

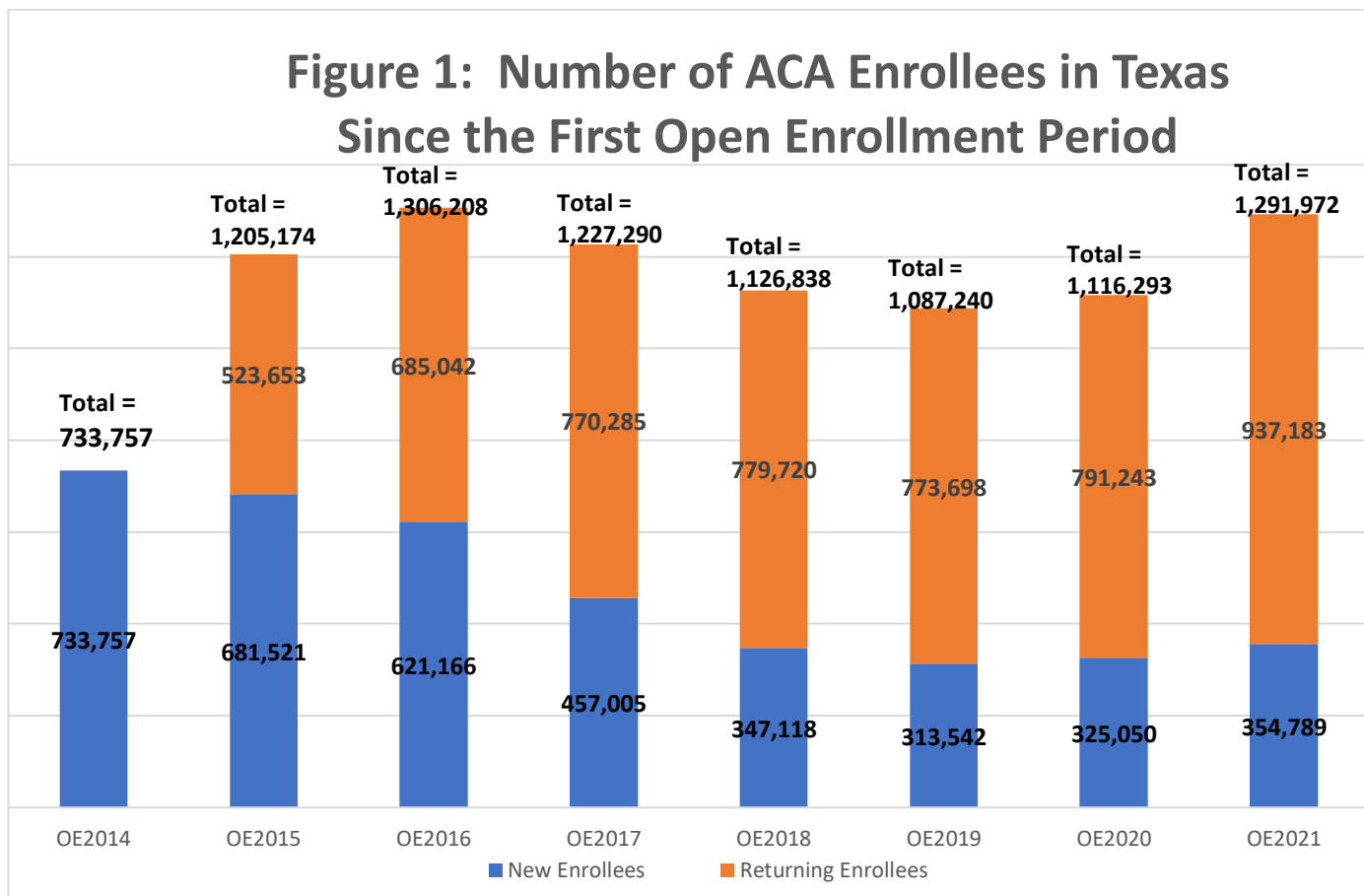
# ANALYSIS OF THE 2020 AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (ACA) ENROLLMENT DATA FOR TEXAS: Key Highlights

**Shao-Chee Sim**  
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Episcopal Health Foundation conducted an analysis of recently released ACA enrollment data for Texas from the [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#) for the Health Insurance Marketplace's 2021 open enrollment period (OEP). In this report, we examine the new enrollment data from the 2021 OEP, November 1, 2020 through December 15, 2020, and compare it to data from the first seven OEPs. We also discuss the implications of the latest ACA enrollment data in Texas in the larger contexts of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis, recent federal policy changes in the ACA marketplace, and state health policy reform.

