

County of Santa Clara

Office of Supportive Housing

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June 7, 2022

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors
Jeffrey V. Smith, County Executive

FROM: Consuelo Hernandez, Director, Office of Supportive Housing

SUBJECT: Isolation and Quarantine Support Program – Final Report

On March 8, 2022 (Item No. 8), the Board of Supervisors (Board) approved a request from Supervisor Ellenberg relating to a final report of the Isolation and Quarantine Support Program (IQ Program). This memorandum provides a summary of services provided through the IQ Program, including knowledge gained, recommendations for subsequent programs, and demographic data for the program participants.

IQ Program Overview

The County began implementing the IQ Program in mid-June 2020 to slow the spread of COVID-19 by offering isolation and quarantine support to COVID-19 positive persons (“cases”) and persons who have been in close contact with COVID-19 positive persons (“contacts”). The IQ Program consisted of three primary components: a) hotel placements for cases and contacts who were unable to isolate or quarantine from others; b) at-home support including purchasing groceries, household cleaning supplies and infant supplies delivery for those who needed assistance isolating or quarantining at home; and c) financial assistance for those who had lost income due to their need to isolate or quarantine.

From June 17, 2020, through May 19, 2022, the IQ Program placed 4,014 households in hotels to safely isolate or quarantine and provided support to 8,649 households to isolate and quarantine in their own homes. In addition, through the IQ Program provided nearly \$19M in financial assistance to 10,505 households. Appended to this report as Attachment A is the demographic data for each component of the IQ Program.

Hotel Component

The first component of the IQ Program consisted of offering a hotel room with supportive services for cases and contacts who could not safely isolate or quarantine at home or who were unhoused. In addition to typical motel management staff and services, the motel was staffed by a combination of County disaster service workers (DSWs), a community-based organization, and a private security company. The County offered limited case management services, three meals per day and laundry services. Medical and behavioral health staff performed wellness checks weekly and connected individuals to social services, medical and behavioral health services based on their needs. Transportation to and from the motel to initiate or conclude isolation or quarantine was provided as needed. Once the isolation or quarantine period was completed, the

IQ Program staff assisted participants to return to their homes or transition to appropriate and available congregate and non-congregate shelter settings.

As of May 19, 2022, the County has placed 4,014 households (cases and contacts) in hotel rooms. Administration intends to continue operating the hotel component of the IQ Program, which prioritizes placements for unhoused people coming from congregate settings, hospital discharge settings and other unhoused individuals, through June 30, 2022. Concurrently, the Administration is reassessing community needs moving forward.

Due to the large percentage of unhoused clients needing hotel assistance, some of the lessons learned around this component of the IQ Program include the need to identify a method to prioritize hotel placements for the most at-risk clients. Early in the pandemic, IQ Program staff attempted to place all eligible cases and contacts requesting placement, regardless of their housing status or living situation. However, during the first major surge in cases in December 2020, it became clear that placing anyone who asked was not sustainable, due to space and cost limitations. Working with the Public Health Department, OSH developed a referral schema to prioritize requests for hotel placement, focusing first on those in congregate shelter and other congregate settings. This schema allowed the Program to maintain space for the most vulnerable County residents during surges in cases.

Administration has also created an internal operations manual, training curriculum, and policies and procedures for operating an isolation and quarantine hotel. These materials could be utilized in future public health emergencies. For the future, a shareable public document for partner agencies and jurisdictions to explain best practices for responding to clients in isolation or quarantine hotel locations could be useful. Staff also learned how to rapidly create a short-term database to immediately begin tracking requests, and then utilized the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) to track enrollments. Staff can now utilize HMIS to track FEMA Public Assistance (PA) data elements related to providing shelter, which could be applied to PA funding for shelter needs in future disasters and utilized for FEMA reimbursement purposes.

Moreover, Administration now understands the costs required to operate an isolation and quarantine hotel. These costs are significantly higher than general hotel programs as they require 24/7 security along with additional staff to conduct wellness checks and meet all basic needs of the clients at the hotel as clients are required to stay at the hotel for the duration of their isolation or quarantine period. Administration also learned how to set up and staff a triage line with medical staff to assist in screening clients for appropriate placement. This model could quickly and easily be replicated for future pandemics or other public health crises.

