



# COMMUNITY ACTION OF EASTERN IOWA

## PERFORMANCE AND OUTCOMES REPORT FOR THE FAMILY DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

STATE FISCAL YEAR 2018

### PREPARED BY

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## INTRODUCTION

Iowa's Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program (FaDSS) was created by the 1988 General Assembly to assist Family Investment Program (FIP) families with significant or multiple barriers reach self-sufficiency. FaDSS provides services that promote, empower, and nurture families toward economic self-sufficiency and family stability.

Participation in FaDSS is a voluntary option for families receiving FIP benefits. Eligible families are identified and referred to the program primarily by Iowa Workforce Development's PROMISE JOBS program. However, referrals to FaDSS may also originate with the Department of Human Services, other social service providers, or as self-referrals. The program is provided to families in Cedar, Clinton, Jackson, Muscatine, and Scott counties through a partnership with Community Action of Eastern Iowa.

Utilizing a strengths-based approach, the program is delivered to families through home visits with certified Family Development Specialists. Core services include assessment and screening, family-driven goal setting, referrals to community resources and supports, and advocacy and self-empowerment.

## CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The FaDSS program is committed to providing high-quality, effective services for families. To that end, program leadership meet each quarter to review performance on select contract measures and family outcomes with the goal of identifying 1) areas where the program is achieving desired results and 2) opportunities to implement responsive changes to practice to ensure the program is on track to meet year-end targets. This report provides an overview of the performance and outcomes data reviewed for each quarter. Statewide performance data is provided where appropriate for comparison purposes. All data provided in this report should be interpreted in light of unique program considerations as well as community factors that may impact performance and outcome measures.

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The Iowa Department of Human Rights, in partnership with Community Action of Eastern Iowa, gathers a wealth of data related to program performance and self-sufficiency outcomes for families. Information about participants is collected by Family Development Specialists using the Self-Sufficiency Matrix, a tool that measures changes in 14 family domains. Demographic characteristics and information about the specific activities and services completed with families are also gathered. Together, this information allows the FaDSS program to:

- Understand family characteristics, including assets and barriers to self-sufficiency;
- Assess changes in family self-sufficiency and stability domains over the course of enrollment;
- Build upon program success and consider areas for further focus.

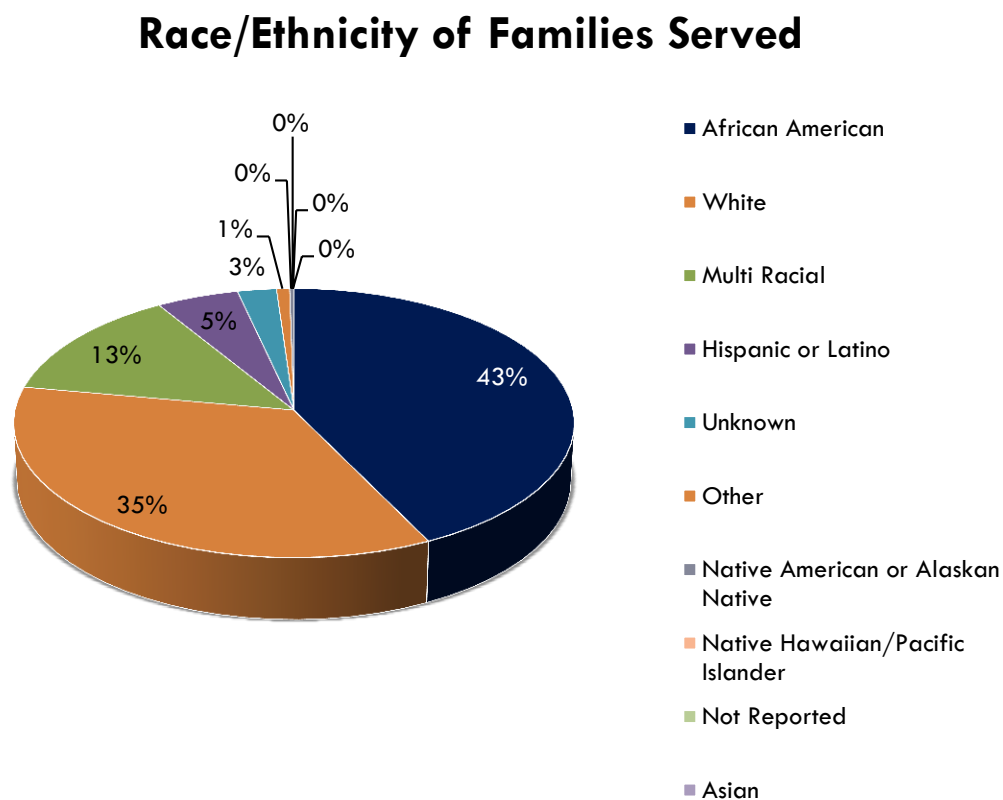
## NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED

At any point in time, the Community Action of Eastern Iowa FaDSS program may serve 98 families. In Fiscal Year 2018, a total of 186 families received services. A total of 115 families completed or were exited from the program during the reporting period, including 231 children (under the age of 18).

## CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES SERVED

Demographic information about FaDSS participants is collected at the family (rather than individual) level, though the program often narrows in on characteristics of the designated “Head of Household” to identify and understand trends related to family structure and progress toward self-sufficiency. Overall, 94% of families are headed by a female; 60% are headed by an individual aged 24-34. Figure 1 below provides insight into the racial and ethnic composition of FaDSS families served by Community Action of Eastern Iowa. Statewide, families of color are disproportionately represented in the FaDSS program when compared to Iowa’s general population, though the disparity is reflective of the broader representation of families of color in the Family Investment Program (FIP).<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1. Race and Ethnicity of Family Heads of Household



<sup>1</sup> Source: Iowa Department of Human Services.

**PROGRAM PERFORMANCE – STATE CONTRACT MEASURES**

Each quarter, program leadership meet to review performance on contract measures. Data are reviewed on a cumulative, quarterly basis, such that data for the first quarter represent July 1, 2017 to September 30, 2017; data for the second quarter represent July 1, 2017 to December 30, 2017, etc. The performance target for each contract measure, as well as statewide performance averages, are included for comparison.

**Table 1. Contract Measures**

<b>Contract Measure</b>	<b>Through Quarter 1</b>	<b>Through Quarter 2</b>	<b>Through Quarter 3</b>	<b>Quarter 4 (Year End)</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>State Average</b>
Families involved in at least one work preparedness activity.	31%	46%	55%	<b>61%</b>	<b>55%</b>	66%
Adult family member(s) with a substantiated mental health barrier that accessed treatment.	63%	63%	73%	<b>68%</b>	<b>85%</b>	85%
Adult family member(s) with a substantiated substance abuse barrier that accessed treatment.	50%	50%	50%	<b>50%</b>	<b>80%</b>	87%
Families experiencing domestic violence that received help.	33%	33%	67%	<b>58%</b>	<b>75%</b>	81%
Families exiting FaDSS with increased income.	50%	45%	46%	<b>40%</b>	<b>45%</b>	43%
Families receiving transition services after the last month of FIP.	28%	34%	37%	<b>41%</b>	<b>65%</b>	58%
Visits provided in the home environment.	85%	88%	87%	<b>85%</b>	<b>80%</b>	82%

**PROGRAM PERFORMANCE – LOCAL PROGRAM GOALS**

In addition to conducting regular reviews of performance on state contract measures, Community Action of Eastern Iowa leadership set and review performance and outcomes goals unique to the local program. Table 2 provides an overview of these goals and corresponding performance data. State performance data have been included for comparison.

**Table 2. Program Goals**

Indicator	Through Quarter 1	Through Quarter 2	Through Quarter 3	Quarter 4 (Year End)	Target	State Average
<i>Goal: Understand how well specialists are able to engage families.</i>						
Length of Stay (months).	5.0	5.7	6.8	7.1	8.0	9.9
Average number of monthly contacts.	3.29	3.67	3.48	3.52	4	3.1
Families receiving transition services after the last month of FIP.	28%	34%	37%	41%	65%*	58%
<i>Goal: Understand changes in family stability measures from enrollment to exit.</i>						
Families demonstrating positive change in the housing domain (SSM).	28%	24%	25%	24%	30%	31%
Families demonstrating positive change in the mental health domain (SSM).	22%	19%	18%	15%	25%	19%
Families demonstrating positive change in the substance abuse domain (SSM).	9%	11%	8%	6%	12%*	10%



\* Denotes state contract measure.

**THE SELF-SUFFICIENCY MATRIX**

Families participating in the FaDSS program often face multiple barriers to self-sufficiency. Through an in-depth assessment process (including both formal and informal assessment), Family Development Specialists work with families to identify areas of strength that are then used to address barriers. The Self-Sufficiency Matrix provides a mechanism for program staff to measure changes in a family’s situation from entry (within 60 days of enrollment) to program exit. The Self-Sufficiency Matrix measures family stability across 14 life domains. Answering a series of questions for each family domain, Family Development Specialists rate stability on a scale of 1 through 5 based on his/her observation and assessment.

