



**Minding the Gap:
Employee Friendly County Policies
Did Not Entirely Stem the
Loss of Women of Color During
Covid-19 and Will Require
Efforts by the County to Achieve Its
Goal of Racial Equity**

June 2022

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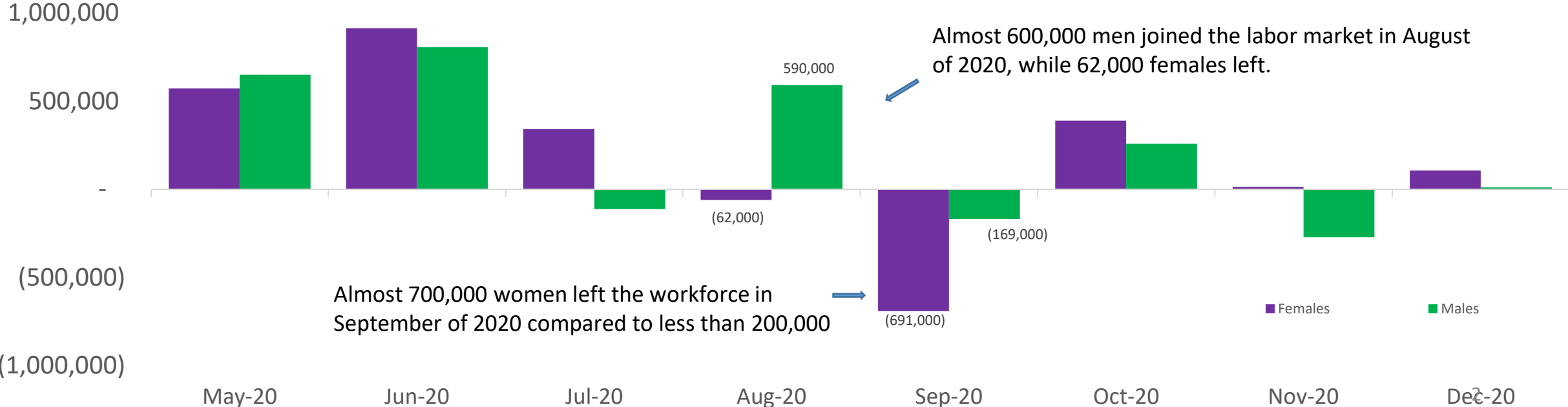
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The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant effect on labor market metrics for the nation, every state, economic sector, and major demographic group in the United States including Milwaukee County. Nationally and in Wisconsin, the disproportionate impact on women and women of color has been widely reported.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data also showed that in the first two months of the pandemic 3.65 million workers who identify as female departed the workforce versus 3.45 million workers who identify as male.

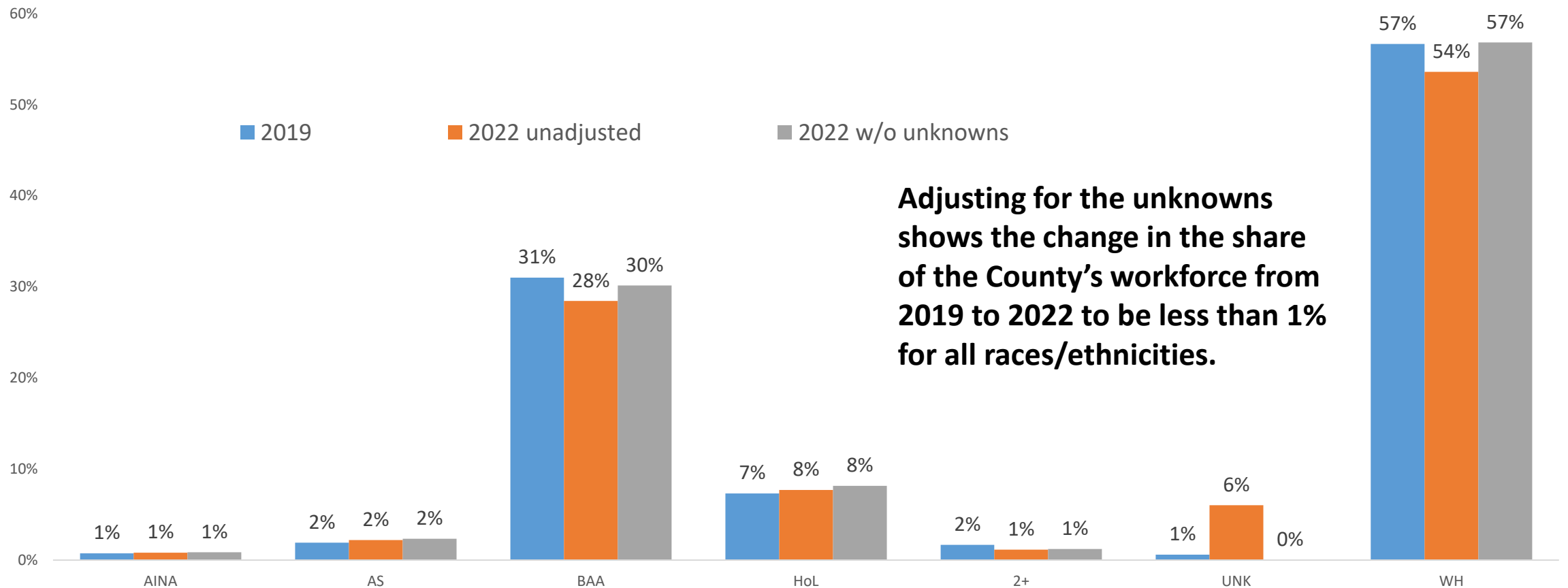
In addition, disparity between genders occurred later in 2020 at the traditional time of school reopening, August and September, when more than 400,000 men joined the labor market and more than 750,000 women left.

