

Comparison of 1991, 1994, 1997, 2000, and 2003 survey results

Gender: In 1991 and 1994, men made up the majority of the adult homeless population in Minnesota (60% and 51% respectively); in 1997 and 2000, women constituted the majority (53% and 51%); and in 2003 men regained a slight majority (52%).

Age of adults: The average age of homeless men increased from 34.9 in 1991 to 41.3 in 2003 and the average age of homeless women increased from 31.7 in 1991 to 33.7 in 2003.

Race/ethnicity: Persons of color continue to make up the majority (57%) of the homeless population. However, this is the first study to show a decrease in the percentage of persons of color (60% in 1991, 61% in 1994 and 1997, and 66% in 2000).

Marital status: About three in five persons (55% to 58% in all five years) never married.

Homeless families: The number of homeless families (defined as one or more adults with one or more children) increased consistently and significantly (434 in 1991, 807 in 1994, 1,103 in 1997, and 1,413 in 2000) from 1991 to 2000 but decreased slightly in 2003 to 1,323 families. This represents a decrease of 6 percent from 2000.

Adults with children: In 2003, 53 percent of homeless women had children with them. This is about the same percent as in 1991 when 52 percent of homeless women had children with them. This rose to 65 percent in 1994, then declined to 60 percent in 1997 and 2000. The percentage of homeless men who had children with them fluctuated between 4 percent and 9 percent from 1991 to 2000, consistent with the 6 percent in 2003.

Adults' education and training: In 2003, 75 percent of homeless adults have completed high school, which is similar to 2000 (76%). The percentage of homeless adults who completed high school had previously dropped from 78 percent in 1991 to 70 percent in 1997. There was a decline in the percentage of persons who had attended at least some college (31% in 1991 to 26% in 1997). Beginning in 2000, there has been a slight increase in the percentage of homeless persons who had attended at least some college (28% in 2000 to 30% in 2003). About half of homeless adults in all five studies (1991, 1994, 1997, 2000, and 2003) had attended classes to learn a specific job.

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Employment: In 2003, there was a decline in the percentage of employed homeless adults for the first time since 1991. The percentage of employed homeless adults increased steadily from 1991 to 2000 (19% in 1991, 26% in 1994, 34% in 1997, 41% in 2000) but dropped in 2003 to 30 percent. Homeless adults who report working full-time followed the same pattern: increasing from 1991 to 2000 and then dropping in 2003 (8% in 1991, 13% in 1994, 17% in 1997, 26% in 2000, and 13% in 2003). At the same time, the percentage of adults unemployed for 12 months or longer also increased to 45 percent from about one-third in 1994, 1997, and 2000 (35%, 33%, and 35%, respectively). In 2003, the percentage of persons who report a steady job as their main income source dropped to 19 percent (about the same as in 1994 and 1997) from 29 percent in 2000.

Other income and assistance: The percentage of homeless adults who report no income almost doubled from 2000 to 2003 (7% in 2000 to 12% in 2003). The percentage receiving family welfare benefits (formerly AFDC and now MFIP) fluctuated from 16 percent in 1991 to 26 percent in 1994, 23 percent in 1997, 24 percent in 2000, and 21 percent in 2003. In 2003, Food Stamp use increased slightly to 46 percent from 41 percent in 2000. The use of Food Stamps had dropped from 57 percent in 1991 to 41 percent in 2000. Homeless persons receiving either Medical Assistance or General Assistance Medical Care dropped from 63 percent in 1991 to 54 percent in 2003. The percentage of persons who received care in an emergency room in the six months prior to the survey was the same in 1991, 1994, 2000, and 2003 (37%). The only year showing a slight decrease was 1997 (34%).

Veterans: In 2003, military veterans make up approximately 26 percent of homeless adult males (same as 1997) compared to 31 percent in 2000. In 2003, the total number of homeless veterans on any given day is 701 (461 in the Twin Cities metro area and 240 in greater Minnesota), which is up slightly from the 2000 study that found 686 homeless veterans. In 1997 there were 374 homeless veterans. In 1991, 33 percent of the adult homeless males were military veterans (N=376) and in 1994, 25 percent of the homeless adult males were military veterans (N=322).

