

Quick Facts

Spring 2020 -- COVID-19 Survey #2 (4/23 -5/7)

In Spring 2020, DMACS invited 1,880 panelists to participate in a rapid response survey about how Detroiters are being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The first rapid response survey was completed between March 31 and April 9, 2020 and captured responses from 1,040 panelists. The second rapid response survey was completed between April 23 and May 7, 2020 and captured responses from 1,102 panelists. Results have been weighted to reflect the population of the City of Detroit. [Full results from the survey are available here.](#)

Job Loss

Survey results show that the unemployment rate in Detroit has ballooned from **9%** prior to the pandemic to **45%** at the time of our survey—nearly twice the state unemployment rate and more than three times the US unemployment rate according to April data from the Current Population Survey. **42%** of Detroiters working before the pandemic have since lost their jobs, either on a temporary or permanent basis. Job loss is disproportionately hitting the people who were most vulnerable before the pandemic.

- **53%** of residents with less than a college degree (high school or less, some college) report losing their jobs compared to just **19%** of those with a college degree or more
- **54%** of residents who earn less than \$30,000 a year (roughly Detroit's median family income) report losing their jobs. Only **23%** of those who make more than \$60,000 a year report similarly losing their jobs
- Black residents are three times more likely than whites to have lost their jobs during the pandemic, **46%** to **21%**
- Even among those still employed, **33%** reported that their hours have been reduced since the pandemic. This reduction in hours is especially true for low-income workers
- With regard to job flexibility and ability to work from home, there were large differences by income level, with lower income earners being much less likely to report working from home. Of people who are still employed **97%** in the highest income bracket (\$100,000 or more) are now able to work primarily at home, compared to only **8%** of people in the lowest income category (less than \$12,500)
- There are also pronounced differences by race in the ability to work from home. **66%** of white Detroiters who are still working report that they primarily work from home compared to only **34%** of Black Detroiters

Financial Effects

The average Detroiters reports a **43%** chance of running out of money in the next three months. The future is especially dire for those with pre-existing debt when the pandemic began. **55%** of those who say their household has more or far more debt than is manageable report losing their jobs due to the pandemic. These families are already underwater and likely sinking further.

- **42%** of Detroiters say they have deferred or not paid one or more household bills during the pandemic
- More than **half** of households with children in Detroit report receiving food assistance (i.e., SNAP), and nearly **1-in-5** receive unemployment insurance
- **27%** of Detroiters say they have worried in the past seven days that they might run out of food, and **22%** report eating less than they thought they should because of a lack of money or other resources

- People living with young children are even more likely to report food insecurity. Four-in-ten households with children say they worried about running out of food in the past seven days

Direct Effects of COVID-19

As of the close of the survey on May 7, **8%** of Detroit residents had been tested for COVID-19, significantly more than the **3%** of residents who reported being tested during the previous survey (March 31-April 14). There are also deep racial disparities in perceptions and effects of COVID-19.

- **57%** of Detroiters say they know someone who has gotten sick from coronavirus, and **38%** say they know someone who has died from the virus
- Black residents are nearly **four times** as likely to know someone who has died from coronavirus as white residents
- Black residents are much more likely than white residents to say that getting the health care they need and accessing medication have been major challenges due to the pandemic. Nearly a **quarter** of Black Detroiters report that accessing health care has been a major challenge compared to **11%** of white Detroiters