About this report

The annual “State of the City” report is part of The Pew Charitable Trusts’ ongoing work in Philadelphia. Staff members Katie Martin, Jason Hachadorian, and Donna Leong gathered the data and assembled the report. Larry Eichel, senior adviser for Pew’s Philadelphia research and policy initiative, helped write and edit the publication, along with Elizabeth Lowe and Erika Compart. Ned Drummond and Cara Bahniuk created the graphics and designed the report.
A Troubling Year

In so many ways, 2020 was a troubling year for Philadelphia, one that raised profound questions about its future. The numbers tell the story of a city facing tremendous challenges, not just from the pandemic and its economic impact but from rising drug overdose deaths and gun violence as well.

Philadelphia recorded more than 96,000 COVID-19 cases and 2,500 deaths from the virus in 2020, with the death toll surpassing 3,000 by mid-February 2021. Although the city’s hospitals never ran out of beds and the number of weekly deaths wasn’t as high as it was elsewhere, the impact on the city was devastating all the same.

The pandemic affected virtually every aspect of Philadelphians’ lives—including their economic, educational, social, physical, and emotional well-being—magnifying existing inequities and exposing new fault lines. As documented in a poll by The Pew Charitable Trusts last summer, Black and Hispanic residents of Philadelphia
were two and three times more likely than White residents, respectively, to lose jobs and income, and to know someone who died from the coronavirus. The factors underlying such disparities were central to the movement for racial equity and social justice that grew nationally and locally after George Floyd was killed in May by police in Minneapolis.

COVID-19 ravaged the city in other ways as well. Drug overdose deaths, already historically high, rose to record levels, with approximately 1,200 Philadelphians dying, up from 1,150 in 2019. Nearly 500 homicides were reported for the year, the most since 1990 and a 40% increase over the already high 2019 numbers.

Experts attributed these trends, seen in varying degrees in other cities, at least in part to the social disruption and despair that 2020 brought: Much of the violence the city reported was concentrated in neighborhoods with high rates of pandemic-related deaths and job losses. Unemployment more than tripled from 5.9% in February to 18% in June, averaging 12.2% for the year.

Economic sectors that had helped fuel the city’s resurgence in the previous decade—hospitality, restaurants, and arts and culture—shut down early in the pandemic, with some reopening later in the year at reduced capacity. Small and medium-sized businesses, a segment of the city’s economy that wasn’t especially strong to begin with, were also hit hard, as were lower-income workers: Many who kept working risked their health daily as they stocked shelves, collected trash, delivered meals, and cared for older adults. Even before the pandemic, the city’s poverty rate stood at 23%—40% for Hispanics, 27% for Black people, 23% for Asian Americans, and 13% for White people.
As 2021 began, several questions about the city’s post-pandemic trajectory were beginning to be asked by officials, business owners, and residents alike:

• Will Philadelphia be a beneficiary or a victim of the trend toward remote work, allowing more people to separate the decision about where to live from where they work, and will that trend make the city’s “eds and meds” sector any less of a bastion of economic strength and stability?

• Will the population decline? In 2020, developers were still betting on the city’s attractiveness, taking out building permits for a record 7,231 residential units, spurred by looming changes in the tax abatement law. And although home sales were down for the year, prices were up.

• How much will Center City offices, as well as the businesses that depend on their occupants, and the taxes they generate, recover from the pandemic? The city government gets 47% of its local revenue from the wage tax, about 40% of which has typically come from commuters; some of that revenue will be lost if people continue working from home.

• Will Philadelphia match or exceed its solid, pre-pandemic record of job creation, having outperformed the nation in three of the four years before the shutdown? How much will the benefits be shared among low-income residents and people of color?

• When will progress be made on the racial and ethnic inequities highlighted by the pandemic and brought to greater attention by the burgeoning racial justice movement? Before COVID-19, the median household income for Black Philadelphians was 52% of that for White Philadelphians; only 6% of businesses with employees had Black proprietors; and 46% of Black residents were cost-burdened by their housing, compared with 32% of White people.

• When will the city see an end to the staggering increase in gun violence and homicides, which by early 2021 were on track to reach levels not seen in half a century? And how will city officials respond to the challenges ahead?

A recovery will come. But mass vaccination and the end of virus-related restrictions won’t lead to universal celebration. The months and years ahead will determine what kind of Philadelphia emerges and whether the city can move toward economic growth that addresses underlying inequities and challenges.
### Figure 1.1
**Portrait of the City**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>1,584,064</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of residents who are:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger than 20</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 20-34</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 35-54</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 55 or older</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of residents who:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were born in Pennsylvania</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were born in other states</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were born in Puerto Rico or another U.S. territory</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are foreign-born</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak a foreign language at home</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of adult residents who:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated from college</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not graduate from high school</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Percentage of adults who are:**
- Married: 31%
- Never married: 51%
- Divorced or separated: 12%
- Widowed: 6%

**Percentage of single-parent households among those with children under 18**: 54%

**Median household income**: $47,474

**Percentage of households with annual incomes of:**
- Less than $35,000: 38%
- $35,000 to $74,999: 30%
- $75,000 to $99,999: 11%
- $100,000 or more: 21%

**Percentage of population below poverty level**: 23%

**Percentage of households with:**
- No vehicles available: 29%
- Two or more vehicles available: 26%
- A computer at home (including tablets and smartphones): 91%
- Broadband internet service: 84%

**Percentage of workers employed by:**
- Private sector: 84%
- Government agencies: 11%
- Their own businesses: 5%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total housing units</th>
<th>691,653</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of units listed as:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Percentage of units built before 1939**: 41%
| **Median monthly rent**: $1,079
| **Percentage of units:** |
| Owned by occupant   | 52%     |
| Rented              | 48%     |

**Where residents lived in the previous year:**
- Same house: 86%
- Different house in Philadelphia: 9%
- Somewhere else in the U.S.: 4%
- Abroad: 1%

**Percentage of residents without health insurance**: 8%

**Source**: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2019, https://data.census.gov

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From 2007 through 2019, Philadelphia’s population rose every year, albeit only marginally at the end of the last decade. The census estimate for mid-2020 was delayed by litigation and COVID-19, and it remains to be seen what impact the pandemic will have on the city’s population.


