

AMERICAN EXPERIENCES SURVEY: BROADBAND SECTION

OCTOBER 2023 NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE
MULTI-MODE SURVEY

REPORT PREPARED DECEMBER 2023
CONSUMER REPORTS® SURVEY GROUP



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1
BROADBAND 2
METHODOLOGY 8

INTRODUCTION

In October 2023, Consumer Reports conducted a nationally representative multi-mode **American Experiences Survey**. NORC at the University of Chicago administered the survey from **October 6th – 16th, 2023** through its AmeriSpeak® Panel to a nationally representative sample of 2,087 adult U.S. residents.

The October omnibus survey included five sections:

- Food labels
- Pillows
- Broadband
- Refrigerator water and ice dispensers
- Credit reports

This report covers highlights from the results of the broadband section.

Toplines for the complete October omnibus, including all five sections, are available at the following link:

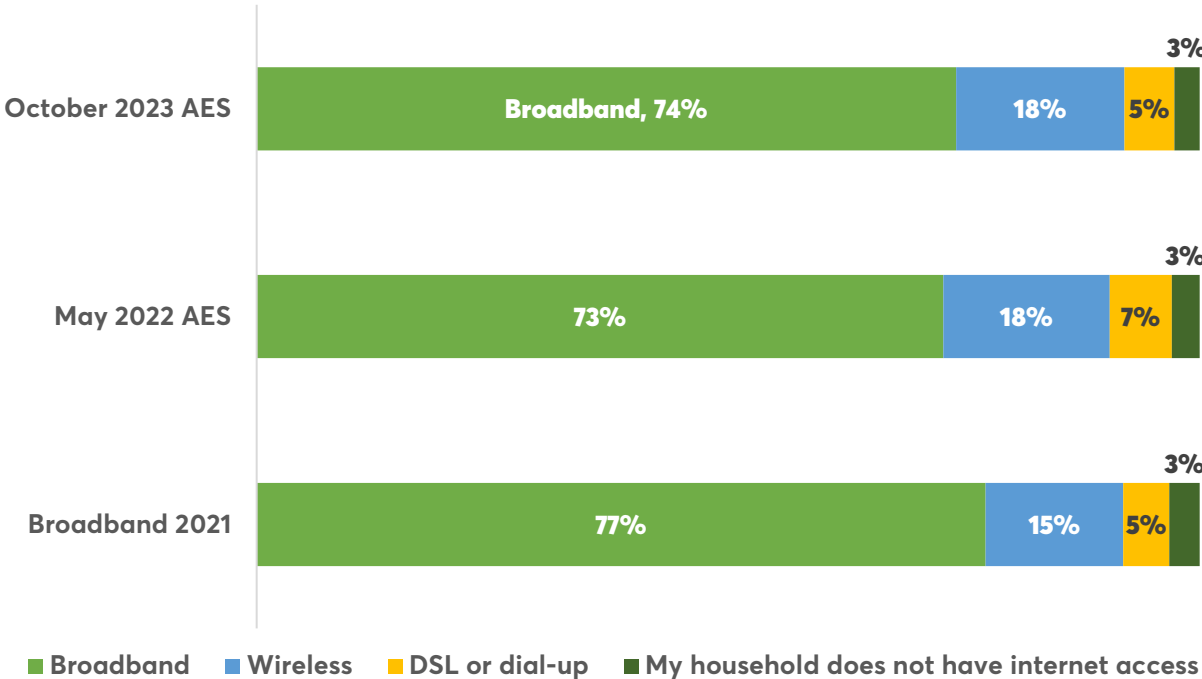
https://article.images.consumerreports.org/image/upload/v1696262259/prod/content/dam/surveys/Consumer_Reports_AES_Toplines_September_2023.pdf

BROADBAND

This section takes a pulse on Americans' relationship with their home internet service. Several of these questions have been repeated at various points since 2021, which allows us to observe trends over time.

