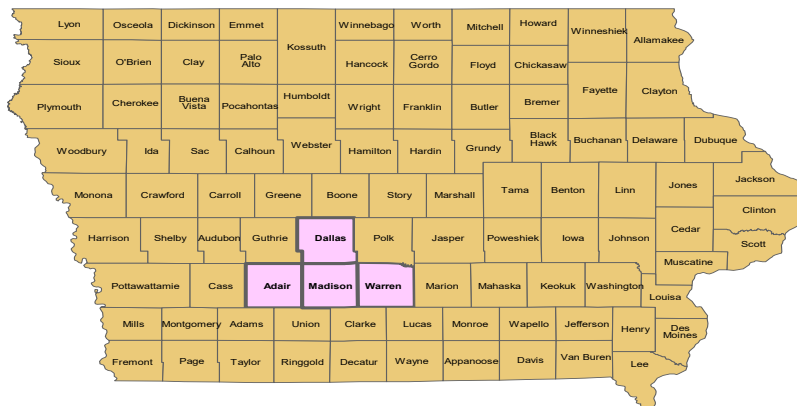


# Community Plan Updates December 18, 2025

## FY2025 - 2029



## Early Childhood Iowa Area



**Serving Adair, Dallas, Madison, and Warren County**

### 4 R Kids ECI Area Contacts

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## **Geographic Area**

The geographic area for the 4 R Kids ECI Area is defined by the boundaries of Adair, Dallas, Madison, and Warren counties. Children prenatal through age five and their families living within the 4 R Kids Early Childhood Area are eligible for services funded by the 4 R Kids ECI Area Board.

## **Vision Statement**

*"Every child beginning at birth will be healthy and successful."*

This has been the Board's vision statement since the board merger in FY2012 and is the same vision statement as Early Childhood Iowa.

## **Mission Statement**

*"Empower families and communities to enhance the quality of the lives of young children."*

This has been the Board's mission statement since the merger in FY12.

## **Guiding Principles**

- Healthy children and healthy families result in healthy communities.
- Support the use of evidence based, promising programs and research-based programs.
- Support programs that can demonstrate performance measures for inputs, outputs, quality/efficiencies, and outcomes.

## **Result Areas**

The 4 R Kids Early Childhood Iowa Area Board supports the following five result areas:

- Healthy Children
- Children Ready to Succeed in School
- Safe and Nurturing Families
- Safe and Supportive Communities
- Secure and Nurturing Early Learning Environments

## **Community Priorities**

Adair, Dallas, Madison, and Warren County Partnership Advisory Committees continue to play an integral role in providing input to the community plan. Feedback is consistently sought throughout the year as evidenced by meeting minutes. Priorities are listed in no certain order.

<b>Quality early childhood education settings (i.e. homes, centers, preschools)</b>
<p>The 4 R Kids ECI Area Board is committed to quality early learning environments. With over 75% of parents with children under the age of five working it is imperative that resources be provided to build awareness of quality care and support those who provide it.</p> <p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide preschool tuition scholarships for families in need.</li><li>• Enforce standards set for quality preschool programs for the tuition program.</li><li>• Promote the statewide voluntary preschool program.</li><li>• Address barriers to transportation for preschool aged children.</li><li>• Assist early care environments in meeting standards through support and education.</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support high quality professional development services and opportunities for early care and education programs.</li> <li>• Support incentives for quality improvement efforts for early learning environments.</li> </ul>
<b>Health services (i.e. vision, dental, mental, medical)</b>
<p>The 4 R Kids ECI Area Board is committed to building strong children and children that are ready for school. Healthy brain development in the early years is the foundation in the years to follow. By intervening early, providers and parents can influence children's health and development, including not only their readiness to learn but also the risk of many adult diseases.</p> <p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support programs that provide awareness regarding dental, medical, nutrition, immunizations, lead prevention, prenatal care, and development milestones.</li> <li>• Support transportation efforts to health services and preschool.</li> <li>• Increase understanding of what children need for optimal health.</li> <li>• Promote positive mental health for children.</li> </ul>
<b>Family support and parent education</b>
<p>The 4 R Kids ECI Area Board is committed to supporting families and providers in the four counties. The community recognizes the importance for families to have the access to programs that support the family in the home and in the community.</p> <p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase coordination among child and family services.</li> <li>• Provide information to parents and facilitate connection to the needed services and supports.</li> <li>• Increase awareness of family support programs.</li> <li>• Maintain quality through the Iowa Family Support Credential or National Accreditation process.</li> <li>• Promote access to family support programs.</li> <li>• Strive to enroll prenatal families and first-time caregivers in home visiting services.</li> </ul>
<b>Community resource management and planning</b>
<p>The 4 R Kids ECI Area Board is committed to building awareness of the services available and importance of early childhood. There is much to do in this area such as central point of contact for family support programs, increasing communication across multiple disciplines, and building awareness within the business community of the importance of early childhood.</p> <p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase coordination among child and family services.</li> <li>• Increase collaboration efforts with community leaders and business to gain partnerships and provide awareness of early childhood needs.</li> <li>• Collaborate with other child serving organizations to maximize resources.</li> <li>• Collaborate with community and neighborhood events to promote activities for families with young children.</li> <li>• Improve practices that will increase efficiencies.</li> <li>• Support central points of contact (navigation) of services.</li> </ul>

## 4 R Kids ECI Area Profile

4 R Kids ECI Area serves Adair, Dallas, Madison, and Warren counties. The four counties are in south central Iowa and are primarily rural in nature. The four-county area overall population is growing; however, Adair County, which is the smallest county has declined in population. Dallas County is the largest county of the four and has more than thirteen times the population of Adair County.

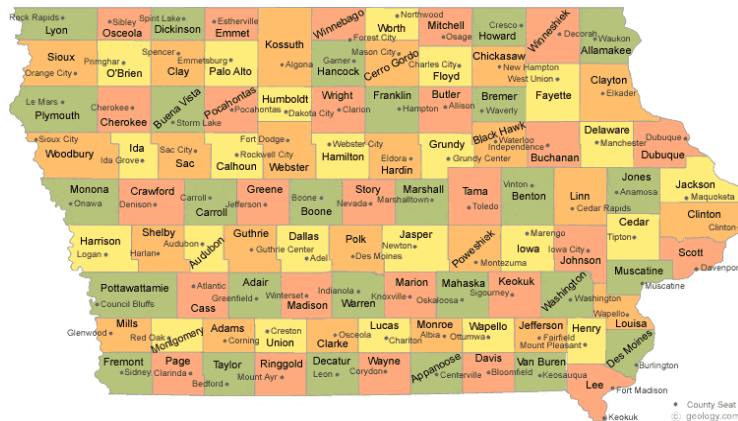
Total Population Trend Data U.S. Census					
Year	Adair	Dallas	Madison	Warren	Total
1950	12,292	23,661	13,131	17,758	66,842
1960	10,892	24,123	12,295	20,829	68,139
1970	9,497	26,085	11,558	27,432	75,572
1980	9,509	29,513	12,597	34,878	86,497
1990	8,409	29,755	12,483	36,033	86,680
2000	8,243	40,750	14,019	40,671	103,683
2010	7,682	66,135	15,679	46,225	135,721
2020	7,497	99,732	16,546	52,398	176,173

As depicted below, Adair County has the highest median age and Dallas County has the lowest when compared to Iowa and United States. The median age of the four-county area is 39.9 years of age compared to Iowa at 38.1 years of age in the United States.

Median Age 2020 U.S. Census					
Adair	Dallas	Madison	Warren	Iowa	U.S.
45.2	35.4	40.8	38.5	38.3	38.1

- Dallas, Madison, and Warren Counties border Polk County and have the benefits of small-town neighborhoods or rural living yet are within driving distance of the Des Moines international Airport, the newest and largest shopping area of Jordan Creek, as well as many cultural opportunities in Polk County.
- Dallas, Madison, and Warren County are three of five counties that make up the Des Moines-West Des Moines Metropolitan Statistical Area.
- The four-county area has contiguous borders.
- The 4 R Kids ECI area has a total area of 2,297.24 square miles.
- All four counties have an interstate that runs through them.
- There are 34 Early Childhood Iowa areas in Iowa (as of FY2025); some encompass more than one county. Of the 34 Early Childhood Iowa areas, the 4 R Kid ECI Area ranks 3rd regarding the largest population of children under the age of five. Additionally, the 4 R Kids ECI Area is also the largest multi county area with children under the age of five.

