

## The COVID-19 Economy's Effects on Food, Housing, and Employment Hardships



*In April 2020, the Census Bureau began the Household Pulse Survey to collect nearly real-time data on how families were faring during this unprecedented crisis. At the end of 2021, the Census Bureau had released data from 39 Pulse surveys on household well-being. CBPP and others used this data to assess hardship and the impact of relief measures.*

*With the end of bi-weekly Pulse data releases in October 2021, this tracker will no longer be updated. The Census Bureau will continue to release Household Pulse data on a monthly basis, and CBPP will continue to analyze and write about the effects of pandemic-relief measures, including the important role of government policies in reducing hardship and poverty.*

The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic fallout caused significant hardship. In the early months of the crisis, tens of millions of people lost their jobs. While employment began to rebound within a few months, unemployment remained high throughout 2020. Improving employment and substantial relief measures helped reduce the very high levels of hardship seen in the summer of 2020. Nonetheless, considerable unmet need remained near the end of 2021, with 20 million households reporting having too little to eat in the past seven days and 10 million households behind on rent. In early 2022, some 3 million fewer people are employed than before the pandemic, though steady progress has been made, including in recent months.

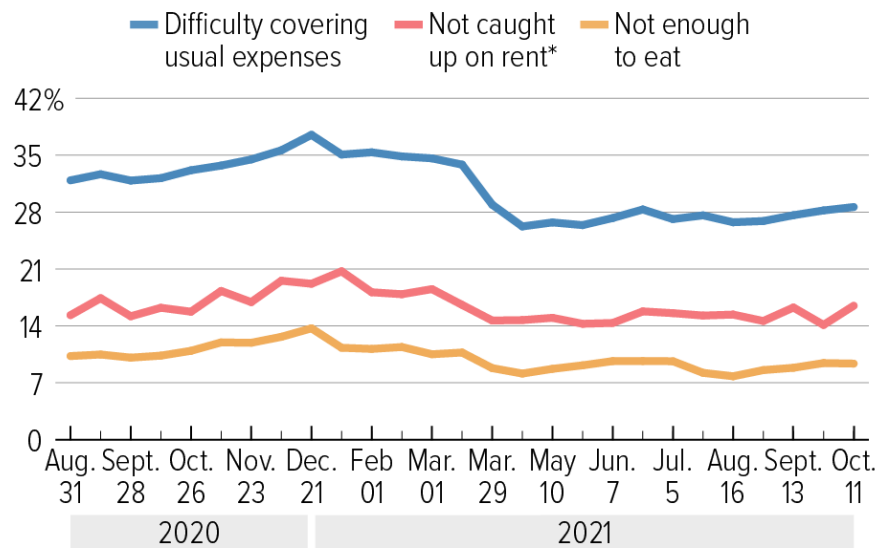
Hardship in 2020 and 2021 would have been far worse without extraordinary steps taken by the federal government, states, and localities to respond to the pandemic and its economic fallout. Key hardship indicators showed strong improvement during early 2021, aided by job growth and government benefits. Hardship rates fell especially fast after the enactment of the American Rescue Plan Act on March 11, 2021, which included \$1,400 payments for most Americans as well as other assistance to struggling households. (See Figure 1.) Food hardship among adults with children also fell after the federal government began issuing monthly payments of the expanded Child Tax Credit on July 15, 2021, along with improvements in food assistance.

Still, according to the Pulse survey, in October 2021, nearly 20 million adults lived in households that did not get enough to eat, 12 million adult renters were behind on rent, and some of the progress from late March appeared to have stalled as other troubles continued to affect the economy, including expiring unemployment benefits and supply chain problems that contributed to rising prices for many goods.

FIGURE 1

## Hardship Fell After Relief Enacted But Persisted in 2021

Share of adults



\*Percent of adults in renter households.

Note: Dates shown are the last day of each 13-day data collection period. Data collection was paused between December 21, 2020, and January 6, 2021, between March 29 and April 14, 2021, and between July 5 and July 21, 2021. Percentages exclude individuals who did not respond to the question.

Source: CBPP analysis of Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey tables

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The impacts of the pandemic and the economic fallout have been widespread, but remain particularly prevalent among Black people, Latino people,<sup>1</sup> and other people of color. These disproportionate impacts reflect harsh, long-standing inequities — often stemming from structural racism — in education, employment, housing, and health care that the crisis exacerbated. Households with children also continue to face especially high hardship rates. Considerable evidence suggests that reducing childhood hardship and poverty would yield improvements in education and health, higher productivity and earnings, less incarceration, and other lasting benefits to children and society.<sup>2</sup>

### High Hardship Rates Fell as Relief Arrived, Census Bureau Data Show

Millions of people were out of work and struggled to afford adequate food and pay the rent through 2021, data from the Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey and other sources, such as unemployment data from Census’ Current Population Survey and the Department of Labor, show. The impacts on those with children have been especially large (see Figures 3, 7, and 8). Still, hardship would have been far worse without the substantial relief measures taken to respond to the pandemic’s economic fallout.

For more on our methodology and data by state, see tables 1-4 at the end of this document.

<sup>1</sup> Federal surveys generally ask respondents whether they are “of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.” This report uses the term “Latino.”

<sup>2</sup> Claire Zippel and Arloc Sherman, “Bolstering Family Income Is Essential to Helping Children Emerge Successfully From the Current Crisis,” CBPP, updated February 25, 2021, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/bolstering-family-income-is-essential-to-helping-children-emerge>.

