



**COMMUNITY
NEEDS ASSESSMENT
— 2021 —**

www.ResilientCommunitiesWapello.com

As individuals, the common understanding we have of our community comes from our closest networks. The relationships we form shape our opinions and guide our decisions about what is best for ourselves and our families.

We hope the pages ahead will expand your knowledge beyond what your everyday circles may provide. This data encompasses our community as a whole and may confirm your ideas about Wapello County or may surprise you. Either way, our goal is to provide the groundwork to work together to nurture a better tomorrow for all children in our community.

While you review this community assessment, read with an open mind and an open heart. We ask you to be an active participant in a journey to understand **OUR** community and understand how **YOU** can make a difference.

This **IS** Wapello County. This is **OUR** community.

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Background

The Resilient Communities Wapello County (RCWC) initiative evolved from the efforts of the Wapello County Children's Alliance--an organization devoted to the prevention of Child Abuse in all forms.

RCWC was developed to focus specifically on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), their long-term effects, and how to reduce their occurrence in the community.

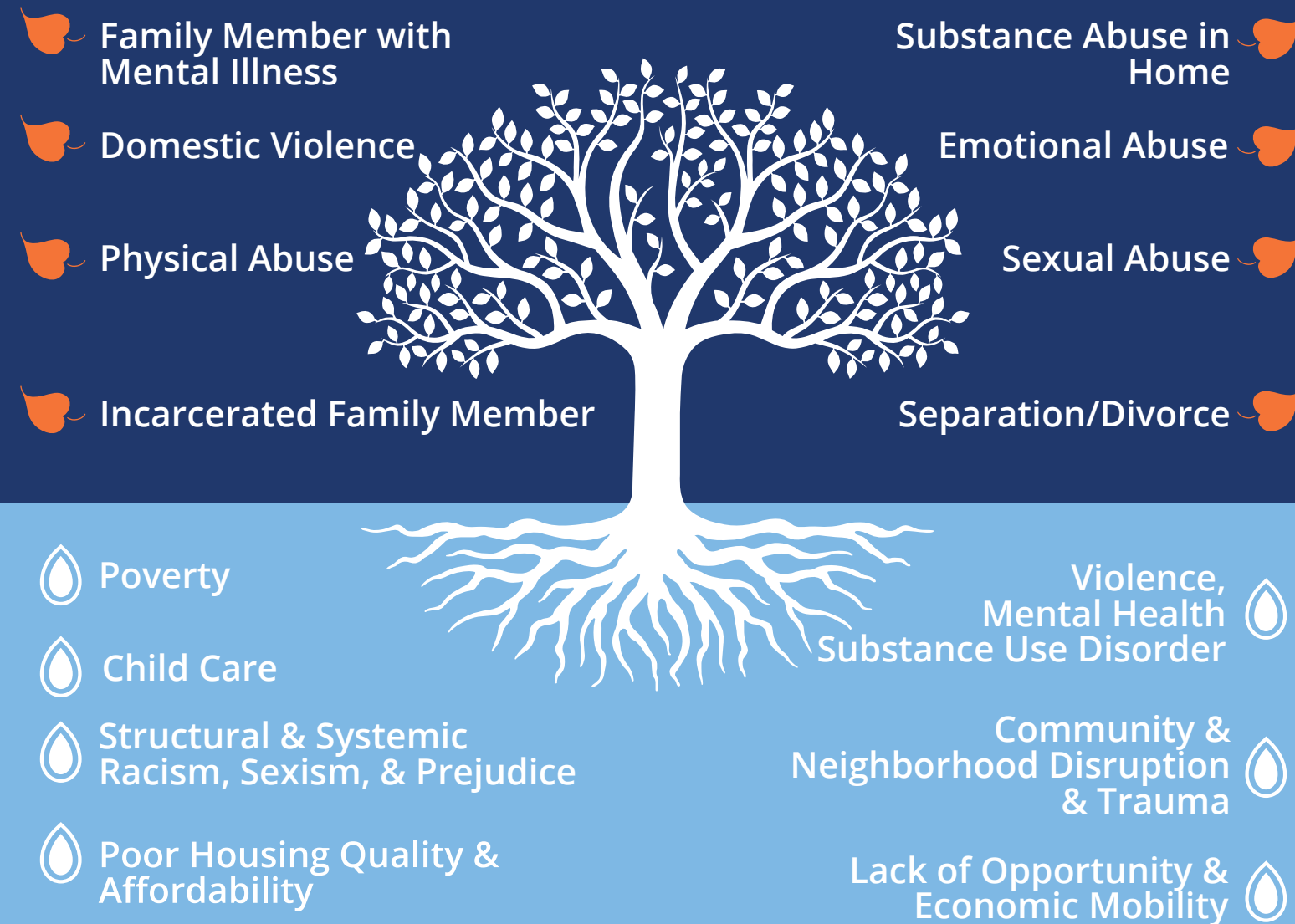
The concept of Adverse Childhood Experiences originated from a 1998 study examining the relationship between childhood trauma and long-term health outcomes (Felitti et al, 1998). The research revealed that exposure to childhood traumas directly impacted patients' health outcomes. The ACE study focuses on adversity experienced at an individual level within a family. However, often external factors such as the environment and the systems within the community can compound adverse childhood experiences.

