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**IOWA'S HOMELESS POPULATION
1999 ESTIMATES AND PROFILE**

**A Report Prepared for the State of Iowa
by the University of Iowa
In Cooperation with
The Iowa Department of Education
and Other State Agencies**

3-1840

January 2000

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
SCOPE OF THE STUDY	2
GENERAL FINDINGS	4
CONSIDERATIONS IN DESIGNING THE STUDY	6
STUDY DESIGN	8
HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE HOMELESS IN IOWA IN 1999?	13
WHO ARE THE HOMELESS?	19
OVERALL CHARACTERISTICS	22
AGE	23
HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION	25
RACE AND ETHNICITY	26
GENDER	27
CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSEHOLDS REPORTED BY SHELTERS AND NON-SHELTER SERVICE PROVIDERS	29
SOURCES OF INCOME	29
CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS	32
YEARS OF EDUCATION	34
LIVING CONDITIONS OF HOMELESS PEOPLE	35
TYPE OF ASSISTANCE TO NEAR-HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS	36
CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUALS REPORTED BY SCHOOLS	37
SPECIAL NEEDS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN	37
CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN	38
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE	40
SUMMARY: WHO ARE THE HOMELESS?	41

PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE PROVIDERS	43
PERCEIVED CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS	45
PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO SERVING THE HOMELESS	47
TRENDS IN THE NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE SERVED	49
SCHOOLS' PERCEPTIONS OF BARRIERS TO ENROLLMENT	50
SCHOOLS' PERCEPTIONS OF NEEDED SERVICES	51
PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITIES	53
SUMMARY: HOW DO SERVICE PROVIDERS PERCEIVE THE PROBLEM?	56
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	58
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES	60
RESOURCES CONSULTED	65
APPENDIX A: DEVELOPING ESTIMATES OF THE ANNUAL	
HOMELESS POPULATION	66
ADJUSTING THE POINT-IN-TIME COUNT TO AN ANNUAL ESTIMATE	68
ADJUSTING ANNUAL ESTIMATES FOR SEASONAL VARIATION	70
ACCOUNTING FOR ZERO REPORTS	71
APPENDIX B: SURVEY INSTRUMENTS	101
SURVEY TO SCHOOLS, HEAD START AGENCIES AND PRE-SCHOOL	
PROGRAMS	101
SURVEY TO NON-SHELTER SERVICE AGENCIES	107
SURVEY TO SHELTERS AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROVIDERS	
THAT DO NOT REPORT TO CHIP	111
SURVEY TO SHELTERS AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROVIDERS	
THAT REPORT INFORMATION TO CHIP	115
SURVEY TO PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITIES	119
COVER LETTERS AND LISTS OF DEFINITIONS PROVIDED	123

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Survey Response Rates	11
Table 2.1: Estimate of Iowa's 1999 Homeless and Near-homeless Population	14
Table 2.2: Estimate of Iowa's 1999 Homeless and Near-homeless Households	17
Table 3.1: Age Distribution of Individuals	23
Table 3.2: Age Distribution of Homeless People by County Poverty Classification	24
Table 3.3: Household Composition of Individuals Counted During the Study Period	25
Table 3.4: Race or Ethnicity of Homeless and Near-Homeless People	26
Table 3.5: Race/Ethnicity of Homeless People by County Poverty Classification	27
Table 3.6: Gender of Homeless and Near Homeless People	28
Table 3.7: Gender of Homeless People by County Population and Poverty Classification	28
Table 3.8: Sources of Income for Homeless and Near-Homeless Households	30
Table 3.9: Income of Homeless Households by County Population and Poverty Classification	31
Table 3.10: Causes of Homelessness and Near-Homelessness by Household	32
Table 3.11: Major Causes of Homelessness by County Poverty Classification, by Household	33
Table 3.12: Years of Education for Homeless and Near-Homeless Adults	34
Table 3.13: Previous Residence of Homeless People in Shelters or Transitional Housing	35
Table 3.14: Type of Assistance Provided to Homeless and Near-Homeless Households	36
Table 3.15: Special Needs of Homeless and Near Homeless School Children	38
Table 3.16: Causes of Homelessness and Near-Homelessness among School Children	39
Table 3.17: School Attendance Among Homeless and Near-Homeless Children	40
Table 4.1: Service Providers' Perceptions of Causes of Homelessness	45
Table 4.2: Service Providers' Perceptions of Causes of Homelessness by County Population and Poverty Classification	46
Table 4.3: Service Providers' Perceptions of Major Barriers to Serving Homeless People	47
Table 4.4: Service Providers' Perceptions of Major Barriers to Serving Homeless People	

by County Poverty and Population Classification	48
Table 4.5: Service Providers' Perceptions of Trends in Numbers of Homeless People Served	
.....	49
Table 4.6: Schools' Perceptions of Barriers to Attendance or Enrollment	
for Homeless Children	50
Table 4.7: Schools' Perceptions of the Importance of and Capacity to	
Provide Services to Homeless Children	52
Table 4.8: Housing Assistance in Iowa, by County Urban-Rural Continuum	54
Table 4.9: Housing Assistance in Iowa, by County Poverty Level	55
Table A.1: Turnover within the Sheltered Homeless Population	68
Table A.2: Per Capita Homelessness for Counties Reporting Some Homeless People	74
Table A.3: Study Period Counts and Annualized, Seasonally Adjusted Estimates of Homeless	
and Near-homeless Individuals	77
Table A.4: Counts and Adjusted Estimates of Homeless and Near-homeless	
School Children by School District	84

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Estimated Homeless Population	16
Figure 1a: People in Poverty	16
Figure 2a: Urban-Rural Classification	21
Figure 2b: Poverty Classification	21
Figure A1: Poverty / Urban-Rural Classification	73
Figure A.2: Estimated Number of Homeless Children	82
Figure A.3: Estimated Number of Homeless Adults	83
Figure A.4: Estimated Homeless School Children by School District	100

INTRODUCTION

This study of Iowa's homeless population was commissioned by the Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Department of Economic Development. As with any such study there are several purposes, including compilation of general educational information, and specific data necessary for program reporting and evaluation by different entities. The primary purposes of the 1999 homeless study are:

- **Estimating the size of the homeless and near-homeless population in Iowa in 1999.** Approximately every second year for the past decade a "homeless count" has been conducted in the state of Iowa. Although there have been differing methodologies, all have included an estimated count as the central theme.
- **Providing a basic demographic profile of the homeless and near-homeless populations.** Thorough demographic information was collected to improve our understanding of both homeless and near-homeless individuals and households.
- **Investigating the causes of homelessness.** Beyond identifying the population, we look into the factors that contribute to their situation. This provides an indirect analysis of the quality of life and larger societal challenges these individuals and families face.
- **Investigating service providers' perceptions of causes, barriers and trends in the number served.** Tapping into the knowledge of informed professionals on this issue, we ask what those serving the homeless and near-homeless populations see as problems and trends related to this issue.

- **Providing state agencies with sufficient current information to re-evaluate programs.** This research was designed, conducted and compiled to meet the specific data needs of a variety of State agencies concerned with homelessness.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

As mentioned above, this study researches the homeless and near-homeless populations. Although we can learn much by identifying, counting and investigating homeless people, looking at the near-homeless will reveal dynamics that both precede and contribute to homelessness. To develop a comprehensive understanding of the problem, identifying similarities and distinctions between these two populations is important, helping to define a continuum of vulnerability to which both belong. Identifying contributing factors and vulnerable populations can also help in the development of preventive measures besides improved support services to those already homeless.

Although there are commonly held perceptions of whom the term homeless includes, a strict definition is necessary for a sound study. The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 (PL 100-77) defines homelessness to include:

- A person without fixed, regular and adequate nighttime shelter;
- A person whose primary nighttime residence is:
 - A supervised shelter designed to provide temporary accommodations (such as a congregate shelter or transitional housing);
 - A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping place for human beings (such as a car, camper, abandoned building, barn or street)

The McKinney Act definition has been interpreted more broadly by several agencies,¹ including the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, to apply to the following classes of people in addition to those listed above:

- Children in runaway shelters or group homes (e.g., homes for abandoned children);
- Children living in state institutions (e.g., awaiting foster home placement) because they have no other home;
- Sick or abandoned children who would be released from the institution (e.g., hospitals) they are living in, if they had another place to go;
- A person or household living doubled-up with family or friends for a temporary period.

This study uses this broader definition, which is consistent with those used in past studies of Iowa's homeless population.

The definition of near-homeless may include a much broader range of situations. Although many impoverished families may be vulnerable to homelessness, a more restricted definition is necessary to identify those who are truly in imminent danger. After much discussion of relevant factors, the purpose of counting this population, and definitions used in other studies, we included the following as "near-homeless":

- A person or household in imminent danger of eviction;
- A person or household in imminent danger of having their utilities disconnected;
- A person or household seeking housing assistance, AND paying more than 50% of their income for housing.

¹ A more detailed discussion of definitional issues may be found in David S. Cordray and Georgine M. Pion (1991) "What's behind the numbers? Definitional issues in counting the Homeless" *Housing Policy Debate* vol. 2, issue 3, pp. 587-616.

To provide more in-depth analysis of much of the data collected we break it down to consider geographic differences. This is done for the "count" portion of the study to estimate the number of homeless and near-homeless in each county. For the demographic and perception portions, degree of urbanization and level of poverty are considered. Counties were divided to fit the following definitions.

County Type by Population	County Type by Poverty Level
Metro: Defined as a metropolitan area by the Census Bureau, containing an urban center with population > 50,000. (10 counties)	Low Poverty: Portion of population in poverty < 8.6%. (26 counties)
Non-Metro Urban: Contains an urban center with population 2,500 - 50,000. (69 counties)	Medium Poverty: Portion of population in poverty is 8.6% - 11.6%. (51 counties)
Rural: All communities have a population < 2,500. (20 counties)	High Poverty: Portion of population in poverty is > 11.6%. (22 counties)

GENERAL FINDINGS

Although far more descriptive data and narrative are provided in the body of this report, we present here several general findings that surfaced during the study. These observations give a descriptive overall picture of the nature of homelessness in Iowa.

The estimated count of the homeless suggests that the number of homeless people has remained static over the past several years. In spite of recent economic expansion and record unemployment, a segment of our population remains entrenched in poverty and at risk of losing their housing if there is a family crisis. Homelessness exists in rural and urban areas, and in low poverty and high poverty communities. Although various factors suggest different levels of

vulnerability in different geographic areas, all parts of the state contain homeless and near-homeless people.

Family breakups are reported as the number one cause of homelessness, far ahead of factors such as eviction or utility disconnection. Interestingly, in the wake of welfare reform, losses of income subsidy benefits of any kinds were cited very infrequently as contributing to homelessness. These indicators point to family instability, such as domestic violence, being highly correlated with homeless families. This holds true in every type of community.

Single adults with children make up the greatest portion of homeless households. With this as the foundation, it is no surprise that children make up just over half the homeless population. Women comprise well over half the adult homeless population, no doubt related to their presence as the single-parent of at least 80% of those households. This typical household structure is clearly related to the fact that family breakups are the number one cause, leaving women with children as the most vulnerable group.

Half of all homeless households rely on income from employment. This suggests wages are too low for families to live securely even if employment is found, and that higher paying jobs are out of reach or unavailable to many. Again relating this to other findings, lack of living wage jobs and affordable housing were reported by most service providers as the most significant barriers to resolving homelessness in every type of community. Long term economic solutions that create living wage jobs and affordable housing seem necessary to solve this crisis.

This brief summary of findings likely defies the stereotype many Iowans have of the homeless that live among us. It may also cause a greater appreciation and empathy for those living in this situation as it becomes clear that more than half are children, and most adults are working to support their families. This suggests that most are trying to improve their condition, but remain victims of larger economic and societal forces.

CONSIDERATIONS IN DESIGNING THE STUDY

Counting the homeless population poses some of the more complex methodological problems of demographic research. While several different approaches have been used, ranging from the US Census "S-night" counts² in 1990 to innumerable city level studies, methodological approaches vary widely. A growing body of critical discussion of methodological pitfalls was drawn on in the development of the methodology for this study. Resources consulted are listed at the end of this report. However, any methodological approach needs to be crafted in the context of what is possible and locally appropriate, and by the uses to which data is to be put. Consequently, the Iowa Interagency Task Force on Homelessness played a key role in the initial design and ongoing development of this study and the final report.

The design of the methodology attempts to resolve several important difficulties raised in previous studies of the homeless. As indicated above, definitions are key to collecting the specifically desired data. Our use of the expanded interpretation of the McKinney Act definition of "homeless" is consistent with previous studies conducted in Iowa, and is common in many studies around the country. However, there is substantial evidence that "snapshot" studies that count those currently homeless, such as this study does, underestimate the problem by excluding people who are intermittently homeless. Therefore, estimating those in imminent danger of becoming homeless, who we define as the "near-homeless," was included as an integral part of this study. Our study also tried to account for this limitation by developing an annualized estimate of homeless people (as described in Appendix A).

This study was based on surveys of service providers rather than direct surveys of homeless people. Merely providing a definition of homelessness and near-homelessness does not ensure that respondents will have enough information about a person to decide whether they are homeless or not. For some types of agencies probing questions may be needed to identify

² S-night counts were conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau as part of the 1990 Census count; enumerators visited locations on the street where homeless people were likely to be found, as well as shelters.

whether people they serve are homeless, and they may be unwilling to be that intrusive. Schools comprise a significant portion of our study, and do not focus on providing homeless services per se. School personnel are often unaware of the household situation of the student, making them ill-prepared to provide the type of in-depth information our survey requested. This accounts for many incomplete and “unknown” responses.

Different sampling frames and approaches were used for different segments of the homeless population. As described in more detail later in this report, a variety of kinds of agencies were surveyed to identify various segments of the homeless population. For example, congregate shelters are clear sources for data on homeless people, while county general relief offices will likely serve a significant number of near-homeless. The accuracy and thoroughness of data collected from different sources may vary. Although very similar, survey instruments were designed differently for collection of data from different sources based on whom they would likely serve (this variation is most significant as it applies to the school survey).

One of the largest challenges of any study of this nature is to produce as complete a count of the homeless and near-homeless populations as possible. However, duplication - counting individuals multiple times - must be avoided. All survey instruments included specific identifiers for individuals counted, that respected their confidentiality. Although cross checking with these identifiers minimized duplication, incomplete information and other intricacies in collection methods leaves a slim possibility that a small subset of people was counted more than once.

The requirements for accuracy must be balanced against the time and resource limitations of the study. Although point-in-time studies of the current homeless population substantially underestimate the proportion of the population affected by homelessness, a longitudinal study was not feasible. Also, lengthy detailed surveys for demographic and other information on those who are homeless or near-homeless, plus questions about providers’ opinions on key barriers and ideas to improve services, have all tended to reduce the response rates in past studies. Cost

constraints, time limitations and keeping survey demands on service providers reasonable were all considerations. Therefore, a relatively streamlined survey instrument focused on a two-week investigation period was determined to be the most efficient and reliable within existing limitations. However, analysis of the longer-term Counting Homeless Iowans Project (CHIP) shelter admissions database is included where available and appropriate, and was used in the extrapolation methodology.

Counting the rural homeless presents special problems for this study. Homelessness is more evident in urbanized areas where shelters and other services are more readily available, than in sparsely populated areas where few or no services exist. This lack of shelters may also drive the rural homeless to be less visible, hiding out in places not meant for human habitation to avoid being stigmatized or even prosecuted. Doubling-up with family or friends is also likely more common for the rural homeless. In both cases, identifying homeless people in rural areas is far more difficult and may not happen unless they request services from a local agency. Consequently, rural counts are prone to be underestimated to an even greater degree than in urban areas.

STUDY DESIGN

Developing an accurate count of the number of people who will be homeless over a year is plagued by the difficulties described above. While some studies may have the resources to conduct a comprehensive Census of homeless persons at a single point-in-time, and others may have the resources to collect agency reports over an entire year, neither of these methods can provide an irrefutable annual count. Point-in-time counts, no matter how comprehensive, all encounter the dilemma of how to extrapolate from a single period to an annual estimate. Year-long counts resolve this problem, but because they rely on reports from agencies with several, often more pressing, responsibilities, may not provide as complete a count as a Census would. A year-long Census would probably be cost-prohibitive.

This study, like most, was much more constrained. With limited finances and time, we needed to accomplish several things. We needed to cast a broad net, looking beyond people served in existing shelters (which reflects only homelessness in communities that have shelters) to schools, Human Service and other agencies that may provide services to homeless people who may not show up in the shelter system. To do this, we had to rely on a limited reporting period that would be feasible for the agencies we asked to participate.

This study used mail back surveys distributed to a total of 2,231 agencies. Surveys requested information on homeless and near-homeless people served during the study period (April 25 to May 8). A series of questions also covered agency perceptions of the major causes of homelessness and barriers to improving services to homeless people. Several types of agencies were surveyed, and surveys were designed to include only questions relevant to the type of contact agencies were likely to have with homeless or near-homeless people. Five different survey instruments were designed (these are included in Appendix B).

The first requested information from schools, Head start agencies and preschools on the homeless and near-homeless children they were aware of during the 1998 - 1999 school year. Schools were asked specific questions about the barriers they encountered to improving the enrollment of homeless children, their assessment of the importance of several services schools provide to homeless children, and their assessment of their school's ability to provide these services. In addition, schools were asked to rank the importance of several causes of homelessness, and to estimate whether they had served more, fewer, or about the same number of homeless children compared with the previous year.

The second version of the survey requested information from non-shelter service providers who may have contact with homeless people. County Human Services offices, General Relief offices, and Mental Health Clinics received this survey. Agencies were asked to list the homeless or near-homeless clients they served over the two-week study period. They were also asked three general questions about their perceptions of the causes of homelessness in their

community, barriers to improving services to homeless clients, and trends in numbers of homeless clients served compared with the same period during the previous year.

The third version of the survey was sent to shelters and transitional housing programs that do not report data on the households they serve to the Counting Homeless Iowans Project (CHIP), described below. Shelter providers were asked to list the people they served during the study period, and were asked the same questions about perceptions of causes, barriers and trends.

Approximately 80 shelters and other organizations that provide services to a homeless clientele (such as food or meals) have recently begun reporting information on the clients they serve to the Counting Homeless Iowans Project (CHIP). In contrast to this study, CHIP is designed to provide detailed demographic data on the homeless population, rather than a comprehensive count. In order to have access to the data reported to CHIP during the study period, we had to obtain signed release forms from each agency. Consequently, the fourth survey, sent to CHIP reporters, did not ask them to duplicate information on the clients they served during the study period. The survey asked them the same general questions about causes, barriers and trends and asked them to sign the release form. CHIP is still in the process of expanding shelter participation, so identifying precisely which shelters should receive which survey was difficult. Several shelters received both the third and fourth surveys as a result.

The final type of agency we surveyed, Public Housing Authorities, was only asked general questions about causes and barriers, with several specific questions on the length of their waiting list, and numbers of homeless or near-homeless households on that list. PHA surveys were intended to provide a general picture of housing assistance in each community.

Mailing lists were obtained from State agencies. Surveys were mailed April 4, with cover letters from the study team and appropriate State or Regional officials, a list of definitions of terms and information about training sessions for survey respondents. School district At-risk Coordinators were mailed an informational letter describing the study and asking for their

assistance in ensuring survey completion. Training sessions were held April 14 over Iowa's satellite communications network (ICN). Three sessions were held that day, with separate ones for shelter providers, non-shelter service providers, and schools. Shelters and non-shelter service providers were contacted by phone before the study period began to check whether surveys had been received and whether agencies had any questions. A toll-free assistance line was established for questions respondents may encounter as they completed the surveys. Calls were returned within 24 hours. Once the study period was over, follow-up with non-respondents was conducted by telephone, fax or e-mail. For schools, School District Administrative Offices were contacted and asked to help follow up with schools that had not responded.

Response rates for each major type of agency are shown in Table 1.1. The response rates shown are comparable to those of previous studies. Responses varied across counties, but only one county (Jefferson) returned no responses from any type of agency.

Table 1.1: Survey Response Rates

Agency Type	Responses	Number of agencies	Response Rate
Shelters / Transitional Housing	88	123	71.5%
CHIP	67	80	83.7%
Non-CHIP	21	43	48.8%
Dept. of Human Services Offices	83	100	83%
General Relief Offices	48	98	48.9%
Other Services*	18	51	35.3%
Public Housing Authorities	40	70	57.1%
Schools	944	1789	52.8%
Total responses	1221	2231	54.7%

* "Other services" included Mental Health Clinics and Community Action Program agencies that do not provide shelter.

Survey responses provided counts of homeless and near-homeless people and households served over the two-week study period (the entire year for schools). Basic demographic details, causes of the homeless episode and other information was collected for individuals. Surveys also provided data on perceptions service providers had of the major causes of homelessness, barriers to improving services, and trends in numbers of homeless people served compared with the past year.

Survey respondents were asked to record data providing a unique identifier for every individual they listed. The first four letters of the last name and the last four digits of the social security number provided a way to identify individuals reported by several agencies, without violating confidentiality. Eliminating duplication for individuals with this information was straightforward. More complex challenges were posed by those for whom one or both fields were missing. Agencies may not have had information on social security numbers, and some agencies (especially shelters for victims of domestic violence) expressed concern about violating client confidentiality. Individuals with missing identifiers were sorted by county, and checked for duplication on age, race, gender, household size and composition. Where data matched on all these variables within the same county for individuals reported by different agencies, we assumed duplication. Our identification of duplicate reports assumed that agencies not reporting unique identifiers did not duplicate their reports of individuals.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE HOMELESS IN IOWA IN 1999?

The raw unduplicated counts on which our study is based provide at best a partial “snapshot” of homelessness in Iowa during a two-week period in the Spring of 1999. This “snapshot” is partial for many reasons. The response rates shown in Table 1.1 are reasonable for a mail-back survey, but they are far from perfect. Despite our best efforts to improve response rates, many communities have only partial responses. The volume of non-respondents points to the need to interpret raw counts with extreme caution. Queries from those surveyed revealed that many (especially schools) had little to go on in differentiating homeless from near-homeless or poor but safely housed individuals. We did not encourage schools or other agencies to inflate their reports with those they thought might be homeless, nor did we encourage them to use intrusive methods to identify homeless individuals. Agencies were instructed to complete surveys to the best of their ability, but many respondents had imperfect information to draw on. Even if agencies did have clear ways to distinguish homeless individuals from others they served, they did not necessarily serve any homeless clients during the two-week period.

Consequently, the raw counts of homeless and near-homeless individuals collected during the study period are just that - raw counts. They provide a basis for estimates of the “true” homeless population of the State, but they cannot be interpreted as reflecting a true annual count in any sense. This section of the report presents our best estimate of how many individuals and households were homeless or near-homeless in Iowa in 1999. Appendix A provides a detailed description of the three steps we used to develop these estimates.

