



Most Louisiana residents see danger of land loss for coastal areas and future generations, fewer expect to be affected themselves

Most state residents believe hurricanes are more frequent and stronger than in the past

The second in a series of six reports from the 2022 Louisiana Survey, a project of the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs

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Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs

The Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs is partnership-driven, action-oriented, and dedicated to exploring contemporary issues at the intersection of mass communication and public life. Its interdisciplinary approach draws together experts from diverse fields to advance research and dialogue. The intent is to inspire our communities to think deeply, develop solutions, take action and broaden knowledge. The Center's role, within the state's flagship university, is to respond quickly to the needs of state governance in addressing challenges facing Louisiana, particularly in times of crisis such as during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill and the 2016 historic floods. Underlying the Center's endeavors is to strengthen and advance the Manship School's national and state leadership in media and politics.

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About the 2022 Louisiana Survey

The *2022 Louisiana Survey* is the twentieth in an annual series of statewide surveys beginning in 2003 and sponsored by the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs at Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication.

Reflecting the continuing evolution of survey research, we used two approaches for this year's survey. First, we used our traditional probability-sampling approach to draw landline and cell phone numbers for a live-interview telephone survey while allowing participants with cellphones to choose to reply online, rather than over the phones, through a link sent via text message. Second, in partnership with the research firm *YouGov*, we administered an online survey to a nonprobability sample of Louisiana residents who participate in the *YouGov* panel. The body of this report focuses on results from the traditional probability sample. However, interested readers can find the topline results from both samples at the end of this document. More information about our methods, including *YouGov's* strategy for generating representative samples, is available in the survey methodology section of this report.

The mission of the *Louisiana Survey* is to establish benchmarks as well as to capture change in residents' assessments of state government services. The survey is further dedicated to tracking public opinion on contemporary policy issues. Each iteration of the *Louisiana Survey* contains core items designed to serve as barometers of public sentiment, including assessments of whether the state is heading in the right direction or wrong direction and perceptions about the most important problems facing the state.

In the *2022 Louisiana Survey*, this core is supplemented with items about the Covid-19 pandemic, access to high-speed internet, coastal issues, flooding and other natural disasters, integrity of elections, media use, the death penalty, and abortion.

As part of an effort to ensure that the *Louisiana Survey* fulfills its public service mission, the research team solicited input about topics for the survey from members of the government and policy community across the political spectrum. Additionally, the research team drew upon expertise in public policy and polling from Louisiana State University faculty. These advisors provided invaluable insight into the design of the questionnaire and in identifying the contemporary policy questions that could most benefit from an understanding of the public's views. While we are indebted to them for their time and contributions, they bear no responsibility for final decisions on the questionnaire, analysis, and interpretation presented in this report or any mistakes therein.

We especially thank the Reilly Family Foundation for their generous support and vision in helping to create the *Louisiana Survey*.

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Summary

This is the second of six reports from the *2022 Louisiana Survey*, a project of the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs at Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication. This report includes results from questions asking Louisiana residents about their perceptions of coastal land loss, hurricanes and flooding, as well as their opinions on policies aimed at mitigating flood risk. These results include:

- Eighty-five percent (85%) said land loss will cause a great deal of harm or a moderate amount of harm to residents of coastal areas in the state, while 73% said it would cause harm to residents across the state as a whole. Similarly, 84% said coastal land loss in Louisiana poses a threat to future generations, but 63% said it will hurt their own generation. Only half of state residents expect land loss to cause harm to them personally.
- Two-thirds of respondents (67%) said hurricanes impacting the state are stronger than those of the past. Nearly as many (62%) said the number of hurricanes impacting the state has increased. Fewer (43%) said flooding in their local community is more common than in the past.
- Majorities support elevation requirements for new construction in areas at high risk of flooding (87%) and paying property owners to elevate existing buildings in these areas (62%). A majority opposes raising insurance rates for properties in these areas (58%). Opinion is more closely divided over requiring owners of existing properties to raise them, prohibiting new construction in these areas, and paying residents of areas at risk of flooding to move to safer areas.

