



New Opportunities, Inc.
Head Start and Early Head Start
Community Needs Assessment
2021

Table of Contents

Introduction..... 3

Executive Summary 7

 Methodology 7

 Significant Findings..... 7

 Utilizing the Community Assessment..... 9

New Opportunities, Inc. Service Area..... 10

Demographics..... 11

 Children with Disabilities..... 15

 Dual Language Learners 16

 Children in Foster Care..... 17

 Data Regarding Health Needs 18

 Data Regarding Nutritional Needs 19

 Data Regarding Social Needs..... 21

 Data Regarding Child Care Needs 23

 Data Regarding Expectant Mothers 24

Additional Information 25

Recommendations 28

Sources..... 30

Introduction

New Opportunities Inc., (NOI), was formed in 2006, as the result of a merger between the New View Substance Abuse Treatment Center and Community Opportunities, a community action agency with over 40 years of experience serving low-income children and families.

NOI, a private nonprofit community action agency, operates an umbrella of services and programs, designed to improve the lives of low-income families. The agency served nearly 10,000 individuals in its seven county area between October 2020 and September 2021. NOI's mission: *helping people, changing lives* is evident every day through outreach centers (also known as Family Development Centers) located in each of the seven counties and its many programs that provide services and link individuals to an array of community resources.

NOI is classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. NOI is also a "community action agency" as defined in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, as amended. To ensure its responsiveness to community circumstances and needs, NOI, like all community action agencies, is governed by a tripartite Board of Directors consisting of one-third low-income persons, one-third local elected officials, and one-third private sector organization representatives representing all counties served. NOI is funded by local, state and federal sources.

New Opportunities, Inc. administers more than 35 programs. These programs include (but are not limited to):

- Early Head Start & Head Start
- Women, Infants & Children (WIC) provides child health screenings and nutrition education

- Maternal Health provides care coordination and screening services for pregnant and post-partum women
- Child Health provides care coordination services to help families access regular and periodic screening services for their children, ages 0-22 years
- Food Pantries provide nutrition to families when their budget otherwise does not allow
- Substance Abuse Treatment provides assistance to families when substance use/abuse becomes a concern
- Financial Literacy Counseling provides budgeting skills and assistance with understanding a credit report
- Free Clinics of Iowa (provided by Free Clinics of Iowa) which is held at the New Opportunities facility and provides free health services to children and their families
- Energy Assistance provides assistance to families with covering the costs of their heating bills during the winter months
- I-Smile provides dental screenings, oral health education and fluoride varnish to low income children, including those in Head Start and Early Head Start

Additional support is provided by outside agencies as necessary with which NOI has longstanding partnerships. The NOI Head Start program collaborates with mental health facilities such as Plains Area Mental Health, Lutheran Services of Iowa, Mid Iowa Therapy, Family Crisis Centers and Crisis Intervention and Advocacy in cases of domestic violence, AEAs (Area Education Agencies) for disability screening and services, School Districts, Region XII Council of Governments for transportation, DHS (Department of Human Services), and FADSS (Family Development and Self Sufficiency Program) to name a few.

The majority of NOI's services, including Head Start, are provided to residents in seven counties in West Central Iowa: Audubon, Calhoun, Carroll, Dallas, Greene, Guthrie and Sac. NOI provides Early Head Start home based services for all of Carroll, Dallas, Greene and Guthrie Counties and has two Early Head Start center based sites in Carroll and Dallas Counties. Currently the New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start program serves 247 children in its 20 classrooms covering the seven county service area. There are 36 children and expectant mothers served by the Early Head Start home based program and 64 children served in eight classrooms through the Early Head Start center based program.

As specified in the Head Start Performance Standards, NOI has included in this Community Needs Assessment the required data to describe the community strengths, needs, and resources.

Executive Summary

Methodology – The Community Assessment Process

The Community Assessment is information related to the trends, available resources and challenges facing Head Start eligible children and their families. Local and state data from a variety of sources (e.g. U.S. Census Bureau, Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Kids Count, Child and Family Policy Center, Iowa Department of Human Services, the State Data Center of Iowa and Child Trends Data Bank, National Center for Education Statistics and Child Care Resource & Referral) was collected and analyzed as reflected in this report. Data from NOI’s Head Start program (mainly from the Program Information Report) has been included. Also included in the 2021 Community Needs Assessment is a survey of households utilizing Head Start and other assistance programs. The survey was conducted in Audubon, Carroll, Calhoun, Dallas, Greene, Guthrie and Sac.

Significant Findings

Analyzing the key data as shown further on in the report, population continues to decrease in most of the rural counties served by New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start. Despite these downward trends, the number of children age 0-4 has increased in all but Carroll County. While these increases are not significant, it will be interesting to see if this trend continues.

Data reflects the percentage of children age 0-17 eligible for free and reduced school meals is increasing in nearly all communities served by the program. Audubon, Greene, and Sac counties stand at nearly 50% of children eligible for free and reduced lunches. All of these counties

exceed the state average. These high percentages support the need for free lunch programs, especially when schools are not in session.

Child care continues to be a major issue in the rural communities served by New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start. In counties like Calhoun, 70% of children in need of child care go without a registered child care spot. Sac County is a close second with 66% of children in need of high quality child care.

Perhaps one of the greatest surprises in the data in 2021 was that of preschool enrollment for three and four year old children. Kids Count Data Reports reflect that under 50% of children are enrolled in a preschool program in Audubon, Calhoun, Carroll, Guthrie, and Sac Counties. This would indicate that more than 50% of children are entering Kindergarten unprepared for the educational experience.

