

Nebraska Annual Social Survey Snapshot:

Are Nebraska and the country headed in the right direction?

Democrats five times more likely than Republicans to think Nebraska, country going in the wrong direction.

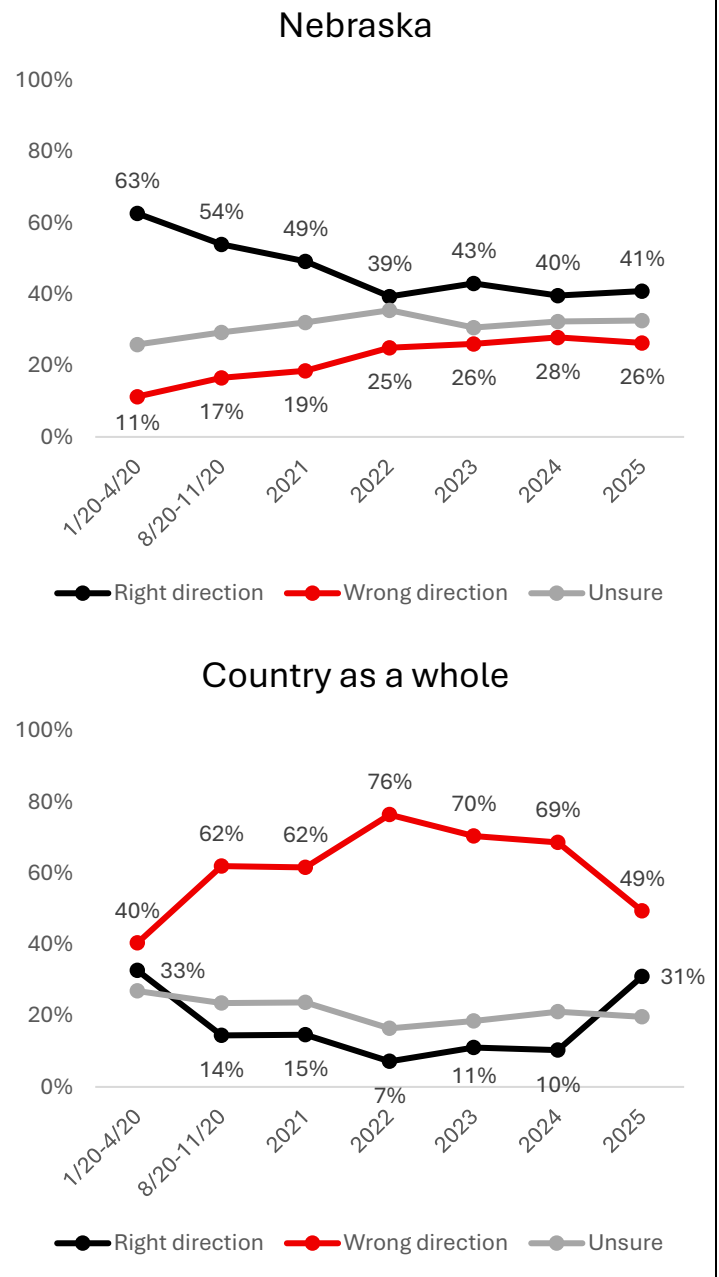
By Kristen Olson & Amanda Ganshert
February 2026

A survey of 977 Nebraskan adults conducted between July and October 2025 asked respondents “All in all, do you think things in Nebraska are generally headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?” and “all in all, do you think things in the country as a whole are generally headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?”, with response categories of “right direction,” “wrong direction,” and “unsure.” Results from 2025 are shown in Table 1 below. We compare these data to reports for this question from Nebraska adults between 2020 to 2025. Data were collected twice in 2020: between January 2020 and April 2020 from 1584 Nebraskans; and between August and November 2020 from 2213 Nebraska adults. Data were collected during late summer and early fall in 2021 (1691 adults), 2022 (1455 adults), 2023 (1725 adults), and 2024 (2232 adults).

In this report we examine reports in 2025 overall, and across political parties, age, sex, education, race, and region. We also examine reports over time for the state as a whole, political parties, age, and sex. Patterns are similar for education, race, and region groups to the overall patterns.

