



# Hopes and Challenges for Community and Civic Life

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE NATION  
AND INDIANA

**Daniel A. Cox, Karlyn Bowman, and Jacqueline Clemence**

OCTOBER 2020

A M E R I C A N   E N T E R P R I S E   I N S T I T U T E

# Executive Summary

---

The coronavirus outbreak has opened up a new front in the culture wars and created tensions between urban-dwelling Americans living in places hit harder by the virus and small towns and rural communities. Despite these disparities in geography and community type before the coronavirus outbreak, recently released surveys find that across the lines of geography, politics, culture, and class, Americans express many of the same ideas and priorities regarding their communities, revealing that we may not be as divided as one might think.

The two identical surveys, conducted in late 2019 by the American Enterprise Institute, look at the adult public nationally and adults living in the state of Indiana to explore the features and challenges of community and civic life. They explore Americans' satisfaction with various aspects of their lives, their connection to their state and local community, their perceptions of economic opportunity, and their optimism about the future.

**Schools Matter.** A majority of Americans say living in a community with good public schools is very important to them. In fact, no community attribute is more frequently mentioned by the public as being important for a community than having good public schools is.

**Feeling Connected.** Most Americans feel at least somewhat connected to the current town or city where they live and the people who reside there. This feeling is evident across various community types. Although

the close-knit ties of rural communities have become a common refrain, urban Americans actually feel more closely connected to their communities and the people than any other community type does.

**A Neighborhood Spot.** Most Americans report frequenting a local coffee shop, bar, restaurant, park, or other public place in their neighborhood. Regardless of location or demographic background, having a neighborhood spot or haunt is associated with greater levels of participation in community life. Americans who have a neighborhood haunt are more likely to participate in various nonreligious civic groups or activities, such as a sports team, book club, PTA meeting, or neighborhood association, than those who do not.

**Trade, Technology, and Immigration Viewed as Mostly Good for Communities.** Americans express far more positive views than negative ones about the impact of free trade, immigration, and technology. Regardless of politics or place, Americans are more likely to believe that trade, immigration, and technology have a positive effect, rather than a negative effect, on local workers and the local economies around the country.

**The Vanishing Entrepreneurial Spirit?** Even before the coronavirus outbreak resulted in record-breaking unemployment, leaving many families in dire financial straits, few Americans reported being comfortable taking professional and career risks, such as starting a new business.

# Hopes and Challenges for Community and Civic Life

---

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE NATION AND INDIANA

**Daniel A. Cox, Karlyn Bowman, and Jacqueline Clemence**

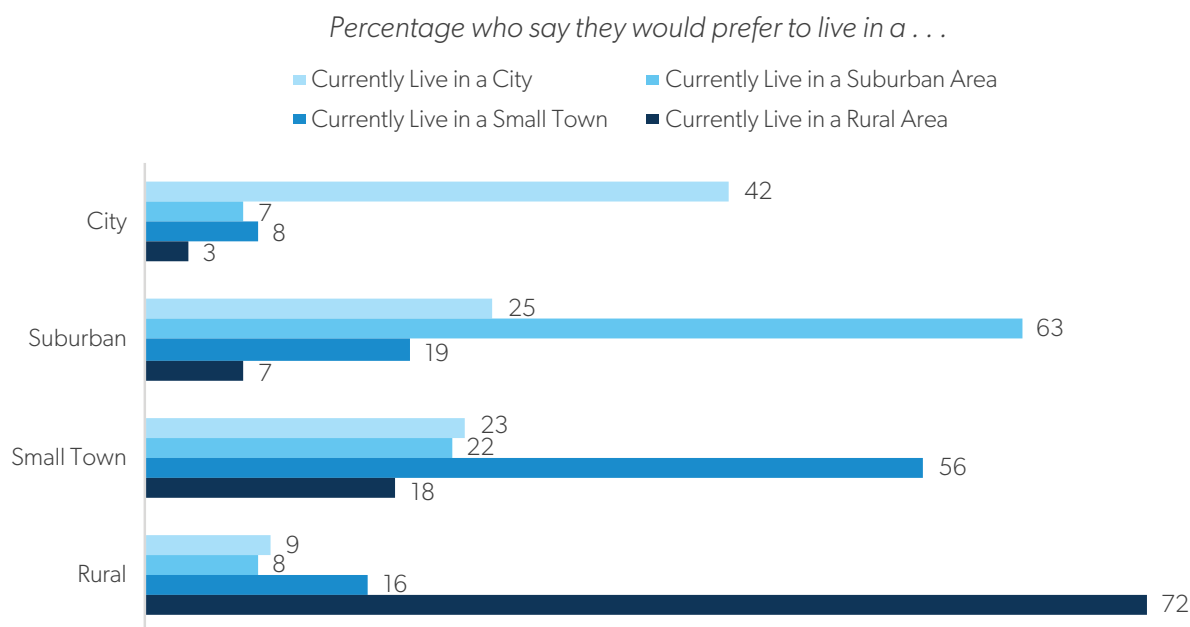
## Survey I: American Adults Nationally

In late 2019, the American Enterprise Institute conducted a pair of identical surveys of the adult public nationally and adults living in the state of Indiana to explore the features and challenges of community and civic life. The surveys allow us to explore how Indiana residents compare to other Americans on important dimensions of social and civic life, including feelings of interpersonal trust, social capital, and civic engagement. They explored Americans' satisfaction with various aspects of their lives, their connection to their state and local community, their perceptions of economic opportunity, and their optimism about the future. The responses presented below reflect public attitudes and experiences before the COVID-19 outbreak and the economic fallout that has left as many as 26 million Americans unemployed. Although the economic and public health circumstances of many Americans have changed dramatically over the past six months, the surveys provide a revealing look at how Americans engage in civic life, what they value in their communities, and what broader concerns they share.

### **What Americans Want in a Community and Where They Would Like to Live**

According to the US Census Bureau, nearly one-third of Americans live in urban areas, but considerably fewer Americans report that this is their ideal place to live.<sup>1</sup> Only 16 percent of Americans say that if they could live anywhere, they would choose to live in a city. Thirty-six percent say they would prefer a suburban area. Twenty-eight percent would live in a small town, and 20 percent would prefer living in a rural community.

Few young people are clamoring for city life, but their preferences differ significantly from those of older Americans. One in five (20 percent) young adults (age 18 to 29) say they would prefer to live in a city, while roughly twice as many (39 percent) say they would rather live in a suburban area. The pattern for seniors (age 65 or older) is markedly different. Only 12 percent say they would prefer an urban neighborhood, while 33 percent say they would choose to live in a suburban area. The majority of seniors say they would most like to live in a small town (34 percent) or rural community (21 percent).

**Figure 1. Americans Living in Rural Areas Most Likely to Be Satisfied with Where They Live**

Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults (N = 3,663).

Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

As shown in Figure 1, Americans appear largely content in their choice of community. The majority (57 percent) of Americans report that they are currently living in their ideal place. However, there are significant differences between urban residents and those living in other types of communities. Only 42 percent of Americans living in cities say they would choose to remain in an urban area if they could live anywhere. In contrast, a majority of Americans living in small towns (56 percent), suburbs (63 percent), and rural areas (72 percent) report that they currently live in their ideal community type.

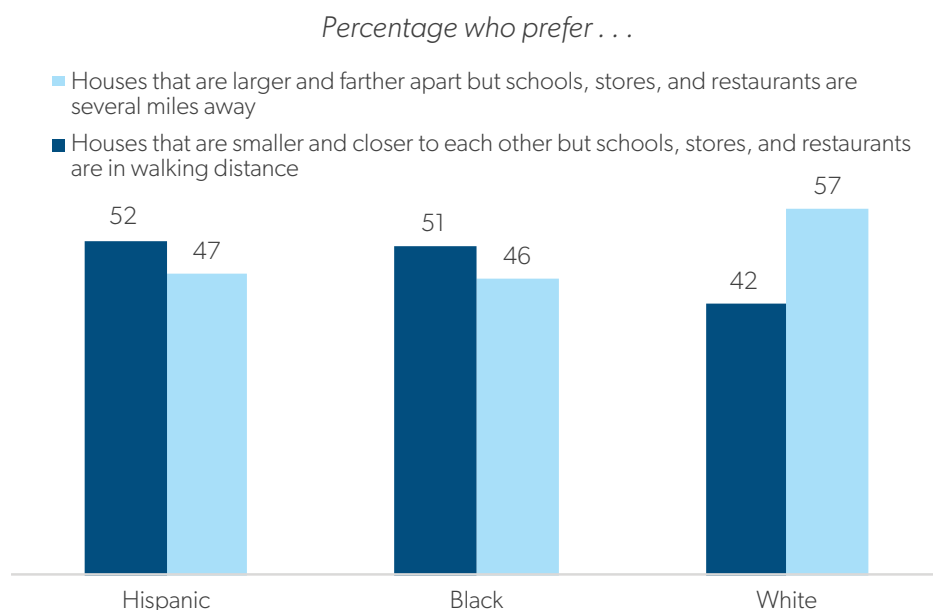
Americans are somewhat divided over which they value more: a community where houses are larger and farther apart with local amenities—such as schools, stores, and restaurants—farther away or a community where houses are smaller and closer together with local amenities in walking distance. More than half (53 percent) say they prefer neighborhoods with larger houses where they have to travel farther to reach public and private amenities, while 46 percent

say they would rather have smaller houses with amenities nearby.

There are few differences in preferences by gender or generation. However, there is a notable gender divide among seniors (age 65 or older). A majority (56 percent) of senior women say they would prefer to live in a community with houses closer together and amenities close by. Fewer than half (44 percent) of senior men say the same.

Racial differences are evident as well. (See Figure 2.) Close to six in 10 (57 percent) white Americans say they prefer communities with houses that are farther apart, while less than half of Hispanic (47 percent) and black (46 percent) Americans say the same. More than half of black (51 percent) and Hispanic (52 percent) Americans say they would prefer a community where the houses are closer together and offer amenities in walking distance.

There are stark ideological differences in community preference. A majority (60 percent) of liberal Americans say they would prefer to live in a

**Figure 2. Walkable Communities Are a Higher Priority for Black and Hispanic Americans**

Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults (N = 3,663).

Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

community where the houses are closer together but that affords greater access to restaurants and stores, while nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of conservatives prefer to live in places where the houses are farther apart. Those who are politically moderate closely resemble the public overall.

### What Matters in a Community?

For many Americans, good public schools make a community a desirable place to live—even for people who do not have children living at home. In fact, no community attribute is more frequently mentioned by the public as being important for a community than having good public schools is. A majority (53 percent) of Americans say living in a community with good public schools is very important to them. Twenty-nine percent say it is somewhat important, and only 17 percent say it is not an important consideration for them.

There is still a considerable divide between parents with children living at home and parents whose

children are not at home. More than three-quarters (76 percent) of parents say living in a community with high-quality public schools is very important to them personally, compared to 45 percent of those without children living at home.

**In fact, no community attribute is more frequently mentioned by the public as being important for a community than having good public schools is.**

Women are more likely to value public school quality than men are. A majority (57 percent) of women, compared to 48 percent of men, say it is very important to live in a community with good public schools. Among married couples, a majority of married men (54 percent) and women (61 percent) say they highly value having access to quality public schools.

Substantially fewer Americans say that easy access to public parks and green spaces (37 percent), a wide variety of different entertainment options (29 percent), close proximity to extended family (24 percent), racial and ethnic diversity (23 percent), and strong local traditions such as fairs, parades, and festivals (17 percent) are very important considerations. Few Americans place importance on living among people who are similar to themselves. Fewer than one in 10 Americans say it is very important to live in places where most people share their religious beliefs (8 percent) or political views (7 percent).

Regarding diversity, relatively few Americans say living among people who have different backgrounds from themselves is a priority, although racial and ethnic diversity is generally viewed as more important than social class diversity is. About one-quarter (23 percent) of Americans say living in an area that is racially or ethnically diverse matters a lot to them, while significantly fewer (11 percent) say that living among a mix of “well-off and less well-off” people is very important.

Access to outdoor green spaces and parks is not prioritized equally among the public. No racial or ethnic group is more likely to prioritize access to green spaces and parks than Hispanics are. Nearly half (49 percent) of Hispanics say living in a community with easy access to public parks is very important to them. Only about one-third of white (35 percent) and black (33 percent) Americans say the same.

There are notable ideological differences as well. Liberals are far more likely to prioritize access to parks than conservatives are. Nearly half (47 percent) of liberals say it is very important to live in a community with easy access to parks, compared to 30 percent of conservatives. The ideological gap is evident across different community types. More than half (52 percent) of liberals living in cities say this is very important

to them, while about only one-third (34 percent) of city-dwelling conservatives say the same.

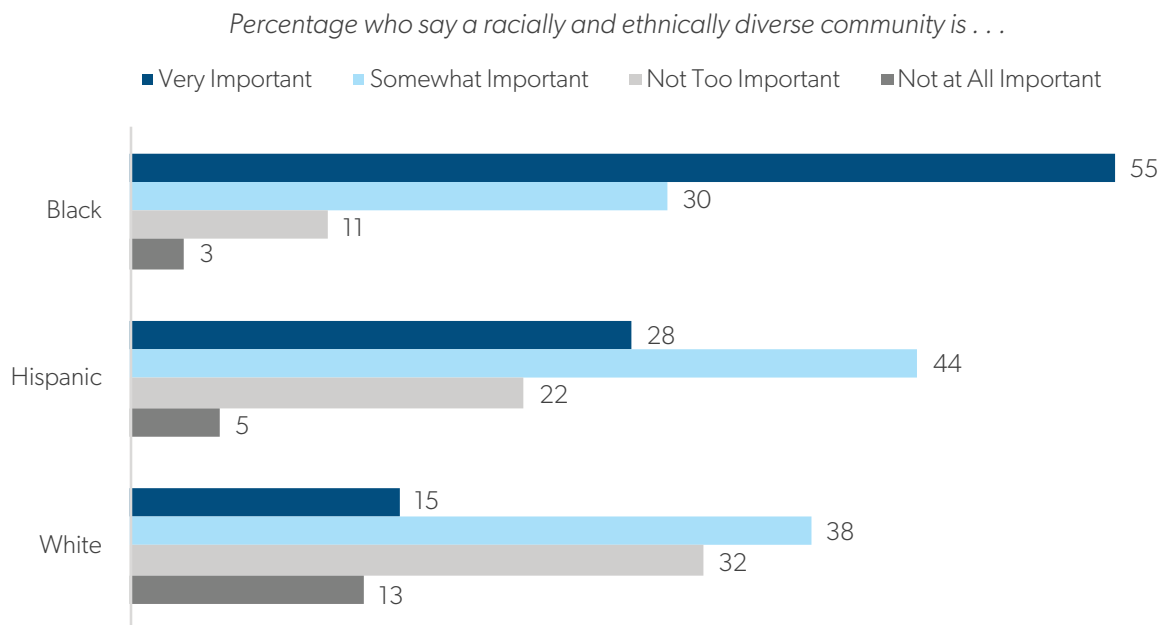
Priorities differ somewhat across community type as well. Americans living in urban areas are more likely to prioritize park access and entertainment options than those living in rural communities are. Forty-two percent of urban residents say easy access to parks and green spaces is very important to them, compared to 28 percent of rural residents. City dwellers are more than twice as likely as rural denizens are to say that having many entertainment options is very important to them (39 percent vs. 17 percent). Urban residents are more likely than those living in rural areas are to prioritize racial and ethnic diversity in their community (30 percent vs. 13 percent).

White evangelical Protestants, more than other religious groups, say they prefer communities where people share their religious beliefs, but relatively few say this is a high priority. Close to one in five (18 percent) white evangelical Protestants say it is very important to live in a community where people share their religious beliefs. Almost half (49 percent) say this is somewhat important. Conversely, for no group is this less an important consideration than the religiously unaffiliated. Only 2 percent say living among people who share their religious beliefs is very important to them, while 8 percent say it is somewhat important.