In looking at the Head Start and Early Head Start slots available by county, data indicates that less than 20% of eligible children are enrolled in Head Start/Early Head Start in Audubon and Calhoun counties. Each of these counties encompass a rather large geographical area (Audubon, 443.58 square miles; Calhoun, 572.29 square miles). In Audubon, the New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start program operates one shared classroom with the Audubon Community School District. In Calhoun County, the program offers Head Start classrooms in Rockwell City and Lake City in partnership with the South Central Calhoun Community School District. Early Head Start is not offered in either of these counties. Sac and Guthrie Counties are just over 20% of eligible children being served at 26.26% and 24.69% respectively.

While the vast majority of communities served by the New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start and Early Head Start programs are very rural, Dallas County includes portions of the suburbs of Des

Moines and is more urban. Dallas County is the largest county by square mile and has the highest population both overall and of children under five years old. This county continues to grow year after year substantially. The data being reported on currently reflects a 3.56% increase in population. The Head Start program maintains five sessions in the county to accommodate the high number of children of Dallas County. Additionally, with the increasing diversity in Dallas county, specifically Perry (which is nearly 35% Latino or Hispanic population), the New Opportunities, Inc. Early Head Start and Head Start programs have continued to reach out to all ethnic populations and work closely within the community to help meet the unique needs this diversity introduces. Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms feature bi-lingual staff as well as a bi-lingual Family Advocate and Early Head Start Home Visitor.

An additional significant finding as a result of the Community Needs Assessment was that of poverty levels in Perry, Iowa. The table below represents the poverty level of all ages in the counties served by New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start but also includes that of the Perry community.

County	Poverty Rate (all ages)
Audubon	11.67%
Calhoun	12.57%
Carroll	8.58%
Dallas	5.22%
Perry	16.61%
Greene	8.28%
Guthrie	8.68%
Sac	9.87%

*Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-19.

When families were surveyed in all counties as part of the 2021 Community Needs Assessment, it was noted that they currently need the most help with money management, housing, and health care (in that order). They also responded that stress in their family was most often caused by lack of money, child behaviors and health concerns. This survey provides a clear indication that there is a great need for families to be supported and connected to community resources to meet their basic needs. These services are a portion of the family services component of the Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

In addition to family needs, the surveys conducted this year showed some key messages about child care. First, that the costs of child care are a burden to local families. Secondly, that there are not enough high quality child care providers in the smaller rural communities to meet the demand.

For reference, the table below shows the numbers of surveys completed for purposes of this needs assessment.

County	Number of Surveys Completed
Audubon	22
Calhoun	38
Carroll	96
Dallas	19
Greene	30
Guthrie	33
Sac	31

Utilizing the Community Assessment

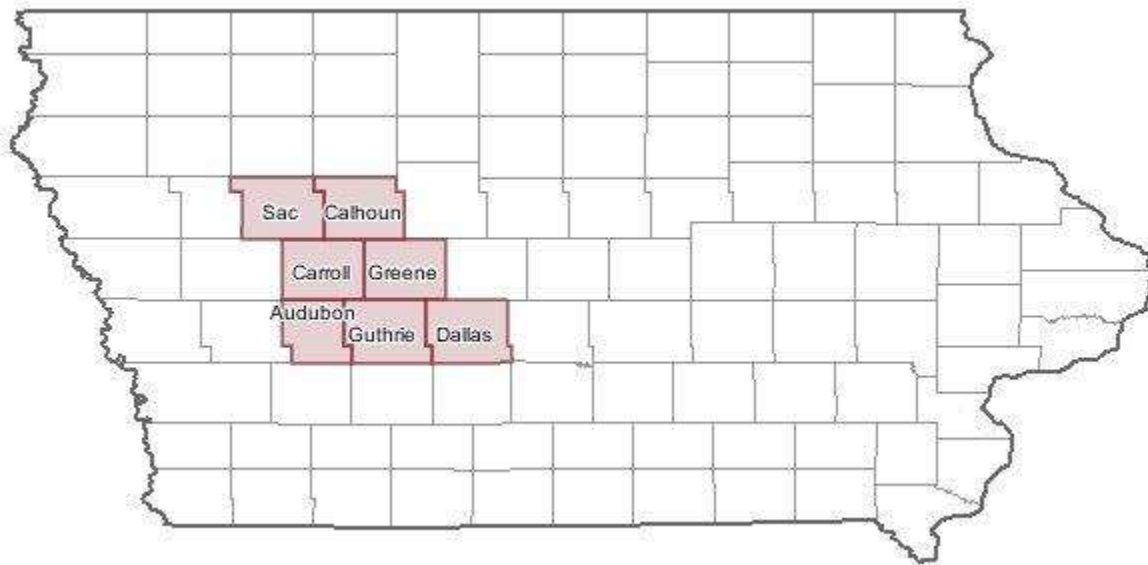
The NOI Community Assessment will be presented to the Policy Council at their meeting in January of 2022. The Policy Council will continue to review this document and will identify significant data. During the January 2022 Governing Board meeting, the Board of Directors will also review the assessment.

The Community Assessment will serve as a guide for program staff and the Policy Council in identifying both the needs of children and families in poverty and the available resources in the communities. These findings will impact NOI’s Head Start program planning, development and evaluation.

New Opportunities, Inc. Service Area

NOI's Head Start program covers seven counties in west central Iowa: Audubon, Calhoun, Carroll, Dallas, Greene, Guthrie and Sac. In these seven counties, there are an estimated 10,585 people living in poverty (as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau). Of these 10,585 people, 1,024 of those are children birth to age 5 (As reported by The U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2015-2019). The New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start and Early Head Start programs serve a total of 347 children at this time, or 34% of all children 0-5 living in poverty in the seven county area.

The New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start seven county area covers a total of 3,920 square miles.



