

# FaDSS

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**PARTNERS FOR THRIVING FAMILIES**

## Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program (FaDSS) **ANNUAL REPORT**

FISCAL YEAR 2025

*PREPARED BY:*

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<https://hhs.iowa.gov/family-community/fadss>





“

I feel like mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and physically I'm the strongest I've ever been. Not everybody has that helping hand — that second chance. The FaDSS program will help you reach your goals that you have set for yourself, even if they're small. It will help you get to that next step ... People need to know there are people like me and worse off, but this program will literally help you succeed.

It's the best program. I don't know where I'd be without it. I love that it never gives up on you — that's the biggest thing. Missy is one of my biggest supporters ... she's always there, no matter what.”

— Arionna, FaDSS family member

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# Iowa Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program (FaDSS)

## 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) cash benefits and experiencing significant or multiple barriers to reach self-sufficiency. FaDSS partners with families to identify and achieve goals to move toward economic security and family stability. Families with minor children who are at or below 175% of the federal poverty guidelines and meet other criteria are eligible to voluntarily participate in the FaDSS program. In FY25, the program was available in all 99 Iowa counties through a network of 15 community action and non-profit social services agencies.

“

FaDSS came into my life after my son was released from the NICU. I was slowly isolating myself and not speaking about the struggles that I was experiencing, but having that outside help and knowing that she would be able to point me in the right direction, it really helped me. My happiness is at a level that it's never been.”

— Raquel, FaDSS family member



# STRENGTHENING IOWA'S FAMILIES. STRENGTHENING IOWA'S ECONOMY.

## FaDSS VISION STATEMENT

**FaDSS engages families in dynamic partnerships to address their basic needs, improve child well-being, and develop career opportunities that, in turn, improves lives, families, and communities.**

### **We do this by:**

- 1. Reducing sources of stress that destabilize families.** We address the basic needs and emotional wellbeing of families through support and connection to resources such as housing, food, safety, and physical and mental conditions, among others.
- 2. Strengthening core skills that are essential for work, school, and life.** We build the capabilities of families by teaching them goal-directed behaviors that strengthen life skills and improve family functioning and by connecting them to education and training opportunities that build career-related skills and healthy work and school-based habits.
- 3. Creating responsive relationships that are safe and supportive.** We cultivate partnerships with families by building trust; holding parents accountable; and practicing unconditional, nonjudgmental positive regard. We collaborate with community partners to address the needs and interests of families. We support healthy parent-child relationships that promote child wellness and development.

# FaDSS Overview

## CORE PROGRAM COMPONENTS

• **Structured home visits conducted by skilled family development specialists**



• **Assessments that support healthy self-exploration**



• **Science-informed goal pursuit designed to build core skills**



• **A framework and process for career development**



• **Connecting families to stabilizing supports and career opportunities in the community.**



# FaDSS Overview

## HOW SERVICES ARE PROVIDED

**The FaDSS program is provided to families in partnership with 15 community action and non-profit social service agencies.** The program employs approximately 76 home visitors; 72% of all FaDSS staff (home visitors and supervisors) have achieved at least a Bachelor's degree. All specialists complete a nationally recognized certification program and 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. Specialists review each family's eligibility for the program every six months. Families may remain in the program while they are working on their goals until they reach 225% of the federal poverty guidelines as long as they continue to meet all other eligibility requirements.

## NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED

In fiscal year 2025, the FaDSS program served **1,981 families**, including **4,581 children** (under the age of 18). Most families (**79%**) were referred for FaDSS services by the PROMISE JOBS program.

## FAMILY WAGES & FIP SAVINGS

During FY 2025, FaDSS families earned **total wages of \$10,959,967** resulting in a **FIP savings of \$1,689,754**.

# Continuous Quality Improvement

## EVALUATION METHOD

The Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with 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 15 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.**

“

FaDSS has helped me with every area in my life — daycare, a car, a high school diploma, and relationships with people. I've learned so much from their program. Without them I would have a hard time in searching that out for myself and for her to help me with that and meet me where I'm at was really special for me.”

