

The **APCO Reset Indicator** is tracking the United States' evolution through the COVID-19 crisis on three dimensions: where Americans see themselves **today**, who is supporting (or supported) them **during** the pandemic and how they feel about the **future**.

By benchmarking Americans' views on these dimensions and observing changes over time, we are keeping a pulse on recovery efforts and how that can inform businesses' strategy and communications. In addition to tracking monthly changes on these metrics, APCO is exploring exploring key themes around America's reset, including: global differences in recovery, personal privacy, lessons learned and lasting changes to the workplace.

As businesses reopen their doors, employees return to work, families and friends are reunited and policymakers turn to other pressing issues, **a significant majority of the country believes they are still in the crisis or expect a return to the crisis in the coming months.** In the face of this dichotomy, understanding Americans' core sentiments around the recovery—and how that changes over time—is central to helping organizations coming back stronger and remaining resilient long-term.

72% of Americans believe they are still in the crisis (44%) or expect a return to the crisis (28%) in the coming months—regardless of where they are or how severe the COVID-19 outbreak has affected their area.

Initial Findings & What to Watch

In late May 2020, Americans still consider themselves in crisis or are expecting the virus to return. And, while they are personally hopeful and find local organizations and government helpful, their personal confidence does not extend to broad, national matters, such as the economy and government.

Though COVID-19 is a global issue, it is being experienced by individuals and in their local communities. Today, not surprisingly, local leaders are seen as being most impactful, but we anticipate increasing expectations of leaders at the national level as Americans refocus on macro issues like the economy and policy.

Notably, across the Reset Indicator data, there is remarkable consistency in views among Americans, regardless of how COVID-19 has impacted their state.

Organizations at the local level are more likely to be seen as doing the right things to manage the pandemic.

- Among the eight institutions we asked about, schools (68%) and charities (62%) stand out most as doing the right things.
- But when it comes to the role of government, state government (50%) gets significantly more positive marks than the federal government (32%).
- A similar pattern among the private sector: one's own employer (60%) and small- and medium-sized businesses (56%) are more seen as doing the right things than large businesses (42%).

“What we're seeing is a wider awareness of where things get done. During the initial phase of the pandemic, the role of state and local government became more important than ever. I think it's a signal that people are identifying more locally—they see that's where change happens and it will be interesting to watch if this gap continues to grow in the months ahead.”

– Howard Pulchin, Global Creative Director, APCO Worldwide

As Americans look ahead three months from now, they are most optimistic about their own personal outlook.

- 75% are very or somewhat optimistic their mental health.
- 68% are very or somewhat optimistic about their personal financial outlook.
- There is notably little difference in these views across regions impacted differently by the coronavirus.

“ The pandemic has highlighted the issues of mental health. While this data shows optimism among Americans, the issue remains complex and deeply rooted. Data over time will be essential to tracking the ‘long tail’ of the pandemic. ”

– Alex Lazorchak,
North America Healthcare Practice Lead,
APCO Worldwide

But, when it comes to Americans’ broader views about the economy and government, they are decidedly more pessimistic.

- As the nation looks three months out, there is consistent pessimism across the nation about the outlook for U.S. employment (59%) and the American economy (57%) and a sense that government policies (60%) and leadership from elected officials (59%) is lacking.
- Yet, those in states hardest hit with deaths and relatedly now decreasing rates of COVID-19 due in large part to tighter social distancing restrictions, are also most pessimistic about the economy (61% vs 54% in other regions).

“ As Americans grapple with understandable fears and uncertainty surrounding the pandemic and economic recovery, it is more important than ever that national and local leaders send a strong signal with appropriate messages and key policy initiatives that will help to restore confidence. ”

– Frank Lowenstein,
Global Solutions Practice Lead,
APCO Worldwide

As the areas hardest hit by the pandemic begin to loosen restrictions and more and more businesses reopen their doors, we will watch how that influences Americans’ views on the economy and the need for leadership—and potentially how that illuminates opportunities for businesses to step up where government is falling short.

This is just the beginning. [APCO is here to help](#) organizations navigate the complexities of this reset and make informed choices, grounded in insights and data.

We’ve been [tracking Americans’ attitudes about COVID-19](#) since early March and we will continue to build on those insights with the APCO Reset Indicator. In coming months, we will continue to follow changes to the sentiment around these key questions, as well as examine other central issues impacting organizations as they navigate how to come back stronger in this environment.

Visit APCO’s [Come Back Stronger](#) resource page and [blog series](#) for more.



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