## Overall Iowa Profile



### State of Iowa

(sources [U.S. Census](#), [Iowa Kids Count](#), [Child Care Resource & Referral](#), [Iowa Data Center](#), Woods & Poole)

Total population (2023):	3,207,004
Total population ages 0-5 (2023):	226,935
White, non-Hispanic population (2023):	84.2%
Median family household income (2023):	\$71,433
Average cost of childcare weekly (2025):	\$171-\$254
Children living below the poverty level (2023):	13.0%
High School Graduation Rate (2023):	87.5%
Free and Reduced lunch rate (2024):	41.8%
Persons without health insurance under 65 (2023):	9.6%
Families with all parents working & children under age 6 (2023):	76%
Square miles:	55,857
Average travel time to work:	26.6 minutes
Capital:	Des Moines Iowa

### Did you know?

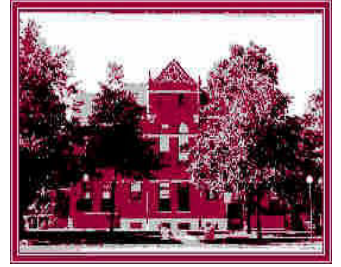
Iowa's nickname is the Hawkeye state. Iowa has 3 state universities: Iowa State University, University of Iowa, and University of Northern Iowa. Iowa ranks first in beef, pork, corn, soybean, and grain production. One Iowa family farm grows enough food and fiber to feed 279 people.

### Interesting Facts:

- Ripley's Believe it or Not named Burlington's Snake Alley the most crooked street in the world.
- Sabula is Iowa's only town on an island.
- Sliced bread was invented by an Iowan from Davenport.
- Iowa has more golf courses per capita than any other state.
- Strawberry Point is the home of the world's largest strawberry.
- Iowa is home to the National Hobo Convention which takes place every year in Britt Iowa.
- Hogs outnumber humans 4 to 1.
- Iowa claims the world's largest nickel, which sits 12 feet across in an Iowa City farm field.
- The Iowa 80 in Walcott is the world's largest truck stop.
- The state is comprised of 92% farmland.

# Adair County Profile

(sources U.S. Census, Iowa Kids Count, Woods & Poole)



Total population (2023):	7,431
Total population ages 0-5 (2023):	546
White, non-Hispanic population (2023):	96.5%
Median family household income (2023):	\$66,176
Average cost of childcare weekly (2025):	\$149-\$166
Children living below the poverty level (2023):	13.3%
High School Graduation Rate (2023):	95.0 %
Free and Reduced lunch rate (2024):	48.0%
Persons without health insurance under 65 (2023):	4.7%
Families with all parents working & children under age 6 (2023):	67%
Square miles:	569
Average travel time to work:	21.1 minutes
County Seat:	Greenfield
Department of Human Service office:	Greenfield (less than full time)
Hospitals:	Adair County Health Systems (does not deliver babies)

## Adair County Schools:

Nodaway Valley Community Schools

## Towns:

Adair	Fontanelle	Stuart
Bridgewater	Greenfield	
Casey	Orient	

## Interesting Facts:

The area around Greenfield was settled in 1854. Greenfield became the county seat in 1875, after battling out nearby Fontanelle for the title.

The Freedom Rock is a large boulder that marks the entrance to an old rock quarry. Beginning in 1999, Ray "Bubba" Sorensen II has painted the rock every Memorial Day with different patriotic images and sayings in support of the United States military. The goal is to have a Freedom Rock in all 99 counties in Iowa.

Wind energy is a focus in Adair County and there are hundreds of wind turbines along interstate 80. Each wind turbine occupies 2 acres of land.

# Dallas County Profile

(Sources U.S. Census, Iowa Kids Count, Woods & Poole)

Total population (2023):	111,092
Total population ages 0-5 (2023):	8,997
White non-Hispanic population (2023):	87.9%
Median family household income (2023):	\$102,349
Average cost of childcare weekly (2025):	\$209-\$324
Children living below the poverty level (2023):	5.4%
High School Graduation Rate (2023):	95.6%
Free and Reduced lunch rate (2024):	21.5%
Persons without health insurance under 65 (2023):	3.8%
Families with all parents working & children under age 6 (2023):	78.7%
Square miles:	588
Average travel time to work:	20.8 minutes
County Seat:	Adel
Department of Human Services office:	Adel (full time)
Hospitals:	Methodist West Hospital Dallas County Hospital (does not deliver babies)



## Colleges

Des Moines Area Community College (DMAC Perry Campus)

## Dallas County Schools:

Adel-DeSoto-Minburn Community Schools  
Dallas Center –Grimes Community Schools  
Perry Community Schools  
Waukee Community Schools  
Woodward-Granger Community Schools  
Adel Classical Academy

