

COMMUNITY  
**PULSE**  
REPORT



# Pulse Report for Children & Families

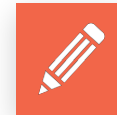
October 2020

# Taking Our Pulse

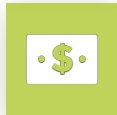
The goal of the Community Pulse Report is to keep track of a consistent set of indicators as a way of taking the pulse of our community during these difficult times and to further inform policy makers, nonprofit leaders, reporters, and the public in general. The report is organized into four sections:



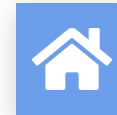
Health & Wellness



Educational Disruptions & Child Care



Jobs & Financial Assistance



Food Access & Housing

Our aim is to utilize data that will give us a snapshot of what is happening in the five-county region—Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette and Westmoreland Counties. Important to the project will be finding data that deepens our understanding of the intersecting disparities in health care, society, and the economy and their impacts on Black and LatinX children and families.

# A Note on Disaggregated Data & Geographies

We are committed to utilizing data that can be disaggregated by race, gender, and age.

In future reports, we will strive to identify proxy indicators where disaggregated data is not available. We will also advocate for the disaggregation of data by race, gender and age and hope you can join us in that work.

Where such data is available, we note that throughout the report with this symbol



Where it is not available, we note with this symbol



Throughout this report, the geography of analyzed data is noted in the upper left-hand corner of each chart or graph:



National



Five-County Region  
*(Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette, Westmoreland)*



County-Specific

# What We Are Seeing This Month



**Utilities:** On slide 15 we highlight the growing backlog of customers unable to meet their utility obligations.

- Until late September, the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission had a moratorium on utility shut offs in place.
- [National United Way 211 data](#) suggests that utility needs this fall have started earlier and are greater than they were during the fall of 2019.
- Our own five-county region saw 211 utility assistance requests increase 31% from last month.
- With the end of the moratorium, winter approaching, and no support from the PA General Assembly or Congress, calls for utility assistance and payment plans will increase rapidly.



# What We Are Seeing This Month



**Housing:** On slides 17 to 20, we highlight the growing need for housing support.

- An eviction and foreclosure moratorium put in place at the beginning of the pandemic initially protected many families from losing their homes.
- In October, Governor Wolf's moratorium ended and he [extended the application deadline](#) for the state's mortgage and rent relief assistance program, to boost participation by landlords and keep more people in their homes during the pandemic.
- At the same time, the [CDC issued a clarification](#) earlier this month that allows landlords to resume eviction proceedings, although [protections remain in place for certain households](#).
- In July, 1 in 5 renters reported being behind on rent, and households of color reported far higher rates of missed payments compared to the national average. ([Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, July](#))



# What We Are Seeing This Month



**Decrease in Utilization of Health Care:** On slide 11, we highlight a recent Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services report pointing to the decreased utilization of health care services for children.

- Of significant concern are reduced numbers of screenings, vaccinations, and mental health visits.
- The rapid shift to telehealth is a bright spot and something we hope will continue, even beyond the pandemic.

**Internet Access, Learning Models, & Telehealth:** Access to the internet remains a challenge for 20-25% of households in the region (slide 16).

- The explosion of telehealth services (slide 11) combined with the concentration of remote learning for low income children of color (slides 21-22) underscores a pressing need for internet access for our families.
- Internet connectivity must be treated as an essential utility – like water, gas, and electric.



# What We Are Seeing This Month



**Child Care:** The decline in child care (slides 23-24) is already impacting labor force participation and is expected to get worse.

- **The share of women employed and at work is the lowest it has been in 35 years.**
- Nationally, the percentage of mothers not in the labor force was 29.1% in September, up from 26.4% in September 2019.
- Workplace engagement for Black and LatinX mothers fell more than for White mothers, because of exits from the labor force at greater rates and also a larger increase in unemployment.



Source: [Pew Research](#)

# From the Field

Feedback and observations from our on-the-ground providers are critical to understanding the data we are collecting in context. This month, providers shared the following:

- Top needs continue to be housing and utility assistance.
  - With an upcoming end to the utility moratorium, concerns are that balances are quite large, and that water and sewer bills are not covered by utility assistance programs (LIHEAP, Dollar Energy, etc.).
  - Suggestions for action: extended moratorium, expanded unemployment, additional funding for utility assistance
- Access to internet is a concern as well.
  - Suggestions for action: additional funding for internet access, create a LIHEAP equivalent for internet access

“People are struggling to pay water and electric. Multiple people have had these services shut off.”