**Table 3. Self-Sufficiency Matrix – Domains**

1. Housing	8. Parenting, Nurturing and Attachment
2. Transportation	9. Child Care
3. Mental Health	10. Support of Child Development
4. Substance Abuse	11. Adult Education
5. Health	12. Language
6. Income	13. Support Network
7. Employment	14. Relationship with Partner

**Figure 2. Self-Sufficiency Matrix - Stability Scale**



**SELF-SUFFICIENCY MATRIX RESULTS**

By comparing scores for each family domain at entry and at exit, we gain insight into the cumulative impact of FaDSS services on self-sufficiency and stability measures. For the current reporting period, a total of 110 families had both entry and exit scores<sup>2</sup>. Additional performance data are included in a discussion of select domains to lend both context and supporting information about changes in family stability and self-sufficiency measures.

Table 4 presents changes in pre-/post- Self-Sufficiency Matrix life domains. When interpreting the data below, it is useful to consider several key factors: 1) the average entry score may impact both the average change and the percent of families that saw improvement in a domain. For example, when the average entry score is high, families may not have much room for further improvement. Conversely, when the average entry

<sup>2</sup> The FaDSS program launched a new data collection system, Iowa FaDSS, on July 1, 2016. Self-Sufficiency Matrix data for families that enrolled prior to July 1, 2016 were not migrated from the legacy data collection system. Therefore, for the current reporting period, only families that enrolled after July 1, 2016 and exited by June 30, 2018 could be included in this analysis.

score is considerably low (i.e. at “Vulnerable”), significant scaffolding of supports may be necessary even to achieve stability, or no change, from entry to exit; 2) While our goal is to leverage FaDSS services to achieve positive outcomes across all life domains, community factors may play a significant role in whether a family achieves improvement. This may be particularly salient for domains such as housing, transportation, and child care. Overall, any review of pre-/post- Self-Sufficiency Matrix changes should include these and other local considerations.

**Table 4. Pre-/Post- Changes in Family Stability and Self-Sufficiency Measures**

Domain	Overall Domain Changes – Head of Household					Targeted Domain Changes <sup>3</sup> - Head of Household		
	Average Entry Score	Average Exit Score	Average Change	Percent Improved	Percent Improved - State	Average Change	Percent Improved	Percent Improved - State
<b>Housing</b>	2.34	2.60	+0.26	23.64%	31%	+0.38	29%	38%
<b>Transportation</b>	3.60	3.76	+0.16	32%	31%	+0.19	40%	44%
<b>Mental Health</b>	3.95	3.88	-0.07	15%	19%	-0.58	18%	26%
<b>Substance Abuse</b>	4.34	4.21	-0.13	6%	10%	-1.36	7%	17%
<b>Health</b>	3.85	4.05	+0.20	24%	21%	+0.09	23%	29%
<b>Income</b>	1.20	1.38	+0.18	20%	22%	+0.14	19%	23%
<b>Employment</b>	1.48	2.06	+0.58	25%	37%	+0.70	29%	40%
<b>Nurturing and Attachment</b>	4.40	4.25	-0.15	7%	15%	-0.14	9%	18%
<b>Childcare</b>	3.07	3.28	+0.21	19%	13%	+0.25	24%	27%
<b>Support of Child Development</b>	3.65	3.84	+0.19	28%	25%	-0.06	21%	28%
<b>Adult Education</b>	1.85	1.90	+0.05	6%	10%	+0.07	9%	15%
<b>Language</b>	1.50	5.0	+3.50	100%	1%	N/A	N/A	15%
<b>Support Network</b>	2.29	2.54	+0.25	29%	31%	+0.20	29%	40%
<b>Relationship with Partner</b>	3.31	3.29	-0.20	10%	6%	+0.00	25%	17%

<sup>3</sup> Targeted domains are domains for which the specialist and family set one or more goals to address identified barriers.



## HOUSING

Taking a deeper look at the housing domain, we can see that as a whole, families entered with an average score of 2.34, or between “vulnerable” and “safe.” Sixty-three percent of families set goals related to their housing situation, meaning that this domain was particularly targeted by both the family and the home visitor for improvement. Families improved in the housing domain regardless of whether a goal was set.

