



Wilder Foundation Family Supportive Housing Services: Project Quest

A Summary of Evaluation Findings from Fiscal Year 2015-16

A total of 9,312 homeless adults, youth, and children were counted during the 2015 Minnesota Homeless Study. Over one-third of that group were children with their parents (35%).¹

Wilder Foundation Family Supportive Housing Services (FSHS) works with homeless individuals and families to assist them in finding and maintaining housing, establishing a stable source of income, and connecting to needed health services. If there are school-age children in the household, staff also work on improving students' school engagement. In fiscal year 2016, FSHS staff provided services through the following programs:

- Jackson Street Village
- Northgate Woods
- Project Quest
- St. Alban's Place
- ROOF Project
- ROOF – Housing Trust Fund
- Minnesota Place Apartments
- St. Philip's Gardens
- Western U Plaza

The following summary highlights evaluation findings from Project Quest between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016.

¹ News release: Wilder study finds 9,312 people in Minnesota are homeless; down 9 percent from 2012. Wilder Research, March 14, 2016.

Project Quest is a scattered-site housing program that serves families in Ramsey, Dakota, and Washington counties. The primary goal of the program is to end homelessness by helping people become more self-reliant and lead healthier, more productive lives.²

Client characteristics

Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016, Project Quest served **186 unduplicated individuals**, including **48 households**; 35 clients entered the program and 41 exited during the reporting period (Figure 1).

1. Unduplicated individuals and households served

	Number of individuals	Number of households
First day of reporting period (July 1, 2015)	151	40
Entered during reporting period	35	8
Exited during reporting period	41	9
Cases open at the end of the year (June 30, 2016)	145	39
Total served during reporting period	186	48

Note. In the “All Programs” report, Project Quest is reported as serving N=187 individuals. It is unclear why there is a discrepancy between these two data sets.

The following bullets outline several demographic characteristics for those served by Project Quest.

- **Gender:** 75 percent of adults served were women, and the majority of households were headed by single mothers (83%).
- **Age:** Project Quest served every age group; however, the majority of clients were youth age 17 and younger (59%) (Figure 2).

2. Age of clients served

N=186	N	%
0 to 5 years old	38	20%
6 to 12 years old	39	21%
13 to 17 years old	33	18%
18 to 21 years old	16	9%
22 to 25 years old	10	5%
26 to 50 years old	43	23%
51 years and older	7	4%

² <http://www.wilder.org/Programs-Services/Housing-Services/Pages/Supportive-Housing.aspx>

- **Race and ethnicity:** The majority of Project Quest clients were people of color (66%), with 43 percent identifying as African American or black. In addition, six percent of clients identified as Hispanic.
- **Disability:** 67 percent of heads of household had at least one disability of long duration. Of those clients, the most common disability reported was mental illness (88%), followed by a chronic health condition (21%), physical disability (14%), and alcohol abuse (14%); clients could report more than one disability.
- **Domestic violence:** At program entry, 35 percent of adults had experienced domestic violence within the past year.
- **History of homelessness, by household:** Prior to their involvement in Project Quest, 65 percent of households were living in an emergency shelter. The next most common living situation was a friend's room, apartment, or house (13%). At program entry, the majority of families were considered long-term homeless (81%).³

Client outcomes

Wilder staff also collect outcome information for clients served. The section below highlights selected outcomes for clients served between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016.

Stable housing

- Nearly all (92%) of the 48 households served during this reporting period had stable housing for more than six months after program entry, and the majority (83%) had stable housing for more than one year.
- The most common destination for exited households was rental housing, either with or without a subsidy (6 households) (Figure 3).

³ Minnesota's definition of long-term homelessness: Individuals, unaccompanied youth, or families with children who lack a permanent place to live continuously for a year or more or at least four times in the past three years. Any period of institutionalization or incarceration is excluded when determining the length of time a household has been homeless.

3. Destination for households that exited Project Quest

N=9	N	%
Rental housing with subsidy	4	44%
Rental housing without subsidy	2	22%
Friends or family, permanently	0	0%
Substance abuse treatment center	0	0%
Emergency shelter	1	11%
Jail	0	0%
Deceased	1	11%
Destination not known	1	11%

Employment and income

- Of the 12 adults (9 households) that exited Project Quest during the reporting period, 41 percent had a monthly income of \$600 or less at program entry (Figure 4).
- Over the course of their involvement in Project Quest, the median income of exited clients increased (\$566 to \$1,345) (Figure 4).

4. Monthly income for clients who exited during the reporting period

N=12	Income at program entry		Income at program exit	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No income	1	8%	5	42%
\$1 – 600	4	33%	2	17%
\$601 or more	7	58%	5	42%
Average monthly income	\$783		\$1,462	
Median monthly income	\$566		\$1,345	

Note. This table is based on 12 adults in the 9 households that left during the reporting period. Cases with “no income” reported are excluded from the calculations of average and median income.

- The proportion of households with earned income increased slightly between intake and the most recent assessment for both exited (none to 17%) and all households (10% to 25%) (Figure 5).
- Sources for income and income assistance remained fairly consistent between program entry and a client’s most recent assessment. There was a decrease in the proportion of clients receiving Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), child support (all households), and food stamps (exited households) (Figure 5).

5. Income sources between program entry and most recent assessment

	# of <u>exited</u> households receiving income source (N=12)*		# of <u>all</u> households receiving income source (N=48)	
	Program entry	Program exit	Program entry	Most recent assessment
Earned income	0%	17%	10%	25%
Cash assistance				
MFIP (a.k.a. TANF)	50%	25%	67%	60%
General Assistance	0%	0%	2%	4%
Child support	8%	8%	10%	6%
SSI	17%	17%	19%	21%
SSDI	0%	0%	2%	8%
Non-cash assistance				
Food stamps/SNAP	92%	83%	98%	100%
Section 8 or other rental assistance	0%	0%	0%	0%
MN Care for adults	0%	0%	2%	2%
Temporary rental assistance	0%	0%	4%	8%

* These columns are based on 12 adults in the 9 households that left during the reporting period.

Survey of participants

In addition to characteristics and outcome data collected from Minnesota’s Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), FSHS program staff also distribute a self-administered questionnaire to all clients 18 years and older, either at exit or annually (if a client has not exited a program). The survey includes questions about services received, program staff, and overall satisfaction. A total of 32 FSHS clients completed a “Survey of participants” between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016. Researchers cannot calculate an exact response rate since we do not know how many clients have been in each program for at least one year. Also, because of the low number of surveys completed at individual programs, Wilder cannot report results at a site-specific level; however, findings from the completed surveys are included in the “All Programs” summary.

Issues to consider

Results of the analysis show that Project Quest served 186 individual, unduplicated clients (48 families). The majority of those served were women, and clients have diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Many clients have complex and co-occurring issues, such as poor physical and mental health, a history of domestic violence, and a history of long-term homelessness.

There were some improvements in the outcomes of clients, although the number of clients who exited Project Quest during the reporting period is small because it is designed to be “permanent” supportive housing.

In moving forward, it will be important to have more consistent data collection, particularly for the participant survey. Wilder Foundation staff have been working to conduct regular data collection with clients, and it appears that the number of completed surveys is increasing.

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For more information

This summary presents highlights from the Wilder Foundation's Family Supportive Housing Services evaluation.

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