

Oregonians' Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

A survey by DHM Research

INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

From March 24 – 30, 2020, DHM Research conducted a survey of Oregonians. The purpose of the survey was to assess their attitudes and behaviors related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency. The survey included a battery of questions about anxiety, their sense of preparedness for coping with the outbreak, perceptions of the job performance of public leaders, and related issues.

DHM Research conducted this survey to benefit Oregonians and public leaders as we all continue to address the coronavirus outbreak. We recognize that this is a quickly developing situation and that attitudes will continue to be shaped by events. Therefore, we present these findings as both a guidepost for moving forward and as a historical document indicating where we have been.

Research Methodology: The online survey consisted of 507 Oregon residents ages 18+ and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. This is a sufficient sample size to assess Oregonians' opinions generally and to review findings by multiple subgroups.

Respondents were contacted by using a professionally maintained online panel. In gathering responses, a variety of quality control measures were employed, including questionnaire pre-testing, validation, and real time monitoring of responses. To ensure a representative sample, demographic quotas were set, and data weighted by gender, age, race, education level, area of the state and political affiliation.

Statement of Limitations: Any sampling of opinions or attitudes is subject to a margin of error. The margin of error is a standard statistical calculation that represents differences between the sample and total population at a confidence interval, or probability, calculated to be 95%. This means that there is a 95% probability that the sample taken for this study would fall within the stated margin of error if compared with the results achieved from surveying the entire population. The margin of error for this survey is $\pm 4.4\%$

DHM Research Background: DHM Research has been providing opinion research and consultation throughout the Pacific Northwest and other regions of the United States for over 40 years. The firm is nonpartisan and independent and specializes in research projects to support public policy making.

KEY FINDINGS

Many Oregonians are feeling anxious during this unprecedented public health crisis.

The survey started by asking a standardized index of questions that assess generalized anxiety disorder (GAD-7). 19% of Oregonians have moderate-to-severe levels of anxiety and 12% have severe levels.¹

Anxiety levels vary by demographics and attitudes about coronavirus. Young people, those with lower income and less education are especially anxious. Anxiety levels are also higher among people worried that they will be infected with coronavirus and feel that their household is not prepared. It is impossible to say if these concerns are the cause of anxiety (or anxiety causes these concerns) but the connection is notable and strong.

Oregon's "right track" numbers are down slightly.

For decades, DHM has asked Oregonians if they feel the state is headed in the right direction or on the wrong track. In this survey, 40% said it is on the right track, while 41% said it is on the wrong track. The right direction percentage is down only 5-points since DHM last asked in late 2019.

Consistent with past findings, there is a significant partisan divide. 58% of Democrats feel that this state is headed in the right direction compared to 32% of Republicans, and 30% of non-affiliated and other party voters.

There is a large increase in the number of Oregonians worried about their personal financial situation.

DHM has been asking Oregonians since 2011 how worried, or not, they are about their personal financial situation. The percentage who said that they are somewhat or very worried peaked at 69% in 2012. This fell slowly but steadily over the last decade, to a low of 50% in late 2019. Now, 63% say that they are worried. Given the great many people who have already lost their jobs due to coronavirus, the number of Oregonians experiencing financial distress will almost certainly increase.

Lower income Oregonians are the most worried. 73% of those with incomes below \$50k are worried compared to 60% of those with incomes between \$50-100k and 45% of people with incomes above \$100k.

Most Oregonians are worried that they or someone close to them will be infected with coronavirus.

- 69% a family member not in the household
- 60% a household member
- 57% a close friend
- 53% you personally
- 47% someone who relies on you for medical care

¹ For comparison, 3% of Americans are clinically diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder. https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.29.020907.090847#_i8

40% of Oregonians say that they are not prepared to deal with a coronavirus infection in their household.

While most (59%) say that they are prepared, a significant number of Oregonians are not. The groups most likely to report that they are not prepared are younger with lower incomes. For instance, 46% of Oregonians between ages 18–29 say they are not prepared compared to 30% of those ages 65+. Similarly, 50% of Oregonians with incomes less than \$50k are unprepared versus 24% with incomes above \$100k.

