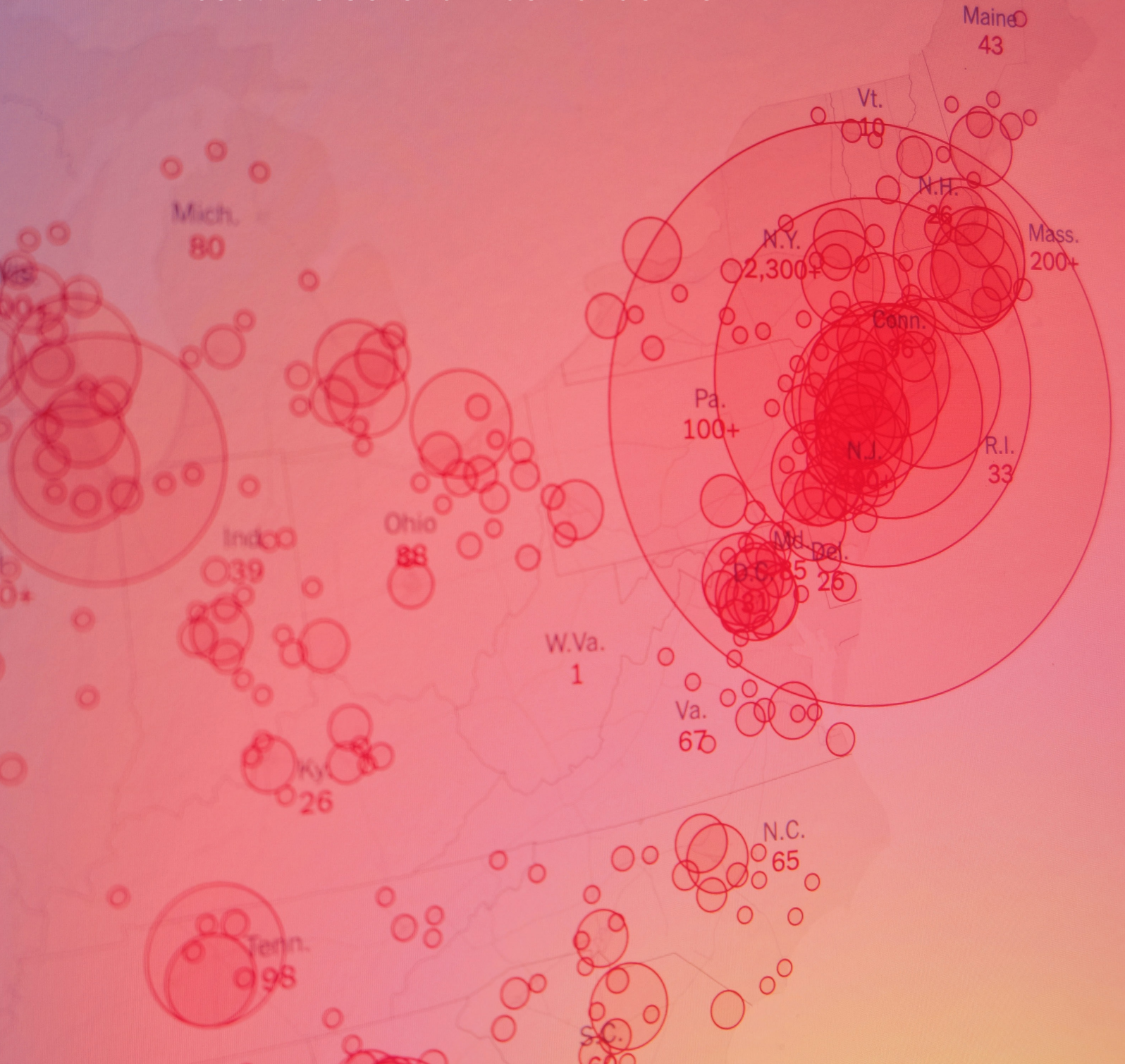


Coping with COVID-19

What Americans **Need**, **Feel** and **Fear**
About the Coronavirus Pandemic



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WHAT AMERICANS NEED, FEEL AND FEAR ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

FINAL RESEARCH REPORT

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Executive Summary

As the COVID-19 pandemic escalated, efforts from the Ad Council, in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the White House, were initially focused around a single message: Slow the Spread. As the significant impacts of the virus rose around the country, it became time to address the urgent, varied needs of Americans triggered by this crisis.

Throughout the spring of 2020, conversations, questions and fears around the pandemic grew as quickly as the virus spread. In order to help determine what Americans really needed, in real time—and how those needs might change as the pandemic unfolded—the Ad Council began research for the study, *Coping with COVID-19: What Americans Need, Feel and Fear About the Coronavirus Pandemic*. Through social listening analysis and a survey fielded six times over three months, the Ad Council identified people's mental, social and economic challenges, to help inform ongoing efforts and make the information available to others who are in a position to help Americans in need during this challenging time.

This research highlighted four dominant trends about Americans and COVID-19, from April to June 2020:

1. Americans' fears about their own health and the health of others (family/friends) lessened. Despite the decrease, people still largely took precautions against COVID-19.
2. Economic fears and financial impact decreased steadily.
3. While anxiety and depression spiked through the spring, gratitude remained the most dominant emotion at the outset of, and throughout, the crisis (April-June 2020).
4. The COVID-19 crisis not only highlighted—but also exacerbated — inequities around race and income.

This report highlights key aspects of the Ad Council's research, which took place from early April to mid-June 2020. For reports of individual survey findings and additional information on this research, visit covidresearch.adcouncilkit.org.

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Introduction

When 2020 began, few people foresaw the all-encompassing crisis that was about to shake the world. In just a few short months, words like “pandemic,” “coronavirus” and “COVID-19” became common terminology in households around the world, with WHO, CDC and NIAID the new go-to acronyms in the U.S. Masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, cleaning wipes and toilet paper flew off grocery store shelves, with some items taking months to be fully restocked.

Schools closed. Travel ceased. Stocks plummeted. Unemployment soared. People stayed home. Life as most knew it was essentially canceled, and as the Ad Council’s initial research uncovered, Americans were worried.

Since its founding, the Ad Council has used the power of communications to raise awareness, inspire action and save lives. The COVID-19 crisis represented a perfect storm of interconnected issues around health, community, safety and education, and while it was clear Americans were facing unprecedented challenges, not much was truly known about the depth of this need in early spring 2020. Garnering a better understanding of Americans’ needs, worries and feelings would both help inform the Ad Council’s own communications and provide guidance to others who are in a position to help the public during this challenging time.

Thus in early April, the Ad Council began a new study, *Coping with COVID-19: What Americans Need, Feel and Fear About the Coronavirus Pandemic*. The study included social listening analysis and a survey conducted six times over three months to help identify Americans’ mental, social and economic challenges, as well as how those needs might change over time.

When the study began in early April 2020, just a few weeks after the United States began shutting down schools, businesses and more, the Ad Council’s research found:

- Americans were most worried about the economy, the health of medical and other frontline workers, and people not taking the pandemic seriously.
- People wanted information—like when the outbreak would end, and when a vaccine would become available.
- People most needed access to personal protective equipment (PPE) like masks and gloves—as well as peace of mind.
- The vast majority (79%) of Americans said they had been financially impacted at least a little (as early as the first week of April 2020) —and nearly one in four had experienced a very large financial impact.

As the pandemic has continued, some groups have been more notably affected than others: younger Americans more than old; Americans who have lower incomes; parents with kids in the household; multi-generational households and single parents; people living in urban areas; and people in the Northeast more than the rest of the country (as the region was also the hardest hit by the virus during the time of this study).

Financially, Hispanic and Asian respondents were more impacted than African Americans or white/Caucasians. In general, however, the pandemic has so far exacerbated issues already experienced by certain communities, such as those who have lower incomes and people of color—a trend also reported by entities other than the Ad Council (such as [this report](#) from the Joint Economic Committee).

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Despite the effects of COVID-19 felt nationwide, and even amidst the worries and uncertainties, the Ad Council's research in April 2020 found that the American spirit was holding strong: People were feeling grateful and hopeful, and they were connecting more with family, friends, acquaintances and coworkers.

How did Americans' needs, feelings and concerns shift from April to June, 2020? What effects were felt toward the beginning of the crisis, and did/how did those change throughout the spring? At

See the Ad Council's Special Report on how COVID-19 has affected Low-Income Minority Americans at covidresearch.adcouncilkit.org

the time of this report, most states in the country [were already reporting](#) spikes in COVID-19 cases, prompting many to stall or even reverse reopening efforts to keep people at home. What could be expected if another wave of the virus hit the nation?

Purpose

As the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, the Ad Council's research began in early April to understand: **What are Americans' needs and concerns amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and how might those needs change as the crisis unfolds?**

This research study was an exploration into the ever-changing conversations, questions and fears around the coronavirus pandemic from April-June 2020. Through social listening analysis and a regular survey (quantitative inquiry), this study sought to discover what Americans really needed at the height of the pandemic in spring 2020, in order to address the public's mental, social and economic challenges as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

The goals of this research were to:

- Identify areas of greatest need as expressed in social media conversations/posts and as reported by a survey sample representing the American public;
- Clarify the correlation and connection between social media conversations and the real-time needs of the American public;
- Provide regular guidance to issue experts, brands, foundations, the media and causes about the American public's greatest needs; and
- Provide insights to stakeholders in order to make strategic decisions regarding how and where to reach Americans with messages that address their needs and concerns.

This report highlights key aspects of the Ad Council's research, which took place from early April to mid-June 2020. For a look at individual weekly reports and additional information on this research, visit covidresearch.adcouncilkit.org.

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Methodology

This study was conducted to measure Americans' perceptions and needs as it relates to the outbreak of COVID-19. The findings in this report are based on a mixed-method research approach: 1) social listening; and 2) quantitative online survey.

Method 1: Social Listening

Objective: This research method sought to uncover the ongoing and dominant COVID-19 conversations taking place online across the nation in order to identify the areas of greatest need and hone in on shifting social trends.

Details: Online conversations were captured on a weekly basis, starting on January 1, 2020, by way of [Talkwalker](#), a leading social listening and analytics platform. Through a weekly review of query topics, defined social conversations observed within the areas of focus, the ongoing quantitative analysis sought to uncover the sentiment and expressions behind American needs and interests.

Method 2: Quantitative Online Survey

Objective: This research method was designed to quantify the areas of greatest need as expressed by a survey of respondents representing the American public. The survey also sought to uncover how Americans were feeling amid the early stages of the pandemic (April-June 2020), what they were specifically worried about, what information

they needed, where they were getting COVID-19 information, and more.

This research was also designed to validate findings from the social listening phase by clarifying the correlation and connection between the social conversation and the real-time needs of the American public.

Details: In partnership with [C+R Research](#), a leading independent full-service marketing insights agency, the Ad Council surveyed a nationally representative population of 1,000 English-speaking adults ages 18+ across the United States online each week. Surveys were fielded among non-overlapping samples during the following time periods:

April 3-5, 2020
April 10-12, 2020
April 17-19, 2020
April 24-26, 2020
May 8-10, 2020
June 12-14, 2020

The 10-minute survey was administered online, and the age, gender, ethnicity, region, household composition and income of respondents were matched to U.S. Census statistics. (Note: The margin of error for a sample of 1,000 respondents is +/- 3 percentage points at 95% confidence).

Find details of the sample at:
covidresearch.adcouncilkit.org

Findings

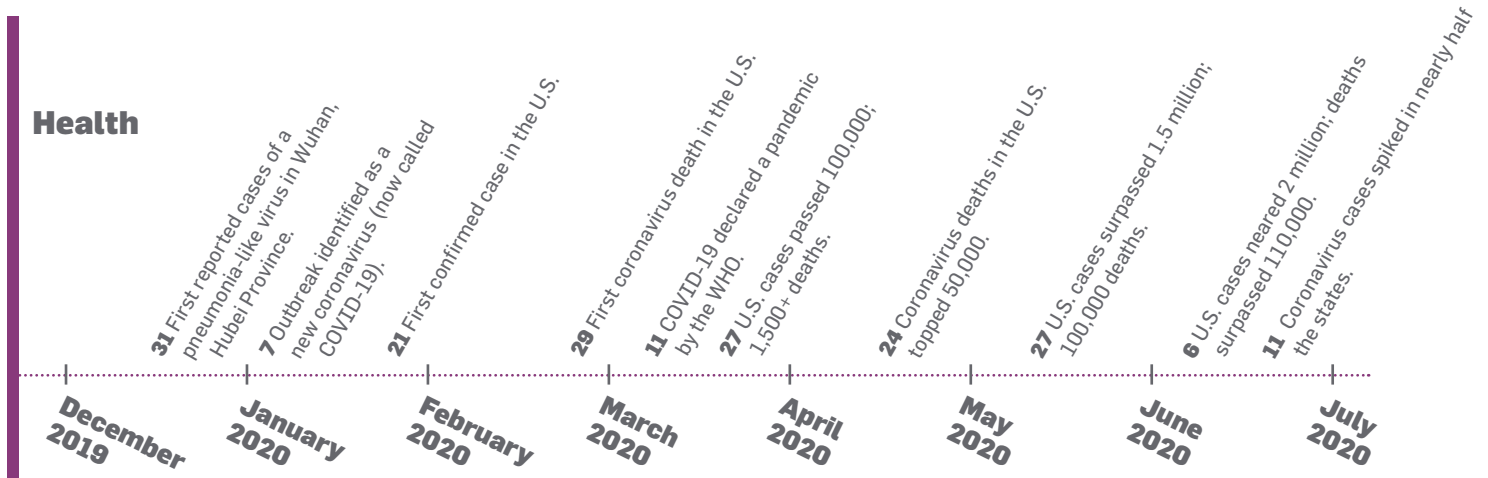
This research highlighted four dominant trends about Americans and COVID-19, from April to June 2020:

1. Americans' fears about their own health and the health of others (family/friends) lessened. Despite the decrease, people still largely took precautions against COVID-19.
2. Economic fears and financial impact decreased steadily.
3. While anxiety and depression spiked through the spring, gratitude remained the most dominant emotion at the outset of, and throughout, the crisis (April-June 2020).
4. The COVID-19 crisis not only highlighted—but also exacerbated — inequities around race and income.

The findings of this study are described within the context of four categories—physical health, financial health, mental health, and safety/inequity—each of which provides a look at what Americans needed, what they were feeling and worried about, and how COVID-19 was impacting their lives in the spring of 2020.

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Physical Health

From April to June 2020, Americans' fears about their own health and the health of others (family/friends) lessened. Despite the decrease, people still largely took precautions against COVID-19.

In early April 2020, COVID-19 was still a fairly new phenomenon in the U.S. Nearly all 50 states had issued stay-at-home orders (in all or in part), and Americans were quickly having to adjust to life indoors. At that time, about one in four Americans (24%) said they knew someone who has/had COVID-19, and in general, people were worried about the physical impacts of the pandemic. Three of the four categories that worried people most were the health of medical and other frontline workers (68%), people not taking COVID-19 seriously (68%), and the health of friends/family (66%).

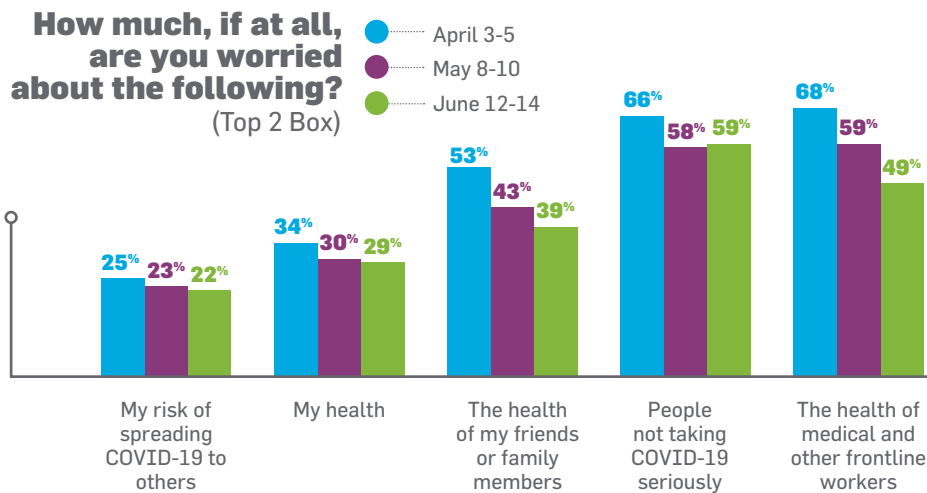
Over time, however, those concerns decreased. Despite more people reporting in June that they know someone who has/had COVID-19 than in April (24% in April, 31% in May, 34% in June), Americans in general became less worried about some of the top health-related topics:

- The health of frontline workers: 68% in April to 49% in June
- People not taking COVID-19 seriously: 66% in April to 59% in June
- The health of friends and family: 53% in April to 39% in June

Of these three concerns, people not taking COVID-19 seriously decreased the least—an unsurprising trend given renewed spikes in the virus once many U.S. states began reopening in May and into June.

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It should also be noted that despite a decrease in health-related concerns, Americans weren't taking health for granted throughout spring 2020. The health and well-being of family, friends, loved ones and/or co-workers, followed by one's own health, consistently topped the list of what people are most grateful for throughout the time of this study. Americans also continued to be concerned about the risk of spreading COVID-19 to others, at levels that did not change from April to June.

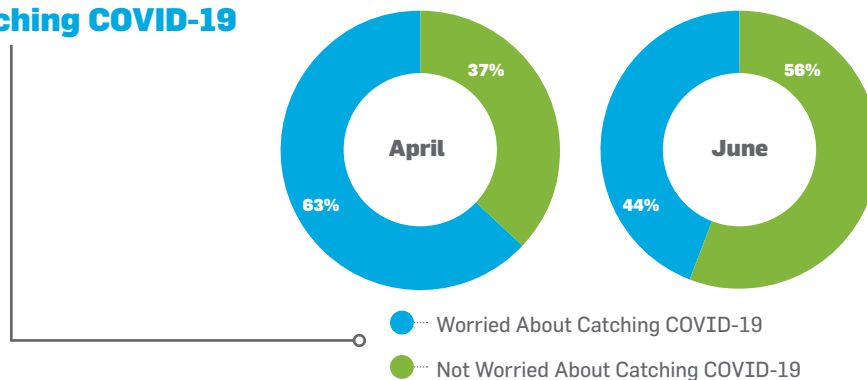
Social Listening

Fears in "Catching" COVID-19 Declined by 32% from April to June 2020

People across the nation flocked to social media to discuss their thoughts on contracting COVID-19. In April, when cases initially peaked, 63% of contraction-specific posts encompassed users who were worried about catching the virus. By June, the percentage of those who worried about contracting the virus dropped to 44%, despite a new high in cases.

Thankfully, nearly half of all social media users who claimed to not be worried about catching the virus touched upon the importance of wearing a mask in public and/or preventing the spread.

Americans' Worries About Catching COVID-19



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How much do you need assistance with each of the following? (Top 2 Box)

● April 3-5 ● May 8-10 ● June 12-14



Physical Health Needs

Like with concerns about their physical health, Americans' needs for assistance related to health and safety fell significantly from April to June, likely due to people having better access to (and more availability of) COVID-19 related resources like PPE and testing. In April, one in five people said they needed assistance getting access to PPE (20%), and 17 percent needed access to COVID-19 testing. By June, these categories fell to 11 percent and 13 percent, respectively.

Needs related to food (like getting enough food to last through times at home, and grocery delivery) also decreased from April to June, likely due to the decrease in stay-at-home orders nationwide. In April, for example, one in five Americans (20%) said they needed help getting enough food to last through the time at home, or that they needed assistance with grocery delivery. By June, these needs both decreased to about one in eight (13%).

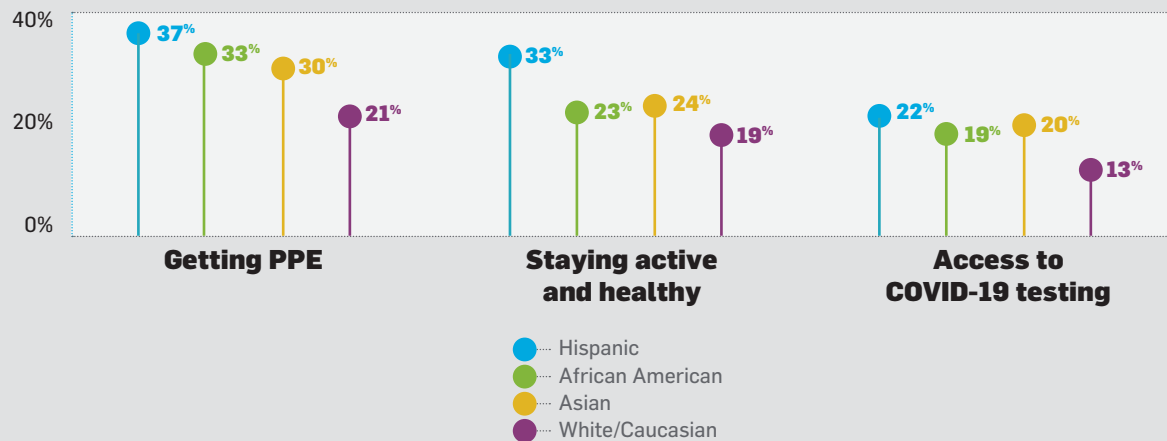
Some needs remained steady throughout the spring, however, including access to health care (18% in April to 15% in May to 17% in June), and staying active and healthy (17% in April and May to 15% in June).

