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Gallup-Walton Family Foundation Voices of Gen Z

Arkansas Youth



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Overview

In 2023, Gallup and the Walton Family Foundation established a partnership to survey and report on the voices of Generation Z. In 2024, children and young adults aged 12 to 27 shared their experiences with school and their teachers, providing insight into Gen Z's engagement with, and opinions about, their education. They also shared their thoughts on their current lives, their wellbeing and what they expect from their futures.

As part of this research initiative, Gallup and the Walton Family Foundation also surveyed over 500 Arkansas Gen Zers, who shared their experiences with these topics. Arkansas Gen Zers are thriving at a level slightly below the national average for Gen Z, but they are more likely to say they know their core values and are engaged in several key areas of their education. While Arkansas Gen Zers are less likely than Gen Zers nationally to enroll in postsecondary education right after high school, their desire for postsecondary education is alive and well: About three in four Arkansas Gen Zers in fifth to 12th grade (74%) say enrolling in college is what they would like to do after high school — above the rate of Gen Zers nationally (68%).

These findings represent the second wave of a multiyear study to elevate the voices of Gen Z in Arkansas and nationwide. Learning from young Arkansans' experiences is crucial for policymakers, residents and educators who are invested in Arkansas' future and wish to support the next generation.



Engagement in School

Arkansas Gen Zers are more likely than the national average to be engaged by their teachers and schoolwork

To better understand their engagement in school (their enthusiasm for what they are learning, its connection to their future and relationships in school), the survey asked school-aged members of Gen Z about eight different aspects of their lives at school. Eighty-two percent of Arkansas Gen Zers agree or strongly agree they have at least one teacher who makes them excited about their future, making this aspect of school the most highly rated by young Arkansans among the list of eight. Arkansas Gen Zers are more likely to agree they have such a teacher than their national peers (75%).

Compared with their peers nationally, Arkansans are notable in two additional areas: They are more likely to agree or strongly agree that in the last week they have learned something interesting in school (69% vs. 59%) and that their teachers make them feel their schoolwork is important (69% vs. 60%). In total, these three areas of student engagement are among the most positively rated by Arkansas Gen Zers. Otherwise, Gen Zers in Arkansas report similar experiences to Gen Zers nationwide in their engagement with school.



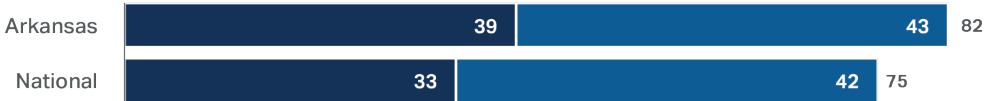
Arkansas Gen Z Engagement Versus National Average

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

% Selected

Strongly agree Agree

I HAVE AT LEAST ONE TEACHER WHO MAKES ME EXCITED ABOUT THE FUTURE.



I FEEL MOTIVATED TO GET GOOD GRADES.



THERE IS AN ADULT IN SCHOOL WHO ENCOURAGES ME TO PURSUE MY GOALS AND DREAMS.



MY TEACHERS MAKE ME FEEL MY SCHOOLWORK IS IMPORTANT.



IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS, I HAVE LEARNED SOMETHING INTERESTING IN SCHOOL.



IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS, SOMEONE HAS TOLD ME I HAVE DONE GOOD WORK AT SCHOOL.



MY SCHOOLWORK CHALLENGES ME IN A GOOD WAY.



AT SCHOOL, I GET TO DO WHAT I DO BEST EVERY DAY.

