

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
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First Lady Mari Culver Announces Success of Homelessness Initiatives

I-JOBS and federal stimulus programs proving successful in helping thousands of Iowans

DES MOINES – First Lady Mari Culver today announced that a combination of state and federal programs designed to combat homelessness are helping thousands of Iowans achieve and maintain self-sufficiency. First, the Culver/Judge I-JOBS initiative includes three housing-related programs that provided \$40 million to help agencies that provide services to the homeless and low-income Iowans. Second, the federal Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program – called Iowa Rental Help in Iowa – has assisted more than 8,000 Iowans since October.

“The Governor, Lt. Governor and I are committed to doing whatever we can to make life better for Iowans. That’s why we created the I-JOBS program, and it includes \$40 million to develop and rehabilitate affordable housing and to give service providers crucial funding to enhance or create adequate shelters for Iowa’s most vulnerable residents,” the First Lady said. “These funds – coupled with federal resources – ensure that Iowans have improved access to the services they need, in safe, secure and modern facilities, while they work towards self-sufficiency.”

Across the nation, the recent economic crisis has contributed to an increase in the homeless population. The recently released 2009 Annual Report on Homelessness said 23,000 people sought help at Iowa’s shelters in 2009, a 38.7 percent increase over the previous year. The report is commissioned by the Iowa Council on Homelessness and the Iowa Finance Authority and prepared by the Iowa Institute for Community Alliances. The full report is available [here](#).

I-JOBS supports shelters, affordable housing

The First Lady shared information from the new study and comments about Iowa’s solution to the problem at an event today at Youth Emergency Shelter and Services (YESS) in Des Moines. The homeless shelter for kids and teens received \$248,609 from the I-JOBS Public Service Shelter Grant Program to renovate its 37,000-square-foot facility in southeast Des Moines. More than 13,000 children have benefitted from the shelter’s services and programs.

“The I-JOBS Public Service Shelter Grant (PSSG) Program is the most significant source of funds for emergency, domestic violence and homeless shelters to make infrastructure improvements to our facilities,” said Stephen Quirk, Executive Director of YESS. “Our facility has not seen a significant renovation in more than 15 years. But funds from I-JOBS are making it possible for us to

improve our facility in four areas: life safety, security, heating and cooling, and general infrastructure so that we can best help Iowa's homeless and near-homeless kids find the safety and security they need and deserve."

YESS is one of 17 shelters that shared \$10 million in I-JOBS funds from the PSSG program. The program will aid the creation of three new shelters in Iowa and help 14 more make major renovations. A complete listing of those projects is [here](#).

In addition, I-JOBS provided another \$20 million for the Affordable Housing Program that helps create and rehabilitate housing for families, seniors and persons with disabilities. Thirty-nine recipients around Iowa received funds from this program. Finally, I-JOBS provided \$10 million from the Disaster Damage Assistance Program. These funds are awarded to homeowners to help them rehabilitate their homes after the natural disasters of 2008. In all the PSSG, Affordable Housing and Disaster Damage Assistance Program are helping thousands of Iowans avoid homeless and find safe, permanent housing.

Additional information about I-JOBS housing programs is available www.IowaFinanceAuthority.gov/ijobs.

Iowa Rental Help keeping families in homes

Federal programs have also benefitted Iowa's homeless and near homeless populations in 2010. As part of the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the State of Iowa received \$11 million for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program, also called Iowa Rental Help. The goal of the program is to assist participants in gaining self-sufficiency. Among other things, Iowa Rental Help provides temporary assistance with rental and utility payments, utility and security deposits.

Since its start in October of 2009 nearly 8,000 Iowans have received assistance through the program. Of the individuals who were on the verge of homelessness and sought assistance to stay in their rental homes, 75 percent have achieved self-sufficiency and no longer require a federal subsidy. Of the homeless individuals who have sought assistance through Iowa Rental Help, 58 percent are now in secure, permanent rental housing.

Tammy Hansen of Harlan accessed the program when she needed to escape a domestic violence situation with her children. When she was no longer able to live with relatives, Tammy struggled to find housing she could afford on her earnings as a waitress. The Iowa Rental Help Program is providing temporary assistance so Tammy and her children can pay their monthly rent and so Tammy can continue her education.

"I never thought my children and I would one day face homelessness." Tammy said. "But when that day came, I immediately turned to the Iowa Rental Help Program. Without it, I don't know where my kids and I would be. But thanks to this temporary assistance, I am furthering my own education while my kids are thriving in a safe, secure living environment. I look forward to the day when I can earn enough money so that my family no longer relies on federal subsidies. But for now, we are one less family living on the streets."

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development administers the program nationally; the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) administers the program in Iowa. Iowans at risk of homelessness can call 877.386.9104, visit www.IowaRentalHelp.com or text RENT to 30644 for more information.

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