

FOR RELEASE FEBRUARY 4, 2016

# Most Americans Say Government Doesn't Do Enough to Help Middle Class

*GOP seen as favoring the rich over middle class, poor; mixed views on which class the Democratic Party favors*

**FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:**

Kim Parker, Director of Social Trends Research  
Carroll Doherty, Director of Political Research  
Molly Rohal, Communications Manager

202.419.4372

[www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org)

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# Most Americans Say Government Doesn't Do Enough to Help Middle Class

*GOP seen as favoring the rich over middle class, poor; mixed views on which class the Democratic Party favors*

At a time when the middle class in the United States is losing ground, most Americans say the federal government provides too little help to this segment of society. And as voters begin casting the first ballots in the 2016 presidential election, neither political party is widely viewed as supportive of the middle class in this country.

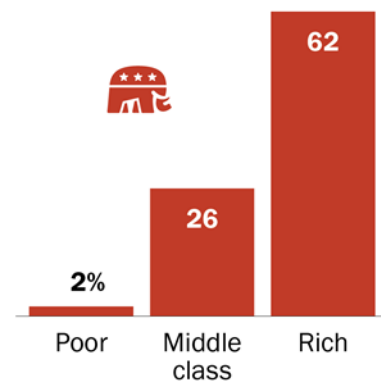
A national survey by Pew Research Center, conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015, among 1,500 adults, finds that 62% say the federal government does not do enough for middle-class people, compared with just 29% who say it does the right amount and 6% who say it does too much. These views have changed little since 2011.

And neither political party has a clear edge when it comes to championing middle-class interests. Just 32% of the public says the Democratic Party favors the middle class. Similar shares say the party favors either the poor (31%) or the rich (26%).

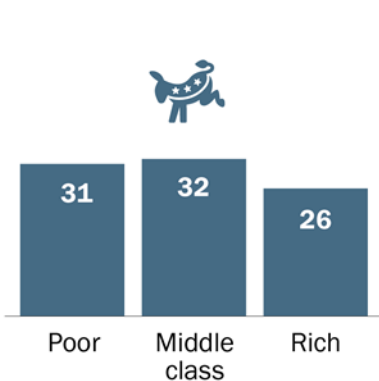
Views of the Republican Party are much less balanced. A majority of the public (62%) says that the GOP favors the rich, while 26% say it favors the middle class. Just 2% say the Republican Party favors the poor.

## Which social classes do the Republican and Democratic Parties favor?

*Those saying the Republican Party favors ...*



*Those saying the Democratic Party favors ...*



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.  
None/DK not shown.

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[A Pew Research Center report released in December](#) found that there are now roughly as many adults in middle-income households as in lower- or upper-income households – a decided shift from four decades ago, when middle-income Americans were clearly in the majority. Moreover,

the nation's aggregate household income has substantially shifted from middle-income to upper-income households since 1970.

In many ways, the attitudes of self-described middle-class adults reflect those of the country as a whole.<sup>1</sup> They have similar assessments of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president, they are largely dissatisfied with the way things are going in the country today, and they echo the public's concerns about terrorism and national security. When it comes to the state of the economy, the views of middle-class adults are in line with those of the general public – strong majorities say economic conditions in the country are only fair or poor.

Looking ahead, the middle class expresses similar policy priorities for 2016 as the general public. (For more on 2016 priorities, see "[Budget Deficit Slips as Public Priority](#)," released Jan. 22, 2016.)

About three-quarters of those who identify as middle class say defending the country from future terrorist attacks (76%) and strengthening the economy (73%) should be top priorities for Obama and Congress in 2016 – the same top two priorities identified by the general public.

When it comes to reducing crime, middle-class adults are more likely than those who identify as upper or upper-middle class to say crime should be a top priority (59% vs. 45%). About two-thirds (65%) of those who identify as lower or lower-middle class give top priority to reducing crime.

