



**NATIONAL SURVEY
OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES**

Iowa had an estimated 532 homeless families on a single night in 2009, with providers serving nearly three times their bed capacity over the course of the year.¹ This brief summarizes some of the state's public and private initiatives to assist these families.

State Taskforce on Homelessness

Taskforce: The Iowa Council on Homelessness (established by executive order in 2003) directs homelessness planning, manages the Balance of State Continuum of Care, and conducts research and analysis on state homelessness issues.

Governor's Appointee: Governor's Appointee: Jeff Gronstal, Licensure Surveyor at the Iowa Department of Public Health, has chaired the Iowa Council on Homelessness since September 2010.



Demographic Summary and Overview of Regional Organization

	Iowa ²	Polk County ³
Persons in homeless families ⁴	1,725	391
Number of family shelter beds ⁵	2,436	484
Persons in homeless families (per 10,000 population in families) ⁶	17	23
Percent of families in poverty ⁷	13.94%	10.72%
10-Year plan date approved or implemented	2004	2009
10-Year plan target population	All	All
Point-in-time count frequency	Annually	Annually
Point-in-time count managing agency	Iowa Institute for Community Alliances	Iowa Institute for Community Alliances
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) managing agency	Iowa Institute for Community Alliances	Iowa Institute for Community Alliances
Main organizing agency or Continuum of Care w(CoC) lead applicant	Iowa Council on Homelessness*	Polk County Housing Continuum

*Corresponds to the Balance of State Continuum of Care, which comprises areas of Iowa that are not included in a regional or local CoC.

Financing Housing for Homeless Hawkeyes

Iowa's State Housing Trust Fund (SHTF), a combination of state General Fund monies and profits from tax-exempt bonds sold by the Iowa Finance Authority, primarily functions to support local, county, and regional housing trust funds. Of the \$5,981,898 distributed by the SHTF in Fiscal Year 2011, 93.8% was allocated to 22 trust funds organized by communities, counties, or non-profit organizations like the Polk County Housing Trust Fund (PCHTF). PCHTF finances the development of transitional and affordable housing using monies from state, regional, and local government programs; donations from individuals and private businesses; and interest on mortgage loans. In Fiscal Year 2010, housing funded by PCHTF served 829 families, including 1,449 children. Nine percent (74) of these families were homeless at entry and 45.8% (380) had annual incomes at or below 30% of Polk County's median family income.⁸



The National Survey of Programs and Services for Homeless Families is an online resource for service providers, advocates, researchers, and public policy makers working in the field of family homelessness. The Web site provides a state-by-state snapshot of the interconnections between governmental and nonprofit work to end family homelessness. For additional information on Iowa and other states, visit www.icprwb.org

In the 2009 and 2010 legislative sessions, Iowa approved the \$875 million Iowa Jobs (I-JOBS) program to create employment opportunities, rebuild communities impacted by major floods and tornadoes in 2008, improve state infrastructure, and encourage long-term economic growth. Financed via the issuance of revenue bonds, the I-JOBS package includes \$10 million in Public Service Shelter Grant funds for the construction or renovation of emergency homeless and domestic violence shelters. Of these funds, approximately \$6.7 million were awarded for the construction of two new homeless shelters—one in Des Moines and the other in Iowa City—and roughly \$2.2 million for the renovation of ten shelters statewide; the remainder was allocated to domestic violence shelters. Transitional housing and permanent supportive housing programs did not qualify for the grant.⁹

