

VICE PRESIDENT FOR EXTENSION AND OUTREACH

# 2018 LISTENING SESSIONS: A SUMMARY

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Iowa State University Vice President for Extension and Outreach John Lawrence held 62 listening sessions at 21 locations across Iowa in the summer and fall of 2018. At each regional location, Lawrence met with three separate groups on the same day: partners and stakeholders at lunch, ISU Extension and Outreach staff in the afternoon, and representatives from county extension councils in the evening. Two additional listening sessions took place on the Iowa State campus for extension staff and faculty.

Approximately 1,200 people participated in the 62 sessions. At each session, discussion was recorded by one assigned note taker hand writing notes on flip charts and a second assigned note taker capturing more detailed information electronically. The listening sessions were the first part of an ongoing, comprehensive needs assessment.

Each group was asked the same three overarching questions. In addition, staff and councils were asked organizationally focused questions about ISU Extension and Outreach. The comments were captured on flip charts and in the electronic notes. At the end of each session, participants were asked to vote for the three most critical issues impacting their community's ability to thrive over the next five years. Later, Dr. Carol Heaverlo, director of ISU Extension and Outreach Professional Development, objectively categorized and summarized the collected data statewide, as well as by location and participant group. This document summarizes the top five issues identified through the brainstorming and voting. (Individual region priorities are shared in the appendix.) This document also summarizes staff and council responses to the additional questions those groups were asked.

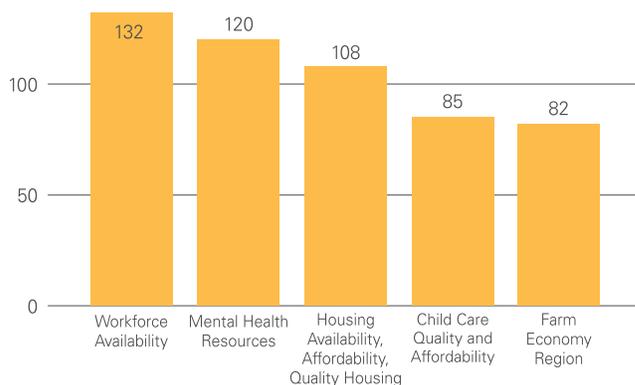
## Top Issues Impacting Your Community's Ability to Thrive

Workforce challenges, child care, housing, mental health, and the farm economy received the most votes statewide and were issues that arose at nearly every location. Availability of workers, particularly skilled workers, affordable housing for the workforce, and quality affordable child care typically were mentioned in the first five minutes of the discussion, particularly among stakeholders. Access to mental health resources and implications from the down turn in the farm economy were also mentioned at most locations.

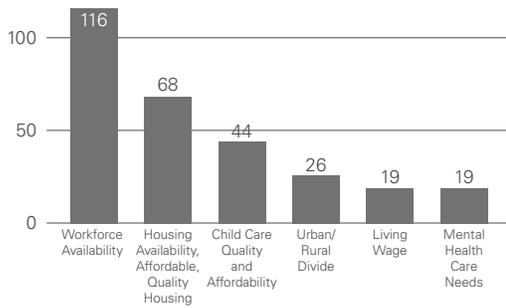
Workforce availability being a top issue is not surprising given the historically low unemployment rate for Iowa at the time of the discussions. Workforce challenges are often featured in media stories, as are availability of housing and child care, particularly in rural communities.

Commodity prices lower than previous years, uncertainty in export markets, and the relative importance of farm income and purchasing power in rural communities heighten the concern about the farm economy. Mental health resources have consolidated in recent years, while the demand for the services associated with addiction issues and financial stress has increased. Although not ranked high enough to appear on the statewide list, other issues appeared on the individual group top five lists, including urban/rural divide and living wage (stakeholders), access to resources (staff), and retaining young people in communities (councils).

