

COMMUNITY
PULSE
REPORT



Pulse Report for Children & Families

November/December 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:



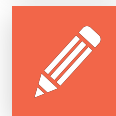
Health & Wellness



Food Access & Housing



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 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:



United States



Pennsylvania



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



County-Specific

What We Are Seeing This Month

Disproportionate Impacts of COVID-19

- As COVID-19 cases spike, we continue to see disparities in who is most impacted – the aging community and Black and Asian individuals.
- COVID-19 is also having negative impacts on mental health needs.

Uninsured Children

- Even before COVID-19, from 2018 to 2019, Pennsylvania saw a steady uptick in the number of children who are uninsured.
- The increase in children enrolled in Medicaid may not reflect the increase in the actual number of eligible children.
- Increased awareness of and support for families enrolling in Medicaid could boost the number of insured children.



What We Are Seeing This Month

Women Leaving the Workforce

- Women are exiting the labor force in record numbers, and represented [80% of all workers who left the labor force in September](#).
- Unemployment is disproportionately impacting Black and Latinx women.
- Supports like paid family leave, strong child care systems, and programs to help women re-enter the workforce are critical to stem the flow of women exiting the labor force.

Disengaged Youth

- Youth unemployment is extremely high, and the number of disconnected youth (16-24 year olds not in school and not working) is expected to increase due to the pandemic.
- Re-engaging youth in school and/or the workforce will be critical in the months to come.



What We Are Seeing This Month

Utilities & Housing

- The eviction moratorium remains in place until 12/31/20, which might protect some families who are facing potential eviction.
- Supports and rental assistance have been available this fall, but most CARES Act funding has now ended.
- There are programs in place to support families' utility needs, like the [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#) (LIHEAP). Public and private utilities often have their own programs to assist customers as well.
- Supports for families to pay back large, backlogged utility bills and rent will be critical in 2021.

From the Field

Feedback and observations from our on-the-ground providers are critical to understanding the data we are collecting in context. **Top concerns continue to be supporting individuals and families in providing funding for basic needs, like housing, food, and utility assistance.**

"Providing support [that] leads towards self-sufficiency has been a challenge for clients with multiple very high utility bills and rent."

"The amount owed is much more than what one source can provide. Also, the needs are multiple, meaning, it's not just housing, it's utilities, food and so on."

"The deadline for CARES rent relief has passed, so we are struggling to help anyone with rent. We refer to Allegheny Link and 211, but many people tell us they have already talked to them and there is no help available."

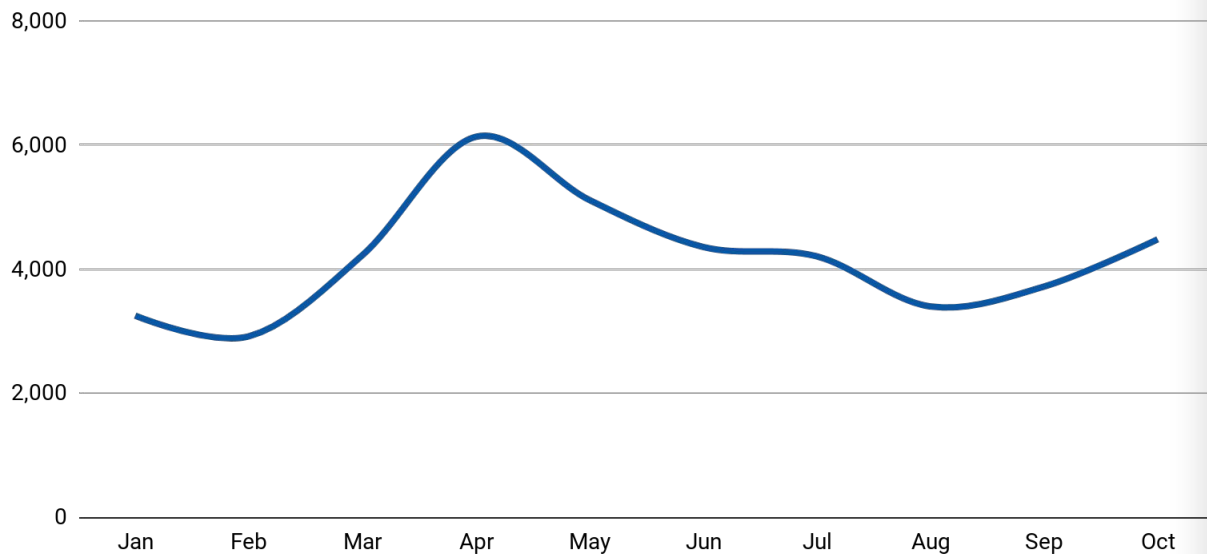




211 Emergency Basic Needs Requests, 2020



of Emergency Basic Needs Requests



In the five-county region, emergency basic needs requests to 211 in October were the highest they've been since May.

