

The Astoria Project Survey: Employment, Health, and Well-being in One New York City Neighborhood During Covid



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A report by L.K. Moe

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Astoria Project survey captures the multi-dimensional impact on a single New York City neighborhood during the Covid-19 pandemic, bringing together economic findings, reflections on health and mental health effects, and perceptions of risk enveloping routine daily activities. While there is considerable evidence that poorer neighborhoods in New York City have borne the brunt of the Covid economic impact, the Astoria Project draws responses from an evolving working-class neighborhood more reflective of middle-income Queens than the city's deepest poverty and shows how broadly the economic impact has been felt in New York City. From professional salaried employees to low-income gig workers, and from those employed as day laborers or restaurant workers to Astoria residents in health care and public service, the pandemic has taken a toll on the economic, health, and psychological well-being of New Yorkers from all races and ethnicities and across the income spectrum.

Conducted between December 2020 and February 2021 and comprising 726 individual responses of workers in Astoria and surrounding neighborhoods, such as Long Island City, the Astoria Project survey offers a unique portrait of workers in one neighborhood's Covid experience that reveals the depth and breadth of the challenges the city will face as it emerges from the pandemic. Survey results were weighted by industry of employment to approximate the industry distribution of workers residing in Astoria.

Economic impacts were widespread and the post-pandemic jobs landscape remains uncertain for many workers. Astoria contains a diverse workforce; the survey included respondents from more than 20 industries. A third of Astoria respondents were furloughed or laid off, with only 38 percent of these dislocated workers having returned to work either fulltime or parttime at the time of the survey. Many workers also lost hours or pay during the pandemic. Two-thirds of all respondents reported that their employment status had been negatively impacted during the pandemic, through job-loss, furlough, lost pay, or reduced hours. More than three-quarters of all households making less than \$50,000 per year saw negative employment impacts due to Covid, more than one-and-a-half times the rate of households with annual earnings over \$150,000.

Despite the extension of Federal unemployment benefits to freelancers and others not eligible for regular state unemployment benefits, more than one in 10 dislocated Astoria workers was unable to access unemployment insurance. Moreover, the survey reveals the deep sense of uncertainty that dislocated workers feel about the opportunities available to them in a post-Covid workforce. Only 42 percent of dislocated workers think that they will be able to return to the same employer post-pandemic and 20 percent think they will have to shift to a new occupation. Together, these factors will create enormous workforce uncertainty in the post-pandemic economy.

Citywide, low-paid workers and workers of color have been hardest hit by pandemic disruptions, a trend that the Astoria survey confirms. Black workers reported the highest rates of dislocation (39 percent), followed by Latinx workers (34 percent), White (25 percent), and Asian and other races and ethnicities (18 percent).

With more than 30,000 deaths across the five boroughs, and unemployment levels and duration not seen since the Great Depression, the psychological disruption and economic aftermath of the disease will likely be long-lasting. Jobless workers report high uncertainty about the longevity of their health insurance and what kinds of jobs might await them after the pandemic recedes. More than a third of Astoria respondents reported feeling anxious nearly every day (35 percent) and mental health help was a reported top immediate need, alongside reemployment, cash assistance, and the extension of unemployment benefits.

Families reported contemplating major shifts to their working lives to adapt to pandemic home care needs. More than four in 10 parents said that they are considering having one adult in their household leave the workforce to care for family members at home.

The Astoria Project illuminates how the impact of Covid has been felt among all families, but the survey also reveals how those most marginal, especially low-income households and residents of color, have been hardest hit, reporting high levels of anxiety, food and housing insecurity, and concerns about not being able to meet the technological and internet needs of school age children learning from home. Respondents whose employment was adversely affected by Covid were more than four times as likely as unaffected respondents to say that their children were often or sometimes not eating enough because they could not afford enough food. Not being able to provide technological needs, including laptops and high-speed internet, was a pervasive challenge for parents of color, with one in four Black respondents indicating “helping people get digitally connected, including assisting parents and students access online classrooms” as an immediate need for their family.

By bringing together data on the familial, social, and economic repercussions of Covid, the Astoria Project offers a rich portrait of the struggles and challenges New Yorkers have faced in the past year. The Astoria Project also showcases the deep economic, food, and housing insecurity that plagued even a middle-income neighborhood. Furthermore, it outlines the daunting and multi-dimensional challenges the city will face in reemerging and rebuilding following this twinned economic and health catastrophe. By addressing the economic and social needs of New Yorkers made so clear during the pandemic, the city has the opportunity after Covid-19 to rebuild as a more inclusive and equitable place for living, working, and thriving.

It is clear that the city’s economy will not snap back as vaccines become widespread and more business restrictions are lifted. With continued substantial jobs deficits that will require the city to make special efforts to reconnect people to jobs and train people whose jobs have disappeared for new opportunities, the city will need to launch a massive wage subsidy program to reconnect workers with employment and to support struggling small business while also enabling an unprecedented scale of workforce reallocation since tens of thousands of jobs will cease to exist and new jobs will require different skills.

About Astoria

Astoria comprises an historically working-class labor force as well as newer populations of both recent immigrants and higher-income professional, technical, and managerial workers.

Like much of New York City, Astoria is a neighborhood in change. The working class continues to constitute an important part of Astoria's labor force, filling both traditional working-class occupations of construction, manufacturing, and day laborers, alongside workers in what has been called the new working class, including retail, health care, hospitality, and other service industries, as well as small business owners.

Astoria's workforce both differs from and resembles the city's overall in many respects. Its worker median age is younger than that of the city overall (35 versus 40 years old). Annual earnings are more likely to be in a middle range (\$40,000 to \$100,000) than for the city overall (52 percent vs. 43 percent), with proportionately fewer workers in either the lower range below \$40,000 or in the high range of \$100,000 or more. Astoria's workers are also more likely to be White or Latinx and less likely to be Black than in the city overall.

The Astoria workforce has a similar percentage of Asian and "other" races and ethnicities as in the overall city workforce. It has both a high concentration of face-to-face workers, including those in food & beverage services, arts & recreation, hotels, restaurants, retail, and personal services, among others, and also a higher representation of workers with a four-year college degree or better (55 percent compared to 43 percent for the city overall).

KEY FINDINGS

The results of the Astoria Project survey show how workers, especially those who are low-income and workers of color, have experienced widespread economic dislocation, health and mental health effects, and difficulties accessing benefits during the pandemic. Key Findings include:

Employment and Economic Impact of Covid-19

- Astoria contains a diverse workforce, with workers of different racial and ethnic backgrounds filling occupations in industries from construction to the arts, and education to retail, a range of employment that the Astoria Project replicates with respondents working in all of the 20 industry categories outlined by the survey. One-third of respondents (32 percent) were dislocated during the pandemic (furloughed or laid off), with Black workers reporting the highest rates of dislocation (39 percent), followed by Latinx workers (34 percent), White (25 percent), and Asian and other races and ethnicities (18 percent). Even though the time periods do not match up exactly, overall displacement found in the Astoria Survey was one-and-a-half times that of the citywide 20 percent of jobs lost between February and April 2020.

- Many workers also lost working hours or pay during the pandemic. Throughout the report, we refer to workers whose employment status was impacted by Covid, including job-loss, furlough, lost pay, or reduced hours, as “impacted workers.” (Furlough and layoff connote different degrees of dislocation; while a furloughed worker still has their job but is not working or receiving pay, a laid-off worker must be rehired to work again for the same employer.)
- An overwhelming majority of respondents (67 percent overall) reported that their employment status had been negatively impacted during the pandemic. More than three-quarters of all households making less than \$50,000 per year saw negative employment effects due to Covid, more than 1.5 times the rate of households with annual earnings over \$150,000.
- Economic impact across a range of industries and occupations was staggeringly high— with more than 8 in 10 respondents in half of the industry categories reporting loss of job, hours, or pay. Those industries with such high rates of displacement are concentrated in face-to-face industries.
- Citywide, low-paid workers and workers of color have been hardest hit by pandemic disruptions, a trend that the Astoria survey mirrors. Racial groups and ethnic groups in Astoria tended to report different kinds of job setbacks, with Latinx and White workers much more likely than Black and Asian respondents to have been furloughed (17 and 11 percent compared to seven and seven percent, respectively), while Black respondents reported the highest rates of being laid off (37 percent of all Black respondents), more than 1.5 times the rate of any other racial or ethnic group.
- Freelancers showed higher rates of displacement, with 36 percent reporting they had been furloughed or laid off compared to 27 percent of payroll workers, as well as higher rates of Covid economic impact than payroll workers, with 85 percent responding they had lost a job, hours, or income since the onset of Covid-19 compared to 58 percent of payroll employees.
- Among those displaced during Covid, just over 12 percent of workers who had been furloughed or laid off reported not being able to access unemployment benefits, a concerning number given the emphasis and federal funding spent to reach all workers who could not access State unemployment insurance (UI) through the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program.
- By the end of the survey period in February 2021, 38 percent of the dislocated respondents had returned to work part- or full-time. Only 13 percent of displaced workers had returned to work fulltime after being furloughed or laid off; 25 percent returned to work parttime. Black workers reported the lowest rates of returning to full employment following furlough or layoff, with only four percent of Black respondents having returned to work fulltime and 13 percent having returned to work parttime. (Citywide, as of February 2021, 33 percent of the February-April 2020 job losses had returned.)
- Astoria’s workers of all races, including Whites, are heavily concentrated in what we term “face-to-face industries,” which include food & beverage services, arts & recreation, hotels, restaurants, retail, and personal services, among others. These industries have seen the highest concentrations of job dislocations

during the pandemic. In part because of the industries in which Astoria workers are concentrated, the results of this survey show that residents of a predominantly middle-income neighborhood such as Astoria have also experienced significant employment dislocation, underscoring the widespread and citywide effects of the pandemic.

- All respondents were asked to list three forms of assistance outside of traditional employment and training programs that would be helpful to them and their families. Overall, the top needs reported were cash assistance or gift cards, mental health counseling, and legislative lobbying, including for the extension of unemployment benefits. Many needs were shared among different groups. However, distinct priorities emerged for certain groups. Nearly one in five Black respondents named “helping people get digitally connected, including assisting parents and students access online classrooms” as a top priority alongside “providing computers for constituents to be able to work remotely.” These technology needs did not appear among the top five priorities for any other racial or ethnic group, suggesting that the digital divide is and will be an area of ongoing concern to achieve racial equity in Astoria.
- Workers who were laid off or furloughed during the pandemic will face a host of challenges in returning to work. Fewer than half of dislocated workers anticipated returning to work with the same employer in the future once Covid business restrictions were lifted or economic activity picked up (42 percent). Additionally, one in five dislocated workers anticipated having to find work in a new occupation or industry (21 percent).

Health, Food & Housing Security, and Returning to Daily Routines

The Astoria survey reveals deep economic, food, and housing insecurity both among respondents whose employment was impacted by Covid and those who were not, underscoring how basic needs that were going unmet during the pandemic will likely remain challenging for these households after Covid. In addition to tracking economic dislocation, the Astoria Project survey asked respondents about health, mental health, and disruptions to family routines.

- Overall, 35 percent of Astoria respondents said their family had experienced Covid-related health issues and, of those who had immediate or family experience with Covid, nearly 40 percent of respondents had a family member who had been hospitalized for Covid-19. Latinx households were the most likely to have positive Covid cases, with 44 percent of respondents indicating that either they or a family member had become sick with the coronavirus. Concerns about Covid and strategies for avoiding exposure had a wide array of potential spillover effects; 43 percent of respondents reported having delayed getting medical care in the previous four weeks because of the pandemic.
- Family exposure to Covid showed a pronounced skew by income level, with families with household incomes between \$25,000 and \$35,000 nearly four times more likely to have a recorded case of Covid than families with households of \$150,000+.
- Food security is a concerning issue among all the surveyed Astoria residents, with just over half of all

respondents affirming that they have enough of the kinds of foods they want to eat (56 percent). White respondents were nearly four times as likely to report having enough of the household's preferred food (74 percent) in the past month as Latinx households (19 percent).

- Food insecurity was heightened among those workers who experienced employment loss during the pandemic, with 52 percent of dislocated workers reporting they did not have enough of their household's preferred food to eat (compared to 30 percent of workers who had not experienced employment loss during Covid). Additionally, workers dislocated during Covid were four and a half times as likely to answer that the following statement was either often true or sometimes true as respondents whose work was not affected by the pandemic: "The children were not eating enough because we just couldn't afford enough food" (27 percent versus six percent).
- Perceptions of safety and anxiety around routine and daily activities remain high. As of the close of the survey in February 2021, Astoria residents reported highest concerns around riding public transit (nearly six in 10 respondents said they were "very concerned" about taking the subway or bus) and going to the workplace (four in 10 respondents said it made them "very concerned").
- Ninety percent of respondents with children were overseeing some remote learning and yet many parents reported difficulties providing digital needs for their school-age children. Only a third of parents said they could always provide a computer to their child for online learning. Nearly four in 10 Black parents said a device was usually but not always available, while 15 percent of Latinx parents said a computer was sometimes, rarely, or never available for their child's online learning.
- Overall, 21 percent of respondents affirmed that one adult in their family felt it was necessary to quit work to stay at home to care for children; an additional 19 percent felt that it would "maybe" be necessary for an adult to leave the workforce. Workers of color reported higher rates of concern about having to leave the workforce to care for children at home: 36 percent of Asian respondents, 27 percent of Latinx respondents, 16 percent of Black respondents, and 12 percent of White respondents said that an adult in their household felt it was necessary to quit work to stay home to care for children.
- The Astoria Project survey found widespread mental health concerns following the health and economic crises of the past year. Astoria respondents whose work lives were economically impacted by Covid were nearly twice as likely to report feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge nearly every day (36 percent versus 20 percent of respondents whose work was not affected by the pandemic). More than three-quarters of dislocated workers said they felt anxious at least on one or two days a week, with 52 percent of dislocated workers feeling anxious more than half the time.
- The Astoria Project survey found broad openness to vaccination, but some vaccine hesitancy among respondents that will be a challenge for public health workers in the months to come. Sixty-one percent of respondents said they would attempt to get a vaccine once it was publicly available, 32 percent said it depended on how safe they perceived the vaccine to be, and only seven percent said they would not attempt to get a vaccine even if it were made available to them.

SECTION I: The Astoria Project Survey

The Astoria Project documents how workers in one neighborhood fared during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, detailing the effects of the twinned health and economic crises on Astoria families. The project set out to capture a snapshot of the effects on employment, mental health, food security, and housing stress, with a focus on the need to understand the suffering of the past year as well as to forecast how workers will seek to find new jobs and, in some cases, new occupations in the changed post-Covid labor market. By partnering with the Consortium for Worker Education, a workforce development umbrella organization affiliated with the New York City Central Labor Council whose community-based employment and training partner organizations serve over 60,000 workers annually, we were able to gather hundreds of responses from Astoria residents. We compiled a rich portrait of how workers and families in one neighborhood struggled to find work, secure unemployment benefits, and meet their basic needs.

The Astoria Project shows the deep and broad reverberations of the economic impact of Covid-19 in all areas of these workers' lives. By showing the extent of the pandemic's impact in one fairly representative New York City neighborhood, the Astoria Project forecasts the range of economic assistance and workforce services, including programs for placement, education, and training, that will be required to help workers get reconnected to jobs and communities to begin to recover.

Historically a working-class neighborhood, Astoria is place of both continuity and change. Astoria is a multi-racial, multi-ethnic community in the western part of Queens, bounded by the East River and bordering the neighborhoods of Long Island City, Sunnyside, and Woodside. With a population over 160,000 according to the most recent Census data, it is among the most ethnically diverse neighborhoods in the City. It has historic Greek, Italian, and Jewish enclaves, as well as large eastern European and south Asian populations, including a significant Bangladeshi community.

Like much of New York, Astoria is a neighborhood in social-economic change. The working class continues to constitute an important part of Astoria labor force, filling traditional occupations in construction, manufacturing and day laborers, alongside workers in what has been called the new working class, including retail, health care, hospitality and other service industries, as well as small business owners. Like many outer-borough neighborhoods in close proximity to Manhattan, Astoria has seen waves of gentrification, with a growing number of highly educated and higher-income workers moving into Astoria in the past two decades. Given its proximity to midtown Manhattan on the western edge of Queens, it has attracted a younger population, as former industrial areas have given way to development of several high-rise apartment buildings more affordable than those on the other side of the East River. The median age of workers in Astoria is 35 compared to the citywide median of 40, and 57 percent of all workers are between the ages of 25 and 39, a much higher concentration in this age category than for the city overall (Figure 1). At the same time, Astoria also has large numbers of public housing units, concentrated between Astoria Boulevard, 27th Avenue, and 8th Street.

Astoria's workers are more likely to have annual earnings in a middle range from \$40,000 to \$100,000 than for the city overall (52 percent vs. 43 percent) and proportionately fewer in the lower range below \$40,000 or in the high range of \$100,000 or more. Compared to all New Yorkers, Astorians are much more heavily White non-Hispanic (56 percent vs. 36 percent citywide), with a far smaller Black population, a slightly smaller Hispanic population and the same 17 percent Asian and "other" share as the city overall. Astoria has fewer foreign-born workers (40 percent vs. 48 percent), and a workforce more highly educated than the city overall. Fifty-five percent of Astoria workers have a four-year college degree or better vs. 43 percent for the city overall, and a far smaller share has only a high school education or less.

