

One in Five American Households Purchased a Gun During the Pandemic

Survey: First-time gun purchasers during the pandemic were more likely to be younger and People of Color, compared to pre-pandemic U.S. gun owners, but they share similar views on gun control.

CHICAGO, March 24, 2022 – Eighteen percent of U.S. households purchased a gun since the start of the pandemic (March 2020–March 2022), according to new survey data from NORC at the University of Chicago, increasing the percentage of U.S. adults living in a household with a gun to 46%. Over this period, one in 20 adults in America (5%) purchased a gun for the first time.

According to the **FBI**, an average of 13 million guns were sold legally in the U.S. each year between 2010 and 2019, increasing to about 20 million annual gun sales in both 2020 and 2021.

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RESOURCES

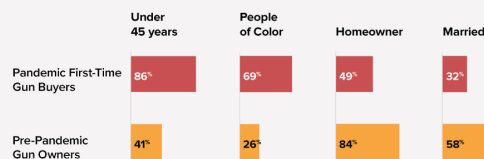
[NORC AmeriSpeak Omnibus Survey Spotlight on Public Safety Topline](#)

PROJECTS

- [Spotlight on Public Safety](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Pandemic Gun Buyers Compared to Pre-Pandemic Gun Owners by Select Characteristics



NORC at the University of Chicago's Spotlight on Public Safety is a series of national surveys on issues vital to public safety, conducted using the AmeriSpeak® probability-based panel.



Pandemic first-time gun buyers bought their first gun since March 2020.
Pre-pandemic gun owners owned a gun before March 2020.

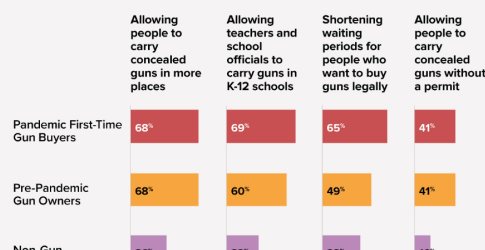
Source: NORC AmeriSpeak® Omnibus survey, conducted March 3–7, 2022, with 1,106 adults nationwide.
Notes: Pandemic First-Time Gun Buyers (N = 41)
Pre-Pandemic Gun Owners (N = 295)

“Increasing gun sales during the pandemic were driven in nearly equal parts by people purchasing a gun for the first time and existing gun owners purchasing additional firearms,” said John Roman of NORC at the University of Chicago. “New gun owners during the pandemic were much more likely to be younger and People of Color compared to pre-pandemic gun owners in America.”

Despite demographic differences between first-time and pre-pandemic U.S. gun owners, NORC’s experts found that the two groups have similar views on gun-control policies. Both first-time and pre-pandemic U.S. gun owners support more permissive gun policies than non-gun owners. These included policies such as expanding concealed carry, shortening waiting periods before gun purchases, and allowing teachers and school officials to carry guns in schools.

SPOTLIGHT ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Support for Permissive Gun Policies by Timing of Gun Ownership



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OWNERS

39%

34%

38%

16%

Pandemic first-time gun buyers bought their first gun since March 2020.

Pre-pandemic gun owners owned a gun before March 2020.

Survey Question: Please indicate whether you would favor or oppose the following proposals about gun policy.

Source: NORC AmeriSpeak® Omnibus survey, conducted March 3-7, 2022, with 1,106 adults nationwide.

Notes: Percentages indicate those who favor or strongly favor each policy.

Pandemic First-Time Gun Buyers (N = 41)
Pre-Pandemic Gun Owners (N = 295)
Non-Gun Owners (N = 758)

"First-time gun buyers' attitudes toward gun control look remarkably similar to those of the pre-pandemic U.S. gun owner," said John Roman. "Whether they bought a gun because of existing beliefs about gun control—or owning a gun changed their policy views—is unknown, but it is notable that the policy positions of new gun owners are so different from non-gun owners."

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Methodology

The self-funded poll was conducted March 3–7, 2022, during a monthly Omnibus survey. It included 1,106 interviews with a nationally representative sample (margin of error +/- 3.85 percent) of adult Americans age 18+ using the **AmeriSpeak®** Panel. AmeriSpeak is NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. A comprehensive listing of all study questions, tabulations of top-level results for each question, and detailed methodology is available [here](#).

About the Spotlight on Public Safety

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About NORC at the University of Chicago

NORC at the University of Chicago conducts research and analysis that decision-makers can trust. We are an objective, nonpartisan research organization and a pioneer in measuring and understanding the world. We have studied almost every aspect of the human experience and every major news event for more than seven decades. Today, amid an ocean of unverified information, our expertise, objectivity, and scientific rigor are necessary to inform the critical decisions facing society.

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