The percentage of Americans with broadband service at home is virtually unchanged since we last asked this question in May 2022. About three-quarters (74%) of Americans have broadband, 18% have only wireless service such as through a smartphone data plan, 5% have DSL or dial-up internet service, and 3% do not have internet access at home.

Which, if any, of the following services does your household use to access the internet?



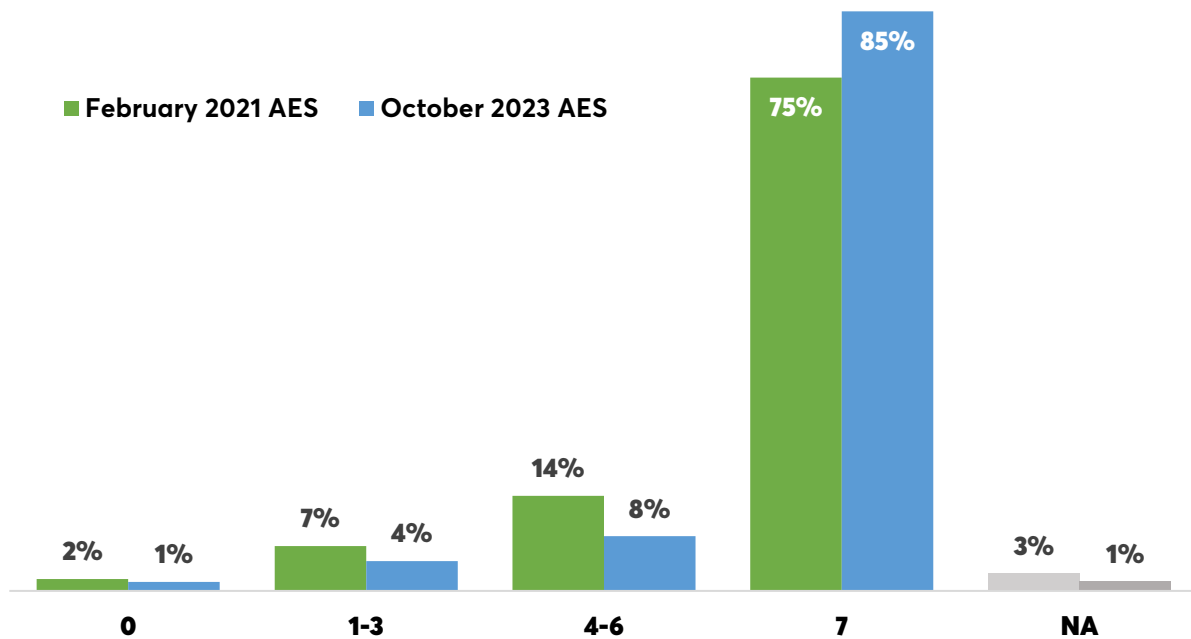
Base: All respondents
Please see topline for full wording of this question

85%

rely on the internet
7 days a week

Most Americans rely on the internet every day. The percentage of people who rely on the internet seven days a week appears to have increased by ten percentage points since we last asked about it, from 75% in February 2021 to 85% in October 2023.

