



# Stable Housing Is a Critical First Step toward Racial Equity

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# Housing Instability: What the Data Show

June 29, 2021

Mary Cunningham, Vice President, Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center

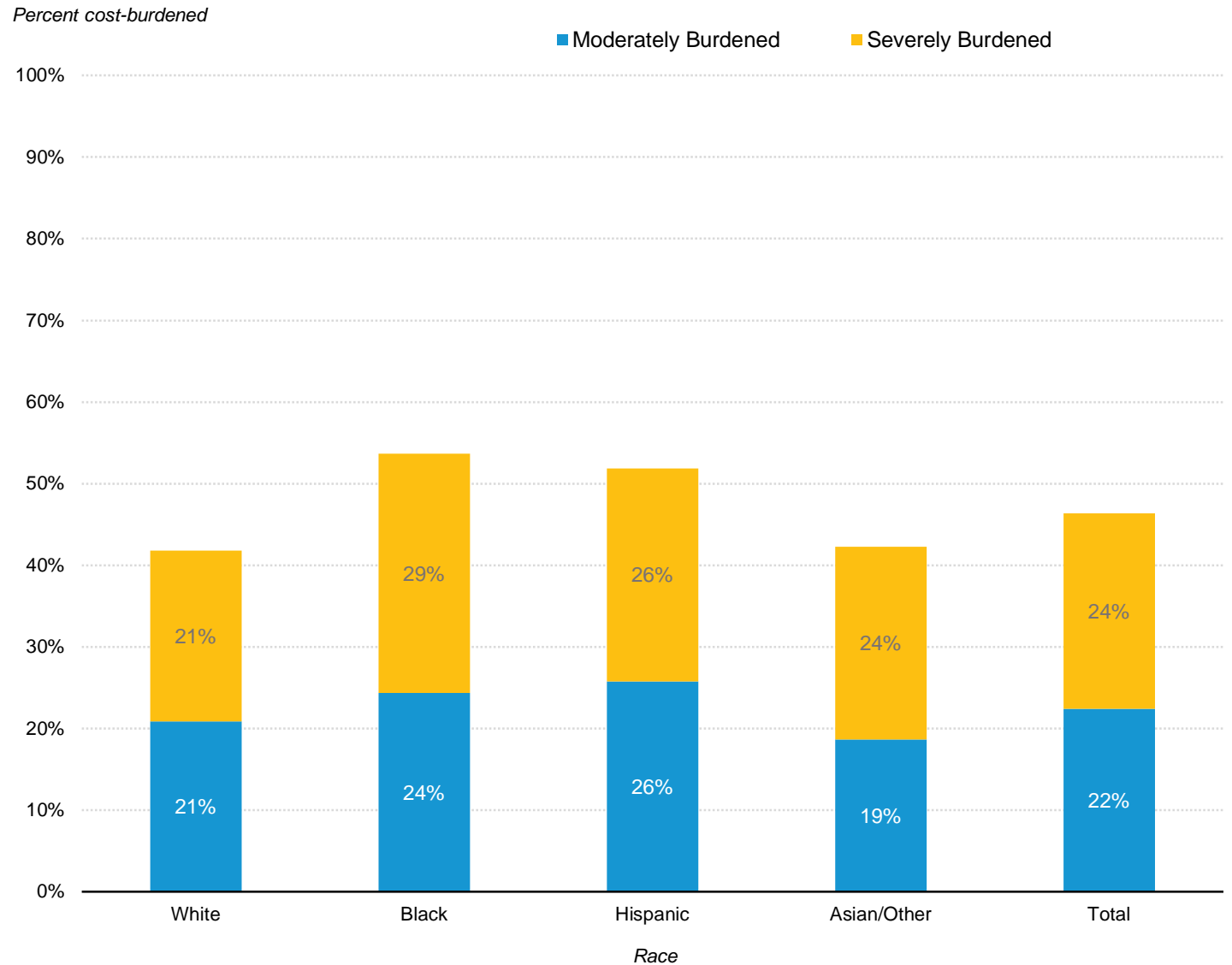


# **A look at housing insecurity before COVID-19**

# The Rental Market Pre-Covid

- 11 million renters (almost 25%) pay more than half their incomes on rent
- 20 percent of renters don't have \$400 in liquid savings
- Rental housing supply shortage of 7 million homes for extremely low-income renters
- Only 1 in 5 renters who qualified for federal housing assistance received it

# Share of Renters with Cost Burdens by Race & Ethnicity



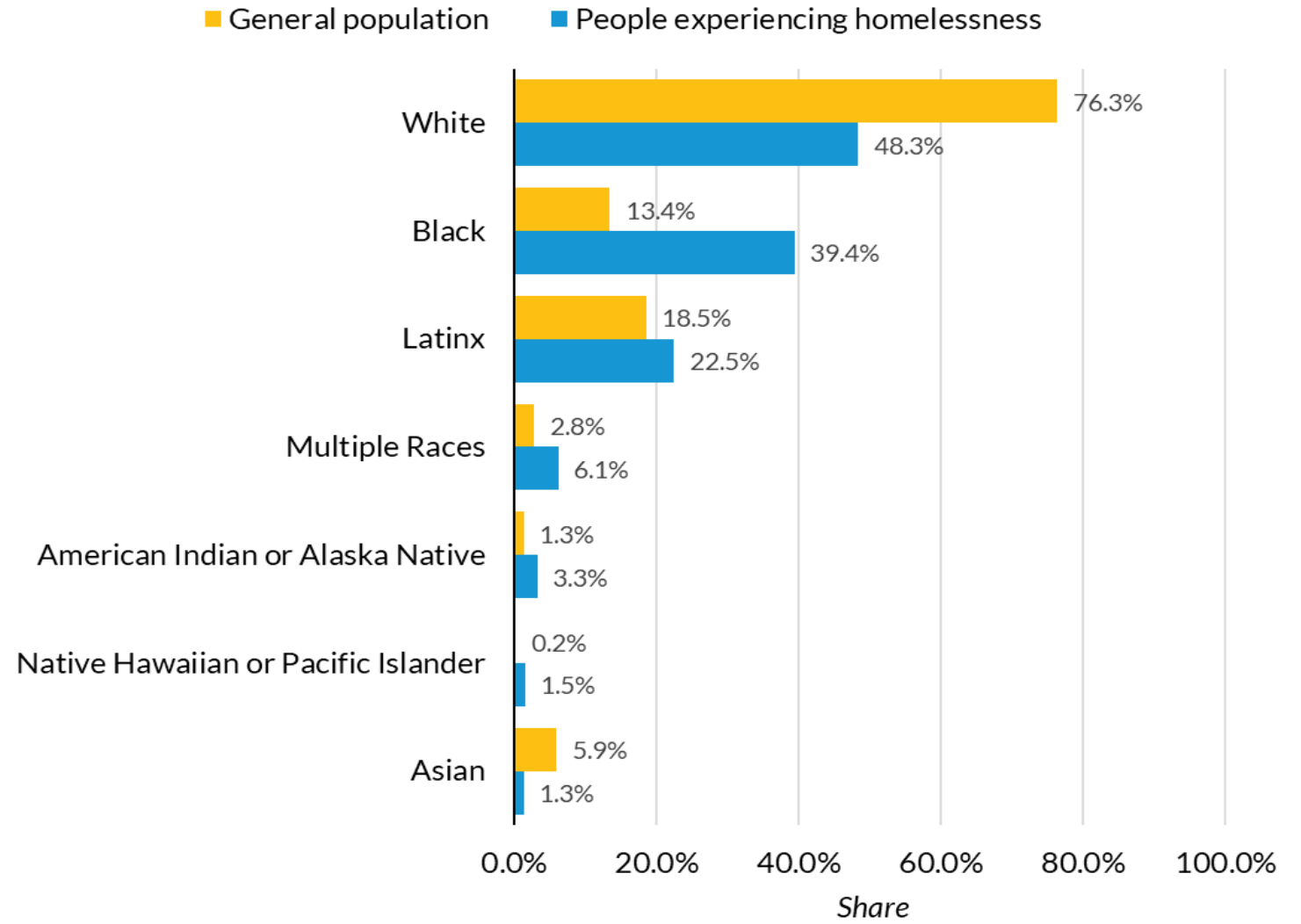
Source: Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, State of the Nation's Housing 2020

