



Head Start &  
Early Head Start

# Community Needs Assessment Update

## Fall 2022

[www.westcentralca.org](http://www.westcentralca.org)

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# 2022 West Central Community Action Head Start Community Needs Assessment (CNA) Update

The updated community information is being added to the comprehensive 2021 Community Needs Assessment in compliance with Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.11 (b).

## 1. Demographics

### a. Population Change by County

COUNTY	TOTAL POPULATION 2000	TOTAL POPULATION 2019	TOTAL POPULATION 2021
CASS	14,684	13,091	13,050
CRAWFORD	16,942	17,034	16,193
FREMONT	8,010	6,946	6,567
HARRISON	15,666	14,089	14,669
MILLS	14,547	15,034	14,465
MONONA	10,020	8,730	8,574
MONTGOMERY	11,771	10,053	10,322
PAGE	16,976	15,263	15,197
POTTAWATTAMIE	87,704	93,393	93,304
SHELBY	13,173	11,606	11,770

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### b. Population Percent Change by County for Children Under 5 Years Old

COUNTY	POPULATION PERCENT UNDER 5 (2019)	POPULATION PERCENT UNDER 5 (2021)
CASS	5.1%	5.4%
CRAWFORD	6.5%	6.4%
FREMONT	5.7%	5.2%
HARRISON	5.8%	5.9%
MILLS	5.4%	5.0%
MONONA	5.2%	5.7%
MONTGOMERY	6.0%	5.8%
PAGE	5.1%	4.3%
POTTAWATTAMIE	6.1%	5.8%
SHELBY	5.0%	5.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

According to the United States Census Bureau's July 2021 estimates, the population in West Central Community Action's (WCCA) Head Start service area has continued to see a decrease in

population. In Cass, Harrison, Monona, and Shelby counties, there was a very slight increase in the population of children under the age of five.

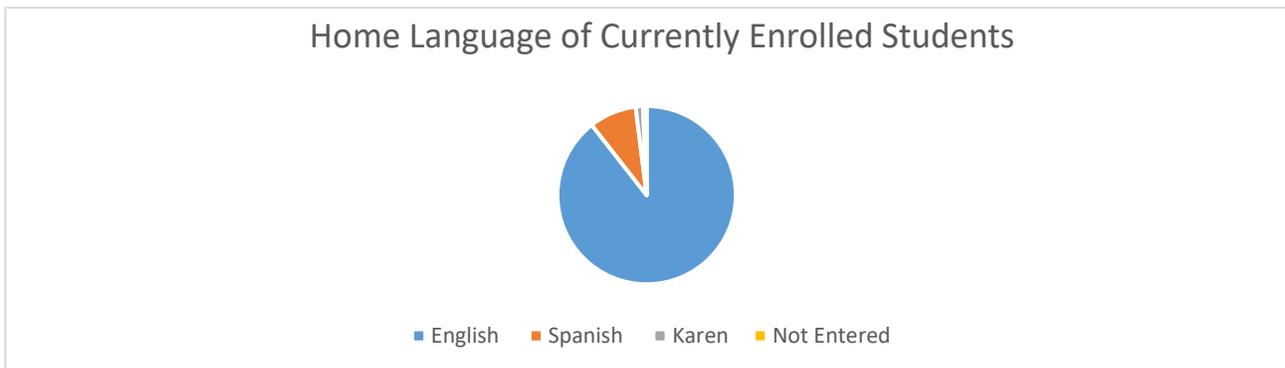
c. Population by Race & Ethnicity

COUNTY	WHITE	BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE	ASIAN	NATIVE HAWAIIAN & OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	TWO OR MORE RACES	HISPANIC/ LATINO
CASS	96.4%	0.05%	0.5%	0.5%	1.0%	1.0%	3.3%
CRAWFORD	90.7%	3.6%	1.5%	2.8%	0.4%	1.0%	30.4%
FREMONT	96.5%	1.0%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	1.3%	3.2%
HARRISON	97.3%	0.6%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	1.3%	2.3%
MILLS	96.6%	0.8%	0.7%	0.4%	0.1%	1.4%	3.7%
MONONA	95.7%	0.7%	2.0%	0.3%	0.1%	1.3%	2.2%
MONTGOMERY	96.9%	0.7%	0.6%	0.4%	0.1%	1.3%	4.3%
PAGE	93.1%	3.2%	0.8%	1.1%	0.1%	1.7%	3.9%
POTTAWATTAMIE	93.9%	1.9%	0.8%	1.0%	0.1%	2.2%	8.7%
SHELBY	96.2%	1.1%	0.5%	0.6%	0.1%	1.5%	3.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The data gathered through this Community Needs Assessment update indicates that the vast majority of the population living in the service area are white and not Hispanic or Latino, except for Crawford County who has a Hispanic/Latino population of almost 30%. Crawford County is where the community of Denison is located, which demonstrates a specific need as 48.7% of the city’s population is Hispanic/Latino according to the US Census Bureau Quick Facts. It is also noted that Pottawattamie County has a higher concentration of Hispanic/Latino and persons of 2 or more races. The higher concentration of Hispanic or Latino population is a unique opportunity for the Head Start program, as it works to provide services and support to those families.

