
COVID-19 CLIENT IMPACT SURVEY

AMPLIFYING THE EXPERIENCES OF ARAB, MIDDLE EASTERN,
NORTH AFRICAN, AND SOUTH ASIAN POPULATIONS



**Arab-American Family
Support Center**





OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

The Arab-American Family Support Center (AAFSC) is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization created in 1994 to provide **culturally and linguistically-competent, trauma-informed social services** to low-income immigrants and refugees across New York City.

As an essential provider, AAFSC has offered uninterrupted service throughout the COVID-19 crisis. **We expanded our outreach across programs and launched new initiatives** to meet the heightened need for mental health services, support for survivors of domestic violence, academic enrichment for youth, emergency financial assistance, and access to health insurance and food safety. For all in-person programming, AAFSC provides staff with personal protective equipment. As able, we pivoted many of our programs to a confidential, HIPAA-compliant platform. AAFSC is also providing information and resources about the COVID-19 vaccine as it rolls out.

OUR IMPACT SURVEY

Despite years of advocacy, **Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African community members are not counted in traditional surveys like the Census**. The lack of disaggregated data also paints Asian-American communities in broad strokes, which renders specific communities and their needs invisible. Anecdotally, AAFSC saw the disproportionate impact COVID-19 is having on the communities we serve.

To understand the full impact of COVID-19, AAFSC invited our clients, most of whom identify as immigrants and refugees, to complete a comprehensive survey. The results of this survey will help guide and improve AAFSC's service provision while being an **invaluable resource for our partners and stakeholders on the unique effect COVID-19 has on vulnerable immigrant communities**.



OUR APPROACH

As with all our work, we utilized a culturally-competent methodology to complete the survey. AAFSC prioritized **collecting disaggregated data from diverse communities that mainstream providers fail to collect**, notably with the inefficient approach of the recent 2020 Census.

AAFSC's 2020 COVID-19 Impact Survey was administered to **309 households between the period of August 10, 2020 through October 8, 2020**. Survey respondents were selected through purposive sampling with an observed response rate of approximately 50%, and the survey sample generally reflects the geographic and racial/ethnic diversity of AAFSC's target service population and the New York City AMEMSA (Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, South Asian) immigrant and refugee population.

AAFSC staff administered the survey verbally and in a variety of languages including Arabic, Bangla, and Urdu, as well as English. Surveyed households include clients from a variety of programs across AAFSC's suite of wrap-around services, with 12% from the Anti-Violence Program, 21% from the Preventive Services program, 39% from the Adult Readiness program, and 28% from our Community Health & Well-Being initiatives (see page 11 for a more detailed description of all AAFSC programs). **Many of the individuals we serve access more than one of our complimentary services**, with 203 internal cross-referrals reported during the survey period.

Participation in the COVID-19 Impact Survey was voluntary, unincentivized, and surveys were carried out with linguistic and cultural competency and trauma-informed practices.

By collecting disaggregated data, AAFSC is paving the way for the City and other providers to adopt this approach. It is our hope that our city and our nation can ultimately offer more culturally appropriate responses to the pandemic and social justice issues at large.



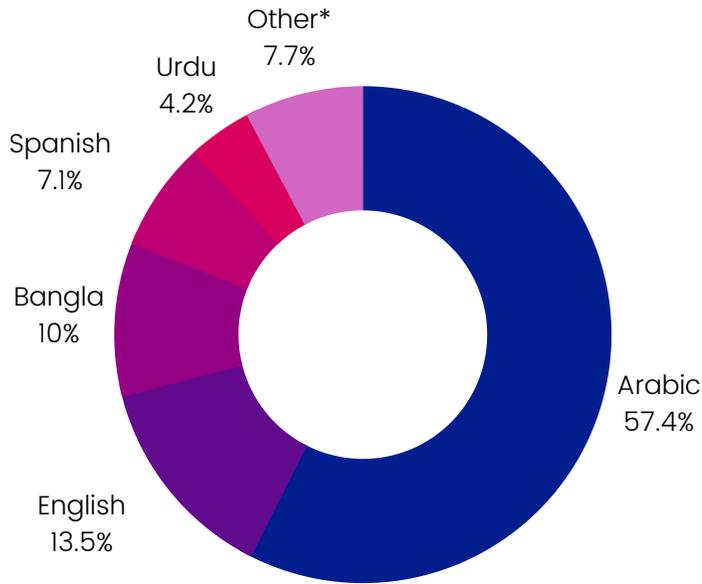
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- New York City must expand financial assistance programs to include all New Yorkers, including documented and undocumented immigrants and refugees. Financial assistance will be critical until the pandemic is under control.
- Linguistically and culturally-competent outreach efforts need to be enhanced to ensure unemployed New Yorkers can access life-saving benefits.
- The public and private sector should collaborate to more efficiently deliver technology to low-income students.
- Federal, state, and city levels must promote food security through increased access to healthy, affordable produce, the expansion of SNAP benefits, and collaborations with farmers' markets.
- Food distribution programs need to account for and respect cultural and dietary differences. Specifically, many food programs distribute pork, a non-inclusive protein option that isolates those who require halal or kosher foods. Further, food allergies must be accommodated, including for infants who need special formula.
- The public and private sector must work closely to ensure that free mental health programs are fully funded. We must collectively prioritize partnerships between community-based organizations and medical providers.
- COVID-19 has laid bare New York City's housing crisis. The city should invest in affordable housing that addresses the excessive cost burden people living in New York City face.
- Healthcare systems must increase the number of multi-language resources and culturally-competent providers available to ensure immigrant and refugee families feel confident and safe accessing healthcare, including for mental health.
- Culturally and linguistically-competent agencies that remain on the front lines during crises like the pandemic need to be financially supported to ensure they can reach the most vulnerable populations.



