

COVID-19 Response in Ottumwa

What can be learned from community stakeholders?

The University of Iowa Prevention Research Center for Rural Health (UI PRC-RH) asked community leaders in Ottumwa, IA about current relief efforts for COVID-19, needs that might not have been met, and vulnerable groups that might not have been reached. We received responses from **37 local stakeholders** in May 2020. Survey highlights are shared here.

We asked Ottumwa stakeholders:

Has the physical and mental well-being of Ottumwa residents gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse since the COVID-19 pandemic became widespread in the United States?

60% said physical health has gotten worse

86% said mental health has gotten worse

We asked Ottumwa stakeholders:

What are the biggest challenges facing the Ottumwa community in the next few months?



Safety in the community and following guidelines



Understanding and preventing the spread of COVID-19



Rebuilding local economy



Mental and physical well-being



Food insecurity



Financial challenges



Children's schooling and education



Maintaining activities for children (band, dance, sports, etc.)



Returning to work and job security

The top 5 positive and negative coping strategies stakeholders have observed in community residents include:



More screen time



More time with family & friends living in the same space



Drinking more alcohol



Fewer new social connections



6ft

Social distancing activities to see friends and family that do not live in the same space

What is coping?

Skills used in uncertain and changing times to manage mental, emotional, and physical stress.

Providing healthy coping strategies is important!

We asked Ottumwa stakeholders:

On a scale of 1-10, how much of a priority is providing healthy coping strategies?

- The average score was: **7.6/10**
- The most common score was: **10/10**

Underserved or vulnerable populations

Jobs/
joblessness

When asked about what needs were being overlooked in Ottumwa during the COVID-19 crisis, stakeholders described the following themes:

Housing needs & homelessness

Maintaining social connection

Mental health



In response to the need for healthy coping strategies, the UI PRC-RH is planning a community volunteer-based coping project to help Ottumwa community members be connected to the resources they need!

Updates will be shared to our Facebook page:



61%

of stakeholders said that there are groups in Ottumwa whose needs are not addressed during COVID-19.

Ottumwa stakeholders shared the following concerns about community members' needs during COVID-19.

"Safe place for many homeless we have in this town."

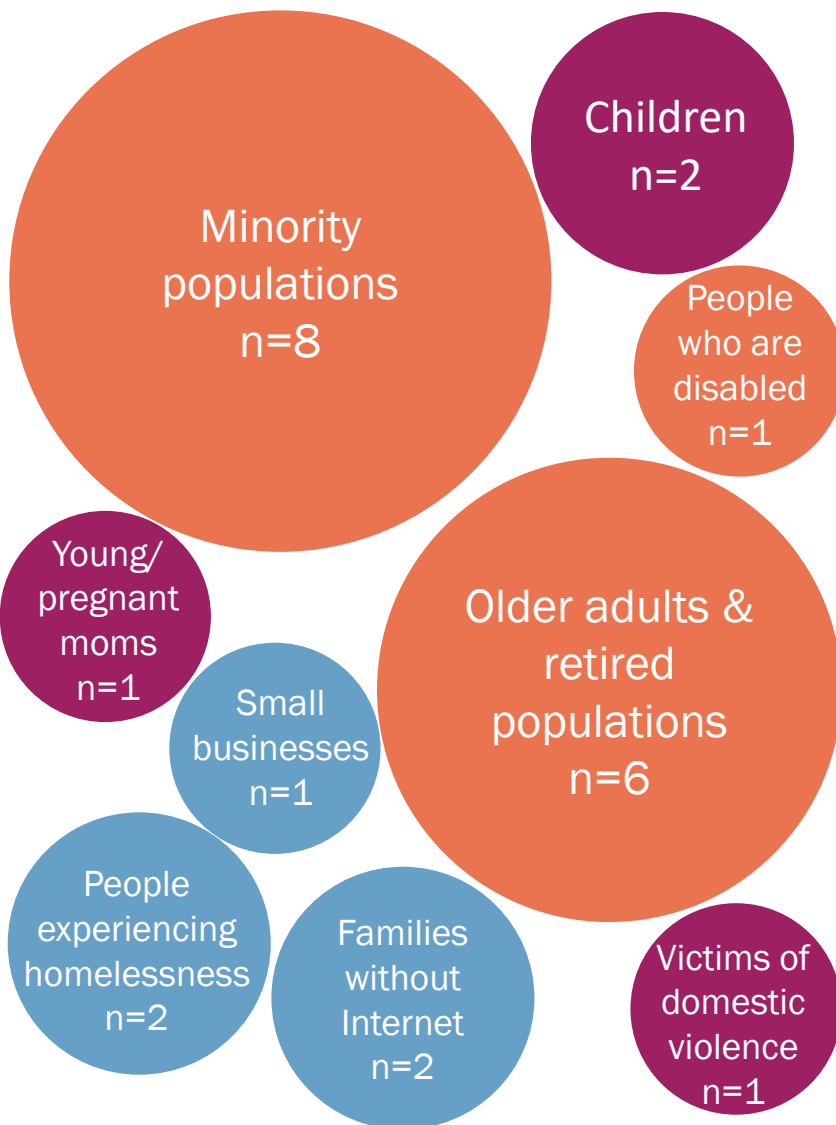
"Knowledge of resources [for] children not in school to receive meals."

"Needs of underserved audiences."

"Protection for our immigrant community."

"Loneliness in elderly, whether in nursing homes or public housing or independent living situations."

"Kids for whom school was their social safety net."



Ottumwa stakeholders listed these community groups as being more vulnerable during COVID-19.

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What can be learned from community stakeholders?

Participating organizations were from:

- Community non-profits
- Schools and education services
- Child development services
- Assisted living facilities
- Primary health care services
- Mental health care services
- Private businesses in the community
- And more!

Majority of organizations report that they have done something to support their community during COVID-19:

87%

Some of the actions taken by organizations in Ottumwa include:



Telehealth services



Online educational opportunities



Curbside pickup or delivery options for goods



Providing time or materials to make masks



Thank you to the stakeholders from Ottumwa who helped identify the current COVID-19 needs and efforts in their community!

The UI PRC-RH is posting healthy coping resources for Ottumwa residents on the Active Ottumwa Facebook page.

Connect with us to learn more!

- Facebook: [@OttumwaOnTheMove](https://www.facebook.com/OttumwaOnTheMove)
- Or, Scan our QR Code:

