

# IOWANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS



**January-December 2010  
Snapshot of Service and Shelter Use**

**Prepared by the Iowa Institute for Community Alliances**

# 18,210



**18,210 Iowans were homeless and served by I-Count agencies in 2010**

**I-Count is the Statewide Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) used by most homeless agencies across Iowa. Approximately 75% of Emergency and Transitional beds are included in this information network.**



# This is not an estimate

**These are real people  
forced to seek help because  
of insecure housing  
and other social ills.**

**18,210 Iowans were  
homeless during 2010.  
(3,048 of whom were in  
HPRP rapid re-housing)**

**35,757 people were  
at risk of homelessness.  
(14,114 of whom were in  
HPRP homeless prevention)**

**51,332**  
people in total  
were served

Each of these numbers is an unduplicated count. Though each person is counted only once within the homeless population and once within the at risk population, there is an overlap between the two populations. 2,635 people were both homeless and at risk during the year. The total unduplicated population served in 2010 was 51,332.





## Balance of State

12,855 Homeless (↑0.78%)

31,674 At-Risk (↑100.27%)

cc jimmywayne

## Polk County

5634 Homeless (↓3.38%)

4131 At-Risk (↓9.94%)

## Cedar Rapids

2798 Homeless (↑24.47%)

11526 At-Risk (↑119.38%)

cc pasa47

## Siouxland

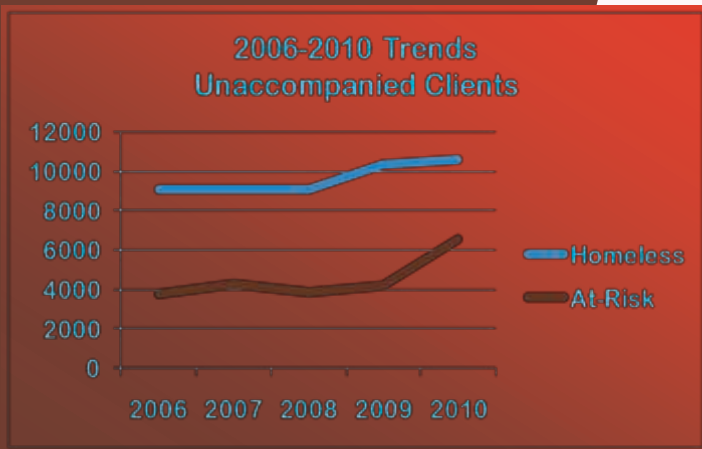
1212 Homeless (↓14%)

1700 At-Risk (↑158%)

A homeless person lacked a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence or had a primary nighttime residence that was a supervised temporary shelter or a place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

A person at risk of homelessness sought services to prevent homelessness but did not qualify as homeless.

# Unaccompanied



Compared to 2009...

## Unaccompanied homeless

were 13.24% more likely to be homeless for a year or more, 4.4% less likely to be first time homeless, and 4.45% more likely to be living on the street at intake. They are 6% less likely to be employed at intake.

Unaccompanied at-risk of homelessness were 8% less likely to have been to college and 14% less likely to suffer from a disability. They are 5% more likely to be employed at intake and also are 12.5% less likely to have no monthly income. They are 15.36% more likely to be veterans.

“ People experiencing homelessness don't stop being the whole person they are. They often still have a job or they attend school. They still send their kids to school. They still go to church. They still volunteer in their community. ”



# Children and Families

**3% of all Iowa's Children lived in homeless shelters or insecure housing in 2010**

6257 Iowans under 18 years old were homeless in 2010. 4959 were in 2705 families and 1392 were unaccompanied.

Another 9144 Iowans under 18 years old were in 4431 families that received services to prevent homelessness in 2010.

13.26% of homeless families have no financial resources

The percent of homeless children, as a portion of the total homeless population, was down 4% while the percent of at-risk children, as a portion of the at-risk population was up 1.7% in 2010 compare to 2009.

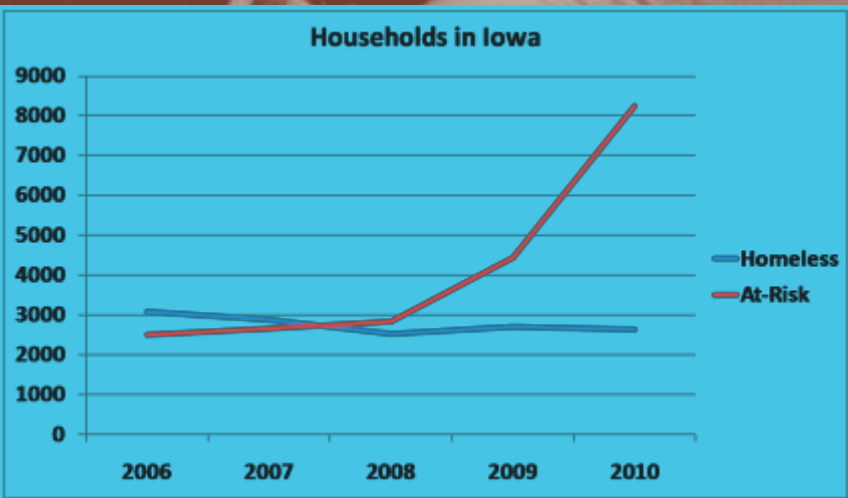
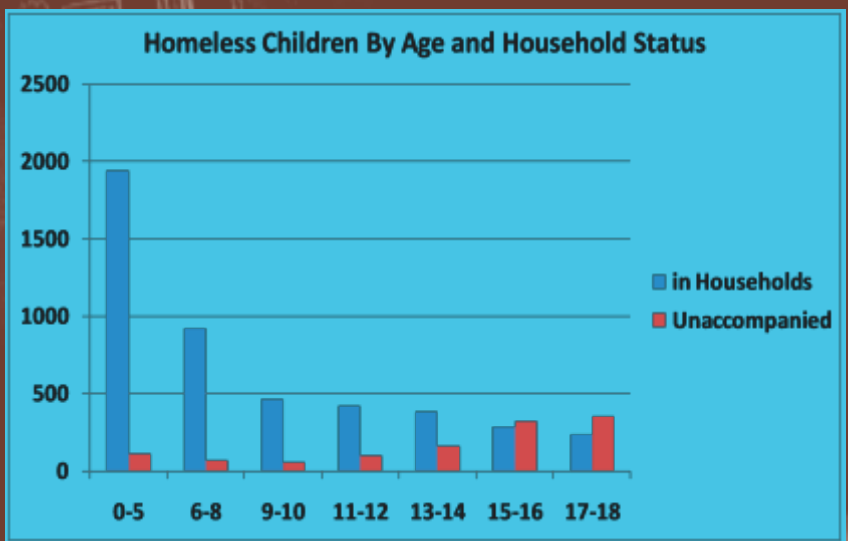
The raw count of homeless children in Iowa was down 4.6% and the raw count of at-risk children in Iowa was up 78.3%.



