

# Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies

Study to Measure Societal Need for Social  
Services in Ontario during COVID-19 Pandemic

October 13, 2020



# Methodology



## STUDY



Commissioned by the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies and conducted by the Angus Reid Group, this poll explores an assessment of current social service needs among Ontarians amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.



## FIELD DATES



This poll was conducted from September 1 – September 4, 2020



## SAMPLE



This survey was conducted among a representative sample of n=1,000 Ontario adults (18+ yrs.) who are members of the Angus Reid Forum, balanced and weighted by age, gender, educational level and region.

For comparison purposes only, the poll is accurate to within +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Ontarians been polled.



## NOTE



Throughout the report,  used to denote statistically significant differences at 95% confidence level.

# Key Findings



Ontario Association of  
Children's Aid Societies

01

**Current Social Needs:** Two-in-five Ontarians say that their family/household needs additional support from social service providers during the COVID-19 pandemic in at least one respect, with adult mental health (28%) and extreme financial stress (15%) the most commonly-cited needs. Notably, younger Ontarians, lower-income households and those with children are substantially more likely to report at least one social need.

02

**Community-Wide Issues?:** Four-in-five Ontarians whose own family or household currently needs support also know at least one other family in need of support—*twice as many* as families that are not in need of support. In fact, two-thirds of Ontarians who report at least one area of concern say they know *several* or *many* other families also experiencing difficulties.

03

**Shortcomings in Awareness of Social Services:** More than half of Ontarians say they would be unsure how to access the right social services in their community if their own family or another family needed support. Among the 42 percent of Ontarians already reporting at least one area of need, fully two-thirds do not know how to access social services.

# Key Findings

# Social Needs During COVID-19

Two-in-five Ontarians report some need for support during the pandemic; prevalence rises among women (46%), those under 55, lower-income households and people with children.

% of families/households experiencing \_\_\_\_\_ during COVID-19...

		18-34 (n=274)	35-54 (n=340)	55+ (n=386)	<\$50k (n=227)	\$50k - <\$100k (n=295)	\$100k+ (n=368)	Kids in HH (n=335)	No Kids (n=665)
Net: At least one	42%	56%	52%	25%	48%	38%	43%	53%	37%
Adult mental health	28%	39%	32%	17%	34%	24%	28%	28%	28%
Extreme financial stress	15%	19%	18%	9%	27%	16%	8%	16%	14%
Children/youth mental health	12%	10%	22%	6%	9%	13%	14%	27%	5%
Access to childcare	8%	11%	13%	2%	5%	7%	10%	19%	3%
Housing insecurity	7%	12%	8%	3%	12%	8%	4%	6%	8%
Food insecurity	6%	8%	6%	5%	13%	4%	3%	5%	7%
Addictions	4%	6%	6%	2%	5%	5%	4%	4%	5%
Intimate partner violence	1%	2%	2%	-	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%
None of the above	58%	44%	48%	75%	52%	62%	57%	47%	63%

Base: Total (n=1,000)

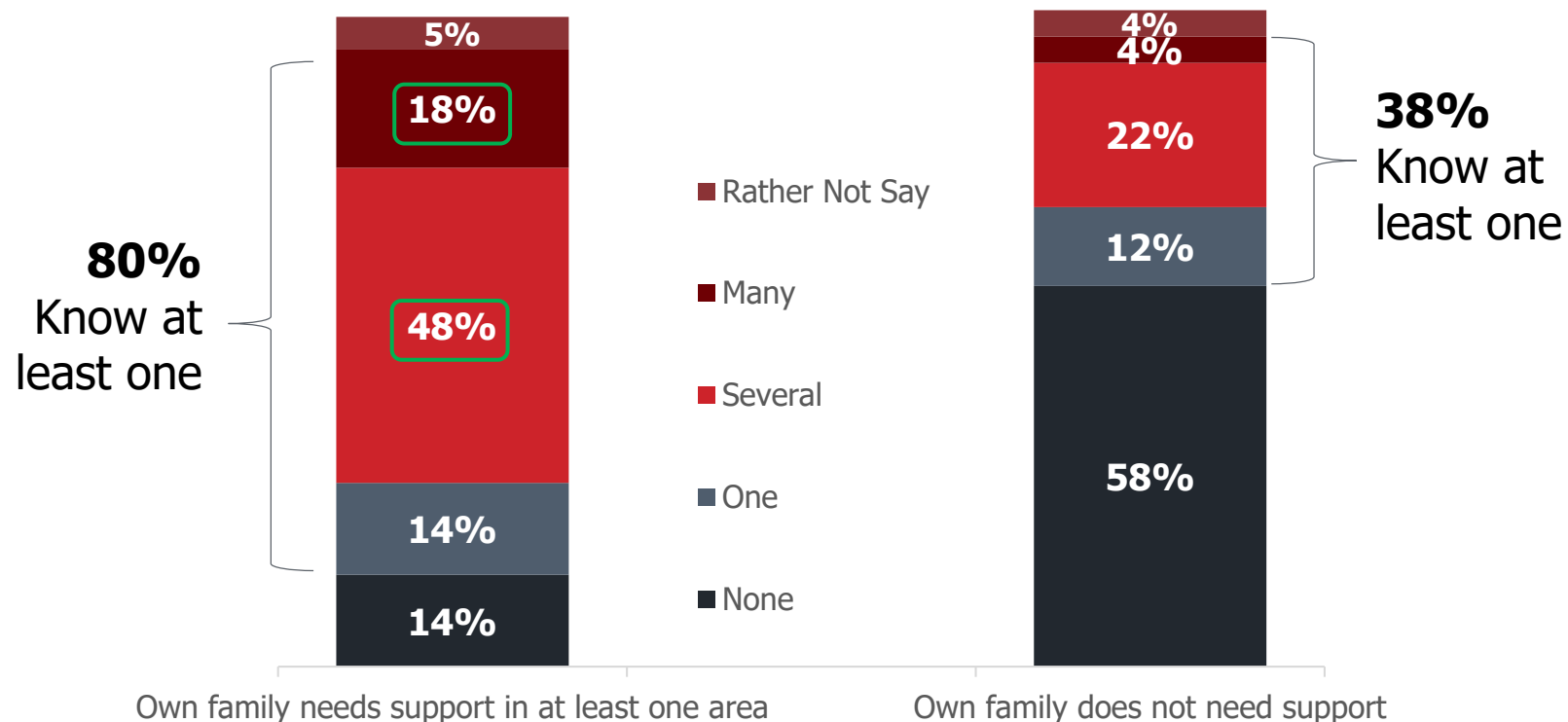
Q. During the COVID-19 pandemic, do you think your own family needs additional help or support from social service providers relating to any of the following?

