

AMERICA SPEAKS!

POLL DATA SUMMARY VOL. 21

RESEARCH
AMERICA
DISCOVERY. INNOVATION. HEALTH.

MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP



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This is an especially important time to gain insight into the public's attitudes towards science and research. Public opinion surveys have long been a vital tool in informing Research!America's mission to advocate for science, discovery, and innovation to achieve better health for all. With this 21st edition of our *Poll Data Summary*, filled with data surveyed during the first year of the pandemic, we believe more than ever that effective advocacy begins with understanding the public's attitudes.

As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public attitudes continues to evolve, a number of key findings have emerged. Seven in 10 Americans say the pandemic is a disruptive event, requiring the U.S. to assign a higher priority to science and technology overall. There is strong support for increasing the percentage of GDP spent on research. In addition, most Americans favor doubling federal spending on medical research, and a majority would be willing to pay more in taxes to support this research. Support for basic research is strong and growing. Across the political spectrum, there is widespread agreement for making faster medical progress an urgent priority.

We have all witnessed the unprecedented spread of misinformation and disinformation amid the pandemic, a phenomenon that has caused confusion and harm. Nonetheless, our surveys suggest that most Americans have confidence in science and nearly half say they

have more trust in it than a year ago. At the same time, we must acknowledge that one in five say that they have less trust. Overall, confidence in doctors, nurses, scientists, and public health officials to act in the best interest of Americans remains high.

The pandemic has showcased what can be accomplished by government and industry stakeholders, and through public-private partnerships, when our nation's research enterprise is called upon to respond. A strong majority of Americans recognize this reality and consider the role of both the private and public sector as equally essential in the development of COVID-19 vaccines.

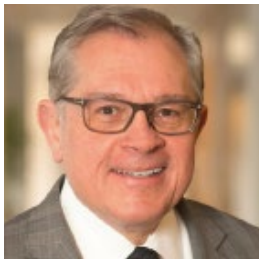
Meanwhile, support for STEM education has significantly increased. Yet many Americans are concerned about the lack of home internet access for children, with many agreeing that ensuring broadband access should be a priority.

Public sentiment is clear: Research can deliver solutions that our nation, and the world, desperately need. Yet the rate of investment in medical and scientific progress is not keeping pace. Americans understand the significance of science and most trust the researchers and scientists at the helm. It's time to take the lessons learned from the pandemic, along with these new cues from the public, and prioritize investments in science and technology for the good of all.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Three in four (73%) say that the COVID-19 pandemic is a disruptive event and requires the United States to assign a higher priority to science and technology.
- Nearly half (46%) of Americans say they have more trust in science than they did a year ago, while over a third (37%) say there has been no change. One in five (18%) say they have less trust in science.
- Two thirds of Americans (67%) — a 14% percentage point drop since 2017 — said they would be likely to participate in a clinical trial if recommended by their doctor.
- 75% of Americans favor doubling spending on medical research over the next five years.
- A strong majority of Americans recognize the value of both public and private research in the development of COVID-19 vaccines, with 80% saying publicly funded research was very or somewhat essential and 81% saying private-sector research was very or somewhat essential.
- Showing an increase of 15 percentage points since 2017, 84% now say that the government should assign a higher priority to improving education focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and careers in those fields.

MESSAGE FROM THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION



By AMA CEO
James L. Madara, MD

and that nearly three in four believe the nation should assign a much higher priority to science and technology.

This year's data reveals strong support among Americans for the cooperative public-private partnership that developed the safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines now being administered nationwide.

It is also notable that 84% of those surveyed support a greater emphasis on education and careers in the fields of science,

The American Medical Association (AMA) is pleased to join Research!America in releasing Volume 21 of the *Poll Data Summary* in the America Speaks series.

In gauging public opinion after a year unlike any other, we are delighted to find that nearly half of those surveyed now place greater trust in science than they did before the pandemic struck,

technology, engineering, and math. That figure represents a jump of 15 percentage points since 2017. Also, a majority of survey respondents favor doubling federal outlays for medical research — and are willing to pay more in taxes if the proceeds are put to that purpose.

As a founding member of Research!America, the AMA is thankful for the opportunity this partnership affords to advance medical and scientific research in support of improved public health.

Our organizations have much in common. Just as we at the AMA work diligently each day to offer advocacy, leadership, and outreach to promote the art and science of medicine and the betterment of public health, our colleagues at Research!America are similarly dedicated to building greater support for science, discovery, and innovation to achieve better health for all through the cure, treatment, and prevention of physical diseases and mental disorders.

The AMA is proud to stand with Research!America and the broad range of institutions, professional societies, and businesses that comprise its membership as we collectively strive toward a healthier nation.

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Look for these indications
throughout this publication:



NEW QUESTION
New question since Poll Data
Summary Volume 20.



DECREASED



INCREASED

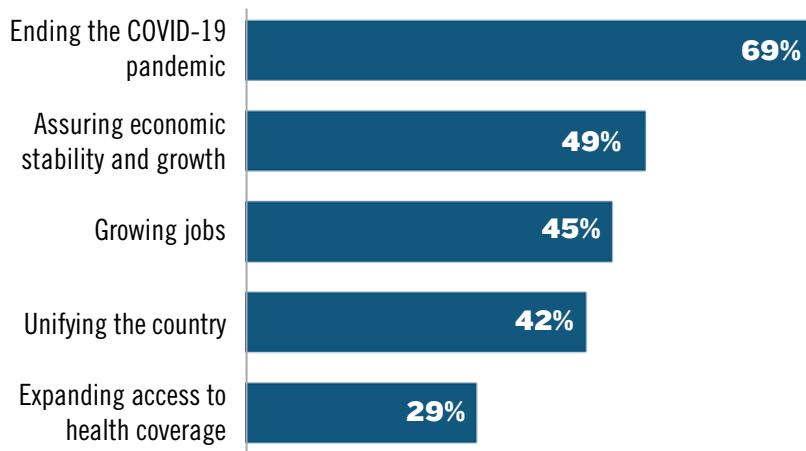
“Science is the U.S. government’s best ally. Renewed investment, coupled with proactive efforts to innovate new solutions, can empower our nation to overcome threats to Americans and people across the globe.”

— Science and Technology Action Committee

AMERICAN PRIORITIES IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

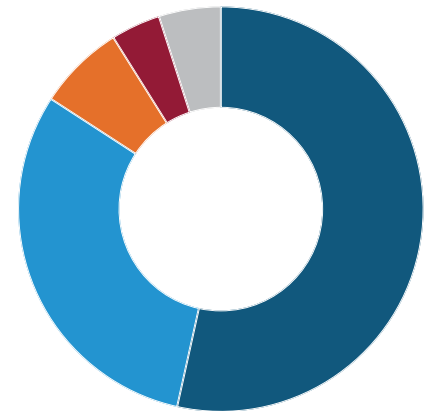
Ending the COVID-19 pandemic tops first 100 days priorities

Please indicate which of the following should be the **top five** priorities for President Biden's and the new Congress' first 100 days in office.



Strong support for making faster medical progress a priority

How important is it for President Biden and the new Congress to assign a higher priority to ensuring faster medical progress?



- 54%** Very important
- 31%** Somewhat important
- 7%** Not too important
- 4%** Not at all important
- 5%** Not sure

NEW

COVID-19 is a disruptive event that merits change

Which statement is closest to your view? **Statement A:** The COVID-19 pandemic is a disruptive event and requires that the United States assign a higher priority to science and technology. **Statement B:** Things will get back to normal soon; we don't need increased efforts in science.



