Fiscal Year 2021

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared by:

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Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Council

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Iowa Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program (FaDSS)

Strengthening Iowa's families. Strengthening Iowa's Economy.

INTRODUCTION

Iowa's Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program (FaDSS) was created by the 1988 General Assembly to assist families receiving Family Investment Program (FIP) with significant or multiple barriers to reach self-sufficiency. FaDSS provides services that promote, empower, and nurture families toward economic self-sufficiency and family stability.

Participation in FaDSS is a voluntary option for families receiving FIP benefits. Eligible families are referred to the program primarily by Iowa Workforce Development's PROMISE JOBS program. Referrals to FaDSS also originate with the Department of Human Services, other social service providers, or as self-referrals. The program is available in all 99 Iowa counties through a network of 17 community action and non-profit social services agencies.

Utilizing a strength-based approach, the program is delivered to families through home visits by certified Family Development Specialists. Core services include assessment and screening, family-driven goal setting, referrals to community resources and supports, and advocacy and self-empowerment.

FaDSS ADMINISTRATION

The FaDSS program is administered by the Iowa Department of Human Rights, Division of Community Action Agencies via a memorandum of understanding with the Iowa Department of Human Services. The program is funded with a combination of federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and state general fund appropriations.

The Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Council, established to study, fund, and evaluate programs which provide developmental services to families at risk of long-term welfare dependency, is tasked with issuing a grant renewal application, reviewing proposals, and approving funding decisions every three years.

FaDSS Overview

Families that participate in FaDSS receive in-home services that support:

- ✓ Increased employment
- ✓ Increased income
- ✓ Decreased Family Investment Program (FIP) payments
- ✓ Achievement of educational goals
- ✓ Increased access to services and treatment for identified domestic violence
- ✓ Increased access to services and treatment for identified mental health concerns
- ✓ Increased access to treatment for identified substance abuse

Services are tailored to each family, using identified strengths to address barriers to self-sufficiency through six core program components:

1) Assessment
2) Goal Setting
3) Home Visiting
4) Referrals and Collaboration
5) Support
6) Advocacy and Self-Empowerment

HOW SERVICES ARE PROVIDED

The FaDSS program is provided to families in partnership with 17 community action and non-profit social service agencies. The program employs approximately 80 home visitors; over 90% of all FaDSS staff (home visitors and supervisors) have achieved at least a Bachelor's degree. All specialists complete an eight-day Family Development Certification program with the University of Iowa's National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice. All FaDSS staff are mandatory child abuse reporters and are required to complete criminal and child abuse background checks at hire and every two years.

Home visits serve as the foundation for all FaDSS services. The family development specialist with input from the family and supervisor determine the level of services the family will receive. Families are provided a minimum of two home visits and one additional contact per month during the first three months and at least one home visit and two additional contacts per month after that. If the family needs are determined to be greater than the minimum, the level of home visits and contacts will be adjusted. Families may receive FaDSS services while receiving FIP benefits and for seven months post-FIP.

NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED

At any point in time, the FaDSS program may serve 1,397 families. In fiscal year 2021, 2,198 families received services. 888 families completed the program during the reporting period, including 1,758 children (under the age of 18). Most families (83%) are referred for FaDSS services by the PROMISE JOBS program.

FAMILY WAGES AND FIP SAVINGS

During FY 2021, FaDSS families earned total **wages of $6,623,924** resulting in a **FIP savings of $975,610.**

Continuous Quality Improvement

The FaDSS program is committed to providing high-quality, outcomes-focused services for families. To that end, program leadership meet each quarter to review performance on select contract measures and family outcomes with the goal of identifying 1) areas where the program is achieving desired results and 2) opportunities to implement responsive changes to practice to ensure the program is on track to meet year-end targets.

