

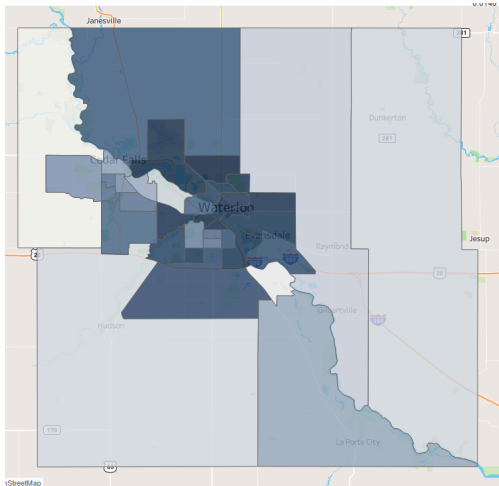
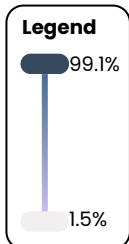


Economic Stability

Economic instability disproportionately affects residents in the top five Social Vulnerability Index census tracts, particularly in ZIP code 50703, including Black/African American, Hispanic, and young adults aged 18–24. Contributing factors such as low wages, lack of worker protections, limited childcare, and unreliable transportation make it difficult for many households to meet basic needs, increasing their vulnerability during emergencies and exacerbating health disparities.

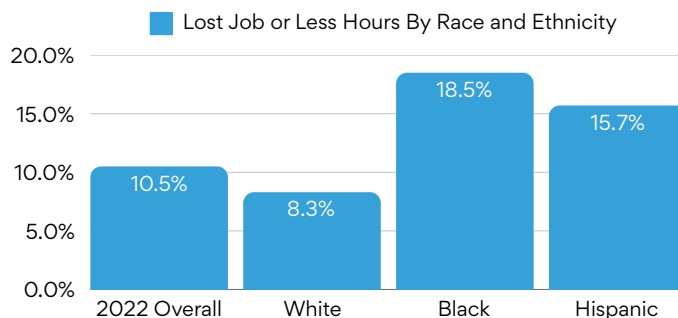
Social Vulnerability Index (SVI)

The SVI was created to enhance preparedness and response by understanding social factors that would affect a community's ability to respond to disasters. It combines several factors in four categories: socioeconomic status, household characteristics, racial and ethnic minority status, and housing type and transportation. The map shows census tracts in Black Hawk County ranked against other counties in Iowa. Census tracts with darker blue have a higher SVI than other census tracts.

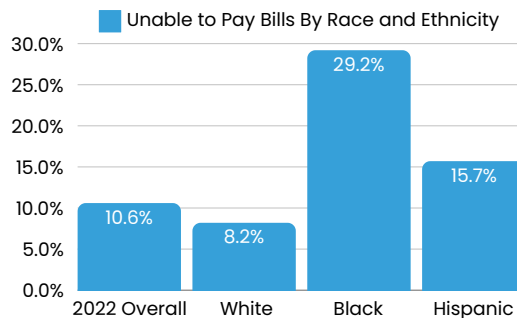
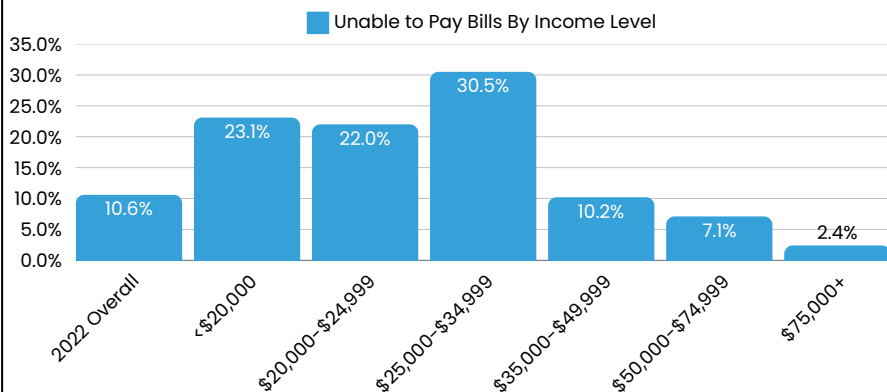


Lost Job or Less Hours

In 2022, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) participants were asked if they had lost their jobs or had hours reduced in the last 12 months. Participants identifying as Black or Hispanic were more likely to say yes to that question. Others impacted were individuals ages 18–24 (20.2%) and households earning less than \$49,999 (18%), with households earning \$25,000 to \$34,999 impacted the most (22.6%).



Unable to Pay Bills or Utilities Shut Off



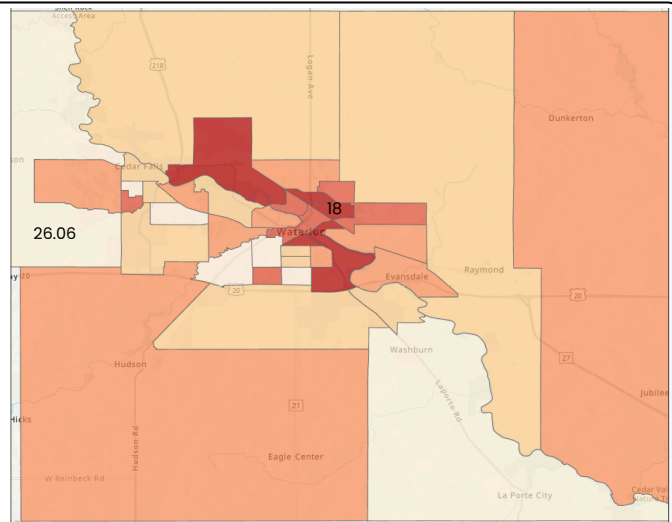
BRFSS participants were asked if they were unable to pay their mortgage, rent, or utility bills in the last 12 months. Individuals identifying as Black were the most likely to say yes to that question, followed by Hispanic individuals, as were households earning less than \$34,999. They were also asked if utility companies threatened to shut off services in the last 12 months, and the same groups were affected at similar rates. However, households earning less than \$35,000 (15.4%) were more likely to say yes compared to an overall average of 6.5%.



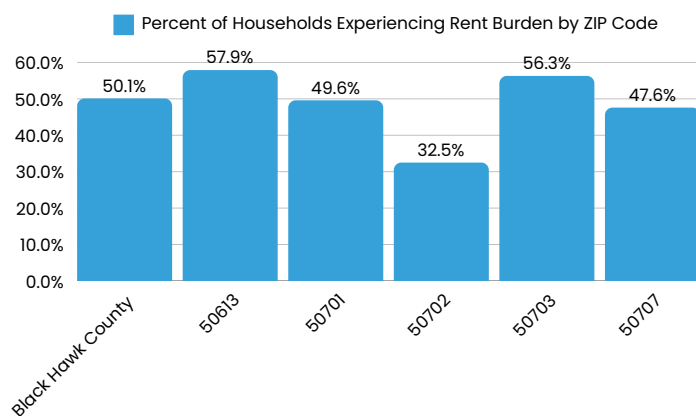
Economic Stability

Unemployment

The map shows Black Hawk County's unemployment rates for individuals aged 16 and older in the civilian labor force. Areas shown in dark red represent higher unemployment proportions, such as 21% in Census Tract 18 (east Waterloo), while lighter areas indicate lower unemployment, such as 0.1% in Census Tract 26.06 (northwest corner of map). This variation highlights distinct economic disparities within the county.

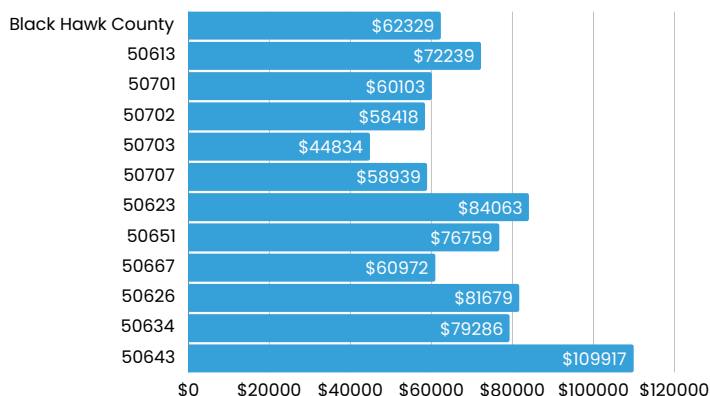


Rent Burden



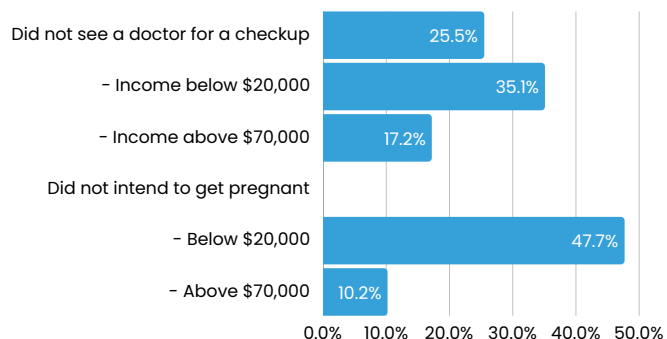
Rent burden is when people spend 30% or more of household income on rent.

