

PRIORITY ACTIVITIES PROGRESS REPORT

MAY 2020

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Capital Crossroads is a **bold but achievable vision** pushing Central Iowans to dream big, not settle for good enough, think long term and work together.

BUSINESS CAPITAL

Kathryn Kunert, David Maahs, Rick Sanders, and Geoff Wood

Impacts of COVID-19 on your Capital

The shutdown of many businesses – retailers, restaurants, bars, hair salons/barber shops, others offering amenities and services – has been devastating to many. Numerous organizations are stepping up and taking action to help. The state and IEDA have helped over 2,000 small businesses across Iowa through April 24, allocating nearly \$40M to small businesses across several industries. For those funds, there were over 14,000 applicants – some of those being non-profits – a truly overwhelming demand for assistance.

The Greater Des Moines Partnership is developing a local program for the small businesses that did not get IEDA or PPP support, driven by corporate and private fundraising. It will launch May 4.

On the PPP side, you see some tech startups based in Des Moines that use larger, coastal banks and did not receive the PPP loan. Many see that as an opportunity for those tech startups working with Silicon Valley (or other investors) making the move towards utilizing region banks. That banking relationship for those PPP dollars seemed to be key – that is likely going to be a shifted priority for all business owners moving forward: ensuring the relationship with their small business banker is strong.

Many manufacturing related businesses have shifted into PPE production, making face shields and masks. They are not worried about long-term implications – they are motivated to help, and that has been an uplifting thing to see. The effects of this emergency move on their businesses long term is not yet known.

It has been a miss for our community to not have the BrokerTech Ventures Accelerator and Global Insurance Accelerator carry out their full program on the ground in in Des Moines. They both had to move their entrepreneurial programs that import startup companies from all over world to Iowa for a window of time to an online version at the outbreak of the pandemic.

At ISU Research Park, most of the bioscience and bio-based chemical companies are closed. Precision agriculture are operating as business as usual (companies like Kent and John Deere), while vaccine work and animal health/immunotherapy have amped up. Workiva – a company familiar and comfortable with a remote workforce – also seems to be forging ahead during this time. SBDC and CIRAS are as busy as ever assisting businesses and getting funding to support their work.

During this time, for Prairie Meadows, a schedule and timeline will be established once they can open back up. Currently, they are seeing a \$20M loss for each month they remained closed. There are many unknowns about what ‘opening back up’ will look like, since the new normal for casinos will be different. How is social distancing integrated? Is there a person at every 2 or 3 slot machines? It is going to have to be a sort of gradual re-entry, with the health and safety of community first. The impact of Prairie Meadows closure is going to be huge; \$26M annually goes to Polk County, with total taxes of \$52 annually...and those are just some examples.

Throughout the business community, there is a lot of talk around internships – in all industries. Many wonder what that future will hold. For now, there have been dramatic cuts in offerings this summer from many.

Shifting Priorities

The Greater Des Moines Partnership has ramped up virtual programming to provide educational opportunities to support businesses and individuals working in remote settings. There have been over 20 webinars and meetings, ranging to everything from remote selling to remote working and beyond. From a communication standpoint, there have been numerous blog and press releases posted daily, a huge ramp up of social media, and various campaigns launched, as a ways for individuals to show support for our local economy (#DSMStrong, #DSMLocalChallenge, others).

ISU Research Park has shifted to focus on their infrastructure. They are targeting their high-use buildings and updating some of their core use features (bathrooms, other public spaces, hallways). This time has enabled them to get some work done now instead of later. It has also enabled their team to shift work to the contractors that they rely on regularly. ISU is considering what the format at the Research Park will be like moving forward – do companies allow remote work? Do they reconfigure spaces?

In addition, during this time, ISU Research Park has offered vacant rent-free lab space to groups that are assembling PPE equipment or focused on response efforts. One group utilizing space is manufacturing more efficient ventilators. The school also has its 3D printers running 24/7 to make face shields.

From a small business standpoint, many of the owners in the ecosystems we know are trying to survive. There are a lot of unknowns still: business owners wondering if they're going to get this funding or that funding and if they can keep afloat when the end of this crisis is not known.

At Gravitate Coworking specifically, there was a shift to all virtual connections with one another with regular coffee, lunch and happy hour events. They decided to have a month-long pause of programming and relaunched in mid-April. They also led a coordinated call with other coworking owners across the state -- 30 total – to talk through shared issues and what might be next. In addition, there is also a lot of thought and discussion around what the physical considerations are for the 'all clear' to go back to work. Questions are being asked about cubes, breakrooms, if work places start providing masks, what 'shared' spaces will look like, and more.

Lastly, a priority for all in this Capital has been boosting up and sharing the successes of the individuals, businesses and members of our region's communities and workplaces. Technology has enabled information to be shared more readily, so leveraging social media, ZOOM, e-mail, group meetings and more to communicate and share stories has been a huge shift and significant to-do.

Leading Resiliently

To all in this Capital, leading resiliently means helping businesses recover, ramp up, reopen and thrive.

At ISU, it, too, is all about flexibility. Not knowing what the future holds, the focus is on agility. In order to bring things back in operation, we are going to have to help each other and rally together, and not place all the importance on our balance sheets...to work together and pay it forward.

At the Partnership, there are discussions with partners around what the plan for reopening looks like. The Partnership, in tandem with several other organizations, will help drive that plan.

For Gravitate, there is a focus on being able to open on Day One to enable people to get back to work as soon as the Gov. Reynolds announces lowans are to go back. This means being prepared and thinking through all the factors now at play and the safety of the individuals that come to work there each day. They have always been a priority, but it takes a different weight now.

Next Steps

- Help businesses large and small, while leading resiliently.
- Identify what the 'new normal' looks like – what is the 'new' day to day? Organizations and businesses need to make some decisions around it so we can amend business plans, budgets, and how we do our work/the day to day.
- Think about embracing the entrepreneur –identify the ways we all can be more inclusive and help build those businesses.
- Broadband is now a front of mind issue – especially if people are moving here from highly urban areas and expecting it. In addition, with the density changes at work vs. in homes/neighborhoods, how are we going to accommodate that? There's also discussion around providing broadband to the more remote areas.
- Work to ensure every organization, regardless of size or industry, has a crisis-management plan. Unsure how CXR can lead this but as a community, we need to know what we do when a crisis hits again. How are we prepared? How do we have the resources stocked and ready to deploy?