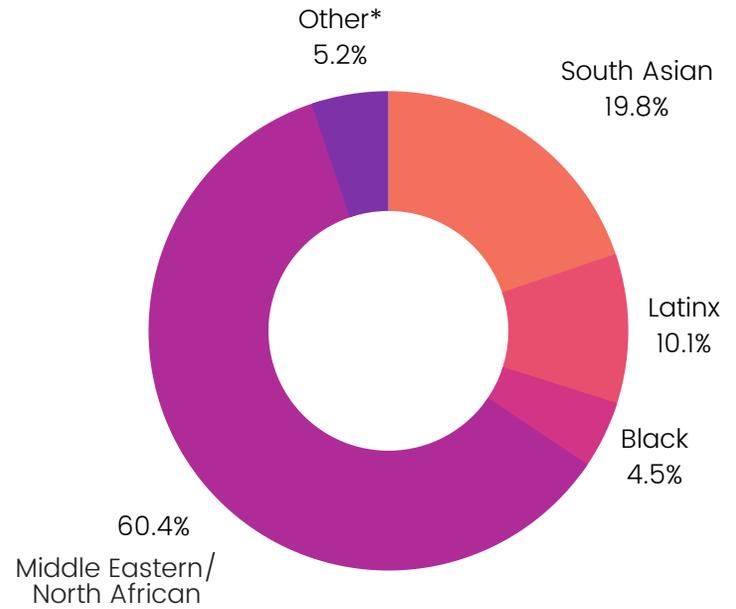
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

LANGUAGE



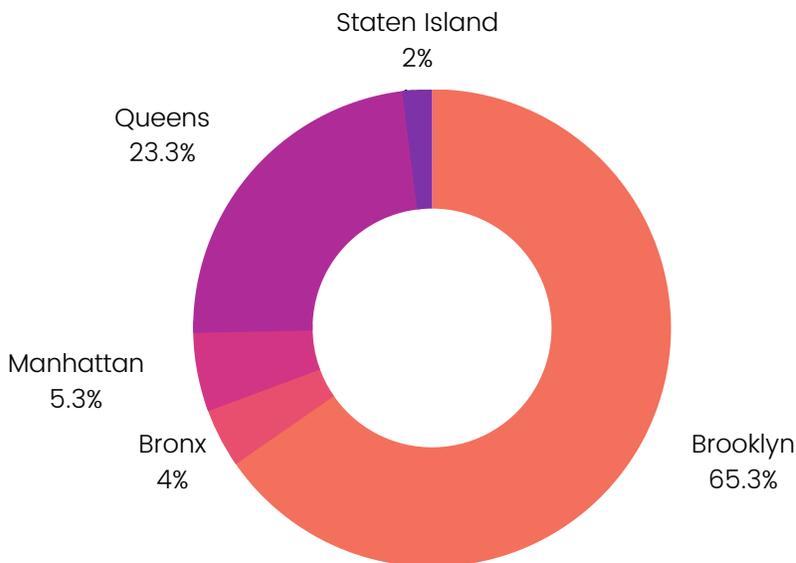
*Pashto, Punjabi, French, Polish, Uzbek, Gujarati, Hindi, Nepali, Tibetan, Korean, Tagalog, Wolof, Russian

