

## Homeless ex-offenders in Minnesota

### ABOUT THE STATEWIDE HOMELESSNESS STUDY

Every three years since 1991, Wilder Research has conducted a statewide survey of people who are homeless or living in temporary housing programs. On October 23, 2003, more than 700 trained volunteer interviewers conducted face-to-face interviews with about 3,100 people experiencing homelessness. This took place in nearly 250 places throughout Minnesota, including about 220 emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and battered women's shelters. In addition to the representative sample of sheltered people, a non-representative sample of nearly 800 homeless people not currently in shelters were interviewed in 40 cities and towns by experienced outreach workers. Adults who are staying temporarily with family or friends are not included in the study.

On October 23, 2003, Wilder Research conducted a one-day statewide survey of homeless individuals in Minnesota. This survey found that 644 adults and unaccompanied youth who were homeless on that date had been in a correctional facility within the past two years. The 35 youth included in this number represent 27 percent of all unaccompanied youth age 8 to 17 who were surveyed. The 609 adults represent 13 percent of all adults surveyed. These numbers include only those whose stays in juvenile detention were for more than a week, and only those whose stays in a county jail or workhouse were for a month or more, thereby excluding persons who were only temporarily detained.

Of these 644 individuals, 522 had been released from a correctional facility within the previous 12 months. This is 11 percent of all homeless adults and unaccompanied youth surveyed: 26 percent of youth, and 10 percent of adults. This fact sheet presents information about these 522 most recently released homeless individuals. Table 1 shows their numbers. Table 2 shows how many reported having a stable place to live when they were released, with comparisons based on region and kinds of services they received. Table 3 shows how the stability of housing at the time of release relates to a variety of later circumstances. Table 4 shows their demographic characteristics and prior experiences of homelessness.

#### 1. Number and percent of homeless individuals who were recently in a correctional facility

	Age group	Juvenile detention for more than one week	County jail for a month or more	State or federal prison	Total
Total number in this kind of facility in the last two years <sup>(a)</sup>	0-17	35 (27%)	3 (2%)	--	35 (27%)
	18+	50 (1%)	531 (11%)	152 (3%)	609 (13%)
	Total	85 (2%)	534 (11%)	152 (3%)	644 (13%)
Number whose most recent release, in the past 12 months, was from this kind of facility <sup>(b)</sup>	0-17	32 (25%)	1 (1%)	--	33 (26%)
	18+	27 (1%)	349 (7%)	110 (2%)	485 (10%)
	Total	59 (1%)	350 (7%)	110 (2%)	522 (11%)

**Notes:** Percents are of the total homeless population surveyed. <sup>(a)</sup>Row total is less than the sum of items in the row because some people were in more than one kind of facility. <sup>(b)</sup>Row total is more than the sum of items in the row because three people did not answer the question.

2. Number and percent of homeless recent ex-offenders who had stable housing when they left a correctional facility, by type of facility most recently left

	Juvenile detention (N=59)	County jail (N=350)	State or federal prison (N=110)	Total (N=519)
Among all those released in the past year <sup>(a)</sup>	43 (77%)	118 (34%)	63 (59%)	224 (44%)
Among those who had help to find housing	20 (91%)	25 (44%)	33 (70%) <sup>(b)</sup>	78 (62%) <sup>(c)</sup>
Among those who did not have help to find housing	24 (71%)	92 (32%)	30 (51%) <sup>(b)</sup>	147 (39%) <sup>(c)</sup>
By number of case managers (at time of interview)				<sup>(d)</sup>
0	10 (83%)	52 (36%)	32 (60%)	94 (45%)
1	19 (70%)	50 (32%)	21 (60%)	90 (41%)
2	14 (88%)	11 (52%)	7 (64%)	32 (67%)
3 or more	--	3 (30%)	--	3 (21%)
Among those under probation supervision	29 (76%)	61 (36%)	37 (58%)	128 (47%)
Among those not under probation supervision	14 (78%)	57 (33%)	26 (62%)	97 (41%)
Among those who were ever homeless before	17 (68%)	57 (28%) <sup>(e)</sup>	36 (65%)	109 (39%) <sup>(f)</sup>
Among those who were homeless for the first time	27 (87%)	61 (43%) <sup>(e)</sup>	28 (53%)	117 (52%) <sup>(f)</sup>
By region		<sup>(g)</sup>		<sup>(h)</sup>
Northeast	10 of 10	7 of 11	--	17 of 21
St. Louis Co.	2 of 2	18 of 34	7 of 8	27 of 44
Northwest	6 of 7	4 of 15	1 of 1	13 of 26
Central	0 of 1	15 of 42	7 of 15	22 of 58
West Central	3 of 4	4 of 16	1 of 4	8 of 24
Southwest	1 of 1	2 of 3	0 of 1	3 of 5
Southeast	2 of 2	1 of 6	0 of 2	3 of 10
Hennepin	12 of 19	37 of 107	30 of 50	79 of 178
Anoka	--	0 of 6	--	0 of 6
Dakota	4 of 5	1 of 1	--	5 of 6
Scott-Carver	--	0 of 4	--	0 of 4
Washington	--	2 of 2	--	2 of 2
Ramsey	4 of 5	26 of 95	17 of 25	47 of 125