Median Household Income



Waterloo ZIP Code 50703 had the lowest median household income in 2022.

Iowa Prenatal Care Survey



Nearly 1 in 4 women did not have a doctor's check-up in the year before pregnancy, with the highest rates among those earning under \$20,000, potentially highlighting disparities in healthcare access compared to higher-income women.

Further, mothers earning under \$20,000 reported the highest rates of stressors during pregnancy, followed by those earning \$20,000–\$70,000, while mothers with incomes above \$70,000 experienced the fewest stressors.

Community Survey

#3

69%

Overall Rank

Needs Improvement

69% of respondents said that jobs and a healthy economy needs improvement

Jobs and a healthy economy was ranked **3rd** overall as top 3 important factors for a healthy community

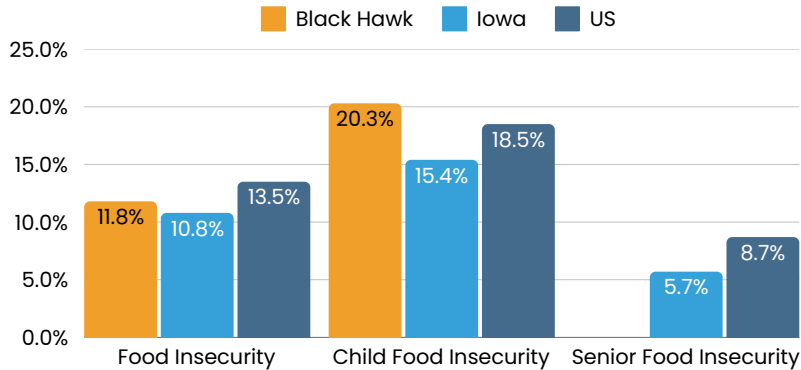


Inequitable Food Access

Inequitable food access affects residents in ZIP code 50703 and census tracts, including tract 1, within 50703, characterized by high food insecurity, a vast food desert, and a lack of healthy food options. These community members face a triple burden: struggling to afford enough food, no grocery stores, and the food that is readily available is often of poor nutritional quality.

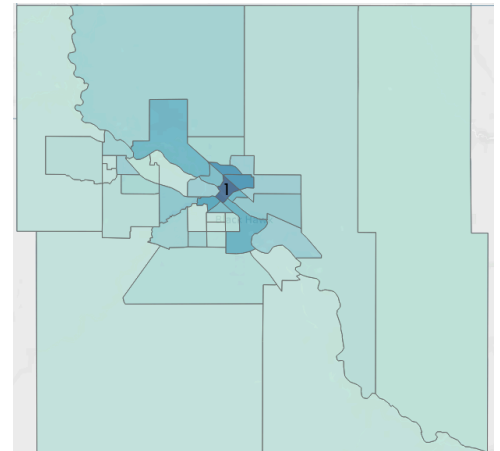
Food Insecurity, 2022

In 2022, food insecurity in Black Hawk County was 12%, slightly higher than Iowa at 11%, but lower than the U.S. average of 14%. Child food insecurity in Black Hawk County was higher at 20%, compared to 15% in Iowa and 19% nationally. Senior food insecurity data for Black Hawk County was suppressed, but Iowa's rate was 6%, lower than the U.S. average of 9%.

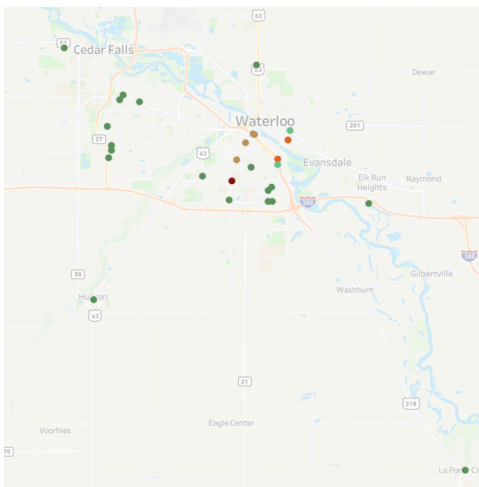


Food Insecurity by Census Tract, 2020

This map highlights food insecurity levels across Black Hawk County census tracts, ranging from 6% to 42%. Created using data modeled by Feeding America and the Northeast Iowa Food Bank, it identifies areas where access to sufficient, nutritious food is most limited. The analysis considers factors like unemployment, poverty, income, homeownership, disability, and demographics to pinpoint areas with the greatest need. Census tract 1 had the highest rates of food insecurity in the county.



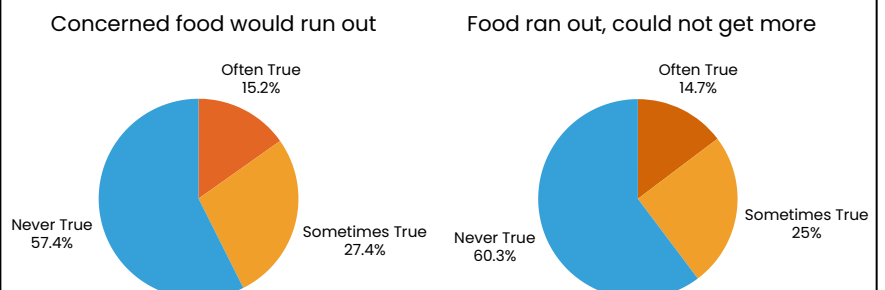
NEMs Food Desert



Locations of supermarkets and grocery stores in Black Hawk County. Two grocery stores closed in ZIP Code 50703 since the NEMS survey was performed.

Community Survey

Many community respondents answered "sometime true" or "often true" to questions indicating that in the past year, they were concerned that food would run out (42.6%) or it did run out, and they didn't have money to buy more (39.8%).

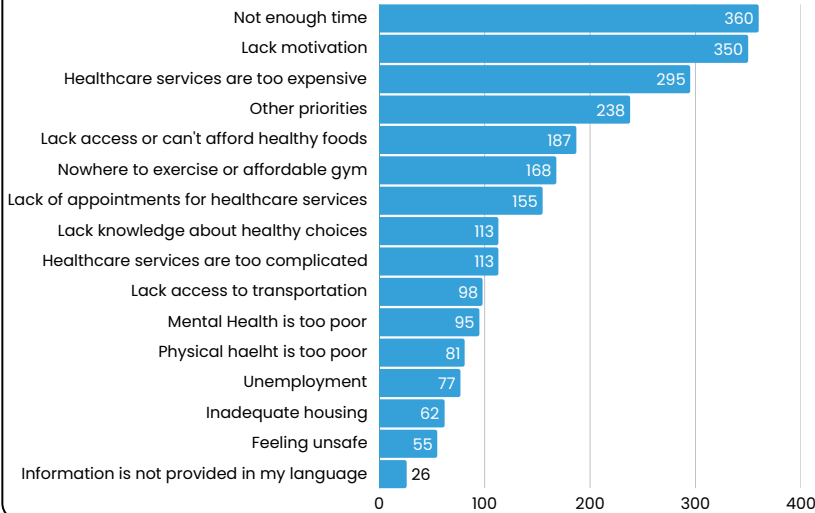




Transportation Challenges

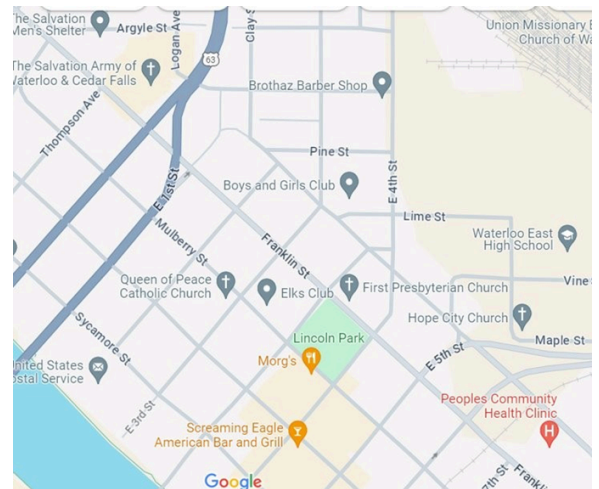
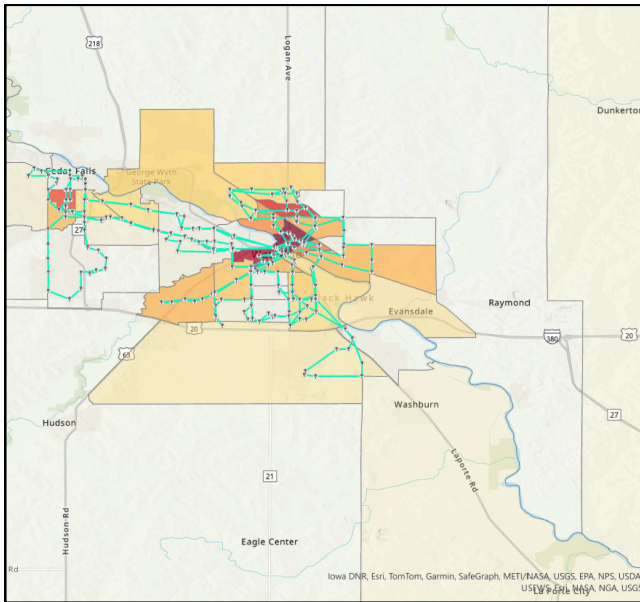
Limited access to reliable transportation disproportionately affects Black/African American community members, immigrant and refugee communities, and individuals with median incomes less than \$20,000 in downtown Waterloo. This issue arises due to a transportation system primarily designed for car owners, compounded by a newly revised public transit system, limited ride-sharing availability, and a lack of education on available routes and infrastructure, all of which create barriers to essential services for these communities.