To develop the Resilient Communities Wapello County initiative, the Wapello County Children's Alliance received funding from the Iowa Department of Human Services/ICAPP to develop a pilot project related to the prevention of child abuse in Iowa. Funding is focused on reducing maltreatment by targeting services to families exhibiting risk factors, coordinating service sectors, supporting cultural equity, and increasing the use of informal and non-stigmatizing supports as well as Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs).

As a pilot project for this state initiative, RCWC will serve to raise awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences and their health impacts that can last into adulthood and showcase how we, as a community, can work together to build strong families and prevent child maltreatment. Our mission is to assure safe, stable, nurturing relationships, and environments for every child and prevent child maltreatment.

The Pair of ACEs – Wapello County

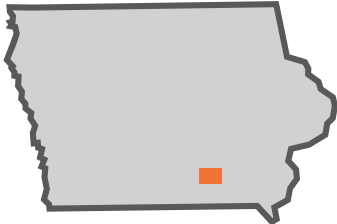
ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES



ADVERSE COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTS

Everyone is responsible for the wellbeing of children in our community. Actions we take can prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) or lessen the impact of ACEs on our lives. By addressing Adverse Community Environments and helping families build positive relationships and connections to the community, we can reduce the likelihood of poor outcomes even if adversity occurs.

About Wapello County



Wapello County is located in southeast Iowa. The county was formally organized in 1844, and Ottumwa was selected as the county seat. Ottumwa’s location along the Des Moines River allowed it to become an important riverboat port.

The population of the county grew steadily, reaching its peak of 47,397 in 1950. Since that time, the population decreased to 35,625 in 2010. However, the past decade has seen an increase within the county hub of Ottumwa, with a nearly 5% increase (2020 Census). From the early years of its existence, manufacturing has been a chief source of employment for residents of Wapello County. Major occupations for the county today include: education and social services (26.2%), manufacturing (22.9%), and retail trade (11.9%).

