

# Iowa West Regional Data Overview



# Acknowledgements

## *Prepared By*

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## About the Data

Data for this analysis comes from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, for multiple years for the following categories:

- Demographics
- Housing Characteristics
- Economic Characteristics
- Social Characteristics
- Geographic Mobility Characteristics
- Educational Characteristics
- Business and Occupation Characteristics

*Note: 5-Year Estimates are used instead of the 1-Year Estimates as the 5-year data offers more robust estimates and data is not available for all counties using the 1-Year Estimates.*

# Key Takeaways

- The regional population has declined 3.6% in the past 10 years. However, Pottawattamie County grew 0.5% over the same time.
- The region's population is aging, with a large share in the 35 to 54 and 65 to 74 age groups and a smaller share among younger residents.
- Population decline in the region is driven by fewer children and net domestic out-migration.
- Most counties are predominantly White; however, Crawford and Pottawattamie counties are more diverse, with growing Latino/a and foreign-born populations.
- Net out-migration is highest among residents with lower levels of educational attainment, which reflects the broader regional pattern — most adults in the region have not completed a college degree.
- Labor force participation is high across the region, especially among households with children.
- Despite high labor force participation, most do not work in high wage occupations (>\$75,000).
- Median household income in most counties in the region is below the statewide median household income of \$73,147.
- The region's economy is concentrated in the education, healthcare, and retail trade industries.
- Metro-adjacent counties in the region have higher home values and rental costs.
- Housing cost burden affects both renters and homeowners in the Iowa West Region, with at least 10% of homeowners and 15% of renters in most counties spending 35% or more of their income on mortgage or rent, respectively.

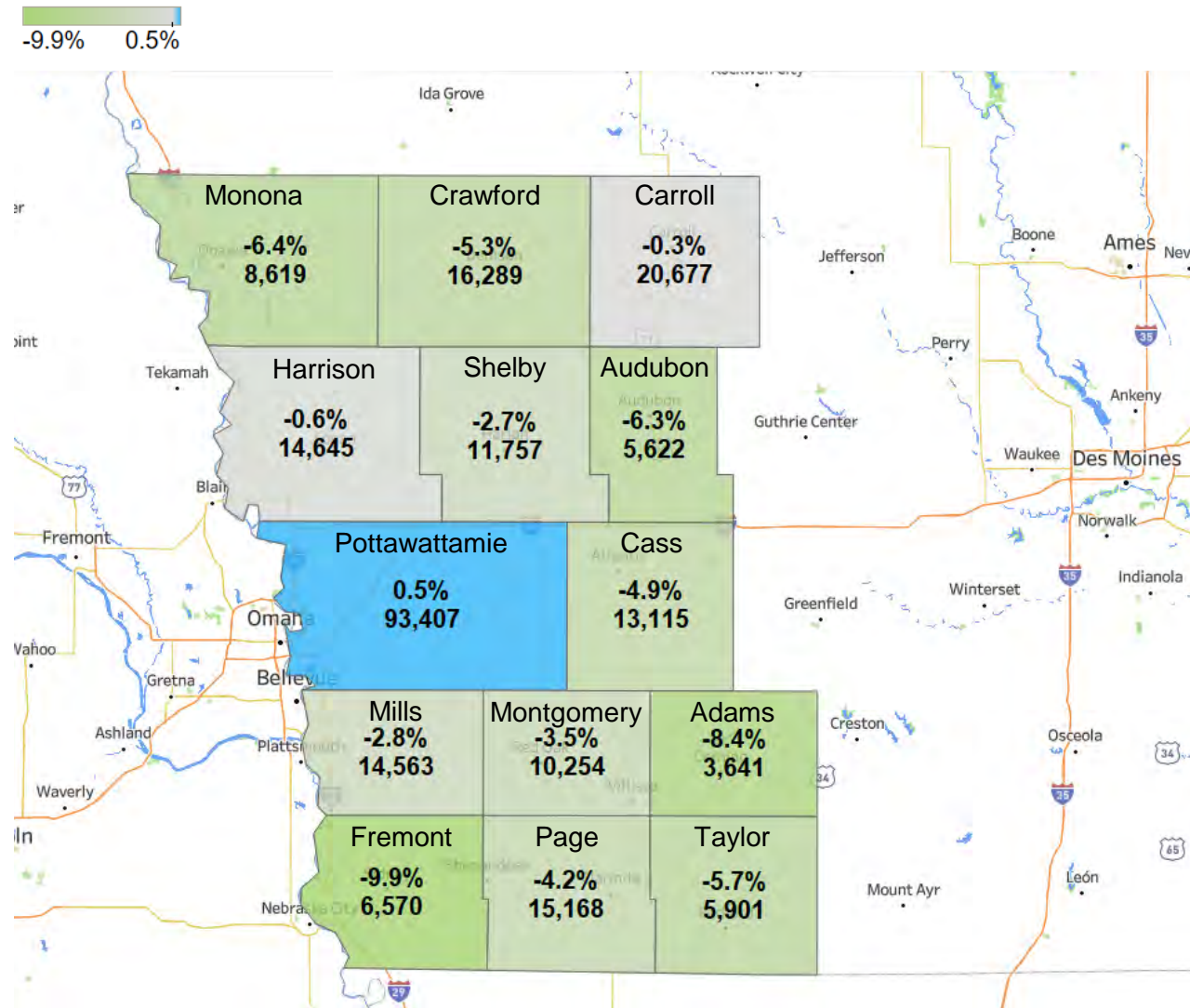


# DEMOGRAPHICS

# Percent Change in Population, 2013 to 2023 and Population Estimates, 2023 by County

The Iowa West Region experienced a 3.6% population decline over the past decade.

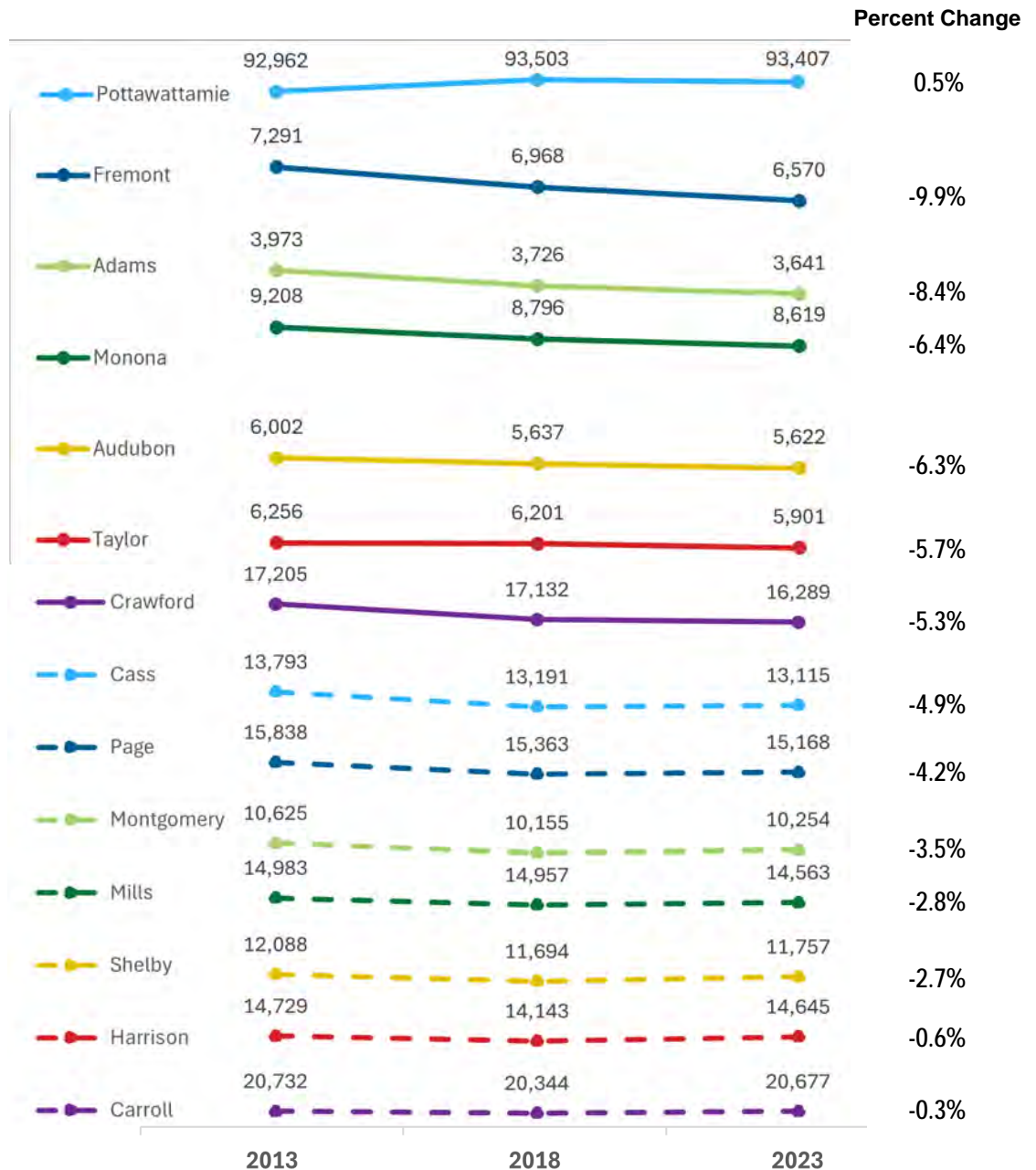
Comparatively, both Iowa and the nation experienced population growth, at 4.4% and 6.7%, respectively.



# Population Estimates 2013, 2018, and 2023 and Percent Change in Population, 2013 to 2023 by County

Most counties in the Iowa West Region from 2013 to 2023 experienced steady population declines, with Fremont County seeing the largest decrease at -9.9%, and Carroll County the smallest at -0.3%.

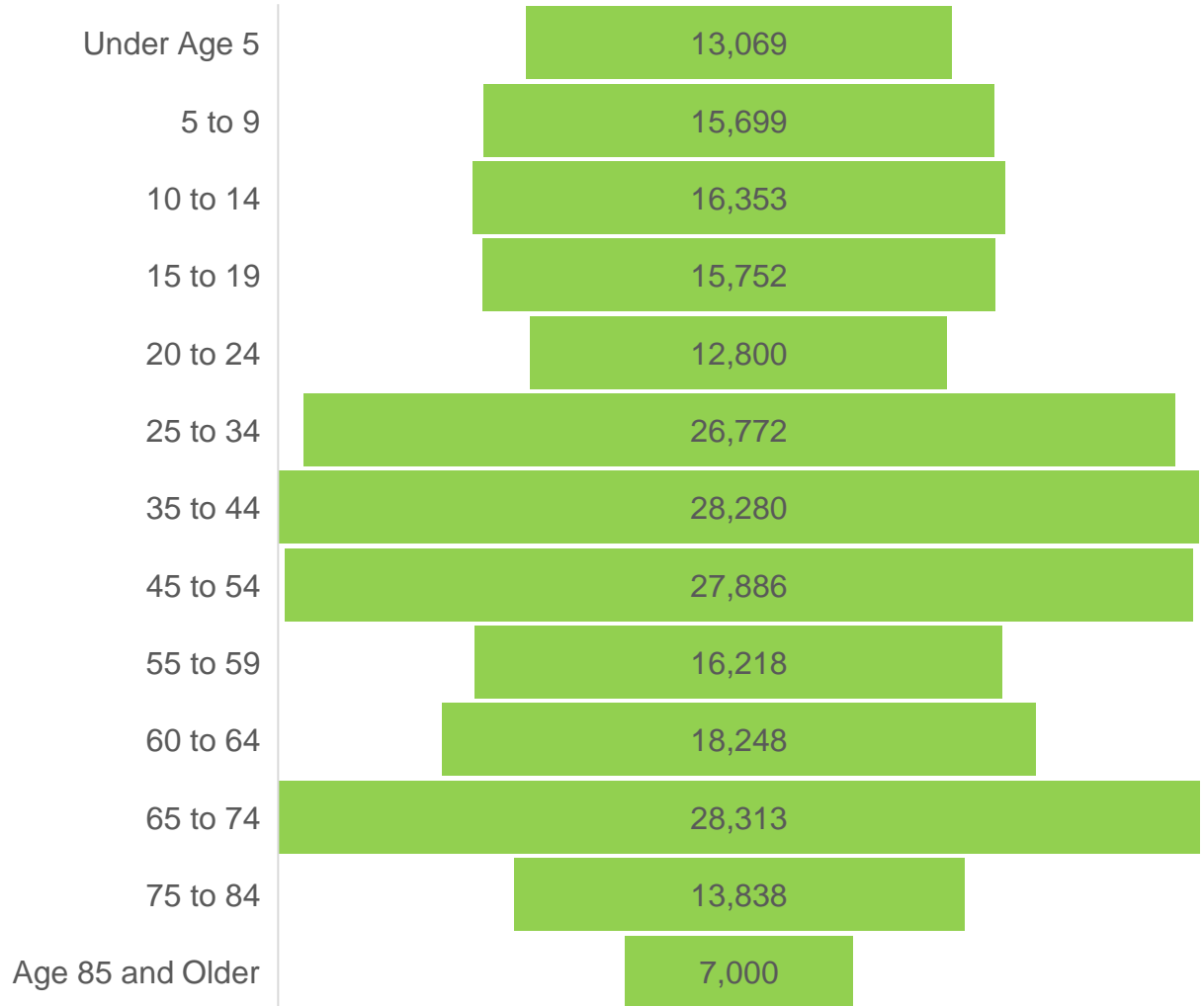
Pottawattamie County stands out as the only county to see a population increase of 0.5% during this period.



