



Communities Speak: Using Microdata to Understand the Secondary Impacts of Covid-19 and for Applied Policymaking

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed significant gaps in the available data cities need to effectively respond to both the health emergency and to the devastating secondary social and economic impacts of the crisis. This failure has been especially devastating for low-income families, the elderly and small businesses. Without publicly available and detailed data, policymakers cannot efficiently and effectively target recovery efforts to the communities most in need or plan for future crises. Communities Speak seeks to solve the shortage of publicly-available microdata for creating data-driven policy solutions at the local level.

OBJECTIVE

We aim to expand community data collection in cities, in order to increase government's capacity to develop policy in response to unanticipated economic and social shocks. In turn, our goal is to improve government's responsiveness to the needs of low-income and minority populations as well as small businesses, who tend to experience the greatest adverse impacts from these shocks.

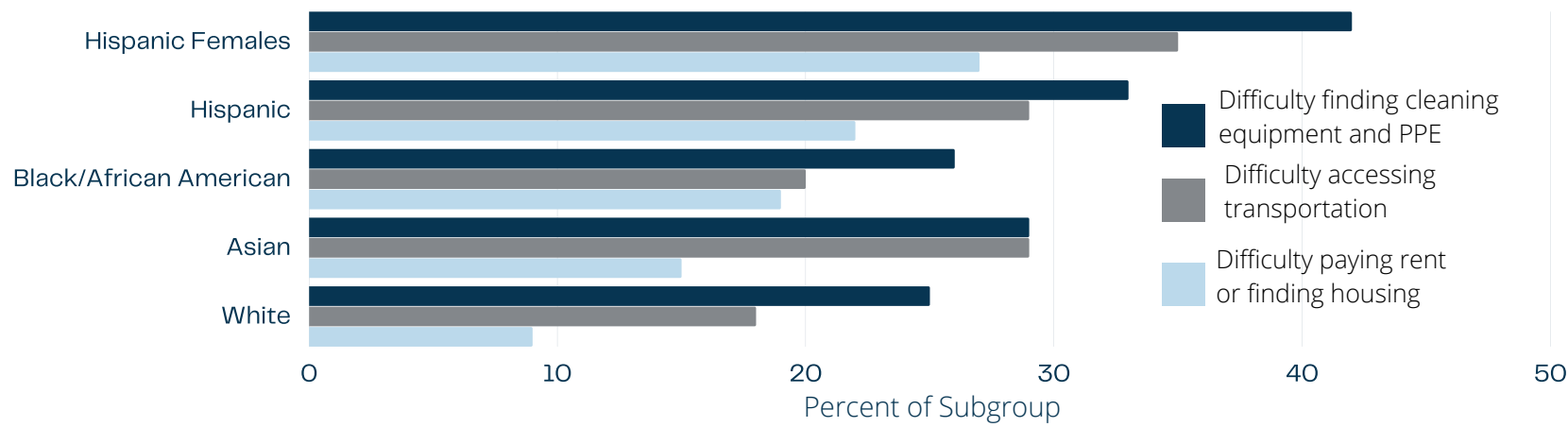
METHODOLOGY

Our surveys will regularly collect data at the scale of an individual person, household, small business, or organization. Collecting targeted individual-level, microdata through surveys of individuals and small businesses allows for an in-depth and differentiated understanding of socio-economic issues among diverse demographic groups and small business types.

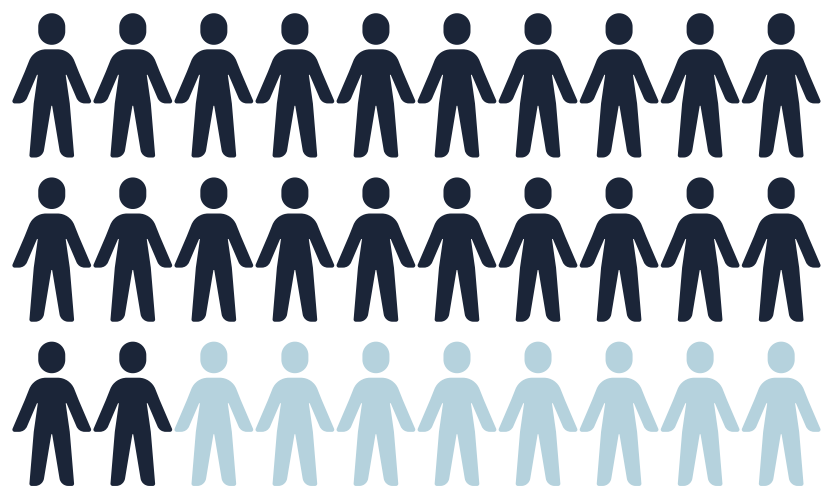
RESULTS/FINDINGS

We closed our most recent iteration of the individual survey at the end of August, 2021. We received over 750+ valid responses from New Yorkers across the city.