d. Language



Source: Child Plus

WCCA Head Start continues to see an increasing number of children and families who speak a language other than English. The program has typically had a number of children and families who speak Spanish, especially in Crawford and Pottawattamie Counties. Over the past few years, we have seen slight growth in the number of Spanish speaking families in Shelby County as well. In Crawford County, there has been a rise in the Karen Language.

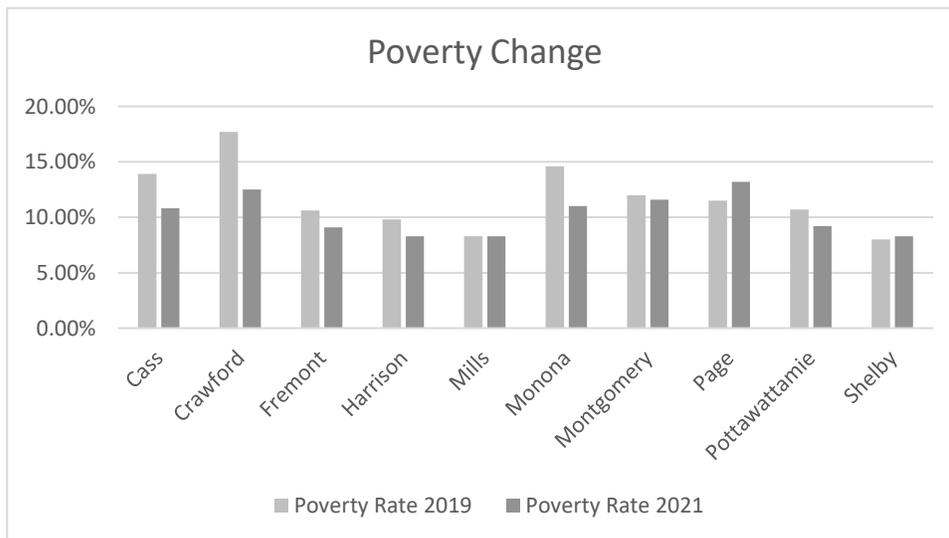
## 2. Economic Activity

### a. Poverty Rate Change

COUNTY	POVERTY RATE 2019	POVERTY RATE 2021
CASS	13.9%	10.8%
CRAWFORD	17.7%	12.5%
FREMONT	10.6%	9.1%
HARRISON	9.8%	8.3%
MILLS	8.3%	8.3%
MONONA	14.6%	11.0%
MONTGOMERY	12.0%	11.6%
PAGE	11.5%	13.2%
POTTAWATTAMIE	10.7%	9.2%
SHELBY	8.0%	8.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### b. Poverty Rate Change for Children Under the Age of 5



Source: U.S. Census Bureau & CAP Engagement Network

c. Number of Families Living in Poverty

COUNTIES	NUMBER OF FAMILIES BELOW 50% OF POVERTY LEVEL	NUMBER OF FAMILIES BETWEEN 50-74% OF POVERTY LEVEL	NUMBER OF FAMILIES BETWEEN 75-99% OF POVERTY LEVEL	NUMBER OF FAMILIES BETWEEN 100%-150% OF POVERTY LEVEL
CASS	126	117	182	350
CRAWFORD	227	119	118	443
FREMONT	55	62	22	184
HARRISON	71	114	70	248
MILLS	59	99	27	291
MONONA	54	49	36	196
MONTGOMERY	142	137	111	312
PAGE	115	123	120	441
POTTAWATTAMIE	878	677	806	1,702
SHELBY	61	82	49	250

Source: U.S. Census Bureau & Iowa State University Iowa Community Indicators Program

From 2019 to 2021, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, and Pottawattamie Counties have seen either a slight decrease or remained the same for the percent of children under the age of five living in poverty. Cass, Crawford, and Monona Counties have seen a larger decrease in the amount of children living in poverty. Page and Shelby Counties have seen slight increases in the amount of children living in poverty. These numbers are based on the Census Community Fact sheets and the American Community Survey Data.

