

# Muscatine County, Iowa Housing Market Analysis

*including the cities of Muscatine, West Liberty & Wilton*



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# Acknowledgements

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*Atlas Community Studios (“Atlas”) is a small, women and minority-owned firm fueled by creative problem-solvers and capacity-builders committed to advancing the economic prosperity of communities across the country. Leveraging more than 45 years of combined experience spanning both the public and private sectors, the Atlas team specializes in project implementation and the pre-development work needed to be implementation-ready, including research, planning, funding strategies, grant writing, and advocacy. The team’s portfolio of work includes 70 action-oriented strategies and technical assistance provided in communities across 29 states.*

# Introduction

## Purpose of this Study

This housing market analysis was completed in partnership with Muscatine County, the cities of Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton, and Atlas Community Studios. The purpose of this assessment is to analyze existing quantitative and qualitative data related to the housing market in the primary market (Muscatine County) and three sub-markets (Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton) and identify current challenges and barriers. The key trends identified in this analysis should assist Muscatine County and the three partner communities with implementing policies and programs to improve existing housing conditions for local and future residents.

## Existing Plans & Studies

The following reports and studies were collected and reviewed prior to the Project Kickoff. The information provided in these reports and studies allowed the Atlas team to gain a better understanding of the housing work that had been conducted over the past 10 years. The findings from these documents will be considered in the development of Muscatine County's housing recommendations, and be included in this analysis when applicable:

- Muscatine County Ignite Vitality Workforce Housing Study (2021)
- City of Muscatine Strategic Plan (2021)
- Muscatine Housing Demand Study (2017)
- City of West Liberty Annexation Study (2017)
- Wilton Housing Needs Assessment (2017)
- City of West Liberty Comprehensive Plan Update (2016)
- Muscatine County Comprehensive Plan (2014)
- West Liberty Housing Needs Assessment (2013)



### **Data Sources**

The housing market analysis utilizes a variety of data indicators to examine Muscatine County's competitiveness as a place to live, work, and do business. Atlas sources data primarily from the U.S. Census Bureau and other public sources, including the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). Atlas also has access to proprietary data sources, such as JobsEQ, a labor market analytics platform developed by [Chmura Economics & Analysis](#) that includes demographic, industry, occupation, and employment data from the past, present, and forecasted future; [mySidewalk](#), a city intelligence platform designed to contextualize economic and demographic indicators; and [ESRI](#), a Geographic Information System (GIS) used to develop mapping visualizations for spatial analysis.

### **Census Estimates**

The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey that collects and produces information on social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics for communities throughout the United States. While the survey is annual, data indicators for communities with fewer than 65,000 residents are typically provided as five-year averages to increase statistical reliability and reduce margins of error. The tradeoff is that ACS 5-Year Estimates are less current. For instance, 5-Year Estimates from the 2022 ACS are derived from 60 months of data collected between 2018 and 2022. Because Muscatine County has a population of fewer than 65,000 residents, this analysis uses 5-Year Estimates for ACS data indicators.



### **What Data Doesn't Tell Us**

Census and other objective data have limitations, so it provides only one element to understanding the housing market. Market data does not capture the feelings and observations of residents. It does not indicate the effect those quantitative conditions have on people in different areas, nor does it fully capture the condition of housing or community amenities. Additionally, market data becomes less reliable for small areas (under 1,000) because of sampling error and insufficient data. Lastly, delays in release of 2020 Census data create a greater need to use locally sourced data from entities such as the Multiple Listing Service (MLS), Iowa Association of Realtors, and Muscatine County Assessor. Ultimately, the key trends and challenges, and strategic recommendations in this housing market analysis are built from a combined collection of quantitative and qualitative data.

# Housing Abbreviations & Terminology

This study includes terminology related to housing that might not be common knowledge to those that do not work in the housing space. Below are definitions that may be included in this study to help readers better understand the content.

## Housing Terminology

**Absorbed Unit:** Refers to when the number of vacant units decreases, either by being put back into productive reuse i.e. occupied by a household or being removed from the housing stock altogether by being torn down.

**Accessible Housing:** Housing that is physically adapted to the individuals who are intended to occupy it including those who are disadvantaged by age, physical or mental disability or medical condition, and those who are victims of a natural disaster.

**Accessory Dwelling Unit:** An interior, attached, or detached residential structure that is used in connection with, or that is accessory to a single-family dwelling and is located on the same lot or parcel as such single-family dwelling.

**Affordable Housing:** Housing for which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, incl. utilities.

**Appraisal:** Assesses the current market value of a property and is usually a key requirement when a property is bought, sold, insured, or mortgaged. Comparables are needed; these are properties located in the same area, have similar characteristics, and have an established value.

**Attainable or Appropriate Housing:** Any housing that is not financially burdensome to a household in a specific income range. Financially burdensome could be housing expenses that exceed 30% of household income. However, it could also include situations where a household has high day care costs, student debt, or other expenses that limit income to spend on housing. Housing in terms of housing subsidized by Federal programs can be included in this definition.

### Abbreviations

**ADA** Americans with Disability Act  
**ADU** Accessory Dwelling Unit  
**AMI** Area Median Income  
**ARPA** American Rescue Plan Act  
**CDBG** Community Development Block Grant

**HUD** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
**MHI** Median Household Income  
**MHV** Median Home Value  
**TIF** Tax Increment Financing

**Average Annual Wage:** JobsEQ defines average annual wage as values found in industry data and are computed by dividing the sum of total wages for the last four quarters by the average of employment for the same four quarters. These data are not adjusted for full-time hours, meaning an industry with many part-time workers may have low average annual wages—overall average annual industry wages may thus be fairly different from average annual occupation wages which are defined differently.

**Contract Rent:** For renter-occupied units, the contract rent is the monthly rent agreed upon regardless of any furnishings, utilities, or services that may be included. Data for contract rent excludes units for which no cash rent is paid.

**Cost-burdened:** The household spends more than 30% of HUD Area Median Income on housing.

**Density Bonus:** A density increase over the otherwise maximum allowable residential density under a city's zoning codes, ordinances, and regulations.

**Empty-Nester:** A single or couple without children living at home. Empty-nesters can include any age range but most often refers to older adults whose children have moved out and no longer live at home.

### **Family Households vs. Nonfamily Households**

**Family:** two or more individuals who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption, although they also may include other unrelated people.; **Nonfamily:** people who live alone or who share their residence with unrelated individuals.

**Free-up or Filter Effect:** Occurs when higher income households are “filtered” out of housing units that are well below the price points that they can afford. Often it involves “move-up” housing that frees up existing more affordable housing. Today the moves can be lateral in square footage but also upgrades in locations or amenities with smaller home square footages.

**Gap Financing:** Refers to a short-term loan for the purpose of meeting an immediate financial obligation until sufficient funds to finance the longer-term financial need can be secured.

**Gross Rent:** Gross rent is the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities and fuels if these are paid by the renter.

**Hard Costs:** These costs refer to any type of spending that directly relates to the physical construction of a project.

**Household:** A household is composed of one or more people who occupy a housing unit.

**Market Rate:** The price that the broad number of home buyers or renters are willing to pay for housing. Market rate housing does not have any restrictions on price. Generally, when the demand goes up, the market rate price will also go up; when supply goes down, the market rate price tends to go up. Note, the market rate price may also be a price buyers must pay because there are no other options for their situation, making them housing cost burdened.



**Median Home Value:** The median home value is the middle point when all the home values in a particular area are arranged in numerical order. It is the value that separates the higher half from the lower half of the distribution. In the context of real estate, it represents the middle value of all the homes in a specified region, where half of the homes have higher values and half have lower values. The median home value is a statistical measure commonly used to assess the central tendency of housing prices in a given area, providing a representative figure that is less sensitive to extreme values compared to the mean or average.

**Median Household Income:** This includes the income of the householder and all other individuals 15 years old and over in the household, whether they are related to the householder or not. The median divides the income distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median income and one-half above the median. For households and families, the median income is based on the distribution of the total number of households and families, including those with no income.

**Middle Housing:** A range of house-scale buildings with multiple units—compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes—located in a walkable neighborhood.

**Mixed-Use:** Mixed-use districts are areas with two or more different uses such as residential, office, retail, and civic in a compact urban form. Typical residential uses in a mixed-use district range from medium density to very high density uses.

**Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing:** Residential properties that are affordable, but are unsubsidized by any federal program.

**Soft Costs:** Costs that are indirectly related to materials, labor or the physical building of the project such as design fees, permitting fees, and interest payments.

**Tax Increment Financing (TIF):** A public financing mechanism used by local governments to stimulate economic development in a designated area. In a TIF district, the property taxes collected from the increase in assessed property values (the “increment”) after a redevelopment project are set aside for financing the costs of that project.

**Townhouse/Townhome:** A dwelling unit constructed in a row of two or more attached units where each dwelling unit is located on an individual lot or parcel and shares at least one common wall with an adjacent unit.

**Occupied Unit(s):** An occupied unit refers to a housing unit, such as a residence or apartment, that is currently being used or lived in by individuals or households. Occupied units can be owned or rented, and they are typically utilized for residential purposes.

**Universal Design:** The process of creating products that are accessible to people with a wide range of abilities, disabilities, and other characteristics. Ideally, the concept extends to neighborhoods.

**Vacancy Rate:** The vacancy rate is a real estate metric that expresses the percentage of vacant units (such as rental properties or housing units) in a specific area or market over a certain period. It is calculated by dividing the number of vacant units by the total number of available units and multiplying the result by 100 to express it as a percentage.

# Executive Summary

## The Housing Market Over Time

In the 1990s and 2000s, Muscatine County underwent a construction surge, witnessing a notable 22% surge in housing units. This upswing was driven by a demand from owner households, revealing a pronounced need for units that were previously lacking in the county's overall housing inventory. The momentum slowed in the 2010s, likely influenced by the economic downturn at the end of the previous decade, creating an increased demand for rental housing. By 2020, **a scarcity of owner-occupied housing paired with a surplus in renter-occupied units set the stage for a constrained housing market**, poised for further impact with the onset of the pandemic.

## Housing Need & Demand in Muscatine County

Over the past few decades, Muscatine County has been challenged to align housing supply with the persistent demand, and the extensiveness of the economic repercussions stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic have further intensified this struggle. The result is a housing market that poses significant challenges for current residents, with **homeowners experiencing a relatively more favorable situation due to higher incomes and lower housing costs** in proportion to their earnings. On the flip side, **renters, despite seeing an increase in income, confront hurdles in both the rental market and the pursuit of homeownership, given the escalating costs across the spectrum**. The widening gap in appropriately priced housing for all segments of households adds to these existing difficulties, creating an overarching sense of frustration among both current homeowners and renters.

### **Future Housing Market Implications**

Muscatine County is anticipated to see limited population growth in the foreseeable future, primarily driven by aging demographics, mirroring trends dating back to 2000. Consequently, it becomes crucial for the county to ready itself to accommodate the housing needs of its older residents, who may necessitate different housing options. Furthermore, Muscatine County needs to achieve a more balanced distribution of housing units relative to their occupants. The current situation, where higher-income households occupy lower-cost units, exacerbates constraints and competition for lower-income households with limited options. **It is imperative to introduce additional housing units across various income brackets throughout the county to expand choices and enhance overall housing quality.**

### **Strategic Recommendations**

Based on the analysis conducted in this study, Muscatine County should focus their efforts on the following initiatives in an effort to improve existing housing conditions for current and future residents:

- **Invest in the Existing Housing Stock:** Improve existing units for current and future residents
- **Incentivize New Housing Types:** Encourage the private sector to develop missing middle housing
- **Promote Infill Development:** Build new units on existing lots to fill in depleted neighborhoods
- **Expand Educational Opportunities for Future Homeowners:** Increase outreach and funding of existing program
- **Create Intentional Planned Developments:** Design needed housing developments with functionality, connectivity, and affordability in mind
- **Become Investment Ready:** Establish policies, practices, and partnerships to prepare for future housing investment and development

**Part 1**

# Muscatine County Housing Market

To comprehensively assess Muscatine County's current housing market, it is essential to delve into the dynamics of past market scenarios, understand recent transformations, and analyze how these shifts have influenced present market expectations. The examination of disparities between the current situation and historical conditions is critical for understanding potential differences, offering valuable insights to policymakers and stakeholders seeking to influence the future growth of the housing market. **This section evaluates market conditions from 1990 to 2020,** highlighting changes in households, housing units, occupancy rates, and the consequences of these fluctuations.





# A look at Muscatine County's housing market over time

Muscatine County is no different than the many communities nationwide grappling with the ongoing challenge of providing suitable and affordable housing. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified existing problems which were a result from heightened demand and a surplus of housing units in the 1990s and 2000s, followed by a stark decline in housing production throughout the 2010s. The rise and fall in housing over the past 30 years has contributed to the limited and unaffordable market many are experiencing today.

**In the 1990s, Muscatine County underwent an unusual demographic transition, yet managed to experience growth in both population and housing units over a span of two decades. In total, the County witnessed an addition of over 400 households and the construction of nearly 2,000 new units.** During the 2000s, homes were built at

increasingly high rates around the country due to significant demand, which resulted in the lending of subprime mortgages to riskier borrowers, and ultimately, caused the 2008 housing crash. Due to initial overbuilding and an economic recession, Muscatine County's vacancy rates rose to 8.4%.

**Throughout the 2010s, the growth of Muscatine County households slowed, with a notable decline in new construction, particularly for owner-occupied units.** The increase in renter households outpaced that of owner households, creating a heightened demand for rental units. The lack of construction in new owner builds played a significant part in reducing the County's vacancy rate, as previously unoccupied units were reintroduced to the market. These circumstances collectively led to escalating prices and a tightening of the market by 2020.

## 1990s 1990 to 2000



**161** less households  
over a decade  
loss of **16** households  
each year

**Household numbers declined**



**1,981**  
new units

**Housing construction boomed**



**5.6%**  
vacancy

**Decrease in vacancy rates**

## 2000s 2000 to 2010



**598** more households  
over a decade  
increase of **~60**  
households each year

**Household growth bounces  
back**



**565**  
new units

**Housing construction  
continues**



**8.4%**  
vacancy

**Economic downturn caused  
vacancy rates to increase**

## 2010s 2010 to 2020



**427** more households  
over a decade  
increase of **43** new  
households each year

**Household growth continues**



**465**  
new units

**Housing construction  
continues, but slows**



**7.9%**  
vacancy

**Slight fall in vacancy rate**



## How is vacancy defined?

In general, the U.S. Census Bureau defines a housing unit as vacant if no one is living in it at the of the interview, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. However, the reasons for why a unit is vacant can vary, and offer more context to what the Census combines together to establish a vacancy rate. Units that are for sale/rent, or already sold/rented but households have not moved in yet would be categorized as vacant, in addition to occasional use or short-term rental units as well.

Units categorized as **“Other Vacant”** is where communities are given more context about units that are not being utilized or potentially could be put back into productive reuse. This category includes reasons like foreclosure, legal proceedings, needs repairs, extended absence, abandoned, etc. This is one way to see the extent of potential problem units in a community, however, it is recommended that an inventory be developed and maintained to know in real time the extent of these potential challenges.

See Appendix A for more details.

# Supply & Demand 1990 to 2000: Muscatine County

## 1990s

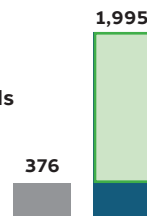
At the beginning of the decade, there were more households than occupied housing units, with 16,044 households living in 13,757 units, a deficiency of 2,287 units. Even if the 1,049 vacant units were absorbed, that would still leave a need for an additional 1,238 units. With an overall deficiency in housing units paired with a 4.5% population increase, there was a strong demand for new construction.



### Change in Ownership Market:

Of the 2,287 housing unit deficit, 1,649 owner units were needed to meet existing demand

Muscatine County added:  
**376 owner-occupied households**  
**1,995 owner units**



A **surplus of 1,619** units were built to meet initial demand in units for existing households

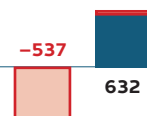
By 2000, the deficit shrunk to just 30 owner units



### Change in Renter Market:

Of the 2,287 housing unit deficit, 638 renter units were needed to meet existing demand

Muscatine County lost:  
**537 renter-occupied households**  
but added:  
**95 renter units**



Due to such a decrease in renter-occupied households, the initial unit gap shrunk significantly, to only a **deficit of 6 units** by 2000

**By the end of the decade, Muscatine County had a higher demand for housing than supply.**



Number of households



Number of housing units



Number of vacant units



Number of occupied units



# Supply & Demand 2010 to 2020: Muscatine County

## 2000s

Although the deficit between households and housing units closed to just 36 units at the end of the millenia, Muscatine County was still experiencing a growth in households that outpaced the number of occupied housing units. Demand for housing continued, but the 2008 housing crash would cause a disturbance in the market and ultimately, increase the rate of vacant housing units throughout the County.



### Change in Ownership Market:

Of the 36 housing unit deficit, 30 owner units were needed to meet existing demand

Muscatine County added:  
**335 owner-occupied households**  
**312 owner units**

A **deficit of 23 units**

By 2010, there was a deficit of 53 owner units



### Change in Renter Market:

Of the 36 housing unit deficit, 6 renter units were needed to meet existing demand

Muscatine County added:  
**263 renter-occupied households**  
**253 new renter units**

A **deficit of 10 units**

By 2010, there was a deficit of 16 renter units



**By the end of the decade, Muscatine County continued to grow but at a slower rate.**



Number of households



Number of housing units



Number of vacant units



Number of occupied units

## 2010s

Housing growth in Muscatine County continued, but slowed down significantly from that which occurred in the 1990s and 2000s, as well as a shifting demand from owners to renters throughout the 2010s. Although the deficit was still minimal, it grew to 69 units by the end of the 2000s. The aftermath of the 2008 housing crash most likely contributed to a rise in renter households, and demand for additional renter-occupied units.



### Change in Ownership Market:

Of the 69 housing unit deficit, 53 owner units were needed to meet existing demand

Muscatine County added:  
**83 owner-occupied households**  
but lost:  
**35 owner units**

A **deficit of 48 units**  
By 2020, there was a deficit of 101 owner units

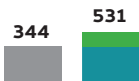


### Change in Renter Market:

Of the 69 housing unit deficit, 16 renter units were needed to meet existing demand

Muscatine County added:  
**344 renter-occupied households**  
**531 new renter units**

A **surplus of 187 units**  
By 2020, there was a surplus of 171 renter units



By the end of the decade, Muscatine County continued to grow but at a slower rate.



Number of households



Number of housing units



Number of vacant units



Number of occupied units



Entering a new decade, Muscatine County reached a point where the number of households equaled the number of occupied housing units (16,908). However, this balance doesn't necessarily translate to a well-adjusted housing market. The surge in renter-occupied households intensified the demand for rental units, creating an oversupply. While the rental market thrived, owner-occupied households experienced only a quarter of that growth, contributing to a widening shortage of owner-occupied units. Although the number of vacant units decreased, this scenario has resulted in a constrained housing market where prices can escalate due to sustained demand and limited choices within the existing housing inventory.

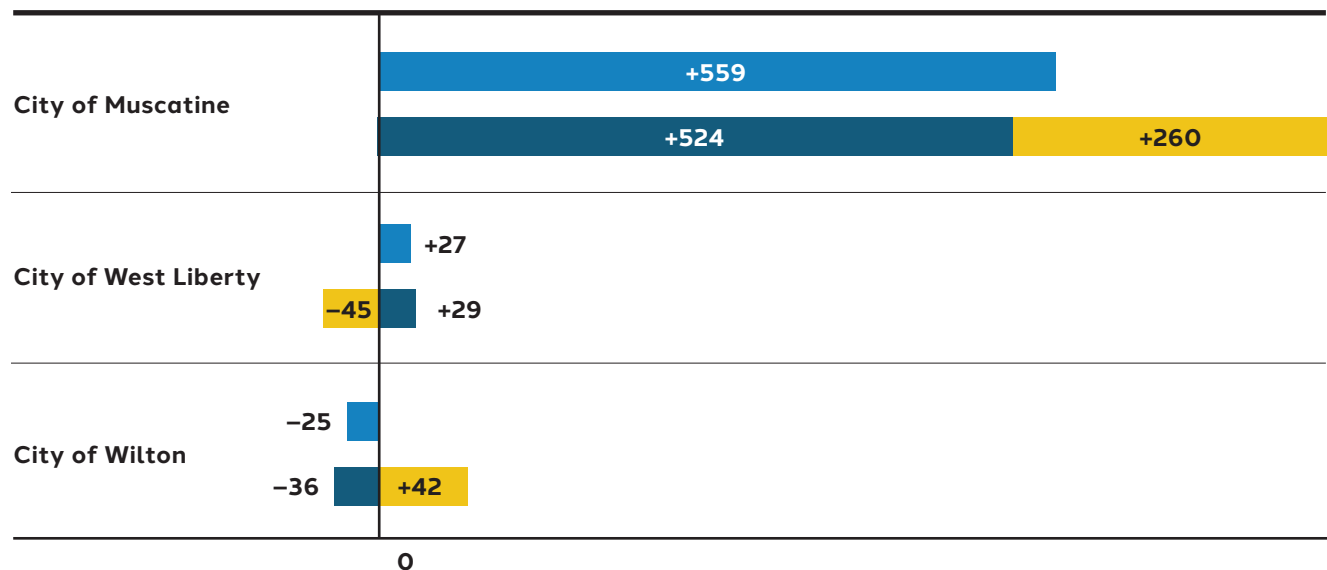
# A Closer Look at Supply & Demand 2000 to 2010: Cities of Muscatine, West Liberty & Wilton

## 2000s

**FIGURE 1.1** highlights the market changes from 2000 to 2010 in Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton. All three communities experienced different changes among households, occupied units, and vacant units. Muscatine experienced growth in all three categories, but high demand for units and overbuilding ultimately drove their vacancy rate up significantly. West Liberty also experienced growth in households, and occupied, and were able to absorb vacant units, decreasing their vacancy rate over time. Lastly, Wilton experienced population loss over this timeframe, which reduced the total number of households and occupied units. This explains why the vacancy rate increased simultaneously.

**FIGURE 1.1 CHANGES IN HOUSING MARKET (2000–2010)**

■ Total Households ■ Total Occupied Units ■ Vacant Units





Upon closer examination, the data provides insights into the shift between owner and renter-occupied units over the 10-year period. In Muscatine, of the **524 units added, all of them were designated as owner-occupied units, while 25 renter-occupied units were lost.** The construction of owner units likely contributed to Muscatine's **homeownership rate increasing to 72.2%** by the end of 2010, despite the negative impact of the 2008 housing market crash.

West Liberty saw an addition of 48 owner-occupied units, and a loss of 19 renter-occupied units, equating to the **29 units added to the housing stock** during the 10-year period. However, due to household and population growth, vacant units were able to be absorbed, thus **reducing the vacancy rate significantly.**

Wilton realized a decline in population, which reduced the number of households. Of the 36 unit decrease, 29 units were owner-occupied and 7 were renter-occupied. In addition to the reduction of existing housing stock, Wilton added 72 vacant units, which **increased their vacancy rate to 9.1% by the end of the 2010s.**



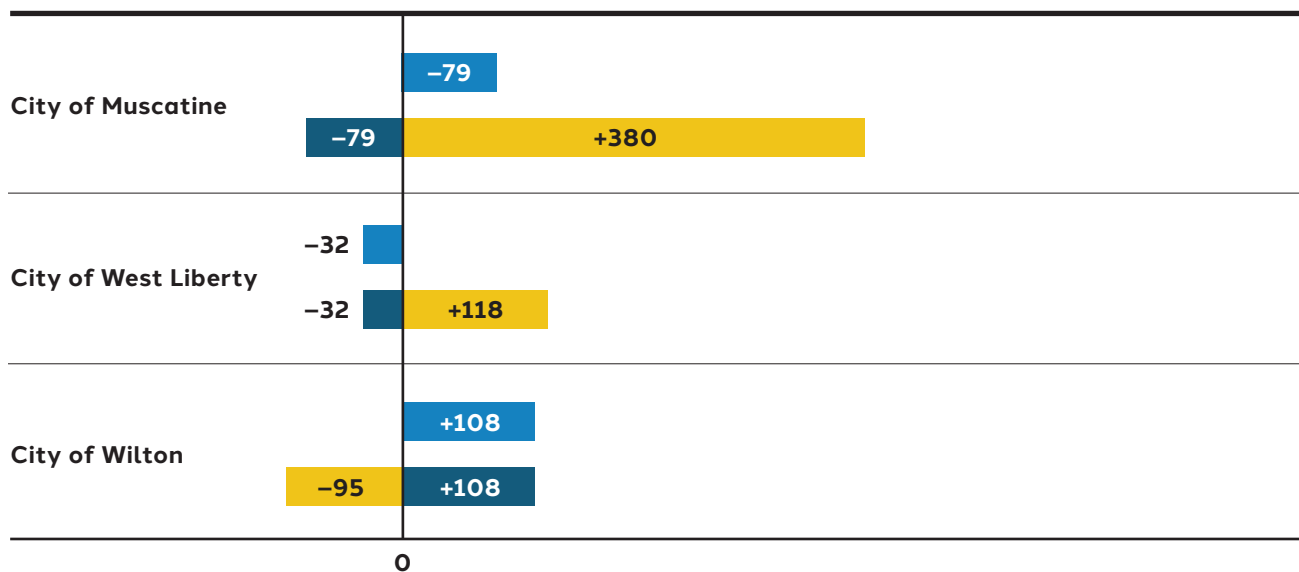
# A Closer Look at Supply & Demand 2000 to 2010: Cities of Muscatine, West Liberty & Wilton

## 2010s

**FIGURE 1.2** illustrates the market transformation from 2010 to 2020 in Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton. As units were added throughout the 2000s, a certain market equilibrium started to form in the 2010s where the number of households equated to the number of occupied units. However, with the construction of additional units to meet demand, vacancy also increased significantly (minus in Wilton). This not only contributed to a surplus of underutilized housing stock, but also raises concerns about potential deterioration. Failing to address these issues quickly and efficiently can cause significant problems down the road.