News, upcoming initiatives, events, and information to share

- **Q1 Business Capital related news from Clay & Milk:**
 - [Haber Tech \(Ames\)](#) received investment from Ag Startup Engine
 - [Skroot Laboratory \(Ames\) also received funding from Ag Startup Engine](#)
 - [Performance Livestock Analytics \(Ames\) was acquired](#)
 - [BrokerTech Ventures happened \(already in the report\) but they also added new investors in Q1](#)
 - [Rocket Referrals & McClure make the Inc Magazine list of 250 Most Successful Companies](#)
 - [Lot of business capital-related companies named finalists for TAI's prometheus awards](#)
 - [Bunker Labs, a veteran-owned startup nonprofit announced a Des Moines chapter](#)
 - [LenderClose \(WDM\) raised \\$1MM+](#)
 - [Hatchlings \(Des Moines\) hosted the "Global Game Jam" at Gravitate](#)
 - [ISU Startup Factory \(Ames\) announced an 8th cohort](#)
 - [FIN Capital, the "female investor network" announced they've invested more than \\$1M in companies](#)
 - [MakuSafe \(WDM\) announced a \\$1.5MM raise](#)

CAPITAL CORE

Colleen Wittmack and Scott Sanders

The urban core of Central Iowa will continue to enhance its role as the region's principal activity, hospitality, and employment hub and benefit from safe, dynamic, desirable, and affordable neighborhoods.

Impacts of COVID-19 on your Capital

The impacts of COVID-19 on housing are occurring in real time, and our most immediate needs and issues are being addressed first. Keeping people in their homes is a priority. A part of our discussions is also about what summer looks like, then the development of a long-range plan. With the anticipation of a rent bubble when the moratorium on evictions and mortgage foreclosures expires, how do we keep individuals housed? The cost of rent or mortgage payments are going to become an issue at some point, as deferral cannot last forever.

Thus, for housing organizations, it is looking at how our communities and organizations can work together prevent a large-scale increase in homelessness or in individuals losing their homes. As of late April, there are no Federal programs or grants supporting housing robustly. ESG solutions grant dollars for current homeless population; CDBG monies in Des Moines are split between businesses and monthly affordable housing/rental payments. In other cities that are not entitlement cities, they can apply to use CDBG dollars for a myriad of COVID-19 responses. Thus, we're unsure where dollars are going to be coming from to support deferred payments. Des Moines, as an entitlement city, is granted CDBG funds directly, as is West Des Moines (others cities, given their size, have to apply). In Des Moines, around half of the funds are for small business grants, while the other half are for either affordable housing or rental payment assistance. There are still questions around unemployment assistance and if the stimulus will address housing need (in the short-term) or is there a need for more emergency funds?

The City of Des Moines is actively encouraging new construction of all types – housing included. Construction is a significant piece of the economy that they believe is part of the solution to recovery. As individuals within the Capital Core work with the region's developers, there will be a push on the affordability aspects identified in the Capital Crossroads workforce housing strategies.

With Invest DSM, some programs are on pause, but the forward momentum has not slowed. Funding for 2021 could be impacted (since some funding comes from sales tax), though those effects are unclear at this time. Invest DSM is focused on behind the scenes work and the impact this will have on the residents of their four neighborhoods.

At OpportUNITY, there is a lot of talk about re-entry and finding housing/jobs for that population. 211 is a key focus; from mid-March to Mid-April, 211 received 677 calls about housing and shelter (a period of 30 days).

Within the work the Greater Des Moines Partnership does in this Capital, there has been a focus on both the present and the short-term future. Timelines for the Downtown Vision Plan have shifted due to COVID-

19. The team is relying on conversations with the city, county and core community partners to maintain alignment of goals during this time.

The Partnership is working to support investors, members, and the community at large. A short-term strategic plan was developed in March with the core strategies of keeping businesses in business, keeping people working and keeping the community healthy. All Partnership initiatives and efforts during this time are in direct alignment with those strategies.

Shifting Priorities

The short-term housing priority is focused all on emergency response and asks how are we utilizing ESG funds and helping the homeless population. Polk County Continuum of Care is working to address keeping the homeless population that we have healthy, so shelters don't become a hot spot for infections.

Residents of Central Iowa Shelter and Services have moved out of the facility and into hotel rooms. What happens after that? Some moved into permanent housing thanks to funds that the City, County, Polk County Housing Trust Fund (PCHTF) and United Way allocated, as all in the housing space have been working to make it a priority.

Leading Resiliently

One of the greatest things we can continue to do is keep people in housing. Another is to continue to move ahead with plans, with an eye on the longer term/larger impacts of COVID, as they still reveal themselves.

Next Steps

- With the Capital Core's workforce housing study, we know data will be altered significantly given the COVID-19 virus. With much of the planned work being one-on-one and in-person meetings, we have put some of those to-dos on hold. However, we want to keep the momentum going with the traction and support we have already built. We plan to communicate to the city managers that we acknowledge the existing challenges. We believe COVID has created an opportunity that gives their teams a chance to strategically transition from crisis – and come out stronger.
 - In addition, we had planned a resolution for city councils across the region to sign and acknowledge. This is 'on hold' until at least summer (and once Councils start convening again). We want to give them time to settle in.
- There is power in regionalism – in a regional coordinated response. Many have acknowledged that communication is paramount during this time. We can work together to craft the messaging around resilience, strength, positivity now and into our future.

CULTIVATION CORRIDOR

Billi Hunt

Central Iowa will become the global center for agricultural technology and associated employment.

Impacts of COVID-19 on your Capital

The agriculture and food industries are both considered critically essential, especially during this time. In all aspects of agriculture and food, there have been few restrictions established at a state or regional level; most are company driven. The farmers of our region, our state and the Midwest are losing millions of dollars, collectively, daily. The industries are seeing impacts throughout the supply chain, not only on the livestock and production side, but with the workforce and consumers. The system is stretched, stressed and we are seeing it start to break down.

In Central Iowa and the corporate world, many are focused on planting season. Farmers are working now to put crops in the ground. Many companies are doing what they can to remain 'business as usual', but if one of their suppliers shuts down, it impacts them greatly. In addition, most all the companies in these sectors have thoughtful crisis management plans that they are implementing during this time – and they are working.

One of the greatest questions that comes out of this for the agriculture and food industry is: how can the industry maintain momentum with the changes and inevitable slowing in parts of the supply chain? There is not a clear answer right now.

Shifting Priorities

From a Cultivation Corridor standpoint, there has been a shift of KPIs for the year. All marketing is now focused on how agriculture and food are essential parts of our system as they work to feed not only the state and the nation but the world. Cultivation Corridor is continuing to share and show that Iowa is an agriculture and food driven state that is contributing to the greater world in which we live.

With plans for the first Cultivo to arrive this month (mid-May) getting delayed, Cultivation Corridor is now focused on having one cohort this year (Australia, postponed to now arrive at the end of August). There are countries lined up and interested in Cultivo, and that priority remains, as we put Iowa on the global map.

Leading Resiliently

Moving forward, there are many ways to share stories and spread positivity around how the agriculture and food industries led the way...how the industry innovated to meet needs. Cultivation Corridor is exploring how we work with media to...communicate the values of the agriculture and food industry. We are asking: how do we share the stories of our region? How do we loop in and unite those stories to have people look at things differently?

A bold goal that our community needs to address is the need for broadband and overall capacity increase within the system. Given the work and school from home need – how can we rise as leaders and be aggressive to do things ahead of the curve? Access to technology and information is crucial.

Next Steps

- We have a goal to create strong messaging about how science prevails and how planning/the food and ag system was able to get food out the door.
- We are focused on hosting the first Cultivo cohort from Australia in August.
- Start recruiting new investors again when the time is right.