73% Statement A

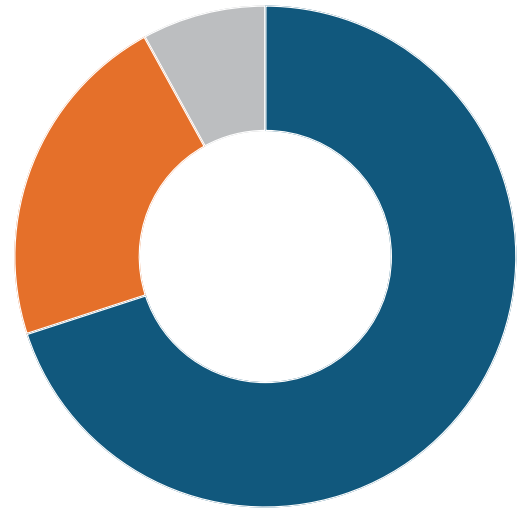
18% Statement B

8% Not sure

NEW

Major changes are needed in our public health systems

Which statement is closest to your view? **Statement A:** The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed that major changes are needed in our public health systems, including more funding. **Statement B:** The COVID-19 pandemic is a once-in-a-lifetime event and existing systems are dealing with it adequately.



70% Statement A

22% Statement B

8% Not sure

Source: A Research!America survey of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in January 2021.

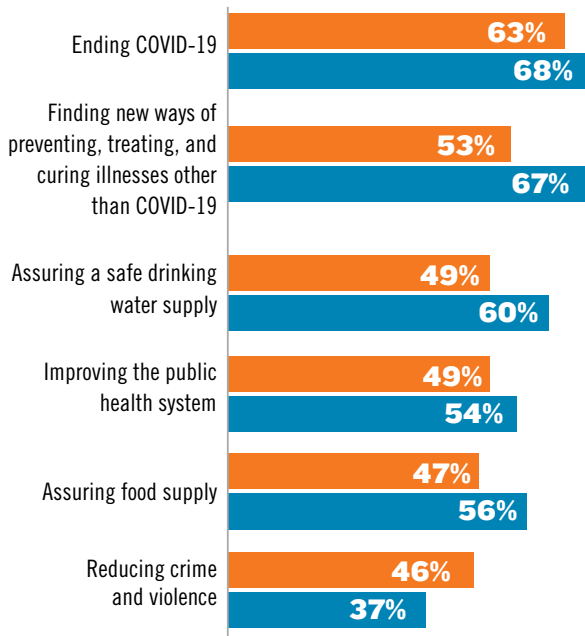
“A robust public health system, one capable of detecting any new health threat and monitoring and responding to it, is an essential component of a resilient health system.”

— **Georges Benjamin, MD**, Executive Director, American Public Health Association

NEW

Urgent priorities for Americans — science can help

How much of a priority are each of the following issues for the United States and how can science, technology, and innovation help address them? (*Top 6 responses*)



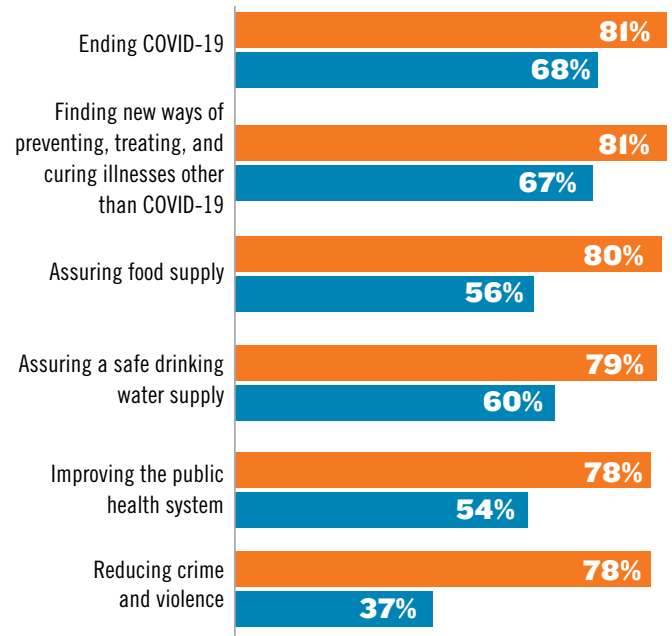
■ % saying, "Urgent priority"

■ % saying, "Science can help a lot"

NEW

Urgent and high priorities for Americans — science can help

How much of a priority are each of the following issues for the United States and how can science, technology, and innovation help address them? (*Top 6 responses*)



■ % saying, "Urgent" or "High" priority

■ % saying, "Science can help a lot"

Source: A Research!America survey of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in August 2020.

"Today's medical discoveries are made possible by strong federal investments in research which help lay the groundwork for tomorrow's medical breakthroughs."

— Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA)

TRUST IN SCIENCE

NEW Only 1 in 5 say their trust in science has declined during the pandemic

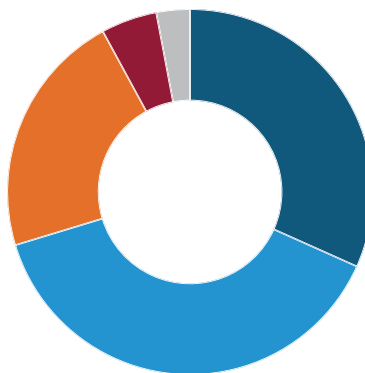
There has been a great deal more attention to science during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some people say that science in general is now more trusted because of this heightened awareness; others disagree. Which would you say applies to you?



- 46%** I have more trust in science than I did a year ago
- 18%** I have less trust in science than I did a year ago
- 37%** There has been no change in my level of trust in science

NEW 7 in 10 Americans think the work of scientists benefits all or most people

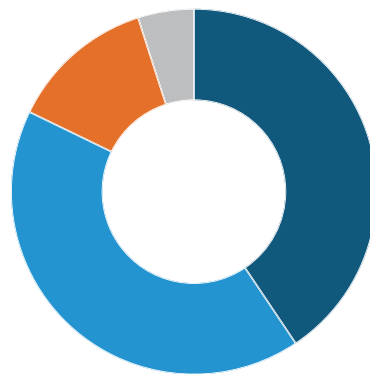
In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits all, most, some, or very few people in this country?



- 32%** All
- 39%** Most
- 22%** Some
- 5%** Very few
- 3%** Not sure

NEW Most Americans think the work of scientists benefits them

In general, to what extent do you think the work that scientists do benefits you?



- 41%** To a great extent
- 42%** Somewhat
- 13%** A little
- 5%** Not sure

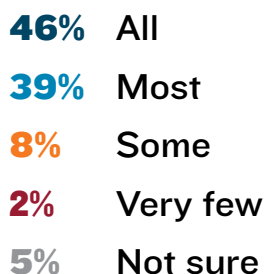
Source: A Research!America survey of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in January 2021.

“Science is always pursuing facts and trying to get to the truth. It’s a sometimes messy process that ultimately gets us to an incredible place where we make dramatic breakthroughs.”

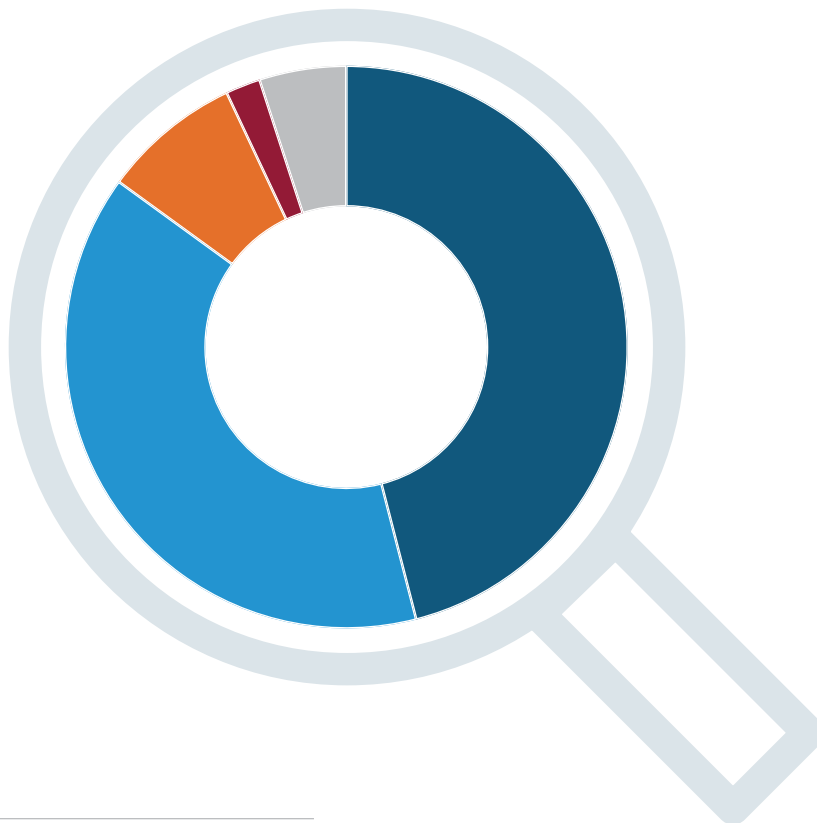
— **William Hait**, MD, PhD, Global Head, Johnson & Johnson External Innovation