Table 2.1 summarizes our estimate of Iowa’s homeless population in 1999. These estimates are based on a methodology that extrapolated from the raw unduplicated counts to address the following three questions:

- How do we adjust our point-in-time count to estimate the number of people we can expect were homeless in Iowa in 1999?
- How do we adjust our point-in-time count to account for seasonal variation over the year?
- How do we account for communities reporting zero homeless people?

Table 2.1 distinguishes between adults and children. Overall, we could expect (based on the demographic profile of the people counted during the study period) that children made up just over half Iowa's homeless population in 1999. This is a smaller proportion than that shown in the unduplicated raw count, because reporting periods differed for different agencies. Schools were asked to report information for all homeless children during the 1998 /1999 school year, while shelters and other non-shelter service providers reported information only on individuals served during the two-week study period. Our extrapolation of an annual estimate for the latter group of agencies inflated the study period count based on the individuals they reported (both adults and children). As schools reported data for the entire school year, estimates were adjusted only to account for school districts reporting zero homeless children. Consequently, our annualized estimate could be expected to include a higher proportion of adults than the raw counts on which the study is based. This discrepancy is especially apparent in the annualized estimate of near-homeless adults and children, because school reports accounted for more than two-thirds of the near-homeless children counted during the study period. Appendix A provides a detailed explanation of these issues.

Table 2.1: Estimate of Iowa's 1999 Homeless and Near-homeless Population

	Homeless Individuals		Near-homeless Individuals	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Unduplicated raw counts:				
Children	2,553	59.7	636	65.2
Adults	1,441	33.7	253	25.9
Unknown	284	6.7	87	8.9
Total	4,278		976	
Annualized Estimate:				
Children	9,383	50.5	3,028	41.4
Adults	9,209	49.5	4,278	58.6
Total	18,592		7,306	

Another issue deserves mention here. Children were reported both by schools, and by shelters and other non-shelter service providers. It is impossible to identify precisely whether school children belong to a household that receives non-shelter assistance. Thus, they may be counted twice - once when household size (but no information on other household members that are not present) is recorded by the non-shelter agency, and once when the school records the child. Despite our best efforts to eliminate duplication, it is possible (but not likely) that as many as 382 (15%) homeless and 223 (35%) near-homeless school children are duplicated in the raw counts obtained from other agencies. If this were the case, our overall annual estimates would be adjusted downwards, to 17,859 homeless individuals for the State as a whole (47.2% of whom would be children) and 6,410 near-homeless individuals (31.5% of whom would be children). However, given that the majority of homeless persons reported were in shelters, where information was recorded for each household member, duplication from this source is likely to be a much less significant issue than duplication in the near-homeless population.

The geographic distribution of this estimate is presented by county in Figure 1. More detailed estimates of homeless and near-homeless people are presented by county in Appendix A, Table A.3. This table compares our estimates for each county with the unduplicated raw count obtained during the study period. Although the reader will note from Table A3 that several counties reported zero homeless people during the study period, the Census Bureau's estimate of the poverty level population (presented inset as Figure 1a) suggests that no county in Iowa is without people who may be vulnerable to homelessness given a family or other personal disaster. The poverty level population shown in Figure 1a is defined by the federal poverty line (\$16,588 in income for a family of four), which equates roughly to between 30% and 50% of median income in most Iowa counties. Department of Housing and Urban Development studies of renter households who do not receive housing assistance, identify those earning less than 50% of median income as likely to have a housing cost burden or other "worst case" housing needs. Without a well-developed support system, housing cost burdens may make poor households vulnerable to displacement. The reported causes of homelessness supports this argument.

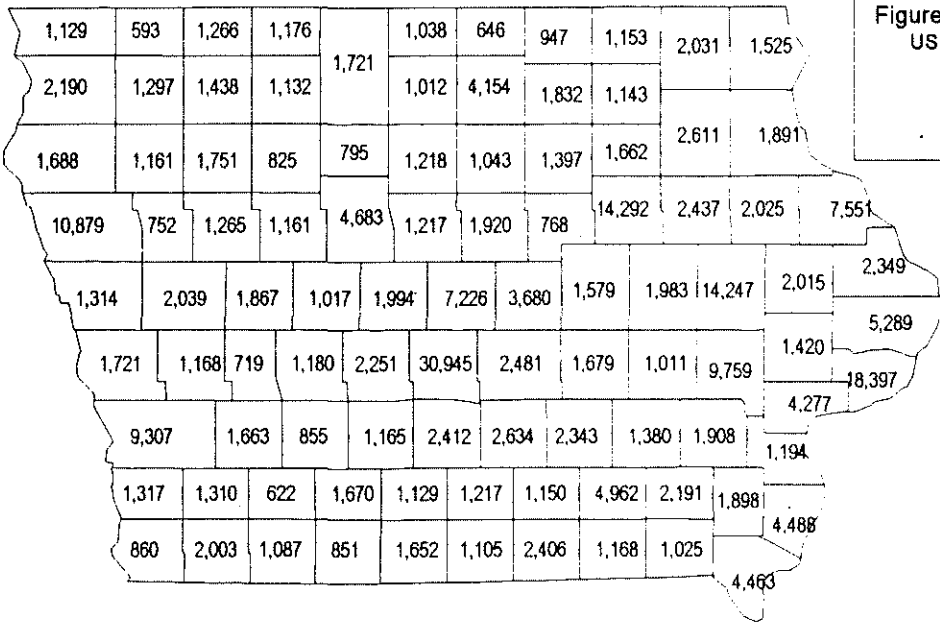


Figure 1a: People in Poverty
US Census Bureau, 1998

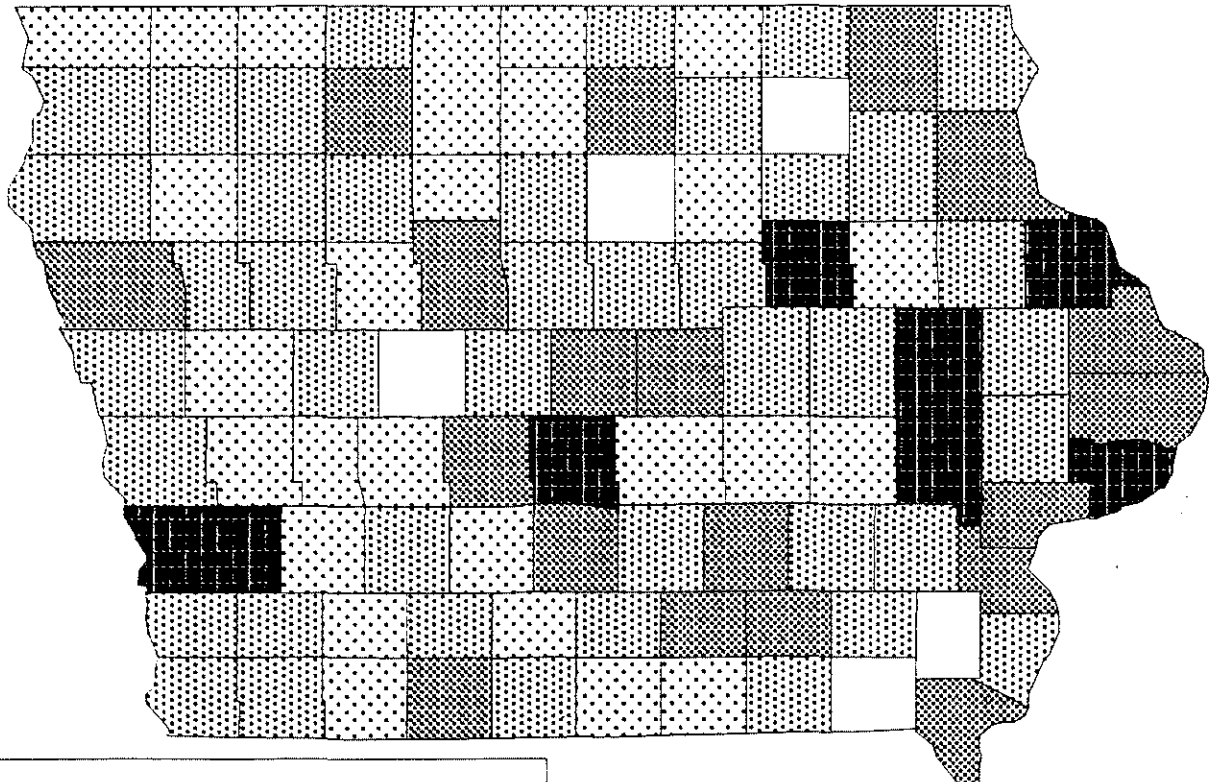


Figure 1: Estimated Homeless Population
1999 Iowa Homeless Study

- more than 500 (7)
- ▨ 100 to 500 (19)
- ▧ 50 to 100 (42)
- ▩ 25 to 50 (26)
- less than 25 (5)

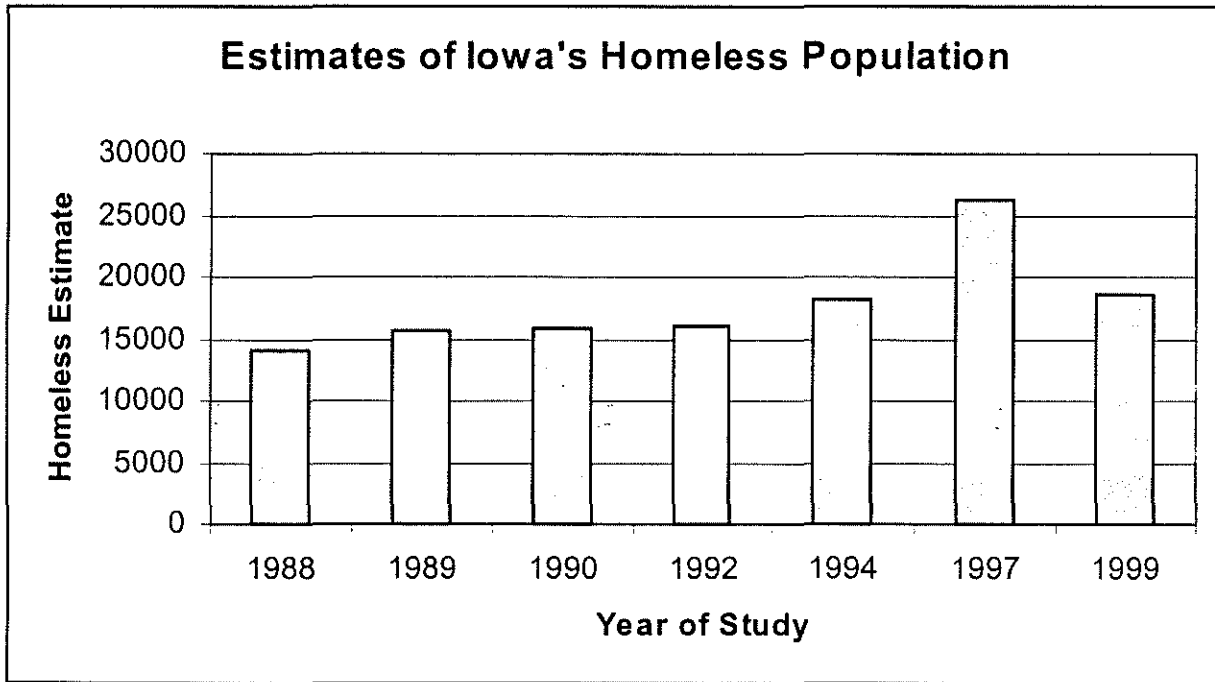
We also estimated the number of households who were likely to be homeless or near-homeless during 1999, extrapolating from the distribution of household size and type reported for the people counted during the study period. Table 2.2 presents our estimate of the number and type of homeless and near-homeless households in Iowa.

Table 2.2: Estimate of Iowa's 1999 Homeless and Near-homeless Households

Household Composition	Homeless Households	Near-homeless Households
Unaccompanied Child	1,952	307
Single Adult w/ children	2,713	1,091
Two Adults w/ children	654	495
Single adult	3,495	782
Childless Couple	112	120
Other	398	266
Unknown	370	125
Total Households	9,694	3,186

How do these estimates compare with those produced in previous studies? The following chart shows trends in estimates of the State's homeless population over the past decade. Comparing trends across studies is impossible because of the very different methodological approaches used in each, although there is reasonable continuity with studies from the mid-1990s. The most recent study, completed in 1997, presents a somewhat higher estimate of the State's homeless population. A very different methodology was used to extrapolate from the study period count to the number of incidents of homelessness and then to the number of people estimated to have been homeless during 1997. This study uses a more conservative methodology. Differences in estimates between 1997 and 1999 cannot be interpreted as showing a decline in the number of homeless people in the State. The unduplicated study period counts (conducted over a four-week rather than a two-week period in 1997) were similar to those

obtained in this study (4,983) suggesting the number of homeless people has not diminished significantly since 1997. Instead, it is likely (as service providers appear to agree) that the number of homeless people in the State has remained fairly stable compared to past years.



WHO ARE THE HOMELESS?

Although many stereotypes of the homeless population exist, such perceptions are often based on the visible homeless who live on the streets in large urban areas. There is a larger homeless population, along with many living on the brink of homelessness, that this study attempts to profile. Particularly in places like Iowa, with extensive rural and sparsely populated areas, the homeless are often less visible and, consequently, more difficult to define.

By researching the demographic makeup of the homeless and near-homeless populations, we can begin to identify trends in age, race, gender and household composition. These characteristics may each affect the likelihood of any particular poor household becoming homeless. Such research begins to identify the implications of these factors for levels of vulnerability, pointing to segments of the general population who are more susceptible to losing their housing. Also, a greater awareness of the demographic composition of this population will help to increase the effectiveness of efforts to identify and serve those in need of support.

We also explore what factors contribute to homelessness, the type of income on which these households rely, where they reside and the services they use because of their situation. Going beyond basic demographic profiles, these indicators help construct a picture of the quality of life for homeless and near-homeless households. The challenges and problems regularly faced by this population begin to become apparent, giving us a greater understanding and appreciation of the situations that confront them. The more precise definition of the problem of homelessness this profile provides should help to improve the design and targeting of services, to use dedicated resources more efficiently, and to begin to implement systemic public policy solutions.

This study covers the entire State, so a diversity of communities is included. The community environment can bring very different factors to bear on insecurely housed people,

causing homelessness to be manifested in unique ways. Analyzing the information collected in relation to degree of urbanization and level of poverty, we further identify characteristics of the homeless population. This information helps us begin to understand why a program may be effective in Davenport but not in De Witt.

We begin by discussing the characteristics of the homeless population overall, including children reported by schools along with children and adults reported by shelters and other non-shelter service providers. The second part of the discussion focuses only on people reported by shelters and non-shelter providers, while the third focuses on the questions specific to school children. For each topic addressed, homeless and near-homeless individuals are compared. Our survey defined homeless and near-homeless people as follows (based on the expanded McKinney Act definitions presented on pages 2 to 3 of this report):

Homeless: People without fixed nighttime shelter or who live in places not ordinarily used for humans (such as a car), people whose primary residence is a temporary congregate shelter or transitional housing, children living in institutions who have no home to return to, and people living doubled-up with family or friends temporarily.

Near-Homeless: People in imminent danger of eviction or having utilities disconnected, and people seeking housing assistance, AND paying more than 50% of their income for housing.

Geographic comparisons are drawn for homeless people only, investigating how their characteristics differed along the urban-rural continuum, and along a continuum of county poverty. The distributions of counties along these continuums are shown in Figures 2a and 2b. Not all data are reported by county type for each demographic area. Only the salient points have been extracted for presentation. County classifications were chosen as follows:

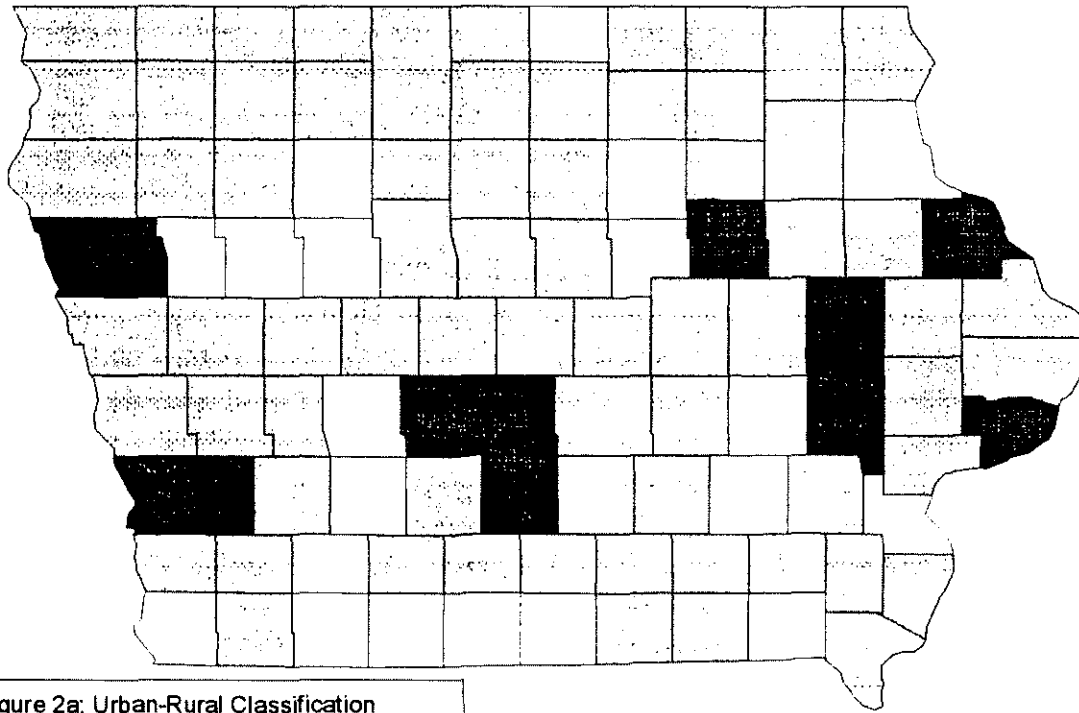


Figure 2a: Urban-Rural Classification

- metropolitan counties (10)
- ▨ non-metro urban counties (69)
- rural counties (20)

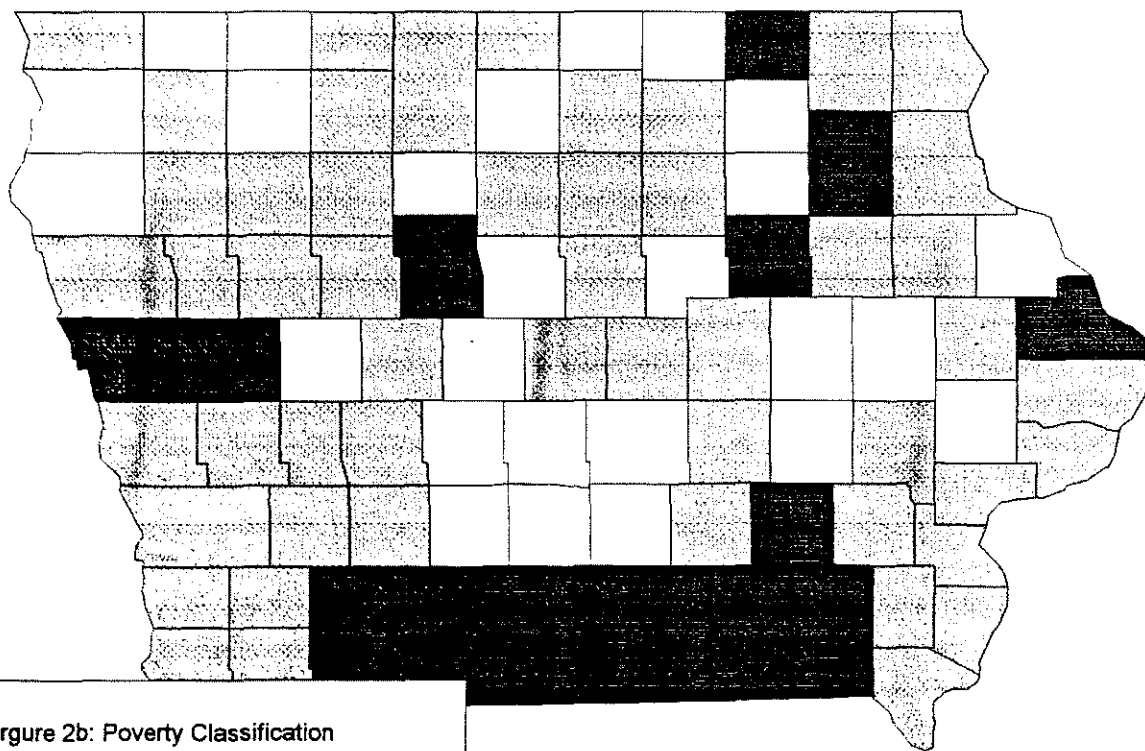


Figure 2b: Poverty Classification

- high poverty (> 11.6%) (22)
- ▨ medium poverty (8.6% - 11.6%) (51)
- low poverty (< 8.6%) (26)

County Type by Population	County Type by Poverty Level
Metro: Defined as a metropolitan area by the Census Bureau, containing an urban center with population > 50,000. (10 counties)	Low Poverty: Portion of population in poverty < 8.6%. (26 counties)
Non-Metro Urban: Contains an urban center with population 2,500 - 50,000. (69 counties)	Medium Poverty: Portion of population in poverty is 8.6% - 11.6%. (51 counties)
Rural: All communities have a population < 2,500. (20 counties)	High Poverty: Portion of population in poverty is > 11.6%. (22 counties)

OVERALL CHARACTERISTICS

This section presents the demographic profile of all individuals reported during the study period, combining those reported by schools with those reported by shelters and non-shelter service agencies. While the characteristics reported here could be seen as typical of Iowa's homeless population, the reader should bear in mind that schools reported data on all children who were homeless or near-homeless over the school year. Shelters and other agencies reported data only for individuals they identified as homeless or near-homeless over a two-week period. Consequently, proportionately more children are represented in the figures reported in this demographic profile than would be the case for the homeless population over the entire year. The discussion of each topic identifies how this may bias the demographic profile presented. Subsequent discussions separate out the treatment of individuals reported by schools from those reported by other agencies. Because agencies were only asked questions that would relate to the type of contact they may have with an individual or household, sample sizes differ among various demographic and other characteristics. The tables reporting our findings highlight particularly noteworthy items, and bullets summarize these key points.

AGE

The following table shows the age distribution of all individuals reported during the study. The reader will note 59.7% of those reported during the study period were children, in contrast to 50.5% estimated for the annual homeless population. This is the result of the differences in reporting periods for schools compared with other agencies described above.

Table 3.1: Age Distribution of Individuals*

Age	Percent Homeless	Percent Near-Homeless
< 5 years	11.6	9.0
6 to 11 years	22.6	25.9
12 to 18 years	22.0	16.3
Other Child	3.5	13.9
Total Children	59.7	65.2
18 to 24 years	7.1	5.0
25 to 34 years	9.6	8.1
35 to 44 years	9.8	6.3
45 to 64 years	5.4	5.7
Over 65 years	0.2	0.7
Other Adults	1.5	0
Total Adults	33.7	25.9
Missing / Unknown	6.7	8.9
N =	4,278	976

* Although unlikely, as many as 382 homeless and 223 near-homeless people reported in this table could be duplicated.