Figure 1: Demographic profile of Astoria compared to New York City

All workers, 18+	NYC	Astoria	All workers, 18+	NYC	Astoria
Total	100%	100%	Total	100%	100%
Gender			Education		
Male	54%	56%	High school diploma or less	34%	27%
Female	46%	44%	Some college or Assoc. degree	23%	19%
Race/ethnicity			Bachelor's degree plus	43%	55%
White Alone	36%	56%	Foreign-born		
Black Alone	20%	5%		48%	40%
Hispanic	26%	22%	Share of all workers who are self-employed		
Asian & All Others	17%	17%		10%	11%
Age			Earnings		
Median age	40	35	\$0-\$20,000	13%	12%
18-24	5%	5%	\$20,000-\$40,000	24%	21%
25-39	43%	57%	\$40,000-\$60,000	20%	23%
40-54	32%	25%	\$60,000-\$100,000	23%	29%
55+	20%	14%	\$100,000 +	19%	15%

Source: CNYCA analysis of American Community Survey, 2019 5-year sample; IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.

Figure 2: Median wage earnings for all Astoria and NYC workers, including wage workers and self-employed who are 18+ (in 2019\$)

Astoria Census Data, 2019\$, all workers 18+		
	Median Earnings	
	Astoria	NYC
All	\$40,000	\$50,000
Male	\$44,000	\$50,000
Female	\$36,000	\$50,000
White	\$50,000	\$70,000
Black/ African American	\$26,500	\$42,100
Hispanic/Latinx	\$27,500	\$35,000
Asian & all others	\$36,000	\$50,000

Source: CNYCA analysis of American Community Survey, 2019 5-year sample; IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org. Universe includes residents 18+ of Astoria or NYC five boroughs.

The Astoria survey asked respondents the annual income of the household of which they are a member. The median household income ranges of the weighted survey responses (see Appendix II for weighting methodology) for all respondents and for men in the \$50,000-\$75,000 range and for women in the \$35,000-\$50,000 range (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Astoria Survey Respondents Household Income

Astoria Survey Respondents Annual Household Income									Median Household Earnings Bucket
	<\$25k	\$25k - \$35k	\$35k - \$50k	\$50k - \$75k	\$75k - \$100k	\$100k - \$150k	\$150k +	All	
All	29%	8%	11%	11%	10%	18%	12%	100%	\$50k-\$75k
White	10%	6%	13%	18%	14%	24%	15%	100%	\$50k-\$75k
Black or African American	67%	13%	9%	3%	3%	5%	0%	100%	< \$25k
Hispanic or Latinx	58%	16%	8%	2%	5%	6%	3%	100%	< \$25k
Asian and Others	32%	3%	12%	5%	2%	21%	25%	100%	\$50k-\$75k

Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

While we sought to disseminate it widely in both English and Spanish, including to community-based organizations that might reach out to Astoria residents facing digital or technological barriers to participation, it was an online survey, which may have affected participation rates along low-income or non-English and non-Spanish speaking residents.

The Astoria Project Survey

The online survey was developed by the Center for New York City Affairs using the Qualtrics survey platform and conducted between December 2020 and February 2021. The survey explored the following issues:

- Lost work (occupation, industry, whether employee, self-employed or small business owner, duration and extent of unemployment).
- Ability to access unemployment insurance benefits.
- Likelihood of return to work with the same or a different employer and occupation.
- Importance of economic or other assistance accessed since March.
- Family experience with Covid-19 health issues as well as mental health issues.
- Housing and food security.
- Concerns and digital obstacles to online learning and work; tradeoffs between work and caring for children.

Portions of the survey drew on questions used on the Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey, an online survey developed rapidly in the wake of the onset of Covid-19 to track how the pandemic affected workers nationwide, asking questions about education, employment, food and housing security, as well as a number

of other areas of personal health and economic well-being.¹ The Astoria Project added more detailed questions about industry and occupation of employment as well as access to New York unemployment benefits.

Survey Outreach and Respondents

The Consortium for Worker Education distributed the survey to 30 organizations that serve or represent a diverse swath of over 20,000 Astoria residents with the goal of maximizing socio-economic diversity, including organizations that represent and serve residents from a range of income levels, social backgrounds, as well as racial and ethnic backgrounds (for a full list see Appendix II). The network of partners that assisted with the survey distribution includes:

- Community-based organizations that provide job training and social services and/or advocate for greater visibility and inclusion for their constituents. This includes organizations focused on providing services to residents in public housing and specialized services to immigrant workers or ethnic groups.
- Churches, e.g., Brooklyn/Queens Catholic Diocese
- Elected or public officials, e.g., state senate, assembly, city council, and local community board members
- Queens Public Library system
- Unions that represent workers in private and public sector employment across a range of industries
- Economic development/business service groups and industry associations
- Traditional media (community newspapers) and social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)

The survey responses span December 2020 through February 2021. Because of the wide outreach, the zip codes of the 726 responses were analyzed to make sure that those who filled out the survey were residents of Astoria or nearby neighborhoods, with 87 percent in Astoria proper and 91 percent in “greater Astoria,” that is within two to three neighborhoods to the south or east (as far as Greenpoint, Brooklyn). Survey responses were then weighted using the latest Census data showing the industry profile of Astoria residents (see Appendix 2 for further details).

The survey resulted in 726 responses, of which 38 percent were male, 60 percent female, and two percent non-binary. Fifty-five percent of respondents were White, five percent Black, 27 percent Hispanic, and 12 percent Asian and other race and ethnicities. Of those respondents who were employed, wage and salary workers made up 69 percent of respondents and freelancers; gig workers or independent contractors comprised the remaining 31 percent. Compared to census demographics for Astoria, survey respondents were more likely to be women and older than the demographic profile described in the 2019 Census data (Figure 4). Survey responses were re-weighted by industry since the pandemic’s economic effects have varied greatly by industry (see Appendix II).

1 United States Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey: Measuring Social and Economic Impacts during the Coronavirus. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey.html>

Figure 4: Demographic profile of Astoria compared to The Astoria Project survey respondents

	Data, all workers 18+	Astoria Survey Respondents
Total	100%	100%
Gender		
Male	56%	38%
Female	44%	60%
Race/ethnicity		
White Alone	56%	56%
Black Alone	5%	5%
Hispanic	22%	27%
Asian & All Others	17%	12%
Age		
18-24	5%	2%
25-39	57%	35%
40-54	25%	37%
55+	14%	26%
Education		
High school diploma or less	27%	24%
Some college or associates degree	19%	18%
Bachelor's degree plus	55%	58%

Source: CNYCA analysis of American Community Survey, 2019 5-year sample; IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org; CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey.

In previous reports by the Center for New York City Affairs about how New York City workers have been affected by the pandemic, we have found it helpful to divide industries into three categories: face-to-face, remote-working, and essential. Face-to-face industries include restaurants, hotels and the arts, entertainment and recreation industry, among others, and have borne the brunt of job dislocations due to business restrictions involving face-to-face encounters. Remote-working industries such as finance and insurance and professional services are those that have, by and large, been able to continue operating through the pandemic with most workers performing their jobs on a remote basis. The essential category includes health care, social assistance, utilities, and government services. Appendix I details all of the industries within each category and shows payroll employment change from February 2020 to March 2021.

As Figure 5 indicates, Astoria Survey respondents are concentrated in face-to-face and remote-working industries and much less present in the essential category. Face-to-face industries account for 78 percent of all New York City payroll job losses since the pandemic began and collectively declined by a staggering 23.5 percent between February of 2020 and March of 2021. Remote-working industries have seen a 6.4 percent decline and essential industries a 2.3 percent decline during that period. Thus, the high concentration of Astoria workers in face-to-face industries (65 percent) suggests that Astoria workers likely have experienced significant job displacement over the past year. This conclusion is bolstered by their significant under-representation in the less-affected essential industries.

Figure 5: Shares of pre-Covid workforce, by three broad categories relevant to pandemic effects

	<u>Astoria Survey Project Respondents</u>
Face-to-face industries	65%
Remote-working industries	21%
Essential industries	14%

Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

While on a citywide basis, low-paid workers and workers of color have been hit hardest by pandemic-related job disruptions,² given the industries where Astoria workers are concentrated, residents of a predominantly middle-income and majority White neighborhood such as Astoria have also experienced significant employment dislocation as the presentation of the survey results will show.

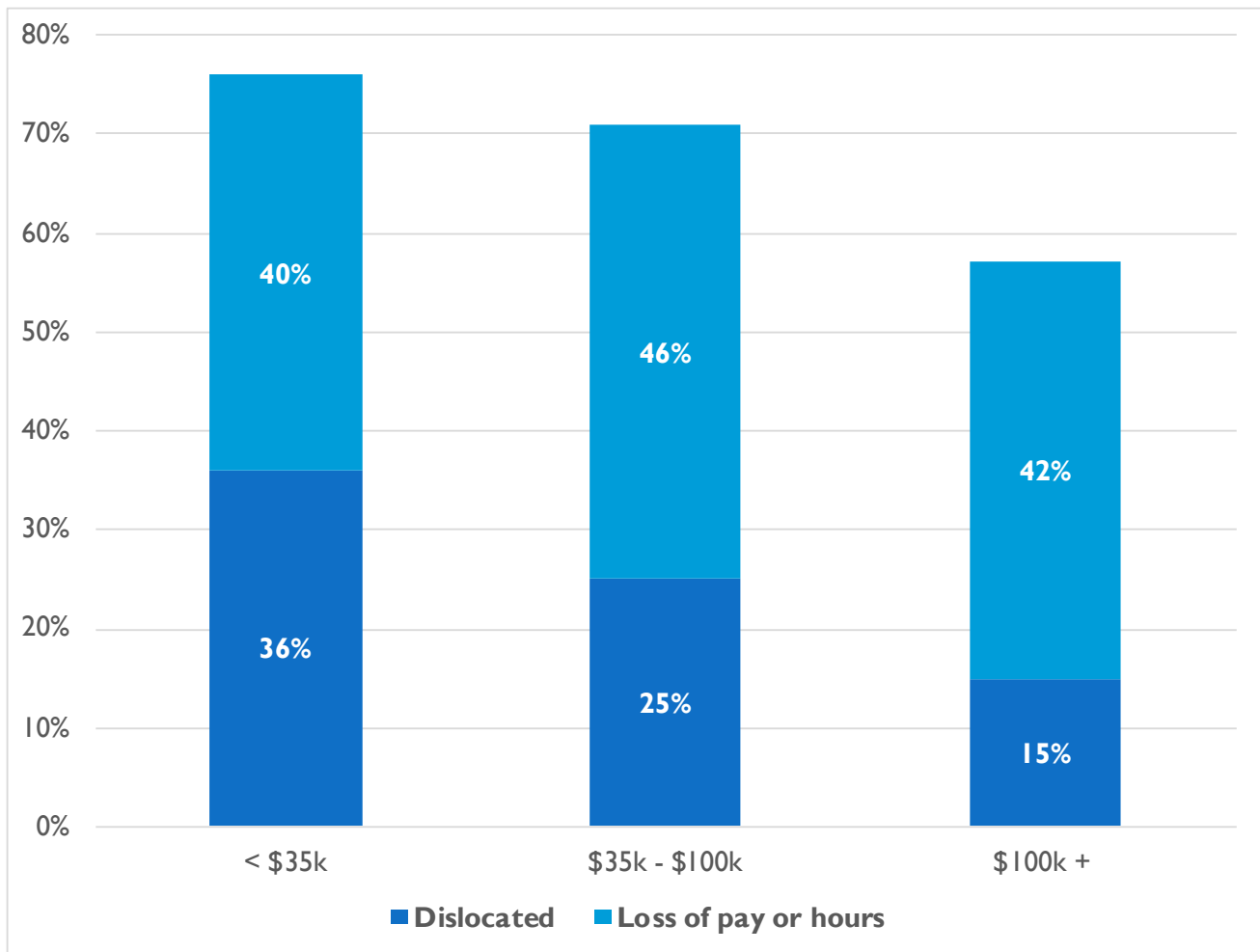
SECTION II: Worker Dislocation, Employment and Income Effects

Astoria contains a diverse workforce, with workers of different racial and ethnic backgrounds filling occupations in industries from construction to the arts, and education to retail. One-third of respondents (32 percent) were dislocated during the pandemic (furloughed or laid off), with Black workers having the highest rates of dislocation (43 percent), followed by Latinx workers (38 percent), White (30 percent), and Asian and other races and ethnicities (23 percent). Overall job displacement found in the Astoria Survey was one-and-a-half times that of the citywide 20 percent of jobs lost between February and April 2020.

Of those workers living in households with less than \$35,000 in annual income, more than a third were dislocated (36 percent), more than double the rate of workers in households earning more than \$100,000 (15 percent). See Figure 6. In the first few weeks of the pandemic when business restrictions were tightest and the public health scare the most alarming, 20 percent of all city residents had lost jobs as of April of 2020. At the close of the survey in February 2021, Astoria Survey respondents in households with income less than \$35,000 per year reported more than 1.5 times the rate of this dislocation over the course of the pandemic.

2 J. Parrott, NYC's Covid-19 Economy Will Not Snap Back," Center for New York City Affairs Report, February 12, 2021; pp. 14-17. <http://www.centrernyc.org/reports-briefs/new-york-citys-covid-19-economy-will-not-snap-back>

Figure 6: Percent of Impacted & Dislocated Workers by household income group since onset of Covid-19 (2019\$)

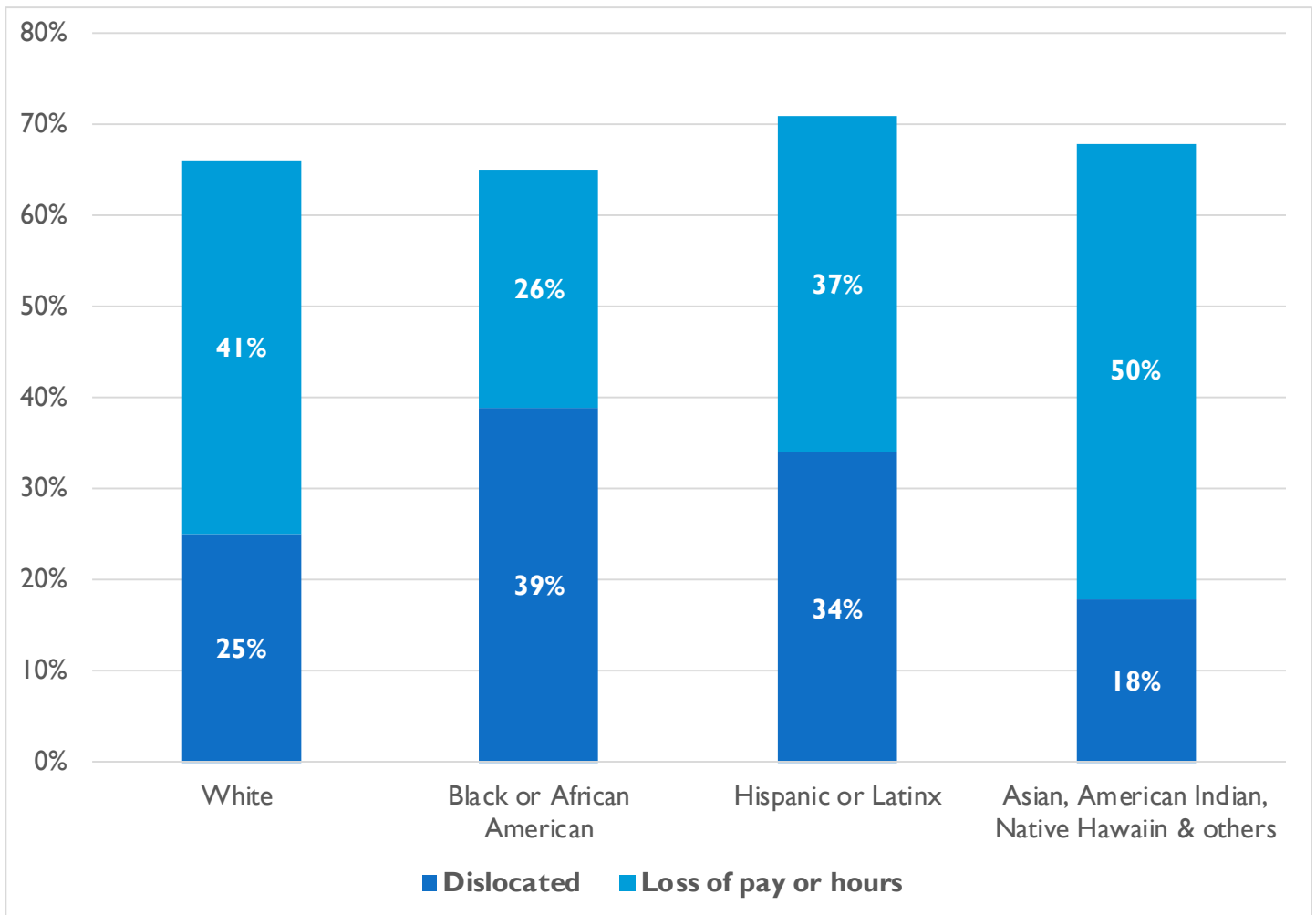


Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

Many additional workers lost hours or pay during the pandemic, even if they weren't laid off or furloughed. Throughout the report, we refer to workers whose employment status was "impacted" by Covid as either dislocated or losing pay or hours. An overwhelming majority of respondents (67 percent overall) reported that their employment status had been impacted by Covid, including job-loss, lost pay, or reduced hours. The rates of adverse job impact among low and middle-income households were even more severe than the 67 percent overall: nearly three-quarters of all households making less than \$100,000 per year saw negative employment effects due to Covid (Figure 6). It is also notable, however, that more than half of all high-income workers were affected.

