

How we mapped conversations



Maps:

[RENT](#) | [EMPLOYMENT](#) | [FOOD ACCESS](#)

July's round of The Virtual Open Newsroom was divided into three topics: rent, jobs and food. These three topics came out of the discussions that took place in our first round of virtual meetings in May. During those conversations, we found that questions and concerns boiled down to eight topics. While all issues are important, we had to narrow them as a group so we could decide what to focus on. [We asked folks to prioritize which of those topics were top of mind via an online poll.](#) Those ended up being: rent, jobs and food.

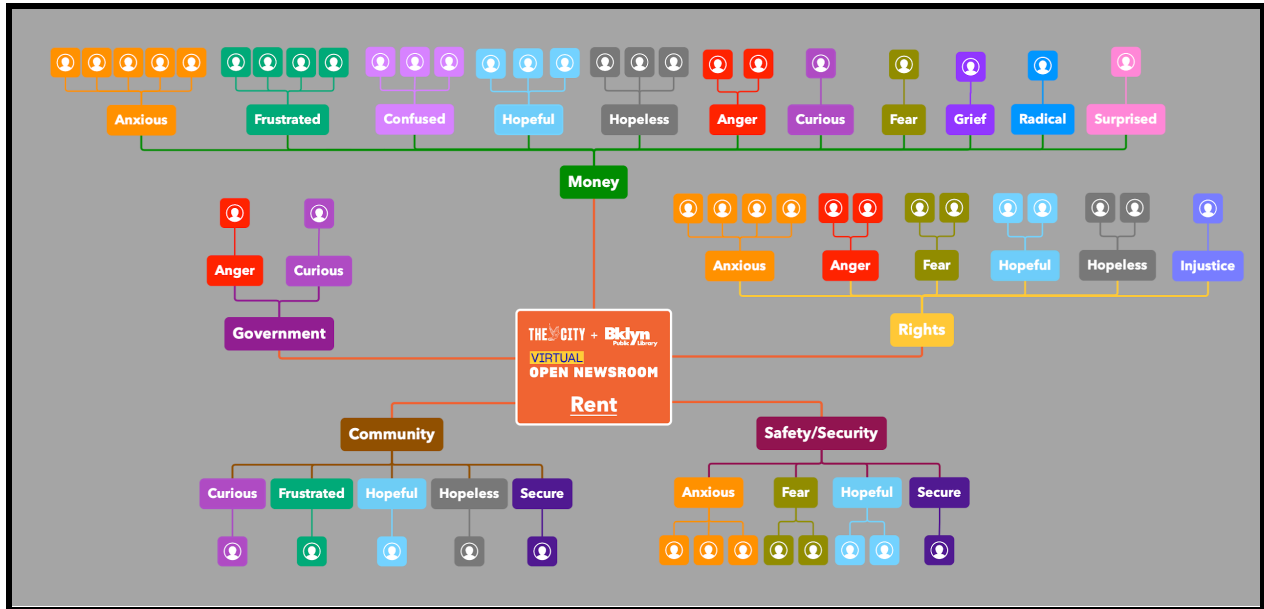
At this month's Virtual Open Newsroom, in partnership with [Local Voices Network](#), we divided our 50+ attendees into smaller rooms to discuss rent, jobs and food. We played a word association game. We asked participants to tell us five words they associated with rent, jobs or food — depending on what meeting they attended. After that, we asked attendees to associate a single feeling word with their previous five words.

We took all of those words, consolidated and condensed them into some common topics and feelings. We mapped all of those words to better understand the commonalities in the conversations.

At the center of the maps below is the topic of the conversation. From the center, you'll notice the common key words from our conversations and then building off of those are the feeling words attendees listed. From those words, there you'll see how many people spoke specifically about a particular line of that conversation. So, for example, you'll see that in the rent conversation, money was mentioned a lot. And a lot of folks said that they were anxious, frustrated or confused. Each of these words have specific experiences attached to them, but these maps show more of a summary of what came up most in the conversations.

The maps are helping us pinpoint what type of experts we want to bring in to the next round of Virtual Open Newsroom to address these issues, questions and concerns. Also, if you have ideas of experts in rent, employment or food access we should talk to, [tell us here](#). An expert is anyone you think has a lot of experience or knowledge in any of these areas.