**FIGURE 1.2 CHANGES IN HOUSING MARKET (2010–2020)**

■ Total Households ■ Total Occupied Units ■ Vacant Units



The effects of the housing market crash began to show in the market throughout the 2010s, manifesting the growth in rental units and a continuous rise in vacancies in Muscatine. Over this period, Muscatine witnessed the addition of 570 new renter units while losing 649 owner units, equating to a **79 unit decline, and signaling a notable market shift**. Vacancies surged, again, by 380 (a nearly 50% increase) surpassing a total of 1,000 vacant units and constituting over 10% of the total housing stock. **Per feedback given by residents, quality issues were likely a contributing factor due to an aging housing stock and an increase in blighted homes.** This shift caused the homeownership rate in Muscatine to drop to 65.5% by the end of the decade.

West Liberty observed a comparable trend, witnessing an uptick in renter-occupied units. West Liberty added 16 new renter units and lost 48 owner units, equating to a total change of

32 units. Vacant units also increased significantly, and overall, resulted in a **decline in the homeownership rate, from 67.9% to 64% by the end of the 2010s.**

**Wilton was the only community that saw an increase in owner occupancy rates.** All additional units added were owner units, increasing their homeownership rate from 73% to 75.6%. The homeownership rate also likely increased due to Wilton's absorption of existing vacant units over this time frame.

**By the end of the 2010s, homeownership was decreasing and vacancies were rising** (with the exception of Wilton), **and supply was becoming more limited.** These factors ultimately played a role in the effect that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the housing market, not only in Muscatine County, but across the United States, and the housing crisis communities are experiencing today.



**Part 2**

# Housing Need & Demand Today

Now that historical context has been provided, it is important to see where Muscatine County stands today, especially from a post-pandemic lens. **This section outlines a comprehensive examination of the present housing market dynamics in the County,** reviewing the needs and financial capabilities of owner and renter households. Our analysis will help identify existing gaps in housing, which will shape how Muscatine County should respond to the ongoing housing needs of its residents.



# What does Muscatine County look like today?

According to the latest data from the American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2022), Muscatine County is home to a population of 42,968, with an average age of 38.6. The predominant age groups fall between 25 and 54 years, representing approximately 37% of the total population, while those aged 55 and above makeup about 31%. Over time, there has been a notable shift in the County's racial and ethnic composition. In 2010, minorities constituted 18.2% of the population, whereas in 2022, this figure rose to 24.9%, marking a more than one-third increase. The majority of the minority population is Hispanic/Latino, experiencing the most substantial growth among all racial and ethnic groups, as illustrated in **FIGURE 2.1**.

**FIGURE 2.1 POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

Race/Ethnicity	Total Number	Total Percentage	% Change Since 2010
American Indian or Alaska Native	48	.2%	+0.1%
Asian	282	.7%	-0.1%
Black or African American	1,163	2.7%	+1.7%
Hispanic/Latino	8,006	18.6%	+3.6%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0%	0.0%
Some Other Race	97	.2%	+0.2%
Two or More Races	1,088	2.5%	+1.2%
White	32,284	75.1%	-6.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,968</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>+1.1%</b>

Data is derived from the 2010 and 2022 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.





Muscatine County has a majority male population, an average household size of 2.5, and a total of 17,075 households. Roughly 35% of households are two-person households, while 27% are one-person households. More than two thirds are considered family households, typically meaning two or more people are related in some way versus nonfamily households, which would be equivalent to two friends who are roommates.



**SENIORS**  
24.4%



**DISABLED**  
13.0%



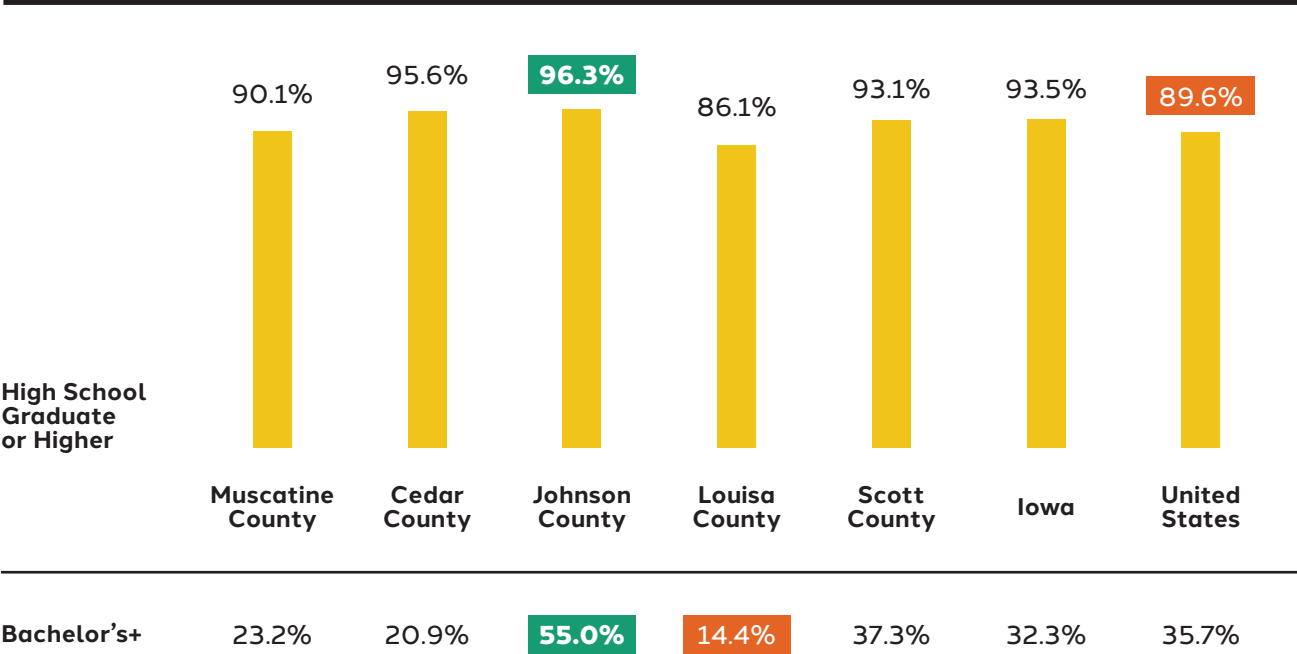
**VETERANS**  
6.6%



**FOREIGN-BORN**  
7.0%

**FIGURE 2.2** and **FIGURE 2.3** provide insights into Muscatine County's position regarding educational attainment, poverty, and median household income (MHI). In 2022, approximately 90% of the County's population attained a high school diploma, with nearly a quarter holding a bachelor's degree or higher. Muscatine County consistently ranks in the middle when compared to surrounding counties, the State of Iowa, and the U.S., without being the lowest or highest in any category. This pattern is mirrored in the County's poverty rate and MHI, maintaining a middle-ranking status among the comparative geographies.

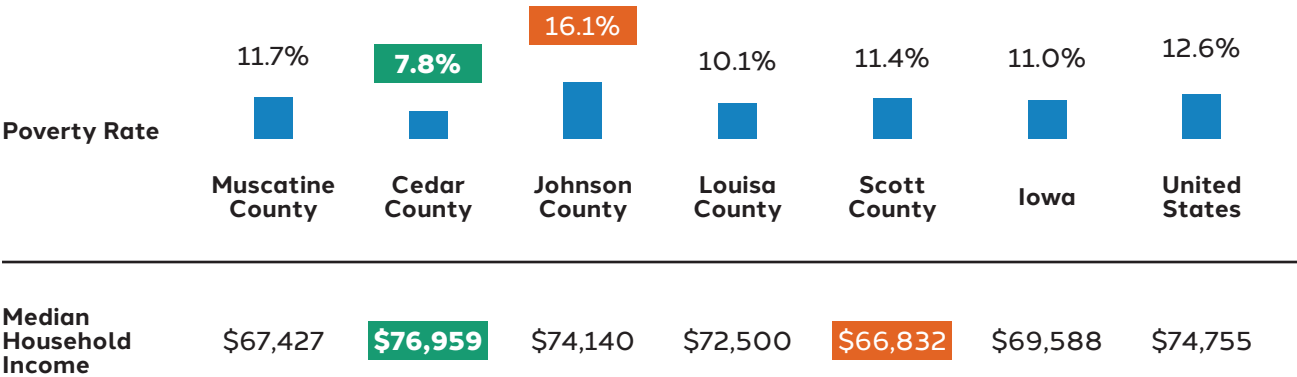
**FIGURE 2.2    EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**



Data is derived from the 2022 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.



**FIGURE 2.3    POVERTY & INCOME**

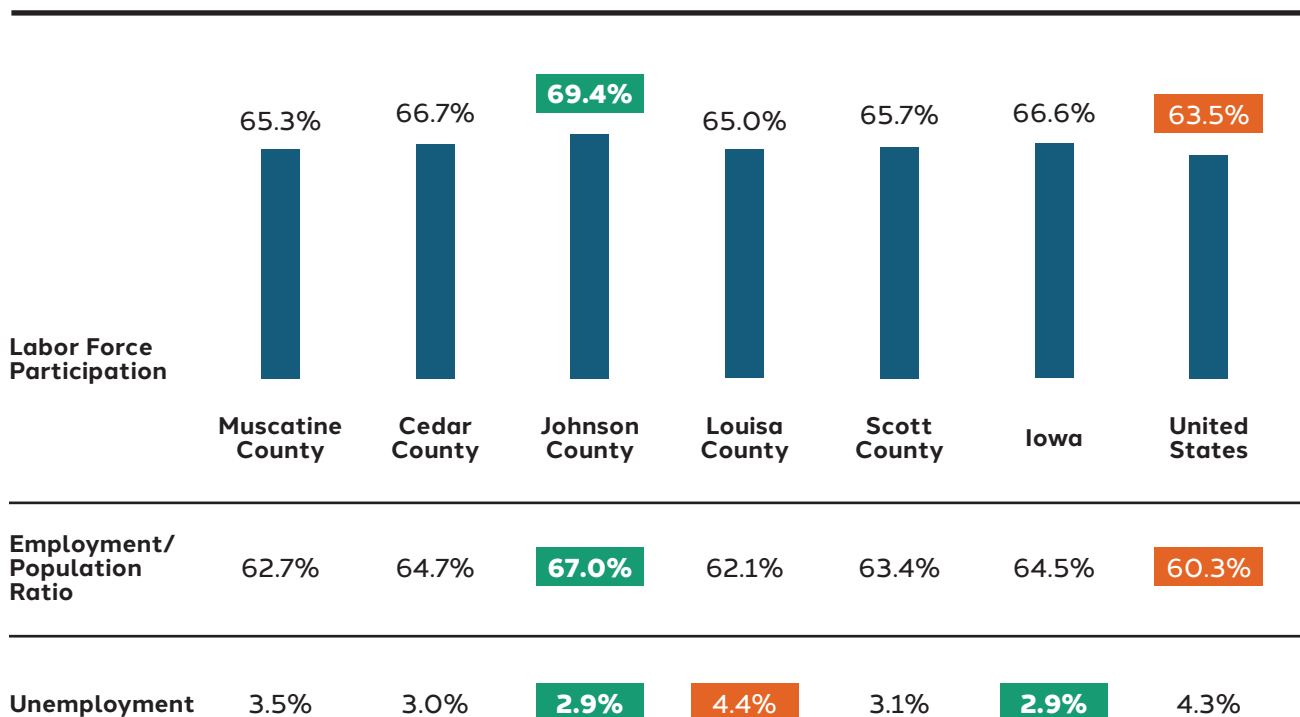


Despite having the second-lowest MHI among comparison geographies at \$67,427, Muscatine County experienced a significant shift in income distribution in the last decade. The largest group of income earners falls within the \$100,000 to \$149,999 per year, comprising 20.2% of the population. This marks a substantial increase of over 10 times since 2010, when only 2.3% of the County's population earned such high incomes.

Data is derived from the 2022 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

According to **FIGURE 2.4**, Muscatine County has a 65.3% labor force participation rate, which ranks similarly to surrounding counties, the State of Iowa, and the U.S. The same trend applies to employment and unemployment rates where Muscatine County falls in the middle of the comparison geographies. These percentages are only slightly different from pre-pandemic levels, which demonstrates that Muscatine County's economy has remained resilient.

**FIGURE 2.4 LABOR FORCE & UNEMPLOYMENT**



Muscatine County generates an annual gross domestic product (GDP) of nearly \$3.2 billion, with the Manufacturing industry contributing more than a third of that total. The Manufacturing industry employs around 30% of the county's workforce and boasts one of the highest average annual wages among the top 10 industries. Over the past decade, only three of the top 10 industries experienced

Data is derived from the 2022 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.  
Data includes the population 16 years and over

growth, with Management of Companies and Enterprises leading at 5.9%. This growth mostly likely explains why, in the section above, income earners making between \$100,000 – \$149,999 rose so significantly over the same time period.

**FIGURE 2.5 TOP 10 INDUSTRIES BY EMPLOYEES**

Industry	2013 Jobs	2023 Jobs	Change (#)	Change (%)	Avg. Ann. Wage
Manufacturing	7,029	7,019	-10	0%	\$74,724
Retail Trade	2,172	2,109	-63	-0.3%	\$33,334
Healthcare & Social Assistance	2,374	1,894	-480	-2.2%	\$45,802
Administrative & Support, etc.	1,570	1,597	+27	+0.2%	\$45,253
Educational Services	1,564	1,436	-128	-0.9%	\$44,045
Accommodation & Food Services	1,140	1,299	+159	+1.3%	\$17,797
Transportation & Warehousing	1,084	1,064	-20	-0.2%	\$58,608
Management of Companies & Enterprises	548	971	+423	+5.9%	\$120,677
Construction	939	928	-11	-0.1%	\$60,782
Other Services (except Public Admin)	903	893	-10	-0.1%	\$36,258
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,348</b>	<b>23,056</b>	<b>-292</b>	<b>-0.1%</b>	<b>\$59,761</b>

Factors such as income, educational attainment, and age can significantly influence housing access and affordability. A higher income generally afford individuals greater flexibility in choosing housing options, while educational attainment often correlates with increased earning potential. Additionally, age can impact housing needs, with younger populations often seeking entry-level homes and older demographics opting for downsized or age-appropriate housing. Moreover, demographic trends, such as population growth or decline, contribute to shifts in housing demand and supply, further impacting overall housing dynamics within a community. **Analyzing these indicators provides essential insights for policymakers and stakeholders aiming to address housing needs effectively.**

Data is derived from the 2022 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.  
Data includes the population 16 years and over



# Homeowners & Renters of All Incomes are Experiencing Frustration with the Current Market

The data included in this section of the report depicts an evolving landscape of homeowner versus renter households and the market's attempt to adapt to these changing needs.

**This analysis brought to light an imbalance in housing affordability relative to household income, resulting in higher income households residing in more affordable units and further intensifying market constraints. FIGURE 2.6** (next page) provides a breakdown of the percentage of monthly housing costs in relation to equivalent household income. For example, owner-occupied units priced under \$800 per month constitute 40% of the market. In order to adhere to the 30% affordability threshold, these units would, ideally, be occupied by households that earn less than \$35,000 per year. However,

this income range only accounts for 14.8% of households. A similar pattern emerges for units priced between \$800 and \$1,999 per month, constituting a slightly larger portion of the market at 51.1%. However, the corresponding household income (\$35,000 – \$74,999) only accounts for 30.7% of households. In an ideal world, households would live in units that are right-priced for their income level; however, that is not the reality. The disparity arises because quality lower priced units are likely already occupied by long-time homeowners (of which **43% of homeowners don't currently have a mortgage**) in addition to higher income households being able to purchase the remaining more desirable units, and leaving less quality units for first-time home buyers and/or lower income households.

**FIGURE 2.6 HOUSING COSTS VS. EQUIVALENT INCOME**

Monthly Housing Costs	Owner-Occupied Units (%)	Equivalent Household Income	Renter-occupied Units (%)	Equivalent Household Income
Less than \$800	39.8%	\$0 – \$34,999 (14.7%)	32.4%	\$0 – \$34,999 (43.5%)
\$800 – \$1,999	51.1%	\$35,000 – \$74,999 (30.7%)	61.1%	\$35,000 – \$74,999 (38.3%)
More than \$2,000	9.1%	\$75,000+ (54.6%)	0.8%	\$75,000+ (18.2%)

Similar trends are observed in the relationship between renter monthly housing costs and equivalent household income. However, a crucial distinction arises in the case of renters, specifically the **significant deficit of affordable housing units for households earning less than \$35,000 per year**. This shortage likely explains why **more than 75% of these income earners experience a cost burden**, being compelled to pay housing costs that surpass their financial capacity. According to the [Living Wage Calculator](#), a tool developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the living wage in Muscatine County is \$15.94 for one adult with no children, or a minimum annual income of \$33,165. Currently, more than one quarter of households\* in Muscatine County earn slightly above, at or below that, explaining the prevalence of cost-burdened households living on the edge of their financial means.

Percentages do not total to 100% due to units identified as “No cash rent”

\* The use of “households” does not equate to a one-person household, the 27.1% of households earning less than \$34,999 a year could be of varying sizes, further restricting their financial means as the living wage would increase with the number of adults and children.

Overall, Muscatine County is experiencing an imbalance of right-priced units to household income. The chart below shows what type of unit is available based on household income. One can see that the largest group of households (3,727) are those earning less than \$35,000 per year. To avoid being cost-burdened, these households would need to purchase a home for less than \$100,000 or pay less than \$799/month in rent. According to the latest data from the American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2022), there are 3,211 owner-occupied units valued at less than \$100,000, and 1,360 renter-occupied units priced at less than \$800/month\*. By subtracting the number of units from the number of households, a surplus or deficit can be identified for each income bracket.

**FIGURE 2.7 AVAILABLE AFFORDABLE UNITS**

Income Range	# of Households	Affordable Range for Owner Units	# of Units	Affordable Range for Renter Units	# of Units	Total Units	Balance
\$0 – \$34,999	3,727	\$0 – \$99,999	3,211	\$0 – \$799	1,360	4,571	+844
\$35,000 – \$49,999	2,356	\$100,000 – \$149,999	2,680	\$800 – \$1,499	2,293	4,973	+2,617
\$50,000 – \$74,999	3,206	\$150,000 – \$199,999	2,280	\$1,500 – \$1,999	277	2,557	-351
\$75,000 – \$99,999	2,368	\$200,000 – \$299,999	2,614	\$2,000 – \$2,499	14	2,628	+260
\$100,000 – \$149,999	3,455	\$300,000 – \$499,999	1,639	\$2,500 – \$2,999	0	1,639	-1,816
\$150,000+	1,963	\$500,000+	448	\$3,000+	19	467	-1,496
	<b>17,075</b>		<b>12,872</b>		<b>3,963</b>	<b>16,835</b>	

\* The # of Units available for renters does not exactly align with the price range for renter units, this is merely meant to provide additional context of the number of units below, at, or near what certain household incomes could potentially afford with what the Census provides



***I don't need extravagance. I need enough space to accommodate my small family and occasional visitors. A fenced yard would be useful for the dog and the small child. Adequate doesn't necessarily imply that the home needs to be ready today, only that it can get there through affordable renovation.***

*– SURVEY RESPONDENT*

According to **FIGURE 2.7** on the previous page, there is a clear surplus among lower priced units, and a deficit among higher priced units. It is important to note that this is one piece to the larger, more complex housing puzzle. **Just because there appears to be a surplus of lower priced units does not mean that supply is truly meeting demand.** Feedback from the Community Engagement phase highlights that a large barrier for homeowners and renters across the board is quality. Both homeowners and renters expressed concern about the quality of lower priced units, noting that significant updates and renovations are needed for these units in order to meet modern expectations. Homeowners don't necessarily have (or want to spend) the funds to support these types of renovations, while renters can find more modern units in surrounding counties for slightly higher price points. **There is still demand across all incomes, despite the high-level imbalance displayed here.** The following sections will dive deeper into those surplus and deficits based on homeowners vs renters.

## “Affordability” Threshold May Differ from Reality

Atlas wishes to emphasize that the conventional metric for affordability might not accurately capture the challenges individuals encounter in their search for affordable housing. While the standard practice deems housing affordable if total expenses (rent/mortgage plus utilities) equate to less than 30% of a household’s gross income, this threshold may not reflect the reality when considering a household’s net income—affected by individual variations in taxes and deductions.



Muscatine County’s MHI  
**\$67,427 = \$5,186/month** (gross)



Housing Affordability Threshold (30%)  
**\$1,556/month**

However, when you factor in taxes and benefits, monthly take home pay reduces even more.

$$\text{\$5,186/month} - \text{Taxes (\$972)} - \text{Benefits (\$454)} = \text{\$3,760/month}$$

The initial 30% threshold, originally amounting to \$1,556/month, in practical terms translates to **41%** of the household's income. Moreover, this calculation neglects factors like student loans or credit card debt, placing additional strain on a household's financial capacity to save, buy a home, or embark on family plans. **Consequently, communities must be mindful of this reality when assessing housing needs, as solely constructing housing at the affordability threshold could elevate the number of cost-burdened households, potentially deepening existing inequalities.**





## Homeowners in Muscatine County

Over the past three decades, Muscatine County has consistently maintained a majority of owner-occupied households, boasting a current owner occupancy rate of 75.4%, as of 2022. Affordability is commonly defined by adhering to the principle of not surpassing a 3:1 ratio of debt to income, ensuring that housing costs (including utilities) remain below 30% of a household's income. By these standards, the county emerges as fairly affordable for homeowners, particularly when compared to neighboring counties, the State of Iowa, and the United States as a whole. Muscatine County ranks lower than all but Louisa County in terms of median home value (MHV) and median monthly housing costs. Additionally, the modest ratio of median home value (MHV) to median household income (MHI) further demonstrates the region's affordability. This ratio signifies that a homeowner in Muscatine County only needs to earn roughly twice the income to afford an average home, in contrast to the nationwide standard that demands three times the income.

In contrast to the population data discussed in the previous section, it becomes evident that **homeowners in Muscatine County have experienced more favorable financial conditions regarding income and housing costs.**

### **Industry Standard vs. Local Standard**

The industry standard for affordability is 3:1 and is applied across the U.S. However, in the Midwest, where housing costs are generally cheaper than the East or West coasts, that standard is closer to a 2:1 ratio (*as demonstrated in Figure 2.8*).

Currently, homeowners in the County earn approximately 23% more income than the County’s MHI, and only pay almost half of the maximum housing cost percentage, providing a significant financial buffer against recent inflation and overall increases in the cost of living. Two key factors likely contribute to the lower housing costs for existing homeowners: 1) the age of buildings; and 2) interest rates. Nearly 68% of owner-occupied units were constructed before 1979, indicating that more homes were built during a period of more affordable housing. While new homes come with higher price points, the limited number (less than 11%) built after 2000 has helped maintain affordability. Additionally the COVID-19 pandemic facilitated easier access to funds, with mortgage rates dropping as low as three percent. In 2023, rates increased approximately 2.5 times, reaching as high as 7.5%. According to American Community Survey (ACS) data, almost 50% of households moved between 2010 and 2020. That number shrunk to just 3.7% of households that moved in 2021 or later. This data aligns with feedback received during the Community Engagement phase where a majority of surveyed homeowners purchased their homes between 2010 and 2019. This likely allowed households to secure low-interest rates during this period, contributing to the ability to keep their monthly housing costs relatively low.