Demographics

Population information as per the 2010 Census and the 2015-2019 U.S. Census Bureau

American Community Survey:

Category	Counties						
	Audubon	Calhoun	Carroll	Dallas	Greene	Guthrie	Sac
Population 2010 Census	6,119	9,670	20,816	66,135	9,336	10,954	10,350
2015-2019 Population Estimate	5,571	9,744	20,281	87,099	8,950	10,669	9,802
% of increase/decrease	-9.84%	0.76%	-2.64%	24.07%	-4.31%	-2.67%	-5.59%
2015-2019 Population 0-4 years	330	567	1,306	6,760	517	564	580

***Source: US Census Bureau.*

The increasing/decreasing population in the seven counties served by the New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start program is a continuing trend. Current data reflects that Dallas County has continued to grow by substantial amounts, while Audubon, Carroll, Greene, Guthrie and Sac have decreased in population. Population estimates show a slight increase in Calhoun County. Additional Census information regarding the population in the seven county service area is represented in the table below.

Category	Counties							State
	Audubon	Calhoun	Carroll	Dallas	Greene	Guthrie	Sac	
% Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	0.6%	1.9%	2.5%	6.1%	2.9%	2.7%	3.1%	6.0%
Race other than white alone % (2015-2019 ACS)	3.05%	4.38%	2.63%	9.43%	4.23%	3.26%	2.64%	N/A
% Children below poverty level (0-5 yrs) (2015-2019 ACS)	27.8%	20.9%	7.4%	7.0%	14.2%	14.8%	17.5%	13.79%
% Children receiving WIC (0-4 yrs) -2019	22.2%	16.0%	25.7%	8.5%	26.0%	22.9%	11.8%	25.9%
Child abuse, confirmed children under 5 -2020	4	11	37	51	17	21	4	N/A
Individuals receiving food assistance-2019	8.0%	7.5%	7.6%	3.4%	10.3%	7.9%	6.4%	9.9%
% Eligible for free or reduced lunch-2019	45.0%	41.7%	42.1%	21.3%	45.3%	39.8%	46.6%	43.0%
Unemployment rates-2019	2.5%	2.6%	1.9%	2.0%	2.4%	3.0%	2.4%	2.7%
High School graduation rates-2019	100%	95.8%	98.1%	97.9%	89.7%	96.3%	94.5%	91.6%
Uninsured Children (2014-2018)	2.7%	1.6%	0.5%	1.8%	0.8%	2.2%	0.8%	3.1%

***Sources: US Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Iowa Kids Count Data Reports. 2019, Department of Health and Human Services.*

While Dallas County continues to have the highest population within the seven county service area and that population is growing by leaps and bounds, it is also the most urban, providing a

greater number of opportunities for work and income. Noted above, Dallas County has the lowest percentage of children living below the poverty level at 7.0%. Taking into consideration all Dallas County residents, the county remains the lowest poverty level at 5.22% according to, the U.S. Census 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates. Conversely, Audubon and Calhoun Counties have the highest poverty rates of children age 0-5, though Greene, Guthrie, and Sac Counties also exceed the state percentage of children age 0-5 below poverty (shown above).

The population in every county within the service area of New Opportunities Head Start, with the exception of Dallas and Calhoun, has decreased in overall population since the 2010 U.S. Census; however, despite the decrease in overall population, the number, and most often, percentage of those in poverty increased. See the following table:

Poverty All Ages	Number of people in poverty 2010	Percentage of population in poverty 2010	Number of people in poverty 2015-2019 ACS	Percentage of population in poverty 2015-2019
Audubon	595	10.0%	632	11.7%
Calhoun	1,134	12.0%	1,133	12.6%
Carroll	1,848	9.1%	1,707	8.6%
Dallas	4,212	6.4%	4,521	5.2%
Greene	1,023	11.1%	731	8.3%
Guthrie	1,116	10.4%	914	8.7%
Sac	1,062	10.5%	947	9.9%

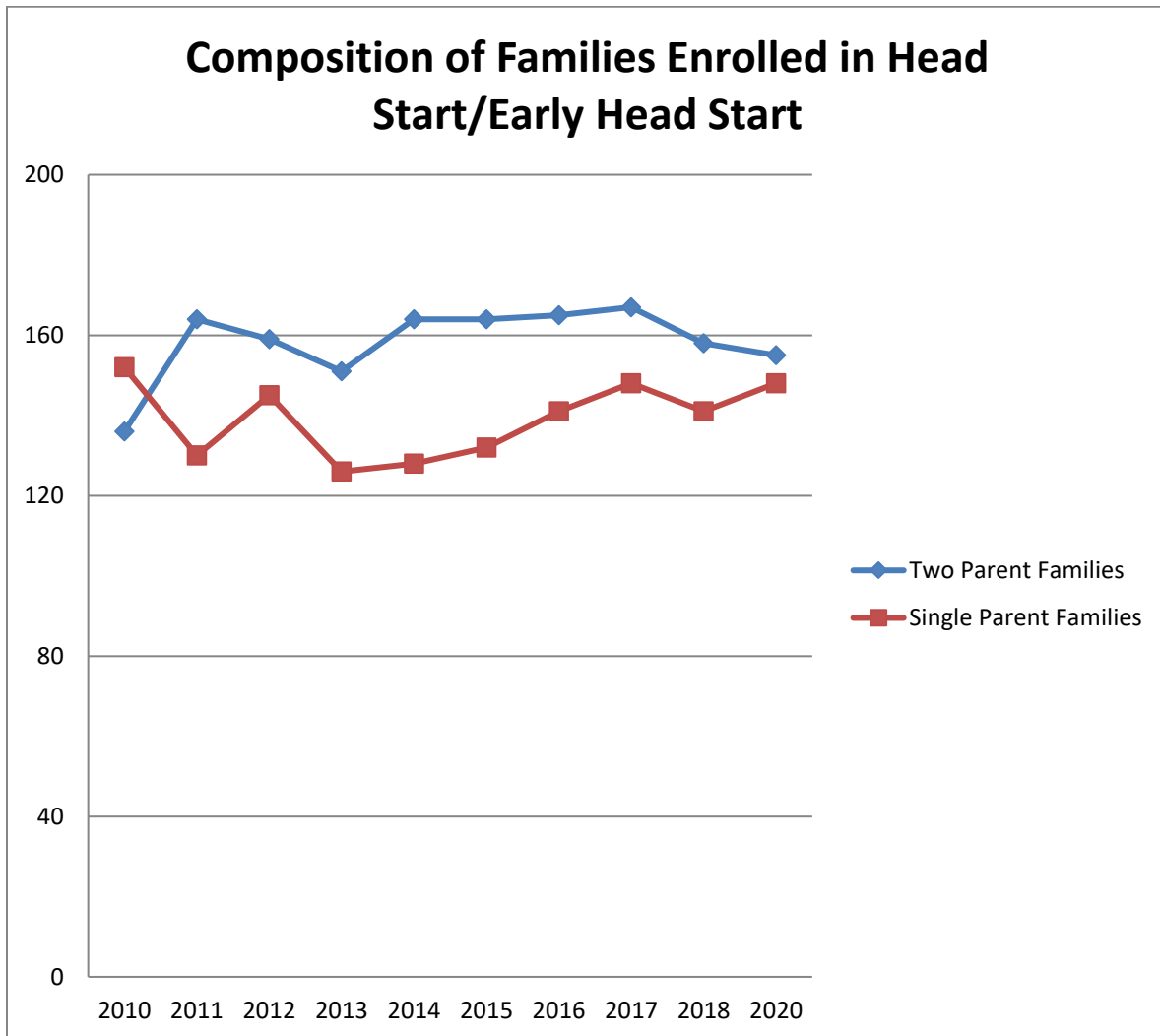
**Source: State of Iowa Data Center(2010), U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates.*

