

FEW AMERICANS TRUST THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT FOR THEM AND THEIR FAMILIES

Despite low trust, they are optimistic about government's potential for positive impact, especially in technology

Chicago, IL, September 15, 2021 — Only 15 percent of American adults think that the federal government acts in their best interest all or most of the time, according to a newly released study from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and MeriTalk.

The MeriTalk/AP-NORC Poll found only 22 percent trust the federal government to deliver services fairly to all Americans, regardless of race, ethnicity, or other characteristics. And just 21 percent feel the federal government has been very effective at responding to the public's needs during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite that low trust, 76 percent of Americans think the federal government will be as important or more important in improving the lives of the American people over the next 10 years.

"These findings show that many Americans are still optimistic about the government's potential to make specific and positive changes for people's lives, even though they don't have a lot of confidence in how well it's generally working today," said Jennifer Benz, deputy director of The AP-NORC Center. "For example, they see specific opportunities for government to improve health care and online data security."

While just 9 percent are confident in the government's ability to spend money in the best interest of the public, 68 percent say federal spending on technology is worth the investment – including majorities from both Republicans (56 percent) and Democrats (79 percent). In the health care space, the vast majority of Americans say they would benefit from expanded telehealth options (78 percent) and increased access to providers and health records online (77 percent). When it comes to data security, 80 percent want stronger punishments for cyber criminals and 71 percent believe individuals' data privacy should be treated as a national security issue.

On a broader scale, 78 percent say technology spending is key to improving the United States' standing as a global economic leader. Sixty-nine percent support increased funding for technological research and development, and 43 percent say that job training for workers who will lose their jobs due to technological innovation would have a major positive impact on workers' lives.

"In a polarized political environment, this research provides a roadmap for the government as it pushes forward with a massive bi-partisan infrastructure investment in our nation's future," said Steve O'Keeffe, founder, MeriTalk. "We're hosting the MeriTocracy conference on July 21, 2022 to bring together Congressional leaders from both parties with leaders from the administration and industry to debate America's innovation agenda – we're all voting for a brighter future."

Other key findings include:

- 68% want the federal government to prioritize improving health care and 61% want it to devote a good deal of time to data security and privacy.
- While 40% say the federal government was very effective at connecting them to information on COVID-19, just 26% feel the same about its ability to connect people to government services like unemployment and food assistance.

- Just 1 in 4 are proud of the way democracy works in the United States. One in 5 are proud of the country's political influence in the world.
- Just 1 in 5 say the federal government is very or extremely effective at adapting to the digital world.

MeriTalk – in partnership with The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, ACT-IAC, Alliance for Digital Innovation, Partnership for Public Service, POLITICO, and WAMU – will host the [MerITocracy: American Innovation Forum](#) on July 21, 2022 in Washington, D.C. Featuring 10 bipartisan Congressional leaders, MerITocracy will convene the White House, Capitol Hill, government agency leaders, and America's most innovative minds from the private sector to focus on the critical issues raised in this study, including policy and technology, education and workforce, global competitiveness, security and privacy, healthcare, and citizen services.

About the Study

This nationwide poll was conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and MeriTalk in English between June 24 and June 28, 2021, 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. Online and telephone interviews using landline and cell phones were conducted with adults age 18 and older representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia; 1,004 completed the survey. The margin of sampling error was +/- 4.3 percentage points.

For more information, please visit www.apnorc.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 is an independent global news organization dedicated to factual reporting. Founded in 1846, AP today remains the most trusted source of fast, accurate, unbiased news in all formats and the essential provider of the technology and services vital to the news business. More than half the world's population sees AP journalism every day.

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NORC at the University of Chicago is an objective, non-partisan research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. Since 1941, NORC has conducted groundbreaking studies, created and applied innovative methods and tools, and advanced principles of scientific integrity and collaboration. Today, government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world partner with NORC to transform increasingly complex information into useful knowledge.

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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.

About MeriTalk

The voice of tomorrow's government today, MeriTalk is a public-private partnership focused on improving the outcomes of government IT. MeriTalk's award-winning editorial team and world-class

events and research staff produce unmatched news, analysis, and insight. The goal: more efficient, responsive, and citizen-centric government. MeriTalk connects with an audience of 160,000 Federal community contacts. For more information, visit <https://www.meritalk.com/> or follow us on Twitter, @MeriTalk. MeriTalk is a 300Brand organization.

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