Change in U.S. Labor Market by Gender from May to December 2020



The distribution of the overall County workforce by race/ethnicity shows minimal change at the highest level from the start of the pandemic to the first quarter of 2022. Due to a data collection issue, the share of the workforce with employees with “unknown” as their race/ethnicity rose from 1% in 2019 to 6% in 2022 which distorts the actual workforce share by race/ethnicity. The table below shows the workforce in 2019 and in 2022 with and without unknowns.

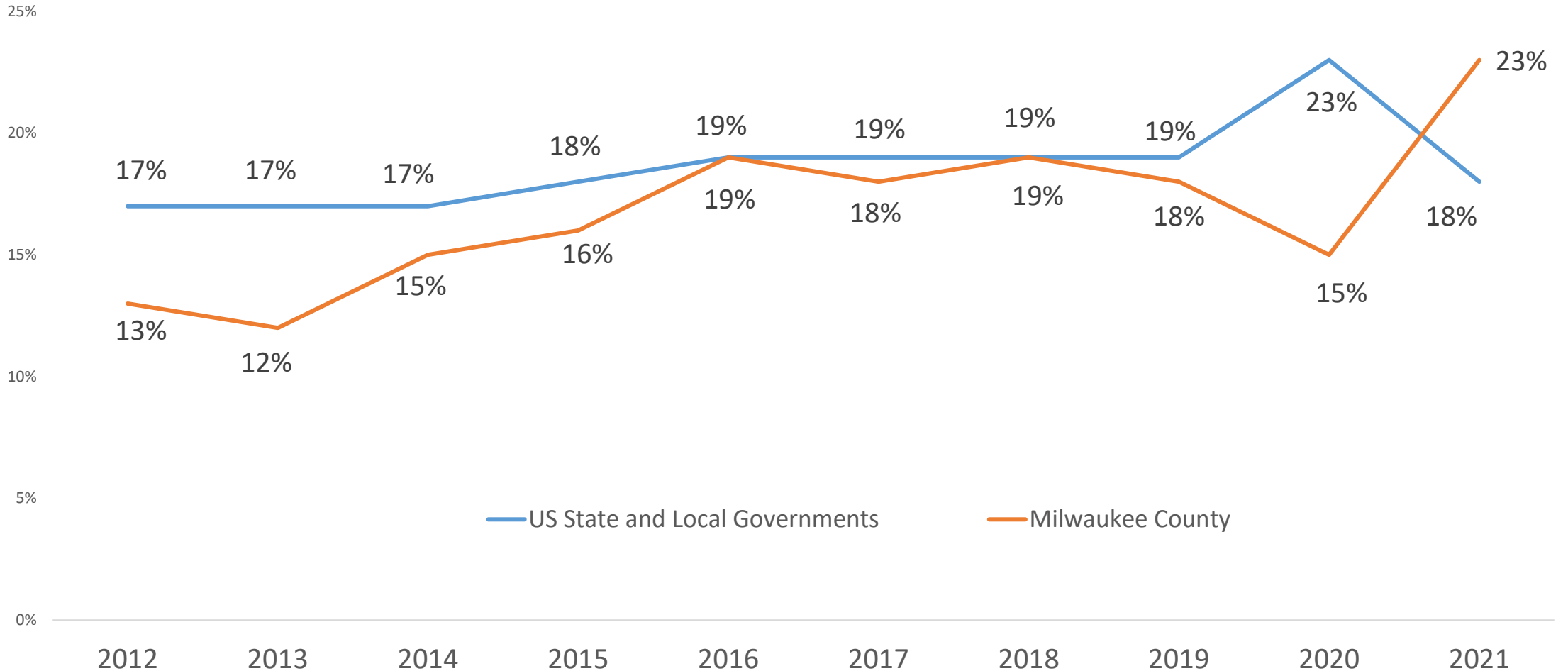
Milwaukee County Workforce Distribution by Race 2019 Compared to 2022 with and without "Unknowns"



Adjusting for the unknowns shows the change in the share of the County’s workforce from 2019 to 2022 to be less than 1% for all races/ethnicities.

While national labor force data showed a large exodus during 2020, the County's year with the largest exodus was in 2021. Our point in time review showed that the County's workforce dropped from 3,424 employees in 2019 to 3,171 in 2022. Its separation rate did not follow national trends for 2020 and 2021.

