

AMERICANS' LACK OF SOCIAL CAPITAL COULD SLOW POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY

Race, ethnicity, and income impact the size of people's trusted networks.

CHICAGO, June 10, 2021 — Many Americans lack important social bonds in their personal and professional lives and within their community, according to a new poll by The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and the Impact Genome Project. About forty-six million adults (18%) have only one person or no one who they trust for help in their personal life like a ride to the airport, emotional support, or when their child is sick. About forty-nine million (20%) have no one in their professional network who can help draft a resume, connect with a potential employer, or provide advice with workplace challenges.

These bonds—called social capital—can boost economic recovery and promote social mobility, particularly after major shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic.

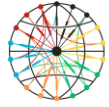
“Our survey found that the pandemic has led to a decrease in social capital for many. This decrease means that millions of adults could miss out on support to find jobs, overcome barriers accessing important services and institutions, and benefit from meaningful relationships within their community,” said Jennifer Benz, deputy director of the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. “The COVID-19 quarantine measures were certainly necessary for public health, but also left 1 in 6 Americans with even smaller trusted personal networks than before the pandemic.”

With these findings, corporate and civic leaders can create opportunities for those who need help strengthening their social bonds to improve community resilience and quicken economic recovery.

“This research gives us precision data to design interventions that drive economic mobility and financial stability for those populations with low or no social capital,” says Jason Saul, CEO of Impact Genome Project®. “Using these insights, we will work with a coalition of leading corporate philanthropies and other funders to invest in solutions that close the gap.”

The survey also measured Americans' levels of civic engagement. More than half of Americans say they volunteered or donated money to a civic cause (54%) in the last year, while just under half (48%) engaged with a religious institution or school, community or service group or participated in a political cause in the last year.

Other key findings include:



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- 16% have fewer people they can trust with personal matters because of COVID-19, and 27% asked for less help than before the pandemic.
- Black (30%) and Hispanic (25%) Americans are more likely than white Americans (14%) to report having just one or no trusted person to turn to for help with a minor emergency.
- 36% of those with incomes below the Federal Poverty Level have no one to turn to for help, compared to 14% of those above 200% of FPL (about \$52,200 for a family of four).

About This Study

This study, funded by Impact Genome with support from the MassMutual Foundation, was conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research between March 25 and April 15, 2021, with adults age 18 and older representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia; 2,314 completed the survey—2,115 via the web and 199 via telephone. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on respondent preference. Staff from NORC at the University of Chicago, The Associated Press, and Impact Genome collaborated on all aspects of the study.

About The Impact Genome Project®

The Impact Genome Project® (IGP) is a public-private research initiative to standardize the way social outcomes are measured, reported, and benchmarked. IGP's mission is to enable grant makers and policymakers to use precision data to solve social determinants. With support from leading corporate and private philanthropies, it has just announced the Sentinel Outcomes Initiative, a multi-year effort to track and quantify the unmet critical human needs of all Americans, spanning financial health, social capital, food security, housing, employment, and education. For more information, please visit: www.impactgenome.org.

About The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

www.apnorc.org

The Associated Press (AP) is the essential global news network, delivering fast, unbiased news from every corner of the world to all media platforms and formats. Founded in 1846, AP today is the most trusted source of independent news and information. On any given day, more than half the world's population sees news from AP.

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NORC at the University of Chicago conducts research and analysis that decision-makers trust. As



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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.

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