

REPORT IN BRIEF

# Addressing the Needs of Vulnerable Communities During COVID-19

Insights from Tulsa's COVID-19 Community Impact Survey





### About New American Economy

New American Economy is a bipartisan research and advocacy organization founded to educate, empower and support policymakers, influencers, and citizens across the country that see the economic and social benefits of a smart approach to immigration reform. NAE has created a coalition of civic, business, and cultural leaders who span the political spectrum and represent all 50 states. NAE makes the case for smart immigration reform in four ways: 1) we use **powerful research** to demonstrate how immigration impacts our economy, 2) we **organize champions** at the grassroots and influencer levels to build support for immigration, 3) we **partner with state and local leaders** to advocate for policies that recognize the value immigrants add locally, and 4) we show **immigrant contributions to American culture** through film, food, art, sports, comedy, and more. Visit [www.NewAmericanEconomy.org](http://www.NewAmericanEconomy.org) to learn more.

### About the City of Tulsa - Mayor's Office of Resilience and Equity (MORE)

The **Mayor's Office of Resilience and Equity (MORE)** works to achieve equality for all Tulsans through partnership building, education, cultural awareness, and advocacy. The office is charged with implementing a broad strategy to promote resilience and equity in Tulsa in all aspects of city life from employment, economic development, health, mental health, and human rights. MORE also oversees the complaint and investigation process for Tulsans who experience discrimination in housing, employment, or public accommodations. In addition, MORE works in partnership with five commissions who represent and advocate for women, Latinos, African Americans, and Native Americans, and human rights in Tulsa.

## Acknowledgments

This report was made possible by the **Walmart Foundation**, which provided funding for the research effort. New American Economy would also like to thank our partners at the **Tulsa Mayor's Office of Resilience and Equity (MORE)**, and community partners across Tulsa who led the community survey effort, including **Uma Tulsa, Block Builderz, YWCA Tulsa, Community Service Council - Power of Families Project, and Community Service Council - Burmese Community Peer Educator Program: Sia Mah Nu.**

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# Executive Summary

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The COVID-19 pandemic has **disproportionally affected** vulnerable communities across the United States, including racial and ethnic minorities and immigrant groups. Many face severe challenges in meeting the essential needs of their families and handling mental health issues, both of which have been exacerbated by the prolonged stress and isolation during the pandemic.

To better support these vulnerable communities and to ensure that Tulsa's emergency services provide equitable access to all of its residents, New American Economy (NAE) worked with the City of Tulsa and local community organizations to survey Tulsans about their experiences during the pandemic. The COVID-19 Community Impact Survey conducted targeted outreach between February and May of 2021 to Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC)<sup>1</sup> and immigrant communities in Tulsa about the essential needs of their families; the impact of COVID-19 on their wellbeing; and the help they received from local organizations.

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## KEY FINDINGS

### **A significant share of BIPOC and immigrant residents in Tulsa experience financial hardship.**

When thinking about the future, BIPOC respondents were most worried about paying utilities or other bills (58 percent), paying down debt (53 percent), and paying for emergency expenses (45 percent). Paying bills (63 percent) and paying down debt (48 percent) were also among immigrant respondents' top concerns, followed by getting enough food (45 percent). More than 15 percent of BIPOC respondents and 16 percent of immigrant respondents reported that they were unable to pay their rent or mortgage on time, including 3 percent of BIPOC respondents and 2.5 percent of immigrant respondents who reported that they had been evicted or were facing eviction or foreclosure.

### **Many immigrants with limited English proficiency (LEP) lack access to reliable information about COVID-19.**

At least half of immigrant respondents reported not being able to speak English well. Among LEP immigrant respondents, at least 13 percent said they did not have regular access to timely, accurate information in their preferred language. The most trusted source for COVID-19 information for LEP immigrant respondents included news media (47 percent), social media (36 percent), and the federal government (34 percent).

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1. BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and other people of color) refers to respondents who self-identified as racial and ethnic minorities that include Blacks, non-white Hispanics, and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, regardless of their immigration status. It includes individuals who are U.S.-born and foreign-born.

## KEY FINDINGS

### **Many internationally trained immigrants struggle to find or keep jobs in the fields they were trained in.**

For immigrants who have earned a postsecondary degree or certification from an institution outside the U.S. and have professional experience abroad, at least 18 percent lost the jobs they had before the pandemic that fully utilized their international education and training.

### **Social isolation harms the mental health of BIPOC and immigrant residents, but many of them find it hard to access mental healthcare.**

About 40 percent of BIPOC respondents and 44 percent of immigrant respondents said they often felt isolated from family and friends during the pandemic. Nearly half of BIPOC respondents and more than two-fifths of immigrant respondents reported needing mental health care during the pandemic; of those, more than one-third of both groups said it was difficult to access mental health services.

### **Local organizations are providing immigrants with much-needed assistance, yet more can be done.**

The majority of BIPOC respondents and immigrant respondents said there was a local organization they could turn to if they needed help getting healthcare, housing, food, or other essentials. However, 15 percent of BIPOC respondents and 12 percent of immigrant respondents reported not having a local organization they could rely on for assistance.

# Impact of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Communities in Tulsa

**N**ationwide, COVID-19 had a disproportionate impact on economically disadvantaged families, who often had difficulty paying for bills, accessing medical care, getting food, and providing childcare. To identify both the essential needs of vulnerable communities and any gaps in assistance, New American Economy worked with the City of Tulsa and local community groups to survey BIPOC and immigrant residents, including Latinx immigrants and Burmese immigrants, two of the largest immigrant groups in Tulsa, about their experiences during the pandemic. The COVID-19 Community Impact Survey focused on communities of color and neighborhoods that were hit hard by the pandemic, aiming to best identify opportunities for the city to address disparities and integrate these communities during the pandemic and through the economic recovery.

