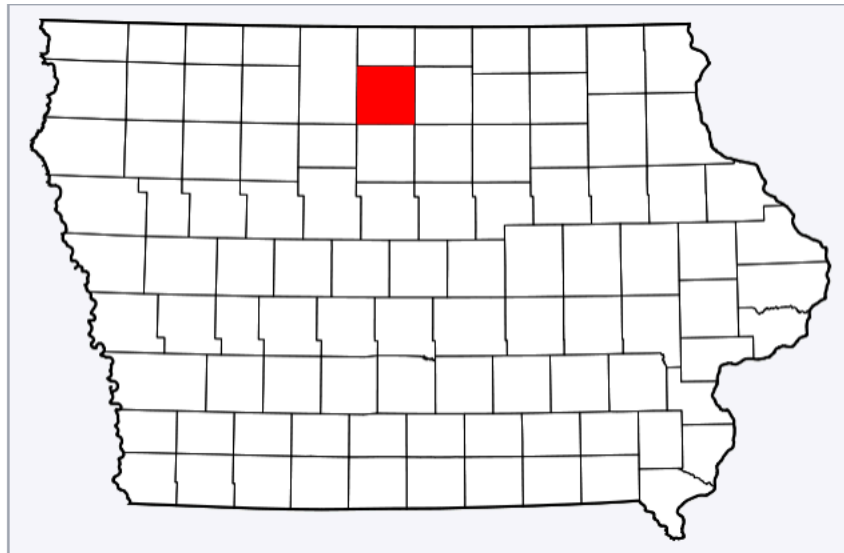


Hancock County 2022 Housing Needs Assessment



Prepared for North Iowa Area Council of Governments
By Iowa State University Extension & Outreach Community Economic
Development
September 2022

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PART 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OVERVIEW

The North Iowa Area Council of Governments (NIACOG) contracted with Iowa State University Extension & Outreach's Farm, Food, and Enterprise Development unit for several studies addressing local needs in NIACOG's eight-county region consisting of Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago, and Worth Counties in north central Iowa. The studies examined the environment for entrepreneurial businesses, day care and other child care needs, and this housing needs assessment. This housing needs assessment report was researched and authored by an Iowa State University Extension & Outreach Community Economic Development Program Specialist with more than 25 years of experience in housing development and housing planning who has conducted similar studies for other cities and counties throughout Iowa as well as for the State of Iowa.

The Housing Needs Assessment includes *quantitative* statistical analysis of population data/demographics, economic and income data, existing housing data, and a housing market analysis. The statistical data was used to create a housing construction model for the county that takes into consideration how many housing units will need to be constructed; what price points those housing units need to be at in order to be affordable to the local population; how many units will need to be created if there is no population growth and how many will need to be created if there is modest population growth. The model also identifies instances in which there may be existing excess housing capacity that does not match local needs.

PURPOSE OF THE HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A housing needs assessment has four primary purposes:

1. Identifying the demographic and economic trends that may impact the future need for housing.
2. Assessing the characteristics of existing housing and households. This determines what housing stock exists and how that housing stock is accommodating the physical needs of the population currently living in Hancock County.
3. Analyzing the current and future demand for housing taking into account such factors as the physical safety needs of an aging population, the condition of existing housing, the affordability of existing housing, whether private market choices exist, and the extent of housing that sits vacant and is therefore not available to house families.
4. To recommend initiatives and actions Hancock County can take to either satisfy future housing needs on their own or to create incentives so the private market can satisfy future housing needs.

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Housing is a large part of a community's economic infrastructure. Communities strive to have an adequate number of housing units, at several price points that are affordable to a populace with a range of income levels, that meet the different physical needs of different types of households from young families with children to senior citizens, and that have the architectural styles and amenities that make neighborhoods livable. From an economic standpoint, a community's goal is to make it *probable* that residents will choose to live, work and shop in their community because their community provides all that is necessary and desired by the majority of its citizens.

Housing's role in economic development is to provide housing for the workforce that *currently* exists in the community and the workforce that is *predicted* to live in the area based on the area's primary economic drivers. A company hoping to locate in the community will need to have housing available to their employees at prices aligned to their incomes. The company may look at the quality and condition of housing as an indicator of the quality of life they can expect to find in a community.

The condition of existing housing also impacts the health of residents. Older housing units were often constructed with building materials we now know have toxic effects, such as asbestos and lead-based paint. Homes that have been exposed to water internally for any length of time are susceptible to mold. These toxins can result in increased diagnoses of asthma and allergies particularly for children and the aged. Homes with older furnaces are more susceptible to increased levels of carbon dioxide. Throughout Iowa, cracked basement walls can cause dangerous levels of radon to leach into homes through porous soils.

Older housing units can also negatively impact the health of older residents when bathrooms and bedrooms are located on second stories, when laundry facilities are located in basements, and when there are exterior steps into the home that may present fall hazards, particularly in winter. Additionally, some older homes are harder to rehabilitate for handicapped-accessibility, making it difficult for aging residents to use their adaptive devices such as walkers and wheelchairs, and therefore more likely to present either an unsafe living environment or reduce the ability of a senior citizen to age-in-place. In cases where seniors are no longer able to live in a single-family home, the presence within the community of other senior housing options is also necessary, such as available and affordable independent living senior apartment-style homes or townhomes, assisted living and skilled care/nursing home facilities. Senior living options can also be enhanced by the provision of supportive services that either help a senior stay in their own home or make a successful transition to other senior housing options. Services such as housekeeping, medication management, meals-on-wheels type food or grocery delivery services, transportation to medical appointments, and case managers can successfully extend the time seniors can stay in their own homes or in independent living before moving on to more institutionalized, and more expensive, care.

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA

The 2022 Hancock County Housing Needs Assessment was quantified using publicly-available secondary source data from Federal sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau, the American Community Survey (ACS), the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). Secondary source material was also gathered from State sources such as Iowa State University's Data for Decision Makers reports, the Iowa Association of Realtors, the County Assessor's Office, and the Iowa Community Action Association. Primary data was also collected through website searches and phone interviews.