# Population Estimates by Age Group, 2023 of Iowa West Region

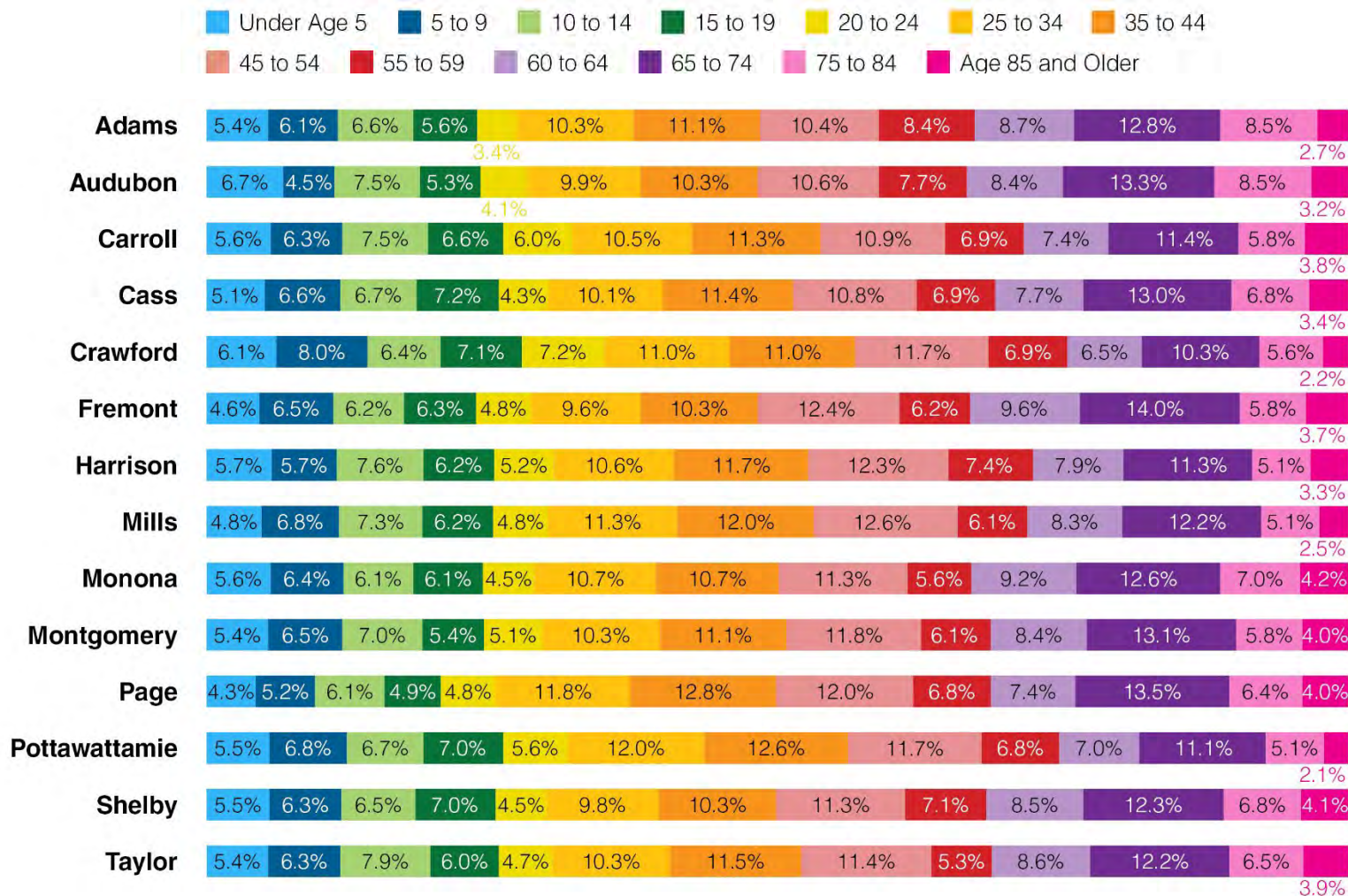
In the whole of the Iowa West Region, the largest age groups are between 25 to 54, considered prime workforce age, and 65 to 74.

There are relatively few young adults aged 20 to 24.



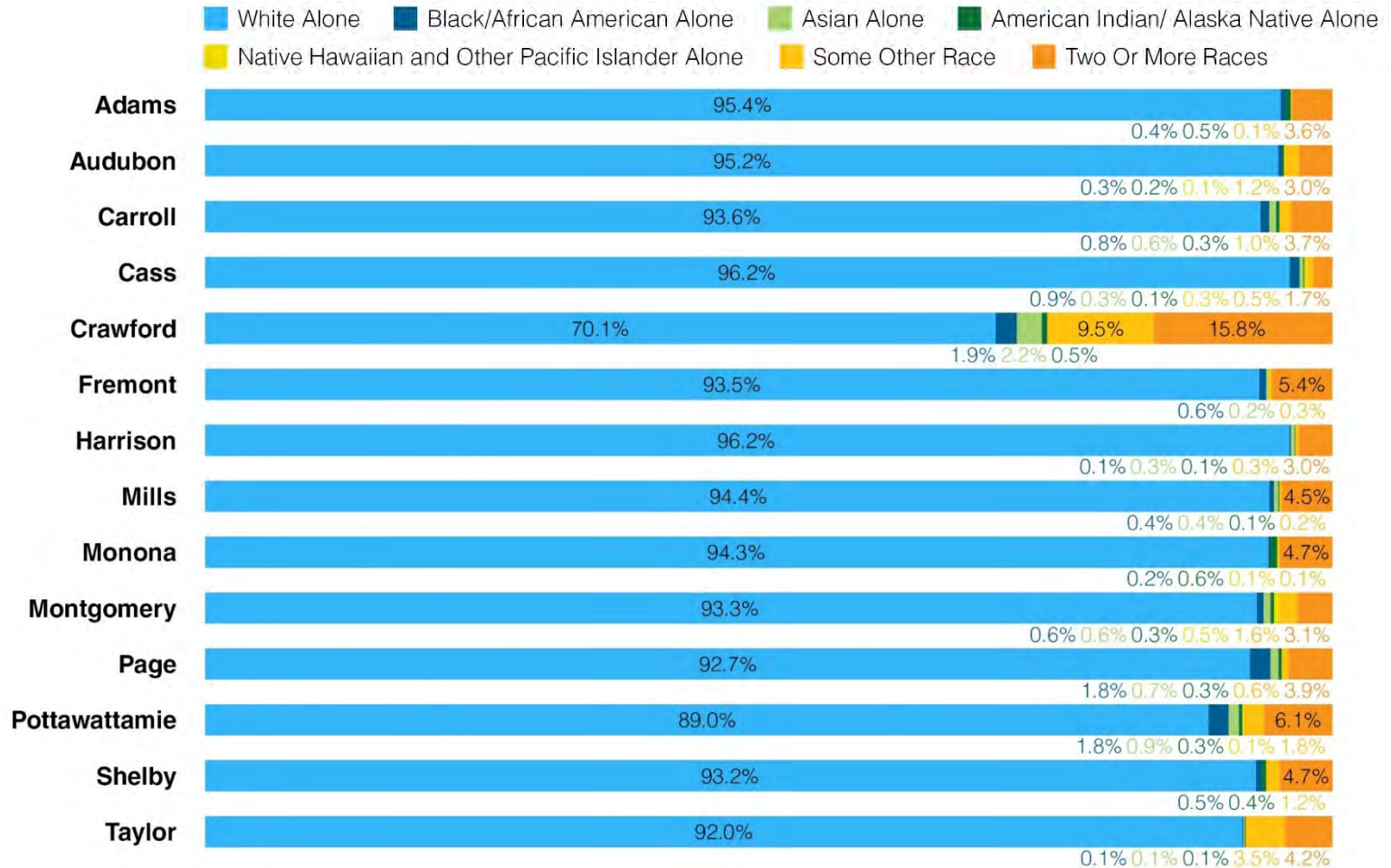
# Percentage of Population by Age Group, 2023 by County

Most counties are predominantly comprised of those in their middle-age and older.



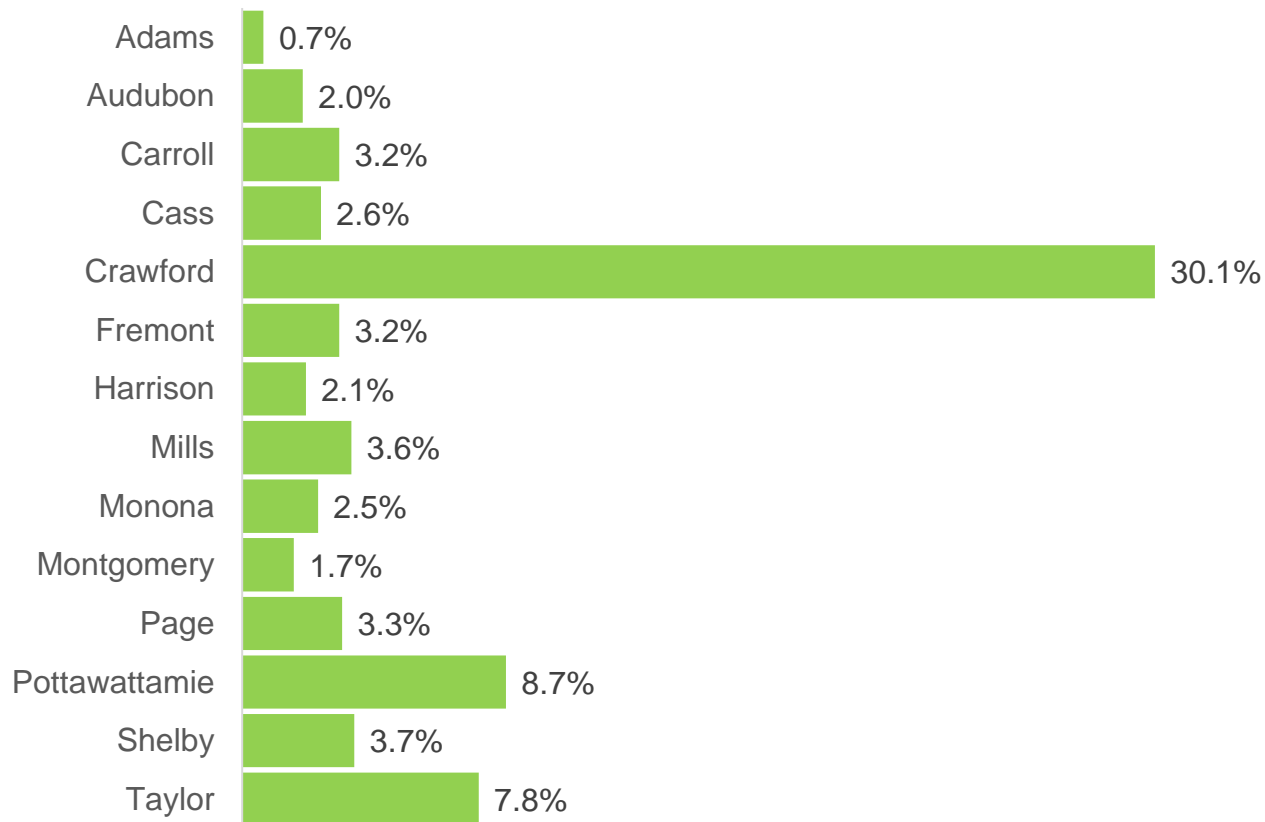
# Percentage of Population by Race, 2023 by County

Most counties are predominantly White, with at least 89.0% of residents in each county identifying as White Alone. Crawford County is more diverse, with only 70.1% identifying as White Alone and larger share identifying as Some Other Race at 9.5% and Two or More Races at 15.8%.



# Percentage of Population that is Latino/a, 2023 by County

Crawford County has the highest percentage of Latino/a population in the Iowa West Region at 30.1%. Pottawattamie County at 8.7% and Taylor County at 7.8% follow with notably higher percentages than other counties. By comparison, the Latino/a population makes up 7.0% in Iowa and 19.0% nationally.