**FIGURE 2.8 OWNER FINANCIAL HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS**

	MHI	MHV	Median Monthly Housing Costs	Ratio	Owner Occupancy
Muscatine County	\$83,143	\$159,000	\$975	1.9	75.4%
Cedar County	\$85,806	\$180,700	\$1,027	2.1	80.6%
Johnson County	\$110,002	\$274,500	\$1,450	2.4	59.1%
Louisa County	\$82,639	\$125,500	\$873	1.5	77.9%
Scott County	\$93,962	\$198,000	\$1,162	2.1	69.1%
Iowa	\$86,339	\$181,600	\$1,042	2.1	71.5%
United States	\$93,531	\$281,900	\$1,282	3.0	64.8%

*Median Household Income (MHI) in the Past 12 Months (2022 inflation-adjusted dollars)*

**To accept the appearance of affordability at face value is a disservice to the people in these communities who are genuinely grappling with the challenges of securing suitable and reasonably priced housing.** A different narrative unfolds for a significant portion of Muscatine County residents, specifically the more than 45% of owner households who earn less than the average MHI of \$83,143. Overall, roughly 17.4% of all owner households are cost-burdened in the County, meaning they spend 30 percent or more of their income on housing expenses. Among these cost-burdened owner households, 60% earn less than \$35,000 per year. With the recent spike in housing prices and the overall cost of living, there has been a notable shift in the distribution of homeowners across income brackets. The proportion of homeowners earning less than \$75,000 annually has substantially decreased, dropping from over 75% in 2000 to 45% today, as illustrated in **FIGURE 2.9** on the following pages.

The only income brackets that have seen an increase in the percentage of owner households is the \$100,000+ categories.

Median home value (MHV) is a good indicator to get a sense of affordability in the region, but it is only one piece of the larger housing puzzle. According to the Iowa Association of Realtors, as of November 2023, the average sales price for a single-family detached home in Muscatine County was \$197,400, a 12.4% drop from the 2022 average of \$225,250. The decrease in sales price between 2022 and 2023 reflects a broader cooling of the housing market due to rising interest rates, which ultimately resulted in a lesser number of homes being put on the market in 2023. Although the sales price dropped, the current price is still significantly higher than the MHV, and continues to price out potential homeowners. **Owning a home has become increasingly expensive, and is quickly pricing low and moderate income earners out of the market.**

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\* See Appendix B for full report

**FIGURE 2.9 HOMEOWNER HOUSEHOLD INCOMES (\$0 – \$74,999)**

Household Income	\$0 – \$34,999			\$35,000 – \$49,999			\$50,000 – \$74,999		
Things to Keep in Mind	Roughly 70% of these homeowners are cost-burdened, despite owning a home. It is likely that this income bracket includes individuals living on a fixed income e.g. Social Security or disability, and current housing costs (property tax, insurance, etc.) exceed that affordability threshold. This income bracket also has the highest amount of surplus units. It's possible that units in this price range are dilapidated / blighted units due to lack of maintenance over time, especially if occupants are on fixed incomes.			Nearly one third of these homeowners are cost-burdened. Similar to the lowest income earners, it is likely that some of these households are on fixed incomes and are challenged to afford property, tax, insurance, etc. along with any maintenance or upgrades needed, which could be why there's still a significant surplus of units, as many could be deteriorating over time.			These households have lower rates of cost-burdened homeowners, but are likely struggling to upsize (if desired) due to current market conditions, limited supply, and competition from higher income households.		
% of Owner Households	2000 32.1%	2010 24.8%	2022 14.6%	2000 18.8%	2010 15.5%	2022 13.4%	2000 25.7%	2010 23.5%	2022 17.3%
Range of Affordable Unit Value	\$0 – \$102,000			\$103,000 – \$146,000			\$147,000 – \$219,000		
# of Households in 2022	1,898			1,722			2,229		
Units Affordable to Income Range in 2022	\$0 – \$99,999: 3,211			\$100,000 – \$149,999: 2,680			\$150,000 – \$199,999: 2,280		
Deficit / Surplus of Affordable Units to Matched Income 2022	+1,313			+958			+51		
# of Cost Burdened Households	1,334			570			222		

Data is derived from the 2000 Decennial Census and the 2010 and 2022 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

Maximum Affordable Unit Value calculation: Maximum income x 30% / 12 = maximum monthly payment.

The Units Affordable calculation is meant to provide additional context of the number of units below, at, or near what certain household incomes could potentially afford.

**FIGURE 2.9 HOMEOWNER HOUSEHOLD INCOMES (\$75,000 – \$150,000+)**

Household Income	\$75,000 – \$99,999			\$100,000 – \$149,999			\$150,000+		
<b>Things to Keep in Mind</b>	These households are likely in a similar situation to the income bracket below them. Although there is more supply to choose from for units priced between \$200,000 and \$299,999, competition from higher incomes is likely to absorb those units that would allow these households to size up.			Although these homeowners have the greatest purchasing power, there is limited choice due to lack of new builds at these equivalent price points. This lack of choice has likely required these households to compete with those earning less than \$100,000, and absorbing more affordable units. Another point to keep in mind is that even though these homeowners can purchase a \$300,000+ home, doesn't mean they all necessarily will. Factors, such as current interest rates, may deter these current homeowners from making the jump. Other major costs like daycare, student loans, etc. also can eat up a household's budget, and reduce the likelihood of higher income households taking on a larger mortgage. On the flip side, those who are on fixed incomes (retirees) but saved comfortably might not be willing to give up their low cost of living from purchasing a home decades prior.					
<b>% of Owner Households</b>	<b>2000</b> 13.7%	<b>2010</b> 18.3%	<b>2022</b> 14.6%	<b>2000</b> 6.7%	<b>2010</b> 12.9%	<b>2022</b> 25.1%	<b>2000</b> 2.9%	<b>2010</b> 4.8%	<b>2022</b> 14.8%
<b>Range of Affordable Unit Value</b>	\$220,000 – \$292,000			\$293,000 – \$438,000			\$438,000+		
<b># of Households in 2022</b>	1,883			3,235			1,905		
<b>Units Affordable to Income Range in 2022</b>	\$200,000 – \$299,999: 2,614			\$300,000 – \$499,999: 1,639			\$500,000+: 448		
<b>Deficit / Surplus of Affordable Units to Matched Income 2022</b>	<b>+731</b>			<b>-1,596</b>			<b>-1,457</b>		
<b># of Cost Burdened Households</b>	115			N/A			N/A		

Data is derived from the 2000 Decennial Census and the 2010 and 2022 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

Maximum Affordable Unit Value calculation: Maximum income x 30% / 12 = maximum monthly payment.

The Units Affordable calculation is meant to provide additional context of the number of units below, at, or near what certain household incomes could potentially afford.





## Renters in Muscatine County

As of 2022, nearly a quarter of households rent in Muscatine County. While homeowners have reaped the benefits of affordability, renters face considerable financial strain and are in a less advantageous position. Renters earn approximately 59% of Muscatine County's MHI (\$67,427), and only 48% of what Muscatine County homeowners earn (\$83,143), highlighting a substantial financial disparity between these two groups. Furthermore, within the region, Muscatine County ranks as the second most expensive county, just below Johnson County, IA, as well as the United States, in terms of median monthly housing costs. Applying the same affordability threshold, current median monthly housing costs already align with the upper limit of renters' budgets before becoming cost-burdened, of which 38% of renter households are. This situation leaves renters with fewer options, likely forcing them to consider less desirable housing conditions in an effort to reduce existing housing costs.

**FIGURE 2.10 RENTER FINANCIAL HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS**

	MHI	Median Monthly Housing Costs	Max Affordability	Renter Occupancy
Muscatine County	\$39,697	\$936	\$992	24.6%
Cedar County	\$38,305	\$830	\$958	19.4%
Johnson County	\$36,677	\$1,086	\$917	40.9%
Louisa County	\$43,382	\$747	\$1,085	22.1%
Scott County	\$39,195	\$919	\$980	30.9%
Iowa	\$40,464	\$914	\$1,012	28.5%
United States	\$48,844	\$1,268	\$1,221	35.2%

Median Household Income (MHI) in the Past 12 Months (2022 inflation-adjusted dollars)  
Maximum Affordable Unit Value calculation: Maximum income x 30% / 12 = maximum monthly payment.

While Muscatine County ranks as the second most expensive county after Johnson County, there is a notable difference in the age of rental housing stock between the two. Approximately 30% of Johnson County's renter-occupied units were constructed in 2000 or later, in contrast to only 12% of Muscatine County's renter units. This implies that **although housing costs are lower in Muscatine County, the units are significantly older and may not align with the expectations of contemporary renters, including updated appliances and fixtures.** Feedback gathered during the Community Engagement phase supports this observation, as participants expressed a perception that Muscatine County is not necessarily more affordable. Some stated a willingness to pay higher housing costs in Johnson County due to the access to higher quality amenities, activities, and events.

As illustrated in **FIGURE 2.11** on the following pages, the disparity among

renters persists when examined through the lens of income brackets. Despite significant increases in incomes over the past two decades, this hasn't necessarily balanced the escalating housing costs that renters are currently grappling with. **The lowest income earners continue to represent the largest proportion of renters, with more than three-quarters of them facing a cost burden.** This is largely attributed to the diminishing availability of units priced at less than \$500 per month, experiencing a 65% decrease since 2010. As a result, these households are compelled to pay for housing that exceeds their financial means. In a similar trend to homeowners in Muscatine County, the percentage of higher income earners has grown over the past 20 years, but the production of equivalently priced units has not kept pace. The scarcity of units relative to higher income earners likely led these households to absorb some of the surplus among units priced from \$800 – \$1,499.

**FIGURE 2.11 RENTER HOUSEHOLD INCOMES (\$0 – \$49,999)**

Household Income	\$0 – \$19,999			\$20,000 – \$34,999			\$0 – \$34,999			\$35,000 – \$49,999		
<b>Things to Keep in Mind</b>	The lowest income earners remain the highest percentage of renter households. It is possible that many of these households are on fixed incomes, which is why there is such a high cost-burdened rate. This income bracket also has the highest amount of deficit units. As housing costs have risen, it is likely landlords are raising rents, reducing the number of affordable units. It is also possible that these lower priced units lacked quality and became dilapidated/blighted due to lack of maintenance.			This income bracket also experienced a decrease in households over time. However, they are unique in the sense of being one of two income brackets who have a surplus in units, which are likely being absorbed by the lowest income bracket. Yet 89% of households are cost-burdened, the highest of any income bracket.			Although this income bracket saw the largest decrease since 2000 (-27.1%), more than 75% of them are still cost-burdened due to a high deficit in affordable units. New construction is not an option unless deeply subsidized. Break even rents for the private sector are well over \$1,000 per unit, which is more than these households can afford.			This group of renters hasn't shifted significantly in terms of households, yet experiences the largest surplus in units. The significant surplus is attributed to the abundance of units within this rent range as of 2022. However, historically, units in this category cater to both lower and higher-income underserved markets. Consequently, individuals with lower incomes in this category might face challenges, such as being outbid or dealing with higher rents. This situation raises concerns about the availability of affordable units and the quality they offer for the cost, particularly impacting family households.		
% of Owner Households	2000 41.3%	2010 36.5%	2022 25.4%	2000 29.3%	2010 27.3%	2022 18.1%	2000 70.6%	2010 63.8%	2022 43.5%	2000 16.6%	2010 14.6%	2022 15.1%
Range of Affordable Unit Value	Less than \$500			\$500 – \$874			\$0 – \$874			\$875 – \$1,249		
# of Households in 2022	1,070			759			1,829			634		
Units Affordable to Income Range in 2022	Less than \$500: 347			\$500 – \$799: 1,013			\$0 – \$799: 1,360			\$800 – \$1,499: 2,293		
Deficit / Surplus of Affordable Units to Matched Income 2022	-723			+254			-469			+1,659		
# of Cost Burdened Households	716			677			1,393			177		

Data is derived from the 2000 Decennial Census and the 2010 and 2022 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

Maximum Affordable Unit Value calculation: Maximum income x 30% / 12 = maximum monthly payment.

The Units Affordable calculation is meant to provide additional context of the number of units below, at, or near what certain household incomes could potentially afford.

**FIGURE 2.11 RENTER HOUSEHOLD INCOMES (\$50,000 – \$150,000+)**

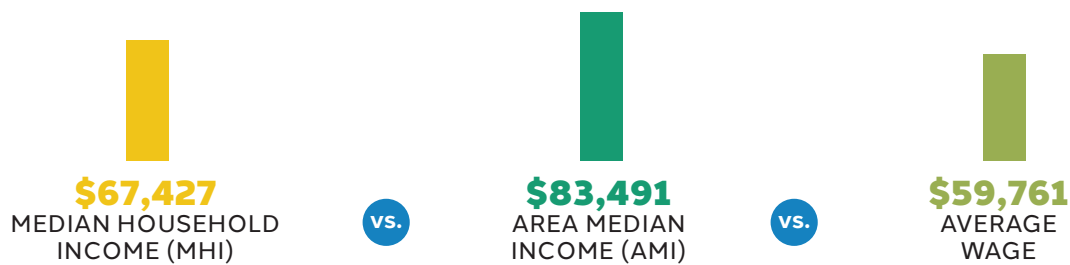
Household Income	\$50,000 – \$74,999			\$75,000 – \$99,999			\$100,000 – \$149,999			+\$150,000		
<b>Things to Keep in Mind</b>	This income bracket experienced the largest increase since 2000 (+12.9%) but still sees a deficit in units relative to income. Although there was a surge in renter units built throughout the 2010s, it is likely that these were units priced under \$1,500, leaving fewer options for these households who can afford more luxury apartment rates.			These top income earners have increased significantly since 2020. Currently, none of these households are not cost-burdened and allows them to afford any rental in Muscatine County. However, there is a deficit in units relative to their income which reflects a limited choice and most likely means these households are paying lower housing costs due to a surplus in lower-priced units.								
% of Owner Households	2000 10.3%	2010 13.2%	2022 23.2%	2000 1.8%	2010 4.9%	2022 11.5%	2000 0.2%	2010 1.6%	2022 5.2%	2000 0.4%	2010 2.0%	2022 1.4%
Range of Affordable Unit Value	\$1,250 – \$1,874			\$1,875 – \$2,499			\$2,500 – \$3,749			\$3,750+		
# of Households in 2022	977			485			220			58		
Units Affordable to Income Range in 2022	\$1,500 – \$1,999: 277			\$2,000 – \$2,499: 14			\$2,500 – \$2,999: 0			\$3,000+: 19		
Deficit / Surplus of Affordable Units to Matched Income 2022	-500			-471			-220			-39		
# of Cost Burdened Households	18			0			N/A			N/A		

Data is derived from the 2000 Decennial Census and the 2010 and 2022 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

Maximum Affordable Unit Value calculation: Maximum income x 30% / 12 = maximum monthly payment.

The Units Affordable calculation is meant to provide additional context of the number of units below, at, or near what certain household incomes could potentially afford.

As demonstrated, renters have not experienced an as favorable market like homeowners. More than 40% of renters in Muscatine County are lower income households and cost-burdened, which requires a closer look at data regarding subsidized units. In order to qualify for subsidized housing, a family or individual has to earn no more than the designated income limits, identified as the Median Family Income (MFI), which is typically derived from the Area Median Income (AMI).



The 2023 Median Family Income (MFI) for Muscatine County is \$83,500 for a four-person household. **FIGURE 2.12** demonstrates the qualifying incomes for Muscatine County based on household size:

**FIGURE 2.12    SUBSIDIZED HOUSING INCOME LIMITS**

30% MFI (extremely low income)	
1 person HH: \$17,700	3 person HH: \$24,860
2 person HH: \$20,200	4 person HH: \$30,000
50% MFI (very low income)	
1 person HH: \$29,500	3 person HH: \$37,900
2 person HH: \$33,700	4 person HH: \$42,100
80% MFI (low income)	
1 person HH: \$47,150	3 person HH: \$60,650
2 person HH: \$53,900	4 person HH: \$67,350

Data for Figure 2.10 is derived from the HUD website





According to HUD, as of 2023, there are 825 subsidized units available, and have a 95% occupancy rate. The average household income of those living in subsidized housing is \$15,833 per year, which falls in the lowest income bracket, where there is a significant deficit of rental units available. Additionally, eligible households wait an average of 17 months on the waiting list for an available unit., indicating a severe lack in availability and most likely forcing these households to pay significantly more for housing. Muscatine County is not alone in this issue, the State of Iowa also has a significant deficit in affordable rental units for very low and extremely low income households.

**The makeup of a household living in subsidized housing is as follows:**



**FEMALE  
W/ CHILD**



**25-49  
YEARS OLD**



**DISABLED**





## Existing Housing Resources in Muscatine County

Although Muscatine County does not directly offer housing resources to residents, there are existing programs within the communities that provide support to current and future homeowners. The City of Muscatine has a [first-time homeowners course](#), which offers participants the opportunity to learn about the homebuying process and secure funds to put towards a down payment. The City of Muscatine and the City of Wilton also offer a tax abatement program as a tool to encourage new construction or improvements to existing housing in designated areas within the community.

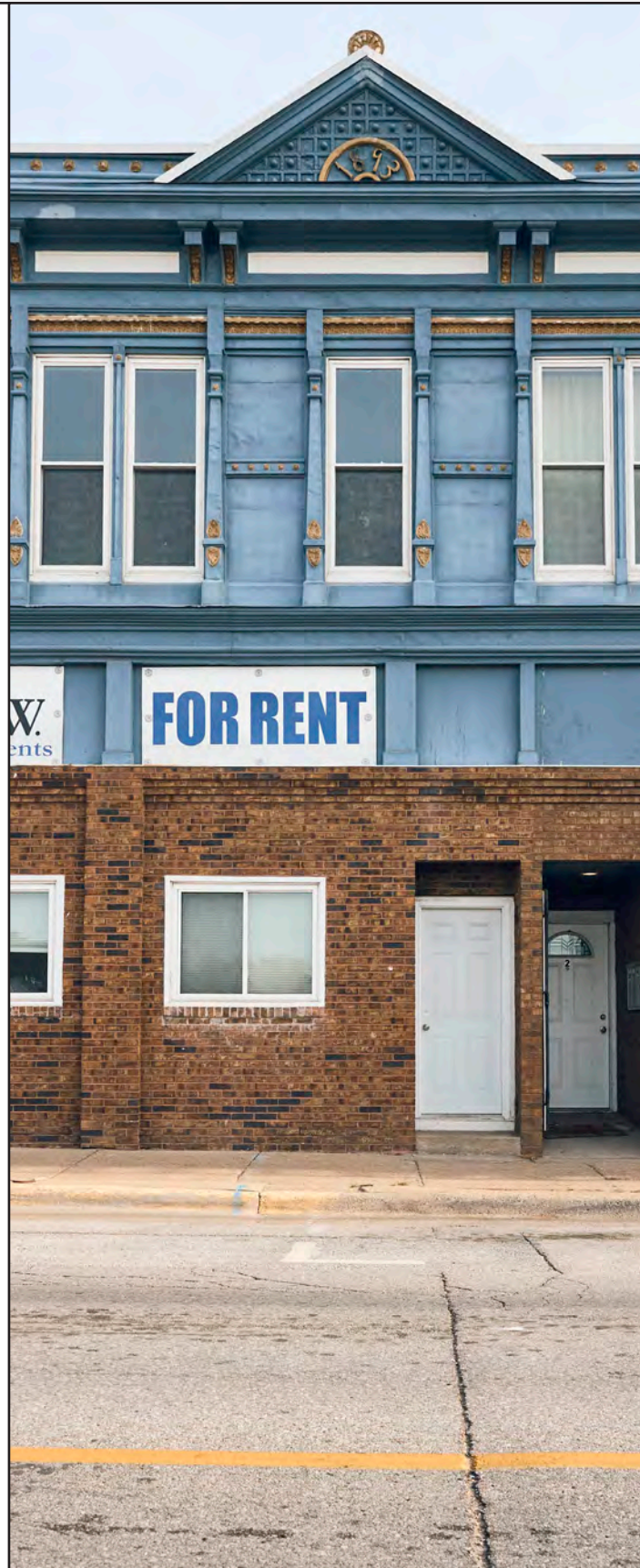
At the time of this report, Atlas is not aware of additional existing housing resources available in other communities within Muscatine County.

# Housing Stock Characteristics

The maps on the following pages utilize GIS software to illustrate the diverse make up of the housing stock in Muscatine County by the following characteristics:

- Residential Parcels by Housing Type
- Single-Family Residential Homes by Year Built
- Single-Family Residential Homes by Total Assessed Value
- Single-Family Residential Homes by Condition




Information was sourced from the Muscatine County Assessor.

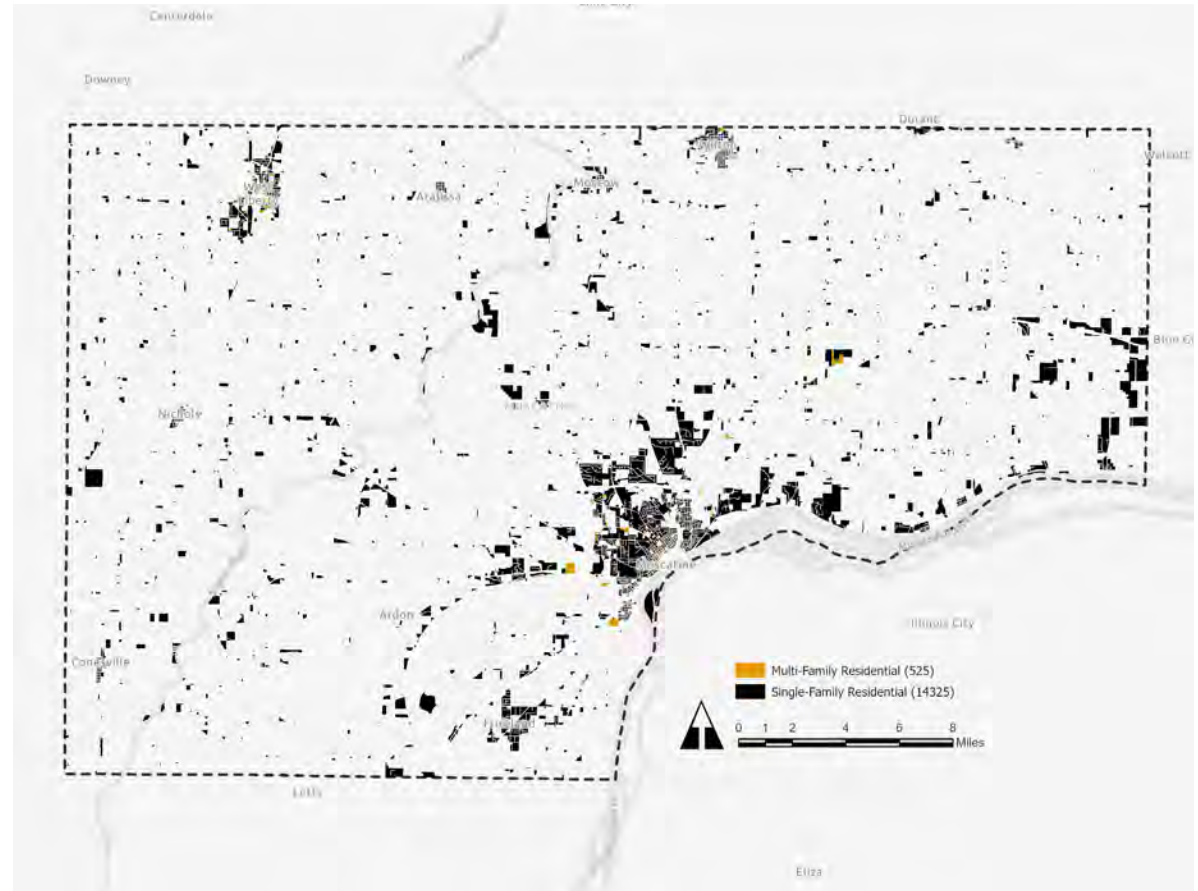




## RESIDENTIAL PARCELS BY HOUSING TYPE

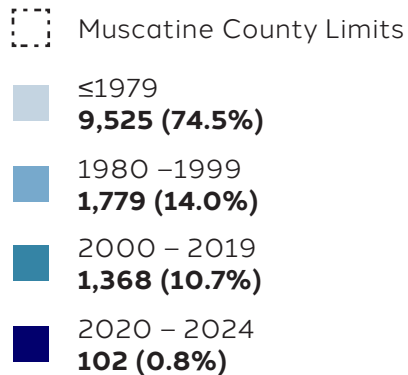
The vast majority of residential parcels in Muscatine County are single-family detached homes shown in black in **FIGURE 2.13**. It is clear that many residents that reside within county limits are single-family homeowners, while most residents living in multi-family units are concentrated in the city limits of the communities within Muscatine County.