26% of homeless families suffer from some disabilities compared to 16.6% of the general population of Iowa

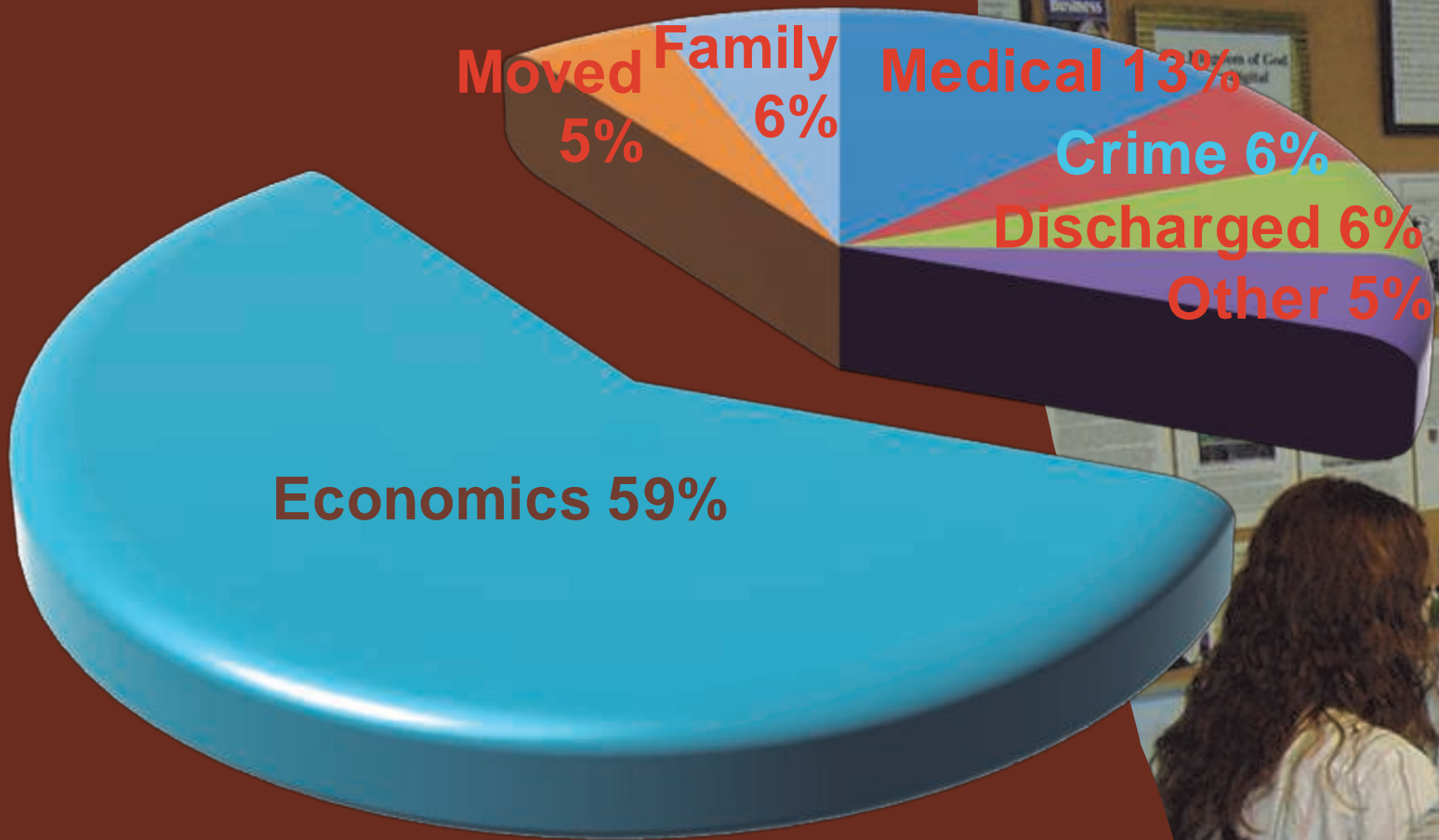
17.34% of homeless families suffer mental disabilities compared to 3.4% of the general population of Iowa

33.5% of homeless families are employed and 69.23% have finished high school



cc Scuola di Atene

# Causes of Homelessness



Economics was the cause of 59% of homelessness. This is consistent from last year. Other causes have stayed fairly consistent, though “Discharged” to homelessness from an

institution like jail or prison, is up slightly and being the victim of a

“crime”, is down slightly. Also, medical causes are up slightly, including substance abuse and physical or mental disability.

“ During housing instability people may have lost a job or their job simply does not cover medical expenses. There may be a mental or physical disability, or substance abuse, or violence or crime.”





“

When people are homeless, they try to hide their homelessness from their friends, their coworkers, and even their family. At the end of the day, they just have no where to call home.

”

**75.6%**  
more at risk  
persons than  
last year

The average mortgage in Iowa is \$1,136/month, 76.3% of the average income for families at-risk of homelessness.

Employment among homeless persons is down 3.9% from last year but employment among at-risk persons is up 8.2%.

