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Poll Finds Majority of New Jerseyans Give Negative Ratings to State and National Economy

Those surveyed say public schools, social services have the biggest influence on the taxes they pay

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. (May 1, 2025) – New Jerseyans give subpar ratings to both the state and national economy, though they are more positive about New Jersey than the nation, as a whole, according to the latest Rutgers-Eagleton Poll in partnership with [New Jersey Organization for a Better State](#) political action committee.

New Jerseyans surveyed in a poll earlier this month are generally negative about the U.S. economy: 41% describe it as “poor,” 39% say “only fair” (up 11 percentage points since November 2024) and 18% “good” (down 9 points); less than 1% say the national economy is doing “excellent.”

Views on the national economy are net negative across the board, including across partisan lines. A majority of Republicans (62%) rate the national economy as either “only fair” or “poor,” though they do so to a lesser extent than Democrats (88%) or independents (82%). Republicans (37%) are three times as likely as Democrats (11%) and more than twice as likely as independents (15%) to rate the economy as “good.” Half or more of Democrats, Black residents, Hispanic residents, 18- to 34-year-olds, and those in households making less than \$50,000 annually specifically rate the national economy as “poor.”

Residents are slightly more positive about New Jersey’s economy, though still negative overall: 26% rate it as “poor,” 37% “only fair,” 31% “good,” and 1% “excellent.” Views on the state economy have changed little since polled in the fall.

Partisan differences are reversed on the state economy compared with the national economy. Democrats (45%) are about twice as likely as Republicans (21%) and one-and-a-half times as likely as independents (slightly more than 28%) to rate New Jersey’s economy as “excellent” or

“good,” and while slightly more than half of Democrats rate it as “only fair” or “poor” (53%), two-thirds of independents (66%) and three-quarters of Republicans (78%) feel the same.

“It’s not surprising that we see ratings of the state economy unimproved and ratings on the national economy even more negative, given the current political and economic climate,” said [Ashley Koning](#), an assistant research professor and director of the [Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling](#) (ECPIP) at [Rutgers University–New Brunswick](#). “While views are colored by partisanship – with Republicans more positive about Trump’s economy and Democrats more positive about Murphy’s – partisans of all stripes sense the economy is not in great shape. The economy is sure to be at the forefront of this year’s governor’s race and next year’s midterms.”

When it comes to opinions on the biggest driver of taxes state residents pay in New Jersey, New Jerseyans coalesce around a couple of major state expenses. Regarding property taxes, 48% say one’s local public school district has the most influence on how much someone pays; no other response comes close. Another 9% say county-level government services; 8% say pensions for local government employees; 7% say local law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services; 6% say road maintenance; 5% social programs and services; 2% local libraries; parks, and other infrastructure; 4% say something else and 12% are unsure.

As for what determines the amount of income tax one pays in New Jersey, residents are divided between healthcare and social services such as Medicaid, public health initiatives, and other social programs (24%) and public education (21%). Eight percent say property tax relief; state police, corrections facilities, and emergency services; and transportation and infrastructure. Five percent say municipal and county aid. Another 5% say public employee pensions, 2% say something else, and 19% are unsure.

“A majority of citizens in New Jersey are worried about the state’s economy and the taxes they pay. That is a very alarming because it also makes businesses concerned about investment and stability in the marketplace,” said Tony Bawidamann, chairman of the [New Jersey Organization for a Better State](#) (NEW JOBS) political action committee. “I think moving forward there is a lot of work to be done, as the state’s business leaders need to work closely with elected leaders to create public policy that makes it easier for businesses grow and flourish here. Creating a positive business climate will result in a stronger economy that builds consumer confidence and attracts business to locate here.”

Results are from a statewide poll of 1,058 adults contacted through the probability-based [Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel](#) from April 1 to April 10. The full sample has a margin of error of +/- 4.1 percentage points.

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Broadcast interviews: Rutgers University-New Brunswick has broadcast-quality television and radio studios available for remote live or taped interviews with Rutgers experts. For more information, contact Kiana Miranda at kiana.miranda@eagleton.rutgers.edu.