EVALUATION METHODLOGY

The Iowa Department of Human Rights, in partnership with the FaDSS grantees, gathers a wealth of data related to program performance and self-sufficiency outcomes for families. Information about participants is collected by Family Development Specialists using the Self-Sufficiency Matrix, a tool that measures changes in 14 life domains. Demographic characteristics and information about the specific activities and services completed with families are also gathered. Together, this information allows the FaDSS program to:

- Understand family characteristics, including assets and barriers to self-sufficiency;
- Assess changes in family self-sufficiency and stability domains over the course of enrollment;
- Build upon program success and consider areas for further focus.

A NOTE ON THE DATA PRESENTED

In March of 2020, the State of Iowa declared an emergency public health disaster due to COVID-19. As a result, the FaDSS program implemented a series of rapid-response adjustments to ensure the safety of all staff and families served, including a requirement that programs provide virtual home visits only and the extension of transition services for up to 60 days after the end of the emergency declaration. These changes are expected to impact performance on contract measures over the next several years.

PROGRAM EQUITY & COVID-19 RECOVERY

At the direction of the FaDSS Council, the program began concerted efforts to apply an equity lens to service provision with the formation of a FaDSS Equity Committee. All policies and practices are reviewed with an equity lens and focused efforts to engage FaDSS workers in ongoing discussions and learning are being implemented statewide.

As we continue to realize the impacts of COVID-19 on all Iowans, specific attention is being drawn to the disproportionate impact for low-income, marginalized and other under-served communities. This creates the opportunity to center the voices of families in addressing equitable economic recovery strategies.

FaDSS MATHEMATICA EVALUATION

The Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) program continues its participation in a national evaluation of family-focused coaching strategies designed to foster family economic self-sufficiency. The three-year evaluation is sponsored by the Office of Program Research and Evaluation at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and conducted by Mathematica Policy Research. The study is utilizing random assignment to treatment and control groups in a longitudinal study to measure the impact of FaDSS services.

The enrollment phase is completed, and 863 families are enrolled in the treatment and control groups. Local sites are continuing to submit service and program data into the Mathematica reporting system for families enrolled in the evaluation. Mathematica is now conducting follow-up surveys with program participants to assess the program model implementation. A program impact report will follow.

Fiscal Year 2021 – Selected Outcomes

Increased Employment

- In FY 2021, 13% of FaDSS households had at least one adult employed at program entry. At exit, 45% of households had at least one adult employed.
- 589 families were involved in activities designed to increase work preparedness skills. These activities, provided by FaDSS, include resume writing, mock interviews, and assistance with completing job applications.

Increased Income

- In FY 2021, families that were employed at exit had an average monthly family income of $1,439, an increase of $1,206.

Decreased Family Investment Program (FIP) Payments

- At entry, families averaged $379 in monthly FIP payments. At exit, the average FIP payment for families was $139, a decrease of $239.

Achievement of Educational Goals

- 121 adults that exited the FaDSS program in FY 2021 achieved a change in their education status.
  - 28 families completed a GED/HS Diploma
  - 41 families completed some college courses
  - 31 families completed a certification program
  - 7 families completed an Associate's Degree
  - 5 famiies completed a Bachelor's Degree

Increased Access to Services and Treatment - Domestic Violence

- In FY 2021, 230 FaDSS families that exited the program had experienced domestic violence as identified through self-disclosure or positive screening.
- 89% of families who screened positive accessed necessary and appropriate assistance. The FaDSS program assisted 61% of families with accessing domestic violence assistance.

Increased Access to Services and Treatment - Mental Health

- In FY 2021, 438 adults that exited the program had a substantiated mental health issue.
- 91% of those adults with a mental health barrier accessed treatment. The FaDSS program assisted 87% of adults with gaining access to treatment.

Increased Access to Treatment - Substance Abuse

- In FY 2021, 148 adults that exited the program had a substantiated substance abuse issue.
- 86% of those adults with a substance abuse barrier accessed treatment. The FaDSS program assisted 73% with gaining access to treatment.

