



# AUGUST 2020 ROSEDALE COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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# INTRODUCTION

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began back in March, the world has changed dramatically. Businesses have shut down or are operating with fewer employees and many restrictions. Schools have closed their doors and are largely facilitating learning and instruction through virtual means. Communities feel disconnected. RDA wants to know, therefore, how it can best support the Rosedale community right now and align its priorities with the priorities of the community. To that end, RDA conducted a series of focus groups to better understand the top challenges, concerns, and existing strengths of the community and to elicit direct feedback on what RDA can do to address those challenges. A supplemental community needs assessment survey was also distributed through the community.

This report is a summary of the main findings from the focus groups and proceeds as follows.

**Section 1:** Brief description of the methodology

**Section 2:** Summary of the common themes that came up across all groups

**Section 3:** Results from survey

**Section 4:** Recommendations for RDA's role based on the challenges identified and direct feedback from focus groups and survey

**Section 5:** An outline of the unique patterns and talking points from each group

# SECTION 1: METHODOLOGY

## Focus Group Methodology:

RDA divided the Rosedale community into seven groups for the purposes of conducting the focus groups. Table 1 displays the seven groups.

1	Neighborhood Group Leaders & RDA Board
2	Educators
3	Spanish Speakers
4	Seniors
5	Small Business Owners
6	Parents
7	Youth

RDA staff was then responsible for recruiting participants for each group and providing zoom links. The researcher conducted a [training](#) with RDA staff on focus group facilitation best practices and provided RDA staff members with a [questionnaire](#) and a sample agenda to guide the discussion. There were five main areas that the focus group was meant to identify:

1. Biggest Challenge During This Time
  - *“What has been most difficult for you and your family/your business since the covid-19 pandemic began?”*
2. Strategies/Solutions found so far
  - *“In what ways have you and your neighbors/colleagues/friends effectively addressed your concerns/problems?”*
3. Strengths Of Community
  - *“What do you believe to be the biggest strengths of your neighborhood/community/group?”*
4. Biggest Concern Moving Forward
  - *“What are you most concerned about moving forward? WHY?”*
5. Rda Role In Addressing Challenges
  - *“How can RDA help you during this crisis?”*

Focus groups were conducted virtually and were recorded, upon soliciting permission from participants. A \$10 Price Chopper gift card was provided to each participant.

### **Community Needs Assessment Survey:**

The researcher created a short [survey](#) that was meant to gather supplemental information from the greater Rosedale community at large to validate the trends being identified in the focus groups. RDA staff distributed and promoted the survey throughout the Rosedale community on their website and social media platforms. A RDA staff member translated the survey into Spanish as well. A \$10 Price Chopper gift card was offered as an incentive to complete the survey and RDA staff were responsible for mailing out gift cards.

## SECTION 2: COMMON THEMES ACROSS GROUPS

This section outlines the common themes that emerged across all seven focus groups.

### **Biggest Challenges:**

#### **1. Maintaining social connections with friends and family**

By and large, the most common challenge across all groups was maintaining social connections. Every group mentioned this almost immediately and shared concerns about missing opportunities to spend quality, in-person time with friends and family. This was particularly true of seniors who felt isolated and lonely on top of it. Every group discussed the social-emotional consequences of this lack of connection with others into other aspects of their lives, including school work, job performance, and parenting.

#### **2. Uncertainty regarding safety protocols and directions in the future**

The uncertainty surrounding all things COVID was taking a toll on participants. Every group identified a way in which the uncertainty impacted them. For everyone, the uncertainty simply in terms of not knowing how much longer “this will all last” and when things will return to normal was impacting their mental health and scheduling plans. The uncertainty regarding safety protocols and guidelines impacted businesses, leaders, and educators who feel responsible for keeping employees/students safe and yet don’t have clear direction. Seniors and parents were especially worried about the uncertainty of the health risk, as they are not sure if it is safe for them to go out or go to school and what level of risk is associated with going out.

#### **3. Keeping kids engaged in school and safe community activities**

A common theme among all groups is keeping young people safe and engaged. Young people are beginning to feel depressed and anxious to see friends and do social activities again but are not having many safe opportunities or opportunities where they feel like it is safe, as again, the uncertainty regarding everything creates confusion as to what they would be allowed to do or not. There is a clear longing for ways to keep kids engaged outside of the home and bring back some semblance of social ties again.

