

THE  
**AMERICAN BELIEFS**  
STUDY  
RELIGIOUS PREFERENCES & PRACTICES

## The MinistryInsite Priorities Report 2021

Prepared for: The Presbytery of the Highlands  
Study area: Geography: Counties - Somerset County (NJ)

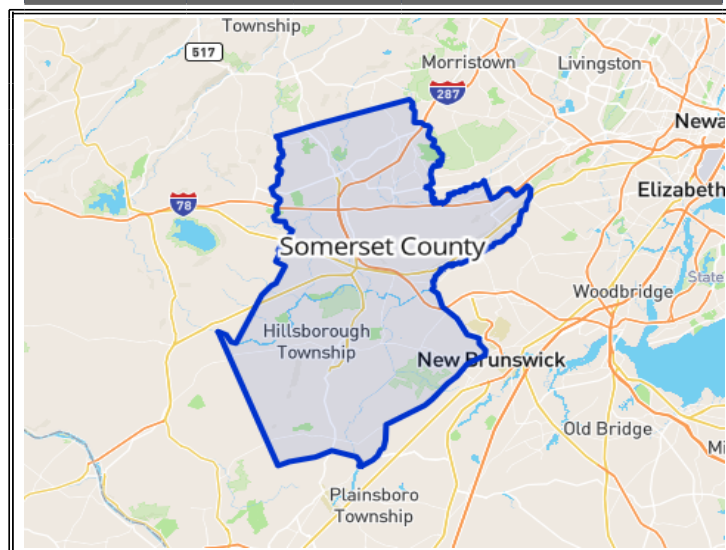
Date of Report: 7/17/23  
American Beliefs Study Version: 2021

### About the American Beliefs Study Reports

The American Beliefs Study provides a projection of likely religious beliefs, preferences, and practices for a defined study area. This report is based on the American Beliefs Study national survey, which MissionInsite conducts every five (5) years. While general religious data is available through various organizations, only MissionInsite can provide current local geography projections. This report is based upon the 2021 American Beliefs Study Survey.

The 2021 American Beliefs Study Survey series contains two reports. **ReligiousInsite** provides insights into community beliefs and religious preferences. **MinistryInsite** focuses on practical applications of the 2021 survey. It includes life concerns, reasons for non-participation (or considered nonparticipation) in a religious congregation or community, and a list of preferred ministries or programs. These are based on the specific study area. Customized priority lists address the study area's concerns, program and ministry preferences and more.

### The Study Area



The **ReligiousInsite Priorities** Report and **MinistryInsite Priorities** Report capture the priorities of some survey questions based upon strengths of beliefs plus the direction of the beliefs, whether towards agreement or disagreement. These two reports correspond to the full reports.

### Contents of the MinistryInsite Priorities Report

The **MinistryInsite Priorities** Report has five sections that summarize data about these topics.

| Topics                                                                                   | Page |
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| Life Concerns                                                                            | 2    |
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### Data Detail Reports and Supporting Documents

The **MinistryInsite Priorities** Report provides a top level view of the full **MinistryInsite** Report. To learn more, generate the full **MinistryInsite** Report. To understand your area's religious and social/moral beliefs, run the **ReligiousInsite** Report.

