

# Grassroots COVID-19 Survey Results and Recommendations



July 22, 2020



# Welcome!

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**GRASSROOTS COVID-19  
RECOVERY SURVEY**

By taking our survey, you are empowering us to  
amplify your voice and fight for change!

[csgnv.org/covid19](https://csgnv.org/covid19)



# Background: Community Spring



*Left to right: Max Tipping (Policy Director), Nadine Johnson, Latashia Brimm, Kevin Scott, Tequila McKnight, and Lindsay Kallman (Executive Director)*

Community Spring is a Gainesville-based nonprofit focused on dismantling structural poverty and spurring economic mobility at a grassroots level. The twin pillars of our work are *providing income* and *building power*. We do this by hiring fellows who have been impacted by poverty to help solve the systemic problems they identify as driving poverty in their communities.

# Background: Why Research COVID-19 Impact?

This crisis shed light on inequities in our broken systems that we have been feeling for a long time. The gaps that existed before are still here - only wider. How we respond to this crisis and rebuild our communities afterward must be guided by people's experiences on a grassroots level. Our survey results are intended to inform:

- **Policy**
- **Philanthropy**
- **Services**
- **Advocacy**

# Background: Methods

- **Participatory Action Research (PAR)** - Engages participants in the research topics, question framing, and translating the results into action.
- How information is gathered impacts the integrity of the results and the dignity of the subjects.
- Our research was developed and driven by Community Spring fellows with input from experts. Not the other way around.
- Ran May 22, 2020 - June 8, 2020