In addition, for other illnesses that may require isolation currently or in the future, it would be helpful to access existing countywide agreements for services such as laundry, security, and food, rather than attempting to execute emergency agreements on a short timeframe. Even though the delegated authority to the Emergency Operations Center Director allowed for flexibility, there was a limited number of vendors from which to select. Throughout the pandemic the Administration has executed agreements with hotels, site operators, transportation, security, and laundry services. The County now has knowledge of vendors interested in working with the County on similar programs, as well as increased knowledge of the scope of

work and qualifications necessary to operate hotel-based programs, potentially expediting procurement of services if needed in the future.

At-Home Support

The second component provided support services for persons who were able to isolate and quarantine at home, but who needed some assistance to do so safely. The supportive services were similar to what was provided at the motel. Most participating households needed help buying groceries, infant supplies, and/or cleaning supplies. From June 17, 2020, through March 31, 2022, the Program provided some level of assistance to help 8,649 households isolate or quarantine at home, at an average cost of \$207.30 per household. The in-home support component ended on March 31, 2022.

IQ Program staff placed grocery orders for clients using a County P-Card. The flexibility to access chain stores such as Safeway and Walmart allowed for greater access to products requested and needed by clients, particularly during the height of the pandemic when many retailers were experiencing shortages of various supplies. At a certain point in the pandemic due to shortened isolation guidelines and rapidly transmissible COVID variants, it was no longer feasible to support clients with groceries while in isolation. Staff instead linked clients to existing community resources, such as Meals on Wheels, Second Harvest Food Bank, and FIRST 5, to support clients with ongoing food needs.

At the inception of the program, Administration attempted to partner with existing community food resources; however, these agencies were lacking in capacity early in the pandemic. Should the need arise again in the future, it would be most cost effective and efficient to work with resources that are already available within the community. However, County staff now possess the knowledge to operate this type of grocery delivery program utilizing a P-Card if other agencies are unable to provide this service for a period of time due to capacity limitations.

Financial Assistance Component

The IQ Program offered two types of financial assistance to help cases and contacts who lost income due to their need to isolate or quarantine. The first type of assistance provided up to \$5,000 to pay rent, utilities, and/or other critical needs to help the household off-set the financial impacts of a loss of income. A household's city of residence determined whether they were eligible for financial assistance and, if so, what type of financial assistance and documentation was required. The second type of assistance included a flat payment of \$2,000 for households with a single-income earner or \$2,500 if the household has more than one income earner. The flat payment option required less documentation and was distributed more quickly. While the flat payment option offered less financial support, residents who selected the flat amount did not have to substantiate the requested amount by providing copies or images of rental agreements, utility bills or other bills. In addition, the flat payment could be conveyed directly to the individual instead of a third party (e.g. property management company). Conveying funds to a third party required additional documentation, coordination, and time thus delaying the issuance of the assistance. The financial assistance program is no longer active and had a deadline of March 31, 2022, to submit applications. Between June 17, 2020, through March 31, 2022, the IQ Program provided financial assistance to 10,505 households.

There were several lessons learned from directly administering a financial assistance program. First, most of the people assisted were extremely low-income households who struggled to produce the documentation

needed to determine eligibility, a large number of households did not have bank accounts, access to internet was limited, and most people were too sick or dealing with grief to be responsive.

The initial steps taken to mitigate these barriers included making changes to the documentation requirements. This included the use of self-attestation forms and operational improvements to streamline call backs to clients by creating a daily team whose sole function was to help families that were struggling to gather the necessary documents. To further mitigate barriers, the IQ Program team partnered with KeyPoint Credit Union (KeyPoint) to issue checks directly to clients, which could be picked up or mailed and cashed at any KeyPoint location or the client's personal bank. This agreement also allowed the program to accept eligibility or other required documentation via text, create a cell phone-friendly DocuSign function which allowed households to sign agreements via their cell phones, and accept self-declaration forms for loss of income. Both IQ Program staff and the KeyPoint team provided these services in multiple languages to participants in the IQ Program. While the Finance Agency could have issued payments directly to clients, they were also stretched by DSW assignments and the need to manage FEMA reimbursement and tracking of federal relief funds.