Coast, Hurricanes, and Flooding

For many, the harm of coastal land loss is distant in place and time

We asked respondents to rate how much coastal land loss in Louisiana will hurt people living in coastal areas, Louisiana residents across the state, people in their own generation, people in future generations, and themselves personally. Significantly more respondents said land loss poses a greater danger to coastal residents than to people across the state as a whole and to future generations than to their own generation. Two-thirds (68%) said land loss will cause a great deal of harm to people living in coastal areas, and another 17% said it will cause a moderate amount of harm (as opposed to only a little or no harm at all). This combined share of 85% shrinks to 73% when considering the long-term harm land loss could have to people living across the state (see Figure 1). The share worried about a great deal of harm drops nearly thirty percentage points from 68% to 37%.

Likewise, 84% said land loss poses a threat to future generations, including 58% who said it will cause a great deal of harm. This share drops to 63% when considering the effects for their own generation, including just 27% who said it would cause a great deal of harm.

Even fewer said land loss would cause a great deal (22%) or a moderate amount of harm (28%) to themselves personally.

Generally, respondents living in coastal areas – defined as residence in a parish with the majority of its landmass within [the Louisiana Coastal Zone Boundary](#) – said land loss poses more harm to each group mentioned in these questions than respondents living further inland. For example, 69% said land loss will cause a great deal or moderate amount of harm to themselves, compared to 39% of noncoastal residents who said so (see Figures 2 and 3).

Figure 1: Perceptions of harm posed by coastal land loss

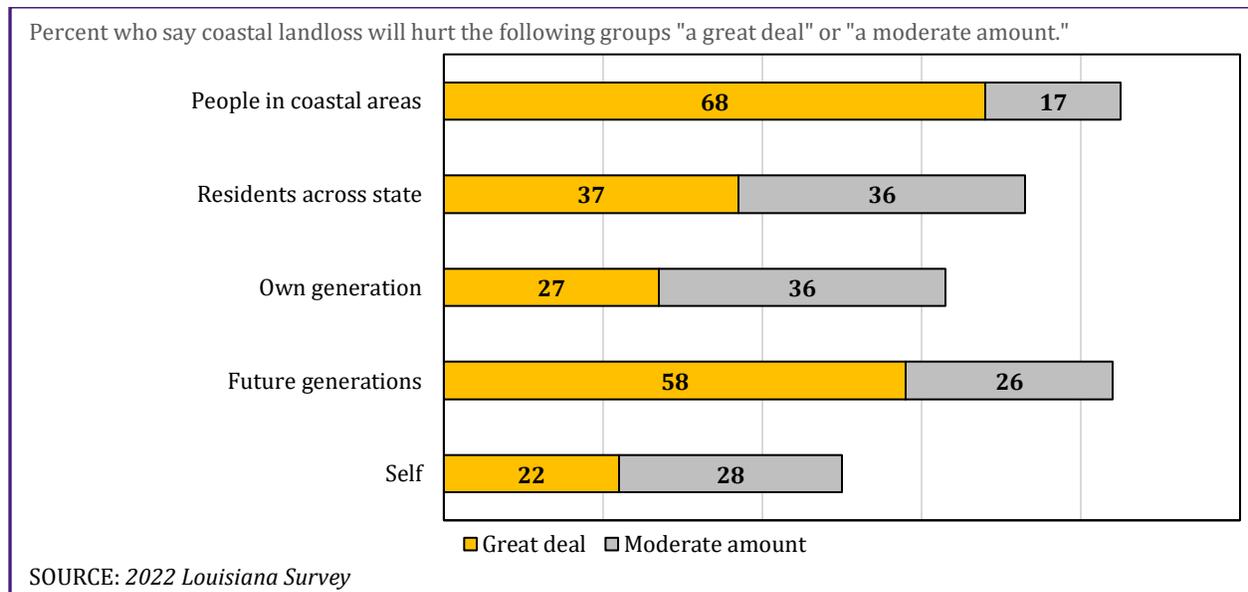


Figure 2: Perceptions of harm posed by coastal land loss among residents of coastal areas

