

In The Know

HELLO *May*

In This Issue

Executive Director

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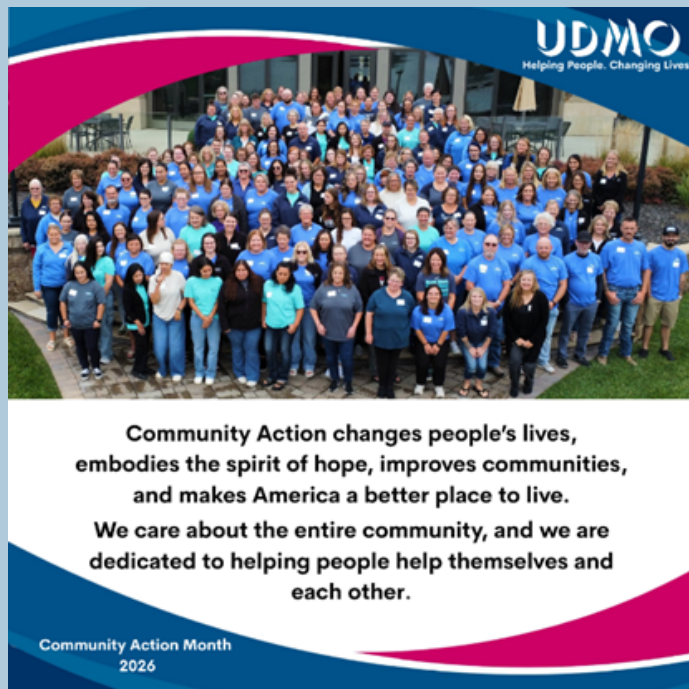
FaDSS

Outreach

Head Start

Compliance & Reporting

May is
Community Action Month!



Here is Jenna Shaughnessy, Paige Bunkofske, and Star Muniz Thompson, Early Head Start teachers having some fun at the National Head Start Conference & Expo.



UDMO Wright County Outreach is incredibly grateful to the Wright County Charitable Foundation for their generous donation!
Christina Whipple, Wright Outreach

Heather Lundberg-Outreach Coordinator, Maggie Reyes-BV Outreach & Sherri Nelsen-BV Outreach attended the BV Asset Mapping Meeting to represent UDMO.





*Executive Director
Julie Edwards*

May 2026

★ Agency Highlights & Program Updates

Strategic Planning

A draft of UDMO's overarching strategic plan goals was presented during the April Board Meeting. Strategic planning discussions continued on May 13 from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM in the large conference room in Graettinger. Two board members attended also.

Grant Updates

UDMO recently received notification regarding several competitive grant opportunities. While we were disappointed to learn that we were not awarded the Thrive Iowa or Shared Visions Parenting grants, we remain encouraged by new opportunities that continue to emerge.

On a positive note, UDMO — as the region's longtime 1st Five grantee — was approached by the Iowa DHHS Bureau of Family Health regarding a new Child & Adolescent Health (CAH) grant opportunity. Following thoughtful review and collaboration with current and former providers, UDMO accepted the opportunity to provide community-level CAH services throughout Collaborative Service Area 1 (CSA1).

Services will include:

HAWKI outreach

Early ACCESS

Healthy Child Care Iowa (HCCI)

I-Smile™ and I-Smile™ @ School programming

The grant period runs from October 1, 2026 through September 30, 2028, with annual funding of up to \$580,081 plus Medicaid revenue and required matching funds.

CSA1 includes the counties of Cherokee, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola, Palo Alto, Plymouth, and Sioux.

Monthly Activities

· Head Start Self-Assessment: Thank you to our Board and Policy Council members for record-breaking participation across seven components of the annual Head Start Self-Assessment process.

FaDSS Program: Following several recent staff transitions, interviews and onboarding are now underway for three new Specialists.

Ashley, the new Coordinator, continues to navigate these transitions successfully.

