

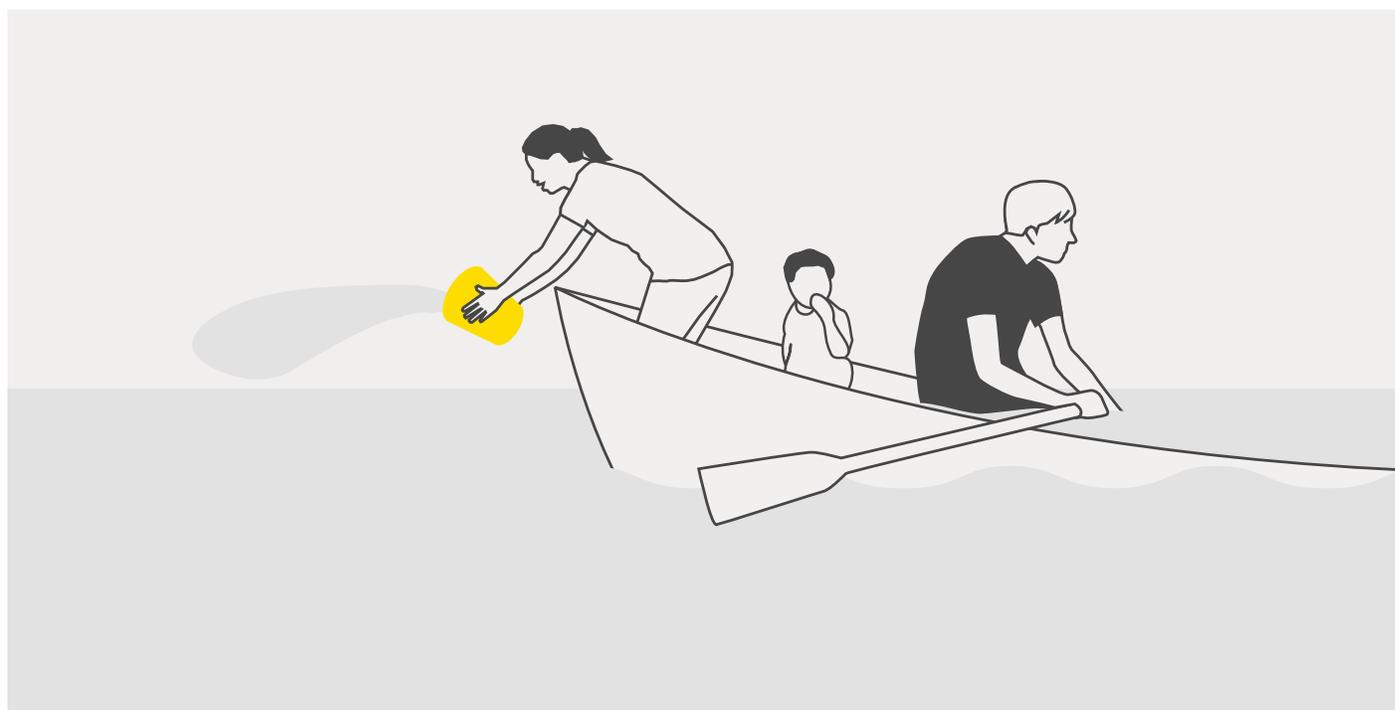
# FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN ARE BURDENED WITH RISING DEBT

American families with young children are struggling with unpaid debt during the pandemic.

This fact sheet provides information about overdue debt and unpaid bills among households with children aged 5 and under during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data indicate that families with young children have been struggling considerably with debt and bills since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

**\*Note**

Given the student loan interest freeze during the pandemic, we excluded student loan debt in this fact sheet.



designbysoapbox.com

## ONE IN FOUR FAMILIES CURRENTLY HAVE OVERDUE DEBT OR UNPAID BILLS

We define overdue debt or unpaid bills as rent, mortgage, utility, medical, credit card, or other bills that are past due, as well as money borrowed from family or friends.

