

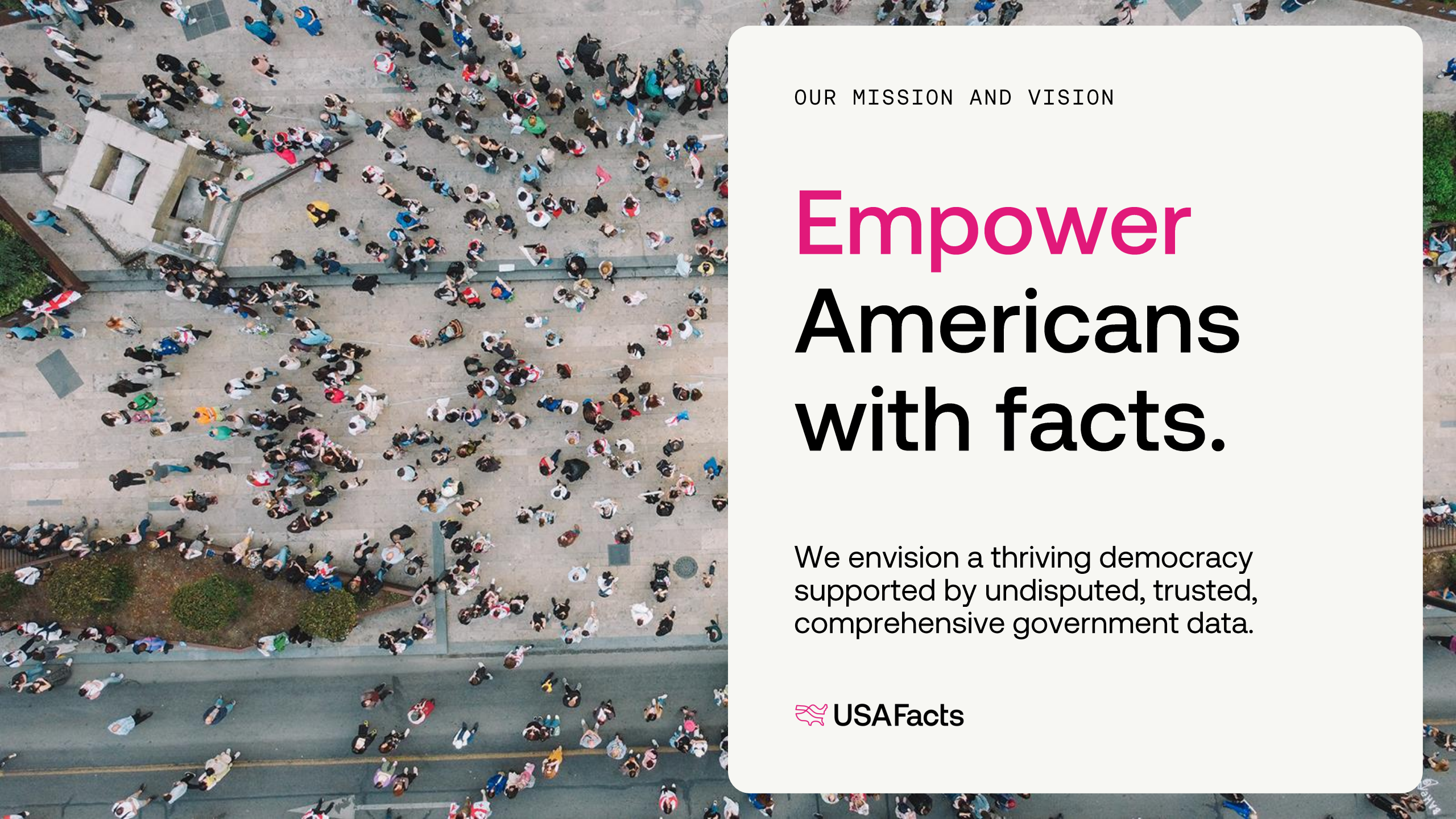
September 2026

A Mandate for 21st Century Government Data

Ben Gitis

Data Policy and Advocacy Manager

beng@usafacts.org



OUR MISSION AND VISION

Empower Americans with facts.

We envision a thriving democracy supported by undisputed, trusted, comprehensive government data.

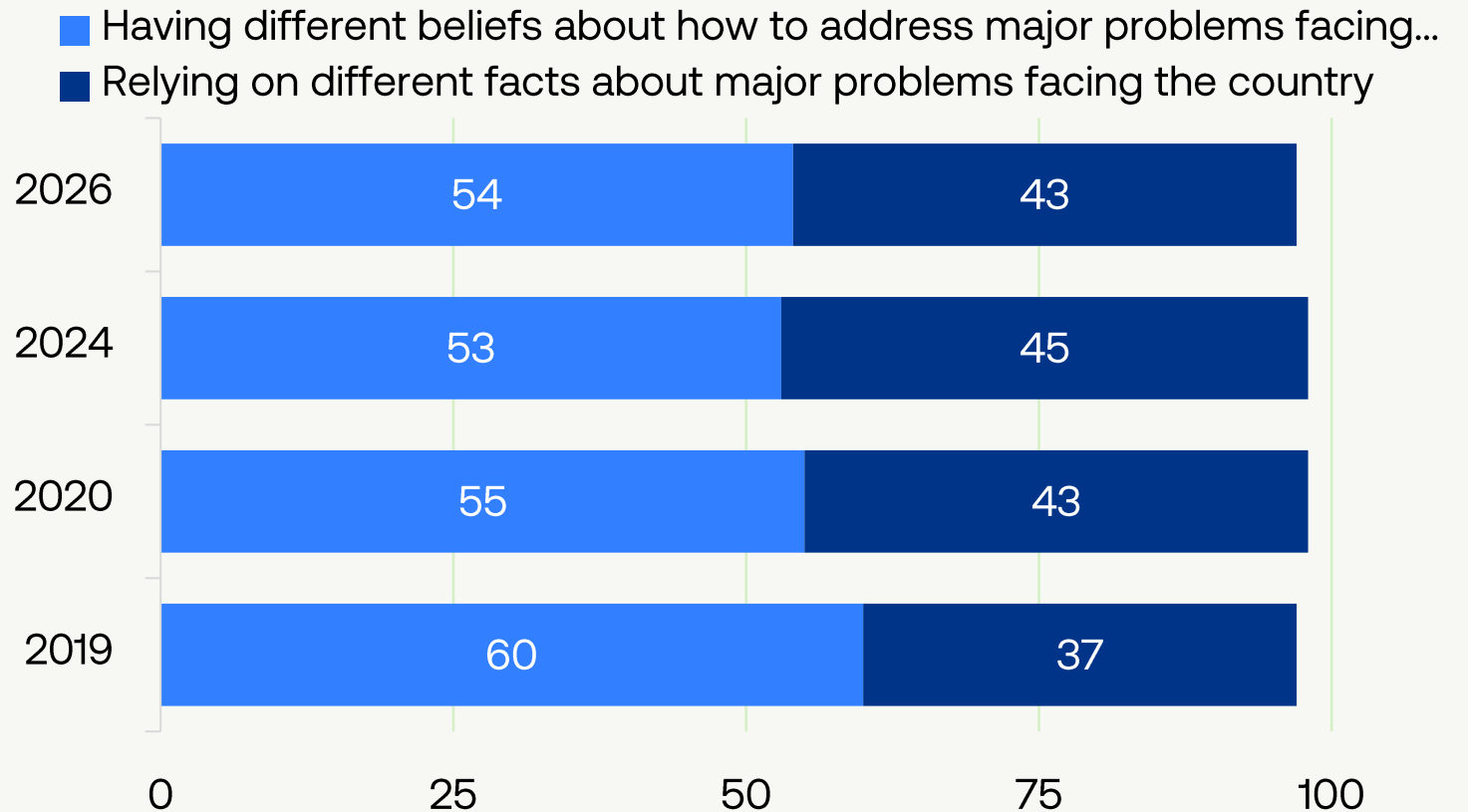


There are more than 90,000 government entities in the country and no standardization for data collection and reporting.

Compared with 2019, more now think that political division in the United States is a result of **people relying on different facts** rather than having different beliefs.

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view, even if neither is exactly right? Political division in the United States is more a result of Americans...

Percent of adults

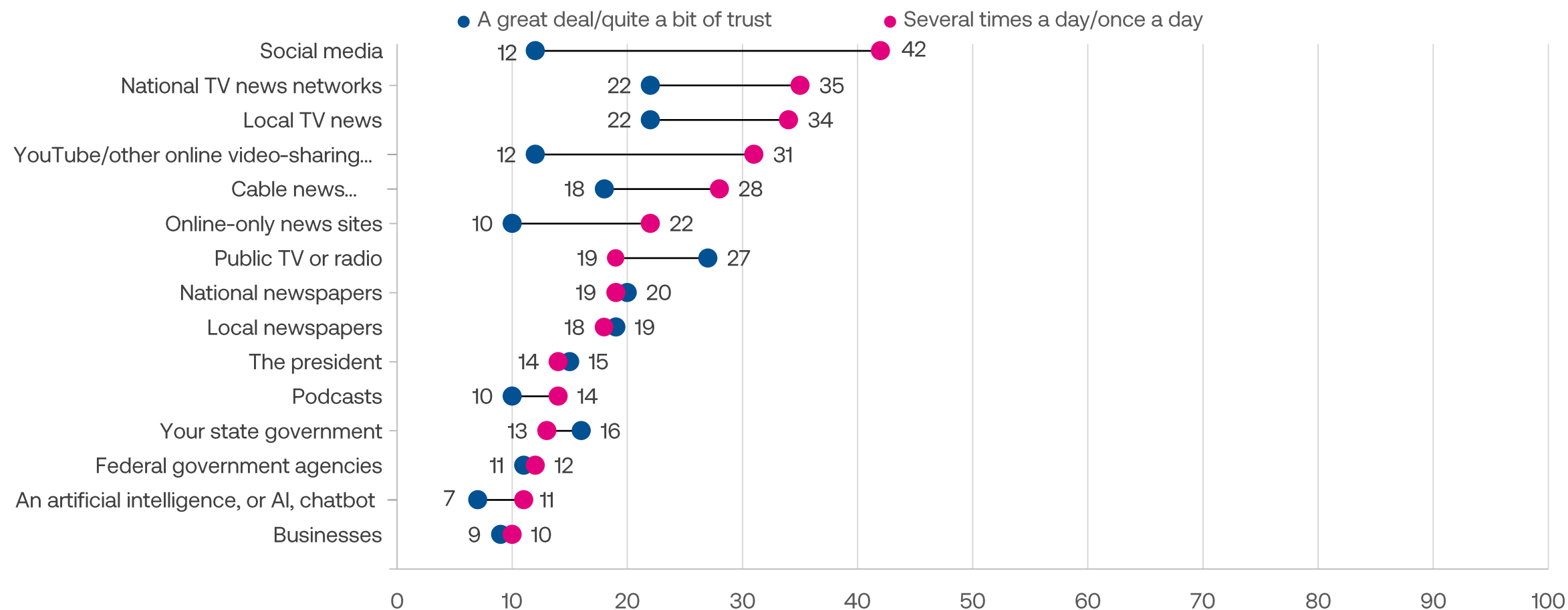


Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts polls conducted July 29-August 10, 2026 with 1,036 adults, July 29-August 8, 2024, with 1,019 adults, September 15-25, 2020, with 1,043 adults, and October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults

Few trust information about the government from sources they use the most regularly

Thinking about some of the ways you get information about the government these days, how often, if at all, do you get information from.../Regardless of how often you get information from these sources, how much do you trust information from them about the government?