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From March 2020 through late December 2020, Philadelphia recorded more than 96,000 cases of COVID-19. Like many other U.S. cities, Philadelphia experienced two major spikes in cases: shortly after the start of the pandemic and once more during the final months of the year.


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In 2020, Philadelphia recorded nearly 2,500 deaths from COVID-19. As the public learned more about how the virus is spread, the number of deaths per month fell gradually from spring to summer before rising sharply in December.

As the pandemic went on, the city steadily increased the availability of COVID-19 testing for residents. Although tests were relatively limited in the early months, more than 200,000 tests per month were administered in November and December, which coincided with a large spike in cases.


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Philadelphia started the year with relatively low unemployment. But after the stay-at-home orders were implemented in the spring, the rate jumped to levels not seen even in the worst days of the Great Recession, reaching a high of 18.2% in June. It gradually fell as businesses started to reopen, ending 2020 at 9.3%.


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The city continued to add jobs in early 2020, reaching upward of 750,000 in February. Then, as a result of the pandemic-related shutdown, nearly 100,000 jobs were lost from March to April. Despite adding jobs nearly every month since then, the city ended the year with 50,000 fewer jobs than it had at the start.

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In 2020, Philadelphia recorded 499 homicides, with nearly 300 of them occurring in the second half of the year. And in the early months of 2021, the homicide rate was running ahead of the 2020 pace.

Source: Philadelphia Police Department
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Although overall home sales declined by 23% in 2020, sales were strong in the second half of the year, after some of the pandemic-related restrictions were relaxed. In the fall, the greatest number of home sales were in South Philadelphia neighborhoods such as Pennsport and Graduate Hospital.

Source: Data from Kevin C. Gillen, senior research fellow at Drexel University’s Lindy Institute for Urban Innovation
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In March, in response to the pandemic, the city’s court system placed a moratorium on evictions and stopped accepting new filings that could lead to eviction. In July, the courts started allowing new cases to be filed but permitted evictions only in cases of breach of lease related to criminal conduct or damage to the property.

Source: Philadelphia Municipal Court

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The stay-at-home orders significantly affected the number of people using SEPTA, with ridership falling 86% on City Transit lines and 88% on Regional Rail from March to April. Usage increased once the restrictions were eased, but ridership levels still ended 2020 substantially below where they started the year.

Source: SEPTA

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As of August 2020, 58% of Philadelphians said they knew someone who had contracted the coronavirus, and nearly a quarter said they knew someone who had died from it. Hispanic and Black residents were far more likely to know someone who had died from the illness than were non-Hispanic White residents.

Source: The Pew Philadelphia Poll, 2020
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Demographics

Whether the COVID-19 pandemic pushed residents out of the city, pulled people in, or changed its makeup remains to be seen.

Prior to the pandemic, Philadelphia’s population had been rising steadily for more than a decade, a strong sign of civic well-being, with growth concentrated in the center of the city and pockets of the Northeast. In other neighborhoods, the population had stayed the same or declined.

Immigrants have played a big role in the overall population increase. In 2019, 14% of Philadelphians were foreign-born, which is roughly the same as the percentage for the nation as a whole.

And in recent years, the city’s population has become increasingly diverse. As of 2019, 40% of Philadelphians were Black or African American, 34% non-Hispanic White, 15% Hispanic or Latino, and 8% Asian.
Philadelphia’s poverty rate decreased steadily but modestly over the eight years ending in 2019, falling from a high of 28.4% in 2011 to 23.3% before the pandemic. Similarly, the city’s deep poverty rate decreased from a high of 13.5% in 2010 to 11.1% in 2019. A household of four was living in poverty in 2019 if its income was $25,750 or less, and in deep poverty if its income was $12,875 or less.

Note: In September 2019, the U.S. Census Bureau identified an error in some of its 2017 data for Philadelphia. Because the Census Bureau does not plan to update the data, Pew will not use 2017 data for Philadelphia in the affected topic areas.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2009-19, Table B17002 (Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months), http://data.census.gov

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Relative to members of other racial and ethnic groups, Hispanic Philadelphia residents have the highest poverty rate, more than triple the rate for non-Hispanic White residents. Although the poverty rate went down for all racial and ethnic groups in the city from 2010 through 2019, it increased for Hispanics and Asians from 2018 to 2019.

Note: In September 2019, the U.S. Census Bureau identified an error in some of its 2017 data for Philadelphia. Because the Census Bureau does not plan to update the data, Pew will not use 2017 data for Philadelphia in the affected topic areas.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2010-19, Table S1703 (Selected Characteristics of People at Specified Levels of Poverty in the Past 12 Months), http://data.census.gov

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In 2019, before the pandemic, Philadelphia continued to have the highest poverty rate among the nation’s largest cities and the third-highest among the comparison cities. The overall poverty level decreased slightly for all of the cities in 2019; the poverty rate for the United States was 10.5%, down 1.3 percentage points from its 2018 average of 11.8%.


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Since 1990, Philadelphia's ethnic and racial makeup has changed considerably. The non-Hispanic White share of the population dropped from just over half in 1990 to roughly a third in 2019, the latest year for which data was available. And the Hispanic and Asian shares have almost tripled during this time, while the share of the Black or African American population has remained relatively stable.

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Even as its population becomes increasingly diverse, Philadelphia remains a largely segregated city. In 83% of the city’s residential census tracts, one group—Black or African American, Asian, Hispanic, or non-Hispanic White residents—accounts for a majority of the population. The remaining 17% of tracts with no absolute majority are largely concentrated in the Lower Northeast.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, five-year estimates, 2019, Table B03002 (Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race), http://data.census.gov

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Figure 2.6
Percentage of Philadelphia Residents Born Outside the U.S., 1970-2019

The share of Philadelphians born outside the United States has more than doubled since 1980. In 2019, 14% of the city’s residents were immigrants, an increase of 2.4 percentage points since 2010.