In 2025, 41% of Nebraska adults reported that Nebraska is headed in the right direction and 26% reported that Nebraska is headed in the wrong direction, while one-third (33%) of adults were unsure (Figure 1). This pattern is down from reports in January-April 2020 when 63% of Nebraska adults thought that Nebraska was heading in the right direction and only 11% of Nebraska adults thought that Nebraska was heading in the wrong direction (Figure 1). Reports for both of these categories have been at about the same level since 2022. In contrast, 31% of Nebraska adults reported that the country as a whole is headed in the right direction and 49% reported that the country is headed in the wrong direction, and 20% were unsure. This is a 21 percentage point increase in the percent thinking that the country is heading in the right direction from 2024 and a 20 percentage point decrease in thinking that

Figure 1. All in all, do you think things in ___ are generally headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?



the country is heading in the wrong direction since 2024. Perceptions of the country as a whole going in the right direction show a U-shaped pattern, with about one-third of Nebraska adults thinking the country is headed in the right direction in January through April 2020, down to about 10 to 15% between mid-2020 and 2024, and back up to 31% in 2025. Perceptions of the country going in the wrong direction show an inverse-U shape, although more adults think the country is going in the wrong direction in 2025 than in early 2020.

Democrats, Republicans and Independents differ dramatically in their perceptions of whether Nebraska is headed in the right direction versus wrong direction. In 2025, 21% of Democrats, 39% of Independents, and 57% of Republicans think that Nebraska is headed in the right direction. For all groups, this is down from the levels reported in January to April 2020 (43% Democrats; 74% Republicans; 60% of Independents), but about the same levels since 2022 (Figure 2). In contrast, 50% of Democrats, 10% of Republicans, and 29% of Independents reported that Nebraska is headed in the wrong direction.

