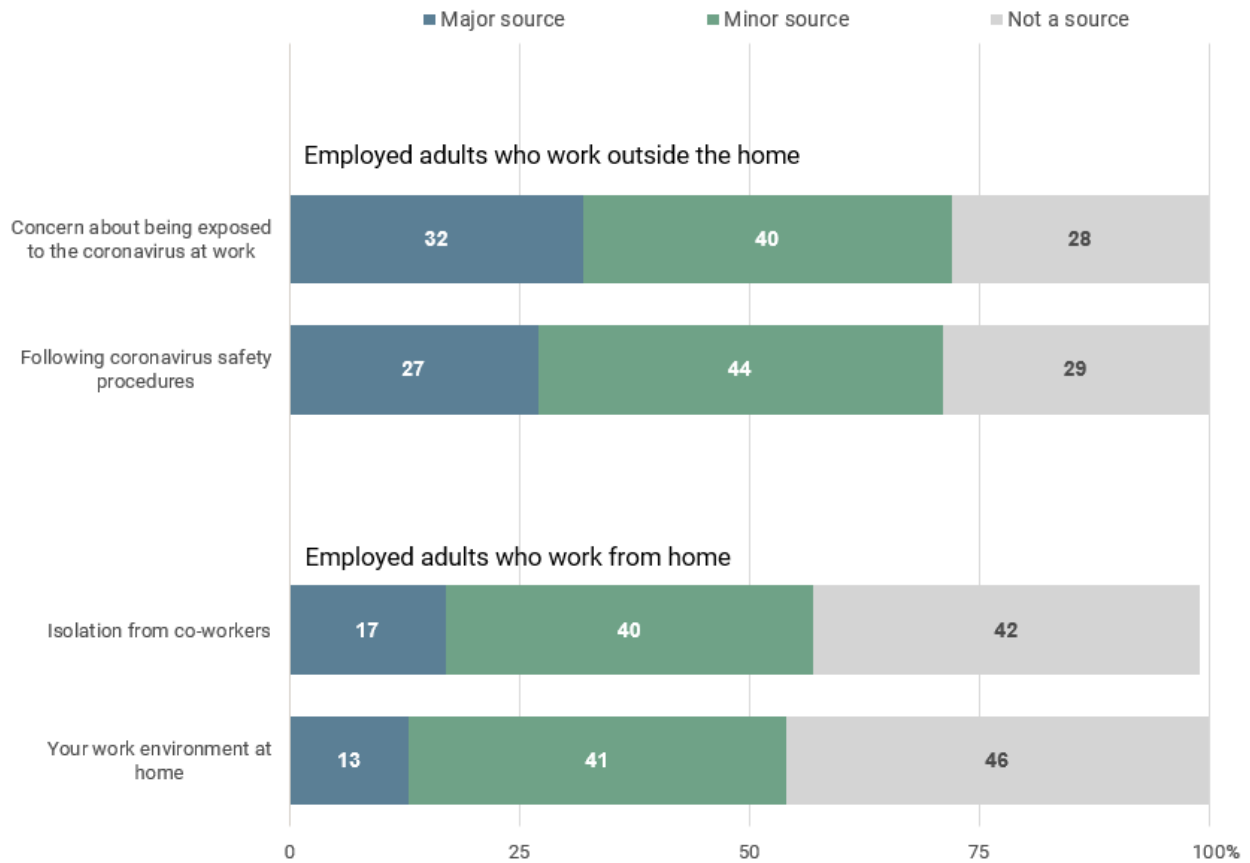
LEAVE HOME TO WORK VERSUS WORK FROM HOME

People working from home and those going to a workplace are about equally as likely to say their stress levels have increased and equally as likely to say their job is a source of stress.

People working from home have at least some stress from isolation and their at-home environment. About a third of those who work outside the home say concern about exposure to COVID-19 is a major source of stress.

Is each of the following a source of stress at work?