3. Child Abuse and Neglect

a. Confirmed and Founded Cases of Child Neglect & Abuse

COUNTIES	CONFIRMED OR FOUNDED ABUSE TOTAL CHILDREN	NUMBER OF CHILDREN 5 OR YOUNGER WITH CONFIRMED OR FOUNDED ABUSE
CASS	36	25
CRAWFORD	43	23
FREMONT	17	13
HARRISON	43	27
MILLS	33	20
MONONA	15	6
MONTGOMERY	42	27
PAGE	38	25
POTTAWATTAMIE	322	240
SHELBY	43	22

Source: Iowa Department of Human Services; Assessed Reports of Child Neglect and Abuse, 2021

#### 4. Nutrition Information

##### a. Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch Programs and Receiving Food Assistance

COUNTY	% OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH PROGRAM (2019)	% OF INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING FOOD ASSISTANCE
CASS	48.7%	11.5%
CRAWFORD	68.1%	8.8%
FREMONT	45.2%	10.8%
HARRISON	39.6%	9.0%
MILLS	38.5%	7.2%
MONONA	54.1%	10.4%
MONTGOMERY	58.4%	14.3%
PAGE	48.9%	10.9%
POTTAWATTAMIE	40.7%	13.7%
SHELBY	39.8%	7.8%

Source: Iowa Kids Count Data Center, 2020

##### b. Number of Households Receiving SNAP

COUNTIES	TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVING SNAP
CASS	853
CRAWFORD	743
FREMONT	280
HARRISON	540
MILLS	436
MONONA	481
MONTGOMERY	652
PAGE	733
POTTAWATTAMIE	4,248
SHELBY	559

Source: Iowa Kids Count Data Center, 2020

On April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022, the Office of Head Start released an Information Memorandum that made children and families receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) categorically eligible for Head Start services. The above charts shows that Crawford County has the highest rate of eligibility for free and reduced lunches, while Montgomery has the largest percentage receiving SNAP. Working with families that are eligible for SNAP could be an opportunity for the program to recruit eligible children.

#### 5. Child Care Availability

a. The below chart is represented from the data posted in July 2021. The chart shows the availability of registered child care spaces and the amount of children in each county. This demonstrates the availability and access to high quality child care for children and families. A majority of the program's service area is considered to be a child care dessert, especially the rural areas.

COUNTY	TOTAL PROGRAMS LISTED WITH CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL	TOTAL REGISTERED CHILD CARE SPACES	TOTAL 0-5 POPULATION	% OF FAMILIES WHERE ALL PARENTS WORK AND THERE ARE CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 6	NUMBER OF CHILDREN WITHOUT A REGISTERED CHILD CARE SPOT
CASS	34	645	841	70%	196
CRAWFORD	23	461	1,341	71%	880
FREMONT	11	197	478	69%	281
HARRISON	16	495	988	87%	493
MILLS	15	453	983	70%	530
MONONA	14	328	597	79%	269
MONTGOMERY	16	472	711	66%	239
PAGE	18	713	897	71%	184
POTTAWATTAMIE	157	5,333	7,034	77%	1,701
SHELBY	21	450	728	87%	278

Source: Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral County Data Sheets, 2021

b. Percent of Requests for Child Care by Age

COUNTY	INFANT (0-12 MONTHS)	TODDLER (13-23 MONTHS)	TWO YEAR OLDS	THREE & FOUR YEAR OLDS
CASS	24%	19%	19%	11%
CRAWFORD	30%	20%	10%	20%
FREMONT	No data	No data	No data	No data
HARRISON	No data	11%	No data	34%
MILLS	34%	11%	33%	11%
MONONA	13%	29%	No data	29%
MONTGOMERY	50%	No data	No data	50%
PAGE	40%	No data	10%	10%
POTTAWATTAMIE	21%	19%	11%	23%
SHELBY	30%	20%	5%	30%

Source: Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral County Data Sheets, 2021

A majority of the service area is in a child care dessert. As you see in the above chart, there are large numbers of children in each county that do not have access to a licensed child care slot based on the population. With children not having access to high quality Early Childhood Care, families are unable to work or attend school. Chart b, also shows the ages being requested for services. Montgomery and Page Counties have a large percentage needing infant care. There has been a steady increase of child care needs for the age group 0-24 months over the past 10 years.

