


Pandemic Policy Survey (screen shots showing modal popups)- Joe Mitchell-Nelson and Trudy Ann Cameron (2020). This survey was distributed to a random sample of California, Oregon, and Washington State residents from the Qualtrics consumer panel



## RECENT PANDEMIC CONDITIONS

The United States has **3,141** counties. As of January 24, 2021:

- Virtually **every one of these counties** had COVID-19 **cases**
- **3,080 of these counties** had COVID-19 **deaths**

So, at this point, the pandemic is almost everywhere in the U.S.

← →



Some Oregon counties have had relatively fewer cases of COVID-19 so far. People in those counties may not be fully aware of just how tough things have been in other parts of the United States. Oregonians may want to be prepared, in case conditions in Oregon get worse.

For example, think about the **four weeks** ending on January 24, 2021. Suppose Lane County had been one of the **300 U.S. counties** with the highest *shares of their populations* affected by COVID-19. In that case, Lane County would have had:

- **9,377 or more** *new* cases, instead of its actual **2,183** new cases
- **258 or more** deaths, instead of its actual **29** death(s)

[Click for more background on these numbers, if desired](#)

We will describe some **possible future pandemic conditions**. These are intended to help Oregon plan. Each set of conditions will include the **expected cases and expected deaths** in Lane County if we just let everyone decide for themselves what to do. This is what we call the “baseline” policy, with no pandemic rules.

We will then describe some possible policies that lay down some rules about how businesses may operate.

- Each pandemic policy has some **benefits**:
  - Fewer cases and/or deaths from pandemic illness.
- Each pandemic policy also has some **costs**:
  - Inconvenience, lost jobs or business income, and different expenses

People have different views:

- Some feel strongly that **businesses need to stay open** and Oregonians need to be able to work.
- Some are more **worried about themselves or others getting sick**, and would prefer rules that keep people away from each other.

We describe each policy in a very compact table.

**FIRST PART OF EACH TABLE**

**Duration:** The number of months the policy would last.

**Pandemic conditions and how the policy would help:** Assume we are at a point in the pandemic when these are the best available numbers for the 368,882 people in Lane County:

- Expected cases and deaths over the same time period, if we just let people decide for themselves what to do (**on the left**, below).
- Cases avoided and deaths prevented, based on how well people are expected to follow the rules of Policy A (**on the right**).

<b>Policy:</b>	<b>A</b>
Duration in months	2
8,506 cases, reduced by	1,800
66 deaths, reduced by	27
<b>Strictness of rules:</b>	
[described later]	
<b>Measures of cost:</b>	
[described later]	

**SECOND PART OF EACH TABLE**

We need to prepare you for the middle section of the policy tables. For your household, strict pandemic rules **for some types of businesses or activities** may result in:

- Loss of income from employment or business
- Loss of access to products, services or activities that your household wants, needs or enjoys

We will focus on just ten types of businesses and activities where pandemic rules have been common.

First, we will ask you to think about whether strict pandemic rules for each type of business or activity would have a significant impact on your own household's income or well-being.

If you wish, click on either of these two questions for their answers:

[What do we mean by a household?](#)

[Why do we leave out other types of businesses or activities?](#)



Think about Oregon adopting strict pandemic rules for each type of business or activity below. Would these rules cause hardship for your household (or have they, already)?

Hardship can take the form of:

- Significant **loss of income**, and/or
- Significant **loss of access** to products, services, or activities that are important to your household's happiness or well-being.

For the businesses/activities below, you can select BOTH "Loss of income" and "Loss of access" if both of these apply.

For my household, strict rules on [Grocery, essential retail](#) would cause hardship from:

Loss of income	Loss of access	Neither
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Strict rules on [Non-essential retail](#) would cause hardship from:

Loss of income	Loss of access	Neither
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**How strict are a given policy's rules for each type of business or activity?** We show the strictness of the rules for each type using little "meters" with three colored bars.

For example, here is how to read the meter for our *first* type.

**Grocery stores** (and other essential retail stores)

-  = All open, minimal restrictions
-  = Masks required
-  = Masks required, limited occupancy
-  = Delivery or curbside pick-up only

**NOTE 1:** More **green** bars means more open; more **red** bars means stricter rules.

**NOTE 2:** For each different type of business or activity, the four levels on the meter will have different interpretations.



The rules for our ten types of businesses and activities are shown in no particular order.

You may see some policies with very *uneven* rules across the ten types.