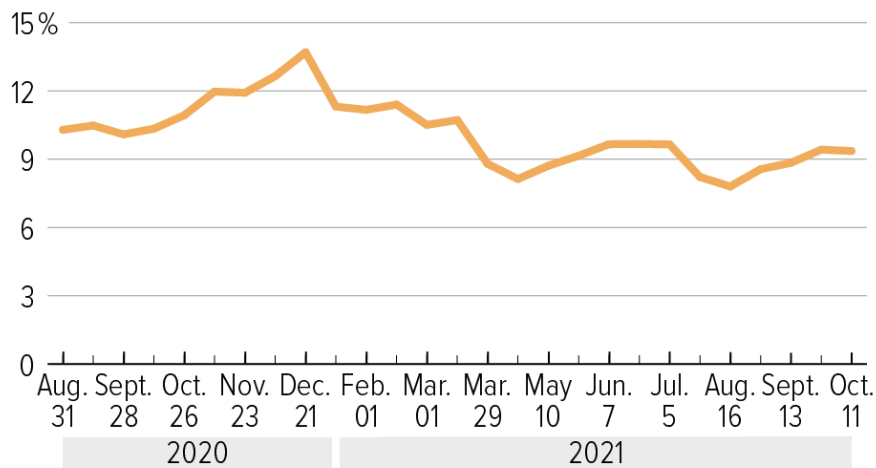
## Difficulty Getting Enough Food

The number of adults reporting that their households did not get enough to eat in the last seven days fell from a peak of nearly 30 million — 14 percent — in December 2021 to nearly 20 million — 9 percent — in the fall of 2021, according to Pulse data.<sup>3</sup> (See Figure 2.) It fell sharply in March 2021 after the enactment of the December 2020 relief package and the mid-March enactment of the Rescue Plan, which included Economic Impact Payments of \$1,400 for most individuals that month. Food hardship among adults with children improved significantly following the issuance of the first monthly Child Tax Credit payment (up to \$300 monthly per child) on July 15, 2021.<sup>4</sup>

FIGURE 2

### Food Hardship Fell From 2020 Peak After Relief Enacted

Share of adults reporting that their household sometimes or often did not have enough to eat in last 7 days



Note: Dates shown are the last day of each Household Pulse Survey 13-day data collection period. Data collection was paused between December 21, 2020, and January 6, 2021, between March 29 and April 14, 2021, and between July 5 and July 21, 2021. Percentages exclude individuals who did not respond to the question.

Source: CBPP analysis of Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey tables

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Nearly 20 million adults — 9 percent of all adults in the country — reported that their household sometimes or often didn't have enough to eat in the last seven days, according to Household Pulse Survey data collected September 29–October 11, 2021. When asked why, 82 percent said they “couldn't afford to buy more food,” rather than (or in addition to) non-financial factors such as lack of transportation or safety concerns due to the pandemic.

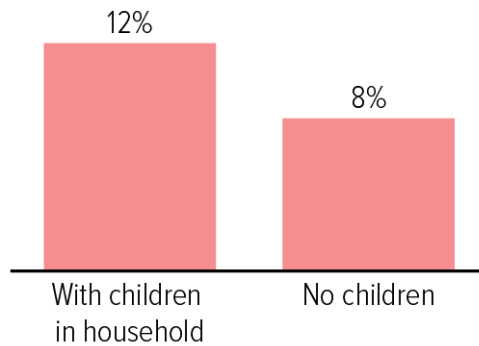
<sup>3</sup> According to annual food insecurity data from the December 2020 Food Security Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS-FSS), 10.5 percent of U.S. households were food insecure in 2020. While the overall prevalence of food insecurity was unchanged from 2019, it increased for households with children and Black households. The number of individuals in food-insecure households also increased by 3 million, from 35.2 million in 2019 to 38.3 million in 2020. The CPS-FSS includes a measure of food insecurity, based on ten to 18 questions about conditions and behaviors related to difficulty meeting food needs. This measure is different from the food insufficiency measure in the Household Pulse Survey, which is based on a single question about the household having enough food to eat in the past seven days. While the food insecurity figures from the CPS-FSS appear to show lower rates of food hardship during 2020 than the Household Pulse Survey, more research is needed to assess the impact of differences in reference periods, mode of data collection, response rates, and other factors on reported food hardship. See Alisha Coleman-Jensen *et al.*, “Household Food Security in the United States in 2020,” U.S. Department of Agriculture, September 2021, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=102075>.

<sup>4</sup> Claire Zippel, “After Child Tax Credit Payments Begin, Many More Families Have Enough to Eat,” CBPP, August 30, 2021, <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/after-child-tax-credit-payments-begin-many-more-families-have-enough-to-eat>.

FIGURE 3

## For Nearly 1 in 8 Adults With Children, Household Lacked Sufficient Food

Share of adults saying that their household sometimes or often did not have enough to eat in the last 7 days, October 2021



Note: Chart excludes individuals who did not respond to the question.

Source: CBPP analysis of Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey tables for September 29 - October 11, 2021

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Adults in households with children were likelier to report that the household didn't get enough to eat: 12 percent, compared to 8 percent for households without children. (See Figure 3.) And 7 to 13 percent of adults with children reported that their *children* sometimes or often didn't eat enough in the last seven days because they couldn't afford it. Households typically first scale back on food for adults before cutting back on what children have to eat. (The 7-13 percent range reflects the different ways to measure food hardship in the Household Pulse Survey.)

Also, analysis of more detailed data from the Pulse Survey shows that between 5 and 9 million children lived in a household where children didn't eat enough because the household couldn't afford it. These figures are approximations; the Pulse Survey was designed to provide data on adult well-being, not precise counts of children.

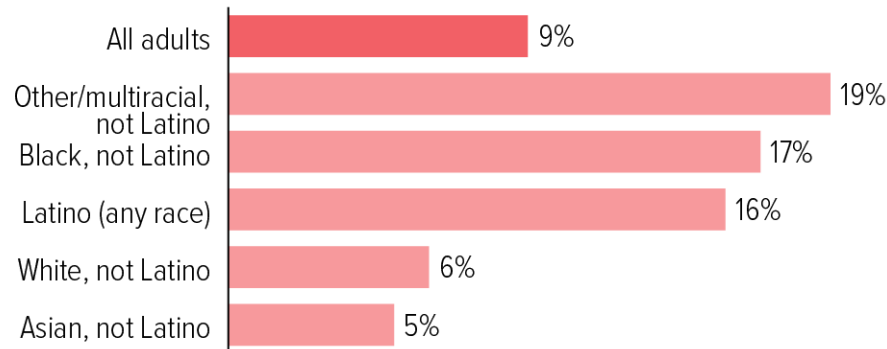
Black and Latino adults were more than twice as likely as white adults to report that their household did not get enough to eat: 17 percent for Black adults and 16 percent for Latino adults, compared to 6 percent of white adults. Adults who identify as American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, or as multiracial, taken together,<sup>5</sup> were more than three times as likely than white adults to report that their household did not get enough to eat, at 19 percent. (See Figure 4.)