MIECHV Grant: As implementation continues, staff have been actively engaging with the Fort Dodge community. Recent collaboration with YOUR Inc. Head Start has focused on increasing referrals and developing shared PAT socialization opportunities.

Outreach Services: Heather and staff have participated in several collaborative meetings with Food Bank partners to strengthen regional coordination and service delivery.

Thrive Iowa Collaboration: Although UDMO was not awarded the grant directly, staff in Webster and Buena Vista Counties continue participating in local HopeHub and Asset Building initiatives connected to Thrive Iowa efforts.

Housing Program: Tanya Petersen has announced her resignation effective June 12, 2026. We appreciate her contributions and are actively developing a transition plan to support continuity of services.

1st Five: On May 8, Meredith Mickelson (Coordinator), Karhyn Alcantara (Specialist), Jessie Hansen (Director) participated in a successful state program review meeting. Discussions included program progress, challenges, and future priorities.

17 Upcoming Meetings & Key Dates

Finance Committee Meeting

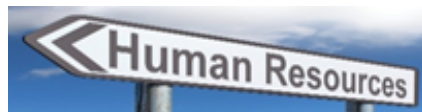
Tuesday, May 21 at 1:00 PM

Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, May 28 at 5:00 PM



May 2026



H.R Director Tiffany Harris

HR MONTHLY NEWS

Key Updates:

- After the Quarter 1 review of medical claims, our policy is currently running slightly higher than anticipated. We are hopeful this will begin to level out as larger claims start to drop off.
- Discussion regarding Workers' Compensation carriers had begun; however, those conversations have temporarily slowed following three recent incident reports that resulted in claims.
- The Wellness & Safety Committee will begin planning the 2027 wellness challenge this month. We encourage employees to share ideas for future challenges and incentives with any committee member.
- The logo has officially been updated on the UDMO apparel site! Be sure to check out the refreshed look and available merchandise at UDMO Apparel Store.

Open Positions:

Outreach Specialist – Palo Alto
ECP Coordinator – Storm Lake



Kyle Dietrich-Weatherization Director

Number of Families Served in April 2026: 13

Number of Families Served in FY 2026: 40

Goal for 2026: 110 Homes

During the month of April, we completed a total of thirteen (13) homes, an increase from seven (7) homes completed in March. This brings the program back on track to meet our annual production goal of 110 homes for the year.

During the month, we also participated in our quarterly meeting with the State and agency staff to review program updates, funding, and any ongoing concerns. One of the primary topics discussed was funding, as June 30, 2026 marks the end of the current grant period, which will require a temporary pause on contract spending until new grants are approved. However, there are sufficient funds currently set aside to maintain program operations during this transition period.

In addition, significant progress has been made with the implementation of our new computer systems. We anticipate that by the beginning of June, a fully operational priority list system will be available. This system will improve our ability to identify and serve additional eligible clients throughout our service area.

The State also requested feedback and suggestions regarding potential new forms and processes that could improve efficiency and better support both clients and Weatherization (WX) program operations. Furthermore, the State informed agencies that updated lead-safe work practice standards and paperwork requirements will be released in the near future to ensure all agencies and contractors remain compliant with lead-safe regulations and procedures.

Overall, April was a productive and relatively uneventful month, which reflects that operations are continuing smoothly without any major issues or disruptions.

As we move forward, we remain committed to maintaining strong production levels, achieving measurable outcomes, and effectively serving the energy needs of clients throughout our 17-county service area.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES NEWSLETTER

JESSIE HANSEN, ECS DIRECTOR



MAY 2026

CARES PROGRAM



Family Story: A pregnant mom was referred to the CARES Program from 1st Five due to concerns with needing support with resources and moving to a new County. We supported her by giving her information related to transportation, WIC, food pantries, child care, and baby items. Mom was responsive to our initial outreach and we look forward to future updates regarding her progress.

EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA UPDATES

- Request for Proposals are due to ECNCI May 10th!
 - New this next year (July 1st) we will be adding **Emmet** and **Kossuth County** Contracts for home visitation.
- Home Visit cost per family will be increased to **\$6250** and **based on capacity**.
- Continuing to work on policies, procedures and data with subcontractors.

