

**United Ways of Iowa
Covid-19
Financial Impact Survey 2020
comparison to the**

**Story County Quality of Life Alliance
2020 Data from the
Community
Needs Assessment**

The majority of the Story County Quality of Life Alliance (SCQLA) 2020 Needs Assessment, including a survey of 567 Story County residents, was conducted prior to the coronavirus pandemic. A Delphi process was used by SCQLA to determine whether the pandemic impacted the health and human service priorities previously identified. The insights of the 13 Story County health and human service experts were included in the final ranking of 6 top priorities: 1) mental health services, 2) food security, 3) housing, 4) child care, 5) suicide prevention, and 6) income.

In late 2020, United Ways of Iowa (UWI) conducted a statewide study to determine the financial impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. Their purpose was to inform the best supports for Iowa ALICE households (Asset Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) in long-term recovery and beyond. In Story County 364 residents participated in this wide-ranging survey conducted late September through early November 2020. The first question of the UWI survey asked “What are your top concerns about the upcoming weeks/months?”

The attached document compares the two studies and then looks at what the results to this first UWI question might say to the data collected during the SCQLA study.

Findings Summary: Mental health was identified as a top priority in both the SCQLA and UWI studies. Income (economic welfare or personal financial status) ranked as the #2 concern in the UWI study as compared to the #6 concern in the earlier SCQLA study. Childcare was a concern as well during the pandemic, ranking as the #3 concern in the UWI study, compared to the #4 concern in the SCQLA study. Food Security and Housing, while falling comparatively in the aggregate rankings on the UWI study to #4 and #5 respectively, actually were key concerns of households with limited incomes and for people of color during the pandemic. This points to the usefulness of disaggregating data where possible.

For the full UWI report email unitedway@uwstory.org

**United Ways of Iowa Covid-19 Financial Impact Survey 2020:
What The Story County Results Say About and/or Add to the SCQLA 2020 Data:**

Research at a Glance:

	SCQLA 2020 Needs Assessment	United Ways of Iowa Covid-19 Financial Impact Survey 2020 (hereafter referred to as “UWI-UNI”)
Methods and Timeframe of Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the American Community Survey data for Story County and existing data from 13 key SCQLA partners – Fall 2019 • A survey of 567 people who live in Story County – January/February 2020. (ISU students were surveyed in late 2019) • Two focus groups involving 15 key community members from Nevada and Zearing – February/March 2020 • A panel of 13 Story County health and human service experts who directly observe needs during COVID 19 – October 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 12-15 minute survey completed by 364 residents of Story County from September 28 – November 2, 2020
Survey Purpose/ Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet every-5-years request by the Iowa Department of Public Health. This assessment guides local educational programming and services. • The 2020 needs assessment focused on: “What are the most important health and human service needs of the people of Story County and why?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist the United Ways of Iowa in assessing the statewide impact of COVID-19 on ALICE (Asset-Limited Income-Constrained Employed) population in Iowa to inform how to best support Iowa ALICE families throughout long-term recovery and beyond.
Survey Respondent Characteristics		
Geographic Representation	Unknown	53% live in zip codes 50010, 50012, 50014 (Ames); 12.1% live in zip code 50201 (Nevada); 9.1% in zip code 50161 (Maxwell); the remaining live in other parts of Story County
Race / Ethnicity	Unknown	94.5% White, 2.5% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1.1% “Other,” 0.8% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.5% Black or African American, 2.2% “Choose not to answer” ⁱ . Note: that 16 individuals, or 4.4% of all respondents identified as Hispanic/Latino; most are included in the “White” category above.