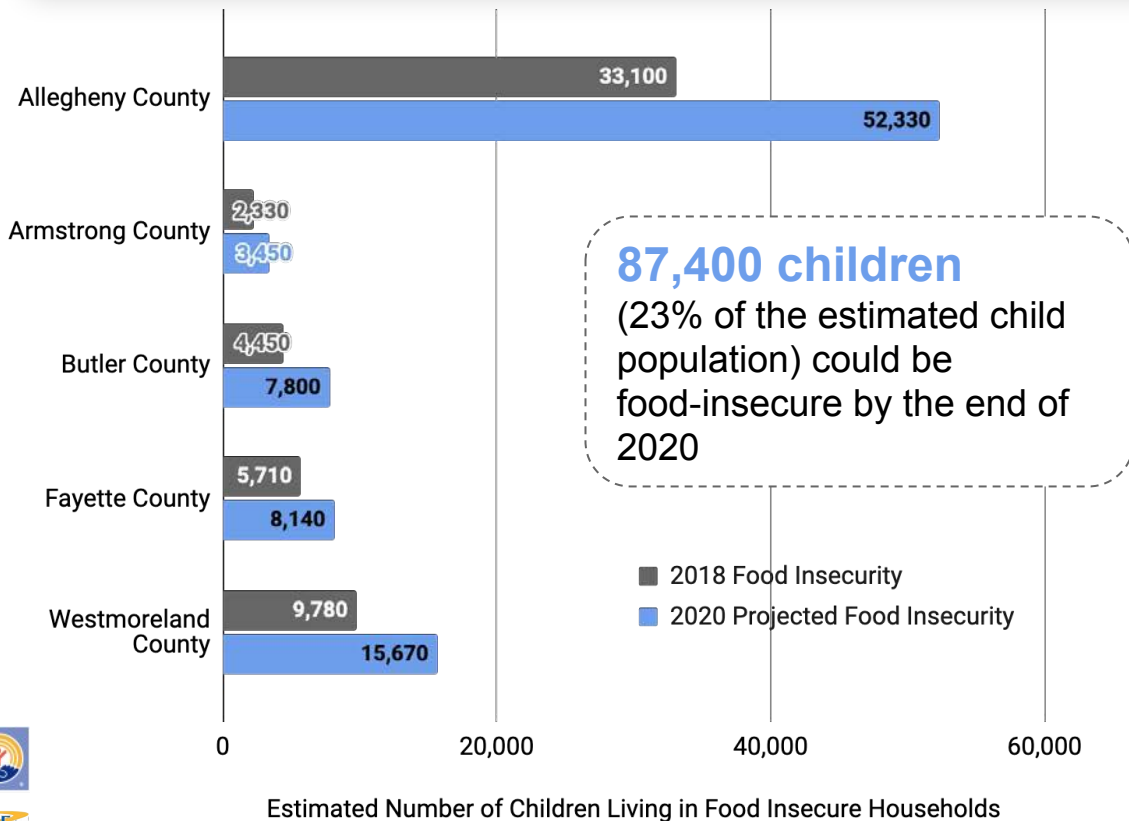
“Not all families have access to technology or wifi for virtual supports. We imagine there is greater need than we know with families who do not know where to turn or how to reach out for help.”







# Child Food Insecurity



In the five-county region, the number of **children living in food insecure households** is predicted to **increase an estimated 58%** between 2018 and 2020.

Source: Gundersen, C., M. Hake, A. Dewey, E. Engelhard (2020). The Impact of the Coronavirus on Food Insecurity v1 [Data file and FAQ]. Available from Feeding America: [research@feedingamerica.org](mailto:research@feedingamerica.org).  
 Note: 2020 Food Insecurity estimates are based on projected national annual unemployment (11.5%) and child poverty (21.2%) rates.





# Medical Service Use Among Medicaid & CHIP Beneficiaries



## National Trends, Children 18 and Under

Comparing March - May 2020 to March - May 2019



**44% fewer**  
child screening services



**69% fewer**  
dental services



**22% fewer**  
vaccinations  
for children up to age 2



**44% fewer**  
outpatient mental  
health services

**2,500%  
increase**

in the **delivery of  
telehealth services**

to children

from February to April 2020



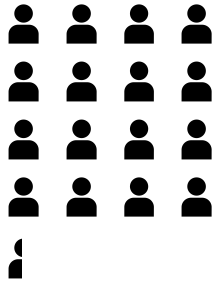
Source: [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\)](#)



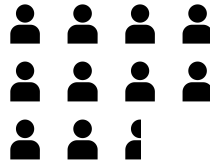
# COVID-19-Associated Hospitalization Rate



**16.4**  
per 100,000  
LatinX children



**10.5**  
per 100,000  
Black children



**2.1**  
per 100,000  
White children



**Nationally, Black and LatinX children have higher rates of COVID-19-associated hospitalizations than White children.**

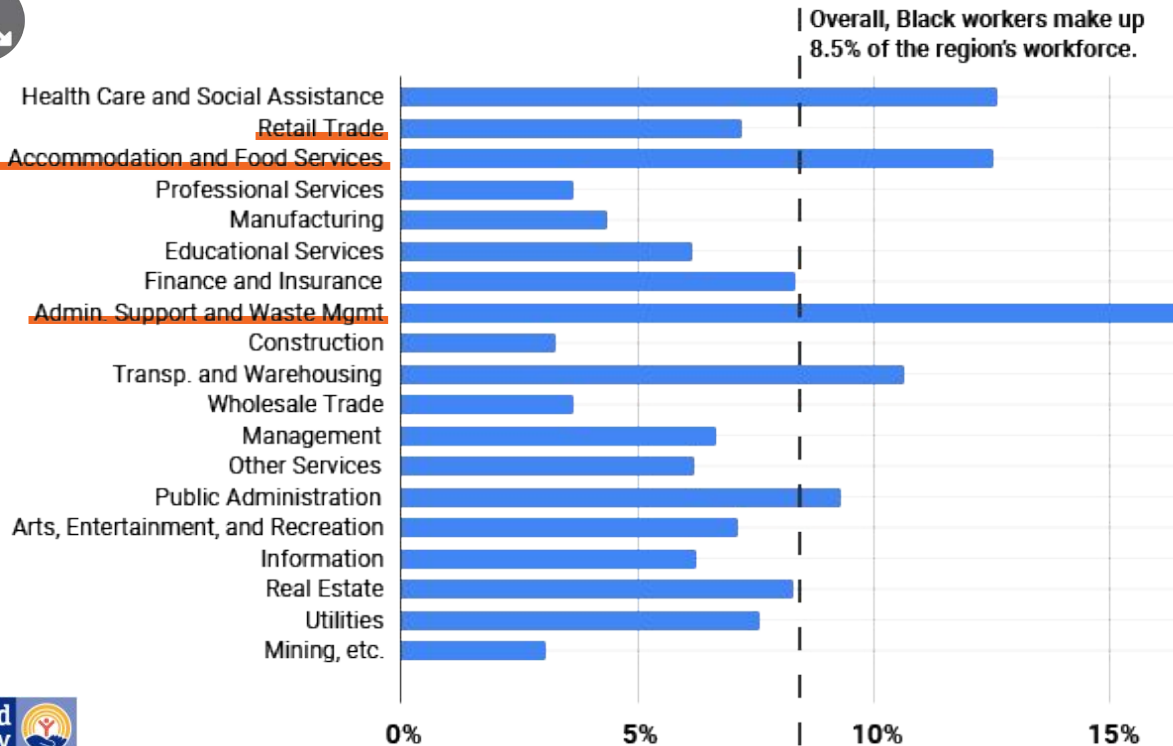
Existing disparities in the social determinants of health, as well as in access to and utilization of health services, could be responsible for these inequities. Other health disparities could be exacerbated by the decreased utilization of care referenced on the previous slides.