RACE/ETHNICITY

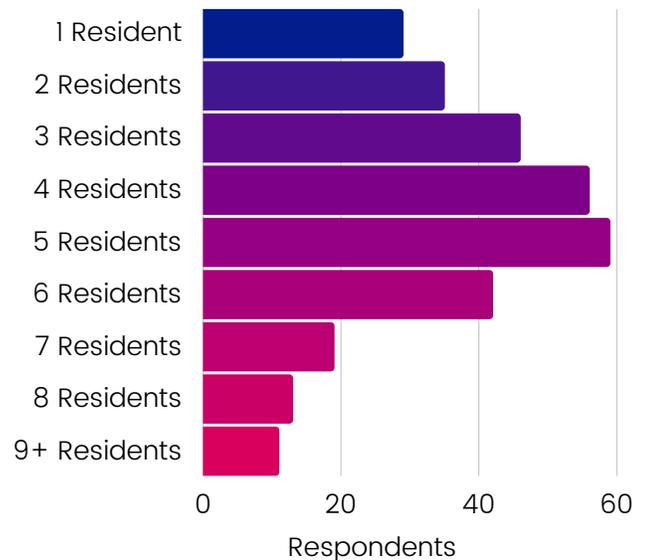


*Asian, White, Multi-Racial

BOROUGH OF RESIDENCE



HOUSEHOLD RESIDENCY



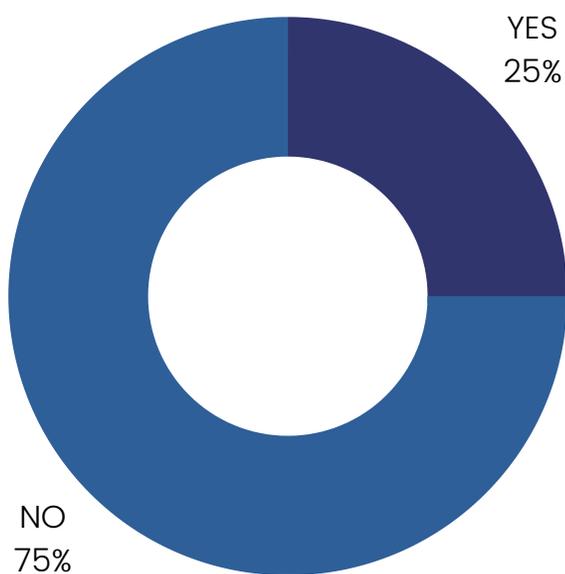
Unaffordable housing forces multiple families to live in shared spaces, increasing the risk of COVID-19 contraction.



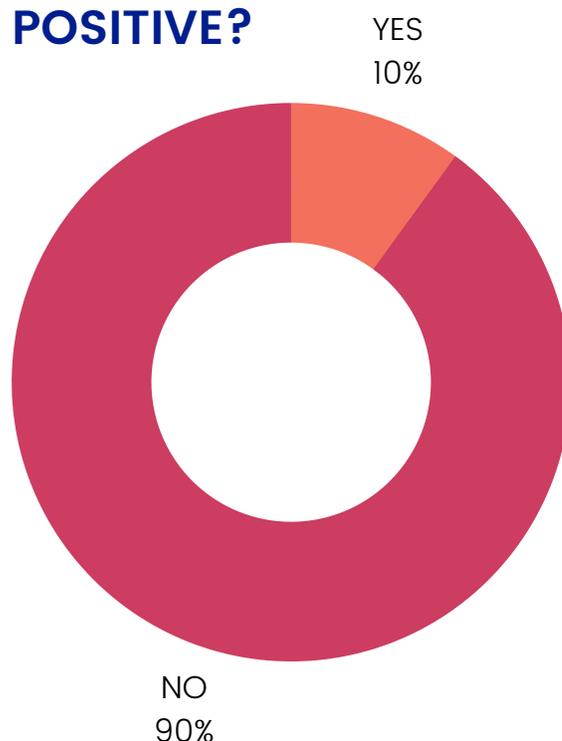
PREVALENCE OF COVID-19

26% of our respondents experienced COVID-19 symptoms and/or tested positive for the virus. However, due to lack of medical access or fear of immigration-based legal repercussions, many are left untested.

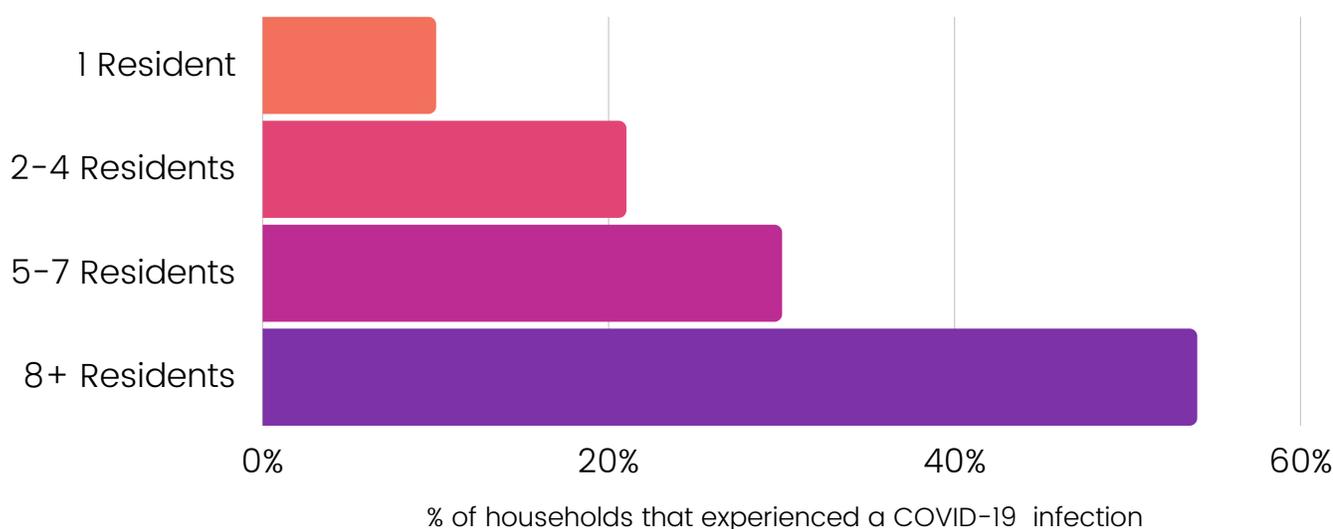
DID YOU EXPERIENCE SYMPTOMS?