# Eviction before the pandemic

- Almost **900,000 renters** were evicted each year
- **People of color**, especially women of color, and single-parent headed households were at the **highest risk for eviction**
- **Less than 10 percent** of tenants have legal representation in eviction proceedings across housing courts nationwide



People of color—**especially Black, Indigenous, and Latinx people**—are overrepresented among **people experiencing homelessness**

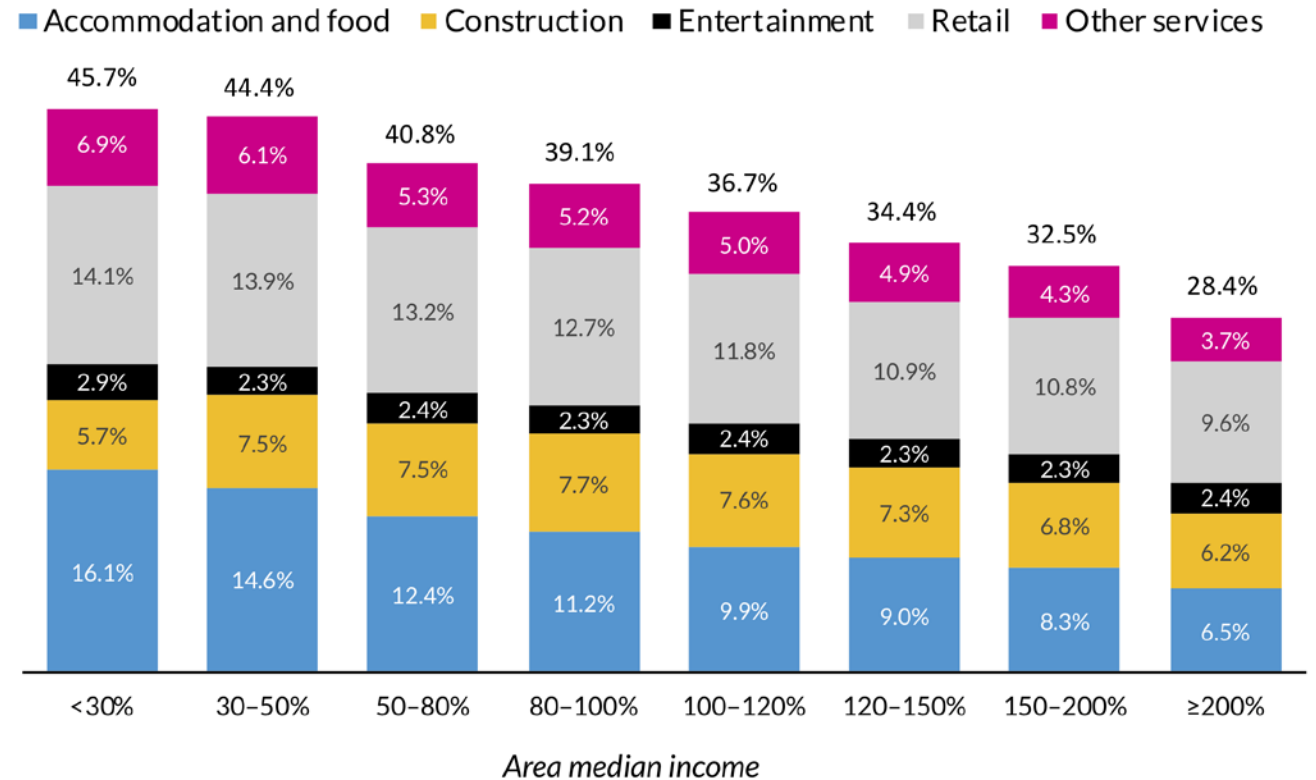


Source: 2020 Point-in-Time Count Estimates published by US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2019 American Community Survey published by US Census Bureau