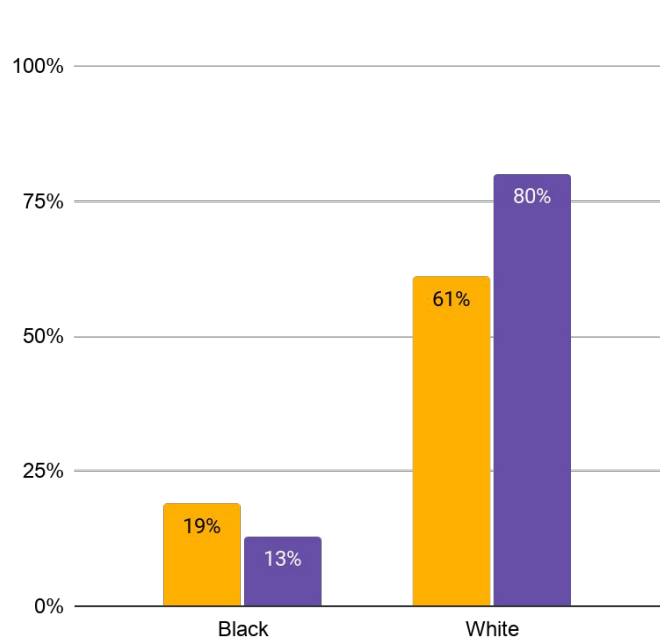
Requests were up in every category from September to October.



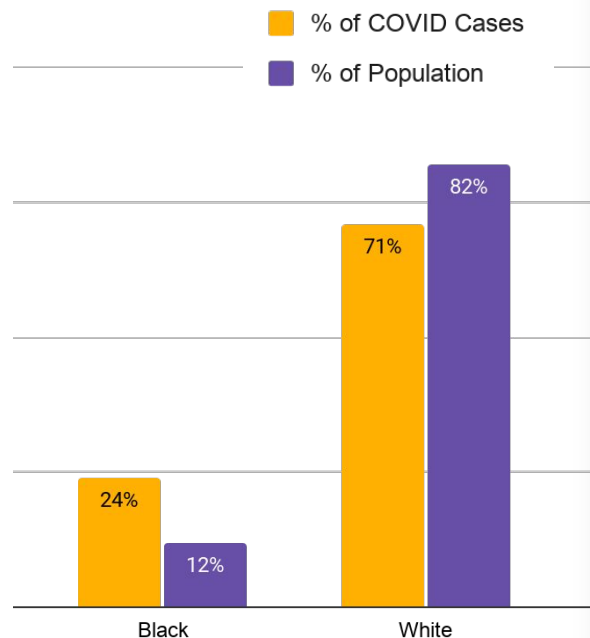
Source: PA 211 Counts, phone and text requests only. "Region" includes Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette, and Westmoreland Counties. Notes; Total "Emergency Basic Needs" requests for this analysis exclude tax preparation requests as well as requests for COVID-19 information.



Percent of All COVID-19 Cases by Race



Allegheny County



Pennsylvania



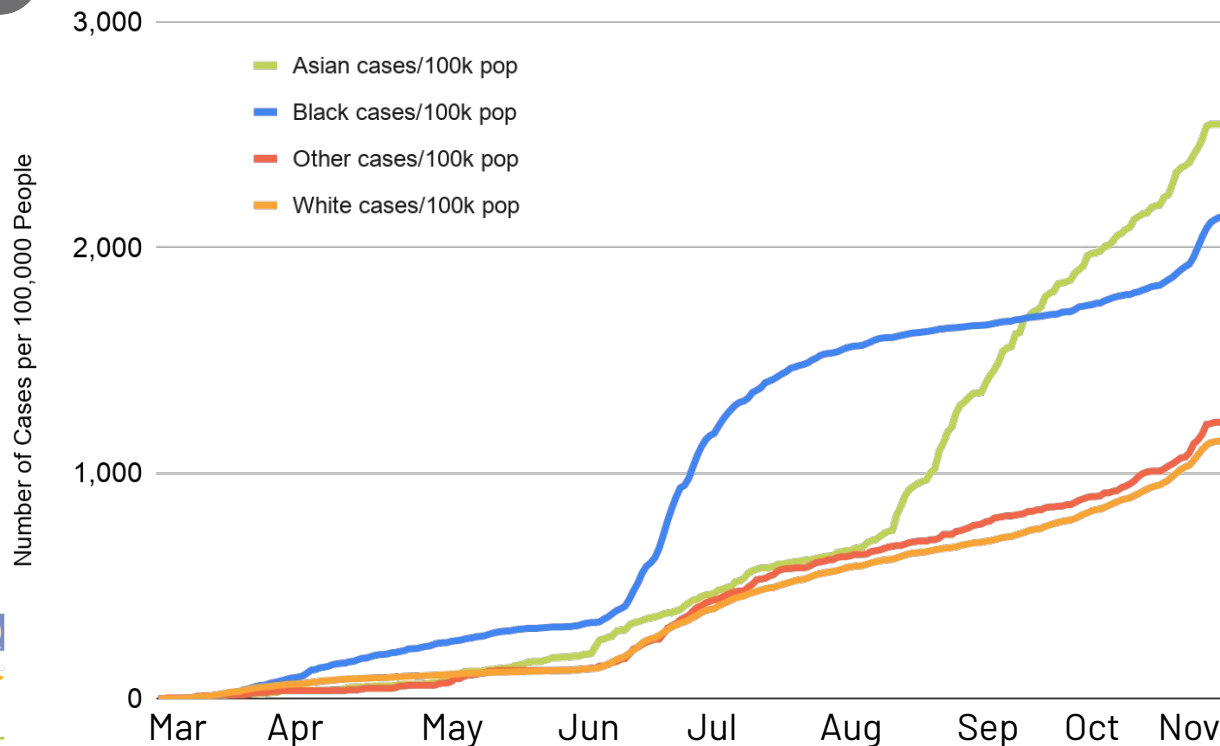
COVID-19 is disproportionately impacting Black communities, with the percent of cases for Black residents exceeding the percent of the population that is Black.