<sup>5</sup> The Pulse Survey does not provide data for these groups individually.

FIGURE 4

## Households of Color Likelier to Lack Sufficient Food During Pandemic

Share of adults saying that their household sometimes or often did not have enough to eat in the last 7 days, October 2021



Note: Other/multiracial, not Latino = people identifying as American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or more than one race. Percentages are based on reporting distributions and do not include individuals who did not respond to the question.

Source: CBPP analysis of Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey tables for September 29 - October 11, 2021

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## Inability to Pay Rent or Mortgage

Millions were not caught up on their rent or mortgage payments in late 2021, the Household Pulse data also showed, but fewer than earlier in the year.

The December 2020 relief package and the Rescue Plan included over \$46 billion in emergency rental assistance, designed to help people struggling to pay their rent and avoid eviction. Getting this emergency aid to people behind on rent took time, as many communities did not have adequate systems in place to distribute emergency rental assistance funds quickly. An August 2021 Supreme Court ruling ended the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s eviction moratorium, heightening the urgency to quickly distribute rental assistance to people in need. Once states and localities built the necessary infrastructure for people to apply for and receive emergency assistance, however, disbursement of funds accelerated in the fall of 2021. Over 3.2 million households received emergency aid from January to November 2021, according to Treasury Department data, with over half of these households receiving aid between September and November.<sup>6</sup>

The number of adult renters reporting to the Census Bureau that their household was not caught up on rent fell from a peak of 15 million people – 1 in 5 adult renters – in January 2021 to more than 10 million people – about 1 in 7 adult renters – in the fall of 2021. (See Figure 5.) These households, particularly those who lost employment during the pandemic, may have accumulated debt from multiple months of back rent and late fees. Renters of color and families with children consistently reported higher rates of rent hardship throughout 2020 and 2021.

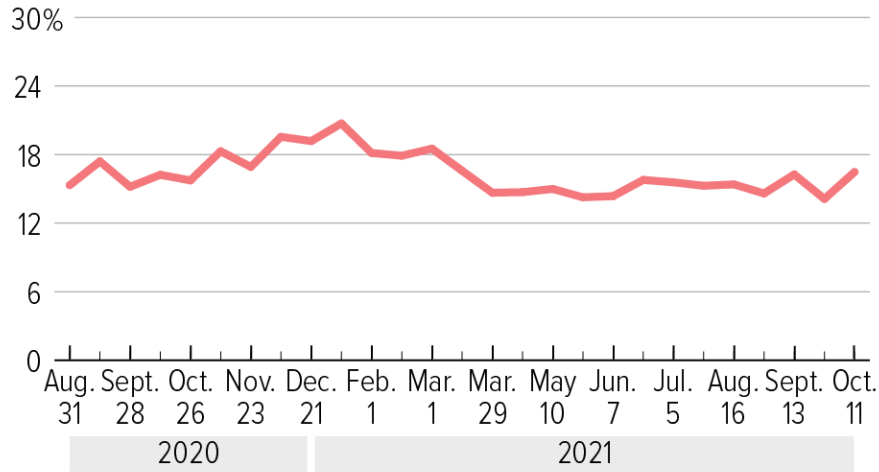
The Pulse data likely understated the number of people struggling to pay rent because many respondents skipped questions toward the end of the survey, including the housing questions. This “non-response” was higher among groups that are younger, have lower levels of education, and identify as Black or Latino – groups that are also more likely to struggle to afford rent, due to long-standing inequities often stemming from structural racism in education, employment, and housing.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of the Treasury, “November Emergency Rental Assistance Program Interim Report,” January 7, 2021, <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/November-ERA-Data.xlsx>.

FIGURE 5

## Rent Hardship, Below Peak, Remained Widespread in 2021

Share of adult renters reporting that their household is not caught up on rent



Note: Dates shown are the last day of each 13-day data collection period. Data collection was paused between December 21, 2020, and January 6, 2021, between March 29 and April 14, 2021, and between July 5 and July 21, 2021. Percentages exclude individuals who did not respond to the question.

Source: CBPP analysis of Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey tables

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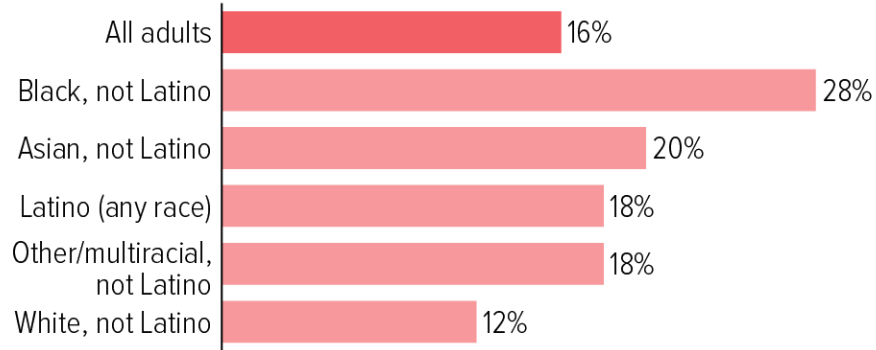
Despite these measurement challenges, the slow rollout of emergency rental assistance and high pre-pandemic levels of housing hardship meant that millions still had difficulty paying rent late in 2021. An estimated 12 million adults living in rental housing – 16 percent of adult renters – were not caught up on rent, according to data collected September 29–October 11, 2021.<sup>7</sup> Here, too, renters of color were more likely to report that their household was not caught up on rent: 28 percent of Black renters, 18 percent of Latino renters, and 20 percent of Asian renters said they were not caught up on rent, compared to 12 percent of white renters. The rate was 18 percent for American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and multiracial adults taken together. (See Figure 6.)

