Poverty and Food Needs: Benton County, Iowa

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Poverty and food insecurity impact the welfare of individuals, families, and communities. This profile describes several indicators of poverty and food insecurity and related measures of general economic well-being in Benton County, Iowa.

Poverty

People living in poverty have annual incomes insufficient to meet their basic needs. The Federal government determines the poverty status of individuals and families using money income thresholds that vary by family size. The thresholds are based on three times the cost of the official USDA Low-Cost Food Plan that includes a nutritious diet of meals and snacks prepared at home. See Page 15 for current Federal poverty guidelines.

The incidence of poverty varies among individuals and families with different socio-economic characteristics. Table 1 (following page) displays poverty rates by age, race and ethnicity, work experience, and family type in Benton County and the state. The data describe average poverty characteristics during a five-year survey measurement period.

For each poverty measure, Table 1 includes a point estimate and a margin of error (MOE) value associated with that estimate. Adding and subtracting the margin of error to the point estimate yields a confidence interval that is 90% likely to contain the actual number or percentage of individuals or families in poverty.

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 1. Poverty Status of Individuals and Families, 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poverty Status of Individuals</th>
<th>Benton County Estimates</th>
<th>Statewide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>MOE (+/-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population in poverty</td>
<td>2,218</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals in Poverty by Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 years</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 65 and up</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 75 and older</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals in Poverty by Race and Hispanic Origin</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White alone</td>
<td>2,104</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other race alone or in combination</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino, any race</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals in Poverty by Work Status in the Past 12 Months</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All persons ages 16 years and older</td>
<td>1,416</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked full-time, year-round</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked part-time or part-year</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not work</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Families at Selected Ratios of Income to Poverty Level

**Income at or below 100% of the poverty threshold:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>MOE (+/-)</th>
<th>% Rate</th>
<th>MOE (+/-)</th>
<th>% Rate</th>
<th>MOE (+/-)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All families</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With related children under 18 years</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married couple family</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent or guardian, no spouse present</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female parent or guardian</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Income under 130% of threshold:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>MOE (+/-)</th>
<th>% Rate</th>
<th>MOE (+/-)</th>
<th>% Rate</th>
<th>MOE (+/-)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All families</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With related children under 18 years</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married couple family</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent or guardian, no spouse present</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female parent or guardian</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Income under 185% of threshold:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>MOE (+/-)</th>
<th>% Rate</th>
<th>MOE (+/-)</th>
<th>% Rate</th>
<th>MOE (+/-)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All families</td>
<td>1,148</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With related children under 18 years</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married couple family</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent or guardian, no spouse present</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female parent or guardian</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A red flag indicates county values that may be unreliable due to small sample size.

**MOE** Add or subtract the MOE (margin of error) to obtain a 90% confidence interval for the estimated number or rate.

Sources this page: American Community Survey Tables S1701, S1702, B17001, B17010, and B17022, U.S. Census Bureau.
Food Insecurity

In food insecure households, access to food is limited by a lack of money or other resources. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines two levels of food insecurity for households: low food secure and very low food secure.

Low food secure households have difficulty at some time during the year providing enough food for all their members. In very low food secure households, the food intake of some household members is reduced and normal eating patterns are disrupted at times during the year due to limited resources. The chart at right illustrates USDA estimates of the incidence of very low food security and low to very low food security among Iowa households compared to the United States.

County-Level Estimates of Food Insecurity

While the Federal government does not publish county-level data on food insecurity, some hunger-related interest groups produce their own sub-state estimates. The estimates in Table 2 showing the incidence of food insecurity among individuals and children in Benton County were produced by the hunger-relief charity Feeding America.

Individuals with income below 185% of the poverty threshold may be eligible for certain food and family assistance programs (see Pages 9-11). Table 2 includes estimates by household income level for individuals and children to help gauge the size of the food-insecure population who may not be eligible for federal assistance.

Table 2. Estimated Number and Percentage of Individuals Living in Food Insecure Households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benton County</th>
<th>Statewide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals who are food insecure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of persons</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>389,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total population</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number with incomes &lt;= 185% of poverty</td>
<td>1,595</td>
<td>235,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total population</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number with incomes &gt; 185% of poverty</td>
<td>1,305</td>
<td>153,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total population</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Children <18 years of age who are food insecure** |               |           |
| Number of children   | 1,220         | 139,850   |
| % of all children     | 18.7%         | 19.3%     |
| Number who are likely income-ineligible for federal nutrition assistance | 720           | 82,512    |
| % of all children     | 11.0%         | 11.4%     |

Access to Food Stores

Number and Types of Food Stores

Many types of stores sell food for consumption at home. At right are the number and types of retail food establishments located in Benton County.

