

NEW POLL FINDS NJ COMMUNITIES OF COLOR INCREASINGLY WILLING TO BE VACCINATED

Black and Hispanic Parents More Willing to Vaccinate Children Than White Parents

NEWARK - As coronavirus infection rates drop and vaccines become available to adolescents, new polling of New Jersey voters conducted by Change Research and commissioned by Newark-based non-profit Project Ready finds that significant gains have been made when it comes to increasing Black and Hispanic voters' willingness to be vaccinated, even as those communities currently have the lowest vaccination rates.

The share of Black voters willing to be vaccinated increased from 62% in February to 69% in May, while 83% of Hispanic voters say they will be vaccinated, compared to 77% in February. In addition, in light of vaccines now being available for children 12 and older, Black (54%) and Hispanic (59%) parents of middle and high school students are more likely to say they will vaccinate their children than white parents (39%).

"Even as they remain far less likely to already be vaccinated, communities of color are becoming increasingly comfortable with receiving the COVID-19 vaccines, and that's a credit to the leaders across New Jersey whose outreach is showing early results," said Project Ready Executive Director Shennell McCloud. "The two biggest reasons cited by those who haven't been vaccinated are side effects and trust in government, suggesting that government and public health officials must continue to work directly with people to build trust and deliver vaccines to their neighborhoods from providers they trust."

"This survey data demonstrates the significant progress we've made as a state in educating people about the efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines, particularly in communities of color," said Dr. Shereef Elnahal, President & CEO of University Hospital in Newark. "However, it also shows how much work we have to do to continue to get people vaccinated, so that every community is protected from the virus. We are committed here at University Hospital to redouble our efforts at this critical time."

While the vaccination rate is lowest among communities of color and highest among white voters, many additional Black and Hispanic voters say they are willing to be vaccinated. Only 35% of Black voters say they are already vaccinated, but an additional 34% say they either have an appointment to receive the vaccine (10%), definitely plan to receive the vaccine (10%) or probably will receive the vaccine (14%). By comparison, 56% of Hispanic and 68% of white voters say they are already vaccinated, with an additional 26% of Hispanic voters and 4% of white voters saying they would get the vaccine.

The most common reasons cited for not getting the vaccine include: Concerns about side effects (43%), Don't trust the government (43%), Don't think I need it (38%), Concerns about a rushed timeline (36%), and Want to wait to confirm it is safe (32%).

The increased willingness to be vaccinated does not appear to be a result of the CDC's action. In the wake of the CDC's new guidance about fully vaccinated individuals no longer needing to wear masks and the pause on the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, the vast majority of New Jerseyans say that neither action makes them more likely to be vaccinated.

When a vaccine becomes available for younger children, a similar pattern holds among parents of those children.

Other key findings include:

- **An increasing number of voters say they are willing to get the COVID-19 vaccine.**
 - Overall, 73% of voters say they have or likely will receive the vaccine, compared to 27% who likely or definitely will not. That is a slight increase from 71% in February 2021 and 60% in November, 2020.
- **The largest gains in willingness to be vaccinated is among communities of color.**
 - The largest increase came from Black voters (69%), compared to 62% in February 2021 and 61% in November 2020 and Hispanic voters (83%), compared to 77% in February 2021 and 55% in November 2020 and Hispanic voters.
 - 73% of white voters say they have or will likely be vaccinated, compared to 71% in February 2021 and 63% in November 2020.
- **While the vaccination rate is lowest among communities of color and highest among white voters, many additional Black and Hispanic voters say they are willing to be vaccinated and they are also less likely than white voters to say they definitely will not receive the vaccine.**
 - Only 35% of Black voters say they are already vaccinated, compared to 56% of Hispanic and 68% of white voters. In addition, 34% of Black voters say they either have an appointment to receive the vaccine (10%), definitely plan to receive the vaccine (10%) or probably will receive the vaccine (14%), compared to 26% of Hispanic voters (11% have an appointment, 14% definitely plan to, 2% probably will) and 4% of white voters (1% have an appointment, 1% definitely plan to, 2% probably will).
 - Only 13% of Black voters, 10% of Hispanic voters, and 19% of white voters say they “definitely will not” receive the vaccine.
- **The strongest indicator of willingness to be vaccinated is partisanship.**
 - 93% of Democrats say they have or likely will get the vaccine, compared to 64% of Independents and 51% of Republicans.
 - Only 7% of Democrats say they likely or definitely will not get the vaccine, compared to 36% of Independents and 49% of Republicans.
 - Only 3% of Democrats say they “definitely will not” get the vaccine, compared to 24% of Independents and 39% of Republicans.