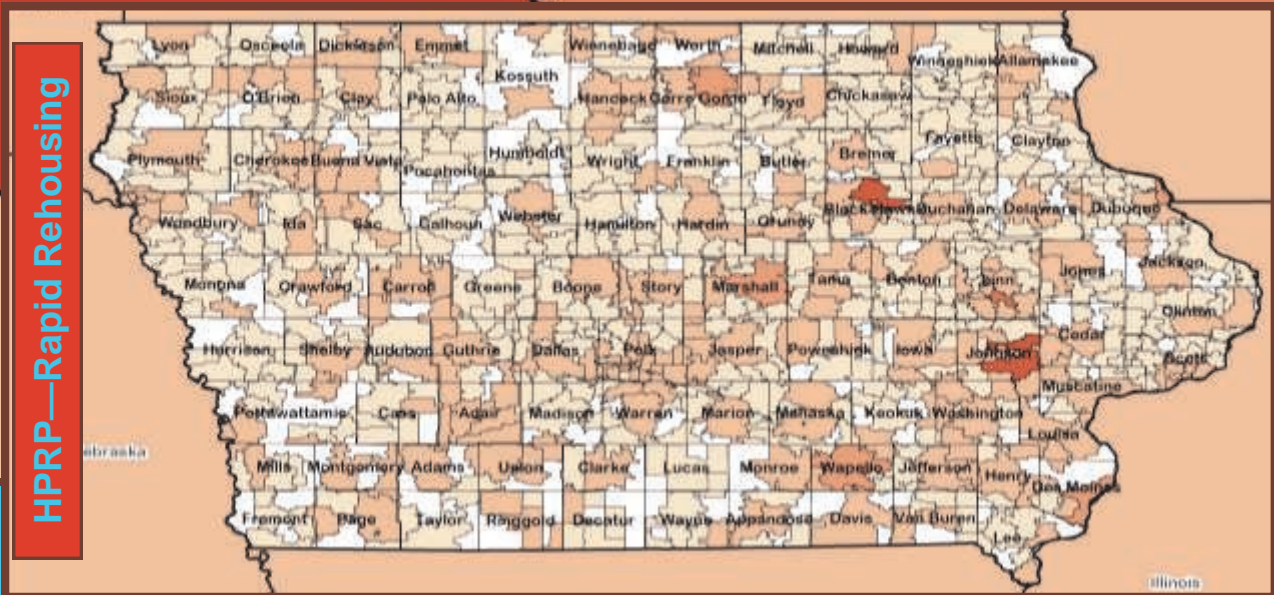
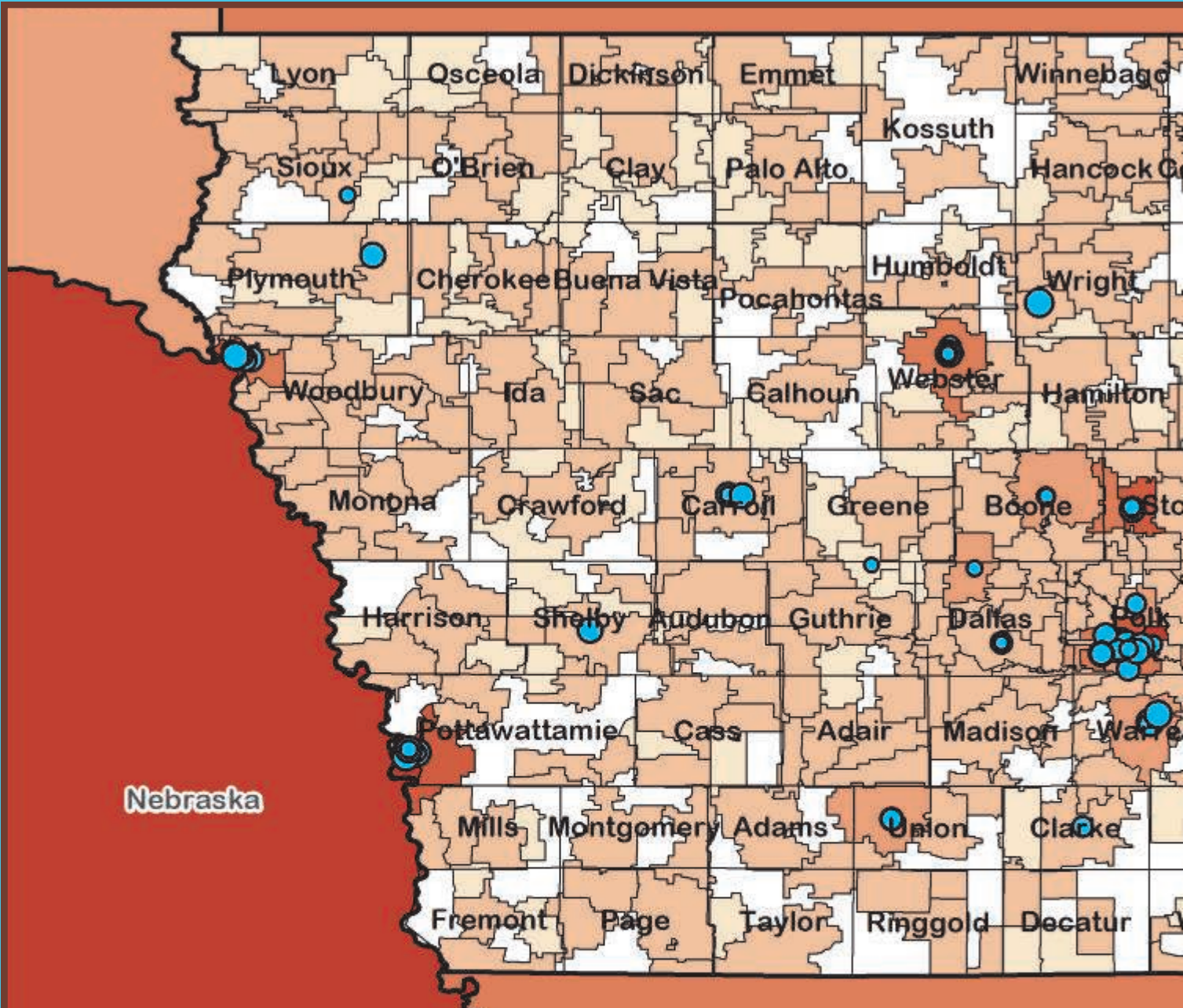
People collecting unemployment and still becoming homeless is up 8.9% from last year. Unemployment benefits are up 12.2% among at-risk populations

## Education

Compared to 2009, persons at-risk of homelessness were 20% more likely to have some college education and 8.8% more likely to have finished high school or a GED.

