

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) in Iowa: Proposed Number and Location of Teams

Center of Excellence for
Behavioral Health

June 2024

Contact:

Alaina Elliott-Wherry, MPH

Program Coordinator

Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health

alaina-elliott@uiowa.edu

Nancy Williams, MD

Professor of Clinical Psychiatry

Medical Director, IMPACT Program

University of Iowa Health Care

Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health

nancy-a-williams@uiowa.edu

How Many Teams Are Needed?

The best estimate for the number of ACT teams needed in a given population is addressed in a 2006 study (1). Applied to Iowa, those numbers estimate nearly 1500 Iowans would benefit from ACT, with about 23-26 teams required to cover state needs (Table 1). Currently, there are 17 ACT teams across the state of Iowa (Appendix A).

Where Should the Teams Be Located?

ACT teams in the communities below would result in 75% of Iowans that need ACT having access to ACT.

Major Metropolitan Areas

Des Moines
Cedar Rapids
Iowa City
Davenport
Waterloo
Ames
Sioux City
Dubuque
Council Bluffs

Major Micropolitan Areas*

Carroll
Ottumwa
Burlington
Mason City
Newton
Marshalltown
Fort Dodge
Clinton
Muscatine
Keokuk

**Population: 25,000-50,000*

What About Rural Areas?

Approximately 25% of people predicted to need ACT in Iowa live in very rural areas (<50 people per square mile). ACT model requirements in these areas make staffing a team difficult due to workforce issues and long distances to reach patients. As of June 2024, 3 rural pilot sites are underway. CEBH initiated a Rural ACT Coalition to better understand and problem solve issues unique to providing care to people with serious mental illness in rural areas.

Table 1. Iowa Population, ACT Needs, and ACT Teams

	Iowa Adult Population (1)	Minimum ACT (2)	Teams Needed (at <=75 clients per Team)	Current Teams (06/2024)
<u>Major Metro Areas:</u>				
Des Moines	535,127	321	4-5	2
Cedar Rapids	213,131	128	2-3	2
Iowa City	155,294	93	1-2	1
Davenport	133,788	80	1	1
Waterloo	122,129	73	1	1
Ames	101,477	61	1	1
Sioux City	98,460	59	1	0
Dubuque	92,087	55	1	1
Council Bluffs	<u>83,282</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Metro Area Total	1,534,775	920	13-16	10
% Adult Population in IA	62%			
<u>Largest Micro Areas:</u>				
Carroll	48,529	29	1	1
Ottumwa	46,609	28	1	1
Burlington	46,211	28	1	0
Mason City	45,063	27	1	1
Newton	44,608	27	1	0
Marshalltown	42,573	26	1	0
Fort Dodge	40,083	24	1	1
Clinton	35,616	21	1	0
Muscatine	32,220	19	1	0
Keokuk	<u>25,934</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Large Micro Areas Total	407,446	245	10	4
% Adult Population in IA	16%			
<u>Rural Areas:</u>				
Rural Northwest				1
Rural South-Central				1
Rural Southwest				<u>1</u>
Rural Areas Total	534,341	321		3
% Adult Population in IA	22%			
Total Adult Population	2,476,562	1,486		17

Recommendations

Teams

Iowa CEBH recommends a total of 23-26 ACT teams in the metro and micro communities identified above to serve 75% of the estimated 1500 Iowans in need of ACT. Note this estimate is conservative because it accounts only for those who are already in the service system and excludes those not receiving social security benefits, individuals experiencing homelessness, and individuals who are incarcerated.

Rate

A widely cited reason for lack of availability of ACT is the stagnant reimbursement rate, which has not seen a significant increase since 2009. CEBH has more information on this [here](#). The insufficient rate impedes teams' ability to fully staff their programs, and thus, is a barrier to achieving higher fidelity and outcomes. Iowa CEBH recommends robust and sustainable funding for ACT programs across the state.

Rural

Rural ACT is feasible but requires modifications. It is more expensive. It requires the infrastructure of a well-established agency to provide staffing and support. An example of such a program is the pilot site run out of Heartland Family Services in the Council Bluffs area. They employ rigorous networking, case finding, consensus building with community partners, and provide stipends, program cars and career development internally for staff. Iowa CEBH recommends rural ACT in areas with the aforementioned infrastructure and supports in place.

References

1. Cuddeback et al. How Many Assertive Community Treatment Teams Do We Need? *Psychiatric Services* 57:1803-1806, 2006.
2. U.S. Census Bureau. QuickFacts: July 1, 2022. Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/>

Appendix A

Figure 1. Map of Current ACT Teams in Iowa (by city) - June 2024

