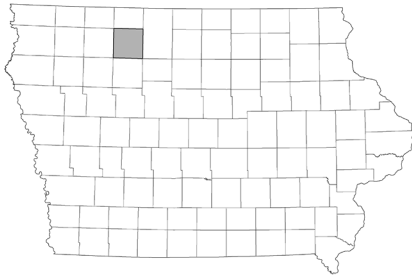


Data for Decision Makers



Palo Alto County County Profile

report created: 12/13/2024

Population profile

Palo Alto County is a nonmetropolitan county in northwest Iowa. It is composed of nine incorporated communities and their surrounding rural areas. From 2010 to 2020, Palo Alto County's population decreased by 4.51% while the state's population increased by 4.73%.

Total Population¹

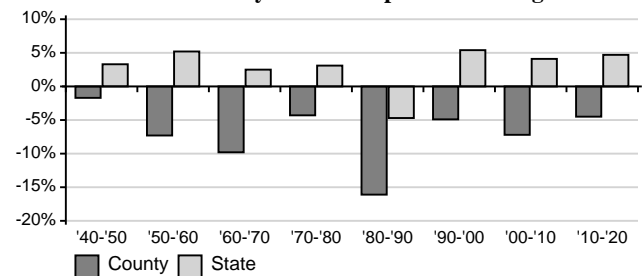
Totals	2000	2010	2020
Palo Alto County	10,147	9,421	8,996
Male Total	4,935	4,678	4,496
Female Total	5,212	4,743	4,500
City			
Ayrshire	202	143	133
Curlew	62	58	37
Cylinder	110	88	87
Emmetsburg	3,958	3,904	3,706
Graettinger	900	844	832
Mallard	298	274	257
Rodman	56	45	31
Ruthven	711	737	725
West Bend [†]	834	785	791
State Total	2,926,324	3,046,355	3,190,369

[†]City is located in multiple counties, total population is provided.

Neighboring Counties - Percent Population Change¹

County	'90-'00	'00-'10	'10-'20
Buena Vista, IA	2.23%	-0.74%	2.78%
Clay, IA	-1.21%	-4.06%	-1.70%
Dickinson, IA	10.16%	1.48%	6.22%
Emmet, IA	-4.68%	-6.57%	-8.87%
Humboldt, IA	-3.49%	-5.45%	-2.22%
Kossuth, IA	-7.68%	-9.44%	-4.60%
Palo Alto, IA	-4.89%	-7.15%	-4.51%
Pocahontas, IA	-9.06%	-15.61%	-3.17%
State of Iowa	5.39%	4.10%	4.73%

Palo Alto County Percent Population Change¹



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Demographic Profile

Palo Alto County

As with the other 98 counties in the state, Palo Alto County's population is predominantly white. The percentage of the population of Hispanic origin increased between 2010 and 2020. In 2020, Palo Alto County had a lower percentage of those 17 or younger than the state. New household relationship categories were reported for 2020 that are not comparable with 2010³.

Percentage of Population by Race/Hispanic Origin¹

Race Groups	County		State	
	2010	2020	2010	2020
One race only	99.2%	96.6%	98.2%	94.4%
White	97.8%	94.1%	91.3%	84.5%
White alone, not Hispanic	96.7%	93.3%	88.7%	82.7%
Black or African American	0.5%	0.6%	2.9%	4.1%
Asian	0.3%	0.4%	1.7%	2.4%
American Indian	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%
Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Other	0.3%	1.2%	1.8%	2.8%
Two or more races	0.8%	3.4%	1.8%	5.6%
Hispanic origin ^a	1.6%	3.0%	5.0%	6.8%

^aHispanics can be of any race.

Households by Family or Nonfamily Type^{1,3}

	County		State	
	2010	2020	2010	2020
Total households	3,994	3,831	1,221,576	1,288,560
Family households ^{a,b}	62.8%	62.1%	64.7%	63.0%
Married couple family ^b	51.9%	49.7%	51.2%	48.5%
With own children	18.0%	16.9%	20.0%	18.2%
Other family ^c	10.9%	12.4%	13.5%	14.4%
Male householder ^c	3.8%	4.6%	4.2%	4.9%
With own children	2.4%	2.7%	2.5%	2.7%
Female householder ^c	7.1%	7.8%	9.3%	9.6%
With own children	4.6%	4.9%	5.9%	5.7%
Nonfamily households ^d	37.2%	37.9%	35.3%	37.0%
Male living alone	14.1%	16.9%	12.8%	14.2%
Female living alone	17.8%	16.2%	15.7%	15.8%

