

# Climate Change: The More You Know, The More You Care

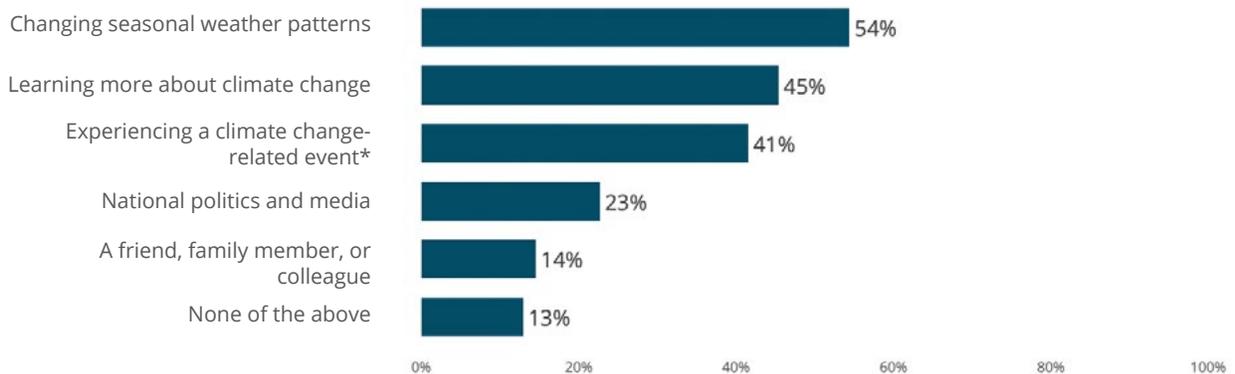
As the country recovers from extreme winter storms that disrupted life across the nation, a new study finds that the majority of Americans are concerned about climate change. ecoAmerica’s latest American Climate Perspectives Survey also identified driving forces behind climate concern. Findings reveal that a notable gap exists in actual versus perceived climate change concern and many Americans don’t know what their local community is doing to address the issue. And, while companies and government agencies have rolled out incentives for Americans to participate in solutions, few think they’re accessible right now.

## Weather Patterns and Learning About Climate Change Are Top Factors Influencing Concern

ecoAmerica’s survey finds that changing seasonal weather patterns, learning more, and experiencing a climate change related event are top factors that influence levels of climate change concern. 54% of Americans report that changing seasonal weather patterns influence their concern. 45% of Americans report that learning about climate change influences their concern, up from 33% who [last year](#) said that seeking out information about climate change was influential. 41% of Americans say that experiencing a climate change related event plays a role.

### Nearly half of Americans say their climate change concern is influenced by learning more.

What are the factors that have influenced your level of climate change concern? 1,056 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



This chart shows that nationally, 54% of Americans say that changing seasonal weather patterns influence their level of climate change concern.

45% of Americans say that learning more about climate change influences their level of concern. 41% of Americans say that experiencing a climate change-related event influences their level of concern. 23% of Americans say that national politics and media influence their level of concern. 14% of Americans say that a friend, family member, or colleague influences their level of concern. 13% of Americans say that none of the above factors influence their level of concern.

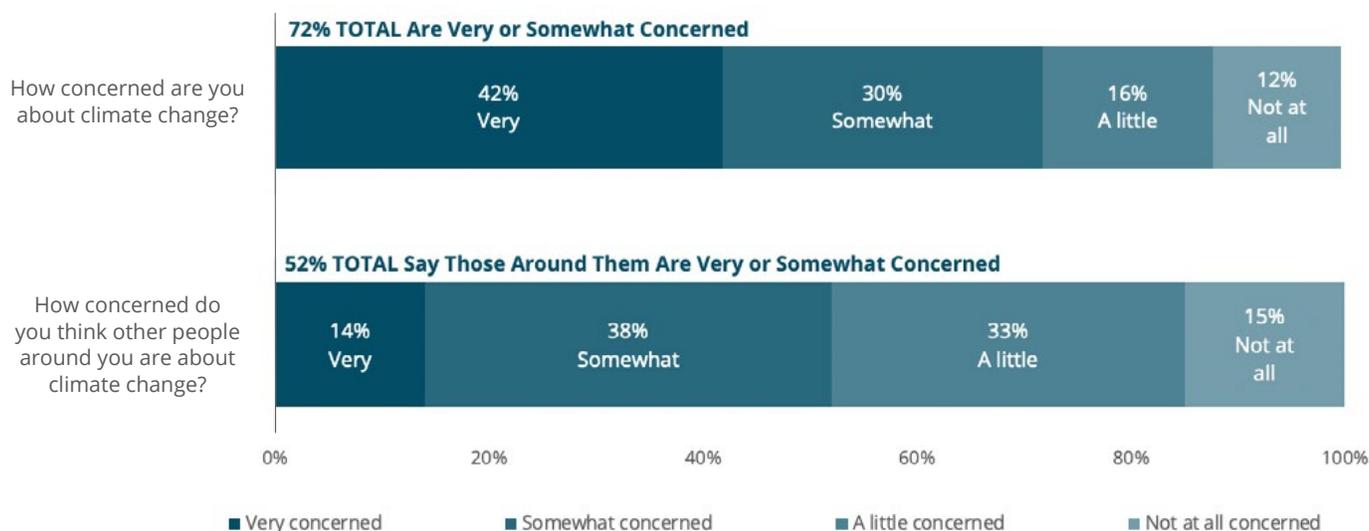
\*like wildfires, severe storms, flooding, or extreme heat