## 6. Access to Preschool (ages 3 and 4) by County

Majority of the school districts in the 10-county service area service a majority of the four-year-olds. Three-year-old programs are non-existent or have a cost associated, unless the child is on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

The Districts that our Head Start program currently partners with are Harlan, Essex, Red Oak, Clarinda, West Monona, Council Bluffs, and Hamburg. Head Start is able to assist the districts in providing full day preschool programming as well as some three year old services. Two of the districts (Council Bluffs and Red Oak) blend Head Start, Shared Vision, and State-Wide Voluntary Preschool funding to provide more children with full day programming in a fully integrated setting.

## 8. Adult Education and Workforce

<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>PERCENT OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE OF PERSONS AGE 25+</b>	<b>PERCENT OF BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER OF PERSONS AGE 25+</b>	<b>MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>
<b>CASS</b>	88.9%	23.0%	\$52,005
<b>CRAWFORD</b>	81.8%	15.1%	\$54,849
<b>FREMONT</b>	94.0%	18.8%	\$59,688
<b>HARRISON</b>	92.7%	19.1%	\$64,154
<b>MILLS</b>	93.6%	26.0%	\$75,137
<b>MONONA</b>	92.5%	15.7%	\$51,866
<b>MONTGOMERY</b>	91.8%	19.8%	\$55,761
<b>PAGE</b>	92.6%	20.3%	\$51,196
<b>POTTAWATTAMIE</b>	89.7%	21.9%	\$59,901
<b>SHELBY</b>	91.7%	21.1%	\$60,139
<b>STATE OF IOWA</b>	92.5%	29.3%	\$61,836

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau & CAP Engagement Network*

The population of adults 25 years of age and older whom do not possess a High Diploma in Cass and Crawford are significantly lower than the remainder of the counties, however they also have the highest percentage of persons who have a Bachelor's degree or higher. Compared to the State of Iowa, at 29.3%, the entire service area is lower than the states average for persons with a Bachelor's Degree or higher. It is also noted that there are no four-year College Universities in the service territory, however, remote learning opportunities through various schools are increasing. The median household income for the entire service territory is between \$51,196 (Page) and \$75,137 (Mills).

## 9. Home Based Visitation Programs

West Central Community Action Early Head Start serves children and families in five of the ten counties within the service area with a Home Based program option for prenatal mothers through age three. Currently, the following home based visitation programs are available in our service area:

Cass: WCCA Early Head Start, Parents as Teachers (PAT), HCCMS Family Health 1<sup>st</sup> Five Program, Parent Partners, Pediatric Integrated Health Program, Cass County Health, Human, and Veteran Services

Crawford: Parent Partners, Family STEPS to Success, 1<sup>st</sup> Five

Fremont: WCCA Early Head Start, Parent Partners, Growing Strong Families

Harrison: Parent Partners, Harrison County Home Health, Learning for Life

Mills: WCCA Early Head Start, Parent Partners, Parents as Teachers (PAT), Maternal Child Health

Monona: Parent Partners, Learning for Life

Montgomery: WCCA Early Head Start, Parent Partners, Parents as Teachers (PAT)

Page: WCCA Early Head Start, Parent Partners, Growing Strong Families

Pottawattamie: Family Inc, Parent Partners

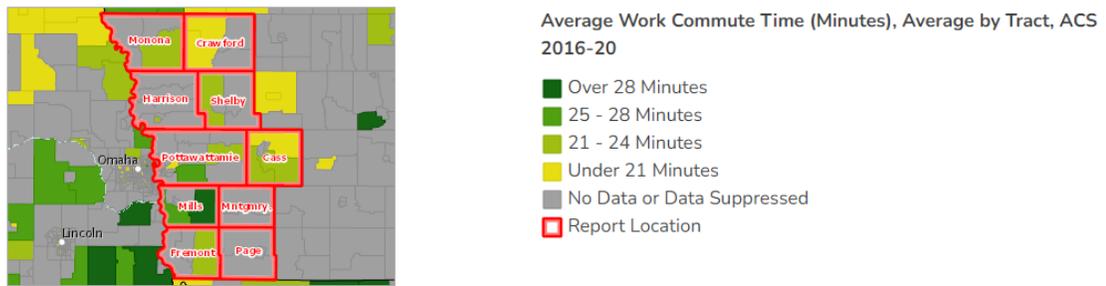
Shelby: Pediatric Integrated Health Program, Parent Partners, Learning for Life

As you can see, there are a variety of home based visitation programs for prenatal mothers and young children in the service area. All of these programs do have a variety of eligibility criteria. WCCA Early Head Start works with Thriving Alliance to ensure that all families within the service area are serviced with the program that best meets the family and child’s needs.