Many Oregonians expect to need help in the coming days.

- 41% may need help paying for basics needs like food, medicine and utilities
- 36% may need help paying for their rent or mortgage
- 35% may need help getting to the store
- 29% may need help getting to medical appointments
- 28% may need help picking up prescription drugs

22% of Oregonians say that the news coverage of coronavirus has been exaggerated, while 24% think that it has been underestimated.

Views on this vary by political party. Just 10% of Democrats feel that the news coverage has been exaggerated compared to 37% of Republicans and 24% of non-affiliated and other party voters.

The vast majority of Oregonians (82%) say that they know where to find credible information about coronavirus.

While a majority of all demographic groups say that they know where to find credible information, younger Oregonians and those with less education are less confident. 69% of Oregonians between the ages 18–29 report knowing where to find credible information versus 93% of those ages 65+. Likewise, fewer people with a high school degree or less (73%) know where to find credible information compared to 90% of those with a college degree.

Many Oregonians are changing how closely they are following the news, or turning the news off, because of coronavirus.

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Oregonians say that they have spent more time paying attention to the news to keep up with developments about coronavirus, while 24% have stopped paying attention to the news because of anxiety about it.

Most Oregonians say that they know what key terms, like social distancing, mean. But a consequential minority are unsure.

The survey asked Oregonians if they know what the following terms mean:

- Social distancing: 88% yes; 10% maybe; 2% no
- Quarantine: 87% yes; 11% maybe; 2% no
- Self-isolation: 84% yes; 13% maybe; 3% no
- Shelter in place: 76% yes; 19% maybe; 5% no

Young people say that they are more concerned about coronavirus than others.

The survey asked Oregonians if they are concerned more about coronavirus, less or about the same as others in their life. Overall, 20% said that are more concerned, 23% less, and 51% the same. However, 29% of 18-29 years old report having a greater level of concern, while only 11% of those ages 65+ feel that way.

Democrats (22%) also report having more concern than Republicans (11%).

Oregonians believe that problems associated with coronavirus will continue to get worse for at least another month.

The survey asked Oregonians if the problems associated with coronavirus will be better, worse or about the same in one week, one month, six months, 12 months and 18 months.

- One week: 12% better; 76% worse
- One month: 39% better; 51% worse
- Six months: 74% better; 14% worse
- 12 months: 76% better; 11% worse
- 18 months: 75% better; 10% worse

President Trump and Governor Brown get mixed reviews for their handling of coronavirus, largely driven by partisan differences.

42% of Oregonians approve of how President Trump has managed coronavirus, while 52% disapprove (and 40% “strongly” disapprove). By party, 78% of Republicans approve of his job performance, while just 12% of Democrats and 45% of non-affiliated and other party voters approve.

A majority (55%) of Oregonians approve of how Governor Brown has managed coronavirus, while 38% disapprove. Opinions about Brown’s job performance are less intense than those of President Trump. Just 18% of Oregonians “strongly” disapprove of her management. By party, 75% of Democrats approve of her job performance versus 31% of Republicans and 52% of non-affiliated and other voters.

**DHM Research Coronavirus Survey
March 24-30, 2020**

**Oregon Adults Ages 18+
N=507; ±4.4% margin of error
15 minutes**

DHM Research

ANXIETY

We would to begin this survey by first asking how you have been feeling recently.

Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems? **[Randomize]**
[Not at all (score = 0); Several days (1); More than half the days (2); Nearly every day (3)]²

Response category	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1. Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge	33%	38%	13%	15%
2. Not being able to control or stop worrying	43%	32%	14%	12%
3. Worrying too much about different things	33%	37%	14%	16%
4. Trouble relaxing	36%	41%	11%	12%
5. Being so restless it is hard to sit still	47%	31%	12%	11%
6. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable	36%	35%	17%	13%
7. Feeling afraid, as if something awful might happen	42%	32%	13%	14%

GAD-7 Scores (Q1-Q7)	N=507
None to mild anxiety (0-4)	41%
Moderate anxiety (5-9)	28%
Moderate to severe anxiety	19%
Severe	12%

² GAD-7 scale.