Source: [CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#), 8/14/20, n=576



# Employment of Black Workers by Industry



Percent of Workforce who are Black by Industry

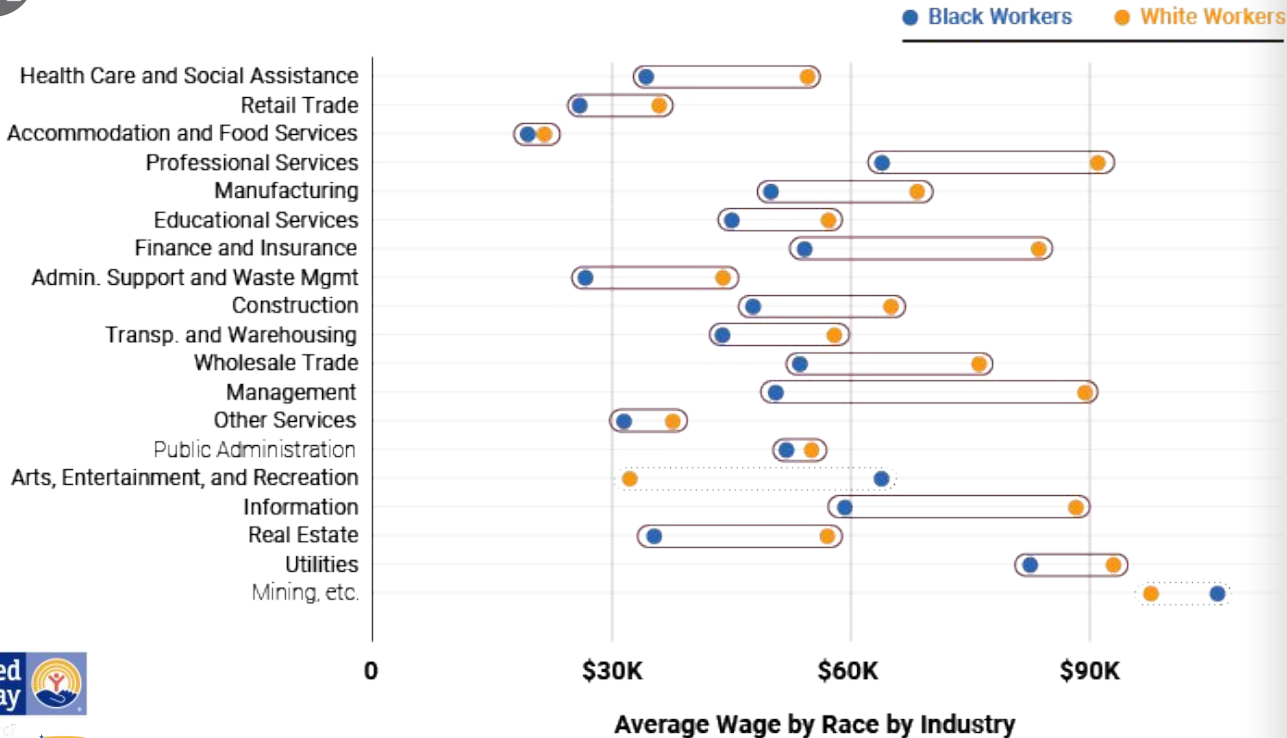
Last month's report looked at employment of non-White workers in the Pittsburgh MSA. This month, we focus in on employment of **Black workers in the five-county region** specifically. We still see a **concentration of Black workers in certain particularly vulnerable industries** (those that have a higher proportion of low-wage, part-time jobs).

Source: 2019 Q3 estimates based on US Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators data. Industries are sorted by total employment for region.





# Wage Disparity by Industry



Last month's report detailed the wage disparity between White and non-White workers in the Pittsburgh MSA. This month, we focus in on the **wage disparity between White and Black workers in the five-county region** specifically.

In all industries except Arts, Entertainment, & Rec. and Mining, there is a **negative wage disparity between Black and White workers**.

Source: 2019 Q3 estimates based on US Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators data; Industries are sorted by total employment for region.

