

Counting on shelter

*Emergency housing use in Ramsey County,
2006 and 2007*

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Summary

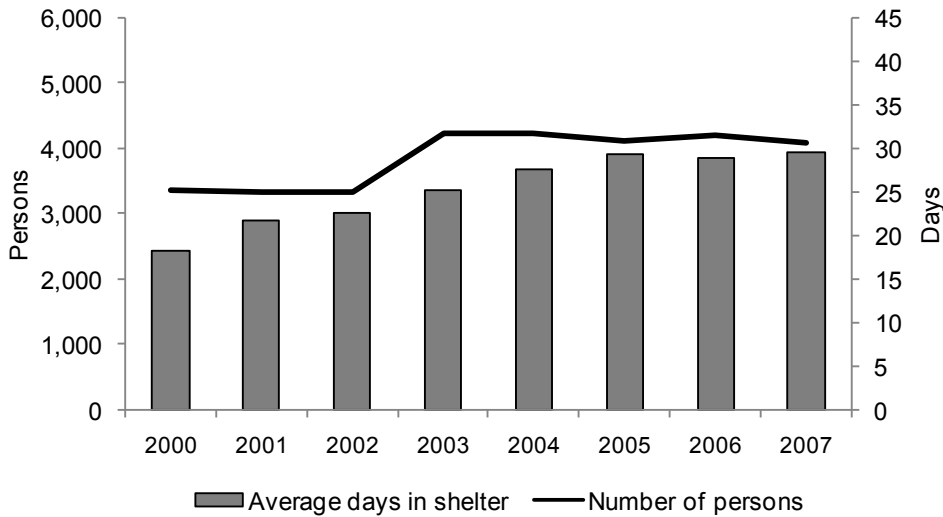
This report, which covers emergency shelter use in Ramsey County in both 2006 and 2007, is the fifteenth in a series started in 1991. Emergency shelters participating in the project provide client-level data that allows Wilder Research to unduplicate the number of people served, and track returns to shelter and total nights in shelter.

While far from providing a comprehensive look at homelessness in Ramsey County, this report does convey fairly comprehensive information about the use of adult and family emergency shelter programs. It does not include information about domestic violence shelters, youth shelters, or transitional or supportive housing.

Number served and average days

The trend line showing numbers of people using adult and family emergency shelter in Ramsey County indicates that usage in 2006 and 2007 was very similar to usage in the previous 3 years. Since 2003 the total number served per year has remained at about 4,200. While the total number of people using shelter has remained stable in 2006 and 2007, the average number of days shelter users spent in shelter continued on a slight increase from 25 days in 2003 to just under 30 days 2007.

1. Total number served and average annual days in shelter, 2000-2007



Note: Number of persons is an unduplicated count of individuals served. "Average days in shelter" includes all days spent in shelter in a given calendar year, including both continuous stays and distinct episodes in shelter.

The biggest change in shelter use so far this decade came in 2003 when Catholic Charities' Dorothy Day shelter changed from a winter only shelter to year-round operations. In the early 1990s adult and family shelters typically housed over 5,000 people per year, but shelter stays only averaged about two weeks per year.

The household type of those served in Ramsey County adult and family shelters has remained fairly stable since 2003: of every 10 individuals served in shelter about 6 are adult males without children, about 3 are adults and children in families, and about 1 in 10 every is an adult female without children. The number of single males sheltered per year decreased slightly, to about 2,500 in 2006 and 2007, the number of children increased slightly, to about 700 per year, and the number of adult women without children is fairly stable at 500 in 2007.

Demographic characteristics of adults in shelter

The gender breakdown of adults using shelter did not change in 2006 and 2007, with three out of every four adults being male and one of every four adults being female. The average age of those using emergency shelter each year in Ramsey County has generally increased since the early 1990s and for the fifth year in a row, more than half of adults using shelter were age 40 or older in 2007. The racial composition of adult shelter users has continued to shift. The percentage of African American adults increased slightly (from 44% in 2005 to 48% in 2007) after decreasing in 2003 and 2004, while the percentage of Hispanic adults decreased (from 11% in 2004 to 6% in 2007).

Patterns of shelter use

In 2006 and 2007, families and single females had an increase in longer stays. For this report, a "stay" can include an absence of up to three nights; if a person is absent from shelter for four nights or more, that person's return to shelter is considered a new stay. The number of separate shelter stays for adults in 2006 was 9,757 and in 2007 it was 9,354. In 2007, the average number of stays for an adult was 2.8, but only 1.4 for adults with children.

The proportion of adults who exited and returned to shelter in the same calendar year, or the proportion experiencing "repeat shelter use," was also up in 2006 and 2007. In 2006, for this first time since the start of this project, over half of all adults (53%) had more than one shelter stay. In 2006, the proportion of single males with repeat stays (60%) was also the highest since the project started. In 2007, 51 percent of all adults had multiple stays, including 63 percent of adult males.

In total, the shelters included in this study provided 121,256 bed nights of emergency shelter to individuals in 2006, and 121,022 bed nights were provided in 2007. This is the

highest level of shelter usage observed in this project, up substantially from 1991 through 2002 when less than 80,000 bed nights of shelter were provided annually.

This increase in shelter use is largely driven by changes in shelter capacity over the course of the project. Since 2004 adult and family shelters in Ramsey County have provided a combined total of about 370 shelter beds per night, or nearly 135,000 spaces over the course of each year.

Long term homelessness

In the 2004-2005 report we identified a new category of shelter users in consideration of the state’s goal to end “Long Term Homelessness,” which the state defines as being without permanent shelter for at least 12 months or four times in the last three years.¹ It is important to note that since episodes of homelessness often include stays in places other than shelters, the numbers in this report likely underestimate the actual number of individuals in Ramsey County who would meet the state’s definition.

For the purposes of this report, an individual is considered a “long-term shelter user” if they either: (a) have lived continuously in shelter for 12 months or more ending in (or continuing through) the year in question, or (b) have had separate shelter stays during at least four calendar quarters in the past three years, including the year in question. For the past four years about one quarter of all adult shelter users met the long-term shelter user definition, including 848 adults in 2006 and 879 in 2007. Ninety-eight percent of these were single adults in 2006, and 99 percent were single adults in 2007.

2. Adults entering emergency shelters by household type and long term shelter use status, 2007

Household type	All adults	Long term homeless adults
Males alone	2,432	762 (31%)
Females alone	490	104 (21%)
Adults with children	415	13 (4%)
Total	3,491	879 (26%)

Note: Percents in parentheses represent percent of adults using shelter who are long-term shelter users. Numbers for “all adults” in this table differ from figures elsewhere in the report, since this table includes only those for whom long-term status was identifiable.

¹ http://www.mnhousing.gov/initiatives/housing-assistance/homelessness/MHFA_001628.aspx

Not surprisingly, long-term shelter users spend considerably more time in shelter than do other adults. Long-term shelter users average about eight weeks in shelter each year, compared to the approximate three week average for other adult shelter users. In both 2006 and 2007 the 25 percent of adult shelter users who were considered long-term shelter users consumed nearly half of the emergency shelter bed nights used by all adults.

Unduplicated number of persons using emergency shelter

From 1991 to 2007, 45,209 men, women, and children have used emergency shelter in Ramsey County. This includes 32,452 adults and almost 12,757 children.

Introduction

This is the fifteenth report in a series started in 1991 about the use of emergency shelters in Ramsey County. The aim of this project is to help funders, policymakers, and providers make decisions about homelessness by providing reliable and useful information.

The information in this report comes from data submitted by the five emergency shelters for adults and families in Ramsey County. It does not include domestic violence or youth shelters. Specifically, the shelters contributing data to this report are:

- Shelters in Ramsey County’s central intake system, including:
 - Family Service Center, operated by Catholic Charities, which provides 45 beds for families and 10 beds for single women.
 - Project Home, operated by the Saint Paul Area Council of Churches, which provides up to 40 beds of family shelter nightly in two of the churches that participate in the shelter network. Families are assigned to Project Home when the Family Service Center is full, and they often transition to Family Service Center as space allows.
 - Mary Hall Men’s Shelter, operated by Catholic Charities, which provides 22 beds for single males.
- Union Gospel Mission, which provides 88 beds for single men.
- Catholic Charities’ Dorothy Day extended hours program, which provides 170 beds for single adult men.