Percent of employed adults



Question: Thinking about your work during the coronavirus pandemic, is each of the following a major source of stress, a minor source of stress or not a source of stress?

Source: AP-NORC/SAP Poll conducted September 11-16, 2020, with 1,015 full-time and part-time employees age 18 and older nationwide.

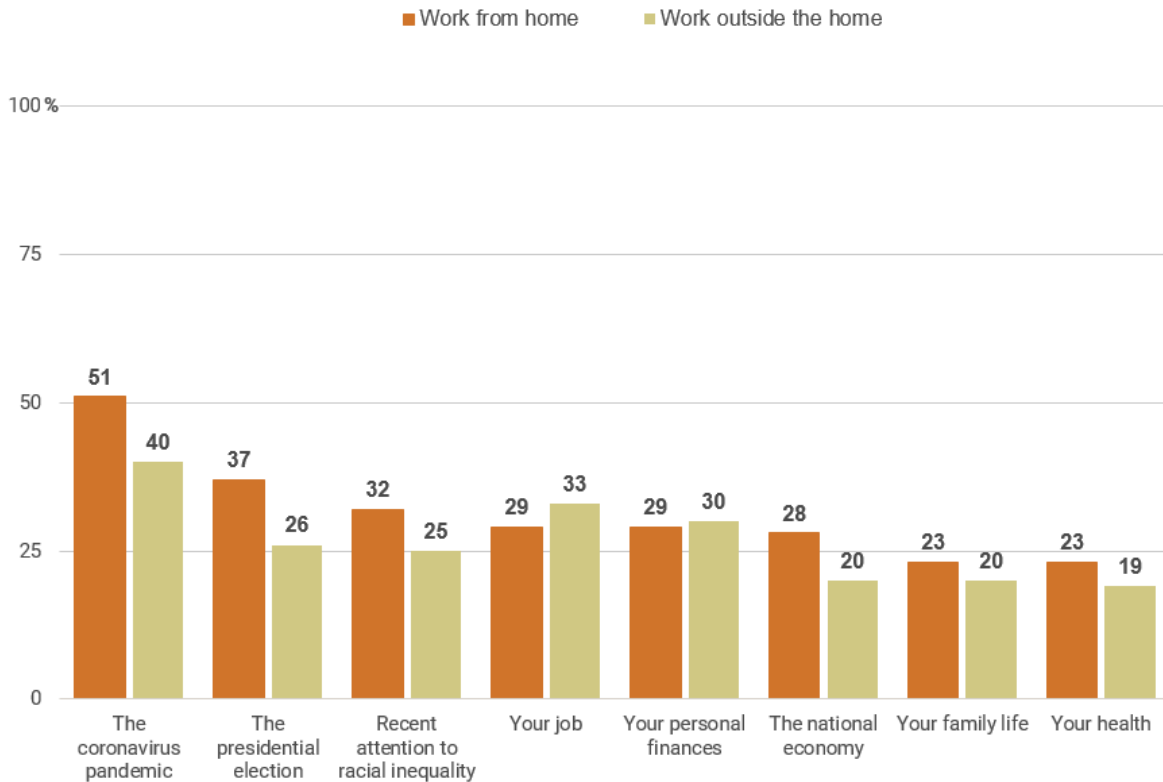


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While most people working outside the home have concerns about exposure to the coronavirus, those working from home are more likely to say the pandemic is a major source of stress.

What is a major source of stress for workers during the pandemic?

Percent of employed adults



Question: Is each of the following a major source of stress, a minor source of stress or not a source of stress?

Source: AP-NORC/SAP Poll conducted September 11-16, 2020, with 1,015 full-time and part-time employees age 18 and older nationwide.



