

# Long-Term Recovery Planning

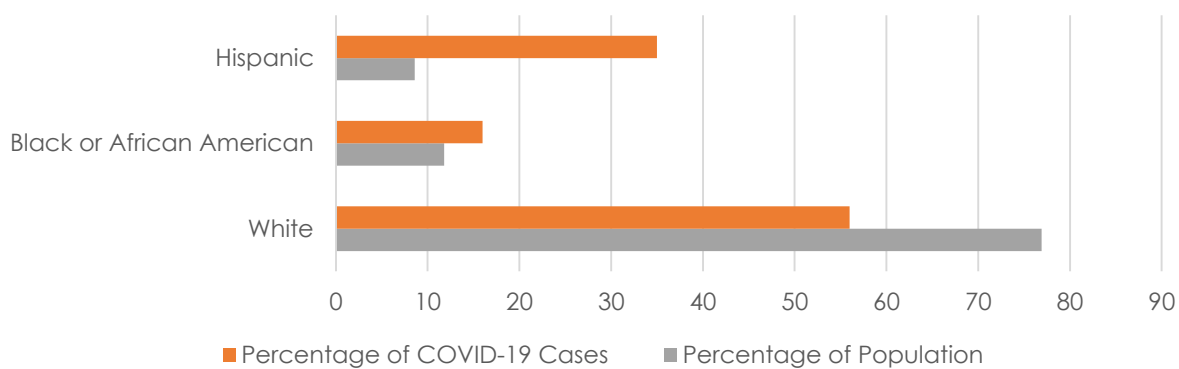
## IMPACT ASSESSMENT: KEY FINDINGS

This document presents the key findings from the *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Impact Assessment* for Orange County, North Carolina. Major impacts from COVID-19 were seen in the health, economy, housing, and social services sectors of Orange County. For more detailed information, please review the full report.

### Health

- Black communities are contracting COVID-19 at disproportionate rates in Orange County, mirroring a similar trend across the United States. While white residents make up 78% of the population in Orange County, they represent 37% of COVID-19 cases, but Black communities make up 11% of the population and account for 17% of the County's COVID-19 cases.
- Latinx communities are the most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 of all races and ethnicities in Orange County, making up only 8.6% of the population but accounting for 35% of COVID-19 cases.
- Pre-existing health conditions can create compounding risk for individuals exposed to the virus. Significant portions (more than 40%) of the County's Black and white populations have underlying health conditions that can translate to worse outcomes if they are infected with COVID-19; but these underlying health issues are more prevalent among Black residents, so they face higher risk of contracting the disease and developing serious complications as a result.
- Most individuals who contract COVID-19 are under 49 years old and many are under 30, indicating high infection rates in younger adult populations within Orange County.
- Available hospital bed capacity in Orange County decreased from 40-50% in April to below 10% in July, putting immense pressure on health workers and personal protective equipment supplies in Orange County.

COVID-19 Cases in Orange County by Race and Ethnicity



## Economy

- Job loss was five percent lower in Orange County than the national average. The industry breakdown of Orange County, with roughly 23.1% of jobs being those in the educational services sector and 16.2% in the healthcare and social assistance sector, may have created stability for the County. However, the stability of the healthcare and education sectors may statistically camouflage the impact of unemployment in other sectors.
- People of color fill a disproportionate number of low-wage essential jobs. Most notably, Latino and Black workers are over-represented in the essential workforce relative to their share in the total workforce. This carries implications for people of color in Orange County, who are more likely to fill essential jobs, and are at higher risk of contracting COVID-19.
- UNC Chapel Hill is one of the County's main tourism drivers, with roughly 29,000 students attending per year. It is estimated that every UNC student that lives off campus spends about \$12,000 in local accommodations. Orange County will likely see a significant reduction in local student spending due to the recent shift to remote learning this fall.
- The County's budget is supplemented by both sales tax and property tax. Overall, there have been reductions to sales tax revenues due to COVID-19, but the County's current tax structure may provide stability if initially projected increases in property, motor vehicle, delinquent, and liquor taxes manifest for FY 2020-21.

## Housing

- The economic hardship caused by COVID-19 has led many households in Orange County to seek additional assistance to avoid eviction and/or homelessness. Between January and July 2020, the Orange County Emergency Housing Assistance Fund helped divert 365 households from eviction and/or homelessness, compared to 26 households in 2019.
- Foreclosures in Orange County have declined during COVID-19, partly due to protections established by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) as well as a statewide moratorium on evictions. Orange County may experience an increase in foreclosures and evictions as extended protections from the CARES Act for federally insured home loans and the CDC Eviction Ban expire on December 31, 2020.
- Median household income is higher than the national average in Orange County and poverty rates are also higher, indicating a wide disparity in financial security among residents and stressing the importance of affordable housing accessibility.
- In 2019, the mean wage earned by renters in Orange County was \$14.12 per hour. A mean wage worker must work 112 hours per week to afford the average monthly rent (\$902) of a two-bedroom apartment designated as affordable in Orange County.

## Social Services

- The full extent of homelessness attributed to COVID-19 is currently unknown (and may not be apparent for some time) but if national trends and feeding operations are any indicator, homelessness is likely on the rise in Orange County. The Interfaith Council in Chapel Hill serves roughly 120 individuals/families nightly in 2020.
- The reduction in public transportation services due to COVID-19 likely increased transportation barriers for low-income workers, specially the eight percent of workers in Orange County that rely on public transportation to get to and from their jobs.
- Moving to an online learning environment has been challenging for many families, especially in single-parent households, households where English is not the primary language, households with limited technological access or expertise, and households with students or parents living with disabilities. In 2018, Orange County cited 50,000 households in rural areas that are underserved by broadband internet.
- Many of the County's non-profit partners began distributing meals to relieve food stress in the community during COVID-19, averaging between 7,000-11,000 supplementary meals per day for Orange County residents.