Length of residence in Minnesota: The percent of newcomers to Minnesota (two years or less) has decreased from 39 percent in 1991 and 1994, to 28 percent in 1997 and 2000, and to 27 percent in 2003.

Length of current homeless episode: The percentage of persons who report being homeless for less than one month dropped from 20 percent in 1991 and 1994 to 14 percent in 1997 and to 11 percent in 2000 and 2003. Persons who were homeless for more than one year remained steady at about 30 percent in 1991, 1994, and 1997, but had increased to 36 percent in 2000 and to 44 percent in 2003.

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Ability to pay rent: In 2003, 21 percent of homeless adults could not pay anything for rent. This increase reverses the downward trend in the proportion of homeless persons who report they could pay nothing for rent (from 24% in 1991 to 14% in 2000). The percentage who report they could pay less than \$200 a month also increased from 29 percent in 2000 to 42 percent in 2003.

Clothing and food shelves, drop-in centers: The use of free clothing shelves dropped slightly from 44 percent in 1991 to 40 percent in 2000 and 2003. The use of hot meal programs in 2003 was approximately the same as 1991, 1994, and 2000 (35% vs. 34%, 33% and 31% respectively). In 1997 the use of hot meal programs had dropped to just over one-quarter (27%). In 2003, the use of drop-in centers increased to 30 percent from the 25 percent reported in the other four time periods.

History of childhood abuse: The percentage of homeless adults who report physical mistreatment as a child increased from 28 percent in 1991 to 38 percent in 2003. Likewise, homeless adults who report being sexually mistreated as children increased from 17 percent in 1991 to 27 percent in 2003.

History of foster care: The percentage of homeless adults who report having lived in a foster home is about the same as in previous surveys (17% in 1991, 15% in 1994, 19% in 1997, 18% in 2000, and 20% in 2003).

Chemical dependency: In each survey, about one-third of homeless persons considered themselves to be chemically dependent (31% in 1991, 30% in 1994, 33% in 1997, 32% in 2000, and 34% in 2003). The percentage who have been admitted to a detox center dropped from 34 percent in 1991 to about 25 percent in 1994 and 1997, then increased to 28 percent in 2000, and to 31 percent in 2003. About two-fifths (39%) of homeless adults report having lived in an alcohol or drug treatment facility and about one in five (21%) report having done so within the previous two years.

Mental health: In 2003, the percentage of homeless adults who report significant mental health problems rose to 42 percent. This is 10 percent higher than in 2000 (32%) and significantly higher than the first statewide homeless study in 1991 (25%). (A significant mental health problem was defined as being told by a doctor or nurse in the previous two years that they have schizophrenia, paranoia or other delusional disorder, manic-depression, major depression, anti-social personality disorder, or post-traumatic stress disorder.)

If we include persons with a recent mental health diagnosis and/or recent treatment for a mental health problem (inpatient or outpatient), the percentage of persons with mental health problems increases to 47 percent. The percentage of persons with a dual diagnosis (both chemically dependent and mentally ill) increased in 2003 to about 17 percent after remaining stable at about 14 percent during the last three study periods. The percentage

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of homeless adults who report having lived in a mental health facility increased from 13 percent in 1991 and 1994, to 18 percent in 1997 and 2000, and to 20 percent in 2003.

Key comparisons: The following two tables provide comparisons on key measures over the five survey periods. The first table shows the trend in the number of families experiencing homelessness on a single night in October. The second table shows selected characteristics for comparison over the five study periods.

