

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; **9,386 households in Linn County spend more than 30% of their income on housing.**
- In 2008, homeless individuals and families were provided over **4,500 nights of shelter in Linn County.** 83% are women with dependent children. The number of shelter nights provided has continued to grow each year since 2004.
- 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.