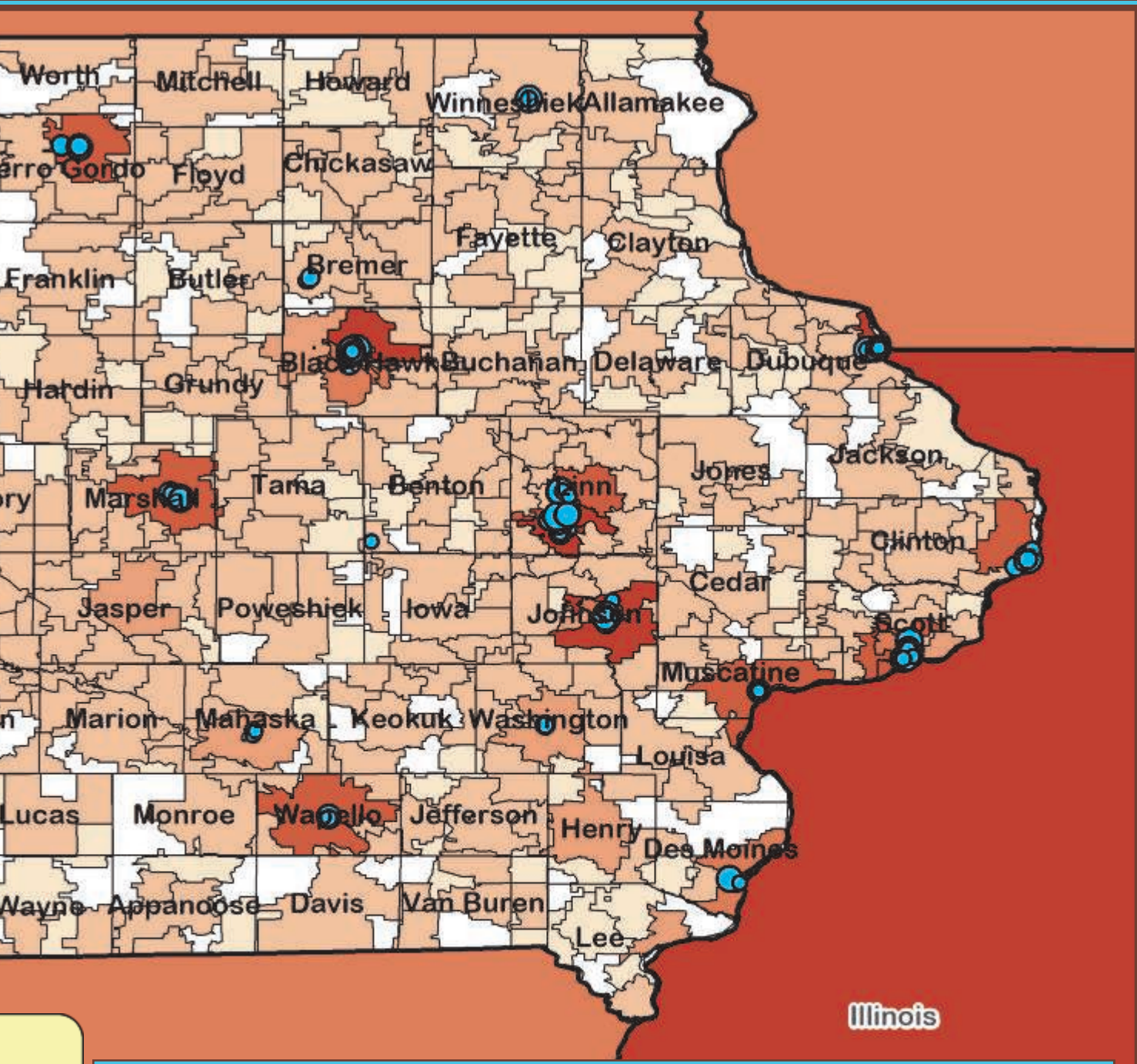


# Last permanent zip code of people experiencing homelessness





# Homelessness and location of homeless service providers



Illinois

0-50  
50-100  
100-200  
200-400  
400-956  
Homeless service provider location (relative to relative count)

People from every Iowa county experienced homelessness in 2010

# HPRP

Homeless Prevention  
and Rapid Rehousing

**14,114 HP clients**  
**3,048 RP clients**

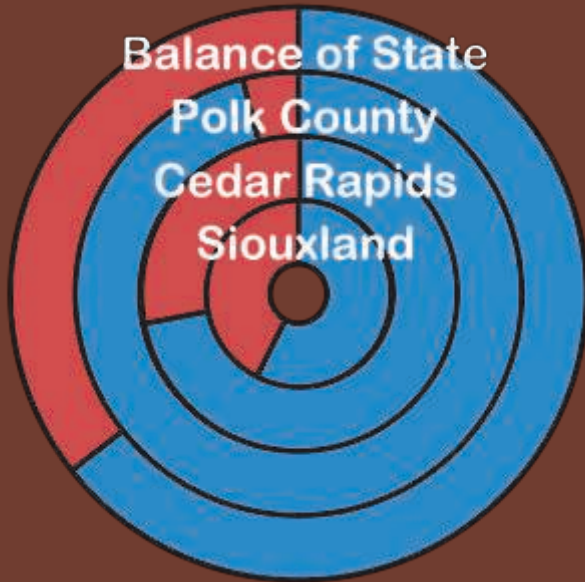
2010 was the first full year of the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP). HPRP is intended for clients who need assistance through the recession, but are generally stable and are not expected to experience long term instability.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds were delivered through regional service agencies to substantially expand programming capacity for those at risk of homelessness but not yet homeless and to immediately re-house persons who have fallen into homelessness. With expanded capacity, a large increase in at-risk populations was recorded.

Accordingly, populations in HPRP are better educated, more likely to be employed and more likely to be from a rural area.