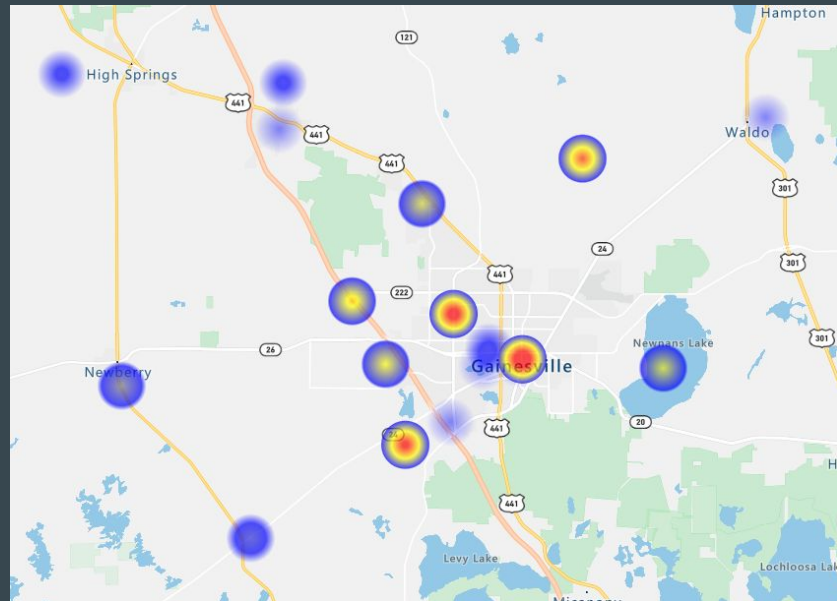


*Video used for paid social media ads*

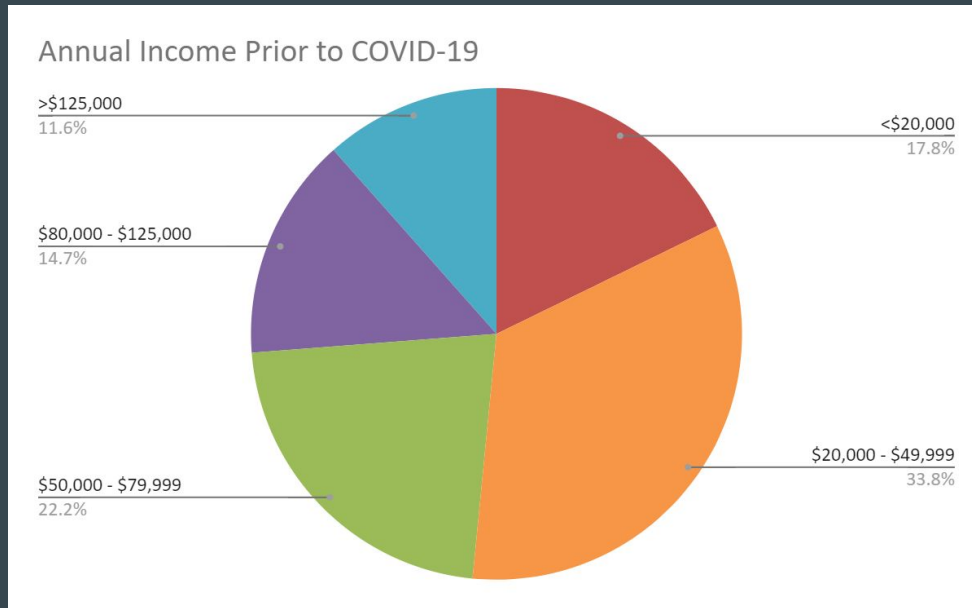
# Background: Survey Participants

- **243 responses**
  - 229 eligible households
  - Representing 497 people
- **Eligibility**
  - Over 18 years old
  - Alachua County Residents
- **Top 4 Zip code Representation**
  - 32601 - 44 (Downtown)
  - 32605 - 38 (NW)
  - 32608 - 34 (SW)
  - 32609 - 28 (Upper NE)

*Responses by Zip Code*



# Background: Survey Participants



Low Income =  $< \$50K$

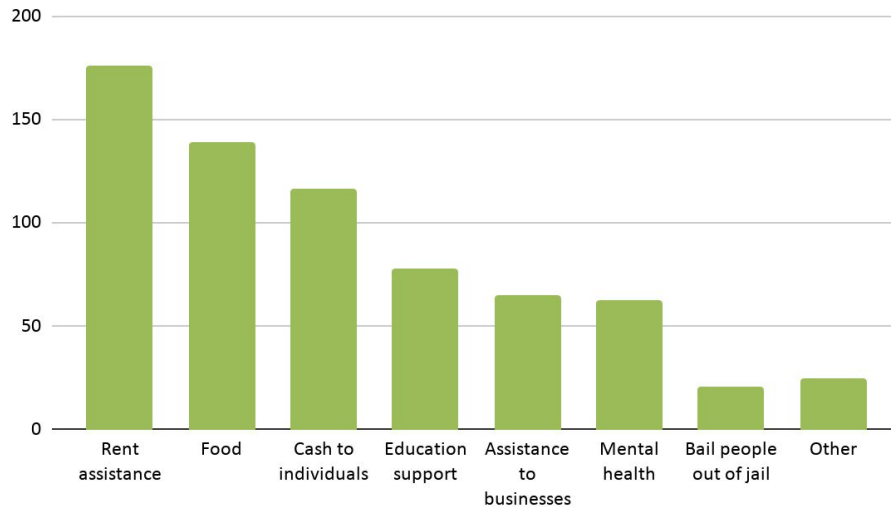
High Income =  $\geq \$50K$

*Federal programs define “low income” as 80% of the area median income. In the Gainesville area that is \$50,300 for a household of 3.*

*The ALICE Survival Budget is \$44,200 for a household of 2.*

# Results: Priorities for Relief

If there was a \$1 million fund for COVID-19 relief, what are the top three things it should be spent on?