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Figure 2.7
Percentage of Philadelphia Residents Born Outside the U.S., 2019
Compared with other cities

The percentage of Philadelphians who were born in another country is essentially the same as the national rate and higher than that of five comparison cities: Washington, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Cleveland, and Detroit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2019, Table B05002 (Place of Birth by Citizenship Status), http://data.census.gov

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Poverty in Philadelphia is widespread, with the highest concentrations found primarily in parts of North and West Philadelphia. In some areas, including much of North Philadelphia, the poverty rate is over 45%; in most of the city’s residential ZIP codes, it is over 15%.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, five-year estimates, 2015-19, Table S1701 (Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months), https://data.census.gov

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Philadelphia had 5,634 people experiencing homelessness in January 2020, according to the annual one-night count of those living on the street and in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and temporary drop-in centers. According to city officials, the opioid crisis has been driving an increase in the number of people with behavioral issues who are experiencing homelessness. The total share of adults with coincident homelessness and a substance use disorder increased from 34% in 2018 to 45.7% in 2020.

Note: Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.


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The Gini Index is a measure of income inequality in a given area; the higher the number on a scale of zero to 1, the greater the level of inequality. As this map of census tracts shows, parts of University City and some North Philadelphia neighborhoods have the most income inequality, while Northeast Philadelphia has a more homogenous range of incomes among residents.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, five-year estimates, 2015-19, Table B19083 (Gini Index of Income Inequality), https://data.census.gov

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Few sectors of society were as disrupted by COVID-19 as K-12 education.

The pandemic forced teachers and students to turn largely to virtual learning, with a complete return to school buildings delayed well into 2021. Beyond the timing of when all classrooms would reopen, the great unknown was the long-term impact on student achievement.

Given the situation, the lasting significance of enrollment figures for the 2020-21 academic year was difficult to assess. Schools run by the School District of Philadelphia recorded their biggest drop in student population since 2013-14. Numbers were also down in the Catholic schools but up slightly for charters.

Pre-pandemic census numbers showed 31% of adult Philadelphians with bachelor’s degrees, the highest percentage ever recorded in the city, and 49% of 3- and 4-year-olds in school, which matched the national average.
Throughout 2020, the city’s district-run, charter, and archdiocesan schools struggled to deal with the pandemic. Those operated by the School District of Philadelphia offered only remote, digital learning. Charter and Catholic schools had in-person classes when infection rates were relatively low and switched to remote learning when infection rates rose late in the year. It remains to be seen how much of an impact the disruptions of 2020 will have on enrollment moving forward. In the current academic year, the number of students attending district-run and Catholic schools continued to decline, while enrollment at charter schools remained stable.

Note: Numbers for district-run schools do not include pre-K or institutional placement students who attend nondistrict schools.


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The four-year graduation rate for schools run by the School District of Philadelphia rose to 72% for the class of 2020. This rate was the highest in recent years, and it came despite the disruptions and the transition to remote learning in the final months of the 2019-20 academic year. In Pennsylvania, the four-year graduation rate for 2018-19, the most recent year for which data was available, was 86.5%. The city’s five- or six-year graduation rate also continued its gradual increase to 75% for the class of 2018, according to the latest data.

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To make remote learning possible after closing school buildings in March 2020 due to the pandemic, the School District of Philadelphia decided to lend Chromebook computers to eligible students who needed them. The map shows the percentage of eligible students throughout the city who had not obtained the laptops as of February 2021. ZIP codes in West Philadelphia, Overbrook, and Southwest Philadelphia had the highest percentages.


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Figure 3.4

Percentage of College Graduates, 2009-19
Adults 25 and older

Educational attainment in Philadelphia has been rising steadily since 2011. In 2019, the share of adults with bachelor’s degrees or higher was the largest recorded in recent decades, at 31%—essentially unchanged from the previous year.

Note: In September 2019, the U.S. Census Bureau identified an error in some of its 2017 data for Philadelphia. Because the Census Bureau does not plan to update the data, Pew will not use 2017 data for Philadelphia in the affected topic areas.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2009-19, Table S1501 (Educational Attainment), http://data.census.gov

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The geographic variation in educational attainment in Philadelphia is extreme. More than 75% of adults have bachelor’s degrees or higher levels of education in Chestnut Hill, parts of University City, and the neighborhoods in and around Center City. However, the percentage of residents with at least a bachelor’s degree is below 25% in vast stretches of the city, including parts of Southwest, West, and North Philadelphia, as well as much of the Northeast.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, five-year estimates, 2015-19, Table S1501 (Educational Attainment), https://data.census.gov

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Philadelphia’s share of children in nursery school or preschool was roughly in line with the national average in 2019. Among the comparison cities, Washington had the highest percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in nursery school or preschool.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2019, Table S1401 (School Enrollment), http://data.census.gov

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The economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic complicated the city government’s work in 2020.

In planning the city budget for fiscal 2021, which began on July 1, 2020, Philadelphia officials were confronted with a projected $749 million budget shortfall. They closed the gap through various steps: They took $229 million from budget reserves, increased some taxes and fees, and reduced the payroll through layoffs and attrition. Some of these budget-balancing tactics, particularly the reliance on reserves, won’t be available for the upcoming fiscal year.

To deal with the uncertainty of its budget projections—dependent as they were on the pace of recovery from the pandemic—the city agreed to submit monthly budgetary monitoring reports to its state oversight agency, the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority (PICA).
In 2020, the number of city employees fell by 2.7% compared with 2019, the first decrease in six years. This reduction was the result of layoffs and vacancies that city officials left unfilled in response to coronavirus-related revenue shortfalls.


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In 2020, Philadelphia’s pension system funding level surpassed 50% for the first time since 2008. The increase was attributed in part to increased contributions by city government and municipal workers as well as the implementation of a so-called stacked hybrid pension plan, which combines aspects of a 401(k) and a traditional defined benefit pension, for most new employees.


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In response to a projected drop in revenues for fiscal 2021, Philadelphia city officials reduced overall general fund spending by roughly 5.6%. Some categories of spending—such as materials, supplies, and equipment purchases—were cut more than others.


