

KIM REYNOLDS
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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May 23, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Through: Regional Administrator Andrea Spillars
FEMA Region VII
Kansas City, MO 64131

RE: Request for Expedited Major Disaster Declaration, Severe Storms and Widespread Flooding

Dear Mr. President:

On May 21, 2024, severe weather impacted Iowa with several extremely broad supercell storms that produced large and damaging tornadoes and extremely heavy rainfall amounts across much of the state. These cells moved across western and central Iowa early in the afternoon and throughout the evening of Tuesday, May 21st. Preliminary impact reports indicated widespread damage, large amounts of debris, and substantial flooding across the state. Consequently, I would respectfully request that you declare a major disaster for the State of Iowa under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207, as implemented by 44 CFR §§ 206.36-206.48.

In response to this event, I took appropriate action under state law and directed the execution of the Iowa Emergency Response Plan on May 21, and signed a Governor's Proclamation of Disaster Emergency for fifteen (15) counties across Iowa the same day. An additional seventeen (17) counties were added to a Governor's Proclamation on May 22, bringing the total counties under a Governor's proclamation to thirty-two (32). This constitutes nearly one-third of all counties in Iowa, highlighting the magnitude of this event. The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) was activated in a partial posture on May 20 in anticipation of a severe weather event. The SEOC was fully activated on May 21 and remains activated to date. The Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEMD) remains in contact with emergency management coordinators across the state and is coordinating with agencies and organizations including the Iowa Department of Public Safety (DPS), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), National Weather Service (NWS), American Red Cross (ARC), and Iowa Disaster Human Resources Council (IDHRC). The State Emergency Response plan remains activated. All State departments and area agencies' resources are available to meet the needs of this emergency, and are hereby committed to the reasonable extent necessary to protect lives, minimize injury, and repair damage. These efforts are being coordinated by the director of the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management with comparable functions of the federal government and political subdivisions of the State.

Given the scope of this disaster, I request activation of the Individual Assistance Program, and Small Business Administration disaster loans for the following four (4) counties: Adair, Polk, Story, and Montgomery. In addition, I request activation of the Public Assistance Program for Adair County.

GENERAL FACTS OF THIS DISASTER

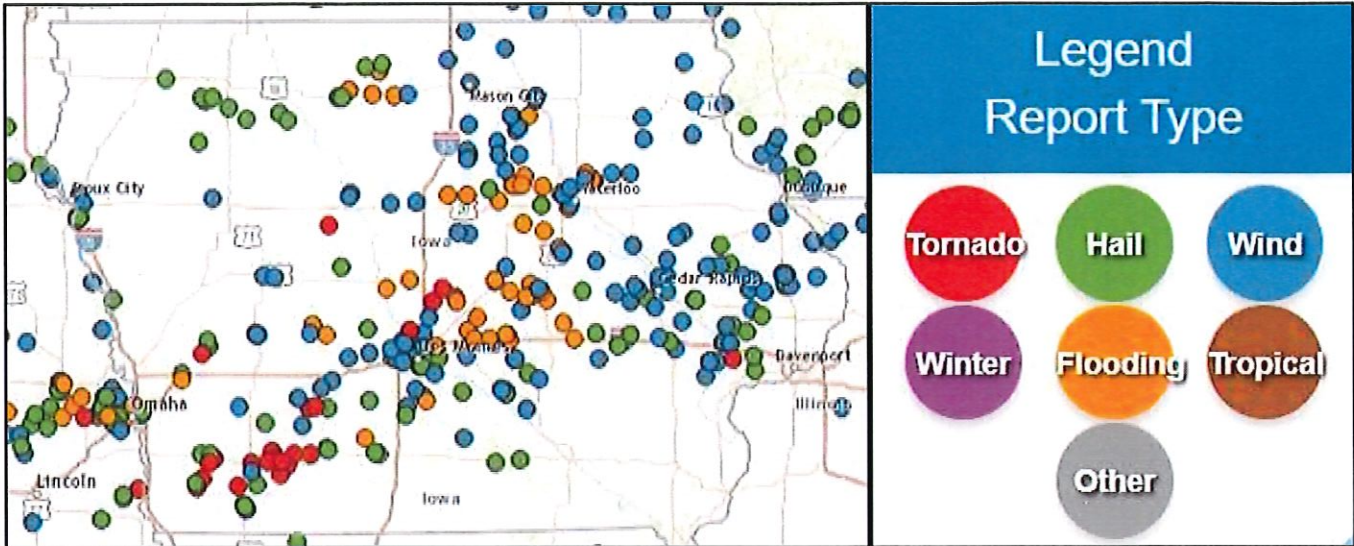
Early on the morning of Tuesday May 21, the National Weather Service (NWS) circulated a weather report showing that a majority of the State of Iowa would be under an NWS Risk Threat level four (out of five) for the day. The major threats identified were large amounts of rain, high winds, and a high chance for the development of tornados. The NWS' forecasts became a reality by early afternoon. Over the course of the day, over one-hundred reports of high winds, flash flooding, funnel clouds, and confirmed tornadoes were reported cumulatively by forty counties across the state. This shows the magnitude and indiscriminate path that this storm system took as it ravaged the state. Reports, videos, and pictures began to inundate local and state authorities, along with local news and media outlets, of the damage that had occurred in Greenfield, IA located in Adair County. Numerous houses, structures, and a hospital were felled by this massive storm. After the storm had passed in Greenfield, local constituents and public safety personnel began to assess the true damage, and discovered the town was effectively leveled. The counties of Polk, Story, and Montgomery were also severely impacted. Washed out roads, large debris fields, and majorly damaged and destroyed houses have been identified across all four counties. As damage reports continue to be submitted to the State and Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEMD), the true picture of the damage that Iowa incurred will be fully known.