DID YOU TEST POSITIVE?



HOUSEHOLD SIZE VS. RATE OF COVID-19 INFECTION

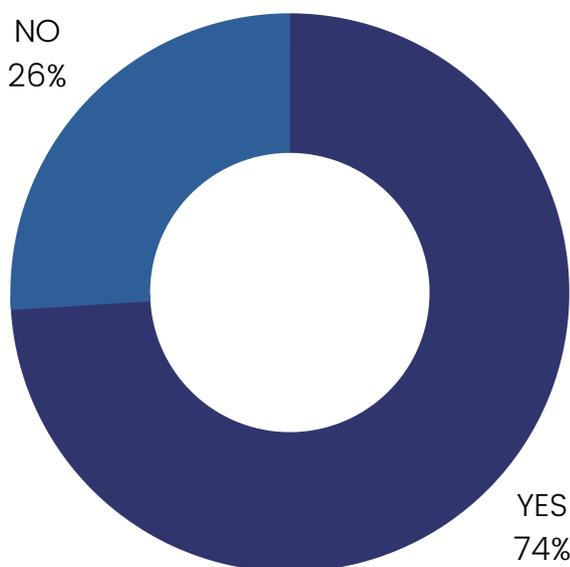




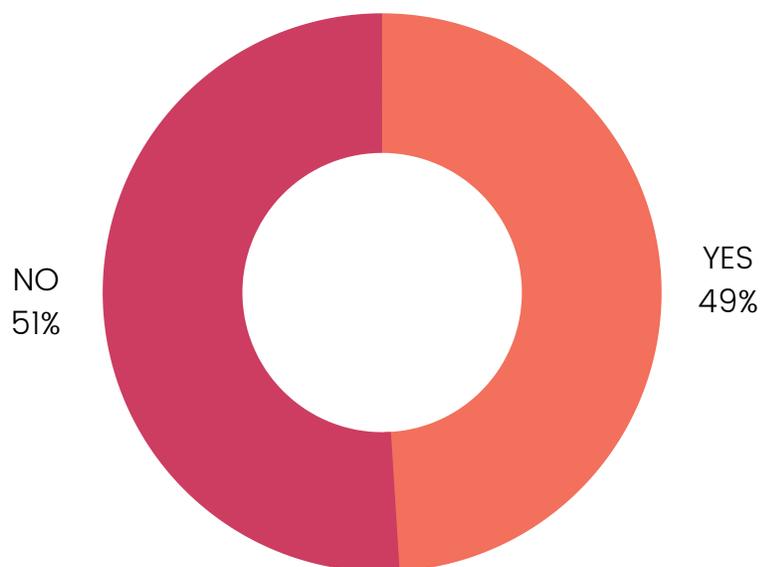
ECONOMIC IMPACT

51% of households whose income was impacted by COVID-19 did not receive Unemployment Insurance benefits.

