

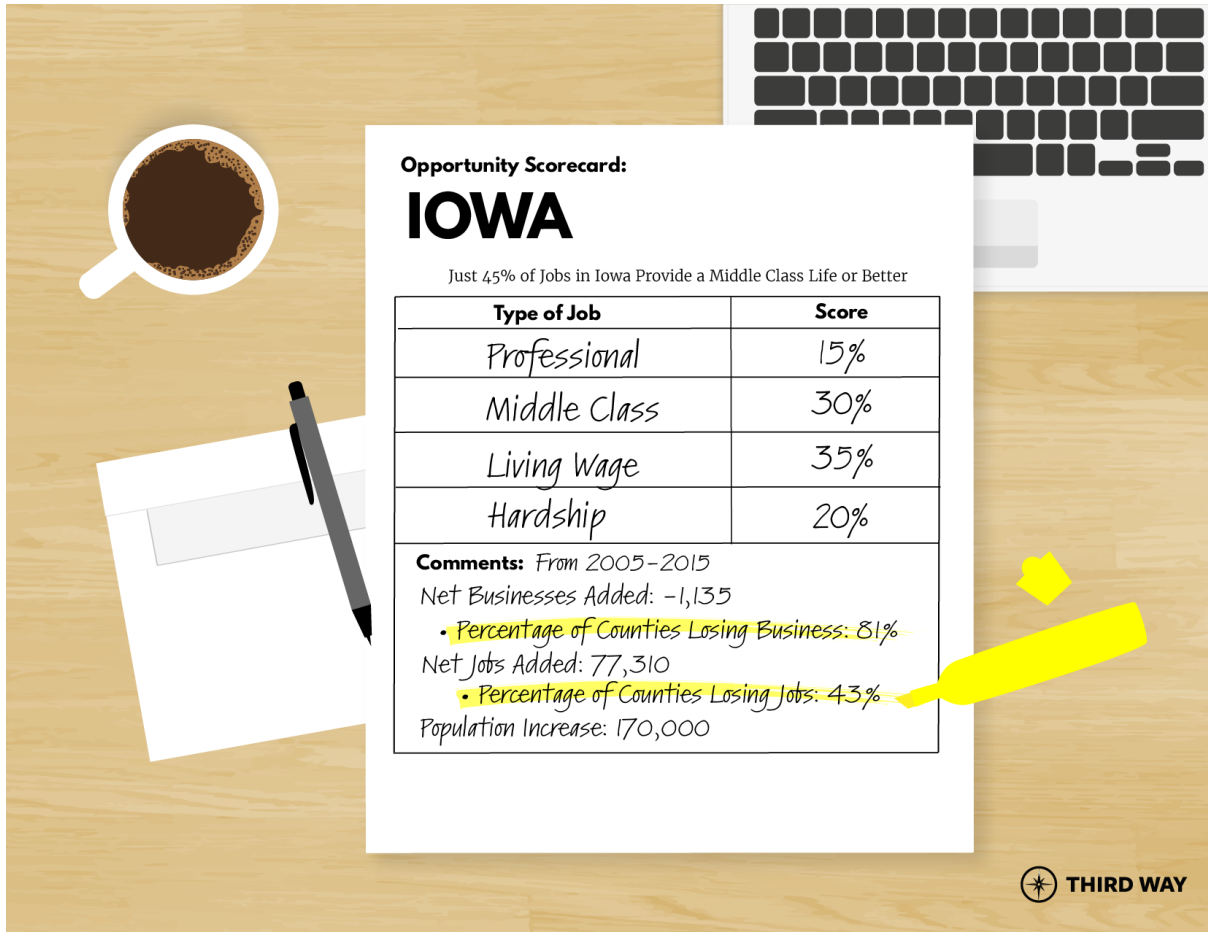
# Opportunity Scorecard: Iowa



**Ryan Bhandari**

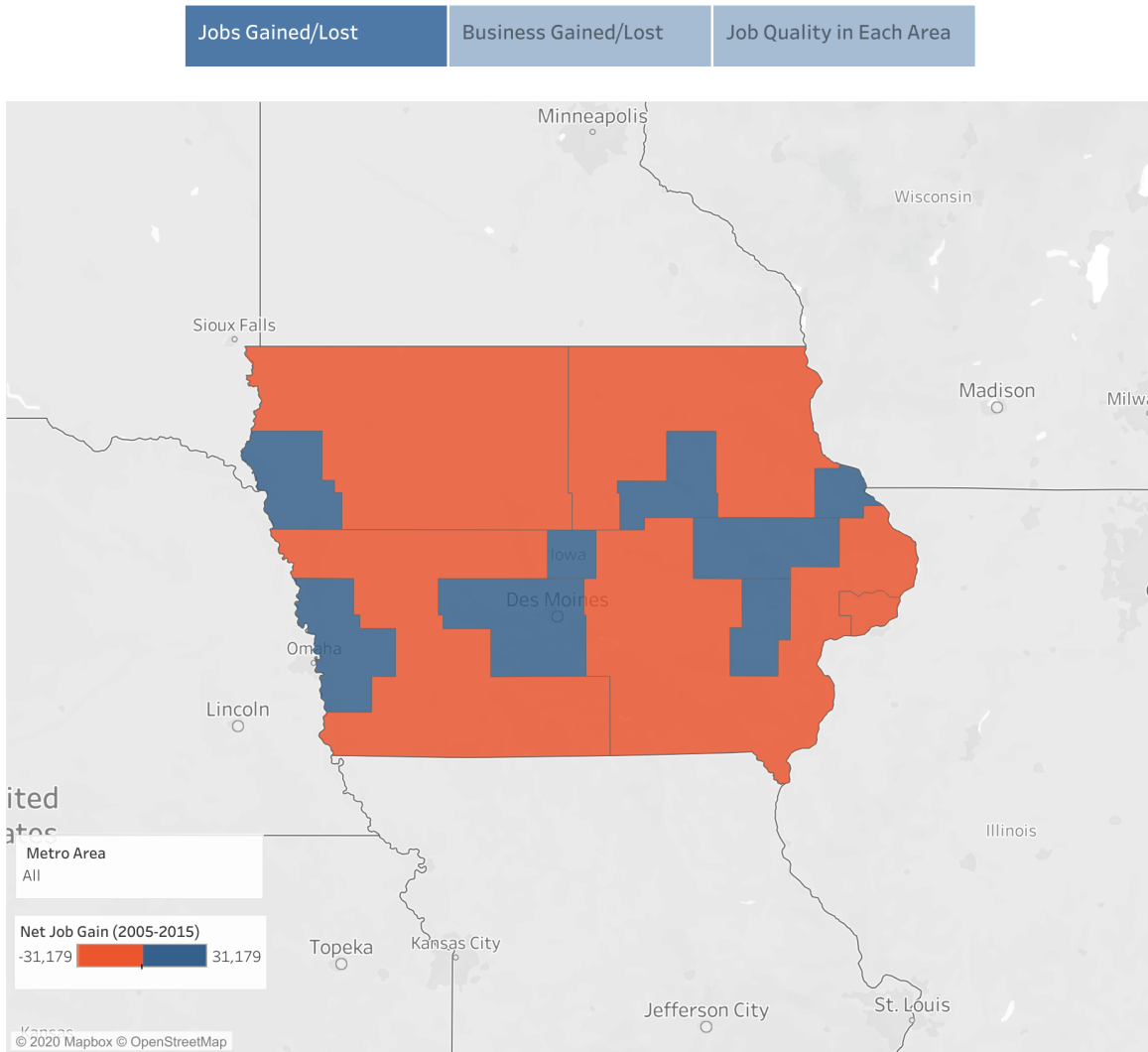
Former Senior Policy Advisor, Economic Program

 [@rbhandari3](https://twitter.com/rbhandari3)



Building off our Opportunity Index model, we looked at cost of living and wages paid across every region in Iowa to see how much opportunity there was for workers. Jobs fall into four categories: hardship jobs, living-wage jobs, middle-class jobs, and professional jobs. <sup>1</sup>

## Opportunity Score Card: Iowa



Although Iowa performs better than the country writ large, **statewide, only 45% of jobs support a middle class life or better** and on average, individuals need \$39,726 to get to a middle class life. And while metro areas like Des Moines and Iowa City saw a substantial increase in the number of businesses between 2005 and 2015, all four rural areas lost a significant number of businesses over the same time period. The map above shows the makeup of jobs in every region in the state. While Cedar Rapids and Des Moines have almost half of their jobs considered middle class or better, the rest of Iowa generally has numbers in the low to mid 40's.

