Results from a Survey of California Adults

Experiences with COVID-19, Equity, and Domestic Violence

CONDUCTED FOR BLUE SHIELD OF CALIFORNIA FOUNDATION
PREPARED BY PERRYUNDEm

MARCH 24, 2021
Blue Shield of California Foundation sponsored this statewide survey of California adults 18 and older. PerryUndem developed and analyzed the survey and Ipsos fielded the survey online January 6 – 22, 2021.

In total, 1,918 interviews were completed; including the following oversamples:

- 428 Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Californians;
- 423 Black Californians;
- 401 Latinx Californians; and
- 293 LGBTQ Californians

The survey was offered in English, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Tagalog, and Spanish.

The margin of sampling error for total results is \( \pm 3.2 \) percentage points.
Key Findings.
Nearly 9 in 10 Californians say COVID-19 and the economic crisis have impacted them. The biggest impacts: having to help children with virtual learning and people seeing their incomes go down.

Q: How much of an effect has the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis had on you and your family?

- Major effect: 35%
- Minor effect: 54%
- No effect at all: 11%

89%

Q: Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, have any of the following happened to you or members of your family or household?

- Had to help your children with distance/virtual learning*: 47%
- Your income went down: 31%
- You/family member got COVID-19: 21%
- Had to use savings to pay bills: 20%
- Had to go to your job even though you felt unsafe: 20%
- Lost a job: 15%
- Needed childcare/babysitting and you couldn’t find it*: 9%
- Asked an older sibling to care for younger sibling(s)*: 9%
- Been unable to pay bills like gas bills, electric bill, credit cards, etc.: 8%
- Been unable to pay rent or mortgage: 5%
- Lost your health insurance coverage: 5%
- None of the above: 34%

* Only among parents: N = 481
**COVID-19 Impacts**

Californians of color are experiencing the greatest impacts from the pandemic, particularly Latinx adults.

Q: How much of an effect has the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis had on you and your family?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCENT WHO SAY “MAJOR EFFECT”</th>
<th>AAPI</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Latinx</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinx</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAPI</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, have any of the following happened to you or members of your family or household?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>AAPI</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Latinx</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your income went down</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You or a family member got the COVID-19 virus</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had to use savings to pay bills</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had to go to your job even though you felt unsafe</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost a job</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been unable to pay bills like gas bill, electric bill, credit cards</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been unable to pay rent or mortgage</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost your health insurance coverage</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7 in 10 Californians have felt isolated from others since the pandemic started. And despite feeling the deepest impacts, Latinx and Black adults are least likely to say they have felt isolated. Half of adults say they have felt unsafe.
3 in 10 Californians say there has been more tension in their romantic relationships since the beginning of the pandemic – and one-third of those say these tensions are becoming “unhealthy.”

**29%**

Say there has been more tension in their relationship with their romantic partner or spouse since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Q: Are the following causes of increased tension in your relationship?*

- Anxiety about the future: 63%
- Isolation from other family/friends: 62%
- More time together in the house: 58%
- Increased financial pressures: 36%
- No childcare options**: 21%

### Q: Would you say the increased tension in your relationship is becoming...?*

- Unhealthy: 34%
- Potentially abusive: 8%
- Unsafe: 7%

* If more tension: Total N = 340
** Only among parents: N = 136
Equity and Racism.
Most Californians – including three-quarters of Black Californians – say racism has increased in the last few years. Only 1 in 10 think it has decreased.

Q: In the last few years, do you think racism has...

- **Increased**: 90%
  - Black: 75%
  - Latinx: 69%
  - AAPI: 62%
  - White: 54%
- **Stayed the same**: 28%
- **Decreased**: 10%
1 in 5 Californians do not feel accepted as equal and valuable members of society. But for Black Californians, almost half say they do not feel accepted as equal members of society.
6 in 10 Californians believe that systems in our society are set up to give white people more opportunities than people of color. Californians of color are more likely to feel this way than white Californians.

Q: Think about the systems in our society, such as housing, health care, business, banking, and the government. In general, do you think these systems are set up in ways that:

- Give white people more opportunities than people of color (59%)
- Give white people and people of color equal opportunities (30%)
- Give people of color more opportunities than white people (9%)

Percent who say systems “give white people more opportunities than people of color”

- Black: 75%
- Latinx: 65%
- AAPI: 60%
- White: 52%
Domestic Violence.
Domestic Violence: Perceptions

9 in 10 Californians feel domestic violence is a serious problem. Two-thirds consider domestic violence to be a public issue that should be addressed by all of us – but 33% either consider it a private issue (15%) or are unsure (18%).

Q: In your opinion, is domestic violence a serious problem or not a serious problem in our society right now?

- Very serious problem: 91%
  - Somewhat serious problem: 91%
  - Not too/Not at all serious problem: 9%

Q: In your opinion, is domestic violence more of a private issue that should stay within families or more of a public issue that should be addressed by all of us in society?