- **In New Jersey’s largest city, very few say they “definitely” will not be vaccinated.**
 - Among Newark voters, 84% say they have or will likely get the vaccine while 16% say they definitely or likely will not, including only 9% who say they “definitely” will not. That is less than half of the state-wide rate (19%) who say they “definitely” will not be vaccinated.

- **Voters say the CDC’s recent actions do not make them more likely to be vaccinated.**
 - Only 1% of unvaccinated people say CDC’s new guidance that fully vaccinated people do not need to wear masks makes them more likely to want to be vaccinated. 93% say it does not.
 - Only 1% of unvaccinated people said the CDC’s pause in the J&J vaccine made them more likely to get the vaccine. 44% said it made them less likely and 50% said it made no difference.

- **More Black and Hispanic parents of middle and high school students say they’re likely to have their children vaccinated than white parents**
 - Overall, 42% of middle and high school parents statewide say they’re likely to have children vaccinated now that vaccine is approved for 12-15 year olds, while 54% say they are not likely to vaccinate their children.
 - 54% of Black and 59% of Hispanic middle and high school parents say they will get their children vaccinated, compared to 39% of white parents.
 - Among middle and high school parents in Newark, 62% are likely to vaccinate their children compared to 26% who are not likely

- **Parents of elementary school and younger children are somewhat more likely to be willing to vaccinate their children when a coronavirus vaccine becomes available compared to parents of older children. The most willing are Black parents.**
 - Overall, 50% of parents of elementary school and younger children say they are likely to get their children vaccinated compared to 43% who say they are not likely to vaccinate their children
 - Black parents of young children are the most likely to say they would vaccinate their children, 55% to 30%, compared to 47% to 41% for Hispanic parents and 47% to 48% for white parents

- **Voters identified a variety of reasons for not getting the vaccine, but difficulty in making an appointment was cited by very few**
 - Statewide, the most common reasons for not getting the vaccine include: Concerns about side effects (43%), Don’t trust the government (43%), Don’t think I need it (38%), Concerns about a rushed timeline (36%), Want to wait to confirm it is safe (32%), Concerned about allergic reaction (21%), Want to wait to see how effective it is (19%), Don’t trust healthcare institutions (19%), Don’t trust vaccines generally (17%)

- The most commonly cited reason by unvaccinated Democrats is “Concerns about side effects” (53%) whereas the most cited reason by Independents (46%) and Republicans (44%) was “Don’t trust the government.”
- Among Newark voters who have not been vaccinated, the most common reasons cited were: Don’t trust the government (42%), Concerns about side effects (38%), Want to wait to confirm it is safe (38%), Want to wait to see how effective it is (33%), Don’t trust vaccines generally (33%), Concerns about a rushed timeline (27%), Don’t think I need it (26%), and Don’t trust healthcare institutions (24%).
- Statewide, only 1% cited the difficulty of making an appointment as a main reason for not getting the vaccine, however that included 7% of unvaccinated Black respondents.

Methodology

Polling was conducted online from May 15-20, 2021. Using its Dynamic Online Sampling technology and SMS text messaging to attain a sample reflective of registered voters, Change Research polled 1215 people in the state of New Jersey. This includes an oversample of 343 voters in the city of Newark. Post-stratification weights were made on age, gender, political region, education, 2020 vote, and race and ethnicity to reflect the distribution of voters statewide.

All polls are subject to errors caused by interviewing a sample of persons, rather than the entire population. In 95 cases out of 100, the responses to this survey should be within plus or minus 3.9 percentage points of those that would have been obtained from interviewing the entire population of likely voters. The sampling error for subgroups of the survey will be greater.