## Mapping Opportunity in Iowa: Job Quality

	<b>% Hardship Jobs</b>	<b>% Living Wage Jobs</b>	<b>% Middle Class Jobs</b>	<b>% Professional Jobs</b>
<b>Ames</b>	<b>24%</b> <\$24,825	<b>31%</b> \$24,825– \$42,606	<b>31%</b> \$42,606– \$77,803	<b>14%</b> >\$77,803
<b>Cedar Rapids</b>	<b>18%</b> <\$22,917	<b>33%</b> \$22,917– \$40,046	<b>32%</b> \$40,046– \$71,660	<b>17%</b> >\$71,660
<b>Davenport</b>	<b>22%</b> <\$22,863	<b>35%</b> \$22,863– \$39,749	<b>26%</b> \$39,749– \$71,462	<b>17%</b> >\$71,462
<b>Des Moines</b>	<b>20%</b> <\$24,504	<b>32%</b> \$24,504– \$41,960	<b>31%</b> \$41,960– \$74,804	<b>17%</b> >\$74,804
<b>Dubuque</b>	<b>19%</b> <\$22,057	<b>40%</b> \$22,057– \$39,843	<b>31%</b> \$39,843– \$72,166	<b>10%</b> >\$72,166
<b>Iowa City</b>	<b>22%</b> <\$24,380	<b>38%</b> \$24,380– \$45,433	<b>29%</b> \$45,433– \$82,333	<b>11%</b> >\$82,333
<b>Omaha</b>	<b>22%</b> <\$24,694	<b>40%</b> \$24,694– \$45,391	<b>26%</b> \$45,391– \$80,359	<b>12%</b> >\$80,359
<b>Sioux City</b>	<b>17%</b> <\$21,812	<b>42%</b> \$21,812– \$39,205	<b>31%</b> \$39,205– \$70,218	<b>10%</b> >\$70,218
<b>Waterloo- Cedar Falls</b>	<b>19%</b> <\$21,754	<b>39%</b> \$21,754– \$38,297	<b>32%</b> \$38,297– \$70,315	<b>10%</b> >\$70,315
<b>Northeast (nonmetro)</b>	<b>23%</b> <\$22,999	<b>37%</b> \$22,999– \$38,636	<b>32%</b> \$38,636– \$70,406	<b>8%</b> >\$70,406
<b>Northwest (nonmetro)</b>	<b>21%</b> <\$22,907	<b>37%</b> \$22,907– \$38,184	<b>32%</b> \$38,184– \$69,398	<b>10%</b> >\$69,398
<b>Southwest (nonmetro)</b>	<b>23%</b> <\$22,698	<b>35%</b> \$22,698– \$36,701	<b>33%</b> \$36,701– \$66,411	<b>9%</b> >\$66,411

<b>Southeast (nonmetro)</b>	<b>23%</b> <\$22,984	<b>31%</b> \$22,984- \$36,058	<b>34%</b> \$36,058- \$65,359	<b>11%</b> >\$65,359
<b>Average</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>15%</b>



## Mapping Opportunity in Iowa: Job and Business Growth

	New Job Gain/Loss	Net New Business gains/ losses 2005-2015
<b>Ames</b>	+2808	+73
<b>Cedar Rapids</b>	+16,117	-82
<b>Davenport</b>	-279	-200
<b>Des Moines</b>	+31,179	+1001
<b>Dubuque</b>	+5,913	+18
<b>Iowa City</b>	+7,124	+251
<b>Omaha</b>	+1,301	-8
<b>Sioux City</b>	+2,122	-151
<b>Waterloo-Cedar Falls</b>	+9,701	+6
<b>Northeast (nonmetro)</b>	-1,395	-345
<b>Northwest (nonmetro)</b>	-1,067	-508
<b>Southwest (nonmetro)</b>	-1,658	-338
<b>Southeast (nonmetro)</b>	-8,992	-1086
<b>Non-Classified*</b>	+14,436	+230
<b>Total</b>	<b>77,310</b>	<b>-1,135</b>

\* These are businesses and jobs that could not be classified in one particular county of Iowa.

## ENDNOTES

1. For more information on Third Way's Opportunity Index and job categories, please visit: <https://www.thirdway.org/report/the-opportunity-index-ranking-opportunity-in-metropolitan-america>. Hardship job: cannot support a single childless adult living by himself.

Living wage job: supports a single childless adult living in a two bedroom unit with another adult. This salary would cover health insurance, food, and basic necessities but no money for entertainment, vacation, savings, or retirement.

Middle class job: pays enough to support half the expenses for a family of four living a middle class life. This includes a three bedroom unit, food, health insurance, basic necessities and money for entertainment, vacation, savings, retirement, and childcare.

Professional class job: pays enough to support 75% of the expenses for a family living a comfortable middle class life. This includes a four bedroom unit and more money for food, entertainment, vacation, savings, and retirement.