Percent of adults



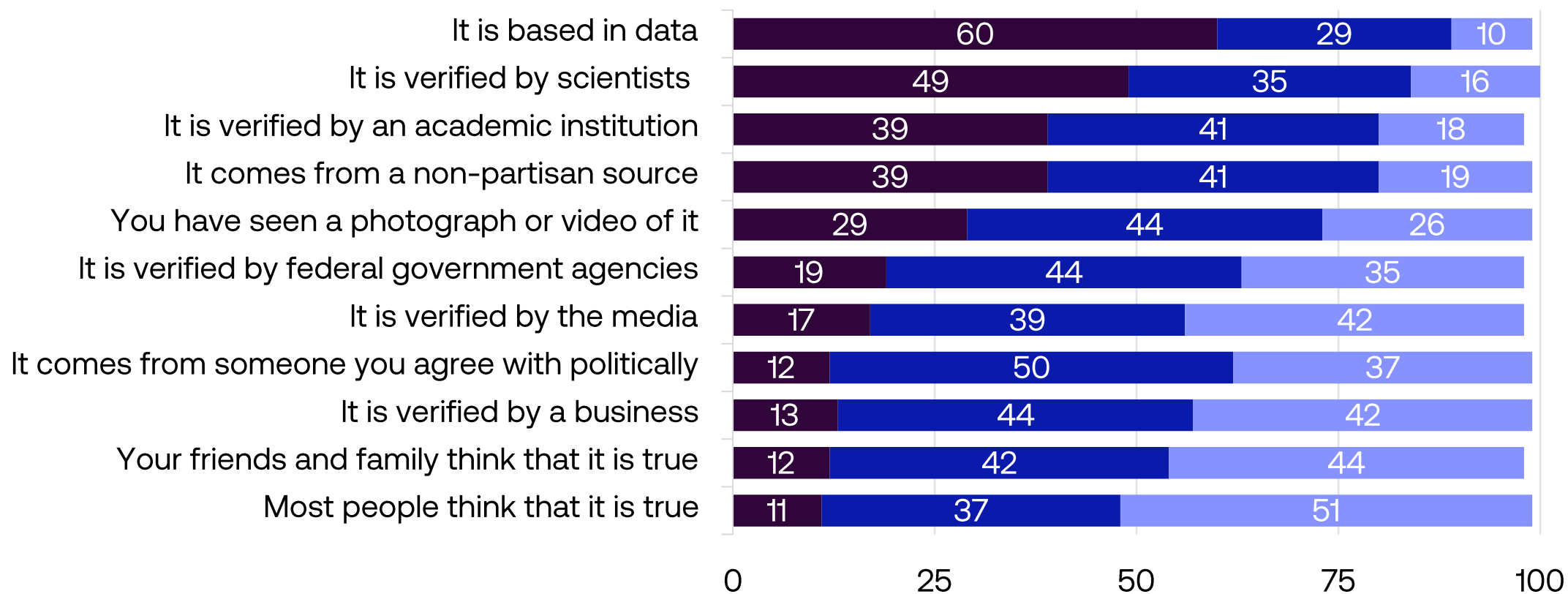
Source: AP-NORC/USAFacts poll conducted July 29–August 10, 2026, with 1,036 adults

Americans are most likely to believe that something is a fact if it is based in data.

How likely are you to consider information factual if it has each of the following characteristics?

Percent of adults

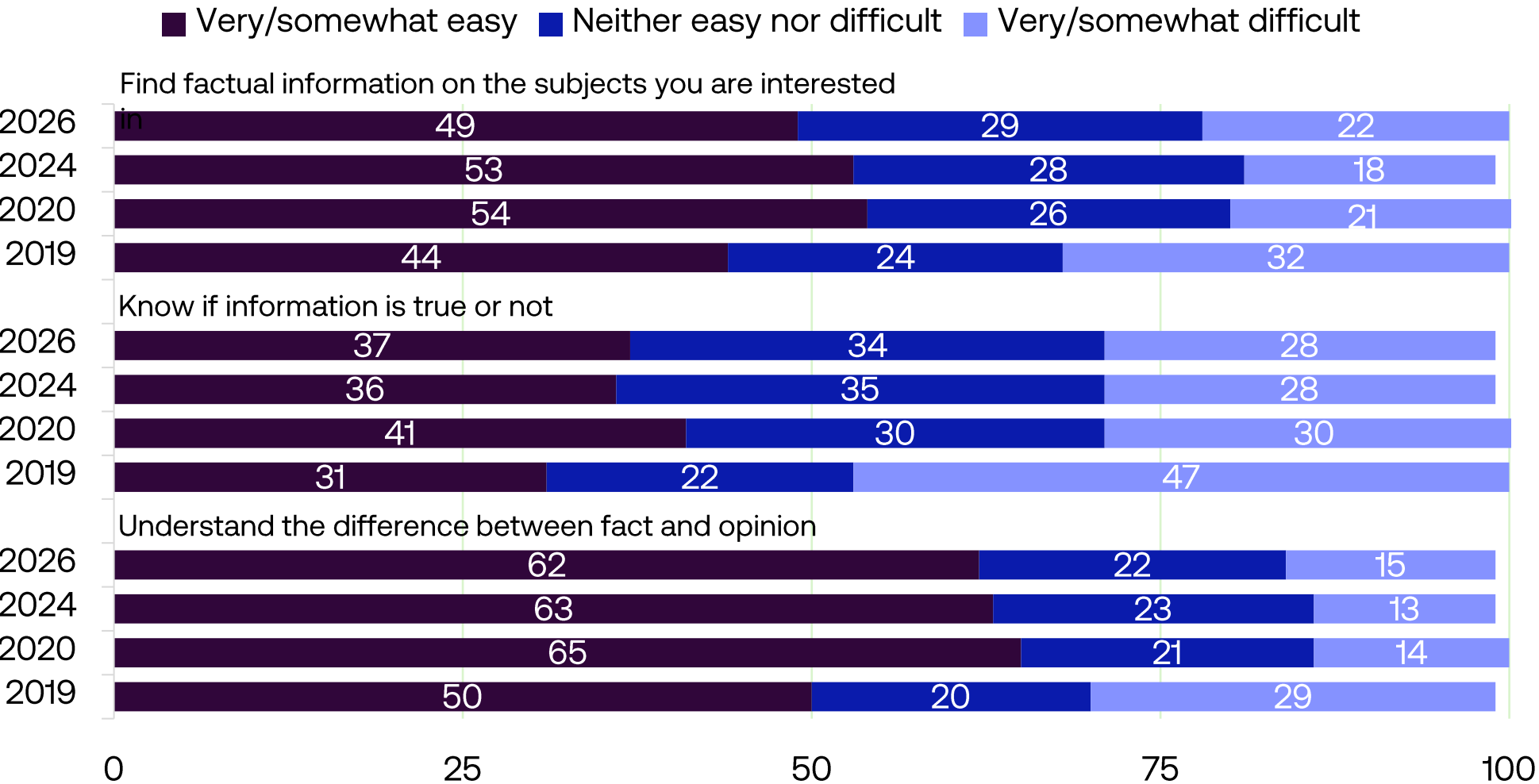
Extremely/very likely Moderately likely Not too/not at all likely



Distinguishing fact from opinion remains far easier than knowing if information is true – a gap that has persisted since 2020.

Next, in general, how easy or difficult is it for you to...

Percent of adults





We are a nonpartisan not-for-profit organization providing comprehensive and understandable government data.