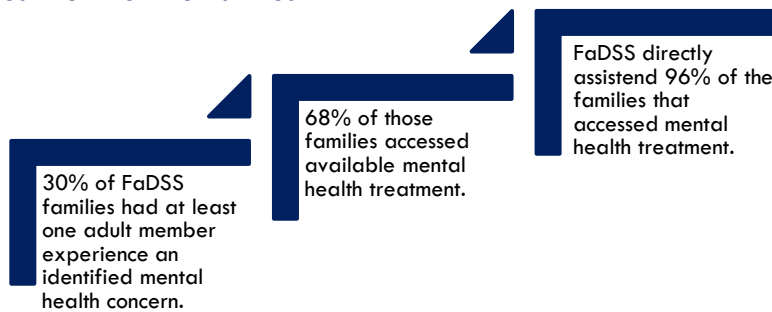
## TRANSPORTATION

Families entered the FaDSS program with an average transportation score of 3.60, or between “safe” and “building capacity.” Fifty percent of families set a goal related to transportation; of those that did, the entry score for this domain was slightly lower at 3.25.

## MENTAL HEALTH

The mental health domain presents a more complex picture of family stability. Families entered the program with an average score of 3.95, nearing the “building capacity” category. Thirty-six percent of families set a goal related to addressing mental health needs; for those that did, the average entry score was slightly lower at 3.23 (between “safe” and “building capacity”). The percentage of families that saw improvement in this domain was slightly higher for those that set goals when compared to all families, though overall families tended to see a decline in their scores at exit. A number of factors may contribute to this change, including the combined use of formal and informal assessment and screening (programs may use selected, valid mental health screening tools) when appropriate, and at any point during enrollment. It is quite possible that Family Development Specialists identified the presence of a mental health concern after the initial Self-Sufficiency Matrix was administered (note: programs are required to gather initial or entry information within sixty days of enrollment). It is also worth noting that the role of the Family Development Specialist, in this case, is to screen for the presence of mental health concerns and connect families to qualified resources and supports. Specialists do not, under any circumstances, provide direct intervention or treatment in this domain.

**Figure 3: Access to Treatment for Mental Health**



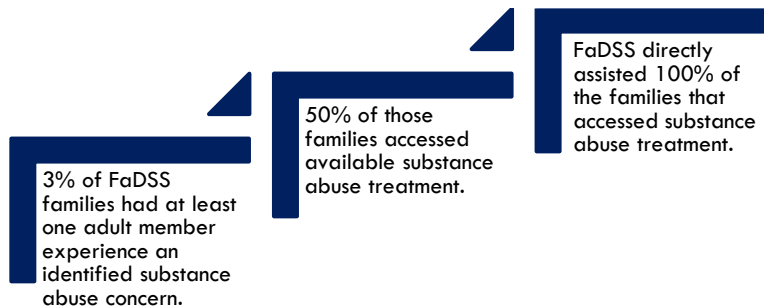
## SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Similar to mental health, the substance abuse domain can provide useful, though complex insight into family stability. A review of data for this domain demonstrates that families enter the program with an average score of 4.34, between “building capacity” and “empowered.” A relatively small percentage of families (13%) chose to set goals for improvement in this domain. Of those that did, the average entry score was significantly lower, at 3.29, between “safe” and “building capacity.” Families tended to see declines in their exit scores regardless of whether a goal was set. Similarly to mental health, substance abuse screening may be both formal and informal, and may occur as appropriate at any point during enrollment. It is possible that Family Development Specialists identified the presence of substance abuse concerns after the initial Self-



Sufficiency Matrix was administered. As with mental health, the role of the Family Development Specialist is strictly to screen for the presence of substance abuse and connect families to qualified resources and supports.

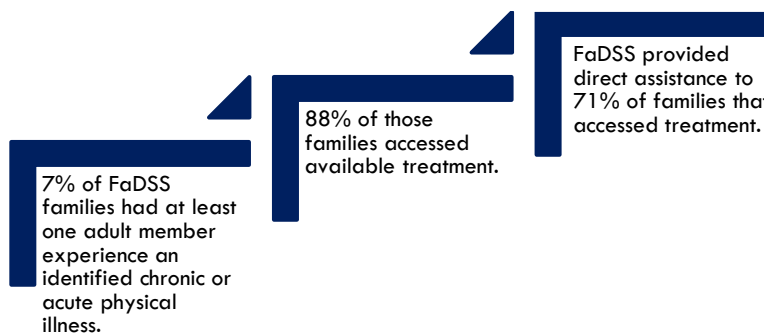
Figure 4: Access to Treatment for Substance Abuse



### HEALTH

Families entered the FaDSS program with an average score of 3.85, nearing the “building capacity” category. Overall, families exited with slightly higher scores, at 4.05. Twenty percent of families chose to set a goal for this domain, and those that did tended to achieve slightly greater improvement when compared to all families. While the FaDSS program measures family progress in this domain, it is generally approached in terms of facilitating family access to appropriate, qualified health professionals.