## Few Americans Think Others Around Them Share Their Climate Concerns

The majority of Americans (72%) report being concerned about climate change, including 42% who are very concerned and 30% who are somewhat concerned. Another 16% are “a little” concerned, totaling 88% overall. Only 12% report that they are not concerned about climate change. Although there is a high level of concern amongst Americans, few believe their peers feel the same. Just about half of Americans (52%) believe that others around them are concerned about climate change.

Only 14% say that others around them are “very” concerned when in reality, three times that number of Americans report this level of concern. ecoAmerica’s survey finds that many Americans [feel comfortable](#) talking about climate change with their friends and family but far fewer are comfortable talking about the issue with other social circles like their neighbors, co-workers, and elected officials. If more Americans join in climate conversations with the people around them, this gap in perception versus reality may begin to close.

**A wide gap exists in actual versus perceived concern about climate change.** Survey questions: 1) How concerned are you about climate change? 2) How concerned do you think other people around you are about climate change? 1,056 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



This chart shows that nationally, 72% of Americans are “very” or “somewhat” concerned about climate change, but only 52% think that others around them are very or somewhat concerned about climate change.

42% of Americans say they are “very” concerned, 30% say they are “somewhat” concerned, 16% say they are “a little” concerned, and 12% say they are “not at all” concerned.

14% say they think others around them are “very” concerned, 38% say they think others around them are “somewhat” concerned, 33% say they think others around them are “a little” concerned, and 15% say they think others around them are “not at all” concerned.

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## Residents Need to Hear From Their Leaders on Local Climate Solutions

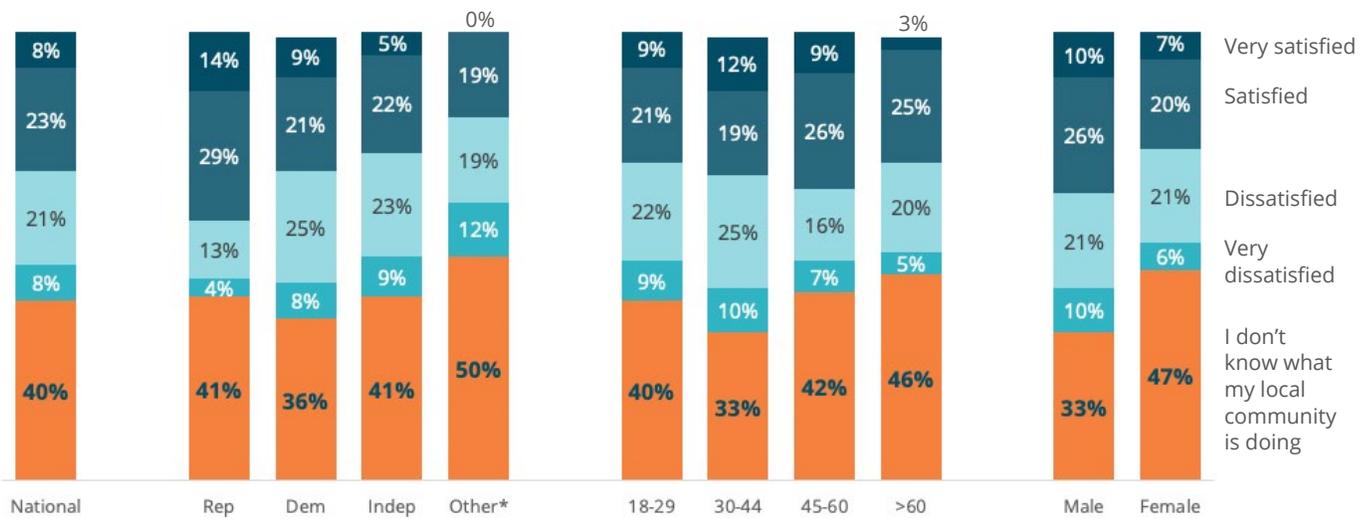
Americans are noticing weather patterns changing around them but do they believe leaders are doing enough to address it? ecoAmerica asked Americans how satisfied they were with the action their local