OUR PRINCIPLES

Factual: Only government data

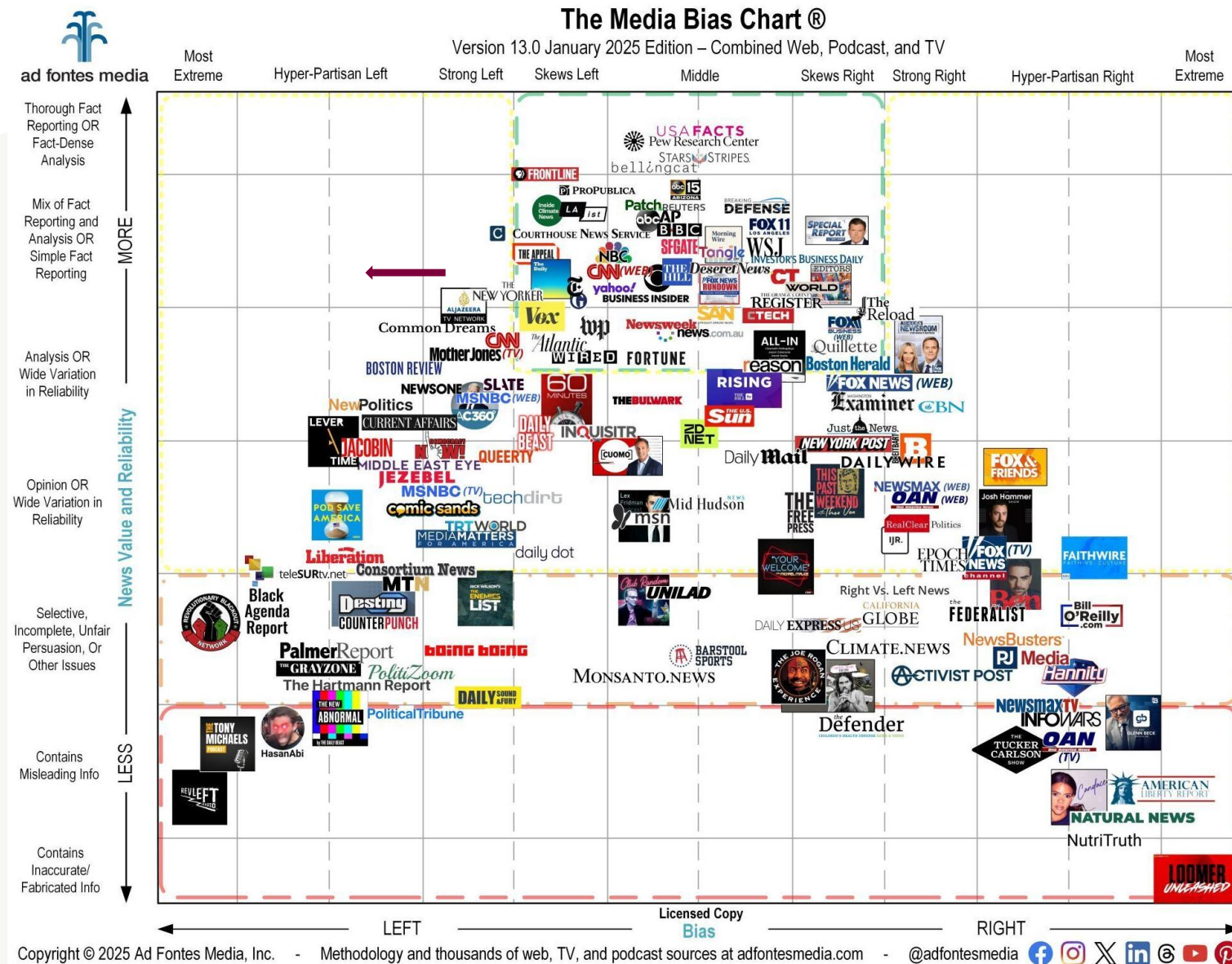
Unbiased: No partisan agenda

Comprehensive: Federal, state, and local

Contextual: Historical trends & other relevant data

Comprehensible: Intuitively organized & visualized

Ad Fontes Media recognizes USAFacts as the **most reliable** and **least biased** media source





Our reach

19.4 million

website sessions
in 2025

820,000

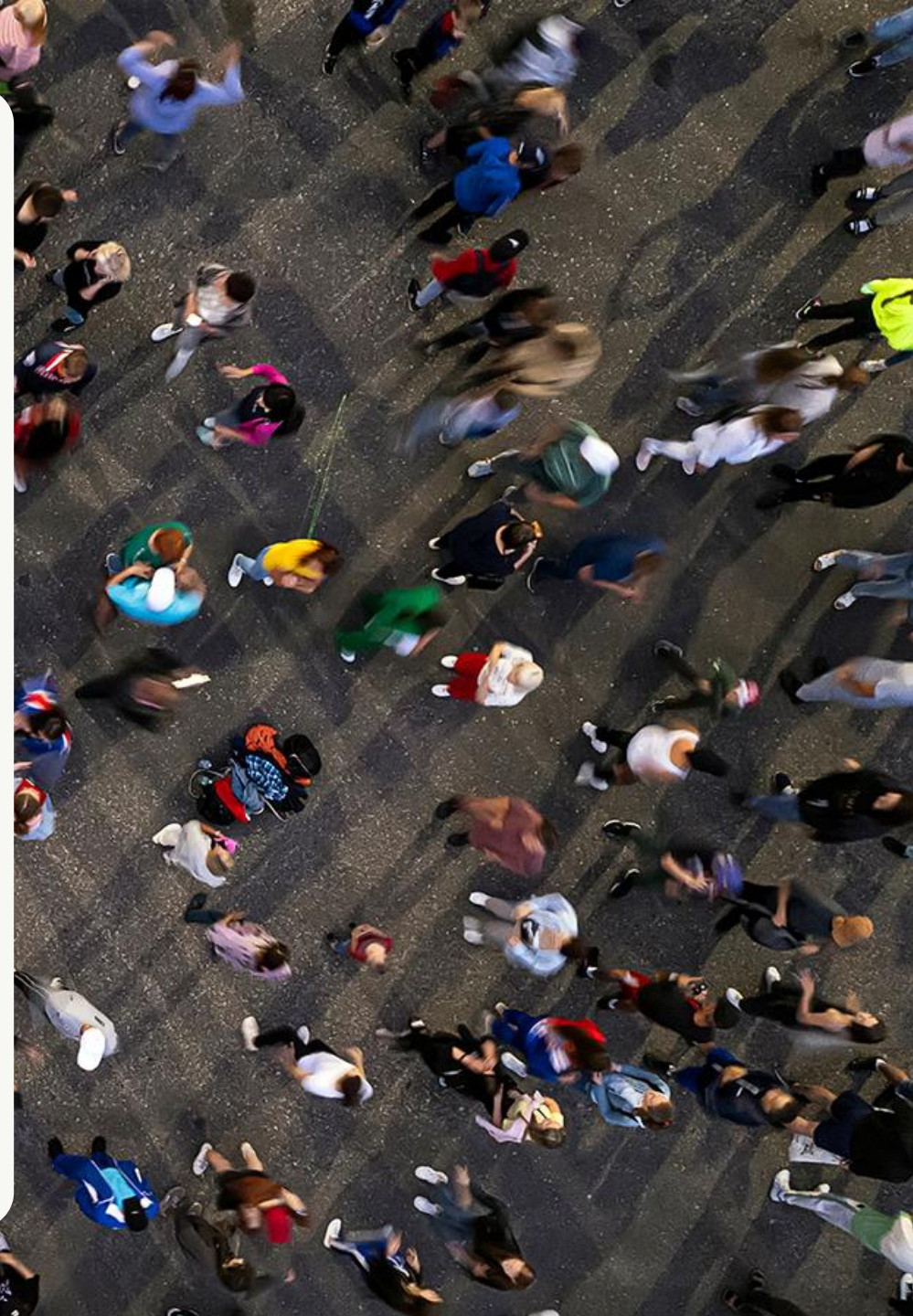
newsletter subscribers,
with a 45% open rate

1.1 million

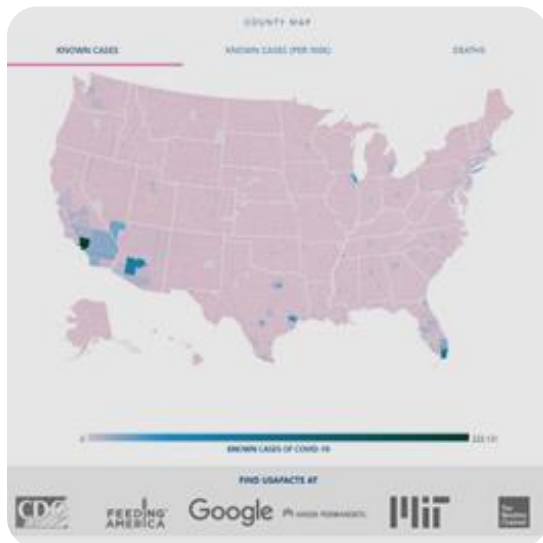
social media followers

356 million

YouTube views of our
Just the Facts series



How USAFacts collaborates with government



The CDC relied on our critical data during the COVID-19 pandemic.



We forged an AI partnership for innovation and progress with the Department of Commerce.



We testified before Congress on data-driven policy.



We met with Congressional leadership for both parties from the House and Senate.



OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Our core products make
government data **easy for the
public to understand and use,**
even when the issues are complex.

Answer pages and guides

- ✓ Provide the public a robust answer to a question rooted in non-partisan data
- ✓ Scale to provide answers for state and local geographies
- ✓ Aggregate answers into hub-like “guides” that provide a central place to understand an issue



