



Homeless veterans in Minnesota 2012

*Statewide survey of veterans without
permanent shelter*

N O V E M B E R 2 0 1 3

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Volunteer interviewers and service providers are not only the backbone of this study; they also raise awareness about homelessness through the many friends, co-workers, and family members each one touches. This year, community volunteers, agency and program staff, and virtually the entire Wilder Research work force went to 390 locations across the state to conduct interviews. The study would not be possible without them. They endure our training videos and instructional materials, and still find the courage to return for the next study cycle. They are special people.

Finally, all social science research depends on the willingness and participation of the individuals who make up the population of interest; in this case, adults and youth throughout Minnesota who have no permanent place to live. Despite the depth of the survey and the personal nature of many questions, participation rates are extremely high (90%). Respondents answer more than 300 survey questions in face-to-face interviews and receive in exchange only a \$5 honorarium. Their generosity in sharing the details of their lives gives voice and substance to the reality of homelessness in our state and helps planners, funders, and advocates in their efforts to find solutions. This report tells their stories.

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Key findings from the survey

Homelessness among veterans in Minnesota has decreased since 2009

Targeted efforts to reduce homelessness among military veterans appear to be paying off. In 2012, 580 homeless veterans were counted on the night of the survey, down from 669 in 2009. Our survey counted 542 male veterans, a 10 percent decline from the 605 counted in 2009. Among female veterans the decline is even more dramatic: our survey counted 38 female veterans compared to 64 female veterans three years earlier, a drop of 41 percent. Minnesota's trend is similar to the national trend reported by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, *Ending Homelessness among Veterans* (USICH, February 2013), that found the number of veterans experiencing homelessness in the United States has decreased by 18 percent since 2010 (from 76,329 to 62,619).

Most homeless veterans are older and home-grown

While nearly a quarter of homeless adults age 55 and older have served in the military only 7 percent of those 54 or younger have done so. More than half of male homeless veterans in Minnesota are over age 50 compared with about one-quarter of Minnesota's overall male homeless population. On average, male veterans are about 10 years older than the general population of homeless men. Seventy percent of all homeless veterans have lived in Minnesota five years or longer and over half have lived in Minnesota more than 20 years.

Homeless veterans are disproportionately people of color

About 37 percent of Minnesota's homeless veterans are persons of color compared with less than 11 percent of the state's overall population. Particularly over-represented are African Americans in the Twin Cities 7-county area (33%), and both African Americans (11%) and American Indians (10%) in greater Minnesota.

One-quarter of homeless veterans reported serving in a combat zone

Ten percent served in a combat zone in Vietnam, 4 percent in the first Gulf War, and 8 percent in the current Iraq War or Afghanistan. Nearly half of homeless veterans reported service-related health problems, primarily mental health problems (44%) and hearing/ear problems (33%). Based on a series of standard health interview questions, 6 percent of veterans reported that they have been diagnosed with a service-related head injury, although a much higher percentage – one third of all veterans – screened positive for a likely brain injury.

For homeless vets, better education doesn't translate to employment; health barriers play a role in high unemployment rates

Almost all homeless veterans have completed high school compared with just three-quarters of the general homeless population. The percentage who attended college was also higher for homeless veterans than for the general homeless population (50% vs. 34%). However, similar to the overall homeless population, only 9 percent of homeless veterans were employed full time. More concerning, 53 percent of homeless veterans have been unemployed for over a year, compared with 46 percent of the overall homeless population. It is important to note that over half of homeless veterans reported that a physical, mental, or other health condition limited the amount or type of work they could do, and nearly one-third reported problems with memory, concentration, or decision-making.

Homeless vets have high rates of health coverage and access to care, but medical needs are not always met

More than 4 out of 5 homeless veterans have some type of medical coverage and 78 percent report that they have a regular place to go for medical care. Nonetheless, among the veterans we surveyed, 49 percent say they need to see a dentist, 43 percent need to see a doctor for physical health problems, and 36 percent need to see a professional for mental health problems. Overall, 26 percent report problems getting the medical care that they need, one out of six was not taking prescribed medications, and 42 percent had sought care in an emergency room within the past six months.

Use of veterans benefits is up

In the year prior to the survey, 45 percent of homeless veterans took advantage of benefits provided them. This compares to 42 percent in 2009 and 33 percent in 2006. The benefits most frequently used were Veterans Administration medical services (34%) and service-related compensation (19%). In addition, about one-third (34%) of homeless military veterans reported that during the past 12 months they had contact with a County Veterans Service Officer and over one-quarter had attended a Veterans Stand Down event.

Veterans experience high levels of chronic homelessness

Nearly 6 out of 10 homeless veterans have been without stable housing for a year or longer. One out of 4 has been homeless at least three years, five percentage points higher than the overall homeless population. The proportion of homeless veterans that fit Minnesota's definition of long-term homeless was 63 percent; the proportion of homeless veterans that fit HUD's definition of chronic homeless was 46 percent.

Addressing veterans' homelessness

According to the USICH report, Veterans Administration program staff and grantees have been working on a variety of engagement strategies designed to fit the individual needs of returning veterans. These strategies include short-term assistance to help veterans connect to mainstream services, transitional services for completing treatment or rehabilitation and securing permanent housing, along with rent subsidy and case management services. Brief descriptions of these programs are presented on page 17 of this report.

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a current snapshot of U.S. military veterans experiencing homelessness in Minnesota. The information is intended as a resource for planners, policymakers, service providers, and others who are interested in addressing the problems associated with homelessness among veterans.

The information presented in this report is a subset of data from the statewide survey and comes from three main sources:

1. A statewide population count, or census, of all persons who were residing in emergency shelters and transitional housing facilities on the night of Thursday, October 25, 2012.
2. A statewide survey of a sample of military veterans (N=441) who were living in emergency shelters and transitional housing facilities on October 25, 2012.
3. A survey of 139 homeless veterans found in informal or non-shelter locations around the state on October 25, 2012.

The report also references U.S. Census information and other data about the general adult population.

Other reports and detailed data tables on homeless adults and their children, youth and young adults, and on Minnesota's Continuum of Care regions are available at:

<http://www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Research-Areas/Homelessness/Pages/default.aspx>

Background

Every three years since 1991, Wilder Research has conducted a statewide survey of people who are homeless or living in temporary housing programs. In October 2012, nearly 1,300 volunteer interviewers conducted face-to-face interviews with more than 4,500 people experiencing homelessness throughout the state. Study participation was voluntary, and participants received \$5.00 for completing the interview. Ninety percent of those who were asked agreed to participate. This report is based on those in the statewide study who identified themselves as having served in the U.S. military.

Data sources

The statewide homeless study is based on two sources of data: face-to-face interviews with adults and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness, and a shelter census completed by the shelter providers.

Interviews

The statewide survey provides information about the characteristics of homeless people based on 4,563 face-to-face interviews with homeless adults and youth, each one typically lasting 35 to 45 minutes. The interviews were done by 1,299 volunteers and program staff in 390 locations, including shelters and transitional housing programs as well as meal sites, service centers, encampments, and other places not intended for housing. Interviews were conducted in October 2012 with respondents known to be homeless on the night of October 25, including 1,502 men and 1,428 women in shelters, as well as another 1,535 interviews with adults in non-shelter locations. According to the interviews, adult respondents had 2,347 children and 704 partners with them. We also conducted interviews with 98 unaccompanied minors age 17 and under, both in and out of shelter settings. These minors had a total of 6 children and 12 partners with them.

According to the interviews, 580 homeless persons identified themselves as having served in the U.S. military. There were 542 men and 38 women. They had a total of 49 children with them on the night of the survey.

Based on prior information from shelter providers, the statewide survey was translated into the languages most often needed. Seven interviews were completed in Somali and 28 were completed in Spanish.

Shelter census count

Detailed information about the total number of men, women, and children in residence on the night of the survey is gathered from all providers of service in emergency shelters, time-limited transitional housing programs, domestic violence shelters, and emergency service voucher sites. This complete enumeration within shelters on the day of the survey provides the basis for all shelter counts reported here. It also allows us to weight the survey results for those in shelters and generalize the findings to nearly the entire population of those experiencing homelessness in our state.

The shelter census counts are used to produce a detailed count for each Continuum of Care region (geographic areas used for housing planning and service coordination) in Minnesota and are posted on the Wilder Research website at <http://www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Research-Areas/Homelessness/Pages/default.aspx>. There is no comparable information about the total number of persons in non-shelter locations, other than the counts of those who participated in interviews and persons staying with them in non-shelter locations. All adults and unaccompanied youth found in non-shelter locations were asked to participate in the study (or one member of each couple).

Who is included in the study

Definition of homelessness

The definition of homelessness used for the study is the same one specified by the U.S. Congress in its most recent reauthorization of the Hearth Act. For the 2012 study, a homeless person is anyone who:

1. lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; **and**
2. has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised, publicly- or privately-operated temporary living accommodation, including emergency shelters, transitional housing, and battered women's shelters; **or**
3. has a nighttime residence in any place not meant for human habitation, such as under bridges or in cars.

A parent not meeting any of these criteria may be included if they have a child with them, and have a significant history of residential instability, and have a barrier (or have a child with a barrier) that interferes with housing or employment.

Where interviews were done

Interviews were conducted in shelters and temporary housing programs and also in non-sheltered locations.

We distinguish three types of *shelter programs* that serve homeless people:

- **Emergency shelters** – A safe place to sleep, generally open only evenings and overnight. May provide meals, housing information and other services.
- **Battered women's shelters** – Safe refuge and advocacy for women and their children when fleeing an abusive situation.
- **Transitional housing** – Time-limited, subsidized housing that involves working with a professional to set and address goals to become self-sufficient.