Some small stores, such as those with no paid employees other than the owner(s), may be excluded from the establishment counts.

Distance to Grocery Stores

Access to healthy food may be limited in towns or neighborhoods without a grocery store, especially in areas where public transportation is unavailable. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) measures access using distance to the nearest supermarket, superstore, or other grocery store selling all major categories of food. Households more than one mile from a grocery store in urban areas and 10 miles in rural areas are considered to have low access.*

Table 3 shows USDA estimates of the number and percentage of individuals, children, seniors, low-income individuals (income at or below 200 percent of the Federal poverty threshold), and certain households with low access.

Table 3. Estimated Number of Individuals and Households With Low Access to Grocery Stores, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Benton County</th>
<th>Statewide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals with low access to grocery stores</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of persons</td>
<td>3,824</td>
<td>598,387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 years of age</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>144,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 65 years and older</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>91,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of total population</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of population under 18 years</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of population 65 years and older</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low income individuals with low access to grocery stores</strong></td>
<td>786</td>
<td>178,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of persons</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>178,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total population</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Households with no vehicle and low access to grocery stores</strong></td>
<td>203</td>
<td>21,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of households</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>21,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total households</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*USDA estimates exclude grocery stores with sales below $2 million per year.

Nutrition

Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

A healthy diet includes fresh fruits, vegetables, and other produce, many of which are available fresh in season from local farmers’ markets and farmstands. The Iowa’s Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) promotes access to fresh fruits and vegetables by children, pregnant women, and seniors. Eligible participants may use FMNP checks to purchase fresh produce at authorized farmers’ markets and farmstands. The map at right shows the locations of authorized farmers’ markets and farmstands near Benton County as of 2015.

A comparatively small amount of Iowa’s cropland acres are devoted to fruit and vegetable production. Farm operators in Benton County reported a total of 175 crop acres used for vegetable, fruit, or tree nut production in 2012. That averages out to just 6.8 acres per 1,000 residents in the county, compared to averages of 3.7 acres for Iowa and 31.8 acres for the United States.

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

Fewer than three out of four of Iowa adults consume fruits and vegetables at least one time per day. Adults with lower educational attainment and lower income are even less likely to consume fruits and vegetables on a regular basis, as illustrated below. Estimated rates for Iowa adults are shown using 95 percent confidence intervals.

Percentage of Iowa Adults Who Consume Fruits and Vegetables LESS than Once Daily, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruits less than once daily Adults 18+ years of age</th>
<th>Vegetables less than once daily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By education:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than H.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. or G.E.D.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some post-H.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By household income:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $15,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000-24,999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000-34,999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000-49,999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 65 or older</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources this page: Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (for locations of FMNP-authorized markets); ISU Estimates based on 2012 Census of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture (for fruit and vegetable production acres); and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health. BRFSS Prevalence & Trends Data [online]. [accessed February 2016]. URL: http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence (for fruit and vegetable consumption rates).
Nutrition in Schools

Schools provide an important source of nutrition education and guidance for children and adolescents. Surveys of school principals by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reveal variation in nutrition policies, practices, and education in the nation’s secondary schools. Table 4 includes several nutrition-related indicators for Iowa’s secondary schools. The reported values reflect the estimated percentage of secondary schools that meet each indicator. The median percentage values for all states are included for comparison.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allowed snack foods or beverages available for sale from vending machines, school store, canteen, or snack bars:</th>
<th>All States</th>
<th>Iowa Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Median %</td>
<td>% Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less healthy foods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chocolate candy</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>7.0 ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other candy</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>10.8 ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salty snacks</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>8.7 ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookies or other baked goods</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>14.2 ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soda pop or fruit drinks</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>14.3 ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports drinks</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>48.1 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not sell any of the 6 items listed above</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>45.8 ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthier foods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonfat or 1% low-fat milk (plain)</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>37.1 ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% fruit or vegetable juice</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>50.8 ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits (not juice)</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>26.6 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables (not juice, not fried)</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>16.0 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always or almost always offered fruits or non-fried vegetables at school celebrations</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>20.7 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placed fruits or vegetables near the cafeteria cashier, where they are easy to access</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>68.2 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used attractive displays for fruits and vegetables in the cafeteria</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>59.2 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offered a self-serve salad bar to students</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>66.6 ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labeled healthful foods with appealing names</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>28.6 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibited sale of less nutritious foods and beverages for fundraising purposes</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>23.8 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priced nutritious foods and beverages at a lower cost while increasing price of less nutritious foods and beverages</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>12.6 ✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

✓ Better than half of all states
X Needs work

Chronic Health Conditions in Iowa and the U.S.