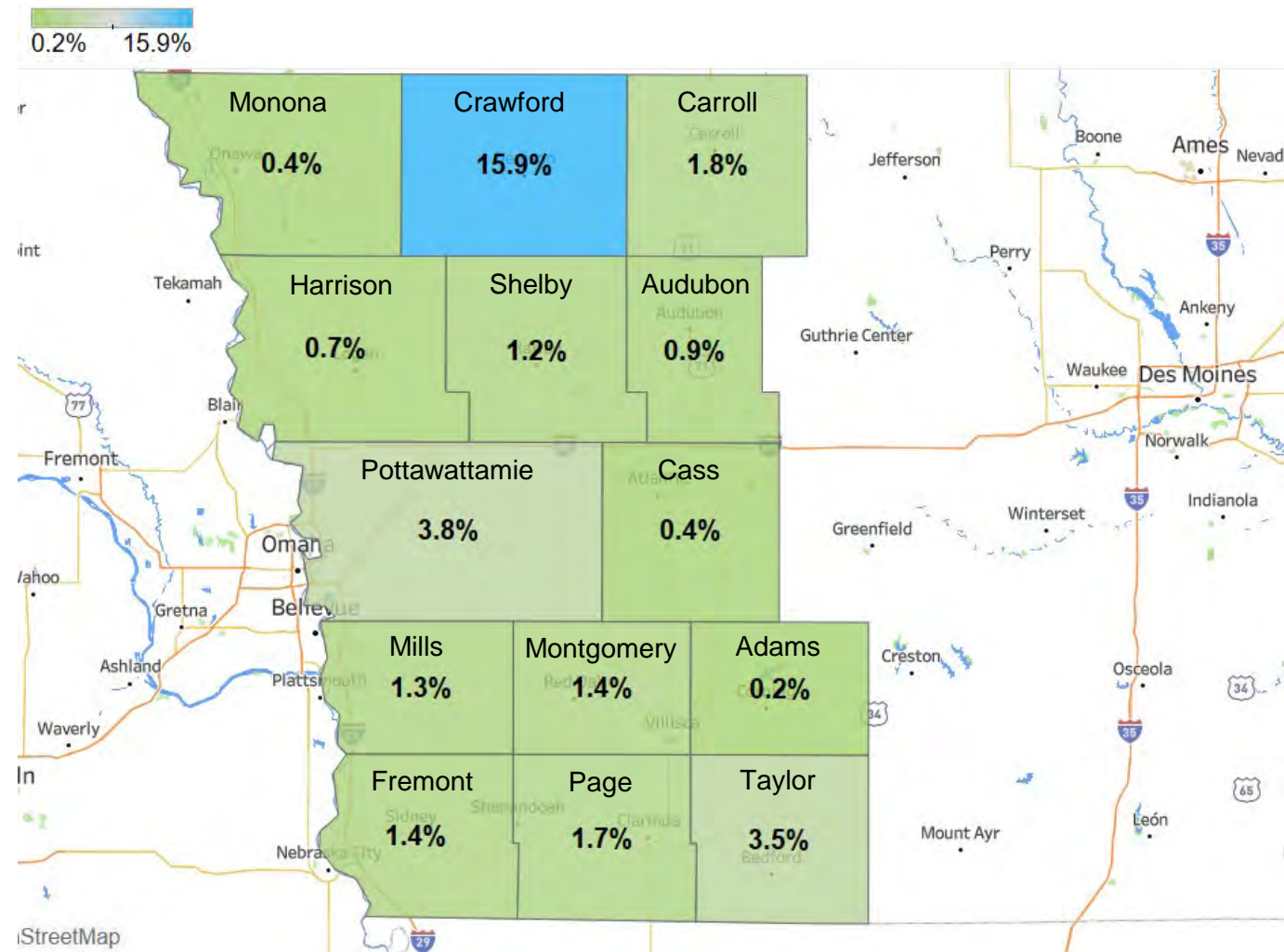


# Percentage of Population that is Foreign-Born, 2023 by County

In Crawford County, 15.9% of residents are foreign-born, the highest in the Iowa West Region.

Pottawattamie County at 3.8% and Taylor County at 3.5% follow with notably higher percentages than other counties.

By comparison, the foreign-born population comprises 5.7% of Iowa and 13.9% nationally.

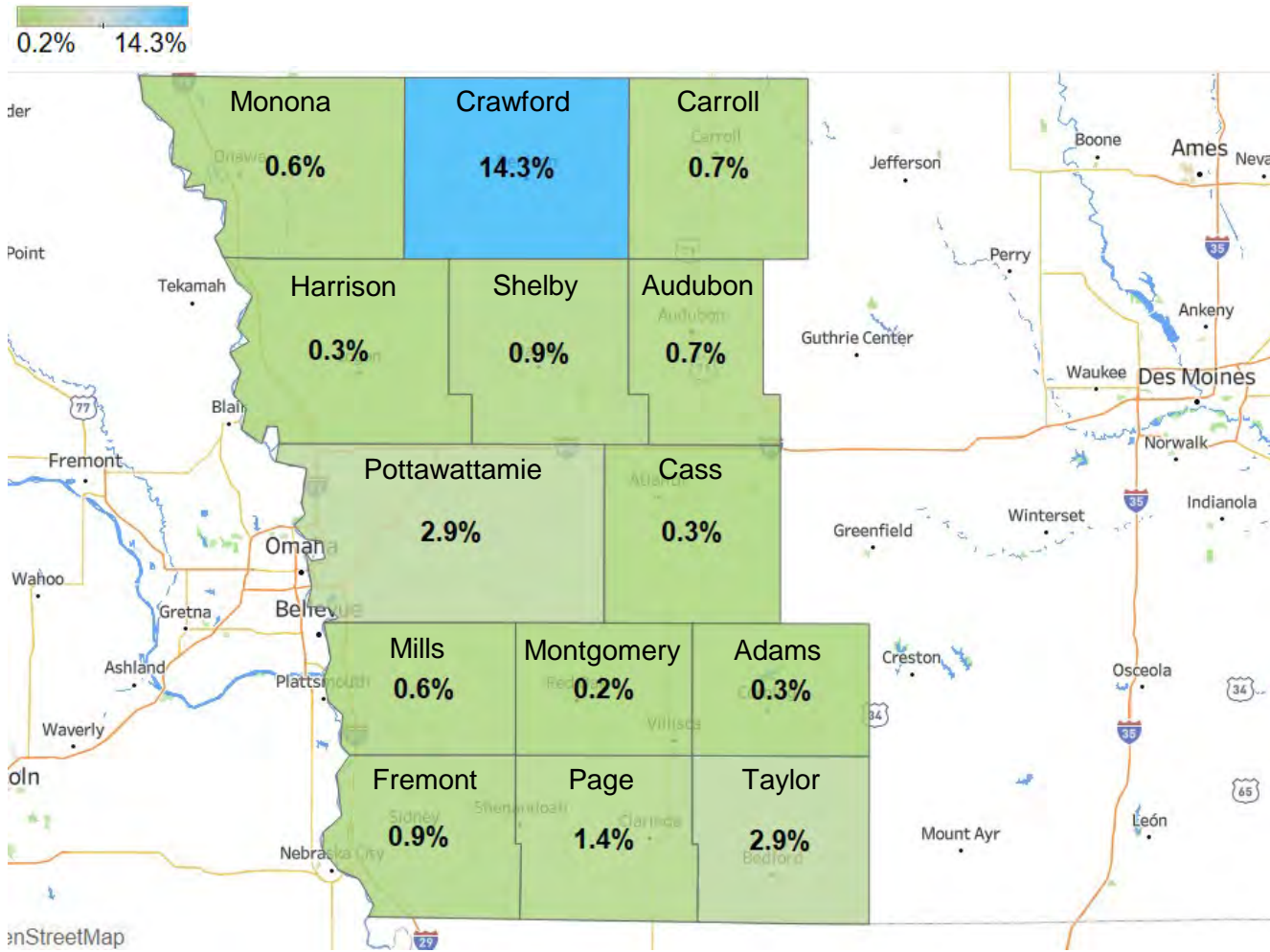


# Percentage of Total Population that Report Speaking English Less than Very Well, 2023 by County

Consistent with its higher shares of foreign-born residents, Crawford County has a larger percentage of residents who speak English less than very well at 14.3%.

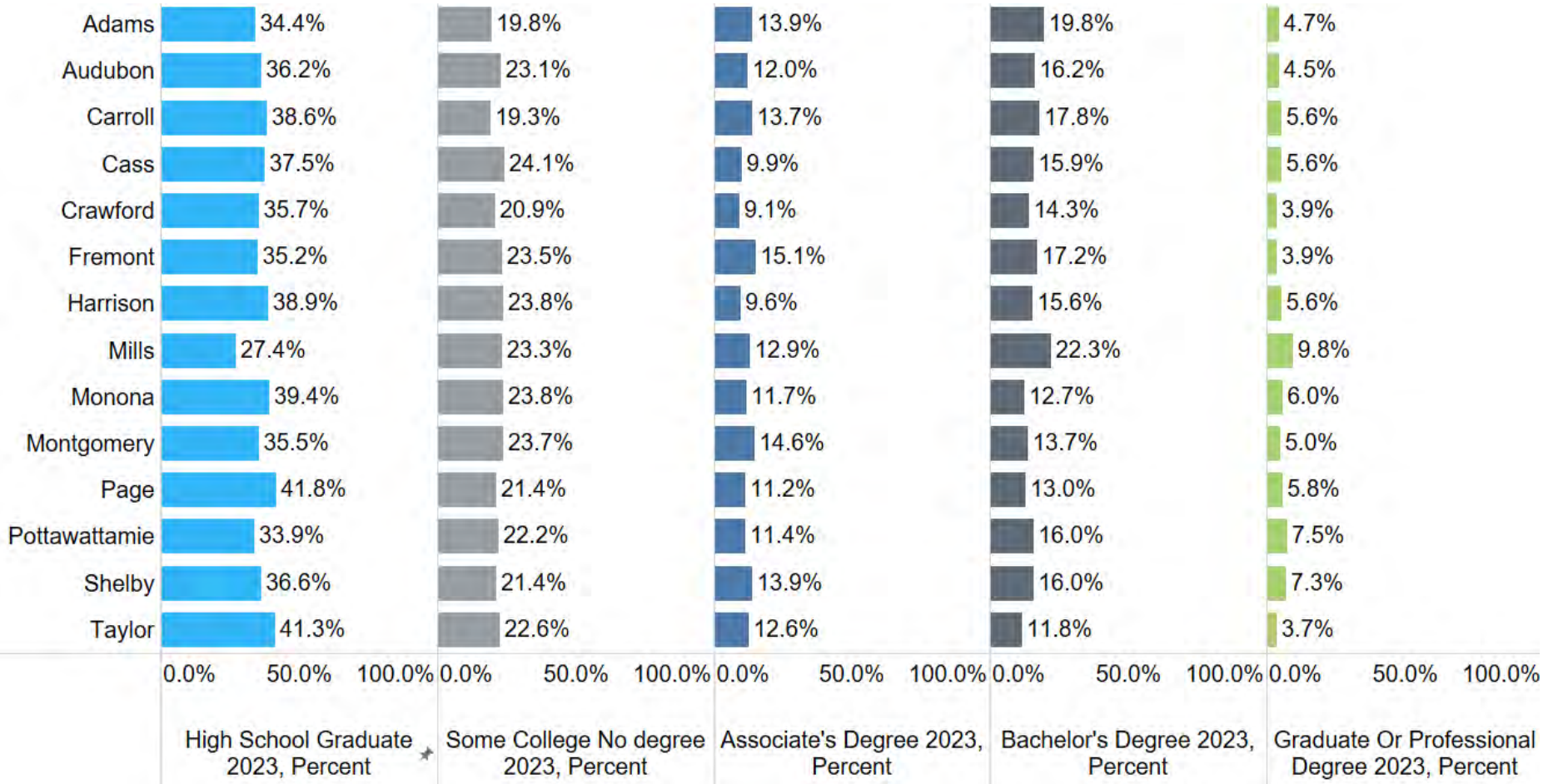
Most other counties are below 1.0%, though Taylor and Pottawattamie counties are slightly higher.

Comparatively, the percentages are 3.6% in Iowa and 8.4% nationally.



# Percentage of Population Age 25 and Older by Educational Attainment, 2023 by County

While high school graduation rates are consistent across the region, college completion is less so. Bachelor's and graduate or professional degrees are highest in Mills, Pottawattamie, and Shelby counties.