Households by Couple or Non-couple Type^{1,3}

	County		State	
	2010	2020	2010	2020
Total households	3,994	3,831	1,221,576	1,288,560
Married couple ^b	51.9%	49.7%	51.2%	48.5%
Cohabiting couple ^{b,f}	NA ^e	6.5%	NA ^e	7.1%
Male householder ^g	NA ^e	20.8%	NA ^e	19.5%
Female householder ^g	NA ^e	23.0%	NA ^e	24.9%

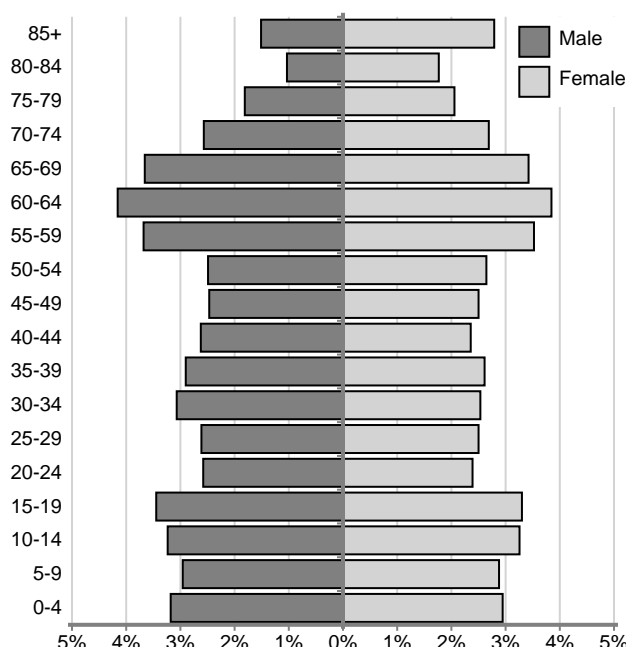
^aHouseholder and at least one other person related to the householder. ^bFor 2020 includes same-sex couples. ^cNo spouse present, but at least one relative present. ^dIn 2010 included same-sex couples whether married or not (if no relatives present). ^e2010 not comparable with 2020. ^fFor 2020 householder has an unmarried partner. ^gFor 2020 no spouse or partner present, but relatives, nonrelatives may be present or householder may be living alone.

Percentage of Population by Age¹

Age Groups	County		State	
	2010	2020	2010	2020
17 or younger	22.0%	22.5%	23.9%	23.2%
0 - 4	6.2%	6.1%	6.6%	6.0%
5 - 9	6.3%	5.8%	6.6%	6.5%
10 - 14	5.7%	6.5%	6.6%	6.8%
15 - 17	3.8%	4.1%	4.1%	3.9%
18 - 24	9.0%	7.6%	10.0%	9.8%
25 - 44	20.0%	21.2%	24.5%	24.6%
45 - 64	27.7%	25.3%	26.7%	24.5%
65 or older	21.3%	23.3%	14.9%	18.0%
65 - 84	17.1%	19.1%	12.4%	15.6%
85 or older	4.2%	4.3%	2.5%	2.4%
Median ⁴ age (years)	43.9	43.6	38.1	38.6
Age dependency ^{a,5}	76.4	84.7	63.4	69.9
Old-Age	37.6	43.1	24.3	30.6
Child	38.8	41.6	39.1	39.4

^aAge Dependency Ratio.

Palo Alto County Population Pyramid^a, 2020¹



^aEach bar represents the percentage that each age-sex group comprises of the total population.

Socioeconomic Profile

Palo Alto County

The median household income in Palo Alto County is less than the median household income of the state. More households in Palo Alto County are in the \$50,000 to \$99,999 household income group while more of Iowa households are in the \$100,000 or more household income group. The median value of owner-occupied housing can vary among counties. The median value of owner-occupied housing units is lower in Palo Alto County than for the state. There is a higher percentage of vacant housing units in Palo Alto County than there is for the state. Many housing units in Palo Alto County were built prior to 1940. Palo Alto County has a lower percentage of college graduates than does the state.