**How has the pandemic affected and perpetuated housing insecurity and racial disparities among renters?**

# Low Income Renters Were More Likely to Work in Industries Vulnerable to COVID-19

Share of workers in vulnerable industries, by income for entire labor force

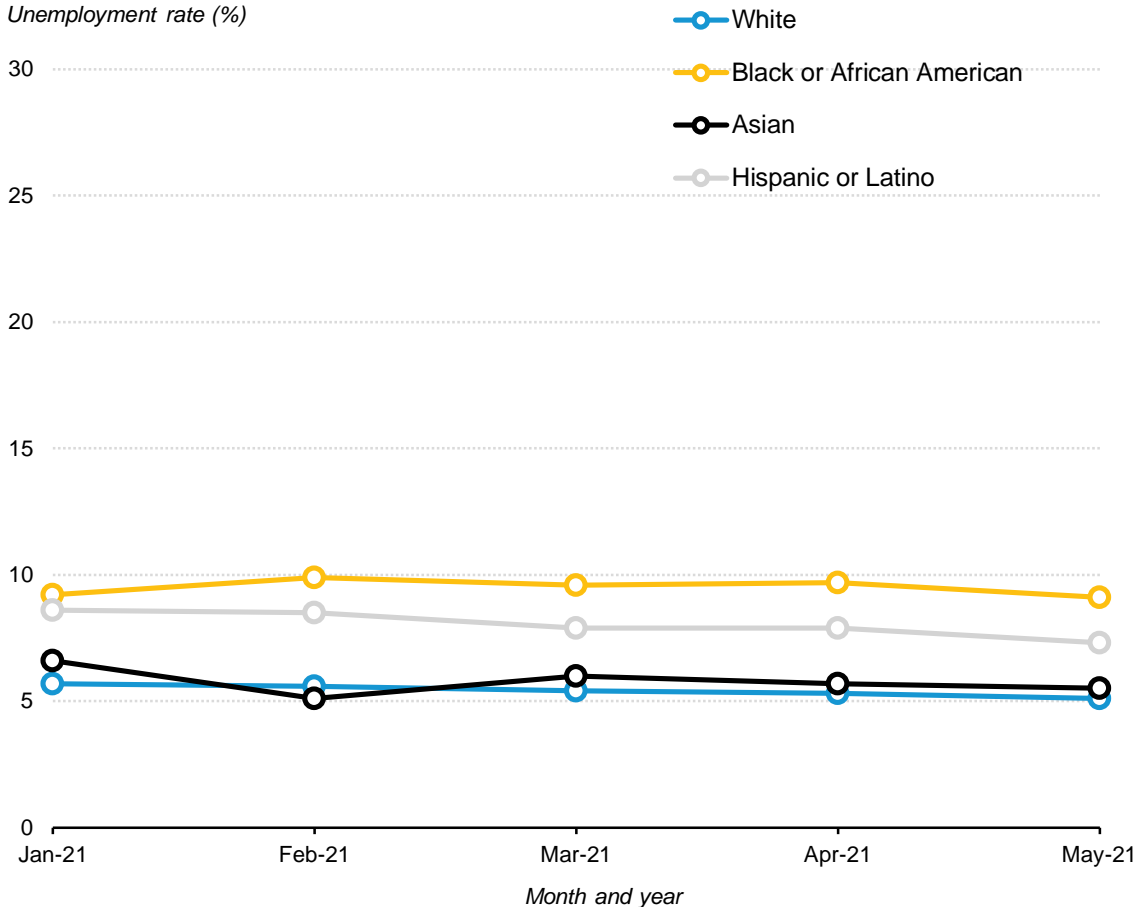
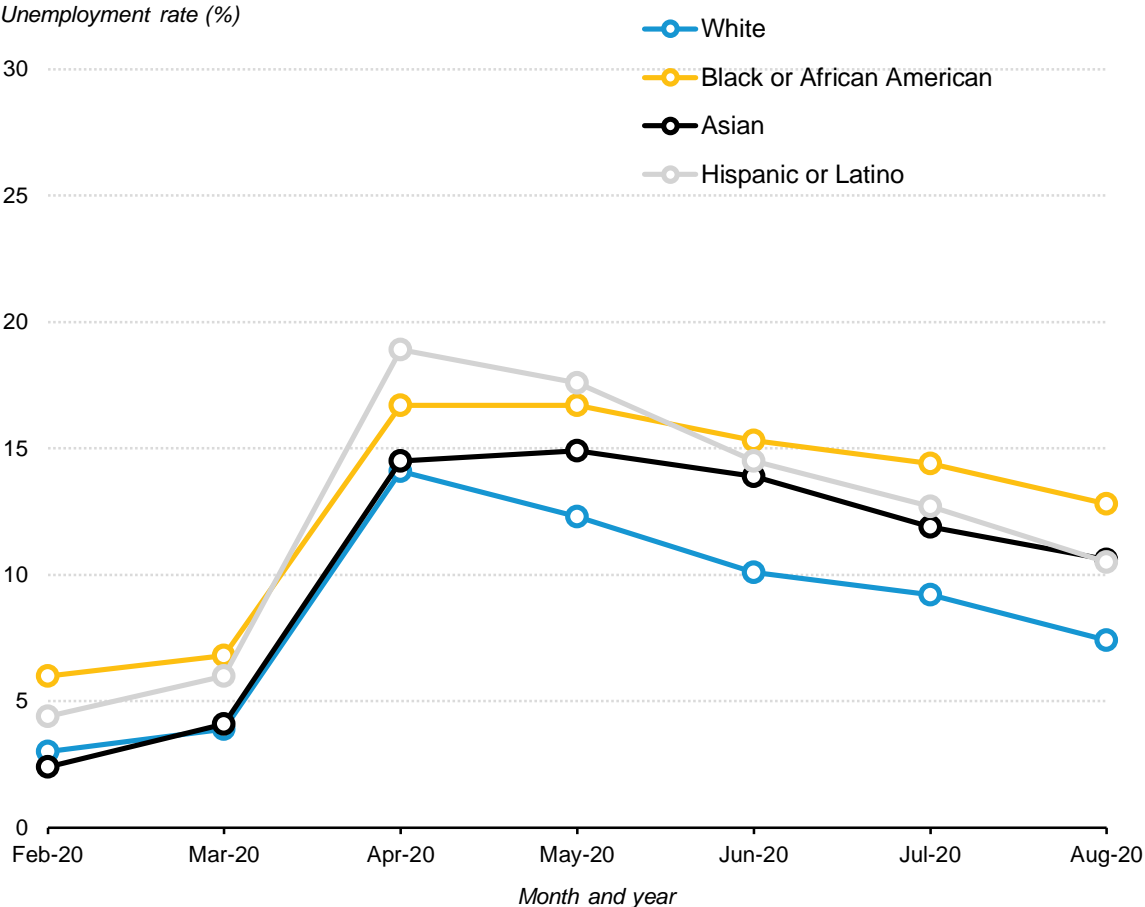


Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 2018 American Community Survey.

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Note: We grouped household income relative to the area median income and looked at all individuals within those households. For non-metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), median household income is calculated by using the population within the state who are not living in MSAs.

# Historic High Rates of Unemployment in 2020, still high for some in 2021



**Note:** For civilian Americans, seasonally adjusted. White, Black, and Asian categories are not exclusive of Hispanic ethnicity.