News, upcoming initiatives, events, and information to share:

- [April News from the Corridor](#)

CULTURAL CAPITAL

Sally Dix, Greg Edwards and Myrna Johnson

Recommendations emerging from the forthcoming Regional Cultural Assessment will be effectively implemented to maximize the role of arts and culture as vital contributors to Greater Des Moines' quality of life and economy.

Impacts of COVID-19 on your Capital

COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the tourism industry and to community cultural experiences in general. 99% of revenue to Bravo Greater Des Moines and 90% of Catch Des Moines' budget is comprised of hotel motel taxes from across the region. Initial projections for next year show around a 50% reduction in revenue. At Catch Des Moines, immediate adjustments to personnel and salary cutbacks were instated and travel, trade shows and other marketing expenses were drastically cut. Now, there is lots of discussion around next steps of kick-starting getting back to business as usual.

Across the Cultural Capital, there are dozens of venues -- organizations that are dependent on ticket sales – seeing a huge drop off in revenue given the required cancellation of shows. There is a coalition of venues who have come together to have those conversations about 'what next.'

In terms of public radio, underwriters are canceling, and there is the challenge of membership and growth. At Iowa Public Radio (IPR) specifically, reserves have been built to make it through 2020. 2021 and beyond are when it will look different. IPR is wondering what support from universities/the state – what will that look like in the future? Some of the regular programming and events have had to shift; for example, IPR isn't having live musicians in the studio during this time, though they are hosting digital events and continuing to compensate musicians for their online performances.

One thing is clear: there are a variety of unique impacts within the Cultural Capital. One is that most cultural organizations rely on earned income and contributed income...both of which have slowed (earned income stopping almost entirely). That loss of current and future revenue is being seen and felt by most all individual artists (musicians, visual artists, and more) and arts organizations. The feedback loop/supply chain of the Cultural Capital is currently on hold – individuals are not coming to or getting out to enjoy arts & culture, stay in hotels, or participate in tourism related activities. As such, organizations have had to get creative during this time – transitioning their ‘products’ online (hosting virtual museum tours, digital art classes, staging online performances). The opportunities for evolution and audience development within this sector have started to take shape, given that arts & culture connect to our inherent need for creativity and expression, but there are questions about sustainability of these models in any longer-term way.

This time has made a gap apparent to a few of us: there are few organizations looking out for the individual artists of our community in a comprehensive and coordinated way. Where do artists turn for resources? What could exist for the region? How can we play a role for advocating arts, culture, tourism as essential in bringing our community back online? From a philanthropy and non-profit standpoint – what does funding look like in the future? How do we encourage more collaboration? As you can see – there are a lot of questions and not a lot of answers at this time.

Around 50% of the organizations funded by Bravo Greater Des Moines filed for PPP support, EIDL, or other financial support. Bravo was able to receive PPP dollars; Catch is a 501(c)6 and does not qualify for PPP – though some lobbyists and others working at a Federal level are seeking to enable organizations structured similarly to Catch to qualify for funding.

It is hard to predict what the full impact of COVID-19 will be on the Cultural Capital. When will we feel comfortable attending a concert or show? How do we message safety in our venues, street festivals, and other arts and cultural events? We will have to work together to ensure that safety is promoted, communicated and enacted to make individuals comfortable and safe.

Shifting Priorities

During this time, Catch Des Moines has amped up communications. They lead a weekly community wide Monday update with all the hotels and have another Thursday call with the same group. They join bi-weekly touchpoints with partners throughout the community and have regular touchpoints with national partners. Catch has also launched a variety of campaigns, including: #DesGoodNews, #DSMLocalChallenge, and “In For Lunch” in tandem with the Greater Des Moines Partnership and other area organizations. Most all marketing strategies focused on tourism/events have been paused (television, magazines, other ads) during this time. A plan for a summer launch of their usual tourism/marketing campaign is planned if the timing is right.

Bravo has been focused on getting dollars to their partner organizations. Between March 17 and April 25, \$1.5M was put into the Cultural Sector via Bravo from dollars committed in the 2020 grant cycle. All other funding commitments will be honored for this calendar year.

IPR has amped up all communications re: COVID, with a COVID blog, a COVID newsletter (with sunny information incorporated and various arts & culture related content), an IPR Tuesday music video series supporting local musicians, and is posting a lot more music & arts content on their website (one story a day, on things like buying merch/other ways you can support local arts & culture). IPR is also working on a music newsletter for the community, is connecting with Spanish language interpreters to better reach the Spanish speaking community and is exploring bringing on a bilingual reporter.

The Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines is hosting regular meetings to discuss the impacts of COVID with a broader coalition of non-profit leaders. It provides a platform for all community non-profits to work together to share information and plan and many arts and culture leaders participate regularly.

Leading Resiliently

Arts & culture plays a huge role in our community and makes it a great place to live, work, play and visit. Arming individuals with the info and stats to understand the importance and tell the stories of culture in Central Iowa will be key moving forward. This is one way we can continue to lead resiliently – by sharing and telling those stories, so people understand the importance of arts & culture.

For our community, it may help to understand the reserves organizations within Central Iowa have during this time. Transparency could lead to greater resiliency and enabled us to learn from one another during this time and potentially, prepare us better for future difficult times.

Next Steps

- One thing that has not shifted during this time is the work on the Regional Cultural Assessment (RCA) – Bravo continues to drive this work and hosted four focus groups in late April with community members. Final recommendations will be completed in mid-May.
- Work together to increase the number of heads in beds, butts in seats and events happening across our region.
- Continuing to advocate for the role of arts, culture & tourism in our community – RCA is ensuring that the goals of the region are aligned – put it at the center of the conversation now and moving forward.
- Work with the cultural sector to ensure their own financial stability now and into the future as they navigate and get creative with the new normal – focus on the health of the sector in the long-term.

GOVERNANCE CAPITAL

Bob Andeweg, Sara Kurovski and Art Wittmack

Central Iowa governments will sustain partnerships to optimize process coordination and regional governance.

Impacts of COVID-19 on your Capital

Everything that is happening right now is going to have a continuous long-term impact on our workforce. Parents educating their children, our workforce being laid off or furloughed, tourism declining, and more. How is this going to impact our economy, our workforce, our day to day? How do we get through this the next time without letting any of the areas slip?

The ability for individuals to engage with elected officials has been reduced to digital engagement. Council meetings and townhalls have all become digital, and conversations are occurring regularly on social media via Facebook Live and more.

Because of that, there seems to be a lessening of participation in some communities. How do conversations about the ongoing projects of a community continue? How is information shared? There needs to be a more accessible public input process.

Shifting Priorities

The safety of the region and safety of residents has become the number one priority. In addition, the ongoing stormwater work has remained a priority and is driven by the Capital Crossroads group. Presentations to the various MPO committees occurred throughout March and April. We are currently looking at January 1, 2021 for official adoption.

Since the Local Government Collaborative has been such a success, there have been ongoing discussions around how we can increase the sharing of resources. How will COVID create an opportunity to more significantly enhance CXR efforts across the region?