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Physical Health Needs (continued)

Throughout the spring, some Americans reported greater health-related needs than others. Hispanic respondents reported greater health needs for almost all categories compared to other races/ethnicities. African American and Asian respondents reported greater needs for almost all categories than white/Caucasian respondents, and food-related needs were higher among African Americans than white/Caucasian and Asian respondents. For example:



Differences in needs can also be seen by area (urban vs. suburban/rural) and income level (those with a household income of under \$50,000 vs. \$100,000+), as people in urban areas and earning lower incomes are much more likely to need assistance across most categories. For further data around these demographic breakdowns, please see the appendix of this report.

Activities & Perceived Risk

As states across the country began phasing through reopening plans, Americans began weighing the safety and perceived risk of certain activities, regardless of their renewed ability to do things like get a haircut or ride public transportation. And for the most part, Americans seemed to want to take things slowly.

In general, as of mid-June 2020, people were more likely to say they *thought* various activities were safe than they were willing to actually *do them* in the coming weeks. For example, the majority of Americans believed it was safe to meet with a few friends outdoors (70%) or go to a doctor's office for an appointment (65%) in mid-June 2020, though only about half of people said they were likely to do either of these activities in the next few weeks.

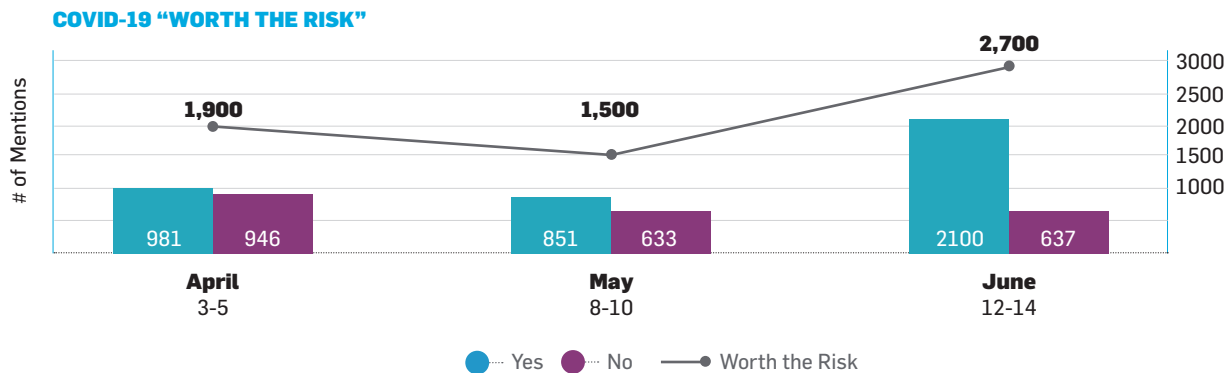
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Social Listening

“Worth the Risk” Assessments Rose by 80% from May to June 2020

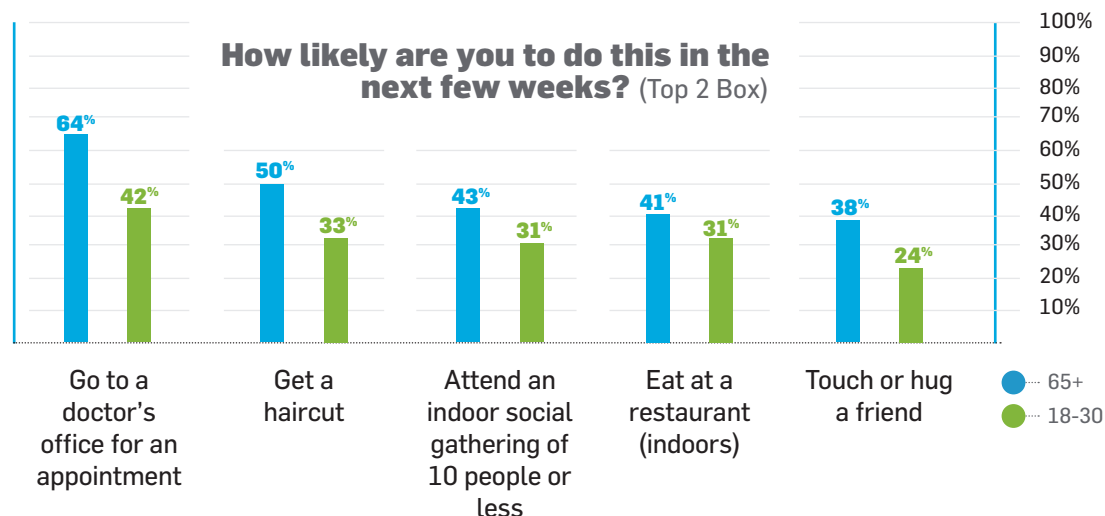
Some social media users publicly assessed whether certain activities were “worth the risk” amidst COVID-19. In June, these assessments hit a high, and those claiming certain activities were “worth the risk” outnumbered those who did not by more than 3x. The top three activities up for debate on social media were going to work, attending a protest, and resuming professional sports leagues.



For nearly all activities surveyed, people’s perception of safety outweighed their likelihood of doing such an activity (ex. Get a haircut, attend an indoor social gathering of 10 people or less, go to the polls to vote in a primary election, play sports with other people, exercise at a gym, ride in a rideshare, etc.

Notable differences in perceived risk vs. likelihood of activity can be seen by various demographic groups, however. For example, as of mid-June:

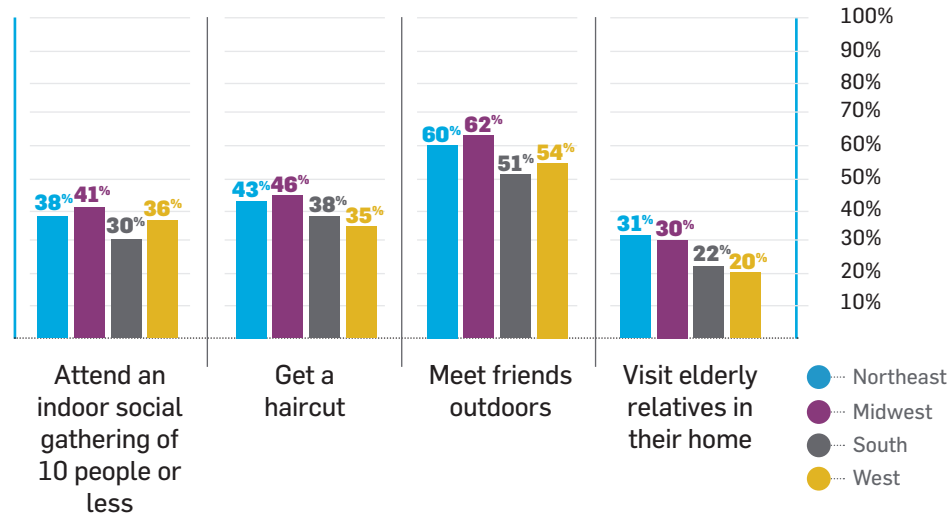
Older adults were much more likely to go to doctor appointments or get a haircut, while younger people were more willing to go to indoor social gatherings and indoor restaurants, and to touch or hug a friend.



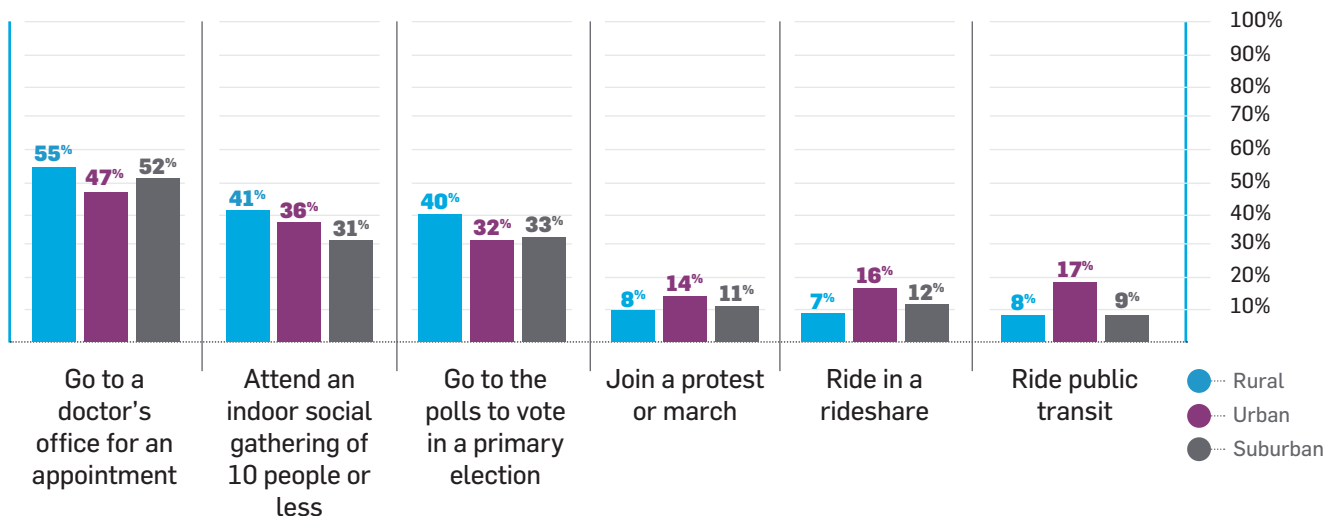
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People in the Northeast and Midwest were more likely to attend indoor social gatherings, get haircuts, meet friends outdoors and visit elderly relatives than those in the South and West.



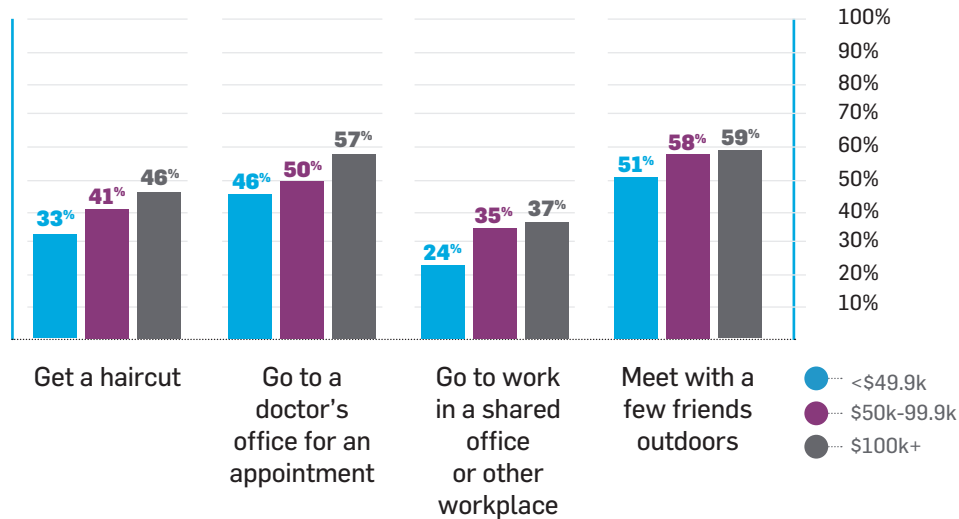
Rural respondents were more likely than others to go to a doctor's office, go to small indoor gatherings, and go to the polls to vote. Urban respondents were more likely to join protests or marches, and use rideshares or public transit (though these latter activities are generally thought of as taking place in urban areas vs. rural ones, which could explain for the difference).



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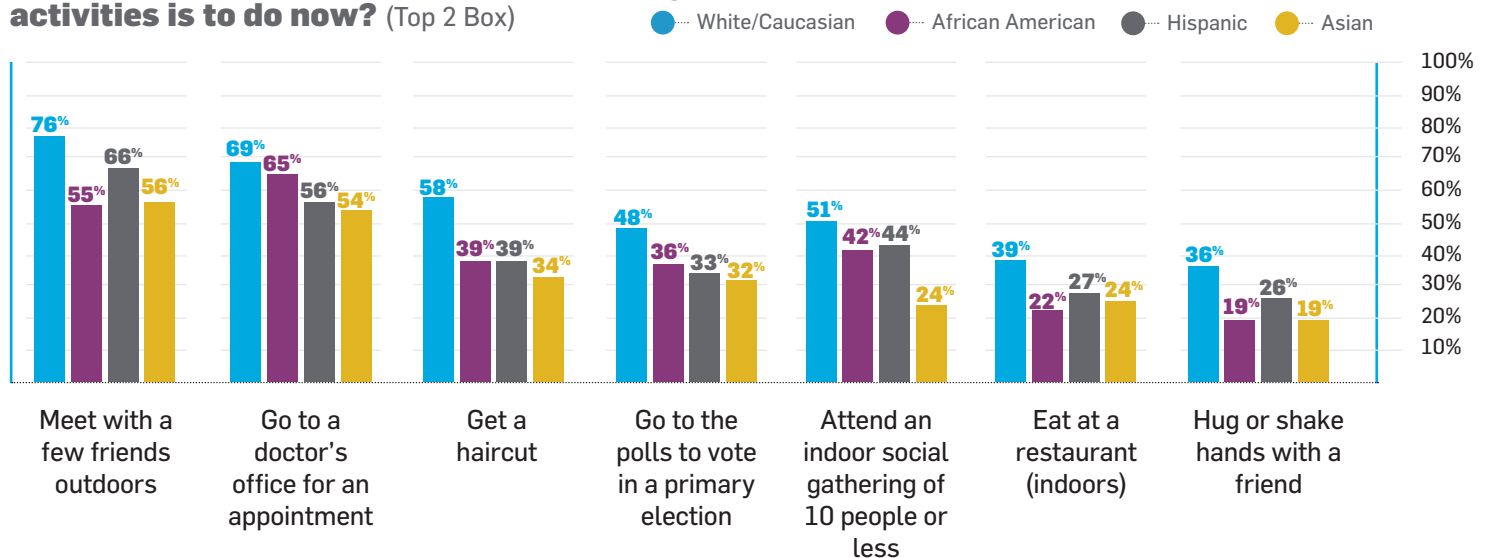
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The higher someone's income, the more likely they were to plan to get a haircut, go to a doctor, go to a shared workplace, and meet friends outdoors.



White/Caucasian respondents are more likely than people of other races/ethnicities to rate most activities as safe.

How safe do you feel each of the following activities is to do now? (Top 2 Box)

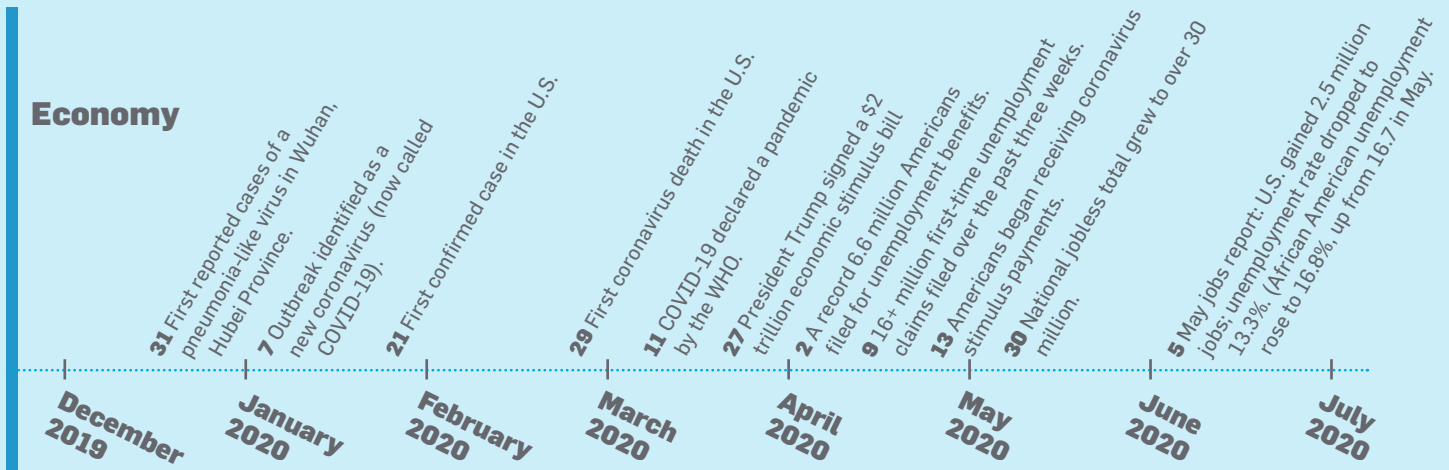


For further data around these demographic breakdowns, please see the appendix of this report.

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Economy



Financial Health

Economic fears and financial impact decreased steadily from April to June.

In early April 2020, the financial impact of the pandemic on the U.S. economy was looking grim. The stock market plummeted in late February; in early March, the market saw its largest point plunge for the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) in history. This date was followed by two more record-setting point drops on March 12 and March 16.

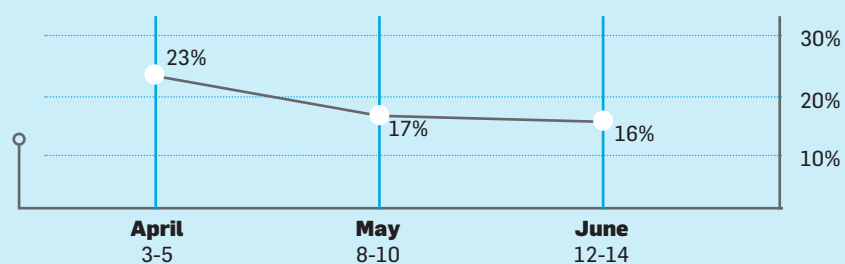
In April, stay-at-home orders across the U.S. sought to refuge against further spreading of the virus, though it may have conversely contributed to further declining of the country's economy. Though President Donald Trump signed a \$2 trillion economic stimulus bill in late March that began paying out in mid-April, many Americans were already struggling: A record 6.6 million Americans filed for unemployment benefits by the beginning of April, a figure that only escalated as the month continued. A monthly employment report released by the Department of Labor at the end of April showed that the U.S. economy lost an unprecedented 20.5 million jobs in April, and the unemployment rate soared to 14.7 percent.

Given the financial climate, it wasn't surprising to find that at the outset of the Ad Council's study in early April, nearly four in five (79%) Americans said the COVID-19 pandemic had already had some impact on them financially—and nearly one in four (23%) reported they'd experienced a large financial impact by that time.

While first-time unemployment claims hit the millions for most of the spring, the number steadily declined each week through May and into June 2020. May 2020 employment reports from the Department of Labor reflected that the U.S. gained 2.5 million jobs in May, and that the unemployment rate dropped to 13.3 percent, down from 14.7 percent in April—positive signs of a rebounding economy, albeit slowly.

While the overall financial impact of COVID-19 on Americans remained high into June (75%), fewer over time reported that they'd experienced a large financial impact from the pandemic—down from 23 percent in early April to 16 percent in early June.

