



SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE
SIENA UNIVERSITY, LOUDONVILLE, NY

www.siena.edu/sri

Special New Yorkers' Kindness Survey

For Immediate Release: Thursday, October 23, 2025

For information/comment: Don Levy: 518-783-2901, dlevy@siena.edu

For PDF of release, or data summary, visit www.siena.edu/sri

70% Say People Were Kinder 10 Years Ago But 97% Describe Themselves as Kind

The Golden Rule: 92% Live by It But Only 27% Say Others Do

Most Say They Practice Small Random Acts of Kindness But Majorities Often Witness People Being Unkind Online (72%), in Traffic (69%) & in Person (55%)

Loudonville, NY – Seventy percent of New Yorkers think people in society are less kind today than they were 10 years ago, but, at the same time, 97% describe themselves as either a very (56%) or somewhat (41%) kind person according to the latest poll by the Siena Research Institute (SRI). Almost all New Yorkers, 92%, say that they live by the golden rule – treating others as they would want to be treated – all (51%) or most (41%) of the time but that when it comes to others, they say only 27% live by the golden rule either all or most of the time.

Large majorities say that they practice acts of kindness regularly, that is, either very often or sometimes including holding a door for someone else (94%), greeting a stranger by nodding or smiling or saying hello when in a public place (87%), checking in on a friend, neighbor or relative that has a health issue (83%) or helping a stranger who seems lost, confused or in need of assistance (79%). Forty-four percent volunteer their time for a cause or organization and 41% pay someone else's tab or 'pay it forward' at least some of the time. However, 72% witness people being unkind to one another all (41%) or some (31%) of the time online including on social media, through texting or in emails, 69% see people being unkind in traffic or while on public transportation and 55% see people being unkind to one another in person.

“Something just doesn't add up. Almost everyone says that they are a kind person and that they live by the golden rule, but only just over one in four think that others are following suit,” according to Don Levy, SRI's Director. “Most practice small acts of kindness, holding a door, helping a stranger or checking in on a friend or neighbor but 70% say that in the past ten years, people in society have become less kind and majorities say others regularly practice random acts of unkindness online, in traffic and in person.”

This Siena Poll was conducted September 15-22, 2025, among 814 New York State Residents. Of the 814 respondents, 392 were contacted through a dual frame (landline and cell phone) mode (117 completed via text to web) and 422 respondents were drawn from a proprietary online panel (Cint). Telephone calls were conducted in English and respondent sampling was initiated by asking for the youngest person in the household. Telephone sampling was conducted via a stratified dual frame probability sample of landline and cell phone telephone numbers weighted to reflect known population patterns. The landline telephone sample was obtained from ASDE and the cell phone sample was obtained from Marketing Systems Group (MSG). Interviews conducted online are excluded from the sample and final analysis if they fail any data quality attention check question. Duplicate responses are identified by their response ID and removed from the sample. Three questions were asked of online respondents, including a honey-pot question to catch bots and two questions that ask respondents to follow explicit directions. The proprietary panel also incorporates measures that safeguard against automated bot attacks, deduplication issues, fraudulent VPN usage, and suspicious IP addresses. Data from collection modes was weighted to balance sample demographics to match estimates for New York State's population using data from the Census Bureau's 2023 U.S. American Community Survey (ACS), on age, region, race/ethnicity, and gender to ensure representativeness. The sample was also weighted to match current patterns of party registration using data from the New York State Board of Elections. It has an overall margin of error of +/- 3.7 percentage points including the design effects resulting from weighting. Sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error and there may be other unmeasured error in this or any other public opinion poll. The Siena Research Institute, directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social, and cultural research primarily in NYS. SRI, an independent, non-partisan research institute, subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. For survey cross-tabs: www.Siena.edu/SRI/.