

Pulse Report for Children and Families

SEPTEMBER 2020

TAKING OUR PULSE

Imagine if at the beginning of COVID-19 we had access to better information. The decisions we made might have been the same but they would have been better informed. 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



FINANCIAL STABILITY



FOOD ACCESS & HOUSING



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT & CHILD CARE

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.

If you would like to learn more about the data as well as the indicators not included in this month's report [click here](#).

A NOTE ON DISAGGREGATED DATA

We are committed to utilizing data that can be disaggregated by race, gender, and age. Where such data is available, we note that throughout the report with this symbol:  And where it is not available, we note with this symbol: 

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.

A NOTE ON GEOGRAPHIES

Throughout this report, the geography of analyzed data is noted next to each chart or graph:



Pennsylvania



5-County Region
(Allegheny, Armstrong,
Butler, Fayette,
Westmoreland)



County-Specific

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WHAT WE ARE SEEING

Children: Although we do see a rise in Medicaid enrollment, national trends point to a reduction in immunization and pediatric well visits. We are, therefore, concerned about potential long-term health impacts from delayed preventative care, challenges with food access and COVID-19 diagnoses. And learners—from birth to university—are being impacted, potentially with developmental loss.

Working Parents: Many working parents are being forced to juggle career and caring for children with no “new normal” in sight and loss of child care and in-person schooling.

Economically Vulnerable Workers: Households with earners in retail, restaurant, and hospitality who cannot find new work have been helped by enhanced unemployment benefits and moratoriums. At the same time, United Way’s 211 Emergency Basic Needs shows a 35% reduction in request for support with utilities. As we head into fall and winter and as benefits and moratoriums expire, we are concerned about the estimated backlog of evictions and foreclosures presented on page 8 and anticipate significant increases in request for help with utilities.

Black and LatinX Families and Children: Multiple recent reports on our region, including the City of Pittsburgh’s Gender Equity Commission’s “Pittsburgh’s Inequality Across Gender and Race,” have detailed health, social, and economic disparities for Black and LatinX children and families in our region. We are attentive to these issues and will strive to gather and provide more data that highlights these intersecting inequalities in future reports.

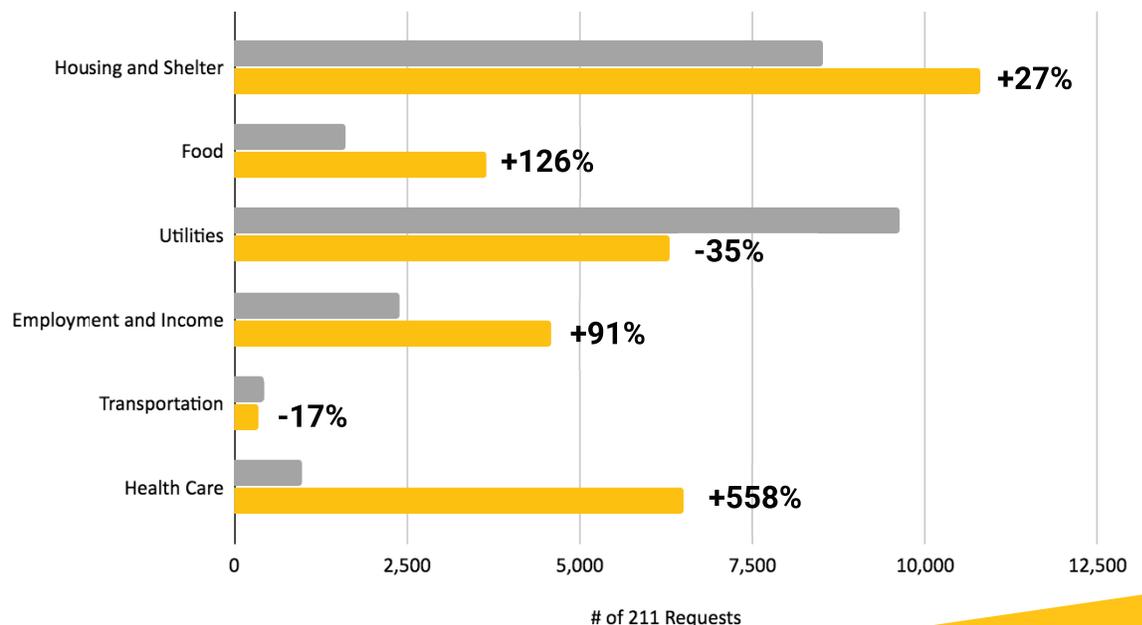


United Way’s 211* Emergency Basic Needs Requests

March 15 - August 31, Five-County Region



■ 2019 ■ 2020



In the five-county region (Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette, and Westmoreland), 211 emergency basic needs requests were 36% higher from March 15-August 31 of 2020 than they were in the same time period of 2019.

*211 is United Way’s free, confidential referral and information helpline and website that connects people to the essential health and human services they need, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Source: PA 211 Counts. Phone and text requests only.
Geography: Five-County Region (Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette, Westmoreland).



