

# **Overview of homelessness in Minnesota 2006**

*Key facts from the statewide  
survey*

**April 2007**

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***About the study***

Every three years since 1991, Wilder Research has conducted a statewide survey of people who are homeless or living in temporary housing programs. In October 2006, more than 950 volunteer interviewers conducted face-to-face interviews with over 3,700 people experiencing homelessness. Interviews took place throughout Minnesota in about 250 emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and battered women's shelters, and among homeless people not in shelters.

Homeless people not currently in shelters were interviewed in more than 80 cities, towns, and surrounding areas, including at food programs and drop-in centers, as well as under bridges, in encampments, and other places where those not using shelter programs spend time. In 2006, Wilder received unprecedented help from partners across the state to reach this population. As a result, we were able to substantially increase the number of interviews conducted among homeless people not in shelters.

One of the biggest changes since 2003 is the development of housing and services targeted to the long-term homeless, much of which has been in the form of permanent supportive housing. Because this kind of housing is not time-limited, previously homeless people being served through permanent supportive housing are not considered homeless and are therefore not included in the statewide survey.

## *Using this report*

This report is an overview of initial findings from the full study. Many sections closely follow our previous summary reports, *Understanding Homelessness 2000* and *Homeless in Minnesota 2003*. Because of changes in programs and services, and increased outreach efforts in 2006, however, you should use caution in making direct comparisons to results from previous years, except comparisons presented in this report.

Homelessness affects a wide variety of people, for many different reasons, in settings that range from isolated or nearly-invisible places to highly structured programs. In this initial overview, we present most homelessness information in terms of overall statewide frequencies or averages. However, in some instances where statewide reporting masks important variations, we have also provided information based on certain populations or types of settings.

As in past years, we distinguish three types of shelter programs that serve homeless people:

- **Emergency shelters** – A safe place to sleep, generally open only evenings and overnight. May provide meals, housing information and other services.
- **Battered women's shelters** – Safe refuge and advocacy for women and their children when fleeing an abusive situation.
- **Transitional housing** – Time-limited, subsidized housing that involves working with a professional to set and address goals to become self-sufficient.

Most homeless people spend some time outside of shelter programs, and many never use them. A national survey in 1997 found that only one-third of homeless adults had slept every night of the previous week in any kind of shelter program, while two-thirds had spent at least one night in unsheltered locations or unofficial temporary housing.

In the 2006 Wilder study, people who were interviewed in non-shelter locations were screened out of the survey if they had not stayed in a shelter or been literally homeless (on the streets, in a car, in an abandoned building, or in some other place not meant for habitation) within the past seven days. This follows the same screening principles as in the 1997 national study, and the same principles Wilder Research has followed in previous studies.

For homeless people we interviewed who were not in shelters on the date of the study, information in the survey gives some insight into the settings in which they had spent the most time in October. When they were not using formal emergency shelters:

**Informal shelter** – They were less likely to be outdoors than in a house, apartment, or room in which they were allowed to stay on a temporary basis; a motel room that they paid for (not provided by a voucher program); or in a jail or detox facility from which they had no place to go when they were released.

**Unsheltered** – They were less likely to be in informal arrangements than in cars or other vehicles, transportation depots, 24-hour businesses, buildings that are abandoned or unfit for habitation (lacking plumbing, electricity, or heat), or outdoor locations.

Unless otherwise stated, percentages given in this report are of all homeless adults who are represented in the survey.

Federal and state legislation governing services for runaway and homeless youth explicitly cover young adults age 18 through 21. We therefore include young people in this age group in our discussion of unaccompanied homeless youth, although they are legally adults and are also included in the overall adult findings.

This is a point-in-time study. If the survey were extended over the course of a year, many more short-term episodes of homelessness would occur, but relatively few additional long-term episodes would be added to those already documented here. Therefore, when interpreting these findings it is important to bear in mind that they better represent the experiences of those who are homeless for lengthy periods of time (or repeatedly) than for those whose experiences of homelessness are short.

More detailed reports from the 2006 study will be published and posted on our Web site: [www.wilderresearch.org](http://www.wilderresearch.org).

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### ***What do we mean by “homeless”?***

In the definition used for this research, a homeless person is anyone who (1) lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and (2) has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised, publicly- or privately-operated temporary living accommodation, including emergency shelters, transitional housing, and battered women’s shelters; or 3) has a nighttime residence in any place not meant for human habitation, such as under bridges or in cars. This is based on the definition established by the U.S. Congress.

In a different section of law, this definition is expanded for youth age 17 or younger to include those who are staying temporarily in other people’s homes, with or without their parents, because they have nowhere else to live.

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## ***Notes on study methods***

The information in this report about the characteristics of homeless adults is based on interviews with 1,174 men and 1,270 women age 18 or older in emergency shelters, battered women's shelters, and transitional housing programs, as well as another 1,138 interviews with adults in non-shelter locations. According to the interviews, adult respondents had a total of 1,948 children with them.

The youth and young adults section of this report describes the characteristics of unaccompanied homeless youth ages 17 and under, as well as young adults ages 18 through 21. We conducted interviews with 151 youth ages 17 and under, including 93 in temporary housing programs and 58 youth in non-shelter locations. Youth respondents had a total of 13 children with them. In addition, we conducted interviews with 455 young adults ages 18 to 21 including 240 in temporary housing programs and 215 in non-shelter locations. Young adult respondents had a total of 178 children with them. (These young adults are also included in the adult numbers mentioned above.)

Recent changes in legislation related to homeless young people define homeless youth through the age of 21. For this reason, young adult analysis was changed this year to include the responses of 21-year-olds.

### **Weighting frequencies and percentages**

Survey results have been statistically adjusted to reflect the actual adult populations residing in emergency shelters, battered women's shelters, and transitional housing programs (1,783 men and 1,860 women) on the day of the survey.

We do not weight the data collected from persons interviewed in non-shelter locations, because we do not know the actual numbers of people who were on the streets or in other non-shelter locations on the day of the survey.