ABOUT THE EAGLETON CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEREST POLLING

Home of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll, the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP) was established in 1971 and is the oldest and one of the most respected university-based statewide polling operations in the United States. Now in its 52nd year and with the publication of over 200 polls, ECPIP's mission is to provide scientifically sound, nonpartisan information about public opinion. To read more about ECPIP and view all of our press releases, published research and data archive, please visit our website: eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu. You can also visit our [Facebook](#) and [X](#), formerly Twitter.

ABOUT THE EAGLETON INSTITUTE OF POLITICS

The Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling is a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University–New Brunswick. The Eagleton Institute studies how American politics and government work and change, analyzes how the democracy might improve and promotes political participation and civic engagement. The Institute explores state and national politics through research, education and public service, linking the study of politics with its day-to-day practice. To learn more about Eagleton programs and expertise, visit eagleton.rutgers.edu.

ABOUT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY–NEW BRUNSWICK

Rutgers University–New Brunswick is where Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, began more than 250 years ago. Ranked among the world's top 60 universities, Rutgers's flagship university is a leading public research institution and a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities. It is home to internationally acclaimed faculty and has 12 degree-granting schools and a Division I Athletics program. It is the Big Ten Conference's most diverse university. Through its community of teachers, scholars, artists, scientists and healers, Rutgers is equipped as never before to transform lives.

ABOUT THE RUTGERS-EAGLETON/SSRS GARDEN STATE PANEL

[The Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel](#) is a probability-based panel of New Jersey adults age 18 or older. Members are recruited randomly based on statewide representative ABS (Address Based Sample) design. The ABS sample is drawn from the Delivery Sequence File (DSF) maintained by the U.S. Postal Service. Population coverage of the DSF is in the 98%-99% range. During the recruitment process, full demographic information on panelists is collected. This data is stored securely and used to determine eligibility for specific studies (if needed). The Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel is a multi-mode panel. Internet households participate via web while all non-internet households (including those who have internet but are unwilling to take surveys online) participate via phone. Panelists also have the option of taking surveys in their preferred language (English or Spanish).

ABOUT NEW JOBS PAC

[The New Jersey Organization for a Better State](#) (NEW JOBS), the state's largest business political action committee, is a nonpartisan organization whose trustees promote a pro-business climate in New Jersey by endorsing and supporting legislative candidates who actively support economic growth, the creation of private-sector jobs, and the lowering of business costs.

QUESTIONS AND TABLES START ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

Questions and Tables

The questions covered in this release are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are New Jersey adults; all percentages are of weighted results. Interpret groups with samples sizes under 100 with extreme caution. Certain crosstabs may be condensed or omitted due to sample size.

Q1. How would you rate the condition of each of the following?

The national economy

Excellent	<1%
Good	18%
Only fair	39%
Poor	41%
Don't know	2%
Unweighted N=	1057

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Excellent	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	<1%	0%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%	<1%
Good	11%	15%	37%	23%	15%	23%	11%	15%	11%	9%	19%	19%	26%
Only fair	36%	45%	33%	38%	38%	44%	27%	27%	42%	32%	38%	41%	43%
Poor	52%	37%	29%	35%	46%	33%	52%	54%	44%	55%	39%	38%	30%
Don't know	2%	3%	0%	3%	1%	0%	9%	3%	0%	3%	3%	2%	0%
Unwt N=	443	435	179	457	597	515	203	237	101	274	271	274	238

**Economic Issues 2025
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
Excellent	2%	<1%	0%	0%	0%	<1%	1%	<1%	1%	<1%	2%	<1%	0%
Good	16%	15%	19%	20%	17%	21%	13%	22%	15%	20%	14%	17%	21%
Only fair	27%	41%	44%	46%	38%	37%	42%	39%	39%	35%	37%	41%	42%
Poor	51%	41%	36%	34%	42%	40%	45%	35%	44%	40%	46%	41%	37%
Don't know	4%	2%	0%	0%	3%	2%	0%	3%	1%	4%	2%	1%	0%
Unwt N=	287	278	205	211	153	345	165	225	169	227	274	253	302

Q1. How would you rate the condition of each of the following?