**Number of families without permanent shelter on a single night in October
1991, 1994, 1997, 2000, and 2003**

	1991	1994	1997	2000	2003
Single men with children	13	16	57	41	81
Single women with children	379	711	902	1,152	1,059
Couples with children	36	65	110	187	157
Unaccompanied youth with children	6	15	34	33	26
Total number of families	434	807	1,103	1,413	1,323

Comparison of selected characteristics of homeless adults, from 1991, 1994, 1997, 2000, 2003 statewide surveys

	1991 (N=1,954)	1994 (N=2,470)	1997 (N=2,884)	2000 (N=4,201)	2003 (N=4,774)
Men	59.8%	51.2%	46.6%	49.5%	52.3%
Women	40.2%	48.8%	53.4%	50.5%	47.7%
Persons of color	59.6%	61.2%	61.1%	65.7%	56.4%
Average age in years (men)	34.9	35.8	37.0	39.7	41.3%
Average age in years (women)	31.7	31.0	30.8	32.3	33.7%
Never married	56.5%	56.6%	58.3%	56.8%	55.3%
Completed high school diploma or GED	78.3%	72.9%	70.2%	75.5%	74.9%
Attended some college	30.6%	26.0%	25.7%	27.9%	29.9%
Attended training to learn a specific job	44.3%	51.7%	50.1%	54.8%	51.5%
Military veterans	23.3%	14.3%	13.2%	16.4%	14.7%
Military veterans, (men only)	32.9%	25.4%	25.9%	31.6%	26.1%
Lived in Minnesota for two years or less	39.1%	39.2%	27.8%	27.8%	27.0%
Ever in foster care	17.2%	14.9%	18.9%	18.4%	19.8%
Ever in hospital for persons with mental health problems	13.4%	13.1%	17.9%	17.9%	20.4%
Have Medical Assistance or GAMC	62.8%	58.9%	48.6%	56.2%	53.9%
Main source of income is MFIP (family welfare, formerly AFDC)	16.4%	26.0%	22.8%	16.7%	16.4%
Main source of income is MFIP (family welfare, formerly AFDC), (women only)	37.9%	48.8%	43.1%	27.7%	30.7%
Main source of income is General Assistance	31.8%	21.0%	14.7%	9.4%	15.8%
Main source of income is a steady job	9.2%	19.7%	21.2%	28.8%	19.8%
No source of income	9.4%	8.9%	6.3%	6.7%	11.9%
Median monthly income (emergency shelter residents)	\$237	Men \$300 Women \$446	Men \$400 Women \$465	Men \$543 Women \$495	Men \$300 Women \$325
Median monthly income (battered women's shelter residents)	\$437	\$532	\$532	\$560	\$437
Median monthly income (transitional housing residents)	\$437	Men \$438 Women \$532	Men \$300 Women \$532	Men \$685 Women \$751	Men \$500 Women \$532

Note: Percentages are weighted to reflect statewide shelter population on the date of the survey.

Homeless adults and children in Minnesota statewide survey
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Comparison of selected characteristics of homeless adults, from 1991, 1994, 1997, 2000, and 2003 statewide surveys (continued)

	1991 (N=1,954)	1994 (N=2,470)	1997 (N=2,884)	2000 (N=4,201)	2003 (N=4,774)
Used Food Stamps in previous month	56.9%	51.7%	38.1%	41.4%	46.0%
Used free clothing shelves in previous month	43.8%	36.7%	38.2%	39.6%	40.0%
Used hot meal programs in previous month	33.9%	33.0%	27.4%	31.2%	34.6%
Used drop-in centers in previous month	25.8%	23.2%	22.5%	25.2%	29.8%
Homeless for less than one month	20.5%	20.3%	13.8%	10.4%	11.2%
Homeless for at least one year*	29.7%	30.8%	31.1%	35.6%	43.8%
Could not pay anything for rent	23.9%	13.4%	14.3%	13.6%	21.1%
Could pay less than \$200 a month for rent	62.8%	44.2%	38.4%	28.7%	36.2%
Women who have children with them	52.0%	64.6%	59.8%	59.9%	53.3%
Men who have children with them	4.0%	8.9%	4.6%	7.9%	5.6%
Employed (full-time or part-time)	18.5%	25.5%	34.2%	40.8%	30.2%
Employed full-time	7.5%	13.4%	16.8%	26.1%	12.7%
Unemployed for 12 months or more	54.5%	34.5%	32.8%	32.0%	42.0%
Chemically dependent (self-report)	31.1%	30.2%	32.6%	32.1%	34.0%
Ever admitted to detox center	34.1%	25.4%	25.6%	27.9%	31.1%
Ever lived in an alcohol or drug treatment facility	36.4%	32.4%	37.7%	37.9%	39.3%
Lived in an alcohol or drug treatment facility in previous two years	19.3%	16.8%	20.2%	19.7%	19.9%
Received care in an emergency room in previous six months	37.2%	32.1%	34.3%	37.2%	37.4%
Reported significant mental illness	25.0%	23.7%	32.0%	32.0%	46.7%
Physically mistreated as a child	27.5%	33.4%	34.3%	32.5%	37.7%
Sexually mistreated as a child	16.9%	21.5%	25.0%	24.4%	27.4%