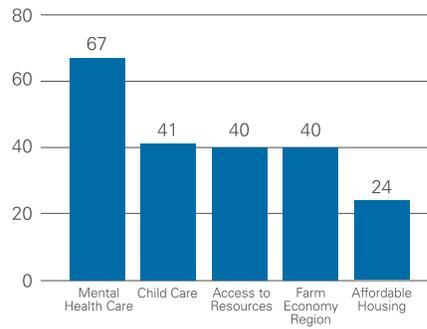
Overall Top 5 Issues



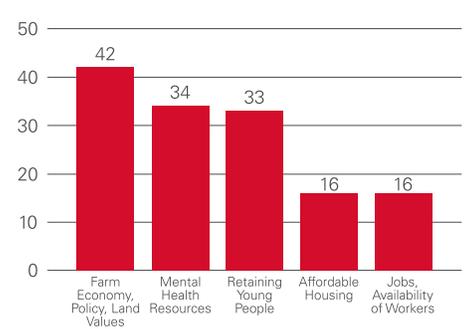
Stakeholder Issues Rank by Top 5 Stakeholder Issues



Staff Issue Rank by Top 5 Staff Issues



Council Issue Rank by Top 5 Council Issues



Many other issues were identified across the state, but did not receive sufficient votes to make the top of the list, including: welcoming and integrating diverse populations into communities, healthcare access, developing volunteerism and leadership in communities, a skills gaps and increasing the number of people skilled in trades, widening income gaps and poverty, and broadband access.

## Role for ISU Extension and Outreach

The goal of the listening sessions was to identify barriers that limit the ability of communities to thrive, but also to determine the appropriate role of ISU Extension and Outreach. Iowa already has some existing public and private sector initiatives and organizations working on the identified issues. ISU Extension and Outreach should be cautious not to duplicate or interfere with their work, but where appropriate, partner with and complement existing efforts. Similarly, we should play to our strengths and avoid issues that we do not have the expertise or resources to address.

While it is only a portion of what we do, ISU Extension and Outreach has existing programming related to the top five identified issues. Similarly, our strengths and resources may only address a part of the issue, as shown in the following examples:

### Workforce

- Continuing education and certification programming for workers and professionals
- College and career readiness programming for youth

### Housing

- Community assessment of housing stock, workforce, and commuting patterns
- Education and assessment on planning and zoning impact on housing
- First-time home buyers education and certification

### Child care

- Certification and continuing education for licensed child care providers
- Education and training for child care staff

### Mental health

- Iowa Concern 24/7 phone hotline, live chat capabilities, and website
- Building capacity among staff and partners on mental health first aid
- Community-based opioid addiction prevention strategies

### Farm economy

- Farm financial associates for objective analysis of business planning
- Production efficiency, business management, and marketing education
- Identifying and understanding emotional stress among farmers

ISU Extension and Outreach applies research-based and evidence-based information to address relevant issues facing Iowans. In addition to programming included in the previous list, we are considering initiatives for which we have or can develop appropriate resources and partnerships to address the identified issues.

## What More Should ISU Extension and Outreach Be Doing?

Participants at the listening sessions were asked what ISU Extension and Outreach could do to help them address the issues impacting their community's ability to thrive. Asked another way, what should ISU Extension and Outreach be doing to help their community? Participants did not vote on their responses to this question. However, their responses had common themes.

### Stakeholders in attendance encouraged ISU Extension and Outreach to

- Expand its influence beyond the perception of assisting only farmers and 4-H
- Build relationships with nontraditional audiences, be inclusive, and make more people aware that we have programming for urban families, youth, and communities of all sizes
- Work to bridge the urban-rural divide and better understand the role of agriculture and food production in Iowa
- Make 4-H accessible and appealing to all youth, and empower youth with leadership and life skills

### Staff discussed how ISU Extension and Outreach could help them address the priority issues identified. This included:

- Better communication throughout the system and improved collaboration across counties and between campus and counties
- Increased programming capacity at the county and field staff level
- More professional development for staff and volunteers, offered online and across the state
- More agile program response that works across disciplines and boundaries

### Councils identified ways that they would like ISU Extension and Outreach to assist them. Some were specific to a particular process or program, while others were more general about challenges in their community. Reoccurring themes included:

- Marketing ISU Extension and Outreach and making people aware of what we have to assist them
- Expanding accessibility to programming, multiple delivery methods and formats, more content personnel
- Help with needs assessment and program selection
- Increased campus support for IT and hiring, retaining, training, and managing staff

## Who Else Should ISU Extension and Outreach Listen To?

Listening sessions were held with extension council members, extension staff, and stakeholders invited by extension staff. Participants were reminded about the ISU Extension and Outreach strategic goal of providing educational programming for all Iowans and were asked to identify others we should listen to. The responses often identified specific organizations or individuals unique to that community, but generally included institutions, agencies, and groups such as schools, churches, businesses and employers, public health officials and hospitals, organizations serving underrepresented populations, farm organizations, chambers of commerce, law enforcement, libraries, and other public institutions. As we continue with our comprehensive and ongoing needs assessment, ISU Extension and Outreach will engage these groups.

## Internal Discussions with Staff and Council Members

In addition to responding to the three questions that were asked of all participants, staff and council members responded to a series of organizationally focused questions. These focused on what we do well and what we could do better, strengths and challenges as an organization, and strategies that would improve our organization and our relationship with employees and county partners. The following collection of comments from staff and councils across the 21 locations is organized by question.

*What does ISU Extension and Outreach do well?* The staff are loyal to the mission and are passionate problem solvers striving to help people. We have a trusted brand, unbiased research-based programming with depth and breadth, and are embedded in the communities that we serve. We are relevant, responsive, and fiscally responsible.

*What can ISU Extension and Outreach do better?* Help in assessing local needs and in selecting, marketing, delivering, and evaluating programs to address them. Assist in reporting impact and telling our story. Hire, train, support, and reward staff to improve retention, particularly at the county level. Strengthening leadership and content delivery skills of county staff. Improved consistency, communication, and collaboration across counties, regions, and programs, and share ideas, successes, and resources more effectively. Improve understanding of and service to underrepresented communities. More consistent onboarding and mentoring for new staff and council members. More program format flexibility and integration across units. Balance staffing with expectations as to not spread staff too thin.

*What strategies would have a positive impact on our organization? (Staff comments)* Programming options that are engaging, impactful, low- or no-cost, multi-county, improves the quality of life, and provides a public value return on public investment. Competitive and equitable staff salaries and health benefits for county staff. Career path options and tuition assistance to provide opportunities for professional growth and to retain great employees in the organization. Professional development for staff, councils, and volunteers that is accessible; cultural competency training; onboarding and mentoring. Area-wide staff meetings to improve communication, collaboration, and sharing across counties and regions. Continue listening to staff, councils, and stakeholders.

*What strategies would have a positive impact on you as employees? (Staff comments)* Competitive and equitable salary and health insurance benefits, tuition assistance for professional growth, and clothing allowance for ISU Extension and Outreach apparel. Clear and consistent communication throughout organization. Clarification and consistency of position descriptions and supervision. Value professional development by making it accessible and affordable and allowing time to participate. Improve networking and collaboration throughout system.

*What can ISU do to strengthen the partnership with county councils? (Council comments)* Timely communication, transparency, and more connections between campus and counties and putting faces with names. More communication about programming priorities and opportunities and sharing best practices and programs across counties and regions. Strategies to support low resource counties and programming for underserved audiences.

*What can ISU do to positively impact you as council members? (Council comments)* Better description of responsibilities, time commitment, and expectations of council members. More onboarding, mentoring, training, and support for new council members. Succession planning, recruitment, and retention of council members. Assist in selecting programs by providing better explanation of programs available, their evaluation, and which are priorities. Better IT support and easier to navigate website. Support for doing “director” activities (HR management, budget and financial, calendar of events). Strategies for recruiting, retaining, and paying (including health benefits) staff.