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Here are a few more questions about how you have been feeling lately.

In the last two weeks how often have you felt the following ways? **[Randomize]** **[Not at all (score = 0); Several days (1); More than half the days (2); Nearly every day (3)]**

Response category	n=507	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
8. Able to control what is important		19%	32%	24%	26%
9. Sense of hopefulness about the future		31%	31%	21%	17%
10. Connected to family and friends		10%	36%	26%	28%
11. Safe from threats		21%	25%	19%	34%

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MOOD

12. All things considered, do you think Oregon is headed in the right direction, or is it off on the wrong track?

Response category	n=507
Right direction	40%
Wrong track	41%
Don't know	19%

13. How would you rate the economic conditions of Oregon today?

Response category	n=507
Very good	4%
Good	31%
Poor	37%
Very poor	18%
Don't know	9%

14. How worried are you about your personal financial situation?

Response category	n=507
Very worried	23%
Somewhat worried	40%
Not too worried	23%
Not at all worried	11%
Don't know	2%

CORONAVIRUS

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The next questions are about coronavirus, also known as COVID-19.

How worried are you that the following people will become infected by coronavirus?

Response category	n=507	Very worried	Somewhat worried	Not too worried	Not worried at all	Not applicable	Don't know
15. You personally		19%	34%	30%	16%	1%	1%
16. A member of your household		26%	34%	20%	11%	7%	1%
17. A close family member who does not live in your household		35%	35%	19%	7%	3%	1%
18. A close friend		22%	35%	24%	12%	5%	3%
19. Anyone else who does not live in your household but who would rely on your support for medical care		16%	31%	16%	11%	23%	3%

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20. Overall, how prepared do you think you are to deal with a coronavirus infection if you or someone in your household contracted the virus?

Response category	n=507
Very prepared	11%
Somewhat prepared	48%
Not too prepared	29%
Not at all prepared	11%
Don't know	2%

Some people may feel like they need help in the coming days as we address the challenges with coronavirus. Do you think that you will need help with the following? **[Randomize]**

Response category.	n=507	Yes, a lot	Yes, some	No	Not applicable	Don't know
21. Getting to the store to buy groceries and other basic needs		12%	23%	63%	<1%	2%
22. Getting to and from necessary medical appointments		11%	19%	60%	8%	2%
23. Picking up prescription drugs		9%	18%	62%	8%	2%
24. Paying your rent or mortgage		15%	21%	49%	11%	3%
25. Paying for basic needs, like food, medicine, and utilities		18%	24%	53%	1%	4%

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26. How confident are you that you would recognize the symptoms of coronavirus?

Response category	n=507
Very confident	19%
Somewhat confident	53%
Not too confident	20%
Not at all confident	5%
Don't know	2%

27. If you or a member of your household developed symptoms consistent with coronavirus, how confident are you that you would know what do?

Response category	n=507
Very confident	19%
Somewhat confident	52%
Not too confident	19%
Not at all confident	8%
Don't know	2%

28. Do you think that the news coverage about coronavirus has been generally exaggerated, been about right, or has it been underestimated?

Response category	n=507
Exaggerated	22%
About right	41%
Underestimated	24%
Don't know	12%

29. Compared to other people in your life, do you have more concern about coronavirus, about the same concern, or less concern?

Response category	n=507
More concern	20%
Same concern	51%
Less concern	23%
Don't know	5%

30. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I know where to find credible information about coronavirus?

