

# A GREATER APPLGATE

## Surveying COVID-19's Applegate impact

BY SETH KAPLAN

Last issue, A Greater Applegate distributed 11,500 surveys as an insert in the *Applegater*, along with an online version, to learn how we all were doing in what proved to be the early days of COVID-19. We collected 155 responses during the month of June. The results are interesting and useful, although admittedly only a snapshot.

### Highlights

More than 84 percent of respondents reported feeling “good,” “great,” or “better than ever” in terms of safety, stability, and overall well-being. Almost 16 percent described their well-being as just OK or very unwell. While this is an outstanding level of community well-being, community members alerted us to several challenges.

About 15 percent of respondents needed to access unemployment benefits since the coronavirus pandemic began. As of this writing, the status of extended unemployment coverage is unknown, and we want to remind people who may need a little help, as well as people with resources, to sign up for the AGA Mutual Aid Network by going to [agreaterapplegate.org](http://agreaterapplegate.org) and clicking on the link or calling us at 541-702-2108, and we will enroll you. The Mutual Aid Network is people volunteering to help their neighbors. We only ask for your time. Any additional support costs can be covered by AGA.

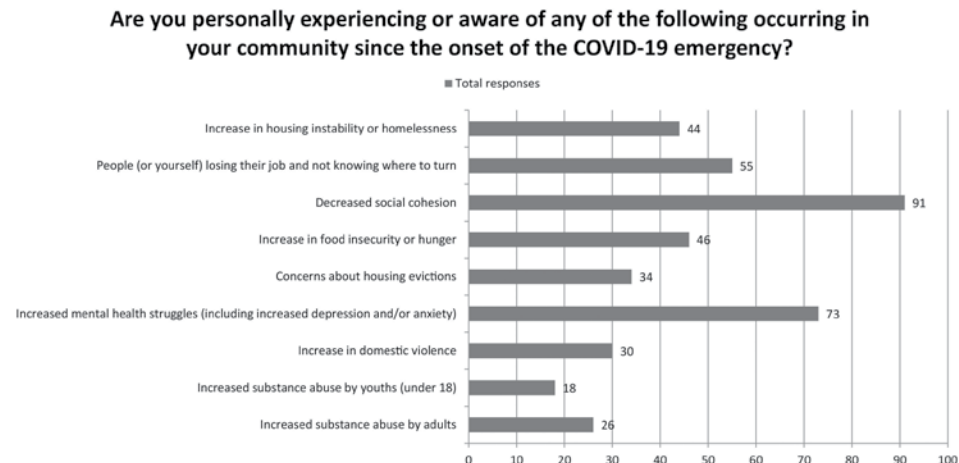
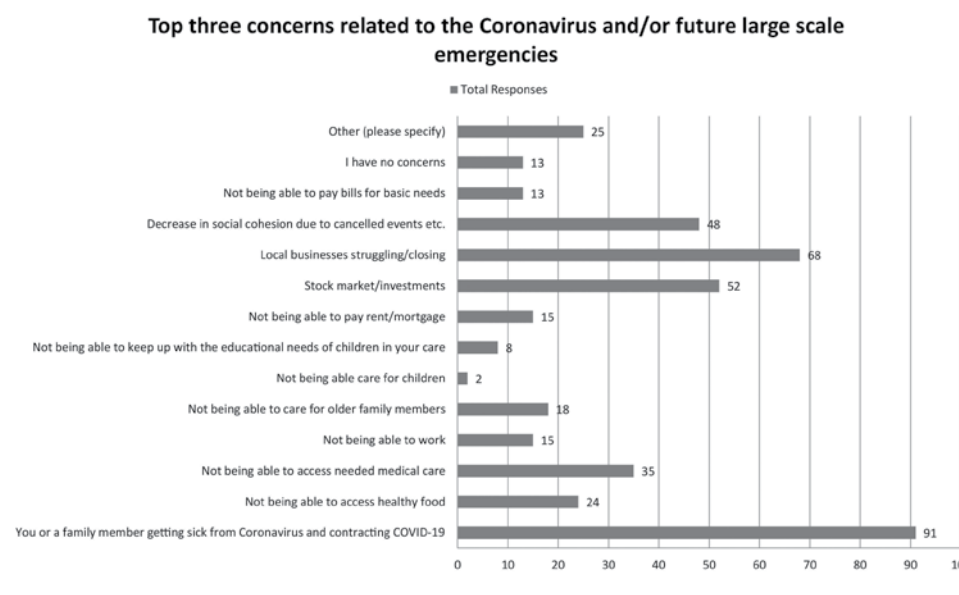
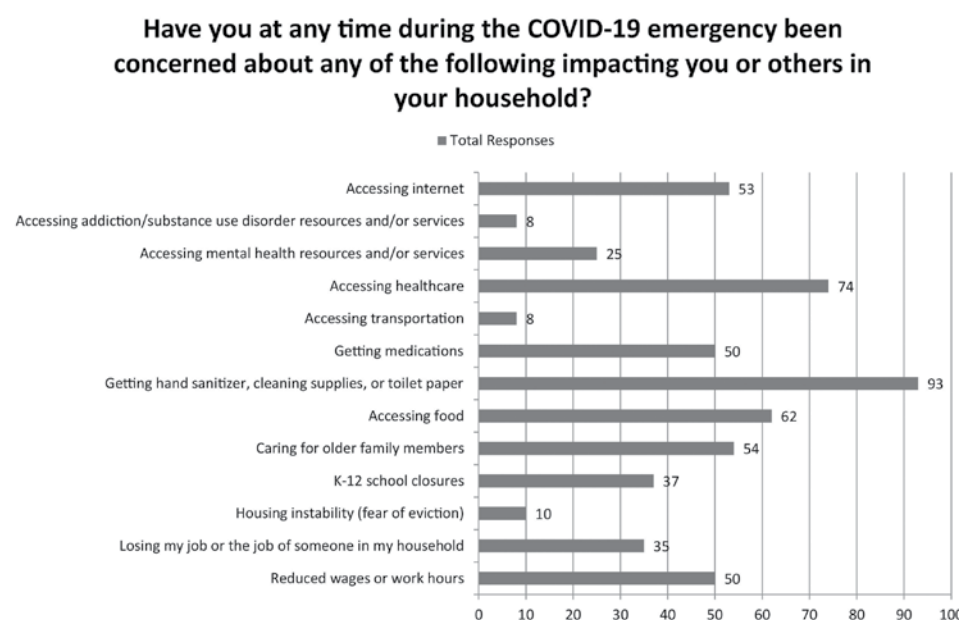