As noted above, two-thirds (67 percent) of all Astoria residents survey experienced a job-related economic impact from Covid-19. The impacts were broadly felt among members of all race/ethnic groups with 65 percent of White and Black respondents affected, 68 percent of Asians and Others adversely affected, and 71 percent of Latinx respondents (see Figure 7).

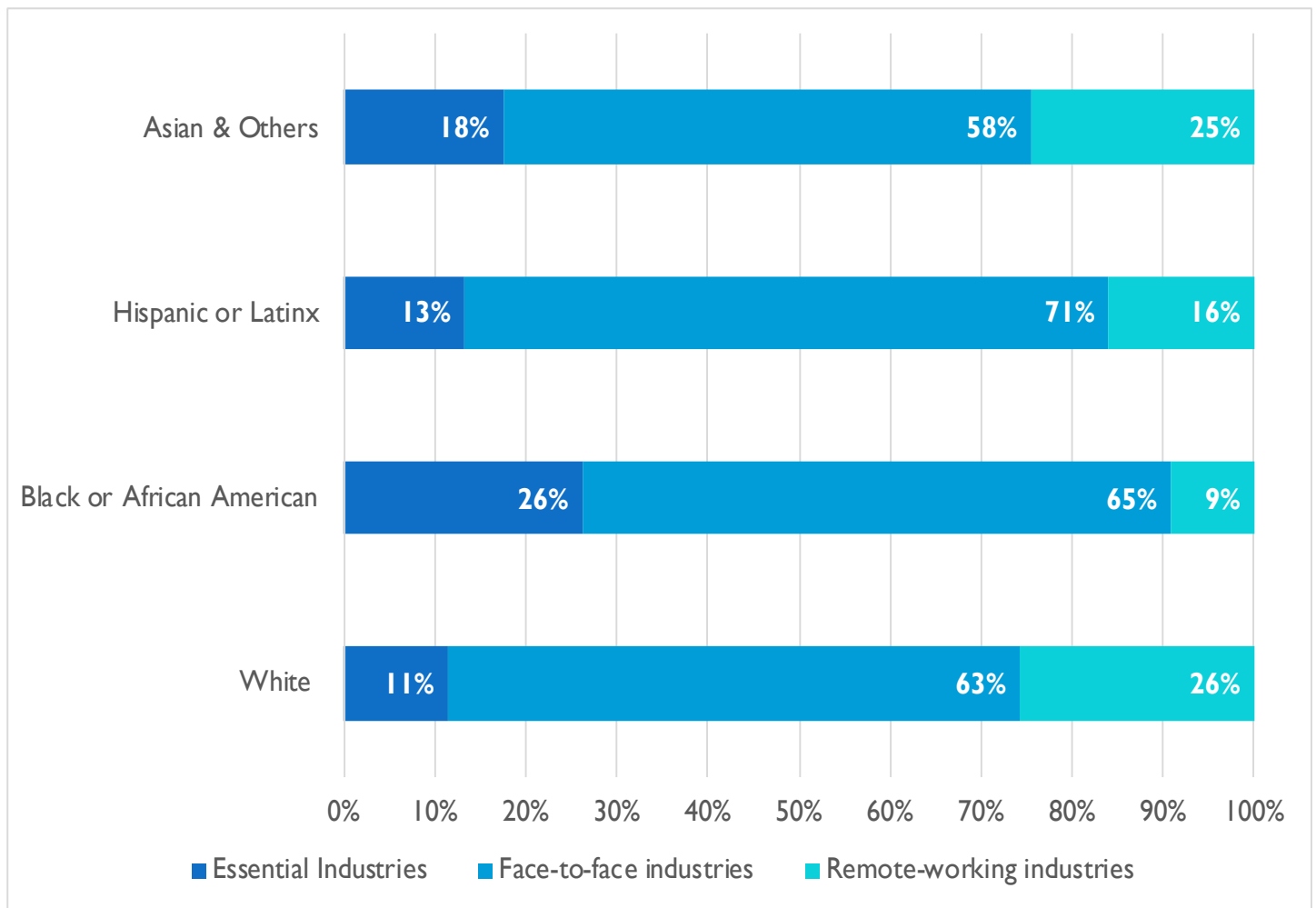
Figure 7: Dislocated (Furloughed or Laid off) & Impacted (Dislocated or Loss of Pay or Hours) Astoria workers since onset of Covid-19



Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

Yet, within those racial groups, workers have suffered different kinds of job setbacks. When asked about the type of economic loss experienced since the onset of Covid— whether they were furloughed, laid off, had hours reduced, had returned to work part-time or full-time after being furloughed or laid off— racial and ethnic groups diverged in their responses. Black and Latinx workers were more likely to have been dislocated (furloughed or laid off) than to have lost hours, pay, or income than White or Asian workers (39 percent and 34 percent compared to 25 percent and 18 percent). See Figure 7. The higher incidence of layoff among Black and Latinx workers may be because they have slightly higher representation in face-to-face industries (65 and 71 percent, respectively) where the economy saw the highest rates of job loss (Figure 8). However, more than a quarter of Black respondents (26 percent) worked in essential industries, with most of those respondents working in the healthcare industry, a sector that saw a mixture of short-term job losses, such as in dental clinics or eye-care facilities, but also strong job retention in hospital and other essential care services. (See Figure 8.) Another reason may be that often those who are last hired are among the first ones fired. To fully explain the much higher incidence of layoffs among Black respondents would require deeper knowledge of the job tenure and specific occupations within the industries in which they worked.

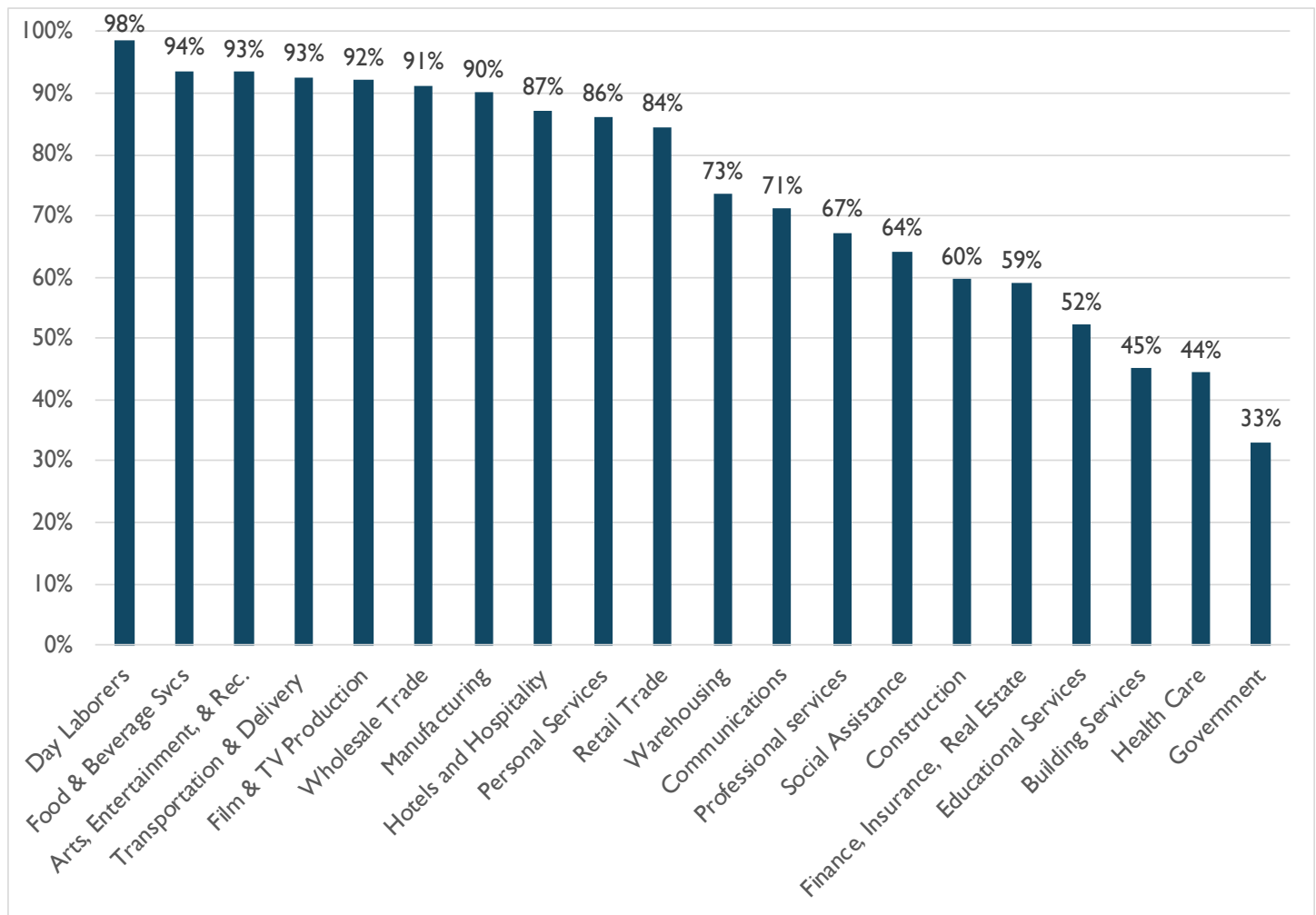
Figure 8: Racial and ethnic groups of survey respondents by industry category



Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

By contrast, when asked about returning to work after being laid off, Black workers reported the lowest rates of returning to work either full or parttime after being furloughed or laid off (17 percent), less than half the reported return to work rate of White workers (39 percent). The return to employment of all dislocated workers had, through the close of the survey in February 2021, proceeded slowly across the board, with only 38 percent of all dislocated workers having returned to work either parttime or fulltime.

Figure 9: Impacted workers: Loss of job, pay, or hours since onset of Covid-19 by employment industry of respondent



Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

The number of impacted workers who lost a job, hours, or pay, was staggeringly high; more than eight in 10 respondents in half of the industry categories reported displacement. Industries with such high rates of displacement are concentrated in face-to-face industries, such as those food & beverage services, arts & recreation, hotels, restaurants, retail, and personal services. Excluded workers, like day laborers, who do not enjoy the benefits and protections of payroll employees, were particularly hard-hit. By contrast, government employees and workers in essential industries, like health care, experienced lower incidence of displacement.

Top economic needs

All respondents were asked to select three additional needs after traditional employment and training from among a list of 17 categories. These included, for example, cash assistance, mental health counseling, legal aid, and assistance accessing unemployment insurance benefits, with the option of writing in additional forms of assistance not listed (Appendix III). The Astoria survey reached workers more than six months after the onset of the pandemic; nevertheless, respondents still reported that a range of forms of “emergency”

economic assistance would benefit them and their families. Respondents also reported that the question of how new legislation might provide longer-term economic assistance, such as extended unemployment insurance, was on their minds. Importantly, mental health and the mental wellbeing of their families ranked alongside cash assistance as top priorities among respondents (Figure 10). Overall, when asked what forms of assistance outside of traditional employment and training programs would be helpful to them and their families, the primary needs reported overall were cash assistance or gift cards (13 percent), mental health counseling (11 percent), and legislative lobbying, including for the extension of unemployment benefits (eight percent).

While many top priorities were shared among different groups, when broken down by race and ethnicity, distinct priorities emerged (Figure 10). Nearly one in four Black respondents named “helping people get digitally connected, including assisting parents and students access online classrooms” as their top priority. Black respondents also listed “providing computers for constituents to be able to work remotely” as a priority. Notably, these technology needs did not appear among the top five priorities for any other racial or ethnic group, suggesting that the digital divide is and will be an area of ongoing concern to achieve racial equity in Astoria. However, Black, Latinx, and Asian respondents all ranked applying for food stamps or Medicaid among their top immediate needs, though this form of assistance did not appear among the top five additional forms of economic assistance.

Figure 10: Immediate Needs in addition to employment, education, and retraining

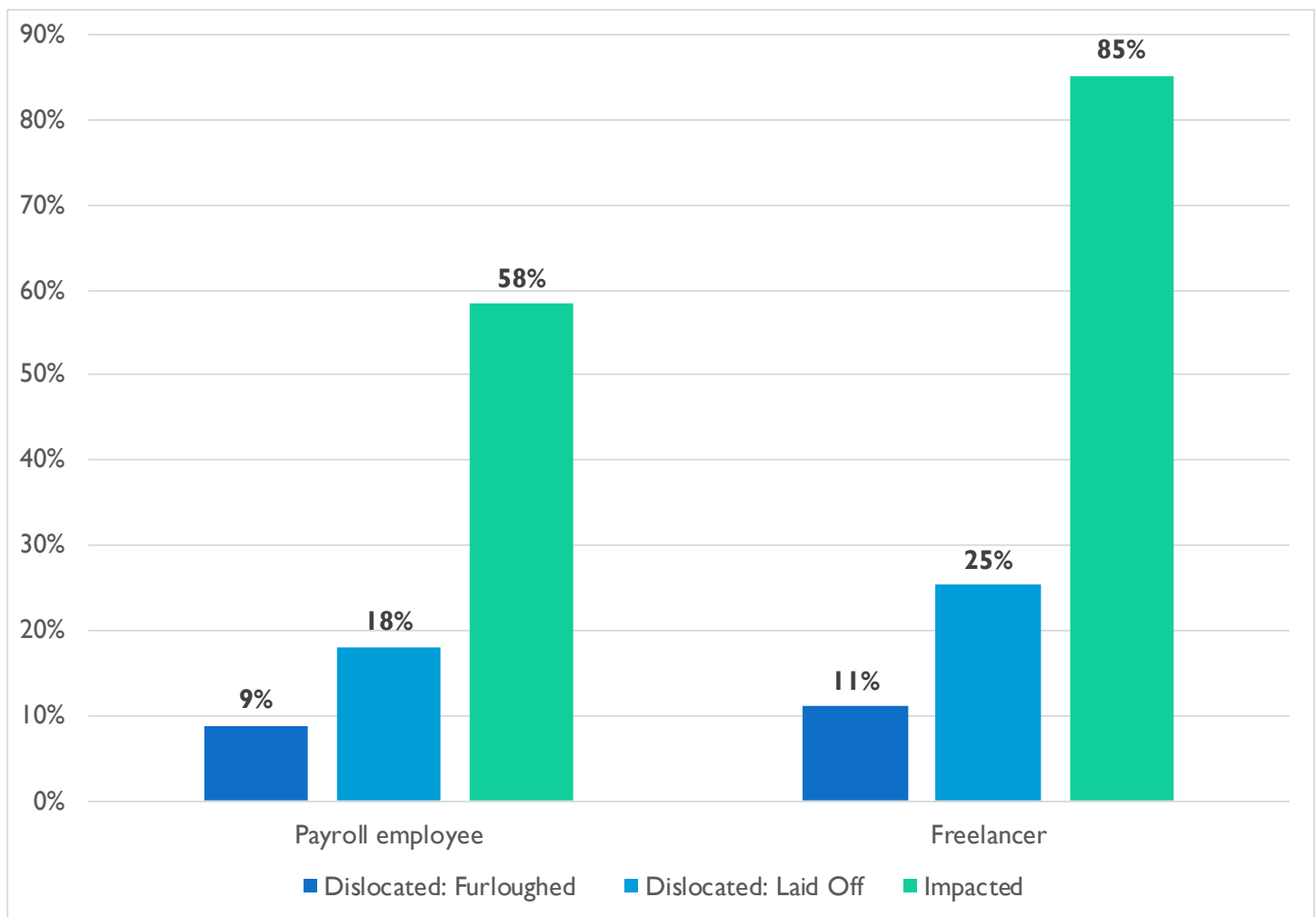
Top Immediate Economic Needs (respondents allowed to select 3)	
White	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mental health counseling (15%) cash assistance or gift cards (13%) providing healthcare or providing assistance in accessing healthcare (9%) legislative lobbying, including for the extension of UI benefits (10%) advocating for workplace safety, including helping with Covid-19 safety procedures at work (9%) applying for unemployment insurance (9%)
Black or African American	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> helping people get digitally connected, incl. assisting parents & students access online classrooms (23%) food assistance, incl. food banks & delivering groceries (18%) assistance with job search, incl. connecting constituents with temporary jobs or maintaining a hiring hall (15%) cash assistance or gift cards (9%) providing computers or tablets for constituents to be able to work remotely (8%) applying for food stamps or Medicaid (8%)
Hispanic or Latinx	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cash assistance or gift cards (16%) applying for food stamps or Medicaid (11%) providing PPE (11%) mental health counseling (10%) applying for unemployment insurance (8%) assistance with job search, including connecting constituents with temporary jobs or maintaining a hiring hall (7%)
Asian, American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cash assistance or gift cards (18%) providing PPE (12%) mental health counseling (10%) applying for food stamps or Medicaid (10%) legislative lobbying, including for the extension of UI benefits (9%)

Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

Freelancers, Gig Workers and Independent Contractors

Freelancers, gig workers, and independent contractors (hereafter grouped together as “freelancers”) were strongly represented among the survey respondents, making up 31 percent of respondents. Freelancers showed higher rates of displacement, with 36 percent reporting they had been furloughed or laid off compared to 27 percent of payroll workers, as well as higher rates of Covid economic impact than payroll workers, with 85 percent responding they had lost a job, hours, or income since the onset of Covid-19 compared to 58 percent of payroll employees (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Rates of dislocation and impacted by loss of hours or pay among Astoria payroll workers and freelancers



Note: Impacted workers includes workers who are dislocated as well as those losing hours or pay. (Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.)

