October 21, 2020

National survey of senior housing providers finds COVID-19 cases in majority of communities; Financial strain and isolation identified as key concerns

In an early October 2020 survey of its affordable senior housing provider members, LeadingAge sheds light on the challenges faced by affordable senior housing providers. As the nation's trusted voice for aging, LeadingAge represents more than 5,000 aging services providers, including federally-subsidized senior housing communities.

Most LeadingAge affordable housing providers use HUD multifamily programs, such as Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance and Section 202 Housing for the Elderly programs, to serve a 62+ older adult population. Some use the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. Residents of HUD-assisted affordable senior housing communities have average annual incomes below $14,000, and are more likely to be non-white and have more chronic health conditions than their non-HUD-assisted peers.

Working with HUD and federal, state, and local health partners, affordable senior housing providers have faced significant challenges in the prevention and spread of COVID-19 in their communities. **Notably, the majority of survey respondents (59.74%) say they are aware of confirmed COVID-19 cases in some or most of their property or properties.**

HUD-assisted independent housing communities rely on individually-determined services and supports that successfully help older adult residents age in community. Most affordable housing providers instituted broad visitor restrictions in the early weeks of the pandemic. With minimal staff and no health resources or personnel, housing providers have had to differentiate between service providers and non-essential visitors, while also working against the ravages of social isolation.

The October 2020 survey results elucidate the impact of the virus on resident social isolation: **More than three quarters** (**84%) of survey respondents consider resident social isolation and access to services to be the top challenge in the next three months**.

The survey also considers staffing struggles resulting from the pandemic, as well as maintenance backlogs, occupancy issues, and resident internet access.

In addition, the survey found that almost the majority (69%) of affordable senior housing providers are at least financially strained, if not severely financially strained, due to the virus. Resources from March 2020's CARES Act to cover extraordinary cleaning and disinfecting, for personal protective equipment, additional staffing costs, and operational adjustments to protect staff and residents are just now, in early October, beginning to be delivered to HUD-assisted affordable senior housing providers.

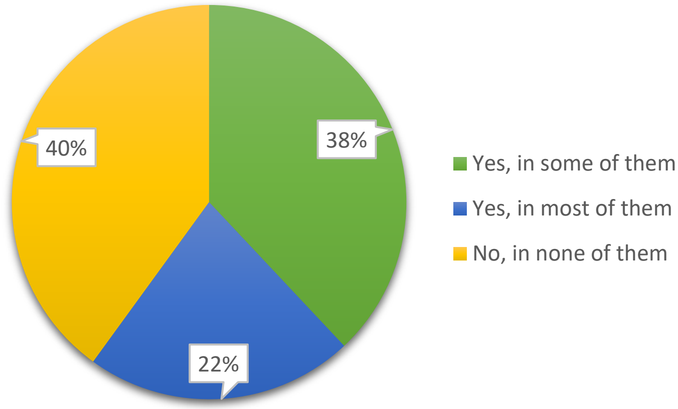
LeadingAge continues to push for $1.2 billion in COVID-19 relief to cover expenses, funding for new Service Coordinators, and for the installation and service fees for wifi in residents' apartments.

LeadingAge plans to conduct this survey each quarter for the foreseeable future. Snapshots of survey responses are below.

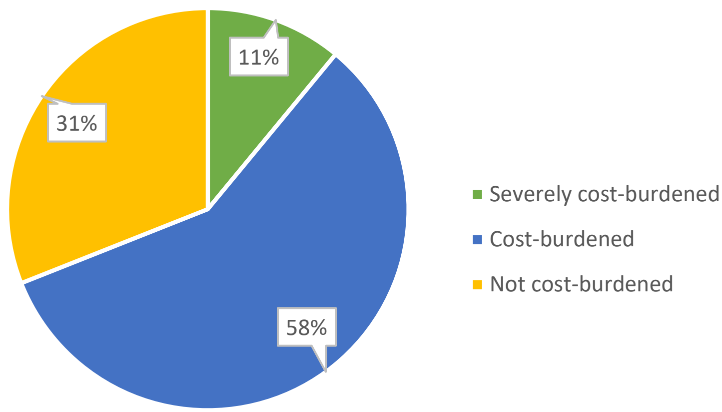
This survey was conducted of LeadingAge members who provide affordable senior housing.

It is not a scientifically-conducted survey and is only representative of these providers' survey responses.

