When faced with an economic crisis, Americans historically have turned to education as a way to meet the challenge and prepare for the future. But COVID-19 has disrupted our lives and work in unprecedented ways. Will we react differently this time?

Already, an estimated 28 million Americans have canceled education plans, results from the fifth week of this nationally representative survey* show. So far, the number of people intending to pursue more education or training as a path forward has not increased in the last year. But those considering more education or training within the next five years are leaning toward different providers than they were a year ago.

Responses from more than 5,000 adults are now included in this survey, updated weekly and designed to track the impact of the pandemic on American lives, work, and education. Its intent is to provide insights to the education and training providers, policymakers, employers, and individual Americans who are navigating the crisis.

The majority of adults considering enrolling in an education or training program in the next six months prefer nondegree programs.

For Americans looking to enroll in the next six months, their interests are divided evenly among reskilling, upskilling, and pursuing personal interests.*

11% of American adults have canceled their education plans because of COVID-19.

Americans’ intent to enroll in postsecondary education and training in the next five years (49%) has not increased from 2019 (53%). But their intentions about where to enroll have shifted.

* Survey completed weekly by Heart+Mind Strategies on behalf of the Center for Consumer Insights.
1. For each of the following, what best describes any ways you have adjusted your plans because of the coronavirus outbreak?

*My education*

a. Have cancelled plans 11%
b. Have changed plans 18%
c. No change 24%
d. Not applicable 48%

*n=4,023*

2. Thinking about the future, in the next five years, how likely are you to enroll in courses or training offered through the following:

*Four-year college or university*

e. Extremely likely 12%
f. Very likely 9%
g. Somewhat likely 17%
h. Not very likely 18%
i. Not at all likely 43%

*Community college*

a. Extremely likely 7%
b. Very likely 12%
c. Somewhat likely 19%
d. Not very likely 19%
e. Not at all likely 43%

*Trade Schools/Programs*

a. Extremely likely 7%
b. Very likely 11%
c. Somewhat likely 20%
d. Not very likely 18%
e. Not at all likely 44%
Employer
a. Extremely likely 11%
b. Very likely 17%
c. Somewhat likely 24%
d. Not very likely 15%
e. Not at all likely 33%

Online only community colleges, colleges or universities
a. Extremely likely 10%
b. Very likely 14%
c. Somewhat likely 21%
d. Not very likely 16%
e. Not at all likely 39%

Other online non-academic courses, trainings, or certifications
a. Extremely likely 9%
b. Very likely 15%
c. Somewhat likely 23%
d. Not very likely 18%
e. Not at all likely 35%

Apprenticeship or internship with a local employer
a. Extremely likely 7%
b. Very likely 12%
c. Somewhat likely 20%
d. Not very likely 19%
e. Not at all likely 41%

*Base: Individuals 18-65 years old, n=3,230.

3. If you were to enroll in additional education or training sometime within the next 6 months, what would be your goal?

a. One or more courses to get some skills I need for work 18%
b. One or more courses for personal interests or hobbies 15%
c. A certificate, certification, or license 26%
d. An associate degree 12%
e. A bachelor's degree 16%
f. A graduate degree 13%

*Base: Individuals who did not say that they “will not enroll in education or training in the next six months,” data from April 15, n=662.
4. If you were to enroll in additional education or training sometime within the next 6 months, what would be the main reason you would enroll?

   a. To get skills for a new career field  34%
   b. To get more skills in my current career field  34%
   c. For personal interest  33%

*Base: Individuals who did not say that they “will not enroll in education or training in the next six months,” n=665.

5. What effect do you think the coronavirus outbreak will have on your …?

   **Finances**
   
   a. Very negative effect 18%
   b. Somewhat negative effect 29%
   c. No effect 32%
   d. Somewhat positive effect 13%
   e. Very positive effect  8%

   **Job**
   
   a. Very negative effect 20%
   b. Somewhat negative effect 23%
   c. No effect  34%
   d. Somewhat positive effect 12%
   e. Very positive effect 11%

   **Mental health**
   
   a. Very negative effect 11%
   b. Somewhat negative effect 30%
   c. No effect 38%
   d. Somewhat positive effect 12%
   e. Very positive effect 10%

   **Physical health**
   
   a. Very negative effect 10%
   b. Somewhat negative effect 23%
   c. No effect  42%
   d. Somewhat positive effect 15%
   e. Very positive effect 10%

*Base: Individuals who were in the workforce (employed full-time or part-time, self-employed, or unemployed looking for work) and for whom the item is applicable, n=Varies.
6. How worried are you that you may lose your job as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) events, or are you not at all worried?

   a. Extremely worried  21%
   b. Very worried        17%
   c. Somewhat worried    23%
   d. Not very worried    20%
   e. Not at all worried  19%

*Base: Individuals who were employed full-time or part-time or self-employed, n=542.

7. Did you lose your job or have your hours or income from work been reduced because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation?

   a. Yes  54%
   b. No   46%

*Base: Individuals who were in the workforce (employed full-time or part-time, self-employed, or unemployed looking for work) n=631.