During this time, the Governance Capital has hosted weekly MAC briefings with regional leaders. This has created the opportunity for a more aligned regional COVID discussion.

The Taxpayer's Association of Central Iowa (TACI) hosted its inaugural ZOOM town hall on April 22. There were over 100 attendees. It will be a bi-weekly call on Wednesdays until further notice.

Leading Resiliently

Leading resiliently for the Governance Capital will be about the transition from saving lives to saving livings. How can we analyze our decisions rather than finding the scapegoat for them? We need to remember and think through where we have come from, why we're here, and where we're going next. This is a time to reflect and learn.

Next Steps

- An opportunity for the Governance Capital may be to lead conversations around preparedness, emergency response and management moving forward. If another emergency were to happen, how can we be more prepared for next time? How can we create a model of resiliency that lasts? What does it look like across the region?
- For 2020, we will be working to get stormwater across the finish line.
- How can we work toward broadband access for all? Critical for all areas.
 - Reduce barriers to entry
 - Need two quality providers in each market to make it viable
- Continued economic development.
- In 2020/early 2021, we will determine the next Local Government Collaborative project.

News, upcoming initiatives, events, and information to share

- The stormwater group submitted a proposal for the Iowa Chapter of the American Planning Association for the APA Upper Midwest Conference with the theme “Regionalism: Planning Knows No Boundaries” to be held on October 14-16th, 2020 in Des Moines, Iowa. We will know if we are presenting in the next few weeks.
- Visit TACI's Town Hall website (<https://tacitownhall.org/>) to learn about future events.

HUMAN CAPITAL

Elisabeth Buck, Renee Miller, Mary Bontrager and Greg Nichols

Central Iowa will feature a workforce with the skills and training necessary to support optimal economic development.

Impacts of COVID-19 on your Capital

Every element of the cradle to career (birth to adulthood) spectrum has been impacted. Some early learning centers and childcare facilities have closed in the midst of COVID-19, while others are still open and providing care for children (especially for those parents that are critical/essential workers). Early in the pandemic, childcare providers who assisted the more vulnerable families were struggling more than others, as they experienced a decrease in attendance given parents who may have lost jobs. Advocacy was done at a state level to ensure support for childcare providers who might miss significant revenue without childcare assistance (CCA) payments. The state has since established a program, funded with federal funds, to ease this burden. While this has provided some short-term support there continue to be many unknowns regarding the long-term sustainability of childcare centers. We are aware of one metro-area center that has already made the difficult decision to close their doors permanently.

With all schools closed for the balance of the year and transition to at-home learning, the digital divide is more transparent than it ever has been. Most school districts have moved entirely digital; children/families without technology or internet access or parents/caregivers to help them navigate are getting left behind.

The Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS) acknowledged this equity gap and started working with local business and the Greater Des Moines Partnership to get technology into student's hands. Beginning the week of April 20, Mediacom started working with families across the district who didn't have internet access. DMPS plans to cover the first month or two with Mediacom donating \$100K++ to the cause. This enables 'access' to education and internet in the short-term but what does three months from now look like? Other districts, too, are addressing this technology gap in a variety of ways; DMPS is one example.

With parents being the educators and motivating children during this time (some while working), it is tough on adults and children alike. The Greater Des Moines Partnership is exploring a tutor-connection program with local colleges and universities, where the students are paid as the tutors and school-aged children receive ongoing tutoring assistance. Exploration around what other learning options exist and what summer programs could look like is ongoing. However you look at it, if things continue in this way, the gap and disparities will continue to widen even further.

Most employment and post-secondary training initiatives are stalled or have slowed down significantly. The State Department of Education is not allowing any new enrollments (as of mid-April). Bridges to Success (a High School Equivalency Diploma program) is an example of a program that has been significantly stunted. Since the HiSET is a high-stakes group of tests it is required to be proctored in person, which is not an option at this time. This, coupled with the restrictions on new enrollments, limits the ability of individuals who are interested in getting their degrees, certificates or equivalency diplomas to proceed with their adult basic and post-secondary education.

Many internships, first jobs out of college, and other employment opportunities are delayed, postponed, or no longer viable. What does this mean for those individuals? Restaurants shutting down, hospitality staff is out of work. The skills gap is going to grow during this time. We will see an increase in jobs again eventually, but they are going to be of different, potentially lower skill level type jobs. The untapped talent (identified as ex-offenders/re-entered citizens, LGBTQ and non-binary individuals, African Americans, people with disabilities, veterans and foreign born) population will get pushed further down the chain. United Way, the Partnership, and others are working towards how to mitigate the deepening of the divide. A part of this is connected to the future world of work: how can you leverage online learning during this time to be increasing your employability? The change is going to continue to be rapid.

Some employers, in certain aspects of the supply chain, are hiring. The Greater Des Moines Partnership launched DSM Employment Ready to connect individuals to where the jobs are. Executive/senior level hiring is not appearing to slow down in the region currently. However, coming out of this, we have not seen what the impact of furloughs, staffing changes, etc. will be. All we know is that there is a definite shift of unemployment from extremely low to quite high.

Shifting Priorities

At the Greater Des Moines Partnership, there has been a movement to expedite the understanding of what the new world of work will look like. What is it going to take to get employment back to where it needs to be? How can we retool our educational system in this new normal? How do we advance or alter trainings as the work changes? Manufacturers that were considering automation are now accelerating those plans.

Tallo, an online platform built to help employers develop a stable, continuous talent pipeline, is seeing an increase of student profiles during this time. There is anticipated population growth in the future as well, which is an opportunity/challenge: we see people continuing to move to the DSM region, leaving higher-density population areas.

In terms of advocacy, the importance of supportive services is paramount. At United Way, this means safety net services, access to basic needs, unemployment, trainings to get reemployed and childcare / childcare assistance program. In addition, there is also an anticipated need for the Federal government to allocate additional training dollars to mitigate the widening of the skills gap. How can this be challenged and implemented? How can we recognize foreign-born degrees and experience without the delays? The healthcare arena is a primary example of an industry that saw regulatory challenges (related to hiring

previously incarcerated individuals) and changed those regulations out of necessity to fill their workforce demand. Let's learn from this example and expedite the ability for foreign-born degrees to be recognized.

At a state level, there has been talk about how we can treat broadband like infrastructure (and include it in a penny tax/infrastructure tax). How can we open up the discussions around that, so the focus is on connectivity and broadband? This pandemic has revealed how vital this resource is to ALL Iowans.

Leading Resiliently

Now is not the time to pull back from diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts. The Partnership is continuing to share podcasts and blogs about DEI and acknowledge the importance of it. Together, we can work together to prevent the gaps from widening.

Every single person has been affected by this. Many are having to engage with a system that they have not engaged with prior (211, Federal Loan Program, State Loan, unemployment, SNAP, etc.) and are figuring out how to navigate that system. The hope is that more people will appreciate/understand the challenges individuals that are disproportionately affected in the 'normal' world go thru during their day to day. How can we ensure everyone is a part of the solution? That is resiliency.