We do not weight the data in the youth and young adult section. This is because many homeless young people do not use shelter and we do not want to over-represent the backgrounds and experiences of the small proportion of those using shelter during the one-night snapshot. However, when adult characteristics are reported, those 18 and older are included with the rest of the adult population. In those sections of the report, their responses are weighted in the same way as the rest of the adult population.

### **Additional notes**

The total number of responses is not always the total number of people. Not all questions were asked of every respondent (for example, questions about children were not asked of those who have no children). Not all respondents answered every question.

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# Highlights

## Key findings in the 2006 survey

Based on survey results and shelter counts, we estimate that there were about 9,200 to 9,300 Minnesotans who were homeless on any given night in 2006, and that this is little changed from the number who were homeless on any given night in 2003. However, survey results show an increasing level of distress among the homeless, with rising rates of many disabilities.

### *What's new?*

#### **Increase in overall distress**

The proportions of people with mental health problems, substance abuse problems, traumatic brain injury, and other disabilities continue to increase. For example:

- In 2006 over half (52%) of homeless adults and 54% of homeless youth 17 and younger report a recent diagnosis or treatment for a serious mental illness.
  - The 2003 proportions were 47% of adults and 42% of youth.
- In 2006, 33% of adults and 24% of youth report cognitive disabilities that make them frequently confused or cause problems in making decisions.
  - The 2003 proportions were 30% of adults and 22% of youth.

This level of distress suggests that the solutions being developed to address homelessness throughout Minnesota must be appropriate and responsive to a wide range of preexisting conditions.

#### **Fewer newcomers to Minnesota**

The 2006 study shows that only 23 percent of those now homeless in Minnesota are from outside the state – and of this group, more than one-third had lived in Minnesota previously. When statewide research on the homeless first began in 1991, nearly one-third of the state's homeless population had come to Minnesota from elsewhere within the most recent two years. This decline may be related to the generally increased level of distress in this population and the relative lack of mobility that people have in the face of multiple and serious problems.

## **Increase in the number of ex-offenders**

Beginning in 2000, the statewide homeless studies have shown an increase in the formerly incarcerated population, and this year's study continues the trend. This increase is understandable given the increased rate of incarceration in Minnesota and throughout the country. In 2006, 47 percent of all homeless adults had ever been incarcerated, up from 42 percent in 2003. Twelve percent had been released from a jail or prison within the past year, of whom only 35 percent had stable housing when they were released. This is an important trend to monitor, since 90 percent of those who enter a correctional facility will at some point be released, and the lack of housing is associated with higher rates of re-offending.

## ***What persists?***

### **Racial disparities**

One trend that is persistent and distressing is the significant over-representation of African Americans and American Indians within the homeless population in Minnesota. These disparities are especially apparent in a state that is more than 80 percent White. Nearly half of all homeless persons in the Twin Cities metro area are African American and nearly one out of five of those in greater Minnesota are American Indian.

### **Domestic violence**

Once again, women fleeing domestic abuse represent a large segment of homeless women in Minnesota. Domestic violence continues as second only to economic reasons in its contribution to homelessness among women in our state. One-third (32%) of all homeless women in the study were homeless at least in part to escape an abusive relationship.

### **Childhood trauma**

A history of abuse is unusually common among homeless adults and youth. While this study cannot directly link childhood maltreatment and neglect as a cause for homelessness, both the adult and youth homeless populations reflect high rates of childhood physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. The levels seen in the 2006 study are consistent with results seen in 2000 and 2003. Nearly 2 in 5 (38%) of homeless adults, and 53 percent of youth, have been physically abused during childhood. One-quarter (26%) of adults and 24 percent of youth have been sexually abused during childhood.

### **Frequent history of out-of-home placement among youth**

In the 2006 study, 7 out of 10 homeless youth (70%) report previous experiences in a foster home, group home, treatment center, or correctional facility. Other research suggests that the resources now available to address the needs of teens with histories of neglect and

mental health problems, as well as the services available to youth as they are transitioning to adulthood from out-of-home placements, may not be adequate to address these problems.

## ***What to watch***

### **Older adults are an increasing fraction of the statewide homeless population**

Although the percentage of persons 55 and older among the homeless population in Minnesota has not increased substantially, the trend over the past three studies shows an upward trend. In 2006, approximately 375 persons 55 and older were interviewed as part of the statewide homeless study. They are more typically male (81%) and more likely to be U.S. military veterans (44% of men) than the rest of the homeless population.

### **More youth are homeless and not staying in shelters**

Results from the street outreach portion of the homeless study, as well as information from youth regarding their experiences being turned away from shelter because of lack of beds, suggest that youth are increasingly on the streets at least part of the time rather than in shelter. (25% of youth 17 or younger reported sleeping at least one night outside in October.) This disconnection from shelter services may make them more vulnerable, and more prone to long-term homelessness. In addition, one out of ten adults in the 2006 study reported that they had lived in a program for homeless people as a child or youth, and nearly one in four (23%) reported that their first experience with homelessness had been when they were children (under the age of 18).

### **Veterans from today's military conflicts are showing up in shelters**

While just 17 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans were identified in the 2006 study, this group was twice as likely as other veterans to report post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The 58 percent with PTSD in this group is higher than the 47 percent among homeless male combat veterans overall, and contrasts sharply with the 27 percent among other male veterans and 13 percent among homeless men who are not veterans.

### **Improved outreach yields a better understanding of hidden homelessness**

A critical change in this year's study was the increased effort to reach out to and identify homeless youth and adults who were not using the shelter or transitional housing system. In fact, through the efforts of nearly one thousand volunteer interviewers throughout the state, the 1,196 non-shelter-using homeless who were identified and interviewed in this year's study was nearly double that of any previous study. While this does not necessarily mean that more people are in fact homeless, it does mean that we are better able to find them and describe their situations. It also means that we have revised upward our

estimating procedures for the number of adults living on the streets or spending part of their time in informal shelter arrangements. While all of the persons included in the current statewide study can be defined as homeless using the federal definition, many – especially those in rural areas – are part of the hidden homeless because of their frequent use of informal shelter with friends and family.