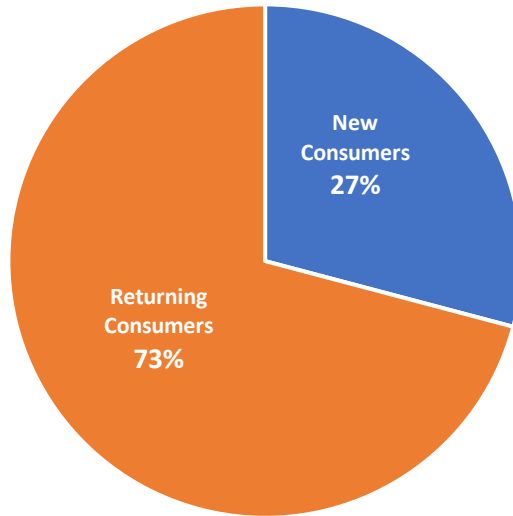
**Finding 1: Total enrollment during the 2021 OEP was 1,291,972, reflecting an increase of 175,679 - or 16% - from the 2020 OEP**

As Figure 1 shows, the increase in the Texas ACA enrollee population during the 2021 OEP is largely driven by the noticeable growth of returning enrollees. Of the Texans who enrolled in ACA coverage in the 2021 OEP, 73% (937,183) were returning enrollees, which is higher than the number of returning enrollees in the 2020 OEP (791,243). Similarly, there is a slight spike in the number of new consumers in the 2021 OEP (354,789) as compared to the 2020 OEP (325,050). 55% of the enrollees were women and 88% lived in urban areas.



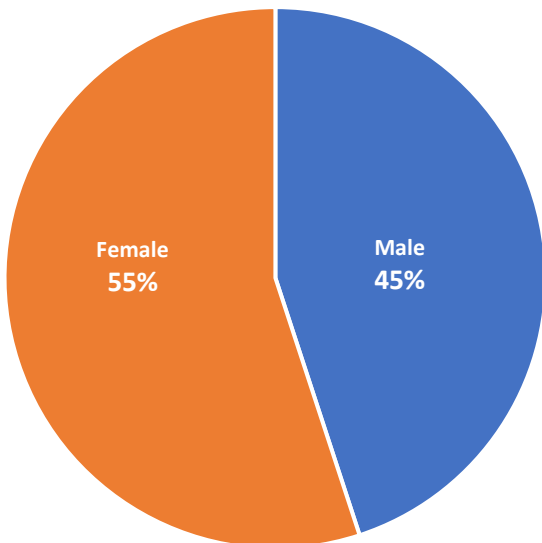
### Most enrollees were **returning consumers**

Percent of total number of ACA Marketplace consumers in Texas who were new consumers versus returning consumers, 2021 OEP



