The Colorado Health Foundation™



3 Things to Know About Coronavirus and Coloradans Living on Low Incomes

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has exposed cracks in Colorado's public systems. Findings from an April 2020 survey of 1,100 Coloradans we conducted in partnership with Healthier Colorado and Magellan Strategies, show that people living on low incomes (under $30,000 per household) have been hit hardest by the virus that's shut down our economy.

We've lifted a few pieces of the data from that survey to help make sense of this. Here's what you need to know:

1. Half of Coloradans living on low income (50%) think the worst is yet to come.

> *"I'm worried that I won't have a job to go back to when it is over." – Female, 18-29 years of age, Fremont County*

- *"[I worry] that people will not continue to practice safe habits and there will be more deaths because of it." – Female, 60-64 years of age, Montezuma County*
- *"I am worried about dying." – Male, 65+ years of age, Pueblo County*

2. Fifty-three percent of Coloradans living on low income say their financial situation is worse now than before the coronavirus outbreak.

That’s 10% higher than all respondents. Here’s what’s behind those numbers:

Before the virus, 36% of Coloradans living on low incomes said it was difficult to pay for basic necessities like food, housing, utilities and health care (compared to 20% of all respondents).

After the virus, 61% of Coloradans living on low incomes report difficulty paying for basic needs (compared to 35% of all respondents). For those who are already struggling to make ends meet, that’s an increase of 25%.

3. Fifty-three percent of Coloradans living on low income report feeling worried about paying their rent or mortgage in the next 12 months, compared to 36% of all respondents.

What’s more, 86% of folks living on low incomes are worried that help won’t be available to those who are struggling to keep a roof over their head. 68% of people living on low incomes believe the government should do more to provide assistance to Coloradans who are homeless and to those who are struggling to pay the rent or mortgage (compared to 58% of all respondents).

As you might expect, all this financial insecurity is causing some stress. Take, for example, some of what respondents shared through the survey:

- *“I am stressed. I am at home with my daughter. I am not having enough food for my daughter. We go to school for our groceries because they offer food for the people. It is really stressful right now.” – Female, 18-29 years of age, Arapahoe County*
- *“I have been very anxious and worried. With stay at home order this has increased my isolation and negatively impacted my mental health.” – Male, 40-44 years of age, Denver County*
- *“I already suffer from severe anxiety and it’s definitely made things worse. I feel more anxious, it’s hard to relax and unwind at the end of the day. I’m not*

> *as motivated as I was before, I feel sluggish and tired all the time." – Female, 18-29 years of age, Larimer County*

The data are clear: the ramifications of the virus are taking a heavy toll on the physical, mental and financial health of Coloradans living on low incomes. As we look toward the road to recovery, we must ensure that those who have been most impacted are not left behind**.**

Learn more about the survey and its key findings, and check out other blog posts highlighting the experiences of Black/African American Coloradans and Latinx Coloradans.

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