

COMMUNITY  
**PULSE**  
REPORT



# Pulse Report for Children & Families

February 2021

# 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:



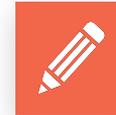
Health & Wellness



Housing & Utilities



Jobs & Financial Assistance



Educational Disruptions & 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 Latino/a/x 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:



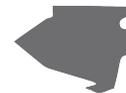
United States



Pennsylvania



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



County-Specific

# From the Field

Feedback and observations from our on-the-ground providers are crucial to understanding the data we are collecting in context.

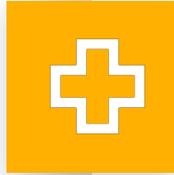
**Agencies continue to emphasize how critical increased funding is. Needs vary, and flexible support is particularly important, especially as providers play a critical role in vaccine outreach.**

“The impact of COVID-19 has shined an illuminous light on structural inequities in this country. One of the many threats to health and well-being is access to the lifesaving COVID-19 vaccine for under resourced and marginalized communities. What has become clear is that community based nonprofit organizations are integral in creating community access. This important work unfortunately becomes yet another expensive and unfunded priority that organizations fulfill.”

“We have been challenged to keep up with demand, due to limited availability of funds.”

“COVID makes it harder for re-entrants, minorities and senior citizens to find employment.”





**There are continued disparities in who is contracting COVID-19, as well as who our essential workers on the front lines are.**

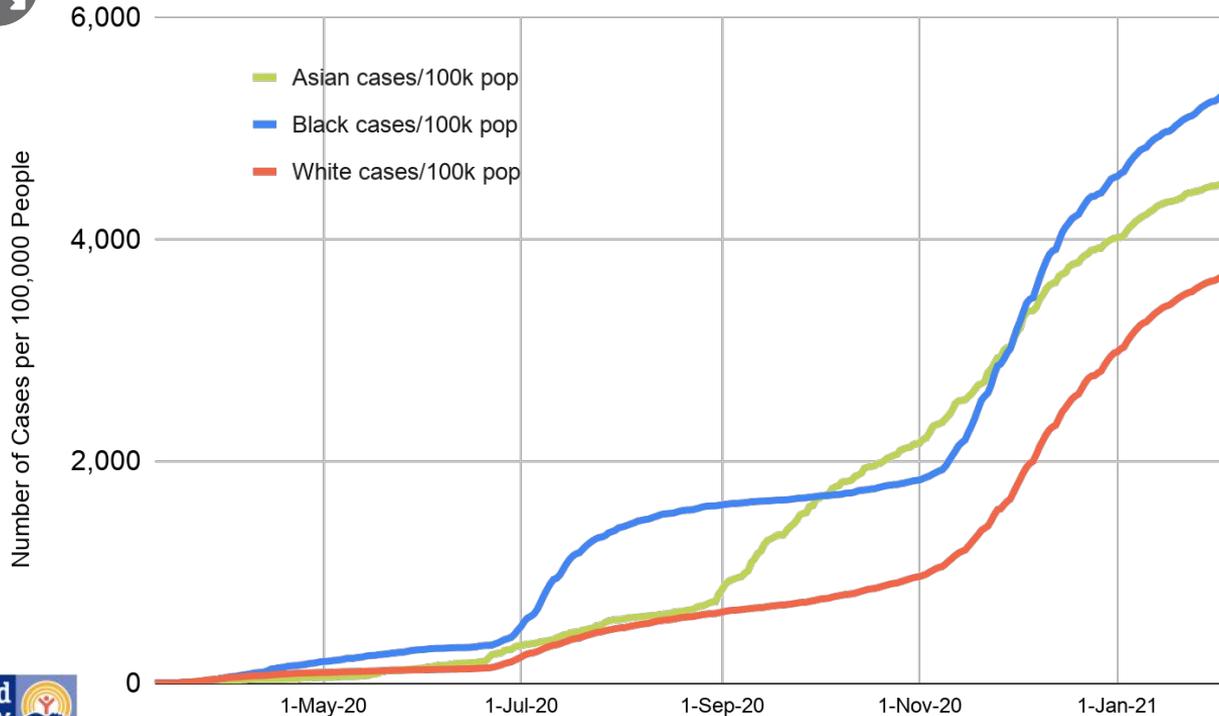
**While vaccines are being distributed across the region, access and receipt is not equitable.**

**Preliminary estimates from the CDC indicate that life expectancy in the US dropped a full year during the first half of 2020, with Black Americans losing nearly three years and Latinos/as/x, nearly two years.**

# Cumulative COVID-19 Cases by Race, Allegheny County



## Cumulative Cases per 100K Population



The cumulative COVID-19 case rate continues to be **higher for Black and Asian populations** in Allegheny County than the White population.