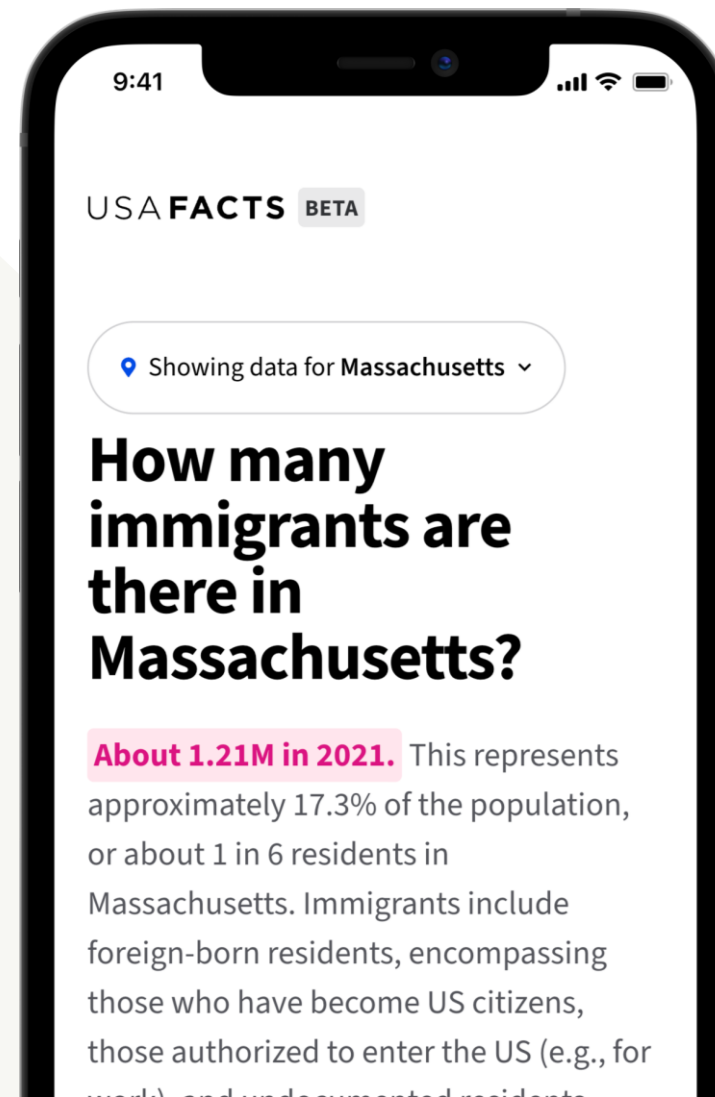
ROBUST ANSWERS



UPDATES MONTHLY



SCALE BY GEOGRAPHY



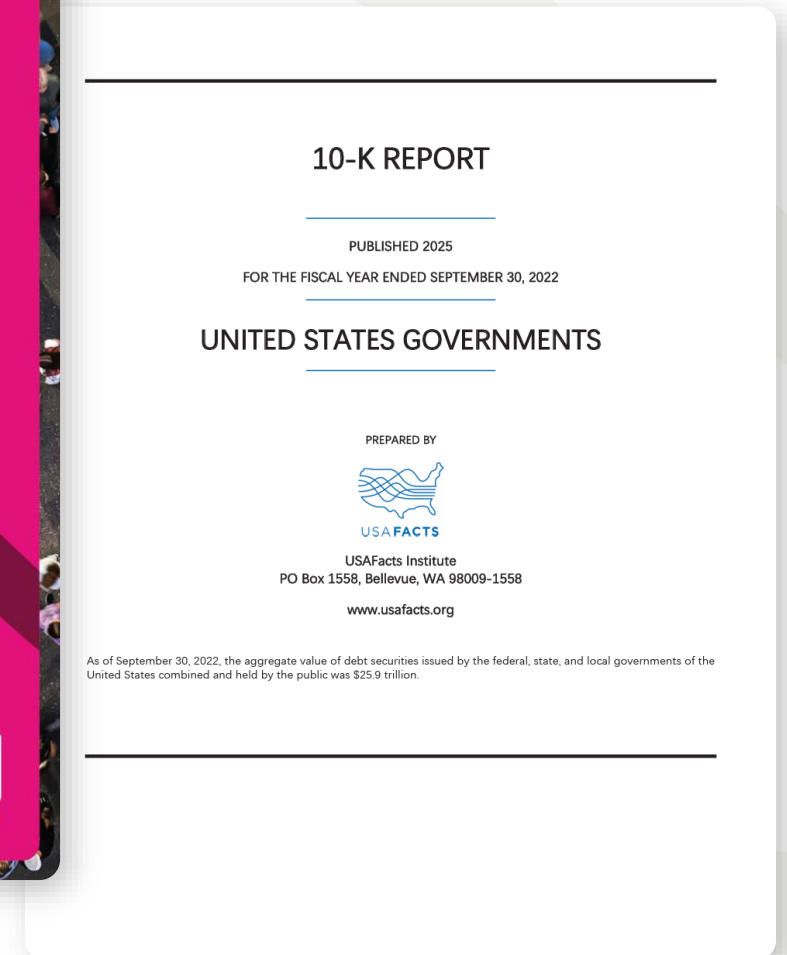
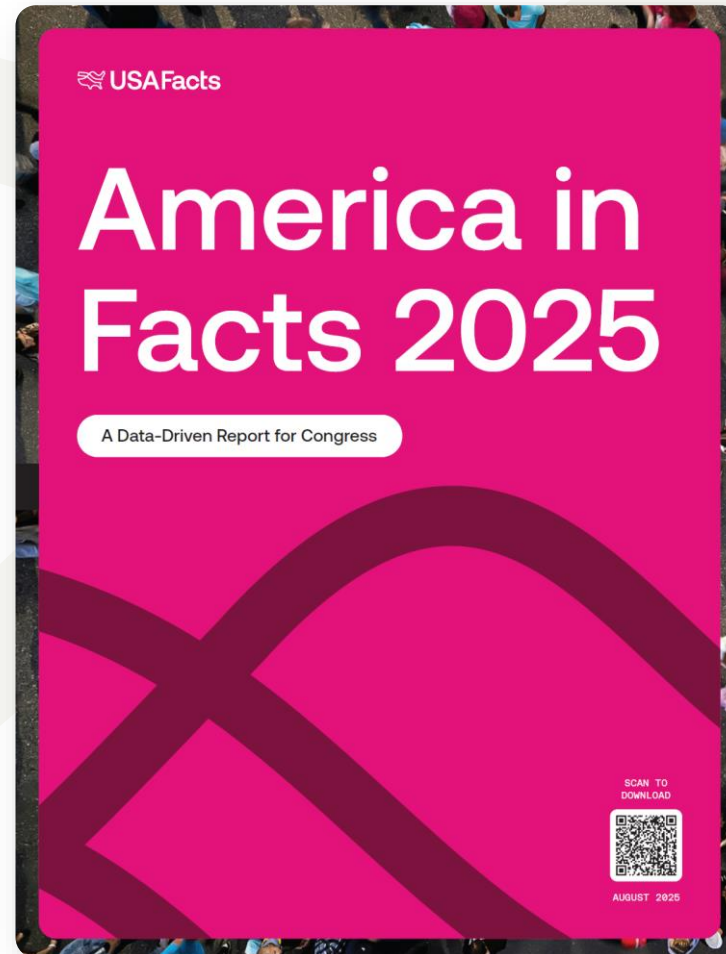
USAFacts, AI, and government data

USAFacts engineers and data analysts build products that use AI to cite government data. In doing so, we have developed a series of learnings on best practices for enabling AI to accurately cite government data with proper context.

- “Ask the Data” chatbot responds to user questions about our country with accurate and contextualized government data
- USAFacts “Answer Pages” use AI to automatically update state and local-level data sourced from government agencies
- Currently developing MCP server for state budget data along with new ChatGPT application

Annual Report and 10-K

For the deepest readers
and “power users”



State of the Union in Numbers

Quick overview of key topics

State of the Union: In Numbers 2025

A nonpartisan, data-driven snapshot of the state of the union in 2025

The issues

Article II of the US Constitution mandates that the president address Congress on the “state of the union,” including a budget report and legislative proposals.

President Donald Trump is set to deliver a speech to Congress on Tuesday, March 4. As it is the first year of his second term, it is not officially designated as a State of the Union but rather a “joint address to Congress.” However, its purpose remains similar to a State of the Union address: to outline priorities and set the stage for upcoming policies.

Throughout history, the State of the Union and similar speeches have been heavy on policy or accomplishments, but have seldom been nonbiased. This is where the 2025 State of the Union in Numbers comes in.

This data-driven, impartial report contains historic metrics — how you use them to advocate for the changes you want to see in the country is up to you.

Jump to ▾

Just the Facts

Video and medium-form content



Data Policy and Advocacy



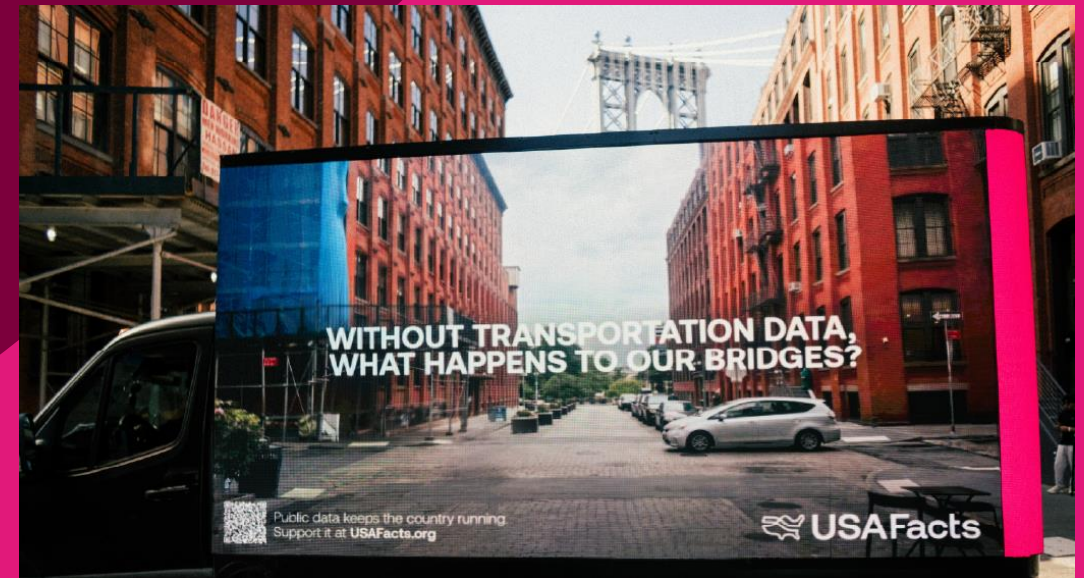
Our Approach

Data-Informed Decisions. Provide educational materials that use government data to inform major issues.

Policy Solutions. Develop and share new ideas to make government data easy to access and use.

Network. Leverage projects to grow and activate our network of data agency professionals, political appointees, Congressional staff, and public policy experts.