Black Americans are far more likely to prioritize racial and ethnically integrated communities (Figure 3). A majority (55 percent) of black Americans say that living in a community that is racially and ethnically diverse is very important. This view is shared by only 15 percent of white Americans and 28 percent of Hispanic Americans.

Across the political spectrum, few Americans prioritize living among their co-partisans. Only 7 percent of conservatives and 9 percent of liberals say living in a community where most people share their political views is very important. However, roughly four in 10 say this is somewhat important (38 percent and 39 percent, respectively). Only one-quarter of moderates say this is either very (4 percent) or somewhat important (21 percent).

**Figure 3. Black Americans Are Most Likely to Say Living in a Racially and Ethnically Diverse Community Is Important**



Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults (N = 3,663).

Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

### The Community Connection

Most Americans feel at least somewhat connected to the current town or city where they live and the people who reside there. More than six in 10 Americans say they feel very close (18 percent) or somewhat close (43 percent) to their community and community members, while about four in 10 (39 percent) report they do not.

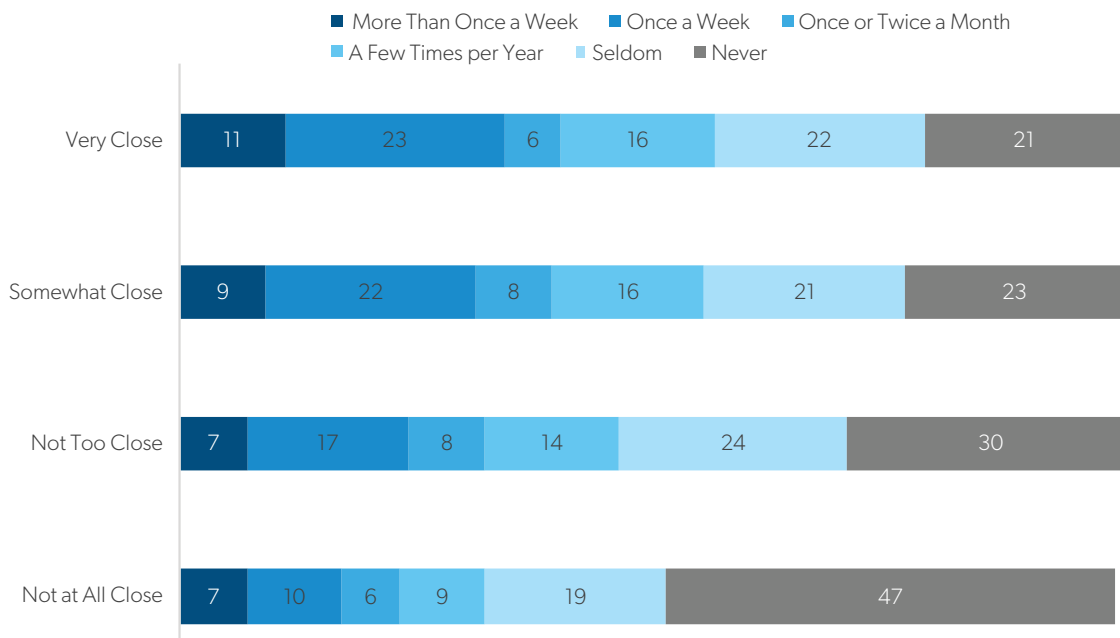
Demographics do not predict feelings of community closeness. Older Americans do not feel more attached to their communities than younger adults do, and parents do not express greater affinity to the places they live nor the people there compared with adults without children. Race, ethnicity, educational background, and income also seem to matter less.

However, Americans who are more tied to local institutions express greater attachment to their communities. Americans who are more involved in religious life express greater feelings of closeness to their community than those who participate less. (See

**Notably, although the close-knit ties of rural communities have become a common refrain, rural Americans actually feel less close to their communities and the people in them than city dwellers do.**

**Figure 4. Americans Who Regularly Attend Religious Services Feel Closer to Their Town or City**

Percentage who report feeling \_\_\_\_\_ to their community and the people in it attend religious service . . .



Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults (N = 3,663).

Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

Figure 4.) Seventy percent of Americans who attend religious services at least once a week report feeling very or somewhat close to the town or city they currently live in. In contrast, only about half (51 percent) of those who never attend religious services report feeling closely connected to their current town or city.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Americans who currently live in the community in which they grew up express warmer feelings about it than do those who have moved away to new communities as adults. Seventy-seven percent of Americans who live in their hometown say they feel very or somewhat close to the place and people who live there. Fewer Americans who live within a two-hour drive (63 percent) or those who live more than a two-hour drive (53 percent) say they feel as closely connected to their current communities.

Notably, although the close-knit ties of rural communities have become a common refrain, rural Americans actually feel less close to their communities and the people in them than city dwellers do. Fifty-six

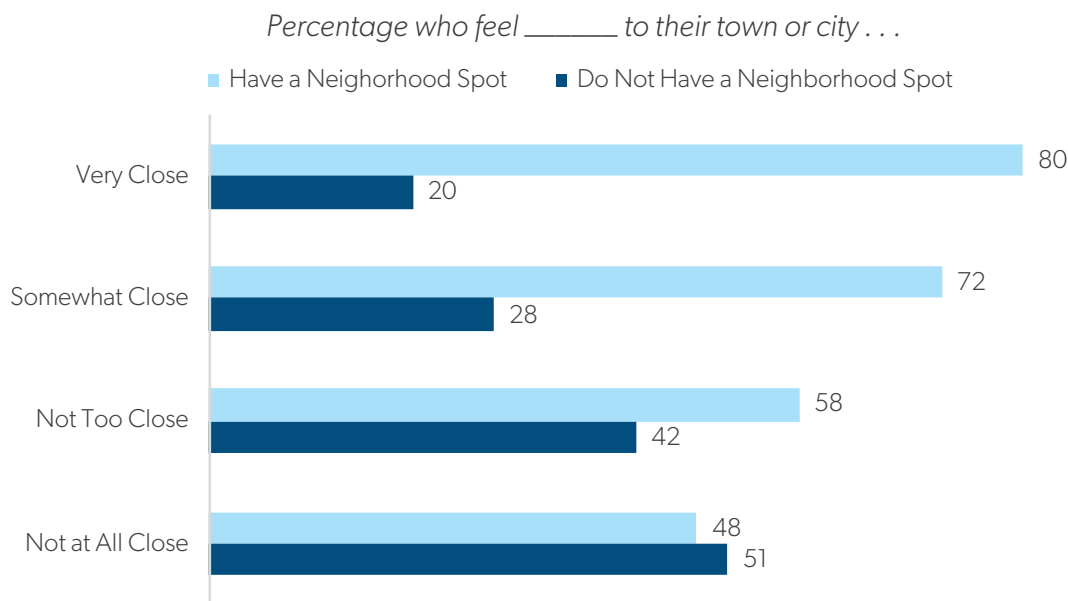
percent of Americans living in rural communities say they feel very or somewhat closely connected to the place where they live, compared to 62 percent of urban residents.

### A Neighborhood Spot

Two-thirds (67 percent) of Americans report that they have a local coffee shop, bar, restaurant, park, or other public place they routinely visit. Approximately one in three (32 percent) say they do not. Among those who say they have a neighborhood haunt they visit regularly, about six in 10 (62 percent) say they generally recognize other people there when they go. Thirty-eight percent say they do not generally recognize others there.

Americans who live in rural areas are far less likely than Americans living in other types of communities are to report having a regular commercial or public place they frequent. Only about half (52 percent)

**Figure 5. Americans Who Have a Neighborhood Haunt Are More Likely to Feel Connected to Their Towns or Cities**



Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults (N = 3,663).

Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

of rural residents report there is a local place they go regularly, compared to roughly seven in 10 urban (73 percent), suburban (68 percent), and small-town (68 percent) residents. However, city dwellers and suburbanites are far less likely than small-town and rural residents are to say that they recognize other people when they visit their neighborhood spot. Among Americans who have a place they visit regularly, around three-quarters of small-town (76 percent) and rural residents (75 percent) recognize other patrons or visitors, while substantially fewer residents of cities (54 percent) and suburban communities (57 percent) say the same. Small-town residents are unique in that a substantial number say they have a regular place that they go and that they generally recognize other folks there when they do.

Having a regular neighborhood haunt populated with recognizable people from the community is associated with more positive perceptions of Americans' community and greater civic engagement. Almost seven in 10 (68 percent) Americans who report having a local place they regularly visit say they feel at

least somewhat closely connected to the place where they live and the people who live there. Less than half (48 percent) of those who report lacking a personal place in their community they habitually visit say they feel similarly close to their community.

Americans who have a local public or commercial place they regularly visit rate their community more positively. (See Figure 5.) Half (50 percent) of Americans who report regularly visiting a local commercial or public place where they recognize others from the community say that "a good place to raise a family" describes their community very well. In contrast, only 33 percent of those without a local spot say the same. They are also roughly twice as likely to say "a place where people look out for each other" describes their community very well (29 percent vs. 15 percent).

Americans who have a neighborhood haunt are more likely to participate in various nonreligious civic groups or activities, such as a sports team, book club, PTA meeting, or neighborhood association than those who do not. Close to half (44 percent) of Americans who routinely visit a local place where they recognize

other community members say they participate in community groups at least a few times a year. In contrast, only one-quarter (25 percent) of those who report they do not have a spot in the neighborhood they regularly visit—such as a coffee shop, park, or bar—are engaged in community groups as often.

### **The Varying Challenges Faced by American Communities**

Among the community challenges most concerning to Americans are availability of affordable housing and drug abuse and addiction. However, perceptions of community problems vary considerably across different types of communities. Residents of rural areas often have different views about the most pressing issues affecting their communities than city dwellers do.

Overall, close to four in 10 Americans (39 percent) say drug abuse and addiction are major problems in their community. Nearly half (48 percent) say they are minor problems. Only 11 percent say they are not problems. A similar number of Americans (37 percent) say the availability of affordable housing is a major problem in their local community. Forty-four percent say this is a minor problem, and 18 percent say it is not a problem.

Roughly one-quarter (26 percent) say poverty is a major problem in their community, while 55 percent say it is a minor problem. Seventeen percent of Americans say poverty is not a pressing concern in their local area. Fewer Americans mention the issue of racial tensions. Fourteen percent say racial tensions are a major problem where they live, while 49 percent say they are a minor problem. More than one-third (36 percent) of Americans say racial tensions are not a problem at all. Relatively few Americans say access to grocery stores is an overriding concern for their community.

Concerns about affordable housing are much more pronounced in urban areas than small-town and rural communities. Nearly half (49 percent) of Americans who live in cities say lack of affordable housing is a major problem where they live,

compared to 38 percent of suburban residents, 30 percent of those living in a small town, and 25 percent of rural residents.

The opioid epidemic has put a spotlight on the devastating effect drug abuse and addiction have had on many rural communities. However, Americans living in cities are more likely to cite drug addiction and abuse as major problems for their community than are those living in rural areas. Half (50 percent) of urban residents say drug abuse is a major problem where they live, compared to 40 percent of rural residents and an equal number (40 percent) of those living in small towns. About only one-third (32 percent) of those living in suburbs say drug abuse and addiction are major problems where they live.

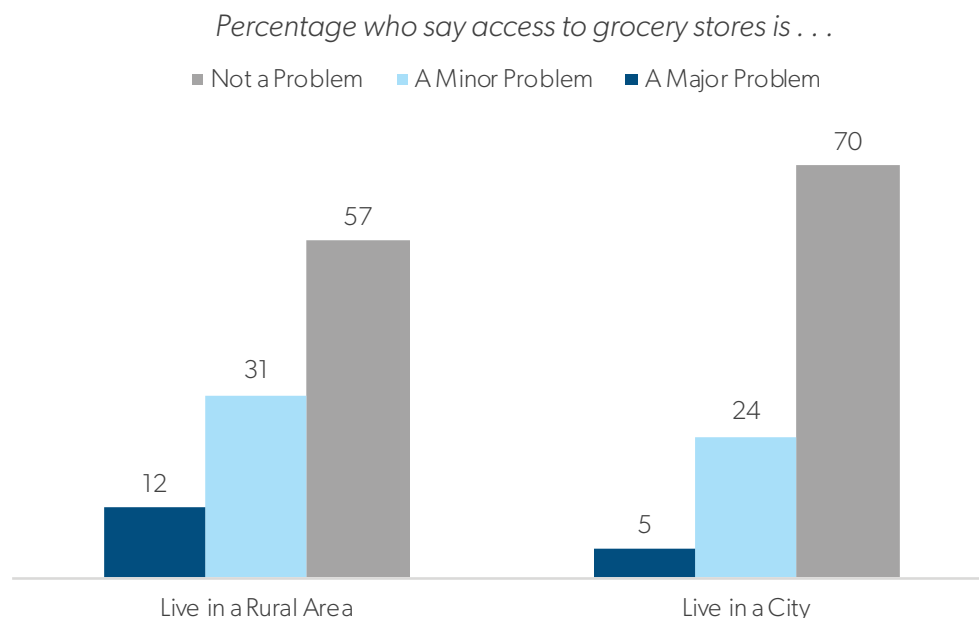
Views are also stratified by educational attainment. Americans with a high school education or less are significantly more likely than those with a four-year college degree are to report that drug abuse and addiction are major problems where they live (44 percent vs. 33 percent).

Although food deserts are often portrayed as a challenge for urban areas, Americans living in rural communities are actually much more likely to say access to grocery stores is a problem where they live. (See Figure 6.) Forty-three percent of rural residents say access to grocery stores is a problem in their community, compared to 29 percent of urban residents. Seventy percent of Americans living in urban areas say access to grocery stores is not a problem in their local community.

### **Personal Safety**

Most Americans say they would not feel comfortable leaving the door to their house or apartment unlocked at night. Only one-third (33 percent) of the public say they would feel comfortable leaving their front door unlocked, while about two-thirds say they would be uncomfortable doing this.

Feelings of safety vary considerably across community type. (See Figure 7.) Feelings of security are inversely correlated to density. Nearly half (48 percent) of Americans living in rural areas say they would

**Figure 6. Access to Grocery Stores Is More Likely to Be a Problem for Rural Residents**

Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults (N = 3,663).

Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

feel comfortable leaving their house unlocked at night. In contrast, substantially fewer Americans who live in small towns (39 percent), suburbs (32 percent), and cities (21 percent) say the same.

### Economic Opportunities and Economic Mobility

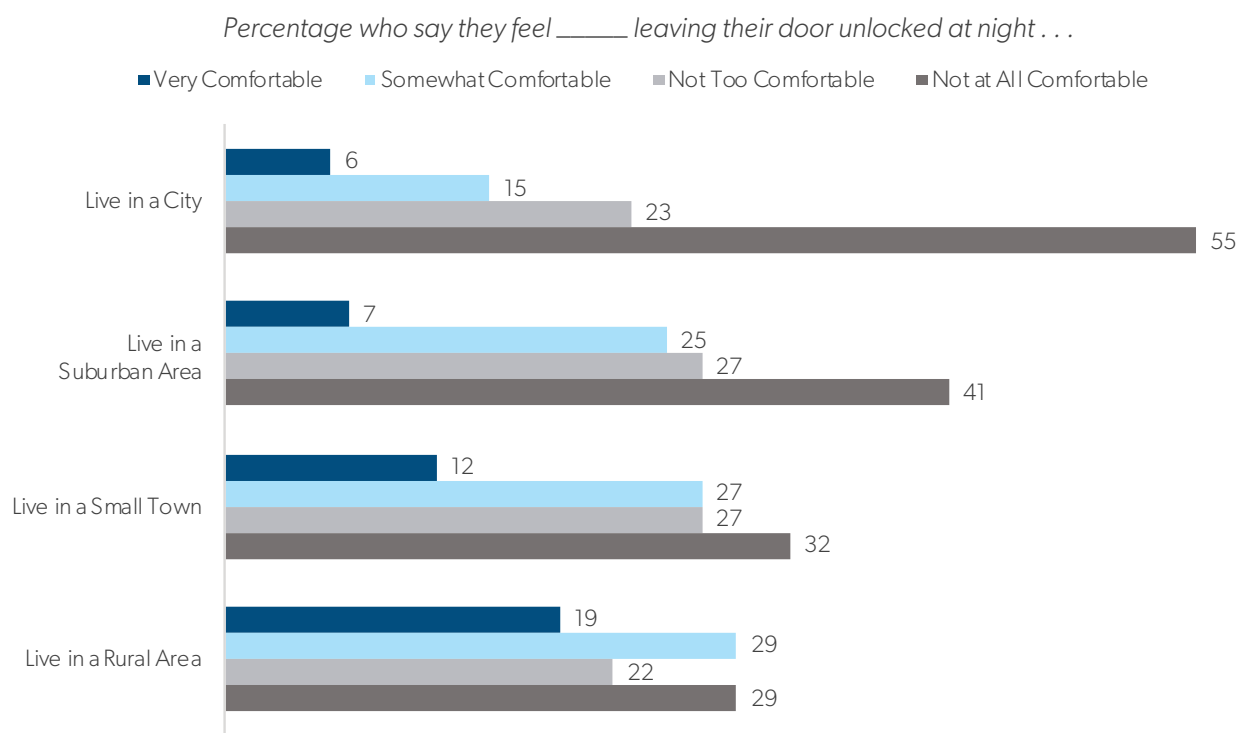
Americans did not share uniform views on the employment outlook of their local area or on whether trade, tariffs, immigration, and automation positively affect their economy. However, they were optimistic that one could improve their economic standing before the coronavirus pandemic affected the world's economy.

