

Worthington Community Coronavirus Recovery Survey Wave 2

MAY 2021

Community Coronavirus Task Force

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INTRODUCTION

In fall 2020, the City of Worthington Community Coronavirus Task Force conducted a survey to understand how our community has been impacted by the coronavirus crisis. A year into the ongoing pandemic, we checked in once more to learn how community members are managing. Respondents were asked to take the survey once again to provide an update on how the situation may have changed for them since the start of the new year.

The first survey—wave 1—concluded in late September, just before local case numbers started to climb steeply over the holiday months and well before the good news about vaccine availability. The second survey—wave 2—concluded at the end of March, as local case numbers were in decline and vaccines were underway in Ohio for high-risk groups.

In general, the overall landscape is more hopeful than it was six months ago. Polling has found that Americans are feeling better about the country's pandemic response (Jurkowitz, 2021), vaccine willingness has increased (Funk & Tyson, 2021) and people are beginning to undertake some usual activities again, such as visiting loved ones or going out to eat (Ipsos, 2021). But about half (52%) still feel that returning to pre-pandemic life presents a moderate to large risk (Ipsos, 2021).

Economic conditions are improving for many. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate in Ohio has dropped from 8.9% in August 2020 to 4.7% in March 2021 (2021a), with similar improvements in Franklin County (from 9.1% to 5.5%) (2021c) and Columbus (8.3% to 5.0%) (2021a) over the same time period. But some groups—especially women, younger workers and those with lower incomes—have struggled more than others to recover (Associated Press and NORC, 2021; Kochar & Bennett, 2021; Microsoft 2021 Work Trend Index, 2021).

Psychological distress levels have also improved somewhat since the start of the pandemic, but women and those with lower incomes show high distress levels in greater numbers (Keeter, 2021). Parents—especially mothers—are struggling to balance work and childcare (North, 2021). The increased stress of pandemic life has led to increased substance use—alcohol, tobacco and prescription drugs—to cope (O'Connor, 2021).

This analysis will examine how the situation in Worthington compares nationally and how things have changed in the last six months.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection

Survey questions

The survey consisted of two series of questions. The first set of core questions asked respondents about their employment, personal finances, health and wellness, social and emotional wellbeing, technology access, family life and support network. For wave 2 of the survey, we added a question about people's use of substances during the pandemic. The core questions included some branching logic for those who are currently employed and those who are self-employed, as well as for respondents who reporting having children in their households.

The second set of questions asked respondents to share their habits and attitudes when it comes to the pandemic response, including safety precautions, risk assessment, news sources and trust. For wave 2, we added a question about the overall impact of the pandemic on people's lives as well as a series of questions about the coronavirus/COVID-19 vaccine, using branching logic based on vaccination status and willingness to receive the vaccine. Because the survey is fairly lengthy, respondents were able to opt out of the second set of questions if they no longer wished to continue. (The full survey instrument is available in Appendix A. Survey Instrument.)

Because prior research has found that different groups are faring differently during the pandemic (e.g., Horowitz, 2020; Keeter, 2020a; Lopez, Rainie & Budiman, 2020; NPR et al., 2020; Parker, Minkin & Bennett, 2020; Vogels, 2020b), we gathered detailed demographic data on respondents to identify subgroups that may be facing particular challenges or have greater need.

The survey began with a series of demographic questions about connection to Worthington, age, gender, race, Hispanic origin, level of education, household size, languages spoken and income.

The demographic questions used categories developed by the U.S. Census Bureau (e.g., 2020a; 2020b) to permit direct comparison of survey results to overall population data. Nearly all survey questions were adapted from prior research conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Czeisler et al., 2020), Gallup (2020; Brenan, 2020), Ipsos (2020; Naidu-Ghelani, 2020), NORC (2020a; 2020b), Pew Research Center (Daniller, 2020; Devlin & Kent, 2021; Funk & Tyson, 2021; Horowitz, 2020; Keeter, 2020a, 2020b; Lopez, Rainie & Budiman, 2020; Rainie & Perrin, 2020; Shearer, 2020; Vogels, 2020a, 2020b; Vogels et al., 2020) and Rand Corporation (Pollard et al., 2020), allowing us to benchmark our findings in Worthington against national findings to see where we align and differ.

Survey procedures

The second wave of the survey was made available online using SurveyMonkey for 41 days, from February 19 through March 31, 2021. Links to the survey were shared on social media (Instagram, Facebook and/or Twitter) by the City of Worthington, Worthington Libraries and Worthington Schools. The City of Worthington and Worthington Libraries also emailed a link to the survey to their subscribers.