community is taking to address climate change. Roughly one third reported satisfaction — only 8% said they were “very” satisfied and 23% said they were satisfied. Similarly, about one third reported dissatisfaction with 8% being “very” dissatisfied and 21% being dissatisfied.

The remaining 40% of Americans said *they don’t know* what their local community is doing to address climate change. Across demographic groups including political affiliations, age, and sex, between 33-50% of Americans report being unaware. This presents an opportunity for education and a call to action for local leaders to communicate with their constituents on climate policies and programs, including how solutions are being rolled out and the ways in which residents can participate and benefit.

### 4 in 10 Americans don’t know what their local community is doing to address climate change.

Survey question: How satisfied are you with what your local community is doing to address climate change? 1,056 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



This chart shows that nationally, 8% of Americans are “very satisfied” with what their local community is doing to address climate change, 23% are “satisfied”, 21% are “dissatisfied”, 8% are “very dissatisfied”, and 40% don't know what their local community is doing.

14% of Republicans, 9% of Democrats, 5% of Independents, 0% of Americans who identify with a political party that is “something else”, 9% of Americans 18-29, 12% of Americans 30-44, 9% of Americans 45-60, 3% of Americans >60, 10% of males, and 7% of females are “very satisfied” with what their local community is doing to address climate change.

29% of Republicans, 21% of Democrats, 22% of Independents, 19% of Americans who identify with a political party that is “something else”, 21% of Americans 18-29, 19% of Americans 30-44, 26% of Americans 45-60, 25% of Americans >60, 25% of males, and 20% of females are “satisfied” with what their local community is doing to address climate change.

13% of Republicans, 25% of Democrats, 23% of Independents, 19% of Americans who identify with a political party that is “something else”, 22% of Americans 18-29, 25% of Americans 30-44, 16% of Americans 45-60, 20% of Americans >60, 21% of males, and 21% of females are “dissatisfied” with what their local community is doing to address climate change.

4% of Republicans, 8% of Democrats, 9% of Independents, 12% of Americans who identify with a political party that is “something else”, 9% of Americans 18-29, 10% of Americans 30-44, 7% of Americans 45-60, 5% of Americans >60, 10% of males, and 6% of females are “very dissatisfied” with what their local community is doing to address climate change.

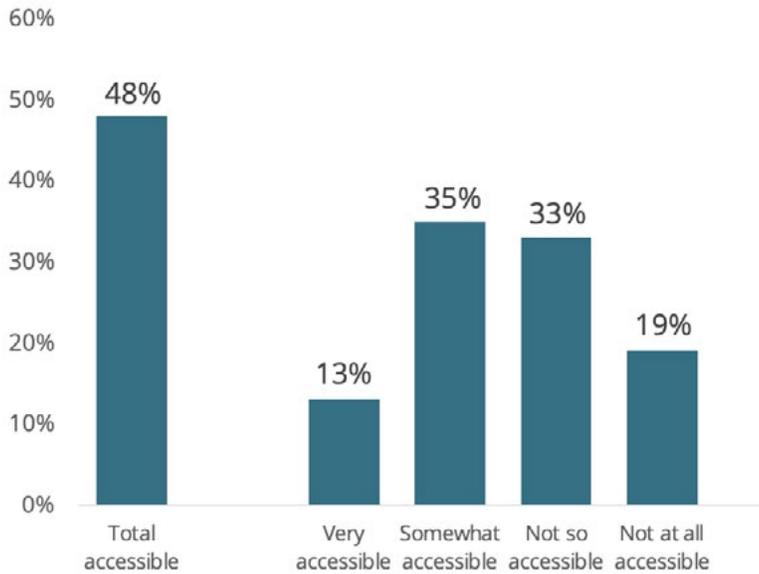
41% of Republicans, 36% of Democrats, 41% of Independents, 50% of Americans who identify with a political party that is “something else”, 40% of Americans 18-29, 33% of Americans 30-44, 42% of Americans 45-60, 46% of Americans >60, 33% of males, and 47% of females don't know what their local community is doing to address climate change.