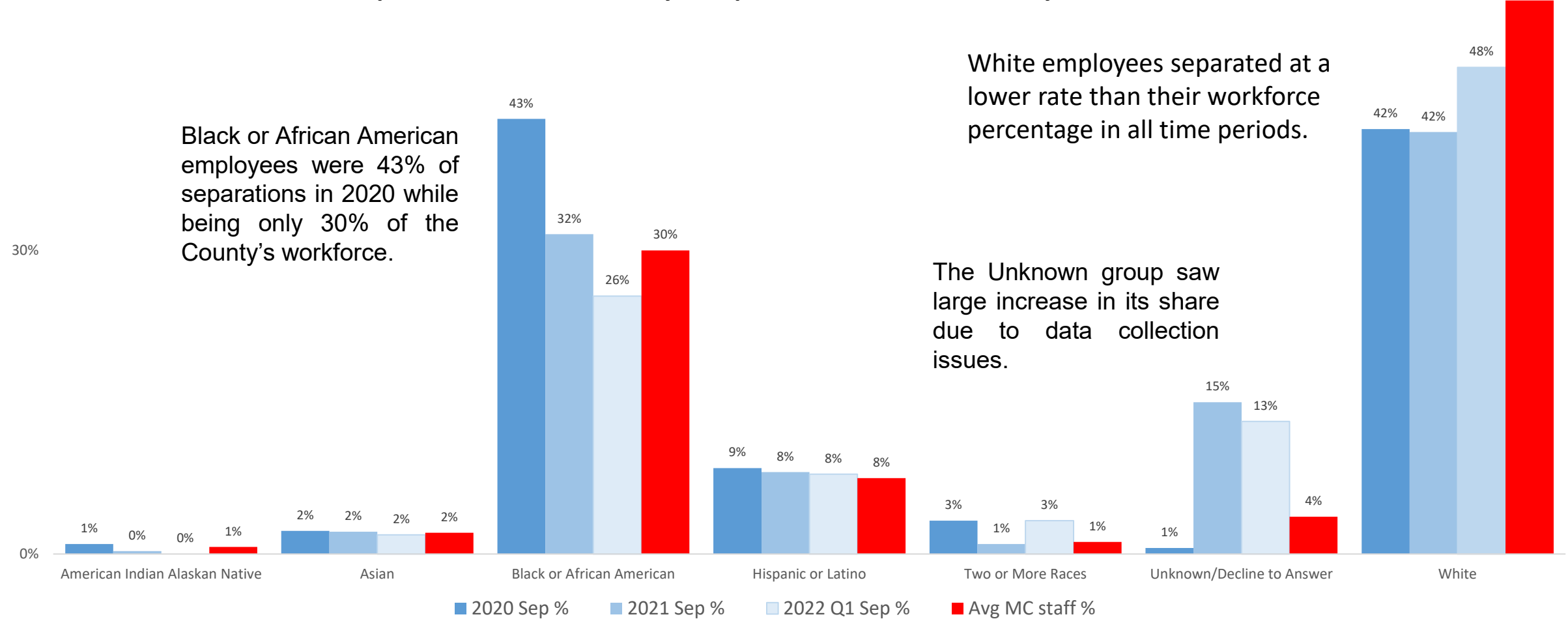
MC Separation Rate Compared to Average for State and Local Governments



Black or African American employees and Hispanic or Latino employees separated at a higher rate than their share of the workforce in most time periods while White employees separated at a lower rate than their share of the workforce in all periods we reviewed.

60%

Separation % Race/Ethnicity Compared to Milwaukee County Workforce %



Black or African American employees were 43% of separations in 2020 while being only 30% of the County's workforce.

White employees separated at a lower rate than their workforce percentage in all time periods.

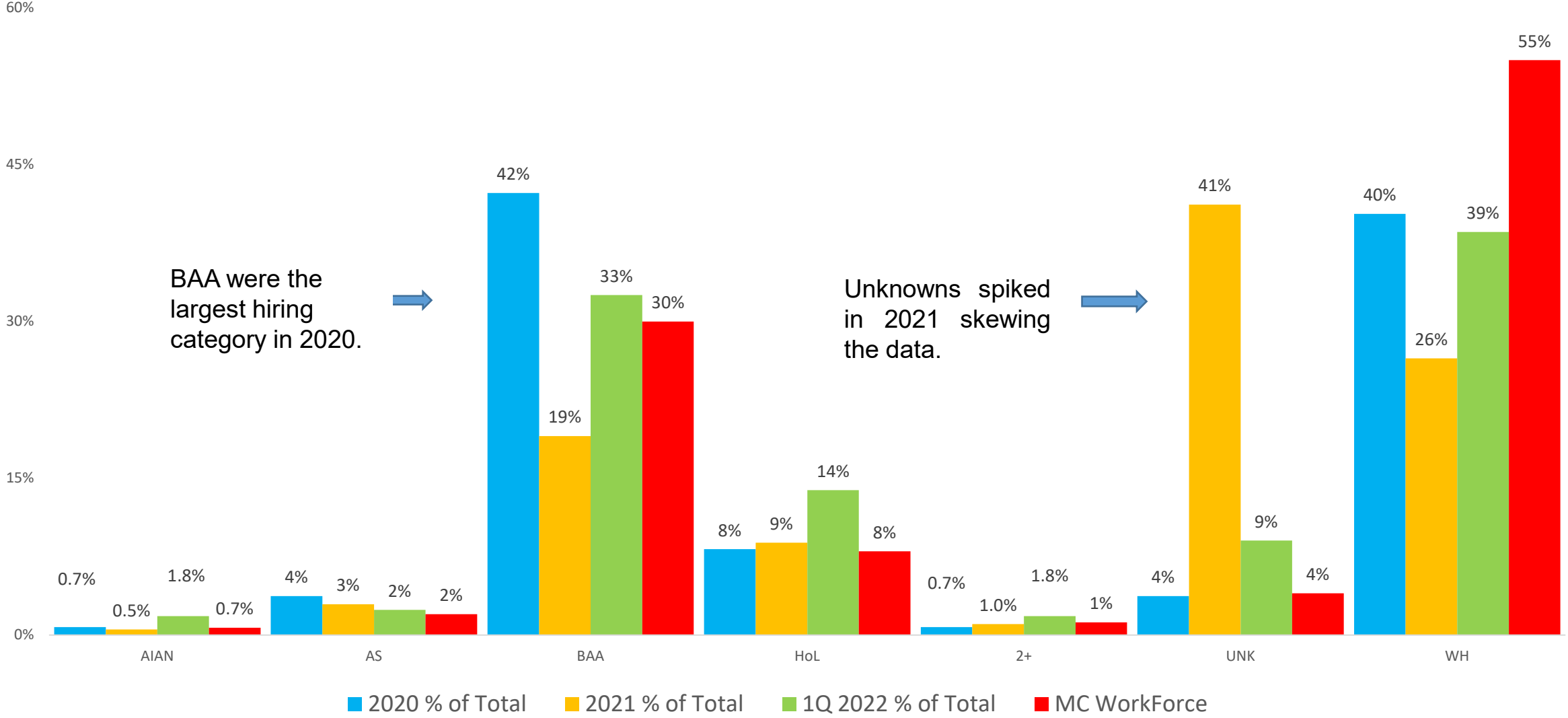
The Unknown group saw large increase in its share due to data collection issues.