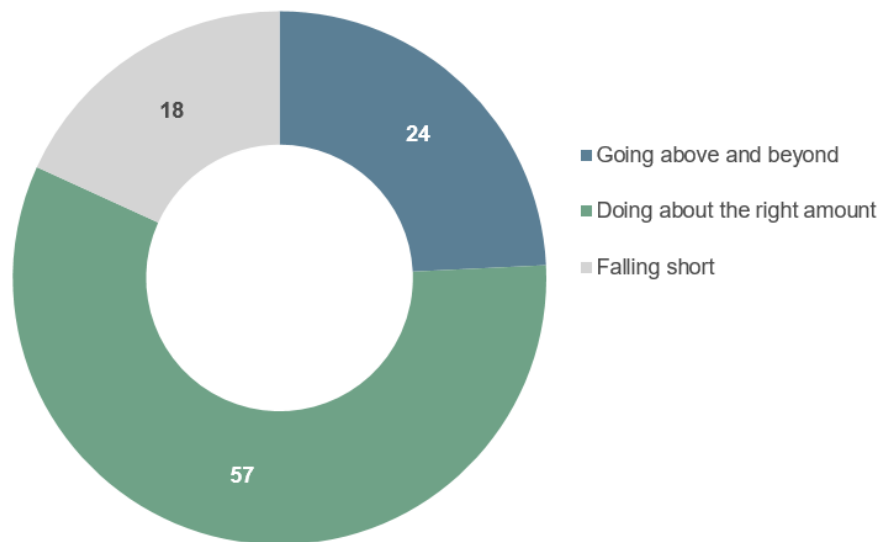
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HOW ARE EMPLOYERS DOING?

While most workers think their employers are doing the right amount to respond to the pandemic, about a quarter of employees feel their employers are exceeding expectations, and nearly a fifth say they are missing the mark. Those who are working from home are more likely to say their employer is going above and beyond (35% vs. 19%), and those who are leaving home for work are more likely to say their employers are falling short (11% vs. 21%).

How is your employer handling the response to the pandemic?

Percent of employed adults



Question: Thinking about the way your employer is responding to the coronavirus pandemic, would you say they are going above and beyond, doing about the right amount, or falling short?

Source: AP-NORC/SAP Poll conducted September 11-16, 2020, with 1,015 full-time and part-time employees age 18 and older nationwide.