In addition to these shelters, for the past three years Catholic Charities also has provided data about those staying in its “unofficial” overflow shelter, mainly for families, which has been in continuous use over the past 2 to 3 years. Catholic Charities houses people very temporarily in this location when the other shelters are full, inaccessible, or inappropriate due to the vulnerabilities of specific individuals.

Data from central intake system shelters were collected through Minnesota’s HMIS. Data from the other shelters were collected by the providers through their own systems, and given to Wilder Research in electronic format. Since the private shelters provide a more limited set of data, the last section of this report includes information on clients served through central intake.

A more comprehensive list of providers that have contributed data to this project since it began in 1991 is provided in the appendix.

Changes Ramsey County's shelter system and in this report

As shown in the appendix, the capacity of adult and family shelters in Ramsey County has fluctuated a great deal since this project began in 1991. The changes in capacity and policy have had a direct impact on the results reported through this project.

Programmatic changes in family shelter since the project started include Ramsey County's investment in a central intake office in 1992. The Family Place, which serves as the County's central intake office and provides daytime activities for Project Home clients, used to provide overnight shelter for families when the church shelters were full, but stopped doing so in early 2004. In 1999, Ramsey County closed the Lowry Family Shelter and opened the Family Service Center in Maplewood.

Changes for single adult shelter include the opening of Catholic Charities' Dorothy Day extended hours emergency shelter during the winter months in 2000. In 2003 Catholic Charities changed the Dorothy Day shelter to year-round operations. Finally, in December 2007, Catholic Charities expanded capacity for families at the Family Service Center by moving the shelter operations for adult women without children to a new women's shelter at its Dorothy Day facility.

Previous reports in this series have included a section on transitional housing which is not included in this report. Additionally, certain information that has appeared in previous reports, including educational status and income, is not presented in this report given the limited availability of data. Other information, for example living arrangements prior to entering shelter, is reported only for those served through the County's central intake system.

Methods

The project began by identifying common data elements that all sites wanted to collect. Data are collected at intake for all persons entering emergency shelter. Unless otherwise noted, descriptive data are reported for the most current stay. Starting in 1994, additional data were collected for those entering shelter through Ramsey County central intake.

After being loaded into a common database, the data are aggregated and unduplicated for reporting. Social Security Number serves as a primary key for matching clients served in different shelter or multiple times. When Social Security Number is not available we rely on other identifiers, including date of birth, gender, race, and (for data collected through Minnesota's HMIS) name.

The data files from the private shelters for 2006 and 2007 had more cases missing Social Security Numbers and unidentifiable through the use of other identifiers, than had been the case previously. To avoid either under-counting shelter use by throwing these cases

out, or over-counting shelter use by treating each unidentifiable case as a unique individual, we introduced weighting into the analysis for 2006 and 2007.

To weight the unidentified cases we relied on shelter use patterns observable in the identifiable cases. Specifically, there were 984 distinct men with Social Security Numbers in the Union Gospel Mission's 2007 data set. Of those, 612, or 62.2 percent, had no stays at other Ramsey County shelters in 2007. Thus, we assigned each unidentified record a weight of 0.6219513 (identified cases are, in effect, weighted as 1.0). The same process was followed for 2006, arriving at a weight of 0.5785341. In both 2006 and 2007 there were a small number of records from the two other Ramsey County shelters for single males which were also missing identifiers, and these cases were also assigned the weights developed for the respective years.

Additionally, we worked with one of the private shelters to clean their data file after finding periodic over-counts on roughly a dozen dates in each of 2005, 2006, and 2007. On these dates the provider indicated that their data files were not able to differentiate shelter clients from those using other services, such as meal service, at their facility. For these dates only the records that had shelter stays on other days of the year were included in the analysis; records of clients who only showed up on the erroneous "over-count" dates were thrown out. This resulted in revisions to numbers published previously for shelter use in 2005.

A word about HMIS

Since 2004 this report has used data collected via Minnesota's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The organizations that originally established the Ramsey County data collection effort, including Ramsey County, the City of Saint Paul, the United Way, The Saint Paul Foundation, and Wilder Research, as well as the service providers who contributed data, were pioneers in establishing what is now known as a HMIS.

The hallmark of an HMIS is that it centralizes data, so that it is possible to obtain unduplicated counts of people using services provided by organizations targeting those experiencing homelessness. HMIS also enables researchers and providers to track trends in such service use over time, as we have done in this report.

Homeless Management Information Systems are now required nation-wide for jurisdictions receiving certain federal homeless assistance funds, including Ramsey County. Wilder Research's involvement in the Ramsey County shelter data collection project led to our participation in the development of Minnesota's HMIS, which we continue to administer.²

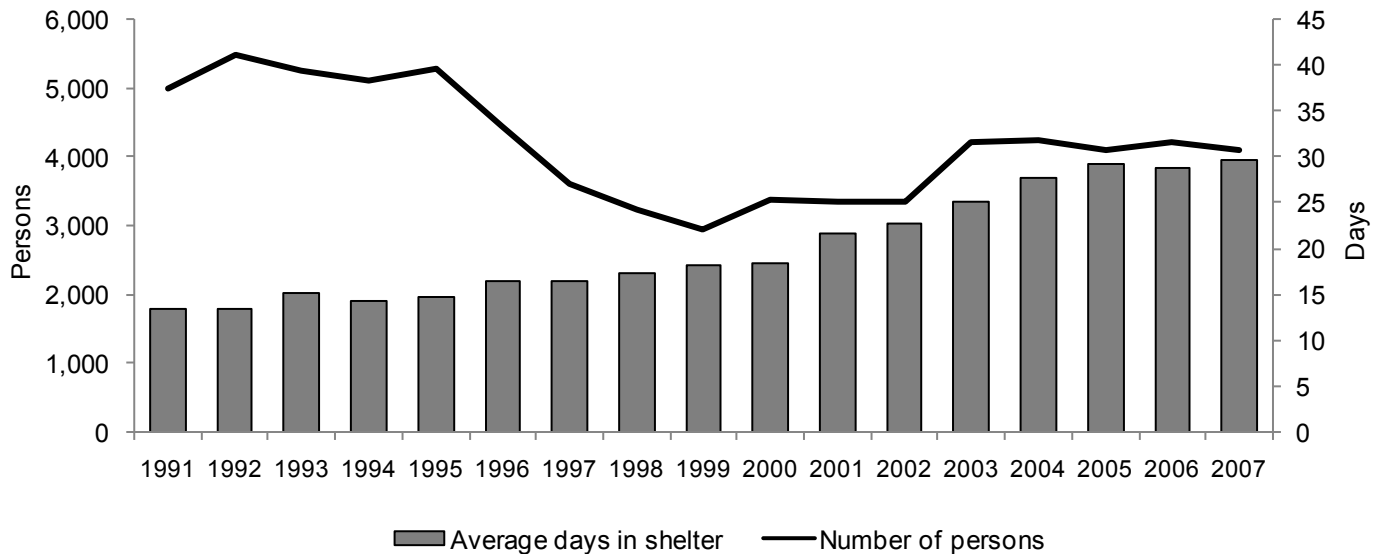
² For more information about Minnesota's HMIS, see www.hmismn.org.

Number served and average days in shelter

In 2006, 4,202 different people used adult and family emergency shelter in Ramsey County. In 2007 this number dropped slightly, to 4,091. These numbers are very similar to the number of individuals served in each year 2003 to 2005, but still up substantially compared with the late 1990s and early 2000s.

While the total number of people served has not changed greatly in recent years, the average number of days shelter users spent in shelter continued on a slight increase from 25 days in 2003 to just under 30 days 2007. Looking at the longer term trajectory, the bigger change happened in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when the average number of days in shelter changed from around two weeks (1991-1998) to around three weeks (1999-2003), to an average of four weeks or longer (2004-2007). This increase is notable, especially in light of the fact that the official policy for the county’s primary family shelter (Family Service Center), as well as Mary Hall Men’s shelter, is to limit shelter stays to no more than 30 consecutive days.