Disaggregated data is currently not available for every County in the region.

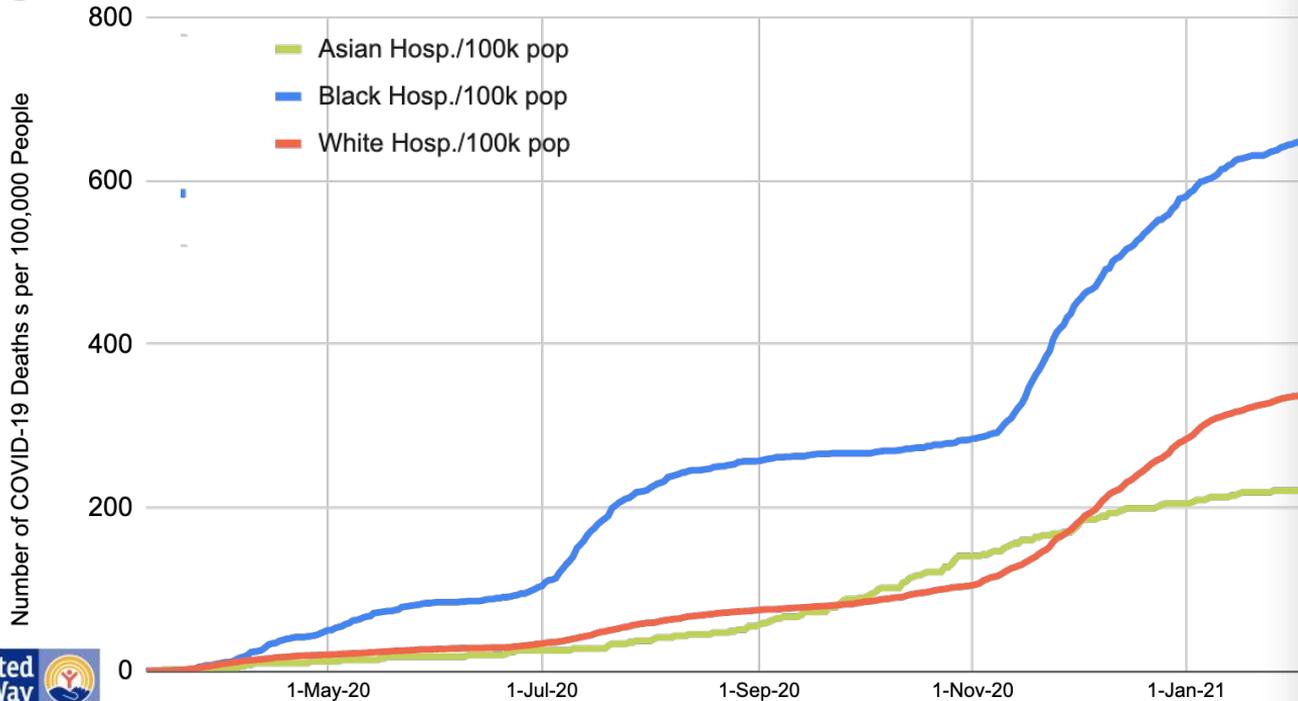


Source: Black COVID-19 Equity Coalition. COVID-19 Data Dashboard developed by the Carnegie Mellon University CREATE Lab using data from the listed sources. Licensed Under CC. Retrieved on 2.9.21 from <https://covid.createlab.org/>