## Three Reoccurring Themes from Staff and Councils

### Theme: Organizational Structure

First, while not a formal question posed to staff and councils, the issue of organizational structure often was mentioned in various ways, such as: clarification of roles and responsibilities for county staff, councils, and regional directors; performing functions formerly done by the county director such as being the local “face of extension” and community connection, on-site manager/supervisor, front-line content provider, and liaison to council; strategies for sharing ideas, staff, and resources across county lines; improving communication and rebuilding a sense of family and belonging throughout ISU Extension and Outreach.

**Response:** The Structured for Success committee has been meeting since September 2018 and is researching options to address these and other concerns. The committee plans to develop two to four alternative organizational models and the pros and cons of each to share in September 2019.

### Theme: Communication

Second, consistent communication throughout the system often was mentioned as something ISU Extension and Outreach should do better, was recognized as a challenge, or was believed would improve conditions for staff and councils.

**Response:** The Internal Communications Task Force has been meeting since April 2018 and has gathered input from staff and councils about how to improve internal communications. The task force is expected to release a report with recommendations in the spring of 2019.

## **Theme: Leadership**

Third, the broad topic of developing local leadership was mentioned at many locations, but didn't rise to become a top issue at any one location. This topic expressed itself in various statements, such as the next generation of volunteers is not emerging, people don't support their community, loss of young people, attracting businesses, and declining human capital.

**Response:** The Vice President for Extension and Outreach is supporting Community and Economic Development to offer the Leading Communities program at more locations across the state. This program builds leadership skills in a cohort of local leaders, while addressing a need in their community. The Vice President for Extension and Outreach will support part of the cost if the county extension council also contributes, and a council member and county staff member join the leadership cohort and participate in the program.

## **Next Steps**

The listening sessions are one part of an ongoing and comprehensive needs assessment. We will engage with other stakeholders, conduct a random sample of lowans, and continue to listen every day to the communities in which we live, work and serve. This information will inform our decisions about program priorities and direction, staffing needs, and resource allocation over the coming months and years.

# Appendix

## 2018 Top 5 Issues Affecting ISU Extension and Outreach's Ability to Thrive in the Next 5 Years, by Region and Audience

### Region 1

#### *Stakeholders*

1. Workforce – availability of people, skills (12)
2. Housing – availability, affordability (9)
3. Business and farm succession (5)
4. Child care (4)
5. Healthcare (4)

#### *Staff*

1. Rural ag economy – Main Street impact (9)
2. Mental health – insufficient care givers, counselors (7)
3. Aging population in Iowa (6)
4. Quality workforce – need line workers, people to take pride in work (5)
5. Affordable housing (2)  
How to – beginning farmers (2)

#### *Councils*

1. Education of nonfarm population (18)
2. Labor force minimal (13)
3. Reliable daycare/cost for families vs. salaries (13)
4. Aging population (10)
5. Individual and family health (6)

### Region 2

#### *Stakeholders*

1. Wages – losing good employees to higher paying jobs (4)
2. Agriculture downturn negative (3)
3. Funding/human capital deficit; attraction/retention of workers (2)
4. Draw younger people into community planning; multi-generational team planning (2)
5. Need for creative financing, resource for guidance (2)

#### *Staff*

1. Community leadership (9)
2. Child care availability affects employment (7)
3. Young people leaving – lack of jobs (7)
4. Family functions: troubled youth, aging parents (5)
5. Nursing home care for aging; hard to manage care needs; ability to age in place; cost (3)

#### *Councils*

1. Economy – agriculture uncertainty/downturn (4)
2. Increased diversity – working effectively with other groups (4)
3. Inadequate workforce – shortage (3)
4. Aging population (2)
5. Addiction: opioids, alcohol, drugs; mental health (2)

## Region 3

### *Stakeholders*

1. Workforce – have jobs, but not people with skills and willingness **(10)**
2. Housing – affordability in small communities; quality **(5)**
3. Volunteerism: lack of/fatigue **(5)**
4. Public funding **(4)**
5. Leverage public funding more effectively **(4)**

### *Staff*

1. Staying relevant **(18)**
2. Workforce: aging, skills **(9)**
3. Downturn in farm economy **(9)**
4. Rural development **(5)**
5. Quality child care **(3)**

