

## BACKGROUND

The City surveyed community members to assess the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals and/or their households.

The objective of the survey was to receive feedback on how people are getting their information about COVID-19, how the City has responded to the pandemic, and the current needs of community members. Information from this survey will be shared with City leadership and relevant community partners.

## SURVEY DISTRIBUTION

The survey went live the evening of July 27 and closed at 5 p.m. on Aug. 5, 2020. It was only accessible via web link.

*e-Source* - web link was provided within the City’s new email newsletter featured as an “invitation.” The e-Source was also released July 27. The link to the survey in the newsletter invite was clicked on by 365\* subscribers.

*City Facebook* - two social posts included links to the survey as an invitation and reminder to take the survey. A total of 290\* link clicks (to website and e-Source for survey) were recorded.

*City website* - web link was provided on the City’s COVID-19 information [page](#).

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

There were a total of 16 questions. All questions or individual parts of a question were optional.

## WHO TOOK THE SURVEY?

<b>527</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
People took the survey	Residents of River Falls	Of City’s population**

### Other areas of residency:

City/Town	Number				
River Falls Township	16	Spring Valley	3	Menomonie	1
Kinnickinnic Township	12	Ellsworth	2	Prescott	1
Troy Township	12	Martell Township	2	Red Wing	1

\*Records an idea of foot traffic in the direction of the survey and not a completion of the survey.

\*\*Based on the City’s 2019 population. Includes undergraduate students at UWRF and CVTC.

Clifton Township	8	Oak Grove Township	2	Stone Lake	1
Hudson	4	Green Bay	1	Trimbelle Township	1
Roberts	4	Hammond	1		

Given these results, we can calculate at least **98.8%** of survey participants reside in Wisconsin.

### State of employment

<b>285</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>114</b>
Wisconsin	Minnesota	Other	N/A

### EMPLOYMENT STATUS

There were three questions regarding employment status in the survey. The following charts show the response to each question. Additionally, responses were dialed in to show specific data in three different places: River Falls residency, WI employment, and MN employment.

#### Question 3

I was laid off as a result of the pandemic		
Response	Percent	Number
Yes	17.4%	91
No	82.6%	432
Question 3 "yes" results:		
River Falls residents	17.45%	78
Employed in WI	24.65%	70
Employed in MN	15.89%	17

#### Question 4

I had difficulty receiving unemployment		
Response	Percent	Number
Yes	39.56%	36
No	39.56%	36
N/A	20.88%	19

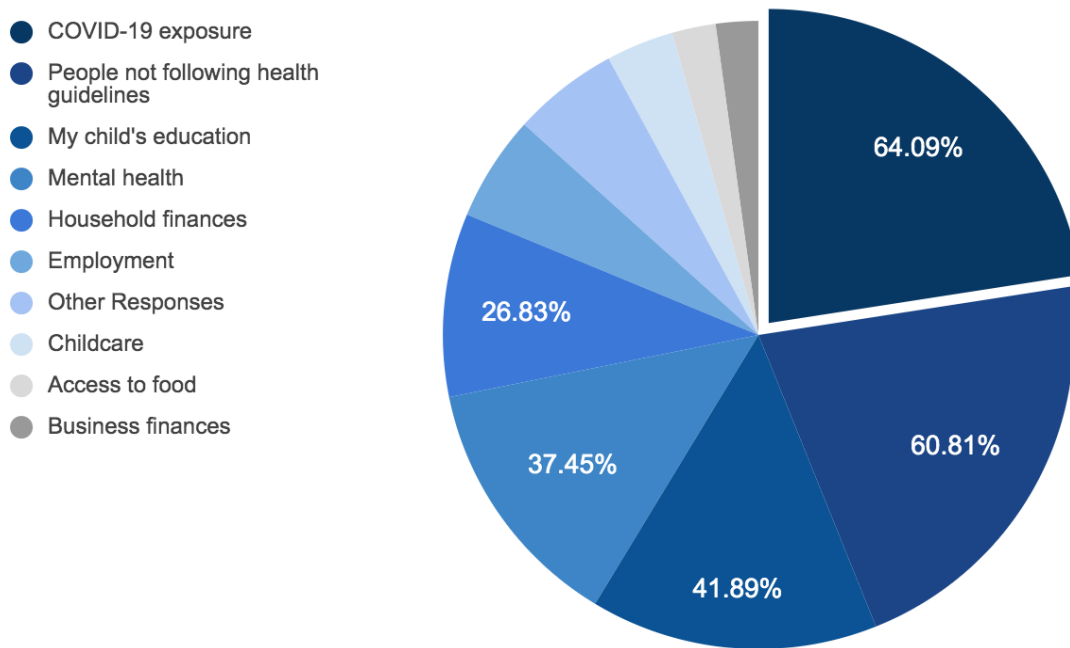
Question 4 breakdown:			
	RF residency	Employed in WI	Employed in MN
Yes	28	31	4
No	32	23	11
N/A	18	16	2