### Local Employment Outlook

Even before the economic shock brought about by the COVID-19 outbreak, Americans were not overly

optimistic in their appraisal of the employment opportunities in their local community in the coming years. Approximately one-third (32 percent) say the employment outlook will improve where they live, 15 percent believe it will get worse, and about half (51 percent) say it will stay about the same. There are notable disparities across regions and community type.

Americans living in the South and West are generally more optimistic than are those living in the Northeast and Midwest, while urban residents offer a more upbeat appraisal of the employment outlook than those living in small towns or rural areas do. More than one-third of Americans living in the South (38 percent) or West (35 percent) say they expect the availability of jobs where they live will improve over the next five years, compared to about one-quarter of those living in the Midwest (27 percent) or Northeast (24 percent). City dwellers are significantly more likely to say the job situation where they live will improve in the near future than rural residents are (37 percent vs. 27 percent).

**Figure 7. Urban Residents Feel the Least Comfortable Leaving Their Doors Unlocked at Night**

Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults ( $N = 3,663$ ).

Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

Importantly, there are no significant differences in perceptions of the local economic opportunities between Americans with more and less formal education. One-third (33 percent) of Americans with a high school degree or less report that the job prospects in their community will get better in the short term, compared to a similar number of those with an associate degree (32 percent) and a four-year college degree (33 percent).

When assessing the strength of the local economy, more Americans cite the wide variety of job opportunities as the biggest economic asset their community has to offer. About one-quarter (24 percent) say the diverse array of job opportunities is their local economy's most significant asset. Seventeen percent say providing a good quality of life for workers is their community's most notable contribution. A similar number (15 percent) say tourism and local attractions are the biggest strength of their local economy, while fewer mention the education

level of the area's workforce (9 percent), natural resources (6 percent), or innovation and entrepreneurship (6 percent). Nearly one in five (19 percent) Americans say that none of these capture the biggest strength of the local economy.

Americans living in urban (28 percent) and suburban communities (28 percent) are much more likely than those living in small towns (17 percent) or rural areas (16 percent) are to say the wide availability of jobs is the biggest source of strength in the local economy. Fourteen percent of rural residents cite natural resources as their community's most significant asset, more than those living in any other community type cite. Similar numbers of suburbanites (19 percent), small-town residents (18 percent), and rural residents (17 percent) say the quality of life for workers is the most important strength of the local economy. Fewer urban residents (13 percent) say the same.

Americans who report that innovation and entrepreneurship are the biggest strengths of their local

economy express much more optimism about the job prospects in the area. Nearly half (49 percent) of those who say innovation and entrepreneurship are their area's most important economic asset believe the employment picture will improve over the next five years. Roughly four in 10 (39 percent) say it will stay the same, while only 12 percent say it will get worse.

## Company Towns

Few Americans live in communities that are dominated by a single employer or industry, traditionally referred to as "company towns." Only 15 percent of the public say that a single industry or company is particularly important to the local economy. Eighty-four percent say a mix of different industries and employers is important.

Small towns and rural communities are far more likely to have a single employer that dominates the economic landscape. Americans who live in small towns and rural areas are about twice as likely as those who live in cities are to say a single employer or industry is crucial to the local economy (20 percent and 21 percent vs. 11 percent). Thirteen percent of Americans living in suburbs report a single industry or employer is important to the local economy.

Americans who live in company towns are generally more pessimistic about potential job opportunities in the area. About one-quarter (26 percent) of Americans residing in company towns say the job outlook five years from now is going to be better, while just as many (26 percent) say it is going to be worse. About half (48 percent) say it will stay the same. In contrast, more than one-third (34 percent) of Americans living in multi-industry areas say the job outlook will be better in the future, while only 13 percent say it will be worse.

Few Americans perceive that the major employers in the area give back a lot to their community. Only 16 percent of the public say the major employers in the area give back a lot to the community. Half (50 percent) say they give back some, while about one-third (32 percent) say they do little or nothing.

Americans who live in areas dominated by a single employer or industry are not much more likely to say

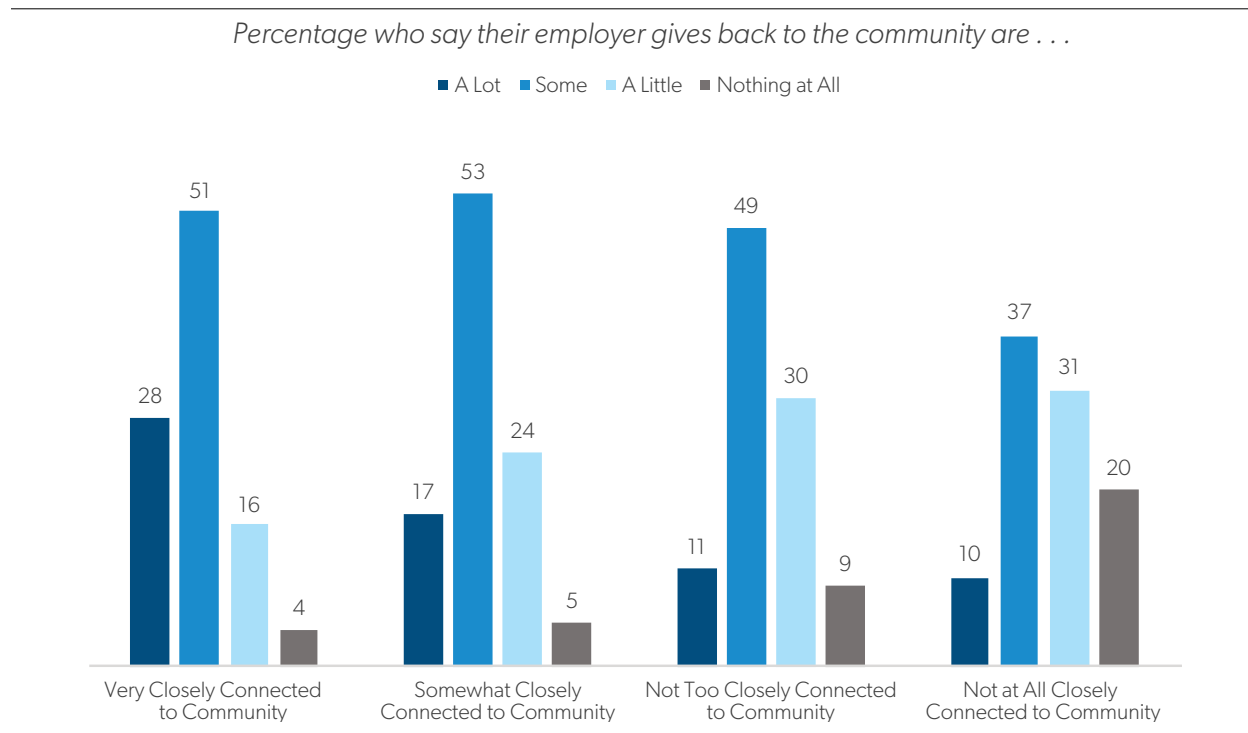
these companies contribute a lot to the local community than are those who live in places with multiple major industries or employers (20 percent vs. 16 percent). However, small-town residents living in company towns are more likely than those with a mix of different employers are to say these companies give back a lot to the community (27 percent vs. 17 percent).

Perceptions of employer generosity are strongly associated with positive assessments of the community overall. (See Figure 8.) More than three-quarters (76 percent) of Americans who say major employers in the area give back a lot to the community report feeling at least somewhat closely connected to the place they live. In contrast, only 39 percent of those who say major employers give nothing back feel the same. Nearly nine in 10 (89 percent) Americans who say the major employers give back a lot would describe their community as "a place where people look out for each other," while less than half (44 percent) of those who say these companies contribute nothing to the community share this view.

## Economic Benefits or Costs: Trade, Immigration, and Technology

There is no consensus among the public about the way trade, immigration, and advancements in technology are affecting local workers and the local economies around the country. Americans express far more positive views about the impact of free trade than about immigration or technology. Nearly half (46 percent) of Americans say free trade agreements are good for the local economy, while 11 percent say they have a negative effect. Forty percent say they do not make much difference either way. Notably, Americans are more likely to say free trade agreements are good for the workers in their area than say that they hurt them. Thirty-seven percent of the public believes free trade agreements benefit these workers, compared to the 14 percent who view them as harmful. About half (46 percent) of the public say they do not really affect local workers.

Tariffs are generally viewed as bad for both local economies and workers. Close to half (45 percent)

**Figure 8. Americans Who Feel Closely Connected to Their Community View Their Employers as More Generous**

Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults (N = 3,663).

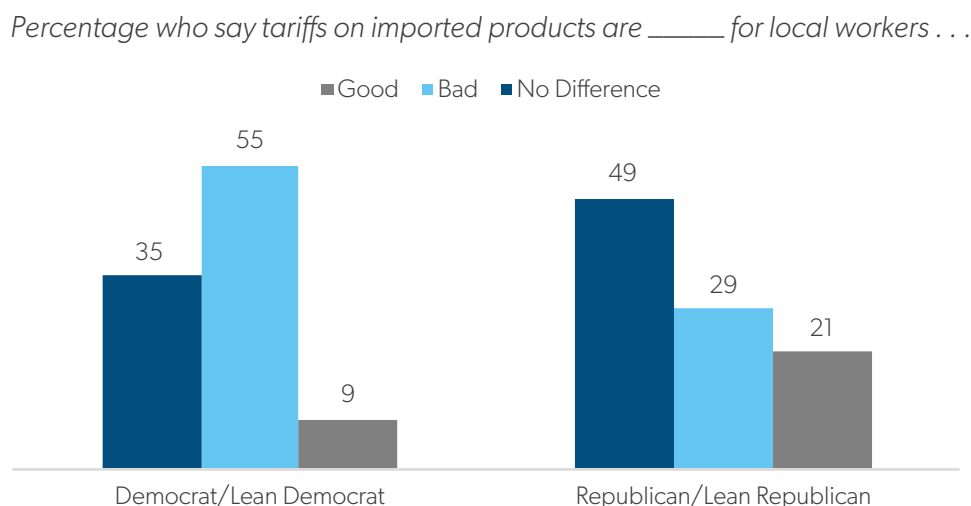
Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

say tariffs on products imported from other countries are harmful to the local economy. Seventeen percent say they are helpful. Thirty-six percent say they do not have much of an effect. Americans believe local workers are also more likely to be harmed (44 percent) than helped (14 percent) by tariffs. Yet, a significant percentage (41 percent) say tariffs do not really matter.

Americans are far more divided over the impact of immigration, although they view it as more harmful to workers than the local economy overall. Roughly as many Americans say immigration is good for local workers as say it is bad (27 percent vs. 26 percent). But nearly half (46 percent) say immigration does not really affect them either way. Americans perceive immigration to be a greater benefit to the local economy where they live. Thirty-five percent say immigration helps the local economy, compared to 23 percent who say it hurts it. Forty percent say it makes no difference.

Americans express significant negativity about the impact of automation. They are twice as likely to say automation of routine jobs through new technology is harmful to local workers as say it is beneficial (42 percent vs. 20 percent). Thirty-six percent say it does not have much of an impact. The pattern is similar in views about the effect on the local economy as a whole. Thirty-nine percent say automation hurts the local economy, while 25 percent say it is helpful. One-third say it does not make a difference. Notably, concerns about automation are evident among the public regardless of educational background.

There are stark divisions among the public between those living in urban and suburban areas and those living in small towns and rural communities, particularly over the issues of free trade and immigration. A majority (54 percent) of Americans living in cities and half (50 percent) of those living in suburbs say free trade agreements benefit their local

**Figure 9. Democrats More Likely to Think Tariffs on Imports Are Bad for Local Workers**

Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults (N = 3,663).  
 Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

economy. In contrast, less than four in 10 Americans living in small towns (39 percent) and rural areas (35 percent) say free trade agreements benefit the local economy. There is also substantial disagreement about the impact of immigration. Close to half (45 percent) of urban residents say immigration benefits the local economy, while only 20 percent of rural residents agree.

Views are also stratified by political affiliation. Democrats more than Republicans offer more positive assessments of the effects of free trade and immigration and are more likely to believe tariffs are harmful. (See Figure 9.) A majority (51 percent) of Democrats, compared to 43 percent of Republicans, say free trade agreements benefit the local economy where they live. Importantly, views among Democrats vary considerably by community type. Fifty-nine percent of urban Democrats say free trade agreements benefit the economy, compared to 36 percent of rural Democrats. There is a more modest gap among Republicans. Forty-seven percent of urban Republicans say free trade is beneficial, compared to 36 percent of rural Republicans.

The partisan gap on effects of tariffs is even wider. Nearly six in 10 (58 percent) Democrats say tariffs on

products imported from other countries would hurt the local economy where they live, but only 33 percent of Republicans agree. There are no significant differences among either Democrats or Republicans by community type.

Compared to Republicans, Democrats are a good deal more upbeat about the benefits of immigration. A majority (53 percent) of Democrats say immigration is good for the local economy where they live. Only 17 percent of Republicans agree it is beneficial. Fewer Democrats (43 percent) say immigration is good for workers in the local area. Again, perspectives vary considerably among Democrats depending on the type of community they live in. Fifty-three percent of urban Democrats say immigration helps the local economy, a view shared by just 36 percent of small-town and rural Democrats.

## Economic Mobility

On the basic question of whether it is possible to move from the lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder to the higher rungs, Americans remain decidedly optimistic. Eighty-two percent of Americans

say they believe it is still possible to start out poor in the US and become wealthy through hard work. Views have been relatively stable over the past two decades. In 2000, 84 percent of Americans said it was possible to start out poor and, through hard work, become rich.<sup>2</sup>

---

## No demographic group expresses more optimism about economic mobility than Hispanics do.

However, simply because Americans say that moving up several rungs of the socioeconomic ladder is still possible today does not mean that this is viewed as the most likely outcome. In fact, most Americans believe that, at least for middle-class families, where you start is most likely where you will end up. A majority (56 percent) of Americans say that people raised in middle-class households are likely to remain middle class over their lifetime. About one-third (35 percent) of Americans say they are more likely to move up the “economic ladder” during their lifetime; only 7 percent say they are likely to move down.

There are only modest partisan differences in views about economic mobility, but ideological differences are more pronounced. Republicans are slightly more likely than Democrats are to say that someone from a middle-class family background is more likely to move up the economic ladder (43 percent vs. 36 percent). Ideological differences are larger. Thirty percent of liberals, compared to 42 percent of conservatives, say middle-class families are more likely to improve their economic position over their lives. A majority of liberals (58 percent) and conservatives (54 percent) believe the most likely outcome for someone raised in a middle-class family is that they will remain so.