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 11.18.20 from <https://covid.createlab.org/>

Cumulative COVID-19 Cases by Race, Allegheny County



Cumulative Cases per 100K Population



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

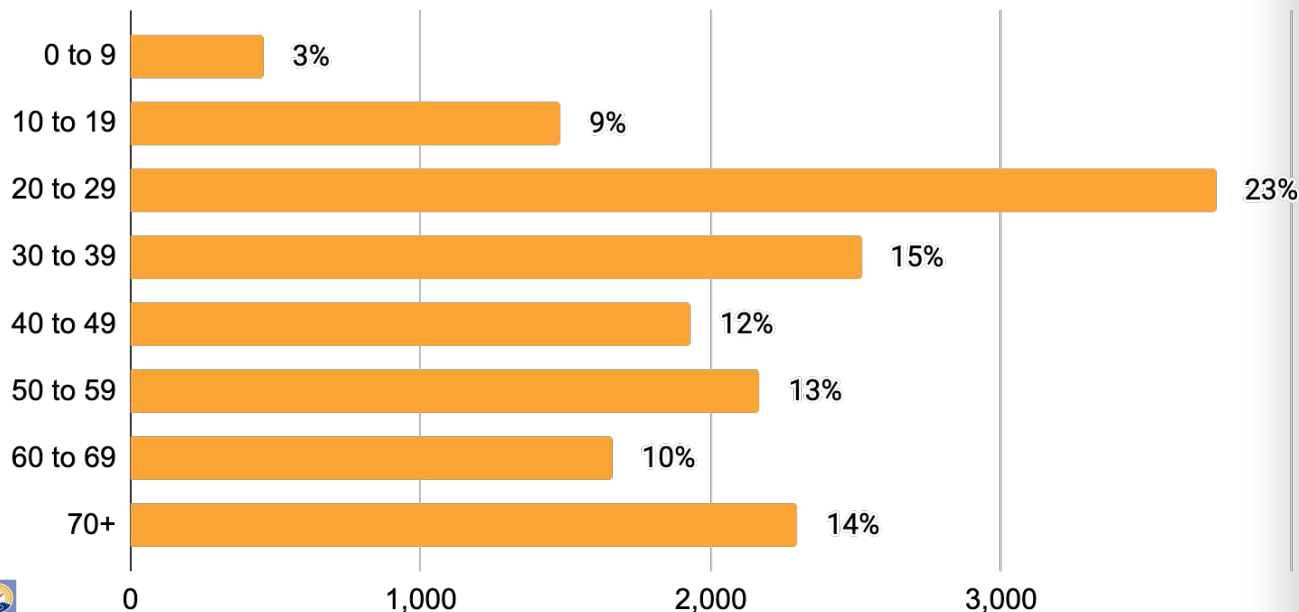
Disaggregated data is currently not publicly available for every County in the region.

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 11.18.20 from <https://covid.createlab.org/>

Cumulative COVID-19 Cases by Age, Allegheny County



(percent of all cases noted)



While only 14% of COVID-19 cases in Allegheny County have been among those 70 and older, that same age group represents **84% of deaths.**

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 11.18.20 from <https://covid.createlab.org/>



Impacts on Seniors



One in four adults over 65 **reported anxiety or depression** in August 2020, with rates even higher for women and Hispanic adults.

vs. one in ten older adults with Medicare who reported anxiety or depression in 2018

Source: [Kaiser Family Foundation](#)



When nursing homes implemented **COVID-19 related restrictions**, including restrictions on visitors and group dining, **significant weight loss occurred** among residents.

Source: [JAMDA](#)

On top of disproportionate mortality rates from COVID-19, **many seniors are facing significant health, social, and emotional impacts** due to increased social isolation, underfunded care facilities, and more.

Impacts on Mental Health



53%

of adults in the US
reported **negative mental
health impacts** due to the
coronavirus

in mid-July

Source: [Kaiser Family Foundation](#)

only 43%

of parents and caregivers in
the five-county region felt
they **could** support their
child's social, mental, and
emotional well-being as
much as they wanted to

