

September 22, 2020

Report on COVID-19 Survey Results

Community Survey (August 2020)



Photo credit: Pete Hocking

Executive Summary

The Provincetown Health Department released two surveys in August 2020. The surveys sought to take the temperature of the general community and the business community on how they are faring six months into the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as, their plans and

concerns for the off-season. For planning purposes, we also wanted to know if we would be welcoming more community members this off-season than normal. Data from both surveys suggests that this off-season Provincetown may welcome around 50 or so residents who do not normally live here in the off-season. However, most survey respondents reported they live in Provincetown year-round.

The survey gives a good overview of the status of Provincetown's older residents, many of whom (58%) report household yearly incomes of over \$100,000, and most of whom are white. The survey did not ask about household size, so it is not known whether the reported household yearly incomes support families, couples, or individuals. The residents who comprise the majority of the survey respondents appear to be doing relatively well six months into the pandemic.

There were some glimpses into the lives of those who report household income of less than \$100,000 a year. Notably the income bracket that reported a higher loss of income were those who reported a yearly income between \$35,000 - 49,999 a year. Just over a third (35%) of all participants expect to see a loss in income in the next two months because of the pandemic. The income brackets where more respondents report expecting a loss in income are \$25,000 - \$34,999 (62%) and \$35,000 - \$49,999 (60%).

Most survey respondents (65%) reported they are currently employed; of the 35% who reported they are not currently employed, most (66%) are retired. Other reasons for not working included employment was temporarily closed (8%) and reduction in business/furlough (7%). Only three percent of respondents reported being laid off due to the pandemic. Most participants (62%) reported no loss of income, a little over a third (38%) reported they lost income.

The survey asked participants questions about food security, both before the pandemic and currently. The data in this section should be considered in light of the demographics of the survey participants, and not be considered representative of the entire Provincetown community. Most participants reported answers that indicate economic stability and food security. Those who reported that sometimes they did not have enough to eat before the pandemic reported yearly incomes of less than \$34,999.

Most respondents indicated that they will get a flu shot this year and, when it's declared safe and effective, a vaccine for COVID-19, though this survey was conducted before COVID-19 vaccinations became increasingly politicized.

The population surveyed reports that they are doing relatively well in terms of mental health during this pandemic. Most respondents reported that they are not overwhelmingly experiencing feeling nervous or on edge, feeling depressed and hopeless, or feeling they can't stop worrying. Respondents value service-oriented activities such as helping friends and family (89%), supporting people at risk (78%), and supporting people experiencing hardship (77%).

In the future, the Health Department will use different research methods to engage a broader, more representative cross-section of the Provincetown population.

Methods

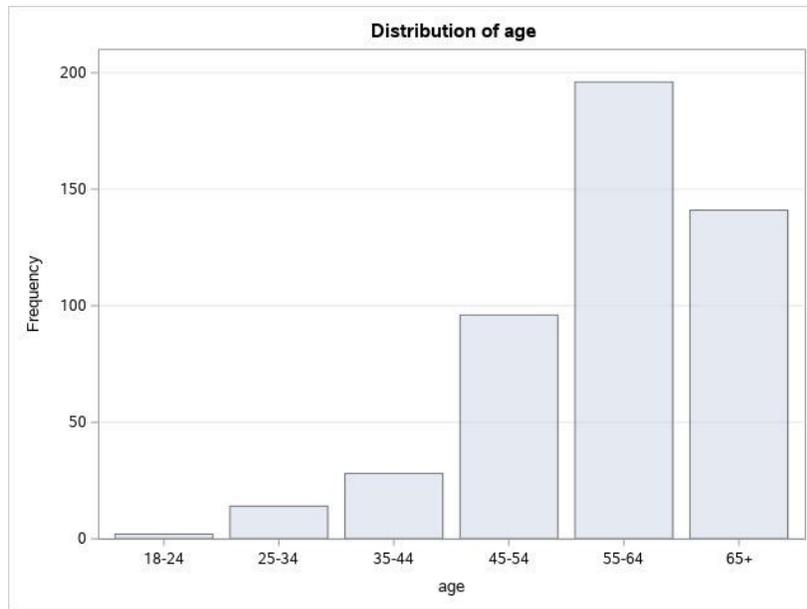
The survey was open August 19 - August 26, 2020. It was promoted through the Part-Time Resident Taxpayers Association, the Provincetown Chamber of Commerce, the Provincetown Business Guild, public service announcements, social media, and media coverage and also was distributed through email to businesses licensed by the Town, Town COVID-19 updates, and Town Department newsletters.