It needs to be noted that the 2020 U.S. Census was problematic for a variety of reasons. Having been conducted largely through online efforts during a pandemic, there were noted under- and over-counts for certain populations. The Census has also begun "masking" certain kinds of data that might serve to identify an individual, a specific household, or a specific business or commercial enterprise. This particularly impacts smaller rural communities where there may be only a handful of non-white residents, for example, or one manufacturing business that could be identified by being the only business of that type in the community. Additionally, the final results of the U.S. Census have been dribbling out throughout 2022 instead of being issued all at one time. The first tranche of housing data was released in the middle of March 2022 and a second data set was released in July. It is expected that additional reports will be released by the end of 2022, but this housing needs assessment is current only up to July of 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Add smaller units of new construction, single or multi-family, for seniors and smaller families. The Construction Model shown in Table 28 shows an eventual need for 11 more units of housing in Hancock County. Part of this is due to current low vacancy rates for both renter and owner-occupied housing that doesn't provide enough choice in the market. Even if Hancock County does NOT experience population growth throughout the rest of this decade, there still is a need for additional new construction housing, either single or multifamily, preferably of smaller units to accommodate smaller households as shown in Table 17. Some of these smaller units should be for senior citizens. Some should be townhouses or condominiums that would be attractive to smaller households at any age range. These smaller units would be ideal for infill where Hancock County communities may have lots already attached to infrastructure.

Recommendation 2: Preserve existing housing through rehabilitation and energy-efficiency improvements. Housing rehabilitation program should be used to preserve existing housing. Currently, the State of Iowa is backing off of rehabilitation programming due to tight housing markets in rural areas and the need to add numbers of housing units to meet that need. That doesn't mean the need for rehabilitation has vanished....just the State funding to support it. That leaves rehab on the table for local housing trust funds, locally-funded initiatives, or USDA funding to backfill the loss of other traditional sources. The North Iowa Area Council of

Governments (NIACOG)'s challenge on this recommendation will be to work with communities in the county, the county, or the entire region to continue seeking grant funding, advocating for new funds, and supporting rehab programming.

Recommendation 3: Update Upper Story Housing and In-fill Lots Inventory. State funding is being directed to Upper Story Housing projects that serve to provide new units of housing while preserving Main Streets and other adjacent downtown areas. Here is a link to the grant program: <https://www.iowaeda.com/downtown-resource-center/downtown-housing-grant/> Identifying eligible upper story owners who may be interested in this program is a task NIACOG could undertake. The In-fill Lot Inventory is another tool that should be updated in each city in Hancock County. One strategy to deal with a shrinking population in a way that doesn't further deteriorate neighborhoods or damages the character of a community, is to address holes in neighborhoods that have come from the loss of housing to fires or other demolitions. Some lots that look like they are in-fill might actually have been purchased by neighboring property owners and aren't really available for new housing, so the inventory should focus on lots that could be used for new housing without expanding the footprint of the community.

Recommendation 4: Conduct a windshield survey and initiate demolition of substandard housing and one-to-one replacement with new housing. When there is excess capacity in a housing market, housing planning should focus on improving the quality of existing housing. A windshield survey should be conducted that evaluates each community's individual housing stock on a simple scale of Excellent for newly constructed housing, Good for newer housing without obvious need of rehabilitation; Fair for older housing that could be eligible for rehabilitation based on the actual condition or age of the structure; and Poor for housing that should be removed. Derelict housing removal should be followed up with an intention of doing a one-to-one replacement if possible.

Recommendation 5: Start actively marketing Hancock County as an attractive place to live. Workforce commuting patterns shown in Figure 1 represent a possible market for new residents to the county. The 8,918 people commuting into the county for jobs represent the market for new home buyers who may want to live closer to their employment, particularly as the price of gas forces the need to make different economic decisions for households.

Recommendation 6: Consider applying for the Rural Housing Readiness Assessment Program. The Rural Housing Readiness Assessment program is for communities under 20,000 population. It provides two educational sessions on the demographics and statistics that drive housing needs; conducts an online survey of local housing demand; and provides two strategic planning sessions that help communities identify their housing goals. The communities then receive a final report where further investigation of their goals is fleshed out with financial resources and examples of similar projects that other communities have been success with in meeting their local housing challenges. The next round of grants should be in the Spring of 2023. Here is a link to information about the program: <https://www.iowaeda.com/empower-rural-iowa/housing-assessment/>

PART 2: DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 1: Population of Hancock County Communities and Percentage of Change Between 2010-2020

City	2020	2010	Change	Percentage Rate
Britt	2,044	2,069	-25	1.2%
Corwith	266	309	-43	-13.9%
Crystal Lake	253	250	+3	+1.2%
Garner	3,065	3,129	-64	-2%
Goodell	140	139	-1	-0.7%
Kanawha	658	652	+6	+0.9%
Klemme	441	507	-66	-13%
Woden	188	229	-41	-17.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2: Hancock County Total Population by 5 Year Age Groups 2020

Age Group	2020	Percent of Population
Total Population	10,709	
Under 5 years	601	5.6%
5-9 years	661	6.2%
10-14 years	631	5.9%
15-19 years	564	5.3%
20-24 years	600	5.6%
25-29 years	593	5.5%
30-34 years	536	5.0%
35-39 years	629	5.9%
40-44 years	615	5.7%
45-49 years	571	5.3%
50-54 years	628	5.9%
55-59 years	1,011	9.4%
60-64 years	681	6.4%
65-69 years	627	5.9%
70-74 years	632	5.9%
75-79 years	379	3.5%
80-84 years	256	2.4%
85 years and older	494	4.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 1 on the previous page shows the 2020 and 2010 populations for Hancock County cities. All cities except Crystal Lake and Kanawha lost population with Woden losing the most

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population, percentagewise, at 17.9%. This is consistent with rural population loss throughout Iowa. Table 2 shows how the population is distributed over five-year age groups. The distribution shows 23% of the population is under the age of 18. Residents between the ages of 19 and 64, who would be in their working years, comprise 54.7% of the population. This is the cohort that would be buying their first homes and are the primary market for home sales. The final 22.3% of the population are over the age of 65 and represent a population that may be looking at senior housing, the need for housing rehabilitation services, and are often the cohort most likely to sell their homes, relocate away from the community, or change residences within the community. Table 3 below shows that overall, Hancock County’s population is older than the Iowa average, but this also not inconsistent with similarly sized rural counties.