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For fiscal year 2021, Philadelphia revised its spending on capital projects in reaction to the pandemic-related reduction in revenue. The revised fiscal 2021 capital budget included $128.3 million in new borrowing, as well as $394 million from prior years. Major projects included street reconstruction and resurfacing, outfitting of new and renovated police facilities, and upgrading of parks and recreation facilities in collaboration with the Rebuild initiative.


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Figure 4.5

City of Philadelphia General Fund Overtime Spending, FY 2010-20

Overtime as a percentage of salary and wage expenditures

Approximately 11.1% of Philadelphia’s general fund budget for salaries and wages was spent on overtime in fiscal 2020, representing roughly $208 million. This was the highest percentage since 2008, when the figure was 12%. The Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority, which oversees city finances, has flagged overtime spending as a major concern.

Note: The 2020 figures are unaudited.


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Many city governments get much of their local revenue from property taxes. However, Philadelphia relies heavily on a wage tax, which was projected to account for 47% of locally generated tax revenue in fiscal 2021. The uncertainties concerning the impact of pandemic-related economic restrictions, including the expansion of remote work, made these projections less reliable than in a more normal year.


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The fiscal 2021 budget, adopted in the midst of the pandemic, was based on an anticipated 5.5% decrease in general fund revenues from the previous year—a more than $190 million reduction. The biggest projected declines were in business and sales taxes, both of which were expected to drop approximately 10% from fiscal 2020.


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In the 2020 general election—in which Pennsylvanians cast votes for president as well as members of Congress and the General Assembly—66% of Philadelphia’s registered voters participated. This map shows the turnout percentages across the city’s 66 political wards. The highest turnout, 80%, was in the 9th Ward in Chestnut Hill; the lowest, 40%, was in the 27th Ward in University City. Some analysts attributed the low turnout there and in several other parts of the city to the COVID-related absence of the university students who typically live in those areas.

Note: Numbers are unofficial.


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Public health took center stage in Philadelphia and around the world in 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic raged on.

During the year, nearly 2,500 Philadelphia residents died from the virus—the death toll surpassed 3,000 in February 2021—and more than 96,000 tested positive. To lower transmission rates, the city started requiring people to wear masks in June and reported that a majority complied with that mandate in both indoor and outdoor settings in the final months of 2020.

In addition to COVID-19, Philadelphians also contended with major health concerns that were present prior to the pandemic. One was opioids. In 2020, an estimated 1,200 fatal overdoses occurred in the city, near 2017’s record high and the fourth straight year in which the number exceeded 1,100. And Black Philadelphians continued to have higher rates of chronic conditions, lower life expectancy, and higher infant mortality rates than White residents.
Philadelphia had an average of 7,158 cases of COVID-19 for every 100,000 residents from March 2020 through late February 2021. Of the 10 counties that contain the comparison cities used in this report, Philadelphia ranked sixth. Maricopa County, Arizona, which includes the city of Phoenix, had the highest rate.


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To help stem the spread of COVID-19, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health began tracking the rates of compliance with wearing masks after Mayor Jim Kenney signed an executive order in June 2020 mandating their use in several situations. The department calculated compliance by counting the number of people seen wearing masks on security cameras throughout the city. Compliance both outside and at retail locations was generally high and rose over time.

Note: No outside observations were logged for June 2020.


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Before the pandemic, the leading causes of death in Philadelphia were heart disease, cancer, and drug overdoses. Of the top 10 causes, six were related to chronic illnesses: heart disease, cancer, cerebrovascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases, chronic kidney disease, and diabetes. Unintentional causes, such as drug overdoses and injuries, rose slightly from 2018 to 2019, with overdose deaths up from 907 to 976 and deaths from injuries up from 373 to 389.

Source: Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Preliminary Vital Statistics, 2019
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The percentage of Philadelphians without health insurance increased slightly from a low of 7.1% in 2017 to 8.1% in 2019. However, the figure was still far below what it was before the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act went into effect in 2010. As recently as 2013, 14.9% of Philadelphians were uninsured.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2019, Table S2701 (Selected Characteristics of Health Insurance Coverage in the United States), http://data.census.gov

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Philadelphia’s infant mortality rate continued to decline, as it has for much of the past decade, down 42% since 2009. The mortality rate was 7.3 per 1,000 live births; the national average was 5.7. Within the city, almost four times as many Black infants as White infants died in 2019.

Note: The citywide total includes infants whose race is unknown. “All other races” includes multiracial infants.


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Births to teenage mothers in Philadelphia have declined in the last several years for which data was available, albeit more slowly than in previous years. Overall, births to teenage mothers have declined 67% since 2007, when 3,620 were recorded.


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Philadelphia reported 62.2 drug overdose deaths for every 100,000 residents in 2019, the latest year for which comparison data was available. Generally, overdose data is collected at the county level. Among the comparison cities and the counties that include them, Philadelphia had the second-highest rate, behind only Baltimore. Among counties nationwide with at least 1 million residents, Philadelphia had the highest rate of overdose deaths in 2019.

Note: Data includes deaths considered unintentional or undetermined, and rates are age-adjusted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, allowing for fairer comparisons among populations in different jurisdictions.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC WONDER Database, “Multiple Cause of Death Data,” https://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd.html

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City officials estimate Philadelphia’s 2020 death toll from drug overdoses to be 1,200, roughly matching the peak recorded in 2017. Should that estimate hold, the total would be slightly higher than in 2019.

Note: The 2020 number is an estimate. These figures apply to all unintentional drug overdose deaths that occurred in Philadelphia; Figure 5.3, by contrast, measures such deaths among Philadelphia residents only.

Source: Philadelphia Department of Public Health
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Philadelphians’ enrollment in Medical Assistance, or Medicaid—the federal-state program that helps low-income individuals and families pay for health care—was much higher in 2019 than it had been five years earlier, before the 2015 expansion of eligibility in Pennsylvania under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Supplemental Security Income benefits, available to people with disabilities or those 65 or older who have limited income and resources, showed little change in recent years.

Note: Numbers represent enrollment for December of each calendar year.


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Life expectancy for Philadelphians had been increasing marginally before the pandemic, an event that reduced life expectancy nationally by over a year. In 2019, Black males in Philadelphia had a life expectancy of 68.7 years, 20 years lower than that of Asian American women.