Where possible, the survey used pre-tested questions, including from the Household Pulse Survey During COVID-19 sponsored by the U.S. Census Bureau and other federal agencies, the U.S. Household Food Security Survey by the USDA, and other pre-tested surveys.

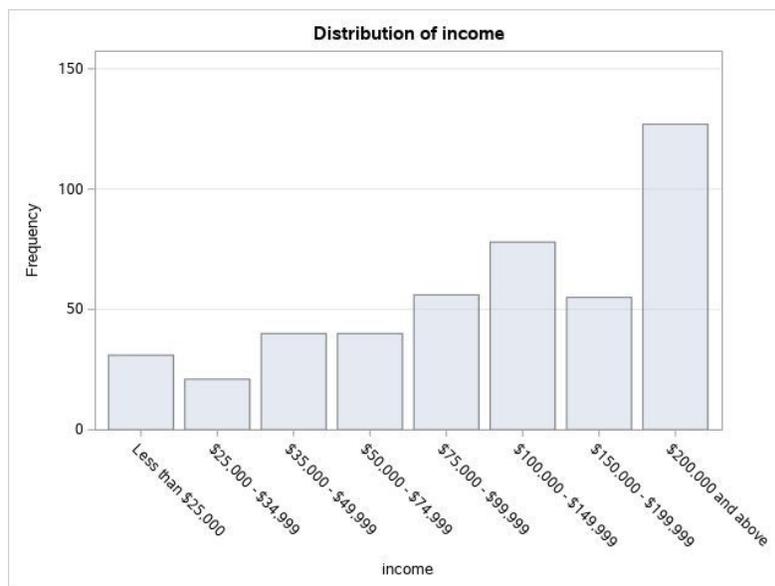
Participants

486 participants filled out the survey, not all participants answered all questions.

Community survey participants were predominantly older (91% were 45 and older) and white (91%). Less than ten percent of participants were 44 years old or younger. Slightly more men (57%) completed the survey than women (42%).



Just over 70% of survey participants reported yearly incomes of \$75,000 or higher, seven percent of participants reported yearly income of less than \$25,000.



The majority of participants (56%) reported they live here year-round, and 35% reported they live here part of the year. Non-residents who work in Provincetown accounted for 7% of the survey participants.

RESULTS

Off-Season Population

As a means of understanding whether the population this off-season would be markedly different than in past years, the community survey asked participants about whether they normally live in Provincetown for the off-season and whether they planned on living here this off-season. Most participants (85%) reported that they typically live in Provincetown for some part of the off-season. Of the 74 people who reported they do not typically live in Provincetown for some part of the off-season, 20 reported they will be living here this off-season, 9 were not sure, and 6 reported they will live here for part of the off-season. All but three of those participants were 45 years or older; all but four reported yearly incomes over \$75,000.

The Health Department also released a survey for businesses and organizations to understand their plans for the off-season. That survey asked business/organization representatives about their and their employees' plans for the off-season. Seven business owners reported planning to live here in the off season who normally do not. Business survey respondents reported approximately 17 workers may live here in the off-season who typically do not.

Data from both surveys suggest that Provincetown may welcome around 50 or so residents who do not normally live here in the off-season this off-season. This is just an approximation and may not be indicative of actual population changes.

Impacts of the pandemic

The survey asked questions about financial well-being, food security, health care, and feelings. It is important to recall the relative wealth of the survey participants when viewing the following data from the survey. Very few participants were from the lowest income brackets, and thus the data here cannot be considered representative of the community as a whole.