We used SurveyMonkey to send an email invitation to wave 1 respondents who provided their email addresses. Those who did not take the survey within one week were emailed one more time.

Because wave 1 of our survey did not reach a representative sample of the school district, for wave 2, we mailed postcards with a URL and QR code to select households within the school district. Worthington Libraries used Gale Analytics to develop a list of households to reach younger people and those with lower levels of education attainment. We built a list of school district residents excluding Experian’s Mosaic profiles associated with those who are older and more highly educated (such as “Q62 Enjoying Retirement”). Postcards were sent to 11,649 households in all.

Finally, to encourage more responses, we offered an incentive, with the opportunity to enter a drawing for one of 100 day passes to the Worthington Community Center. Once the survey was complete, we used Microsoft Excel to assign a random number to each qualified entry. Entries were sorted by random number from smallest to largest and we selected the first 100 entries as the winners. The names and email addresses of the winning entries were provided to the Worthington Community Center to make further arrangements.

Survey respondents

In all, there were 2,089 responses to the second wave of the survey.

We were interested in only adults with a direct connection to Worthington. The first two questions asked age and whether respondents lived, worked or spent time in Worthington. Respondents who were under 18 or who had no connection to Worthington were immediately disqualified. In total, 34 respondents were disqualified: 10 who were under 18 and 24 who had no connection to Worthington.

Of the remaining responses, 1,652 completed the core set of questions and 1,451 completed the optional pandemic response questions. The results of this report will be based on these completed responses.

As a result of branching logic, some questions had smaller numbers of respondents, including: 907 who are currently employed; 100 who are self-employed; 1,552 who are not self-employed; 716 with children of any age; 586 with children age 6-17; 598 with children enrolled in school; 856 who had not already received a COVID-19 vaccine; and, 129 who expressed hesitancy about getting vaccines.

Finally, 623 respondents provided a full name and valid email address to enter the drawing for the incentive.

Worthington connection

Although the City of Worthington makes up less than one-quarter (22%) of the overall population of the Worthington school district (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a), the number of City residents completing the survey exceeds the number of non-City school district residents. The survey responses over-represent residents of the City of Worthington.

Worthington connection	Survey responses	
	Wave 1	Wave 2
City of Worthington residents	44%	43%
Non-City, Worthington school district residents	39%	37%
City of Worthington workers only	6%	4%
Non-City Worthington school district workers only	1%	1%
Visitors only	10%	15%

Age

Compared to 2019 Census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a), the survey responses greatly over-represent seniors age 65 and over. Middle-aged people, age 35-54 are also over-represented. Those under age 35 are under-represented and there are very few responses from those under age 25.

Age	2019 ACS	Survey responses	
		Wave 1	Wave 2
18-24	8%	1%	<1%
25-34	22%	10%	8%
35-44	19%	30%	25%
45-54	16%	23%	19%
55-64	16%	14%	14%
65+	18%	21%	34%

Gender

Compared to 2019 Census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a), the survey responses over-represent women; men are under-represented.

Gender	2019 ACS	Survey responses	
		Wave 1	Wave 2
Female	53%	80%	75%
Male	47%	20%	25%
Prefer to self-describe	-	<1%	1%

Race

Compared to 2019 Census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019g, 2019h, 2019i, 2019k, 2019l, 2019m, 2019n), the survey responses over-represent white people; Black and Asian people are under-represented.

Race	2019 ACS	Survey responses	
		Wave 1	Wave 2
White only	81%	92%	94%
Black only	8%	1%	1%
American Indian only	<1%	0%	<1%
Asian only	7%	2%	2%
Pacific Islander only	0%	<1%	<1%
Some other race only	1%	2%	1%
Two or more races	3%	2%	1%

Hispanic origin

Compared to 2019 Census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019j), survey responses do not fully represent those of Hispanic origin.

Hispanic origin	2019 ACS	Survey responses	
		Wave 1	Wave 2
Hispanic or Latino	3%	2%	2%

Educational attainment

Educational attainment	2019 ACS	Survey responses	
		Wave 1	Wave 2
Less than high school graduate	3%	<1%	<1%
High school diploma, GED or alternative credential	15%	3%	3%
Some college credit, no degree	18%	8%	10%
Associate's degree	6%	5%	5%
Bachelor's degree	36%	38%	37%
Master's, doctorate or other	22%	46%	45%

Compared to 2019 Census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b), the survey responses over-represent those with degrees beyond a bachelor’s degree; those without college degrees are under-represented.

professional degree beyond bachelor's degree		
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Household size and makeup

Compared to 2019 Census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019c), the survey over-represents households with adults age 60 and over and somewhat over-represents households with children under age 18, especially those households with school-age children, age 6-17.