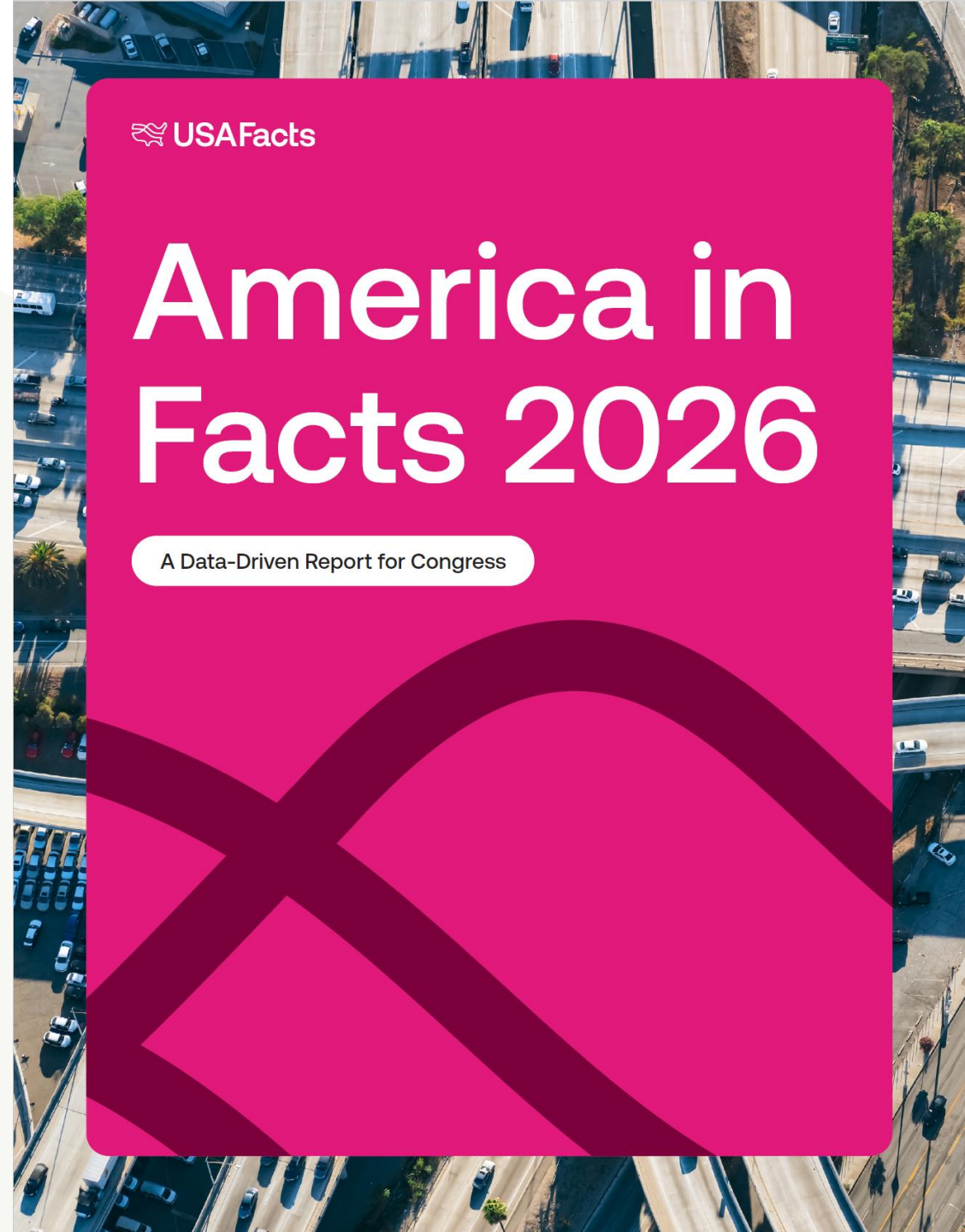
Advocacy. Directly engage Congress, data agencies, and the administration to support the development and advancement of policies that improve the accessibility and usefulness of government data.



Data-Informed Policymaking:

Annual Report

- Data-driven report focusing on major issues lawmakers tackle each year
- Topics covered in the 2026 edition
 - Federal Finances
 - Population
 - Immigration Enforcement
 - Federal Reserve
 - Healthcare Affordability
 - Electricity Costs





EXPLORING THE DATA

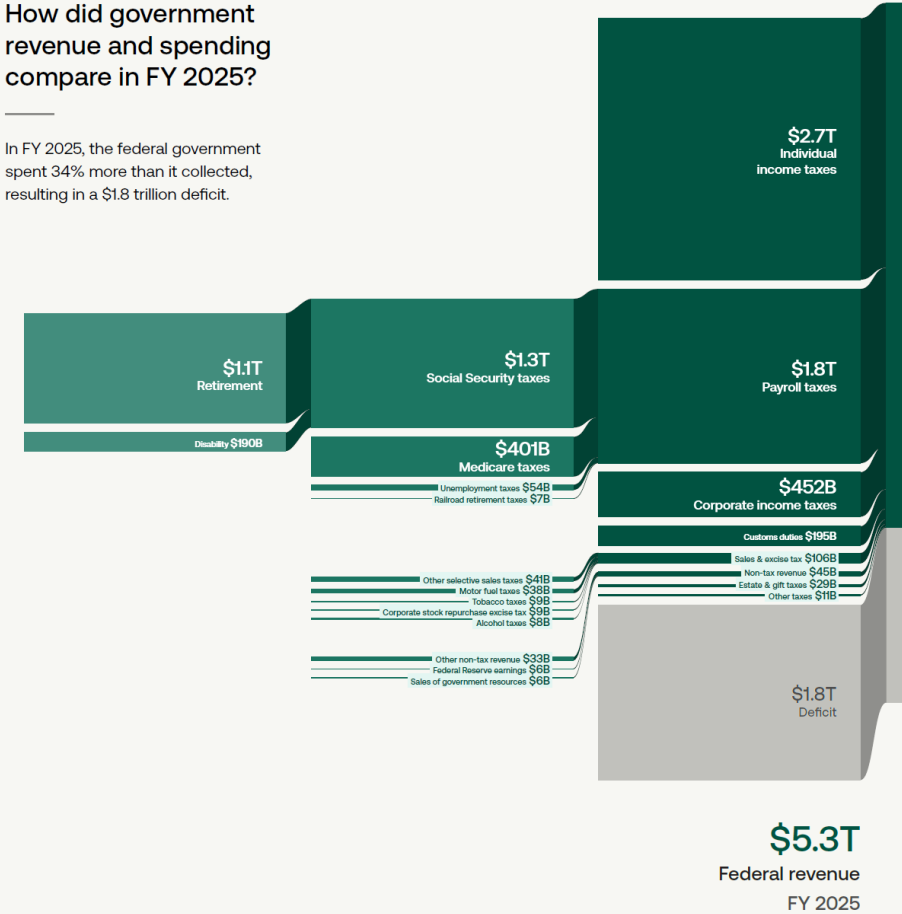
Federal Finances



Federal Budget Sankey, FY 2025

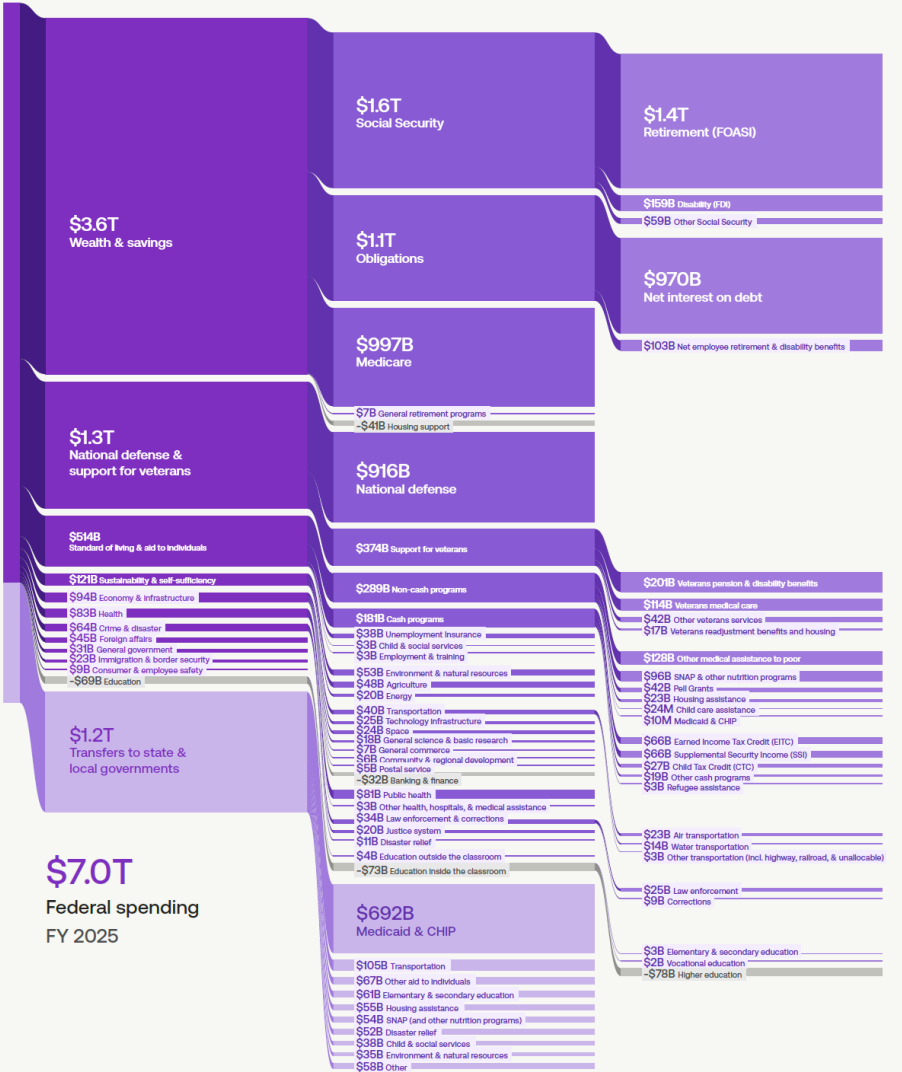
How did government revenue and spending compare in FY 2025?

In FY 2025, the federal government spent 34% more than it collected, resulting in a \$1.8 trillion deficit.



Federal government finances (FY 2025)

Source: USAFacts aggregation of data from Office of Management and Budget and Bureau of Economic Analysis
Note: Charts are shown to scale for comparison. Numbers may not add due to rounding.



EXPLORING THE DATA

Healthcare Affordability



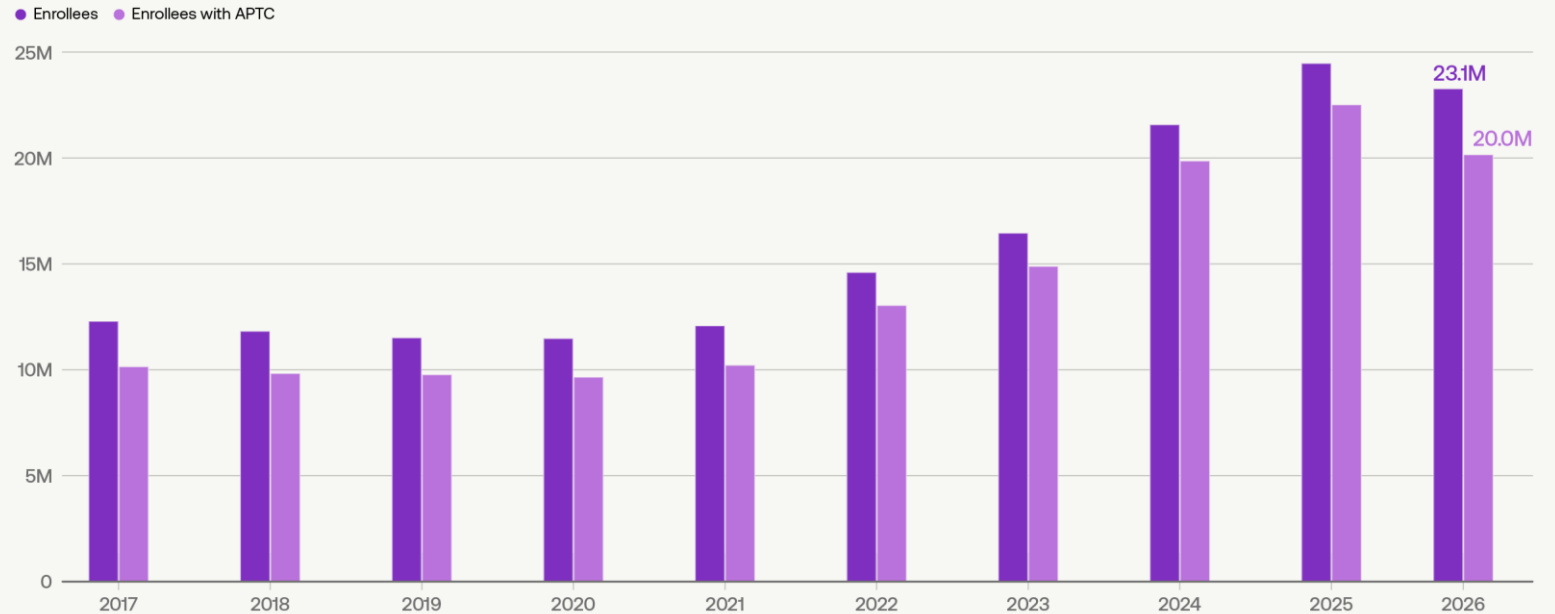
How many people are enrolled in ACA marketplace plans?