Van Meter Community Schools  
West Central Valley Community Schools  
St. Patrick's Catholic School  
Dallas Center Christian School  
St Francis Assisi School

## Towns:

Adel	Dexter
Bouton	Granger
Clive*	Linden
Dallas Center	Minburn
Dawson	Perry
Desoto	Redfield

Urbandale\*  
Van Meter  
Waukee  
West Des Moines\*  
Woodward

*\*city shares with Polk County*

## Interesting Facts:

Dallas County is the fastest growing county in Iowa. Dallas County is the 4<sup>th</sup> fastest growing County in the nation. Dallas County's population grew to 99,672 in 2020 from 66,133 a decade earlier, a 51% increase. The only counties in the country that grew faster were McKenzie (131%) and Williams (83%) counties at the epicenter of North Dakota's oil boom; and Hays County, Texas (53%), an Austin suburb.

American Major League baseball player Bob Feller (November 3, 1918 - December 15, 2010) was born and raised on the family farm in Van Meter Iowa. Bob Feller was known for passing the minor leagues at age 17 and played for the Cleveland Indians.

In 2017, *Apple* known for mobile communications and technology was awarded \$213 million in incentives to build a \$1.3 billion state of art data center in Dallas County.

# Madison County Profile

*(Sources U.S. Census, Iowa Kids Count, Woods & Poole)*



Total population (2023):	16,971
Total population ages 0-5 (2023):	1,190
White non-Hispanic population (2023)	96.9%
Median family household income (2023):	\$89,542
Average cost of childcare weekly (2025):	\$186 - \$232
Children living below the poverty level (2023):	6.7%
High School Graduation Rate (2023):	95.1 %
Free and Reduced lunch rate (2024):	27.5%
Persons without health insurance under 65 (2023):	4.8%
Families with all parents working & children under age 6 (2023):	79.6%
Square miles:	561
Average travel time to work:	27.0 minutes
County Seat:	Winterset
Department of Human Service office:	Winterset (less than full time)
Hospital:	Madison County Health Systems (does not deliver babies)

## Madison County Schools:

Winterset Community Schools  
Interstate 35 Community Schools  
Earlham Community Schools  
Winterset Christian Academy

## Towns:

Bevington	Macksburg	Truro
Earlham	Patterson	Winterset
East Peru	St. Charles	

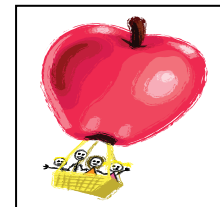
## Interesting Facts:

East Peru (current population 125) is the birthplace of the Red Delicious cultivar apple.

Madison County is the birthplace of John Wayne and home of the historic covered bridges popularized by Robert James Waller's novel *The Bridges of Madison County* and the feature film starring Meryl Streep and Clint Eastwood.

Madison County was named after James Madison (1751–1836), the fourth President of the United States, between 1809 and 1817.





# Warren County Profile

(Sources U.S. Census, Iowa Kids Count, Woods & Poole)

Total population (2023):	55,205
Total population ages 0-5 (2023):	3,781
White non-Hispanic population (2023):	95.6%
Median family household income (2023):	\$92,990
Average cost of childcare weekly (2025):	\$182-\$292
Children living below the poverty level (2023):	5.7%
High School Graduation Rate (2023):	95.3%
Free and Reduced lunch rate (2024):	26.5%
Persons without health insurance under 65 (2023):	3.6%
Families with all parents working & children under age 6 (2023):	77.9%
Square miles:	69
Average travel time to work:	24.2 minutes
County Seat:	Indianola
Department of Humans Service office:	Indianola (full time office)
Hospitals:	There are no hospitals in Warren County

## Warren County Schools:

Norwalk Community Schools  
Indianola Community Schools  
Carlisle Community Schools  
Southeast Warren Community Schools  
Martensdale-St. Mary Community Schools  
Main Street (Pre-K – 12<sup>th</sup>)  
Victory Christian Academy (Pre-K – 8<sup>th</sup>)  
Strong Roots Christian School (Pre-K – 12<sup>th</sup>)

## Colleges:

Simpson

## Towns:

Ackworth	Indianola	Prole
Bevington	Lacona	Sandyville
Carlisle	Milo	Spring Hill
Cumming	Martensdale	St. Marys
Des Moines*	New Virginia	West Des Moines*
Hartford	Norwalk	

\* city mostly in Polk County

## Interesting Facts:

Microsoft invested more than \$3.5 billion in Iowa and in 2017 and built the largest data center in the United States which is in Warren and Madison County. The complex is larger than Jordan Creek Town Center in Des Moines.