— Maddi, FaDSS family member



# Selected Outcomes

## ✓ INCREASED EMPLOYMENT

- In FY 2025, 24% of FaDSS households had at least one adult employed at program entry. At exit, 49% of households had at least one adult employed.
- 535 families were involved in activities designed to increase work preparedness skills. These activities, provided by FaDSS, include career exploration, interview preparation, resume development, providing job leads, and assistance with completing job applications.

## ✓ INCREASED INCOME

- In FY 2025, families that were employed at exit had an average monthly family income of \$4,141.03, an increase of \$2,640.02.

## ✓ DECREASED FAMILY INVESTMENT PROGRAM (FIP) PAYMENTS

- At entry, families averaged \$265.11 in monthly FIP payments. At exit, the average FIP payment for families was \$104.31, a decrease of \$160.80.

## ✓ ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS

- 105 adults that exited the FaDSS program in FY 2025 achieved major education goals:
  - 23 completed a certification program
  - 49 completed some college courses
  - 20 completed a GED/HS diploma
  - 7 completed an Associate's Degree
  - 5 completed a Bachelor's Degree
  - 1 completed a Master's Degree

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# Selected Outcomes

## ✓ Increased Access to Services and Treatment — Domestic Violence

- In FY 2025, 166 FaDSS families that exited the program had experienced domestic violence as identified through self-disclosure or positive screening.
- 79% of families experiencing domestic violence received help.

## ✓ Increased Access to Services and Treatment — Mental Health

- In FY 2025, 365 adults that exited the program had a substantiated mental health issue.
- 89% of those adults with a mental health barrier accessed treatment. The FaDSS program assisted 85% of adults gaining access to treatment.

## ✓ Increased Access to Treatment — Substance Abuse

- In FY 2025, 122 adults that exited the program had a substantiated substance abuse issue.
- 80% of those adults with a substance abuse barrier accessed treatment. The FaDSS program assisted 65% 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 15 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

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|  Housing         |  Health                             |  Transportation            |
|  Income          |  Mental Health                      |  Employment                |
|  Substance Abuse |  Parenting, Nurturing, & Attachment |  Child Care                |
|  Support Network |  Support of Child Development       |  Relationship with Partner |
|  Adult Education |  Legal                              |  Language                  |

# The Self-Sufficiency Matrix

## 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, 699 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 below 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.

# The Self-Sufficiency Matrix

**FY 2025 Percent of Families Improving in Each Domain Comparing Families That Had a Goal in Each Domain with All Families**



## TRANSPORTATION

Many families struggle to access reliable transportation for such things as work and appointments. Overall, 36% of all families in FaDSS improved their transportation. 49% of families improved in the area of transportation when goals were established.

## SUPPORT NETWORK

FaDSS assists families in identifying support networks. 43% of all families improved in their support networks. 56% of families who set a targeted goal around support network improved in this domain.

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# 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; 43% are headed by an individual aged 24-34.



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# Selected Demographics

EDUCATION LEVELS, HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD

| Head of Household Education Level at Enrollment | Individuals | Percent     |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Less than High School                           | 174         | 23%         |
| High School Diploma / HiSED                     | 279         | 37%         |
| Some College                                    | 190         | 26%         |
| Trade/Vocational Training                       | 49          | 7%          |
| Two Year College Degree (Associates)            | 29          | 4%          |
| Four Year College Degree (Bachelors)            | 17          | 2%          |
| Masters or Above                                | 7           | 1%          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                    | <b>746</b>  | <b>100%</b> |



## FISCAL YEAR 2025

# Capacity and Funding

During FY 2025, FaDSS was funded with an appropriation of **\$7,192,834** in TANF and state general funds. In addition, other supports of **\$79,596** were provided to supplement FaDSS services.

