



BLUE SHIELD OF CALIFORNIA FOUNDATION

Key Insights into the experiences of Black Californians from a Statewide Survey about COVID-19, Equity, and Domestic Violence

April 2021

Blue Shield of California Foundation sponsored a statewide survey of 1,918 California adults 18 and older to understand experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic, equity, and domestic violence. The non-partisan research firm PerryUndem developed and analyzed the survey and Ipsos fielded the survey online January 6 – 22, 2021.¹

The survey found that many Californians are experiencing serious impacts from the pandemic, and provides insights to their experiences with race, health, finances, and a growth in the conditions that cause domestic violence. The pandemic has exacerbated many of the disparities that Black Californians face, and the survey data offer insights into these experiences among Black Californians during this time. Following are some key insights from the 423 Black Californians who participated in our survey:

COVID-19 IMPACTS

Like other Californians of color in the survey, Black adults are experiencing serious impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic including effects on their mental and emotional well-being and economic security. Key findings include:

- 84% of Black respondents say the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major (43%) or minor (41%) effect on them and their families.
- Since the pandemic started, 66% of Black Californians say they have felt isolated from others and 57% say they have felt trapped in their homes.

¹ The survey of 1,918 California adults included: 428 Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) adults; 423 Black adults; 401 Latinx adults; and 293 LGBTQ adults. The survey was offered in English, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Tagalog, and Spanish. The margin of sampling error for total results is + 3.2 percentage points.

- One in four report feeling unsafe (42%) or depressed (42%); and more than a quarter have felt panic or severe anxiety (27%).
- The economic impacts have also been steep. Three in ten say their incomes have gone down since the pandemic began (30%); and one in five say they have had to go to work even though they felt unsafe (20%), or that they have lost a job (18%).

RACISM

Black Californians report feeling and experiencing the effects of racism in their lives more intensely than any other demographic group. Key findings include:

- 92% of Black adults believe racism has increased (75%) or stayed the same (17%) in recent years.
- Majorities of Black adults feel it is a “bad time” to be a Black man (73%) or Black woman (57%) in America.
- Almost half (47%) say they do not feel personally accepted as an equal and valuable member of society.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

One purpose of the survey was to better understand feelings about and experiences with domestic violence. The results show that the vast majority of Black adults see this as a serious issue and provide insights into solutions to address the issue. Key findings include:

- 91% of Black adults say domestic violence is a serious problem in society right now (62% very serious; 29% somewhat serious).
- 66% say it is a public issue that should be addressed by all of us, just 14% say it is a private issue that should stay within families.
- 81% of Black adults think the pandemic and the stay-at home orders in California have made domestic violence incidents more likely to occur.
- 64% of Black adults believe the COVID-19 pandemic and stay-at-home orders have made it harder for people experiencing domestic violence to reach out for help.
- 90% of Black survivors of domestic violence say having a safe place to live is very important to helping them feel safe; as well as having personal freedom (85%) and knowing there are services and organizations in their community to help (71%).
- 75% of Black adults support alternatives to jail for people who cause domestic violence. This could be counseling, including substance abuse counseling, supervision by a social worker, or restitution to the person who experienced the violence.