### *Councils*

1. Best potential employees leave **(11)**
2. Mental healthcare **(10)**
3. Grain markets/downturn **(8)**
4. Urban/rural divide – economy **(5)**
5. Drug use/substance abuse **(4)** and daycare **(4)**

## Region 4

### *Stakeholders*

1. Workforce – lack of workforce (people) and trainings – career development and interest, lots of people transitioning through jobs, interest in developing your own path **(16)**
2. Housing – affordable housing – anything in front of housing – ALL aspects of housing **(13)**
3. Child care – lack of affordable providers, keeping it affordable for families **(8)**
4. Healthcare and insurance **(7)**
5. Career development – youth and adults **(4)**  
Business succession **(4)**

### *Staff*

1. Workforce and job trainings – lots of jobs available but need to have job training; lack of access to quality employees – maintaining employees, keeping on payroll, passing drug tests, low wages, etc. **(9)**
2. Succession – farm, any business succession – beginning farmer, diversified agriculture, etc. **(6)**
3. Child care – lack of and lack of quality child care **(4)**
4. Internet – ease of shopping; positive and negative impact on communities **(3)**
5. Immigration policy – making local law enforcement in charge of immigration issues; need labor, but can't have labor force here; difficulty getting programming out to other communities; must build trust, but difficult with fear due to policies

### *Councils did not rank issues*

- Financial – income doesn't match needs, fluctuation in farm commodity prices
- Farm economy – also hurting implement dealers, local businesses, small towns
- Local foods/organic farmers/markets struggling
- Increase in suicide, stress
- Lack of housing, affordable housing
- Health insurance

- Need for employees
- Lack of volunteers
- All problems magnified by number of small towns in this area

## Region 5

### *Stakeholders*

1. Quality child care options (8)
2. Cultural integration/cultural competency (6)
3. Low skill levels and low education levels (5)
4. Relocation to rural Iowa (5)

### *Staff*

1. Job opportunities: needs diversity, some unknown related to attracting and growing population (11)
2. Identifying needs of county/balance of programs (10)
3. Accepting diversity in our community (8)

### *Councils*

1. Farm economy (14)
2. Declining rural population (11)
3. Education on job skills, life skills, generational poverty (8)

## Region 6

### *Stakeholders*

1. Adequate and affordable housing (7)
2. Education – K-12, opportunity for higher education and trades, and access (5)
3. Healthcare disparities, i.e., affordability, language barriers (5)
4. Safety, not only for citizens, but immigrants (4)
5. While this group represents a large Buena Vista/Storm Lake presence, there is recognition that other more rural counties in the region are losing population and students, and have an aging population, which create different issues. (3)

### *Staff*

1. Lack of child care, evenings and other times (7)
2. Quality housing and affordability (6)
3. Not having an infrastructure for aging, including caregivers and transportation (6)
4. Many support resources, DHS, Iowa Workforce Development pulled to central Iowa; need access to resources and services (5)
5. Transitioning small businesses – new business start-up, entrepreneurial (4)

### *Councils*

1. Can't find nighttime child care, and healthcare (7)
2. Labor shortage, more of an issue in the future than what we have now (6)
3. Diversification of the agriculture economy (5)
4. Manufacturing sector requiring higher skilled workers using computers (5)
5. Affordable housing (4)

## Region 7

### *Stakeholders*

1. Leadership among young folks (10)
2. Housing availability (6)
3. Livable wages – wage scale; more jobs that pay livable wages (5)
4. Sustainable agriculture (5)
5. Critical thinking skills in youth (4)
6. Mental health (4)

### *Staff*

1. Mental health care (11)
2. Poverty (9)
3. Ag profitability (7)
4. Substance abuse (6)
5. Out migration of educated youth (5)

### *Councils*

1. Retaining/attracting young people (13)
2. Divide between urban/rural: assumptions about resources, accessibility (6)
3. Competition for time (4)
4. Change in demographics (4)
5. Technology – online retail (3)