For homeless people interviewed who were *not in shelters* on the date of the study, information in the survey gives some insight into the settings in which they had spent the most time in October. For analysis and reporting, we have identified two groups:

- **Informal arrangements** – People in this group were more likely to be in a house, apartment, or room in which they were allowed to stay on a temporary basis; or a motel room that they paid for (not provided by a voucher program). They were less likely to be outdoors.

- **Unsheltered** – People in this group were more likely to be in cars, transportation depots, 24-hour businesses, buildings that are abandoned or unfit for habitation (lacking plumbing, electricity, or heat), or outdoor locations. They were less likely to be in informal arrangements staying with others on a temporary basis.

Unless otherwise stated, percentages reported are based on all homeless adults who are represented in the survey.

Using this report

This report provides overall findings from a subset of data from the 2012 study based on interviews conducted with homeless persons who identified themselves as having served in the U.S. military. Because of changes in programs and services, and variations in outreach efforts in different regions of Minnesota, caution should be exercised in making direct comparisons to results from previous years, except comparisons presented in this report.

In this report, we present most homelessness information in terms of overall statewide frequencies or averages. There is a wealth of information in this report, but it is still possible that the specific fact a reader may be looking for is not here. In that case, it is likely to be found on our website: <http://www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Research-Areas/Homelessness/Pages/default.aspx> where detailed responses to each survey question are available in tabular form, partitioned by geography, shelter type, and gender of respondent.

Interpreting the findings

This is a point-in-time study. If the study were extended over the course of a year, many more short-term episodes of homelessness would occur, but relatively few additional long-term episodes would be added to those already documented here. Therefore, when interpreting these findings, it is important to bear in mind that they better represent the experiences of those who are homeless for lengthy periods of time (or repeatedly) than for those whose experiences of homelessness are short.

The total number of responses to a given question is not always the total number of people in the survey. Not all questions were asked of every respondent (for example, questions about children were not asked of those who have no children). Not all respondents answered every question.

Understanding data weighting

It is not possible to interview every person staying in shelters on the date of the survey, although in 2012, nearly two-thirds (62%) of sheltered adults were interviewed. Survey results for sheltered adults have been statistically adjusted to reflect the actual adult populations residing in emergency shelters, battered women's shelters, and transitional housing programs (2,326 men and 2,412 women) on the day of the survey.

We do not weight the data collected from persons interviewed in non-shelter locations, because we do not know the actual number of people who were on the streets or in other non-shelter locations on the day of the survey.

Overview

This study gives a snapshot of U.S. military veterans experiencing homelessness in Minnesota on a single day in October 2012. The findings reported here are based on interviews with 412 male veterans and 28 female veterans conducted on Thursday, October 25, 2012. Interviews, as part of the statewide survey of people without permanent shelter in Minnesota, were weighted to represent the known population count of adults residing in emergency shelters and transitional housing facilities. The known number of veterans in Minnesota's temporary housing programs was 441 veterans (414 men and 27 women). An additional 139 veterans (128 men and 11 women) were interviewed in non-shelter locations. Interviews with people in non-sheltered locations were not weighted, because there is no way to determine the total population in such settings. In all, the 2012 study identified 580 homeless veterans, including 542 men and 38 women, residing in emergency shelters, battered women's shelters, and transitional housing programs or in non-sheltered locations. These homeless veterans were accompanied by 49 children.

Highlights

Numbers of homeless

According to the overall statewide study conducted on October 25, 2012, shelter providers counted 7,961 homeless people in emergency shelters, battered women's shelters, and transitional housing programs, as well as 32 homeless persons in detox facilities. An additional 2,221 homeless people were identified who were not staying in any formal shelter or housing program, for a total of 10,214 homeless persons. The total is made up of 3,423 men; 3,067 women; 66 male unaccompanied minors under 18; 80 female unaccompanied minors under 18; and 3,546 minor children who were with their parents. (Age and gender are not known for the 32 persons in detox.)

- About one in ten (9%) homeless adults had served in the military, a proportion that is the same as in the overall adult Minnesota population and a result that is similar to previous surveys.¹
- The proportion of homeless men who are military veterans (17%) is much higher than the proportion of women (1%).
- Homeless adults age 55 or older are more likely to have served in the military than those 54 or younger (24% vs. 7%).

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. *2011 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates* [statistics from data file]. Retrieved May 1, 2013, <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

Compared with the general adult population experiencing homelessness, the number of U.S. military veterans experiencing homeless has decreased. The percentage of homeless adults who are veterans decreased from 22 percent in 1991 to 9 percent in 2012. Veterans, as a percentage of men experiencing homelessness, have also declined (34% in 1991 to 17% in 2012). The following figure shows the weighted numbers and percentages of homeless veterans described over the eight study periods.

1. Number and percentage of homeless persons who are U.S. military veterans

	Men		Women		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
October 1991	417	33.7%	21	2.7%	438	21.8%
October 1994	322	25.4%	32	2.6%	354	14.3%
October 1997	350	26.3%	24	1.6%	374	13.2%
October 2000	686	30.7%	50	2.4%	686	16.4%
October 2003	652	26.1%	50	2.2%	702	14.7%
October 2006	595	23.9%	29	1.3%	624	13.2%
October 2009	605	19.3%	64	2.3%	669	11.3%
October 2012	542	16.5%	38	1.3%	580	9.3%

Who is homeless?

- The vast majority of homeless veterans were males (93%). The average age of homeless male veterans was 50, and the average age of homeless female veterans was 33. Nearly half (48%) of homeless veterans reported that they were divorced or separated (38% and 10%, respectively). The percentage of homeless veterans who had never married was lower than that of the general homeless population surveyed in 2012 (43% vs. 63%).
- Less than one-quarter (23%) of homeless veterans interviewed on the night of the survey had lived in Minnesota for two years or less. Over two-thirds (70%) of the veterans surveyed had lived in Minnesota for more than five years, including over half (52%) who had lived in Minnesota for more than 20 years.
- Homeless veterans were disproportionately people of color. Particularly over-represented were African Americans in the Twin Cities area (33%), and both African Americans (11%) and American Indians (10%) in greater Minnesota.² While less than 11 percent of the state’s overall population is made up of persons of color, nearly two-fifths (37%) of Minnesota’s homeless veterans were persons of color.

² Throughout this report, the “Twin Cities area” refers to the seven counties of Hennepin, Ramsey, Anoka, Carver, Scott, Dakota, and Washington.

- Veterans interviewed in informal and unsheltered locations were predominantly male (91%), and over half (59%) had been homeless for a year or longer. American Indian veterans (16%) and African American veterans (15%) veterans made up about one-third of those interviewed in informal and unsheltered locations.
- Half (50%) of homeless veterans interviewed had served in the Army; 16 percent served in the Navy; 16 percent served in the Marine Corps; 9 percent served in the National Guard; 6 percent served in the Air Force; and 3 percent served in the Reserves.
- Two-thirds (67%) of homeless veterans had served for more than two years; 21 percent for 181 days to two years; 6 percent for 90 days to 180 days; and 6 percent for less than 90 days.
- One percent of the homeless veterans began their military service prior to August 1964; 22 percent between August 1964 and May 1975; 22 percent between June 1975 and September 1980; 46 percent between October 1980 and March 2003; and 10 percent April 2003 or later.
- One-quarter (26%) of homeless veterans reported having served in a combat zone. Ten percent of homeless veterans reported they had served in a combat zone in Vietnam; 8 percent in the current Gulf War, Iraq or Afghanistan; 4 percent in the first Gulf War; 1 percent in Panama; 1 percent in Granada; 1 percent in Lebanon/Beirut; and less than 1 percent each in Korea and Serbia/Bosnia.

Children of homeless veterans

- Although 152 homeless veterans (26%) reported having children under the age of 18, only 34 parents (22% of parents) had any children with them on the night of the survey. Those parents represented 5 percent of all homeless veterans surveyed.
- Of the 34 homeless veteran parents who had children with them, nine parents (26%) reported they had been unable to obtain needed child care in the previous 12 months; six parents (18%) had been unable to obtain needed dental care; four parents (11%) had been unable to obtain needed health care; and three parents (8%) had been unable to obtain mental health care for at least one of their children. Two (6%) of the homeless parents reported that their children had to skip meals in the last month.
- Ten (28%) homeless veteran parents who had children with them reported having at least one child who has an emotional or behavioral problem that interferes with their daily activities. Two homeless parents (7%) reported having at least one child who has a physical health problem that interferes with their daily activities.

- Twenty-three homeless veteran parents had a least one school-age child with them. Ten parents (42%) reported that their child has been a victim of bullying; four parents (21%) reported that at least one of their school-age children has some type of learning or school-related problem; and 5 parents (23%) reported having a child who has repeated a grade in school. Seventeen (79%) homeless parents reported that their children attended school on the day of the survey, and four parents (17%) reported that one or more children has problems going to school because of their housing situation.

Education, employment, and income

- The percentage of homeless veterans who completed high school was much higher than that of the general homeless population surveyed in 2012 (96% for homeless veterans compared to 77% for the general homeless population). The percentage who had attended at least some college was also higher than for the general homeless population (50% vs. 34%).
- Twenty-two percent of homeless veterans were employed; 9 percent were employed full-time. Of those employed, nearly half (48%) earned less than \$10 per hour. Two-thirds (67%) of those who were employed had been at their job for three months or more.
- Those who were not working reported that their main barriers to employment were physical health problems (37%), mental health problems (18%), lack of transportation (17%), lack of job opportunities (14%), criminal background (14%), lack of housing (14%), and age (13%).
- Homeless veterans surveyed reported that their main sources of income in the month of October were General Assistance (26%), steady employment (16%), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) (10%), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (7%), Social Security (7%), and day labor (7%).
- When asked about their total income for the month of October, 14 percent of homeless veterans reported some income, but \$100 or less; 23 percent reported incomes of \$101 to \$300; 6 percent reported incomes of \$301 to \$500; 17 percent reported incomes of \$501 to \$800; and 30 percent reported incomes over \$800. Fifty-four (10%) homeless veterans reported having had no income in October. The average income was \$637 and the median income was \$403.