3. Total number served and average annual days in shelter per person, 1991-2007

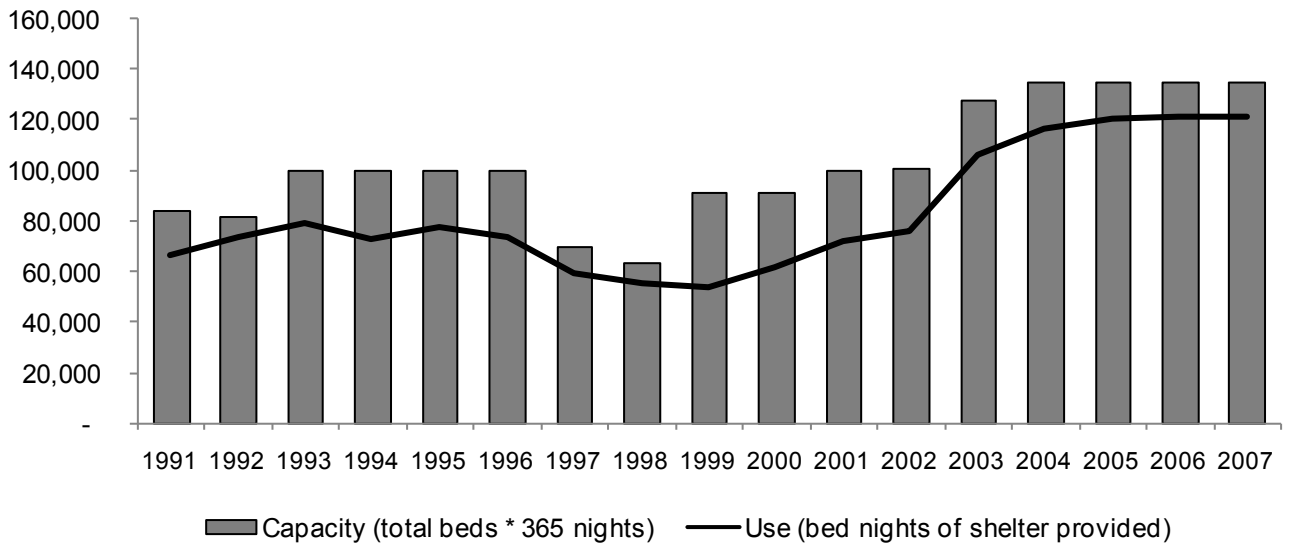


Note: Number of persons is an unduplicated count of individuals served. “Average days in shelter” includes all days spent in shelter in a given calendar year, including both continuous stays and distinct episodes in shelter.

It is important to note that the numbers in this report are driven largely by shelter capacity. For example, increases in number served and average days in shelter can only show up in this report if capacity exists to house the increased numbers. Shelter capacity has generally increased over the course of this project, most recently with the opening of the 170 person capacity Dorothy Day shelter, first as a winter only program in 2000, and then expanding to year-round operations in 2003.

For most of 2006 and 2007 the programs included in this report included enough beds (or mats) to shelter up to 369 individuals per night, not including the “unofficial” overflow space that Catholic Charities uses to shelter families at its Dorothy Day facility. This capacity is approximate, however, since the number of beds available at a family shelter on any given night can change due to the composition of families served. Additionally, family shelters may occasionally house singles, or vice-versa, to help meet needs in emergency circumstances. That said, the estimated year round “bed night” capacity for housing single adults and families with children has fluctuated since 1991, from a low of approximately 63,000 in 1998 to a high of 134,685 (369 beds * 365 days) since 2004.

4. Total “bed nights” of shelter use and estimated bed capacity, 1991-2007

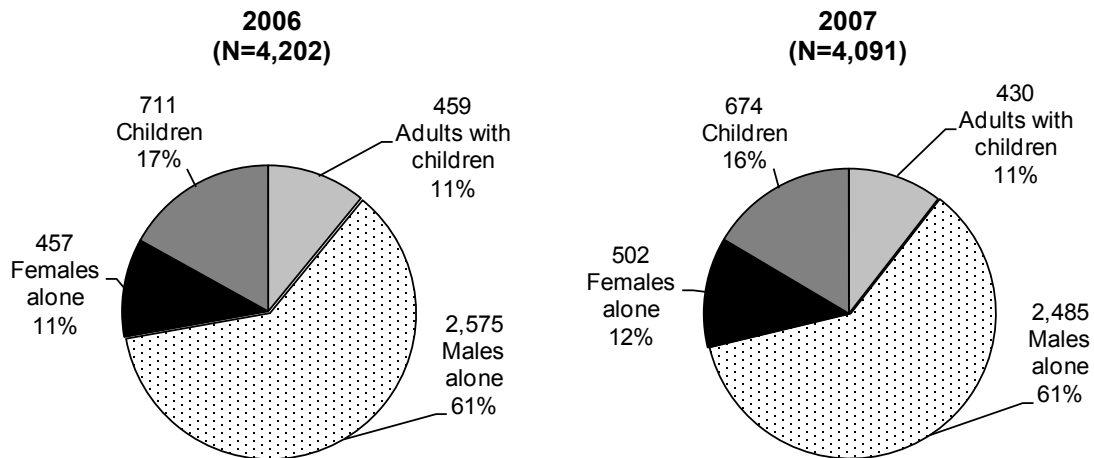


In the most recent three years the county’s adult and family shelters have together provided over 120,000 bed nights of shelter to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Compared to total estimated capacity that would equal an occupancy rate of about 90 percent which, given the vagaries of estimating capacity especially for family shelters, is fairly full.

Number served and average days, by household type

The types of households served in shelter did not change greatly from 2006 to 2007. Indeed, the household type of those served in Ramsey County adult and family shelters has remained fairly stable since 2003: of every 10 individuals served in shelter about 6 are adult males without children, about 3 adults and children in families, and about 1 in 10 individuals is an adult female without children.

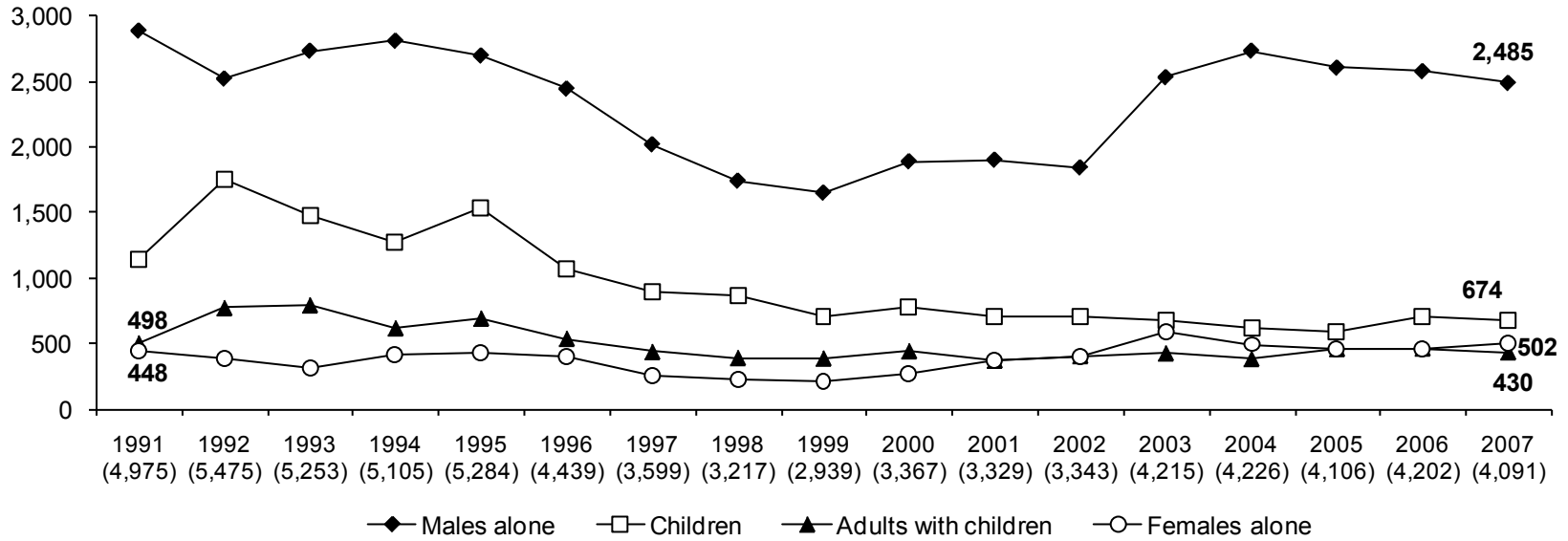
5. Individuals entering emergency shelters by household type, 2006 and 2007*



* Adults who entered shelters both alone and with children during the year are counted only as "with children."