**Notes:** The statistical significance of differences in proportions are shown the following footnotes:

(a) Overall differences among facility types: less than .001 likelihood of occurring by chance.

(b) Difference for prison releasees: less than .05 likelihood of occurring by chance.

(c) Difference for releasees overall: less than .001 likelihood of occurring by chance.

(d) Differences for releasees overall: less than .01 likelihood of occurring by chance.

(e) Differences for jail releasees: less than .01 likelihood of occurring by chance.

(f) Differences for releasees overall: less than .01 likelihood of occurring by chance.

(g) Regional differences for those released from county jail: less than .05 likelihood of occurring by chance.

(h) Regional differences for releasees overall: less than .001 likelihood of occurring by chance.

### 3. Later experiences for those with and without a stable place to live at the time of release

	Those who had stable housing at time of release (N=226)	Those without stable housing at time of release (N=283)	Total (N=509)
<b>Current type of shelter***</b>			
Emergency shelter	72 (32%)	118 (42%)	190 (37%)
Battered women's shelter	9 (4%)	--	9 (2%)
Transitional housing	96 (42%)	94 (33%)	190 (37%)
Unknown shelter or street	49 (22%)	71 (25%)	120 (24%)
<b>Number of nights slept outside in October***</b>			
Average (mean)	2.7	4.6	3.8
Median (half below, half above this number)	0	1	0
<b>Received any kind of help paying housing costs in October**</b>	45 (20%)	33 (12%)	78 (15%)
<b>Currently on a waiting list for Section 8 housing</b>	54 (24%)	67 (24%)	121 (24%)
<b>Currently employed (including day labor)</b>	74 (33%)	79 (28%)	153 (30%)
<b>Hourly wages (if employed)</b>			
Less than \$6	3 (5%)	8 (11%)	11 (8%)
\$6 to \$7.99	33 (52%)	33 (44%)	66 (48%)
\$8 to \$9.99	19 (30%)	17 (23%)	36 (26%)
\$10 or more	8 (13%)	17 (23%)	25 (18%)
<b>Income in October from all sources**</b>			
Average (mean)	\$470	\$340	\$396
Median (half below, half above this number)	\$253	\$203	\$210
<b>Main barriers to employment (self-reported)<sup>(a)</sup></b>			
Transportation	43 (31%)	75 (39%)	118 (36%)
Housing	32 (23%)	67 (35%)	99 (30%)
Personal reasons (including criminal history)	53 (38%)	41 (21%)	94 (28%)
Mental health	40 (29%)	47 (25%)	87 (26%)
Physical health	28 (20%)	51 (27%)	79 (24%)
Employment opportunities	37 (26%)	32 (17%)	69 (21%)
Job experience or history	31 (22%)	23 (12%)	54 (16%)
Resources needed to work or look for work	12 (9%)	30 (16%)	42 (13%)
<b>Received emergency room care in past 6 months</b>	84 (37%)	103 (37%)	187 (37%)
<b>Number of times in emergency room in past 6 months</b>			
Average (mean)	2.3	2.7	2.5
Median (half below, half above this number)	1.0	2.0	1.0
<b>Sought health care due to violence in past 12 months</b>	36 (16%)	41 (15%)	77 (15%)
<b>Any current barriers to housing<sup>(b)</sup> ***</b>	126 (56%)	199 (70%)	325 (64%)
<b>Reasons for leaving last permanent housing, for those homeless less than one year</b>			
Lost job or had hours cut*	39 (31%)	45 (39%)	84 (35%)
Problems getting along with others*	53 (34%)	26 (21%)	79 (29%)
Couldn't afford rent or house payments*	35 (23%)	41 (34%)	76 (27%)
Relationship problem (other than abuse or breakup)*	50 (32%)	25 (20%)	75 (27%)
Drinking or drug problem you had	46 (30%)	27 (22%)	73 (26%)
Eviction, foreclosure, lease not renewed**	25 (16%)	38 (31%)	63 (23%)
Breakup with a spouse or partner**	40 (26%)	17 (14%)	57 (20%)
Drinking or drug problem, someone else	25 (16%)	21 (17%)	46 (17%)
Abuse by someone you lived with*	29 (19%)	13 (11%)	42 (15%)
Substandard or unsafe housing **	10 (6%)	23 (19%)	33 (12%)
Violence in the neighborhood	14 (9%)	16 (13%)	30 (11%)
Behavior problem of guest or visitor **	10 (6%)	20 (16%)	30 (11%)

**Notes:** Likelihood that between-group differences are due to chance: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

(a) Main barriers to employment: Open-ended responses, coded; only first three mentions were counted. Statistical significance cannot be tested.