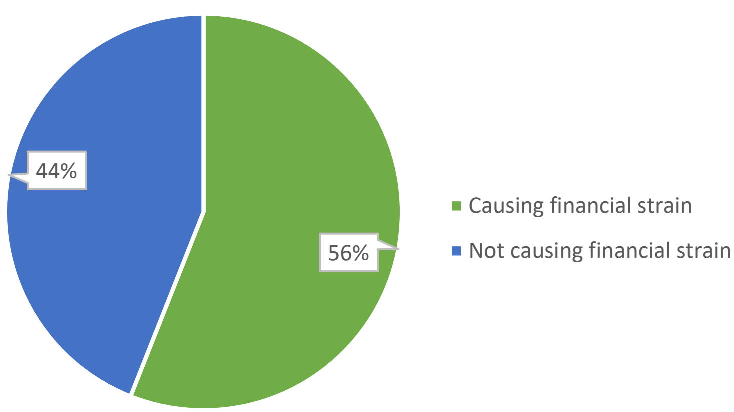
Are you aware of confirmed COVID-19 cases in your property/ies?

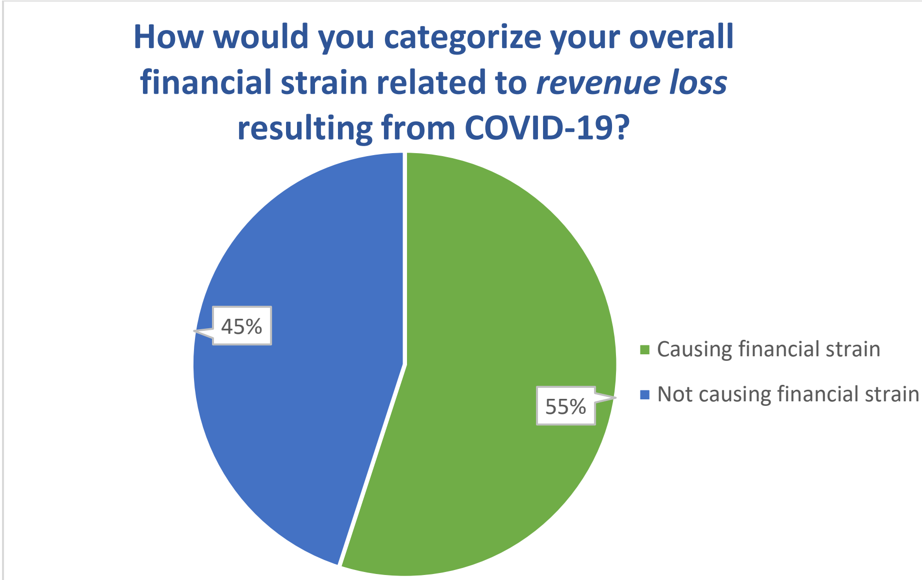


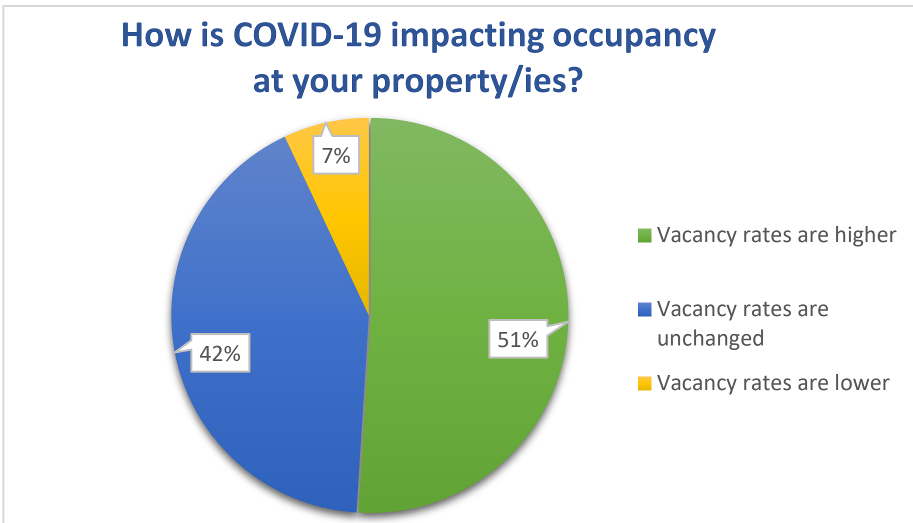
How would you categorize your overall financial strain resulting from COVID-19?