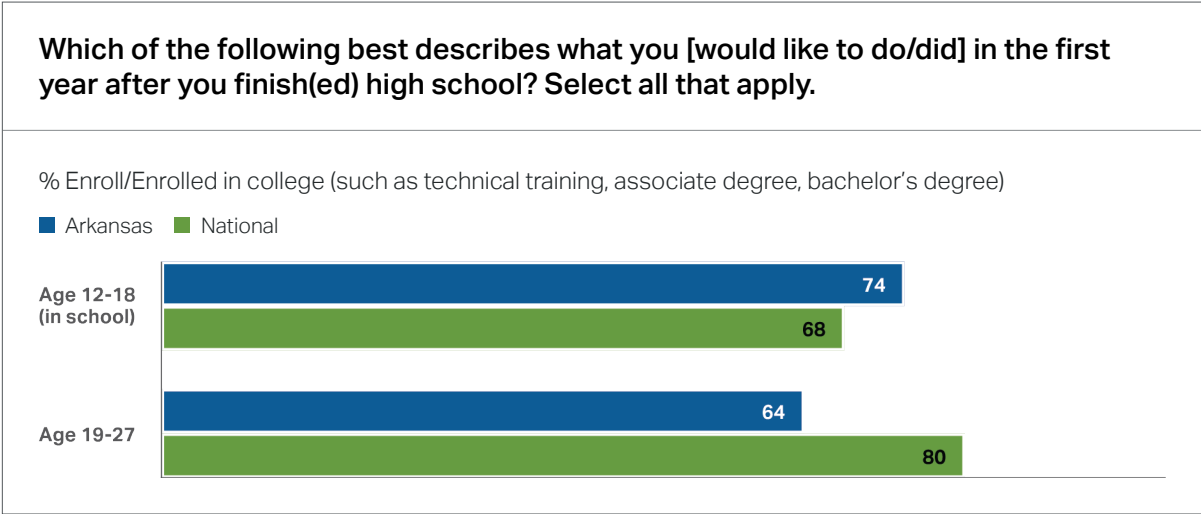


Note: Among 12- to 18-year-old members of Gen Z who are currently enrolled in public or private school

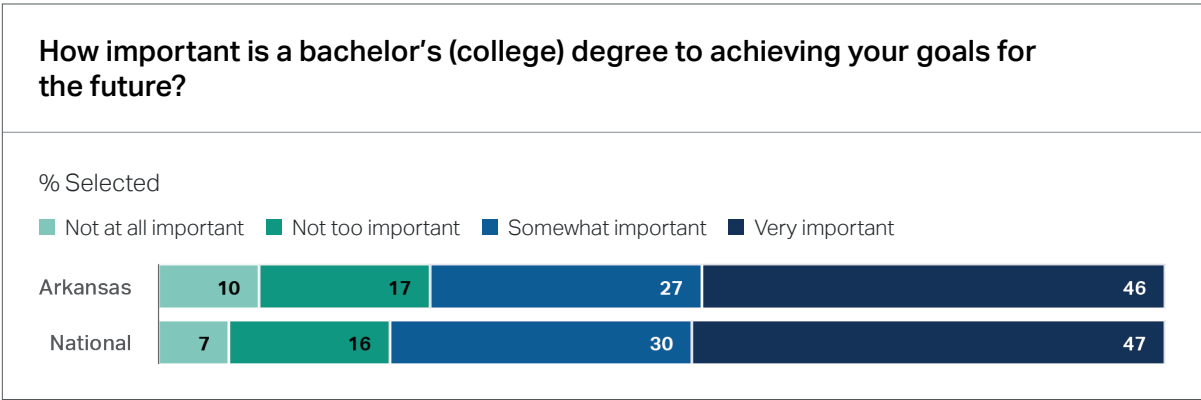
Postsecondary Paths and Future Preparedness

Many Arkansans want to pursue college but are less likely to enroll than the national average

In Arkansas, 74% of Gen Zers aged 12 to 18 want to pursue college after high school. Sixty-four percent of respondents aged 19 to 27 report enrolling in college in their first year after high school. This differs from their national peers, who are less likely to say they want to pursue college (68% among those aged 12 to 18) but are more likely to say they enrolled (80% among those aged 19 to 27).



Among Gen Zers of all ages (12 to 27), those in Arkansas are less likely than the national average to say that a bachelor's degree is very or somewhat important to achieving their goals for the future (73% vs. 77%).