History of homelessness

- Two-thirds (67%) of homeless veterans had been homeless more than once. Over one-quarter (28%) reported they had been homeless two to three times in their lives; 17 percent had been homeless four to seven times; and nearly one-quarter (22%) had been homeless eight or more times. The average age at which veterans became homeless for the first time was 35; the median age was also 35.

- The proportion of homeless veterans that fit HUD’s definition of chronic homeless was 46 percent. The proportion of homeless veterans that fit Minnesota’s definition of long-term homeless was 63 percent.
- Nearly one-fifth (19%) of homeless veterans reported having been unable to obtain shelter in the previous three months because of a lack of available beds. Of those, most ended up sleeping outdoors (40%), in cars or other enclosed places not meant for habitation (21%), in another shelter (17%), or with friends or family (11%). Others ended up with a voucher for a motel (7%), in a hospital (2%), or in jail (1%).
- Over one-third (37%) of homeless veterans spent at least one night outdoors during the month of October. The average number of nights spent outdoors was 6. Nearly one-quarter (22%) of homeless veterans spent at least one night during October doubled up with friends or family. The average number of nights spent doubled up was 2.

Residential placements

- Two-thirds (66%) of homeless veterans had lived in at least one kind of institution or residential program in their lives including a drug or alcohol treatment facility (46%), a halfway house (30%), a mental health treatment facility (25%), a group home (20%), or a foster home (17%).
- Over half (56%) of homeless veterans had been in a correctional facility in their lives including in a county jail or workhouse (51%), a state prison (23%), a juvenile detention center (15%), or federal prison (5%).

Housing

- The most common reasons homeless veterans cited for having left their last regular housing were loss of a job or reduction in work hours (38%); inability to afford the rent (37%); eviction (26%); a drinking or drug problem (21%); problems getting along with the people they lived with (20%); or a break-up with a spouse or partner (20%). The most commonly cited current barriers to regaining housing were lack of a job or income (43%), no housing they could afford (21%), a criminal background (18%), or credit problems (17%).
- The average amount homeless veterans reported they could pay for rent, including utilities, was \$298 a month. The median amount was \$250. About one-third (34%) of homeless veterans could pay something, but \$300 or less, for rent. One-quarter (25%) reported they could not pay anything for rent. Nearly three-quarters (72%) needed only an efficiency or studio apartment.

Public assistance and service use

- Seven percent of homeless veterans (5% of men and 45% of women) had received MFIP (welfare assistance) in the previous 12 months.
- About one-fifth (19%) of homeless veterans reported the loss of one or more services or public assistance benefits during the previous 12 months. Those who had lost benefits most frequently reported the loss of food stamps (68%), public medical benefits (34%), and unemployment benefits (14%). One-quarter (25%) of all homeless veterans said they needed help to apply or reapply for services.
- Over four-fifths (83%) of homeless veterans reported having some type of medical coverage in October, and nearly half (48%) reported the use of food stamps in October. Other frequently used services included free clothing shelves (39%), hot meal programs (37%), transportation assistance (35%), state or federal veterans benefits (32%), drop-in centers (31%), food shelves (23%), emergency room (21%), and free medical clinics (19%).
- Over one-third (34%) of homeless veterans reported having had contact with their County Veterans Service Officer during the previous 12 months.
- Over one-quarter (27%) of homeless veterans had attended a Veterans Stand Down event in the previous 12 months.
- Over one-quarter (28%) of homeless veterans had attended a Project Homeless connect event in the previous 12 months.
- Nearly two-thirds (65%) of homeless veterans reported that they have access to a computer with internet access; nearly two-fifths (38%) own a cell phone that can access the internet.
- Two-thirds (67%) of homeless veterans have a Minnesota driver's license or Minnesota state-issued photo ID.

Health and well-being

- Nearly half (47%) of homeless veterans reported a service-related health problem. Of those veterans, over two-fifths (44%) reported a mental health problem and one-third (33%) had ear or hearing related problems. Six percent reported a service-related head injury or traumatic brain injury.
- Over half (54%) of homeless veterans had at least one chronic medical condition (asthma, other chronic lung or respiratory problems, chronic heart or circulatory problems, high blood pressure, diabetes, tuberculosis, hepatitis, or HIV/AIDS). Of those, three-quarters (75%) received care for each such condition in the previous year.

- Half (49%) of homeless veterans said they currently needed to see a dentist; 43 percent needed to see a doctor for a physical health problem; 36 percent needed to see a professional for a mental health problem; and 9 percent needed to see a professional for a chemical dependency problem. More than one-quarter (26%) reported problems getting needed medical care.
- Over three-fourths (78%) of homeless veterans reported they had a regular place to go for medical care. Of those, over two-fifths (43%) received medical care at a clinic that required fees or insurance, and 39 percent received care at a Veterans Administration Medical Center.

Mental and chemical health

- Mental illness is a significant problem among homeless veterans in Minnesota. Half (50%) had been told by a doctor or nurse within the previous two years that they had at least one of the following serious mental health disorders: schizophrenia, manic depression, some type of delusional disorder, major depression, antisocial personality disorder, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Adding those who had received inpatient or outpatient mental health treatment in the previous two years, 57 percent of homeless veterans can be described as having a serious mental health problem.
- The specific mental health disorders reported by homeless veterans included major depression (36%); post-traumatic stress disorder (27%); manic depression (21%); antisocial personality disorder or another serious emotional disorder (17%); paranoia or some other type of delusional disorder (7%); and schizophrenia (8%).
- Nearly two-fifths (37%) of homeless veterans self-report that they are alcoholic or chemically dependent. Over one-quarter (27%) reported being told by a doctor or nurse within the previous two years that they have a drug disorder or an alcohol disorder. Twenty percent of homeless veterans received inpatient alcohol or drug treatment within the previous two years. Thirteen percent of homeless veterans received outpatient alcohol or drug treatment in the previous two years.
- Nearly one-fifth (18%) of homeless veterans have a dual diagnosis of a mental illness and chemical dependency. This is based on the percentage of persons who reported being told by a doctor or nurse within the previous two years that they have a major mental illness (schizophrenia, paranoia, manic depression, major depression, antisocial personality or post-traumatic stress disorder) as well as an alcohol or drug abuse disorder. This is similar to the 16 percent of the statewide homeless population surveyed in 2012 that meet the same criteria of having a dual diagnosis.

Serious or chronic disability

- Over half (54%) of homeless veterans reported that a physical, mental, or other health condition limited the amount or type of work they could do. Nearly one-sixth (14%) reported that a health condition limited their daily activities, and nearly one-third (32%) reported problems with memory, concentration, or decision-making.
- Pooling the above disabilities with chronic medical conditions, mental illness, and substance abuse, 87 percent of homeless veterans had at least one serious or chronic disability.
- One-third (33%) of homeless veterans had a history that suggests likely traumatic brain injury. Thirteen percent have been told by a doctor or nurse within the last two years that they had a concussion or traumatic brain injury. Six percent reported a service-related head injury or traumatic brain injury.

Abuse and victimization

- Just over one-third (35%) percent of homeless veterans reported physical mistreatment as a child (34% of men and 45% of women), and 18 percent reported they were sexually mistreated as children (18% of men and 30% of women).
- Nearly one-quarter (23%) of homeless veterans (21% of men and 52% of women) had stayed in an abusive situation for lack of other housing options, and nearly one-third (30%) of the female veterans left their previous housing to flee domestic violence. Ten percent of homeless veterans (8% of men and 35% of women) had been in an abusive relationship in the previous 12 months.
- Fifteen percent of homeless female veterans and 5 percent of male homeless veterans had been approached to work in the sex industry.
- Nearly one-sixth (14%) of homeless veterans had been physically or sexually attacked at some time while they were homeless (14% of men and 20% of women), and 8 percent had sought health care for injuries due to violence in the previous year (7% of men and 16% of women).

Effective service strategies

In response to the national priority of ending homelessness among veterans by 2015, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) released its plan, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, in 2010. According to their February 2013 report, entitled *Ending Homelessness among Veterans: A Report by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness*, progress has been made in reducing homelessness among veterans, but more needs to be done to meet the goal.

The strategy employed in the federal initiative is to increase the supply of permanent supportive housing, improve access to veteran-centric homeless services, and increase the focus on prevention of homelessness and rapid rehousing. According to the report, the Veterans Administration is the key partner in working with veterans and their families. Their primary objective is to connect veterans and their families with the programs designed to provide them with services that best fit their needs.

The three main program components of the plan are:

- Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) – This program provides short-term assistance with a focus on making connections to mainstream services and rapidly rehousing those veterans who become homeless.
- The Grant and Per Diem (GPD) and other Residential Rehabilitation programs – These programs provide transitional assistance and supports for those completing treatment and services and exiting to permanent housing. Using what can best be described as a transitional housing model, the program provides rental assistance and supportive services in housing that the veteran can remain in as leaseholder when the assistance is withdrawn.
- HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) – This program provides a permanent rental subsidy and long-term case management for veterans experiencing chronic homelessness. In collaboration with VA Medical Centers and Public Housing Agencies, the Veterans Administration and HUD are working together using a Housing First model which focuses on getting veterans into permanent housing as quickly as possible. Once housed, caseworkers and other supportive service providers work to improve the quality of life and health for participating veterans.

An early feature of this federal initiative was the development of the National Homeless Registry, a data management tool designed to monitor Veterans Health Administration data, homeless programs' data, and certain community partners' data related to homelessness. It is believed that this data management system will also provide a more accurate count of homeless veterans than the current annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count conducted by the HUD Continuum of Care units across the country.