The magnitude and geographic impact of this event created large amounts of debris, extensive destruction to homes and widespread flash flooding. and widespread flash flooding. Search and rescue efforts are still being conducted in Greenfield to provide an accurate number of fatalities, but it is known that there have been multiple fatalities and injuries as a result of this disaster.

Storm Paths: The graphic below depicts local storm reports and warning polygons



Severe Weather Reports by Type: The graph below depicts the numerous reports, by



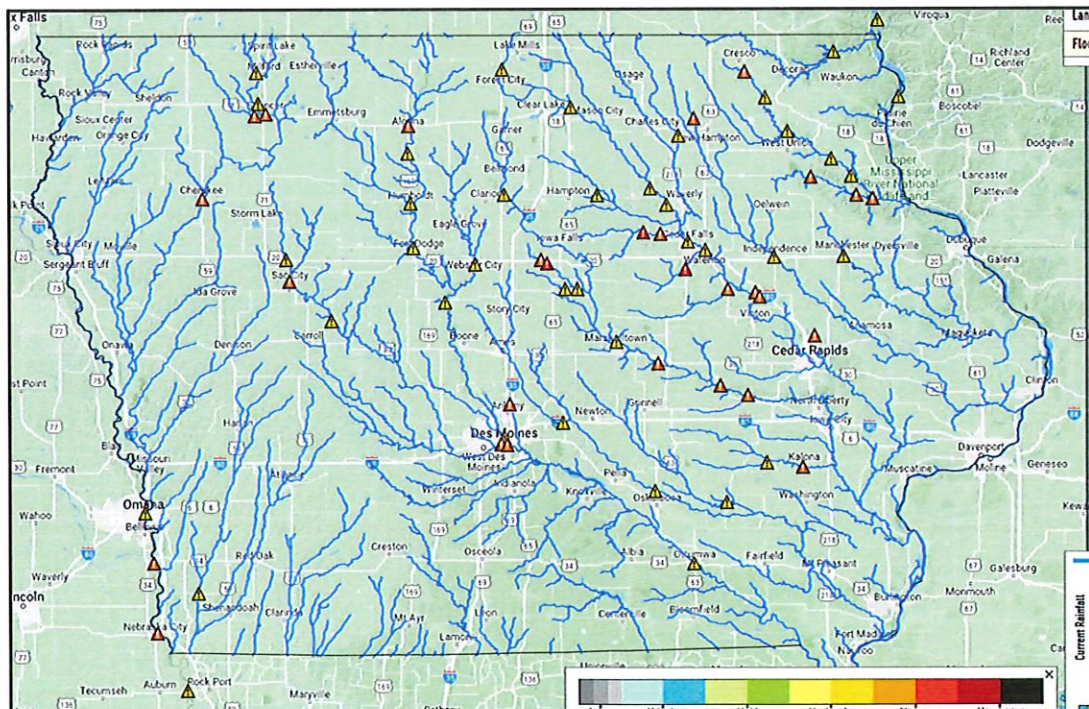
type submitted to the NWS over the course of the event by various sources.