### **Strategies to Address Challenges:**

#### **1. Being out in the community in socially safe ways**

Every group mentioned that a positive outcome of all of this is that people are out in the community walking around more. Just seeing people walking around and being active was encouraging to many participants and most said they have gotten to know their neighbors better.

#### **2. Collaboration and Listening**

All groups agreed that a strategy to help with social connectedness was collaborating and listening more to their neighbors and/or colleagues. It seems that Rosedalians are becoming

active listeners and wanting to listen to their neighbors experiences and struggles as a way of showing camaraderie.

### **Strengths of Rosedale Community:**

#### **1. Diversity**

Every group identified the diversity of the Rosedale community as a key strength. Participants enjoy the diverse make-up of the community and the cultural awareness and opportunities that brings, like a number of great restaurants.

#### **2. Location, including KU Med**

The location of Rosedale is a major asset as participants like that it is centrally located and easy to get to downtown one direction and Johnson County the other direction. They like that there is “everything you need” within a ten minute drive. Participants also believe that having KU Med in Rosedale is a benefit because it provides some of the best quality healthcare options in the area as well as provides incentives for more businesses to come to the area as well as improving the look of the neighborhood.

#### **3. Friendliness of Neighborhood**

As the participants in every group enjoyed seeing people out and about in the neighborhood more, it follows that a big strength they see of the neighborhood is the friendliness of neighbors. Participants expressed feeling safe walking around and that neighbors seem to go out of their way to talk to each other, especially nowadays.

### **Biggest Concerns for the Future:**

#### **1. Continued uncertainty**

Without a doubt, the biggest concern for all groups moving forward is the continued uncertainty about everything and how that impacts their lives. They are longing for better guidance, more reliable information, and leadership.

#### **2. School return plans**

For most groups, the return-to-school plans are a concern. Since KCK is going to be completely virtual this semester, the concern is how to keep kids academically engaged and on grade-level and maintain social-emotional health as well.

#### **3. Families with little resources**

While most participants did not express needing assistance with basic resources themselves, they did believe that a number of neighbors are in need of assistance with basic needs like food, utilities, access to technology, and better transportation.