MIECHV



CAPACITY/ENROLLMENT

48/11



MAY 21ST 4:30-6PM

First Group Parent Meeting at St. Marks in Fort Dodge, IA



COMMUNITY EVENTS:

*Laundry of Love
*Bowling Event
*HS/EHS Group Socialization



May 2026

Beyond Referrals. Beyond Relationships. Building Stronger Systems for Iowa's Youngest Children.

Professional Development: Growing Our Expertise to Better Serve Families



Community Events: Showing Up Where Families Live, Learn, and Grow



Helping People. Changing Lives.

1st Five Coordinators
Meredith Mickelson-
mmickelson@udmo.com
Teresa Ball- tball@udmo.com





Tanya Petersen, Housing Director

114 households received rental assistance in the month of April.

★ Special Announcement ★

Our UDMO Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) launched on March 1st. This project is designed to assist youth ages 18-24 secure stable housing for up to 24 months as long as they remain income eligible. To apply please contact the call center at 833-739-0065.

Our application for the Iowa Finance Authority's Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program has been submitted. This resource will allow us to continue supporting individuals and families in our region with safe and stable housing. Special thanks to all agencies and service providers who took time to submit a letter of support on our behalf! The TBRA awards will be announced in August.

Success Story

I recently worked with a client who had been homeless for many years off and on and spent a long time living in a tent by the river. She often shared how she couldn't remember the last time she slept without fear or worry for her safety. During this difficult time, she was also working hard on her sobriety and taking steps each day to rebuild her life.

With our support, she was able to find an apartment that she will be moving into very soon. She is excited, hopeful, and looking forward to finally having a safe place to rest. This move represents a fresh start for her, one where she can focus on her recovery, her stability, and her future.

Her strength and determination remind us why this work matters. I'm happy to be working alongside her to offer monthly case management and support her on her journey.

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.



Shelly Charapata-Energy Program Director

- Last day to apply for LIHEAP was April 30th! Anyone that submitted an application by April 30th still has 30 days to submit missing verification and processed. We still have 2 online applications to finish processing.
- LIHEAP APPLICATIONS: For April, Outreach took and processed 122 Liheap applications. This report from State includes Online applications in it.
- YTD TOTALS: From 10-01-2025 to 4-30-2026 - Total applications 4,399. Total amount paid out \$2,175,000.
- LAST YEAR AT THIS TIME: 4,378 applications were processed.
- ONLINE LIHEAP APPLICATIONS: For April, 19 applications were received. YTD: 205.
- ECIP/CRISIS: For April, 214 households received ECIP/CRISIS funds in the amount of \$102,406.82.



Ashley Cooklin
FaDSS Coordinator

We are currently at 57 families, 0 in recruitment, and 32 on the waiting list. I am very excited to announce that we have filled all positions and are busy training. Once that is done we will be able to work on our waiting list and build are capacity back up to the needed 76.



Outreach-
Heather Lundberg-Coordinator

Jacquelyn Origer-Outreach Specialist Palo Alto will be leaving UDMO, last day in May 15th. We wish her the best as she starts up a new daycare. Outreach will be shut down May 18-25, all offices will be closed closed, emergency number is posted. Shout out to Valero in Webster County they are collecting hygiene and cleaning products for Webster UDMO to hand out.



Enrollment:

Early Head Start with 183 children and Head Start Preschool with 254 children.

Disabilities:

Early Head Start students served on IFSP's: 15

Head Start Preschool students served on IEP's: 34

Total served: 49 Target: 47

TEACH – CDA, 2 year or 4-year Degree:

CDA certification completion: 1

Associates degree in progress: 3

Bachelor degree in progress: 0

Coaching:

Teachers – 4 and Home Base Teachers – 5

It Takes a community:

Storm Lake hosted the Storm Lake Police Department, Storm Lake Fire Department, Buena Vista Regional Medical Center Ambulance Crew, Buena Vista Sheriff's Department, and Iowa State Patrol for our Community Hero socialization event on April 7th. Children and families had the opportunity to sit in the vehicles and take pictures. Each of the community heroes, took the time to come in the building and visit, play with the kids and families and take even more pictures. After introducing themselves, our heroes answered any questions anyone had. Children were provided dress up clothes to enhance the experience.