<sup>7</sup> In Pulse survey data collected September 29–October 11, 2021, 8.4 million adults lived in households not caught up on rent. To adjust for non-response in the survey, we applied the share not caught up on rent (16.5 percent) to the total number of adult renters (73 million) in the March 2020 Current Population Survey to calculate an adjusted estimate.

FIGURE 6

## 1 in 6 Renters Not Caught Up on Rent During Pandemic, With Renters of Color Facing Greatest Hardship

Share of adult renters saying their household is not caught up on rent, October 2021



Note: Other/multiracial, not Latino = people identifying as American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or more than one race. Chart excludes renters who did not respond to the question.

Source: CBPP analysis of Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey tables for September 29 - October 11, 2021

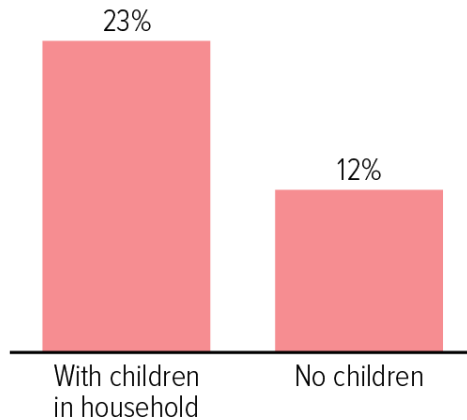
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In addition, 23 percent of renters who are parents or otherwise living with children reported that they were not caught up on rent, compared to 12 percent among adults not living with anyone under age 18. (See Figure 7.)

FIGURE 7

## Over 1 in 5 Renters Living With Children Were Not Caught Up on Rent

Share of adult renters who said household is not caught up on last month's rent, October 2021



Note: Chart excludes renters who did not respond to question.

Source: CBPP analysis of Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey tables for September 29–October 11, 2021

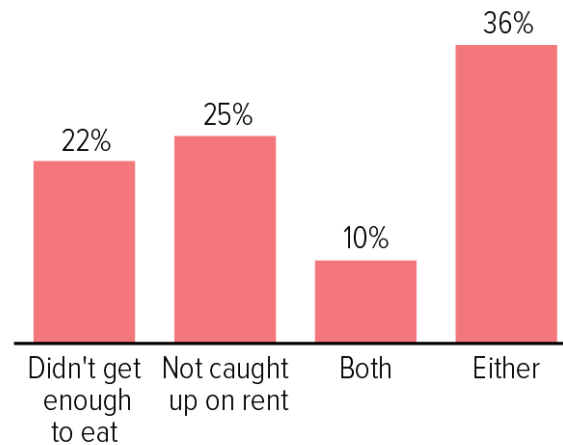
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Children in renter households also faced high rates of food hardship. Over 1 in 5 children living in rental housing lived in a household that didn't have enough to eat, according to detailed Pulse data. And over 1 in 3 children living in rental housing lived in a household that either wasn't getting enough to eat or was not caught up on rent. (See Figure 8.)

FIGURE 8

## Over 1 in 3 Children in Renter Households Faced Food and/or Housing Hardship

In October 2021, percent of children in households that:



Note: Didn't get enough to eat = household had "not enough to eat" sometimes or often in last seven days. Figures omit children in households that do not pay cash rent, such as those in employer-provided housing, as well as those who did not respond to one or both hardship questions. Survey does not collect data on children directly; figures for children are estimated based on number of children in each household.

Source: CBPP analysis of Census' Household Pulse Survey public use file, data collected September 29 - October 11, 2021

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While households that don't rent their homes but have mortgage payments typically have higher incomes than renters, some of them also faced difficulties, especially if they lost their jobs or their incomes fell significantly. An estimated 7.5 million adults are in a household that was not caught up in its mortgage payment in the fall of 2021.<sup>8</sup>

## Difficulty Covering Household Expenses

The Household Pulse Survey provided data on the number of adults struggling to cover usual household expenses such as food, rent or mortgage, car payments, medical expenses, or student loans. Some 63 million adults — 29 percent of all adults in the country — reported it was somewhat or very difficult for their household to cover usual expenses in the past seven days, according to data collected September 29–October 11, 2021. That was down from a peak of 38 percent in mid-December 2020. (See Figure 9.)

In early 2021, the share of adults with trouble covering expenses stabilized as employment rose and aid from the December 2020 relief package — including renewed jobless benefits and another round of stimulus payments — reached households.

<sup>8</sup> In Pulse survey data collected September 29–October 11, 2021, 6.5 million adults were in households not caught up on their mortgage. To adjust for non-response in the survey, we applied the share not caught up on their mortgage (7.5 percent) to the total number of adult homeowners (about 100 million) in the March 2020 Current Population Survey to calculate an adjusted estimate.

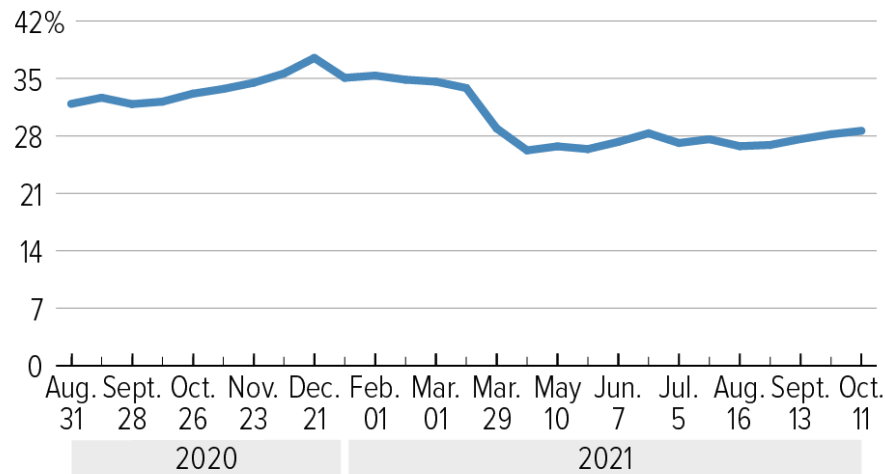


Following the March 2021 enactment of the Rescue Plan, and as the economy continued to add jobs, the share of adults who had trouble covering usual expenses fell sharply. The share ticked upward in May, likely due to the fading impact of the third round of stimulus payments, but it remained statistically unchanged in the subsequent months as other troubles continued to affect the economy, including expiring unemployment benefits, a resurging virus, and supply chain problems that contributed to rising prices for many goods.