### **Transitional housing use has declined**

For the first time, our 2006 study shows an approximately 20 percent drop in the use of transitional housing compared to the previous study three years earlier (one-night transitional housing counts of 4,333 in 2003, and 3,756 in 2006). This includes 27 percent fewer individuals, and 11 percent fewer families, in transitional housing. During the same time period the amount of permanent supportive housing in Minnesota has nearly doubled and it is not unreasonable to expect that these drops in transitional housing are related to the use of more permanent housing solutions for many formerly homeless adults.

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### ***Minnesota's plan for ending long-term homelessness***

In 2004, the State of Minnesota launched a Business Plan to End Long-Term Homelessness in Minnesota by 2010. The Plan involves multiple services, sectors, and levels of government with a primary strategy to develop more permanent supportive housing.

A broad-based Working Group developed the plan. Using Wilder Research data, and allowing for growth, the Group set a goal of creating 4,000 additional housing opportunities that include a place to live, funding for maintenance (rental assistance or operating subsidy), and funding for services such as mental health, chemical health, and employability to help ensure long-term stability.

Implementation of the Plan is ahead of schedule. By the end of 2006, 1,091 housing opportunities were created, against a goal of 1,000 – 588 for single adults, 486 for families, and 17 for unaccompanied youth. The housing opportunities are scattered throughout the state, with 745 in the Twin Cities metro area and 346 in greater Minnesota.

The Plan calls for funding an additional 600 new housing opportunities in 2007, and 800 in 2008, 2009 and 2010. Some units are new; others are units already on the private market. Funding for the plan comes from public and private resources.

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# How many homeless Minnesotans?

*We estimate there were between 9,200 and 9,300 total homeless on any given night in Minnesota.*

## *Numbers that are known*

On October 26, 2006, shelter providers counted 6,292 homeless people in emergency shelters and transitional housing programs. An additional 1,421 homeless people were identified who were not staying in any formal shelter or housing program, for a total of 7,713 who were counted that night. Combined, these figures include 2,523 men, 2,258 women, 206 unaccompanied youth under 18, and 2,726 minor children who were with their parents.

### **SHELTER COUNTS AND INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED IN NON-SHELTER LOCATIONS**

	<b>Emergency and battered women's shelters</b>	<b>Transitional housing programs</b>	<b>Unsheltered and informal shelter</b>	<b>Total</b>
Adult men 22 and older	1,033	625	609	2,267
Adult women 22 and older	585	954	314	1,853
Young adult males 18-21	61	73	122	256
Young adult females 18-21	84	228	93	405
Unaccompanied male youth under 18	43	16	23	82
Unaccompanied female youth under 18	57	32	35	124
Children with their parents	673	1,828	225	2,726
<b>TOTAL</b> (source of number)	<b>2,536</b> (count)	<b>3,756</b> (count)	<b>1,421</b> (interviews)	<b>7,713</b> (sum)

**Source:** Counts from shelter providers, interview data from Wilder Research survey.

**Note:** Figures do not include homeless people on Indian reservations

In addition, 38 homeless people were in detoxification facilities on the night of October 26, 2006.

## *Numbers that are estimated*

Research done elsewhere provides a basis for estimating how many more Minnesotans are likely to have been without permanent shelter on the date of the survey but not living in a formal shelter program:

**Unaccompanied youth (age 11-17).** Based on the proportions found in a 1998 Research Triangle Institute study, we estimate that about 400 to 500 youth were homeless on their own (not with their parents), and were not served by formal shelter programs. Adding in the number we counted in formal shelter, we estimate that between 550 and 650 youth 17 and under were homeless and unaccompanied on the date of the study.

**Young adults (age 18-21).** Based on the proportions found in a recent statewide study in Illinois, we estimate that there were about 850 homeless young adults not using shelter programs, or about 640 more than were actually interviewed in non-shelter locations. In all, we estimate that 1,300 young adults age 18-21 were homeless on the date of the study.

**Adults (age 22 and older).** Researchers commonly estimate that there are between 20 and 40 homeless adults not using shelter programs for every 100 who are staying in shelters. Wilder Research has always used the more conservative estimate of 20. However, in 2006 we interviewed 923 unsheltered adults (ages 22 and older), which is almost 300 more than we obtain using this method. While the increased outreach efforts enabled the study to locate and interview more hidden homeless than previously, they also showed us that the survey was unable to find all the homeless adults who were staying outside of shelters on the date of the study. Therefore, we make our 2006 estimates using 40 unsheltered adults for every 100 sheltered. This leads to an estimate of 1,300 homeless adults (ages 22 or older) who were not using shelters on the date of the study, or about 350 more than were interviewed. In all, we estimate there were a total of about 4,550 adults (22 and older) homeless on the night of the study.

**Children with their parents (age 0-17).** The 2006 adult estimates assume that we interviewed about 70 percent of unsheltered homeless adults (923 of 1,300). Assuming the same proportion of unsheltered children were identified, we estimate that there were 312 homeless children who were with non-shelter-using parents (or 57 more than those whose parents were interviewed), for a total of just over 2,800 minor children with parents on the date of the study.

### ***Statewide one-night estimate***

Adding all of these together, we estimate that there were between **9,200 and 9,300** total homeless Minnesotans on any given night in 2006.

### ***How does the number of homeless people compare to 2003?***

#### **Adults (age 22 or older)**

The number of homeless adults in emergency shelters shows no change from 2003, while the number in transitional housing is down by 20 percent. Thus the total number of sheltered homeless adults in 2006 is fewer than in 2003. As a result of greater efforts at outreach, the number of unsheltered homeless adults who were interviewed was larger. However, the study gives no evidence that there were any more homeless adults in unsheltered locations in 2006 compared to 2003. About the same proportion of homeless adults in both years reported having been turned away for lack of space in the previous few months, and in 2006 fewer reported sleeping in unsheltered locations as a result of being turned away.