## The MinistryInsite Priorities Report 2021

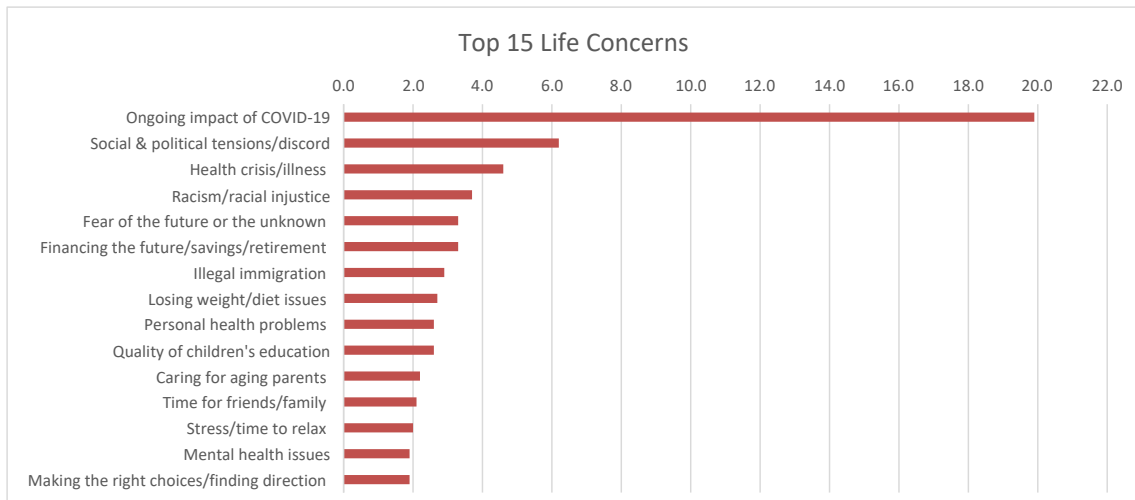
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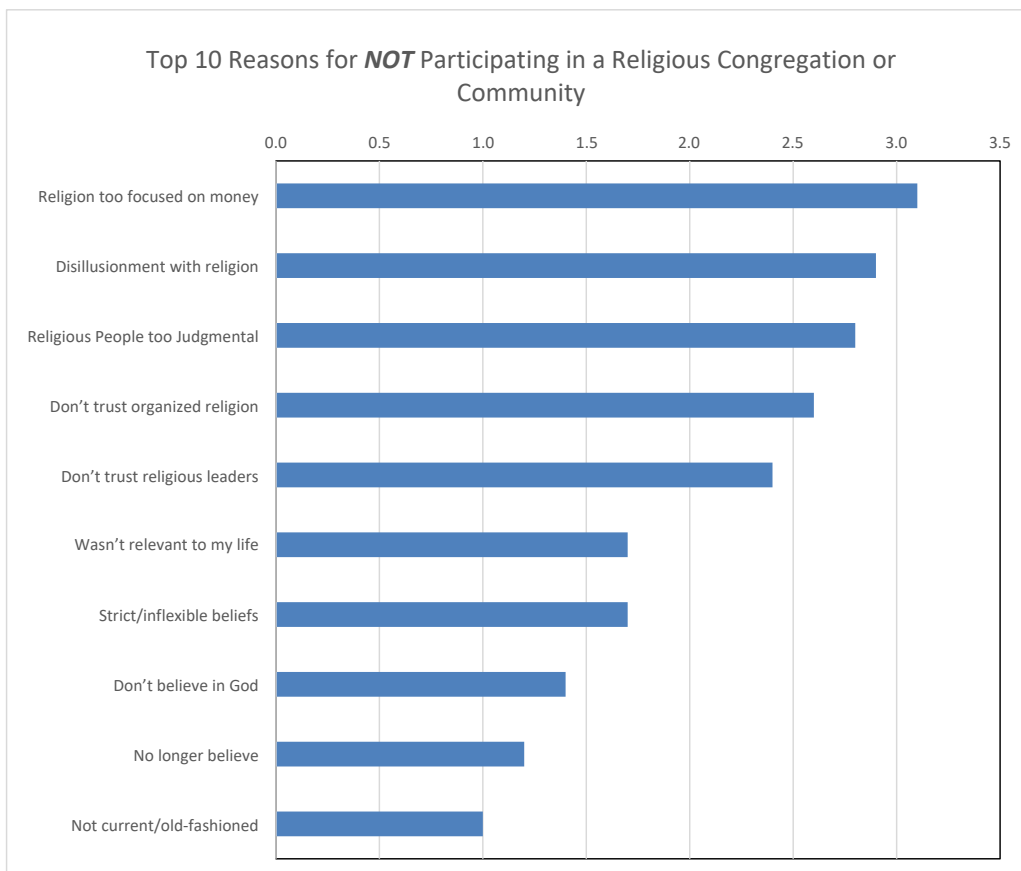
### Life Concerns