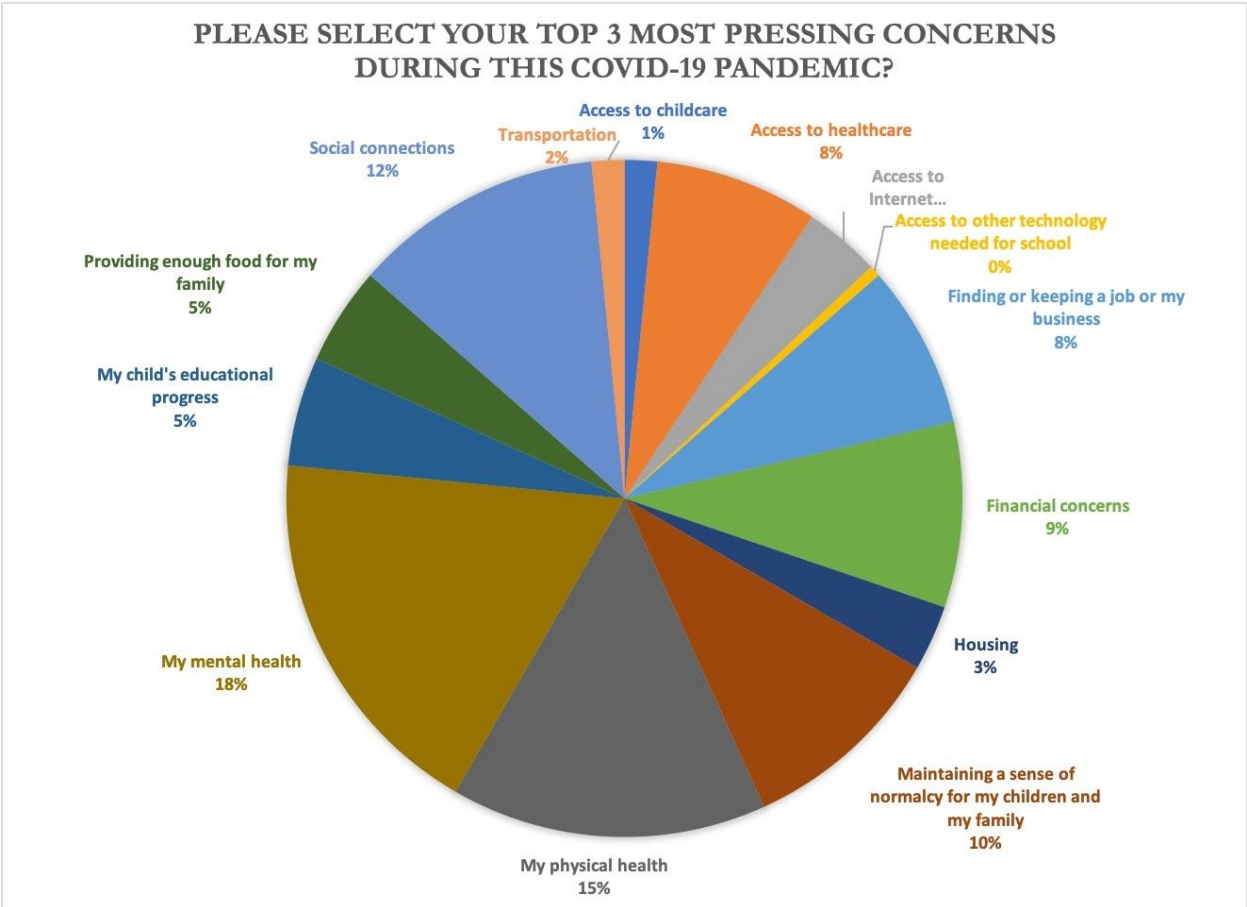
# SECTION 3: SURVEY RESULTS

Total Number of Survey Respondents: 85 (including 10 from Spanish survey)

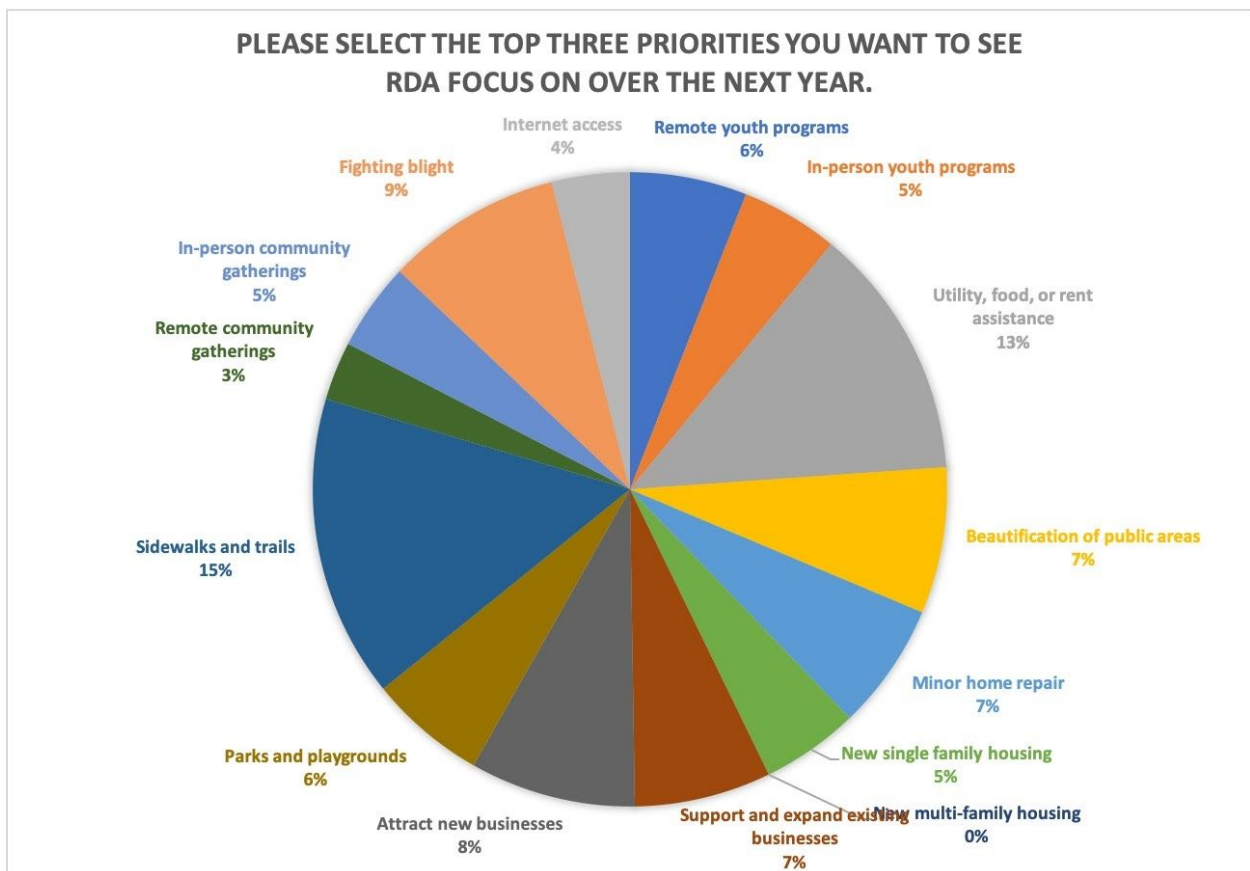
- White: 55
- Hispanic: 10
- Black: 4
- Asian: 4
- Unknown: 12\*
- Male: 25
- Female: 47
- Transgender Female: 1
- Unknown: 12\*