### **Unaccompanied youth and young adults (age 21 or younger)**

The picture is different for unaccompanied youth and young adults, however. Slightly more were in shelter programs in 2006. The difference is small enough that it could represent no more than random fluctuation. However, higher proportions in both age groups reported that they had recently been turned away for lack of space. In addition, a higher proportion of youth also reported that they had ended up without shelter as a result of being turned away. The evidence thus suggests that the same number of beds for young people on their own may be in demand by a larger number of homeless youth in need of them.

### **Children (age 0-17) with their parents**

The number of homeless children with their parents in 2006 continued to be high, but for the second time in a row, it dropped slightly from the maximum found in 2000. On the night of the 2006 survey, 2,726 children were in shelters, transitional housing, or outside of shelter programs with their families, compared to 875 children when this research began in 1991. Unlike 2003, when the decrease was observed only in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, in 2006 the decrease was statewide and steeper in greater Minnesota. However, the decrease was only seen in transitional housing programs. The number of children in emergency shelter programs was about the same.

## **Who was homeless in Minnesota in 2006?**

Homeless people interviewed in 2006 were very similar to those in 2003 in their ages, marital status, and education levels.

### ***Age***

The average age of people experiencing homelessness:

- 41 years for adult men (age 18 and older)
- 33 years for adult women (age 18 and older)
- 16 years for unaccompanied youth (17 and younger)

Children, youth, and young adults age 21 and younger (including children with their parents) make up 47 percent of all homeless Minnesotans identified in the 2006 study.

Among children who are homeless with their parents:

- 84% are age 12 or younger
- 49% are age 5 or younger

**Note:** The age information above is based on the 1,961 children whose parents were interviewed, and not on the 2,726 children reflected in the shelter census figures for the night of the survey.

## ***Family status***

Minnesota's homeless population in 2006 included 1,318 families (defined as one or more parents or caregivers with one or more children). Most children (75%) were with their mother or other female caregiver, some (22%) were with both parents or two caregivers, and a few (4%) were with their father or male caregiver.

Between 1991 and 2000, the number of homeless families more than tripled, from 434 families in 1991 to a peak of 1,413 in 2000. It has decreased since that peak, to 1,395 in 2003 and now 1,318 in 2006. It is likely that a growing number of formerly homeless families are now being helped in permanent supportive housing programs. However, the increased outreach efforts associated with the 2006 study located a significant number of homeless families not using shelter programs (133, compared to 72 in 2003).

More than half of homeless adults (57%) had never been married, 23 percent were divorced, 10 percent were separated, 7 percent were currently married, and 2 percent were widowed.

## ***Education***

One out of four homeless adults (26%) had no high school diploma. Just under half (47%) had a high school education but no more, and just over one-quarter (27%) had at least some higher education. One-quarter (24%) reported that they had received special education services while in school.

## ***Length of residence in Minnesota***

The percentage of homeless people who have lived in Minnesota for two years or less has continued to drop since the first statewide homeless survey in 1991. In the 2006 survey 23 percent of adults had lived in Minnesota for less than 2 years. This is down from 39 percent in 1991 and 1994, 28 percent in 1997 and 2000, and 27 percent in 2003. Three out of five homeless adults (59%) have lived in Minnesota for more than 10 years, and slightly over two-thirds (69%) have lived here more than five years. Of those in Minnesota for two years or less, one-third (33%) had lived in Minnesota before.

## ***Race and ethnicity***

Black, American Indian, and Hispanic people comprise a much larger proportion of the homeless population than of the overall state population. The disparities for adults were about the same in 2006 as in 2003. (Although a higher proportion of homeless adults were American Indian in 2006, this difference is due to the greater representation of

homeless people who were not using the formal shelter system.) Disparities for African American youth were less severe in 2006 compared to 2003.

#### RACE AND ETHNICITY OF HOMELESS ADULTS AND YOUTH IN 2006

Percent of homeless adults	Percent of all Minnesota adults		Percent of homeless youth (unaccompanied, age 11-17)	Percent of all Minnesota youth (age 11-17)
11%	1%	American Indian	20%	2%
2%	3%	Asian American	2%	4%
38%	3%	Black	25%	5%
41%	90%	White	34%	82%
8%	3%	Other, including multi-racial	15%	4%
7%	3%	Hispanic (may be of any race)	12%	4%

**Sources:** Wilder Research Center survey of homelessness and U.S. Census Bureau 2005 American Community Survey

# Section I:

## Characteristics of homeless adults overall

### Income and employment

*More homeless people were working than in 1991, but not as many as in 2000 or 2003.*

Thirteen percent of homeless adults reported no income for the month of October (2006). Among those with any income the most commonly mentioned sources were steady employment and/or day labor, General Assistance, and MFIP (Minnesota's family welfare program). Two Social Security programs for people with serious and persistent disabilities were also sources of income for some (these are SSDI, for people who have had to leave employment due to disabilities, and SSI, which does not require a previous employment history.) The table below shows the most common income sources and those most often mentioned as the main source of income in October:

**SOURCES OF INCOME, FOR HOMELESS ADULTS WITH ANY INCOME**

	<u>A source of any</u> income in October	<u>Main source of</u> income in October
Steady employment	22%	20%
General Assistance	22%	18%
MFIP, Minnesota's welfare program	19% of adults 36% of women	15% of adults 27% of women
Day or temporary labor	12%	9%
Friends or relatives	12%	4%
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	11%	9%
Asking for money on the streets	11%	4%
Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	7%	6%

Total monthly incomes for sheltered adults averaged \$532 in 2006, unchanged from the \$531 in 2003. After adjustment for inflation, this is a decrease from average incomes in 2003. The average monthly income for all homeless adults in 2006, including those not using shelter programs, was \$498.