  Significantly higher at 95% confidence.

# Social Needs During COVID-19 (cont.)

Ontarians whose own family or household currently needs support are *more than twice as likely* as others to know at least one other family or household that also needs support.

*During the COVID-19 pandemic, how many families or households do you know who need help or support from social service providers relating to any of the following: children or adult mental health, extreme financial stress, addictions, food and/or housing insecurity, access to childcare, intimate partner violence?*



Base: Own family needs support in at least one area (n=431), Own family does not need support (n=569)

Q. During the COVID-19 pandemic, how many families or households do you know who need help or support from social service providers relating to any of the following: children or adult mental health, extreme financial stress, addictions, food and/or housing insecurity, access to childcare, intimate partner violence?

Significantly higher at 95% confidence. PAGE

# Awareness of Social Services and Resources

More than half of Ontarians are unsure of how to access supportive services if their own family or another family in their community needed support; *two-thirds of respondents whose families currently need support do not know how to access services.*

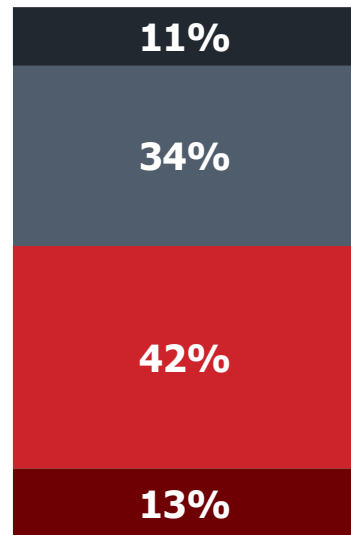
*If my family/household were in need of support, I am unsure how to access the right supportive services in my community*

*I am unsure how to help a family in my community access services if I knew they were in need of support*

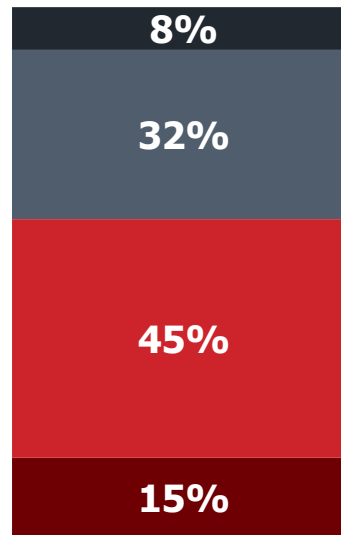
Agreement **higher** among :

- 18-34-year-olds (64%)
- Annual HHI <\$50k (61%)
- **Families who need support in at least one area during COVID-19 (67%)**

**56%**  
Net:  
Agree



- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree



**60%**  
Net:  
Agree

Base: Total (n=1,000)

Q. If my family/household were in need of support, I am unsure how to access the right supportive services in my community

Q. I am unsure how to help a family in my community access services if I knew they were in need of support

For more information please contact

**Sean McGrady**

Interim Senior Manager, Communications

[smcgrady@oacas.org](mailto:smcgrady@oacas.org)