-  Muscatine County Limits
-  Multi-Family Residential  
**525 (3.5%)**
-  Multi-Family Residential  
**14,325 (96.5%)**

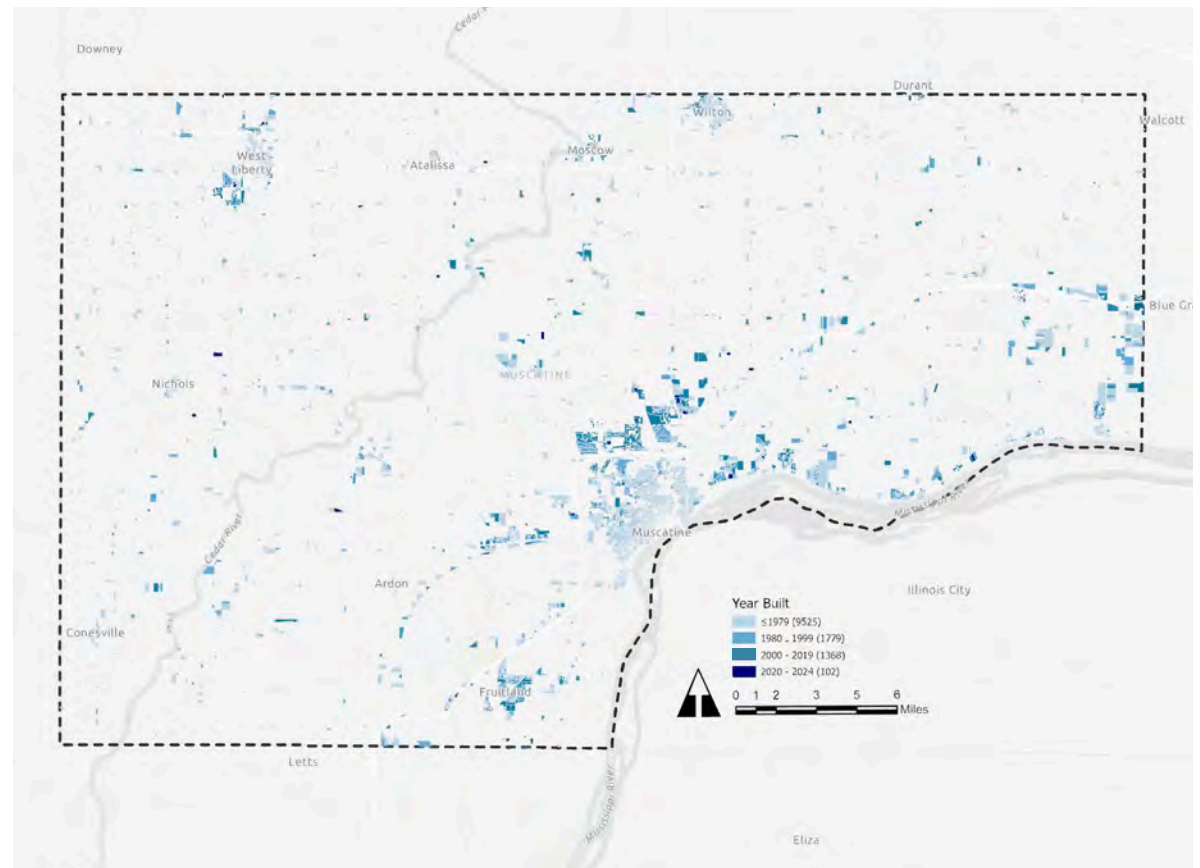


**FIGURE 2.13** MUSCATINE COUNTY RESIDENTIAL PARCELS BY HOUSING TYPE

**FIGURE 2.14** demonstrates that older single-family homes are concentrated at the core of each community within Muscatine County, while most modern housing has been built on the outer edges. This map also shows the disparity between older and newer housing, with only about 12% of existing single-family homes being built since 2000.



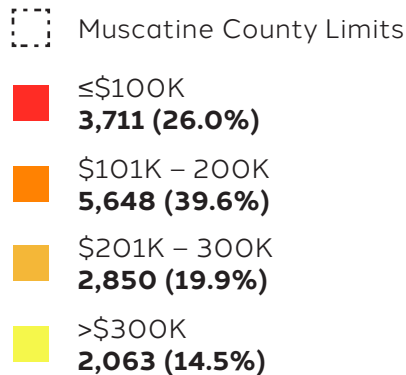
## SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL HOMES BY YEAR BUILT



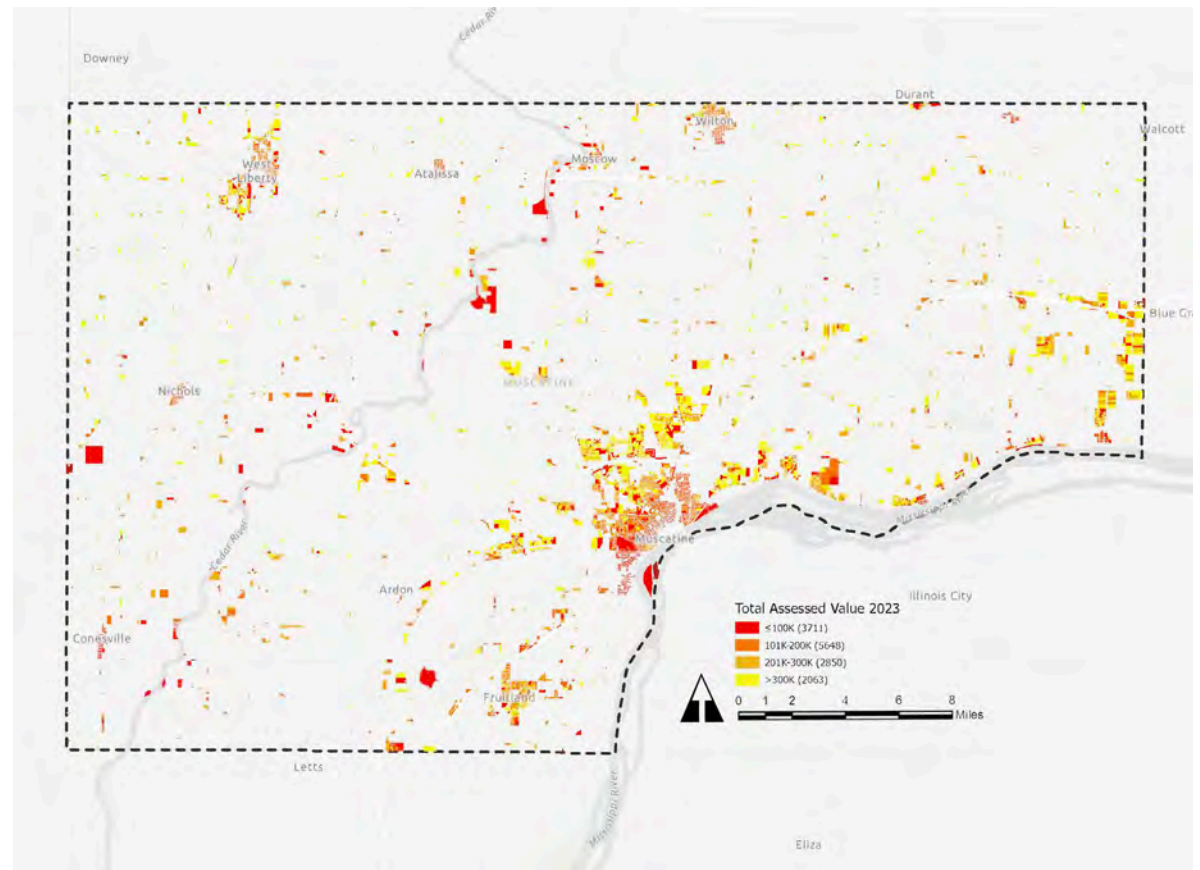
**FIGURE 2.14** SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL HOMES BY YEAR BUILT



**FIGURE 2.15** shows the range of home values in Muscatine County. The map somewhat mirrors the Homes by Year Built where lower value homes are concentrated in the cores of the communities, while higher value homes are on the outskirts. The largest percentage of single-family homes are priced between \$101,000 and \$200,000, followed by those that are equal to or less than \$100,000.

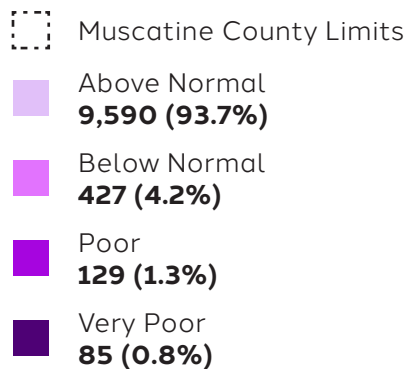


## SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL HOMES BY TOTAL ASSESSED VALUE

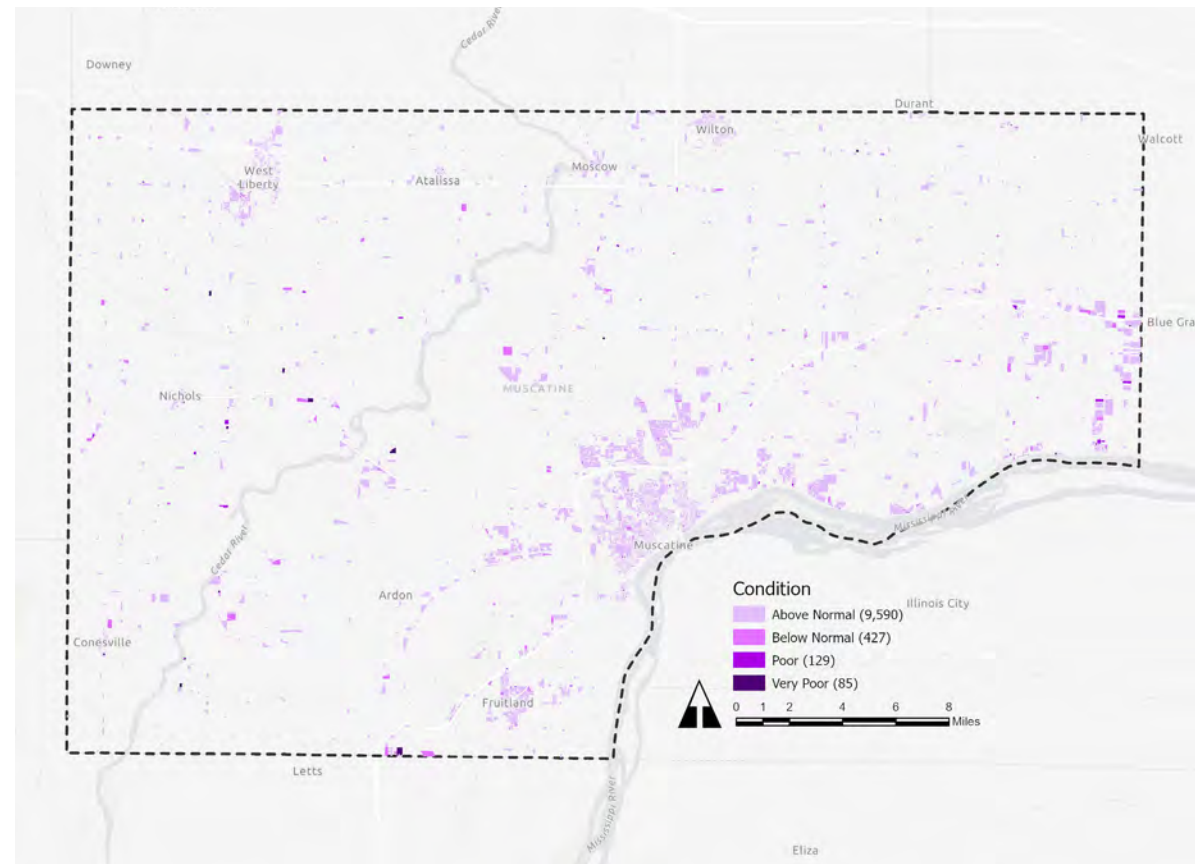


**FIGURE 2.15** SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL HOMES BY TOTAL ASSESSED VALUE

**FIGURE 2.16** breaks down single-family homes by condition, as determined by the Muscatine County Assessor's Office. A large majority of homes are categorized as Above Normal conditions, while 5% of homes are considered Below Normal or worse. Although this is a low percentage, it still equates to more than 600 homes that most likely need renovations or updates, especially those that are Poor or Very Poor, where blight is the likely culprit.



## SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL HOMES BY CONDITION



**FIGURE 2.16** SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL HOMES BY CONDITION

**Part 3**

# The Future Housing Market of Muscatine County

The housing market dynamics that characterized Muscatine County in previous decades are poised for a notable shift in the future. The 1990s witnessed heightened demand, propelling substantial growth in housing production that extended into the 2000s. However, by the 2010s, this momentum slowed, accompanied by a decline in homeownership rates and a rise in the number of vacant units. The onset of the 2020s brought about a significant reversal with low interest rates, marking a transformative phase in the housing market landscape.

In the coming decades, changes in the housing market will be driven by a number of factors. Demographic shifts, including an aging population and evolving household structures, are likely to reshape housing preferences and demands. The impact of technology and remote work trends will continue to influence location choices and the need for flexible living spaces. Sustainability concerns are expected to drive a surge in eco-friendly and energy-efficient housing solutions. Additionally, economic factors, such as interest rates and overall market conditions, will play a pivotal role in shaping affordability and homeownership trends. The continued interconnectedness of these factors suggests a future housing landscape that embraces innovation, sustainability, and adaptability to meet the diverse and evolving needs of a changing society.



# How Housing Must Meet the Needs of Changing Demographics

To anticipate future housing demand, it is crucial to examine the demographic shifts that Muscatine County has undergone in the last two decades. Factors such as people relocating, deciding whether to pursue homeownership, selling their homes, or downsizing to single-story rentals all contribute significantly to shaping the trajectory of future housing needs. The median age in Muscatine County is 38.6, aligning closely with both the State of Iowa and the United States.

**FIGURE 3.1** (next page) illustrates the evolution of each age cohort over time, revealing a consistent decline in younger populations and a corresponding rise in aging populations between 2000 and 2022.



**FIGURE 3.1 AGE COHORTS (HISTORICAL & PROJECTED)**

Age Totals	2000	2010	2022	Historical Change (2000 – 2022)		2030	2040	Projected Change (2022 – 2040)
<b>Total Population</b>	41,722	42,745	42,968	+1,246		42,970	43,185	+0.5%
<b>Age 14 &amp; Under</b>	22.1%	21.7%	20.1%	-2.0%	<i>Ages 54 and below saw a decline of 8.4% over more than two decades.</i>	19.5%	20.1%	0%
<b>Age 15 – 24</b>	13.3%	12.5%	12.6%	-0.7%		11.7%	10.5%	-2.1%
<b>Age 25 – 34</b>	12.9%	12.1%	12.3%	-0.6%		11.9%	12.6%	+0.3%
<b>Age 35 – 44</b>	15.9%	12.7%	12.4%	-3.5%		12.9%	12.1%	-0.3%
<b>Age 45 – 54</b>	13.9%	14.9%	12.2%	-1.6%		11.7%	12.6%	+0.4%
<b>Age 55 – 59</b>	4.9%	6.8%	6.2%	+1.3%	<i>Ages 55+ saw an increase of 8.8% over more than two decades.</i>	5.5%	5.8%	-0.4%
<b>Age 60 – 64</b>	4.0%	5.7%	7.2%	+3.2%		5.6%	5.3%	-1.9%
<b>Age 65 – 74</b>	6.5%	7.2%	10.5%	+4.0%		11.3%	9.6%	-0.9%
<b>Age 75 – 84</b>	4.6%	4.4%	4.6%	0%		7.8%	8.6%	+4.0%
<b>Age 85+</b>	1.9%	2.1%	2.0%	+0.1%		2.2%	2.7%	+0.7%

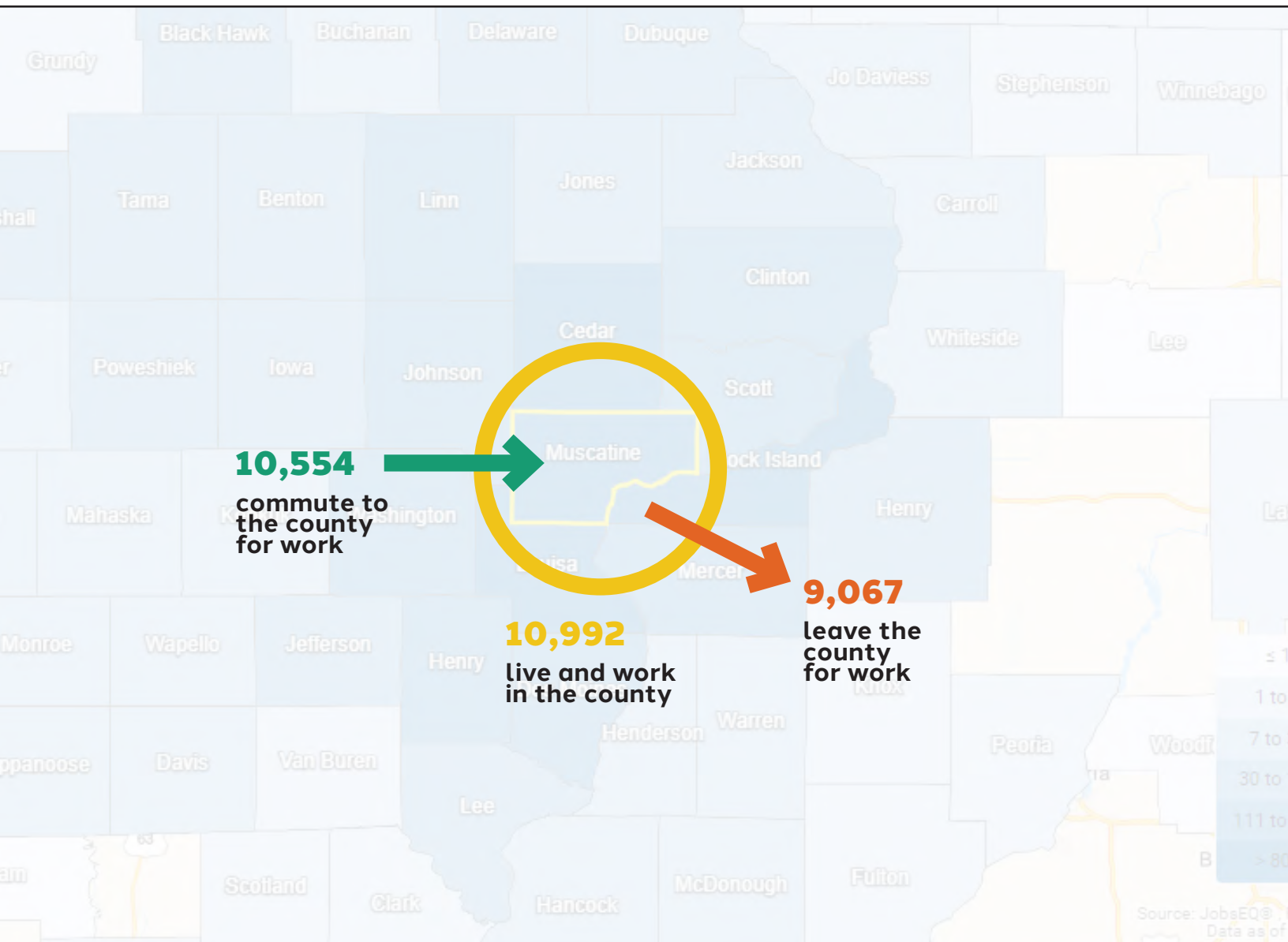
Data is derived from the 2000 Decennial Census and the 2010 and 2022 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.  
Data projections are derived from an annual report created by Woods & Poole Economics for the State of Iowa State Data Center.





According to projections from the State Data Center of Iowa, the anticipated trends align with the observed population changes over the past 20 years, suggesting a gradual continuation of declining younger populations and increasing aging populations. However, minimal population growth is anticipated, with a slight decrease by 2030, followed by a subsequent rebound by 2040. Although households are anticipated to get older with time, the size of them is expected to stay roughly the same. The current average household size in Muscatine County is 2.5, and has only decreased slightly since 1990, from 2.7. Projections from the State Data Center of Iowa show that it will only slightly decline to 2.4 by 2040. Overall, **Muscatine County should anticipate housing aging and slightly smaller households as time goes on.**

Muscatine County is not expected to experience significant population growth over the coming years, but the adjacent counties of Johnson and Scott are anticipating high rates of growth. However, Muscatine County has been able to attract workers from neighboring counties due to a number of strong local employers. If the county can provide appropriate and right-priced housing for these workers, perhaps they will relocate to Muscatine County and spur population growth in the future.



Per JobsEQ, **FIGURE 3.2** highlights the top five occupations of individuals that are commuting to Muscatine County for work, but do not live within the county. The chart below breaks down each occupation's income levels, and equivalent housing cost estimates relative to that income. This provides important insight into what these potential households could afford and what housing price points Muscatine County needs to offer in order to attract them.

**FIGURE 3.2 TOP OCCUPATIONS FOR COMMUTERS – INCOME & HOUSING COSTS**

Occupation	Entry Level	Median	Experienced	Purchase Price	Rental Price
Management Occupations	\$51,500	\$95,200	\$135,400	< \$150,000	≤ \$1,288/month
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	\$27,900	\$49,800	\$63,200	< \$100,000	≤ \$698/month
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	\$30,700	\$44,600	\$51,500	< \$100,000	≤ \$768/month
Production Occupations	\$35,500	\$46,900	\$55,500	< \$100,000	≤ \$888/month
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	\$30,200	\$42,400	\$52,200	< \$100,000	≤ \$755/month

*These maximum price ranges represent what an entry-level employee could afford (by applying the 30% threshold). Atlas is starting with entry-level pay based on discussions with major employers in the county, and how many of the new hires they've had would fall under this category. By assessing the housing expenses relevant to entry-level employees, this approach ensures that housing remains more accessible across all income levels, as opposed to being relative to earnings of average or seasoned employees, who typically command higher salaries (as demonstrated in the chart)*

# The Future for Owner Households in Muscatine County

Part II of this study outlined existing gaps in the market for owner-occupied households, demonstrating higher income earners are occupying units that are significantly below than the cost-burdened threshold. It is possible that higher income earners were able to purchase a home when the market was more favorable. Additionally, it is possible these households could consist of aging individuals who purchased their homes decades ago, have now paid off that home and have maintained a low cost of living. That is very likely due to the fact that 40% of existing owner-occupied units are mortgage-free in Muscatine County, and aging generations have expressed a reluctance to move (which is what has been [reported at national levels](#)). This type of stagnant housing environment requires communities to be more proactive at tackling existing barriers, rather than just sit back and let the market sort itself out over time. **Different housing types across**

**all price ranges need to be added to the existing housing stock in order to allow for more movement.** Despite some of the hard data demonstrating need at the highest of incomes, Iowans are accustomed to housing costs that mimic a 2:1 ratio versus a 3:1 ratio at the national level, as shown by so many high income households living significantly below their (relative) means.

With higher interest rates and increased construction costs, adding housing that is appropriate for all income levels will require a more strategic and hands-on approach. First, it is always important to look at what currently exists for housing, and how that could be improved and put back into productive reuse. It is proven that vacant or blighted properties have an impact on public health, individual wealth, and community fiscal stability, per the Center for Community Progress.



**Redeveloping vacant or blighted homes is a great way to reinvest in existing infrastructure and neighborhoods, and immediately see a return on that investment.**

Secondly, not all housing needs will likely be met through the redevelopment of vacant or blighted homes. Therefore, it is evident that new construction will need to happen in order to meet current and future supply and demand needs. However, **Muscatine County should explore options that increase diversity within the housing stock, like smaller footprint homes requiring less maintenance (which has proven beneficial for both older and younger generations) or condominiums and townhomes that don't come with as high of a single-family price tag.** Overall, collaborative efforts among Muscatine County and the cities of Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton are imperative to enhance the housing stock by revitalizing existing units and constructing new ones that cater to a broad range of income levels.







HOUSEHOLD INCOME

**Less than \$50,000**

**Becoming homeowners would be extremely difficult and likely unattainable for the lowest of incomes.**

For those earning closer to \$50,000, achieving homeownership still poses a considerable challenge, as homes within an appropriate price range would likely necessitate extensive renovations and/or upgrades, surpassing the financial capacity of these households.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

**\$100,000 – \$149,999**

These households are not as constrained to the existing housing stock and could afford new construction homes should the existing supply not meet demand.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

**\$50,000 – \$74,999**

These households are likely to experience ongoing frustration due to limited choices in a stagnant market, constrained by the availability of existing houses. Existing homeowners in this income range are expected to stay put until market conditions evolve significantly, while prospective first-time buyers may find themselves compelled to rent until a sufficient number of current homeowners are compelled to sell.

