

**Fact Sheet**  
**Public Opinion Polling on Housing Instability During the COVID-19 Pandemic**  
**June 1, 2020**

The [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) campaign commissioned a national public opinion poll through Hart Research Associates to assess the public's opinions and perspectives on issues related to housing instability during the COVID-19 pandemic. The poll surveyed 1,212 adults nationwide between May 15-20, 2020. To see press release, [click here](#). To see actual survey questionnaire, [click here](#).

**Poll Findings:**

- **Roughly 9 in 10 people support the government taking the following policy approaches as they relate to housing and COVID-19:**
  - **Providing emergency rental assistance for people who are struggling to afford the rent and are at serious risk of eviction as a result of the coronavirus outbreak (93% favor)**
    - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: Democrats (99%), Independents (90%), Republicans (87%), and conservative Republicans (84%).
  - **Expanding funding for homeless assistance programs that minimize the number of people living in large shelters by providing them with alternative individual spaces for isolation and self-quarantine (90% favor)**
    - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: Democrats (97%), Independents (93%), Republicans (80%), and conservative Republicans (77%).
  - **Enacting a uniform, nationwide policy that stops all evictions during the coronavirus outbreak (89% favor)**
    - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: Democrats (95%), Independents (89%), Republicans (82%), and conservative Republicans (78%).
- **By a 2:1 margin (67% to 33%), people want to see government make major housing investments even if it means increasing the deficit.**
  - Democrats (79%), Independents (76%), and Republicans (49%).
- **80% of all people think it's very or fairly important for government to provide assistance to help people cover their housing costs during the coronavirus outbreak**
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: Democrats (92%), Independents (81%), Republicans (67%), and conservative Republicans (63%).
- **89% of all people say the government has an important role to play in making sure that people do not get evicted from their homes as a result of the coronavirus outbreak**
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: Democrats (96%), Independents (90%), Republicans (80%), and conservative Republicans (78%).
- **A very significant majority (3 in 4 or greater) agree that the government should play a significant role in the following housing-related policies:**

- **Providing housing assistance to prevent evictions and homelessness during the coronavirus outbreak should be considered as urgent a priority as investments in healthcare (88% agree).**
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: Democrats (96%), Independents (91%), Republicans (77%), and conservative Republicans (75%).
- **Our elected leaders in Washington should take major action to make sure everyone has stable, affordable housing during the coronavirus outbreak (87% agree).**
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: Democrats (96%), Independents (91%), Republicans (73%), and conservative Republicans (69%).
- **The coronavirus outbreak has demonstrated that the government needs to invest more in affordable housing over the long-term, to help ensure people are prepared when a crisis like the coronavirus hits (86% agree).**
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: Democrats (97%), Independents (87%), Republicans (72%), and conservative Republicans (68%).
- **Our elected leaders are not putting enough attention on people’s need for help to pay for their housing during the coronavirus outbreak (78% agree).**
  - This is the majority view across the political spectrum: Democrats (90%), Independents (85%), Republicans (59%), and conservative Republicans (56%).
- **87% of the public says that, given our current situation with the coronavirus outbreak, the need for people to have stable affordable housing has become more important.**
- **63% of the public says that housing affordability is a “serious problem” in the area where they live, which is up 24 points since 2016.**

<i>Proportion saying housing affordability is a serious problem where they live</i>					
Northeast	63%	City	73%	Democrats	72%
South	58%	Suburb	63%	Independents	65%
Midwest	54%	Small town/rural	55%	Republicans	52%
West	77%				