New Jersey's economy

Excellent	1%
Good	31%
Only fair	37%
Poor	26%
Don't know	4%
Unweighted N=	1057

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Excellent	2%	<1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	3%	2%	<1%	3%	2%	0%	<1%
Good	43%	28%	19%	35%	29%	32%	29%	26%	40%	26%	33%	30%	38%
Only fair	34%	39%	39%	36%	38%	39%	29%	36%	42%	35%	33%	39%	41%
Poor	19%	27%	39%	22%	30%	25%	28%	34%	18%	30%	28%	29%	18%
Don't know	3%	6%	2%	5%	3%	3%	11%	2%	1%	7%	3%	3%	2%
Unwt N=	444	434	179	456	598	514	203	238	101	275	271	274	237

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
Excellent	1%	1%	3%	0%	1%	1%	<1%	2%	0%	2%	<1%	2%	0%
Good	24%	33%	30%	43%	32%	34%	35%	28%	26%	22%	30%	36%	41%
Only fair	27%	35%	47%	35%	39%	36%	34%	37%	39%	34%	37%	34%	43%
Poor	42%	26%	18%	19%	24%	24%	25%	29%	31%	35%	31%	24%	14%
Don't know	5%	4%	2%	2%	4%	4%	6%	3%	3%	6%	2%	4%	2%
Unwt N=	288	278	204	211	153	346	164	225	169	228	274	253	301

Q2A. In your opinion, which of the following has the biggest influence on the amount of property taxes one pays in New Jersey?

Note: This question was part of a split sample. Half of respondents received Q2A and half received Q2B.

Their local public school district	48%
County-level government services like courts, jails, and health departments	9%
Pensions for local government employees	8%
Local law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services	7%
Road maintenance	6%
Social programs and services	5%
Local libraries, parks, and other infrastructure	2%
Something else	4%
Don't know	12%
Unweighted N=	546

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	White, Non-Hispanic	Non-White	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Schools	50%	46%	46%	53%	43%	61%	32%	26%	45%	55%	65%
Govt services	11%	8%	8%	8%	11%	6%	13%	14%	12%	8%	2%
Pensions	5%	7%	13%	8%	7%	8%	7%	7%	7%	10%	7%
Local law, etc.	10%	6%	3%	7%	7%	6%	8%	10%	3%	10%	5%
Roads	5%	7%	7%	5%	7%	3%	10%	10%	9%	5%	<1%
Social prog	4%	6%	4%	5%	5%	4%	6%	5%	6%	4%	4%
Libraries, etc.	3%	3%	<1%	1%	3%	1%	3%	5%	1%	0%	3%
Something else	1%	5%	5%	6%	2%	5%	3%	4%	4%	2%	5%
Don't know	10%	11%	14%	7%	16%	7%	17%	19%	13%	6%	9%
Unwt N=	229	224	93	241	303	256	290	138	140	139	129

**Economic Issues 2025
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

	Income				Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
Schools	24%	50%	51%	64%	37%	41%	55%	58%
Govt services	14%	6%	11%	8%	16%	10%	7%	3%
Pensions	13%	6%	6%	4%	9%	8%	8%	6%
Local law, etc.	7%	10%	11%	3%	5%	10%	7%	6%
Roads	10%	12%	2%	2%	8%	10%	4%	3%
Social prog	5%	2%	7%	6%	4%	4%	1%	9%
Libraries, etc.	2%	3%	3%	1%	1%	6%	0%	1%
Something else	3%	3%	<1%	10%	3%	1%	7%	4%
Don't know	22%	8%	9%	3%	16%	10%	10%	9%
Unwt N=	145	151	100	108	114	145	124	163

Q2B. In your opinion, the costs associated with which of the following has the biggest influence on the amount of income tax one pays in New Jersey?

Note: This question was part of a split sample. Half of respondents received Q2A and half received Q2B.

