

Measure X: Leveraging Opportunities to Strengthen the Contra Costa County Safety Net



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
REPORT TO MEASURE X COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD | JULY 14, 2021

Overview of EHSD's Safety Net Programs



Workforce Services Bureau

Medi-Cal	Health insurance coverage to low-income adults, children, pregnant women, seniors, and people with disabilities.	280,458 individuals enrolled, or approximately 25% of the total County population
CalFresh	Food benefits that help stretch household budgets, allowing recipients to afford nutritious food, including fruit, vegetables, and other healthy options.	76,427 individuals enrolled
CalWORKs	Financial aid, employment services, and other supportive services through CalWORKs; to help them succeed in the workforce and become self-sufficient	13,037 individuals enrolled

Aging and Adult Services

General Assistance	Temporary financial relief to indigent residents who are not supported by their own or other public means	481 individuals enrolled
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Workforce Development Board

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Programs	Programs offered by the Workforce Development Board for adults, dislocated workers, and youth	17,886 individuals served in program year 2019
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The Context of Poverty in Contra Costa County

- **Structural racism** in U.S. policies and practices has shaped the social and economic development of historically marginalized communities. The term refers to “a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity.” (Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, *Structural Racism and Community Building*, June 2004).
- Barriers in access to affordable housing, good schools, quality health care, child care, high wage jobs and other opportunities have led to cycles of intergenerational poverty.
- Today, **rising housing costs and migration patterns** are contributing to new concentrations of segregation and poverty in the County. Communities of color were particularly vulnerable to the **impact of rapid rent increases** in the Bay Area between 2000 and 2015.
 - **53% of low-income Black households** lived in high-poverty, segregated neighborhoods in 2015, up from **38%** in 2000.
 - The share of **low-income Latinx households** living in high-poverty, segregated neighborhoods **nearly doubled to 31%**.

Poverty Disparities Persist in Contra Costa County

1 in 8

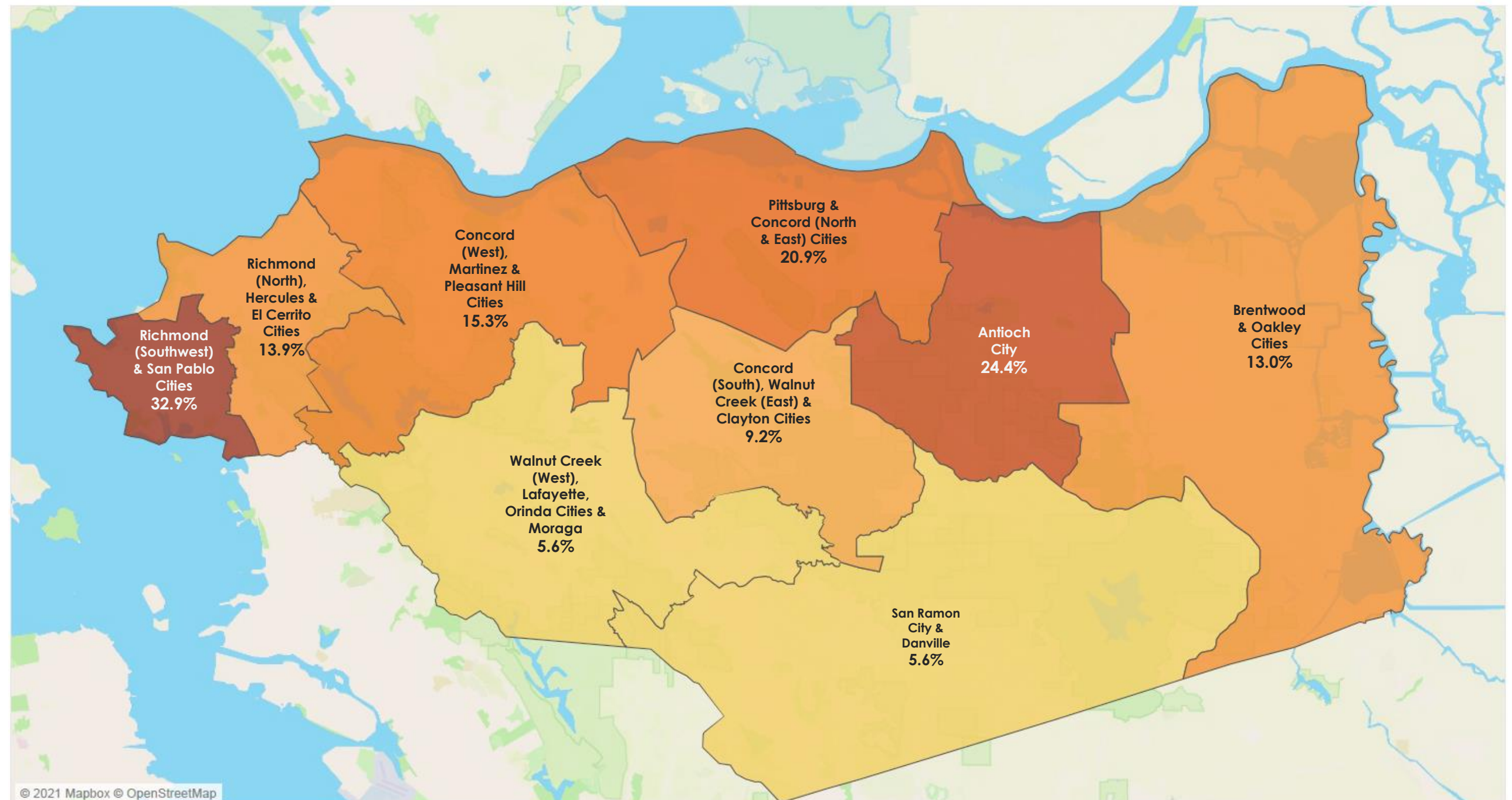
Contra Costa residents live in poverty, when taking into account the cost of living and resources from social safety net programs, according to the Public Policy Institute of California's California Poverty Measure (CPM).