| Priority List | Top 15 of 44 Life Concerns  |                                            |       |                          |
|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
|               | Ranked by greatest concerns |                                            |       |                          |
|               | Ranking                     | Concern                                    | Ratio | Strength of Concern      |
|               | 1                           | Ongoing impact of COVID-19                 | 19.9  | Extremely Strong Concern |
|               | 2                           | Social & political tensions/discord        | 6.2   | Very Strong Concern      |
|               | 3                           | Health crisis/illness                      | 4.6   | Very Strong Concern      |
|               | 4                           | Racism/racial injustice                    | 3.7   | Strong Concern           |
|               | 5                           | Fear of the future or the unknown          | 3.3   | Strong Concern           |
|               | 6                           | Financing the future/savings/retirement    | 3.3   | Strong Concern           |
|               | 7                           | Illegal immigration                        | 2.9   | Strong Concern           |
|               | 8                           | Losing weight/diet issues                  | 2.7   | Strong Concern           |
|               | 9                           | Personal health problems                   | 2.6   | Strong Concern           |
|               | 10                          | Quality of children's education            | 2.6   | Strong Concern           |
|               | 11                          | Caring for aging parents                   | 2.2   | Strong Concern           |
|               | 12                          | Time for friends/family                    | 2.1   | Strong Concern           |
|               | 13                          | Stress/time to relax                       | 2.0   | Strong Concern           |
|               | 14                          | Mental health issues                       | 1.9   | Somewhat Strong Concern  |
|               | 15                          | Making the right choices/finding direction | 1.9   | Somewhat Strong Concern  |



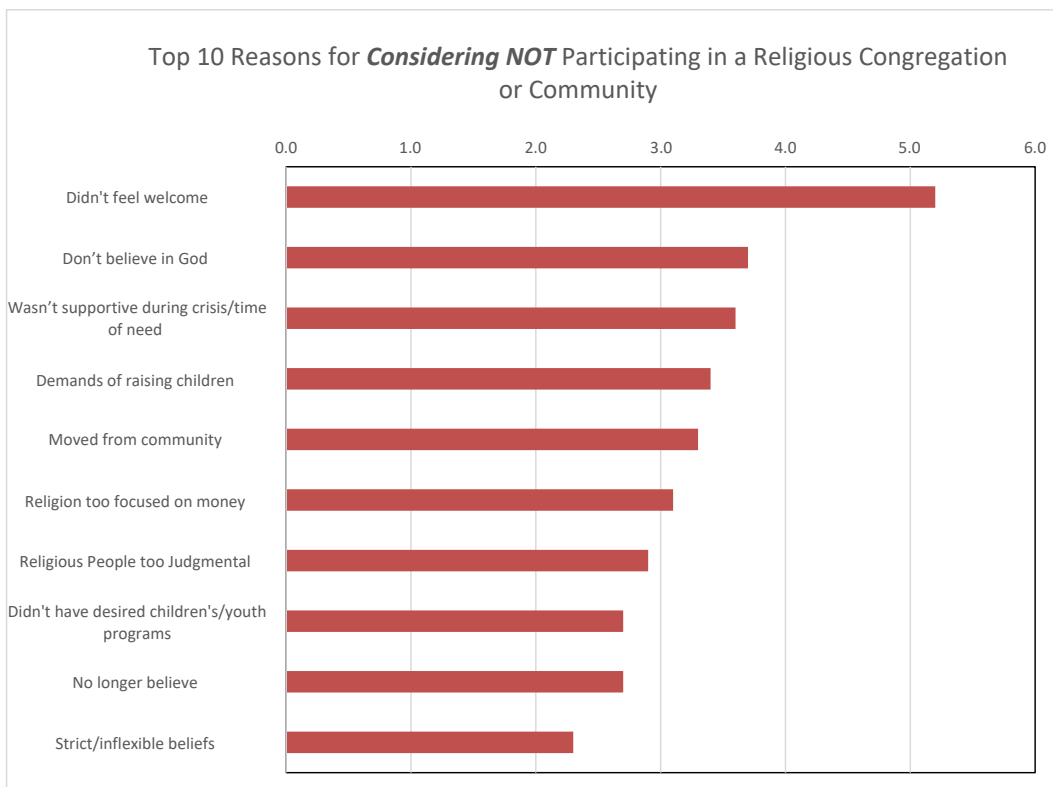
## Reasons for Non-Participation—Those Outside of a Religious Congregation or Community