The separation data by race and gender showed that employees who identify as Black and African American and female left at a higher rate than their share of the County workforce. Employees who identify as Black or African American and female were 24% of the separations while being 20% of the County’s workforce. For both genders, employees who identify as White separated at a rate lower than their share of the County workforce.

SEPARATIONS BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND GENDER COMPARED TO WORKFORCE						
RACE/ETHNICITY	% of SEPARATIONS		% of WORKFORCE		VARIANCE BETWEEN SEPARATION % AND WORKFORCE %	
	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE
AIAN	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%
AS	0.7%	1.5%	1.2%	0.9%	0.5%	-0.6%
BAA	23.6%	10.9%	19.7%	10.3%	-3.9%	-0.6%
HoL	4.3%	3.9%	4.0%	3.5%	-0.3%	-0.4%
2+	1.1%	1.0%	0.7%	0.5%	-0.5%	-0.5%
UNK	5.5%	4.3%	2.2%	1.6%	-3.3%	-2.7%
WH	19.4%	23.3%	23.8%	30.9%	4.4%	7.6%
TOTAL	54.9%	45.1%	51.9%	48.1%	-3.0%	3.0%

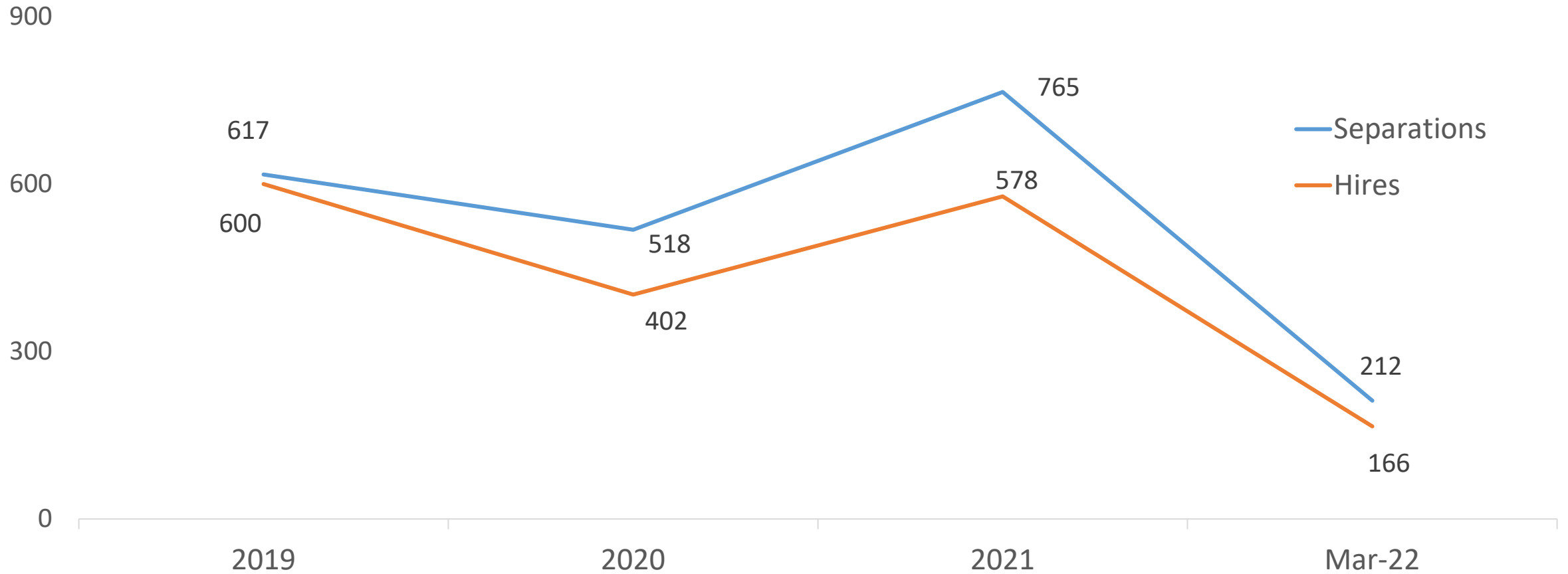
The Black or African American race/ethnicity was the largest percentage of all hires in 2020 at 42%. Employees who identify as Hispanic or Latino saw their share increase from 8% in 2020 to 14% in the first quarter of 2022. The data for 2021 is skewed due to the issue of “unknowns”.

Percentage of Hires by Race/Ethnicity from 2020 to March of 2022



In 2019 the County saw a net loss of 17 employees. That number grew to 116 in 2020 and 187 in 2021. The first quarter of 2022 saw a net loss of 46 employees. During the pandemic the County lost 349 total employees.