Next Steps

- Work towards greater educational attainment
- Growth of the economy and the population
 - Supporting New Iowans once they arrive
- Develop a better understanding and plan world of work as we move towards the new normal
- Help individuals recover – education, financial self-sufficiency – keep pressing ahead and collaborating, by continuing to forge partnerships with organizations to help move the needle (the trajectory may look different, but the vision is the same)

NATURAL CAPITAL

Hannah Inman, Larry James and Julie Stewart

Central Iowa will be recognized nationally as a best practice community for its environmental sustainability

Impacts of COVID-19 on your Capital

A core focus of the Natural Capital for the last two plus years has been Central Iowa Water Trails (CIWT). One of the first impacts COVID-19 had on this project was a pause of fundraising. The group identified countless organizations have very acute/immediate needs during this time and felt pausing fundraising was both timely and principled. CIWT did receive \$500,000 in early April and still has grants coming through the pipeline. The BUILD grant work and design phases are in full swing (for the Scott Ave, Harriett, Prospect and Birdland projects) and going through permitting now. In addition, Governance is ramping up and the team is working to implement the structure. The model will hopefully pave the way for future regional projects within the Natural Capital and enable some exciting things to be accomplished in the future.

So far, the Central Iowa Water Trails project has raised \$20M privately, received the \$25M BUILD grant and had abundant regional support. Some regional dollars may be delayed (along with some of the other donor timelines). Right now, there is a drive to finish fundraising for the Center and Fleur sites. The team has acknowledged that local fundraising may take some time to ramp back up so are working now on how they can advocate at a Federal level for funding streams that may exist now or in the future.

At the Great Outdoors Foundation (GOF), the team is working to see what the world looks like post-water trails, with a focus on how a better impact can be made on our region's Natural Capital. It's very much a three-prong approach of climate, environment and resiliency. There has been talk about a carbon offset program. The Upstream/Downstream partnership through Capital Crossroads and other initiatives has proven successful...how do we continue those events post-COVID-19?

A big question lately: are there opportunities to make private investments on public and private land for a public good? Iowa Soybean Association, an organization GOF has partnered with in the past applied for and received a Regional Conservation Planning Partnership (RCPP) grant for water quality investment on private land for the Raccoon River Watershed (\$10M). With an existing right of way already along the Raccoon – do we revisit the plans proposed and those that already exist to connect water trails to Whiterock Conservancy and paved trails along the Raccoon up through Waukee to the Raccoon River and then to the High Trestle Trail (string of pearls concept)? Or, do we focus on creating MOU on water quality (using Dubuque's work on this topic as an example), where the City of Des Moines, the County, and private investors invest and fund water quality work? All provide meaningful opportunities for regional partnerships and are crucial projects for our region now and in to the future.

The Connect Downtown work may be more relevant now than before. There is a BUILD grant application planned for 2021 to assist in funding this project. Connect Downtown provides an opportunity to unite people from across the region differently. How do we connect our amenities to our homes, our jobs, our greater trail network? Where are those missing links and how can we build on them? How can we expand upon that Connect Downtown concept? How do you make it safe for kids, families and adults to work where

they live and access where they want to play? Creating those spaces and wayfinding...reimagining the right of way – is crucial to this work. There is a Pork Producers survey that targeted individuals that reside in both rural and urban areas and asked about water quality, quality of life, etc. – those rural individuals responded, citing access to recreational options as important, placing even more importance on this qualifier than their urban counterparts. There is a demand, and a supply of space to fulfill it.

Shifting Priorities

Public engagement, getting individuals outside and to engage with nature and take care of it is incredibly timely. GOF, Polk County Conservation and Conoyer Gardens sold seed ball kits as a fundraiser for Earth Day. An activity like planting can be completed alone or in a small group – as can many activities in nature – gardening, planting in general, running, biking, or kayaking – to name a few.

One of several key priorities that touches this sector: with nearly 27 million people out of work nationwide – how do we (as a Capital) get more people back to work? Are there ways to create employment opportunities within these different initiatives/ideas born out of the Natural Capital? There are many ways to reframe the Natural Capital work and tie it into economic development, future job creation, and even more robust Federal funding opportunities. The Natural Capital group has connected with Trees forever on a variety of initiatives, some of which are focused on job creation.

Another key priority is focused on asking questions about the climate. How can we make a bigger impact on our climate? The State of Iowa has funded recreation and natural capital at less than 0.1% historically. How can we leverage our work to create/increase jobs related to conservation, our environment, other big issues? Our Natural Capital is a part of our day to day lives – we need to remind people of that, which COVID-19 has helped reveal to many. The trails, our parks – all are necessary amenities, that people can play in and escape to. How can we raise funds for the amenities that matter most to our well-being?

Lastly, but never least, is the acknowledgment that we have some serious updates needed to our region's infrastructure, in terms of safety, flood resiliency, and water quality. With the infrastructure bill – how can we drive the focus? There are opportunities for more rural partnerships. Tourism, from a more regional/national travel perspective, is going to be more important in the short-term. In addition, as we look at the lifestyle changes that have happened and are happening– will there be an influx to the Midwest from the coasts? Does our Natural Capital / CIWT / or other initiatives work together to lure folks to Des Moines? This potential population growth and opportunity for economic development is one of many reasons that Connect Downtown and access to trails and recreation remain a priority.

Leading Resiliently

Leading resiliently in this Capital means leveraging the Natural Capital's goals to increase the quality and quantity of jobs across our region. It also is that constant reminder to all that our environment is our most important asset – we must take care of it, respect it – and craft a positive message around it.

Another key component of leadership is making sure you have the right people on the team. The Natural Capital is well positioned to continue working with other organizations, cities in our region, and non-profits

that have shared visions. These partnerships can reduce cost, reduce redundancy, and provide an important opportunity for collaboration and, greater impact.

Resilient leadership also is innovative; the Natural Capital touches it all – and provides a truly holistic approach to the vitality of our region.

Next Steps

- Discuss how can we devise a direct to consumer/direct to business carbon offset program to match public dollars (Collaboration with Trees Forever, other communities, other organizations – alliances are key)
- Implement the CIWT Governance model
- Connect the dots of the Upstream/Downstream partnership – driven by the MOU (see Dubuque’s example) over the next 2 years
- Connect Downtown / alignment with CIWT / GOF / CXR – how can we work together to connect the greater ecosystems/networks of trails, suburbs, etc.?

News, upcoming initiatives, events, and information to share

- **YOUR INPUT WANTED: Des Moines River Activation**

You are invited to participate in an [online public meeting](#), open now till June 3, to provide input on the Des Moines River Activation and Possible Dam Modification (DMRA) Project.

The DMRA Project would provide a regional water trail network on the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers that enhance recreational opportunities and create safer public access in the downtown Des Moines riverfront. The proposed DMRA Project would potentially modify one low-head dam at Scott Avenue and enhance three additional access points (Prospect Park, Birdland Marina and Harriet Street) along a 5-mile stretch of the Des Moines River, in its initial construction. Ultimate construction in downtown Des Moines would include modifications of Center Street Dam, as well as in-river recreation features added downstream of Fleur Drive Dam. Final design for the DMRA Project is anticipated to be complete in summer 2021. Construction is anticipated to begin late 2021 or early 2022.