- Some groups might have been really eager to open their businesses or get their activities going again. Looser rules could result from **successful lobbying** by those groups.
- Other groups might not have tried as hard to re-open. Or, their lobbying efforts may have been less successful. Stricter rules may apply for those groups.

Click the **name** of any business/activity to see the key for its different levels of rules.

Policy:	A
[described earlier]	
Strictness of rules:	
Grocery, essential retail	 
Non-essential retail	 
Schools, daycare	 
Universities, colleges	 
Parks, outdoor sports	 
Gyms, indoor sports	 
Theaters, concert halls	 
Restaurants, bars, clubs	 
Meetings, religious services	 
Assisted living facilities	 
Measures of cost:	
[described later]	

**THIRD PART OF EACH TABLE:**

Pandemic rules can be **bothersome and/or very inconvenient**. For example, you may have to wear a mask when you go out. Households with school-aged children may have to do their best to teach these children at home while the adults still try to do their regular work. We have already asked you to think about some of these burdens.

However, strict pandemic rules can also have big monetary costs. They can **slow a state's economy**. People may be urged to stay home. Stores and restaurants close. These businesses and others will lose money and will begin to lay off workers. People will spend less because they lose their jobs. Many business owners will lose income as well.

We will show two possible ways to measure these costs for each policy:

- **Unemployment** rates for Lane County, and
- **Average \$/month lost**, the resulting overall loss of net income, averaged across all households in the county.



**Unemployment** rates describe the share of workers in Lane County who would lose their jobs because of each policy.

The overall unemployment rate for Oregon in January and February of 2020 was about 3.3%. As early as April, however, this state-wide rate had risen to 14.9%. This was because of the pandemic.

You may wish to think about these job losses in relation to the worst conditions during two historically hard times for the whole country.

- Maximum unemployment in the Great Recession of 2009:
  - About 10% (1 in 10 workers cannot find a job)
- Maximum unemployment in the Great Depression of the 1930s:
  - About 25% (1 in 4 workers cannot find a job)





“**Average \$/month lost**” is another way to describe the cost of a policy. For your own household, the economic impact of pandemic rules will depend on:

- The **chance** that workers in your household will lose their jobs;
- The **harm to your household's net income** if these job losses happen.

The cost of the policy to your household may end up being high or low. This will depend on what happens to its income and expenses. **Across all households** in Lane County, the *average net income loss* to be expected from each policy will be reported as “**Average \$/month lost.**”



During the first part of the current pandemic, there was **an extra unemployment benefit of \$600 per week from the Federal government** under the CARES Act. These benefits made the pandemic's “Average \$/month lost” much lower than they would normally be, for any given level of unemployment.

The \$600/week extra benefit ended July 31. A \$300/week extra benefit was then provided in December. The incoming Administration is proposing \$400/week. It is not yet clear whether extra unemployment benefits will continue to be available, at what level, or for how long, as the pandemic drags on.

You will be shown policies that assume different levels of extra Federal unemployment benefits. These extra benefits explain why policies with similar levels of unemployment can result in different “Average \$/month lost” in your county. **Assume that any Federal unemployment benefits, as described, will be in place regardless of any pandemic rules that apply in Lane County.**



Assume our numbers for **Unemployment** and **Average \$/month lost** are the **best available estimates**, based on the median income of about \$49,958 per year in Lane County.

**Unemployment** shows the expected share of workers who are out of a job if the policy's rules are put in place. This new total includes the 3.3% share of such workers in Oregon before the pandemic started.

**Average \$/month lost** is the average across households of the lost income, from lost jobs or lost business earnings, while the policy's rules are in effect. It takes account of standard unemployment benefits for Oregon. It also reflects any *extra* unemployment benefits expected from the Federal government. But remember this is *only an average*. Your own household's costs could be higher or lower than this.

<b>Policy:</b>	<b>A</b>
[described earlier]	
<b>Strictness of rules:</b>	
[described earlier]	
<b>Measures of cost:</b>	
Unemployment	16.8%
Average \$/month lost	\$5

In any policy you will consider, you can click on the name for each measure of cost if you wish to review what it means.





### YOUR POLICY CHOICES

Consider each choice separately. Don't hold out for a better policy that is NOT being offered in the current choice.

In each choice, the only alternative to the offered policies is "no pandemic rules." That option lets each person in Lane County make their own decisions about what to do.

- Reasonable people can certainly disagree about pandemic policies. In some cases, a policy may cause too much hardship, result in too much unemployment and/or cost simply too much, given what it would do.
- In other cases, you might settle for a policy, even though it isn't perfect. The policy might still be better than just letting your county suffer all of the cases and deaths that would happen without the policy.

