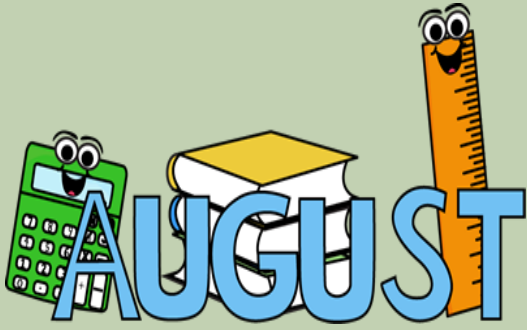


# In The Know, August 2025



**Thank you so much to an anonymous donor who donated these school supplies for our Wright County Back to School Program. This is greatly appreciated, thank you!**

Executive Director 2-3

Human Resources 4

Weatherization 5

CACFP & LIHEAP 6

Compliance/Reporting 7

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1st/Five 9

Early Childhood 10-11

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FADSS/Outreach 13-14



**FUN FACT:** There was a Bomgaars employee last night who has been working at this event since 1992, when our local Bomgaars was still called Shoppers Supply!

## Notice:

**Shut Down Week for all Outreach offices:**

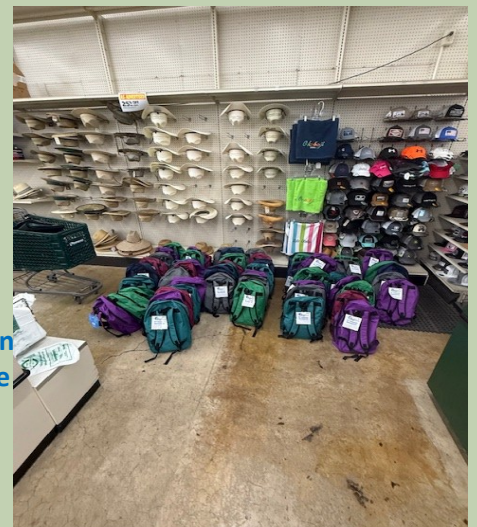
All offices will be closed the following dates.

There is a phone number for families to reach Alisa in the event of an emergency.

August 18-22



Special thanks to Spirit Lake Bomgaars, Spirit Lake High Noon Kiwanis, and our community donors from across Dickinson County, and all our volunteers who came together to make the night happen. We served 61 kids from 26 families, helping to ensure they have a great start to the new school year!





## Legislation & Advocacy

### Success Stories

Have you seen our latest social media posts? Legislative offices have!

In fact, several have requested visits to our central office in Graettinger.

In August, we welcomed legislative staff from Senator Ernst's and Senator Grassley's offices. Programs featured included **CSBG**, **Weatherization**, **LIHEAP**, and **Head Start**, presented by Directors Shakira, Alisa, Kyle, Shelly, and Sarina. They did a fabulous job sharing accurate, impactful information about our services.

## Highlights

We received a **presentation request** from the Iowa Environmental Council for their annual conference on September 16, 2025, in Des Moines. The topic: *The Role of Mutual Aid and Community Support During Climate Disasters*. This is part of the Community-Building track.

Their team felt our expertise and community connections would add significant value, especially in demonstrating how local organizations respond to disasters—like the 2024 Spencer flooding—when they strike their community.

## Program Updates

### CACFP In-Home

Local child care providers across our 10-county area have faced a steady decline over the years. To sustain UDMO's program, we entered negotiations resulting in the following plan:

- **Mid-Iowa Community Action (MICA)**, which has served Pocahontas, Humboldt, Hamilton, Webster, and Wright counties, will now also serve Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, and Palo Alto counties. UDMO (Becky) will serve some of these counties where existing provider relationships already exist.
- **New Opportunities (Carroll, IA)** will serve Buena Vista and O'Brien counties previously served by UDMO.
- **Community Action of Siouxland** will serve Lyon, Sioux, and Osceola counties previously served by UDMO. The UDMO Board of Directors will be asked to approve this plan at the August meeting.

### Head Start

- **Supplemental Grant for Nutrition** – Released July 29, 2025, with a submission deadline of August 22, 2025. Due to the short turnaround, the UDMO Board and Head Start Policy Council will vote virtually so the grant can be submitted before regular meetings.
- **CACFP Audit** – The recent audit identified findings requiring corrective action and repayment. Staff training and school-year preparations begin in August.



## Head Start-Continued

- **Child Care Assistance** – State approval received; families are completing applications and receiving approvals for extended care.