Unemployment Insurance Benefits

Among Astoria Project respondents who had been displaced during Covid, 12 percent of workers who had been furloughed or laid off reported not being able to access unemployment benefits. With the pandemic emphasis on providing unemployment insurance (UI) to workers by the federal government through the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program, it is significant that 12 percent of unemployed workers were able to access unemployment insurance. Among all workers who received unemployment benefits, more than half received UI from New York State (58 percent), with the remaining 42 percent receiving Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.

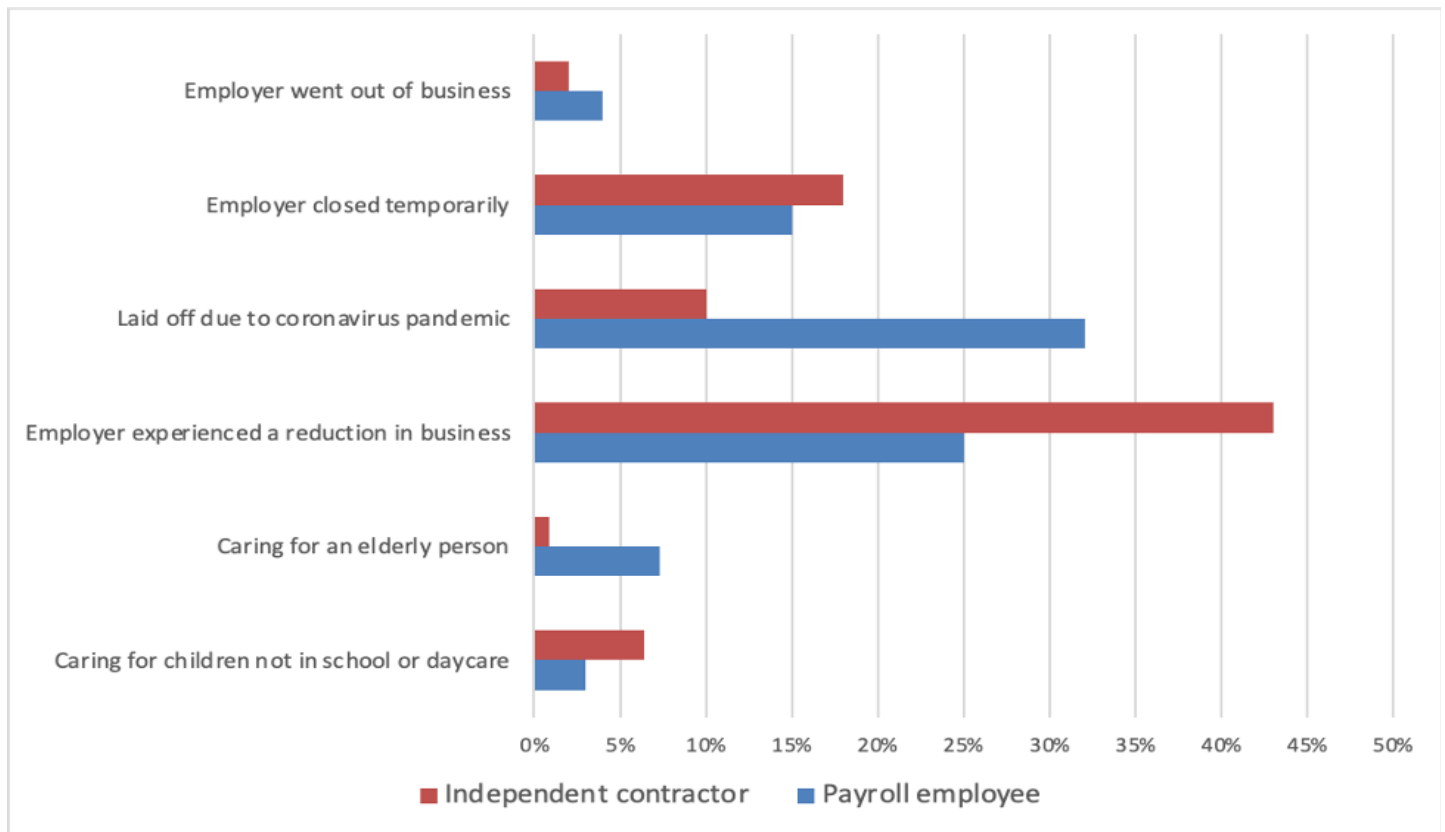
The receipt of New York State unemployment benefits and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance does not always align neatly with a respondent's primary reported job, as either a payroll workers or freelancer. A majority of payroll employees who applied for and received unemployment benefits did so from the New York State unemployment benefits system (58 percent), however the remaining 42 percent of payroll workers reported that they received UI through PUA. Some payroll workers may have been receiving PUA if they did not qualify for regular UI due to insufficient base period earnings or other reasons. Freelancers were more evenly divided, with 49 percent receiving UI through PUA and 51 percent receiving State unemployment benefits. Freelancers who reported receiving New York State UI may also have had earnings as a payroll employee through which they were able to apply for and receive regular UI benefits.

Reasons for not returning to work

Among those workers who had not worked in the past week, when asked about their main reason for not working for pay or profit, payroll and independent contractors expressed similar reasons, including being sick or being concerned about getting sick with coronavirus, because their employer closed temporarily or went out of business entirely. Freelancers and wage workers were roughly equal in their responses that they were not able to work because of needing to care for a family member, including both children and elderly relatives (nine percent of freelancers and 10 percent of wage workers).³

³ While freelancers reported a higher rate of not working because of caring for children while wage workers reported a higher rate of not being able to work because of elder care responsibilities, the two groups did not have different age profiles. Therefore, we considered caring for children and caring for elderly family members as a single "family care" responsibility that had a significant role in preventing both freelancers and wage workers from being able to remain in the workforce.

Figure 12: Main reason for not working for pay or profit during the last week



Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

Work Post-Covid: Returning to the Same Employer or Finding a New Occupation

Workers who were laid off or furloughed during the pandemic will face a host of challenges in returning to work. Those who experienced many weeks of unemployment (more than 26 weeks of unemployment is considered “long-term unemployed” by economists) may be perceived as having lost skills. Some workers will have seen their employer’s business close or even their industries change, especially workers who relied on tourism, which is expected to recover very gradually over the next three to four years. The Astoria Project survey sought to capture workers attitudes about their occupations post-Covid: do they anticipate returning to work with the same business? If not, are they confident they will find a job in the same industry but with a new employer? Or, will they have to look for work in an entirely new sector, either seeking retraining or starting from the bottom as an entry-level worker in a new occupation?

Workers expressed uncertainty about the major occupational shifts that their post-Covid working lives might bring. When asked, if they are out of work now, whether they anticipate returning to work with the same

employer in the future, only 42 percent of dislocated workers anticipated they would return to work with the same employer once Covid business restrictions were lifted or economic activity picked up. However, for those workers who anticipated not being able to return to work with the same employer post-pandemic, many responded that they would not only shift to a new place of employment, but that they also anticipated having to shift occupations.

Workers in some industries reflected relatively high confidence that they would be able to return to the same employer after the pandemic, such as those respondents who worked in government (63 percent). By contrast, respondents who prior to Covid worked in warehousing and retail had high rates of thinking they would have to find work in a new occupation or industry post-pandemic (See Figure 13). Overall, the high response rates of those considering employer and occupational changes should be better understood as an overall uncertainty about the post-Covid work landscape than as predictions about specific industries that will see high rates of turnover.

Figure 13: Anticipating post-pandemic employer and occupational changes

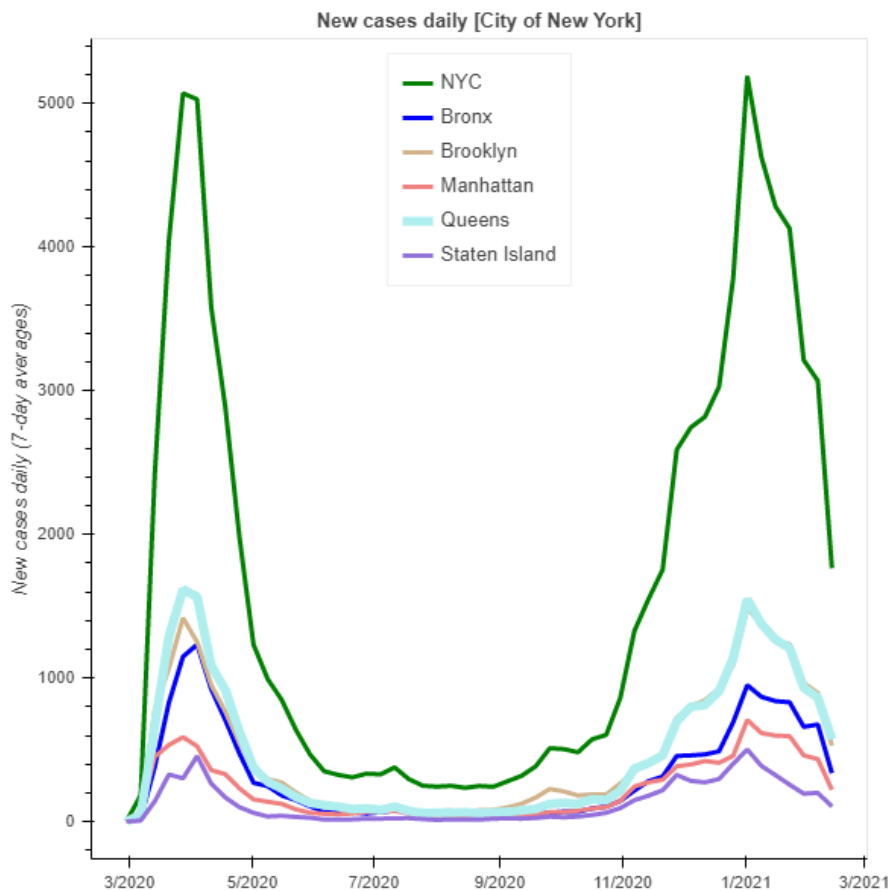
	I am out of work now and I anticipate returning to work with the same employer.	I am out of work now and I anticipate having to find work in a new occupation or industry.
Day Laborers	38%	12%
Construction	31%	0%
Manufacturing	0%	26%
Wholesale Trade	10%	0%
Retail Trade	51%	42%
Transportation & Delivery	72%	5%
Warehousing	35%	65%
Communications	43%	0%
Film & TV Production	31%	5%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	44%	29%
Professional services	24%	19%
Building Services	67%	33%
Educational Services	43%	10%
Health Care	50%	36%
Social Assistance	9%	28%
Arts, Entertainment, & Rec.	41%	10%
Hotels and Hospitality	53%	12%
Food & Beverage Services	58%	21%
Personal Services	56%	29%
Government	63%	26%
Total	42%	21%

Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

SECTION III: Health, Mental Health, Family Well-Being

In March of 2020, New York, led by Queens, saw a rapid and frightening rise in coronavirus cases. The surge of cases in Queens, topping 1,600 new cases per day at the height of the first wave, overwhelmed the borough's hospitals and urgent care facilities.⁴ Cases were most concentrated in areas neighboring Astoria, in central Queens neighborhoods such as Elmhurst and Jackson Heights, with its multi-family and multi-generational households and working-class families whose "essential work" status meant they were exposed to the virus. An early analysis during the first wave by the New York State Department of Health estimated that Latinx people comprised 34 percent of deaths in New York City and that the mortality rate due to Covid among Black and Latinx New Yorkers was double that of White New Yorkers.⁵ The multi-ethnic, multi-racial borough of Queens saw higher daily new case rates in both the first and second surge than any other borough (See Figure 14).

Figure 14: Queens led New York City in New Daily Coronavirus Cases during both Surges



Source: New York Times Data Repository of Coronavirus Cases. <https://github.com/nytimes/covid-19-data>

4 Shalini Ramachandran, Joe Palazzolo, Melanie Grayce West and Melanie Evans. Coronavirus Cases Strain New York City Hospitals: 'We're Getting Pounded'. The Wall Street Journal. March 20, 2020. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/coronavirus-cases-strain-new-york-city-hospitals-were-getting-pounded-11584719908>

5 New York State Department of Health Covid-19 Tracker. <https://covid19tracker.health.ny.gov/views/NYS-COVID19-Tracker/NYSDOHCOVID-19Tracker-Map?%3Aembed=yes&%3Atoolbar=no&%3Atabs=n>.

See also: Annie Correal and Andrew Jacobs, "A Tragedy is Unfolding": Inside New York City's Virus Epicenter," The New York Times, April 9, 2020; Jeffrey C. Mays and Andy Newman, "Virus is Twice as Deadly for Black and Latino People than Whites in NYC," The New York Times, April 8, 2020, updated June 26, 2020.

Across New York City in response to the State's lockdown order issued March 20, 2020, schools closed, restaurants, non-essential stores and other businesses shut down, and businesses that could sent workers home to set up desks and monitors on kitchen tables and in living rooms. Families suddenly saw their college-age children returning, sharing increasingly crowded space with Zoom work calls and children's online classes. The State's antiquated unemployment insurance system collapsed in the days following the city's lockdown and monumental processing delays continued for weeks, unable to keep up with the onslaught of new claims.⁶

The Astoria Project uses an in-depth survey of one neighborhood to illuminate the citywide health and economic consequences of Covid in the months that followed the pandemic's onset, as residents lost jobs and filed for unemployment insurance, sought new sources of income, and coped with a changing job market. Large swathes of traditional entry-level occupations – in retail, hotels and restaurants—disappeared. The arts industry saw catastrophic job losses as theaters and music venues closed and museums were shuttered for months before opening to limited capacity.⁷ Tourism plummeted⁸ as did the economic activity around Midtown office buildings.⁹ Against this backdrop of economic suffering and uncertainty, New Yorkers grappled with an often overwhelming range of challenges at home, dealing with sickness, death, and fear of disease, while juggling working from home, providing family care, and overseeing remote learning.

At home, New Yorkers isolated themselves in response to public health concerns and mandates. In America's densest city, they coped with the anxiety of getting Covid from neighbors, friends, classmates—the very personal and social networks that traditionally provide support in times of economic stress. Especially in the first months when residents of Queens weathered an outbreak among the severest the country saw throughout the pandemic. Many did so while uncertain whether they could make rent, afford food,¹⁰ or safely take public transit to work.

In this section, we examine the craters the pandemic has left in the health, mental health, and well-being of Astoria residents. The social repercussions of this year of personal hardship for many individuals and families will no doubt reverberate long beyond the gradual process of reopening in the coming months. This report scrutinizes the fissures in New York's social safety systems as revealed by respondents who faced challenges accessing health care, the digital divide separating children who could easily access classes from home from those who had to share laptops or had weak broadband, who grappled with unmet basic needs in securing food and housing. Understanding the personal and social repercussions of Covid will be crucial for rebuilding a more just and more equitable New York after the city, the economy, and New Yorkers emerge from life during the pandemic.