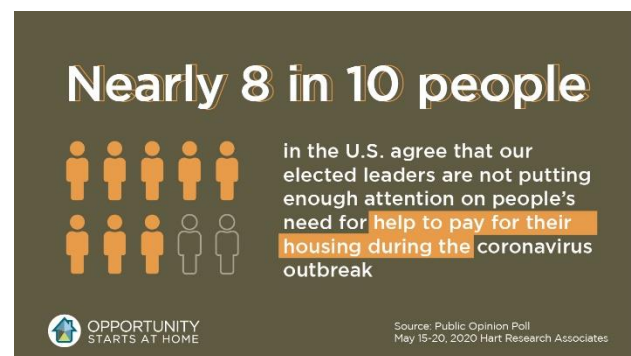
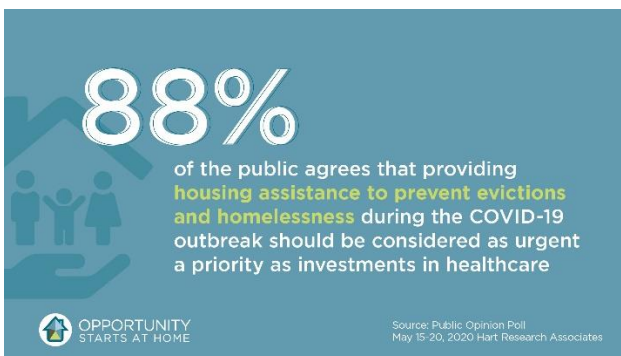
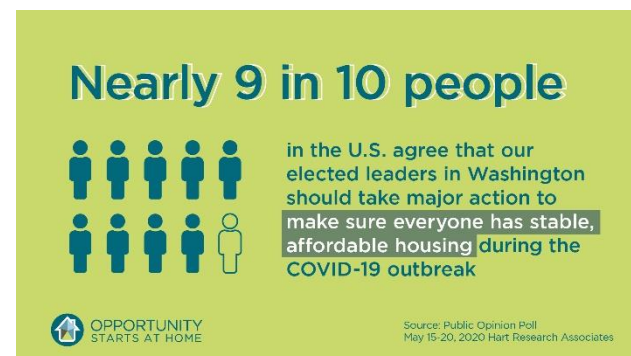
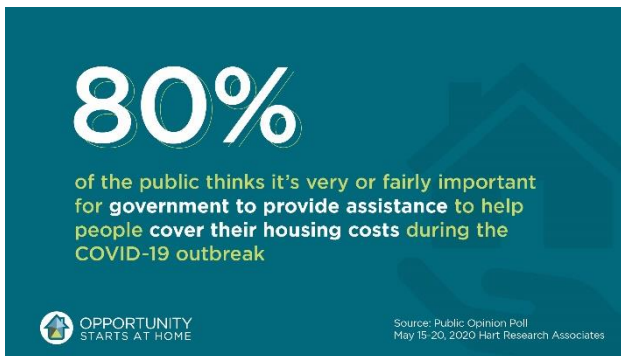
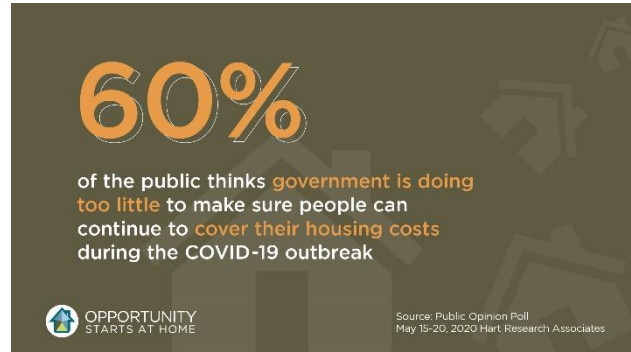
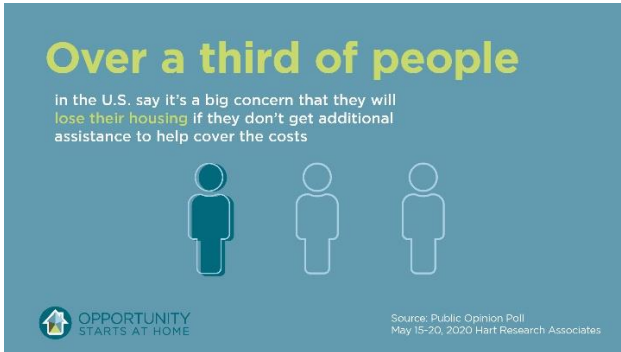
- **66% of the public says the amount they pay for housing (mortgage or rent) is a concern, with 44% saying it is a BIG concern. 51% of households making below \$40,000 say it’s a big concern, compared to 37% of households making over \$75,000. 58% of African Americans and 56% of Hispanics say it’s a big concern, compared to 39% of whites.**
  - (Q7b) Of all people who said it’s a concern, 65% say their concern about the amount they pay for housing has increased since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak. 73% of African Americans and 72% of Hispanics say their concern has increased since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, compared to 63% of whites.
- **A majority of people express concern about their ability to cover their housing costs and the prospect of losing their housing during the coronavirus outbreak:**
  - **58% express concern that the coronavirus outbreak will impacting their ability to cover housing costs.**
    - 63% of households making below \$40,000 and 51% of households making over \$75,000 say it is a concern that the coronavirus outbreak is impacting their ability to cover housing costs. 70% of African Americans and 78% of Hispanics say it’s a concern, compared to 50% of whites.

- **54% express concern that they will lose their housing if they don't get additional assistance to help cover the costs**
  - 61% of households making below \$40,000 and 43% of households making over \$75,000 say this is a concern. 72% of African Americans and 76% of Hispanics say it's a concern, compared to 43% of whites.
  
- **46% of the public reports that they have had to take at least one of the following actions since the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak to make sure they can pay their rent or mortgage:**
  - Cut back on healthy, nutritious food (17%)
  - Stop saving for retirement (16%)
  - Used a credit card to help cover all or some of their housing costs (15%)
  - Accumulate credit card debt (13%)
  - Borrowed money from a friend or family member to cover all or some of their housing costs (11%)
  - Skip paying other important bills such as electricity, water, or insurance (10%)
  - Take on an additional job or work more at their current job (8%)
  - Cut back on activities and learning materials for their child (8%)
  - Cut back on healthcare for you or a family member (6%)
  - Taken out a payday loan or car title loan to cover all or some of your housing costs (5%).
    - 48% of households making below \$40,000 report that they have had to take at least one of the following actions, compared to 41% of households making over \$75,000. 53% of African Americans and 64% of Hispanics report taking at least one of the following actions, compared to 40% of whites.
  
- **Among those who applied for unemployment benefits as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, a significant proportion (31%) do NOT believe the unemployment benefits will cover their basic living expenses, including housing costs over the next several months.**
  - 34% of households making \$40,000 or below do not think the benefits will be enough to cover their basic living expenses, including housing costs, over the next several months and 27% of households making over \$75,000 who applied for benefits say they think the unemployment benefits will not be enough.
  
- **Very large proportions of adults say the following are BIG concerns to them personally:**
  - Even after we re-open the economy, people will struggle for a long time to get back on their feet and make up their lost income (81% big concern)
  - People who are experiencing homelessness are not able to shelter in place to protect against the spread of the coronavirus (78% big concern)
  - Evictions and homelessness will increase because people are losing their income as a result of the coronavirus outbreak (78% big concern)
  - People who are experiencing homelessness are at high risk of getting the coronavirus (77% big concern)
  - If there is an increase in homelessness, it will lead to more spreading of the coronavirus and pose a health risk for everyone (75% big concern)

**Methodology:**

On behalf of the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign, Hart Research Associates conducted an online survey of 1,212 adults nationwide. These interviews were conducted from May 15-20, 2020. The sample is representative of adults, nationwide, based on U.S. Census data.

**Infographics:**



When asked about **housing instability and homelessness** during the COVID-19 outbreak...



89% of people in the U.S. favor a nationwide policy that **stops all evictions**



93% favor providing **emergency rental assistance**

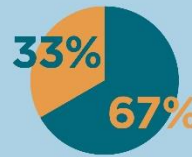


90% favor expanding funding for **homeless assistance programs** that minimize the number of people living in large shelters



Source: Public Opinion Poll May 15-20, 2020 Hart Research Associates

By a 2:1 margin,



the public wants to see government make major housing investments **even if it means increasing the deficit**



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