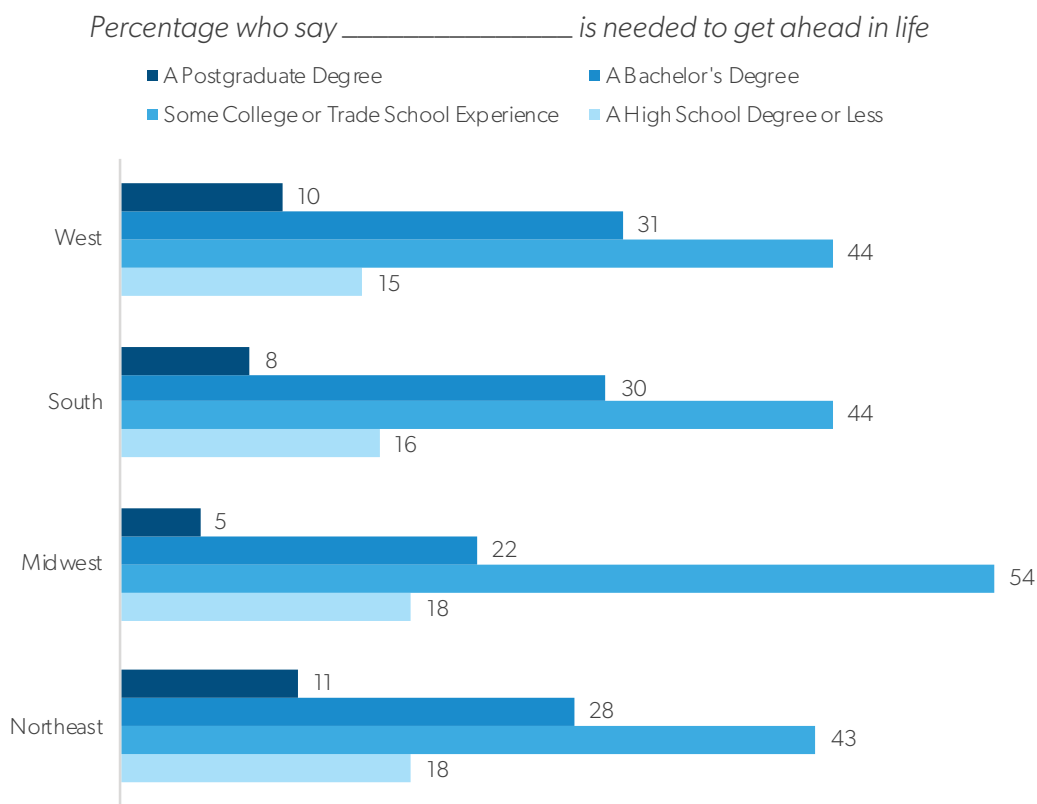
No demographic group expresses more optimism about economic mobility than Hispanics do. Half (50 percent) of Hispanic Americans say someone from a middle-class background is likely to improve their economic situation over their life. Forty-one percent of black Americans agree. Whites are more pessimistic about the potential for economic improvement. Less than one-third (30 percent) of white Americans say people who grew up middle-class are likely to improve their economic fortunes during their lifetime. Sixty-two percent of white Americans say middle-class Americans would most likely remain in the same economic position.

**The Importance of Education.** Most Americans do not believe that a four-year college degree is necessary for someone to be successful in the US. Only 36 percent of Americans say a four-year college degree or postgraduate degree is necessary “to get ahead in life.” About half (46 percent) the public say some college higher education or trade school experience is necessary to be successful. Only 17 percent of Americans say a high school diploma is sufficient.

Not surprisingly, college graduates are much more likely to say a college education is crucial to getting ahead in life. More than half (53 percent) of college graduates say a four-year degree or postgraduate training is necessary to do so. Twenty-nine percent of those with a high school education or less say this amount of formal education is necessary.

Midwesterners are unique to the extent they do not believe a college education or more advanced training is necessary. (See Figure 10.) About one-quarter (27 percent) of midwesterners say a four-year degree or postgraduate education is crucial to getting ahead. A greater share of northeasterners (39 percent), southerners (38 percent), and Americans living in the West (41 percent) say the same.

There are important differences between Americans across community types as well. Only 22 percent of Americans living in rural communities say higher education—a four-year or graduate degree—is necessary to achieve success, compared to 44 percent of Americans living in urban areas.

**Figure 10. Midwesterners Say a Bachelor's Degree or Higher Is Not Needed to Get Ahead in Life**

Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults (N = 3,663).

Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

Democrats and Republicans disagree about the amount of formal education that is necessary to get ahead. Close to half (48 percent) of Democrats say getting a four-year college degree or postgraduate training is important to getting ahead, while only 30 percent of Republicans agree.

**Family's Education Expectations.** More than four in 10 (41 percent) Americans say that growing up it was generally expected that they would go to a four-year college after high school. More than one in 10 say their family expected them to go to community college or enter trade school or a vocational program. Seventeen percent of Americans report that their family expected them to get a job upon completing high school. About one-quarter (26 percent) say their family did not really talk about it.

There has been a profound generational shift in the expectations that American families have for higher education. A majority (55 percent) of young adults today report that it was expected in their family that they would attend a four-year college. Thirteen percent say it was expected that they would attend community college. In contrast, only 34 percent of seniors (age 65 or older) said their family expected them to go to a four-year college.

Not only are there partisan differences in views about the value of higher education, Republicans are also less likely to report that their parents stressed the importance of a four-year education. Republicans are less likely to say their families expected them to attend a four-year college than Democrats are (39 percent vs. 48 percent).

With one important exception, there are only modest differences by racial and ethnic background. Roughly four in 10 white (41 percent) and black (37 percent) Americans say their family generally expected them to go to a four-year college. More than one-third (34 percent) of Hispanics report that in their family it was expected that they would go to a traditional four-year college. Among Asian-Pacific Islander Americans, 70 percent report that their family expected them to attend a four-year college.

Perhaps nothing more strongly predicts familial expectations for higher education than parental education background does. Americans who report that both their parents went to college are far more likely to say they were expected to attend a four-year school than are those from families in which neither parent had a college degree (77 percent vs. 27 percent). A majority (54 percent) of Americans with at least one parent who graduated from college say they were expected to attend.

There is a strong correlation between familial expectations and educational outcomes. A majority of Americans whose family expected them to go to a four-year college report having received a BA or BS degree. In contrast, only 12 percent of Americans whose families never discussed their educational future report having attended a four-year college or university.

### **Entrepreneurship: Appetite for Risk and Playing by the Rules**

The US is known for its entrepreneurial spirit. Although entrepreneurship is associated with numerous personal traits—such as vision, creativity, and industriousness—one key component of entrepreneurship is risk-taking. The act of starting a new business or starting a new career involves an assumption of risk. Today, most Americans are not comfortable taking these types of career risks. One in five Americans say they would be willing to take risks, such as “switching jobs, starting a business or aggressively investing in the stock market” to try to get ahead. More than three-quarters (77 percent) say they prefer

to be more cautious, prioritizing “job stability, safe investments, and savings.”

Younger adults are more comfortable taking career and financial risks than older Americans are. One-quarter (25 percent) of young adults would be willing to take risks to try to get ahead, compared to 14 percent of seniors. But the majority of young people (71 percent) are still more likely to say they tend to be more cautious, prioritizing job stability, savings, and safe investments.

Men report being more willing to take risks than women report (25 percent vs. 16 percent), but the majority (73 percent) of men say they tend to be more cautious.

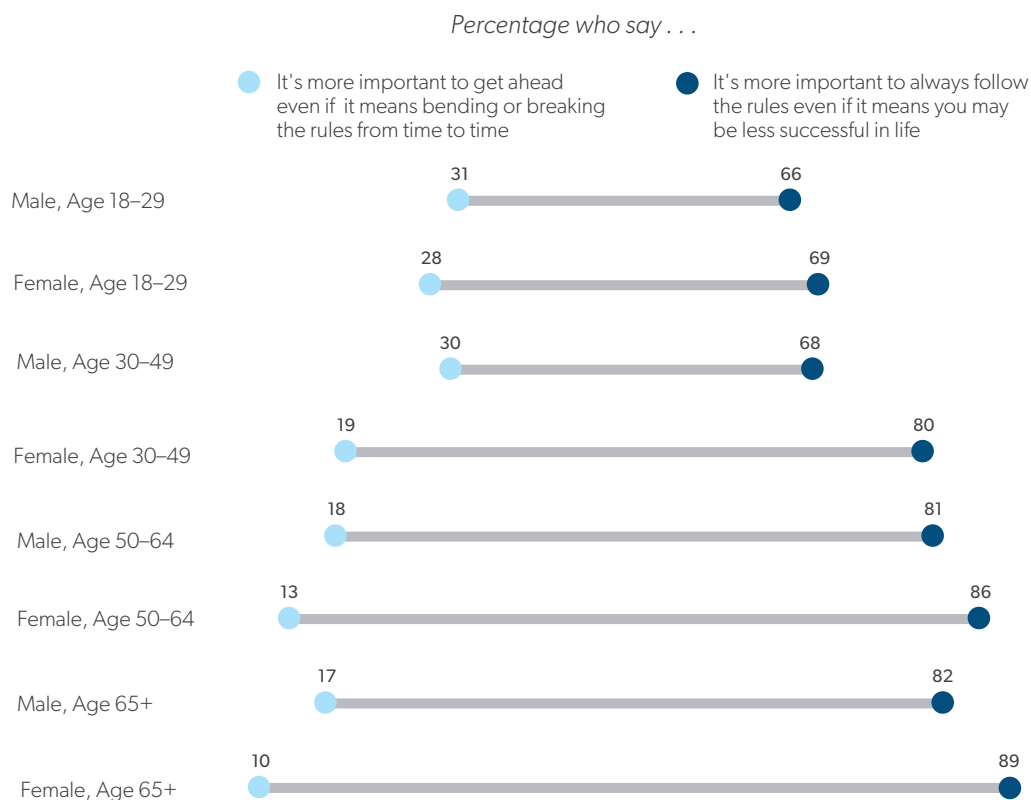
When looking at racial and ethnic differences, minorities are more likely to have an appetite for risk. While only 18 percent of white non-Hispanics say they are willing to take risks to try to get ahead, 25 percent of black non-Hispanics, 25 percent of Hispanics, and 29 percent of Asians are willing to take risks.

Americans who report growing up in more economically distressed households express an equal appetite for risk as those who were raised more comfortably. Roughly one in four (23 percent) of Americans who say their family never struggled to pay bills or meet their financial obligations were willing to take risks in their professional endeavors. A nearly identical number (22 percent) of Americans raised in households that often struggled to pay their bills say they would be willing to take risks to try to get ahead.

### **Is It More Important to Get Ahead or Play by the Rules?**

Most Americans believe that being successful should not come at the expense of fair play. The majority of Americans (77 percent) say it is more important to always follow the rules even if it means you may be less successful in life, while 21 percent say it is more important to get ahead even if it means bending or breaking the rules from time to time.

Young people—more than older Americans—tend to place more weight on success than playing by the rules. Young adults are more than twice as likely as

**Figure 11. Young Men Are More Likely to Say It Is Alright to Bend or Break the Rules to Get Ahead**

Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults (N = 3,663).

Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

those age 65 and older to say it is more important to get ahead (29 percent vs. 13 percent).

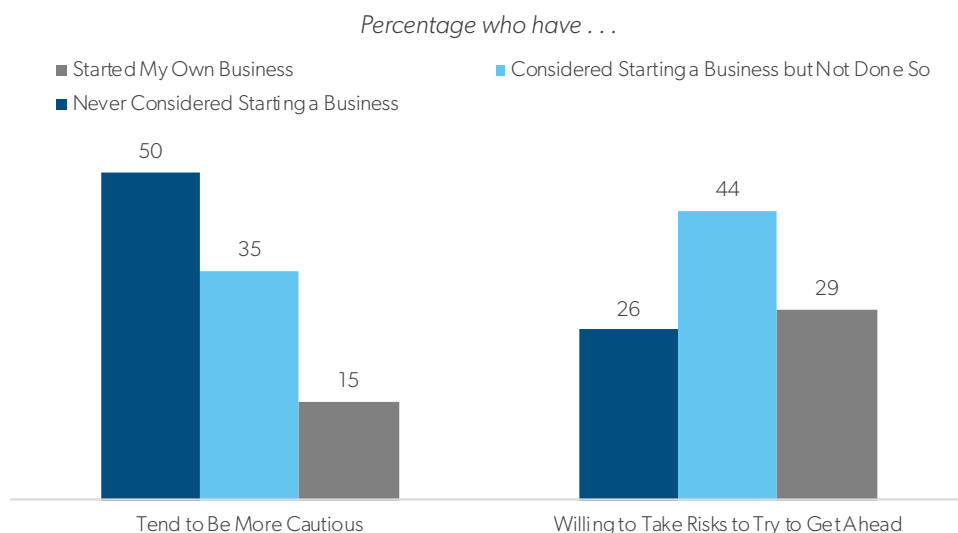
There is also a gender gap regarding playing by the rules. One-quarter of men say it is more important to get ahead even if it means bending or breaking the rules, compared to 17 percent of women. Notably, young men and women are about equally as likely to prioritize getting ahead even if it means breaking the rules (31 percent vs. 28 percent). (See Figure 11.)

Americans with lower levels of educational attainment express similar levels of comfort with breaking or bending the rules to get ahead. Nineteen percent of Americans with bachelor's degrees or higher say getting ahead is more important than playing fair, compared to 23 percent of those with a high school degree or less.

## Starting a Business

Despite an expressed hesitation to make career decisions that carry more risk, many Americans have thought about starting a business even if few actually do. Only 18 percent of Americans have started their own business, but 37 percent have considered doing so. Forty-four percent have never considered it.

Age plays a large role in determining whether a person has started his or her own business. Seniors are almost six times more likely to have started their own business than young people are. Twenty-nine percent of seniors have started their own business, while only 5 percent of young people have ever done so. However, young people are more likely to have considered starting their own business than seniors are (44 percent vs. 22 percent).

**Figure 12. Those Who Have Considered Starting a Business Are More Likely to Be Willing to Take Risks**

Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults (N = 3,663).

Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

Gender plays a more moderate role here. Men are slightly more likely than women are to have started their own business (21 percent vs. 14 percent). They are also more likely to have considered the idea (39 percent vs. 35 percent).

Americans who live in rural areas are more likely than those in cities are to have started their own business (22 percent vs. 14 percent). However, 43 percent of those in cities have thought about starting one, compared to 33 percent in rural areas.