| Priority List | Top 10 of 25 Reasons for people outside a religious congregation or community for not participating |                                 |       |                        |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|------------------------|
|               | Ranking                                                                                             | Concern                         | Ratio | Strength of Reason     |
|               | 1                                                                                                   | Religion too focused on money   | 3.1   | Strong Reason          |
|               | 2                                                                                                   | Disillusionment with religion   | 2.9   | Strong Reason          |
|               | 3                                                                                                   | Religious People too Judgmental | 2.8   | Strong Reason          |
|               | 4                                                                                                   | Don't trust organized religion  | 2.6   | Strong Reason          |
|               | 5                                                                                                   | Don't trust religious leaders   | 2.4   | Strong Reason          |
|               | 6                                                                                                   | Wasn't relevant to my life      | 1.7   | Somewhat Strong Reason |
|               | 7                                                                                                   | Strict/inflexible beliefs       | 1.7   | Somewhat Strong Reason |
|               | 8                                                                                                   | Don't believe in God            | 1.4   | Somewhat Strong Reason |
|               | 9                                                                                                   | No longer believe               | 1.2   | Moderate Reason        |
|               | 10                                                                                                  | Not current/old-fashioned       | 1.0   | Moderate Reason        |



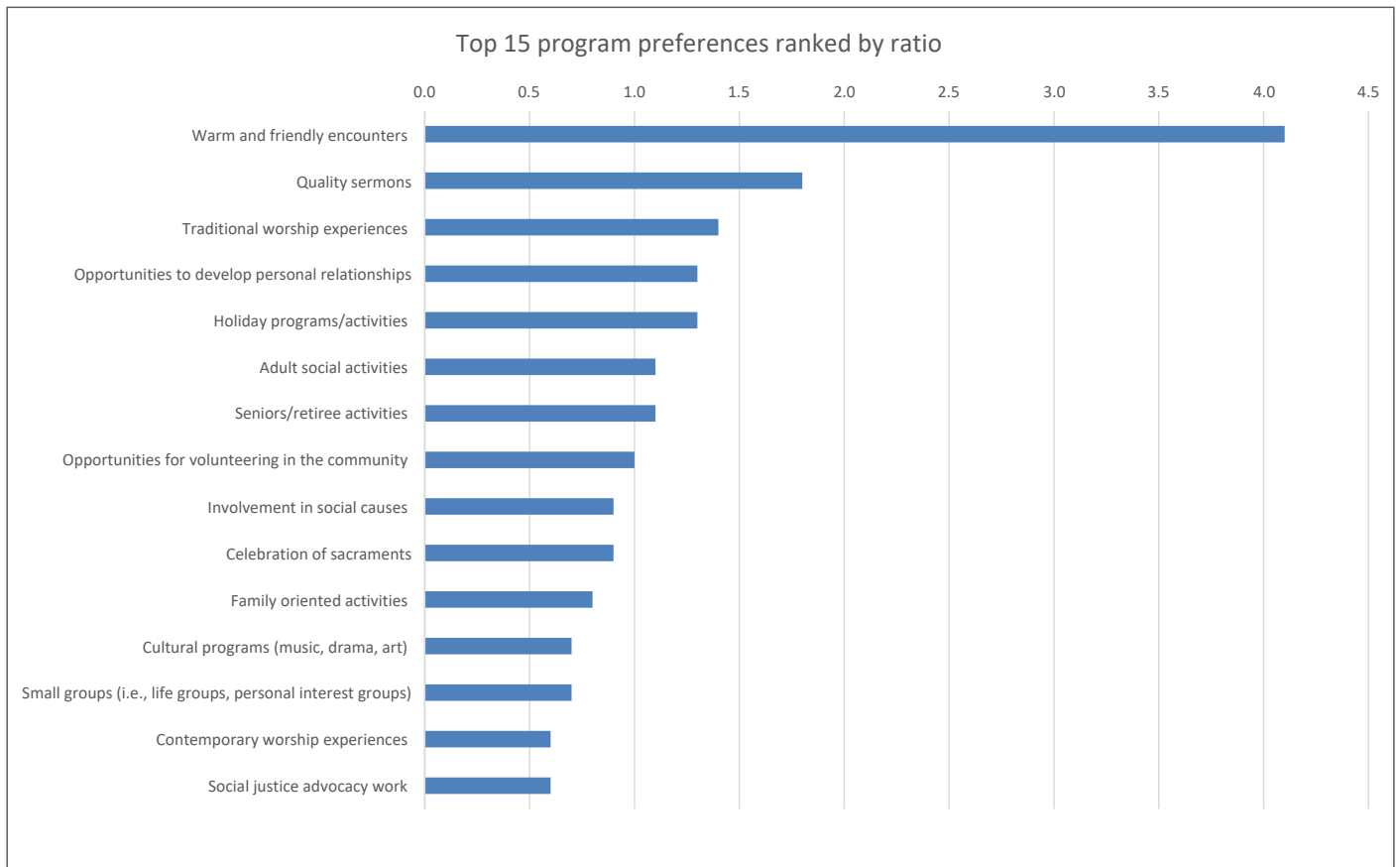
## Reasons to Consider Non-Participation—Those Inside a Religious Congregation or Community

