

Ramsey 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 throughout the state with people 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 25, 2018.

This fact sheet highlights findings from interviews with people experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County. Wilder Research staff and trained volunteers conducted interviews in emergency shelters, domestic violence shelters, transitional housing, and non-shelter locations such as encampments, transit locations, hot-meal programs, and other drop-in service sites.

Additional fact sheets and reports about Minnesotans experiencing homelessness, including Ramsey County data tables with counts and characteristics by age group, gender, and shelter type can be found at www.mnhomeless.org.

Homelessness in Ramsey County has increased over the previous two studies

- On October 25, 2018, there were **1,927** people experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County, up 8% from 1,787 counted in 2015. This increase follows a 14% increase in the number of homeless people counted in Ramsey County between 2012 and 2015.
- People experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County account for **19% of the state total** (10,233).
- The number of homeless children with their parents **increased 10%** from 2015 (541) to 2018 (593). Children and unaccompanied youth (age 24 or younger) represent 45% of the overall homeless population in Ramsey County (children 31% and unaccompanied youth 14%).
- 83% of homeless adults** (age 18+) in Ramsey County have been in Minnesota for more than two years.

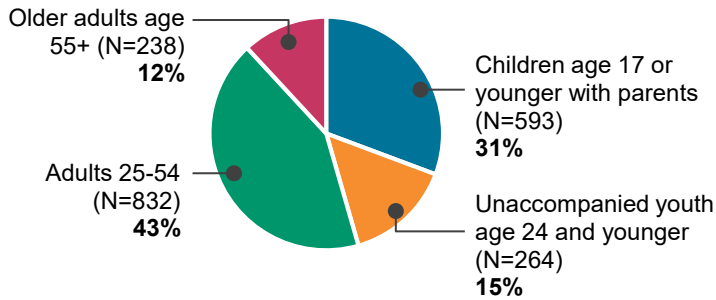
Changes in Ramsey County vary from year to year depending on age group

- Overall, there was a slight decrease between 2015 (902) and 2018 (857) in the number of children and youth (age 24 and younger) experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County; with the number of children with parents increasing (10%) and the number of unaccompanied youth decreasing (-27%).
- There was a marked increase in the number of adults age 25-54 (up 20%) and older adults (up 25%) experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County from 2015 to 2018.

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

	2015 study	2018 study	% change (2015-2018)
Children (17 and younger) with parents	541	593	+10%
Youth on their own (24 and younger)	361	264	-27%
Adults (25-54)	695	832	+20%
Older adults (55 and older)	190	238	+25%
Total	1,787	1,927	+8%

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



The number of children, adults, and older adults have increased from 2012 to 2018; youth (21 and younger) numbers decreased over 2015 levels

- The number of homeless parents decrease over number found in 2015.
- The number of homeless older adults (age 55+) increased steadily from 2012 (165) to 2018 (236).
- The number of youth (age 21 and younger) decreased by 35% from 2015 to 2018, but was preceded by a 26% increase from 2012 to 2015.

	2012 study	2015 study	2018 study
Parents with children on day of the survey			
Number of parents in shelter	263	296	258
Number of parents not in shelter	11	35	16
Number of children	469	541	593
Individuals without children			
Youth (age 21 and younger) in shelter	114	122	103
Youth (age 21 and younger) not in shelter	49	56	28
Adults (age 22-54) in shelter	413	441	461
Adults (age 22-54) in not shelter	83	110	232
Older adults (55+) in shelter	151	166	207
Older adults (55+) in not shelter	14	20	29
Total	1,567^a	1,787^a	1,927^a

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

Comparing numbers: Ramsey County and Hennepin 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. Between 2015 and 2018, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Hennepin and Ramsey counties are up (11% in Hennepin; 8% in Ramsey). 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. However, during the 2018 study, there was an increased visibility of unsheltered homelessness (and thus our ability to interview unsheltered people) due to a large encampment in Minneapolis (Hiawatha Avenue) and smaller encampments in St. Paul (Cathedral Hill).

