



The Pandemic’s Impact on Third District Consumers

Consumers living in the Federal Reserve’s Third District are experiencing job losses at a similar rate as the nation. At the same time, compared with the nation as a whole, a larger share of Third District residents were able to maintain their incomes and felt less likely to require additional financial resources in the future.

Those were some of the results of the polling of residents in the Third District (Delaware, southern New Jersey, and central and eastern Pennsylvania), conducted in conjunction with the Consumer Finance Institute’s (CFI) first [COVID-19 Survey of Consumers](#). These ongoing surveys are one part of the research CFI is conducting to gauge the pandemic’s impact on consumers’ job status, income, and financial security.

When CFI conducted the first survey in early April, 74.6 percent of Third District respondents who were employed prior to the crisis said they were still working (although some at reduced hours). This compares favorably with the 72.5 percent share of respondents nationally. A slightly smaller share of Third District respondents had lost their jobs, compared with respondents nationally (22.8 percent versus 23.5 percent, respectively). Interestingly, a higher share of Third District respondents reported working remotely (36.7 percent), compared with respondents nationally (32.4 percent).

A noticeably higher share of COVID-19 Survey respondents who live in the Third District were able to maintain or increase their income, compared with respondents nationally (66.9 percent versus 60.9 percent, respectively). A worrisome, but also similar, portion of respondents in the Third District and nationally lost half or more of their income (19.5 percent versus 21.4 percent, respectively). The primary difference in income dynamics was that the share of respondents in the Third District who experienced smaller declines in income was noticeably smaller than among respondents nationally (13.6 percent versus 17.6 percent, respectively).

Possibly because of the more stable income described previously, a smaller share of respondents in the Third

District than in the nation as a whole expected they would eventually require additional financial resources (55.8 percent versus 60.3 percent, respectively). This difference of about 4–5 percentage points also holds true when we asked respondents how soon they might require additional resources (see the table).

When asked about proposed relief efforts, Third District residents identified direct payments and extended filing deadlines as beneficial at nearly identical rates to national respondents, but all other relief efforts received lower ratings.

COVID-19 Survey of Consumers: Comparing National and Third District Results

	National	Third District
Ability to Work (if previously employed)		
Working Onsite	40.1%	37.9%
Working Remotely	32.4%	36.7%
Still Employed	72.5%	74.6%
Laid Off/Furloughed, Not Paid	17.8%	17.8%
Business Closed, Being Paid	5.7%	5.0%
Lost Job/Not Working	23.5%	22.8%
Personal Income		
Income Same or Increased	60.9%	66.9%
Income Fell Less Than 50%	17.6%	13.6%
Income Fell 50% or More	21.4%	19.5%
Need for Additional Financial Resources		
Within 4 weeks	34.0%	28.7%
Within 8 weeks	44.6%	40.8%
Will Not Need	39.7%	44.2%