Community Survey



Transportation was ranked 10 out of 16 overall for factors that respondents said prevented them from being healthier and was not a major barrier noted in other questions. However, it was one of the top barriers for individuals with an income less than \$15,000. Transportation was also the top reason why individuals who made less than \$15,000 did not seek mental health services when they needed them. Additionally, Marshallese and Burmese respondents said it was the most needed improvement.

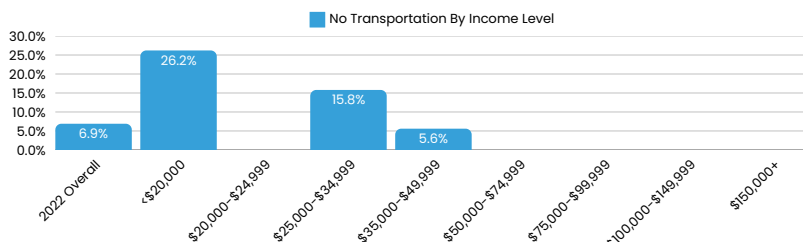
Low Income and Bus Routes



Diagonal roads and high-speed traffic on Mullen and Franklin Streets create pedestrian safety concerns. Salvation Army is enhancing accessibility with a new parking lot entrance and a sidewalk from the bus stop. Franklin Street is undergoing construction to improve conditions, with a plan for pedestrian and bike-friendly upgrades.

BRFSS, 2022

Low income prevented some BRFSS respondents from getting to appointments, work, and daily activities.



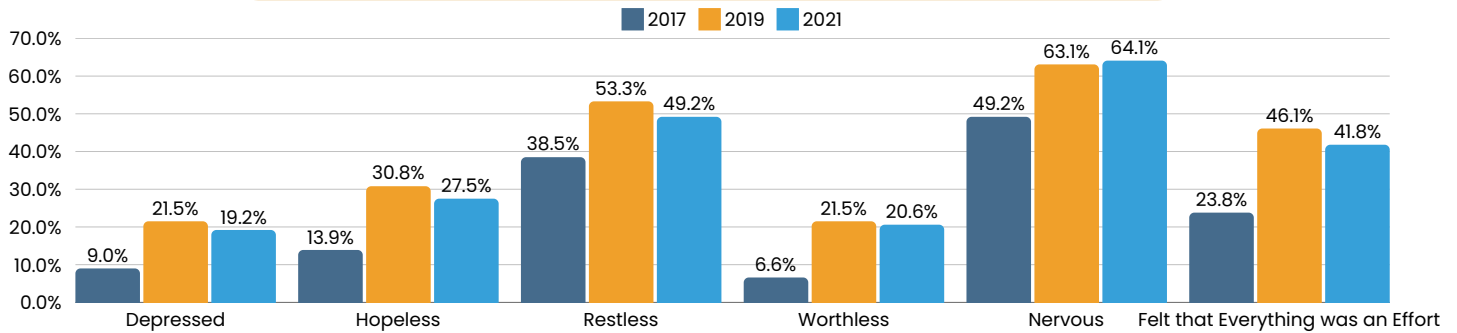
Window Survey



Behavioral Health: Treatment, Prevention, and Recovery

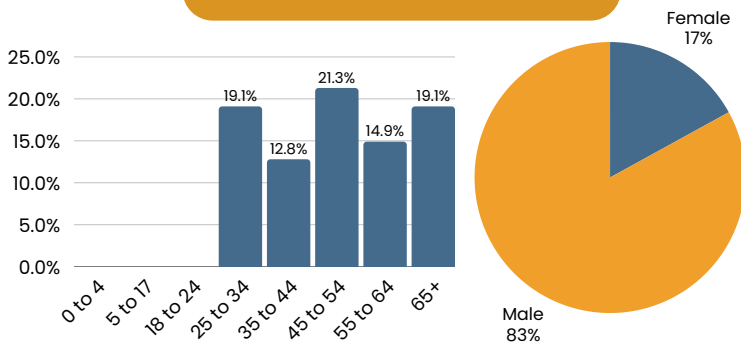
Behavioral health challenges disproportionately affect Black/African Americans, individuals aged 18-24 and 45-54, and those with lower incomes, with contributing factors including high ACE scores, male SUD, and anxiety disorders among younger age groups. 18-24-year-old females report the highest percentage of days that their mental health was not good, while alcohol, marijuana, and methamphetamine use pose significant challenges as they, directly or indirectly, impact many people.

Behavioral Risk Factor Survey



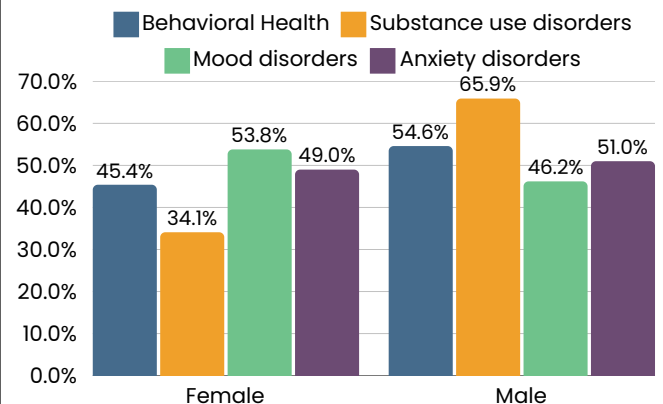
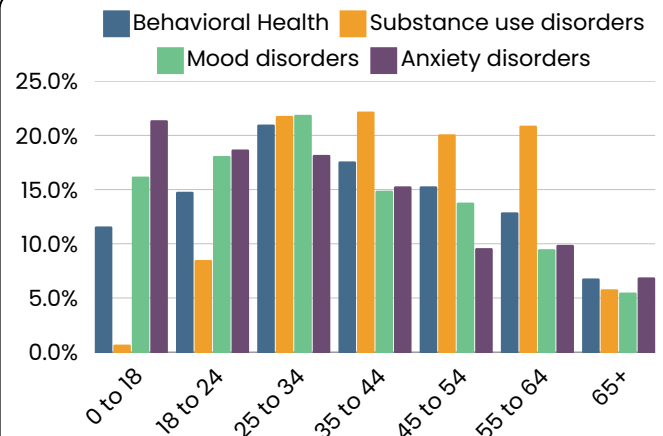
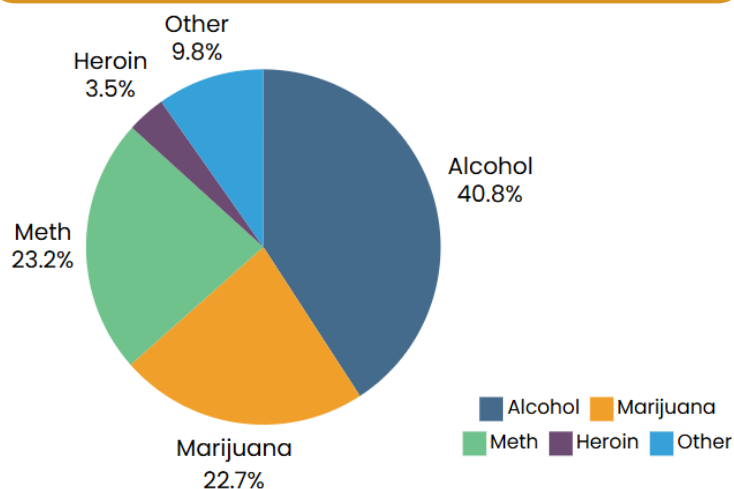
BRFSS participants in 2017, 2019, and 2021 have been asked if they had certain mental health symptoms in the past 30 days. There was an increase for each symptom from 2017 to 2019. In 2021, there was a slight decrease for all symptoms, except nervousness, but overall, they remain more similar to 2019 levels than returning to 2017 levels.

Vital Records



Individuals who died by suicide were more likely to be male, but no age group stands out as being more affected than others.

