

# LIVABILITY IN NORTHWEST ILLINOIS

December 2022

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## Introduction

The role of livability in economic development, especially since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, has shifted from the periphery to the essential, nesting itself within the [legs of the proverbial economic development stool](#). Residents and workers have come to expect certain amenities in their communities. The trend of livability being viewed as foundational is not unique to the counties of Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, and Whiteside. Sometimes called quality of life, livability is often associated with six principles<sup>1</sup>, stated as follows:

1. Provide more transportation choices
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing
3. Enhance economic competitiveness
4. Support existing communities
5. Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment
6. Value communities and neighborhoods

The following review of livability/quality of life within the Blackhawk Hills Regional Council (BHRC) region addresses portions of the above principles, including housing, childcare, broadband, walkability, and greenways and trails.

Many of the following activities were funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration through CARES Act assistance geared towards helping various constituencies respond to and recover from the impacts of the coronavirus on the United States. BHRC's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Northwest Illinois (CEDS) guided goalsetting and recommendations throughout these studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainable Cities Initiative, *What is Livability?*, 2015.



# Housing

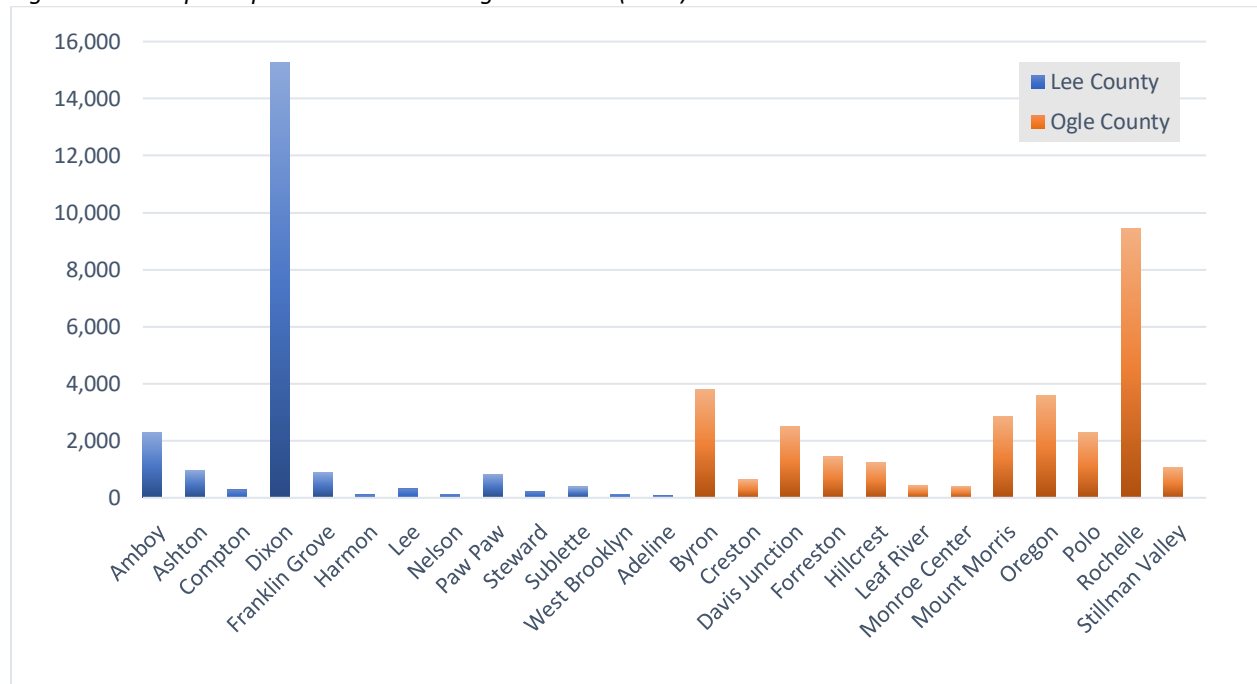
## Overview

BHRC commissioned workforce housing studies for four Northwest Illinois counties to assess the state of the region's housing.<sup>2</sup> At the time of this review's publication, Lee and Ogle counties' studies are complete. Created by Redevelopment Resources of Madison, WI, and Studio GWA of Rockford, IL, the findings of both as well as a study of Sterling, IL, are summarized below.

## Population

Both Lee and Ogle counties' populations have declined since 2010, a trend that is expected to continue; the housing studies estimate that by 2026, the two counties will lose 2.68% (Lee) and 2.97% (Ogle) of their people. The largest communities in each county are Dixon in Lee and Rochelle in Ogle, which had 2020 populations of 15,274 and 9,446, respectively.

Figure 1: Municipal Population in Lee and Ogle Counties (2020)



Source: U.S. Census, 2020 Decennial Census

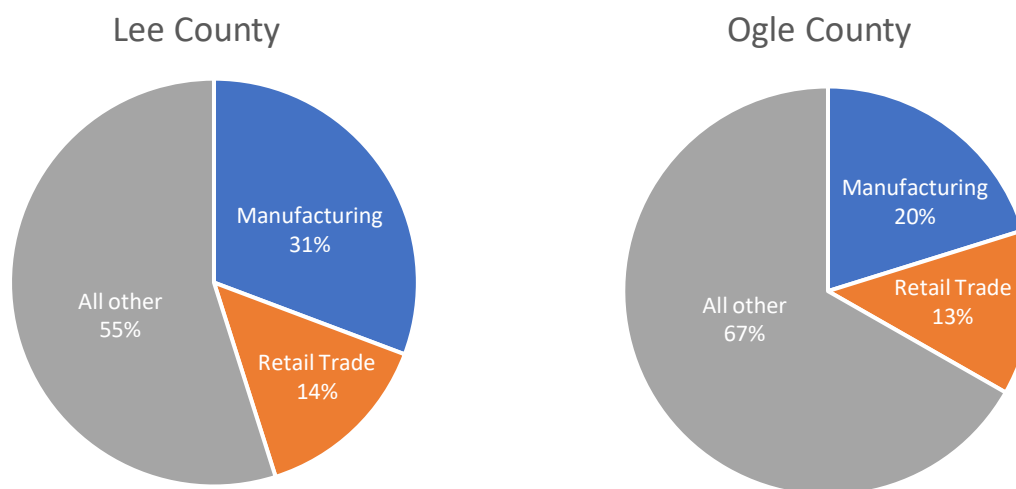
Both counties' populations are older; the 55-64 cohort is the largest. The 25-34 cohort is Lee's second largest, while in Ogle, it is the 45-54 age group. When assessing housing needs in Ogle, the study focused on the aging population, while the Lee study assessed the aging population as well as incoming professionals. Both groups have similar needs in terms of smaller, denser affordable housing.

<sup>2</sup> Carroll County stakeholders saw value in a study but were unable to support the effort at the time. Information about Whiteside County, extrapolated from a study of the City of Sterling, is included in the concluding paragraph of this section.

## Employment and Income

Jobs can be a significant driver of housing demand. From 2013-2019, annual employment growth averaged 90 jobs in Lee and 100 jobs in Ogle. Barring significant economic shifts, such growth is expected to remain consistent. In both counties, Manufacturing and Retail Trade dominate private sector employment.

Figure 2: Lee and Ogle County Private Sector Employment by [NAICS Sector](#) (2019)



Source: Redevelopment Resources and Studio GWA, *Lee County Workforce Housing Study* and *Ogle County Workforce Housing Study*, 2022

Pay disparities between these top sectors are significant. The 2020 average annual pay for Manufacturing for both Lee (\$58,040) and Ogle (\$55,337)<sup>3</sup> is above workforce-income.<sup>4</sup> The 2020 average annual pay for Retail Trade is \$31,373 for Lee and \$28,246<sup>3</sup> for Ogle.

## Rental Affordability and Availability

From 2013-2019, rental rates increased in Lee by 11.9% and Ogle by 8.0%. Though Ogle's increase was lower during this six-year period, the county also had a poorer income growth rate at just 2.14% vs. Lee's 16.2%.

The increase in rental rates may have been a market reaction to a rental unit shortage. Vacancy rates for rentals fell sharply in Lee from an 8.9% high in 2017 to a 4.0% low in 2019, a two-year period. Vacancy rates fell more gradually in Ogle from a 7.9% high in 2013 to a 3.7% low in 2019, a six-year period.

Both reports rely on Arthur Nelson, author of *Planner's Estimating Guide: Projecting Land-Use and Facility Needs* (2004), as a guide for vacancy rates. The recommended rental vacancy rate is from 5-7%. Based on the counties' housing stock quantity and occupancy, a healthy rental vacancy rate would result in 754 vacant units for Lee and 1,133 vacant units for Ogle. However, the consultants could find only three units for rent in Lee and no units for rent in Ogle on any given day. According to stakeholders in

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2022. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

<sup>4</sup> Within the housing reports, "workforce-income" refers to households making approximately 50-80% of the county's median household income (between \$30,000-\$45,000 in Lee and \$30,000-\$50,000 in Ogle). Median household income (MHI) in 2021 for Lee was \$57,031 and \$59,510 for Ogle.

both communities, “informal networks, word-of-mouth, and rental sites specific to local businesses are more common ways of finding rentals in the area” (pg. 25). These methods of finding rentals can discourage people attempting to relocate to these communities.