When the age data is broken down by degree of urbanization, children make up a higher proportion of homeless people in non-metropolitan and rural counties than in metropolitan counties. This is also the case in high poverty counties, as the following table shows:

Table 3.2: Age Distribution of Homeless People by County Poverty Classification

Age	Low Poverty	Medium Poverty	High Poverty
Child Under 18	61.5 %	56.7 %	76.6 %
18 - 54 years	32.9 %	32.9 %	19.5 %
55 + years	5.6 %	10.4 %	3.8 %
N =	1242	1779	625

- **Nearly 60% of all homeless people counted are children.**
- **Over 11% of all homeless and near-homeless people counted are less than five years of age.**
- **The likelihood of being homeless or near-homeless appears, generally, to decrease with age.**
- **High poverty counties have more children as a percentage of the homeless population, when compared with lower poverty counties.**
- **Non-metropolitan and rural counties have more children as a percentage of the homeless population, when compared with metropolitan counties. This is probably because families predominate among the homeless in rural and non-metropolitan areas.**

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Respondents recorded the *current* household composition of the individuals they counted. For example, if a woman enters a shelter with two children in her care, all three individuals would be counted as part of a “single adult with children” household. This definition applies even if she is married and not the parent of the children. This group would count as three individuals living in a “single adult with children” household. The following table describes the distribution of all individuals counted during the study among six household types. Although no tabular information is provided for county breakdowns by population and poverty level, some interesting contrasts by county type are summarized below.

Table 3.3: Household Composition of Individuals Counted During the Study Period*

Household Composition	Percent Homeless	Percent Near-Homeless
Unaccompanied Child	10.5	4.2
Single Adult w/children	43.2	41.8
Two Adults w/children	15.2	26.7
Single Adult	18.8	10.7
Childless Couple	1.2	3.3
Other	6.3	9.1
Unknown	4.7	4.1
N =	4,278	976

* Although unlikely, as many as 382 homeless, and 223 near-homeless people in this table could be duplicated.

- **By far the largest proportion of both homeless and near-homeless individuals live in single-parent households.**
- **82% of all homeless, and 90 % of all near-homeless single adult households with children are headed by a woman.**
- **Unaccompanied children represent more than 10% of the homeless population.**

- Homeless single adults are far more likely to live in metropolitan areas, represented at four to five times the rate of homeless single adults in rural areas.
- High poverty counties are more likely to have single-parent households, and less likely to have two-parent households, than lower poverty counties.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Survey respondents were asked to identify the race or ethnicity of the people they reported, and the results were reported in the six categories on the following table. For comparison, the 1990 racial /ethnic composition of Iowa's population is included. Children had very similar profiles to adults on this measure.

Table 3.4: Race or Ethnicity of Homeless and Near-Homeless People

Race	Percent 1990 State Population*	Percent Homeless	Percent Near-Homeless
White	94.65	68.3	80.5
African-American	1.89	18.1	7.9
Hispanic	1.80	7.1	6.0
Native American	0.27	1.5	0.4
Asian	1.20	0.5	0.4
Other / Mixed	0.19	3.7	2.2
Missing	--	0.8	2.6
N =	2,862,447	3710	768

* From 1998 U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates

When homeless data is broken down by county type to consider population and poverty level factors, African-Americans are evidently concentrated in the largest metropolitan areas. Hispanics make up proportionately smaller shares of the homeless population in higher poverty counties.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSEHOLDS REPORTED BY SHELTERS AND NON-SHELTER SERVICE PROVIDERS

The basic profile of the homeless population presented in the first section was supplemented by several more specific questions. Questions were designed to be relevant to the different types of services agencies might provide. For instance, we did not ask schools what the household's sources of income were, because we did not expect schools would be able to answer this question meaningfully. Consequently, we report information on these more specific questions separately in this section and the next. The profile here is presented by households, rather than individuals. Again, noteworthy findings are highlighted in each table and discussed in bullets; different groups of agencies responded to different questions, so sample sizes vary.

SOURCES OF INCOME

What forms of income do homeless and near-homeless households rely on? Respondents were asked to identify all sources of income relied on by each individual or household they reported. Eight options were provided.

Table 3.8: Sources of Income for Homeless and Near-Homeless Households*

Income Source	Percent of Homeless Households	Percent of Near-Homeless Households
FIP / TANF ¹	8.0	9.4
Food Stamps	9.3	18.5
SSI / SSD ²	7.7	11.5
Social Security	1.0	3.8
VA Benefits	0.3	0.9
Title XIX ³	4.2	15.3
Employment	46.3	19.4
Other	4.3	8.8
Not Reported	18.9	12.1
N =	1046	339

* Totals may not sum to 100% because more than one answer is possible.

1. Cash assistance provided through the Family Investment Program (FIP) or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), formerly known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).
2. Cash assistance provided through the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Supplemental Security Disability (SSD) programs.
3. Title XIX provides Medicaid benefits for poor non-elderly individuals.

- **Employment is the most common income source for both homeless and near-homeless households, and over half of all homeless (51.9%) and near-homeless (50.6%) individuals benefit from employment income.**
- **Income subsidy programs, such as FIP/TANF and SSI/SSD, are far less common sources of income for homeless households, than for near-homeless households.**

Table 3.9: Income of Homeless Households by County Population and Poverty Classification

Income Source	Metro Area	Non-Metro Urban	Rural Area	Low Poverty	Medium Poverty	High Poverty
FIP/TANF	7.4 %	13.1 %	20.0 %	7.9 %	9.1 %	12.1 %
Food Stamps	8.8 %	14.1 %	30.0 %	9.2 %	11.1 %	13.1 %
Social Security	0.7 %	1.5 %	6.7 %	0.6 %	1.4 %	0.9 %
Employment	54.4 %	51.5 %	23.3 %	70.2 %	45.0 %	37.4 %
N =	689	198	30	315	495	107

- **Rural households are the least likely to have employment income, and the most likely to receive a government income subsidy, such as FIP or Social Security.**
- **Households in low poverty and more urban counties are nearly twice as likely to have employment income than households in high poverty and rural counties.**

CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

Respondent agencies were asked to identify the factors contributing to homelessness or near-homelessness for each of the individuals they reported. Fourteen options were listed, with many households having more than one contributing factor.

Table 3.10: Causes of Homelessness and Near-Homelessness by Household*

Cause	Percent Homeless	Percent Near-Homeless
Eviction	9.1	10.6
Substance Abuse	7.6	2.7
Mental Illness	7.9	10.6
Physical Disability	3.2	8.9
AIDS Related	0.2	0
Utility Disconnection	0.5	16.0
Domestic Violence	10.4	0.3
Family Breakup	24.3	5.1
Job Loss	13.3	14.7
Loss of FIP / TANF	0.2	0.7
Loss of Food Stamps	0.1	0.3
Loss of Other Benefits	0.1	1.7
Deinstitutionalization	3.7	1.4
Other	13.6	3.4
Unknown/Not Reported	5.7	23.5
N =	1515	293

* Totals may not sum to 100% because more than one answer is possible

When causes of homelessness are broken down by county type to consider urban and rural distinctions, causes tend to be consistent across all three county types. However, homeless rural households are more likely to list eviction as a cause than are urban areas, and less likely to

list domestic violence. When the data is broken out to consider poverty level, more differences are evident.

Table 3.11: Major Causes of Homelessness by County Poverty Classification, by Household*

Cause	Low Poverty	Medium Poverty	High Poverty
Eviction	4.6 %	12.6 %	12.2 %
Substance Abuse	10.3 %	17.2 %	5.4 %
Mental Illness	5.0 %	9.6 %	14.3 %
Domestic Violence	12.9 %	8.9 %	15.6 %
Family Breakup	30.6 %	23.5 %	24.5 %
Job Loss	10.7%	17.1%	10.9 %
N =	503	767	147

* Totals may not sum to 100% because more than one answer is possible, and not all survey options are listed in the table.

- **Family breakups are consistently the number one cause of homelessness.**
- **Potential utility disconnection and job loss are the factors which put people in near homeless situations.**
- **Loss of income subsidy program benefits does not contribute significantly to homelessness or near-homelessness.**
- **Eviction, substance abuse and mental illness all contribute significantly to homelessness, but AIDS and physical disabilities do not.**
- **Homeless rural households are more likely to cite eviction, and less likely to cite domestic violence as causes, than households in urban areas.**
- **As poverty level increases, so does the likelihood that mental illness is a contributing factor to homelessness.**

- **Contrary to what we may expect, job loss is a more important cause of homelessness in medium poverty counties than in high poverty ones.**
- **Eviction is less likely to be a cause of homelessness in low poverty counties compared with those with higher levels of poverty.**

YEARS OF EDUCATION

Adult respondents were asked how many years of formal education they have completed. Although 12 years may commonly mean they have a high school diploma, this cannot be assumed because the question was not asked in that manner.

Table 3.12: Years of Education for Homeless and Near-Homeless Adults

Years of Education	Homeless Adults	Near-Homeless Adults
Less than 6 years	0.4 %	0 %
6 to 11 years	21.9 %	13.8 %
12 years	29.0 %	38.5 %
12 to 14 years	5.7 %	8.1 %
more than 14 years	3.1 %	1.2 %
not reported	39.4 %	38.5 %
N =	360	260

- **Near-homeless adults are more likely to have at least twelve years of formal education compared with homeless adults.**
- **More than one in five homeless adults has less than twelve years of education.**

LIVING CONDITIONS OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

It is interesting to look at where people who occupy shelters and homeless housing programs lived prior to needing these services. Shelters and Transitional Housing providers were asked to report the previous living conditions of the people they listed as currently homeless.

**Table 3.13: Previous Residence of Homeless People
in Shelters or Transitional Housing**

Previous Residence	Percent of Homeless People
Shelter or Transitional Housing	9.4
Doubled-up with Family or Friends	23.1
The Street / Place Not Designed for Habitation	1.8
Apartment or House	39.7
Other	15.3
Unknown / Not Reported	10.8
N =	1887

- **Far less than half (39.7 %) of homeless respondents came from an apartment or house before becoming homeless.**
- **Nearly a quarter of all homeless people were previously doubled-up temporarily with family or friends.**
- **Nearly ten percent of shelter and transitional housing occupants came from another similar program.**
- **Less than two percent of homeless respondents reported living on the street or in a place not designed for human habitation.**

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE TO NEAR-HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS

Non-shelter service providers were asked to report what types of services they provided to the people they reported as homeless or near-homeless.

Table 3.14: Type of Assistance Provided to Homeless and Near-Homeless Households*

Type of Assistance	Percent Homeless Households	Percent Near-Homeless Households
Referral	10.7	18.3
Hotel/Motel Voucher	2.1	0.3
Income Subsidy	18.4	27.7
Food Stamps	25.1	9.7
Crisis Assistance	11.5	22.1
Mental Health Treatment	13.3	7.3
Outreach	5.1	4.2
Other	11.5	9.7
No Assistance / Not Reported	2.4	0.7
N =	375	289

* Total may not sum to 100% because more than one response is possible.

- **An income subsidy or crisis assistance payment is provided as support to a near-homeless household more often than to a homeless household.**
- **Mental health treatment and Food Stamps are provided more frequently to homeless than to near-homeless households.**

CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUALS REPORTED BY SCHOOLS

This section reports on the specific questions we asked about the children that schools and other programs reported. This information is more appropriately presented by individual rather than by household. All Head Start programs and public and private schools in Iowa, grade kindergarten through twelve, were surveyed for this study to identify characteristics of homeless and near-homeless children in the educational system (however, for simplicity we refer to all respondents as “schools” and all those they report as “school children”). The survey is provided in Appendix B. This survey sought to identify not only the demographic profile of these students, but also special needs and causes that contribute to their situation. We recognize that schools are often not aware of the homeless or near-homeless status or specific household situations of their students, making it difficult for schools to respond thoroughly and completely. Basic demographic data (on age, race, gender and so on) is discussed in the first section of this chapter; we deal with those questions specific to school children here.

SPECIAL NEEDS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

Homeless and near-homeless children often have special education-related needs that may either contribute to, or result from, their lack of stable housing. Schools can play an important role in identifying and serving these special needs. The following table shows the proportion of homeless and near-homeless children in need of one or more of the following services.

Table 3.15: Special Needs of Homeless and Near Homeless School Children*

Type of Special Need	Percent Homeless	Percent Near-Homeless
No Special Need	62.5	52.7
Counseling	21.3	23.4
Tutoring/Remedial Education	14.4	17.7
Mental Disability	6.7	13.2
Health Care Needs	2.4	4.8
Substance Abuse Treatment	2.0	1.6
Physical Disability	0.9	0.7
N =	1350	440

* Totals may not sum to 100% because multiple responses may be reported.

- **Near-homeless students were more likely to be reported as having some type of special educational need, compared with homeless children.**
- **Counseling and tutoring are the primary special needs of both homeless and near-homeless students.**

CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN

Schools were asked to report the causes related to the student's homeless or near-homeless status. The fourteen options listed in this table were provided in the survey. Causes of homelessness are presented separately for school children, because there are a few interesting differences with the causes reported by shelters and other non-shelter service providers.

Table 3.16: Causes of Homelessness and Near-Homelessness among School Children

Causes	Percent Homeless	Percent Near-Homeless
Eviction	11.3	16.6
Substance Abuse	10.2	10.9
Mental Illness	4.0	7.0
Physical Disability	0.1	2.3
AIDS / Related Illness	0.1	0
Utility Disconnection	2.1	11.1
Domestic Violence	12.7	11.8
Family Breakup	25.6	21.4
Job Loss	10.1	10.2
Loss of FIP/TANF	1.6	0
Loss of Food Stamps	0.4	0.5
Loss of Other Benefits	2.4	1.6
Deinstitutionalization	2.8	1.8
Other Cause	11.7	15.0
Not Reported/Unknown	22.8	17.3
N =	1350	440

* Totals may not sum to 100% because multiple causes may be reported.

- **Family breakups are the number one cause of homelessness and near-homelessness in school children.**
- **Domestic violence and substance abuse are reported more frequently as contributing to homelessness and near-homelessness for school children, than for the homeless and near-homeless populations reported by shelters and other service providers.**

- Job loss in the household is a significant causal factor for many students, while loss of welfare or other benefits is not.
- Schools were less often able to identify the causes of homelessness (or near-homelessness) than were other agencies.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

For each student reported as homeless or near-homeless the school was asked to report on that student's attendance pattern.

Table 3.17: School Attendance Among Homeless and Near-Homeless Children

Attendance Pattern	Percent Homeless	Percent Near-Homeless
Enrolled, attending regularly	68.5	79.5
Enrolled, not attending regularly	22.6	14.3
School age, not enrolled in school	3.8	3.4
Not reported / Unknown	5.1	2.7
N =	1350	440

- Although most homeless and near-homeless school children attend regularly, a significant proportion of both have attendance difficulties.
- Homeless children are less likely than near-homeless children to be enrolled in school, but they are more likely not to attend school regularly.

SUMMARY: WHO ARE THE HOMELESS?

Demographic profiles of homeless persons defy the stereotype of an unemployed, single male on the street. Rather, this population is comprised largely of single-mothers with children, living in shelters or crowded in with family or friends. Children make up well over half of all homeless and near-homeless people reported. Women are more commonly homeless than men, strongly correlated to their role as the parent in more than 80% of all single-adult households with children. Given that single-parent families account for the majority of homeless households, it is not surprising that family breakups are reported as the primary cause of homelessness.

Rather than seeing most individuals and families relying on income subsidy programs, nearly half of all homeless households have earned income. Less than 10% receive Family Investment Program (FIP) benefits. Less than 10% receive Social Security Disability. Instead, most are struggling to make do in low-paying jobs, benefitting only partially, if at all, from any type of government support.

What emerges is a picture of families with children, living in the throes of poverty and consistently teetering on the brink of separation and/or loss of shelter. This finding is consistent with previous Iowa studies, but may be more surprising because of the relatively healthy overall economic environment. Despite extremely low unemployment, we consistently see a class of working poor that suffers from a lack of access to living wage jobs. Many would argue that this ongoing financial struggle contributes significantly to the persistence of domestic violence, divorce, substance abuse and other factors that create a dissonant family dynamic.

Although programs that provide short-term support and help to prevent homelessness are absolutely necessary, more comprehensive family support and economic approaches are necessary for long term solutions. Living wage jobs are a vital component of any sound plan to

end homelessness. Systemic changes that provide education, resources and access to living wage jobs will be the most effective in eliminating the problem. To build toward that end, a safety net of services that helps families through personal and economic upheaval is necessary to prevent homelessness and keep the family structure intact. Availability of affordable and safe housing is a key component of this support system. For once a family has been dissolved or put in a rock-bottom homeless situation, the road back to self-sufficiency is much more difficult and demands far more resources. The effects of both homelessness and near-homelessness for children's school attendance suggest that even temporary disruption may have severe long-term consequences.

The following section of this report discusses the other category of information collected from survey responses - service providers' perceptions of the major causes of homelessness, barriers to improving services, and trends over the past year.

PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

The professionals who provide direct services to homeless people are our most knowledgeable source for an overview of the problem. Besides the portion of the survey that requested specific information on homeless and near-homeless people served, providers were asked what they perceive as causes of homelessness and barriers to providing the needed services. The surveys are provided in Appendix B.

Asking service providers and related professionals about their perceptions provides another perspective from which to analyze issues related to homelessness. Because these people are regularly on the front-lines working directly with the homeless population, most have developed an acute awareness of what contributes to the problem, what weaknesses exist in available services, and what gaps there are in the service continuum. Their opinions can be valuable in helping to develop better policies, design better programs, more effectively target populations and more efficiently use resources. This is particularly true as it relates to barriers to serving the homeless.

Information gathered on perceived causes, when compared with actual causes reported by homeless people, can also help professionals identify where their perceptions may be inaccurate. Since these very providers are often the developers of programs and advocates of policy, their perceptions frequently guide these activities. By distinguishing perception from fact, service providers may be encouraged to take a step back and re-evaluate what they believe to be effective and necessary service provision.

Three different groups were surveyed: shelters and transitional housing providers (**Shelters**), Iowa Department of Human Services, County General Relief, Mental Health agencies

and Public Housing Authority offices (**Non-Shelter Agencies**), and schools (**Schools**). The data collected from each group is listed separately, and then aggregated to show the average percentage of all opinions. Schools were asked more specific questions about barriers to the enrollment of homeless children, and the importance of several education-related services and their ability to meet these needs. Public Housing Authority responses provide more detail on housing assistance trends across the State.

As with the demographic data, we also investigate how these perceptions differ by county type, using the same classifications of metropolitan, non-metropolitan and rural counties, and counties classified by poverty level, described in the previous chapter. Not all data are reported by county population and poverty type. Only the salient points have been extracted for presentation.

PERCEIVED CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

Service providers were asked; “What are the major causes of homelessness in the area you serve?” They were then directed, based on their experience, to rank fourteen potential causes in order of importance. This table reports the percentage of respondents ranking each cause in the top three.

**Table 4.1: Service Providers’ Perceptions of Causes of Homelessness
(percent ranking in the top three)**

Causes	Non-Shelter Agencies	Shelters	Schools	All Agencies
Eviction	76.7	43.5	50.0	61.2
Substance Abuse	36.7	38.3	46.4	41.4
Mental Illness	22.3	30.4	10.5	18.4
Physical Disability	4.2	4.4	2.9	3.7
AIDS Related	0	2.2	0.8	0.6
Utility Disconnect	31.7	4.4	22.4	24.4
Domestic Violence	43.3	53.2	62.2	52.9
Family Breakup	50.8	37.8	73.7	60.4
Job Loss	54.9	34.8	50.8	50.8
Loss of FIP/TANF	10.1	4.5	9.2	9.0
Loss Food Stamps	0	0	9.5	4.2
Other Benefits Lost	2.1	2.3	6.3	3.9
Deinstitutionalized	7.6	20.0	7.3	9.2
Other	22.8	16.2	20.6	20.7
N =	214	47	273	534

When broken down by county type to consider degree of urbanization and level of poverty, most areas show even distribution of perceived causes, with a few exceptions.

**Table 4.2: Service Providers' Perceptions of Causes of Homelessness
by County Population and Poverty Classification
(percent ranking in the top three)**

Cause	Low Poverty	Medium Poverty	High Poverty	Metro Area	Non-Metro	Rural Area
Mental Illness	25.3	15.3	17.7	29.6	13.6	11.1
Utility Disconnect	21.9	26.6	23.4	12.3	28.5	38.5
Family Breakup	57.8	59.5	65.4	52.5	61.1	75.0
Job Loss	44.3	51.0	57.5	43.9	51.9	59.5
Loss of FIP/TANF	1.1	11.3	12.7	7.9	10.8	0
Deinstitutionalized	10.1	8.8	8.6	16.8	5.4	6.3
N =	150	278	93	147	313	61

- **Eviction, domestic violence and loss of FIP/TANF benefits are all perceived as more important causes of homelessness than those actually reported for homeless households.**
- **Family breakup and job loss are both perceived by providers and reported by homeless households as primary causes of homelessness.**
- **Mental illness as a perceived cause of homelessness is more likely in high poverty and metropolitan counties.**
- **Utility disconnection is more often seen as a cause in rural areas.**
- **Job loss as a perceived cause of homelessness is more likely in high poverty and rural areas.**
- **Loss of welfare benefits is more likely to be perceived as a cause of homelessness in medium and high poverty counties.**
- **Deinstitutionalization is most often perceived as a cause of homelessness in metropolitan areas.**
- **“Other” causes of homelessness listed most often included personal characteristics, poor budgeting decisions, low wages and lack of affordable**

housing. These last two were included as options in our question about barriers. We reasoned they were larger structural barriers rather than proximate causes of particular episodes of homelessness, but clearly interpreting them as “causes” would be reasonable too.

PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO SERVING THE HOMELESS

Service providers were asked: “What are the major barriers your community faces in serving homeless clients?” They were then directed, based on their experience, to rank ten potential barriers in order of importance. The three most important barriers were then summed and reported as a percentage of all respondents ranking that barrier in the top three. Schools were not asked this specific question, and are not included in these results.

Table 4.3: Service Providers’ Perceptions of Major Barriers to Serving Homeless People (percent ranking in the top three)

Lack of:	Non-Shelter Agencies	Shelters	All Agencies
Affordable Housing	88.3	82.6	87.0
Day Care	36.3	26.1	33.5
Domestic Violence Counseling	15.3	6.7	12.8
Housing Assistance	59.6	48.9	56.9
Job Training	26.9	17.8	24.4
Living Wage Jobs	72.5	69.6	71.8
Medical Services	5.4	6.7	5.8
Mental Health Services	7.9	13.3	9.4
Space or Staff	8.0	22.2	12.1
Other Services	25.4	11.1	20.0
N =	174	47	221

When broken down by county type to consider degree of urbanization and level of poverty, most areas show even distribution of perceived barriers, with a few exceptions.

Table 4.4: Service Providers' Perceptions of Major Barriers to Serving Homeless People by County Poverty and Population Classification (percent ranking in the top three)

Lack of:	Low Poverty	Medium Poverty	High Poverty	Metro Area	Non-Metro	Rural Area
Affordable Housing	83.3	85.3	97.3	83.9	85.5	100
Mental Health Services	9.8	8.6	11.1	11.5	6.7	16.7
Space or Staff	13.5	13.9	4.0	17.3	6.7	26.7
Living Wage Jobs	70.0	66.3	88.9	72.7	72.2	68.0
N =	60	102	37	56	117	26

- **Lack of affordable housing, living wage jobs and housing assistance are perceived as the most significant barriers to serving the homeless in all categories.**
- **High poverty and rural counties are the most likely to cite lack of affordable housing as a barrier to serving the homeless.**
- **Rural areas report shortages of staff, space and mental health services more than urban areas.**
- **Lack of living wage jobs is seen as a much greater barrier to serving the homeless in high poverty areas, than in medium and low poverty areas.**
- **Other perceived barriers to serving the homeless include lack of affordable day care, personal characteristics of clients, and general lack of support services of all types for the population.**

TRENDS IN THE NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE SERVED

Service providers were asked: "In your opinion, has your agency served: more homeless clients, fewer homeless clients, or about the same number of homeless clients, between January and May of 1999 compared with the same period in 1998." Agencies could report serving more clients for a variety of reasons, such as increased shelter space or additional funding. A reported increase in the number of clients served does not necessarily mean there were more homeless people in their service area. Responses are reported in the table below.

Table 4.5: Service Providers' Perceptions of Trends in Numbers of Homeless People Served

Trend	Non-Shelter Agencies	Shelters	Schools	All Agencies
More Homeless Served	10.3	51.1	17.6	18.2
Same Number Served	57.5	40.4	53.8	53.8
Fewer Homeless Served	15.5	6.4	9.2	11.1
N =	174	47	273	494

- **Most agencies report serving about the same number of clients as the previous year.**
- **Shelters are the most likely to report serving more clients than the previous year; however, this may reflect expansion in their capacity rather than absolute increases in numbers of homeless people in the community.**

SCHOOLS' PERCEPTIONS OF BARRIERS TO ENROLLMENT

In the survey sent to schools, respondents were asked; "What are the most important barriers to school attendance or enrollment for **homeless** school children in your community?" They were then asked to rank the following nine potential barriers in order of importance.

Table 4.6: Schools' Perceptions of Barriers to Attendance or Enrollment for Homeless Children

Barrier	Ranked Most Important	Ranked Top Three
Residency Requirements	14.7 %	40.7 %
Availability of School Records	8.1 %	32.2 %
Birth Certificates	2.8 %	27.7 %
Legal Guardianship Requirements	17.0 %	44.4 %
Transportation	39.5 %	66.1 %
Lack of Pre-School Programs	10.0 %	26.4 %
Immunization Requirements	20.8 %	56.6 %
Physical Examination Records	1.4 %	25.6 %
Other Barriers	56.5 %	67.1 %
N =	177	

- **Transportation and immunization requirements are viewed as the primary barriers to attendance for school children.**
- **Primary barriers reported in the "Other" category focus on the role of the parents: Parents' attitude / lack of responsibility (12.4%), parents do not see the importance of getting the child to school (6.8%), family dynamics and instability (3.3%).**

SCHOOLS' PERCEPTIONS OF NEEDED SERVICES

School personnel were asked: "How important are the following educational services for **homeless** children in your community?" For each service they were asked to rate the importance of the service. They were then asked to rate their school's ability to meet that need. The responses were then aggregated to fit in the categories listed in the table below. The percent of schools rating a service "important" or "very important" are reported in the first column; those rating the service "not important" or "not very important" are reported in the second column. The third column shows the percent of schools reporting the need was met "completely" or almost completely. The fourth column shows schools reporting the need was "not met at all" or met insufficiently.

Table 4.7: Schools' Perceptions of the Importance of and Capacity to Provide Services to Homeless Children

Service	Important	Not Important	Able to Meet	Unable to Meet
Tutoring / Remedial	81.9%	6.1%	68.2%	10.9%
Special Education	83.9 %	6.1 %	91.0 %	4.5 %
English as a Second Language	42.7 %	46.9 %	43.0 %	39.2 %
Counseling	90.3 %	5.1 %	80.3 %	7.4 %
Transportation	82.2 %	8.7 %	74.2 %	12.4 %
Free Lunch / Breakfast	88.8 %	5.6 %	93.0 %	4.3 %
Medical Services	79.6 %	7.1 %	53.8 %	35.2 %
School Supplies	65.8 %	12.2 %	78.8 %	8.2 %
Preschool Programs	77.6 %	7.1 %	53.8 %	28.4 %
Child Care Services	68.9 %	11.4 %	22.4 %	61.7 %
Staff Development	39.7 %	24.1 %	23.4 %	44.3 %
Parent Training / Involvement	79.6 %	8.7 %	30.6 %	39.7 %
School / Agency Coordination	81.8 %	8.9 %	53.5 %	20.9 %
Removing Enrollment Barriers	66.5 %	18.8 %	77.4 %	10.5 %
Case Management	70.4 %	12.2 %	45.7 %	23.9 %
Enrollment	80.5 %	8.5 %	82.2 %	6.3 %
Records Transfer	73.3 %	9.9 %	72.8 %	6.2 %
N =	179			

Services appear to fall into two categories - those where the proportion of schools that rate a need as important is matched by the proportion of schools able to meet that need, and those where there is a shortfall between the perceived importance of the service and their ability to provide it.

- **There is a wide gap between the perceived importance of child care services, medical services, preschool programs, staff development, parent training/involvement, school/agency coordination and case management, and the reported ability of schools to provide these services.**
- **The ability to provide services such as special education, English as a second language, free lunch, school supplies, enrollment and records transfer seems proportionate to the perceived importance of each of these services.**

PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITIES

The final group of agencies surveyed were Public Housing Authorities (PHAs). PHAs administer several federal programs that provide housing assistance, such as public housing and Section 8 rental assistance certificates and vouchers.³ In addition to questions about the perceptions of causes of homelessness, PHAs were also asked several detailed questions about the services they provided - whether they had a waiting list, how many people were on it, and what the average wait was for assistance. Their responses provide another component of our picture of Iowa's homeless population. The following tables show how several elements of housing assistance differ between county types.

³ Section 8 certificates and vouchers provide rental assistance to households living in moderately priced private rented housing. Certificates and vouchers pay the difference between 30% of the household's income and the rent of the unit (or Fair Market Rent for the area, in the case of vouchers).

Table 4.8: Housing Assistance in Iowa, by County Urban-Rural Continuum

	Metro Areas	Non-metro Urbanized	Rural Areas	Total
Public Housing Units	619	1,605	203	2,427
Rent Assistance Certificates	4,668	3,663	518	8,850
Applicants on Waiting List	4,949	1,386	155	6,496
Average Wait (months)	10.1	4.4	4.6	5.4
Doubled Up	155	97	7	259
Over-crowded	7	38	3	48
Displacement	183	51	15	249
Cost-burdened	658	99	13	770

Federal preferences once gave priority to several groups of people, primarily those defined as homeless or near-homeless for the purposes of this study. Preference was given to applicants living doubled-up with other families, in over-crowded conditions, in danger of displacement, and those who were severely cost-burdened (paying more than 50% of their income in rent). However, PHAs are now free to decide whether to continue using these preferences to assign housing to those on their waiting list, and of the 40 PHA agencies that responded to our survey, 34 no longer used federal preferences. Several communities however are in the process of revising their preferences, and it is likely that many may choose to continue to give homeless households some level of priority for assistance. Thus, the total number of people on PHA waiting lists reported as doubled up with family or friends, in over-crowded living conditions, in danger of displacement or with severe housing cost burdens (paying more

than 50% of their income in rent), comes from the six PHAs that still use these categories to prioritize their waiting lists.

Table 4.9: Housing Assistance in Iowa, by County Poverty Level

	Low Poverty	Medium Poverty	High Poverty	Total
Public Housing Units	241	1,381	805	2,427
Rent Assistance Certificates	2,112	4,645	2,092	8,850
Applicants on Waiting List	1,194	4,326	970	6,496
Average Wait (months)	5.5	7.1	2.9	5.4
Doubled Up	63	188	8	259
Over-crowded	8	37	3	48
Displacement	29	211	9	249
Cost-burdened	59	697	14	770

- **Rental assistance certificates are more numerous in all areas than public housing units.**
- **Metropolitan areas have longer waiting lists, and longer wait times, than non-metropolitan or rural areas.**
- **Housing cost burdens affect the largest share of households on waiting lists, where a reason is reported.**
- **PHAs in medium poverty areas report longer waiting lists, and wait times, than those in low or high poverty counties.**

SUMMARY: HOW DO SERVICE PROVIDERS PERCEIVE THE PROBLEM?

In this section our assumption that service providers are highly knowledgeable about homeless related issues is confirmed. For the most part their perceptions of the causes of homelessness are on the mark. As with causes reported by homeless persons, service providers identified family breakup and job loss as the most common. However, they perceived eviction, domestic violence and loss of Family Investment Program (FIP) benefits as causes to a far greater degree than actually reported by homeless persons. Matters of eviction and domestic violence are so closely related to job loss and family breakups respectively, that there may be no significant distinction. For instance, job loss in the family may lead to eviction; the family reports job loss as the cause of their situation, while the service provider perceives eviction as the cause. Although loss of FIP benefits is perceived as a greater cause than was reported, it is still ranked remarkably low. Conventional wisdom may assume that the dramatic number of cases removed from the FIP rolls due to welfare reform would create an increase in homelessness. However, there may be little relationship between the two in either fact or perception.

The primary barriers reported by service providers revolve around issues of household income and affordability of housing. Lack of affordable housing, lack of housing assistance, and lack of living wage jobs speak not so much to the need for more support services, but rather to the need to address the root causes of why people find themselves insecurely housed. This relates back to the fact that roughly half of all homeless households have earned income; however, this is not enough to make them self-sufficient. Service providers see the importance of stable housing as necessary for family stability and as a mechanism to prevent further deterioration of the family unit and their economic situation. Affordable housing and the income to stay there are the obvious solution.

For schools, barriers to enrollment and needed services are closely related.

Transportation and immunization requirements top the list of things that prevent enrollment, with parental attitude and support being mentioned frequently as “other” causes. Although most schools felt they could meet transportation needs, many cited the need for additional parent training, medical services and child care. These responses are distinct from those of other service providers because the questions were tailored specifically to the student population and the services schools provide.

Finally, except for shelters, most believe they are providing services to about the same number of homeless people as in the past year. This does not necessarily imply that they believe the homeless population has grown. Rather, their response may be affected by factors such as funding and space which dictate their capacity to provide services. Nonetheless, this perception appears consistent with the overall findings of this study that conclude that the homeless population has remained relatively static over the past few years. As in previous years, the primary barrier to reducing the number of homeless people and families is seen as a combination of the lack of affordable housing, and the lack of living wage jobs. These two linked gaps appear to be acute in communities of every size and type across the state. Segments of the homeless population may need more targeted services (such as mental health services or affordable daycare), but the great majority of all types of service providers identify affordable housing as the key.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The estimated count of homeless people in Iowa in 1999 of 18,592 is relatively consistent with previous Iowa homeless studies. This, coupled with agencies' perceptions that most are serving roughly the same number of people as last year, confirms that the number of homeless people in Iowa has remained stable since the middle years of the decade. During this same period the State has seen significant economic growth and prosperity, manifested partially in extremely low unemployment rates. Static numbers of homeless in the presence of an improving economic environment suggests a level of structural homelessness that will remain no matter how much growth may occur.

The demographic profile yielded by this study provides several potential explanations for this "structural" homelessness. Family breakups were cited as the number one cause by all service segments and geographic areas, leaving little doubt that keeping families intact will help stabilize their housing situation. Many families go through upheavals, whether because of domestic violence, divorce or other personal disaster. Unfortunately, they often do not have the social safety net or personal resources to tide them through these difficult times. Family disintegration will continue despite economic growth, and vulnerable people will continue to fall into homelessness as a result.

With more than 50% of homeless households bringing in earned income, employment alone is clearly not sufficient to provide this safety net for many families and individuals. Although half are working, limited skills and opportunities prevent access to living wage jobs. Lack of living wage jobs was identified as one of the primary barriers to serving the homeless effectively, a perception borne out by the proportion of homeless people who are employed. There are, no doubt, more who strive unsuccessfully to find any work. Higher minimum wages, income supplements to low wages, and recruitment of employers who pay living wages would begin to address this barrier, but require fundamental economic changes that are difficult to accomplish in one State.

Economic growth tends to create more competition in the housing market, driving up prices for rent and purchase. This trend has been evident in the wake of Iowa's recent economic prosperity, raising housing costs disproportionate to the income provided by low wage jobs. In many communities, particularly those in rural areas, an absolute lack of affordable housing increases the vulnerability of many families and individuals. This irony suggests that those not riding the wave of economic prosperity not only remain stuck in the ranks of the low-income, but find their housing dollar decreasing in value. As with employment, this is a primary structural barrier to resolving the problem of homelessness. Without substantial public investment to stimulate private sector provision, it is unlikely that the market can provide housing at levels affordable to low-wage earners. Again, meeting the State's entire housing need would entail a fundamental economic change difficult to accomplish in one State. However, better targeted efforts to increase the affordable housing stock would clearly help to reduce the number of homeless (and near-homeless) families and people in communities across the State.

With the likelihood that fundamental structural changes will not occur in the short term, we are faced with the question of how we can manage and ameliorate the homelessness that will continue to threaten a segment of the population. Increasing housing assistance to low-income families would make housing costs more affordable. Emergency assistance to families in imminent danger of becoming homeless would decrease the incidence of displacement, and help to deal with it in the event that it does occur. Increasing shelter capacity may be an unpleasant necessity, as well as developing more transitional housing programs and services that provide a more stable base for homeless families. Although not addressing the root causes of homelessness, these are obvious interim remedies.

Development of short-term remedies should consider the populations most vulnerable and likely to be homeless. Single-parent families headed by women make up the highest proportion of homeless households, and often also have the fewest resources and greatest barriers to self-sufficiency. Lack of affordable daycare, domestic violence counseling, education and training opportunities, and gender-based disparities in earnings may deserve serious attention. Over half

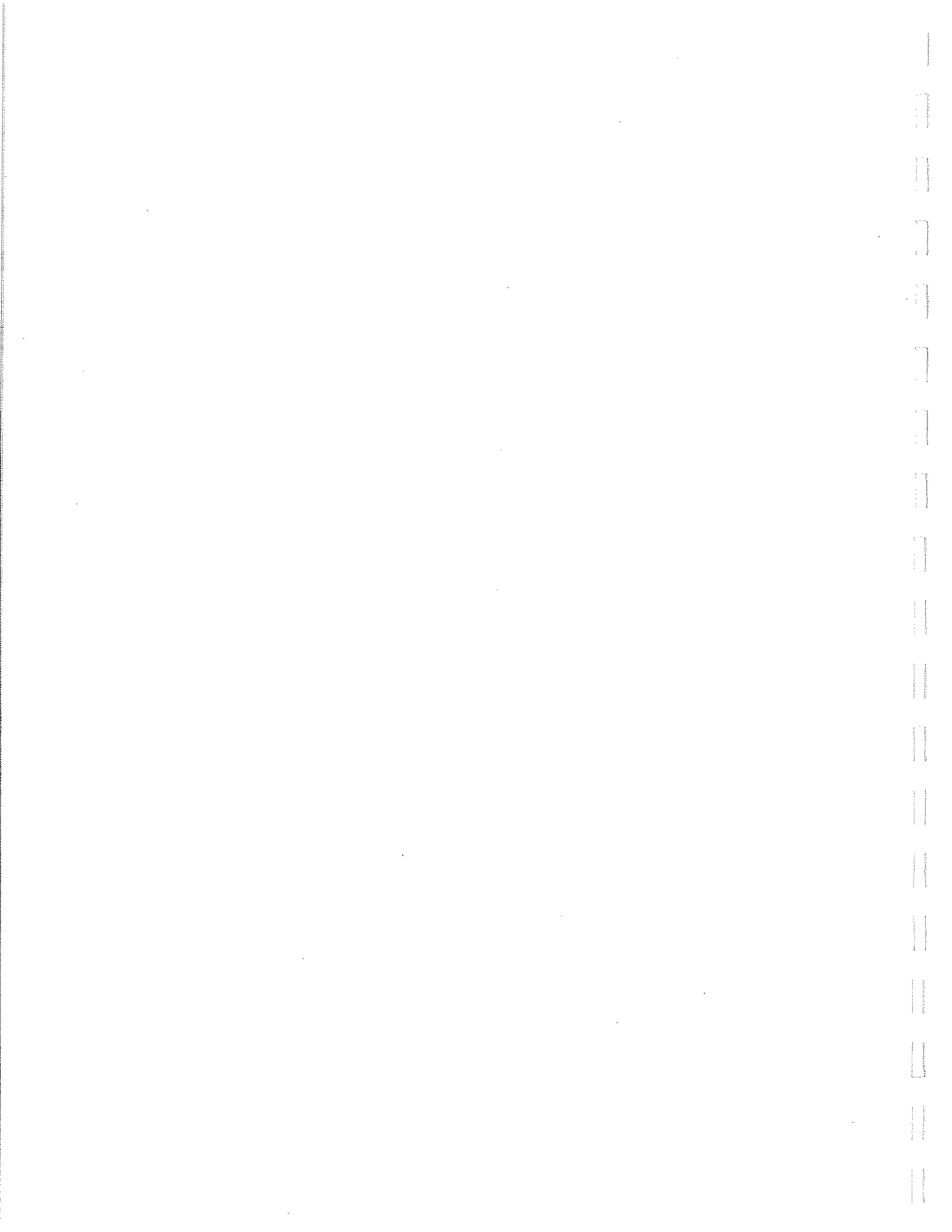
Iowa's homeless population are children, many of whom are on their own. An appreciation for their extreme vulnerability and fragile personal development suggests we should examine more carefully how children could be better protected from at least the consequences of homelessness. Strategies that provide more stable living environments for families with children, particularly those headed by single mothers, should receive special attention for these reasons.

One of the surprising findings of this study was that loss of public assistance (Family Investment Program, Food Stamps or other income subsidies) was not as important as other states have reported. In the wake of welfare reform in Iowa many thousands of families have been removed from the rolls of public assistance since 1995, leading us to suspect that this would be a significant causal factor related to homelessness. Interestingly, less than 10% of homeless and near-homeless families report the Family Investment Program as providing any household income, with less than 1% reporting the loss of that income as contributing to their homeless or near-homeless situation. Explanations offered for this in focus group discussions were consistent with the findings of the report. Those working with this population felt that public assistance provided so little support to households it was unlikely to be a factor increasing their vulnerability, and that the full impact of welfare reform has yet to be felt.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

As discussed in the introduction to this study, several methodological challenges were considered before finalizing our design for data collection. This study relied on a mail-back survey format (the complete instruments can be found in Appendix B), which have several limitations, but provide an efficient cost-effective way to gather information.

There are ways to improve on the quantity and quality of the information collected if sufficient resources are dedicated to the study. Another method distributes surveys to all agencies that may have contact with homeless people, including entities such as public libraries and



government offices, besides the homeless and near-homeless service providers surveyed for this study. A first filter question, "is the place you're living now permanent?" eliminates non-homeless people; people who do not have a permanent home are then asked a series of more detailed questions. It is possible that this method provides a more thorough count of homeless people, particularly in communities without shelters or other homeless services. However, it is much more costly due to the expanded universe of potential respondents that must be provided survey instruments, and the greatly increased number of individual responses that would need to be processed. It would also require a greater investment of time from a larger number of local officials who would need to distribute, collect and return the surveys. There may also be a level of discomfort or unwillingness to participate by those entities that do not aim to serve homeless populations, possibly finding the survey to be laborious and/or unnecessary, or the questions to be too intrusive.

A third method uses volunteers to survey people in person, again drawing on a wide range of service contact points. Besides the challenges listed above, it may be very time consuming and difficult to construct the well-developed network of volunteers needed across the State to implement this strategy effectively. Although effective, this method may be more appropriate and manageable for locally focused studies.

Having worked within the constraints of the mail-back survey format, we learned a variety of ways that the results of annual counts may be improved. We surveyed public and nonprofit agencies that rely, in part, on funds that could be affected by the estimated count of homeless people in their community. This group also contains many of the most concerned professionals in the field, interested in quantifying and advocating for the homeless population. Because of these factors we expected response rates to be higher than they were. Our preparation and outreach for the survey were thorough. Timing was considered, materials were provided well in advance, phone contact was made before the survey period, a toll-free support number was made available and follow-up contacts were made to many non-respondents. Despite our best efforts, response rates remained about the same as in previous Iowa homeless studies. However, outreach was more effective for some segments of respondents than others. What can be learned from these differences?

Outreach among Iowa Department of Human Services (IDHS) offices was effective and yielded response rates that were as good as could be expected. The efforts of the State IDHS office in publicizing the survey and its purpose, communicating its importance and providing longer-term education and encouragement of staff to participate proved to be highly effective. Similar efforts would likely increase the number of respondents if replicated in other networks.

The role of Local Homeless Coordinating Boards (LHCBs) was significant in maximizing participation by local communities. Counties such as Linn, Scott and Polk relied heavily on their LHCBs to coordinate and encourage local service providers of all types to be timely and complete in responding to the study. The long term presence and strength of LHCBs in these and other communities serve as a nucleus that provides invaluable coordination and education over time that effectively increases the appreciation for the importance of this study and similar efforts. Future studies should consider communicating more directly with LHCBs in Iowa to capitalize on their strength where it is available.

Response rates from shelters were lower than hoped, especially given that shelter providers focus solely on this population and have the knowledge base and appreciation for such efforts that many other entities do not. With pre-survey contacts having been made, and follow-up calls (often more than one) to every shelter that did not respond, it is unclear what more could be done to improve these rates. As mentioned above, the drive to participate may be largely fueled at the local level by community coalitions. The time-consuming effort of direct contact with shelters may be less effective than tapping into pre-coordinated local resources, such as Local Homeless Coordinating Boards. For those shelters with objections in principle to participating in government-sponsored programs, it is unlikely much can be done.

In general schools showed much room for improvement. Schools have a multitude of reporting requirements and likely placed this survey low on their list of priorities. This could be due to a lack of understanding about the purpose and need for the study or because of a lack of awareness or unwillingness to confront the issue of homelessness in the school. It is quite possible that more

communication regarding the study within the network of public schools, led by the Iowa Department of Education, could yield higher response rates as did such efforts within the Iowa Department of Human Services. Mandatory reporting might also be considered if feasible.

Telephone inquiries suggested that many schools do not know enough about the potentially homeless children in their schools to respond meaningfully. This matter of the ability to respond thoroughly from an informed position is as much a concern as increasing response rates. A longer term capacity building approach, perhaps focused on preparing key personnel in each district to develop this knowledge over time will not only increase study response rates, but will likely improve the schools' ability to meet the needs of these children.

