

# Californians and Their Economic Well-Being November 2021

## Time Trends – California Adults Earning Less Than \$40,000 Only

### Methodology Note:

Findings for November 2021 are based on a survey of 2,292 California adult residents, conducted online using the Ipsos KnowledgePanel. Interviews were conducted in English, Spanish, Chinese (simplified or traditional), Vietnamese, and Korean according to the respondents' preferences. The median time to complete the survey was 16.2 minutes. Interviewing took place from October 12–31, 2021.

The November 2021 sampling error for the 1,027 California adults earning less than \$40,000 annually, taking design effects from weighting into consideration, is  $\pm 5$  percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

Note: This document only includes data from the 2020 and 2021 Californians and Their Economic Well-Being surveys given there was an oversample of lower-income Californians in each survey. If you have further questions on this, please see the survey methodology for each survey.

If you have any questions or require additional information regarding this survey, please contact [surveys@ppic.org](mailto:surveys@ppic.org)

**PPIC Statewide Survey**  
**Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021**  
**Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way  
that Governor Newsom is handling the issue of  
jobs and the economy?

	Approve	Disapprove	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	64%	35%	1%	1010
Dec 2020	58%	39%	3%	986

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q2. Do you approve or disapprove of the way  
 that the California Legislature is handling the  
 issue of jobs and the economy?

	Approve	Disapprove	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	56%	43%	1%	1009
Dec 2020	51%	45%	4%	990

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

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Q3. How much of the time can you trust the state government to do what is right when it comes to handling the issue of jobs and the economy?

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	Just about always	Most of the time	Only some of the time	(VOL) None	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	10%	37%	53%	0%	0%	1012
Dec 2020	7%	40%	51%	0%	2%	994

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Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q4. Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think  
 that during the next 12 months we will have good times  
 financially or bad times?

	Good times	Bad times	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	43%	56%	1%	1012
Dec 2020	32%	67%	2%	997

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q5. Looking ahead, in California will we have  
 mostly good times during the next five years or  
 will we have mostly periods of widespread  
 unemployment or depression?

	Good times	Periods of depression or unemployment	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	41%	58%	1%	1012
Dec 2020	35%	64%	1%	997

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

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 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q6. How much of a problem is the availability of well-paying jobs  
 in your part of California today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of  
 a problem, or not a problem?

	Big problem	Somewhat of a problem	Not a problem	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	27%	55%	17%	0%	1014
Dec 2020	31%	59%	8%	2%	998

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q7. Does the lack of well-paying jobs make you and your family seriously consider moving away from the part of California you live now?

	Yes, elsewhere in California	Yes, outside of the state	Yes, other	No	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	8%	23%	0%	68%	0%	1013
Dec 2020	8%	27%	0%	64%	1%	993

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding



**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q8. Now thinking about your own personal finances, would you say that you and your family are financially better off, worse off, or just about the same as you were a year ago?

	Better off	Worse off	About the same	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	13%	29%	58%	0%	1013
Dec 2020	12%	34%	54%	1%	999

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q9. Now looking ahead, do you think a year from now that you  
 and your family will be better off, worse off, or just about the  
 same as now?

	Better off	Worse off	About the same	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	24%	20%	56%	0%	1014
Dec 2020	22%	21%	55%	1%	998

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**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q11. Suppose that you have an emergency expense that costs \$1,000. Based on your current financial situation, how difficult would it be for you to pay for this expense?

	Not too difficult	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult	Nearly impossible	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	28%	30%	23%	18%	0%	1014
Dec 2020	23%	31%	23%	22%	1%	998

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**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q12. On another topic, do you think the American Dream—that if you work hard you'll get ahead—still holds true, never held true, or once held true but does not anymore?

	Still holds true	Never held true	Once held true, but not anymore	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	30%	20%	50%	0%	1012
Dec 2020	30%	22%	48%	1%	998

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

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Q13. Do you think the American Dream is easier to achieve in California than elsewhere in the U.S. or harder to achieve?

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	Easier to achieve	Harder to achieve	About the same	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	13%	55%	32%	0%	1014
Dec 2020	8%	55%	35%	1%	1000

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**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q14. When children today in California grow up, do you think they will be better off or worse off financially than their parents?