# Cumulative Hospitalizations by Race, Allegheny County



## Cumulative Hospitalizations per 100K Population



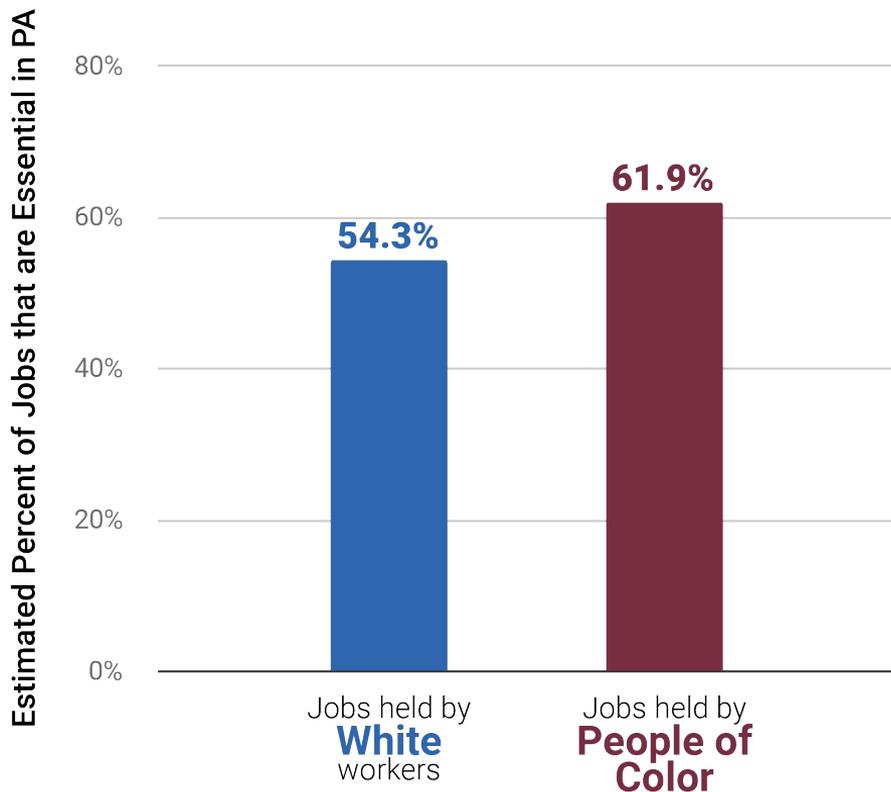
Hospitalization rates from COVID-19 are also **higher for the Black population** in Allegheny County than the White or Asian populations

Disaggregated data is currently not available for every County in the region.



Source: Black COVID-19 Equity Coalition. COVID-19 Data Dashboard developed by the Carnegie Mellon University CREATE Lab using data from the listed sources. Licensed Under CC. Retrieved on 2.9.21 from <https://covid.createlab.org/>

# Essential Workers by Race, Pennsylvania



Estimates suggest that **jobs held by people of color in PA are more likely to be “essential” jobs.** That is true in all five counties of Southwest PA’s five-county region.

We might expect vaccination rates among people of color to reflect these higher rates, but with limited data to date, we have not yet seen this.

Source: Fourth Economy analysis based on QWI data, UI Claims data, and PA closure order classifications



# Essential Workers & Women, Pennsylvania



## In Pennsylvania, women represent:



**56%**  
of jobs in accommodation  
and food



**78%**  
of jobs in health care and social  
assistance



**66%**  
of jobs in  
education

There are greater concentrations of women working in industries that may be considered “essential,” thus potentially putting them at greater risk to contract COVID-19.



Source: QWI 2019 Annual Average Employment



# COVID-19 Vaccinations, at least one dose, Five-County Region



In the five-county region,

## 204,914

people have been vaccinated with at least one dose.\* That's an estimated 13.3% of adults 18+ in the region.

The Butler County Area Agency on Aging has received [state-wide recognition](#) for its success in helping local older adults receive COVID-19 vaccines.

## Estimated % of Adults 18+ Vaccinated with at Least One Dose\*

Allegheny	<b>13.2%</b>
Armstrong	<b>12.1%</b>
<b>Butler</b>	<b>17.1%</b>
Fayette	<b>12.0%</b>
Westmoreland	<b>12.8%</b>
Pennsylvania	<b>10.6%</b>

\*As of 2/15/21.