Although this shift may not materialize until the 2030s, an inevitable increase in the number of sellers and a decline in the number of under-35 households will potentially ease the competitive intensity for houses priced below \$250,000.

Alternatively, if policymakers aim to enhance homeownership opportunities in this income bracket, collaboration with the private sector to provide support to tackle existing quality issues and for new construction becomes essential.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

**\$150,000+**

These households will have the greatest ability and access to buy or build in the current market.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

**\$75,000 – \$99,999**

# The Future for Renter Households in Muscatine County

Part II of this study highlighted that current renters are severely disadvantaged when compared to owner households. More than 40% of renters in the county are lower income households and cost-burdened, with Muscatine County having higher average rental costs compared to the surrounding area and the State of Iowa. **The lack of affordability is mainly a challenge for those earning less than \$35,000 per year, which is a majority of entry-level workers in the top occupations that are commuting to Muscatine County.** At the other end of the spectrum is a lack of options for those that are earning higher incomes. Due to homeownership currently being less attainable, more households are renting for longer periods. However, in

general, **renters expressed frustration with limited options and the quality of those options, and some stated they preferred to commute due to the availability of newer rentals in other surrounding counties.** Should Muscatine County want to attract and retain more households that are renting (especially those commuting), it needs to add new rental units priced across the spectrum.

**Muscatine County could meet the needs at both ends of the income spectrum by building mixed-income developments, where there is diversity in the types of units and price points offered within a building or housing development.** Firstly, it can help build more socio-economic diversity within the actual

***Only 11% of workforce survey respondents agreed the quality of rental offerings is adequate (or better).***



*Many survey respondents who identified as renters said the financial level needed to purchase and maintain a home outweighs their ability to rent and save.*

living quarters and within the larger community. **Multiple employers expressed a need to find housing for employees**, whether it is short-term housing for interns or long-term housing for teachers, mixed-income developments could serve as a dual option while also allowing newcomers the opportunity to meet more people within the community. This would allow for communities to improve the number of quality units without necessarily pricing out households that cannot afford current market-rate prices.

Many policymakers and elected officials assume that aspiring to homeownership is every household's end goal, and yes, that is widely true

in a state like Iowa where living costs are cheaper than across the country. **However, the landscape of housing affordability, attainability, and need has evolved (more quickly in recent years), and the importance of providing right-priced rental units cannot be overstated.** It is important to remember that current renters are anticipated future homeowners, and if they are constantly burdened by high rental costs, that limits their ability to move towards homeownership in the future, something that has become increasingly more expensive. While homeownership remains a goal for many, offering a variety of rental options is vital to ensuring housing accessibility and meeting the diverse needs of households.



HOUSEHOLD INCOME

**\$0 – \$19,999**

These households are the largest percentage of renters and have the most limited choice due to a significant deficit in the number of units under \$500/month. Because of this deficit, 67% of households are cost-burdened.

The construction of additional units needed to meet existing demand would need significant subsidization and incentives.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

**\$50,000 – \$74,999**

The number of households in this income bracket has more than doubled since 2000, and is the second largest group of renters today. They have a significant choice in what type of rental unit they can afford. However, there are limited options due to a lack of units priced accordingly.

It is likely that this renter group has increased over the years due to the inability to enter homeownership. Economic hardship and market instability are likely contributing factors.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

**\$20,000 – \$34,000**

These households struggle with current housing costs. Muscatine County's average rent is \$936/month. With a maximum budget of \$875/month, almost 90% of households in this income bracket are cost-burdened, despite seeing a surplus in units priced between \$500 and \$799.

Efforts to reduce the significant cost-burden these households face is important, whether that be the addition of new or converted right-priced units. Quality may be an underlying issue here too where these households have to pay higher rent for more quality housing.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

**\$75,000+**

These households can afford any type of rental unit in Muscatine County, yet have the highest deficit of units among any income group.

Luxury, market-rate units could be constructed to meet existing demand and allow Muscatine County to compete with neighboring counties with newer units. This would also free up less expensive units, which are most likely being occupied by this group due to a lack of options.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

**\$35,000 – \$49,999**

These households still struggle with housing costs despite only having roughly 28% of households being cost-burdened.

This income bracket resides on the threshold where households can either still qualify or become ineligible for subsidized housing resources, depending on the size of the household. It represents a delicate balance where individuals may no longer access certain resources but are still significantly constrained when covering the costs of market-rate units.



**Part 4**

# Strategic Recommendations

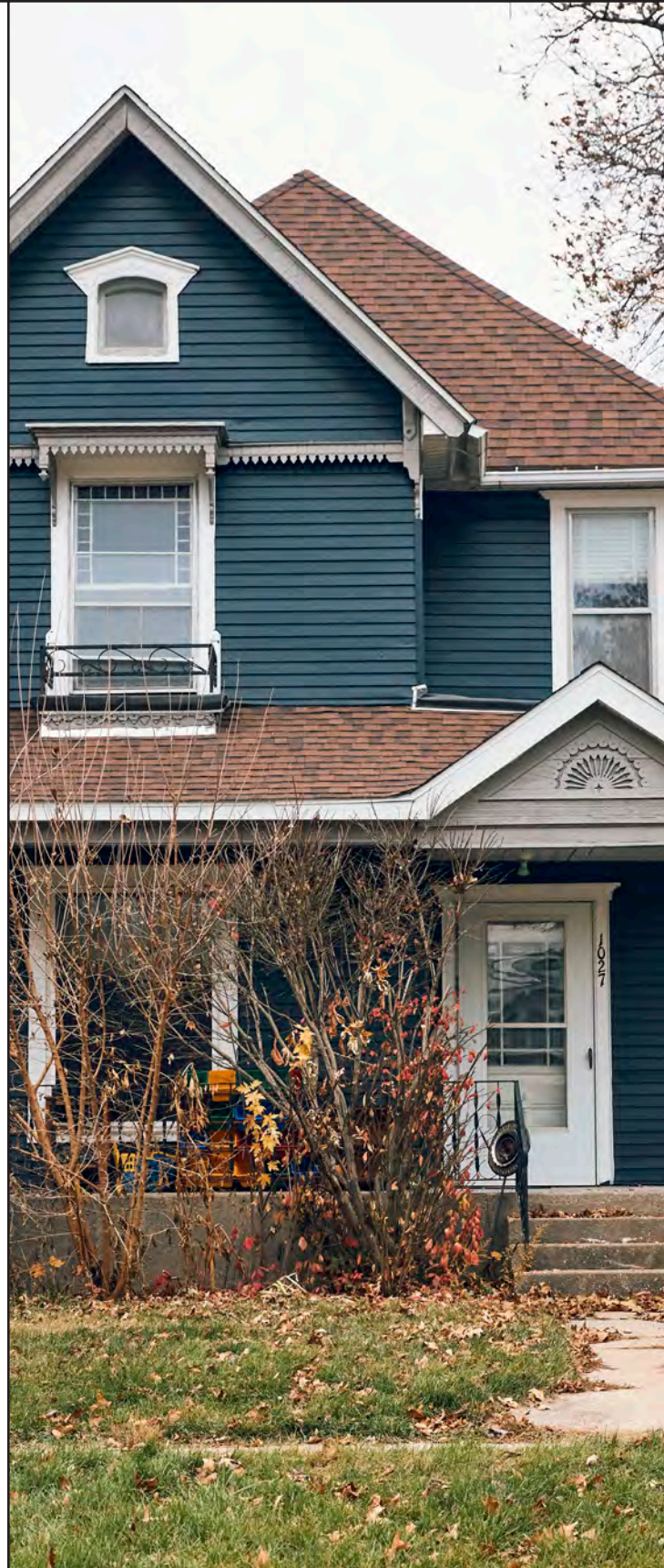
This final section identifies key strategic recommendations aimed at addressing the nuanced housing needs. As Muscatine County and the cities of Muscatine, West Liberty and Wilton confront the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, demographic shifts, and economic dynamics, the importance of a strategic housing approach becomes increasingly evident. From empowering prospective homeowners to enhancing the

availability of right-priced units, these recommendations serve as a blueprint for guiding policy decisions, fostering collaborative initiatives, and shaping the future trajectory of housing in the county. By embracing innovative solutions and proactive measures, Muscatine County can aspire to create a housing environment that is resilient, inclusive, and attuned to the evolving needs of its communities.



# Solutions to Implement

The analysis conducted in this report shows that **Muscatine County needs owner and renter units across all incomes to create a more balanced housing market.** The pressing housing challenges evident in the early 2020s demand attention, and the impending issues for the future, while somewhat unclear, still require forward-thinking consideration. Conventional approaches will not suffice for either the short-term or long-term concerns, necessitating strategic thinking and proactive measures. **The following strategic recommendations present substantial initiatives for policymakers and professional staff to contemplate, endorse, formulate, fund, and execute.** Individually, each initiative holds the potential to address current and future housing-related issues in the cities of Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton. Collectively, they signify a transformative shift in local housing policy and practices throughout Muscatine County that will work to add a diversity of units that are right-priced for all households.







**INVEST IN THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK:** Improve existing units for current and future residents

Resident feedback underscored the **absence of a high-quality housing inventory** in Muscatine County, and **the data illustrated a progressively constrained housing market** despite an increase in vacant units. Muscatine County, overall, has an aging housing stock, relying on current owners to keep up with increasing maintenance. Many of the more affordable homes demand a prohibitively high investment from potential buyers to meet current standards, leading to their underutilization. However, considering the escalating construction costs, it is likely more cost-effective to enhance existing housing rather than opting solely for complete new construction. **Allocating funds towards this improvement strategy can curtail vacancies across the community, repurpose dormant units, and increase the overall housing stock, thereby fostering a healthier housing environment for both present and future residents.**

A **Developer's Cohort** would offer educational training and development opportunities for local residents aiming to become small-scale developers, more inclined and financially equipped to tackle the rehabilitation of blighted properties, both single and multi-family units. The training program would encompass formal classroom instruction facilitated by local and regional partners, coupled with continuous technical support during implementation to ensure successful outcomes. This approach not only presents a chance to reinvest in existing infrastructure but also addresses the workforce gap in an area with identified needs. It can also be one of the more cost-effective approaches when addressing housing in terms of initial investment and potential returns.

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*\*See Appendix C for a sample training syllabus*



Other communities like [Hartford, CT](#) and [South Bend, IN](#) have seen successful results upon investing in a Developer's Cohort training program. Based on feedback from the Hartford Land Bank\*, the costs to launch the first cohort was around \$45,000 (on the high end), including costs for a venue, materials, meals, transportation, etc. There are ways to reduce cost, especially if partners are willing to donate their time for educational sessions.



**INCENTIVIZE NEW HOUSING TYPES:** Encourage the private sector to develop missing middle housing

Since 2010, the predominant focus of housing construction in Muscatine County has been on single-family units, with their rate exceeding that of multi-family units by more than double. However, the conventional image of an ideal home, such as a 2,000 square foot single-family unit featuring 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms on a quarter acre lot, may not align with the practical financial constraints many individuals currently face. Additionally, there's a notable shift in perspectives regarding the determinants of quality of life. **This evolving economic and cultural landscape presents an opportunity for communities to explore alternative housing types, specifically missing middle housing options.** These options can be strategically deployed for both infill development and planned developments, providing a more diverse and adaptable range of housing solutions.

A **Pattern Book** is a tool that acts as a guide or manual that provides a collection of architectural and design patterns for residential buildings. It typically includes a variety of floor plans, architectural styles, and design elements that adhere to specific neighborhood or community guidelines. They are crafted to fit current zoning rules, lot sizes and shapes, and market conditions, and offer inspiration for creating cohesive and functional neighborhoods or communities. Since Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton have determined new construction is necessary in the future, a pattern book should be developed as a county-wide tool rather than for individual communities. A county-wide pattern book would allow the cost to be spread across multiple municipalities, making it more economically feasible and encouraging development across all communities.

This concept dates back to the early 1900s when the famous Sears catalog allowed people to review a number of floorplans and order their desired home, which was then delivered and constructed onsite. Now, many communities have rediscovered this tool as a way to offset some of the challenges in the existing housing market. The [State of Michigan](#) was the first to develop a state-wide pattern book in 2022.



**PROMOTE INFILL DEVELOPMENT:** Build new units on existing lots to fill in depleted neighborhoods

Given Muscatine County's aging housing stock, the presence of infill lots resulting from previously demolished homes is a common occurrence. However, the City of Muscatine is witnessing a notably higher surge in blighted, vacant properties and infill lots compared to West Liberty or Wilton, likely attributed to the number of vacancies. **Emphasizing infill development provides Muscatine an opportunity to allocate funds toward existing developed land and infrastructure, breathe new life into declining neighborhoods, and contribute to the enhancement of the community's core**, steering growth intentionally within existing boundaries rather than unintentionally expanding on the outskirts. Although these units will likely need to be subsidized based on neighborhood appraisal valuations, the return on investment will come from increased collection of property taxes.

**This approach presents a chance to integrate two of the aforementioned strategies: the Developer's Cohort and Pattern Book.** Infill lots often pose challenges in attracting established developers, but they provide a distinct opportunity for emerging small-scale developers. Linking available infill lots to graduates of the Developer's Cohort (potentially offering incentives) and promoting the use of Pattern Book designs can simplify the process, cutting down on time and costs throughout the project's duration, leading to faster and more efficient outcomes. The communities and county, in return, get a predictable form of development that is aesthetically compatible and can be replicated at scale.

[South Bend, IN](#) is a great community example that has combined these strategies. Their Build South Bend program has trained more than 100 individuals, including many women and people of color, on becoming small scale developers who are revitalizing historically poor and redlined neighborhoods. They are able to take advantage of South Bend's new pre-approved development templates that are available to small scale developers at no cost.





**EXPAND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE HOMEOWNERS:** Increase outreach and funding of existing program

A noticeable disparity emerged between expectations and the actualities expressed by first-time homeowners and professionals in the housing industry in Muscatine County. The emerging generation of homeowners, primarily Millennials and Gen Z, may be drawing parallels between their parents' housing experiences and what they anticipate should unfold in today's market. **To sustain and enhance homeownership rates in Muscatine County, it becomes imperative to equip prospective buyers with accurate knowledge.** This proactive measure not only helps manage expectations but also aligns them more effectively with the current and future dynamics of the housing market.

The City of Muscatine's first-time homeowner course stands as an established county-wide resource, attracting hundreds of participants since its inception. By strategically expanding its reach through partnerships with other communities and Muscatine County, the program can better serve eligible participants. An increased marketing effort across the county, coupled with engagement with private employers for financial support, could enhance the program's effectiveness. This collaboration may not only elevate the amount of down payment assistance available to participants but also foster increased participation and rewards over time.



**CREATE INTENTIONAL PLANNED DEVELOPMENTS:** Design needed housing developments with functionality, connectivity, and affordability in mind

**All three communities voiced the demand for more housing units,** prompting discussions on development opportunities. Conventional models, such as the 2,000 square foot single-family unit with 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms on a quarter-acre lot, may not resonate with the needs of the upcoming generation of homeowners. That's not to say these types of homes don't remain desirable, but this model has created issues of providing acceptably priced options. Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton are encouraged to think innovatively and explore ways to incorporate non-traditional elements. **New developments should prioritize aspects that contribute to a higher quality of life, like connectivity to trails and walkability.** Developing new housing from this lens has the potential to address current demands and entice a significant number of commuters to consider residing there as well.

Exploring the implementation of a new zoning district classification, such as a **Planned Unit Development (PUD)** district, provides enhanced flexibility in land use regulations. This allows developers more room for creative innovation in shaping the development of land parcels. Collaborative efforts with city and county staff and regulatory bodies can lead to adjustments in density requirements, setbacks, and other land use regulations, aligning with the community's existing characteristics. PUDs can also serve as a mechanism to encourage the creation of new affordable housing units by leveraging the flexibility granted within this district's regulations.

Enforcing a **Dedication Requirement** ordinance that mandates the integration of parks, open spaces, and trails into the platting and subdivision process becomes a seamless strategy to incorporate essential amenities, as emphasized by community feedback, into the cities and county land development procedures. This measure guarantees that, amid community expansion, community residents continue to enjoy convenient access to parks, trails, and open areas. In addition to this ordinance, the city councils could prescribe that all multi-family developments include a play area or green space as part of their construction, thus offering recreational opportunities in proximity to higher density residential development.

**Inclusionary Zoning** stands as a proactive urban planning policy designed to foster housing affordability and socioeconomic diversity in communities. This approach encourages real estate developers to include a percentage of affordable housing units within market-rate residential developments, addressing the issues posed by rising housing costs and growing income disparities. Typically, inclusionary zoning strategies mandate that a portion of newly constructed or redeveloped housing units be reserved for individuals and families with lower incomes. This integration of affordable housing options into neighborhoods dominated by higher-priced homes promotes:

- Inclusive urban landscape
- Social equity
- Healthier, well-rounded neighborhoods



### **PERMANENT AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Permanent affordable housing refers to residential units that are designed and maintained to remain affordable for an extended period, typically indefinitely. The goal is to ensure that these housing units remain accessible to individuals or families with lower incomes over the long term. Various mechanisms, such as government subsidies, inclusionary zoning policies, or community land trusts, may be employed to establish and sustain permanent affordability. This type of housing is crucial for addressing housing inequality and providing stable, affordable living options for those in need. This housing market analysis identified that many low income renters makeup the largest portion of renters, and are the most cost-burdened. Therefore, permanent affordable housing would greatly benefit these households in obtaining and maintaining affordable housing.

### **DENSITY BONUS**

A density bonus is a planning incentive or concession offered by local governments to developers. In exchange for providing specific community benefits, such as including affordable housing units, public spaces, or other amenities, developers may be granted the opportunity to increase the allowable density or intensity of a project beyond what is normally permitted by existing zoning regulations. This bonus allows developers to build more units or increase the size of their development in exchange for contributing to the community's needs or goals.

## ZONING VARIANCES

A zoning variance is a discretionary waiver or exception granted by a local zoning board or regulatory authority that allows a property owner to deviate from certain zoning regulations or requirements. Zoning variances are typically sought when strict adherence to existing zoning laws would cause undue hardship for a property owner, and there are unique circumstances that justify a deviation. Common reasons for seeking a zoning variance include issues related to setbacks, building height, land use, or other zoning restrictions. The decision to grant a variance is usually based on whether the property owner can demonstrate that compliance with existing regulations would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardship.

## OTHER INCENTIVES

Other less commonly used incentives include waivers, reduction or deferral of development, administrative, and/or financing fees, expedited processing, concessions on the size and cost of finishes of affordable units, tax relief abatement, and direct public subsidy.

Muscatine County and the cities of Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton would not be the first communities to think outside the box when it comes to planned developments. Other communities across the country have started to prioritize functionality, connectivity, and affordability when it comes to housing. [Veridian at County Farm](#) in Ann Arbor, MI is one of the first planned communities that is solar powered, net zero energy and fossil fuel free that sits next to 130 acres of outdoor space. [Munising Marketplace](#) in Munising, MI is working on a mixed income and mixed use development project that will have 39 housing units, community-centered commercial space for rent, and a workforce development center. These, as well as others, can serve as inspiration for what Muscatine County and the cities of Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton can accomplish.





**BECOME INVESTMENT READY:** Establish policies, practices, and partnerships to prepare for future housing investment and development

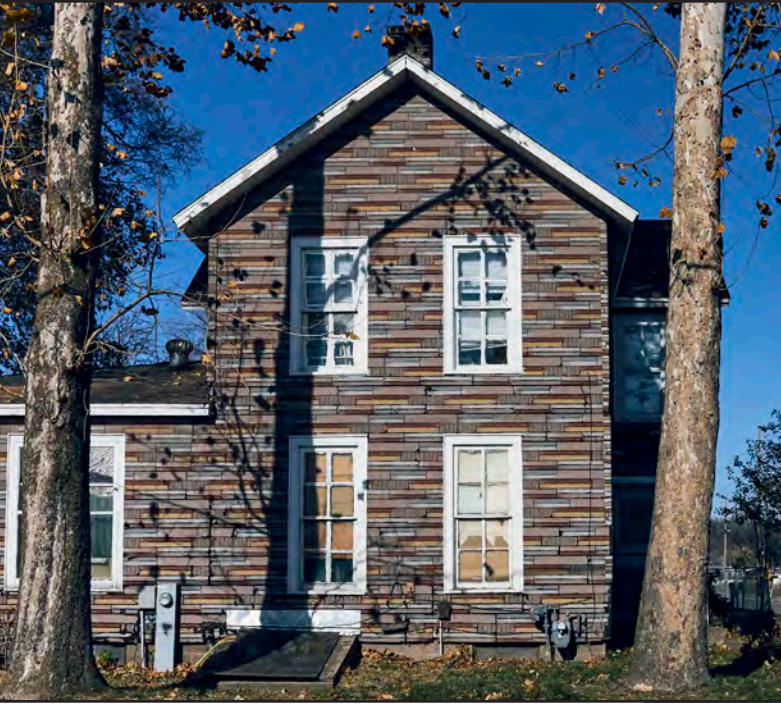
Finally, the successful implementation of all these solutions requires collaborative efforts from Muscatine County, the cities of Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton, as well as additional partners. Although this report is not suggesting that Muscatine County be the lead in developing additional housing, it does still have a role to play in the success of that happening by **adopting policies that encourage collective growth, facilitate cohesiveness with building codes and inspection, and invest dollars into necessary infrastructure in order to make communities more investment ready.**

As the collective desire of Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton to expand housing beyond city limits has been expressed, a collaborative effort with the county becomes essential to acquire suitable land for development. The 2014 Comprehensive Plan already pinpointed potential residential development areas in the county, offering viable options for all three communities to expand. To enhance coordination and streamline the development process, the exploration of a **Fringe Area Policy Agreement** between the county and municipalities emerges as a strategic approach. Such an agreement could establish a more predictable framework for development, particularly in the realm of housing, fostering greater cohesion and efficiency across the region. The adoption of this agreement could also tie in accordingly with the imminent updates to the Comprehensive Plans of both the City of Muscatine and Muscatine County. [Johnson County, IA](#) is a strong example of a county collaborating with surrounding communities to develop sustainably and predictably.

### **What is a Fringe Area Policy Agreement?**

*The Fringe Area Policy Agreement is intended to provide for orderly and efficient development patterns appropriate to a non-urbanized area, protect and preserve the fringe area's natural resources and environmentally sensitive features, direct development to areas with physical characteristics which can accommodate development, and effectively and economically provide services for future growth and development.*

While towns and cities typically spearhead future housing plans, the cost of developing essential infrastructure for new housing developments can be prohibitive. Counties, cautious about shouldering long-term maintenance responsibilities, may adopt alternative approaches to support such projects. **Muscatine County should consider a bond issuance to develop the infrastructure needed to support additional housing within Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton.** By issuing a bond, this would allow the municipalities to secure funds upfront, and begin to undertake large-scale projects, like developing the sewer, water, and road infrastructure, without straining immediate budgetary constraints. The funds raised through bond issuance empower Muscatine County to invest in key areas that foster economic growth, create job opportunities, and enhance overall quality of life for residents. While bonds provide an infusion of capital, it's crucial for Muscatine County to implement sound fiscal management practices to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of the projects financed through these instruments. The strategic use of bonds can serve as a catalyst for positive transformation, driving economic development and addressing housing needs within the community.



### **What is a brownfield?**

*A brownfield is a property where expansion, redevelopment or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant.*

Given Muscatine County's historical significance as a major manufacturing hub, it is plausible that there are existing sites from past (or potential future) facilities lying dormant and undeveloped. Conducting an inventory could play a crucial role in identifying current and prospective developable housing sites within city limits, enabling all three communities to enhance their housing stock without relying on acquiring land beyond city boundaries. At the time of this housing market analysis, Muscatine County lacked a **Brownfield Inventory**, which could pinpoint potential sites for evaluation and eventual redevelopment. Fortunately, Kansas State University (KSU) serves as a regional [Technical Assistance to Brownfields \(TAB\) Provider](#) and offers no-cost technical assistance to facilitate the development of such an inventory, as well as additional resources that can support the redevelopment of brownfields.

During the data collection phase of this housing market analysis, Atlas learned that Wilton does not have an official building code, nor do they or West Liberty have their own building inspector(s). **In an effort to create more cohesiveness and encourage shared resources, it is recommended that Wilton officially adopt a building code**, specifically the county-wide building code, which will be beneficial for several reasons. Firstly, it establishes minimum standards for construction, ensuring that buildings are safe, structurally sound, and adhere to essential health and safety regulations. Building codes also contribute to the overall quality and durability of structures, protecting both occupants and investments. Additionally, they provide a standardized framework for construction practices, facilitating consistency and predictability in the building process. Ultimately, the adoption of building codes promotes public welfare, reduces the risk of accidents or disasters, and fosters a more resilient and sustainable built environment. This will be necessary when Wilton looks to build additional housing in large quantities to accommodate the existing need.