- 24% had monthly incomes of \$100 or less
- 23% had incomes of \$101 - \$300
- 12% had incomes of \$301 - \$500
- 23% had incomes of \$501 - \$800
- 18% had incomes of over \$800

## ***Who was working***

Twenty-eight percent of homeless adults were working in 2006, compared to 30 percent in 2003 and 41 percent in 2000. Twelve percent were working full-time, down from 13 percent. A slightly higher percentage of women (30%) than men (27%) were working. Homeless parents (33%) were more likely to be employed than homeless adults without children (26%), and parents were also slightly more likely (14%) than other adults (11%) to be working full-time. Adults in transitional housing were more likely to be working (36%) than adults in other types of shelters (26% in emergency and 19% in battered women's shelters). Non-shelter-using adults living primarily in unsheltered locations (13%) were less likely to be working than adults in shelters (31%). However, those who had spent much of October in informal shelter arrangements were as likely to be working as the general adult homeless population (28% for both groups).

Twelve percent of unemployed homeless adults had been laid off within the previous six months. Only 10 percent of these reported having received any unemployment benefits.

## ***Wages***

Wages were lower than in 2003. Of homeless adults working full-time in 2006:

- 64% earned less than \$10 an hour (compared to 59% in 2003)
- 32% earned less than \$8 an hour (compared to 26% in 2003)

## ***Barriers to employment***

Unemployed homeless adults most commonly reported the following as the main problems they faced in trying to get a job:

- Lack of transportation (34%)
- Lack of housing (27%)
- Physical health problems (26%)
- Mental health problems (24%)
- Criminal history (14%)
- Job experience or history (13%)
- Education (11%)
- Lack of child care (10% of all unemployed homeless adults, and 21% of unemployed women)

In addition, from answers to other questions, we know that unemployed adults are affected by the following potential barriers to employment:

- Mental health problems (reported by 57% of unemployed adults, although fewer mentioned them as a main job barrier)
- Long-term unemployment of a year or more (53%)
- A physical, mental, or other health condition that limits the work they can do (51%)
- Chemical dependency problems (41%)
- Lack of a high school diploma (28%)
- A history of any incarceration (50%)

## Health concerns

*Homeless people report high needs for basic health care, dental care, prescription medicines, mental health treatment, and substance abuse treatment.*

### *Physical health*

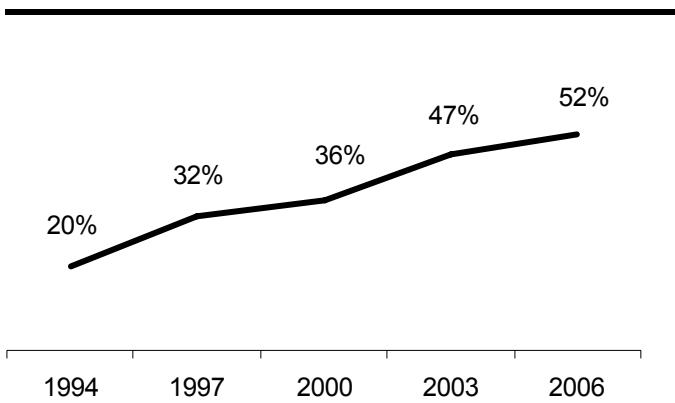
Forty-four percent of homeless adults reported at least one chronic health problem (comparable to the 43 percent found in the 2003 study). This includes:

- 28% with asthma or another chronic lung or respiratory problem, including tuberculosis
- 21% with high blood pressure
- 7% with diabetes
- 7% with chronic heart or circulatory problems
- 5% with hepatitis
- 2% with HIV or AIDS
- 2% with a sexually transmitted disease (other than HIV/AIDS)

## ***Mental health***

Mental illness has steadily risen over the last 12 years and is again significantly higher in the 2006 survey. Over half (52%) of homeless adults had a serious mental illness, compared to 20 percent in 1994, 32 percent in 1997, 36 percent in 2000, and 47 percent in 2003. In the past two years, 36 percent of homeless adults received outpatient care from a counselor, psychologist, or mental health worker because of nervousness, depression, or mental health problems, and 10 percent had been in a residential mental health treatment facility.

**STEADY RISE IN PROPORTION OF HOMELESS ADULTS WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS**



Homeless adults reported that they had been told by a doctor or nurse, in the past two years, that they had the following diagnoses:

- 36% with major depression
- 19% with manic episodes or manic depression (also called bipolar disorder)
- 19% with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- 14% with anti-social personality, obsessive-compulsive personality, or any other severe personality disorder
- 6% with schizophrenia
- 7% with a paranoid or delusional disorder other than schizophrenia
- 19% had both a mental illness and a substance abuse disorder

Among residents of emergency shelters and battered women's shelters, and among those not using shelter programs, each of these types of mental illness increased from 2003 to 2006. Among transitional housing residents, the incidence of most of these mental illnesses decreased from 2003 to 2006. Only the rates of depression and bipolar disorder rose slightly among transitional housing residents.

## ***Substance abuse***

- 21% of homeless adults had recently been told they had an alcohol abuse disorder. The proportion was higher for homeless men (28%) than for homeless women (13%). In comparison, an estimated 8% of all Minnesota adults have an alcohol abuse disorder.
- 19% of homeless adults had been diagnosed with drug abuse disorder. Again, the proportion was higher for men (23%) than for women (15%). In comparison, the 12-month prevalence of drug dependence or abuse among all Minnesota adults is estimated at 8% for those age 18-25, and less than 2% for those age 26 or older.
- 27% of all homeless adults had at least one of those two disorders (35% of men, 19% of women).
- 48% of homeless men and 28% of homeless women had been in an in-patient drug or alcohol treatment facility (and 23% of men and 16% of women had done so within the past two years).
- 19% of homeless adults had received outpatient alcohol or drug treatment in the last two years.
- 30% of homeless adults had been admitted to a detox center at least once in their life.