This project is possible because of a \$25 million federal grant from the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development, or BUILD, grant program from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The grant was secured by the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and is being implemented by the MPO, the Iowa Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration.

PHYSICAL CAPITAL

Todd Ashby, Eric Burmeister and Elizabeth Presutti

Smart planning, timely infrastructure development, and implementation of state-of-the-art technologies will sustain Central Iowa population growth for the present and future

Impacts of COVID-19 on your Capital

At the Des Moines Area Metro Planning Organization (MPO), fuel tax revenue is dropping off given that individuals are traveling and driving less. That will mean at least a 30% drop in revenues for transportation projects this year and in to next. That revenue is directed to roads, some trail and some operations costs. Right now, the team is exploring how we can work to accommodate that loss. There are lots of questions in the air still, like if the Federal Government will step in or not. The MPO has submitted a letter to the congressional federation to assist in those efforts if the opportunity exists.

The Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) has reduced service by about 50%, including the elimination of a few routes. In addition, DART has implemented numerous new safety measures and precautions, a suspension of fare collection (which will be a revenue loss for the next few months) and responded to various operational challenges. Historically, federal grant funding for public transportation has been tied to ridership statistics and passenger miles traveled – this is likely going to change as a metric for the next funding cycle. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is working now to decide how the grant pendulum works beyond COVID-19. At an advocacy level, there is a surface transportation bill DART is following. We are tracking what transit looks like in the future and how it might be supported.

Despite service reductions, DART remains focused on continuing to safely provide essential transportation so people in our community can get to work and meet their most basic needs. DART is also partnering with several organizations to help meet various community needs during this time. The Iowa Cancer Consortium (ICC), with guidance from the American Cancer Society (ACS), asked DART to assist in providing safe, reliable transportation options for cancer center patients who need transportation to reach their treatment appointments. DART is also collaborating with the Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC) to support meal delivery during a time of growing food insecurity throughout the community.

DART is anticipating a medium-term ridership decline as a result of the pandemic. This will create a heightened need to communicate the importance of supporting and funding a regional transit agency so public transit continues to exist for essential workers and continues to support regional goals related to economic development and quality of life after the pandemic subsides. DART officials are also discussing what the longer-term impact on funding could be if we enter a recession. Part of DART's dollars come from property taxes and other public revenue sources/local governments. Congress did allocate \$25B to transit nationwide, and DART received close to \$20M (the Des Moines Airport received \$23M; the Ankeny Airport -- \$70,000) to assist over the next year with revenue issues...however the longer-term unknown is hard to predict regarding ridership, what social distancing will continue to imply, and how long this will truly last.

At Polk County Housing Trust Fund (PCHTF), the housing work group that worked together on a long-range workforce housing plan (borne out of the VA Tech data/study) has paused all future plans (as mentioned in the Capital Core section above). Future discussions with cities and elected officials will ensue once face-to-face meetings are deemed acceptable again. There is a plan in the works to have cities sign a resolution acknowledging the goals outlined in the Workforce Housing Study.

The work PCHTF is focused on is a more immediate need –keeping individuals housed and creating a pathway for housing dollars to individuals/families. Housing dollars are coming thru HUD (via the Iowa Finance Authority - IFA, entitlement jurisdictions – cities of Des Moines and West Des Moines, and Iowa Economic Development Authority – IEDA, the holder of Community Development Block Grants - CDBG in Iowa). To ensure that relief is received by the individuals who need it is a priority and no small feat when working with various organizations in charge of those dollars. Immediate housing needs, for now, are being handled by Polk County and private philanthropy.

The anticipated rent bubble – as soon as moratoriums expire – is creeping up on us day by day. Individuals are going to be required to ante up and pay their rent, while potentially jobless. PCHTF and others are working alongside a ticking clock to ensure that the Federal dollars and programs are in place and accessible. This is the best way to ensure individuals and families are not out on the street, evicted, or going through foreclosure (that horizon estimate, from PCHTF is around July 4). There are 25,000 renters in the city of Des Moines that already pay more than 30% of their income in rent; this is a seemingly significant section of the population who is potentially at risk for those evictions.

Shifting Priorities

The number one priority for PCHTF and many housing related organizations is to keep people in their homes. As mentioned above, this means staying connected with the channels that are driving the control of those federal dollars (IFA, City of Des Moines, IEDA). West Des Moines has already allocated some of their CDBG funds to be used for rental assistance (via their DHS). Des Moines, too, has around 50% of their CDBG dollars going towards rental assistance. From a housing perspective, we have been encouraging those additional dollars being applied to rental assistance and those in need.

All work, promotions and tours of Undesign the Redline were paused for a few weeks in March. As of mid-April, Undesign is open to the public, for digital tours. Most all advocacy work the Trust Fund was focused on has shifted from that longer-term perspective to coordination of immediate needs.

Within public transportation – safety has become the number one priority. At DART, as of late April, there have been no layoffs or furloughs. There has been a push to maintain the day to day operations, while ensuring safety of customers and employees. Many of the projects that had a lot of momentum (the transit optimization study) and the new property tax formula (with our local governments) have been put on pause. All stakeholders involved are taking the time to reflect on how those initiatives might move forward. A current and future priority for DART is to identify what that new normal is and how it relates to their business. What aspects will have to remain in place (having riders sit farther apart) and what can go back to business as usual?

The MPO's focus shifted to working more closely with Department of Transportation (DOT) to keep projects current. There is also a focus on looking at where additional funding can come from for additional projects – how can we get creative? As of early May, there have been no layoffs or furloughs for staff. From an advocacy standpoint, the MPO is looking at legislative solutions for funding deals...like will the gas tax related funding be the primary mechanism in the future? How could it shift? Given the change in traffic, it alone is not viable. This question is going to apply to more than just the MPO, since tax collection drives most all budgets. If you look at projections from the Local Option Sales tax – the City of Des Moines is predicting a \$18M loss from their budget due to that tax alone.

Leading Resiliently

Having the infrastructure in place and tools to work remotely have proven crucial during this time. If we talk about broadband and infrastructure for all – how can the forces that be come together and align goals to make this happen? That is resiliency.

Next Steps

- Define the new normal. How do we continue to be agile and pivot as a community? Things will continue to adapt and change – it is crucial for us all to work together and bend with it.
- Housing – triage of horizons – keeping folks in their home, heading off homelessness, future planning are the priorities. Is where we have come from/the plan still valid?

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Angie Dethlefs-Trettin, Daniel Hoffman-Zinnel, Izaah Knox and Shaimaa Aly

Central Iowa will become the gold standard of the successful 21st century region.

Impacts of COVID-19 on your Capital

Numerous articles and stories of people of color being disproportionately at risk during this time have been in the news since COVID-19 became our world's reality. The 'essential employees/industries' on the front line are working, but often not get paid what they should. If you look at the food service and retail employee conditions, their lack of PPE, paid sick leave, etc. it is startling.