The percentage of Americans reporting that the COVID-19 crisis had a "large financial impact" on them



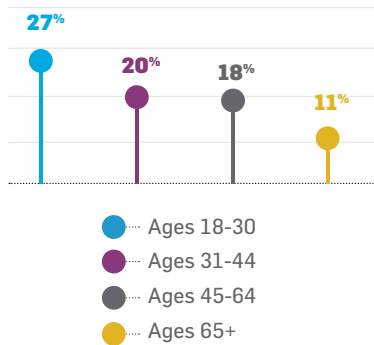
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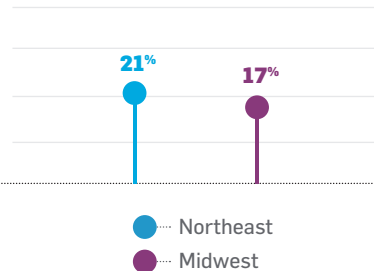
Those who reported the most financial impact (i.e., were significantly more likely to say COVID-19 had a “large financial impact”) included:

How much of an impact has the COVID-19 pandemic had on you financially? (Top Box)

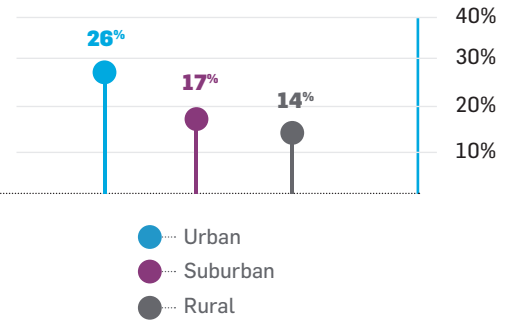
Younger adults



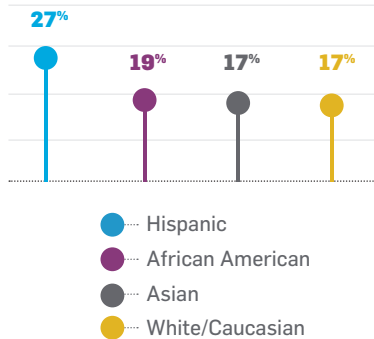
People living in the Northeast vs. the Midwest



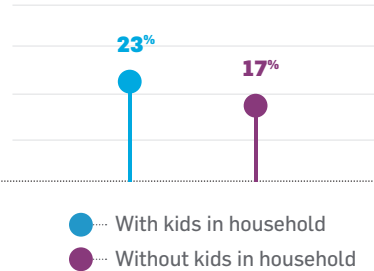
People living in urban areas



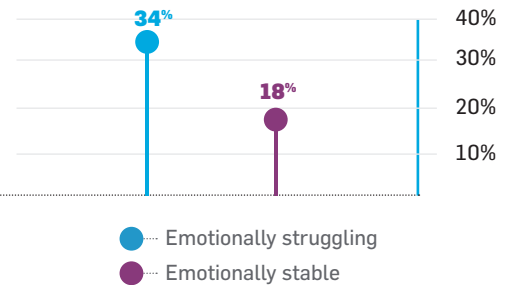
Hispanic respondents more than all races/ethnicities, followed by African Americans



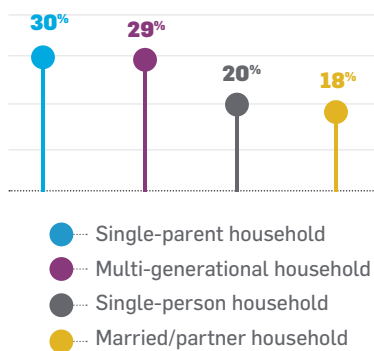
Parents w/kids under 18 in the household



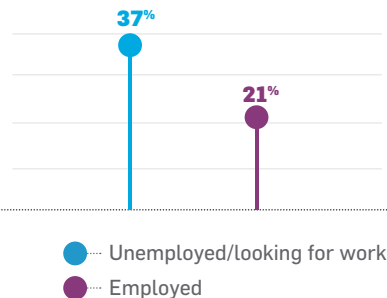
Those who are emotionally struggling



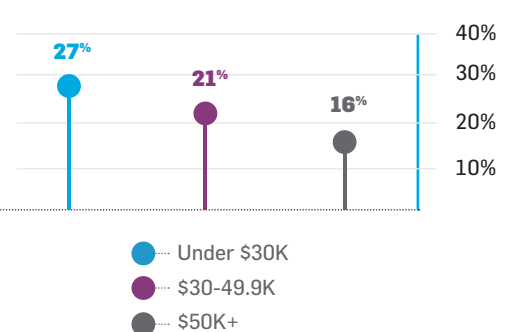
Single parents and multi-generational households



Unemployed/looking for work



People with lower incomes

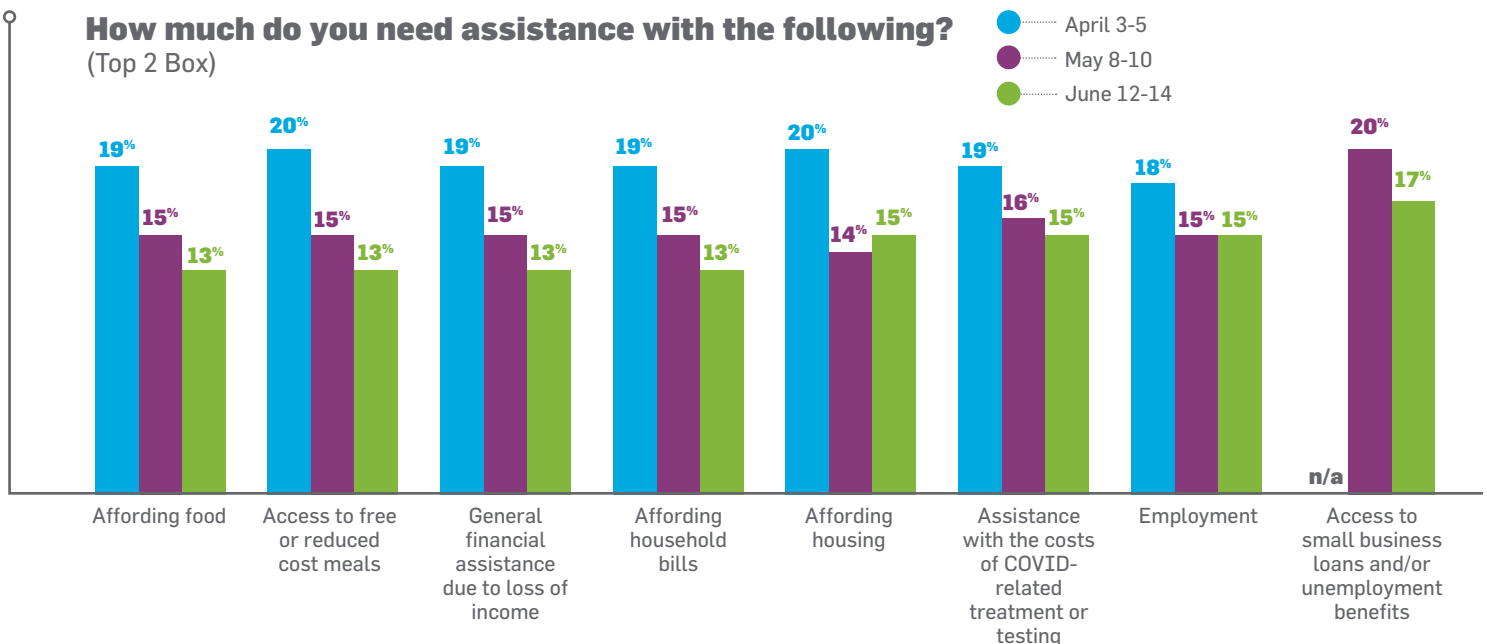


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WHAT AMERICANS NEED, FEEL AND FEAR ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Americans' needs for assistance needs fell significantly from April to June, largely related to people being better able to get by financially (like affording food, bills and housing), and to better access and availability of COVID-19 related resources (better access to PPE and COVID-19 testing).

How much do you need assistance with the following? (Top 2 Box)



Some disparities in needs were still seen among demographic groups, however. For example:

- Americans with lower incomes reported needing much more assistance affording housing, bills and food than those at higher income levels.
- Urban Americans were dramatically more likely to need assistance across all categories and types of needs, compared to those living in suburban or rural areas.
- Hispanic respondents reported greater needs for assistance for almost all categories compared to other racial/ethnic groups.
- African American and Asian respondents reported greater needs than white/Caucasian respondents for affording bills and housing.
- African Americans also reported greater needs affording food than white/Caucasian and Asian respondents.

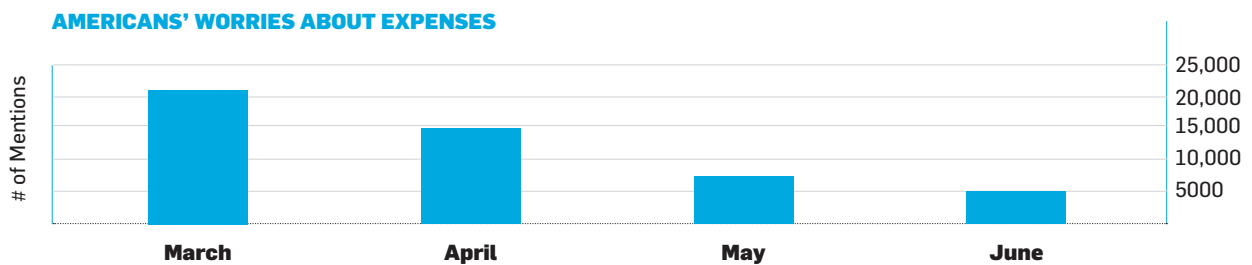
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WHAT AMERICANS NEED, FEEL AND FEAR ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Social Listening

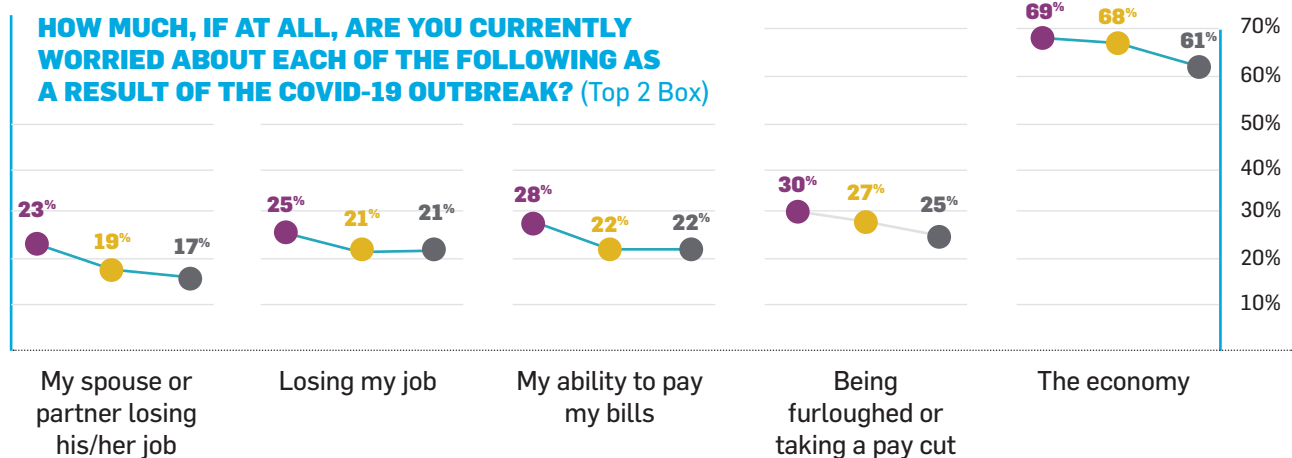
Americans' Worries About Expenses Down 78% from March to June 2020

Many of those who were experiencing a high financial impact turned to social media to express their frustration and outrage over being unable to afford their expenses. Despite continued financial struggles, online mentions of expense worries dropped significantly from the start of the pandemic to June 2020.



As the financial impact lessened, and as health-related needs and concerns decreased, Americans in general became less worried from April to June 2020 about financially related topics—including the economy, furloughs/pay cuts, one's ability to pay bills, losing a job, or a spouse losing his/her job.

- April 3-5
- May 8-10
- June 12-14



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Some exceptions included:

- Older adults (ages 31+) were more worried about the economy as a whole, compared to 18-30 year olds.
- Urban residents were more worried than those in suburban and rural areas about most things, including the economy, job loss & ability to pay bills.
- Respondents with higher incomes were more worried about the economy than those with lower incomes; Americans with lower income were more worried about job loss and paying bills.
- Caregivers were more worried about nearly all topics, compared to non-caregivers.
- Multi-generational and single parent households reported greater worries about financial concerns (like the ability to pay bills) compared to other household types.
- African American respondents were significantly less worried about the economy than those of other races/ethnicities.

For further data around these demographic breakdowns, please see the appendix of this report.

Mental Health

While anxiety and depression spiked through the spring, gratitude remained the most dominant emotion at the outset of, and throughout, the crisis (April-June 2020).

As needs and concerns about health and finances loomed in early April, morale across the country was mixed. Gratitude dominated Americans' top emotion (53% reported feeling grateful in the past week), while positive and negative emotions ranked next: 38% reported feeling hopeful, 36% reported feeling tired or anxious, 34% felt isolated, 32% were optimistic.

As spring continued, positive feelings became the majority: Americans were significantly more likely in June to say they had been feeling hopeful, relaxed, content, confident, optimistic and cheerful—and significantly less likely to be feeling sad, isolated, bored, or anxious. Gratefulness continued to top this list, with little change from April to June.

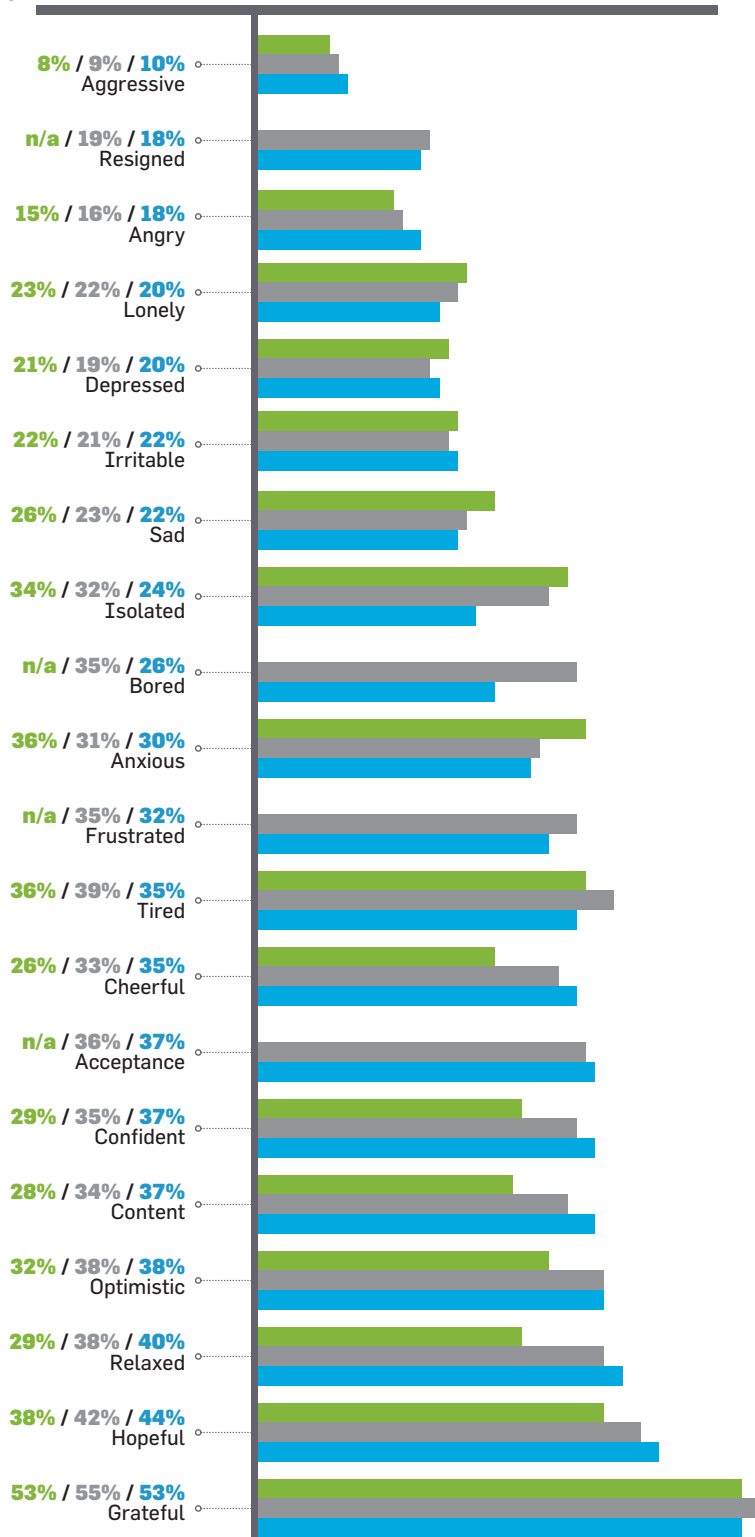
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WHAT AMERICANS NEED, FEEL AND FEAR ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Feelings/Emotions from April to June

In the past week, how often have you felt any of the following? (Top 2 Box)

● Early April
● Early May
● Early June



Resigned, Frustrated, Acceptance not surveyed in early April.

Some demographic groups were worse off than others emotionally, however. For example:

- Urban respondents were significantly more likely than rural and suburban residents to feel anxious, isolated, depressed, lonely, aggressive, angry, resigned and bored.
- People earning under \$50k in household income were significantly more likely than the highest income group (\$100k+) to report feeling depressed, lonely, sad, bored, isolated, and tired—while those earning \$100k+ were more likely to feel relaxed, optimistic, cheerful or resigned.
- Single-parent and multi-generational households were significantly more likely to report feeling anxious, depressed, lonely, isolated, sad and tired compared to people in married/partner households.
- African American respondents were significantly more likely to report feeling grateful, hopeful, optimistic, confident, relaxed, content, cheerful or acceptance than people of other races/ethnicities. In general, positive emotions (like cheerfulness, contentedness, relaxation) increased from April to June for African Americans, while emotions like depression, isolation and loneliness decreased.
- Compared to people of other races/ethnicities, Hispanic respondents were the most likely to report feeling sad, tired, frustrated, lonely, irritable, depressed, anxious, angry and aggressive.
- Caregivers were significantly more likely to report negative emotions than non-caregivers.
- And not surprisingly, Americans in frontline/essential jobs were most likely to feel tired—though otherwise, these workers reported the same feelings as people not working in occupations deemed essential.

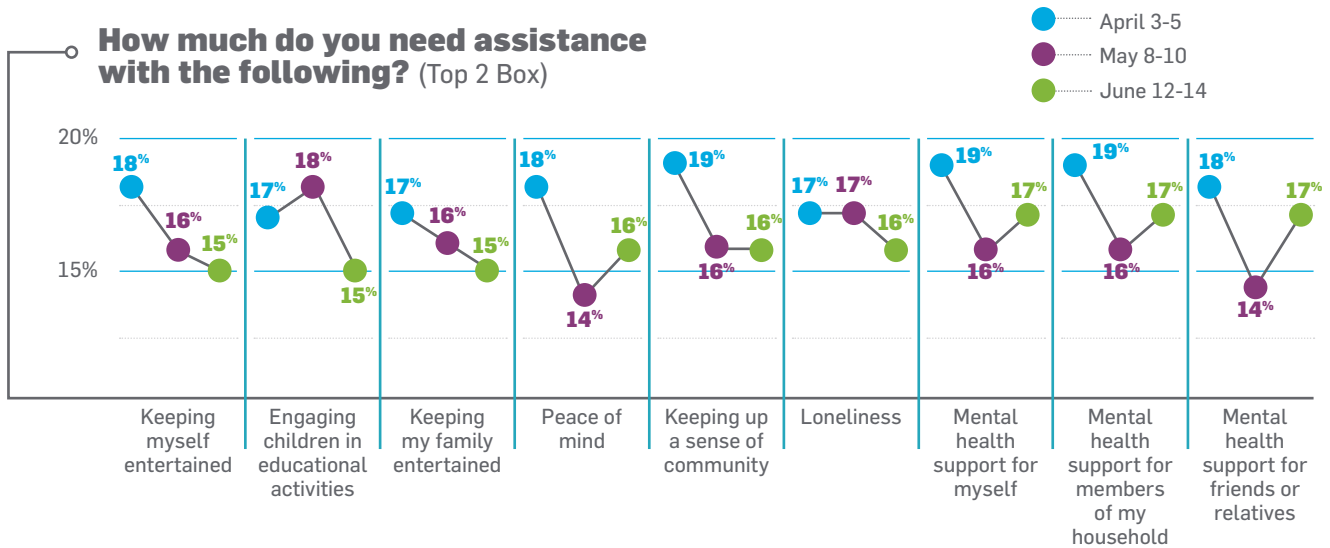
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WHAT AMERICANS NEED, FEEL AND FEAR ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Mental Health Needs & Concerns

Similar to financial and health impacts, many mental health needs and concerns declined from April to June, including peace of mind, loneliness, keeping the family entertained and mental health support for friends and family.