FIGURE 9

## Down From Peak, More Than 1 in 4 Adults Had Trouble Covering Expenses in 2021

Share of adults reporting that it was somewhat or very difficult for their household to pay for usual expenses in last 7 days



Note: Dates shown are the last day of each 13-day data collection period. Data collection was paused between December 21, 2020, and January 6, 2021, between March 29 and April 14, 2021, and between July 5 and July 21, 2021. Percentages exclude individuals who did not respond to the question.

Source: CBPP analysis of Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey tables

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Adults in households with children were more likely to report difficulty paying for usual expenses than those without children: 36 percent, compared to 24 percent. Financial hardship can have serious effects on children’s long-term health and education, research shows.<sup>9</sup>

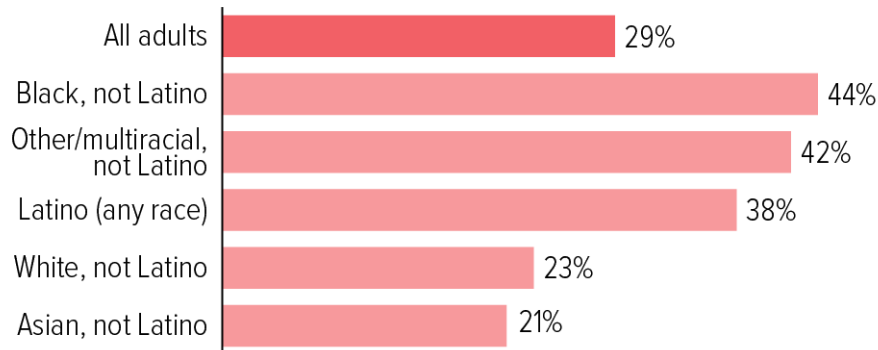
Black and Latino adults reported difficulty covering expenses at higher rates: 44 percent and 38 percent respectively, compared to 23 percent for white adults and 21 percent for Asian adults. (See Figure 10.) The rate was 42 percent for American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and multiracial adults taken together.

<sup>9</sup> Ajay Chaudry and Christopher Wimer, “Poverty is Not Just an Indicator: The Relationship Between Income, Poverty, and Child Well-Being,” *Academic Pediatrics*, Vol. 16, Issue 3, April 1, 2016, [https://www.academicpedsinl.net/article/S1876-2859\(15\)00383-6/fulltext](https://www.academicpedsinl.net/article/S1876-2859(15)00383-6/fulltext).

FIGURE 10

## Over 1 in 4 Adults Had Trouble Paying for Usual Household Expenses in Last 7 Days

Share of adults reporting that it was somewhat or very difficult for their household to pay for usual expenses, October 2021



Note: Other/multiracial, not Latino = people identifying as American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or more than one race. Percentages exclude individuals who did not respond to the question.

Source: CBPP analysis of Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey tables for September 29–October 11, 2021

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Adults with a disability<sup>10</sup> were more than twice as likely to report difficulty paying for usual expenses than adults without a disability: 54 percent compared to 23 percent, according to detailed Pulse data. In addition, LGBT<sup>11</sup> adults were likelier than non-LGBT adults to live in households with difficulty covering expenses: 34 percent compared to 27 percent.

An estimated 38 percent of children lived in households that have trouble covering usual expenses, according to detailed data from the Pulse Survey. They included 57 percent of children in Black households, 46 percent of children in Latino households, 30 percent of children in white households, and 24 percent of children in Asian households. (The Pulse Survey asks the race of the adult respondent, not the children.)

## Many Workers Remained Sidelined, With Job Losses Concentrated in Low-Paid Industries

The unemployment rate jumped in April 2020 to a level not seen since the 1930s – and stood at 4.9 percent in October 2021, compared with 3.5 percent in February 2020. That official unemployment rate, moreover, understated job losses.

There were still 4.2 million fewer jobs in October 2021 than in February 2020. The majority of jobs lost in the crisis have been in industries that pay low average wages, with the lowest-paying industries accounting for 30 percent of all jobs but 59 percent of the jobs lost from February 2020 to October 2021, according to Labor Department employment data. Jobs were down nearly twice as much in low-paying industries (4.5 percent) as in medium-wage industries (2.6 percent) and roughly 15 times as much as in high-wage industries (0.3 percent) during this period. (See Figure 11.)

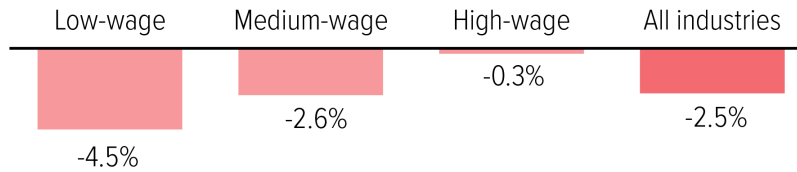
<sup>10</sup> Starting in mid-April 2021, the Pulse survey asks respondents whether they have difficulty seeing, hearing, remembering or concentrating, or walking or climbing stairs. In this report, adults with a disability are those who reported “a lot of difficulty” with, or “could not do at all”, one or more of these four activities. This definition, like others, may not accurately reflect the identities and experiences of all disabled people.

<sup>11</sup> Starting in late July 2021, the Pulse survey asks respondents about their sex assigned at birth, gender identity, and sexual orientation. The Census Bureau categorizes Pulse respondents as LGBT if they identify as gay, bisexual, transgender, or as having a gender identity that doesn’t align with the sex they were assigned at birth. Respondents whose sex at birth aligns with their gender identity and who identify as straight are categorized as non-LGBT.

FIGURE 11

## Job Losses Largest in Low-Wage Industries

Percent change in number of jobs, February 2020 to October 2021



Note: Industries were ranked by average wages in February 2020 and divided into three groups containing roughly the same number of jobs.