DID COVID-19 CAUSE ECONOMIC HARDSHIP?*



DID YOU RECEIVE UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS?*



*Due to job loss, hours of employment loss, or business closure

*If economic hardship was caused by COVID-19

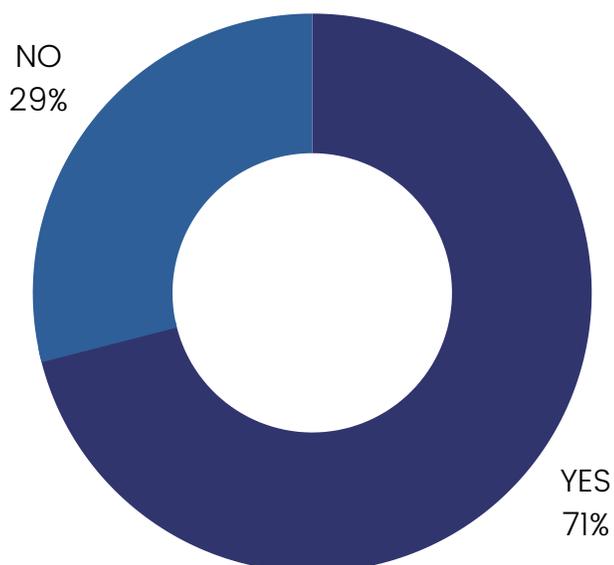




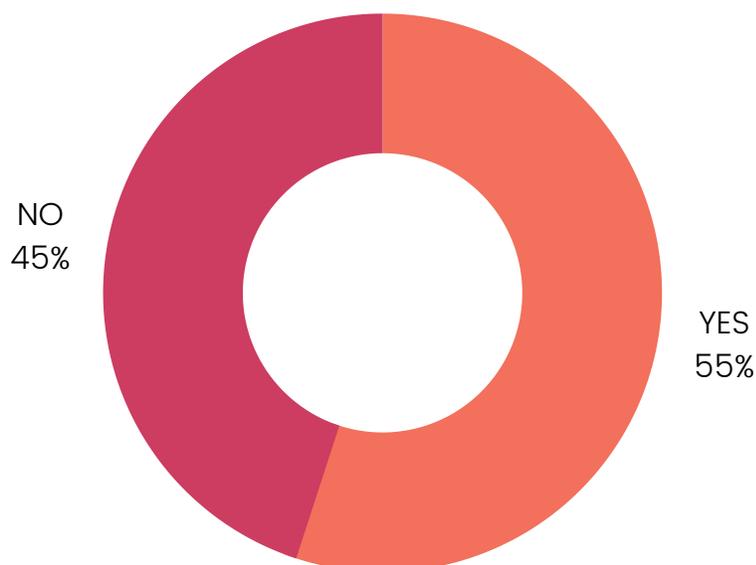
REMOTE LEARNING

55% of families involved in remote learning reported experiencing difficulties because of minimal access to internet and technology, heightened disconnect due to language barriers, and lack of an adequate working space at home.

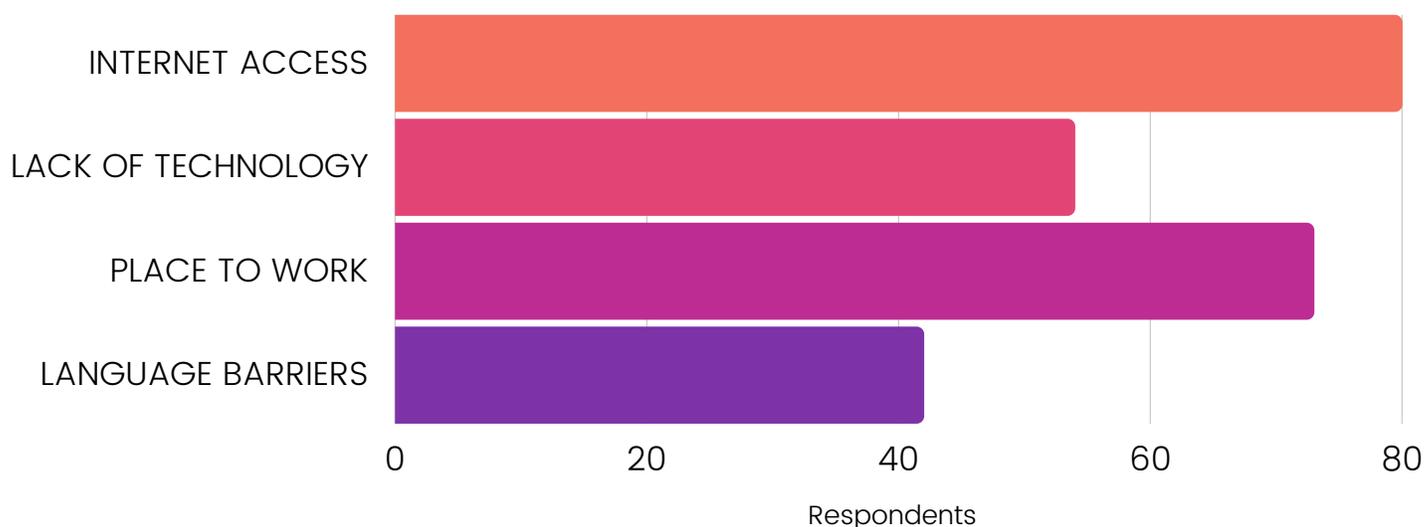
IS YOUR HOUSEHOLD INVOLVED IN REMOTE LEARNING?



ARE YOU EXPERIENCING BARRIERS TO REMOTE LEARNING?