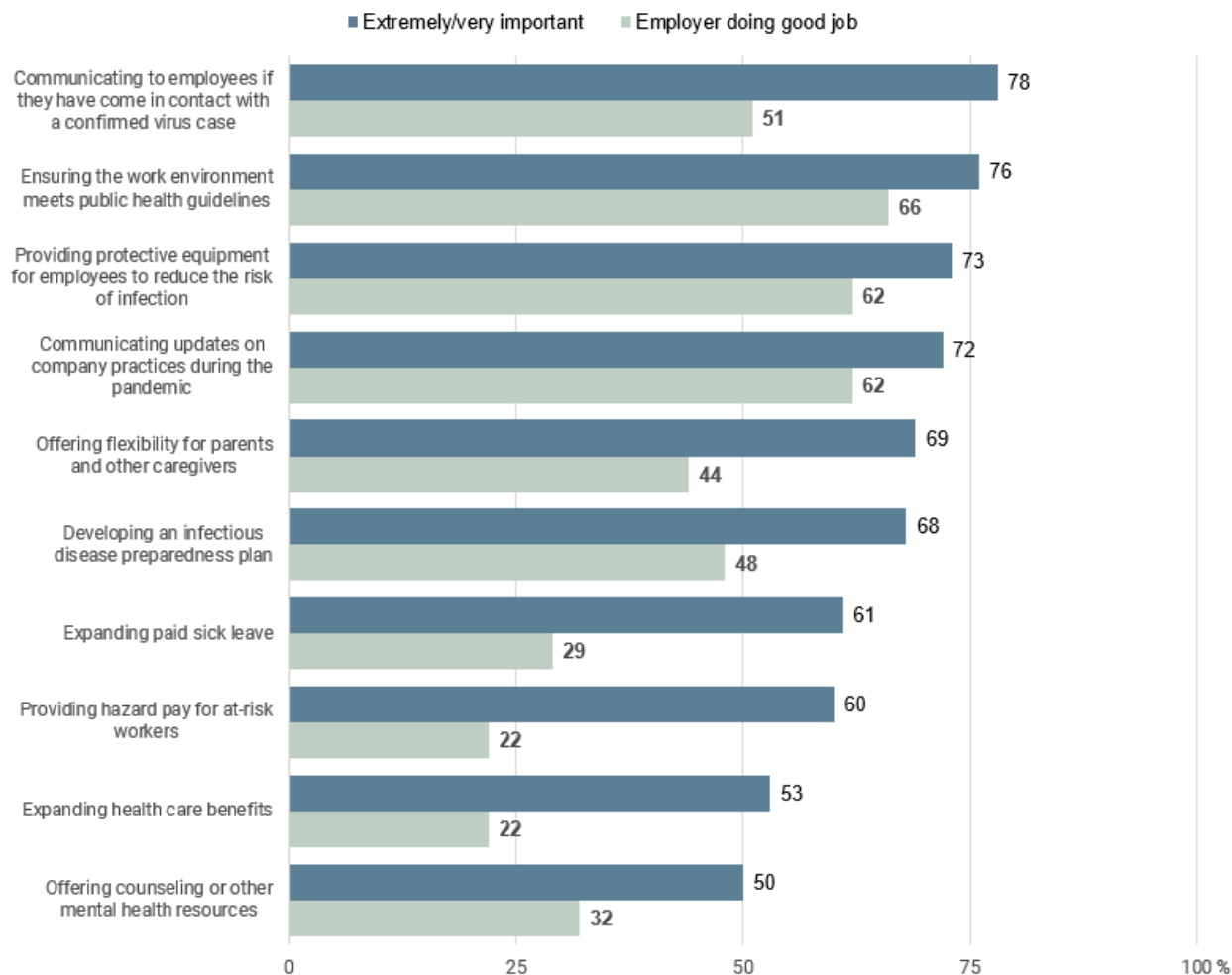
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Most workers say their employers are doing a good job communicating during the pandemic, providing protective equipment, and ensuring the workplace meets public health guidelines. Hazard pay for at-risk workers and expanded health care benefits are two areas where workers feel their employer is falling short.

Employees from larger companies say it's more important that their employer provide expanded benefits, and they are also more likely to say their employers are doing a good job at communicating and expanding benefits.

How are employers responding to the things employees say are important during coronavirus pandemic?

Percent of employed adults



Question: How important would you say it is for your employer to be doing each of the following during the coronavirus pandemic?

Question: Would you say your employer is doing a good job, a bad job, or neither a good job nor bad job doing each of the following during the coronavirus pandemic?

Source: AP-NORC/SAP Poll conducted September 11-16, 2020, with 1,015 full-time and part-time employees age 18 and older nationwide.