In 2019, majority of rentals in both counties cost from \$500-\$999 a month, with the median monthly rent being \$694 (Lee) and \$745 (Ogle)<sup>5</sup>. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, households that pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs are considered housing cost-burdened. From 2014-2018, 18.7% and 17.6% of the renters in Lee and Ogle, respectively, were considered housing cost-burdened, paying from 30%-50% of their income towards rent. An additional 14.5% of Lee renters and 16.0% of Ogle renters were considered severely housing cost-burdened, meaning the household pays more than 50% of its income on housing (cumulatively, 33.2% and 33.6%).

As noted above, the Manufacturing and Retail Trade dominate the private sector. Table 1 provides 2019 figures for median annual wages for both. Annual rent is calculated as median monthly rent multiplied by 12. Table 2 then shows the percent of annual rent as a cost of the annual pay.

*Table 1: Annual Pay and MHI Compared to Rent in Lee and Ogle Counties (2019)*

	Manufacturing Annual Pay	Retail Trade Annual Pay	Annual Rent
Lee	\$58,040	\$29,251	\$8,328 (\$694/month)
Ogle	\$53,933	\$25,809	\$8,940 (\$745/month)

*Table 2: Annual Pay and MHI Spent on Rent in Lee and Ogle Counties (2019)*

	Manufacturing	Retail Trade
Lee	14.3%	28.5%
Ogle	16.6%	34.6%

Source: U.S. Census, ACS 2019 5-year and Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2019

While renters employed in the Manufacturing sector are not considered housing cost-burdened by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) standards, renters in the Retail Trade sector, the second largest employer in both counties, may struggle to pay for housing.

## Single-Family Affordability and Availability

Owner-occupied vacancy rates have remained steady from 2013-2019 at 2-3% (Lee) and 1-2% (Ogle). Median home values were \$133,403 in Lee and \$149,690 in Ogle<sup>6</sup>. From 2014-2018, approximately 9.9% (Lee) and 9.6% (Ogle) of owner-occupied units with a mortgage were considered housing cost-burdened. 4.45% (Lee) and 7.6% (Ogle) additional units were considered severely housing cost-burdened.

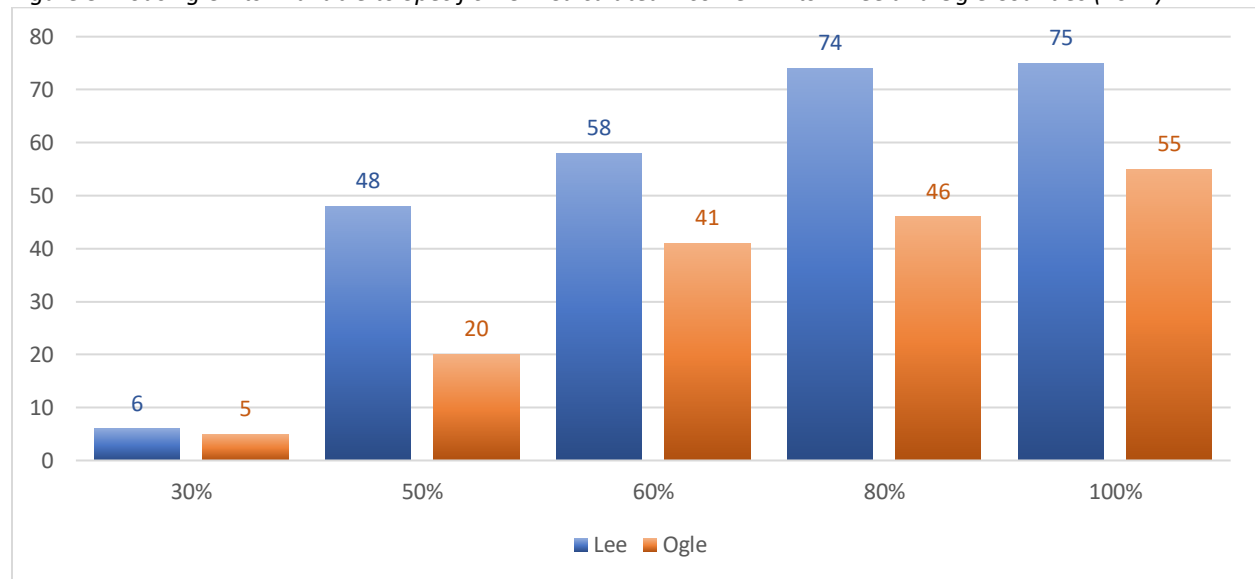
Redevelopment Resources looked at housing units for sale on June 25, 2021, in both counties. Based on HUD’s income limits for each county, the firm calculated what an affordable housing price would be and how many units for sale that day were at or below that point. Figure 3 shows the availability of units for a 4-person household at 30% to 100% income limits for HUD-calculated income limits).<sup>7</sup> The numbers are cumulative.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 2022. American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Table DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics.

<sup>6</sup> 2021 ESRI Community Profile data.

<sup>7</sup> 2021 MFI for a family of four was \$77,700 in Lee and \$75,800 in Ogle.

Figure 3: Housing Units Available to Specific HUD-Calculated Income Limits in Lee and Ogle Counties (2021)



Source: Redevelopment Resources and Studio GWA, *Lee County Workforce Housing Study* and *Ogle County Workforce Housing Study*, 2022

Newcomers and residents may prefer (or need, given availability) to build new housing rather than rely on existing stock. Contractors from the region indicated that new housing affordable to workforce-income buyers would need to be less than 2,000 square feet with modest finishes, resulting in an average sale price of \$201,000-310,000. This price point is lower than the national average, but it is still a significant expense; only four-person families earning 105% of MHI in Lee or 100% in Ogle could afford such a new home.

## Housing Age

Availability does not consider unit condition. As of 2019, 77% of Lee housing units and 64% of Ogle housing units were built before 1980. 35% of Lee and 24% of Ogle houses were built before 1939. Lead-based paint is more likely to be found in homes built before 1978. Additionally, older homes tend to be less energy efficient, may contain asbestos and other sources of lead, and often must be modified to accommodate persons with disabilities and seniors. However, the character of older homes can make them attractive to buyers willing to bear additional costs. Making use of existing structures can improve the use of resources, reduce waste, and preserve cultural memory.

## Whiteside County

The city of Sterling in Whiteside County commissioned Baker Tilly US, LLP for its own housing analysis in 2021 titled, *Sterling, IL Housing Analysis: Multifamily & Senior Independent Living Housing Analysis*. There were similar conclusions drawn from that analysis to those found in the Lee and Ogle county studies. Both Sterling and Whiteside County are expected to lose population overall, and the age of the population trends older. The percentage of residents who are housing cost-burdened is higher for renter-occupied housing than owner-occupied, and housing tends to be older, with the majority of units built before 1969.

The study indicated there is a market for multi-family and senior independent living housing in Sterling, IL. Table 3 shows demand for Section 42 Low-Income Housing Credit (LIHTC) units for multi-family and senior populations as well as the demand for market-rate housing for multi-family populations.

*Table 3: Potential Multifamily and Senior Housing Units in Sterling, IL*

	Section 42 LIHTC		Market Rate
	Multi-Family	Senior	Multi-Family
Maximum Income Level	\$44,160	\$32,700	\$74,999
Minimum Income Level	\$13,131	\$11,490	\$36,320
Potential Units	175	35	120

Source: Baker Tilly US, LLP, *Sterling, IL Housing Analysis: Multifamily & Senior Independent Living Housing Analysis*, 2021

These figures account for both market capture and penetration rates.

## Recommendations

### LEE AND OGLE COUNTY HOUSING STUDIES

Based on the housing studies' data, stakeholder interviews, and other input, the following recommendations were provided for Lee and Ogle Counties:

#### Common to All

##### To Attract New Development

- Host a Developer Familiarization Tour
- Encourage Development of High-Density Market Rate Multi-Family Housing
- Incentivize Construction of Single-Family Homes
  - Utilize TIF in creative ways to incentivize housing development
  - Offer construction permit fee waivers
  - Offer municipal-owned properties for sale for \$1
  - Rebate a portion of property taxes after a commitment to pay is reached
  - Partner with employers to acquire land and sell lots at discounted prices
  - Partner with employers to offer down payment assistance to new home buyers
  - Work with local banks to subsidize interest rates on subdivision developments
- Market Lee/Ogle County Communities
- Market Available Properties and Incentives

##### To Address Existing Housing Units

- Support Infill Development
- Create a Downtown Residential Rehab Program

##### To Ensure Implementation

- Build a Network
- Equip and Charge BHRC as a One-Stop-Shop
- Provide a Dedicated Focus on Housing



## County-Specific

### To Attract New Development

- *Lee County* - Facilitate Development of Pocket Neighborhoods on Appropriate Sites

### To Address Existing Housing Units

- *Lee County* - Create a Residential Rehab Program (Dixon)
- *Lee County* - Create a Rental Inspection Program
- *Ogle County* - Create a Homeowner Rehab Program
- *Ogle County* - Eliminate Blighted Housing Stock

### To Ensure Implementation

- *Lee County* - Dedicate Staff to Housing Issues

## STERLING, IL HOUSING STUDY

This study's authors concluded that "a market exists for the addition of multifamily and senior independent LIHTC Section 42 as well as market rate rental housing within the Sterling, IL area[,]” which includes Lee County census tracts 2-7 and Whiteside County census tracts 1 and 8-18. Further, they note that “[t]he overall regional rental market is considered strong by generally accepted standards[.]”

## NORTHWEST ILLINOIS COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Within the Action Plan section of the CEDS, there are [several goals related to housing](#) as follows:

### CEDS Housing Goals

#### Goal 2.1 - Promote workforce continuity planning

- Develop worker recruitment, retention, and advancement guides/templates

#### Goal 2.5 - Research the impacts of financial and non-financial factors on job performance and employment longevity

- Study wage/benefit issues, non-wage/benefit issues (like childcare and healthcare access, transportation availability, flexibility, workplace environment, etc.)

#### Goal 2.11 - Improve access to housing and transportation/transportation alternatives

- Encourage housing investment near jobs or transportation facilities

#### Goal 4.2 - Identify and study various built infrastructure needs

- Identify key infrastructure needs. Examples: aging-in-place initiatives, housing, recreational spaces, etc.
- Secure technical assistance funding from EDA and other granting organizations to study issues and improve projects, programs, and policies

## Conclusion

Despite Northwest Illinois' declining population, additional housing is needed throughout the economic development district. Based on the data, the studies recommended constructing additional housing units; there was no distinction made between single vs. multi-family units. Although current housing stock is mostly 1-unit, detached, smaller, lower-maintenance properties of greater unit densities might be more suitable for incoming professionals and an aging population.

Rental vacancy rates are below recommended guidelines, and available rentals are difficult to find. While most rental costs are low in comparison to metropolitan areas, at least one-third of all renters in both counties are housing cost-burdened, indicating a need not only for more units but also for more cost-effective units.

The availability of workforce housing is less clear from these studies. However, interviews with stakeholders showed:

- Perceived shortages of housing for individuals making within the workforce-income range,
- Current housing stock needs rehabilitation, and
- Lack of housing is causing is contributing to employer strain.

This last point emphasizes the importance of these studies from an economic development standpoint. Traditional economic investments are more likely to fail if there is no housing to support the workforce that such investments might otherwise attract.

# Childcare

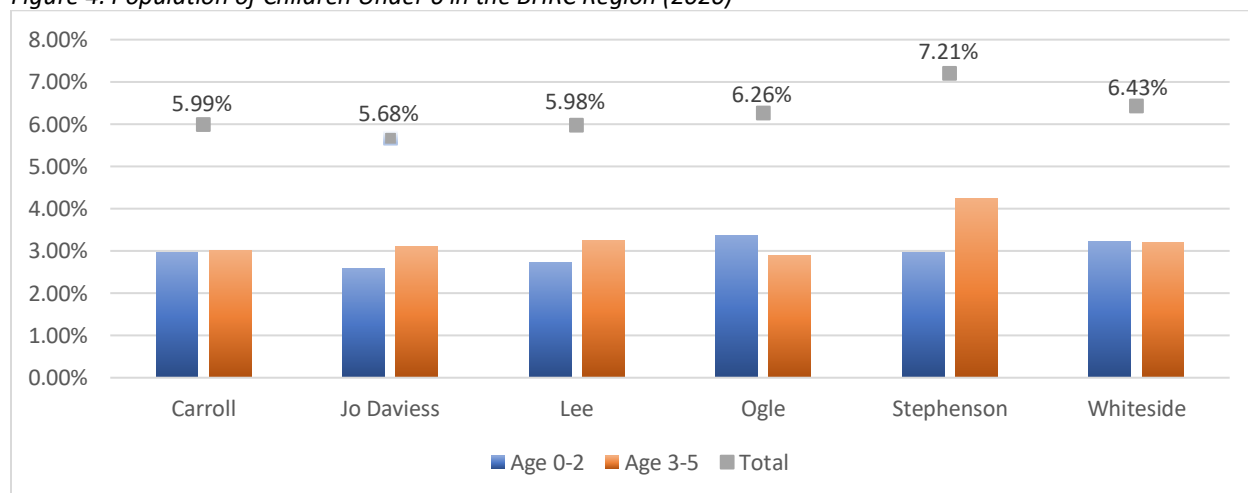
## Overview

Childcare access is a critical component of supporting and expanding a region's workforce. It was included in the most recent [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy](#) for Northwest Illinois in the [Data & Research](#) as well as [Action Plan](#) sections. Stakeholders identified “round-the-clock childcare availability” as a weakness in the [Quality of Life & Recreation SWOT analysis](#). Without access to affordable, quality childcare, parents and other guardians are less available, limiting the types of jobs and number of hours they can work. Below is a summary of youth population data and childcare assets in Northwest Illinois.

## Population and Working Parents

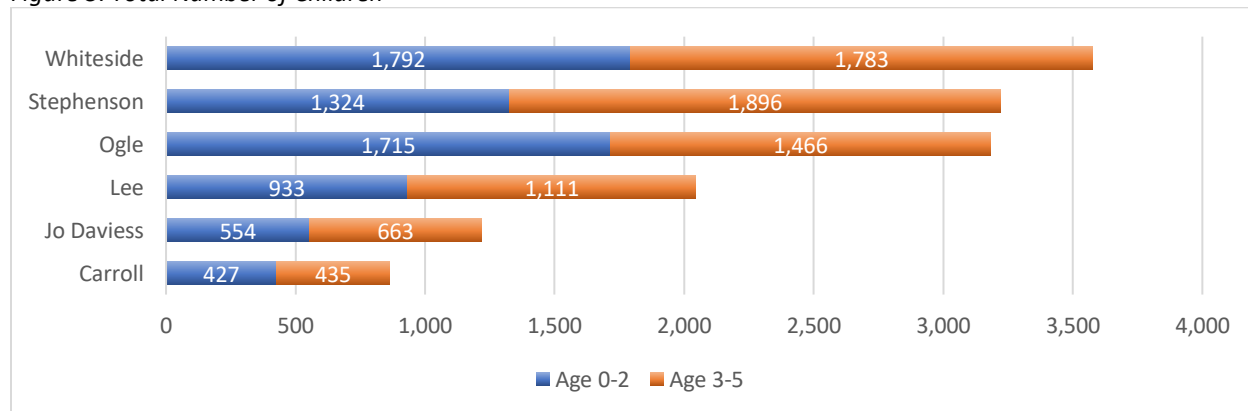
As of 2020, children under six make up 6.38% of the region's population, which is slightly less than Illinois' 7.04%. Stephenson County has the largest proportion of children to population, but Whiteside County has the most children overall.

Figure 4: Population of Children Under 6 in the BHRC Region (2020)



Source: Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM), Regional Reports, 2020

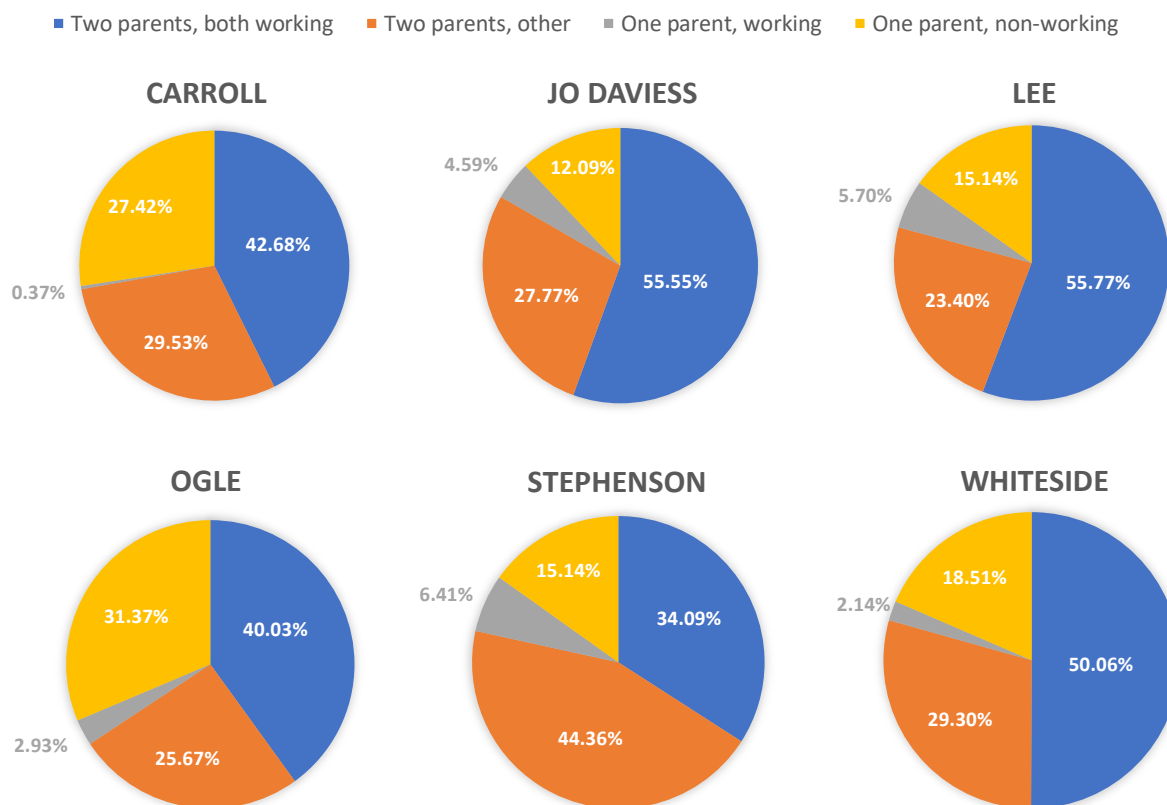
Figure 5: Total Number of Children



Source: IECAM, Regional Reports, 2020

Childcare is often necessary for working families where one parent is unable to stay home. Figure 6 depicts children under six who live with families. The charts below show the number of parents children under six are living with and how many of those parents work.<sup>8</sup> Even in households where one parent is not working, childcare may still be needed. IECAM’s data is based on the U.S. Census, which may not capture all types of employment. Additionally, the U.S. Census defines families as “...a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together.”<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the data does not capture children who live with unrelated guardians who have not been formally adopted.

Figure 6: Children Under 6 in Working Families in the BHRC Region



Source: IECAM, Regional Reports, 2020

## Childcare Availability

Figure 7 depicts the total licensed capacity of childcare centers in the region for children under six. Actual enrollment may be lower. Centers are divided into the following categories:

<sup>8</sup> For two-parent households, IECAM only records if both parents are working; there is no information on how many parents in a two-parent household are not working.

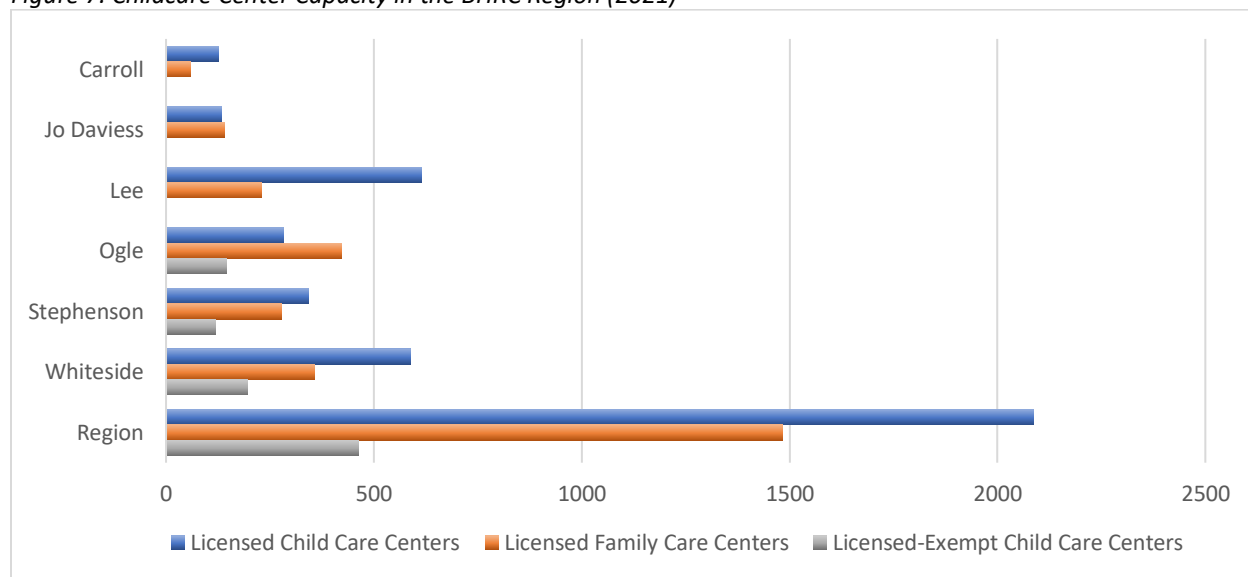
<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Subject Definitions. Retrieved December 24, 2022.

- [Licensed Childcare Centers](#) and [Licensed-Exempt Childcare Centers](#) are both facilities that “regularly provide day care for less than 24 hours per day for more than 8 children in a family home or more than 3 children in a facility other than a family home, including senior citizen buildings.”<sup>10</sup> The only difference is one is required to be licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services while the other is not.
- [Licensed Family Centers](#) provide childcare in a homelike setting. They are limited to up to 8 children (including their own) or may provide care up to 12 children with an assistant.

As of 2021, the total licensed capacity of all childcare in Northwest Illinois was 4,033. As of 2020, the total number of children under six in the region was 14,099.

Note that total licensed capacity does not equal the sum of all individual capacities. Centers can have separate capacities for different age groups and can limit capacity for one age group while still having open spaces. For example, a center may have licensed capacity for 20 children, but it will only take up to 5 children under the age of one. The data may indicate the facility has 15 open spaces, but once those 5 slots for one-year-olds are filled, a family with a one-year-old will need to find another center. Additionally, a center may be licensed for a capacity of 20 but choose to use that capacity in half-day sessions, serving up to 40 children during the day.

Figure 7: Childcare Center Capacity in the BHRC Region (2021)



Source: IECAM, Regional Reports, 2021

## Publicly Funded Programs

In addition to childcare facilities, there are a number of publicly funded programs to support early childhood development and education. Figure 8 depicts the capacity of these programs. Preschool for All and Prevention Initiatives are measured by the number of children the program proposes to serve at

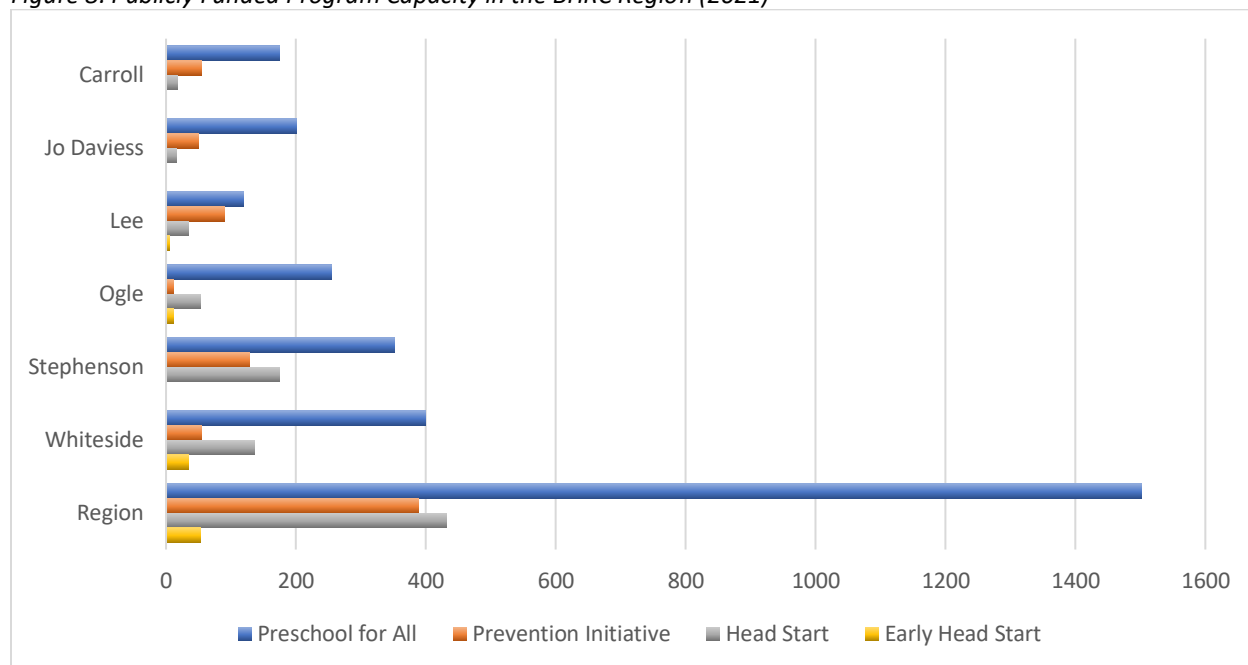
<sup>10</sup> IECAM, 2022.



the site each year. Head Start and Early Head Start are measured by the total number of children that the center receives funding from the Head Start Program to enroll.

- Preschool for All provides educational programs to 3 and 4-year-old children whose families choose to participate. While the focus is on children at risk of academic failure, other families may receive services as long as 80% of those served are at-risk children.
- Prevention Initiatives provide children from birth to 3-years-old child development and family support services. These services may be center-based or delivered through home visitation.
- Head Start and Early Head Start programs provide pregnant women and children from birth to 5-years comprehensive services to support child development. These may be educational, nutrition, health, social, and other services.