Table 3: Hancock County Median Age of Population by Sex

Median Age in Years	Hancock County 2020	Iowa 2020
Total Population	44.5	38.3
Male Population	42.8	37.2
Female Population	45.6	39.4

Source: U.S. Census

**Table 4: Population by Hispanic/Latino Origin and Race
HANCOCK COUNTY**

Hispanic/Latino Origin and Race	2020 Hancock County Population	Percentage of Hancock County Population	Iowa Percentage of Population
White alone	9,959	92.3	84.5
Black/African American alone	76	0.7	4.1
American Indian/Alaska Native alone	39	0.4	0.5
Asian alone	25	0.2	2.4
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander alone	5	0.0	0.2
Some Other Race alone	186	1.7	2.8
Two or More Races	505	4.7	5.6

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Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	614	5.7	6.8
Total	10,795		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

While Table 4 shows that Hancock County is predominantly White and has a higher percentage of White residents than the State average, it also shows growing diversity, particularly in the number of individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino at 5.7% or Two or More Races at 4.7%.

Table 5: Hancock County Households and Families by Type

2020 Households	Number	Percentage of All Occupied Units
Family Households	3,312	69.2%
Married-Couple Family	2,765	57.8%
With Related Children of Householder Under Age 18	1,249	26.1%
Householder 65 Years and Older	817	17.1%
Male Householder With No Spouse Present	212	4.4%
Female Householder With No Spouse Present	335	7.0%
Non-Family Households	1,475	30.8%
Householder Living Alone	1,213	25.3%
Householder Living Alone Over Age 65	558	11.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The information in Table 5 is important to determining housing need because it identifies the need for larger family homes and the number of single-person households that may need smaller-sized homes. The 69.2% in family households, with 26.1% having children under the age of 18 at home, is higher than the national trend where fewer and fewer households meet this definition of “traditional family.” Even where population is falling, MORE housing units become necessary as fewer individuals occupy individual units of housing. What this means in rural areas is that there can simultaneously be a decrease in overall population and increased need for new housing to accommodate more individual households with fewer people per house.

PART 3: ECONOMICS

The economic data that needs to be analyzed as part of a housing needs assessment includes data about the labor force; the industries and types of jobs available in Hancock County and nearby communities; the education levels needed to obtain the jobs available; the unemployment rate; and the number of households subsisting below the poverty level. This economic data informs community leaders about the price points that are affordable to individuals at a variety of income levels and the sources of the income households have available to satisfy their housing needs.

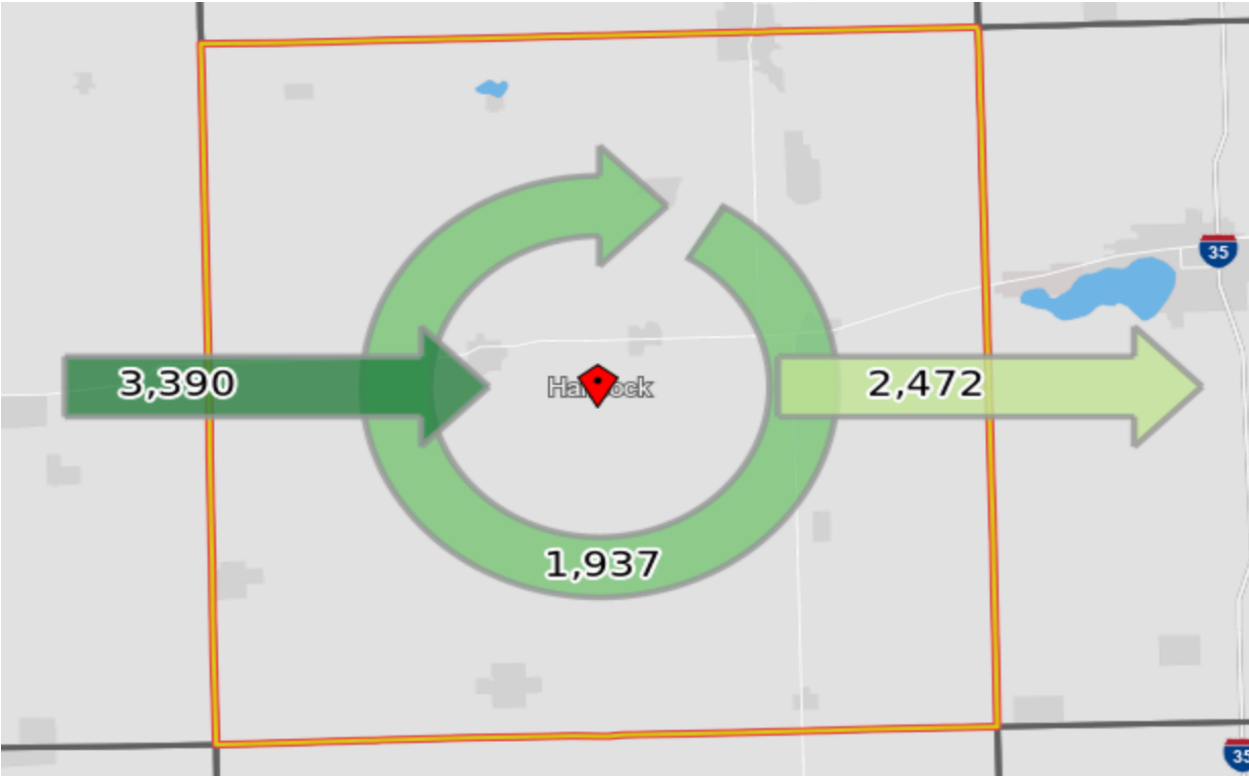
Table 6: Hancock County Employment Job Counts by Where Workers Live

