

# As U.S. Reopens, Coronavirus Concerns Could Lead to Mass Exodus



Franchising.com (May 2020) – Call it the Epicenter Exodus. As the U.S. starts reopening in time for May’s National Moving Month and the busy summer moving season, a just released survey reveals a good chunk of residents from coronavirus hot spot states would voluntarily pack up and move out to areas not as crippled by the virus. It’s not only the city slickers in cramped quarters who want out. Spread-out suburbanites want to hit the road, too.

The Our Town America national survey of 1,000 Americans reveals a large percentage of residents living in the ten states with the most Covid-19 cases would consider moving – even though many have lived in their state for more than twenty years, or even their whole lives. The states with the most coronavirus cases are New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Illinois, California, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Louisiana, Connecticut, and Florida.

The survey, commissioned by Our Town America, the nation’s leading new mover marketing franchise, reveals:

- More than 40% of folks polled say they’d consider moving because they

live in a coronavirus hot spot state. More than half polled live in the suburbs and more than 30% live in the city.

- Of those who would move, more than 1/2 (53%) say they say they would move to an area of the country less affected by the coronavirus for peace of mind (44%) and because there's less chance of a resurgence of coronavirus (40%). Some also say it's important to live somewhere their kids will be able to start school sooner.
- When would they move? Nearly 1 in 5 (19%) say they're ready to move NOW – as quickly as possible. More than 3 in 5 (64%) say they'd want to move by the end of the year.

### Numb Nation

The new survey of 1000 American adults from the 10 hotspot states reveals a country shell-shocked by Covid-19. As America reopens, more than 3 in 4 polled (76%) say they're still worried about the virus. Nearly 2 in 3 (64%) say they're also concerned about the future and 1 in 3 (33%) said they don't believe the state they live in will ever get back to pre-pandemic normal.

- Folks are most worried about their families, health, and finances. More than 1/3 (35%) say they or someone in their family lost work or a job. And almost half (46%) say they want better mental health. Those with kids also ranked their children's well-being as a top worry.
- The South Atlantic states rank as the top areas people would move to right now- states on the east coast from Florida up to Delaware. (DE, MD, DC, VA, NC, SC, WV, FL)
- More than 1 in 4 (28%) eager to move say they'd move to a warmer climate. More than 1/2 (53%) of those folks say warm weather is better for their physical and mental health and more than 1 in 6 (17%) believe the virus has less chance of spreading in warmer temperatures.

### Pandemic Prisoners Want Out!

Folks polled say the country can't open soon enough.

- Nearly 1/3 (30%) say the Stay-At-Home orders in their state were too severe. They describe their neighborhoods during quarantine as the "Apocalypse," "Armageddon" and "Hitler-esque". Nearly 2/3 (65%) of respondents are ready for the country to open now!
- And when asked if the lockdowns were necessary, more than 1 in 4 (28%)

say they would have preferred NO Stay-At-Home orders and would have taken their chances on contracting the virus.

- Almost a third (27%) of those eager to move say they'd relocate as a chance to move on from the virus in a new place, for a fresh start.

"It's clear the coronavirus has scarred people physically, mentally, financially and geographically. We could see a mass exodus of people leaving these hot spot states to begin a new chapter of their lives for different opportunities for them and their families," says Our Town America's CEO Michael Plummer. "Our new mover welcome packages stuffed with certificates to try out new area businesses is more critical than ever because social distancing may keep neighbors away from new families so there won't be anyone to welcome them."

### Covid Concerns

In fact, in the survey, people who want to move from hot spot states fear new neighbors will keep their distance for fear of contracting the virus.

- More than 2/3 (68%) say they worry neighbors might stay away because they come from a state heavily infected with the virus.
- More than 2/3 (69%) say receiving a housewarming gift would make them more comfortable, but more than half (60%) also say the best way for neighbors to welcome them is to flag them down in the front yard and introduce themselves following social distancing guidelines.

"In this coronavirus era, we probably won't see neighbors welcoming new families with dinner invitations and home baked goods because people will keep their distance," says Plummer. "A free meal, haircut or service that comes in our envelope, will be the boost and welcome new movers need to feel part of the community."

The survey suggests Americans agree with Plummer as respondents say they'll continue supporting local businesses after the Coronavirus chaos dies down, especially the places that stick to curbside/takeout and share more information online.

- More than 4 in 5 (81.4%) say they'll take advantage of a proven offer (i.e. free meal, haircut, etc.) from a local business that welcomes them to their new community but nearly 1/2 (49%) say they'll be sticking to takeout and curbside when they do.

- The responses also prove folks are craving a new online directory that lists restaurants open for takeout and delivery. More than 7 in 10 (70.6%) say they would have used that type of directory while living in quarantine and even more (73%) say they'll use it when the quarantine is lifted.

*\*Editor's Note:*

\*Please cite **Our Town America** as the source for this survey

\*This online survey of 1,000 American men and women was conducted by a third party and commissioned by Our Town America

\*Survey participants have no affiliation with Our Town America

### About Our Town America

For over 48 years, Our Town America has been providing new movers with traditional hospitality by mailing warm housewarming gifts from local neighborhood businesses in a premium Welcome Package. Since the company started franchising in 2005, Our Town America has consistently been placed in the Franchise Top 50, ranking top in their category for franchisee satisfaction.

Our Town America's dedication to the "sponsor exclusivity" concept, meaning Our Town America will only recommend one of each business type in any specific zip code within its Welcome Packages, has been one of the key catalysts for the company's long-term success. In addition, sponsors consistently rave about other unique aspects of the new mover marketing program - such as their ability to reach a brand-new audience of impressionable new movers each month and the insightful data/metrics delivered by Our Town America's innovative pinpoint tracking system.

Due in large part to Our Town America's devotion to those concepts, thousands of satisfied business owners throughout the United States attest to the success and effectiveness of the program. Additionally, dozens of locally owned franchisees validate Our Town America's concept as a viable business opportunity.

It is Our Town America's mission to assist new movers adjusting to their community, help businesses gain new and loyal customers and provide franchisees with an excellent opportunity. The eight million households who receive Our Town America's Welcome Packages each year prove that Our Town America is committed to following through on that mission statement.

Survey Source: Our Town America