

Iowa Council on Homelessness Facts

The Primary mission of the Iowa Council on Homelessness is to:

- Identify causes and effects of homelessness in Iowa and develop recommendations to address homelessness,
- Foster greater awareness among policy makers and the general public, and
- Ensure all Iowans have access to safe, decent and affordable housing, health care and education.

In carrying out this mission, the Council seeks to increase public awareness and education about homelessness through various means including:

- Information and tools for everyday Iowans to utilize in making a difference in the lives of the homeless, and
- Ongoing information, tools and resources for State Legislators to utilize in passing legislation that will positively impact the homeless population.

2007 FACTS:

During the 2007 I-Count of homeless people in Iowa, that there were 17,908 people who were provided assistance through Iowa's homeless network.

56% of homeless families experienced homelessness for the first time in 2007.

12% of homeless adults served in the Armed Forces.

10,206 Iowans under the age of 18 needed assistance and were provided services in 2007.

57% of homeless people in families are children. That is 4 out of 10 homeless Iowans.

67% of adults in families have completed high school or obtained a GED

53% of homeless individuals report a long term disability.

1/3 of homeless families are the "working poor".

Homeless service providers helped 9,822 homeless individuals in 2007.

An additional 10,010 Iowans were at risk of becoming homeless and were served by Iowa's homeless service network to prevent homelessness in 2007.

Perspective:

27,571 people were homeless or near homeless in 2007 and were served by a reporting agency which is similar to the entire population of Mason City, our 15th largest city,

Or

If the entire population of Coralville lost their homes.

Why should Iowans care?

Costs – Homeless people are involved in more "systems" and more assistance is required due to the difficulties that come with being homeless.

Education – Estimates indicate that three to six months of education are lost every time a child moves. Homeless families often move several times before finding permanent housing.

Health – Without stable housing, pre-existing conditions are aggravated, routine health care is ignored and high risks of catastrophic health problems increase.

The right things to do – Iowans have a tradition of stepping up to help those in need. Assisting those with the least improves their situation and improves the quality of life for all of us.

Main Reasons for Homelessness:

- **Economic – unemployment, declining wages or death/divorce of a spouse,**
- **Lack of affordable housing and the limited number of programs that assist with housing.**
- **Catastrophic illness and/or lack of affordable health care.**
- **Domestic Violence**
- **Mental Illness**
- **Addiction Disorders**

Homelessness results from a complex set of circumstances in their lives. Only a concerted effort to ensure jobs that pay a living wage, adequate support for those who cannot work, affordable housing and access to health care will bring an end to homelessness.

For more information about the Iowa Council on Homelessness and to view the full report from the Iowa Institute for Community Alliances go to:

www.iowafinanceauthority.gov/en/for_communities_housing_org/iowa_council_on_homelessness/