Over **23 million** people enrolled in an ACA marketplace plan in 2026, the second-highest year on record, down **1 million** people from the 2025 peak.

The share of enrollees receiving the Advanced Premium Tax Credit dropped from **92%** in 2025 to **87%** in 2026 after enhanced subsidies expired.

ACA marketplace enrollment

Total enrollment and enrollees with Advance Premium Tax Credit



Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

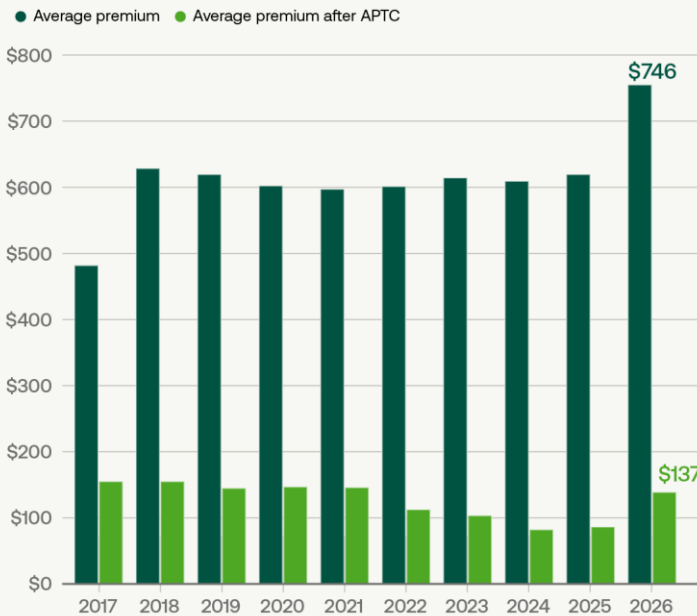
How much do ACA marketplace enrollees pay in premiums?

The average monthly premium on Healthcare.gov rose from **\$612** (**\$85** after the premium tax credit) in 2025 to **\$746** (**\$137** after accounting for the tax credit).

State-based exchanges saw similar increases: average premiums after credits rose from **\$179** in 2025 to **\$266** in 2026.

Average premiums and average premiums after the APTC

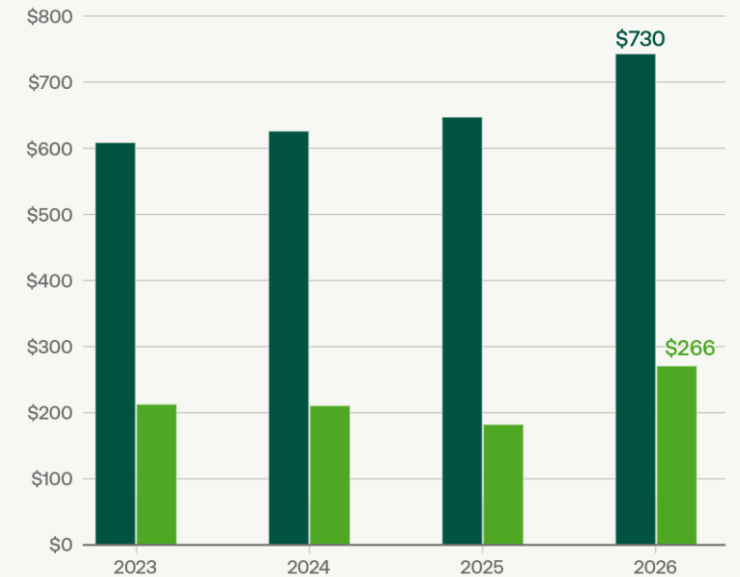
Healthcare.gov open enrollment premiums



Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

Note: This data includes plans purchased during open enrollment. Not adjusted for inflation.

State-based exchanges open enrollment premiums



Data Skills for Congress

A data analysis certificate program
exclusively for Congressional staff



2025 cohorts of the Data Skills for Congress program

About Data Skills for Congress

USAFacts provides Data Skills for Congress in partnership with UC Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy as a free education program on data skills and data policy exclusively for Congressional staff.



Where and how to access public data in support of legislation, oversight, communications, and casework



Methods and tools for evaluating, using, and visualizing data



Using emerging technologies, including AI



US federal open data policy

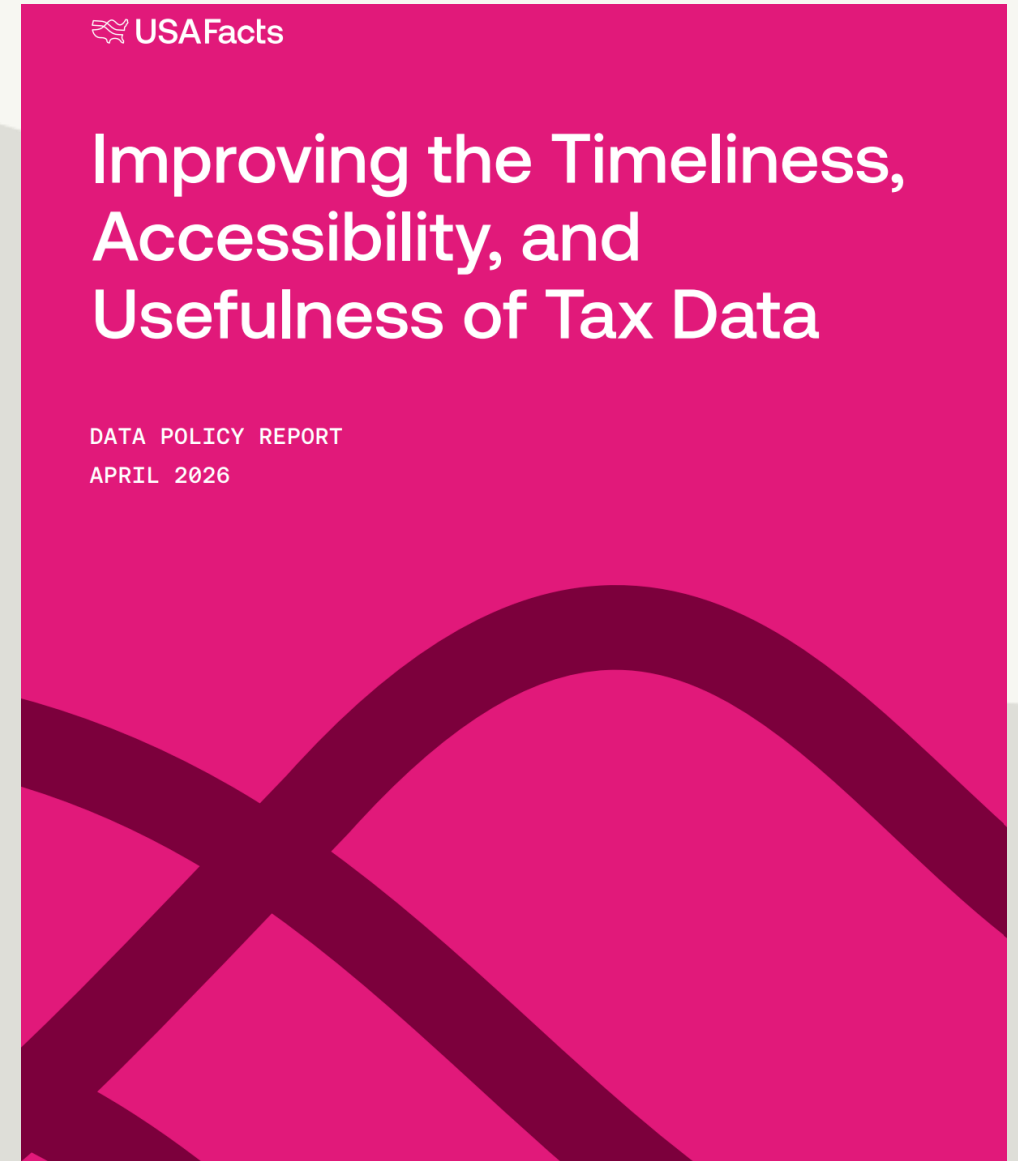
No prior experience in data analysis, data policy, or AI is required

Data Policy Solutions

Efforts to modernize government data, making it easier to access and use

Modernizing Statistics of Income

- USAFacts developed solutions to empower and modernize the Statistics of Income amidst 2025 tax reform
- Effort began as a response to a technical assistance request from House Ways & Means Republicans
- Developed 13 recommendations based on USAFacts expertise and input from leading tax economists and statistical officials
 - Empower SOI: Authorize funding for the agency, increase funding, and elevate SOI director
 - Technology solutions to quicken publication
 - Ideas to make tax data easier to access and use



Federal Data Excellence

About

Joint initiative with the Partnership for Public Service to evaluate the ease of access and usefulness of government data products, based on a set of standards, and recognize the best products.

