



USF-Nielsen Sunshine State COVID-19 Survey Governance & Policies

Summary: The University of South Florida and Nielsen partnered on a statewide survey of 600 Floridians to assess public opinion related to the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, public health situation. The survey was fielded from April 15-24, 2020, and the results are reported with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error +/-4. Top line results include:

Public concern remains high. A majority agree with a statement that they are personally concerned (52.2%) or are concerned about someone they know (76.6%) contracting the novel coronavirus in the next three months.

Public concerns are justified, but worries remain about response. While a near universal number of respondents (86.5%) agree that public concern related to the coronavirus is justified, worries also persist about the public reaction. Four in 10 individuals surveyed agree that public reactions to the pandemic will do more harm than the disease itself.

Strong support for statewide mitigation policies, including face mask requirements. Healthy majorities of individuals surveyed report support for the state closing restaurants and bars (88.9%), limiting public gatherings (94.3%), limiting gatherings in houses of worship (87.4%), issuing “stay at home” orders (86.2%), closing beaches and other public recreation areas (81.6%), fining individuals who violate “stay at home” orders (62.2%), instituting nightly curfews (62.9%), and requiring individuals to wear masks in public places (79.3%).

Healthy approval and trust of federal government’s response, but attitudes trail assessments of state and local government. A plurality of Floridians (48.9%) approve of the federal government’s response to the coronavirus pandemic. Approval of the federal response is 2.5% lower than state government and fully 20% lower than local government. A majority of individuals surveyed (54.9%) also trust the federal government “a great deal” or a “good amount” to provide accurate information about the pandemic. Trust in federal information is 8.3% lower than that for state government and 21.7% lower than that for local government.

Majority approve of and trust the state government’s response. A majority of Floridians (51.5%) approve of state government’s response to the coronavirus pandemic. Almost two-thirds of individuals surveyed (63.1%) also trust state government “a great deal” or a “good amount” to provide accurate information about the novel coronavirus situation.

Robust approval and trust in local government response. Nearly 7 in 10 Floridians surveyed (68.8%) approve of their local government’s response to the coronavirus pandemic. Greater than three-quarters of Floridians (76.6%) also trust their local government “a great deal” or a “good amount” to provide accurate information about the novel coronavirus situation.

Partisan differences emerge on trust and approval. Registered Democrats are significantly more likely to disapprove (52%) of the federal response to the COVID-19 situation, compared with 10% of Republicans and 35% of Independents/Third Party identifiers. Similarly, 44% of Democrats disapproved of the state government’s response, compared with 11% of Republicans and 32% of Independents/Third Party identifiers.

The president’s and governor’s press conferences matter. Two-thirds of Floridians (66.3%) say the president’s daily press conferences in April were a source of “a lot” or “some” information about the novel coronavirus situation. Greater than 6 in 10 Floridians (61.4%) report the same about the governor’s daily press conferences in April.



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COVID-19 Concerns

*Prompt: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements related to the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. **I am concerned that I will contract the novel coronavirus in the next three months.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	61	10.1
	Somewhat Disagree	96	16.1
	Neither	130	21.6
	Somewhat Agree	185	30.9
	Strongly Agree	128	21.3
	Total	600	100.0

*Prompt: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements related to the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. **I am concerned that someone I know will contract the novel coronavirus in the next three months.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	21	3.6
	Somewhat Disagree	32	5.3
	Neither	87	14.5
	Somewhat Agree	213	35.5
	Strongly Agree	246	41.1
	Total	600	100.0

*Prompt: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements related to the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. **Public concern over the coronavirus is justified.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	1.9
	Somewhat Disagree	18	3.0
	Neither	52	8.6
	Somewhat Agree	193	32.1
	Strongly Agree	326	54.4
	Total	600	100.0



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*Prompt: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements related to the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. **Public reactions to the coronavirus will do more harm than the disease itself.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	70	11.6
	Somewhat Disagree	124	20.6
	Neither	167	27.8
	Somewhat Agree	148	24.6
	Strongly Agree	92	15.3
	Total	600	100.0



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Policy Support for COVID-19 Mitigation Measures

*Question: Many states have enacted policies to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. To what extent do you support or oppose the following decisions that may or may not be taken by the State of Florida? **Close restaurants and bars.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Oppose	6	1.1
	Somewhat Oppose	17	2.9
	Neither	43	7.1
	Somewhat Support	125	20.8
	Strongly Support	409	68.1
	Total	600	100.0

*Question: Many states have enacted policies to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. To what extent do you support or oppose the following decisions that may or may not be taken by the State of Florida? **Limit public gatherings.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Oppose	7	1.2
	Somewhat Oppose	5	.8
	Neither	22	3.7
	Somewhat Support	103	17.1
	Strongly Support	463	77.2
	Total	600	100.0