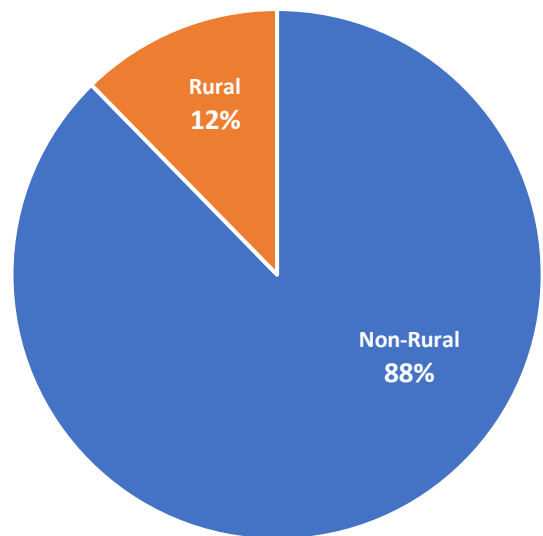
### Most enrollees were **women**

Total number of marketplace enrollees in Texas by gender, 20201 OEP



### Most enrollees lived in **non-rural areas**

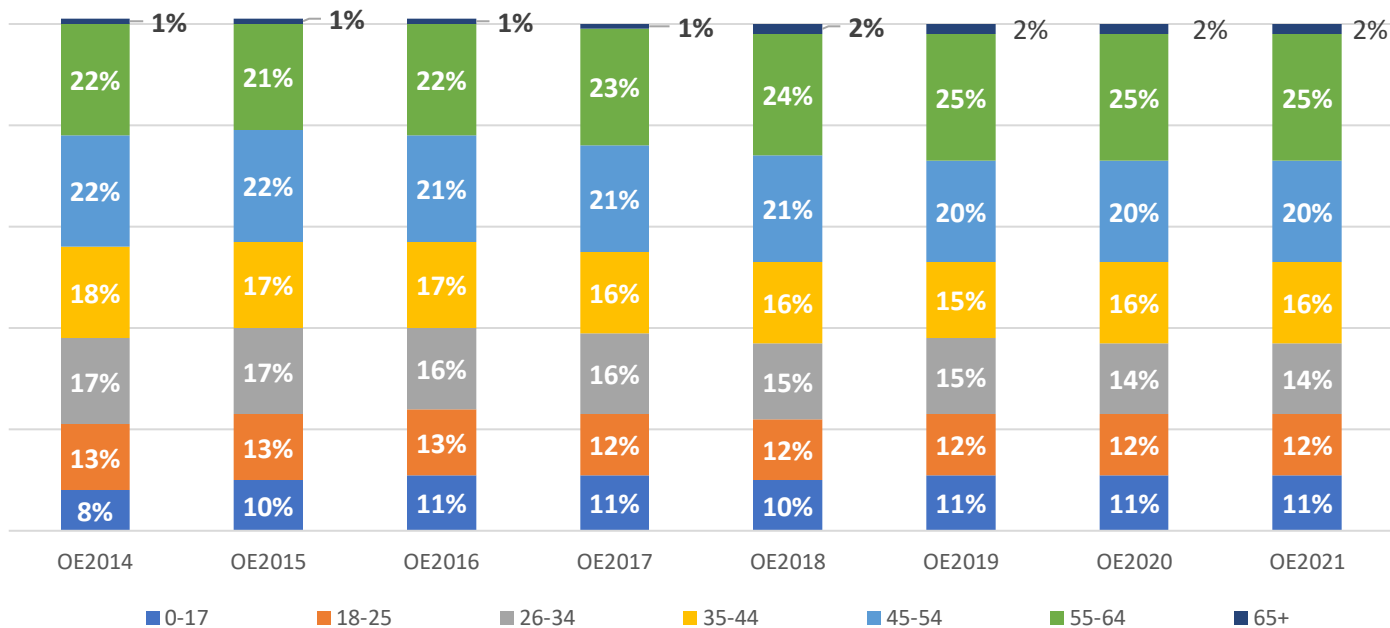
Total number of marketplace enrollees in non-rural and rural areas in Texas 2021 OEP



**Finding 2: Adults ages 55-64, low-income and moderately low-income individuals were among the key demographic groups of Texas enrollees**