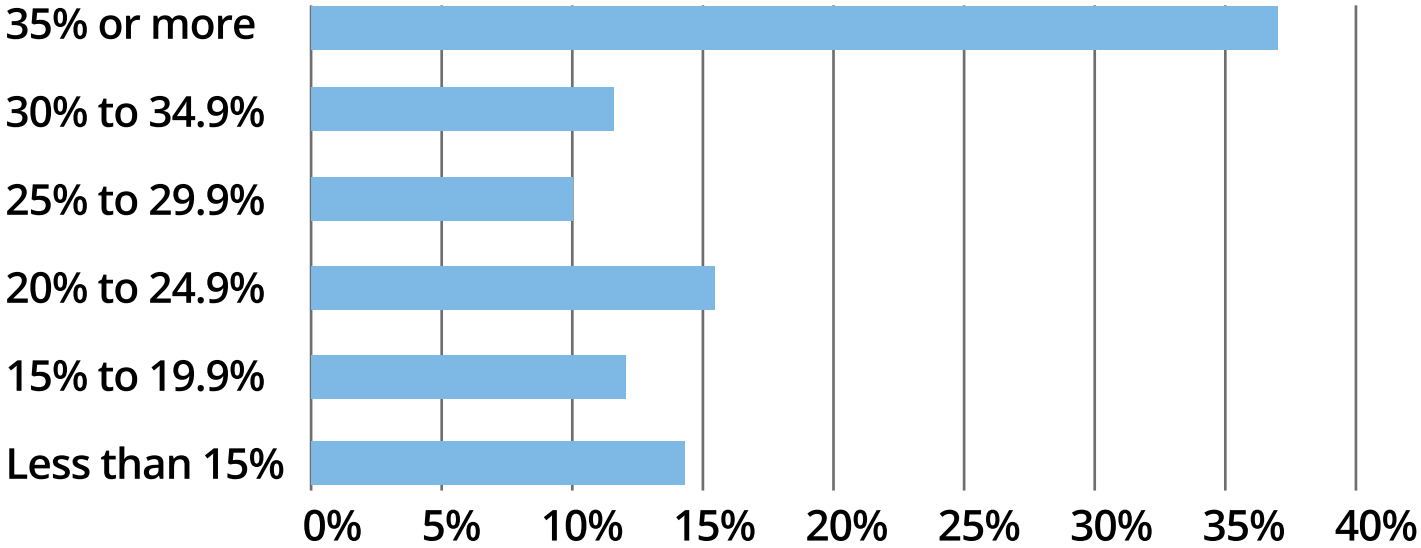
At \$43,329, the median household income for Wapello County is about 23.4% lower than the statewide median household income of \$56,570. Approximately 3.4% of workers are unemployed compared to 2.9% in the state. Approximately 17% are living below the designated poverty level, compared to the state average of 12%. Additional County characteristics are explored further in the Results section.

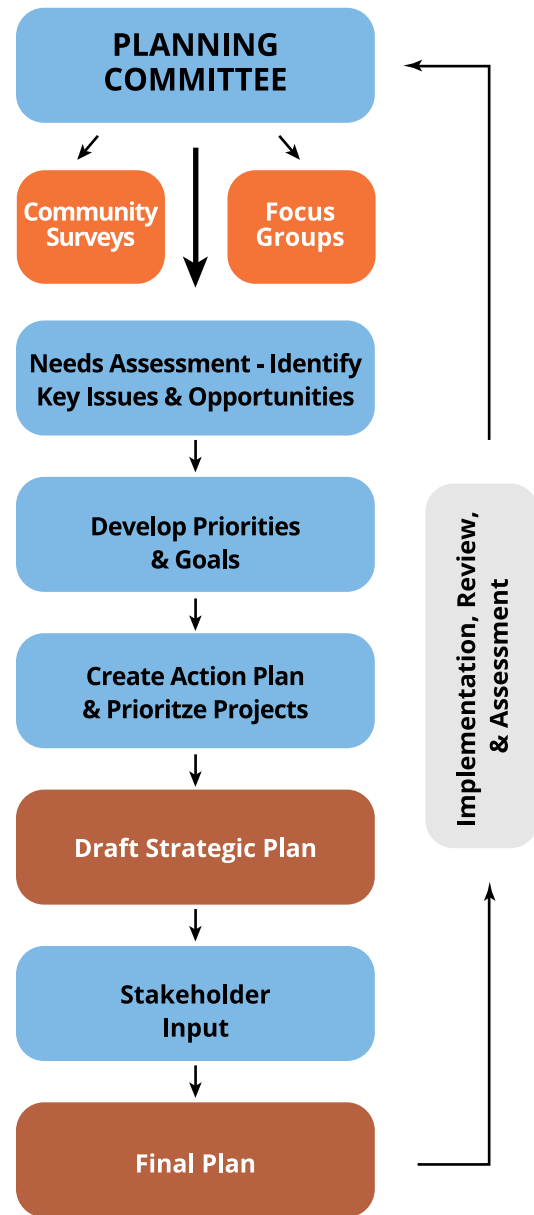
ICAPP completed a statewide needs assessment in 2017 that was updated in 2019. **Wapello County was ranked 99, having the highest risk factor score for child abuse and neglect in the state of Iowa.**

Characteristics of Children in Wapello County 2011-2019

RACE	POPULATION 2019	POPULATION 2011	Percent Change
White	79.0%	90.10%	-10.2%
Black or African American	4.20%	1.00%	3.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.00%	0.10%	-0.1%
Asian	1.50%	1%	0.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders	1.20%	0.00%	1.2%
Two or More Races	6.10%	4.20%	1.9%
Hispanic or Latino Origin	18.30%	16.60%	1.7%

Wapello County Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income





An accurate picture of the community is key to developing an effective strategy to strengthen families. This assessment aims to look holistically at the community by collecting and analyzing data, gathering input from community members, and collaborating with partnering organizations to identify current initiatives. This report will then be used by the Resilient Communities Wapello County to identify and prioritize the needs of the community and develop programs and resources to address them in the ACEs framework.

