# The Coronavirus in Cincinnati: The Geography and Demography of It

## The Demography

### Race

Since tracking by the Cincinnati Health Department began March 23, as of June 1, there have been 1,129 confirmed cases, 230 hospitalizations, 52 deaths, and 694 recorded recoveries. The racial distribution of the cases is hard to describe because early on race was not always recorded. If we allocate half of the “unknown” cases to the black population it equals 39.5% of the confirmed cases and would not indicate racial disparity. We need better data. The death statistics show almost half the total deaths are among blacks. So, we can conclude that blacks are more likely than whites to die from this virus. Here is the data the Health Department posts:

Table 1: Race Distribution of Deaths and Confirmed Cases

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Race | Deaths | Confirmed Cases |
| Black | 24 | 368 |
| Hispanic | 0 | 195 |
| White | 20 | 324 |
| Other | 3 | 77 |
| Unknown | 5 | 165 |
| Total | 52 | 1,129 |

*Cincinnati Health Department March 23 – June 1 data*

### Age

Most of the deaths have occurred in the population over 60 (90.3%) but most of the confirmed cases have occurred in the 20-60 age range. The hardest hit group in raw numbers was people in their 30s (251 confirmed cases). The younger groups are presumably less vulnerable hence the lower death rates.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Deaths and Confirmed Cases

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Age Group | Deaths | ConfirmedCases |
| 0-9 | 0 | 22 |
| 10-19 | 0 | 42 |
| 20-29 | 0 | 172 |
| 30-39 | 1 | 251 |
| 40-49 | 1 | 160 |
|  50-59  | 3 | 158 |
| 60-69 | 12 | 134 |
| 70-79 | 5 | 79 |
| 80-89 | 16 | 73 |
| 90-99 | 11 | 35 |
| 100- | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 52 | 1,129 |

*Cincinnati Health Department March 23 – June 1 data*

## Geographic Distribution

### Confirmed Cases

The coronavirus in Cincinnati is concentrated on the far west side. More than half the confirmed cases as of June 1 were concentrated in seven West Side Neighborhoods from Lower Price Hill to the city boundary. This cluster includes Westwood (209), East Westwood (21), Mt. Airy (40), West Price Hill (114), East Price Hill (154), College Hill (48), and Lower Price Hill (8). A cluster of seven neighborhoods on the East Side (Reading Road / Montgomery Road Corridors) had only 141 cases, less than East Price Hill alone. These east side neighborhoods are Avondale (47), Mt. Auburn (11), Walnut Hills (20), East Walnut Hills (8), Evanston (19), North Avondale (7), and Bond Hill (29). Is the East Side/West Side difference in occurrences because some of the west side communities have a larger population size? The difference does not seem to be wide enough to explain the level of variation. Is it because the west side has more access to testing? At the time of this writing, most of the test sites are on the East Side. Right now, we can be sure that the data we have show the epicenter of the pandemic in Cincinnati is on the West Side.

| Neighborhood | Case Count | Neighborhood | Case Count |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Queensgate | 2 | Roselawn | 20 |
| West End | 13 | Bond Hill | 29 |
| CBD-Riverfront | 9 | N. Avondale – Paddock Hills | 7 |
| Over-the-Rhine | 7 | Avondale | 47 |
| Mt. Adams | 0 | Clifton | 18 |
| Mt. Auburn | 11 | Spring Grove Village | 5 |
| Clifton/University Heights—Fairview (CUF) | 9 | Northside | 17 |
| Camp Washington | 2 | S. Cumminsville | 3 |
| Corryville | 3 | Winton Hills | 12 |
| Evanston | 19 | College Hill | 45 |
| E. Walnut Hills | 8 | Mt. Airy | 40 |
| Walnut Hills | 20 | Villages of Roll Hill | 3 |
| East End | 0 | N. Fairmount | 5 |
| California | 0 | S. Fairmount | 3 |
| Mt. Washington | 27 | Lower Price Hill | 8 |
| Columbia-Tusculum | 1 | East Price Hill | 154 |
| Mt. Lookout | 9 | West Price Hill | 114 |
| Linwood | 1 | Westwood | 209 |
| Hyde Park | 20 | Sedamsville | 2 |
| Oakley | 29 | Riverside – Sayler Park | 3 |
| Madisonville | 18 | Sayler Park | 1 |
| Pleasant Ridge | 60 | East Westwood | 21 |
| Kennedy Heights | 20 | Pendleton | 0 |
| Hartwell | 42 | English Woods | 1 |
| Carthage | 11 | Riverside | 3 |
|  |  | Millvale | 2 |

Looking at the number of confirmed cases by neighborhood does not consider that some neighborhoods are huge. So, we can calculate confirmed cases per capita. Avondale has a population of 13,967 and 47 confirmed cases or .0034 per capita. East Price Hill has a population of 14,224 and 154 cases or a per capita occurrence of .0108. Bond Hill has a population of 6,826 and 29 confirmed cases. Its per capita rate is .0042 West Price Hill has a population of 19,443 with 114 confirmed cases or .0006 per capita. So, neighborhood size does not totally determine the difference. Other factors to consider is the amount of testing in the neighborhoods and the number of people in nursing homes. Seventy percent of Ohio’s coronavirus cases are found in nursing homes.

## Anomalies in the Data

Neighborhoods along the Ohio River, along Mill Creek and in the Basin Area (Downtown, Queensgate, West End, Over-the-Rhine, Pendleton) have very low numbers of occurrence. Some, like Queensgate have small populations but neighborhoods like South Fairmount, Camp Washington, and Over-the-Rhine have significant low income and presumably at-risk populations and yet have numbers like Pendleton (10), English Woods (1), and Over-the-Rhine (7). I know these neighborhoods have no nursing homes and some like Over-the-Rhine and West End have significant gentrification. I still find the Health Department’s number of cases for these areas incredible. I think testing has not been available and suspect that people are getting sick and their illness is not being recorded.

Conclusions

If Cincinnati is to continue recovering from the first phase of the Covid-19 pandemic and prepare for a possible phase two, we need to have testing centers throughout the city including low income and minority concentrations. Testing needs to be universal in nursing homes and places of incarceration, of course. Pharmacies and grocery stores are good but why not open the neighborhood health clinics, school-based health centers, and even churches and storefronts. Right now, I believe there are serious questions of equity in the allocation of resources. The failure to make testing available more broadly and fairly and the early failure to record race and ethnicity data needs the attention of our government at all levels throughout Cincinnati and the Tri-State. Community leaders in smaller often left out areas need to be involved in decisions about allocating new public health resources such as outreach workers. African American, Appalachian and Hispanic organizations must be involved.

Table 3: Covid-19 Virus Confirmed Cases by Neighborhood

*Source: Cincinnati Health Department June 1, 2020*

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