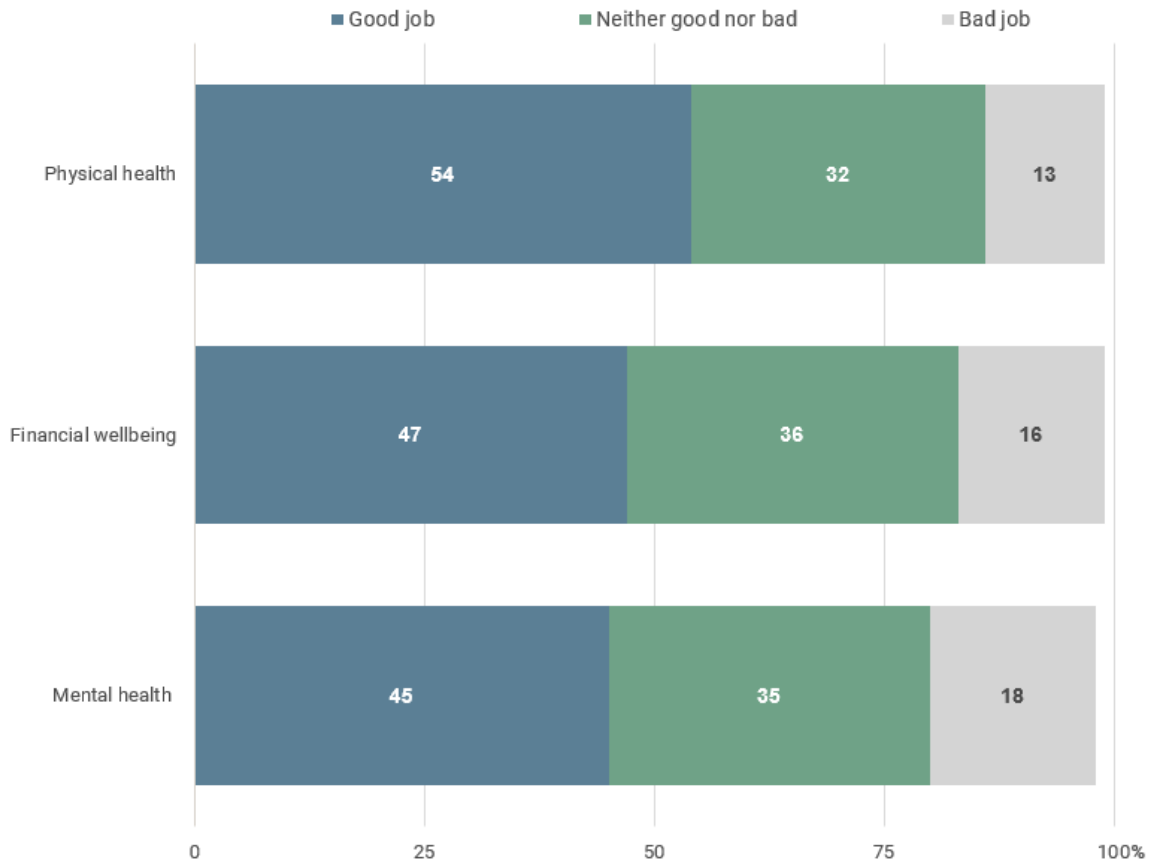


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Fifty-four percent say their employer, regardless of company size, is doing a good job protecting their physical health, but fewer think the protection for their mental and financial health is as good. Workers who work outside the home are less likely to say their employers are doing a good job protecting their physical and mental health.

Is your employer doing a good job protecting its employees'...?

Percent of employed adults



Question: Would you say your employer is doing a good job, a bad job, or neither a good job nor bad job protecting its employees for each of the following?

Source: AP-NORC/SAP Poll conducted September 11-16, 2020, with 1,015 full-time and part-time employees age 18 and older nationwide.