in September

Source: The Pittsburgh Study's [Family
Strengths Survey](#)*

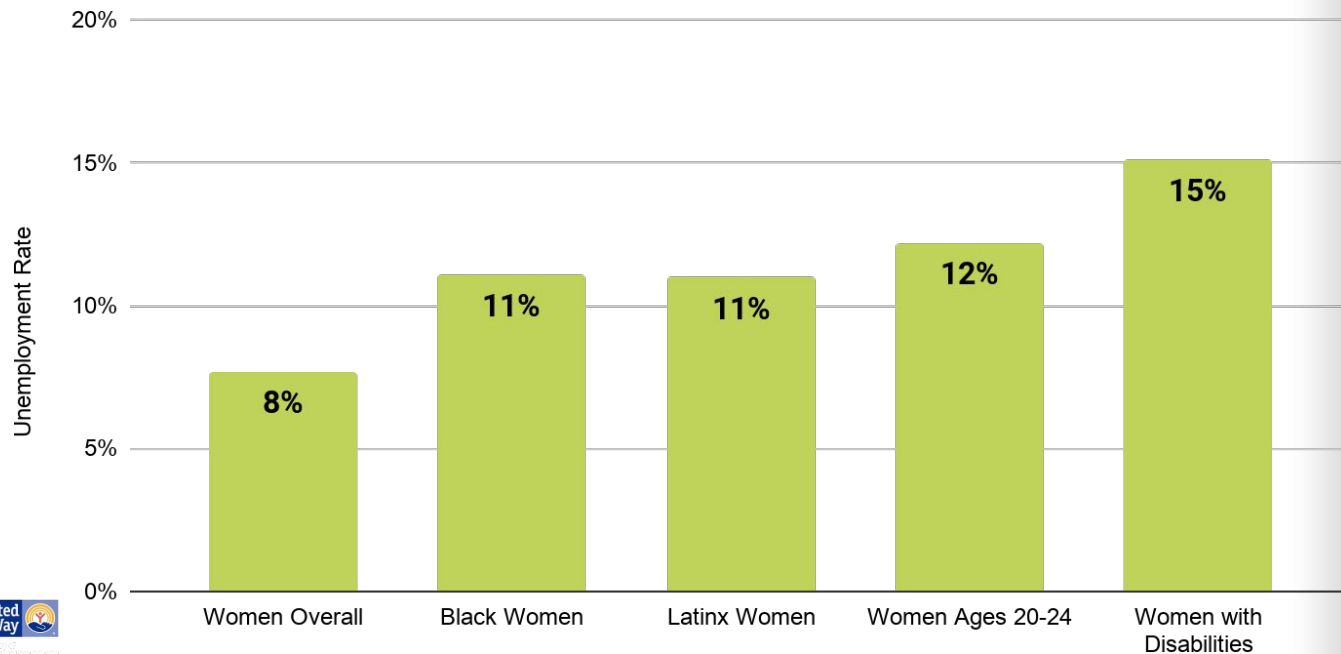
COVID-19 has not only created new forms of worry and stress, but has also been challenging for parents, and has exacerbated existing mental health and substance use disorders.

Source: The Pittsburgh Study's Family Strengths Survey is made possible in part through support from the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Foundation, Pitt Pediatrics, The Grable Foundation, and The Shear Family Foundation. Average responses from 8/31 – 9/25, n~220-250





Unemployment Rates for Women Sep 2020



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

We continue to see **COVID-19 negatively impacting women's workforce participation and employment**. And unemployment continues to disproportionately impact women of color.



Individuals who have **exited the labor force** are those who are **no longer working and not actively looking for work.**

an estimated

12,800

women over 20 have exited the labor force in the five-county region between October 2019 and October 2020, if we assume the same rate of decline as National rates

Sources: Local estimates: ACS 2018 5-year estimates | National estimates: BLS labor force estimates, not seasonally adjusted

Impacts on Mothers



Nationally, the share of **unpartnered mothers** at work fell more steeply than for other parents between Sep. 2019 and Sep. 2020.

For **Black and Hispanic unpartnered mothers**, the share who are working fell by **nearly twice as much** as for White unpartnered mothers.

Source: [Pew Research Center](#)

In Southwestern PA, **38%** of women report changing their job or work schedule since the start of the pandemic due to child care concerns.

Source: The Pittsburgh Study's [Family Strengths Survey](#)*

*The Pittsburgh Study's Family Strengths Survey is made possible in part through support from the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Foundation, Pitt Pediatrics, The Grable Foundation, and The Shear Family Foundation. Responses from week of 9/4, n=210