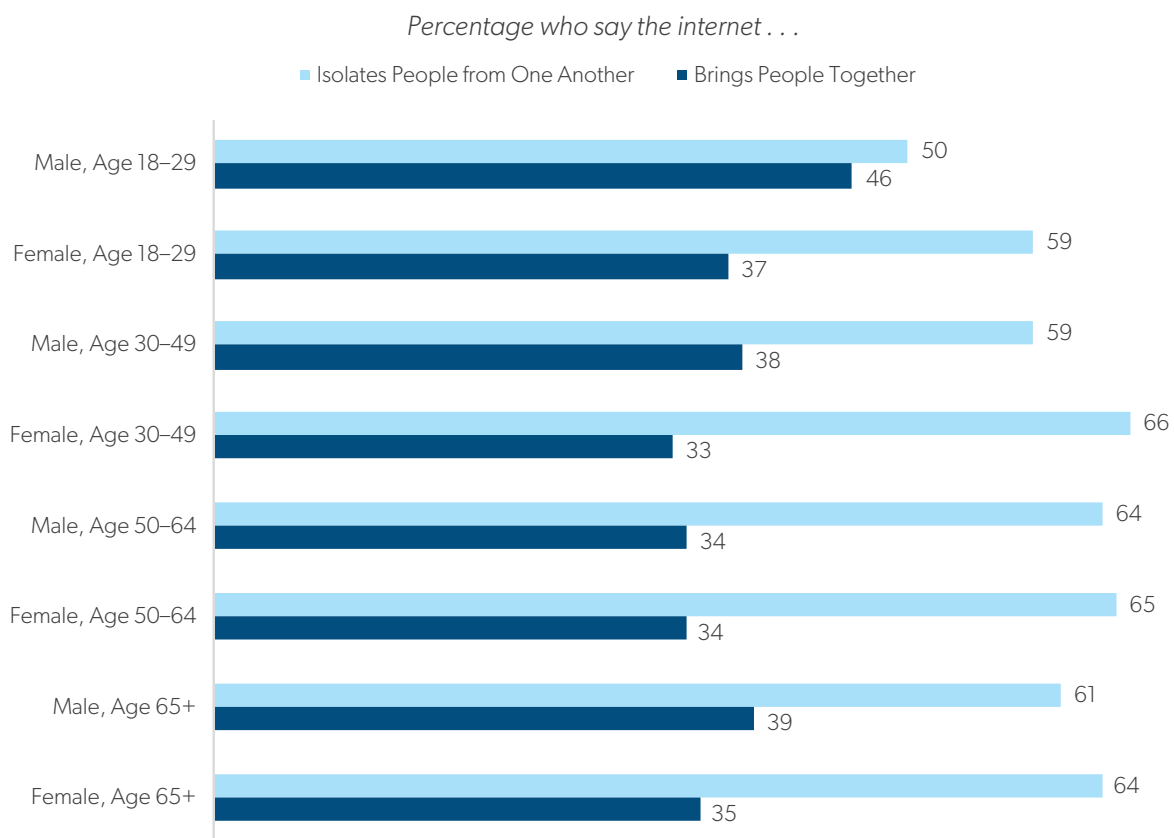
Perhaps not surprisingly, Americans who report greater willingness to take risks are more likely to have started their own business. (See Figure 12.) Americans who are more comfortable taking risks are almost twice as likely to have started their own business (29 percent vs. 15 percent) and more likely to have given thought to starting a new enterprise (44 percent vs. 35 percent).

### The Benefits and Limits of Technology

Americans have mixed views on how technology affects American society. Americans are generally

more likely to say that new technology makes life easier (63 percent) versus more complicated (35 percent). However, with the internet, Americans believe it has done more to isolate people from one another (61 percent) than it has to bring people together (37 percent).

There are notable, but still modest, generational divisions in perceptions of technology, with young adults expressing generally more positive views. Seven in 10 young people say technology makes life easier—a view shared by 56 percent of seniors. Young Americans are also less likely than seniors are to say the internet serves to isolate people from each other, although a majority of both groups still does (54 percent vs. 63 percent). There is a notable gender divide among young people, with young men, compared to young women, expressing more confidence in technology. (See Figure 13.) For instance, young men are divided over whether the internet is more likely to divide people or bring them together (50 percent vs. 46 percent). Young women, by contrast, are far more likely to say the internet is divisive, with 59 percent expressing this opinion.

**Figure 13. Young Men Are the Most Likely to Say That the Internet Brings People Together**

Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults ( $N = 3,663$ ).

Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

## Survey II: Indiana and the Nation

How do attitudes of Indiana residents about their state and local communities compare to national perceptions? In addition to conducting a major national survey, the American Enterprise Institute conducted an independent survey of roughly 1,600 adults living in the state of Indiana. The survey provides an in-depth portrait of how Indiana residents live their daily lives and their expectations for the future. In many areas, the viewpoints of Indiana residents are remarkably similar to all Americans. In some important areas, there are differences.

### How Hoosiers Rate Their State

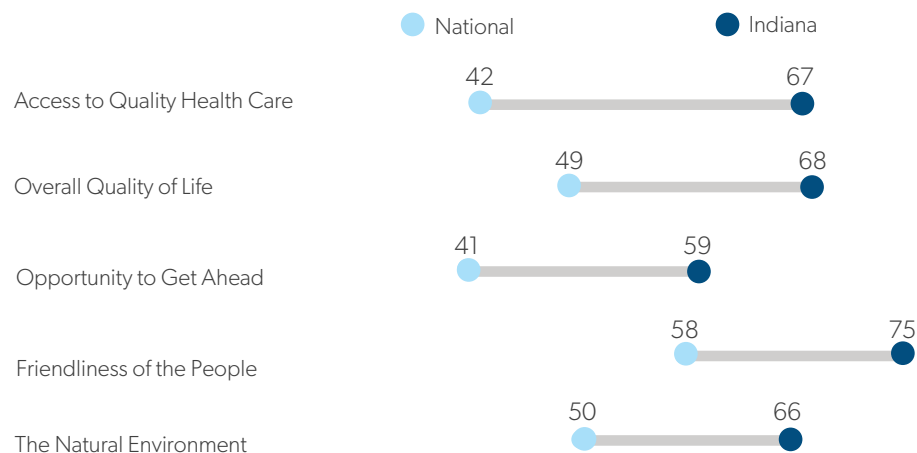
Indiana residents—known as Hoosiers<sup>3</sup>—generally believe their state is better than average when compared to other states on five different dimensions:

opportunities for people to get ahead, the friendliness of the people, the natural environment, access to quality health care, and the overall quality of life. (See Figure 14.) Three-quarters of Hoosiers say their state ranks in the top half of states regarding the friendliness of its residents. Roughly two-thirds of Hoosiers say Indiana is in the top half of all states regarding overall quality of life (68 percent), access to health care (67 percent), and the natural environment (66 percent). Fifty-nine percent of Hoosiers say that when compared to other states, their state ranks in the top 50th percentile regarding opportunities to get ahead.

At the same time, few Hoosiers believe their state ranks among the top 10 states in the US across these areas. For instance, only one in 10 residents say Indiana is in the top 10 states nationally in opportunities to get ahead (10 percent), the natural environment

**Figure 14. Hoosiers Have More Pride in Their State Than the Average American Does**

*Percentage who say their state is in the top half or one of the top 10 states when it comes to . . .*



Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults (N = 3,663). Survey of Indiana adults (N = 1,608). Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019; and Indiana Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

**W**ho is a Hoosier? The etymology of the word Hoosier is a bit of a mystery. The term was popularized in the early 19th century after the publication of the poem “The Hoosier’s Nest” in 1832. But other accounts suggest that Indiana residents adopted the informal demonym even earlier. Today, the label is popular among Indiana residents, although it is not universally adopted.

Seventy-three percent of Indiana residents say they would identify as a Hoosier, while 27 percent of the state’s population reject the label. Nearly eight in 10 (78 percent) rural residents claim the label, compared to 74 percent of urban residents and fewer than seven in 10 (69 percent) of those living in the suburbs. Older residents are also more likely to identify as a Hoosier. More than three-quarters of Indiana seniors (76 percent) identify as a Hoosier, compared to 62 percent of residents under age 30.

(10 percent), access to quality health care (13 percent), or overall quality of life (13 percent). Twenty percent of Hoosiers say the state is in the top 10 in friendliness.

One possible explanation for the positive attitudes that Hoosiers have about their state is that so many residents have lived in the community where they grew up or within a two-hour drive of it. More than seven in 10 (72 percent) current Indiana residents say they generally live in or not that far away from the community they were raised in. Fifty-seven percent of Americans overall report that they are still living in their childhood community or living somewhat nearby. Notably, of the Indiana residents who indicated they lived in the community where they grew up, nearly two-thirds (63 percent) had lived there all their lives.

## How Americans View Indiana

Americans overall rated Indiana much less positively across all these dimensions, but it scored highest in

perceptions of friendliness.<sup>4</sup> Fifty-eight percent of Americans say Indiana is in the top half in terms of its residents’ friendliness. Fifty percent had a positive view of Indiana’s natural environment and 49 percent its overall quality of life. When asked about whether the state had access to quality health care, 42 percent put Indiana above average.

Despite expressing less optimistic appraisals of Indiana than the state’s residents express, most Americans report having a favorable impression of the state. Sixty-nine percent of Americans who do not currently reside in Indiana say they have a favorable opinion of the state, compared to 26 percent who express a negative view.

Those who have lived in Indiana rank Indiana as a better state on all metrics, compared to those who have never lived or visited Indiana. (See Figure 15.) Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of Americans who have visited the state of Indiana have a positive impression, compared to 67 percent who have never visited or lived in the state.

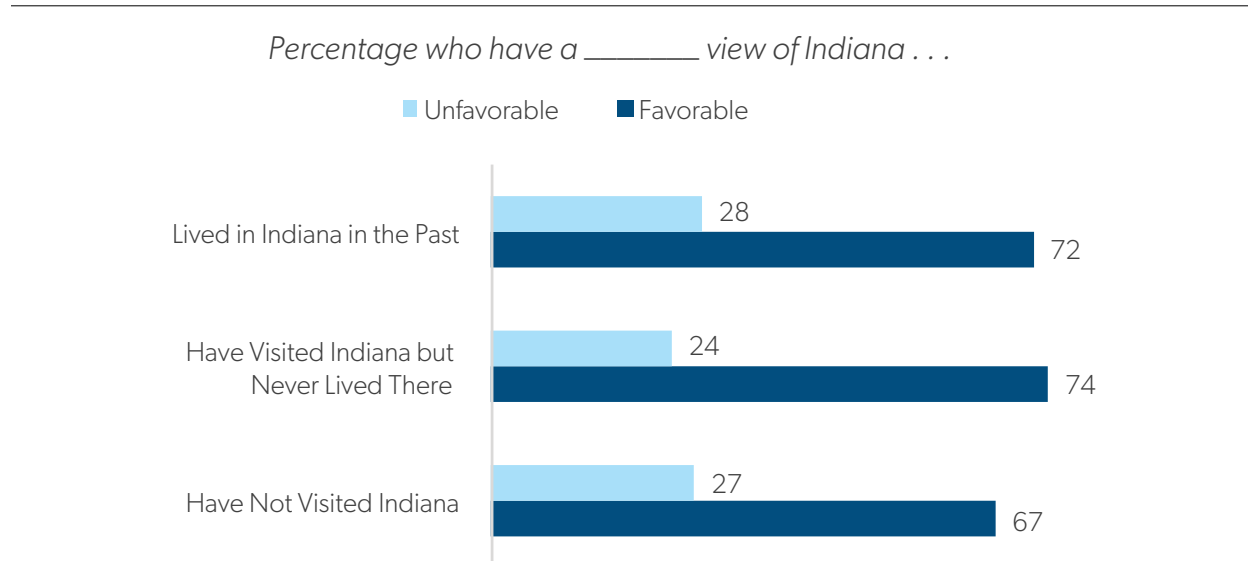
There is a sizable generation gap in views of Indiana. Seniors hold much more positive views of Indiana than young adults do (78 percent vs. 63 percent). Nearly one in three (29 percent) young adults say they have an unfavorable view of Indiana.

Partisan differences in views of Indiana are evident as well. Republicans express considerably more positive views about Indiana than Democrats do, perhaps reflecting the state’s conservative-leaning politics. More than eight in 10 (81 percent) Republicans, compared to 64 percent of Democrats, have a favorable opinion of Indiana.

Relatively few Americans report having ever lived in Indiana. Four percent of Americans who are not currently living in Indiana report having lived in the state at some point in the past. Twenty-seven percent of Americans living outside the state report having visited there, and more than two-thirds (68 percent) say they have never stepped foot in the state.

Notably, Americans who have lived in Indiana—but do not currently reside there—are not much more likely to have a favorable view of the state than are those who have never been in the state (72 percent vs. 67 percent).

**Figure 15. Those Who Have Lived in or Visited Indiana Have a Significantly More Favorable View of the State**



Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults (N = 3,663).

Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

### What Do Hoosiers Value in Their Community?

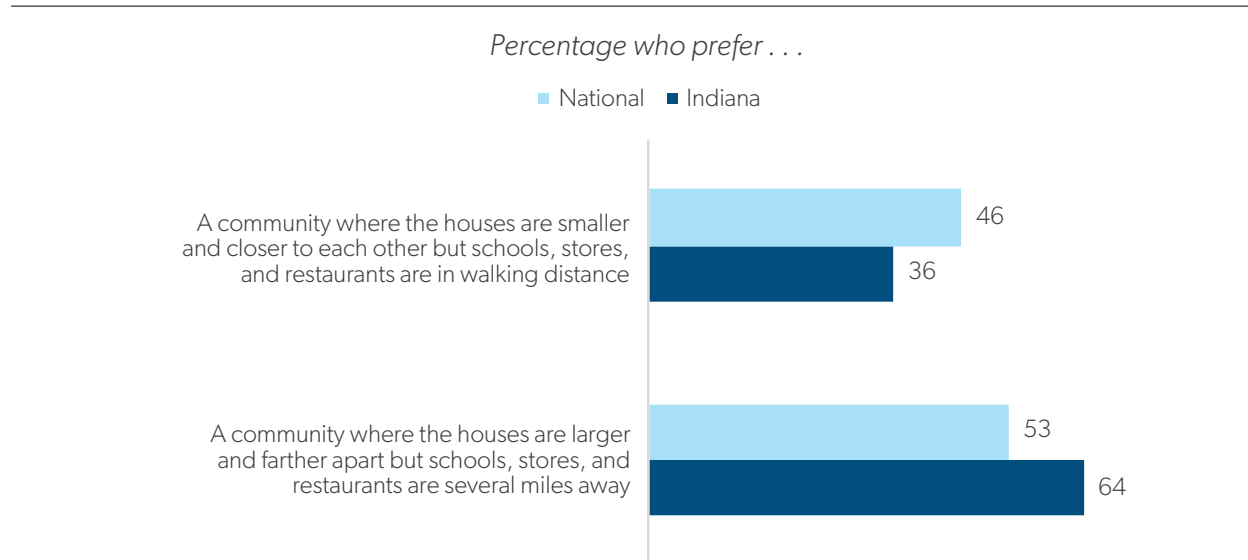
Compared to Americans overall, Hoosiers are more likely to report currently living in the same community in which they were raised. Forty percent of Hoosiers say they live in the community where they were raised, compared to 29 percent of Americans overall.

Hoosiers are also somewhat more likely to feel a greater sense of attachment to the place where they live and the people in it. About one-quarter (24 percent) of Hoosiers say they feel very closely connected to their current town or city, compared to 18 percent of Americans nationally.

Indiana residents differ in the communities they prefer, largely mirroring the same divisions found among the American public overall. Only 16 percent say they would prefer to live in a city. About one-third (31 percent) of Hoosiers say they would most prefer to live in a suburb, and more than half would choose a small town (27 percent) or rural area (26 percent). Notably, younger Hoosiers are more likely than young Americans overall are to express a preference for city living (27 percent vs. 20 percent).

Reflecting the less-urban landscape of the state, Indiana residents generally prefer larger domiciles with larger lots even if it means having less access to neighborhood amenities, such as stores and restaurants. (See Figure 16.) Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of Indiana residents say they would prefer to live in a community where the houses are larger and farther apart even if it means a longer trip to the store. Among Americans overall, slightly more than half (53 percent) express this preference.

Of all the different types of community amenities and features, Hoosiers value living in a neighborhood with good public schools the most. Nearly six in 10 (59 percent) say living in a community with good public schools is very important to them. Indiana residents value it more than easy access to public parks and green spaces (38 percent); diverse entertainment options (31 percent); close proximity to extended family (29 percent); strong local traditions such as fairs, parades, and festivals (24 percent); and racial and ethnic diversity (20 percent). Like Americans overall, even fewer Hoosiers say living in a place where people share their religious beliefs (11 percent) or political views (7 percent) is a

**Figure 16. Hoosiers Prefer Communities with Homes That Are Larger and Farther Apart**

Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults ( $N = 3,663$ ). Survey of Indiana adults ( $N = 1,608$ ). Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019; and Indiana Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

very important consideration for them when choosing a place to live.

### How Indiana Residents Rate Their Community

In general, Indiana residents have more positive feelings about their communities than Americans living in other states do. (See Figure 17.) Nearly half (46 percent) of Indiana residents say the description “good place to raise a family” describes their community very well. Forty percent of Americans overall say the same.

