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ISSUE BRIEF

DETROITERS' PRIORITIES FOR AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDS

NOVEMBER 2021

OVERVIEW

This report draws on data from the Detroit Metro Area Communities Study (DMACS) to detail Detroiters' needs in relation to priority areas for investment of American Rescue Plan Act funds. Results are drawn from multiple survey waves and have been weighted to reflect the population of the City of Detroit.

[See full results from DMACS surveys here.](#)

KEY FINDINGS

- Results from the City of Detroit's survey suggest residents' top priorities for use of American Rescue Plan Act funds include investing in neighborhoods, fighting intergenerational poverty, and improving public safety.
- Within the broad priority of investing in Detroit's neighborhoods, funding for home repair garnered the greatest support from the city's survey respondents. DMACS estimates 37,630 households—or 90,690 Detroit residents—live in housing that can be considered in inadequate condition.
- Related to intergenerational poverty, 1 in 5 Detroit residents (22%) say they would be unable to cover a \$400 emergency expense based on their current financial situation. Households with children are twice as likely (32%) to report they skipped a bill in the past month compared to those without children (17%).
- When it comes to public safety, 42% of residents say increased police presence in their neighborhood would make them feel more safe. Just 10% say more police in their neighborhood would make them feel less safe. Roughly one-quarter (27%) say that increased police presence would not affect how safe they feel in their neighborhood, while 21% say they don't know.

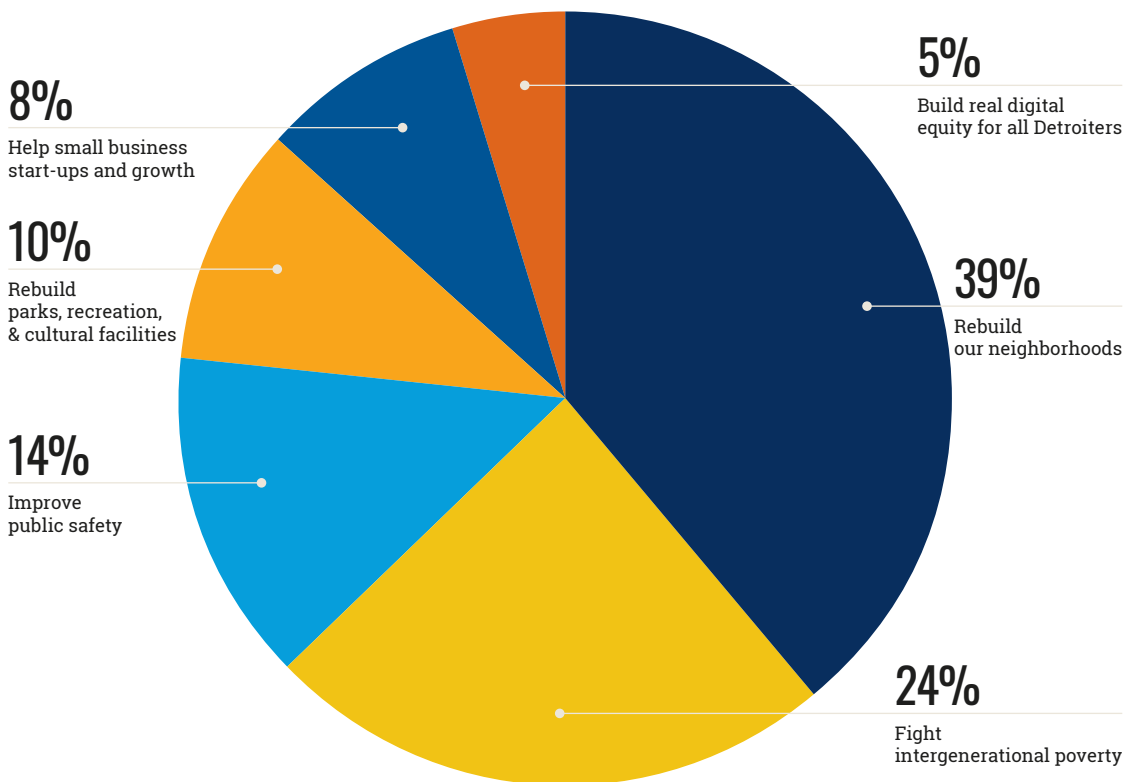


INTRODUCTION

In June 2021, the [City of Detroit was awarded \\$826 million](#) in federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The funds are intended to aid communities hit hard by the financial toll of the COVID-19 pandemic and can be spent to cover costs incurred by households, nonprofits, and small businesses. In an effort to direct financial relief to areas of need identified by Detroit residents, the Duggan administration solicited input from residents in community meetings and via an online survey in May and June of 2021.¹ Survey results suggest that residents' top priorities for use of ARPA funds include investing in neighborhoods, fighting intergenerational poverty, and improving public safety.

