



Most New Jerseyans have trust in their local news, new poll shows



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07/15/2024 - Eight in 10 New Jerseyans at least moderately trust their local news outlets, but two-thirds don't think those same organizations have much influence in their communities, according to a new poll conducted by the [Eggleton Center for Public Interest Polling](#) at [Rutgers University](#) and [SSRS](#), commissioned by the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium.

Sixteen percent of those polled said they trusted local news in their area "a great deal," and 63% said "a moderate amount," according to the poll. Two-thirds said their local news media does not have much of an influence in their community.

Search engines such as Google were by far the most popular source from which New Jerseyans said they get local news, followed by local newspapers and local television stations. When it comes to social media, Facebook is the dominant source for news.

"The results from this poll give the Consortium, its current grantees and future grantees a wealth of information to help them build news products that will meet the information needs of New Jersey residents," said Chris Daggett, board chair and interim executive director of the Consortium. "While it's great that our state trusts local news and believes it mostly keeps them informed, there is much work to be done to rebuild its influence and ensure that local organizations owned and run by local people are the ones providing news and information to communities here."

"Who you are and where you live are big drivers of things like news source usage, where

you get news, what kind of news you seek, and ease of finding it,” said Ashley Koning, an assistant research professor and director of the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP) at Rutgers University–New Brunswick. “Those in Black and brown communities, in lower-income households, in rural areas, and in what are considered news deserts tend to have a different local news media experience than white communities, higher-income households, and urban and suburban areas.”

The poll was conducted February 28–March 12, 2024 via telephone and online in both English and Spanish using the [Rutgers–Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel](#) of New Jersey adults aged 18 and older. The poll oversampled among Asian–American/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (AANHPI), Black, low-income, and rural respondents. The full sample of 1,014 New Jersey adults has a margin of error of +/- 4.2 percentage points.

Results of the poll were broken down by partisanship, gender, race/ethnicity, age, education, income and whether or not the person lived in a news desert, as well as other key demographics.

The poll also found that:

- New Jerseyans seek national news with the greatest frequency, followed by statewide, local, and finally international news.
- Local activities, weather, crime, and traffic top the list of topics about which New Jerseyans seek local news.
- Almost nine in 10 people said they seek local news because they want to be an informed member of their community.
- New Jerseyans believe the most important thing a local news source should do is report news accurately, followed by being transparent about reporting.
- Fifteen percent feel that the local news in their area keeps them “very well” informed of the most important stories and issues of the day, and 57% “somewhat well.”

The New Jersey poll mirrors some of what has been shown in national and international surveys. Related to trust in news, the latest [Pew Research Center report on news](#) from the Pew–Knight Initiative showed that “the vast majority of U.S. adults (85%) say local news outlets are at least somewhat important to the well-being of their local community.” When it comes to how people find news, the latest [Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2024](#) showed that the majority of people “continue to identify platforms including social media, search, or aggregators as their main gateway to online news.”

To read the full results of the New Jersey poll, click [here](#).

About the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium: The [Consortium](#) is an independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that funds initiatives to benefit the State’s civic life and meet the evolving information needs of New Jersey’s communities. A first-in-the-nation project, the Consortium builds on the foundation laid by public media in the United States, and reimagines how public funding can be used to address the growing problem of news deserts, misinformation, and support more informed communities.

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