Personal finances

The community survey asked about the financial circumstances of the participants since March 2020. Most participants (62%) reported no loss of income, a little over a third (38%)

reported they lost income. The income bracket that reported more loss of income than no loss of income were those who reported making between \$35,000 - 49,999 a year. Just over a third (35%) of participants expect to see a loss in income in the next two months because of the pandemic. The income brackets where more respondents report expecting a loss in income are \$25,000 - \$34,999 (62%) and \$35,000 - \$49,999 (60%).

Most survey respondents (65%) reported current employment. Just over half (54%) of the respondents 65 and older reported they are not currently employed. The survey asked the main reason that participants were not working, and the majority (66%) indicated they were retired. Other reasons for not working included employment was temporarily closed (8%) and reduction in business/furlough (7%). Only three percent of respondents reported being laid off due to the pandemic.

The survey asked whether participants had paid their last month's rent or mortgage on time: 94% of participants reported they had, 2% reported they did not, and 4% reported their payment was deferred. Most participants (83%) reported high confidence that they will be able to pay their next month's rent or mortgage on time, two percent reported payment will still be deferred, 13% indicated a slight or moderate confidence, and two percent indicated they have no confidence that they will be able to pay on time.

Food security

The survey asked participants questions about food security, both before the pandemic and currently. The data in this section should be considered in light of the demographics of the survey participants, and not be considered representative of the entire Provincetown community.

Most participants (89%) reported they had enough food before the pandemic, ten percent reported they had enough to eat but not always what they wanted before the pandemic, one percent responded that sometimes they did not have enough to eat. Those who reported that sometimes they did not have enough to eat before the pandemic reported yearly incomes of less than \$34,999.

When asked about whether they had enough to eat in the past seven days, most participants (85%) reported they had enough to eat, 14% reported they had enough but not

always what they wanted, and under two percent reported either sometimes or often not having enough to eat. Of the 88 participants who indicated they did not have enough to eat, most (47 people) reported it was because the stores did not have the food they wanted; sixteen participants said they were afraid or did not want to go to stores to buy food, and fifteen said they could not afford to buy food. Eight participants who reported not having enough food to eat said it was because of either transportation or mobility issues, and two reported they did not have enough to eat because they could not get food delivered to them.

Most survey participants (68%) reported they are very confident they can afford the kinds of food they need for the next two months, sixteen percent were moderately confident, fourteen percent were somewhat confident, and three percent were not at all confident.

Health Care

One of the goals of the survey was to determine whether people were moving to Provincetown during the pandemic, and if so, whether they had what they needed to live here safely, including access to health care. Just over half of survey respondents (52%) reported that they have a primary care provider on Cape Cod. Fortunately, that does not mean that half of the respondents need a primary care provider, as that question was asked as well. Only 15% of participants reported they need a primary care provider. The survey offered a space for participants to include their contact information to be connected to primary care; that information was shared with Outer Cape Health Services to make a connection.

Vaccinations

The survey also asked participants if they were planning on getting a flu shot this year. Most (80%) reported they are, eight percent were not sure, and eleven percent said they were not planning to get a flu shot this year. The survey gave options for locations where participants might get their flu shot and they could select as many as they wished. The locations respondents selected included Outer Cape Health Services (47%), CVS (30%), Stop & Shop (21%), other doctor's office (16%), other (12%), employer flu clinic (5%), and regional flu clinic (3%).

Respondents were also asked whether they would get a vaccine for COVID-19 when one was approved as safe and effective¹. Most respondents (77%) indicated they would, 21% indicated they were not sure, and only two percent reported they would not get a vaccine.

Feelings

The survey asked questions about participants' feelings in light of the pandemic. First it asked about whether participants found certain service-oriented behaviors to be necessary and useful during a pandemic. The activities that most respondents ranked as very useful and necessary were helping friends and family (89%), supporting people at risk (78%), and supporting people experiencing hardship (77%). Donating blood (36%) and helping with neighborhood assistance (48%) were ranked as very useful and necessary at lower frequencies.

Participants were also asked about how they felt over the last seven days. Many (43%) reported they did not feel nervous or on edge, 32% said they felt nervous or on edge for several days, thirteen percent reported they felt nervous or on edge for more than half the days, and twelve percent reported they felt nervous or on edge nearly every day.

