

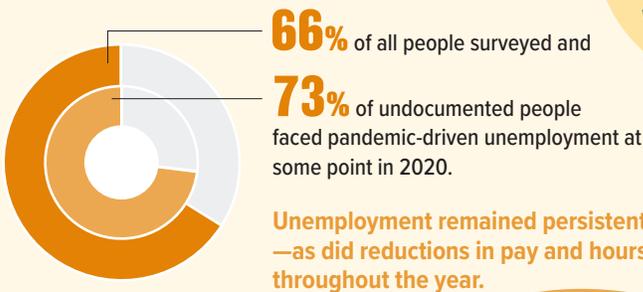
ESSENTIAL AND EXCLUDED

How the COVID-19 Pandemic is Impacting Immigrant Families



Center for Popular Democracy (CPD) affiliates in six states conducted community impact surveys between April and November 2020. Organizers in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Nevada, and North Carolina had in-depth conversations with over 900 primarily Latinx immigrants—including nearly 400 undocumented community members. While capturing different moments of the pandemic, important issues facing immigrant communities were surfaced across the surveys:

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.



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



“We are going to work, we pay taxes, we try to do the things the right way. For [the government] to put us to the side and not include us in the stimulus makes us feel like they only see our value to work and not our humanity, and our children were also left out even if they are US Citizens.”
—Make the Road NJ member

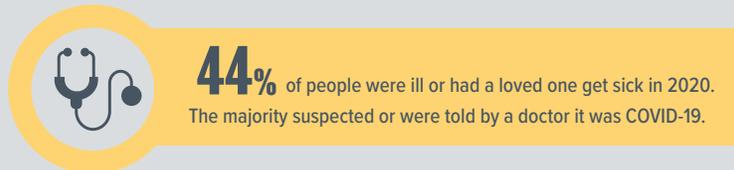
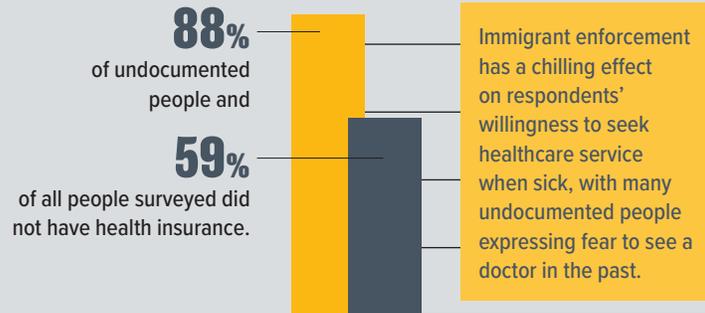
Only **37%** received federal stimulus payments.



“Well, in the case of my family, we are very scared, because we had the loss of my brother who died from the coronavirus. And everyone is scared by this pandemic that we have had to live in isolation, without work, without money and with great fear.”
—Make the Road NY member

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.



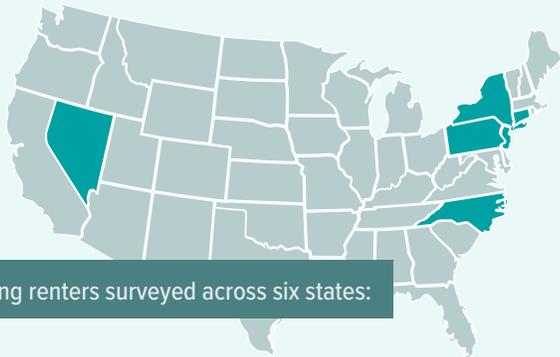
In some states surveyed, **1 in 6** people had lost a family member to COVID-19. This echoes national data showing Black, Latinx, and Indigenous people are at least

2.7x more likely to die from COVID-19 than white people.¹

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

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.



Among renters surveyed across six states:



At first, I was told to leave and was being harassed but when the governor issued the eviction moratorium, my landlord has only reached out to me once since then. But as soon as the eviction moratorium is up, I will be evicted."
—Make the Road NV member

"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.

Five million undocumented essential workers have been providing vital public services while living under the constant threat of COVID-19 and deportation.



Immigrant worker survey respondents around the country described a lack of personal protective equipment, inadequate safety precautions, and insufficient paid sick leave.



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.²

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.