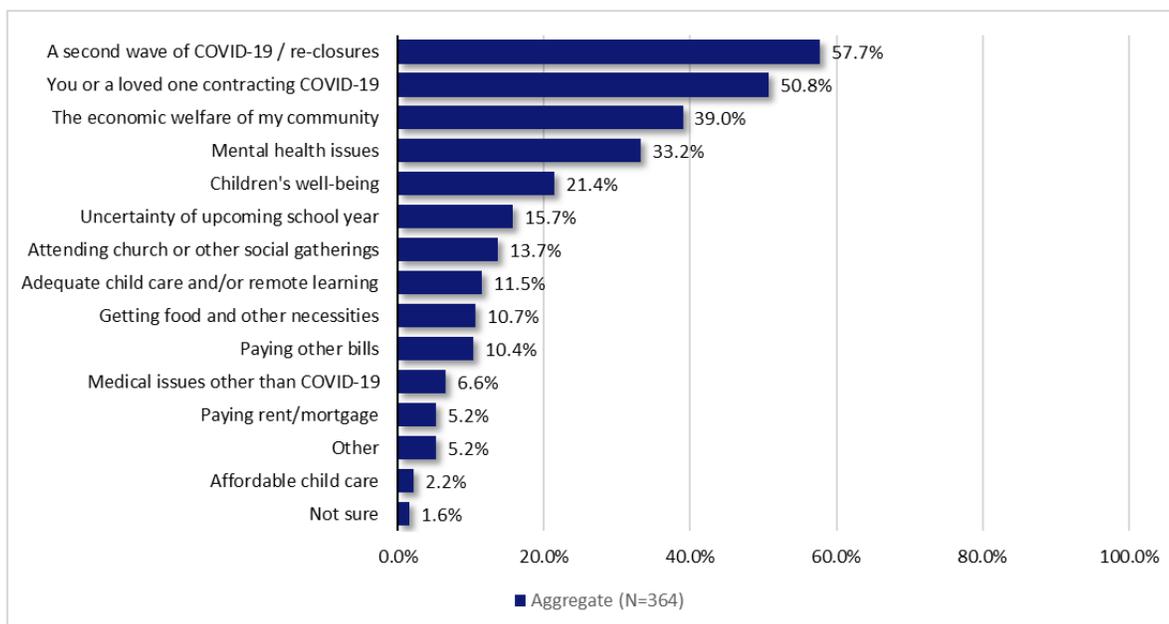
Age	Highest number of respondents: 21.7% were ages 25-34, 21.3% were ages 35-44, and 16.8% were ages 55-64	Highest number of respondents: 26.4% were ages 30-39, 23.6% were ages 40-49, and 17.9% were 50-59
Gender	75.1% female. 22.4% male. 2.5% choose not to disclose	78.8% female. 19.8% male. 0.5% non-binary/third gender. 0.5% prefer not to answer. 0.3% prefer to self-describe
Health Insurance	93.1% Yes. 6.9% No	Unknown
Income Level	Unknown	9.4% Below FPL, 14.0% ALICE, 16.2% Sufficient Survival, 19.0% Stable, 35.1% Very Stable Income ⁱⁱ
Highest Education Completed	Unknown	76.7% had a college degree (B.A. or above). 16.2% had some college but no degree. 9.1% had an associate degree. 5.5% had high-school degree or equivalent. 1.4% had less than a high school degree ⁱⁱⁱ

SCQLA Findings: Across the four sources of data, the top health and human service needs are (most important listed first):

- Mental health services
- Food security
- Housing
- Child Care
- Suicide Prevention
- Income

These needs were determined from the personal and professional observations of people participating in the survey, focus groups, and panel.

UNI/UWI Covid-19 Study Findings: Top 3 concerns for Story County residents during the COVID-19 pandemic were:



Rank Comparison:

An effort was made to compare the SCQLA 2020 results with the responses to the first UWI-UNI survey question: “What are your top concerns about the upcoming weeks/months?” The goal in doing so was to determine what, if anything, the UWI-UNI survey might say to the data collected during the earlier SCQLA study. A comparison is complicated by a few factors:

1. *The options given vary.* For example, SCQLA respondents were given the choice of “health care” as a top health and human service need, with 66.3% of respondents rating this as highly important. UWI-UNI respondents were given the choices of “you or a loved one contracting COVID-19” and “medical issues other than COVID-19” as top concerns, and 50.8% and 6.6% selected these.
2. *The SCQLA options did not provide the same level of specificity as provided in the options of the UWI-UNI study.*
3. *The timeframe for consideration was different:* While SCQLA asked about the top health and human service needs (assuming for the present and foreseeable future), the UWI-UNI survey was specifically about the upcoming weeks/months of the pandemic.

Nonetheless, a rough comparison can be made. For the UWI-UNI study, the “ranking” provided is based on summing the related options (highlighted in red):

Health/Human Service Need	SCQLA 2020	UWI-UNI Covid-19 2020
Mental Health	#1	<p>#1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Mental health issues” were marked as a concern for 33.2%. An additional 21.4% marked “children’s well-being” as a key concern, arguably also a mental health choice. Taken together, 54.6% indicated these were top concerns. • When broken down by income level, we see that households with Stable and Very Stable income were somewhat more likely to rank mental health and children’s well-being as top concerns over households with lower incomes.
Food security	#2	<p>#4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Getting food and other necessities” was marked as a top concern for 10.7% of respondents. • When broken down by income level, we see that households with limited incomes were much more likely to rank food security as a top concern, with 29.4% of below FPL and 17.6% of ALICE households, vs. 5.8% and 5.5% of Stable and Very Stable.
Housing	#3	<p>#5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Paying rent/mortgage” was marked as a top concern for 5.2% of respondents. • When broken down by income level, we see that households with limited incomes were much more likely to rank housing issues as a top concern, with 38.2% of below FPL and 15.7% of ALICE, vs. 2.9% and 0.0% for Stable and Very Stable. In fact, for households below FPL, housing ranked as the #2 concern (tied with mental health), only after “paying other bills” at 41.2%.