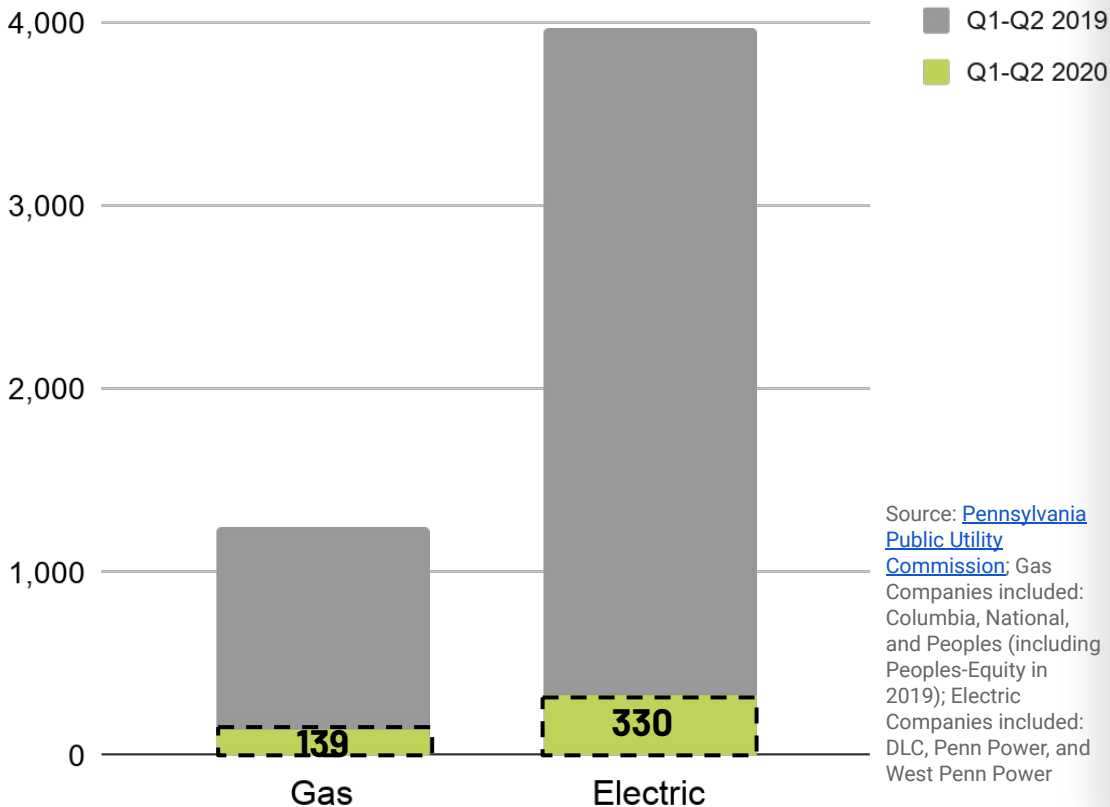




# Utility Payment Plan Requests, Q1-Q2 (Jan-Jun)



# of Residential Payment Requests



Source: [Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission](#); Gas Companies included: Columbia, National, and Peoples (including Peoples-Equity in 2019); Electric Companies included: DLC, Penn Power, and West Penn Power

**There is a potential backlog of utility bills in the region.** In January to June, there were:

**>5,000 total residential payment requests in 2019**

**yet only 469 total residential payment requests in 2020**

We are worried about what this lack of payment plans could mean: that people are neither paying, nor saving to pay – which will mean major balances and shut offs in the spring.





# Households with Internet Access



County	% of Households with a Broadband Internet Subscription
Allegheny	<b>81.5%</b>
Armstrong	<b>73.0%</b>
Butler	<b>83.0%</b>
Fayette	<b>72.2%</b>
Westmoreland	<b>77.8%</b>

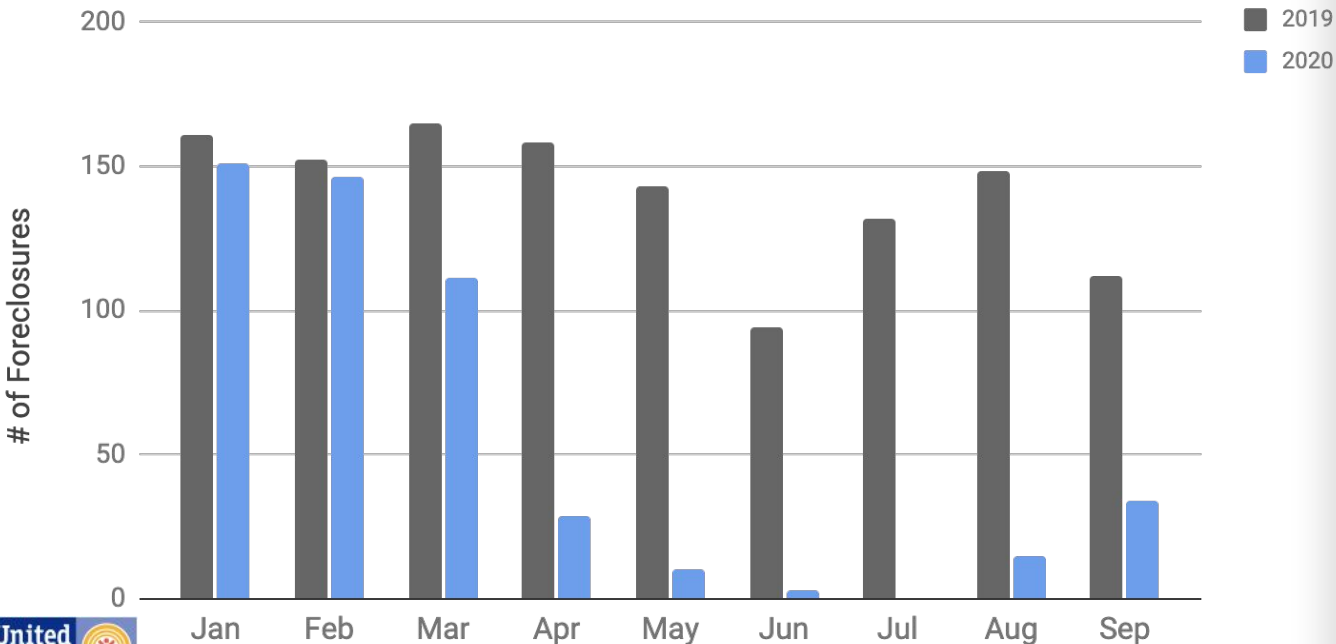
Internet access is an essential utility that allows families to work and attend school remotely, receive telehealth services, and conduct other critical business, like online banking.