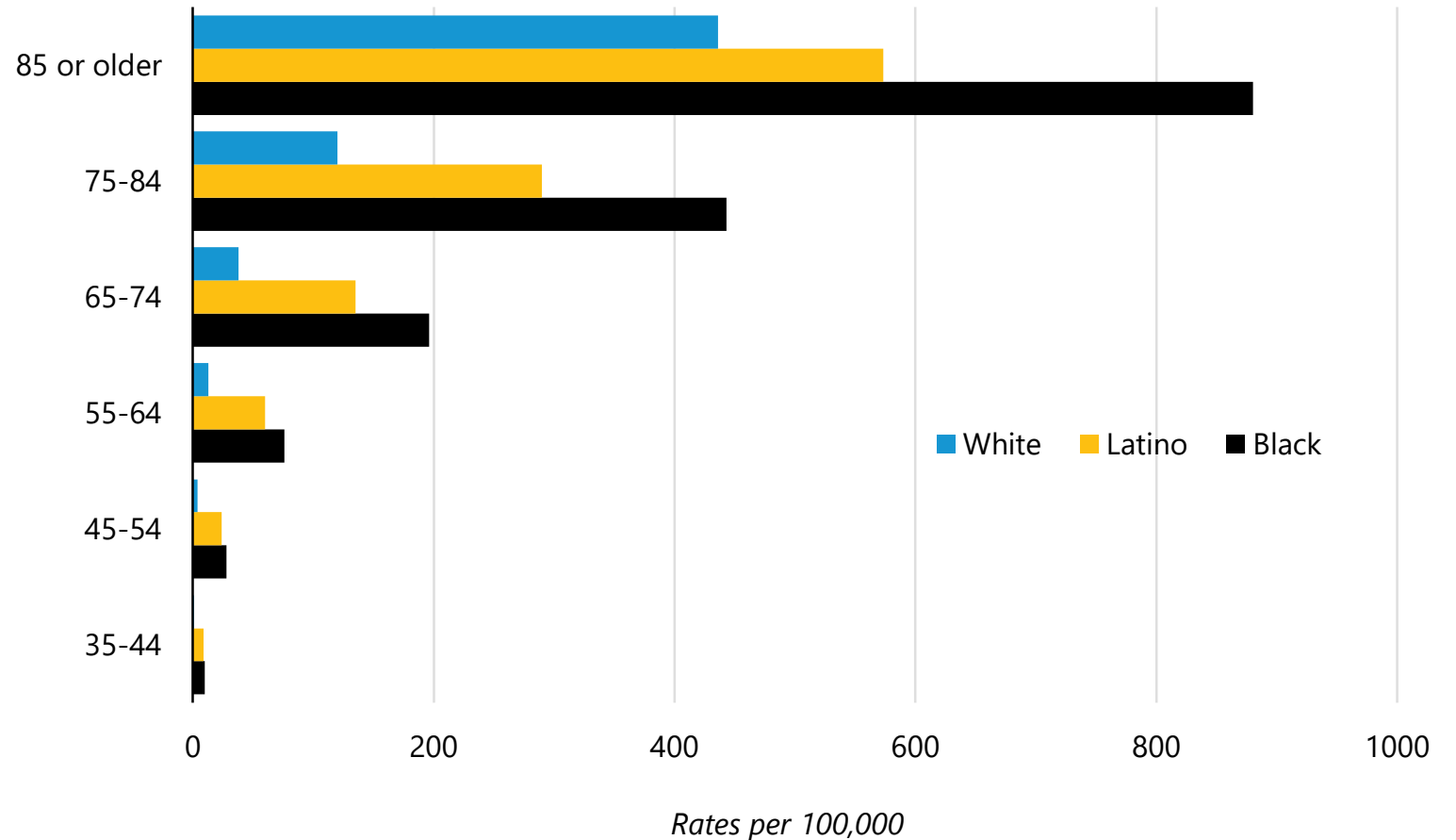
**Source:** Bureau of Labor Statistics



# Black and Latinx people overrepresented in COVID-19 deaths

COVID-19 Deaths by Age and Race

Age range (years)



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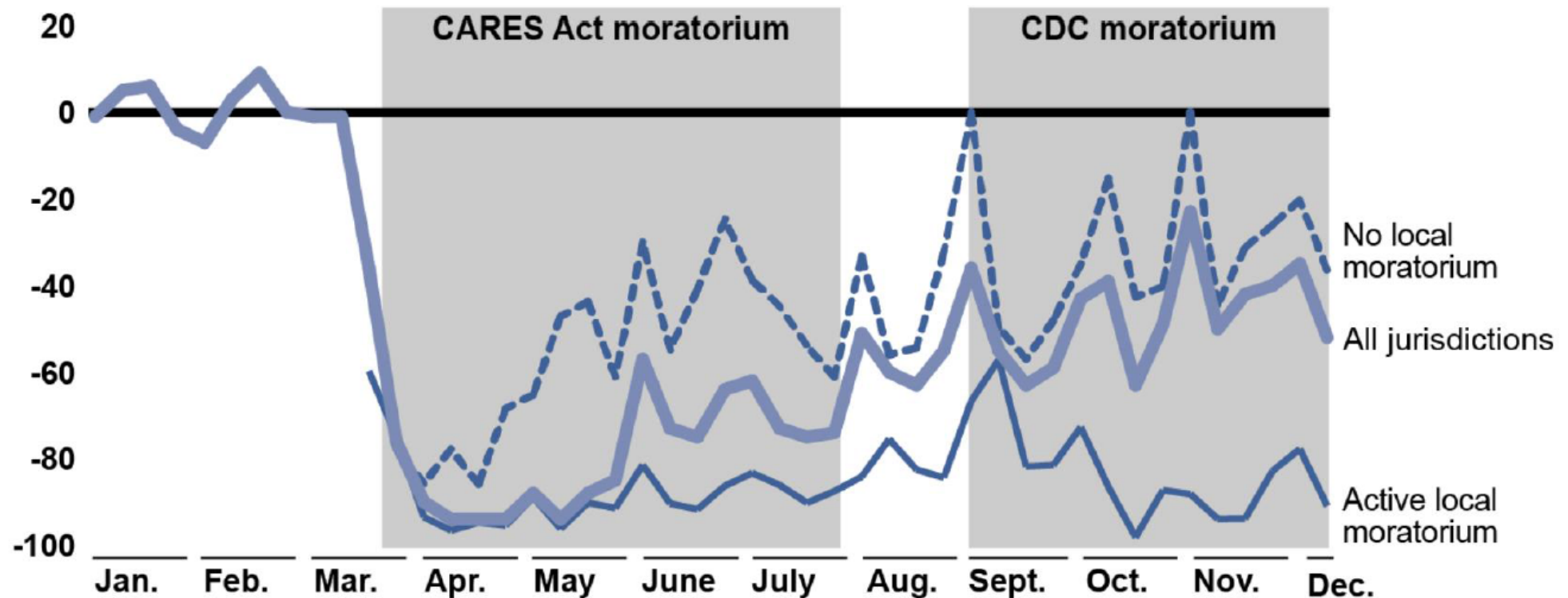
**CDC Eviction Moratorium**  
**Expires July 31st**  
*Very few states have  
protections*

# Eviction trends during the crisis

FIGURE 1

Median Percentage Change in Eviction Filings in 63 Jurisdictions

2019-20



Source: US Government Accountability Office, *COVID-19 Housing Protections: Moratoriums Have Helped Limit Evictions, but Further Outreach Is Needed* (Washington, DC, US Government Accountability Office, 2021)

# Estimates of back rent owed

- As of early 2021, estimates ranged from \$11 billion to \$53 billion
  - There is no one data source tracking rental payments and economists rely on a range of assumptions to create estimates
- Stimulus payments helped but did not cover all rent owed
- Rental debt remains substantial despite gains in the labor market
- Households of color and female-headed households have greater rental debt (Philadelphia Federal Reserve, March 2021)