FIGURE 1

DETROITERS' PRIORITIES FOR USE OF AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDING



Source:

Data reflects survey results collected by the City of Detroit between May and June of 2021. The data reflect responses from 1,154 respondents who participated in community meetings or responded to an online survey. Only respondents' top choice for funding priority is reported.

REBUILD OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

Two in five respondents to the city’s survey (39%) say their top priority for use of ARPA funds is investing in Detroit’s neighborhoods. Within that broad area of investment, funding for home repair garnered the greatest support from survey respondents.

- [DMACS estimates that 37,630 households—or 90,690 Detroit residents](#)—live in housing that can be considered in inadequate condition: housing in which residents say exposed wires or electrical problems, broken furnace or heating problems, and/or lack of hot or running water were a major issue in the past year.²
- White Detroiters are half as likely (8%) as residents of color (14%) to live in inadequate housing conditions.
- Almost 1 in 5 households with children (18%) live in inadequate housing conditions compared to 11% of households without children. See Figure 3.
- Eighty-one percent of Detroiters report having at least one problem with the condition of their home in the past year and 43% report having at least one **major** home repair need. See Figure 2.
- Fifty-three percent of residents say that blighted or vacant lots are a problem in their neighborhood.

FIGURE 2

FREQUENCY OF DETROITERS’ REPORTED HOME PROBLEMS

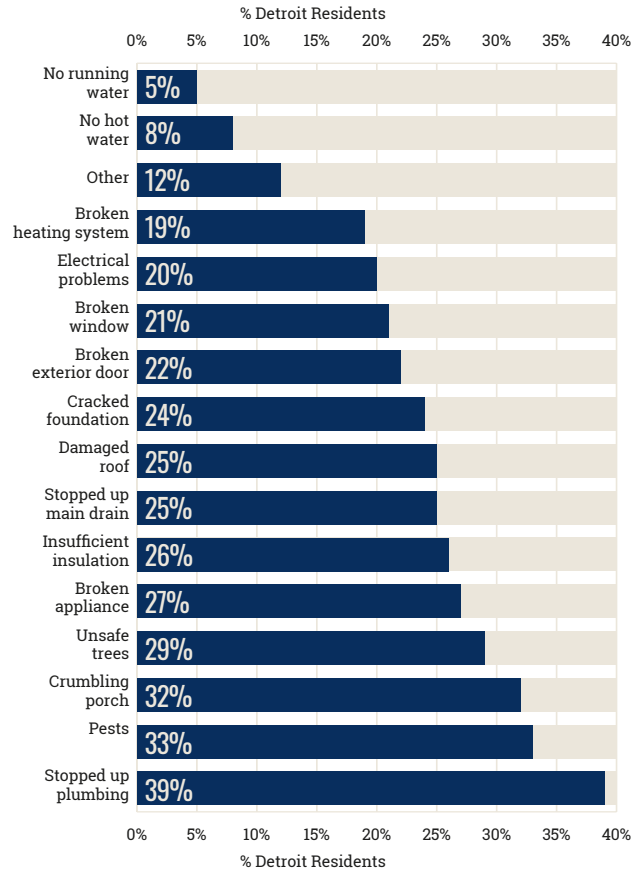
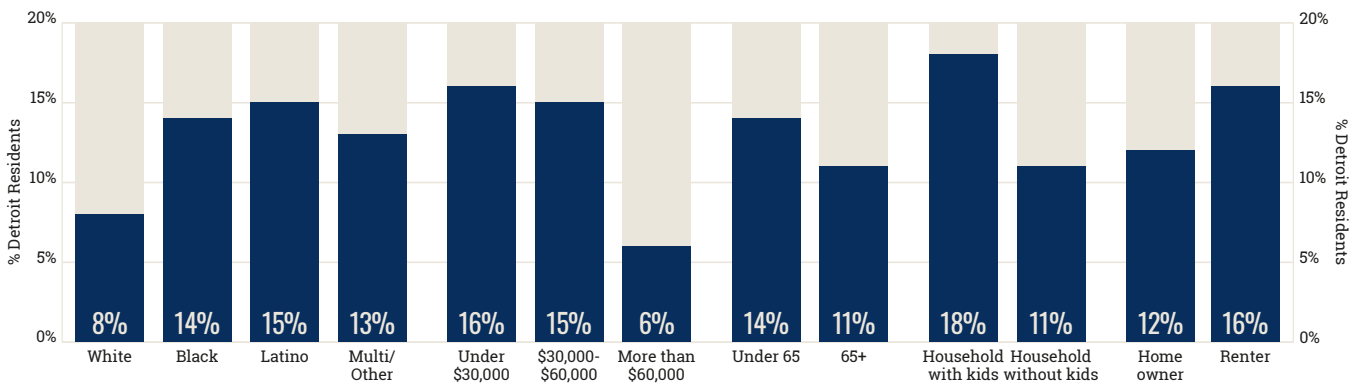


FIGURE 3

INADEQUATE HOUSING AMONG DETROITERS



FIGHTING INTERGENERATIONAL POVERTY

One-quarter of respondents to the city’s survey said their top priority for use of ARPA funds was fighting intergenerational poverty, including investing in job training and services for at-risk or near-poverty groups and aiding with affordable housing.

