

American Indian homelessness in Minnesota

Fact sheet: Minnesota statewide homeless survey, 2012

This report is based on the 2012 Statewide Study of Homelessness conducted by Wilder Research. It focuses on American Indians who were identified as homeless on October 25, 2012 and who were *not* living on reservations.

Results

On the night of October 25, 2012, trained volunteers interviewed 674 homeless adult American Indians in non-reservation locations across the state of Minnesota. Of this group, 45 percent were men and 55 percent were women.

Sixty-four percent of American Indian adults compared to 81 percent of the statewide homeless population were staying in a shelter or transitional housing program or were about to be evicted from their housing and had nowhere else to go. American Indians were more likely than the statewide homeless population (23% vs. 13%) to be staying in a place that is not a regular or permanent place to stay, such as outdoors, in a car or vacant building, a place of business, or a place that they received a voucher for. American Indian homeless adults were also more than twice as likely as the general population of homeless adults (14% vs. 6%) to be doubled up with a friend or family member on a temporary basis because they had nowhere else to go.

Just over half of American Indians (55%) were interviewed in greater Minnesota, and 45 percent were interviewed in the metro area.

Education and employment

Twenty-nine percent of American Indian homeless adults, compared with 23 percent of the general homeless population, had not completed high school. Thirty-four percent reported that they had received special education services while in school, compared with 28 percent for all homeless adults.

For American Indian adults, 19 percent were currently employed, compared with 24 percent of the general homeless population. Similarly, only 6 percent of American Indian adults were employed full-time, compared with 8 percent in the general homeless population.

Income and income sources

Compared with the general homeless population, American Indians had a somewhat lower monthly income (\$452 compared to \$509). While 19 percent of the general homeless population reported that their main source of income was from steady employment, 13 percent of American Indians gave such a response. Just under half of the American Indian respondents (48%), comparable to 47 percent of the general homeless population, reported that they could pay \$200 or less per month for rent.

Health and disabilities

American Indian homeless adults were somewhat more likely than the general homeless population to report having been hit in the head so hard as to have seen stars or been knocked unconscious (60% vs. 52%). Further, 73 percent of the American Indian homeless adults who reported this kind of a head injury also (vs. 63% of those with head injuries in the general homeless population) said they had gone on to experience problems with headaches, concentration or memory, understanding, excessive worry, sleeping, or getting along with people.

Thirty-eight percent of American Indians in the sample self-reported alcoholism or chemical dependency, compared with 35 percent in the general homeless population reporting such conditions.

Forty-two percent of American Indians felt they need to see a health professional about emotional or mental health problems, 40 percent felt they needed to see a health professional about physical health problems, and 54 percent felt they needed to see a dentist about tooth or gum problems.

Incarceration and post-release housing

Fifty-nine percent of American Indians, compared with 47 percent of adults in the general homeless population, reported that they had ever been incarcerated. Of the American Indian homeless adults who had been incarcerated, 29 percent reported that they had been in a juvenile corrections facility, 48 percent reported that they had served in a county jail or workhouse, and 22 percent had served time in a state or federal prison.

Violence and abuse

Forty percent of American Indian women, compared to 33 percent of women in the general homeless population, report that they were in a personal relationship in the last 12 months with someone who hit, slapped, or pushed them around, or threatened to do so.

Rates of physical and sexual abuse as well as child neglect are higher for the American Indian adult homeless population than the general adult homeless population. Forty-six percent of homeless American Indian adults reported that they were physically abused as a child, compared with 37 percent of adults in the general homeless population. Thirty-five percent of homeless American Indians, compared with 26 percent of adults in the general homeless population, reported that they were sexually abused as children. Neglect was reported by 34 percent of American Indian homeless adults, compared with 21 percent of adults in the general homeless population.

Service use

The use of Food Stamp benefits and transportation assistance was similar for the American Indian and the general homeless population. Sixty-eight percent of American Indians, comparable to 67 percent of the general adult homeless population, used Food Stamps during October 2012. Fewer American Indians received transportation assistance than the general adult homeless population (41% vs. 44%) during the same time period. American Indians were slightly more likely to use food shelves (36% vs. 31%), and just as likely to use free medical clinics (20% vs. 21%) and free or almost free clothing shelves (43% vs. 40%). Twenty-seven percent of homeless American Indian adults used the Emergency Room in October 2012, compared with 26 percent of the general adult homeless population.

American Indian homeless adults rated Food Stamps (56%), transportation assistance (26%), hot meal programs (22%), and free or almost free clothing shelves (21%) as the most helpful services received.

Summary

The results show that the general level of distress in the American Indian homeless population not residing on reservations is somewhat higher than for adults in the general homeless population. However, homeless American Indians use services at a similar rate when compared with the general homeless population, and American Indians also find the same services to be helpful.

About the study

In the statewide study conducted every three years since 1991, trained volunteers conduct interviews with adults and unaccompanied youth who are in emergency shelters, battered women's shelters, transitional housing programs, or who are staying in places not meant for habitation. More information about the study, including an overview of the overall findings, can be found on the Wilder Research website (www.wilderresearch.org).

In 2012, a separate companion study examined American Indian homelessness and near-homelessness on six northern Minnesota reservations. Results of this study are planned to be released in the near future.

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For more information

This summary presents highlights of the 2012 *Statewide Study of Homelessness*. For more information about this report, contact Nicole MartinRogers at Wilder Research, 651-280-2682.

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