## Region 8

### *Stakeholders*

1. Need workforce (12)
2. Child care (10)
3. Keeping young families in rural communities (7)
4. Coordinate community efforts (5)
5. Volunteering spirit loss (5)
  - Substance abuse (5)
  - Water quality (5)

### *Staff*

1. Child care – supply (7)
2. Financial insecurity (7)
3. Housing – supply (5)
4. Mental health resources (5)
5. Reaching diverse populations (4)
6. Attracting businesses with living wage (4)

### *Councils*

1. Supply of child care (8)
2. Financial insecurity (8)
3. Lack of mental health resources (6)
4. Supply of housing (5)
5. Reaching diverse populations: refugees, immigrants (4)
  - Attracting businesses with living wage (4)

## Region 9

### *Stakeholders*

1. Leadership void in communities (9)
2. Workforce – lack attraction of workforce, lack housing for workforce (4)
3. Iowa used to be at the top in the country – quality 4-year focus and 2-year and trades should also have focus (3)
4. Retention of workforce – across the board (2)
5. Greater relationships = more collaboration (2)

### *Staff*

1. Lack of knowledge of what ISU Extension and Outreach offers (9)
2. Poor farm economy (5)
3. Business succession – wait until next year/kick the can down the road (5)
4. Connecting youth to workforce (5)
5. Economic survival of small communities (4)
  - Lack of child care (4)
  - Aging population of farmers – succession (4)
  - Career development (4)

### *Councils*

1. Community leadership – train, retention (9)
2. Economic development – rural business attraction with low employment rate (6)
3. Attract/retain residents (5)
4. Poverty (4)
5. Ag value chain – retention (3)

## Region 10

### *Stakeholders*

1. Housing affordability (3)
2. Education diversification – meeting students where they are (2)
3. Watershed management (2)
4. Creating learning communities (2)
5. Building capacity in nonprofits (1)
  - Workforce: drug testing, number of available workers (1)
  - Community growth (1)
  - Equity and increasing diversity (1)
  - Civil discourse – find common ground (1)
  - Urban/rural divide (1)
  - Sustainable public service model (1)

### *Staff*

1. Economy – farm and small business (10)
2. Equitable access to resources, especially families, mental health, basic needs (5)
3. Lack of child care, affordability (3)
4. WOW factor – Iowa attractiveness (3)
5. Pre-existing notions, traditions: 4-H livestock awareness, hit new markets and grow (3)
  - Community facilitator to correct area (3)
  - Food insecurity (3)
  - Immigrant population – get word out about area/resources (3)
  - Farm economy: young farmers, access to land, financing (3)
  - Think and reason on their own (3)

### *Councils*

1. Getting brand out there – know ISU Extension and Outreach (6)
2. Family dynamics: split families, two incomes, foster families (5)
3. Educating families: helping them help themselves, finance, basic needs, parenting (4)
4. Family farm vs. corporate farm (4)
5. Aging population (3)

## **Region 11**

### *Stakeholders*

1. Skilled labor – shortage, work ethic (12)
2. Openness to change/cultural shift in way we think and work – need to bring people together and appreciate what it takes to bring new people into a community (8)
3. Unmet mental health care needs/substance abuse (7)
4. Quality early childhood programming and child care (6)
5. Adult mentors to nurture next generation of volunteers (6)

### *Staff*

1. Career advancement (not just entry level) and work at home opportunities (9)
2. Engage next generation to give them a sense of community, get them involved (8)
3. Quality K-12 programming and partnerships (7)
4. Mental health resources (5)
5. Economics and the farm economy (4)

### *Councils*

1. Farm economy (11)
2. Societal issues impacting families (7)
3. Involvement – generation, mean age of people getting older, figure out a way to get people out of 4-H and into volunteer positions (5)
4. Available workforce (4)
5. Access to capital – venture, seed, loans (1)  
Rural population decline (1)