## Question 5

If you were laid off/furloughed, are you back to work either at your workplace or remotely?			
Response	Percent	Number	<p><b>63%</b> of people who were laid off are back to work</p>
Yes	63.74%	58	
No	35.15%	32	
N/A	1.10%	1	
Question 5 breakdown:			
	RF residency	Employed in WI	Employed in MN
Yes	50	45	11
No	27	25	5
N/A	1	0	1

## COMMUNITY CONCERN

What are your households biggest COVID concerns? (listed most to least)



An option listed as “other” was left open-ended and we received 79 responses. These “other” concerns were themed, grouped, and quantified.

Percentage	Theme		
<b>17.78%</b>	<b>Government and politics</b>	<b>6.67%</b>	<b>Spread and exposure of virus</b>
	- Government overreach		- Uncontrolled spread
	- Lack of government involvement/leadership		- Exposing older residents
	- Government/community divide	<b>6.67%</b>	<b>No concerns</b>
	- Paying taxes w/ no students in school	<b>5.56%</b>	<b>Other community members</b>
<b>13.33%</b>	<b>School</b>		- Exposing older residents
	- Schools opening safely		- Community discord
	- Schools not opening		- Family members safety
	- General education and finances	<b>4.44%</b>	<b>Mental Health</b>

<b>13.33%</b>	<b>Masking</b>		- Of community members
	- No mask guidelines (for)		- Emotional abuse from fear
	- Masking guidelines (against)		- Of self
<b>8.89%</b>	<b>Too many restrictions/taking away rights and freedom</b>	<b>4.44%</b>	<b>Misinformation</b>
	- Rights for individuals and families		- What information to believe/trust
	- Rights for businesses	<b>3.33%</b>	<b>COVID testing</b>
<b>6.67%</b>	<b>Everyday supplies/services</b>		- Lack of testing
	- Wifi access		- Testing taking so long
	- Goods and services		- Government monitoring
	- Medical care (non COVID-19 related)	<b>2.22%</b>	<b>Elections</b>
	- Water quality		- Health safety measures
<b>6.67%</b>	<b>Business and economy</b>		- Lost uncounted absentee ballots
	- COVID-19 spread in bars		- Voter fraud
	- Safety measures in businesses		
	- Economic health		

## COVID-19 SUPPORT/RELIEF

The survey asked participants to share what kind of help they have been receiving due to the pandemic. Chart 1 shows the percentage of respondents in each area of aid; respondents were able to check all that apply. Chart 2 shows the results of the open ended “other” option. 25 comments were themed, grouped, and quantified. Chart 2 also includes areas that respondents listed as challenging to receive aid.

### Chart 1

What kind of help have you or members of your household utilized as a result of the pandemic?	
<b>56.82%</b>	N/A
<b>18.18%</b>	Unemployment benefits
<b>7.44%</b>	Medical health care
<b>7.23%</b>	Childcare support from family/friends
<b>5.99%</b>	Mental health care

<b>5.37%</b>	Other
<b>5.17%</b>	RF Food Pantry or other food supports
<b>4.96%</b>	Help procuring household/personal care necessities
<b>4.96%</b>	Other financial supports
<b>2.89%</b>	Business loan
<b>1.03%</b>	Utility bill relief from local sources

**Chart 2**

<b>Other help</b>	<b>Other financial supports</b>
- Information support	- Student loan forbearance
- School district programs	- Mortgage relief
-School lunch program	- Federal stimulus check
- Additional employment	- Refinanced home
- COVID-19 Testing	
- Business safety implications	<b>Trouble getting help</b>
-Early grocery hours for elderly -Grocery store curbside pickup	- Unemployment
- Church aid	- Utility relief
- None	- Cleaning

## COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

Two questions in the survey sought to analyze the current activity of our community. As you can see from the results below, the majority of people are being cautious in their day to day lives.