(b) Any current barriers: Survey respondent reported that any of a list of 12 possible barriers to housing was currently preventing them from obtaining stable housing.

#### 4. Characteristics of homeless recent ex-offenders, by type of facility most recently left

		Juvenile detention (N=59)	County jail (N=350)	State or federal prison (N=110)	Total (N=519)
Current age	0-17	32 (54%)	1 (<1%)	--	33 (6%)
	18-25	27 (46%)	59 (17%)	10 (9%)	96 (19%)
	26-34	--	80 (23%)	36 (33%)	116 (22%)
	35+	--	210 (60%)	63 (58%)	273 (53%)
Gender	Male	36 (60%)	252 (72%)	84 (76%)	372 (72%)
	Female	24 (40%)	98 (28%)	26 (24%)	148 (28%)
Surveyed individual has any children with them		4 (7%)	31 (9%)	7 (6%)	42 (8%)
Region	Northeast	10 (17%)	11 (3%)	--	21 (4%)
	St. Louis Co.	3 (5%)	34 (10%)	8 (7%)	45 (9%)
	Northwest	9 (15%)	15 (4%)	1 (10%)	25 (5%)
	Central	1 (2%)	42 (12%)	17 (16%)	60 (12%)
	West Central	4 (7%)	17 (5%)	4 (4%)	25 (5%)
	Southwest	1 (2%)	3 (1%)	1 (1%)	5 (1%)
	Southeast	2 (3%)	6 (2%)	2 (2%)	10 (2%)
	Hennepin	20 (33%)	110 (31%)	51 (47%)	181 (35%)
	Anoka	--	6 (2%)	--	6 (1%)
	Dakota	5 (8%)	4 (1%)	--	9 (2%)
	Scott-Carver	--	4 (1%)	--	4 (1%)
	Washington	--	2 (1%)	--	2 (<1%)
	Ramsey	5 (8%)	96 (27%)	25 (23%)	126 (24%)
Type of shelter	Emergency shelter <sup>(a)</sup>	15 (25%)	135 (39%)	43 (39%)	193 (37%)
	Battered women's shelter	1 (2%)	4 (1%)	4 (4%)	9 (2%)
	Transitional housing <sup>(b)</sup>	20 (33%)	132 (38%)	41 (38%)	193 (37%)
	Unknown shelter or street	24 (40%)	78 (22%)	21 (19%)	123 (24%)
How long homeless	Less than 1 month	14 (24%)	27 (8%)	5 (5%)	46 (9%)
	1 to 11 months	30 (52%)	154 (45%)	60 (55%)	244 (48%)
	At least 1 year	14 (24%)	160 (47%)	45 (41%)	219 (43%)
Resident in another facility in past 2 years					
	Drug/alcohol treatment	13 (22%)	123 (35%)	26 (24%)	162 (31%)
	Halfway house	11 (19%)	97 (28%)	18 (16%)	126 (24%)
	Foster home	21 (36%)	7 (2%)	--	28 (5%)
	Group home	19 (32%)	16 (5%)	2 (2%)	37 (7%)
Ever homeless before		28 (47%)	205 (59%)	57 (52%)	290 (56%)
Under probation supervision at time of release		39 (68%)	168 (49%)	65 (61%)	272 (54%)
Had a stable place to live at time of release		43 (77%)	118 (34%)	63 (59%)	224 (44%)
Received help to find stable housing		22 (39%)	57 (17%)	47 (44%)	126 (25%)

*Note:* Percents are of all surveyed homeless individuals released within the past 12 months from the type of facility shown. Cell totals do not always add up to the full population size shown at the top of the column, because not all respondents answered every question. (a) "Emergency" refers to short-term shelter (up to 30 days) with limited services. (b) "Transitional" refers to time limited housing (30 days to 2 years) with services intended to help residents acquire longer-term stable housing.

**Wilder  
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#### For more information

For details on study methods and results, see the full report, "Minnesota statewide survey of persons without permanent shelter," found on the Wilder Research web site at [www.wilderresearch.org](http://www.wilderresearch.org). For more information, contact Ellen Shelton at 651-637-2470.

AUGUST 2005