Immigrant and undocumented families are among those most impacted by the pandemic but they have been excluded from the federal and state relief they urgently need.

66% of all people surveyed and 73% of undocumented people faced pandemic-driven unemployment at some point in 2020.

Unemployment remained persistently high—as did reductions in pay and hours—throughout the year.

Only 1 in 10 people said they received unemployment insurance in the past month.

Only 37% received federal stimulus payments.

Due to long-standing systemic inequalities, Latinx and Black communities are hardest hit by the pandemic, contracting and dying from COVID-19 at alarming rates.

Latinx and Black communities are bearing the brunt of this crisis because of systemic and historical racism in our economy, healthcare system, and society generally.

Immigrant enforcement has a chilling effect on respondents’ willingness to seek healthcare service when sick, with many undocumented people expressing fear to see a doctor in the past.

88% of undocumented people and 59% of all people surveyed did not have health insurance.

Policy solution: Ensure everyone, regardless of immigration status, can access quality healthcare, including COVID-19 testing, treatment, and vaccination.

In some states surveyed, 1 in 6 people had lost a family member to COVID-19.

This echoes national data showing Black, Latinx, and Indigenous people are at least 2.7x more likely to die from COVID-19 than white people.

Policy solution: Ensure that federal stimulus payments and unemployment insurance are made available to all families and impacted workers, regardless of immigration status.
There is an eviction crisis and it is hitting immigrant communities especially hard.

77% of renters were concerned about making next month’s rent.

Nearly 90% of undocumented renters are worried about making rent.

Among renters surveyed across six states:

An estimated 5 million undocumented essential workers are on the frontlines in the US, providing vital support in healthcare, the food supply chain, the care economy, and other key sectors.

“I have been working ever since the pandemic started because I am an essential worker. I have been worried because I come in and out of the house, so regardless [of] if I’m taking the right measures, I don’t know if I might get sick or not.”
—Make the Road CT member

Policy solution:
Enact a comprehensive eviction moratorium that bars all evictions and foreclosures until the end of the pandemic, while implementing rent forgiveness for all renters and investing in affordable housing.

Policy solution:
Secure a pathway to citizenship for all 11 million undocumented people in the US, including essential workers and their families, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders, and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients.

CPD would like to acknowledge and thank the following organizations for contributing their survey findings to this brief: Action North Carolina, Make the Road Connecticut, Make the Road Nevada, Make the Road New Jersey, Make the Road New York, Make the Road Pennsylvania, and Hester Street. Links to their full survey data and published reports appear on the last page.

Congress passes the CARES Act to give $1,200 payments and other assistance to US households; however, undocumented and mixed-immigration status families are largely excluded.

March 2020

Congress passes the CARES Act to give $1,200 payments and other assistance to US households; however, undocumented and mixed-immigration status families are largely excluded.

April 2020

Make the Road NJ’s 200+ person survey reveals widespread financial hardship: 91% of undocumented respondents are worried about being able to pay utilities or other bills. 83% are worried about accessing enough food for their families.

Nationally, Latinx and Black workers doing essential roles are less likely to be able to work remotely, and are more likely to get exposed to COVID-19 on the job. In fact, only 20% of Black workers and 16% of Latinx workers can telework.

May 2020

Make the Road NY and Hester Street’s 240+ person survey finds 92% of households have lost jobs or income due to the pandemic. More than half of respondents couldn’t pay their April rent and 89% are worried about being able to pay May rent. One out of six people have lost a family member to COVID-19.

June 2020

Make the Road NV’s 140+ person survey shows less than half of workers surveyed have paid sick leave—many report inadequate personal protective equipment and workplace safety. Latinx and Black workers are 2-3 times more likely to report their hours cut or pay reduced because of the pandemic.

July 2020

Make the Road NV’s 140+ person survey shows less than half of workers surveyed have paid sick leave—many report inadequate personal protective equipment and workplace safety. Latinx and Black workers are 2-3 times more likely to report their hours cut or pay reduced because of the pandemic.

August 2020

Make the Road NY and Hester Street’s 240+ person survey finds 92% of households have lost jobs or income due to the pandemic. More than half of respondents couldn’t pay their April rent and 89% are worried about being able to pay May rent. One out of six people have lost a family member to COVID-19.

September 2020

Make the Road PA’s 100+ person survey finds 40% of renters are unable to make their most recent rent payment and 79% are worried about making next month’s rent.