Household size and makeup	2019 ACS	Survey responses	
		Wave 1	Wave 2
Average household size	2.68	3.07	2.75
Households with children under 18	37%	55%	43%
Households with children 5 and under only	8%	9%	8%
Households with children 5 and under & age 6-17	11%	11%	9%
Households with children age 6-17 only	16%	35%	26%
Households with adults age 60+	33%	34%	45%

Languages spoken in household

Compared to 2019 Census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019f), the survey responses over-represent households that speak only English.

Language spoken in household	2019 ACS	Survey responses	
		Wave 1	Wave 2
English only	87%	91%	93%
Spanish	3%	4%	3%
Other Indo-European languages	4%	1%	1%
Hindi	-	1%	1%
Portuguese	-	<1%	<1%
Tamil	-	<1%	<1%
Telugu	-	<1%	<1%
Asian and Pacific Island languages	4%	1%	1%
Chinese	-	<1%	1%
Japanese	-	<1%	<1%
Other languages	2%	1%	<1%
Arabic	-	1%	<1%
Somali	-	<1%	0%
Some other language	-	4%	4%

Household income

Compared to 2019 Census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019e), the survey responses over-represent households with incomes higher than \$100,000; households with incomes lower than \$50,000 are under-represented.

Household income	2019 ACS	Survey responses	
		Wave 1	Wave 2
Less than \$10,000	1%	1%	<1%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3%	1%	1%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	2%	2%	2%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	6%	3%	4%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	8%	6%	6%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	21%	13%	14%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	15%	15%	16%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	22%	30%	27%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	12%	16%	15%
\$200,000 or more	10%	14%	16%

Household type

Compared to 2019 Census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019d), the survey responses over-represent two-parent families; people living alone are under-represented.

Household type	2019 ACS	Survey responses	
		Wave 1	Wave 2
Two-parent families	29%	48%	37%
Single-parent families	7%	5%	4%
Couples	32%	23%	30%
Singles	24%	11%	16%

Data analysis

Immediately upon conclusion of the survey, we exported the complete survey results from SurveyMonkey in XLS format for further analysis.

Worthington connection

Using responses to the question about Worthington connection, respondents were designated as either residents or workers in either the City of Worthington or the Worthington school district, or as visitors. Residents are defined as respondents who indicated they live in the City of Worthington or in the Worthington school district. Workers are people who indicated they work for an employer located in the City of Worthington or in the Worthington school district and excludes those who indicated that they live in the City of Worthington or in the Worthington school district. Visitors are people who indicated that they spend time in Worthington but neither live nor work in the City of Worthington or in the Worthington school district.

Although the response options for living and working in the City of Worthington or the Worthington school district were mutually exclusive—i.e., “I live in the City of Worthington, Ohio” and “I live in the Worthington, Ohio school district (but NOT within the City of Worthington)” —several respondents answered “Yes” to both options. In these cases, respondents were designated as City of Worthington residents or City of Worthington workers.

Household income categories

Using responses to the question about annual household income, respondents were assigned to an income category. We used Keeter’s (2020a) definition: “Middle income is defined here as two-thirds to double the median annual income for all panelists. Lower income is below that range; upper income falls above it.” The median household annual income in the Worthington school district in 2019 was \$89,689 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019e). Middle income for the Worthington school district would therefore range from \$60,091 to \$179,378; the lower bound aligns most closely to the \$50,000 to \$74,999 income range and the upper bound aligns most closely to the \$100,000 to \$149,999 income range. Therefore, in this report, “middle income” is defined as \$50,000 to \$149,999; “lower income” is below \$50,000 and “upper income” is \$150,000 and above.

Household type

Using responses to the question about number of people of various ages living in their household, we designated several household types. Two-parent families are households with any number of children and exactly two adults, age 18-59. Single-parent families are defined as households with any number of children and just one adult, age 18-59. Couples are defined as households with no children and exactly two adults. Singles are defined as households with no children and exactly one adult. We acknowledge that these definitions may not capture the actual household circumstances perfectly.

