



**School of Public Affairs, August 13, 2020**  
**Emergency Preparedness Survey**

**Summary:** Researchers at the University of South Florida conducted a statewide survey of 600 Floridians to measure emergency preparedness, as well as general opinions regarding the COVID-19 public health crisis and related policy issues. This brief summarizes responses related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey included a representative sample of the state's residents, fielded between July 30<sup>th</sup> and August 10<sup>th</sup>. The results are reported below with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error +/- 4.

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**Floridians are still concerned about COVID-19.** When it comes to COVID-19, a majority of Floridians (55%) believe that the worst is not yet behind us; less than 25% believe that it is.

**Trust in Public Health Guidelines.** A large majority of Floridians (82%) believe that prevention guidelines being emphasized by public health officials – such as wearing a mask in public and practicing social distancing – are effective at slowing the spread of COVID-19.

**Most Floridians Would Support Closing Public Schools This Fall.** Nearly three-quarters of respondents (73%) indicated that they would support a statewide decision to close public schools this Fall. A majority (54%) indicated that they would “Strongly Support” doing so.

**Strong Support for a Statewide Mask Mandate:** An overwhelming majority of Floridians (87%) would support a statewide mask mandate, with 73% indicating that they would “Strongly Support” such a measure.

**Concerns Over Political Rallies.** With election season approaching, 46% of Floridians feel that political candidates should not hold any rallies in Florida this Fall, while another 42% feel that political rallies should only be held if they can adhere to proper social distancing guidelines.

**Additional Support for Mitigation Policies.** A majority of Floridians would also support additional mitigation efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19, including placing stricter limits on public gatherings (85%) as well as temporarily re-closing bars and restaurants (66%), houses of worship (63%), and beaches/public parks (60%).

**Small Partisan Differences on COVID-19.** Majorities of both Republicans and Democrats favor enhanced mitigation efforts, though some partisan differences exist. Republicans are more likely to believe that the worst is behind us with regard to COVID-19 and slightly less likely to believe that public health guidance is effective at limiting the spread of the virus. Democrats are more supportive of a statewide mask mandate, closing public schools, and placing stricter limits on public gatherings, though majorities in both parties support each measure.

**Summary of Responses**

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: ***When it comes to COVID-19, the worst is behind us.***

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	66	11.0
Somewhat Agree	74	12.3
Neither Agree nor Disagree	130	21.7
Somewhat Disagree	146	24.3
Strongly Disagree	184	30.7

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: ***I feel more prepared to protect myself from COVID-19 than I did when the outbreak began.***

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	211	35.2
Somewhat Agree	227	37.8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	114	19.0
Somewhat Disagree	31	5.2
Strongly Disagree	17	2.8

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: ***I believe that the prevention guidelines given by public health officials (such as wearing a mask in public and practicing social distancing) are effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19.***

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	275	45.8
Somewhat Agree	218	36.3
Neither Agree nor Disagree	55	9.2
Somewhat Disagree	28	4.7
Strongly Disagree	24	4.0

*To what extent would you support or oppose the state of Florida taking the following actions to slow the spread of COVID-19? **Placing stricter limits on the size of public gatherings.***

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Support	406	67.7
Somewhat Support	105	17.5
Neither Support nor Oppose	46	7.7
Somewhat Oppose	22	3.7
Strongly Oppose	21	3.5

*To what extent would you support or oppose the state of Florida taking the following actions to slow the spread of COVID-19? **Requiring individuals to wear face masks in public.***

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Support	440	73.3
Somewhat Support	79	13.2
Neither Support nor Oppose	36	6.0
Somewhat Oppose	16	2.7
Strongly Oppose	29	4.8

*To what extent would you support or oppose the state of Florida taking the following actions to slow the spread of COVID-19? **Issuing a new “Stay-at-Home” Order.***

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Support	245	40.8
Somewhat Support	149	24.8
Neither Support nor Oppose	80	13.3
Somewhat Oppose	58	9.7
Strongly Oppose	68	11.3

*To what extent would you support or oppose the state of Florida taking the following actions to slow the spread of COVID-19? **Closing Public Schools for the Fall.***

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Support	324	54.0
Somewhat Support	111	18.5
Neither Support nor Oppose	77	12.8
Somewhat Oppose	41	6.8
Strongly Oppose	47	7.8

*To what extent would you support or oppose the state of Florida taking the following actions to slow the spread of COVID-19? **Re-Closing Restaurants and Bars.***

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Support	241	40.2
Somewhat Support	152	25.3
Neither Support nor Oppose	77	12.8
Somewhat Oppose	71	11.8
Strongly Oppose	59	9.8

*To what extent would you support or oppose the state of Florida taking the following actions to slow the spread of COVID-19? **Re-Closing Houses of Worship.***

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Support	247	41.2
Somewhat Support	128	21.3
Neither Support nor Oppose	97	16.2
Somewhat Oppose	52	8.7
Strongly Oppose	76	12.7