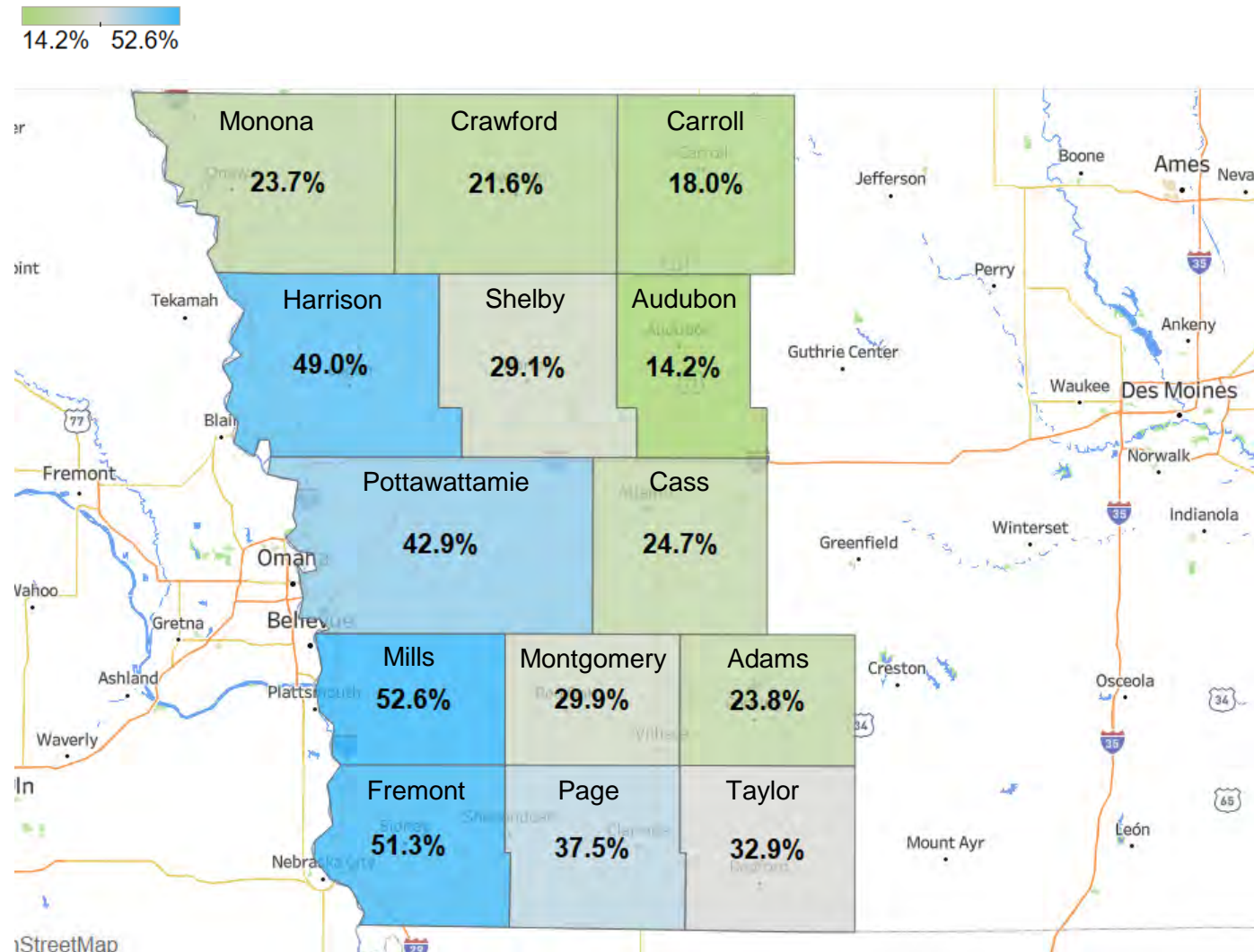


# Percentage of Population Born in a Different State, 2023 by County

Metro-adjacent counties in the Iowa West Region have the highest share of residents born out of state, with Mills County at 52.6% and Fremont County at 51.3% leading the region.

All other counties are below 50.0%.

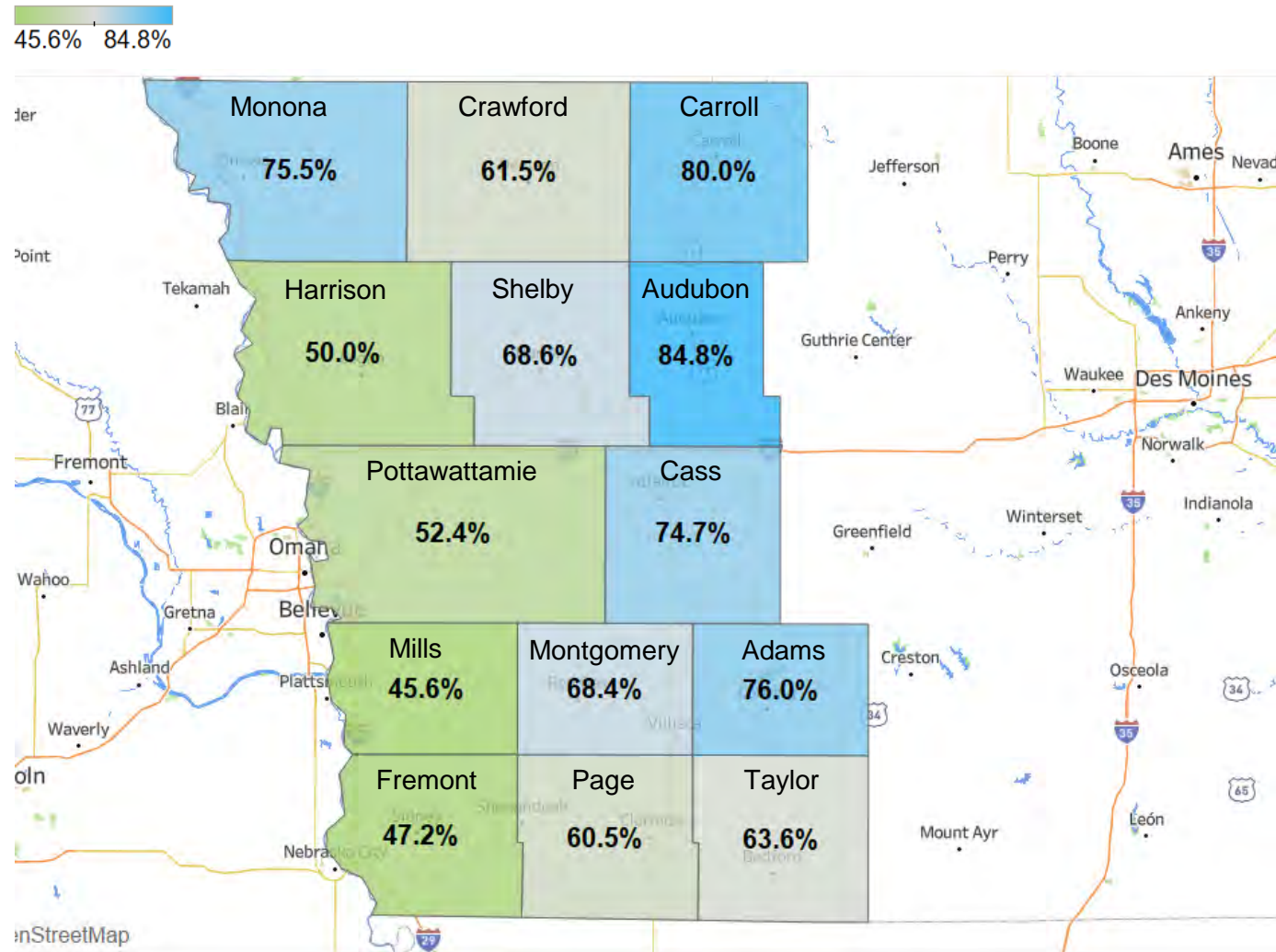
Comparatively, 23.7% of population in Iowa were born in a different state.



# Percentage of Population Born In-State, 2023 by County

Audubon County at 84.8% and Carroll County at 80.0% have the highest shares of residents born in Iowa.

Comparatively, 69.9% of the population in Iowa were born in the state.

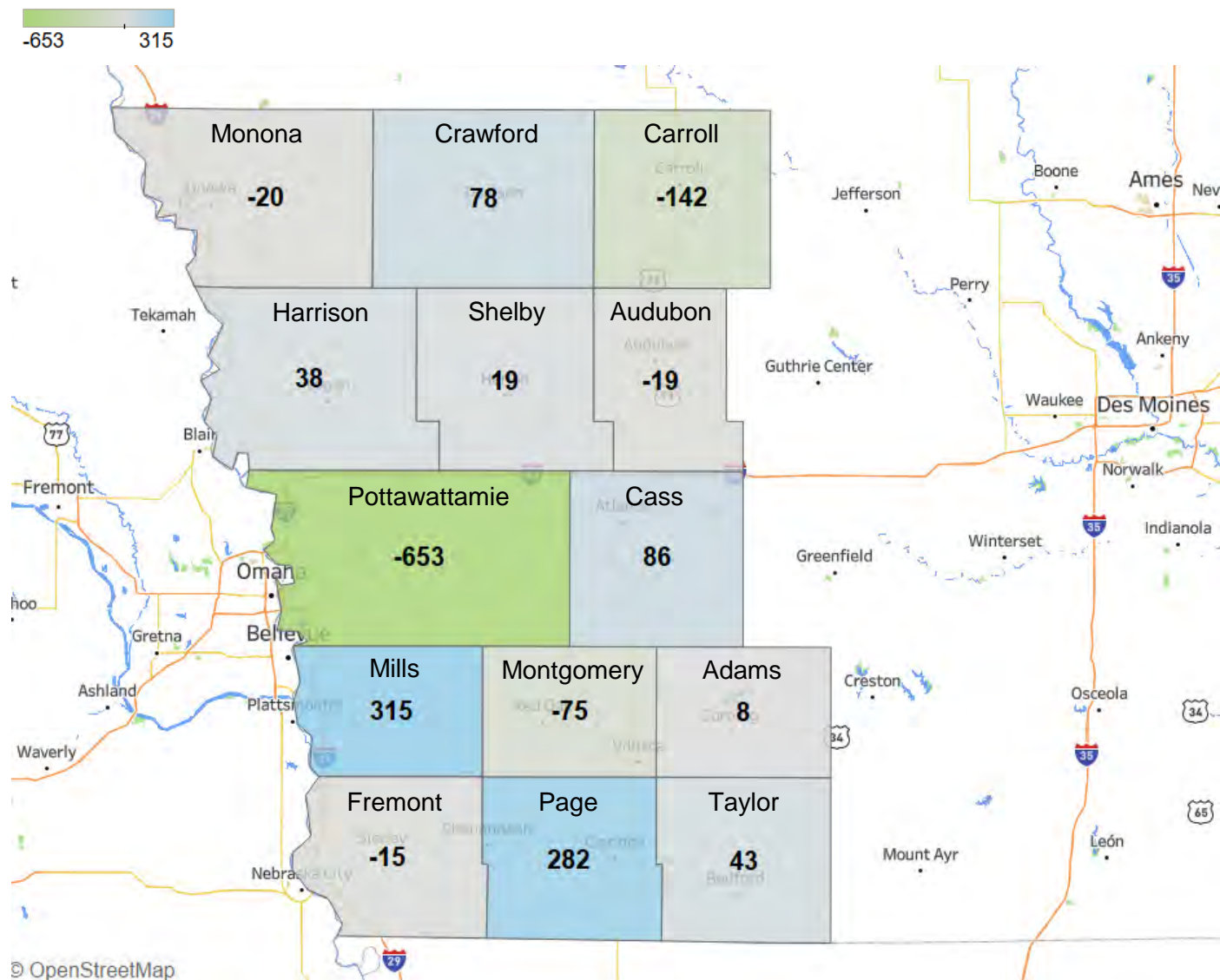


# Net Migration Estimates, 2023 by County

Most counties in the region had a net migration that was either slightly negative or positive.

Pottawattamie County experienced the largest net loss of -653, while Mills County at 315 and Page County at 282 have the largest net gain.

For comparison, the state of Iowa had a net loss of -3,534 in 2023.