Across class lines, those who identify as lower-middle or lower class are the most likely to say

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### Middle class priorities for 2016

*% saying each should be a top priority for Obama and Congress ...*

	Total	NET Upper class	Middle class	NET Lower class
	%	%	%	%
Economy	75	75	73	77
Terrorism	75	68	76	77
Education	66	66	63	71
Job situation	64	55	62	71
Social Security	62	59	63	62
Health care costs	61	52	59	70
Medicare	58	56	59	59
Reducing crime	58	45	59	65
Budget deficit	56	56	59	51
Poor and needy	54	47	52	59
Immigration	51	51	49	54
Military	49	45	50	49
Environment	47	41	46	53
Tax reform	45	47	47	41
Criminal justice reform	44	41	43	47
Climate change	38	36	37	42
Gun policy	37	37	38	34
Global trade	31	31	30	33

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 7-14, 2016.

Note: "NET Upper class" includes those who self-identify as upper or upper-middle class; "NET Lower class" includes those who self-identify as lower or lower-middle class.

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<sup>1</sup> Respondents were asked which of the following names for the social classes best described them: upper class, upper-middle class, middle class, lower-middle class or lower class; throughout the report, those who identify as upper or upper-middle class are combined into a NET upper class category and those who identify as lower or lower-middle class are combined into a NET lower class category.

improving the job situation (71%) and reducing health care costs (70%) should be top priorities for Obama and Congress in 2016.

When it comes to what it takes to be middle class, there is near unanimity in the public that a secure job and the ability to save money are essential for middle-class status. At the same time, there are sharp differences in opinion across classes regarding the availability of good jobs. Majorities of self-identified middle-class (58%) and lower-class adults (73%) say that good jobs are difficult to find, compared with only 46% of upper-class adults.

## Views on Government Help for Middle Class, Wealthy and Poor

A clear majority of Americans say the federal government does not do enough to help the middle class, but the middle class is hardly alone on this list. Majorities also say the government doesn't do enough for older people, poor people or children.

Overall, 62% say the government doesn't do enough to help the middle class, while 29% say it does about the right amount and 6% say it does too much. Roughly the same share (59%) says the government does not do enough for poor people or for children (59% each), and 66% say the government doesn't do enough to help older people.

Wealthy people are the one group included in the survey for which the public thinks the government does too much: 61% say this, while 24% say the government does about the right amount and 9% say it does not do enough.

Republicans and Democrats differ significantly in views of how much help the government gives the wealthy and poor. But there is greater consensus across party lines when it comes to the middle class, with most in both parties saying the government does not do enough for this group.

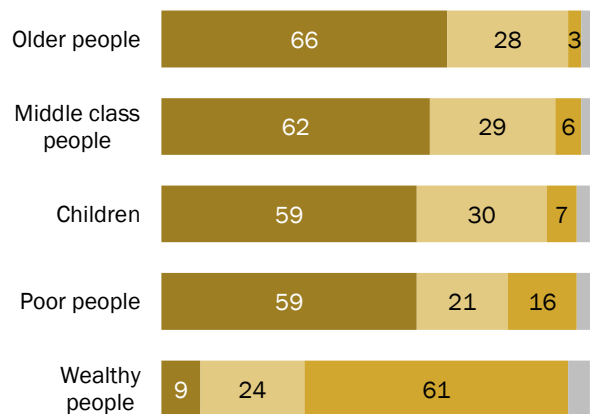
Fully 77% of Democrats say the government does too much for wealthy people, while 12% say it does about the right amount and 9% say it doesn't do enough. Among Republicans, views are more mixed: 44% say the government does too much to help the wealthy, 39% say it does about the right amount and 9% say it does not do enough.

About three-quarters of Democrats (76%) say the government does not provide enough help to poor people; far fewer say it helps poor people about the right amount (16%) or too much (5%). Republicans are far less likely to say the government does not do enough for poor people: 37% say this, while 30% say it does too much and 26% say it does about the right amount.

### Public says federal government does 'not enough' for middle class

*How much help does the federal government provide to each group? (%)*

■ Not enough ■ About right amount ■ Too much ■ DK



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.

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When it comes to the middle class, 68% of Democrats and 53% of Republicans say the federal government does not do enough to help middle-class people. Few Republicans (9%) or Democrats (2%) say the government does too much for the middle class.

Middle-class Americans who identify with the Democratic Party or lean Democratic are more likely than those who are Republican or lean to the GOP to say the government does not do enough to help the middle class. Among Democrats and Democratic leaners who say they are middle class, fully 71% say the federal government does not do enough to help middle-class people. By comparison, 50% of Republican and Republican-leaning middle-class adults say the same.