Distress levels

Using responses to the question about mental health, we calculated a distress level for each respondent. Excluding the “Feeling hopeful” answer, the remaining five answers were scored according to this scale: 1 for “rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)”; 2 for “some or a little of the time (1-2 days)”; 3 for “occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)”; 4 for “most or all of the time (5-7 days).” When added together, score totals for each respondent could therefore range from 5-20. Following Keeter (2020, March 30), a total score of 5-8 was designated low distress; a total score of 9-11 was designated medium distress; and, a total score above 12 was designated high distress.

Vaccination status

Using responses to the series of questions about vaccines, we identified respondents’ vaccination status. Those respondents who said they have received the coronavirus/COVID-19 vaccine have been labelled “already vaccinated.” Those who have not received the vaccine, but said they would definitely or probably get the vaccine have been labelled “vaccine willing.” Those who have not received the vaccine and said they would definitely or probably *not* get the vaccine or who are unsure have been labelled “vaccine hesitant.”

For each question, library staff used Microsoft Excel to calculate the percentage of respondents who responded with each answer. (See Appendix B. Data tables and charts – All responses.) We then calculated the percentages of respondents who responded with each answer by Worthington connection, age, gender, race, Hispanic origin, educational attainment, language spoken, household income, household type, distress level and vaccination status. We produced 100% stacked bar charts color-coded by response to visualize differences in responses across the different subgroups (see Appendix C. Charts – Demographic subgroup differences) and corresponding tables with the percentages (see Appendix D. Data tables – Demographic subgroup differences).

Limitations

Even though the wave 2 survey ran a few longer than wave 1 and despite additional promotional efforts and incentives, we were not successful in increasing survey participation or in reaching a more diverse population of residents. The overall response rate was basically unchanged, with 65 fewer completed responses in wave 2. Overall demographics of survey respondents were likewise mostly unchanged between wave 1 and wave 2, with the exception of residents 65 and over, who accounted for about one-fifth (21%) of survey respondents in wave 1 and about a third (34%) in wave 2.

As noted above, residents of the City of Worthington as well as older, female, white, non-Hispanic, college-educated, English-speaking, upper-income, two-parent families are over-represented among

survey respondents. Because the survey respondents do not represent the population of the Worthington school district in some key aspects—namely age, gender, race, educational attainment level, language, income and household type—the overall findings may not accurately represent the overall population.

Breaking down the responses by demographic subgroup may offer more reliable insights. However, low response rates among some demographic subgroups mean the margin of error is higher and the findings for those subgroups may not be as reliable; any subgroup with a margin of error higher than $\pm 7\%$ is of particular concern. Therefore, findings reported for these subgroups are suggestive only: 18-34-year-olds; people who are Black, Asian, American Indian, Pacific Islander or some other race; multiracial people; people of Hispanic origin; speakers of languages other than English; and single-parent families.

Margins of error by subgroup (SurveyMonkey, 2020)

Subgroup	Population	Survey responses	Margin of error (Confidence level = 95%)
Worthington connection			
Worthington school district residents (age 18+)	49,682	1,322	$\pm 3\%$
City of Worthington residents (age 18+)	10,873	707	$\pm 4\%$
Age			
18-24	3,942	6	$\pm 40\%$
25-34	11,159	134	$\pm 8\%$
35-44	9,629	409	$\pm 5\%$
45-54	8,142	312	$\pm 5\%$
55-64	8,029	232	$\pm 6\%$
65+	8,781	559	$\pm 4\%$
Gender			
Female (age 18+)	26,179	1,237	$\pm 3\%$
Male (age 18+)	23,503	406	$\pm 5\%$
Race			
White only (age 18+)	40,522	1,554	$\pm 2\%$
Black only (age 18+)	3,761	16	$\pm 24\%$
Asian only (age 18+)	3,640	30	$\pm 18\%$
American Indian, Pacific Islander or some other race only (age 18+)	746	28	$\pm 18\%$
Two or more races (age 18+)	1,203	24	$\pm 20\%$
Hispanic origin			
Hispanic or Latino (age 18+)	1,758	33	$\pm 17\%$
Educational attainment			
High school graduate or less	8,551	53	$\pm 13\%$
Some college or associate's degree	11,685	243	$\pm 6\%$
Bachelor's degree or higher	28,086	1,356	$\pm 3\%$
Language spoken in household			
English only (age 5+)	53,110	1,532	$\pm 2\%$
Spanish (age 5+)	1,969	48	$\pm 14\%$
Some other language (age 5+)	7,403	72	$\pm 11\%$

Subgroup	Population	Survey responses	Margin of error (Confidence level = 95%)
Household income			
Low income (<\$50K)	4,988	216	±7%
Middle income (\$50-150K)	14,417	930	±3%
Upper income (>\$150K)	5,409	506	±4%
Household type			
Two-parent families	7,187	618	±4%
Single-parent families	1,707	72	±11%
Couples	7,832	495	±4%
Singles	6,031	257	±6%

Statistical power analysis has not been done as part of this research, nor have the sample data been weighted.