## KIDS

- Expansion into **Winnebago County** begins October 1, in partnership with Early Childhood Iowa.
- **MIECHV Grant** – Submitted.

## Housing

- **Rapid Rehousing ERA2** funding extended under a new program.
- **TBRA** – Denied for next year.
- **Youth Homelessness Grant** – Expected start date: October 1.

## Outreach

- **Emmet County Outreach** will relocate to the Roosevelt building. Bid packets have been released and will be reviewed at the August Board Meeting.
- **FEMA** – Awaiting final state approval to close out.



## Upcoming Meetings & Dates

- **Finance Committee Meeting** – Tuesday, August 19 @ 1:00 PM
- **Board of Directors Meeting** – Tuesday, August 26 @ 5:00 PM



Some of the Directors met with Kolby DeWitt, Outreach Director for Joni Ernst. They appreciated the opportunity to share the work that we do and highlight how Community Action has a positive impact on those who receive our services!

**Tiffany Harris– HR Director**



## HR MONTHLY NEWS

**SAVE THE DATE:** Thursday September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ The Shores, Emmetsburg **9:00am – 2:30pm**

**\*Mandatory All Staff Inservice**

UDMO has partnered with Gallagher as our new insurance broker! We have met with them for our pre-renewal meeting. Our plans are running well, so our renewal rate is predicted to be lower than trend on the medical side. Dental, vision and life plans will be marketed. More details to come.

### **August Service Anniversaries**

<b>4 Years:</b> Teri Chinn, Outreach Specialist Mara Barajas, Home Base Teacher Sarah Meerbeek, Teacher Heather Schacherer, EHS Teacher Juany Castillo De Aguilar, Assistant Teacher	<b>5 Years:</b> Lisa Bethune, Home Base Coach
<b>7 Years:</b> Rosie Wolfe, Food Service Debb Carr, Education Coach	<b>8 Years:</b> Jody Crocker, Site Assistant Dawn Hoffman, Admin Assistant
<b>9 Years:</b> Tracy Fischer, Teacher Angie Mitchell, ECP Coordinator Kayla Ross, Sub	<b>10 Years:</b> Jovita Alonso, Food Service Rosa Marquez, Classroom Mentor-+
<b>13 Years:</b> Alice Wilk, Assistant Teacher	<b>14 Years:</b> Caitlyn Kacmarynski, Teacher
<b>15 Years:</b> Dawn Hill, Home Base Teacher Brittany Lullmann, Teacher	<b>17 Years:</b> Shakira Meyer, Program Development & Compliance Director
<b>20 Years:</b> Kerry Bennett, Teacher	<b>27 Years:</b> Julie Schmitz, Admin Assistant Dee Reed, ECP Coordinator

### **BVU Strategic Partnership Fall 2025 Enrollments:**

3 employees

2 dependents

### **Work Comp Incident Report Recap:**

May 2025: 4 incident reports

June 2025: 0 incident reports

July 2025: 0 incident reports

Incident YTD Total: **14**

Work Comp Claim YTD Total: **5**





### **"Weatherization Report for July 2025"**

**Number of Families Served in July 2025: 10**

**Number of Families Served in FY 2025: 70**

**Goal for 2025: 110 Homes**

The Weatherization Department for the month of July have been going strong with the completion of 10 homes per month consistently. I am very proud of my team for making this happen with all that is going on at the government and all the new changes to our state standards and policies and procedures.

The Weatherization Program at the state level had a meeting to go over updates and here are a few things that were addressed.

- We were notified that there will be readiness funds coming in the near future and that money can be used to help with clients that maybe outside the scope of WX Program and we can make those repairs so that we can move forward with the weatherization program.
- DOE 25 funding has been approved and they will be allocating that money out to each individual agency and since they have taken more time then was allowed for our DOE contract the DOE is willing to prolong our funding dates from July 1st 2025 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2026 for a contract date.
- Fiscal Monitoring will start September 1<sup>st</sup> 2025.
- *Our priority list for our homes to help assist clients. The state said in the next couple weeks they will be getting that information to all the agencies. To help assist new clients in our area.*
- **Work Standards:** *Fuel switch form when asking for a fuel switch from electric to gas or vise versa will have to have actual cost entered on that form for approval and this will be based off of clients bills.*
- *State also suggested that we don't remove electric water heaters for gas water heaters and just replace them with electric heat pump water heaters in the future with client homes.*

**We will continue to push hard and create results and effectively assist our clients with their energy needs in their homes in our 17-County area that we serve.**



## CACFP (Child & Adult Care Food Program) In Home

### Monthly Board Report:

*Counties Served: Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, and Sioux.*

CACFP had 35 providers submit claims for July. I signed on one new provider in Clay county.

