

## Hennepin County: Characteristics and Trends Of Those Experiencing Homelessness in Minnesota

Every three years, Wilder Research conducts a statewide study to better understand the prevalence, causes, circumstances, and effects of homelessness. The study includes face-to-face interviews with people throughout the state who meet the federal definition of homelessness, as well as a count of people who were homeless on a single night in late October. The most recent study was conducted on October 22, 2015.

This fact sheet highlights findings from interviews with people experiencing homelessness in Hennepin County. Interviews were conducted in emergency shelters, domestic violence shelters, transitional housing, and non-shelter locations such as encampments, hot-meal programs, and other drop-in service sites.

Additional fact sheets and reports about Minnesotans experiencing homelessness, including data tables with counts by age group, gender, and individuals versus families in Hennepin County can be found at [www.mnhomeless.org](http://www.mnhomeless.org).

### Homelessness in Hennepin County is down from the previous two studies

- Overall, 3,665 people experiencing homelessness were counted in Hennepin County, down 15% from 4,316 counted in 2012. This decrease follows a jump of 7% between 2009 and 2012.
- People experiencing homelessness in Hennepin County account for 39% of the state total (9,312).
- Children represent 37% of Hennepin County's overall homeless population. Children and youth age 24 or younger are the most likely to be homeless.
- 71% of homeless adults age 18 or older in Hennepin County have been in Minnesota for longer than 2 years.

### Changes in numbers counted in Hennepin County vary from year to year depending on age group

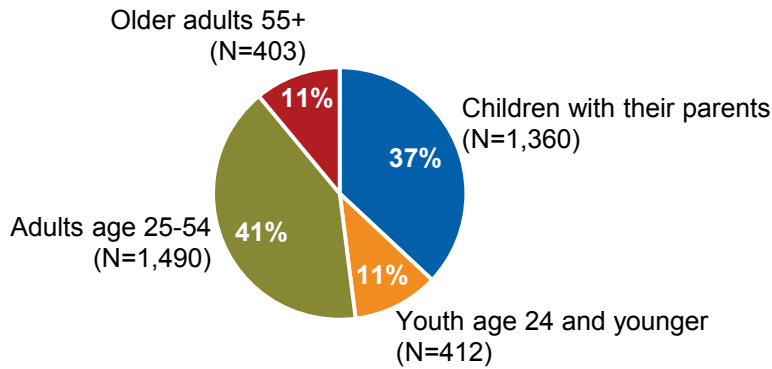
- After increasing in 2012, the combined number of children and unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness in Hennepin County has dropped back to 2009 levels.
- There has been a *decrease* in the number of adults age 18-54 experiencing homelessness in Hennepin County (down 21% from 2012).
- There has been an *increase* in the number of older adults experiencing homelessness (up 23% from 2012).

#### HENNEPIN COUNTY HOMELESS NUMBERS BY STUDY YEAR, AGE GROUP, AND PERCENT CHANGE BETWEEN 2012 AND 2015

	2009 study	2012 study	2015 study	% change (2012-2015)
Children (17 and under) with parents	1,356	1,623	1,360	-16%
Unaccompanied minors (17 and under)	56	35	55	+43%
Young adults (18-21)	371	349	200	-22%
Adults (22-54) <sup>a</sup>	1,965	1,982	1,647	-17%
Older adults (55 and over)	287	327	403	+23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,035<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>4,316<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>3,665<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>-15%</b>

<sup>a</sup> Young adults age 22-24 are included in the "adults" category so that we can compare to data collected in previous studies.

## In Hennepin County, nearly half of people experiencing homelessness are children and youth



## Hennepin and Ramsey County

It is helpful to look at homelessness as a regional issue, since the homeless population is highly mobile. Wilder’s statewide data tables illustrate the difference between homeless numbers in the Twin Cities metro area versus greater Minnesota; however, this fact sheet looks more specifically at Hennepin compared to Ramsey County. Although numbers found in Hennepin County are down since 2012, there was a 14 percent increase in Ramsey County. Some fluctuations in number of people between counties may be due to movement of homeless people as well as the ability of outreach workers to locate people who are staying outside of the shelter system. Therefore, slight fluctuations should be interpreted with caution.

### 2015 COUNTS BY HENNEPIN AND RAMSEY COUNTIES AND SHELTERED VS. NOT IN SHELTER

	Hennepin County in shelters	Hennepin County not in shelter	Total Hennepin County	Ramsey County in shelters	Ramsey County not in shelter	Total Ramsey County
Unaccompanied minors (17 and under)	42	13	55	35	17	52
Young adults (18-21)	166	34	200	157	51	208
Young adults (22-24)	135	22	157	80	21	101
Adults (25-54)	1,320	170	1,490	583	112	695
Older adults (55 and over)	353	50	403	170	20	190
Children (<18) with parents	1,350	10	1,360	499	42	541
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,366</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>3,665</b>	<b>1,524</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>1,787</b>

## Availability of affordable housing is still a critical issue in Hennepin County

- 45% of homeless adults are on a waiting list for subsidized housing, with an average wait time of 14 months; another 16% were unable to get on a waiting list because it was closed.
- 26% of youth (age 24 and younger) and 29% of adults spent at least one night sleeping outside in the 30-day period before the study.
- The most common reasons adults left their last housing: 36% could not afford it, 33% were evicted, and 30% lost their job or had their hours cut.
- Homeless adults had a median income of \$535 during the month of the study and could afford an average of \$423 per month in rent (one in five could not pay anything for rent). At the time of the study, fair market rent determined annually by the federal government was \$796 per month for a one-bedroom apartment in the Twin Cities.
- 65% of homeless adults report that they would only need an efficiency or one bedroom apartment.