Substance Use Disorder Treatment



Anxiety disorders affected younger age groups, while substance use disorders affected men and older age groups.

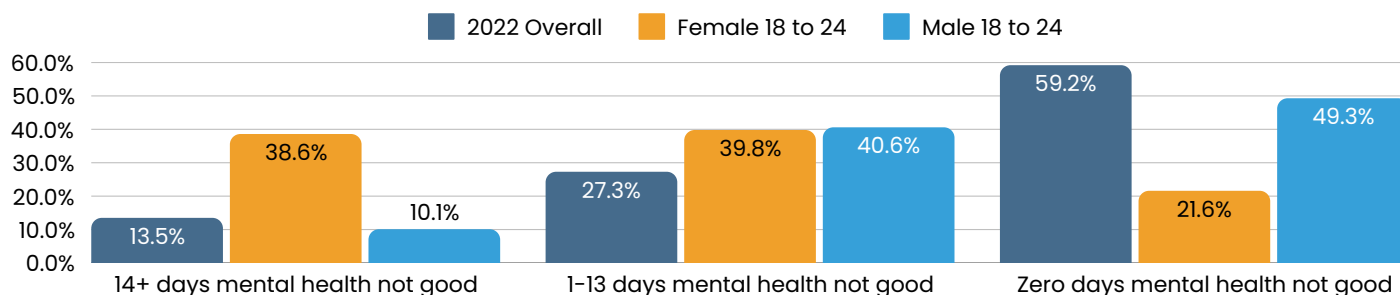
Behavioral Health Diagnosis



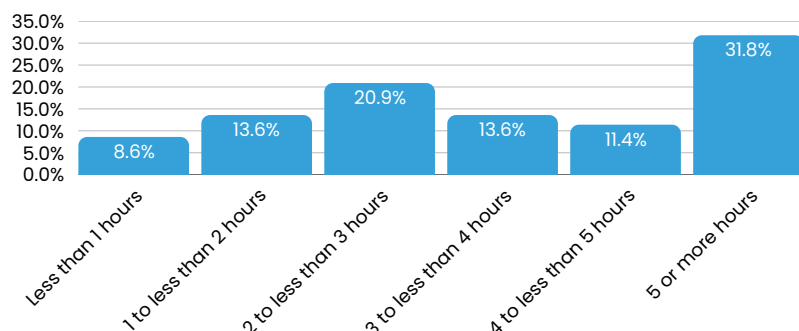
Behavioral Health: Treatment, Prevention, and Recovery

Mental Health Not Good, 2022

BRFSS participants were asked how many days out of the last 30 days was their mental health overall not good. In 2021, 16.1% individuals said that their mental health was not good 14–30 days. This decreased to 13.5% in 2022. However, women were more likely than men to be affected in 2022 (16.7% compared to 9.5%). 18–24 year olds were also more likely to be affected than other age groups (26.1%). The most affected group was 18–24 year old women, with 38.6% saying they had 14–30 days that their mental health was not good.

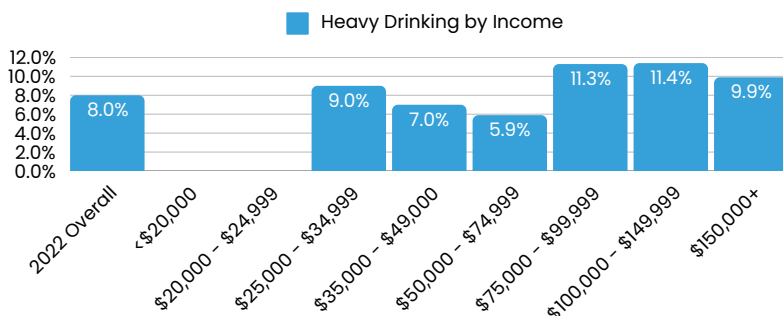


Screen Time, 2021



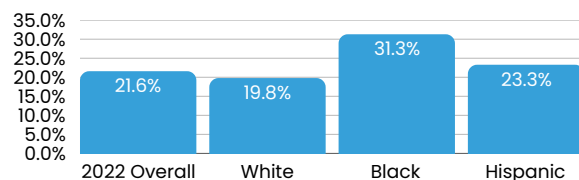
BRFSS participants were asked how many hours were they using screens or devices when they were not at work.

Heavy Drinking Alcohol, 2022

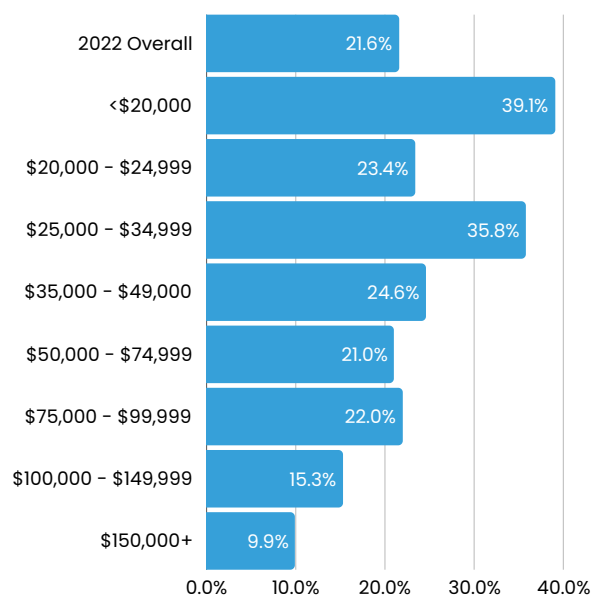


Heavy drinking is defined as more than 14 drinks per week for men and more than 7 drinks per week for women. Higher income levels, having a less than high school education, identifying as male, and people ages 25–34 were groups more likely to be affected.

4 or More ACEs by Race and Ethnicity



4 or More ACEs by Income



People reporting 4+ ACEs increased in 2022 (21.6%) compared to 2021 (18.6%). Age groups were normally distributed, but those who were under the age of 55 were more likely to report 4+ ACEs than those older than 55.

4+ ACEs, 2022

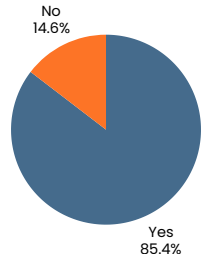


Access to Healthcare

Healthcare access disproportionately affect Black/African American, Hispanic, immigrant and refugee communities (Marshall and Burmese communities), and low-income populations across the county, with many unable to access care due to cost, insurance issues, scheduling conflicts, lack of transportation or language support. These barriers reduce those receiving timely preventive care, leading to increased Emergency Department visits, delayed diagnoses, and poorer health outcomes.

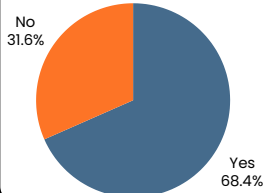
Community Survey

Doctor Visit



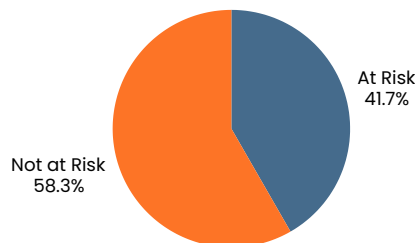
Younger age groups and lower income groups were less likely to visit the doctor or the dentist, as were some foreign-born population groups (Burma, Marshall Islands).

Dental Visit



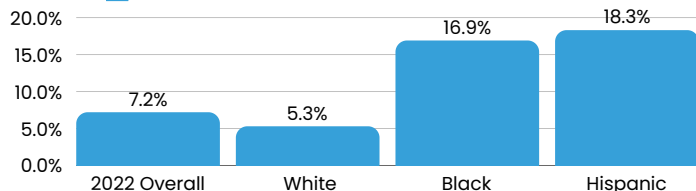
Top reasons included cost and inability to get an appointment time that works for them. Dental insurance was also a barrier for dental care.

Oral Healthcare

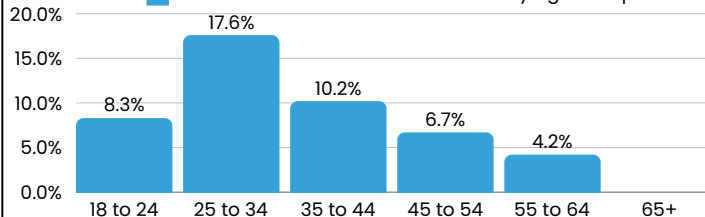


BRFSS participants were asked if they had lost any teeth to decay or gum disease. Those who had lost one or more for those reasons are considered to be "at risk". Individuals with a less than high school education (56.7%) and individuals earning less than \$25,000 (63.8%) were the most affected.