Most policy choices during a pandemic involve trade-offs between lost lives and lost jobs (or other financial hardship). Neither outcome is good. So please **vote for the option that you think would be *least bad***.

You are welcome to discuss your policy preferences with others in your household before you make your choices, just as you might if preparing to vote in a real referendum.



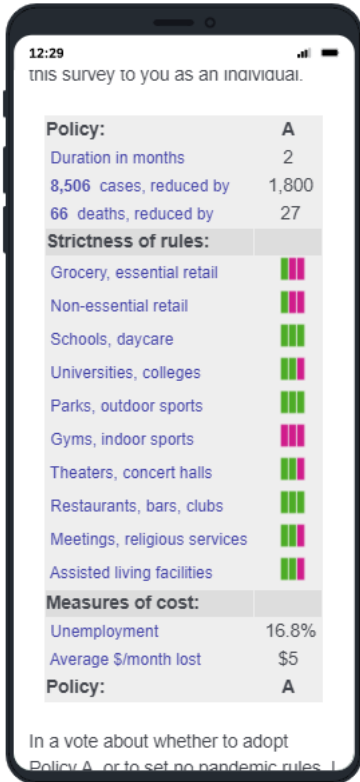
Please consider all features of each policy:

- Its **duration**;
- Baseline **cases and deaths** likely during that time, if no rules are imposed (on the left);
- The cases and deaths the policy would **prevent** (on the right);
- The policy's **mix of rules** on businesses or activities that your household may care about;
- The economic **cost of the policy**, as measured by
  - **Unemployment** (the share of workers unable to find jobs), or
  - **Average \$/month lost** for households in your county.

Remember, if the information in the table is not detailed enough, you can **click on the name of each feature** to review explanations.

The **Average \$/month lost** for Policy A takes into account **\$400/week in extra unemployment benefits** from the Federal government for those who are eligible.

**Vote at the bottom of the screen**, just as you would if this were a secret ballot in a real referendum. The policy would apply to the 368,882 people in Lane County. Be sure to think carefully about *whether your household could live with the policy's costs*. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. No one will be able to connect your choices in this survey to you as an individual.

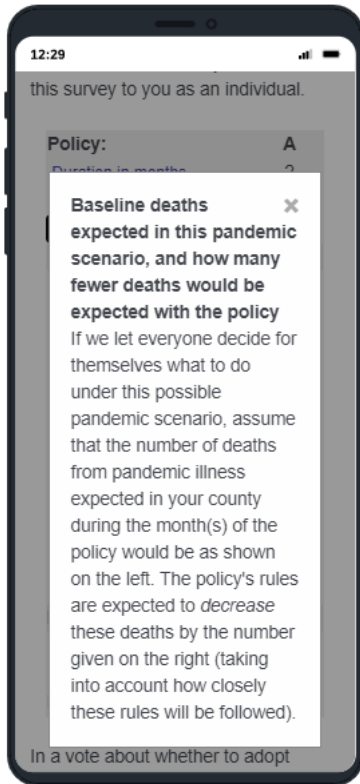
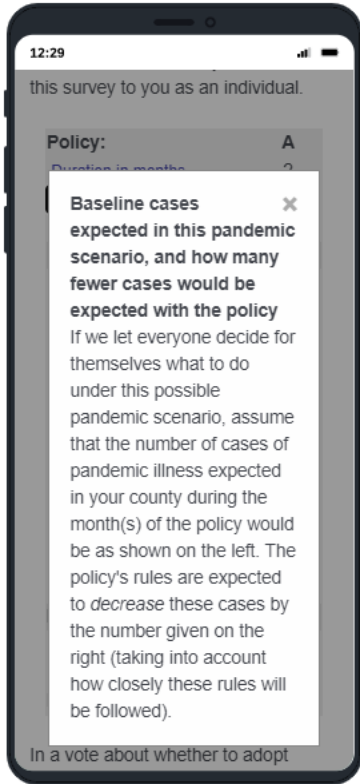