| Grantee  | Capacity<br>FY 2025 | Allocation<br>FY 2025 | Slot Rate<br>FY 2025 | Federal<br>Funds   |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Four Oaks                                      | 216                 | \$1,090,586           | \$5,049              | \$436,234          |
| Polk County Family<br>Enrichment Center        | 210                 | \$1,050,478           | \$5,002              | \$420,191          |
| Community Action of Eastern Iowa               | 135                 | \$666,944             | \$4,940              | \$266,778          |
| West Central Community Action                  | 95                  | \$501,793             | \$5,282              | \$200,717          |
| Mid-Iowa Community Action                      | 95                  | \$484,004             | \$5,095              | \$193,602          |
| Operation Threshold                            | 81                  | \$404,324             | \$4,992              | \$161,730          |
| Upper Des Moines Opportunity                   | 76                  | \$380,619             | \$5,008              | \$152,248          |
| Community Action of<br>Southeast Iowa          | 76                  | \$357,213             | \$4,700              | \$142,885          |
| Sieda Community Action                         | 72                  | \$339,662             | \$4,718              | \$135,865          |
| North Iowa Community<br>Action Organization    | 62                  | \$314,377             | \$5,071              | \$125,751          |
| Community Action Agency of<br>Siouxland        | 61                  | \$310,542             | \$5,091              | \$124,217          |
| New Opportunities                              | 42                  | \$230,000             | \$5,476              | \$92,000           |
| Northeast Iowa Community Action<br>Corporation | 42                  | \$230,000             | \$5,476              | \$92,000           |
| Mid-Sioux Opportunity, Inc.                    | 42                  | \$230,000             | \$5,476              | \$92,000           |
| SCICAP   | 42                  | \$230,000             | \$5,476              | \$92,000           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                   | <b>1,347</b>        | <b>\$6,820,542</b>    |                      | <b>\$2,728,218</b> |

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# Capacity and Funding

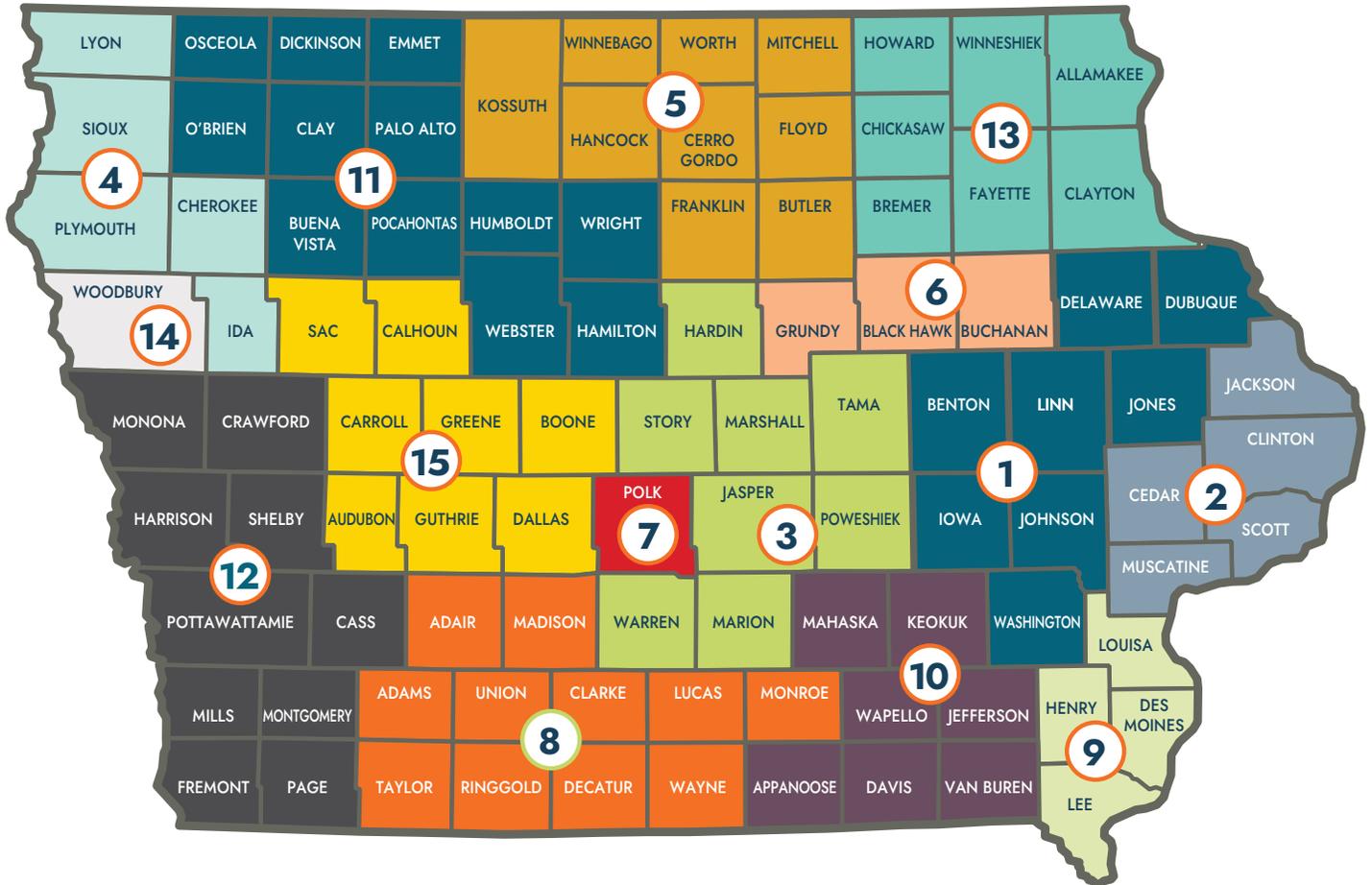
| Allocation  | Allocation<br>FY 2025 |
|---|-----------------------|
| Total Grantee Allocation                          | \$6,820,542           |
| FaDSS Administration<br><i>(not to exceed 5%)</i> | \$359,642             |
| Technology  | \$12,650              |
| <b>TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS</b>                       | <b>\$7,192,834</b>    |