The Self-Sufficiency Matrix

Families participating in the FaDSS program often face multiple barriers to self-sufficiency. Through an in-depth assessment process (including both formal and informal assessment), Family Development Specialists work with families to identify areas of strength that are then used to address barriers. The Self-Sufficiency Matrix provides a mechanism for program staff to measure changes in a family's situation from entry (within 60 days of enrollment) to program exit. The Self-Sufficiency Matrix measures family stability across 14 life domains. Answering a series of questions for each family domain, Family Development Specialists rate stability on a scale of 1 through 5 based on his/her observation and assessment.

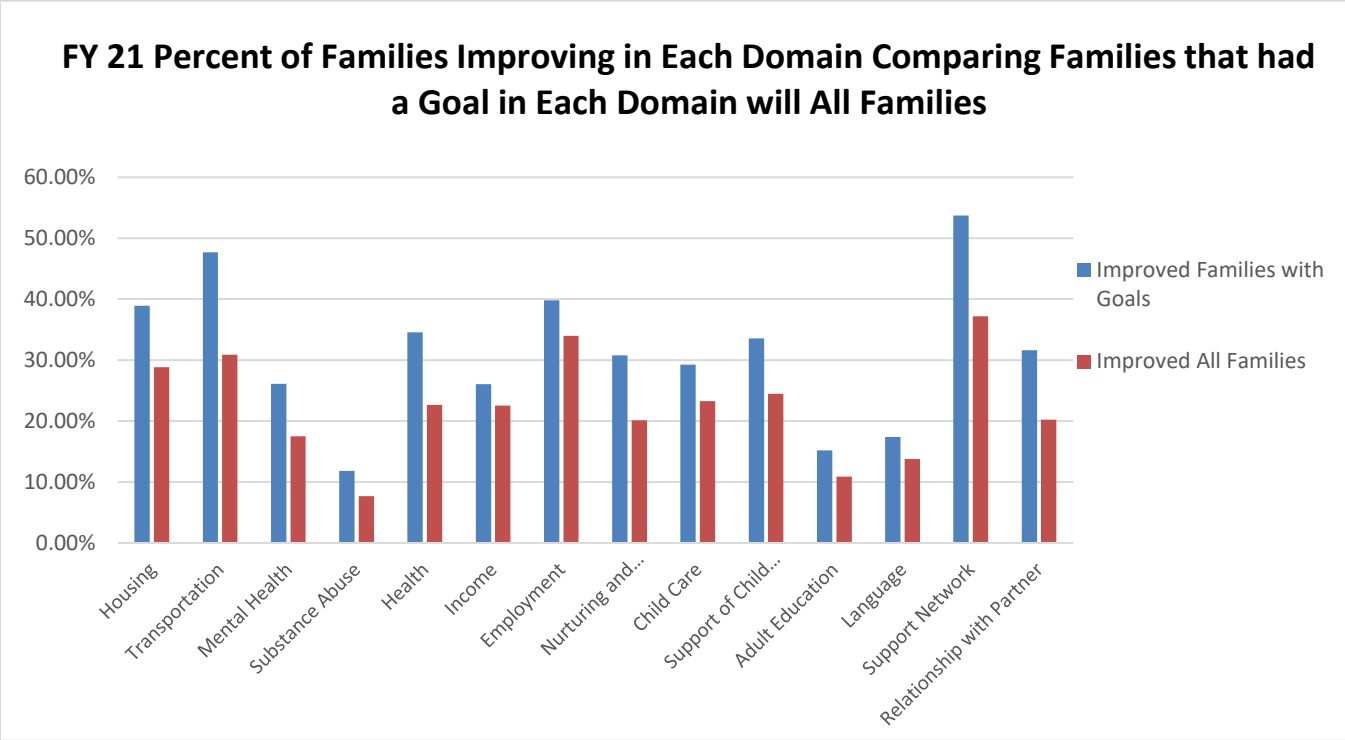
Self-Sufficiency Matrix – Domains

1. Housing	8. Parenting, Nurturing and Attachment
2. Transportation	9. Child Care
3. Mental Health	10. Support of Child Development
4. Substance Abuse	11. Adult Education
5. Health	12. Language
6. Income	13. Support Network
7. Employment	14. Relationship with Partner

Self-Sufficiency Matrix - Stability Scale

SELF-SUFFICIENCY MATRIX RESULTS

By comparing scores for each family domain at entry and at exit, we can gain insight into the cumulative impact of FaDSS services on self-sufficiency and stability measures. For the current reporting period, 894 families had both entry and exit scores.