City/Place	Job Count	Share/Percentage
Garner	598	11.2%
Forest City	594	11.2%
Britt	400	7.5%
Mason City	296	5.6%
Clear Lake	240	4.5%
Lake Mills	139	2.6%
Belmond	101	1.9%
Kanawha	89	1.7%
Klemme	76	1.4%
Charles City	65	1.2%
All Other Locations	2,729	51.2%

U.S. Census Bureau “On The Map” 2019

Table 6 above shows the location and number of jobs held by Hancock County residents. Garner and Forest City have the largest number of jobs at 598 and 594, respectively. What is of concern is the 2,729 other communities that Hancock County residents travel to for employment. Research from studies at Iowa State University have shown that if workers live outside of the community they work in, they will eventually either move to the community they work in or they will find a job closer to where they live. For that reason, we examine commuting patterns of workers. In Figure 1 below, the 3,390 people who commute INTO Hancock County represent a possible market for new housing ownership while the 2,472 people who leave the county each day for employment represent a possible loss of population in the future. The number of individuals who both live and work in a county represents the core stability of the population, so increasing that number is a way communities can generate future economic growth.

Figure 1: Hancock County Workforce Commuting Pattern



Source: U.S. Census Bureau “On The Map” 2019

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is used to determine what primary industries are located in each community or county. The statistics that are derived from NAICS show that Hancock County’s largest industry in terms of numbers of employees is Manufacturing with 54.2% of the workforce. The only other category in the double digits is Transportation and Warehousing with 10% of the workforce. This shows a local economy that is heavily dependent on just a handful of employers. Table 7 below shows the number of jobs in each NAICS classification and the percentage of that industry as a part of the total economy.

Table 7: Hancock County Jobs by NAICS Industry Classification

Industry Sector	Number of Jobs	Share of Workforce
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	216	4.1%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	6	0.1%
Utilities	63	1.2%
Construction	126	2.4%
Manufacturing	2,887	54.2%
Wholesale Trade	203	3.8%
Retail Trade	280	5.3%

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Transportation and Warehousing	534	10.0%
Information	24	0.5%
Finance and Insurance	76	1.4%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	17	0.3%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	62	1.2%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	18	0.3%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	14	0.3%
Educational Services	10	0.2%
Health Care and Social Assistance	459	8.6%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	17	0.3%
Accommodation and Food Services	102	1.9%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	213	4.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Tables 8 and 9 below take a look at the levels of education needed for the jobs available in Hancock County. Table 8 shows 541 people with less than a high school education compared to 407 jobs in the community that can be done by someone with less than a high school education. Typically, these may be individuals who have migrated to the community from foreign countries where they had not completed their educations. In the next category there are 4,365 individuals with high school or some college available for 3,178 job positions where less than an Associate's degree is necessary for employment. This represents a surplus of education. The 1,689 individuals with a Bachelor's degree and Graduate or Professional degrees are available to fill the 718 positions that require higher education. This shows why the majority of Hancock County residents leave the county for employment because there is a very large skills mismatch.

Table 8: Hancock County Educational Attainment

Education Level	Number	Percentage
Population 25 years and over	7,652	
Less than 9 th grade	137	1.8%
9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma	404	5.3%
High School graduate (includes equivalency)	2,807	36.7%
Some college, no degree	1,558	20.4%
Associate’s degree	1,057	13.8%
Bachelor’s degree	1,370	17.9%
Graduate or professional degree	319	4.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 9: Hancock County Jobs by Educational Attainment

Education Level	Number of Jobs	Share of Jobs
Less than high school	407	7.6%
High school or equivalent, no college	1,536	28.8%
Some college or Associate degree	1,642	30.8%
Bachelor’s degree or advanced degree	718	13.5%
Educational attainment not available (workers aged 29 or younger)	1,024	19.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Next, we look at the incomes that are generated by the jobs located in the county. The Median Family Income in Hancock County for all households is \$72,182 which means that half of all jobs pay more than \$72,182 and half pay less. The Median Household Income is \$61,957 which is the average of all earned income divided by the number of all income earners. The Median Family Income (MFI) is the figure used by governmental agencies to determine the income eligibility of individuals and households for assistance programs. Table 10 illustrates the Median Family Income for individuals, families, and non-related households. Table 11 shows the number of households reporting earned income from wages. In terms of housing, what we look at is the income available by various types of household formation to satisfy their housing needs. At the high end, what this shows is that Married-couple families with a Median Income of \$78,712 have available to them \$1,968 per month for housing (30% of income/12 months) while a Nonfamily household with a Median Income of \$39,243 has \$981 a month available for

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housing. These numbers will appear again Part 5 of this report where they will be used to determine projected housing needs, construction model, and affordability model for Hancock County.

Table 10: Hancock County Median Household, Family, and Non-Family Median Income

Income	Households	Families	Married-couple families	Nonfamily households
Total Households	4,787	3,312	2,765	1,475
Less than \$10,000	6.6%	5.6%	2.5%	9.8%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	4.7%	2.0%	1.5%	10.3%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	6.6%	3.5%	2.9%	13.7%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	6.7%	5.9%	4.6%	11.5%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	12.3%	11.1%	9.7%	15.1%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	22.7%	23.1%	23.5%	21.1%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	20.5%	22.1%	25.4%	15.3%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	13.6%	18.3%	20.0%	2.4%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	3.0%	4.3%	5.2%	0.1%
\$200,000 or more	3.0%	4.0%	4.5%	0.8%
Median Income	\$61,957	\$72,182	\$78,712	\$39,243

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 11: Hancock County Household Income and Benefits by Income Range

Income Range	Number of Households in Range
Total Households	3,312
Less than \$10,000	185
\$10,000 to \$14,999	65
\$15,000 to \$24,999	116
\$25,000 to \$34,999	196
\$35,000 to \$49,999	368
\$50,000 to \$74,999	766
\$75,000 to \$99,999	733
\$100,000 to \$149,999	605
\$150,000 to \$199,999	144
\$200,000 or more	134

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Wages earned from employment are one way of gaining income. Other ways of gaining income include Social Security, Retirement/Pension benefits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI/Disability), and cash public assistance. Table 12 shows these other types of income, the number of households receiving these types of funds, and the average annual income these income sources provide to their recipients. Remember that an individual household can have

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several sources of income outside of their primary source of income. Something that stands out from this chart is the extremely low wages of self-employed individuals. This may be a source of potential workforce for area employers who may be able to offer a better salary and better benefits.

