Iowa OER is a group of individuals working to support the affordability of higher education for students in the state of Iowa through the use of open educational resources (OER). OER are "teaching, learning, and research resources that are free of cost and access barriers, and which also carry legal permission for open use."

Key Findings

1. OER initiatives in Iowa are growing.
   While the number of active OER initiatives has not changed over the past 12 months, the number and kind of projects supported by each initiative has grown.

2. OER initiatives need training for staff and top-down support.
   When identifying barriers encountered by their OER initiatives, most institutions brought forward the need for institutional change and funding needs, bigger-ticket items than those sought in previous years. This shows that initiatives are growing, yet the support being provided for OER initiatives does not reflect that same growth.

3. Iowa OER is helping, but more can be done.
   Some OER initiatives in Iowa have identified needs that can be met by currently available projects or ones in development from Iowa OER. However, others have asked for more advanced support than we can offer. This year, we will explore how to better meet those needs.

Initiatives Need Help with...

**Faculty Training**
"Standardized training resources," and other professional development opportunities were requested.

Iowa OER provides webinars, and we are exploring a state-wide OER conference for 2022 as well as a more official training program.

**Stipends**
"Finances to help us develop grants" and funding for stipends are points of interest for colleges.

Iowa OER operates through volunteer support. We will explore options to help institutions with grant writing and other funding needs in 2021/2022.

**Staffing**
"Additional staffing to support faculty with OER work" was noted as a need for multiple institutions.

Iowa OER cannot provide funding for staff time, but we will explore more outreach about this topic.

**Locating content**
Some institutions requested support for vetting and locating OER.

Iowa OER hosts a Group for sharing recommended OER adopted in the state, and we are considering a future webinar on this topic.

In 2020, Iowa college students saved $3,052,000 thanks to the use of OER in place of commercial textbooks.

Covid-19 has impacted OER initiatives in Iowa both positively, by exposing the need for affordable course materials, and negatively, by stalling the continued development of OER programming.