15.4%

of Contra Costa children live in poverty, according to the CPM.

Source: [California Poverty by County and Legislative District - Public Policy Institute of California \(ppic.org\)](https://www.ppic.org/publications/california-poverty-by-county-and-legislative-district/)

California Poverty Measure (CPM) Child Poverty Rates Across Contra Costa



Disparities Increased During Pandemic



Black workers filed for unemployment at 1.75x the rate of White workers



Black workers and women suffered more economic and job losses during the pandemic



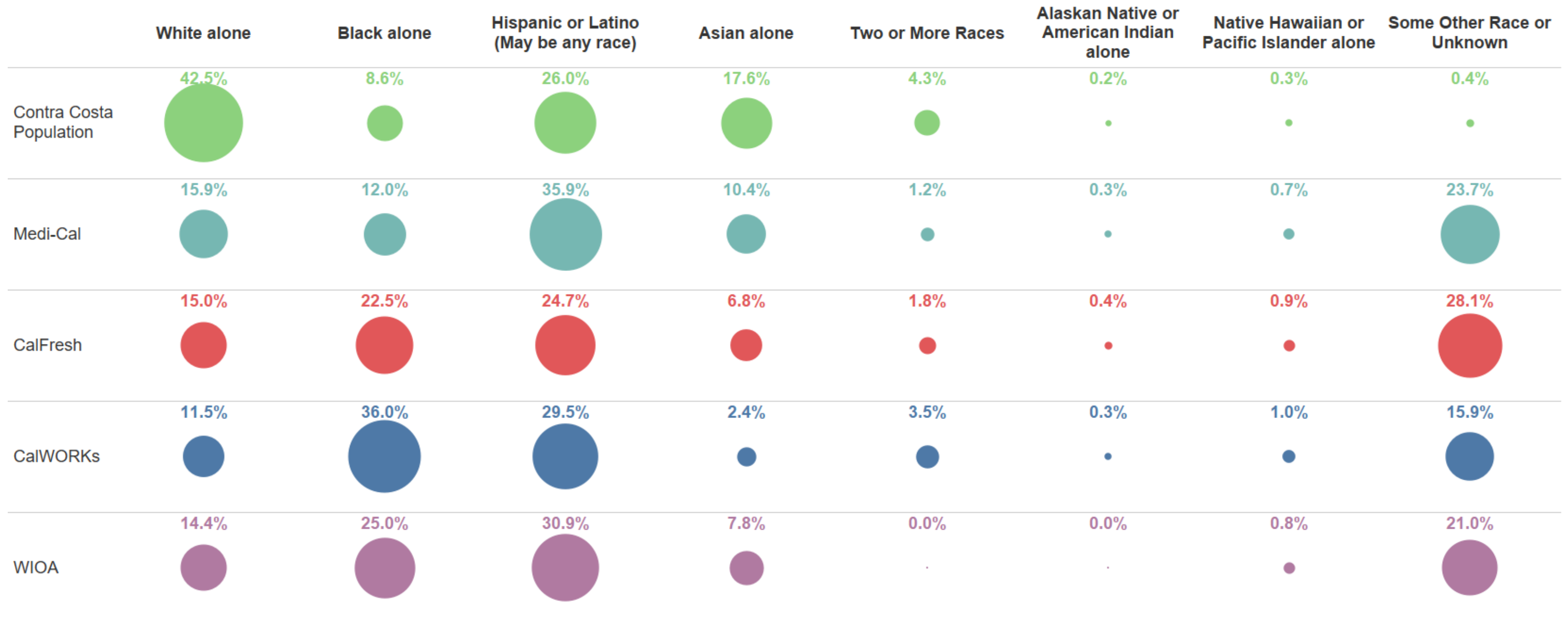
Minority owned business owners were largely underrepresented in Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loans in the first round