## Party divides in views of how much govt does for rich, poor, middle class

*How much help does federal government provide to ...*

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	R-D diff
<b>Wealthy people</b>					
	%	%	%	%	
Too much	61	44	77	61	-33
About right	24	39	12	24	+26
Not enough	9	9	9	11	0
<b>Middle class people</b>					
Too much	6	9	2	8	+7
About right	29	35	28	27	+7
Not enough	62	53	68	64	-15
<b>Poor people</b>					
Too much	16	30	5	18	+25
About right	21	26	16	22	+10
Not enough	59	37	76	57	-39

Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.

Don't know responses not shown. Difference is calculated before rounding.

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## No consensus on which social class Democratic Party favors; most say GOP favors the rich

Overall, roughly a third of adults (32%) say the Democratic Party favors the middle class over the rich and the poor. A nearly identical share (31%) says the Democratic Party favors the poor, and 26% say it favors the rich. Young adults (those under 30) are among the most likely to view the Democratic Party as favoring the middle class: 40% say this, while about a quarter say the party favors the rich (25%) or the poor (24%). Older age groups are more mixed in their views, with no more than a third saying the Democratic Party favors the middle class.

Blacks are more likely than whites to perceive a pro-middle-class stance from the Democratic Party: 39% of blacks, compared with 29% of whites, say the Democratic Party favors the middle class. A third of whites and about a quarter (26%) of blacks say the Democrats favor the poor.

Among Democrats themselves, 54% say their party favors the middle class over the rich or the poor. Some 23% of Democrats say the Democratic Party favors the poor and 14% say it favors the rich. Republicans hold much different views: About half (48%) say the Democratic Party favors the poor, while 34% say it favors the rich and just 10% say it favors the middle class. Independents are

### Mixed views on social class Democratic Party favors

*% who say the Democratic Party favors ...*

	The rich %	The middle class %	The poor %	(VOL.) None/all equally %	DK %
Total	26	32	31	5	6=100
Men	28	29	32	5	6=100
Women	25	34	29	6	7=100
White	27	29	33	6	6=100
Black	26	39	26	6	4=100
Hispanic	25	33	27	4	11=100
18-29	25	40	24	2	9=100
30-49	26	33	33	4	4=100
50-64	28	26	33	7	6=100
65+	27	27	31	8	7=100
Republican	34	10	48	4	4=100
Democrat	14	54	23	5	3=100
Independent	32	28	28	5	7=100
NET Upper class	21	37	32	5	5=100
Middle class	24	32	33	5	6=100
NET Lower class	31	30	28	5	7=100

Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.

Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Note: "NET Upper class" includes those who self-identify as upper or upper-middle class;

"NET Lower class" includes those who self-identify as lower or lower-middle class.

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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split in their perception of the Democratic Party: 32% say it favors the rich, while 28% each say it favors the middle class or poor.

Across demographic groups, views on which class the Republican Party favors often run in the opposite direction as patterns seen in views of the Democratic Party.

For example, whites (30%) are more likely than blacks (11%) to say the Republican Party favors the middle class. Large percentages of both groups say the GOP favors the rich (80% of blacks and 58% of whites).

Across age groups, the oldest adults (ages 65 and older) are the most likely to see the GOP as favoring the middle class: 35% say this, compared with 24% of those 50-64, 25% of those 30-49 and 24% of those 18-29.

Among Republicans, 56% say their party favors the middle class; this percentage is comparable to the 54% of Democrats who say the same about their own party. About three-in-ten Republicans (28%) say the GOP favors the rich and just 3% say it favors the poor. Among Democrats, fully 90% say the Republican Party favors the rich, while just 7% say it favors the middle class. And a quarter of independents (25%) say the GOP favors the middle class – roughly on par with the 28% who say this of the Democratic Party – while 64% of independents say the GOP favors the rich.