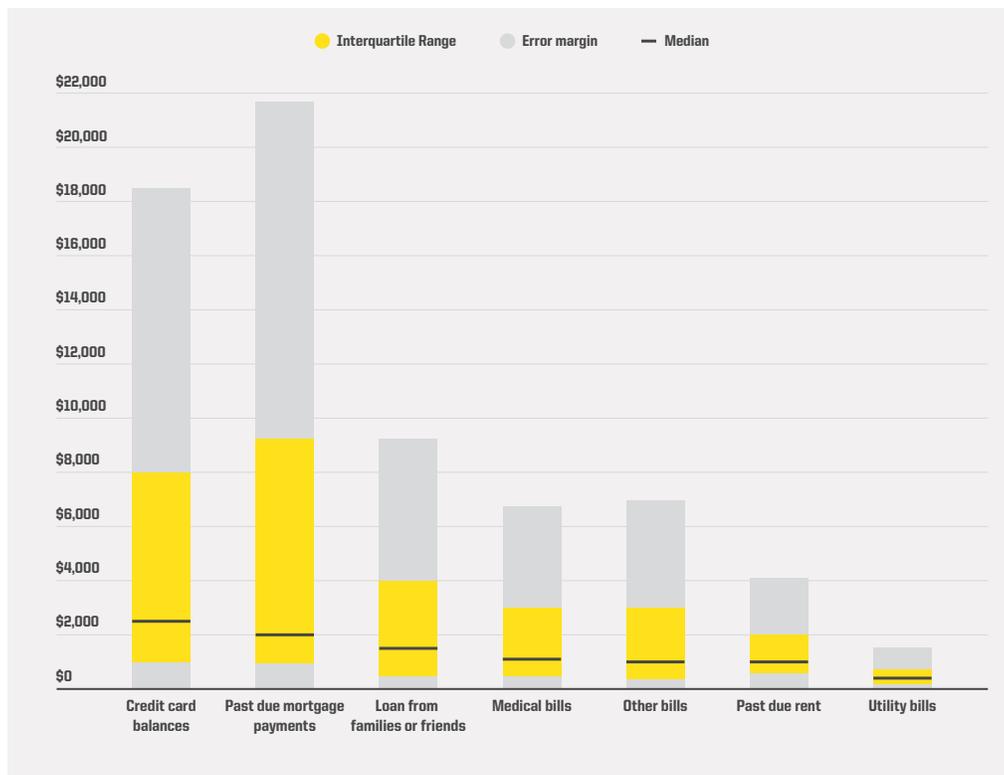
- Among families who have overdue debt or unpaid bills, more than half (53%) reported increased debt compared to pre-pandemic.
- More Black (35%) and Latinx (34%) families have overdue debt or unpaid bills than White (23%) families.

**“We have to have somewhere to live, something to eat and to stay warm, everything else will have to wait.”**  
Parent in Indiana

## THE MEDIAN OF TOTAL AMOUNT OF OVERDUE DEBT OR UNPAID BILLS DURING THE PANDEMIC IS \$4,500

The figure presents the median of specific categories of overdue debt or unpaid bills that families owed during the pandemic.

Amount of overdue debt or unpaid bills in specific categories



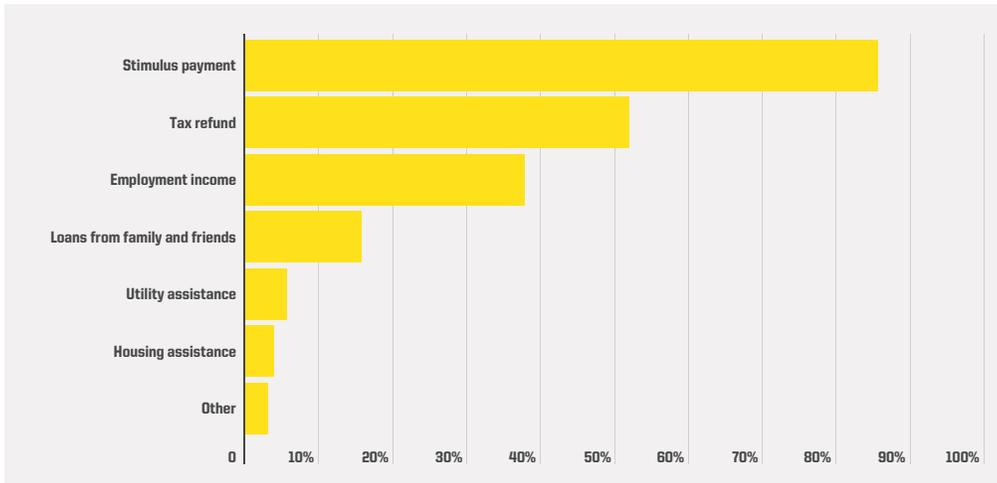
**“We need universal healthcare, my husband and I don’t go to the Dr because we can’t afford it. We’re drowning in debt from my son’s medical needs.”**  
Parent in Indiana