| Priority List | Top 10 of 25 reasons for considering NOT participating in a religious congregation or community |                                               |       |                    |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------|--------------------|
|               | Ranking                                                                                         | Concern                                       | Ratio | Strength           |
|               | 1                                                                                               | Didn't feel welcome                           | 5.2   | Very Strong Reason |
|               | 2                                                                                               | Don't believe in God                          | 3.7   | Strong Reason      |
|               | 3                                                                                               | Wasn't supportive during crisis/time of need  | 3.6   | Strong Reason      |
|               | 4                                                                                               | Demands of raising children                   | 3.4   | Strong Reason      |
|               | 5                                                                                               | Moved from community                          | 3.3   | Strong Reason      |
|               | 6                                                                                               | Religion too focused on money                 | 3.1   | Strong Reason      |
|               | 7                                                                                               | Religious People too Judgmental               | 2.9   | Strong Reason      |
|               | 8                                                                                               | Didn't have desired children's/youth programs | 2.7   | Strong Reason      |
|               | 9                                                                                               | No longer believe                             | 2.7   | Strong Reason      |
|               | 10                                                                                              | Strict/inflexible beliefs                     | 2.3   | Strong Reason      |



## Program or Ministry Preferences

| Priority List | Top 15 ministry or program recommendations based on this study area |                                                            |       |                             |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|
|               | Preferences are ranked by ratio of important to not important       |                                                            |       |                             |
|               | Ranking                                                             | Program                                                    | Ratio | Strength of Preference      |
|               | 1                                                                   | Warm and friendly encounters                               | 4.1   | Very Strong Preference      |
|               | 2                                                                   | Quality sermons                                            | 1.8   | Somewhat Strong Preference  |
|               | 3                                                                   | Traditional worship experiences                            | 1.4   | Somewhat Strong Preference  |
|               | 4                                                                   | Opportunities to develop personal relationships            | 1.3   | Somewhat Strong Preference  |
|               | 5                                                                   | Holiday programs/activities                                | 1.3   | Somewhat Strong Preference  |
|               | 6                                                                   | Adult social activities                                    | 1.1   | Moderate Preference         |
|               | 7                                                                   | Seniors/retiree activities                                 | 1.1   | Moderate Preference         |
|               | 8                                                                   | Opportunities for volunteering in the community            | 1.0   | Moderate Preference         |
|               | 9                                                                   | Involvement in social causes                               | 0.9   | Moderate Preference         |
|               | 10                                                                  | Celebration of sacraments                                  | 0.9   | Moderate Preference         |
|               | 11                                                                  | Family oriented activities                                 | 0.8   | Somewhat Minimal Preference |
|               | 12                                                                  | Cultural programs (music, drama, art)                      | 0.7   | Somewhat Minimal Preference |
|               | 13                                                                  | Small groups (i.e., life groups, personal interest groups) | 0.7   | Somewhat Minimal Preference |
|               | 14                                                                  | Contemporary worship experiences                           | 0.6   | Somewhat Minimal Preference |
|               | 15                                                                  | Social justice advocacy work                               | 0.6   | Somewhat Minimal Preference |



## Information Sources and Social Media Preferences

Media options for obtaining information today have exploded. The days of a few sources, such as major newspapers or network news programs have been replaced with multiple cable news networks, online news outlets, and social media sources.

