



Mahaska Wapello

COMMUNITY PLAN

2020-2024

OUR VISION FOR IOWA'S CHILDREN:



The Mahaska Wapello Early Childhood Iowa Community Plan is a document of the Mahaska Wapello Early Childhood Iowa Area Board. Trend data and content updates are completed annually, reviewed by the board, and included in the state annual report.

Mahaska Wapello Early Childhood Iowa

Board Chair: Nicholas T. Maxwell

Area Director: Pat McReynolds

PO Box 335

Richland, IA 52585

Phone: 641-451-5437

Email: patmcreynolds318@gmail.com

Website: www.mweci.biz

The Mahaska Wapello ECI Community Plan is implemented through the collaborative work of agencies, organizations, and individuals serving children and families in the area. The MWECI Advisory Committee efforts are open to anyone with an interest in early childhood care & education, health and human services. The following agencies are members of the local area early childhood system and provided direct input into the planning process throughout each fiscal year.

- Four Oaks
- Sieda Community Action
- Orchard Place / Child Care Resource & Referral – Region IV
- Mahaska County Public Health
- Wapello County Public Health
- American Home Finding Association
- Southern Iowa Mental Health Center
- Child Health Specialty Clinics
- Children and Families of Iowa
- Mahaska & Wapello DHS
- Great Prairie AEA
- Mahaska Safe Kids
- Food Bank of Southern Iowa
- Heartland Pregnancy Center
- Hope House
- Iowa Workforce Development
- River Hills Community Health Center
- Tenco
- Wapello County Children’s Alliance
- ISU Extension & Outreach Mahaska County
- ISU Extension & Outreach Wapello County
- Mahaska / Wapello Decat & CPPC
- South Central Mental Health Region
- First Resources Corporation
- Mid Iowa Family Therapy Clinic
- Wapello County Family Treatment Court
- Indian Hills Community College
- William Penn University
- Family Crisis Center
- United Way of Wapello County
- United Way of Mahaska County
- Mahaska County YMCA
- Ottumwa YMCA
- CASA
- Legal Aid

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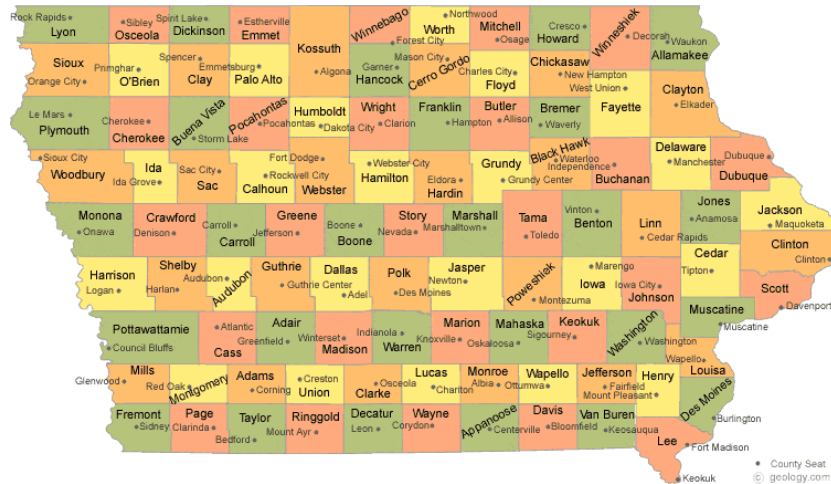
General Information

Brief History of Early Childhood Iowa

Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) was established in Iowa Code in 1998 as *Community Empowerment* to create a partnership between communities and state government committed to improving the well-being of children ages 0-5 and their families. Within every county in the state, ECI is engaged in efforts to unite agencies, organizations, business, and community partners to speak one message – **All children, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful.** The statewide system consists of three parts: State leadership board, State advisory structure, and the local structure. The local structure is comprised of citizen led boards dedicated to local, informed decision making. This community plan and the preceding needs assessment are required elements of a comprehensive early care, education, health and human services system working toward the desired results of: Healthy children, children ready to succeed in school, safe and supportive communities, secure and nurturing families, and secure and nurturing early learning environments.