*Question: Many states have enacted policies to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. To what extent do you support or oppose the following decisions that may or may not be taken by the State of Florida? **Limit gatherings in houses of worship.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Oppose	15	2.4
	Somewhat Oppose	14	2.3
	Neither	47	7.8
	Somewhat Support	109	18.1
	Strongly Support	416	69.3
	Total	600	100.0



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*Question: Many states have enacted policies to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. To what extent do you support or oppose the following decisions that may or may not be taken by the State of Florida? **Issue “stay-at-home” orders.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Oppose	19	3.1
	Somewhat Oppose	23	3.9
	Neither	41	6.9
	Somewhat Support	132	22.1
	Strongly Support	385	64.1
	Total	600	100.0

*Question: Many states have enacted policies to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. To what extent do you support or oppose the following decisions that may or may not be taken by the State of Florida? **Close beaches, parks, and other outdoor recreation areas.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Oppose	27	4.5
	Somewhat Oppose	49	8.1
	Neither	34	5.7
	Somewhat Support	111	18.5
	Strongly Support	379	63.1
	Total	600	100.0

*Question: Many states have enacted policies to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. To what extent do you support or oppose the following decisions that may or may not be taken by the State of Florida? **Fine individuals who violate “stay at home” orders.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Oppose	58	9.6
	Somewhat Oppose	50	8.3
	Neither	119	19.9
	Somewhat Support	163	27.2
	Strongly Support	210	35.0
	Total	600	100.0



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*Question: Many states have enacted policies to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. To what extent do you support or oppose the following decisions that may or may not be taken by the State of Florida?
Institute nightly curfews.*

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Oppose	72	12.0
	Somewhat Oppose	61	10.2
	Neither	89	14.9
	Somewhat Support	151	25.1
	Strongly Support	227	37.8
	Total	600	100.0

*Question: Many states have enacted policies to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. To what extent do you support or oppose the following decisions that may or may not be taken by the State of Florida?
Require individuals to wear masks in public places.*

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Oppose	25	4.2
	Somewhat Oppose	36	6.0
	Neither	62	10.4
	Somewhat Support	173	28.8
	Strongly Support	303	50.5
	Total	600	100.0



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Government Performance Related to COVID-19

*Prompt: Please rate the extent to which you approve or disapprove of the way each political organization has handled the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. **Federal government in Washington D.C.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disapprove	119	19.8
	Somewhat Disapprove	89	14.9
	Neither	99	16.5
	Somewhat Approve	176	29.4
	Strongly Approve	117	19.5
	Total	600	100.0

*Prompt: Please rate the extent to which you approve or disapprove of the way each political organization has handled the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. **State government in Tallahassee, FL.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disapprove	78	13.0
	Somewhat Disapprove	100	16.6
	Neither	113	18.9
	Somewhat Approve	176	29.3
	Strongly Approve	133	22.2
	Total	600	100.0

*Prompt: Please rate the extent to which you approve or disapprove of the way each political organization has handled the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. **Your local government.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disapprove	25	4.2
	Somewhat Disapprove	47	7.9
	Neither	114	19.1
	Somewhat Approve	258	42.9
	Strongly Approve	155	25.9
	Total	600	100.0



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*Prompt: Please rate the extent to which you trust each political organization to provide you with accurate information about the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. **Federal government in Washington D.C.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	A Great Deal	113	18.8
	A Good Amount	217	36.1
	Not Very Much	160	26.7
	Not at All	111	18.5
	Total	600	100.0

*Prompt: Please rate the extent to which you trust each political organization to provide you with accurate information about the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. **State government in Tallahassee, FL.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	A Great Deal	112	18.7
	A Good Amount	267	44.5
	Not Very Much	154	25.6
	Not at All	68	11.3
	Total	600	100.0

*Prompt: Please rate the extent to which you trust each political organization to provide you with accurate information about the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. **Your local government.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	A Great Deal	134	22.3
	A Good Amount	326	54.3
	Not Very Much	113	18.9
	Not at All	27	4.5
	Total	600	100.0



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Information Acquisition from Government Sources

*Question: How much information about the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, public health situation have you received from the following government sources? **The President's Daily Press Conferences.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	A Lot	195	33.0
	Some	197	33.3
	A Little	122	20.7
	None	77	13.1
	Total	592	100.0
Missing	System	8	
Total		600	

*Question: How much information about the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, public health situation have you received from the following government sources? **The Governor's Daily Press Conferences.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	A Lot	151	25.6
	Some	212	35.8
	A Little	155	26.1
	None	74	12.6
	Total	592	100.0
Missing	System	8	
Total		600	