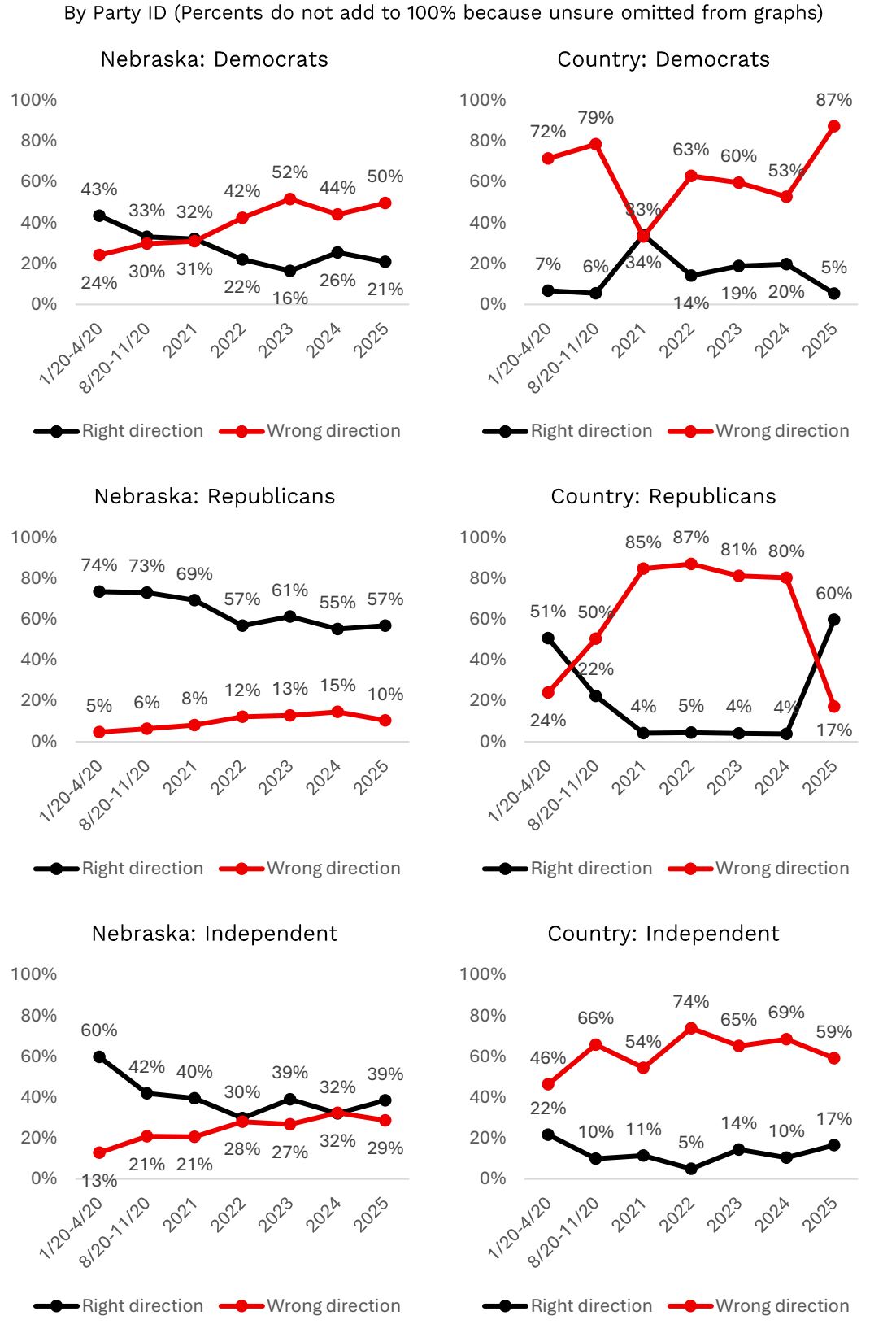
| Table 1. All in all, do you think things in ____ are generally headed in the right direction or the wrong direction? Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey, 2025 | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | Nebraska | | | Country as a whole | | |
| | Right direction | Wrong direction | Unsure | Right direction | Wrong direction | Unsure |
| Overall | 41% | 26% | 33% | 31% | 49% | 20% |
| Party ID | | | | | | |
| Democrat | 21% | 50% | 29% | 5% | 87% | 7% |
| Republican | 57% | 10% | 33% | 60% | 17% | 23% |
| Independent/Other | 39% | 29% | 33% | 17% | 59% | 24% |
| Age | | | | | | |
| 19 to 44 | 35% | 33% | 32% | 18% | 61% | 21% |
| 45 to 64 | 45% | 22% | 32% | 43% | 40% | 17% |
| 65+ | 47% | 24% | 30% | 31% | 48% | 21% |
| Education | | | | | | |
| High school degree or less | 41% | 17% | 42% | 26% | 45% | 28% |
| Some college | 36% | 33% | 31% | 34% | 49% | 18% |
| College degree or above | 47% | 28% | 25% | 34% | 54% | 12% |
| Sex | | | | | | |
| Male | 46% | 27% | 27% | 38% | 45% | 18% |
| Female | 36% | 26% | 38% | 26% | 52% | 22% |
| Race | | | | | | |
| White only | 42% | 25% | 33% | 32% | 48% | 20% |
| People of color | 43% | 30% | 27% | 23% | 60% | 17% |
| Region | | | | | | |
| Panhandle | 47% | 23% | 30% | 39% | 46% | 15% |
| Southwest | 47% | 25% | 27% | 42% | 40% | 18% |
| South Central | 47% | 17% | 36% | 36% | 42% | 22% |
| North | 33% | 28% | 39% | 23% | 57% | 20% |
| Southeast, including Lincoln | 43% | 23% | 34% | 29% | 53% | 19% |
| Midland, including Omaha | 39% | 31% | 30% | 31% | 48% | 20% |

Note: Bold cells indicate that these groups significantly differ.

Views of Nebraska's direction are net positive for Republicans and Independents. This net positive has fallen over time for both groups. Republicans had a net positive view in January to April 2020 of 69 percentage points, now down to 47 points net positive; Independents had a net positive view of 47 percentage points in January to April 2020, down to 10 percentage points net positive in 2025. Views of Nebraska's direction are net negative for Democrats in 2025, also falling over time from a 19 percentage point net positive view in January to April 2020 to a low of 35 percentage points net negative in 2023 to 29 point net negative in 2025.