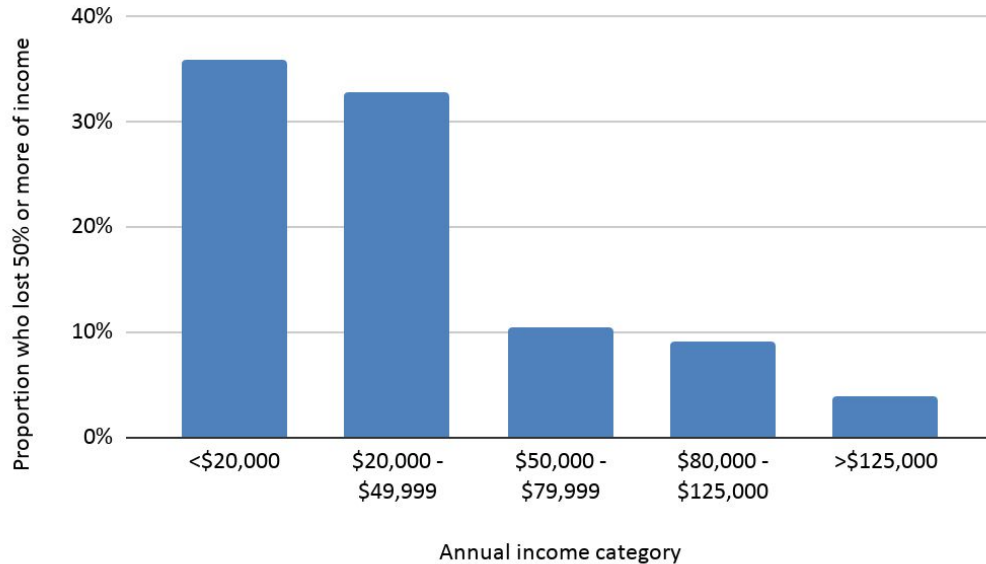


1. Rent Assistance
2. Food
3. Cash to Individuals



# Results: Impact of COVID-19 on Income

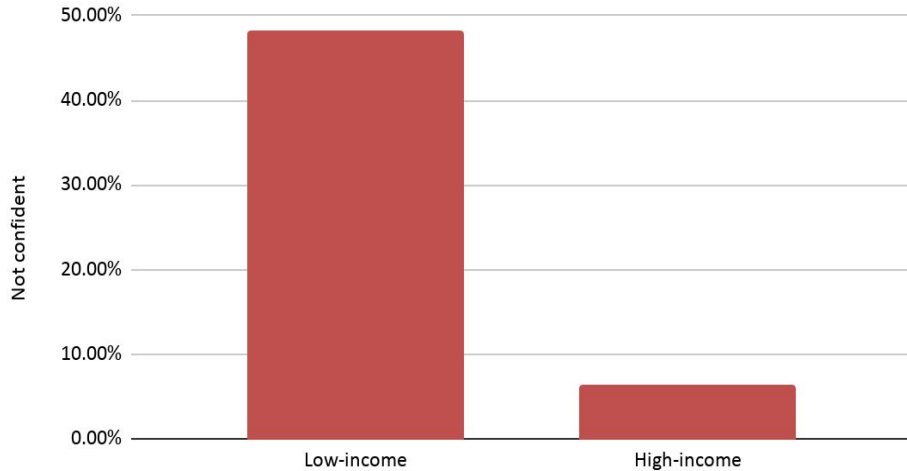
Proportion who lost 50% or more of their income during COVID-19 by annual income category



- Direct relationship to income category and impact of COVID-19 on wages.
- **26%** of people making an annual income of <\$20K lost ALL wages while **no one** making \$80K or more lost their jobs.

# Results: Economic Resilience

Percentage who are not confident they could come up with \$400 if an unexpected expense arose within the next month



- Economic resilience is the ability withstand or recover from economic shocks
- People with low-incomes have a harder time building long-term wealth because they have less economic resilience to unexpected expenses
- Among people making >\$80K, only one person indicated they were not confident

# Results: Employment

- 34% reported losing their jobs or reducing their hours.
- Of those, 44% are not confident that they will be able to return to previous employment with the same number of hours
- Qualitative responses:
  - People looking for jobs are in trouble
  - Reduction in other sources of income not eligible for assistance (overtime, dependents, etc.)
  - Fear of COVID-19 in the workplace

# Results: Bills Not Covered

What bills were not covered in April and May?



- 30% of low-income respondents were unable to pay all their bills in April and May
- Other category:
  - Student loans
  - Car insurance
  - Internet
  - Other loans
  - Furniture payment