A few school districts, such as Cedar Rapids and Ottumwa, were extremely well organized and produced what appeared to be very thorough counts at the district level, including having sufficient information about students to eliminate overlap with children in child-only shelters. Drawing on the success of these districts to learn more about why their capacity to respond to the survey was so much better than most may help design improvements and develop "best practices" throughout the State.

Personal contact before the survey period may help identify a central contact staff person responsible for ensuring better response rates in his/her school district. This is particularly important in larger districts and metropolitan communities where responses could be drastically increased with such efforts. In many metropolitan areas there might be substantial undercounting because the majority of schools did not respond. While school district supervisors were informed of the survey in advance by letter, much more personal contact was clearly needed to explain why the survey was important. Problems with the quality and quantity of responses from schools seem structural or systematic, and cannot be solved during a limited survey period.

Responses from county general relief offices would likely be improved by communicating more directly with them individually, and educating them about the study through their statewide

association. Because of the crisis support nature of their services and the volume of people they serve, they likely come into contact with a vast portion of the near-homeless population in the state, which tends to be the most difficult to count. In counties where the general relief office participated in the study counts tended to be much higher than for those who did not. Future studies should understand the importance of county general relief offices as a primary source of data on homeless and near-homeless populations, and expend greater resources to encourage their participation.

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APPENDIX A: DEVELOPING ESTIMATES OF THE ANNUAL HOMELESS POPULATION

An earlier section of this report presents our best estimate of the number of homeless individuals in Iowa in 1999. As we explained before presenting these estimates, our study collected only raw counts of homeless and near-homeless persons during a two-week period in Spring 1999. We pointed out briefly the limitations of point-in-time raw counts using mail-back surveys from a wide variety of agencies. Extrapolating from these raw counts posed several methodological challenges. This Appendix describes these challenges and explains how we resolved the dilemmas they raise.

Our study design had two limitations built in:

- The study was conducted over a limited period, and
- It relied on mail-back surveys to a wide range of agencies that might have contact with homeless persons.

Consequently, our raw counts are limited in the following ways:

- A point-in-time study is a snapshot of the homeless population - it does not tell us how much turnover there will be in the population over a year. A person served today may find stable housing next month, or they may remain homeless all year. People not currently homeless may become homeless over the course of the year. Estimating the number of homeless people in the State in any year requires that we account for those who are or who will be temporarily homeless in 1999, along with those who are chronically homeless.
- A point-in-time study by definition cannot account for variations in homelessness rates over the year. Weather, holidays, and targeted assistance programs all affect the likelihood people will become homeless (and perhaps also the volume of homeless persons counted). No time period is ideal - a February count may provide an inflated estimate, while a July count under-estimates the problem. An annualized estimate must account for seasonal variation.

- Non-responses from agencies surveyed result in a count of zero regardless of the true size of the county's homeless population, or the number of homeless people served by that agency.
- The survey was for a limited period and because most types of agencies were instructed to record only the homeless individuals they served during that period, if no homeless people requested service during the period, agencies would record zero regardless of the true size of the county's homeless population.
- The survey relied on the ability of agency staff to identify homeless and near-homeless people. In some cases, this was relatively straightforward, but it varied depending on the type of service they were providing. Schools seemed particularly ill-equipped to differentiate homeless children from those who were poor but securely housed, without becoming intrusive.

Estimating the number of people who were homeless in Iowa in 1999 required us to adjust the raw counts to resolve these limitations. Three principle questions framed our estimation methodology:

- How do we adjust our point-in-time count to estimate the number of people we can expect have been homeless in Iowa in 1999?
- How do we adjust our point-in-time count to account for seasonal variation over the year?
- How do we account for communities reporting zero homeless people?

ADJUSTING THE POINT-IN-TIME COUNT TO AN ANNUAL ESTIMATE

Counts of homeless and near-homeless people from agencies and shelters were obtained for a limited study period. These counts obviously can't just be inflated, because the people counted during the study period have been or will be homeless for varying lengths of time. Periods of homelessness differ widely. Some people are only temporarily homeless, while others may be homeless for several periods during the year or for the whole year. Among the people reported as homeless during a limited period, how many will remain homeless and how many will find stable housing and be replaced by other temporarily homeless families? In other words, if we were to take similar "snapshots" of the homeless population during every two week period in the year, how many different people would appear over the year?

Our task here was to estimate what these "snapshots" would look like over the course of a year. The people counted during the study period can be divided into categories reflecting the length of time they had been homeless as of the last day of the study (May 8). We could think of these categories as a set of probabilities that any homeless person would remain homeless for a specific length of time. In other words, we assume that a snapshot taken at any two week period would have a similar proportion of people who had been homeless for less than two weeks, for between two weeks and one month, and so on. Table A.1 shows the proportion of homeless people reported by shelters in this study, who had been homeless for various periods by May 8.

Table A.1: Turnover within the Sheltered Homeless Population

Length of Homeless Episode	Percent of Individuals
less than two weeks	16.5
between two weeks and a month	18.9
between one and two months	21.3
between two and six months	25.8
more than six months	17.3

Of course, among the people reported as being homeless for less than two weeks, a proportion may remain homeless for much longer periods. We accounted for this using the same probabilities - of those who were currently homeless for less than 2 weeks, there is a 16.5% probability they will be homeless for *only* 2 weeks, an 18.9% probability they will be homeless between 2 weeks and one month, and so on. If our "snapshot" of the homeless population remains similar for each two-week period in the year (with the same long-term homeless people but different short-term people), we can use these probabilities to work out *how many different people* we can assume will be homeless over one year.⁴

This method was based on data collected for homeless individuals reported by shelters. Extrapolating using the characteristics of the sheltered population is not ideal. The population living doubled up with friends and family, and the near-homeless, may experience problems for very different lengths of time to those in shelters. People in shelters may have fewer personal resources to draw on and it may be more difficult for them to move out of homelessness (for instance, landlords or employers may be prejudiced against applicants who list a shelter as their address). However, the sheltered population provides the only empirical basis on which to estimate the turnover within the homeless population. Furthermore, the majority of homeless people counted in our study were in shelters, so this did not seem a serious limitation. Estimates produced during this first step provided the basis for our next task.

⁴An illustration may help to clarify the method. For instance, agencies in Appanoose County reported six homeless individuals during the study period. Of those, we expected that 2.72% (16.5% of 16.5%) would be homeless for no more than two weeks, and would be replaced by other temporarily homeless individuals during each two week period over the course of the year. Thus, we could expect that 4.3 different individuals would be homeless in Appanoose County for periods lasting less than two weeks during 1999. Using the same logic, 7.1 individuals could be expected to be homeless for between two and four weeks over the year, 7.1 to be homeless for between one and two months, 4.3 different people to be homeless for between two and six months, and 1.9 to be homeless for more than six months. Our adjusted estimate of the annual number of people who were homeless in Appanoose County in 1999 is thus 24.7 (this does not include children reported by schools).

ADJUSTING ANNUAL ESTIMATES FOR SEASONAL VARIATION

Our next task was to adjust for seasonality - the likelihood that “snapshots” of the homeless population taken at other times would show more (or fewer) people. There are several reasons why the extent of homelessness would vary over the year. Colder weather may encourage more to seek shelter and assistance. Higher utility bills during winter may lead to displacement. Seasonal employment fluctuations (as well as seasonal variations in sources of assistance) may affect people who are marginally housed.

Data collected on a segment of the sheltered population, the Counting Homeless Iowans Project (CHIP), offered one solution. CHIP data is collected monthly from approximately 356 county-based service providers⁵ throughout Iowa. Because CHIP data is collected over time, it reflects seasonal fluctuations in clients served. Our reasoning was that proportionate variations from the number of people counted during our study period would provide a way to adjust segments of our annual estimate to reflect these fluctuations. CHIP is in its early stages however, and this posed some problems. Most importantly, the number of county-based agencies reporting in any period fluctuated, with 105 more reporting in the second than in the first quarter. It was impossible to separate out counts by time period by agency, so inflation as a result of more reporting agencies could not be distinguished from inflation because homelessness had increased. Finally, we had to estimate the proportion of additional homeless persons reported that reflected new agencies participating. Separating out new reporters was impossible for the monthly data, so quarterly data was used instead. This was not ideal, but was the best we could do under the circumstances. As the CHIP data collection process becomes better established, this problem should diminish.

After accounting for differences in agency participation, the first quarter of 1999 saw 1.3 times the number of homeless individuals recorded than the second quarter (the period during

⁵ We identified approximately 80 agencies that reported data to CHIP, but separate reports are filed for services provided in different counties, thus the 356 county-based agency reports.

which this study was conducted). Annual estimates were inflated by adjusting the first quarter estimates upwards. In the absence of data on more recent periods, estimates for other quarters of the year were not adjusted. It is possible that these seasonally adjusted estimates could be revised as quarterly reports are obtained for the third and fourth quarters. It is not clear that seasonal variation will be as great in these quarters however - homelessness may increase most after the holidays, so the cold months at the end of the year may not show a significant increase in numbers.

This step in the estimation procedure provided us with an annualized estimate with a small seasonal adjustment to reflect higher rates of homelessness during the first quarter of 1999. One task remains - to extrapolate these estimates to counties reporting zero homeless people during the study period.

ACCOUNTING FOR ZERO REPORTS

There may be several reasons why communities report zero homeless persons, either during the study period or in the case of schools during the entire school year. Non-responses, an inability to identify homeless individuals, no homeless persons requesting service during the study period, or no homeless residents during the study period, may all result in a count of zero in communities that had homeless residents at some point during 1999. Of course, it is also possible that there truly were no homeless persons in those communities at any point during the year. Consequently, the first stage of our extrapolation attempts to account for the homeless persons there may be during the year in each county (or in each school district, in the case of school children). However, it should be emphasized that these are our best estimates of homelessness, not an indisputable truth. Our purpose here is to explain our methodological procedure so readers understand the basis of the estimates presented in this report. The methodological choices made were discussed at length with members of the Data Committee of the Interagency Task Force on Homelessness, and we tried to be as conservative as possible in developing the estimates. While estimates for individual counties may over- or under-estimate the problem, we are fairly

confident that the State-wide totals produced through county-level estimates are sound reflections of the volume of homelessness in the State.

Our starting place in developing the estimates was with the annualized estimates prepared for counties (or school districts) reporting at least some homeless individuals. Counties (or districts) with different degrees of urbanization and with different levels of poverty are likely to have different rates of homelessness. Estimates were developed separately for people (adults and children) reported by shelters and non-shelter service agencies, and for children reported by schools. Separate estimates were prepared for homeless and near-homeless individuals.

We divided the counties into six categories, reflecting whether they were metropolitan areas, urbanized non-metropolitan counties with cities between 2,500 and 50,000 people, or rural counties with no communities over 2,500 (the Census definition of “rural”). This “urban-rural” continuum was further divided by poverty levels - whether the proportion of residents identified as living below poverty level was above or below the State median of county poverty levels. Half the counties in Iowa have less than 10% of their population living in poverty, and half have more than 10% in poverty. Thus, metro, non-metro and rural areas were classified according to whether they were above or below the median poverty rate. Figure A.1 shows how counties were distributed among these categories. It is reasonable to assume that these two county characteristics influence the level of homelessness experienced. For school districts, poverty levels were calculated from the proportion of poor children in the district, allowing us to account for differences in the age profile of the population. School districts were also classified by the degree of urbanization in the county in which the district headquarters was located (metro, non-metro or rural). Six categories reflecting urbanization / child poverty were developed for school districts.

We reasoned that while numbers of homeless people reported during the study period may reflect a larger (or smaller) than “true” count for the counties with more than zero reported, the average per capita proportion of homeless people reported by counties (or school districts) in

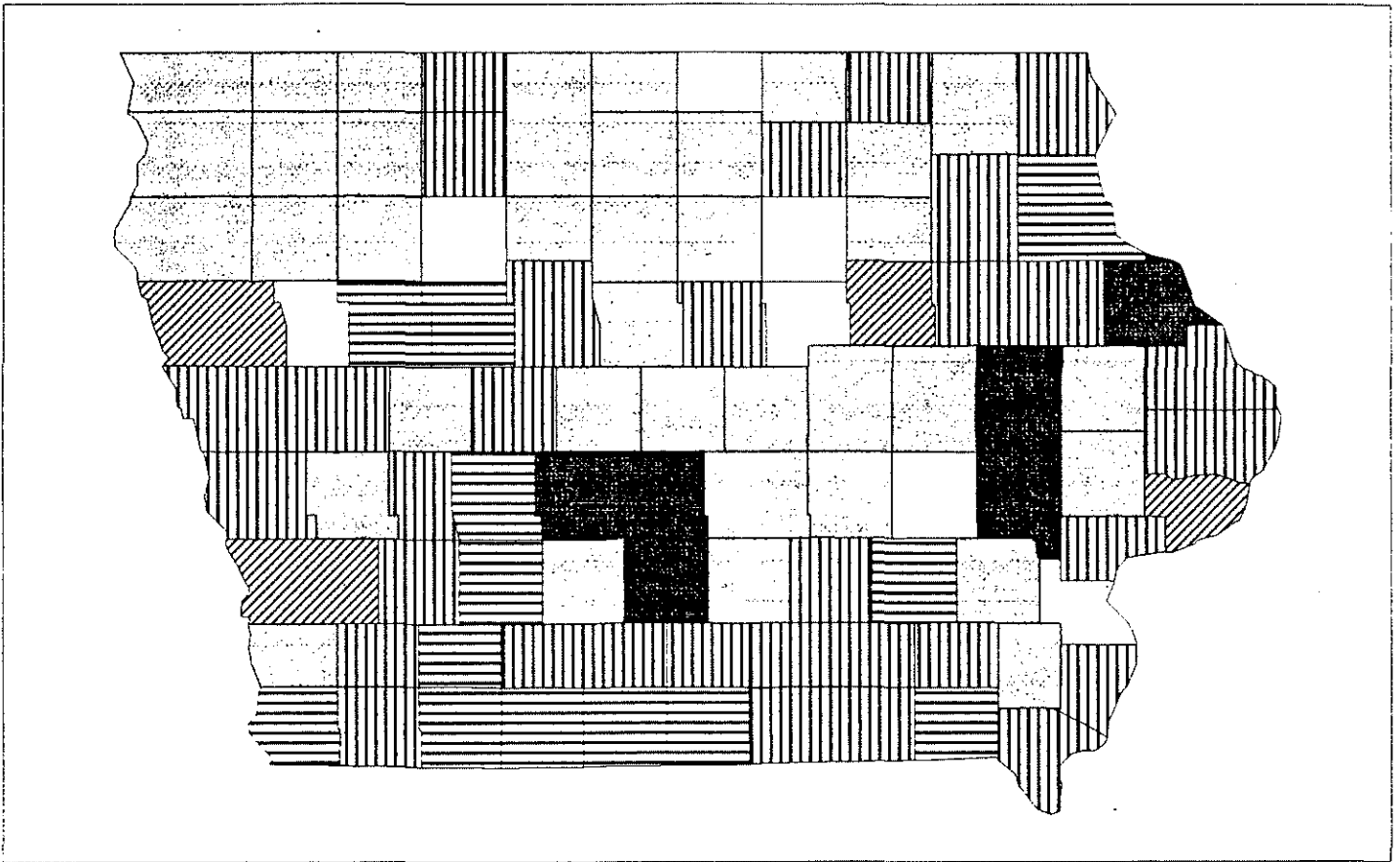


Figure A1: Poverty / Urban-Rural Classification

- metro, low poverty (6)
- ▨ metro, high poverty (4)
- non-metro, low poverty (37)
- ▤ non-metro, high poverty (32)
- ▥ rural, low poverty (7)
- ▧ rural, high poverty (13)

each category provides a fair estimate of the number of homeless people in similar counties (or districts) reporting zero. Table A.2 shows the per capita rates of annual homelessness for counties in the six categories that reported at least some homeless individuals. Separate per capita rates were calculated for homeless children by school district, and for near-homeless individuals reported by agencies, and by schools.

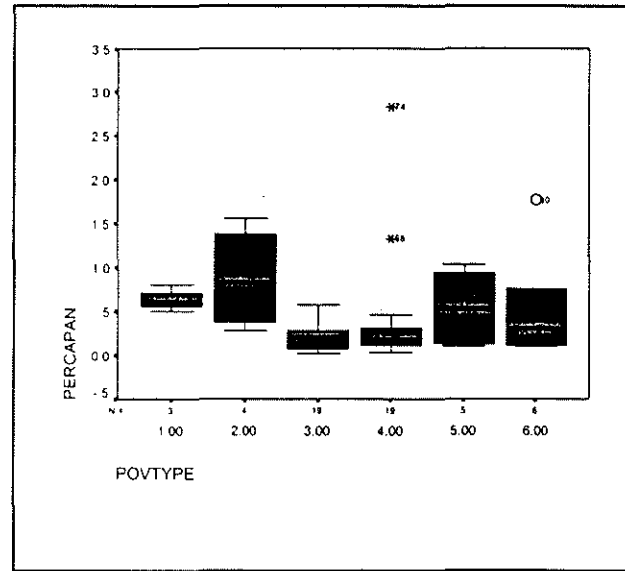
Table A.2: Per Capita Homelessness for Counties Reporting Some Homeless People*

County Type	Average Per Capita Homeless	Standard Deviation	Number of Counties Reporting	Number of Counties in Category
metropolitan, low poverty	0.64225	0.153854	3	6
metropolitan, high poverty	0.877095	0.601709	4	4
non-metropolitan, low poverty	0.215547	0.165908	19	37
non-metropolitan, high poverty	0.39134	0.656345	19	32
rural, low poverty	0.544969	0.434219	5	7
rural, high poverty	0.556688	0.642993	6	13

* Percentages of homeless persons per capita are reported here. Estimates for non-reporters were obtained by multiplying county population by the per capita rates.

One constraint here is that there are relatively few metropolitan or entirely rural counties in the State - most fall into the "non-metropolitan" category. However, there are qualitative differences between metropolitan counties and larger non-metro counties, as there are between rural and smaller non-metro counties, that dictate these divisions. Average per capita rates are calculated from fairly small samples in some cases. Standard deviations show that for some classifications - metro high poverty, and both rural categories - the "true" average may vary quite substantially for counties in that category. (A standard deviation shows the range within which

we could expect the “true” average to fall). Non-metropolitan high poverty counties also have a large standard deviation, the result of two “outlier” counties that reported much higher than average per capita rates of homeless people. However, examination of these two counties did not show any evidence of over-reporting, so we could not justify excluding them. The boxplot of average per capita rates at right shows the range of variation within each category (POVTYPE).



The wide variation in category 2 - metro high poverty - need not concern us, as every county in this category reported at least some homeless persons, so these per capita rates were not used to extrapolate estimates. The range in categories 5 and 6 (both rural classifications) is of more concern. Estimates of homeless persons for very small rural counties (2 low poverty and 7 high poverty counties) should be interpreted with more caution than others.

Per capita annual rates of homelessness were used to derive an estimate of the homeless population for each county that reported zero homeless persons during the study period. The 1998 population of each county was multiplied by the per capita rate appropriate for that county’s levels of poverty and urbanization. For instance, Adair County, a rural high poverty county, reported zero homeless persons. We multiplied Adair County’s 1998 population (8,064) by the per capita annual homeless rate for rural high poverty counties (0.00556688) to obtain an estimated homeless population of 44.89. This estimate was adjusted to reflect seasonal variation (as described above) to produce a total estimated homeless population of 48.59. The same method was used to estimate homeless school children in school districts that reported zero. For school districts, we used the average rate of homelessness per child reported by districts with similar characteristics, multiplied by the population of children in the district rather than the total

population (to account for differences in the age distribution). Separate estimates were also constructed for the near-homeless population reported by agencies, and by schools. Estimates of homeless and near-homeless individuals derived from the agency and shelter counts were added to those derived from the school counts to produce a total estimate. Total estimates of all homeless and near-homeless individuals are presented by county in Table A.3. Estimates of homeless and near-homeless school children by school district are presented in Table A.4.

The three low poverty metropolitan counties for which we had to extrapolate estimates should be looked at with care. Dubuque County reported only two homeless people during the study period. This report came from a non-shelter service agency. Dubuque was clearly an extreme “outlier” compared to other metropolitan counties. Although the county has several homeless shelters, few report to the CHIP project, and of those that apparently do, none allowed us access to their CHIP data. Despite our best efforts, no other shelters in Dubuque County responded to our request for information. Consequently, it appears as if the very low count in Dubuque is a result of an unusual level of non-responses. After careful consideration, we decided to treat Dubuque as reporting zero. The other two counties in this category - Dallas and Warren - are both on the fringes of the Des Moines metro area. As suburban counties without any homeless shelters we could identify, it is possible that the majority of people who become homeless in those counties seek services in Polk County. Consequently, the estimates for Dallas and Warren should also be interpreted with care. People living doubled up with family and friends may constitute the majority of homeless persons in those counties.

The per capita rates shown in Table A.2 are not unreasonable. For each category along the urban/rural continuum, homelessness rates are lower in low poverty counties. Metropolitan counties have higher rates of homelessness than others, as we might expect given that metro areas are more likely to provide shelters and other services or opportunities that homeless people seek out. Homelessness in rural counties is higher than in urbanized non-metropolitan counties, probably reflecting the greater difficulty precariously housed people have maintaining employment or obtaining housing assistance or other services that may keep them in their homes

in extremely small communities. Raw counts and estimates for all categories of homeless and near-homeless people are presented by county in Table A.3. This table is based on estimates derived from shelters, agencies, and schools. Table A.4 presents our estimates of homeless and near-homeless school children only, by school district. Estimated numbers of homeless children and adults are presented separately by county in Figures A.2 and A.3.