6 Clayton Guse, "New York's unemployment system overwhelmed as coronavirus pandemic shuts businesses across the state," New York Daily News, March 16, 2020. <https://www.nydailynews.com/coronavirus/ny-coronavirus-state-unemployment-website-crashes-20200316-ccc6fqalgrf3ree3o5zvi54ite-story.html>

7 "There is no support system": Art Handlers, the invisible muscle of the multi-billion dollar art industry, face an uncertain future as work vanishes. April 13, 2020. <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/art-handlers-lockdown-1807263>. Richard Florida and Michael Seman, "Lost Art: Measuring Covid-19's devastating impact on America's creative economy," August 11, 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/lost-art-measuring-covid-19s-devastating-impact-on-americas-creative-economy/>

8 Patrick McGeehan, "Tourism, Engine for N.Y.C. Economy, May Not Fully Recover Until 2025," NYTimes, November 16, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/nyregion/nyc-tourism-covid.html>

9 James Parrott, "Five industries with job declines in NYC much greater than nationally," CNYCA Economic Update, Sept. 17, 2020. <http://www.centernyc.org/reports-briefs/2020/9/17/cnycas-covid-19-economic-update>

10 United States Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey Data Tables, "Food Sufficiency and Security Tables," <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2021/demo/hhp/hhp26.html>

Family experience of Covid-19

Overall, 35 percent of Astoria respondents said their family had experienced Covid-related health issues. Of those, a third had been diagnosed with Covid themselves and 85 percent had a close family member diagnosed with Covid. Additionally, of those who had immediate or family experience with Covid, nearly 40 percent of respondents had a family member who had been hospitalized for Covid-19. While the majority of those who reported having tested positive for Covid said they had recovered, nearly a third were experiencing ongoing health effects from the disease. The lingering disease effects are particularly concerning for those not currently working, of which less than a quarter estimated that their insurance through a former employer would continue to cover them through the next six months (23 percent). Concerns about Covid and strategies for avoiding exposure have a wide array of potential spillover effects as 43 percent of respondents reported having delayed getting medical care in the previous four weeks because of the pandemic.

The survey reveals widespread exposure, sickness, and suffering from the pandemic. When analyzed by racial and ethnic groups as well as income levels, the health and personal challenges for some groups become even more pronounced. Family exposure to Covid showed a pronounced skew by income level, with families with household incomes less than \$35,000 more than twice as likely to have a recorded case of Covid than families with households of \$100,000+ (See Figure 15). Latinx households were the most likely to have positive Covid cases, with 44 percent of respondents indicating that either they or a family member had become sick with coronavirus (See Figure 16).

Figure 15: Family experience of a Covid-19 case in the household-by-household income level

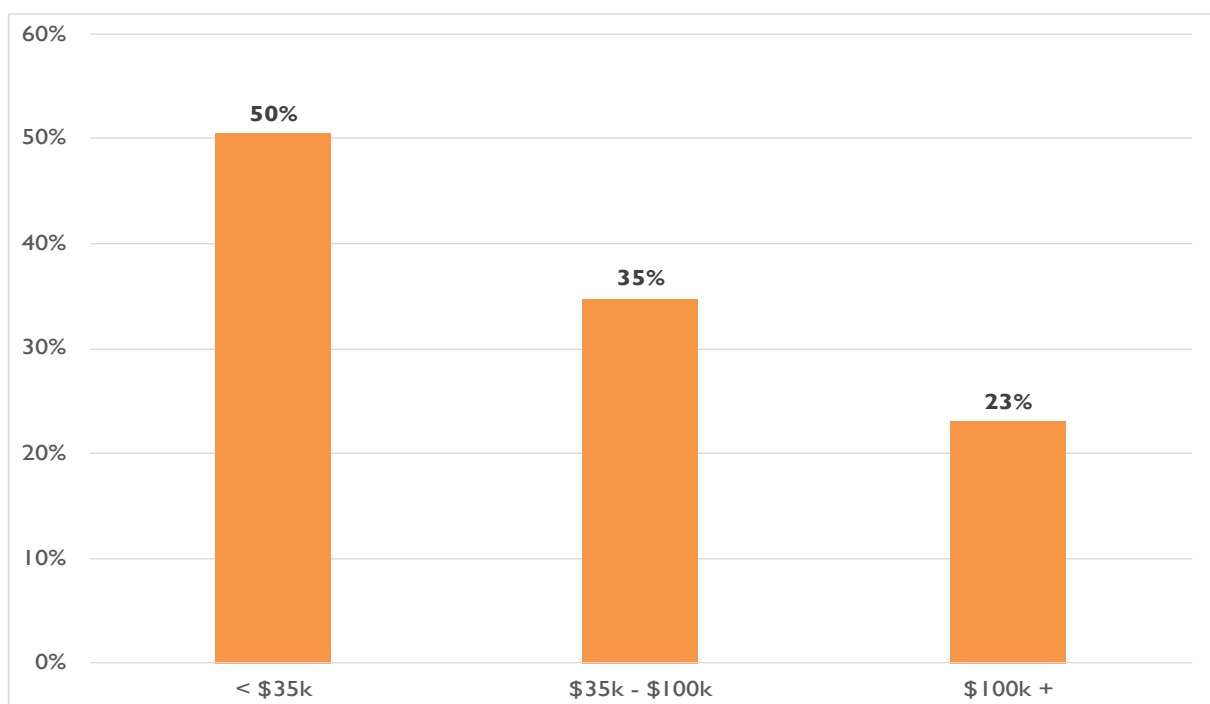
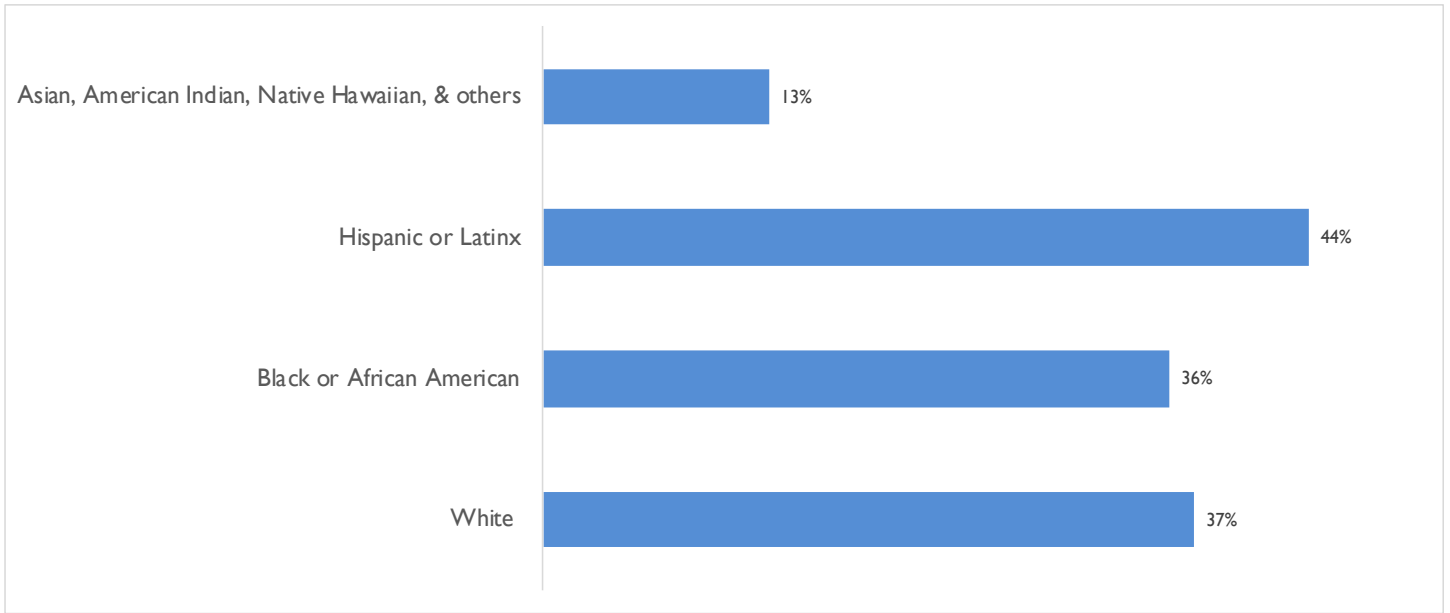


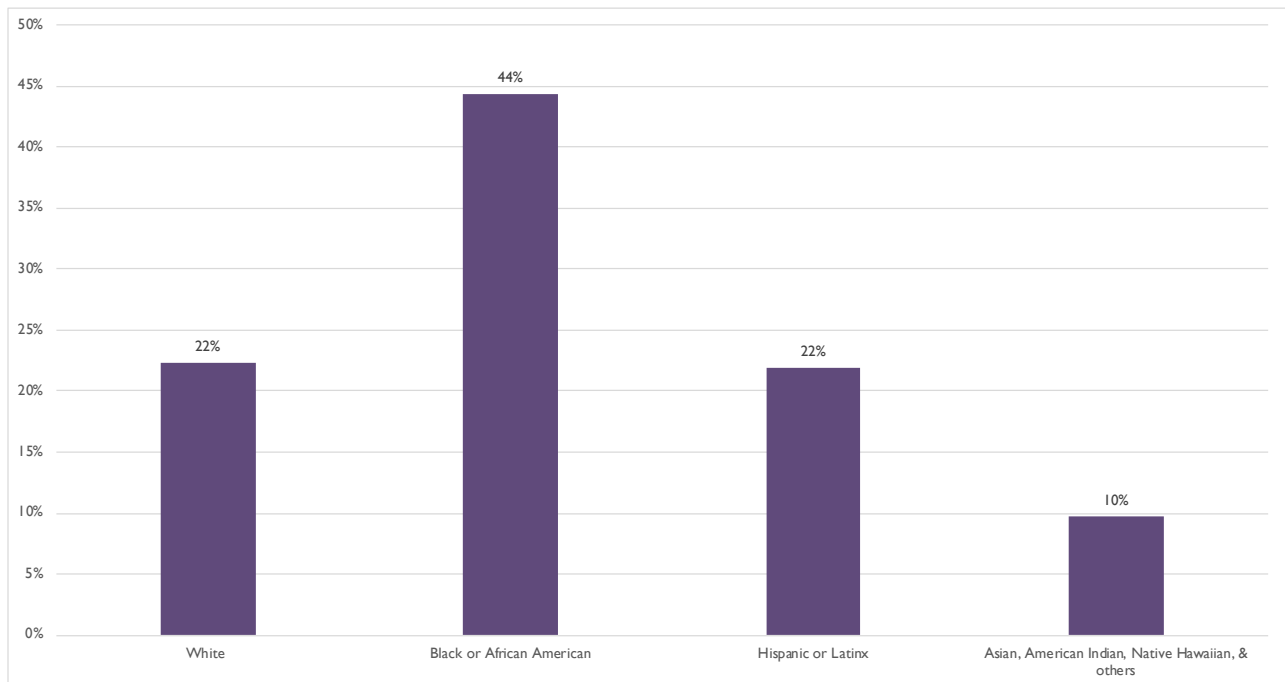
Figure 16: More than forty percent of Hispanic or Latinx families report experience of Covid-19



Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

Black respondents were also disproportionately more likely to report they or a family member had been hospitalized for Covid (See Figure 17).

Figure 17: Likelihood of those with family experience of Covid-19 to have been hospitalized or had a close family member hospitalized for Covid-19



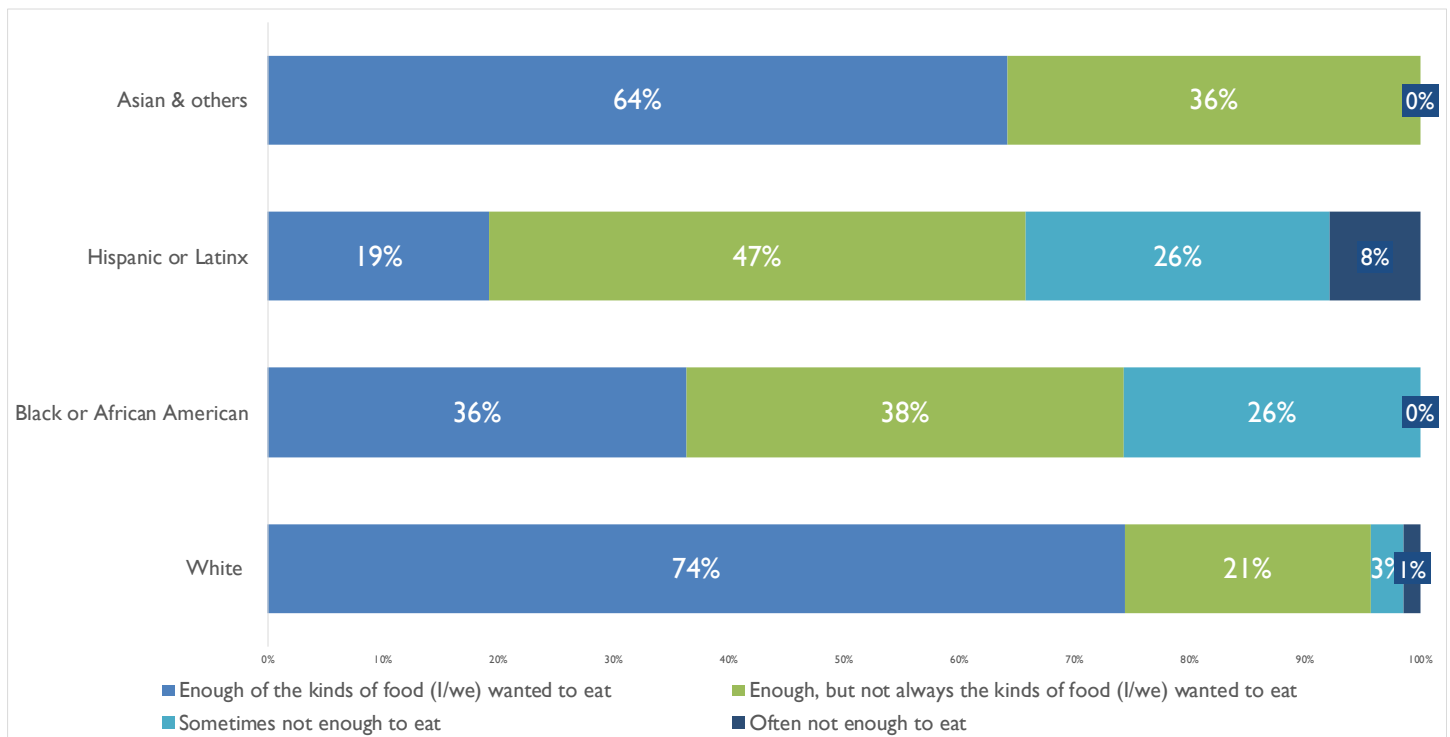
Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

Seeking care for Covid-19 may have also been influenced by having health insurance, however the proportion of Astoria residents lacking healthcare was low, at three percent overall (two percent for White, six percent for Latinx, and 10 percent for Black respondents). Overall, one-third of respondents relied on Medicaid or another government-assistance plan for those with low income or a disability (23 percent of White, 22 percent of Asian, 53 percent of Latinx, and 58 percent of Black respondents), while overall 43 percent had insurance through an employer, union, either through their own employment or membership or a family member's (61 percent of Asian, 48 percent of White, 27 percent Latinx, and 23 percent Black). However, of those currently with insurance but out of work, almost another quarter said that employer-provided insurance would end in the next six months (23 percent); among those whose employment was affected by Covid, that rate rose to 30 percent.

Food Security

Food security is a concerning issue among all the surveyed Astoria residents, with only just over half of all respondents affirming that they have enough of the kinds of foods they want to eat (56 percent). The remaining 44 percent answered that they either had enough food, but not the kinds of food they prefer to eat, only sometimes had enough food, or often did not have enough to eat. Of all Astoria respondents, White respondents were four times as likely to report having enough of the household's preferred food in the past month as Latinx households (19 percent).

