

In May, we launched this Data Lab, analyzing the best available data on how our communities have been affected by the COVID-19 crisis. We hope that this research will be used to help shape an inclusive recovery, because thus far, rather than being an equalizer, the dynamics of this crisis have served to exacerbate underlying racial and economic inequality.

When we first launched, much of the data showed remarkable levels of inactivity, both physical and economic. Transit ridership and road traffic had dropped as much as 95 percent, and weekly job losses regularly broke historic records. While we are far from anything resembling “normal,” late April and early May now appear to have been a low point for many measures. People are now traveling away from home a bit more, and some laid-off workers have been rehired. But will we continue on this trajectory, or might a second wave of infections force a reversal? And even if measures continue improving, how long will it take for us to rebuild (or build something anew)? These are some of the questions that we’ll continue tracking through this ongoing research project.

We’ve been updating data weekly, so please come back regularly for the latest analysis across all domains. For now, here are some key findings from our most recent updates and expansions:

- We’re beginning to analyze results from a brand-new weekly Census Bureau survey measuring household experiences during the coronavirus pandemic called the [Household Pulse Survey](#). Here, we analyze economic anxiety around possible future loss of income, finding that while there was a general decline in early May, anxiety is rising again in Massachusetts, especially among Black and Latino households. In the coming weeks we hope to add data from this survey on things like food insecurity and housing stability.
- While we had one of the strongest state economies before the COVID crisis hit, the Massachusetts unemployment rate has been higher than the nationwide rate for the last two months. Also, after declining for several weeks straight, weekly unemployment claims in Massachusetts ticked up again in the first week of June before declining once more - suggesting that MA's economy has not quite stabilized.
- Nationally, the unemployment rate declined a bit in May, suggesting that the national economic collapse may have bottomed out. Despite the overall drop, [Black and Asian unemployment actually increased in May](#). Also, the small aggregate improvement for May only very partially offsets the major losses from March and April. The Congressional Budget Office estimates it might [take a decade to recover](#) fully.
- After declining by more than 90 percent in some cases, public transit ridership and road traffic have increased from their April lows, with road traffic up a bit more. Blue Line ridership has declined less than any other subway line during the pandemic, likely due in part to the high number of frontline workers living in East Boston and Revere who are dependent on the line.
- The state’s temporary eviction moratorium has helped mitigate immediate housing pain during the first few months of the crisis. But housing experts are increasingly concerned about what will happen to many low- and moderate-income households if the moratorium is not renewed later this summer.
- New listings of homes for sale bounced back in May, but remain below the spring norm. After a slight drop, median prices of homes listed for sale ticked up again in May. Median rents haven’t declined markedly during the crisis, and they remain high.

Boston Indicators is leading this research project in partnership with the [Center for Housing Data at the Massachusetts Housing Partnership](#) and with contributions from the [Economic and Public Policy Research team at the UMass Donahue Institute](#). This is an ongoing project that we've been updating weekly. We're also periodically adding new lines of analysis. If you are interested in getting involved as the project evolves and grows, please reach out.