*Figure 8: Publicly Funded Program Capacity in the BHRC Region (2021)*



Source: IECAM, Regional Reports, 2021

## Childcare Costs

Even if childcare is available, it may not be affordable. Table 4 shows the 2020 average monthly price of childcare for a family per child under six for Illinois and the BHRC Region as well as the counties within the neighboring Economic Development District of Wisconsin, the Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC). Compared to Illinois, Wisconsin has a higher average monthly price of childcare, and residents in Wisconsin spend more of their household income on childcare. However, the neighboring counties in SWWRPC, overall, have slightly lower childcare costs than counties in BHRC Region (mean of \$672.80 vs. \$700.00).

**Table 4: Cost of Childcare in BHRC and SWWRPC Counties for a Family per Child Under 6 (2020)**

	Average Monthly Price	Percent of MHI (Married Couple)	Percent of MHI (Single-Parent)
Illinois	\$821 (BHRC avg = \$700)	11%	31%
Carroll	\$585	10%	18%
Jo Daviess	\$657	10%	19%
Lee	\$751	12%	23%
Ogle	\$829	12%	28%
Stephenson	\$589	10%	28%
Whiteside	\$789	14%	24%
Wisconsin	\$915 (SWWRPC avg = \$673)	13%	34%
Grant	\$621	10%	24%
Green	\$915	12%	22%
Iowa	\$673	10%	18%
Lafayette	\$563	9%	17%
Richland	\$592	9%	18%

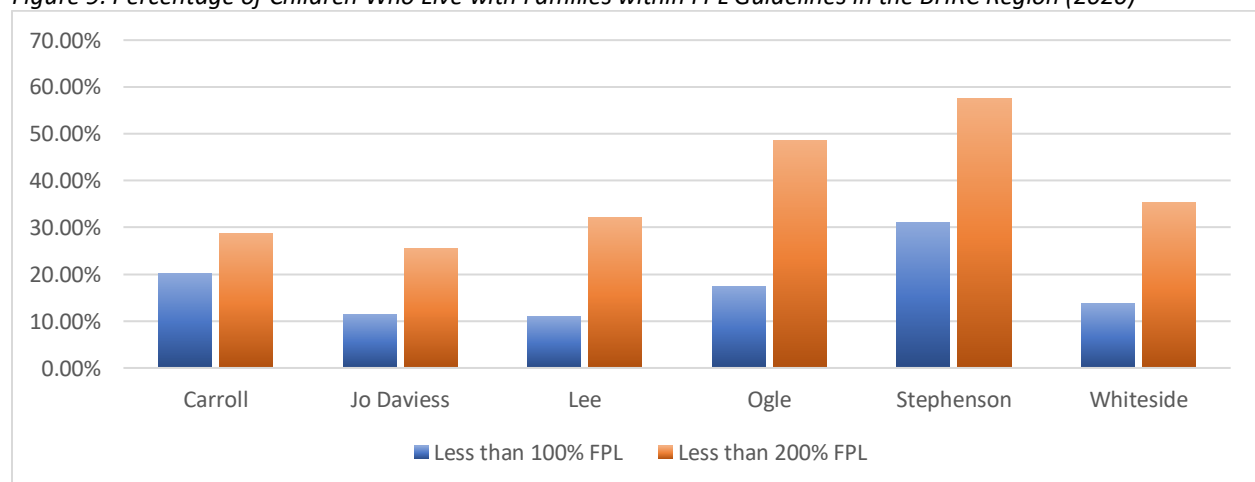
Source: Child Care Aware of America, Illinois, 2020

Table 9 in Appendix B shows all Illinois counties by population, the median monthly cost of childcare, and the price as a percentage of MHI for all families (married and single-parent). Northwest Illinois' average monthly price was \$700 vs. \$654 for all other counties classifiable as rural by 2010 U.S. Census data. When looking at price as a percentage of MHI, the median percentage for Northwest Illinois is 15%. For all other counties classifiable as rural, the median percentage is 14%.

There are federal and state programs to assist with childcare costs. Federal poverty level (FPL) guidelines are used by various governmental organizations to determine financial eligibility for their programs. For example, in Illinois, FPL guidelines are used for the Child Care Assistance Program and Illinois' All Kids (CHIPRA).

In 2020, FPL guidelines for a family of four was \$26,200 at 100% and \$52,400 at 200%. Figure 9 shows the percentage of children under six living in families that meet income criteria.

**Figure 9: Percentage of Children Who Live with Families within FPL Guidelines in the BHRC Region (2020)**



Source: IECAM, Regional Reports, 2020

## Recommendations

Within the Action Plan section of the CEDS, there are [several goals related to childcare](#) associated with assessing and addressing local needs.

### CEDS Childcare Goals

#### Goal 2.5 - Research the impacts of financial and non-financial factors on job performance and employment longevity

- Study wage/benefit issues, non-wage/benefit issues (like childcare and healthcare access, transportation availability, flexibility, workplace environment, etc.)

#### Goal 2.6 - Increase childcare access

- Report on the state of childcare within the region
- Identify obstacles (e.g., regulatory, cost, etc.) to providing high-quality childcare access

This report fulfills Goal 2.5 and the first bullet point of Goal 2.6. However, a more thorough investigation with public input will be necessary to compliment the data presented so that any further recommendations on childcare access will be effective in the region.

## Conclusion

Northwest Illinois appears to have a childcare capacity gap. There were 14,099 children under six in the region in 2020 but licensed capacity for only 4,033 children under six in 2021, a difference of over 10,000. However, because all 14,099 children will not have the same childcare needs, it is difficult to assess the exact disparity in capacity without further information.

Childcare costs place a significant burden on families. When compared to the neighboring SWWRPC economic development district, costs in the BHRC region tended to be higher and accounted for a larger portion of MHI. Compared to other rural Illinois counties, Northwest Illinois counties do not have the highest childcare costs relative to MHI. However, they also do not have the lowest. Without affordable and readily available childcare, families will struggle to make a home in Northwest Illinois.

# Walkability

## Overview

To improve active transportation in Northwest Illinois, which can improve a community's safety, health, and commerce, BHRC conducted walkability assessments in six municipalities:

### First Round (Spring/Summer 2021):

- Village of Mt. Morris in Ogle County
- City of Oregon in Ogle County
- City of Sterling in Whiteside County
- Village of Warren in Jo Daviess County

### Second Round (Fall 2021):

- Village of Erie in Whiteside County
- City of Galena in Jo Daviess County

Communities were chosen based on interest and ability to engage in the program as well as size and compactness to make the surveys manageable. A community steering committee formulated municipal goals and objectives and advised BHRC on routes of focus for surveys. Steering committee members were also invited to participate in walk audits.

## Assessments

### Village of Erie

Priority Areas		
Sidewalks and Streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A Safe Routes to School application for sidewalk additions and improvements around the middle and elementary schools</li><li>• Crosswalk improvements at Albany Rd and 16th Ave and Albany Rd and 12th St (IL 2)</li><li>• Addition of a bike lane and/or sidewalk along 16th Ave for access to a potential future recreational trail north of the Erie Evangelical Free Church</li><li>• Construction of sidewalk on the north side of 12th St (IL 2) between Albany Rd and the Dollar General</li></ul>	
Green Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Streetscaping around the downtown triangle to improve safety and walkability</li></ul>	
Routes Surveyed		
Priority	Route	Observations
School Routes	Sections of roads around the middle and high schools, including 5th Ave, 5th St, and 6th Ave	Absence of sidewalks for large areas; no shoulder; road used by farming equipment and semi-trucks; existing sidewalks in fair to poor condition; crosswalks painted but no traffic control or signs; ramps are not ADA compliant
Core Sidewalks	The downtown triangle of Main St, Albany Rd, and a section of 8th Ave sidewalks	Sidewalk conditions downtown are fair to good; narrow sidewalks; outside downtown, conditions deteriorate; ramps are not ADA compliant; large flangeway gaps at railroad crossing; large crossings without controls or signs; gaps in sidewalk; obstructed sightlines for pedestrians
Potential Trail Connections	Heritage Park, 16th Ave near the Erie Evangelical Free Church, and Highland Ave	Lack of sidewalk, bike lanes, or shoulders; Highland Ave is a compressed gravel road; unsafe intersection with IL Route 2

## Village of Mt. Morris

Priority Areas		
Sidewalks and Streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sidewalk construction to minimize gaps in the existing network</li> <li>The addition of a sidewalk on the west side of IL 64 in front of Sullivan's Foods</li> <li>The improvement of intersection safety at IL 64 and E Hitt St</li> </ul>	
Green Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A village street tree plan to replace trees lost or to be lost</li> </ul>	
Routes Surveyed		
Priority	Route	Observations
Routes for Seniors	McKendrie Ave from the Pinecrest Campus north to the library	Absence of sidewalks for large areas; mixed sidewalk conditions; curb ramps are not flush with streets; good sightlines for pedestrians
Critical Connections	Zickuhr Park, Dillehay Park, and DLR Junior High linking the north and south parks of the village across IL 64/W Hitt St	Absence of sidewalks for large areas; existing sidewalks in good to fair condition; curb ramp conditions are fair to poor; intersections are not ADA compliant
Food Access	IL 64 to the mobile home park, Mt Morris Estates, E Hitt St to Katie's Way, and E Front St to S Ogle Ave to the Parkside Apartments complex	Absence of sidewalks for large areas; sidewalks need repair; intersections aren't ADA compliant; poor sightlines; lack of bike lanes