How much do you need assistance with the following? (Top 2 Box)

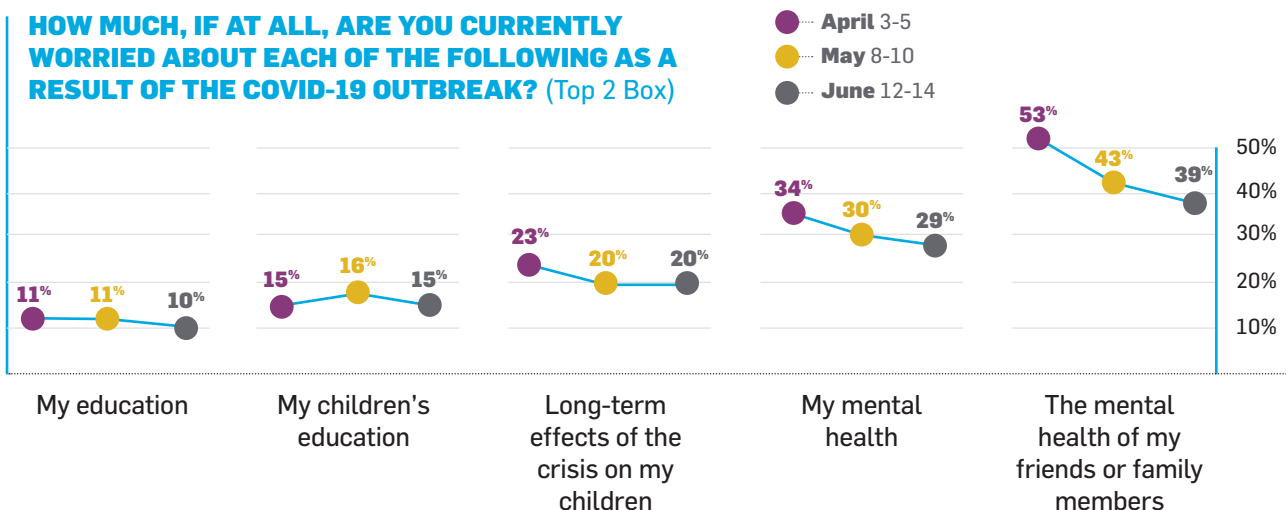


Again, some differences were seen among demographic groups, such as:

- Urban residents were more likely to need assistance across all categories compared to suburban/rural residents—especially peace of mind, a difference that wasn't seen among other demographic groups.
- Hispanic respondents again reported greater needs for almost all categories compared to respondents of other races/ethnicities, and Hispanic and Asian respondents were most likely to mention needing help engaging their children in educational activities.

Most mental health concerns decreased for the general population from April to June 2020 as well. Over time, Americans became less worried about topics like the mental health of friends or family members, and the long-term effects of the pandemic on their children.

HOW MUCH, IF AT ALL, ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORRIED ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK? (Top 2 Box)



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Among demographic groups:

- Like with other findings, urban residents were more worried than those in suburban and rural areas about most things, including mental health.
- Younger adults were more worried than older Americans about most mental health-related categories.
- Americans with lower incomes were more worried than those earning higher incomes about their mental health and the mental health of those around them, while respondents with higher incomes were more worried about their children's education.
- Caregivers were more worried about nearly every category than non-caregivers.
- Multi-generational and single parent households reported greater worries about their children and mental health than single-person and married/partner households.
- Compared to white/Caucasians, Hispanic and African American respondents were significantly more worried about every mental health-related issue.

For further data around these demographic breakdowns, please see the appendix of this report.

Social Listening

Personal Mental Health Discussions Dropped by 87% from March 2020 to June 2020

Back in March, amidst school closures, stock market crashes and stay at home orders, social media users actively spoke out about their mental health. An average of 2,250 publicly available social media posts appeared online in March—which dropped to less than 500 by June.

While Americans across the nation continue to struggle with their mental health, the start of summer brought new peace of mind. Despite civil unrest and a damaged economy, the pandemic forced the nation to slow down, re-prioritize and recognize the importance of mental health. Words like “family,” “friends” and “work,” common influences in the state of one’s mental health, appeared most frequently in online dialogue.



Information Seeking

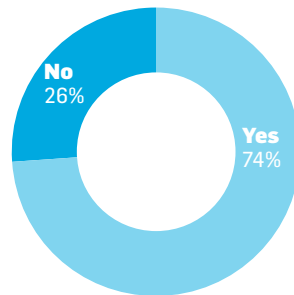
As general needs and concerns about the pandemic decreased from April to June 2020, so did Americans' efforts to seek out information about the crisis. In general, Americans sought out less information about the pandemic in June 2020 (54%) compared to early April (74%). In addition, Americans were less likely in June than in April to say they needed more information about:

- When the crisis will end (**64% to 55%**)
- When a vaccine will be available (**59% to 54%**)
- How and where to get tested (**45% to 27%**)
- How to support healthcare workers (**35% to 24%**)
- What I can do to help others (**28% to 22%**)
- How long to quarantine (**29% to 19%**)
- Their risk of getting COVID-19 (**26% to 18%**)
- Their loved ones risk of dying from COVID-19 (**26% to 18%**)
- When they need to quarantine (**21% to 13%**)

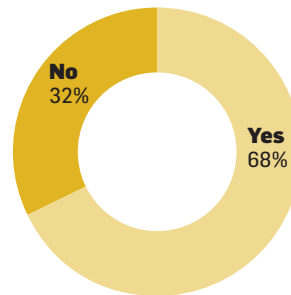
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WHAT AMERICANS NEED, FEEL AND FEAR ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

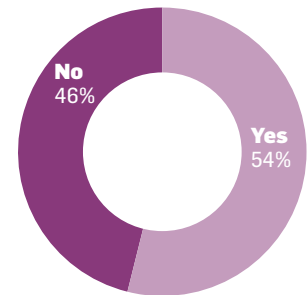
HAVE YOU PERSONALLY LOOKED FOR OR SOUGHT OUT INFORMATION ABOUT COVID-19 WITHIN THE PAST WEEK?



Early April

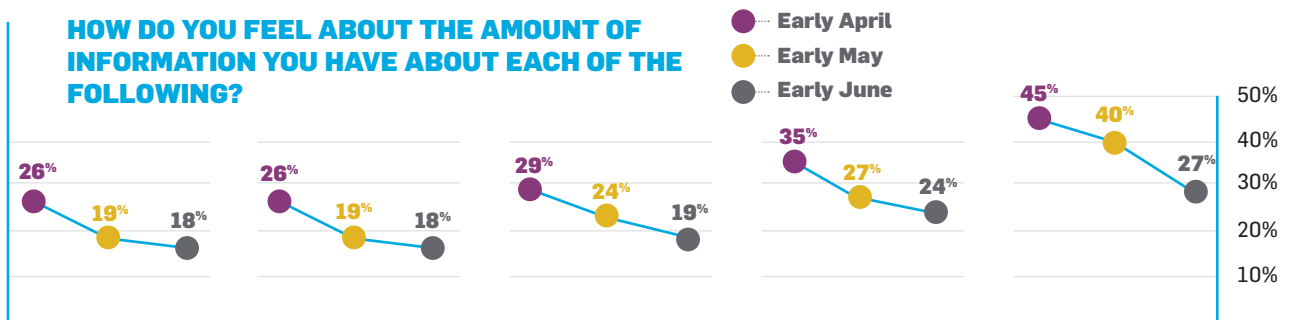


Early May



Early June

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION YOU HAVE ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING?



The risk of those I love dying from COVID-19

My risk of getting COVID-19

How long I need to quarantine for

How to help or support healthcare workers

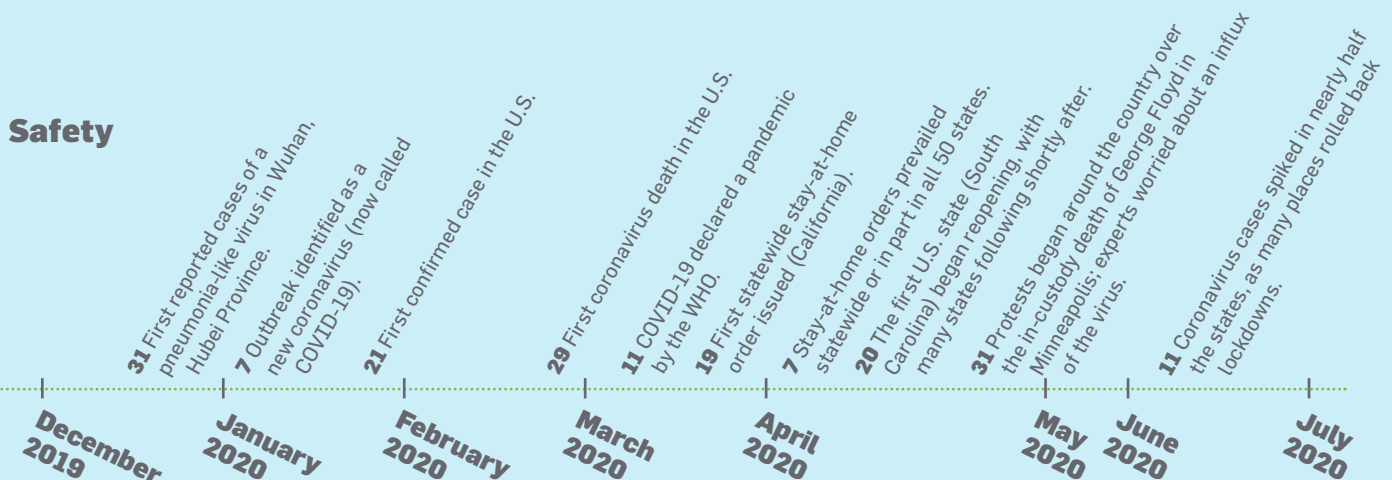
How and/or where to get tested for COVID-19

Safety & Inequity

The COVID-19 crisis in April-June 2020 not only highlighted—but also exacerbated—inequities around race and income.

While the COVID-19 crisis has undoubtedly affected Americans regardless of demographics, it has disproportionately impacted some groups more than others—especially people who were already struggling before the pandemic. In particular, this crisis has had a particularly strong impact on people of color and people with lower incomes, and already has worsened racial and income-related inequities.

Safety



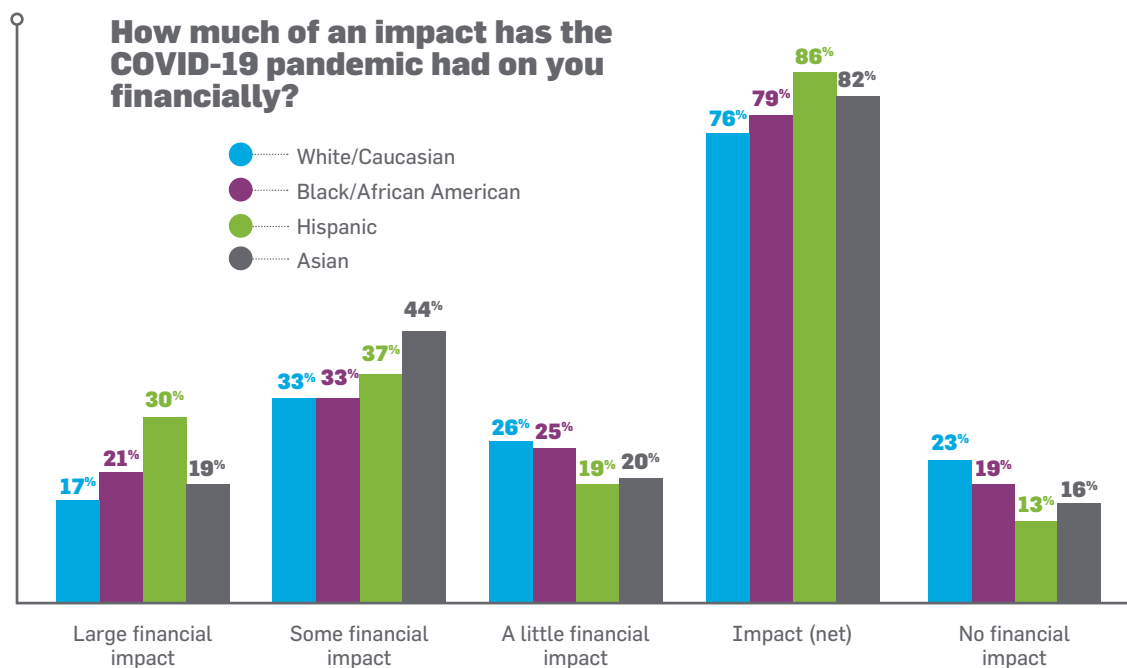
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WHAT AMERICANS NEED, FEEL AND FEAR ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Research included in a [spring 2020 report](#) from the Joint Economic Committee showed that lower income Americans are most vulnerable to COVID-19, as they are much more likely to have underlying health conditions like hypertension, chronic lung disease, diabetes and heart disease.

In mid-April 2020, the CDC [released data](#) that revealed almost 34 percent of COVID-19 patients were African American—even though African Americans make up around 13 percent of the [U.S. population](#). Hispanic/Latinx patients accounted for approximately 23 percent of COVID-19 cases, while making up about 18 percent of the population in the U.S.

Financially, the impact has been disproportionate as well for people of color and people with lower incomes. One in four (27%) of Hispanic and one in five (19%) of African American respondents in the Ad Council's study reported a large financial impact due to COVID-19, compared to 17 percent of Asian or white/Caucasian respondents. In lower income brackets, one in four (27%) of people earning under \$30k and one in five (21%) of people earning \$30-49k were significantly more likely to say COVID-19 had a large financial impact than people with higher incomes (16% for people earning \$50k+).



A larger financial impact for people of color and those with lower incomes isn't surprising, when other environmental factors are also considered. For example, when discussing the disparate economic impact of the coronavirus, the Joint Economic Committee's [report](#) cited the following:

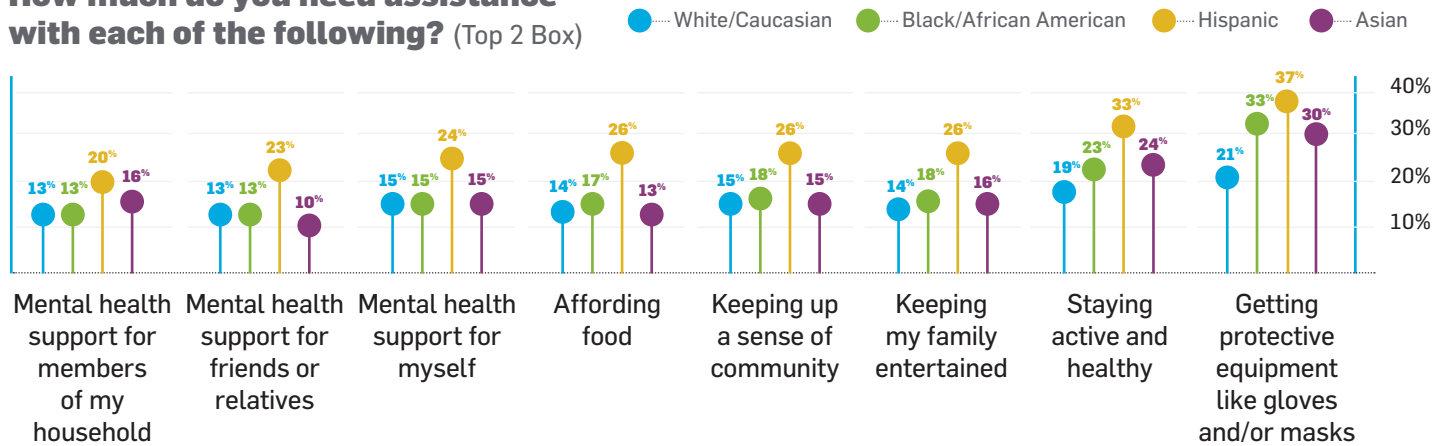
- African American workers are at the highest risk of job loss and long-term unemployment, as they are typically (and historically) the first to be fired in the event of an economic downturn.
- Latino workers are facing job loss and pay cuts as a result of the coronavirus.
- Employed Americans with low incomes are more likely to experience severe economic distress as a result of illness.

These trends are seen elsewhere, too: Though the overall unemployment rate decreased slightly from April to May 2020 (14.4% to 13.7%), [the rate actually increased](#) for African Americans, from 16.7 percent in April to 16.8 percent in May. And in the Ad Council's study, Hispanic (30%) and African American (24%) respondents were significantly more likely to say they needed general financial assistance due to loss of income than Asian (17%) or white/Caucasian (17%) respondents—and to report greater needs in many other categories spanning finance, health and mental health.

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WHAT AMERICANS NEED, FEEL AND FEAR ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

How much do you need assistance with each of the following? (Top 2 Box)



Likewise, people with lower incomes reported much greater needs for financial assistance than those with higher incomes, such as:

- Affording food: 22% low income, 11% high income
- Affording housing: 22% low income, 13% high income
- Employment: 23% low income, 15% high income
- General financial assistance due to loss of income: 24% low income, 15% high income

How much do you need assistance with the following? (Top 2 Box)

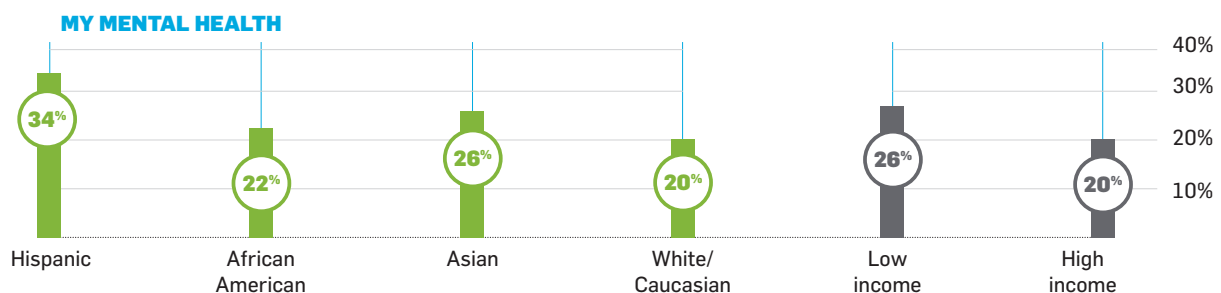
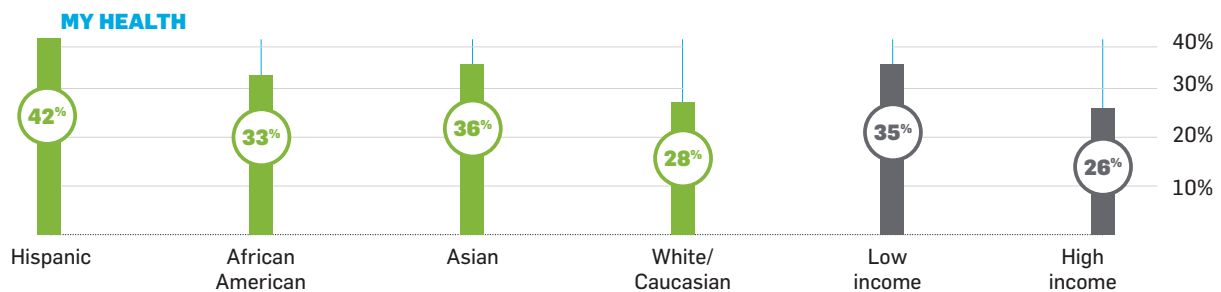
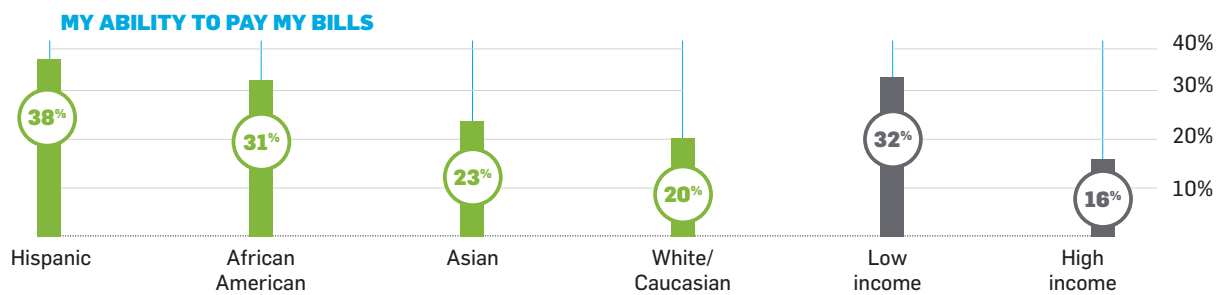
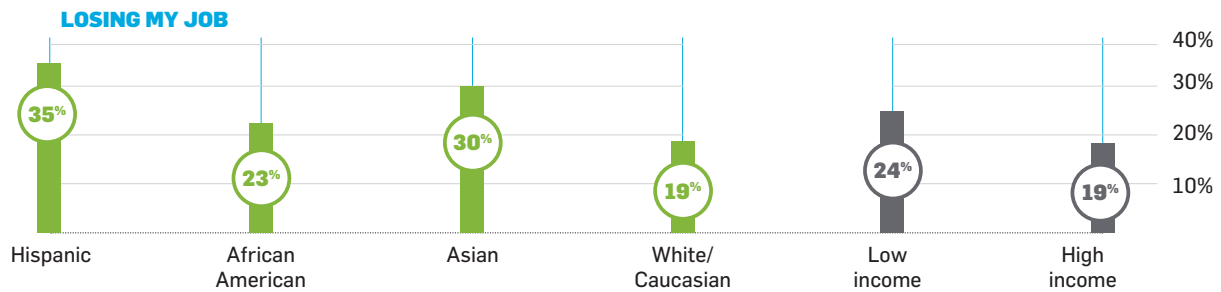