Table A.3: Study Period Counts and Annualized, Seasonally Adjusted Estimates of Homeless and Near-homeless Individuals

County	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-Homeless Count	Adjusted Near-homeless Estimate
Adair	0	59	0	48
Adams	0	28	0	26
Allamakee	1	77	0	52
Appanoose	18	45	3	43
Audubon	4	27	2	13
Benton	9	67	7	54
Black Hawk	239	717	52	143
Boone	3	91	0	75
Bremer	0	88	1	78
Buchanan	8	45	24	109
Buena Vista	13	63	4	38
Butler	5	34	3	26
Calhoun	3	30	22	87
Carroll	17	77	5	23
Cass	9	29	1	49
Cedar	3	63	0	54

County	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-Homeless Count	Adjusted Near-homeless Estimate
Cerro Gordo	43	162	61	167
Cherokee	1	41	0	39
Chickasaw	6	18	10	44
Clarke	19	47	1	29
Clay	0	53	0	55
Clayton	0	144	9	49
Clinton	81	314	6	26
Crawford	4	43	9	27
Dallas	0	275	0	72
Davis	0	50	0	30
Decatur	18	72	10	43
Delaware	3	94	0	69
Des Moines	22	50	19	52
Dickinson	10	40	4	44
Dubuque	20	683	4	177
Emmet	0	61	0	39
Fayette	13	67	0	89
Floyd	24	73	16	81
Franklin	9	19	4	36
Fremont	0	55	0	48
Greene	4	18	5	29
Grundy	2	85	4	24
Guthrie	6	31	7	44
Hamilton	0	50	0	51

County	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-Homeless Count	Adjusted Near-homeless Estimate
Hancock	0	43	0	38
Hardin	2	96	1	67
Harrison	3	80	21	73
Henry	2	16	4	52
Howard	0	62	0	37
Humboldt	0	32	0	32
Ida	10	54	0	15
Iowa	4	36	4	33
Jackson	0	112	0	75
Jasper	27	48	2	31
Jefferson	0	95	0	58
Johnson	156	599	18	63
Jones	18	68	28	70
Keokuk	0	76	0	75
Kossuth	6	38	7	33
Lee	20	103	0	134
Linn	538	1,490	152	552
Louisa	33	168	0	29
Lucas	12	53	0	31
Lyon	6	44	0	38
Madison	4	37	17	57
Mahaska	5	101	3	78
Marion	2	87	4	91
Marshall	61	257	0	109

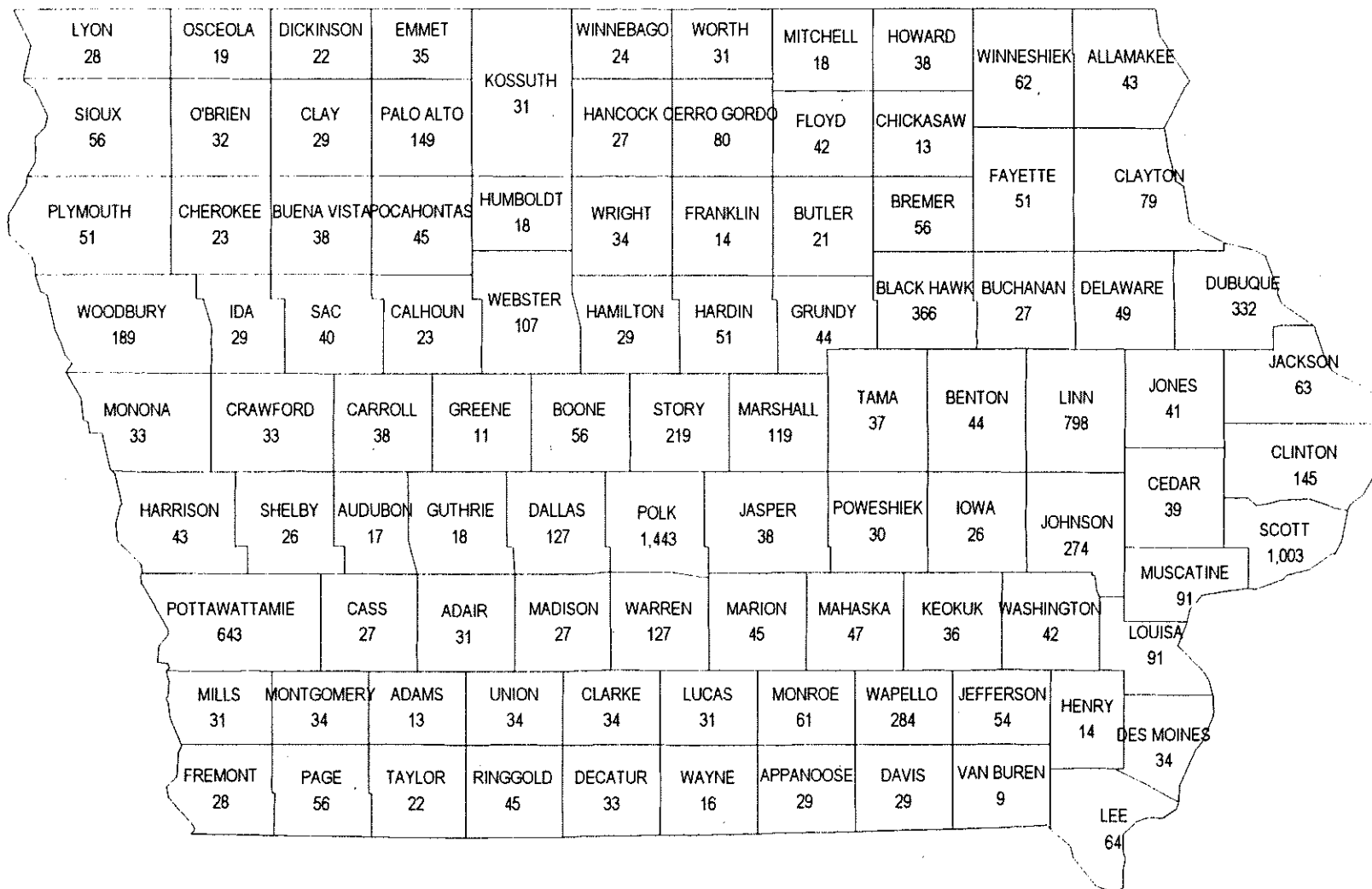


Figure A2: Estimated Number of Homeless Children
1999 Iowa Homeless Study

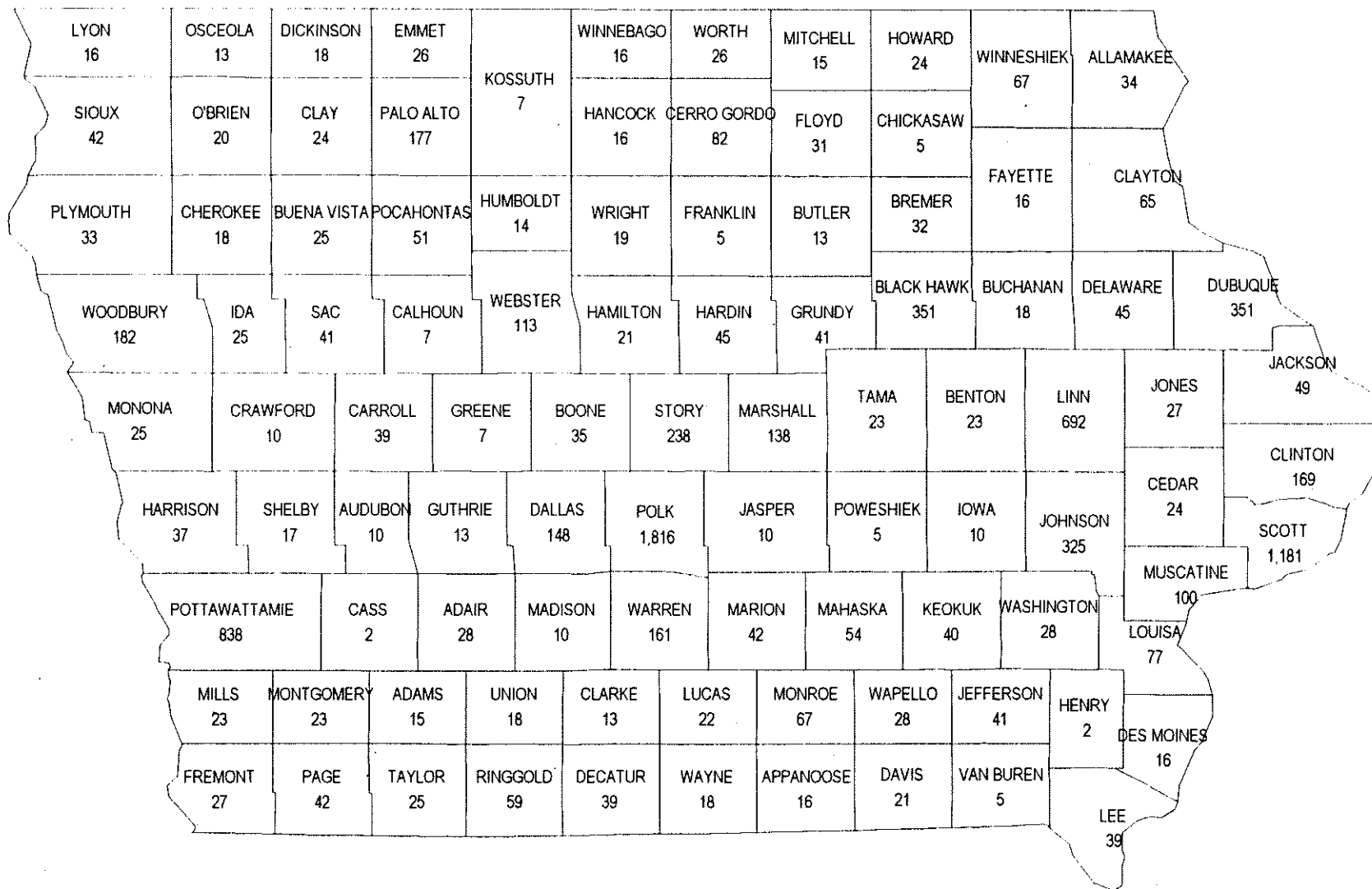


Figure A3: Estimated Number of Homeless Adults
1999 Iowa Homeless Study

Table A.4: Counts and Adjusted Estimates of Homeless and Near-homeless School Children by School District

School District	District Number	Number of Children in Poverty	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-homeless Count	Adjusted Near-Homeless Estimate
Ackley-Geneva	42-0009	49	1	1	1	1
Adair-Casey	39-0018	47	0	4	0	2
Adel-De Soto-Minburn	25-0027	73	0	4	0	5
Akron Westfield	75-0063	41	0	2	0	4
Albert City - Truesdale	11-0072	6	0	1	0	2
Albia	68-0081	245	0	12	0	8
Alburnett	57-0099	47	0	2	0	2
Alden	42-0108	64	0	3	0	2
Algona	55-0126	225	0	16	0	11
Allamakee	03-0135	198	0	15	0	10
Allison-Bristow	12-0153	47	0	1	0	8
Alta	11-0171	90	0	5	0	3
Ames	85-0225	515	23	23	0	28
Anamosa	53-0234	142	13	13	24	24
Andrew	49-0243	48	0	3	0	2
Anita	15-0252	76	8	8	2	2
Ankeny	77-0261	130	0	10	0	12
Anthon-Oto	97-0270	39	0	1	0	1
Aplington	12-0279	32	0	4	0	1
Ar-We-Va	24-0355	59	0	2	0	3
Armstrong-Ringstead	32-0333	58	0	4	0	3
Atlantic	15-0387	205	0	15	0	10
Audubon	05-0414	102	0	7	0	4

School District	District Number	Number of Children in Poverty	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-homeless Count	Adjusted Near-Homeless Estimate
Aurelia	18-0423	37	1	1	0	2
Ballard	85-0472	64	0	4	0	7
Battle Creek-Ida Grove	47-0504	76	0	9	0	3
Baxter	50-0513	25	0	1	0	2
BCLUW	38-0540	70	0	2	0	13
Bedford	87-0549	132	0	2	0	12
Belle Plaine	06-0576	41	0	3	0	4
Bellevue	49-0585	70	0	4	0	6
Belmond-Klemme	99-0594	71	0	3	0	5
Bennett	16-0603	37	0	3	0	2
Benton	06-0609	129	0	6	0	10
Bettendorf	82-0621	245	26	26	10	10
Bondurant-Farrar	77-0720	5	2	2	0	2
Boone	08-0729	284	0	22	0	15
Boyden-Hull	84-0747	65	4	4	0	5
Boyer Valley	43-1917	128	0	2	0	13
Bridgewater-Fontanelle	01-0792	64	0	3	0	2
Brooklyn-Guernsey-Malcom	79-0846	77	3	3	0	1
Burlington	29-0882	1009	16	16	13	13
Burt	55-0900	13	0	1	0	1
C and M	15-0914	56	0	3	0	2
Cal	35-0916	16	5	5	4	4
Calamus-Wheatland	23-0918	48	0	2	0	3
Camanche	23-0936	108	4	4	0	6

School District	District Number	Number of Children in Poverty	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-homeless Count	Adjusted Near-Homeless Estimate
Cardinal	90-0977	120	0	7	0	4
Carlisle	91-0981	108	0	3	0	3
Carroll	14-0999	260	2	2	2	2
Cedar Falls	07-1044	605	9	9	4	4
Cedar Rapids	57-1053	2214	249	249	16	16
Center Point - Urbana	57-1062	71	0	2	0	2
Centerville	04-1071	424	12	12	16	16
Central	22-1080	80	0	3	0	5
Central City	57-1089	50	0	2	0	3
Central Clinton	23-1082	116	0	16	0	6
Central Decatur	27-1093	168	2	2	0	13
Central Lee	56-1079	82	3	3	1	1
Central Lyon	60-1095	103	0	8	0	6
Chariton	59-1107	198	12	12	18	18
Charles City	34-1116	304	12	12	0	12
Charter Oak - Ute	24-1134	56	0	3	0	2
Cherokee	18-1152	109	0	5	0	8
Clarinda	73-1197	159	0	10	3	3
Clarion - Goldfield	99-1206	93	0	7	0	5
Clarke	20-1211	196	0	11	0	8
Clarksville	12-1215	45	0	4	0	2
Clay Central- Everly	21-1218	50	0	2	0	3
Clear Creek- Amana	52-1221	87	7	7	0	6
Clear Lake	17-1233	162	0	4	0	5

School District	District Number	Number of Children in Poverty	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-homeless Count	Adjusted Near-Homeless Estimate
Clearfield	87-1224	29	0	0	0	3
Clinton	23-1278	795	7	7	2	2
Colfax-Mingo	50-1332	76	0	3	0	5
College	57-1337	144	9	9	15	15
Collins-Maxwell	85-1350	53	0	4	0	3
Colo-Nesco	85-1359	67	0	3	0	4
Columbus	58-1368	102	0	2	0	16
Coon Rapids-Bayard	14-1413	56	0	2	0	3
Corning	02-1431	86	0	2	0	11
Corwith-Wesley	41-1449	26	0	1	0	1
Council Bluffs	78-1476	1679	3	3	2	2
Creston	88-1503	327	0	16	0	11
Dallas Center-Grimes	25-1576	41	0	3	0	3
Danville	29-1602	19	0	2	0	3
Davenport	82-1611	3844	97	97	45	45
Davis County	26-1619	279	0	14	0	9
Decorah	96-1638	147	1	1	0	10
Deep River-Millersburg	48-1647	46	0	1	0	5
Delwood	23-1675	14	0	1	0	1
Denison	24-1701	216	0	15	5	5
Denver	09-1719	41	0	3	1	1
Des Moines Independent	77-1737	6061	68	68	48	48
Dexfield	25-1770	31	0	1	0	1
Diagonal	80-1782	20	0	0	0	3

School District	District Number	Number of Children in Poverty	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-homeless Count	Adjusted Near-Homeless Estimate
Dike-New Hartford	38-1791	47	0	5	0	2
Dows	99-1854	26	0	1	0	1
Dubuque	31-1863	1226	10	10	88	88
Dunkerton	07-1908	35	0	1	0	1
Durant	16-1926	60	0	2	0	4
Eagle Grove	99-1944	122	0	8	3	3
Earlham	61-1953	27	0	2	0	3
East Buchanan	10-1963	62	0	3	0	4
East Central	49-1965	42	0	2	0	3
East Greene	37-1967	51	0	3	0	2
East Marshall	64-1968	63	0	3	0	5
East Monona	67-1969	32	0	2	0	1
East Union	88-1970	113	0	6	0	4
Eastern Allamakee	03-1972	54	0	2	0	3
Eddyville-Blakesburg	90-0657	105	7	7	9	9
Edgewood-Colesburg	28-1989	75	0	3	0	4
Eldora-New Providence	42-2007	114	0	8	0	6
Elk Horn-Kimballton	83-2016	21	0	1	0	1
Emmetsburg	74-2088	112	0	9	0	6
English Valleys	48-2097	55	0	1	0	9
Essex	73-2113	31	0	1	0	2
Estherville Lincoln Central	32-2124	198	0	13	0	9
Exira	05-2151	49	0	3	0	2

School District	District Number	Number of Children in Poverty	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-homeless Count	Adjusted Near-Homeless Estimate
Fairfield	51-2169	350	0	23	0	15
Farragut	36-2205	47	0	1	0	7
Forest City	95-2295	129	0	5	0	8
Fort Dodge	94-2313	913	3	3	1	1
Fort Madison	56-2322	404	0	29	0	20
Fox Valley	89-2327	68	0	1	0	5
Fredericksburg	19-2349	29	3	3	4	4
Fremont	62-2367	23	0	1	3	3
Fremont-Mills	36-2369	46	0	5	0	2
Galva-Holstein	47-2376	72	0	2	0	12
Garnavillo	22-2394	15	0	3	0	1
Gamer-Hayfield	41-2403	25	0	3	0	5
George	60-2457	44	0	3	0	2
Gilbert	85-2466	35	0	2	0	4
Gilmore City-Bradgate	46-2493	26	0	2	0	1
Gladbrook-Reinbeck	86-2502	22	0	1	0	2
Glenwood	65-2511	150	0	7	1	1
Glidden-Ralston	14-2520	62	0	4	0	3
GMG	86-2682	25	0	1	0	2
Graettinger	74-2556	67	0	3	0	2
Grand	08-2570	24	0	1	0	1
Greene	12-2664	49	0	1	0	8
Greenfield	01-2673	39	0	5	0	2
Grinnell-Newburg	79-2709	139	0	7	0	11
Griswold	15-2718	127	0	6	0	4
Grundy Center	38-2727	32	2	2	4	4

School District	District Number	Number of Children in Poverty	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-homeless Count	Adjusted Near-Homeless Estimate
Guthrie Center	39-2754	61	0	2	0	11
Guttenberg	22-2763	92	0	2	0	15
H-L-V	48-2766	24	0	5	0	2
Hamburg	36-2772	32	0	1	0	6
Hampton-Dumont	35-2781	129	2	2	0	7
Harlan	83-2826	174	0	7	0	11
Harmony	89-2834	73	0	2	0	11
Harris-Lake Park	30-2846	32	0	1	0	2
Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn	71-2862	84	1	1	0	5
Highland	92-2977	49	0	2	0	3
Hinton	75-2988	10	0	2	0	4
Howard-Winneschick	45-3029	232	0	15	0	10
Hubbard-Radcliffe	42-3033	112	0	5	0	3
Hudson	07-3042	37	0	1	0	2
Humboldt	46-3060	141	0	5	0	8
IKM	83-3168	66	0	5	0	4
Independence	10-3105	252	1	1	0	11
Indianola	91-3114	233	1	1	1	1
Interstate 35	61-3119	85	0	3	0	5
Iowa City	52-3141	951	24	24	5	5
Iowa Falls	42-3150	80	1	1	0	7
Iowa Valley	48-3154	80	0	2	0	13
Janesville Consolidated	09-3186	31	0	2	0	3
Jefferson-Scranton	37-3195	160	1	1	0	7
Jesup	10-3204	139	0	10	1	1

School District	District Number	Number of Children in Poverty	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-homeless Count	Adjusted Near-Homeless Estimate
Johnston	77-3231	31	0	3	0	3
Keokuk	56-3312	562	5	5	0	16
Keota	54-3330	61	0	1	0	9
Kingsley-Pierson	75-3348	83	0	4	0	3
Knoxville	63-3375	218	1	1	7	7
Lake Mills	95-3420	68	0	3	0	5
Lamoni	27-3465	62	0	1	0	7
Laurens-Marathon	76-3537	26	0	5	0	2
Lawton-Bronson	97-3555	41	0	1	0	2
Le Mars	75-3600	158	0	10	0	15
Lenox	87-3609	58	0	1	0	9
Lewis Central	78-3645	231	0	6	0	7
Lineville-Clio	93-3705	18	0	0	0	2
Linn-Mar	57-3715	261	0	9	0	10
Lisbon	57-3744	46	0	1	0	1
Little Rock	60-3771	27	0	2	0	1
Logan-Magnolia	43-3798	79	0	5	0	3
Lone Tree	52-3816	16	0	1	0	1
Louisa-Muscatine	58-3841	95	29	29	1	1
Lu Verne	55-3897	9	0	1	0	1
Lynnville-Sully	50-3906	59	0	2	0	4
Madrid	08-3942	35	0	2	0	4
Malvern	65-3978	67	0	4	0	3
Manning	14-4014	48	0	2	0	3
Manson Northwest Webster	13-4023	68	0	8	0	3
Maple Valley	67-4033	120	0	6	0	4

School District	District Number	Number of Children in Poverty	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-homeless Count	Adjusted Near-Homeless Estimate
Maquoketa	49-4041	302	0	15	0	10
Maquoketa Valley	28-4043	130	0	9	0	6
Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn	18-4068	56	0	4	0	2
Marion Independent	57-4086	195	8	8	0	3
Marshalltown	64-4104	607	7	7	0	29
Martensdale-St Marys	91-4122	32	0	1	0	1
Mason City	17-4131	564	11	11	26	26
Mediapolis	29-4203	72	0	4	0	6
Melcher-Dallas	63-4212	75	0	5	0	3
Meservey-Thornton	17-4266	10	0	1	0	1
MFL Mar Mac	22-4419	101	0	10	0	4
Mid-Prairie	92-4271	226	2	2	1	1
Midland	53-4269	151	1	1	1	1
Missouri Valley	43-4356	104	0	4	0	6
Moc-Floyd Valley	84-4149	115	0	8	0	12
Montezuma	79-4437	85	16	16	4	4
Monticello	53-4446	126	4	4	2	2
Moravia	04-4491	76	0	4	0	3
Mormon Trail	27-4505	70	0	1	0	6
Morning Sun	58-4509	38	1	1	10	10
Moulton-Udell	04-4518	62	0	3	0	2
Mount Ayr	80-4527	134	2	2	0	13
Mount Pleasant	44-4536	226	1	1	4	4
Mount Vernon	57-4554	29	0	2	0	3

School District	District Number	Number of Children in Poverty	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-homeless Count	Adjusted Near-Homeless Estimate
Murray	20-4572	74	14	14	1	1
Muscatine	70-4581	836	9	9	2	2
Nashua-Plainfield	19-4599	100	0	5	0	3
Nevada	85-4617	127	0	5	0	9
New Hampton	19-4662	130	1	1	0	9
New London	44-4689	71	0	6	0	4
New Market	87-4698	36	0	1	0	4
Newell-Fonda	11-4644	79	0	5	0	3
Newton	50-4725	248	3	3	5	5
Nishna Valley	65-4751	59	0	3	0	2
Nora Springs-Rock Falls	34-4761	38	0	2	0	3
North Cedar	16-3691	119	0	9	3	3
North Central	98-4772	38	0	6	0	2
North Fayette	33-4774	124	0	4	0	7
North Kossuth	55-4778	85	3	3	6	6
North Linn	57-4777	80	0	2	0	2
North Mahaska	62-4776	57	0	2	0	3
North Polk	77-4779	80	0	2	0	3
North Scott	82-4784	301	7	7	6	6
North Tama County	86-4785	50	0	2	0	3
North Winneshiek	96-4787	66	0	3	0	2
Northeast	23-4773	104	4	4	0	4
Northeast Hamilton	40-4775	44	0	3	0	2
Northwood-Kensett	98-4788	57	0	5	0	2