We asked people if they knew where to get necessary resources in time of need, and the vast majority said they didn't need assistance. The one exception was COVID-19 testing locations. The closest test sites are in Grants Pass and Medford. Neither Jackson nor Josephine County provides any COVID-19 testing in the Applegate Valley. AGA has reached out to both county departments of health to encourage a mobile van for testing at local schools or other public sites but has not received a positive response as of this writing. We will keep trying if the need continues, and we encourage others to reach out to Jackson County Health & Human Services (541-774-8200) or Josephine County Public Health Department (541-474-5325). The following sites are the closest available for testing. Please call for an appointment.

### Medford test sites are:

Providence Stewart Meadows Urgent Care  
70 Bower Drive, Suite 110  
541-732-3962

### La Clinica Wellness Center

730 Biddle Road  
541-535-6239



### Asante COVID-19 Specimen Collection Center

1321 Center Drive  
541-789-2813

### Valley Immediate Care

1600 Delta Waters Road No. 107  
541-734-9030

### Grants Pass test sites are:

Siskiyou Community Health Center  
1701 NW Hawthorne Ave.  
541-472-4777

### Asante COVID-19 Specimen Collection Center

Near the Asante Three Rivers Medical Center campus on the corner of SW Ramsey

Avenue and Ringuette Street.  
541-789-2813

Valley Immediate Care  
162 NE Beacon Drive, No. 103  
541-734-9030

According to the Oregon Health Authority, two do-it-yourself home testing kits are available from online sites: Everlywell ([everlywell.com/products/covid-19-test](http://everlywell.com/products/covid-19-test)) and Pixel by LabCorp ([pixel.labcorp.com/at-home-test-kits/covid-19-test](http://pixel.labcorp.com/at-home-test-kits/covid-19-test)).