2025 Winners

- **Administrative:** Summary of Deposits – FDIC
- **Geospatial:** Landscape Change Monitoring System – Agriculture
- **Statistical:** Medical Expenditure Panel Survey Household Component – HHS
- **Honorable mention:** National Fire Incident Reporting System – US Fire Administration

State of Federal Data 2025

- Evaluates changes in functionality of 2024 nominees
- Of those still online and expected to update:
 - 48% active, 22% missed or reduced updates, 17% had no updates, 11% had reduced functionality, and 2% improved



Envisioning the future of government data

Co-authored with the Center for Open Data Enterprise (CODE)

Three major sections

- Envisions the future of government data
- Identifies the federal government's essential data roles
- Presents a roadmap for modernizing government data

Process

- Reflects input from more than 150 leading data experts gathered at roundtables hosted in DC and Oakland last year



USAFacts



CODE

Building the National Data Ecosystem America Deserves

A Report from USAFacts and the Center for Open Data Enterprise (CODE)

These seven goals are:

Goal 1

Maintaining critical federal data collections

With federal data in a state of transition, it's important to identify essential data sources in different sectors, determine what data must be maintained, and develop criteria for deciding when and how a federal data program can be discontinued. There is also a need to monitor changes to government data collections and archive important data and tools.

Goal 2

Strong, reliable federal data governance

The current pressures on national data provide an opportunity to take a fresh look at how the government manages its data. It's an appropriate time to fully implement current laws and privacy protections, improve federal data products, and consider new legislation, governance structures, funding mechanisms, and technical solutions. Developing better ways to manage the country's data, and communicating them to the public, can help restore trust in our national data systems.

Goal 3

A national data ecosystem that serves all Americans

National data collections should represent all American communities and groups. It's important to ensure that data is disaggregated by race, ethnicity, income, education, rural or tribal residency, sexual orientation, and other factors at both a national and state level. It's also important to engage with local communities around that data collection and use.

Goal 4

An AI-enabled system for better data and data access

AI is having a profound impact on the federal data ecosystem. There is an immediate need to address critical concerns about AI while also improving national data in ways that will make it more useful for AI applications. At the same time, AI can improve the national data ecosystem by harmonizing data sources, creating new data sources, and democratizing data access and analysis.

Goal 5

Extensive and usable systems of state and local data

State and local data, an integral part of the national data ecosystem, needs to be improved in many ways. There are opportunities to improve capacity and ensure funding for state and local data, improve data sharing and data standards, preserve data for state and local use, and tap administrative data for analysis.

Goal 6

Robust American data developed with and for America's businesses

Both large and small businesses have a stake in a robust national data ecosystem, and they can do more to help build that ecosystem for the future. There are opportunities to explore using private data for public use and to identify public data of high value to the private sector. New approaches can include developing proxy and blended data sources and new cooperative models for data collection and management.

Goal 7

Shared expertise, communication, and collaboration around national data

National data is a critical public good, and the public can become more involved in its development, maintenance, and use. Stakeholders with an interest in national data can tell more effective stories, target key stakeholders more strategically, and build and tap new expert networks.

Achieving these goals will take vision, organization, collaboration, and time. That work will need to balance immediate improvements with more extensive initiatives to achieve bold goals for major change.

Advocacy

Directly engaging lawmakers to strengthen public data, while mobilizing our audience to call for action

Bridging Content and Advocacy: Federal Reserve

Kevin Warsh nominated to serve as Chair of the Fed

- Data Brief on the Fed & the economy
- In-person Congressional briefing held in March
- Questions for the Next Fed Chair
 - Picked up by McClatchy Media Network

Result?

- USAFacts prompted data policy discussion during Warsh's nomination hearing
 - Question posed by Sen. Cortez Masto (D-NV)
 - Warsh gave in-depth answer about inflation data

FEDERAL RESERVE | FEATURE

Why Kevin Warsh Thinks Inflation Isn't Being Measured Correctly

By Nicole Goodkind [Follow](#)

Updated May 11, 2026, 5:50 am EDT / Original May 11, 2026, 1:00 am EDT

[Share](#) [G](#) [Aa](#) [Resize](#)

[Reprints](#) [Headphones](#)



The Senate is expected to confirm Kevin Warsh as the next chair of the Federal Reserve. (ANDREW HARRIS/GETTY IMAGES)

The Data We Depend On Campaign



The Data We Depend On

Centered on the idea that government data belongs to the people, the campaign urges Americans to see the value of public data in their everyday lives by questioning what would happen to our world if the data disappeared.

The campaign also encourages the public to **call on Congress to use data in decision making and invest in improving it**, with the goal of generating widespread engagement.

The Data We Depend On campaign aims to drive awareness, spark earned media momentum, and mobilize Americans to sign an Open Letter to Congress.

Open Letter to Congress

The DWDO Open Letter makes two asks of Congress:

1. **Use data to legislate.** Make data a standard part of policymaking. Use it to define problems, compare options, allocate resources, and measure outcomes. Make the data behind major decisions clear and accessible so that voters can understand your work.
2. **Fix the data when it falls short.** When data is too slow, too fragmented, too inaccessible, or lacks local relevance, it is a critical problem to solve, not just for you, but for your constituents as well. We ask you to use your authority to modernize federal data systems, improve timeliness and quality, increase ease of access, and ensure data is usable for both policymakers and the public.



A Mandate for 21st-Century Government Data

To the Members of the United States Congress,

We, the undersigned voters, are writing with a simple request: govern with data, and make the data better when it falls short.

Government data is about the American people, provided by the American people, and paid for with their tax dollars. So, we expect you to use it when making decisions on behalf of millions of Americans and deciding how to allocate trillions of taxpayer dollars. Those decisions should be grounded in data. Put another way, they should be grounded in facts.

Leaders of every modern business count on timely, reliable data to make decisions, allocate resources, and evaluate outcomes. Congress should be no different.

Using data is not just about better policymaking. It is about trust. When you use clear, publicly available data, voters can understand why decisions were made, track whether they worked, and evaluate the results.

We also ask you to fulfill your duties as stewards of the data itself.

Years of underinvestment has led America's data system — considered the gold standard of the world — to degrade. Federal data is frequently outdated, released too slowly to inform real-time decisions, and lacks local detail needed to understand what is happening in states and communities. It is fragmented across agencies, difficult to access, and often requires specialized expertise to interpret. In some cases, critical data is incomplete or inconsistent, limiting its usefulness for both lawmakers and the public.

When data grows obsolete, decision-making suffers. So does public trust.

This is not an abstract problem — it is a core function of government. The same way Congress funds roads, defense, and public safety, you must also fund and oversee the nation's data infrastructure. It's 2026. We need leaders to bring government data into the 21st Century.

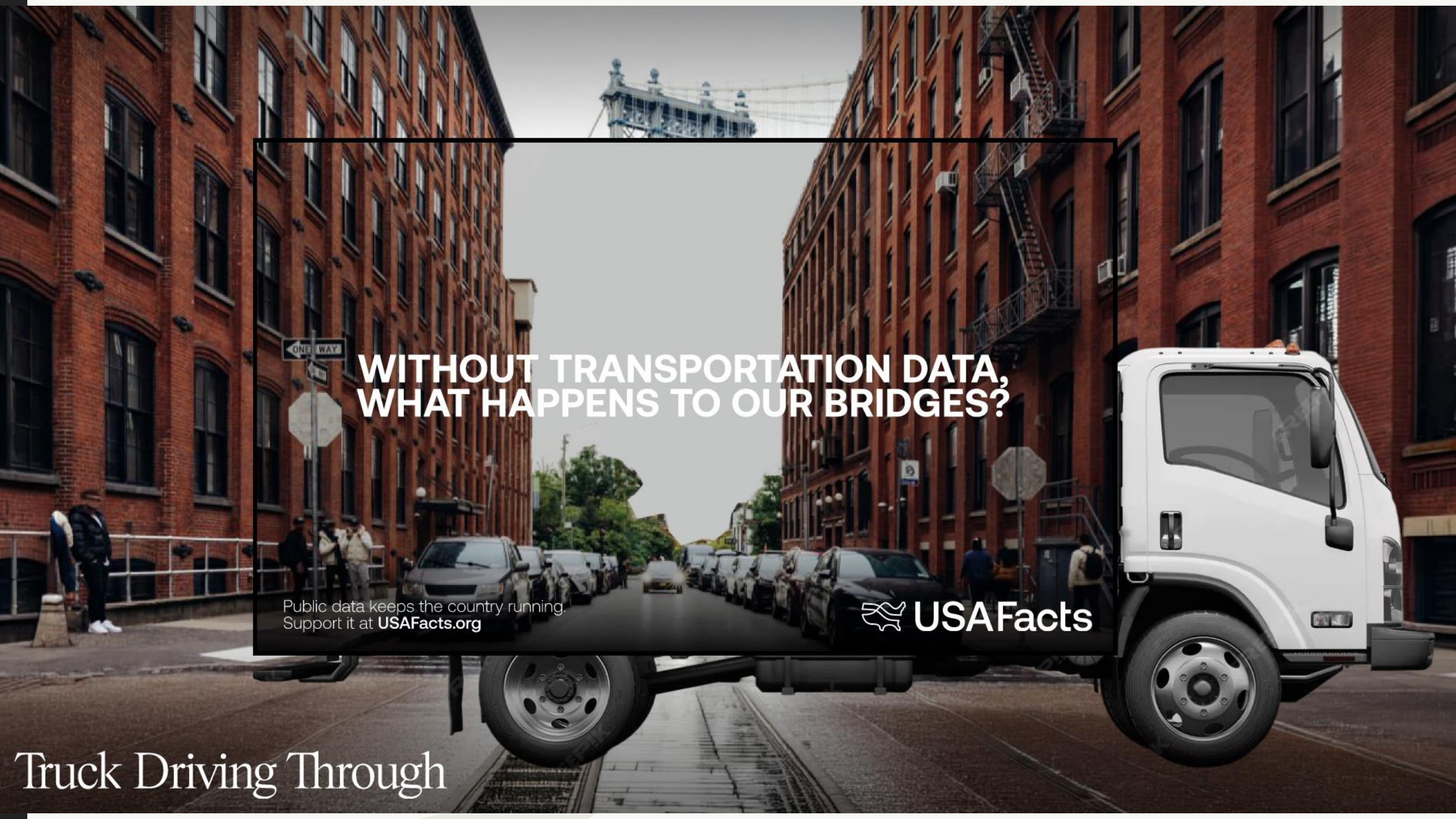
We are asking you to do two things:

First: Use data to legislate. Make data a standard part of policymaking. Use it to define problems, compare options, allocate resources, and measure outcomes. Make the data behind major decisions clear and accessible so that voters can understand your work.