A key component of FaDSS is helping families learn to set goals to meet the needs of their families. The chart above shows the difference between the improvements of families in each domain compared to those who established goals within each domain. Below are examples of how goal setting has made marked improvement in families' lives.

Transportation

Many families struggle to access reliable transportation for such things as work and appointments. Overall, thirty-one percent of families in FaDSS improved their transportation. Forty-eight percent of families improved in the area of transportation when goals were established. Goals to help meet their transportation needs improved.

Support Network

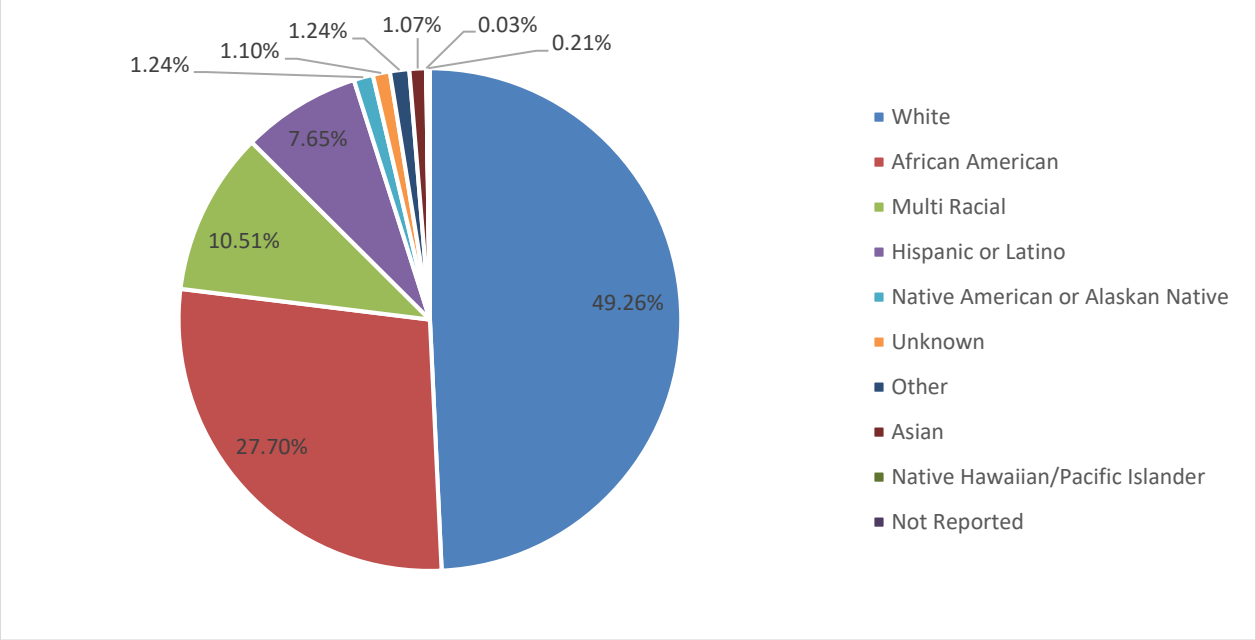
FaDSS assists families in identifying support networks. Thirty-seven percent of all families improved their support networks while in FaDSS in FY 2021. Fifty-four percent of families who established a formal goal for support networks improved.