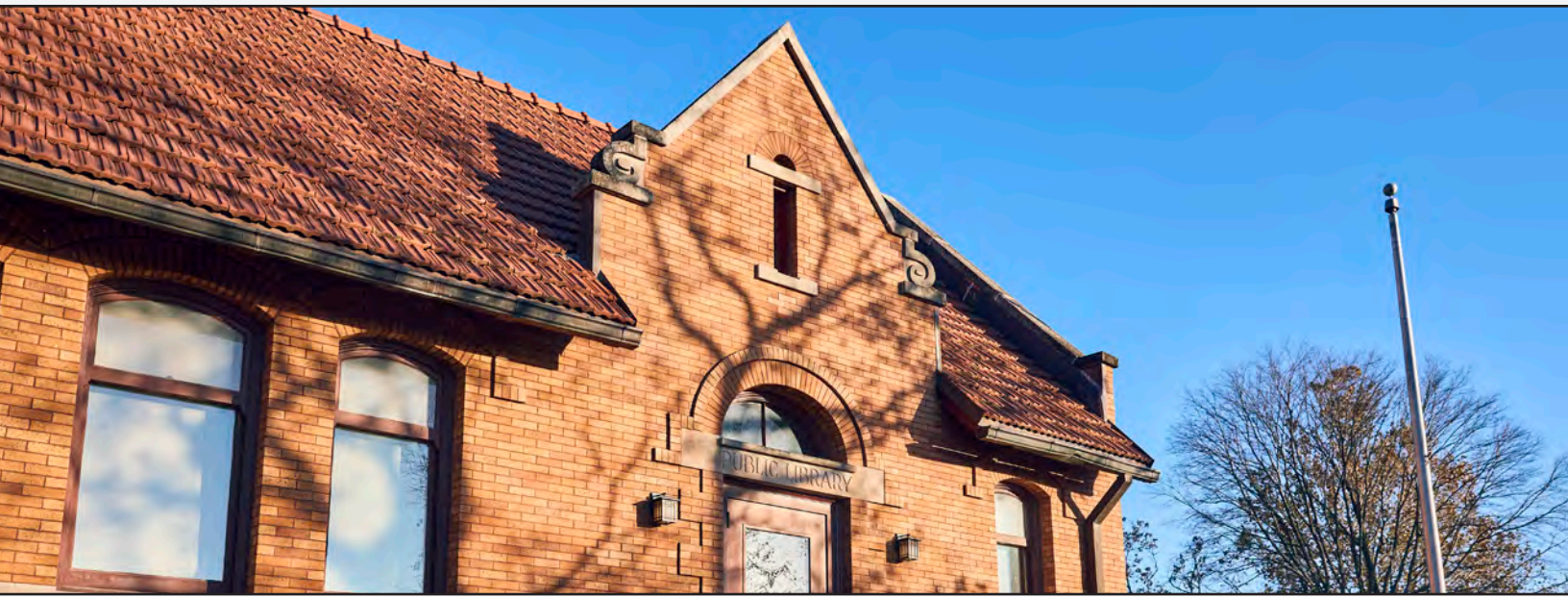
Lastly, as another method to foster cohesiveness across municipalities in Muscatine County, **it would be advantageous for the County to allocate personnel to serve as West Liberty and Wilton's building inspector(s)**. This cooperative approach allows for the efficient use of personnel and financial resources, enhances consistency and standardization in building inspections, and ensures that inspections adhere to the same set of criteria and regulations (should Wilton adopt a county-wide building code). Ideally, a cost-share model or agreement would be worked out prior to the start of major housing development projects.

## PART IV

### Strategic Recommendations

Invest in Existing Housing Stock		Incentivize New Housing Types	Promote Infill Development	Expand Homeowner Education Opportunities	Create Intentional Planned Developments	Become Investment Ready			
Strategy	Developer's Cohort	Pattern Book	Developer's Cohort + Pattern Book	Increase marketing / outreach of existing course  Increase funding to assist more individuals / amount of downpayment assistance	Design needed housing developments with functionality, connectivity, & affordability in mind	Fringe Area Policy Agreement	Bond Issuance to support infrastructure needs	Brownfield Inventory	Adopt county-wide building code / building inspector
	Although there are a number of individual funding avenues to support each of these strategies, a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) would be one mechanism that could offer support across the board by providing accessible capital that can be continuously recycled. An RLF has the flexibility to adapt to changing needs and demands and support a variety of projects over time, whereas grant funding can be more restrictive and is typically short-lived.								
Funding									
Where	Muscatine	Muscatine County Muscatine West Liberty Wilton	Muscatine	Muscatine County Muscatine West Liberty Wilton	Muscatine County Muscatine West Liberty Wilton	Muscatine County Muscatine West Liberty Wilton	Muscatine County	Muscatine County Muscatine West Liberty Wilton	Muscatine County West Liberty Wilton
How	Identify lead entity and develop a curriculum for the initial cohort	Determine partners, scope of work, and existing financial resources.	Establish/ update a true blighted/ vacant lot inventory (which could happen through the Pattern Book development)	Identify and engage potential donors, sponsors, supporters, etc. that could contribute to the existing downpayment assistance fund and assist with outreach efforts.	This is a long-term strategy and will extend over several years. Therefore, the first steps should be more research-focused to gather inspiration and information. Reaching out to communities who have constructed these types of projects could be very informative.	Explore the Fringe Area Policy and collaborate with participating communities by developing an agreement that aligns with current development needs.	Assess existing financial needs and conduct an analysis to determine the County's ability to repay the bond and through what funding sources.	Contact KSU Tab to discuss scope of work	Wilton should research building code and best practices to be included in the final draft.  West Liberty and Wilton should meet with the county to explore shared building inspector and cost-share model.

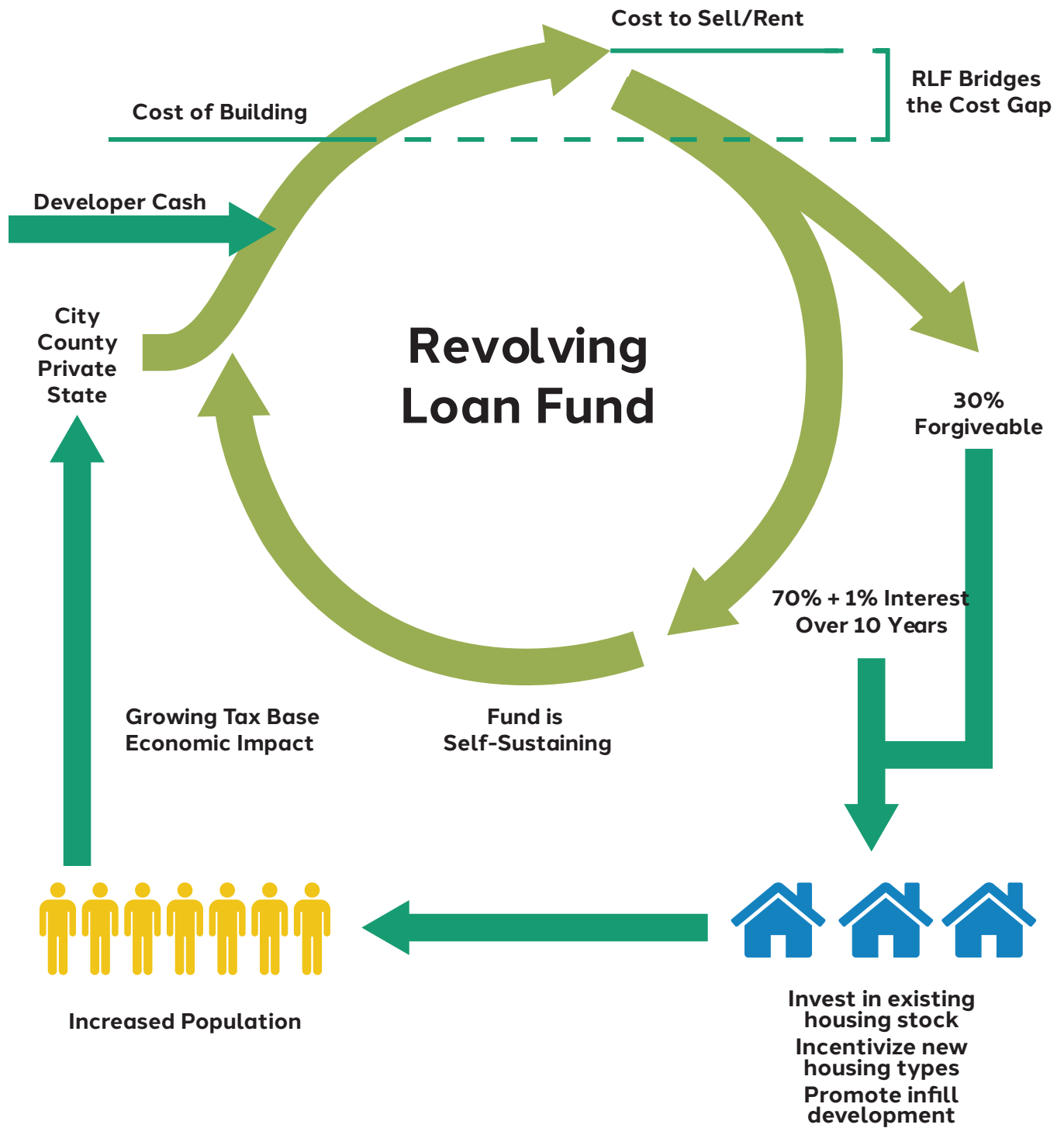




## HOUSING REVOLVING LOAN FUND

A housing revolving loan fund (RLF) is a financing mechanism typically established by governments or nonprofit organizations to provide low-interest loans or grants to support affordable housing initiatives. The funds are “revolving” because the principal and interest payments from loans are recycled back into the fund, allowing it to continue providing financial assistance to new projects over time. These funds can be used for various purposes, including the construction or rehabilitation of housing units, down payment assistance programs, or home repair programs for low-income homeowners. **The goal of housing revolving loan funds is to increase access to safe and sustainable housing options for individuals and families with limited financial resources.**

To initiate this fund and keep it as least restrictive as possible i.e. not utilize federal or state funds, the host organization could partner with interested municipalities and private employers to start. In exchange for financial support from employers, the host organization could form an agreement with employers in that employees who work at contributing businesses will be able to utilize assistance from the RLF (depending on the initial initiatives the RLF will support). RLF funds can also be used as matching funds for grant programs.



# The Return on These Investments

The purpose of a housing study is to help municipalities identify strategies and solutions to combat existing housing challenges. Many of these solutions and strategies outlined above will require an upfront financial investment from Muscatine County, each of the communities, and local/regional partners. It is equally important to outline the impact that could result from the implementation of these strategies, and the return on investment the interested partners could see.

## FINANCIAL RETURN

Expanding the housing stock and revitalizing blighted properties can significantly bolster the tax base of a community. **By adding more housing units, whether through new construction or the rehabilitation of existing properties, municipalities increase the taxable property inventory.** This expansion not only generates additional property tax revenue but also stimulates economic activity and property values within the area. Redeveloping blighted properties further enhances the tax base by transforming underutilized or neglected assets into productive and taxable real estate. As property values rise and the community attracts new residents and businesses, the tax revenue generated can be reinvested into essential services, infrastructure improvements, and community development initiatives, fostering long-term economic growth and prosperity.

As an example, Muscatine County and neighboring communities might examine the approximately 214 homes classified as being in Poor or Very Poor condition, presuming they are valued at less than \$100,000 and potentially vacant. Funds from the RLF could finance essential renovations and updates, effectively returning these properties to productive use. Such an investment could potentially double the property taxes\* collected from just one single-family unit. Additionally, this approach would channel resources into homes that could later serve as affordable options for first-time homebuyers and entry-level workers.



Vacant unit valued at \$50,700  
~\$825 in property taxes/year



**\$50,000 to make  
renovations and updates**



Occupied unit at \$120,000+  
~\$1,700 in property taxes/year

The potential financial return is even more pronounced for vacant lots. For instance, a vacant lot spanning .20 acres typically yields approximately \$260 in property taxes annually. Constructing a subsidized home on such a lot, valued at approximately \$100,000, would likely triple the collected property taxes and reintegrate the lot into productive use. While these calculations are hypothetical, they underscore the notion that **investing in housing can yield tangible financial benefits**. Blighted and vacant properties demonstrably have a negative impact on neighboring units. Therefore, by enhancing individual properties and lots, communities can enhance the value of adjacent properties as well. Though achieving a break-even point on the initial investment through increased property taxes may take time, there remains a clear financial advantage to expanding the tax base for communities.

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*\*This includes examples based on properties in the City of Muscatine.*





## PEOPLE RETURN

Investing in housing yields significant returns for communities, extending far beyond mere financial gains.

**By bolstering housing initiatives, communities enhance their attractiveness to residents and businesses alike, spurring economic growth and revitalization. Affordable, quality housing attracts a skilled workforce, thereby stimulating local businesses and increasing tax revenue. Moreover, stable housing reduces strain on social services, healthcare systems, and law enforcement agencies, ultimately leading to cost savings for the**

**community.** Additionally, improved housing conditions foster a sense of pride and belonging among residents, strengthening social cohesion and community resilience. Pride and belonging encourages residents to stay in those communities long-term, and possibly purchase a home or start a family. New families enrolling their children in the local school district adds more than \$7,800 (per student) in funding to that community. Overall, investing in housing is not just a financial decision but a strategic investment in the long-term prosperity and vitality of communities.



Solution	Barriers Addressed	Goals	Impact
<b>Invest in Existing Housing Stock</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missing middle housing for homeowners and renters</li> <li>• Lack of quality units for homeowners and renters</li> <li>• Aging housing stock</li> <li>• High vacancy rate</li> <li>• Lack of skilled developers</li> <li>• Dormant units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train community members to become small-scale developers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of quality units (especially available for first-time homebuyers)</li> </ul>
<b>Incentivize New Housing Types</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missing middle housing for homeowners and renters</li> <li>• Lack of quality units for homeowners and renters</li> <li>• Somewhat cumbersome administrative process to build new units</li> <li>• Small and/or oddly shaped lots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redevelop severely blighted/vacant housing units</li> <li>• Introduce different housing types, sizes, and price points to the housing stock</li> <li>• Streamline administrative processes to build new housing types</li> <li>• Develop a tool that can be utilized county-wide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of blighted/vacant homes</li> <li>• Work towards closing a workforce gap of skilled developers</li> <li>• Diversify the housing stock</li> <li>• Incentivize developers to build middle housing options</li> <li>• Increase density within neighborhoods and city limits</li> <li>• Increase the tax base</li> </ul>
<b>Promote Infill Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missing middle housing for homeowners and renters</li> <li>• Lack of quality units for homeowners and renters</li> <li>• Growing infill lots</li> <li>• Depleted neighborhoods</li> </ul>		
<b>Expand Homeownership Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge around the homeownership process among first-time homebuyers</li> <li>• Financial literacy related to purchasing a home</li> <li>• Housing market awareness and understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host homeownership classes in additional Muscatine County communities</li> <li>• Collaborate with community partners to identify specific first-time homebuyer populations</li> <li>• Offer classes in Spanish</li> <li>• Grow the down payment assistance fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of program participants</li> <li>• Increase awareness and knowledge of the homeownership process</li> <li>• Increase the amount of down payment assistance</li> <li>• Increase rates of homeownership in Muscatine County (especially within the commuting population)</li> </ul>

Solution	Barriers Addressed	Goals	Impact
<b>Create Intentional Planned Developments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Missing middle housing for homeowners and renters</li> <li>Lack of quality units for homeowners and renters</li> <li>Diversity among housing units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create planned developments that introduce different housing types, sizes, and price points to the housing stock</li> <li>Prioritize functional units, i.e. units that may be smaller but have a murphy bed to create a home office while still serving as a second bedroom</li> <li>Prioritize connectivity, i.e. building developments that can be incorporated into existing infrastructure (trails, sidewalks, etc.)</li> <li>Prioritize affordability, i.e. incorporated mixed income units across the spectrum as well as owner and renter opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the overall number of owner and/or rental units</li> <li>Increase density within neighborhoods and city limits</li> <li>Diversify the housing stock</li> <li>Increase quality of place and life for future residents</li> <li>Foster stronger community connections</li> <li>Increase the tax base</li> <li>Support cohesive growth and development throughout Muscatine County</li> </ul>
<b>Become Investment Ready</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited space for communities to build within city limits</li> <li>Lack of quality units for homeowners and renters</li> <li>Diversity among housing units</li> <li>Unpredictable growth and development between communities and Muscatine County</li> <li>Resident confusion between taxes vs. municipal services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt Fringe Area Policy Agreement between communities and Muscatine County</li> <li>Evaluate a bond issuance to support necessary infrastructure for additional housing units</li> <li>Develop a Brownfield Inventory to identify potential sites for redevelopment</li> <li>Adopt an official building code in Wilton to cohesively plan for future growth</li> <li>Establish a joint building inspector for West Liberty and Wilton to enhance consistency and standardization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intentionally prepare for future development</li> <li>Support predictable growth and development throughout Muscatine County</li> <li>Foster cohesion and collaboration on the administrative side</li> </ul>



## Alternative Construction Methods

Because Muscatine County and the cities of Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton will have to build additional housing to meet current and future demand, exploring alternative construction methods for housing presents an innovative approach that could revolutionize the way communities address their housing needs. Embracing sustainable and cost-effective building techniques, such as modular construction or 3D printing, holds the potential to accelerate the pace of housing development while minimizing environmental impact. These methods often allow for quicker construction timelines and reduced material waste, addressing both the urgency and sustainability concerns in the housing sector. Additionally, alternative construction techniques can offer creative solutions to challenges like affordability and customization, providing a diverse range of housing options that cater to different needs within a community. By considering these innovative methods, communities can not only streamline housing production but also pave the way for more resilient, adaptable, and environmentally conscious living spaces.

## ADVANTAGES



**Speed of Construction:** Alternative methods often result in faster build times compared to traditional construction, allowing for quicker occupancy.



**Cost Efficiency:** Some alternative methods can be more cost-effective, minimizing material waste and reducing overall construction expenses.



**Sustainability:** Many alternative construction techniques focus on eco-friendly materials and practices, contributing to a more sustainable and environmentally conscious approach.



**Customization:** Certain methods, such as modular construction, allow for a high degree of customization, catering to diverse architectural and design preferences.



**Innovation:** Embracing new construction technologies fosters innovation in the industry, encouraging continuous improvement and adaptation to changing needs.

## DISADVANTAGES



**Initial Investment:** The upfront costs for implementing alternative construction methods, such as investing in new technologies, may be higher compared to traditional approaches.



**Limited Materials:** Some alternative methods may rely on specific materials, limiting the range of construction options and potentially increasing costs if those materials become scarce.



**Perception & Acceptance:** There might be resistance or skepticism from stakeholders accustomed to traditional construction methods, affecting the widespread adoption of alternative techniques.



**Regulatory Challenges:** Building codes and regulations might not always keep pace with innovative construction methods, leading to challenges in obtaining approvals.



**Skilled Labor Shortage:** Specialized skills may be required for certain alternative construction approaches, and a shortage of skilled labor in these areas could pose challenges for widespread adoption.





The City of Muscatine has already embraced an alternative construction method by implementing plans for 3D printed housing in the community; therefore, introducing the concept to residents. Survey respondents were asked “What is your opinion of the quality of homes built using alternative construction methods?” Of which can be summarized as follows:

- People are open to modular / prefab homes
- Great alternative to make homes more affordable
- Still very experimental in some cases
- I don’t know really know about these homes / unsure of the quality
- Skeptical of 3D printed homes due to quality and durability

As the development of 3D printed homes continues (and the consideration of additional methods in the future), Atlas recommends further educating residents (across the county) on these types of alternative construction methods to ensure a widespread undering and acceptance.

## ALTERNATIVE CONSTRUCTION OUTREACH METHODS

### COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS

Organize workshops or seminars to introduce residents to various alternative construction methods. Invite experts, architects, and builders to share their knowledge and experiences.

### OPEN HOUSES & SITE VISITS

Organize open houses for completed projects or ongoing construction using alternative methods. Allow residents to tour the site, ask questions, and interact with builders and experts.

### DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Implement small-scale demonstration projects within the community. Construct a building or structure using alternative methods and invite residents to observe the process. This hands-on experience can enhance understanding.

### NETWORKING EVENTS

Facilitate networking events where residents can connect with builders, architects, and industry professionals specializing in alternative construction. Personal interactions can address specific queries and build relationships.

### COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SESSIONS

Host community meetings to gather feedback, concerns, and suggestions regarding alternative construction methods. Addressing community concerns directly can help build trust and understanding.

### EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Develop brochures, pamphlets, or digital materials explaining different construction methods. Clearly outline the benefits and potential challenges to provide a comprehensive overview.

### ONLINE PLATFORMS

Utilize community websites, social media, and online forums to share information. Create engaging content, such as videos, infographics, or virtual tours, to make the information accessible and interesting.

### ENGAGE LOCAL MEDIA

Work with local newspapers, radio stations, and television channels to feature stories on projects using alternative methods. Media coverage can reach a broader audience and generate interest.

### INCENTIVES & SUBSIDIES

Provide financial incentives or subsidies for property owners or developers who choose alternative construction methods. This can encourage adoption and alleviate some financial concerns.

### PARTNERSHIPS WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Collaborate with local schools, colleges, or vocational institutions to include modules on alternative construction methods in the curriculum. This helps educate the younger generation and encourages interest in the field.

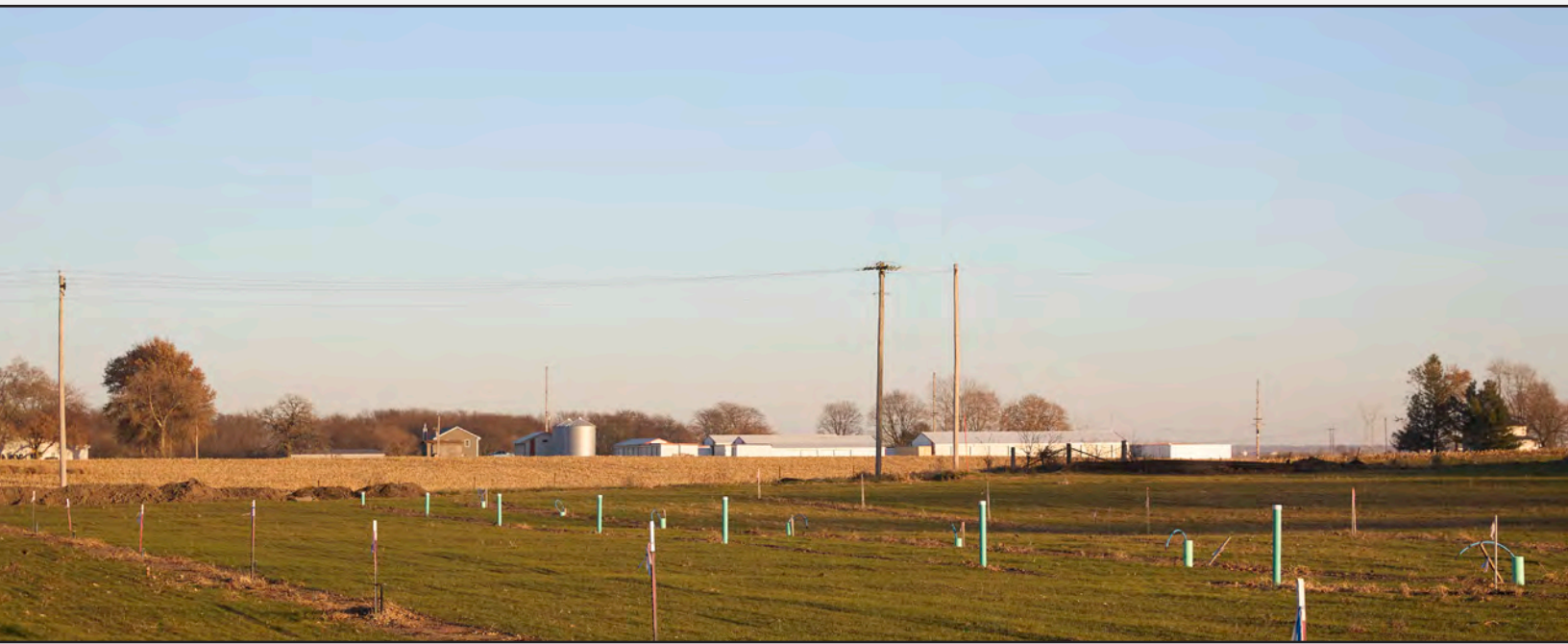
# Partnerships

Preceding this Housing Market Analysis, Muscatine County and the cities of Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton had already showcased their commitment to enhancing housing for residents through the establishment of the Muscatine Housing Council (MHC), born out of the 2021 Muscatine County Ignite Vitality study, encompassing key partners essential for addressing ongoing challenges. This section, complemented by the introduction of a few new partners, aims to guide existing collaborators on their potential roles moving forward. **The strategic recommendations outlined in this report call for a departure from traditional roles, urging partners to adopt new responsibilities to facilitate innovative solutions.** As a unified council, leaders from these organizations should collectively identify additional stakeholders (as needed), and determine their roles in advancing shared housing priorities, programs, initiatives, and major housing development projects.