## Most say Republican Party favors the rich

*% who say the Republican Party favors ...*

		<b>The rich</b>	<b>The middle class</b>	<b>The poor</b>	<b>(VOL.) None/all equally</b>	<b>DK</b>
		%	%	%	%	%
Total		62	26	2	4	5=100
Men		62	28	2	4	4=100
Women		62	25	2	4	7=100
White		58	30	2	5	5=100
Black		80	11	4	2	4=100
Hispanic		62	24	2	3	9=100
18-29		67	24	2	2	5=100
30-49		66	25	2	4	3=100
50-64		60	24	3	6	7=100
65+		50	35	2	6	7=100
Republican		28	56	3	9	4=100
Democrat		90	7	1	1	2=100
Independent		64	25	2	3	5=100
NET Upper class		63	27	2	4	3=100
Middle class		57	32	2	4	5=100
NET Lower class		67	21	2	4	6=100

Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.

Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Note: "NET Upper class" includes those who self-identify as upper or upper-middle class;

"NET Lower class" includes those who self-identify as lower or lower-middle class.

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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Among middle-class adults themselves, 32% say the Republican Party favors the middle class – identical to the share of them saying the Democratic Party favors this group; 57% of those in the middle class say the GOP favors the rich.

Six-in-ten middle-class adults who identify or lean toward the Republican Party (60%) say the GOP favors the middle class. A similar share (56%) of those in the middle class who identify or lean Democratic say their party favors the middle class.

Both Republicans and Democrats who identify as lower class are less likely to say their own party favors the middle class than are those in their party who consider themselves higher up the class ladder. Among Democrats and Democratic leaners, 43% of those who say they are lower class say their party favors the middle class, compared with 59% of those who say they are upper class. Similarly, 42% of Republicans and Republican leaners who identify as lower class say the party favors the middle class, while 59% of those who say they are upper class say the same.

## How partisans across social classes view the leanings of their own party

*Based on Republicans and Republican leaners*

	Republican Party favors ...			None/All equally/ DK
	Rich	Middle class	Poor	
	%	%	%	%
All Rep/Lean Rep	33	53	3	11=100
NET Upper class	29	59	3	9=100
Middle class	27	60	3	11=100
NET Lower class	44	42	3	11=100

*Based on Democrats and Democratic leaners*

	Democratic Party favors ...			None/All equally/ DK
	Rich	Middle class	Poor	
	%	%	%	%
All Dem/Lean Dem	18	51	22	8=100
NET Upper class	19	59	15	7=100
Middle class	15	56	20	8=100
NET Lower class	21	43	27	9=100

Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Note: "NET Upper class" includes those who self-identify as upper or upper-middle class; "NET Lower class" includes those who self-identify as lower or lower-middle class.

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## Life satisfaction and views of personal finances across social classes

Assessments of life satisfaction differ across self-identified social classes, with some of the widest differences seen between the views of the lower class and those of the upper and middle classes.

Majorities across groups say they are very satisfied with their family life. However, somewhat greater shares of those in the upper class (83%) and middle class (79%) say this than of those in the lower class (66%).

About three-quarters of upper-class adults (77%) say they are very satisfied with their present housing situation; 68% of those in the middle class also say this. Among lower-class adults, far fewer (43%) say they are very satisfied with their current housing.

Similarly, most upper- (71%) and middle-class adults (62%) say they are very satisfied with their education, compared with 43% of lower-class adults.

Among those currently employed, 62% of upper-class adults say they are very satisfied with their current job, while about half of those in the middle class (53%) say they are very satisfied with their job. Among employed adults who describe themselves as lower class, 40% say they are very satisfied with their current job.

By an 80%-20% margin, more upper-class adults say they are generally satisfied with their financial situation than say they are not very satisfied with it. Among those in the middle class, far more say they are generally satisfied (70%) than not very satisfied (29%) with their financial situation. But the picture is much gloomier among the lower class: Just 34% say they are generally satisfied with their financial situation, while 65% say they are not very satisfied.

### Life satisfaction across social classes

	Total	NET Upper class	Middle class	NET Lower class
<i>Very satisfied with ...</i>	%	%	%	%
Family life	74	83	79	66
Housing situation	60	77	68	46
Education	55	71	62	43
Current job*	50	62	53	40
<hr/>				
<i>Say they are ...</i>				
Generally satisfied with financial situation	57	80	70	34
Not very satisfied with financial situation	43	20	29	65
<hr/>				
<i>Rating of personal financial situation ...</i>				
Excellent	8	28	6	2
Good	35	53	49	15
Only fair	39	17	37	51
Poor	17	2	8	33

Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.