Source: CBPP calculations of Bureau of Labor Statistics data

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Black and Latino workers have experienced a far slower jobs recovery than white workers — reflecting historical patterns rooted in structural racism.<sup>12</sup> Some 7.9 percent of Black workers and 5.9 percent of Latino workers were unemployed in October 2021, compared to 4.0 percent of white workers. Workers who were born outside the U.S. (this includes individuals who are now U.S. citizens) have experienced larger job losses than U.S.-born workers.

Data from the Census Bureau’s basic monthly Current Population Survey released November 10, 2021, provided more detail on unemployed workers and their family members. Some 17.9 million people either met the official definition of unemployed (meaning they had actively looked for work in the last four weeks or were on temporary layoff) or lived with an unemployed family member in October. This figure included 4.4 million children.

The official definition of unemployed leaves out many workers deprived of pay amid the pandemic,<sup>13</sup> including some 1.3 million workers in October 2021 who reported they did not look for work because of the pandemic, according to the Labor Department. The official definition also omitted some 200,000 workers who reported that they had a job but that they were absent from work without pay and lost pay in the last four weeks “because their employer closed or lost business due to the coronavirus pandemic,” according to our calculations.

When family members were considered, some 21.3 million people in October 2021, including 5.3 million children, lived in a family where at least one adult did not have paid work in the last week because of unemployment or the pandemic, we estimated.

During 2021, a large share of people getting jobless benefits only qualified because of the temporary eligibility expansions enacted in response to the pandemic. Permanent reforms are needed to fix an underlying system in which too many unemployed workers get inadequate benefits or no benefits at all.<sup>14</sup>

## State-by-State Food, Housing, and Employment Hardship Data

Data by state show that hardship was widespread in the fall of 2021. The following tables provide state-level data on:

<sup>12</sup> Chad Stone, “Robust Unemployment Insurance, Other Relief Needed to Mitigate Racial and Ethnic Unemployment Disparities,” CBPP, August 5, 2020, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/economy/robust-unemployment-insurance-other-relief-needed-to-mitigate-racial-and-ethnic>.

<sup>13</sup> Many analysts reach a similar conclusion using a slightly different approach, noting that the official unemployment rate is too low because it omits workers who have exited the labor force in the last 12 months and are no longer looking for work, and because it ignores workers whom the Labor Department says are improperly classified as employed in its survey data but are in fact absent from work. When these two factors are corrected using an approach recommended by Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, the unemployment rate for October 2021 could be as high as 7.2 percent. Jerome H. Powell, “Recent Economic Developments and the Challenges Ahead,” speech at the National Association for Business Economics Virtual Annual Meeting, October 6, 2020, <https://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/speech/powell20201006a.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> Chad Stone, “Congress Should Heed President Biden’s Call for Fundamental UI Reform,” CBPP, May 5, 2021, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/economy/congress-should-heed-president-bidens-call-for-fundamental-ui-reform>.

- the share of adults reporting that their household didn't have enough to eat (Table 1);
- the share of adults saying children in their household were not eating enough because they couldn't afford enough (Table 1);
- the share of adults not caught up on rent (Table 2);
- the share of adults saying their household had difficulty paying for their usual expenses (Table 3); and
- the three-month moving average unemployment rate and recent jobless claim data (Table 4).

For data from the Pulse Survey, we averaged data collected September 15-27, 2021 and September 29–October 11, 2021 to improve the accuracy of the state estimates.

Differences in Pulse hardship rates between states may reflect sampling error, so we suggest not drawing strong conclusions from modest differences between states. The data do show, however, that high levels of hardship remained widespread across the country.

## Difficulty Getting Enough Food

The Pulse Survey asks adult respondents if their household did not have enough to eat and if children in the household were not eating enough because the household couldn't afford it.

TABLE 1

### High Shares of Households Report Difficulty Getting Enough Food

Among adults; data collected September 15–October 11, 2021.

**How to read this table:** In the U.S., some 20 million adults reported that their household sometimes or often didn't have enough to eat in the last seven days. This represented 9 percent of all adults in the country. Some 9 million adults living with children reported that "the children were not eating enough because we just couldn't afford enough food." This represented 12 percent of adults living with children.

State	Adults Reporting That Household Didn't Have Enough to Eat		Adults Reporting That Children in Household Weren't Eating Enough Because Household Couldn't Afford Enough	
	Number	As a Percent of Adults	Number	As a Percent of Adults Living with Children
United States	20,008,000	9%	9,346,000	12%
Alabama	341,000	11%	163,000	15%
Alaska	53,000	11%	15,000	8%
Arizona	410,000	8%	235,000	12%
Arkansas	196,000	10%	95,000	13%
California	2,424,000	10%	1,180,000	13%
Colorado	263,000	7%	128,000	10%
Connecticut	183,000	8%	90,000	11%
Delaware	87,000	13%	29,000	12%
District of Columbia	40,000	8%	23,000	15%
Florida	1,610,000	11%	613,000	12%
Georgia	897,000	13%	507,000	18%
Hawai'i	100,000	11%	68,000	19%
Idaho	81,000	7%	35,000	8%
Illinois	621,000	8%	406,000	15%
Indiana	397,000	9%	132,000	9%