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WHAT AMERICANS NEED, FEEL AND FEAR ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

These two groups (people of color and people with lower incomes) were also significantly more worried in general than their counterparts through the spring of 2020 about:

How much, if at all, are you currently worried about each of the following as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak? (Top 2 Box)

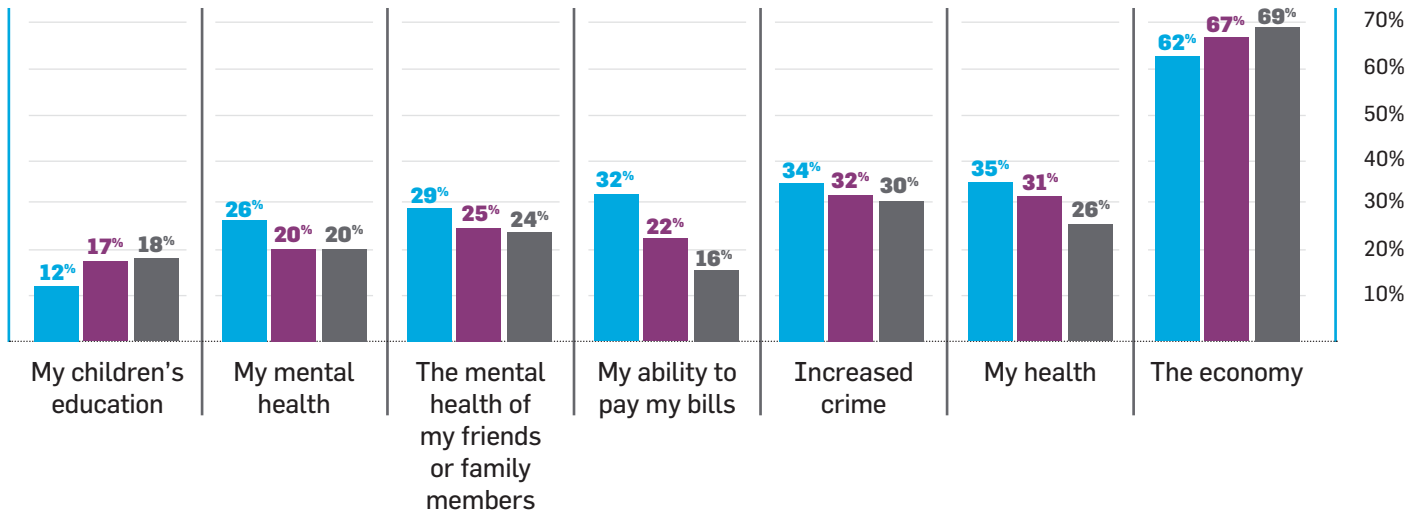


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WHAT AMERICANS NEED, FEEL AND FEAR ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

HOW MUCH, IF AT ALL, ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORRIED ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK? (Top 2 Box)

- Low income (\$49.9k or less)
- Middle income (\$50k-\$99.9k)
- High income (\$100k or more)



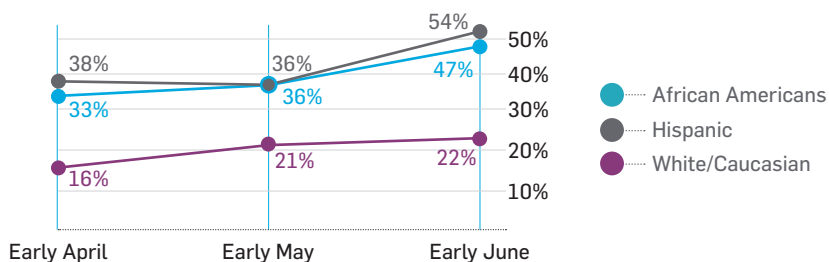
In general, most of the effects of COVID-19 lessened over time from April to June 2020. As noted throughout this report, Americans in general cited less of a financial impact in June versus April, as well as decreased needs for assistance and concerns across many categories. While the overall impact for groups such as people of color and people with low incomes was still at a higher level than others, these too waned some over time. But some notable worries increased over the time of this study, including concerns around increased crime, increased discrimination, and a loss of civil liberties—especially for people of color.

At a time in the U.S. when states were reopening and unemployment was slowly decreasing, June 2020 was marked by a different defining set of circumstances, which undoubtedly impacted these respondents' fears of increased discrimination at the time: May 26, 2020 [marked the beginning of](#)

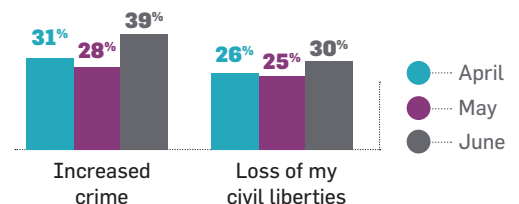
[protests](#) in Minneapolis over the in-custody killing of George Floyd, which soon spread to cities across the country and around the world. The protests, as *The New York Times* [put it](#), "quickly [gave] rise to a vast American reckoning with racism, as a backlash against entrenched inequality reverberates across society, from the upper echelons of corporations and media organizations to the pages of the dictionary."

In the Ad Council's study, concern about increased discrimination rose dramatically over time among African American respondents, from a third (33%) in early April to almost half (47%) in early June (which was fielded shortly after the killing of George Floyd and the start of ensuing protests). This trend was also seen among Hispanic respondents: 38 percent were concerned about increased discrimination in early April, which grew to 54 percent in early June.

WORRY GREW ABOUT INCREASED DISCRIMINATION



For Americans in general, the June survey also saw a sharp uptick in concerns over increased crime and a loss of one's civil liberties as compared to April and May:



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Conclusion

Though the initial shock of the COVID-19 pandemic may have waned, the United States has by no means come close to eradicating the virus or ending the crisis as of June 2020.

There's the good: Many states are cautiously phasing through reopening plans, balancing economic concerns with those of safety. Testing is much more widely available now than in the early spring.

And there's the not-so-good: Cases are rapidly increasing in many states across the U.S. (especially in the South and West), causing a pause in reopening plans. [Over 20 million Americans are unemployed](#), with the unemployment rate at 13.3 percent at the end of May 2020. Americans across the country are struggling; some in particular (such as people who have lower incomes and people of color) have been more affected than others. And while the needs and worries felt by many have lessened some over time, others spiked amid the shifting cultural landscape that took place between the early surveys in April and later ones in June.

But for better or for worse, Americans seem to be overall adjusting to life in a pandemic. People are feeling more positive emotions and less negative ones, and gratitude is holding strong. Concerns are dwindling for many, and the impacts are lessening as time goes on. Importantly, for now, Americans seem to be carefully weighing the perceived risk and safety of everyday activities before simply doing them.

This research was designed to uncover the needs and worries of Americans during the COVID-19 crisis, and to help brands, the media, causes and foundations understand how they can adequately address these needs. Though the coronavirus is no longer "novel," many of these needs are still being felt nationwide—and will likely continue long into the future. Americans will need these leaders and organizations to step up and support them, consistently and equitably, for the road ahead.

Find past reports and additional information at <http://covidresearch.adcouncilkit.org>.



About The Ad Council

The Ad Council has a long history of creating life-saving public service communications in times of national crisis, starting in the organization's earliest days during World War II to September 11th and natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy. Its deep relationships with media outlets, the creative community, issue experts and government leaders make the organization uniquely poised to quickly distribute life-saving information to millions of Americans.

The Ad Council is where creativity and causes converge. The non-profit organization brings together the most creative minds in advertising, media, technology and marketing to address many of the nation's most important causes. The Ad Council has created many of the most iconic campaigns in advertising history. Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk. Smokey Bear. Love Has No Labels.

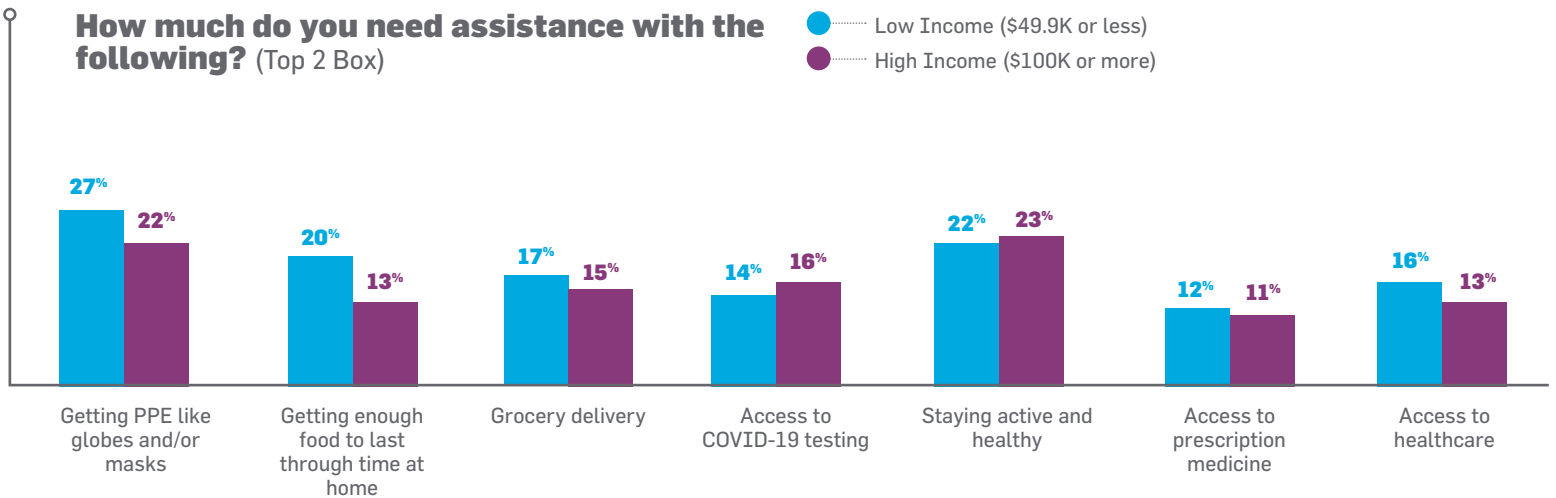
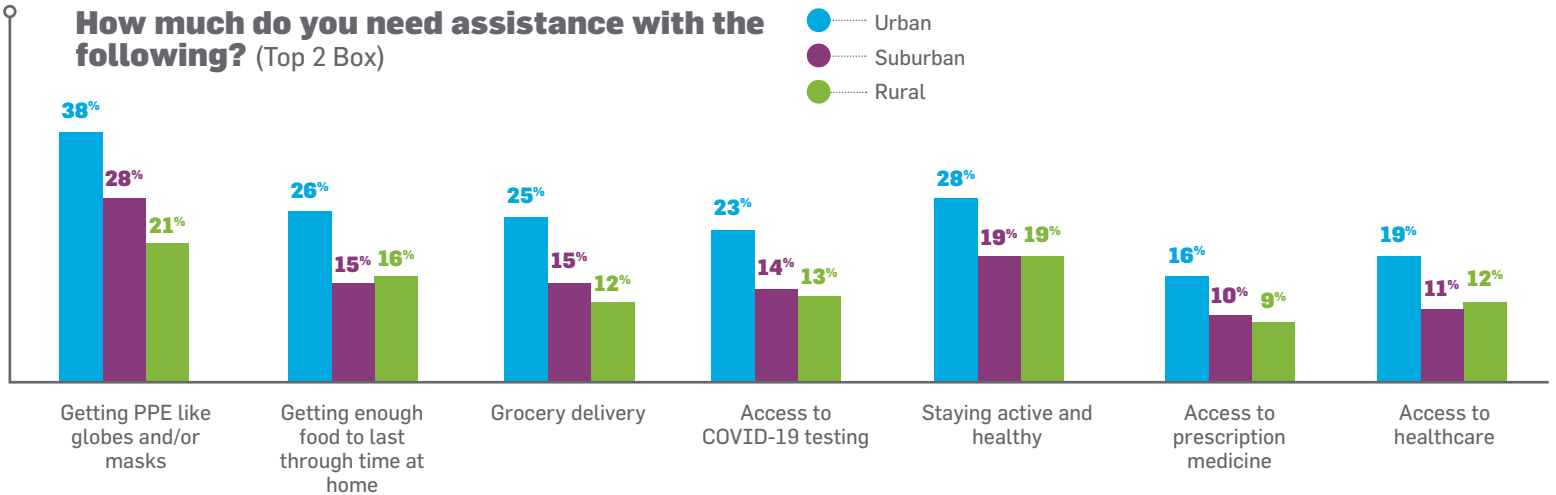
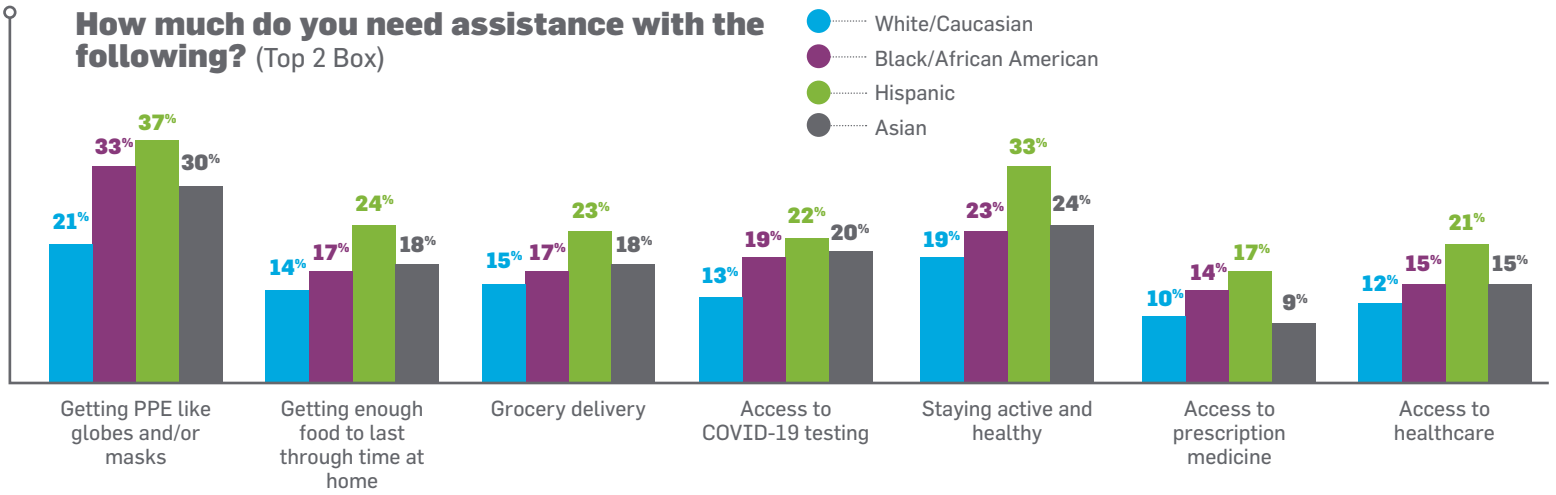
The Ad Council's innovative social good campaigns raise awareness, inspire action and save lives. To learn more, visit AdCouncil.org, follow the Ad Council's communities on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and view the creative on [YouTube](#).

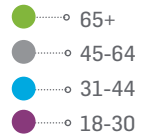


About C+R Research

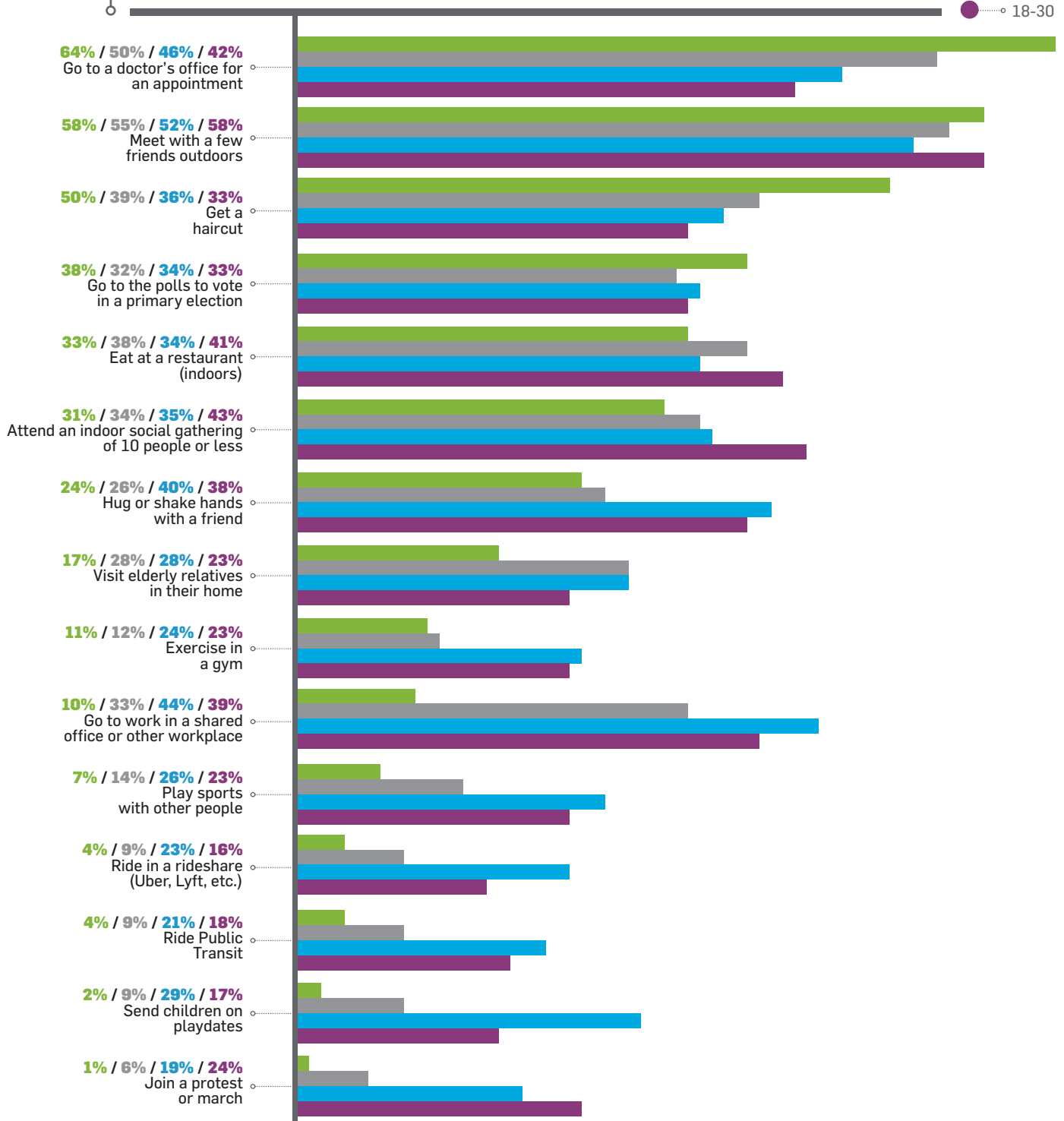
C+R Research is an independent full-service marketing insights agency with 60 years of experience delivering great research, deep perspective and committed client service. C+R is nationally recognized for its best-in-class quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and expertise with specific populations, including shoppers, youth & family, multicultural consumers, business professionals, and global communities. C+R is privately held and headquartered in Chicago, IL. For additional information, please visit www.crresearch.com.