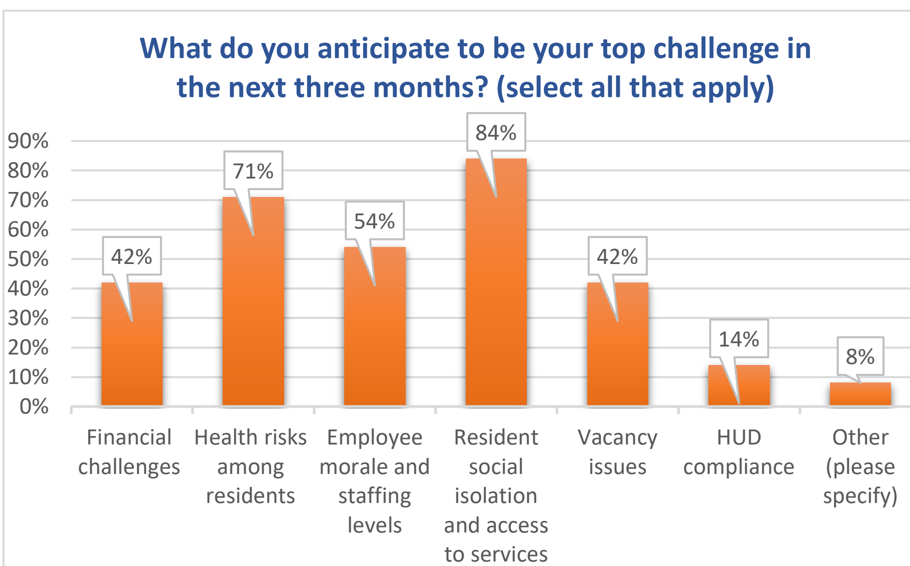


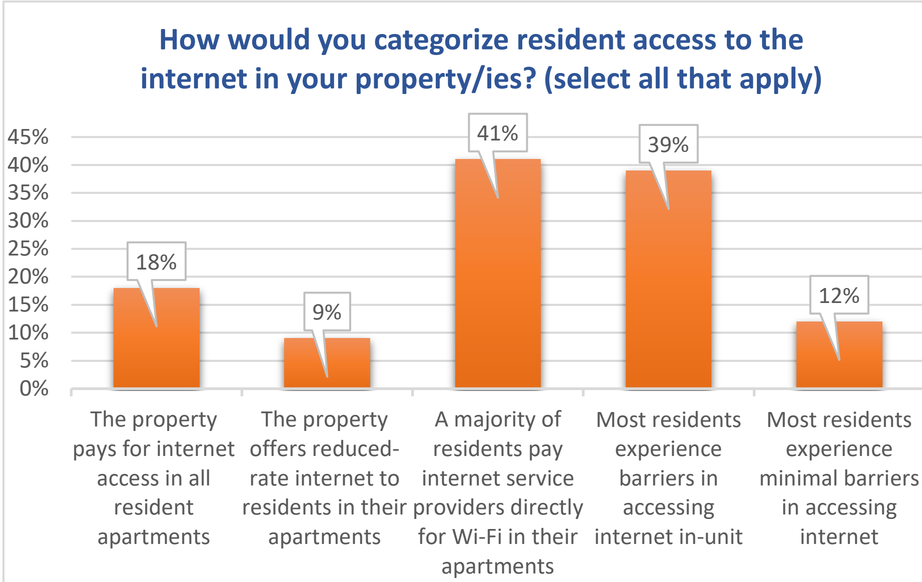
How would you categorize your overall financial strain related to *expenses* resulting from COVID-19?