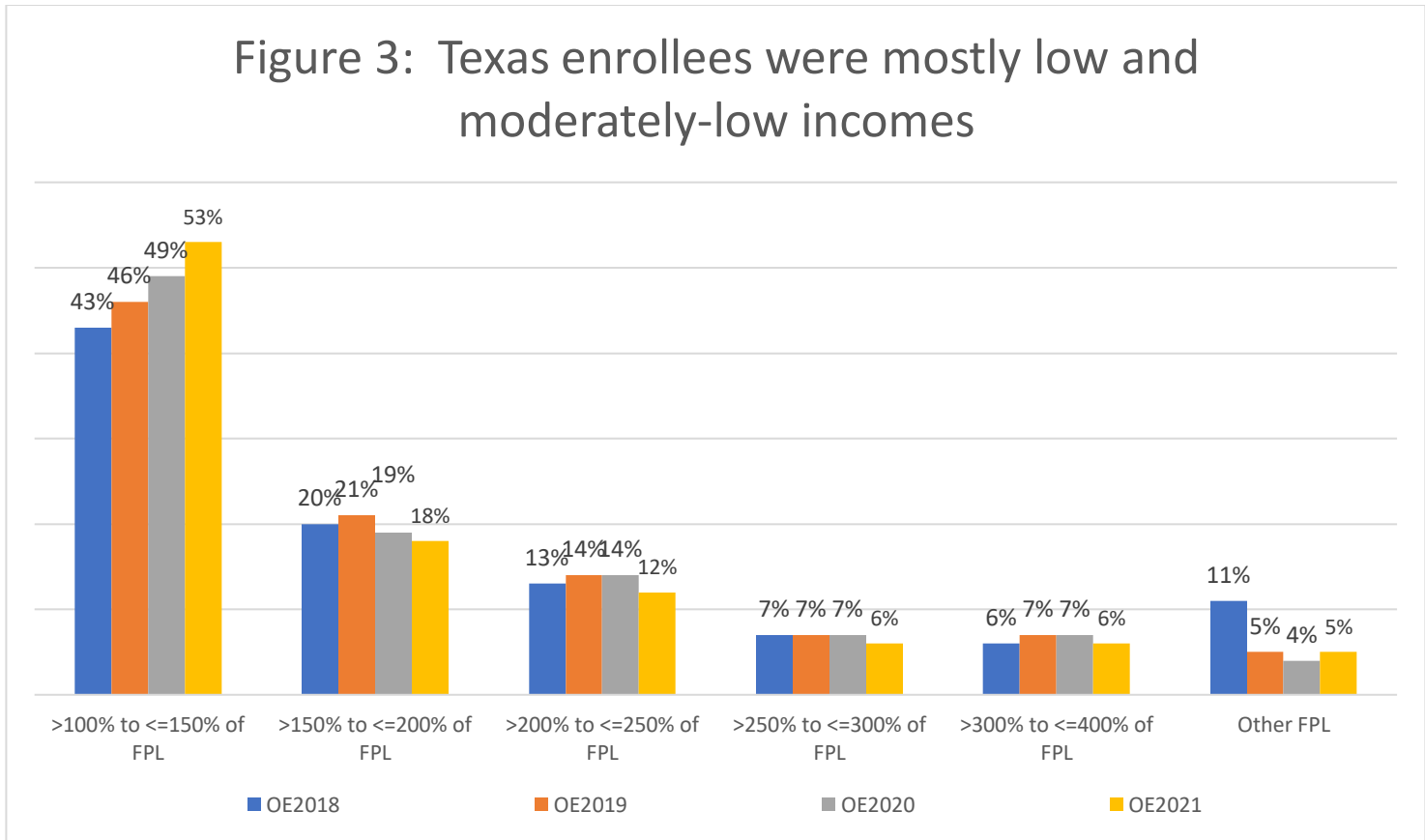
As Figure 2 shows, the age distribution of ACA Enrollees has been consistent across all eight OEPs. During the most recent OEP, adults ages 55-64 comprised 25% of all enrollees, followed by adults ages 45 to 54 at 20%.

Figure 2: Adults ages 55-64 were the largest category of enrollees



As Figure 3 shows, seven in 10 ACA enrollees in Texas were low or moderately low-income during the most recent OEP. This is consistent with 2019.