County	Event Type
Adair	TORNADO
Adair	TORNADO
Adair	TSTM WND DMG
Montgomery	FUNNEL CLOUD
Montgomery	TORNADO
Montgomery	TORNADO
Polk	FLASH FLOOD
Polk	FLOOD
Polk	TORNADO
Polk	TORNADO
Polk	TORNADO
Polk	TSTM WND DMG
Polk	TSTM WND DMG
Polk	TSTM WND DMG
Polk	TSTM WND DMG
Polk	TSTM WND DMG

Polk	TSTM WND DMG
Polk	TSTM WND DMG
Polk	TSTM WND DMG
Polk	TSTM WND DMG
Polk	TSTM WND DMG
Polk	TSTM WND DMG
Story	FLOOD
Story	FLOOD
Story	TORNADO
Story	TORNADO
Story	TORNADO
Story	TORNADO
Story	TSTM WND DMG

Source: National Weather Service (NWS)

Rainfall and Flash-Flooding: The below graph shows a number of Iowa rivers, creeks, and streams that are at action or flood stage following the deluge of rain that accompanied the storm event. Flash-flooding remains a major concern for all communities located near these waterways. Prior to the April and May storms, a majority of Iowa was experiencing severe drought conditions.



Source: Iowa Flood Information System (IFIS)

Residential Impacts:

County	Major	Destroyed
Adair		153
Montgomery		8
Polk		26
Story		15
Total		202

ADDITIONAL DAMAGE

The following is a compilation of the additional damage, impacts, and accessibility problems in the affected area and population described in sections 8 and 10 of the Request for Presidential Disaster (FEMA form 010-0-13).

Injuries, Fatalities and Sheltering-in-Place

There have been multiple reported fatalities as a result of the severe weather and subsequent tornadoes. Due to the extent of the destruction, search and rescue efforts are still ongoing and the full number of fatalities is not yet known, it may be days until the full impact to life and health is known. Multiple people have been treated for injuries ranging from minor to severe

Thousands of Iowans sheltered in place and awaited the passing of the storms. Early warning systems implemented through statewide preparedness and mitigation efforts were effective in providing individuals in the affected counties an opportunity to seek shelter. This includes the use of mass notification through the statewide alerting system, Alert Iowa and weather radios.

Critical Facilities and Infrastructure

Power Outages:

Downed powerlines and damage to distribution and generation facilities in the most affected counties caused power disruption and outages to 69,005 homes, businesses and facilities. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC) notified the SEOC that three distribution facilities and one generation facility had requested mutual aid to help restore power and mitigate further disruptions. It has been estimated, in total, that the Rural Electric Cooperatives (RECs) have sustained over \$4 million dollars in damages.

Roadways and Bridges:

Rural county roads across the state were affected by the storm path, and subsequent flash-flooding. Early estimates show that hundreds of secondary county roads could be washed

out or unable to sustain traffic. Numerous Iowa rivers overtopped affecting bridges and transportation infrastructures across the state. Post-storm Tama County shared that over thirty-two different road closures had been posted to the county website. In the Hancock County, twelve roads and two bridge overpasses were closed due to flooding.

Healthcare:

The Adair County hospital located in Greenfield was evacuated prior to being severely damaged on May 21st. The hospital served the town of Greenfield and much of Adair County. There are no current estimates on when the hospital will be operational again, but without this critical resource, the residents of Greenfield and Adair County will need to travel outside of the county to seek hospital services.

Public Safety Communications:

Two public safety communication towers that help to ensure agency communication interoperability were destroyed in Montgomery County and damaged in Adair County. DPS deployed a mobile command vehicle to be used as a mobile interoperable communications resource while the destroyed tower is repaired or replaced.