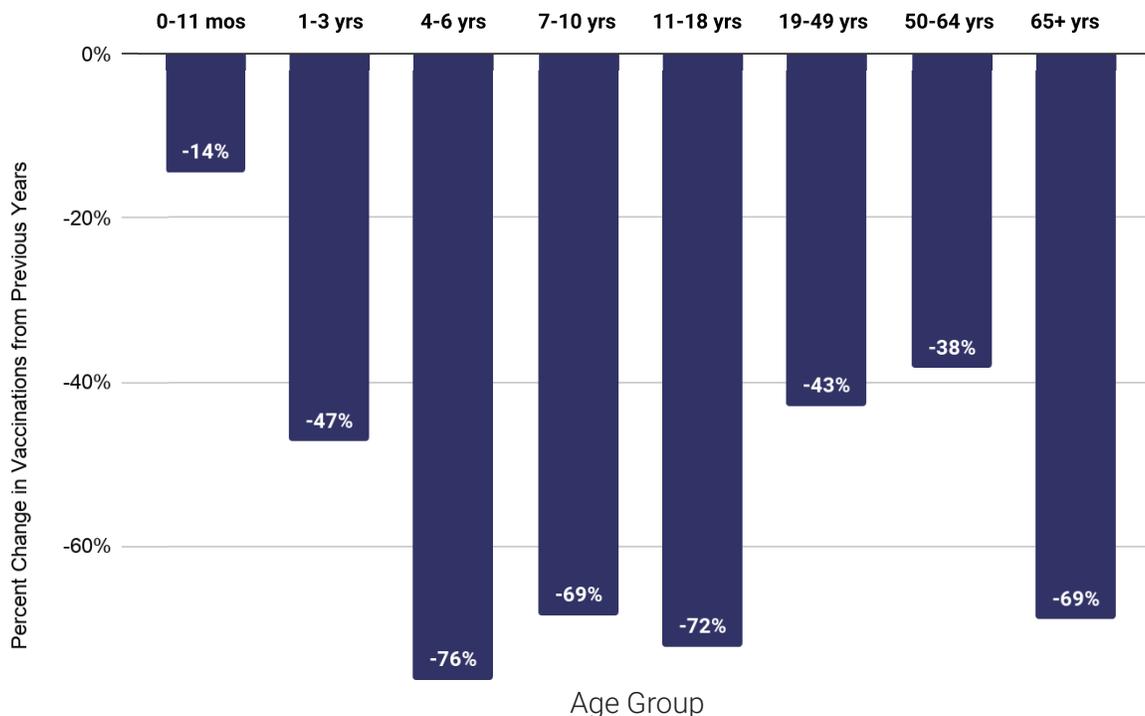
Ensuring continuous access of health care for children will mitigate the long-term negative impacts of the pandemic.

IMMUNIZATION RATES IN PENNSYLVANIA, MARCH 15-JUNE 30



Vaccination rates from March-June have been lower this year than in prior years.

Children need critical vaccines during the first year of their lives, and luckily infants had the lowest decline in vaccination rates. Children and adolescents between four and 18 and senior adults (65+) saw major declines in vaccination rates.



Source: PA Partnerships for Children | PA Health Department. Geography: Pennsylvania

Note: This data reflects immunizations reported by participating providers registered in PA SIIS. The registry is voluntary and does not capture all providers or immunizations in the state.

WELL VISITS, NATIONALLY



Pediatric visits are down

26%

from their typical baseline, nationally (as of 7/26).

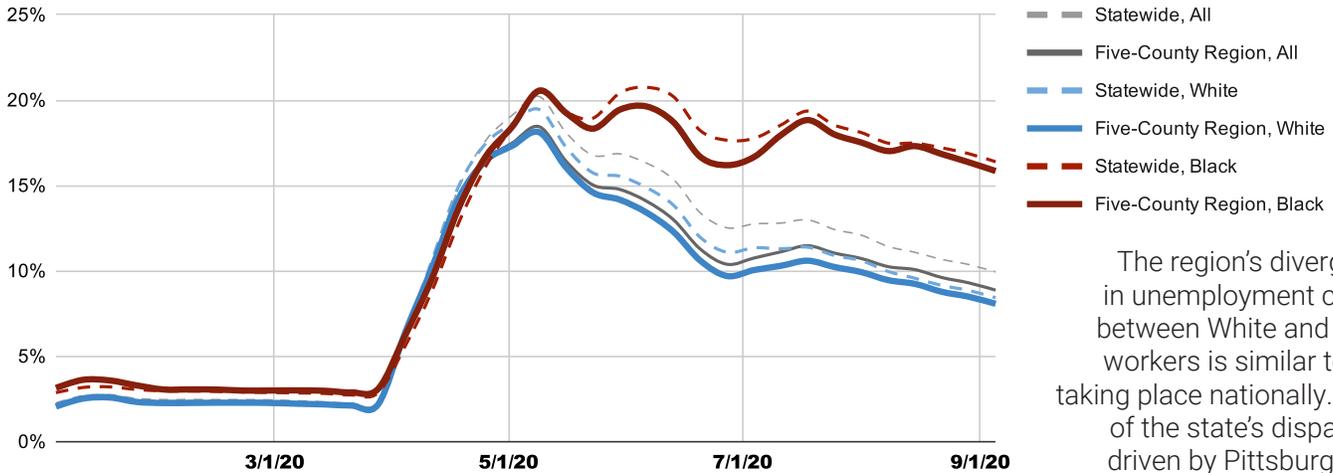
Although visits have not returned to baseline levels, they have been trending steadily up since lows in mid-March.

Source: Commonwealth Fund.
Geography: National



The economic consequences of the pandemic will continue to drive most of the non-health related aspects of the crisis as well as further aggravate the racial and gender disparities across many of the other indicators.