In terms of numbers of individuals served, the trends over the past two years show slight decreases in single males, stability in the number of adults in families and their children, and a slight increase in single adult females. Single males continue to be the largest group, with about 2,500 sheltered in both 2006 and 2007. The number of children in shelter had been dropping steadily throughout the project, but increased slightly from the project low of 590 in 2005 to 711 in 2006 and then 674 in 2007. The number and percent of adults with children has remained fairly constant in recent years, at 459 in 2006 and 430 in 2007. The number of single females without children was unchanged from 2005 (459) to 2006 (457) but increased slightly in 2007 to 502.

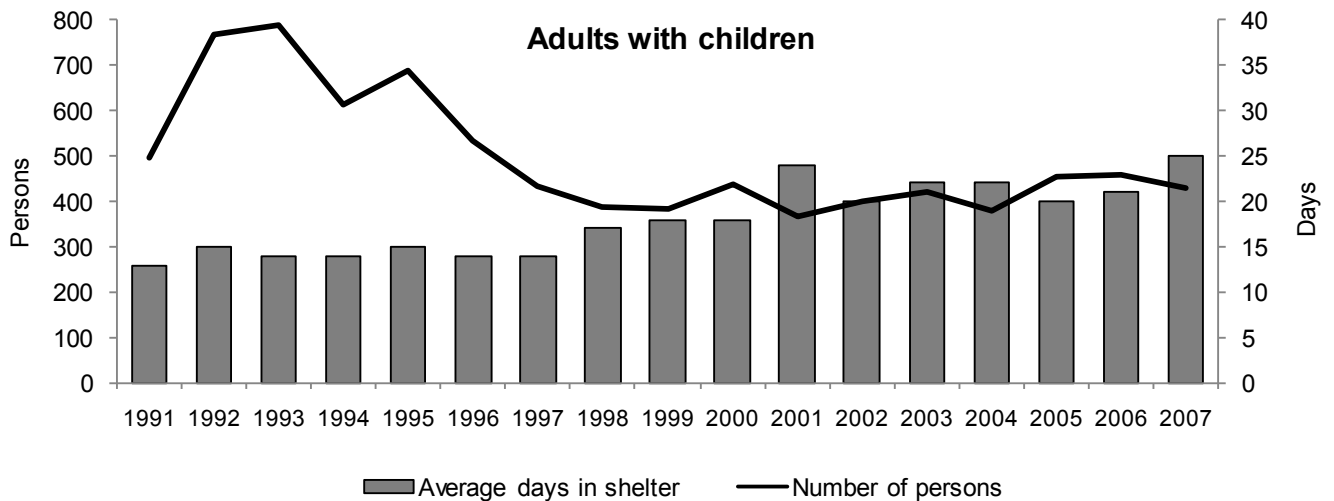
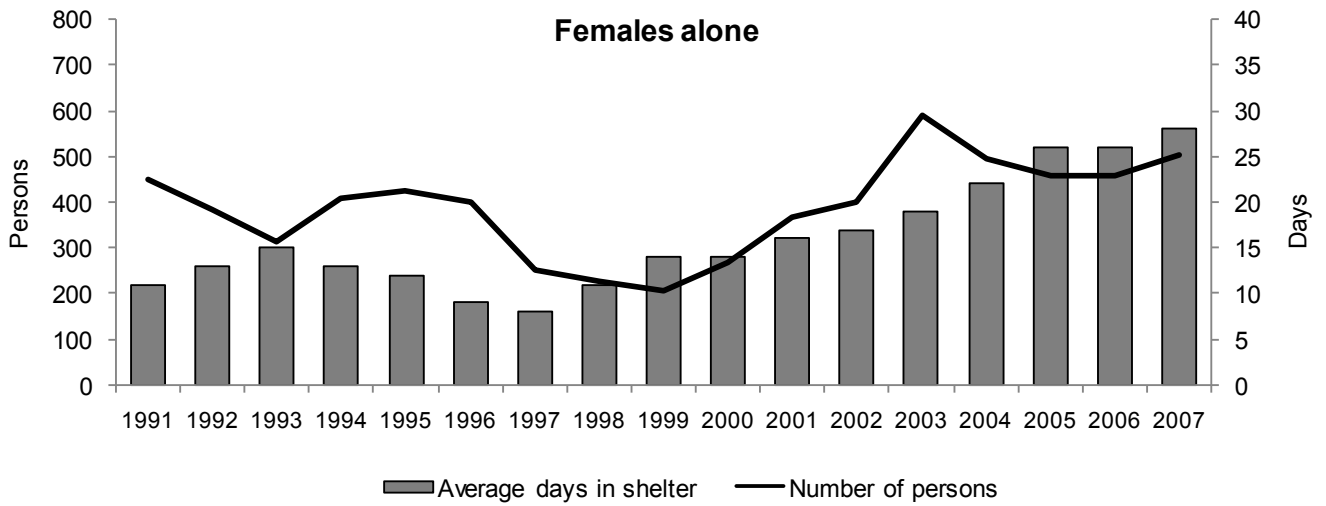
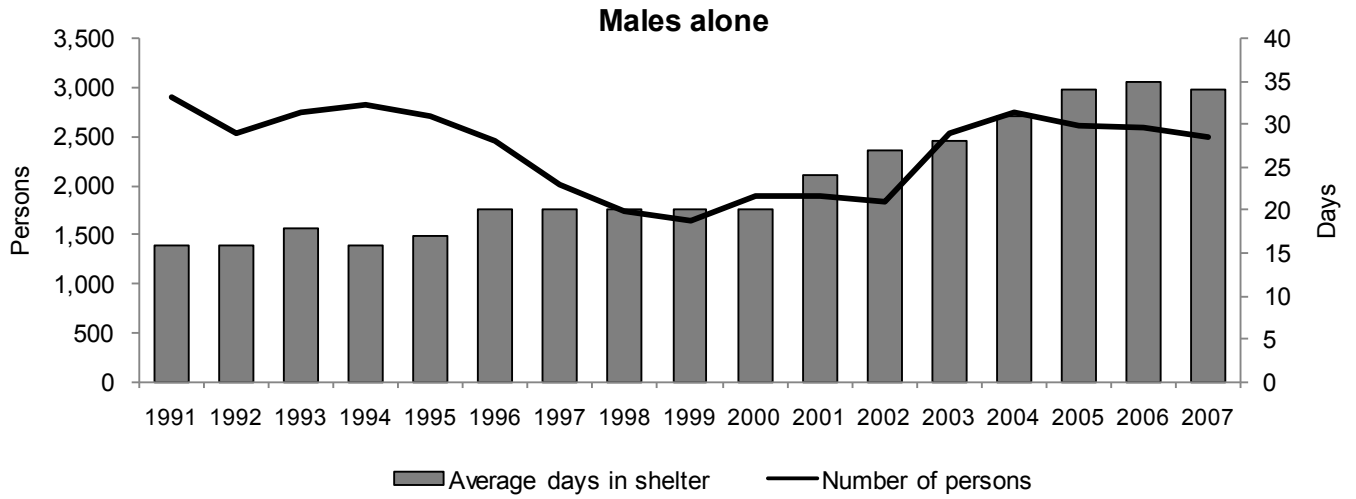
6. Individuals entering emergency shelters by household type, 1991-2007



As is the case with the overall totals shown earlier, adding consideration of average days in shelter changes the picture of shelter use in Ramsey County. So far this decade the general trend has been an increase in both numbers of individuals served and average days in shelter. For single adult males without children, the average number of days in shelter ranged between two and three weeks for the first decade of this project, and then grew to around four weeks from 2002 to 2004, and has been closer to five weeks in the most recent three years. Similarly, females alone stayed in shelter an average of one to two weeks through 2002, and grew closer to three weeks in 2005 through 2007.