Black and Latinx people are overrepresented among essential workers who are paid less than non-essential workers

Racial Disparities Are Reflected in Our Programs

Race / Ethnicity Breakdown: Contra Costa Population Compared To Medi-Cal, CalFresh, CalWORKs, and Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Participants

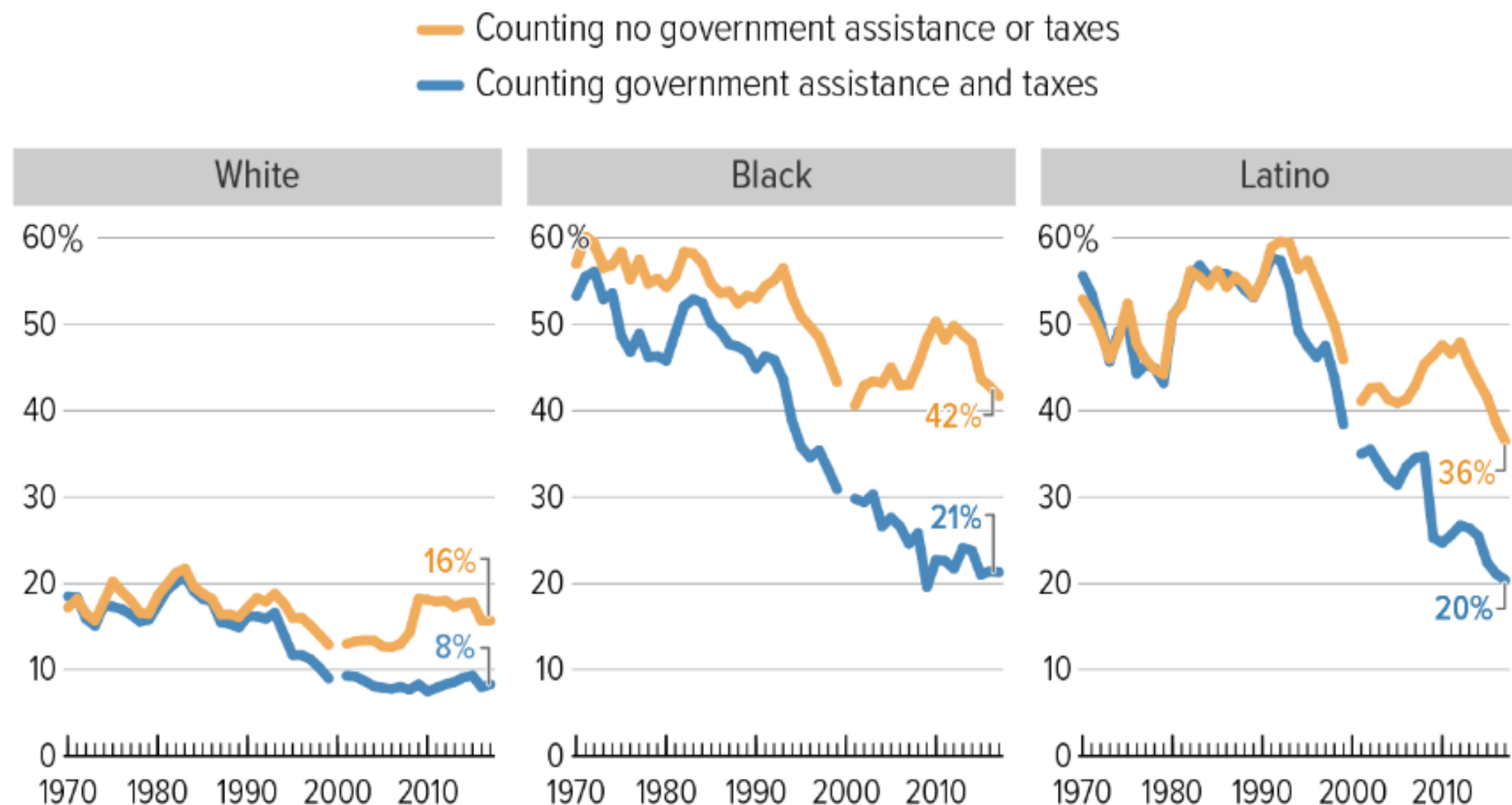


278,417 Medi-Cal, 68,516 CalFresh, and 12,098 CalWORKs participants, and approximately 510 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Participants (528 responses) as of 06-16-2021 data snapshot. Source for Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and CalWORKs participant data is 6-16-2021 CalWIN CIS Report. Source for WIOA participant data is CalJOBS. Source for Contra Costa Population by Race / Ethnicity is U.S. Census 2019 ACS 1-Year Estimates Table DP05.

The Good News: Safety Net Programs Are Increasingly Effective