TABLE 1

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State	Adults Reporting That Household Didn't Have Enough to Eat		Adults Reporting That Children in Household Weren't Eating Enough Because Household Couldn't Afford Enough	
	Number	As a Percent of Adults	Number	As a Percent of Adults Living with Children
Iowa	181,000	9%	47,000	7%
Kansas	187,000	10%	59,000	9%
Kentucky	313,000	11%	109,000	11%
Louisiana	414,000	14%	213,000	19%
Maine	64,000	7%	19,000	6%
Maryland	312,000	8%	213,000	14%
Massachusetts	371,000	8%	119,000	8%
Michigan	534,000	8%	273,000	12%
Minnesota	198,000	5%	132,000	10%
Mississippi	253,000	14%	112,000	16%
Missouri	418,000	10%	124,000	9%
Montana	58,000	8%	23,000	10%
Nebraska	74,000	6%	42,000	9%
Nevada	143,000	7%	102,000	13%
New Hampshire	57,000	6%	28,000	9%
New Jersey	464,000	8%	291,000	14%
New Mexico	132,000	9%	52,000	10%
New York	1,400,000	12%	628,000	15%
North Carolina	698,000	10%	321,000	13%
North Dakota	39,000	8%	17,000	8%
Ohio	587,000	8%	224,000	8%
Oklahoma	347,000	13%	147,000	15%
Oregon	266,000	9%	84,000	8%
Pennsylvania	656,000	8%	305,000	11%
Rhode Island	63,000	9%	32,000	13%
South Carolina	308,000	9%	123,000	11%
South Dakota	45,000	8%	25,000	12%
Tennessee	426,000	10%	168,000	11%
Texas	2,079,000	12%	1,145,000	17%
Utah	151,000	7%	47,000	6%
Vermont	20,000	5%	7,000	6%
Virginia	336,000	6%	144,000	8%
Washington	405,000	8%	146,000	8%
West Virginia	108,000	9%	31,000	8%
Wisconsin	177,000	5%	70,000	6%

TABLE 1

## High Shares of Households Report Difficulty Getting Enough Food

Among adults; data collected September 15–October 11, 2021.

**How to read this table:** In the U.S., some 20 million adults reported that their household sometimes or often didn't have enough to eat in the last seven days. This represented 9 percent of all adults in the country. Some 9 million adults living with children reported that "the children were not eating enough because we just couldn't afford enough food." This represented 12 percent of adults living with children.

State	Adults Reporting That Household Didn't Have Enough to Eat		Adults Reporting That Children in Household Weren't Eating Enough Because Household Couldn't Afford Enough	
	Number	As a Percent of Adults	Number	As a Percent of Adults Living with Children
Wyoming	22,000	6%	8,000	5%

Note: Figures are averages of data collected September 15-27, 2021 and September 29–October 11, 2021. In the data collected September 29–October 11, 2021, 9.4 percent of all adults reported that their household "sometimes" or "often" in the last seven days had "not enough to eat," while 12.9 percent of adults living with children reported that the children sometimes or often in the last seven days were "not eating enough because we just couldn't afford enough food." As recommended by the Census Bureau, percentages exclude persons not replying to the question.

Source: Calculated by Center on Budget and Policy Priorities from Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey published tables "food1," "food2," and "food4," for survey weeks 38 and 39, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/data.html>

## Not Caught Up on Rent

Table 2 shows the estimated number of adults whose household was not caught up on rent by state. The Pulse data likely understated the number of people struggling to pay rent because many respondents skipped questions toward the end of the survey, including the housing questions. This “non-response” was higher among groups that are younger, have lower levels of education, and identify as Black or Latino – groups that are more likely to struggle to afford rent, due to long-standing inequities often stemming from structural racism in education, employment, and housing.

TABLE 2

### One in 6 Renters Nationwide Were Not Caught Up on Rent

Among adults in rental housing; data collected September 15–October 11, 2021

#### Not Caught Up on Rent

	Estimated Number	Percent
Alabama	150,000	17%
Alaska	20,000	13%
Arizona	159,000	9%
Arkansas	101,000	16%
California	1,557,000	13%
Colorado	106,000	8%
Connecticut	118,000	15%
Delaware	52,000	28%
District of Columbia	39,000	13%
Florida	912,000	18%
Georgia	542,000	23%
Hawai'i	41,000	11%
Idaho	21,000	7%
Illinois	463,000	17%
Indiana	187,000	15%
Iowa	91,000	16%
Kansas	44,000	7%
Kentucky	192,000	22%
Louisiana	163,000	18%
Maine	28,000	12%
Maryland	265,000	20%
Massachusetts	188,000	11%
Michigan	241,000	14%
Minnesota	115,000	12%
Mississippi	111,000	20%
Missouri	137,000	11%
Montana	16,000	8%
Nebraska	53,000	13%
Nevada	79,000	9%
New Hampshire	26,000	11%
New Jersey	328,000	15%
New Mexico	99,000	24%
New York	1,257,000	21%
North Carolina	397,000	17%

TABLE 2

**One in 6 Renters Nationwide Were Not Caught Up on Rent**

Among adults in rental housing; data collected September 15–October 11, 2021

**Not Caught Up on Rent**

	Estimated Number	Percent
<b>North Dakota</b>	15,000	8%
<b>Ohio</b>	329,000	13%
<b>Oklahoma</b>	202,000	24%
<b>Oregon</b>	123,000	12%
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	274,000	11%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	71,000	28%
<b>South Carolina</b>	180,000	19%
<b>South Dakota</b>	29,000	18%
<b>Tennessee</b>	202,000	14%
<b>Texas</b>	1,401,000	21%
<b>Utah</b>	31,000	6%
<b>Vermont</b>	8,000	7%
<b>Virginia</b>	213,000	11%
<b>Washington</b>	178,000	9%
<b>West Virginia</b>	32,000	12%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	125,000	10%
<b>Wyoming</b>	8,000	8%

Note: Figures are averages of data collected September 15-27, 2021 and September 29–October 11, 2021. To adjust for non-response in the Pulse Survey, the estimated number is calculated as the Pulse Survey’s estimated share not caught up on rent multiplied by the total number of adult renters ages 18 and older from the American Community Survey.

Source: Calculated by Center on Budget and Policy Priorities from Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey published table “housing1b” for survey weeks 38 and 39, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/data.html>; and 2019 American Community Survey public use file



## Difficulty Covering Usual Household Expenses

The Pulse survey asks adult respondents if their household had difficulty paying for usual expenses such as food, rent or mortgage, car payments, medical expenses, or student loans in the last seven days. Table 3 shows the estimated number and percent of adults reporting that it was somewhat or very difficult for their household to pay for their usual expenses in the last seven days.