Source: Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Preliminary Vital Statistics, 2019

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Philadelphia had the second-highest disability rate among the comparison cities in 2019. In years past, it had been third, behind Cleveland and Detroit. But Philadelphia's disability rate has risen by 2.4 percentage points—about 40,000 people—in the past five years, while Detroit’s has decreased by nearly as much.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2019, Table S1810 (Disability Characteristics), https://data.census.gov

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Life expectancy for Philadelphians had been increasing marginally before the pandemic, an event that reduced life expectancy nationally by over a year. In 2019, Black males in Philadelphia had a life expectancy of 68.7 years, 20 years lower than that of Asian American women.

Source: Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Preliminary Vital Statistics, 2019

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Chronic health conditions often reduce adults’ quality of life and may lead to disability and higher health care costs. In 2019, about a third of adults in Philadelphia were obese, and a third were diagnosed with hypertension. The rates for the three chronic conditions shown here, including diabetes, have remained relatively stable over the past decade. Relative to the citywide adult population, Black adults had higher rates of all three conditions.

Note: 2010 and 2018 information for adult hypertension is unavailable, and 2010 information for adult diabetes is unavailable.

Source: Pennsylvania Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2010-19

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Figure 5.13

New HIV Diagnoses by Transmission Category in Philadelphia, 2010-19

The number of new HIV diagnoses has declined over the past decade, but there was an overall increase from 2018 to 2019. In recent years, the city has also seen growth in the number of HIV cases attributed to injection drug use, which the Philadelphia Department of Public Health attributes to the opioid epidemic. In 2019, Black and Hispanic Philadelphians had the highest rates of new diagnoses by race and ethnicity: 43.5 per 100,000 people for Black residents and 41 per 100,000 for Hispanics.

Note: 2016 and 2017 data on male-to-male sexual contact and injection drug use is unavailable.

Source: Philadelphia Department of Public Health, HIV Surveillance Data, 2010-19

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In a challenging year, the housing market was a bright spot in Philadelphia.

The city issued 58% more residential building permits in 2020 than in 2019, a show of developers’ confidence in the local housing market.

Although home sales dropped to approximately the same total as in 2016, the median home sale price was the highest on record, at $204,500, with the bulk of sales occurring in the final six months of the year—after the pandemic’s impact had become clear.

For renters, eviction filings plunged after a temporary moratorium was established in the spring, in the wake of the COVID-19 shutdown. Almost 52% of renters spent 30% or more of their income on rent and utilities, the highest rate among the comparison cities.
Philadelphia has long had a higher homeownership rate than other large, older cities in the Northeast and Midwest. In the early part of the past decade, it appeared that the city was on track to have renters in the majority, but that has not happened. The numbers of homeowning and renting households have grown in tandem over the past six years. In 2019, 52% of housing units were owner-occupied, and 48% were renter-occupied.

Note: In September 2019, the U.S. Census Bureau identified an error in some of its 2017 data for Philadelphia. Because the Census Bureau does not plan to update the data, Pew will not use 2017 data for Philadelphia in the affected topic areas.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2009-19, Table B25003 (Tenure), https://data.census.gov

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In the past decade, the median home sale price in Philadelphia has nearly doubled, from $103,000 in 2010 to $204,500 in 2020. The largest increases were recorded in lower North Philadelphia as well as Graduate Hospital and West Philadelphia; the smallest were in the Center City ZIP codes where prices were already high as well as middle-income neighborhoods including Mount Airy, East Falls, and Torresdale.

Source: Data from Kevin C. Gillen, senior research fellow at Drexel University’s Lindy Institute for Urban Innovation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZIP code</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>Change from 2010 to 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>169%</td>
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<td>$336,750</td>
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<td>150%</td>
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<td>$50,000</td>
<td>135%</td>
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<td>$210,000</td>
<td>130%</td>
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<td>$125,000</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<td>56%</td>
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<td>41%</td>
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<td>$800,000</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<td>19107</td>
<td>$412,500</td>
<td>$575,000</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<td>$132,700</td>
<td>$183,000</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<td>$130,000</td>
<td>$180,000</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<td>$248,250</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<td>37%</td>
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<td>$217,500</td>
<td>$292,500</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<tr>
<td>19115</td>
<td>$225,900</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19154</td>
<td>$190,000</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<td>19127</td>
<td>$210,000</td>
<td>$275,000</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>19114</td>
<td>$196,500</td>
<td>$251,000</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19128</td>
<td>$224,750</td>
<td>$287,900</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19129</td>
<td>$218,000</td>
<td>$276,500</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19119</td>
<td>$234,750</td>
<td>$285,000</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

City median | $103,000 | $204,500 | 99%  

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For the second consecutive year, sales of private residential units declined in the city, coming in 23% lower than the recent high recorded in 2018.

Source: Data from Kevin C. Gillen, senior research fellow at Drexel University’s Lindy Institute for Urban Innovation
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In 2020, even with the pandemic, the number of residential building permits issued by Philadelphia’s Department of Licenses and Inspections grew 58% over the previous year, with 50% of the permits issued in the final three months of the year. Some analysts attributed the growth to developers making sure their projects qualified for the city’s 10-year tax abatement on new construction, which was scheduled to expire in December 2020. At year’s end, that tax break was extended for another 12 months.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, “Building Permit Survey,” https://www.census.gov/construction/bps, based on data from Philadelphia’s Department of Licenses and Inspections
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In 2019, almost 52% of renters in Philadelphia spent 30% or more of their income on rent and utilities, a threshold long used as a measure of housing affordability. Philadelphia’s rate was the highest among the comparison cities.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2019, Table B25070 (Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months), https://data.census.gov
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Figure 6.6

Residential Landlords in Philadelphia, 2020
By size of property holdings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of landlord</th>
<th>Share of landlords</th>
<th>Properties owned</th>
<th>Units owned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owns 1 or 2 units</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owns 3 to 24 units</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owns 25 or more units</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2020, 73% of the city’s landlords owned only one or two rental units, accounting for a third of all rental properties but only 18% of Philadelphia’s 288,000 units. Many of these landlords are “mom and pop” operations, often owning single rental units in the buildings where they live.

