

Food & Shelter

Food and shelter are fundamental human needs. Insecurity in either takes a toll on an individual's ability to seek and maintain employment, pursue education or contribute to the community. The costs associated with housing have grown by more than 25% in the last nine years without comparable growth in household income – particularly for the less-educated, low-wage workers and their families.

- The flood has magnified the shortage of affordable housing; **Over 40% of renters in Linn County spend more than 30% of their income on housing.**

	Total Number of Housing Units	Median Monthly Housing Costs	Spend 30% or More of Income on Housing
Owners with Mortgages	43,561	\$1,221	19%
Owners without Mortgages	18,465	\$426	13%
Renters	21,900	\$624	41%

- In 2009, Linn County Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing Programs served more than **5,500 homeless persons**.
 - ⊖ 82% of the families served were women with dependent children.
 - ⊖ The number of shelter nights has **grown 37%** since FY06.
- Food pantry usage has increased over 15% in the last year.

Families in low wage jobs struggle to afford housing, food and other basic needs. The economic crisis, the floods and the rising cost of essential items strain family resources. The results are housing instability, poor nutrition, stress and poor health. Research demonstrates that children of low-income families often fare worse in terms of health and education outcomes.

Sources:

U.S. Census Bureau: 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Linn County Community Services. FY10 LINN COUNTY HOMELESS DATA SUMMARY REPORT, 2010.