Should the County ever need to provide a similar response in the future, the Administration may consider leveraging an existing system or program which allows distribution of funds directly by the County. While the partnership with the credit union filled a gap for this program, having a mechanism that would allow the County to quickly issue checks directly to households could save time and money in the future.

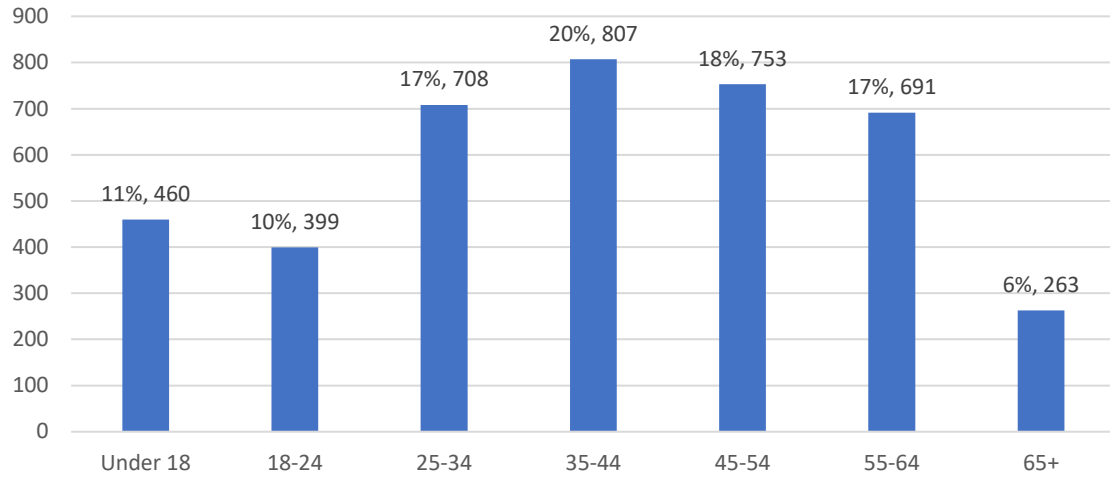
As underserved communities will likely again be the most impacted demographic during this type of emergency, maintaining language capacity, along with outreach and public information capabilities, is critical to informing the public of available resources. The experience of providing this type of assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the Administration's ability to respond to future crises and support the county's most vulnerable residents.

CC: Chief Board Aides
Miguel Márquez, Chief Operating Officer
Ky Le, Deputy County Executive
James Williams, County Counsel
Tiffany Lennear, Clerk of the Board
Director, County Emergency Operations Center
Dr. Sara Cody, Health Officer and Director, Public Health Department

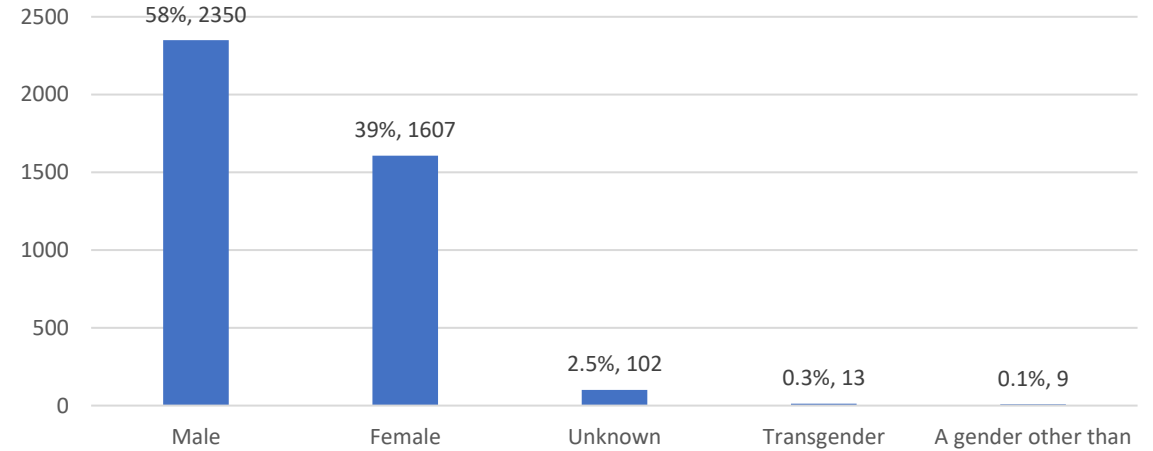
Attachment A
Isolation and Quarantine Program
Demographic Data By Program Type

