

TO: American Federation of Teachers
FROM: Guy Molyneux and Geoff Garin, Hart Research
DATE: August 19, 2021
RE: Survey of AFT Members on COVID-19 Vaccination

From August 10 to 15, 2021, Hart Research Associates conducted a telephone survey among 1,204 AFT members on the issue of COVID-19 vaccination. The survey has a margin of error of $\pm 2.8\%$.

MEMBER VACCINATION STATUS: AFT members have gotten vaccinated at a very high rate: fully nine in 10 members are already vaccinated (90%), and another 3% either have a vaccination appointment (1%) or say they will likely get vaccinated (2%). The current vaccination rate of 90% represents a 14-point increase over March, when 76% of members were vaccinated. The March survey indicated that another 13% of members had an appointment (5%) or were likely to get vaccinated (8%), for a total potential vaccination of 89%. Today the union has exceeded those earlier results, with some potential for further growth.

AFT Members' Vaccination Status

	Vaccinated
ALL MEMBERS	90%
18 to 39	84%
40 to 54	86%
55+	96%
Whites	91%
Hispanics	91%
Blacks	83%
Democrats	96%
Independents	85%
Republicans	85%

National polls consistently find a partisan split in vaccination behavior and attitudes, with Democrats generally being pro-vaccine, Republicans less so, and independents in between. So it's especially impressive that 85% of AFT's Republican members and 85% of the independents are vaccinated. The 91% vaccination rate for Hispanic members and the 84% rate for those under age 40 also far exceed the national averages for those populations.

Hart Research Associates

The main reason some members have not received the vaccine is concern about the safety of the vaccine, and fear of side effects. However, a considerable portion of the unvaccinated remain open to vaccination.

Concerns Among Unvaccinated

	All Unvaccinated
I think the vaccine approval process was rushed, without adequate time to test for safety and effectiveness.	80%
I worry about the safety and long-term side effects of the vaccine.	78%
I don't trust the government officials who are pushing the vaccine.	67%
I do not think the vaccine will be effective.	54%
I do not think I will get very sick even if I do get COVID-19.	52%
I do not trust vaccines in general.	44%

Just 26% of unvaccinated members express confidence that COVID-19 vaccines are safe, compared with 93% of vaccinated members. Similarly, only 24% of the unvaccinated feel the vaccines are effective, in contrast with 91% of the vaccinated.

Although 61% of unvaccinated members say they likely won't get the vaccine, four in 10 say they probably or definitely will get vaccinated (23%) or they remain unsure (16%). So the AFT vaccination rate seems likely to reach even higher levels in the months ahead.

Consistently, the most powerful motivator to get the vaccine is concern for the member's family and loved ones, even above concern for their own health. In addition, we find many AFT educators are moved by a desire to protect the students they teach.

Strong Reasons to Get Vaccinated

	All Unvaccinated
To protect my family and loved ones	55%
To protect students at my school (K-12 only)	46%
To get back to normal life and resume normal activities	39%
To keep my community healthy and safe	39%
To protect myself	39%

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Addressing the safety concerns of unvaccinated members and persuading them to get the vaccine is work that must be done by trusted messengers. Many of these members do not trust government information sources or the media. However, many express confidence in their doctor, their pharmacist, the CDC, and their coworkers.

Most Trusted Information Sources for Unvaccinated Members

	All <u>Unvaccinated</u>
Your doctor	63%
Your pharmacist	47%
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC	40%
A coworker who recently received the vaccine	35%