## **Region 12**

### *Stakeholders*

1. Skilled workers (19)
2. Leadership development (8)
3. Attracting young people (7)
4. Develop partnerships with businesses and education (7)
5. Housing (4)

### *Staff*

1. Community feeling/involvement (7)
2. Access to resources – small towns (6)
3. Mental health – youth (6)
4. +/- population (4)
5. Ag economy (4)

### *Councils*

1. Collaboration among partners (7)
2. Mental health (6)
3. Making rural Iowa attractive for people to live in (4)
4. Affordable housing (3)
5. Reinvent ourselves (2)

## **Region 13**

### *Stakeholders*

1. Access to routine medical and dental care, food and fitness – healthy living needs (6)
2. Poverty (6)
3. Workforce availability – merchants say they have trouble finding the right employees who will stay; employees say the pay is not enough (5)
4. Workforce – availability, readiness and talent (5)
5. Child care quality and affordability – affecting employees (4)

### *Staff*

1. Inequity across the spectrum (15)
2. General communication – not a good source to get all the communication they need (12)
3. Cooperation of resources – lack thereof (11)
4. Funding for schools K-12 (10)
5. Support for early childhood education and daycare (6)

### *Councils*

1. Youth leadership (9)
2. Interaction between urban and rural communities (5)
3. Activities to engage youth from all communities (3)
4. Entrepreneurship support (2)
5. Community services for senior citizens to age in place (2)
  - Rural connectivity – broadband (2)
  - Population diversity (2)

## **Region 14**

*Participants did not rank issues.*

### *Stakeholders*

- Day care
- Ag sectors – downturn in farm economy; crop insurance, farm programs
- Housing for seniors and young families; affordable and rentals
- Recreational and entertainment opportunities
- Mental health

### *Staff*

- Health care – affordability, availability, money taken from budgets
- Child care
- Family dynamics – some are still living with parents; multi-generational
- Farm economy
- Decline in rural population

### *Councils*

- Economy – layoffs
- Decrease in volunteers
- Hiring people with right skill set
- Work ethic of employees
- Parents both working
- Child care and after school care
- Family structure – two people working, parenting skills, literacy skills
- Rural region – accessing resources when communities lose businesses
- Lack of economic diversity
- More elderly, less children, fixed income
- Baby Boomer retirements
- Lack of population growth
- Retention of young people
- Health care
- Mental health
- Recreational, educational, quality of life opportunities

## **Region 15**

### *Stakeholders*

1. Lack of work force **(5)**
2. Succession planning **(5)**
3. Focus on trades/two-year college, support w/no debt **(5)**
4. Lack of child care **(4)**
5. Consistent common goal **(4)**
6. Disparity rural urban **(4)**

### *Staff*

1. Lack of partnerships **(14)**
2. Understanding and using limited resources **(6)**
3. Rural urban collaboration/cooperation **(3)**
4. Information overload **(3)**
5. Tourism **(2)**
  - Affordable child care **(2)**
  - Internet infrastructure **(2)**
  - Audience diversity **(2)**
  - Citizen education **(2)**

### *Councils*

1. Health of community **(8)**
2. Family values **(7)**
3. Farm economy, policy, land values **(5)**
4. Schools, education **(5)**
5. Jobs, availability of workers **(3)**

## Region 16

### *Stakeholders*

1. Mental health issues and lack of resources
2. Diversity and inclusion
3. High school graduation
4. Living wage
5. Bi-mobile income disparities

### *Staff*

1. Mental health **(12)**
2. High turnover in social service staff **(7)**
3. Less public resources for agencies **(6)**
4. Trauma informed care **(6)**
5. Workforce development – living wage, poverty **(4)**
  - Increase of violence **(4)**
  - Access to higher education **(4)**

### *Councils*

1. Funding – tax revenue keeping up with inflation **(6)**
2. Mental health **(6)**
3. Diversity and inclusion integration **(5)**
4. Single family households **(4)**
5. Keeping and bring young people in Iowa and our communities **(3)**
  - Labor force – skilled and unskilled **(3)**
  - Aging population **(3)**
  - Career discovery – youth and parents **(3)**