TOP BARRIERS EXPERIENCED WITH REMOTE LEARNING

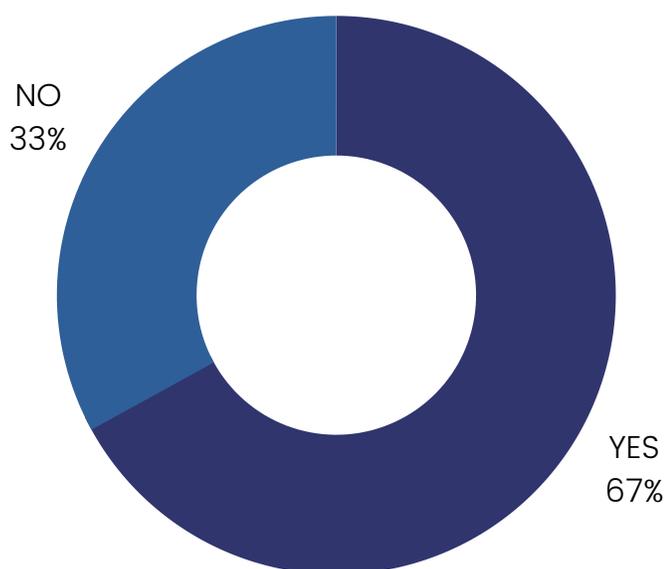




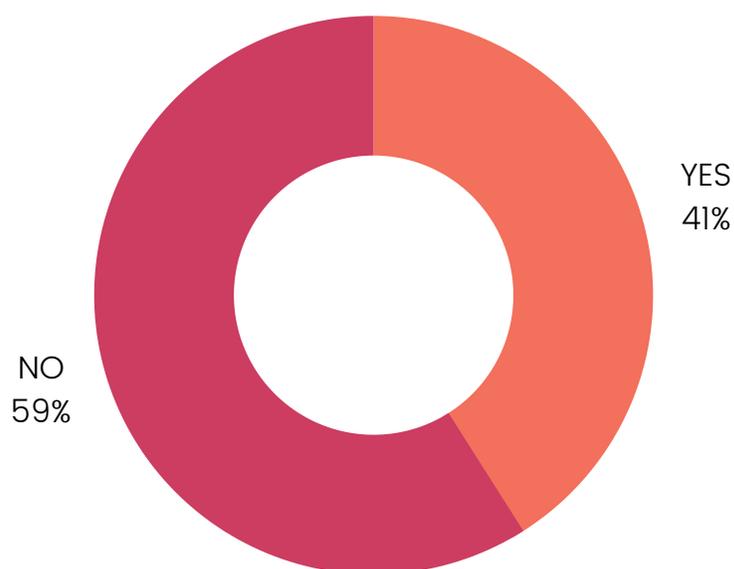
ACCESS TO RESOURCES

67% of surveyed households sought services, resources, and support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

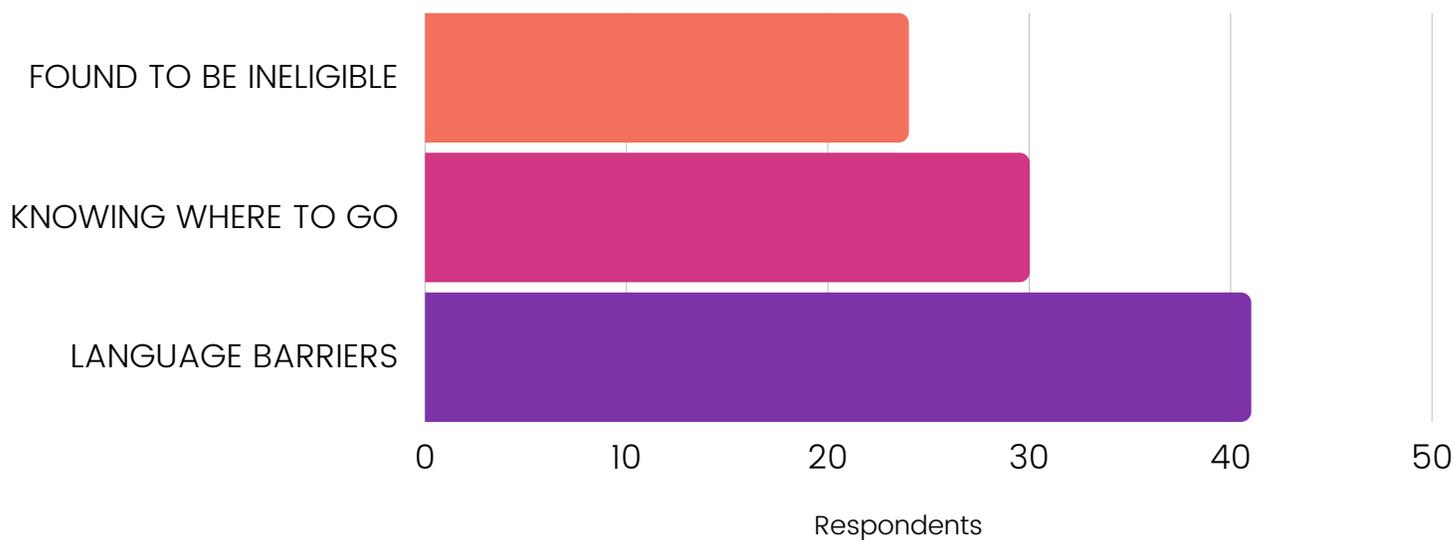
HAVE YOU SOUGHT RESOURCES OR SUPPORT?



HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED BARRIERS TO SEEKING SERVICES?



