Country Facts: Polk County, IA
Population 482,000

The Local Economy

Unemployment rate | Polk County 3.1% | IA 3.1% | United States 4.4%
Poverty rate | Polk County 13.1% | IA 12.4% | United States 15.1%
Median family income (000s) | Polk County $62 | IA $56 | United States $57
Population growth 2000-2017 | Polk County 29% | IA 16% | United States 7%
Manufacturing share of workforce | Polk County 15% | IA 10% | United States 8%
Farming share of workforce | Polk County 4.3% | IA 1.5% | United States 1.7%
Great Recession unemployment spike (pp) | Polk County 2.8% | IA 2.5% | United States 4.7%

How Local Kids' Lives Turn Out

Percent graduating any college | Polk County 54% | IA 55% | United States 46%
Percent reaching upper-middle class | Polk County 27% | IA 26% | United States 20%
Percent achieving American Dream | Polk County 14% | IA 11% | United States 10%
Percent giving birth as a teen | Polk County 15% | IA 14% | United States 15%
Percent landing in jail | Polk County 1.5% | IA 0.7% | United States 1.2%
Local school expenditure per student (000s) | Polk County $6.4 | IA $6.1 | United States $6.4
Local Colleges and Upward Mobility

4-Year Colleges

- Low-income share of students: Drake Univ. 3.7%, Iowa 4-year-college average 4.6%, U.S. 4-year-college average 9.3%
- Low-income student success rate: Drake Univ. 58.1%, Iowa 4-year-college average 51.3%, U.S. 4-year-college average 71.0%

2-Year Colleges

- Low-income share of students: Des Moines Area CC (public) 8.5%, Iowa 2-year-college average 9.7%, U.S. 2-year-college average 15.6%
- Low-income student success rate: Des Moines Area CC (public) 29.3%, Iowa 2-year-college average 32.8%, U.S. 2-year-college average 32.9%

*: Data refers to the full college system, not just this campus. †: In nearby county

Local Demographics

- Percent Black: Polk County 8%, IA 4%, United States 14%
- Percent Hispanic: Polk County 17%, IA 6%, United States 3.0%
- Percent over age 65: Polk County 24%, IA 19%, United States 21%
- Percent college grad: Polk County 81, IA 66, United States 76
- Crime rate (arrests per 10k residents): Polk County 12, IA 82.9, United States 83.2
- Life expectancy (years): Polk County 32.8, IA 32.9, United States 32.9
- Opioid deaths (deaths per 10k residents): Polk County 15, IA 7, United States 7

Polk County, IA

Katie Donnelly, Clancy Green, and Danny Yagan

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Definitions and Sources

The Local Economy
- Unemployment rate (August 2018, BLS)
- Poverty rate (2012-2016 ACS)
- Median family income (2016 ACS)
- Manufacturing share of workforce (2012-2016 ACS)
- Farming share of workforce (2012-2016 ACS)
- Great Recession unemployment spike (BLS LAUS)

How Local Kids’ Lives Turn Out
- Percent graduating any college (2-yr or 4-yr, Tax Data 2, N/A for some counties)
- Percent reaching upper middle-class (top 20% of the U.S. income distribution, Tax Data 1, N/A for some counties)
- Percent achieving American Dream (share of local low-income kids—i.e. those with 25th-income-percentile parents—who reach the top 20% of the U.S. income distribution as adults, Tax Data 1, N/A for some counties)
- Percent (of local female kids) giving birth as a teen (Tax Data 1, N/A for some counties)
- Percent landing in jail (percent of local kids in jail on 1 April 2010, Tax Data 1 and 2010 Census, N/A for some counties)
- Local school expenditure per student (in public schools, NCES, N/A for some counties)

Local Colleges and Upward Mobility
- Low-income share of students (share of age-18-22 students with bottom-20% parents, Tax Data 2)
- Low-income student success rate (share of low-income age-18-22 students who reach the top 40% of the U.S. income distribution as adults, Tax Data 2)

Local Demographics
- Percent Black (2012-2016 ACS)
- Percent Hispanic (2012-2016 ACS)
- Percent over age 65 (2010 Census)
- Percent college grad (4-yr college, 2012-2016 ACS)
- Crime rate (serious violent and property arrests per 10,000 residents, FBI Uniform Crime Reports, N/A for some counties)
- Life expectancy (at age 40, Tax Data 3, N/A for some counties)
- Opioid deaths (per 10,000 residents in 2017, CDC, N/A for some counties and some counties report population weighted commuting zone average)

Sources Legend
- ACS: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Surveys, 2012-2016
- CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2017 on CDC WONDER Online Database.
- Census: U.S. Census Bureau