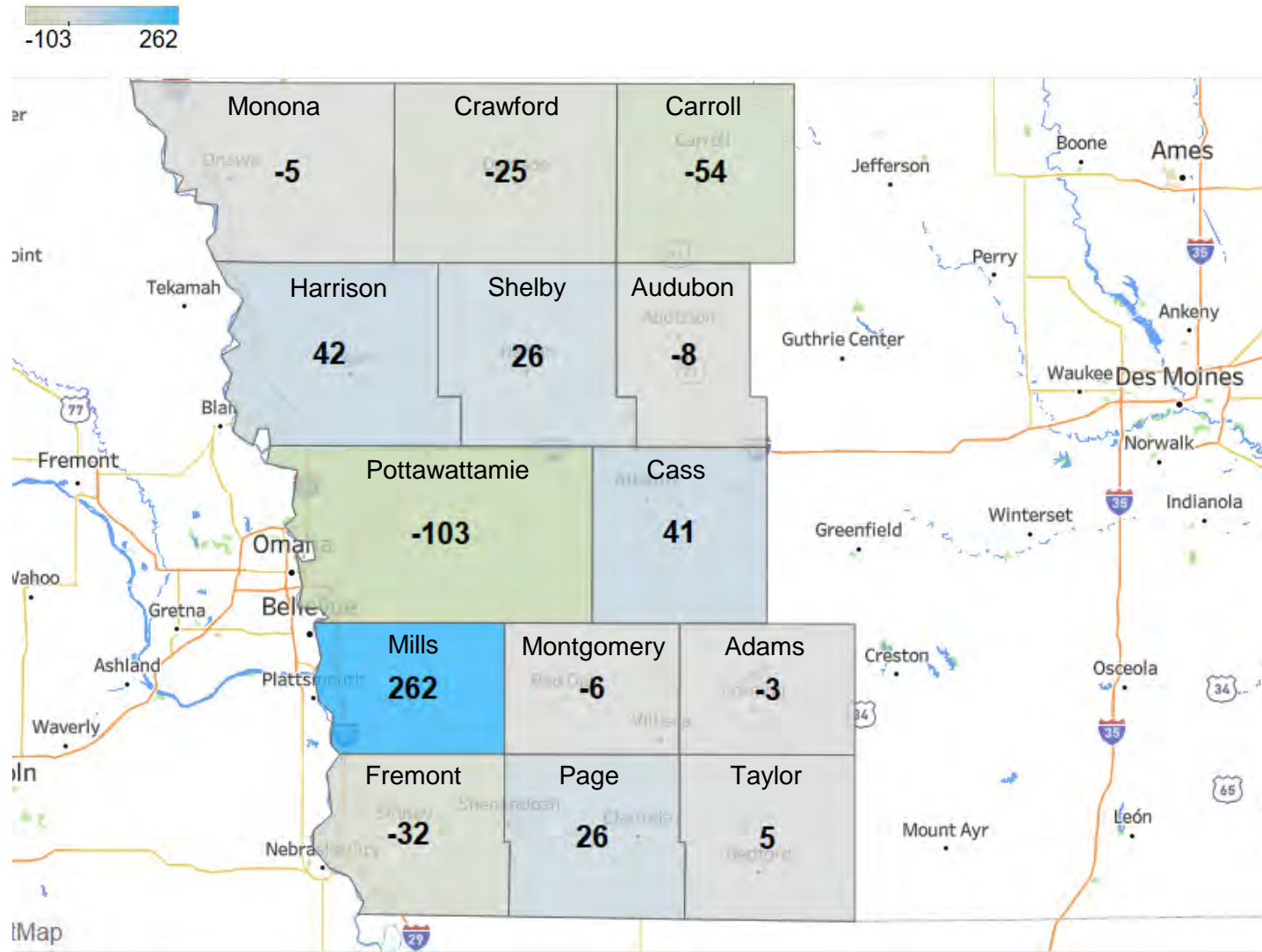


# Net Migration Estimates of Persons with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, 2023, "Brain Drain"

Most counties had low net out migration among residents with a bachelor's degree or higher.

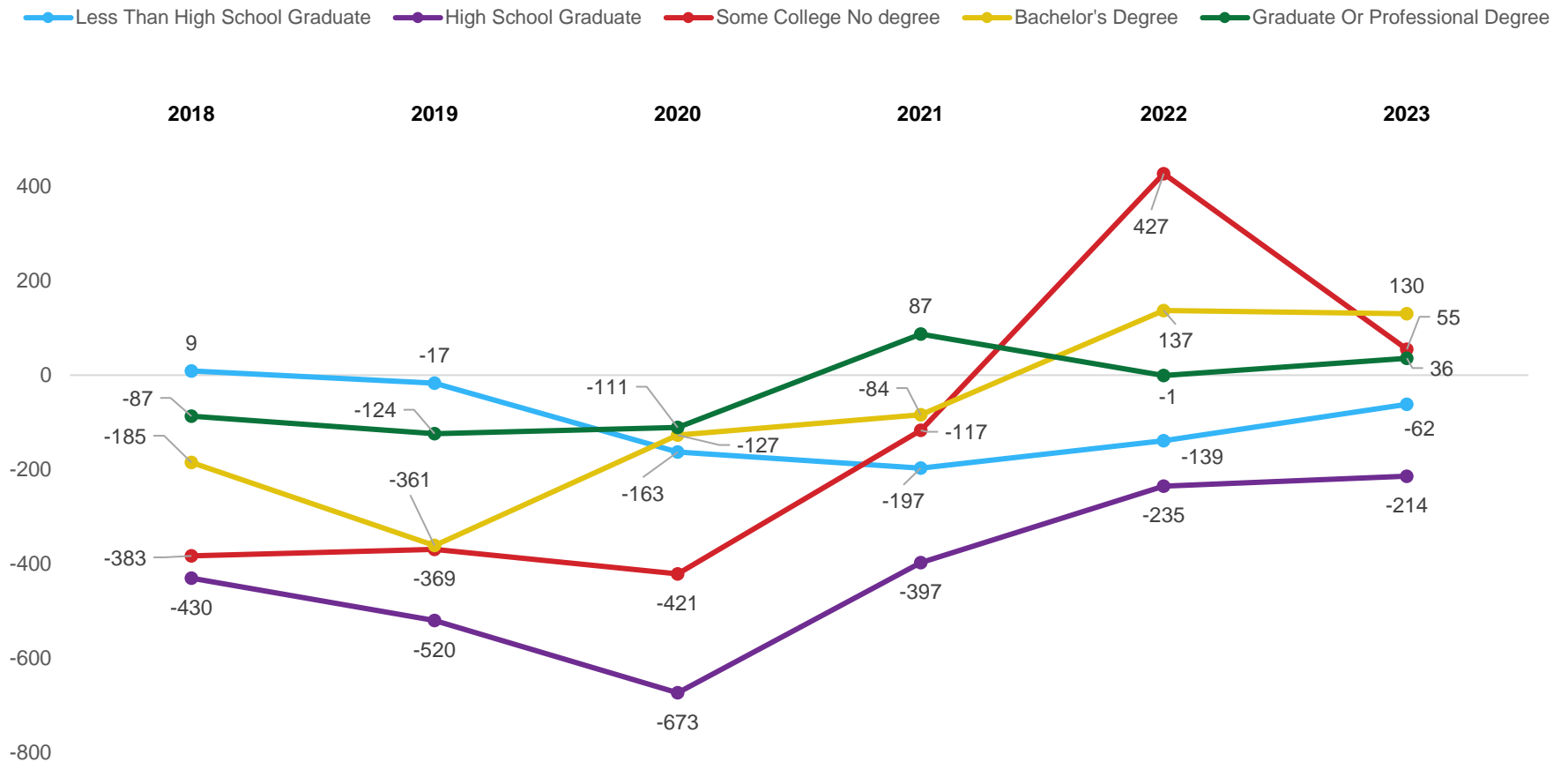
Pottawattamie County experienced the largest net loss of -103, while Mills County saw the largest net gain of +262.

For comparison, the state of Iowa had a net loss of -3,202.



# Net Migration Estimates by Educational Attainment, 2018 to 2023 for the Iowa West Region

Overall, net out-migration in the region is most pronounced among residents with lower levels of educational attainment. However, in 2022 and 2023, the region saw modest gains among those with some college and a bachelor's degree.





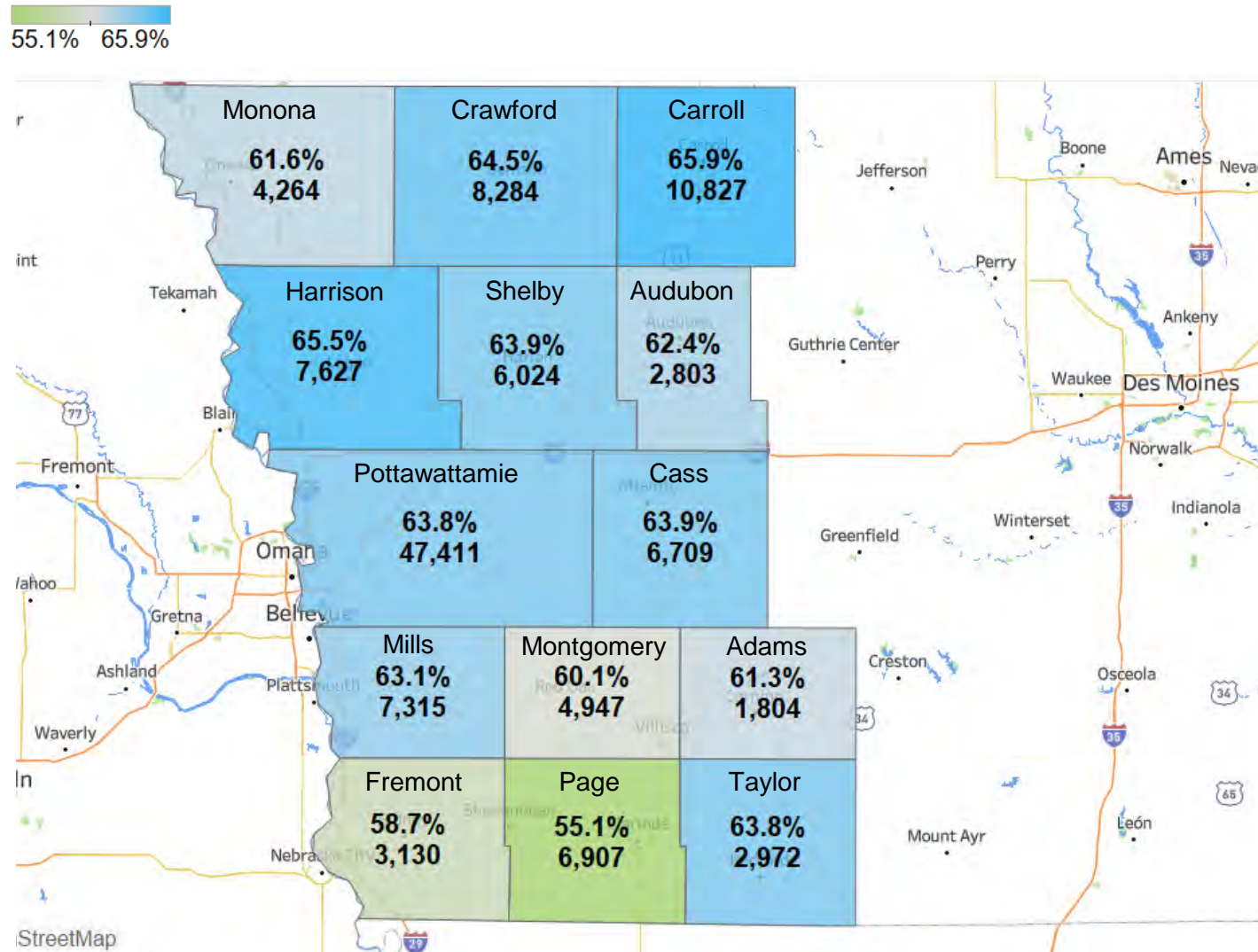
**WORKFORCE**

# Percentage of Population Ages 16 Years and Older in Labor Force and Estimate of the Number in the Labor Force, 2023 by County

Labor force participation rates are high across the Iowa West Region.

Fremont County at 58.7% and Page County at 55.1% are the only counties below 60.0%.

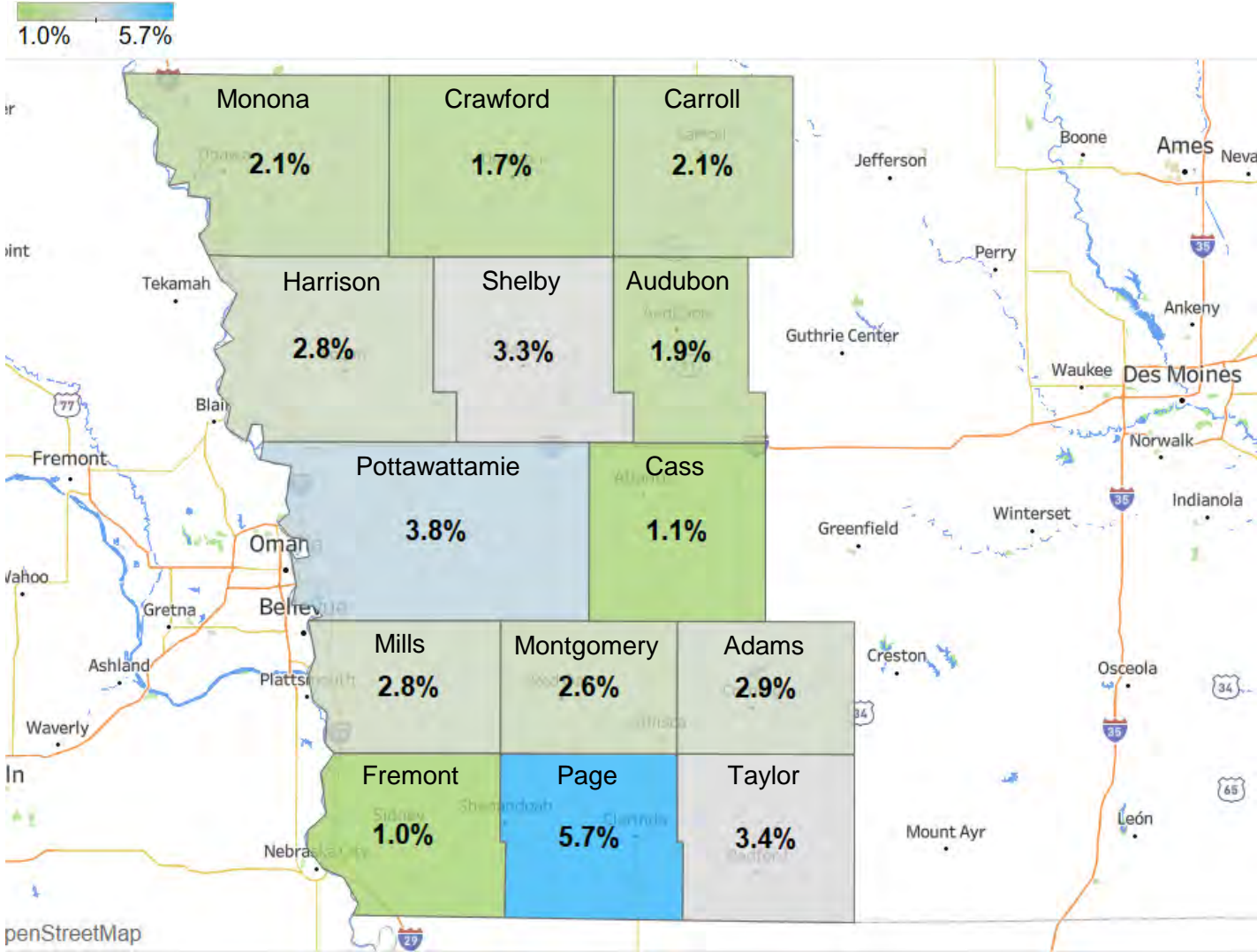
Comparatively, the labor force participation rate is 66.5% in Iowa and 63.5% nationally.