Note: Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Pew’s and The Reinvestment Fund’s analysis of Philadelphia business license data

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Figure 6.7

Median Cost for a Two-Bedroom Unit, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Median Cost ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>$1,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>$1,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>$1,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>$1,142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>$1,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>$1,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix</td>
<td>$1,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>$1,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>$1,038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>$840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>$735</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2019, the median cost for a two-bedroom rental unit in Philadelphia—including rent and utilities—was $1,132 per month, more affordable than similar units in Washington and Boston but slightly more expensive than the national median.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2019, Table B25031 (Median Gross Rent by Bedrooms), https://data.census.gov

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The percentage of mortgages in Philadelphia that were 30 to 89 days past due had been steadily decreasing prior to 2020 and the arrival of COVID-19. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which compiles this data, describes the 30-to-89-day delinquency rate as an early indicator of mortgage market health and the 90-day delinquency rate as an indicator of more severe distress. In the city, the 90-day delinquency rate has decreased sharply since 2015. In 2020, the coronavirus relief bill created forbearance protections for all federally backed mortgages, which allowed some homeowners who were unable to pay to postpone their mortgage payments.


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Residential eviction filings in Philadelphia, which had gradually declined in recent years, plummeted in 2020 as a result of the temporary evictions moratorium established in March. The municipal court has extended the moratorium through June 2021.

Source: Philadelphia Municipal Court
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Lead poisoning can permanently affect a child's development. Lead in the blood is measured in micrograms per deciliter (µg/dL); levels greater than 5 are much higher than average, and children with levels above 10 require frequent monitoring and interventions. The percentage of children with elevated lead levels in their blood has been decreasing in Philadelphia. In 2017, the latest year for which data was available, the percentage of children with blood lead levels ranging from 5 to less than 10 µg/dL dropped to 2.9%, the lowest figure in the past several years. The percentage of children with levels at or above 10 µg/dL has been close to 1% for several years. Since October 2020, the city has required that landlords certify rentals as lead-safe or lead-free.

Note: Data is for children over 6 years old.


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Jobs and the Economy

As in much of the country, COVID-19 caused sudden and severe damage to Philadelphia’s economy in 2020.

On an annual basis, the number of jobs in the city declined by more than 40,000 from 2019 to 2020, though at times that figure was down almost 100,000. The local unemployment rate averaged 12.2% for the year after peaking at more than 18% during the summer months. Although both the jobs and unemployment numbers improved late in the year, both were far worse than in much of the previous decade.

The leisure and hospitality sector was hit hardest; a third of its jobs disappeared in 2020. Many of these businesses were temporarily shuttered during the early wave of the pandemic as a result of the mayor’s stay-at-home order.
As happened in the country as a whole, Philadelphia’s unemployment rate rose sharply from 2019 to 2020, averaging 12.2% for the year. Although the rate began to decrease in the latter half of the year, the city’s average was still the highest in decades and higher than the national average of 8.1%.


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Philadelphia had the third-highest unemployment rate among the comparison cities, behind only Detroit and Cleveland. The city’s rate increased 7 percentage points from 2019, placing it in the middle of these cities in terms of increases.

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Philadelphia underwent a 5.6% contraction in the number of jobs from 2019 to 2020, similar to the country’s 5.8% decrease. This came after years of job growth in the city, which outperformed the country as a whole in 2016, 2018, and 2019.

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Although nearly all sectors experienced job losses in 2020, the leisure and hospitality sector was hit particularly hard—with almost 25,000 fewer jobs in 2020 than in 2019. The sector started to rebound in the latter part of the year but still had far fewer jobs than in years past.


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Philadelphia lagged behind many of the comparison cities and was ahead of only Cleveland and Detroit in terms of median household income in 2019. All cities listed above, except for Baltimore, recorded increases from 2018 to 2019, but Philadelphia’s increase was among the lowest, at roughly $1,350. These numbers do not reflect COVID-19’s impact on household income in 2020.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2019, Table B19013 (Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months), http://data.census.gov

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Philadelphia’s highest-earning neighborhoods are in Center City and Northwest Philadelphia; its lowest-earning areas are mostly in North and West Philadelphia. This income data, gathered by the Census Bureau from 2015 to 2019, is reported in 2019 dollars.


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Median household income in Philadelphia varied substantially in 2019 by race and ethnicity, with non-Hispanic White households recording the highest amount, at $70,034. This was notably higher than Black and Hispanic households, which had incomes of $36,601 and $32,425, respectively.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2019, Table B19013 (Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months), http://data.census.gov

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Of the 15 largest employers in Philadelphia in 2020, many were in higher education and health care. Five of them were in the public sector—the U.S. government, the city of Philadelphia, the School District of Philadelphia, SEPTA, and the state of Pennsylvania. The University of Pennsylvania, which includes its health system, is the city’s largest employer.

Note: In this list, employees of the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania are counted as part of the university.

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, Center for Workforce Information and Analysis, “Pennsylvania Top 50 Employers and Industries: Philadelphia County, 2nd Quarter, 2020,” https://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Products/Top50/Pages/default.aspx

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Figure 7.9
Labor Force Participation Rate, 2019
Compared with other cities

Among the comparison cities, Philadelphia had the third-lowest labor force participation rate in 2019 among residents ages 16-64. The labor force consists of people who are employed or are actively looking for work. These rates are influenced by a variety of factors, including age, disability rates, and the local economy. The numbers are indicators of how the economy was faring before the pandemic-related shutdowns.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2019, Table B23001 (Sex by Age by Employment Status for the Population 16 Years and Over), http://data.census.gov

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Of Philadelphia businesses with employees, roughly three-quarters had White proprietors in 2017, and almost 1 in 5 were owned by Asians. Only 6% were owned by Black proprietors and 4% by Hispanic people.

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.


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Since 2010, employment growth at large companies in Philadelphia has exceeded the rate at small and midsize businesses. Prior to the pandemic, businesses of all sizes were growing at a healthy rate.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2010-19
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Businesses throughout the city received federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans in 2020 to help keep their workers employed during the pandemic. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the highest percentage of PPP loans went to businesses in and around the city’s central business district. More than 17,000 loans were distributed to Philadelphia businesses, and 85% of those were for less than $150,000—similar to the national figure of 86.5%.