Table 12: Hancock County Household Income From All Sources

Type of Income	Number of Households	Mean Annual Income
All households	4,787	\$71,449
With earnings	3,727	\$72,426
With wages or salary income	3,543	\$67,702
With self-employment income	796	\$37,770
With interest, dividends, or net rental income	1,339	\$10,678
With Social Security income	1,596	\$20,645
With Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	121	\$10,540
With cash public assistance income or Food Stamps/SNAP	415	X
With cash public assistance	42	\$4,471
With retirement income	770	\$25,591
With other types of income	505	\$7,286

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Another factor to consider in examining what drives housing need in a locality is the poverty level. People living in poverty are not always able to find housing that meets their needs in a location without some kind of assistance. Table 13 shows the poverty rate for Hancock County. It is common for the highest poverty levels to be among female-headed households with minor children present in the home. As young people start their careers and families, we would expect to see them exit the ranks of poverty, but what is concerning about this table is the 14.1% in the 18-34 age group that still linger in the poverty category. This is the tangible evidence of the impact of the high cost of education and the lack of affordability of housing that is delaying this age group from achieving age-appropriate milestones at the same rate as previous generations.

Table 13: Hancock County Poverty Rates

Age Group	Total in Population	Number Living Below Poverty Limit	Percentage of Total in Age Group Living Below Poverty Limit
Population for whom poverty status is determined	10,487	1,149	11.0%
Under 18 years	2,244	290	12.9%
Under 5 years	543	60	11.0%
5 to 17 years	1,701	230	13.5%
18 to 64 years	6,001	584	9.7%
18 to 34 years	1,868	263	14.1%
35 to 64 years	4,133	321	7.8%
60 years and older	2,923	304	10.4%
65 years and older	2,242	275	12.3%
Male	5,297	519	9.8%
Female	5,190	630	12.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The “poverty level” is not a fluid or dynamic number. It isn’t often changed to reflect reality, yet it is still used to identify portions of the populace that are eligible for certain assistance programs. Many programs, therefore, have adopted “percentages of poverty level” as eligibility for their programs. Table 14 shows the most common levels and the number of individuals in each of those ranges.

Table 14: Hancock Residents in Each Percentage of Poverty

Poverty Level	Number of Residents in Range
50% of poverty level	540
125% of poverty level	1,519
150% of poverty level	1,801
185% of poverty level	2,380
200% of poverty level	2,653
300% of poverty level	4,735
400% of poverty level	6,866
500% of poverty level	8,069

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 15 on the next page shows the current 2022 program eligibility for a number of programs that impact housing and social services by income and family size.

Table 15: 2022 Iowa Poverty Levels by Household Size and Program Eligibility

Number in Household	50%	100% HS/EHS	130%	150%	175% LIHEAP	185% WIC	200% WAP
1-person	\$6,795	\$13,590	\$17,667	\$20,385	\$23,783	\$25,142	\$27,184
2-person	\$9,155	\$18,310	\$23,803	\$27,465	\$32,043	\$33,874	\$36,620
3-person	\$11,515	\$23,030	\$29,939	\$34,545	\$40,303	\$42,606	\$46,060
4-person	\$13,875	\$27,750	\$36,075	\$41,625	\$48,563	\$51,338	\$55,500
5-person	\$16,235	\$32,470	\$42,211	\$48,705	\$56,823	\$60,070	\$64,940
6-person	\$18,595	\$37,190	\$48,347	\$55,785	\$65,083	\$68,802	\$74,380
7-person	\$20,955	\$41,910	\$54,483	\$62,865	\$73,343	\$77,534	\$83,820
8-person	\$23,315	\$46,630	\$60,619	\$69,945	\$81,603	\$86,266	\$93,260

Source: Iowa Community Action Association

HS/EHS: Head Start/Early Head Start

LIHEAP: Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

WIC: Women, Infants, and Children

WAP: Weatherization Program

Here are some of the most frequently used assistance programs and their eligibility requirements:

- Head Start/Early Head Start - 100% of poverty
- Shared Visions, National School Lunch Program (Free) - 130% of poverty
- Medicaid – 133-167% of poverty
- Child Care Subsidy - 145% of poverty
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Weatherization = 175% of poverty
- Weatherization program = 200% of poverty
- WIC, Title V – Maternal & Child Health Services; National School Lunch Program (Reduced Price School Lunch) - 185% of poverty
- Early Childhood Iowa Low-Income Preschool Tuition Assistance, HAWK-I = 200% of poverty

PART 4: HOUSING

Part 4 will provide information about how people occupy housing, such as rates of home ownership or rentals. Information about household composition, for example, helps leaders understand the need for housing of different sizes to accommodate larger families compared to a similar need for smaller units to accommodate senior citizens or single individuals. Information about the age and condition of existing housing helps leaders understand what is available on the open market and what will likely need to be replaced in the near future as certain houses become obsolete either for health and safety reasons or because they lack amenities that today’s homebuyers want.