## Demographics

We received 559 valid responses to the COVID-19 Community Impact Survey in Tulsa. Using responses to the question about race, ethnicity, and country of birth, we identified that 455 of these were from BIPOC residents and 293 were from immigrant residents.

The majority of these respondents (85.7 percent of BIPOC respondents and 87.6 percent of immigrant respondents) were between the ages of 25 and 64, making them more likely to actively participate in the labor force. In addition, 72.8 percent of BIPOC respondents and 71.6 percent of immigrant respondents were women.

Breaking down the respondents by race and ethnicity, we found that Hispanics made up 43.3 percent of the respondents, followed by Asian or Pacific Islanders (17.7 percent), non-Hispanic White (14.3 percent) and Black or African Americans (10.6 percent)<sup>2</sup>. Meanwhile, immigrant respondents came from a wide range of countries – 31 countries were represented in the survey – with the greatest percentages hailing from Mexico (43.3 percent), Myanmar (27.0 percent), Venezuela (7.2 percent), and Honduras (5.1 percent). Nearly two-thirds of the immigrant respondents (65.2 percent) were Hispanics.

Additionally, a majority of BIPOC respondents (61.8 percent) reported household income below \$40,000 in 2019, which is roughly **150 percent of the federal poverty level** for a household of four. The percentage of low-income individuals is even higher for immigrant respondents, 73.8 percent of whom reported household income that was below \$40,000. This is due, in part, to the fact that a significant share — 61.2 percent of BIPOC respondents and 70.4 percent of immigrant respondents — did not have a college degree, limiting their access to a number of higher-paying jobs.

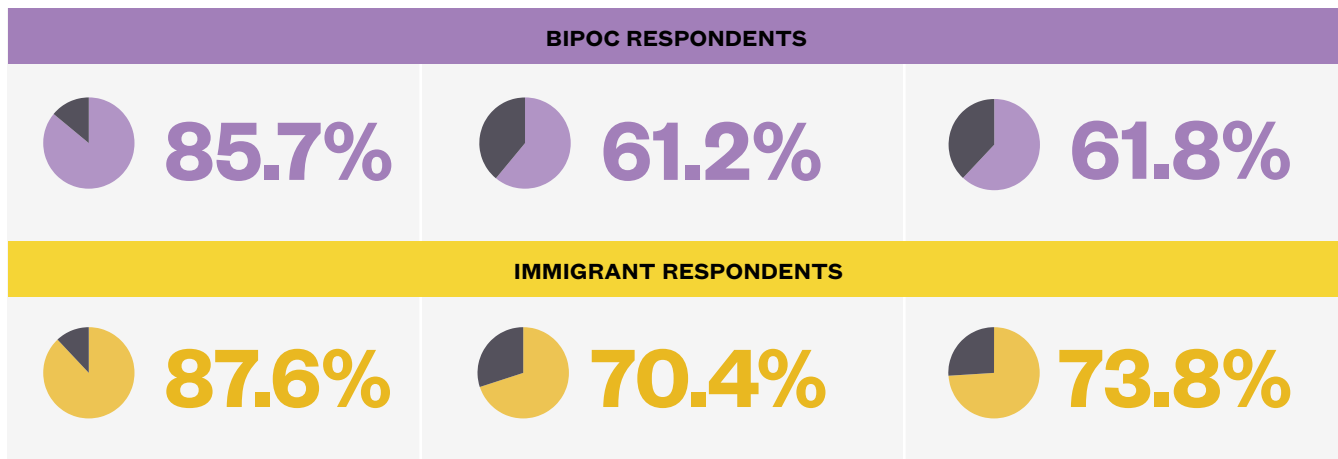
2. Because the sample size of respondents who self-identified as Native American or Alaska Native in this survey is too small, we are unable to provide estimates for this group in this report.