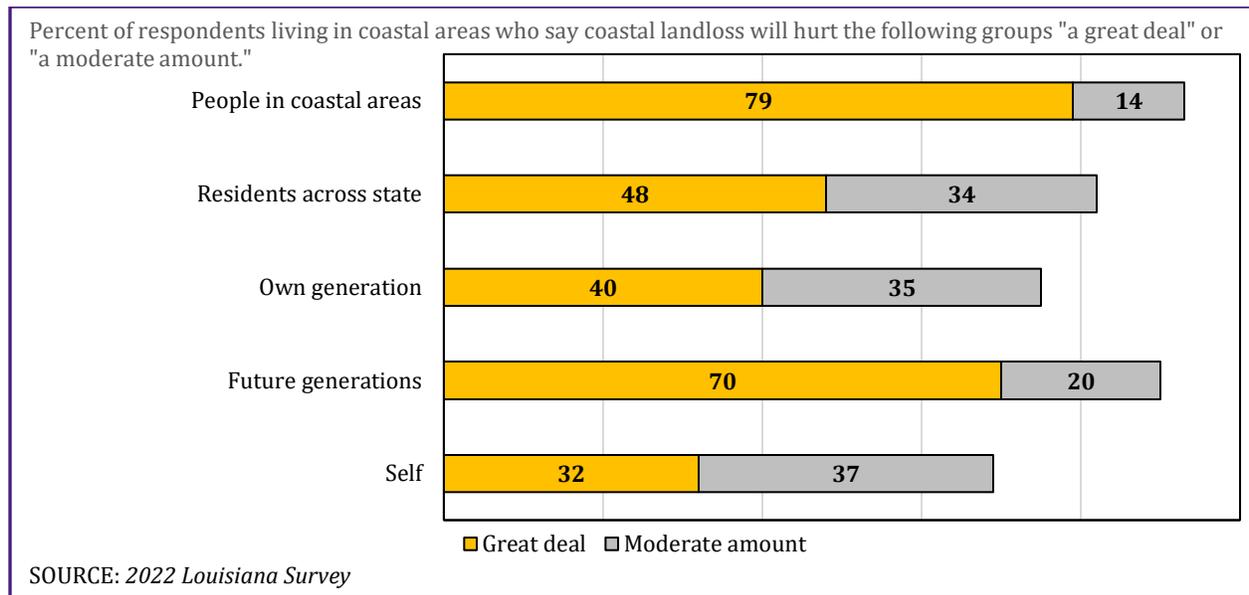
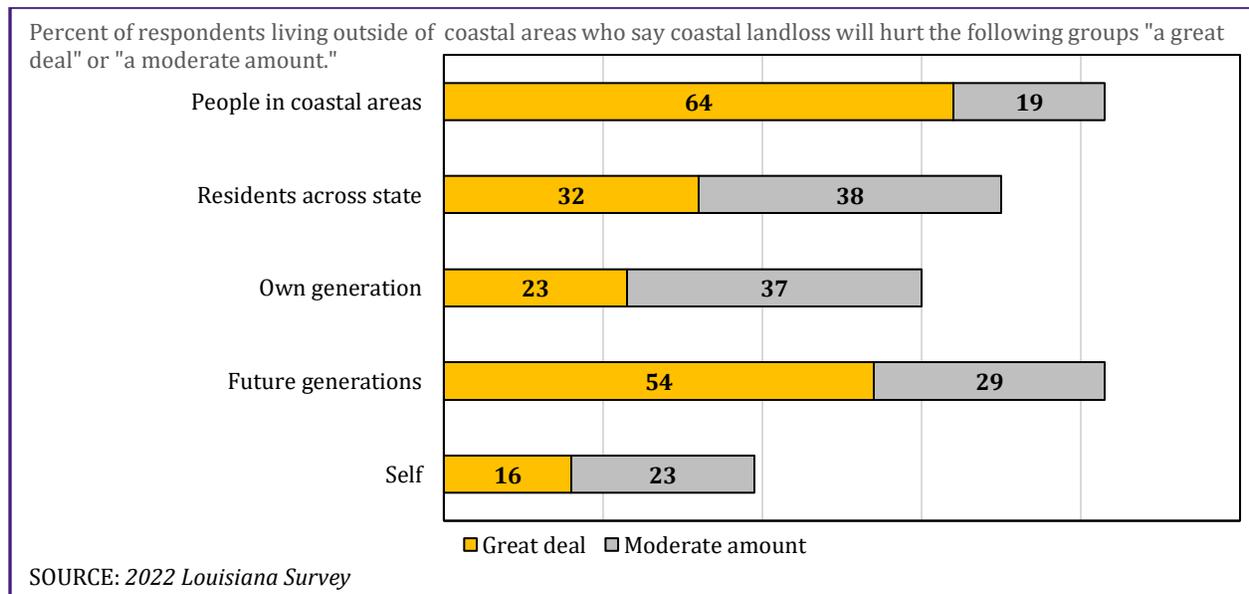


