

Black & Essential – Top Line

322 self-identified Black & African American Baton Rouge, LA residents participated in an online questionnaire. 48% identified as male, 49% identified as female, and 3% as non-gender binary. 51% did not possess a college (two or four year) degree, and the average age of the sample was 35, ranging from 18 to 76 years of age.

→ Of the sample, 8% tested positive, and 52% know someone personally that has received a positive diagnosis of Covid-19. 40% are not aware of someone personally that has received a positive diagnosis of Covid-19.

→ 45% have someone in their household with a serious health condition such as high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, or cancer.

→ 18% have someone in their household that works in a health care setting.

→ 45% have someone in their household employed in a position identified as an “essential worker.”

→ 91% reported having internet access in their homes.

→ 76% had health insurance before Covid-19, and this percentage increased by 2% since the pandemic began.

→ 50% reported having supported family financially before the pandemic. There was a 2% increase among respondents who now support family members financially since the pandemic began.

→ There was a 1% decrease in home stability among respondents since the pandemic began.

→ 29% of households have multiple generations, including grandparents, living together.

→ 8% stated that family members or friends have moved into their homes since the beginning of the pandemic, with an average of two additional people moving in.

→ Among respondents, before the pandemic, 33% mentioned that “once in a while,” there was not enough money in the household for rent or mortgage, 7% of that group stated that this was the case “very often.” Since the pandemic began, this percent has risen overall by 4%, with a 2% increase that “very often” there is not enough money in the household for rent or mortgage.

→ Among respondents, before the pandemic, 37% mentioned that “once in a while,” there was not enough money in the household for food to eat, 7% of that group stated that this was the case “very often.” Since the pandemic began, the percent has risen overall by 1%, with a steady percentage that “very often” there is not enough money in the household for food to eat.

→ Among respondents, before the pandemic, 38% mentioned that “once in a while,” there was not enough money in the household to cover medical care expenses (e.g., co-pays), 8% of that group stated that this was the case “very often.” Since the pandemic began, the percent has decreased by 3%, with a 1% decrease that “very often” there is not enough money in the household to cover medical care expenses.

→ When asked which officials you trust most in receiving information about the pandemic, trust was highest in healthcare providers ($M = 5.15$), followed by the Mayor/President of Baton Rouge ($M = 4.87$), and lowest for the President of the United States ($M = 2.53$).

→ When asked of confidence in support from employers of a range of workplace concerns, respondents were confident in support for continued healthcare coverage ($M = 4.35$), workplace safety ($M = 4.01$), and least in childcare support ($M = 2.85$) and hazard pay if becoming sick or contracting Covid-19 ($M = 3.25$)

→ When asked, “How are you, family, and community members supporting one another during the pandemic?” respondents often referenced task-orientated responsibilities such as picking up groceries or medications for neighbors and family members. Respondents also stated, “We coordinate a food drive where we give away food to local community members” (Male, 49 years old) and “We host a ‘wave by’ for our elders where we caravan past their homes, honk our horns, wave, and drop off cards and gifts” (Female, 56 years old).

→ When asked, “What do you think is needed most from government and private sector officials during the pandemic?” respondents offered explicit examples, including, “My elderly neighbor is an EBT recipient. I try to do most of her shopping for her. But they [government] should put in the work to allow EBT recipients to use their benefits online, (Female, 25 years old) and “There needs to be better access to medical care and special transportation for the elderly” (Female, 38 years old).

→ When asked, “What is an action that you take on to deal with the current situation around Covid-19,” a majority of respondents stated that they aim to adhere to guidelines such as wearing masks, social distancing, and if possible, continuing to quarantine. Some respondents reported that they are now more focused on their health, “I make sure that my family and I are staying healthy, I try to cook healthier and keep fresh fruit and vegetables in the house instead of junk food, and I also make sure that we all take vitamins daily now (Female, 28 years old) and “I take a lot of supplements, herbs and also drink teas. I am also vegan and try to incorporate as much fruit and veggies as possible (Female, 46 years old). Lastly, a majority of respondents mentioned prayers, leaning on their spirituality, and meditation as coping mechanisms or actions undertaken to deal with the ongoing experience of the pandemic.