While generally optimistic, the report acknowledges that,

"... it will require continued investment in veteran-centric housing and health programs, the widespread adoption of evidence-based practices such as Housing First and Critical Time Intervention, resource targeting to ensure that veterans receive the proper dose and duration of treatment to achieve the best outcome, and collaboration across all Council agencies to provide increased access to mainstream housing, employment, income, and healthcare resources for Veterans."

The federal report concludes by calling for a greater commitment from all federal agencies to increase access to mainstream housing and stabilization services. It also calls for an increased investment in HUD-VASH and SSVF programs, especially in communities with the highest demonstrated needs. Finally, it calls for greater local ownership of the goal of ending homelessness among veterans by 2015.

Introduction to survey results

This report presents study results in two ways:

1. A comparison of homeless male veterans to non-veteran homeless men.
2. A descriptive overview of homeless veterans surveyed on Thursday, October 25, 2012.

In addition, detailed data tables that allow readers to examine specific survey questions broken down by locale (Twin Cities area vs. greater Minnesota), gender, and shelter type are available on our Web site: <http://www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Research-Areas/Homelessness/Pages/default.aspx>.

Comparison of homeless male veterans to non-veteran homeless men

Of homeless persons surveyed in the 2012 statewide study, nine percent (17% men and 1% women) had served in the U.S. military. Ninety-three percent of the 580 homeless persons identified as veterans were men; therefore, unless otherwise stated, the descriptions given below apply only to male veterans.

Homeless male veterans were more likely to be older than other homeless men. They were also more likely to have completed high school, attended some college, and been homeless for a year or longer. Homeless male veterans were less likely to identify as a racial or ethnic minority, be located in the Twin Cities area, or have been homeless before. Although the percentage who were employed was equal, male veterans were slightly more likely to be working full-time.

2. Homeless male veterans compared to other homeless Men

	Male veterans N=542	Other homeless men N=2,741
Average (mean) age	50	40
Age 34 or younger	11%	37%
Located in Twin Cities area	62%	66%
At least a HS diploma or GED	96%	78%
Some college	50%	29%
Racial or ethnic minority	37%	53%
Ever incarcerated	59%	62%
Ever homeless before	66%	70%
Currently homeless a year or longer	60%	55%
Employed	21%	21%
Working full-time (35+ hours/week)	9%	6%

On average, homeless male veterans reported fewer traumatic childhood experiences than homeless non-veterans. Fewer male veterans lived in an out-of-home placement as a child or experienced homelessness before the age of 18. However, approximately equal proportions reported that they had been physically or sexually abused as children.

3. Homeless male veterans compared to other homeless Men – childhood trauma and placements

	Male veterans N=542	Other homeless men N=2,741
Spent a week (or more) in a juvenile detention center	16%	25%
Foster care (as a child)	16%	19%
Group home (as a child)	11%	13%
Drug treatment facility (as a child)	2%	8%
Physically or sexually abused (as a child)	36%	31%
First experienced homelessness before age 18	10%	23%
First experienced homelessness before age 26	27%	52%

Physical and mental health

Homeless male veterans were more likely than other homeless men to have considered suicide or attempted suicide. They were also more likely to have a serious mental illness or have a chronic health condition. Homeless veterans (especially combat veterans) were much more likely to experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Homeless veterans and non-veteran homeless males were about equally likely to have major depression, alcohol abuse disorder, or have a dual diagnosis. Homeless male veterans were slightly less likely to have a drug abuse disorder.

4. Homeless male veterans compared to other homeless Men – health

	Male veterans N=542	Other homeless men N=2741
Service-related health problem (% of combat veterans)	46% (63%)	(n.a.)
Chronic health condition	54%	49%
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (% of combat veterans)	24% (43%)	18% (n.a.)
Major depression	34%	33%
Serious mental illness	48%	43%
Ever considered suicide	44%	33%
Ever attempted suicide	26%	18%
Alcohol abuse disorder	23%	21%
Drug abuse disorder	13%	16%
Dual diagnosis (mental health and substance abuse disorder)	17%	18%

Barriers to housing

Homeless male veterans reported housing barriers similar to those reported by other homeless men. Veterans were somewhat less likely to cite criminal history, lack of affordable housing, or alcohol or drug use as current barriers to housing, but more likely to cite credit problems.

5. Homeless male veterans compared to other homeless men – Barriers to housing

Current housing barriers cited by veterans:	Male veterans N=542	Other homeless men N=2741
Credit problems	17%	15%
Criminal history	17%	25%
Lack of affordable housing	21%	25%
Alcohol or drug use	5%	6%

Other current barriers to housing reported by homeless male veterans include the lack of a job, bad rental history, no local rental history, mental health problems, and the cost of application fees.

Barriers to employment

Compared to other homeless men, homeless male veterans were about equally likely to be employed. A slightly higher percentage of homeless male veterans were working full-time (35 hours or more a week). Veterans were more likely to identify physical health problems and age as barriers to employment. Veterans were less likely to identify transportation and criminal history as barriers to employment. A slightly higher percentage of veterans were diagnosed with a serious mental illness within the previous two years (48% vs. 43%); however, about the same percentage of homeless veterans as non-veterans identified this as a barrier to employment.

Homeless male veterans were more likely than other homeless men to have been unemployed for a year or longer (64% vs. 54%). Lack of education (completing high school or GED) was higher among non-veteran homeless men (22% vs. 4%).

Some of these differences may be attributable to the fact that homeless male veterans, on average, are ten years older than other homeless men.

6. Homeless male veterans compared to other homeless men – Barriers to employment

	Male veterans N=386	Other homeless men N=1,913
Employment barriers cited by unemployed veterans:		
Physical health problems	36%	25%
Mental health problems	18%	17%
Transportation	16%	26%
Lack of housing	14%	15%
Age	14%	7%
Criminal history	13%	20%
	Male veterans N=542	Other homeless men N=2,741
Potential employment barriers based on survey:		
Mental illness problems	48%	43%
Long-term unemployment (of those unemployed)	64%	54%
Alcohol or drug problems	27%	26%
Lack of education (no high school diploma or GED)	4%	22%

General descriptive profile

Background characteristics

The known number of homeless veterans in Minnesota's temporary housing programs on October 25, 2012, was 441 (414 men and 27 women). An additional 139 veterans (128 men and 11 women) were interviewed in non-shelter locations. Homeless veterans were accompanied by 49 children.

The following results are based on weighted interviews as described on page 43 of this report.

Men made up 93 percent of the homeless veteran population. The average age for men was 50 years and for women, 33 years.

Racial disparities are prevalent in the homeless veteran population. Nearly two-fifths (37%) of homeless veterans in Minnesota were people of color. Survey results indicate that 61 percent of homeless veterans were Caucasian, 24 percent were African American, 6 percent were American Indian, 6 percent were of mixed racial background, and 1 percent identified their race as Asian. Two percent did not specify any race. Four percent of homeless veterans said they were of Hispanic origin.

7. Race and ethnicity of homeless veterans compared to Minnesota adult homeless population and overall Minnesota adult population

	Percent of homeless veterans	Percent of homeless adults in MN	Percent of all Minnesota adults
American Indian	6%	10%	1%
Asian American	1%	1%	4%
Black/African American	24%	38%	5%
White/Caucasian	61%	42%	86%
Other/Mixed race	6%	8%	3%
Hispanic (any race)	4%	7%	4%

Sources: Wilder Research 2012 survey of homelessness and U.S. 2010 Census

Note: Column totals may be more than 100% because Hispanic ethnicity is asked independent of race.

Over two-thirds (70%) of homeless veterans had lived in Minnesota for more than five years. Over half (55%) of homeless veterans grew up in another state or country.

Over two-fifths (43%) of surveyed homeless veterans had never been married. Nearly two-fifths (38%) were divorced, 10 percent were separated, 4 percent were currently married, and 4 percent were widowed.

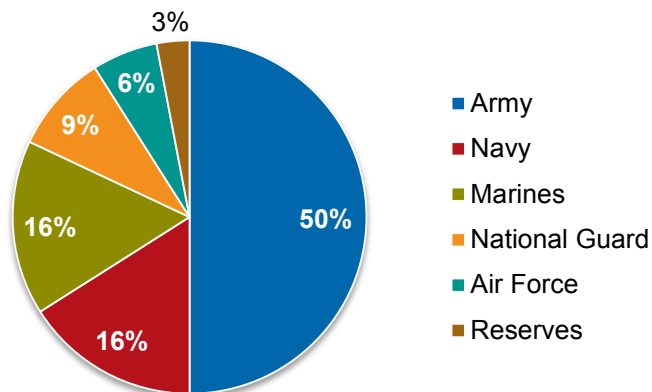
Ninety-six percent of homeless veterans had graduated from high school or completed a GED, and one half (50%) had some type of post-secondary education. For comparison, approximately nine of ten (92%), of adults in the general population have completed high school.³

Veteran status

On Thursday, October 25, 2012, the study found that 355 homeless adults in the Twin Cities area and 225 homeless adults in greater Minnesota had served in the U.S. military. This represents approximately one-tenth (9%) of the total homeless population and 17 percent of homeless men in Minnesota.

Half (50%) of the U.S. military veterans had served in the Army, 16 percent in the Navy, 16 percent in the Marine Corps, 9 percent in the National Guard, 6 percent in the Air Force, and 3 percent in the Reserves.

8. Branch of U.S. military in which homeless veterans served



³ 2011 American Community Survey. Minnesota Selected Social Characteristics in United States. [Statistics from Data file] Retrieved September 11, 2012 from <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

Over two-fifths (46%) of homeless military veterans began their service between October 1980 and March 2003. One percent began their service before August 1964; about one-fifth (22%) began between August 1964 and May 1975; and about one-fifth (22%) began between June 1975 and September 1980. Ten percent began their service in April 2003 or later.