\*Respondents answered “Something else” for political party identification

## Solar Energy and Electric Vehicles Are Viewed as Inaccessible

### Less than half of Americans say climate solutions like solar and EVs are accessible to them.

Survey question: Companies and government agencies are working to make climate solutions like solar energy and electric cars widely affordable and available. How accessible are they to you right now? 1,056 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



This chart shows that nationally, 48% of Americans say that climate solutions like solar energy and electric cars are accessible to them right now.

14% say they are very accessible. 35% say they are somewhat accessible. 33% say they are not so accessible. 19% say they are not at all accessible.

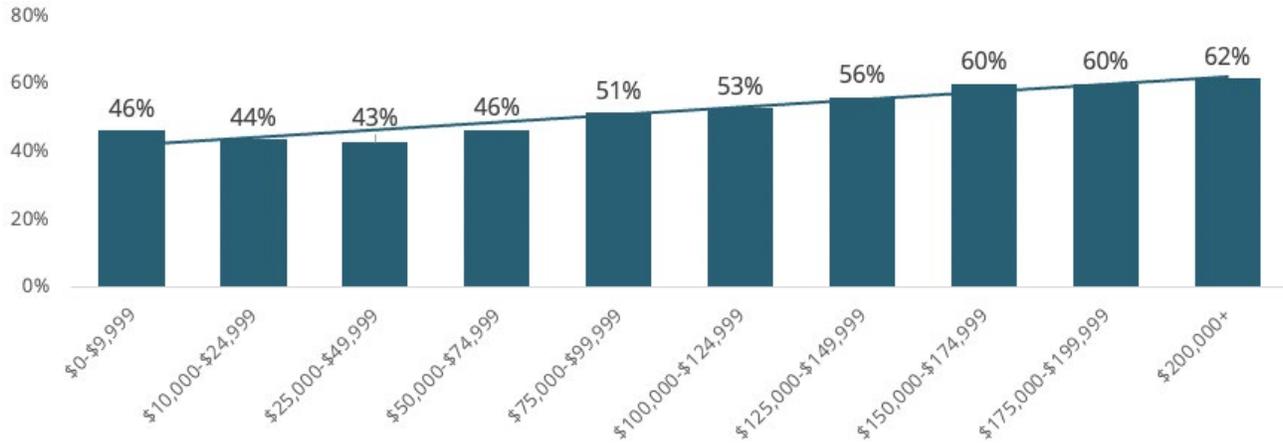
Since the Inflation Reduction Act was passed, companies and government agencies are working to make at-home climate solutions like solar energy and electric cars more affordable and available. However, when ecoAmerica asked Americans if these types of solutions are accessible to them right now, more than half (52%) thought “not.” Only 13% said they were very accessible while 35% said they were somewhat accessible (48% total accessible).

Household income and age highlight disparities in reported accessibility. For instance, compared to other household income brackets, more Americans in the \$200,000+ group report that solar panels and EVs (electric vehicles) are accessible to them right now (62%). This is as much as a 19-point difference in reported accessibility compared to people with household incomes ranging from \$0-\$49,000, who report total accessibility ranging from 43% - 46%.

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### Americans with higher household incomes feel that solar energy and EVs are more accessible to them than Americans with lower incomes

Survey question: Companies and government agencies are working to make climate solutions like solar energy and electric cars widely affordable and available. How accessible are they to you right now? “very accessible” and “somewhat accessible” 1,056 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



This chart shows that 46% of Americans with annual household incomes between \$0-\$9,999 say that climate solutions like solar energy and electric vehicles (EVs) are very or somewhat accessible to them right now.

44% of Americans with annual household incomes between \$10,000-\$24,999 say that climate solutions like solar energy and EVs are very or somewhat accessible to them right now.