School District	District Number	Number of Children in Poverty	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-homeless Count	Adjusted Near-Homeless Estimate
Norwalk	91-4797	81	2	2	1	1
Odebolt-Arthur	81-4860	52	0	1	0	10
Oelwein	33-4869	316	7	7	0	11
Ogden	08-4878	44	3	3	1	1
Okoboji	30-4890	74	0	4	0	6
Olin Consolidated	53-4905	42	0	3	0	2
Orient-Macksburg	01-4978	32	0	3	0	1
Osage	66-4995	96	0	4	0	6
Oskaloosa	62-5013	374	5	5	0	17
Ottumwa	90-5049	964	125	125	0	28
Panorama	39-5121	152	0	2	0	16
Parkersburg	12-5130	84	0	2	0	11
Paton-Churdan	37-5139	18	0	1	0	1
PCM	50-5160	94	13	13	0	6
Pekin	54-5163	97	0	2	0	15
Pella	63-5166	159	1	1	0	14
Perry	25-5184	178	0	4	0	5
Pleasant Valley	82-5250	237	2	2	0	8
Pleasantville	63-5256	84	0	6	0	4
Pocahontas Area	76-5283	104	0	2	0	16
Pomeroy-Palmer	13-5301	50	0	1	0	8
Postville	03-5310	92	1	1	0	4
Prairie Valley	94-5325	96	17	17	6	6
Prescott	02-5328	13	8	8	14	14
Preston	49-5337	66	0	4	0	3
Red Oak	69-5463	148	0	12	0	8
Remsen-Union	75-5486	111	0	7	0	5

School District	District Number	Number of Children in Poverty	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-homeless Count	Adjusted Near-Homeless Estimate
Riceville	45-5508	113	0	6	0	4
Riverside	78-5510	118	8	8	10	10
Rock Valley	84-5607	33	0	4	0	6
Rockwell City-Lytton	13-5625	88	0	5	0	4
Rockwell-Swaledale	17-5616	54	0	1	4	4
Roland-Story	85-5643	26	1	1	3	3
Rudd-Rockford-Marble Rock	34-5697	83	0	6	0	4
Russell	59-5715	36	0	2	0	1
Ruthven-Ayrshire	74-5724	47	0	3	0	2
Sac	81-5742	52	6	6	4	4
Saydel Consolidated	77-5805	91	0	3	0	3
Schaller-Crestland	81-5823	66	1	1	4	4
Schleswig	24-5832	66	0	3	0	2
Sentral	55-5868	31	0	2	0	2
Sergeant Bluff-Luton	97-5877	136	0	13	0	20
Seymour	93-5895	125	0	1	0	8
Sheffield-Chapin	35-5922	60	0	3	0	2
Sheldon	71-5949	128	0	5	0	8
Shenandoah	73-5976	210	0	10	0	7
Sibley-Ocheyedan	72-5994	110	0	8	0	6
Sidney	36-6003	71	0	1	0	8
Sigourney	54-6012	113	0	2	0	14
Sioux Center	84-6030	154	0	5	0	4
Sioux Central	11-6035	78	0	6	0	9

School District	District Number	Number of Children in Poverty	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-homeless Count	Adjusted Near-Homeless Estimate
Sioux City	97-6039	2247	30	30	13	13
Solon	52-6093	33	5	5	0	2
South Clay	21-6092	9	0	1	0	1
South Hamilton	40-6095	51	0	3	0	4
South O'Brien	71-6099	172	0	11	0	7
South Page	73-6097	56	0	3	0	2
South Tama County	86-6098	224	0	15	13	13
South Winneshiek	96-6100	105	0	8	0	6
Southeast Polk	77-6101	164	0	9	25	25
Southeast Warren	91-6094	60	0	2	0	2
Southeast Webster	94-6096	80	0	4	0	3
Southern Cal	13-6091	55	0	7	0	3
Spencer	21-6102	216	0	9	0	13
Spirit Lake	30-6120	148	3	3	4	4
Springville	57-6138	29	0	1	0	2
St Ansgar	66-5751	49	0	3	0	5
Stanton	69-6165	32	0	1	0	2
Starmont	22-6175	128	0	8	2	2
Storm Lake	11-6219	169	3	3	0	10
Stratford	40-6246	10	0	1	0	1
Stuart-Menlo	39-6264	61	1	1	2	2
Sumner	09-6273	79	0	6	0	4
Terril	30-6345	40	0	2	0	2
Tipton	16-6408	78	0	4	0	5
Titonka Consolidated	55-6417	24	0	2	0	1
Treynor	78-6453	25	0	1	0	1

School District	District Number	Number of Children in Poverty	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-homeless Count	Adjusted Near-Homeless Estimate
Tri-Center	78-6460	71	0	2	0	2
Tri-County	54-6462	84	0	1	0	9
Tripoli	09-6471	51	0	4	0	3
Turkey Valley	33-6509	93	0	6	0	4
Twin Cedars	63-6512	52	0	2	0	3
Twin Rivers	46-6516	19	0	1	0	1
Underwood	78-6534	36	0	1	0	2
Union	07-6536	65	0	3	0	3
United	08-6561	11	0	1	0	2
Urbandale	77-6579	60	2	2	2	2
Valley	33-6591	62	0	5	0	3
Van Buren	89-6592	113	0	2	0	14
Van Meter	25-6615	50	0	1	0	1
Ventura	17-6633	46	0	3	0	2
Villisca	69-6651	87	0	4	0	3
Vinton-Shellsburg	06-6660	278	0	18	0	12
Waco	44-6700	57	0	2	0	3
Wall Lake View Auburn	81-6741	54	0	1	0	6
Walnut	78-6750	44	0	4	0	5
Wapello	58-6759	114	0	3	0	17
Wapsie Valley	09-6762	150	0	8	0	5
Washington	92-6768	222	0	16	16	16
Waterloo	07-6795	2824	93	93	23	23
Waukee	25-6822	40	0	2	0	3
Waverly-Shell Rock	09-6840	140	0	8	0	13
Wayne	93-6854	103	0	2	0	14

School District	District Number	Number of Children in Poverty	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-homeless Count	Adjusted Near-Homeless Estimate
Webster City	40-6867	176	0	7	0	10
Wellsburg-Steamboat Rock	38-6894	43	0	4	0	2
West Bend-Mallard	74-6921	67	0	5	0	4
West Branch	16-6930	57	0	3	0	5
West Burlington	29-6937	29	0	2	1	1
West Central	33-6943	90	0	4	0	3
West Delaware County	28-6950	270	3	3	0	12
West Des Moines	77-6957	300	4	4	0	25
West Hancock	41-0819	123	0	7	0	5
West Harrison	43-6969	47	0	4	0	3
West Liberty	70-6975	103	0	4	0	7
West Lyon	60-6983	111	0	4	0	6
West Marshall	64-6985	105	0	7	0	5
West Monona	67-6987	146	0	6	0	4
West Sioux	84-6990	97	0	3	0	5
Western Dubuque	31-6961	551	0	55	0	84
Westwood	97-6992	141	0	9	0	14
Whiting	67-7002	18	1	1	4	4
Williamsburg	48-7029	44	0	9	0	4
Wilton	70-7038	22	0	3	0	5
Winfield-Mt Union	44-7047	45	0	3	0	2
Winterset	61-7056	188	0	14	9	9
Woden-Crystal Lake	41-7083	17	0	1	0	1
Woodbine	43-7092	96	3	3	21	21

School District	District Number	Number of Children in Poverty	Homeless Count	Adjusted Homeless Estimate	Near-homeless Count	Adjusted Near-Homeless Estimate
Woodbury Central	97-7098	58	0	1	0	2
Woodward-Granger	25-7110	50	0	2	0	2

Note: An additional 90 school children were reported homeless (and 67 near-homeless), but could not be assigned to a school district or county, so they are not included in this table.

PART II

2. What are the most important barriers to school attendance or enrollment for **homeless** children in your community? Please rank all the following options that apply (1=most important, 9=least important)

- _____ 1. Residency requirements
- _____ 2. Availability of school records
- _____ 3. Birth certificates
- _____ 4. Legal guardianship requirements
- _____ 5. Transportation
- _____ 6. Lack of available pre-school programs
- _____ 7. Immunization requirements
- _____ 8. Physical examination records
- _____ 9. Other (please specify) _____

3. How important are the following educational services for **homeless** children in your school? Please rate all services by their importance (1= very important, 5= not important)

Next, please rate your school's ability to meet these needs (1= need met completely, 5= need not met at all, N/A = not needed)

Service	Importance of service	School's ability to provide service
tutoring/remedial		
special education		
English as second language		
counseling		
transportation		
free lunch/breakfast		
medical services		
school supplies		
preschool programs		
childcare services		
staff development on homeless issues		
parent training/involvement		
school/agency coordination		

Service	Importance of service	School's ability to provide service
removing barriers to enrollment		
case management		
enrollment		
records transfer		
other (please specify)		

4. What are the major causes of homelessness **in the community** your school serves? Based on your experience, please rank all the following options that apply, in order of importance (1=most important, 14= least important)

- _____ 1. Eviction
- _____ 2. Substance abuse
- _____ 3. Mental illness
- _____ 4. Physical disability
- _____ 5. AIDS/related illness
- _____ 6. Utility disconnection
- _____ 7. Domestic violence
- _____ 8. Family breakup/ runaway
- _____ 9. Loss of income from employment
- _____ 10. Loss of FIP/TANF
- _____ 11. Loss of food stamps
- _____ 12. Loss of other benefits (e.g. medical assistance)
- _____ 13. Deinstitutionalization (e.g. prison or treatment facility)
- _____ 14. Other (please specify) _____

5. In your opinion, has your school served: _____ more homeless children
 _____ fewer homeless children
 _____ about the same number of homeless children
 between January and May of 1999 compared to the same period in 1998?

6. Please add any other comments you wish to make on the other side of this sheet:

- about improvements to services for homeless people in your community
- to clarify your answers to these questions
- about how this survey could be improved in the future

7. If your school has developed any unique programs to meet the needs of homeless children, please attach descriptions.

SURVEY TO NON-SHELTER SERVICE AGENCIES
DEPT. OF HUMAN SERVICES OFFICES
GENERAL RELIEF OFFICES
MENTAL HEALTH CLINICS

Agency _____
County _____

Please help us provide an accurate count of **homeless and near-homeless** people in your community.

Who do we define as "homeless"?

- * A person without fixed, regular and adequate night time shelter;
- * A person whose primary night time residence is
 - A supervised shelter designed to provide temporary accommodations (such as congregate shelter or transitional housing)
 - A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping place for human beings (such as a car, camper, abandoned building, barn or street)
- * A person living doubled up with family or friends, for a temporary period*

Who do we define as "near homeless" or "at risk of becoming homeless"?*

- * A person in imminent danger of eviction
- * A person in imminent danger of having their utilities disconnected
- * A person seeking housing assistance AND paying more than 50% of their income for housing

We realize it is more difficult to identify near-homeless individuals, and that being "at risk of becoming homeless" is a continuum without well-defined limits. If you can identify the near-homeless as well as the homeless clients that you serve, please do so.

If your agency served **NO HOMELESS OR NEAR-HOMELESS CLIENTS** during the study period, PLEASE check here _____, **complete Part II** and return the survey.

Thank you very much for your time. If any questions are unclear, please call us anytime at **1-877-226-8108 (toll-free)**; someone will get back to you within 24 hours.

Please **make copies** of the table as needed, or call us to **request more** copies. If several people from your agency fill out the information on different sheets, please send all responses in together in the reply-paid envelope. If your agency receives more than one survey, please return only one copy of Part II.

PART I

1. For each **homeless or near-homeless client who visits your office** during the 2-week study period (April 25 to May 8), please fill out a line in the attached table. If you have any information about them, please list members of the same household on sequential lines. We have asked for only the **last four digits of the person's social security number** and the **first four letters of their name**; this is so we can sort out people listed by more than one agency. **WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY INDIVIDUALS.** If this information is not available, please fill out whatever you can for the person. For each question, list all answers that apply.

* = see "definition of terms"

Questions? Call 1-877-226-8108

Study period: April 25 to May 8 1999

DHS

A. SS# (last 4 digits)	B. last name (first 4 letters)	C. age (approx.)	D. male (M) or female (F)	E. county person became homeless*	F. race (see key)	G. type of assistance provided* (see key)	H. causes of home- lessness* (see key)	J. house- hold com- position* (see key)	K. current living conditions * (see key)	L. source of income /benefits* (see key)	M. number of people in household	N. school attendanc e (see key)	P. years of education

KEY:

F. Race:

- 1. White
- 2. African-American
- 3. Hispanic
- 4. Native American
- 5. Asian
- 6. Other / mixed

G. Type of assistance:

- 1. Referral
- 2. Motel voucher
- 3. Income subsidy
- 4. Food stamps
- 5. Crisis assistance payment
- 6. Mental health treatment
- 7. Outreach
- 8. Other

J. Household composition:

- 1. Unaccompanied child
- 2. Single adult w/child
- 3. Two adults w/child
- 4. Unaccompanied adult
- 5. Couple, no child
- 6. Other

H. Causes of homelessness:

- 0. Unknown
- 1. Eviction
- 2. Substance abuse
- 3. Mental illness
- 4. Physical disability
- 5. AIDS/related illness
- 6. Utility disconnection
- 7. Domestic violence
- 8. Family breakup / runaway
- 9. Loss of other employment
- 10. Loss of FIP
- 11. Loss of food stamps
- 12. Loss of other benefits
- 13. Deinstitutionalization
- 14. Other

K. Current living conditions:

- 0. Unknown
- 1. Shelter
- 2. Transitional housing
- 3. Family or friends
- 4. Car, camper, abandoned building etc.
- 5. Street
- 6. Apartment/house, at risk
- 7. Other (please specify)

L. Source of income/benefits:

- 0. Unknown
- 1. FIP/TANF
- 2. Food stamps
- 3. SSI/SSD
- 4. Social security
- 5. VA benefits
- 6. Title XIX
- 7. Employment
- 8. Other

N. School Attendance:

- 1. enrolled, attending school regularly
- 2. enrolled, not attending school regularly
- 3. school age, not enrolled in school

PART II

2. What are the major causes of homelessness in the area you serve? Based on your experience, please rank all applicable options, in order of importance (1=most important, 14= least important)

- _____ 1. Eviction
- _____ 2. Substance abuse
- _____ 3. Mental illness
- _____ 4. Physical disability
- _____ 5. AIDS/related illness
- _____ 6. Utility disconnection
- _____ 7. Domestic violence
- _____ 8. Family breakup /runaway
- _____ 9. Loss of employment
- _____ 10. Loss of FIP
- _____ 11. Loss of food stamps
- _____ 12. Loss of other benefits (e.g. medical assistance)
- _____ 13. Deinstitutionalization (e.g. prison or treatment facility)
- _____ 14. Other (please specify) _____

3. What are the major barriers your community faces in serving homeless clients? Based on your experience, please rank all of the relevant following options in order of importance (1=most important, 10=least important)

- _____ 1. Lack of affordable housing
- _____ 2. Lack of housing assistance
- _____ 3. Lack of medical services
- _____ 4. Lack of mental health services
- _____ 5. Lack of space / staff in service facilities
- _____ 6. Lack of job-training / employment services
- _____ 7. Lack of family / domestic violence counseling
- _____ 8. Lack of daycare services
- _____ 9. Lack of living wage jobs
- _____ 10. Other (please specify) _____

4. In your opinion, has your agency served: _____ more homeless clients
_____ fewer homeless clients
_____ about the same number of homeless clients
between January and May of 1999 compared to the same period in 1998?

5. Please add any other comments you wish to make on the other side of this sheet:
- about improvements to services for homeless people in your community
 - to clarify your answers to these questions
 - about how this survey could be improved in the future

**SURVEY TO SHELTERS AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROVIDERS
THAT DO NOT REPORT TO CHIP**

Agency _____
County _____

Please help us provide an accurate count of **homeless** people in your community.

Who do we define as “homeless”?

- * A person without fixed, regular and adequate night time shelter;
- * A person whose primary night time residence is
 - A supervised shelter designed to provide temporary accommodations (such as congregate shelter or transitional housing)
 - A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping place for human beings (such as a car, camper, abandoned building, barn or street)
- * A person living doubled up with family or friends, for a temporary period*

Thank you very much for your time. If any questions are unclear, please call us anytime at **1-877-226-8108 (toll-free)**; someone will get back to you within 24 hours.

Please **make copies** of the table as needed, or call us to **request more** copies. If several people from your agency fill out the information on different sheets, please send all responses in together in the reply-paid envelope. If your agency receives more than one survey, please return only one copy of Part II.

PART I

1. For each **homeless client you serve** during the 2-week study period (April 25 to May 8), please fill out a line in the attached table. Please list members of the same household on sequential lines.

We have asked for only the **last four digits of the person’s social security number** and the **first four letters of their name**; this is so we can sort out people listed by more than one agency. **WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY INDIVIDUALS.** If this information is not available, please fill out whatever you can for the person.

Include all clients currently being served, not just those who received the service for the first time this week. For each question, list all answers that apply.

*= see “definitions of terms”

PART II

2. How many people did you turn away during the 2-week study period (4/25 to 5/08)? _____
Is this more or less than usual, or about normal? _____

3. What are the major causes of homelessness in the area you serve? Based on your experience, please rank all the following options that apply, in order of importance (1=most important, 14= least important)

- _____ 1. Eviction
- _____ 2. Substance abuse
- _____ 3. Mental illness
- _____ 4. Physical disability
- _____ 5. AIDS/related illness
- _____ 6. Utility disconnection
- _____ 7. Domestic violence
- _____ 8. Family breakup /runaway
- _____ 9. Loss of employment
- _____ 10. Loss of FIP
- _____ 11. Loss of food stamps
- _____ 12. Loss of other benefits (e.g. medical assistance)
- _____ 13. Deinstitutionalization (e.g. prison or treatment facility)
- _____ 14. Other (please specify) _____

4. What are the major barriers your community faces in serving homeless clients? Based on your experience, please rank all the following options that apply, in order of importance (1=most important, 10=least important)

- _____ 1. Lack of affordable housing
- _____ 2. Lack of housing assistance
- _____ 3. Lack of medical services
- _____ 4. Lack of mental health services
- _____ 5. Lack of space / staff in service facilities
- _____ 6. Lack of job-training / employment services
- _____ 7. Lack of family / domestic violence counseling
- _____ 8. Lack of daycare services
- _____ 9. Lack of living wage jobs
- _____ 10. Other (please specify) _____

5. In your opinion, has your agency served: _____ more homeless clients
_____ fewer homeless clients
_____ about the same number of homeless clients
between January and May of 1999 compared to the same period in 1998?

6. Please add any other comments you wish to make on the other side of this sheet:

- about improvements to services for homeless people in your community
- to clarify your answers to these questions
- about how this survey could be improved in the future

**SURVEY TO SHELTERS AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROVIDERS
THAT REPORT INFORMATION TO CHIP**

Agency _____
County _____

We appreciate your help in **supplementing** the data collected by CHIP about homeless individuals and households.

Who do we define as "homeless"?

- * A person without fixed, regular and adequate night time shelter;
- * A person whose primary night time residence is
 - A supervised shelter designed to provide temporary accommodations (such as congregate shelter or transitional housing)
 - A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping place for human beings (such as a car, camper, abandoned building, barn or street)
- * A person living doubled up with family or friends, for a temporary period*
- * Children in runaway shelters or group homes (e.g. for abandoned children)
- * Children living in state institutions (e.g. awaiting foster home placement) because they have no other home
 - * Sick or abandoned children who would be released from the institution (e.g. hospital) they are living in, if they had some other place to go.

Thank you very much for your time. If any questions are unclear, please call us anytime at **1-877-226-8108 (toll-free)**; someone will get back to within 24 hours.

1. How many people was your agency **unable** to shelter* during the 2-week period April 25 to May 8?

_____ Adults
_____ Children / youths under 18

2. Of the people who could not be provided with shelter, can you **estimate** how many of them used any of the following options:

- _____ 0. Unknown
- _____ 1. Other shelter
- _____ 2. Other transitional housing
- _____ 3. Family or friends
- _____ 4. Car, camper, abandoned building etc.
- _____ 5. Streets
- _____ 6. Other

3. What is your estimate* of the number of people in your county were homeless and unsheltered during the 2-week period, April 25 to May 8?

_____ Adults, unaccompanied by children
_____ Unaccompanied children / youths
_____ Children, with an adult
_____ Total estimated number
_____ Unable to estimate

4. What are the major causes of homelessness in the area you serve? Based on your experience, please rank all the following options that apply, in order of importance (1=most important, 14= least important)

- _____ 1. Eviction
- _____ 2. Substance abuse
- _____ 3. Mental illness
- _____ 4. Physical disability
- _____ 5. AIDS/related illness
- _____ 6. Utility disconnection
- _____ 7. Domestic violence
- _____ 8. Family breakup /runaway
- _____ 9. Loss of employment
- _____ 10. Loss of FIP
- _____ 11. Loss of food stamps
- _____ 12. Loss of other benefits (e.g. medical assistance)
- _____ 13. Deinstitutionalization (e.g. prison or treatment facility)
- _____ 14. Other (please specify) _____

5. What are the major barriers your community faces in serving homeless clients? Based on your experience, please rank all the following options that apply, in order of importance (1=most important, 10=least important)

- _____ 1. Lack of affordable housing
- _____ 2. Lack of housing assistance
- _____ 3. Lack of medical services
- _____ 4. Lack of mental health services
- _____ 5. Lack of space / staff in service facilities
- _____ 6. Lack of job-training / employment services
- _____ 7. Lack of family / domestic violence counseling
- _____ 8. Lack of daycare services
- _____ 9. Lack of living wage jobs
- _____ 10. Other (please specify) _____

6. In your opinion, has your agency served: _____ more homeless clients
_____ fewer homeless clients
_____ about the same number of homeless clients
between January and May of 1999 compared to the same period in 1998?

7. Please add any other comments you have below, or on the other side of this sheet:

- about improvements to services for homeless people in your community
- to clarify your answers to these questions
- about how this survey could be improved in the future

*=see definition of terms

SURVEY TO PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITIES

Agency _____
County _____

Please help us provide an accurate count of the individuals and households in your community who are **homeless or near-homeless**.

Who do we define as "homeless"?

- * A person without fixed, regular and adequate night time shelter;
- * A person whose primary night time residence is

A supervised shelter designed to provide temporary accommodations (such as congregate shelter or transitional housing)

A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping place for human beings (such as a car, camper, abandoned building, barn or street)

- * A person living doubled up with family or friends, for a temporary period*

Who do we define as "near homeless" or "at risk of becoming homeless"??*

- * A person in imminent danger of eviction
- * A person in imminent danger of having their utilities disconnected
- * A person seeking housing assistance AND paying more than 50% of their income for housing.

We realize it is more difficult to identify near-homeless individuals, and that "at risk of becoming homeless" is a continuum without well-defined limits. If you can identify the near-homeless as well as the homeless clients that you serve, please do so.

Thank you very much for your time. If any questions are unclear, please call us anytime at **1-877-226-8108 (toll-free)**; someone will get back to you within 24 hours.