The trends for families served in shelter are similar to those observable for singles, but less dramatic. The number of adults with children served in Ramsey County shelter has stayed fairly stable this decade, hovering around 400, but increasing to above 450 in 2005 and 2006. In 2007 the number of adults with children served in shelter decreased somewhat to 430, but the average number of days in shelter grew to a high of 25 days. The County's official policy of limiting shelter stays to 30 consecutive days at its primary family shelter, the Family Service Center, limits the growth in average days for families.

7. Number of adults served and average days in shelter, by household type, 1991-2007



Unduplicated count of individuals using shelter

From 1991 to 2007, 45,209 men, women, and children have used emergency shelter in Ramsey County. This includes 32,452 different adults; 21,560 males alone, 4,308 females alone, and 6,584 adults with children. The total number of different children known to have used emergency shelter from 1991-2007 is 12,757.

Demographic characteristics of adults using emergency shelter

Age and gender

Ever since the beginning of this project about three quarters of all adults served in Ramsey County's adult and family shelters have been males, and about one-quarter have been females. Continuing a trend first seen in 2003, more than half of adults using shelter in both 2006 and 2007 were age 40 or older. This proportion has been on a steady upward trend starting at about 30 percent in the early 1990s. The proportion of adults age 60 and older has increased since 2002, to 5 percent in 2007.

Race and ethnicity

In 2006 and 2007, like all but the first two years of the project, there were more African American adults served in the shelter than any other racial group. Whites are the second most common group. The proportion of adults in shelter who are African American increased in 2006 and 2007 to 48 percent after declining in 2003, 2004, and 2005. The proportion of white adults in shelter also increased slightly to 39 percent in 2007, the highest level since 1992. The percent of Hispanics in shelters has generally been declining over the 15 years of the project and continued to do so in 2006 and 2007, particularly among single males.

8. Characteristics of adults who entered Ramsey County emergency shelters, 1991-2007

	1991 (N=3,911)	1992 (N=3,849)	1993 (N=3,747)	1994 (N=3,832)	1995 (N=3,764)	1996 (N=3,352)	1997 (N=2,687)	1998 (N=2,338)	1999 (N=2,227)	2000 (N=2,580)	2001 (N=2,625)	2002 (N=2,626)	2003 (N=3,544)	2004 (N=3,604)	2005 (N=3,516)	2006 (N=3,383)	2007 (N=3,379)
Sex																	
Female	23%	27%	25%	23%	26%	24%	22%	22%	22%	23%	24%	27%	25%	21%	23%	24%	25%
Male	78%	73%	75%	77%	74%	76%	78%	78%	78%	77%	76%	73%	75%	79%	77%	76%	75%
Age	(N=3,507)	(N=3,655)	(N=3,622)	(N=3,504)	(N=3,546)	(N=3,188)	(N=2,525)	(N=2,257)	(N=2,169)	(N=2,528)	(N=2,580)	(N=2,604)	(N=3,508)	(N=3,578)	(N=3,481)	(N=3,267)	(N=3,338)
<20	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
20-29	31%	32%	30%	30%	29%	24%	22%	19%	19%	19%	16%	18%	16%	17%	18%	18%	17%
30-39	37%	37%	38%	40%	39%	41%	39%	39%	35%	35%	35%	31%	28%	26%	26%	24%	22%
40-49	19%	17%	19%	17%	21%	22%	27%	28%	30%	32%	34%	34%	35%	35%	34%	34%	34%
50-59	7%	7%	7%	6%	6%	7%	8%	8%	8%	9%	11%	11%	15%	16%	16%	17%	20%
60+	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%
Race/ ethnicity	(N=3,905)	(N=3,816)	(N=3,762)	(N=3,730)	(N=3,757)	(N=3,342)	(N=2,681)	(N=2,334)	(N=2,226)	(N=2,573)	(N=2,622)	(N=2,625)	(N=3,542)	(N=3,602)	(N=3,423)	(N=3,142)	(N=3,182)
White	49%	40%	36%	32%	31%	32%	33%	33%	29%	33%	32%	35%	36%	37%	39%	38%	39%
African American	30%	39%	42%	50%	51%	51%	50%	52%	57%	53%	53%	50%	47%	45%	45%	48%	48%
Hispanic	15%	16%	16%	12%	14%	12%	12%	11%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	11%	9%	5%	6%
American Indian	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Asian	<1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Multi-racial/ Other	-	-	-	-	-	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%

9. Race and ethnicity of adults entering emergency shelters by household type, 2005 through 2007

	All adults	Males alone	Females alone	Adults with children
2005	(N=3,423)	(N=2,599)	(N=447)	(N=377)
African American	45%	43%	38%	63%
White	39%	39%	47%	26%
Hispanic	9%	11%	3%	5%
American Indian	4%	3%	9%	2%
Asian	2%	2%	2%	1%
Multi-racial/Other	2%	1%	2%	3%
2006	(N=3,142)	(N=2,371)	(N=438)	(N=333)
African American	48%	46%	38%	68%
White	38%	38%	49%	20%
Hispanic	5%	6%	2%	4%
American Indian	4%	3%	8%	4%
Asian	1%	1%	1%	1%
Multi-racial/Other	4%	6%	2%	3%
2007	(N=3,182)	(N=2,391)	(N=487)	(N=304)
African American	48%	46%	46%	67%
White	39%	41%	41%	22%
Hispanic	6%	6%	4%	5%
American Indian	4%	3%	8%	4%
Asian	1%	1%	>1%	1%
Multi-racial/Other	2%	3%	1%	1%

Demographic characteristics of children using emergency shelters

At least 711 different children used emergency shelters in Ramsey County in 2006, and 674 children used shelters in 2007. This is up somewhat from the project low of 622 reported in 2004.

The demographic characteristics of children in shelter have been fairly consistent since the project began. Two recent exceptions are:

- 1) A shifting racial composition. In 2007, the number of African-American children using shelter decreased to 66 percent, down from its high of 82 percent in 1999. The number of American Indian children using shelter increased, from one percent in 2005 to four percent in 2007.
- 2) A trend toward slightly smaller family size. Continuing a trend started in 2002, nearly half of families had only one child with them (48% in 2006 and 46% in 2007), and the average number of children per family was at or below two for the fifth consecutive year.