The number of individuals living below the poverty level in the counties served by New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start has remained fairly consistent in the past ten years. The following table provides additional information regarding individuals living in poverty within the counties.

Category	Counties						
	Audubon	Calhoun	Carroll	Dallas	Greene	Guthrie	Sac
Total Families	1,596	2,672	5,681	23,525	2,484	3,090	2,880
Families below Poverty	137	235	318	682	154	161	204
Married Couple Family below Poverty	49	68	176	378	47	83	80
Percentage of Married Couple homes below poverty	3.7%	3.2%	3.7%	1.9%	2.3%	3.2%	3.4%
Female householder below Poverty	88	156	111	208	77	65	104
Percentage of Female householder homes below poverty	47.1%	41.1%	18.8%	8.8%	24%	21.8%	33%

**Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019.

There are several key points gleaned from looking at the number and makeup of the families living in poverty. Female householder families are significantly more likely to be living in poverty than two parent families. Further, in Audubon and Calhoun Counties, nearly 50% of female householder families are living in poverty. In looking at the New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start data from 2010 through 2020 (missing 2019 due to COVID 19 and no data reporting), the following table reflects the household makeup of enrolled families.



**Source: New Opportunities, Inc. Program Information Report (PIR). 2010-2020.

The graph above shows that the program sees almost an even split of two parent and single parent families from year to year. Given the statistics that show single parent families are more likely to live in poverty, this data is not surprising but indicates that the New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start program is reaching the right populations within the communities it serves.

Further, the state of Iowa data shows that 7.2% of all Iowa households live in poverty. Several counties in the New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start service area exceed that percentage, Audubon (8.6%) and Calhoun (8.8%).

Of the 303 families enrolled in either Head Start or Early Head Start throughout the 2020-2021 school year, a total of 155 families were two parent families, and 148 families were single parent families. According to the American Community Survey information represented in the preceding table, the greatest number of families in poverty in the New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start seven county area are families that are female-headed. The report shows a total of 1,892 families living below the poverty level, 809 of which are female-headed.

Children with Disabilities

Children under age five identified with disabilities are served by the two area education agencies (AEA – Part C service providers in Iowa) responsible for the New Opportunities, Inc. service area. Services provided through these agencies include audiology, speech and language, physical therapy, occupational therapy, psychological services, etc. The following table provides data on the number of children with disabilities, served by the Area Education Agencies) in the New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start area:

County	Children Birth to 5 with disabilities
Audubon	13
Calhoun	33
Carroll	65
Dallas	322
Greene	31
Guthrie	38
Sac	24

***Source: Heartland and Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency.*

Dual Language Learners And Diversity

There are families in all of the counties in the New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start service area who speak languages other than English as their primary language. In the 2020-2021 school year 44 Head Start children and 20 Early Head Start children came to the classroom from a home where the primary language spoken was not English.

The majority of the population in the rural Iowa counties served by New Opportunities, Inc. consists of white, non-Hispanic residents. According to the Community Health Needs Assessment Reports found at (<http://www.communitycommons.org>) and derived from US Census data, in all counties served by New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start, with the exception of Dallas, less than 5% of the population identifies as a race other than white alone. Dallas County reflects 9.43% of the population identifies as a race other than white alone. In all counties, with the exception of Dallas County, less than 4% of the population identifies as Hispanic. Dallas County remains the county with the highest rate of Hispanic population with 6.1%. This, however, is not the complete picture of Dallas County. The New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start

program provides Head Start to 51 three and four year olds and provides Early Head Start (including both home based and center based options) to 44 expectant mothers and children age 0-3 in Perry, Iowa. Perry is a community of approximately 7,599 residents (Source: State Data Center of Iowa, U.S. Census Bureau 2019 American Community Survey) that boasts a large meat packing plant (Tyson Foods). Perry’s unique diversity includes over 2,600 Hispanic residents (34.9%). Further, while the child poverty rate in Dallas County is the lowest of the seven counties served by New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start at only 7%, the city of Perry shows 16.6% of individuals in the community living below the poverty level.

Children in foster care

The following table illustrates the number of children currently living in foster care within the New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start service area.

