



Community Conditions Survey Update: Spring 2022

by: Steven Howland

June 16, 2022

In May the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City conducted the first large-scale test of the new [Community Conditions Survey](#). The survey asks organizations that serve low- and moderate-income (LMI) populations to gauge economic and community conditions for LMI populations. People representing organizations throughout the Kansas City Fed's seven-state District can participate. With the successful launch of the new survey, we are providing a short update on what to expect in the coming year.

Survey results used to inform monetary policy

The first survey round collected 115 responses from across the Tenth District. At 115 responses, we can provide a reliable update at the District level and can report on some data divided by respondents that said they primarily served urban, rural, or mixed populations. We cannot, however, reliably report on our seven states individually or the major metro areas within the District because we do not have enough responses for reliable data at smaller geographic scales.

When we receive more responses, we can provide more granular data. That is why before the Spring 2023 survey, we would like to see our responses increase to at least 300. This will allow us to provide you with data at a level of detail that is more useful for your work. We will absolutely need your help to get us there.

Because of the Federal Reserve System's reputation for producing and providing high-quality data, we want to be very careful when we release data. As such, for at least 2022, we will not release any public reports on the Community Conditions Survey. This is a new survey, so we want to be very careful about the data we share. It is normal to need to change the wording of questions, or add or delete questions, based on what we learn from responses. Since questions may change, it could change our ability to analyze data across surveys.

We also need to increase the number of respondents to improve the reliability of the data at the state and metro level. It does not mean we are not utilizing your responses. Because data are reliable at the District level, and anecdotes are always informative, we are using the data internally for informing monetary policy and our community development activities.

With that said, we do want to provide you with an update of data we can share publicly. We asked survey respondents to rank the top three price pressures on low- and moderate-income (LMI) populations they serve. Gasoline and rent topped the rankings of price pressures regardless of serving an urban or rural area (Table 1). With price increases affecting three core items, gasoline, housing and food, households are having to make difficult decisions. Multiple respondents said families were having to downsize apartments or double up in homes to afford rent. Another noted that they hear daily from people who cannot afford gas to get to work.

Table 1: Gas and rent top price pressures for LMI populations

We also asked respondents how their organizations are responding to help LMI populations with price increases. Most non-housing organizations reported they do not have programming to help alleviate the housing cost burdens, but they recognize the importance of helping however they can to free up clients' funds to cover other expenses. Only one organization reported helping with gas expenses by providing gas cards. Some organizations also noted that they have increased their role in emergency relief, such as by expanding existing programs or starting new ones. Several organizations, though, noted the difficulty they face with funding. The increased costs of goods have limited how far their budget goes, and many programs use government funds that will eventually expire or run out.

Thank you, again!

Thank you to everyone who has signed up for the Community Conditions Survey so far. We look forward to your continued participation, and the participation of new participants. Your participation helps us and LMI-serving organizations across our District understand the conditions affecting our communities. We will release our next survey in October.

Over the next few months, you will continue to see emails from us and community partners encouraging you to [sign up for the survey](#) or asking you to encourage other organizations to sign up. Signing up is your opportunity to ensure your voice is contributing to the greater understanding of the issues affecting LMI populations' economic prosperity. And as more organizations participate, the more informative our data can be for your work.

Author



Steven Howland

Senior Researcher, Community Development

Steven Howland is senior researcher in the community development department of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. Howland performs analyses on various surveys, such as the Community Conditions Survey, and those at the System level to provide insight on the conditions of LMI communities in the Kansas City District. He also conducts independent research that gives more insight into issues affecting LMI communities. Howland joined the Kansas City Fed in August 2020 after a career as a college instructor and researcher. Howland has undergraduate and graduate degrees in urban and environmental planning from Arizona State University and has a doctorate in urban studies from Portland State University. Howland enjoys reading both academic works and sci-fi/fantasy novels as well as playing video and board games. Highlights of his work include: [“I should have moved somewhere else”: The impacts of gentrification on transportation and social support for Black working-poor families in Portland, Oregon](#) [“Evictions and the pandemic economy in the Tenth District”](#) To learn more about Steven: [Howland researches issues facing disadvantaged populations](#) - Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City **About the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City** The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City is one of 12 regional Reserve Banks that, along with the Board of Governors in Washington, D.C., make up our nation's central bank. We work in the public's interest by supporting economic and financial stability. The Kansas City Fed's territory includes Colorado, Kansas, western Missouri, Nebraska, northern New Mexico, Oklahoma and Wyoming. Our headquarters is in Kansas City, with branch offices in Denver, Omaha and Oklahoma City. The Kansas City Fed Community Development Department promotes economic development and public understanding that leads to progress for lower-income individuals and communities. Our focus areas include community development investments, digital inclusion, small business / entrepreneurship, and workforce development.

Media

Rank	All	Urban	Rural	Mixed
1	Gasoline	Rent	Gasoline	Gasoline
2	Rent	Gasoline	Non-prepared food	Rent
3	Childcare	Childcare	Rent	Infant needs (e.g., diapers, formula)
n=	114	55	26	33