At the same time, Indiana residents lag midwesterners overall. Fifty percent of Americans living in the Midwest say a “good place to raise a family” describes their community well. There are important differences across community types. More than half (53 percent) of suburban Indiana residents say that being a good place to raise a family is a very apt description of their community, but only 30 percent of urban residents in the state share this view.

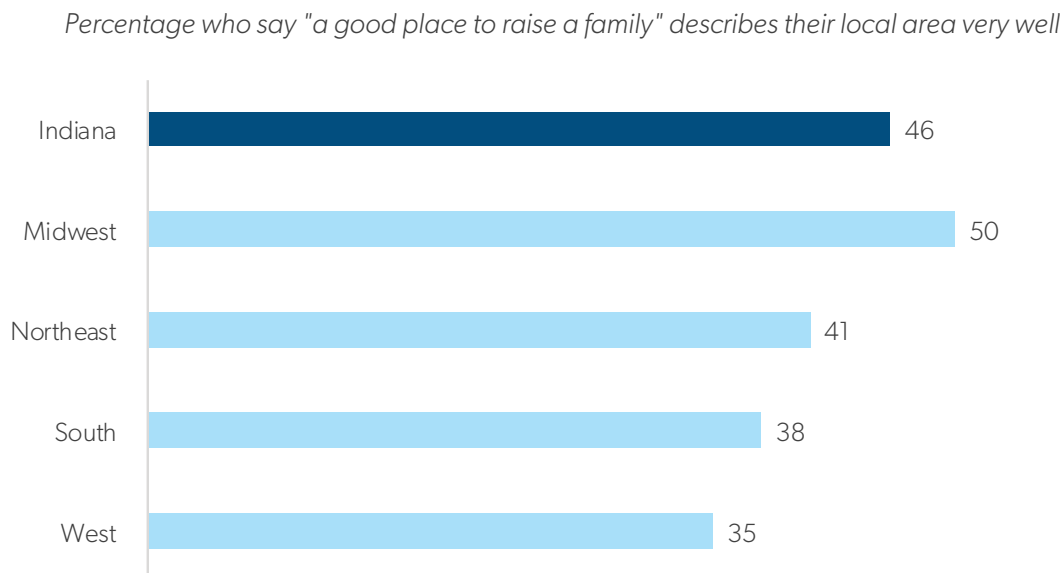
Indiana residents are more likely than Americans overall are to say the phrase “a place where people look out for each other” describes their community

very well (27 percent vs. 20 percent). This is similar to the rate with which midwesterners express this view. Rural Indiana residents are particularly likely to describe their communities this way; 42 percent say this describes their community very well.

Indiana residents have more positive impressions of their community’s public schools than the American public at large does. Forty percent of Indiana residents say “a place with good public schools” describes their community very well. About one-third (32 percent) of Americans overall say the same. Suburban Indiana residents are even more likely to say they live in a community with good public schools. Nearly half (47 percent) of Hoosiers living in suburban neighborhoods say a place with good public schools is a very good description of their community. Nationally, fewer than four in 10 (39 percent) suburban Americans express this view.

Hoosiers have a more positive outlook about economic opportunities in the state than Americans overall do. About one-quarter (24 percent) of Indiana residents—and 20 percent of midwesterners—say “a good place to start a business” is a very good description of their community. Seventeen percent of Americans overall express this view.

**Figure 17. Almost Half of Hoosiers Say the Statement “A Good Place to Raise a Family” Describes Their Local Area Very Well**



Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults ( $N = 3,663$ ). Survey of Indiana adults ( $N = 1,608$ ). Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019; and Indiana Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

Thirty percent of Indiana residents say “a place where everyone has equal opportunities to get ahead” describes their communities very well. This sentiment is shared by one-quarter of midwesterners and 23 percent of Americans as whole. Notably, this view is shared roughly equally across different community types in Indiana: urban, rural, suburban, and small towns.

Indiana residents are generally more positive about the quality of life in their communities. They also seem to be positive about the economic climate. When asked what the biggest strength of the economy in their local area was, the top response was a wide variety of job opportunities (32 percent). In another question, when we asked respondents to look ahead five years, Hoosiers were slightly more optimistic about the availability of jobs going forward. Thirty-seven percent of Indiana residents and 32 percent of Americans overall say they expected them to get better in five years. Equal numbers of Hoosiers (15 percent) and Americans (15 percent) expect them to get worse.

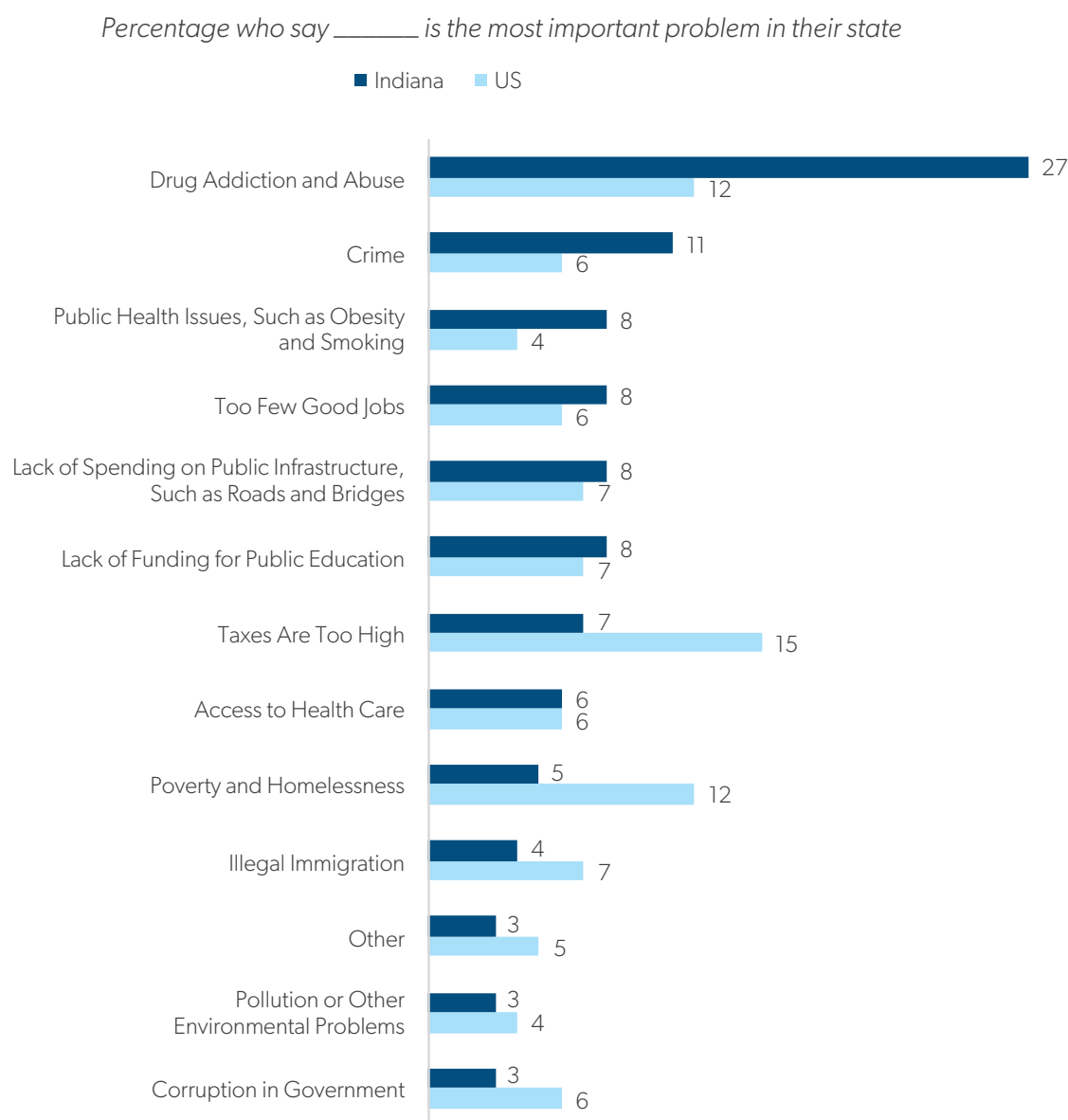
### Employers Giving Back

Indiana residents are not much more likely than Americans overall are to live in a community where one industry or employer plays an outsized role in the local economy. Seventeen percent of Indiana residents live in an area where one employer or industry is particularly important to the local economy. Fifteen percent of Americans overall say the same.

However, Indiana residents generally perceive employers as being more committed to the communities where they are located. Roughly one-quarter (24 percent) of Hoosiers say local employers give back to their communities, compared to 16 percent among the public overall.

### Indiana’s Challenges Mirror Those of the US

Regarding major problems facing the state, one issue stands above the rest. Out of 12 potential problems facing the state—such as taxation, pollution, crime,

**Figure 18. Hoosiers Say the Most Important Problems in Indiana Are Drug Addiction and Abuse**

Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of US adults ( $N = 3,663$ ). Survey of Indiana adults ( $N = 1,608$ ). Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019; and Indiana Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

and corruption—drug addiction and abuse are mentioned by more residents than any other issue as the most important challenges facing their state. (See Figure 18.) Twenty-seven percent in Indiana (compared to 12 percent of Americans overall) say drug addiction and abuse are the most important state problems. Eleven percent of Indiana residents say crime is the

number one problem facing the state. Fewer Hoosiers mention lack of good jobs (8 percent), lack of funding for public education (8 percent), or public health issues, such as obesity and smoking (8 percent). Notably, compared to Americans nationally, Indiana residents are half as likely to cite poverty (12 percent vs. 5 percent) and taxes (15 percent vs. 7 percent).

A common narrative is that drug addiction plagues small towns and rural areas. In Indiana, there were only modest differences between community types here in the percentage of those who say drug addiction and abuse are the most important problems in their state: 23 percent of city dwellers, 25 percent of suburbanites, 31 percent of those in small towns, and 29 percent in rural areas. Drug addiction and abuse are still ranked as the most important problems for all these areas in Indiana.

Underscoring the concern about drug addiction and abuse, 44 percent of Indiana residents say they are major problems in their local community, which is slightly higher than among the public overall (39 percent). Twenty-two percent of Hoosiers say poverty is a major problem in their community (compared to 26 percent of Americans). Indiana residents are about half as likely as the public overall is to say availability of affordable housing is a major problem where they live (20 percent vs. 37 percent). There is an even larger gap between urban Indiana residents and Americans living in other urban areas. Less than one-third of Indiana residents living in an urban area cite lack of affordable housing as a major problem, compared to about half (49 percent) of Americans overall. Significantly fewer Hoosiers cite racial tensions as a major concern. Twelve percent of Hoosiers say racial tensions where they live are a major problem, although black residents are roughly three times more likely than white residents are to cite this as a major concern (32 percent vs. 9 percent).

### **Economic Factors: Trade, Technology, and Immigration**

Indiana residents are four times more likely than all Americans are to say free trade agreements help rather than hurt the local economy where they live (48 percent vs. 12 percent). Notably, they are also twice as likely to say that free trade agreements help as opposed to hurt workers (38 percent vs. 19 percent). There is more agreement among Hoosiers that tariffs hurt local economies and workers. Roughly four in 10 say tariffs on goods from other countries

are bad for the local economy (39 percent) and bad for workers (42 percent).

Despite the generally negative views Hoosiers have about tariffs, they are more likely than Americans nationally are to say they benefit the local economy (24 percent vs. 17 percent). (See Figure 19.)

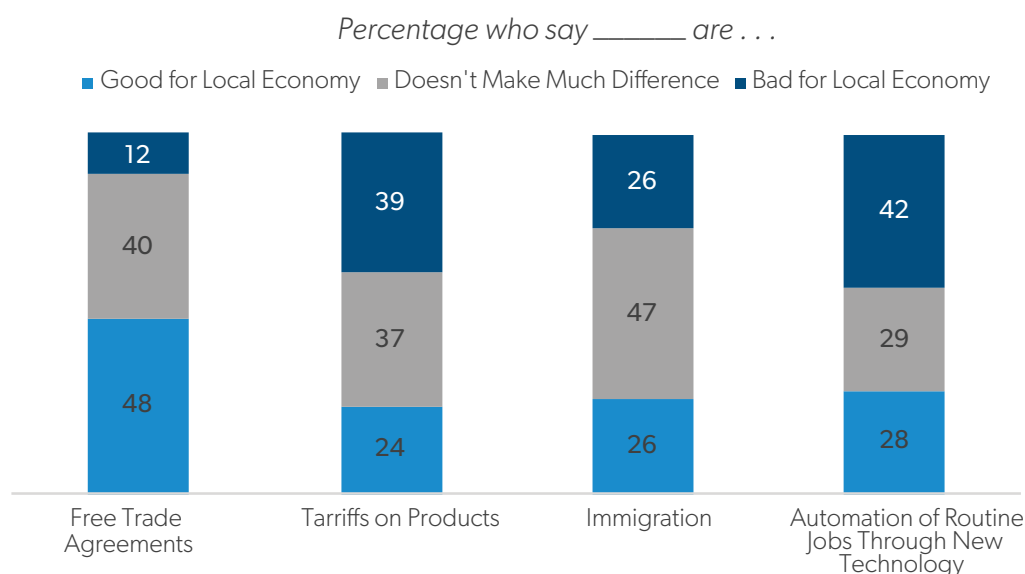
Compared to Americans nationally, Indiana residents express more negative views about how immigration affects workers and the local community. More Indiana residents say immigration is bad for workers than say it is good (30 percent vs. 21 percent), although nearly half (48 percent) say it does not make much of a difference. Residents of the state are split over whether immigration is helpful (26 percent) or harmful (26 percent) to the local economy. Again, close to half (47 percent) say immigration does not have much of an effect on the local economy.

Workers in Indiana have mixed views of the effects of automation. Nearly half (47 percent) say automation benefits workers, while about half as many (25 percent) say it is harmful. There is a narrower gap in perceptions of its impact on the local economy, but Hoosiers are more likely to say it hurts (42 percent) than say it helps (28 percent) the economy where they live. (See Figure 20.)

### **Indiana Prospects: An Entrepreneurial Culture?**

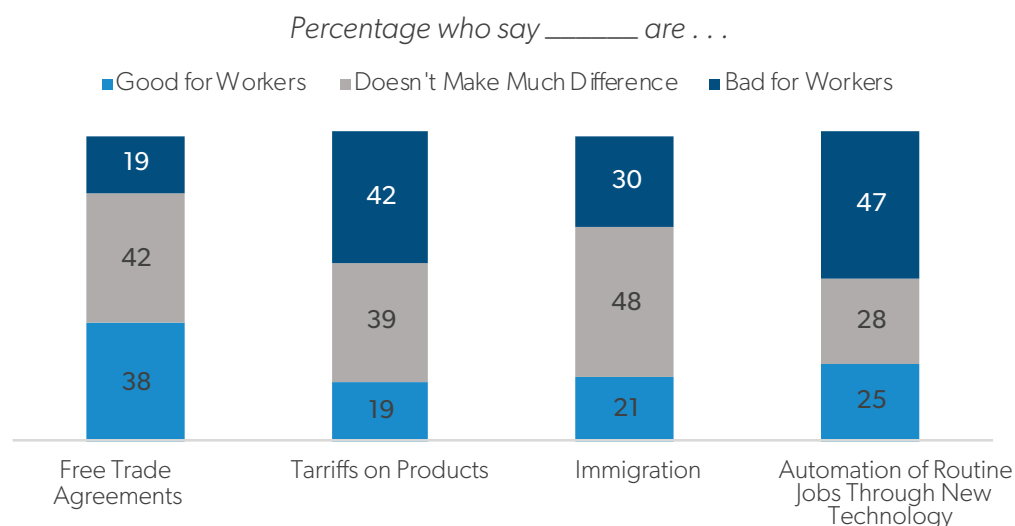
A recent American Enterprise Institute report focuses on economic dynamism.<sup>5</sup> The author makes the point that social and physical mobility in the US have slowed, directly affecting the kind of opportunities people have to improve their lives. In tandem with this project, the two surveys discussed in this report examine perceptions nationally and in Indiana that could reignite or dampen that spirit.