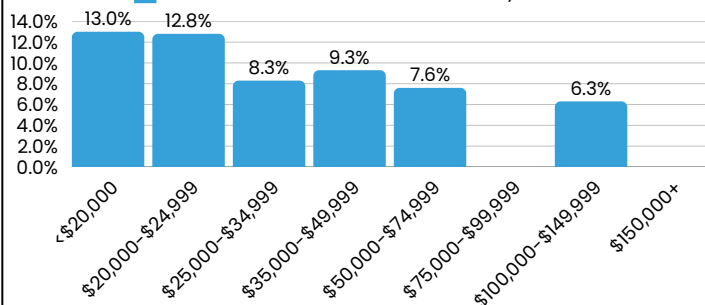
Could not See a Doctor Due to Cost by Race and Ethnicity



Could not See a Doctor Due to Cost by Age Group



Could not See a Doctor Due to Cost by Income Level

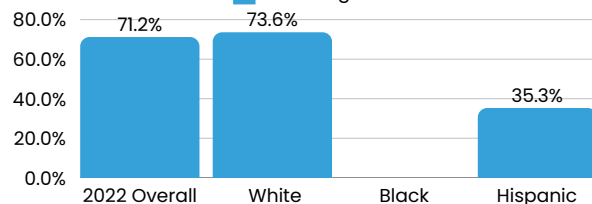


BRFSS participants were asked if they could not see doctor due to cost in the last 12 months. There was a slight increase from 2016 to 2020, but the level has been similar from 2020 to 2022. The most impacted groups are shown above.

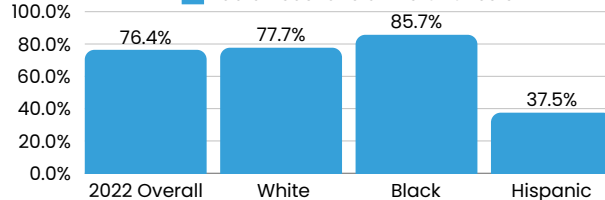
Cost of Healthcare

Cancer Screening

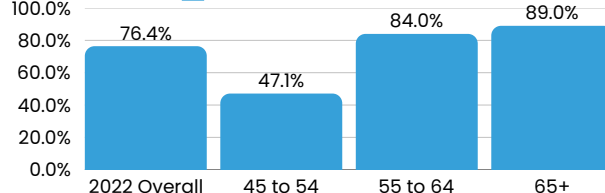
Mammogram at 40



Had at least one of the CRC tests



Had at least one of the CRC tests



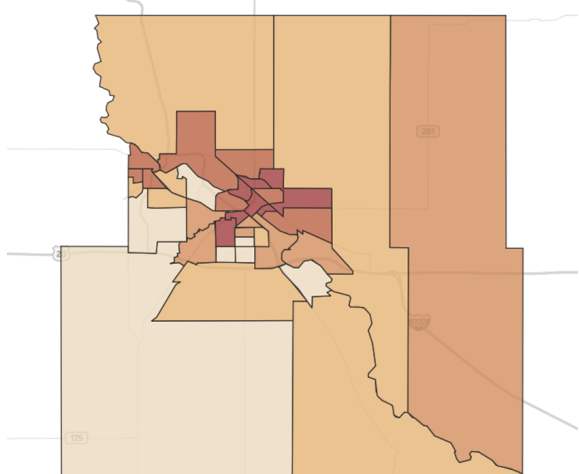
BRFSS participants were asked how long it had been since they had their last cancer screenings. While over 70% of participants were able to get a recommended cancer screening test, Hispanic individuals were less likely to get either a mammogram or colorectal cancer screening. Individuals ages 45 to 54 were also less likely to get a colorectal cancer screening test.



Housing Stability

Housing instability and lead exposure affect residents in east and central west Waterloo, particularly in ZIP codes 50703 and 50613, where rent burden is high, and older homes increase lead exposure risks. Rising housing costs, economic challenges, limited transitional housing, and zoning policies contribute to these issues, which mirror broader national and state trends.

Lead Exposure Risk Map, 2021



This map, created by IHHS, shows areas of risk for lead exposure based on the age of housing and childhood poverty. Darker red areas indicate higher risk. Parts of Waterloo have the highest risk zones, parts of Cedar Falls have moderate risk with fewer older homes and lower poverty, and rural areas generally show lower risk, though the eastern part of the county remain a concern.

Community Survey

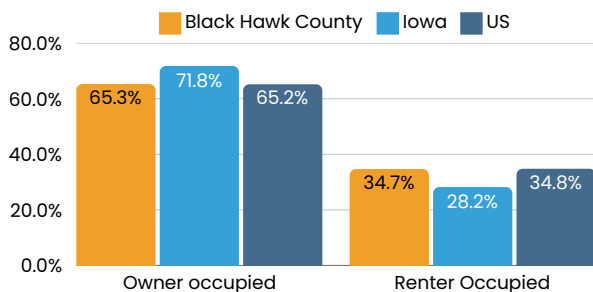
#2



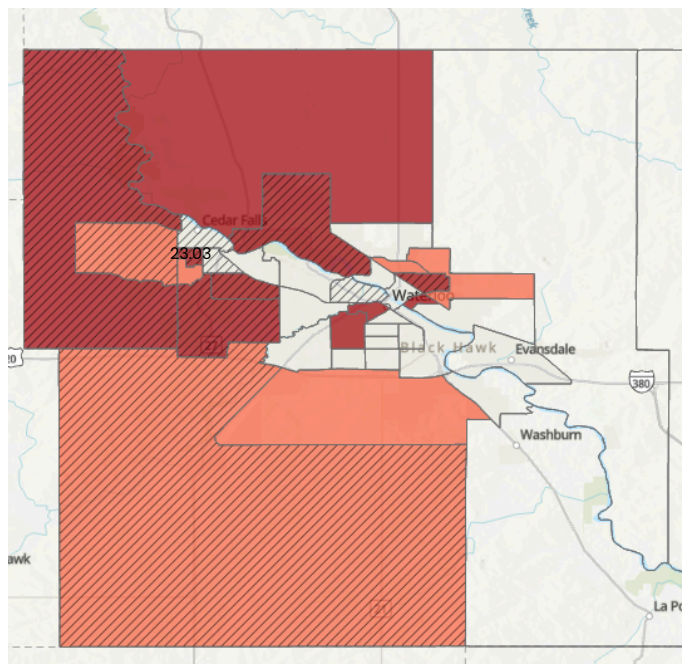
Overall Rank Needs Improvement

Affordable safe housing ranked #2 as a top factor for a healthy community, with 77% of respondents identifying it as the area most in need of improvement.

Homeownership



Black Hawk County has a lower owner-occupied housing rate than Iowa but is similar to the U.S. average. Census tracts 23.03 (home to UNI) and 1 have the lowest homeownership rates, ranging from 12.5% to 14.5%.



This map highlights areas in Black Hawk County where households face a high rent burden in red, meaning they spend more than 35% of their income on rent. While some neighborhoods with high rent burden also have higher-than-average rents (over \$1,000 per month shown with hatched lines), the map shows that rent burden is significant even in areas with lower median rents.

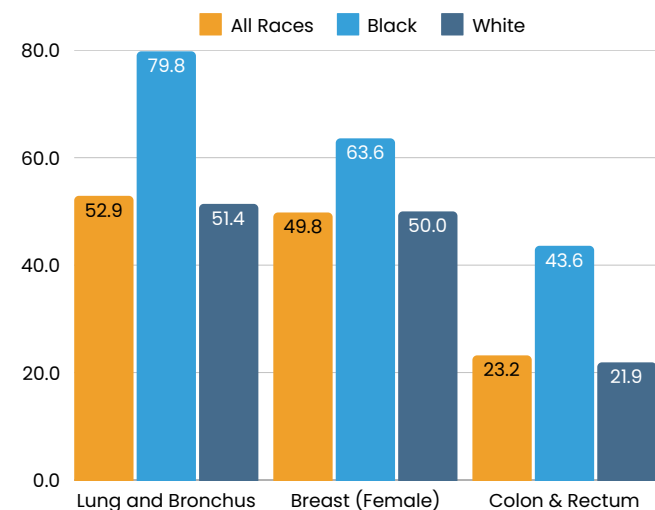
Rent Burden



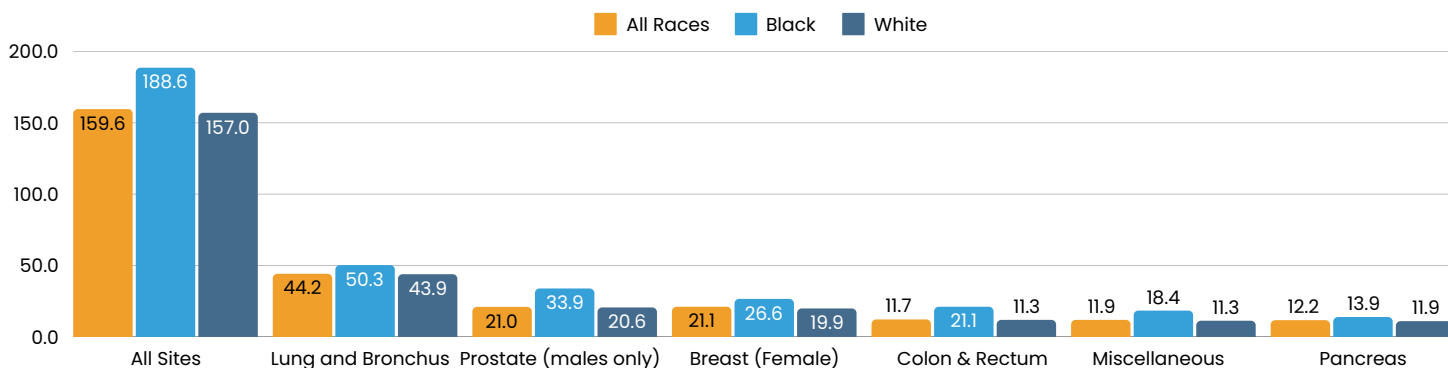
Chronic Disease

Chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and obesity disproportionately affect Black/African American residents in ZIP code 50703, with obesity rates particularly high and cancer rates exceeding national levels. Contributing factors include complex interactions of lifestyle, genetics, concentrated poverty, and limited access to healthcare, creating significant health disparities in this community.