RESOURCES

The following information describes the nature and amount of state and local resources that have been or will be used to alleviate conditions of this disaster as outlined in Section 9 of the Request for Presidential Disaster (FEMA Form 010-0-13)

Local Resources

Local Emergency Management:

Local emergency management coordinators, fire and rescue, and police/public safety personnel were the initial responders to the incident. Life-safety operations occurred through the night of May 21 and will be ongoing for multiple days to come, with local emergency management agencies reporting extractions of individuals trapped under debris, and addressing immediate public safety and public resource needs through local coordination.

Debris Removal:

This storm system created substantial debris fields during and after the incident period. All affected counties and cities are engaged in debris removal operations including: clearing right of ways, providing segregation and removal services to constituents, and complying with local, state, and federal regulations regarding the handling and removal of different types of debris.

Emergency Public Information and Warning:

Early warning and alert systems across the state played a role in giving affected individuals the opportunity to seek shelter before storm impacts. Severe weather sirens sounded across the state, state and federal alerting systems and local news channels provided critical up-to-the-minute updates on storm paths, magnitudes, and recommendations on when, and how, to safely seek shelter.

A number of local school districts, businesses, and organizations let students and staff leave early to get home and shelter-in-place for the coming storms. These actions at the local level surely reduced the number of potential injuries that could have resulted from the storm impacts. Irrespective of these precautions, communities were still devastated across the state.

State Resources

State Emergency Operations:

Prior to the full impact of the May 21st storms, the Iowa State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) was partially activated. Following the damage reports detailed for Adair County, the SEOC was fully activated to meet the needs of the event. Primary agencies for each of the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) were notified of the activation, and numerous state agencies responded throughout the event.

A number of state agencies and ESF partners responded to this event including: The American Red Cross, Iowa Department of Natural Resource, Department of Transportation, Iowa Disaster Human Resource Council, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Department of Public Safety, Animal Rescue League, and others.

State Individual Assistance and Disaster Case Advocacy (IIAGP/DCA):

The Iowa Individual Disaster Assistance Grant Program and Disaster Case Advocacy was made available to constituents of the following affected counties as a result of the Governor's proclamations on May 21: Adair, Adams, Cass, Clay, Hardin, Harrison, Jasper, Kossuth, Marshall, Montgomery, Page, Palo Alto, Pottawattamie, Tama, and Warren counties. The following additional counties were included under a Governor's proclamation on May 22: Black Hawk, Buena Vista, Butler, Cedar, Clinton, Dubuque, Fayette, Franklin, Hancock, Humboldt, Iowa, Jackson, Mills, Muscatine, O'Brien, Polk, and Story.

Debris Removal:

Iowa HSEMD and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) helped to define debris missions, especially for the town of Greenfield, and provided subject matter expertise and guidance for debris management operations. Iowa HSEMD will rely on state Master Agreements (MA) to help with debris management operations at the local level. Iowa HSEMD is also prepared to help with landfill fees and other costs associated with managing and removing debris at this large of a scale.

Housing:

The ARC, in coordination with the SEOC, responded quickly to affected areas, especially in Adair County, to setup emergency shelters and begin assessing unmet housing and personal item needs. More discussions will be occurring in the near future with ESF 6 Mass Care and RSF Housing to ensure short, mid-term, and long-term housing solutions are established for those affected.

Transportation:

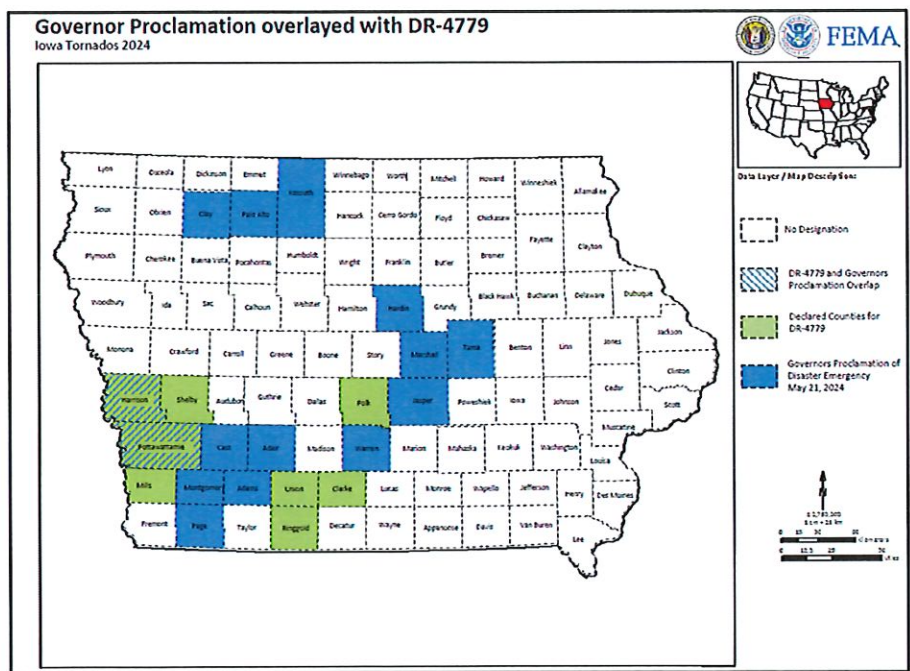
Large amounts of debris in roadways, and damaged transportation infrastructure, has greatly impacted the affected counties, especially at the local level. Numerous towns closed primary roads, secondary roads, and bridges, due to flash-flooding, debris in

roadways and general damage to roadway infrastructure. Recovery and rebuilding of this infrastructure will take weeks, if not months.

Recent Declarations:

The majority of the counties included in this request have been included as a declared area in a previous declaration, an active FEMA Disaster Declaration (not including COVID-19), and/or a USDA Disaster Declaration for Drought. Currently (2019 - Present), the State of Iowa has six open presidentially-declared disasters for Individual and Public Assistance, including DR-4779 which was declared on May 14, 2024. The counties included in this major disaster request are currently included in an open Presidential Disaster Declaration, with more than 976 projects and a total obligation exceeding \$473 million. The latest round of damage only serves to cause additional stress to these counties.

The below graphic shows the overlay of the counties declared for DR-4779 and the counties included in the Governor’s Proclamation on May 21. This further shows the impact and strain on the State of Iowa’s ability to respond to this event as it continues to recover from the events on April 26.



PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SUMMARY

The severe storms, producing numerous tornados, left widespread damage to roads, utility infrastructures, and public buildings and services. Many communities in the affected area took emergency protective measures to clear roads, manage, segregate, and remove debris, and re-establish critical community services (Category B). High winds and tornadic activities caused significant damage to buildings (Category E) and utilities (Category F), from destroying roofs and walls, to downing powerlines and disrupting water service.

Below is a summary of estimated Public Assistance-eligible damage in Adair County for which I am requesting federal assistance:

Category	Estimates
A (Debris Removal)	\$ 6,450,286.00
B (Emergency Protective Measures)	\$ 529,200.00
C (Roads & Bridges)	
D (Water Control Facilities)	
E (Buildings)	
F (Utilities)	\$ 4,140,000.00
G (Parks, Rec Facilities, Other)	
Total	\$ 11,119,486.00

There are outstanding Public Assistance-eligible damage estimates that will be added into these calculations once the amounts are assessed and validated.

ASSISTANCE REQUESTED AND CERTIFICATIONS GIVEN

I certify that for this major disaster, the state and local governments will assume all applicable non-federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act.

I request activation of the Individual Assistance Program, and Small Business Administration disaster loans for the following four (4) counties: Adair, Montgomery, Polk, and Story.

I request activation of the Public Assistance program for: Adair County.

In addition to Individual and Public Assistance, I request Hazard Mitigation funding statewide.

In accordance with 44 CFR § 206.208, the State of Iowa agrees that with respect to direct federal assistance, it will do the following:

1. Provide without cost to the United States all lands, easements and rights-of-way necessary to accomplish the approved work;
2. Hold and save the United States free from damages due to the requested work, and shall indemnify the federal government against any claims arising from such work;
3. Provide reimbursement to FEMA for the non-federal share of the cost of such work in accordance with the provisions of the FEMA-state agreement; and
4. Assist the performing federal agency in all support and local jurisdictional matters.

