



Poverty And Food Needs

Palo Alto County, Iowa

Income and Poverty

Poverty Status

The Census Bureau determines poverty status for all people except those institutionalized, in military group quarters, in college dormitories, and/or unrelated individuals under 15 years old based on income and poverty guidelines. If the total income of a person's family is less than the threshold appropriate for that family size, that person, as well as every member of his/her family, is considered poor.

	Palo Alto County		State	
	n	%	n	%
Population for whom poverty status determined (2000)	9,787	--	2,824,435	--
Population at less than 100% poverty	1,033	10.6	258,008	9.1
Children 4 or younger	85	14.6	24,705	13.4
Children 5 to 17	220	11.8	42,056	10.4
Persons 65 or older	173	9.1	31,118	7.6
Population at 100% to 129% poverty	504	5.1	124,926	4.4
Children 4 or younger	54	9.2	11,163	6.0
Children 5 to 17	125	6.7	21,200	5.2
Persons 65 or older	90	4.7	25,761	4.5
Population at 130% to 184% poverty	1,235	12.6	280,219	9.9
Children 4 or younger	54	9.2	24,862	13.5
Children 5 to 17	313	16.8	52,053	12.8
Persons 65 or older	279	14.7	52,376	12.5

Income Distribution

Household income data are derived from the US Census Bureau's 1990 and 2000 census. These data are pre-tax and include all sources of income (e.g., wages/salaries, Social Security, public assistance, etc.). Median household income is that level of income for which half of the households reported a higher income level and half reported a lower income level. These data are not adjusted for inflation.

	Palo Alto County				State	
	1989		1999		1989	1999
	n	%	n	%	%	%
Total Households	4,226	100.0	4,119	100.0	100.0	100.0
with Incomes...						
Less than \$15,000	1,407	33.3	753	18.3	26.7	14.9
\$15,000 to \$34,999	1,856	43.9	1,449	35.2	39.1	29.1
\$35,000 to \$59,999	724	17.1	1,206	29.3	24.5	29.2
\$60,000 or more	239	5.7	570	13.8	9.6	26.9
Median Household Income	\$21,223		\$32,409		\$26,229	\$39,469



This profile was created as part of the Iowa Food Insecurity Project (2001-2004) funded by:

The Iowa Nutrition Network,

Iowa Department of Public Health

and

USDA Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program

Food Accessibility

Grocery and Convenience Stores

The number of food retailing establishments with employees are reported by the U.S. Census Bureau's *County Business Patterns*. Grocery stores are firms that retail a general line of food, including fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh and prepared meats, fish and poultry, and frozen and canned goods. Convenience stores offer a limited line of products that generally includes milk, bread, soda and snacks.



		2001	
Type of Store		Estimated Number of Firms	Estimated # of Residents Served
Palo Alto County	Grocery Stores	3	3,382
	Convenience Stores	9	1,127
	Total	12	846
Iowa	Grocery Stores	705	4,151
	Convenience Stores	1,704	1,717
	Total	2,409	1,215

Farmers' markets provide Iowans opportunities for fresh produce that is locally produced. Seniors with limited incomes and families who participate in the WIC program are eligible to receive coupons to purchase fresh produce at farmers' markets.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship reported 2 farmers' markets in Palo Alto County in 2003.

Vehicle Accessibility

For those living in small towns and rural areas where public transportation is seldom available, access to a vehicle is important for an active lifestyle. Most rural residents have a personal car. However, rural households lacking their own vehicle have limited access to grocery stores and other consumer goods. These data on the number of households with no vehicle available are taken from the *U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 census*.

	Palo Alto County	Iowa
Households (2000)		
With no vehicle available	178	73,684
As a % of total households	4.3	6.4

Food-Related Health Issues

Limited household income can hinder access to nutritious foods, which in turn may result in health issues. Data on the percent of the population that is overweight and obese are synthetic estimates based on the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) calculated by Iowa's *State Center for Health Statistics*. Overweight is defined as Body Mass Index (BMI) ≥ 25.0 and < 30.0 . Obesity is defined as BMI ≥ 30.0 . The Body Mass Index is a person's body weight in kilograms divided by their height in meters squared. Diabetes is more common among populations with low incomes than those with higher incomes. The diabetes hospitalization figures are for Type II, adult onset diabetes and were provided by the *Iowa Hospital Association*. Rates are per 1,000 people aged 19 or older.



	Palo Alto County	State
Estimated Percent Overweight (2002)	38.6	38.3
Estimated Percent Obese (2002)	23.0	22.9
Number of Hospitalizations from Diabetes (2000)	175	37,587
Number per 1,000 adults	23.9	17.9

Food Assistance Programs

Program Participation

The monthly average number of food stamp and Family Investment Program (FIP) recipients were provided by the *Iowa Department of Human Services*. The numbers for Food Stamp activity are for the fiscal years noted; FIP are for the calendar year. Numbers of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals were provided by the *Iowa Department of Education*, as were the numbers of students enrolled. The years are the academic years (i.e., 2000 is for the 2000-2001 school year).