1. How many applicants (households) are on the waiting list for housing assistance in your jurisdiction?

Is your waiting list closed? Y _____ N _____
Has it been closed at any time since May 1998? Y _____ N _____

2. How long does it normally take for a person/ household to receive housing assistance, from the time they apply? _____

3. How many applicants for housing assistance have been disqualified in the past year (since May 1998)?

4. How many applicants who received a voucher or certificate in your community since May 1998 were unable to find an apartment or house to rent within 3 months?

*=see "definition of terms"

5. We realize that many agencies no longer use the federal preference system to allocate housing. If your agency does not, but you feel you can estimate the numbers of applicants in each category, please do so.

Do you use Federal Preferences to determine the order of the waiting list? _____

How many applicants on your waiting list are:

- _____ 1. doubled up temporarily
- _____ 2. in severely overcrowded or substandard housing*
- _____ 3. in imminent danger of displacement or utility disconnection
- _____ 4. severely cost-burdened (paying more than 50% of income in rent)
- _____ 4. homeless, in a shelter or transitional housing
- _____ 5. homeless, unsheltered
- _____ 6. homeless, current living conditions unknown

6. What are the major causes of homelessness in the area you serve? Based on your experience, please rank all the following options that apply, in order of importance (1=most important, 14= least important)

- _____ 1. Eviction
- _____ 2. Substance abuse
- _____ 3. Mental illness
- _____ 4. Physical disability
- _____ 5. AIDS/related illness
- _____ 6. Utility disconnection
- _____ 7. Domestic violence
- _____ 8. Family breakup /runaway
- _____ 9. Loss of employment
- _____ 10. Loss of FIP
- _____ 11. Loss of food stamps
- _____ 12. Loss of other benefits (e.g. medical assistance)
- _____ 13. Deinstitutionalization (e.g. prison or treatment facility)
- _____ 14. Other (please specify) _____

COVER LETTERS AND LISTS OF DEFINITIONS PROVIDED

2 April 1999

Dear Principal or Pre-school Program Director,

Accurately counting homeless and near-homeless children in your community is important to ensure your school / program receives a fair share of the resources available in Iowa to serve homeless and at-risk children and youths. Developing an accurate state-wide count of homeless children is essential to ensure Iowa receives all the federal homeless assistance funds it is eligible for. The 1999 State-wide Homeless Study will collect information from a variety of agencies serving homeless and near-homeless clientele. The study is sponsored by the Iowa Departments of Education and Economic Development. Schools and pre-school programs are a key part of the service delivery system, and we hope you will help us by completing this survey and returning it in the pre-paid reply envelope. Participating in this survey is, of course, entirely voluntary.

This year, the study is designed to count homeless and near-homeless children and youths during the 1998-1999 school year. People who may be helpful resources in completing this survey, include: school nurse, social worker, counselor, pre-school coordinator, at-risk coordinator, Family resource center coordinator, school-based Youth Services coordinator, secretary in charge of enrollment, or human services contacts.

The first part of the survey is set up in table format, requesting several pieces of information about **each homeless or near-homeless child or youth in your school or program**. The first two pieces of information (last four digits of the social security number, and first four letters of the child's last name) will help us develop an unduplicated count by creating a unique identifier for each child. **INDIVIDUALS CANNOT BE IDENTIFIED USING THIS INFORMATION**. However, if you do not have this information, please report whatever you can about the child. They will still be counted in our larger estimate of Iowa's total homeless population. **Feel free to make copies of the table, or call us toll-free at 1-877-226-8108 for more copies.**

We are also interested in your assessment of the major causes of homelessness in your community, and the barriers your school or program faces in increasing enrollment and attendance and improving services to homeless and at-risk children. We have tried to keep the information requested to a minimum. We've also tried to make questions as straightforward as possible. Inevitably, some questions could be interpreted in different ways. We've provided a more extensive discussion of items that may be unclear in the "Definition of terms". We will be holding a **training session for survey participants over the ICN on Tuesday April 13, 2:30 - 3:30pm**. ICN sites are listed below. Please attend if you can. If you or your staff have questions while completing the survey, please call us toll-free at **1-877-226-8108**. We will return your call within 24 hours or less.

We really appreciate your help with this study. Thank you for your time and effort.
Sincerely,

Heather I. MacDonald
Associate Professor
University of Iowa

Dan Jenney
Co-investigator

**Training Sessions, ICN Sites
Tuesday April 13 2:30 to 3:30pm**

Burlington High School
ICN Classroom
421 Terrace Drive
Burlington, IA 52601

Educational Services Center/Administration
12 Scott Street
Council Bluffs, IA 51503

Creston High School
ICN Classroom #404
601 West Townline Road
Creston, IA 50801

West High School
3505 West Locust
Davenport, IA 52804

Iowa Department of Economic Development
Main Conference Room - 2nd Floor
200 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309

Dubuque Senior High School
Room: A-123
1800 Clarke Drive
Dubuque, IA 52001

Fort Dodge Army Aviation Support Facility
1649 Nelson Ave., 133rd ACS (Airport)
Fort Dodge, IA 50501

Iowa City High School
ICN Classroom: #1001/1005
1900 Morningside Drive
Iowa City, IA 52245

Newman Catholic High School
2445 19th Street
Mason City, IA 50401

Ottumwa High School
Voc. Tech. Building, Room 155
501 East Second
Ottumwa, IA 52501

Cora B. Darling Elementary/Middle School
P.O. Box 717
312 West Post Street
Postville, IA 52162

Sioux City Federal Courthouse
ICN Classroom: #B27
320 6th Street
Sioux City, IA 51101

Iowa Lakes Community College
Spencer Attendance Center
Fiber Optics Room
1950 Grand Avenue
Spencer, IA 51301

Hawkeye Community College - 2 Cart
1501 East Orange Road
Waterloo, IA 50704

Definition of terms:

Many of the terms used in the questionnaire could be interpreted in several ways. We have tried to eliminate confusing categories and definitions. However, it isn't always possible to be absolutely clear in the limited space available on the questionnaire, so we hope these more extended definitions and examples guide you in deciding how to respond. Again, if we've left anything off this list, or we still haven't clarified things, PLEASE call us toll-free at 1-877-226-8108.

- **Living doubled up for a temporary period:** the household is not a permanent part of the family or friend's household (for instance, they are not living together because both households want to share housing costs, but because the doubled-up household has no other home to go to). Thus, "a temporary period" could last a week, some months or even more than a year.
- **In imminent danger** of eviction or utility disconnection: the household has received an eviction or foreclosure notice, or a utility disconnection notice. Households on a utility repayment plan are also in danger as they would be subject to immediate disconnection if they default on the repayment plan.
- **Causes of homelessness:** enter all options that apply to **this** episode of homelessness. For instance, a household may have become homeless a year ago because of domestic violence. They may have found permanent housing where they stayed for some months, and have recently become homeless again because of a combination of loss of income and mental health problems. You would enter the causes as "loss of income" and "mental illness". Please enter **all applicable options** (starting with the most important), separated by commas.
- **Current living conditions:** this item allows us to differentiate between the homeless and near-homeless people. Transitional housing serves homeless people for a longer period of time than emergency shelters (typically, for between six months and two years), but is not designed to provide permanent housing. Public housing or other subsidized housing is permanent housing; a public housing resident would be counted as homeless or near-homeless, unless they were in imminent danger of eviction (as described above).
- **Number of people in the household:** even if you do not know every person in the household, try to enter the total number in the household. Similarly, enter whatever you know about the child's current living conditions. We realize "household" could be defined in several ways. For this survey, children's definitions of their **current** household should be used.

3 April 1999

Human Services Area Administrator

Dear Administrator,

Accurately counting homeless individuals and households in your community is important to ensure your community receives a fair share of the resources available in Iowa to serve homeless people. Developing an accurate state-wide count of homeless people is essential to ensure Iowa receives all the federal homeless assistance funds it is eligible for. The 1999 State-wide Homeless Study will collect information from a variety of agencies serving homeless and near-homeless clientele. Human Services agencies are a key part of the service delivery system, and we hope you will help us by completing this survey and returning it in the pre-paid reply envelope. Participating in this survey is, of course, entirely voluntary.

This year, the study is designed to count the individuals and households each agency serves during a two week study period - April 25 to May 8. We are interested in counting both the currently homeless and those at risk of homelessness. The first part of the survey is set up in table format, requesting several pieces of information about **each homeless or near-homeless client who visits your office** for service over this period. The first two pieces of information (last four digits of the social security number, and first four letters of the person's last name) will help us develop an unduplicated count by creating a unique identifier for each person. **INDIVIDUALS CANNOT BE IDENTIFIED USING THIS INFORMATION.** However, if you do not have this information, please report whatever you can about the person. They will still be counted in our larger estimate of Iowa's total homeless population. **Feel free to make copies of the table, or call us at 1-877-226-8108 for more copies** (please leave your name and address, and the approximate number you need).

We are also interested in your assessment of the major causes of homelessness in your community, and the barriers your community faces in improving services to homeless individuals and families. We have tried to keep the information requested to a minimum. We've also tried to make questions as straightforward as possible. Inevitably, some questions could be interpreted in different ways. We've provided a more extensive discussion of items that may be unclear on the reverse of this letter. We will be holding a training session for survey participants over the ICN on Tuesday April 13, 12:30 - 1:30pm. Twelve ICN sites will be hooked up [list sites] - please attend if you can. If you or your staff have questions while completing the survey, please call us at **1-877-226-8108**. We will return your call within 24 hours or less.

We really appreciate your help with this study.

Sincerely,

Heather I. MacDonald
Associate Professor
University of Iowa

Daniel J. Jenney
Co-investigator

Definition of terms:

Many of the terms used in the questionnaire could be interpreted in several ways. We have tried to eliminate confusing categories and definitions. However, it isn't always possible to be absolutely clear in the limited space available on the questionnaire, so we hope these more extended definitions and examples guide you in deciding how to respond. Again, if we've left anything off this list, or we still haven't clarified things, PLEASE call us at 1-877-226-8108.

* **Living doubled up for "a temporary period"** means: the household is not a permanent part of the family or friend's household (for instance, they are not living together because both households want to share housing costs, but because the doubled-up household has no other home to go to). Thus, "a temporary period" could last a week, some months or even more than a year. We realize "household" could be defined in several ways. For this survey, client definitions of who is part of their household should be used.

* **"In imminent danger"** of eviction or utility disconnection means the household has received an eviction or foreclosure notice, or a utility disconnection notice. Households on a utility repayment plan are also in danger as they would be subject to immediate disconnection if they default on the repayment plan.

* **County where person became homeless:** enter the county if it was in Iowa, enter the state if they became homeless outside of Iowa. Here we are referring to the most recent episode of homelessness - where did they last have a permanent place to stay?

* For questions where a number of options may apply (eg, type of assistance, causes of homelessness, source of income) enter **all applicable options** (starting with the most important), separated by commas.

* **Causes of homelessness:** enter only those that apply to **this** episode of homelessness. For instance, a household may have become homeless a year ago because of domestic violence. They may have found permanent housing where they stayed for some months, and have recently become homeless again because of a combination of loss of income and mental health problems. You would enter the causes as "loss of income" and "mental illness".

* **Number of people in the household:** even if you do not see every person in the household, try to enter the total number in the household. For instance, if a single-parent of two children comes in to apply for emergency cash assistance, enter household size as 3 not 1. If you can, enter information about each household member on sequential lines, so if household size is 3 we can count down and see the two children listed after the parent are part of the same household.

* **Types of assistance:** This is the kind of assistance you provide to the client (at this visit, and normally). We define "income subsidy" as a benefit payment, such as FIP, SSI, or SSD. A "crisis assistance payment", in contrast, would be a one-time payment to assist the household with an emergency, such as avoiding utility disconnection.

* **Source of income:** This is the clients' usual source of income - it may be the same as the "type of assistance" reported above (e.g. food stamps), but it may include other sources too (e.g. employment).

3 April 1999

Emergency Shelter / Transitional Housing Directors

Dear Director,

Accurately counting homeless individuals and households in your community is important to ensure your community receives a fair share of the resources available in Iowa to serve homeless people. Developing an accurate state-wide count of homeless people is essential to ensure Iowa receives all the federal homeless assistance funds it is eligible for. The 1999 State-wide Homeless Study will collect information from a variety of agencies serving homeless and near-homeless clientele. Emergency shelter and transitional housing providers are a key part of the service delivery system, and we hope you will help us by completing this survey and returning it in the pre-paid reply envelope. Participating in this survey is, of course, entirely voluntary.

This year, the study is designed to count the individuals and households each agency serves during a two week study period - April 25 to May 8. The first part of the survey is set up in table format, requesting several pieces of information about **each homeless client you serve** over this period. The first two pieces of information (last four digits of the social security number, and first four letters of the person's last name) will help us develop an unduplicated count by creating a unique identifier for each person. **INDIVIDUALS CANNOT BE IDENTIFIED USING THIS INFORMATION.** However, if you do not have this information, please report whatever you can about the person. They will still be counted in our larger estimate of Iowa's total homeless population. **Feel free to make copies of the table, or call us at 1-877-226-8108 for more copies** (please leave your name and address, and the approximate number you need).

We are also interested in your assessment of the major causes of homelessness in your community, and the barriers your community faces in improving services to homeless individuals and families. We have tried to keep the information requested to a minimum. We've also tried to make questions as straightforward as possible. Inevitably, some questions could be interpreted in different ways. We've provided a more extensive discussion of items that may be unclear on the reverse of this letter. We will be holding a training session for survey participants over the ICN on Tuesday April 13, 10:30 to 11:30am. Twelve ICN sites will be hooked up [list sites] - please attend if you can. If you or your staff have questions while completing the survey, please call us at **1-877-226-8108**. We will return your call within 24 hours or less.

We really appreciate your help with this study.
Sincerely,

Heather I. MacDonald
Associate Professor
University of Iowa

Daniel J. Jenney
Co-investigator

Definition of terms:

Many of the terms used in the questionnaire could be interpreted in several ways. We have tried to eliminate confusing categories and definitions. However, it isn't always possible to be absolutely clear in the limited space available on the questionnaire, so we hope these more extended definitions and examples guide you in deciding how to respond. This survey form will also go out to Human Services and General Relief Offices, so not all options may apply to you. Again, if we've left anything off this list, or we still haven't clarified things, PLEASE call us at 1-877-226-8108.

* **Living doubled up for "a temporary period"** means: the household is not a permanent part of the family or friend's household (for instance, they are not living together because both households want to share housing costs, but because the doubled-up household has no other home to go to). Thus, "a temporary period" could last a week, some months or even more than a year.

* **County where person became homeless:** enter the county if it was in Iowa, enter the state if they became homeless outside of Iowa. Here we are referring to the most recent episode of homelessness - where did they last have a permanent place to stay?

* **Days in this shelter:** Enter the number of days the client has stayed in this shelter (as of May 8, the end of the survey period) during **this current** episode of homelessness

* For questions where a number of options may apply (eg, causes of homelessness, source of income) enter **all applicable options** (starting with the most important), separated by commas.

* **Causes of homelessness:** enter only those that apply to **this** episode of homelessness. For instance, a household may have become homeless a year ago because of domestic violence. They may have found permanent housing where they stayed for some months, and have recently become homeless again because of a combination of loss of income and mental health problems. You would enter the causes as "loss of income" and "mental illness".

* **Number of people in the household:** Please enter information about each household member on sequential lines, so if household size is 3 we can count down and see the two children listed after the parent are part of the same household. We realize "household" could be defined in several ways. For this survey, client definitions of who is part of their household should be used.

3 April 1999

CHIP Emergency Shelter Directors

Dear Director,

Accurately counting homeless individuals and households in your community is important to ensure your community receives a fair share of the resources available in Iowa to serve homeless people. Developing an accurate state-wide count of homeless people is essential to ensure Iowa receives all the federal homeless assistance funds it is eligible for. We realize that your agency already reports a substantial amount of information about the population you serve, through the CHIP survey. THIS SURVEY ASKS FOR SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION that will help us develop a better estimate of the total number of homeless individuals and households in the state. It **does not duplicate** the information reported under CHIP.

The 1999 State-wide Homeless Study will collect information from a variety of agencies serving homeless and near-homeless clientele. CHIP will be used to develop better estimates of the sheltered homeless population, but this survey is designed to collect information about those not sheltered, and about your assessment of the major causes of homelessness in your community, and the major barriers to improving service to homeless people. We hope you will help us by completing this survey and returning it in the pre-paid reply envelope. Participating in this survey is, of course, entirely voluntary.

This year, the study is designed to count the individuals and households each agency serves during a two week study period - April 25 to May 8. We are also interested in your assessment of the major causes of homelessness in your community, and the barriers your community faces in improving services to homeless individuals and families. We have tried to keep the information requested to a minimum. We've also tried to make questions as straightforward as possible. Inevitably, some questions could be interpreted in different ways. We've provided a more extensive discussion of items that may be unclear on the reverse of this letter. If you or your staff have questions while completing the survey, please call us at **1-877-226-8108**. We will return your call within 24 hours or less.

We really appreciate your help with this study.
Sincerely,

Heather I. MacDonald
Associate Professor
University of Iowa

Daniel J. Jenney
Co-investigator

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* **"In imminent danger"** of eviction or utility disconnection means the household has received an eviction or foreclosure notice, or a utility disconnection notice. Households on a utility repayment plan are also in danger as they would be subject to immediate disconnection if they default on the repayment plan.

3 April 1999

Director, Public Housing Authority

Dear Director,

Accurately counting homeless individuals and households in your community is important to ensure your community receives a fair share of the resources available in Iowa to serve homeless people. Developing an accurate state-wide count of homeless people is essential to ensure Iowa receives all the federal homeless assistance funds it is eligible for. The 1999 State-wide Homeless Study will collect information from a variety of agencies serving homeless and near-homeless clientele. Public Housing Authorities are a key part of the service delivery system, and we hope you will help us by completing this survey and returning it in the pre-paid reply envelope. Participating in this survey is, of course, entirely voluntary.

The 1999 Homeless Study is designed to count individuals and households who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. We define these terms at the beginning of the survey. We realize your agency may no longer use the Federal Preference system to order its waiting list. However, if you do have information about the status of applicants on your waiting list this would be extremely helpful for the study. It is extremely difficult to identify near-homeless individuals through other means.

We are also interested in your assessment of the major causes of homelessness in your community. We have tried to keep the information requested to a minimum. We've also tried to make questions as straightforward as possible. Inevitably, some questions could be interpreted in different ways. We've provided a more extensive discussion of items that may be unclear on the reverse of this letter. If you or your staff have questions while completing the survey, please call us at 1-877-226-8108. We will return your call within 24 hours or less.

We really appreciate your help with this study.

Sincerely,

Heather I. MacDonald
Associate Professor
University of Iowa

Daniel J. Jenney
Co-investigator

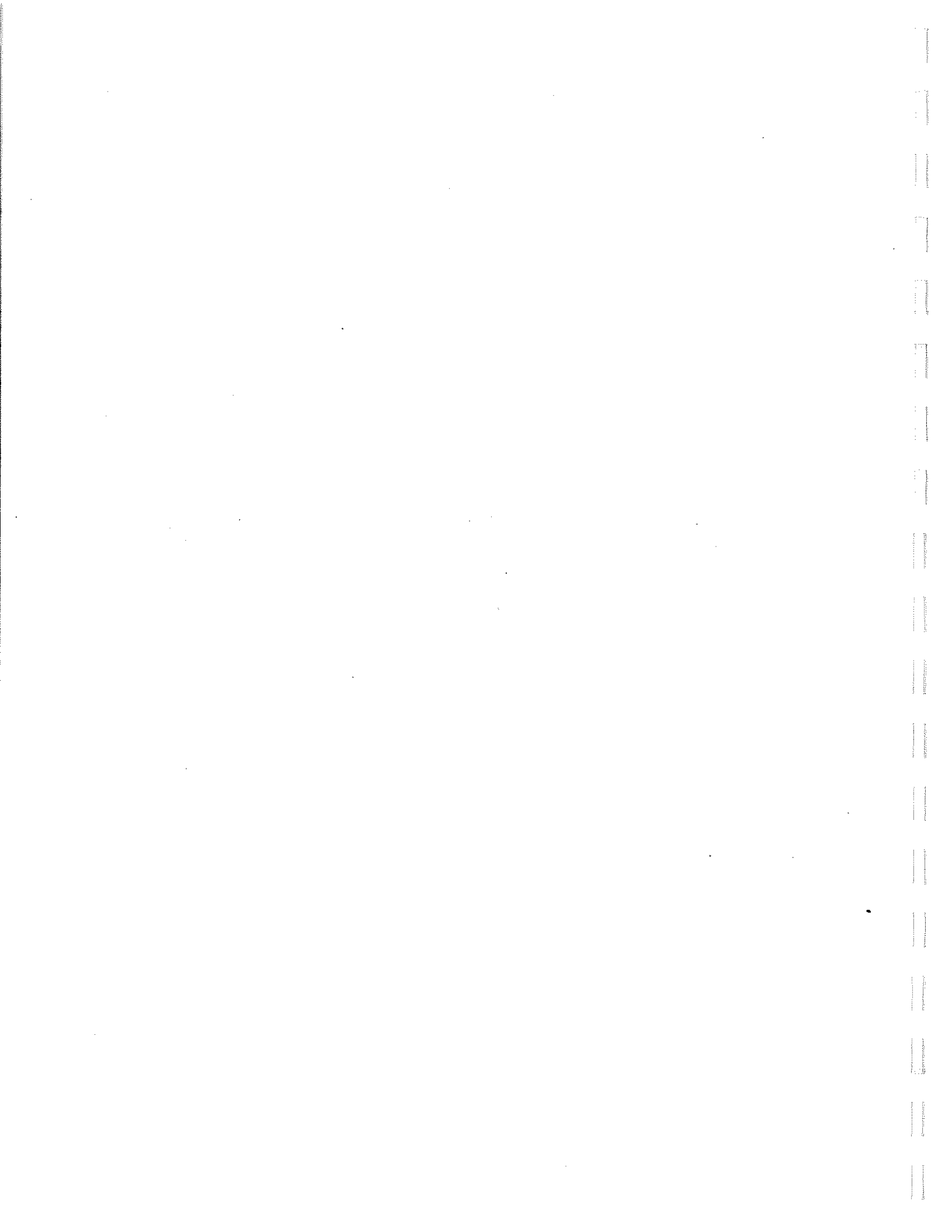
Definition of terms:

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* **Living doubled up for "a temporary period"** means: the household is not a permanent part of the family or friend's household (for instance, they are not living together because both households want to share housing costs, but because the doubled-up household has no other home to go to). Thus, "a temporary period" could last a week, some months or even more than a year.

* **"In imminent danger"** of eviction or utility disconnection means the household has received an eviction or foreclosure notice, or a utility disconnection notice. Households on a utility repayment plan are also in danger as they would be subject to immediate disconnection if they default on the repayment plan.

* **Severely over-crowded or sub-standard housing:** we assume you will use HUD's definition of this term.



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