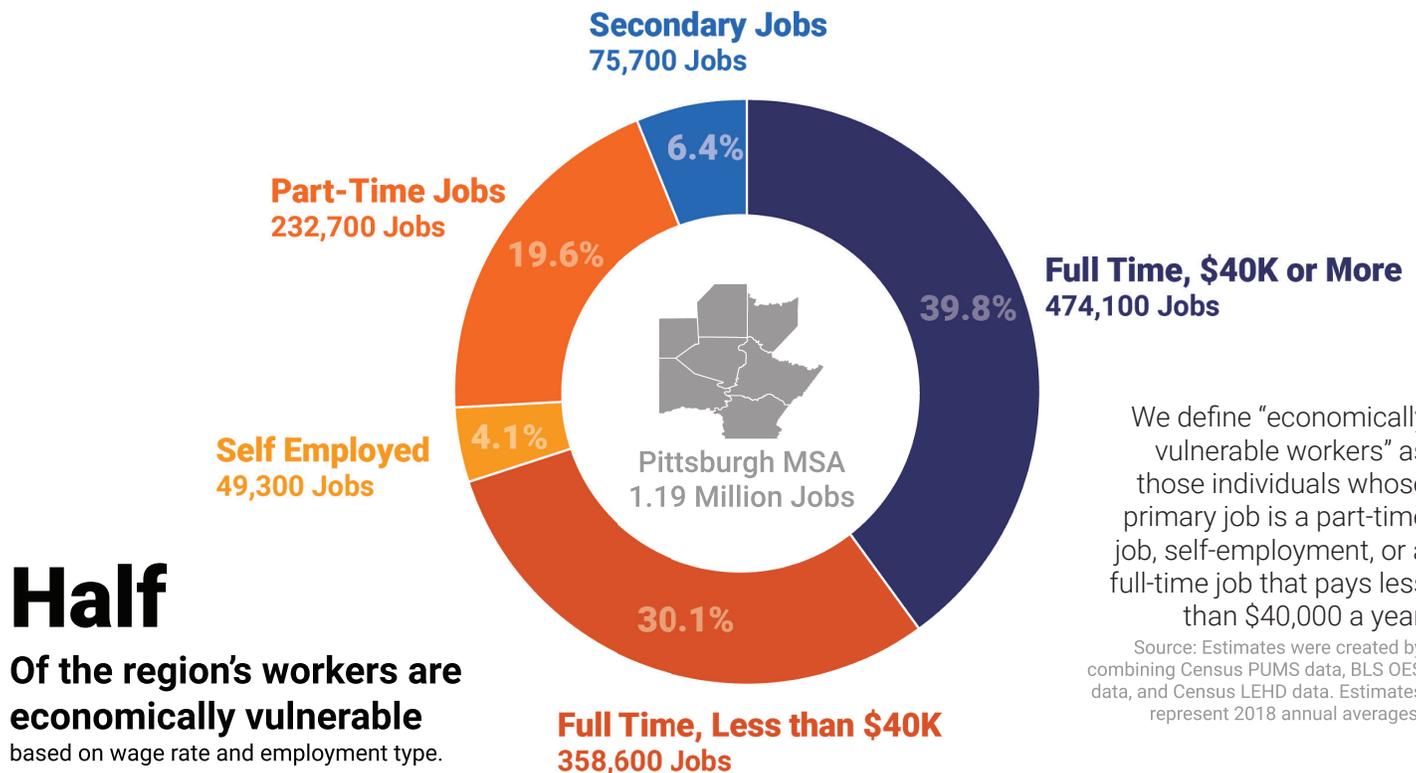
ESTIMATED PENNSYLVANIA UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS BY RACE: 2020



The region's divergence in unemployment claims between White and Black workers is similar to that taking place nationally. Most of the state's disparity is driven by Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

Source: PA Department of Labor & Industry UI claims data; Estimated rate based on 2019 QWI workforce data

ECONOMICALLY VULNERABLE WORKERS: PITTSBURGH MSA



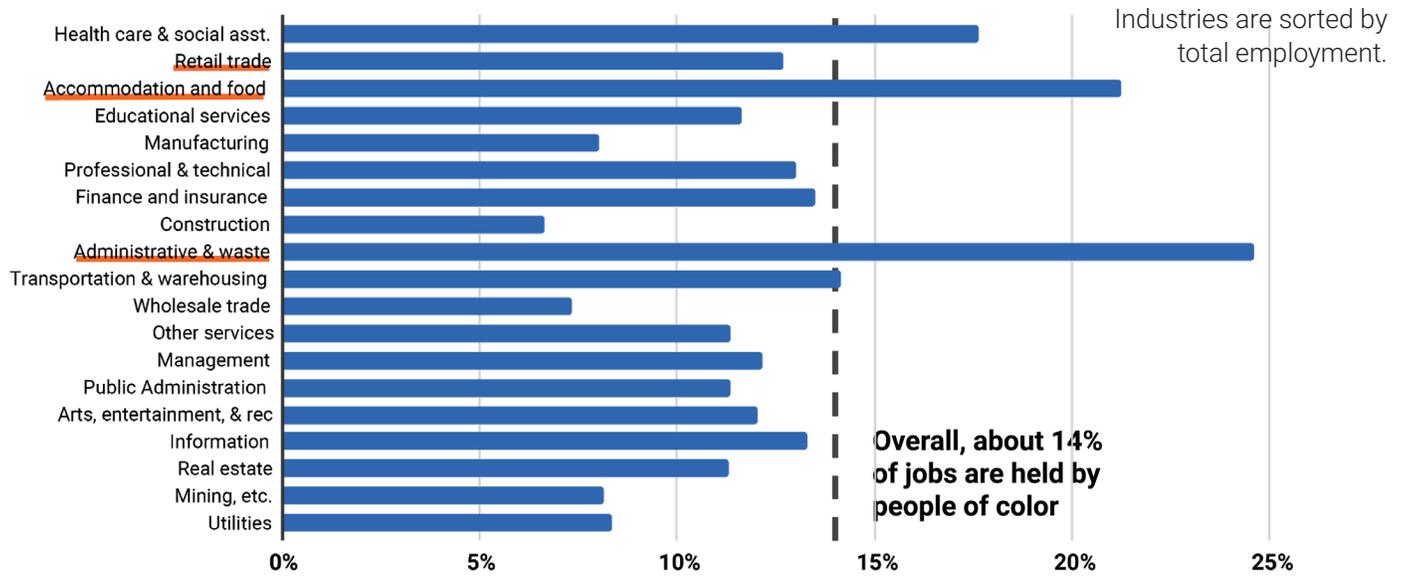
Half
Of the region's workers are economically vulnerable based on wage rate and employment type.