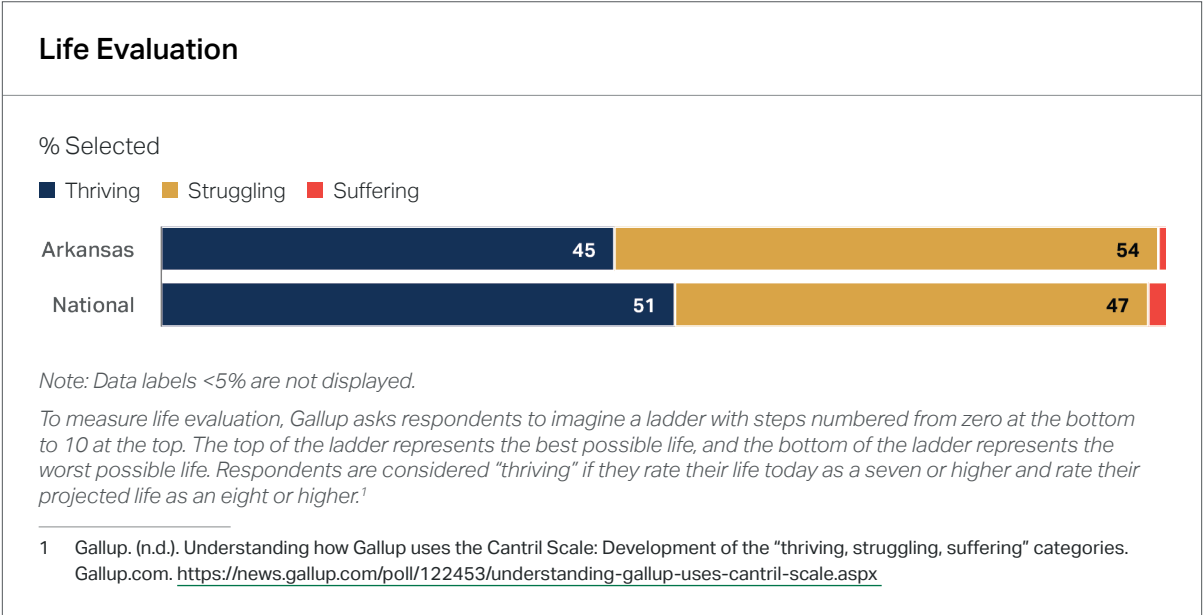


While Gen Zers were not asked about barriers to enrolling in college specifically, they did share the challenges they currently face in achieving their goals and aspirations. Like their national peers, Arkansas Gen Zers are most likely to identify cost of living (60%) and cost of education (46%) as challenges to achieving their goals (respondents could select all that apply).

Thriving and Great Lives

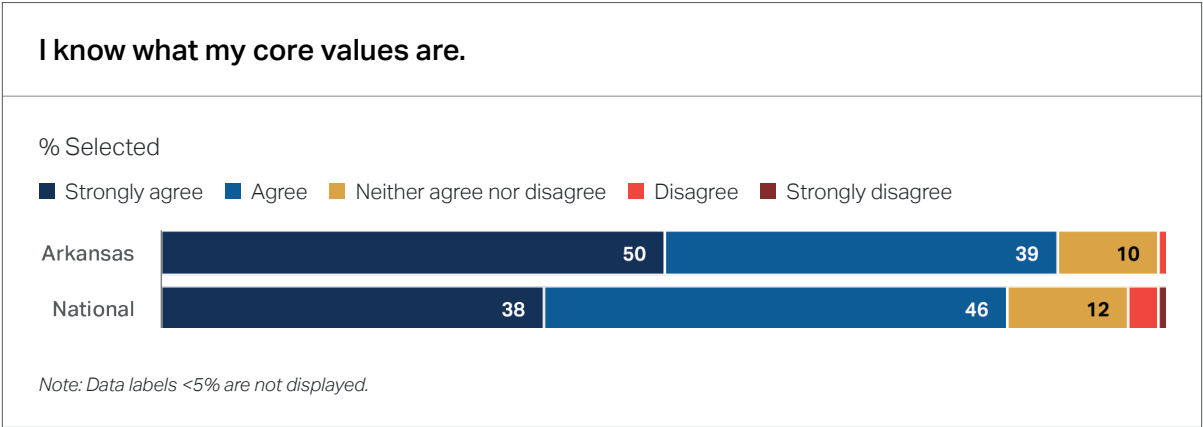
Less than half of Arkansas Gen Zers are thriving, falling below the national average

In 2024, 45% of Arkansas Gen Zers are thriving, a rate somewhat lower than their peers nationally (51%). Gallup considers people to be thriving if they give high ratings to their current life and their future expected life.



Young Arkansans know their core values better than young people nationally

Previous work by the Walton Family Foundation and Gallup has found that having a sense of purpose is closely tied to happiness in Generation Z. In 2024, 50% of Gen Zers in Arkansas strongly agree they know what their core values are, compared with 38% of Gen Z nationally.