TABLE 3

### Over 1 in 4 Adults Nationwide Had Difficulty Covering Usual Household Expenses

Among adults; data collected September 15–October 11, 2021

	Difficulty Covering Usual Household Expenses	
	Number	Percent
<b>United States</b>	62,845,000	28%
<b>Alabama</b>	1,046,000	33%
<b>Alaska</b>	150,000	31%
<b>Arizona</b>	1,476,000	29%
<b>Arkansas</b>	674,000	34%
<b>California</b>	7,970,000	30%
<b>Colorado</b>	963,000	24%
<b>Connecticut</b>	646,000	26%
<b>Delaware</b>	221,000	31%
<b>District of Columbia</b>	119,000	24%
<b>Florida</b>	4,852,000	32%
<b>Georgia</b>	2,308,000	33%
<b>Hawai'i</b>	304,000	31%
<b>Idaho</b>	271,000	22%
<b>Illinois</b>	2,142,000	26%
<b>Indiana</b>	1,155,000	26%
<b>Iowa</b>	489,000	23%
<b>Kansas</b>	451,000	23%
<b>Kentucky</b>	822,000	28%
<b>Louisiana</b>	1,100,000	37%
<b>Maine</b>	239,000	24%
<b>Maryland</b>	1,142,000	28%
<b>Massachusetts</b>	1,173,000	25%
<b>Michigan</b>	1,757,000	27%
<b>Minnesota</b>	651,000	17%
<b>Mississippi</b>	723,000	38%
<b>Missouri</b>	1,231,000	29%
<b>Montana</b>	207,000	27%
<b>Nebraska</b>	303,000	23%
<b>Nevada</b>	622,000	28%
<b>New Hampshire</b>	202,000	21%
<b>New Jersey</b>	1,667,000	29%
<b>New Mexico</b>	438,000	30%
<b>New York</b>	3,793,000	30%
<b>North Carolina</b>	2,072,000	29%
<b>North Dakota</b>	102,000	20%

TABLE 3

**Over 1 in 4 Adults Nationwide Had Difficulty Covering Usual Household Expenses**

Among adults; data collected September 15–October 11, 2021

	<b>Difficulty Covering Usual Household Expenses</b>	
	Number	Percent
<b>Ohio</b>	1,815,000	23%
<b>Oklahoma</b>	958,000	36%
<b>Oregon</b>	813,000	27%
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	2,319,000	26%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	210,000	29%
<b>South Carolina</b>	980,000	29%
<b>South Dakota</b>	143,000	25%
<b>Tennessee</b>	1,465,000	32%
<b>Texas</b>	6,095,000	32%
<b>Utah</b>	493,000	23%
<b>Vermont</b>	72,000	16%
<b>Virginia</b>	1,477,000	26%
<b>Washington</b>	1,244,000	23%
<b>West Virginia</b>	347,000	29%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	825,000	21%
<b>Wyoming</b>	106,000	27%

Note: Figures are averages of data collected September 15-27 and September 29–October 11. In the data collected September 29–October 11, 63 million adults nationwide (29 percent) reported difficulty paying for usual household expenses.

Source: Calculated by Center on Budget and Policy Priorities from Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey published table “spending1” for survey weeks 38 and 39, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/data.html>

## Unemployment

Table 4 provides state-by-state data on the unemployment rate over the August–October 2021 period and data on unemployment benefit claims.

TABLE 4

### Unemployment, Jobless Claims Remained Elevated Across Most of the Country

States	Unemployment rate (August–October average) <sup>a</sup>	Jobless benefits claims for week ending October 30 <sup>b</sup>
Alabama	3.1	7,000
Alaska	6.3	7,000
Arizona	5.7	21,000
Arkansas	4.0	14,000
California	7.4	1,265,000
Colorado	5.6	24,000
Connecticut	6.8	24,000
Delaware	5.3	5,000
District of Columbia	6.4	20,000
Florida	4.8	53,000
Georgia	3.3	45,000
Hawai'i	6.6	14,000
Idaho	2.9	3,000
Illinois	6.6	134,000
Indiana	3.8	38,000
Iowa	4.0	10,000
Kansas	3.9	7,000
Kentucky	4.3	18,000
Louisiana	5.8	24,000
Maine	4.9	5,000
Maryland	5.8	40,000
Massachusetts	5.2	56,000
Michigan	5.1	52,000
Minnesota	3.7	43,000
Mississippi	5.8	7,000
Missouri	3.8	21,000
Montana	3.3	4,000
Nebraska	2.0	3,000
Nevada	7.5	26,000
New Hampshire	2.9	3,000
New Jersey	7.1	124,000
New Mexico	6.9	12,000
New York	7.1	214,000
North Carolina	4.2	26,000
North Dakota	3.5	1,000
Ohio	5.3	65,000

TABLE 4

## Unemployment, Jobless Claims Remained Elevated Across Most of the Country

States	Unemployment rate (August–October average) <sup>a</sup>	Jobless benefits claims for week ending October 30 <sup>b</sup>
Oklahoma	3.0	15,000
Oregon	4.7	35,000
Pennsylvania	6.2	107,000
Puerto Rico	8.2	36,000
Rhode Island	5.5	8,000
South Carolina	4.1	13,000
South Dakota	2.9	1,000
Tennessee	4.4	23,000
Texas	5.6	130,000
Utah	2.4	6,000
Vermont	2.9	2,000
Virgin Islands	9.3	1,000
Virginia	3.8	115,000
Washington	5.0	50,000
West Virginia	4.6	7,000
Wisconsin	3.7	29,000
Wyoming	4.5	2,000
<b>United States</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>3,017,000</b>

<sup>a</sup> All rates are the August–October 2021 average and are seasonally adjusted, except for the Virgin Islands.

<sup>b</sup> Compiled from data for regular state UI benefits, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation. Including other smaller programs, 3,184,657 people were claiming benefits in that week. Per Government Accountability Office recommendations, the Department of Labor now says about these data, “Continued weeks claimed represent all weeks of benefits claimed during the week being reported, and do not represent weeks claimed by unique individuals.”

\*Rate is not seasonally adjusted.

Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment for Virgin Islands from Virgin Islands Electronic Workforce System; Unemployment Weekly Claims Report, Department of Labor, November 18, 2021.