Table 16: Hancock County Housing Units by Occupancy and Tenure

Housing Unit Type	2020
Total Housing Units	5,342
Occupied	4,787
Owner Occupied	3,806
Renter-Occupied	981
Vacant Units	555
Owner-Occupied Vacancy Rate	1.2%
Renter-Occupied Vacancy Rate	3.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 16 shows the split between owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units. The table shows a 80/20 owner/renter split which is less than optimal and should be closer to a 60/40 split. What also isn’t optimal are the two vacancy rates. For owner-occupied housing, anything less than 5% vacancy doesn’t provide enough choice in the market. For renter-occupied housing, vacancy rates of 5-7% are standard as there is higher turnover in rental markets, so the current vacancy rates illustrate a lack of housing choice.

Table 17: Hancock County Household Size

Household Size	Total Number	Percentage of Total	Percentage of Owner-Occupied	Percentage of Renter-Occupied
1-person	1,213	25.3%	22.3%	37.2%
2-person	2,126	44.4%	48.6%	28.0%
3-person	628	13.1%	12.6%	15.3%
4 or more person	820	17.1%	16.5%	19.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

A highlight of Table 17 is that 48.6% of the owner-occupied market is for 2-person households while households of more than just two people, i.e. families with children, account for only 29.1% of the entire owner-occupied housing market. Why this is notable is because many

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communities focus on the family housing when it is increasingly less a percentage of the entire population.

Table 18: Hancock County Age of Housing

Year Structure Built	Number	Percentage
Built 2014 or later	53	1.0%
Built 2010 to 2013	24	0.4%
Built 2000 to 2009	369	6.9%
Built 1990 to 1999	206	3.9%
Built 1980 to 1989	440	8.2%
Built 1970 to 1979	776	14.5%
Built 1960 to 1969	611	11.4%
Built 1950 to 1959	902	16.9%
Built 1940 to 1949	241	4.5%
Built 1939 or earlier	1,720	32.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

As is typical throughout all of Iowa, the age of our housing stock presents a continued challenge. What Table 18 shows is that based on age alone, 98.6% of the housing stock would be eligible for rehabilitation programs to bring major systems up to code or to just maintain expected deterioration. That said, the 32.2% of homes built prior to 1939 are what define the community’s visual character and historic value.

Table 19: Hancock County Housing Units by Type of Structure

Type of Structure	Number	Percentage
Total Housing Units	5,342	
1-unit detached	4,741	88.7%
1-unit attached	64	1.2%
2 units	0	0.0%
3 or 4 units	75	1.4%
5 to 9 units	83	1.6%
10 to 19 units	79	1.5%
20 or more units	145	2.7%
Mobile Homes	155	2.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 19 shows the type of structures that make up the number of housing units in the county. This shows a pretty solid base of single-family homes being used both as owner-occupied and rental housing with a pretty significant lack of multi-family housing opportunities for anyone who would like to rent something more manageable in size, including elderly populations looking for less maintenance requirements.

Table 20: Hancock County Housing Units by Number of Bedrooms

Number of Bedrooms	Number	Percentage
Total Number of Units	5,342	
No bedroom	40	0.9%
1 bedroom	321	6.0%
2 bedrooms	1,190	22.3%
3 bedrooms	2,334	43.7%
4 bedrooms	1,035	19.4%
5 or more bedrooms	413	7.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 20 shows a very pretty good mix of housing units by bedroom size. One note would be the 7.7% of 5-bedroom houses. These are likely older homes and preserving the stock of these homes is important because new builds will likely be much smaller and the families that need larger bedroom homes are likely to be at the lower end of the economic spectrum. That said, some smaller one-bedroom rental units would provide a fuller range of choices.

Table 21: Hancock County Housing Values

Housing Value	Number	Percentage
Owner-Occupied Units	3,806	
Less than \$50,000	672	17.7%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	1,217	32.0%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	624	16.4%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	544	14.3%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	487	12.2%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	241	6.3%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	21	0.6%
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0.0%
MEDIAN HOUSING VALUE	\$100,900	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 21 shows some concerning data. The very low Median Housing Value of \$100,900 versus the cost of new housing creates what is called a “Value Gap” where the cost to build housing in a rural area is compromised by the low value of existing housing in the market. This makes it hard to get loans to build or buy. Additionally, the low value doesn’t drive enough revenue to cover the increasing cost of public services.

Table 22: Hancock County Mortgage Status

Mortgage Status	Number	Percentage
Owner-occupied units	3,806	
Housing units with a mortgage	2,038	53.5%
Housing units without a mortgage	1,768	46.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 22 shows the percentage of owner-occupied homes by their mortgage status and it is notable that there is such a large percentage of housing that does NOT have a mortgage. This lack of a mortgage represents potential equity that could be reinvested in rehabilitation of the housing to add additional years of life to the existing housing stock in the area.

Table 23: Hancock County Owner Monthly Mortgage Costs

Gross Monthly Expenses	Number	Percentage
Housing units with a mortgage	3,806	
Less than \$500	157	7.7%
\$500 to \$999	912	44.7%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	620	30.4%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	193	9.5%
\$2,000 to \$2,499	83	4.1%
\$2,500 to \$2,999	29	1.4%
\$3,000 or more	44	2.2%
Median Monthly Expenses = \$978		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 23 shows that there is a broad range of mortgages being paid by owner-occupants, but that the 82.8% paying less than \$1,500 per month is reflective of the lower value of the housing shown in Table 21.

Table 24: Hancock County Mortgage Expenses as a Percentage of Household Income

Monthly Mortgage Expenses	Number	Percentage
Less than 20%	1,289	63.8%
20% to 24.9%	214	10.6%
25% to 29.9%	126	6.2%
30% to 34.9%	45	2.2%
35% or more	345	17.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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Breaking down the mortgages shown in Table 23, Table 24 shows that even with lower housing values, there are still 19.3% of the owner-occupants paying over 30% of their household income toward their mortgage. That is officially considered “cost burdened.” Because banks will only lend on a loan-to-value ratio of 80/20, the percentage of “cost burdened” households are likely from the “housing units without a mortgage” shown on Table 22. These may be elderly households where the taxes alone take too large a proportion of their income or it may also be households that have experienced a more recent loss of income leaving them with mortgages underwater.