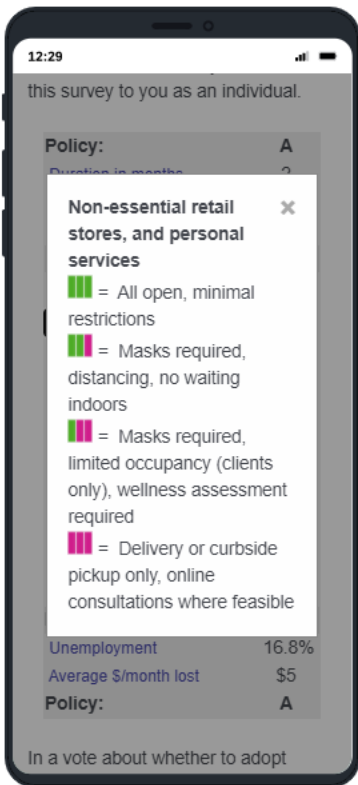
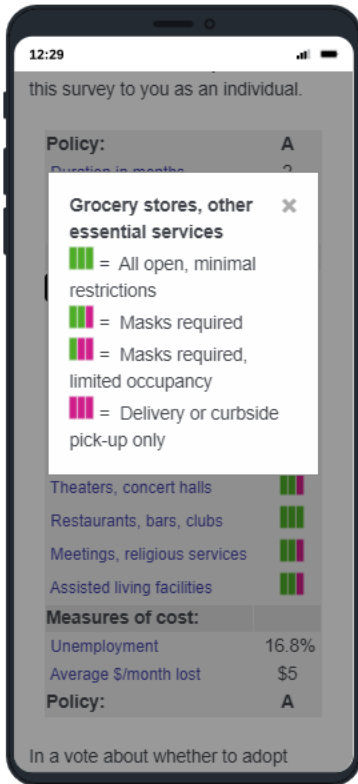
<b>Policy:</b>	<b>A</b>
Duration in months	2
8,506 cases, reduced by	1,800
66 deaths, reduced by	27
<b>Strictness of rules:</b>	
Grocery, essential retail	
Non-essential retail	
Schools, daycare	
Universities, colleges	
Parks, outdoor sports	
Gyms, indoor sports	
Theaters, concert halls	
Restaurants, bars, clubs	
Meetings, religious services	
Assisted living facilities	
<b>Measures of cost:</b>	
Unemployment	16.8%
Average \$/month lost	\$5
<b>Policy:</b>	<b>A</b>

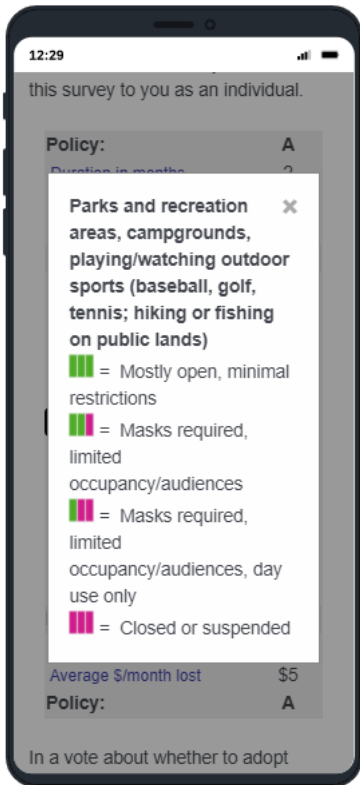
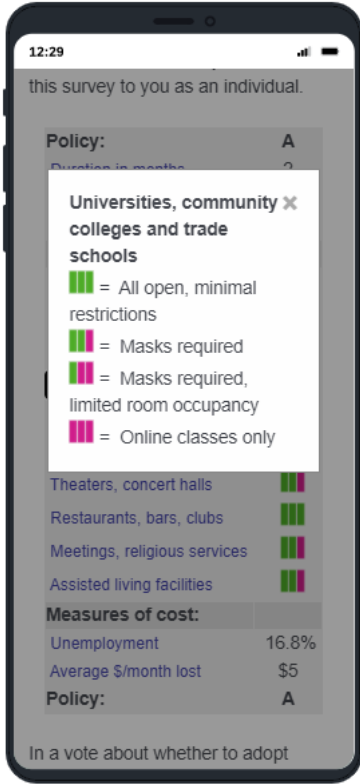
In a vote about whether to adopt Policy A, or to set no pandemic rules, I would choose:

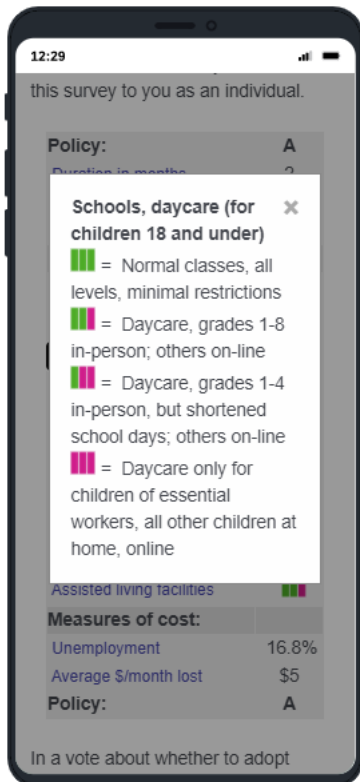
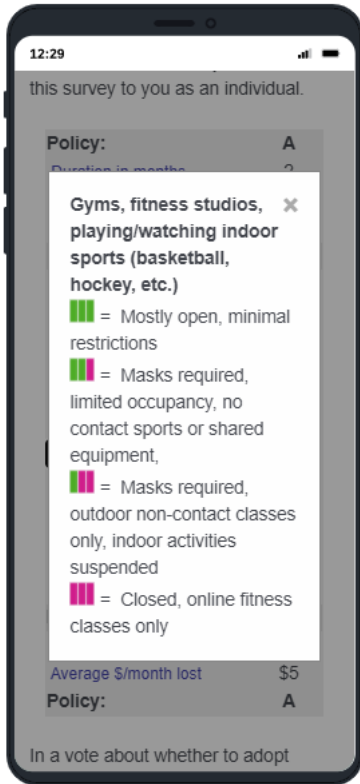
Policy A with its cost and its mix of rules (reduces cases by 1,800 and deaths by 27)

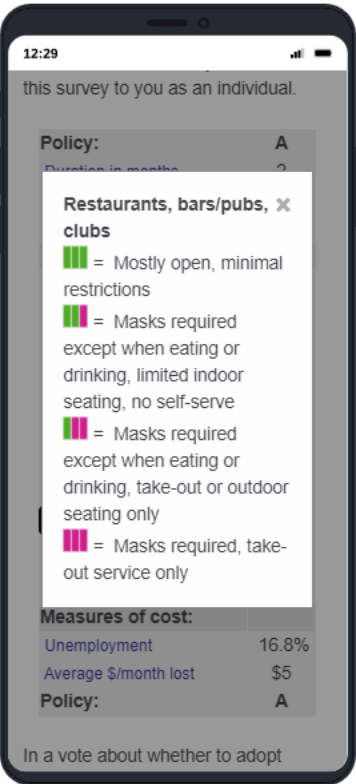
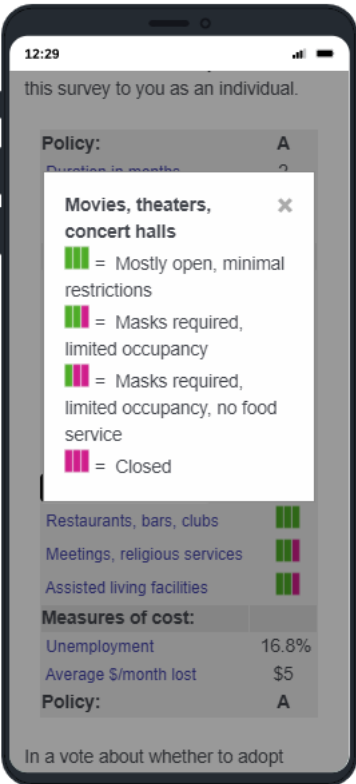
No pandemic rules, and just accept the 8,506 cases and 66 deaths expected if we let everyone decide for themselves what to do

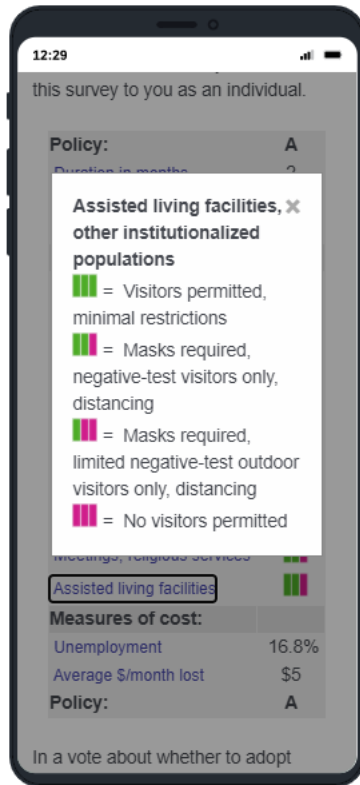
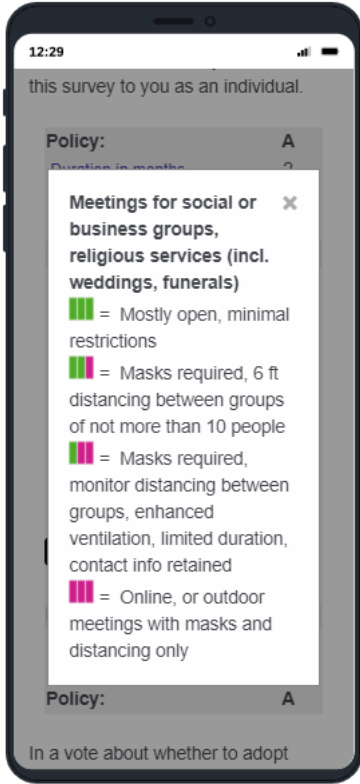