Figure 3: Perceptions of harm posed by coastal land loss among residents outside of coastal areas



Most say hurricane frequency and strength on rise

Two-thirds of respondents (67%) said hurricanes impacting the state are stronger than those of the past. Nearly as many (62%) said the number of hurricanes impacting the state has increased.

There is significant regional variation in these perceptions. Nearly three-fourths (74%) of respondents in the metropolitan area of New Orleans said hurricanes are stronger now than in the past, as did 68% of respondents in the metropolitan area of Baton Rouge and 69% of respondents throughout the rest of south Louisiana. In north Louisiana, however, the share falls to 56%. Similarly, 71% of respondents in the New Orleans area said

hurricanes are more frequent, as did 63% of respondents in the Baton Rouge area and 62% in the rest of south Louisiana. Yet, this view is less common in north Louisiana (53%).

Fewer (43%) said flooding in their local community is more common than in the past. Again, there are significant regional differences. Two-thirds (68%) of respondents in the Baton Rouge area said flooding has increased. In the New Orleans area, 43% said flooding has increased, and 44% of respondents living elsewhere in south Louisiana said so. Just 26% of respondents in north Louisiana said flooding has increased.

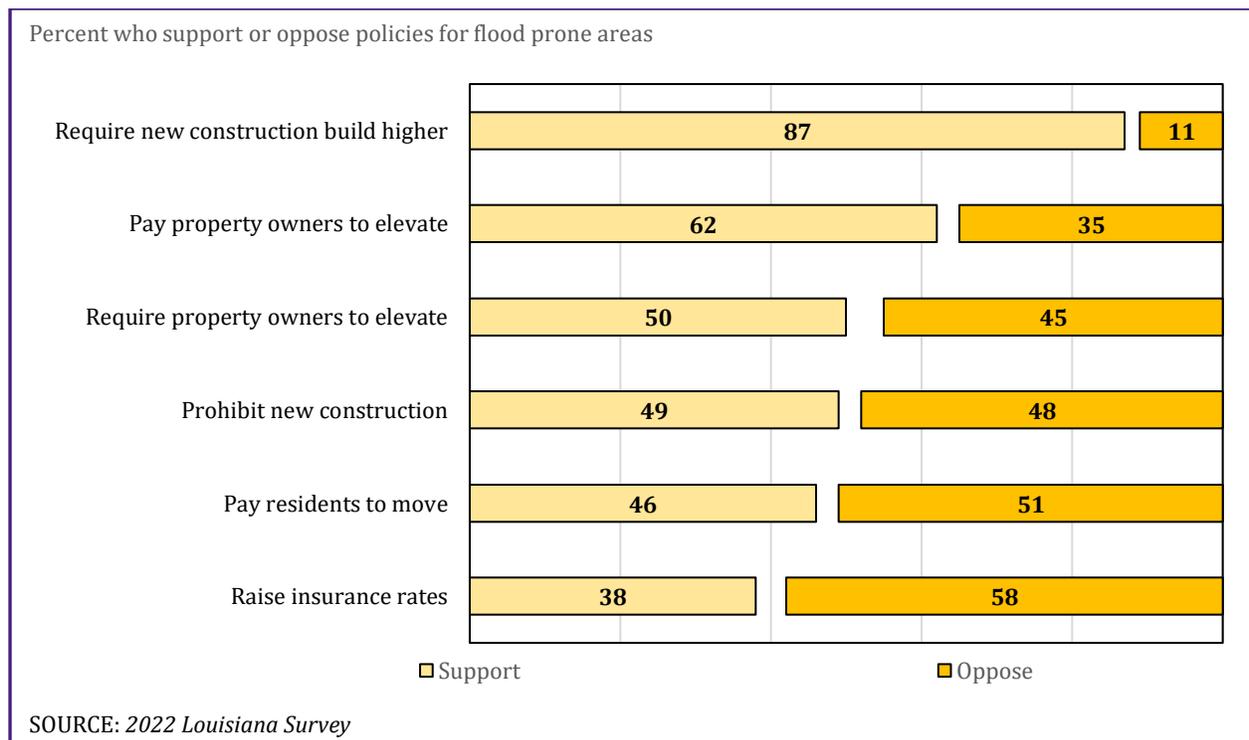
Majority supports elevation requirements for new construction in flood prone areas but not for existing construction

The 2022 Louisiana Survey included questions measuring respondents' attitudes on six policy proposals for dealing with homes and other buildings in areas at risk of flooding. These policy proposals include requiring new houses and buildings in these areas to be built higher above the ground; prohibiting construction of new buildings in these areas; requiring property owners to elevate existing buildings in these areas; paying property owners to elevate existing buildings in these areas; paying residents of these areas to move to safer places; and raising insurance rates for properties located in these areas.