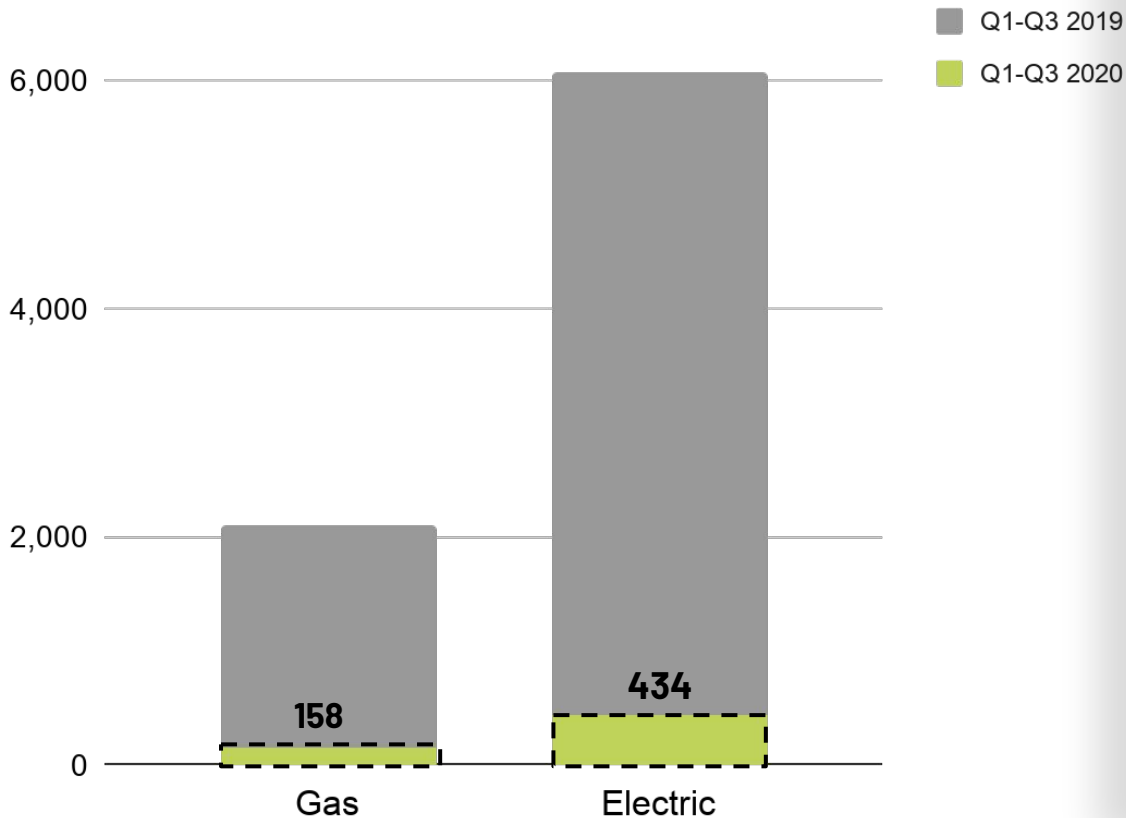




Utility Payment Plan Requests, Q1-Q3 (Jan-Sep)



of Residential Payment Requests



The potential backlog of utility bills continues to grow. In January to September, there were:

>8,000
total residential payment requests in 2019

yet only 592
total residential payment requests in 2020

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

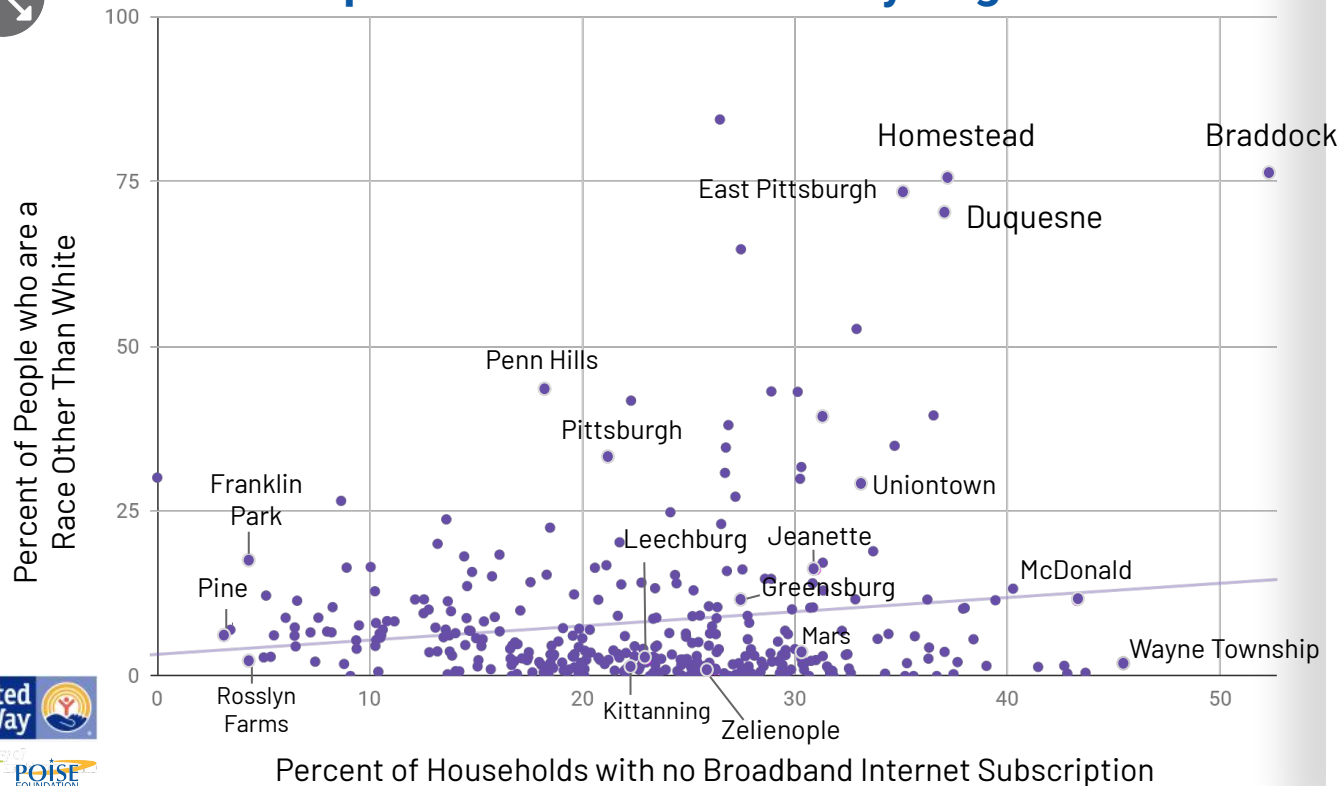




Households Without Broadband Internet



Municipalities in the Five-County Region



According to a [2019 study](#) by the Pew Research Center, **79% of White Americans** have broadband internet subscriptions vs. **66% of Black Americans**.

Source: ACS 2018 5-year estimates.