County	Number of children living in foster care (all ages)
Audubon	17
Calhoun	34
Carroll	60
Dallas	87
Greene	36
Guthrie	28
Sac	17

***Source: Iowa Data Center: Iowa Department of Human Services, 2020.*

2019 KIDS COUNT data derived from the U.S. Census (2015-2019 American Community Survey) for the NOI service area indicate that in five out of the seven counties served by the NOI Head

Start program fewer than half of four year olds attended preschool. The following table shows the percentage of three and four year olds who attended preschool.

Audubon	Calhoun	Carroll	Dallas	Greene	Guthrie	Sac
36.2%	42.1%	42.3%	55.7%	58.6%	36.6%	33.3%

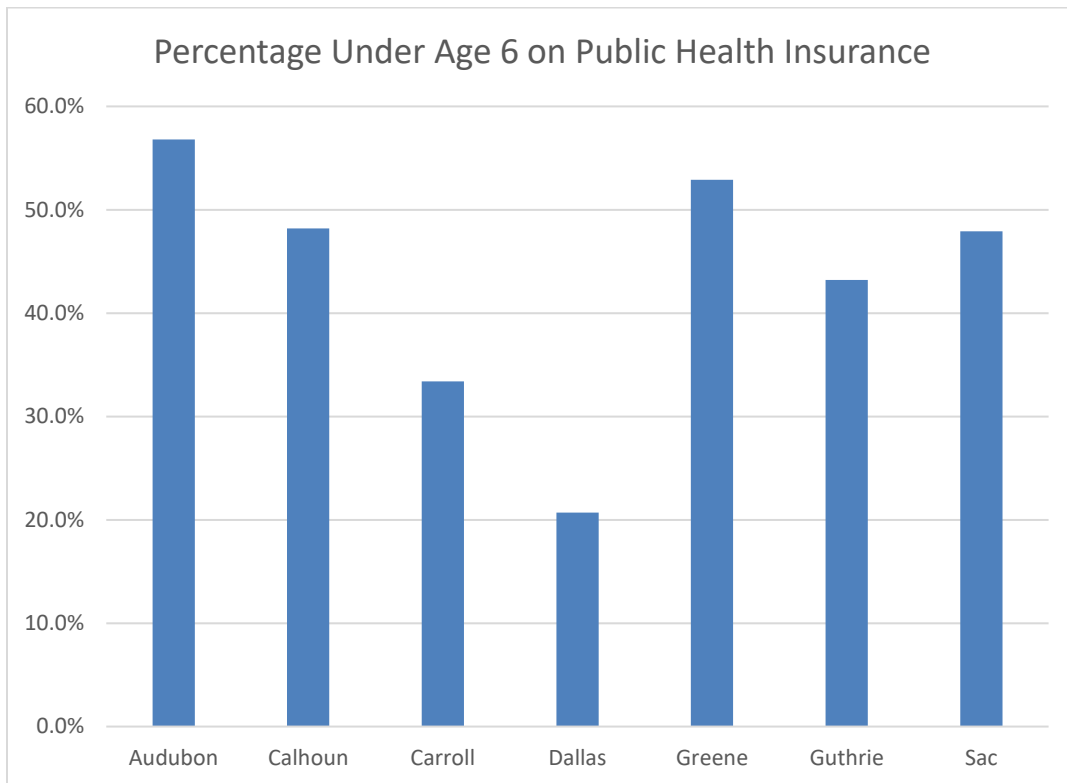
***Source: Iowa Kids Count Data Reports, 2019*

While Dallas and Greene Counties showed an increase from prior year data in the percentage of children enrolled in and attending preschool, worth taking note are the decreases in Audubon, Calhoun, Carroll, Guthrie, and Sac Counties. All of these counties are also below the state percentage of 46.6%. Audubon County shows a 22% decrease in number of three and four year olds attending preschool from 2012-2016 data to 2015-2019 data.

The state-funded “universal preschool” program has not been implemented by all school districts or in all elementary buildings. One such district is Waukee. Waukee resides in Dallas County, the largest county in the New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start service area. The Waukee Community School District, according to certified enrollment for 2020-2021 reported by the Iowa Department of Education, is within the top ten school districts in the state for highest enrollment. The district surpasses districts such as West Des Moines and Council Bluffs, however, is the only district in its size range without Statewide Voluntary Preschool. This statistical data supports the need for Head Start educational services in the NOI Head Start service area and places added emphasis on the need in the Waukee area.

Data regarding health needs

U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey, 5 Year Estimates provides the total percentage of population under age 6 on public health insurance, either with or without other coverage, in the seven county service area.



****Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey.**

The Community Health Needs Assessment Reports found at

<http://www.communitycommons.org> and derived from US Census data shows the percentage of uninsured population under age 18 in the seven county New Opportunities, Inc. service area.

The percentages are as follows:

Audubon	Calhoun	Carroll	Dallas	Greene	Guthrie	Sac	State of Iowa
1.63%	1.87%	0.25%	2.67%	0.57%	1.94%	0.87%	2.98%

Data regarding nutritional needs

In the area of nutrition, several services available dictate the need for Head Start programming in the NOI seven county area. These services include those families on Women, Infants & Children (WIC), families on food assistance, and families eligible for free and reduced cost school lunches.

County	Percentage of Children Receiving WIC age 0-4	Percentage of Individuals Receiving Food Assistance	Percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunches
Audubon	22.2%	8%	45%
Calhoun	16%	7.5%	41.7%
Carroll	25.7%	7.6%	42.1%
Dallas	8.5%	3.4%	21.3%
Greene	26%	10.3%	45.3%
Guthrie	22.9%	7.9%	39.8%
Sac	11.8%	6.4%	46.6%

**** Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, Iowa Kids Count Data Reports. 2019.**

Noteworthy regarding the above data is that the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunches increased in five of the seven counties from 2016 to 2019, a continuing trend

we have seen since 2011. In the other two counties (Dallas and Greene), the decreases were minor. As a part of the Head Start Program, children are provided healthy meals and snacks. The following table shows the 2020-2021 obesity statistics in children age birth to five in the Iowa counties served by the New Opportunities, Inc. WIC program. While this is not a complete picture of the entire county, it does provide validation of the need for the nutrition and nutrition education components of the Head Start program.

