



Race Relations and the Role of the Federal Government
 January 12-17, 2012

- Six in 10 Americans – including most whites and blacks – think race relations in the U.S. are generally good, but 39% think the government is not paying enough attention to the needs of blacks and other minorities.
- 40% say whites have a better chance to get ahead in the U.S.; that rises to 58% among blacks.

Just 16% of Americans think the government in Washington is paying too much attention to the needs and problems of blacks and other minorities, and more than twice as many – 39% - think the government is not paying enough attention. Another 35% think the government is paying the right amount of attention.

Whites and blacks see things differently. One in five white Americans think that the government is paying too much attention to the needs of minorities, and just 31% think it is not paying enough attention. 77% of blacks think the federal government is not paying enough attention.

Government Attention to Needs of Blacks and Other Minorities?

	Total	Whites	Blacks
Too much	16%	20%	0%
Not enough	39	31	77
About right	35	38	17

There are partisan differences as well. While most Democrats (55%) think the government is not paying enough attention to the needs and problems of blacks and other minorities, most Republicans either think it is paying the right amount (43%) or too much (29%).

How Much Attention is the Government Paying to the Needs of Blacks and Other Minorities?

	Total	Reps	Dems	Inds
Too much	16%	29%	7%	16%
Not enough	39	19	55	36
About right	35	43	28	36

Race Relations in the U.S.

Overall, 62% of Americans think race relations in the U.S. are generally good; just 30% think they are generally bad. A majority of both white and black Americans agree.

A positive view of race relations in the U.S. reached an all-time high of 66% in April 2009 – shortly after Barack Obama took office – and it hasn't dropped much since then. Today it is 37 points higher than the low of 25%, which was recorded in May 1992 -- right after six days of rioting following the acquittal of four white police officers who were on trial for the beating of black motorist Rodney King.

		Race Relations in the U.S. Are...					
		Now	3/2011	4/2009	2/2000	1/1997	5/1992
Good	62%	64%	66%	52%	40%	25%	
Bad	30	29	22	38	54	68	

When asked whether whites or blacks have the best chance to get ahead in today's society, most Americans (51%) say both do equally. 40% say whites do, and just 5% say blacks have a better chance to get ahead. Most whites (53%) think both groups have an equal chance, while most blacks (58%) think whites have a better chance.

Who Has a Better Chance to Get Ahead?			
	Total	Whites	Blacks
Whites	40%	37%	58%
Blacks	5	6	0
Both equal	51	53	34

This poll was conducted by telephone from January 12-17, 2012 among 1,154 adults nationwide. Phone numbers were dialed from samples of both standard land-line and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The error for subgroups may be higher. This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES POLL
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q72 Do you think race relations in the United States are generally good or generally bad?

	***** TOTAL RESPONDENTS *****				***** Race *****		
	Total	**** Party ID ****			Whites	Blacks	Mar11a
	%	Rep	Dem	Ind	%	%	%
Good	62	69	59	61	64	55	64
Bad	30	25	33	30	27	37	29
DK/NA	8	6	8	9	9	8	7

q73 In general, who do you think has a better chance of getting ahead in today's society- white people, black people, or do white people and black people have about an equal chance of getting ahead?

White people	40	29	53	35	37	58	45
Black people	5	6	2	7	6	0	8
Equal	51	61	41	55	53	34	46
DK/NA	4	4	4	3	4	8	1

q74 Do you think the government in Washington is paying too much, not enough, or about the right amount of attention to the needs and problems of blacks and other minorities?

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Too much	16	29	7	16	20	0	15
Not enough	39	19	55	36	31	77	40
Right amount	35	43	28	36	38	17	35
DK/NA	10	9	10	12	11	6	10

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	1154	
Total Republicans	322	286
Total Democrats	400	403
Total Independents	432	465
Total whites	959	875
Total blacks	98	134