## Government Sector

**City of Muscatine; City of West Liberty; City of Wilton  
Muscatine County Board of Commissioners  
Iowa Finance Authority**

*The governmental sector i.e. municipalities and states, play a crucial role in housing development due to their direct impact on local land use and zoning regulations. They provide the framework within which housing projects operate, ensuring compliance with building codes, zoning ordinances, and other regulations. Additionally, municipalities often offer incentives and support to developers, facilitate community engagement processes, and allocate resources to address housing needs. Their involvement is essential for creating vibrant and sustainable communities with diverse housing options that meet the needs of residents.*



## Private Sector

**Local/Regional Banks**  
**Local/Regional Employers**  
**Local Landlords**

*The private sector plays a crucial role in developing housing by contributing to the overall economic vitality of communities and addressing workforce housing needs. They have a vested interest in ensuring that their employees have access to safe, affordable housing options near their workplace, as this can improve employee retention, productivity, and satisfaction. Private employers and institutions can support housing development initiatives through various means, such as providing financial incentives for employee housing, partnering with developers to build workforce housing developments, or donating land to allow for additional housing development. By collaborating with private entities, communities can create more resilient and thriving housing ecosystems that benefit both residents and businesses alike.*

**Public Sector**

<b>Greater Muscatine Chamber of Commerce</b>	<b>Muscatine Municipal Housing Agency</b>
<b>Community Foundation of Muscatine</b>	<b>West Liberty Economic Area Development</b>
<b>Muscatine Center for Social Action</b>	<b>Wilton Development Corporation</b>
<b>Muscatine Community College</b>	<b>Iowa Home Builders Association</b>

*The public sector is a vital partner in housing development because they serve as pillars of stability and growth within communities. These institutions often have a vested interest in the well-being of their surrounding areas and can leverage their resources to support housing initiatives. For example, colleges may provide land or funding for student housing, while hospitals may invest in affordable housing for their employees. By collaborating with community anchor institutions, housing developers can access valuable resources, expertise, and support networks, leading to more sustainable and inclusive housing solutions.*

Addressing these challenges and implementing these solutions into action is a substantial undertaking, demanding ongoing commitment, engagement, and strategic deliberation from all involved partners. Considering the scope of the tasks ahead, it might be advantageous for Muscatine County, MHC, and the communities to consider employing a Project Manager who can oversee these continuous efforts. Whether this involves bringing on a full-time staff member or hiring a consultant, having a dedicated facilitator could enhance capacity and expedite the implementation process without depleting existing personnel resources.



# Funding Resource Roadmap

Access to funding is often regarded as one of the greatest barriers to economic and community development efforts. This section is meant to serve as a funding resource roadmap to help guide Muscatine County and the cities of Muscatine, West Liberty, and Wilton as they and strategic partners pursue funding for the housing solutions outlined in this report.

## PRE-DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Pre-selling homes or lots in a housing development project can offer several benefits to developers and buyers alike. For developers, pre-selling provides a source of upfront capital that can be used to finance construction and infrastructure development. It also helps mitigate financial risks by ensuring that there is demand for the homes or lots before significant investments are made. Additionally, pre-selling allows developers to gauge market interest and adjust their plans accordingly, potentially avoiding overbuilding or underestimating demand. For buyers, pre-selling offers the opportunity to secure a desirable property at an early stage, often at a lower price than what would be available once construction is complete. It also allows buyers to

customize certain aspects of the home or lot to better suit their preferences. Overall, pre-selling homes or lots can streamline the development process, reduce financial risks, and provide buyers with greater flexibility and value.

This pre-sale approach could be strategically integrated with the first-time homeowners' course to introduce the concept and available units to prospective homebuyers who may not be familiar with such opportunities. It could also be employed for infill development sites, aiding new small-scale developers in expediting the sale of their properties. Furthermore, it could be leveraged for targeted planned developments, mirroring the success of initiatives like the Veridian development in attracting early buyers.

## EMPLOYER-ASSISTED HOUSING

Employer-assisted housing programs have emerged as innovative solutions to address the housing challenges faced by employees in high-cost areas. These programs, often implemented by employers in collaboration with local governments or housing organizations, aim to provide financial assistance or other support to help employees secure housing. In regards to Muscatine County, Atlas spoke with top employers in the area and learned that many would be open to learning about opportunities they could support. Based on the strategies identified above, the following would be most advantageous for employers to support financially due to low(er) initial costs with a potential high (and long-term) return on their investment:

- Developer's Cohort
- Pattern Book
- Homeowners Education Course

Additionally, these projects and programs can strengthen ties between employers and the communities in which they operate, fostering an enhanced sense of corporate responsibility and social impact. Overall, employer-assisted housing initiatives represent a proactive approach to addressing housing affordability issues and promoting workforce stability, creating a mutually beneficial outcome.

## NON-TRADITIONAL FINANCING

- [Shared Appreciation Mortgages](#): Typically zero interest and deferred principal loans, this type of mortgage is repaid when the owner sells or refinances the property as well as a percentage of the home value appreciation.
- [Subsidized Mortgages](#): Partner with a state or local housing finance agency that can provide alternative mortgage products that bridge the gap between low- and moderate-income individuals/families who want to purchase a home.
- [Small-balance Home Mortgages](#): Roughly 25% of Muscatine County's existing housing stock is valued at \$99,000 or less, which can make it difficult for potential homeowners to receive a mortgage loan. By collaborating with local entities, such as community banks, credit unions, and community development financial institutions (CDFIs), loans can be made available to eligible homeowners.



For additional federal, state, regional and local funding opportunities\* that could support the solutions outlined above, please see **Appendix D** for a complete list. The identified grant opportunities were carefully evaluated to determine their potential to support implementation efforts. However, it is crucial to thoroughly review the program guidelines to ensure ongoing eligibility before proceeding with the application process based on what implantation looks like.

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\* Many funding opportunities are connected to providing subsidized housing

# Appendices

**Appendix A:** Census Housing Definitions

**Appendix B:** Iowa Association of Realtors Nov. 2023 Report

**Appendix C:** Developer's Cohort Training Syllabus

**Appendix D:** Funding Resource Roadmap



## Definitions and Explanations

The United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas according to published standards that are applied to Census Bureau data. The general concept of a metropolitan or micropolitan statistical area is that of a core area containing a substantial population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration with that core.

Standard definitions of metropolitan areas were first issued in 1949 by the then Bureau of the Budget (predecessor of OMB), under the designation "standard metropolitan area" (SMA). The term was changed to "standard metropolitan statistical area" (SMSA) in 1959, and to "metropolitan statistical area" (MSA) in 1983.

The term "metropolitan area" (MA) was adopted in 1990 and referred collectively to metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), consolidated metropolitan statistical areas (CMSAs), and primary metropolitan statistical areas (PMSAs). The term "core based statistical area" (CBSA) became effective in 2000 and refers collectively to metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas.

OMB has been responsible for the official metropolitan areas since they were first defined, except for the period 1977 to 1981, when they were the responsibility of the Office of Federal Statistical Policy and Standards, Department of Commerce. The standards for defining metropolitan areas were modified in 1958, 1971, 1975, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010.

Beginning in first quarter 2015, the Current Population Survey/Housing Vacancy Survey began using the new metropolitan and micropolitan statistical definitions announced by OMB in February 2013, and were based on the application of the 2010 standards to Census 2010 data. The February 2013 definitions are available at: <http://www.census.gov/population/metro/>.

The 2015 metropolitan area data reflect 2010 definitions, the 2005 to 2014 data reflect 2000 definitions, the 1995 to 2004 data reflect 2000 definitions, and the 1986 to 1994 data reflect 1990 definitions. Therefore, metropolitan/nonmetropolitan data prior to 1986, 1986 to 1994, 1995 to 2004, 2005 to 2014 and 2015 and later are not directly comparable to each other.

**Defining Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas.** The term Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA) is a collective term for both metro and micro areas. The 2010 standards provide that each CBSA must contain at least one urban area of 10,000 or more population. Each metropolitan statistical area must have at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more inhabitants. Each micropolitan statistical area must have at least one urban cluster of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 population.

Under the standards, the county (or counties) in which at least 50 percent of the population resides within urban areas of 10,000 or more population, or that contain at least 5,000 people residing within a single urban area of 10,000 or more population, is identified as a "central county" (counties). Additional "outlying counties" are included in the CBSA if they meet specified requirements of commuting to or from the central counties. Counties or equivalent



entities form the geographic "building blocks" for metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas throughout the United States and Puerto Rico.

If specified criteria are met, a metropolitan statistical area containing a single core with a population of 2.5 million or more may be subdivided to form smaller groupings of counties referred to as "metropolitan divisions."

As of February 2013, there are 381 metropolitan statistical areas and 536 micropolitan statistical areas in the United States.

**Principal Cities and Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Area.** The largest city in each metropolitan or micropolitan statistical area is designated a "principal city." Additional cities qualify if specified requirements are met concerning population size and employment. The title of each metropolitan or micropolitan statistical area consists of the names of up to three of its principal cities and the name of each state into which the metropolitan or micropolitan statistical area extends. Titles of metropolitan divisions also typically are based on principal city names but in certain cases consist of county names.

**Defining New England City and Town Areas.** In view of the importance of cities and town in New England, the 2010 standards also provide for a set of geographic areas that are delineated using cities and towns in the six New England states. The New England city and town areas (NECTAs) are delineated using the same criteria as metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas and are identified as either metropolitan or micropolitan, based, respectively, on the presence of either an urbanized area of 50,000 or more population or an urban cluster of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 population. If the specified criteria are met, a NECTA containing a single core with a population of at least 2.5 million may be subdivided to form smaller groupings of cities and towns referred to as New England city and town area divisions.

**Changes in Definitions over Time.** Changes in the delineations of these statistical areas since the 1950 census have consisted chiefly of the recognition of new areas as they reached the minimum required city or urbanized area population, and the addition of counties (or cities and towns in New England) to existing areas as new decennial census data showed them to qualify.

In some instances, formerly separate areas have been merged, components of an area have been transferred from one area to another, or components have been dropped from an area. The large majority of changes have taken place on the basis of decennial census data. However, Census Bureau data serve as the basis for intercensal updates in specified circumstances.

**Geographic regions.** The four major regions of the United States for which data are presented in this report represent groups of States as follows:

**Northeast:** Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania.

**Midwest:** Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota.

**South:** Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas.

**West:** Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington.

**Housing Unit.** A housing unit is a house, an apartment, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied or intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants do not live and eat with other persons in the structure and which have direct access from the outside of the building or through a common hall. For vacant units, the criteria of separateness and direct access are applied to the intended occupants whenever possible. If the information cannot be obtained, the criteria are applied to the previous occupants. Tents and boats are excluded if vacant, used for business, or used for extra sleeping space or vacations. Vacant seasonal/migratory mobile homes are included in the count of vacant seasonal/migratory housing units. Living quarters of the following types are excluded from the housing unit inventory: Dormitories, bunkhouses, and barracks; quarters in predominantly transient hotels, motels, and the like, except those occupied by persons who consider the hotel their usual place of residence; quarters in institutions, general hospitals, and military installations except those occupied by staff members or resident employees who have separate living arrangements.

**Occupied Housing Units.** A housing unit is occupied if a person or group of persons is living in it at the time of the interview or if the occupants are only temporarily absent, as for example, on vacation. The persons living in the unit must consider it their usual place of residence or have no usual place of residence elsewhere. The count of occupied housing units is the same as the count of households.

**Householder.** The householder refers to the person (or one of the persons) in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented or, if there is no such person, any adult member, excluding roomers, boarders, or paid employees. If the house is jointly owned by a married couple, either the husband or the wife may be listed first, thereby becoming the reference person, or householder, to whom the relationship of the other household members is recorded. One person in each household is designated as the "householder."

**Vacant Housing Units.** A housing unit is vacant if no one is living in it at the time of the interview, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. In addition, a vacant unit may be one which is entirely occupied by persons who have a usual residence elsewhere. New units not yet occupied are classified as vacant housing units if construction has reached a point where all exterior windows and doors are installed and final usable floors are in place. Vacant units are excluded if they are exposed to the elements, that is, if the roof, walls, windows, or doors no longer protect the interior from the elements, or if there is positive evidence (such as a sign on the house or block) that the unit is to be demolished or is condemned. Also excluded are quarters being used entirely for nonresidential purposes, such as a store or an office, or quarters used for the storage of business supplies or inventory, machinery, or agricultural products. Vacant sleeping rooms in lodging houses, transient accommodations, barracks, and other quarters not

defined as housing units are not included in the statistics in this report. (See section on "Housing Unit.")

**Year-round Vacant Units.** Beginning in 1990, year-round vacant mobile homes were included as part of the year-round vacant count of housing units. Year-round units are those intended for occupancy at any time of the year, even though they may not be in use the year round. In resort areas, a housing unit which is usually occupied on a year-round basis is considered a year-round unit. As indicated above, year-round units temporarily occupied by persons with usual residence elsewhere are included with year-round vacant units.

Year-round vacant units are classified in the following categories:

**Vacant units for rent.** This group consists of vacant units offered for rent and those offered both for rent and sale.

**Vacant units for sale only.** This group is limited to units for sale only; it excludes units both for rent and sale. If a unit was located in a multi-unit structure which was for sale as an entire structure and if the unit was not for rent, it was reported as "held off market." However, if the individual unit was intended to be occupied by the new owner, it was reported as "for sale."

**Vacant units rented or sold.** This group consists of year-round vacant units which have been rented or sold but the new renters or owners have not moved in as of the day of interview.

**Vacant units held off the market.** Included in this category are units held for occasional use, temporarily occupied by persons with usual residence elsewhere, and vacant for other reasons. These classifications are described below.

**For occasional use.** If the vacant unit is not for-rent or for-sale-only but is held for weekends or occasional use throughout the year, the unit is included in this category. Time-shared units are classified in this category if the vacant unit is not for-rent or for-sale-only, but held for use for an individual during the time of interview.

**Units Occupied by Persons With Usual Residence Elsewhere.** A housing unit which is occupied temporarily by persons who usually live elsewhere is interviewed as a vacant unit provided that a usual place of residence is held for the household which is not offered for rent or for sale. For example, a beach cottage occupied at the time of the interview by a family which has a usual place of residence in the city is included in the count of vacant units. Their house in the city would be reported "occupied" and would be included in the count of occupied units since the occupants are only temporarily absent. Units occupied by persons with usual residence elsewhere (URE) are further classified as seasonal vacant or year round vacant units.

**Other vacant.** Included in this category are year-round units which were vacant for reasons other than those mentioned above: For example, held for settlement of an estate, held for personal reasons, or held for repairs. Below are the definitions for the other vacant categories presented in Historical Table 18.

- **Foreclosure.** This category is for units that are vacant because owners' payments (mortgage, taxes, or loans) to their lending institution, city, or state, were no longer being made. Includes units that are under foreclosure, bank owned, bankrupt, up for auction, sheriff's sale, repossessed, have a lien, or taken for taxes.
- **Personal/Family Reasons.** This category is for units that are vacant due to the owners' preferences and/or personal situation. Includes units where the owner does not want to rent/sell, owner is deciding what to do, owner is keeping for family use, owner is staying with family, or owner is in assisted living or other type of care situation.
- **Legal Proceedings.** This category is for units that are vacant due to legal issues or disputes. Includes units held for the settlement of estate, in probate, involved in divorce or eviction proceedings, or where the owner is deceased. Also includes units with code violations.
- **Preparing to Rent/Sell.** This category is for units that are vacant and the owner is currently preparing to rent or sell. Includes units that will be placed for rent or for sale this month or where the owner is meeting with a listing agent/agency this month to prepare to put the unit on the market.
- **Held for Storage of Household Furniture.** This category is for units that are vacant and used to store excess household furniture or other household items.
- **Needs Repairs.** This category is for units that are vacant and in need of repairs. Includes units that are in need of repair, renovations, or cleaning, but are not currently being repaired, renovated, or cleaned.
- **Currently Being Repaired/Renovated.** This category is for units that are vacant and currently undergoing repairs. Includes units that are being repaired, renovated, refurbished, or cleaned.
- **Specific Use Housing.** This category is for units that are vacant and only used by a specific group of people at one or various times throughout the year. Includes military housing, employee/corporate housing, transient quarters, units held by a church, student housing (dorms and school-sponsored housing), model home/apartment, or guest house.
- **Extended Absence.** This category is for units that are intended for year-round occupancy but are vacant for 6 months or more. Includes units where the owner is on extended work or military assignment, temporarily out of the country, or in jail or other type of detention situation.
- **Abandoned/Possibly to be Demolished/Possibly Condemned.** This category is for units that are vacant and abandoned, to be demolished, or condemned. Includes units that are abandoned. Also includes units that are said to be demolished or condemned, but where there is no positive evidence such as a sign, notice, or mark on the house or in the block to indicate the unit is to be demolished or condemned.
- **Other Write-in/Don't Know.** This category is for units that are vacant for reasons that do not fit into any of the above categories. This category also includes units where the knowledgeable respondent and/or field representative does not know why the unit is other vacant.

**Seasonal Vacant Units.** Seasonal housing units are those intended for occupancy only during certain seasons of the year and are found primarily in resort areas. Housing units held for occupancy by migratory labor employed in farm work during the crop season are tabulated as seasonal. As of the first quarter 1986 vacant seasonal mobile homes are being counted as a part of the seasonal housing inventory.

**Vacancy and Homeownership Rates.** In this report several measures are shown for vacant housing units that are on the market for rent or for sale only. Measures are also shown for homeownership rates.

**Rental Vacancy Rate.** The rental vacancy rate is the proportion of the rental inventory which is vacant for rent. In tables 1 and 2, the rates are computed using the following formula:

$$\text{Rental Vacancy Rate } (\%) = \left[ \frac{\text{Vacant year-round units for rent}}{\left( \text{Renter occupied units} \right) + \left( \text{Vacant year-round units rented but awaiting occupancy} \right) + \left( \text{Vacant year-round units for rent} \right)} \right] * 100$$

**Rental Vacancy Rates by Selected Characteristics.** The rental vacancy rates shown in table 3 are the percent relationship of the vacant year-round units for rent with a specific characteristic (such as 3-room units) to all rental units with that specific characteristic. Excluded from the denominator are year-round units rented but awaiting occupancy. The rates are computed as follows:

$$\text{Rental vacancy rate for a specific characteristic } (\%) = \left[ \frac{\text{All vacant year-round for rent units with a specific characteristic}}{\text{All renter occupied and vacant year-round for rent units with a specific characteristic}} \right] * 100$$

For example, the numerator for the rental vacancy rate for units with 3 rooms is all vacant year-round for rent units with 3 rooms. The denominator is: (1) all renter occupied units with 3 rooms and (2) vacant year-round units for rent with 3 rooms.

**Homeowner Vacancy Rate.** The homeowner vacancy rate is the proportion of the homeowner inventory which is vacant for sale. In tables 1 and 2, the rates are computed using the following formula:

$$\text{Homeowner Vacancy Rate } (\%) = \left[ \frac{\text{Vacant year-round units for sale only}}{\left( \text{Owner occupied units} \right) + \left( \text{Vacant year-round units sold but awaiting occupancy} \right) + \left( \text{Vacant year-round units for sale only} \right)} \right] * 100$$



**Homeowner Vacancy Rates by Selected Characteristics.** The homeowner vacancy rates shown in table 3 are the percent relationship of the vacant year-round units for sale with a specific characteristic (such as 3-room units) to all homeowner units with that specific characteristic. Excluded from the denominator are year-round units sold but awaiting occupancy. The rates are computed as follows:

$$\text{Homeowner vacancy rate for a specific characteristic (\%)} = \left[ \frac{\text{All vacant year - round units for sale with a specific characteristic}}{\text{All owner occupied and vacant year - round units for sale with a specific characteristic}} \right] * 100$$

For example, the numerator for the homeowner vacancy rate for units with 3 rooms is all vacant year-round units for sale only with 3 rooms.

The denominator is: (1) all owner occupied units with 3 rooms and (2) vacant year-round units for sale with 3 rooms.

**Homeownership Rates.** The proportion of households that are owners is termed the homeownership rate. It is computed by dividing the number of households that are owners by the total number of occupied households (table 5 and 6). The formula is as follows:

$$\text{Homeownership Rate (\%)} = \left[ \frac{\text{Owner occupied housing units}}{\text{Total occupied housing units}} \right] * 100$$

**Homeownership by Age of Householder.** This homeownership rate is calculated by dividing the number of owner household in a particular age group by the total number of occupied households in that age group (table 7).

$$\text{Homeownership rate for a specific age group (\%)} = \left[ \frac{\text{Owner households in age group}}{\text{Total occupied households in age group}} \right] * 100$$

**Other Occupancy and Vacancy Rates.** The percent distribution of vacant and occupied housing units, shown in tables 10 and 11, are shown as a percent of all housing units and are computed using the following formula.

$$\text{Rate for type of unit (\%)} = \left[ \frac{\text{Type of Unit}}{\text{All housing units}} \right] * 100$$

For example, the numerator for the for-rent rate is all year-round vacant units for rent. The denominator is all housing units.

**Tenure.** A unit is owner occupied if the owner or co-owner lives in the unit, even if it is mortgaged or not fully paid for. A cooperative or condominium unit is "owner occupied" only if the owner or co-owner lives in it. All other occupied units are classified as "renter occupied," including units rented for cash rent and those occupied without payment of cash rent.

**Number of Rooms.** Included in the count of rooms were whole rooms such as living rooms, dining rooms, bedrooms, kitchens, finished basements or attics, recreation rooms, permanently enclosed sun porches which are suitable for year-round use, and lodger's rooms. A partially divided room, such as dinette next to a kitchen or living room was counted as a separate room only if there was a partition from floor to ceiling, but was not counted as a room if the partition consisted solely of shelves or cabinets. Not included in the count of rooms were bathrooms, halls, foyers or vestibules, balconies, closets, alcoves, pantries, strip or pullman kitchens, laundry or furnace rooms, unfinished attics or basements, open porches, sun porches not suited for year-round use, unfinished space used for storage, mobile homes or trailers used only as bedrooms, and offices used only by persons not living in the unit. A room used by the occupants of more than one unit was included with the unit from which it could be most easily reached. The median number of rooms is the theoretical value which divides the housing units equally, one-half having more rooms and one-half having fewer rooms than the median. In the computation of the median, a continuous distribution was assumed. For example, when the median was in the three-room group, the lower and upper limits were assumed to be 2.5 and 3.5, respectively. Tenths were used in the computation of the median to permit comparisons.

**Number of Bedrooms.** Rooms used mainly for sleeping, even if used for other purposes, were counted as bedrooms. Also included in the count of bedrooms were rooms reserved for sleeping, such as guest rooms, even though used infrequently. A room used mainly for other purposes, although also used for sleeping, such as a living room with a hide-away bed, was not counted as a bedroom. A one-room apartment, therefore, was reported as having no bedroom.

**Number of Housing Units in Structure.** A structure is a separate building which either has open space on all four sides or is separated from other structures by dividing walls that extend from ground to roof. In double houses, row houses, and houses attached to nonresidential structures, each building is a structure if the common wall between them goes from ground to roof. Sheds and private garages which adjoin houses are not counted as separate structures. In apartment developments, each building with open space on all sides is considered a separate structure. The count of housing units in a structure is the total number of units in the structure, both occupied and vacant units. In the tabulations, occupied mobile homes or trailers, tents, and boats are included in the category one housing unit in structure.

The statistics reflect the number of housing units in the structure in which they are located, rather than the number of residential structures. In the quarterly surveys, data were obtained on the number of housing units in the structure, regardless of the type of structures in which the unit was located.

**Year Structure Built.** "Year structure built" refers to the date the original construction of the structure was completed, and not to any later remodeling, addition, or conversion. The figures on

the number of units built during a given period relate to the number of units in existence at the time of interview. For both occupied and vacant mobile homes, "model year" is the year built.