Brief Identification of the ECIA

The Mahaska Wapello Early Childhood Iowa (MWECI) area consists of a two-county wide area.



Mahaska County is a non-metropolitan area located in South Central Iowa. The county is composed of ten incorporated communities and their surrounding rural areas. Its county seat is Oskaloosa, Iowa.

Wapello County is a non-metropolitan county located in South Central Iowa. The County is composed of seven incorporated communities and their surrounding rural areas. Its county seat is Ottumwa, Iowa.

The Mahaska Wapello Early Childhood Iowa Area serves children ages 0-5 years and their families who reside in the two-county area. Parents of children, birth through age 5 and pregnant mothers, living in the Mahaska Wapello Early Childhood Iowa Area, are eligible to participate in Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) funded services.

Number of eligible children:

- Children age 5 and under in Mahaska County – 1,787
 - Children age 5 and under in Wapello County – 2,601
- Total = 4,388

(Data-Woods and Poole Population Estimates as of Dec. 31,2018)

Pregnant Moms: Per 2018 information there were 271 live births in Mahaska County; Wapello County had 414. Included in these numbers were the teen births: Live births to teens for Mahaska County were 16 and Wapello County was 31. *Data – 2018 Vital Statistics of Iowa (Iowa Dept. of Public Health).*

Services Out of Area

The MWECI Board believes that state and federal funding providing services for children should follow the needs of the child, hence the MWECI Board will fund services for children in bordering counties once the need has been established and assurances have been provided that there is no supplanting of funds or duplication of funding. The Early Childhood Iowa Area Board has policies regarding

- families living in the area but requesting to receive services outside the area
- families living outside the area but requesting services within the Mahaska Wapello Early Childhood Area
- families living outside the area

(Please refer to Appendix A regarding “Services Out of Area Policy.”)

Purpose of the Community Plan

An effective community plan builds a strong foundation for community collaboration. The MWECI Board, in cooperation with community partners, other agencies, programs and services, use the community plan to move our local early care, health and education system forward by:

- Keeping our work focused on answering "is it good for children and families?"
- Recognizing that we all are a part of the local (and larger) system and working towards keeping everyone well informed and knowledgeable about relevant early care, health and education issues including utilization of current data, reports, legislation and local barriers.
- Establishing and building strong relationships between early care, health, and education community partners, agencies, programs and services through joint efforts in effective communication by sharing program information, making referrals, attending local community meetings, braiding and sharing of resources and working toward coordinated intake and case management.

The plan is a living, breathing, ever-changing document that reflects the needs and assets of our community. The MWECI Board invited the MWECI Advisory Committee and other local community providers including parents, to review and provide input into updating the plan. The process included:

1. Reviewing the Mission Statement, the Vision Statement, Core Values and Organizational Philosophy.
2. Reviewing the completed Child Care Marketing Analysis for Wapello County (FYE 2018).
3. Reviewing a variety of the most recent (2017 – 2019) community assessments available and data regarding the local two-county area.
4. Identifying barriers; identifying needs of families; and identifying community resources and gaps.
5. Determining service priorities that would best meet the needs of the children in the service area; and updating the local area indicators.
6. Completing a fiscal assessment for the area (FYE 2019).
7. Establishing a strategic plan.

Input was requested and received from our local community providers, service agencies both public and private. Information from parents and consumers was received through the Child Care Marketing Analysis (employer and employee surveys), the Preschool Development Grant Provider and Parent Focus Groups, and local program parental feedback/evaluation data.

As the MWECA board considers funding for services, the Community Plan is utilized in determining the needs of the community and to determine if the requested funding/services aligns with the needs of families with children zero through five. It is also used as a primary tool to educate the community on Early Childhood Iowa services and needs in our local area. The Community Plan will continue to be monitored and updated as necessary by the board.

The MWECI Board, community partners, other agencies, programs and services as leaders in our community are encouraged to use the plan to set priorities and guide decision making.

MWECI Vision Statement

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

A vision statement is one way to articulate and share an organization's beliefs, passion and shared commitment. The MWECI Board desired to recognize and show support of the state Early Childhood Iowa initiative by adopting their vision statement as their own in 2007. The Board noted that the vision statement was short and easily remembered. They also agreed that the vision statement generated enthusiasm, energy and excitement for a better tomorrow.

The MWECI Board desired to clarify the organization's ideology by developing and adopting a mission statement, core values and organizational philosophy in October 2012. More recently, this Fall of 2019, the MWECI Board slightly revised both the mission statement and organizational philosophy by eliminating any redundant wordage.

MWECI Mission Statement

"The Mahaska Wapello Early Childhood Iowa Board of Directors is committed to providing resources and support to local early care, health and education providers to increase their capacity to deliver comprehensive services to children 0-5 years and their families."

MWECI Core Values

- Respect for all children, families, early care, health and education providers and our community at large.
- Advocacy for all children and families.
- Encouragement of high-quality services.
- Diversity of ideas and people.
- Communication and openness to help us achieve our common goals.
- To promote partnerships and collaboration at all levels.
- To be fair and reasonable in our dealings.

MWECI Organizational Philosophy

"The early years in a child's life provide the foundation for their unique rate of growth in emotional, social, physical, and cognitive development. Mahaska Wapello Early Childhood Iowa provides resources and support to local area early care, health and education providers enabling them to use recognized best practices and evidence-based curricula and program models, resulting in quality comprehensive services for all children and their families and securing a solid foundation for school success and future as happy and productive citizens."

The MWECI Board proudly displays and circulates this important ideology so that all who partner with the board will have a full understanding of our organization's meaning. This ideology is also used to ensure that all stakeholders who receive funding utilize these objectives when determining their organization's goals and objectives for short- and long-term planning.

Brief Snapshot: Geographic/Demographic Profile

Mahaska County is a non-metropolitan area located in South Central Iowa. The county is composed of ten incorporated communities (Barnes City, New Sharon, Leighton, Beacon, Oskaloosa, University Park, Keomah Village, Rose Hill, Fremont, and Eddyville) and their surrounding rural areas. Its county seat is Oskaloosa, Iowa. Community School Districts located in Mahaska County are: North Mahaska CSD, Oskaloosa CSD, and Eddyville/Blakesburg/Fremont CSD. Chief Mahaska was a Chief of the Fox and Sauk Tribes, which inhabited the southern part of Iowa. Although the tribes were moved to Kansas following a treaty with the United States in the 1840's, they, through their chief, are remembered in Iowa in the name of Mahaska County.

Wapello County is a non-metropolitan county located in South Central Iowa. The County is composed of seven incorporated communities (Eddyville, Kirksville, Chillicothe, Blakesburg, Ottumwa, Agency, and Eldon) and their surrounding rural areas. Its county seat is Ottumwa, Iowa. Community School Districts located in Wapello County are: Eddyville/Blakesburg/Fremont CSD, Ottumwa CSD and Cardinal CSD. Ottumwa is pleasantly situated on the north side of the Des Moines River, very nearly in the geographical center of the county. It is in the southeastern part of Iowa, and the city is split into northern and southern halves by the Des Moines River. Here intersect the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, the Keokuk and Des Moines, and the St. Louis, Kansas City & Northern Railroads. This county derives its name from Wapello, a subordinate chief of the Sac and Fox Indians, who occupied this section of country immediately before the advent of the whites. The county originated in 1844.

The two-county area is predominately rural offering basic amenities, retail, groceries, and health care options. Travel time from the most northern communities to the most southern communities within the two-county area is approximately 60 minutes with access to major state highways and county service roads.

Both Mahaska and Wapello counties maintain a **strong and diversified local economy**. In Mahaska County, local employers such as C.L. Barnhouse, Clow Valve Company, Interpower Corporation, and Musco Lighting are joined by nearby employers like Ajinomoto, Cargill, Pella Corporation, and Vermeer to provide steady

employment opportunities and strong support of community projects. Wapello County is home to employers like JBS Pork, Keurig/Dr. Pepper, Plastipak, John Deere, Cargill Corn Milling, Ajinomoto and the Iowa Bioprocessing Center (a 1600-acre, \$1.5 billion agricultural complex nearby) and continues to be an ideal location for growth and prosperity.

Hospitals and **health care services** are available in both counties. Mahaska Health Partnership in Oskaloosa, Iowa is a thriving medical campus providing services from birth to end-of-life, and everything in between – including emergency care, outpatient services, classes, support groups, and elective and preventive healthcare. For more than 125 years, Ottumwa Regional Health Center has been serving the community of Ottumwa and the citizens of Southeast Iowa. ORHC is a full-service regional health center providing a wide range of health services, including emergency medicine, critical care services, medical/surgical, acute rehabilitation, obstetrics, and pediatrics, as well as specialty services such as cardiac catheterization, diagnostic and therapeutic radiological services, wound care, pain clinic, sleep lab, pathology, and so much more. River Hills Community Health Center serves an 8-county area in Southeastern Iowa. (FTCA Deemed Health Center. This health center is a Health Center Program grantee under 42 U.S.C. 254b, and a deemed Public Health Service employee under 42 U.S.C. 233(g)-(n).) River Hills Community Health Center also provides a wide range of health services, including medical, pediatrics, dental, behavioral health, and women’s health and family planning.

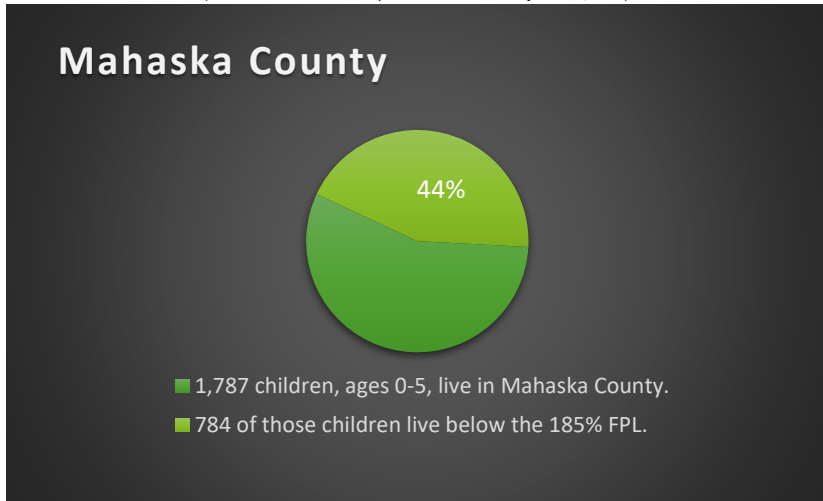
Families living in rural Mahaska/Oskaloosa and Wapello/Ottumwa have access to **large retail box stores** (Walmart and Kohls) and full-service groceries (HyVee and Aldi). Those living in smaller communities, may rely on convenience stores for quick access to basic food and household essentials, but must travel for more options, making reliable transportation a key resource. As the two largest cities within the area, Oskaloosa and Ottumwa offer many family **recreation and entertainment opportunities** such as golf courses, city parks and nature trails, YMCAs, aquatic centers (including the Ottumwa Beach Waterpark), movie theatres, museums and so much more, yet still maintaining a culture of being friendly and caring communities that support various activities and programs serving families with young children.

There are **five public school districts** within the two-county area, ranging in size from as little as 532 students (North Mahaska CSD) to serving nearly 4,655 students (Ottumwa CSD). Three private faith-based schools offer alternative options for PK-12 education and a couple of rural based elementary schools remain in small towns. Preschool for 4-year-old children is widely available through the districts and a variety of options for 3-year-old preschool can be found in throughout all communities. **Higher education opportunities** are also readily available. Indian Hills Community College provides a dynamic and timely response to the ever-changing needs of our business community and the populace of our small towns and rural areas. The campus covers 215 acres and is located seven miles northwest of Ottumwa. To realize a powerful vision for the future, it takes an equally powerful history from which to gain the necessary knowledge, perspective, and perseverance. William Penn University has that kind of history. Founded in 1873 by Quaker settlers who strongly valued education and then named for the Quaker, William Penn, the University was in Oskaloosa and graduated its first class in 1875. Since its founding, they have persevered through a 1916 fire that destroyed the original campus, transitioned from college to university status, led the way in educational programs for working adults, and greatly expanded its campus and facilities.

Population

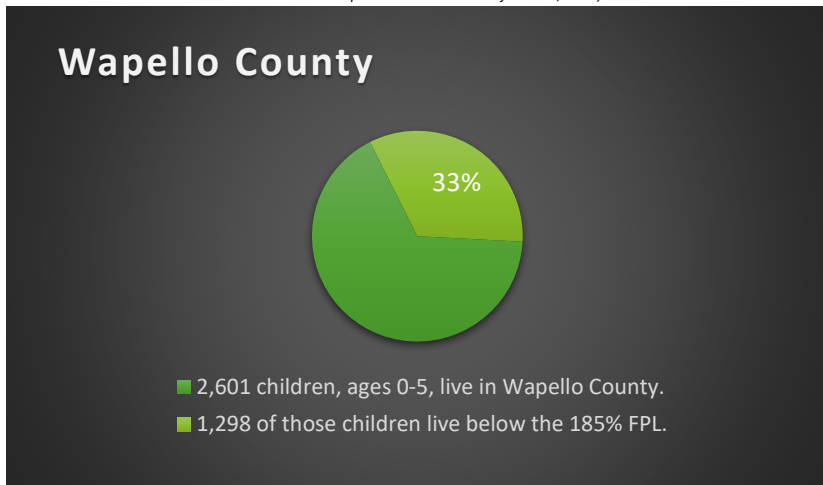
The population of **Mahaska County** is 22,264. Mahaska County has 1,787 (8.0%) children ages 0 through 5 years; and 784 (43.8%) children under age 6 living <185%FPL.

(Source: Woods & Poole Population Estimates as of Dec. 31, 2018)



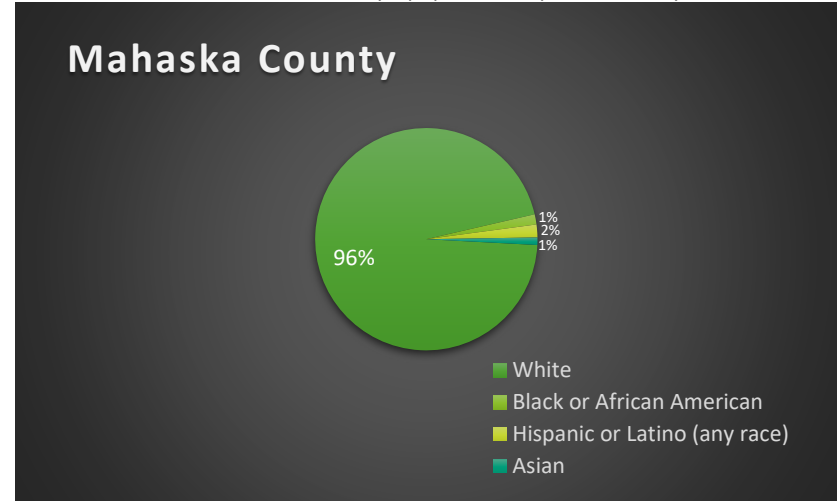
The population of **Wapello County** is 35,056. Wapello County has 2,601 (7.4%) children ages 0 through 5 years; and 1,295 (49.7%) children under age 6 living <185%FPL. *(Source: Woods & Poole Population Estimates as of Dec. 31, 2018)*

(Source: Woods & Poole Population Estimates as of Dec. 31, 2018)

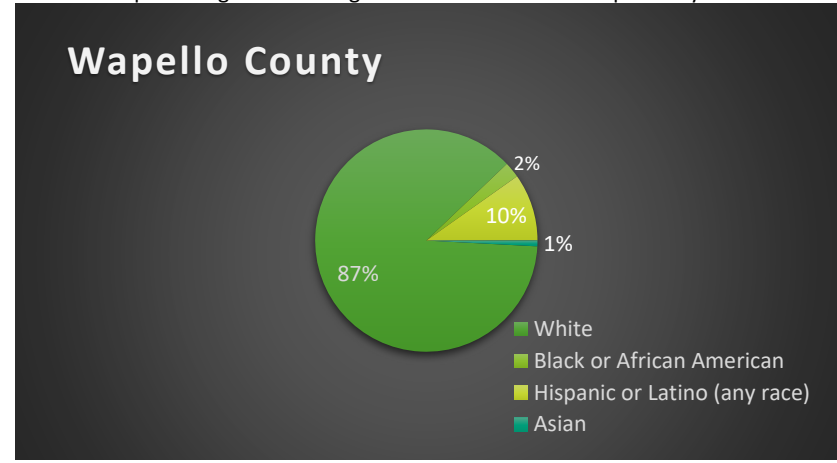


Diversity/Ethnicity

Mahaska County: White – 95.7%; Black or African American – 1.5%; Hispanic or Latino (any race) – 1.9%; Asian – 1.1% (State Library of Iowa 2012-2016 ACS 5Y Estimates) As with the other 98 counties in the state, Mahaska County’s population is predominantly white.



Wapello County: White – 90.8%; Black – 2.4%; Hispanic or Latino (any race) – 10.2%; Asian – 0.9% (State Library of Iowa 2012-2016 ACS 5Y Estimates) As with the other 98 counties in the state, Wapello County’s population is predominantly white. The percentage of the population of Hispanic origin has had significant increase over the past 20 years.



Population / Addressing Rural Needs

The distribution of metropolitan areas in Iowa places about 90% of the population within a 45-minute commute of an urban labor market. As a result, almost three-fourths of residents of towns with populations under 2,500 commutes to another town for work. Iowa's small towns are surviving because small town Iowans can access the higher urban wages while taking advantage of the lower cost of living available in small towns. A wealth of research has documented that urban firms have significant advantages over rural firms in terms of productivity, infrastructure, proximity to customers, access to financing and educated labor, and other so-called agglomeration economies, which has allowed faster growth than rural firms despite higher land and labor costs.

So, what does Iowa need to do to preserve competitive small towns? We need to continue fostering growth in urban markets and ensure that we have good commuting roads from metropolitan areas to surrounding small towns. Research done at Iowa State has shown that job growth in one county leads to population growth in a two-county radius. It was also found that agglomeration economies are important for new firm entry even in rural areas, meaning local labor centers such as [Oskaloosa and Ottumwa] can attract new business, and small towns within a two-county radius can rely on these areas for jobs. (Artz, Georgeanne M., Younjun Kim and Peter F. Orazem. 2013. "How Market Structure Affects Firm Entry in Rural and Urban Communities: Evidence from Iowa." Iowa State University Department of Economics Working Paper).

Population / Addressing Diverse Needs

Iowa, like the nation, is growing more diverse. Between 2000 and 2011, the state's Latino population increased more than 91 percent. Latinos currently constitute about 5 percent of Iowa's total population, a figure projected to rise to nearly 13 percent by 2040. About 11 percent of Ottumwa's population is of Latino origin. Compared to the overall Iowa population, Latinos face higher rates of poverty, are more likely to be uninsured, and are less likely to have a high school education. Nationally, obesity and chronic disease, particularly diabetes, are major health issues facing Latino children and adults. The **Prevention Research Center for Rural Health (PRC-RH)**, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, collaborates with rural communities to improve health and recently formed a partnership with Ottumwa. The PRC-RH team will share survey results with the community and collaborate on interventions to address health concerns. Research interests include community-based participatory health interventions, obesity and chronic disease prevention, Latino health, and health disparities.

Indian Hills Community College / Annual Diversity Conference – Indian Hills Community College hosts an annual Diversity Conference each spring on their Ottumwa Campus. IHCC upholds that diversity is a term that many people only associate with race and gender; however, it goes far beyond that. The concept of diversity itself represents a broad range of characteristics that can include, but are not limited to age, race, creed, color, gender, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, religion, disability, lifestyle, background, intellect, language, political views, and socio-economic status. The diverse world that we live in today encompasses a wide range of cultures, ethnicities, values, and beliefs — which makes each and every individual unique. Understanding the definition of diversity allows people to recognize their own individual differences, and thus explore these differences in a positive and enlightening way. The annual conference welcomes and celebrates these dimensions of diversity that each individual represents. The March 2019 annual conference speakers addressed a full range of issues including labor trafficking, formalizing informal networks and the stigmatization of mental health.