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## Report: Assistance misses eligible Iowans

By Dan Gearino, Journal Des Moines Bureau

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DES MOINES n- A report released Tuesday shows that public assistance programs only reach a small share of eligible Iowans.

The study, co-sponsored by the Iowa Policy Project, finds that the state's child care assistance program reaches one third of the 56,000 eligible children, subsidized housing reaches one quarter of the 96,000 eligible households and food stamps reach two thirds of 318,000 eligible individuals.

"Our research shows Iowa can do much better ... if resources are made more accessible," said Elaine Ditsler, research associate for the Iowa Policy Project, which is a Mount Vernon-based think tank.

She was joined at a downtown Des Moines news conference by state legislators.

Rep. Wayne Ford, D-Des Moines, said the state needs to do more to publicize the programs available to people with low incomes. He said recent legislation, such as this year's increase in the minimum wage, is just a small step toward improving the lives of people in poverty.




"You and I both know we've got a long way to go," Ford said.

Sen. Jack Hatch, D-Des Moines, said the problem exists across the state and across racial and ethnic lines.

"This is not just an urban issue. This is not just a black-white issue," he said.

The Iowa report is part of a multi-state project led by the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, D.C., and the Center for Social Policy at the University of Massachusetts.

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