

Nebraska Annual Social Survey Snapshot:

Loneliness Among Nebraskan Adults

About one-in-six Nebraska adults feel lonely at least some of the time, with higher rates for unemployed, unmarried, and lower income Nebraskans

By Mia Bourek, Kristen Olson & Amanda Ganshert
March 2025

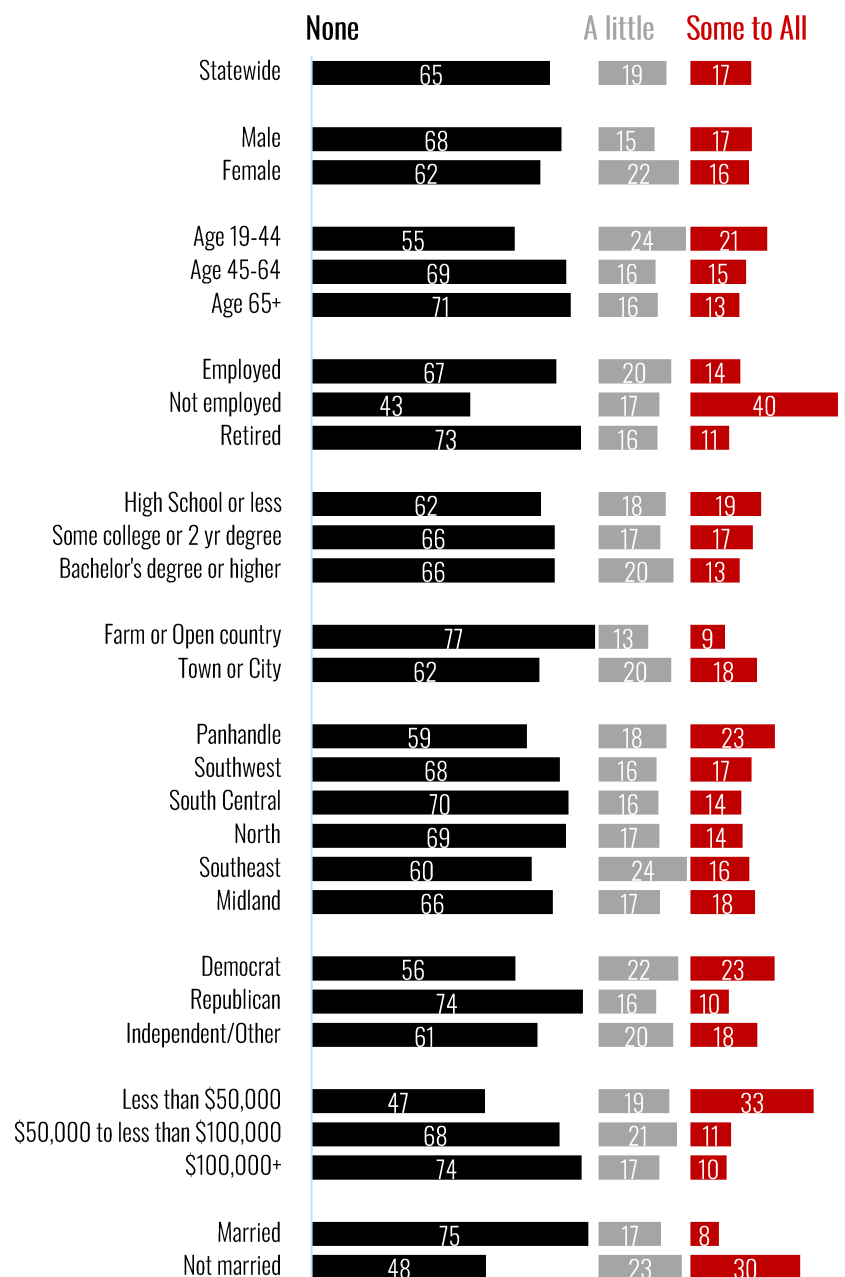
A survey of 2,232 Nebraskans conducted between July and November 2024 asked respondents “During the past 4 weeks (28 days), how much of the time did you feel lonely?” Respondents could answer “None of the time,” “A little of the time,” “Some of the time,” “Most of the time” and “All of the time.” For this report, some, most, and all of the time, answers are combined.