\*(There were 12 surveys returned by mail and race/gender was not asked)

In the pie chart below, the distribution of the top three more pressing concerns among survey respondents is illustrated. Mental health was the concern that the most people selected, followed by physical health, social connections and maintaining a sense of normalcy. These survey results validate the results from the focus groups. A lack of social connectedness and the consequences of that on participants' mental health was the number one concern among focus group participants as well. The concern over uncertainty that those in the focus group expressed corresponds to the sense of wanting to maintain normalcy identified by survey respondents.



The pie chart below shows the distribution of the top priorities survey respondents believed RDA should prioritize over the next year. Fixing sidewalks and resource assistance were the top two priorities selected, followed by fighting blight/beautification of public areas, and attracting new businesses. These survey results also largely validate results of the focus groups.





## SECTION 4: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RDA

**How can RDA support the community best right now?** Based on the responses to the questions above in focus groups and on information from the survey, there are four main areas where RDA might consider focusing its priorities.

### 1. Provider of reliable information

Given the level of uncertainty surrounding everything related to COVID, RDA could be a significant asset to Rosedale as a source of information that people can trust. Participants already see RDA as a leader in this regard and expressed enjoying reading the newsletter and trusting the content within it as well as content from RDA more generally. Many participants said that they would like RDA to provide information specifically related to:

- COVID testing
- Facts related to COVID health risks and statistics
- Safety protocols and guidelines
- Resources available in the community

It is clear that more direction is needed and that participants see RDA as a trusted leader to provide that direction. They didn't expect that to be much beyond continuing to use the newsletter, website, and social media as outlets for reliable information, but did suggest promoting it more widely to those that might not be aware of it.

### 2. Provide tutoring and social activities for kids of all ages

Since kids are learning at-home this semester, there is a concern about keeping kids on grade-level and ensuring that they are learning. Therefore, RDA could build on its existing youth programming to provide tutoring services either in a socially distanced way or virtually, but there is an expectation that there would be an actual interaction taking place.

The community is also looking for ways to get their kids more engaged and active outside of the home and are hoping for social opportunities that are safe. Participants expressed interest in attending community events in parks.

### 3. Improve sidewalks

Since people in Rosedale are out walking around the neighborhood more, there is a clear demand for better sidewalks.

### 4. Provide basic resources to families in need, especially seniors

Participants were concerned that as winter is approaching there will be a bigger need for help with basic resources. Masks, food and utility assistance were areas that came up a lot in the focus groups. For seniors in particular, there was a need for help with transportation and small chores around the home.

## SECTION 5: KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR EACH GROUP

### NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP LEADERS & RDA BOARD

10 Participants

**Unique Themes among Neighborhood Group Leaders & RDA Board:**

1. This group was particularly concerned about improving sidewalks and the general infrastructure of Rosedale more than other groups.
2. Given the active nature of the group, they were the most concerned about how winter would exacerbate challenges.
3. Navigating the conflicting information regarding COVID-19 and the necessary requirements is particularly troubling for this group because they feel pressure to be leaders and take the appropriate action but it is hard to know the right action.