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In 2020, Philadelphia had 499 homicides—the most since the early 1990s—up 40% from the previous year and more than twice the historic low recorded in 2013.

Even with this sharp increase, major crimes—a category that includes rape, assault, and robbery, as well as homicide, burglary, car theft, and other property crimes—declined by nearly 5%. Violent crimes remained essentially unchanged from 2019, with more than 15,000 incidents in 2020.

During and after the civil unrest in May and June sparked by the killing of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis, some groups called for “defunding” the police or redirecting spending to other services, although a Pew poll found that only 14% of Philadelphians said the city had too many officers. The police department received widespread criticism for using tear gas in dealing with the unrest.
In 2020, homicides in Philadelphia increased to levels not seen since the early 1990s. The number of homicides was more than 40% higher than in 2019 and more than twice as high as in 2013, when the total was the lowest since the 1960s.

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Cities and towns across the U.S. experienced an increase in homicide rates in 2020, a trend that many experts linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. Philadelphia’s homicide rate increased from 22.5 per 100,000 residents in 2019 to 31.5 in 2020. Over the past year, Cleveland recorded the largest increase, from 22.5 to 45.9 homicides per 100,000 residents. And Baltimore had the highest rate, at 56.4 per 100,000 residents.

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In 2020, shootings in Philadelphia rose even more sharply than did homicides, increasing nearly 54% from 2019. Since 2014, the number of shootings in the city was up 115%.


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Despite the alarming rise in homicides and shootings in 2020, major crimes declined nearly 5% from 2019, and violent crimes essentially remained steady. Violent crimes include homicide, rape, robbery, and assault. Total major crimes include those categories in addition to property crimes such as burglary, theft, and automobile theft.

Source: Philadelphia Police Department

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Aggravated assault, with or without a weapon, accounted for 3 in 5 violent crimes in Philadelphia in 2020. As a percentage of violent crimes, rape and robbery have decreased since 2018, while aggravated assault and homicide have increased. Theft accounted for the largest share of all property crimes, nearly 27%.

Source: Philadelphia Police Department

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Figure 8.6
Violent Crime in Philadelphia, 2018 and 2020
Percentage change by police district

Although violent crime rose 6% over the two-year span shown here, more significant increases were recorded in communities that already had some of the highest rates. For instance, violent crime increased nearly 25% in Kensington (24th District), more than 21% in Southwest Philadelphia (12th District), and around 17% in West Philadelphia (19th District). The greatest decreases were in South Philadelphia East (3rd District) and Point Breeze (17th District).

Source: Philadelphia Police Department
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In 2020, police listed arguments as the top motive for homicide in Philadelphia, accounting for nearly 43% of all cases. The number of homicides attributed to arguments, 213, was more than twice as high as it had been two years earlier. Drugs were second, followed by “undetermined.”

Note: Motive is a preliminary classification and can change during an investigation. The Philadelphia Police Department changed its protocols in 2018 to classify fewer motives as “undetermined.”

Source: Philadelphia Police Department
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The average daily population in the Philadelphia prisons, as the city’s jails are known, continued to decline in 2020; it was less than half of what it had been in 2013. After Philadelphia issued its pandemic-related stay-at-home order in March 2020, the jail population got as low as 3,777 in May before rising later in the year. Throughout much of 2020, the Department of Prisons implemented strict lockdown and shelter-in-place protocols in response to the pandemic; more than 1,000 inmates tested positive for COVID-19 in 2020.

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In 2020, for the second consecutive year, Philadelphia recorded more than 30 fire deaths, higher than in 2015 through 2018 but in keeping with the numbers from prior years.

Source: Philadelphia Fire Department
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Despite a challenging year, Philadelphians’ views of their city remained positive in 2020, with two-thirds rating it an excellent or good place to live. During more than 10 years of polling by Pew, residents’ opinions of the city have not varied much from year to year. In 2020, college graduates and those earning more than $100,000 annually rated Philadelphia particularly favorably.


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Local, regional, national, and international transportation was severely curtailed in 2020 after governments told residents to stay home.

Local mass transit use dropped sharply in 2020; through the 12 months ending June 30—which included only the first few months of the pandemic restrictions—ridership on SEPTA’s City Transit Division was down almost 24% from the prior year. Use of PATCO’s high-speed line declined more than 60% for the entire year. Air travel was down substantially, too: The number of passengers at Philadelphia International Airport fell 64%, and the number of international passengers dropped 83%.

This pandemic-related decline in travel may have also contributed to improved air quality; Philadelphia had only five days with unhealthy air in 2020, the fewest in the past decade and down sharply from 28 in 2012.
Among people in the comparison cities who worked outside their homes, Philadelphia and Chicago residents had the longest average commute times in 2019, with those in Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Cleveland averaging quite a bit less. The pandemic prompted many people to stop commuting in 2020: In the Pew Philadelphia Poll, taken in August 2020, 52% of residents said they had been working mostly or entirely at home.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2019, Table S0801 (Commuting Characteristics by Sex), https://data.census.gov

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Mass transit ridership, which had been declining in previous years, dropped sharply in 2020, largely because of the pandemic. Through midyear, ridership was down almost 24% from 2019 on SEPTA’s City Transit Division and down 23% on Regional Rail. PATCO’s high-speed line was off 64% for the entire year. In response to stay-at-home orders and office closings, transit agencies adjusted their schedules to accommodate decreased demand.

Note: SEPTA statistics are for the period ending June 30 of each year. PATCO statistics are for the calendar year.

Sources: SEPTA (City Transit and Regional Rail data); Delaware River Port Authority (PATCO high-speed line data)

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In 2020, as a result of the pandemic, the number of passengers at Philadelphia International Airport fell 64% after airlines suspended flights and global quarantine restrictions were enforced. The number of international passengers alone dropped 83%.