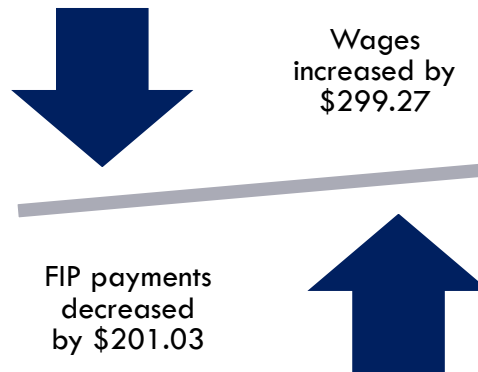
Figure 5: Access to Treatment for Chronic and Acute Physical Illness



### INCOME

As might be expected, families tended to enter the FaDSS program with much lower scores in this domain (the average score was 1.20, or “in crisis”). The average score at exit was 1.38; still within the “in crisis” range, though improved over scores at entry. Eighty-seven percent of families set income-related goals; because such a high percentage of families target this domain, it is difficult to make a meaningful comparison between improvements for families with goals and families overall. It is worth noting, however, that the income domain is directly related to earned wages. To put this into further context, the “in crisis” category applies to families between 0% and 100% of poverty by family size.

**Figure 6: Average Changes in Monthly FIP and Wages from Entry to Exit (All Families)**



Narrowing in on families employed at exit (45%), we see that the average monthly wage was \$1,159.88 (an increase of \$775.83). In comparison, 51% of families statewide were employed at exit.

**EMPLOYMENT**

Supporting families as they seek and obtain employment is a cornerstone of the FaDSS model. Families entered the FaDSS program with an average score of 1.48, within the “in crisis” range for the employment domain. At 82%, this domain had one of the highest rates of goal setting. Families also saw the greatest improvements in this domain, with an overall increase of .58 (for an average, all-family exit score of 2.06) and .70 (for an average, goal-related exit score of 2.16). The FaDSS program provides a number of formal and informal supports related to employment. Figure 7 below provides a detailed look at these activities.

**Figure 7: Job Preparedness Activities**



Reviewing family progress for both the employment and income domains together, it is clear that FaDSS is effective in supporting families to obtain employment, though improvements in income suggest that overall wages earned remain lower.

**PARENTING, NURTURING AND ATTACHMENT**

Families enrolling in FaDSS tended to score relatively high in the parenting, nurturing and attachment domain. With an average incoming score of 4.40, parents were generally considered to be “building capacity” in terms of their parenting ability and relationship with their children. Overall, 52% of families set a goal related to this domain. When this domain was targeted, families tended to see minimal changes in scores at exit (similarly, scores were relatively stable for families overall). The FaDSS program, unlike many family support programs, may provide support to families even when child safety comes to the attention of child

protective services. Of families completing the FaDSS program in Fiscal Year 2018, 10% had an active child abuse case at some point during their enrollment.

### **CHILD CARE**

This domain applied to only 63% of families, meaning that they had a child that would require child care. However, access to child care is often a significant barrier to employment and self-sufficiency for families with young children. The average score at entry was 3.07, within the “safe” category. Seventy-two percent of families for whom this domain applied set a goal related to child care; of those that did, entry scores averaged 2.98. FaDSS was able to provide direct assistance in obtaining child care to 53% of employed families for whom this was a barrier.

### **SUPPORT OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

The average score at entry was 3.65, between “safe” and “building capacity.” Fifty-one percent of families set a goal related to child development; of those that did, entry scores averaged 3.54. Notably, the FaDSS program engages families in formal screening for developmental delays for all children ages 0-3. Using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3 and/or ASQ SE: 2), the FaDSS program conducted screening with 37% of families with an age-eligible child (39% of children screened were identified as positive for a developmental delay). Overall, 25% of families with age-eligible children also participated in an early childhood program.