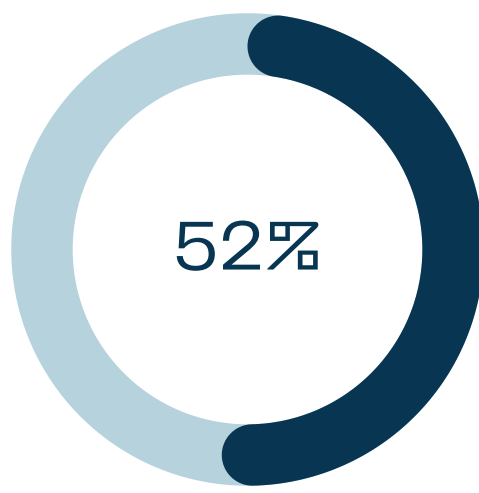
HISPANIC FEMALES OVERWHELMINGLY LACK ACCESS TO BASIC RESOURCES



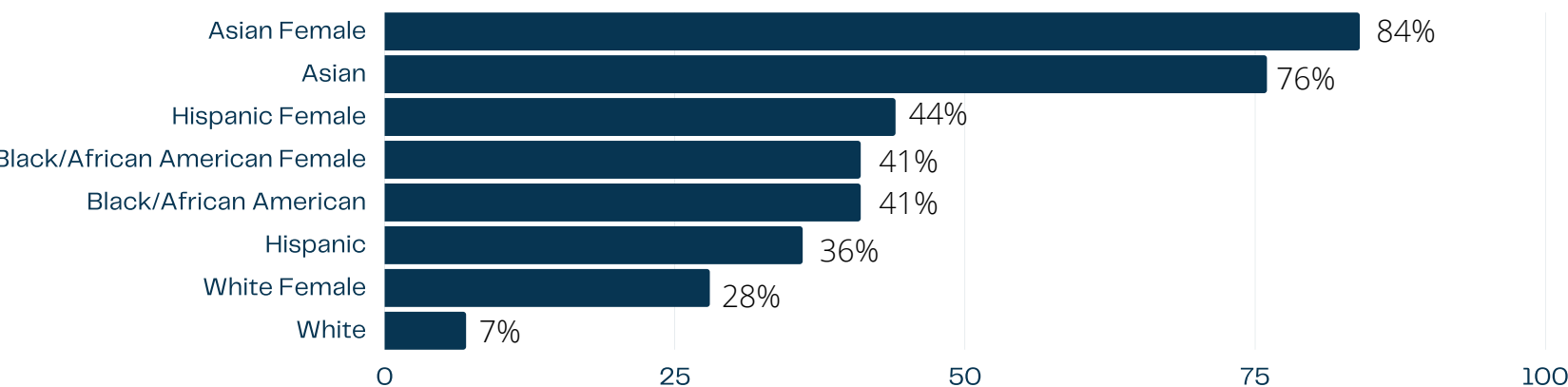
73% OF HISPANIC FEMALE RESPONDENTS FELT THEY WERE UNABLE TO CONTROL THE IMPORTANT THINGS IN THEIR LIFE



52% OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN LACK ACCESS TO CHILDCARE



PERCENT OF EACH SUB-DEMOGRAPHIC THAT EXPERIENCED OR FEARED DISCRIMINATION RELATED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Sample Survey Questions

If you have children, does your household currently have access to childcare?

- Yes
- No
- I don't have children

Have you been discriminated against or felt threatened due to COVID-19? Select all that apply

- Yes, I have experienced verbal abuse
- Yes, I have experienced physical violence
- No, I have not experienced discrimination but I am worried about it
- No, I have not experienced discrimination and am not worried about it
- Other _____

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. For each question, please indicate the response that represents how often you felt or thought a certain way.

	Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?					



WHY MICRODATA?

Data can serve as an extremely powerful tool to set city government priorities, and inform decision-making and target new solutions. According to the World Bank, microdata "allows [for] in-depth understanding of socio-economic issues by studying relationships and interactions among phenomena." Macro-level data in particular misses important nuances that vary at the intersection of different variables such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender.

Communities Speak strives to improve government performance and residents' lives to enable this kind of policy-making and opportunity through microdata collection and analysis and by providing evidence-based policy recommendations grounded in community involvement.

CONCLUSION

Communities Speak will empower New York City officials to plan for recovery. Specifically, this project will enable local leaders to define needs, identify vulnerable communities, assess the best method to deploy resources, and measure the satisfaction of residents by collecting critical data via surveys and carrying out analyses.

Communities Speak has developed a framework and practical tool for city governments and policy makers to collect, analyze, and share policy relevant micro-level data. The data collection and analysis framework can be adapted by any city, enabling local governments to develop evidence-based policy in partnership with their residents.

KEY PARTNERS