STEERING COMMITTEE Resilient Communities Wapello County (RCWC) utilized the sector approach to engage potential partners to commit and support the efforts of this project. Recruitment outreach efforts focused on key community sectors and persons with a known interest in supporting child abuse prevention efforts, collective impact, and ability to influence others.

Our complete assessment is derived from numerous data sources, multiple surveys developed for specific audiences; parents, youth grades 6-12, business owners/operators, and community members. Using survey results, focus groups were hosted to obtain more feedback. Resulting from this review and in-depth discussions, the committee identified seven priority areas of focus:

Survey Results from Wapello County Students Grades 6-12

Can not depend on people in their community 24.5%	School work has suffered because of stress & responsibilities in their personal lives 51.5%	Their families do not talk about or share their problems 39.8%
Feel little interest or pleasure in their lives 40.3%	Often feel down, depressed, or hopeless 47.2%	Have experienced being sworn at, insulted, or put down verbally 44.2%
Felt no one in their family loved or looked out for them 31.2%	Have lived with someone with a drug or alcohol issue 22.0%	Have had a household member mentally ill, depressed, or suicidal 28.4%
Have been bullied by a peer or classmate 48.9%	Have had a household member go to jail or be deported 27.9%	Have been sexually abused 13.1%

Responses include all three school districts with little variation in results between districts. Data collected Fall 2020.



PRIORITY AREAS

Our complete assessment is a combination of multiple data sources including results from our 4 surveys.

The Resilient Communities Wapello County steering committee reviewed the data, surveys, and focus group feedback. Resulting from this review and in-depth discussions, the committee identified seven priority areas of focus:

- **Poverty**
- **Structural & Systemic Racism, Sexism, & Prejudice**
- **Housing Quality & Affordability**
- **Violence / Mental Health / Substance Use Disorder**
- **Community & Neighborhood Disruption & Trauma**
- **Opportunity & Economic Mobility**
- **Child Care**

These areas will be utilized for prioritizing action items during the strategic steering process.



OUR PARENT SURVEY SHOWS:

- **30% of parents can not access the resources they need in our community**
- **21% of parents have difficulty accessing sufficient food, housing, and clothing**

We know that poverty rates are higher in Wapello County than the state and national poverty rates.

20% of people under age 18 live in poverty compared to 12% of Iowans and 14% Nationwide.

20% of people under age 18 in poverty (14% for IA)

27% of children under 5 in poverty

40% of households under 200% poverty line

6-12 graders in Wapello County (from all 3 school districts equally represented) reported that:

- **11% of youth can not access the resources they need**
- **More than 10% have experienced not having enough to eat or dirty clothes**

Structural & Systemic Racism, Sexism, & Prejudice



In our school districts there are **66** different ethnicities and **26** unique languages spoken.

8% of the Wapello county population is foreign born

Iowa has one of the highest gender pay gaps in the U.S. Women make **\$0.79** to each **\$1** and on average earn **\$10,637** less annually

OUR YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS SHOW:

- **17% of youth have been treated badly or unfairly based on their race, ethnicity, or orientation**
- **10% of parents cannot access services that are appropriate for their culture or language**

Housing Quality & Affordability



OUR YOUTH SURVEY SHOWS:

- **11.3% of youth do not feel safe in their neighborhoods**

WAPELLO COUNTY PARENTS REPORT:

- **13.3% of parents do not feel safe in their neighborhoods**

12% of households spend **50% or more** of their household income on housing

16% of households with at least 1 of 4 housing problems: overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen facilities, or lack of plumbing facilities. Compared to 12% across the state of Iowa.

Violence / Mental Health / Substance use Disorder

We know that violence, mental health and substance use disorder are frequently co-occurring adversities.