Comparing Homeless and At-risk Families in Iowa

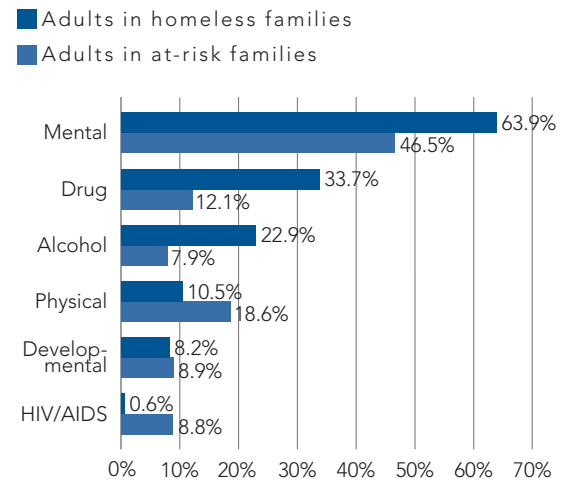
Using client data recorded by homeless service providers statewide, the Iowa Institute for Community Alliances, a non-profit organization, found differences in education, employment, income, and vulnerability factors between the 14,068 persons in homeless families and 13,153 persons in at-risk families served in Iowa in 2009. More adults in homeless households had not obtained a high school diploma or equivalent (89.9%, compared to 81.9% of adults in at-risk households) and fewer were employed at intake (15.0%, versus 28.8%). Combining all sources of income, the average homeless adult in a family earned \$1,437 per month, while the average at-risk adult earned \$1,582. Twenty-two percent of adults in homeless households and 8.8% of those in at-risk households had no income of any kind.

More homeless adults also suffered from a long-term disability (24.8%, versus 18.4% of adults in at-risk families). Mental illnesses and drug and alcohol addictions were more prevalent in homeless parents. In contrast, physical disabilities and HIV/AIDS were less prevalent, while both groups of adults experienced developmental disabilities at comparable rates.¹⁰

Becoming a STAR

The Shelter House, a non-profit organization in Iowa City, provides comprehensive employment support to chronically homeless or unemployed families and individuals through the Supported Training and Access to Resources (STAR) case management program. STAR encourages all clients to participate in skills training and paid internships. The program provides interns' wages of \$8 per hour and workers' compensation insurance using federal Supportive Housing Program funds, while participating employers supply on-site training. Employers establish three- to six-month intern positions, or two-week internships if interested in extensively evaluating a potential permanent employee. To decrease barriers to employment, participants receive transportation, child care, housing, mental health, substance abuse, and medical services throughout the program (for a maximum of two years). This wraparound strategy to maximize self-sufficiency involves collaboration between service providers, private businesses, public entities, and landlords. During the 2009–10 program year, STAR's case management team served 181 adults, directly benefiting 113 children. Of the 114 adults exiting the program, 81.6% increased housing stability, 92.1% had a source of income, and 52.6% were employed.¹¹

Adults with Long-term Disabilities in Homeless and At-risk Families (by percent of all adults in family type with a long-term disability)



Source: Ehren Stover-Wright (Data Analyst, Iowa Institute for Community Alliances), interview with ICPH, November 2010.

Endnotes

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *HUD's 2009 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Homeless Populations and Subpopulations*; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *AHAR Exchange Public Reports: 2009 Comprehensive Report of Sheltered Homeless Persons*.
- Statistics for Iowa include Dakota County, Nebraska and exclude Pottawattamie County, Iowa.
- Statistics for Polk County include the City of West Des Moines.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Homeless Populations and Subpopulations*.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *HUD's 2009 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Housing Inventory Chart Report*.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Homeless Populations and Subpopulations*; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2008 *American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates*.
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2008 *American Community Survey*.
- Center for Community Change, *Housing Trust Fund Progress Report 2007*; Iowa Finance Authority, "State Housing Trust Fund," <http://www.iowafinanceauthority.gov>; Lori Kauzlarich (Associate Director, Polk County Housing Trust Fund), interview with ICPH, December 2010.
- I-JOBS, <http://www.ijobsiowa.gov>; Iowa Finance Authority, *Allocation Plan for the Public Service Shelter Grant Program*, May 2009; Iowa Finance Authority, *I-JOBS Public Service Shelter Grant Awards*, January 2010.
- Iowa Institute for Community Alliances, *Iowans Experiencing Homelessness: January–December 2009 Annual Snapshot of Service and Shelter Use*; Ehren Stover-Wright (Data Analyst, Iowa Institute for Community Alliances), interview with ICPH, November 2010.
- Shelter House, <http://www.shelterhouseiowa.org>; Crissy Canganelli (Executive Director, Shelter House), interview with ICPH, November 2010.