

FaDSS

PARTNERS FOR THRIVING FAMILIES

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

FISCAL YEAR 2026

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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 FY26, the program was available in all 99 Iowa counties through a network of 15 community action and non-profit social services agencies.



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; 71% 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 2026, the FaDSS program served **1,980 families**, including **4,473 children** (under the age of 18). Most families (**71%**) were referred for FaDSS services by the PROMISE JOBS program.

FAMILY WAGES & FIP SAVINGS

During FY 2026, FaDSS families earned **total wages of \$10,566,245** resulting in a **FIP savings of \$2,070,998**.

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.**



FISCAL YEAR 2026

Selected Outcomes

✓ INCREASED EMPLOYMENT

- In FY 2026, 26% of FaDSS households had at least one adult employed at program entry. At exit, 56% of households had at least one adult employed.
- 1,484 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 2026, families that were employed at exit had an average monthly family income of \$4,926.37, an increase of \$3,268.31.

✓ DECREASED FAMILY INVESTMENT PROGRAM (FIP) PAYMENTS

- At entry, families averaged \$267.52 in monthly FIP payments. At exit, the average FIP payment for families was \$91.79, a decrease of \$175.73.

✓ ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS

- 110 adults that exited the FaDSS program in FY 2026 achieved major education goals:
 - 32 completed a certification program
 - 45 completed some college courses
 - 25 completed a GED/HS diploma
 - 7 completed an Associate's Degree
 - 1 completed a Bachelor's Degree

FISCAL YEAR 2026

Selected Outcomes

✓ Increased Access to Services and Treatment — Domestic Violence

- In FY 2026, 197 FaDSS families that exited the program had experienced domestic violence as identified through self-disclosure or positive screening.
- 86% of families experiencing domestic violence received help.

✓ Increased Access to Services and Treatment — Mental Health

- In FY 2026, 465 adults that exited the program had a substantiated mental health issue.
- 90% of those adults with a mental health barrier accessed treatment. The FaDSS program assisted 83% of adults gaining access to treatment.

✓ Increased Access to Treatment — Substance Abuse

- In FY 2026, 138 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 74% 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, 852 families had both entry and exit scores.

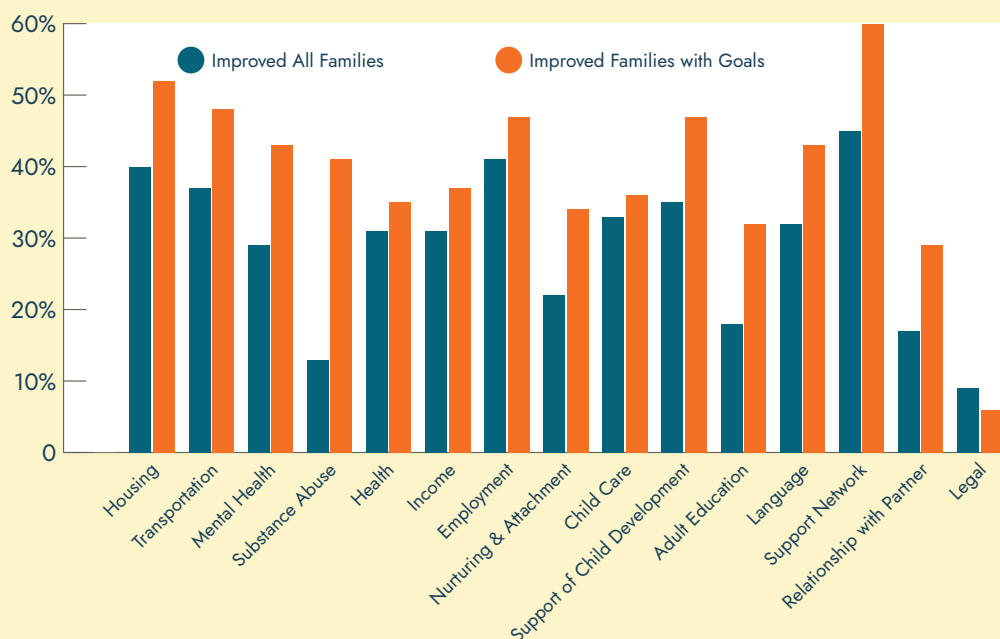
A key component of FaDSS is helping families learn to set goals to meet the needs of their families. The chart below shows the difference between the improvements of families in each domain compared to those who established goals within each domain.