Separations and Hires by Year



During the pandemic, the net change by race and gender shows the largest variance between genders occurred with Black or African American employees with 77% of the net change being female while the share of the Black or African American workforce is 66% female. The County had a net loss of 140 employees who identify as Black or Africa American and female.

The Hispanic or Latino group was close behind with 75% of the net change being female while the share of the Hispanic or Latino workforce is 53% female. The County had a net loss of 12 employee who identify as Hispanic or Latino and female.

Net Change by Race/Ethnicity				
	Total Net Change		Total 2022 Workforce	
	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2	0	13	13
Asian	1	2	41	29
Black or African American	-140	-42	592	310
Hispanic or Latino	-12	-4	131	113
Two or more Races	-10	-10	20	17
Unknown/Decline to Answer	65	57	104	87
<u>White</u>	<u>-120</u>	<u>-139</u>	<u>739</u>	<u>961</u>
TOTAL	-213	-136	1,640	1,530

The County implemented 21 Administrative Orders with 77 revisions from March 2020 to March 2022 in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Number of Covid-19 Administrative Orders Issued by Area and By Year 2020–2022				
Primary Topic of Administrative Order	2020	2021	2022	Versions
Payroll	5	1	0	20
Travel	1	0	0	4
Telework	1	0	0	1
Procedures for Responding to Exposure, Symptoms	4	0	0	17
Fiscal	1	0	0	3
Contracts	1	0	0	1
Phased Reopening	1	0	1	13
Face Mask Policy	1	0	0	11
Vaccine Mandate	0	1	0	3
<u>Other</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
Total	17	3	1	77

We grouped the various payroll codes issued under the 26 Administrative Orders related to payroll into like categories to perform our analysis of the use of Covid Paid Leave.

Covid Paid Leave Categories

Covid-paid time off for employees with Covid-19 or symptoms of Covid-19.

Covid Related-paid time off for employees who need to quarantine, have high risk family members or cannot work to do Covid-19 related disruption.

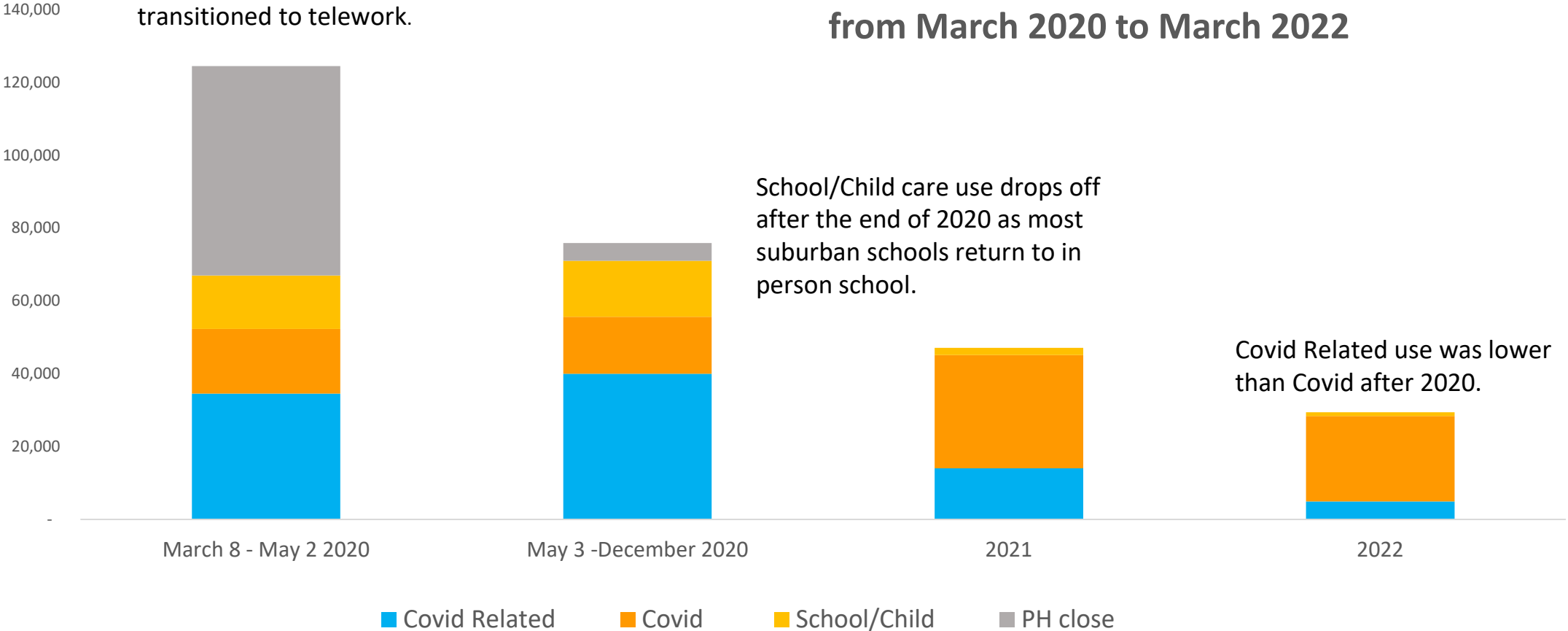
School/Child Care-for employees to care for child with covid, child who is quarantining or has child care or school closure.

PH Close-paid time off for employees who were able to work but could not telework or work onsite due to facility closure.

Different time periods of the pandemic showed employees used different types of Covid paid time off.