### Major concerns

The three major issues that respondents to the survey said they or others were experiencing since the onset of COVID-19 are 1) increased feelings of isolation, 2) increased mental health struggles (including depression and anxiety), and 3) people losing their jobs and not knowing where to turn.

When asked to list their three major concerns related to this COVID-19 emergency or future emergencies, respondents listed 1) themselves or a family member getting sick, 2) local businesses struggling or closing, and 3) loss of retirement funds, investments, or savings.

First on the list of major concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic was the availability of hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, and toilet paper. As readers may recall, this survey was taken when many supplies and provisions were in short supply. Other concerns included 1) accessing healthcare, 2) accessing food, 3) caring for older family members, 4) accessing the internet, 5) reduced wages and getting medications (tie).

AGA is working to address the issues that have arisen in this survey. Again, we encourage all readers to join the Mutual Aid Network, whether because you find yourself needing help or because you're able to help other Applegaters. Either way, go to [agreaterapplegate.org](http://agreaterapplegate.org) or call 541-702-2108.

### AGA is:

- Reaching out to internet providers and our state representatives to improve internet and cell service in our valley. While we have made progress, we have learned enough to know that there is no easy solution.

- Supporting our two food pantries in Ruch and Williams and working on a more sustainable Applegate food system strategy.

If you would like to join us in any of these efforts, we welcome you!

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*The following is a representative sample of comments offered by respondents to the COVID-19 survey. We did not include comments of a partisan political nature, of which there were many, representing both sides.*

—Seth Kaplan

I am retired and receive Social Security benefits. I help take care of my grandson while his father works. I am fortunate to have been an old hippy who can grow my own food!

It finally slowed me down—in a positive way. Though I am aware that I am lucky for now and things can change quickly.

I am keeping in better contact with family members and loved ones. A positive!

I am fortunate in that I am retired and don't have a mortgage. I've been making masks and giving them to friends and neighbors. I've also been growing veggies and giving some of them away. We are in

## Applegate community comments

this together, so I am doing what I can to help others, including calling and visiting with others who are staying home.

Experiencing uncertainty about how this will affect our culture and world, going forward. Concerns that this pandemic is just the “tip of the iceberg” concerning system breakdowns. Feeling alternately just fine (impacts on me are minimal) and deeply upset (by impacts on others). Seeing others go through major emotional swings as this plays out on the larger stage. Feeling very grateful to be in the Applegate during this time.

I wish I had a better sense of how things are going with others in our valley.

I feel badly that we are faring so well while others are suffering and struggling, and our prayers are asking that those who are struggling will find comfort and peace. To

help with this calamity we stay home, obey the guidelines for safety while in public, tip largely when possible to restaurants, donate money moderately, and show patience and kindness to any we connect with. Nothing heroic but just helpful.

My greatest concern is the local public's lack of use of masks while in town. I estimate about 25 percent of people I see using face masks. To me this shows a lack of concern for the severity of the coronavirus.

I was laid off from my sewing job. I am also a caregiver; due to living with two compromised family members I could not take caregiving work and had constant concern about contaminating them by my shopping.

A good friend locally was not able to work at her practice during the pandemic,

has not yet received any unemployment for “gig” self-employment, as promised, and had to be financially supported for a while by me and another friend. I feel lucky I was able to help.

I work at (a local) school, and I have severe asthma, and I am scared to death to go back to work.

We are elderly and getting groceries delivered from the Williams General Store. They are wonderful, caring people.

I had COVID-19-symptom onset March 20. I did not test right away due to fear of further exposure or exposing others but was in contact via phone and video with the doctor. It was very difficult and very scary. I feel my community is not taking it seriously for either getting the virus or spreading the virus.