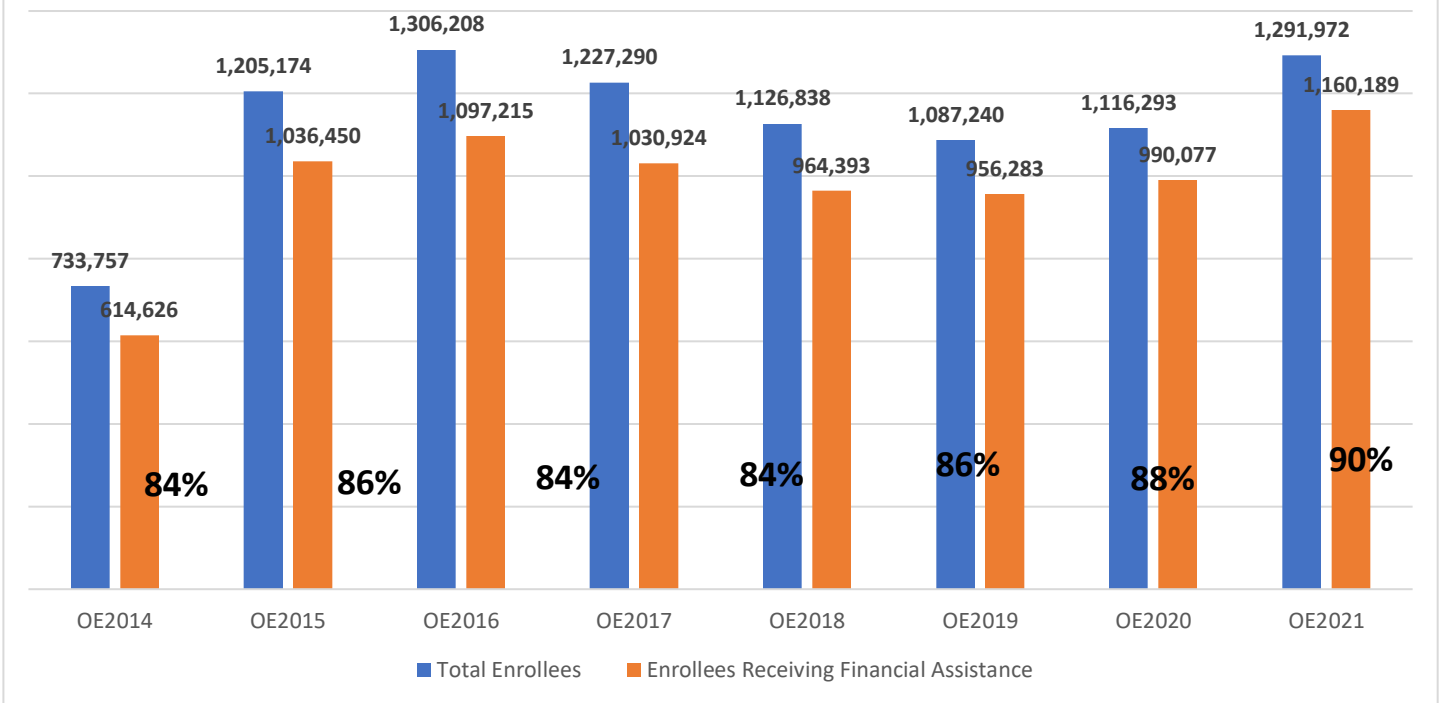
Figure 3: Texas enrollees were mostly low and moderately-low incomes



**Finding 3: Nine in 10 Texas enrollees received financial assistance. Federal tax credits have reduced the costs of premiums by 78%**

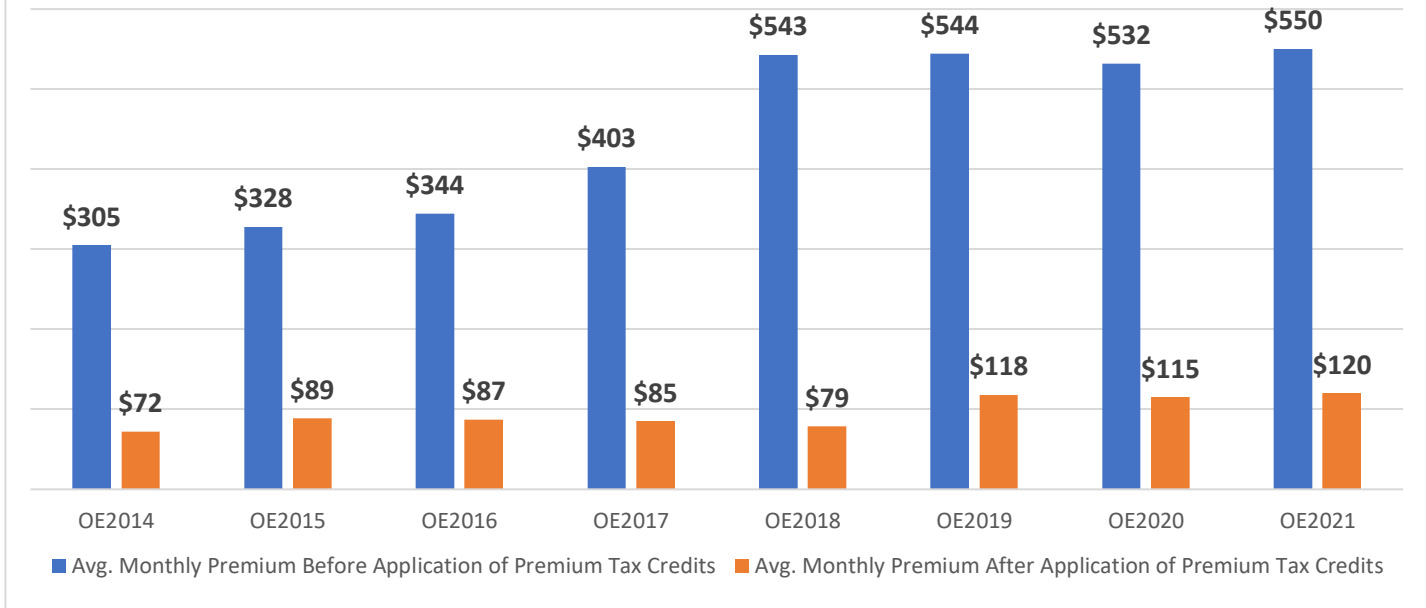
As Figure 4 shows, 1,160,189 Texas enrollees, or 90% of all Texas enrollees, received financial assistance in the form of premium tax credits during the most recent OEP. Again, this trend is consistent across all OEPs.

