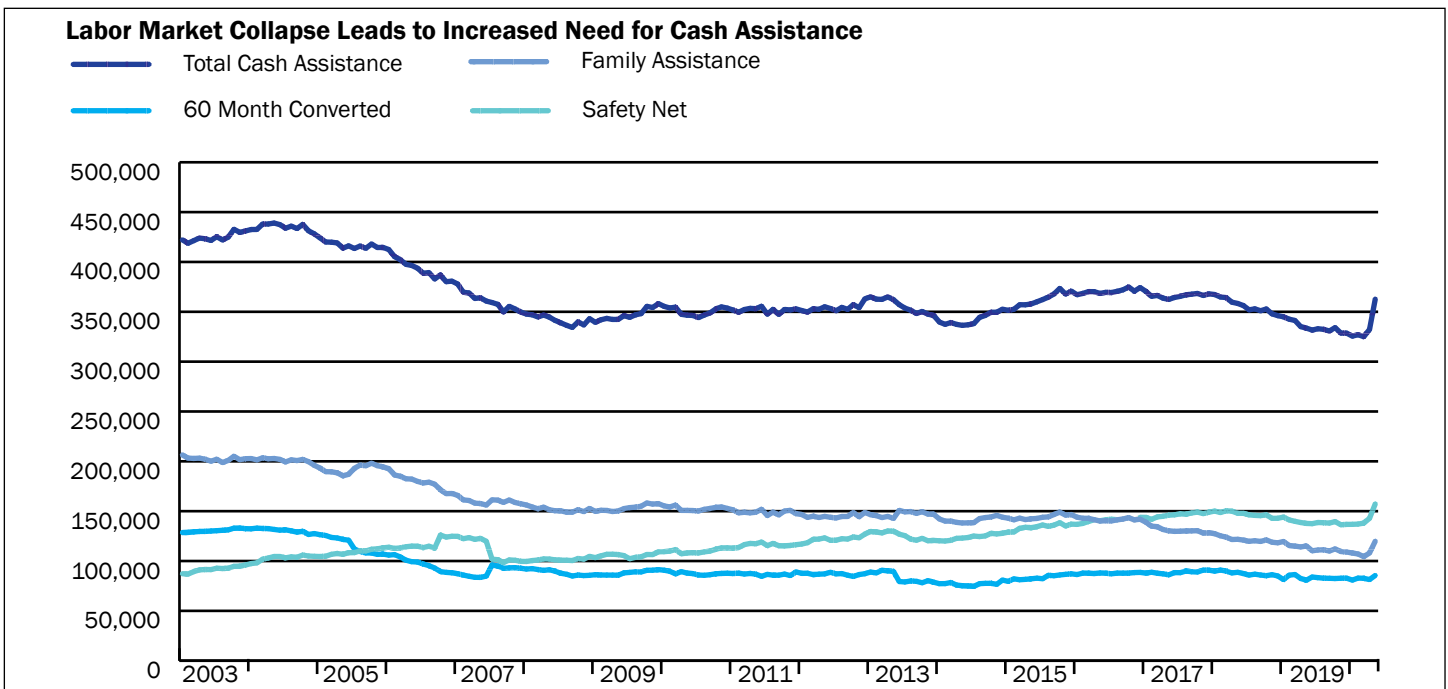


Have NYC's Cash Assistance Rolls Grown Following The Pandemic-Related Rise in Unemployment?

The Covid-19 pandemic and the rapid rise in unemployment resulting from efforts to mitigate the impact of the virus have led to an historic rise in demand for government assistance, including cash assistance grants. After reaching a nearly 60-year low of about 325,000 this past March, the number of New York City residents receiving cash assistance—what was once called public assistance or welfare—increased by 7,300 in April and by an additional 30,500 in May, the largest monthly increase in over half a century.

The increased need for cash assistance comes in spite of the temporary expansion through the end of July of eligibility for unemployment assistance, which now includes Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, a federal program for self-employed workers, independent contractors, and others ineligible for standard benefits.



- The surge of 30,500 recipients in May was the largest monthly growth since August 1967, when the cash assistance rolls increased by 35,700.
- There were 362,800 cash assistance recipients in May, the most since March 2018, reversing two years of caseload decreases.
- The May increases occurred mainly among recipients of Family Assistance for families with minor children and Safety Net Assistance for single adults and couples without children. There was a smaller increase among recipients of 60 Month Converted to Safety Net aid for families that reach their time limit on Family Assistance.
- At the current average grant per person, the combined increase of 37,753 recipients in April and May would raise overall costs for cash assistance grants by \$14.2 million per month, with about half coming from city funds. The number of city residents in need of cash assistance in future months will depend on the course of the pandemic, how quickly the labor market recovers, and decisions made at the federal level about the availability of expanded unemployment assistance.

SOURCE: Human Resources Administration