Support for basic research is strong

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Even if it brings no immediate benefits, basic scientific research that advances the frontiers of knowledge is necessary and should be supported by the federal government.



85% say they **strongly or somewhat agree** it should be supported by the federal government. This is up from 77% in August 2020, and 80% in January 2019.



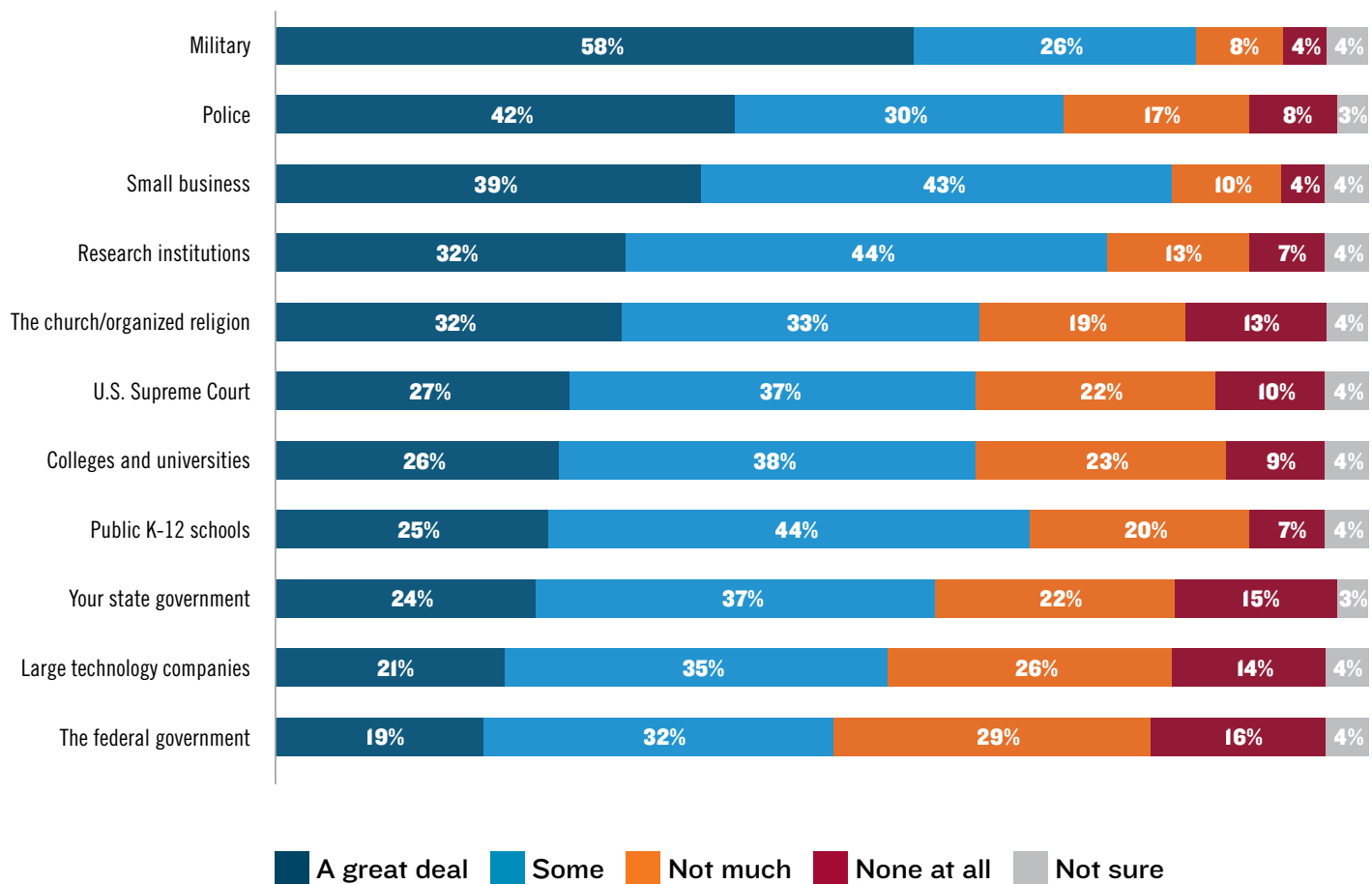
Source: A Research!America survey of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in January 2021.

“Our research enterprise has long been a driver for innovations that have saved lives, inspired entire new industries, and spurred major economic growth...look no further than the rapid and unprecedented development of COVID-19 vaccines, enabled by recent breakthroughs from investing in basic research.”

— Marcia McNutt, PhD, President, National Academy of Sciences

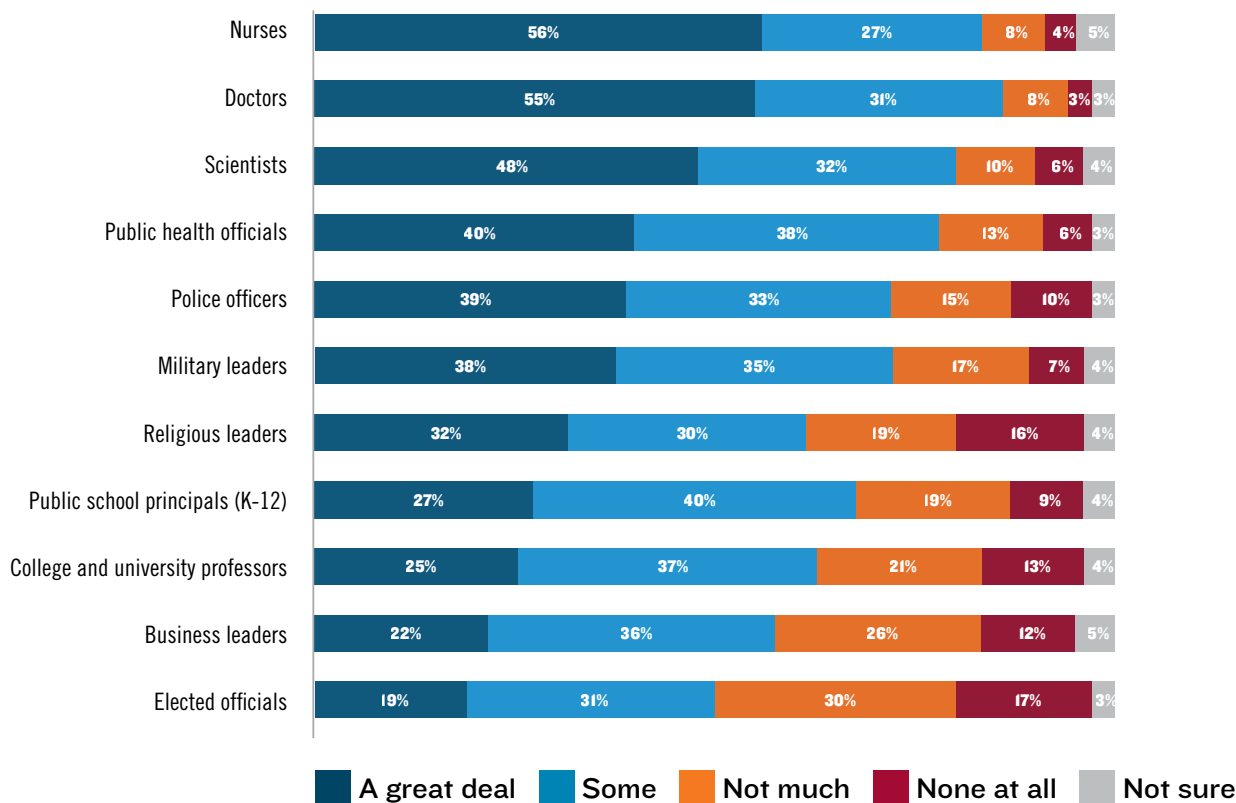
Americans have high confidence in the military, small businesses, and research institutions

How much confidence do you have in each of the following institutions?