<p><b>Biggest Challenge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Difficult to sort through conflicting information             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “There are so many messages coming from so many different outlets.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Unclear guidelines related to health and safety protocols             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “I’m looking for science to guide us.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Polarization on mask issue             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Navigating family dynamics as some don’t take pandemic as seriously</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Maintaining social connections</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strengths of Rosedale</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Diversity of Rosedale</li> <li>● Easier to connect with neighbors as more people are out on porches and walking around</li> <li>● KU Med Center</li> <li>● Activism in the community             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “It has been nice to see so many people advocating for social issues.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Geographic diversity and available green space, particularly the Rosedale trails</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategies to Address Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Walking around</li> <li>● “Listening to neighbors” and giving each other chance to talk and share experiences</li> <li>● Zoom</li> </ul>	<p><b>Concerns for future</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Winter is coming and people will be forced indoors</li> <li>● Families needing utility assistance or Internet access</li> <li>● Winter transportation</li> <li>● Domestic abuse detection</li> </ul>
<p><b>RDA Role</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Helping families with utility assistance</li> <li>● SIDEWALKS</li> <li>● Social activities for kids that abide by health precautions</li> </ul>	

## EDUCATORS

4 Participants

### Unique Themes among Educators:

1. Educators were the group most concerned about families' access to technology for at-home learning.
2. Because educators have not seen their students in-person for several months, they are very concerned about the social-emotional wellbeing of their students and families.
3. **Educators are looking for RDA to support their students' families with food, translation, tutoring, and technology support.**

<p><b>Biggest Challenge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Uncertain environment makes planning for school difficult             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Everything is unknown and changing”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Student enthusiasm for school is low due to virtual learning</li> <li>● Teachers are overwhelmed with all the changes</li> <li>● Being able to visit parents and concern for their health</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strengths of Rosedale</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Diversity of Rosedale</li> <li>● Easier to connect with neighbors as more people are out on porches and walking around</li> <li>● KU Med Center</li> <li>● Location - Rosedale is close to everything</li> <li>● Rosedale community supports local businesses</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategies to Address Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher collaboration             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Talking and listening with other teachers keeps me motivated.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Concerns for future</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Social-emotional well-being of students during prolonged virtual learning</li> <li>● Parent support and engagement</li> <li>● Technology barriers for students at home</li> </ul>
<p><b>RDA Role</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide food and technology support to families             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collaborate with churches to provide resources</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Tutoring services for school-age children</li> <li>● Translation services for families</li> <li>● Supporting senior citizens that are lonely</li> <li>● Provide information that is reliable</li> </ul>	

## SPANISH SPEAKERS

1 Participant

### Unique Themes among Spanish Speakers:

N/A

<b>Biggest Challenge</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Social aspect - not being able to see family<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ “My dad is in El Salvador and is very lonely.”</li></ul></li><li>● Travel is harder for work</li></ul>	<b>Strengths of Rosedale</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Diversity of Rosedale</li></ul>
<b>Strategies to Address Challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Relying on close family friends to help with baby so we can work.</li><li>● “Communicating through difference.”</li></ul>	<b>Concerns for future</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Uncertainty and “not knowing how much longer this will all last.”</li></ul>
<b>RDA Role</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Provide information that is reliable and available on social media</li></ul>	

# SENIORS

5 Participants

## Unique Themes among Seniors:

1. While every group identified missing social connections, this was particularly true and troublesome for seniors. They expressed feeling lonely and isolated, which other groups did not feel or report.
2. Seniors were also the group most concerned about their personal health and the risk involved when going out. While most in the group supported wearing masks, each had close friends or family that did not wear masks and that was a concern for them and their health.
3. Seniors were very happy with the trash department in Rosedale.
4. **Seniors look to RDA for assistance with small household tasks or finding a reputable, local person to help.**

<p><b>Biggest Challenge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintaining connections with family and friends             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “We missed out on all the holidays.”</li> <li>○ “Missed out on all the get-togethers”</li> <li>○ “Family time was completely lost.”</li> <li>○ “My children are essential workers and they don’t come to my house...just leave groceries at my door.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Maintaining connection with the Church, which is seen as main place for elderly to go             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “I hate not getting to hug people at church.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Health concern about going out and encountering people that aren’t wearing masks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strengths of Rosedale</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Trash department             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “They pick up everything and are very clean!”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Neighbors are friendly and wave a lot             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More people walking around</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Fire department             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “They came in an instant to come and help me when I fell down and one guy came back the next day to check on me.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Frank Rushton Elementary             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Get news from the school</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Location is close to everything</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategies to Address Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Connecting with friends and family             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sit outside</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Church             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ social distance seats, handing out masks</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Concerns for future</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Worried about grandkids going to school             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Access to computers, Internet connection and affordability</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Violence</li> <li>● Meal access for seniors and for kids</li> </ul>
<p><b>RDA Role</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Source of information             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Newsletter</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Help with holidays</li> <li>● Help with small household tasks             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Listing of services that are reputable and don’t over-charge</li> <li>○ Prefer someone to help from within the community</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

## SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

3 Participants

### Unique Themes among Small Business Owners:

1. For small business owners, the lack of consistent guidelines related to safety protocols was difficult to navigate and know the right thing to do to keep everyone safe and still keep business open.
2. Small business owners talked the most about the role of the government in regulation and stepping in to support businesses and families during the pandemic.
3. This group is looking for RDA to promote their businesses to young people through job fairs or job training as a potential source for new employees.