- DMACS data from summer 2021 finds that 1 in 5 Detroit residents (22%) say they would be unable to cover a \$400 emergency expense based on their current financial situation. See Figure 4.
- Twenty-two percent of Detroiters have skipped a household bill (e.g. mortgage or rent, loan, credit card, utility bill) in the past month.
- Households with children are twice as likely (32%) to report they skipped a bill in the past month compared to those without children (17%). See Figure 5.
- Residents most commonly skipped payments on loans and medical bills: 19% report skipping a loan payment and 17% report not paying a medical bill in the past month.
- One-third (35%) of Detroiters who have housing costs report they have missed one or more monthly housing payments in the past year.
- Just 8% of Detroiters who have skipped or paid only part of their mortgage or rent in the past month report they are receiving rental or mortgage assistance.

FIGURE 4

PERCENT OF DETROITERS WHO WOULD BE UNABLE TO COVER AN EMERGENCY EXPENSE

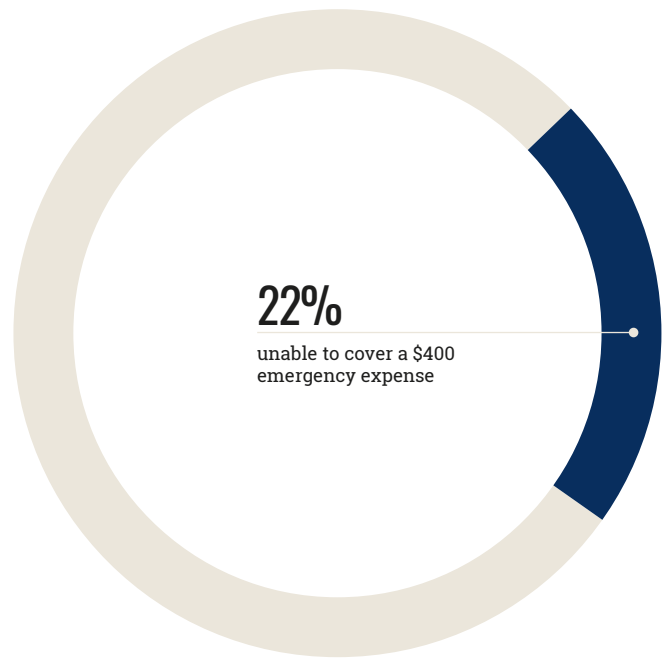
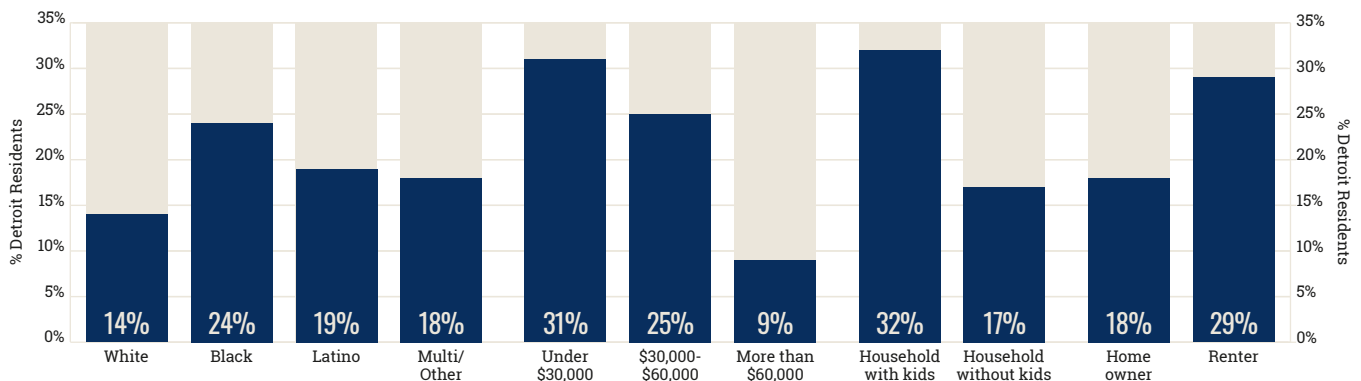


FIGURE 5

DETROITERS WHO SKIPPED ONE OR MORE BILL IN THE PAST MONTH



IMPROVING PUBLIC SAFETY

Fourteen percent of respondents to the city’s survey said their top priority for use of ARPA funds was improving public safety, including cracking down on dangerous drivers, increasing emergency response times, and responding to gun violence.