# Emergency Rental Assistance

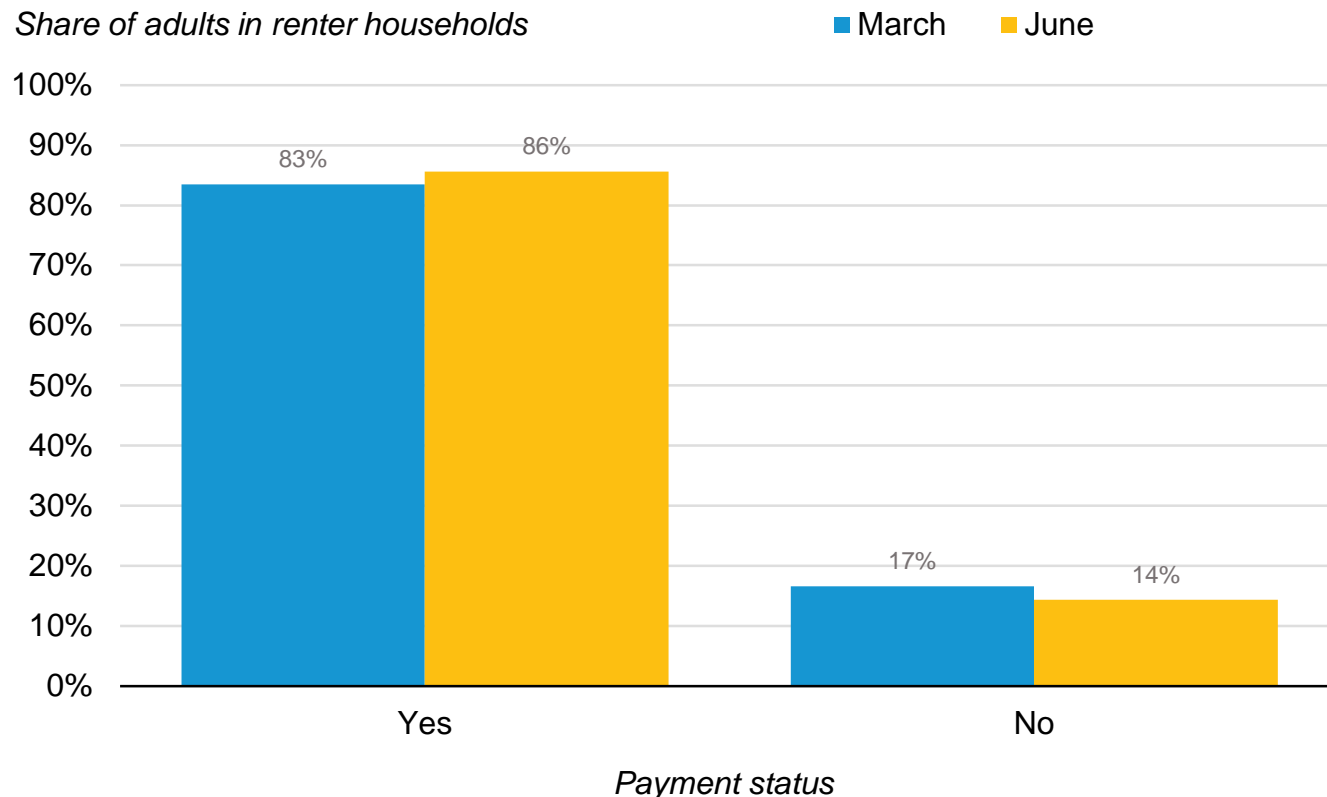
- Many state and local emergency rental assistance programs started using CARES Act funding in 2020
- In December 2020 and March 2021, Congress appropriated almost **\$47 billion in emergency rental assistance funds**
- Funds are administered **by state and local housing and community development agencies**, with agency type varying by place
- **10% of program funds** may be used for housing stability services, such as housing and counseling and legal support services
- **Prohibits the eviction of renters for nonpayment** in months for which they receive emergency rental assistance; many programs cover a longer period (30-90 days)

**What is the situation for renters now?**

Over **7 million** renters behind on rent in March and June of 2021 (**17 and 14 percent, respectively**, of adults in renter households)

## Renters in the United States, 2021

Share of renters currently caught up on rent



**Source:** Authors' calculations using U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey Data collected between March 3 to March 15 and May 26 to June 7.

**Note:** Results include estimates for renters who responded to the survey and answered specific questions about their ability to pay rent. The Pulse Survey provides estimates for all adults in households; therefore, percentages should be interpreted as the share of adults in households who pay rent.

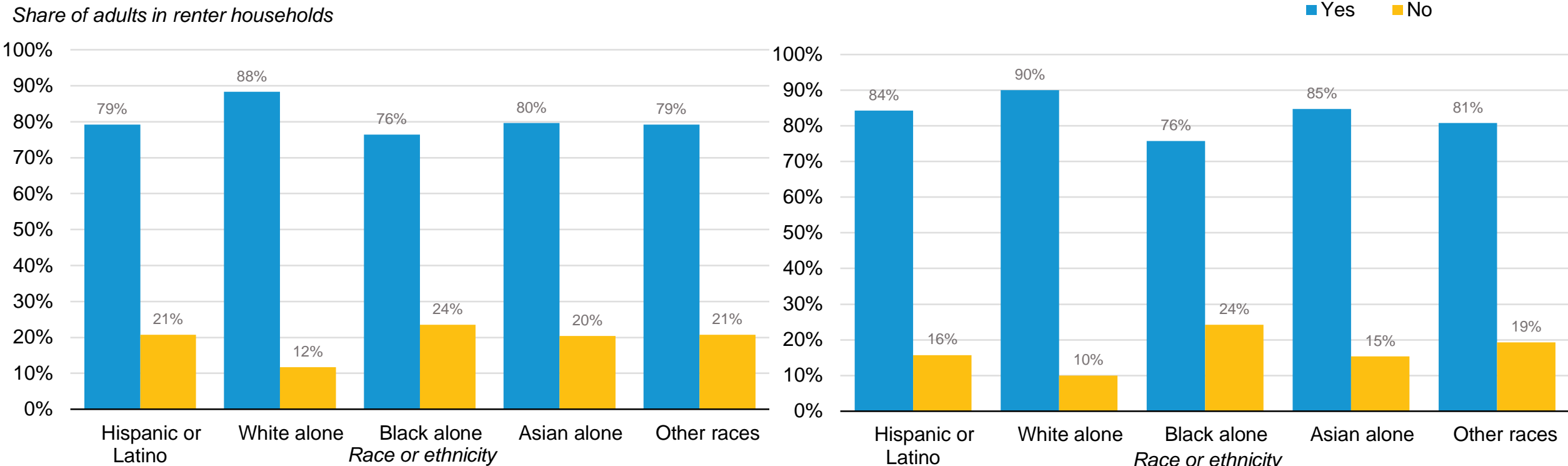
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# Black, Latinx, and Asian renters are more likely than white renters to be behind on rent

## Renters by Race and Ethnicity, March and June 2021

Share of renters currently caught up on rent

Share of adults in renter households



**Source:** Authors' calculations using U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey Data collected between March 3 to March 15 and May 26 to June 7.

**Note:** Results include estimates for renters who responded to the survey and answered specific questions about their ability to pay rent. The Pulse Survey provides estimates for all adults in households; therefore, percentages should be interpreted as the share of adults in households who pay rent. "Latino" includes respondents who identified as "Hispanic or Latino" of any race. "White," "Black," and "Asian" exclude respondents who identified as "Hispanic or Latino."