43% of Americans with annual household incomes between \$25,000-\$49,999 say that climate solutions like solar energy and EVs are very or somewhat accessible to them right now.

46% of Americans with annual household incomes between \$50,000-\$74,999 say that climate solutions like solar energy and EVs are very or somewhat accessible to them right now.

51% of Americans with annual household incomes between \$75,000-\$99,999 say that climate solutions like solar energy and EVs are very or somewhat accessible to them right now.

53% of Americans with annual household incomes between \$100,000-\$124,999 say that climate solutions like solar energy and EVs are very or somewhat accessible to them right now.

56% of Americans with annual household incomes between \$125,000-\$149,999 say that climate solutions like solar energy and EVs are very or somewhat accessible to them right now.

60% of Americans with annual household incomes between \$150,000-\$174,999 say that climate solutions like solar energy and EVs are very or somewhat accessible to them right now.

60% of Americans with annual household incomes between \$175,000-\$199,999 say that climate solutions like solar energy and EVs are very or somewhat accessible to them right now.

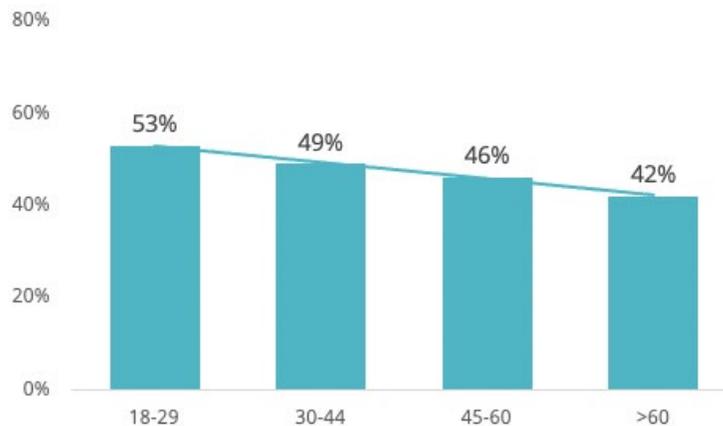
62% of Americans with annual household incomes above \$200,000 say that climate solutions like solar energy and EVs are very or somewhat accessible to them right now.

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While reported accessibility trends up with income, the opposite is seen with age. Americans in the youngest age group (18-29) view climate solutions like solar energy and electric cars as more accessible (53%) to them right now. In contrast, only 42% of Americans over the age of 60 say these solutions are accessible, highlighting an 11-point difference. Americans in the 30-44 age group and 45-60 age group fall in between, at 49% and 46% respectively. These findings highlight that while programs are rolling out to make at-home climate solutions more widely available, there is work to do to ensure they are accessible to a broader diversity of Americans.

## Younger Americans view climate solutions as more accessible to them than older Americans.

Survey question: Companies and government agencies are working to make climate solutions like solar energy and electric cars widely affordable and available. How accessible are they to you right now? “very accessible” and “somewhat accessible” 1,056 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



This chart shows that 53% of Americans between 18-29 years of age say that climate solutions solar energy and electric vehicles (EVs) are very or somewhat accessible to them right now.

49% of Americans between 30-44 years of age say that climate solutions solar energy and EVs are very or somewhat accessible to them right now.

46% of Americans between 45-60 years of age say that climate solutions solar energy and EVs are very or somewhat accessible to them right now.

42% of Americans over 60 years of age say that climate solutions solar energy and EVs are very or somewhat accessible to them right now.

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Full data is available in the accompanying [toplines](#).

### Methodology

ecoAmerica designed and administered this survey, which was conducted online on January 5-6, 2023 using Survey Monkey. The survey yielded a total of 1,056 complete adult responses and used the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey to weigh the national general population and reflect the demographic composition of the US. The sample was drawn from an online panel and the respondents were screened to ensure that they were over the age of 18. The margin of error for the sample is +/-3%. In interpreting the survey results, it is important to note that all sample surveys are subject to possible sampling error. Thus, the results of a survey may differ from the results that would be obtained if the entire population was interviewed. The size of the sampling error depends upon both the total number of respondents in the survey and the percentage distribution of the responses to a particular question. For example, if 50% of the respondents in a sample of 1,066 respondents answered, “Yes” to a particular question, we can be 95% confident that the true percentage would fall within 3 points, or range from 47% to 53%.

### Suggested Citation

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