Americans have confidence in doctors, nurses, scientists, and public health officials

How much confidence do you have in each of the following to act in your best interest?



Source: A Research!America survey of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in January 2021.

“We must “communicate, communicate, communicate — but in one voice. Leadership at all levels need to display unwavering enthusiasm for science and communicate the importance of scientific advancement like was done for [the response to] Sputnik.”

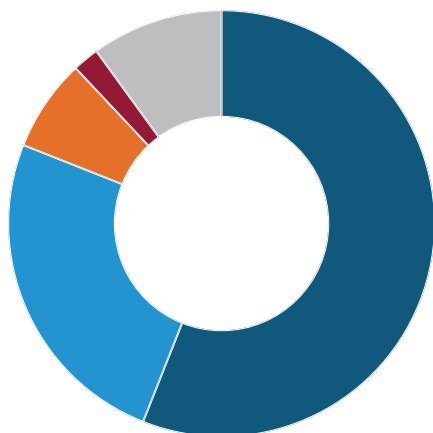
— **Susan Hockfield**, PhD, President Emerita and Professor of Neuroscience, MIT

INVESTING IN MEDICAL & SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS

NEW

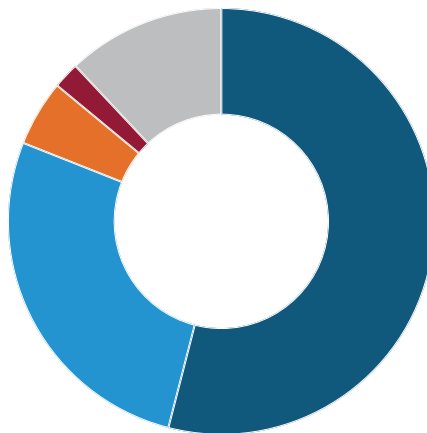
8 in 10 Americans recognize the value of both public and private research in the development of COVID-19 vaccines

To the best of your knowledge, how essential was publicly funded research to the development of COVID-19 vaccines?



56% Very essential
25% Somewhat essential
7% Not too essential
2% Not at all essential
10% Not sure

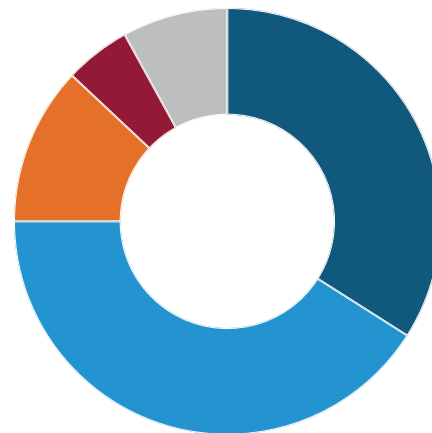
To the best of your knowledge, how essential was private sector funded research to the development of COVID-19 vaccines?



54% Very essential
27% Somewhat essential
5% Not too essential
2% Not at all essential
12% Not sure

75% of Americans favor doubling spending on medical research

Do you favor or oppose doubling federal spending on medical research over the next five years?



34% Strongly favor
41% Somewhat favor
12% Somewhat oppose
5% Strongly oppose
8% Not sure

Source: A Research!America poll of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in January 2021.

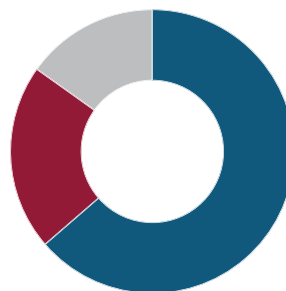
“It doesn't matter where in the world a cure is found; finding a cure is what's important, and that takes research.”

— Cynthia Zagieboylo, President and CEO, National Multiple Sclerosis Society

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6 in 10 Americans willing to pay more in taxes for more medical research

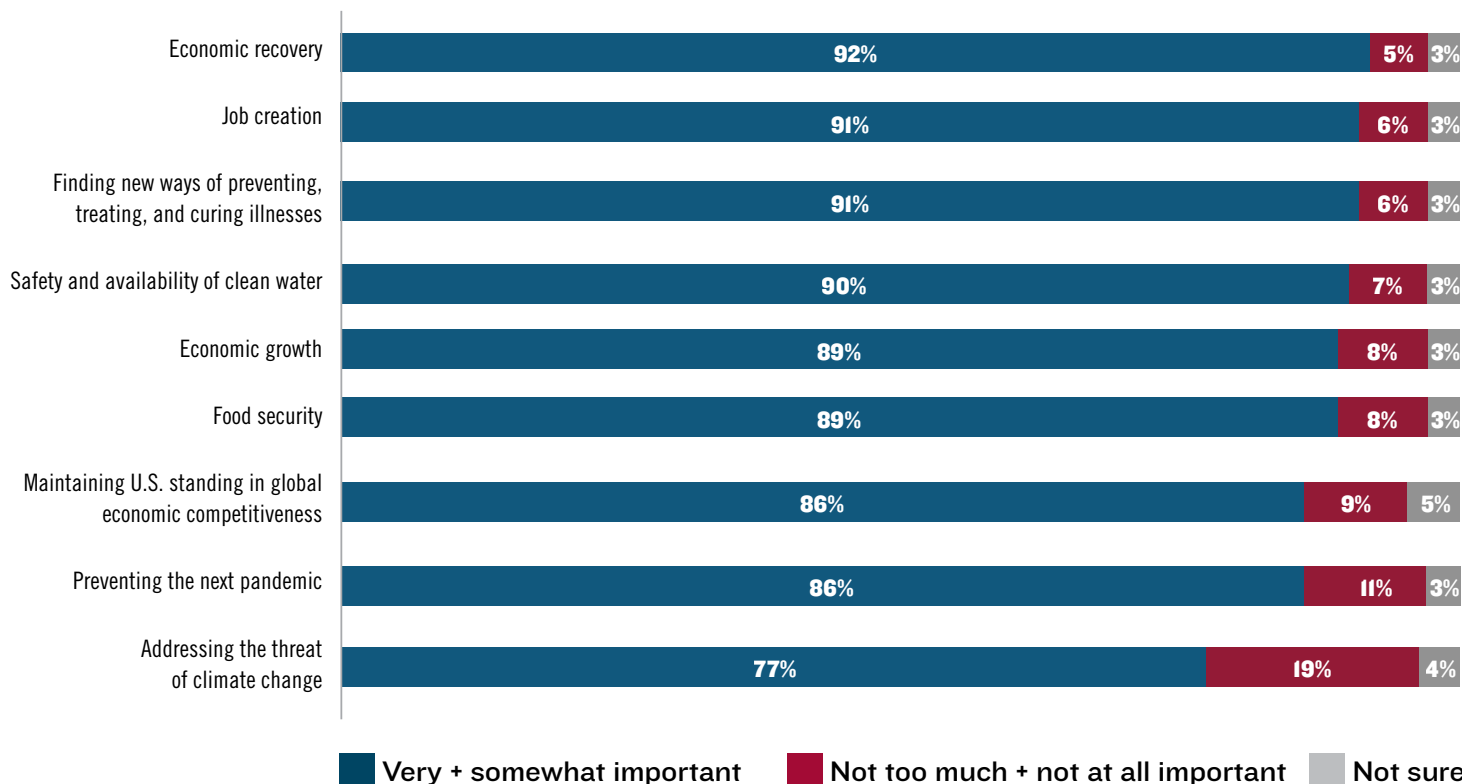
Would you be willing to pay \$1 per week more in taxes if you were certain that all of the money would be spent on additional medical research?