*To what extent would you support or oppose the state of Florida taking the following actions to slow the spread of COVID-19? **Re-Closing Beaches and Public Parks.***

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Support	256	42.7
Somewhat Support	101	16.8
Neither Support nor Oppose	99	16.5
Somewhat Oppose	57	9.5
Strongly Oppose	87	14.5

*How do you feel about political candidates holding campaign rallies in Florida this Fall?*

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Candidates should hold rallies the same as they would any other year	72	12.2
Candidates should only hold rallies that follow proper social distancing guidelines	248	42.0
Candidates should not hold any campaign rallies in Florida this Fall	270	45.8

**Partisan Differences**

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: **When it comes to COVID-19, the worst is behind us.**

*Reported as percentage of column totals*

	<b>Democrats</b>	<b>Independents</b>	<b>Republicans</b>
Strongly Agree	6.6	9.6	18.9
Somewhat Agree	9.7	9.0	19.4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	16.7	22.8	28.0
Somewhat Disagree	29.5	24.6	16.6
Strongly Disagree	37.6	34.1	17.1

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements. **I believe that the prevention guidelines given by public health officials (such as wearing a mask in public and practicing social distancing) are effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19.**

*Reported as percentage of column totals*

	<b>Democrats</b>	<b>Independents</b>	<b>Republicans</b>
Strongly Agree	50.8	38.3	45.7
Somewhat Agree	38.0	37.1	33.1
Neither Agree nor Disagree	7.0	11.4	10.3
Somewhat Disagree	2.7	6.0	6.3
Strongly Disagree	1.6	7.2	4.6

To what extent would you support or oppose the state of Florida taking the following actions to slow the spread of COVID-19? **Requiring individuals to wear face masks in public.**

*Reported as percentage of column totals*

	<b>Democrats</b>	<b>Independents</b>	<b>Republicans</b>
Strongly Support	86.0	68.9	58.9
Somewhat Support	10.1	12.6	18.3
Neither Support nor Oppose	2.3	8.4	9.1
Somewhat Oppose	0.8	2.4	5.7
Strongly Oppose	0.8	7.8	8.0

To what extent would you support or oppose the state of Florida taking the following actions to slow the spread of COVID-19? **Closing Public Schools for the Fall.**

*Reported as percentage of column totals*

	<b>Democrats</b>	<b>Independents</b>	<b>Republicans</b>
Strongly Support	65.9	50.3	40.0
Somewhat Support	20.2	20.4	14.3
Neither Support nor Oppose	9.7	18.0	12.6
Somewhat Oppose	2.7	6.6	13.1
Strongly Oppose	1.6	4.8	20.0

To what extent would you support or oppose the state of Florida taking the following actions to slow the spread of COVID-19? **Placing Stricter Limits on Public Gatherings.**

*Reported as percentage of column totals*

	<b>Democrats</b>	<b>Independents</b>	<b>Republicans</b>
Strongly Support	76.4	64.1	58.3
Somewhat Support	18.2	18.6	15.4
Neither Support nor Oppose	4.3	9.6	10.9
Somewhat Oppose	0.8	3.6	8.0
Strongly Oppose	0.4	4.2	7.4



**Survey Information**

For this survey, 600 residents of Florida were surveyed via an online web-panel using Prodege MR, an industry leading market research provider. The survey was fielded from July 30<sup>th</sup> through August 10<sup>th</sup>, and the results are reported with a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of +/-4.

Survey respondents were selected via a stratified, quota sampling approach in order to ensure a representative sample of Florida’s population. Quotas for gender, age, race, and ethnicity were calculated based on population estimates provided by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEER). Table A1 below summarizes the USF survey sample in comparison to BEER’s 2019 population estimates.

**Table A1  
Sample Comparison**

	USF Survey Sample	2019 BEBR Estimates
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	53%	51%
Male	47%	49%
<i>Age</i>		
18-24	10%	11%
25-54	48%	47%
55-64	18%	17%
65+	24%	25%
<i>Race</i>		
African American	20%	17%
White/Caucasian	71%	77%
Other	9%	6%
<i>Ethnicity</i>		
Hispanic	27%	26%
Non- Hispanic	73%	74%

The sample was stratified by region of the state to ensure geographical representativeness. [Northeast Florida-14%; Tampa Bay Metro-17%; Southwest Florida-11%; Orlando/Daytona-18%; Palm Beach/Treasure Coast-10%; Southeast Florida-23%; and Northwest Florida-7%].

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### **About our Research Team**

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### **About the School of Public Affairs**

The School of Public Affairs (SPA) at the University of South Florida is part of USF's College of Arts and Sciences and serves as a premier community-centered hub for public affairs education and research, providing quality education, research, and public service to meet community, national, and global needs.

SPA offers graduate degree programs in Public Administration and Urban & Regional Planning, as well as graduate certificates in Public Management, Nonprofit Management, Data Science, Community Development, and Coastal Resiliency Planning. SPA also offers undergraduate minors in Public Service & Leadership as well as Urban Studies.

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