## Share of respondents who reported ....

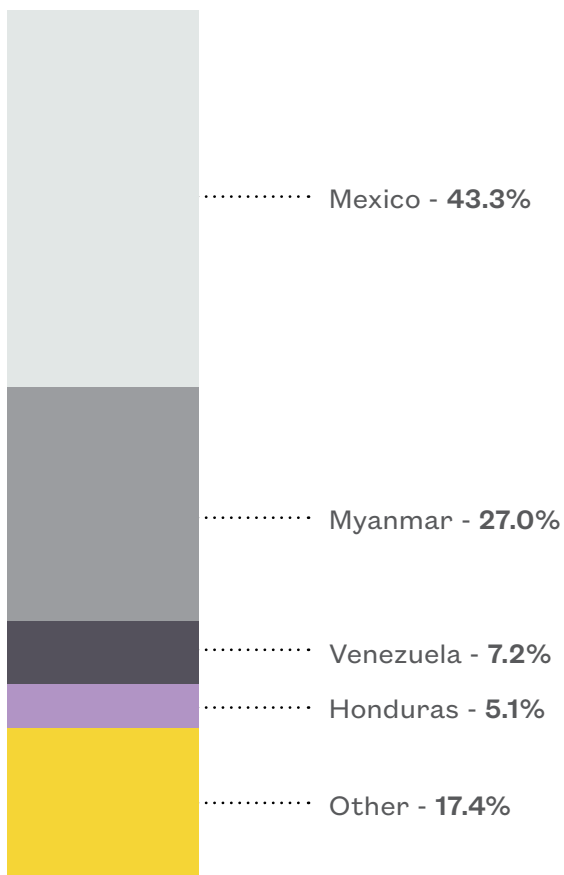
AGES BETWEEN AGES 25 AND 64

NOT HAVING A COLLEGE DEGREE

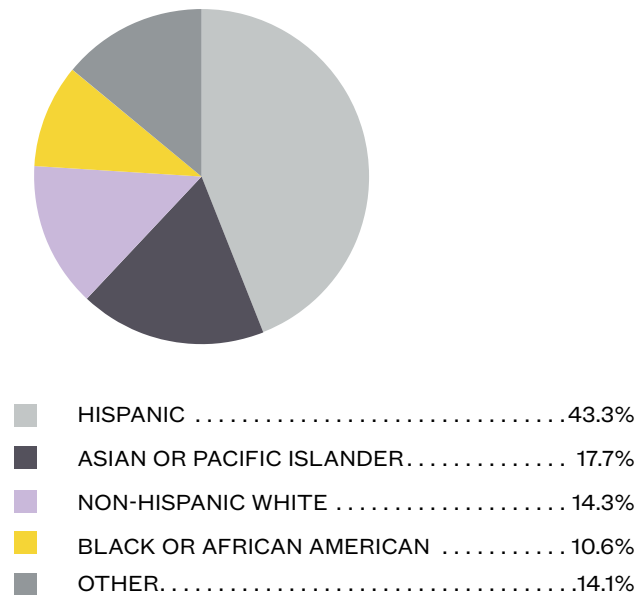
HOUSEHOLD INCOME BELOW \$40,000



COUNTRY OF BIRTH (IMMIGRANT RESPONDENTS)



RACE AND ETHNICITY (ALL RESPONDENTS)



# 65.2%

of immigrant respondents were Hispanic.

## Household Wellbeing

The survey, conducted between February and May of 2021, asked BIPOC residents to share their top concerns for the coming month. BIPOC respondents overall were most worried about paying utilities or other bills (57.9 percent). In addition, within racial and ethnic groups, 67.0 percent of AAPI respondents were worried about paying for healthcare and medicine for their families, while 60.4 percent of Black respondents and 45.2 percent of Hispanic respondents were concerned that they would not be able to pay down their debt.

**TABLE 1: WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THE COMING MONTH, ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT BEING ABLE TO . . . ?**

	BIPOC Respondents	AAPI Respondents	Black Respondents	Hispanic Respondents	Non-Hispanic White Respondents
Pay for healthcare and medicine for your family	41.8%	67.0%	31.3%	31.0%	37.5%
Get enough food for your family	40.3%	56.4%	N.A. <sup>3</sup>	38.1%	29.2%
Pay utilities or other bills	57.9%	71.3%	31.3%	58.6%	39.6%
Pay down debt	52.9%	59.6%	60.4%	45.2%	54.2%
Pay for emergency expenses	44.6%	63.8%	47.9%	30.5%	70.8%
Access shelter for your family	14.9%	37.2%	N.A.	6.2%	N.A.
Receive assistance escaping an abusive environment	7.1%	14.9%	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Receive financial or legal assistance for immigration issues	12.6%	22.3%	N.A.	12.9%	N.A.

“You only think about how to pay the debts ...”

— Survey respondent

3. Fields marked "N.A." are not available because the sample size of respondents in this category is too small.

Paying utilities or other bills was also the top financial concern for immigrants, with more than three-fifths putting it above the other financial worries. In addition, 41.4 percent of Latinx immigrant respondents worried about paying down debt, while 69.7 percent of Burmese immigrant respondents and 50.6 percent of immigrant respondents with limited English proficiency (LEP) were most concerned about getting enough food for their families.

**TABLE 2: WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THE COMING MONTH, ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT BEING ABLE TO...?**

	Immigrant Respondents	Latinx Immigrant Respondents	Burmese Immigrant Respondents	LEP Immigrant Respondents
Pay for healthcare and medicine for your family	41.3%	28.4%	65.8%	41.0%
Get enough food for your family	45.1%	36.7%	69.7%	50.6%
Pay utilities or other bills	63.3%	59.2%	72.4%	67.3%
Pay down debt	47.7%	41.4%	61.8%	45.5%
Pay for emergency expenses	39.8%	27.8%	61.8%	35.3%
Access shelter for your family	16.3%	N.A.	44.7%	20.5%
Receive assistance escaping an abusive environment	6.8%	N.A.	17.1%	9.0%
Receive financial or legal assistance for immigration issues	17.4%	14.8%	26.3%	19.2%

**“Support people in need. Economically and psychologically.”**

**— Survey respondent when being asked what their city government could do better at helping them through this crisis**

Many families also struggled with paying rent and mortgage during the pandemic. Nearly 45 percent of BIPOC respondents had to reduce other essential spending so they could make housing payments. About 15.4 percent reported that they were unable to pay their rent or mortgage on time, including 3.4 percent who reported that they had been evicted or were facing eviction or foreclosure.