63% Yes
21% No
15% Not sure

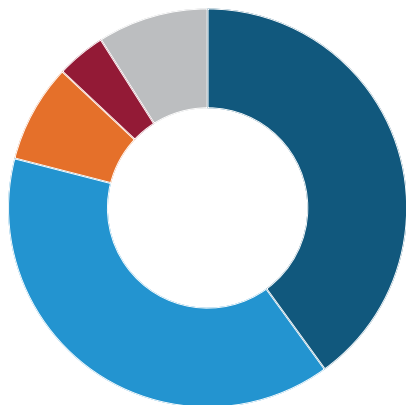
Over three-quarters say investing in research is important to achieving key priorities

How important is investing in research to each of the following?



Strong support for publicly funded scientific research at universities

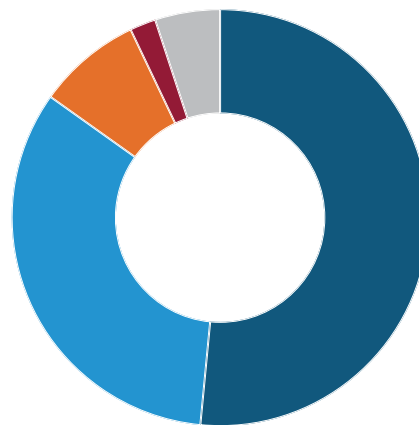
As you may know, the federal government provides public funds on a competitive basis to universities to conduct basic scientific research. Do you approve or disapprove of the federal government spending to sponsor scientific research at universities?



- 40%** Strongly approve
- 39%** Somewhat approve
- 8%** Somewhat disapprove
- 4%** Strongly disapprove
- 9%** Not sure

8 in 10 agree that state-supported research at state universities is important

How important is it that your state continues to support science and engineering research at state universities?

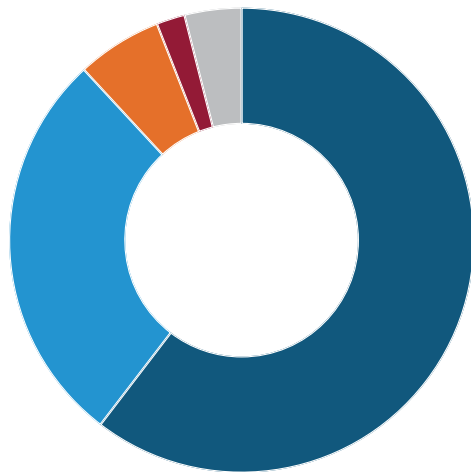


- 51%** Very important
- 33%** Somewhat important
- 8%** Not too important
- 2%** Not at all important
- 5%** Not sure

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

9 of 10 agree U.S. should be global leader in scientific research

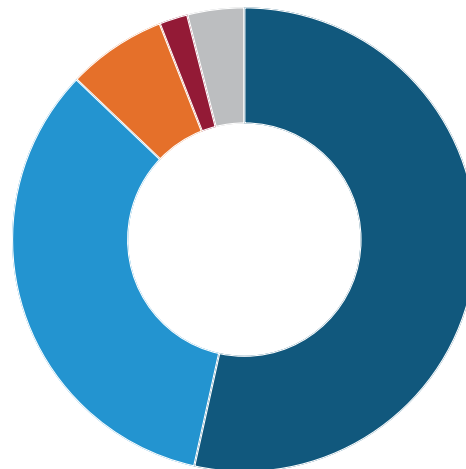
How important do you think it is that the U.S. is a global leader in scientific research?



- 61%** Very important
- 28%** Somewhat important
- 6%** Not too important
- 2%** Not at all important
- 4%** Not sure

Strong majority of Americans say it is important the the U.S. be a global leader in health research

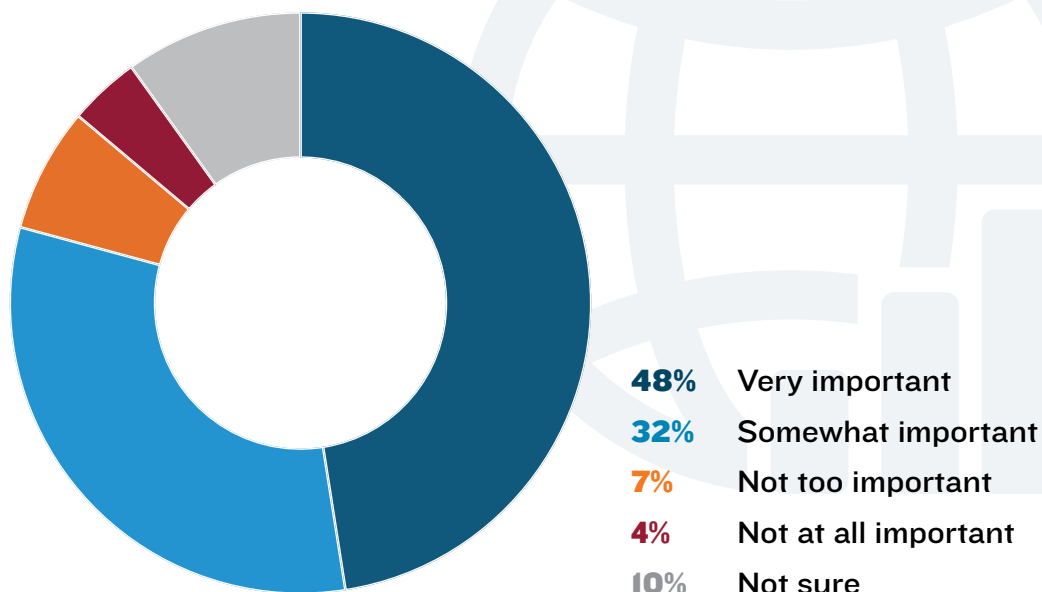
How important do you think it is that the U.S. is a global leader in research to improve health?



- 54%** Very important
- 34%** Somewhat important
- 7%** Not too important
- 2%** Not at all important
- 4%** Not sure

8 in 10 say it's important to increase GDP spent on research

Some governments have a goal to spend 3%-5% of GDP on research and development. Some, including Japan and Korea, have already met this goal, and others, including China, have pledged to do so. How important do you think it is for the U.S. to achieve this goal?