Tom Harkin, United States Senator, was born in Cumming Iowa in 1939.

Major league baseball player Casey Blake, actor Brandon Routh who played Superman, actor Jason Momoa who played Aquaman, Iowa Hawkeye basketball player and potential NBA player Chris Street were all natives of Warren County.

#### 4 R Kids Early Childhood Iowa Area Board Indicators

ECI Indicators	Results Linked to the Indicator	Data Source	Baseline Data (date & numerical value)	Subsequent Year's Data (Trend Line) Identify the Year			Goal (Numerical value & projected timeline)	Progress Update and/or Brief Analysis of data
<b>Poverty</b> % of children age 0-17 who live below the poverty level	Secure and Nurturing Families	U.S. Census Bureau	9.4% (2007)  <i>13.7% (State rate)</i>	5.9% (2021)  <i>12.3% (state rate)</i>	5.8% (2022)  <i>12.3% (State rate)</i>	5.9% (2023)  <i>13.3% (State rate)</i>	Reference purposes only	Of the four counties, Adair County has the highest poverty rate at 13.3% and Dallas has the lowest rate at 5.4%. The area average is below the state average. The U.S. average is 16.0%.
<b>Preschool Experience</b> % of kindergartners who had a preschool experience	Children ready to succeed in school	Iowa Department of Education and local school districts	83.0% (fall 2010)  <i>74.2% (State rate) FY11</i>	84.9% (fall 2023)  <i>79.3% (State rate) FY24</i>	82.8% (fall 2024)  <i>80.3% (State rate) FY25</i>	78.4% (fall 2025)  (State rate TBD)	To be at or above 90%	All school districts receive statewide voluntary preschool funding and 1 receives Shared Visions funding. There is Head Start in 3 of the 4 counties. The preschool experience rate decreased and this may be an indicator of the impact of the COVID pandemic. In 2017 was the highest average rate of 89.9% compared to the state at 66.6% Additionally, there is no prescribed way that schools are required to measure the preschool experience rate.
<b>Health</b> % of live births where the mother began prenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy	Healthy Children	Iowa Department of Health & Human Services	90.4% (2011)  <i>1,581/1,748  84.8% (State rate)</i>	88.5% (2021)  <i>2,025/2,287  80.3% (State rate)</i>	87.4% (2022)  <i>1,983/2,287  79.8% (State rate)</i>	87.1% (2023)  <i>1,944/2,231  78.9% (State rate)</i>	Stay at or above the state rate	All four counties are above the state average. Adair County was 82.5%, Dallas County 88.1%, Madison County 82.5%, and Warren County 86.7%. The four-county area is above the state average of 78.9%, the national average is 76.1%
<b>Parents in the Workforce</b> % of families with all parents working & children under age 6	Safe and supportive communities	Iowa Department of Health & Human Services	74.6% (2015)  <i>75.2% (State rate)</i>	76.8% (2021)  <i>75.7% (State rate)</i>	75.9% (2022)  <i>76.0% (State rate)</i>	78.1% (2023)  <i>75% (State rate)</i>	Reference purposes only	Madison county has the highest rate at 79.6% and Adair County has the lowest at 67.0%. The rate of parents in the work force has increased more than 2% from 2022 to 2023. This is an indicator that more child care slots are needed.
<b>Quality Rating System</b> % of participating child care providers and preschools at each level of the voluntary quality rating system (IQ4K)	Secure and nurturing child care environments	Department of Health & Human Services  Child Care Resource and Referral	9.5% (FY2023)  <i>(19/201 total providers)  8.4% (State rate) IQ4K System)</i>	13.6% (FY2024)  <i>(27/199 total providers)  14.1% (State rate) IQ4K System)</i>	13.7% (FY2025)  <i>(26/189 total providers)  16.3% (State rate) IQ4K System)</i>		Stay above the state rate	The new IQ4K system was replaced with the old QRS system in 2023. Achieving a rating in the new system does not mirror the old system. It was anticipated that fewer providers would engage in the new IQ4K system as well as fewer providers choosing to be registered. FY23 was the new baselines going forward. The 4 R Kids area IQ4K rating is lower than the state rate.