Childcare	#4	#3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Adequate child care and remote learning” was marked as a concern for 11.5% and “affordable childcare” for 2.2%. Total = 13.7%. • When broken down by income level, we see comparable levels of concern across income levels, with slightly higher concern among Very Stable households.
Suicide Prevention	#5	Not explicitly mentioned
Income	#6	#2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Economic welfare of my community” was marked as a top concern by 39.0%, with 10.4% marking that “paying other bills” was also a concern. Total= 49.4%. • When broken down by income level, we see that economic welfare broadly conceived was a higher concern among households with higher incomes (49.3% for Stable and 49.2% for Very Stable vs. 14.7% for below FPL). “Paying other bills” was ranked the top concern among households with below FPL incomes (41.2%) compared to 7.2% and 0.0% for Stable and Very Stable households respectively. Given that households with lower incomes were much more severely impacted by the economic shifts of the pandemic (see p.10 & 11, p.13), this is not surprising.^{iv}

Important Note About Race/Ethnicity: The number of respondents of color in the UWI-UNI study is very small: 14 out of 358 identified their race as something other than white/Caucasian and 16 identified their ethnicity as Hispanic/Latino. As a result, the conclusions are likely of limited reliability. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that there were apparent differences in survey responses between white respondents and respondents of color. For example, 33.4% of whites/Caucasians and 35.7% for people of color (excluding Hispanic/Latinos) marked **mental health** as a top concern, while 44% of Hispanics/Latinos selected this. Similarly, 10.2% of whites/Caucasians selected **food insecurity** as a top concern, 19% of Hispanics/Latinos selected this, and 21.4% of people of color (excluding Hispanics/Latinos) said hunger was a top concern.

As seen in the table above, survey respondents also had – in many cases - markedly different answers depending on their income level. As such, it could be helpful for SCQLA to collect and disaggregate data on both income levels and race/ethnicity of respondents in future Story County needs assessments.

ENDNOTES:

ⁱ The respondents in the UWI-UNI study were *disproportionately* white/Caucasian, at 94.5%.

The race and ethnicity break down in Story County is as follows, as per the American Community Survey 2019:

Ethnicity Groups	Percentage Estimate
White/Caucasian	84.20%
Black/African American	3.20%
Hispanic/Latino	3.70%
Asian	6.80%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	0.00%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.40%

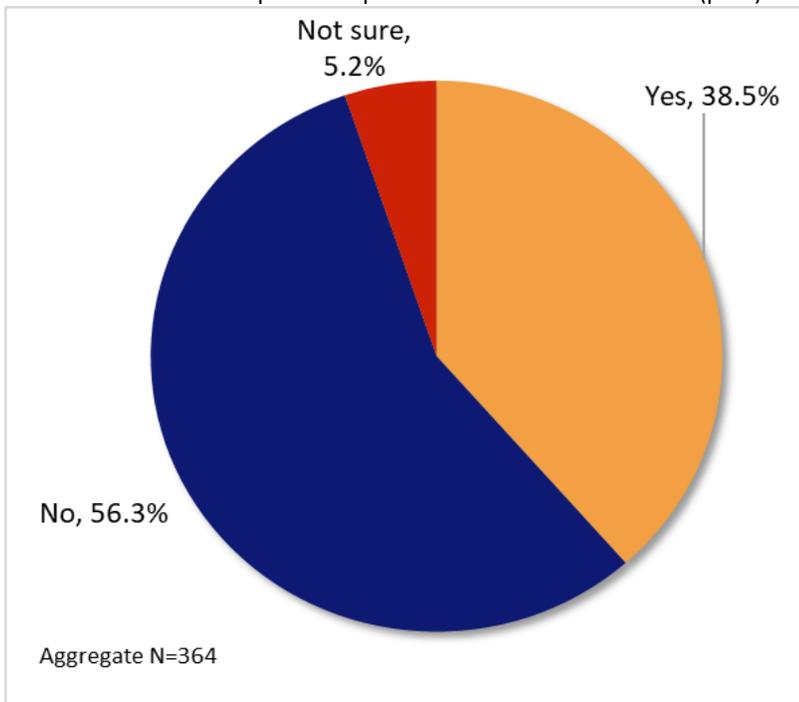
ii Respondents in the UWI-UNI study were *disproportionately* higher-income (Stable and Very Stable), at close to 55% of all respondents. According to the American Community Survey, 2019 (as reported on p.12 of the UWI-UNI report):

Income Level – Story County population	Percentage Estimate
Below FPL	17.6%
ALICE	22.6%
Sufficient Survival	19.5%
Stable	14.1%
Very Stable	26.3%

iii In the UWI-UNI survey, respondents were *disproportionately* those with more formal education. American Community Survey, 2019, 1-Year Estimate finds that:

Educational Attainment (Adults 25+) – Story County	Percentage Estimate
College degree or higher	51.5%
Some college but no degree	18.7%
Associate’s degree	10.4%
High school diploma or equivalent	16.9%
Less than a high school degree	2.6%

iv The UWI-UNI Study shows that the financial impact of the pandemic directly correlated to household income: 61.8% of Below FLP households, 51.0% of ALICE households, 40.7% of Sufficient, 33.3% of Stable, and 25.0% of Very Stable note a “loss of income or unexpected expense as a result of COVID-19” (p.13). This can be seen graphically on the UWI-UNI study:



	Aggregate (N=364)	Below FLP (N=34)	ALICE (N=51)	Sufficient (N=59)	Stable (N=69)	Very Stable (N=128)
Yes	38.5%	61.8%	51.0%	40.7%	33.3%	25.0%
No	56.3%	32.4%	39.2%	50.8%	65.2%	71.9%
Not sure	5.2%	5.9%	9.8%	8.5%	1.4%	3.1%