TOP BARRIERS EXPERIENCED WITH SEEKING SERVICES

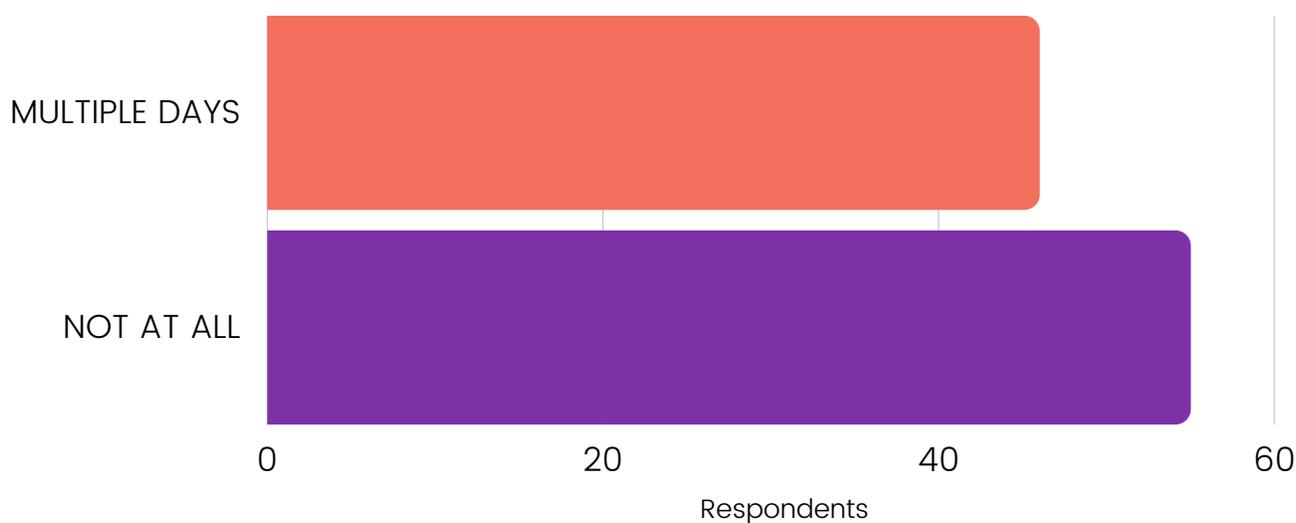




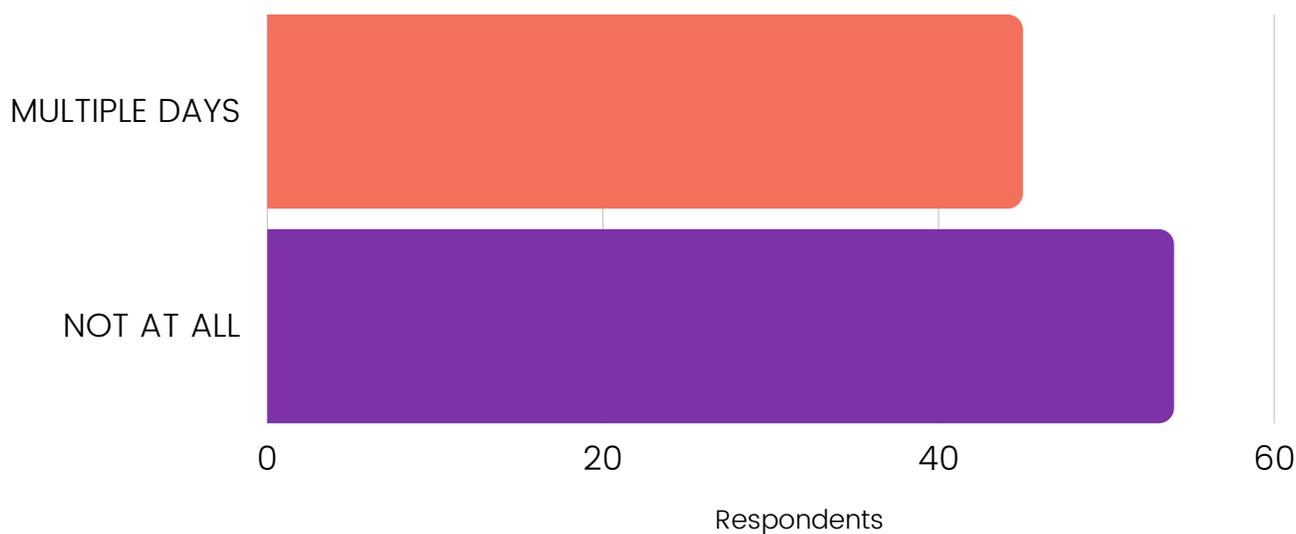
MENTAL HEALTH

45% of respondents reported that they felt “down, depressed, or hopeless” at least “several days” in the two weeks prior to being surveyed.

HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED LITTLE INTEREST IN DOING THINGS?*



HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU FELT DEPRESSED, DOWN, OR HOPELESS?*