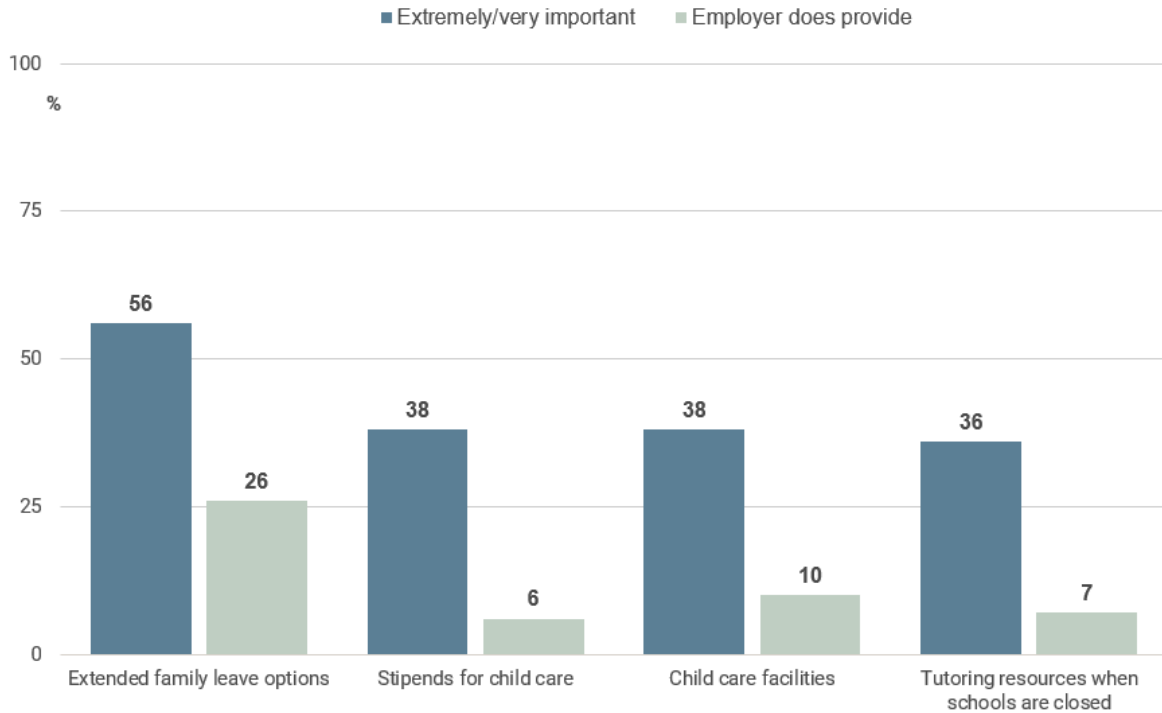


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Most workers say family leave options should be extended for parents and older caregivers; less than half say their employer has done this. Fewer workers support child care stipends or facilities, or tutoring when schools are closed. Very few employers offer these benefits.

Is it important that your employer provide parents and caregivers the following?

Percent of employed adults