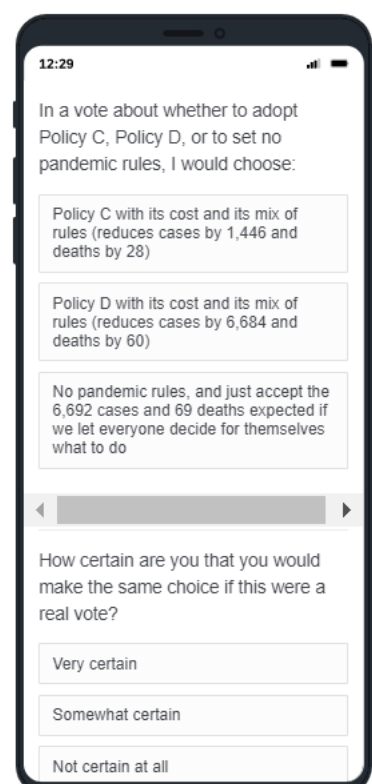
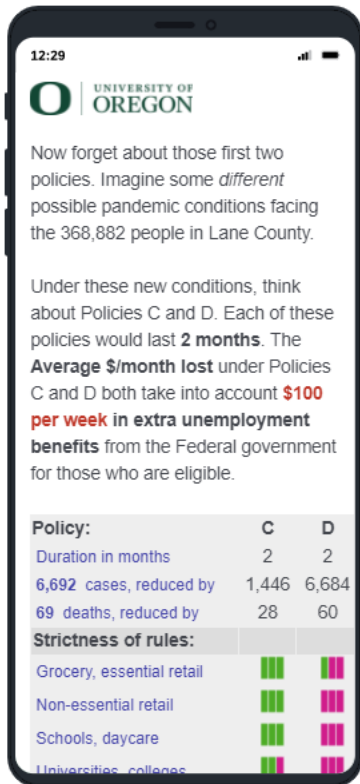
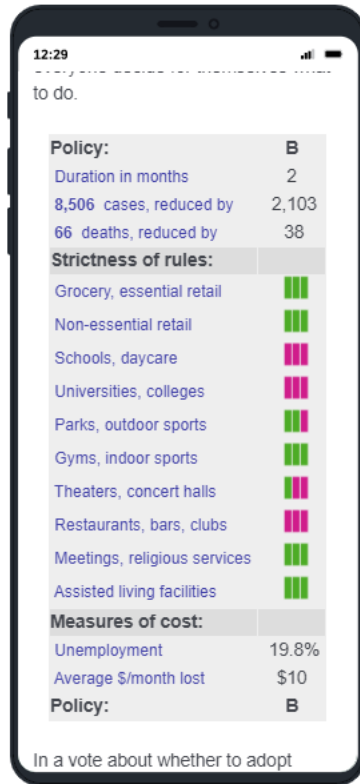
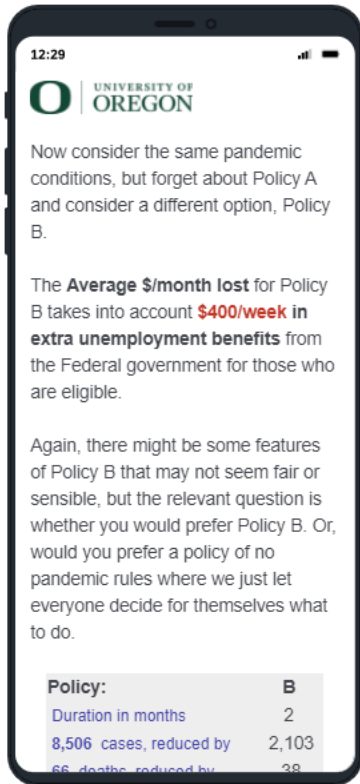