- More of a public issue that should be addressed by all of us: 67%
  - More of a private issue that should stay within families: 15%
  - I'm not sure: 18%
### Domestic Violence: Perceptions

Q: Do you consider these as part of a definition of domestic violence?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percent &quot;Yes&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical abuse of one romantic partner over another</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse of one romantic partner over another</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional abuse of one romantic partner over the other</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats involving taking away children of one romantic partner over the other</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal assault of one romantic partner over the other</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental control of one romantic partner over another</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats involving sharing private information like text messages or photos on social media</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats to expose immigration status of one romantic partner over another</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial control of resources of one romantic partner over another</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempts to control a partner’s reproductive health like using birth control</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most Californians have a broad and inclusive understanding of domestic violence.
Two-thirds of Californians think if they were assaulted by a partner and called the police, they would help the situation. But many, especially Black Californians, say they would not go to the police if assaulted or feel the police would make the situation worse.

Q: Let’s say you were assaulted by a partner or spouse. If you called the police, do you think:

- Police would help the situation
- Police would make the situation worse
- I would not go to the police if I were assaulted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Police would help</th>
<th>Police would make</th>
<th>I would not go to the police</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinx</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAPI</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Californians who have experienced abuse as a child or witnessed domestic violence as a child are more likely to experience domestic violence as an adult.

27% of Californians say that as a child, they experienced abuse from a parent, adult caregiver, or sibling, or that they witnessed domestic violence in their household.

71% of Californians who experienced/witnessed abuse as a child said yes to at least one of the options we gave for personally experiencing domestic violence.

- Have friends/family who experienced domestic violence: 64%
- Have friends/family who committed abuse against a romantic partner: 42%
- Have experienced domestic violence themselves: 34%
- Committed domestic violence against a romantic partner: 9%

* Experienced/witnessed abuse as a child: N = 582
Q: During the time period you experienced abuse – including up to the current time period – did you feel:

- Shame about your situation: 56%
- Afraid to tell others what you were experiencing: 40%
- You had no place else to go: 27%
- Supported by your family: 25%
- You had no access to money to support yourself if you left: 25%
- Supported by your friends: 23%
- Isolated or disconnected from your community: 23%
- You would become homeless if you left: 17%
- You might die: 14%
- Afraid to go to the police: 13%
- There were services and organizations that could help you: 12%
- You would lose your children if you left**: 9%

56% of Californians who have experienced domestic violence say they have felt “shame” about their situation. Four in ten say they have felt afraid to tell others about their experience. Only 1 in 4 felt supported by friends or family.

* If experienced domestic violence: N = 364
** Only among parents: N = 94
Directions for Change.
Q: How important is each of the following in helping you feel safe:

Percent “Very important” among survivors of domestic violence

- Having a safe place to live: 91%
- Being financially stable: 88%
- Having personal freedom: 83%
- Having a steady job: 80%
- Family and friends who are supportive: 73%
- Knowing there are services and organizations in my community that can help me: 54%
- Having support from the local police: 52%
- Close connections with people in my community: 43%

9 in 10 California survivors of domestic violence say having a safe place to live is “very” important in helping them feel safe. Other key factors are financial stability, personal freedom and having a steady job.

* If experienced domestic violence: N = 364
Q: Would you support or oppose 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 (for example, paying for their therapy, medical expenses, or loss of employment).

8 in 10 Californians support alternatives to jail for people who cause domestic violence. This idea has support across political party ideology.

Strongly support: 35%
Somewhat support: 44%
Somewhat oppose: 13%
Strongly oppose: 6%
9 in 10

Californians support childcare, food, housing, and transportation assistance to help those who have experienced domestic violence. Another 8 in 10 support paid leave from work and cash assistance.

Q: Would you support or oppose the following ideas to help survivors of domestic violence:

- Childcare assistance: 62% strongly support, 31% somewhat support, 93% total support
- Food assistance: 60% strongly support, 33% somewhat support, 93% total support
- Housing assistance: 58% strongly support, 35% somewhat support, 93% total support
- Transportation assistance: 54% strongly support, 37% somewhat support, 91% total support
- Paid leave from work: 43% strongly support, 40% somewhat support, 83% total support
- Cash assistance: 42% strongly support, 41% somewhat support, 83% total support
AAPI Insights.
55%

Of AAPI adults report feeling “unsafe” during the pandemic. And more than half of AAPI adults feel it is “bad time” to be an Asian woman (54%) or an Asian man (53%) in America right now.

Among \( n = 428 \) AAPI adults

Other key findings about AAPI Californians from the survey:

- **92%** say the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major (38%) or minor (54%) effect on them and their families.
- **72%** report they have felt isolated from others and 64% say they have felt trapped in their homes during the pandemic.
- **90%** believe racism has increased (62%) or stayed the same (28%) in recent years.
- **1 in 5** (22%) say they do not feel personally accepted as an equal and valuable member of society.
- **90%** say domestic violence is a serious problem in society right now.
- **85%** think the pandemic and the stay-at-home orders in California have made domestic violence incidents more likely to occur.
- **4 in 5** (79%) support alternatives to jail for people who cause domestic violence.
- **70%** feel that the police would “help the situation” if they were assaulted by a romantic partner or a spouse.
blue shield of california foundation