Economic Security Programs Increasingly Effective at Reducing Child Poverty, But Disparities Persist

Percent of children in poverty, by race and ethnicity, 1970-2017



According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, income support programs are becoming **increasingly effective** in reducing poverty while narrowing the nation's long-standing gaps in poverty by race¹.

According to the Stanford Center on Poverty & Inequality, if all safety net benefits were eliminated (i.e., CalFresh, CalWORKs, tax credits, school meals, housing subsidies, SSI, and social security), the percentage of California's population in poverty would **increase by 12.9%** (i.e. from 22.0% to 34.9%)².

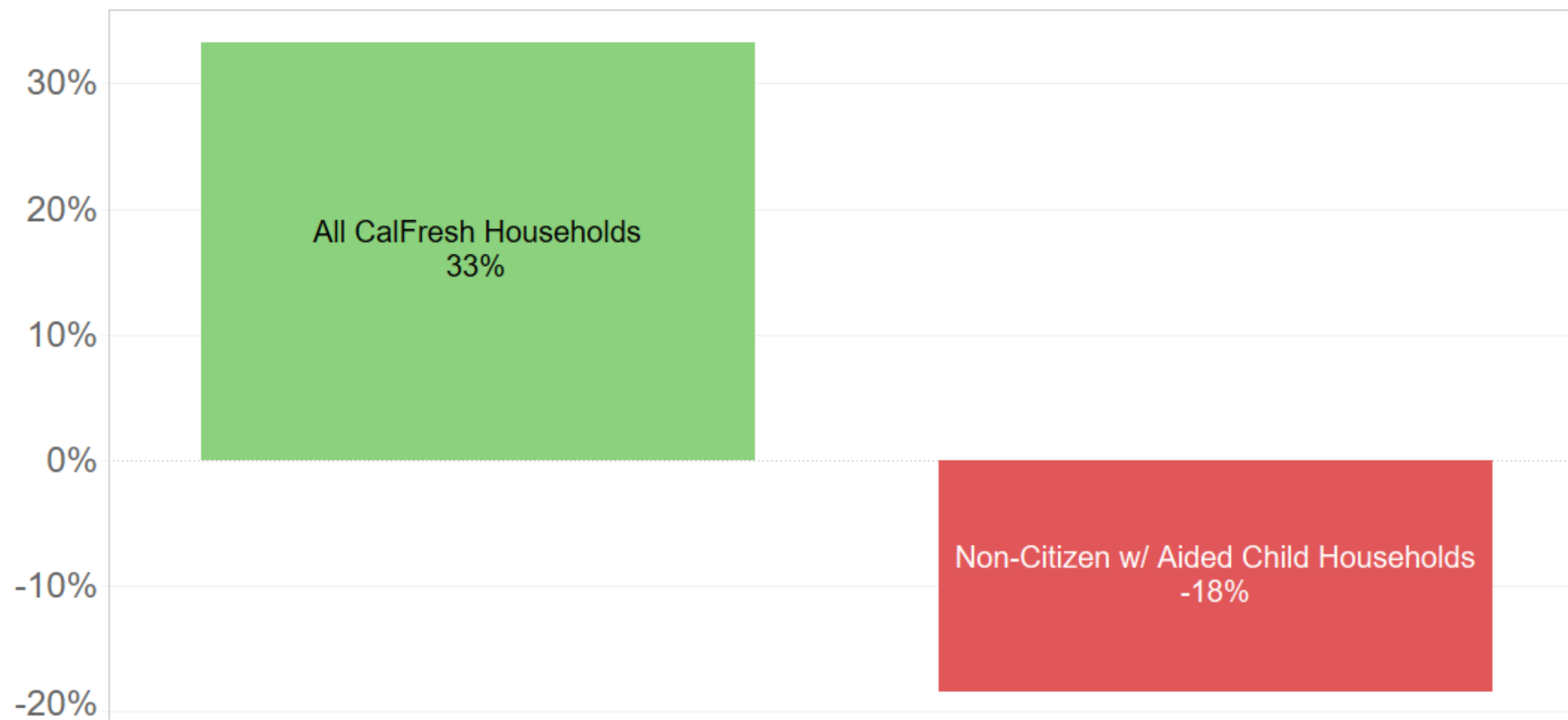
¹Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, [Building an Equitable Recovery Requires Investing in Children, Supporting Workers, and Expanding Health Coverage](#)