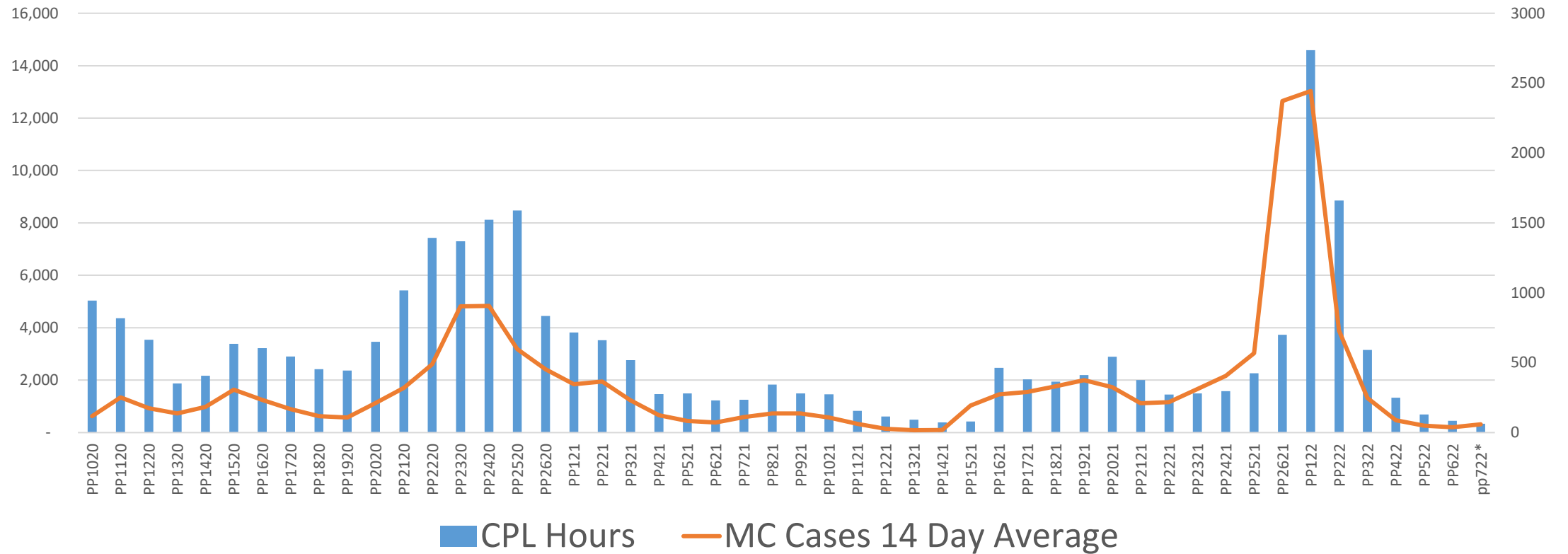
The first eight weeks of the pandemic saw the highest use of PH close as the County closed some facilities and transitioned to telework.

Covid Paid Time off use by Type from March 2020 to March 2022



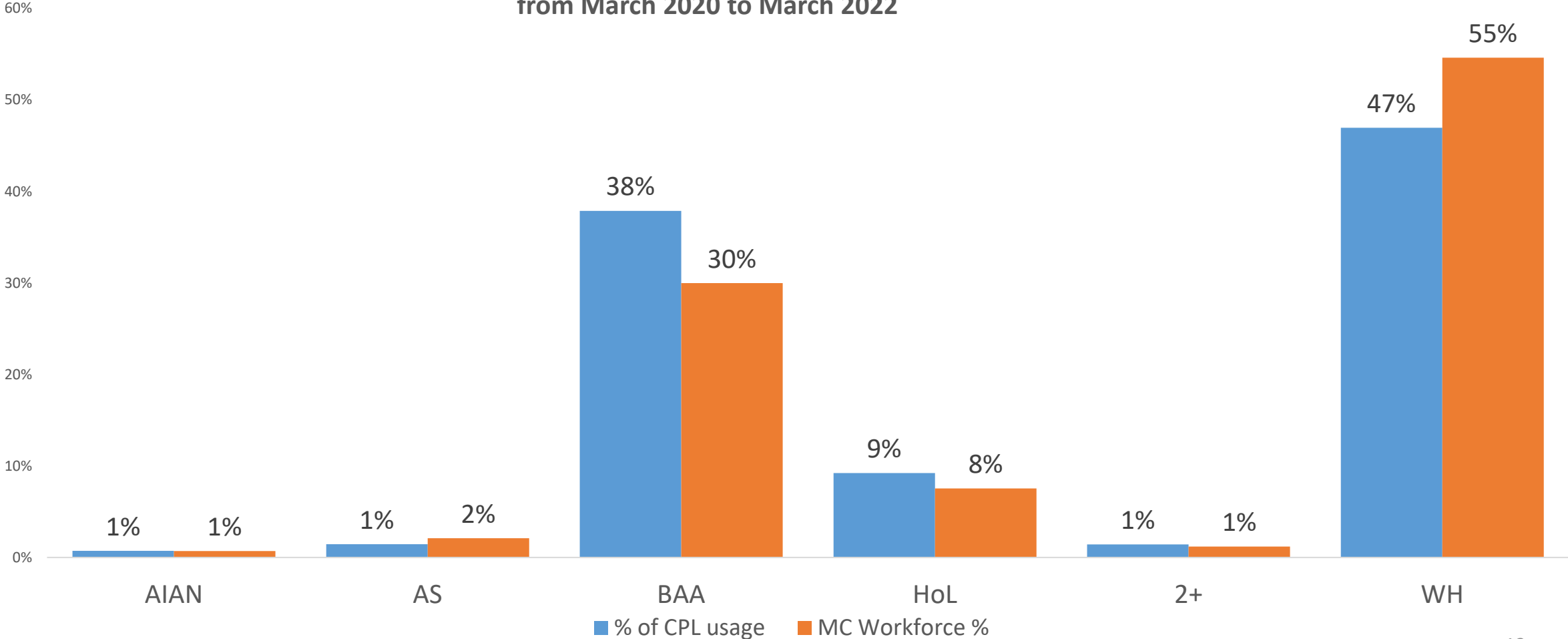
After the first eight weeks of the pandemic, the remaining use of paid time off hours follows the pattern of the caseloads within Milwaukee County.