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Like all major Amtrak stations along the Northeast corridor, Philadelphia’s 30th Street Station enjoyed an increase in ridership (10%) from 2015 to 2019, the last full year for which data was available. For its 2020 fiscal year, which ended Sept. 30, Amtrak recorded a 47% decrease in ridership nationally, with most of the decline coming after the pandemic-related shutdown.


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Despite the city government’s attempts to reduce the number of traffic fatalities, the annual total has changed little in recent years.


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Figure 9.6

Street Tree Plantings in Philadelphia, 2010-20

In 2020, Philadelphia planted more than 800 trees along city streets, using a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. In addition, TreePhilly gave away 1,283 trees for homeowners to plant on their properties.

Source: Philadelphia Parks & Recreation
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Figure 9.7

Average Annual Water Consumption for Residents and Small Businesses, 2010-20

The average annual water consumption for Philadelphia's residents and small businesses continued to decline marginally in 2020, despite more individuals working from home and sheltering in place.

Source: Philadelphia Water Department
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Philadelphia had only five days with unhealthy air in 2020, the fewest in the past decade. This continued the general pattern of decline, down from 28 days in 2012. Air pollution is weather-dependent and varies as meteorological trends change. The pandemic-related decline in travel may have also contributed to the city’s improved air quality.

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Figure 9.9
Miles of Bike Lanes in Philadelphia, 2017-20
New, upgraded, and restriped/repaved bicycle lanes

Philadelphia has prioritized the upgrading and expansion of its bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in recent years. In November, the city updated its Vision Zero plan with the goal of eliminating all traffic fatalities by 2030; updating the bicycle infrastructure is a key component in reaching that goal. But bicycle infrastructure projects and upgrades were delayed in 2020 as a result of the pandemic.

Source: Philadelphia Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability
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The number and share of trash and recycling collection requests submitted through Philly311—the city government’s nonemergency customer service system—has increased notably since 2015. These requests usually indicate that scheduled weekly pickups were not made. In 2020, there were nearly 50,000 such requests, accounting for 6.6% of the total for the year. Trash collection during the summer months was slowed by pandemic-related staffing shortages.

Source: Philly311

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Photo Captions

Photographs by Lexey Swall

Cover  Pedestrians head west on the South Street Bridge.
Page 1  A sign points the way to a COVID-19 testing site at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Center City.
Page 2  People walk by a vacant building on Chestnut Street.
Page 3  A woman crosses Fifth Street in Center City.
Page 6  Health care workers provide COVID-19 testing at Sayre Health Center in West Philadelphia.
Page 8  A shuttered storefront along Germantown Avenue in North Philadelphia.
Page 9  Police on motorcycles head south on Broad Street.
Page 11  Vacant homes on a residential street in the Grays Ferry neighborhood.
Page 12  Riders board a SEPTA bus.
Page 13  Health care workers walk near Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.
Page 15  Pedestrians on Germantown Avenue.
Page 16  People sit with their belongings in Kensington.
Page 17  A Black Lives Matter sign in the window of a residence on South 21st Street.
Page 18  People queue up under scaffolding to receive to-go meals at Broad Street Ministry in Center City.
Page 19  Men shop for produce on 10th Street in Chinatown.
Page 23  A woman sets out to-go meals at Broad Street Ministry in Center City.
Page 25  Joggers run in Fitler Square.
Page 27  An empty playground and basketball court at Andrew Jackson School in South Philadelphia.
Page 28  A student at Andrew Jackson School in South Philadelphia.
Page 31  South Philadelphia High School.
Page 33  Adults and a group of children walk by Independence Hall.
Page 35  A view of City Hall from the west side and its reflection off Two Liberty Place on Market Street.
Page 37  A police officer enters Philadelphia Municipal Court.
Page 38  A SEPTA driver opens the bus doors.
Page 39  A sanitation worker empties a public trash can at 16th and Market streets.
Page 43  A woman receives a COVID-19 diagnostic test.
Page 44  A health care worker holds a vial of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.
Page 45  A woman stops to tie her shoe on the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.
Page 46  An ambulance heads south on 10th Street.
Page 47  A man and a woman sit on the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, overlooking the Benjamin Franklin Parkway.
Photo Captions

Photographs by Lexey Swall

Page 48  A mother helps as her child is examined by a doctor.
Page 49  A family takes pictures in Clark Park in West Philadelphia.
Page 50  A health care worker shows a dose of Suboxone, used to treat opioid use disorder.
Page 51  Workers pack up syringes for distribution at Prevention Point in Kensington.
Page 52  Workers sign in patients at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.
Page 54  Dr. Judith Green McKenzie speaks with a patient at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.
Page 55  A worker packs disposable syringes at Prevention Point in Kensington.
Page 57  The Hamilton, an apartment complex near the Community College of Philadelphia in the city’s Spring Garden section.
Page 58  Rental housing at 50th and Walnut streets.
Page 59  A construction project on Washington Avenue.
Page 63  A cyclist bikes east on Washington Avenue.
Page 65  A vacant home in the city’s Grays Ferry neighborhood.
Page 66  Philadelphia Municipal Court’s Traffic Court Division on Spring Garden Street.
Page 67  Pedestrians walk a dog on Lombard Street in Center City.
Page 69  A waitress sets an outside table at Barbuzzo, a restaurant on 13th Street in Center City.
Page 70  A person with belongings near I-676.
Page 72  A man walks past a vacant building on Chestnut Street.
Page 73  A view of Center City and the Schuylkill River from the South Street Bridge.
Page 76  A man cuts hair at Blind Barber on Sansom Street.
Page 77  Diners eat outside at El Vez on 13th Street.
Page 78  A woman pays for groceries at a supermarket.
Page 81  A mounted police officer and a pedestrian pass City Hall on South Broad Street.
Page 83  A police car crosses Market Street.
Page 84  Police officers stand on a corner in South Philadelphia.
Page 88  A Ladder 23 firetruck turns onto Race Street in Chinatown.
Page 89  A woman and children view the Schuylkill River dog park.
Page 91  A window washer cleans a high-rise building’s windows.
Page 92  The City Hall entrance to SEPTA’s Broad Street Line.
Page 97  Sanitation workers pick up trash in South Philadelphia.