Healthcare and social services like Medicaid, public health initiatives, and other social programs	24%
Public education	21%
Property tax relief	8%
State police, corrections facilities, and emergency services	8%
Transportation and infrastructure	8%
Municipal and county aid	5%
Public employee pensions	5%
Something else	2%
Don't know	19%
Unweighted N=	512

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	White, Non-Hispanic	Non-White	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Healthcare	21%	20%	35%	28%	21%	22%	26%	24%	27%	23%	21%
Public ed	18%	22%	24%	18%	23%	27%	13%	12%	16%	28%	29%
Prop tax relief	8%	7%	9%	7%	9%	5%	12%	7%	9%	11%	4%
Police, etc.	5%	15%	3%	7%	9%	6%	11%	13%	12%	5%	2%
Transport	10%	7%	5%	7%	8%	8%	7%	10%	9%	8%	2%
Mun/Cty aid	6%	6%	3%	8%	3%	3%	8%	5%	2%	8%	6%
Pensions	5%	4%	7%	6%	5%	8%	2%	5%	5%	5%	6%
Something else	26%	16%	12%	17%	20%	18%	20%	24%	20%	8%	28%
Don't know	<1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	0%
Unwt N=	215	211	86	216	295	259	252	137	131	135	109

**Economic Issues 2025
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

	Income				Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
Healthcare	18%	19%	32%	28%	29%	30%	15%	21%
Public ed	13%	20%	26%	25%	14%	12%	32%	27%
Prop tax relief	7%	13%	5%	6%	11%	7%	6%	7%
Police, etc.	15%	7%	6%	5%	9%	12%	8%	5%
Transport	10%	4%	6%	12%	5%	8%	7%	12%
Mun/Cty aid	5%	9%	1%	6%	4%	6%	6%	6%
Pensions	4%	5%	5%	5%	6%	4%	4%	5%
Something else	1%	1%	5%	1%	2%	1%	3%	1%
Don't know	27%	22%	14%	12%	20%	20%	19%	16%
Unwt N=	143	127	105	103	114	129	129	139

Methodology

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted using the [Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel](#) from April 1 to 10, 2025, with a scientifically selected random sample of 1,058 New Jersey adults, 18 or older. Analysis is based on a registered voter subsample including 966 New Jersey adults, 18 or older, who are self-reported registered voters. The Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel is a probability-based panel of New Jersey adults aged 18 or older. Members are recruited randomly based on statewide representative ABS (Address Based Sample) design. ABS sample is drawn from the Delivery Sequence File (DSF) maintained by the U.S. Postal Service. Population coverage of the DSF is in the 98%-99% range. During the recruitment process, full demographic information on panelists is collected. The Rutgers/SSRS Garden State Panel is a multi-mode panel. For this poll, only Internet households were invited to participate via web; non-internet households were not included. Sample drawn was stratified by county, age, gender, race and ethnicity, and education to ensure adequate representation of each demographic group. Only panelists who complete surveys by web in English were eligible for selection for this study.

Data were weighted to represent the adult population of New Jersey. Weighting was done by applying a base weight, making an adjustment to account for the oversampling of Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino respondents and calibrating sample demographic distributions to match target population benchmarks.

The first step in the weighting was to apply a base weight, d_0 , that accounts for the recruitment sampling probabilities and respondent selection.

A composite adjustment was applied to combine the panel base sample and the panel oversamples of African Americans and Hispanics. This adjustment brought the proportion of the two targeted groups in the combined sample to equal the proportion of the main Garden State Panel sample.

The final base weight is the product of the initial base weight and the composite adjustments. The final base weight was standardized overall to sum up the number of interviews.

With the base weight applied, the data were weighted to balance the demographic profile of the sample to target population parameters.

Data were calibrated by raking sample distributions to target population distributions using iterative proportional fitting. This procedure balances each calibration variable to target benchmarks individually and iteratively. The entire set of calibration variables is cycled through until the weights converge across all dimensions.

Data were weighted to distributions of sex by age, sex by education, gender by race, age by race, age by education, detailed education, race/ethnicity, region, home tenure, number of adults per household, civic engagement, internet use frequency and 2024 recalled vote. Missing data in the raking variables were imputed using hot decking. Hot deck imputation replaces the missing values of a respondent randomly with another similar respondent without missing data. Hot decking was done using an SPSS macro detailed in 'Goodbye, Listwise Deletion: Presenting Hot Deck Imputation as an Easy and Effective Tool for Handling Missing Data' (Myers, 2011).