Question: Thinking specifically about parents and caregivers, how important would you say it is for your employer to provide each of the following during the coronavirus pandemic?

Question: Is your employer providing each of the following, or not?

Source: AP-NORC/SAP Poll conducted September 11-16, 2020, with 1,015 full-time and part-time employees age 18 and older nationwide.



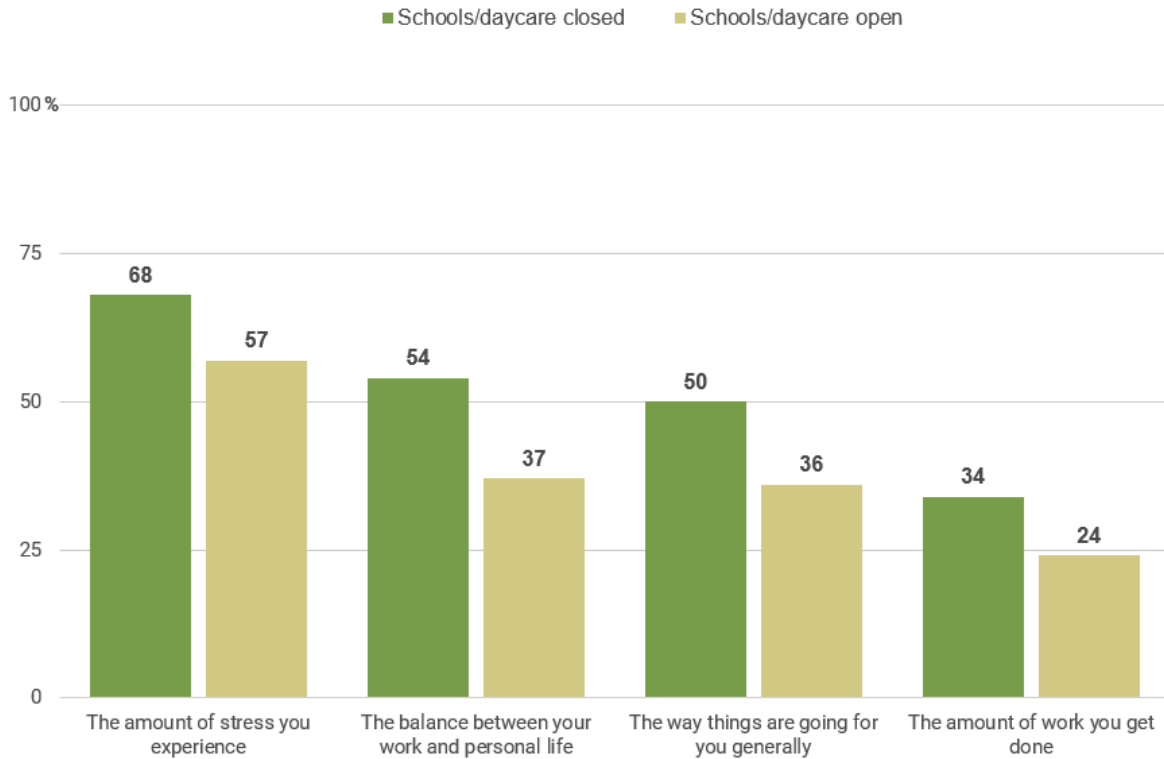
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PARENTS OF REMOTE SCHOOLED CHILDREN

