Nebraskans Think the Country is Headed in the Wrong Direction, but are Split Over Nebraska’s Direction

A survey of 1725 Nebraskans between July and November 2023 revealed notable differences in views on whether the state and US are headed in the right direction. Overall, 43% of Nebraska adults think the state is headed in the right direction, 31% feel unsure and 26% feel the state is going in the wrong direction. In comparison, only 11% think the country is headed in the right direction, 19% report being unsure about the country’s direction, and 70% think the country is heading in the wrong direction.

Men and women are similar in attitudes about whether Nebraska and the country are heading in the right direction. About four-in-ten men and women think the state is headed in the right direction, whereas only one-in-ten feel the country as a whole is headed in the right direction. Twenty-eight percent of men feel unsure about Nebraska’s direction and 18% are unsure about the country; women stood at 34% and 19%. About a quarter of men (27%) and women (24%) think the state is headed in the wrong direction and seven-in-ten (69% men; 72% women) for the country.

Seniors (age 65+) are significantly more likely than younger adults to think that Nebraska is headed in the right direction, reported by 48% of adults age 65 and older, 40% age 19 to 44, and 43% ages 45 to 64. About one-third (31%) of younger adults think that Nebraska is heading in the wrong direction, compared to about one-quarter of All age groups are equally pessimistic about the country, with about 70% of all Nebraska age groups reporting that the country is headed in the wrong direction.

White respondents are significantly more positive (45% right track) about the direction of Nebraska than People of Color (28% right track). However, People of Color are significantly more positive than White respondents about the direction of the country (right track: 30% vs. 9%), although large fractions of each group consider the country going in the wrong direction (74% White adults; 48% People of Color).

Nebraskans who live in a town or city differ significantly about the direction of Nebraska and the country than those who live on a farm or in open country. More than half (57%) of adults who live on a farm think Nebraska is headed in the right direction, compared to 49% of adults who live in open country and 41% of adults who live in town or city. When looking at the country as a whole, 80% of those who live on a farm or
open country think that the country is going in the wrong direction, compared to 69% of those living in a town or city.

There are substantial differences in attitudes by party affiliation. A majority of Republicans (61%) think that Nebraska is heading in the right direction, compared to only 16% of Democrats and 41% of Independents. Half of Democrats (52%) think that Nebraska is heading in the wrong direction, compared to 13% of Republicans and 26% of Independents. In contrast, 81% of Republicans think that the country is heading in the wrong direction, significantly different from the 60% of Democrats and 64% of Independents who report the same.

Attitudes about the direction of Nebraska differ significantly across education levels, largely in the “unsure” category. About four-in-ten adults in each education group think that Nebraska is headed in the right direction. However, 39% of adults with a high school diploma or less, 34% of people with some college or two-year degree, and 26% of people with bachelor’s degree or higher feel unsure about the state. No differences are observed in Nebraska adults’ attitudes about the country as a whole across education groups.

**Data Source and Methodology**

The Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey (NASIS) is an annual statewide concurrent mail and web survey conducted by BOSR with multiple clients. NASIS uses an address-based sample of adults aged 19 and older (Nebraska’s age of majority), and asks adults with the next birthday to participate in the survey. The 2023 NASIS consisted of a 16-page paper questionnaire that was administered by mail with an option to complete by web to a sample of 8,000 Nebraska households. Data were collected from July to November 2023 with an AAPOR Response Rate 2 of 21.6% (n=1,725). Overall estimates have a margin of error of ±4%. Significantly different groups are reported from statistical tests with p<.05. The full methodology report can be found at [https://bosr.unl.edu/nasis](https://bosr.unl.edu/nasis).

**WHO ARE WE?**

BOSR has been conducting survey research and providing research assistance to University of Nebraska–Lincoln faculty, departments, administrative units, students, and various government agencies and non-profit organizations since 1964. Operating as a ‘one-stop research shop,’ BOSR develops and manages mail, web, telephone, in-person, and mixed-mode surveys with academic rigor.