## City of Oregon

Priority Areas		
Sidewalks and streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvement of intersection safety at the Park West and Mix Park entrances</li> <li>Sidewalk construction along the west end of Jefferson St from the elementary school to Park West</li> <li>Installation of crosswalks and signage along Koontz Pl (elementary school pick-up/drop-off location)</li> </ul>	
Routes Surveyed		
Priority	Route	Observations
Routes to Schools and Parks	Jefferson Elementary and Oregon High School to and from neighborhoods to the north, northeast, and southeast of the schools	Absence of sidewalks for large areas; mixed sidewalk conditions; no bike lanes; no controlled or signed crosswalks in some areas; non-ADA compliant and missing curb ramps
Critical Connections	Sections of IL 2 (4th St) and IL 64 (Washington St) where they bisect the downtown	Downtown sidewalks are contiguous, meet ADA width standards, and are in very good condition; downtown layout and amenities encourage walking
Intersections of Concern	Jefferson St/Hawk Dr entrance to Park West, IL 64 and 5th St downtown, and IL 2 and Webster St near the northwest entrance to Mix Park	Heavy traffic and high-speed crossings with poor signage and no signals; poor sightlines for pedestrians



## City of Sterling

Priority Areas		
Sidewalks and Streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sterling Lincoln Highway commercial corridor</li> <li>Side streets of commercial corridor that could provide potential connections to a newly planned trail from Hoover Park to Sauk Valley Community College</li> </ul>	
Routes Surveyed		
Priority	Route	Observations
Commercial Corridor	2-mile section of road from the intersection with Freeport Rd and E 13th St northeast to the intersection with 45th Ave	No bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure; sidewalks along front side of commercial buildings; no crossing zones in parking lots; signage exists to alert drivers of cyclists; intersections have no crosswalks or pedestrian signals/signs
Side Streets	Woodlawn Rd/E 15th St, River Rd/E 23rd St, Polo Rd, 43rd Ave, and 45th Ave	No bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure; lower traffic and speed limits than highway; 43rd Ave and 35th Ave intersections with highway promising for crosswalk infrastructure

## Village of Warren

Priority Areas		
Sidewalks and streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sidewalk replacement along streets surrounding the school campus</li> <li>Curb ramp replacement at intersections near the schools</li> <li>Sidewalk replacement along the west side of Bellevue Ave to address severe heaving from tree roots</li> <li>Sidewalk construction on the east side of Chestnut St adjacent to the schools</li> </ul>	
Routes Surveyed		
Priority	Route	Observations
Routes to Schools and Meridian Park	Streets connecting Warren Elementary and Warren Jr/Sr High School to Meridian Park	Absence of sidewalks for large areas; existing sidewalks in fair to poor condition; vertical faults greater than ½"; with is non-ADA compliant; ramps are not ADA compliant; no controlled, painted, or signed crosswalks
Food Access	Several streets south of the schools and a section of IL 78 (Tisdell Ave) that connects to Hartzell's IGA and Dollar General	Absence of sidewalks for large areas; shoulders are paved but unpainted; vertical faults greater than ½"; sidewalk obstructions such as bushes; ramps are not ADA compliant
Routes to Fairgrounds	Critical east/west connection point for the Village across the Canadian National railroad tracks on Johnson St. Includes Jefferson, Railroad, and Beebe streets	Absence of sidewalks for large areas; sidewalks on only one side of street; large flangeway gaps at railroad crossing; deteriorated sidewalks; ramps are not ADA compliant

## City of Galena

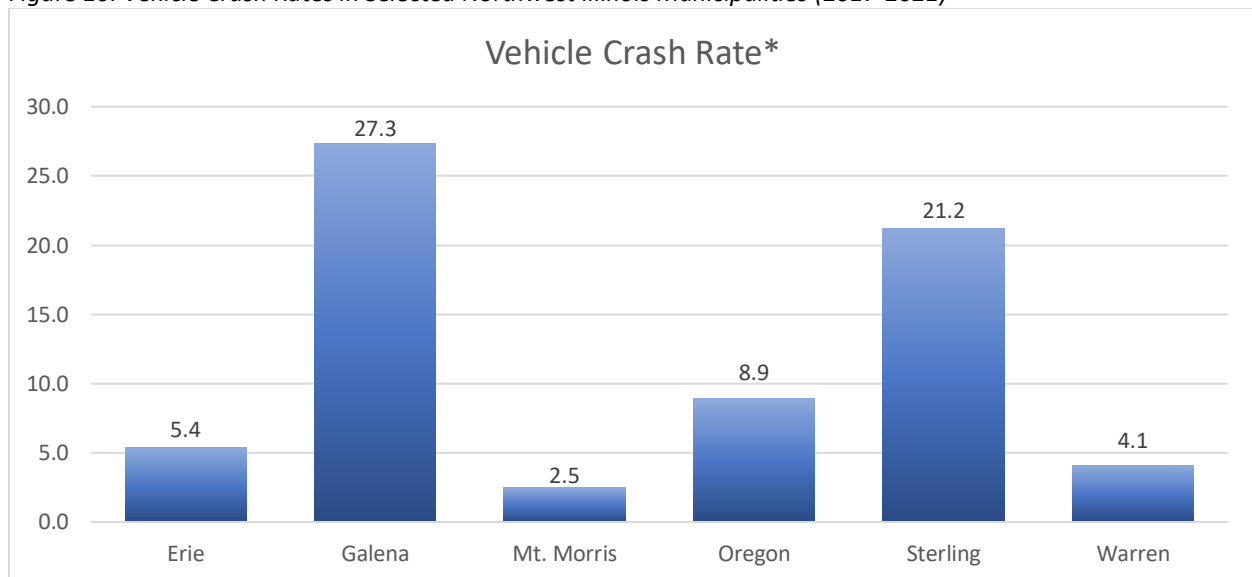
The City of Galena's assessment was different from the other five. The city hired MSA Professional Services to conduct a Sidewalk Deterioration Study in 2015. The BHRC assessment built upon that study, and the methods used in the 2021 survey were similar to methods used in 2015. BHRC used ArcGIS Survey123 to note any sidewalk deficiencies and associated severity. The resulting data can be used by Galena to prioritize sidewalk maintenance based on location and significance of defect.

## Vehicle Crashes

While some of the walkability reports included crash data for the routes surveyed, others did not. This report provides updated crash data for the six municipalities studied. The vehicle crash rates in Figure 10 are based on the average amount of all vehicle crashes (fatal, injury, and property damage) over the period of 2017-2021 divided by 2020 population data from the U.S. Census. While Sterling had the highest quantity of crashes, Galena had the highest crash rate.

Crash rates are important to both perceived and real pedestrian and cyclist safety. Walkers and rollers will avoid roads known for their crashes. A road with a high crash rate may signal unsafe design that could result in more harm to pedestrians.

Figure 10: Vehicle Crash Rates in Selected Northwest Illinois Municipalities (2017-2021)



\*Rates are per 1,000 population

Source: IDOT, City Crash Statistics, 2017-2021

## Recommendations

### WALKABILITY STUDIES

The following recommendations were common among the six reports:

Policy Improvements
<b>Overall</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop written sidewalk plans</li><li>• Review and adopt new ordinances regarding snow removal, ADA compliance, and sidewalk repair/construction</li><li>• Develop community forestry programs</li><li>• Review municipal lighting plans to meet International Dark-Sky Association recommendations</li></ul>
Capital Improvements
<b>Low Cost</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Temporary protected walkways and bikeways</li><li>• Temporary traffic calming techniques using removable barriers</li><li>• Speedbumps at high-traffic intersections</li><li>• Additional painted crosswalks in school areas</li><li>• Lowering speed limits in high traffic areas</li><li>• Work with railroad companies to ensure railroad crossing addresses all compliance issues</li></ul>
<b>Moderate to High Cost</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Construct new sidewalks to fill in gaps</li><li>• Add curb ramps at intersections</li><li>• Repair broken sidewalks and curb ramps that are no longer ADA compliant</li><li>• Add permanent bike lanes</li><li>• Add additional traffic control signals</li></ul>

### NORTHWEST ILLINOIS COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Within the Action Plan section of the CEDS, there are [several goals related to walkability](#) as follows:

CEDS Walkability Goals
<b>Goal 3.16 - Review and maintain existing infrastructure assets that support business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage road safety audits and other transportation planning</li></ul>
<b>Goal 4.2 - Identify and study various built infrastructure needs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess community accessibility and walkability</li><li>• Support capital improvement program planning in local communities and counties</li><li>• Secure technical assistance funding from EDA and other granting organizations to study issues and improve projects, programs, and policies</li></ul>
<b>Goal 4.5 - Use planning and placemaking techniques to improve community infrastructure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify existing successful community infrastructure</li><li>• Help communities plan complete streets and safe routes to schools</li></ul>
<b>Goal 4.8 - Expand access to transportation alternatives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure, as well as transit interconnections</li></ul>

## Conclusion

The results of the six assessments suggest that sidewalks in Northwest Illinois municipalities are in need of significant improvements. All communities had large stretches of road without sidewalks and often without shoulders. When sidewalks were present, they were often disconnected and formed no comprehensive system. With the exception of downtown areas, sidewalks tended to be in fair to poor condition. Ramps were not level with the street, had inappropriate slopes, and/or did not use ADA bumps.