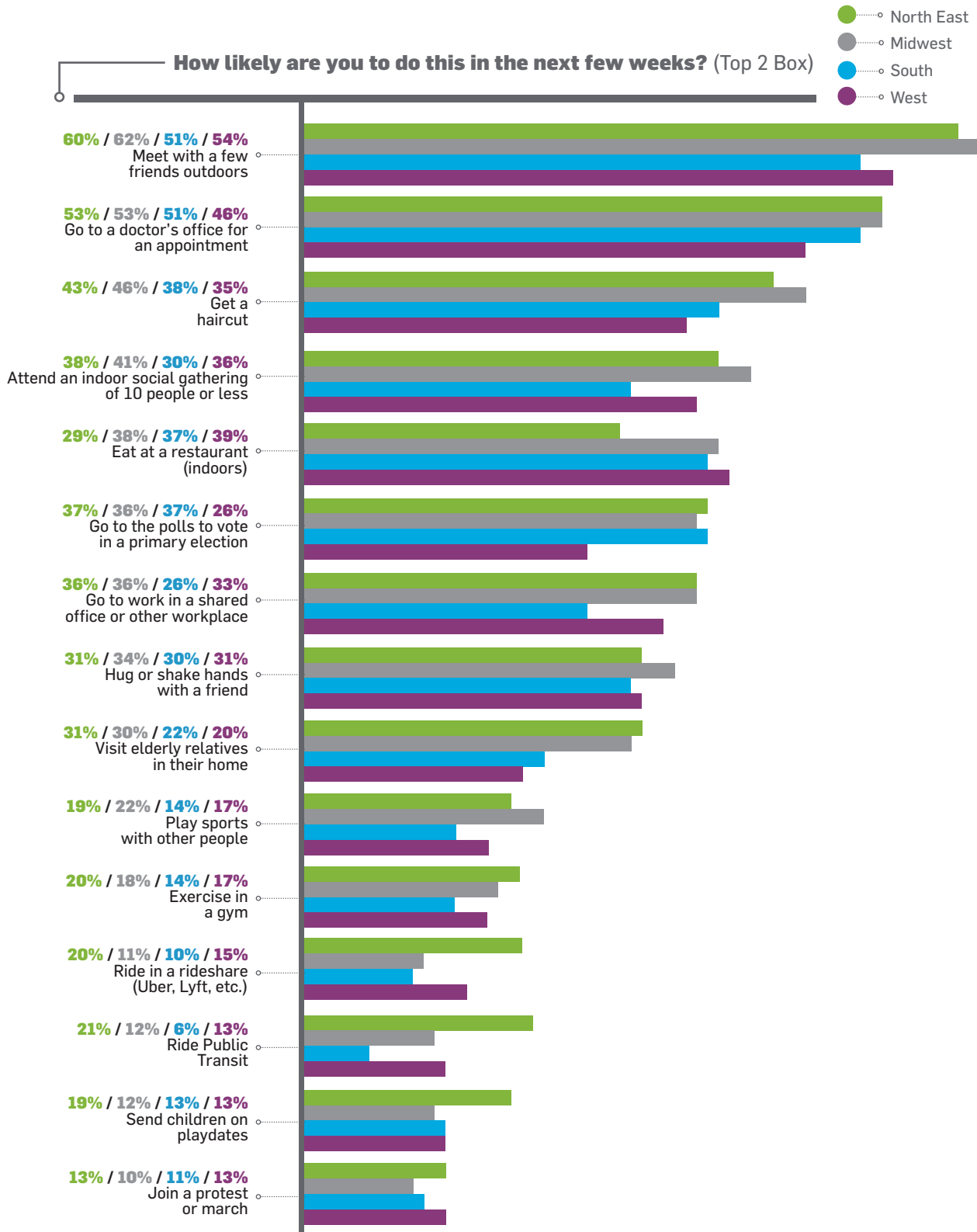
APPENDIX

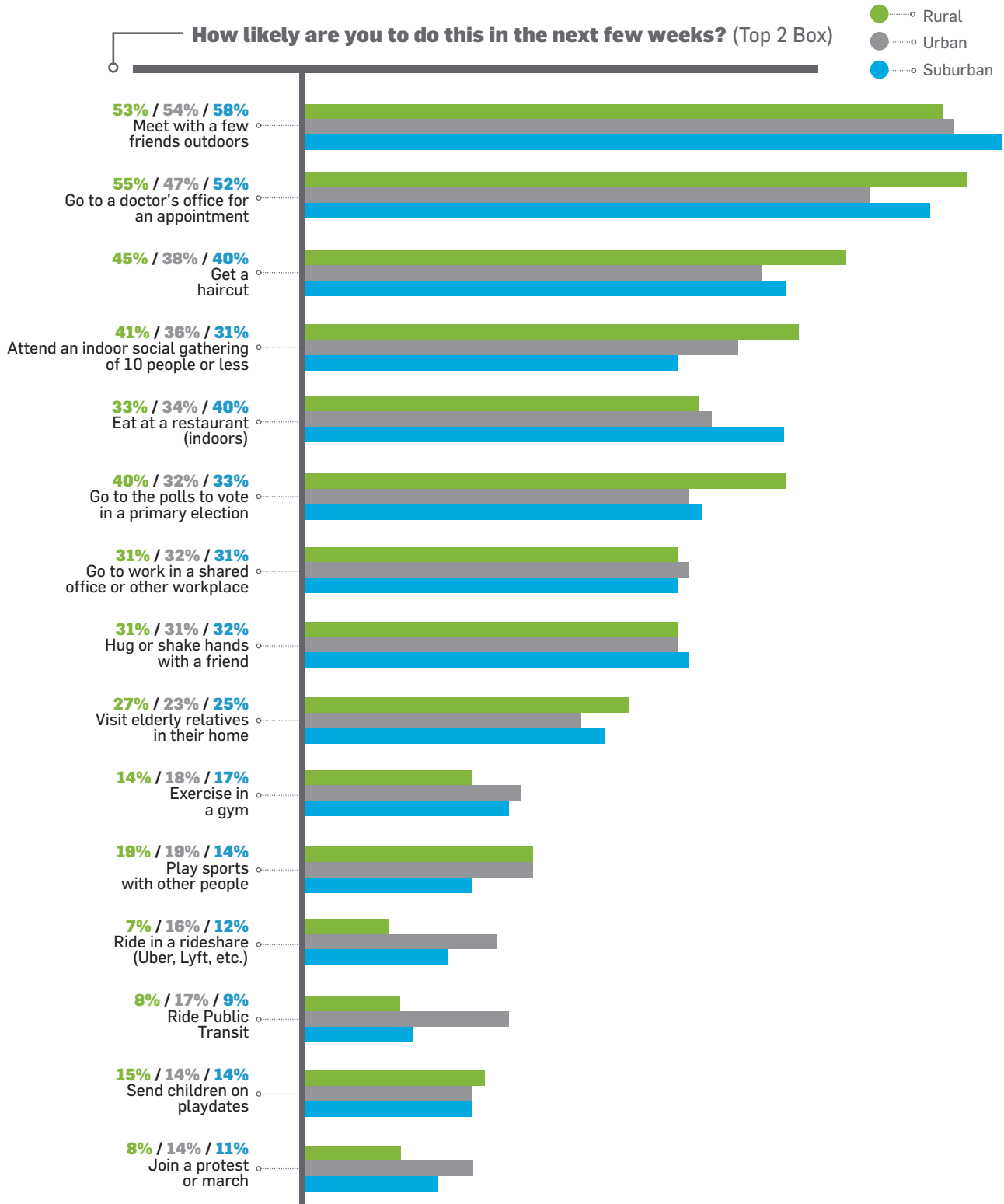




How likely are you to do this in the next few weeks? (Top 2 Box)

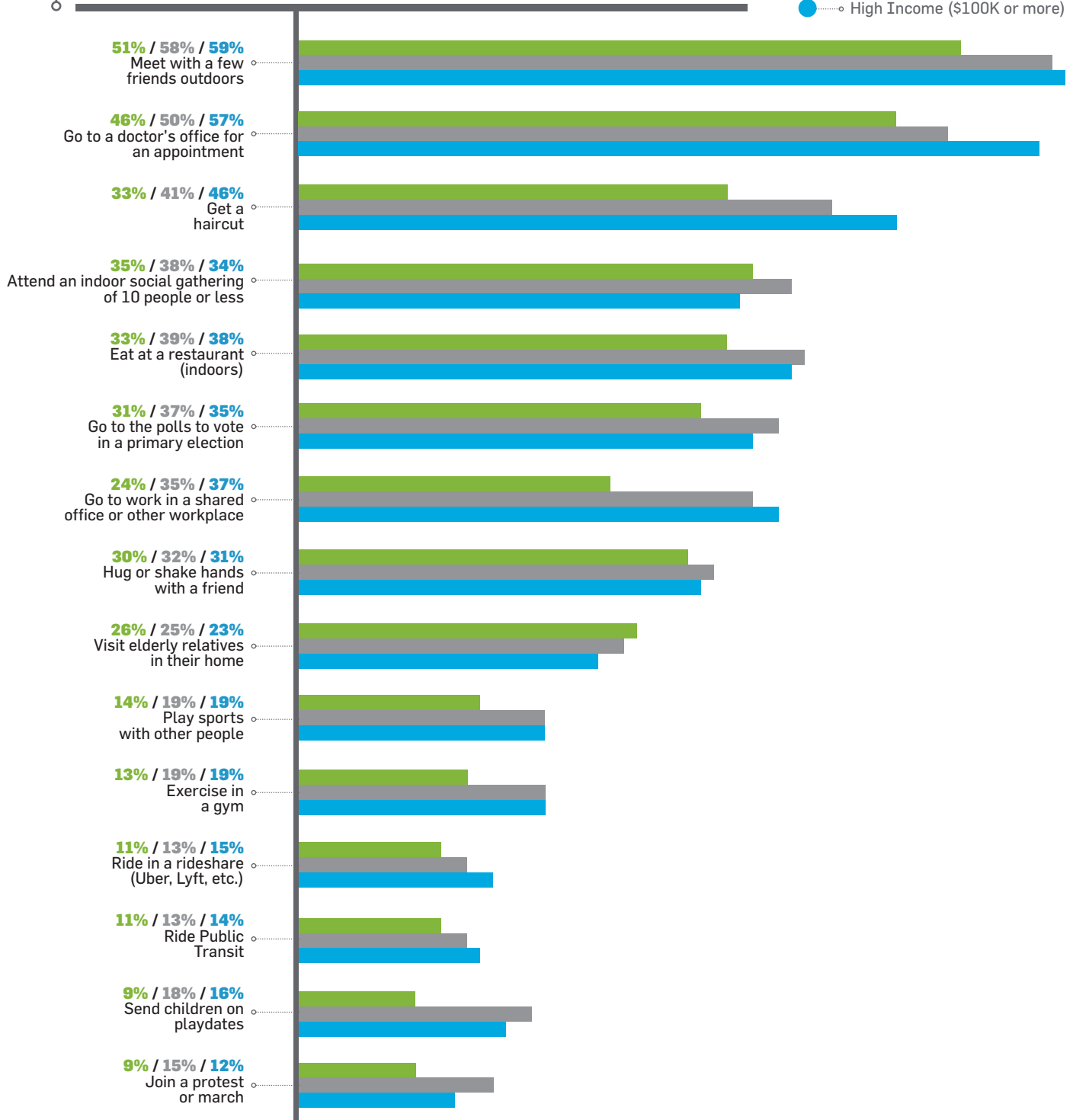


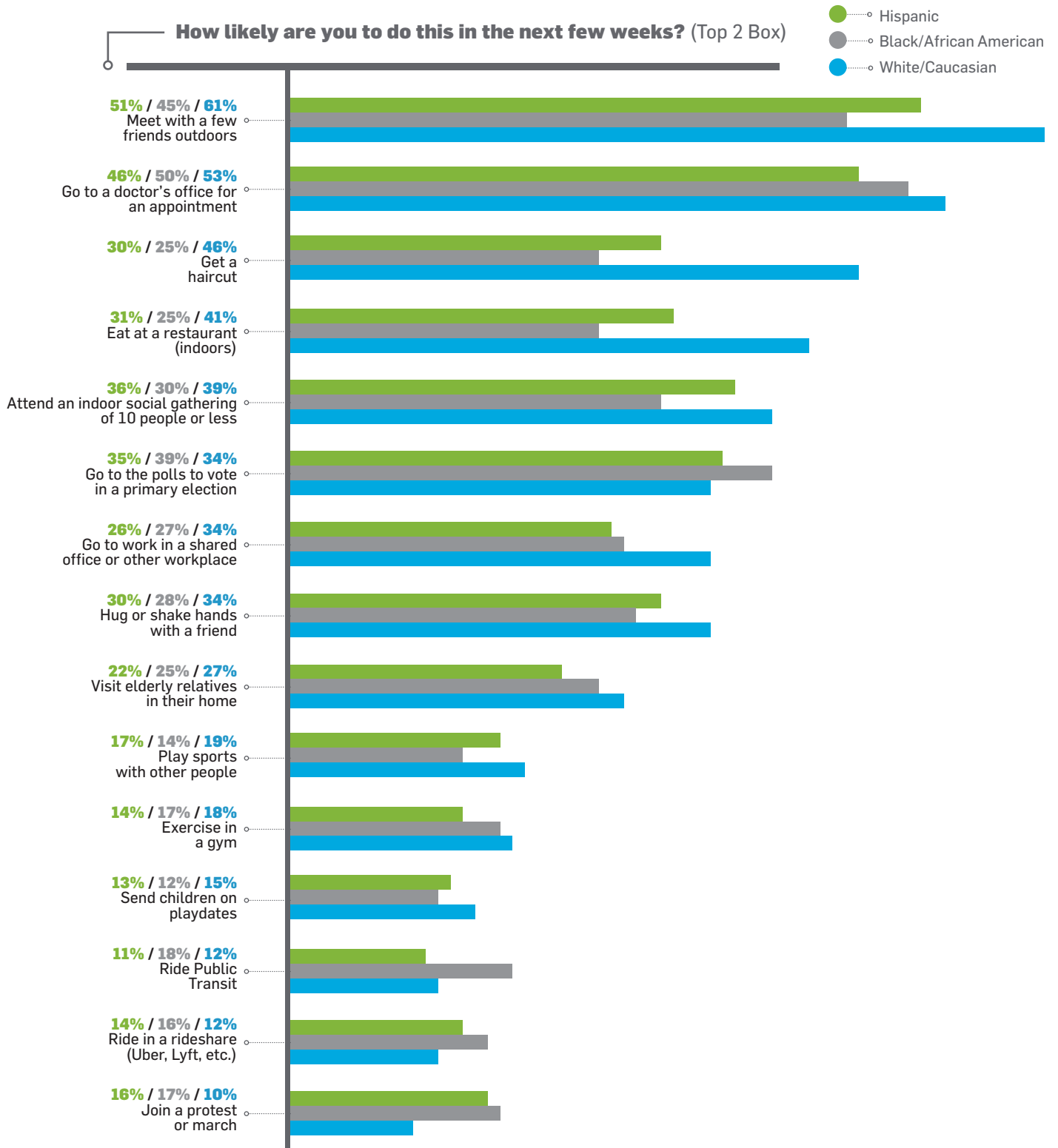




How likely are you to do this in the next few weeks? (Top 2 Box)

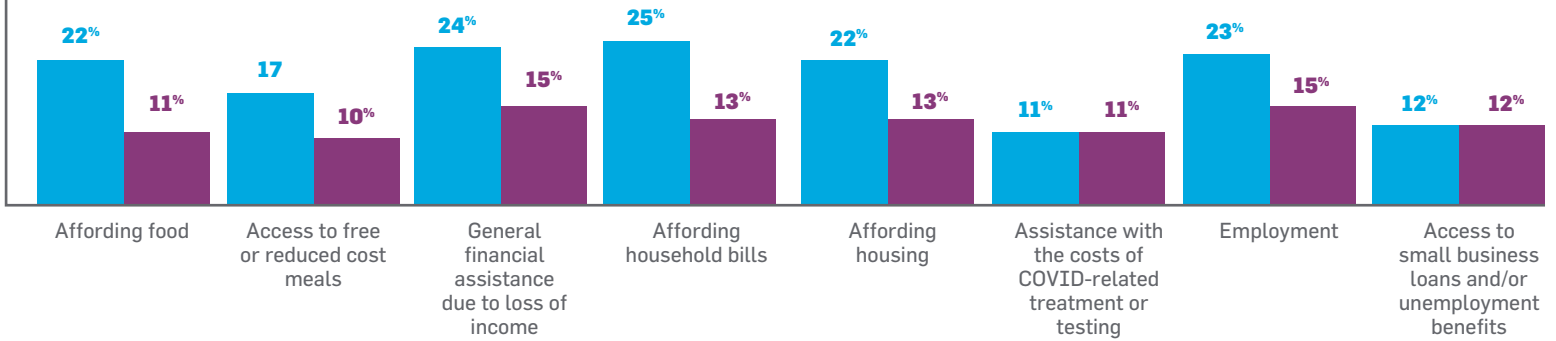
● Low Income (\$49.9K or less)
 ● Middle Income (\$50K-\$99.9K)
 ● High Income (\$100K or more)





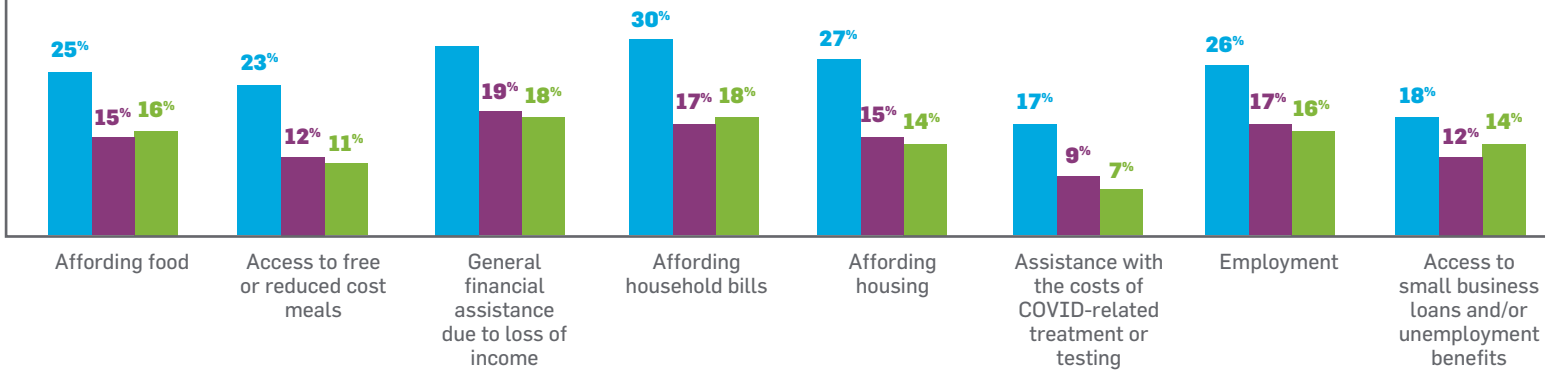
How much do you need assistance with the following? (Top 2 Box)

● Low Income (\$49.9K or less)
● High Income (\$100K or more)



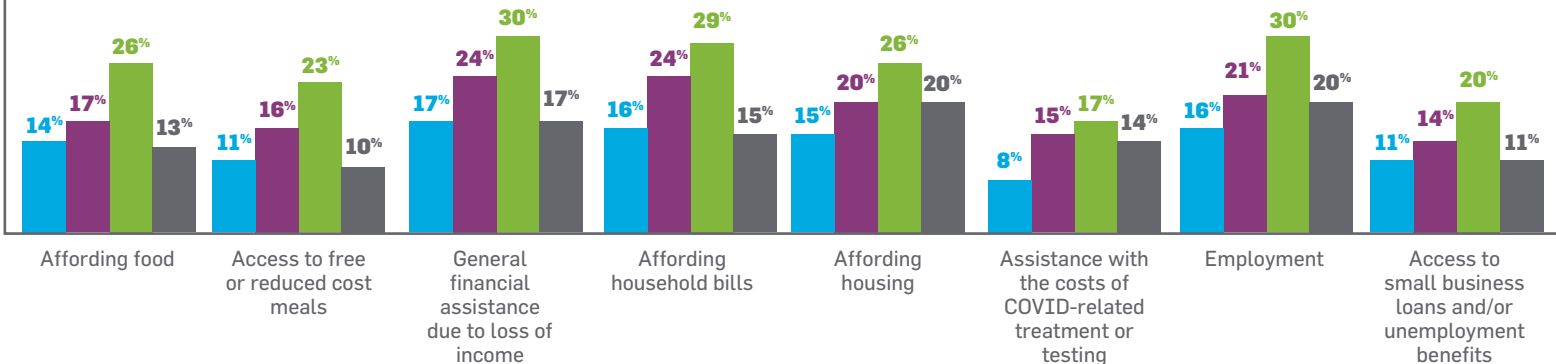
How much do you need assistance with the following? (Top 2 Box)

● Urban
● Suburban
● Rural



How much do you need assistance with the following? (Top 2 Box)

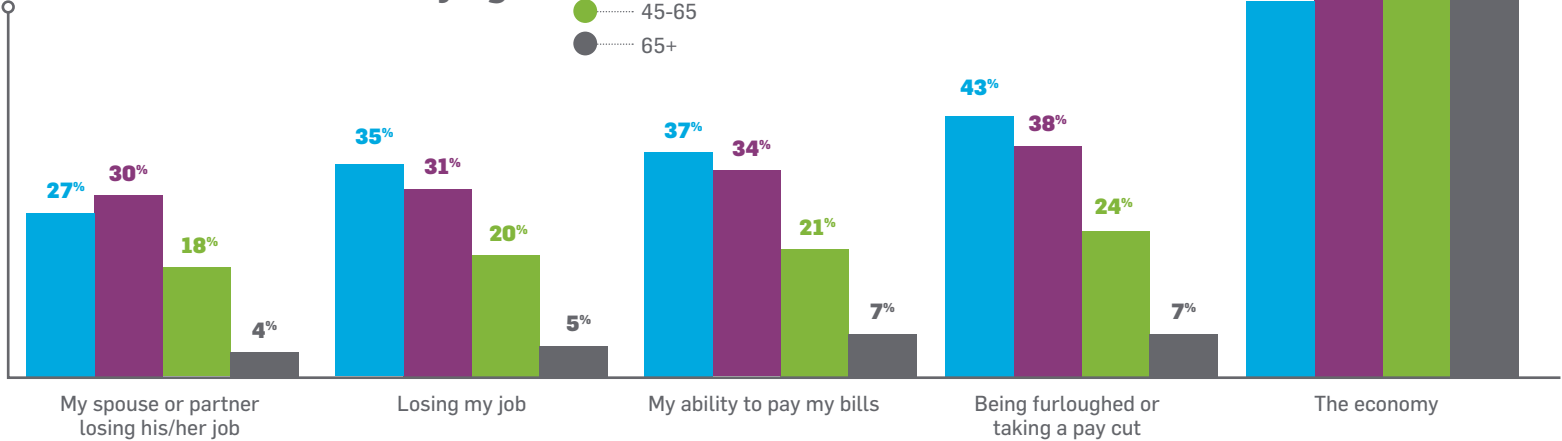
● White/Caucasian
● Black/African American
● Hispanic
● Asian