\* Based on those who are employed.

Note: "NET Upper class" includes those who self-identify as upper or upper-middle class; "NET Lower class" includes those who self-identify as lower or lower-middle class.

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While large majorities of upper- and middle-class adults say they are generally satisfied financially, a gap emerges between the groups when asked for more detailed assessments of their financial state. Overall, 28% of those who describe themselves as upper class say they are in excellent financial shape, while 53% say they are in good shape, 17% say they are in only fair shape and just 2% say they are in poor shape. Ratings are somewhat less strong among the middle class: Only 6% describe their personal financial situation as excellent; a plurality (49%) say they are in good shape financially, compared with 37% who say they are in only fair shape and 8% who describe their situation as poor. Personal financial ratings among the lower class are much more negative. Relatively few lower-class adults say they are in excellent (2%) or good shape (15%) financially; about half (51%) describe their financial situation as only fair, while a third (33%) say it is poor.

As the country has recovered from the Great Recession, assessments of personal finances have improved across most groups, particularly among those who describe themselves as middle class.

Among the general public, the share describing their personal financial situation as either excellent or good has ticked up 5 percentage points since December 2011, while the share describing their situation as poor has declined 7 points.

Among those who say they are middle class, positive personal financial ratings are up 12 points, from 43% who described their finances as excellent or good in 2011 to 55% in the current survey.

Relatively few lower-class adults say their finances are in excellent or good shape, and there has been little change in this view since 2011. However, 51% now say their finances are in only fair shape, up 13 points from December 2011. Over this same period of time, the share

## Improving assessments of personal finances among middle class

*Personal financial ratings ...*

	Dec 2011	Jan 2014	Dec 2015	'11-'15 change
<b>Total</b>	%	%	%	
Excellent/Good	38	39	43	+5
Only fair	37	38	39	+3
Poor	24	22	17	-7
<b>NET Upper class</b>				
Excellent/Good	74	77	80	+6
Only fair	21	16	17	-4
Poor	4	7	2	-2
<b>Middle class</b>				
Excellent/Good	43	49	55	+12
Only fair	42	40	37	-6
Poor	14	10	8	-6
<b>NET Lower class</b>				
Excellent/Good	14	16	16	+2
Only fair	38	43	51	+13
Poor	48	40	33	-15

Source: Surveys conducted Dec. 7-11, 2011, Jan. 15-19, 2014, and Dec. 8-13, 2015.

Don't know responses not shown.

Note: "NET Upper class" includes those who self-identify as upper or upper-middle class; "NET Lower class" includes those who self-identify as lower or lower-middle class. Percentage point change calculated before rounding.

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of lower-class adults describing their personal financial situation as poor has declined 15 points.

Among those who are upper class, eight-in-ten describe their financial situation as excellent or good. Financial ratings among this group were already quite strong in December 2011, when about three-quarters (74%) said their finances were in excellent or good shape.

## Views on cost of living across social classes

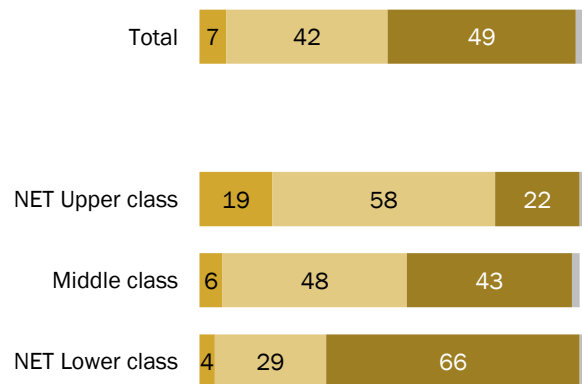
Overall, 49% of the public says their family's income is falling behind the cost of living, while 42% say it is staying about even and just 7% say it is going up faster.

Across class lines, fully 66% of those who identify as lower class say they are falling behind the cost of living, compared with 29% who say they are staying about even and 4% who say their income is going up faster than the cost of living. Views are mixed among the middle class: 48% say their income is staying about even with the cost of living, but almost as many (43%) say it is falling behind; 6% say it is going up faster. Even among the upper class, about as many say their income is falling behind the cost of living (22%) as going up faster (19%); a 58% majority of upper-class adults say their income is staying about even with the cost of living.