<p><b>Biggest Challenge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Demand for new customers in the beginning was difficult             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Uncertainty for future demand means we are unsure how to use employees but don’t want to lose them.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Finding people to hire amid unemployment compensation that pays better than wages</li> <li>● Understanding “if we are considered essential”</li> <li>● Unclear of the guidelines and protocols we need to take to keep employees and customers safe</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strengths of Rosedale</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Location - close to everything</li> <li>● KU Med</li> <li>● Cost of housing is affordable and people are updating their houses so neighborhood is looking better.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategies to Address Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● PPP money from government “saved us”</li> <li>● The Unified government was helpful when they came out with rules on masks and other guidelines “so that we didn’t have to be the cops.”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Concerns for future</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Possible loss of jobs</li> <li>● Need to be able to take out loans with low interest in order to keep employees during a downturn</li> <li>● “If someone were to get sick, we could be shut down.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>RDA Role</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide a list of resources that we can give to our employees related to COVID testing</li> <li>● Promote our businesses to young people as potential employees in the future             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Host job fairs</li> <li>○ Promote the trades and blue collar work</li> </ul> </li> <li>● “Pull in people from unified government so they take an interest in Rosedale”</li> </ul>	

## PARENTS IN ROSEDALE

3 Participants (1 is a recent immigrants)

### Unique Themes among Parents:

1. Parents' main concern was their childrens' social-emotional well-being and finding ways to keep their kids engaged not only in school but in social activities more generally.

<p><b>Biggest Challenge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Need a safe place for kids to go and have new activities and see friends.</li> <li>● It is hard to keep their kids engaged in school work and generally interested in new activities             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “My kids feel a bit depressed.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● They worry about kids who might be in abusive situations at home or elderly people who might need help at home and have no outlets to ask for help</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strengths of Rosedale</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Diversity</li> <li>● KU Med</li> <li>● Location</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategies to Address Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Help pick up trash around neighborhood and keep kids busy</li> <li>● Talking and communicating more with neighbors and listening more to their experiences and perspectives</li> </ul>	<p><b>Concerns for future</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Return to school plans and managing at-home learning</li> </ul>
<p><b>RDA Role</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide information about COVID-19 testing or policy changes regarding guidelines</li> <li>● Be a place where people can come to ask questions</li> <li>● Provide trainings on how to notice warning-signs of abuse or trouble with neighbors and how to intervene</li> </ul>	

# YOUTH IN ROSEDALE

3 Participants

## Unique Themes among Youth:

1. The youth are concerned about learning at-home and staying connected with friends - both of which they miss a lot and are yearning for routine.
2. The youth had lots of unique ideas for how RDA could help, including providing activities for young people to do with their friends and organizing a “Lending Library.”

<p><b>Biggest Challenge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of connection with my friends             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “I miss playing with my friends...and they live right across the street.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Communication with teachers is difficult             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “I can’t ask questions to my teachers so I feel behind a lot.”</li> <li>○ “Usually I learn from my friends, and now I can’t.”</li> <li>○ “It’s hard to stay motivated.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Uncertainty is hard because “we don’t know what will happen next.”</li> <li>● They worry about friends that don’t have Internet and have lots of home distractions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strengths of Rosedale</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Neighbors are out more and talking more on the streets</li> <li>● There has been more activism on social issues</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategies to Address Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● FaceTime with friends</li> <li>● We are spending more time with family, which has been “mostly good.”</li> <li>● “We are used to technology, so it’s not so hard for us to reach friends or do our school work.”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Concerns for future</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Returning to school             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “I worry about doing everything online again and it gets boring.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>RDA Role</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide neighbors with basic resources, including masks</li> <li>● They are looking for activities to do with friends that can be socially distanced</li> <li>● Help schools support at-home learning             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Help families with access to technology</li> <li>○ Train families on technology</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Clean and/or fix sidewalks</li> <li>● Organize a donation drive or a “Lending Resources Library”</li> <li>● Maintain information on RDA website and social media</li> </ul>	