# Percentage of Labor Force that is Unemployed, 2023 by County

Unemployment remains low across most counties in the Iowa West Region, with rates below 5.0% in all counties except for Page County at 5.7%.

Comparatively, the unemployment rate is 3.6% in Iowa and 5.2% nationally.

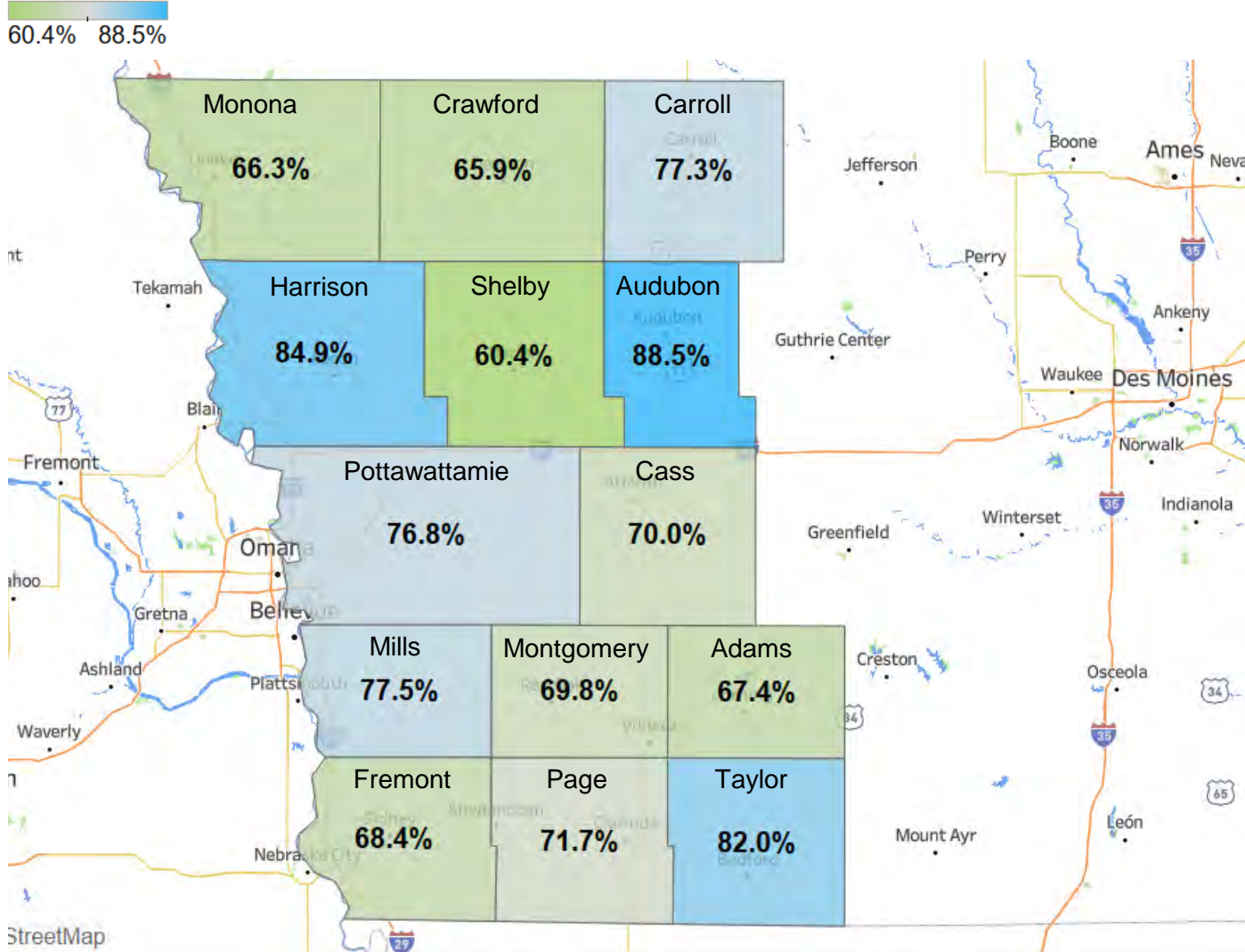


# Percentage of Children Under Age 6 With All Parents in the Labor Force, 2023 by County

In most counties, over 65% of children under age 6 have all parents in the labor force.

Audubon County at 88.5%, Harrison County at 84.9%, and Taylor County at 82.0% lead the counties in the Iowa West Region.

Comparatively, the share is 76.0% in Iowa and 67.7% nationally.

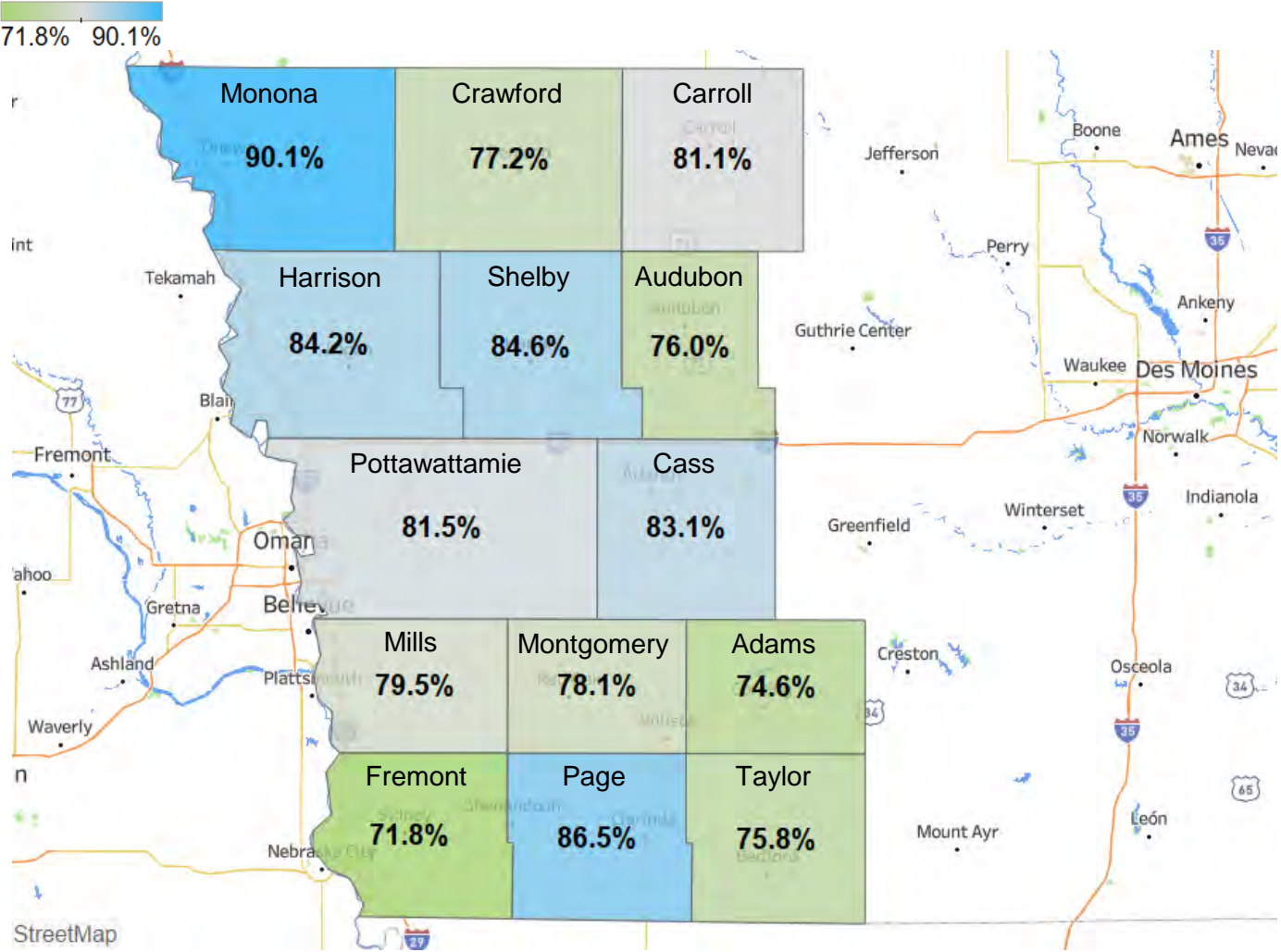


# Percentage of Children Ages 6 to 17 With All Parents in the Labor Force, 2023 by County

Parental labor force participation is also high among families with children ages 6 to 17, with all counties reporting rates above 70%.

Monona County exceeds 90%.

Comparatively, the share is 81.1% in Iowa and 72.4% nationally.



## Median Earnings, 2023 Dollars by County

Median earnings vary across the Iowa West Region, ranging from around \$35,500 to over \$50,000. Mills County is the only county with median earnings above \$50,000, while Audubon, Cass, and Crawford counties are under \$40,000. The average median earnings in the Iowa West Region is \$42,282.

In comparison, median earnings are \$42,607 in Iowa and \$44,587 nationally.

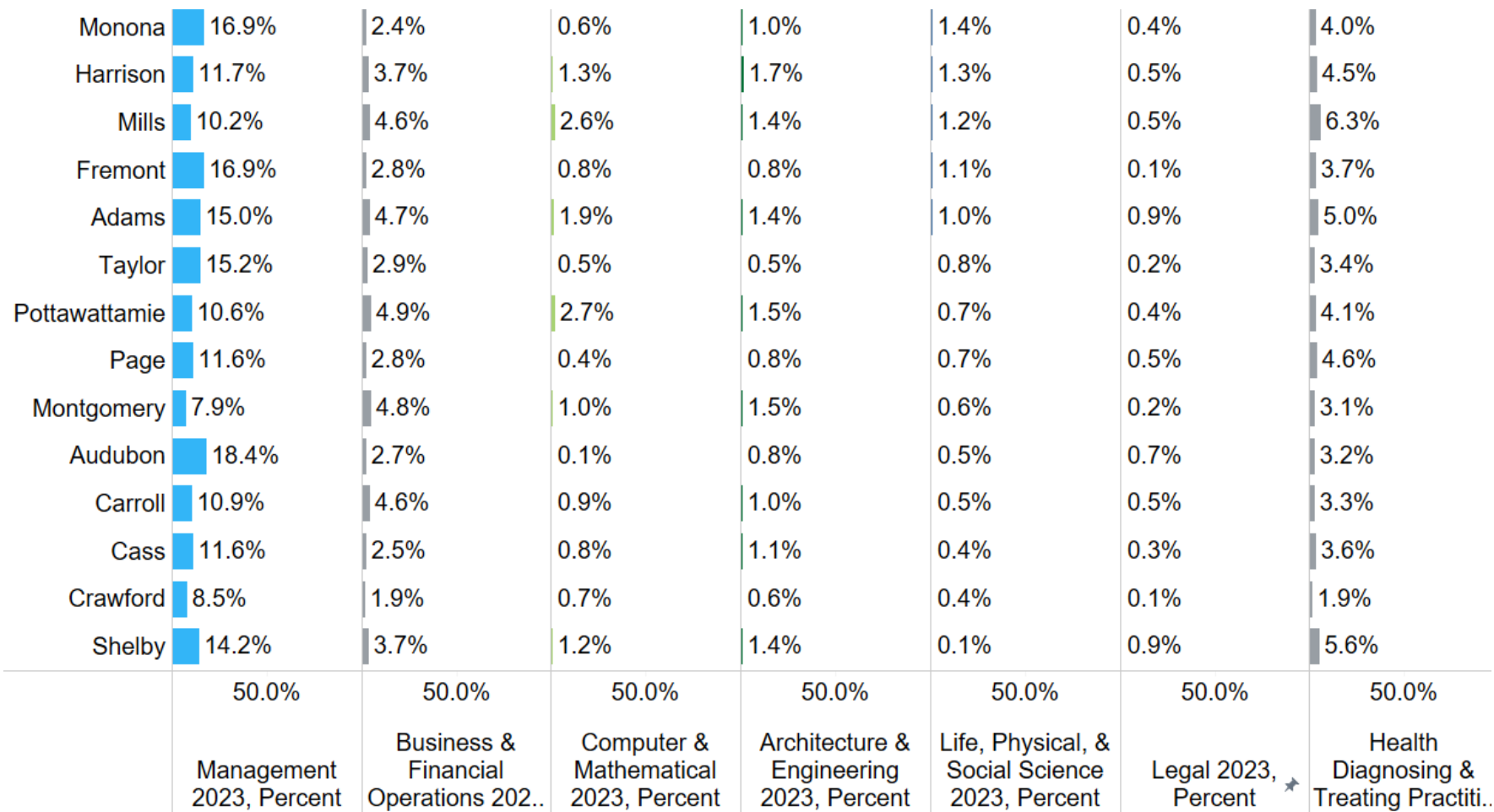


# Occupation and Industry Explained

- In the next several slides we explain what people do and where they work in the Iowa West Region.
  - **Occupation** describes the type of work people do.
  - **Industry** describes the sector/establishment where people work.
- For the **occupation** slides, occupations are grouped by median wages into three categories:
  - High-wage (above the state average of medians),
  - Middle-wage (around the state average of medians), and
  - Low-wage (below the state average of medians).
- For the **industry** slides, industries are grouped into broad categories based on similarities for example, professional, services, and trades.