**TABLE 3: HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO AFFORD YOUR RENT OR MORTGAGE THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC?**

	BIPOC Respondents	AAPI Respondents	Black Respondents	Hispanic Respondents	Non-Hispanic White
Yes, we have paid our rent or mortgage in full and on-time	33.0%	31.3%	54.2%	26.7%	61.5%
Yes, but we had to reduce other essential spending to meet housing expenses	44.7%	49.5%	20.3%	50.0%	19.2%
No, we are behind on our rent or mortgage but not facing eviction or foreclosure	12.0%	15.2%	N.A.	12.5%	N.A.
No, we are facing eviction or foreclosure or are already evicted for not paying our rent or mortgage	3.4%	N.A.	N.A.	4.3%	N.A.
Other	7.0%	4.0%	N.A.	6.5%	14.1%

More than half of immigrant respondents had to reduce other essential spending so they could pay their rent or mortgage. About 16.5 percent reported that they were unable to pay their rent or mortgage on time, including 2.5 percent who reported that they had been evicted or were facing eviction or foreclosure.

**TABLE 4: HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO AFFORD YOUR RENT OR MORTGAGE THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC?**

	Immigrant Respondents	Latinx Immigrant Respondents	Burmese Immigrant Respondents	LEP Immigrant Respondents
Yes, we have paid our rent or mortgage in full and on-time	26.7%	23.4%	34.2%	24.8%
Yes, but we had to reduce other essential spending to meet housing expenses	51.6%	52.7%	44.3%	54.7%
No, we are behind on our rent or mortgage but not facing eviction or foreclosure	14.0%	13.6%	17.7%	13.7%
No, we are facing eviction or foreclosure or are already evicted for not paying our rent or mortgage	2.5%	3.8%	N.A.	N.A.
Other	5.3%	6.5%	N.A.	N.A.

Help with childcare also became critical for families with school-age children when in-person classes were shut down during the pandemic. Of surveyed families with needs for education and childcare during the pandemic, 17.2 percent of BIPOC respondents and 12.6 percent of immigrant respondents reported lacking childcare support during school hours. In addition, 16.5 percent of BIPOC respondents and 14.6 percent of immigrant respondents did not have a reliable internet connection at home for their children's online classes. More than two-fifths of BIPOC respondents and immigrant respondents worried that their children were academically behind as a result of the pandemic, for any reason.

**TABLE 5: WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAMILY'S EXPERIENCE WITH EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE DURING THE PANDEMIC?**

	BIPOC Respondents	AAP Respondents	Black Respondents	Hispanic Respondents	Immigrant Respondents
Lacked childcare support during school hours	17.2%	N.A.	31.3%	17.4%	12.6%
Lacked a reliable internet connection at home for children's online classes	16.5%	N.A.	N.A.	17.4%	14.6%
Lacked computer, tablet, or other devices for school work	15.4%	N.A.	N.A.	16.1%	11.1%
Unsure how to help my children with their schoolwork or the technology	28.1%	31.8%	N.A.	27.3%	26.1%
Worried my children are academically behind	46.3%	56.1%	53.1%	39.1%	41.7%

"Because I lost my job. I had to stay home with my school-aged children and provide them the help they needed with schoolwork and supervision. It took a huge mental and emotional toll on me as a single parent."

— **Survey respondent**

## Language Access

While many BIPOC and immigrant residents face tremendous challenges paying bills, getting childcare support, and more, LEP immigrants with have a particularly difficult time accessing much-needed resources and assistance.

**"Include all communities that live in Tulsa and include them based on their particular cultures, languages, and needs."**

### — Survey respondent

Of the immigrants surveyed, 57.9 percent were LEP immigrants who reported that they didn't speak English well, couldn't easily communicate in English about everyday things, understood only a few English words, or did not speak English at all. In addition, 55.1 percent of Latinx immigrant respondents and 81.8 percent of Burmese immigrant respondents were identified as having limited English proficiency.

**TABLE 6: ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF PEOPLE WHOSE PRIMARY LANGUAGE IS NOT ENGLISH**

	Immigrant Respondents	Latinx Immigrant Respondents	Burmese Immigrant Respondents
Not able to communicate in English at all	14.4%	13.0%	23.4%
Able to understand a few words	27.7%	23.8%	45.5%
Able to carry on a basic conversation and read simple paragraphs	15.8%	18.4%	13.0%
Able to communicate easily about everyday things	15.8%	19.5%	N.A.
Highly proficient in spoken and written English	9.1%	11.4%	N.A.
Fluent	8.4%	8.6%	N.A.

**"Continue informing our community about all aspects of the City. Have more bilingual staff."**

### — Survey respondent when being asked what their city government could do better at helping them through this crisis

One major challenge of the COVID-19 crisis has been to figure out how to counter misinformation and get accurate information to vulnerable communities, especially in the languages people prefer. At least one in eight LEP immigrant respondents said they did not have regular access to timely, accurate information during the pandemic in their preferred language. Of the LEP immigrant respondents, 61.2 percent spoke Spanish as their primary language and 33.9 percent spoke primarily Zopau (Zomi).

**TABLE 7: DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE REGULAR ACCESS TO TIMELY, ACCURATE INFORMATION DURING THE PANDEMIC IN YOUR PREFERRED LANGUAGE?**

	Immigrant Respondents	Latinx Immigrant Respondents	Burmese Immigrant Respondents	LEP Immigrant Respondents
Yes	77.6%	80.5%	75.6%	80.4%
No	14.8%	10.5%	19.2%	13.5%
I Don't Know	7.6%	8.9%	5.1%	6.1%

**“More languages and resources to help people understand the process to request assistance, what's available, etc.”**

**— Survey respondent when being asked what their city government could do better at helping them through this crisis**

The top trusted source for information about COVID-19 and where to get help was news media for all immigrant respondents (47.9 percent), Latinx immigrant respondents (56.3 percent), and LEP immigrant respondents (46.6 percent), while the federal government was rated as the most reliable information source for Burmese immigrant respondents (55.1 percent).