9. Dates homeless veterans entered U.S. military service

	Men (N=538)	Women (N=37)	Total (N=575)
Prior to August 1964	1%	-	1%
August 1964 to May 1975	23%	-	22%
June 1975 to September 1980	23%	11%	22%
October 1980 to March 2003	45%	52%	46%
April 2003 or later	8%	38%	10%

One-quarter (26%) of homeless veterans reported serving in a combat zone. Ten percent served in a combat zone in Vietnam, 4 percent in the first Gulf War, and 8 percent in the current Iraq War or Afghanistan. Other conflicts, mentioned by about 1 percent each, included Lebanon/Beirut, Panama, Granada, Korea, and Serbia/Bosnia.

Two-thirds (67%) of homeless veterans reported that the length of their military service was more than two years; about one-fifth (21%) served between 181 days and two years.

Over two-thirds of homeless military veterans (70%) received an honorable discharge, and 13 percent received a General Discharge. Nearly half (47%) of homeless veterans reported service-related health problems, primarily mental health problems (44%) and hearing/ear problems (33%). Six percent reported that they have been diagnosed with a service-related head injury or traumatic brain injury.

About one-third (34%) of homeless military veterans reported that during the past 12 months they had contact with a County Veterans Service Officer; over one-quarter (28%) had attended a Project Homeless Connect event; and over one-quarter (27%) had attended a Veterans Stand Down event.

Over two-fifths (44%) of homeless veterans were currently using veterans' benefits. The benefits most frequently used were Veterans Administration Medical services (34%) and service-related compensation (19%). An additional 1 percent of veterans were not currently using veterans' benefits, but had used veterans' benefits in the previous 12 months.

Public assistance and service use

The services most commonly used by homeless veterans during the month of the survey (October) were:

- Food stamps (48%)
- Free clothing shelves (39%)
- Hot meal programs (37%)
- Transportation assistance (35%)
- State or federal veterans benefits (32%)
- Drop-in centers (31%)
- Food shelves (23%)
- Emergency room (21%)
- Free medical clinic (19%)

One-fifth (19%) of homeless veterans reported having lost public benefits during the 12 months preceding the study. Of those who lost benefits, the benefits most frequently lost were food stamps (68%), medical benefits (34%), and unemployment benefits (14%).

Seven percent of homeless veterans (5% of men and 45% of women) had received MFIP in the previous 12 months.

More than four-fifth (83%) of homeless veterans had medical coverage of some kind in October. Just over one-fifth (21%) of homeless veterans had received care in an emergency room in October, and more than two-fifths (42%) of homeless veterans reported receiving care in an emergency room in the previous six months

One-quarter (25%) of homeless veterans reported needing help applying or reapplying for services, particularly for medical benefits (29% of those needing help with applications), food stamps (29%), SSI (25%), and housing assistance (15%).

Employment

Over one-fifth (22%) of homeless veterans were employed; 9 percent were employed full-time. Two-thirds (67%) of employed homeless veterans reported that their job had lasted at least three months. Nearly half (48%) of employed homeless veterans reported that their jobs paid less than \$10 per hour.

Of those veterans who were not employed, 13 percent reported they had been laid off, terminated, or had their job eliminated in the last six months. For nearly one-fifth (18%) of unemployed veterans, it had been less than six months since they had last held a steady job. Seventeen percent of unemployed veterans last had a job between six months and one year prior; 14 percent last had a job one to two years prior; 13 percent had last been employed two to three years prior; 6 percent had last been employed three to four years prior; and almost one-third (32%) reported that their last job had been more than four years prior.

10. Unemployed homeless veterans: length of time without a job

How long has it been since you last held a job?	Men (N=402)	Women (N=26)	Total (N=428)
Less than six months	17%	27%	18%
Six months to one year	18%	8%	17%
One to two years	14%	8%	14%
Two to three years	12%	27%	13%
Three to four years	6%	8%	6%
More than four years	33%	23%	32%

Nearly half (49%) of unemployed homeless veterans were looking for work. The most frequently mentioned barriers to employment were physical health problems (37%), mental health problems (18%), lack of transportation (17%), lack of job opportunities (14%), criminal background (14%), lack of housing (14%), and age (13%).

Income

Homeless veterans surveyed reported their main sources of income for the month of October had been from General Assistance (26%), steady employment (16%), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) (10%), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (7%), Social Security (7%), and day labor (7%).

When homeless veterans were asked about their total income for the month of October, 14 percent reported some income, but \$100 or less; 23 percent reported incomes of \$101 to \$300; 6 percent reported incomes of \$301 to \$500; 17 percent reported incomes of \$501 to \$800; and 30 percent reported incomes over \$800. Ten percent of respondents reported having no income in the month of October.

Overall, homeless male veterans had lower median incomes than homeless female veterans (\$400 vs. \$437). The median income for homeless male veterans in the Twin

Cities area was \$280, compared to \$412 for homeless female veterans. In greater Minnesota the median income for homeless male veterans was \$641 compared to \$600 for homeless female veterans

History of homelessness

For one-third (33%) of homeless veterans interviewed, this was their first experience of homelessness. Over one-quarter (28%) had been homeless two or three times in their lives, 17 percent had been homeless four to seven times, and over one-fifth (22%) had been homeless eight or more times. The average age at which veterans reported becoming homeless for the first time was 35; the median age was also 35.

Four percent of homeless veterans reported they had been homeless for more than a week but less than one month; 37 percent had been homeless for at least one month but less than one year; 32 percent had been homeless for at least one year but less than three years; 10 percent had been homeless for at least three years but less than five years; and 18 percent had been homeless for five years or longer.

11. Homeless veterans length of time without stable housing

	Men (N=537)	Women (N=38)	Total (N=576)
More than one week but less than one month	4%	3%	4%
At least one month but less than four months	13%	25%	14%
At least four months but less than 7 months	15%	11%	15%
At least 7 months but less than 12 months	9%	14%	9%
At least one year but less than three years	32%	28%	32%
At least three years but less than five years	10%	7%	10%
Five years or longer	18%	12%	18%

Sixty-three percent of homeless veterans met the Minnesota definition of long-term homelessness (they had been homeless for a year or longer, or four or more times in the previous four years). Nearly half (46%) of homeless veterans met the federal definition of chronic homelessness, which, in addition to the long-term criteria in the Minnesota definition, also requires the presence of at least one serious or chronic disability and a marital status of single.

Shelter use

Over three-quarters (77%) of homeless veterans reported having lived in an emergency shelter (68% in the previous two years). Three percent of homeless veterans reported having lived in a battered women's shelter (1% in the previous two years). Over two-fifths (42%) of homeless veterans reported having lived in a transitional housing program (37% in the previous two years). Twelve percent of homeless veterans lived in permanent supportive housing (9% in the previous two years). Overall, 91 percent of all homeless veterans surveyed had lived in a temporary or supportive shelter facility (emergency shelter, battered women's shelter, transitional housing, or permanent housing with supportive services); of those, 87 percent had done so in the previous two years. Very few veterans report living in any of these types of facilities as children.

About one-quarter (24%) of homeless veterans left a homeless service program in the previous 12 months. Of the 141 veterans who left a homeless service program, four-fifths (80%) last left an emergency shelter, 14 percent last left transitional housing, 6 percent last left permanent supportive housing, and 1 percent last left a battered women's shelter.

Over two-fifths (42%) Of the 141 veterans who left a homeless service program, reported that they had a stable place to live at the time they left the program. Almost one-third (31%) received help from the program in finding a stable place to live, and 26 percent were offered follow-up or aftercare services. Sixty-eight percent of the 19 homeless veterans who last left a transitional housing program reported having stable housing when they left. Thirty-eight percent of the 112 homeless veterans who last left an emergency shelter reported having stable housing when they left. Thirty-eight percent of the eight homeless veterans who last left a permanent supportive housing program reported having stable housing when they left.

Four percent of homeless veterans had been in their current temporary housing arrangements for less than one month. Over one-third (37%) had been in their current temporary housing for one month or more, but less than one year. Nearly three-fifths (59%) had been in their current temporary arrangement for more than one year.

Nearly one-fifth (19%) of homeless veterans had been unable to obtain shelter at least once in the previous three months. The last time that happened, they reported having slept in the following places:

- Outdoors (40%)
- Cars, abandoned buildings, or other enclosed spaces (21%)
- Another shelter (17%)

- With family or a friend (11%)
- A motel or other shelter with a voucher (7%)
- Hospital (2%)
- Jail (1%)

Over one-third (37%) of homeless veterans reported having stayed outdoors at least one night during the month of October. Twelve percent had spent one to seven nights outdoors, and one-quarter (25%) had spent eight or more nights outdoors. The average number of nights spent outdoors was six.

Nearly one-quarter (22%) of homeless veterans reported that they had doubled up in the month of the survey (October). Eleven percent had spent one to seven nights doubled up, and one-tenth (10%) had spent eight or more nights doubled up. The average number of nights spent doubled up in October was two.

Residential placements

With respect to prior residential placements, two-thirds (66%) of homeless veterans surveyed had lived in at least one type of residential facility or program. If correctional facilities are included, the percentage increases to 80 percent. Men and women veterans were about equally likely to have lived in some type of residential setting (66% vs. 65%).

Homeless veterans most often had lived in correctional facilities (56%), drug or alcohol treatment facilities (46%), halfway houses (30%), mental health facilities (25%), group homes (20%), or foster care (17%). There were gender differences in the type of placements. Men were more likely than women to have been in a correctional facility (59% vs. 23%); in a drug or alcohol treatment facility (47% vs. 35%); hallway house (31% vs. 19%); a mental health facility (25% vs. 21%); or in a group home (20% vs. 17%). Women were more likely than men to have been in foster care (28% vs. 16%).

Less than ten percent of homeless veterans surveyed had lived in an adoptive home (8%) or a residence for persons with physical disabilities (3%).