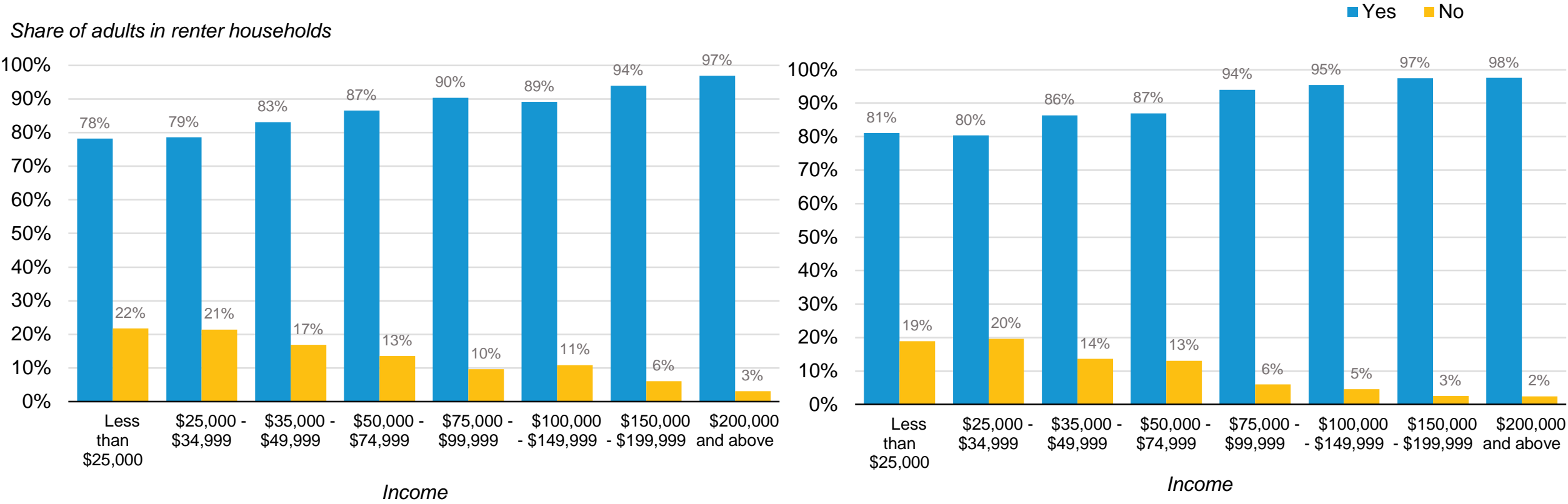


# Low-income renters more likely to be behind on rent

## Renters by Income, March and June 2021

Share of renters currently caught up on rent

Share of adults in renter households



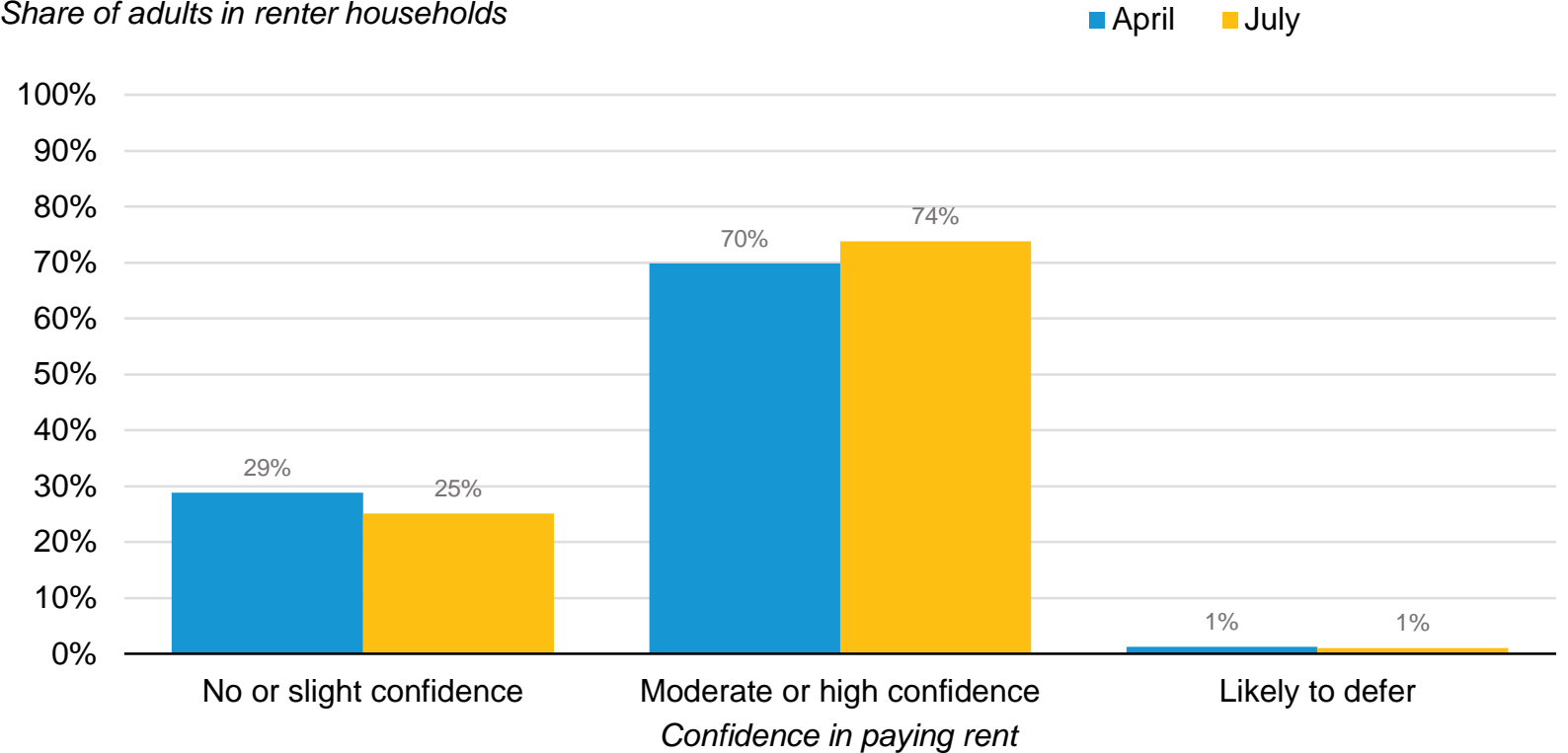
**Source:** Authors' calculations using U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey Data collected between March 3 to March 15 and May 26 to June 7.  
**Note:** Results include estimates for renters who responded to the survey and answered specific questions about their ability to pay rent. The Pulse Survey provides estimates for all adults in households; therefore, percentages should be interpreted as the share of adults in households who pay rent.

One quarter of adults in renter households have no or slight confidence they can pay the rent in July

## Renters in the United States, 2021

Confidence in paying April or July rent

Share of adults in renter households



**Source:** Authors' calculations using U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey Data collected between March 3 to March 15 and May 26 to June 7.