Table 25: Hancock County Gross Monthly Rental Rates

Gross Monthly Rent	Number	Percentage
Occupied units paying rent	846	
Less than \$500	158	18.7%
\$500 to \$999	544	64.3%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	109	12.9%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	10	1.2%
\$2,000 to \$2,499	17	2.0%
\$2,500 to \$2,999	0	0.0%
\$3,000 or more	8	0.9%
No rent paid	135	
Median = \$755		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 25 shows the number of rental units available at various price points. While it looks like most of the housing is clustered at the lower end of the price spectrum, all of this is relative to what local incomes can support.

Table 26: Hancock County Gross Rent As Percentage of Household Income

Percentage of Household Income Spent on Rent	Number	Percentage
Occupied units paying rent	832	
Less than 15%	236	28.4%
15.0% to 19.9%	112	13.5%
20.0% to 24.9%	80	9.6%
25.0% to 29.9%	82	9.9%
30.0% to 34.9%	26	3.1%
35.0% or more	296	35.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

“Cost burdening” is a larger problem in renter-occupied housing where there is no check to the market, like banks provide for owner-occupied units, that keeps people from getting into tight

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financial situations by living in housing that is too expensive for their income levels. With 38.7% of all renters in Hancock County paying more than 30% of their income for housing, the cost burdened issue shows a need for new, affordable, multi-family housing to provide better choices in the marketplace. This cost burdening statistic is one of the highest in the region.

Table 27: Hancock County Building Permits

Permit Year	Single Family Units	Duplex Units	Tri/Four-plex Unit	Multi-Family Units	Total Units	Single-Family Valuation	Multi-Family Valuation
2000 to 2004	97	1	0	0	98	\$131,891	\$0
2005 to 2009	56	4	2	0	62	\$183,926	\$0
2010 to 2015	49	2	0	0	51	\$175,755	\$0
2017	10	0	0	0	10	\$187,400	\$0
2018	5	0	0	1	6	\$293,000	\$940,000
2019	5	0	0	1	6	\$293,000	\$940,000
2020	4	0	0	2	6	\$246,936	\$650,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Building Permit Survey

Table 27 shows what has been built in the county in more recent years. The average of 10-20 units of new housing per year is about 50% less new construction compared to the early 2000s. The price of new single-family housing is also reflected in the increased valuation that has doubled since the early 2000s.

PART 5: PROJECTED HOUSING NEEDS, CONSTRUCTION MODEL, AND AFFORDABILITY MODELS

This part of the Hancock County Housing Needs Assessment will use all the data that has been presented in the previous sections to construct a model that can be used to determine how many housing units will need to be constructed by 2030 to accommodate the expected population and continued economic stability. Models were also constructed to determine the price ranges that are affordable by various income levels. Then, using these models, the report concludes with recommendations on steps that can be taken to achieve a healthy mix of housing for the future.

The first step in constructing the model was to project the population based on two different scenarios. Growth is normally projected by the following equation:

Growth = Population minus Mortality (deaths), plus Natality (births), plus Immigration (people moving to the county), minus Emigration (people moving away from the county). While it is unlikely that the county's population will grow significantly, we can plan for a continued stable population and we can plan for the possibility of unexpected growth that could happen through positive economic development trends. Two scenarios for population are presented in Table 28. The first assumes a growth rate of 1% year-over-year which would be a positive outcome. The second scenario estimates a 1% loss of population that has been consistent with the population loss of the last two decades. The true number should fall somewhere between those two estimates.

Next, we need to figure out how many housing units this aggregate number of people need when they are split into their expected household formations, which is 2.19 persons per household, according to the 2020 U.S. Census.

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Table 28: Projected Housing Needs 2023-2030

Projected Population Scenarios HH Size 2.19	Total Housing Units Needed	Housing Units Available in 2023	Minus Projected Vacancy Rate @ 7%	Minus Projected Annual Demolitions	Adjusted Total Housing Units Available	New Units Needed/Excess Units
2020	4,787	5,342	(374)	(5)	4,963	176
# (-231) 2010-2020 actual increase	4,556	5,342			4,963	407
2024		5,342		(5)	4,958	
2025		5,342		(5)	4,953	
2026		5,342		(5)	4,948	
2027		5,342		(5)	4,943	
2028		5,342		(5)	4,938	
2029		5,342		(5)	4,933	
2030		5,342		(5)	4,928	
1% projected growth by 2030	10,816/2.19 = 4,939	5,342			4,928	11
Projected Population 2030 @ 1% population loss/HH Size 2.19	10,602 needing 4,841 units of housing total	4,533				87

Source: Iowa State University Extension & Outreach, 2022

The far right column (column 7) in Table 28 above shows the total number of housing units needed based on four different scenarios. The current situation is the top line number that shows Hancock County having an excess of 176 units. The second line contemplates how many housing units would be needed if the next decade has as much population loss as the last one did. In that scenario, Hancock County has an excess of 407 units. The next two scenarios look at the year 2030 and show a need for 11 units if 1% growth is achieved and an excess of 87 units if there is a 1% population loss.

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Column 2 of Table 28 shows the total number of housing units that currently exist. The 2020 U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) showed a total of 5,342 units, as seen in Table 20.

Column 3 accounts for the vacancy rate. Houses that are vacant may or may not be able to satisfy housing need depending on the reason for the vacancy. Some vacancies are temporary, such as rental units being cleaned or repaired between tenants, or some owner-occupied housing structures that are for sale where the previous owners have already moved to another structure. Other vacancies have longer tenures and may be vacant because they have been foreclosed upon by a bank, their owner has passed away and the home is part of an estate in probate, or their owner is hospitalized or in a nursing home but retains ownership of their home. The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development does not include the homes of “snowbirds” as vacant when the house is empty for six months or less per year and is the owner’s primary residence for tax purposes. A house is considered vacant if the U.S. Postal Service does not deliver mail to that address and if there are no utilities connected at the address. Table 16 showed a current vacancy rate of 1.2% for owner-occupied structures and a 3.7% vacancy rate for rental units. A vacancy rate of 7% is considered “normal,” so 7% was used to calculate the construction formula. Vacancy as a percentage of all housing units in service can, and does, change over time, so using 7% is a good rule of thumb. What we don’t have explanation for is the difference between the vacancy rate and the excess number of housing units that exist. There are a lot of possible explanations, but the data isn’t showing a definitive answer. Local investigation will be required and a windshield survey is recommended.