County	Number of Participants 0-5	Percentage of obese or overweight participants age 0-5
Audubon	71	28.2%
Calhoun	82	25.6%
Carroll	346	24.6%
Dallas	773	18%
Greene	118	32.2%
Guthrie	109	29.4%
Sac	66	24.2%
State of Iowa	45,452	25.4%

****Source: WIC (Women, Infants and Children), Prevalence of Nutrition Risk by Local Agency and County Report. 10/1/21.**

Data regarding social needs

Unemployment rates according to the Iowa Workforce Development in the seven counties served by the NOI Head Start program can be found in the following table.

County	Unemployment Rate
Audubon	2.5%
Calhoun	2.6%
Carroll	1.9%
Dallas	2.0%
Greene	2.4%
Guthrie	3.0%
Sac	2.7%

***Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count Data Center. July 2019.*

Low income parents of Head Start-eligible children are not as likely to be working as their more fortunate neighbors. Of the 303 families enrolled in either Head Start or Early Head Start throughout the 2020-2021 school year, 219 or 72% of those families had at least one parent working.

The 2015-2019 American Community Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau showed the following educational attainment statistics for adults over 25 years of age.

County	% with No High School Diploma	% with High School Diploma or equivalent
Audubon	9.8%	37.2%
Calhoun	6.2%	35.6%
Carroll	5.8%	36.7%
Dallas	4.4%	17.3%
Greene	6.5%	39.5%
Guthrie	6.7%	38.8%
Sac	6.7%	37.1%

***Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2015-2019.*

These numbers look fairly similar to the state of Iowa numbers, at 7.9% with no high school diploma and 31% with a high school diploma or equivalent. In 2020, of the families served, 9.6% were without a high school diploma and 69% hold a high school diploma or equivalent.

Also interesting, in the area of educational attainment, is the data showing percentages of adults 25 and over with bachelor's degrees or higher. According to the 2015-2019 American Community Survey, the state of Iowa shows 19.3% of all adults 25 and older hold a bachelor's degree or higher. This is comparable to the New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start service area: Audubon – 17.5%, Calhoun – 20.2%, Carroll – 22.7%, Dallas – 50.7%, Greene – 18.8%, Guthrie – 19.9% and Sac – 20.4%. Dallas, being a suburb community to Des Moines, is home to a greater number of higher income families.

The educational and unemployment statistics of the rural Iowa counties served by the New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start area provide evidence that there is a social need for increased

numbers of families that are economically self-sustaining and for training and education on employment and job retention.

Head Start families were linked to a wide spectrum of services during the 2020-2021 school year through staff referrals. More than 1,500 referrals to resources were offered in areas such as crisis intervention, housing assistance, mental health, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, child support assistance, parenting education, and more.

The Department of Human Services provides statistical data on the number of children involved in confirmed or founded abuse cases each year. The following reflects 2020 data.

	Audubon	Calhoun	Carroll	Dallas	Greene	Guthrie	Sac	State
Percentage of Children 5 or younger of all abuse cases	28.6%	57.9%	53.6%	38.9%	43.6%	51.2%	15.4%	47.3%

***Source: Department of Human Services, 2020.*

According to the Department of Human Services, the total number of confirmed and/or founded cases of child abuse in 2020 in the New Opportunities, Inc. seven county service area was 339. The number of confirmed cases in which the victim was a child 5 years old or younger was 145, over 40% of all cases.

Data regarding child care needs

The table below illustrates the need for quality child care services in the NOI seven county area.

County	Total 0-5 Population	% of Families where all Parents Work and Children are Under 6	Estimated Number of Children Needing Child Care	Number of Children without a Registered Child Care Space
Audubon	384	87%	334	137
Calhoun	680	77%	524	369
Carroll	1,568	90%	1,411	453
Dallas	8,408	70%	5,886	0
Greene	672	84%	564	231
Guthrie	703	78%	548	297
Sac	705	83%	585	387

***Source: Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R), County Data Sheets, July 2020.*

The table above illustrates the high need for quality child care in six of the seven counties served by New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start. In six counties the need outweighs the availability of child care. In some cases, the New Opportunities, Inc. center based preschool can meet this need. It is also necessary to note that the acceptance of Child Care Assistance at child care centers and in child care homes is limited, so for low income families, finding quality child care can be extremely difficult.

Data Regarding Expectant Mothers

The following data, derived from the 2019 Kids Count reports shows the need for early care and education during pregnancy and postpartum.

	Audubon	Calhoun	Carroll	Dallas	Greene	Guthrie	Sac	State
Prenatal Care	95.8%	86%	86.2%	89.5%	88.9%	86.1%	87.7%	83.8%
Teen Births	N/A	N/A	1.5%	0.9%	3.3%	N/A	N/A	1.5%
Low Birthweight	N/A	15.5%	5.6%	5.4%	N/A	5.9%	N/A	6.9%

***Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, Iowa Kids Count Data Reports. 2019.*

Prenatal care shows the percentage of live births where the mother began prenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy.

Teen births measures the percentage of females age 15-19 giving birth.

Low birthweight shows the percentage of live births weighing less than 5.5 pounds at the time of birth.

The following table represents the number of live births by county from 2018 to 2020 as provided by the State of Iowa Data Center based upon data from the Iowa Department of Public Health: Bureau of Family Health.