Two proposals have majority support: 87% support elevation requirements for new construction, and 62% support incentivizing property owners to elevate existing buildings by paying them to do so (see Figure 4). A majority (58%) also opposes raising insurance rates for properties in these areas at risk of flooding.

Opinion is closely divided over the other three: Requiring owners of existing properties to raise them; prohibiting new construction in these areas, and incentivizing people to move to safer areas by paying them to do so.

Figure 4: Opinions on policy proposals for areas at high risk of flooding



Regional Definitions

This section indicates how parishes are classified by region.

Regional definitions

Metropolitan Baton Rouge: Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana

Metropolitan New Orleans: Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, and Washington

South Louisiana: Acadia, Assumption, Avoyelles, Calcasieu, Cameron, Evangeline, Iberia, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Lafourche, St. James, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, Terrebonne, and Vermilion

North Louisiana: Allen, Beauregard, Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Caldwell, Catahoula, Claiborne, Concordia, DeSoto, East Carroll, Franklin, Grant, Jackson, LaSalle, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Ouachita, Rapides, Red River, Richland, Sabine, Tensas, Union, Vernon, Webster, West Carroll, and Winn

Coastal definitions

Coastal: Assumption, Cameron, Iberia, Jefferson, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Mary, Terrebonne, and Vermilion

Not coastal: Acadia, Allen, Ascension, Avoyelles, Beauregard, Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Calcasieu, Caldwell, Catahoula, Claiborne, Concordia, DeSoto, East Baton Rouge, East Carroll, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Franklin, Grant, Iberville, Jackson, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, LaSalle, Lincoln, Livingston, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Ouachita, Pointe Coupee, Rapides, Red River, Richland, Sabine, St. Helena, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Tensas, Union, Vernon, Washington, Webster, West Baton Rouge, West Carroll, West Feliciana, and Winn

Survey Methodology

The *2022 Louisiana Survey* includes two distinct efforts to sample residents of the state and conduct interviews.