We define "economically vulnerable workers" as those individuals whose primary job is a part-time job, self-employment, or a full-time job that pays less than \$40,000 a year.

Source: Estimates were created by combining Census PUMS data, BLS OES data, and Census LEHD data. Estimates represent 2018 annual averages.



EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE OF COLOR BY INDUSTRY: PITTSBURGH MSA

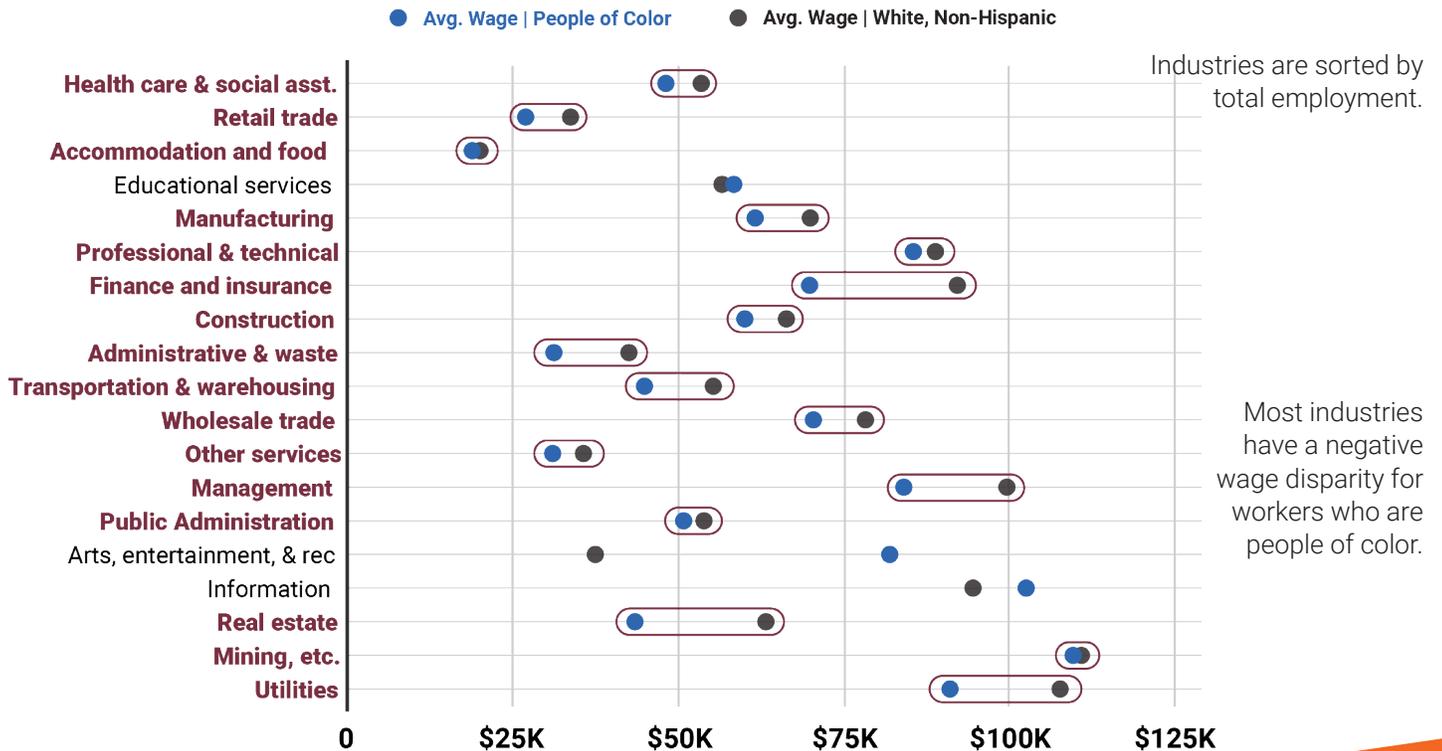


[Workers in these industries are particularly vulnerable, with a higher proportion of low-wage, part-time jobs.]

