

The MassINC Polling Group
Massachusetts Middle Class Poll
 Survey of 854 Massachusetts residents
 Field dates: April 3 - 22, 2026

Overall, how would you rate the quality of life for you and your family today?

	2003	2023	2026
Excellent	13%	8%	8%
Very good	28%	24%	26%
Good	39%	36%	35%
Fair	16%	23%	21%
Poor	4%	9%	10%
Unsure	0%	<1%	1%

Over the past five years, has the quality of life for you and your family...

Gotten better	20%
Gotten worse	40%
Stayed the same	36%
Unsure	4%

We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you and your family are better off or worse off financially than you were a year ago, or just about the same?

	2011	2013	2026
Better off	27%	30%	17%
Same	27%	26%	39%
Worse off	45%	41%	42%
Unsure	1%	3%	2%

Thinking about your household financial situation most months, would you say you have ...

Enough to pay your bills with plenty left over	15%
Enough to pay your bills with a little left over	42%
Just enough to pay your bills	29%
Not enough to pay your bills	13%
Unsure	1%

Now looking ahead—do you think that a year from now you and your family will be better off financially, or worse off, or just about the same?

	2011	2013	2026
Better off	28%	22%	27%
Same	51%	55%	24%
Worse off	17%	17%	40%
Unsure	3%	7%	9%

Sources for trend data:

2003: MassINC survey of Massachusetts residents, "The Pursuit of Happiness"

2011 & 2013: MPG Omnibus Index of Consumer Sentiment

2023: CommonWealth Beacon survey of Massachusetts residents

Would you say you are financially better off than your parents were when they were your age, financially worse off, or about the same?

	2011	2026
Better off	50%	32%
Worse off	22%	33%
About the same	26%	27%
Unsure	1%	8%

Looking ahead, do you think the next generation will be financially better off when they are your age, financially worse off, or about the same?

	2011	2026
Better off	20%	22%
Worse off	38%	44%
About the same	37%	20%
Unsure	5%	15%

Which of the following terms **best** describes your economic status?

	2003	2026
Wealthy	1%	3%
Upper middle class	12%	13%
Middle class	43%	40%
Working class	33%	32%
Poor	9%	11%
Unsure	2%	2%

ASK FOLLOWING QUESTION IF DESCRIBES ECONOMIC STATUS AS MIDDLE CLASS, WORKING CLASS, OR POOR - EXCLUDING OPTION SELECTED IN PREVIOUS QUESTION

Do any of the following **also** describe your economic status?

Wealthy	1%
Upper middle class	10%
Middle class	25%
Working class	35%
Poor	10%
None of these	12%
Unsure	7%

ASK FOLLOWING QUESTION IF DESCRIBES ECONOMIC STATUS AS UPPER MIDDLE CLASS OR MIDDLE CLASS ON FIRST ASK

Would you say you and your family are securely in the middle class, moving up beyond the middle class, or in danger of falling out of the middle class?

	2011	2026
Securely in the middle class	55%	54%
Moving up beyond the middle class	9%	24%
In danger of falling out of the middle class	32%	17%
Unsure	4%	5%

Please tell me which **one** of the following terms **best describes your family when you were growing up—** even if none is exactly right?

Wealthy	3%
Upper middle class	9%
Middle class	38%
Working class	36%
Poor	12%
Unsure	2%

In a few words, how would you define being middle class?

Comfortable/ money left over after bills	44%
Living within means/ getting by	17%
Homeowner	16%
Save/ retirement	13%
Middle (between wealthy and poor)	12%
Vacation	10%
Stability/ security	9%
Discretionary spending	9%
Car owner	6%
Raise/ support family	3%
Paying for education/ helping children financially	3%
Higher education/ white collar	3%
No debt	2%
Specific income	2%
Hard work	1%
Suburb	1%
Healthcare/ insurance	1%
Other	10%
Unsure / nonresponse	2%

Which three of the following best define a middle-class lifestyle in Massachusetts today? **Select up to three.**

Earning enough to pay for basic needs	39%
Having a steady, full-time job	41%
Having a comfortable place to live	38%
Owning a home	38%
Having health insurance	29%
Access to good K-12 schools	6%
Saving money for the future	30%
Being able to set aside money for emergencies	28%
Being able to afford childcare	8%
Being able to pay for college	9%
Being able to take a vacation	23%
Unsure	1%

In your view, what is the **lowest annual household income** that should be considered middle class in Massachusetts today? **Please include all earners in the household. OPEN ENDED, CODED INTO CATEGORIES.**

Median response: \$97,000

<\$50K	13%
\$50 - <\$75K	21%
\$75K - <\$100K	17%
\$100K - <\$150K	24%
\$150K - <\$200K	10%
\$200K+	15%

In your view, what is the **highest annual household income** that should be considered middle class in Massachusetts today? **Please include all earners in the household. OPEN ENDED, CODED INTO CATEGORIES.**

Median response: \$209,000

<\$100K	17%
\$100K - <\$150K	15%
\$150K - <\$200K	14%
\$200K - <\$250K	12%
\$250K - <\$400K	19%
\$400K +	24%

Which of these groups do you think state government should prioritize the needs of?

