

Poverty, Income, and Health Insurance in Iowa

September 2009

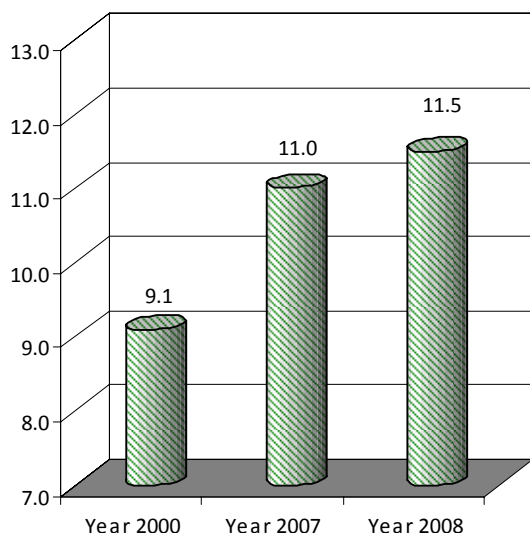
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Recessions have a disproportionate impact on lower-income families because they cause rising unemployment, a reduction in work hours, and the stagnation of family incomes—all of which have the greatest impact on those with the least income. The data in this fact sheet reflect the year 2008 and so begin to capture the first effects of the recession on low-income Iowa families. However, the economic downturn has greatly accelerated since 2008, making it very likely that these figures underestimate the true deterioration of incomes and increases in poverty currently impacting families.

Poverty and Child Poverty

In Iowa, 334,919 people live below the poverty line, a poverty rate of 11.5%. The poverty rate change in Iowa from 2007 to 2008 is not statistically significant, and the change from 2000 to 2008 is statistically significant.

Poverty Rates in Iowa

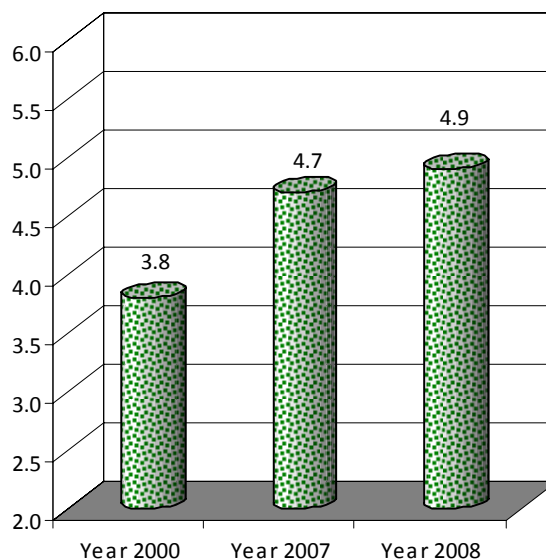


Children are particularly vulnerable to poverty. 95,792 children live below the poverty line in Iowa, a child poverty rate of 13.8%. The child poverty rate in 2007 was 13.1%, and in 2000 it was 10.5%. The change from 2007 to 2008 is not statistically significant, and the change from 2000 to 2008 is statistically significant.

Extreme Poverty

Extreme poverty, living on an annual income of less than half the poverty line (below \$10,600 for a family of four), affects 141,181 people in Iowa, an extreme poverty rate of 4.9%. The extreme poverty rate change from 2007 to 2008 is not statistically significant, and the change from 2000 to 2008 is statistically significant. Those living in extreme poverty are often in unsafe living conditions and struggle to meet the most basic of their needs.

Extreme Poverty Rates in Iowa



Asset Poverty

Seventeen percent of families in Iowa are asset poor, meaning they do not have enough saved to subsist at the poverty level for even 3 months if their income suddenly dried up. Without this cushion to fall back on in tough times, job loss, reduction in hours, loss of benefits, or “crises” like a car breaking down, can catapult families into poverty and hardship. (CFED 2009-2010 Assets and Opportunity Scorecard. Visit <http://cfed.org/> for more information.)

Health Insurance Coverage

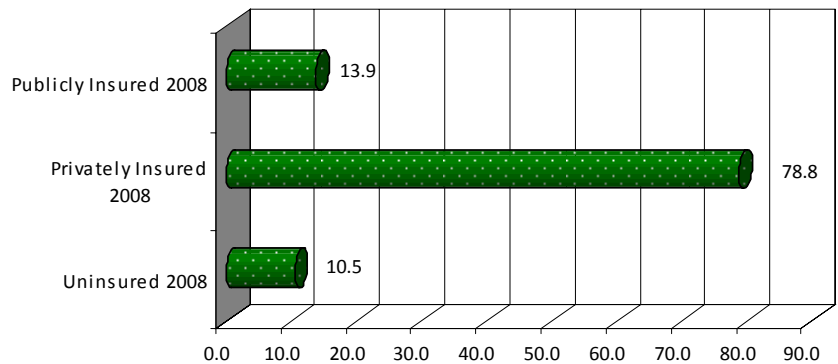
In Iowa, 265,854 people do not have health insurance. This translates into 10.5% of the population being uninsured.

Of those with coverage in Iowa, 78.8% are covered by private insurance, and 13.9% are covered by public insurance. (civilian, non-institutionalized population; sum of uninsured, privately insured, and publicly insured percents do not add up to 100 because for certain populations it is possible have both public and private coverage.)

Median Household Income

The median household income in Iowa is \$48,980, meaning half of households in Iowa have incomes higher and half lower than this amount. Since 2007, median household income has declined \$129, a change that is not statistically significant. Since 2000, median household income has declined \$2,022, a change that is statistically significant. (when adjusted for inflation)

Health Insurance Coverage Status in Iowa, 2008



Measuring Hardship and Establishing What Families Need to Get By

The Federal Poverty Measure

Official poverty data are based on the federal poverty guidelines, which were developed in the 1960s. The measure is not geographically specific and does not reflect what it takes for families to make ends meet.

2008 Federal Poverty Guidelines

Family Size	Poverty Guideline
1	\$10,400
2	\$14,000
3	\$17,600
4	\$21,200

Making Ends Meet

Efforts targeted at helping families escape poverty or as measured by the federal poverty measure are vitally important. However, it is abundantly clear that just because someone is not officially poor does not mean they have a standard of living that allows them to fully participate in American life. Experts agree that it usually takes around twice the poverty line for families to make ends meet.

Data Source Explanation:

Unless otherwise noted, all data are derived from the U.S. Census Bureau's *American Community Survey* and from the *2000 Decennial Census*. The *American Community Survey* recently released estimates on 2008 income, poverty, and health insurance coverage, which are the most current data available for geographies with populations over 65,000. For more information on the *American Community Survey*, visit www.census.gov/acs/www/.

For further analysis and comments on poverty trends, implications, and solutions, contact us:

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