Percent of Industry Employees who are **People of Color**

2018 estimates based on BLS data

WAGE DISPARITY BY INDUSTRY: PITTSBURGH MSA



2018 estimates based on BLS data

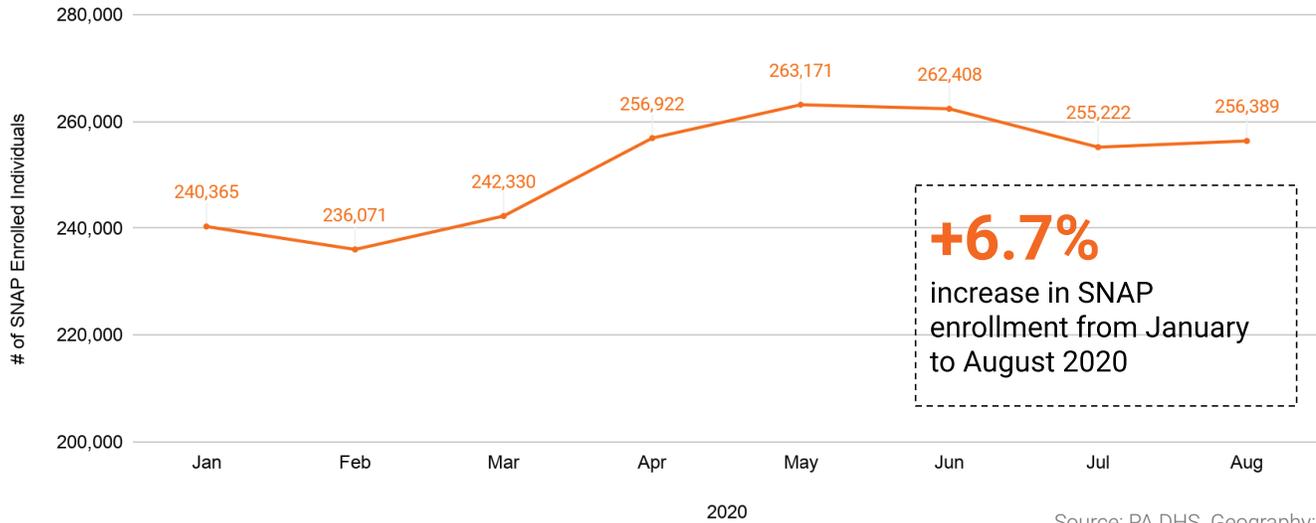


SNAP and Medical Assistance are essential elements of our social safety net. While enrollment is on the rise, we expect the rate of enrollment to increase as the pandemic continues and benefits end.

SNAP ENROLLMENT



In the five-county region, rates of SNAP enrollment are higher in Black households than White households: an estimated **10%** of White households receive SNAP benefits vs. **38%** of Black households.

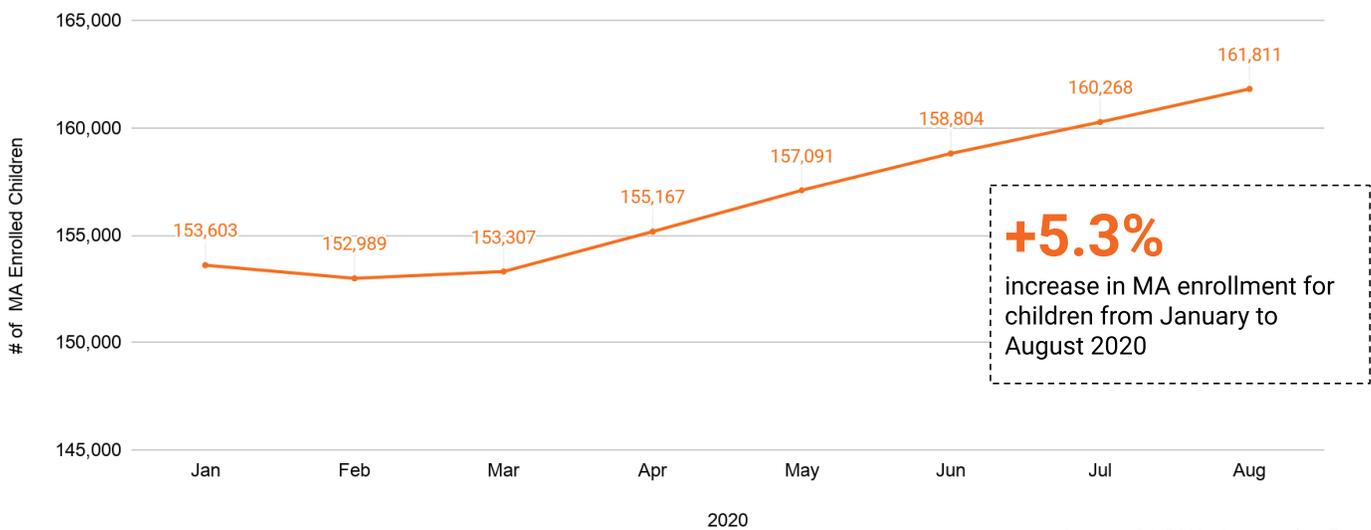


Source: PA DHS. Geography: Five-County Region (Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette, Westmoreland).

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE ENROLLMENT FOR CHILDREN



In August 2020, in the five-county region, **40%** of MA beneficiaries were children under the age of 18.