Angie, Program Coordinator for the West sites, will be participating in a reading event for children ages 0–5 at the Graettinger Library on June 22. We appreciate opportunities to continue strengthening literacy and community engagement for our families.

Barbara Sorrels will be joining Head Start on June 17 in Milford for training and support related to scripted stories, puppet practice, guided discipline, and self-regulation strategies.

The program self-assessment has been completed and will be presented to the Board and Policy Council in June. We had a record amount of participation this year and greatly appreciate the involvement and collaboration that support the governance and continuous improvement of our program.

Alicia Koppman graduated in June 2026 with her Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood. We congratulate Alicia on this accomplishment and appreciate her continued dedication to the field of early childhood education.

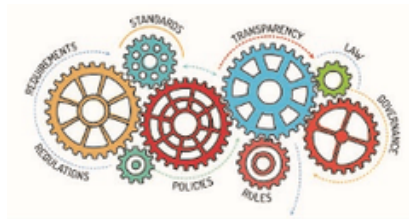
Emmet garden project
is underway.

Dickinson County Grant results in
Children having the
time of their lives
In their new sandbox!









Shakira Meyer –

Director of Program Development, Compliance & Reporting

May is Community Action Month!

What has Community Action meant for American families? For generations, Community Action has helped people and families build stronger futures by connecting them with support, resources, and opportunities to succeed. From helping families stay warm in the winter, to supporting children through early childhood programs, to helping neighbors find stability and hope during difficult times, Community Action continues making a difference in communities all across America.

This month, we're celebrating the impact of Community Action and the people, programs, and partnerships that help change lives every day. Be sure to check out UDMO's Facebook and Instagram pages throughout the month for stories, highlights, and all things Community Action!

- ✓ Stable housing
- ✓ Family support
- ✓ Food on the table
- ✓ Affordable heat and energy
- ✓ High-quality early childhood education
- ✓ School readiness and child development
- ✓ Safe and healthy homes
- ✓ Emergency support in times of crisis
- ✓ Parenting tools and support
- ✓ Help for seniors and adults with disabilities
- ✓ Nutrition and wellness support
- ✓ Hope, dignity, and opportunity for every family

UDMO Funding Requests Update:

Recent Foundation/Organizational/Trust Grants Submitted & Status: May 2026	County	Program	Submitted/ Pending	Amount Awarded	Not Funded
Taylor Family Farms	EM, OB, OS, PO, WR	Outreach Food Pantry		\$20,000	
Fort Dodge United Way	WE	Client Assistance – Water		\$10,000	
Emmet County Community Foundation	EM	Outreach Parking Lot Safety	X		
O'Brien County Community Foundation	OB	Hartley HS Shade Structure	X		
Sheldon United 2026 – TBD Spring 2027	OB	Client Services – Sheldon	X		
Still Pending from Summer/Fall 2025 – Award Spring 2026					
Dickinson County Good Neighbor Fund	DI	Client Services	X		
Belmond Area Community Trust	WR	Client Services Belmond	X		
Program Grants Submitted and Status: May 2026	County	Program	Submitted/ Pending	Funded	Not Funded
Shared Visions Parent Support Program – Iowa Department of Education	CL, OB, OS	KIDS Home Visitation & Parent Support			X
Thrive Iowa – Iowa Department of Health & Human Services	HU, PO, WR	Community Alliance Building & Family Resource Navigation			X
Head Start 1303 - Resubmitted w/ updates	Emmet	Roosevelt Heating System	X		
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)	All	Housing	X		
Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)	All	Outreach and Program Support	X		