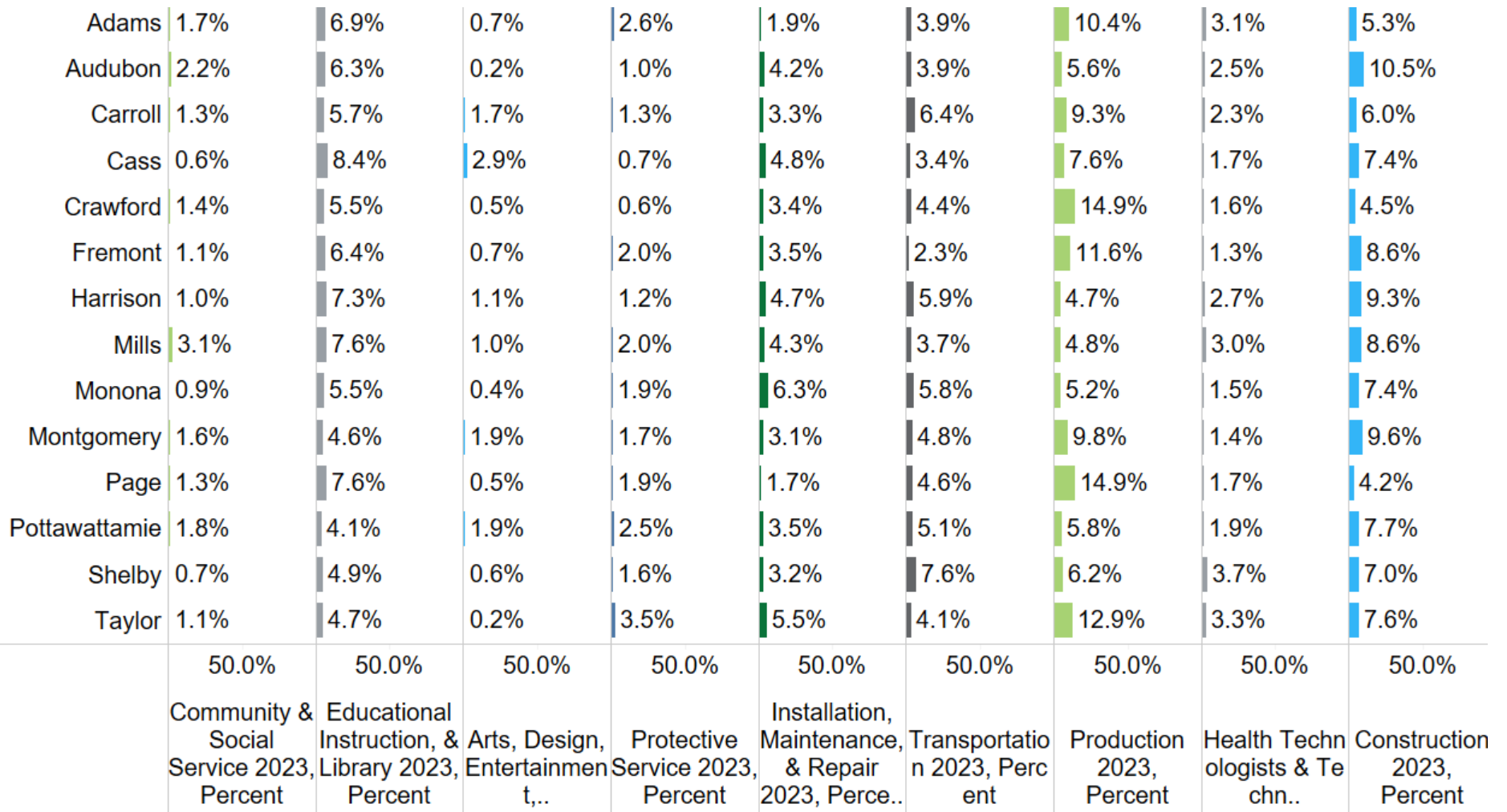
# High-Wage Occupations by Percent, 2023 by County

Management roles account for the largest share of high-wage employment across Iowa West Region counties in 2023. The statewide average median earnings for high-wage occupations is \$75,683.



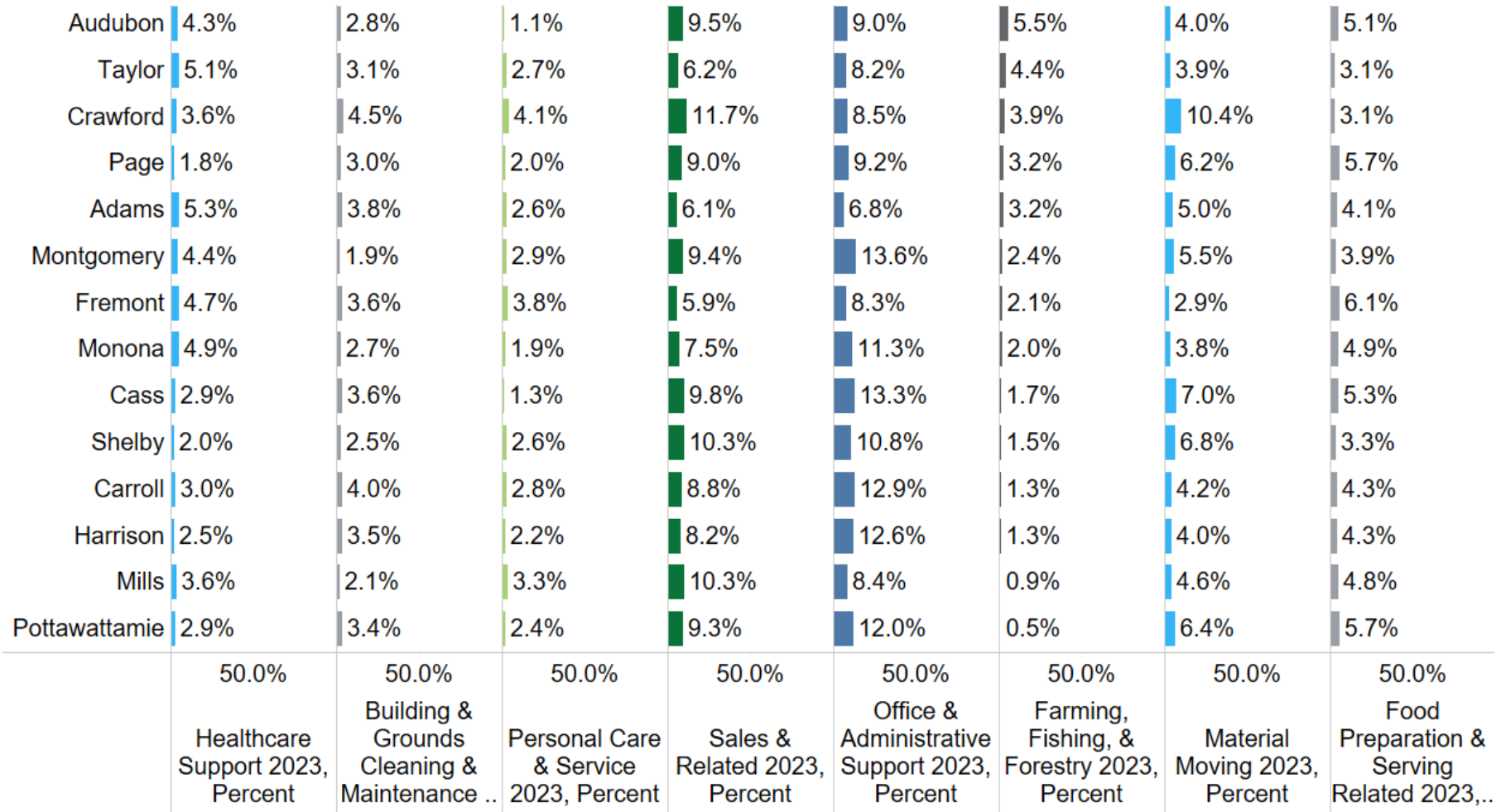
# Middle-Wage Occupations by Percent, 2023 by County

Among middle-income roles in the Iowa West Region, production and construction jobs are most common – but overall, these occupations account for a modest share of total employment. The statewide average median earnings for middle-wage occupations is \$43,516.



# Low-Wage Occupations by Percent, 2023 by County

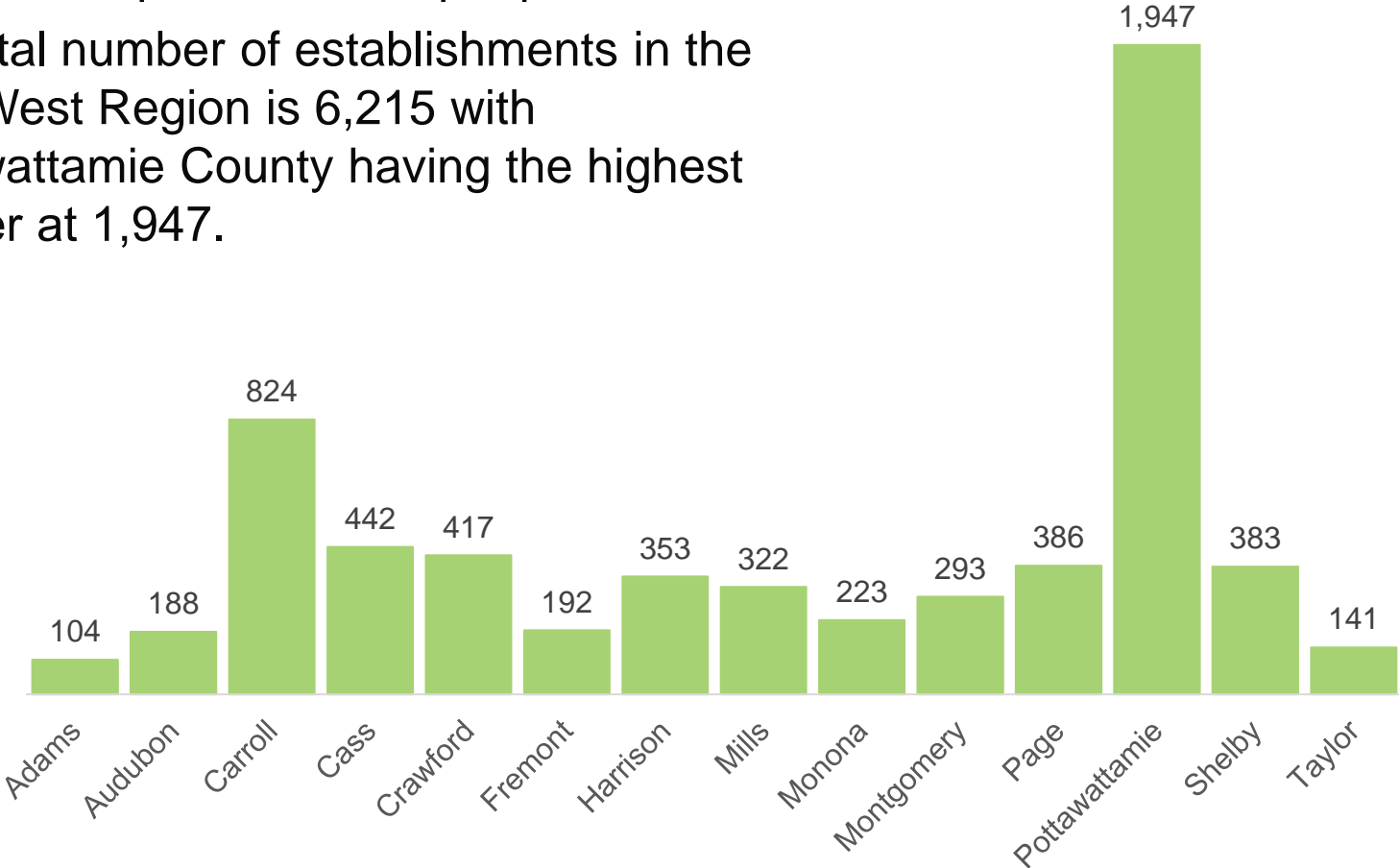
Across the Iowa West Region, low-wage occupations are concentrated in sales and administrative support roles, followed by food service and personal care. The statewide average median earnings for low-wage occupations is \$29,500.