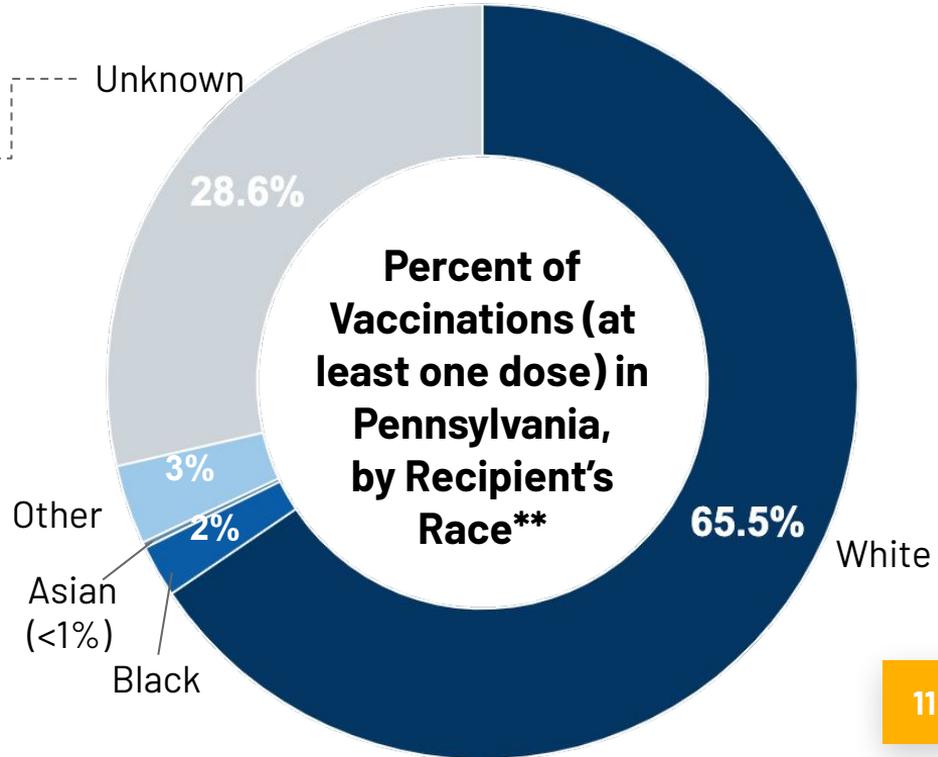
Source: [Pennsylvania Department of Health](#). Population estimates based on 2019 ACS 5-year estimates of adults 18 and older.



# COVID-19 Vaccinations by Race, Pennsylvania



Until recently, it was not mandatory for facilities to collect race/ethnicity data. As of February 12, that data is now required. Therefore, we can expect to see the large portion of “unknowns” in the data go down and get a more accurate picture of who is getting vaccinated in the months to come.



\*As of 2/16/21. \*\*As of 2/12/21. Pennsylvania residents who receive a vaccination from a clinic located in Philadelphia county, a federal facility, or in another state are not included in this data.

Source: [Pennsylvania Department of Health](#)