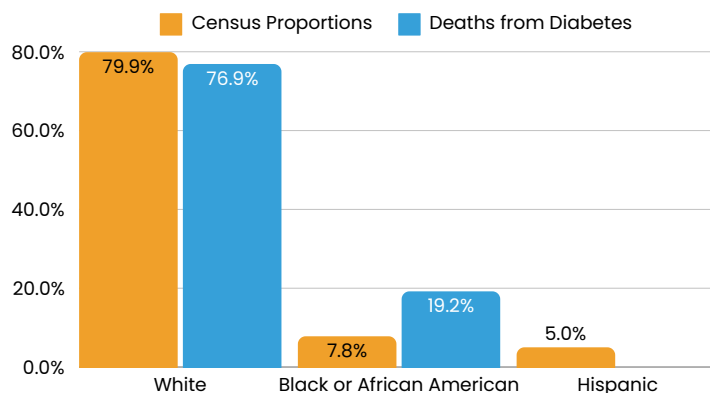
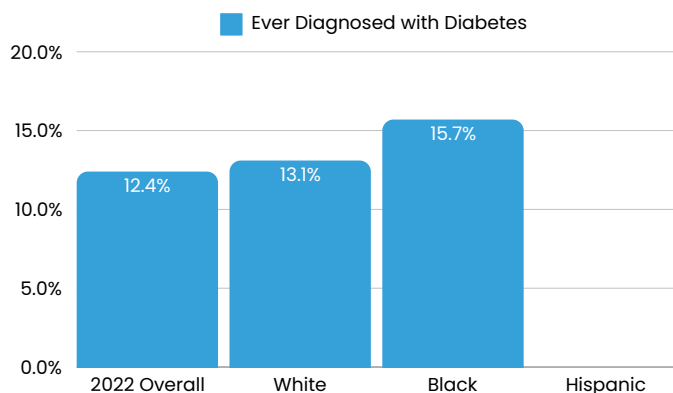
Cancer



Invasive cancer incidence (defined as stages 1-4) has been increasing between 2010 and 2019 for Black Hawk County. Black or African American individuals are more likely to be diagnosed with some of the top cancers (prostate, lung and bronchus, colorectal, and liver cancer), in addition to having an overall higher cancer diagnosis rate. The first graph shows late-stage cancer rates for lung, breast, and colon cancers. Black residents have higher rates than White residents and the overall population. The second graph shows cancer mortality by race, which shows that Black or African American individuals are more likely to die of the cancers listed.



Diabetes

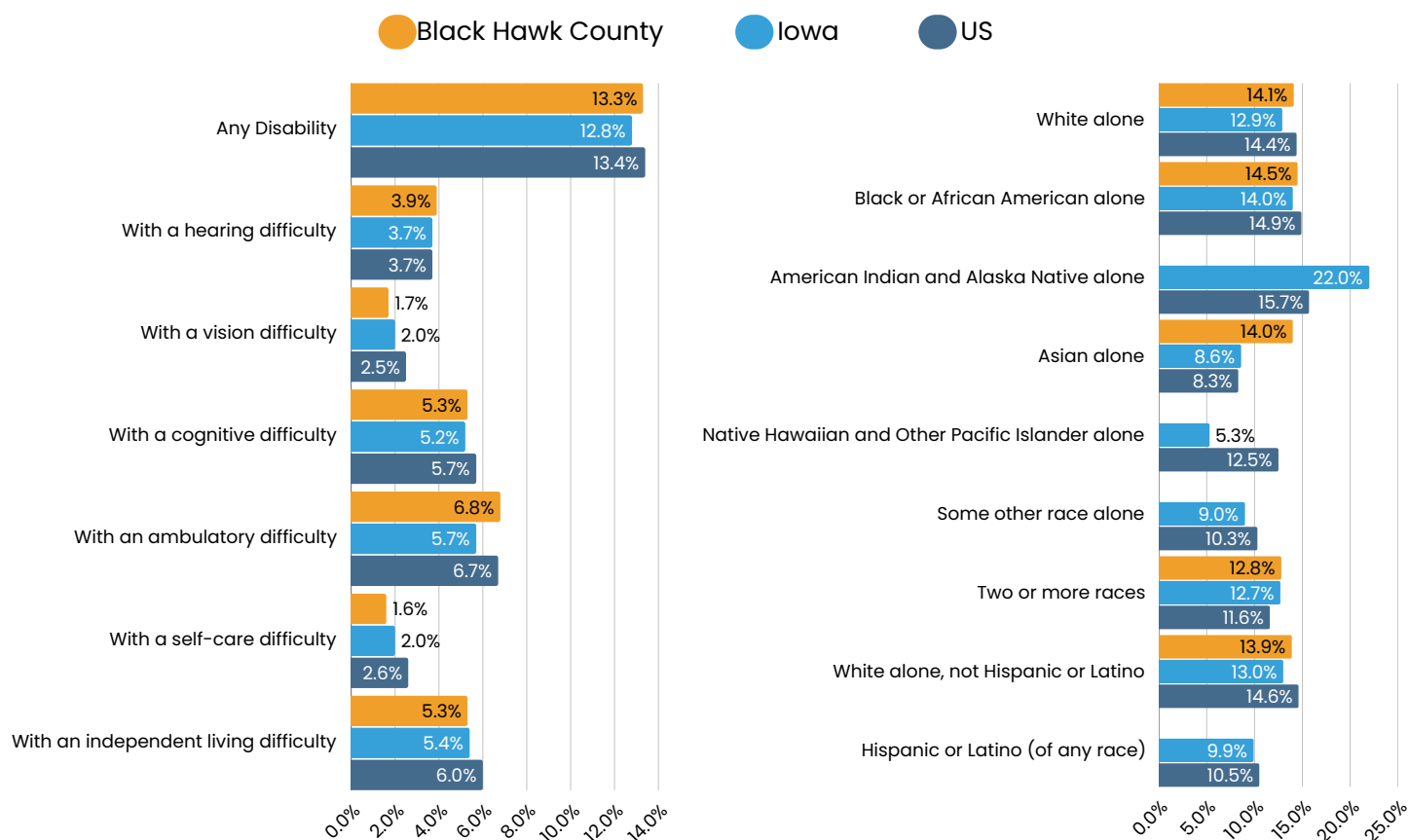


Black or African American individuals are more likely to identify as having diabetes or to die from diabetes compared to Census proportions. Individuals from Waterloo ZIP code 50703 are also more likely to go to the hospital or die from diabetes compared to Census proportions.



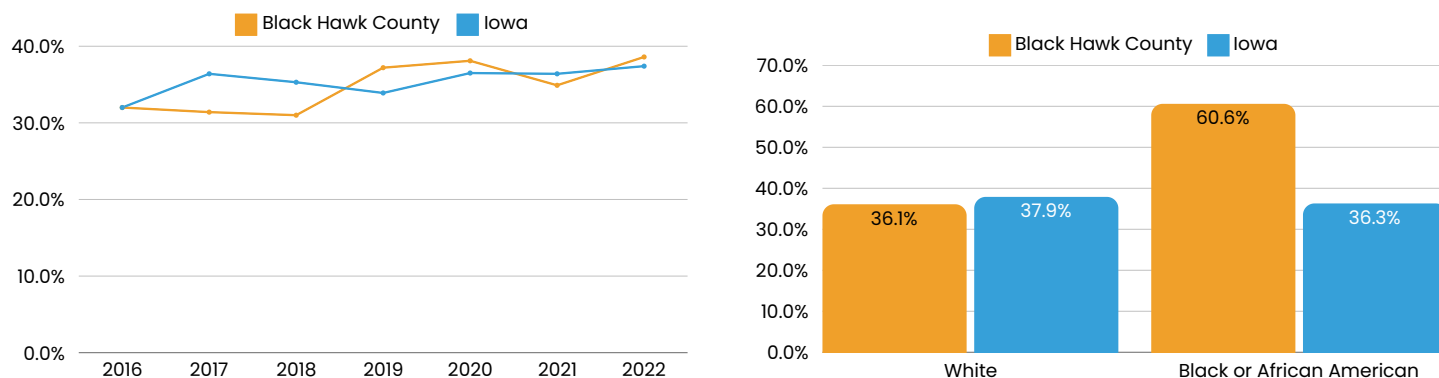
Chronic Disease

Disability



Proportions of individuals with disabilities in Black Hawk County were more likely to reflect US levels than Iowa levels. The most common disabilities were cognitive, ambulatory, and independent living disabilities. Racial and ethnic groups in Black Hawk County were more likely to identify as having a disability than the Iowa average, but less likely than the US average, with the exception of people identifying as Asian or Two or more races.