*Question: How much information about the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, public health situation have you received from the following government sources? **Florida Member of Congress (U.S. Senator or U.S. Congressperson).***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	A Lot	73	12.4
	Some	149	25.2
	A Little	176	29.7
	None	194	32.8
	Total	592	100.0
Missing	System	8	
Total		600	



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*Question: How much information about the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, public health situation have you received from the following government sources? **Florida Legislature Member (Florida Senate or Florida House).***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	A Lot	66	11.1
	Some	115	19.4
	A Little	146	24.6
	None	265	44.8
	Total	592	100.0
Missing	System	8	
Total		600	

*Question: How much information about the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, public health situation have you received from the following government sources? **A county or local official (examples: Mayor, Commissioner, Sheriff, School Board).***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	A Lot	110	18.5
	Some	219	36.9
	A Little	138	23.4
	None	125	21.2
	Total	592	100.0
Missing	System	8	
Total		600	

*Question: How much information about the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, public health situation have you received from the following government sources? **A government website (examples: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Florida Department of Health).***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	A Lot	148	25.0
	Some	203	34.3
	A Little	123	20.8
	None	118	19.9
	Total	592	100.0
Missing	System	8	
Total		600	



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*Question: How much information about the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, public health situation have you received from the following government sources? **Automated phone messages.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	A Lot	37	6.2
	Some	56	9.5
	A Little	98	16.6
	None	401	67.7
	Total	592	100.0
Missing	System	8	
Total		600	

*Question: How much information about the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, public health situation have you received from the following government sources? **Text message alerts.***

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	A Lot	37	6.2
	Some	86	14.6
	A Little	109	18.4
	None	360	60.8
	Total	592	100.0
Missing	System	8	
Total		600	



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Survey Information

For this survey, 600 Florida residents were recruited using online panel provider Prodege MR - a leading market research panel - via a partnership with Nielsen. The survey was fielded from April 15-24, 2020 and the results are reported with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error +/-4.

For sampling purposes, and to overcome drawbacks associated with online panel surveys, participants were recruited using a stratified quota sampling method to match Florida’s demography. Gender, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and age quotas were derived from the 2019 Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) population estimates for the state of Florida. The table below details comparisons between the USF-Nielsen Sunshine State COVID-19 Survey sample and the BEBR 2019 estimates.

Sample Comparison

	USF-Nielsen Sample	BEBR 2019 Estimates
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	49%	49%
Female	51%	51%
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>		
White	77.2%	77%
Black	16.8%	17%
Other	6%	6%
Hispanic	26%	26%
<i>Age</i>		
18-24	11%	11%
25-54	47%	47%
55-64	17%	17%
65+	25%	25%

The sample of participants was stratified by Florida region during recruitment to ensure the balance of the sample matched location dynamics (Northeast Florida [13%], Tampa Bay Metro [19%], Southwest Florida [10%], Orlando/Daytona [18%], Palm Beach/Treasure Coast [10%], Southeast Florida [23%], and Northwest [7%]). For the purposes of analysis, survey responses were weighted for representativeness based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, and region of the state.



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About Nielsen

Nielsen Holdings plc (NYSE: NLSN) is a global measurement and data analytics company that provides the most complete and trusted view available of consumers and markets worldwide. Nielsen is divided into two business units. Nielsen Global Media, the arbiter of truth for media markets, provides media and advertising industries with unbiased and reliable metrics that create a shared understanding of the industry required for markets to function. Nielsen Global Connect provides consumer packaged goods manufacturers and retailers with accurate, actionable information and insights and a complete picture of the complex and changing marketplace that companies need to innovate and grow.

Our approach marries proprietary Nielsen data with other data sources to help clients around the world understand what's happening now, what's happening next, and how to best act on this knowledge.

An S&P 500 company, Nielsen has operations in over 100 countries, covering more than 90% of the world's population. For more information, visit www.nielsen.com

About the Sunshine State Survey

The Sunshine State Survey measures the views and opinions of Floridians on a wide range of economic, social, and political issues, ranging from policy priorities and preferences to government performance and media consumption. The survey provides valuable data for leaders and decision makers, as well as citizens and researchers in one of the nation's largest, most diverse, and highly competitive states. The survey, managed by the University of South Florida's School of Public Affairs, is led by an interdisciplinary research team including Dr. Stephen Neely (Public Affairs) and Dr. Joshua Scacco (Communication) in partnership with Nielsen. For more information, visit the survey website (<https://www.usf.edu/arts-sciences/sunshine-state-survey/>) or Twitter page (@sunstatesurvey).

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