Overall, 65% of Nebraskan adults reported not feeling lonely over the past four weeks, 19% reported feeling lonely a little of the time, and 17% reported feeling lonely some, most, or all of the time.

Large differences in feelings of loneliness exist across age groups, employment groups, urban and rural areas, political parties, income levels, and marital status. Among adults aged 19-44, 55% report feeling lonely none of the time, a rate that is significantly lower than the 69% of adults aged 45-64 and the 71% of adults aged 65 and older who also report feeling lonely none of the time. Nebraskans aged 19-44 also report feeling lonely a little of the time at higher rates than those aged 45-64 and adults aged 65 and older (24%, 16%, and 16%, respectively).

Similarly, large differences in feelings of loneliness are reported across employment groups. Respondents who are not employed – including those who are unemployed, laid off or looking for work, in school, keeping house, or disabled – report the highest levels of feeling lonely some to all of the time. Among adults who are not employed, 40% report feeling lonely during the past four weeks some of the time, most of the time, or all of the time. Among this group, only 43% report feeling lonely none of the time. In contrast, 73% of retired adults and 67% of employed adults report having felt lonely none of the time during the past four weeks.

During the past 4 weeks (28 days), how much of the time did you feel lonely?



Significant differences in feelings of loneliness are reported across urban and rural areas. While 77% of Nebraskans living on a farm or in the open country report feeling lonely none of the time, only 62% of adults living in a town or city reported the same. Similarly, only 9% of respondents living on a farm or in the open country report feeling lonely some to all of the time and 13% experienced loneliness a little of the time, while 18% of adults living in a town or city report having felt lonely some to all of the time, and 20% felt lonely a little of the time during the past four weeks.

Notable differences in reported feelings of loneliness also appear among political groups. Nearly three-fourths (74%) of Republican respondents report no feelings of loneliness during the past four weeks, as compared to the 56% of Democrat respondents and 61% of Independent/Other respondents who report the same. Republican respondents also reported feeling lonely a little of the time (16%) and some to all of the time (10%) at lower rates than Democrat (22% and 23%, respectively) and Independent/other respondents (20%, 18%, respectively).

Reported levels of felt loneliness during the past four weeks (28 days) decreases across higher income levels. One-third (33%) of adults with an annual household income of less than \$50,000 report feeling lonely some to all of the time, compared to 11% of those with an annual household income of \$50,000 to less than \$100,000, and 10% of those in the \$100,000 or more income level. Similar variations appear across income groups and no feelings of loneliness. Among Nebraskans with an annual household income of less than \$50,000, 47% report having felt lonely none of the time during the past four weeks. This rate increases to 68% and 74% among respondents within the middle and highest income groups, respectively.

Variation also exists across marital status. One-fourth (75%) of married adults report having felt lonely none of the time during the past four weeks, as compared to the 48% of unmarried Nebraskans who report the same. Only 8% of married Nebraskans report feeling lonely some to all of the time and 17% report loneliness a little of the time, whereas 30% of unmarried Nebraskans experience loneliness some to all of the time and 23% felt lonely a little of the time during the past four weeks. Few differences were observed across sex, education, or across regions of the state.

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 2024 NASIS consisted of a 16-page paper questionnaire that was administered by mail with an option to complete by web to a sample of 10,000 Nebraska households. Data were collected from July to November 2024 with an AAPOR Response Rate 2 of 23.2% (n=2,232). Overall estimates have a margin of error of $\pm 4\%$. Significantly separate groups are reported from statistical tests with $p < .05$. The full methodology report can be found at <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.