Fiscal Year 2021 – Selected Demographics

CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES SERVED

Demographic information about FaDSS participants is collected at the family (rather than individual) level, though the program often narrows in on characteristics of the designated "Head of Household" to identify and understand trends related to family structure and progress toward self-sufficiency. Overall, 90% of families are headed by a female; 51% are headed by an individual aged 24-34. The chart below provides insight into the racial and ethnic composition of FaDSS families. Overall, families of color are disproportionately represented in the FaDSS program when compared to Iowa's general population, but reflective of the disproportionate representation of families of color in the FIP program.

Race and ethnicity of family heads of household



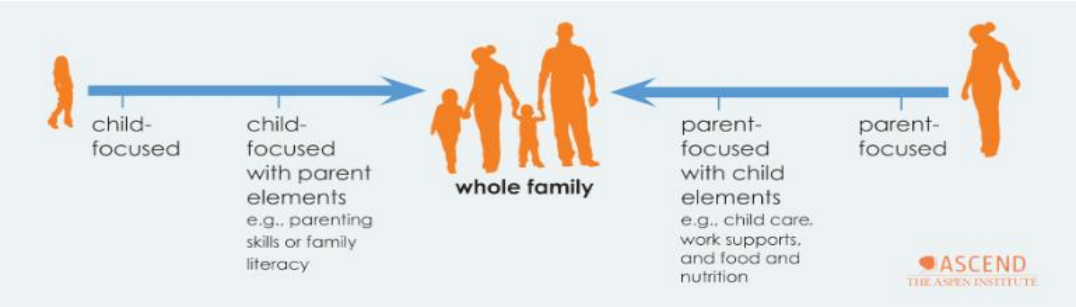
Educational levels, heads of household

Head of Household Education Level at Enrollment	Individuals	Percent
Less than High School	236	26%
High School Diploma / HI Set	343	39%
Some College	186	21%
Trade/vocational Training	60	7%
Two year college degree (Associate)	45	5%
Four year college degree (Bachelor)	20	2%
Master degree or above	1	<1%
TOTAL	**888**	**100%***

*Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Two-Generation Initiative

A Two-Generation approach seeks to ensure that programs and policies are designed and implemented with a mindset that understands the intersecting needs of parents and their children. Applying a "2-Gen lens" facilitates the strategic alignment of existing systems and services, allowing for a whole family approach to moving families out of poverty. This approach does not require development of new programs or services, but it does require a shift in thinking about how existing services and programs are provided.



Iowa's 2-Gen Vision

Iowa continues its TANF 2-Gen initiative to improve the lives of families in poverty who are enrolled in the Family Investment Program (FIP), specifically families participating in the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) Program and PROMISE JOBS (PJ).

Iowa seeks to implement promising 2-Gen strategies, policies, and practices to help break the cycle of poverty and improve the overall well-being for Iowa families. To this end, the Steering Committee and Core Team developed a plan that included gathering input and feedback from a variety of stakeholders. This information is formulated into strategies and corresponding outcomes to be tested as part of a pilot project.

Pilot Development

In Fiscal Year 21, FaDSS continued implementing 2-Gen strategies and activities in five pilot sites. The pilot sites are Lutheran Services in Iowa, Mid-Iowa Community Action, Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation, Operation Threshold and North Iowa Community Action Organization.

The 2-Gen pilot incorporates strategies for foundational training on 2-Gen concepts and practices, family leadership development, and system collaboration and data sharing. Pilot sites are identifying target populations, service strategies, and outcome measures. Sites will continue to place emphasis on the input of families, frontline staff, and other stakeholders throughout the timeframe of the pilot and beyond.

2-Gen Pilot Outcomes

More information on available data and outcomes measures for families served in the 2-Gen pilot site programs can be found in summary reports posted on the FaDSS website.

Fiscal Year 2021 Capacity and Funding

During FY 2021, FaDSS was funded with an appropriation of $6,192,834 in TANF and state general funds. In addition, other supports of $1,466,461 were provided to supplement FaDSS services.