IQ Hotel Demographic Data

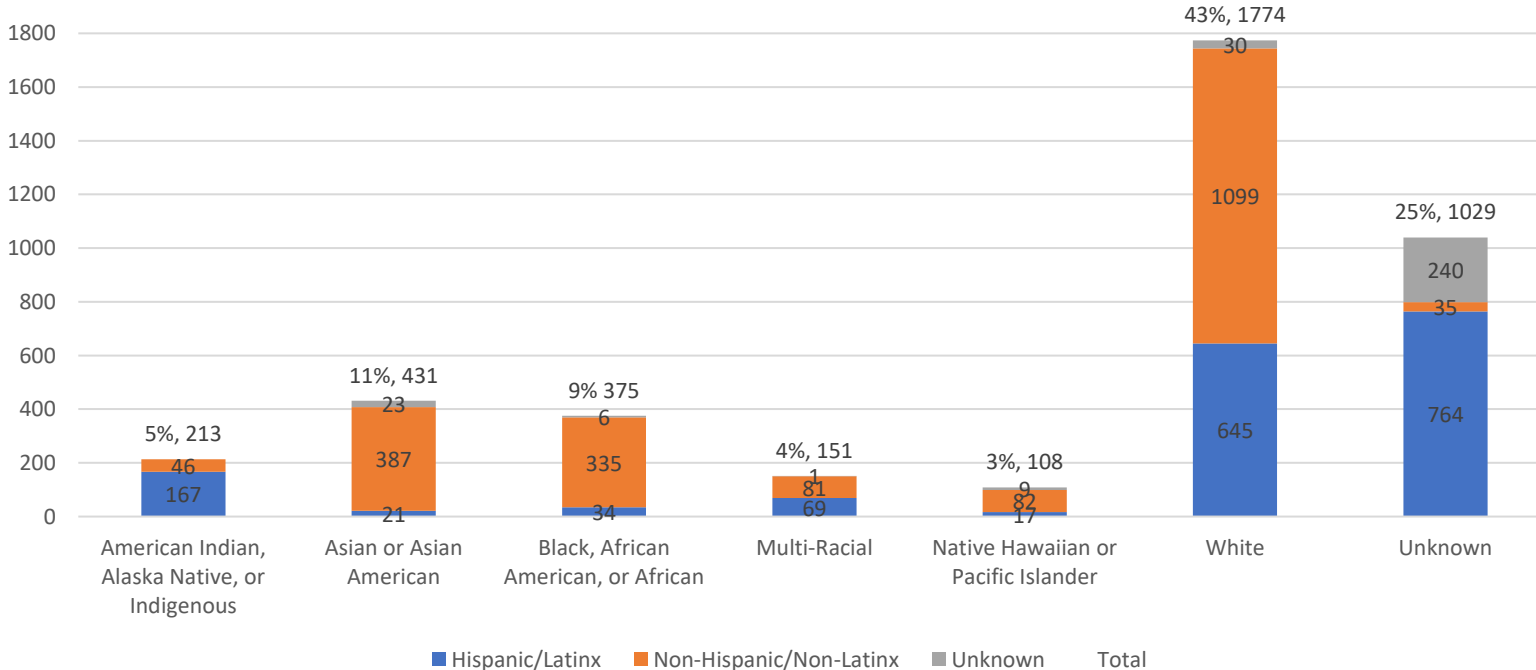
IQ Hotel: Age Tier



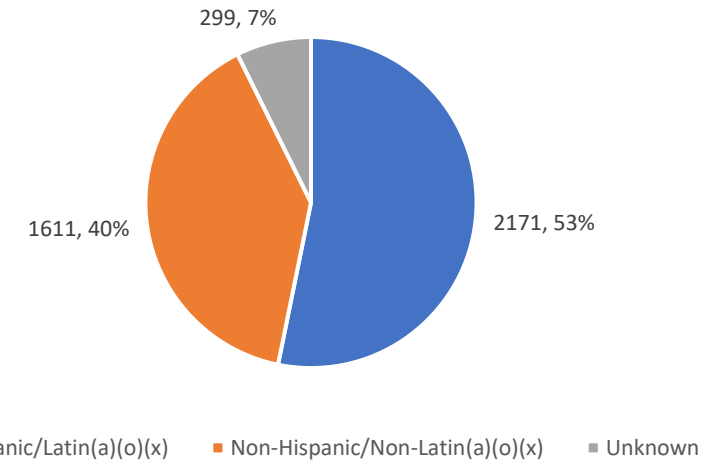
IQ Hotel: Gender



IQ Hotel: Race by Ethnicity