Democrats, Republicans and Independents also differ dramatically in their perceptions of whether the country as a whole is headed in the right direction versus wrong direction. In 2025, only 5% of Democrats, 17% of Independents, but a majority (60%) of Republicans think that the country as a whole is

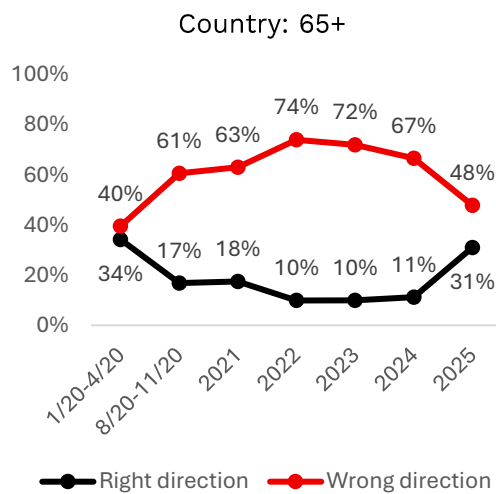
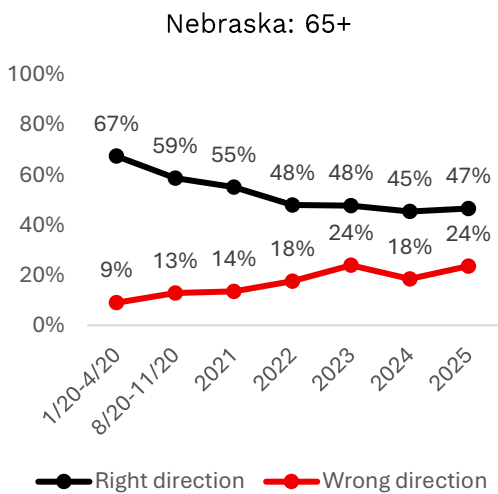
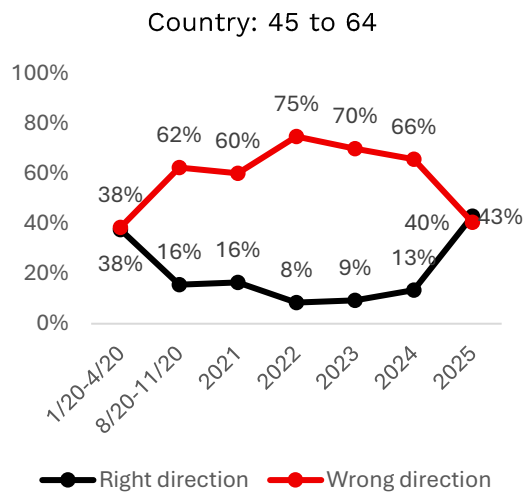
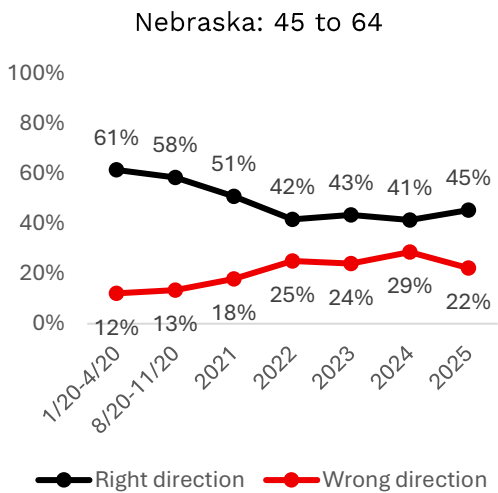
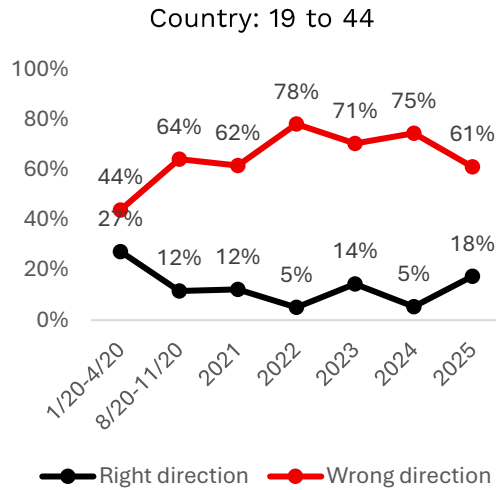
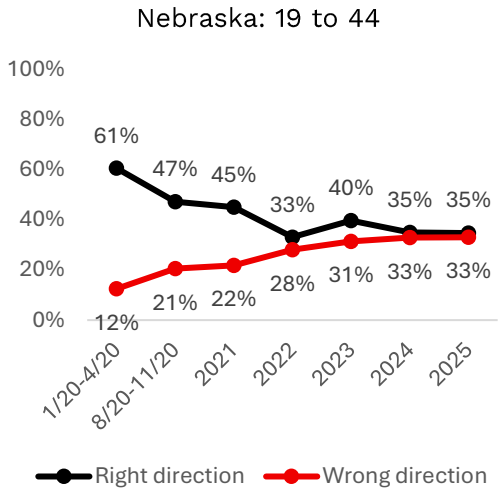
Figure 2. All in all, do you think things in ___ are generally headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?