### Most in lower class say they're 'falling behind' the cost of living

Family income relative to the cost of living ... (%)

■ Going up faster ■ Staying even ■ Falling behind ■ DK



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.

Note: "NET Upper class" includes those who self-identify as upper or upper-middle class; "NET Lower class" includes those who self-identify as lower or lower-middle class

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Over the past two years, the overall share of the public saying they are falling behind the cost of living has declined as the share saying they are staying about even has increased. (For more on how the public views the economy, see: “[As Election Year Nears, Public Sees Mixed Economic Picture](#),” released Dec. 22, 2015.)

Across the social classes, there has been a comparable uptick in the share saying they are keeping up with the cost of living among those who say they are upper class (+8 points), middle class (+9 points) and lower class (+7 points).

## Fewer say their incomes are ‘falling behind’ cost of living

*Family income relative to the cost of living (%)*

	Jan 2014	Dec 2015	Change
<b>Total</b>	%	%	
Going up faster	7	7	0
Staying about even	34	42	+8
Falling behind	57	49	-8
<b>NET Upper class</b>			
Going up faster	21	19	-2
Staying about even	50	58	+9
Falling behind	28	22	-6
<b>Middle class</b>			
Going up faster	6	6	0
Staying about even	39	48	+9
Falling behind	52	43	-8
<b>NET Lower class</b>			
Going up faster	4	4	0
Staying about even	22	29	+7
Falling behind	73	66	-7

Source: Surveys conducted Jan. 15-19, 2014, and Dec. 8-13, 2015. Don't know responses not shown.

Note: “NET Upper class” includes those who self-identify as upper or upper-middle class; “NET Lower class” includes those who self-identify as lower or lower-middle class. Percentage point change calculated before rounding.

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## Views of the job market across social classes

By a 53%-41% margin, more Americans say that job opportunities in their community are difficult to find than say there are plenty of jobs available. On a different question that asks about the availability of *good* jobs, an even larger percentage says that good jobs are hard to find in their community (62%), compared with 33% who say there are plenty of good jobs available.

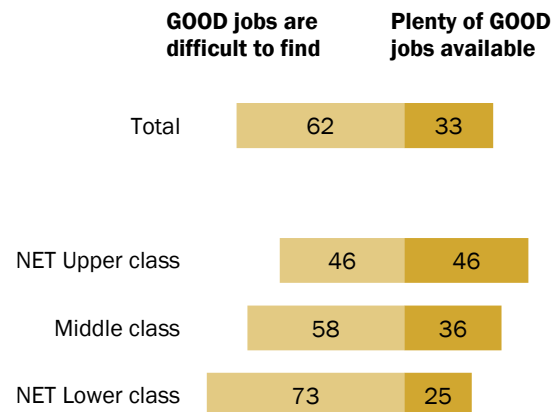
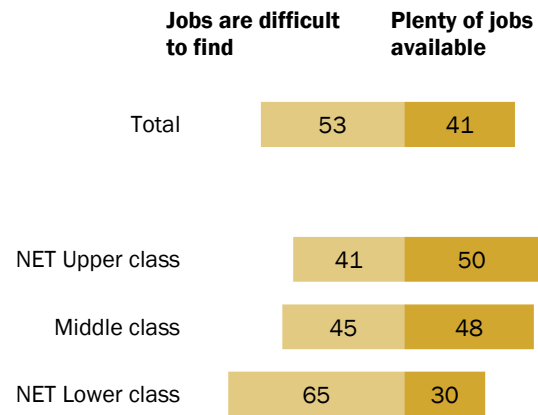
Middle-class adults are particularly likely to see a difference between the availability of jobs and *good* jobs in their community. About as many middle-class adults say there are plenty of jobs available in their community (48%) as say that jobs are difficult to find (45%). However, when it comes to the availability of *good* jobs, just 36% say there are plenty of good jobs in their community, compared with 58% who say that good jobs are hard to find.