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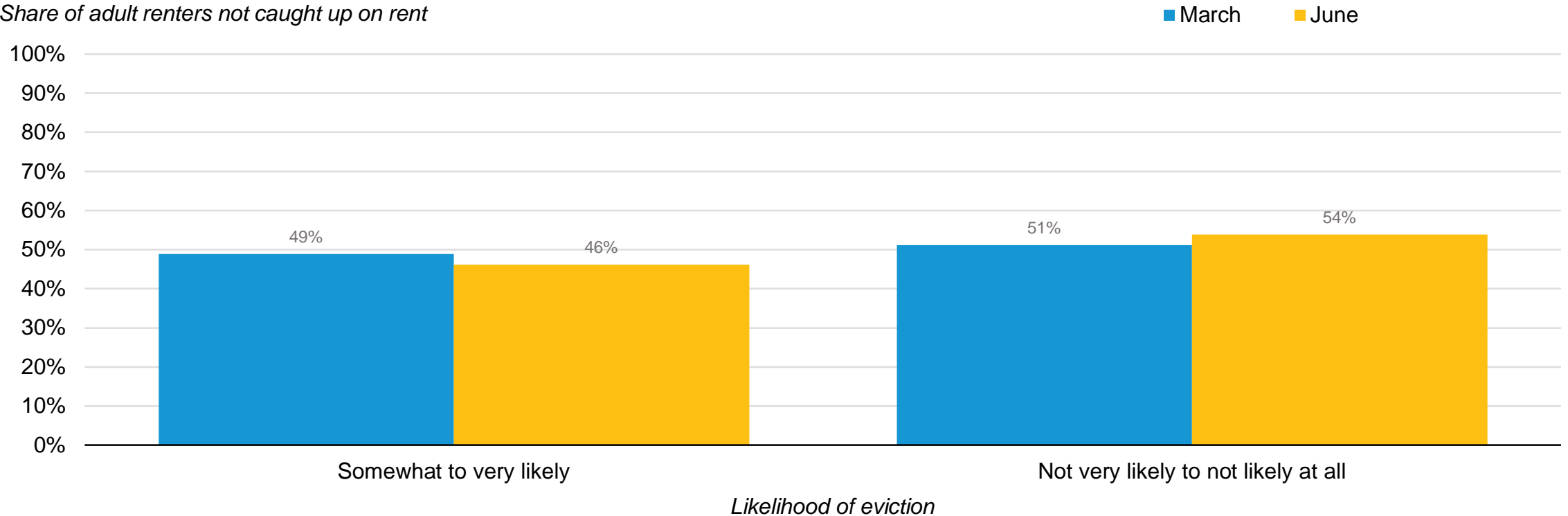
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# Almost half of those behind on rent believe they will be evicted

## Renters in the United States, 2021

Likelihood of eviction in next 2 months

Share of adult renters not caught up on rent



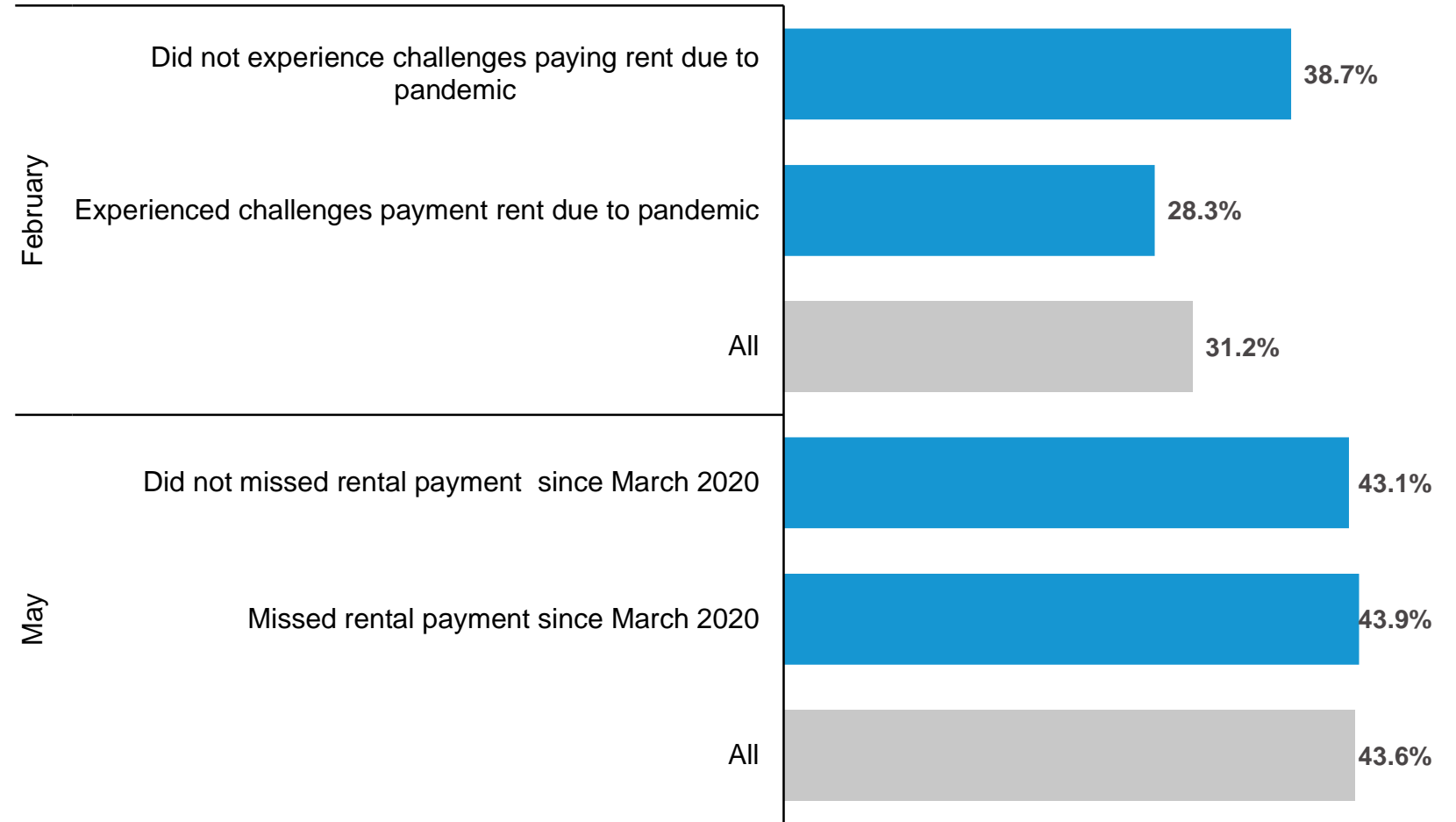
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**From February to May, tenant's awareness of federal rental assistance increased by 12 percentage points**

