

Notes on the 2003 homeless survey

These tables provide detailed survey results from *Homeless adults and children in Minnesota: Statewide survey of people without permanent shelter*. The data are provided to help planners and service providers develop summary information about the characteristics of homeless people, their experiences and needs, and the barriers that prevent them from obtaining housing.

The statewide data tables are based on interviews with 1,102 men and 1,241 women in emergency shelters, battered women's shelters, and transitional housing programs, and another 624 interviews with adults in non-shelter locations. According to the interviews, adult respondents had a total of 1,767 children with them.

In the data tables, survey results have been weighted to represent the 2,118 men and 2,032 women who were in temporary housing programs on the night of the survey. According to shelter providers, 2,724 children were with their parents or another adult on the night of the survey.

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, battered women's shelters, and transitional housing programs on the day of the survey. (We interviewed a sample, not every person in each shelter.)

For non-shelter locations, the data is 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 this 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.

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.

Not all regions have all categories of shelters. That is why some shelter types are missing in certain regions.

The percentages apply only to the respondents who were qualified to answer that question. Some tables report data that were collected only from those who answered a previous question in a certain way. For example, many questions about children are asked only of those adults who have children with them, so the percentages apply only to that group.

Weighting techniques

The 2003 survey data was weighted to reflect the actual number of homeless persons as indicated by specific site counts of people in shelters throughout the state on October 23, 2003. 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 (northwest, northeast, central, west central, southwest, southeast, Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Scott/Carver, Washington, Ramsey, St. Louis County).
- Shelter type (emergency, transitional, battered women's shelter).
- Shelter type within region by gender (all combinations of items 2, 3, and 4 above).

Weightings were used to estimate the characteristics of homeless persons in Minnesota's temporary housing programs on the night of the survey based on the sample of 2,343 interviews with adults. Statistical weightings could not be computed if interviews were not completed in a specific weighting category (e.g., region, shelter type, and gender). The actual number of adults in temporary housing programs on the night of the survey was 4,150. When this is combined with the results of the 624 interviews completed with adults in non-shelter locations, the total sample for which estimates are available is 4,774.

Homeless adults and children in Minnesota statewide survey