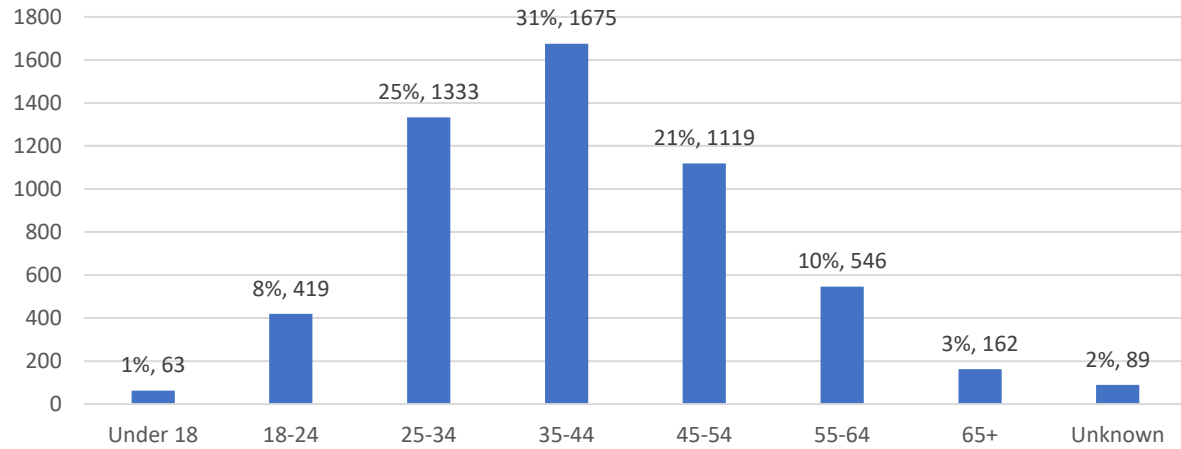


IQ Hotel: Ethnicity

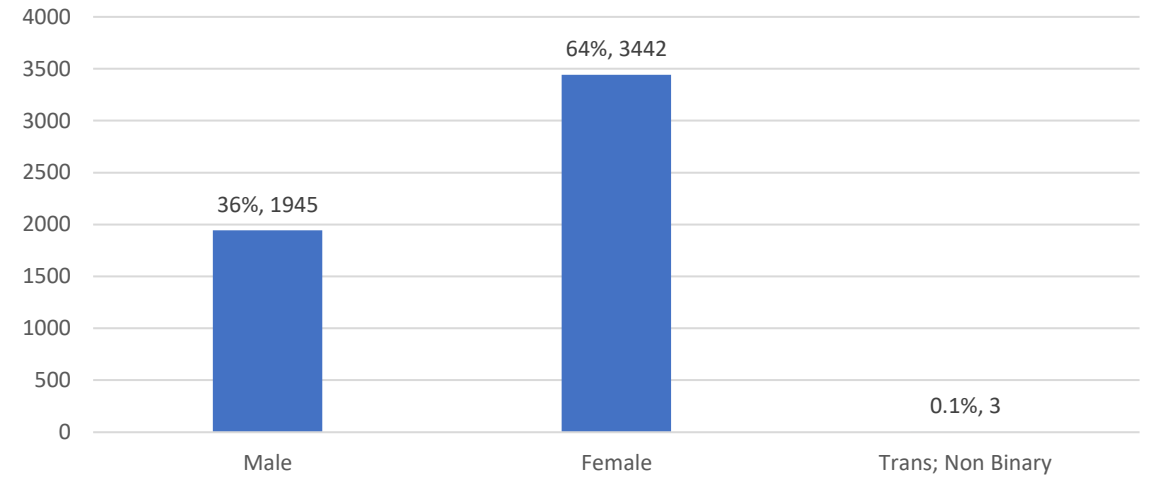


IQ At-Home Assistance Demographic Data