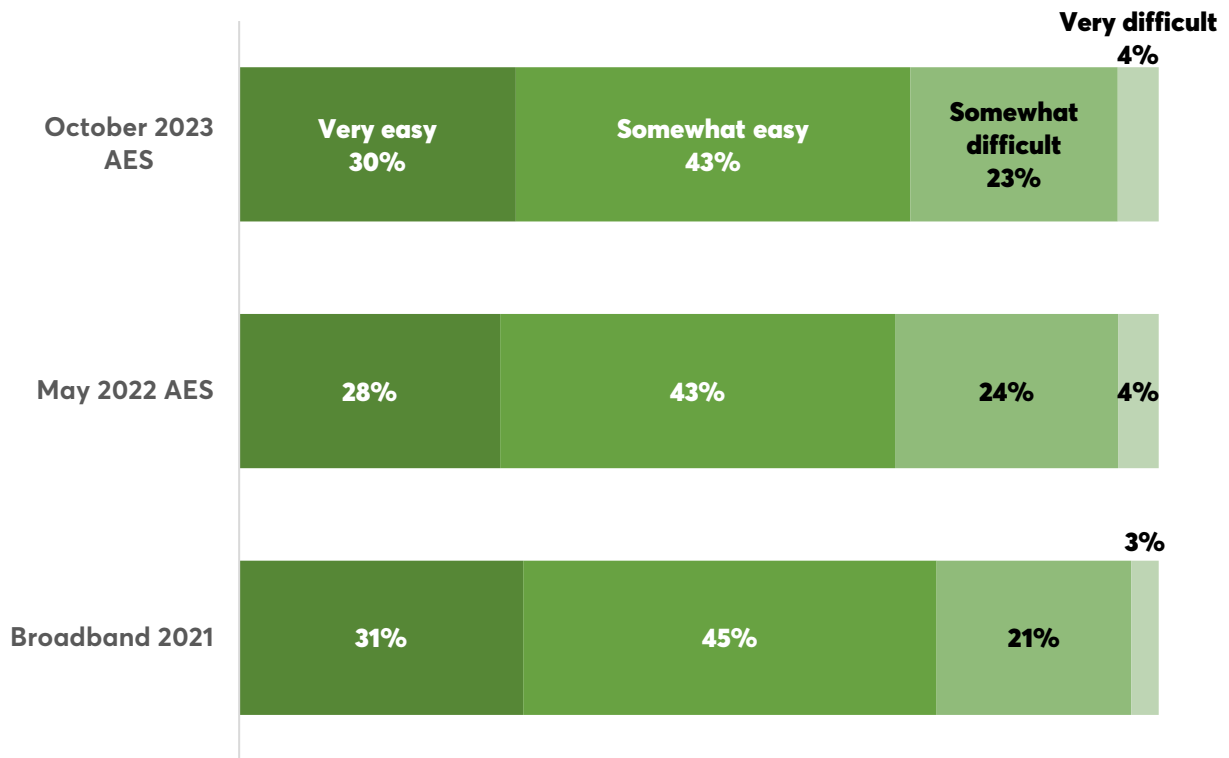
In general, how many days a week do you rely on the internet?



Base: All respondents
Please see topline for full wording of this question

Next, we asked broadband users how easy they found it to afford their monthly internet costs. We see no meaningful change in this question since 2021, with 30% finding it very easy, 43% finding it somewhat easy, 23% finding it somewhat difficult, and 4% finding it very difficult to afford their internet costs.

How easy or difficult is it for you to afford your monthly internet costs?



Base: Respondents who have broadband internet at home
Please see topline for full wording of this question

In the May 2023 AES and 2021 Broadband Survey, this item showed to all respondents whose households had broadband internet access. In October 2023, people whose households have broadband but do not personally use the internet did not see the item. However, this is a vanishingly small percentage, so the trend is still reliable.

How much do Americans pay for their broadband service? About half (52%) pay under \$75 per month, 42% pay \$75 a month or more, and 6% are unsure. This is not meaningfully different from the last time we asked this question in 2021.

Approximately how much do you currently pay per month (including taxes and fees) for your internet service?