To help people sort through this mass of media options, the study asked respondents to indicate their preferences in a series of "forced pairs". The data reveals which sources of information this area prefers, so you can identify the best channels for reaching the intended audience.

| Study Area Detail                                           | Media Preferences: Forced Pairs |                |       |   |                                                             |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|-------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
|                                                             | Prefer this                     | Media Category | OR    |   | Media Category                                              | Prefer this |
| Blogs                                                       | 6                               | 18.4%          | 81.6% | 4 | Major Newspapers (e.g. LA Times, NY Times, Washington Post) |             |
| Cable News (e.g. CNN, Fox News)                             | 1                               | 38.9%          | 61.1% | 5 | Network News (ABC, NBC, CBS)                                |             |
| CNN Online News                                             | 3                               | 57.4%          | 42.6% | 3 | Yahoo News                                                  |             |
| CNN Online News                                             | 3                               | 56.5%          | 43.5% | 1 | Fox News                                                    |             |
| Facebook                                                    | 6                               | 19.1%          | 80.9% | 1 | Cable News (e.g. CNN, Fox News)                             |             |
| Facebook                                                    | 6                               | 69.0%          | 31.0% | 6 | Twitter                                                     |             |
| Fox News                                                    | 1                               | 57.0%          | 43.0% | 6 | Facebook                                                    |             |
| Fox News                                                    | 1                               | 30.2%          | 69.8% | 2 | Television News (Network OR Cable)                          |             |
| Huffington Post                                             | 3                               | 49.7%          | 50.3% | 1 | Fox News                                                    |             |
| Huffington Post                                             | 3                               | 44.5%          | 55.5% | 3 | Yahoo News                                                  |             |
| Major Newspapers (e.g. LA Times, NY Times, Washington Post) | 4                               | 32.6%          | 67.5% | 2 | Television News (Network OR Cable)                          |             |
| Online News (e.g. Yahoo, Google, CNN, Fox, Huffington Post) | 3                               | 49.7%          | 50.3% | 4 | Major Newspapers (e.g. LA Times, NY Times, Washington Post) |             |
| Twitter                                                     | 6                               | 12.0%          | 88.0% | 2 | Television News (Network OR Cable)                          |             |
| USA Today                                                   | 4                               | 29.7%          | 70.3% | 1 | Cable News (e.g. CNN, Fox News)                             |             |
| USA Today                                                   | 4                               | 23.0%          | 77.0% | 2 | Television News (Network OR Cable)                          |             |
| Yahoo News                                                  | 3                               | 42.0%          | 58.0% | 1 | CNN Television News                                         |             |

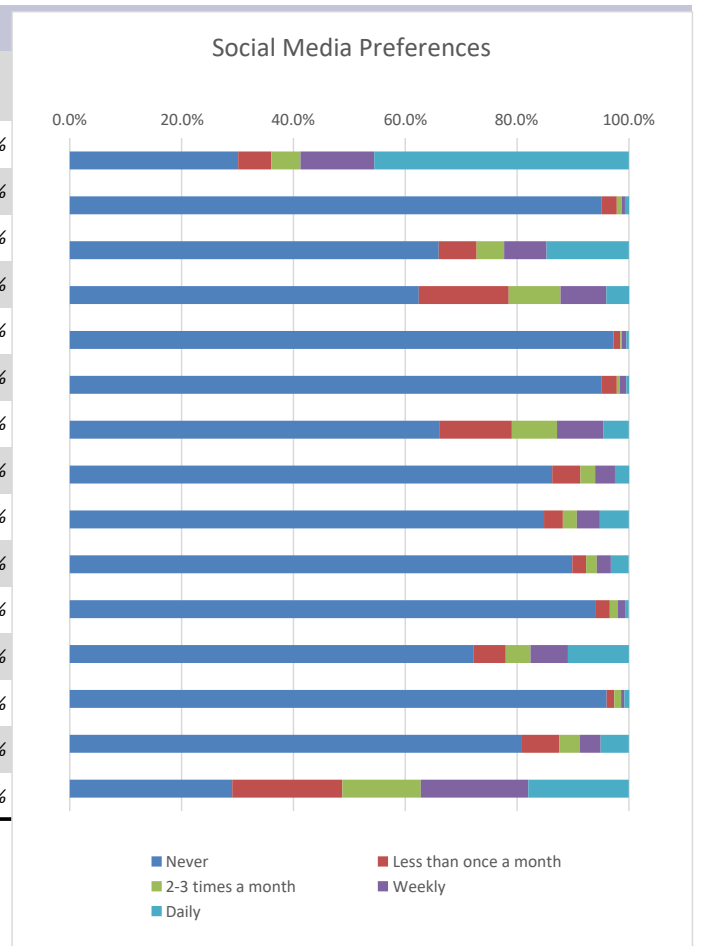
| Key to Media Types |                                         |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1                  | Cable News                              |
| 2                  | Television News (Network or Cable)      |
| 3                  | Online News                             |
| 4                  | Major Newspapers                        |
| 5                  | Major Network News Only (ABC, NBC, CBS) |
| 6                  | Social Media                            |