### **ADULT EDUCATION**

For families enrolling in FaDSS, the average score for adult education was 1.85, between “in crisis” and “vulnerable.” For this domain, it is worth noting that a score of 2 indicates that the head of household has achieved either a high school equivalency diploma or has graduated from high school; a score of 3 indicates that the head of household attends college, community college, or a job/technical training program. Thirty-nine percent of families set a formal goal for this domain. Overall, 16% of adult heads of household improved their level of educational attainment.

### **LANGUAGE**

The language domain measures changes in literacy for a family’s native language and progress toward bilingual fluency. This domain is not completed for English-speaking adult family members; 1% of families were scored for changes in language. Overall, the data available for this domain are insufficient for analysis.

### **SUPPORT NETWORK**

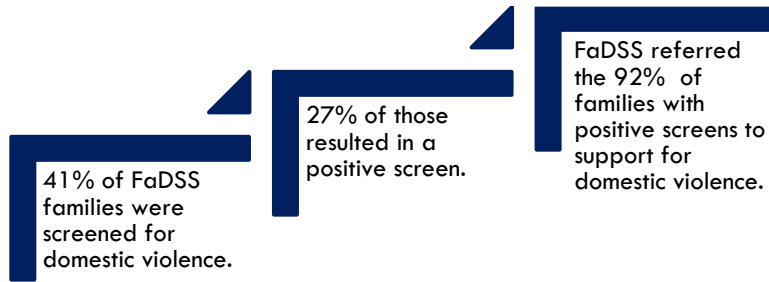
This domain measures family access to both formal (i.e. social service programs) and informal (i.e. family and friends) supports. The average score at entry for this domain was 2.29, between “vulnerable” and “safe.” Fifty-seven percent of families set a goal related to their support network; families that targeted this domain achieved improvement at rates comparable to that of all families. Families averaged a positive change of .25 points with a significant percentage of households (29%) seeing overall improvement.

### **RELATIONSHIP WITH PARTNER**

As with the child care and language domains, the relationship domain considers a smaller number of families for changes from entry to exit. This domain is completed for heads of household based on current and past relationships (within six months prior to completion of the entry Self-Sufficiency Matrix). For the current reporting period, data for this domain are available for 46% of families with Self-Sufficiency Matrix scores. At entry, families averaged a score of 3.31, within the “safe” category. Exit scores averaged 3.29. Thirty-one percent of families set a formal goal related to this domain; those that did entered the program with a

significantly lower score (2.33). The FaDSS program engages families in formal screening for domestic violence within the first ninety days of enrollment. Figure 8 below provides an overview of screening activities completed in Fiscal Year 18.

**Figure 8: Screening for Domestic Violence**



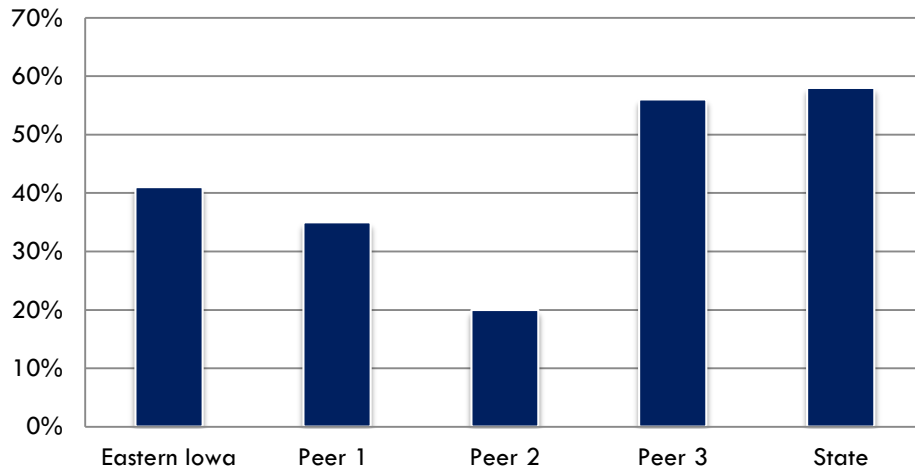
## CONCLUSION

The Community Action of Eastern Iowa FaDSS program works diligently to provide high-quality, supportive services to families participating in the Family Investment Program. The data presented above reflect the program's commitment to achieving improved outcomes for parents, children, and families as a whole.

**APPENDIX A – Utilization of Transition Services**

The following analysis presents an in-depth, comparative look at whether families utilized transition services. Peer and state performance data is provided for comparison; peer data reflect FaDSS grantees with service areas that border another state.

**Families Utilizing Transition**



**Reasons for No Transition**