Survey 1: Probability sample of landline and cellphone numbers

The results discussed in this report come from interviews of a probability sample of adult Louisiana residents contacted via telephone (landline or cell phone), administered by the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs' Public Policy Research Lab (PPRL) at Louisiana State University. This sample was stratified across Louisiana parishes proportionally to their adult population ensuring geographic representation. The design of the landline portion of this sample ensures representation of both listed and unlisted landline numbers by use of random digit dialing. Similarly, the cellphone portion of this sample is randomly drawn from known, available phone number banks dedicated to wireless service in the state. Both portions, landline and cell phone, were provided by Marketing Systems Group. For landline numbers, interviewers called landline numbers to conduct interviews. For cellphone numbers, the PPRL first sent a text to these numbers inviting recipients to complete the questionnaire online and, if the recipient did not use the online option, interviewers followed up with a call to conduct interviews over the telephone. Of the 508 respondents in this sample, 105 were interviewed via a landline telephone, 290 were interviewed over a cellphone, and another 113 cellphone owners elected to complete the questionnaire online. Interviews for this survey were conducted from February 21 to March 14, 2022.

The combined landline and cellphone sample (including cellphone owners who completed the questionnaire online via the link sent to them by text) is weighted using an iterative procedure that matches race, education, household income, gender, and age to known profiles for the adult population of Louisiana found in the Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2020 five-year estimates. Weighting cannot eliminate every source of nonresponse bias. However, proper administration of probability sampling combined with accepted weighting techniques has a strong record of yielding unbiased results.

The sample has an overall margin of error of +/- 5.8 percentage points. The margin of error includes adjustment due to the weighting procedure. The design effect due to weighting is 1.4 percentage points; that is, the margin of error is 1.4 percentage points larger than it would be for a simple random sample of this size without weighting.

In addition to sampling error, as accounted for through the margin of error, readers should recognize that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls. As often as possible, the *Louisiana Survey* follows the wording of relevant questions repeatedly used by reputable public opinion research institutions and projects, such as the Pew Research Center, Gallup Inc., and the American National Election Studies.

This version of the *2022 Louisiana Survey* has a response rate of 6%. This response rate is the percentage of eligible residential households or personal cell phones in the sample for which an interview is completed. The rate is calculated using the American Association for Public Opinion Research's method for Response Rate 3 as published in their Standard Definitions. Response rates for telephones have been on decline for several decades and frequently fall in the single digits even among the very best survey research organizations.

Survey 2: Non-probability sample administered online

As the technology and science of the survey industry continues to evolve – especially in the face of declining response rates among traditional probability-based telephone surveys – the *2022 Louisiana Survey* included a second design: An online survey administered by the survey firm *YouGov* to a nonprobability sample of adult Louisiana residents. *YouGov* recruits individuals online to join its panel of survey respondents and periodically answer online questionnaires.

For this survey, 623 adult Louisiana residents in the *YouGov* panel completed the questionnaire. *YouGov* then matched 500 respondents to a sampling frame representing the adult population of the state on gender, age, race, and education. *YouGov* constructed this frame by stratified sampling from the full 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) one-year sample with selection within strata by weighted sampling with replacements (using the person weights on the public use file). The frame reflects, on average, what probability samples of adult Louisiana residents would look like in terms of these demographic characteristics. The 500 respondents were then weighted to this sampling frame using propensity scores. The matched cases and the frame were combined and a logistic regression was estimated for inclusion. The propensity score function included age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, and region. The propensity scores were grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame and post-stratified according to these deciles. The weights were then post-stratified on 2016 and 2020 Presidential vote choice, and a four-way stratification of gender, age (4-categories), race (4-categories), and education (4-categories), to produce the final weight.

Respondents completed this survey from March 1 to March 21, 2022.

The margin of error for this survey is +/- 6.1%.

