

## S U M M A R Y

**American Indian homeless adults in Minnesota****Quick facts from Wilder Research Center's October 2000 statewide survey****On the night of October 26, 2000**

- 434 homeless American Indian adults were surveyed statewide, over half of whom were in the 7-county metro area
- 48% are men and 52% are women
- 19% are U. S. military veterans
- 158 were staying in shelters, 163 were in transitional housing, and 114 were on the streets
- 45% have been homeless for at least one year and 51% have had multiple episodes of homelessness
- 39% left their last housing because of eviction, 28% left because of relationship problems, and 26% left because of drinking or drug problems
- Three-quarters have children; over half of those with children under age 18 had their children with them (257 children total were with these parents)
- Although 18% said they cannot afford to pay anything for rent, the average monthly housing cost these individuals could afford is \$295
- An unknown number of additional American Indian individuals were homeless on this night, but did not participate in this study

The following information reflects data that was gathered from surveys with these 434 individuals:

**A long history of living in institutions**

- Over 85% have lived in some type of institution in their lifetime, including:
  - 69% have stayed in emergency shelters
  - 58% have lived in drug or alcohol treatment facilities
  - 45% have lived in foster homes
  - 43% have lived in detention centers
  - 37% have lived in halfway houses
  - 37% have lived in transitional housing
- 68% were in one of these institutions within the last two years

- 20% attended Indian boarding schools as children
- Over half of those who left an institution in the last year did not have a stable place to live when they left, and only one-third were offered aftercare services

**Health care needs**

- 34% feel they need to see a health professional for a physical health problem
- 22% feel they need to see a health professional about a mental health problem
- 20% feel they need to see a health professional about alcohol or drug problems
- 43% have received care in an emergency room in the past six months
- 21% said they are prescribed medications that they are not taking
- In the past year, 39% had tooth or gum problems, 19% had asthma problems, 16% had stomach or digestive problems, 13% had problems with high blood pressure, 10% had lung or respiratory problems, and 10% had problems with diabetes

**The role of mental illness and substance abuse**

- One-third said they have difficulty getting or keeping housing because of alcohol or drug use
- Over half consider themselves to be alcoholics
- Over half have been in a detox center; one-third of these have had more than 30 detox visits
- Nearly half have been in outpatient drug or alcohol treatment
- 21% have been told in the past two years by a health care professional that they have major depression and one-third said they have considered suicide

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### **There is significant short-term and long-term history of abuse**

- 39% were physically abused as children and 30% were sexually abused
- One-third of these respondents (46% of the women) said they have been in a physically abusive relationship in the past year
- Half of the women said they have stayed in abusive situations because they did not have other housing options

### **The working homeless**

- 25% said they are currently employed (compared to 41% of the overall homeless population in Minnesota who are employed)
- Their average monthly income (including all American Indian respondents, not just those who are employed) was \$444, and 21% said their monthly income was \$100 or less
- Nearly half said that finding jobs is their biggest need other than housing

### **Employment and job training**

- 27% have less than a high school education, 49% have a GED or high school diploma, and 23% have some college or more education
- Half have received job training or similar classes and 13% are currently enrolled in school
- Over half have attended classes to learn how to find jobs

### **Service use**

- 31% are on a waiting list for Section 8 or other housing assistance and 10% actually received housing assistance in the past month
- In the past month, 26% received MFIP (welfare), 16% received General Assistance (GA), 13% received SSI (disability), and 9% received Emergency Assistance
- 45% used food stamps and 13% used Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in the past month
- 52% received Medical Assistance (MA), 14% used medical clinics, 11% received General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC), and 7% received Medicare in the past month
- 49% used clothes shelves, 39% used hot meal programs, 38% used drop-in centers, and 32% used food shelves in the past month
- Of all services used, Medical Assistance (MA) and food stamps were rated as the most helpful

### **Background on the survey**

Wilder Research Center interviewed 2,270 adults and 209 unaccompanied youth (of all races), with help from more than 500 trained volunteers across the state. The survey, co-sponsored by a diverse group of government agencies and private organizations, was conducted on October 26, 2000. For this survey, the definition of “homeless” includes those without a permanent place to live, but does not include individuals who are doubled-up with friends or family members.

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#### **WILDER RESEARCH CENTER**

1295 Bandana Boulevard North, Suite 210  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55108

651-647-4600; FAX 651-647-4623  
[www.wilder.org/research](http://www.wilder.org/research)



#### **For more information**

Find the detailed survey data, special reports, and more at [www.wilder.org/research/topics/homeless](http://www.wilder.org/research/topics/homeless). Contact Nicole Martin at Wilder Research Center 651-647-3862 for more information about this fact sheet or other data on homeless American Indians in Minnesota.  
OCTOBER 2003