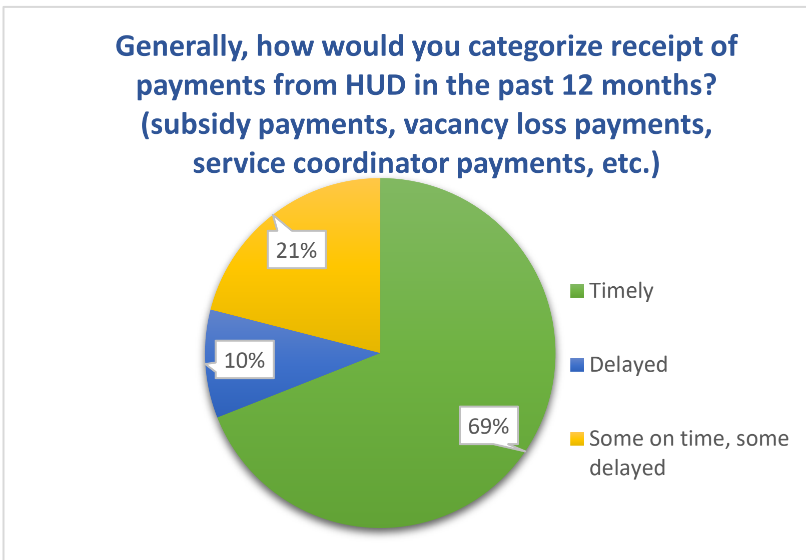


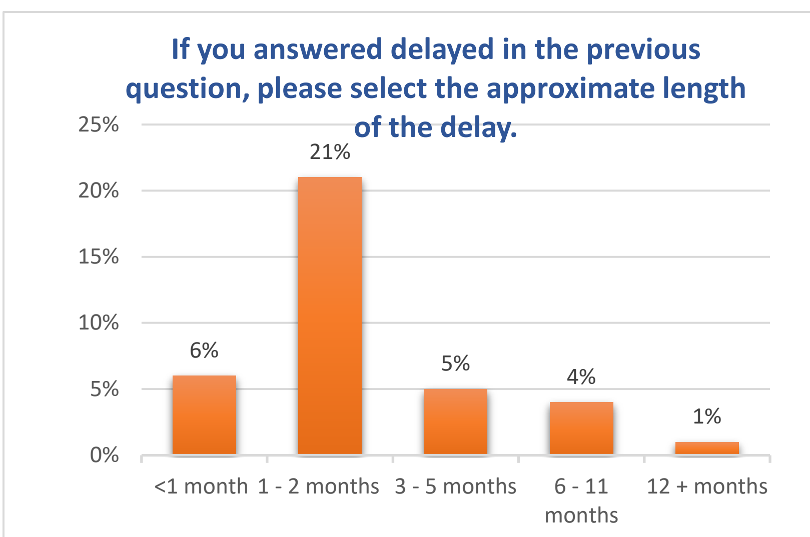

How would you categorize your overall financial strain related to *revenue loss* resulting from COVID-19?
45%
55%
Causing financial strain
Not causing financial strain

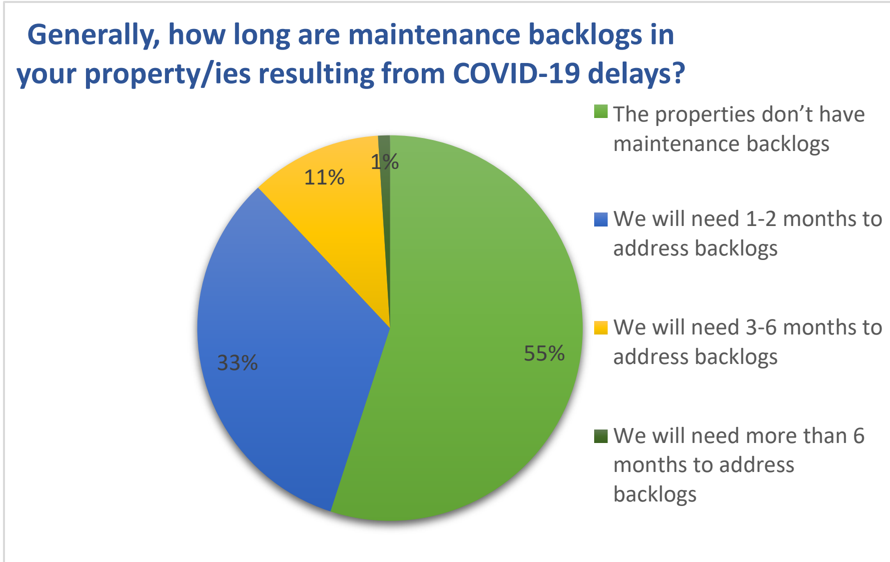

How is COVID-19 impacting occupancy at your property/ies?
7%
42%
51%
Vacancy rates are higher
Vacancy rates are unchanged
Vacancy rates are lower


What do you anticipate to be your top challenge in the next three months? (select all that apply)
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
42%
71%
54%
84%
42%
14%
8%
Financial challenges
Health risks among residents
Employee morale and staffing levels
Resident social isolation and access to services
Vacancy issues
HUD compliance
Other (please specify)


How would you categorize resident access to the internet in your property/ies? (select all that apply)
45%
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
18%
9%
41%
39%
12%
The property pays for internet access in all resident apartments
The property offers reduced-rate internet to residents in their apartments
A majority of residents pay internet service providers directly for Wi-Fi in their apartments
Most residents experience barriers in accessing internet in-unit
Most residents experience minimal barriers in accessing internet


Generally, how would you categorize receipt of payments from HUD in the past 12 months? (subsidy payments, vacancy loss payments, service coordinator payments, etc.)
21%
10%
69%
Timely
Delayed
Some on time, some delayed


If you answered delayed in the previous question, please select the approximate length of the delay.
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
6%
21%
5%
4%
1%
<1 month
1 - 2 months
3 - 5 months
6 - 11 months
12 + months


Generally, how long are maintenance backlogs in your property/ies resulting from COVID-19 delays?
55%
33%
11%
1%
The properties don't have maintenance backlogs
We will need 1-2 months to address backlogs
We will need 3-6 months to address backlogs
We will need more than 6 months to address backlogs


What staffing issues are your property/ies experiencing due to the pandemic? (select all that apply)
50%
45%
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
21%
44%
37%
19%
45%
22%
9%
Confirmed or suspected cases...
Low morale...
Challenges with staffing levels
Significant overtime scheduling
Personal circumstances...
None
Other