	Better off	Worse off	About the same	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	42%	56%	0%	1%	1011
Dec 2020	43%	54%	0%	3%	998

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q15. Do you think the gap between the rich and the poor in your part of California is getting larger, getting smaller, or has it stayed the same?

	Getting larger	Getting smaller	Stayed the same	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	63%	7%	29%	0%	1012
Dec 2020	58%	9%	31%	1%	999

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q16. Looking ahead to the year 2030, do you think the gap between the rich and the poor in your part of California will be larger, be smaller, or will be the same?

	Be larger	Be smaller	Will be the same	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	56%	11%	32%	2%	1014
Dec 2020	57%	11%	30%	2%	996

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding



**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q17. Now, please indicate whether you or anyone in your household has done or experienced any of the following in the last 12 months...Been laid off or lost their job?

	Yes, happened to me	Yes, happened to someone in my household	Yes, happened to me and someone in my household	Did not happen to anyone in my household	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	17%	9%	3%	71%	1009
Dec 2020	18%	11%	6%	65%	992

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**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q18. Now, please indicate whether you or anyone in your household has done or experienced any of the following in the last 12 months...Had work hours reduced or pay cut?

	Yes, happened to me	Yes, happened to someone in my household	Yes, happened to me and someone in my household	Did not happen to anyone in my household	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	20%	11%	5%	64%	112
Dec 2020	22%	10%	11%	57%	994

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q19. Now, please indicate whether you or anyone in your household has done or experienced any of the following in the last 12 months...Put off seeing a doctor or purchasing medication for financial reasons?

	Yes, happened to me	Yes, happened to someone in my household	Yes, happened to me and someone in my household	Did not happen to anyone in my household	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	21%	5%	3%	71%	1011
Dec 2020	20%	4%	7%	69%	993

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q20. Now, please indicate whether you or anyone in your household has done or experienced any of the following in the last 12 months...Was not able to pay a monthly bill?

	Yes, happened to me	Yes, happened to someone in my household	Yes, happened to me and someone in my household	Did not happen to anyone in my household	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	24%	7%	3%	66%	1011
Dec 2020	20%	7%	9%	65%	995

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q21. Now, please indicate whether you or anyone in your household has done or experienced any of the following in the last 12 months...Received food stamps?

	Yes, happened to me	Yes, happened to someone in my household	Yes, happened to me and someone in my household	Did not happen to anyone in my household	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	30%	6%	6%	58%	1012
Dec 2020	22%	8%	8%	62%	995

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q22. Now, please indicate whether you or anyone in your household has done or experienced any of the following in the last 12 months...Reduced meals or cut back on food to save money?

	Yes, happened to me	Yes, happened to someone in my household	Yes, happened to me and someone in my household	Did not happen to anyone in my household	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	29%	2%	8%	61%	1009
Dec 2020	23%	5%	14%	58%	995

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q23. Now, please indicate whether you or anyone in your household has done or experienced any of the following in the last 12 months...Received unemployment benefits?

	Yes, happened to me	Yes, happened to someone in my household	Yes, happened to me and someone in my household	Did not happen to anyone in my household	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	19%	10%	4%	67%	1014
Dec 2020	16%	15%	5%	64%	993

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**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q24. Now, please indicate whether you or anyone in your household has done or experienced any of the following in the last 12 months...Received food from a food bank or pantry?

	Yes, happened to me	Yes, happened to someone in my household	Yes, happened to me and someone in my household	Did not happen to anyone in my household	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	24%	7%	6%	63%	1009
Dec 2020	24%	7%	12%	57%	993

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding



**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q26. Now, please indicate whether you or anyone in your household has done or experienced any of the following in the last 12 months...Had difficulty paying rent or mortgage?

	Yes, happened to me	Yes, happened to someone in my household	Yes, happened to me and someone in my household	Did not happen to anyone in my household	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	20%	5%	5%	69%	1011
Dec 2020	18%	8%	9%	64%	994

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

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Q27. Next, how often, if ever, do you worry about each of the following? You or someone in your family losing their job?