CACFP In-home Providers served the following meals in July:

	<b>July 2025</b>	<b>July 2024</b>
Breakfast:	4,385	5,322
Lunches:	4,794	5,655
Snacks:	5,045	5,902
Suppers:	5	65
Total Meals Served:	14,229	16,944

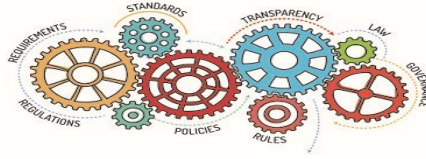


**Shelly Charapata– Energy Program Director**



- **ECIP/CRISIS:** For July, 142 households received ECIP-Crisis funds in the amount of \$35,881.59.
- Outreach offices will be very busy in the month to come mailing out and processing the possible 2,300 plus AE applications (Automatic Eligible households) for the upcoming Liheap season.
- Liheap will Not be participating in the Summer Pre-Buy/Contracting for our deliverable vendors that participate in this for the upcoming heating season. We have opted out of this due to receiving less funding amount for those deliverable vendors. Not enough funding allocated for this, so the dollar amount we would have received will now be issued into ECIP budget amount which can be re-allocated into another Liheap budget line item if needed.

## Shakira Meyer – Director of Program Development, Compliance & Reporting



### Community Action and ROMA

Thank you, Julie, for recognizing my certification as a ROMA Implementer last month.

As a certified ROMA Implementer, I will work to integrate ROMA principles and practices across all UDMO programs, promoting a results-oriented approach throughout the agency. This effort ensures that we continue to meet all Federal CSBG Organizational Standards—standards that define us as a Community Action Agency.

It's important to remember that CSBG is the primary funding source for our Outreach programs in all 12 counties we serve. By applying ROMA effectively, we strengthen our ability to make measurable impacts in the communities we support.

Learn more about Community Action here: <https://youtu.be/8sDfxOIkSHI?si=UE88ter3HSi13mC9>

Learn more about ROMA here: <https://youtu.be/kOUQCibiac?si=SJRScgqRfOSu41lb>

### UDMO Funding Requests Update:

Recent Foundation/Organizational/Trust Grants Submitted & Status: August 2025	County	Program	Submitted/ Pending	Amount Awarded	Not Funded
Homeland Security – EM FEMA Grant	CL	Repairs – App in Process	X		
Sheldon United	OB	Client Services – Sheldon	X		
United Way	BV, CL, OB	Client Services	X		
Dickinson County Good Neighbor Fund	DI	Client Services	X		
Dickinson County Endowment Fund	DI	Milford Head Start	X		
CPPC – CPW Cluster	CA, PO, WE	1 <sup>st</sup> Five		\$1,500	
CPPC – CPW Cluster	PO	Coats for Kids		\$1,500	
Belmond Area Community Trust	WR	Client Services Belmond	X		
Fort Dodge United Way	WE	Water Assistance			

Program Grants Submitted and Status: August 2025	County	Program	Submitted/ Pending	Funded	Not Funded
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)	All	Housing			X
CSBG FY26 Application	All 12	Outreach + Co-funding: HS, SV, SWVPP, WRAP & KIDS		X	
IA BOS CoC Intent to Apply	All	Housing	X		
MIECHV (KIDS)	WE	Home Visitation	X		
Iowa Homelessness Prevention Fund	All	New Project Invite Only	X		

# KIDS/CARES Program

## August 2025 Edition

### EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA HOME VISITING UPDATES

- We finished the first month of our subcontract with Palo Alto Community Health Systems for home visiting.
- 6 visits completed and 4 new referrals!
- Our capacity is 10 families and we have 4 currently

### KIDS PROGRAM CONTRACT UPDATES

- Iowa Family Support Credential continues to be a work in progress.
- Completed MIECHV Grant Submitted on time
- Met with Winnebago to discuss contracting for home visitation services

### COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

- We finished the first month of providing services under the Community Capacity Building
- 6 referrals and multiple connections to resources

### CARES PROGRAM CONTRACT UPDATES

- Attended meetings with HHS regarding services
- Invited to support work group around concrete goods and teenage homelessness
- Continue to provide outreach to Winnebago and Osceola next

Submitted by: Jessie Hansen, Director



# WOW!

The large conference room at Central Office has received a makeover! This space has been painted, panels have been added to the walls to help with noise and echoing and the AV System has been upgraded. This is a very inviting space to hold a meeting.