# FaDSS Grantee Service Areas

- 1** Four Oaks Family and Children’s Services
- 2** Community Action of Eastern Iowa
- 3** Mid-Iowa Community Action
- 4** Mid-Sioux Opportunity, Inc.
- 5** North Iowa Community Action Organization
- 6** Operation Threshold
- 7** Polk County Family Enrichment Center
- 8** South Central Iowa Community Action Program
- 9** Community Action of Southeast Iowa
- 10** Sieda Community Action
- 11** Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc.
- 12** West Central Community Action
- 13** Northeast Iowa Community Action Corp.
- 14** Community Action Agency of Siouxland
- 15** New Opportunities, Inc.

# FaDSS Grantee Service Areas



# FaDSS Grantee Service Areas

| Service Area # | FaDSS Grantees  |
|----------------|---|
| 1              | <p><b>Four Oaks Family and Children’s Services</b><br/>           Dubuque — <i>Julie Weber Davis</i><br/>           563-557-3100, <a href="mailto:jweber@fouroaks.org">jweber@fouroaks.org</a><br/>           Or Cedar Rapids – <i>Amber Mercil</i><br/>           319-247-4834, <a href="mailto:amercil@fouroaks.org">amercil@fouroaks.org</a></p> |
| 2              | <p><b>Community Action of Eastern Iowa</b><br/> <i>Daniel Sheridan</i><br/>           563-484-4562, <a href="mailto:dsheridan@caeiowa.org">dsheridan@caeiowa.org</a></p>  |
| 3              | <p><b>Mid-Iowa Community Action</b><br/> <i>Mindy Clayton</i><br/>           641-236-3923, <a href="mailto:Mindy.Clayton@micaonline.org">Mindy.Clayton@micaonline.org</a></p>   |
| 4              | <p><b>Mid-Sioux Opportunity, Inc.</b><br/> <i>Katie Vis</i><br/>           712-541-1197, <a href="mailto:kvis@midsioux.org">kvis@midsioux.org</a></p>   |
| 5              | <p><b>North Iowa Community Action Organization</b><br/> <i>Lori Brandt</i><br/>           641-423-7766, <a href="mailto:lbrandt@nicao-online.org">lbrandt@nicao-online.org</a></p>  |
| 6              | <p><b>Operation Threshold</b><br/> <i>Leanne Corwin</i><br/>           319-291-2065, <a href="mailto:LCorwin@operationthreshold.org">LCorwin@operationthreshold.org</a></p>   |
| 7              | <p><b>Polk County Family Enrichment Center</b><br/> <i>Doug Stodgel</i><br/>           515-286-3406, <a href="mailto:doug.stodgel@polkcountyiowa.gov">doug.stodgel@polkcountyiowa.gov</a></p>   |
| 8              | <p><b>South Central Iowa Community Action Program</b><br/> <i>Jamie Swearingin</i><br/>           641-344-1045, <a href="mailto:jswearingin@scicap.org">jswearingin@scicap.org</a></p>  |