There continues to more individuals who are disenfranchised and marginalized by systems...those who cannot access the services that are offered (like unemployment benefits, SNAP, educational opportunities, and more) because of language or class barriers, challenges of navigating what benefits exist, or not being eligible for public assistance. There is no "Guide to the System" – no book on how to defer a mortgage, get SNAP, qualify for a small business loan – you get the picture. People are getting left behind, the new lowans, the documented or undocumented immigrants, those re-entering, the single moms, the ESL population – to name a few.

Nearly three years ago, there was a community opportunity where organizations and stakeholders were advocating for the state to put together a "Benefit Bank"– a place individuals can go to figure out what resources exist locally or federally for ____ (fill in the blank service). Other states have various resources,

and the Federal government runs a [Federal Benefits site](#). The Department of Humans Services (DHS) would not move on it at the time. If we want to start building resilient communities – this is where we need some collective strength. Does DHS have to own this? Can we have another guide? United Way was leading conversations around it at one point. Is it a community effort?

In our community and nationally, young men of color are not comfortable wearing face masks in public -- out of fear. During this time especially, misinformation is a huge issue for minorities and people of color; they often have an inherent lack of trust for the mainstream 'information'. Many of these implied or required restrictions on daily living feel like 'same old same old,' meaning many minorities and people of color have felt this restriction throughout their lives. Governments have long been telling (or implying) where minorities and people of color can or cannot go. In addition, there are issues of individuals and organizations using information as power and reaping the benefit. We see landlords threatening tenants, banks seizing stimulus checks, scams on the elderly, etc. Finally, there has been a blatant racism demonstrated towards the Asian population during this time. Crises give people (implied) permission to 'place blame.' Fear of scarcity brings out additional fear, which perpetuates much of what we are seeing related to racism, classism, etc. In addition, national police data revealed stark racial discrepancies in social distancing enforcement, showing mainly Blacks and Latinos receiving the most tickets for violations.

The strain is coming down on every level: on the system, the individual, the family unit. The divide and gap is widening socioeconomically. Are the accommodations for individuals in need, with disabilities, for minorities and people of color, enough? Public transportation is limited, Goodwill had to lay off 300 employees, what can we do to help those in need?

Lastly, there is a need for broadband, internet access and technology for all, for education, telehealth, access, and more. The Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS) worked to fulfill these technology and connectivity needs, along with many other organizations including Mediacom, Polk County Health, PI515, Al Exito, Urban Dreams, and the Greater Des Moines Partnership, to name a few. 20% (that is 6,500+ kids) did not have access to internet within the DMPS district prior to COVID-19. For now, that has changed.

Shifting Priorities

At Urban Dreams, the core focus has been on the client – getting individuals food, information, telehealth or mental health services, technology, and assistance with workforce related issues. The goals remain the same, but how they are getting achieved look and feel a bit different. Urban Dreams has remained open and anticipates no change there.

Proteus launched a “facemasks for farmworker campaign” where they reached out to employers to encourage them to take the proper precautions during this time (like social distancing, accessible handwashing stations and hand sanitizer for staff, free PPE, paid sick leave). Proteus offered education and information to all employers about the response and current and future safety needs their organizations should consider.

The Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines has shifted to focus on the Disaster Recovery Fund. There is also a movement to listening, connecting, convening, and providing information to individuals within the non-profit sphere. During this time, trust and authentic relationships have shown to be the most

important. Collective discussions are ongoing with non-profits across our region about collaborating, lifting one another up and even doing the work differently or more efficiently. How can organizations expand services by collaboration/partnership? Does more resource sharing happen in the future?

Another priority of all in this Capital has been ensuring that diversity, equity, inclusion is still front of mind. For the community to grow and thrive, it demands that we engage diverse populations. How can we do more than just say "...go to these locally owned businesses..."? What does this look like? How can our community better lift up minority owned businesses? How can we lift up women and people of color? What organizations can we collaborate with to make this meaningful (Immigrant Entrepreneurship Summit, Financial Empowerment Center, other ideas?).

Leading Resiliently

Leading resiliently takes many forms within the Social Capital. The work the Inclusion Committee of the Central Iowa Water Trails group is doing is a great example. The team is talking through what ADA Compliance will look like at various sites along the water trails. ADA Compliance, in our group's mind, is more than just a 'to-do' item on the checklist. We want to provide ADA Amenities (resiliency and access – truly go above and beyond the basic 'must-haves.'). When we rebuild—physically, emotionally, socially—after the crisis, how do we ensure that we do not just meet the minimum needs but meet individuals where they're at and exceed the needs? This will be our resiliency.

We have started to talk about social capital, diversity, equity, and inclusion more regularly over the last two years. Do we have a "Rebuilding DSM Task Force" that is focused on creating the communities we want to live in now and into the future? Is this a subset of Capital Crossroads or focus of our future work? Some people have said, 'I wish it would all go back to normal' – we don't want to go back to normal. We want to do better than normal, and this is our chance. Telehealth has gotten us started on a path to a new (positive) normal. We need to find those silver linings.

Next Steps

Goals:

- How do we embrace this experience and celebrate different audiences?
 - Telehealth, access, connectivity
 - Are there any early adopters of diversity, equity, inclusion during this time that we can recognize?
 - Using the digital platforms to level the playing field
- Take 4Equity meetings digital
 - Start scheduling for Q3
 - Urban Dreams board trial run – July 8, 2020

News, upcoming initiatives, events, and information to share

- Check out the weekly Community Circle Conversations with nearly 100 nonprofit leaders: <https://www.desmoinesfoundation.org/events>

WELLNESS CAPITAL

Brad Anderson, Jami Haberl, Suzanne Mineck and Ruth Randleman

Wellness Capital will lead in elevating the conversation and giving voice to the vast number of opportunities to improve the overall social and emotional well-being of the community through advocacy and awareness.

Impacts of COVID-19 on your Capital

Ruth has connected with Carlisle's First Responders. There is continued concern over infection, transmission, and how to prepare, educate and help those individuals on the front line. In addition, there is continued discussion around essential employees – how are they being treated? Many are working more, not being compensated enough, and are putting themselves on the front line – the most at risk. With various campaigns underway to acknowledge healthcare workers and first responders – what is being done to recognize those essential employees – grocery staff, gas station attendants, parks workers, others? How are they being recognized/thanked?

Conversations around the long-term mental health impacts of social isolation on children, seniors and adults are starting now. This 'lock-down' of our communities has brought to light the interconnectivity of our systems. Seniors are quarantined to a facility without access to technology, to groceries, to a green space to enjoy. Even some children live without internet access, unable to continue their education, during this time. What will have to change? What will the trickle down of that be?

A win in the Wellness Capital during this time has been the agility with which the healthcare system has pivoted to telehealth. The innovative response in going virtual for telehealth needs has been inspiring. All messaging, training and 'face to face visits' are now digital. The effectivity of it all exemplifies the collaboration that is going on in this space. Most all delivery systems have offered telehealth as a comparable service/a part of insurance plans (Wellmark, others). Medicare is also reimbursing for telehealth (this is something AARP helped fight for).