# Results: COVID-19 Assistance

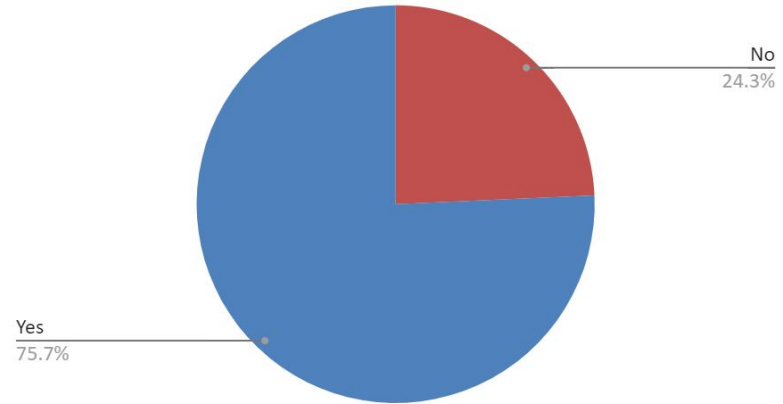
- 80% of respondents have received their federal stimulus check
- Only 21% of people who lost their job or had hours reduced actually received unemployment assistance
- Only 4% of total respondents have received any other type of assistance
  - Of those, examples were more like mutual aid (e.g. landlord waived rent) and suspension of loans

*“I may have to go bankrupt. The virus and the restrictions may force me to lose everything. I understand the virus problem. But the government has failed us in helping the people. Too little too late if anything at all.”*

# Results: Housing

- 18% of total renters were not able to pay rent in May
  - 24% of low-income respondents were not able to pay rent in May
- 7% of renters' landlords threaten or filed for eviction in April or May
- 10% of renters received rent assistance in April or May

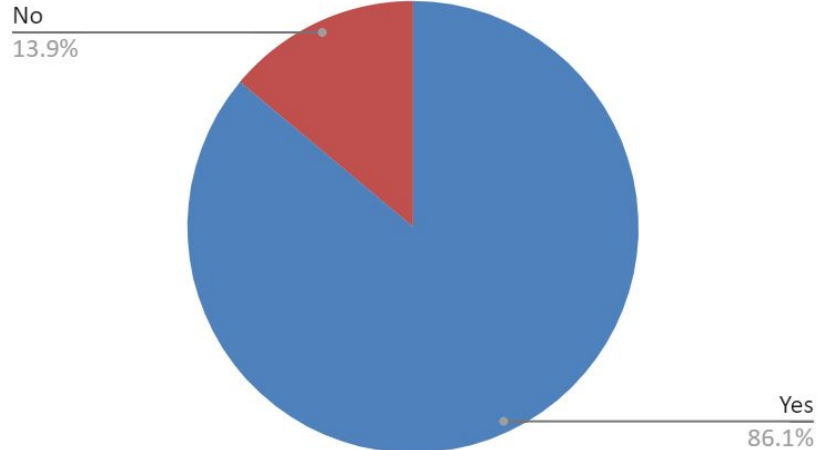
Low-income renters able to pay rent in May



*“April and May is the wrong question, I used what I had to pay those as a priority. It’s June and especially July that is the problem because the senate is never going to pass another stimulus bill this year. I don’t even want to think about August and the power bill, forget rent”*

# Results: Internet

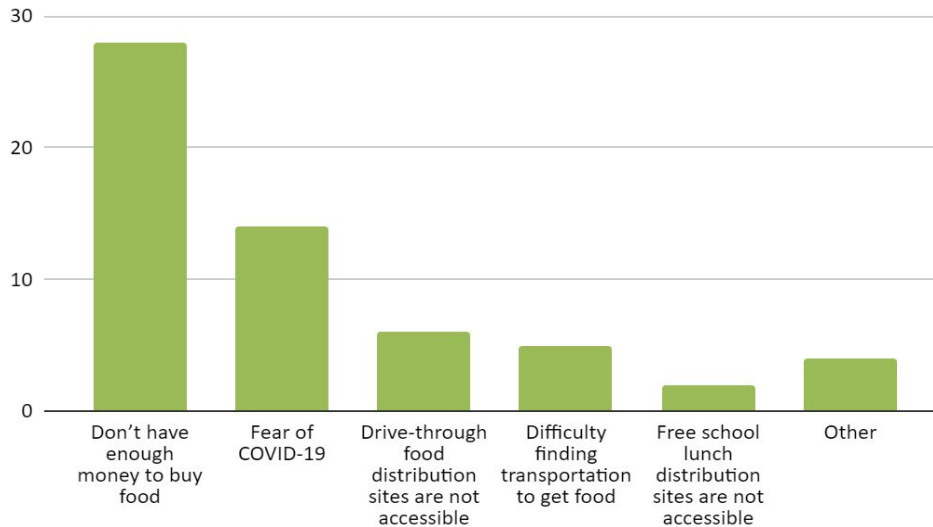
Does your internet access meet the needs of your household?



