

City of Madison

Community Development Division

Crisis Intervention and Prevention

Community Voices Survey Report

Introduction

The Community Voices survey was conducted to better understand the perspectives, awareness, and engagement of residents regarding crisis intervention and prevention services across Madison. With 470 total respondents, the survey provides important insights into who is being reached, which services are most recognized, and where additional outreach or education may be needed. The results highlight both opportunities and gaps in service awareness, offering valuable direction for future programming and community engagement efforts.

Participation and Demographic Profile

A total of 470 community members participated in the survey. Notably, 75% of respondents (353 individuals) identified as City of Madison residents, indicating that the survey captured perspectives from the core community served by these programs.

The language profile of respondents underscores accessibility across communities. The vast majority (95%) of surveys were completed in English with a 90% completion rate, while 5% were completed in Spanish with an even higher completion rate of 97%. This suggests that Spanish-speaking participants who engaged with the survey were committed to completing it and signals the importance of continuing to provide linguistically inclusive outreach.

Geographic distribution is also notable, as 55% of respondents were from the 53704 ZIP code. This high concentration highlights a neighborhood with significant engagement, but it also raises the question of whether residents from other parts of the city are equally represented. More intentional outreach to additional ZIP codes may help balance geographic representation and ensure a broader understanding of citywide needs.

Awareness and Knowledge of Services

When examining overall knowledge across service sectors, the survey revealed the following trends:

- 15% of respondents reported that they both knew about and had used available services.
- 61% had heard of the services but never used them.
- 9% had never heard of the services at all.

These numbers suggest that while there is strong awareness of programs (with more than three-quarters of respondents aware in some form), actual usage lags significantly behind. The gap between “awareness” and “utilization” highlights a potential barrier: residents may know programs exist but lack clear pathways, trust, or motivation to access them. This insight underscores the need for more effective outreach strategies and potentially additional supports to lower barriers to participation.

Program-Specific Knowledge and Usage

Breaking down awareness and knowledge by program type provides more nuanced insights:

- Crisis Programs (53% overall): Awareness and knowledge were highest in this category. Within crisis programs, shelter services stood out with 74% recognition and use, demonstrating both the necessity of these services and the effectiveness of outreach efforts around them. This suggests that when services meet immediate, visible needs, residents are both aware and more likely to utilize them.
- Outreach and Information Services (42%): Awareness and use of outreach efforts lagged behind crisis programming. Within this category:
 - Workshops (31%): These had the lowest recognition, signaling that workshops may not be reaching or resonating with large portions of the community.
 - Youth Restorative Justice (33%): Awareness was slightly stronger but still limited. Given the importance of restorative justice approaches for youth, this relatively low awareness suggests a need for targeted communications and deeper community partnerships.

Interpretation and Implications

The survey results point to three key themes:

1. High Awareness, Low Utilization
While 61% of respondents had heard of services, only 15% reported using them. This gap may be driven by factors such as stigma, eligibility confusion, accessibility challenges (e.g., location, timing, language), or a lack of understanding about how to connect to services. Future efforts should focus not only on promoting awareness but also on reducing these barriers and making services feel approachable and relevant.
2. Uneven Geographic and Demographic Reach
The heavy concentration of responses from 53704 shows strong engagement in that area, but may leave blind spots in understanding needs in other neighborhoods. Similarly, while the Spanish-speaking community demonstrated high engagement once reached, the small percentage of respondents completing the survey in Spanish signals a need to increase bilingual outreach and engagement strategies.
3. Program-Specific Gaps
Shelter services are widely recognized and utilized, but outreach programs, workshops, and youth restorative justice lag far behind. This suggests that crisis-oriented programs are more visible to the public, while preventative and developmental programs may not be communicated as effectively. Strengthening visibility and trust for these programs could ensure more balanced use of available supports.

From Community Voices to Action: Next Steps in the 2025 CIP RFP

The 2025 Crisis Intervention and Prevention (CIP) RFP directly responds to community feedback by refining its focus into two priority areas: Crisis Intervention Support Services and Prevention Services and Activities. Within this framework, case management is no longer a standalone program type, reflecting the City's commitment to elevating non-credentialed staff with lived experience and community trust. Prevention efforts now emphasize targeted outreach and workshops that address emerging needs, greater investment in skill-building and civic engagement as pathways to long-term stability, and a shift from funding youth restorative justice programs toward supporting community-based conflict resolution, de-escalation, and non-violent communication. These changes ensure the City's investments remain responsive, inclusive, and aligned with building stronger connections, trust, and stability across Madison's communities.