Source: Census American Community Survey, 2014–2018 estimates



# Foreclosures, Allegheny County



Absent the moratorium and if 2020 foreclosures were at 2019 levels, there could be a backlog of

**750**  
foreclosures.

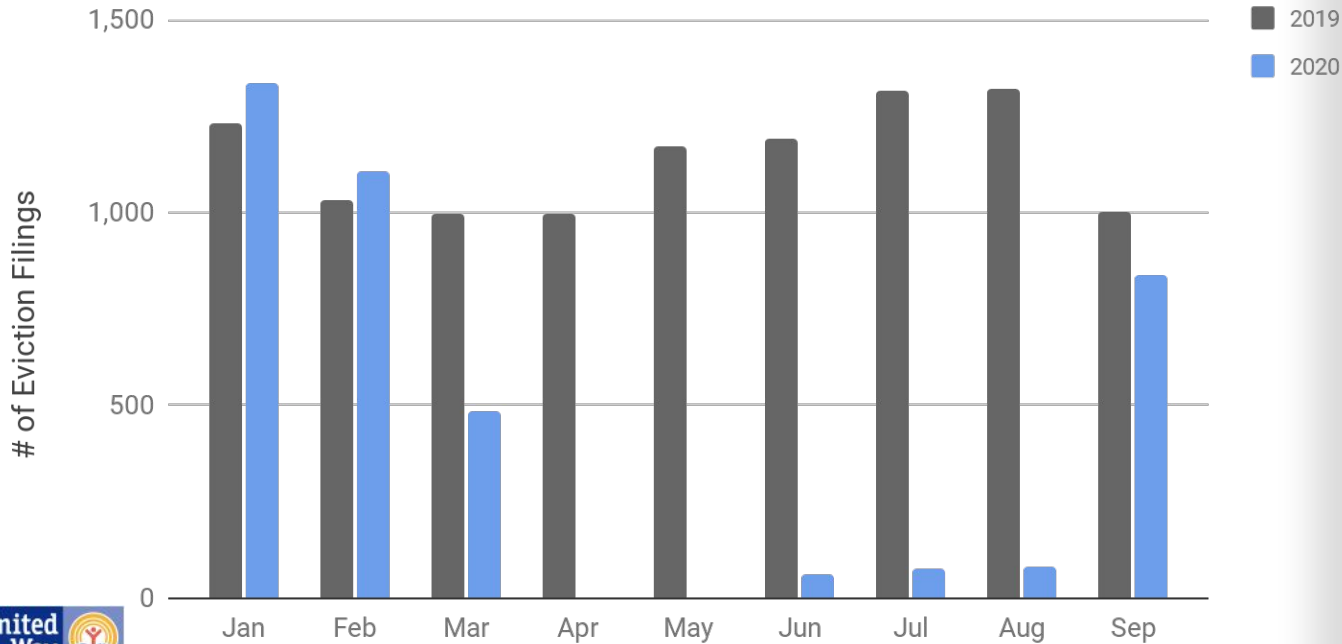


Source: Western Pennsylvania Regional Data Center





# Evictions, Allegheny County



Absent the moratorium and if 2020 evictions were at 2019 levels, there could be a backlog of