- Most people access internet at home (61%) but many people rely on a mobile device (33%) rather than traditional wifi
- 14% report that their current internet access does not meet the needs of the household
  - 18% of low-income respondents
- 20% of low-income respondents do not have enough computers to meet the needs of the household

# Results: Food

What issues have you had with getting food?

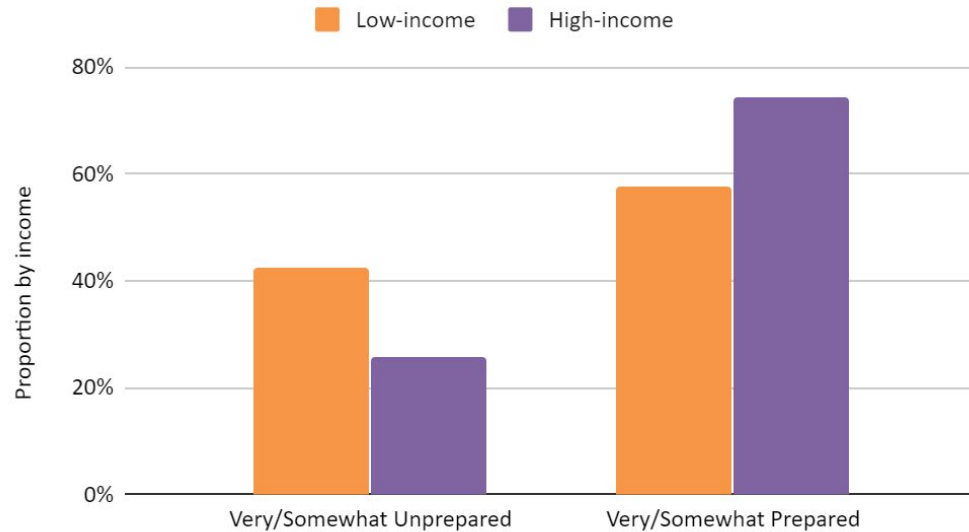


- 27% of low-income respondents have not consistently had enough food for their household in April and May
- Among those without enough food, money to buy food was cited most often as the reason



# Results: Education

Rate how academically prepared you feel the children in your household will be to start the new school year



- The majority of respondents are satisfied with virtual education
- Relationship between poverty and academic preparedness

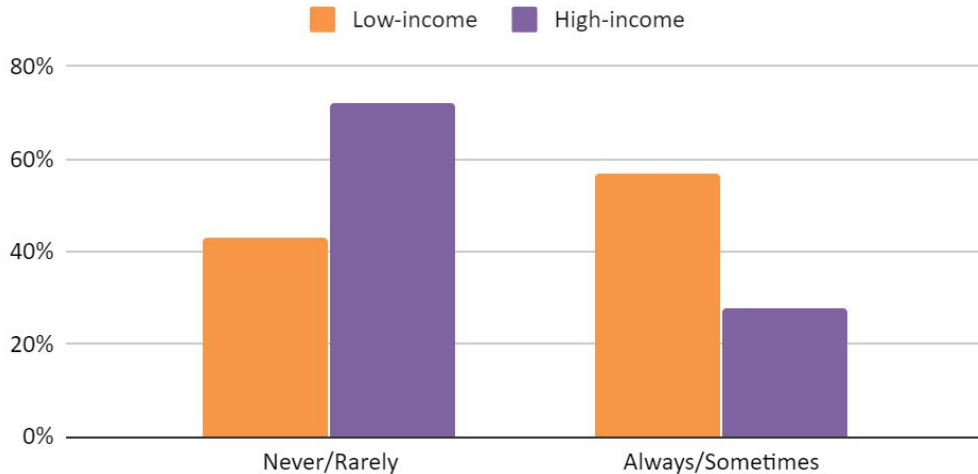
# Results: Education

*“In my opinion, the biggest hindrance was the parents and grandparents were totally unprepared for this. In most cases, it has been many years since they have had this type of work. Some of the work, they have never had the math. It was very frustrating not being able to help the kids.”*

- Qualitative responses:
  - Access to adequate internet and computers
  - Guardians unprepared or unable to tutor and supervise
  - More contact with teachers

# Results: Well-being

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you felt that there was no one you can turn to?