How much, if at all, are you currently worried about each of the following as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak? (Top 2 Box)

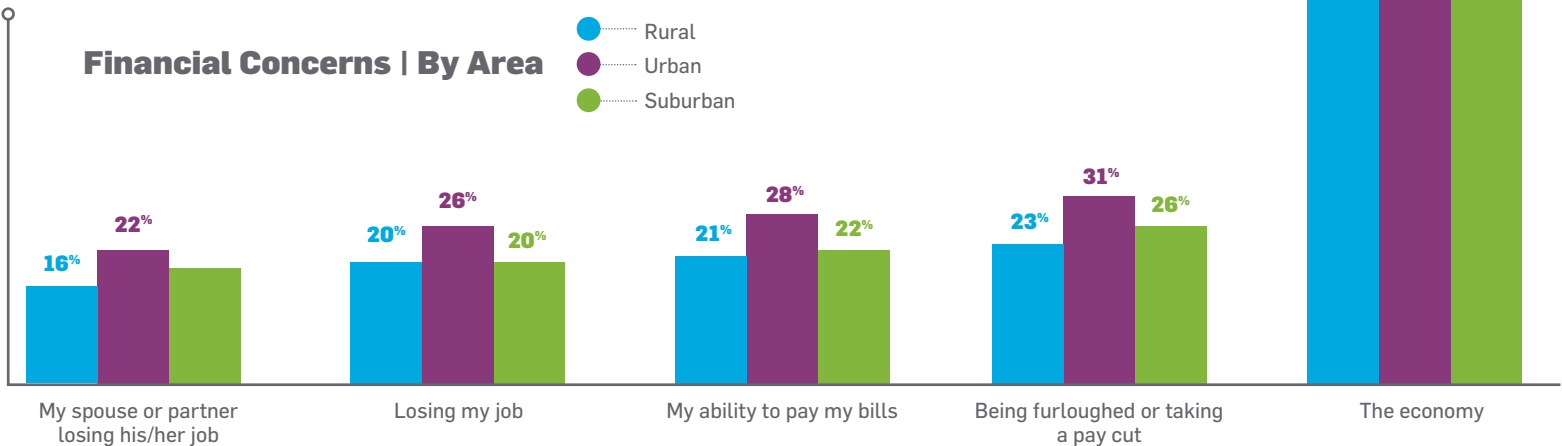
Financial Concerns | By Age

- 18-30
- 31-44
- 45-65
- 65+



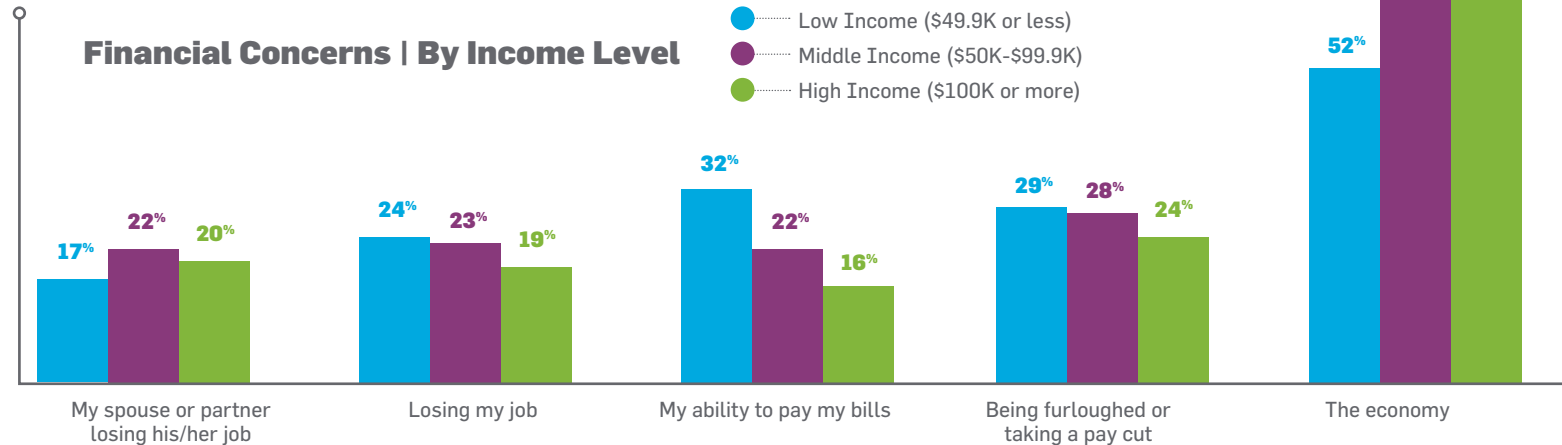
Financial Concerns | By Area

- Rural
- Urban
- Suburban



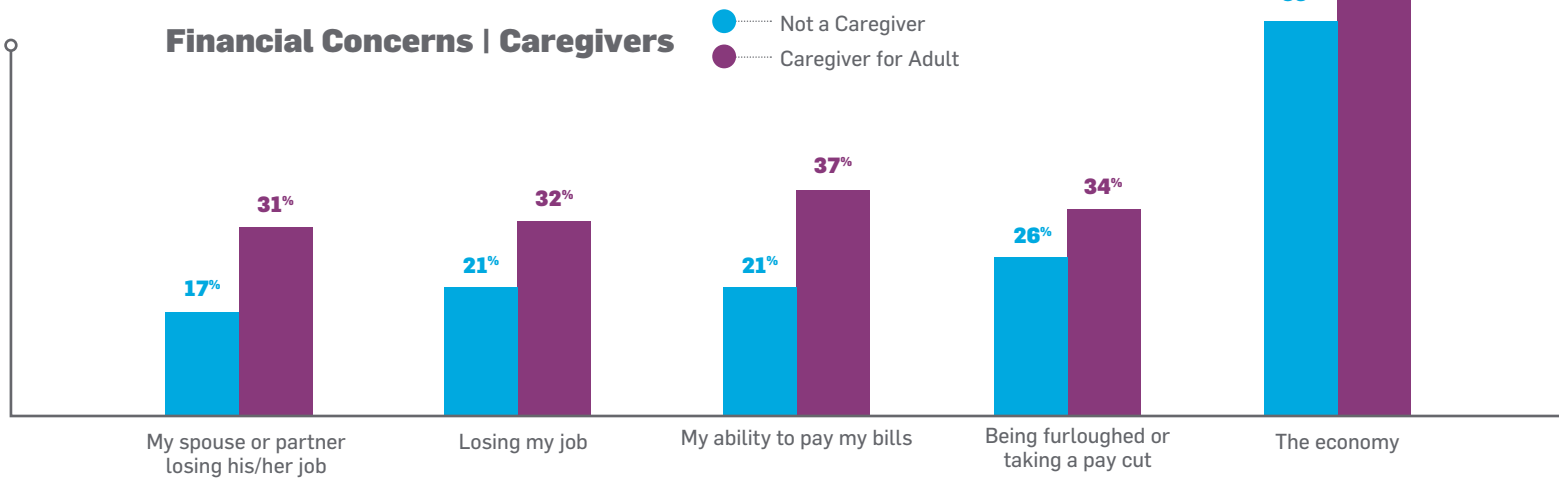
Financial Concerns | By Income Level

- Low Income (\$49.9K or less)
- Middle Income (\$50K-\$99.9K)
- High Income (\$100K or more)

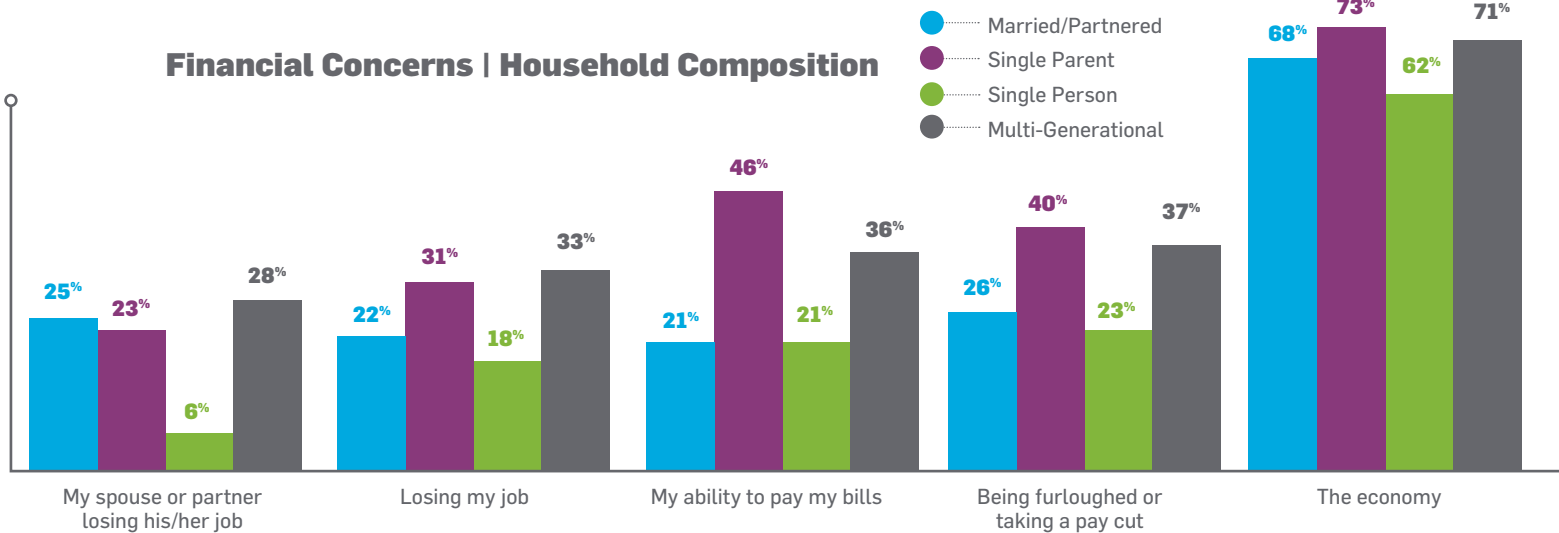


How much, if at all, are you currently worried about each of the following as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak? (Top 2 Box)

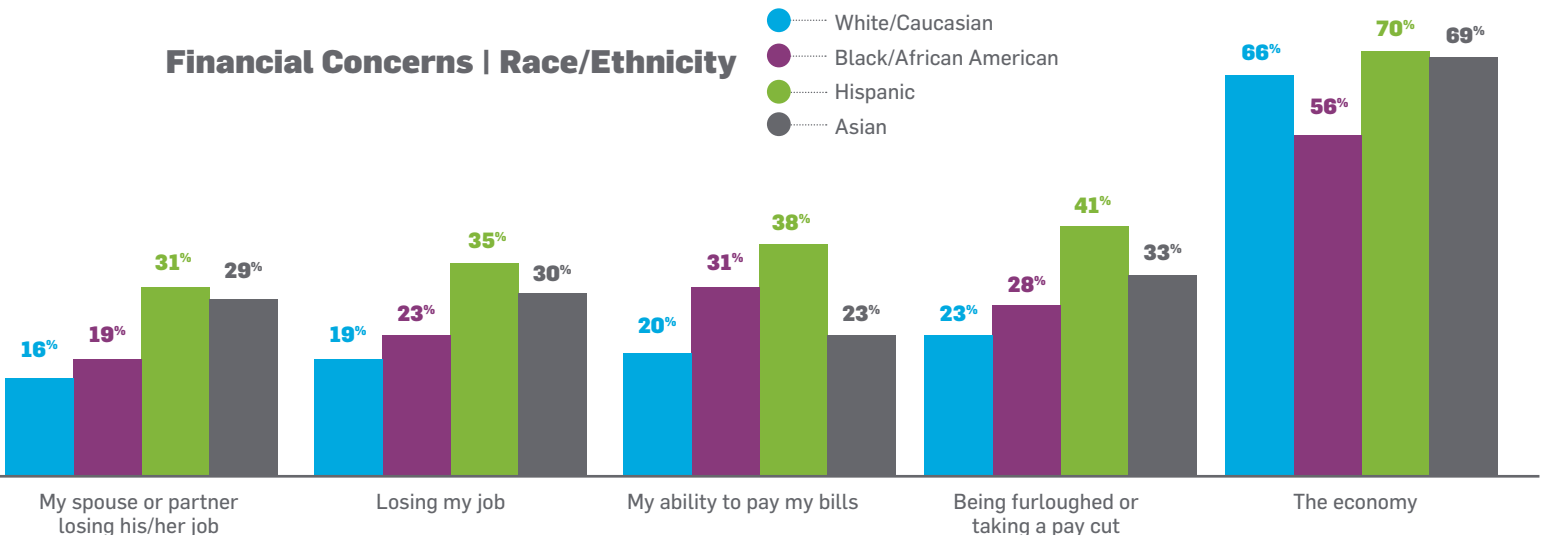
Financial Concerns | Caregivers



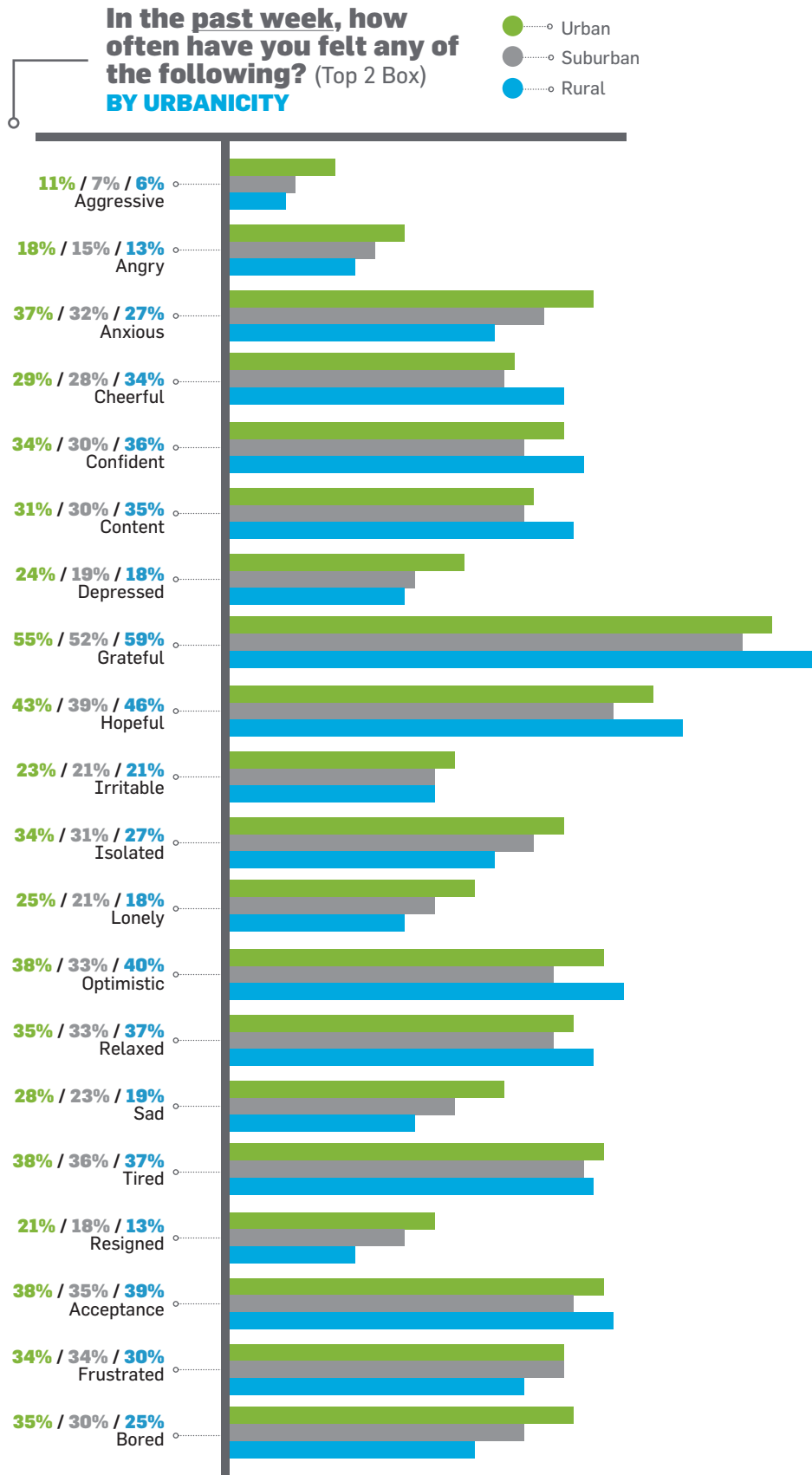
Financial Concerns | Household Composition



Financial Concerns | Race/Ethnicity

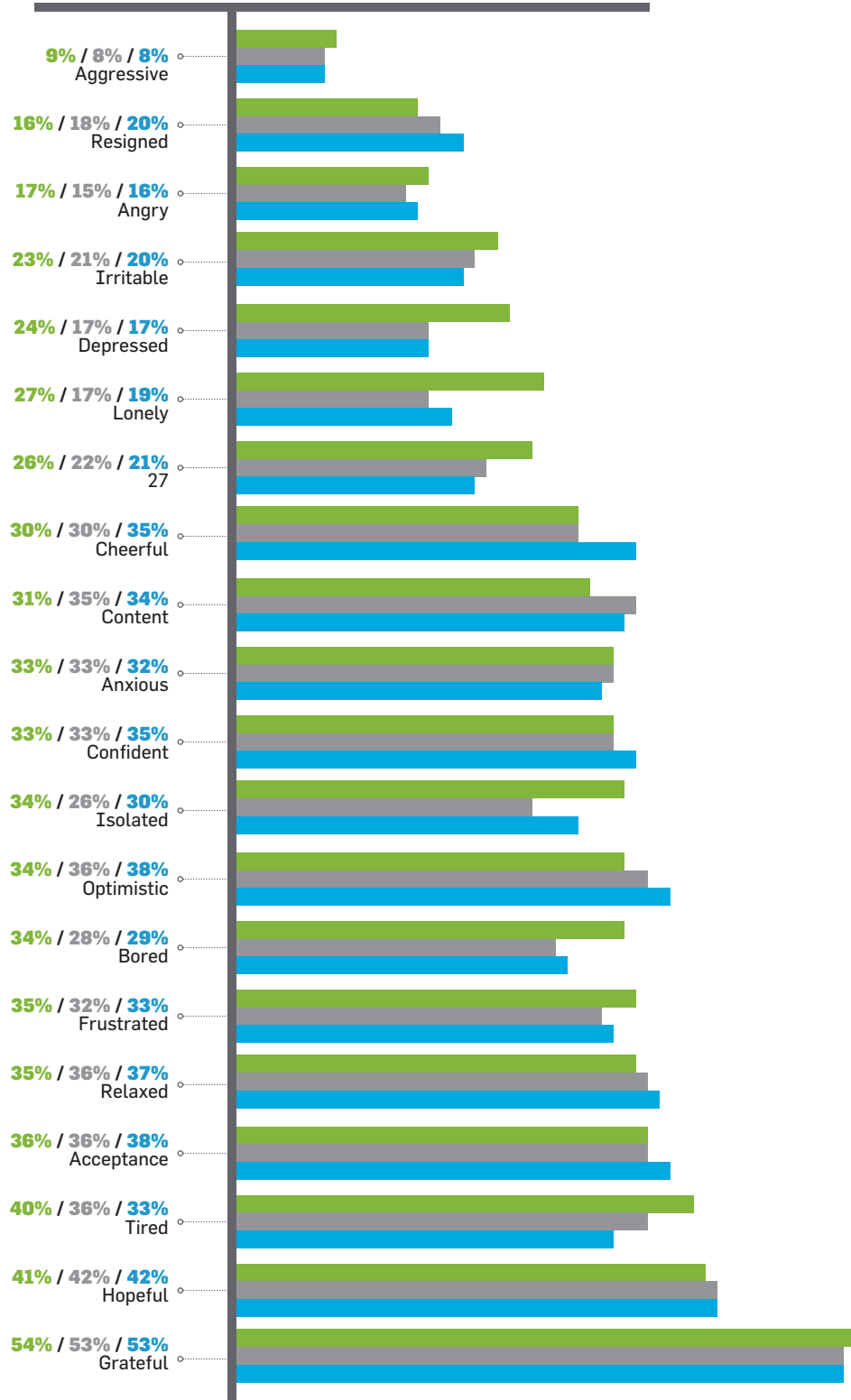


Combined data from the 3 fielding periods of April 3 to April 5, May 8 – 10, and June 12-14, 2020.