RENT



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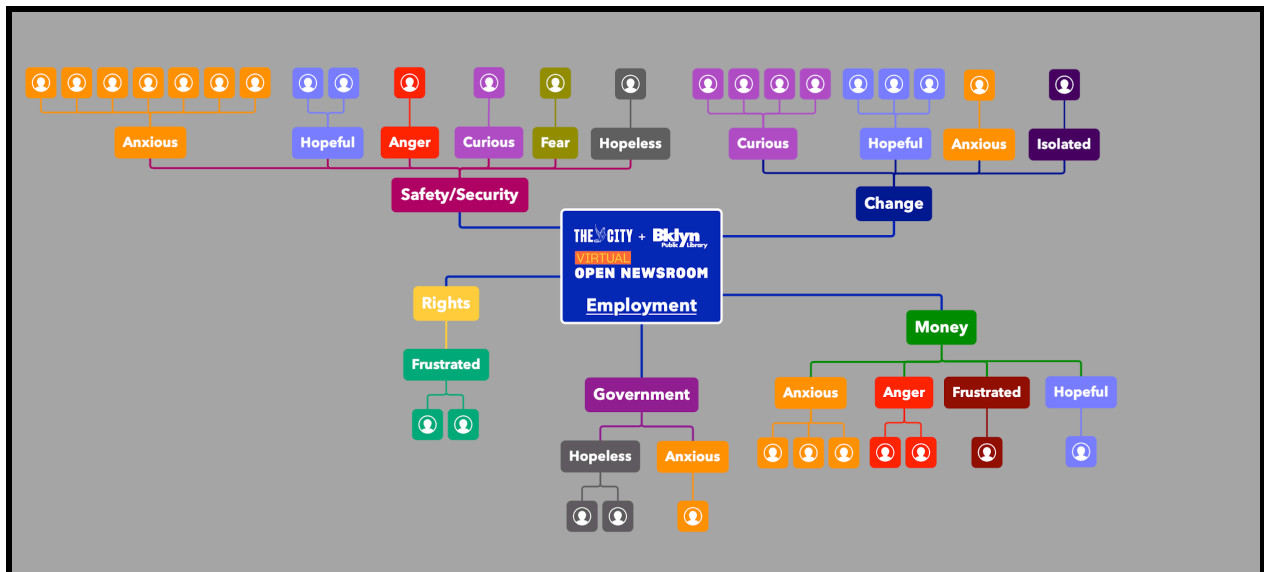
Feeling **anxiety** around rent — and all it encompasses — came up in many of our conversations. For some, their stabilized rent evokes feelings of **hope** while for others paying rent feels like a **hopeless burden**. Folks mentioned being **frustrated** about **negotiating** with their **landlord** about their rent as well as talking about issues like **repairs**. Questions came up around what language renters should know to have these conversations with **landlords**, and what key rights all renters should know about.

Shira shared her concerns about planning a move during COVID-19:

“One question that I have right now during the pandemic is like if you are planning to move and things changed pandemic-wise like things get worse and more restrictions are put back in place, how that will affect moving. ... That just makes it a little hard to plan. Planning to move is hard anyways, but not knowing if how conditions might change just make it a little bit harder.”

Check out the audio [highlight from LVN here](#).