The following are examples of how goal setting has made marked improvement in families' lives.



The Self-Sufficiency Matrix

**FY 2026 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, 37% of all families in FaDSS improved their transportation. 48% of families improved in the area of transportation when goals were established.

SUPPORT NETWORK

FaDSS assists families in identifying support networks. 45% of all families improved in their support networks. 60% of families who set a targeted goal around support network improved in this domain.

FISCAL YEAR 2026

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. In 19% of households, families spoke a language other than English.



FISCAL YEAR 2026

Capacity and Funding

During FY 2026, FaDSS was funded with an appropriation of **\$7,192,834** in TANF and state general funds. FaDSS Administrative cost was **\$359,642**, representing less than 5% of the overall appropriated funds. In addition, other supports of **\$1,674,322** were provided to supplement FaDSS services.

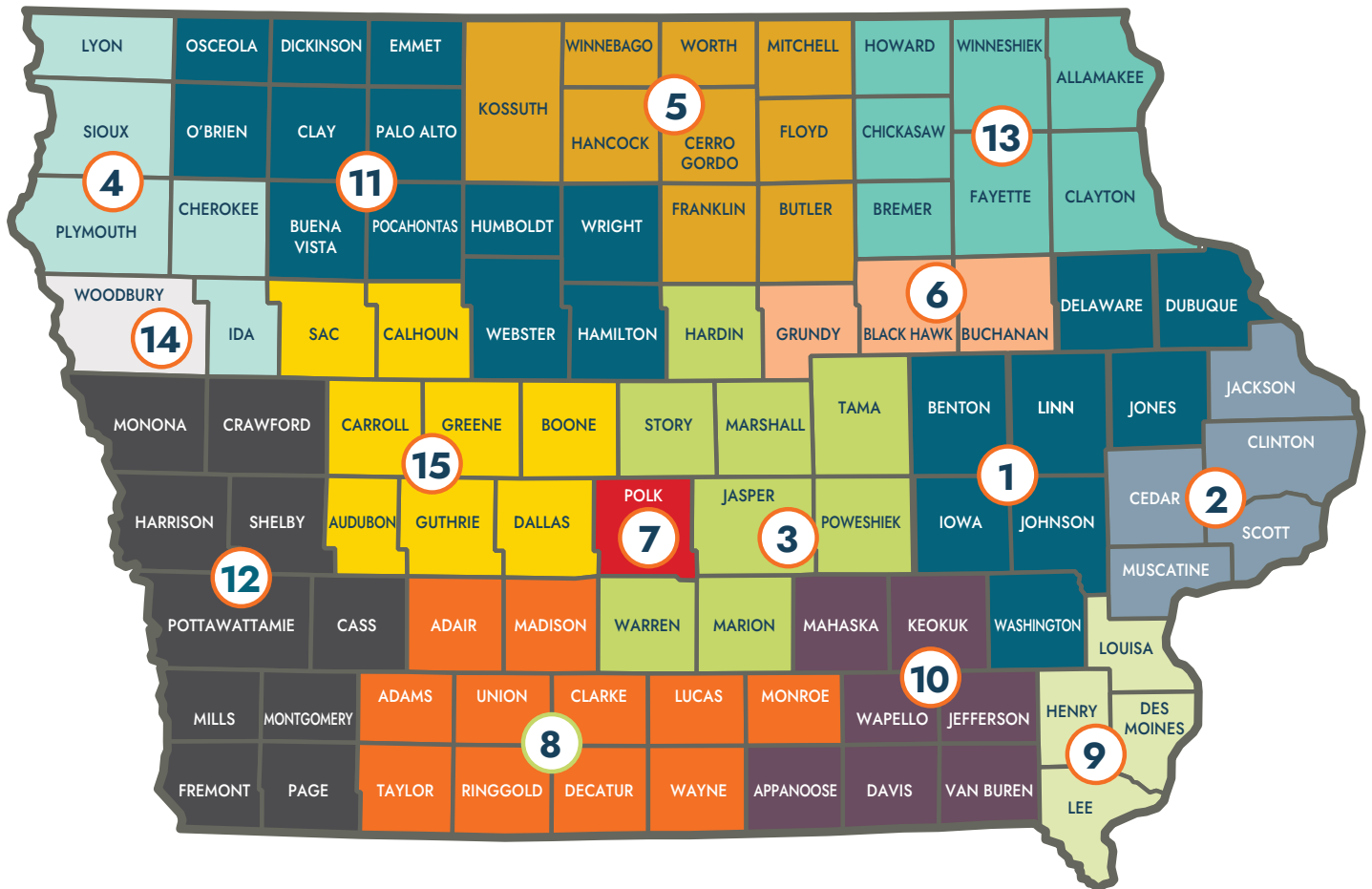
Grantee	Capacity FY 2026	Allocation FY 2026	Slot Rate FY 2026	Federal Funds	State Funds
Four Oaks	216	\$1,090,586	\$5,049	\$436,234	\$654,352
Polk County Family Enrichment Center	210	\$1,050,478	\$5,002	\$420,191	\$630,287
Community Action of Eastern Iowa	135	\$666,944	\$4,940	\$266,778	\$400,166
West Central Community Action	95	\$501,793	\$5,282	\$200,717	\$301,076
Mid-Iowa Community Action	95	\$484,004	\$5,095	\$193,602	\$290,402
Operation Threshold	81	\$404,324	\$4,992	\$161,730	\$242,594
Upper Des Moines Opportunity	76	\$380,619	\$5,008	\$152,248	\$228,371
Community Action of Southeast Iowa	76	\$357,213	\$4,700	\$142,885	\$214,328
Sieda Community Action	72	\$339,662	\$4,718	\$135,865	\$203,797
North Iowa Community Action Organization	62	\$314,377	\$5,071	\$125,751	\$188,626
Community Action Agency of Siouxland	61	\$310,542	\$5,091	\$124,217	\$186,325
New Opportunities	42	\$230,000	\$5,476	\$92,000	\$138,000
Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation	42	\$230,000	\$5,476	\$92,000	\$138,000
Mid-Sioux Opportunity, Inc.	42	\$230,000	\$5,476	\$92,000	\$138,000
SCICAP	42	\$230,000	\$5,476	\$92,000	\$138,000
TOTAL	1,347	\$6,820,542		\$2,728,218	\$4,092,324