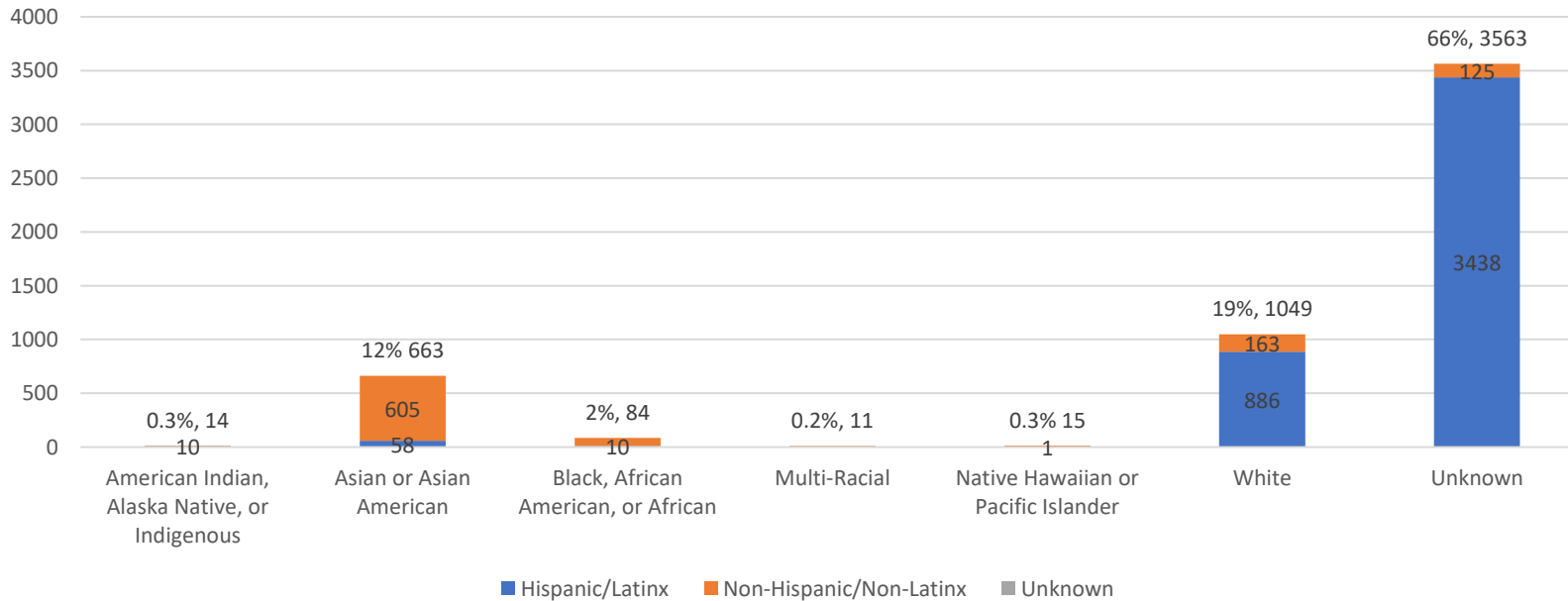
IQ At-Home: Age Tier



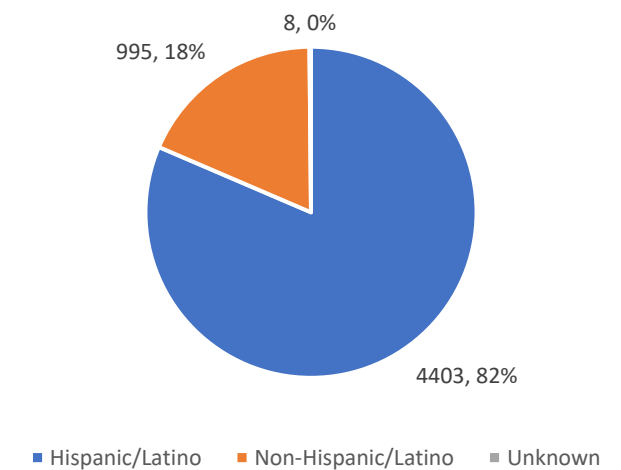
IQ At-Home: Gender



IQ At-Home: Race by Ethnicity