**6,454 evictions.**

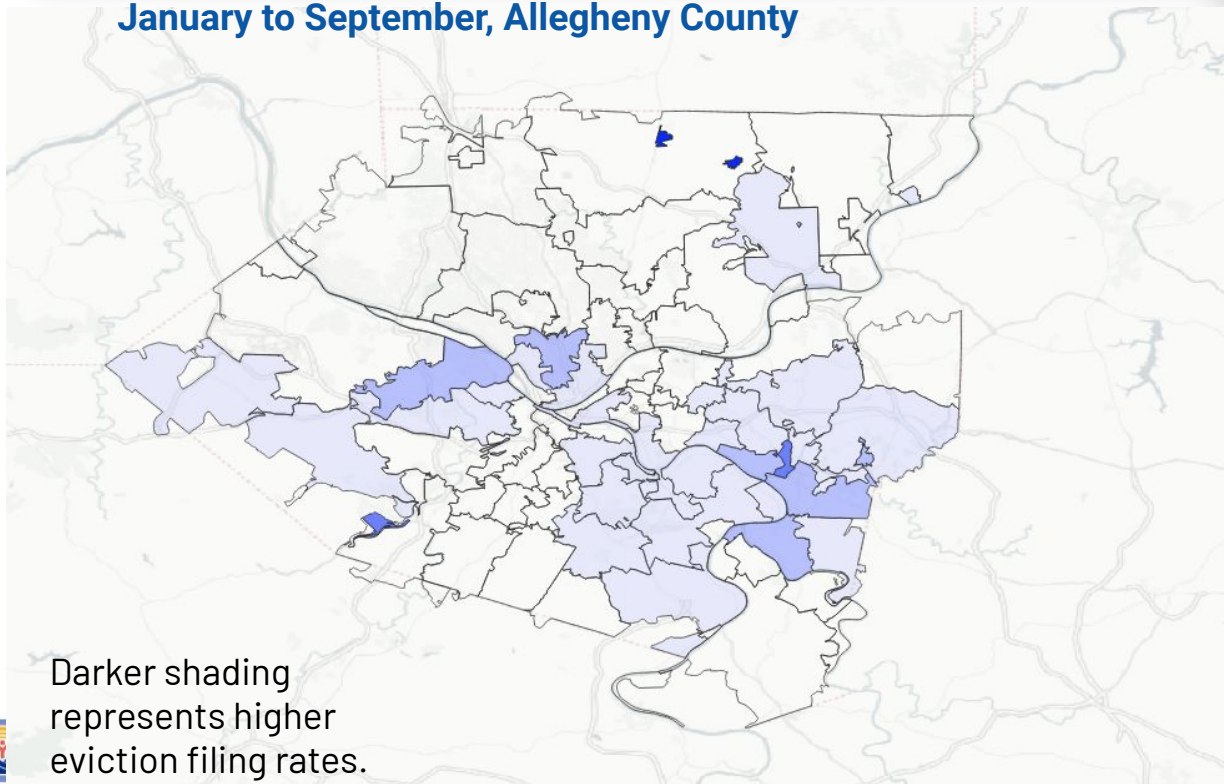


Source: Eviction Lab, CMU Create Lab

# 2020 Eviction Filing Rates by Zip Code



January to September, Allegheny County



**Eviction filing rates are higher in majority-Black zip codes.**

Eviction filing rate, Jan-Sep, majority-Black zip codes:

**3.4% in 2020**

(10.9% avg. 2012-2019)

Eviction filing rate, Jan-Sep, majority-White zip codes:

**2.0% in 2020**

(5.0% avg. 2012-2019)



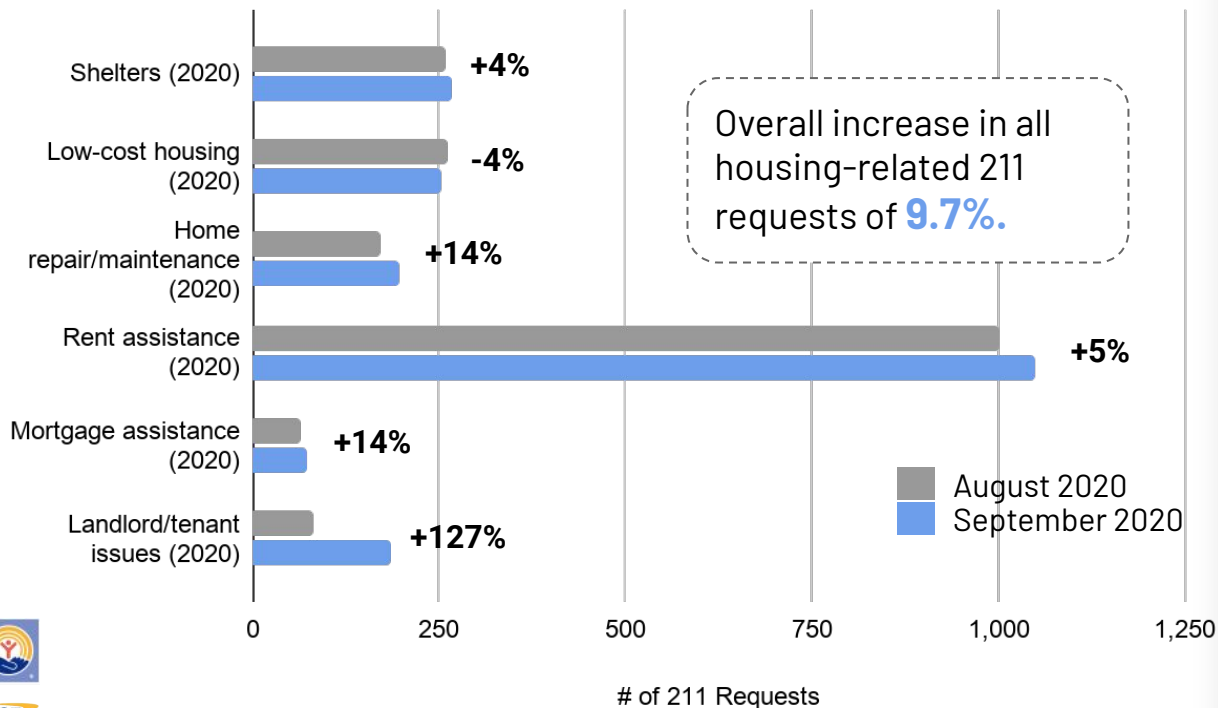
Source: [Eviction Lab](#), CMU Create Lab, ACS 2018 5-Year Estimates; "Filing Rate" = number of eviction filings per 100 renter-occupied households.



# 211 Housing Support Requests



## August to September, 2020, Five-County Region



Besides an overall increase in requests for housing supports, we also see disparities in who needs that support.

Of calls to Allegheny Link, Allegheny County's information and referral program for housing and homelessness supports, **41% of callers in September 2020 were Black vs. 29% White.** In September 2019, 50% of callers were Black vs. 31% White.

