

New Jersey voters say the spread of misinformation in the state is a big problem

New Jerseyans are mixed on how much local news coverage there is in their community today compared with five years ago

June 11, 2026 – New Jersey voters consider the spread of false or misleading information a big problem in the state, with a third saying local news in their area has decreased over the past five years, according to a Rutgers-Eagleton Poll.

In the poll, commissioned by the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium and conducted by the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling, 6 out of 10 say the spread of false or misleading information among New Jerseyans is a “very big problem” (60%). Twenty-two percent say it’s a “moderately big problem,” 11% say it’s a “small problem” and 4% say it is “not a problem.”

“Across all demographic groups and, specifically, across the political aisle, New Jersey voters raise concerns about the spread of misinformation throughout the state,” said Ashley Koning, an assistant research professor and director of the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. “Three quarters or more across the board label it a ‘big problem’ on some level. In an era of divisive politics, strong bipartisan agreement that misinformation is an issue is noteworthy.”

Voters are split on how much local news coverage is available in their community today compared with five years ago: Thirty-two percent say coverage has increased (15% “a great deal,” 17% “somewhat”), while 34% say it has decreased (17% “a great deal,” 17% “somewhat”) and 28% say coverage has stayed about the same.

Democrats are more likely to say local news in their areas has decreased (41%) than Republicans (27%) and independents (30%).

Those living in the state’s urban areas (46%) as well as those living near the Jersey Shore (42%) are more likely than those living elsewhere to say local coverage has increased.

New Jersey voters are most likely to say they get news and information about their local community from search engines such as Google (77%), followed by friends or family (75%), and national news outlets (71%). Sixty-five percent say they get news from a local newspaper, whether online or in print.

Nearly 6 in 10 get local news from a local television news station (59%) and about half get news from a local online-only news outlet (52%) or a local radio station or podcast (48%).

Slightly more than 4 in 10 point to public television such as PBS (42%), community newsletters (42%), community organizations (40%), Facebook (38%), government news websites (38%) and public radio (37%), while roughly 3 in 10 say they reference Instagram (31%) and YouTube (31%).

Fewer voters receive local news from Nextdoor or a similar neighborhood app (23%), X (21%), their religious community (19%) or TikTok (17%). Four percent say they get news from another source.

Voters rely most on local television news for information about their local community (14%), followed closely by national news outlets (12%) and a local newspaper (11%).

“The role of local news is more important than ever for communities to keep track of the decisions that impact their day-to-day life the most,” said Lisa Sahulka, executive director of the [New Jersey Civic Information Consortium](https://www.njcivicinfo.org). “As national newspapers diminish and misinformation spreads more rapidly, this poll shows that local news is still consumed by the majority via public access TV, online and print. There is also a great opportunity to reach new audiences via social media and new platforms, cementing local news in the daily media consumption habits of New Jerseyans.”

Voters also were asked about their level of trust in the sources they specifically use to get accurate information about local issues in New Jersey. Among those who go to a religious community for information, 90% place at least a “fair amount” of trust in it.

Among those who reference each for information, 85% have a “great deal” or “fair amount” of trust in public radio. Eighty-two percent trust public television, 81% trust community organizations and 80% each trust local radio or local online-only news outlets.

Seventy-seven percent of voters who get information from friends or family trust the information. Seventy-five percent each say the same about local newspapers and community newsletters, 74% say this about local television and 71% say it about search engines such as Google.

More than two-thirds who access government news websites trust them for accurate information about issues in New Jersey (67%). Sixty-two percent of those who look to national news outlets and 61% of X users trust them to provide accurate information.

Among those who access YouTube or TikTok for information, 59% each trust the platforms to supply accurate information. Fifty-two percent of users of neighborhood apps like Nextdoor and 51% of Instagram users trust the apps for accurate information.

Facebook garners the least trust among those who reference it as a source of information: Forty-two percent say they trust it a “great deal” or “fair amount.”

Results are from a statewide poll of 859 registered voters in New Jersey from May 15 to May 19. The full registered voter sample has a margin of error of +/- 4.2 percentage points.

ABOUT THE EAGLETON CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEREST POLLING

Home of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll, the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP) was established in 1971 and is the oldest and one of the most respected university-based statewide polling operations in the United States. Now in its 56th year and with the publication of over 200 polls, ECPIP’s mission is to provide scientifically sound, nonpartisan information about public opinion. In addition to its public polling, ECPIP partners with organizations, foundations, and public agencies to design and conduct custom survey research on issues of public concern.

To learn more about ECPIP, explore our published research and data archive, or inquire about our research services, please visit our website: eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu. You can also visit our Facebook, Bluesky, and LinkedIn.

ABOUT THE EAGLETON INSTITUTE OF POLITICS

The Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling is a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University–New Brunswick. The Eagleton Institute studies how American politics and government work and change, analyzes how democracy might improve and promotes political participation and civic engagement. The Institute explores state and national politics through research, education and public service, linking the study of politics with its day-to-day practice. To learn more about Eagleton programs and expertise, visit eagleton.rutgers.edu.

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Rutgers University-New Brunswick is where Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, began more than 250 years ago. Ranked among the world's top 60 universities, Rutgers's flagship university is a leading public research institution and a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities. It is home to internationally acclaimed faculty and has 12 degree-granting schools and a Division I Athletics program. It is the Big Ten Conference's most diverse university. Through its community of teachers, scholars, artists, scientists and healers, Rutgers is equipped as never before to transform lives.

ABOUT THE NEW JERSEY CIVIC INFORMATION CONSORTIUM

The New Jersey Civic Information Consortium is an independent nonprofit organization established by the State of New Jersey in 2018 to strengthen local journalism and civic information across the state. Through grants, research, training programs, back-office support, and collaboration with media organizations and community partners, the Consortium works to ensure New Jersey residents have access to reliable information that helps increase civic participation and enhance community life.