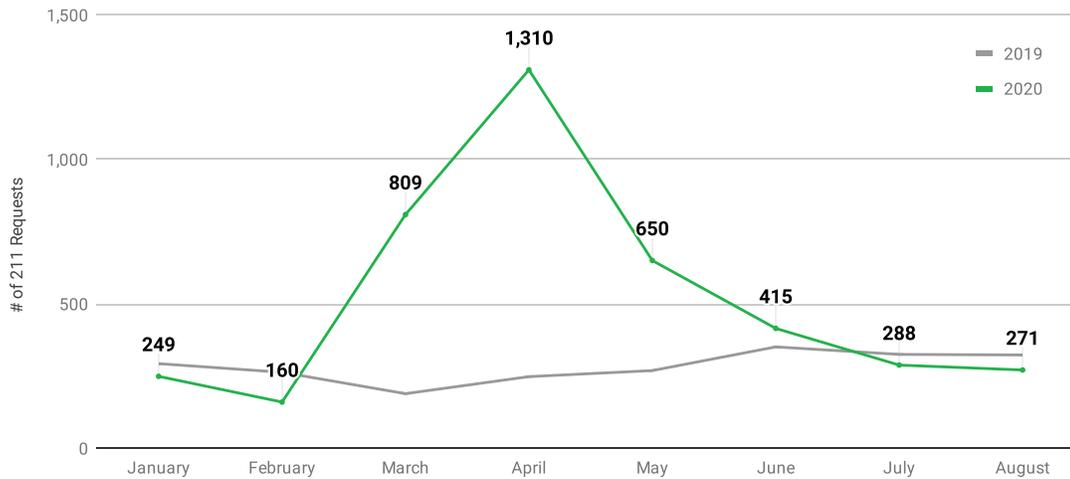


Source: PA DHS. Geography: Five-County Region (Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette, Westmoreland).



Requests for basic needs, like food and housing, can tell us more about how families are struggling to make ends meet. Where are resources most needed, and where are they likely to continue to be needed?

UNITED WAY'S 211 REQUESTS FOR FOOD SUPPORT

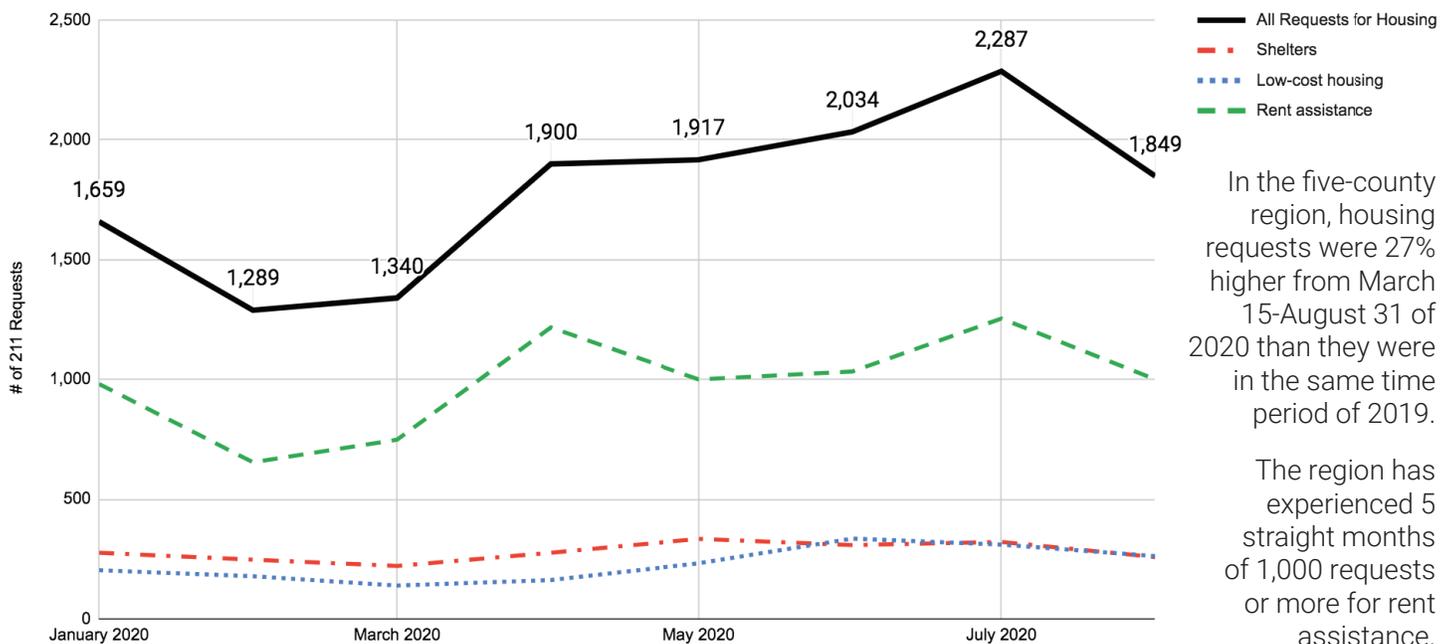


From the time period of March 15 to August 31, food requests were 126% higher in 2020 than they were in 2019.

But the volume of requests has gone down since the start of the pandemic. This could be because of a combination of strong local efforts and investment in increased food access for high-need areas. It could also be due to the delayed impacts of unemployment benefits, which may not have arrived for families until after April.

Source: PA 211 Counts. Phone and text requests only.
 Geography: Five-County Region (Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette, Westmoreland).

UNITED WAY'S 211 REQUESTS FOR HOUSING SUPPORT



In the five-county region, housing requests were 27% higher from March 15-August 31 of 2020 than they were in the same time period of 2019.