# Total Establishment by Percent, 2022 by County

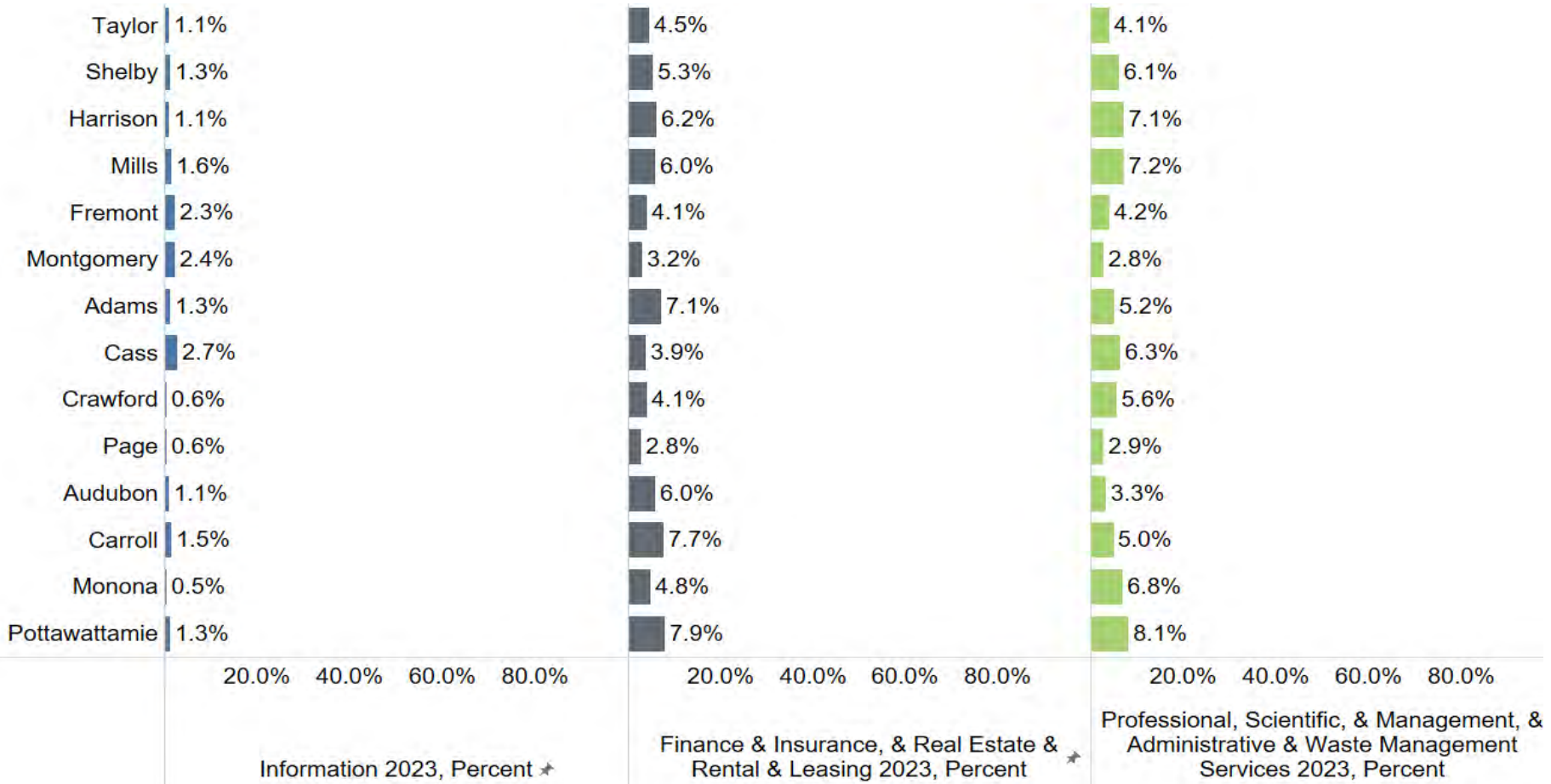
While occupations describe the type of work people do, establishments and industries describe the places where people work.

The total number of establishments in the Iowa West Region is 6,215 with Pottawattamie County having the highest number at 1,947.



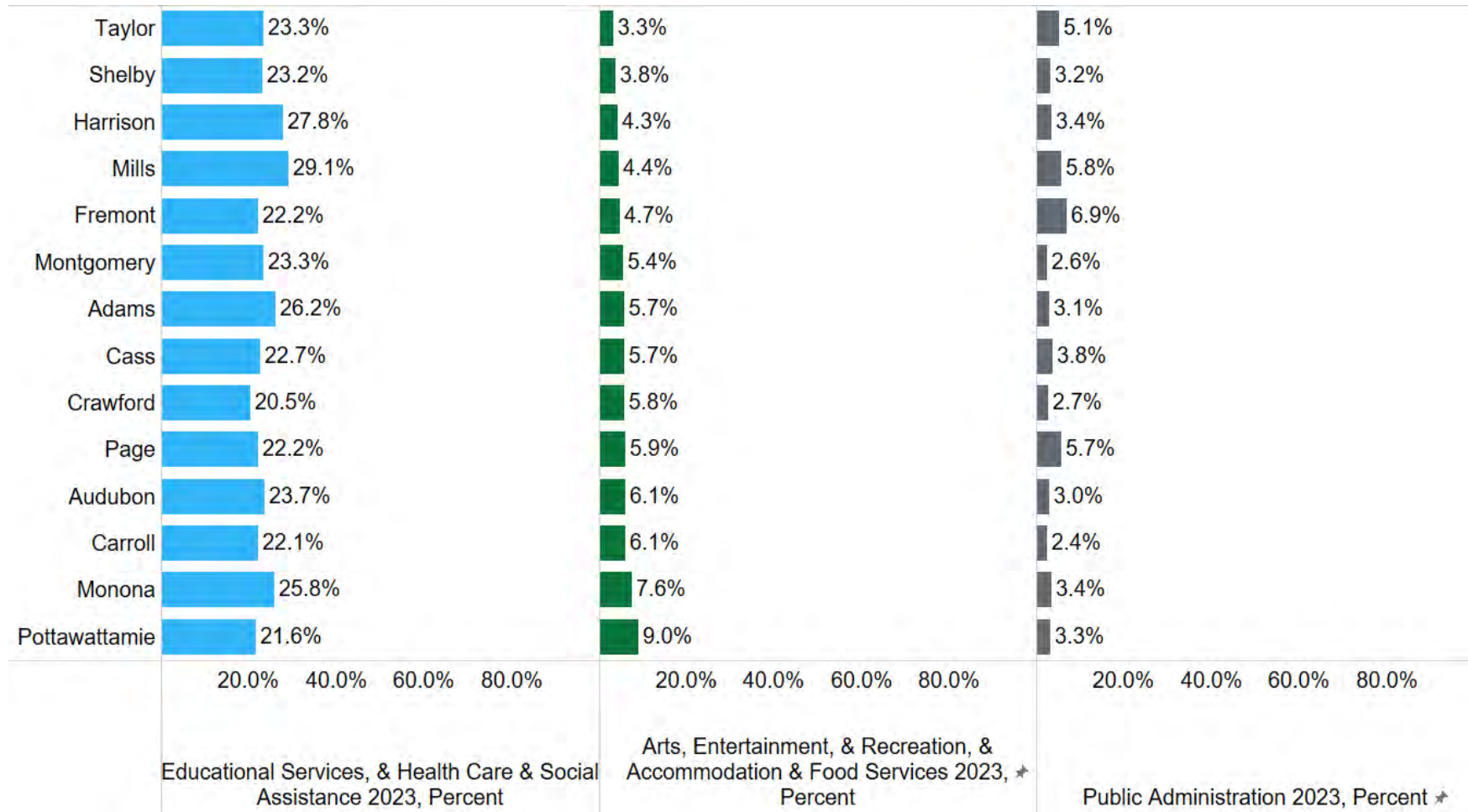
# Percentage of Population by Select Industries, 2023 by County

Finance and real estate along with professional, scientific, and management services comprise a moderate share of industries with Pottawattamie County leading both at 7.9% and 8.1% among the counties in the Iowa West Region.



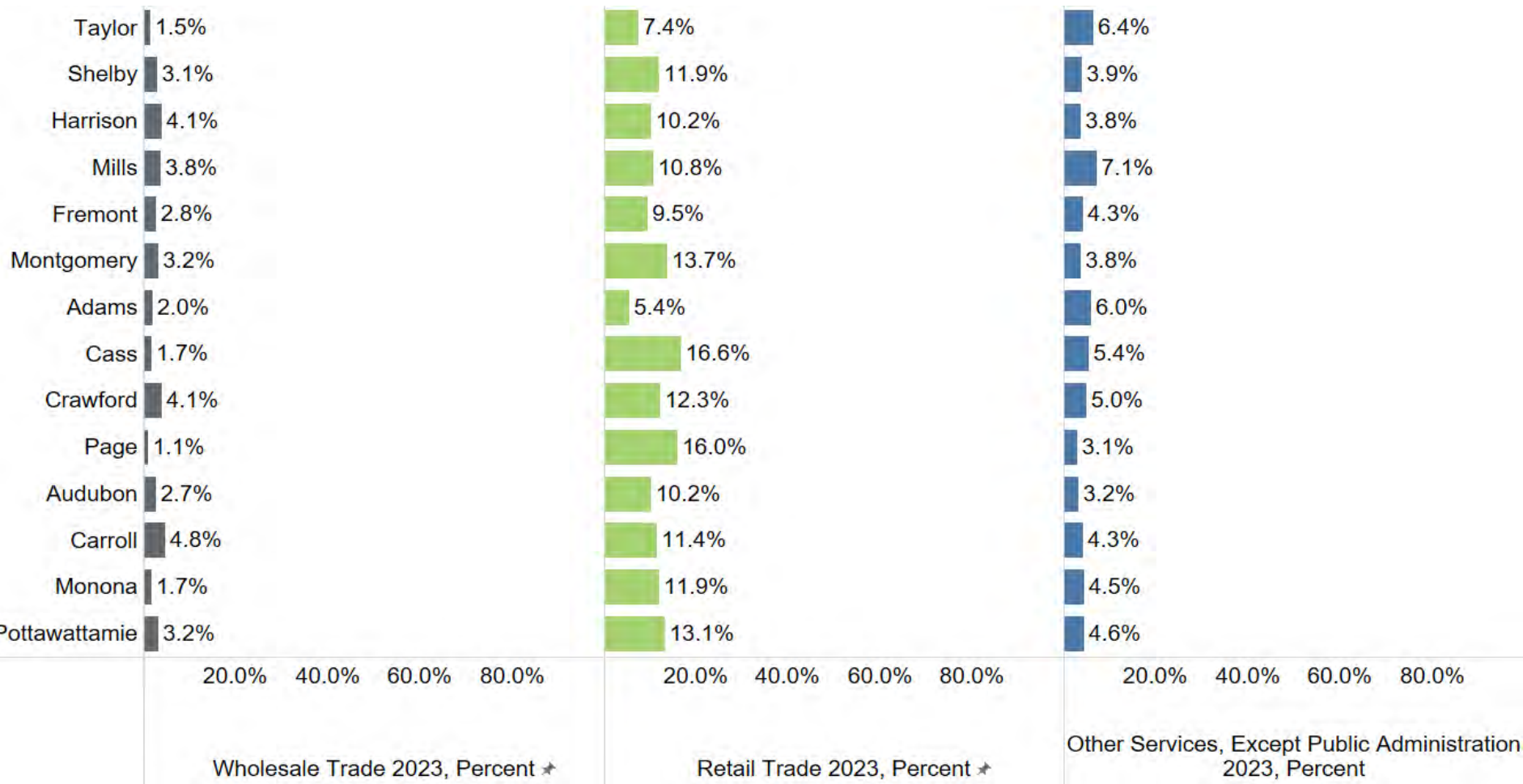
# Percentage of Population by Select Industries, 2023 by County

Educational services, health care, and social assistance is the largest industry in the Iowa West Region, accounting for at least 20% of employment in all counties.



# Percentage of Population by Select Industries, 2023 by County

Retail trade is a significant employer in the Iowa West Region, with most counties reporting at least 10% employment. Cass and Page counties lead the region.



# Percentage of Population by Select Industries, 2023 by County

Manufacturing is a major employer in the Iowa West Region, with most counties reporting at least 10% of employment. In Crawford and Page counties, it accounts for more than 20% of the workforce.