Wealthy	2%
Upper middle class	3%
Middle class	16%
Working class	40%
Poor	32%
None of these groups	2%
Unsure	5%

Which of these groups do you think state government prioritizes the needs of now?

Wealthy	25%
Upper middle class	11%
Middle class	9%
Working class	15%
Poor	23%
None of these groups	6%
Unsure	10%

For each of the following groups of people, do you think living in Massachusetts is better, worse, or about the same compared to elsewhere in the country?

ROTATE ORDER	Better	Worse	About the same	Unsure
Wealthy people	49%	14%	29%	8%
Middle class people	22%	38%	34%	7%
Working class people	22%	44%	28%	6%
Poor people	27%	43%	21%	9%

Thinking about your finances and how much each item costs you, would you say each of the following are affordable to your household or not?

ROTATE ORDER	Affordable	Unaffordable	I do not pay for this	Unsure
Housing	39%	51%	7%	3%
Healthcare	46%	42%	11%	2%
Childcare	15%	35%	48%	2%
Car ownership	45%	40%	12%	3%
Public transportation	54%	12%	30%	4%
Groceries	57%	37%	3%	3%
Higher education (college, trade school)	17%	48%	31%	4%
Taxes	39%	46%	8%	7%
Vacations	32%	51%	11%	6%
Going out (movies, restaurants, etc.)	44%	45%	6%	4%
Clothes	64%	28%	3%	5%

If you were financially able to, how would you prioritize each of the following? **ORDER RANKED 1-7**

ROTATE ORDER	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th
Working fewer hours	15%	10%	17%	15%	14%	14%	15%
Taking more time off from work	5%	13%	15%	20%	17%	20%	10%
Buying nicer things	5%	10%	16%	16%	21%	20%	13%
Saving more for the future	41%	24%	14%	8%	6%	3%	3%
Moving to a different area	8%	9%	11%	9%	15%	14%	33%
Traveling more	9%	13%	15%	18%	16%	13%	15%
Improving your housing	16%	20%	12%	14%	12%	15%	11%

To what extent, if at all, has your current financial situation affected your ability to do each of the following?

ROTATE ORDER	Prevented me from doing this	Delayed me from doing this	No impact	Not applicable to me	Unsure
Establishing your own household (living independently rather than with parents or other family)	13%	18%	36%	32%	2%
Pursuing a college degree or professional credential	11%	15%	26%	45%	2%
Buying a home	21%	20%	27%	30%	2%
Getting married	6%	10%	32%	49%	3%
Getting divorced	4%	4%	21%	69%	2%
Having the number of children you would like	9%	11%	30%	49%	2%
Saving for retirement	21%	32%	31%	13%	3%
Sending children to the college of their choice	10%	11%	22%	54%	4%
Starting a business	13%	13%	21%	51%	2%
Moving to a home or community of your choice in retirement	17%	17%	27%	36%	4%

The last few questions are for statistical purposes.

Which one of the following best describes your work situation? **Select all that apply.**

I have a full-time job	44%
I have a part-time job	16%
I have more than one part-time jobs	2%
Not currently employed	38%
Unsure	1%

ASK FOLLOWING QUESTION IF NOT CURRENTLY EMPLOYED

Are you a student, a homemaker, retired, or temporarily unemployed?

A student	11%
A homemaker	9%
Retired	58%
Temporarily unemployed	20%
Unsure	1%

As an adult, did you receive financial assistance from your immediate family for any of the following? **Select all that apply.**

Going to college	25%
Having a wedding	13%
Buying a house	12%
Getting a car	17%
None of the above	56%
Prefer not to say	2%

Do you own or rent your home?

Own	52%
Rent	39%
Some other arrangement	6%
Prefer not to say	2%

ASK FOLLOWING QUESTION IF RENTS OR HAS SOME OTHER LIVING ARRANGEMENT

Do you plan to buy a home in the next 5 years?

Yes, in Massachusetts	27%
Yes, outside of Massachusetts	13%
No	38%
Unsure	22%

Other than yourself, how many adults do you have living with you?

0	23%
1	42%
2	22%
3+	13%

How many children under 18 do you have living with you?

0	71%
1	14%
2+	15%

How many of the people living with you, including yourself, have an income, whether from a job or from retirement income?

0	10%
1	43%
2	31%
3+	17%

Demographics

Gender

Man	48%
Woman	52%
Non-binary / some other way	<1%
Prefer not to say	<1%

Age

18-25 years old	14%
26-34 years old	16%
35-44 years old	16%
45-54 years old	15%
55-64 years old	17%
65 or older	22%

Race

White	69%
Black	6%
Latino	11%
AAPI	7%
Other / multiple	5%
Prefer not to say	1%

Education

High School or less	32%
Some college, no degree	24%
College graduate (BA/BS)	24%
Advanced degree	19%
Prefer not to say	<1%

About the poll

These results are based on a survey of 854 Massachusetts residents. Responses were collected using text to web and online survey interviewing April 3 - 22, 2026. Results were weighted by race, age, gender, education, political identification, and county to reflect known and estimated population parameters for Massachusetts adults. The credibility interval for this survey is +/- 4.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, inclusive of the design effect. This project was conducted by The MassINC Polling Group and sponsored by MassINC with design input from Commonwealth Beacon and WBUR.