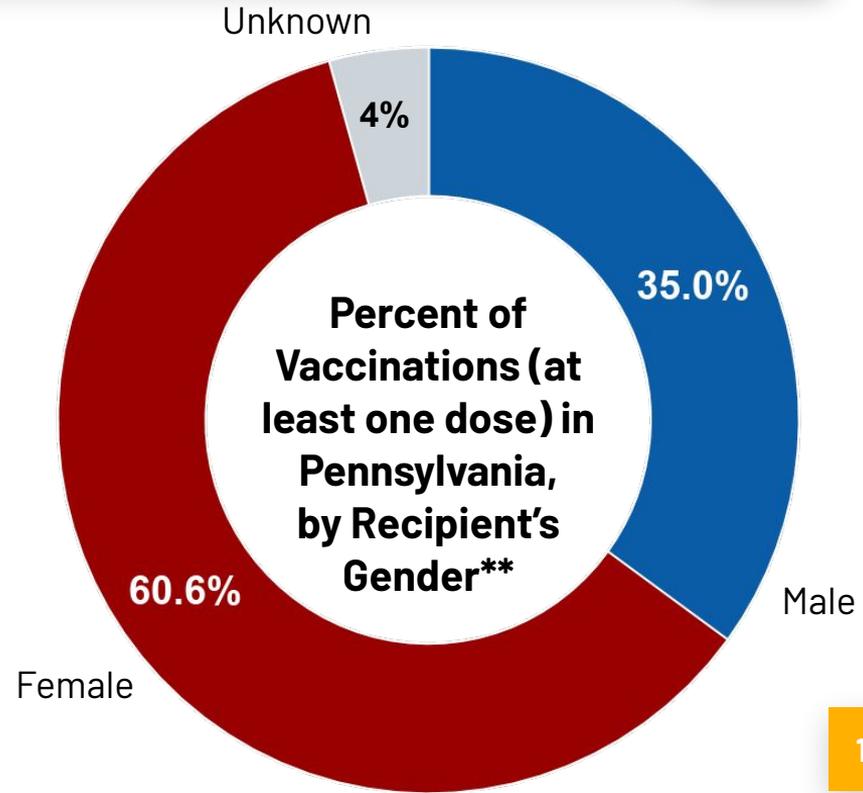


# COVID-19 Vaccinations by Gender, Pennsylvania



More women than men have received at least one dose of the vaccine statewide.

This may partially be explained by the greater proportion of women working in health care and/or who are over age 75. Both of those groups have been prioritized for vaccine distribution.



\*As of 2/16/21. \*\*As of 2/12/21. Pennsylvania residents who receive a vaccination from a clinic located in Philadelphia county, a federal facility, or in another state are not included in this data.

Source: [Pennsylvania Department of Health](https://www.health.pa.gov/)