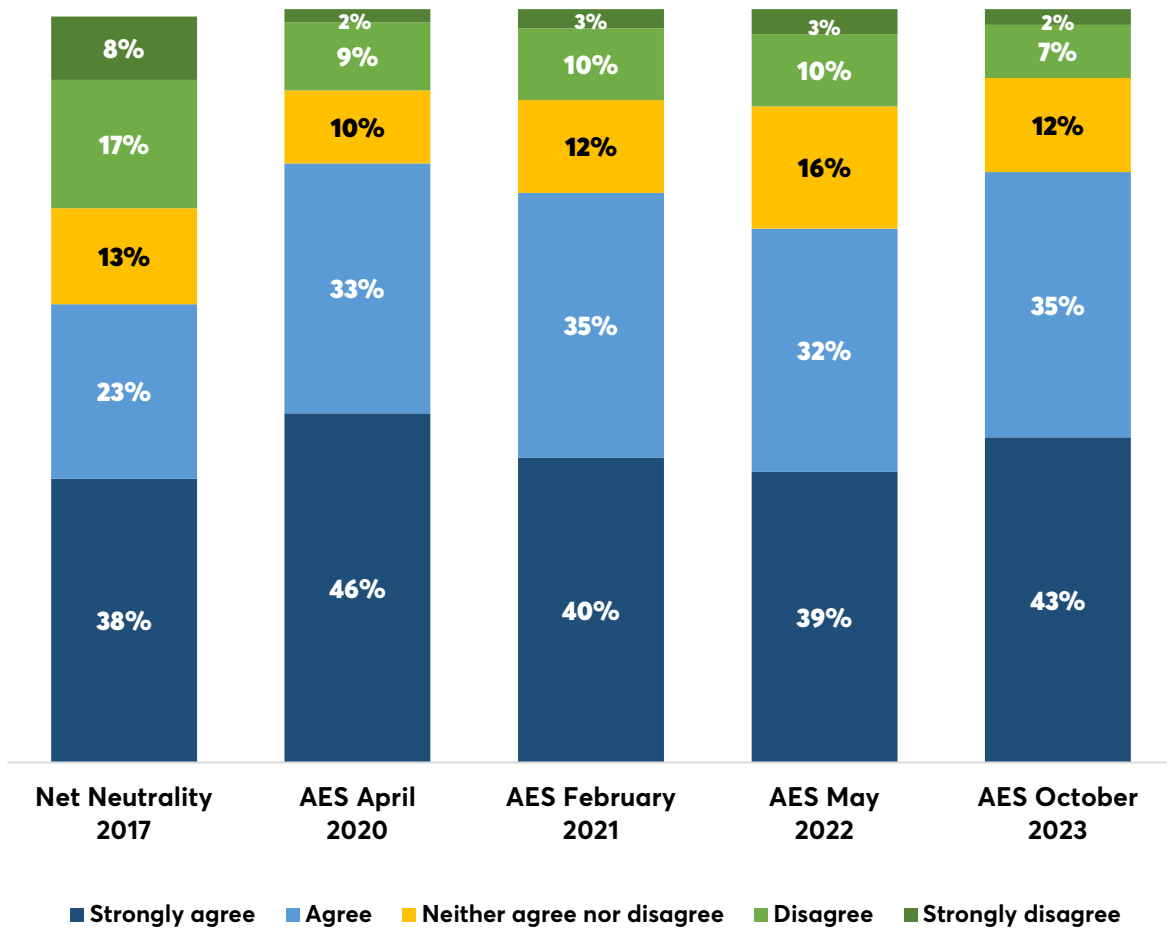


Base: Respondents who have broadband internet at home
Please see toplines for full wording of this question

For six years now, CR has been tracking how Americans feel about the importance of internet service as a needed household utility. So far, Americans' opinions on this issue have stayed roughly consistent over time, especially since 2020. In the present survey, **78% agree or strongly agree that internet service is as important as water or electricity**; 12% neither agree nor disagree, and 9% disagree or strongly disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Internet service is as important as electricity or water service in today's world.