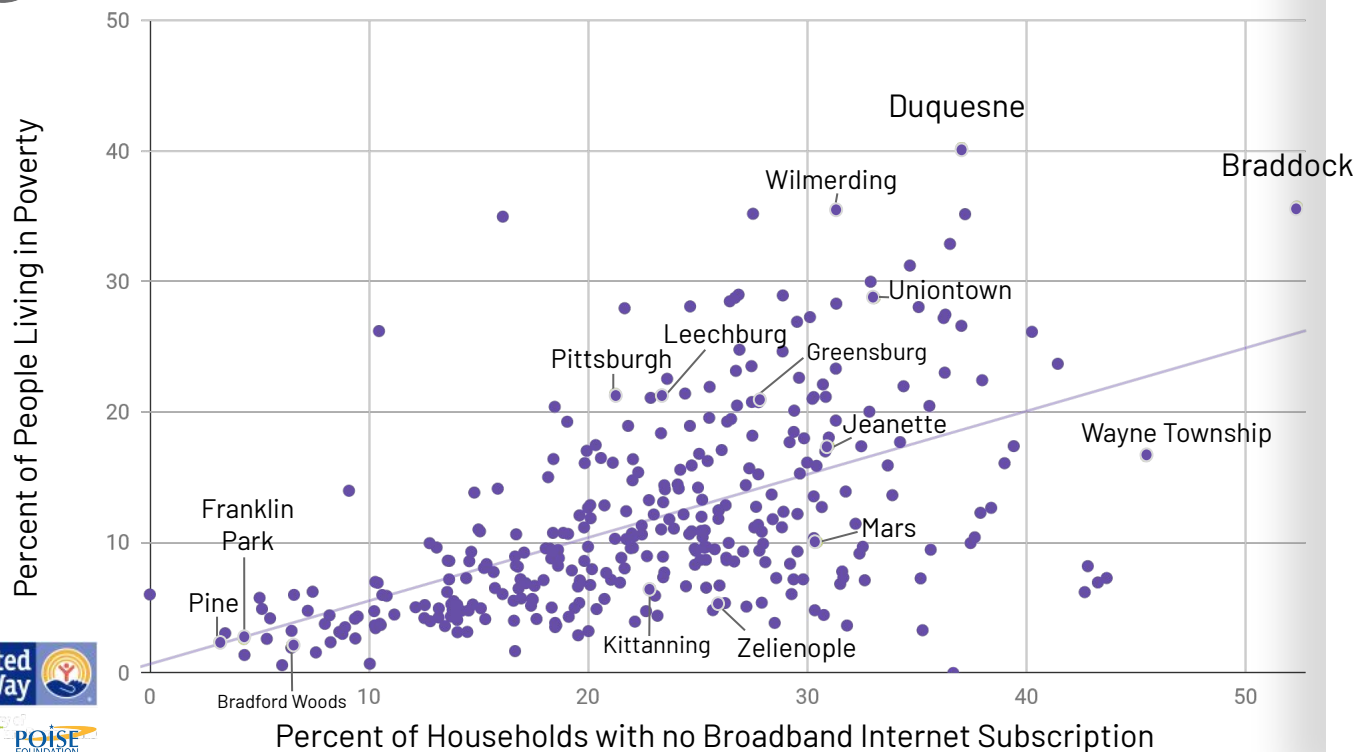




Households Without Broadband Internet



Municipalities in the Five-County Region



According to a [2019 study](#) by the Pew Research Center, **only 56% of Americans with incomes less than \$30,000 have broadband internet subscriptions**, and only 63% of rural households have broadband.

Source: ACS 2018 5-year estimates.





Children's Health Insurance in Pennsylvania



Even before COVID-19, Pennsylvania was seeing a steady uptick in the number of uninsured children, increasing from 4.4% to 4.6% from 2018 to 2019.

In 2019, 5.0% of White children were uninsured vs. 4.7% of Latinx children and 3.2% of Black children.

Children from low-income families are more likely to be uninsured, at a rate 41% higher than the state average.

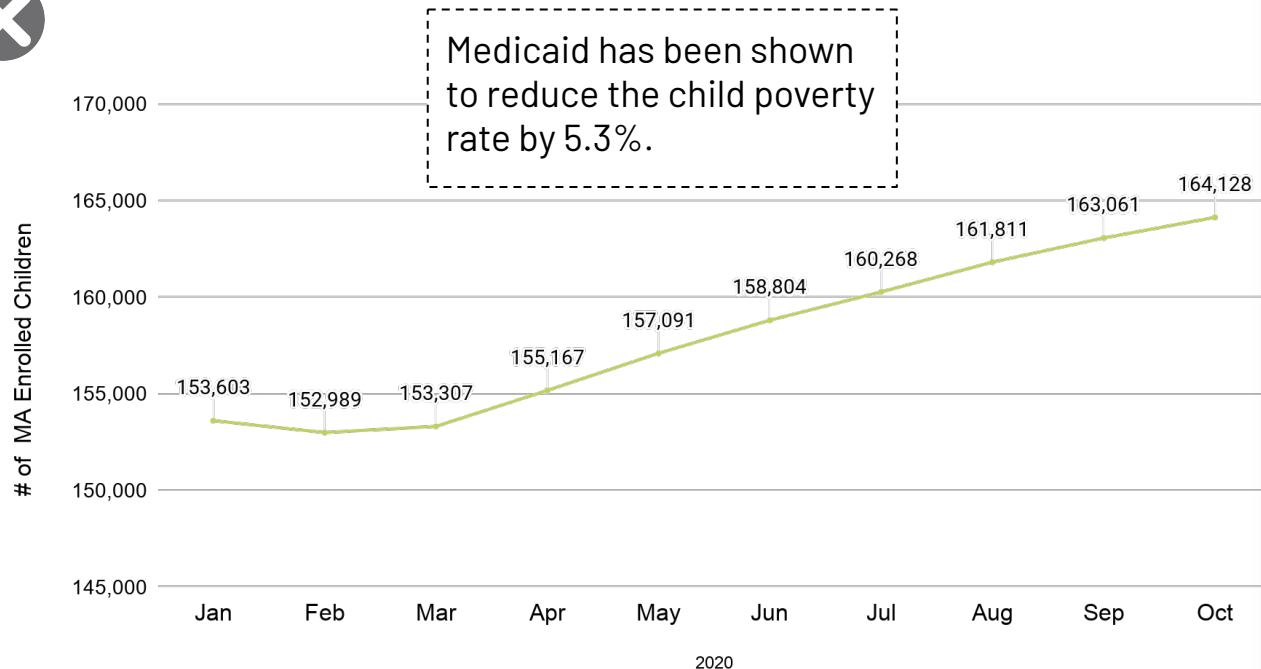
COVID-19's economic impacts on families might be widening this gap further.