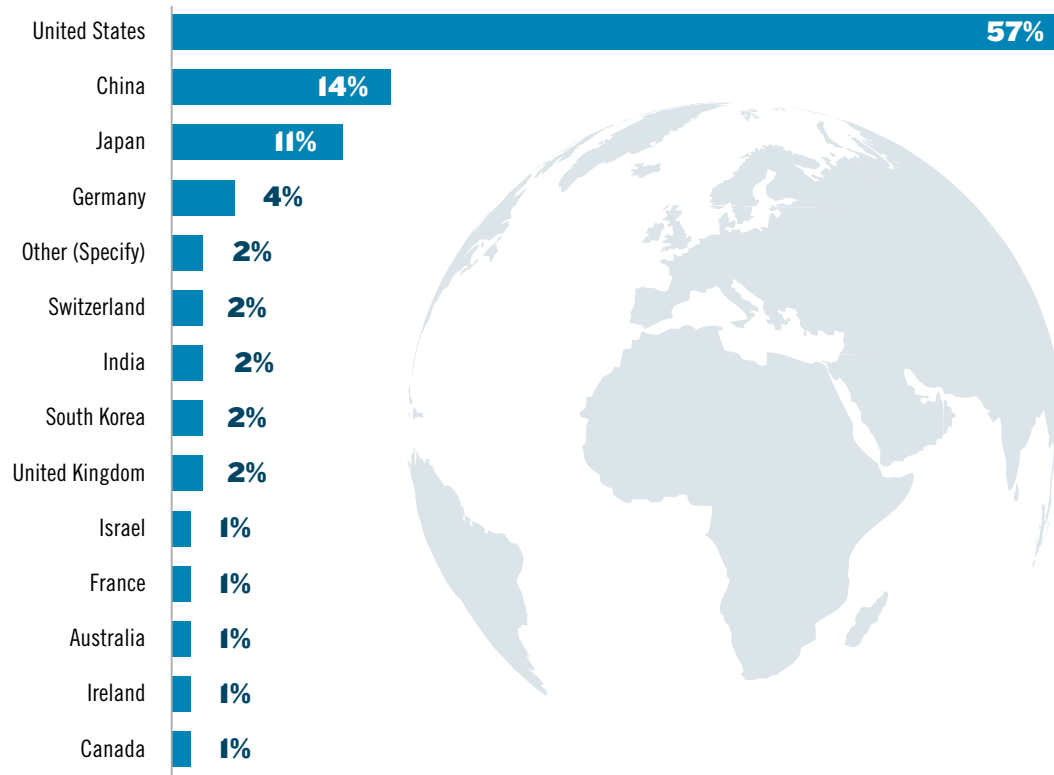
Source: A Research!America survey of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in January 2021.

“Make no mistake: we remain in a global race for innovation advantage... Done well and learning from the past, supporting our nation's scientific enterprise will be vital to serving the well-being of all our citizens and bolstering economic security for all.”

— **Sudip S. Parikh**, PhD, CEO, American Association for the Advancement of Science

Americans believe the U.S. will be the world leader in science

In your view, which of the following will be the number one world leader in science and technology in the year 2030?



Source: A Research!America survey of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in August 2020.

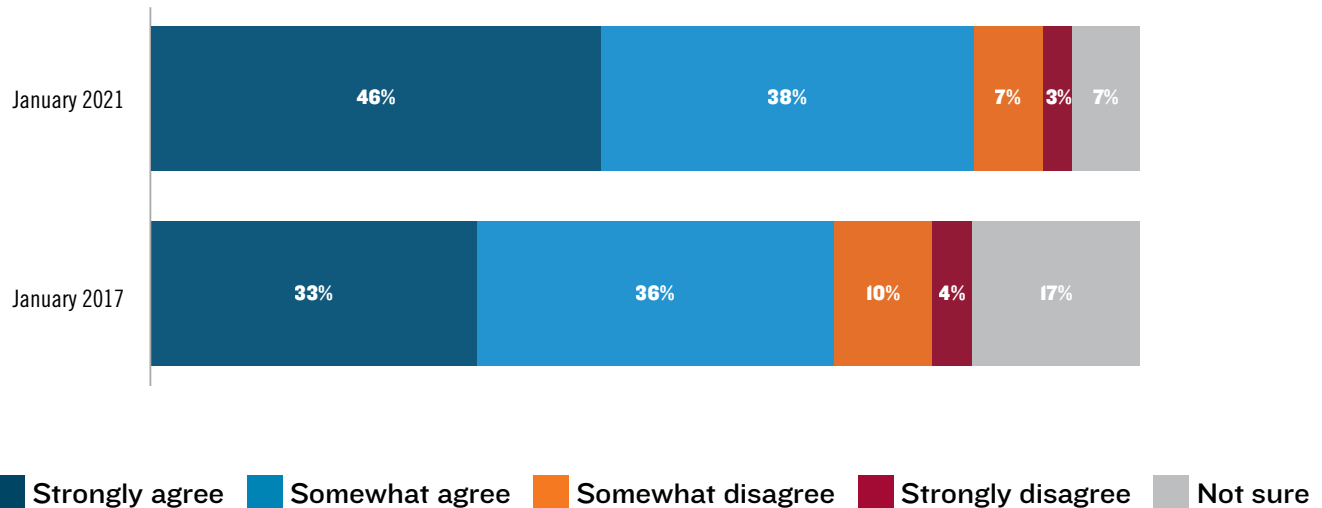
“Progress in science makes a huge difference to the world – as the global effort to confront and curb the COVID-19 pandemic is making clear. And we as the human community have other big challenges that science and technology can help us address, like climate change.”

— **Dario Gil**, PhD, Senior Vice President and Director of IBM Research

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, & MATHEMATICS (STEM) EDUCATION

Americans increasingly support improving STEM education

Do you agree or disagree the federal government should assign a higher priority to improving education focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and careers in those fields?



Source: A Research!America survey of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in January 2017 and January 2021.

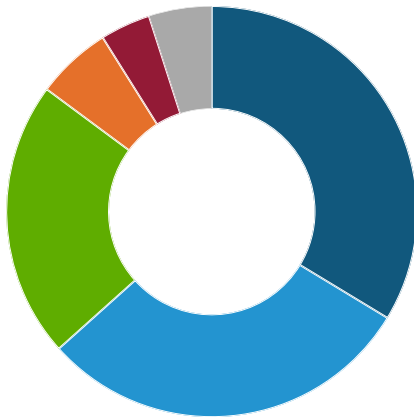
“Our nation’s scientific capacity is a defining strength and must continue to be a top priority going forward. In doing so, we must also bolster and diversify the STEM workforce, shore up our STEM infrastructure, and build out STEM investment to accelerate scientific and technological progress.”

— Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

NEW

Americans concerned about lack of home internet access for children

How concerned are you that currently, 14% of children ages 3-18—about 9.4 million in total—are without home internet access?



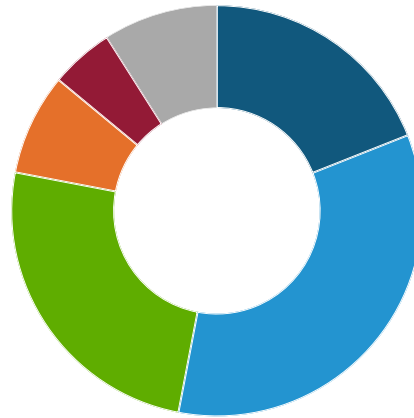
- 34%** Very concerned
- 30%** Somewhat concerned
- 22%** Neutral
- 6%** Somewhat unconcerned
- 4%** Not at all concerned
- 5%** Not sure

Source: A Research!America survey of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in August 2020.

NEW

Ensuring broadband should be a priority in the U.S.

Should ensuring universal access to broadband in the United States be an urgent, high, medium, or low priority or not a priority?



- 19%** Urgent
- 34%** High priority
- 25%** Medium
- 8%** Low priority
- 5%** Not a priority
- 9%** Not sure

Source: A Research!America survey of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in January 2021.

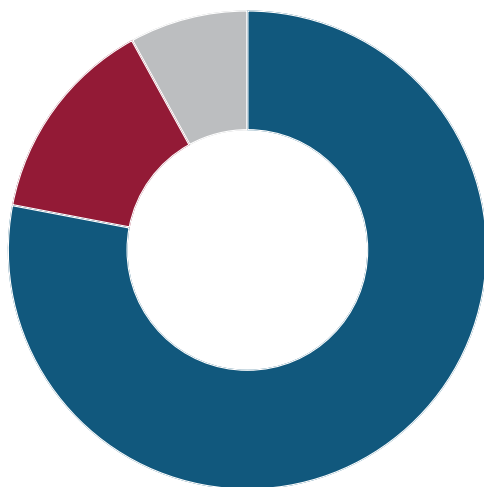
“While improving broadband accessibility in West Virginia and across rural America has always been a top priority, there’s no question that the coronavirus pandemic has underscored the need to address this challenge now more than ever.”

— Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)

THE IMPORTANCE OF CLINICAL TRIALS

Nearly 8 in 10 Americans have heard of clinical trials

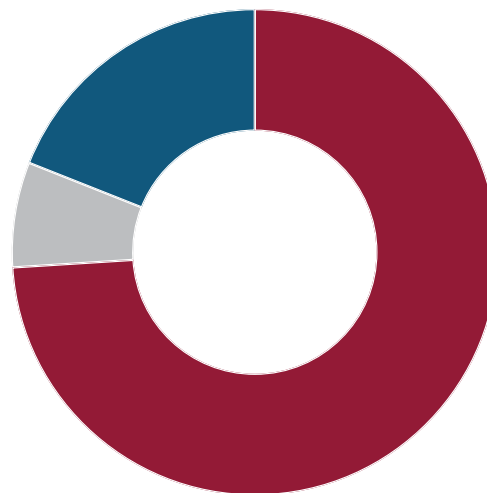
One kind of medical research is often referred to as a clinical trial. In this, volunteers choose to participate to test the safety and effectiveness of certain treatments, drugs, or devices. Have you ever heard of a clinical trial?



78% Yes
14% No
8% Not sure

More than 70% of Americans have not participated in a clinical trial

Have you or anyone in your family ever participated in clinical trials?



19% Yes
74% No
7% Not sure

Source: A Research!America survey of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in January 2021.

“Investing resources in building partnerships is vital in building trust. It begins now with clinical trials.”

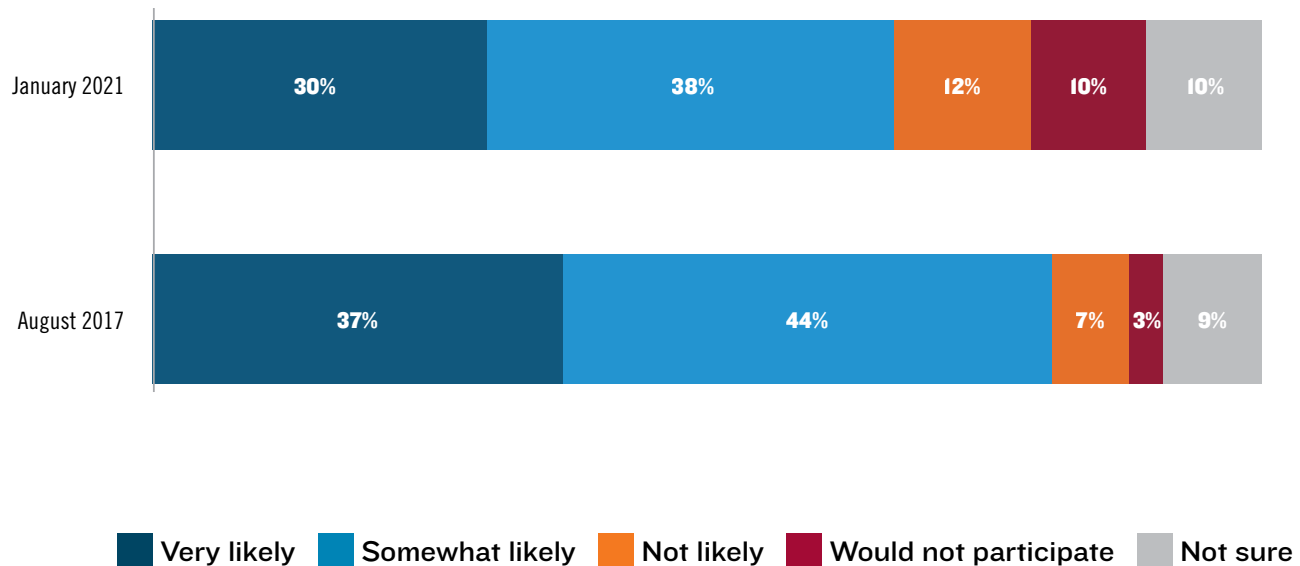
— **Sandra Crouse Quinn, PhD**, Senior Associate Director, Maryland Center for Health Equity

Fewer Americans are willing to participate in a clinical trial

If your doctor found a clinical trial for you and recommended you join, how likely would you be to participate in a clinical trial?

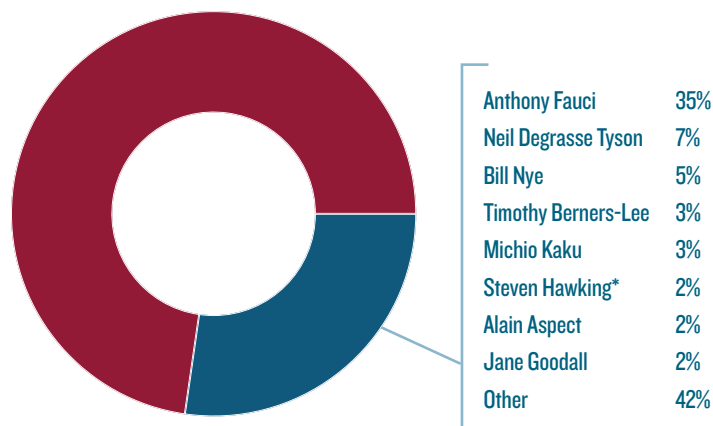


Very + somewhat likely decreased from
81% in 2017 to 68% in 2021



VISIBILITY OF SCIENCE

Most Americans cannot name a living scientist



27% Yes

72% No/Not sure

Of those responding **yes**, Dr. Fauci named by 35%, up from 24% in August 2020.

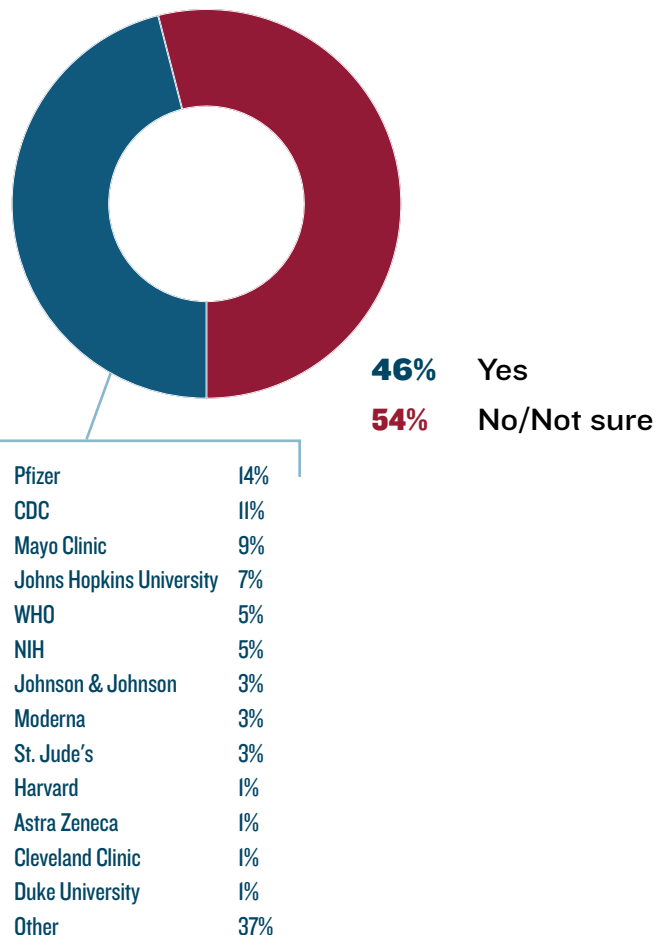


Total saying **yes** increased from 20% in 2019 to 27% in 2021.

* Deceased

More than 50% of Americans can not name a medical or health research institution

Can you name any institution, company or organization where medical or health research is conducted?