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	Four Oaks Family and Children's Services <i>Amber Mercil</i> 319-247-4834, amercil@fouroaks.org
2	Community Action of Eastern Iowa <i>Nicole Calhoun</i> 563-271-2546, ncalhoun@caeiowa.org
3	Mid-Iowa Community Action <i>Mindy Clayton</i> 641-236-3923, Mindy.Clayton@micaonline.org
4	Mid-Sioux Opportunity, Inc. <i>Katie Vis</i> 712-541-1197, kvis@midsioux.org
5	North Iowa Community Action Organization <i>Lori Brandt</i> 641-423-7766, lbrandt@nicao-online.org
6	Operation Threshold <i>Leanne Corwin</i> 319-291-2065, LCorwin@operationthreshold.org
7	Polk County Family Enrichment Center <i>Connie McGough-Kaufmann</i> 515-286-3593, connie.mcgough-kaufmann@polkcountyiowa.gov
8	South Central Iowa Community Action Program <i>Jamie Swearingin</i> 641-344-1045, jswearingin@scicap.org

FaDSS Grantee Service Areas

Service Area #	FaDSS Grantees
9	Community Action of Southeast Iowa <i>Joy Szewczyk</i> 319-753-0193, joy.szewczyk@caofseia.org
10	Sieda Community Action <i>Dianne Ellis</i> 641-814-2759, dellis@sieda.org
11	Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc. <i>Ashley Cooklin</i> 515-570-0036, acooklin@udmo.com
12	West Central Community Action <i>Mary Wisnieski</i> 712-322-5966, mwisnieski@westcca.org
13	Northeast Iowa Community Action Corp. <i>Nichole Griesse</i> 563-419-8243, ngriesse@neicac.org
14	Community Action Agency of Siouxland <i>Jessi Bergin</i> 712-274-1610, jbergin@caasiouxland.org
15	New Opportunities <i>Jamie Johnston</i> 712-830-7294, jjohnston@newopp.org

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Human Services**