Indiana residents are slightly less risk averse than the public as a whole is. When asked how they tended to approach decisions about their own careers and personal life, one-quarter (25 percent) of Indiana residents and 20 percent of Americans overall say they were willing to take risks to try to

**Figure 19. Hoosiers Say Free Trade Agreements Are Good for the Local Economy**

Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of Indiana adults ( $N = 1,608$ ).

Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

**Figure 20. Hoosiers Say Automation Is Generally Bad for Workers**

Note: Figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey of Indiana adults ( $N = 1,608$ ).

Source: American Community and Civic Life Survey, October 2019.

get ahead—such as switching jobs, starting a business, or investing aggressively in the stock market. Roughly three-quarters of Americans as a whole (77 percent) and Hoosiers (75 percent) report being

more cautious; they prefer job stability or putting money into savings or safe investment.

As with the public at large, there is a sharp generational division. Nearly one-third (32 percent) of

young adults in the state say they are comfortable taking risks with their career and finances, while only 13 percent of Indiana seniors say the same.

At the same time, entrepreneurs are no more prevalent in Indiana than elsewhere. Twenty percent of Indiana residents and 18 percent of the public as a whole say they started their own business, while another 38 percent in Indiana and 37 percent nationally said they had considered but not actually started one.

### The Importance of Education

Indiana residents are less likely than Americans as a whole are to believe more formal education is needed to succeed in life. Nearly three-quarters of Indiana residents say that a four-year college education is not required to be successful in life, while 63 percent of Americans overall express this view. One-quarter of Indiana residents say graduating high school is all the formal education required for one to get ahead in life. This view may reflect a broader economic reality in the state. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Indiana is among the states with the largest share of employment opportunities that does not require a college education.<sup>6</sup>

There are stark generational divisions in views about the amount of formal education that is required to be successful. Younger residents are less likely to believe that college experience is required than older residents are. More than four in 10 (41 percent) of young Indiana residents say a high school diploma is enough for one to be successful, while only 18 percent of Indiana seniors say the same.

There are no differences along lines of race, ethnicity, religion, or gender, but views diverge between those with contrasting political orientations. Political liberals are more likely to say a college education is necessary than conservatives are. Only 19 percent of liberals in Indiana believe a high school education is sufficient to get ahead in life, a view held by 27 percent of conservatives. More than one in three liberals (34 percent) say a four-year college degree or even more formal education is necessary, compared to 27 percent of conservatives.

### The Nostalgia Impulse

Americans overall have generally positive feelings about the past compared to life today. Indiana residents express an even stronger nostalgia impulse. Nearly nine in 10 (88 percent) Indiana residents agree with the statement that “Americans are spending less quality time with their families than they used to,” including 44 percent who completely agree. A nearly identical majority (87 percent) of Indiana residents agree that “in the past people looked out for one another more than they do today.” Seven in 10 (70 percent) Indiana residents believe that “getting ahead financially” in the US today is more difficult than it was for previous generations. And roughly two-thirds (66 percent) of Hoosiers say that the US is in danger of losing its culture and identity.

### Confidence in Local and National Institutions

Surveys taken in recent years, including the 2019 AEI Survey on Community and Society, show that Americans are more confident in local than national institutions. This same pattern is evident both nationally and among Hoosiers. Fifty-nine percent of Indiana residents say they had a great deal or fair amount of confidence that their city or local government would act in the best interests of the public, while 54 percent of the public express the same opinion. Fifty-seven percent of Indiana residents and the overall public express a great deal or some confidence in college or university professors.

Slightly more than half (51 percent) of Hoosiers and Americans at large (52 percent) have at least some confidence in their local news media. Fifty-three percent of Indiana residents and slightly fewer Americans (46 percent) report having a fair or a great deal of confidence in religious leaders to act in the best interests of the public. Hoosiers and Americans nationally express far less confidence in the national news media and the federal government: Only one-third of Indiana residents express at least some confidence that

both would act in the public interest (33 percent and 33 percent, respectively).

Indiana, being a more Republican-leaning state, reports higher confidence in the Republican Party (41 percent) than all Americans do (29 percent) and lower confidence in the Democratic Party (34 percent, compared to 37 percent of Americans). Forty-six percent of Hoosiers had a great deal (22 percent) or a fair amount of (24 percent) confidence in Donald Trump to act in the public interest. Among all Americans, just 32 percent had confidence in the president.

## Conclusion

A lot has happened over the past six months. With an upcoming presidential election, an ongoing national health crisis, and continual economic pain, the next six months may be even more eventful. This new report suggests that despite these changes, the public shares many of the same desires and aspirations regarding their communities.

Although the state of Indiana is in many ways economically and culturally distinct from the wider US, Hoosiers share many of the same concerns and values as the public overall does. Americans overall and Hoosiers in particular are more likely to trust local institutions over national ones, particularly regarding the press. Among both the public at large and residents of Indiana, there is evidence of risk taking and entrepreneurial activity. Despite the historic importance of manufacturing to Indiana's economy Hoosiers generally share the same view as the public as a whole does

that trade, immigration, and technology have been a net positive for local workers.

That said, some distinctions are worth noting. Hoosiers are more likely to prefer residencies that are farther apart from their neighbors, and they place less emphasis on formal education as a means of getting ahead in life. In a state that has been ravaged by the opioid epidemic, Hoosiers are also more likely to express concerns about illicit drug use in their communities.

## Acknowledgments

This report was made possible through generous funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. in partnership with the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership.

## About the Authors

**Daniel A. Cox** is a research fellow in polling and public opinion at the American Enterprise Institute, where he specializes in survey research, politics, youth culture and identity, and religion.

**Karlyn Bowman**, a senior fellow at AEI, compiles and analyzes American public opinion using available polling data on a variety of subjects.

**Jacqueline Clemence** is a research associate in political and public opinion studies at the American Enterprise Institute, where she focuses on survey research and analyzing public opinion.

# Appendix A. Topline Questionnaire

*Note: All results shown are percentages. An asterisk (\*) replaces percentages greater than zero but less than 0.5 percent. Responses may not total to 100 percent due to rounding.*

## National Sample

Total N = 3,663 Adults

Interview Dates: October 7–22, 2019

Margin of Error: +/- 1.8 Percentage Points

## Indiana Sample

Total N = 1,608 Adults

Interview Dates: October 7–30, 2019

Margin of Error: +/- 3.4 Percentage Points

### ASK ALL:

Q.1 Do you feel that your local area, in general, is headed in the right direction, or do you think things are seriously off on the wrong track?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
66	69	Right direction
33	31	Wrong track
1	*	Refused

Q.2 Do you currently live in the community in which you grew up, live within a two-hour drive from where you grew up, or do you live farther away than that?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
29	40	Live in the community in which you grew up
28	32	Live within two-hour drive
42	27	Live farther away
1	*	Refused

### ASK IF CURRENTLY LIVES IN COMMUNITY WHERE GREW UP [N = 950; N = 630]:

Q.3 And have you live in or near this community your entire life, or have you lived in other places?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
63	64	Lived in or near this community my entire life
37	36	Lived in other places
*	0	Refused

### ASK ALL:

Q.4 How closely connected do you feel to the current town or city you live in and the people who live there?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
18	24	Very close
43	43	Somewhat close
28	24	Not too close
11	9	Not at all close
1	*	Refused

Q.5 How comfortable would you be leaving the door to your house or apartment unlocked at night?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
10	14	Very comfortable
23	23	Somewhat comfortable
25	24	Not too comfortable
41	39	Not at all comfortable
1	*	Refused

Q.6 Now, please tell me whether each of the following statements describes your local area very well, somewhat well, not very well, or not well at all. It is . . . **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

A. A place where people look out for each other

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
20	27	Very well
55	50	Somewhat well
19	17	Not very well
5	6	Not well at all
1	*	Refused

B. A good place to raise a family

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
40	46	Very well
45	40	Somewhat well
10	9	Not very well
3	4	Not well at all
1	*	Refused

C. A good place to retire

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
27	30	Very well
44	44	Somewhat well
20	17	Not very well
8	8	Not well at all
2	*	Refused

D. A good place to start a business

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
17	24	Very well
48	45	Somewhat well
26	21	Not very well
7	9	Not well at all
2	*	Refused

E. A place where all types of people have equal opportunity to get ahead

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
23	30	Very well
50	46	Somewhat well
20	18	Not very well
6	6	Not well at all
1	*	Refused

F. A place with good public schools

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
33	40	Very well
46	40	Somewhat well
15	13	Not very well
5	6	Not well at all
1	*	Refused

G. A place with a strong economy

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
20	25	Very well
50	50	Somewhat well
22	18	Not very well
6	7	Not well at all
1	*	Refused

H. A place I feel safe walking around alone at night

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
27	32	Very well
45	41	Somewhat well
18	17	Not very well
9	10	Not well at all
1	*	Refused

I. A place with easy access to public parks, green spaces, or outdoor recreation areas

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
47	49	Very well
39	38	Somewhat well
10	9	Not very well
3	3	Not well at all
1	*	Refused

- Q.7 If you could live in anywhere in the United States that you wanted to, would you prefer a city, a suburban area, a small town, or a rural area?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
16	16	City
36	31	Suburban area
28	27	Small town
20	26	Rural area
1	0	Refused

- Q.8 Would you prefer to live in . . . **[ROTATE OPTIONS]**

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
53	64	A community where the houses are larger and farther apart, but schools, stores, and restaurants are several miles away
46	36	A community where the houses are smaller and closer to each other, but schools, stores, and restaurants are within walking distance
1	*	Refused

- Q.9 Regardless of whether you think each of the following is a problem in our country . . . How much, if at all, is each of the following a problem in YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

A. Availability of affordable housing

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
37	20	Major problem
44	47	Minor problem
18	32	Not a problem
1	*	Refused

B. Access to grocery stores

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
6	8	Major problem
23	25	Minor problem
70	67	Not a problem
1	*	Refused

C. Drug abuse and addiction

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
39	44	Major problem
48	44	Minor problem
11	13	Not a problem
1	*	Refused

## D. Poverty

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
26	22	Major problem
55	56	Minor problem
17	22	Not a problem
1	*	Refused

## E. Racial tensions

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
14	12	Major problem
49	49	Minor problem
36	39	Not a problem
1	*	Refused

Q.10 In your local community, do you have a coffee shop, bar, restaurant, park, or other public place that you go to regularly?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
67	71	Yes
32	29	No
1	*	Refused

**ASK IF HAS A PLACE IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY THEY GO TO REGULARLY [N = 2,452; N = 1,105]:**

Q.11 When you go there, do you generally recognize other people from your community who go there, or do you not generally recognize other people there?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
62	65	Yes, recognize other people there
38	35	No, do not recognize other people there
*	0	Refused

**ASK ALL:**

Q.12 Regardless of whether each of the following is available where you currently live . . . How important is it to you, personally, to live in a community . . . [RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

## A. That has good public schools

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
53	59	Very important
29	28	Somewhat important
10	8	Not too important
7	6	Not at all important
1	*	Refused

## B. That is close to your extended family

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
24	29	Very important
40	38	Somewhat important
25	24	Not too important
10	8	Not at all important
1	*	Refused

## C. With easy access to public parks and green spaces

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
37	38	Very important
46	46	Somewhat important
13	12	Not too important
3	4	Not at all important
1	*	Refused

## D. Where most people share your political views

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
7	7	Very important
31	30	Somewhat important
41	41	Not too important
20	22	Not at all important
1	*	Refused

## E. Where most people share your religious beliefs

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
8	11	Very important
26	27	Somewhat important
36	38	Not too important
29	25	Not at all important
1	*	Refused

## F. That has a mix of more well-off and less well-off people

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
11	10	Very important
41	42	Somewhat important
36	38	Not too important
10	10	Not at all important
1	*	Refused

G. That has strong local traditions like fairs, parades, and festivals

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
17	24	Very important
46	46	Somewhat important
28	24	Not too important
7	6	Not at all important
1	*	Refused

H. That has a wide variety of different entertainment options, such as restaurants, bars, and theaters

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
29	31	Very important
46	46	Somewhat important
19	18	Not too important
4	5	Not at all important
1	*	Refused

**ASK FORM 1 [N = 1,827; N = 800]:**

I. Where most people share your racial or ethnic background

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
8	9	Very important
25	28	Somewhat important
41	40	Not too important
25	23	Not at all important
1	*	Refused

**ASK FORM 2 [N = 1,836; N = 807]:**

J. That is racially or ethnically diverse

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
23	20	Very important
38	42	Somewhat important
27	27	Not too important
10	10	Not at all important
1	0	Refused

**ASK ALL:**

Q.13 To get ahead in life, how much formal education do you think a person needs?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
17	25	A high school diploma
46	48	Some college education or trade school experience
28	21	A four-year college degree
8	6	A post graduate degree
1	0	Refused

Q.14 Do you think it's still possible to start out poor in this country, work hard, and become rich?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
82	86	Possible
17	14	Not possible
1	*	Refused

Q.15 Do you think that people who grew up in middle class households are more likely to move up the economic ladder during their lifetime, move down, or stay about the same?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
35	36	Move up
7	7	Move down
56	57	Stay about the same
2	*	Refused

Q.16 Which of the following statements better describes how you tend to approach decisions about your career and personal finances? **[ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS]**

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
20	25	Willing to take risks to try to get ahead – to do things like switch jobs, start a business, or invest aggressively in the stock market
77	75	Tend to be more cautious – to prefer job stability, put money in savings or safe investments, etc.
2	*	Refused

Q.17 Which of the following comes closest to your own views, even if neither is exactly right? **[ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS]**

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
77	77	It's more important to always follow the rules even if it means you may be less successful in life
21	23	It's more important to get ahead even if it means bending or breaking the rules from time to time
2	*	Refused

Q.18 Have you ever considered starting your own business?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
18	20	Yes, and I have started my own business
37	38	Yes, have considered it, but have not started my own
44	42	No, have not considered it
1	*	Refused

Q. 19 Looking ahead 5 years, do you expect the availability of jobs where you live to . . .

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
32	37	Get better
15	15	Get worse
51	47	Stay about the same
1	*	Refused

Q.20 What, if any, is the biggest strength of the economy in your local area? [RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1-6; ANCHOR OPTIONS 7 AND 8 AT END OF LIST]

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
6	6	Innovation and entrepreneurship
6	5	Natural resources
9	7	A highly educated workforce
24	32	Wide variety of job opportunities
15	7	Tourism and local attractions
17	20	Good quality of life for workers
3	4	Other [SPECIFY]
19	19	None of these
2	*	Refused

Q.21 Thinking about your local community's economy, would you say that there is one main industry or employer that is particularly important to the local economy, or that a mix of different industries and employers are important to the local economy?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
15	17	One main industry or employer
84	83	A mix of different industries and employers
2	*	Refused

Q.22 How much, if at all, do the major employers in your local area give back to the community?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
16	24	A lot
50	49	Some
25	22	Little
7	5	Nothing at all
2	*	Refused

**ASK FORM 1 [N = 1,827; N = 800]:**

Q.23 Do you think each of the following is generally good for workers in your local area, bad for the workers in your local area, or doesn't make much difference either way? [RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

## A. Free trade agreements

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
37	38	Good for workers in your local area
14	19	Bad for workers in your local area
46	42	Doesn't make much difference either way
3	1	Refused

## B. Tariffs on products imported from other countries

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
14	19	Good for workers in your local area
44	42	Bad for workers in your local area
41	39	Doesn't make much difference either way
2	*	Refused

## C. Immigration

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
27	21	Good for workers in your local area
26	30	Bad for workers in your local area
46	48	Doesn't make much difference either way
2	1	Refused

## D. Automation of routine jobs through new technology

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
20	25	Good for workers in your local area
42	47	Bad for workers in your local area
36	28	Doesn't make much difference either way
2	1	Refused