2020 IN REVIEW

Survey Highlights and Key Developments

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.⁵



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.⁶

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.⁸



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.¹²



The CDC enacts a national eviction moratorium to run through 2020 (and later extended through March 2021).¹³ 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.¹⁴

December 2020

Throughout 2020, Black, Latinx, and Indigenous people were least 2.7 times more likely to die from COVID-19 than white people.¹⁷

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.¹⁸

March 2020

The World Health Organization officially declares the coronavirus crisis a pandemic. State-wide stay at home orders roll out across the country.³

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.⁴

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-19.⁷



August 2020

National estimates show 30 to 40 million people are at risk of eviction in the US.⁹

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) data finds widespread racial health disparities. Black, Latinx, and Indigenous people are contracting and dying of COVID-19 at alarming rates.¹⁰ National data shows Latinx workers face skyrocketing unemployment and are among the most vulnerable to COVID-19 related job loss and economic insecurity.¹¹

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.¹⁵



Make the Road CT's 100+ person survey finds only **8%** of survey respondents received unemployment insurance in the past month. Only **21%** qualified for the government stimulus. **Three out of four** people have gone into significant debt (\$1,000+) to make ends meet.¹⁶



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Immigrant Families Speak Out

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

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

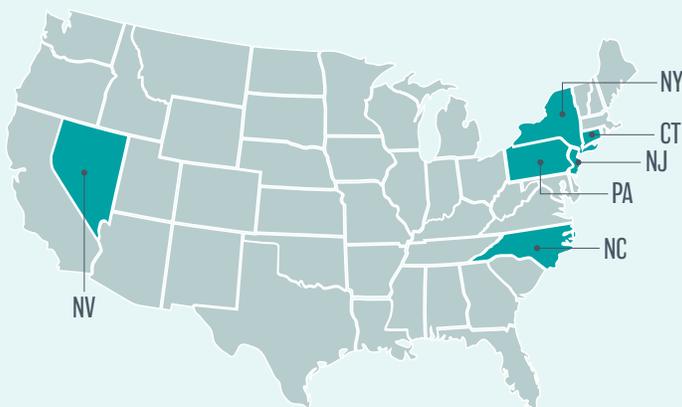
We lost our jobs and we were not included in the aid packages.

—Make the Road PA member

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

Gender and Gender Identity:

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

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

*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/3rnfr6x>

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”
<https://bit.ly/3cGvgkL>

See also “150 Days Later: Unemployed & Excluded” from August 2020, <https://bit.ly/3cHrUxW>

Make the Road Nevada, August 2020
“Nevada’s Excluded Communities: Key Findings from a COVID-19 Community Impact Survey”
<https://bit.ly/3pPqzsw>

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

- <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/covid/deaths-2020-review>
- <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2020/12/02/493307/protecting-undocumented-workers-pandemics-front-lines/>
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-51839944>. <https://www.kff.org/other/slide/when-state-stay-at-home-orders-due-to-coronavirus-went-into-effect/>
- <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/assistance-for-american-workers-and-families#:~:text=The%20CARES%20Act%20initially%20provided,for%20a%20family%20of%20four.>
- <https://app.box.com/s/ad9my2650tj0errrpl5b0ab-0p0v0e68>; <https://www.epi.org/publication/black-workers-covid/>
- <https://www.epi.org/blog/black-and-hispanic-workers-are-much-less-likely-to-be-able-to-work-from-home/>
- https://maketheroadny.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/MRNY_SurveyReport_small.pdf
- <https://www.populardemocracy.org/sites/default/files/MRNV-Covid19-Impact-Report-2020%20FINAL.pdf>
- <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/the-covid-19- eviction-crisis-an-estimated-30-40-million-people-in-america-are-at-risk/>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/22/us/politics/biden-coronavirus-stimulus-bill.html>
- <https://www.populardemocracy.org/sites/default/files/MRPA%20CPD%20COVID%20Impact%20Report%20October%202020%20FINAL.pdf>
- <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/09/04/2020-19654/temporary-halt-in-residential-evictions-to-prevent-the-further-spread-of-covid-19#footnote-5-p55293>
- <https://www.populardemocracy.org/blog/eviction-crisis-will-be-met-mass-resistance>
- <https://www.epi.org/publication/latinx-workers-covid/>
- [sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2020/racial-disparities-in-covid-19/](https://www.sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2020/racial-disparities-in-covid-19/); <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/covid/deaths-by-race>