# FaDSS Grantee Service Areas

| <b>Service Area #</b> | <b>FaDSS Grantees</b>  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>9</b>              | <b>Community Action of Southeast Iowa</b><br><i>Joy Szewczyk</i><br>319-753-0193, <a href="mailto:joy.szewczyk@caofseia.org">joy.szewczyk@caofseia.org</a> |
| <b>10</b>             | <b>Sieda Community Action</b><br><i>Dianne Ellis</i><br>641-814-2759, <a href="mailto:dellis@sieda.org">dellis@sieda.org</a>                               |
| <b>11</b>             | <b>Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc.</b><br><i>Alisa Schlief</i><br>515-576-7774, <a href="mailto:aschlief@udmo.com">aschlief@udmo.com</a>                |
| <b>12</b>             | <b>West Central Community Action</b><br><i>Mary Wisnieski</i><br>712-322-5966, <a href="mailto:mwisnieski@westcca.org">mwisnieski@westcca.org</a>          |
| <b>13</b>             | <b>Northeast Iowa Community Action Corp.</b><br><i>Nichole Griese</i><br>563-419-8243, <a href="mailto:ngriese@neicac.org">ngriese@neicac.org</a>          |
| <b>14</b>             | <b>Community Action Agency of Siouxland</b><br><i>Jessi Bergin</i><br>712-274-1610, <a href="mailto:jbergin@caasiouxland.org">jbergin@caasiouxland.org</a> |
| <b>15</b>             | <b>New Opportunities</b><br><i>Jamie Johnston</i><br>712-830-7294, <a href="mailto:jjohnston@newopp.org">jjohnston@newopp.org</a>                          |

“ I ended up getting pregnant and dropping out of school. I had a really complicated pregnancy. I was having twins, and I had twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome — so one of the twins was taking all the good stuff away from the other twin. My four-year-old now is a survivor of that. His brother passed away, so that was traumatic for me.

After I had my son, I really kind of got into the whole drug scene with my children’s father. It was a very abusive relationship. We weren’t very healthy together, and eventually I got a DHS call to me, and they said you can either go to treatment, or you can continue what you’re doing and lose your child. So I decided to go to treatment.

My life kind of changed there, and I realized that drugs and the life I was living before wasn’t what I or my children deserved.

I was in treatment for four and a half months, and then they said, “There’s a place called the Genesis House in Orange City — would you like to fill out an application?” I had never been to Orange City before, and I really didn’t want to do that, but I did. A month later, they said I got accepted, and I was so excited! I was really nervous because change is really hard for me, and I didn’t really know what to expect. I didn’t know anybody here, but then I ended up moving here.



After that, Katie came into my life — shortly before I had my other child — and she really helped me to get back on my feet. She helped me apply for this Car Ministry program, and I got my car, and I got my license, which I never thought possible. I just always thought I would live my life without my license.

Since I dropped out of high school, I applied for the HiSED program. I got my HiSED — I finished that last year in June. I got a job at Brad's Breads, and I quickly moved to the manager position there. I absolutely love that job.

My life has really changed from two-and-a-half years ago until now. I'm clean and sober. My kids are in my life, and I'm present with them. My relationships have really flourished now that I'm clean, and I'm able to be a better mom and a better person overall.

I think Katie's definitely really helped me with that. I text Katie sometimes as a friend, and she's always there for me. It's a really good relationship that I hold close to my heart.”

— Maddi, FaDSS family member

# FaDSS

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