cc Sebastiaan ter Burg

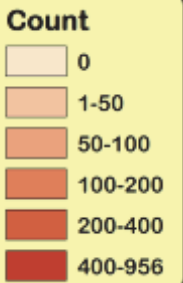
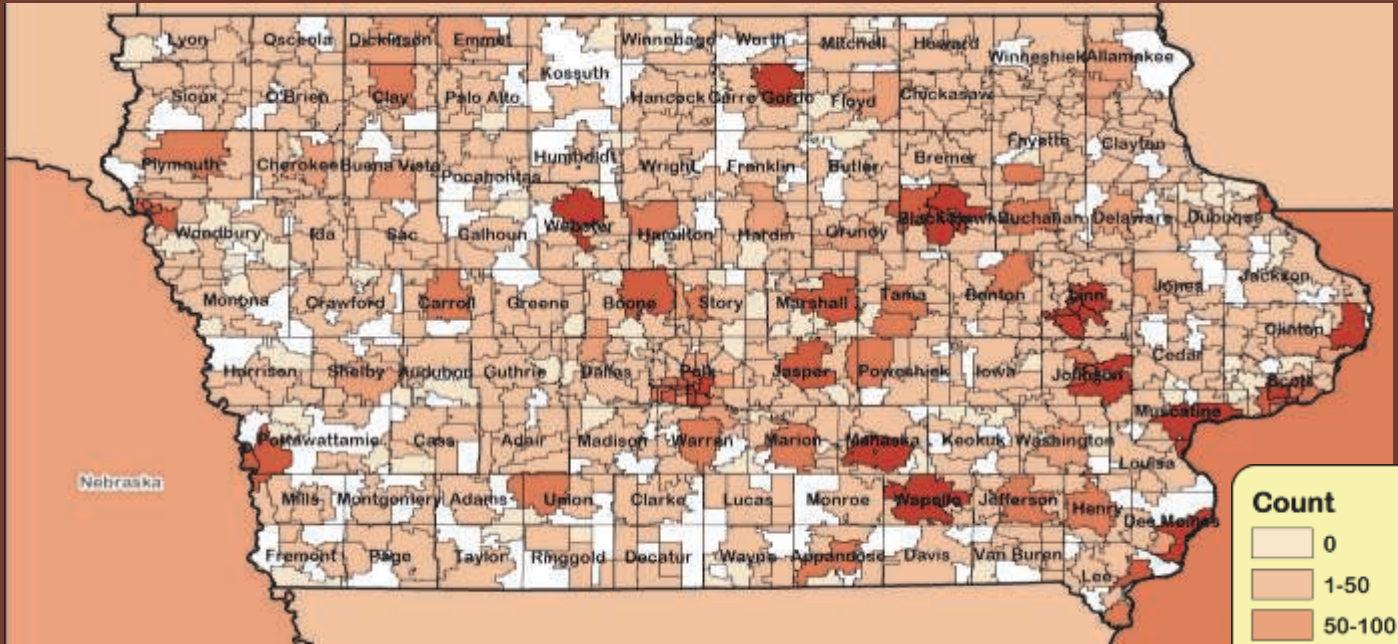