County	2018	2019	2020
Audubon	60	57	57
Calhoun	110	103	95
Carroll	228	232	230
Dallas	1,274	1,272	1,237
Greene	98	81	95
Guthrie	100	102	89
Sac	107	111	87

***Source: Iowa Department of Public Health. Bureau of Family Health. 2018, 2019, & 2020.*

Using the ‘live birth’ statistical data, one can conclude the approximate numbers of children eligible for Early Head Start and Head Start. The methodology used in this calculation assumes that all children born in 2018 and 2019 would be age eligible for Head Start as either a three or four year old in 2021/2022, and children born in 2020 and 2021 would be age eligible for Early Head Start as a two year old in 2021/2022. Additionally, the data does not account for children who have left or moved into each county.

Head Start Table

County	# of Live Births in 2018-2019	% of 0-5 living in poverty	# of children eligible for HS	# of available spots in HS
Audubon	117	27.8%	33	15
Calhoun	213	20.9%	45	13
Carroll	460	7.4%	34	43
Dallas	2,546	7.0%	178	85
Greene	179	14.2%	25	51
Guthrie	202	14.8%	30	14
Sac	218	17.5%	38	26

***Source: Iowa Department of Public Health, Bureau of Family Health, 2018 & 2019; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2015-2019.*

Early Head Start Table

County	# of Live Births in 2020	Estimated # of Live Births in 2021	% of 0-5 living in poverty	# age eligible for EHS	# of available spots in EHS
Audubon	57	58	27.8%	32	0
Calhoun	95	103	20.9%	41	0
Carroll	230	230	7.4%	34	38
Dallas	1,237	1,261	7.0%	175	50
Greene	95	91	14.2%	26	6
Guthrie	89	97	14.8%	28	6
Sac	87	102	17.5%	33	0

***Source: Iowa Department of Public Health, Bureau of Family Health, 2020; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2015-2019.*

Important notes regarding the prior two tables:

- The Head Start program enrolls children who are either three or four by September 15th of the school year. This would mean that children born in the later portion of 2017 would also be eligible for Head Start. Since, for purposes of this needs assessment, the data is available by year only, children born in 2017 are not included in the table.
- The number of live births in 2021 is estimated based upon the prior 3 year average. Years 2018-2020 were fairly consistent from year to year. See estimated number of live births in 2021 in the Early Head Start table.
- These two tables account for only children living below 100% of federal poverty level. They do not account for children living in foster care, children who are homeless, or children who have other qualifying circumstances making them eligible for Head Start/Early Head Start.

Based upon the data, the largest gaps in the NOI Head Start program exist in Calhoun and Dallas counties. It is also noted that a gap in service exists in Audubon and Guthrie counties as well, though not quite as sizable as Calhoun and Dallas. The table indicates that Greene County is overserved; however, Greene County has been, and continues to be, one of the highest enrolled Head Start programs for New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start. This may be the result of combined school districts over the past several years resulting in most all children in the school district attending at the Greene County Community School District.

The NOI Early Head Start programs show gaps in nearly all counties. While the table above indicates Carroll County is overserved, it is important to note that the Early Head Start center in

Carroll was proposed as a center to serve children from neighboring communities/counties as Carroll is a regional economic hub in the otherwise very rural area of west central Iowa.

Additional Data Regarding Enrolled Children & Families

The following table provides information on the number of children served through the Head Start and Early Head Start programs provided through New Opportunities, Inc. in the seven county area.

County	Number of Slots (HS & EHS)	Number of Children 0-5 under 100% of poverty	Percent of children in Poverty receiving Head Start/Early Head Start services
Audubon	15	88	17.05%
Calhoun	13	118	11.02%
Carroll	81	96	84.38%
Dallas	135	469	28.78%
Greene	57	73	78.08%
Guthrie	20	81	24.69%
Sac	26	99	26.26%

***Source: US Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey.*

The program appears to be reaching many children in need in Carroll and Greene Counties.

Unfortunately, the remaining communities show the vast majority of children age 0-5, living in poverty, are going unserved by Head Start and/or Early Head Start.

During the 2020-2021 program year, Head Start and Early Head Start enrolled children in the following categories.

Category	Percentage of Total Enrollment 2020-2021
Income at or below 100% of federal poverty line	63%
Public assistance such as TANF and SSI	17%
Foster Care	2%
Homelessness	14%
Eligibility based on other type of need	2%
Income between 100-130% and not counted above	2%

***Source: New Opportunities, Inc. 2020-2021 Program Information Report.*

Additional Information

The New Opportunities, Inc. operates two Early Head Start Centers as well as the home based visitation option. In the home based option, the 36 enrolled children and/or expectant mothers receive weekly home visits and bi-monthly socializations. In the center based option, 64 children age 0-3 receive 1,380 hours of planned services each year in high quality classrooms. All enrolled participants receive information on child development, health, nutrition, and a variety of other information throughout the program year. New Opportunities, Inc. has Early Head Start centers in Perry and Carroll. Each center features four full day, full year classrooms. Home based services are offered in Carroll, Dallas, Greene, and Guthrie counties.

The New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start program enrolls 247 children in the seven counties of Audubon, Calhoun, Carroll, Dallas, Greene, Guthrie, and Sac. The program provides high quality preschool in the following classrooms:

- Audubon County: (Audubon) One full day classroom in partnership with the Audubon Community School District
- Calhoun County: (Rockwell City) Two part day classrooms in partnership with the South Central Calhoun Community School District.
- Calhoun County: (Lake City) Two part day classrooms in partnership with the South Central Calhoun Community School District.
- Carroll County: (Carroll) One part day classroom and one full day classroom that are both independently funded Head Start classrooms. Through collaborations with the Carroll Community School District, children enrolled in the part day classroom attend half day at Head Start and half day in statewide voluntary preschool program.