Pursuant to Sections 403 and 407 of the Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5170b, 5173, the State agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the United States of America for any claims arising from the removal of debris or wreckage for this disaster. The State agrees that debris removal from public and private property will not occur until the landowner signs an unconditional authorization for the removal of debris.

I hereby designate Dennis Harper as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. He will work with FEMA and may provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,



Kim Reynolds
Governor of Iowa

Enclosures

OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13

Enclosure A – Estimates for Individual Assistance

Enclosure B1 – Public Assistance Preliminary Damage Assessment Cost Estimate Worksheet

Enclosure B2 – Governor's Certification

ENCLOSURE A TO MAJOR DISASTER REQUEST

Estimated Requirements for Individual Assistance Under the Stafford Act

County	Assistance to Individuals and Households					Other Programs
	Temporary Housing	Repairs	Replacement	Permanent Housing Construction	Other Needs Assistance	(Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Legal Services, and Crisis Counseling)
4						
Adair	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Montgomery	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Polk	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Story	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
TOTAL	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

Profiles of Affected Populations

<p>Adair County - Census Data</p> <p>In 2022, Adair, IA had a population of 828 people with a median age of 40.6 and a median household income of \$50,688. Between 2021 and 2022 the population of Adair, IA declined from 856 to 828, a -3.27% decrease and its median household income grew from \$49,423 to \$50,688, a 2.56% increase.</p> <p>The 5 largest ethnic groups in Adair, IA are White (Non-Hispanic) (92.5%), Two+ (Non-Hispanic) (4.23%), White (Hispanic) (1.93%), Two+ (Hispanic) (1.33%), and Black or African American (Non-Hispanic) (0%). In 2022, the median property value in Adair, IA was \$119,400, and the homeownership rate was 64.9%.</p>
<p>Polk County - Census Data</p> <p>In 2021, Polk County, IA had a population of 489k people with a median age of 35.9 and a median household income of \$73,015. Between 2020 and 2021 the population of Polk County, IA grew from 485,418 to 488,871, a 0.711% increase and its median household income grew from \$69,747 to \$73,015, a 4.69% increase. The 5 largest ethnic groups in Polk County, IA are White (Non-Hispanic) (76.2%), Black or African American (Non-Hispanic) (7.02%), White (Hispanic) (5.15%), Asian (Non-Hispanic) (4.88%), and Two+ (Non-Hispanic) (2.89%). 94.9% of the residents in Polk County, IA are U.S. citizens. In 2021, the median property value in Polk County, IA was \$201,300, and the homeownership rate was 66.9%.</p>
<p>Montgomery County - Census Data</p> <p>In 2022, Montgomery County, IA had a population of 10.3k people with a median age of 43.3 and a median household income of \$61,261. Between 2021 and 2022 the population of Montgomery County, IA declined from 10,327 to 10,285, a -0.407% decrease and its median household income grew from \$56,971 to \$61,261, a 7.53% increase. The 5 largest ethnic groups in Montgomery County, IA are White (Non-Hispanic) (92.1%), Two+ (Non-Hispanic) (2.98%), American Indian & Alaska Native (Non-Hispanic) (1.94%), Other (Non-Hispanic) (0.924%), and White (Hispanic) (0.632%). In 2022, the median property value in Montgomery County, IA was \$99,300, and the homeownership rate was 70.9%.</p>
<p>Story County - Census Data</p> <p>In 2022, Story County, IA had a population of 98.6k people with a median age of 26.5 and a median household income of \$66,197. Between 2021 and 2022 the population of Story County, IA grew from 98,106 to 98,573, a 0.476% increase and its median household income grew from \$62,578 to \$66,197, a 5.78% increase.</p>

The 5 largest ethnic groups in Story County, IA are White (Non-Hispanic) (82.5%), Asian (Non-Hispanic) (7.26%), Two+ (Non-Hispanic) (3.72%), Black or African American (Non-Hispanic) (2.36%), and Other (Hispanic) (1.34%). In 2022, the median property value in Story County, IA was \$229,100, and the homeownership rate was 55.7%.