Next, we have to account for the number of units that are demolished annually (column 4, Table 28). An average of five demolitions per year was used to describe houses that will go out of service. These are houses that exist currently that will go out of service, most likely because of fires and storm damage, houses purchased and demolished to make way for new development, or houses that are unfit for human habitation.

When Columns 3 and 4 are factored into the formula, the 5,342 housing units that exist become 4,963 units that are actually available to house the population. This is shown in Column 5.

Column 7 then becomes the projected housing need that must be satisfied to meet the need of the population broken into households of 2.19 persons. This shows a beginning excess of 176 units of housing that becomes a need for 11 units by 2030. A 1% loss of population year-on-year would result in an excess of housing by 2030 of 87 units.

When interpreting all the columns together, Table 28 shows that the housing that exists calls for a rehabilitation program and a new construction program. The age of housing shown on Table 18 also supports this conclusion. The loss of population scenario shown in the second set of calculations only makes the need for rehabilitation programs more necessary as new development would become less likely and the need to retain and maintain existing housing, therefore, that much more important.

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What this construction model also suggests is that the age of housing alone suggests that there may be a market for new or custom-built housing that is a better match for the amenities that buyers are now looking for on the open market that may not exist in Hancock County’s communities. Also, new housing may be needed to meet the special needs of seniors who may desire housing that comes with additional supportive services or independent living in houses that are designed with zero-entry, fewer interior stairs, wider doorways, and safer bathroom features. Satisfying this need would call for new construction as the goal is unlikely to be met by adapting existing structures in the community.

To guide the development of future housing, Hancock County leaders should also take into consideration the affordability of housing based on the incomes of the area’s residents and workforce. To aid in those decisions, Table 29 shows what Low and Moderate Income Households can afford to spend on housing annually and monthly.

Table 29: Housing Affordability Based on Hancock County’s \$72,182 Median Family Income

Percentage of Median Family Income (MFI)	Annual Income	30% of Gross Income Available for Housing	30% of Gross Income Available Monthly for Housing
100% of MFI	\$72,182	\$21,654	\$1,804
80% of MFI	\$57,745	\$17,323	\$1,443
50% of MFI	\$36,091	\$10,827	\$902
30% of MFI	\$21,654	\$6,496	\$541

Source: Iowa State University Extension & Outreach, 2022

The Median Family Income (MFI) for Hancock County in 2020 was \$72,182. Households earning less than 80% of MFI are often eligible for a variety of public assistance to help make housing more affordable for them. Renters at these income levels may qualify for Section 8 Housing Vouchers, elderly housing programs, or low cost units that are constructed using U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD), or Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). These are programs where eligibility is determined by the income of the household receiving assistance. This information is also useful to share with potential developers to help developers determine what their clients will be able to afford and the likelihood of finding tenants able to pay the rents necessary to make their project profitable.

Table 29 shows how much people should spend on their housing based on their income range and spending no more than 30% of their adjusted gross income on their housing. For renters, this dollar amount should include their rent, utilities, and insurance. For home owners, this dollar amount should include their principal and interest on their mortgage loan, taxes, insurance, utilities, and maintenance. Table 30 is focused on owner-occupants. Table 31 shows what the price range of housing needs to be to be affordable to homeowners in order to not go over the 30% of adjusted gross income toward total housing expenses. Considered together with the previous analysis showing an excess of housing units, this information is needed to

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determine whether it is price and affordability that is a mismatch between the incomes available to support housing and the housing available on the open market.

Table 30: Monthly Housing Affordability by Income Level

Income Range	Number of Households in County	Monthly Housing Affordability Bottom of Range	Monthly Housing Affordability at Top of Range
Total Households	3,312		
Less than \$10,000	185		\$250
\$10,000 to \$14,999	65	\$250	\$375
\$15,000 to \$24,999	116	\$375	\$625
\$25,000 to \$34,999	196	\$625	\$875
\$35,000 to \$49,999	368	\$875	\$1,250
\$50,000 to \$74,999	766	\$1,250	\$1,875
\$75,000 to \$99,999	733	\$1,875	\$2,500
\$100,000 to \$149,999	605	\$2,500	\$3,750
\$150,000 to \$199,999	144	\$3,750	\$4,975
\$200,000 or More	134	\$4,975	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Iowa State University Extension & Outreach, 2022

Table 31: Price Range of Homes Affordable By Income

Income Range	Monthly Housing Affordability Bottom of Range	Monthly Housing Affordability Top of Range	Price Range of Home Affordable at Bottom of Range	Price Range of Home Affordable at Top of Range
Less than \$10,000		\$250	0	\$20,000
\$10,000 to \$14,999	\$250	\$375	\$20,000	\$30,000
\$15,000 to \$24,999	\$375	\$625	\$30,000	\$50,000
\$25,000 to \$34,999	\$625	\$875	\$50,000	\$70,000
\$35,000 to \$49,999	\$875	\$1,250	\$70,000	\$100,000
\$50,000 to \$74,999	\$1,250	\$1,875	\$100,000	\$150,000
\$75,000 to \$99,999	\$1,875	\$2,500	\$150,000	\$200,000
\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$2,500	\$3,750	\$200,000	\$300,000
\$150,000 to \$199,999	\$3,750	\$4,975	\$300,000	\$398,000
\$200,000 or More	\$4,975		\$398,000	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Iowa State University Extension & Outreach, 2022