Policy:	E	F
Duration in months	1	1
4,626 cases, reduced by	3,763	3,689
117 deaths, reduced by	80	68
Strictness of rules:		
Grocery, essential retail		
Non-essential retail		
Schools, daycare		
Universities, colleges		
Parks, outdoor sports		
Gyms, indoor sports		
Theaters, concert halls		
Restaurants, bars, clubs		
Meetings, religious services		
Assisted living facilities		
Measures of cost:		
Unemployment	28.5%	25.6%
Average \$/month lost	\$170	\$150
Policy:	E	F

Policy:	F
Duration in months	1
4,626 cases, reduced by	3,689
117 deaths, reduced by	68
Strictness of rules:	
Grocery, essential retail	
Non-essential retail	
Schools, daycare	
Universities, colleges	
Parks, outdoor sports	
Gyms, indoor sports	
Theaters, concert halls	
Restaurants, bars, clubs	
Meetings, religious services	
Assisted living facilities	
Measures of cost:	
Unemployment	25.6%
Average \$/month lost	\$150
Policy:	F

<b>Policy:</b>	<b>E</b>
Duration in months	1
4,626 cases, reduced by	3,763
117 deaths, reduced by	80
<b>Strictness of rules:</b>	
Grocery, essential retail	 
Non-essential retail	 
Schools, daycare	 
Universities, colleges	 
Parks, outdoor sports	 
Gyms, indoor sports	 
Theaters, concert halls	 
Restaurants, bars, clubs	 
Meetings, religious services	 
Assisted living facilities	 
<b>Measures of cost:</b>	
Unemployment	28.5%
Average \$/month lost	\$170
<b>Policy:</b>	<b>E</b>



Reflect on your pandemic policy choices on the previous screens. Compared to the **Average \$/month lost** by households in Lane County, did you assume that the **actual cost** to **your own household** would be:

Much higher

Somewhat higher

About the same

Somewhat lower

Much lower

←
→

Your ideal strictness of rules on [Non-essential retail](#)

			
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Your ideal strictness of rules on [Schools, daycare](#)

			
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Your ideal strictness of rules on [Universities, colleges](#)

			
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Your ideal strictness of rules on [Parks, outdoor sports](#)

			
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Remember that one option would be to let everyone decide for themselves what to do under these pandemic conditions. We are assuming we could expect **about 4,626 cases** of pandemic illness in Lane County over **1 month** without pandemic rules.

**What is the maximum number you would be OK with, for cases of pandemic illness, under your ideal set of rules for these businesses and activities?** You may need to scroll to see all the options. Just select your best guess.

less than 463

463 to 925

925 to 1,388

1,388 to 1,850

1,850 to 2,313

2,313 to 2,776

2,776 to 3,238

3,238 to 3,701

3,701 to 4,163



We are assuming we could also expect **about 117 deaths** from pandemic illness in Lane County over **1 month**, if we let everyone decide for themselves what to do.

Everyone eventually dies from something. **What is the maximum number you would be OK with, for deaths from pandemic illness, under your ideal set of rules for these businesses and activities?** You may need to scroll to see all the options. Just select your best guess.

less than 23

23 to 47

47 to 70

70 to 94

94 or more

[No idea how many]



Consider your ideal set of pandemic rules, and their potential effect on the economy. **About what would be the maximum level of unemployment you could live with, over 1 month, under your ideal set of rules?**

Continue to assume **\$200 per week in extra unemployment benefits** from the Federal government for those who are eligible.

Recall that Oregon's unemployment rate was about 3.3%, just before the current pandemic began. Select your best guess.

0% to 5%

5% to 10%

10% to 15%

15% to 20%



That's it for the policy choices. You are doing great!

Surveys like this one can be much harder than most opinion surveys. Your choices, along with those of other people in this study, provide important information about the trade-offs that Oregonians are willing to make.

The next part of the survey will be more typical. Most of the questions just ask for some facts, or for simple opinions.



#### SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR HOUSEHOLD

This information will allow us to group your answers with those of others who are like you. Your answers will be anonymous.

**Including yourself**, is there anyone in your household in each of these age groups?

[Click if you wish to check what we mean by a household](#)

Check all that apply.

0 to 1 year

2 to 5 years

6 to 12 years

13 to 17 years

18 to 64 years

65 years or more



What is your marital status?

Married (or equivalent)

Single

Prefer not to say



Do you have a family member or a close friend who lives in any of the following?

- An assisted-living complex
- A long-term care facility or nursing home
- A detention or correctional facility
- Any similar institution where social distancing is difficult and they cannot easily move elsewhere

Yes

No

Don't know / Not sure







Did any members of your household rely on public transit to get to work before the pandemic started? For example, did they ride a bus, train, streetcar or other shared transportation?