	Palo Alto County		State	
	2000	2003	2000	2003
Avg. Monthly Food Stamp Recipients	287	310	124,384	149,991
As percent of total population	2.8	3.2	4.3	5.1
Average monthly benefit per recipient (\$)	56	70	67	80
Avg. Monthly Family Investment Program (FIP) Recipients	68	56	51,842	51,827
As percent of total population	0.7	0.6	1.8	1.8
Average monthly benefit per recipient (\$)	123	133	123	128
Students Eligible for...				
Free School Meal Program	283	336	93,823	107,324
As percent of total enrollment	15.4	20.3	19.1	22.3
Reduced Price School Meal Program	243	151	37,754	36,907
As percent of total enrollment	13.2	9.1	7.7	7.7

*Contact your local WIC agency for average monthly WIC participation (<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/common/pdf/wic/wicmap.pdf>)

Program Eligibility

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM To receive food stamps, households must meet three financial criteria. 1) A household's gross income before taxes in the previous month must be at or below 130 percent of the poverty line. Households headed by someone over the age of 60 are exempt from this test (although they must still pass the net income test). 2) A household must have a net monthly income at or below the poverty line. 3) All net-income-eligible households with assets less than \$2,000 qualify for the program (\$3,000 for households headed by someone over age 60). The value of a vehicle above \$4,650 (in 2003) is also considered an asset unless it is used for work or for the transportation of disabled persons. The value of a home is not considered an asset. Households participating in the Family Investment Program (FIP), or households where all members receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), are categorically eligible for food stamps and do not have to meet these three tests.

FAMILY INVESTMENT PROGRAM (FIP) Iowa's Family Investment Program provides cash assistance to needy families with dependent children. Eligibility requirements are relatively complex due to the large number of factors involved but include such things as income, resources (e.g., household goods, motor vehicles, etc.), and an interview process. For more detailed information, see <http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/FinancialHealthandWorkSupports/financialassistance.asp>

SCHOOL MEALS Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free lunches and breakfasts. Children from families 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. While virtually all schools offer lunch, a large number of schools do not offer breakfast.

Federal Poverty Income Guidelines , 2004

Household Size	Federal Poverty Guideline (\$)		
	100%	130%	185%
1	9,310	12,103	17,224
2	12,490	16,237	23,107
3	15,670	20,371	28,990
4	18,850	24,505	34,873
5	22,030	28,639	40,756
6	25,210	32,773	46,639

Source: USDA Food and Nutrition Service.
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cga/Federal-Register/2004/032904-b.pdf>

Demographic Profile

Age Distribution by Race and Ethnicity

Statistics on age, race and Hispanic origin are taken from the *U.S. Census Bureau* and the 2000 census. Although respondents had the option of identifying themselves in more than one racial category in 2000, only those respondents who identified themselves in a single racial category are highlighted in the table below. NOTE: The Census Bureau defines Hispanic as an ethnicity not a race; therefore individuals of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

	Total	19 Years or Younger			20 to 44 Years			45 to 64 Years			65 Years or Older		
		Palo Alto County		State	Palo Alto County		State	Palo Alto County		State	Palo Alto County		State
		n	%	%	n	%	%	n	%	%	n	%	%
Total Population (2000)	10,147	2,819	27.8	28.3	2,945	29.0	34.6	2,220	21.9	22.2	2,163	21.3	14.9
White	10,007	2,751	27.5	27.4	2,905	29.0	34.1	2,204	22.0	22.8	2,147	21.5	15.6
Black	9	5	55.6	39.9	3	33.3	39.3	1	11.1	14.9	0	0.0	5.9
American Indian	26	19	73.1	39.1	6	23.1	41.3	1	3.8	16.1	0	0.0	3.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	35	11	31.4	32.1	12	34.3	49.2	6	17.1	15.1	6	17.1	3.6
Other	19	11	57.9	42.9	5	26.3	46.7	2	10.5	8.8	1	5.3	1.6
Hispanic (of any race)	77	35	45.5	44.0	26	33.8	43.3	9	11.7	9.8	7	9.1	2.9

Education

Education is reported for the adult population after their education is largely complete (25 years of age or older). These numbers are provided by the *U.S. Census Bureau*.

	Palo Alto County		State	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Population 25 Years or Older	7,024	6,692	1,776,798	1,895,856
Percent with...				
Less than 12 years school	23.1	16.3	19.9	13.9
High school graduate	37.8	35.0	38.5	36.1
Less than 4 years college	26.3	34.8	24.7	28.8
4 or more years college	12.8	13.9	16.9	21.2

For more information about these and other data, please visit the web site of the Office of Social and Economic Trends Analysis: <http://www.seta.iastate.edu>

Employment

The labor force in an area consists of all persons aged 16 or older who either are currently employed or actively seeking work. The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number employed by the civilian labor force. Labor force and employment rate figures are provided by *Iowa Workforce Development*.

	1997	2003
Total Civilian Labor Force		
Palo Alto County	5,510	5,070
State	1,579,400	1,612,300
Employment Rate (%)		
Palo Alto County	97.5	96.6
State	96.7	95.5

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Stanley R. Johnson, director, Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa.

For more information on these and other topics, please visit the Iowa Food Insecurity Program Web site at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/hunger>