## Percent of Tenants Who are Aware of Federal Emergency Rental



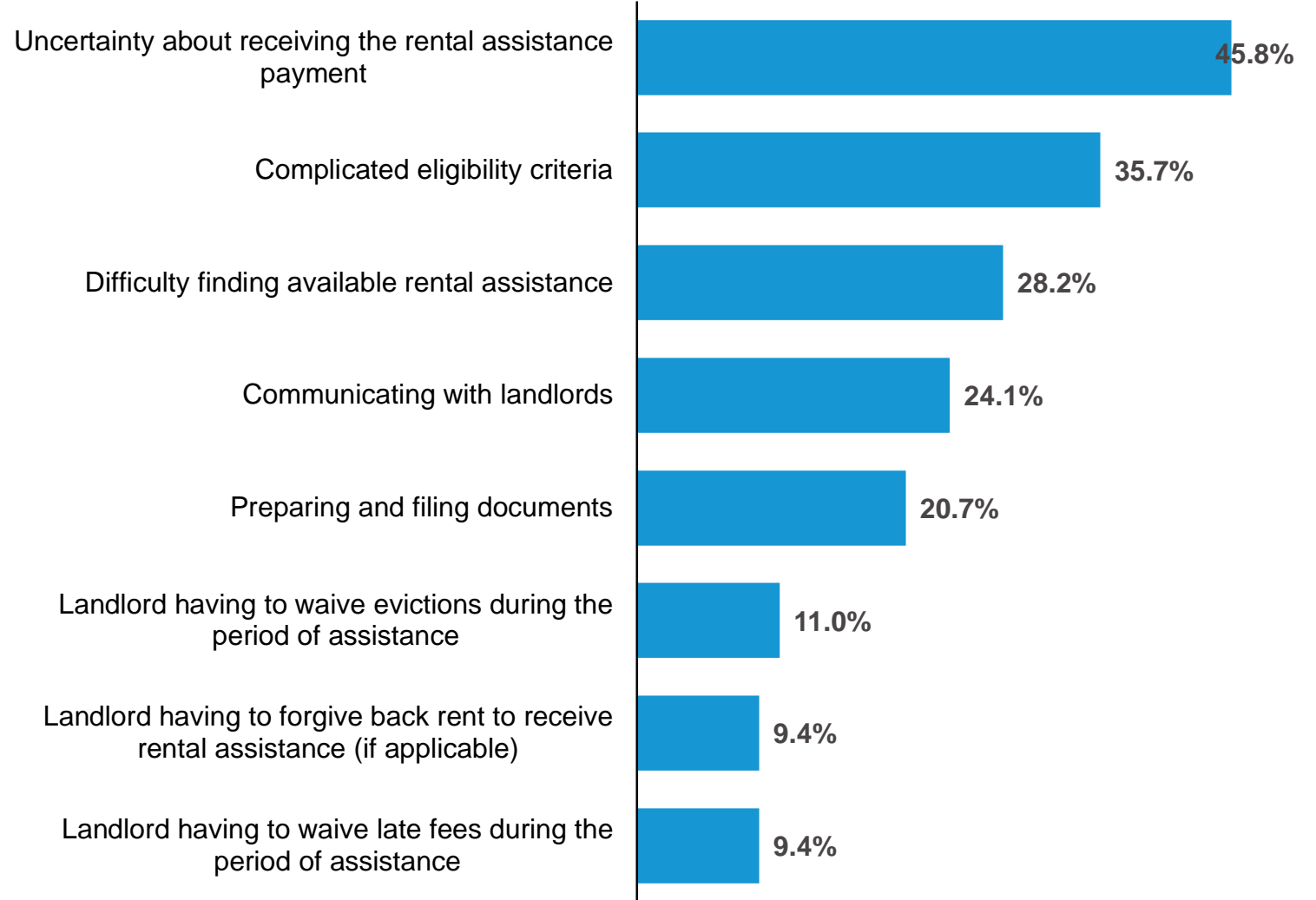
Source: Avail 2021 February and May Tenant Survey



# The most cited reason for tenants not applying to federal ERA was the uncertainty of receiving funds

- **Survey Question:** *What factors most influenced your decision not to apply for government-funded emergency rental assistance programs?*

## Results

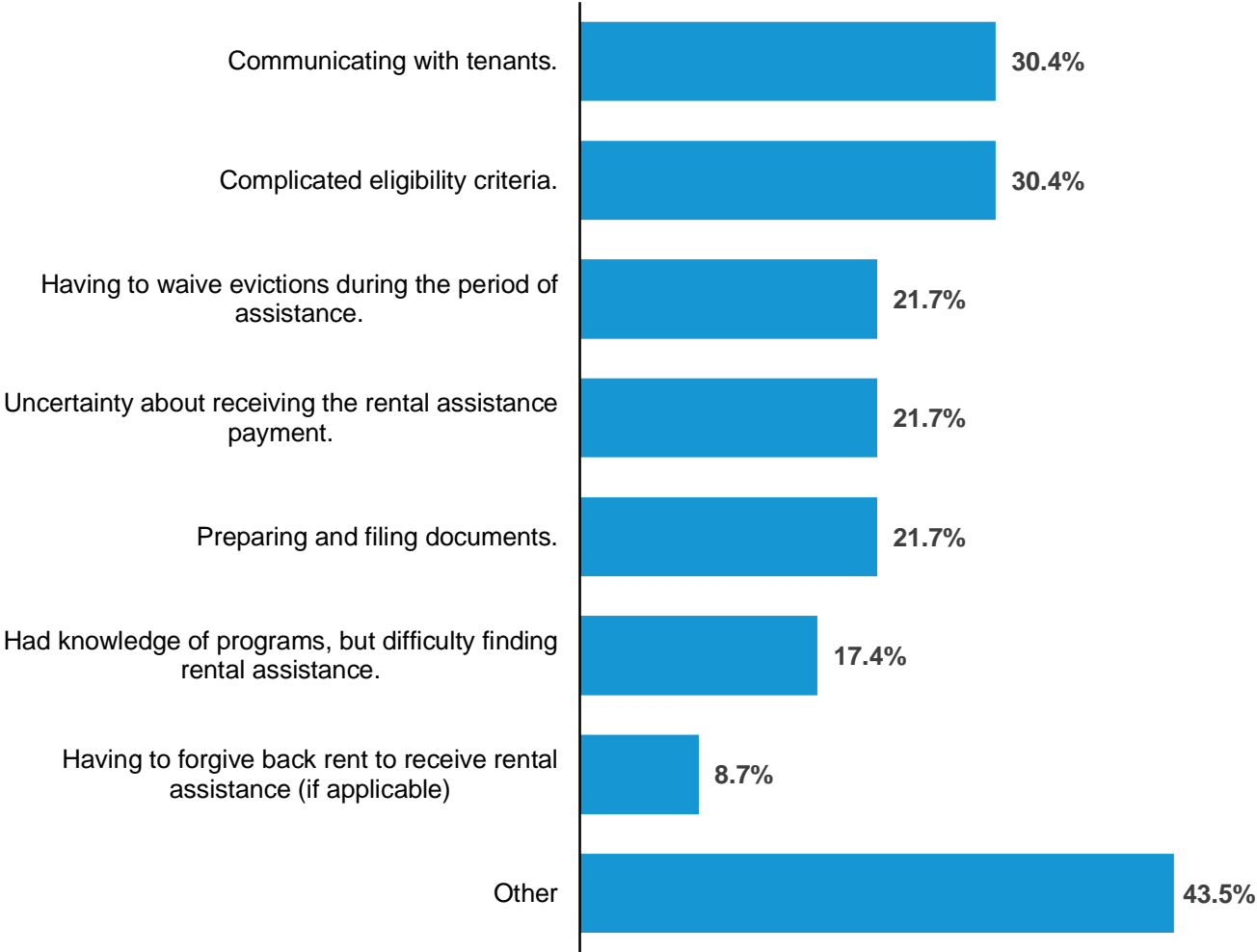


Source: Avail May 2021 Tenant Survey

# Results

**Some eligible landlords chose not to apply for ERA due to issues related to communication with tenants, complicated eligibility criteria, and other factors**

- **Survey Question:** *If eligible but have not applied for ERA, what factors most influenced your decision? (Those who are eligible but have not applied)*



**Clock is ticking on  
getting rental assistance  
to renters who need it the most**



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