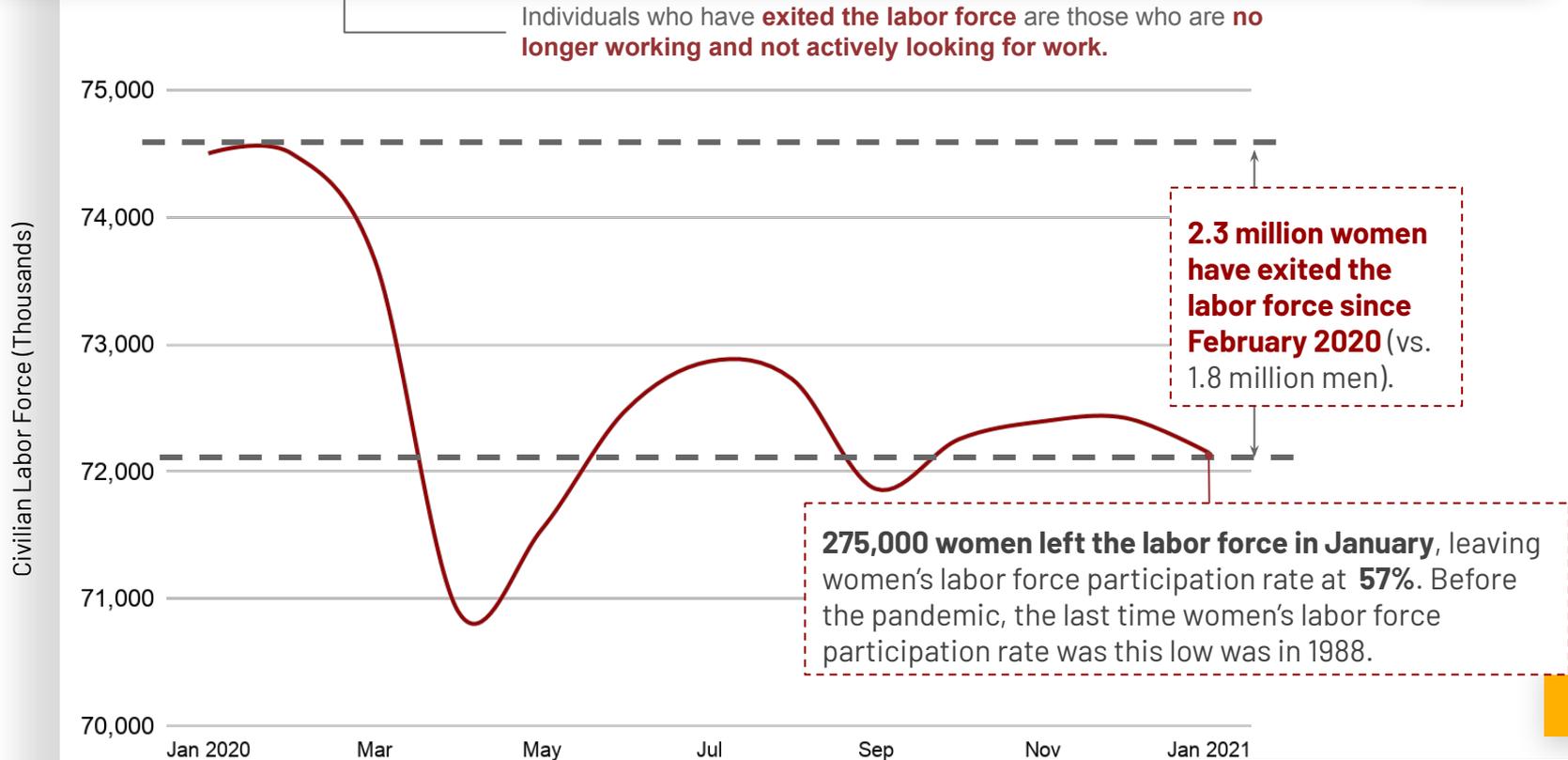


**Many families and children continue to face economic hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

**There are racial disparities in unemployment rates, and women are exiting the labor force at alarming rates.**



# Women's Labor Force Participation, Nationally



Source: BLS, Data Table A-1. Figure is seasonally adjusted. Women 20 and over.



# Impacts on Mothers & Parents



"Almost  
**1 million mothers**  
have left the  
workforce – with  
Black mothers,  
Hispanic mothers and  
single mothers among  
the hardest hit."

Source: [NY Times](#)

For Pennsylvania families  
with average incomes  
below the basic  
household "survival  
budget,"

**64%**

report reducing their  
hours or leaving a job to  
take care of their children  
during the pandemic.

Source: United Way of PA's August 2020  
COVID-19 Impact Survey, "Survival  
budget" = \$69,648 for a family of four.

Child care needs are a  
significant driver of  
women and parents  
exiting the labor force.