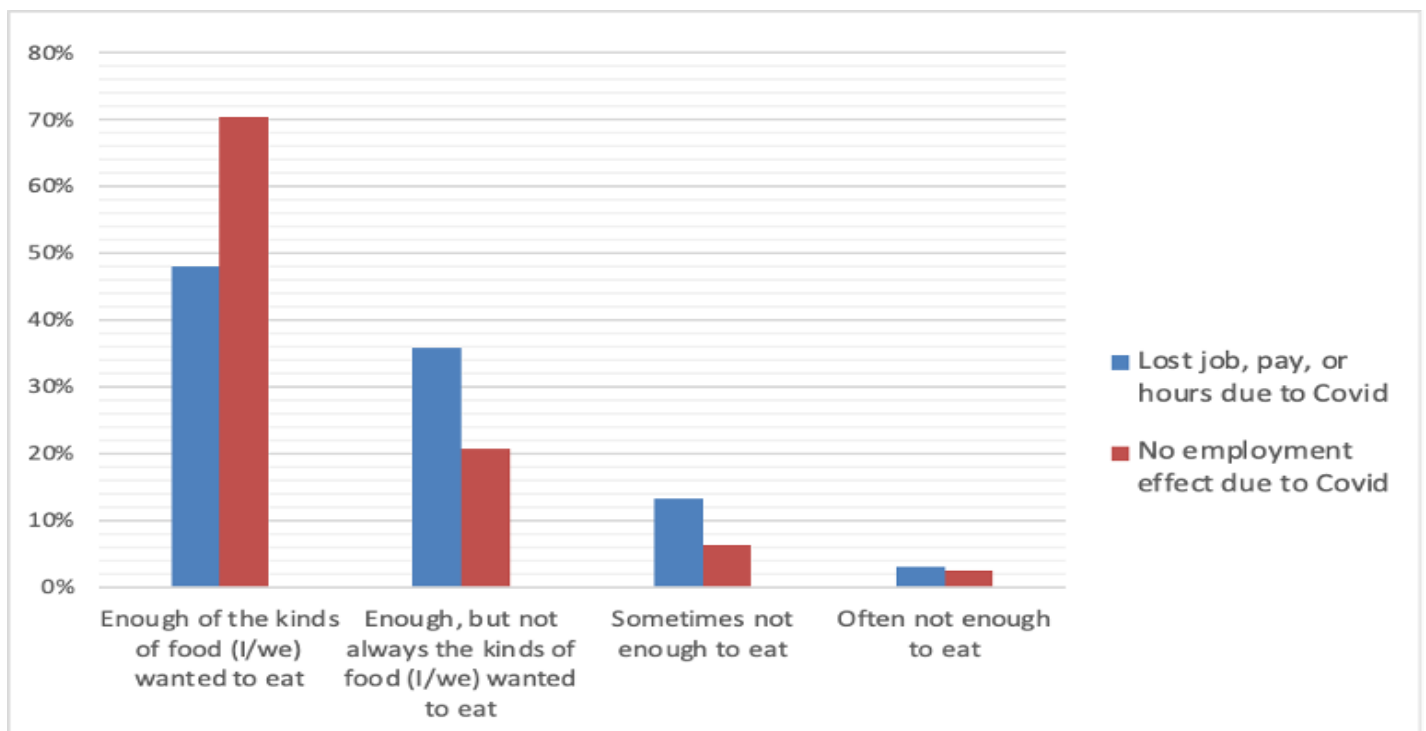
Figure 18: Astoria Respondents' Food Security in the past month



Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

Food insecurity was heightened among those workers who experienced employment loss during the pandemic. Among workers who had lost a job, pay, or hours due to the coronavirus, 52 percent did not have enough of their household’s preferred food to eat (compared to 30 percent of workers who had not experienced employment loss during Covid) and 16 percent either sometimes or often did not have enough to eat, almost double the nine percent of respondents whose work was not impacted by Covid (See Figure 19). Additionally, compared to respondents whose work was not affected by Covid, respondents who had lost work during the pandemic were four and a half times as likely (27 percent versus six percent) to answer that this statement was either often true or sometimes true: “The children were not eating enough because we just couldn’t afford enough food.”

Figure 19: Respondents who lost work during Covid less likely to have household food needs met in the past month



Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

Food insecurity was higher among workers dislocated during Covid (52 percent versus 30 percent among those not dislocated). Respondents who lost work during Covid were also more than three times as likely as their Astoria counterparts who did not lose work to seek out free meals or groceries through the public school (18 percent versus five percent), community programs (10 percent versus zero percent), as well as from family, friends, or neighbors (31 percent versus zero percent). By contrast, those who had not lost work during Covid were more likely to have sought out free groceries or meals from food pantries (23 percent of dislocated workers versus 41 percent of non-dislocated workers) or home-delivered meal services (four percent dislocated workers versus 15 percent of non-dislocated workers). This suggests that food insecurity is widespread regardless of Covid employment effects, and that individuals who did not lose work during Covid, but nevertheless had food needs had been and continued to seek out support through institutional structures

like food pantries, food banks, and meal delivery services. Nearly 30 percent of Astoria respondents, regardless of whether they lost work during the pandemic, lived in households with yearly incomes at or below \$25,000 (see Section I, Figure 1 for Astoria average wage and earnings distribution). The meals and groceries sought by workers who lost work during Covid were more likely to be from ad-hoc programs set up during public school closures (free meals were distributed by schools even though they were closed) or from informal networks of family and friends (See Figure 20).

Figure 20: Food insecure dislocated workers rely on informal networks of family, friends, and neighbors for free meals and groceries

	Workers dislocated by Covid	Workers whose employment was not affected by Covid
Free meals through the school or other programs aimed at children	18%	5%
Food pantry or food bank	23%	41%
Home-delivered meal service like Meals on Wheels	4%	15%
Church, synagogue, temple, mosque or other religious organization	13%	39%
Shelter or soup kitchen	1%	0%
Other community program	10%	0%
Family, friends, or neighbors	31%	0%

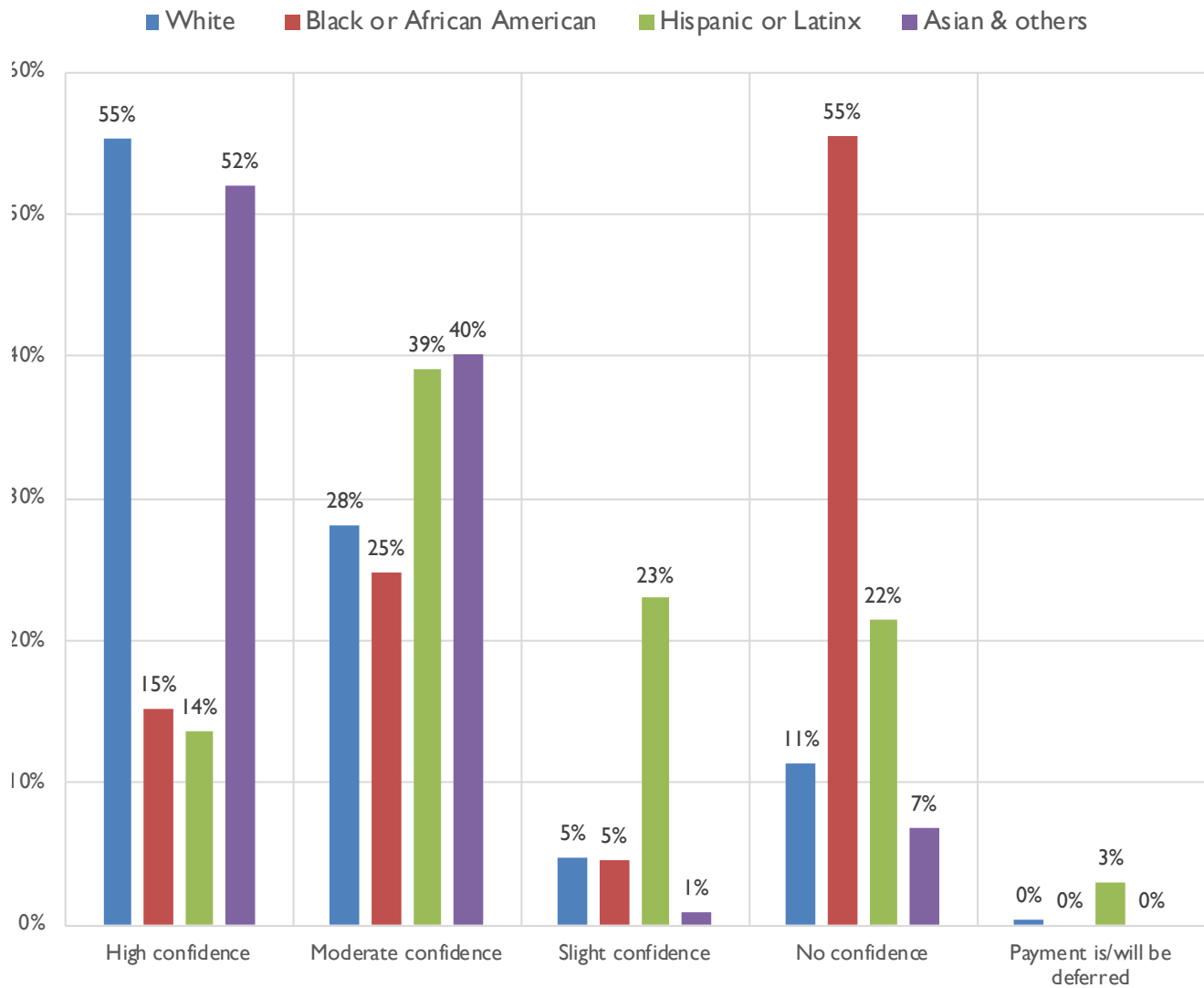
Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

Housing Security

Housing costs, already a large share of a typical New Yorker’s budget, became even more burdensome during Covid for workers who were dislocated during the pandemic. Of all Astoria respondents, 21 percent replied that they had no or only slight confidence that they would be able to pay their next rent or mortgage payment on time. This portion increased to 26 percent when only considering workers dislocated during Covid.

Of those dislocated workers, concerns about being able to make the next rent or mortgage payment were highest among Black and Latinx respondents, with 60 percent of Black respondents and 45 percent of Latinx respondents expressing no or slight confidence they would be able to make their next payment. Surprisingly, only a tiny number of respondents (three percent) reported that their rent or mortgage payments were or would be deferred (See Figure 21). Even when considering only workers dislocated by Covid, workers of color are more than twice as likely to express concerns about making their rent or mortgage payments as White dislocated workers (36 percent versus 16 percent).

Figure 21: Black and Latinx workers dislocated during Covid-19 express higher rates of concern about being able to make their next rent or mortgage payment



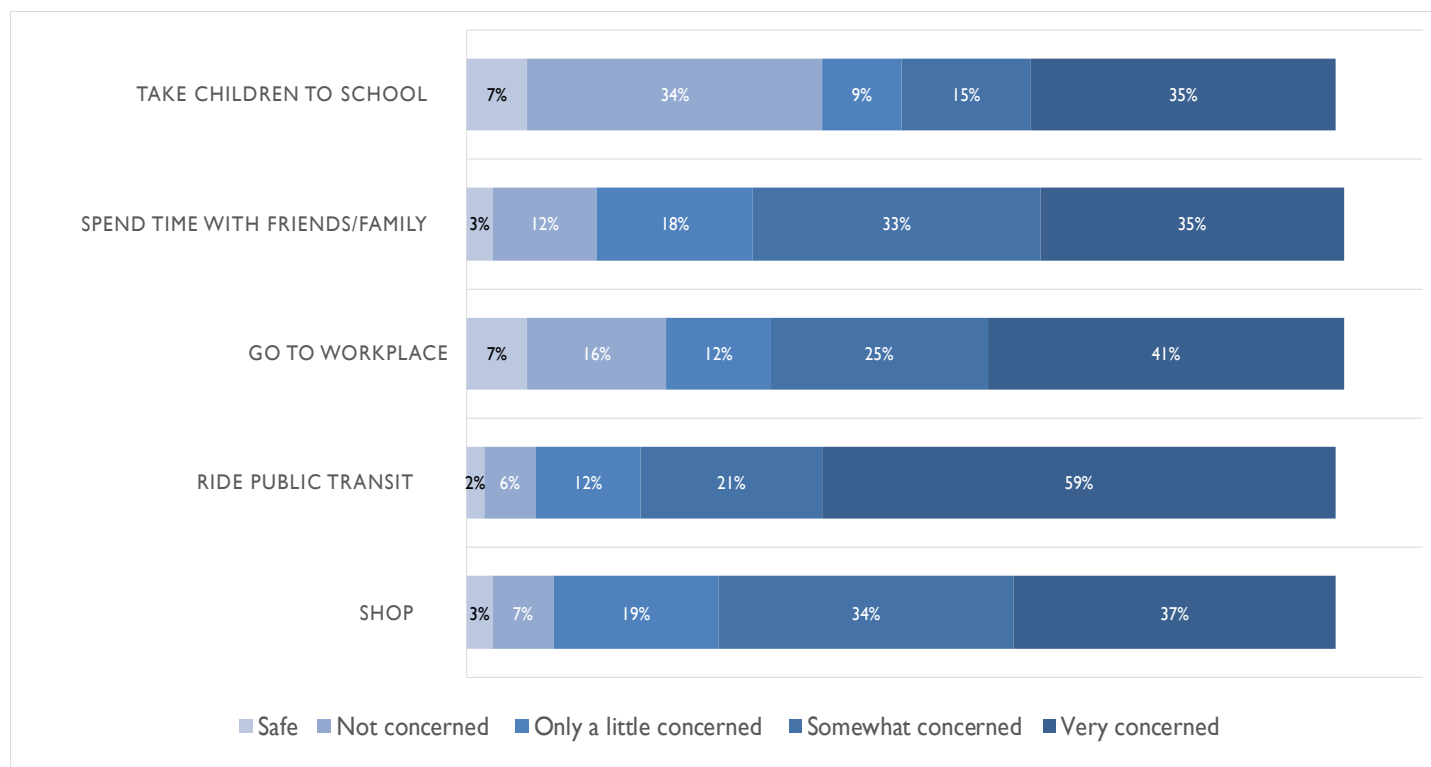
Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

Black respondents were dramatically more likely to have no confidence in their ability to make the next month’s rent or mortgage payment; they responded in this fashion at more than twice the rate of Latinx respondents and five times that of White respondents. These are workers who report being dislocated during the pandemic. However, housing insecurity is likely also related to household income and wealth prior to the pandemic. According to the 2019 American Community Survey, Black residents of Astoria also had the lowest household earnings among all racial categories prior to Covid, of \$26,500, just over half the median income of White Astoria residents (Figure 2).

SECTION IV: Covid-19 Impacts on Daily Life, Activities, Children, and Vaccine Attitudes

With the increasing rollout of multiple vaccines as well as updated CDC guidelines for school openings, anxieties and perceived risk of daily activities continue to change. Perceptions of safety and anxiety around routine and daily activities remain high. At the close of the survey in February 2021, Astoria residents reported highest concerns around riding public transit (nearly six in 10 respondents said they were “very concerned” to take the subway or bus) and going to the workplace (four in 10 respondents said it made them very concerned). However, other activities also sparked high levels of anxiety, including taking children to school, spending time with friends and family, and going shopping (See Figure 22).

Figure 22: Astoria respondents report highest anxiety activity is riding public transit



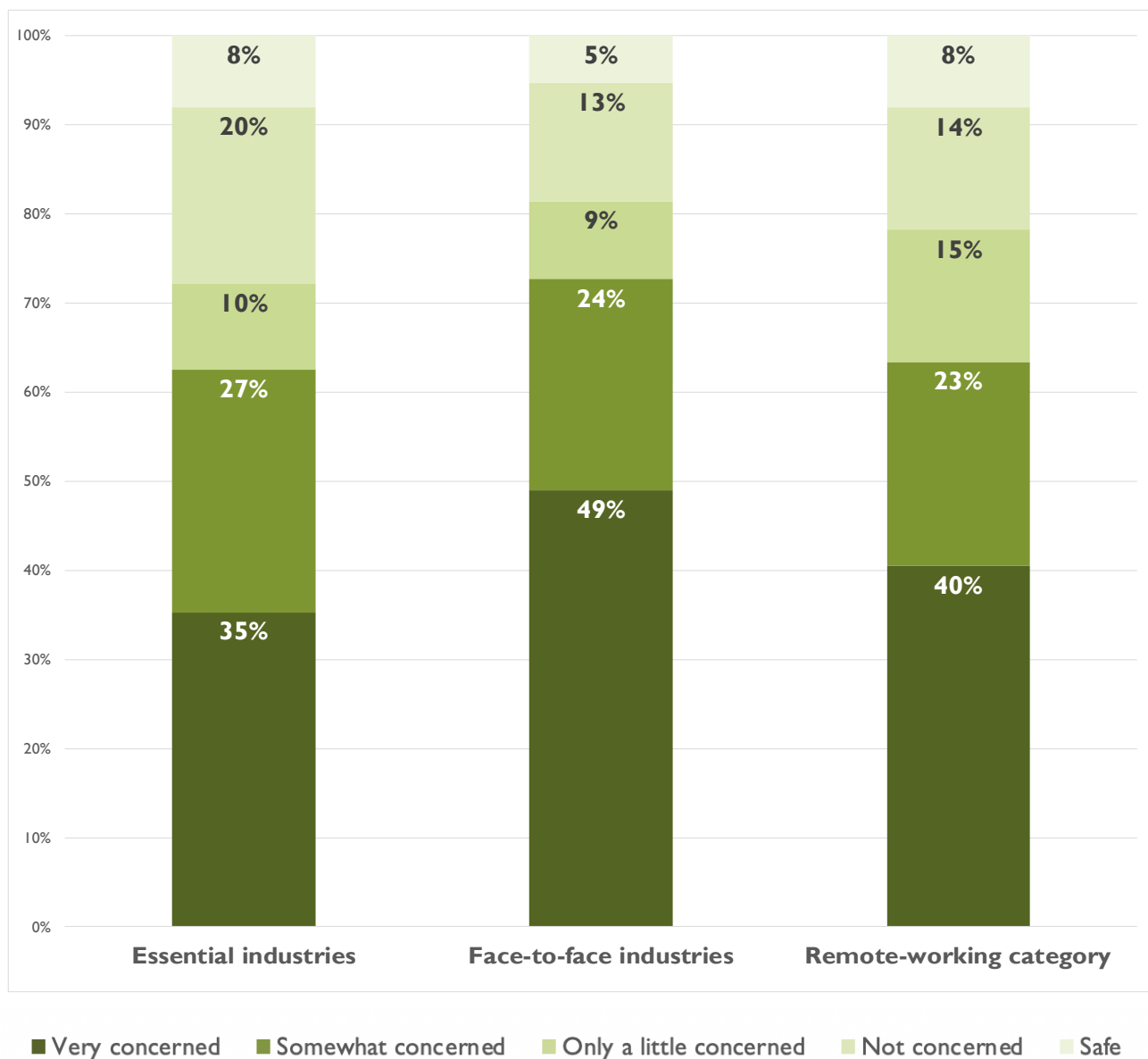
Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

Focusing on fears related to going to the workplace revealed disparities among different occupations and industries. Concerns related to going to the workplace, an activity only required by occupations that did not or could not be transformed into remote work during the pandemic, varied dramatically by occupation. When grouped by occupational category, workers in face-to-face industries showed the greatest concern about the risk of working on site, with nearly half saying they were “very concerned” about going to work compared to 35 percent of workers in essential industries and 40 percent of workers in remote work categories (See Figure

23). Similarly, only 18 percent of workers in face-to-face industries feel “safe” or “not concerned” about going to the workplace, compared to 28 percent of workers in essential industries and 22 percent of workers in remote categories.