## ***Other disabilities***

- 41% reported that they had a physical, mental, or other health condition that limited the kind or amount of work they could do.
- 15% had a condition that makes it hard to engage in activities of daily living (such as bathing, eating, getting dressed, getting in or out of a bed or chair, or getting around by themselves).
- 33% often feel confused, have trouble remembering things, or have problems making decisions, to the point that it interferes with daily activities.
- 30% had received a blow to the head hard enough to knock them out or make them see stars, followed by problems with headache, concentration or memory, understanding, excessive worry, sleeping, or getting along with people (an indication of a possible traumatic brain injury). For over half of homeless adults who had suffered such a head injury with subsequent symptoms (56%), the injury occurred before their first experience of homelessness. For another 7 percent, the injury occurred during the same year (and is thus not clearly either before or after homelessness began). For 37 percent, the injury occurred after they had already become homeless.

## Disabilities occur together more often than alone

Most homeless adults suffer from more than just a single disability. For this reason, a simple listing of disabilities and their frequencies does not fully represent the challenges in living with or overcoming these disabilities. The diagram below shows the extent to which the three most common disabilities – chronic health conditions, mental illness, and substance abuse disorders – pile up on each other.

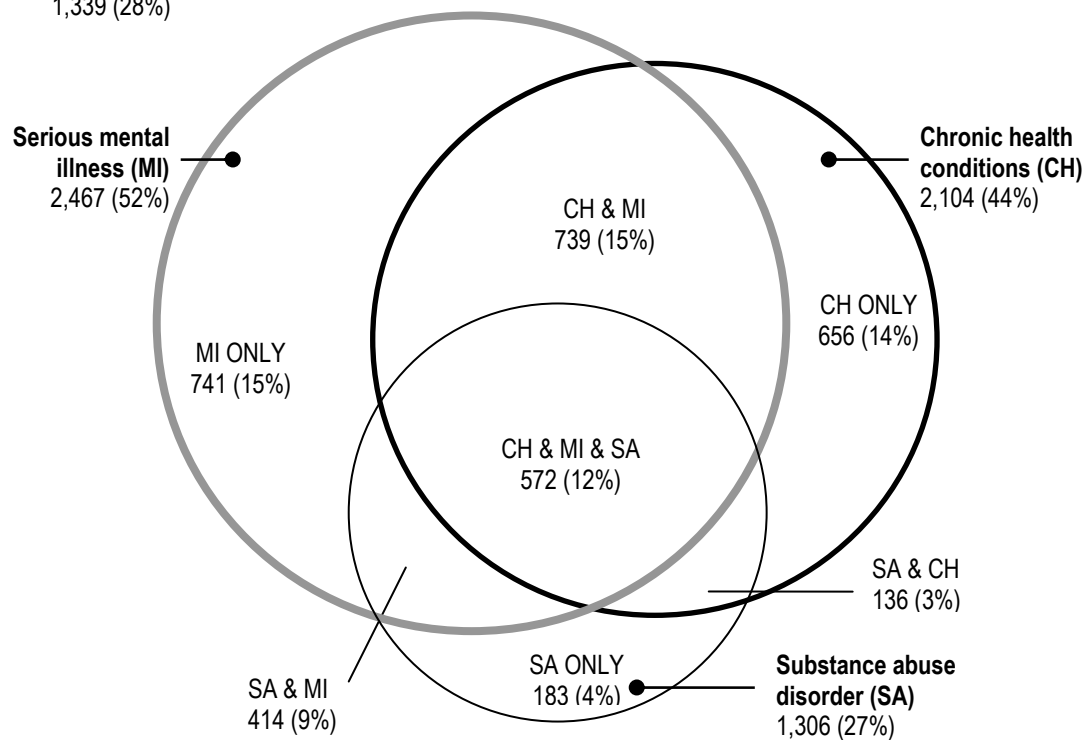
### INCIDENCE AND CO-OCCURRENCE OF DISABILITIES AMONG HOMELESS ADULTS

Total homeless adults surveyed:

4,781 (100%)

Proportion with none of these three disabilities:

1,339 (28%)



In addition to these three most common disabilities:

- 41% of homeless adults (1,969) report conditions that limit the kind or amount of work they can do
- 33% of homeless adults (1,563) report cognitive disabilities
- 30% of homeless adults (1,446) report likely traumatic brain injuries

Only 992 homeless adults (21%) report none of these six disabilities, and only 19 percent report only one. More than 2,000 homeless adults (2,041, or 43% of all) report having three or more of the identified disabilities.

## ***Health care***

In the area of health care:

- 43% of homeless adults said they needed to see a doctor for a physical health problem (up from 35% in 2000 and similar to the 41% in 2003).
- 37% said they needed to see a health professional for a mental health problem (up from 30% in 2000 and similar to the 39% in 2003).
- 56% had current dental problems needing attention (59% in 2003).
- 39% had visited an emergency room, an average of 2.6 times, in the past 6 months (similar to 37% and 2.5 times in 2003).
- 19% had medication prescribed in the past year that they were not taking – 48% of them for a physical problem, 67% for a mental health problem (up from 56% in 2003), and 6% for a substance abuse problem. The total proportion not taking needed medication was about the same as in 2003, but the number not taking needed mental health medications increased.
- 69% had medical coverage during the month of October 2006, and 71% had some kind of public medical benefit (such as Medical Assistance, General Assistance Medical Care, or MinnesotaCare) at some time during the previous year.

## **Violence and abuse**

*Both as a cause and an effect of homelessness, violence and abuse are common threads in the lives of homeless adults.*

### ***Domestic violence***

As in previous years, approximately one of every three homeless women (32%) was homeless at least in part because of domestic abuse. This proportion was higher in greater Minnesota (35%) than the Twin Cities area (30%).

In addition, 33 percent of homeless adults (45% of women and 22% of men) reported that they had stayed in an abusive relationship because they had nowhere else to live.

Women fleeing abuse were in all types of shelter arrangements:

- 37% were in battered women's shelters
- 41% were in transitional housing
- 9% were in emergency shelters

- 8% were staying outside of formal shelter programs, and had spent much of October in informal shelter
- 5% were living in unsheltered locations

### ***History of childhood abuse and neglect***

A history of abuse or neglect during childhood is unusually common among homeless adults. In 2006:

- Nearly 2 out of 5 (38%) homeless adults had been physically abused as a child. As in previous surveys, the proportion was higher for women (44%) than for men (32%).
- 1 out of 4 homeless adults (26%) had been sexually abused as a child. On this measure as well, the rates for women (40%) were higher than those for men (13%).
- More than 1 out of 5 homeless adults (22%) had been neglected as a child (26% of women and 17% of men).