- Carroll County: (Coon Rapids) One part day classroom in partnership with the Coon Rapids Community School District. Children attend only half day.
- Dallas County: (Perry) Three full day classrooms that are independently funded by Head Start.
- Dallas County: (Waukee) Two full day classrooms that are independently funded Head Start classrooms
- Greene County: (Jefferson) Two part day sessions (one morning & one afternoon), and one full day classroom in partnership with the Jefferson-Scranton Community School District. Children in part day classrooms attend half day Head Start and half day statewide voluntary preschool program.
- Guthrie County: (Panora) Three sessions (all in the morning), in partnership with the Panorama Community School District. Enrolled four year old children attend half day Head Start and half day statewide voluntary preschool program.
- Sac County: (Sac City) One part day independently funded Head Start classroom. Enrolled four year old children attend half day Head Start and half day statewide voluntary preschool program through a collaboration with the East Sac Community School District.
- Sac County: (Schaller) One part day session in partnership with the Schaller-Crestland Community School District. Currently only enrolling three year old children.

While all the school districts in the seven county Head Start area, with the exception of Adel-Desoto-Minburn (ADM) provide free preschool to four year old children, the partnerships that the New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start program shares with most of the above mentioned

school districts allows us to provide full day services to many Head Start eligible children by utilizing ½ day of Head Start and ½ day of statewide voluntary preschool. This full day of preschool enables children to be more prepared to enter kindergarten as a five year old. In addition, these partnerships assist with providing transportation, a much needed service, to Head Start children. The partnerships have created classrooms in which low and middle income children are integrated and all receive a program that meets the high thresholds of the Head Start Performance Standards.

The New Opportunities Early Head Start center based program uses the *Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos* and the *Creative Curriculum for Preschool* is utilized by Head Start to structure the program and classrooms. The curricula is used in combination with the associated child development assessment system, *Teaching Strategies GOLD*. The aforementioned curricular components are research-based, have been validated through years of classroom application, and have been reformulated to align with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework and state early learning standards. In addition, the use of *Teaching Strategies GOLD* for assessment helps teachers observe children in the context of everyday experiences, an effective way to inform and improve classroom practice and ensure that instruction can be specific to the needs of individual children. *Teaching Strategies GOLD* includes tools that enable teachers to individualize learning for every child. Other tools used to enhance the classroom experience include Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Conscious Discipline, I Am Moving I Am Learning (IMIL) (Head Start only), and Chef Combo combined with program designed nutrition curriculum (Head Start only).

The New Opportunities Early Head Start home based program utilizes the *Parents As Teachers* home based visitation curriculum. The curriculum promotes the optimal early development, learning, and health of children by supporting and engaging their parents and caregivers.

Parents As Teachers features family-friendly activities and resources that engage families in their child's learning and development within three critical areas. Those areas include parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting, and family well-being. Similar to the Early Head Start centers and the Head Start program, the Early Head Start home based option utilizes the *Teaching Strategies GOLD* child development observational assessment system.

New Opportunities has created preschool readiness goals that are designed to address the five domains as specified in the 2007 Head Start Act, these include; language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches toward learning, physical well-being and motor development and social emotional development. The program's school readiness goals align with the Iowa Early Learning Standards as well as the Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

The New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start program encourages the participation and involvement of parents, caregivers, and other significant family members in their child's experience. The program provides family literacy opportunities, parenting skills trainings, goal setting and support to families dealing with an array of situations such as mental health, domestic violence, homelessness, and substance abuse among others.

Children's physical, mental and dental health are regularly assessed as a part of the Head Start/Early Head Start program. Those needing treatment, follow-up services, or further evaluation are referred to a variety of professionals and organizations in the service area. The

program works with two area education agencies to address the needs of children with disabilities through Individual Education Plans (IEP). Mental health and behavioral concerns are dealt with in consultation with a mental health services provider.

Recommendations

The recommendations of the New Opportunities, Inc. Head Start program include the following:

Head Start Focus Areas

Looking at the potential number of children eligible for Head Start in each county it would appear that Calhoun and Dallas Counties are significantly underserved. Audubon, Guthrie, and Sac also appear to be underserved, though not to the extent of Calhoun and Dallas. This said, it is important to note that all of the counties are fairly large and most counties contain more than one school district. In counties such as Audubon and Guthrie, the Head Start program has classrooms in only one district within the county. In counties with only one Head Start location, it may be difficult to reach all, or even most, eligible children; however, these may be areas worth researching a bit to ensure classrooms are located in the best areas possible and that the program is able to locate and serve the children most in need in each county.

Expansion of Early Head Start

The data provided in the 2021 Community Needs Assessment continues to support the consideration of expansion of Early Head Start services. Based upon surveys and data, the largest need in the 0-3 population appears to be the lack of quality child care at affordable rates. The data reflected in the preceding pages indicates inadequate number of child care spaces available for the children present in the communities served by New Opportunities, Inc Head Start/Early Head Start programs. Further research into child care in the seven counties revealed that in Calhoun County the number of child care programs has decreased from 2015 to 2020 by 61%; conversely, the cost of child care for an infant in the same county has

increased by 40%. It does appear that other counties served, with the exception of Dallas and Greene, have seen similar trends in the decrease in child care programs and spaces available from 2015 to 2020 despite relatively consistent birth rates in each of the counties (as shown previously).

These indicators would suggest the need to consider future expansion into Early Head Start center based in communities beyond Carroll and Perry.

Parent Needs

The community needs assessment surveys completed indicated many families listed lack of money and child behaviors as their greatest stressor in the home. Further, of those that indicated lack of money was a concern, nearly 90% responded that they had difficulty setting up a budget or maintaining a budget. It is the ongoing goal of the program to have Family Support workers in Head Start and Early Head Start continue to work with enrolled families to provide much needed services in these areas to assist families in meeting their needs. Increased partnerships with programs offering financial literacy may be considered looking forward.

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