Because the survey unfortunately did not distinguish between respondents who were working on site and commuting from those who were allowed to work from home, the expressions of concern about being unsafe while going to a workplace could include both the lived experience of workers forced to continue to work on-site throughout the pandemic as well as the perceived threat of disease by those workers who were encouraged or could choose to work remotely.

Figure 23: Concerns about going to the workplace, ranked by “very concerned”

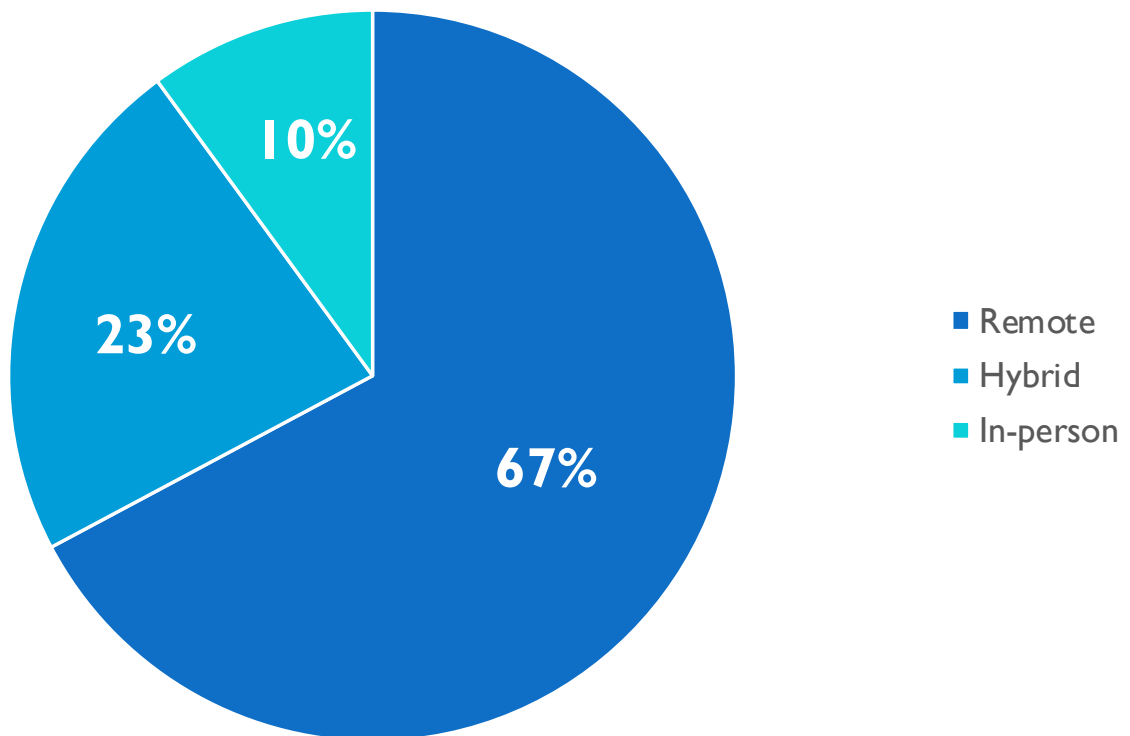


Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

Housing Security

Parents and caregivers have faced momentous challenges over the past year in adapting to working from home while caring for children who were learning remotely for much of the pandemic. Homes have been turned into ad-hoc workspaces, schoolrooms, and exercise areas. Parents have become teachers, supervisors, coaches, and digital technology troubleshooters, while having to provide deep levels of emotional support for children cut off from their peers. More than two-thirds of Astoria respondents reported their children were learning entirely remotely, with another quarter having a hybrid remote and in-person schedule, so that, together, 90 percent of respondents were overseeing some remote learning of their children.

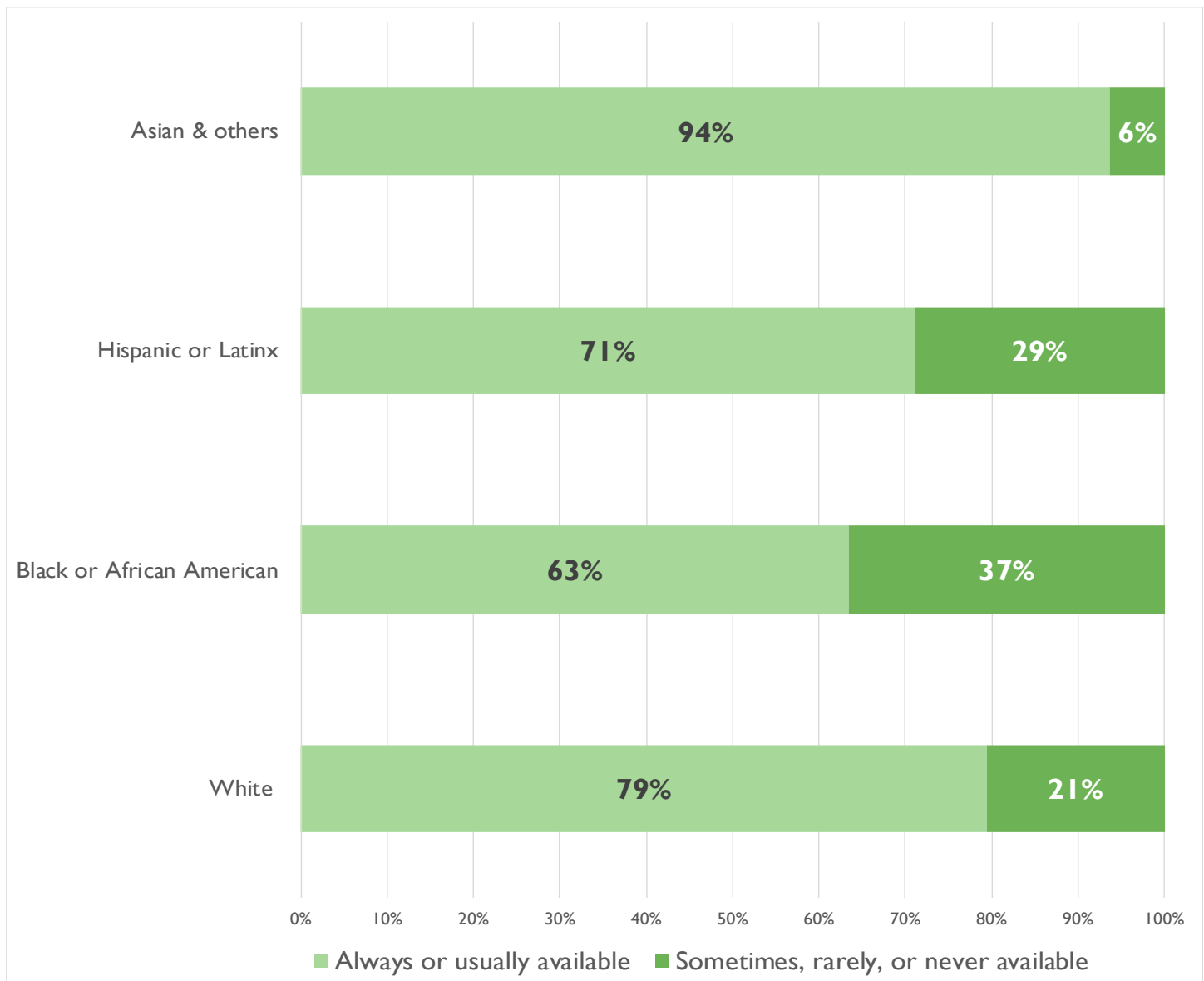
Figure 24: Learning schedules for school-age children



Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

Many parents reported difficulties consistently providing a computer to their children so they could access their online classrooms. Only two-thirds of all parents said they could always provide a computer to their child for online learning. Nearly four in 10 Black parents said a device was usually but not always available, while 15 percent of Latinx parents said a computer was sometimes, rarely, or never available for their child's online learning. Alongside the challenge of providing a computer, laptop or tablet for online learning, having access to reliable high-speed internet was difficult for many families. Black and Latinx families, in particular, reported high rates of not always or usually having high-speed internet for online learning (37 percent and 29 percent). See Figure 25.

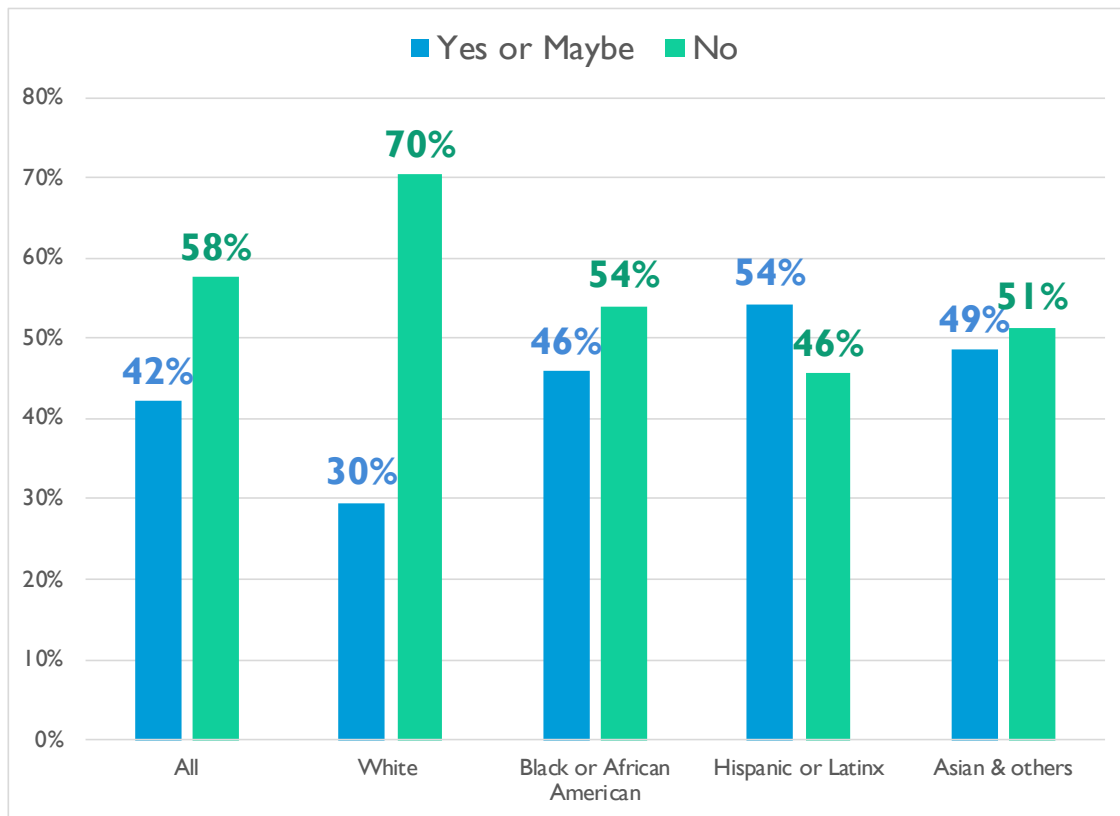
Figure 25: High-speed internet available in the household for online learning



Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

Workers of color reported particularly high rates of concern about leaving the workforce to stay home to care for their children. While this may change given plans to reopen in-person learning in New York City public schools, many of these workers may have already left the workforce and will have to be reconnected to work (See Figure 26). While 12 percent of White workers said that an adult in their household felt it was necessary to quit work to stay home to care for children, 16 percent of Black respondents, 27 percent of Latinx respondents, and 36 percent of Asian respondents felt it was necessary. When combined with those who felt it was “maybe” necessary, nearly half of respondents of color said an adult in their household felt it was definitely or maybe necessary to leave the workforce. Whether these adults did in fact leave the workforce, the high number of those who were considering it underscores the staggering strain households were put under to oversee learning at home, the lack of social support for parents during the pandemic, and the momentous challenge the city may face in reconnecting these parents to the workforce.

Figure 26: Does an adult feel it is necessary to quit work to stay home to care for children who will be home-schooled or learning remotely?



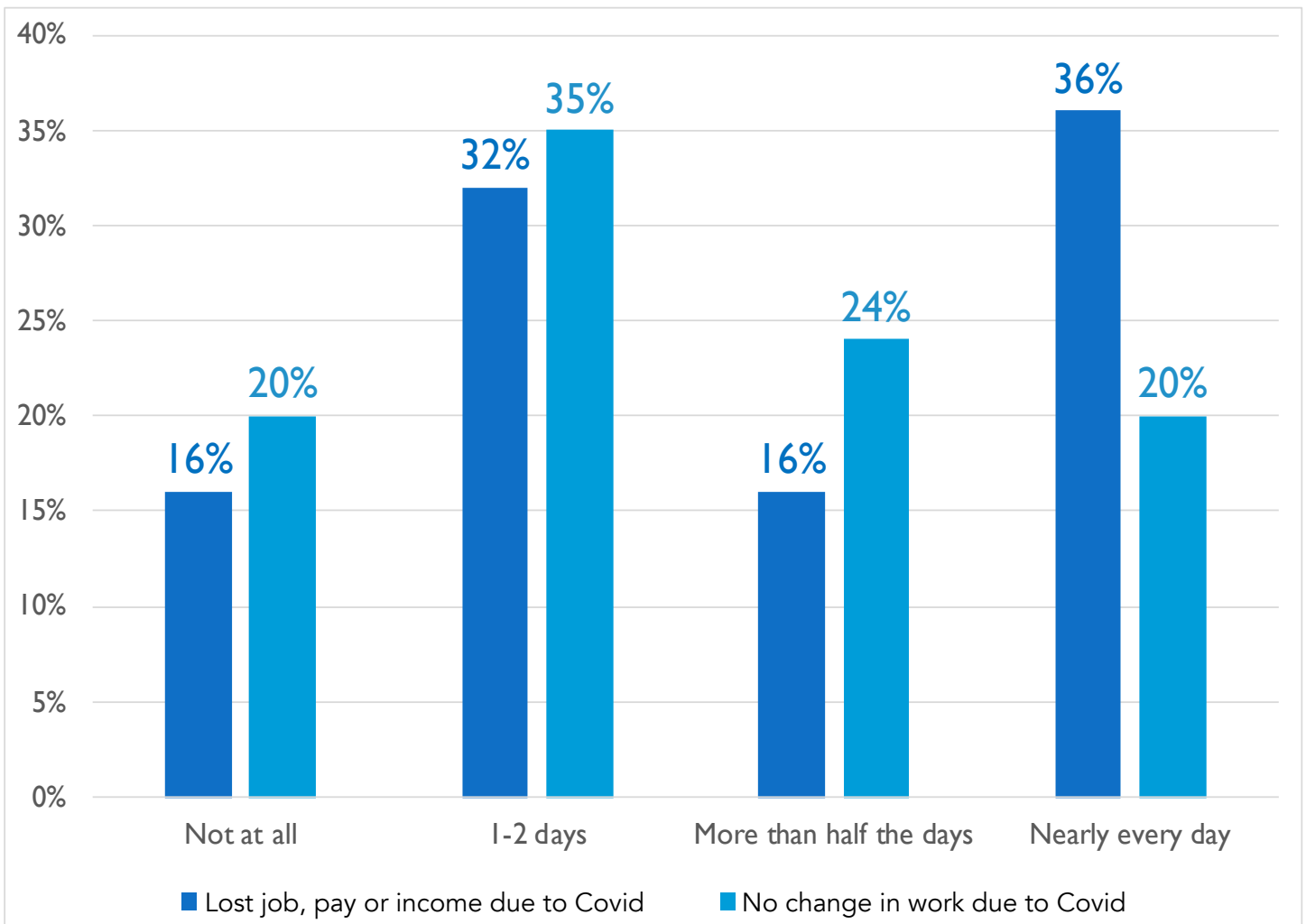
Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

Mental Health

The turmoil of the initial shutdown followed by the long months of uncertainty, waves of disease, and disruption of school, work, and play have taken a toll on the emotional and mental health of New Yorkers, as well as their economic well-being. At the same time parents have faced unprecedented demands on their energy, attention, and patience with overseeing home learning, adults report that their own mental health reflects the twinned health and economic catastrophes of the past year. Astoria respondents whose work lives were affected by Covid were more than 1.5 times as likely to report feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge nearly every day (36 percent versus 20 percent of respondents whose work was not affected by the pandemic). More than three-quarters of dislocated workers said they felt anxious at least one to two days a week, with 52 percent of dislocated workers saying they felt anxious more than half the time.

