



# HEALTH BRIEFS

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## OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF BLACK, HISPANIC, AND ASIAN LOW-INCOME NEW YORKERS ARE WORRIED ABOUT RUNNING OUT OF MONEY IN THE NEXT MONTH

Public Health Solutions' survey reveals how the city's vulnerable communities are struggling financially as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

### KEY FINDINGS

A new report released by Public Health Solutions (PHS) uncovered low-income New Yorkers' (defined as annual household income of less than \$50,000) concerns about their ability to afford essential expenses as the coronavirus pandemic persists. Key findings from the report include:

- Racial disparities are evident among New Yorkers who have sought help with basic necessities such as food, income and health insurance.
- Financial difficulties plaguing low-income New Yorkers are particularly dire among communities of color.
- Respondents from the Bronx not only reported the highest share of COVID-19 diagnoses and presumed positives, but also greater financial hardship compared to other boroughs.
- New Yorkers will need long-term help to get back on their feet after the pandemic has been controlled.

### BACKGROUND

Over the last few weeks, the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the deep inequities that affect health outcomes of communities across New York City. A recent analysis by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYCDOHMH) indicated that zip codes home to low-income neighborhoods — often homes to communities of color — have seen high rates of COVID-19 cases.

Further compounding health disparities and hardships faced by vulnerable New Yorkers, COVID-19 has also led to an unprecedented economic crisis that some experts say the likes of which has not been experienced since the Great Depression.

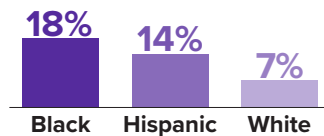
PHS' survey takes a closer look at the immediate and long-term concerns of low-income New Yorkers as the COVID-19 pandemic persists, their awareness of social safety net programs such as SNAP (food stamps) and WIC, and options for accessing health insurance.

## FINDINGS

### Racial disparities are evident among New Yorkers who have sought help with basic necessities such as food, income and health insurance.

#### Food

Demographic breakdown of respondents who applied for or utilized food pantries/soup kitchens in the last month:



- 25% of Black respondents anticipate they would need help getting enough food within a month if they lost their job today or were recently laid off, compared with 14% of white respondents.

#### Income

- 46% of Black respondents anticipate their 2020 annual household income will be less than \$25,000 in light of changes due to COVID-19, compared with 20% of white respondents and 31% of all respondents.

#### Health Insurance

- 11% of Hispanic respondents, 9% of Asian respondents, 7% of Black respondents, and 6% of white respondents lost their health insurance since the coronavirus outbreak began in New York City.
- 43% of Asian respondents, 42% of Hispanic respondents and 38% of Black respondents are unsure of where they could turn to for help enrolling in health insurance.

### The pandemic has disproportionately affected vulnerable New Yorkers who were already struggling to make ends meet.

- 48% of respondents making less than \$50,000 are worried about paying their rent or mortgage, compared with 28% of respondents making more than \$100k.
- 21% of respondents making less than \$50,000 and 18% of respondents making \$50k-\$99k are very worried about paying their rent or mortgage, compared with 10% of respondents making more than \$100k.
- 14% of those making less than \$50,000 and 17% of those making \$50k-\$99k have applied for or utilized unemployment benefits in the last

month, compared with 7% of those making more than \$100k.

### Financial difficulties plaguing low-income New Yorkers are particularly dire among communities of color.



Demographic breakdown of low-income respondents who were worried about running out of money in the next month:



- Low-income respondents across ethnicities are concerned about getting enough food (76%), paying the rent or mortgage (66%), paying for medical costs (63%), paying for utility bills (69%), and paying off debt (69%).
- More than half (52%) of Hispanic low-income respondents report being laid off since the outbreak began. Another 14% indicated a layoff is likely.
- Most (84%) Asian low-income respondents are worried about paying for medical costs.

### Respondents from the Bronx not only reported the highest share of COVID-19 diagnoses and presumed positives, but also greater financial hardship compared to other boroughs.