EMPLOYMENT



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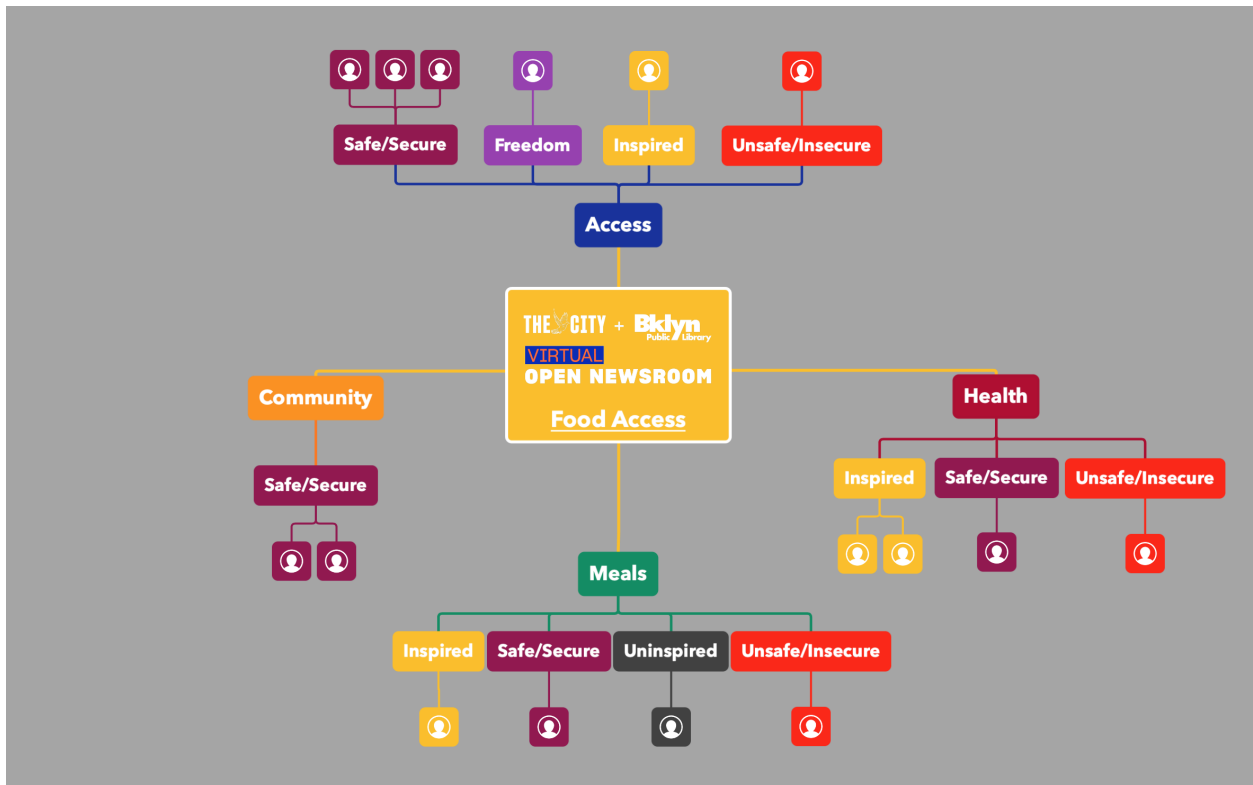
Whether you're an **essential worker**, remote worker, or you're one of the millions of people who have lost their job due to COVID, our work lives have changed dramatically. Our conversations reflected both the **anxiety** and the **curiosity** of this changing landscape. For those who may not be in crisis mode, the term **curiosity** came up. Folks said that due to the pandemic they are considering **new career possibilities**. For those who lost their jobs, we had a lot of questions and concerns about how to navigate the **unemployment** process, loss of health **insurance** and what it means to be a **job seeker** during COVID.

Allison talked about how she's finding positives during COVID-19 by exploring new career options:

"I think I'm just open to jobs that I haven't been open to before, because I'm trying to figure out what types of companies are hiring. I guess I'm being a little bit more flexible with my next job, which is actually a little bit exciting, because it's like I'm considering companies that I never would have considered before. And I'm learning some cool stuff. So that's a positive thing to come out of it."

Check out the audio [highlight from LVN here.](#)

FOOD ACCESS



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Most of the conversation broke down to being **inspired** or **uninspired** and feeling **secure** or **insecure** about food. A lot of folks asked about how to stay **inspired** with limited ingredients and cook **healthy**. For **access**, it was finding **fresh** food—or food at all—and how to navigate **benefits** like SNAP. Questions came up on how to get involved in community-based food efforts like **gardens** and **CSAs**.

Betty spoke about her experience with webinars about food insecurity and hunger during COVID-19:

“I’ve been participating in a lot of Zoom and webinars about food insecurity and hunger and so on and what the different groups are trying to do and in my experience with schools, pre-Covid when they were food donations all the kids are encouraged to bring food to give to people who need it, it’s all canned stuff, expired stuff. That’s what I wrote, like rice, beans. It isn’t that I don’t like rice and beans, it’s just like that’s what people bring when there’s a food collection.”

Check out the audio [highlight from LVN here.](#)

HELP US

Do you know someone who has experience with any of these topics? Is there an organization in your community that helps folks navigate these concerns? We'd love to hear about it. Let us know by [filling out this form](#), emailing us at opennewsroom@thecity.nyc or texting us at 718-866-8674.

Also, if this spurs any ideas or questions, let us know. Contact info same as above.