Dislocated workers also reported higher rates of feeling down, depressed, or hopeless, with more than a quarter saying they felt so nearly every day as opposed to 10 percent of respondents whose work, pay, and hours were not negatively affected by the pandemic.

Figure 27: Covid impacted Astoria workers report higher rates of feeling nervous, anxious or on edge in the past week



Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

Vaccine attitudes

Vaccine hesitancy is not a one-dimensional issue and the reluctance expressed by some Astoria residents reflects the need to find ways to make vaccine easily accessible, to create channels for the flow of information to come through trusted sources, and to clarify the low risk and high benefits of vaccination.

With the vaccine becoming more widely available in New York, vaccine attitudes have the potential to dramatically affect how swiftly public and shared spaces are reopened as well as how safe people feel resuming activities in shared and crowded spaces. Among the Astoria respondents, there was broad openness to receiving a vaccine if offered: 61 percent said they would attempt to get a vaccine once it was publicly available, 32 percent said it depended on how safe they perceived the vaccine to be, and only seven percent said they would not attempt to get a vaccine even if it were made available to them. These opinions did not differ among groups that had experienced employment dislocation of a lost job, hours, or pay (60 percent of workers who had experienced work dislocation and 61 percent of all workers were ready to get a vaccine). Some respondent groups expressed greater skepticism about the vaccine and, at the close of the survey in February 2021, roughly one-third of Black, Asian, and Native respondents and over half of Hispanic respondents were confident they would try to get a vaccine once it was available to them (Figure 28). Almost half of Black and Asian respondents said that their openness to getting a vaccine depended on how safe they perceive the vaccine to be.

Figure 28: Vaccine Openness among Astoria Survey respondents

	When there is a vaccine publicly available, will you attempt to get one?		
	Yes	No	Depends on how safe I perceive the vaccine to be
White	72%	2%	25%
Black or African American	31%	22%	47%
Hispanic or Latinx	57%	13%	29%
Asian, American Indian, Native Hawaiian, & others	38%	6%	56%
Total	61%	7%	32%

Source: CNYCA-CWE Astoria Project Survey, Jan.-Feb. 2021.

CONCLUSION

The Astoria project survey brings together economic findings, reflections of health and mental health, and perceptions of risk around daily activities. With responses drawn from an evolving working-class neighborhood that is not among the very poorest, the Astoria Project survey shows how broadly the economic impact has been felt in New York City. From professional salaried employees to low-income gig workers, and from those employed as day laborers and in manufacturing to Astoria residents in government and health care, the pandemic has taken a toll on the economic, health, and psychological well-being of New Yorkers from all races and ethnicities and across the income spectrum.

Economic impacts were widespread and the post-pandemic jobs landscape remains uncertain for many workers. One-third of Astoria respondents were furloughed or laid off (32 percent), with only 38 percent of dislocated workers having returned to work either fulltime or parttime. Despite unprecedented Federal stimulus and the extension of unemployment benefits to freelancers, 12 percent of Astoria workers were still unable to access unemployment insurance. Moreover, half of dislocated workers think that they will not be able to return to the same employer post-pandemic and 20 percent think they will have to shift to a new occupation, which together will create enormous workforce uncertainty in the post-pandemic economy. With more than 580,000 deaths across the U.S., and unemployment claims reaching numbers not seen since the Great Recession, the psychological disruption of the disease will likely be long-lasting. Jobless workers report high uncertainty about the longevity of their health insurance and what kinds of jobs might await them after the pandemic recedes. More than a third of Astoria respondents reported feeling anxious nearly every day (35 percent) and families report having contemplating major shifts to their working lives to adapt to pandemic home care needs. More than four in 10 parents report that they have or are considering having one adult in their household leave the workforce to care for family members at home (42 percent).

Even though the Astoria Project illuminates the broad impact of Covid, the survey also reveals how those most marginal, especially low-income communities and residents of color, have been hardest hit, reporting high levels of anxiety, food and housing insecurity, and concerns about not being able to guarantee the technological and internet needs for school age children learning from home.

By bringing together data on the familial, social, and economic repercussions of Covid, the Astoria Project offers a rich portrait of the struggles and challenges New Yorkers have faced in the past year. The Astoria Project also showcases the deep economic, food, and housing insecurity that plagued even a middle-income neighborhood. Furthermore, it outlines the daunting and multi-dimensional challenges the city will face in reemerging and rebuilding following this twinned economic and health catastrophe. By addressing the linked economic and social needs of New Yorkers made so clear during the pandemic, the city has the opportunity after Covid-19 to rebuild as a more inclusive and equitable place for living, working, and thriving.

APPENDIX I: New York City Job Loss

Appendix Figure 1: As of March, New York City was still down 585,000 payroll jobs since last February, having regained only 37 percent of job losses

	2020		2021		Jan.21-	Feb.21-	Feb.20-	Feb.20-	Apr.-	%
	FEB	2021 FEB	MAR	Feb.21	Mar.21	Mar.21	Mar.21	Feb-Apr.	Mar.	regained
All Industries	4,675.0	4,049.9	4,090.0	47.5	40.1	-585.0	-12.5%	-926.5	341.5	37%
Total Private	4,083.9	3,467.2	3,503.2	42.6	36.0	-580.7	-14.2%	-921.3	340.6	37%
Essential Industry category	1,428.7	1,387.4	1,395.3	18.2	7.9	-33.4	-2.3%	-118.7	85.3	72%
Utilities	15.1	14.5	14.3	0.0	-0.2	-0.8	-5.3%	-0.2	-0.6	-300%
Health Care	600.3	588.0	590.3	9.9	2.3	-10.0	-1.7%	-83.0	73.0	88%
Social Assistance	222.2	202.2	203.9	3.4	1.7	-18.3	-8.2%	-30.3	12.0	40%
Government	591.1	582.7	586.8	4.9	4.1	-4.3	-0.7%	-5.2	0.9	17%
Face-to-face Industry category	2,018.5	1,516.7	1,544.9	20.0	28.2	-473.6	-23.5%	-725.0	251.4	35%
Construction	157.9	129.3	132.3	-4.3	3.0	-25.6	-16.2%	-70.7	45.1	64%
Manufacturing	65.3	53.0	53.7	0.8	0.7	-11.6	-17.8%	-27.2	15.6	57%
Wholesale Trade	138.9	116.1	116.7	-1.7	0.6	-22.2	-16.0%	-31.6	9.4	30%
Retail Trade	339.5	283.8	284.3	-2.6	0.5	-55.2	-16.3%	-114.9	59.7	52%
Transportation and Warehousing	134.4	105.5	106.2	-1.6	0.7	-28.2	-21.0%	-36.2	8.0	22%
Administrative & Support & Waste Mgmt.	257.9	219.6	222.9	3.2	3.3	-35.0	-13.6%	-53.8	18.8	35%
Educational Services (private)	273.1	234.5	240.1	11.0	5.6	-33.0	-12.1%	-26.4	-6.6	-25%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	93.2	44.7	46.4	1.8	1.7	-46.8	-50.2%	-40.5	-6.3	-16%
Accommodation	52.3	15.4	15.1	0.0	-0.3	-37.2	-71.1%	-34.1	-3.1	-9%
Food Services and Drinking Places	311.2	160.5	171.0	12.9	10.5	-140.2	-45.1%	-224.1	83.9	37%
Other Services	194.8	154.3	156.2	0.5	1.9	-38.6	-19.8%	-65.5	26.9	41%
Remote-working category	1,227.8	1,145.8	1,149.8	9.3	4.0	-78.0	-6.4%	-82.8	4.8	6%
Information	226.8	207.3	210.7	5.0	3.4	-16.1	-7.1%	-24.7	8.6	35%
Finance and Insurance	347.3	335.9	335.1	-0.9	-0.8	-12.2	-3.5%	-7.0	-5.2	-74%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	137.3	124.8	124.4	-0.3	-0.4	-12.9	-9.4%	-14.1	1.2	9%
Professional, Scientific & Tech. Svcs.	444.6	415.4	417.4	5.9	2.0	-27.2	-6.1%	-28.9	1.7	6%
Mgmt. of Comps. & Enterprises	71.8	62.4	62.2	-0.4	-0.2	-9.6	-13.4%	-8.1	-1.5	-19%

Source: CNYCA analysis of NYSDOL current employment statistics, preliminary March 2021 data.

APPENDIX II: Survey Distribution and Survey Response

Weighting Methodology

The Astoria Project Survey was developed following The New School's institutional review board (IRB) ethical guidelines to protect human subjects. The survey was determined by The New School's IRB board to be exempt from necessary approval, however data safety and subject anonymity protocols outlined by the IRB best practices were followed.

The Consortium for Worker Education distributed the survey to 30 organizations that serve or represent a diverse swath of over 20,000 Astoria residents with the goal of maximizing socio-economic diversity, including organizations that represent and serve residents from a range of income levels, social backgrounds, as well as racial and ethnic backgrounds. These partners that assisted with the survey distribution include:

Organizational Partners

Actors Fund
AFM Local 802 Musicians
ANSOB
Astoria Mutual Aid
Catholic Diocese
Center for the Integration & Advancement of New Americans(CIANA)
Communications Workers of America (CWA 1180)
Community Board #1
DC37 Day Care members
Freelancers Union
Hellenic American Neighborhood Action Committee (HANAC)
Hotel Trades Council
IAM Independent Drivers Guild
ITAC - Manufacturing
Jacob Riise Workforce Development
Local ethnic papers
Make the Road
Marty Acumpora
Nontraditional Employment for Women
NYC Council District 22, Council Member Costas Constantinides
Office of NYS Assembly Member Catherine Nolan
Office of NYS Senator Michael Gianaris
Professional Staff Congress
QEDC
Queens Ledger
Queens Public Library
Restaurant Opportunity Council (ROC)
Retail, Wholesale & Department Store Union (RWDSU)
Service Employees International Union Local 1199
Social media
Teamsters
UrbanUpbound
Utilities Workers Union, Local 1-2
Writer's Guild, East
YAMA

The survey was distributed by the Consortium for Worker Education electronically, using a unique Qualtrics link, with responses going directly to the author's New School Qualtrics account. The Qualtrics survey protection filter was used so that survey users had to use the provided link to connect to the survey. The Qualtrics filter preventing indexing, in which a tag was added to the survey to prevent search engines from indexing it, was used to prevent fraudulent responses. The CWE reported organizations who had multiple members fill out the survey from the same location so that responses with the same IP address so that those results were not weeded out as fraudulent.

The survey responses span December 2020 through February 2021. Because of the wide outreach, the zip codes of the 726 responses were analyzed to make sure that those who filled out the survey were residents of Astoria or nearby neighborhoods, with 87 percent in Astoria proper and 91 percent in "greater Astoria," that is within 2-3 neighborhoods to the south or east (as far as Greenpoint, Brooklyn).

The survey resulted in 726 sufficiently complete responses. Compared to census data distribution, the Astoria Project respondents were more likely to be women, Latinx, and older than the demographic profile described in the 2019 Census data (Figure 3 in the text). These disparities remained but were slightly ameliorated after weighting the Astoria Project responses by industry.

Weighting Survey Responses

Before analysis of survey respondents, the latest Census data were used to analyze the demographic and industry profile of Astoria residents using the 2019 5-year American Community Survey Census data. Given the Astoria Project focus on employment effects, survey responses were weighted using the latest census employment distribution by industry. Some categories from the Astoria Project survey, such as day laborers and construction, were combined to make the equivalence of the single American Community Survey category of construction (Figure 1). Survey responses were weighted using the Qualtrics static weighting, adjusting response weights to reflect ACS industry distributions (Figure 2). The racial and ethnic demographic profile of respondents were compared to Census data demographic distributions before and after weighting showing that three of the four racial and ethnic categories had moved closer to the ACS distribution, with only Black or African American respondents being slightly over-weighted at 8 percent of responses compared to 5 percent of Astoria residents reported by the Census data (Figure 3). We sought to distribute the survey to public housing residents, however only seven percent of total respondents lived in an NYC Housing Authority facility.

Appendix Figure 2: Combining Astoria Project Response Categories to Match Census Industry Categories

ACS/Astoria Project Industry crosswalk notes for weighting:	
ACS Industry Category	Astoria Survey Response
Construction	Construction + Day Laborers
Administrative, support & waste mgmnt services	Building Services
Accommodation & Restaurants and Other Eating Places	Hotels and Hospitality and Food & Beverages
Information	Film and TV & Communications

Appendix Figure 3: Weighting the Astoria Project Survey Responses by the 2019 American Community Survey Industry Distribution of Astoria Workers

2019 5-year ACS Industry of Employment for Residents of Astoria, Queens		The Astoria Project: What industry do you typically work in?		
Industry	Percent Distribution	Industry	Percentage of Respondents	
			Unweighted	Weighted
Construction	5.3%	Day Laborers	3.5%	3.1%
Manufacturing	3.6%	Construction	2.9%	3.2%
Wholesale Trade	1.9%	Manufacturing	1.1%	3.0%
Retail	9.7%	Wholesale Trade	1.1%	1.8%
Transportation and Warehousing	5.1%	Retail Trade	2.4%	7.7%
Administrative, support & waste mgmnt services	4.1%	Transportation, including delivery services	4.7%	3.8%
Educational Services	9.7%	Warehousing	1.1%	2.1%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4.6%	Communications	1.8%	2.1%
Accommodation	1.7%	Film and TV production	5.1%	3.7%
Restaurants and Other Eating Places	9.0%	Finance & Insurance, Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	3.2%	5.9%
Other Services	5.5%	Professional services, incl. graphic or web design, social media, writing & editing	8.6%	11.2%
Information	5.0%	Building Services	1.4%	3.3%
Finance and Insurance	5.9%	Educational Services	15.1%	9.8%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2.9%	Health Care	9.6%	8.8%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	12.1%	Social Assistance	2.9%	2.2%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.2%	Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	12.5%	8.0%
Utilities	0.4%	Hotels and Hospitality	7.4%	3.9%
Health Care	8.4%	Food and Beverage Services	8.7%	8.9%
Social Assistance	2.2%	Personal Services (incl. nail salons, barber shops, repair services, dry-cleaning and laundry services)	2.7%	4.6%
Public Administration (Government)	2.6%	Government	4.5%	3.0%
Total	100.0%	Total	100.0%	100.0%

Appendix Figure 4: Race and ethnicity distribution of Astoria, Queens

	2019 5-year ACS for residents of Astoria, Queens	The Astoria Project: What race or ethnicity do you identify with?	
		Unweighted	Weighted
White alone	53%	56%	53%
Black alone	5%	5%	8%
Hispanic or Latino	23%	27%	25%
Asian and Others	18%	12%	13%

APPENDIX III: Astoria Project Survey forms of additional economic assistance

Appendix Figure 5: Astoria Project Survey responses answering priorities for forms of additional economic assistance besides training and employment assistance

	What additional economic assistance would be most helpful for you and your family? (mark up to three that you think are the most important)	Responses	
		%	Count
1	applying for unemployment insurance	7%	70
2	applying for food stamps or Medicaid	7%	72
3	helping people get digitally connected, including assisting parents and students access online classrooms	4%	42
4	assistance with job search, including connecting constituents with temporary jobs or maintaining a hiring hall	7%	67
5	food assistance, including food banks and delivering groceries	4%	39
6	other (you may offer a description in the next question)	3%	27
7	assistance finding secure housing	3%	27
8	mental health counseling	11%	104
9	cash assistance or gift cards	13%	132
10	providing computers or tablets for constituents to be able to work remotely	5%	45
11	providing PPE	8%	76
12	providing healthcare or providing assistance in accessing healthcare	8%	75
13	advocating for workplace safety, including helping with Covid-19 safety procedures at work	7%	67
15	legislative lobbying, including for the extension of UE benefits	8%	82
16	assistance in applying for workers' compensation	2%	15
17	legal assistance	2%	19
18	immigration services	2%	20
	Total	100%	979

Note: Respondents could select up to 3 forms of economic assistance.

The logo for The New School, featuring the words "THE NEW SCHOOL" in white, stacked vertically on a black rectangular background. The text is in a bold, sans-serif font, with "THE" on the top line, "NEW" on the second line, and "SCHOOL" on the third line. Two horizontal white lines are positioned below the word "SCHOOL".

Center for New York City Affairs

The Center for New York City Affairs at The New School is an applied policy research institute that drives innovation in social policy. The Center provides analysis and solutions. We focus on how public policy impacts low-income communities, and we strive for a more just and equitable city.



The Consortium for Worker Education is dedicated to regional workforce and economic development through the preparation, training and placement of workers. The workforce development arm of the New York City Central Labor Council AFL-CIO, which represents 1.2 million union members in the Metropolitan region, the CWE helps tens of thousands of New Yorkers gain workplace skills, credential-based training and find employment. CWE provides resources for workers at its union affiliates, as well as residents of low-income communities, New Americans and those entering the workforce for the first time.