Workers with children whose schools or daycares have been closed because of COVID-19 have been particularly affected by the pandemic, and more so than other working parents.

Each of the following has gotten worse as a result of the pandemic.

Percent of workers with children in daycare through 12th grade



Question: Would you say that each of the following has gotten better, stayed the same or gotten worse as a result of the coronavirus pandemic?
Source: AP-NORC/SAP Poll conducted September 11-16, 2020, with 1,015 full-time and part-time employees age 18 and older nationwide.

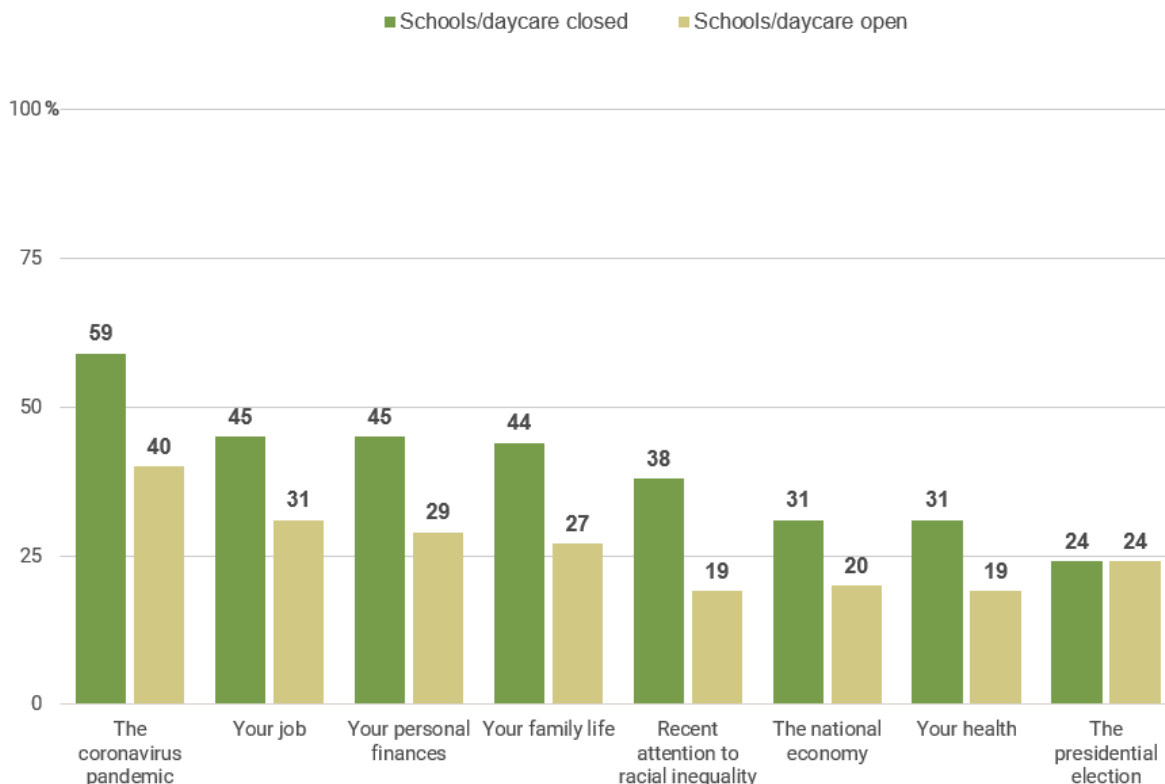


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Most of the working parents with closed schools and daycare describe the pandemic as a major basis of stress, more so than working parents whose schools and daycare facilities are open. Their family life were also a considerable source of stress.

What is a major source of stress for working parents during the pandemic?

Percent of working parents with children in daycare through grade 12



Question: Is each of the following a major source of stress, a minor source of stress or not a source of stress?

Source: AP-NORC/SAP Poll conducted September 11-16, 2020, with 1,015 full-time and part-time employees age 18 and older nationwide.



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Thirty-seven percent of workers whose children’s schools or daycares were closed by the pandemic say they have taken leave, along with 23% of working parents whose children’s schools are open.

More than half of the schools or daycare attended by non-white workers’ children are closed, compared with about a quarter of white workers.

WHO IS CONSIDERING RESIGNING THEIR JOB?

Twenty-five percent say they have considered quitting, while 28% have cut back on their hours, and 20% have taken leave. There is no difference in whether workers working remotely or in person have taken leave or considered quitting, but workers who work outside the home are more likely to say they have cut back on their hours (32% vs. 19%). Younger workers and those whose household incomes are under \$50,000 are more inclined to think about leaving their job.

Those who are considering quitting their job are more likely to say they are experiencing more stress because of the pandemic, getting less work done, and are less likely to say their employers are doing a good job of protecting their employees.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research with funding from the technology company SAP.

Data were collected using the AmeriSpeak Omnibus®, a monthly multi-client survey using NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. The survey was part of a larger study that included questions about other topics not included in this report. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face-to-face). The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings.

Interviews for this survey were conducted between September 11 and 16, 2020, with full-time or part-time employed adults age 18 and over representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Self-employed adults were not included in the survey. Panel members were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak and screened during the survey for their current employment status. In addition to 531 employed adults from the omnibus sample, the survey included a supplementary sample of 484 employed adults. A total of 1,015 employed adults completed the survey—1,005 via the web and 10 via telephone. Interviews were conducted in English. The screener completion rate is 21.3%, the weighted household panel response rate is 21.0%, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 80.4%, for a cumulative response rate of 3.4%. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 4.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data have been collected and made final, a poststratification process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any noncoverage or under- and oversampling resulting from the study-specific sample design. Poststratification variables included age, gender, census division, race/ethnicity, and education. Weighting variables were obtained from the 2020 Current Population Survey. The weighted data reflect the U.S. population of full-time and part-time employed adults age 18 and over.

For more information, email info@apnorc.org.

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The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals.

The founding principles of The AP-NORC Center include a mandate to carefully preserve and protect the scientific integrity and objectivity of NORC and the journalistic independence of AP. All work conducted by the Center conforms to the highest levels of scientific integrity to prevent any real or perceived bias in the research. All of the work of the Center is subject to review by its advisory committee to help ensure it meets these standards. The Center will publicize the results of all studies and make all datasets and study documentation available to scholars and the public.

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