FINDINGS

Outside of the new questions—on impact of the pandemic, substance use and vaccinations—overall responses were very similar between wave 1 and wave 2. This report focuses on detailing responses to the new questions, key areas highlighted in wave 1 (mental health and personal finances) and any other notable differences between responses in wave 1 and wave 2. The full data is available in appendices to this report.

Overall impact

When asked how the coronavirus pandemic has changed their lives, the vast majority (84%) reported that they had been impacted at least “a fair amount,” with more than one-third (37%) saying they had been impacted “a great deal.” Just 17% said their lives had been impacted “not too much” or “not at all.”

A larger share of people in Worthington reported that their lives had been impacted than those at the national level. Three-quarters (74%) of Americans said that their lives had been impacted at least a fair amount, though a somewhat greater share nationally said they had been impacted a great deal (44%) (Devlin & Kent, 2021).

Employment

Employment status

Wave 2 of the survey saw some changes in respondents’ employment status from wave 1, with fewer respondents reporting being employed full-time (46% compared to 54%) or part-time (9% compared to 11%) and more respondents reporting being unemployed, including those who are retired or in school (39% compared to 29%). These changes are driven by the higher response rate among those aged 65 and older in wave 2. When excluding those under 25 and those over 65, 17% of those aged 25-64 report being unemployed, which is unchanged from wave 1. This rate compares favorably to national findings that a quarter are not employed or furloughed (Parker, Igielnik & Kochhar, 2021).

Workplace

Work from home is on the decline, with 60% of respondents now reporting to their regular workplace outside the home compared to 52% in wave 1.

Business impact

A year into the pandemic, earlier business losses seem to have rebounded or leveled off with fewer people reporting their business lost revenue (67% compared to 54%) and fewer saying they considered closing their business (24% compared to 17%). Only 4% of respondents now say they have been forced to close a business (compared to 11% in wave 1).

Employment change

Fewer people overall are reporting a reduction in their work hours (16% compared to 10%) or loss of income (24% compared to 16%). These rates differ by household income level, with a larger share of those in low-income households reporting income loss (24%) than those in middle- (15%) and upper-income (14%) households.

Finances

Personal finances

The majority of respondents (from 73%-85%) report that their ability to pay bills and afford food and household goods has remained the same since the start of the year, comparable to rates nationally (from 82%-85%) (Ipsos, 2021). Fewer people overall report struggling to afford their expenses. For example, when it comes to the ability to afford food and household supplies, 11% of wave 1 respondents said it had gotten worse, compared with just 7% in wave 2, somewhat better than the national rate of 10% (Ipsos, 2021). Similarly, when it comes to rent and mortgage, 9% of wave 1 respondents had difficulty affording payments, compared with 6% in wave 2, similar to the national rate of 7% (Ipsos, 2021).

However, there is stark contrast based on household income. 17% of those in low-income households say their ability to afford food has gotten worse since the start of the year, compared with only 7% of middle-income respondents and just 2% of upper-income respondents. 14% of those in low-income households say their ability to pay rent or mortgage has gotten worse, compared with 6% of middle-income respondents and 3% of upper-income respondents.

Even still, Worthington respondents may be faring better than most Ohioans. The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) (2021) reports that, as of March 2021, “one out of every three adults in Ohio are having a somewhat or very difficult time keeping up with usual household expenses,” largely due to employment loss.

Social and emotional wellbeing

Relationships

When asked how relationships had changed, if at all, more respondents reported that their time talking to family decreased, from 15% in wave 1 to 22% in wave 2. There was a similar pattern when it comes to a feeling of connection to family and friends, with 43% reporting a decrease in wave 1 and 49% in wave 2. A larger share of those in high distress report decreased feelings of connection (63%), compared to those in medium (53%) or low distress (41%).

Online activities

“Zoom fatigue” may be setting in as fewer people report attending virtual social gatherings (decreasing from 67% to 60%) and webinars (decreasing from 65% to 61%), participating in online fitness classes (decreasing from 41% to 37%) and video chatting with friends and family (decreasing from 86% to 83%).