## 10. Transportation

Report Area	Workers that Commute Age 16 and Up	Travel Time in Minutes (Percent of Workers) Less than 10	Travel Time in Minutes (Percent of Workers) 10 to 30	Travel Time in Minutes (Percent of Workers) 30 to 60	Travel Time in Minutes (Percent of Workers) More than 60	Average Commute Time (mins)
Report Location	94,123	26.07	48.25	20.69	5.00	6.22
Cass County, IA	5,919	46.36	37.02	8.40	8.23	No data
Crawford County, IA	7,377	32.17	51.53	11.25	5.06	17.11
Fremont County, IA	3,130	30.70	42.78	20.45	6.07	20.30
Harrison County, IA	6,842	24.45	27.07	37.84	10.64	27.90
Mills County, IA	6,946	22.01	39.81	34.48	3.70	23.60
Monona County, IA	3,709	32.73	39.69	21.16	6.42	No data
Montgomery County, IA	4,637	39.47	36.94	15.14	8.45	19.69
Page County, IA	6,682	48.58	35.29	12.05	4.09	No data
Pottawattamie County, IA	43,586	15.52	59.45	21.66	3.37	No data
Shelby County, IA	5,295	41.61	37.92	14.88	5.59	No data
Iowa	1,482,217	23.68	55.42	17.25	3.65	19.48
United States	142,512,559	12.30	49.26	29.19	9.25	26.93

Source: CAP Engagement Network



Source: CAP Engagement Network

As you can see in the above chart and graph, the amount of travel/commute time in the service area varies greatly throughout the ten county territory. Currently, West Central Community Action Head Start provides transportation in Cass, Crawford, Mills, Montgomery, and Shelby counties through a contracted transportation service, Southwest Iowa Transit Agency, SWITA. The program has found it more and more challenging each year to offer transportation as SWITA is struggling to staff drivers.

## 11. Opportunities

### a. Building Partnerships

Continue working to collaborate with Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs in additional locations. With the continued partnerships, the program can continue to assist Public School Districts in providing a full day program to preschoolers. This could also be helpful in expanding 3 year old preschools in some communities.

The program should continue partnership expansion in Mills and Harrison Counties. Mills County, Glenwood classroom, has struggled to be staffed due to the community being a “commuter” community and a lot of the potential employees travel to the more urban areas for higher paying jobs. Harrison County has ample opportunities to partner to ensure the neediest children and families are being served.

West Central Community Action Head Start would like to continue being a part of conversations with school districts to assess their needs and find how the two entities can work together to best serve children, families, and communities. There are also ample opportunities to continue to work on blended funded models with Statewide Voluntary Preschool, Shared Visions, and Head Start.

### b. Early Head Start Expansion

Continue to monitor the need for services to children age zero to three, specifically in a center-based setting. Child care is a significant area of opportunity for West Central Community Action Early Head Start. The program has the infrastructure available to implement high-quality early childhood programs. The program is currently relocating an Early Head Start Center Based program to Shelby County. Based upon the data in other communities, an opportunity exists to continue to explore opportunities to add Early Head Start Center Based programming, work with area child care centers as partners, or to consider conversion of slots from Head Start to Early

Head Start center based to meet this need within the communities being served. There is the possibility for expanding infant and toddler care in Cass, Harrison, and Montgomery Counties especially.

c. Community Availability

The Head Start program should continue to monitor programs that are currently available in each community and assess the need for the program. Classrooms are currently in each county, but the program should assess to ensure it is the location that would most benefit and is accessible to smaller, more rural communities. This may entail providing more transportation through partnerships. The location of the center is essential, but must also meet Head Start and Department of Human Services (DHS) guidelines.

d. Resources for Families

The program should find ways to get parents to attend and engage in parenting curriculum, meetings, and classes within the service area. The number of founded and confirmed child abuse cases has seen an increase. The program will find ways to support families and assist in reversing this trend. This may include partnerships with other local programs, offering trainings, and encourage parenting curriculum and meetings attendance.

e. Cultural Competence

Ensure WCCA's Head Start program is culturally aware and cognizant of the diverse population in the service area. The increasing diversity should be met with training and knowledge so families can be served in their home language, as possible, and so their customs and culture are respected. All children and families cultures need to be represented and respected in the classrooms, at socializations, and parent meetings.