ABOUT THE CENSUS BUREAU'S HOUSEHOLD PULSE SURVEY

In late April, the Census Bureau, in partnership with other federal agencies, launched the Household Pulse Survey to provide nearly real-time weekly data on COVID-19's impact on employment, food security, health status, housing security, and educational disruption.

The survey provides representative estimates for the adult population living in households at three different levels of geography: the 15 largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas, the 50 states plus the District of Columbia and the U.S. The data used here includes only the New York State counties of the New York City Metropolitan Statistical Area: the five boroughs of New York City and Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, Rockland and Putnam counties.

The survey was originally intended to cover the 12 weeks April 23, 2020 – July 21, 2020. It has since been extended. Phase 2 of the data collection began on August 19th and continued through late October. Phase 3 began in late October and continued through December. The survey carried over many Phase 1 questions and collected additional information on the application and receipt of benefits, post-secondary education disruptions, tobacco and alcohol use, capacity to telework, travel practices, and behavioral changes in response to the pandemic.

The employment component of the survey includes questions about the household and individual respondent experiences of employment loss. The survey also asks about expectations of employment and wage loss in the four weeks following the interview. The specific employment estimate reported in the blog post, job loss, was operationalized as percent of respondents in the entire sample universe who indicated they had not worked for payment in the past seven days due to COVID-related business shutdowns, including furlough. The survey also asks about expectations of employment and wage loss. Wage insecurity estimates in this issue refer to whether respondents anticipate that they, or someone in their household, will lose employment income in the four weeks following the interview.

The survey began measuring respondents' experience of financial difficulty beginning in Phase 2. In this post, high financial difficulty refers to participants who found it "somewhat" to "very" difficult to pay for usual household expenses (e.g. food, rent or mortgage, car payments, medical expenses, student loans).

Analysis of the weekly data found a large amount of variance, making it less reliable for week-to-week comparisons. We instead average the weekly data into multiple periods. This is more reliable and allows us to tie the data more directly to changes in COVID related policy as they happen. Due to small sample sizes and a lack of reliable variation across time, the estimates for job loss and expected wage loss across the sample universe and by education level were divided into six periods (see figure below). For analyses by demographic subgroups in Figure 5, job loss estimates were collapsed into three periods. Estimates for financial difficulty were collapsed across survey phases two and three.

The Pulse data used here is for the New York State portion of the greater Metropolitan area. To make the post more New York City specific, we provided context by adding relevant local data in addition to Pulse data estimates. In this issue of the post we provided local, seasonally adjusted unemployment statistics from the New York State Department of Labor. We also included 2019 New York City workforce data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). For the purpose of this blog, the workforce estimates include responses from the New York City area for employed individuals over the age of 18 who are not in the military industry. Respondents aged 18 and older were included to match the sample characteristics of the Household Pulse estimates, which also include respondents over 18. Respondents with occupations in the military or who were unemployed were excluded for clarity, because they represented only 1.2% of the ACS workforce when including respondents aged 18 and older. Telework was classified according to methodology developed by Jonathan Dingel and Brent Neiman, as modified by Rakesh Kochhar and Jeffrey Passel.

Household Pulse Survey Phases & Analysis Periods						
Phase 1 Apr. 23 – Jul. 21, 2020				**Phase 2** Aug. 19 – Oct. 26, 2020	**Phase 3** Oct. 28 – Jan. ##, 2021	
Pre-Opening Period *Apr. 23 – Jun. 2* Only essential businesses in operation	**Reopening Period 1** *Jun. 4 – Jun. 30* Includes Phases 1 & 2 of Reopening in the greater NYC Area	**Reopening Period 2** *Jul. 2 – Jul. 21* Includes Phases 3 & 4 of Reopening in the greater NYC Area	*No Data Collected*	**Post-Opening Period 1** *Aug. 19 – Sept. 28* This period ends just before in-person learning resumes in public schools	**Post-Opening Period 2** *Sept. 30 – Nov. 23* In person learning resumed by Oct. 1, though it has paused for certain times/districts	*Data Not Available*
Time Periods may be further collapsed when comparing small subgroups over time						
Pre-Opening Period	**Initial Reopening Periods**			**Recent Post-Opening Periods**		