While public coverage for children increased during the first six months of the pandemic, use of health services declined.

Fewer families are taking their children for well-child visits and immunizations.



Children Enrolled in MA, Five-County Region



In the five-county region, the number of children enrolled in **MA (Medical Assistance)** has continued to climb steadily.

We would expect to see this increase, as children who were previously on CHIP move to Medicaid coverage.



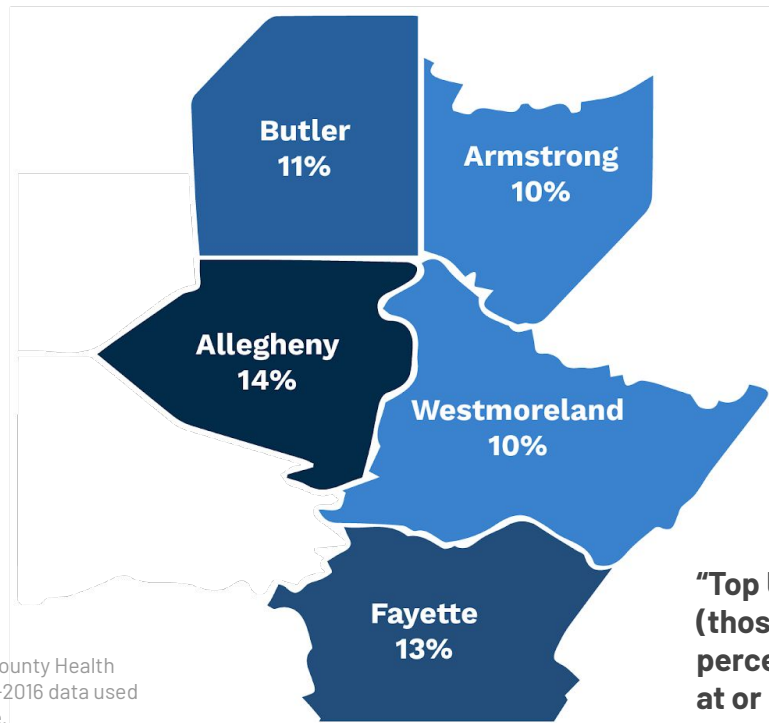
Sources: PA Partnerships for Children's [State of Children's Health Care Report](#) | Allies for Children via PA DHS; "Region" includes Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette, and Westmoreland Counties



Housing Problems



Percentage of households with at least 1 of 4 housing problems: overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen facilities, or lack of plumbing facilities



Even before COVID-19, the five-county region faced housing challenges.

"Top US performers"
(those in the 10th percentile) are Counties at or below 9%.

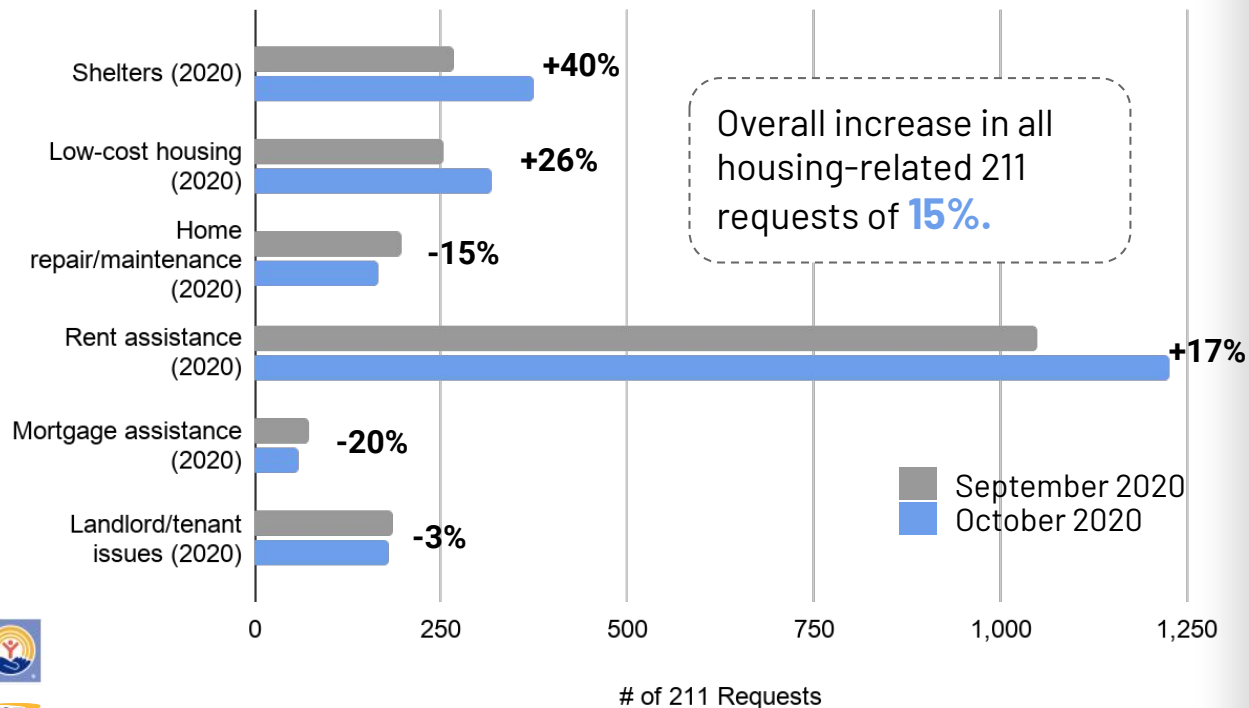
Source: 2020 County Health Rankings; 2012-2016 data used for the measure.



