

Iowa City Compassion Needs Assessment

Branycia Mitchell, Public Health Trainee

Sauda Abdullahi, Public Health Trainee

Ryan Elhag, Family Trainee

Research Mentor and other collaborators:

Nichole Nidey, PhD, Public Health Core Faculty

Objective:

A survey was administered to community members served by Iowa City Compassion, a faith-based nonprofit organization. Iowa City Compassion's mission is to bridge community through hope, opportunities, and partnerships. Through its services, including legal immigration assistance, Iowa City Compassion helps individuals overcome poverty and encourages them to give back to others. Iowa Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (ILEND) trainees partnered with Iowa City Compassion's Executive Director, Teresa Stecker, to create a survey to collect data on the makeup of community members being served, the community's awareness and priority needs of Iowa City Compassion programs and services, community utilization and engagement with Iowa City Compassion's programs and services, and barriers to accessing Iowa City Compassion programs and services.

Method:

This study utilized a cross-sectional survey design to assess the needs, service utilization, and barriers faced by community members served by Iowa City Compassion. ILEND trainees collected data on two days in March 2025 and surveyed community members while they received on-site services at Iowa City Compassion. Surveys were created in English, Spanish, Arabic, Swahili, French, and Haitian Creole to meet the needs of the population most served by Iowa City Compassion. Respondents completed the surveys independently, with Spanish and Arabic translation assistance available as needed. Data collected included demographics, service utilization and engagement, and perceived needs. Forty-seven surveys were collected on-site. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the study population and examine differences by disability related to community needs and awareness, utilization of programs and services, and barriers to accessing programs and services.

Results & Conclusion:

Of the total survey respondents, **45% reported having a household member with a disability**. Among these households, the **most frequently identified priority needs were food assistance (21.95%), learning English (7.32%), and physical healthcare (4.88%)**. In addition to these service needs, respondents cited **significant barriers to accessing support, including a lack of time, limited awareness of services, transportation difficulties, inconvenient service hours, childcare challenges, and language barriers**.

These findings highlight the importance of **tailoring services to the unique experiences of individuals with disabilities**, particularly by addressing access challenges. **Continued research**

and long-term evaluation are essential to ensure that Iowa City Compassion can adequately serve its diverse client base. Disaggregating the needs of individuals with disabilities from those of other service recipients will enable **more targeted and inclusive program development**. A deeper understanding of these needs will enhance Iowa City Compassion's ability to provide effective and equitable support to all community members.

References:

1. *About Us | ic-compassion*. (n.d.). Ic-compassion. <https://www.iccompassion.org/about-us>
2. *Poverty guidelines*. (n.d.). ASPE. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>