**What are you doing to prevent the spread of the virus?** (Highlighted areas show the highest percentage in each category)

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Washing hands frequently	98.28%	1.53%	0.19%
Practicing social distancing (staying 6' apart)	93.13%	5.73%	1.15%
Wiping surfaces where the virus might live	84.97%	13.68%	1.35%
Wearing a mask when social distancing is not possible	81.89%	15.99%	2.12%

Staying home when sick	77.25%	0%	22.75%
Gathering in groups of ten or less inside	74.95%	13.10%	11.95%
Gathering in groups of 50 or less outside	66.09%	10.85%	23.06%
Limiting travel to within the community	53.08%	44.04%	2.88%

**Since mid-May, how many times per week have you or members of your household...**

(Highlighted areas show the largest percentage in each category)

Activity	5 or more times/week	1-4 times/week	Less than 1 time/week	Never	N/A
Shopped at a local retailer	8.37%	56.46%	32.32%	2.85%	0.00%
Gone to a local bar	0.19%	5.56%	16.28%	75.48%	2.49%
Dined at a local restaurant (inside)	0.19%	8.57%	21.14%	68.57%	1.52%
Dined at a local restaurant (outside)	0.19%	10.29%	25.90%	61.33%	2.29%
Ordered food from local restaurants for delivery/pick up	1.71%	46.58%	39.92%	10.46%	1.33%
Used library curbside services	0.57%	12.57%	18.29%	63.62%	4.95%
Utilized local business services (gas stations, title companies, banks, repair shops, etc.)	9.71%	51.24%	36.95%	1.90%	0.19%
Gone to a nail salon, hair salon, barber	0.76%	1.71%	44.76%	50.67%	2.10%
Played on a public sports court (tennis, basketball, pickleball, volleyball, etc.)	0.76%	6.10%	44.76%	77.14%	7.24%
Played a field sport with a team (baseball, football, T-ball, softball, etc.)	0.76%	5.33%	3.81%	81.33%	8.76%
Used playground equipment at local parks	2.29%	10.13%	16.25%	62.52%	8.80%

## COMMUNITY INFORMATION

In question 9 we asked respondents to mark how useful the listed sources were in providing proper COVID-19 information. In chart 1, you will see the results of the sources listed. Excluding the N/A column, highlighted boxes show the highest performing column.

**Chart 1**

Source	Very useful	Useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful	N/A
City's website	9.24%	25.10%	23.49%	10.04%	32.13%
City's Facebook	17.50%	26.24%	18.29%	9.15%	28.83%
Mayor's weekly video	17.89%	24.45%	16.50%	9.34%	31.81%
River Falls Chamber of Commerce	2.43%	9.53%	17.04%	18.05%	52.94%
Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	30.51%	30.31%	19.29%	12.60%	7.28%
Wisconsin Department of Health Services	23.35%	28.94%	20.96%	10.18%	16.57%
Pierce County	18.33%	26.10%	22.91%	8.17%	24.50%
St. Croix County	11.47%	19.92%	24.35%	9.66%	34.61%
The Star-Observer	1.43%	5.70%	13.44%	27.49%	51.93%
Statewide/national media	14.97%	23.55%	28.54%	23.75%	9.18%
RF School District	10.77%	22.76%	21.14%	9.96%	35.37%
UW-River Falls	3.46%	9.35%	14.23%	13.41%	59.55%

Question 9 also included an open-ended “other” option for respondents to share any information source they utilize that wasn’t listed above. Chart 2 shows the results. Thirty comments were themed, grouped, and quantified. Two comments in this section expressed the feeling that there wasn’t enough information being provided at the local level.