Table 1 shows the data sources used for calibration totals.

Table 1. Calibration Variable Sources

Dimension	Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex • Age • Education • Race • Hispanic nativity • Number of adults in household • Home tenure 	Current Population Survey 2024 ¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region 	American Community Survey 2023 ²
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic engagement • Internet frequency 	Modeled from SSRS Opinion Panel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024 Presidential recalled vote 	National Election Pool

Weights were trimmed at the 4th and 96th percentiles to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on survey-derived estimates.

Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. We calculate the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect" or *deff* represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from a disproportionate sample design and systematic non-response. The total sample design effect for this survey is 1.81. Design effect for the registered voter subsample is 1.82.

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. Sampling error should be adjusted to recognize the effect of weighting the data to better match the population. In this poll, the simple sampling error for 1,058 New Jersey adults is +/-3.0 percentage points at a 95% confidence interval. The design effect³ is 1.81, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 4.1 percentage points. Thus, if 50% of New Jersey adults in this sample favor a particular position, we would be 95% sure that the true figure is between 45.9 and 54.1% (50 +/- 4.1) if all New Jersey adults had been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Among the registered voter subsample (n=966), the simple sampling error is +/- 3.2 percentage points. Design effect for the registered voter subsample is 1.82, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 4.3 percentage points.

¹ Sarah Flood, Miriam King, Renae Rodgers, Steven Ruggles, J. Robert Warren, Daniel Backman, Annie Chen, Grace Cooper, Stephanie Richards, Megan Schouweiler, and Michael Westberry. IPUMS CPS: Version 12.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2024.

<https://doi.org/10.18128/D030.V12.0>

² U.S. Census Bureau. "Age and Sex." American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0101, 2023.

³ Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. We calculate the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect" or *deff* represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from a disproportionate sample design and systematic non-response.

Sampling error is only one possible source of error in a survey estimate. Sampling error does not consider other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as selection bias, non-response bias, question wording, context effects, or reporting accuracy, which may contribute additional error.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded by SSRS through the Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel. The questionnaire was developed and all data analyses were completed in house by the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP). Jessica Roman assisted with analysis and preparation of this report. The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll is paid for and sponsored by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, a non-partisan academic center for the study of politics and the political process. Full questionnaires are available on request and can also be accessed through our archives at eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu. For more information, please contact poll@eagleton.rutgers.edu.

Weighted Demographics
1,058 New Jersey Adults 18+
Overall Margin of Error = +/- 4.1 percentage points

Please note: Totals may equal slightly more or less than 100% due to rounding.

		deff	MOE			deff	MOE
Man	47%	1.76	+/- 6.1%	White	55%	1.61	+/- 5.1%
Woman	53%	1.85	+/- 5.5%	Black	13%	2.07	+/- 7.3%
				Hispanic	20%	2.23	+/- 9.5%
18-34	25%	1.92	+/- 8.2%	Other	12%	1.54	+/- 12.1%
35-49	25%	1.80	+/- 8.0%				
50-64	27%	1.74	+/- 7.8%	<50K	26%	1.96	+/- 8.1%
65+	23%	1.78	+/- 8.5%	50K-<100K	27%	1.93	+/- 8.2%
				100K-<150K	25%	1.71	+/- 9.0%
Democrat	38%	1.84	+/- 6.3%	150K+	23%	1.56	+/- 8.4%
Independent	40%	1.81	+/- 6.3%				
Republican	22%	1.64	+/- 9.4%	Urban	17%	1.68	+/- 10.3%
				Suburb	35%	1.71	+/- 6.9%
HS or Less	32%	1.64	+/- 8.3%	Exurban	14%	1.94	+/- 10.6%
Some College	21%	1.93	+/- 8.2%	Phil/South	17%	2.14	+/- 9.6%
College Grad	23%	1.66	+/- 7.9%	Shore	17%	1.65	+/- 9.7%
Grad Work	25%	1.72	+/- 7.4%				