Health and wellness

Physical health

The same number of people (71%) say their overall physical health has stayed the same or gotten better from wave 1 to wave 2. This is lower than national findings, with 90% of people saying their health is no different or improved (Ipsos, 2021). Exercise has declined in wave 2 with 45% saying this aspect of their health has gotten worse compared to 36% in wave 1, likely due to the inability to get outdoors due to winter weather.

Mental health

More people report low distress levels, rising from 47% in wave 1 to 55% in wave 2. More people also report being hopeful most of the time or a moderate amount of the time, rising from 44% to 56%. These numbers track closely to national numbers, with 54% in low distress and 52% feeling hopeful most of the time or a moderate amount of the time (Keeter, 2021). However, nationally as well as in Worthington, one in five remain in high distress.

Substance use

Since the start of 2021, 19% of respondents said they had increased use of alcohol to cope with stress or emotions related to the coronavirus pandemic, while 5% said they had increased use of prescription drugs and 3% said they had increased use of tobacco and nicotine products. National data showed 20% of people increased alcohol consumption and 9% increased tobacco use (Ipsos, 2020), or 13% reported increased use of any substance (Czeisler et al., 2020).

In Worthington, a larger share of couples with children (26%) and single parents (22%) as well as people in high distress (34%) reported increased alcohol consumption during the pandemic.

Families and children

Emotional state of children

In wave 2, more parents reported that their children felt happiness and enjoyment than in wave 1 (both increasing from 86% to 91%) the previous day. The results remain little changed from wave 1 to wave 2, but are still twice or more than the national results from early in the pandemic (Gallup, 2020):

- Worry: 26% nationally, compared with 53% in wave 1 and 51% in wave 2
- Anger: 24% nationally, compared with 46% in wave 1 and 47% in wave 2
- Stress: 24% nationally, compared with 57% in wave 1 and 57% in wave 2
- Loneliness: 20% nationally, compared with 46% in wave 1 and 46% in wave 2
- Sadness: 20% nationally, compared with 47% in wave 1 and 49% in wave 2

Family life

Parents were also asked about specific aspects of family life. Half of parents agree that their children are impacting their ability to work. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of parents continue to agree that they aren't doing enough activities with their children and half are unsure how to give their children the support they need.

Although parents generally felt the same from wave 1 to wave 2, responses were less strong. For instance, the number of people who agreed they were doing a great job parenting declined somewhat between wave 1 and wave 2, from 70% to 67%, but those who strongly agreed dropped from 16% to 12%. Likewise, the vast majority of parents agreed they appreciate or enjoy spending time more time together as a family, with 93% in wave 1 and 92% in wave 2, but those who strongly agreed dropped from 62% to 56%.

Support network

Although the vast majority of survey respondents have someone to talk and know where to go for support, about 10% of wave 2 respondents do not have anywhere to turn when it comes to help with mental health, emotional wellbeing, diet and exercise, personal finances or ability to take care of their households.

When looking at those in high distress, the share grows to about 20% who have nowhere to turn when it comes to the areas above as well as home and home life and job and career. Similarly, around 15% of single parents reported lack of support in these areas. The ability to care for their households was the single biggest support need for both groups, with 24% of those in high distress and 28% of single parents reporting they had nowhere to turn.

Optional pandemic response questions

Vaccinations

In wave 2, we asked a new question about the coronavirus vaccine, asking if people had received the vaccine, or if people planned to get it and, if not, to indicate why. We learned 41% of respondents had already received the vaccine (at the time of survey closing, vaccines were still limited to older Ohioans and scheduling appointments was more difficult).

Among those who had not already been vaccinated, when asked if they would get the vaccine if it were immediately available at no cost, 85% expressed willingness, with 76% saying they would definitely get the vaccine and 9% saying they would probably get the vaccine. On the flip side, among the unvaccinated, 16% expressed hesitancy, with 7% saying they would definitely not get the vaccine, 5% saying they would probably not get the vaccine and 4% expressing uncertainty. Those surveyed were more willing to get vaccinated than those nationally, with 62% willing and 38% hesitant as of February 2021 (Funk & Tyson, 2021).

Those who were hesitant about the vaccine cited concerns about vaccine development (20%), concerns about potential side effects (18%) and wanting to wait to see if it was safe (16%) as the top three reasons, with 15% saying they were unconcerned about getting seriously ill from the coronavirus.