Second: Fix the data when it falls short. When data is too slow, too fragmented, too inaccessible, or lacks local relevance, it is a critical problem to solve, not just for you, but for your constituents as well. We ask you to use your authority to modernize federal data systems, improve timeliness and quality, increase ease of access, and ensure data is usable for both policymakers and the public.

A functioning democracy requires informed decisions and an informed public. Both depend on better use of data — and better data itself.

The Fact Fleet



WITHOUT TRANSPORTATION DATA, WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR BRIDGES?

Public data keeps the country running.
Support it at USAFacts.org

 **USA Facts**

Truck Driving Through



**WITHOUT AGRICULTURAL DATA,
WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN TO OUR FOOD SUPPLY?**

Public data keeps the country running.
Support it at USAFacts.org

 **USA Facts**

Public data keeps the country running
Support it at USAFacts.org



 USAFacts

Public data keeps the country running
Support it at USAFacts.org



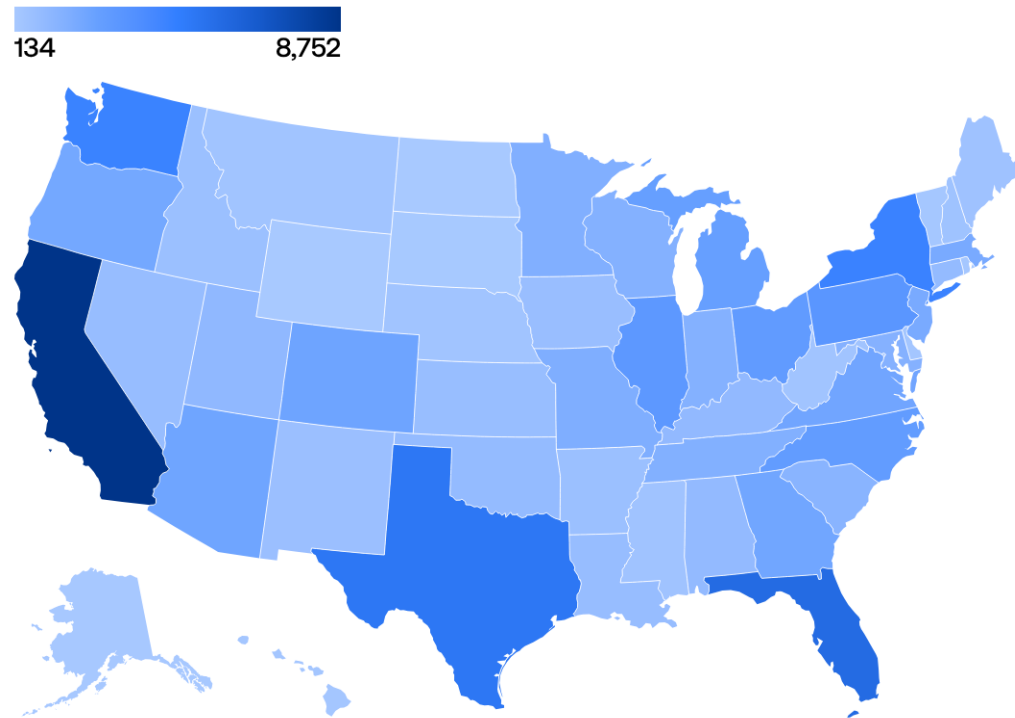
 USAFacts

2017 VIRGINIA TRUCK
UC67-974

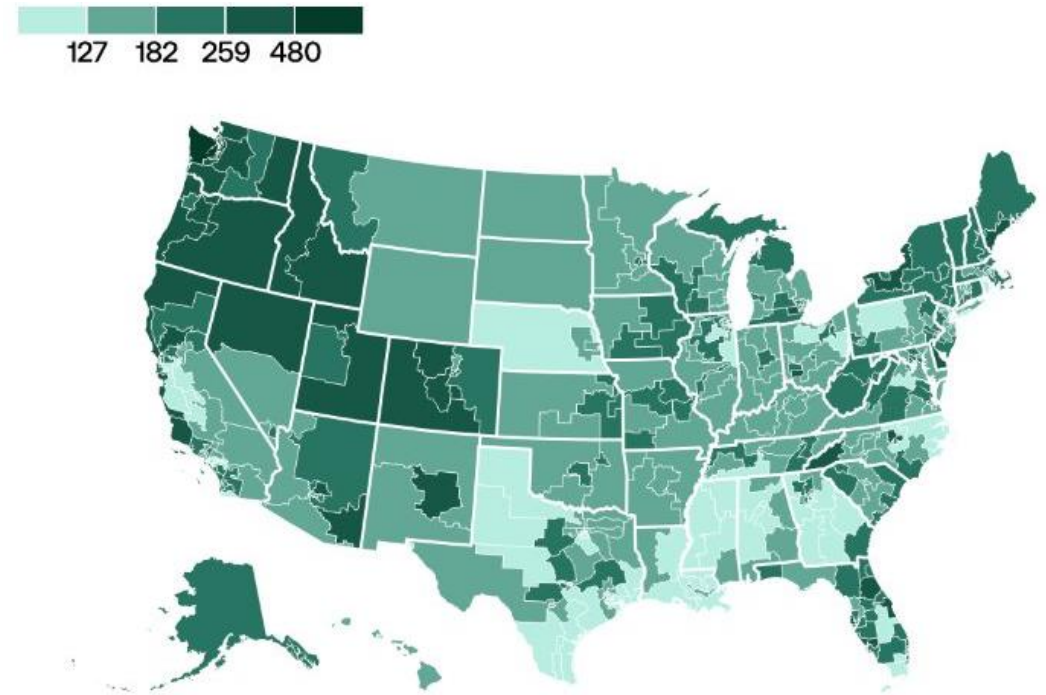
REACH

80,100 total signatures

Signatures by State



Signatures by Congressional District



CAMPAIGN RESPONSES

What data do
people
actually care
about?

23,627

written responses in one open-
ended question

Note: responses often mention more than one topic, so categories are not mutually exclusive and percentages sum to more than 100%.

Responses by category:



CAMPAIGN RESPONSES

What data do people actually care about?

“Transparency in government is essential to public confidence.”

Accuracy and transparency came up in over 2,000 answers, across every theme.

Health and healthcare 5,594

“Health, schooling and public transportation are all important things that will be impacted by reliable statistics”

“Data from CDC on emerging organisms and on hospital infections”

Spending and taxes 3,167

“How tax dollars are spent, the results they get and data that benefits the public such as that produced by the CDC and NIH.”

“I am most concerned about deficit growth actions and national investment in science and technology.”

Economy and cost of living 4,317

“I care about economic data maintained by Census, the BEA, the BLS, and the Federal Reserve. It's vital to go beyond maintenance and push agencies to modernize and add new data sources for better insight into current blind spots and emerging issues.”

“Cost of living, cost of housing, cost of healthcare, education statistics”

Climate and environment 2,847

“Science of all types. For me, environmental and climate is really important as well medical”

“Environmental data, demographic data, and temporal data to track trends!”

Sign the open letter here!

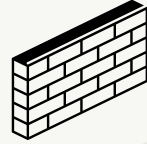


And don't forget to share
with your networks!

WHAT'S NEXT?

AI-Ready Government Data

The problem



57% of Americans have used AI tools to search or brainstorm — but **only 13.8% of AI users say they trust the information** it provides (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2026*)

Government data is the most rigorous, authoritative source of information about the country — **but it wasn't built for machines to read or understand.** Methodology lives in PDFs, context lives in institutional memory, and formats vary agency to agency

Leading AI models **succeed less than 50% of the time** in accurately retrieving government data from databases or APIs (*USABench*)

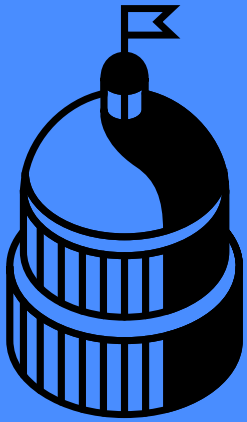
Goal: a framework that makes **AI-readiness for government data actionable and measurable** — not just a direction to point toward

USAFacts, AI, and government data

USAFacts engineers and data analysts build products that use AI to cite government data. In doing so, we have developed a series of learnings on best practices for enabling AI to accurately cite government data with proper context.

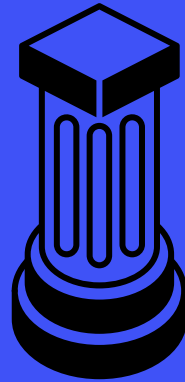
- “Ask the Data” chatbot responds to user questions about our country with accurate and contextualized government data
- USAFacts “Answer Pages” use AI to automatically update state and local-level data sourced from government agencies
- Currently developing MCP server for state budget data along with new ChatGPT application

Who the framework is for



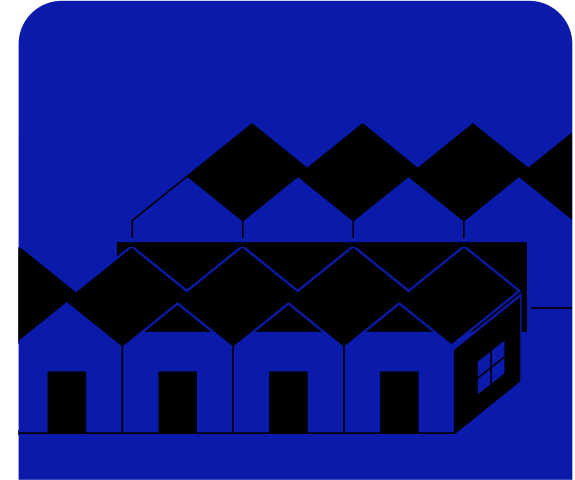
Congress

A basis for legislation
and funding that's
measurable



Agencies

A self-assessment
and investment
roadmap



AI Labs

A shared standard for
what to expect from –
and how to partner on
– federal data

Building on What Already Exists

"Generative Artificial Intelligence and Open Data: Guidelines and Best Practices"

Department of Commerce
2025

AI Risk Management Framework

National Institute of Standards and Technology
2023

Federal Data Excellence Standards

USAFacts & Partnership for Public Service

Why this framework is different: Provides an actionable roadmap for publishing data that AI agents can use accurately.

USAFacts

Thank you!

Ben Gitis

Data Policy and Advocacy Manager

beng@usafacts.org



usafacts.org