Sources: PA 211 Counts. "Region" includes Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette, and Westmoreland Counties | Link Calls: Allegheny County DHS



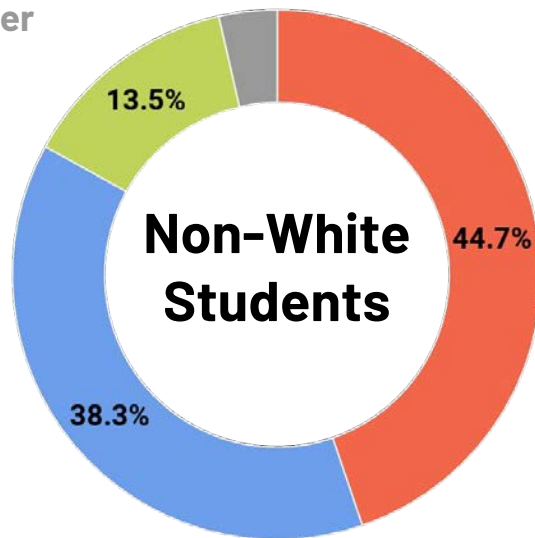
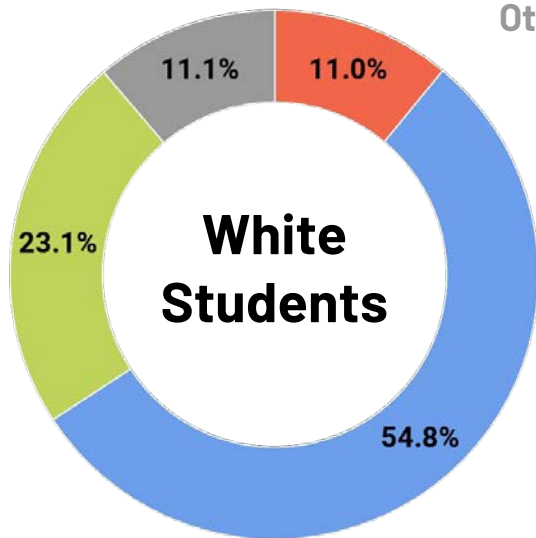


# Learning Models, Start of the School Year



## Learning Model (District Recommendation)\*:

- Full Remote
- Blended, Hybrid
- Full In-Person
- Other



Although most students are currently attending schools that are employing a blended, hybrid model of learning, **non-White students are more likely than White students to be attending schools that are employing full remote models of learning.**

There are already educational disparities for low-income students of color, and a shift to fully virtual learning this school year could exacerbate those gaps.

\*Note: All districts have a virtual/remote option. Schools represented are public schools only.

Sources: PA Schools Work, PDE 2019-2020 enrollment, Allies for Children. Counties included: Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette, Westmoreland.



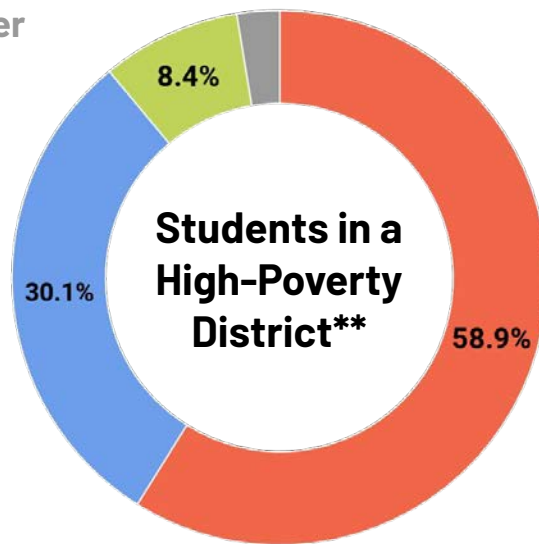
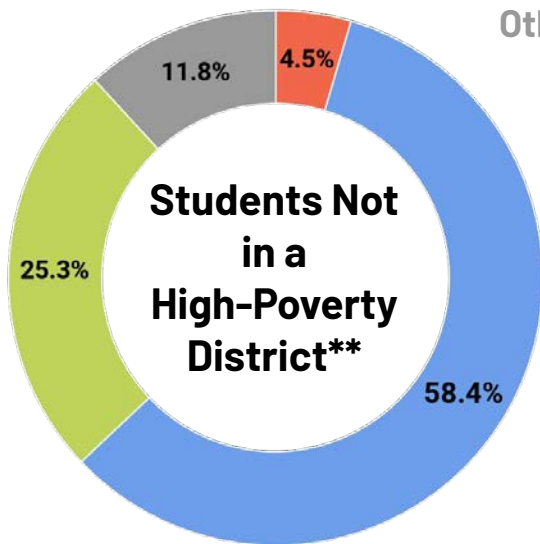


# Learning Models, Start of the School Year



## Learning Model (District Recommendation)\*:

Full Remote  
Blended, Hybrid  
Full In-Person  
Other



Although most students are currently attending schools that are employing a blended, hybrid model of learning, **students in districts with higher rates of child poverty are more likely to be attending schools that are employing full remote models of learning.**

\*Note: All districts have a virtual/remote option. Schools represented are public schools only.