AARP has been hosting tele-town halls weekly and had great turnouts for each event (they're seeing over 10k people join in). Bruce Buchanan and NAMI Iowa Executive Director Peggy Huppert spoke at an April tele-town hall that focused on mental health. The reach that Bruce has as a therapist has grown exponentially. He currently sees clients across the state – thanks to telehealth. Our next step/focus is how do you get people comfortable with going out and business as usual again? Fear is the biggest issue for us. We need influential members of Central Iowa that show and tell what makes going out again okay.

Overall, AARP has started to host more virtual events. Topics include:

- Brain health, led by Dr. Bender
- COVID-19 and Iowa, led Dr. Shah and Senator Grassley
- Fraud

AARP also has a Friendly Caller Program, comprised of 700 volunteers countrywide. It is a social isolation program for individuals that want to receive calls and have someone to talk with. This has become a very

popular program for seniors during this time. Any lowan can request a volunteer Friendly Caller by calling 1-888-281-0145.

The County and City have been a force behind positive messaging in our community during this time. They, too, are now working to address the stigma around mental health and starting conversations around it. 211 has also been a solid resource for mental health and other needs. Another win in the Capital the Governor's approval for a partnership with the Iowa Department of Public Health and 211 for the crisis mental health line. This option enables more directed mental health support via the 211. From a policy standpoint, this is important to the Wellness Capital – and tied to Your Life Iowa, which has capacity to be statewide.

As a response to COVID-19, Iowa Healthiest State Initiative started a Monday evening series of digital mental health conversations – a collaboration with Make It OK and Please Pass the Love. Currently, a toolkit is being crafted for a May release (to honor mental health awareness month). The toolkit will share resources, the importance of seeking treatment, and asking for help. In addition, WriteBrain has continued to produce videos and stories on mental health for Make It OK. These written stories will be released in May, with the videos launching once the group can convene and arrange proper roll out and marketing for them. During this time, Make It OK has paused all in-person ambassador trainings. The first virtual Make It OK presentation will be hosted via Zoom on May 7th at noon.

COVID-19 has forced many things to be canceled or postponed. The Iowa Healthiest State Initiative Conference in May is canceled. The Please Pass the Love conference is delayed to August. The trauma informed care conference canceled.

Please Pass the Love has been doing virtual peer mental health – providing a safe space for kids to connect with other kids. It is all peer to peer but is monitored by adults. Please Pass the Love participated in DSM Hack to leverage the technology and has seen great success with that program during this time.

Lastly, NAMI Greater Des Moines has partnered with over 50 organizations across the region to promote their 8-week speaker series on wellness and mental health. They have been having over 3,000 attendees at most sessions. Iowa Healthiest State Initiative and Capital Crossroads are helping promote.

Shifting Priorities

Priorities haven't really shifted in this Capital, rather, they have doubled down. The priority of wellness and emotional/social well-being has become elevated. Some of the team's strategies have had to pivot (with everything moving remotely) but the conversation on wellness and mental health is now top of mind. In the media, everywhere, this is being addressed and talked about.

Iowa Healthiest State Initiative has continued to focus on:

- Sharing a variety of resources and being the 'voice' for mental health – statewide. They did pivot to offering creative ideas for those at home, socially distancing.
- Amping up social media. Healthy Choices Count has been reinforcing the importance of activity and reminding folks to eat fruits/veggies (use of the #healthychoicescount tag on social media).

- Double Up Food Bucks Program (Fareway, Farmer’s Markets, Iowa Department of Ag) – looking now at how the Farmer’s Market model will need to be readjusted to ensure farmers can still benefit from the program. Healthiest State Initiative will redirect this program as needed. There is an anticipated increase in the number of SNAP benefits given the rising unemployment numbers – discussions around what this implies are starting.

The core priorities at AARP are usually focused around fraud protection, healthy living, and advocacy. This has shifted a bit to focus on more urgent needs (mental health, social isolation, re-entry post COVID, food insecurity). The real shift remains to be seen.

Mental health, typically, is more relevant to individuals during this time – there is a high amount of anxiety and stress being felt by those who are at home, with kids, or lost their job, cannot pay rent, etc. How do we work to ensure the right resources are there for people at the right time?

Leading Resiliently

How can we assist in providing our own sort of ‘wellness’ guidelines? How can we work to guide action, compassion, wellness, and encourage healthy choices? Many of us are working towards providing that – guiding that – daily. That is leading resiliently, for us. We want to encourage individuals to take care of themselves and their own needs.

Next Steps

- Universal Broadband Internet Access should be a short-term goal for us all! Placing this as an essential need is crucial. School children, seniors, those seeking employment – all need access. It crosses demographics – it applies to the urban, rural, all of us. Other cities/regions have done it – Iowa can too.
- Continue to advocate for the children’s mental health system – what will funding, structure be like? With conversations occurring behind closed doors with legislature not in session, what has changed?
- Drive resiliency – statewide. We see meatpacking plants with high cases of infection and death. There needs to be a push to think outside of just the Caucasian lowans. Portions of the working-class population may not be English speaking...how can we work to provide solutions to the challenges they face, how do we provide them the resources they need?
- The Wellness Capital will continue to focus on mental health, food insecurity and reinforce the importance of healthy food.
- With AARP, they are focused on driving affordable housing and ADUs (via a collaboration with HOME Inc).

Other news, upcoming initiatives, events, and information to share

- **From Iowa Healthiest State Initiative:**
 - [The Mental Health Awareness Toolkit](#) was distributed to all registered ambassadors and workplaces the week of April 20th

- **A Make It OK Community Virtual Presentation** is scheduled for May 7th at noon – [Registration is required](#) as we are limited to 100 attendees. If there is a huge demand, Make It OK will look at offering again possibly at a different time of day
 - **Lifting the Veil Sponsorship** – Make It OK is a sponsor of the Lifting the Veil series (includes the webinars scheduled in May) as well as the Lifting the Veil event in November/December 2020.
 - **Media Plan** - we have partnered with On Media to roll out Make It OK messaging the month of May in Polk County. We will have access to a dashboard to gather the analytics which will be useful as we look at future campaign options.
 - This plan includes:
 - Over-the-top (OTT) – targets viewers of streaming video content on any screen
 - [Display ads](#) – extends the reach of the campaign across a variety of sites with custom built display ads including mobile
 - Pre-Roll – reaches audience with video messaging in front of online video content, being viewed on any device
 - 30 seconds: <https://youtu.be/Zli8Ovp1pSs>
 - 15 seconds: <https://youtu.be/ITxJ--6OAKU>
 - **Make It OK T-shirts** – we have partnered with 87 Central in the East Village to sell for a limited time “OK” t-shirts. They are available for purchase until May 12th. Any funds that are raised will benefit the Make IT OK campaign.
- **From AARP:**
 - The week of May 4th is AARP Iowa’s Virtual Lobby Week. AARP has virtual meetings set up with Senators Grassley and Ernst, as well meetings at the staff level with Iowa’s congressional delegation. AARP top federal priorities include: Nursing Home Safety, Federal Aid to State and Local governments, and SNAP / Food Insecurity.