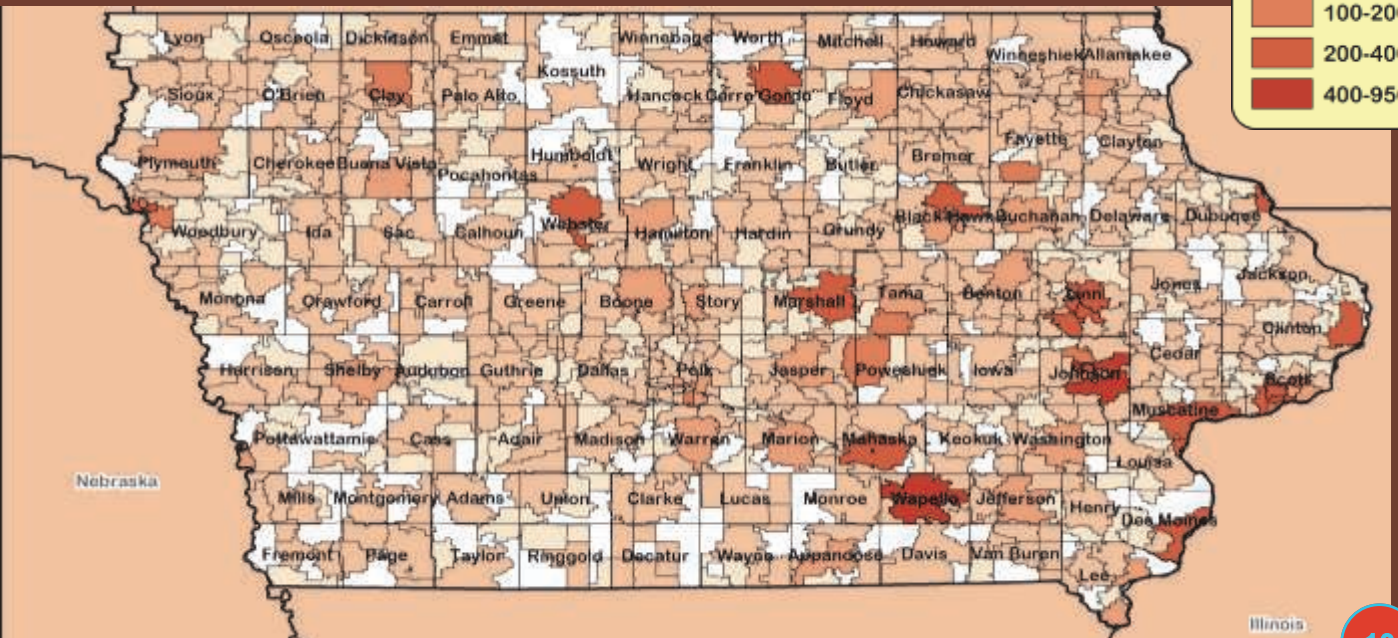
## HPRP as a Portion of Total Clients

- Non HPRP
- HPRP

At Risk



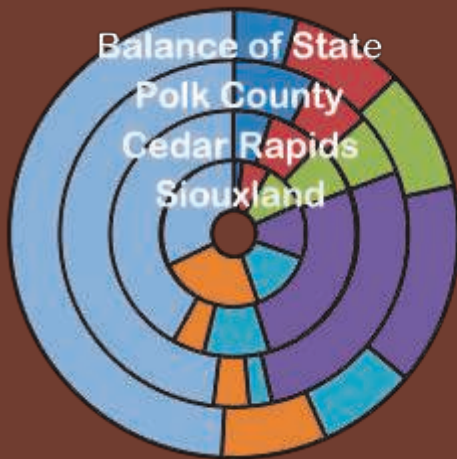
Homeless Prevention



Illinois

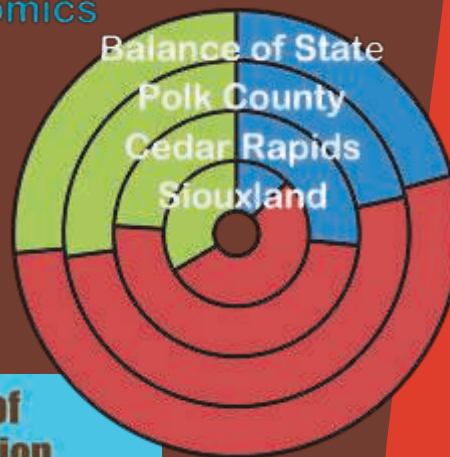


# Descriptives at Entry



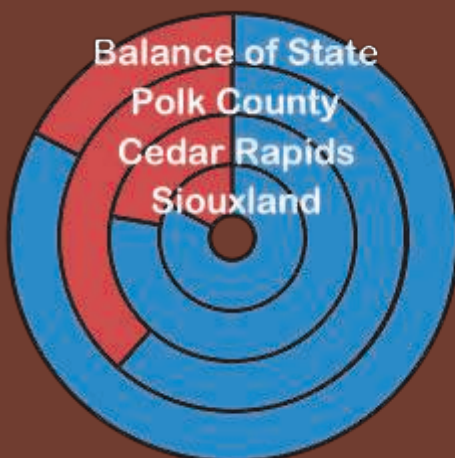
## Cause of Homelessness

- Discharged
- Moved
- Family
- Medical
- Other
- Crime
- Economics



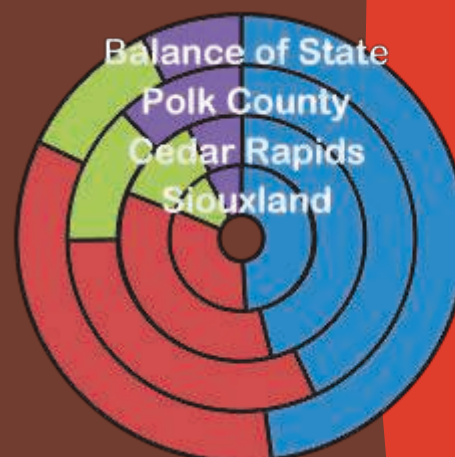
## Education

- Some College or More
- GED or Diploma
- Less Than GED



## Disability of Long Duration

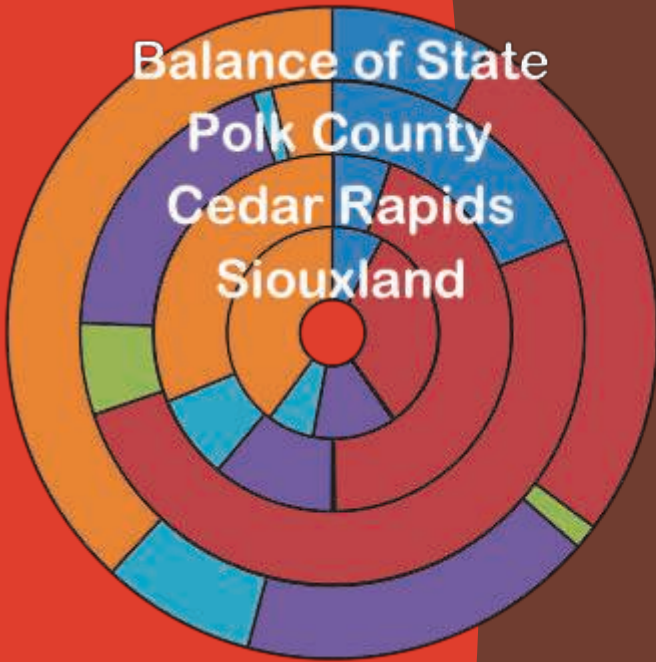
- No Disability
- Some Disability of Long Duration



## Extent of Homelessness

- 1<sup>st</sup> Time
- 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Times
- 4+ Times
- Ongoing: 1 Year or More





### Program Type

- Transitional
- Service Only
- P.S.H.
- Emergency
- Rapid Rehousing
- Homeless Prevention



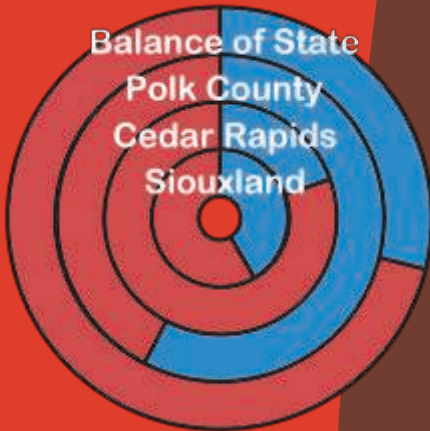
### Family Status as a Portion of Total Clients

- In Families
- Unaccompanied



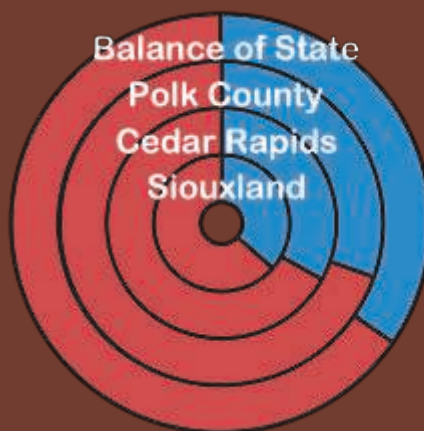
### Place the Night Before Entry

- Other
- Living on the street



### Homelessness Programming Focus

- Homeless
- At-Risk



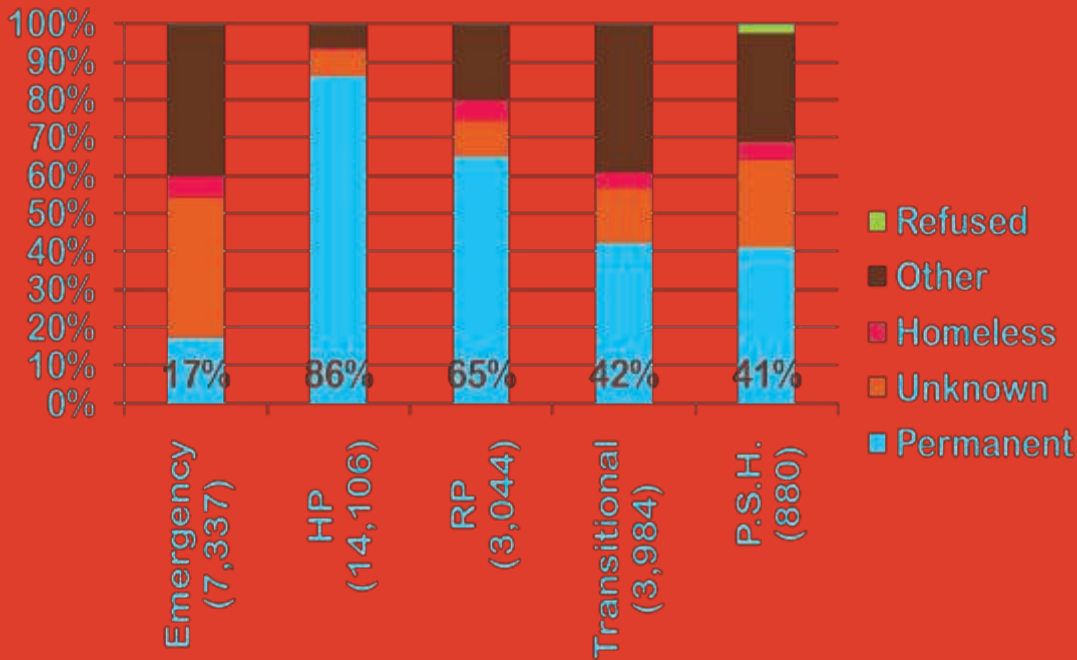
### Employment

- Employed
- Unemployed

# Outcomes

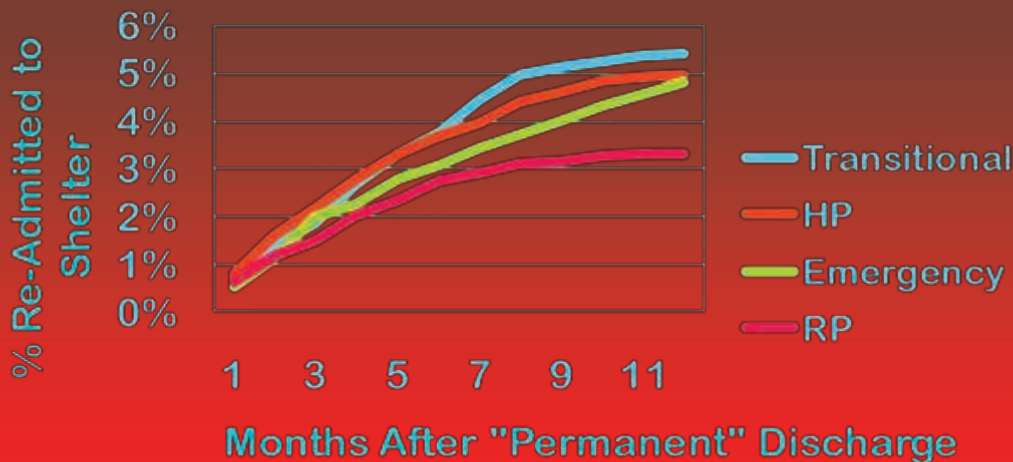
Success is measured as exiting service to a permanent living situation, or if exiting an emergency shelter, a transitional housing program.

## Destination at Exit



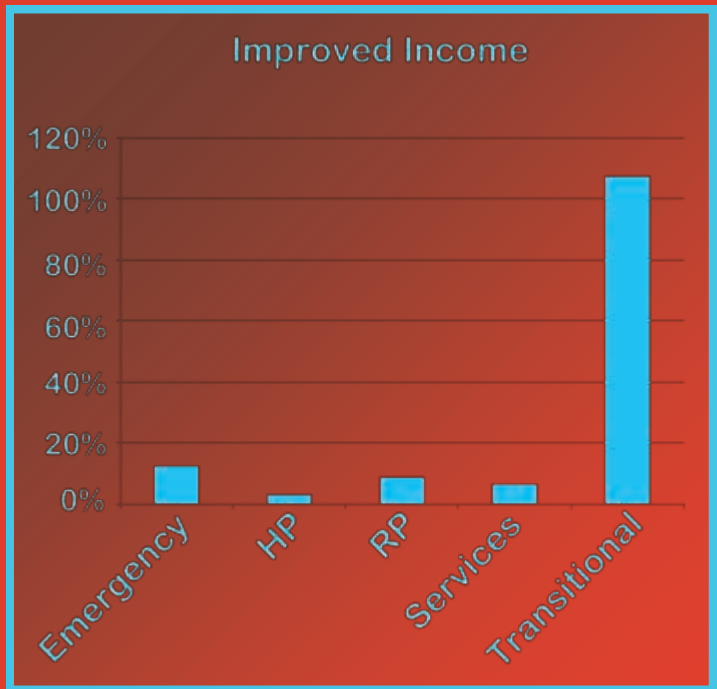
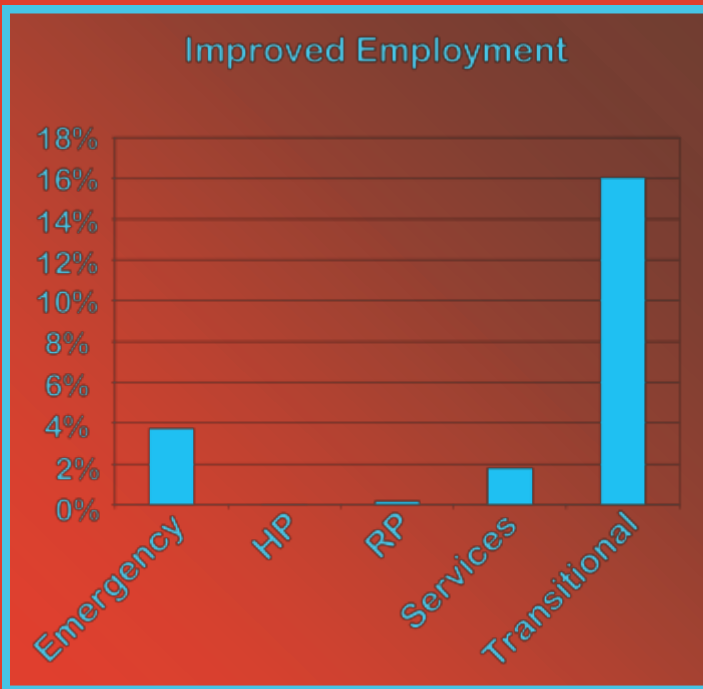
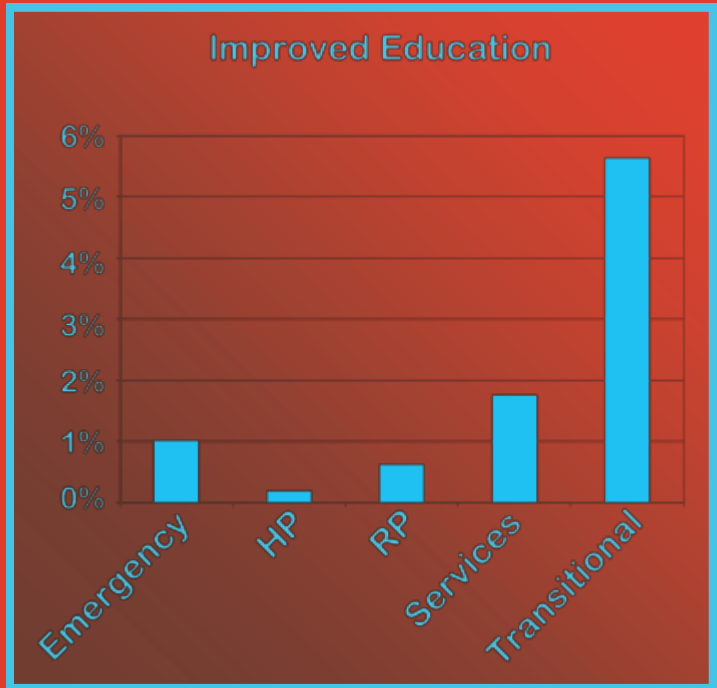
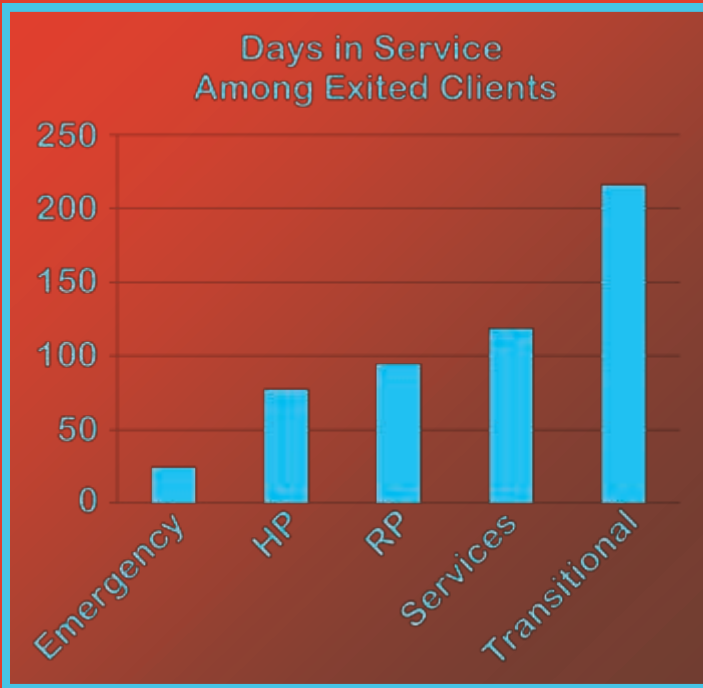
When clients exit to a “permanent” destination, how often do they return to shelter in the next 12 months?