²Source: Stanford University: [Why Is There So Much Poverty in California?](#)

Impact of Proposed Public Charge Rule

Rebuilding Eroded Support for Undocumented Immigrant Households

Percentage Change in CalFresh Participation of All CalFresh Households vs. Non-Citizen Adult w/ Aided Child Households in Contra Costa, March 2017 to May 2021



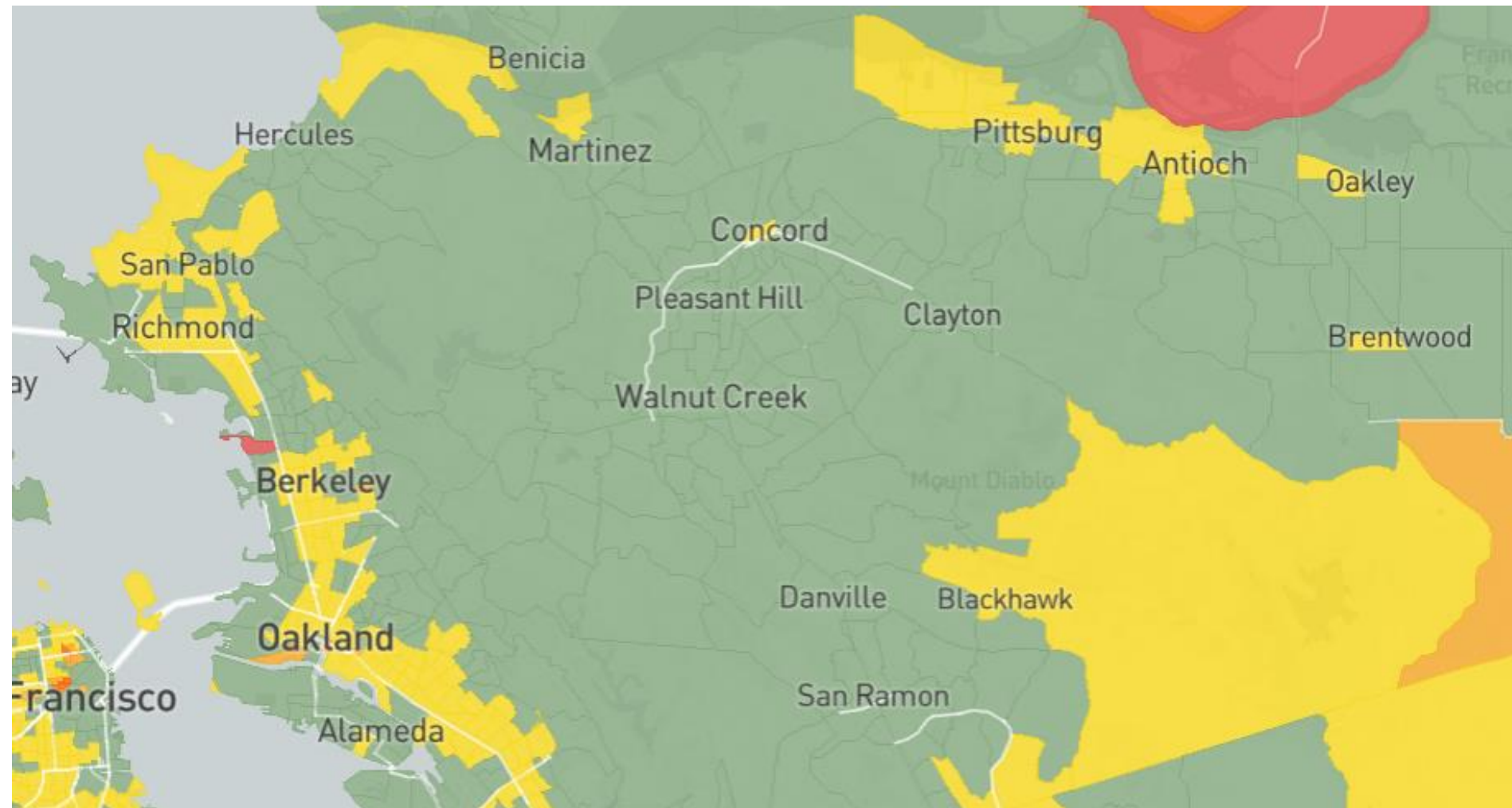
Source: Analysis of CalWIN Caseload Data from March 2017 to May 2021.