**“I am working full time and we are trying. I have debts that cause me so much anxiety sometimes I just cry alone in the car or shower. I am getting by pay check to paycheck, but the stimulus has helped tremendously. I feel like I will never get out of debt.”**  
Parent in New Jersey

## STIMULUS PAYMENTS ARE WIDELY USED TO PAY OFF OVERDUE DEBT AND COVER UNPAID BILLS

86% of families use stimulus payments for overdue debt and cover unpaid bills. Families also use a variety of other ways to pay off debt/bills.

How families have been paying off overdue debt or unpaid bills



**“Student loan debt is life-altering. Student loan debt keeps me from making major life choices, like returning to school (and thus the workforce), in fear of accruing more debt. As a couple/family we have also chosen not to pursue major life choices like moves or new careers because they would not allow us to continue paying on student loan debt. It feels like a life sentence.”**

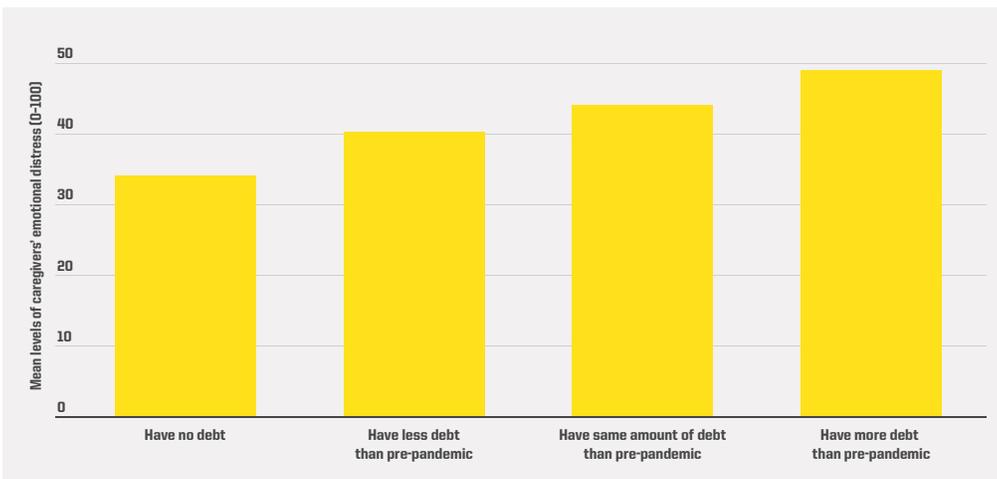
Parent

## THE MORE OVERDUE DEBT AND UNPAID BILLS, THE GREATER EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

The more overdue debt and unpaid bills that families reported (especially increased debt/bills during the pandemic), the greater emotional distress caregivers are experiencing.

- Families who accumulate more debt during the pandemic are also experiencing more material hardship.

Associations between families' debt conditions and caregivers' emotional distress



**“The expectations put on working parents, particularly lower middle class are binding. We overpay for childcare while working from home in order to keep our jobs, our jobs require us to work from home with high utility and internet bills, and we’ve had to resort to paying extra for grocery delivery services and inflation of essential products. It’s been hard to not accrue debt.”**

Parent in Pennsylvania

# ABOUT THE RAPID-EC PROJECT

RAPID-EC is under the Direction of Philip Fisher, PhD, Director of the Center for Translational Neuroscience at the University of Oregon

The RAPID-EC project is an early childhood family well-being survey designed to gather essential information in a continuous manner regarding the needs, health promoting behaviors, and well-being of children and their families during the COVID-19 outbreak and recovery in the United States. The survey focuses on better understanding child development (and parents' concerns about development over time), caregiver mental health and well-being, and caregiver needs and utilization of resources.

RAPID-EC collects data from 1,000 caregivers in all 50 states twice per month. The survey collects snapshots of data across time with the ability to assess trends longitudinally.

Twice per month, the team posts analyses of survey findings, including policy recommendations and resources for additional reading.

1,000+

surveyed  
bi-weekly

62

surveys

10,000

unique  
households

50

US states