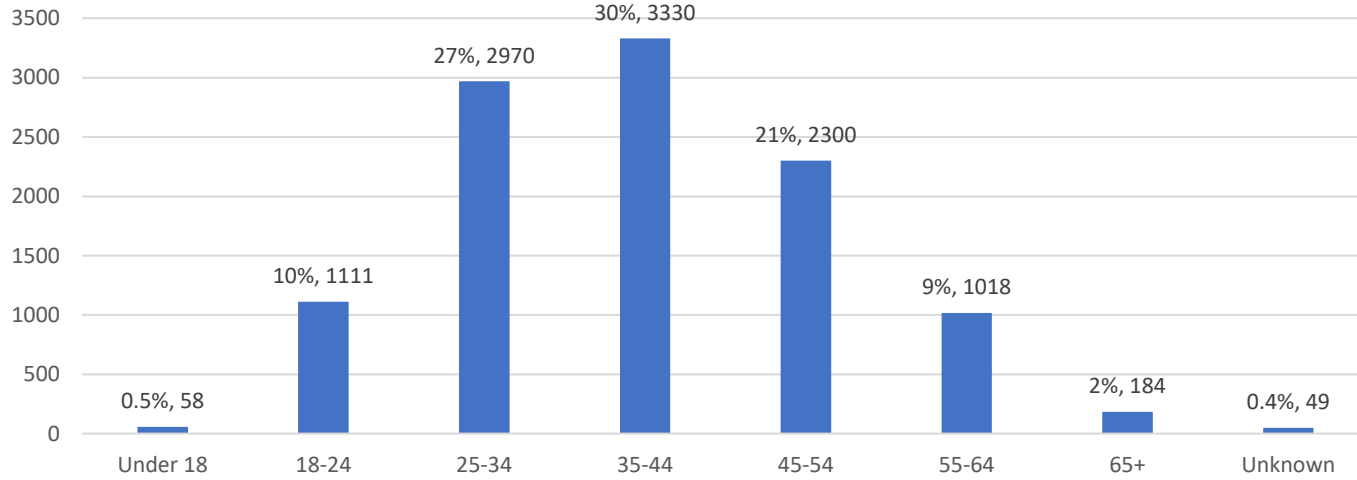


IQ At-Home: Ethnicity

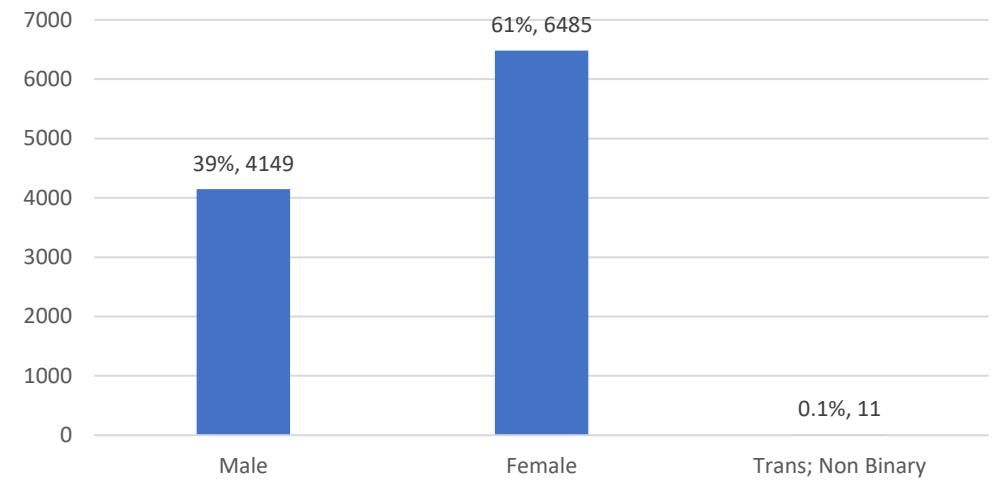


IQ Financial Assistance Demographic Data

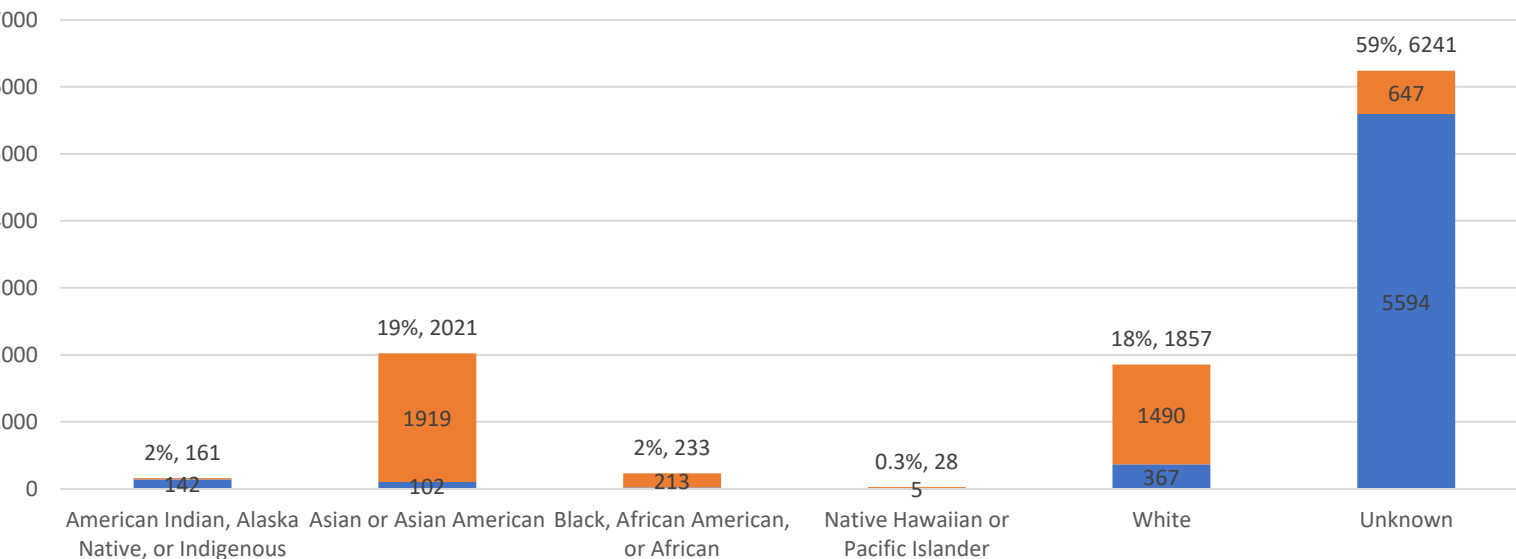
IQ Financial Assistance: Age Tier



IQ Financial Assistance: Gender



IQ Financial Assistance: Race by Ethnicity



IQ Financial Assistance: Ethnicity