The 2006 rates are similar to those observed in the 2003 survey.

### ***Community violence***

In the 2006 survey, violence in the neighborhood was a factor for 11 percent of homeless adults leaving their previous housing.

### ***Violence while homeless***

The lack of stable housing puts people at higher risk for violence:

- 18% of homeless adults had been physically or sexually assaulted while homeless.
- 13% of homeless adults had to seek health care because of an injury or illness resulting from violence in the past year.
- 11% of homeless adults reported a head injury with likely traumatic brain injury that occurred after they had become homeless for the first time.

## Services

***90 percent of homeless adults received at least one of the services listed in the survey during the month of October 2006.***

Many of the services that are important to homeless adults are mainstream services available to a broader range of people, and intended to support and increase self-sufficiency. Compared to other homeless adults, residents of transitional housing and battered women's shelters are more likely to use such services (which include Food Stamps, WIC, job training, and help to find a job). Other services more specifically targeted to homeless people (such as drop-in centers, hot meal programs, and outreach services) are more frequently used by residents of emergency shelters and people not using shelter or housing programs.

The services most commonly received were:

### SERVICES RECEIVED BY HOMELESS ADULTS DURING OCTOBER 2006

Services	ALL ADULTS N=4,781	Battered women's shelter n=266	Emergency shelter n=1,497	Transitional housing n=1,880	Informal shelter n=571	Un- sheltered n=567
Food Stamps	51%	70%	48%	58%	40%	36%
Free or almost free clothes	42%	54%	49%	34%	36%	50%
Transportation assistance	38%	52%	38%	43%	32%	24%
Hot meal program	36%	12%	53%	14%	39%	68%
Food shelves	31%	22%	23%	31%	45%	42%
Drop-in centers	28%	7%	38%	12%	34%	57%
Free medical clinic	23%	22%	30%	18%	19%	24%
Help finding a job	18%	26%	16%	22%	15%	9%
Help with public benefits	16%	25%	14%	17%	15%	14%
Outreach services	16%	9%	14%	10%	26%	33%
Help with legal issues	13%	20%	10%	15%	15%	10%
WIC (Women, Infant, and Children food program)	12%	18%	6%	20%	10%	1%
Free mental health clinic	11%	12%	14%	10%	9%	13%
Community voice mail	11%	18%	15%	10%	7%	6%
Job training	10%	12%	8%	13%	8%	4%
Free dental clinic	8%	11%	8%	8%	7%	6%
<b>At least one of the above</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>More than one of the above</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>Average number received</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.9</b>

## **Most helpful services**

For those who received them, the following services were most often mentioned among the three services that homeless adults considered the most helpful:

- Food stamps (72%)
- WIC (61%)
- Hot meal program (57%)
- Transportation assistance or bus cards (53%)
- Free medical clinic (50%)

## **Public services and loss of benefits**

- 71% of adults had received public medical benefits during the previous 12 months; of these, one in seven (15%) had lost them during that time or become unable to afford them.
- 59% of homeless adults had received Food Stamps during the previous 12 months; of these, one in five (19%) had lost them (11% of all homeless adults).
- 19% of homeless women had received child care assistance in the previous 12 months; of these, 15% had lost them or become unable to afford them.
- 11% of homeless adult had lost or were unable to use a Section 8 voucher at some time in the past (17% of women and 5% of men). Of these:
  - 30% were terminated for a program violation
  - 28% could not find a place that would accept the voucher
  - 20% moved out of the area where the voucher could be used
- 8% of homeless adults had lived in a project or public housing at some point but had been evicted or obliged to leave. Of these:
  - 60% were terminated for a program violation
  - 26% were evicted for having an unauthorized guest
  - 5% lost their eligibility because of an increase in income

# Affordable housing

*Homelessness involves many factors beyond the purely financial. However, the cost of housing plays an important role in homelessness.*

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## ***What's an affordable rent?***

A rule of thumb for housing affordability, particularly for lower-income households, is that housing should cost no more than 30% of monthly income. Housing that costs 50% or more of monthly income is considered a severe housing cost burden.

At the time of the survey, “fair market rent” (an amount, determined annually by the federal government, that makes 40 to 50 percent of local apartments available to a renter) was \$707 per month for a one-bedroom apartment in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, and averaged \$471 per month in the other 80 counties of greater Minnesota.

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## ***Employment and affordability***

Both in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and in greater Minnesota, the median income for all homeless adults in October was \$400. For those who were employed, the median income in the metropolitan area was \$800, and in greater Minnesota it was \$680.

In the metropolitan area, 67 percent of homeless adults say that they would need a one-bedroom apartment or less, while in greater Minnesota 59 percent would need housing with one bedroom or less.

Based on fair market rents and monthly incomes of employed homeless adults at the time of the survey:

- The rent for a one-bedroom apartment would require 88 percent of the median monthly income in the seven-county metro area, and 69 percent of the median monthly income in greater Minnesota.
- The rent for a two-bedroom apartment is higher than the total monthly income of homeless adults in the metro area, where the rent for a two-bedroom apartment would require 107 percent of the median monthly income. In greater Minnesota, rent on a two-bedroom apartment would consume 87 percent of the median income.

At the wages earned by homeless adults, even full-time work is not enough to afford housing.