- 40% of respondents report more tension in the household than before COVID-19
  - 20% report more tension among neighbors
- 72% of respondents report feeling down, depressed, or hopeless
- Support network is less robust among low-income respondents

# Implications

- Those least able to bear the brunt were hit the hardest
  - Target assistance to low-income households
- Needs are diverse
  - Assistance should be as flexible as possible
- Bringing forward historically silenced voices is critical to rebuilding a more equitable community
  - Focus on needs and priorities identified by community members

*“Children and families trying their best to meet each other’s needs at a time when it seems that others don’t understand our fears, needs, wants, and expectations.”*

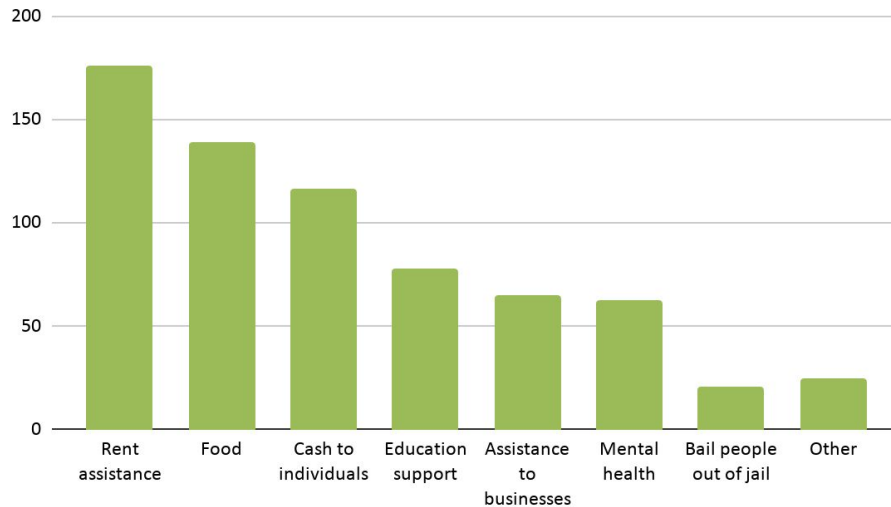
# Recommendations for a Grassroots Recovery

## A grassroots recovery effort:

1. Is guided by the self-identified needs of community members
2. Develops resources to match the scale of the need
3. Gets resources directly to households in need

# Priorities for Relief

If there was a \$1 million fund for COVID-19 relief, what are the top three things it should be spent on?



1. Rent Assistance
2. Food
3. Cash to Individuals

# Recommendations: Rent Assistance

## Need

- 27,000 low-income renters
- Half of low-income participants lost at least 25% income

*=13,500 households in need of rent assistance*

## Proposal

- County-wide rent assistance
- At least \$3000/household for rent
- <80% of AMI

*=\$40.5 million budget  
(w/o admin costs)*

- Program design considerations

# Recommendations: Food

## Need

- Extensive community efforts
- 43,000 low-income households
- 27% low-income participants didn't have consistent food

*=11,000 households  
w/o enough food*

## Proposal

- Food
  - Release \$500,000 for “future food delivery” in Alachua County Cares
- Funds
  - Evaluate impact of P-EBT on need for funds



# Recommendations: Cash to Individuals

## Need

- 43,000 low-income households
- Half of low-income participants not confident w/ \$400 expense

*=21,500 households w/  
low economic resilience*

## Proposal

- Alachua County Cares
  - \$500 relief payments to low-income households
- =\$500,000 initial budget*
- Program advantages & examples

# Recommendations: Cash to Individuals

## CS Direct

- \$300 disaster relief payments to households receiving SNAP
- Unconditional = households have flexibility
- Low admin burden = 100% of donations directly to participants
- More info at [csgnv.org/csdirect](https://csgnv.org/csdirect)

# Report on Survey Results and Recommendations

## Building a Grassroots COVID-19 Recovery in Alachua County

Available on our website at [csgnv.org/covid19](https://csgnv.org/covid19)



**Thank you!**

Tequila McKnight  
tmcknight@csgnv.org

Lindsay Kallman  
lkallman@csgnv.org

Max Tipping  
mtipping@csgnv.org