Obesity



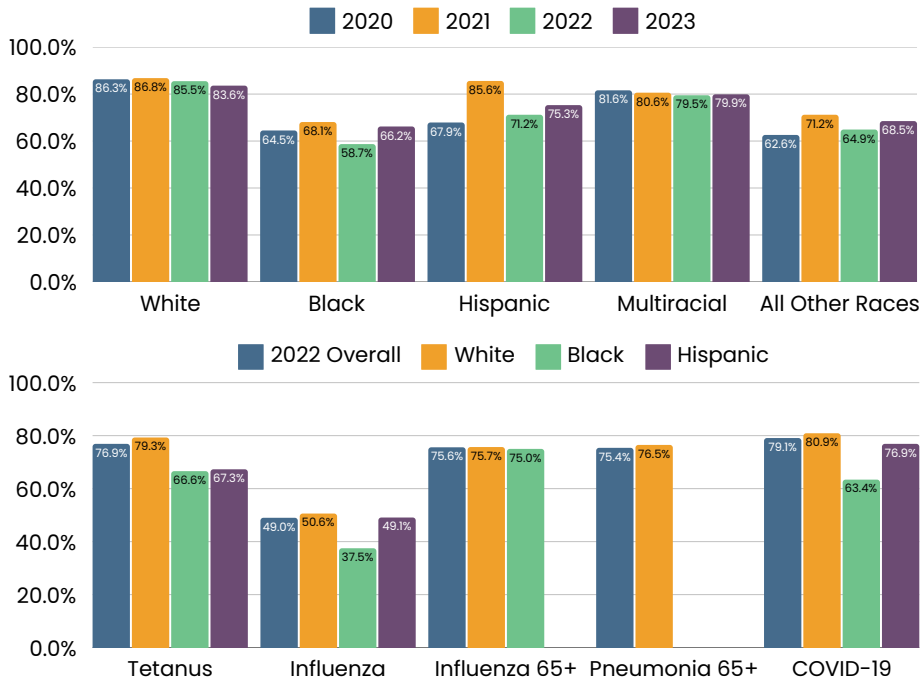
Obesity has been increasing in Black Hawk County and Iowa from 2016 to 2022. Rates for White individuals are lower in Black Hawk County than Iowa, while rates for Black or African American individuals are much higher.



Infectious Disease

Lower influenza and COVID-19 vaccination rates among Black/African American adults and children, combined with a rise in syphilis and congenital syphilis cases, highlight growing infectious disease risks in the county. Contributing factors include declining childhood immunization rates and insufficient maternal syphilis testing, increasing the likelihood of outbreaks and severe health outcomes.

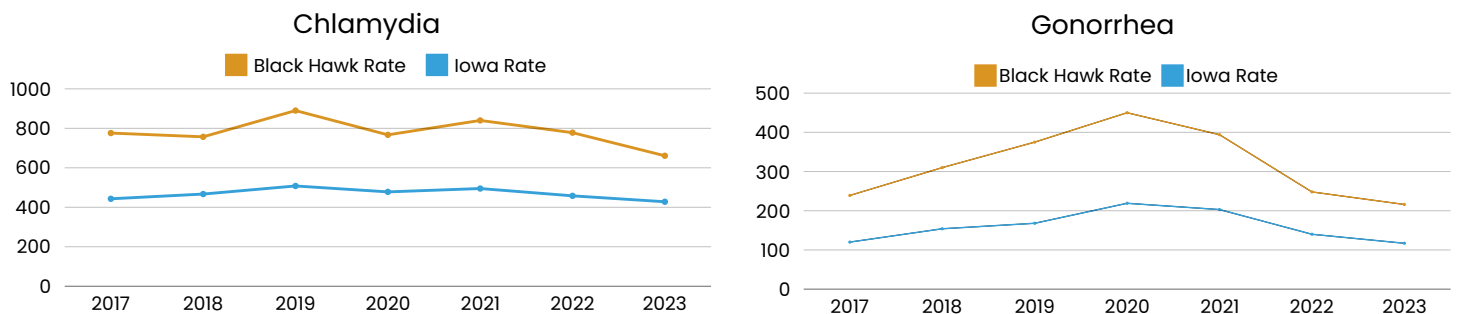
Immunizations



Immunization rates for children completing their recommended vaccines by age 2 have been steadily declining, while adolescent vaccinations are experiencing a slower, more gradual drop.

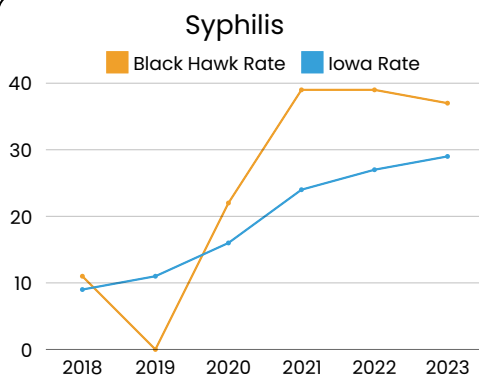
For adults, overall vaccination rates for tetanus, influenza (65+), pneumonia (65+), and COVID-19 hover around 75-79%, but significant disparities exist. Black and Hispanic adults have lower rates of tetanus vaccination, with Black adults having the lowest vaccination rates across all listed vaccines.

STI - Gonorrhea and Chlamydia

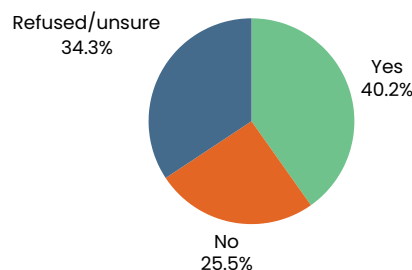


Chlamydia and gonorrhea rates have been steadily decreasing in recent years, but rates in Black Hawk County remain higher than both the Iowa and U.S. averages.

Syphilis



Mothers Tested for Syphilis



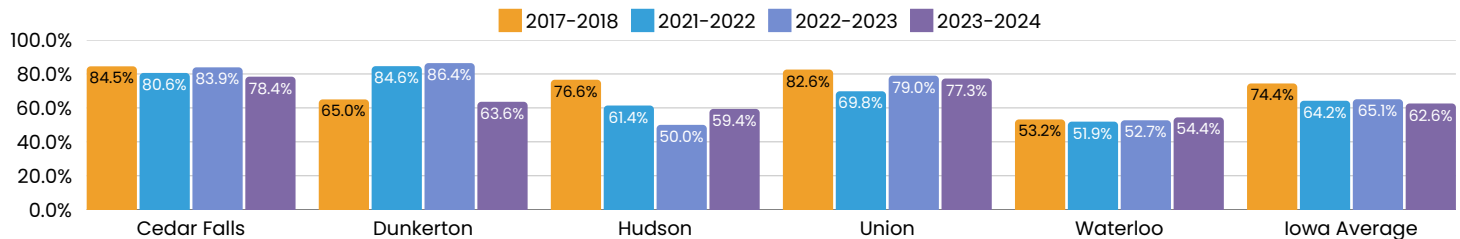
Local syphilis rates remain higher than Iowa but have stayed consistent in recent years. Only about 40% of mothers reported being tested for syphilis during pregnancy. New recommendations from the CDC are for all pregnant women to be tested multiple times due to rising rates of congenital syphilis.