2018 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
Children (17 and younger) with parents	1,261	63	1,324	571	22	593
Youth on their own (24 and younger)	285	139	424	213	51	264
Adults (25-54)	1,335	489	1,824	607	225	832
Older adults (55 and over)	400	100	500	209	29	238
Total	3,281	791	4,072	1,600	327	1,927

Availability of affordable housing is still a critical issue in Ramsey County

- 46% of homeless adults (age 18+) are on a waiting list for subsidized housing, with an average wait time of 13 months; another 11% were unable to get on a waiting list because it was closed.
- 42% of youth (age 24 and younger) and 36% of adults (age 18+) spent at least one night sleeping outside in the 30-day period before the study.
- The most common reasons adults left their last housing: 40% could not afford it, 38% were evicted, and 31% lost their job or had their hours cut.
- Homeless adults had a median income of \$700 during the month of the study. At the time of the study, fair market rent determined annually by the federal government was \$864 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 rates for people experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County continue to rise after reaching a low point in 2009

Employment (adults age 18 or older)	2009	2012	2015	2018
Adults employed at the time of the survey	18%	21%	32%	36%
Adults working full time (35+ hours/week)	6%	7%	14%	16%

For youth age 24 or younger, 38% were employed at the time of the 2018 survey; 11% were working full time.

In Ramsey County, as in statewide, people who identify as African American, Native American or multi-racial are disproportionately affected by homelessness

	Percent of homeless adults age 18 or older	Percent of all 7-county metro adults age 18 or older ^a	Percent of unaccompanied homeless youth age 24 or younger	Percent of all 7-county metro youth age 10-24 ^a
American Indian	6%	1%	12%	1%
Asian American	4%	7%	0%	9%
Black/African American	50%	9%	55%	13%
White/Caucasian	28%	76%	16%	62%
Multi-racial	12%	2%	17%	5%
Hispanic (any race)	8%	5%	9%	10%

^a Source: Vintage 2018 Population Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

More than 6 in 10 homeless adults in Ramsey County are experiencing long-term homelessness

Length of time homeless (adults age 18 or older)	2009	2012	2015	2018
Homeless less than 1 month	6%	4%	6%	3%
Homeless 1 year or more	59%	56%	62%	63%
Fits Federal definition of long-term homeless	42%	35%	36%	40%
Fits MN definition of long-term homeless	65%	60%	66%	66%

For youth age 24 or younger, 2% were homeless for less than one month and 55% were homeless for one year or more. Sixty-three percent fit the MN definition of long-term homeless.

Homelessness in Ramsey County is often preceded by childhood trauma and abuse

Adverse childhood experiences	Ramsey County adults (age 18 or older)	Ramsey County youth (age 24 or younger)
Physically abused as a child	41%	45%
Sexually abused as a child	30%	34%
Neglected as a child	20%	32%
During childhood, had a parent serve time in prison	23%	45%
Witnessed abuse as a child	51%	57%
Lived with substance abuser as a child	48%	59%
Lived with parent/guardian with mental illness	40%	55%
At least one of the above	72%	81%
Long-term health issues		
Serious mental illness	58%	54%
Chronic physical health condition	56%	37%
Substance abuse disorder	19%	12%
Evidence of traumatic brain injury	33%	20%
At least one of the above	81%	73%
Age at first homelessness		
0 - 12 years old	9%	27%
13 - 17 years old	19%	37%
18 - 24 years old	21%	37%

Many people experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County have experienced trauma related to their housing or homelessness; this is especially true of women

Violence and sexual exploitation	Ramsey County adults (age 18 or older)		Ramsey County youth (age 24 or younger)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Left last housing because of abuse by someone they lived with	40%	16%	41%	17%
Stayed in an abusive situation due to no other housing options	50%	24%	60%	22%
Physically or sexually attacked while homeless	35%	19%	29%	22%
Been sexual with someone only for the purpose of getting shelter, clothing, or food	25%	11%	31%	16%
At least one of the above	69%	42%	72%	47%

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

Chronic health conditions (adults age 18 or older)	2009	2012	2015	2018
Adults with serious mental illness ^a	54%	54%	52%	55%
Adults with chronic physical health conditions ^b	46%	51%	51%	47%
Adults with a substance abuse disorder	20%	21%	19%	19%
Adults with a serious or chronic condition ^c	79%	82%	79%	81%

^a 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.

^b For consistency over time, “cancer” and “chronic pain” (first asked in 2018) are omitted from “physical health conditions” in this table. It is included in the table on the previous page.

^c Serious or chronic condition includes chronic health condition, mental illness, substance abuse disorder, or traumatic brain injury.

For youth age 24 or younger, 54% reported a serious mental illness, 37% reported a chronic physical health condition, and 12% reported a substance abuse disorder.

