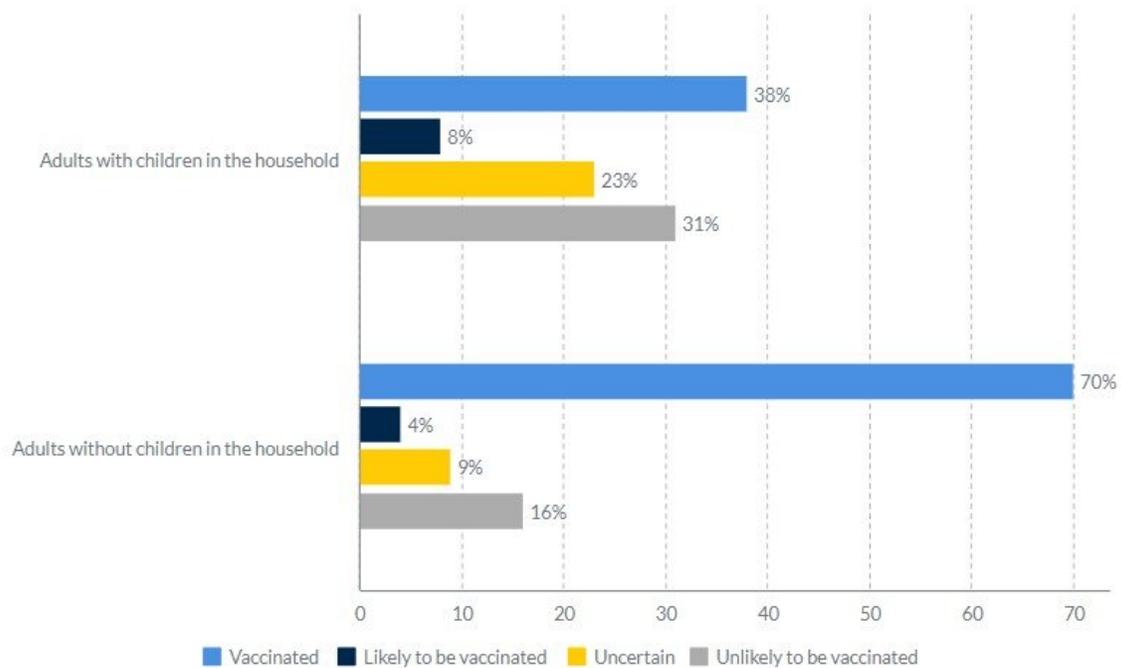


Low vaccination rates persist in Detroit households with children

August 23 2021



Credit: University of Michigan

With a new school year three weeks away and cases of COVID-19 on the rise again, vaccination rates in the households of school-age children will play an important role in how school districts weigh their options for returning to the classroom.

A [new University of Michigan survey](#) finds that only about one-third (34 percent) of Detroit adults living with [children](#) between the ages of 12 and 17 report that they have either gotten their child/children vaccinated or are likely to get their child/children vaccinated against COVID-19.

When asked about the likelihood of getting younger children vaccinated once they are eligible, just over 1 in 10 adults (13 percent) living in households with children under age 12 say they are comfortable having their kids vaccinated once they are eligible.

The discomfort that many adults feel toward vaccinating the children in their household is also evident in their willingness to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine for themselves. Adults living in Detroit households with children are about half as likely (38 percent) as adults living in Detroit households without children (70 percent) to report that they have been vaccinated against COVID-19.

Equally notable is the large share of adults living with children in Detroit that have no intention of getting vaccinated. Adults living in households with children are about twice as likely (31 percent) to say they are unlikely to get vaccinated, relative to adults without children in their household (16 percent).

Since 2016, U-M's Detroit Metro Area Communities Study has been conducting a state-of-the-art, panel survey of a representative sample of Detroit households. This study stands apart from many others in that participants are randomly selected from a list of validated Detroit addresses, permitted to take the survey online or over the phone with a live interviewer, and compensated for their participation. Final responses are weighted to reflect the city's demographics. This allows DMACS to reach and reflect the voices of populations that are often hard to reach and therefore not included in other data on public preferences.

"This DMACS survey gives us new information about just how vulnerable the environments of school-aged children are to COVID-19. The degree of vaccine hesitancy we are seeing among households with children in Detroit has serious implications for public health officials and educators as they consider how to safely return students and staff to the classroom," said Jeffrey Morenoff, one of the faculty research leads for DMACS, professor of public policy and sociology, and research professor at U-M's Institute for Social Research.

Many states and [school districts](#) have already begun debating whether they will add COVID-19 vaccines to the list of vaccinations that students are required to have prior to enrollment.

According to U-M's DMACS survey, 56 percent of Detroit adults support requiring vaccines for students to attend K-12 schools in person, once they are eligible. Twenty-four percent of Detroit adults oppose requiring COVID-19 vaccines for K-12 school enrollment, and 19 percent remain unsure. These levels of support are similar to those expressed for vaccine requirements in other public activities, including attending large events, flying on an airplane, using public transit, attending school (college or K-12) in person, and working outside the home.

The support for vaccine requirements is largely driven by Detroiters who have already gotten vaccinated. Detroiters who have gotten at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine are twice as likely to be in favor of vaccine mandates as unvaccinated residents. For example, while 74 percent of vaccinated Detroiters support requiring proof of vaccination to attend a K-12 school in person, just 33 percent of unvaccinated residents support such a requirement.

While adults living in Detroit households with children are significantly less likely to get a COVID-19 vaccine for themselves or their children,

the reasons behind the decision not to vaccinate are similar to those of households without children. Both groups listed concerns about the safety (78 percent) and side effects (78 percent) of the [vaccine](#) as a reason behind their choice.

Provided by University of Michigan

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