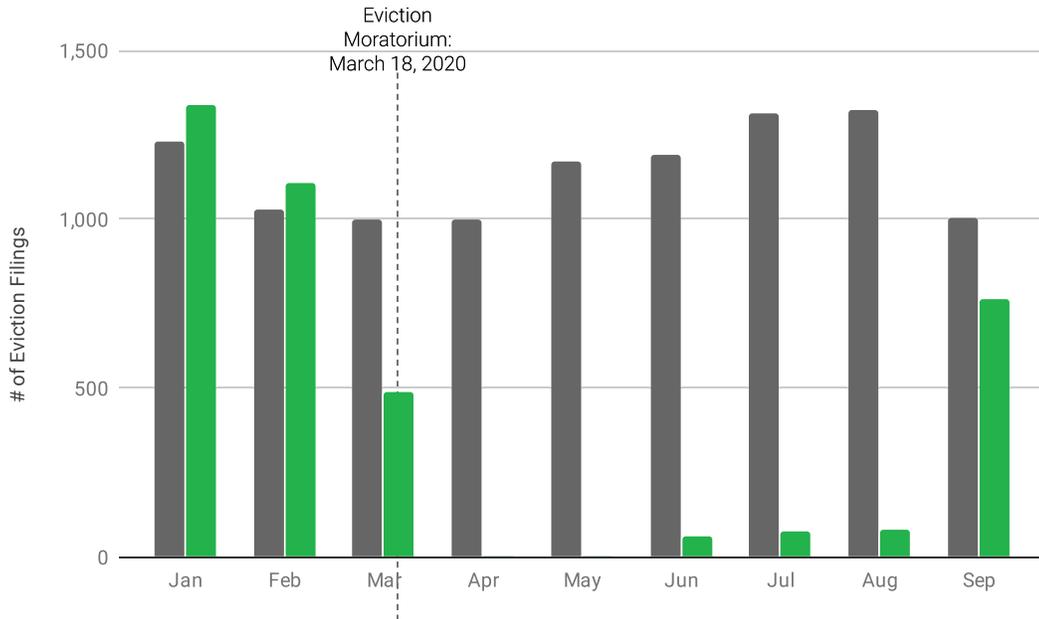
The region has experienced 5 straight months of 1,000 requests or more for rent assistance.

Source: PA 211 Counts. Phone and text requests only.
 Geography: Five-County Region (Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette, Westmoreland).



Because of the continued moratoriums and the availability of some funds to support renters, evictions have not been on the rise. We are monitoring this situation closely.

EVICTIIONS IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY

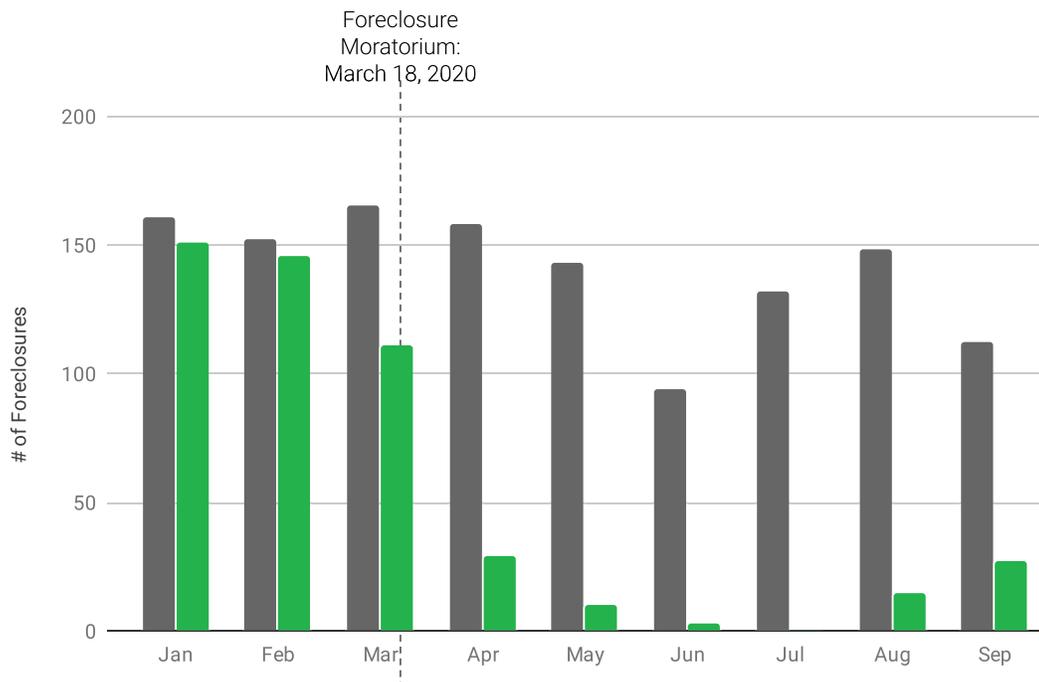


If 2020 evictions were at 2019 levels, there could be a

backlog of 6,530 evictions.

Source: Eviction Lab, as of 9/26.
Geography: Allegheny County

FORECLOSURES IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY



If 2020 foreclosures were at 2019 levels, there could be a

backlog of 757 foreclosures.