12. Have you ever lived in any of the following types of facilities or programs?

	Percentage responding "yes"		
	Men	Women	Total
Foster care	16%	28%	17%
Drug or alcohol treatment	47%	35%	46%
Residence for persons with physical disabilities	3%	-	3%
Halfway house	31%	19%	30%
Mental health facility	25%	21%	25%
Group home	20%	17%	20%
Adoptive home	8%	7%	8%
Any of the above placements	66%	65%	66%
Juvenile detention or facility	16%	6%	15%
County jail or workhouse	53%	21%	51%
State prison	23%	16%	23%
Federal prison	5%	3%	5%
Any correction facility or detention center	59%	23%	56%
Any of the above, including correction facility or detention center	80%	74%	80%

Migration to Minnesota

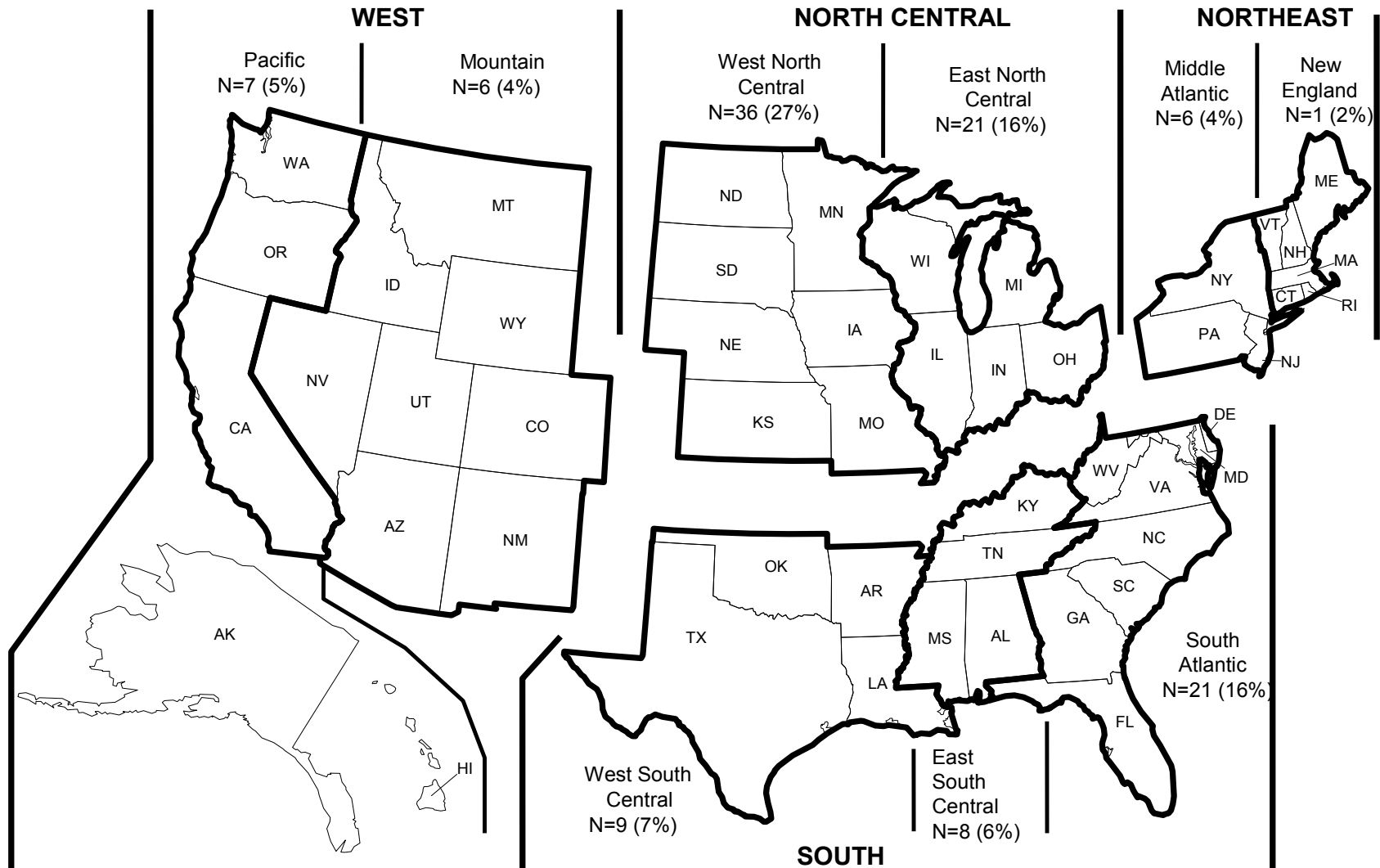
Homeless male veterans were more likely than homeless female veterans to have lived in Minnesota for less than one year (15% vs. 8%). Overall, 15 percent of homeless veterans had been in Minnesota for less than one year, 9 percent for one to two years, and 77 percent for longer than two years. Two-fifths (40%) of recent residents (two years or less) had previously lived in Minnesota.

Of the 134 homeless veterans who have lived in Minnesota two years or less, over one-fifth (27%) came from West North Central states; 16 percent from East North Central States; 16 percent from South Atlantic states; 7 percent from West South Central states; 6 percent from East South Central states; 5 percent from Pacific States; 4 percent from Mountain states; 4 percent from Middle Atlantic States; and 1 percent from New England states. In addition, 2 percent of homeless veterans came from other countries (Mexico and Thailand). Data on where homeless veterans lived before coming to Minnesota were missing for 12 percent of those interviewed. (See map on the next page.)

Additional maps on the following pages display the above information for the state as a whole, for those interviewed in greater Minnesota, and for those interviewed in the Twin Cities area.

13. All homeless veterans living in Minnesota two years or less:
 "Where did you live before coming to Minnesota?" N=134*

US Census Bureau geographic regions

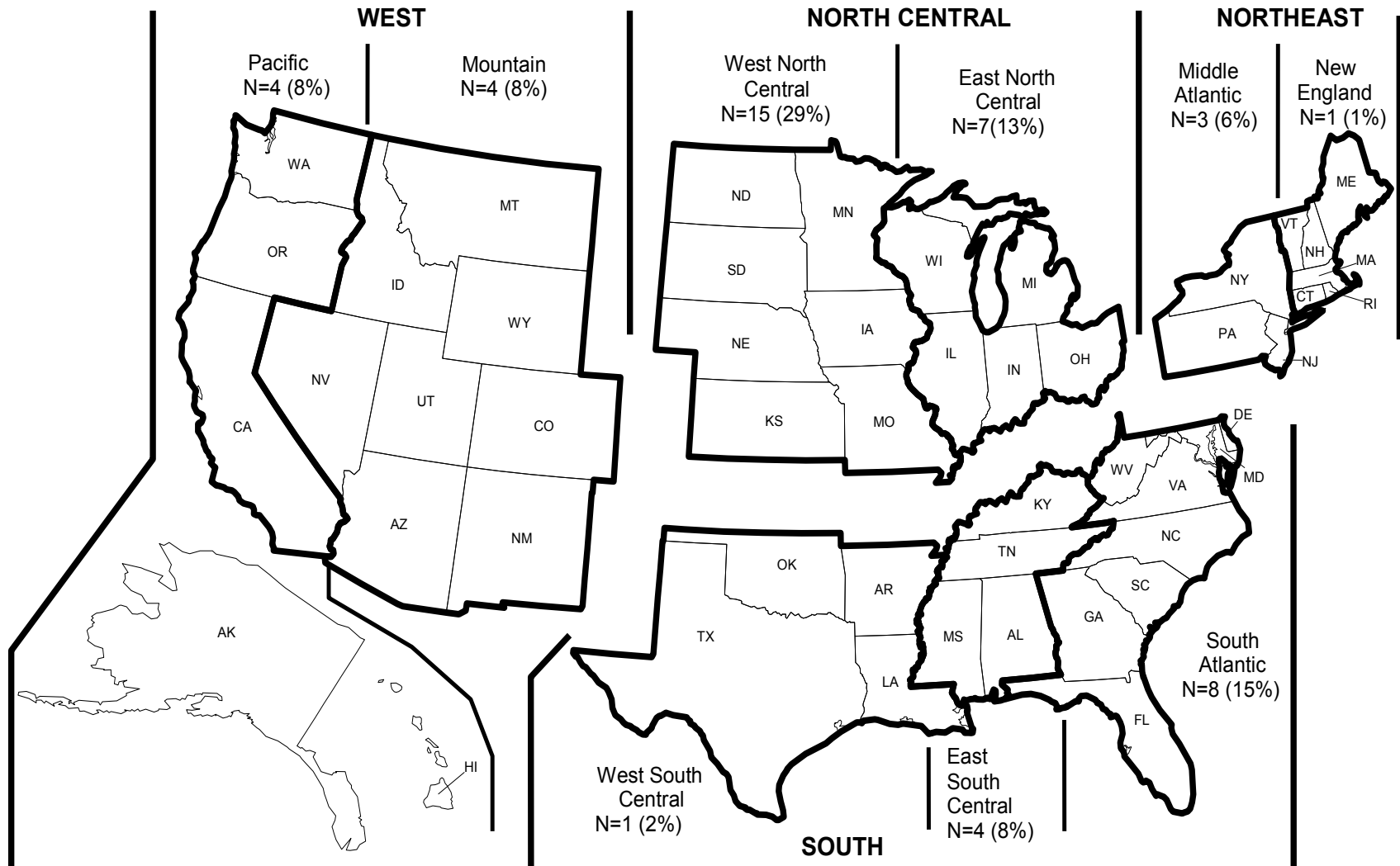


*Missing data N= 16 (12%)

Countries outside the United States N=3 (2%)

14. Greater Minnesota homeless veterans living in the state two years or less:
 “Where did you live before coming to Minnesota?” N=52*