**ASK FORM 2 [N = 1,836; N = 807]:**

Q.24 Do you think each of the following is generally good for the economy in your local area, bad for the local economy, or doesn't make much difference either way? [RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

## A. Free trade agreements

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
46	48	Good for your local economy
11	12	Bad for your local economy
40	40	Doesn't make much difference either way
3	1	Refused

## B. Tariffs on products imported from other countries

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
17	24	Good for your local economy
45	39	Bad for your local economy
36	37	Doesn't make much difference either way
3	*	Refused

## C. Immigration

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
35	26	Good for your local economy
23	26	Bad for your local economy
40	47	Doesn't make much difference either way
2	*	Refused

## D. Automation of routine jobs through new technology

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
25	28	Good for your local economy
39	42	Bad for your local economy
33	29	Doesn't make much difference either way
2	*	Refused

**ASK ALL:**

Q.25 In your view, has this country been successful more because of its . . . [ROTATE OPTIONS]

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
62	60	Ability to change
36	39	Reliance on long-standing principles
3	*	Refused

Q.26 Which of these statements best describes your opinion about the United States?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
24	33	The U.S. stands above all other countries in the world
54	51	The U.S. is one of the greatest countries in the world, along with some others
19	15	There are other countries better than the U.S.
2	*	Refused

**Now a few questions about you . . .**

Q.27 What is your present religion, if any?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
30	33	Protestant (Baptist, Methodist, Non-denominational, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Episcopalian, Reformed, Church of Christ, Jehovah's Witness, etc.)
22	17	Roman Catholic (Catholic)
2	1	Mormon (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints/LDS)
*	1	Orthodox (Greek, Russian, or some other orthodox church)
2	*	Jewish (Judaism)
*	1	Muslim (Islam)
1	1	Buddhist
1	*	Hindu
6	3	Atheist (do not believe in God)
5	6	Agnostic (not sure if there is a God)
12	13	Nothing in particular
13	19	Just Christian
1	1	Unitarian (Universalist)
4	4	Something else [SPECIFY]
2	1	Refused

**ASK IF PROTESTANT, CATHOLIC, MORMON, ORTHODOX, OR SOMETHING ELSE [N = 2,606; N = 1,212]:**

Q.28 Would you describe yourself as a "born-again" or evangelical Christian, or not?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
36	43	Yes
64	57	No
1	0	Refused

**ASK ALL:**

Q.29 Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
9	9	More than once a week
19	23	Once a week
7	9	Once or twice a month
14	13	A few times a year
22	20	Seldom
27	26	Never
2	*	Refused

- Q.30 In general, how often, if at all, do you participate in a non-religious group or organization in your community, such as a sports team, book club, PTA (Parent/Teacher Association), neighborhood association, or political organization?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
4	6	More than once a week
6	5	Once a week
10	12	Once or twice a month
13	15	A few times a year
25	24	Seldom
40	38	Never
2	*	Refused

- Q.31 How do you feel about different aspects of your life? How often, if ever, do you feel . . .  
[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

A. Lonely or isolated from those around you

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
5	7	All or nearly all the time
12	13	Most of the time
31	34	Once in a while
29	26	Hardly ever
22	20	Never
2	*	Refused

B. You are too busy to enjoy life

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
5	5	All or nearly all the time
16	19	Most of the time
38	35	Once in a while
24	24	Hardly ever
16	17	Never
2	*	Refused

C. You have people you can rely on

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
33	32	All or nearly all the time
39	41	Most of the time
17	16	Once in a while
7	7	Hardly ever
3	3	Never
1	*	Refused

D. There are few people you can trust

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
16	16	All or nearly all the time
29	33	Most of the time
27	26	Once in a while
19	16	Hardly ever
7	8	Never
2	1	Refused

Q.32 What was the marital status of your parents during most of the time you were growing up?  
Were they . . .

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
72	71	Married
12	13	Divorced
3	3	Separated
2	2	Widowed
9	10	Never married
1	*	Refused

Q.33 Which of the following applies to the education level of your parents?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
18	15	Both have at least a college degree
20	20	Only one has a college degree
61	64	Neither has a college degree
1	*	Refused

Q.34 Growing up in your family was it generally expected that you would go to college after high school or was it generally expected you would get a full-time job after high school?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
41	38	Go to a four-year college
9	7	Go to a community college
5	5	Enter a trade school or vocational program
17	23	Immediately get a job
26	26	Family did not talk about it
2	1	Refused

Q.35 Thinking about your family's financial situation when you were growing up, how often did your family struggle to pay bills or make ends meet?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
22	25	Often
37	36	Sometimes
25	25	Rarely
15	14	Never
1	*	Refused

Q.36 Now, please read the following statements on a few different topics and say if you agree or disagree with each one. [RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

A. These days, Americans are spending less quality time with their families than they used to

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
36	44	Completely agree
49	44	Mostly agree
12	9	Mostly disagree
1	3	Completely disagree
2	*	Refused

B. Modern life has become too complicated and difficult

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
15	19	Completely agree
47	42	Mostly agree
30	32	Mostly disagree
5	6	Completely disagree
2	*	Refused

C. In the past, people looked out for each other more than they do today

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
35	41	Completely agree
47	46	Mostly agree
14	10	Mostly disagree
2	2	Completely disagree
2	*	Refused

D. Today, America is in danger of losing its culture and identity

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
24	24	Completely agree
38	42	Mostly agree
27	27	Mostly disagree
9	7	Completely disagree
2	*	Refused

E. For most people today, getting ahead financially is harder than it was for previous generations

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
28	29	Completely agree
44	41	Mostly agree
23	24	Mostly disagree
3	5	Completely disagree
2	*	Refused

Q.37 Which statement comes closer to your own views, even if neither is exactly right? **[ROTATE OPTIONS]**

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
63	64	New technology makes life easier
35	36	New technology makes life more complicated
2	*	Refused

Q.38 Do you think the Internet does more to bring people together, or do you think the Internet does more to isolate people from one another? **[ROTATE OPTIONS]**

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
61	59	Isolate people from one another
37	41	Bring people together
2	*	Refused

Q.39 How much confidence, if any, do you have in each of the following to act in the best interests of the public? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

A. Your city or local government

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
5	8	A great deal of confidence
49	51	Some
34	31	Only a little
9	10	Not at all
3	*	Refused

B. Local news media

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
6	9	A great deal of confidence
46	42	Some
31	31	Only a little
14	17	Not at all
3	1	Refused

C. The federal government

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
2	4	A great deal of confidence
28	29	Some
47	47	Only a little
19	19	Not at all
3	*	Refused

## D. National news media

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
5	5	A great deal of confidence
32	28	Some
34	33	Only a little
27	33	Not at all
2	*	Refused

## E. College and university professors

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
8	10	A great deal of confidence
49	47	Some
27	29	Only a little
14	14	Not at all
3	*	Refused

## F. Religious leaders

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
7	11	A great deal of confidence
39	42	Some
33	31	Only a little
18	15	Not at all
3	1	Refused

## G. The Republican Party

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
7	11	A great deal of confidence
22	30	Some
32	30	Only a little
36	28	Not at all
3	1	Refused

## H. The Democratic Party

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
7	7	A great deal of confidence
30	27	Some
29	28	Only a little
31	38	Not at all
3	1	Refused

## I. Donald Trump

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
14	22	A great deal of confidence
18	24	Some
15	15	Only a little
51	38	Not at all
3	1	Refused

Now, thinking about the state where you currently live . . .

Q.40 What do you think is the MOST important problem in your state? [RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1–12; ANCHOR OPTION 13 AT END OF LIST]

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
6	3	Corruption in government
7	8	Lack of funding for public education
6	11	Crime
7	4	Illegal immigration
7	8	Lack of spending on public infrastructure such as roads and bridges
12	27	Drug addiction and abuse
12	5	Poverty and homelessness
6	6	Access to health care
6	8	Too few good jobs
15	7	Taxes are too high
4	3	Pollution or other environmental problems
4	8	Public health issues, such as obesity and smoking
5	3	Other (Please specify)
2	*	Refused

**ASK IF CURRENTLY LIVES IN INDIANA [N = 1,608]:**

Q.41 Thinking about the state where you live compared to other states, how would you rank your state on each of the following? [RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

## A. Opportunity to get ahead

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
NA	10	One of the top 10 states in the country
NA	49	In the top half, but not one of the top 10
NA	33	In the bottom half, but not one of the bottom 10
NA	8	One of the bottom 10 states
NA	1	Refused

## B. Friendliness of the people

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
NA	20	One of the top 10 states in the country
NA	55	In the top half, but not one of the top 10
NA	19	In the bottom half, but not one of the bottom 10
NA	6	One of the bottom 10 states
NA	*	Refused

## C. The natural environment

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
NA	10	One of the top 10 states in the country
NA	56	In the top half, but not one of the top 10
NA	27	In the bottom half, but not one of the bottom 10
NA	6	One of the bottom 10 states
NA	*	Refused

## D. Access to quality healthcare

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
NA	13	One of the top 10 states in the country
NA	54	In the top half, but not one of the top 10
NA	26	In the bottom half, but not one of the bottom 10
NA	7	One of the bottom 10 states
NA	1	Refused

## E. Overall quality of life

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
NA	13	One of the top 10 states in the country
NA	55	In the top half, but not one of the top 10
NA	25	In the bottom half, but not one of the bottom 10
NA	6	One of the bottom 10 states
NA	1	Refused

## Q.42 Do you think of yourself as a Hoosier, or not?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
NA	73	Yes
NA	27	No
NA	*	Refused

**ASK IF DOES NOT LIVE IN INDIANA [N = 3,613]:**

Now, a few questions about the state of Indiana . . .

Q.43 Have you ever visited the state of Indiana or lived there in the past?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
4	NA	Yes, lived there in the past
27	NA	Yes, visited, but never lived there
68	NA	No
1	NA	Refused

Q.44 Would you say you generally have a favorable or unfavorable view of Indiana?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
69	NA	Favorable
26	NA	Unfavorable
6	NA	Refused

Q.45 Thinking about Indiana compared to other states, how would you rank Indiana on each of the following? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

A. Opportunity to get ahead

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
3	NA	One of the top 10 states in the country
38	NA	In the top half, but not one of the top 10
40	NA	In the bottom half, but not one of the bottom 10
7	NA	One of the bottom 10 states
13	NA	Refused

B. Friendliness of the people

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
6	NA	One of the top 10 states in the country
52	NA	In the top half, but not one of the top 10
25	NA	In the bottom half, but not one of the bottom 10
5	NA	One of the bottom 10 states
12	NA	Refused

C. The natural environment

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
5	NA	One of the top 10 states in the country
45	NA	In the top half, but not one of the top 10
32	NA	In the bottom half, but not one of the bottom 10
6	NA	One of the bottom 10 states
12	NA	Refused

## D. Access to quality healthcare

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
3	NA	One of the top 10 states in the country
39	NA	In the top half, but not one of the top 10
38	NA	In the bottom half, but not one of the bottom 10
7	NA	One of the bottom 10 states
13	NA	Refused

## E. Overall quality of life

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
4	NA	One of the top 10 states in the country
45	NA	In the top half, but not one of the top 10
32	NA	In the bottom half, but not one of the bottom 10
7	NA	One of the bottom 10 states
13	NA	Refused

**ASK ALL:****Now, a few questions about yourself . . .**

Q.46 How would you rate your own personal financial situation? Would you say you are in . . .

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
11	12	Excellent shape
46	41	Good shape
31	33	Only fair shape
11	13	Poor shape
2	*	Refused

Q.47 If you were to lose your main source of income (e.g. job, government benefits), could you cover your expenses for 3 months by borrowing money, using savings, selling assets, or borrowing from friends/family?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
69	65	Yes
29	35	No
2	*	Refused

Q.48 Do you currently live in a city, a suburban area, a small town, or a rural area?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
26	23	City
39	36	Suburban area
19	21	Small town
15	20	Rural area
1	*	Refused

Q.49 Are you currently the parent or guardian of a child or children under the age of 18 now living in your household?

<u>National</u>	<u>Indiana</u>	
26	30	Yes
73	69	No
1	1	Refused

## Appendix B. Survey Methodology: American Community and Civic Life Survey

The American Community and Civic Life Survey was designed and conducted by the Survey Center on American Life, a project of the American Enterprise Institute. Interviews were conducted among a random sample of 3,663 adults (age 18 or older) living in the United States, including all 50 states and the District of Columbia. All interviews were conducted among participants of the web-enabled KnowledgePanel, a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the US general population, not just the online population. Interviewing was conducted between October 7 and October 22, 2019.

Initially, participants are chosen scientifically by a random selection of telephone numbers and residential addresses. Persons in selected households are then invited by telephone or mail to participate in the web-enabled KnowledgePanel. For those who agree to participate but do not already have internet access, Ipsos provides at no cost a laptop and internet

service provider connection. People who already have computers and internet service are permitted to participate using their own equipment. Panelists then receive unique log-in information for accessing surveys online and then are sent emails throughout each month inviting them to participate in research.

The data were weighted to adjust for gender by age, race, education, Census region by metropolitan status, and household income. The sample weighting was accomplished using an iterative proportional fitting (IFP) process that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables.

The use of survey weights in statistical analyses ensures that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the target population. The margin of error for the qualified survey sample is  $\pm 1.8$  percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence. The design effect for the survey is 1.19.

## Appendix C. Survey Methodology: Indiana Community and Civic Life Survey

The Indiana Community and Civic Life Survey was designed and conducted by the Survey Center on American Life, a project of the American Enterprise Institute. Interviews were conducted among a random sample of 1,608 adults (age 18 or older) living in the state of Indiana. All interviews were conducted among participants of the web-enabled KnowledgePanel, a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the US general population, not just the online population. Interviewing was conducted between October 7 and October 30, 2019.

Initially, participants are chosen scientifically by a random selection of telephone numbers and residential addresses. Persons in selected households are then invited by telephone or mail to participate in the web-enabled KnowledgePanel. For those who agree to participate but do not already have internet access, Ipsos provides at no cost a laptop and internet service provider connection. People who already have computers and internet service are permitted to

participate using their own equipment. Panelists then receive unique log-in information for accessing surveys online and then are sent emails throughout each month inviting them to participate in research.

The data were weighted to adjust for gender by age, race, education, Census region by metropolitan status, and household income. The sample weighting was accomplished using an iterative proportional fitting (IFP) process that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables. Weights were trimmed and scaled to sum to the unweighted sample size of all KnowledgePanel Indiana respondents.

The use of survey weights in statistical analyses ensures that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the target population. The margin of error for the qualified survey sample is  $\pm 3.4$  percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence. The design effect for the survey is 1.90.

# Notes

1. Kim Parker et al., “Demographic and Economic Trends in Urban, Suburban and Rural Communities,” Pew Research Center, May 22, 2018, <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2018/05/22/demographic-and-economic-trends-in-urban-suburban-and-rural-communities/>.
2. CBS News, “Do You Think It’s Still Possible to Start Out Poor in the Country, Work Hard, and Become Rich?,” Roper iPoll, February 2000, <https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/ipoll/search?q=USCBS.200002A.Q07&start=2000-01-01>.
3. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of Indiana residents say they would identify themselves as a “Hoosier,” a response that was relatively consistent across lines of race and class.
4. This analysis is based on Americans who do not currently live in Indiana.
5. Mark D. Partridge, “Rural America’s Stagnant Economic Performance,” American Enterprise Institute, February 27, 2020, <https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/rural-americas-stagnant-economic-performance-what-is-the-role-of-declining-dynamism/>.
6. A 2013 US Bureau of Labor Statistics study found that 41.3 percent of employment opportunities in the state of Indiana do not require any college education. Only four states had a larger share. See Elka Torpey and Audrey Watson, “Education Levels and Jobs: Opportunities by State,” US Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 2014, <https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2014/article/education-level-and-jobs.htm>.

© 2020 by the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. All rights reserved.

The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) educational organization and does not take institutional positions on any issues. The views expressed here are those of the author(s).