CPL Hours and MC Cases March 2020 to March 2022

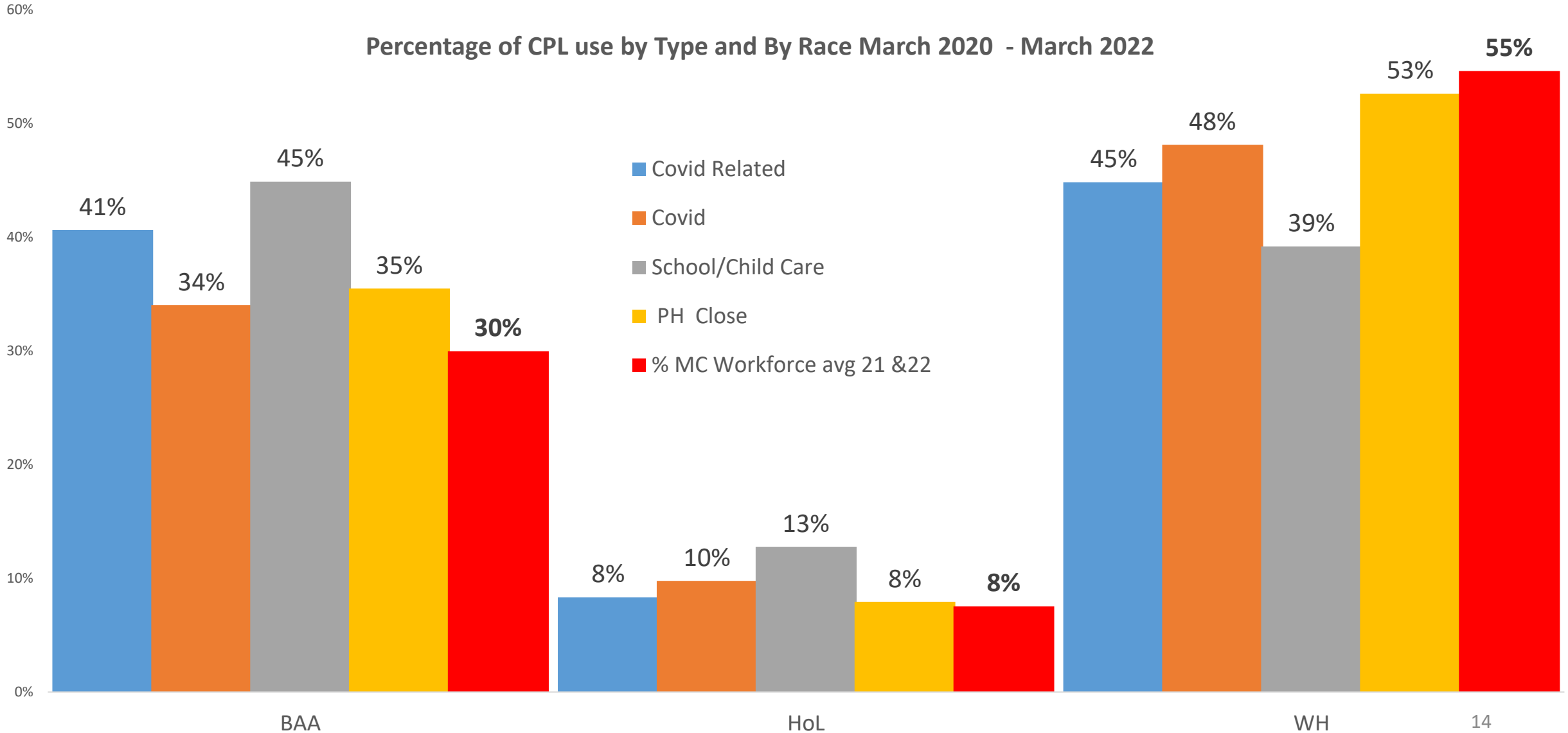


Overall, employees who identify as Black or African American were 38% of Covid paid time off and were 30% of the workforce. Employees who identify as White were 47% of the Covid paid time off and were 55% of the workforce. The remaining race/ethnicities were within 1% of their workforce share with their Covid Paid leave use.

Percentage of Covid Paid Leave Hours and Percentage of the Milwaukee County Workforce from March 2020 to March 2022