Social media was among the most trusted information source for Latinx immigrant respondents (44.2 percent) and LEP immigrant respondents (35.6 percent), and 35.9 percent of Burmese immigrant respondents relied on religious organizations for COVID-19 information.

**TABLE 8: WHAT IS YOUR TRUSTED SOURCE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT COVID-19 AND WHERE TO GET HELP DURING THIS PANDEMIC?**

	Immigrant Respondents	Latinx Immigrant Respondents	Burmese Immigrant Respondents	LEP Immigrant Respondents
Federal government (e.g., president, CDC)	40.0%	32.1%	55.1%	33.7%
State government (e.g., governor, health department)	30.7%	31.1%	21.8%	22.7%
City or county government	38.6%	41.1%	26.9%	26.4%
News media	47.9%	56.3%	28.2%	46.6%
Social media	35.9%	44.2%	16.7%	35.6%
Family and friends	27.2%	30.5%	15.4%	23.9%
Religious organizations	12.1%	N.A.	35.9%	15.3%
Nonprofit organization	10.7%	11.1%	N.A.	8.6%
Medical Professional	19.0%	18.4%	14.1%	12.9%
Employer	7.2%	7.4%	N.A.	3.1%

“More access to different languages for help, cultural understanding, outreach.”

— Survey respondent when being asked what their city government could do better at helping them through this crisis

## Internationally Trained Immigrants

The economic recession that accompanied the pandemic has posed a significant challenge for internationally trained immigrants who hold a post-secondary degree or certification from another country and earned their professional experience abroad. About 18.2 percent of internationally trained immigrant respondents and 17.9 percent of internationally trained Latinx immigrant respondents who were working in a field they were trained in before the pandemic became unemployed during the lockdowns and economic recession, while one in ten internationally trained immigrant respondents and internationally trained Latinx immigrant respondents had to switch to a job in a field they were not trained in.

Meanwhile, about one in five internationally trained immigrant respondents and Latinx immigrant respondents were seeking to work in a field similar to the one they had abroad; and even higher shares – 32.5 percent of internationally trained immigrant respondents and 26.8 percent of internationally trained Latinx immigrant respondents – were seeking to pursue further education to qualify for a career in the United States.

**TABLE 9: EMPLOYMENT STATUS FOR INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED IMMIGRANT TALENT<sup>4</sup>**

	Immigrant Respondents	Latinx Immigrant Respondents
I am employed in a field that fully utilizes my international education and training.	29.9%	28.6%
Before the pandemic, I was working in a field I was trained in but am currently unemployed.	18.2%	17.9%
Before the pandemic, I was working in a field that I was trained in but am currently working outside this field.	10.4%	10.7%
Before the pandemic, I was not working in the field I am trained in and am still not in the field.	10.4%	14.3%
I am seeking to work in a field similar to the one I had abroad.	19.5%	21.4%
I am seeking to pursue further education to qualify for a career in the United States.	32.5%	26.8%

“Open opportunities for people who come prepared from other countries. We could contribute a lot to our community, not only the Latino community but to the diversity of Spanish speakers in this society.”

— Survey respondent

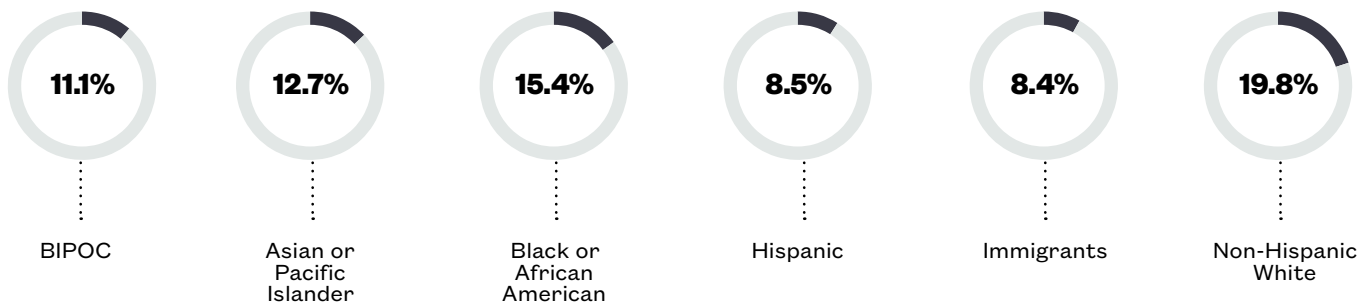
4. The sample sizes of internationally-trained respondents in the other immigrant groups are too small, so we are unable to release our estimates for those groups in this section.