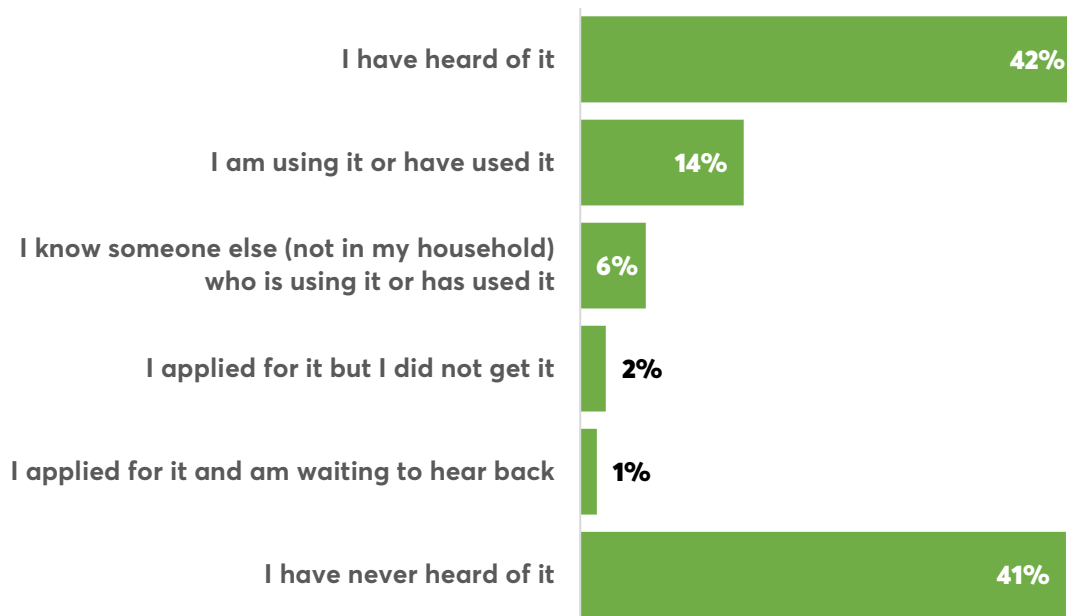
Base: All respondents

To conclude this section, we asked a question about the federal **Affordability Connectivity Program**, which offers assistance to households in affording broadband internet service. We wanted to learn about Americans' **awareness and usage** of this benefit program. **Four in ten (42%) had heard of the program and roughly the same percentage (41%) had not heard of it before.**

Fourteen percent are current or former participants in the program, and six percent know someone else who is a current or former participant. A total of 4%¹ applied for the program and either are still waiting to hear back or were not accepted into the program.

The federal government offers assistance through the Affordable Connectivity Program that provides a discount toward monthly internet service for eligible households.

Before taking this survey, how familiar were you with the Affordability Connectivity Program, if at all?



Base: All respondents
Respondents could select multiple responses

¹ Numbers may not appear to sum due to rounding.

METHODOLOGY

This multi-mode survey was fielded by NORC at the University of Chicago using a nationally representative sample. The survey was conducted from October 6 – 16, 2023. Interviews were conducted in English ($n = 1,981$) and in Spanish ($n = 106$), and were administered both online ($n = 1,974$) and by phone ($n = 113$).

A general population sample of U.S. adults age 18 and older was selected from NORC's AmeriSpeak® Panel for this study. Funded and operated by NORC at the University of Chicago, AmeriSpeak® is a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the US household population. Randomly selected US households are sampled using area probability and address-based sampling, with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame. These sampled households are then contacted by US mail, telephone, and field interviewers (face to face). The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings. While most AmeriSpeak households participate in surveys by web, non-internet households can participate in AmeriSpeak surveys by telephone. Households without conventional internet access but having web access via smartphones are allowed to participate in AmeriSpeak surveys by web. AmeriSpeak panelists participate in NORC studies or studies conducted by NORC on behalf of governmental agencies, academic researchers, and media and commercial organizations.

In total NORC collected 2,087 interviews. The margin of error for the sample of 2,087 is +/- 2.76 at the 95% confidence level. Smaller subgroups will have larger error margins. Web-mode panelists were offered the cash equivalent of \$3 for completing the survey. Phone-mode panelists were offered the equivalent of \$5.

Final data are weighted by age, gender, race/Hispanic ethnicity, housing tenure, telephone status, education, and Census Division to be proportionally representative of the U.S. adult population. Key demographic characteristics (after weighting is applied) of this sample are presented below:

- 52% female
- Median age of 47 years old
- 61% white, non-Hispanic
- 36% 4-year college graduates
- 59% have a household income of \$50,000 or more