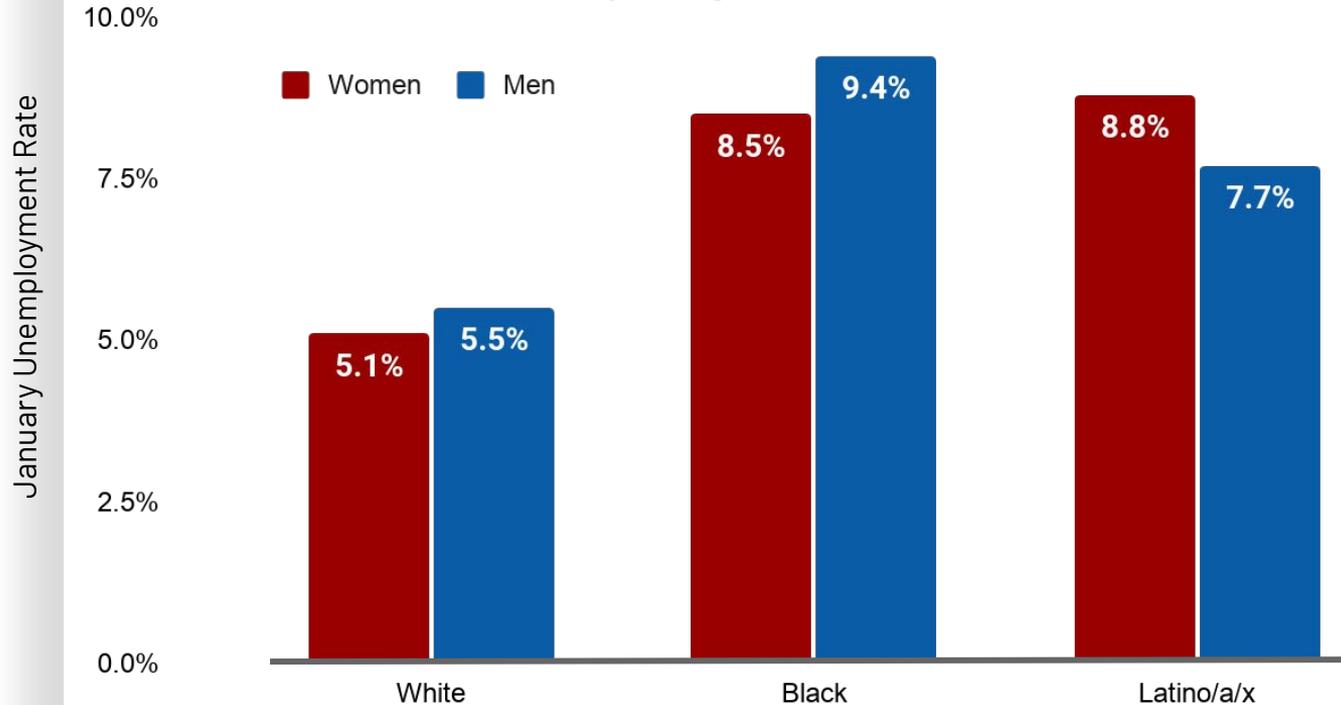




# Unemployment Rates by Race and Gender, Nationally (January)



**Unemployed** individuals are those who are not currently working but are **actively looking for work**.



Race is a significant factor in unemployment disparities. Black and Latino/a/x individuals have higher rates of unemployment than their white counterparts.

Source: BLS January 2021. Ages 20 and over except for persons with a disability (16-64). Seasonally adjusted except for persons with a disability.





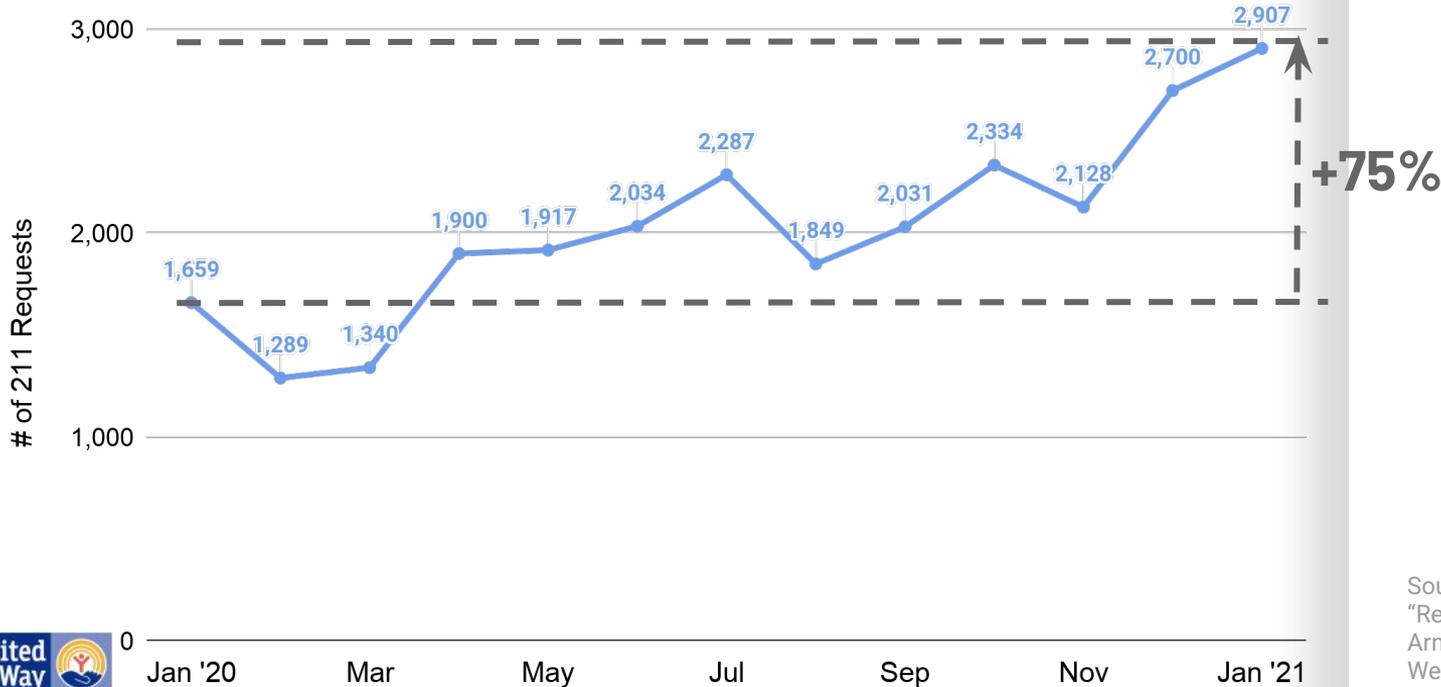
**Families continue to need housing supports, and fear evictions and foreclosures.**