Yes

Only sometimes

No



For about how many years, so far, have you lived in Lane County?

2 years or less

3 to 5 years

6 to 10 years

More than 10 years



For about how many **more** years do you expect to continue to live in Lane County?

2 years or less

3 to 5 years

6 to 10 years

More than 10 years

Don't know / Not sure / It depends...



**Do you, personally, have any of the following health conditions?** At least some research suggests they may affect your pandemic risks. Check any group that applies. Remember that nobody will be able to connect your answers to you as an individual.

Still NOT had a COVID-19 vaccine

High blood pressure, heart disease, history of stroke(s)

Diabetes, obesity

Respiratory problems (asthma, emphysema, COPD), recent or current smoker

Cancers, chronic kidney disease, immune disorder

Advanced age

Current pregnancy

Previous or current COVID-19 infection (suspected or confirmed)

Other (please specify)

None of the above



Does **anyone close to you, whom you care about**, have any of these same conditions?  
Check any group that applies.

Still NOT had a COVID vaccine

High blood pressure, heart disease, history of stroke(s)

Diabetes, obesity

Respiratory problems (asthma, emphysema, COPD), recent or current smoker

Cancers, chronic kidney disease, immune disorder

Advanced age

Current pregnancy

Previous or current COVID-19 (suspected or confirmed)

Other (please specify)

None of the above

Don't know / Not sure

If **one person** catches COVID-19, about **how many other people will they infect**, on average? Scroll to see all the options. Check a range of boxes if you can't narrow your answer to just one option (or choose Don't know / Not sure)

0 to 1

1 to 2

2 to 3

3 to 5

5 to 7

7 to 10

More than 10

Don't know / Not sure



**Suppose someone catches COVID-19. Are they more likely than average to be hospitalized or to die** if they belong to any of these groups? Select all that apply (where the list is in no particular order)

Children

Teens and young adults

Seniors

Women

Men

Non-white racial groups

Non-native English speakers

People with low incomes

People who live in rural areas

People with not much scientific training or knowledge

Essential workers, if they catch COVID-19

Other (please specify)



People are more likely to die from COVID-19 if they cannot get good medical care. Good care may be hard to find if too many other people are sick.

Suppose the pandemic gets a lot worse in your area. **How would you rate your chances of getting good medical care in Lane County, compared to other counties in Oregon?**

Excellent

Good

Average

Poor

Terrible

Don't know / Not sure





How long the COVID-19 pandemic lasts will depend on how people behave. It will also depend on how long it takes until enough people can be vaccinated, which may take many months yet. The way things are going, **how long do you think this pandemic will go on?**

It is more or less over already

Another month

Another 2 to 6 months

Another 6 to 12 months

Another 12 to 24 months

More than 2 years

Don't know / Not sure



Politically, do you consider yourself to be:

Strongly conservative

Somewhat conservative

Moderate

Somewhat liberal

Strongly liberal

Prefer not to say





What is your ethnicity?

Hispanic

Non-hispanic

Prefer not to say



Which best describes your current employment status?

Self-employed or small business owner

Employee, working full-time

Employee, working part-time

Not employed, looking for work

Not employed, NOT looking for work

Retired

Disabled, not able to work

Full-time student

Student with part-time work

Other

Prefer not to say



What is your household's homeowner or renter status?

Homeowner with no mortgage

Homeowner with mortgage payments

Renter

Staying with friends or another household

Unhoused

Prefer not to say



After any unemployment benefits, has your household's **monthly income** been **reduced** by Oregon's pandemic rules?

Yes

No

Don't know / Not sure





What is your highest level of education?

Less than high school

High school graduate

Some college

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Doctoral degree

Trade or technical school

Prefer not to say



Since the start of the pandemic, how would you rate the Federal Government's response to COVID-19?

Great

Good

Just OK

Bad

Terrible

Don't know / Not sure





Under the new Administration, *in your opinion*, will the Federal Government's response to COVID-19 be:

Much improved

Somewhat improved

About the same

Somewhat worse

Much worse



One final question: Think about the wording in this survey. Did it seem like the people who wrote this survey wanted you to vote one way or the other on pandemic Policies A through F?

They *definitely* wanted me to vote FOR these policies

They *probably* wanted me to vote FOR these policies

It was hard to tell whether they wanted me to vote FOR or AGAINST these policies

They *probably* wanted me to vote AGAINST these policies

They *definitely* wanted me to vote AGAINST these policies