With its innovative approach to online polling, *YouGov* conducts surveys for a variety of business, university, and media clients, including *CBS News*, the *Economist* and the *New York Times*. [Research from scholars at Harvard University and Tufts University](#) shows that well-designed online opt-in sampling techniques, like those *YouGov* uses for its surveys, perform as well as traditional random digit dialing telephone polls.

Although the results discussed above in this report focus on Survey 1, readers can find topline results from Survey 2 below.

Comparison of samples

The following table displays demographic characteristics of each sample as well as population estimates based on the ACS.

Table: Comparison of survey samples to population benchmarks

Characteristic	Probability based Telephone Sample	Non probability Online Sample	Benchmark
High school diploma or less	36.3%	46.9%	47.8%
Some college	34.1%	29.1%	29.3%
College degree or higher	28.5%	24.0%	22.9%
White, non-Hispanic	62.4%	57.7%	60.5%
Black, non-Hispanic	25.5%	33.3%	31.2%
Hispanic	3.1%	4.8%	4.8%
Other	6.5%	4.1%	3.5%
18-24	8.7%	7.2%	11.9%
25-34	16.1%	17.3%	18.7%
35-44	16.2%	20.5%	16.5%
45-54	15.6%	20.0%	15.8%
55-64	17.4%	11.8%	16.9%
65+	25.6%	23.2%	20.2%
Men	47.2%	47.1%	48.2%
Women	52.0%	52.9%	51.8%
Metro BR	18.7%	19.4%	17.8%
Metro NOLA	29.8%	29.5%	31.0%
South Louisiana	23.6%	23.1%	25.2%
North Louisiana	26.5%	28.0%	26.0%

Characteristic	Probability based Telephone Sample	Non probability Online Sample	Benchmark
Registered to vote	92.1%	82.7%	84.5%
Have driver's license	88.8%	84.9%	94.6%
Average size of household	2.6	3.7	2.6
Employed	52.7%	45.9%	55.4%
Married (not separated)	46.4%	44.2%	43.4%
Have cell phone	98.3%	98.4%	90.6%
Have cell phone only	72.0%	73.8%	64.0%
Have internet access at home	82.3%	88.5%	78.5%

Statistics for both Louisiana Survey samples incorporate the sample weights. All sample statistics and benchmarks are for the adult population of Louisiana. Benchmarks represent data from the following data sources:

- U.S Census American Community Survey (ACS), 2020 5-year estimates (education, race and ethnicity, age, gender, average size of household, employment, and marital status);
- U.S Census ACS, 2019 1-year estimate (region);
- Louisiana Secretary of State (voter registration count is for March 1, 2022, and divided by the adult population from the 2022 5-year ACS estimate);
- Federal Highway Administration (the number of adult licensed drivers from 2019, which is divided by the 2019 ACS population estimate);
- National Health Insurance Survey (cell phone access); and
- National Center for Education Statistics (household internet access).

These comparisons indicate that both samples are often close to the benchmark (within five percentage points) for education, race and ethnicity, age, gender, and region. The exceptions are that the probability sample underestimates the share who have no experience with college, overestimates the share with a college degree, underestimates the share of non-Hispanic Black residents, and overestimates the share who are 65 years or older. The non-probability sample overestimates the share who are 55 to 64 years old. The general similarity of both samples to population benchmarks for this set of demographics is unsurprising given that both samples are weighted to these characteristics of the population.

The comparisons to the remaining benchmarks are more interesting because they reveal whether the samples represent the population even on characteristics to which they are not weighted. Ideally, this would be the case. In most cases, the probability sample comes within five percentage

points of the population benchmark. It overestimates voter registration, underestimates the share of adults with a driver's license, and overestimates cell phone access. The non-probability sample performs slightly less well, generally. It overestimates the share with a driver's license, overestimates the size of households, underestimates employment, overestimates cell phone access, and overestimates home internet access.