Looking more broadly at how those who are vaccine hesitant answered other survey questions, they were more likely to say that there should be fewer restrictions right now (66%), when compared to those who had already been vaccinated (15%) or who expressed willingness to be vaccinated (15%). They were likewise more likely to say that people and groups were overreacting to the outbreak, across the board; for example, about half (51%) of the vaccine hesitant felt local government was over-reacting to the outbreak, compared with 5% of the already vaccinated and 7% of the vaccine willing. They

reported lower rates of all safety precautions; for example, about a third (63%) of the vaccine hesitant said they maintained social distancing, compared with nearly all of those already vaccinated (96%) and the vaccine willing (96%). The vaccine hesitant reported a higher willingness to undertake all activities; for example, 81% of the vaccine hesitant are willing to dine in at a restaurant compared with 31% of the already vaccinated and 29% of the vaccine willing.

Finally, the vaccine hesitant reported that international, national and local news outlets and public health organizations and officials were not a source of news about the coronavirus outbreak at higher rates than those who had already been vaccinated or who expressed willingness to be vaccinated. For instance, one-quarter (24%) of the vaccine hesitant said public health organizations were not a source of information about the pandemic, compared with 6% of the already vaccinated and 5% of the vaccine willing. These results, along with the politicization of public health orders, suggest the vaccine hesitant may not be easily convinced to reverse their position (Thompson, 2021).

Restrictions

People are beginning to relax. In wave 1, nearly half (44%) of respondents wanted more restrictions, but in wave 2, that number shrunk to about a quarter (24%) of respondents. The majority (56%) now believe we should have the same number of restrictions, compared with 39% in wave 1. The remaining 20% of people want fewer restrictions right now.

Risk assessment

A majority of respondents remain unwilling to take part in many activities, including:

- visit entertainment centers (movie theaters, bowling alleys, etc.) (75% unwilling);
- use public transportation (70% unwilling)
- attend indoor group programs (67% unwilling);
- attend indoor concerts or sporting events (64% unwilling);
- use fitness centers, studios or gyms (64% unwilling);
- use a taxi or ride-sharing service (64% unwilling);
- dine in at a restaurant or bar (57% unwilling); and
- visit religious centers or churches in person (55% unwilling).

A majority of people express willingness to do other activities, such as:

- visiting parks (95% willing);
- visit healthcare providers in their offices (93% willing);
- go inside and shop at grocery stores (87% willing);
- visit a barbershop/hair salon (69% willing); and
- go inside the public library (59% willing).

Notably, the top activity people are willing to undertake—visiting parks—is outdoors. People express far greater willingness to undertake outdoor activities over their indoor counterparts. For group programs, half of respondents are willing to attend if offered outdoors, but only one-fifth indoors; for concerts or sporting events, 43% are willing to attend if offered outdoors, but only 14% indoors.

This, too, corresponds with national data, which found that the majority of people deemed a variety of activities moderate to high risk, including: traveling on an airplane or mass transit (68%), attending a sporting event (67%), dining in at a restaurant (51%) and in-person gatherings (50%) (Ipsos, 2021).

Safety precautions

The vast majority of respondents are still adhering to recommended safety precautions including wearing a mask (97%), maintaining social distancing (93%) and washing hands (91%). These rates are higher than reported nationally, with 87% wearing a mask sometimes or at all times and 85% maintaining social distance sometimes or at all times (Ipsos, 2021).

There has been some movement from wave 1 to wave 2, with fewer people stocking up on food and other supplies, dropping from 70% to 59%. Fewer people report avoiding public places, dropping from 74% to 69%, but more people are avoiding small gatherings of people, increasing from 61% to 74%.

Trust

When asked to think about how different groups are reacting to the pandemic, the largest shift was seen in how people view the federal government's response, with 58% in wave 2 saying it is reacting about right, as opposed to 14% in wave 1. Nationally, 54% of people report trusting the federal government a fair amount or great deal with information about the pandemic, up from 34% in August 2020 (Ipsos, 2021).

CONCLUSION

There has been no singular Worthington pandemic experience. People who were financially secure at the start, with a good support system in place, were better able to weather the ups and downs of the last year. Others, who may have been having a difficult time before the pandemic, saw their struggles amplified. Almost everyone can find themselves in the spectrum between those experiences.

The good news is, things are starting to improve and some aspects of everyday life are returning to *almost* normal. Although many people are still working from home, more than 60% are now working at their regular places of employment. Schools and daycare facilities have mostly reopened, easing some of the burden for working parents and providing children with needed routine and the opportunity to be with their teachers and classmates.