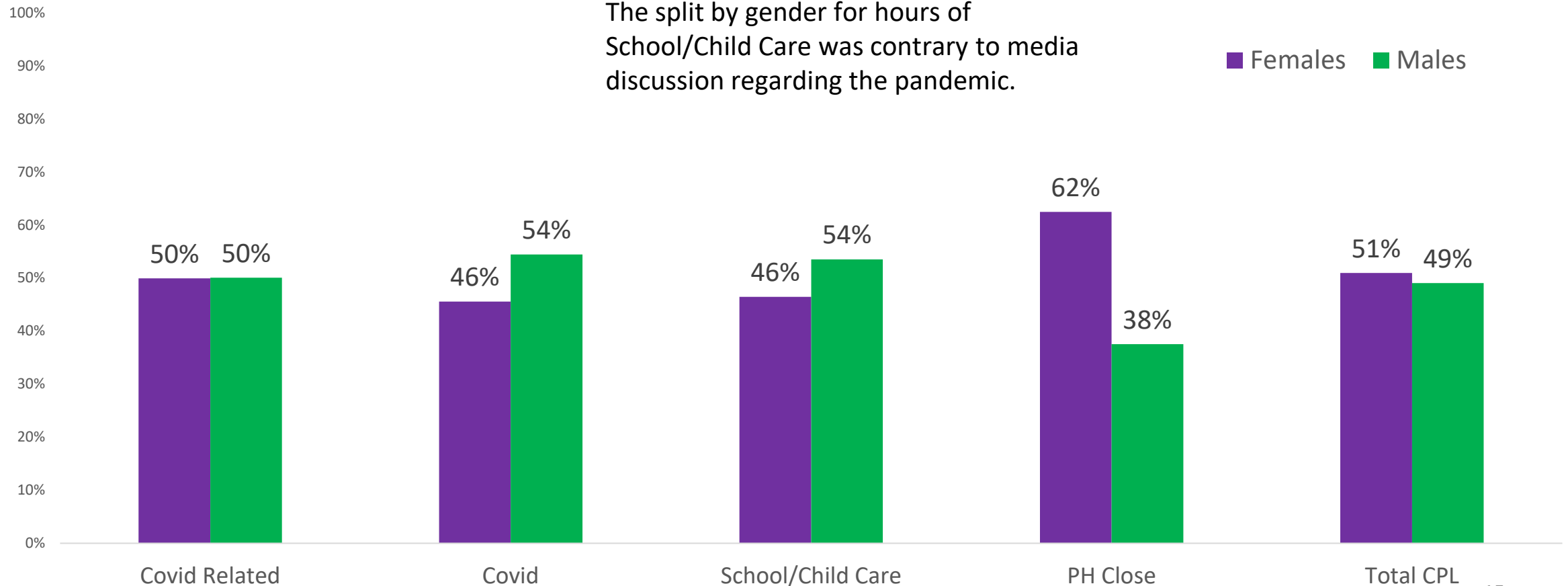


Employees who identify as Black or African American were 45% of the School/Child Care hours and are 30% of the workforce. Employees who identify as Hispanic or Latino were 13% of the School/Child Care hours and are 8% of the workforce. Employees who identify as White were 39% of the School/Child Care hours and are 55% of the workforce.



Hours used by gender were consistent with the County's gender distribution. Analyzing use by type showed the largest gap in the use of PH Close where 62% was used by employees who identify as female. Covid and School/Child Care both saw 54% use by males.

Percentage of CPL Hours by Gender and Type from March 2020 to March of 2022



Premiums and risk recognition pay show use by employees who identify as Black or African American at a higher rate than their share of the overall County workforce. Nearly half of the premium pandemic and risk recognition pay went to employees who identify as Black or African American. Since this pay was not available to all County staff, the use of pay is driven by employees within the eligible jobs. Eligible jobs included Correctional Officers, Registered Nurses and Forensic staff.

Pandemic/Risk Pay by Race/Ethnicity			
Race/Ethnicity	Hours	Percent of Pandemic Pay Hours	Percent of Workforce
American Indian Alaskan Native	1,817	0.6%	0.7%
Asian	5,643	1.8%	2.1%
Black or African American	141,154	44.4%	30.0%
Hispanic or Latino	25,009	7.9%	7.5%
Two or More Races	6,427	2.0%	1.2%
Unknown/Decline to Answer	2,425	0.8%	3.7%
White	135,346	42.6%	54.7%
Total	317,941		

The County Board voted in the fall of 2021 to create premiums for Correctional Officers at the House of Correction, the Sheriff’s Office and the Department of Health and Human Services for employees compliant with the vaccine mandate. Correctional Officer premiums were paid to Black or African American employees at a rate higher than their share of the Correctional Officer staff.

Correctional Office Premium Pay by Race/Ethnicity Compared to Workforce				
Race/Ethnicity	Hours	Percent of Pandemic Pay Hours	Percent of Workforce	Percent of CO Staff 2021
American Indian Alaskan Native	1,187	0.3%	0.7%	0.2%
Asian	2,384	0.6%	2.1%	1.0%
Black or African American	218,473	54.4%	30.0%	50.4%
Hispanic or Latino	36,391	9.1%	7.5%	9.2%
Two or More Races	4,616	1.1%	1.2%	0.2%
Unknown/Decline to Answer	36,842	9.2%	3.7%	1.5%
White	100,619	25.1%	54.7%	26.5%
Total	401,530			

Recommendations for the Department of Human Resources.

Recommendation #1 - DHR review all information available, including those contained in personnel files, exit interviews, and follow-up with direct supervisors to understand why these employees voluntarily separated and come back with a report on the results of this review and targeted retention strategies. DHR should report back to the County Board within one year with results and recommendations on how to increase retention of women of color.

Recommendation #2 - DHR should work with the Office of Corporation Counsel to craft a plan to contact impacted County employees who have unknown listed as their race/ethnicity to request that they update the data. DHR should report back with an updated report on 2021 hiring data as soon as practicable but no later than within one year.

Recommendation #3 - DHR should review employee testimonial excerpts contained in the audit and evaluate whether the proposals could be implemented and studied further and report back to the County Board in six months with the results of the review.

Recommendation #4 - DHR should pull together a pandemic lessons learned from the last two years and issue a guide for future actions including a review of communication of policies to managers and staff.

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