10. Characteristics of children with adults in emergency shelters, 1991-2007

Sex	1991 (N=1,064)	1992 (N=1,874)	1993 (N=1,447)	1994 (N=1,273)	1995 (N=1,520)	1996 (N=1,087)	1997 (N=912)	1998 (N=879)	1999 (N=712)	2000 (N=786)	2001 (N=700)	2002 (N=717)	2003 (N=671)	2004 (N=622)	2005 (N=722)	2006 (N=711)	2007 (N=674)
Boys	49%	49%	50%	50%	48%	51%	52%	52%	51%	50%	50%	50%	53%	52%	50%	50%	52%
Girls	51%	51%	50%	50%	52%	49%	48%	48%	49%	50%	50%	50%	47%	48%	50%	50%	48%
Age								(N=877)	(N=708)	(N=768)	(N=700)	(N=717)	(N=670)	(N=622)	(N=716)	(N=709)	(N=674)
2 or younger	31%	30%	23%	29%	29%	29%	24%	24%	19%	21%	22%	24%	27%	24%	28%	27%	30%
3-4	14%	17%	17%	17%	19%	17%	15%	15%	13%	11%	12%	15%	14%	17%	13%	15%	15%
5-9	32%	30%	33%	32%	30%	30%	32%	31%	37%	34%	33%	31%	27%	25%	25%	26%	27%
10-12	14%	13%	14%	13%	13%	13%	14%	16%	16%	16%	19%	16%	17%	18%	15%	14%	12%
13-14	5%	5%	7%	5%	5%	7%	8%	8%	7%	9%	8%	7%	9%	9%	9%	7%	7%
15-18	5%	4%	5%	3%	4%	5%	7%	6%	8%	7%	6%	8%	6%	7%	8%	10%	9%
Race/ethnicity							(N=900)	(N=870)	(N=710)	(N=750)	(N=700)	(N=716)	(N=670)	(N=622)	(N=590)	(N=494)	(N=462)
African American	69%	76%	77%	82%	82%	76%	76%	75%	82%	76%	77%	76%	70%	72%	63%	68%	66%
White	16%	14%	10%	9%	10%	11%	13%	15%	11%	15%	12%	11%	14%	14%	20%	15%	16%
Hispanic	6%	5%	6%	5%	6%	4%	3%	5%	3%	5%	3%	5%	8%	3%	4%	6%	5%
American Indian	6%	3%	4%	2%	1%	5%	4%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	<1%	1%	3%	4%
Asian	<1%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	-	-	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Multi-racial/Other	3%	1%	3%	2%	2%	3%	4%	1%	2%	2%	5%	6%	5%	9%	9%	8%	7%
Number of children per family	(N=479 Families)	(N=642 Families)	(N=627 Families)	(N=421 Families)	(N=574 Families)	(N=440 Families)	(N=358 Families)	(N=378 Families)	(N=314 Families)	(N=353 Families)	(N=312 Families)	(N=337 Families)	(N=349 Families)	(N=307 Families)	(N=367 Families)	(N=363 Families)	(N=355 Families)
1	37%	27%	29%	35%	33%	40%	35%	33%	35%	37%	38%	41%	49%	47%	45%	48%	46%
2	31%	28%	30%	28%	31%	28%	30%	30%	32%	28%	26%	30%	26%	25%	30%	25%	32%
3	19%	22%	19%	18%	20%	17%	17%	18%	16%	19%	20%	14%	15%	14%	16%	17%	14%
4	7%	12%	10%	11%	10%	9%	10%	12%	11%	11%	9%	8%	5%	9%	4%	6%	3%
5	2%	4%	6%	4%	4%	4%	6%	4%	5%	4%	4%	6%	2%	4%	2%	2%	2%
6	4%	4%	4%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%	<1%	1%	1%	1%
7 or more	1%	4%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Mean	2.2	2.7	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.1	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.9
Median	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Emergency shelter use patterns

The general trend over the past several years has been for more frequent stays for all adults. This trend continued in 2006 and 2007, with adult shelter users more likely to return to shelter than has been the case since the project started, and with longer lengths of stay.

Total number of days adults stayed in emergency shelters

To analyze days in shelter, we only look at adults who entered during the calendar year. If, for example, an individual started a shelter stay in 2005 that ended in 2006, that stay is not included in the count for 2006.

- As discussed earlier, the average days in shelter grew to a project high in 2006 and 2007. However, it is still the case that many shelter users have fairly short stays, with over just over 40 percent of shelter users staying for one week or less.
- Somewhat fewer single males and single females spent only one week or less in shelter in each year 2005 to 2007 than was the case in 2003 and 2004. Contrary to this trend was the increase in proportion of adults in families who had short stays, with about 40 percent staying one week or less in 2006 and 2007 compared with about one-third of adults in families sheltered in 2004 and 2005. At the same time, however, over 40 percent of adults in families spent more than 4 weeks in shelter in 2007, despite the 30-consecutive-day limit that is the County's policy at the Family Service Center.

11. Total number of days in shelter for adults by household type, 2006 and 2007

	All adults	Males alone	Females alone	Adults with children
2005	(N=3,425)	(N=2,543)	(N=449)	(N=433)
1 – 7 days	40%	41%	40%	34%
8 – 14 days	12%	12%	14%	12%
15 – 21 days	8%	7%	10%	10%
22 – 28 days	7%	6%	9%	11%
29+ days	32%	33%	27%	32%
2006	(N=3,322)	(N=2,422)	(N=451)	(N=449)
1 – 7 days	41%	41%	46%	40%
8 – 14 days	12%	13%	11%	8%
15 – 21 days	9%	8%	8%	11%
22 – 28 days	7%	6%	8%	10%
29+ days	31%	32%	27%	31%
2007	(N=3,277)	(N=2,377)	(N=490)	(N=410)
1 – 7 days	42%	42%	44%	37%
8 – 14 days	11%	12%	8%	8%
15 – 21 days	8%	7%	10%	8%
22 – 28 days	6%	6%	9%	6%
29+ days	33%	33%	29%	41%

Repeat shelter use

Over the course of this project we have defined a shelter stay as continuous residence in a shelter which can include an absence of up to three nights. If an individual leaves shelter for four or more nights before entering shelter again, that re-entry is defined as a new stay. Under this definition an individual could have several separate shelter stays in the course of one episode of homelessness if, for example, the individual cycles from a shelter onto the streets, and back into a shelter over the course of several weeks.

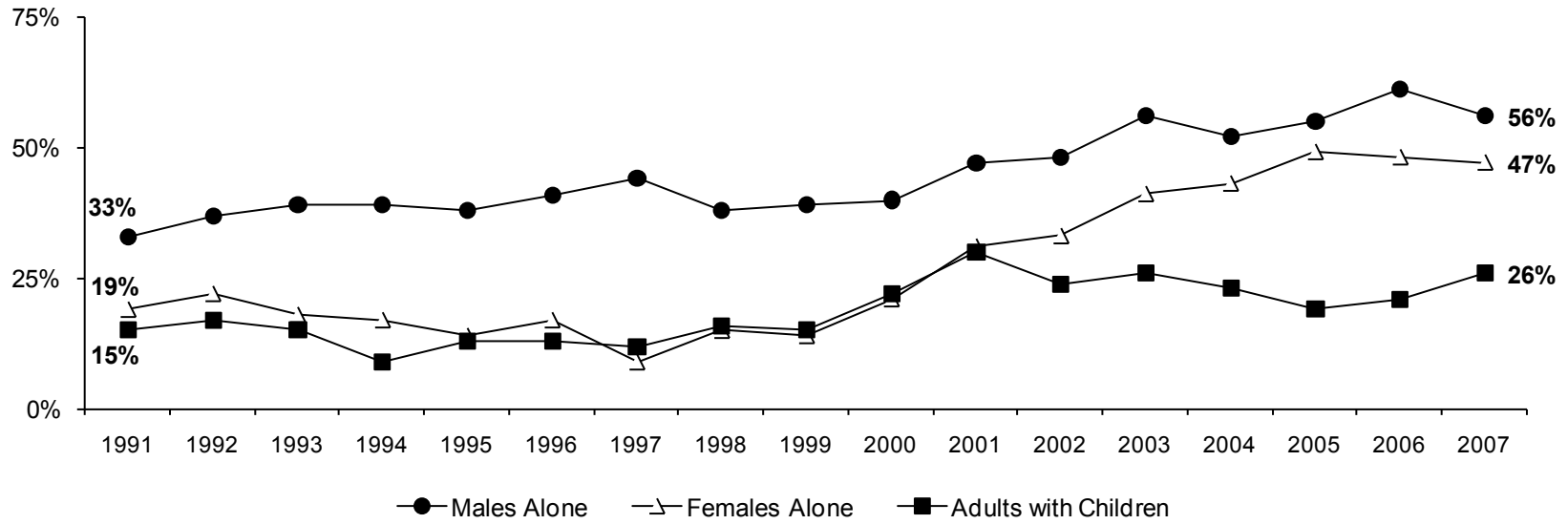
The major finding from the analysis of stays in 2006 and 2007 is that for the first time more than half of all shelter users had more than one shelter stay. Additionally, adults averaged 2.8 stays in shelter in 2006 and 2007, just under the highest average of 2.9 recorded in 2005.