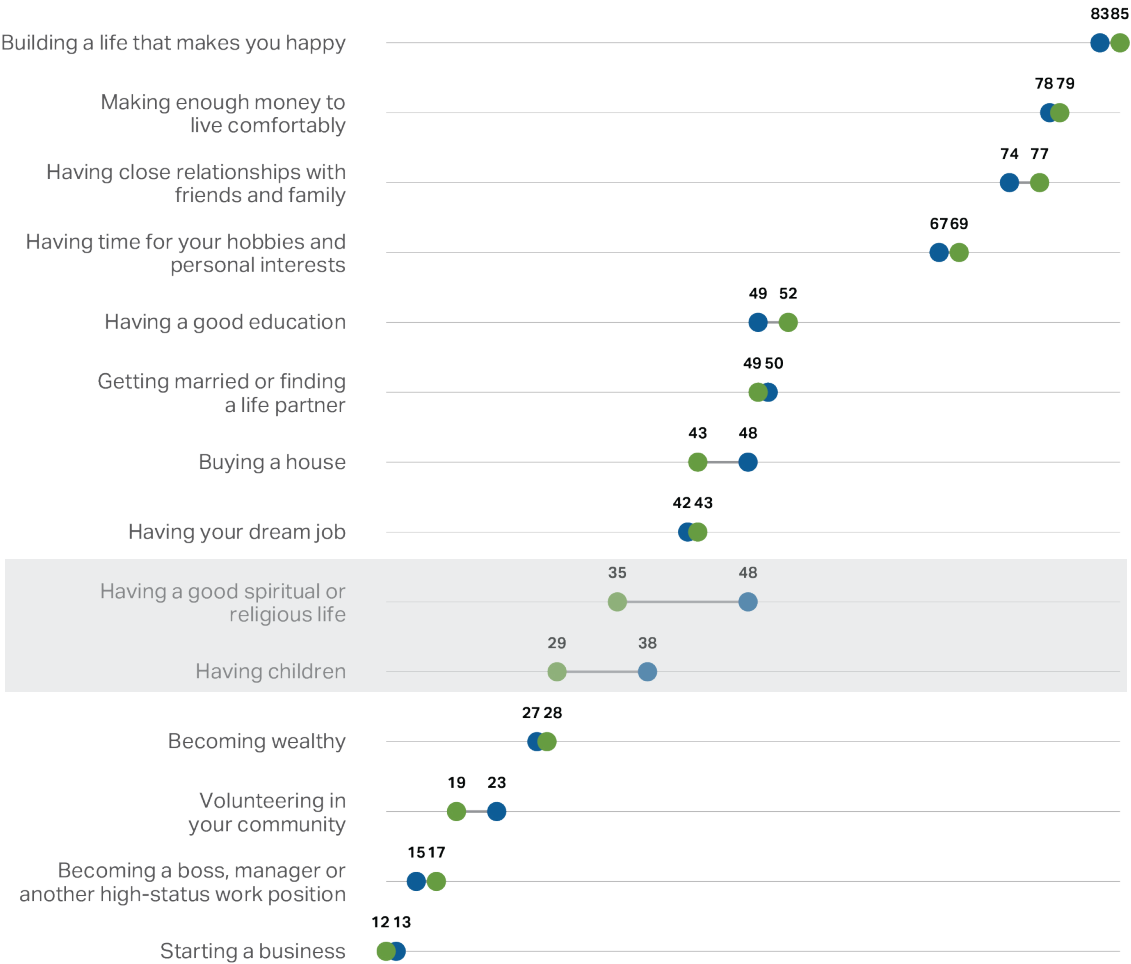


The study provided Gen Z respondents with a list of factors and asked to what extent each is important to having a great life. Three factors are most likely to be identified by Gen Zers in Arkansas as being very important to having a great life: building a life that makes you happy (83%), making enough money to live comfortably (78%), and having close relationships with friends and family (74%). Gen Zers nationwide hold similar opinions. However, Arkansans are more likely to say that having a good spiritual or religious life and having children are very important to having a great life compared with their national Gen Z peers.

How important are each of the following to you, personally, when you think about your future and having a great life?

% Very important

■ Arkansas ■ National



Methodology

Results are based on a Gallup Panel™ web survey conducted April 26-May 9, 2024, with a sample of 4,157 12- to 27-year-olds nationally and 526 from Arkansas, specifically. The Gallup Panel is a probability-based panel of U.S. adults randomly selected using address-based sampling methodology. Gallup also recruits using random-digit-dial phone interviews that cover landlines and cellphones.

Within the overall sample, 2,364 12- to 19-year-old children nationally and 137 from Arkansas were reached through adult members of the Gallup Panel who indicated they had at least one child 18 or younger living in their household; panel members whose child completed the survey in 2023 were asked to have the same child complete the survey again, even if they were 19 years old. The remaining 1,793 18- to 27-year-old respondents nationally and 389 from Arkansas are members of the Gallup Panel.

National Sample

For the total sample of 4,157 Gen Z respondents, the margin of sampling error is ± 2.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. For the sample of 2,317 children still enrolled in K-12 school, the margin of sampling error is ± 2.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. For the sample of 1,840 Gen Z youth no longer enrolled in K-12 school, the margin of sampling error is ± 3.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Margins of error for subgroups are higher.

Arkansas Sample

For the total sample of 526 Gen Z respondents in Arkansas, the margin of sampling error is ± 5.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. For the sample of 117 children still enrolled in K-12 school, the margin of sampling error is ± 9.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. For the sample of 389 Gen Z youth aged 19 to 27, the margin of sampling error is ± 6.6 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Margins of error for subgroups are higher.

All reported margins of sampling error include computed design effects for weighting. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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