Response category	n=507
Strongly agree	32%
Somewhat agree	50%
Somewhat disagree	8%
Strongly disagree	6%
Don't know	4%

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Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the following public officials and agencies when it comes to managing coronavirus? **[Randomize]**

Response category. n=507	Strongly approve	Somewhat approve	Somewhat disapprove	Strongly disapprove	Don't know
31. President Donald Trump	22%	20%	12%	40%	6%
32. Governor Kate Brown	17%	37%	20%	18%	8%
33. United States Centers for Disease Control	28%	46%	13%	5%	8%
34. Oregon Health Authority	22%	48%	12%	5%	12%
35. Hospitals in your community	35%	44%	7%	2%	11%
36. Your local government	15%	51%	15%	10%	9%

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The following are terms that public officials are using to describe what actions may need to be taken to slow the spread of coronavirus. Do you think you know what these terms mean? **[Randomize]**

Response category n=507	Yes, I'm certain that I know	Maybe, but I'm not certain	No, I don't know
37. Social distancing	88%	10%	2%
38. Self-isolation	84%	13%	3%
39. Quarantine	87%	11%	2%
40. Shelter in place	76%	19%	5%

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Do you think that the problems associated with coronavirus will be better, worse, or about the same in the following time periods?

Response category n=507	Much better	Somewhat better	Somewhat worse	Much worse	Don't know
41. One week	2%	11%	43%	33%	12%
42. One month	6%	33%	31%	20%	9%
43. Six months	29%	44%	10%	4%	12%
44. 12 months	52%	24%	3%	7%	14%
45. 18 months	63%	13%	5%	4%	15%

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We are interested in Oregonians' experiences since the coronavirus arrived in the state in early March. Since then, have you done any of the following: **[Randomize]**

Response category	n=507	Yes	No	Don't know
46. Had an argument with a friend or family member about coronavirus		19%	77%	4%
47. Stopped paying attention the news because of anxiety about coronavirus		24%	71%	4%
48. Spent more time paying attention to the news to keep up developments about coronavirus		64%	33%	3%
49. Missed a birthday, anniversary, wedding, or some other special event because of coronavirus		39%	59%	3%
50. Reached out to family and friends more often to help you manage anxiety about coronavirus		48%	49%	3%
51. Started a new project because you have more time		42%	55%	3%

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Oregon has elections coming up in May and November. Many local governments were planning to ask voters to support tax measures to fund schools, roads, public safety, and other public services. Some are now reconsidering these measures because of the impacts of coronavirus.

52. Knowing this, what do you think local governments should do? **[Randomize]**

Response category	n=507
Continue as planned. There are many community needs in addition to managing coronavirus and voters should be able to decide what to fund.	46%
Take these funding measures off the ballot. Local governments need to dedicate their full attention to managing coronavirus and these measures are a distraction.	36%
Don't know	17%

DEMOGRAPHICS

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53. In what year were you born? [Autofill age as:]

Response category	n=507
18–29	21%
30–44	26%
45–64	32%
65+	21%

54. I describe my gender as:

Response category	n=507
Male	50%
Female	49%
Non-binary or gender non-conforming	1%
Trans	<1%

55. In what county do you live? [Dropdown box of all Oregon counties]
[Autofill area as:]

Response category	n=507
Tri-county	44%
Willamette Valley	27%
Rest of state	29%

56. What is your party registration?

Response category	n=507
Democrat	32%
Republican	22%
Another party	13%
Not affiliated with a political party	24%
Not registered to vote	9%

57. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

Response category	n=507
Less than high school	8%
High school diploma/GED	25%
Some college/2-year degree	36%
College degree/4-year degree	22%
Graduate/professional school	9%

58. What was your total household income in 2019? Remember to include everyone and your best guess is okay.

Response category	n=507
Less than \$25,000	25%
\$25,000 to less than \$50,000	23%
\$50,000 to less than \$75,000	18%
\$75,000 to less than \$100,000	13%
\$100,000 to less than \$150,000	12%
\$150,000 or more	8%

59. With which of the following races and ethnicities do you identify? Check all that apply.

Response category	n=507
African	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	6%
Black/African American	5%
Hispanic/Latino/a/x	8%
Middle Eastern/North African	<1%
Native American/American Indian	6%
Slavic	1%
White or Caucasian	82%
Other	2%