US Census Bureau geographic regions

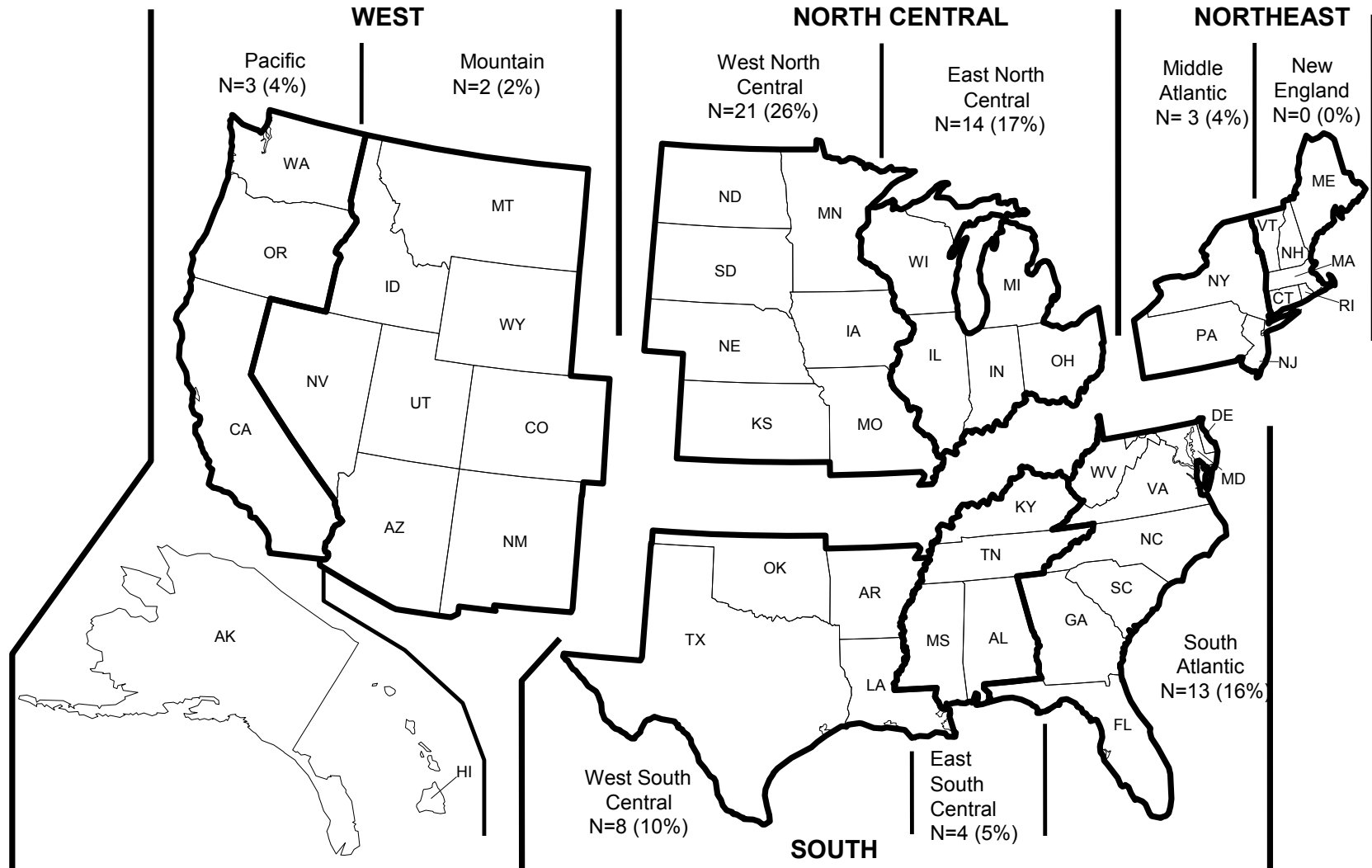


*Missing data: N=5 (10%)

Countries outside the United States: N=0

15. Twin Cities area homeless veterans living in Minnesota two years or less:
 “Where did you live before coming to Minnesota?” N=82*

US Census Bureau geographic regions



*Missing data N=11 (13%)

Housing

Nearly three-fifths (59%) of homeless veterans reported that they had been without permanent housing for a year or longer. Over one-third (34%) of homeless veterans were on a waiting list for housing vouchers (Section 8) or housing that offers some type of financial assistance, and 15 percent of those veterans had been waiting for over a year. Sixteen percent of homeless veterans were unable to get on a waiting list, because the list was closed. Six percent of homeless veterans said they had received a housing voucher that they lost or could not use.

Over four-fifths (85%) of homeless veterans needed only an efficiency or one-bedroom apartment. One-quarter (25%) of homeless veterans were not able to pay any amount for rent. Eleven percent indicated they could pay \$1 to \$100 per month for rent; 9 percent could pay \$101 to \$200; 15 percent could pay \$201 to \$300; 11 percent could pay \$301 to \$400; 13 percent could pay \$401 to \$500; and 17 percent could pay more than \$500 per month.

Two-thirds (68%) of homeless veterans indicated that their last regular or permanent housing was in Minnesota, 31 percent in another state, and less than 1 percent in another country.

The main reasons homeless veterans cited for leaving their last regular housing included loss of a job or reduction in work hours (38%); inability to afford the rent (37%); eviction (26%); their own drinking or drug problems (21%); problems getting along with the people they lived with (20%); or a breakup with their spouse or partner (20%).

Nearly one-third (30%) of women cited domestic violence as a reason for leaving their last housing. Men were more likely than women to cite the loss of a job (39% vs. 29%); inability to afford the rent (38% vs. 23%); eviction (26% vs. 16%); their own drinking or drug problems (22% vs. 9%); or entering treatment, jail or a residential program (15% vs. 3%). Women were more likely than men to cite a breakup with a spouse or partner (33% vs. 19%); substandard or unsafe housing (23% vs. 10%); or another household member's drinking or drug problem (13% vs. 10%).

16. Common reasons why homeless veterans left their last regular housing

Did you leave your last regular housing because...	Percentage responding "yes"		
	Men (N=542)	Women (N=38)	Total (N=580)
You lost your job or had your hours cut	39%	29%	38%
You could not afford the rent or house payments	38%	23%	37%
You were evicted or your lease was not renewed	26%	16%	26%
A drinking or drug problem you had	22%	9%	21%
Breakup with your spouse or partner	19%	33%	20%
Problems getting along with other people you lived with	20%	27%	20%
You entered treatment, jail or a residential program	15%	3%	15%
You were living in substandard or unsafe housing	10%	23%	11%
A drinking or drug problem of another member of your household	10%	13%	10%
Abuse by someone you lived with	4%	30%	6%

Homeless veterans most often reported that the first place they stayed in when they lost their housing was with family or friends (38%); in an emergency shelter (24%); outdoors (11%); or in a van, bus station, or another public place (12%). Other places mentioned were a treatment program (2%); jail (2%); hotel or motel (6%); transitional housing (1%); rental housing (1%); hospital (2%); and halfway house (<1%). Homeless female veterans were more likely to stay with family or friends than homeless male veterans (53% vs. 37%).

The main reasons given by homeless veterans for currently being unable to obtain housing included lack of job or income (43%); no housing they could afford (21%); a criminal background (18%); credit problems (17%); no local rental history (7%); court eviction (6%); cost of application fees (6%); and alcohol or chemical use (5%).

Children of homeless veterans

Although over two-thirds (69%) of homeless female veterans and nearly one-quarter (23%) of homeless male veterans reported that they *had* children under the age of 18, the proportion caring for their children while homeless was substantially lower. Just under two-fifths (39%) of homeless female veterans and 1 percent of male veterans were accompanied by their children on the night of the survey. The parents accompanied by their children represented 5 percent of all homeless veterans surveyed. The average number of children with those parents was two, with an average age of seven years.

Of the 34 homeless veterans who had children with them, 26 percent reported being unable to obtain needed child care in the previous 12 months; 18 percent were unable to obtain needed dental care; 11 percent were unable to obtain needed physical health care; and 8 percent were unable to obtain needed mental health care. Six percent of the homeless veterans who had children with them reported that their children had to skip meals in the previous month. Over one-quarter (28%) of homeless veterans who had children with them reported having at least one child with emotional health problems, and 7 percent reported having at least one child with physical health problems that interfere with their daily life.

Twenty-three parents had school-age children with them. Of those parents, 42 percent reported that they have at least one child who has experienced bullying; 21 percent had at least one child with learning or school problems; 23 percent had at least one child who has repeated a grade in school; 18 percent had at least one child whose grades had dropped; and 15 percent had at least one child who has trouble going to school because of their current housing problems.

Chemical dependency

Over one-third (37%) of homeless veterans (37% of male veterans and 31% of female veterans) reported that they consider themselves to be alcoholic or chemically dependent. Over one-third (35%) of male veterans and one-fifth (20%) of female veterans had been admitted to a detox center at least once.

Nine percent of homeless veterans reported the need to see a health professional about alcohol or drug problems. Over one-quarter of male veterans (27%) and female veterans (28%) had been told by a doctor or nurse, within the previous two years, that they had chemical dependency problems.

Nearly half of male veterans (47%) and over one-third of female veterans (35%) reported that, at some time in their lives, they had lived in an alcohol or drug treatment facility. About one-fifth (19%) of male veterans and nearly one-quarter (23%) of female veterans had been in residential drug treatment programs in the previous two years.

Forty-four percent of male veterans and 34 percent of female veterans had received outpatient drug or alcohol treatment at some time in their lives. Thirteen percent of male veterans and 8 percent of female veterans received outpatient drug or alcohol treatment in the previous two years.

Physical health

Over half (54%) of homeless veterans reported they had at least one chronic medical condition (high blood pressure, asthma, other chronic lung or respiratory problems, chronic heart or circulatory problems, diabetes, hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, and/or tuberculosis). Of those, three-quarters (75%) reported receiving care for each reported condition in the previous 12 months.