## Small Business Owners

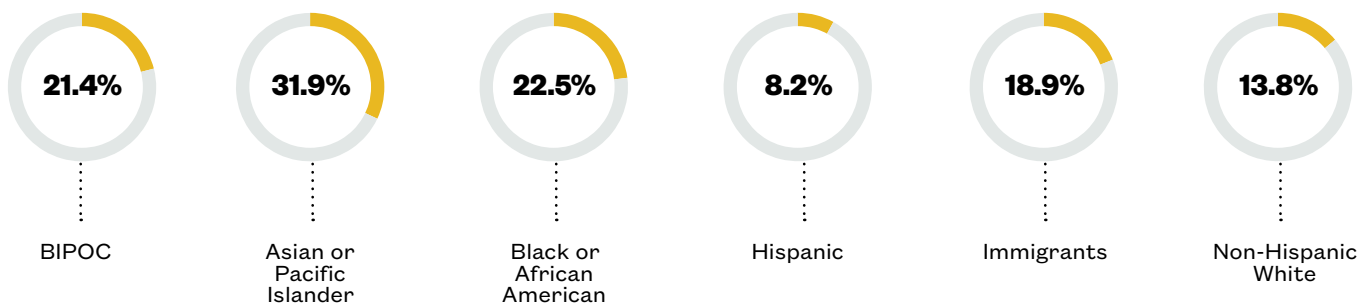
BIPOC and immigrant business owners were hit hard during the pandemic lockdowns and economic recession. The number of self-employed respondents in Tulsa alone was too small to evaluate with any statistical accuracy, but responses from business owners in the combined five-city survey, from Atlanta, Austin, Denver, Louisville, and Tulsa, offer some insight. More than one in 10 of those BIPOC respondents had to close their business, and at least one-fifth of them had to lay off employees. More than 8 percent of immigrant respondents who said they were business owners reported having to close their business, and 18.9 percent said they had to lay off employees.

### HOW HAS THE PANDEMIC AFFECTED YOUR EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS?

Closed my business:



Had to lay off employees in my own business:



At the same time, of the business owners, only 19.1 percent of BIPOC respondents and 14.5 percent of immigrant respondents said they received help for their business from their city government.

“Making small loans to independent business owners who are struggling the most. People who are self-employed are really without help.”

— Survey respondent

## Social Isolation and Mental Health

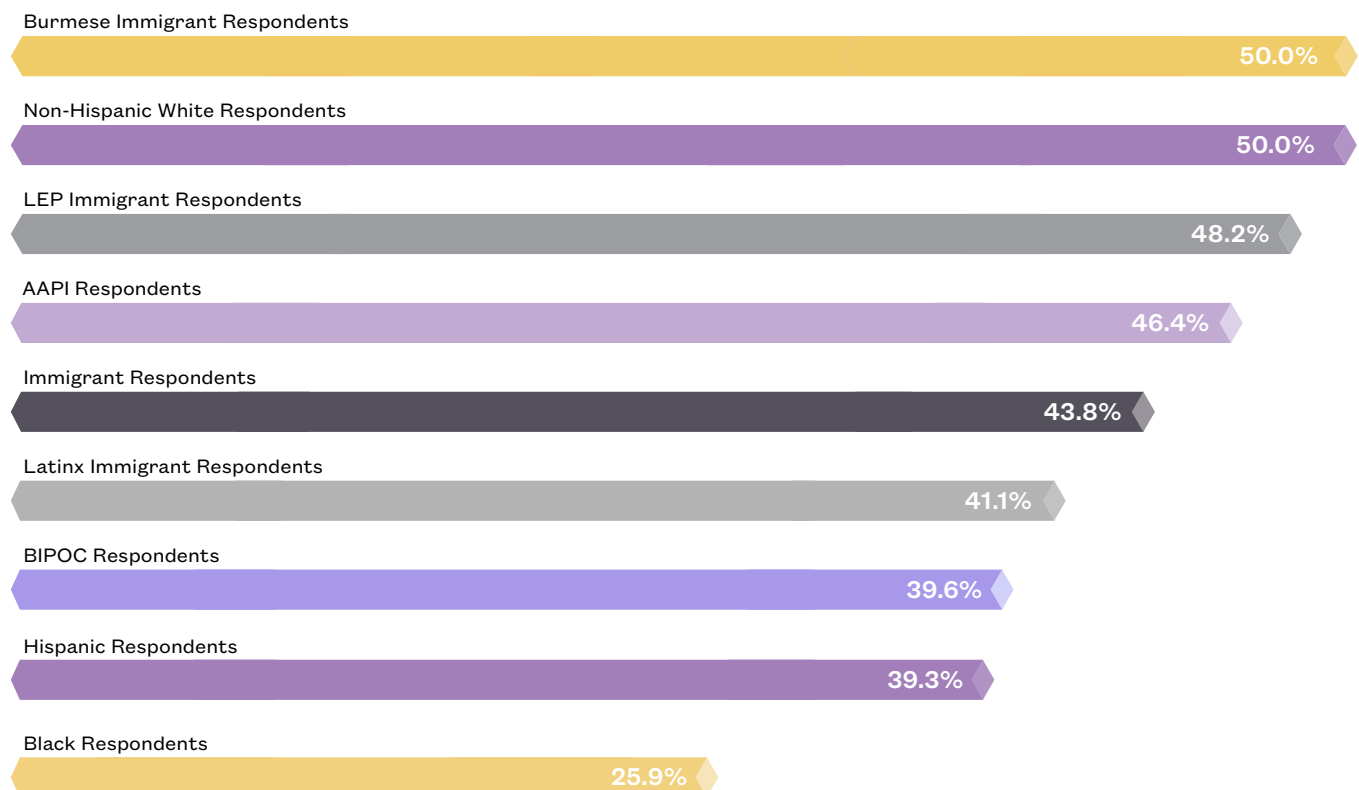
The COVID-19 pandemic has socially isolated Americans and exacerbated the mental health conditions of many, including those in vulnerable communities.

“Helping each other in the community, visiting friends and family has decreased.”

### — Survey respondent

Lockdowns and travel restrictions, put in place to slow the spread of the virus, kept many from connecting with family and friends, or from expanding their local networks. Nearly 40 percent of BIPOC respondents and 43.8 percent of immigrant respondents said they often felt isolated from family and friends during the pandemic, with non-Hispanic White and Burmese respondents reporting the highest rates of feeling isolated.

#### SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED OFTEN FEELING ISOLATED FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS DURING THE PANDEMIC



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“The fact of not being able to go out freely affects a lot mentally.”

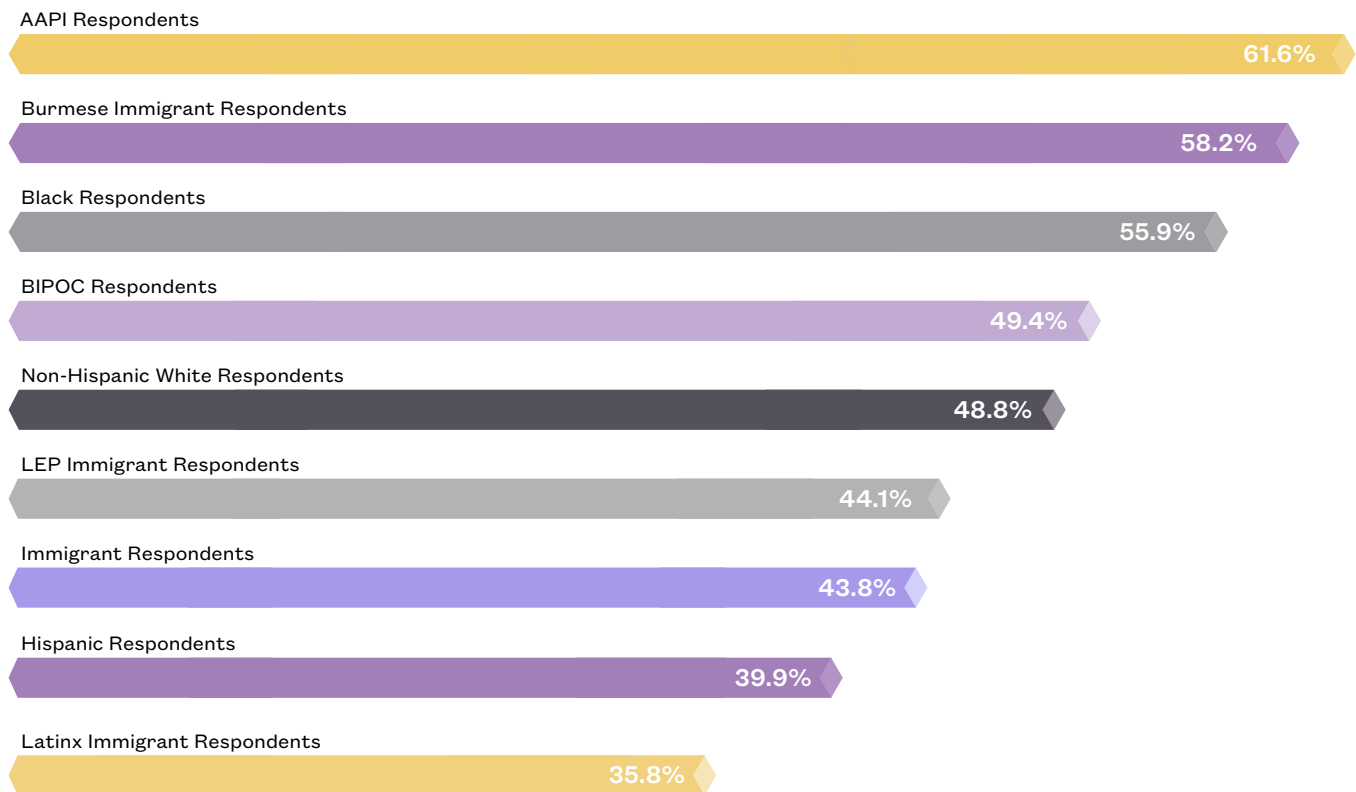
— **Survey respondent**

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Social isolation coupled with other pandemic stressors has led to a rising demand for mental health services. Nearly half of BIPOC respondents and more than two-fifths of immigrant respondents reported having needed mental care during the pandemic, with the highest rates being among AAPI, Black and Burmese immigrant respondents.

**SHARE OF PEOPLE HAVING NEEDED MENTAL CARE DURING THE PANDEMIC**

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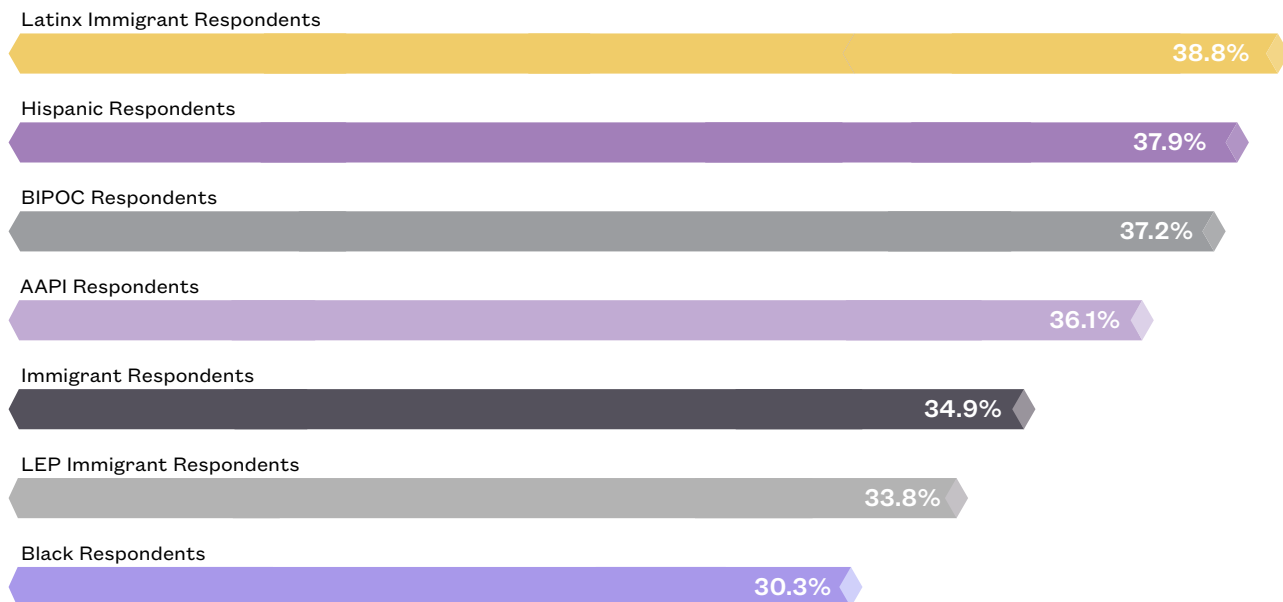