The trend toward more repeat stays has been especially notable since 2001, when the proportion of adult males alone with repeat stays first approached half, and the proportion of adult females alone with repeat stays approached one-third. In the most recent two years well over half of single males had repeat stays, as did nearly half of single females. Throughout this decade about one-quarter of adults with children using shelter have two or more separate shelter stays in the same year.

12. Number of separate stays for adults in emergency shelters, by household type, 2005-2007

Number of stays	All adults	Males alone	Females alone	Adults with children
2005	(N=3,425)	(N=2,543)	(N=449)	(N=433)
1	50%	45%	51%	81%
2	16%	17%	14%	11%
3	9%	10%	12%	3%
4	6%	7%	6%	2%
5	4%	5%	3%	1%
6	4%	4%	4%	<1%
7 or more	11%	13%	10%	<1%
Mean	2.9	3.2	2.8	1.4
2006	(N=3,429)	(N=2,529)	(N=451)	(N=449)
1	47%	40%	52%	79%
2	19%	19%	19%	15%
3	8%	9%	7%	3%
4	7%	8%	6%	2%
5	5%	6%	4%	<1%
6	4%	4%	4%	<1%
7 or more	10%	14%	8%	<1%
Mean	2.8	3.1	2.7	1.3
2007	(N=3,314)	(N=2,414)	(N=490)	(N=410)
1	49%	44%	53%	74%
2	18%	18%	18%	18%
3	10%	10%	9%	5%
4	5%	6%	5%	1%
5	5%	6%	4%	2%
6	3%	3%	3%	-
7 or more	10%	13%	8%	<1%
Mean	2.8	3.1	2.8	1.4

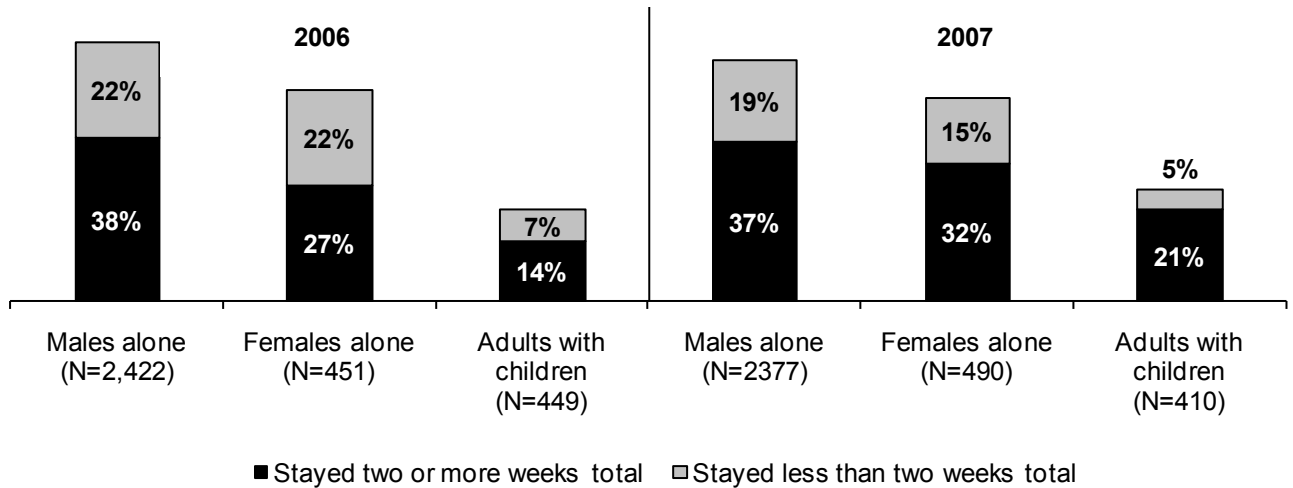
13. Adults re-entering shelter within the same year, 1991-2007



Days in shelter for those repeating use of emergency shelters

Repeat shelter users tend to have more total days in shelter than those with only one shelter stay. For all adults who stayed in shelter more than once, the average length of time in shelter was 46 days in 2006 and 49 days in 2007, similar to the 50 days average for those with repeated stays in 2005. In both 2006 and 2007, over one-third of single males used shelter more than one time and stayed in shelter for at least two weeks. Over one-quarter of single females used shelter more than once and stayed in for at least two weeks. The percents of families staying in shelter more than once and for two or more weeks total increased to 21 percent in 2007.

14. Days in shelter for repeat adult users by household type, 2006 and 2007



Chronic and long-term shelter use

Since the beginning of this project, we have defined “chronic shelter users” as those who stay in shelters at least one night every quarter, or eight or more days per quarter for three out of four quarters. For the second consecutive time in this series of reports we also have attempted to operationalize the state’s definition of Long Term Homeless (being without permanent shelter for at least 12 consecutive months or four times in the last three years) using only the administrative shelter stay data that undergirds this report.

For purposes of this report, we have operationalized the state’s definition so that individuals are counted as “long-term shelter users” if they either: a) have lived continuously in shelter for 12 months or more ending in (or continuing through) the year in question, or b) have had separate shelter stays during at least four calendar quarters in the past three years, including the year in question.” It is important to note that since episodes of homelessness often include stays in places other than shelters, the numbers in this report likely underestimate the actual number of individuals in Ramsey County who would meet the state’s definition of long term homelessness.

Considerably more shelter users meet this report’s “long-term shelter user” definition than the “chronic shelter user” definition, but it is not surprising to find a large percentage of overlap between the two groups. Eighty-five percent of adult chronic shelter users met this report’s definition of long-term shelter user in 2006, and in 2007, 92 percent of adult chronic shelter users met the definition of long-term shelter users.

Chronic use of emergency shelters

From 1992 to 2002 the proportion of adults using shelter who met the “chronic shelter user” definition has been a fairly stable 2 to 3 percent. Since 2003 that proportion has crept up slightly: to 6 percent in 2003, 7 percent in 2004, 9 percent in 2005, 7 percent in 2006, and 8 percent in 2007.

- 241 people met the “chronic shelter users” definition in 2006, and 254 did so in 2007. This is down from the project’s high of 296 in 2005.
- Chronic shelter users are predominantly male adults without children. In both 2006 and 2007, just under 90 percent of those meeting the chronic definition were single males, about 10 percent were single females, and less than 1 percent were adults with children.
- Chronic shelter use is also more common among single males than the other two groups, with about 9 percent of all male shelter users meeting the chronic definition in both 2006 and 2007, compared to about 6 percent of all single females, and less than 1 percent of all adults with children.

- By definition chronic shelter users consume a disproportionate share of shelter resources. In 2006, 41 percent of all emergency shelter bed nights were used by those defined as chronic shelter users, and in 2007 chronic shelter users consumed 43 percent of all bed nights.

Long term shelter use

For the past four years about one quarter of all adults using emergency shelter in Ramsey County have met this report's definition of long term shelter use. In 2006, 848 adults (24 percent of all adults in shelter) met the definition, and in 2007, 879 adults (26 percent of all adults in shelter) met the long-term shelter user definition. The vast majority of those meeting the definition are single adults without children, most of whom are single males.

15. Number of long-term shelter users by household type, 2004 through 2007

Household type	2004	2005	2006	2007
Males alone	750 (87%)	768 (86%)	732 (86%)	762 (87%)
Females alone	94 (11%)	105 (12%)	99 (12%)	104 (12%)
Adults with children	14 (2%)	18 (2%)	17 (2%)	13 (1%)
Total	858 (100%)	891 (100%)	848 (100%)	879 (100%)

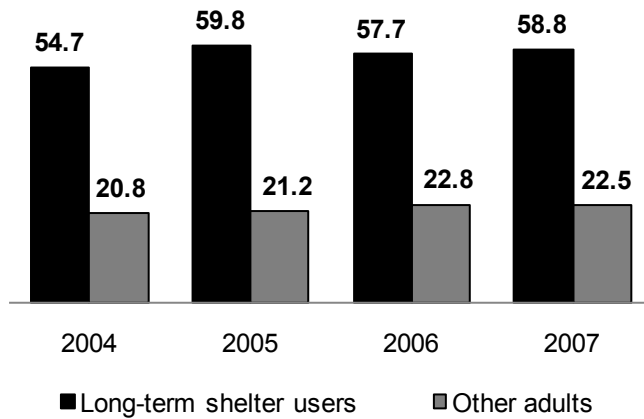
As is the case with chronic shelter use definition, long-term shelter use is more common among males without children than either females without children or adults sheltered with their children. In all four years, about 30 percent of all single males served in shelter were long-term shelter users, compared with roughly 20 percent of single females, and only 3 percent of adults in families.

