

Expectations & Experiences

Our Quarterly Consumer Trends Research

COVID-19 and Household Finances

November 2020



A note about this survey

This survey of 3,001 U.S. adults was conducted August 18–September 9, 2020 as part of the Expectations & Experiences quarterly surveys from Fiserv. It is part of the longest-running consumer trends survey of its kind. This survey is focused on how people manage finances in their households.

This survey was fielded after social distancing requirements and business closures had been lifted in many parts of the country. However, many people remain affected by COVID-19 in terms of their physical, financial and social health. Those effects are likely to influence the way people move and manage their money.

As with all Expectations & Experiences surveys, the results highlighted here share trending data (comparisons to last year's survey). However, given the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on people's finances, we also repeated some questions from the survey conducted in May 2020. Trending data from the previous quarter and year is noted where relevant.

For more information, see the survey methodology at the end of this document or visit [fiserv.com](https://www.fiserv.com).



- 1 People remain concerned about their finances.**
Not surprisingly, concerns about personal finances and the state of the economy have remained high since the start of the pandemic, although we've seen small improvements.
- 2 Interest in contactless payment methods is up significantly.**
Contactless payments were already on an upward trajectory, but 2020 brings a sharp rise in interest and availability. This includes increases in both credit/debit card options and payments through mobile wallets.
- 3 For many types of financial tools, consumers' interest, use and stated importance remain steady.**
Consumers continue to rate the importance of real-time access to financial information and alerts for bills and balances very highly. Meanwhile, interest in consolidation services to manage all finances is similar to last year.
- 4 Mobile is in, cash is out.**
As daily activities resume, changes in use of financial services tools since the pandemic began seem to be sticking. Many people have increased use of mobile check deposits and payment apps, while they have decreased use of cash and in-branch ATMs.

How Would People Pay for a \$500 Emergency



Finances are a concern for many

From their personal finances to the state of the U.S. economy, financial concerns are pressing for many people. For example, 66 percent are somewhat or very concerned about their personal finances (down from 70 percent in last quarter's survey), while only 12 percent say they aren't worried at all.

Only half of banking consumers (50 percent) say they could pay for a \$500 emergency with at least some existing funds, while 23 percent would use a credit card and pay it off at the next statement. Meanwhile, 20 percent would not use existing funds at all, saying they would need to charge it or borrow from friends or family, a bank or payday lender.

Nearly one-fifth of consumers (19 percent) have missed a rent, mortgage or bill payment as a result of the pandemic. Younger consumers are hit harder with 29 percent of Gen Z and millennials and 25 percent of Gen X saying they've missed payments.



Survey question to all respondents: Suppose that you have an emergency expense that costs \$500. Based on your current financial situation, how would you pay for this expense? / As a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, have you or your household been impacted in any of the following ways?

Contactless payments gain ground

Interest in using tap-and-pay options – especially through debit and credit cards – has increased significantly over last year. Nearly three-fifths (58 percent) of consumers say they would be interested in using card-based contactless payments, compared to only 38 percent last year. Just over two-fifths (42 percent) express interest in paying via their smartphone's mobile wallet – an increase of four percentage points over 2019.

Awareness is high, with 84 percent saying they are aware of tap-and-pay debit and credit card methods, up from 79 percent in 2019.



Survey questions to all respondents: Are you interested in using the below tap-and-pay methods of payment? / Have you ever used a contactless payment method?

Interest in Using Tap-and-Pay Methods



Similar to 2019, Consumers Say These Features are Extremely/Very Important



The more things change, the more they stay the same

Although most people's daily lives have changed drastically in 2020, some areas of money management and interest in specific services and features have held steady since 2019.

For example, the majority of banking consumers (78 percent) say real-time access to their financial information is "extremely" or "very important." That number is unchanged from the 2019 survey. Similarly, 62 percent of consumers say it's extremely or very important that they receive information about bills due and balances via mobile alerts or email, up slightly from 59 percent in 2019.

When asked about interest in a variety of financial tools, "security to safeguard mobile activity" topped the list, with 77 percent saying they are interested. Again, this is up slightly from 73 percent in 2019.

Survey questions to all respondents: When thinking about managing your money, how important, if at all, would it be to have access to each of the following? / Would you be interested in the following financial tools, if they could be made available to you?

Changes in use of financial tools continues

In our May 2020 survey, consumers reported increases and decreases in the use of different types of financial services tools since the start of the pandemic. With many people having been under stay-at-home orders, increased use of mobile options and decreased use of things like cash were not a surprise. In the current survey, people have resumed many daily activities, yet the changes have continued.

For example, among those who use in-branch ATMs, 32 percent have decreased their use. Similarly, 36 percent of cash users are using cash less often since the start of the pandemic. On the other hand, 25 percent of current users have increased use of mobile check deposits and 27 percent have increased use of mobile payment apps.

Change in usage among those who already use the service in question

Cash Use More.....11% Use Less.....36%	ATM in-branch Use More..... 12% Use Less.....32%	P2P nonbank Use More..... 24% Use Less..... 12%	Mobile check deposit Use More.....25% Use Less..... 6%
Checks Use More.....9% Use Less..... 16%	ATM drive-up Use More..... 18% Use Less.....22%	P2P financial organization Use More..... 21% Use Less..... 13%	Mobile payment apps Use More.....27% Use Less..... 7%

Survey question to all respondents: Have you changed your usage of any of the following since the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?

About Fiserv

Fiserv, Inc. (NASDAQ: FISV) aspires to move money and information in a way that moves the world. As a global leader in payments and financial technology, the company helps clients achieve best-in-class results through a commitment to innovation and excellence in areas including account processing and digital banking solutions; card issuer processing and network services; payments; e-commerce; merchant acquiring and processing; and the Clover® cloud-based point-of-sale solution. Fiserv is a member of the S&P 500® Index and the FORTUNE® 500, and is among the FORTUNE World's Most Admired Companies®.

About The Harris Poll

The Harris Poll is one of the longest running surveys in the U.S. tracking public opinion, motivations and social sentiment since 1963 that is now part of Harris Insights & Analytics, a global consulting and market research firm that delivers social intelligence for transformational times. We work with clients in three primary areas: building twenty-first-century corporate reputation, crafting brand strategy and performance tracking and earning organic media through public relations research. Our mission is to provide insights and advisory to help leaders make the best decisions possible. To learn more, visit [theharris.com](https://www.theharris.com).

Methodology

The survey was conducted online within the U.S. by The Harris Poll from August 18–September 9, 2020. A total of 3,001 interviews were conducted among U.S. adults ages 18 and older who met the following criteria: Someone in the household currently has a checking account with a bank, credit union, brokerage firm or other financial organization and has used their checking account to pay a bill or make a purchase in the past 30 days. The data were weighted to ensure that relevant demographic characteristics of the sample matched those of the U.S. general population. All respondents (not only those who met the qualifying criteria) were weighted to U.S. Census Bureau demographic profiles for the U.S. population, age 18+ on education, age, gender, race, income, region, marital status, employment status, household size and propensity to be online.

Notes: The reference questions and answer text provided here have in some cases been shortened due to space constraints. The complete text for any questions referenced in this report is available upon request. Age group references in the survey are defined as follows: Gen Z (18–23), millennials (24–39), Gen X (40–55), boomers (56–74) and seniors (75+).