Median⁴ Household and Per Capita Income, 2018-2022²

	County		State	
	Estimate	MOE*	Estimate	MOE*
Total households	3,635	+/- 151	1,290,139	+/- 4,032
Less than \$14,999	8.2%	+/- 1.8%	7.8%	+/- 0.4%
\$15,000 to \$34,999	18.1%	+/- 2.1%	15.2%	+/- 0.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	11.7%	+/- 2.4%	11.9%	+/- 0.2%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	33.0%	+/- 2.5%	32.2%	+/- 0.6%
\$100,000 Or More	29.0%	+/- 2.5%	32.9%	+/- 0.8%
Median ⁴ household income	\$67,306	+/- \$5,588	\$70,571	+/- \$395
Median ⁴ family income	\$86,020	+/- \$6,346	\$90,921	+/- \$579
Per capita income	\$33,517	+/- \$2,063	\$37,949	+/- \$241

Educational Attainment, 2018-2022²

	County		State	
	Estimate	MOE*	Estimate	MOE*
Population 25 and older	6,058	+/-71	2,131,202	+/-967
High school graduate or higher	93.0%	+/-1.5%	93.0%	+/-0.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher	20.2%	+/-3.0%	30.3%	+/-0.3%

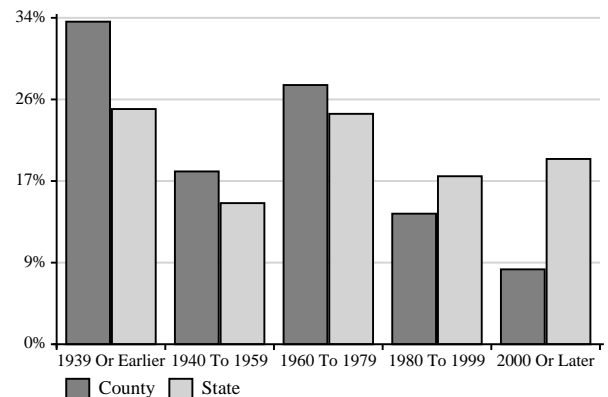
*MOE = the margin of error for American Community Survey estimates² which is a numerical value that when added to or subtracted from the point estimate value gives the range of a 90% confidence interval around the estimate.

Housing Characteristics, 2018-2022²

	County		State	
	Estimate	MOE*	Estimate	MOE*
Total units	4,509	+/- 47	1,417,064	+/- 977
Vacant	19.4%	+/- 3.0%	9.0%	+/- 0.3%
Occupied	80.6%	+/- 3.0%	91.0%	+/- 0.3%
Occupied ^a	3,635	+/- 151	1,290,139	+/- 4,032
Owner	76.1%	+/- 3.2%	71.5%	+/- 0.3%
Renter	23.9%	+/- 3.2%	28.5%	+/- 0.3%
Median ⁴ rent ^b	\$631	+/- \$74	\$914	+/- \$6
Median value ^c	\$117,000	+/- \$8,558	\$181,600	+/- \$1,035

^aOccupied Units. ^bMedian gross rent of renter-occupied units ^cMedian value of owner-occupied units.

Percent Housing by Year Built, 2018-2022²



In Palo Alto County there is a higher percentage of workers in management, business, science, and arts occupations than any other occupation category while the production, transportation, and material moving occupation category makes up 21.8% of occupations of the civilian employed population in the county.

Occupation of the Civilian Employed Population, 2018-2022²

	County		State	
	Estimate	MOE*	Estimate	MOE*
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	4,493	+/- 196	1,627,434	+/- 5,740
Management, business, science, and arts	29.9%	+/- 4.0%	38.1%	+/- 0.3%
Service	11.9%	+/- 2.5%	15.5%	+/- 0.2%
Sales and office	22.2%	+/- 3.1%	19.7%	+/- 0.2%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	14.2%	+/- 2.8%	9.5%	+/- 0.2%
Production, transportation, and material moving	21.8%	+/- 4.1%	17.2%	+/- 0.2%

Socioeconomic Profile

Palo Alto County

Palo Alto County has a lower proportion of the population age 16 or older in the labor force than the state. A portion of those who are not in the labor force are people who are retired. The percent unemployed in Palo Alto County is lower than that for the state overall. Earnings data are provided for the population 16 and over who have earnings. Median⁴ earnings in Palo Alto County tend to be lower than the median earnings for the state. There is a lower percentage of families in Palo Alto County below poverty level than for the state. Families with children tend to have a higher rate of poverty than families without children.