With vaccines now readily available to adults who want them, people—especially those who are now fully vaccinated—are starting to venture out and engage in activities they’ve been avoiding for a year, such as seeing extended family, getting together with friends and traveling. Most retailers, restaurants and other establishments, like gyms, community centers and libraries, have now reopened. Though restrictions still apply and many people are still avoiding indoor gatherings, it would seem we are on a path to have a far more normal summer, with significantly less stress and worry about getting ill, than the one we experienced last year.

The pandemic, however, is not over, and the road to full recovery will be long, especially for those hardest hit by the financial and social impacts of the last year. In wave 2, we once again found a significant number of people dealing with high levels of stress and anxiety related to the pandemic. This was particularly pronounced among families.

In addition, with a majority of people still avoiding going inside for many purchases, activities and services, it may still take considerable time for restaurants, small retail businesses and non-profits that rely on revenue from ticket sales, admissions and events to rebound from the financial impact of the still-ongoing pandemic.

The unfortunate politicization of health orders and vaccines further complicates recovery as people who are reluctant or refuse to get vaccinated may make it difficult to return to life as it was before the pandemic.

These issues are further detailed below for additional consideration and possible action by community leaders.

Impact on families

Children

Although mental and physical health and wellbeing have improved over the year, families and children continue to struggle and single-parent families have been hit particularly hard.

National polls have found that 46% of parents have said that their teenage children’s mental health has worsened during the pandemic (Mostafavi, 2021); visits to emergency rooms among teenagers rose 31%

in 2020 over the previous year (Leeb et al., 2020). Social isolation due to the pandemic is only part of the picture; young people are feeling an intensifying pressure to achieve (Esfahani Smith, 2021).

This may explain, in part, the high rates of stress, worry, sadness, loneliness and anger Worthington parents are reporting in their children. Future partnerships between Worthington Schools and other community organizations should focus on the mental health of students beyond the more obvious implications of the pandemic.

Parents

Many parents are struggling to balance work with family life, worry that they aren't giving their children necessary support and feel guilty about not spending more time with their children. Parents have increased their alcohol consumption, as well as use of prescription drugs and tobacco products, to cope with the pandemic at higher rates than others.

A year of uncertainty, when many parents were coping with layoffs and job loss in addition to round-the-clock childcare and managing remote and hybrid school learning schedules while also trying to work from home, clearly took its toll, leading some respondents to cope in unhealthy ways. While most people in our survey are able to find sources of support they need, others, who are highly stressed, don't have a network of friends or professionals to rely on.

Connecting parents with support systems and resources they need to help themselves and their children will be important as families work to rebuild after the turmoil of the last year.

Small business impact

Things look better for individuals and small businesses in terms of financial impact, but the road to full recovery is likely to be long. While an increasing number of survey respondents are willing to venture out to parks and grocery stores and to attend outdoor events, more than half are still wary of attending indoor activities, working out at the gym, going inside a coffee shop or eating inside a restaurant.

Vaccines, lower coronavirus transmission and relaxed health orders may all play a role in increasing comfort with these activities, but for the immediate future, small businesses can continue to expect fewer traditional customers in their brick and mortar locations.

MORPC (2021) has noted that Columbus-area businesses continue to operate below capacity and anticipate "a long, slow recovery," with many small businesses anticipating it will take at least six months—from March 2021—to return to normal. MORPC further notes that a majority of nonprofits reported a reduction in services, with many unable to provide any programs or services. Local non-profit organizations that rely on admissions, event attendance or ticket sales will have a more difficult time rebounding.

Supporting a hybrid of services—curbside pickup, delivery and online ordering or online events—in addition to traditional retail will be necessary for months to come. Businesses may need help in expanding and contracting services in response to the ongoing pandemic.

Repercussions of vaccine hesitancy

With about 1 in 10 survey respondents hesitant about vaccination, there is still outreach and education to be done about the safety and efficacy of the vaccinations and their role in returning us to pre-pandemic levels of normalcy.

Our findings suggest that people refusing to get the vaccine are entrenched in their views as they don't turn to public health officials or news outlets as sources of information. Unfortunately, since those who are vaccine hesitant also want fewer restrictions, reopening will be difficult, increasing the likelihood of continued community transmission of the coronavirus, especially if mask mandates and other precautions are scaled back.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Survey instrument

Appendix B. Data tables and charts – All responses

Appendix C. Charts – Demographic subgroup differences

Appendix D. Data tables – Demographic subgroup differences