- In summer 2021, DMACS finds that 40% of Latino residents say they have been the victim of a crime in the last year, compared to 27% of White and 26% of Black residents
- Three-quarters of Detroiters report that they have heard gunshots in their neighborhood in the past 12 months, roughly equivalent to the 74% who reported hearing gunshots in fall 2019. See Figure 6.
- Nearly half (46%) of residents somewhat or strongly agree that the police are doing a good job protecting their neighborhood. Similarly, 45% somewhat or strongly agree that police in their neighborhood can be trusted. Nearly one-quarter of Detroiters do not feel that police are trustworthy or are doing a good job protecting their neighborhood.
- Forty-two percent of residents say increasing police presence in their neighborhood would make them feel more safe. Just 10% say more police in their neighborhood would make them feel less safe. Roughly one-quarter (27%) say that increasing police presence would not affect how safe they feel in their neighborhood, while 21% say they don’t know. See Figure 7.
- Response to increased police presence varies considerably by group. For example, though nearly half of White (41%) and Black residents (45%) say that increased police presence would make them feel more safe, White residents (14%) are nearly twice as likely to say that increased police presence would make them feel less safe in their neighborhoods compared to Black residents (8%).
- One-third (33%) of Latinos say they would feel more safe with increased police presence in their neighborhood while 10% say they would feel less safe.

FIGURE 6

DETROITERS' REPORTS OF GUNSHOTS IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD BY POLICE PRECINCT

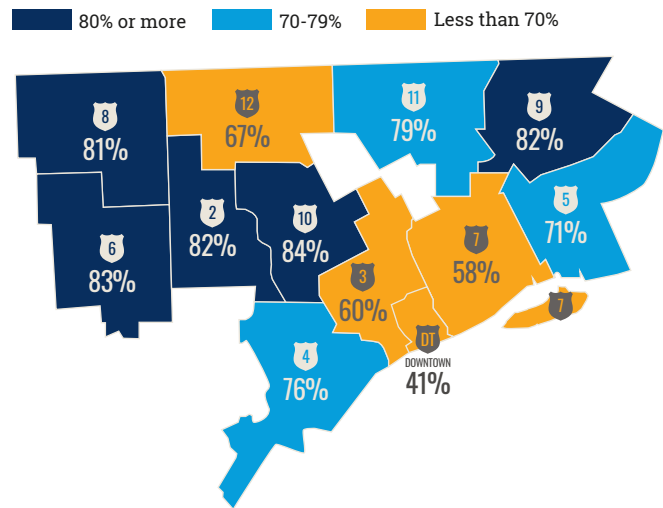
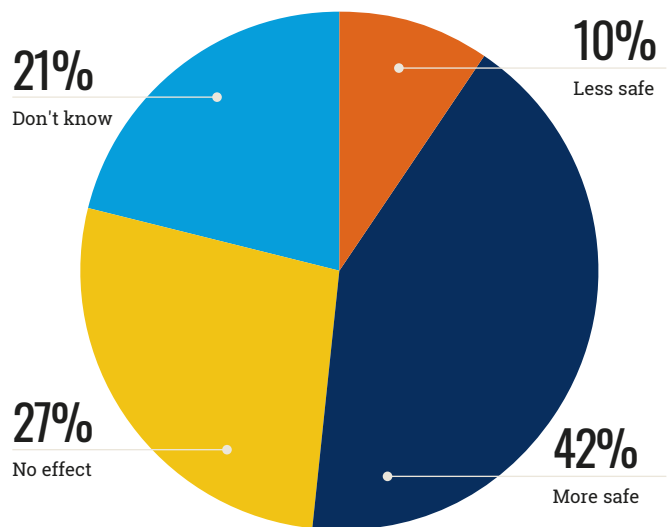


FIGURE 7

EFFECT OF INCREASED POLICE PRESENCE



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ENDNOTES

- 1 Data on resident priorities were collected by the City of Detroit through surveys and community meetings and reflect the views of 1,152 households. See additional information on the ARPA survey at <https://detroitmi.gov/webapp/arpa-survey-results>.
- 2 [See the DMACS report on home repair](#) for a full description of Detroiters' home repair needs and details of DMACS estimates.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Learn more at www.detroitssurvey.umich.edu