Grantee	Family Capacity	Total Grant	Other Support	Total FaDSS
Community Action Agency of Siouxland	41	$173,969	$2,383	$176,352
Community Action of Eastern Iowa	98	$411,034	$0	$411,034
Community Action of SE Iowa	82	$345,663	$10,735	$356,398
Four Oaks	206	$864,812	$18,015	$882,827
Lutheran Services of Iowa	37	$154,611	$0	$154,611
MATURA Action Corporation	28	$118,593	$0	$118,593
Mid Iowa Community Action	119	$499,301	$565	$499,866
Mid-Sioux Opportunity	33	$138,979	$237	$139,216
Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation	67	$283,007	$	$283,007
North Iowa Community Action Organization	66	$275,407	$0	$275,407
Operation Threshold	73	$305,264	$0	$305,264
Polk Family Enrichment Center	180	$755,963	$1,410,170	$2,166,133
South Central Iowa Community Action Program	46	$193,783	$500	$194,283
Sieda Community Action	94	$394,430	$0	$394,430
Upper Des Moines Opportunity	68	$287,484	$10,833	$298,317
West Central Community Action	98	$412,170	$11,883	$424,053
Youth and Shelter Services	61	$256,074	$1,140	$257,214
Total	**1397**	**$5,870,544**	**$1,466,461**	**$7,337,005**
DHR Admin @5%	-	$309,642	-	-
Technology	-	$ 12,649	-	-
Total Appropriations	-	**$6,192,834**	-	-

Selected program features, FY2021

Staffing
FaDSS grantees employed 79 FaDSS specialists .

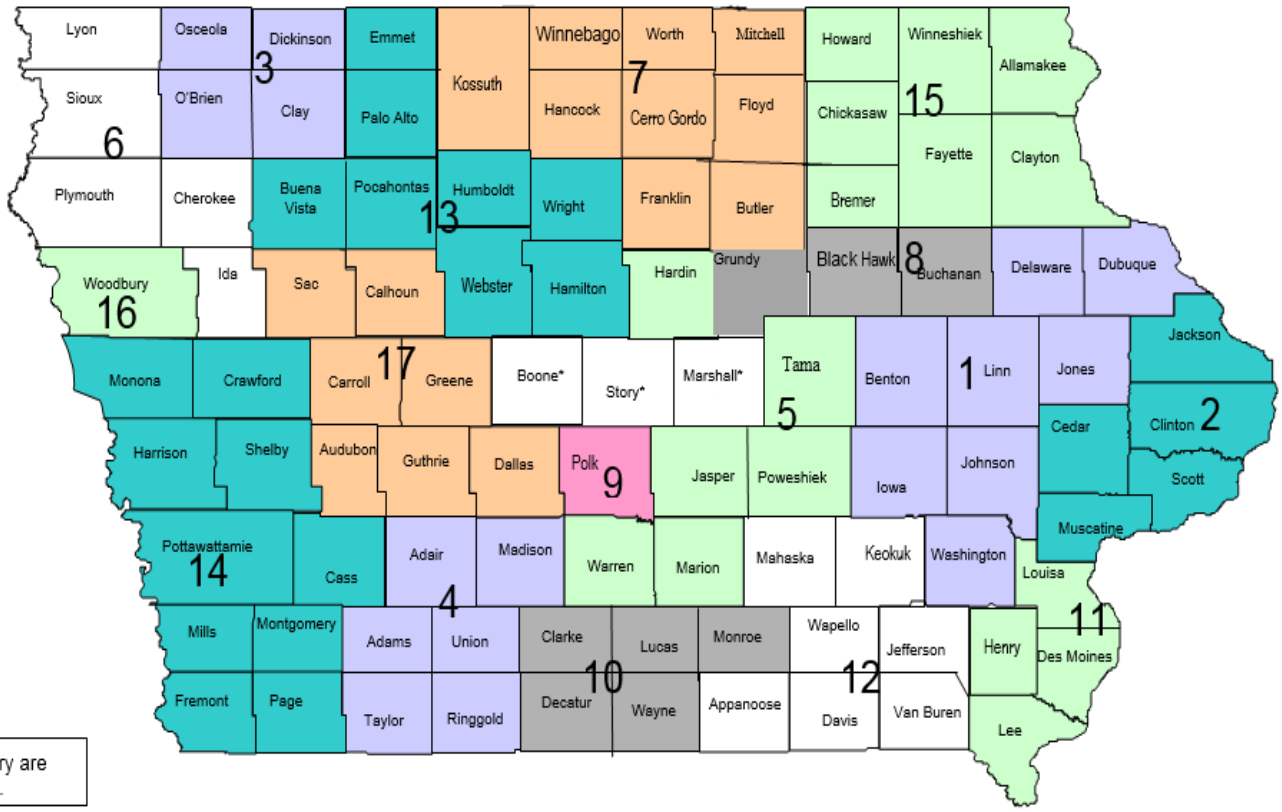
Education
Over 90% of specialists and supervisors have post secondary degrees.

Training
FaDSS staff are required to complete Family Development Certification and 10 hours of additional training each year.

Safety
FaDSS staff are mandatory child abuse reporters. Staff are required to complete criminal and child abuse background checks at hire and every two years.

FaDSS Grantee Service Areas

1. Four Oaks
2. Community Action of Eastern Iowa
3. Lutheran Service in Iowa
4. MATURA Action Corp.
5. Mid-Iowa Community Action
6. Mid-Sioux Opportunity
7. North Iowa Community Action Org.
8. Operation Threshold
9. Polk County Family Enrichment Center
10. South Central Iowa Community Action Program
11. Southeast Iowa Community Action Org.
12. Southern Iowa Economic Development Association
13. Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc.
14. West Central Community Action
15. Northeast Iowa Community Action Corp.
16. Community Action of Siouxland
17. Youth and Shelter Services, Inc.



•Boone, Marshall and Story are served bv YSS and MICA.

FaDSS Grantee Service Areas

Service Area #	FaDSS Grantees	Service Area #	FaDSS Grantees
1	Four Oaks Family and Children's Services Dubuque- Julie Weber– 563-557-3100 QCJweber@fouroaks.org or Cedar Rapids-Amber Mercil amercil@fouroaks.org 319-247-4834	10	South Central Iowa Community Action Program Jamie Swearingin 641-3441045 jswearingin@scicap.org
2	Community Action of Eastern Iowa Lisa Raya 563-324-3236 ext. 1217 lraya@caeiowa.org	11	Community Action of Southeast Iowa Joy Szewczyk 319-753-0193 joy.szewczyk@caofseia.org
3	Lutheran Services in Iowa Mallory Berkenpas 712-255-2505 Mallory.berkenpas@lsiowa.org	12	Southern Iowa Economic Development Association Deb Shubat 641-814-2759 dshubat@sieda.org
4	MATURA Action Corp. Katie Christensen 641-782-8431 kchristensen@maturaact.org	13	Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc. Alisa Schlief 515-576-7774 aschlief@udmo.com
5	Mid-Iowa Community Action Mindy Clayton 641-236-3923 Mindy.Clayton@micaonline.org	14	West Central Community Action Mindy Williamson 712-304-3358 mwilliamson@westcca.org
6	Mid-Sioux Opportunity Laura Benson 712-786-3483 lbenson@midsioux.org	15	Northeast Iowa Community Action Corp. Nichole Griese 563-419-8243 ngriese@neicac.org
7	North Iowa Community Action Organization Lori Brandt 641.423.7766 lbrandt@nicao-online.org	16	Community Action Agency of Siouxland Jessi Bergin 712-274-1610 jbergin@caasiouxland.org
8	Operation Threshold Mindy Dolan 319-291-2065 MDolan@operationthreshold.org	17	Youth and Shelter Services, Inc. Peg Ragner 515-233-3141 x4405 PRagner@yss.org
9	Polk County Family Enrichment Center Doug Stodgel 515-286-3406 doug.stodgel@polkcountyiowa.gov		

FaDSS Success Stories

Four Oaks

Submitted by Elizabeth McClain Lenz, FaDSS Specialist

I met "Lori" in January 2017 when she moved to Dubuque and enrolled at NICC to obtain her HiSet. Lori had a young daughter. She shared several challenges she had in her life, including housing, health, legal, child care, and learning disability. PROMISE JOBS (PJ) also referred Lori to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation (IVRS) at the same time the referral was made to FaDSS. Regular team meetings were held with PJ, IVRS, FaDSS and Lori to support Lori's goals. She was able to find stable housing and became employed as she continued to attend HiSet classes. When she had car problems, she was able to use PJ Family Self-Sufficiency Grant (FSSG) funds for repairs so she could continue to work. FSSG funds also helped with rent and utility bill. Lori's family grew to include another daughter. Lori received child care assistance through PROMISE JOBS so she could continue to work and attend school. No matter what challenges arose; Lori persevered and earned her HiSet in June 2019. Lori continued her goal of education by completing Certified Nurse's Aide (CAN) training in September 2019 and started college, while continuing to work. Plans changed and eventually Lori started working more hours, using her CNA credentials and skills. Her FaDSS specialist, Beth, shared these insights: "Lori has learned to navigate life in such a healthier way since we met. She is employed and really enjoys her job. Lori has gained money management skills that help her to stay on top of her bills. Through the help of her team with PJ, IVRS and FADSS, Lori was able to face her fears while raising two busy girls. Lori now has the confidence to create a better life for her family. I believe Lori has only just begun!"

Community Action of Southeast Iowa

Submitted by Gale Wessels, FaDSS Family Participant

I would like to thank all the personnel in the FaDSS program at Community Action of Southeast Iowa in Mt. Pleasant. They have helped me through many difficult times as a single father on SSI. My FaDSS Specialist is Maci Hirschy, a wonderful, compassionate and caring individual. Masi understands my conditions and has taken calls from me when I am in the midst of a massive panic attack and has been able to get me through those times without me having to call 9-1-1 as I have done in the past. She has shown me that there are people out there who care, and that means so much to me.

I cannot even count the number of times Masi has helped me get connected with resources I have needed including Information on accessing mental health services, food banks and forms I need to fill out. If Masi had not connected me with the LIHEAP program, I would not have been able to pay my utility bill to keep my lights and heat on.

Masi helped me and my eight-year-old daughter set goals. One of my daughter's goals involved her health. Masi sent us information including a BMI chart and nutrition information. We hung the charts where we could see them in our kitchen and they have helped greatly.

Another goal was to stay with my mental health providers and follow up with them if I have any problems. Most recently, Masi has helped me and my daughter get new mattresses as the ones we have now are so old and worn we basically are sleeping on the springs. I do not know how she or FaDSS are able to do this but is it something I am so grateful and thankful for I really cannot express it in words. All of this has made my life and my daughter's life so many degrees better. It helps our mental health our physical health and I cannot thank Maci and the FaDSS program enough for helping to make our lives so much more positive.

Polk County Family Enrichment Center

Submitted by Christy Evans, FaDSS Specialist

My participant is a refugee from South Sudan. She has been in the United States since 2006. When she enrolled in the FaDSS Program, she had just lost her job at a meat packing plant due to a work related injury. She had been receiving unemployment, but had exhausted her benefits. Although she spoke English very well, she had difficulty with reading and writing. Many of our home visits have consisted of assisting her in going through her mail and completing paperwork. During her enrollment in FaDSS, she enrolled in ESL classes and Adult Literacy classes through Drake University.

She wanted to find employment, but had difficulty due to issues with her arm/hand and also not being able to read and write English well. She often came to my office so that I could assist her in job applications on-line. She has secured employment in housekeeping at a local hospital, where she works 30 hours per week. She hopes to move into a full time position once it becomes available. She is no longer receiving FIP. She has four daughters, the oldest of whom is in college and is on the basketball team. All four of her children are doing well in school.