Impact of proposed Public Charge rule change and lingering effects: Analysis suggests that while CalFresh caseloads have increased by 33%, the **share of aided children with a non-citizen adult has decreased by 18%.**

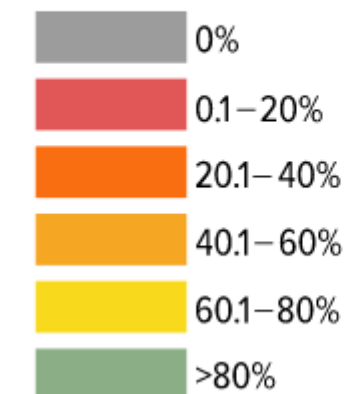
While there are encouraging signs at State level for Medi-Cal, undocumented immigrants still face **significant barriers** to accessing critical services such as CalFresh, and cash assistance and wrap-around supportive services offered by CalWORKs.

Access to Technology and Internet

The Digital Divide



2018 Rate of households with broadband subscriptions



Source: EdSource.org
Interactive Map: [Internet subscription rates in California](#)

Although access to broadband has increased overall in recent years, several areas of our County have between 60-70% broadband adoption, which means that **up to 40% still do not have broadband** access in these areas. These areas tend to have higher concentrations of African American, Hispanic and low-income communities.

EHSD is a Key Partner in Efforts to Close the Digital Divide



Partners with EveryoneOn and California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) on the *GetConnected Contra Costa* initiative, which provides affordable home internet or low-cost computer equipment to benefit program participants

Over 74,000

Number of text messages delivered to Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and CalWORKs customers in two text campaigns: September 2020 and March 2021

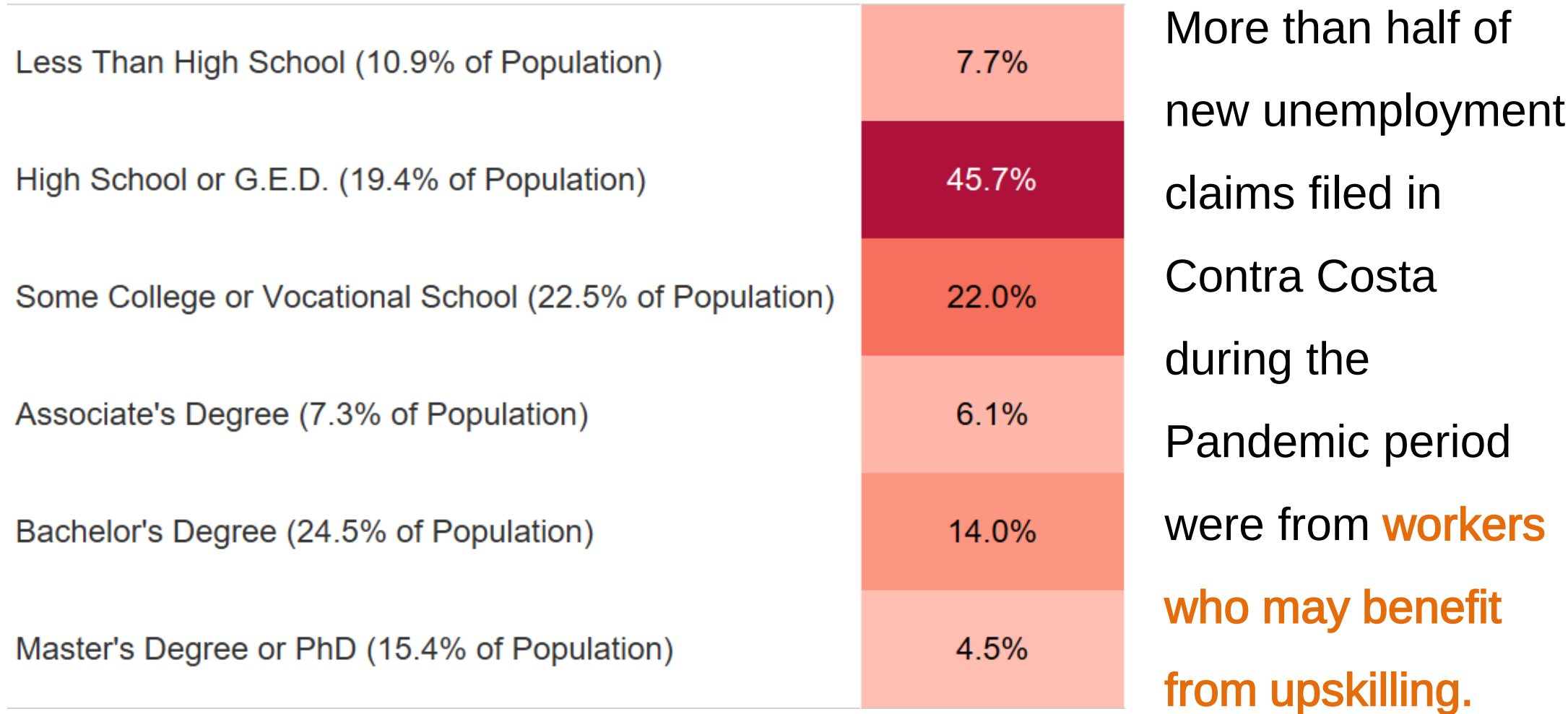
More information on <http://ehsd.org/get-connected-contra-costa>