Figure 4: Number and Percent of Texan Enrollees with Financial Assistance Across 8 OEPs



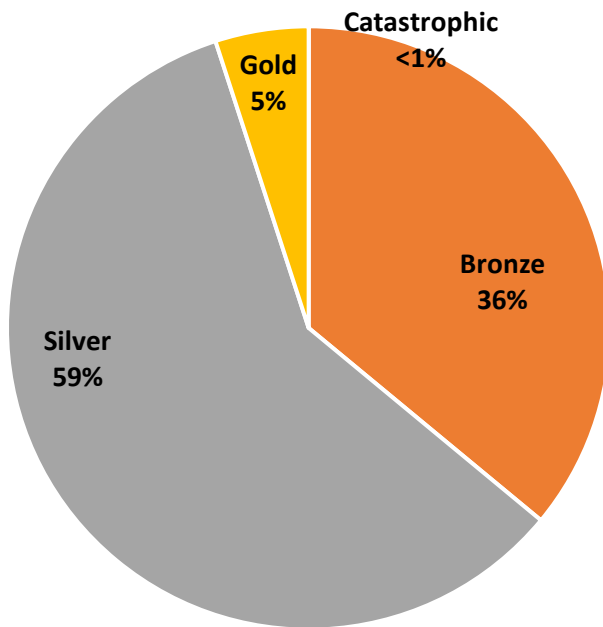
On average, federal financial assistance provided Texas enrollees with a 78% reduction in monthly premiums across all eight OEPs. As Figure 5 shows, average premium costs were \$550 per month in the 2021 OEP, which is consistent with the average premium costs in the prior OEP. When we factor in the federal tax credits, the average cost of the premiums for enrollees who received tax credits in the 2021 OEP dropped by 78% to \$120 per month.

**Figure 5: ACA Tax Credits Cut Premium Costs to Texans by 78%**



Similar to previous years, 59% of ACA enrollees selected a silver plan, while 36% of enrollees selected a bronze plan.

### Most Texas enrollees selected a Silver or Bronze plan



#### Discussion: What are the data telling us?

Similar to previous years, the 2021 OEP, which runs from November 1, 2020 to December 15, 2020, faced a highly uncertain policy environment. A host of external factors, such as the proposed public charge rule and the challenges to the legality of the ACA led to confusion among eligible populations. More importantly, Texas and the rest of the country also faced tremendous challenges in confronting the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Many ACA enrollment education and assistance activities had to be held in a virtual environment. Despite these issues, we are seeing a noticeable increase in the total ACA enrollment in Texas.

Close to 1.3 million Texans with low to moderate incomes enrolled in the ACA marketplace, 90% received federal tax credits to subsidize their premium costs under the ACA. In fact, as a result of federal tax credits, the average cost of premium for Texas enrollees was only \$120 per month. This clearly demonstrates there is a great need for affordable health insurance coverage for low-income Texans. Further, nearly three quarter of the ACA enrollee population were returning customers. This clearly suggests close to 1 million Texans who were enrolled in ACA healthcare coverage want to keep their affordable health coverage.



Under the American Rescue Plan Act, the federal government expanded the eligibility requirements of the ACA marketplace for 2 years. It increases subsidies to those already eligible for federal subsidies and expands subsidies to people earning income over 400% federal poverty guideline (FPL). According to [estimate](#) released by Department of Health and Human Services, 2.5 million Texans may be eligible to receive these additional subsidies. As the federal government extended the special enrollment period to August 15, 2021, more low-income uninsured Texans will have the opportunity to enroll in ACA marketplace coverage.

Texas already experienced the highest uninsured rate in the country prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the impact of economic fallout and healthcare crisis during the pandemic continue to unfold, we urge policy makers to consider alternatives to expand health insurance coverage for low-income Texans who need affordable coverage.