Those who identify as lower class have the most negative view of the job market: 65% say that jobs are difficult to find and 73% say good jobs are difficult to find.

Among upper-class adults, half say that there are plenty of jobs available in their community and 41% say jobs are difficult to find. When it comes to the availability of good jobs, upper-class adults are evenly divided on whether plenty are available or they are hard to find (46% for each).

### Lower class sees dim job market in their community

% who say ...



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.

Other/Don't know responses not shown.

Note: "NET Upper class" includes those who self-identify as upper or upper-middle class; "NET Lower class" includes those who self-identify as lower or lower-middle class.

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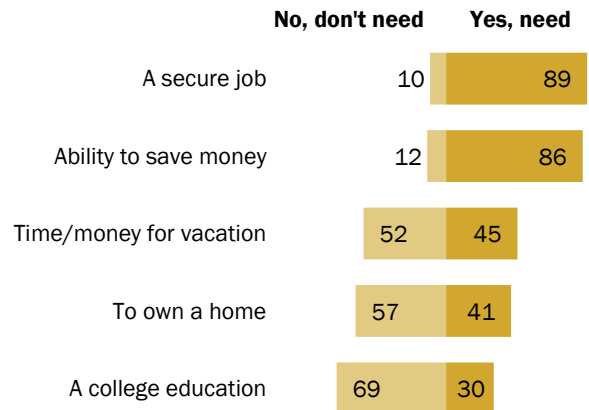
## Job and ability to save are key to middle class status

The public sees two characteristics as essential to middle-class status: a secure job and the ability to save money. Other characteristics – including owning a home and having a college degree – are not widely seen as necessary to be considered middle class.

Broad majorities say that a secure job (89%) and the ability to save money for the future (86%) are needed for a person to be considered middle class. Fewer than half say having the time and money to travel on vacation (45%) and owning a home (41%) are needed for someone to be considered middle class. And while a college degree is widely seen as a key to advancement and success, just 30% say a person has to have one to be considered middle class.

### Secure job, ability to save seen as top requirements for middle class

*Which of the following do Americans need to be considered part of the middle class? (%)*



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.  
Not sure responses not shown.

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Across most characteristics included in the survey, there is general agreement among the social classes on what is needed – or not needed – to be considered middle class. One exception is views about a college degree. Large majorities of upper- (78%) and middle-class (72%) adults say a college degree is not required to be considered middle class. A smaller majority of lower-class adults say it is not required (63%), while 36% say that it is. And among the 11% of the public who describe themselves as lower class – separate from the 31% who say they are lower-middle class – as many say a college degree is needed to be considered middle class (49%) as say it is not (49%).



## Acknowledgments

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals.  
Find related reports online at [pewresearch.org/politics](http://pewresearch.org/politics)

Kim Parker, *Director of Social Trends Research*

Carroll Doherty, *Director, Political Research*

Jocelyn Kiley, *Associate Director, Research*

Juliana Menasce Horowitz, *Associate Director, Research*

Rakesh Kochhar, *Associate Director, Research*

Alec Tyson, *Senior Researcher*

Anna Brown, *Research Assistant*

Molly Rohal, *Communications Manager*

## Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on two telephone surveys conducted December 8-13, 2015 and January 7-14, 2016. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/>

The survey conducted December 8-13, 2015 was among a national sample of 1,500 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (525 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 975 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 582 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International.

The survey conducted January 7-14, 2016 was among a national sample of 2,009 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (504 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 1,505 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 867 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted under the direction of Abt SRBI.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the 2014 Census Bureau's American Community Survey (for the January 2016 survey) and the 2013 Census Bureau's American Community Survey (for the December 2015 survey) and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status (landline only, cell phone only, or both landline and cell phone), based on extrapolations from the 2015 National Health Interview Survey (for the January 2016 survey) and the 2014 National Health Interview Survey (for the December 2015 survey). The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. The margins of error reported and statistical tests of significance are adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, a measure of how much efficiency is lost from the weighting procedures.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the January 2016 survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	2,009	2.5 percentage points
Form 1	997	3.5 percentage points
Form 2	1,012	3.5 percentage points

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the December 2015 survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	1,500	2.9 percentage points
Form 1	731	4.2 percentage points
Form 2	769	4.1 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.