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## NEWS RELEASE

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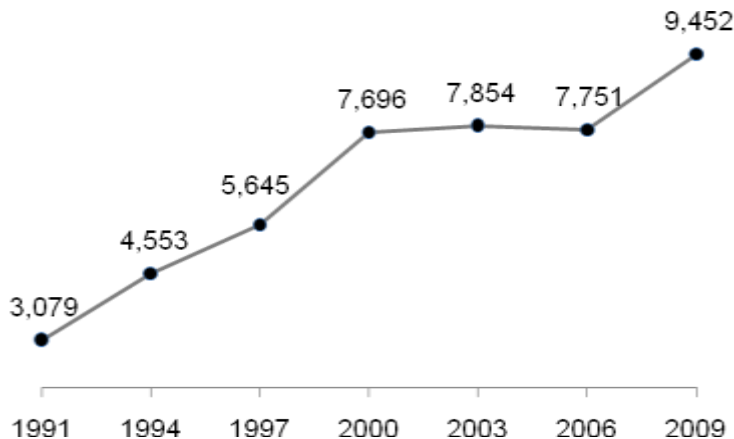
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### **Wilder study finds overall number of homeless people in Minnesota up sharply**

*Saint Paul* – After leveling off in the mid-2000s the number of homeless people in Minnesota has dramatically increased according to initial findings from Wilder Research’s triennial statewide homelessness study. The one-day survey conducted in October, 2009 counted 9,452 homeless adults, youth, and children in shelters, transitional housing, and on the streets. This compares to 7,751 homeless adults, youth and children counted in 2006.

#### **Count of homeless people**

#### **Wilder Research Minnesota Statewide Study, 1991-2009**



The number of homeless families with children increased 27 percent, from 1,318 in 2006 to 1,670 in 2009. In all, 3,251 children were counted with their parents on the night of the survey, up about 500 from 2006. The average age of children with their parents is 6 and a half. The study also counted 1,207 youth on their own (up significantly from 867 in 2006); 220 were age 17 and younger; 987 were 18 through 21.

The youngest person interviewed in the study was 12; the oldest was 83.

Numbers reflect homeless people counted or interviewed for the study. Estimates of additional numbers of homeless people not found through study outreach will be released when additional analyses are completed.

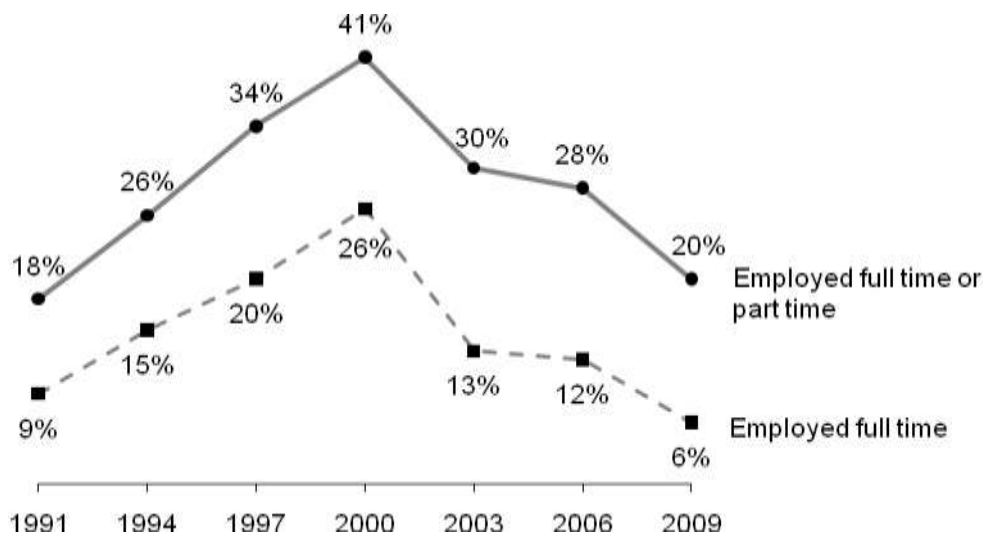
“These results are troubling, but they are not surprising,” said Greg Owen, director of the study. “The tough economic landscape of the past few years coupled with the recent shrinking of the safety net has made life a lot tougher, especially for those already living on the margin.”

Thirty-nine percent of adults in the study left their last permanent housing because of eviction, foreclosure, or failure to have their lease renewed; up from 32 percent in 2006. In addition, 40 percent reported that a job loss or reduction in hours was a reason for the loss of their last housing; up from 31 percent in 2006.

Another key component of the current picture is the continued decline in employment and hours of employment since a peak in 2000 at the height of the last economic boom. Twenty percent of homeless adults reported they were employed, either full time (35 hours+) or part time, down from about 28 percent in 2006, while average hours of employment per week also dropped to 26 from 30 in 2006.

### Percentage of homeless adults who are employed

#### Wilder Study 1991-2009



### **Additional findings:**

- 68% of homeless people found in the study were in metro area locations.
- Homeless adults in greater Minnesota are more than twice as likely as those in the metro area to have been found through outreach efforts (similar to previous years).
- African Americans represent about 41% of homeless adults statewide (52% in the metro area), but make up only about 4% of the overall adult Minnesota population.
- American Indians represent about 11% of homeless adults statewide but 19% of homeless adults in greater Minnesota and just 1% of the overall adult Minnesota population (similar to previous years).
- Overall, people of color represent 62% of Minnesota's adult homeless population, but make up only about 13% of the adult population.
- 44% of homeless adults are on a waiting list for some form of public housing (up from 34% in 2006).
- 46% of homeless adults have a chronic health condition during the preceding year (similar to 2006).
- 55% of homeless adults have a serious mental illness (up slightly from 2006).
- 23% of homeless adults have been diagnosed with a drug or alcohol abuse disorder, a figure that has been very stable since 1991.
- 64% of youth (age 21 and younger) have a history of being in out-of-home placements including foster care, group homes, detention, or treatment centers (down from 70% in 2006).
- 74% of youth (age 21 and younger) have been homeless before. On average, youth first experienced homelessness at age 15.
- 24% of youth (age 21 and younger) slept outside, in a car, or in an abandoned building at least one night in October (the month of the study).
- Nearly 700 homeless adults (19% of men and 2% of women) have served in the armed services. Of this group, 44% report a service-related health problem and 26% have served in a combat zone.

The study is an independent initiative of Wilder Research in partnership with public and private funders and in-kind support from service providers throughout the state. More than 1,000 volunteers conducted interviews in almost 400 locations including emergency shelters, battered women's shelters, and transitional housing programs, as well as in non-shelter locations that include encampments, abandoned buildings, under bridges and other places not intended for habitation. Interviews were also conducted at hot meal programs and other drop-in service locations. All of the people included in the study are in circumstances that meet the federal definition of homelessness.

A presentation, Homelessness in Minnesota: A Closer Look, will be held on May 25<sup>th</sup> at Wilder Center. It will include additional findings, trends, and analysis, and be followed with a panel discussion. More information is available at [www.wilderresearch.org](http://www.wilderresearch.org).

Counts of sheltered and unsheltered individuals for each Minnesota Continuum of Care region will be available in April; specialized reports on homeless families, veterans, youth, older adults, and long-term homeless populations will be released throughout 2010 at [www.wilderresearch.org](http://www.wilderresearch.org)

Wilder Research, part of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation in Saint Paul, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research and evaluation center dedicated to the field of human services. Wilder Research issues nearly 150 reports per year that help improve understanding of major social issues and identify effective ways to strengthen individuals, families and communities.

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