“Mentally kept inside and away from people or social gatherings for some relief have been hard. Especially after having a baby during the pandemic. Depression and postpartum.”

— **Survey respondent**

Making matters worse, when they needed mental health support, about one-third of respondents across different BIPOC and immigrant groups found it difficult to access services, indicating a gap in needed services exists for these communities.

#### SHARE OF PEOPLE HAVING NEEDED MENTAL CARE THAT REPORTED FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO ACCESS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DURING THE PANDEMIC



“After I got COVID-19 I lost my physical and mental health.”

— **Survey respondent**

## Community Support

Local organizations play a significant role when it comes to helping Tulsa's BIPOC and immigrant residents. The majority of BIPOC respondents and immigrant respondents said there was a local organization they could turn to if they needed help getting healthcare, housing, food, or other essentials. However, at least one in seven BIPOC respondents and one in nine immigrant respondents reported not having a local organization they could rely on for assistance, highlighting the need for local organizations to extend their outreach to vulnerable communities. These findings may be skewed due to the data collection method used in Tulsa to use community health workers from trusted organizations to collect surveys.

**TABLE 10: THERE IS A LOCAL ORGANIZATION I KNOW THAT I COULD TURN TO IF I NEEDED HELP GETTING HEALTHCARE, HOUSING, FOOD, OR OTHER ASSISTANCE.**

	Share of Respondents Who Agreed with the Statement	Share of Respondents Who Neither Agreed nor Disagree	Share of Respondents Who Disagreed
BIPOC Respondents	61.5%	23.9%	14.6%
AAPI Respondents	67.0%	16.5%	16.5%
Black Respondents	70.7%	25.9%	3.4%
Hispanic Respondents	60.4%	27.4%	12.2%
Immigrant Respondents	64.0%	23.7%	12.4%
Latinx Immigrant Respondents	62.8%	25.1%	12.0%
Burmese Immigrant Respondents	71.8%	17.9%	10.3%
LEP Immigrant Respondents	63.1%	23.7%	13.1%
Non-Hispanic White Respondents	58.2%	22.8%	19.0%

"It is a difficult situation, despite the fact that a bit is happening now. But with the encouragement of some friendly organizations we are going to come out of this."

— Survey respondent

# Methodology

Local officials from five communities — Atlanta, Austin, Denver, Louisville, and Tulsa — oversaw the development and implementation of the COVID-19 Community Impact Survey, with the goal of surveying at least 200 residents in each community.

## Data Collection

The 43-item quantitative and qualitative survey was translated into 16 languages: Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, Chinese (simplified), Dari, French, Hmong, Karen, Kinyarwanda, Nepali, Portuguese, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Vietnamese, and Zopau (Zomi). Multilingual community leaders and volunteers were recruited to provide interpretation via phone and in-person survey collection.

The City of Tulsa relied on multiple outreach strategies to ensure BIPOC and immigrant populations were well-represented in the survey. The first strategy was to partner with four trusted community partners: Community Service Council (CSC) Power of Families, which has community navigators that work with the Latinx community; Community Service Council (CSC) Sia Mah Nu Program, whose community navigators work with the Burmese and Zomi community; YWCA Tulsa, which is a trusted community partner among numerous populations in Tulsa; and Block Builderz, which works with advocates for justice. The city also posted the survey on social media including Facebook and Nextdoor, shared the survey with community partners, conducted interviews with local media, and shared posters and flyers about the survey in nonprofits and BIPOC businesses.

In total, New American Economy received 559 valid survey responses from adult residents in Tulsa. NAE did not collect personal information, such as names, telephone numbers, or any potentially identifying information. NAE shared participants' email addresses with Tulsa partners but only for the purpose of issuing gift cards as incentives for their participation in the survey. NAE did not match the email data with the survey data.

When participants responded to write-in or open-ended questions in a language other than English, NAE asked survey staff to translate the responses into English, if they were able, and input them into the online forms. For all non-English responses, NAE worked with its staff members, members of local organizations, and a professional agency to translate content into English for the analysis.

## Data Cleaning

After gathering the survey responses, NAE used a mixed approach of data science and manual review to identify and remove invalid entries. Using machine-learning techniques, NAE looked for patterns and set the criteria for invalid entries based on city, referral organization, zip code, and demographics, as well as responses to the write-in fields and open-ended questions. NAE then went through the manual review of the entries in question and removed those deemed invalid. For duplicate entries — those that shared identical responses to all the questions — NAE kept the first entry and removed those that followed.