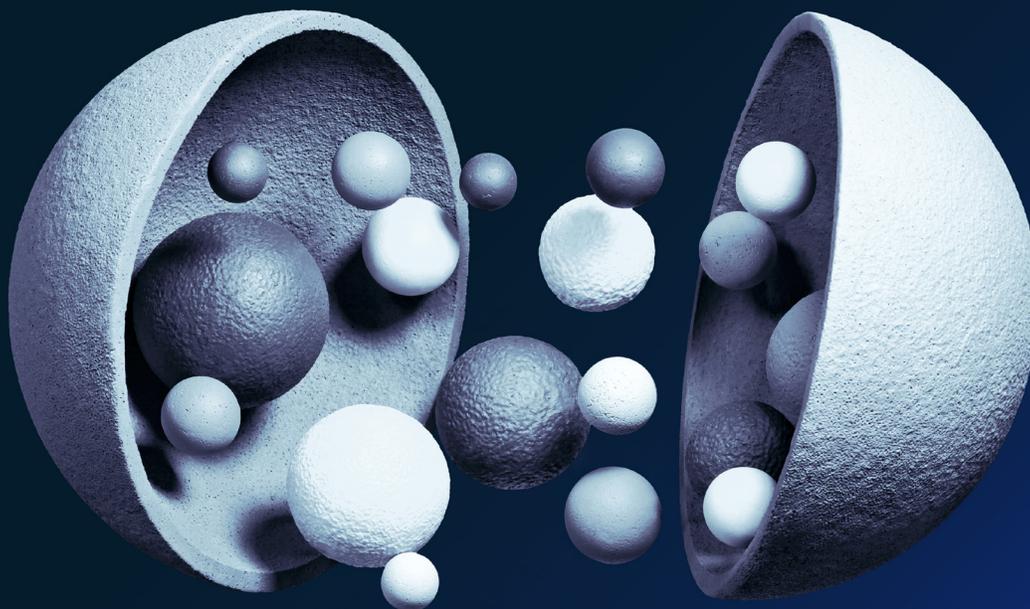


Risk Practice

# COVID-19: Briefing note #43, February 19, 2021

The pandemic has hit America hard. Our new #America2021 series looks at how the country can recover.



**The US presidential transition** is always a time for the country to reflect and reset. The 2021 transition is much more than that; given the once-in-a-century pandemic, it is a watershed moment. This week, we published a series of five memos offering our latest perspectives on four issues confronting the country and how public- and private-sector leaders could organize to drive change on them.

**Defeat COVID-19.** Will 2021 be the year in which the United States gains a decisive upper hand in its fight against the pandemic? We argue that it is reasonable to hope that the first half of the year could be a bridge to “normalcy,” when many aspects of social and economic life can resume without fear of excess mortality. This memo condenses the recent history of the COVID-19 crisis into must-see charts and sets out six considerations for those building bridges to normalcy.

**Rebuild the economy.** For America’s leaders, innovators, and changemakers, the post–World War II recovery offers valuable lessons for encouraging productivity, innovation, and social-capital creation in a post-COVID-19 future. Global managing partner Kevin Sneader and senior partner Shubham Singhal explore the good policies, political commitment, and hard work that will be needed to replicate those successes.

**Advance racial equity.** Repairing the frayed social fabric in the United States is not a new problem. But as the civil unrest of 2020 showed, it has become increasingly urgent. Our experts contribute ideas for inclusive growth for all races and the impact, in particular, of higher Black participation in different roles in the economy—a goal that the pandemic has set back.

**Commit to climate action.** The global transition to a low-carbon economy is well underway. In the United States, 23 states have established emission-reduction goals, and 12 have instituted carbon-pricing policies. Making good on those intentions will require new information, products, operations, and market innovations from public officials and business leaders. Our experts bring the best of McKinsey’s decades of research to the task.

**Organize for change.** To make all this happen, public-sector leaders will need to move swiftly and decisively, bringing the whole of government to bear across all four priorities, even as they revitalize a federal workforce with plummeting morale and lack of trust in government leadership. In the final memo of the series, we distill the lessons from successful government-change programs in a set of tactical ideas for leaders to consider.

Also this week, the McKinsey Global Institute published the first of three reports that examine the postpandemic economy. In *The future of work after COVID-19*, we assess the lasting impact of the pandemic on labor demand, the mix of occupations, and the workforce skills required in eight countries with diverse economic and labor-market models: China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Our research concludes that because of the pandemic, up to 25 percent more workers than previously estimated may need to switch occupations.

*With vaccinations underway, executives everywhere are thinking about the critical next months of the pandemic. Start with the McKinsey Download Hub to find McKinsey’s latest research, perspectives, and insights on the management issues that matter most, from leading through the COVID-19 crisis to managing risk and digitizing operations. Also consider our special collection The Next Normal: The Recovery Will Be Digital. All five installments—a 172-page report on technology and data transformation, a 130-page report on the path to true transformation, a 206-page report on reimagining the postpandemic organization, a 157-page report on the challenge of climate change, and 202 pages on reimagining operational resilience—are available now. All the reports are a product of Our New Future, a multimedia series we created with CNBC.*

*You can also see the full collection of our coronavirus-related content, visual insights from our “chart of the day,” a curated collection of our first 100 articles relating to the coronavirus, our suite of tools to help leaders respond to the pandemic, and how our editors choose images that help readers visualize the impact of an invisible threat.*