August 2025

# 1ST FIVE

## ~PARTNERING FOR PREVENTION~

*Building a Seamless Path from Screening to Support*

### 1ST FIVE'S ROLE IN PRIMARY CARE

When families visit their trusted primary care provider, they're not just receiving health checkups; they're entering one of the most powerful touchpoints for early intervention.

That's where 1st Five Iowa HHS steps in.

### BRIDGING HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Early identification of social-emotional delays don't begin in a behavioral health clinic, it starts in the exam room during well-child visits.

Through universal screenings like the ASQ-3, ASQ:SE-2, & MCHAT

1st Five helps clinics flag concerns early and connect families to tailored support.

### EMPOWERING PROVIDERS WITH TOOLS THAT WORK

- Training for clinic staff fosters confidence in handling sensitive conversations
- Follow-up pathways ensure families aren't left navigating complex systems alone
- Feedback Loop helps clinics evaluate and enhance their care impact

### WELLNESS STARTS EARLY

By supporting primary care practices across Iowa, 1st Five ensures that developmental screenings aren't just a checkbox, they're the beginning of a shared commitment to mental wellness in the first five years.



### FY2025 1<sup>ST</sup> FIVE OUTCOMES

205 Referrals

31 Referring Clinics

80 Referring Providers

Contacts:

**Meredith Mickelson**

[mmickelson@udmo.com](mailto:mmickelson@udmo.com) | (712) 298-6292

CSA-4: Calhoun, Hamilton, Hardin, Humboldt, Pocahontas, Webster, & Wright

**Teresa Ball**

[tball@udmo.com](mailto:tball@udmo.com) | (712) 298-6751

CSA-1: Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, O'Brien, Osceola, & Palo Alto

*Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc.*



**Left:** 1<sup>st</sup> Five staff along with UDMO Director, Julie Edwards, attending the ICAA Conference in July

**Above:** Kristi Radtke, 1<sup>st</sup> Five DSS, attending Back-to-School Event at CHC in Spencer

## 0-5 Early Childhood Programs– Sarina Smith

### Enrollment:

Early Head Start with 180 children and Head Start Preschool with 289 children.

### Disabilities:

Early Head Start students served on IFSP's: 20

Head Start Preschool students served on IEP's: 39

**Total served: 59 Target: 47**

### TEACH – CDA, 2 year or 4-year Degree:

CDA certification completion: 7

Associates degree in progress: 1

Bachelor degree in progress: 1

### Coaching:

Teachers – 6 and Home Base Teachers – 2

### What's Happening:

- **Advocacy in Action:** Advocacy remains a top priority for our program. We are actively preparing for our trip to Washington, D.C. in September to meet with legislators and elevate the voices of our families and communities. On August 6th, we met with Kolby DeWitt, Senator Joni Ernst's representative, to share the impact of Head Start in our service area. The conversation was productive and well-received, reinforcing the importance of ongoing communication with our elected officials. On August 20th, we will meet with Jacob Bossman, representing Senator Grassley's office, to continue these important discussions.
- **Investing in Professional Growth:** Thank you to everyone who attended our all-staff in-service on August 13th! It was a wonderful opportunity to reconnect, recharge, and kick off the new program year together with energy and purpose. We appreciate your engagement and look forward to applying what we learned in the months ahead.
- **Community Collaboration:** We continue to meet with our local superintendents and collaborate with county partners to provide ongoing support for children and families. These partnerships are essential in strengthening community resources and ensuring our program meets the needs of those we serve.



**Look at these smiling faces!**

**The Head Start Program had their In-Service on 8/13/25 at the Hope Church in Spencer.**





## Housing Report– Tanya Petersen Housing Director



**107 households** received rental assistance in the month of July.

Our application is in for the Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program (TBRA).

We submitted our application for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project. The rental assistance project is designed to target individuals 18 – 25 years of age. **\*UPDATE\* – We have been awarded \$851,894.00.** this project is slated to launch October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

### Staff Success Story

I received a referral for client who is recently out on parole. I was able to find him a rental along with a landlord who was willing to give him a chance. He is receiving assistance with deposit and rent to get him by until he can get his Section 8 Housing Voucher. At the time that he was placed into a rental he had transportation but shortly after his car broke down. We found out that because he originally applied for HUD using a temporary address, he would have to withdraw his original application and start the process all over. This is difficult for him because of not having transportation.