## Priority List

## Media preferences by category

| Rank Order | Weighted Ranking                        |
|------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1          | Television News (Network or Cable)      |
| 2          | Cable News                              |
| 3          | Major Newspapers                        |
| 4          | Online News                             |
| 5          | Major Network News Only (ABC, NBC, CBS) |
| 6          | Social Media                            |

| Study Area Detail | Social media preferences |                        |                   |        |       |
|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|--------|-------|
|                   | Never                    | Less than once a month | 2-3 times a month | Weekly | Daily |
| Facebook          | 30.1%                    | 5.9%                   | 5.2%              | 13.2%  | 45.5% |
| Flickr            | 95.1%                    | 2.8%                   | 0.9%              | 0.6%   | 0.7%  |
| Instagram         | 66.0%                    | 6.8%                   | 4.9%              | 7.6%   | 14.7% |
| LinkedIn          | 62.4%                    | 16.1%                  | 9.3%              | 8.2%   | 4.1%  |
| Marco-polo        | 97.2%                    | 1.2%                   | 0.3%              | 0.8%   | 0.5%  |
| Meetup            | 95.1%                    | 2.8%                   | 0.6%              | 1.2%   | 0.5%  |
| Pinterest         | 66.1%                    | 13.0%                  | 8.1%              | 8.3%   | 4.5%  |
| Reddit            | 86.3%                    | 5.1%                   | 2.6%              | 3.5%   | 2.5%  |
| Snapchat          | 84.8%                    | 3.4%                   | 2.5%              | 4.1%   | 5.2%  |
| Tik Tok           | 89.9%                    | 2.5%                   | 1.9%              | 2.5%   | 3.2%  |
| Tumblr            | 94.0%                    | 2.6%                   | 1.5%              | 1.3%   | 0.6%  |
| Twitter           | 72.2%                    | 5.8%                   | 4.4%              | 6.7%   | 10.9% |
| WeChat            | 96.0%                    | 1.4%                   | 1.2%              | 0.6%   | 0.9%  |
| WhatsApp          | 80.9%                    | 6.7%                   | 3.7%              | 3.7%   | 5.0%  |
| YouTube           | 29.1%                    | 19.7%                  | 14.0%             | 19.2%  | 18.0% |



## Supporting Information

### Interpreting the Report

The American Beliefs Study reports help you interpret data at a glance.

**Comparative Indexes:** All variables have a column called Comparative Index, which compares your study area with a larger area. For this report, all comparisons are with the national averages for the data item.

- Indexes of 100 mean the study area variable is the same as its base area.
- Indexes greater than 100 mean the study area variable is above the base area. The higher the number, the greater it is above the base.
- Indexes less than 100 mean the study area variable is below the base area. The lower the number, the greater it is below the base.

**Color Coding:** The Comparative Indexes columns are color coded so you can easily spot changes and the direction of change.

Index: Above Ave Ave Below Ave.

### Support

If you need support, email us at [misupport@acst.com](mailto:misupport@acst.com) or call 1-877-230-3212.