



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

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from the INSTITUTE FOR CHILDREN, POVERTY, AND HOMELESSNESS

Nebraska had an estimated 530 homeless families on a single night in 2009, with providers serving four times their bed capacity over the course of the year.¹ This brief summarizes some of the state's public and private initiatives to assist these families.

State Taskforce on Homelessness

Taskforce: The Nebraska Commission on Housing and Homelessness (established by executive order in 1998) leads statewide efforts to end homelessness.

Governor's Appointee: Ardith Hoins, Director of Family and Community Services at the Blue Valley Community Action Partnership, has chaired the Nebraska Commission on Housing and Homelessness since 2010.



Demographic Summary and Overview of Regional Organization

	Nebraska ²	Douglas County ³	Lincoln
Persons in homeless families ⁴	1,646	304	521
Number of family shelter beds ⁵	1,641	558	507
Persons in homeless families (per 10,000 population in families) ⁶	24	11	57
Percent of families in poverty ⁷	12.02%	12.09%	10.83%
10-Year plan date approved or implemented	2004	2008	No plan
10-Year plan target population	Chronic	All	No plan
Point-in-time count frequency	Locally managed	Biannually	Biannually
Point-in-time count managing agency	Locally managed	Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless	Lincoln Homeless Coalition
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) managing agency	Nebraska Management Information System	Iowa Institute for Community Alliances	University of Nebraska-Lincoln Center for Children, Families, and the Law
Continuum of Care (CoC) lead applicant or main organizing agency	Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services	Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless	City of Lincoln Urban Development Department

Funding Homelessness Programs in Nebraska

The Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program (NHAP) administers Nebraska Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund (HSATF) and Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) dollars to non-profit subgrantees that provide emergency shelter, transitional housing, or supportive services to homeless individuals and families. HSATF provides the state's matching funds for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's ESG and also awards additional funds for homelessness services. Established in 1992 by the Nebraska Legislature, HSATF receives \$0.25 per \$1,000 of real estate sales as part of Nebraska's Documentary Stamp Tax, a total of over \$800,000 annually.⁸ In the 2009–10 grant year, NHAP administered \$766,918 in ESG funds and \$2,479,266 in HSATF funds to 66 programs. Of the \$3,246,184 total disbursed funds, \$661,635 subsidized rent or utility bills and \$2,584,549 financed case management.⁹

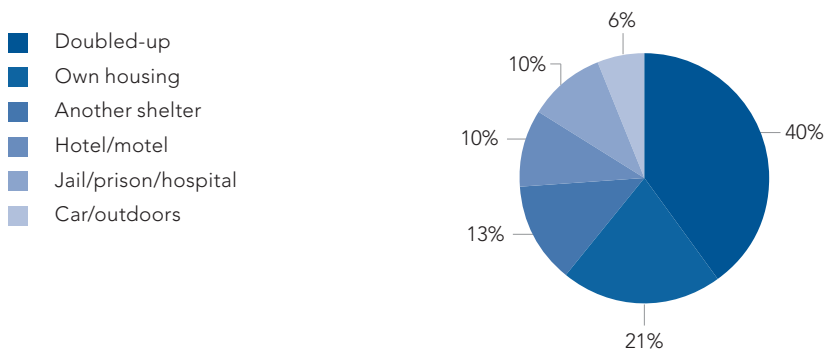
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The *National Survey of Programs and Services for Homeless Families* is an online resource for service providers, advocates, researchers, and public policy makers working in the field of family homelessness. The Web site provides a state-by-state snapshot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

Analyzing the Efficacy of Prevention Efforts in Omaha

Prompted by increased need for prevention services and the availability of federal Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP) funds, the Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless (MACCH) conducted a study in September 2010 on the efficacy of prevention programs in the greater Omaha region. MACCH found a disconnect between the program requirements of existing cash assistance providers and the needs of households at risk of homelessness. Of the \$17,791,510 available to the region in 2009, \$11,201,154 was restricted to utilities assistance and \$6,590,356 could be allocated for either utilities or rent. Most of the funds were available at a typical cap of \$350 only once a year per client with a proof of lease and an ability to pay subsequent bills. These eligibility restrictions exclude persons who are unemployed, without significant benefits, or living doubled up. Only 21.2% of homeless persons enter shelter from their own home and 68.3% report lack of income as one of their two greatest barriers to housing. MACCH recommended creating a single point-of-entry for prevention services, dedicating more funds for long-term rental assistance, and removing restrictive program requirements to improve the existing cash assistance and prevention system.¹⁰

Living Situation Prior to Shelter Entry in Omaha



Source: Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless, *Meeting the Effectiveness Challenge: Improving Homelessness Prevention in the Metro Area*, September 2010.

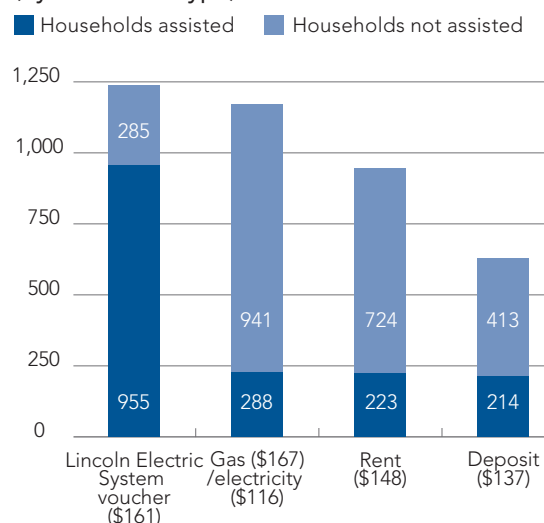
Developing Prevention Strategies in Lincoln

In September 2009, the City of Lincoln adopted a plan for using HPRP funds. In addition to preventing homelessness and rapidly re-housing homeless individuals and families, the plan's goals are to stabilize clients' housing situations and improve the city's service delivery model. During the three-year grant period, Lincoln will use city and state allocations to spend \$589,244 on housing relocation and stabilization services and disburse \$774,859 in cash assistance.

To develop its HPRP plan, Lincoln analyzed needs gaps in both housing and services. In its housing assessment, the city determined a shortage of 169 emergency shelter beds and 437 permanent supportive housing beds.¹¹ Lincoln also found an affordable housing gap of 5,512 units for extremely low-income households. Nearly three-quarters (74.3%) of all renter households with incomes less than 30% of the median family income were cost-overburdened (used more than 30% of their total income toward housing costs).¹² To evaluate service delivery, the city examined data for the Lincoln Action Program's Housing and Resource Counseling Program, which provides utility and rent assistance. Lincoln found that 11.5% (486) of 4,209 applications were submitted by homeless households. Despite fewer requests, homeless applications were approved at a similar rate to non-homeless applications, at 38.7% and 41.3%, respectively.¹³

Household Applications for Cash Assistance in Lincoln

(by status and type)



Source: HPRP Advisory Committee, *The HPRP Plan for Lincoln, Nebraska*, 2009. The Lincoln Electric System provides vouchers for clients who experience difficulty paying their electric bills. The gas/electricity category includes assistance funded by other sources. Numbers in parentheses represent the average amount of cash assistance disbursed per household.

Endnotes

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *HUD's 2009 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Homeless Populations and Subpopulations*; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *AHAR Exchange Public Reports: 2009 Comprehensive Report of Sheltered Homeless Persons*.
- Statistics for Nebraska exclude Dakota County, Nebraska and include Pottawattamie County, Iowa.
- Statistics for Douglas County include Sarpy County, Nebraska and Pottawattamie County, Iowa.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *2009 Homeless Populations and Subpopulations*.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *HUD's 2009 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Housing Inventory Chart Report*.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *2009 Homeless Populations and Subpopulations*; U.S. Census Bureau, *2006–2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates*.
- U.S. Census Bureau, *2006–2008 American Community Survey*.
- Nebraska Department of Economic Development, "Homeless," <http://www.neded.org/content/view/457/676>
- State of Nebraska Department of Economic Development, *Proposed 2009 Annual Performance Evaluation Report for the Nebraska Housing and Community Development Programs Consolidated Plan*.
- Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless, *Meeting the Effectiveness Challenge: Improving Homelessness Prevention in the Metro Area*, September 2010.
- HPRP Advisory Committee, *The HPRP Plan for Lincoln, Nebraska*, 2009.
- City of Lincoln Urban Development Department, *Affordable Housing Needs Analysis*, 2005.
- HPRP Advisory Committee, *The HPRP Plan for Lincoln, Nebraska*, 2009.