I took him to the housing office a couple of times to get things straightened out and also gave him a ride to the DMV to get his State ID updated which was needed for his new HUD application. In order to gain local preference, which will help him get pulled off the waitlist faster, the housing office requires documentation to prove an individual is a local resident. I assisted him in turning in his HUD application, lease copy, ID, and Social Security Card. The housing office also needs 2 pieces of 1<sup>st</sup> class business mail to prove residency. Because his utilities are built into his rent this was a difficult task as he was not receiving any other bills. I reached out to 3 other service providers and requested they send him something via first class mail so that we have something to turn in that would support that he is a local resident. I helped connect him to our Outreach Office in the town he is living in and he has been able to utilize the food pantry.

Last week when I stopped by to deliver a few items he needed that I had laying around my own house he was pleased to tell me he applied for work at a local grocery store. He is doing very well adjusting and working hard to better his life. He is so grateful for the help and tells me every time I see him that he doesn't know what he would have done if there weren't advocates helping him navigate resources. He is well on his way to self-sufficiency.

**Statewide Crisis Line Update:** Clients in need of rental assistance should call the Statewide Crisis Line at **1-833-739-0065** to complete the intake process. Normal business hours are 7am – 8pm. Clients calling outside of these hours will need to leave a message and wait for a call back. Call backs are being made usually within 1-3 business days.



**FaDSS:**



Enrolled Families: 78

Target # of families per month: 76

Families in Recruitment: 11

Families on Waiting list: 38

Leighia was referred to the FaDSS program after having a baby. She is the proud mother of an infant who has a significant birth defect. She is staying away from home in the Ronald McDonald house in Iowa City while the baby receives the specialized care he needs. Leighia needed help managing the stress of this situation while trying to plan for the future. FaDSS was able to connect her to resources in Iowa City to help her meet her own dietary needs, find places away from the hospital to exercise, and to encourage her to join a local support group. She is now better able to manage her own mental and physical health so that she can focus on her new family's future.

**Outreach:**



**Shut Down Weeks for all Outreach offices:**

All offices will be closed the following dates. There is a phone number for families to reach Alisa during these weeks in the event of an emergency.

**August 18-22**



**BACK TO SCHOOL APPLICATIONS:**

Outreach offices are now taking applications for our Back to School programming-please contact your local county offices for more information. The offices that are now accepting are BV, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Hamilton, Humboldt, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, Webster and Wright.



**Coats for Kids:**

Applications for Coats for Kids are now available in the following counties: Clay, Dickinson, Hamilton, Humboldt, Pocahontas and Wright



**Healthy Kid Iowa Program:**

The **Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc. (UDMO) Outreach Food Pantry Program**, in collaboration with **Food Bank of Iowa**, has been selected to partner with the **Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS)** in a new pilot program.

The **Healthy Kids Iowa Pilot Program** will help eligible families get expanded access to additional food throughout June, July and August, such as fruits, vegetables, dairy items, grains and proteins.

Below you will find the numbers for our distributions for June/July:



**First June Distribution**

County	Number received	Number distributed	Number of households impacted	Number of individuals impacted
BV	300	300	121	614
Clay	150	47	20	88
Dickinson	146	44	19	81
Emmet	245	84	35	175
Humboldt	90	49	17	49
O'Brien	106	28	10	47
Osceola	123	139	52	277
Pocahontas	139	124	46	211
Webster	325	132	55	234
Wright	250	41	20	44

**Second June Distribution**

County	Number received	Number distributed	Number of households impacted	Number of individuals impacted
BV	300	211	93	430

**First July Distribution**

County	Number received	Number distributed	Number of households impacted	Number of individuals impacted
BV	300	309	125	631
Clay	150	94	33	165
Dickinson	146	21	52	89
Emmet	245	75	32	146
Humboldt	90	79	27	131
O'Brien	106	45	15	76
Osceola	123	64	22	124
Palo Alto	90	84	37	173
Pocahontas	139	125	44	221
Webster	325	156	66	326
Wright	250	61	28	88

**Second July Distribution**

County	Number received	Number distributed	Number of households impacted	Number of individuals impacted
BV	300	233	101	501