Notes: Percentages are weighted to reflect statewide shelter population on the date of the survey.

* Prior to 2003, this was asked as "more than one year."

Comparison to 2000 Census information

U.S. Census information gathered during 2000 makes it possible to compare the characteristics of persons in temporary housing programs and the unsheltered people who were interviewed to the characteristics of adults in the general population. The next table provides comparisons for the following variables: gender, ethnicity, age, educational level, marital status, veteran status, place of birth, rents of \$300 or more per month, receipt of public assistance, and Social Security benefits.

Characteristics of Minnesota homeless adults surveyed in October 2003 compared with the general adult Minnesota population in 2000

	Minnesota 2003 adult homeless sample (N=4,774) ^a		Minnesota 2000 Census (N=4,919,479)
	Number	Percent	Percent
Gender			N=4,919,479^b
Male	2,498	52.3%	49.5%
Female	2,276	47.7%	50.5%
Ethnicity			N=4,919,479^b
Caucasian	2,020	43.1%	89.4%
African American	1,817	38.7%	3.5%
American Indian	426	9.1%	1.1%
Asian	48	1.0%	2.9%
Multiracial/other	372	7.9%	3.0%
Hispanic origin – Hispanic, Latino, or Chicano	324	7.2%	2.9%
Age			N=4,919,479^b
18-29 years	1,311	27.5%	16.1%
30-39 years	1,265	26.5%	15.6%
40-49 years	1,473	30.9%	15.8%
50-59 years	606	12.7%	10.7%
60+ years	119	2.5%	15.7%
Educational level (age 25+)			N=3,164,345^b
Less than high school	1,194	25.1%	12.1%
High school graduate or GED	2,147	45.1%	28.8%
At least some college	1,424	29.9%	59.1%
Marital status (age 15+)			N=3,857,755^b
Married	324	6.8%	56.3%
Separated, widowed, divorced	1,801	37.8%	15.6%
Never married	2,634	55.3%	28.1%

Background characteristics of homeless adult sample compared to Minnesota population (continued)

	Minnesota 2000 adult homeless sample (N=4,774) ^a		Minnesota 2000 Census (N=4,919,479)
	Number	Percent	Percent
U.S. military veteran (Census data includes all persons age 18+)	702	14.7%	N=3,632,940 ^b 12.9%
U.S. military veteran (men only) (Census data includes only men age 18+)	652	26.1%	N=1,773,904 ^b 25.1%
Native to Minnesota	2,109	44.4%	70.2% ^c
Lived in Minnesota 5 years ago (Census data includes age 5 and older)	3,036	63.6%	N=4,589,885 ^c 90.4%
Can pay rent of \$300 or more per month ^d (Census data includes renters only)	1,677	42.1%	N=454,011 ^d 81.9%
Household receives public assistance income including Supplemental Security Income ^e (Census data includes number of households)	2,200	46.1%	N=1,896,209 ^e 6.3%
Household receives Social Security income (Census data includes number of households)	471	9.9%	N=1,896,209 ^e 23.9%

Notes:

(a) The Minnesota homeless adult sample in this table is weighted to better reflect the actual population of homeless adults in shelters on the night of the survey. The homeless adult sample in this table also includes interviews with non-sheltered adults interviewed in the survey, which are not weighted because the actual population of non-sheltered adults is not known. See "Background and Notes," page 121, for details on the weighting method.