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	Every day	Almost every day	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	15%	7%	32%	17%	29%	1011
Dec 2020	18%	9%	30%	15%	28%	995

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Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

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Q28. Next, how often, if ever, do you worry about each of the following? The cost of healthcare for you and your family?

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	Every day	Almost every day	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	14%	10%	35%	17%	23%	1014
Dec 2020	18%	9%	31%	18%	24%	995

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**PPIC Statewide Survey**  
**Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021**  
**Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q29. Next, how often, if ever, do you worry about each of the following? The cost of housing for you and your family?

	Every day	Almost every day	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	24%	12%	36%	12%	17%	1013
Dec 2020	25%	12%	31%	16%	17%	994

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

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Q30. Next, how often, if ever, do you worry about each of the following? Paying your bills?

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	Every day	Almost every day	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	20%	15%	32%	16%	17%	1012
Dec 2020	12%	11%	35%	15%	16%	995

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Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

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Q31. Next, how often, if ever, do you worry about each of the following? The cost of childcare?

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	Every day	Almost every day	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	8%	3%	11%	10%	68%	1012
Dec 2020	7%	2%	6%	12%	70%	995

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Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

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Q32. Next, how often, if ever, do you worry about each of the following? The amount of debt your have?

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	Every day	Almost every day	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	19%	12%	28%	18%	24%	1014
Dec 2020	22%	12%	25%	18%	23%	995

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Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q33. Next, how often, if ever, do you worry about each of the following? Being able to save enough for your children's college education?

	Every day	Almost every day	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	13%	6%	16%	11%	54%	1012
Dec 2020	13%	8%	13%	14%	53%	996

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding



**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q34 Next, how often, if ever, do you worry about each of the following? Being able to save enough for your retirement?

	Every day	Almost every day	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	22%	12%	31%	11%	24%	1011
Dec 2020	22%	15%	25%	14%	24%	996

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey**  
**Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November**  
**2021**  
**Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q36. Would you say that you  
 have stable and predictable  
 pay at work?

	Yes	No	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	75%	25%	375
Dec 2020	72%	28%	343

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey**  
**Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November**  
**2021**  
**Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q37. Would you say that you  
 have stable and predictable  
 hours at work?

	Yes	No	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	72%	28%	376
Dec 2020	66%	34%	344

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November  
 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q38. Would you say that your  
 job offers opportunities for  
 growth and advancement?

	Yes	No	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	48%	52%	376
Dec 2020	54%	46%	343

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November  
 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q39. Would you say that your  
 employer cares about your  
 health and safety at work as it  
 relates to COVID-19?

	Yes	No	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	80%	20%	376
Dec 2020	85%	15%	343

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey**  
**Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November**  
**2021**  
**Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q40. Would you say that you  
 can voice concerns at work  
 without fear of negative  
 consequences?

	Yes	No	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	67%	33%	376
Dec 2020	74%	26%	344

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey**  
**Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November**  
**2021**  
**Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q41. Would you say that  
 decisions made at work take  
 into account your views and  
 concerns?

	Yes	No	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	53%	47%	376
Dec 2020	67%	33%	344

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey**  
**Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November**  
**2021**  
**Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

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Q47. Does your current job provide healthcare coverage?

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	Yes	No	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	50%	50%	376
Dec 2020	48%	52%	344

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Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding



**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November  
 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q48. Does your current job provide paid sick leave?			
	Yes	No	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	56%	44%	376
Dec 2020	59%	41%	344

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey**  
**Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November**  
**2021**  
**Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q49. Does your current job provide retirement savings?			
	Yes	No	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	45%	55%	376
Dec 2020	40%	60%	344

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November  
 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q50. And thinking about the benefits  
 offered at your current job... - Does  
 your current job provide educational or  
 training assistance?

	Yes	No	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	35%	65%	376
Dec 2020	33%	67%	344

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q51. Next, please read these two statements and say if you completely agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or completely disagree with each one. It is important for workers to organize so that employers do not take advantage of them.

	Completely agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Completely disagree	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	48%	39%	9%	12%	1012
Dec 2020	49%	35%	11%	5%	996

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q52. Next, please read these two statements and say if you completely agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or completely disagree with each one.  
 Voting gives people like me some say in what the government does.