Half (49%) of homeless veterans said they needed to see a dentist about tooth or gum problems, and over two-fifths (43%) said they needed to see a doctor for a physical health problem. One-sixth (16%) of homeless veterans reported they were not taking prescribed medication. Over two-fifths (42%) of homeless veterans had used emergency room services during the previous six months.

Over four-fifths (83%) of homeless veterans reported that they had medical coverage in October. Of those who reported having medical coverage, 34 percent had Medical Assistance; 30 percent had VAMC benefits; 11 percent had MinnesotaCare; 9 percent had Medicare; 6 percent had General Assistance Medical Care; 5 percent had Medicare plus another type of insurance; 5 percent did not specify the type of medical coverage they had; and 2 percent had employer-sponsored insurance. Over one-quarter (26%) of homeless veterans reported they had problems getting needed medical care, primarily because of a lack of money or insurance.

17. Type of medical insurance reported by homeless veterans who had some kind of coverage in October

	Percentage of those with coverage
Medical Assistance	34%
VAMC benefits	30%
MinnesotaCare	11%
Medicare	9%
General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC)	6%
Medicare plus another type of insurance	5%
Type of coverage not specified	5%
Employer-sponsored health insurance	2%

Over three-quarters (78%) of homeless veterans reported that they had a regular place to go for medical care. Of these, over two-fifths (43%) reported that they received medical care at a clinic that requires insurance or fees; 39 percent received care at the VA Medical Center; 7 percent received care at a free clinic; 5 percent received care at an emergency room; 2 percent received care at a medical center (not specified if these centers require fees or insurance); percent received care at a medical clinic (not specified if these clinics require fees or insurance), and 1 percent received care at a hospital. Two percent did not name any type of medical facility;

Mental health

Mental illness was a significant problem for nearly three-fifths (57%) of the homeless veterans interviewed in 2012. Half (50%) of homeless veterans had been told by a doctor or nurse (within the previous two years) that they had schizophrenia, manic depression, some other type of delusional disorder, major depression, antisocial personality disorder, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Forty percent of homeless veterans surveyed had received outpatient mental health services, and 14 percent had lived in a facility for persons with mental health problems within the previous two years. Over one-third (36%) of homeless veterans said they needed to see a doctor about a mental or emotional health problem.

18. Mental health characteristics of homeless veterans

	Percentage with characteristics		
	Men (N=542)	Women (N=38)	Total (N=580)
Schizophrenia	9%	-	8%
Paranoid or delusional disorder, other than schizophrenia	7%	3%	7%
Manic episodes or manic depression, also called bipolar disorder	20%	35%	21%
Major depression	34%	61%	36%
Antisocial personality, obsessive-compulsive personality, or another severe emotional disorder	16%	27%	17%
Post-traumatic stress disorder	24%	59%	27%
Any mental health diagnosis above	48%	82%	50%
Alcohol abuse disorder	23%	25%	23%
Drug abuse disorder	13%	20%	14%
Any chemical dependency diagnosis above	27%	28%	27%
Dual diagnosis (chemical dependency and mental illness)	17%	25%	18%

Serious or chronic disability

As described previously, half (50%) of homeless veterans had serious mental health problems (indicated by recent diagnosis or treatment), 27 percent had a diagnosed alcohol or drug abuse disorder, and over half (54%) had a chronic physical health condition.

According to many homeless veterans interviewed, physical, mental, or other health conditions limited the amount or kind of work they could do (54%), limited their daily activities (14%), or interfered with memory or daily decision-making (32%).

Pooling all of the above, nearly nine in ten (87%) homeless veterans reported having at least one serious or chronic disability (mental illness, substance abuse disorder, chronic medical condition, cognitive impairment, or other condition that limits work or activities of daily living).

Another concern is the fact that traumatic brain injury, which is reported by about one in three homeless veterans, is sometimes difficult to detect, and the symptoms may mimic those of post-traumatic stress disorder. While survivors may appear normal, they often have diminished memory, act in irrational ways, display episodes of rage, have difficulty concentrating, and generally have diminished capacity to maintain family relationships. Any of these elements, left untreated, can increase the likelihood of homelessness for new veterans.

One-third (33%) of homeless veterans in the Wilder study had a history that suggests likely traumatic brain injury. That is, they received a serious head injury, followed by the development of problems with headaches, concentration or memory, understanding, excessive worry, sleeping, or getting along with people.

Thirteen percent of homeless veterans report being told by a doctor or nurse in the previous two years that they have a traumatic brain injury. Six percent of homeless veterans report being diagnosed with a service-related head injury or traumatic brain injury.

Abuse and victimization

A history of childhood mistreatment was not uncommon for respondents in the survey. About one-third (34%) of homeless male veterans and 45 percent of homeless female veterans indicated that they were physically mistreated as children, and 18 percent of men and 30 percent of women reported sexual mistreatment as children. Thirteen percent of men and 37 percent of women indicated that, as children, their parents neglected to provide food, shelter, or medical care, or left them unsupervised for long periods of time when they were too young to be left on their own. Over one-third (36%) of homeless male veterans and nearly half (49%) of homeless female veterans were either physically

or sexually mistreated as children. If individuals reporting neglect as children were added, 38 percent of men and 59 percent of women reported mistreatment as children.

19. Childhood mistreatment reported by homeless veterans

	Men (N=542)	Women (N=38)	Total (N=580)
Physically abused as a child or youth	34%	45%	35%
Sexually abused as a child or youth	18%	30%	18%
Neglected as a child or youth (not provided food, shelter, or medical care, or left unsupervised for long periods of time)	13%	37%	15%
Any of the above experiences as a child	38%	59%	40%
Either physically <u>or</u> sexually abused as a child	36%	49%	37%

Eleven percent of homeless veterans interviewed (11% of men and 19% of women) reported being sexual with someone only for the purpose of getting shelter, clothing, food, and other things. About one-fifth (21%) of homeless male veterans and 52 percent of homeless female veterans reported staying in an abusive situation because they did not have other housing options. Eight percent of homeless male veterans and over one-third (35%) of homeless female veterans reported being in a personal relationship in the previous year with someone who hit them, slapped them, pushed them around, or threatened to do so. Nearly one-third (30%) of women veterans reported they were homeless, at least in part, because they were fleeing abuse.

The overall experience of homelessness can be a risky one, especially for women. Nearly one-sixth (15%) of homeless female veterans had been approached to work in the sex industry. Fourteen percent (14% of men and 20% of women) of homeless veterans reported having been physically or sexually attacked or beaten since becoming homeless. Eight percent of homeless veterans (7% of men and 16% of women) reported having sought health care because of an injury or illness caused by violence in the previous year.

Homeless veterans data tables

Detail tables including the frequency distributions for all questions included in the survey, with breakdowns by geographic area (Twin Cities area vs. greater Minnesota), by gender (male vs. female), and by type of shelter arrangement (emergency shelter, transitional housing programs, informal shelter, and unsheltered locations) can be found on our website <http://www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Research-Areas/Homelessness/Pages/Statewide-Homeless-Study-Detailed-Data.aspx>.⁴

The tables are organized by question. Within each question, the first data table displays the responses by the type of shelter arrangement and the second table displays the responses by the Twin Cities area, then by the greater Minnesota area, and then by the combined totals for the Twin Cities area and greater Minnesota.

Note that some tables are conditional. For example, Table 174 reports the number of respondents who have considered suicide. This question was asked of everyone. Table 175 reports information about suicide attempts, but this question was asked only of those who had considered suicide. Thus, the percentages reported in Table 175 total 100 percent of those who have considered suicide, not 100 percent of the entire sample.

Notes for interpreting the data tables

The tables contain weighted estimates. This means that the survey results have been statistically adjusted to reflect the actual populations residing in emergency shelters and transitional housing programs on the day of the survey. (We interviewed a sample, not every person in each shelter.)

For informal and unsheltered locations, the data are not weighted. We do not adjust the numbers to reflect the actual population, because we do not know the actual numbers of men, women, and children who were on the streets or in other non-shelter locations on the day of the survey.

You should use the percentages, not the frequencies, when interpreting these tables. Sample weighting, such as we have performed with these data, uses calculations that can result in "fractional" persons. When we use computer rounding to adjust for this, the numbers do not always add up exactly to the total for each category.

⁴ Unsheltered arrangements include outside, abandoned buildings, vehicles, temporary paid, or exchange arrangements.

The total number of responses is different for each question, based on the number of valid responses to that question. Missing data (cases when a respondent did not answer a question) are not reported or included in the percentages.

Weighting techniques

The 2012 survey data were weighted to reflect the actual number of homeless persons as indicated by specific site counts of people in shelters in Minnesota on Thursday, October 25, 2012. Only sites from which there were completed interviews were used in the weighting. The actual number of homeless persons in non-sheltered locations cannot be accurately estimated, so these cases were given a weight of 1.0.

The weightings were calculated by a sample-balancing program available in the Princeton Statistical Program (P-Stat). This technique uses an iterative approximation to the least square adjustment of W.E. Deming (Statistical Adjustment of Data, New York: Wiley, 1943). This weighting procedure uses marginals (totals of control variables) to compute individual case weights. In order to obtain the highest possible accuracy, 5 sets of marginals were used.

These were:

- Individual sites
- Gender (male, female)
- Region (Twin Cities area and greater Minnesota)
- Shelter type (emergency, transitional)
- Shelter type within region by gender (all combinations of items 2, 3, and 4 above).

Weightings were used to estimate the characteristics of homeless veterans in Minnesota temporary housing programs on the night of the survey, based on the sample of interviews with adults in such programs. Statistical weightings could not be computed if interviews were not completed in a specific weighting category (e.g., region, shelter type, and gender).

The 2012 data tables can be found on our website: <http://www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Research-Areas/Homelessness/Pages/Statewide-Homeless-Study-Detailed-Data.aspx>