Nutrition is an important factor in the incidence and management of many chronic health conditions. The prevalence of selected health conditions in Iowa and the U.S. is compared at right. Age-adjusted rates are displayed with 95 percent confidence intervals.

Overweight and obese are defined using Body Mass Index, a ratio of weight divided by height. Being overweight (BMI = 25.0-29.9) or obese (BMI >=30.0) increases the risk for heart disease, stroke, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, osteoarthritis, and certain cancers.

High cholesterol: High fat intake, diabetes, and obesity have been associated with elevated levels of serum cholesterol. High cholesterol may increase risk for coronary heart disease and stroke.

High blood pressure: High sodium intake, insufficient potassium intake, and excessive weight may affect blood pressure. High blood pressure may raise the risk for coronary heart disease and stroke.

Diabetes: Diet is an important factor in the management of diabetes and the risk of developing Type II diabetes. Diabetes can increase risk of blindness, kidney failure, heart disease, stroke, and other circulatory problems.

Cardiovascular disease: Poor nutrition is a modifiable risk factor for cardiovascular disease, which is the leading cause of death in the U.S. Coronary heart disease and stroke are two of many types of cardiovascular disease.

Notes: With the exception of mortality from cardiovascular disease, the rates shown are based on the self-reported percentage of adults ever told by a doctor that they have these conditions. Diabetes and high blood pressure rates exclude women diagnosed during pregnancy. U.S. rates reflect median values for all states. Mortality rates are based on vital records for 2010, all other rates derive from Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data for 2013.

Source this page: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health. Chronic Disease Indicators [online]. [accessed January 2016]. URL: http://www.cdc.gov/CDI/.
Health Status, continued

Socio-economic Factors

The risk for some nutrition-related health conditions varies by race and ethnicity. Following are recent statistics showing the national incidence of selected conditions among non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, and Hispanic/Latino adults.

Risk profiles for these chronic health conditions also vary by income and educational attainment. Socioeconomic groups with higher incidence of poverty also tend to face higher risk for nutrition-related health problems. Incidence rates for U.S. adults in poverty are compared to overall rates below.

Food and Family Assistance Programs

Program Participation Levels and Trends

Food and family assistance programs available to Iowa households and families include the Food Assistance Program, referred to at the Federal level as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Family Investment Program (FIP); the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); and Free and Reduced School Meals Program. Recent county and statewide participation levels in these programs are illustrated in Table 5 below and charts on the following page. Data sources are described on the following page.

### Table 5. Participation Levels, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Benton County</th>
<th>Statewide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Assistance Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of recipients</td>
<td>2,162</td>
<td>387,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment per recipient ($)</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants per 1,000 population</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>124.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar year 2015</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>130.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latest 3-year average</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>130.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Investment Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of recipients</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>27,022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment per recipient ($)</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants per 1,000 population</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar year 2015</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latest 3-year average</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WIC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unduplicated Annual Participation*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants and Children</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>76,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>32,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants per 1,000 population</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal fiscal year 2015</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latest 3-year average</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Free or Reduced School Lunch</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of eligible students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free lunch</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>166,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced-price lunch</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>34,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible percentage of enrollment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latest 3-year average</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Unduplicated counts of persons issued food benefits during the federal fiscal year, with each participant counted only once each year.
SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, and CHILDREN (WIC)

USDA provides federal grants to states to provide supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for individuals at nutritional risk. To be eligible for WIC in Iowa, individuals must live in the state and be included in one of the eligible participant categories: pregnant, breast-feeding (up to one year), postpartum (up to six months), or infants or children up to the age of five. Eligible participants must be in households that have income at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level. They also must have a medical or nutrition need as determined at the certification appointment. For more information, go to http://www.idph.iowa.gov/wic.

SCHOOL MEALS

The National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program provide reimbursement to schools for nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free meals to children. State law requires all public schools to offer the National School Lunch Program to all students in school for 4 hours or more each day. Iowa schools are not required to offer School Breakfast, although many do. Children in households with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free lunches and breakfasts. Children in households with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price lunches and breakfasts, for which no more than 40 cents may be charged. The Iowa Department of Education provides data on school enrollment and the number of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. For more information visit: https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/nutrition-programs/national-school-lunch-program.