## Employment for people experiencing homelessness in Hennepin County continues to rise after reaching a low in 2009

Employment (adults age 18 or older)	2006	2009	2012	2015
Adults employed at the time of the survey	26%	16%	21%	27%
Adults working full time (35+ hours/week)	11%	4%	6%	14%

For youth age 24 or younger, 44 percent were employed at the time of the 2015 survey; 20 percent were working full time.

## In Hennepin County, as statewide, people of color are disproportionately affected by homelessness

	Percent of homeless adults age 18 or older	Percent of all Minnesota adults age 18 or older <sup>a</sup>	Percent of unaccompanied homeless youth age 24 or younger	Percent of all Minnesota youth age 10-24 <sup>a</sup>
American Indian	6%	1%	6%	1%
Asian American	3%	4%	2%	6%
Black/African American	55%	5%	63%	8%
White/Caucasian	27%	85%	16%	74%
Other/Mixed race	9%	1%	14%	4%
Hispanic (any race)	7%	4%	9%	7%

<sup>a</sup> Source: U.S. Census

## 6 in 10 homeless adults and youth in Hennepin County are experiencing long-term homelessness

Length of time homeless (adults age 18 or older)	2006	2009	2012	2015
Homeless less than 1 month	9%	6%	5%	6%
Homeless 1 year or more	51%	57%	53%	57%
Fits Federal definition of long-term homeless	36%	44%	34%	40%
Fits MN definition of long-term homeless	57%	63%	58%	62%

For youth age 24 or younger, 7 percent were homeless for less than one month and 51 percent were homeless for one year or more. Sixty percent fit the Minnesota definition of long term homeless.

## Homelessness in Hennepin County is often preceded by childhood trauma and abuse

Adverse childhood experiences	Adults (age 18 or older)	Youth (age 24 or younger)
Physically abused as a child	32%	44%
Sexually abused as a child	20%	27%
Neglected as a child	17%	27%
Out-of-home placements as a child (ever for youth) <sup>a</sup>	26%	53%
During childhood, had a parent serve time in prison	16%	48%
Witnessed abuse as a child	41%	57%
Lived with substance abuser as a child	44%	56%
Lived with parent/guardian with mental illness	30%	39%
At least one of the above	68%	87%

<sup>a</sup> Out-of-home placements include foster care, group home, and treatment facilities.

## Homelessness in Hennepin County is often preceded by childhood trauma and abuse (continued)

	Adults (age 18 or older)	Youth (age 24 or younger)
<b>Long-term health issues</b>		
Serious mental illness <sup>b</sup>	55%	50%
Chronic physical health condition	54%	56%
Substance abuse disorder	18%	8%
Evidence of traumatic brain injury	30%	18%
At least one of the above	81%	73%
<b>Age at first homelessness</b>		
0 - 12 years old	8%	18%
13 - 17 years old	16%	48%
18 - 24 years old	21%	34%

<sup>b</sup> The diagnosis of “anxiety or panic disorder” was added in 2015.

	Adults (age 18 or older)		Youth (age 24 or younger)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>Violence and sexual exploitation</b>				
Left last housing because of abuse by someone they lived with	23%	9%	23%	10%
Stayed in an abusive situation due to no other housing options	39%	22%	33%	29%
Physically or sexually attacked while homeless	19%	19%	22%	16%
Been sexual with someone only for the purpose of getting shelter, clothing, or food	14%	13%	11%	15%
At least one of the above	53%	39%	48%	41%

## Physical and mental health issues are persistent among homeless adults in Hennepin County

Chronic health conditions (adults age 18 or older)	2006	2009	2012	2015
Adults with serious mental illness <sup>a</sup>	49%	51%	52%	47%
Adults with chronic physical health conditions	49%	51%	55%	54%
Adults with a substance abuse disorder	27%	24%	22%	18%
Adults with a serious or chronic disability <sup>b</sup>	76%	79%	79%	81%

<sup>a</sup> For consistency over time, “anxiety or panic disorder” (first asked in 2015 survey) is omitted from these numbers. It is included in the table on the previous page.

<sup>b</sup> Serious or chronic disability includes mental illness, substance abuse disorder, or other condition that limits work or activities of daily living.

For youth age 24 or younger, 50 percent report a serious mental illness, 56 percent report a chronic physical health problem, and 8 percent report a substance abuse problem.

## Nine percent of homeless adults in Hennepin County have served in the military; numbers are decreasing

Military service (adults age 18 or older in Hennepin County)	2006	2009	2012	2015
Served in military	13%	13%	9%	9%
Men who served	22%	20%	16%	14%
Women who served	1%	2%	1%	2%

## A snapshot of four key supportive services used by Hennepin County's homeless population

SERVICE USE IN THE PAST MONTH (adults age 18 or older)	2006	2009	2012	2015
MFIP <sup>a</sup>	19%	19%	21%	21%
SNAP/food stamps	52%	63%	69%	62%
Transportation assistance	47%	51%	54%	51%
Have medical coverage/health insurance	70%	76%	83%	79%

<sup>a</sup> The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) is the Federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance welfare program administered by the State of Minnesota.

### More from the homeless study

Fact sheets, detailed data tables, and methodology are available at [www.mnhomeless.org](http://www.mnhomeless.org). Data tables include breakdowns by geographic regions of the state, and by shelter types and gender.

Results from a companion study of homelessness on American Indian reservations conducted in October 2015 in partnership with six northern Tribes will be reported separately.

## Wilder Research

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### For more information

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