Cultural and Linguistic Inclusivity

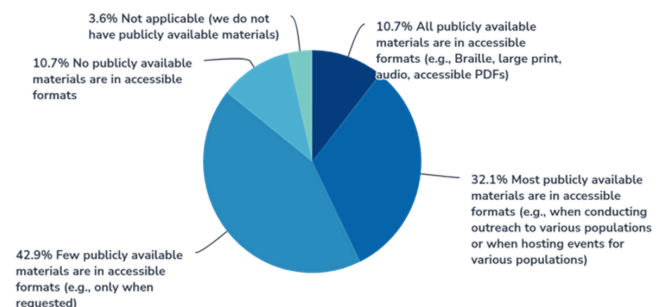
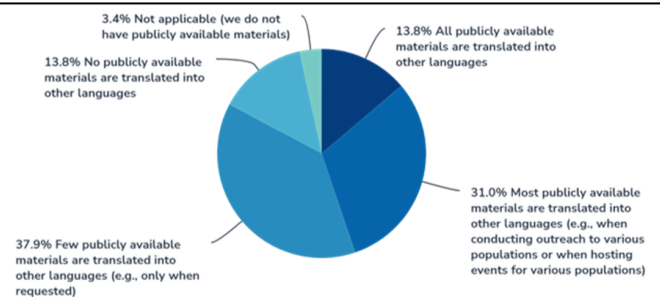
Cultural and linguistic inclusivity challenges impact education and community services with disparities in grade 3 reading proficiency, graduation rates, and support for diverse language needs. Contributing factors include increasing linguistic diversity, limited translation services beyond Spanish, and systemic gaps in fostering inclusivity, exacerbating disparities in education and access to resources.

3rd Grade Reading Level



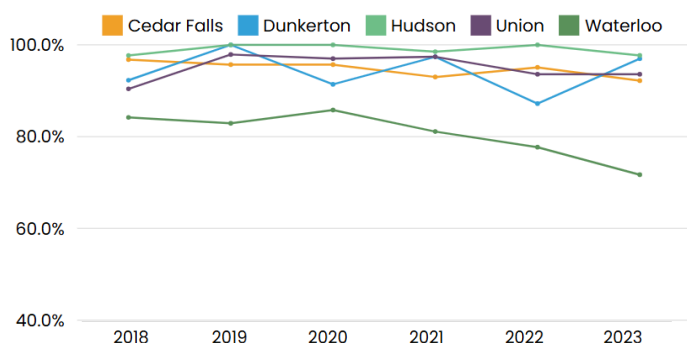
Grade 3 language arts proficiency is monitored annually at the state and school district levels. There are disparities across school districts which have been consistent from the 2017-2018 school year to the 2023-2024 school year. Disparities are seen across racial and ethnic groups and programs, but all groups reflect the district disparity.

Languages for ELL in Public Schools



Staff at local organizations had staff that spoke Spanish, French, Bosnian, Marshallese, and languages of the Burma refugee community, among others, and were more likely to translate into these languages. However, many organizations still face barriers with translations and accessibility. Local organizations reported that most publicly available materials are only occasionally translated into other languages or provided in accessible formats, with less than 14% translating all materials and fewer than 11% offering all materials in accessible formats like Braille or audio.

Graduation Rates



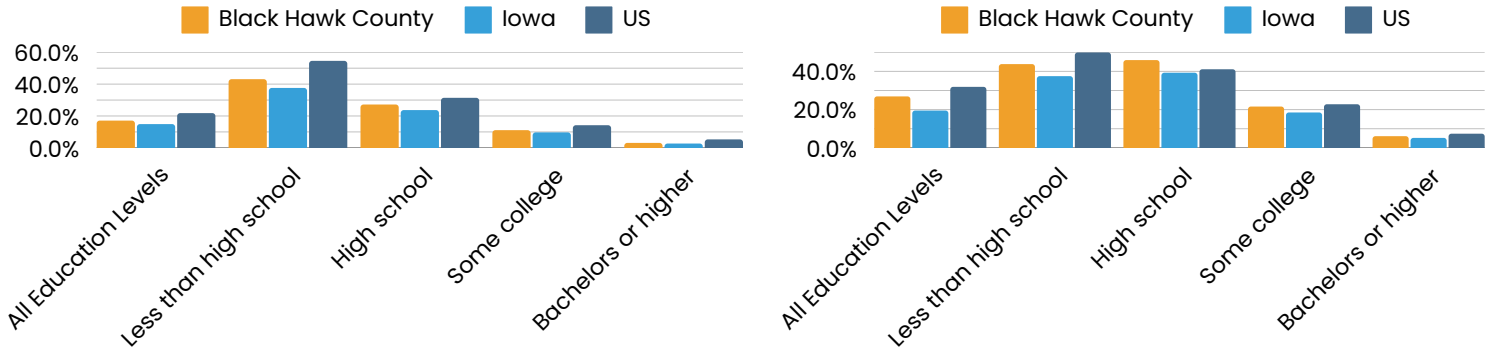
Waterloo has consistently had the lowest graduation rates compared to local public schools and the Iowa average, dropping from 84.2% in 2018 to 71.7% in 2023. In contrast, Hudson has maintained the highest graduation rate, consistently above 97%.



Health Literacy

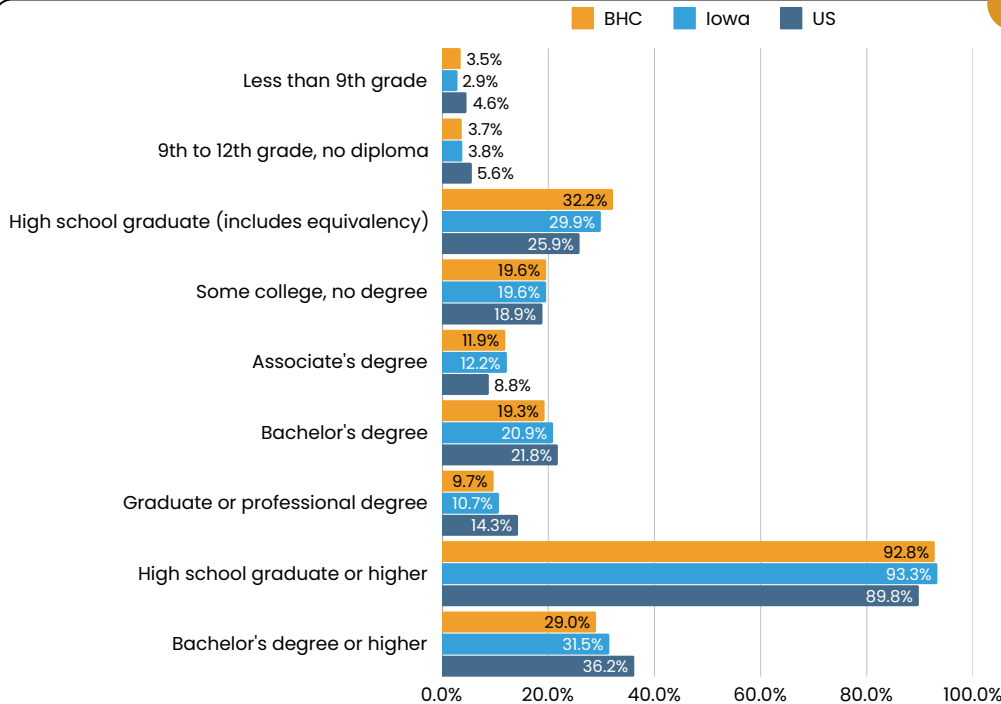
Health literacy challenges disproportionately affect individuals with lower education levels, young adults (18-29), Black/African American and Hispanic populations, and those in fair or poor health, with worsening trends over time nationally, statewide, and in the county. Declining literacy and numeracy skills impact self-advocacy and contribute to poorer health outcomes, particularly for older adults and those with lower education levels.

Literacy Estimates



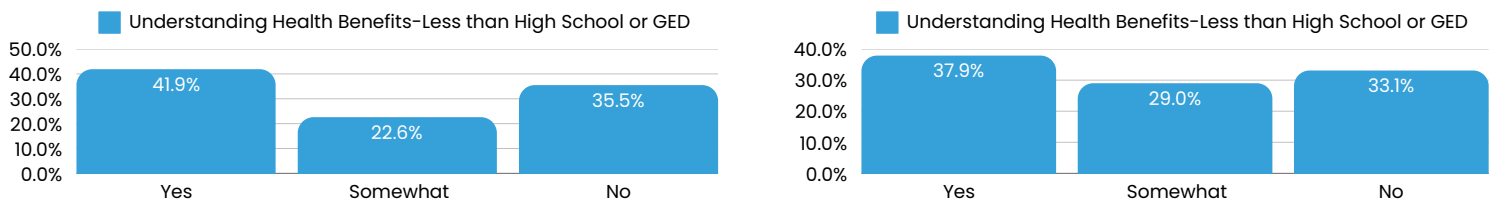
Health literacy is the ability to understand and make decisions about health information. Literacy and numeracy (ability to understand numbers) are important factors that impact health literacy levels. In Black Hawk County, people were more likely to be below level 1 literacy and numeracy levels than the Iowa average. Also, those with a less than high school education and those who were above the age of 45 were more likely to be impacted than other groups for both literacy and numeracy.

Educational Attainment



Educational attainment plays a critical role in health literacy, with higher education levels often associated with better understanding and navigation of health benefits. In Black Hawk County, 92.8% of residents have at least a high school diploma, slightly below the Iowa average of 93.3%. However, only 29% of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, lagging behind both the state (31.5%) average, potentially impacting health literacy in the community.

Community Survey



Respondents with less than an 8th-grade education or a GED, as well as those aged 18-29, reported higher rates of not understanding health benefits compared to the overall average.