Additionally, many streets lacked adequate crossing features, such as painted stripes, signs, and signals. Except for signs warning drivers to share the road, most municipalities do not have cycling infrastructure. Large flangeway gaps on those few routes with railroad crossings posed a tripping hazard for pedestrians and may cause wheels to become stuck.

Expansion of non-motorized transportation increases economic resiliency by allowing households to reduce economic costs and providing more options for work travel. Addressing walkability issues in Northwest Illinois would help make the region healthier, more accessible, and more economically equitable.

# Greenways and Trails

## Overview

In 2021, BHRC updated the Greenways and Trails plans of five of its six counties: Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, and Stephenson.<sup>11</sup> The plans had an economic emphasis as well as focus on the recreation and transportation value of trails, parks, and open spaces. Advisory groups worked with BHRC in completing each plan. Public input was solicited via stakeholder interviews and an online survey.

## Existing Resources

An inventory of existing public trails, routes, parks, and open spaces was gathered from the USGS Protected Areas Database, the Prairie State Conservation Coalition's protected lands database, the National Register of Historic Places database, a BHRC trails layer, and knowledge provided by members of the advisory group. A full list of these assets is in each trail plan, but in total, the five-county region has:

*Tables 5-8: Greenway and Trail Resources in Surveyed Counties (2022)*

Trails and Scenic Routes	
All Types	33
Biking Trails	24
Walking Trails	17
Waterway Trails	6

Open Spaces	
All Types	62
Ecological reserve	5
Nature Preserve	35
Natural Cemetery	1
Teaching Forest	1
Conservation Area	1
State Natural Area	1
Natural area	8
Wildlife area	5
Wildlife Sanctuary	1
Wildlife Refuge	1
Habitat Area	1
Community Forest	1
Wetland Preserve	1

Parks and Recreation	
All Types	159
Parks	127
Playground	3
Athletic Fields	4
Fairgrounds	3
Marina	2
Golf Course	4
Scout Camp	1
Ski Resort	1
Forest Reserve	1
Scenic Overlook	1
State Recreational Area	1
Outdoor Pool & Splash Pad	1
State Park	5
Campground	2
Boat Ramp	1
Sports Facility	1

Heritage Sites	
All Types	26

Source: BHRC, Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, and Stephenson County Greenways and Trails Plans, 2022

<sup>11</sup> At the time, Whiteside County did not express immediate interest in updating its existing plan.



## Public Input

Advisory groups and some individual stakeholders completed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis for their respective regions. A consolidated version is as follows:

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural and unique beauty of the area</li> <li>Many trails, open spaces, and parks</li> <li>Multiple well-maintained trails such as Galena River Trail, Jane Addams, and Four Sisters' Bike Path</li> <li>Unique aspects to trails such as challenging hills for cyclists, snowmobile trails, equestrian paths, etc.</li> <li>Multiple nature preserves and state parks</li> <li>Small but dedicated volunteer groups to help with maintenance of natural spaces and trails</li> </ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of promotion of amenities and trails</li> <li>Maintenance can be an issue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget constraints on smaller rural communities</li> <li>Volunteers are dedicated, but mostly older and shrinking in number</li> </ul> </li> <li>Lack of signage on some trails</li> <li>Issues with connectivity – trails are generally short, and connecting roads are not safe for cyclists and pedestrians</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating more connections between trails <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linking the Great River Trail to the Galena River Trail</li> </ul> </li> <li>Develop signage, maps, and other wayfinding materials to help in using and promoting trails</li> <li>Promote recreational opportunities in the region</li> <li>Implement already completed trail plans</li> <li>More community engagement and volunteer attraction</li> <li>Making roads safer for cyclists and pedestrians</li> </ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State of Illinois laws complicate matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>35 mph speed limits for roads designated for OHV use makes connections between towns challenging</li> <li>Boub v. Wayne 1998 makes it hard to add bike lanes</li> <li>Public water access law limits recreational stream use</li> </ul> </li> <li>Funding is a challenge for smaller cities with large recreational footprints to maintain</li> <li>Volunteers are waning, and community is disengaged or hostile to trails</li> </ul>

A public survey was conducted for each plan using the ArcGIS Survey123 platform. 470 respondents participated across the three surveys. Participants were asked about their top three (of nine) most important benefits of trails, parks, and open spaces. Across the region, the top two responses were:

1. Conservation of natural areas
2. Promotion of health (physical, social engagement, psychological), wellness, and fitness

The next highest responses were different for each county, although there were common responses:

Carroll and Jo Daviess	Lee and Ogle	Stephenson
3. Historical or heritage preservation 4. Neighborhood/community open space for social interactions and play (creating a sense of community/bringing people together)	3. Transportation/connectivity, options for commuters (e.g., bike lanes, trails) 4. Neighborhood/community open space for social interactions and play (creating a sense of community/bringing people together)	3. Economic development (helping the community attract and retain residents and businesses, increase property values, and be more resilient) 4. Transportation/connectivity, options for commuters (e.g., bike lanes, trails) 5. Neighborhood/community open space for social interactions and play (creating a sense of community/bringing people together)

Participants were also asked what reasons prevent them from using trails, parks, and open spaces more often. The top answer for all three surveys was, “Don’t know where parks/trails are located” (likely a result reading through a comprehensive listing of recreational areas). The second most popular answer for Lee, Ogle, and Stephenson counties was, “Trails aren’t open to or designated for the uses I’m interested in,” while for Carroll and Jo Daviess, it was, “Parks/trails lack adequate maps or directional signage on-site.”

These responses reflect findings from the BHRC 2017-2018 and 2019-2020 Trails Studies, where survey respondents answered that they learned about local trails most frequently through word of mouth, and most suggested needing additional signage or mile markers on the trails.

## Recommendations

### GREENWAYS AND TRAILS PLANS

The majority of the recommendations within the Greenways and Trails plans are for specific trails or amenities. Lists of specific projects be found in those reports. Common to the majority of the plans are the following:

Common Recommendations
Implement improvements at open spaces, parks, and preserves to include parking, road signage, and amenities
Develop additional bike/pedestrian plans at county and/or municipal levels
<b>Trail wayfinding signage improvements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northwest Illinois Trails Wayfinding Sign Guide Template to be used and adopted as the signage standard for trails in the counties</li> <li>Accessibility information such as trail surface, elevation change, slopes, and trail width to be included</li> </ul>
<b>Promotion of Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, and Stephenson counties’ trails, parks, and open spaces</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To include the development of a publicly available map showing recreation opportunities- may build upon the</li> <li>Northwest Illinois Trails webpage</li> <li>To advertise new and existing opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Continue to explore options for providing OHV opportunities in the counties</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Important steps to take include an inclusive public input process and a study of options for a legal ordinance at the county level</li> <li>Identify suitable properties for OHV park</li> </ul>
<b>Expand water trails</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore options for designating streams and creeks as water trails</li> <li>Develop and implement information on current paddling trails, including signs, route maps, and hazard warnings</li> <li>Provide additional river access points</li> </ul>
<b>Explore potential locations for providing mountain biking opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities may include purpose-built mountain bike trails or mountain bike skills courses</li> </ul>
<b>Work with Rails-to-Trails Conservancy for support, resources, and warnings of local rail abandonments for corridor preservation and future trail use</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek out additional multi-use rails-to-trail opportunities with winter snowmobile use</li> </ul>

Within the Action Plan section of the CEDS, there are [several goals related to greenways and trails](#) as follows:

#### **CEDS Greenway and Trails Goals**

##### **Goal 3.16 - Review and maintain existing infrastructure assets that support business**

- Encourage road safety audits and other transportation planning

##### **Goal 4.7 - Expand established trail systems and develop new trails**

- Establish a regionally cohesive wayfinding and signage program
- Connect existing employers to bicycle routes, including those between Sterling, Sauk Valley Community College, and Dixon

##### **Goal 4.8 - Expand access to transportation alternatives**

- Improve bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure, as well as transit interconnections

## **Conclusion**

Northwest Illinois has an abundance of greenspace. With at least 33 different trails (though often disconnected from one another), 62 open spaces, and 159 parks and recreational opportunities, the region benefits greatly from its natural resources. The distinct character of and dedicated volunteers maintaining local trails provide opportunities for residents and visitors to connect with the local environment and commerce.

However, improvements are warranted. Improving connectivity and access to destinations are of paramount importance. Increased familiarity, both through promotional and wayfinding materials and signs, would be another significant improvement to all greenways and trails in the BHRC region. Furthermore, increased funding is required to both expand and maintain the trails, especially with shrinking volunteer populations.

# Broadband

## Overview

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated widescale use of videoconferencing, the importance of Internet access as an economic development tool was known by communities and economic developers. A limited number of municipal deployments have occurred in order to support various constituencies in Northwest Illinois. In addition, for over ten years, BHRC has partnered with regional organizations to ensure that its communities are adequately connected.