Even more respondents (63%) indicated they were not bothered with being able to stop or control worrying. Seven percent indicated they were not able to stop or control worrying more than half the days of the past week, and six percent reported that feeling nearly every day in the past week.

Most respondents (60%) also indicated they were not feeling down, depressed, or hopeless in the past week, though seven percent said they felt that way more than half the days of the past week, and four percent reported that feeling nearly every day in the past week.

When asked if they have little interest or pleasure in doing things, most respondents (65%) indicated this was not an issue for them, but six percent said they felt that way more than half the days of the past week and four percent reported they felt that way nearly every day in the past week.

¹ This survey was administered prior to President Trump's announcements that he would have a vaccine by the end of the year, and then before the election, which reportedly is eroding the public's trust in the vaccine approval process (source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/17/us/politics/trump-biden-coronavirus-vaccine.html>)

The survey also asked if respondents felt stressed or burdened by certain factors in the previous two weeks, the following table shows the responses by percentage:

	Very much	Somewhat	A little	Not at all	N/A
The current pandemic	40%	30%	23%	6%	<1%
Living in a small accommodation	6%	9%	10%	65%	11%
Being in quarantine / Staying at home	11%	20%	28%	33%	8%
Childcare	2%	<1%	<1%	46%	51%
My child(ren)s schooling	4%	4%	2%	40%	50%
Working from home	4%	9%	13%	46%	29%
Worries about my health	14%	26%	35%	24%	2%
Worries of not being able to get medical care	11%	15%	23%	48%	4%
Increased conflicts with people close to me	7%	14%	22%	54%	3%
Financial worries	13%	17%	25%	43%	2%
Uncertainties regarding my job, studies, or school	12%	15%	19%	42%	12%
Concerns for my own personal safety	13%	21%	30%	34%	3%
Concerns for the wellbeing of family members or friends	31%	28%	25%	10%	5%
Fears of what the future will bring, or that I won't be able to cope with everything	21%	21%	29%	26%	3%
Boredom	10%	16%	28%	42%	4%

On a whole, the people who filled out the survey do not report being overwhelmed by negative feelings. Understandably, many report feeling some level of stress or burden particularly concerning their friends and family's wellbeing, or fears about the future. Many

report feeling stressed by the current pandemic in general. Survey participants found value in many service-oriented behaviors, the highest of which were supporting people at risk, supporting people experiencing hardship, and helping friends and family.

It is important to remember that this survey was conducted in August. Weather and activity play a large role in mood and feelings, and we cannot assume that how people responded to these questions is indicative of anything further than their feelings at that point in time.

Takeaways

The goal of this survey was to get an idea of how the Provincetown community is doing six months into the pandemic, and to understand what community members feel their needs are moving into the off-season.

The survey gives a good overview of the status of Provincetown's older residents, many of whom (58%) report household yearly incomes of over \$100,000. Those residents appear to be doing relatively well six months into the pandemic.

There were some glimpses into the lives of those who make under \$100,000 a year. Notably the income bracket that reported a higher loss of income was those who reported making between \$35,000 - 49,999 a year. Just over a third (35%) of participants expect to see a loss of income in the next two months because of the pandemic.

Most survey respondents (65%) reported they are currently employed, and most of those who are not currently employed are retired (66%). Most participants (62%) reported no loss of income, a little over a third (38%) reported they lost income. The income brackets where more respondents report expecting a loss in income are \$25,000 - \$34,999 (62%) and \$35,000 - \$49,999 (60%).

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Most respondents indicated that they will get a flu shot this year and, when it's declared safe and effective, a vaccine for COVID-19, though this survey was conducted before COVID-19 vaccinations became increasingly politicized.

The population surveyed reports that they are doing relatively well during this pandemic. Most respondents reported that they are not overwhelmingly experiencing feelings such as being nervous or on edge, feeling depressed and hopeless, or feeling they can't stop worrying. Respondents do value service-oriented activities such as helping friends and family (89%), supporting people at risk (78%), supporting people experiencing hardship (77%).

In the future, the Health Department will use different research methods to engage a broader, more representative cross-section of the Provincetown population.