

New Jersey Households with Children Are Hit Hardest by COVID-19

By Peter Chen, ACNJ Policy Counsel

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The COVID-19 pandemic and its economic repercussions continue to resonate throughout New Jersey. However, many traditional data sources for tracking the well-being of households in the Garden State do not update quickly or regularly enough to see trends affecting families now. [The Census Household Pulse Survey](#), which began collecting data weekly in late April 2020, helps provide a snapshot of key economic, health, nutrition, education and housing indicators for families.

The Big Takeaway

- **COVID-19 has hit households with children hardest.** Although the pandemic has hurt all households, households with children faced higher rates of food scarcity, lost income, missed housing payments and delayed medical care.
- **Little improvement over the last three months.** Despite variations in week-to-week data, most rates remain persistent over the twelve weeks of the survey.

Loss of Income

- **More than half of NJ households lost income:** More than half of New Jersey respondents reported losing employment income since March, counting more than 3 million households.

- **Households with children hit harder:** In the most recent week's data, 63 percent of households with children reported employment income loss, compared to 50 percent of households without.

Housing Insecurity

- **Missed housing payments are common, especially for renters:** Many households missed mortgage or rent payments over the last month, although most households stated that they made payments on time. Renters were less likely to say they made their payments on time than homeowners with mortgage payments.
- **Renting households with children hit hardest:** Although the numbers fluctuated from week to week, households with children frequently answered that they did not make last month's rent payment, ranging from 15 percent to nearly 50 percent.

Food Scarcity

- **Overall, about 90 percent of households reported getting enough food in the last 7 days, but food scarcity rates were higher for households with children.** More households with children (~10-15 percent) than households without (~5-10 percent) are still regularly responding that they "sometimes" or "often" did not get enough food in the past 7 days.

Giving Every Child a Chance

- **The number of children receiving [NJ SNAP benefits](#) increased by 24,000 since March.** New Jersey saw a roughly 8 percent increase in SNAP food assistance usage among children between March and May 2020.

Missed Medical Care

- **Households across the board reported missing or delaying medical care in the last month.** Although numbers fluctuated with each week, more than 30 percent of all NJ respondents reported delaying medical care.
- **Households with children tended to delay medical care at higher rates than those without.** In some weeks as many as half of households with children delayed or missed medical care. Although the survey did not ask which family member delayed care, children may risk losing out on vaccinations and well-child visits.

***Data note:** The Household Pulse Survey covers 12 weeks beginning April 23, 2020 through July 21, 2020. For complete technical documentation, see the [Census Bureau's website](#).*

For questions, contact Peter Chen at pchen@acnj.org.

Educational Access to Devices/Internet

- **1 in 4 households did not “always” have device and Internet access for education.** Across the board, roughly 3 in 4 households reported “always” having a device available for educational purposes.
 - This aligns roughly with [NJ Department of Education data](#) showing about 23% of families reporting only moderate or no confidence in access to adequate technology devices to support online learning.
- **Gaps remain in access by race, especially Black households.** Disparities existed in most weeks between Black, Hispanic, White and Asian households, with Black and Hispanic households less likely to report “always” having internet and device access for educational purposes.