Unemployment and Workforce Trends

Opportunity Disparities by Skill Level

The Unemployment Rate in Contra Costa has stabilized (6.3% as of May 2021), but it still **remains higher than pre-Pandemic lows**

Share of New Unemployment (UI) Claims in Contra Costa by Educational Attainment, March 2020 to March 2021



Source: Analysis of [EDD Unemployment Benefits Dashboard](#) Demographics Data

California Workforce Association Shared Aspirations for 2021



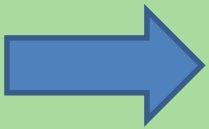
"We're not going back to the same economy"
– Jerome Powell, Federal Reserve Chairman

The WDB rises to a pivotal position post-pandemic, BUT it needs "game-changing" funding to achieve equity



To support Businesses

Especially small and minority-owned businesses and under-invested communities



To support Job Seekers

Self-sufficient careers and a path to the middle class

Emerging Themes & Trends in Federal & State Policy



- Federal Stimulus Relief (e.g. CRRSAA and American Rescue Plan including \$224 million CRSLRF Allocation to Contra Costa County)
 - Investments in Child Care and Early Childhood Learning
 - Expanded CA Rent Relief and Extension of Eviction Moratorium
 - Expansion of Access to Broadband and Technology
 - Expansion of Behavioral Health & Crisis Care Funding
 - Investments in Housing & Homelessness Programs
- Healthy California for All:
 - Full-coverage Medi-Cal expansion to Older Adults Age 50 and older regardless of immigration status
 - Elimination of the Asset Test

Gaps

- **Housing burden**
 - 40% of black households spend more than 50% of their income on housing vs. 23% of white households¹.
- **Affordable quality child care**
 - The average cost of child care for annual full-time infant care was **\$19,460** in a licensed child care center and **\$12,543** for a family child care home (California Child Care Resource & Referral Network)².
- **Dedicated access to mental and behavioral health supports and treatment**
- **Higher touch assistance** for families and individuals navigating safety net network while in crisis