**Increased access to broadband is imperative for supporting remote work, online schooling, telehealth, and more. Even before the pandemic, a 2018 survey conducted by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission showed over half of the 1,000+ respondents found that the provision of high-speed internet should be “the most urgent technological Force of Change the region should address over the next 25 years.”**





# 211 Housing Support Requests, 2020-21



In the five-county region, housing requests continue to rise.

**January 2021 requests were 75% higher than January 2020.**

Source: Source: PA 211 Counts. "Region" includes Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette, and Westmoreland Counties



# Housing Insecurity, Pennsylvania Households



26%

of adults are living in households not current on rent or mortgage where **eviction or foreclosure in the next two months** is either very likely or somewhat likely

Source: Census Household PULSE Survey, Pennsylvania, Week Ending 2/1

44%

of households earning below a basic "survival budget," are **more concerned about paying housing expenses than contracting COVID-19**

Source: United Way of PA's August 2020 COVID-19 Impact Survey, "Survival budget" = \$69,648 for a family of four.

Pennsylvanians continue to struggle to pay rent and mortgage payments. When moratoriums and protections expire, there may be an eviction and foreclosure crisis.





# Broadband Infrastructure



## Median download and upload speed

- **High speed connection for 3-4 people:** 50+ Mbps down / 5+ Mbps up
- **High speed internet (FCC definition):** 25+ Mbps down / 3+ Mbps up
- **Work from home minimum:** 10+ Mbps down / 1+ Mbps up
- **Too slow for remote work:** under 10 Mbps down / 1 Mbps up

## Overall, the region boasts fast internet.

Internet speed for a typical user in the region meets the FCC definition for high speed internet.

Median download and upload speed in the region in every county in the region is at least 25+ Mbps down / 3+ Mbps up.

**This still may not be fast enough to support multiple remote workers and students taking online classes.**

Source: BLS Job Flexibilities and Work Schedule data, 2017-2018  
Measurement Lab Internet Speed data, 2020





# Broadband Access



**Percent of households without a subscription to any type of broadband**

- 30% or more
- 24% to 29%
- 20% to 23%
- 19% or less

## But that doesn't mean that everyone has access.

**Even if the infrastructure is in place for high-speed internet, many households are still not connected.**

In counties with strong broadband infrastructure, like Allegheny and Butler, households may still be unconnected due to subscription costs.

In counties where the infrastructure is not as strong, like Armstrong, lack of access could be related to rurality and the inability to connect to broadband regardless of cost.

Source: Census American Community Survey, 2015-2019 estimates





**Lack of internet access, combined with other disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic, factor heavily into children's education.**



# Increased Truancy Rates



School absences have spiked since the start of the pandemic, due to lack of internet access, housing instability, and more.

In the fall, teachers reported that student

**absences had increased from 6% before the pandemic to 10%.**

[Education Week](#)

In many cases, chronically absent students are being deemed “truant,” and their families may be facing harsh consequences, like

**finances, probation, and referrals to child protective services or court.**

Shifting truancy rules away from punishment and toward positive reinforcements can help schools support families, instead of penalize them.



# More Information & Previous Reports

- Previous reports:
  - [Community Pulse Report: September](#)
  - [Community Pulse Report: October](#)
  - [Community Pulse Report: November/December](#)
  - [Community Pulse Report: January](#)