headed in the right direction. In contrast, 87% of Democrats, 17% of Republicans, and 59% of Independents reported that the US is headed in the wrong direction. Views of the country's direction are net positive for Republicans, but negative for Democrats and Independents. Views have shifted dramatically over time. A majority of Democrats have reported the

Figure 3. All in all, do you think things in ___ are generally headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?

By Age Group (Percents do not add to 100% because unsure omitted from graphs)



country as a whole heading in the wrong direction in all years by 2021, but the 87% who report it is going in the wrong direction in 2025 is a 34 percentage point increase over the reports in 2024 (which was similar to 2022 and 2023). Between 80% and 90% of Republicans reported the country heading in the wrong direction between 2021 and 2024; the 17% who report the country going in the wrong direction is a 63 percentage point decrease from the 80% who reported it going in the wrong direction in 2024. Reports from Independents have been fairly steady since 2020.

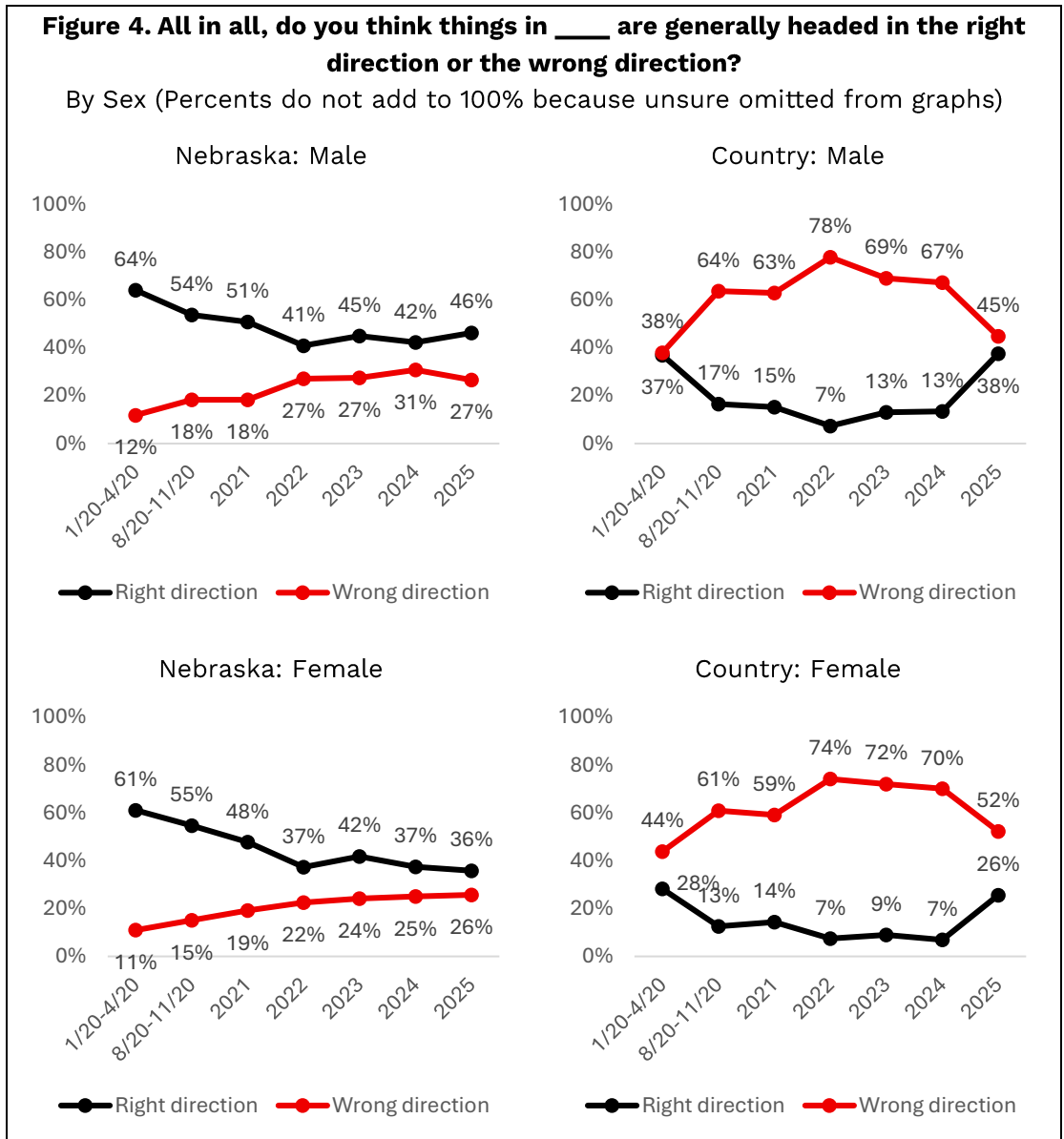
Adults aged 19 to 44 differed in opinions about the direction of country as a whole compared to older adults, but were similar in their attitudes towards the direction of Nebraska as older adults in 2025. In 2025, 35% of adults aged 19 to 44 thought that Nebraska was headed in the right direction, compared to 45% of adults age 45 to 65 and 47% of adults 65 and older. One-third (33%) of younger