Question Wording and Toplines

Unless otherwise indicated, results are for the total sample. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Q1: How much, if at all, do you think coastal land loss in Louisiana will hurt people living in coastal areas of the state? Would you say coastal land loss in Louisiana will hurt them a great deal, a moderate amount, only a little, or not at all?

Response	Probability based Telephone Sample	Non probability Online Sample
A great deal	68	61
A moderate amount	17	27
Only a little	9	8
Not at all	2	3
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	4	0

Q2: How much, if at all, do you think coastal land loss in Louisiana will hurt Louisiana residents across the state as a whole? Would you say coastal land loss in Louisiana will hurt them a great deal, a moderate amount, only a little, or not at all?

Response	Probability based Telephone Sample	Non probability Online Sample
A great deal	37	29
A moderate amount	36	42
Only a little	17	24
Not at all	6	5
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	4	0

Q3: How much, if at all, do you think coastal land loss in Louisiana will hurt people in your generation? Would you say coastal land loss in Louisiana will hurt them a great deal, a moderate amount, only a little, or not at all?

Response	Probability based Telephone Sample	Non probability Online Sample
A great deal	29	24
A moderate amount	36	44
Only a little	22	24
Not at all	9	7
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	4	0

Q4: How much, if at all, do you think coastal land loss in Louisiana will hurt people in future generations? Would you say coastal land loss in Louisiana will hurt them a great deal, a moderate amount, only a little, or not at all?

Response	Probability based Telephone Sample	Non probability Online Sample
A great deal	58	51
A moderate amount	26	33
Only a little	9	12
Not at all	3	4
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	3	0

Q5: How much, if at all, do you think coastal land loss in Louisiana will hurt you personally? Would you say coastal land loss in Louisiana will hurt you a great deal, a moderate amount, only a little, or not at all?

Response	Probability based Telephone Sample	Non probability Online Sample
A great deal	22	19
A moderate amount	28	31
Only a little	26	30
Not at all	21	20
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	3	0

Q6: Would you say that the number of hurricanes that have impacted Louisiana have increased, decreased, or stayed about the same as in the past?

Response	Probability based Telephone Sample	Non probability Online Sample
Increased	62	54
Decreased	4	10
Stayed about the same	32	37
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	1	0

Q7: Would you say that the hurricanes that do impact Louisiana are stronger, weaker, or have stayed about the same as in the past?

Response	Probability based Telephone Sample	Non probability Online Sample
Stronger	67	57
Weaker	2	6
Stayed about the same	29	37
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	2	0

Q8: Would you say flooding in your local community has increased, decreased, or stayed about the same as in the past?

Response	Probability based Telephone Sample	Non probability Online Sample
Increased	43	41
Decreased	9	12
Stayed about the same	46	46
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	2	0

Q9: Do you support or oppose requiring that any new buildings and houses in areas at high risk to flooding be built higher above the ground?

Response	Probability based Telephone Sample	Non probability Online Sample
Support	87	88
Oppose	11	12
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	2	0

Q10: Do you support or oppose prohibiting construction of new buildings in areas at high risk to flooding?

Response	Probability based Telephone Sample	Non probability Online Sample
Support	49	66
Oppose	48	34
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	3	0

Q11: Do you support or oppose requiring property owners to elevate existing buildings in areas at high risk to flooding?

Response	Probability based Telephone Sample	Non probability Online Sample
Support	50	62
Oppose	45	38
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	5	0

Q12: Do you support or oppose the government paying property owners to elevate existing buildings in areas at high risk to flooding?

Response	Probability based Telephone Sample	Non probability Online Sample
Support	62	70
Oppose	35	30
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	4	0

Q13: Do you support or oppose the government paying people living in areas at high risk of flooding to move to safer places?

Response	Probability based Telephone Sample	Non probability Online Sample
Support	46	66
Oppose	51	33
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	3	0

Q14: Do you support or oppose raising insurance rates for property located in areas at high risk to flooding?

Response	Probability based Telephone Sample	Non probability Online Sample
Support	38	38
Oppose	58	62
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	4	0