Source: WPRDC, as of 9/26.
Geography: Allegheny County

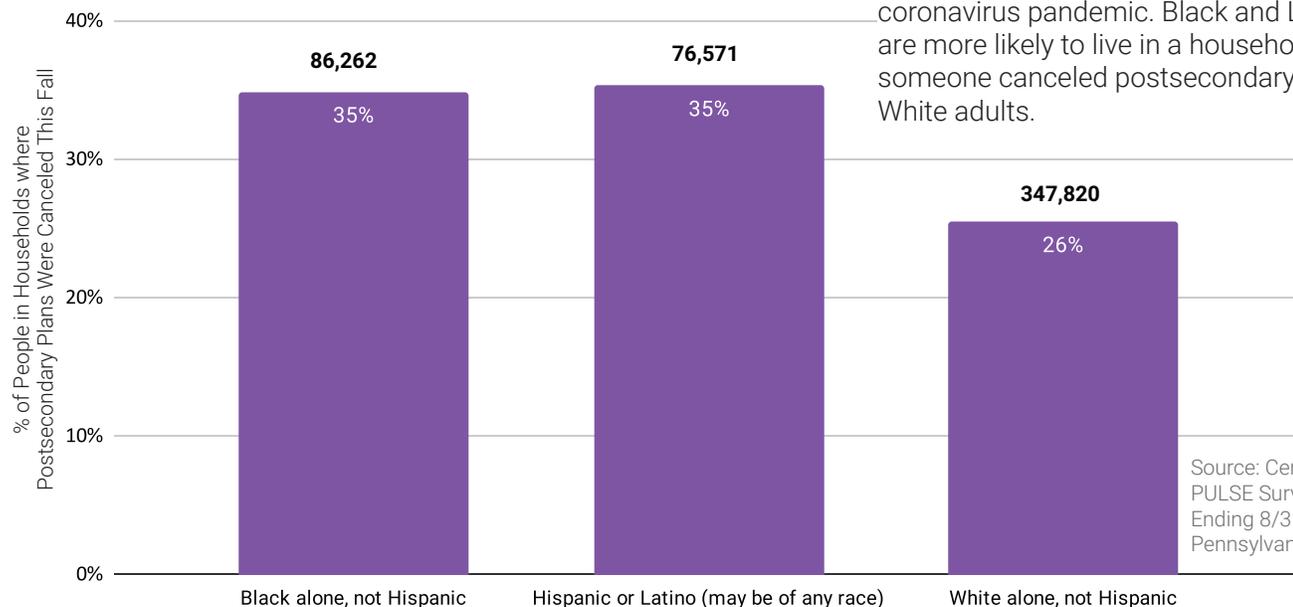


The ability of child care providers and schools to serve children in person, virtually, or in hybrid models impacts the growth and development of children and also the ability of parents to work. In future reports, we plan to provide more information on these learning models.

CANCELED POSTSECONDARY PLANS: PENNSYLVANIA

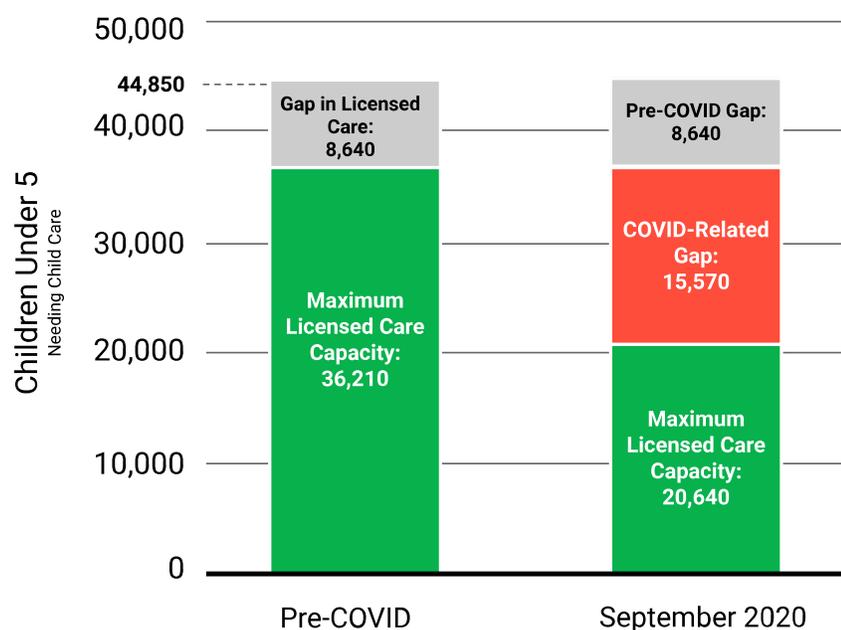


28% of people in households where someone was planning to take postsecondary classes this fall saw all plans canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic. Black and LatinX adults are more likely to live in a household where someone canceled postsecondary plans than White adults.



Source: Census Household PULSE Survey, Week Ending 8/31. Geography: Pennsylvania

COVID'S IMPACTS ON CHILD CARE IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY



Even before COVID-19, there were gaps in licensed child care for children under five, with 44,850 children needing care, but only 36,210 "slots" available.

That gap is now widening by as many as 15,570 spots, due to decreased capacity for health and safety concerns and some child care businesses closing permanently. This doesn't account for further anticipated losses as CARES Act money and additional funding runs out.

Sources: PA Partnerships for Children & PA Department of Human Services (July 2020) with 4E analysis; Center for American Progress, "Understanding the True Cost of Child Care for Infants and Toddlers"

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UP NEXT

From the field, we are hearing that requests for assistance with rent and utility bills are increasing both in number and in size. They tell us that seniors, Black children, and families and single parents are struggling the most, and there are a greater number of requests coming from people above the Federal Poverty Limit. Based on that, we expect October's Community Pulse Report to include information on utility bills and housing stability. We will also have more information on the learning models applied across the schools of our region as well as on disengaged youth. We will also continue to focus on vulnerable workers of the region.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEXT MONTH

We will continue working on the following areas:

- Exploring the disaggregation of data and where it is not available, considering how best to advocate for it
- Gathering more data focused on seniors, including calls to the DHS senior line
- Utilizing data from the Family Strengths Survey
- Promoting the Family Strengths Survey in different groups, thereby further diversifying respondents
- Gathering more regional data



United Way
of Southwestern Pennsylvania



ALLIES
FOR CHILDREN

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Interested in Learning More?

Contact Patrick Dowd at:
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