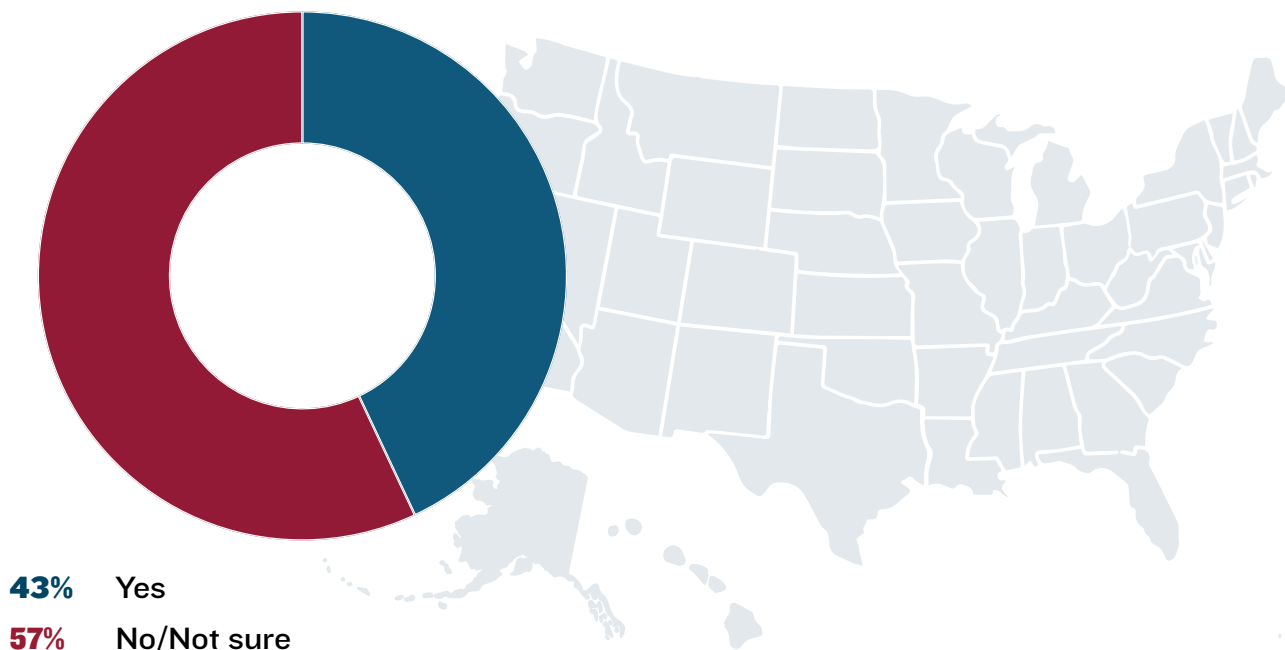


46% Yes

54% No/Not sure

Many Americans are unaware that medical research happens in all 50 states

To the best of your knowledge, would you say that medical research in the U.S. is conducted in all 50 states?



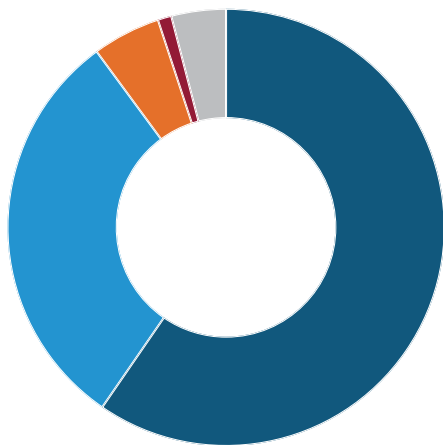
Source: A Research!America survey of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in January 2021.

“Research yields enormous benefits for our state, among them the attraction of talent, federal funding and economic development.”

— M. Roy Wilson, MD, President, Wayne State University

Strong majority agree on importance of scientists informing elected officials about their research

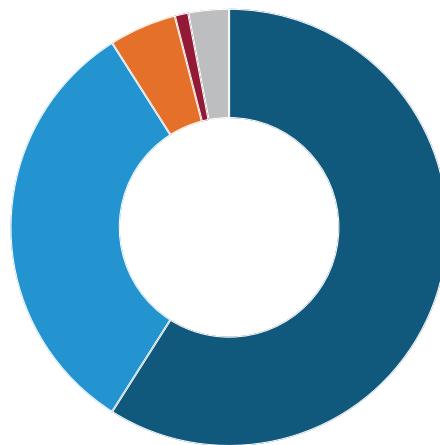
How important is it for scientists to inform elected officials about their research and its impact on society?



- 59%** Very important
- 30%** Somewhat important
- 5%** Not too important
- 1%** Not at all important
- 4%** Not sure

Most Americans say it is important for scientists to inform the public about their research

How important is it for scientists to inform the public about their research and its impact on society?



- 59%** Very important
- 32%** Somewhat important
- 5%** Not too important
- 1%** Not at all important
- 3%** Not sure

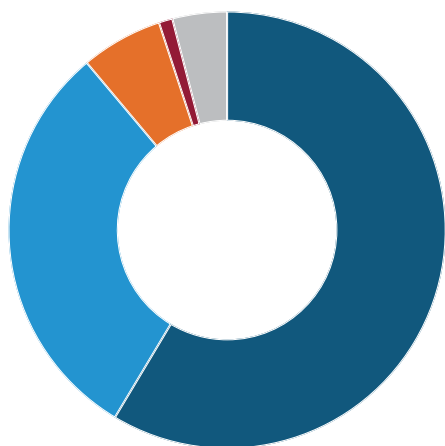
Source: A Research!America survey of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in January 2021.

“People need to be in a relationship with science. And it needs to be a collaborative endeavor that everyone is engaged with and everyone from every community has a stake in.”

— Donna Cryer, JD, President & CEO, Global Liver Institute

Most Americans say elected officials should listen to advice from scientists

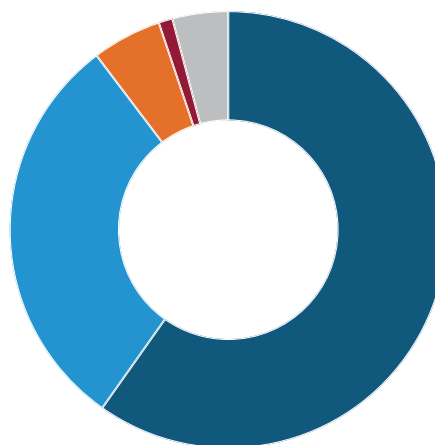
In thinking about threats to your health, how important is it that elected officials at all levels listen to advice from scientists?



- 58%** Very important
- 30%** Somewhat important
- 6%** Not too important
- 1%** Not at all important
- 4%** Not sure

Most Americans say elected officials should listen to advice from public health professionals

In thinking about threats to your health, how important is it that elected officials at all levels listen to advice from public health professionals?



- 58%** Very important
- 29%** Somewhat important
- 5%** Not too important
- 1%** Not at all important
- 4%** Not sure

Source: A Research!America survey of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in January 2021.

“With science as one of the reliable foundations to guide us into the future, it’s critical that science is communicated with a uniform voice, relying on rigor, transparency, and quality.”

— **Mikael Dolsten**, MD, PhD, Chief Scientific Officer and President of Worldwide Research, Development and Medical, Pfizer Inc

METHODOLOGY

- Online surveys are conducted with an approximate sample size of 800–1000+ adults (ages 18 and up) and a maximum theoretical sampling error of +/- 3.5%.
- Data are demographically representative of adult U.S. residents.
- Survey data in this publication was conducted by Zogby Analytics.
- Due to rounding, the total may not add to 100% on some charts.

Zogby
Analytics

Research!America began commissioning polls in 1992 in an effort to understand public attitudes toward medical, health, and scientific research.

The results of Research!America's polls have proven invaluable to our alliance of member organizations and, in turn, to the fulfillment of our mission to advocate for science, discovery, and innovation to achieve better health for all. In response to growing usage and demand, Research!America has expanded its portfolio, which includes state, national, and issue-specific polling.

Poll data is available by request or at www.researchamerica.org.

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