**Chart 2**

Other information sources	
John Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center	Reddit
Healthcare/Medical professionals	World Health Organization
Scientific journals/studies	Misc. online sources
Local media/radio	YouTube
Self knowledge/research	Other people



## GOVERNMENT COVID-19 RESPONSE

In the survey, questions 10-14 were about government response. Chart 1 reveals how the City of River Falls residents feel the City’s operational response has been during the COVID-19 pandemic. Chart 1 has been specified to include **ONLY City of River Falls residents (450 respondents)**.

**Chart 1**

City of River Falls	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
City services have been sufficient to meet my needs	18.02%	45.27%	17.79%	4.73%	4.50%	9.68%
I am able to easily access services online	22.47%	46.29%	12.36%	2.70%	1.12%	15.06%
City employees have been responsive to my needs	11.71%	24.55%	7.66%	2.25%	1.58%	52.25%
The City is giving timely updates about services	16.78%	46.26%	14.74%	4.76%	1.13%	16.33%
I feel safe in my community	23.21%	28.57%	27.68%	13.62%	6.03%	0.89%

Chart 2 reveals how respondents feel the government response has been at a federal level.

**Chart 2**

Federal level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Generally acting in the best interest of the public	6.87%	16.79%	18.32%	23.09%	34.92%
Being open and transparent to the public	4.77%	13.55%	18.70%	27.10%	35.88%
Providing helpful, timely information	5.54%	14.72%	25.43%	24.28%	30.02%
Overall confidence in response efforts	4.59%	14.91%	18.55%	23.33%	38.62%

Chart 3 reveals how respondents feel the government response has been at state (in which you live) level. From the first survey question, we can conclude that 522 respondents reside in Wisconsin, one in Minnesota, and four unknown. Based on these results, chart 3 will **ONLY be showing results based on respondents who reside in the state of WI.**

**Chart 3**

<b>State level</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
Generally acting in the best interest of the public	5.05%	27.57%	34.17%	18.64%	14.56%
Being open and transparent to the public	5.24%	30.68%	36.89%	15.34%	11.84%
Providing helpful, timely information	4.66%	33.40%	37.86%	13.79%	10.29%
Overall confidence in response efforts	3.52%	23.44%	34.96%	20.90%	17.19%

Chart 4 reveals how respondents feel the government response has been at county level. Again, based on survey question one, we can conclude 99.2% of respondents reside in one of the following counties with Pierce and St. Croix County representing 98.5% of participants:

- Pierce County
- St. Croix County
- Brown County
- Dunn County
- Goodhue County
- Sawyer County

**Chart 4**

<b>County level</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
Generally acting in the best interest of the public	10.47%	39.73%	31.78%	11.82%	6.20%
Being open and transparent to the public	9.14%	42.61%	33.66%	9.53%	5.06%
Providing helpful, timely information	9.13%	39.22%	35.15%	11.84%	4.66%
Overall confidence in response efforts	8.38%	37.62%	34.31%	12.48%	7.21%

Chart 5 shows how respondents feel the government response has been at a city level.

**Chart 5**

<b>City level</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
Generally acting in the best interest of the public	11.76%	40.98%	29.80%	12.35%	5.10%
Being open and transparent to the public	13.56%	47.35%	29.27%	7.07%	2.75%
Providing helpful, timely information	11.39%	44.20%	33.20%	8.25%	2.95%
Overall confidence in response efforts	9.63%	40.47%	30.84%	13.95%	5.11%

## HIGH LEVEL FINDINGS

**Community concerns** - Many people are worried about COVID-19 exposure.

**Community activity** - In general, people are reducing some activity, staying cautious, and sticking to preventive measures. General week-to-week activities seem to be shopping at a local retailer, taking advantage of delivery or curbside services, and utilizing local business services (gas stations, banks, etc.).

**Information** - Respondents are generally happy with current resources provided by the City and describe them as “useful.” At the same time, they are seeking more specific information about virus spread in River Falls.

**Government response** - City operational services and response rank well. Most residents who have been using City services or resources are satisfied with the results. A slight dip in the results suggest room for improvement in making the community feel safe when out and about. County response also ranked well. However, the state (Wisconsin) response was ranked in the middle while federal response was ranked poorly.