**Duration of Vacancy.** The length of time a housing unit was vacant was computed from the day the unit became vacant until the day of the interview. The data, therefore, do not provide a direct measure of the total length of time units remain vacant. For newly constructed units, the duration of vacancy represents the time period since the date when the unit was considered a vacant housing unit, that is, when construction had reached the point that all exterior windows and doors were installed and final usable floors were in place. For recently converted or merged units, the length of time is reported from the date the conversion or merger was completed. For units temporarily occupied by persons with a usual residence elsewhere, duration of vacancy is the length of time since the last usual residents moved; if the unit was always occupied by persons with usual residence elsewhere the time is reported from the date the unit was originally ready for occupancy. The time intervals used in the tables represent full months, calculated from a date in the month to the same date the following month. For example, if the unit became vacant on July 29 and was still vacant on the day interviewed, September 20, the time reported would be "1 to 2 months," meaning that the unit had been vacant for more than 1 month but less than 2 months. Or if the unit became vacant on August 25 and was still vacant on September 20, the time reported would be "less than 1 month."

**Previous Occupancy.** A unit was classified as being "previously occupied" if the unit had ever been occupied or if the unit was occupied by persons with a usual residence elsewhere. If a previously occupied unit had been converted into several housing units, each unit was classified as being previously occupied. Also, housing units that resulted from conversion of nonresidential space or from a merger was reported as being previously occupied. Only vacant newly constructed units were classified as "not previously occupied."

**Contract Rent.** For renter-occupied units, the contract rent is the monthly rent agreed upon regardless of any furnishings, utilities, or services that may be included. For vacant units, rent is the amount asked for the unit at the time of interview; the amount may differ from the rent contracted for when the unit is occupied. Data for contract rent excludes units for which no cash rent is paid. As in the 1980 census, the statistics are limited to specified rental units. These data exclude rents for renter-occupied and vacant for-rent single-family structures on places of 10 acres or more. The median monthly rent is the rent which divides the series into two equal parts, one-half of the units with rents higher than the median and the other half with rents lower than the median. In the computation of the median, a continuous distribution was assumed, and the limits of the class intervals were assumed to stand at the midpoint of the 1-dollar interval between the end of one of the rent groups and the beginning of the next. For example, the limits of the interval designated \$250 to \$299 were assumed to be \$249.50 and \$299.50.

**Inclusion of Utilities in Rent.** The utilities included in the inquiry were electricity, gas, water, oil, coal, wood, and kerosene, etc. The statistics reflect whether all or some or none of these utilities are provided for in the amount of rent asked at the time of the interview. A unit was classified as having "all utilities included" if the cost of the utilities are included in the rent at no additional cost to the renter or if the utilities would not be used by the renter. A unit was classified as having "some or none included" if all or part of the utilities are to be paid for

separately by the renter in addition to the rent asked. Data on the inclusion of utilities are limited to vacant units for which rent is reported. No data on utilities are collected for renter-occupied units.

**Value.** Value is the respondent's estimate of how much the property would sell for on the current market. For vacant units, value is the sales price asked for the property at the time of the interview and may differ from the price at which the property is sold. The "sales price asked" includes the price of a one-housing-unit structure and the land on which it is located. The "sales price asked" may also include additional structures such as garages, sheds, barns, etc.

In this report, statistics on value for owner-occupied units and vacant for-sale-only units are limited to specified homeowner units which includes all one-housing unit structures located on places of less than 10 acres, without a commercial establishment or medical office on the property and with only one-housing unit on the property. The median value or sales price is the amount which divides the series into two equal parts, one-half of the units with values higher than the median and the other half with values lower than the median. The median was computed on the basis of more detailed tabulation groups than are shown in the tables and was rounded to the nearest hundred dollars.

**Family.** A family is a group of two persons or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together; all of such persons (including related subfamily members) are considered as members of one family. Beginning with the 1980 CPS, unrelated subfamilies (referred to in the past as secondary families) are no longer included in the count of families, nor are the members of unrelated subfamilies included in the count of family members.

**Married-Couple Families.** A married couple, as defined for Census purposes, is a husband and wife enumerated as members of the same household. The married couple may or may not have children living with them. The expression "husband-wife" or "married-couple" before the term "household," or "family," indicates that the household, or family, is maintained by a husband and wife.

### **Other Family Households**

**Male Householder no wife present:** This category includes households with male householders who are married with at least one other relative in the household, but with wife absent because of separation or other reason where husband and wife maintain separate residences; and male householders who are widowed, divorced, or single with at least one other relative in the household.

**Female Householders no husband present:** This category includes households with female householders who are married with one other relative in the household, but with husband absent because of separation or other reason where husband and wife maintain separate residences; and female householders who are widowed, divorced, or single with at least one other relative in the household.

**Non-family householder.** A non-family householder is a person maintaining a household while living alone or with non-relatives only.

**One-person Households.** Households consisting of only one person are shown separately for male householder and female householder under the category "one-person households".

**Other Two-or-More-Person Households.** Households consisting of a householder living with one or more non-relatives only. Data are shown separately for male and female householder only.

**Single Male Householder.** This includes the following 3 categories--other family households--male householder no wife present, one person male householder, and Nonfamily Other Two-or-More-Person Male Households.

**Single Female Householder.** This includes the following 3 categories--other family households--female householder no husband present, one person female householder, and Nonfamily Other Two-or-More-Person female Households.

**Age.** The age classification is based on the age of the householder at the time of interview.



# Local Market Update – November 2023

A Research Tool Provided by Iowa Association of REALTORS®



## Muscatine County

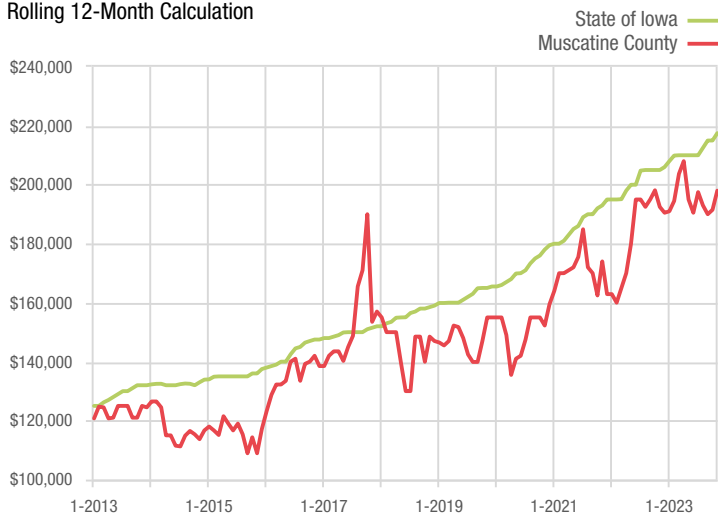
Single-Family Detached	November			Year to Date		
Key Metrics	2022	2023	% Change	Thru 11-2022	Thru 11-2023	% Change
New Listings	40	32	- 20.0%	577	485	- 15.9%
Pending Sales	33	31	- 6.1%	479	411	- 14.2%
Closed Sales	8	5	- 37.5%	87	92	+ 5.7%
Days on Market Until Sale	31	56	+ 80.6%	40	51	+ 27.5%
Median Sales Price*	\$141,000	<b>\$178,000</b>	+ 26.2%	\$191,000	<b>\$198,950</b>	+ 4.2%
Average Sales Price*	\$225,250	<b>\$197,400</b>	- 12.4%	\$220,434	<b>\$239,546</b>	+ 8.7%
Percent of List Price Received*	96.1%	<b>91.4%</b>	- 4.9%	97.1%	<b>98.1%</b>	+ 1.0%
Inventory of Homes for Sale	88	72	- 18.2%	—	—	—
Months Supply of Inventory	2.1	2.0	- 4.8%	—	—	—

Townhouse-Condo	November			Year to Date		
Key Metrics	2022	2023	% Change	Thru 11-2022	Thru 11-2023	% Change
New Listings	0	1	—	14	24	+ 71.4%
Pending Sales	0	1	—	12	14	+ 16.7%
Closed Sales	1	0	- 100.0%	5	3	- 40.0%
Days on Market Until Sale	56	—	—	25	30	+ 20.0%
Median Sales Price*	\$192,000	—	—	\$150,000	<b>\$270,000</b>	+ 80.0%
Average Sales Price*	\$192,000	—	—	\$182,600	<b>\$287,667</b>	+ 57.5%
Percent of List Price Received*	98.5%	—	—	102.2%	<b>96.7%</b>	- 5.4%
Inventory of Homes for Sale	0	8	—	—	—	—
Months Supply of Inventory	—	4.6	—	—	—	—

\* Does not account for seller concessions; % Change may be extreme due to small sample size.

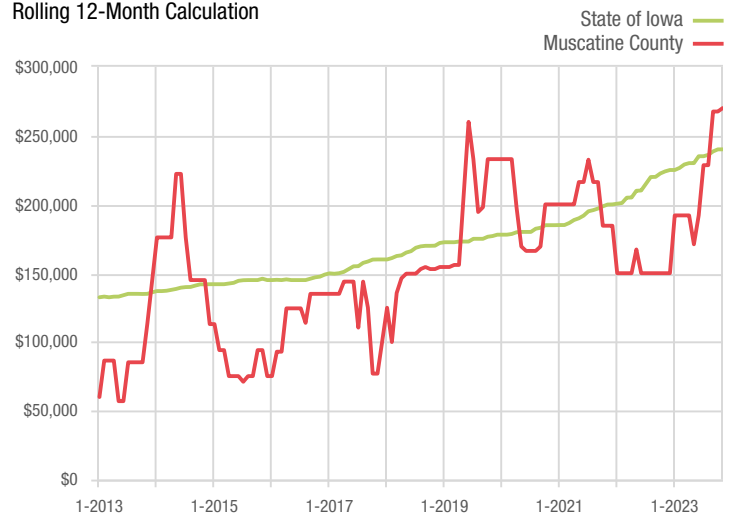
### Median Sales Price - Single-Family Detached

Rolling 12-Month Calculation



### Median Sales Price - Townhouse-Condo

Rolling 12-Month Calculation



A rolling 12-month calculation represents the current month and the 11 months prior in a single data point. If no activity occurred during a month, the line extends to the next available data point.



## Instructions for Developers Cohort Pre-activities

Greetings! We cannot wait for you all to begin the Hartford Land Bank 2023 Developer's Cohort. This is a great opportunity for you all to learn, network, and engage in all things construction, project management, and development. We truly appreciate you all coming to these sessions.

With that being said, there are a few activities we require you to complete prior to the first class. The due date for these pre-activities is on **January 18th, 2023 by 11:59 PM.**

- 1.) Complete the training registration packet (each cohort member has a copy in their individual folders).
- 2.) Watch the video entitled "Entrepreneurial DNA" by Joe Abraham (link below)
  - a.) [Entrepreneurial DNA: Joe Abraham at TEDxBend](#)
- 3.) Complete the BOSI Assessment below and write down your answers (link below)
  - a.) [BOSI DNA assessment](#)
- 4.) After viewing the TED Talk and completing the [BOSI DNA assessment](#), go to your pre-activities folder and record your answers under "Bosi Results."
- 5.) Complete the SWOT analysis (each cohort member has a copy in their individual pre-activities folder).

Thanks again and see you all soon!

Best,  
HLB Staff

## Developers Cohort Schedule

- DAY 1: JANUARY 21 from 9 AM – 6 PM
- DAY 2: JANUARY 24 from 4 PM – 8 PM
- DAY 3: JANUARY 26 from 4 PM – 8 PM
- DAY 4: JANUARY 28 from 9 AM – 8 PM
- DAY 5: FEBRUARY 4 from 9 AM – 8 PM
- DAY 6: FEBRUARY 7 from 4 PM – 8 PM
- DAY 7: FEBRUARY 9 from 4 PM – 8 PM
- DAY 8: FEBRUARY 11 from 9 AM – 5 PM
- DAY 9: MARCH 4 from 9 AM – 3 PM (FINAL PRESENTATIONS)
- *SNOW DATES: February 18<sup>th</sup> and February 25<sup>th</sup> from 9 AM – 6 PM*

# Developers Cohort Training Syllabus

## DAY 1: 9 AM – 6 PM JANUARY 21

- INTRODUCTION 9:00 AM - 9:45 AM
- CONSTRUCTION SITE VISIT 10:00 AM -12:00 PM (Location TBD)
- LUNCH: 12:00 PM - 12:40 PM
- BUDGET & PROFORMA 12:40 PM - 5:00 PM

## DAY 2: 4 PM – 8 PM TUESDAY JANUARY 24TH

*Start the day with questions about budget and proforma (30 mins)*

- DEVELOPING DESIGN (SCOPE OF WORK & CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE) 4:30 PM - 8:00 PM

## DAY 3: 4 PM – 8 PM THURSDAY JANUARY 26

- FINANCING: 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

## DAY 4: 9 AM – 8 PM SATURDAY JANUARY 28

- NETWORKING OPPORTUNITY 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
- HEDCO: 11:30 AM - 12:30PM
- LUNCH 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM
- HOW TO BUILD A TEAM: 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
- NAVIGATING THE CITY 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM
- HISTORIC TAX CREDIT 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

## DAY 5: 9 AM – 8 PM SATURDAY FEBRUARY 4

- BUSINESS MODEL AND PLAN 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- LUNCH 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
- FINISH BUSINESS MODEL 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM
- L.L.C. FORMATION 2:15 PM - 4:15 PM
- NETWORKING W/ TRADES & 1<sup>st</sup> COHORT 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

## DAY 6: 4 PM – 8 PM TUESDAY FEBRUARY 7

- DEEP DIVE CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- DINNER 6:00 PM

## DAY 7: 4 PM – 8 PM THURSDAY FEBRUARY 9

- DEEP DIVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM
- DINNER 6:00 PM

## DAY 8: 9 AM – 5 PM SATURDAY FEBRUARY 11

- DISCUSS FINAL PROJECT 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM

# Developers Cohort Training Syllabus

- CREATE YOUR TEAMS 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM
- VISIT FINAL PROJECT PROPERTY (2 HOURS ON SITE) 10:30 AM-12:30 PM
  - Walk through each floor (15 minutes each floor)
  - Once you are back, start your project.
- LUNCH 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM
- FINAL PROJECT WORK TIME 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

**FINAL PRESENTATIONS: 9 AM – 3 PM SATURDAY MARCH 4**

**(SNOW DATES: 9 AM – 6 PM SATURDAY FEBRUARY 18 AND/OR FEBRUARY 25)**

# FEDERAL Funding Opportunities

Agency / Division	Grant Program	Description	Funding Range	Application Cycle	To Apply	Applicable Solution
U.S. Department of Agriculture / Rural Development	<a href="#">Single Family Housing Repair Loans &amp; Grants</a>	Also known as the Section 504 Home Repair program, this program provides loans to very-low-income homeowners to repair, improve or modernize their homes or grants to elderly very-low-income homeowners to remove health and safety hazards. Provides up to \$40,000 loan and \$10,000 in grant funds to very-low-income homeowners to repair, improve or modernize their homes; can be combined for a total of \$27,500 in assistance; grants target elderly very-low-income homeowners to remove health and safety hazards; loans up to 20 years with a fixed interest rate of 1%.	\$40,000 loan + \$10,000 grant	Open Cycle	Contact your <a href="#">USDA State or Area Office</a> to request an application package, and to discuss your project	Invest in Existing Housing Stock
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	<a href="#">Brownfields Program</a>	EPA's Brownfields Program provides grants and technical assistance to communities, states, tribes and others to assess, safely clean up and sustainably reuse contaminated properties. They offer a number of <a href="#">funding opportunities</a> to support assessment, clean up, and job training activities.	Varies	November (typically)	Contact your <a href="#">EPA Regional Office</a> to request an application package and to discuss your project	Become Investment Ready
Fannie Mae	<a href="#">Homestyle Renovation Mortgage</a>	Similar to the FHA 203K loan, the HomeStyle Renovation Mortgage can provide a financing option to buy and renovate an existing house. One of the major differences between the two loans is that a HomeStyle Renovation Mortgage can finance renovations to a primary residence, rental property, or vacation home while FHA restricts use to primary residences only. With this flexibility comes a slightly higher down payment minimum of 5% and stricter lending requirements with a minimum FICO score of 620	75% of the lesser of the purchase price plus renovation costs, or the "as completed" appraised value	Open Cycle	Contact your local lender and request a this loan product	Invest in Existing Housing Stock
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development / Housing	<a href="#">FHA 203K Loans – Mortgage Loan for Fixer Upper Properties</a>	An FHA 203k loan is backed by the federal government and is a financing option for buyers who want to buy a damaged or older home and do repairs on it. The program provides financing up to 110% of the after-improvement value. However, the borrower is required to provide a detailed proposal of the work they want to do and cost estimates for each item so will need to hire an independent consultant or licensed contractor to prepare these exhibits.	Up to \$35,000 loan to be used for improvements	Open Cycle	Contact your local lender and request a this loan product	Invest in Existing Housing Stock



U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development / Housing	<a href="#">National Housing Trust Fund</a>	Funds may be used for the production or preservation of permanent affordable rental housing through new construction, adaptive reuse and/or rehabilitation projects. Proposed projects addressing the needs of extremely low-income renters—those with incomes below 30% of Area Median Income (AMI)—are a high priority for the Iowa Finance Authority	Limits depend on whether units are single-family, multi-family, new construction and/or existing housing	March (typically)	Contact the <a href="#">National Housing Trust Fund</a> team for more information	Invest in Existing Housing Stock Incentivize New Housing Types Create Planned Development Units
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development / Housing	Choice Neighborhoods	<a href="#">Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants</a> support the development of comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plans which focused on directing resources to address three core goals: Housing, People and Neighborhoods. To achieve these core goals, communities must develop and implement a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy, or Transformation Plan. The Transformation Plan will become the guiding document for the revitalization of the public and/or assisted housing units while simultaneously directing the transformation of the surrounding neighborhood and positive outcomes for families.	Up to \$500,000 per award, totalling \$10M for Planning Grant Awards	June 2024	Contact <a href="#">Luci Blackburn</a> , Community Neighborhoods Director	Invest in Existing Housing Stock Create Planned Development Units
		<a href="#">Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants</a> support those communities that have undergone a comprehensive local planning process and are ready to implement their “Transformation Plan” to redevelop the neighborhood.	Up to \$50M each	February 2025		
U.S. Department of the Interior/ National Parks Services	<a href="#">Federal Historic Tax Credits</a>	The Historic Tax Credit (HTC) program encourages investment in the rehabilitation and re-use of historic buildings. The federal tax credit allows program participants to claim 20 percent of eligible improvement expenses against their federal tax liability. The federal tax credit program uses the US Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation to determine what kinds of work are appropriate for historic buildings and eligible for the tax credits. In addition, federal tax credits require a property must be income-producing such as an apartment building, upper-story housing on main street or some other commercial use (i.e. private residence ineligible)	Up to 20% of project costs on Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures (QREs)	Open Cycle	Contact the <a href="#">National Housing Trust Fund</a> team for more information	Invest in Existing Housing Stock Create Planned Development Units

# STATE Funding Opportunities

Agency	Grant Program	Description	Funding Range	Application Cycle	To Apply	Applicable Solution
State Historical Society of Iowa	<a href="#">State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit</a>	This program offers tax credits to developers who sensitively rehabilitate historic buildings to offer them new life. The state offers this tax credit program to ensure character-defining features and spaces of buildings are retained to help create distinct and vibrant communities. Individual owner-occupied residences do qualify for this program. State income tax credit of up to 25% of the qualified rehabilitation expenditures associated with the project. “Qualified rehabilitation expenditures” or “QREs” means the same as defined in Section 47 of the Internal Revenue Code. These QREs generally include expenditures related to structural components of the building and some soft costs that would normally be charged to a capital account.	Up to 25% of project costs on Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures (QREs)	May 2024	Submit a request for information through the State Historical Society of Iowa <a href="#">website</a> .	Invest in Existing Housing Stock Create Planned Development Units”
Iowa Finance Authority	<a href="#">Homebuyer Assistance</a>	The homebuyer assistance program allows nonprofit entities to give an extra boost to homebuyers through down payment and rehabilitation assistance. Types of assistance include downpayment or closing cost assistance, and acquisition and rehabilitation assistance for a home after it has been purchased. The homebuyer must have a gross annual income that does not exceed 80% of the <a href="#">Area Median Income, as established by HUD</a> .	Varies	Open Cycle	Contact the <a href="#">HOME Program Team</a> for more information (515) 452-0422	Expand Homeowner Education Opportunities
Iowa Finance Authority	<a href="#">Tenant-based Rental Assistance (TBRA)</a>	The tenant-based rental assistance program allows nonprofit and local government entities to assist many Iowa families to afford their rental home. Assistance types include monthly rental assistance payment, upfront security deposit assistance, and utility deposit assistance. All funds are paid directly to the landlord or utility provider on behalf of the tenants.	Varies	Open Cycle	Contact the <a href="#">HOME Program Team</a> for more information (515) 452-0422	Invest in Existing Housing Stock
Iowa Finance Authority	<a href="#">Rental Assistance</a>	The HOME Rental Assistance program provides property owners and developers with funds to develop and preserve affordable rental housing for Iowans. Project types include new construction and conversion of rental housing, as well as rehabilitation of existing buildings.	Varies	Annually	Contact the <a href="#">HOME Program Team</a> for more information (515) 452-0422	Invest in Existing Housing Stock Incentivize New Housing Types Create Planned Development Units

Iowa Finance Authority	<a href="#">Housing Tax Credit Program</a>	The federal low-income housing tax credit program acts as an incentive for property owners to invest in the development of rental housing for individuals and families with fixed or limited incomes. The housing tax credit provides a dollar to dollar reduction (or credit) to offset an owner's federal tax liability on ordinary income for a 10-year period. This tax credit often provides the last critical element to ensure financial feasibility of the project. These affordable housing developments often attract young professionals, working families, seniors or persons with disabilities who are unable to maintain a house but want to live independently.	Up to 9% of qualified costs of development for new construction and rehabilitation  Up to 4% for acquisition and federally subsidized projects	Open Cycle	Contact the <a href="#">Housing Tax Credit Team</a> for more information	Invest in Existing Housing Stock  Incentivize New Housing Types  Create Planned Development Units
Iowa Finance Authority	<a href="#">State Housing Trust Fund</a>	<p>"The Iowa legislature created the Local Housing Trust Fund Program to allow certified Local Housing Trust Funds to efficiently fulfill unique local affordable housing needs throughout the state. The program receives at least 60% of the State Housing Trust Fund allocation to provide grants for organizations certified by the Iowa Finance Authority as a Local Housing Trust Fund.</p> <p>Awards from the Local Housing Trust Fund Program must be used for the development or preservation of affordable housing for eligible recipients. Each Local Housing Trust Fund outlines its eligible projects in an approved Housing Assistance Plan."</p>	Minimum local match of 25% of the total grant amount requested	Fall (typically)	Contact the <a href="#">State Housing Trust Fund Team</a> for more information	Invest in Existing Housing Stock  Incentivize New Housing Types  Create Planned Development Units
Iowa Finance Authority	<a href="#">First Home Program</a>	The FirstHome Program connects first-time homebuyers with affordable mortgages and local lenders.	Assistance with acquiring lower interest rates, downpayment assistance, and a free Iowa Title Guaranty Owner's Certificate	Open Cycle	Contact the <a href="#">Homeowner Team</a> at Iowa Finance Authority for more information	Expand Homeowner Education Opportunities
Iowa Finance Authority	<a href="#">Homes for Iowans</a>	The Homes for Iowans Program can help first-time and repeat home buyers purchase a home in Iowa.	Assistance with acquiring lower interest rates, downpayment assistance, and a free Iowa Title Guaranty Owner's Certificate	Open Cycle	Contact the <a href="#">Homeowner Team</a> at Iowa Finance Authority for more information	Expand Homeowner Education Opportunities
Iowa Finance Authority	<a href="#">Military Homeownership Assistance Program</a>	The program provides grant funding to service members and veterans for down payments and closing costs on qualifying homes. The funds may be used in conjunction with the FirstHome and Homes for Iowans programs. This program is limited to funding availability.	Up to \$5,000	Open Cycle	Contact the <a href="#">Homeowner Team</a> at Iowa Finance Authority for more information	Expand Homeowner Education Opportunities

# REGIONAL Funding Opportunities

Agency	Grant Program	Description	Funding Range	Application Cycle	To Apply	Applicable Solution
Kansas State University (KSU)	<a href="#">Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB)</a>	Brownfields technical assistance is available to cities, nonprofits and Tribal organizations at no cost. TAB is a national program funded by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). TAB helps guide local and tribal governments through the brownfields redevelopment process, using custom-selected teams of experts to address site-specific needs. TAB assistance is usually coordinated through the city, tribal or nonprofit brownfields project manager.	Varies	Open Cycle	Contact <a href="#">KSU Tab</a> to talk with a TAB Services Coordinator in Region 7	Become Investment Ready



**COMPLETED IN 2024**

for Muscatine County, Iowa and the cities of  
Muscatine, West Liberty and Wilton

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