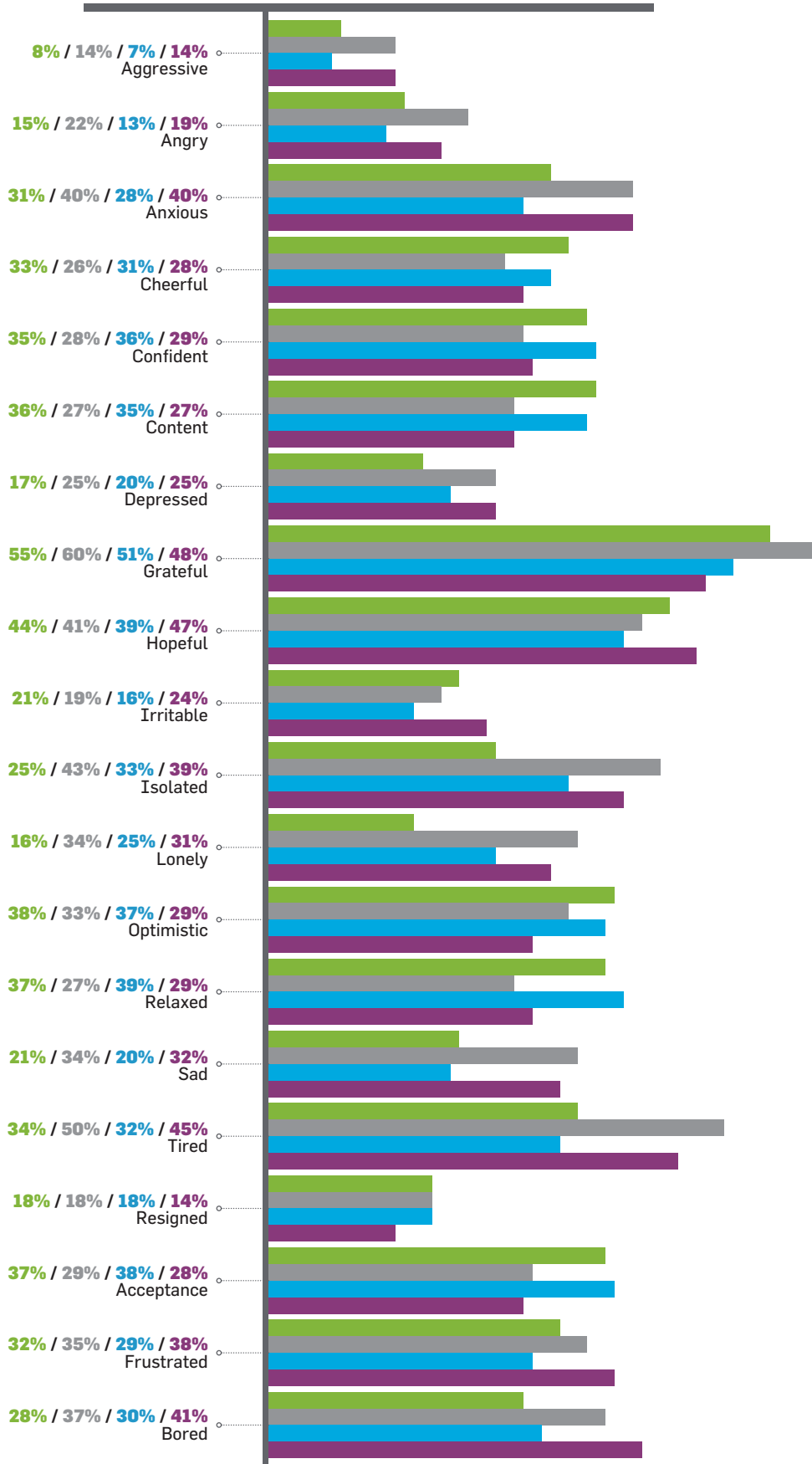
In the past week, how often have you felt any of the following? (Top 2 Box)
INCOME LEVEL

- Low Income (\$49.9K or less)
- Middle Income (\$50K-\$99.9K)
- High Income (\$100K or more)



In the past week, how often have you felt any of the following? (Top 2 Box)
HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

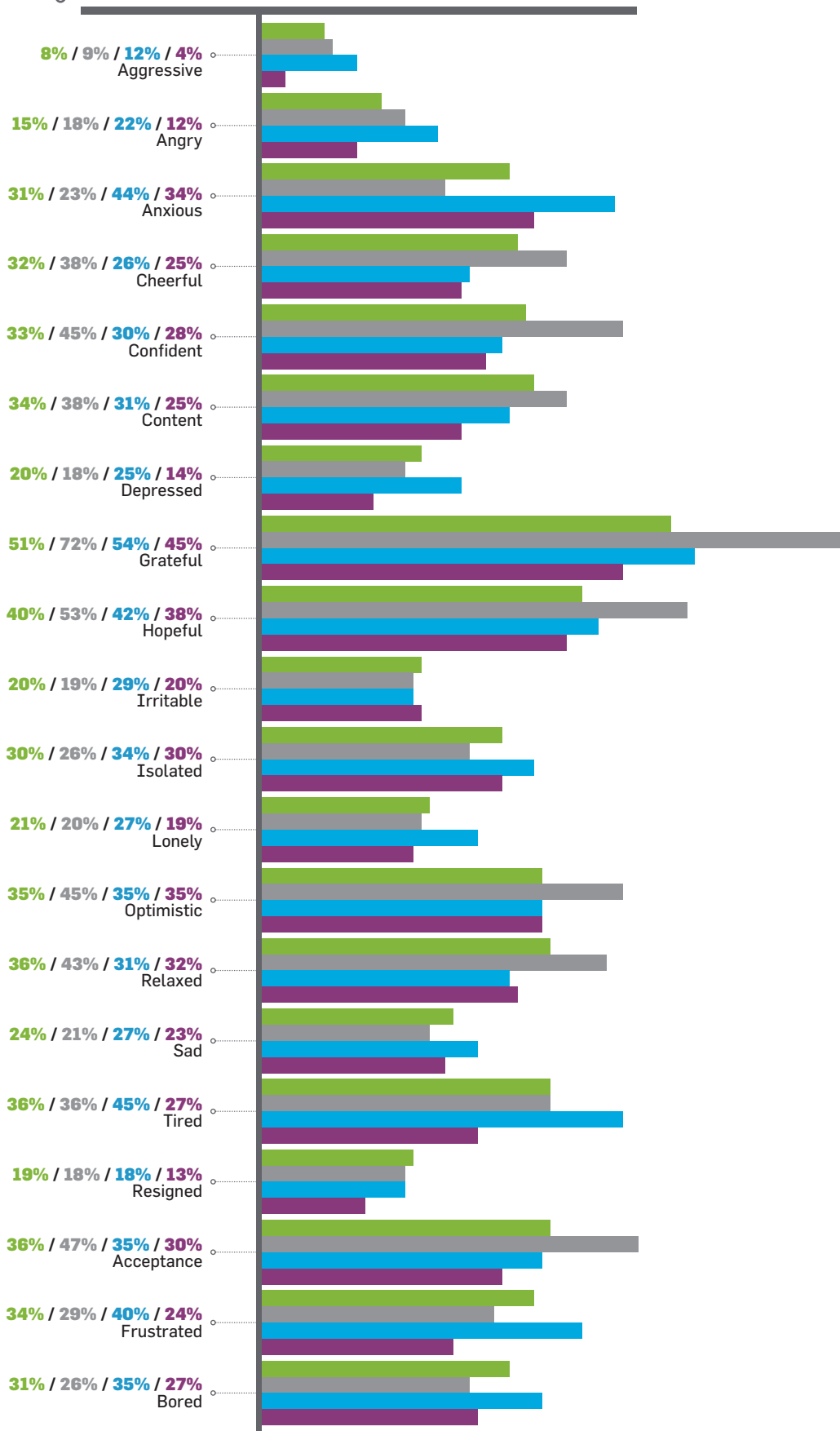
- Married/Partnered
- Single Parent
- Single Person
- Multi-Generational



Combined data from the 3 fielding periods of April 3 to April 5, May 8 – 10, and June 12-14, 2020.

In the past week, how often have you felt any of the following? (Top 2 Box)
RACE/ETHNICITY

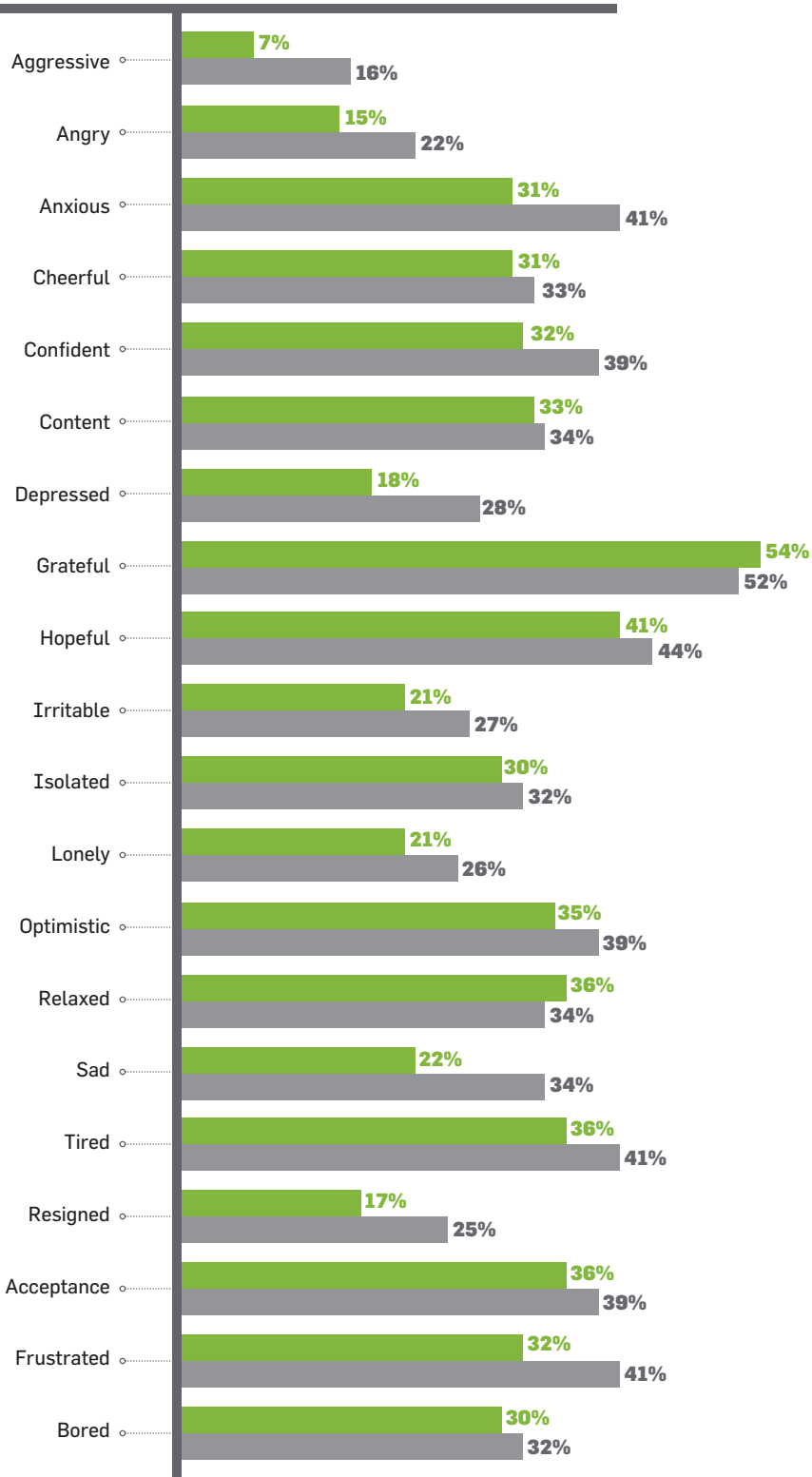
- White/Caucasian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic
- Asian



Combined data from the 3 fielding periods of April 3 to April 5, May 8 – 10, and June 12-14, 2020.

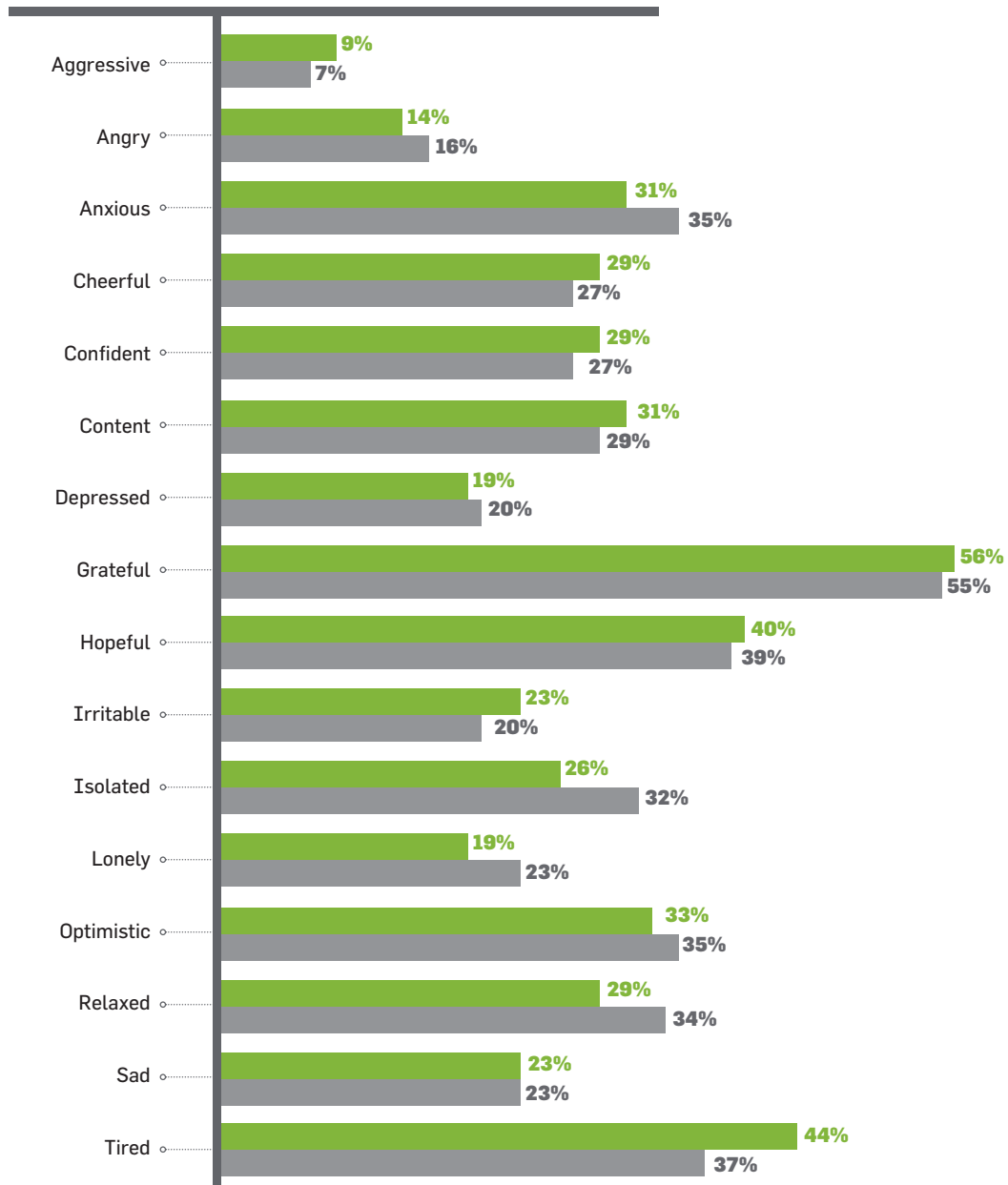
In the past week, how often have you felt any of the following? (Top 2 Box)
CAREGIVER STATUS

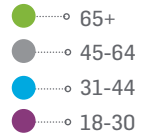
● Not a Caregiver
 ● Caregiver for Adult



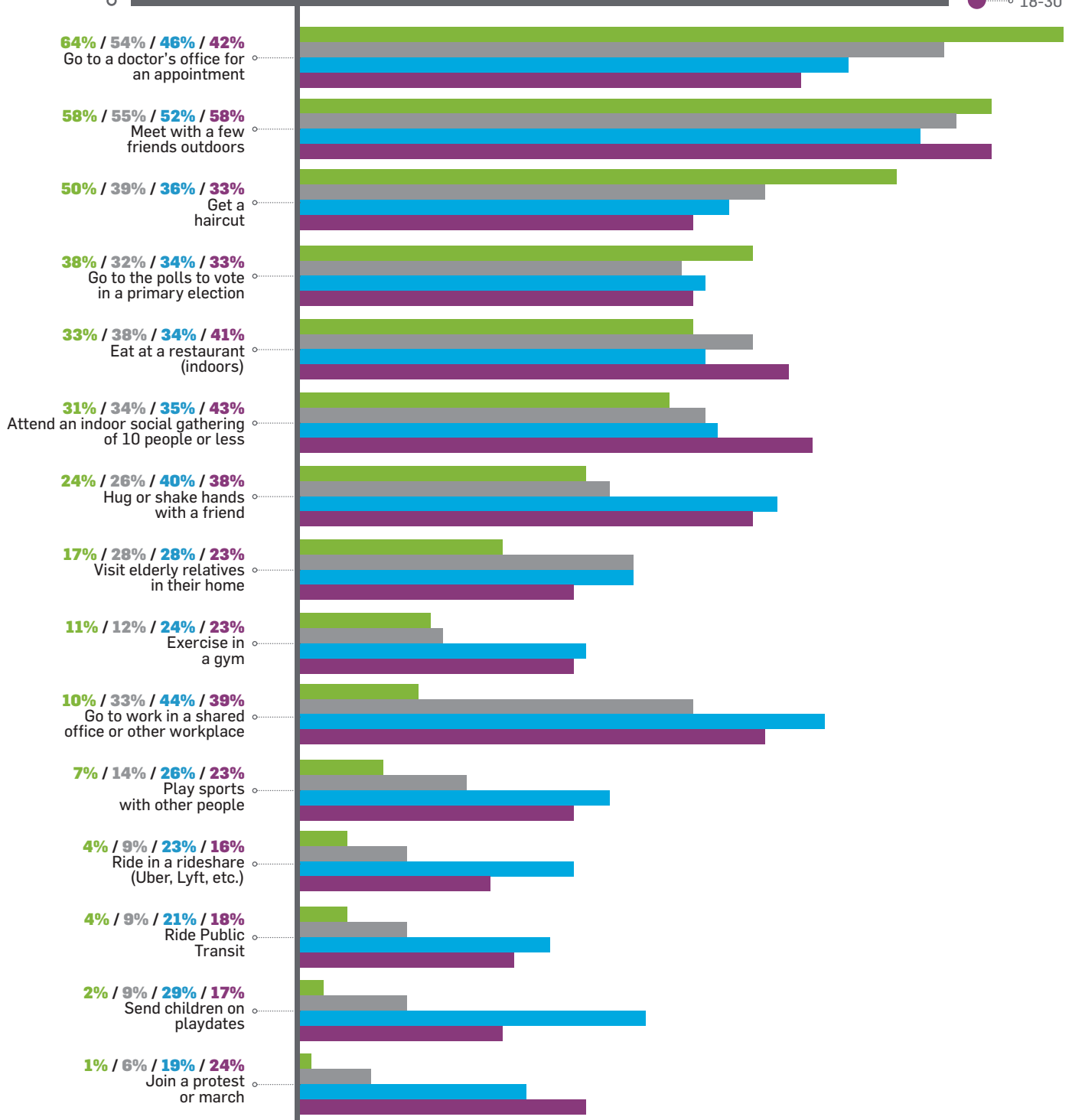
In the past week, how often have you felt any of the following? (Top 2 Box)
FRONTLINE/ESSENTIAL JOBS

● Works in an affected industry
 ● Does not work in an affected industry





How likely are you to do this in the next few weeks? (Top 2 Box)



Please consider your current needs that are specifically related to COVID-19. How much do you need assistance with each of the following? (Top 2 Box)
By Urbanicity

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