Nebraskan adults think that Nebraska is headed in the wrong direction, compared with about one-quarter (45 to 64: 22%; 65 and older: 24%) of older adults. These differences are within the margin of error. All age groups saw a similar decline in perceptions that Nebraska is headed in the right direction since January-April 2020 (Figure 3). The youngest adult

group (19 to 44) are 2 points net positive for the direction of Nebraska in 2025, declining steadily from a net positive view of 49 percentage points in January-April 2020.

In contrast, in 2025, 61% of adults aged 19 to 44 thought that the country was headed in the wrong direction, compared to 43% of adults ages 45 to 64 and 48% of adults ages 65 and older. Only 18% of adults ages 19 to 44 thought the country was headed in the right direction, compared to 43% of adults ages 45 to 64 and 31% of adults age 65 and older.

Men and women differed in their perceptions of the direction of Nebraska and the country in 2025. About 46% of men thought that Nebraska is headed in the right direction, compared to 36% of women. Similar proportions of men and women thought that Nebraska is headed in the wrong direction. Almost four-in-ten (38%) of men thought that the country is headed in the right direction, compared to 26% of women in 2025; 45% of men thought the country is headed in the wrong direction, compared to 52% of women. Both men and women, however, see an increase in thinking the country is headed in the right direction and a decrease of thinking it is in the wrong direction, from 2024 (Figure 4).



Only 17% of Nebraskans with a high school degree or less reported that Nebraska is headed in the wrong direction in 2025, compared to about 30% of the other education groups. Although all education groups' perceptions that Nebraska is heading in the wrong direction have increased over time, the increase has been slightly steeper for the higher education groups. Over half (54%) of Nebraska adults with a college degree or more reported that the country is headed in the wrong direction, compared to 49% of those with some college, and 45% of those whose highest education level was a high school degree or less. There is no difference in 2025 in perceptions of Nebraska's direction by age, race, or region, and no differences in 2025 in perceptions of the country's directions by race or region.

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 2025 NASIS consisted of a 12-page paper questionnaire that was administered by mail with an option to complete by web to a sample of 5,000 Nebraska households. Data were collected from July to November 2025 with an AAPOR Response Rate 2 of 20.3% (n=977). Overall estimates have a margin of error of $\pm 4.5\%$. 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.