	Completely agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Completely disagree	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	37%	42%	11%	10%	0%	1013
Dec 2020	38%	45%	10%	7%	0%	995

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey**  
**Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November**  
**2021**  
**Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

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Q53. Do you favor or oppose a  
 government policy to make  
 college tuition free at both  
 public two-year and four-year  
 colleges?

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	Favor	Oppose	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	75%	25%	1010
Dec 2020	76%	14%	993

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey**  
**Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November**  
**2021**  
**Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q54. Would you favor or  
 oppose a government policy to  
 eliminate college debt?

	Favor	Oppose	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	75%	25%	1010
Dec 2020	74%	26%	992

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey**  
**Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November**  
**2021**  
**Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

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Q55. Do you favor or oppose  
 increasing government funding  
 so that child care programs  
 are available for more lower-  
 income working parents?

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	Favor	Oppose	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	82%	18%	1012
Dec 2020	82%	18%	993

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding



**PPIC Statewide Survey**  
**Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November**  
**2021**  
**Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q56. Do you favor or oppose  
 increasing government funding  
 for job training programs so  
 that more workers have the  
 skills they need for today's  
 jobs?

	Favor	Oppose	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	85%	15%	1012
Dec 2020	85%	15%	992

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey**  
**Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November**  
**2021**  
**Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q57. Would you favor or  
 oppose the government  
 offering a health insurance  
 plan, similar to Medicare, that  
 Americans can choose to  
 purchase instead of private  
 insurance?

	Favor	Oppose	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	79%	21%	1009
Dec 2020	79%	21%	994

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey**  
**Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November**  
**2021**  
**Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

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Q58. Do you favor or oppose  
 the government expanding the  
 eligibility and payments of the  
 earned income tax credit for  
 lower-income working families  
 and individuals?

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	Favor	Oppose	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	82%	18%	1008
Dec 2020	81%	19%	987

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey**  
**Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November**  
**2021**  
**Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

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Q59. Would you favor or  
 oppose the federal  
 government providing a  
 guaranteed income,  
 sometimes called a "Universal  
 Basic Income," of about  
 \$1,000 a month for all adult  
 citizens, whether or not they  
 work?

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	Favor	Oppose	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	63%	37%	1012
Dec 2020	63%	37%	990

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Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

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Q60. How big of a problem is racism in the U.S. today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, a small problem, or not a problem at all?

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	Big problem	Somewhat of a problem	Small problem	Not a problem at all	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	51%	30%	13%	7%	0%	1013
Dec 2020	56%	31%	8%	5%	0%	999

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Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q61. Was there a time in the last twelve months when you felt  
 you were treated unfairly at your place of work because of your  
 racial or ethnic background?

	Yes	No	(VOL) Not applicable	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	15%	84%	0%	0%	1012
Dec 2020	13%	86%	1%	0%	998

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q62. How much do you think that racial and ethnic discrimination contributes to economic inequality in this country?

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not too much	Not at all	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	34%	39%	19%	9%	0%	1013
Dec 2020	33%	44%	17%	7%	0%	999

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q63. How much of a problem is the threat of wildfires in your part of California? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?

	Big problem	Somewhat of a problem	Not much of a problem	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	49%	35%	16%	0%	1014
Dec 2020	53%	36%	11%	0%	1000

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding



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 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

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Q64. How serious is the threat of wildfires in your part of California to your personal and economic wellbeing—very serious, somewhat serious, or not too serious?

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	Very serious	Somewhat serious	Not too serious	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	28%	40%	32%	0%	1014
Dec 2020	30%	41%	30%	0%	999

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Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding

**PPIC Statewide Survey  
 Californians and their Economic Well-Being - November 2021  
 Adults with Incomes Under \$40k - Time Trends**

Q65. How much confidence do you have in the government in terms of its readiness to respond to wildfires in your part of California—a great deal, only some, or hardly any confidence?

	A great deal	Only some	Hardly any confidence	None	(VOL) Don't know	Unweighted n
Nov 2021	34%	49%	17%	0%	0%	2285
Dec 2020	41%	45%	14%	0%	0%	2321

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding