



Recent Trends and Impact of COVID-19 in the Bronx

Highlights

- Population in the Bronx grew by 10.4 percent from 2000 to 2017 (faster than any other borough), driven primarily by the growth in the immigrant population, but it declined in the next two years to 1.42 million residents.
- More than 90 percent of Bronx residents are minority residents, a higher share than any other borough.
- From 2009 to 2019, private sector employment in the Bronx grew by 20 percent to reach 248,800 jobs.
- Prior to the pandemic, more than 70 percent of the Bronx work force worked in essential or face-to-face industries.
- Although the Bronx did not have the highest rate of COVID-19 cases among the City's boroughs, outcomes in the Bronx were more severe, with the highest hospitalization and death rates.
- By the second quarter of 2020, employment had fallen by 18 percent in the Bronx compared to 2019, with unemployment peaking at nearly 25 percent in May 2020, the highest rate among all the boroughs.
- In the 2021 round of the federal Paycheck Protection Program, a higher share of loan dollars in the Bronx went to first-time borrowers (30.8 percent) and to single-entity businesses (19.9 percent) than in any other borough.
- Feeding America estimated that 17.5 percent of Bronx residents suffered food insecurity in 2018.

The Bronx is the northernmost of New York City's five boroughs and is home to nearly one-fifth of the City's population. It is a vibrant borough with some of the City's most famous attractions, including the Bronx Zoo, the New York Botanical Garden and Yankee Stadium.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bronx was on a trajectory of growth. It attracted new residents, particularly immigrants, at a higher rate than any other borough, and experienced solid improvement in employment and new businesses.

In spite of these trends, most Bronx neighborhoods faced higher risks for negative health and economic outcomes from the pandemic. Characteristics that reflect economic and social inequities, such as lower household incomes, higher poverty rates, jobs less conducive to remote work and a higher share of minority residents, made the Bronx particularly vulnerable.

Indeed, the Bronx was hit hard by the pandemic—harder than the other boroughs overall—although neighborhoods citywide with similar characteristics were also hard-hit. The Bronx had the City's highest rates of hospitalizations and deaths, even though it did not have the highest case rates. Bronx residents also experienced significantly higher unemployment rates.

As the pandemic has receded and economic activity has increased, the borough has had lower COVID-19 positivity rates, fewer severe outcomes and more vaccinations, as has the City as a whole. While the Bronx is resilient, a return to "normal" will take time. The City faces a test of equitable distribution as the Bronx will need to receive its fair share of aid and programmatic resources to bounce back to its pre-COVID path.

Introduction

The Bronx developed as its transportation system improved in the late 1800s, allowing easier access to Manhattan and attracting residents from the other boroughs and beyond. However, many Bronx residents decamped for the newly built suburbs after the Second World War, and parts of the borough's housing stock deteriorated. By the late 1970s, the Bronx was well into a period of economic decline, with dilapidated buildings and high crime rates. Using resources supplied by the federal, State and local governments and the private sector since the 1980s, the Bronx has undertaken many economic development efforts and has regained almost all the population that had been lost.

In terms of tourist attractions, the Wildlife Conservation Society's Bronx Zoo, which opened in 1899, is the largest urban zoo in the world, and houses more than 600 species. The New York Botanical Garden, which is a national landmark, was founded in 1891, and has 50 gardens and more than 1 million plants from around the world spread across 250 acres. The Bronx has been home to the New York Yankees baseball team since 1923.

Nearly one-quarter of the Bronx's total land area is dedicated to parks and open space (see Figure 1). Pelham Bay Park, which includes Orchard Beach and a 13-mile saltwater shoreline, is the largest park in the City, more than three times larger than Central Park. Van Cortlandt Park is home to the nation's first public golf course as well as the Van Cortlandt House, the borough's oldest house (built in 1748). Wave Hill, a 28-acre public garden and cultural center, provides views of the Hudson River and the Palisades.

The Bronx is home to an array of higher-education institutions including Fordham University, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Manhattan College and the College of Mount St. Vincent. The City University of New York has two community colleges there (Bronx Community College and Hostos Community College), and one senior college (Lehman College).

Shopping districts in the borough include Fordham Road, Bay Plaza in Co-op City, the Hub (where East 149th Street and Willis, Melrose and Third avenues converge) and the Riverdale/Kingsbridge and Bruckner Boulevard shopping centers. The Bronx Terminal Market offers nearly 1 million square feet of retail space.

Like the rest of the City, the Bronx comprises diverse neighborhoods, and many reflect the strong Latino presence in the borough. The Belmont-Arthur Avenue neighborhood is known as the Little Italy of the Bronx, where visitors can find an abundance of food shopping and Italian restaurants. City Island has retained its traditional charm, reflecting its historic ties to the water with seafood restaurants and charter boats available for fishing and diving. Irish immigrants first began to settle in Woodlawn in the mid-19th century, and the neighborhood remains a hub for many Irish restaurants and pubs. The growing communities of Caribbean and African residents have also contributed to the cultural mosaic of the borough.

FIGURE 1
The Bronx



Demographic Trends

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bronx was experiencing fairly steady population, employment and new business growth. At the same time, it faced challenges such as low household incomes, high poverty rates and high unemployment rates.

Population in the Bronx registered faster growth than every other borough over the past nearly 20 years, driven primarily by growth in the immigrant population (see Figure 2). From 2000 to 2017, the Bronx registered a 10.4 percent increase in population (compared to 7.7 percent citywide) to reach 1.47 million residents. The growth in the borough's immigrant population was 38.8 percent, raising the share of immigrants from 29 percent to 36.4 percent in 2017.

FIGURE 2
Population Changes by Borough, 2000 to 2019

| Borough | Total Population 2019 | Change 2000-2017 | Change 2017-2019 |
|---------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Bronx | 1,418,207 | 10.4% | -3.6% |
| Brooklyn | 2,559,903 | 7.4% | -3.4% |
| Manhattan | 1,628,706 | 8.3% | -2.2% |
| Queens | 2,253,858 | 5.8% | -4.4% |
| Staten Island | 476,143 | 8.1% | -0.7% |
| NYC | 8,336,817 | 7.7% | -3.3% |

| Borough | Immigrant Population 2019 | Change 2000-2017 | Change 2017-2019 |
|---------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Bronx | 477,678 | 38.8% | -10.8% |
| Brooklyn | 905,490 | 2.9% | -5.6% |
| Manhattan | 453,153 | 3.9% | -3.6% |
| Queens | 1,072,916 | 8.5% | -3.8% |
| Staten Island | 111,846 | 57.5% | -2.3% |
| NYC | 3,021,083 | 11.3% | -5.4% |

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-year estimates; OSC analysis

From 2017 to 2019 (the latest year for which data are available), population declined throughout the City, with both the immigrant and native-born populations falling in all boroughs except the Bronx. In the Bronx, the native-born population increased slightly, while the immigrant population fell by 10.8 percent over the two-year period. This placed the overall population in the Bronx at 1.42 million residents (and the immigrant share at 33.7 percent) in 2019.

The Bronx has a higher share of minority residents (more than 90 percent) than any other borough, and includes people who identify as Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and other non-White residents. In five of the 10 Census-defined neighborhoods in the Bronx, nearly all residents were minority residents in 2019 (more than 96 percent).

In the Bronx overall, more than half of the residents were Hispanic or Latino in 2019 (56.4 percent), at least double the share of any other borough (see Figure 3). Residents who identified as Dominican made up 21 percent of the total population, and those who identified as Puerto Rican accounted for 13 percent.

FIGURE 3
Share of Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2019

| Borough | Hispanic or Latino | Black or African American | White | Asian American and Pacific Islander |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| Bronx | 56.4% | 29.0% | 8.8% | 3.7% |
| Brooklyn | 18.9% | 29.8% | 36.5% | 11.9% |
| Manhattan | 25.6% | 12.3% | 46.9% | 12.3% |
| Queens | 28.2% | 17.3% | 24.4% | 26.1% |
| Staten Island | 18.6% | 9.5% | 59.5% | 10.7% |
| NYC | 29.1% | 21.7% | 31.9% | 14.3% |

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019 1-year estimates; OSC analysis

The Bronx has experienced persistent challenges with low household incomes and high poverty. In 2019, the median household income for the Bronx was \$41,400, significantly lower than any other borough (the citywide median was \$69,400, see Figure 4). Household income in the Bronx also grew more slowly than any other borough from 2009 to 2019.

FIGURE 4
Median Household Incomes and Poverty Rates by Borough, 2019

| Borough | Household Income | Poverty Rate |
|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| Bronx | \$41,400 | 27.3% |
| Brooklyn | \$66,900 | 17.3% |
| Manhattan | \$93,650 | 14.5% |
| Queens | \$73,700 | 11.6% |
| Staten Island | \$89,800 | 8.6% |
| NYC | \$69,400 | 16.4% |

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019 1-year estimates; OSC analysis

From 2009 to 2019, the household poverty rates in the Bronx were higher than in any other borough. Although poverty rates were slowly improving in the Bronx (as in every other borough) during much of this period, more than one-quarter (27.3 percent) of all Bronx households were still categorized as living below the poverty threshold in 2019. This rate was well above the citywide rate (16.4 percent) and 10 percentage points higher than the second-highest rate in Brooklyn.

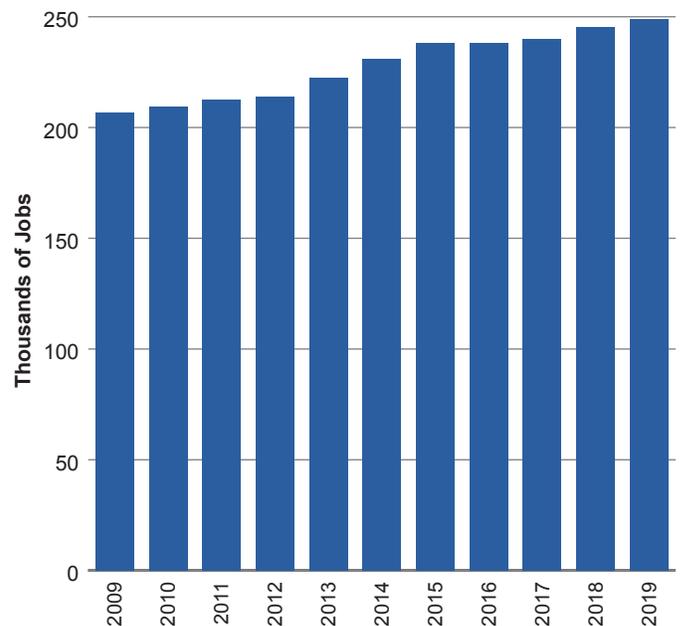
Among the 10 Census-defined neighborhoods in the Bronx, only two had household poverty rates below the citywide average in 2019 (Riverdale/Fieldston/Kingsbridge and Co-op City/Pelham Bay/Schuylerville), and six registered poverty rates among the 10 highest citywide.¹

Employment, Businesses and Work Force Pre-COVID-19

Employment Growth

Employment in the Bronx grew by 20 percent during the 10 years prior to the pandemic from 2009 to 2019 and total wages grew by 48.4 percent. The borough added 42,200 jobs to reach 248,800 jobs in 2019 (see Figure 5). The Bronx was the only borough that showed no decline in employment during the Great Recession. Citywide, both jobs and total wages grew at a faster pace (29.9 percent and 64.3 percent, respectively).

FIGURE 5
Private Sector Employment in the Bronx



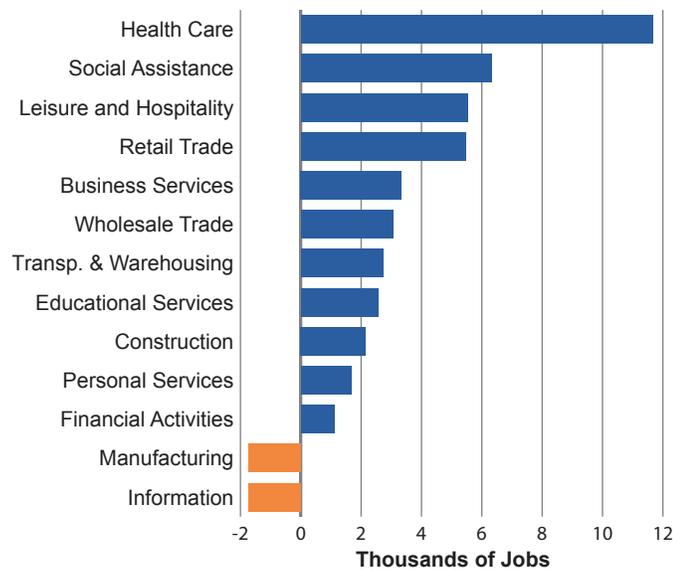
Sources: NYS Department of Labor; OSC analysis

The average salary for all private sector jobs in the Bronx, which includes high average salaries for professional athletes as well as some working in the health care sector, was \$52,700 in 2019, just surpassing Queens and placing the Bronx higher than every other borough except Manhattan (\$131,800). These jobs are not necessarily held by Bronx residents.

Health care is the largest employment sector in the borough (as in all other boroughs except Manhattan), representing 28 percent of all private sector jobs in 2019. The next three largest sectors in the Bronx were retail trade (12.5 percent of jobs), social assistance (11.1 percent), and leisure and hospitality (8.1 percent). Educational services, business services, financial activities and construction each accounted for 5 percent or more.

The top four sectors also accounted for more than two-thirds of the job growth over the decade (see Figure 6). While the health care sector accounted for the most new jobs, the leisure and hospitality sector grew fastest (by 38 percent).

FIGURE 6
Job Gains or Losses by Sector in the Bronx, 2009-2019



Sources: NYS Department of Labor; OSC analysis

Of the 10 Census-defined neighborhoods in the Bronx, Hunts Point/Longwood/Melrose, which includes Hunts Point Market, accounted for 20 percent of the jobs in the borough and 31 percent of the job growth over the decade, larger shares than in any other neighborhood. Of the 13,000 additional jobs in this neighborhood, the top three sectors were wholesale trade, business services and health care.

Business Growth

The number of businesses in the Bronx increased by 15.3 percent from 2009 to 2019, faster than in Manhattan and Staten Island (although slower than the citywide growth rate of 18.7 percent), to reach 18,300 businesses in 2019. While business growth was spread across many sectors, the largest growth areas were leisure and hospitality, retail trade, and social assistance, which together accounted for more than half of the 2,400 new businesses.

Most businesses in the Bronx are small. More than two-thirds had fewer than five employees and more than 80 percent had fewer than 10 employees in 2019. The borough also had 23 businesses with more than 1,000 employees, concentrated in health care and social assistance.

Resident Work Force Pre-COVID-19

In 2019, the Bronx had more than 600,000 working residents with average earnings of \$41,850. They included both full-time and part-time employees as well as individual contractors, sole proprietors and self-employed individuals.

Employment for these residents was concentrated in essential and face-to-face sectors more than in sectors conducive to working remotely.² Four of the top five sectors in which Bronx residents worked in 2019 were classified either as essential or face-to-face sectors, together accounting for more than half of all working residents. These included health care and social assistance (25.9 percent), retail trade (10.2 percent), accommodation and food services (9.6 percent), and transportation and warehousing (7.7 percent). Among the top five, only business services, with 9 percent of employed residents, was conducive to working remotely.

Additional face-to-face sectors, including construction, personal services (such as nail salons and auto repair shops), manufacturing, arts and entertainment, and wholesale trade, accounted for another 18 percent of the working residents. Thus, the total share of Bronx residents working in either essential or face-to-face sectors exceeded 70 percent.

As a result, as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, many working residents of the Bronx faced greater chances of contracting COVID-19 or of becoming unemployed than residents across the City who worked in industries that could accommodate remote work. During the pandemic-related shutdown, many essential workers in the Bronx maintained their jobs but had to work on-site, while workers in nonessential face-to-face industries, such as accommodation and food services, personal services and retail (other than grocery stores and pharmacies), faced layoffs as businesses closed or reduced hours.

COVID-19 Risk Factors

Certain conditions put individuals, and thus communities, at higher risk of not only contracting COVID-19 but also experiencing severe outcomes. These conditions range from underlying health issues to socioeconomic factors such as poverty. In order to assess these risks, indices related to COVID-19 have been developed.

One such index from the U.S. Census Bureau is the Community Resilience Estimates (CRE) for states, counties and census tracts.³ The Census Bureau chose to focus its initial use of the CRE on the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CRE first calculates an individual risk index based on 11 risk factors including income-to-poverty ratio, crowding in housing and in neighborhoods, unemployment, health insurance, and certain disabilities and health problems, including heart conditions and emphysema or asthma. The CRE reports people within a geographical area in three risk groups: those with zero risks, those with one to two risks and those with three or more risks. The data is also reported as a share of the area's population.

New York City's boroughs had very few residents with zero risks and had a greater share of people with one to two risks than with three or more risks (see Figure 7). However, compared to the other boroughs, the Bronx had a larger share of population with 3 or more risks overall.⁴

FIGURE 7
Community Resilience Estimates:
Risk Factors by Borough

| Borough | Percent of Borough's Population With: | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| | 0 Risk Factors | 1-2 Risk Factors | 3 or more Risk Factors |
| Bronx | 0.01% | 58.02% | 41.97% |
| Brooklyn | 0.01% | 64.66% | 35.33% |
| Manhattan | 0.01% | 64.48% | 35.52% |
| Queens | 0.01% | 63.88% | 36.11% |
| Staten Island | 0.83% | 66.59% | 32.58% |

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Community Resilience Estimates; OSC analysis

The share of the Bronx population with three or more risk factors ranged from 37.8 percent in the Pelham Parkway/Morris Park/Laconia neighborhood to 45.2 percent in Hunts Point/Longwood/Melrose. By comparison, in the City as a whole, an average of 36.6 percent of the population had three or more risk factors.

Other indices, including a local COVID-19 risk index from the NYU Langone Health and the Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service at NYU and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, find similar results to the CRE, showing the Bronx had a high-risk population.⁵

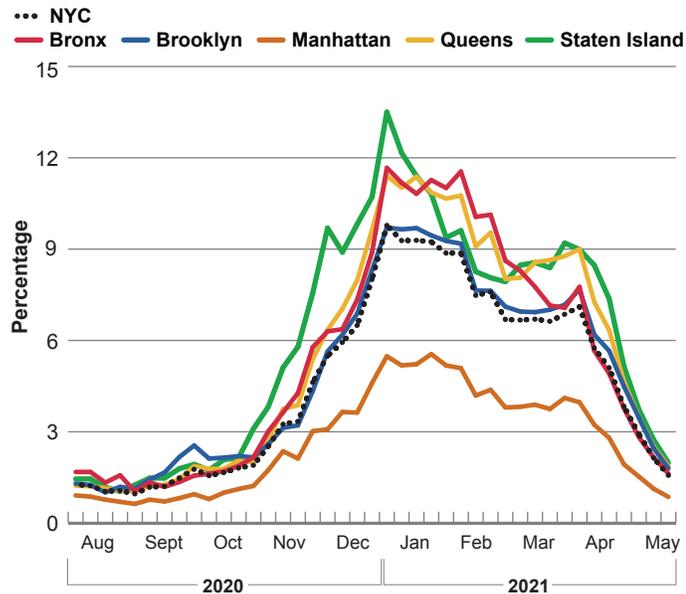
COVID-19 Health Impacts

New York City was hit early and hard by COVID-19 and became the epicenter of the pandemic in the United States last spring.⁶ The number of COVID-19 cases dropped after early April and stayed at low levels through October, when a second surge began, peaking in January 2021. By mid-February, cases had declined to levels not seen since mid-December, and by early April, they began a rapid decline as the City transitioned to a period of recovery.⁷

For most of the period since August 2020, either the Bronx or Queens has had the second-highest 7-day positivity rate (the percentage of people tested who had positive results), with the Bronx peaking at

more than 11 percent in early January (see Figure 8).⁸ The Bronx had the highest positivity rate among the boroughs in February 2021, before starting a decline that accelerated in April and May, the same as citywide.

FIGURE 8
COVID-19 Positivity Rates for NYC and Boroughs, August 2020 to May 2021



Sources: NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; OSC analysis

As shown in Figure 9, Staten Island had the highest cumulative case rate. Nonetheless, the Bronx had more severe outcomes, with cumulative hospitalization and death rates higher than the other four boroughs.⁹

FIGURE 9
Cumulative Cases, Hospitalizations and Deaths from COVID-19 by Borough, through May 16, 2021

| Borough | Cases | Hospitalizations | Deaths | Case Rates | Hospitalization Rates | Death Rates |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Bronx | 150,149 | 22,791 | 5,547 | 10,587 | 1,607 | 391 |
| Brooklyn | 221,719 | 31,649 | 8,520 | 8,974 | 1,236 | 333 |
| Manhattan | 108,104 | 15,111 | 3,740 | 6,637 | 928 | 230 |
| Queens | 227,440 | 32,048 | 8,515 | 10,091 | 1,422 | 378 |
| Staten Island | 61,920 | 5,850 | 1,602 | 13,005 | 1,229 | 336 |
| NYC | 777,378 | 107,450 | 27,924 | 9,325 | 1,289 | 335 |

Note: Rates are per 100,000 people.

Sources: NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; OSC analysis

The incidence of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths varied among the different racial and ethnic groups residing in the Bronx (see Figure 10). When adjusted for population differences, Hispanics or Latinos had the highest case rates, while rates for hospitalizations and deaths were highest for Black or African American residents.

FIGURE 10
Cumulative Rates for COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations and Deaths by Race and Ethnicity for the Bronx

| Race / Ethnicity | Case Rates | Hospitalization Rates | Death Rates |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Hispanic or Latino | 9,315 | 1,414 | 375 |
| White | 8,003 | 1,062 | 248 |
| Asian American and Pacific Islander | 7,252 | 1,082 | 255 |
| Black or African American | 7,239 | 1,598 | 383 |

Note: Rates are per 100,000 people. Data is as of May 16, 2021.

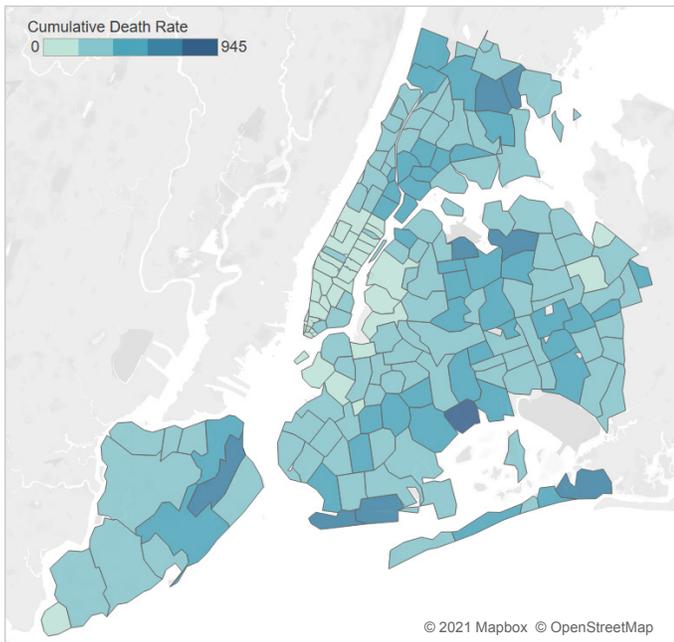
Sources: NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; OSC analysis

As of May 16, 2021, among the 25 ZIP codes in the Bronx, cumulative case rates ranged from a high of 11,579 per 100,000 people in Morris Park/Pelham Bay/Westchester Square to a low of 8,679 in Co-op City/Edenwald, compared to a high of 16,477 and a low of 3,467 among all of the City's 177 ZIP codes. More than 60 percent of the Bronx ZIP codes had case rates among the highest third citywide (although none were among the top 10 highest rates), and only two (Claremont/Morrisania and

Co-op City/Edenwald) had case rates that were in the lowest half of all the City's ZIP codes.

The trend for cumulative death rates was similar to the trend for case rates in that more than half of Bronx ZIP codes had cumulative death rates in the top third citywide (with three among the 10 highest rates), and Bronx ZIP codes also rarely ranked in the lower ranges (see Figure 11). Cumulative death rates in the Bronx ranged from a high of 611 per 100,000 people in Allerton/Baychester/Pelham Gardens/Williamsbridge to a low of 231 in Belmont/Fordham University/Kingsbridge, while the highest among all the City's ZIP codes was 945 (in Brooklyn's East New York) and the lowest was zero (in Manhattan's Financial District).

FIGURE 11
New York City COVID-19 Death Rates by ZIP Code



Cumulative hospitalization rates by ZIP code are not reported by the City, but monthly data has been released beginning in March 2020. On average from March through August, 70 percent of Bronx ZIP codes had hospitalization rates that were in the highest third of all the City's 177 ZIP codes. From September through December 2020, the share of Bronx ZIP codes with hospitalization rates within the highest third citywide fell below 50 percent as

hospitalization rates in Staten Island surged. In 2021 the share rose again, so that by February almost all (92 percent) of the Bronx's ZIP codes were in the top third citywide.

Health Outcomes and Association with Specific Risk Factors

According to the most recent New York City Community Health Profiles, each of the 10 neighborhoods in the borough had rates of diabetes, obesity and hypertension that were similar or higher than the citywide average, with none experiencing rates below the average. The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has noted the prevalence of these poorer health outcomes in low-income, minority communities where economic stress and discrimination can limit access to quality health care.

Analysis of the correspondence between COVID-19 health outcomes in the Bronx and median household income and share of minority residents found an association with more severe health impacts.¹⁰ In general, throughout the pandemic, the six neighborhoods with the lowest household incomes in the Bronx, among the lowest citywide, have been among those with the highest hospitalization rates from COVID-19. Most ZIP codes associated with these neighborhoods fell within the top third of hospitalization rates citywide. The four Bronx neighborhoods that had more moderate median household incomes also had lower hospitalization rates.

Neighborhoods in the City that had a higher share of minority residents generally experienced higher cumulative case rates and death rates. Eighteen of the City's 55 Census-defined neighborhoods had a minority population in the top third in 2019, greater than 83 percent.¹¹ Of these 18 City neighborhoods, eight were in the Bronx. The 20 ZIP codes covering these eight Bronx neighborhoods all had cumulative death rates within the top half of all City ZIP codes, and 11 were in the top third. The results are very similar for case rates.

While similar neighborhoods are also located in other boroughs (and were affected similarly to those in the Bronx), those boroughs also include more middle- and high-income areas, which were affected less severely and generally suffered from lower rates of hospitalizations and deaths.



Vaccinations

On December 14, 2020, a nurse employed at a hospital in Queens became the first person in the United States to receive an FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccination. Distribution of the vaccine in New York City began with groups who were considered “essential or at-risk.” As doses of the vaccine became more available, eligibility was expanded, and vaccinations are now available for all individuals age 12 and older on a walk-in or appointment basis.

As of May 25, 2021, 61 percent of New York City’s adult population had received at least one dose of the vaccine (4.0 million people), with 52 percent of the adult population fully vaccinated (3.4 million people). In the Bronx, 52 percent of residents had received at least one dose (561,220 people) and 44 percent were fully vaccinated (467,020 people; see Figure 12). Vaccination rates were highest in the Fieldston/North Riverdale/Riverdale area and lowest in Edenwald/Wakefield and Hunts Point.

FIGURE 12
COVID-19 Vaccinations by Borough
as of May 25, 2021

| Borough | Percentage with at Least One Dose | Percentage Fully Vaccinated |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Bronx | 52% | 44% |
| Brooklyn | 55% | 46% |
| Manhattan | 70% | 61% |
| Queens | 66% | 56% |
| Staten Island | 57% | 50% |
| NYC | 61% | 52% |

Note: Percentage of the population age 18 and older as of May 25, 2021.
Sources: NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; OSC analysis

More than one-third of Hispanic or Latino residents and one-third of Black or African American residents had received at least one dose (see Figure 13). Whites and Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders had significantly higher vaccination rates. As in the rest of the City, some residents in the Bronx are hesitant to be vaccinated. Elected officials, agencies and community groups are working to address this challenge.

FIGURE 13
COVID-19 Vaccinations by Race and Ethnicity
in the Bronx as of May 20, 2021

| Borough | Percentage with at Least One Dose | Percentage Fully Vaccinated |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Hispanic or Latino | 36% | 29% |
| White | 47% | 41% |
| Black or African American | 33% | 27% |
| Asian American and Pacific Islander | 59% | 48% |

Note: Percentage of the population age 18 and older as of May 20, 2021. Data is not available in this form for May 25, 2021.
Sources: NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; OSC analysis

Economic Impact of the Pandemic

Employment and Businesses

At the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, the economic shutdown was sudden and dramatic. By April, the City was down 873,000 private sector jobs compared to a year earlier, to about 3.03 million jobs. The shutdown evolved into a gradual and selective reopening, and by December 2020, citywide employment averaged 3.4 million jobs.

Businesses, particularly nonessential businesses that required face-to-face work and could not transition to remote work, were the hardest hit and laid off many employees. Essential sectors such as health care experienced much smaller employment declines, along with business services, financial activities and information, all of which could readily transition to remote work.

By the second quarter of 2020, the Bronx had lost 45,000 private sector jobs (an 18 percent decline compared to the same period a year earlier), and employment had fallen to 205,100 jobs total. Although employment rose to 231,000 jobs by the fourth quarter of 2020, it was still down 8.5 percent year over year.

Data for the second quarter of 2020, when the pandemic's impact on employment was the most severe, reveals which sectors were most affected in the Bronx. With the shutdown of indoor dining, a dramatic decline in hotel reservations, and the closure of most arts and sports venues, the leisure and hospitality sector experienced the largest job decline year over year, followed by personal services, transportation and warehousing, construction, manufacturing, and retail trade (see Figure 14).

Health care, finance, business services and information services declined by 14 percent or less, and those sectors have recovered more quickly.

FIGURE 14

Change in Employment in the Bronx by Sector, Second Quarter 2019 to Second Quarter 2020

| Sector | Number of Jobs in 2019 Q2 | Number of Jobs in 2020 Q2 | Percent Change |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Health Care | 70,200 | 63,300 | -9.9% |
| Retail Trade | 30,900 | 24,200 | -21.6% |
| Social Assistance | 28,000 | 25,200 | -10.0% |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 20,900 | 11,300 | -45.6% |
| Educational Services | 16,200 | 15,100 | -6.8% |
| Business Services | 15,700 | 14,100 | -10.4% |
| Financial Activities | 14,600 | 12,700 | -13.5% |
| Construction | 12,500 | 8,800 | -30.0% |
| Wholesale Trade | 12,300 | 10,000 | -18.9% |
| Personal Services | 9,700 | 6,300 | -35.8% |
| Transportation and Warehousing | 8,800 | 5,900 | -31.6% |
| Manufacturing | 5,600 | 4,100 | -26.9% |
| Information | 2,100 | 1,900 | -9.2% |
| All Other | 2,600 | 2,200 | -15.4% |
| Bronx Total | 250,100 | 205,100 | -18.0% |
| NYC | 3,915,800 | 3,085,800 | -21.2% |

Sources: NYS Department of Labor; OSC analysis

Although there have been many anecdotal reports of firms going out of business as a result of economic hardship from the pandemic, data for 2020 actually show a modest increase in the average number of businesses in the Bronx (220 more firms), with a similar result citywide, driven up by an increase in firms with fewer than five employees.

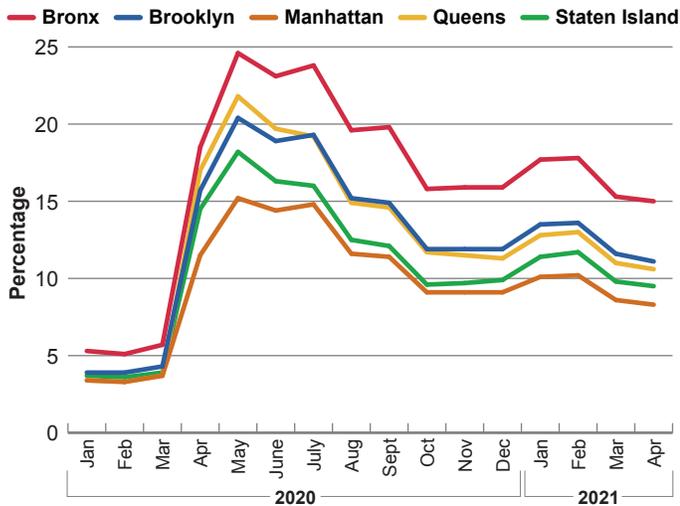
Unemployment

The unemployment rate has tended to be higher in the Bronx than in the City's other boroughs, and this trend continued and intensified during the pandemic because fewer residents were able to maintain employment by working remotely (see Figure 15).

After averaging 5.4 percent in the first three months of 2020, unemployment rose rapidly to reach 24.6 percent in the Bronx in May 2020 as the pandemic took hold. This rate is likely to have

been topped only once in the last century, during the Great Depression. The borough's unemployment rate has gradually declined to reach 15 percent as of April 2021, the lowest level since the start of the pandemic, though still trailing the citywide and statewide figures.

FIGURE 15
Unemployment Rates by Borough, 2020-2021



Sources: NYS Department of Labor; OSC analysis

Subway Ridership

In all but one month (October 2020) since the start of the pandemic, the level of subway ridership was higher in the Bronx than in all other boroughs

FIGURE 16
Averages of Subway Turnstile Entries as a Share of the Same Month in 2019

| Borough | 2020 | | | | | | | | | | 2021 | | | |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--|
| | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | |
| Bronx | 17.6 | 20.4 | 28.4 | 33.5 | 34.5 | 39.8 | 40.8 | 39.9 | 41.5 | 39.1 | 38.3 | 42.7 | 44.1 | |
| Brooklyn | 12.2 | 14.5 | 22.7 | 29.9 | 31.5 | 35.7 | 36.9 | 36.5 | 36.5 | 34.5 | 34.5 | 38.1 | 38.6 | |
| Manhattan | 8.2 | 9.6 | 15.6 | 21.3 | 23.5 | 26.4 | 27.3 | 26.9 | 26.6 | 25.2 | 25.2 | 28.3 | 29.6 | |
| Queens | 11.1 | 14.2 | 22.6 | 30.0 | 31.6 | 37.7 | 41.2 | 38.1 | 38.0 | 37.4 | 36.4 | 40.1 | 41.0 | |

Note: Staten Island has no subway stops.

Sources: NYC Metropolitan Transportation Authority; OSC analysis

Percent:



(see Figure 16). The Bronx accounted for nine of the 15 neighborhoods with the highest levels of ridership in April 2020. One year later, in April 2021, seven of the 15 neighborhoods with the highest ridership levels citywide were in the borough.¹²

For the entire period from April 2020 to April 2021, seven Bronx neighborhoods were among the 15 with the highest average monthly ridership. Health care and social assistance was the dominant employment sector for these neighborhoods in 2019, highlighting local residents' key roles in operating essential industries and their reliance on public transit as a means to travel to work.

Housing

Housing affordability is a serious problem in the Bronx, as it is citywide. The Bronx has the largest share of renters of any county in New York State, as more than 80 percent of Bronx households rent their apartments.¹³ Nearly 12 percent of all renters in the State are located in the Bronx, despite the borough having fewer than 7 percent of the State's households. In 2019, nearly 61 percent of renters in the Bronx faced a rent burden, where rent consumed 30 percent or more of their household incomes. This was higher than in any other borough, and 10 percentage points higher than the share citywide (50 percent).

The affordability problem is evident in the number of evictions that have occurred in the borough. Prior to the pandemic, the Bronx had the highest number of pending, scheduled and executed evictions of all the boroughs, even though it had fewer rental units than every other borough except Staten Island (see Figure 17).

FIGURE 17
Residential Evictions in New York City in 2018 and 2019, and Number of Units in 2019, by Borough

| Borough | Residential Evictions | | Rental Units 2019 |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------|----------------------|
| | 2018 | 2019 | |
| Bronx | 6,860 | 5,850 | 416,921 |
| Brooklyn | 5,702 | 4,886 | 687,076 |
| Manhattan | 2,713 | 2,292 | 588,960 |
| Queens | 4,053 | 3,350 | 438,262 |
| Staten Island | 660 | 597 | 56,995 |

Sources: NYC Department of Investigation; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-year estimates; OSC analysis

With the pandemic and its economic consequences, including rising unemployment in the Bronx and citywide, many residents have been unable to pay rent, and there was concern that evictions would be rampant throughout the City. However, no new eviction filings were accepted by New York City housing courts between March 20 and June 20, 2020. Once filings by landlords were again accepted, there were far fewer than in past years. In fact, between the end of June 2020 and March 2021,

residential nonpayment filings were down over 60 percent both citywide and in the Bronx, compared to the same period one year earlier.

Landlords may have been reluctant to file since there has been a State moratorium on many evictions through August 2021. The New York State budget includes a \$2.7 billion Emergency Rental Assistance Program geared to help lower-income renters (those who earn 80 percent or less of their area’s median income), and thus their landlords. Applications were accepted starting June 1. Given the large share of renters, lower household incomes and higher rates of unemployment in the Bronx, the borough should receive significant relief from the program.

Food Insecurity

The Bronx has the highest level of food insecurity in the City. Feeding America estimates that 17.5 percent of all people and 23.5 percent of all children living in the Bronx had limited or uncertain access to adequate food (i.e., were “food insecure”) in 2018, the highest rates across the five boroughs (see Figure 18).¹⁴

The estimates also show that all Bronx residents who were food insecure were living in households with income levels below the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility threshold. In other boroughs, this share ranged from 67 percent to 85 percent.

FIGURE 18
Feeding America, 2018 Estimates of Food Insecurity by Borough

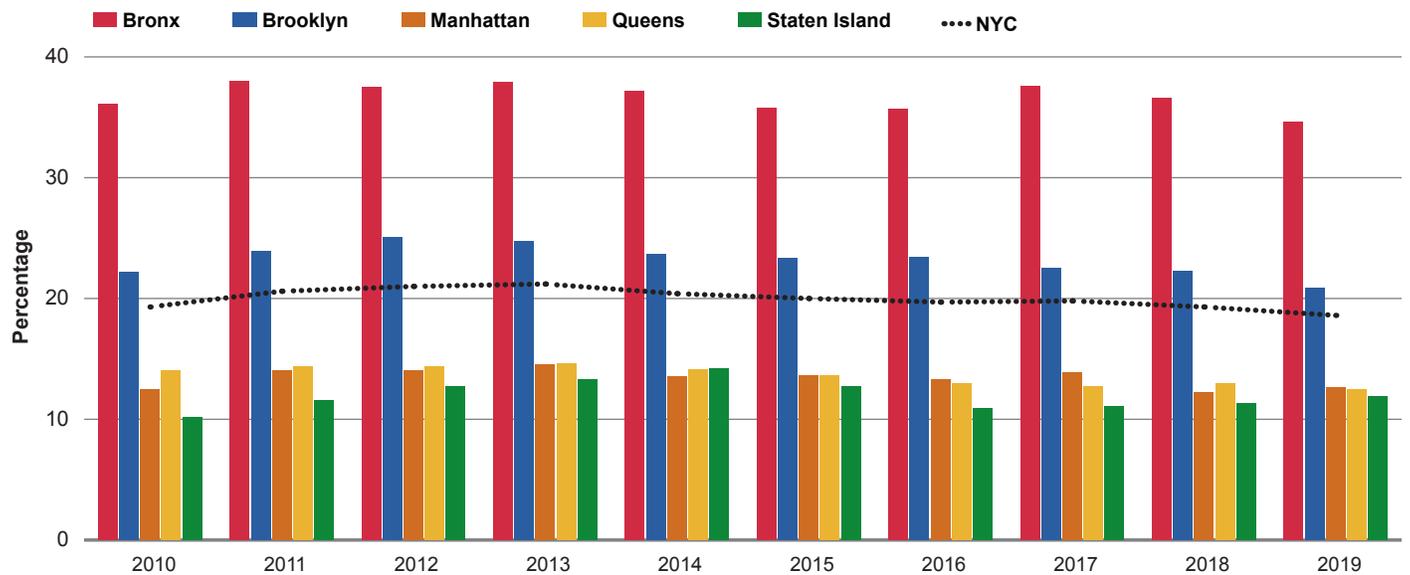
| Borough | All Food-Insecure People | Food-Insecure Children | Share of Food-Insecure People Below SNAP Income Threshold | Share of Food-Insecure Children Below SNAP Income Threshold | All People Food-Insecurity Rate | Child Food-Insecurity Rate | Average Meal Cost in Dollars |
|---------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Bronx | 251,180 | 84,770 | 100 | 80 | 17.5 | 23.5 | 3.4 |
| Brooklyn | 371,210 | 117,820 | 81 | 75 | 14.3 | 19.6 | 3.9 |
| Manhattan | 198,450 | 34,450 | 67 | 80 | 12.2 | 14.6 | 6.2 |
| Queens | 228,660 | 65,440 | 85 | 86 | 9.9 | 14.1 | 3.6 |
| Staten Island | 42,830 | 15,369 | 67 | 66 | 9.0 | 14.7 | 3.7 |

Note: SNAP stands for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Sources: Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap, <http://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2018/overall/new-york>; OSC analysis

FIGURE 19

Share of Borough Households Receiving SNAP Benefits, 2010 to 2019



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-year estimates; OSC analysis

U.S. Census Bureau data highlights the persistence of the borough’s high food-insecurity levels relative to the rest of the City over time (see Figure 19). As of 2019, 34.6 percent of Bronx households participated in SNAP compared to 20.9 percent of households in Brooklyn and 18.6 percent citywide.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the food insecurity levels in the Bronx and in New York City overall were exacerbated by reduced operations or closures of emergency food pantries. At the height of the pandemic in April 2020, 50 percent of the total number of emergency food providers in the Bronx were reported closed, compared to 38 percent for the City as a whole.¹⁵

New York City’s measures to address food insecurity during the pandemic included development and implementation of an interagency plan to provide adequate food to City residents for immediate relief, as well as in the medium term and the long term. The plan for immediate relief included supporting food pantries, supplying meals for pickup at local schools and delivering food to seniors at home.¹⁶

Several individuals, community organizations and mutual-aid groups started and continue to spearhead pop-up pantries and to stock community refrigerators for residents to access food at no cost on a regular basis. Since parts of the Bronx are considered food deserts, BronxWorks and other nonprofit organizations have been encouraging small grocery stores to carry healthier food options, in part through the Shop Healthy NYC! program.¹⁷

In late March 2021, construction began on a regional food hub located in the Hunts Point area of the Bronx. The hub is mainly a cold storage facility aimed at improving the distribution of locally produced food, especially from upstate farmers, to residents of the City, with a focus on less advantaged areas. It is a joint initiative of the City and the State, and reflects some of the recommendations of a New York State-New York City Regional Food Hubs Task Force, and the City’s food policy plan.¹⁸ The estimated construction cost is \$39 million and the hub is expected to be completed in September 2022.

Education and Broadband Internet

Education

Like many other public school systems in the State and across the nation, New York City experienced a marked decline in public school enrollment for the 2020-21 school year in the wake of the pandemic. The Bronx, which historically accounts for about one-fifth of the City's enrollment, was by far the hardest-hit of the five boroughs. According to State Education Department data, enrollment in the Bronx for prekindergarten through 12th grade (Pre-K to 12) fell by 6.9 percent in the 2020-21 school year, compared to 4.9 percent citywide.

Most of the decline was concentrated among younger grade levels, with Bronx Pre-K enrollment declining by nearly a quarter (22.8 percent) while enrollment in grades K-6 fell by 7.7 percent. This pattern was common across the City, but in other boroughs areas with steep declines in enrollment were offset by areas with less pronounced declines. This was not the case in the Bronx. Five of the borough's six school districts had declines in enrollment higher than in both the City and the average district (5.4 percent).

The pandemic has also disrupted historical methods of tracking student progress (such as standardized testing), and has forced schools to adopt remote-learning practices. Student attendance rates, which had averaged 89.7 percent in the Bronx during the six years prior, dropped to 83.8 percent in the spring of 2020. Rates have since largely recovered, following a citywide trend, to reach an average of 89.3 percent for in-person learning and 86.8 percent for remote learning in the spring of 2021. This recovery may have been helped by the City's provision of free remote-learning devices to all families who requested them in the fall of 2020. However, attendance rates in the Bronx continued to lag slightly behind the other boroughs, as they did before the pandemic.

Broadband Internet Access

With the shift to full-time remote learning and working from home immediately after the onset of the pandemic, followed by a gradual and partial return to in-person classes, the need for affordable high-speed Internet access at home increased sharply across the City.

As of 2019, the Bronx had the lowest share of households with cable, fiber-optic or DSL (digital subscriber line) broadband (61.3 percent) among the five boroughs. The share of households with broadband access in the other four boroughs ranged from 69.5 percent (Queens) to 78.0 percent (Manhattan).

Among the 10 Census-defined neighborhoods in the Bronx, the share of households with broadband Internet was lowest (less than 60 percent) in Belmont/Crotona Park East/East Tremont, Concourse/Highbridge/Mount Eden, Hunts Point/Longwood /Melrose and Wakefield/Williamsbridge/Woodlawn.

Given the disparities in broadband access, Bronx residents were challenged to find solutions to accommodate distance learning and working from home. Separate efforts toward resolution were led by the City and by community and mutual aid groups. For its part, the City accepted a pledge from a major provider in November 2020 (settling a three-year lawsuit) to extend fiber-optic infrastructure to 500,000 additional homes in neighborhoods across the boroughs.¹⁹ These include Hunts Point, Fordham, Morris Heights, Mount Hope, University Heights, Bedford Park, Jerome Park, Kingsbridge Heights and Norwood.

The City is also collaborating with a cluster of nonprofit and private sector organizations to provide access to upgraded broadband Internet at community centers at 50 New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) locations. These included seven in the Bronx (Melrose, Butler, Edenwald, Marble Hill, Boston Secor, Davidson and Fort Independence St-Heath Ave.). As of January 2020, there were at least 90,971 NYCHA residents in the Bronx.

Recent federal and state measures may help improve Internet access by Bronx households. A federal emergency broadband benefit program now provides discounts on monthly broadband service payments for low-income households during the pandemic. New state legislation requires that service providers charge low-income households no more than \$15 monthly for 25 megabits per second connection.²⁰ An estimated 57 percent of Bronx households participate in either the SNAP or Medicaid programs, and may therefore be eligible for these measures.²¹

Crime

Major index crime in the Bronx (which includes murder, rape, felony assault, robbery, burglary, grand larceny and grand larceny auto) declined 39 percent between 2000 and 2019, a significant reduction but still the smallest decline of any borough during that period. Violent crime in the Bronx continued to be the highest of any borough per capita, with 688 violent crimes per 100,000 residents in 2019 (59 percent higher than the citywide rate).

Although the increase in major index crime in the Bronx during 2020 peaked in March 2020 at 21 percent (compared to the same month one year earlier), crime ended the year with a 6 percent annual average increase compared to crime in the City overall, which remained flat. The Bronx experienced increases in incidents of murder (32 percent), burglary (34 percent) and grand larceny auto (67 percent), as did the City as a whole for those crimes (47 percent, 44 percent and 66 percent, respectively). Additionally, shooting incidents jumped 79 percent in the Bronx and 97 percent citywide.

As of May 16, 2021, year-to-date major index crime in the Bronx was up 3 percent when compared to the same period last year, while citywide major index crime fell by 4 percent. Shootings have increased citywide by 82 percent and by 152 percent in the Bronx.

Federal, State and City Relief Measures

Paycheck Protection Program

The share of small businesses that accessed the federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) for the first time in 2021 was higher in the Bronx than in any other borough (see Figure 20). Loans approved for the Bronx as a share of all New York City loans (10.5 percent) was higher in 2021 than in 2020 (7.0 percent). Among the five boroughs, the Bronx received the second-lowest share of all PPP loans to the City in each of the two years.²²

FIGURE 20
PPP Loans Approved, First Quarter 2021

| Borough | Loan Type | Total Dollars (in thousands) | Share of Borough Totals |
|---------------|-----------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Bronx | 1st Draw | \$ 164,045 | 30.8 |
| | 2nd Draw | 368,860 | 69.2 |
| Brooklyn | 1st Draw | 300,055 | 16.8 |
| | 2nd Draw | 1,482,734 | 83.2 |
| Manhattan | 1st Draw | 410,094 | 8.1 |
| | 2nd Draw | 4,666,027 | 91.9 |
| Queens | 1st Draw | 302,202 | 18.3 |
| | 2nd Draw | 1,348,314 | 81.7 |
| Staten Island | 1st Draw | 52,186 | 19.3 |
| | 2nd Draw | 217,934 | 80.7 |
| NYC | 1st Draw | \$ 1,228,582 | 13.2 |
| | 2nd Draw | \$ 8,083,868 | 86.8 |

Sources: U.S. Small Business Administration; OSC analysis

The PPP was established through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act in March 2020. The PPP was designed to provide small businesses with forgivable loans for relief from the pandemic's impacts.

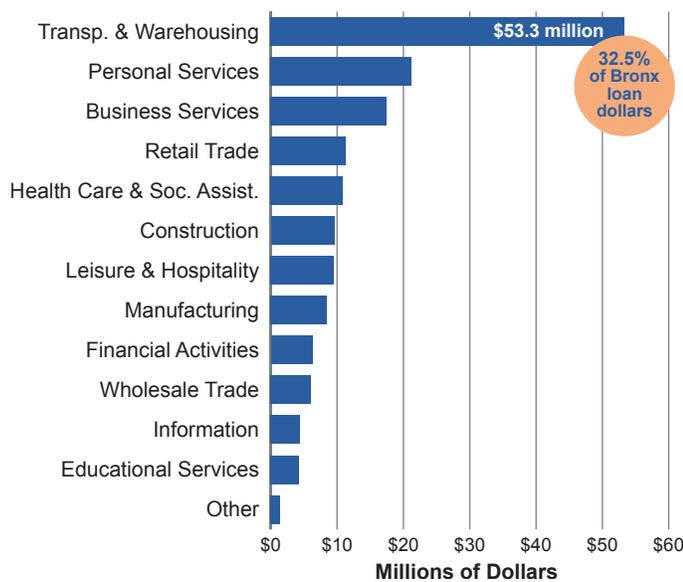
The program was funded for a second lending round through March 31, 2021, under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) in December 2020, and several follow-up measures were taken to ensure equity in disbursement.²³

The CRRSA allowed for loans to first-time applicants (i.e., the first draw) and to borrowers who had received funds from the 2020 program round (i.e., the second draw). Analysis here focuses on PPP loans to these two groups of borrowers in the 2021 round only.²⁴

Loans by Sector

Businesses in the transportation and warehousing, business services, and retail trade sectors accounted for almost two-thirds of first-draw loan dollars approved in the Bronx (see Figure 21).

FIGURE 21
PPP Loan Dollars Approved for the Bronx in First Quarter 2021 by Sector



Sources: U.S. Small Business Administration; OSC analysis

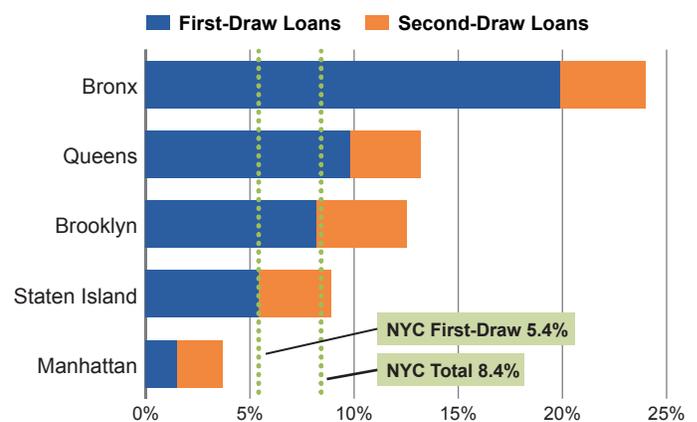
Firm Shares and Business Types

First-draw loans approved to firms (excluding independent contractors, sole proprietors and self-employed individuals) for the first quarter of 2021 represented 6.7 percent of the total number of firms in the Bronx in 2019, the highest share among all five boroughs. For second-draw loans as a share of businesses, the Bronx had the smallest share.

Loans for independent contractors, sole proprietors and self-employed individuals accounted for

55.5 percent of all first-draw loans approved for the Bronx and for 19.9 percent of first-draw loan dollars (see Figure 22). These shares were the highest across the five boroughs. The pattern highlights the importance of such smaller businesses and suggests that concerted efforts to ensure access to PPP funds are succeeding.

FIGURE 22
PPP Loan Dollars to Independent Contractors, Sole Proprietors and Self-Employed Individuals as Shares of Borough Loans by Type



Sources: U.S. Small Business Administration; OSC analysis

Firm and Loan Sizes

Of total loan dollars approved for the Bronx in the first quarter of 2021, 54.3 percent went to businesses with fewer than 20 employees. This was the highest share among the five boroughs and higher than the comparable City share (44.7 percent). The average size of the 13,541 loans approved for the borough was \$39,355, the smallest of the five boroughs. The average size of all loans approved citywide (128,661) for the period was \$72,380.

Bronx Loans by Neighborhood

Four of the 10 Census-defined Bronx neighborhoods (Hunts Point/Longwood/Melrose, Pelham Parkway/Morris Park/Laconia, Concourse/Highbridge/Mount Eden) accounted for 61 percent of loans and 65 percent of loan dollars approved for the borough. Their individual shares of borough

loan dollars ranged from 12 percent to 22 percent. Loans of less than \$1 million made up 82 percent of all loan dollars approved for the Bronx, the second-highest share among the five boroughs. Citywide, the comparable share was 75.9 percent.

Other Federal Small Business Relief

The CRRSA made provisions for reopening disbursements of Economic Impact Disaster Loans (EIDLs) and establishing the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) program.²⁵ Additional funds were appropriated for targeted EIDLs (\$15 billion) and restaurant revitalization grants (\$28.6 billion) through the American Rescue Plan. In 2019, restaurants accounted for at least 10 percent of all businesses in six of the 10 Census-defined Bronx neighborhoods.²⁶

The U.S. Small Business Administration opened the online application portals for the SVOG and the Restaurant Revitalization Fund on April 26, 2021, and May 3, 2021, respectively.

Unemployment Relief

The CARES Act extended the period of eligibility for unemployment payments by 13 weeks for individuals affected by the pandemic, and provided for an additional weekly payment (Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation). Given the high levels of unemployment in the Bronx, relief measures that enhance State unemployment programs are important for the borough.

The CARES Act also provided for unemployment payments to individuals who are not normally covered by states' unemployment programs, such as independent contractors and self-employed people. In 2019, self-employed people made up 6.7 percent of working residents in the Bronx.

The period through which individuals may receive unemployment compensation and benefits was changed in both the CRRSA and the American Rescue Plan, and now extends through September 6, 2021. The New York State enacted budget also provides \$2.1 billion in State funding for

cash payments to excluded (i.e., undocumented) workers who have suffered a loss of work-related income due to the pandemic and are not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits or federal assistance payments because of their immigration status or other factors. These funds should also provide relief for some unemployed workers in the Bronx.

New York City Open Streets Program

To reduce the impact of restaurant closures, the City expanded its Open Streets program in June 2020 to allow establishments to serve patrons at tables on sidewalks and closed streets. While the Bronx had 8.1 percent of all the City's restaurants in 2019, it accounted for only 5.5 percent of Open Restaurants permits since the start of the program through May 31, 2021.

Economic Development

Despite slowdowns in construction due to the pandemic, significant progress has been made on some economic development projects in the borough, particularly in the South Bronx area. Major projects for which milestones have been reached since the start of the pandemic include the Bronx Point Development and the Spofford Juvenile Detention Center Redevelopment.

The Bronx Point Development is located at the northeastern corner of the Hunts Point/Longwood/Melrose neighborhood. A \$350 million financing package for the first phase was closed in December 2020, and construction started in January 2021. The Bronx Point Development plans include 1,045 apartments, 56,000 square feet of educational and community space, and more than 12,000 square feet of retail space. The development will include at least 542 affordable housing units and a permanent home for the Universal Hip Hop Museum. A groundbreaking ceremony for the museum was held on May 20, 2021.

The Spofford Redevelopment Project is a five-building, mixed-use campus (located in the northeast corner of the Hunts Point area) to be built in three phases by a private real estate developer. The approved plan includes 740 affordable housing units, commercial space with a supermarket and kitchen incubator, and an area preserved for early education programming. The final beam was placed on the first residential building of the development at a recent topping-off ceremony in December 2020, and project completion is expected to be in 2025.

Revenue declines during the pandemic resulted in the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) suspending the start of most new capital projects, especially those in the MTA's ambitious 2020-2024 capital program. This delayed the start of the Penn Station Access project to expand Metro-North Railroad service in the Bronx. The project includes four new stations linked to Penn Station in Manhattan using Amtrak's Hell Gate Line.

By the start of 2020, a project memorandum of understanding had been signed with Amtrak, and preliminary designs and environmental assessment (EA) processes started. The draft EA has now been federally approved for publication for comments. The preliminary project budget is \$1.6 billion, \$452 million of which was allocated in the MTA's 2015-2019 capital program.

The MTA's work to make stations compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has advanced at a much slower rate than planned. In the Bronx, ADA compliance work included installation of one or more elevators at the Bedford Park Boulevard Station on the Central Park West Local/6 Avenue Express B/D line (Concourse) in 2020, and at Gunhill Road Station on the Lexington Avenue Express 5 line (Dyre Ave.) in 2021. Installation of elevator access to the Lexington Avenue Local/Pelham Express 6 line at the 149th Street and Grand Concourse Station and at the Tremont Avenue Station began in 2020, and the MTA expects to start work on an ADA project at Westchester Square in 2021.

The Bronx: Looking Ahead

In the period leading up to the arrival of COVID-19 in New York City, the Bronx saw improvement across numerous socioeconomic indicators, including population, employment, and wage growth. The pandemic put an abrupt stop to that trajectory. It had a disproportionate effect on the City's low-income minority communities, which make up the majority of neighborhoods in the Bronx.

It will take time for the borough's residents to recover from the effects of COVID-19. Food insecurity, rent burden and unemployment may continue to plague the Bronx as it emerges from the pandemic. The past year has also emphasized the disadvantages faced by the borough in providing access to health care, education, the Internet, and jobs.

However, recent adjustments to programs intended to help target those most affected by COVID-19 seem to be helping to alleviate some pressures in the Bronx. Small businesses, which were left to catch up in the initial rush of federal aid, have found their footing and begun to take better advantage of loan programs.

Sustained outreach will also be necessary to improve programs to distribute food to those in need, enroll eligible participants into rent relief programs, and most importantly, vaccinate the general population in the borough. The State and the City must track performance of these dollars to ensure that the Bronx receives a fair share of relief—one that corresponds to the serious damage it has sustained.

Continued investment in the borough, some of which was put on hiatus during the pandemic, should also help aid recovery. As the City's economy returns to a new normal, the Bronx's economy should rebound too. The Bronx's revitalization and improvement with respect to key indicators, including population, employment, education, rent burden and poverty, will serve as an important benchmark for measuring the City's success in achieving the goal of an equitable recovery for all New Yorkers.

Endnotes

- 1 The U.S. Census Bureau defines 55 neighborhoods citywide (with 10 in the Bronx) called Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs), whose boundaries are similar to New York City community districts in all but four cases (two in the Bronx; two in Manhattan), where the PUMAs encompass two community districts each.
- 2 For the concepts of essential, face-to-face and remote industries, this report draws on two reports by James A. Parrot and Linda Moe at the Center for New York City Affairs: *The New Strain of Inequality: The Economic Impact of Covid-19 in New York City*, April 15, 2020; and *The Covid-19 New York City Economy, Three Months In: Reopening and a Continuing Low-Wage Workers Recession*, June 2020.
- 3 The U.S. Census Bureau defines community resilience as “the capacity of individuals and households to absorb, endure, and recover from the health, social, and economic impacts of a disaster such as a hurricane or pandemic.”
- 4 For ease of comparability in this report, the census tract data in the City has been converted to 55 Census-defined neighborhoods (PUMAs), which are larger geographic areas than census tracts.
- 5 Department of Population Health, NYU Langone Health, City Health Dashboard, <https://www.cityhealthdashboard.com/>, accessed May 3, 2021.
- 6 All health-related data is from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, unless otherwise specified. Case and case counts are a 7-day average of confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases.
- 7 Data include people in congregate settings, such as nursing homes and correctional facilities, which may affect outcomes, especially on a ZIP code basis.
- 8 Boroughwide data was not made available in its current format until August 8, 2020.
- 9 Cumulative rates are based on totals from the start of the pandemic and calculated per 100,000 people.
- 10 Data on health outcomes from the pandemic here covers a one-year period through March 2021 and is from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. This data is reported on a ZIP code basis and has been attributed to a particular Census-defined Bronx neighborhood through a crosswalk. Data on household income and share of the population that are minority residents is from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 2019, 1-year estimates, and is reported based on PUMA data.
- 11 Of the 56 ZIP codes associated with these neighborhoods citywide, 48 registered cumulative death rates in the top half citywide, and 33 of these had cumulative death rates among the highest third citywide.
- 12 For details on ridership levels, see OSC, *Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Subway Ridership in New York City*, <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/reports/osdc/impact-covid-19-pandemic-subway-ridership-new-york-city>.
- 13 Data for State and Bronx comparisons is taken from OSC Report, *Housing Affordability in New York State*, June 2019, <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/reports/special-topics/pdf/housing-affordability-2019.pdf>.
- 14 See Feeding America, *Map the Meal Gap*, technical note on 2018 measure at [https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/Map the Meal Gap 2020 Technical Brief-Updated.pdf](https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/Map%20the%20Meal%20Gap%202020%20Technical%20Brief-Updated.pdf).
- 15 As reported in Food Bank for New York City, *Fighting More than COVID-19: Unmasking the State of Hunger in NYC During a Pandemic*, June 2020.
- 16 The City of New York, *Feeding New York: The Plan to Keep Our City Fed During the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis*, April 2021.
- 17 Food deserts are described by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as areas where households are at least 1 mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) away from the nearest supermarket.
- 18 The City of New York, *Food Forward NYC: A 10-Year Food Policy Plan*, February 2021.
- 19 New York City Law School, *City Reaches Settlement Agreement with Verizon FIOS Regarding Expansion*, *CityLand*, December 15, 2020, <https://www.citylandnyc.org/city-reaches-settlement-agreement-with-verizon-fios-regarding-expansion/>.
- 20 Several ISPs had adopted a practice of providing low cost Internet to certain households well before the passage of the relevant state legislation.
- 21 OSC estimate based on American Community Survey 2019 data.
- 22 A total of \$669 billion was appropriated for the program in 2020 through two previous acts. See OSC Report 10-2021, *The Paycheck Protection Program in New York City: What’s Next?*, February 2021, <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/reports/osdc/pdf/report-10-2021.pdf>.
- 23 A total of \$284 billion was appropriated through the CRRSA, which passed in December 2020. In January 2021, an additional \$7.25 billion was appropriated through the American Rescue Plan. In February 2021, an administrative decision gave priority to applications from firms with fewer than 20 employees between February 24 and March 10, 2021. In March 2021, the PPP Extension Act was passed, shifting the application deadline to the end of May 2021 and the disbursement deadline to the end of June 2021.
- 24 For details of the 2020 round, see OSC Report 10-2021, cited in note 21.
- 25 The SVOG was established to provide relief from the impact of closures and limitations on crowd size. It is intended for venue operators (such as live performing arts organizations, museums and cinemas), promoters, producers, talent managers and agencies shuttered during the pandemic.
- 26 See OSC Report 4-2020, *The Restaurant Industry in New York City: Tracking the Recovery*, September 2020, Appendix A, <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/reports/osdc/pdf/nyc-restaurant-industry-final.pdf>.

Prepared By

Office of the State Deputy Comptroller for the City of New York

The Comptroller would like to thank Holly Clarke, Diane Diamond, Patricia Mendoza, Wesley Kirby, Mike Aguilar, Leonard Liberto, Leopold Wilson and Wen Xi Wong for their assistance in preparing this report.

Contact

Office of the New York State Comptroller

110 State Street

Albany, New York 12236

(518) 474-4040

www.osc.state.ny.us



Like us on **Facebook** at facebook.com/nyscomptroller

Follow us on **Twitter** @nyscomptroller

Follow us on **Instagram** @nys.comptroller