Data Sources: Food Assistance Program and Family Investment Program data were obtained from the Iowa Department of Human Services and compiled by the State Data Center of Iowa. Unless otherwise noted, Food Assistance and FIP program data reflect calendar year averages. WIC program data were provided courtesy of the Iowa Department of Public Health and reflect federal fiscal year averages. Free/Reduced School Meals data were obtained from the Iowa Department of Education and reflect academic year averages (e.g. 2015 describes the 2015-2016 school year).
SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was established to ensure that low-income children and teens aged 18 and under continue to receive nutritious meals and snacks when school is not in session. The SFSP operates during school vacations, primarily May through August. Free meals that meet Federal nutrition standards are provided to all children at approved SFSP sites located in areas with significant concentrations of low-income children. Sites may be located in schools, churches, community centers, parks, libraries, swimming pools, medical clinics, farmers markets and more. USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service administers the program at the national and regional level. The program is administered at the state level by the Iowa Department of Education. Sponsoring organizations receive Federal reimbursement to cover the administrative and operating costs of preparing and serving the meals and snacks provided. A sponsoring organization may be a public or private nonprofit school; a public or private non-profit college or university, a public or private non-profit residential summer camp; a unit of local, county, municipal, State, or Federal government; or any other type of private non-profit organization. For more information visit: https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/nutrition-programs-0. Average daily participation totals for all sites within the county are shown at right, expressed as a percentage of the number of students in the county who were eligible for free/reduced school meals during the 2015-2016 academic year.

NUTRITION SERVICES TO SENIORS

The Iowa Department on Aging administers nutrition programs and services through a network of area agencies. The programs are available to individuals 60 years of age and older, with preference given to those at risk for institutionalization or with the greatest economic or social need, such as low-income minority; limited English proficiency; or rural residents. Available services include congregate meals and home-delivered meals. Eligible participants for congregate meals are 60 years of age or older, spouses of eligible individuals, volunteers who assist during meal hours, and individuals with a handicap or disability who meet specific criteria. Home-delivered meals are available to people age 60 or older who are homebound due to illness or disability or who are otherwise isolated. Recent trends in state-level participation in both programs are illustrated at right, with the annual number of registered consumers expressed as a percentage of the statewide population aged 60 years or older.

Data Sources: Summer Food Program participation data were provided by the Iowa Department of Education. Senior Nutrition Program participation data were obtained from the Iowa Department on Aging and Area Agencies on Aging, Iowa Aging Services Consumer Counts by Fiscal Year, Age Group, and Service, via the Iowa Open Data Portal [online]. [accessed February, 2016]. URL https://data.iowa.gov/.
Local Income Characteristics

Household Income
Median household and family income values and median worker earnings are shown in Table 6. Household income describes the annual, pre-tax income from all sources (earnings, Social Security, public assistance, etc.) for all members in a household. Earnings include wages, salaries, and net self-employment income. Values are shown using 90 percent confidence intervals.

Personal Income by Source
Total personal income is the income received by all persons from all sources. Its major components include the earnings of workers and incomes of proprietors; rental, dividend, and interest income from investments; and government and other transfer payments. The chart below illustrates Benton County’s average per capita income in dollars and the average percentage contributed by each major source.

Transfer payments, which include Social Security, Medicare, income maintenance and other assistance programs, are an important source of local personal income. The fraction of local income derived from government assistance programs provides a relative measure of need. Table 7 shows detailed flows of income maintenance and other transfer payments into Benton County compared to statewide per capita averages.

Table 6. Income Statistics, 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Benton County</th>
<th>State of Iowa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Incomes ($)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All households</td>
<td>56,257 - 62,115</td>
<td>52,445 - 52,987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>70,074 - 75,930</td>
<td>66,427 - 67,231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-family households</td>
<td>27,238 - 32,622</td>
<td>29,639 - 30,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Earnings of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers ($)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>48,426 - 51,748</td>
<td>46,152 - 46,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>34,498 - 37,790</td>
<td>35,684 - 36,104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Transfer Payments Per Capita (2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Benton County</th>
<th>Statewide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retirement and Disability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security (OASDI)....................</td>
<td>$3,059</td>
<td>$2,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-OASDI disability and related..........</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicare</td>
<td>1,789</td>
<td>1,734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid and related</td>
<td>1,162</td>
<td>1,363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military medical</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Maintenance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental Security Income (SSI).......</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned Income Tax Credit</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNAP (Food Assistance)</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income maintenance*</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Transfers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans benefits</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment insurance</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training assistance</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), energy assistance, foster care and adoption assistance, WIC payments, and general state and local assistance to low-income individuals and families.