211 Housing Support Requests

2-1-1
Get Connected. Get Help.™

September to October, 2020, Five-County Region



Besides an overall increase in requests for housing supports, we also see **disparities in what type of support is needed.**

Of calls to Allegheny Link, Allegheny County's information and referral program for housing and homelessness supports, **39% of callers in Oct-Nov were Black vs. 26% White.**

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



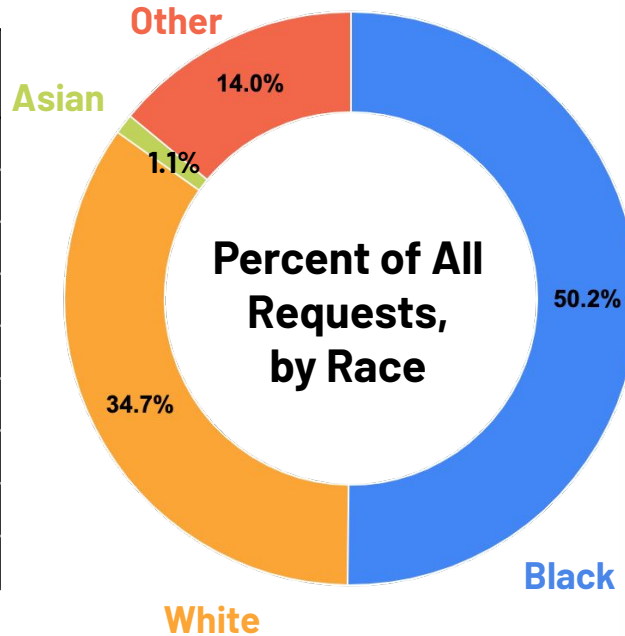


RentHelpPGH Service Requests



July to October, 2020, Allegheny County

Services Sought by Clients	% of Total Requests
Rent assistance	43%
Resource navigation	13%
Legal assistance	11%
Utility assistance	10%
Rehousing support	9%
Food assistance	7%
Social services	5%
Homeowner assistance	2%
Health care navigation	1%



[RentHelpPGH](#) “assists residents of Allegheny County in obtaining legal and financial assistance in order to avoid eviction and to help residents access resources that will stabilize their household and create an environment in which they can thrive.”



Source: RentHelpPGH, via CMU Create Lab



Need for Housing Support



From July to October, in Allegheny County...

6,189

requests to 211

Source: PA 211 Counts

528

requests to RentHelpPGH

Source: RentHelpPGH, via CMU Create Lab

7,460

applications for
Allegheny County rent
relief

Source: Allegheny County DHS

Note: All of these requests for help and support are not necessarily exclusive of each other.
More data to come from Counties outside of Allegheny.





Disconnected Youth, Nationally



2010: 1 in 7



After the Great Recession, the national youth disconnection rate was 14.7%.

2018: 1 in 9



In 2018, the youth disconnection rate reached a low, at 11.2%.

2020: 1 in 4?



Due to COVID-19, Measure of America estimates that the disconnection rate could reach as high as 25%.

Disconnected youth are young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are **not in school and not working**.

Measure of America's analysis has shown that "experiencing a period of disconnection as a young person can have **profound effects on earnings, employment, homeownership, and health that last into one's thirties.**"

Source: [Measure of America](#)





Disconnected Youth, Locally (2018 Averages)



	% of Youth	# of Youth
Allegheny	8.8%	12,100
Armstrong	14.4%	900
Butler	7.5%	1,600
Fayette	17.7%	2,400
Westmoreland	9.7%	3,500
Pennsylvania	10.5%	156,200

17.8% of Black youth

Regionally, two counties had higher rates of disconnected youth than the state at large — and this was before COVID-19. We can expect these rates to grow across the board due to the pandemic.



Source: [Measure of America](#)



Youth Unemployment



Unemployment for Youth Ages 16-24

2019

8.4%

spring unemployment
rate, nationally

2020

24.4%

spring unemployment
rate, nationally

29.6%

for young Black
workers

an estimated

31,700

**unemployed
young workers**

in the five-county region
based on National rates of youth
unemployment

Unemployment in the
spring of 2020 was
three times higher
for young workers
than in 2019. And
those rates are even
higher for young Black
workers.



Sources: Local estimates: ACS 2018 5-year estimates | National estimates: [Economic Policy Institute](#)

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)
 - [Community Pulse Report: October](#) (full)
 - [Community Pulse Report: October](#) (abbreviated)