- 11% of Bronx respondents said someone in their household was diagnosed with or was presumed to have COVID-19, compared to 4% in Brooklyn, 5% in Manhattan, 5% in Queens, and 5% in Staten Island.



**81%** of Bronx respondents expressed concern about running out of money in the next month.

- 29% of Bronx respondents would need help paying their bills in a month if they lost their job, compared to 19% in Brooklyn, 15% in Manhattan, and 15% in Queens.
- 11% of people in the Bronx are panicked about getting enough food for themselves and their families, compared to 6% of all respondents.

**New Yorkers will need long-term help to get back on their feet after the pandemic has been controlled.**



**Over the next month:**

**35%** of low-income respondents were most worried about getting enough food.

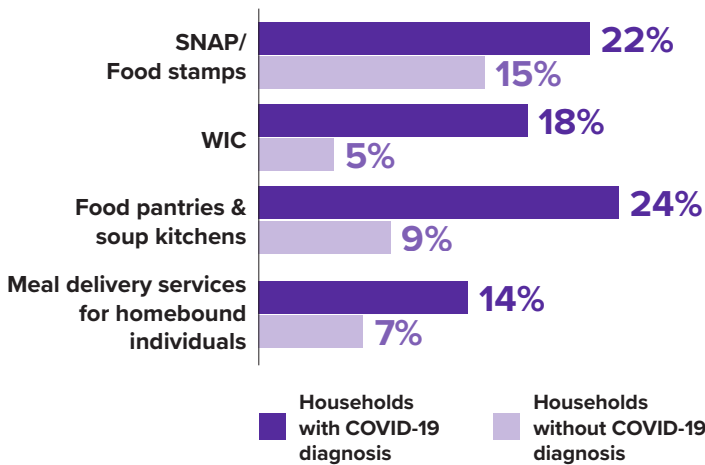
**25%** of low-income respondents said paying their rent or mortgage was their main concern.

- 27% of low-income respondents have applied for or utilized SNAP in the last month. 13% utilized food pantries or soup kitchens, and 14% applied for or utilized unemployment.



**23%** of low-income respondents reported not having health insurance at the time of the survey.

**Respondents with a confirmed or presumed COVID-19 diagnosis in their household were more likely than those without a diagnosis to have utilized or applied for public health benefit programs in the last month.**



**The financial gap for many New Yorkers is so wide that the \$1,200 federal stimulus check isn't sufficient to fill it.**



**23%** of all respondents said that the check is not enough for their immediate needs and they need more assistance now.

- Another quarter (26%) said they will likely need more assistance soon.
- However, 26% of white respondents felt that the federal stimulus check is nice to have but they are financially secure enough that they don't need the check, compared with only 9% of Black respondents.

### CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic will dramatically worsen health inequities for vulnerable New Yorkers, unless we act immediately. We can help safeguard the health of under resourced communities and ensure they have the same chance at recovery as everyone else by expanding social safety net programs and strengthening them against the budget cuts we've seen in recent years.

### SURVEY METHODOLOGY

1,000 New York City adult residents from varying income levels across all five boroughs were surveyed through an online questionnaire. It was conducted April 17-29, 2020, in partnership with Kantar, the world's leading evidence-based insights and consulting company.

### ABOUT PHS

Health disparities among New Yorkers are large, persistent and increasing. Public Health Solutions (PHS) exists to change that trajectory, and support vulnerable New Yorkers in achieving optimal health and building pathways to reach their potential. We improve health outcomes and help communities thrive by providing services directly to vulnerable low-income families, and supporting 200 community-based organizations through our long-standing public-private partnerships. We focus on a wide range of public health issues including food and nutrition, health insurance, maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, tobacco control, and HIV/AIDS. Your support helps us to realize our vision for health equity in New York City. Visit [healthsolutions.org](http://healthsolutions.org) to learn more.