Employment Status, 2018-2022²

	County		State	
	Estimate	MOE*	Estimate	MOE*
Population 16+	7,043	+/- 70	2,544,719	+/- 1,266
In labor force	66.2%	+/- 2.2%	66.6%	+/- 0.2%
Not in labor force	33.8%	+/- 2.2%	33.4%	+/- 0.2%
Civilian labor force	4,663	+/- 177	1,692,129	+/- 5,407
Unemployed	3.6%	+/- 1.3%	3.8%	+/- 0.1%

Individuals Below Poverty Level by Race, 2018-2022²

	County		State	
	Estimate	MOE*	Estimate	MOE*
Total population ^a	8,537	+/-81	3,088,999	+/-950
Percent below	10.7%	+/-0.2%	11.1%	+/-0.2%
White alone	11.2%	+/-3.3%	9.7%	+/-0.2%
Black/African American alone	***	+/-***	30.5%	+/-1.9%
Asian/Pacific Islander alone	***	+/-***	13.6%	+/-1.4%
American Indian alone	***	+/-***	27.6%	+/-4%
Hawaiian alone	***	+/-***	33.1%	+/-8.5%
Other race alone	***	+/-***	16.6%	+/-2.3%
Two or more races	***	+/-***	17.6%	+/-1.3%
Hispanic origin ^b	***	+/-***	17.4%	+/-1.1%

^afor whom poverty status is determined, ^bHispanics can be of any race. **MOE is high, use state estimate.

*MOE = the margin of error for American Community Survey estimates² which is a numerical value that when added to or subtracted from the point estimate value gives the range of a 90% confidence interval around the estimate.

Median⁴ Employment Earnings, 2018-2022²

	County		State	
	Estimate	MOE*	Estimate	MOE*
Population 16+ ^a	4,873	+/- 173	1,799,851	+/- 5,338
Median earnings	\$36,815 +/-	\$1,619	\$40,905	+/- \$219
Female	\$30,676 +/-	\$3,546	\$33,724	+/- \$250
Male	\$42,315 +/-	\$4,954	\$48,115	+/- \$407
Female, full time ^b	\$42,421 +/-	\$2,662	\$47,128	+/- \$238
Male, full time ^b	\$55,270 +/-	\$4,576	\$59,875	+/- \$356

^awith earnings. ^byear round.

Individuals and Families Below Poverty Level, 2018-2022²

	County		State	
	Estimate	MOE*	Estimate	MOE*
Total population ^a	8,537	+/-81	3,088,999	+/-950
Below poverty	10.7%	+/-0.2%	11.1%	+/-0.2%
17 and under	17.2%	+/-8.1%	13%	+/-0.4%
18 - 64	9.1%	+/-2.3%	11.4%	+/-0.2%
65+	7.3%	+/-2.9%	7.7%	+/-0.2%
All families	6.8%	+/-2.7%	7%	+/-0.2%
With children	13.2%	+/-6.1%	11.5%	+/-0.4%
Married couple	5.8%	+/-2.6%	3.2%	+/-0.1%
With children	***	+/-***	4.1%	+/-0.3%
Female HH ^b	***	+/-***	25.4%	+/-1%
With children	***	+/-***	32.4%	+/-1.4%

^afor whom poverty status is determined, ^bfemale householder, no spouse present, **MOE is high. Use state estimate.

Notes and Source Information:

¹ U.S. Census Bureau; Decennial Censuses 1940 - 2020

² U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey 2018-2022

³ For the 2020 Decennial Census, households are divided into subcategories by two different methods. One method (family or nonfamily) is based on the presence or absence of family relationships among the household members and the householder. Using family relationships (birth, marriage, or adoption) has been the usual way to classify households, and the data using this method has good comparability between 2010 and 2020. In 2020, the Census Bureau introduced an additional method to divide households into subcategories. This second method (couple or noncouple) is based on the presence or absence of a couple relationship for the householder. The relationship can be as a married spouse or as an unmarried partner and can be of the opposite or same sex. The 2020 data reported for the second method (except for married couples) does not have good comparability with data from 2010. In this profile, the 2020 data are reported, but items for 2010 are omitted.

⁴ Median is the middle value of a distribution.

⁵ The age dependency ratio compares, by age, those typically not in the labor force with those who typically are in the labor force. Old Age dependency is persons 65+ per 100 persons age 18-64. Child dependency is persons under age 18 per 100 persons age 18-64. The total age dependency ratio is persons under age 18 plus persons 65 or older per 100 persons age 18-64.

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