## Cumulative Recidivism





Length of stay in a program is an important metric. Some people need longer stays to establish habits of stability. Others need to move on to a housing solution as quickly as possible.



# Rural Homelessness



**Compared to Urban Homeless, Rural Iowa homeless were...**

**17% more likely to suffer disabilities**

**23% more likely to suffer alcohol addiction**

**Half as likely to have been homeless for a year or longer**

**18% less likely to have college education**

**40% less likely to be a veteran**

**17.49% of Iowa homeless and 34.38% of Iowans at risk of homelessness came from rural zip codes, as their last permanent residence**

**By comparison 39% of Iowans live in Rural settings.**



## Summary Analysis

2010 was the 10th year that the I-Count network collected data statewide on homelessness in Iowa. I-Count is a real-time database that captures information from service providers across the state about Iowa's homeless and near homeless citizens. Changing needs and resource availability change the nature, capacity and emphasis of homeless service programming in Iowa.

The 2010 calendar year saw a great increase in the count of persons in need of assistance to prevent homelessness who were not formally homeless (at-risk) as they sought services. Across the state this number jumped 75.6%, from 20,362 persons in 2009 to 35,757 persons in 2010. This was accompanied by a very slight decline in actual homelessness to 18,210 persons, from 18,325 in 2009. The Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing program (HPRP) is the best explanation for these phenomena.

The HPRP program worked to assist families and individuals facing risk of homelessness, and to house those who had become homeless but were likely to find lasting stability with a brief episode of assistance. HPRP mobilized large amounts of new money, relative to existing funds, and makes longitudinal analysis of homelessness in Iowa challenging.

HPRP has changed the face of homelessness and extreme housing instability in Iowa. The HPRP programs contributed to the increase in the at-risk populations due to additional funding spent to increase system capacity for services, and due to a public awareness campaign. The numbers reflect an increase in need, but also a significant increase in the capacity of the system. By opening new avenues to impoverished Iowans HPRP diverted some population from non-HPRP programs, a trend that contributed to the relatively flat homeless numbers compared to 2009.

Comparing the HPRP population to the non-HPRP population, and the 2009 population to the 2010 population, absolute and relative changes must be kept separate. Most absolute changes are increases, because of the tremendous jump in total population. Relative changes look at the percentage of clients exhibiting specific characteristics within a population. Both are important.

For instance, 2010 saw a 41% increase in the absolute number of at-risk clients with disabilities and an increase of 17.1% among homeless populations, putting tremendous strain on the system. But looking at the relative numbers, 2010 saw a 20.9% decrease in the percentage of at-risk persons with disabilities and a 7.1% decrease in the percentage of homeless persons with disabilities. This shows that new clients are considerably less likely to experience disabilities.

The engagement of regional agencies for the delivery of HPRP dollars saw service provided in rural areas of the state, where previously there were few service providers present. This led to a disproportional increase in at-risk populations coming from rural areas in 2010 as compared to 2009, especially in households.

Patterns of employment changed. At-risk adults were 8.2% more likely to be employed and homeless adults were 3.9% less likely to be employed in 2010. The absolute number of homeless fell but the absolute number of employed homeless was up. Clients with no disability for whom economics is the only cause of instability are more likely to be stable after HPRP services. However, given the incredible growth in clients and slight commensurate decline in homeless, indications are that many clients would not have experienced homelessness.

There is hope that lessons learned from the HPRP experience will lead to improved service delivery for homeless and near homeless Iowans.

**The Iowa Institute for Community Alliances has worked in partnership with service providing agencies for more than 15 years and has been involved in the science of data collection during this period. Please contact our organization if you have any questions regarding this report or the work that we do.**

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A photograph of a woman and two children standing in front of a wooden building. The woman is in the center, smiling and waving. To her left is an older woman wearing a winter hat and glasses, also waving. In the foreground is a young child with a wide, joyful expression. The entire image has a reddish-orange tint and is framed by a dotted line.

# everyone deserves a home

Produced by  
the Iowa Institute  
for Community Alliances