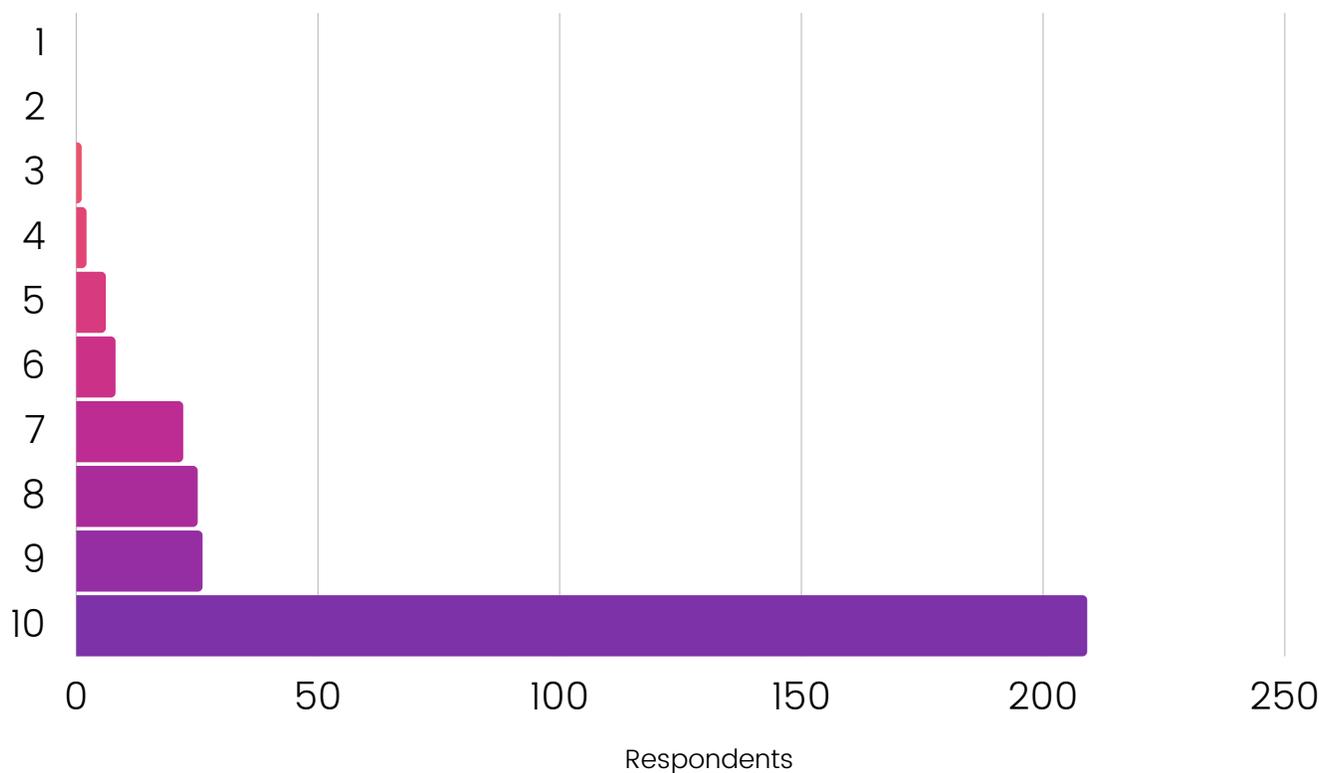
*Over a two week period



SATISFACTION

96% of respondents indicated that the Arab-American Family Support Center has been helpful during this time.

ON A SCALE OF 1-10, HOW HELPFUL HAS AAFSC BEEN FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY DURING THIS TIME?



CONCLUSION

COVID-19 has severely impacted New York's immigrant and refugee communities due to a nexus of challenges, including language, economic, and health barriers. **It is critical that we act urgently at the local, state, and federal levels to meet disadvantaged populations where they are at by increasing access to food, housing, and healthcare options to deliver the culturally and linguistically-competent care they need to remain healthy.** AAFSC stands ready to work with our partners to ensure the needs of these communities are met to build a healthier, safer future for us all.



PROGRAM GUIDE

AAFSC is providing multiple in-person and remote services to support community members during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are open for referrals. Please contact our Brooklyn headquarters at 718-643-8000 or info@aafscny.org to learn more.

Preventive Program

We ensure the safety of children in homes where there have been allegations of child abuse or neglect.

Anti-Violence Program

We work to end partner violence, create equitable relationships, and revolutionize gendered discussions.

Legal Services Program

We ensure families have access to their rights, remain with their families, and understand immigration laws.

Community Health & Wellness Program

We promote mental and physical well-being, healthy relationships, and all forms of community wellness.

Emergency Fund Program

We support vulnerable, low-income communities in need of emergency financial assistance.

Readiness Program

We teach English reading and writing to adults, meeting them where they are at to ensure success.

Young Adult Program

We work with young adults to develop life skills including financial literacy and college and career readiness.

Caregiver-Child Bonding Circle

We provide caregivers with special support and resources connect with their young children and establish the building blocks for early literacy.



CONNECT WITH US



aafscny.org



@AAFSC



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@AAFSCNY

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Queens Offices

37-10 30th St, 2nd Fl, Queens, NY 11101 • 718-937-8000

37-14 30th St, 2nd FL, Queens, NY 11101 (Opening March 2021)

Bronx Office

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At the Khalil Gibran International Academy

362 Schermerhorn St, Brooklyn, NY 11217 • 718-237-2502

NYC Family Justice Center, Bronx

198 East 161th St, Bronx, NY 10451 • 718-508-1222

NYC Family Justice Center, Brooklyn

350 Jay St, Brooklyn, NY 11201 • 718-250-5035

NYC Family Justice Center, Manhattan

80 Centre St, New York, NY 10013 • 212-602-2800

NYC Family Justice Center, Queens

126-02 82nd Ave, Kew Gardens, NY 11415 • 718-575-4500

NYC Family Justice Center, Staten Island

126 Stuyvesant Pl, Staten Island, NY 10301 • 718-697-4300

To support the immigrant and refugee families that AAFSC serve, please donate today at aafscny.org/donate