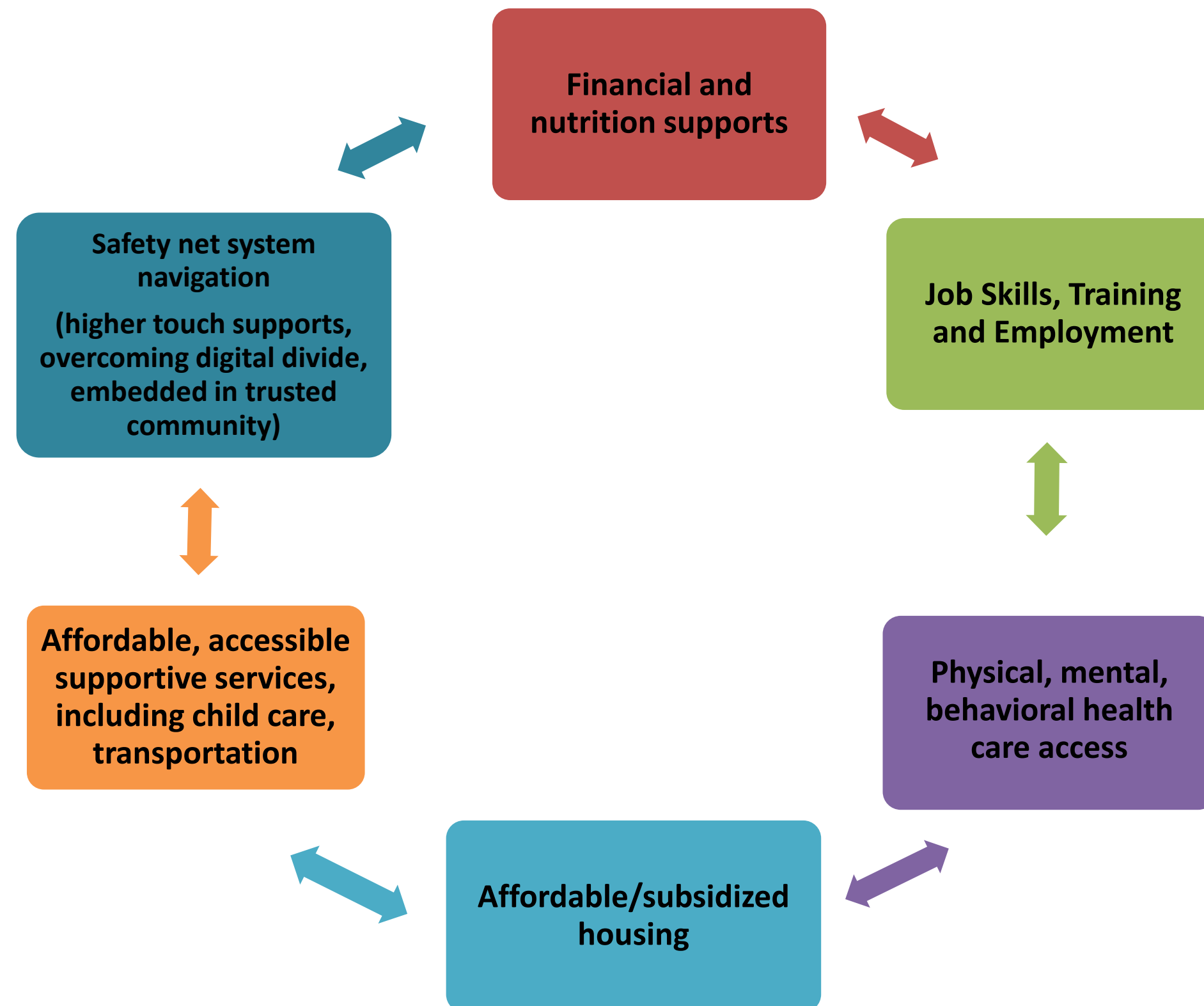
¹Source: Bay Area Equity Atlas, [Housing Burden Dashboard](#)

²Source: California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, [Child Care Portfolio](#)



Safety Net Intersections

Strengthening the Safety Net for Vulnerable Individuals and Families in Contra Costa



Bold Transformational Ideas

Explore a **Universal Basic Income Pilot** to leverage state match funding in FY 2021/22 budget.

Establish a **Subsidized Employment Program for CalFresh-eligible Individuals** to leverage 50% match funding available in October 2022.

Conduct market analysis to develop outreach strategies for CalFresh and MC programs to identify eligible yet unenrolled with underserved populations in the County.

Expand **EHSD Navigator program** to assist individuals and families in crises to enroll in safety net programs and connect with community resources necessary to stabilize.

Increase baseline funding request for **Workforce Development Board** to provide outreach and support for small businesses and under-invested communities, and expand subsidized employment opportunities and supportive services for marginalized communities.

Convene a **safety net partnership group** to establish a safety net strategic plan.

Profile of Success

A coordinated system of support ensures that **all people in Contra Costa County** benefit from:

- Secure housing and nutrition
- Access to good jobs
- Affordable health care, child care and education

No matter where they live, the color of their skin, or their families' income.



Questions?



Building Brighter Futures Together...