## Current Efforts

The not-for-profit Illinois Fiber Resources Group (iFiber), of which BHRC is a founding partner and current outreach lead in Northwest Illinois, was created to provide fast, reliable fiber broadband services in rural and underserved areas. As an open-access network available to all from its inception, iFiber was designed to foster a competitive Internet environment by facilitating public and private Internet Service Provider (ISP) development in areas lacking usable fiber optics or experiencing limited ISP competition. Partially as a result of iFiber's work, private enterprise has constructed hundreds of miles of fiber optic infrastructure in northwest and north central Illinois, including investments in networks supporting gigabit fiber-to-the-home and business. Over the past decade, hundreds of Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) throughout Boone, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside, and Winnebago counties have gained access to symmetrical, 400Mbps-10Gbps Internet transport. Entities like Northern Illinois University, the City of Rockford, LaSalle County, the North Central Illinois Council of Governments, and BHRC supported these efforts from the start.

Despite these investments, the most rural places in Northwest Illinois still lack access; areas that have access lack sufficient bandwidth. In BHRC-facilitated home and work surveys of Ogle County<sup>12</sup> in 2021 and Whiteside County in 2022, about 45% of respondents (237 of 521 survey takers) that took a speed test reported download speeds of below 25Mbps. Many respondents expressed dissatisfaction concerning ISP cost and service. Finally, those without Internet access indicated a need for more information about subsidy programs that might lead to Internet adoption.

## Recommendations

Within the Action Plan section of the CEDS, there are [several goals related to broadband access](#) as follows:

### CEDS Broadband Access Goals

#### Goal 4.9 - Expand broadband access

- Expand the region's fiber footprint
- Support municipal and not-for-profit networks
- Follow work trends and new technology developments/implementation, such as 5G

<sup>12</sup> Includes some nearby Winnebago County home and/or work locations.

## Conclusion

Broadband access is no longer a competitive advantage; it is a necessity, without which community and economic growth are stymied. Continued public and private investment are needed in the most rural and economically disadvantaged portions of Northwest Illinois to see improved (or even access to) modern broadband service.<sup>13</sup> The agricultural sector – which contributes to the region’s important food processing industry – stands to benefit especially by new fiber optic and 5G rollouts. Local leaders should heed calls to comment on state and federal broadband maps and policy to ensure that their constituencies are well served. Prudence dictates public support of competition and mission-focused ISPs. Authorities must also work in good faith regarding utility permitting prior to infrastructure deployment. Moreover, in addition to telecommunications system upgrades, education and outreach are needed. Providing eligible persons with information about subsidy programs (like the federal Affordable Connectivity Program) and helping them enroll would expand broadband access to those with limited financial means.

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<sup>13</sup> Modern broadband service = Internet bandwidth that is 100Mbps download, 20Mbps upload



## Appendix A – Reports and Resources

### Housing Studies

To be published on <http://www.blackhawkhills.com>.

### Childcare Data for Illinois

- [Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map](#)
- [Childcare Aware of America](#)

### Walkability Studies

- [2021 Erie Walkability Assessment Report](#)
- [2021 Galena Sidewalk Assessment Report](#)
- [2021 Mount Morris Walkability Assessment Report](#)
- [2021 Oregon Walkability Assessment Report](#)
- [2021 Sterling Walkability Assessment Report](#)
- [2021 Warren Walkability Assessment Report](#)

### Greenways and Trails Plans

- [2022 Carroll and Jo Daviess Counties Greenways and Trails Plan](#)
- [2022 Lee and Ogle Counties Greenways and Trails Plan](#)
- [2022 Stephenson County Greenways and Trails Plan](#)

## Appendix B – Childcare Tables

BHRC counties are highlighted in orange:

*Table 9: Cost of Childcare in Illinois by County (2020)*

	Population	Median Monthly Costs	Price as Percent of MHI	Rurality <sup>14</sup>
Cook	5,275,541	\$991	18%	Non-Rural
DuPage	932,877	\$1,094	13%	Non-Rural
Lake	714,342	\$1,111	No Data	Non-Rural
Will	696,355	\$992	13%	Non-Rural
Kane	516,522	\$841	13%	Non-Rural
McHenry	310,229	\$1,080	14%	Non-Rural
Winnebago	285,350	\$847	20%	Non-Rural
Madison	265,859	\$884	16%	Non-Rural
St. Clair	257,400	\$808	17%	Non-Rural
Champaign	205,865	\$881	No Data	Non-Rural
Sangamon	196,343	\$752	16%	Non-Rural
Peoria	181,830	\$861	17%	Non-Rural
McLean	170,954	\$885	14%	Non-Rural
Rock Island	144,672	\$791	19%	Non-Rural
Kendall	131,869	\$1,023	13%	Non-Rural
Tazewell	131,343	\$821	14%	Non-Rural
LaSalle	109,658	\$638	13%	Non-Rural
Kankakee	107,502	\$746	15%	Non-Rural
Macon	103,998	\$740	19%	Non-Rural
DeKalb	100,420	\$971	19%	Non-Rural
Vermilion	74,188	\$577	15%	Non-Rural
Williamson	67,153	\$659	13%	Non-Rural
Adams	65,737	\$707	16%	Non-Rural
Whiteside	55,691	\$789	17%	Rural
Boone	53,448	\$816	17%	Rural
Jackson	52,974	\$738	24%	Rural
Grundy	52,533	\$811	11%	Rural
Ogle	51,788	\$829	16%	Rural
Knox	49,967	\$766	19%	Rural
Henry	49,284	\$716	14%	Rural
Coles	46,863	\$681	21%	Rural
Macoupin	44,967	\$720	14%	Rural
Stephenson	44,630	\$589	15%	Rural
Woodford	38,467	\$827	15%	Rural
Franklin	37,804	\$734	17%	Rural
Marion	37,729	\$652	15%	Rural
Jefferson	37,113	\$777	19%	Rural
Clinton	36,899	\$688	13%	Rural
Livingston	35,815	\$650	14%	Rural

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. n/a. [Rural America: A Story Map](#).

Monroe	34,962	\$784	13%	Rural
Effingham	34,668	\$583	12%	Rural
Lee	34,145	\$751	14%	Rural
Christian	34,032	\$681	13%	Rural
Fulton	33,609	\$711	14%	Rural
Bureau	33,244	\$672	14%	Rural
Morgan	32,915	\$712	16%	Rural
Randolph	30,163	\$654	14%	Rural
Montgomery	28,288	\$741	16%	Rural
Logan	27,987	\$775	15%	Rural
McDonough	27,238	\$607	14%	Rural
Iroquois	27,077	\$538	12%	Rural
Saline	23,768	\$745	20%	Rural
Jo Daviess	22,035	\$657	12%	Rural
Jersey	21,512	\$629	12%	Rural
Fayette	21,488	\$575	12%	Rural
Shelby	20,990	\$592	12%	Rural
Perry	20,945	\$772	16%	Rural
Douglas	19,740	\$686	16%	Rural
Crawford	18,679	\$626	13%	Rural
Hancock	17,620	\$461	9%	Rural
Union	17,244	\$698	17%	Rural
Edgar	16,866	\$626	15%	Rural
Warren	16,835	\$663	14%	Rural
Bond	16,725	\$716	14%	Rural
Piatt	16,673	\$725	13%	Rural
Wayne	16,179	\$593	12%	Rural
Richland	15,813	\$655	15%	Rural
Carroll	15,702	\$585	12%	Rural
Mercer	15,699	\$737	14%	Rural
De Witt	15,516	\$563	12%	Rural
Clark	15,455	\$564	11%	Rural
Lawrence	15,280	\$528	12%	Rural
Pike	14,739	\$520	12%	Rural
Moultrie	14,526	\$635	12%	Rural
Massac	14,169	\$672	17%	Rural
White	13,877	\$601	15%	Rural
Washington	13,761	\$600	12%	Rural
Ford	13,534	\$725	16%	Rural
Johnson	13,308	\$643	15%	Rural
Clay	13,288	\$560	11%	Rural
Mason	13,086	\$714	16%	Rural
Cass	13,042	\$569	11%	Rural
Menard	12,297	\$711	13%	Rural
Greene	11,985	\$577	12%	Rural
Marshall	11,742	\$790	16%	Rural
Wabash	11,361	\$547	14%	Rural
Cumberland	10,450	\$590	13%	Rural

Jasper	9,287	\$467	9%	Rural
Hamilton	7,993	\$692	16%	Rural
Schuyler	6,902	\$617	14%	Rural
Henderson	6,387	\$509	10%	Rural
Edwards	6,245	\$614	14%	Rural
Brown	6,244	\$512	10%	Rural
Putnam	5,637	\$554	11%	Rural
Stark	5,400	\$513	11%	Rural
Alexander	5,240	\$709	20%	Rural
Pulaski	5,193	\$709	19%	Rural
Scott	4,949	\$539	11%	Rural
Gallatin	4,946	No Data	No Data	Rural
Calhoun	4,437	No Data	No Data	Rural
Pope	3,763	No Data	No Data	Rural
Hardin	3,649	\$709	19%	Rural

Source: Child Care Aware of America, Illinois, 2020

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