Seven percent of homeless adults in Ramsey County have served in the military; numbers are decreasing

Military service (adults age 18 or older in Hennepin County)	2009	2012	2015	2018
Served in military	13%	9%	8%	7%
Men who served	22%	16%	14%	12%
Women who served	3%	1%	1%	1%

A snapshot of four key supportive services used by Ramsey County’s homeless population

Service use (adults age 18 or older)	2009	2012	2015	2018
MFIP ^a	19%	16%	17%	12%
SNAP/food stamps	61%	68%	56%	54%
Transportation assistance	44%	51%	48%	52%
Have medical coverage/health insurance	74%	80%	75%	72%

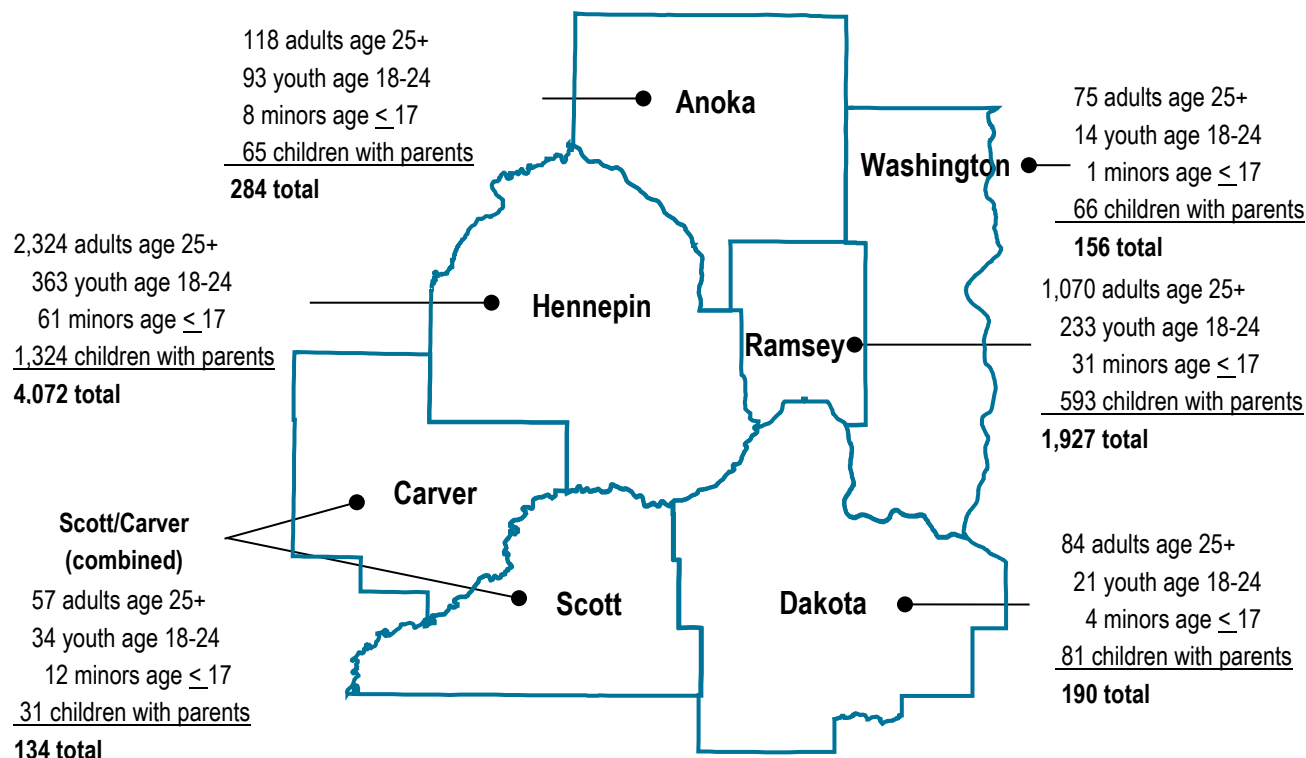
^a The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) is the Federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance welfare program administered by the State of Minnesota.

More from the homeless study

Fact sheets, detailed data tables, and methodology are available at www.mnhomeless.org. 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 2018 in partnership with six northern Tribes will be reported separately.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE COUNTED IN TWIN CITIES METRO AREA HOMELESS SHELTERS, TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMS, AND IN NON-SHELTER LOCATIONS BY COUNTY ON OCTOBER 25, 2018



Source: Wilder Research; data from shelter providers and homeless persons interviewed in non-shelter locations.

Note: "Minors" refers to those age 17 and younger who are on their own (not with their families)

Learn more at our website (<http://mnhomeless.org>) which includes the following:

- Counts by geographic region, Twin Cities metro area, and greater Minnesota: 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018
- Detailed data tables (for each question of the survey) by shelter setting, gender, and geographic region: 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018
- Detailed data tables (for each question of the survey) about youth (age 24 and under) and Veterans
- Reports and fact sheets: 2015 and 2018 (previous reports are at: www.wilderresearch.org)

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For more information about this report, call Wilder Research, 651-280-2700, or visit mnhomeless.org.

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