Sources this page: American Community Survey Table DP-03, U.S. Census Bureau (for household income and earnings); and Local Area Personal Income and Employment Tables CA1-3, CA04, and CA35, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (for personal income and transfers by source).
Measures of Household Economic Stress

Due to the many competing demands on household budgets, the risk for poverty and food insecurity may increase during periods of economic stress caused by job loss, illness or injury, and other changes in household conditions.

Unemployment
The loss of wages and other benefits due to unemployment may contribute to individual and family economic stress. The chart at right shows recent average, annual unemployment rates in the county and state. The unemployment rate measures the percentage of the civilian labor force that is unemployed. The labor force consists of all persons aged 16 or older who either are currently employed or actively seeking work.

Health Insurance
The cost of obtaining health care services may require families, especially those lacking health insurance coverage, to make trade-offs between health care and food. Table 8 shows the estimated number and percentage of individuals without health insurance. The displayed ranges reflect 90% confidence intervals for each measure.

Housing Costs
Housing costs typically represent a large fraction of a family’s budget, and may constrain the amount of income available for purchasing food. Table 9 shows the estimated median value for homes and median gross rent for housing units in the county and state. Also shown are estimated percentages of households whose housing costs exceed 30 percent of their monthly income. The displayed ranges reflect 90% confidence intervals for each measure.

Sources this page: Local Area Unemployment Statistics (for unemployment rates), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau (for health insurance coverage); and American Community Survey Table DP-04, U.S. Census Bureau (for housing costs).
## Population Profile

### Age Distribution by Race and Ethnicity

Recent U.S. Census Bureau population estimates by age, race, and Hispanic origin for Benton County are shown in Table 10 below. The Census Bureau defines Hispanic as an ethnicity, not a race. Individuals of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

**Table 10. Population Estimates, 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Under 20</th>
<th>20 to 44</th>
<th>45 to 64</th>
<th>65 years</th>
<th>All Ages</th>
<th>Benton</th>
<th>Statewide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>6,704</td>
<td>7,048</td>
<td>7,586</td>
<td>4,342</td>
<td>25,680</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White alone</td>
<td>6,456</td>
<td>6,864</td>
<td>7,506</td>
<td>4,315</td>
<td>25,141</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>92.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black alone</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native alone</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian alone</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other race or combination</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic (of any race)</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Educational Attainment and English Language Ability

Individuals with lower educational attainment may have limited employment and earnings opportunities that contribute to household economic stress. Table 11 displays the percentage of the adult population by their highest degree attained. Educational attainment is reported for the adult aged population after their education is largely complete (25 years of age or older). Values are displayed using 90% confidence intervals.

Language barriers may hinder programming and other local efforts to assist area families and individuals in need. Table 10 below shows the number and percentage of individuals ages 5 years and older who report speaking English less than "very well."

**Table 11. Education and English Language Ability, 2010-2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adults by Highest Degree Attained</th>
<th>Benton County</th>
<th>State of Iowa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Less than 9th grade</td>
<td>1.5% - 2.9%</td>
<td>3.4% - 3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% High school diploma</td>
<td>90.9% - 93.3%</td>
<td>91.2% - 91.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Bachelor’s degree or higher</td>
<td>18.3% - 21.7%</td>
<td>26.2% - 26.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population with Limited English-Speaking Ability (Age 5 and Older)</th>
<th>Benton</th>
<th>State of Iowa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of persons</td>
<td>113 - 311</td>
<td>85,647 - 90,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of population</td>
<td>0.5% - 1.3%</td>
<td>3.0% - 3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources this page: 2014 Annual Population Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau (for age distribution by race, and ethnicity); and American Community Survey Table DP-02, U.S. Census Bureau (for educational attainment and English language ability).
Data Notes

Federal Poverty Guidelines

The U.S. Census Bureau determines the poverty status of the non-institutionalized population based on family size and income level. If a family's total annual income is below the threshold level appropriate for that family size, every member of the family is considered poor. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) annually publishes poverty guidelines by family size that are based on Census Bureau poverty thresholds. At right are recent HHS poverty guidelines as published in the Federal Register.


Other Information Sources

- Poverty: Poverty rate data in this report were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Other sources for poverty data include the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates Program and the Current Population Survey, both of which are administered by the U.S. Census Bureau.

- Food insecurity: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) publishes estimates of food insecurity at the national and state levels using data collected from a special annual supplement to the Current Population Survey. The county-level data in this report were obtained from Map the Meal Gap, Feeding America (http://feedingamerica.org/). Readers are encouraged to visit their web site for more information about their methodology and data sources.


- Resources for families and communities: Please visit the ISUEO Families and Communities Web page at: http://www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/reducing-poverty-families-communities.

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