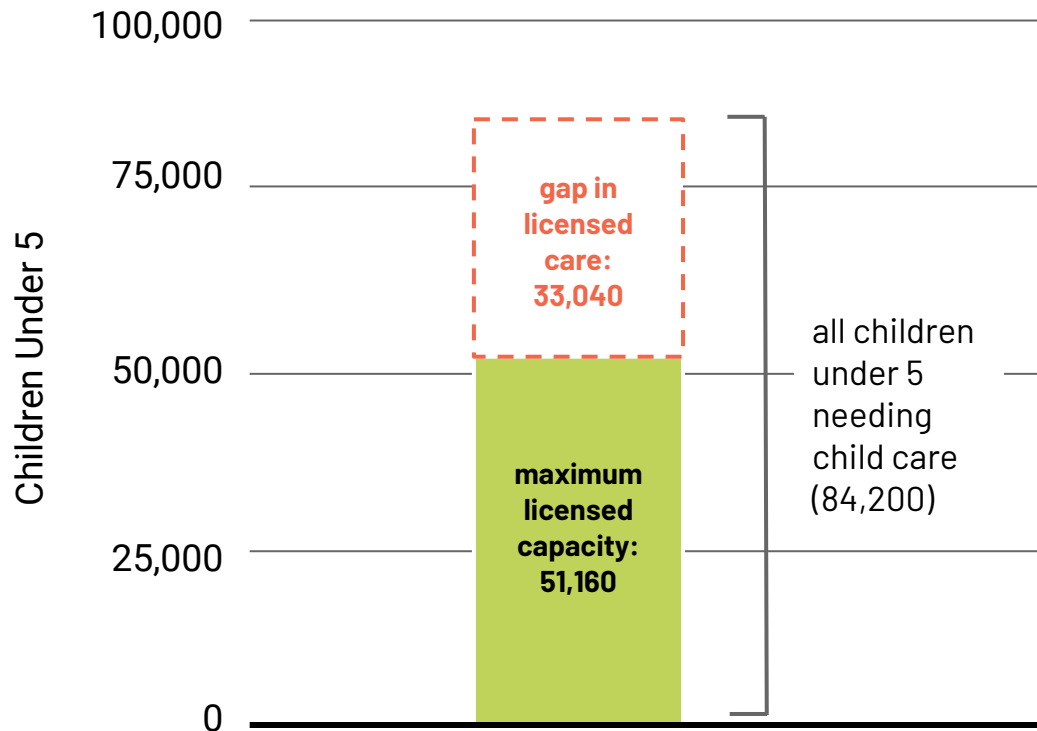
\*\*High-Poverty refers to a district with a child poverty rate greater than or equal to 16.8%, PA's 2018 child poverty rate.

Sources: PA Schools Work, PDE 2019-2020 enrollment, Allies for Children. Counties included: Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette, Westmoreland.





# Gaps in Needed Child Care, Pre-COVID



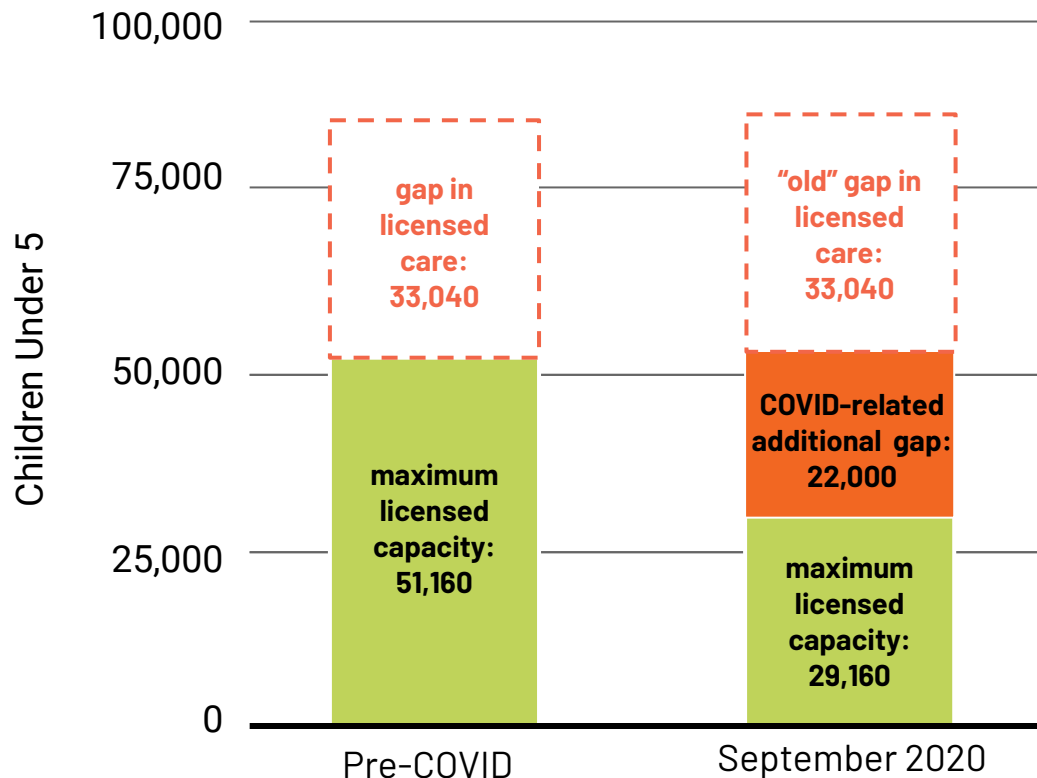
Even before COVID-19, there were gaps in child care, with **84,200 children under five needing care**, but only **51,160 licensed spots**.



Source: PA Partnerships for Children & PA Department of Human Services (February 2020) with 4E analysis



# Gaps in Needed Child Care, Pre-COVID



COVID has exacerbated these gaps, forcing providers to decrease their capacity even more. Some estimates say **the gap could be widening by as much as 22,000 additional seats.**



Source: PA Partnerships for Children & PA Department of Human Services (February 2020) with 4E analysis

# More Information & Previous Reports

- Find our full report, with more detailed data [here](#).
- Previous reports:
  - [Community Pulse Report: September](#) (full)
  - [Community Pulse Report: September](#) (abbreviated)