## Region 17

### *Stakeholders*

1. Housing **(6)**
2. Poverty **(6)**
3. Workforce – more skilled jobs than applicants **(4)**
4. Broadband access **(3)**
5. Child care needs

### *Staff*

1. Living wage and/or self-employment opportunities/poverty **(13)**
2. How we share info with clients without Internet – Latino, elderly, poverty **(7)**
3. “Good,” affordable housing **(6)**
4. Aging population
5. Engaging young families in community opportunities

### *Councils*

1. Family dysfunction, i.e., grandparents raising kids **(6)**
2. At-risk children (early childhood ages) – home life, birth to age 10 **(5)**
3. Schools teaching life skills – financial education, work ethic **(5)**
4. Access to education **(4)**
5. Housing that fits the desired needs – restrictions by size, price, quality, etc. **(3)**

## Region 18

### *Stakeholders*

1. Housing for workforce **(8)**
2. Finding enough workers to fill jobs **(5)**
3. Lack of entrepreneurship **(5)**
4. Filling the middle skills gap – short-term training, certificate, associate degree **(4)**
5. Skilled trades – plumbers, electricians – barriers to entry **(4)**  
Ability to track professionals – pharmacist, dentist **(4)**

### *Staff*

1. Small population – young people **(13)**
2. Mental health – drugs, alcohol **(13)**
3. Minimal public services and resources for people with lower incomes **(7)**
4. Poverty **(5)**
5. Limited jobs **(5)**

### *Councils*

1. Shortage of trade skills – middle skills **(7)**
2. Economy in general; less wealth in the rural community **(6)**
3. Quality jobs – lack of good paying jobs **(6)**
4. Loss of population **(2)**
5. Job loss, i.e., Gummi Bear factory **(1)**  
Decent, affordable housing **(1)**  
Loss of mental health resources **(1)**

## Region 19

### *Stakeholders*

1. Access to high-speed Internet **(12)**
2. More aggressive youth development program **(11)**
3. Living wage jobs **(10)**
4. Quality housing **(7)**
5. Basic life skills – budget, shopping, cooking, etc. **(7)**

### *Staff*

1. Decline in volunteerism **(13)**
2. Lack of good jobs in community **(11)**
3. Fewer opportunities for youth, especially in schools **(9)**
4. Mental health access **(8)**
5. Healthcare costs **(7)**

### *Councils*

1. Knowing how to access resources and get them out there **(7)**
2. Living wages **(6)**
3. Lack of quality jobs **(5)**
4. Marketing assets **(5)**
5. Resources in rural area **(5)**  
Resources for mental health and substance abuse **(5)**

## Region 20

### *Stakeholders*

1. Generational poverty (8)
2. Mental illness – lack of services (8)
3. Family connections – family unity (7)
4. Lack of workforce (6)
5. Lack of planning in rural communities – need to look forward (6)

### *Staff*

1. Farm economy (9)
2. Quality jobs to support the cost of living (7)
3. Affordable/available health care (5)
4. Support of small business – retention/education about the need to shop local/access to capital (5)
5. Affordable housing (5)  
Broadband/internet (5)

### *Councils*

1. Retaining young people (6)
2. Training people already in the workforce – skilled career path (5)
3. Broadband/high-speed connection (4)
4. Social skills suffer due to lack of face-to-face communication, lack of response (2)
5. Retirees – they have been valued as they work and now life is different (2)

## Regional Directors

1. Lack of skilled workforce (10)
2. Developing future leaders (8)
3. Global economy (5)
4. Poverty (5)
5. Lack of diversity – lack of acceptance, infrastructure to support immigration (3)

## State 4-H Council

1. Safety (22)
2. Schools lack of resources (20)
3. Communication (17)  
Entitlement – “I deserve,” “I shouldn’t have to” (17)
4. Education of agriculture (16)
5. Lack of jobs (14)

## Campus Faculty and Staff

Campus faculty and staff discussed a range of issues during the two campus sessions, but did not vote on their top five.