The CDC enacts a national eviction moratorium to run through 2020 (and later extended through March 2021). While this provides tenants some tools to resist eviction, it does not prevent all evictions or give relief to renters for back rent owed since March.

October 2020

Action North Carolina’s 100+ person survey finds that over half of those surveyed—and 91% of undocumented people—have no health insurance. Two out of three undocumented people have not gone to a doctor in the past for fear of immigration enforcement.

December 2020

Throughout 2020, Black, Latinx, and Indigenous people were least 2.7 times more likely to die from COVID-19 than white people.

Congress passes a COVID-19 relief bill that Biden himself acknowledges as insufficient to address people’s needs—calling it a “down payment” on more comprehensive relief to be passed in the next Congress.
I’m worried because my dad lost his job and my mom is the only one working. She’s working at a laundromat. She’s risking her health to work, and I’m scared my parents will get sick because they also are undocumented.

—Make the Road NY member

[The pandemic] has affected me in my job because my hours were reduced. I have to go get food at a pantry so that we can have something to eat at home.

—Make the Road CT member

Well my whole family caught COVID and I was not able to see them. My mom was afraid of losing my dad at a point. It was very terrifying.

—Make the Road CT member

My spouse was out of work due to his sickness. I was not able to receive a stimulus check due to the fact that I am an immigrant. My husband and kids are citizens.

—Make the Road CT member

We lost our jobs and we were not included in the aid packages.

—Make the Road PA member

Speaking to over 900 immigrants around the country surfaced countless stories of financial hardship and illness, compounded by a lack of government support.

SURVEY SAMPLE AT A GLANCE

937 individuals surveyed by CPD affiliates in six states—and over 50 cities—from April to November 2020

Race and Ethnicity:

- 91% Latinx
- 6% Black
- 6% White
- 1% Asian
- 1% Native American

Immigration Status:

- 42% Undocumented*
- 29% US Citizen
- 11% Lawful permanent resident
- 5% Work authorization or asylum status
- 4% DACA/TPS
- 9% Prefer not to respond

Gender and Gender Identity:

- 72% Female
- 27% Male
- 1% Transgender
- 0.3% Non-binary

*Estimated undocumented total reflects individuals who identify as immigrants to the United States who are not US citizens nor have lawful permanent residence, DACA or TPS status, or work authorization.
Full survey findings for the six states are available here:

Make the Road New Jersey, April 2020
“Essential and Excluded: A Survey of Immigrants in New Jersey under COVID-19”
https://bit.ly/3rfr6x

Make the Road New York and Hester Street, May 2020
“Excluded In The Epicenter: Impacts Of The COVID Crisis On Working class Immigrant, Black, And Brown New Yorkers”


Make the Road Nevada, August 2020
“Nevada’s Excluded Communities: Key Findings from a COVID-19 Community Impact Survey”

Make the Road Pennsylvania, October 2020
“Unemployed, Unhoused, and Unhelped COVID-19’s Devastating Toll on Pennsylvania’s Latinx Communities”
https://bit.ly/3aylK0i

Action North Carolina, January 2021
“North Carolina’s Excluded Communities: COVID-19 Community Impact Survey Findings”
https://bit.ly/3aCL6tZ

Make the Road Connecticut, January 2021
“Connecticut’s Excluded Communities: Key Findings from a COVID-19 Community Impact Survey”
https://bit.ly/3rka1Jq

Notes

1 https://www.apmresearchlab.org/covid/deaths-2020-review
2 https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2020/12/02/493307/protecting-undocumented-workers-pandemics-front-lines/
4 https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/assistance-for-american-workers-and-families#:~:text=The%20CARES%20Act%20initially%20provided%20for%20a%20family%20of%20four.
5 https://app.box.com/s/ad9my2650jt0errprl5b0ab-0p0v0e68: https://www.epi.org/publication/black-workers-covid/
6 https://www.epi.org/blog/black-and-hispanic-workers-are-much-less-likely-to-be-able-to-work-from-home/
8 https://www.populardemocracy.org/sites/default/files/MRPA%20CPD%20COVID%20Impact%20Report%20October%202020%20FINAL.pdf
14 https://www.populardemocracy.org/blog/eviction-crisis-will-be-met-mass-resistance
17 https://www.apmresearchlab.org/covid/deaths-2020-review