(b) 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing. Retrieved data from internet on June 10, 2004 (<http://www.lmic.state.mn.us/datanetweb/php/census2000>)

(c) 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing. Retrieved data from internet on June 14, 2004 (<http://factfinder.census.gov>)

(d) Census data include all renters who pay rents of more than \$300 per month. Homeless data include all respondents who say they could afford to pay more than \$300 per month for rent.

(e) Homeless data include SSI, MFIP, Minnesota Supplemental Assistance, and Census data include public assistance and SSI.

Personal accounts

The general statewide profile of people who were homeless on October 23, 2003 shows a widely varied population tied together by three common elements: poverty, inadequate employment, and no place to call home. Many of those who are homeless in Minnesota also share backgrounds of abuse, institutionalization, and chemical dependency. Each of the following accounts is drawn from an actual survey interview; the names have been changed to protect the identity of the respondents.

Aleema is a White 18-year-old who grew up in Indiana. She moved to Minnesota about two years ago with her family. When she became pregnant, Aleema left her family to live with her baby's father. When the baby's father lost his job, they became homeless. She has been living with her child in transitional housing for just over four months. She is not currently living with the baby's father. The primary barriers keeping her from getting permanent housing are her age, the cost of application fees, no rental history, and no housing she can afford. Her main source of income is MFIP (Minnesota's welfare program); and she receives no child support from her child's father. Aleema does not report any chemical dependency or mental health problems. She does not report any mistreatment as a child. However, she did spend time in foster care. She said that she could return home but does not think she will ever live with her parents again. Her main reasons for not returning home include wanting to make her own decisions and the lack of space in the household. In the last year she has received help in finding needed services from a parent and a youth worker. *(Actual survey participant; name and details changed to protect privacy.)*

Jake is a 48-year-old American Indian who has lived in Minnesota all of his life. He is an enrolled member of the Nett Lake Band of Ojibwe. He completed high school and a training course in carpentry. Jake is currently working part-time for less than \$6 an hour at a job that has lasted more than three months. Jake has been homeless for more than five years. When interviewed in October, he had slept outside every night that month. Jake has a long history of living in institutions. As a youth he lived in foster care and an Indian school. As an adult he has lived in a substance abuse treatment center, a mental health facility, a halfway house, and an emergency shelter. He says he is chemically dependent and reports being in detox at least 150 times. Jake has had a head injury in the past that required hospitalization. After the injury he had headaches, loss of memory, and other problems related to his head injury. Jake has been diagnosed with alcohol abuse disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. In the last two years, he received outpatient treatment for mental health problems. He has had contact with a family member within the past month. *(Actual survey participant; name and details changed to protect privacy.)*

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Katrina is a 28-year-old African American woman who recently moved here from Wisconsin, where she grew up. She is a trained medical assistant. She moved to Minnesota for a job but was laid off within the past six months. When her job ended she lost her housing. This is the first time she has been homeless. Katrina has been homeless for less than four months. She is currently living with her two children in a transitional housing program. She does not report any institutionalization or mistreatment as a child. Her main barriers to housing include a bad rental history, credit problems, and difficulty finding housing she can afford. *(Actual survey participant; name and details changed to protect privacy.)*

Gerardo is a 38-year-old Latino man who has lived in Minnesota all of his life. He completed two years of college and received a degree. Within the past year, he was released from prison under the supervision of a parole officer. He received no help finding a stable place to live. During October he has slept outside every night. Gerardo was physically mistreated as a child and lived in a foster care home. As an adult, he spent time in a mental health facility and a chemical dependency treatment center. Gerardo served in the U.S. Army for more than two years and received an honorable discharge, but does not receive any veterans' benefits. Gerardo reports that he has been diagnosed with an anti-social personality disorder. He received some counseling while in prison but none since he has been released. Gerardo reports he was once knocked unconscious, received treatment in a hospital, and started having problems with headaches, memory problems, and other problems related to the head injury. He says his main barrier to finding both housing and a job is his criminal background. This is the first time he has been homeless. *(Actual survey participant; name and details changed to protect privacy.)*