16. Adult shelter capacity consumption: Long-term shelter users compared to other adults, 2004 through 2007

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Bed nights used by long-term shelter users	46,858 (45%)	53,124 (50%)	48,576 (46%)	51,550 (49%)
Bed nights used by other adults using shelter	56,150 (55%)	53,707 (50%)	57,785 (54%)	54,581 (51%)

Those meeting the long-term definition use a disproportionate share of shelter capacity. Although individuals meeting this definition make up about a quarter of all adult shelter users, they consume about half of all the shelter capacity used by adults in recent years. This is also reflected in the markedly longer average days in shelter for those meeting the long-term definition compared with other adult shelter users. On average, long-term shelter users stay in shelter 2.5 to 3 times longer than other shelter users.

17. Average annual days in shelter: Long-term shelter users compared to other adults, 2004 through 2007



Previous living arrangements

This section includes additional information about previous living arrangements, which was collected only for those served through Ramsey County’s central intake system for emergency shelter, including: Mary Hall Men’s Shelter, the Family Service Center, Project Home, and the Family Place.

Altogether 930 adults, or nearly 27 percent of all adult shelter users, were served through the central intake shelters in 2006. That includes 398 men without children (15% of all males alone), 149 women without children (33% of all females alone), and 383 adults accompanied by children (83% of all adults with children).

Similarly, in 2007 867 adults, or 25 percent of all adult shelter users, were sheltered through Ramsey County’s central intake system. This includes 361 men sheltered without children (14% of all males alone), 170 women without children (34% of all females alone), and 336 of adults in families with children (78% of adults with children).

Addresses of adults before entering emergency shelters

Upon intake, adults served through Ramsey County’s central intake system were asked the geographic location of their last permanent address. Not surprisingly, Ramsey County heads the list in both cases, although there was a nine percentage point increase in those reporting last permanent addresses outside of Minnesota in 2007.

18. Place of previous residence of adults entering emergency shelters, 2006 and 2007

2006	2006 (N=2,483)	2007 (N=2,371)
Ramsey County	75%	65%
Other Twin Cities Metro	14%	15%
Other Minnesota	1%	2%
Outside Minnesota	10%	19%

Note: This table only includes adults served through Ramsey County’s emergency shelter central intake system. Data regarding where clients have lived for most of the past five years is no longer being collected.

Reasons leading adults to enter emergency shelters

Intake workers record which of several possible reasons for seeking shelter apply to each adult entering shelter through Ramsey County's central intake system. Lack of affordable housing lead the list in 2006 at 50 percent, with drinking/drug use leading the list in 2007 at 40 percent. Following affordable housing and drinking/drug abuse was eviction in 2006 at 14 percent and personal/family crisis in 2007 at 11 percent.

19. Reasons leading adults to enter shelter, by household type, 2006 and 2007

	All adults (N=1,237)	Males alone (N=694)	Females alone (N=177)	Adults with children (N=366)
2006				
Lack of affordable housing	50%	44%	42%	70%
Drinking/drug use	36%	52%	36%	2%
Eviction	14%	5%	14%	35%
Employment/income	12%	8%	10%	24%
Mental Illness	8%	8%	14%	2%
Physical abuse	3%	1%	7%	4%
Fear of crime/violence	2%	1%	-	5%
Unit condemned	1%	<1%	2%	2%
2007	(N=1,307)	(N=984)	(N=230)	(N=93)
Drinking/drug use	40%	44%	31%	6%
Lack of affordable housing	39%	39%	31%	60%
Personal/family crisis	11%	11%	13%	3%
Eviction	10%	8%	12%	34%
Mental Illness	7%	7%	7%	3%
Employment/income	4%	4%	1%	25%
Physical abuse	4%	2%	13%	4%
Fear of crime/violence	2%	1%	5%	2%
Unit condemned	<1%	1%	-	-

Note: Case workers record up to two reasons for each client. This table only includes adults served through Ramsey County's emergency shelter central intake system.

Living arrangements of adults before entering emergency shelters

Adults were asked about their living arrangements the night prior to entering shelter. As in previous years, “another shelter” was the most commonly reported prior living arrangement for all adults, including both males- and females- alone in 2006 and 2007. “Friends or relatives” was the most common previous living situation for adults with children.

20. Previous living arrangements of adults entering emergency shelters by household type, 2006 and 2007

	All adults (N=2,240)	Males alone (N=1,521)	Females alone (N=407)	Adults with children (N=312)
2006				
Another shelter	55%	67%	47%	6%
Friends or relatives	18%	10%	20%	56%
Own place	17%	14%	20%	28%
Other	5%	4%	6%	8%
On the streets	3%	3%	3%	<1%
Treatment facility	1%	1%	2%	1%
Hospital	1%	1%	1%	-
Correctional facility	<1%	<1%	<1%	-
Detox	<1%	<1%	<1%	-
2007	(N=2,150)	(N=1,434)	(N=437)	(N=279)
Another shelter	52%	61%	43%	14%
Friends or relatives	21%	12%	22%	63%
Own place	13%	11%	18%	12%
On the streets	6%	7%	7%	-
Other	6%	6%	7%	10%
Hospital	1%	1%	2%	-
Detox	1%	1%	<1%	<1%
Correctional facility	1%	1%	1%	-
Treatment facility	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%

Note: This table only includes adults served through Ramsey County’s emergency shelter central intake system and only those who responded to this question.

Appendices

Summary of data sources

Summary of family and individual bed capacity of emergency shelter providers

Emergency shelter - data sources summary

Agency program	Intake year																
	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Union Gospel Mission (Shelter)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
ACCESS (Motel Overflow)	X	X															
Catholic Charities (Mary Hall Men's Shelter)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X*	X*	X*	X*
Lowry Family Shelter	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X							
Union Gospel Mission (Naomi Center)			X	X	X	X	X	X									
Saint Paul Area Council of Churches (Project Home)					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X*	X*	X*	X*
Catholic Charities (Dorothy Day)										X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Family Service Center (Maplewood)										X	X	X	X	X*	X*	X*	X*
The Family Place											X	X	X	X*			
Catholic charities unofficial overflow (mainly families)															X	X	X

* Indicates that data was provided through the HMIS system.

Emergency housing providers in Ramsey County, 2006 and 2007

Provider	Bed Capacity		Total Bed Capacity
	Family Beds	Individual Beds	
Emergency Shelters for adults and families			
Catholic Charities (Dorothy Day)*	-	170 (mats)	170 (mats)
Catholic Charities (Mary Hall Men's Shelter)*	-	22	22
Family Service Center*	45	10	55
Project Home (Saint Paul Area Council of Churches)*	40	-	40
Union Gospel Mission*	-	82	82
Total	85	284	369
Battered Women's Shelters <i>(not included elsewhere in this report)</i>			
Casa De Esperanza	9	3	12
Tubman Family Alliance (Doris and Stan Hill Home)	20	10	30
Women of Nations (Eagle's Nest)	40	6	46
Women's Advocates	45	7	52
Total	133	7	140
Youth Emergency Shelters <i>(not included elsewhere in this report)</i>			
Ain Dah Yung	-	10	10
Lutheran Social Services (Safe House)	-	6	6
Total	6	16	16

Source: Ramsey County Continuum of Care 2008 Exhibit 1 application to the U.S. Dept of Housing and Urban Development, Housing Inventory Chart 2008.

Note: Bed capacity should be viewed as approximations, especially for family beds.

* Indicates that the provider is a participant in this project and submitted data for 2006 and 2007.