315/100,000 number of reported violent crime offenses per capita (vs. 282 for Iowa)

The following statistics were gathered from Wapello County youth.

49% of youth have been bullied by a peer or classmate

35% of youth have experienced being sworn at, insulted frequently, or put down verbally

19% of youth have experienced their parents being abused; **10%** witnessed it

23% of youth have lived with a person who was mentally ill or committed suicide

24% of youth have a household member who has gone to jail/prison or be deported

24.2% of parents have difficulty accessing mental health treatment

24.7% of parents have difficulty accessing services for their child's social, emotional and/or behavioral development

13.2% of youth have been the victim of violence

10.4% of youth have been sexually abused

13.9% of youth have been in a relationship where they felt unsafe

18.1% of youth have lived with someone with a drug or alcohol problem

Opportunity & Economic Mobility



Each year a study is done to show how many households earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but less than the basic cost of living for our county. This study is called ALICE (Assist Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) **26%** of Wapello County households fit into this category.

Our Parent Survey shows:

- **10%** of parents find it difficult to access affordable, quality adult education
- **30%** of parents find it difficult to access sports/recreation/arts programs for their children - that could be financially or logistically
- **OVER HALF of our youth - 53%** reported that schoolwork has suffered because of stress/responsibilities in their personal lives

There were **2.2 million** fewer women in the labor force in October 2020 than there were in October 2019 due to child care issues related to the pandemic.

In 2020 families all across the world were impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic. The following statistics were gathered during that time.



Over half of the ALICE respondents (**52.3%**) indicated their household experienced a loss of income or an unexpected expense as a direct result of the pandemic along with **60.3%** of the below FPL respondents compared to **44.2%** of all respondents.

- **25%** of youth and **38%** of parents do not feel they can depend on others in the community
- **21%** of youth have had to move or change schools multiple times
- **11%** of youth and **13%** of parents reported they do not feel safe in their neighborhoods **26%** of Wapello County House Hold fall into the ALICE Category Pandemic (From United Way Financial Impact Study)

Prior to the pandemic, just over one fourth (**26.7%**) of ALICE respondents reported they could cover basic bills from savings for one month while **19.4%** reported four or more months. The below FPL respondents were in worse financial shape with **23.8%** reporting they could cover one week or less of their basic bills, **13.0%** could cover two to three weeks, and **22.5%** could cover one month.



These statistics show that child care is not a family issue alone – it is a **workforce issue.**

49% of parents with young children indicated that over the last 12 months, they have experienced challenges with their child care arrangement that had caused them to miss a day of work, **43%** left work early or arrived late, **15%** troubles changing shifts or schedules, and **6%** said their work quality was lower.

Our Parent Surveys were completed in late 2020 during the pandemic. They show:

- **45%** of parents find it difficult to access affordable, quality child care
- **35%** of parents have worked less effectively because they were concerned or upset about child care issues
- **31%** of parents have had to work reduced hours due to child care responsibilities

Iowa leads the nation in the number of families with parents working outside the home, with three-fourths of households with children under the age of 6 having all parents at home in the labor force. When childcare is unaffordable, inaccessible, or nonexistent, working parents miss work, drop shifts, are less engaged on the job, switch employers, or leave the workforce all together.

Next Steps



The results of this needs assessment will become the basis of the Resilient Communities Wapello County strategic planning process. The RCWC steering committee, along with the Parent Leadership group, will utilize this information to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the community.

The work plan developed from the planning process will include prioritized programs and initiatives, marketing plan, and highlight areas for collaboration with other community partners.

GOALS

- ➔ Reduce stigma of poverty by improving community understanding and awareness
- ➔ Increase awareness of, and access to, available support resources
- ➔ Improve connections with, and appreciation of, our diverse community
- ➔ Provide resources for minorities, break through language barriers, and ensure community boards and commissions are reflective of the community
- ➔ Address youth LatinX and LGBTQ+ bullying and discrimination
- ➔ Increase access to safe and affordable housing and reduce waitlists
- ➔ Increase availability of affordable, safe child care, with specific need for infant and toddler care

Acknowledgments

STEERING COMMITTEE

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* Combined with the contractors these people make up the core team.

LEARN MORE



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To see our complete needs assessment statistics please visit:



www.ResilientCommunitiesWapello.com