- More than one-third (36%) of homeless working adults in the metro area earn less than \$8 per hour. At this rate, a full-time worker would spend more than half (55% or more) of his or her gross income for a one-bedroom apartment.
- More than half (53%) of homeless working adults in greater Minnesota earn less than \$8 per hour. At this rate, a full-time worker would spend more than 37 percent of his or her gross income for a one-bedroom apartment, and more than 46 percent of gross income on a two-bedroom apartment.
- Almost one-third (29%) of homeless workers in the metro area earn \$8.00 to \$9.99 per hour. At this rate, a full-time worker would spend 44 percent to 55 percent of his or her gross income for a one-bedroom apartment and 53 percent to 68 percent of gross income on a two-bedroom apartment.
- Almost one-third (30%) of homeless workers in greater Minnesota earn \$8.00 to \$9.99 per hour. At this rate, a full-time worker would spend 29 percent to 37 percent of his or her gross income for a one-bedroom apartment and 37 percent to 46 percent of gross income on a two-bedroom apartment.

#### COMPARISON OF HOMELESS ADULTS' MEDIAN INCOMES AND FAIR MARKET RENTS

	Metro area	Greater Minnesota
Median income, all homeless adults	\$400	\$400
Median income, employed homeless adults	\$800	\$680
Fair Market Rent, one-bedroom apartment	\$707	\$471
Fair Market Rent, two-bedroom apartment	\$858	\$589
Percent who need one bedroom or less	67%	59%
1-BR rent as % of median monthly income of those employed	88%	69%
2-BR rent as % of median monthly income of those employed	107%	87%
<b>Of those who were employed:</b>		
Percent earning less than \$8 per hour	36%	53%
Percent of full-time income at that wage needed for one-bedroom apartment	55% or more	37% or more
Percent earning \$8 - \$9.99 per hour	29%	30%
Percent of full-time income at that wage needed for one-bedroom apartment	44% - 55%	29% - 37%
Percent of full-time income at that wage needed for two-bedroom apartment	53%-68%	37% - 46%

## ***Evidence of the role of affordability in homelessness***

The ability to pay for housing costs varies greatly between homeless adults who are employed and those without employment.

- 28% of unemployed homeless adults report being unable to afford any housing costs. 21% report they could pay at least \$500 a month.
- 8% of those employed part-time could not afford to pay anything; 29% report they could pay at least \$500 a month.
- 4% of those employed full-time could not afford to pay anything; 61% report they could pay at least \$500 a month.

The average amount employed homeless adults report being able to afford each month for rent and utilities also varies greatly compared to unemployed homeless adults. These averages were:

- \$518 per month for those employed full-time
- \$338 per month for those employed part-time
- \$227 for those not employed

Forty-eight percent of homeless adults report that the lack of a job or income or lack of affordable housing is currently preventing them from getting housing.

## **Barriers to stable housing**

***Unemployment, mental health issues, and criminal records are common barriers to stable housing.***

## ***Main reasons for leaving previous housing***

- Unable to afford rent (39%, up from 33% in 2003)
- Lost job or had hours cut (31%)
- Eviction (32%)
- Breakup with spouse or partner (25%) or other relationship problem (20%)
- Drinking or drug problem (21%)
- Being abused (17%)
- Entered jail or treatment (16%)

- Drinking or drug problem of someone else who was living there (15%)
- Substandard or unsafe housing (12%)
- A behavior problem of a visitor or guest (12%)
- Violence in the neighborhood (11%)

### ***Potential barriers to stable housing***

Ninety-eight percent of homeless adults have at least one of the following barriers, and 89 percent have more than one. The average number of these barriers is almost 4 per person (3.8 overall, 4.0 for men, and 3.7 for women). The most common barriers:

- 71% are not currently employed (essentially unchanged from 70% in 2003).
- 67% have been homeless before (because of differences in how the survey questions were asked, this figure is not comparable to 2003).
- 52% have a serious mental health problem (up from 47%).
- 47% have been homeless for more than one year (up from 43%).
- 34% could pay less than \$200 per month for rent (slightly up from 30%).
- 27% have a substance abuse diagnosis (similar to the 25% in 2003).
- 27% have been in jail or prison within the past two years, or mention a criminal record as a barrier to housing (up from 22%).
- 17% have credit problems (down from 22%).
- 15% need more than two bedrooms (the same proportion as in 2003).
- 10% report that a health problem or physical disability has kept them from getting or keeping housing (up from 7%).
- 9% have an eviction or other rental problems on their record (similar to the 11% in 2003).
- 6% have no local rental history (down from 9%).

## ***Prior history of institutional living***

About two-thirds of homeless adults (69%) have prior experience living in institutional arrangements, including:

- 47% have lived in a jail, prison, or juvenile detention center (17% within the last two years).
- 39% have lived in a drug or alcohol treatment facility (20% within the last two years).
- 25% have lived in some type of halfway house (13% within the last two years).
- 20% have lived in a facility for persons with emotional, behavioral, or mental health problems (10% within the last two years).
- 19% have lived in a foster home (1% within the last two years).

Sixty-five percent of homeless adults who had left correctional facilities in the past year, and 57 percent of those recently leaving other kinds of institutions, had not had a stable place to live when they left (up from 58% and 50% respectively). This includes:

- 70% of those who had recently left county jails or workhouses.
- 53% of those who had recently left state or federal prisons.
- 50% of those who had recently left foster homes.
- 49% of those who had recently left group homes.

Many adults who are homeless following time in a residential facility were also homeless before they entered it. However, survey responses suggest that spending time in treatment and social service placements generally improve residents' chances of securing stable housing, while spending time in correctional facilities tends to decrease later housing stability.

Of the 12 percent of homeless adults who left correctional facilities in the previous 12 months:

- 57% were homeless at the time of incarceration.
- 11% were homeless when incarcerated but had stable housing at release.
- 19% were housed when incarcerated but did not have stable housing at release.
- 24% reported that they received help to try to find stable housing at the time of their release (the same proportion as in 2003).

Of the 17 percent of homeless adults who left non-corrections institutional facilities in the previous 12 months (including group homes, halfway houses, mental health treatment, or drug/alcohol treatment):

- 72% were homeless at the time of entry.
- 27% were homeless at entry but had stable housing at release.
- 12% were housed at entry but lacked stable housing at release.
- 42% reported that they received help to try to find stable housing at the time of their release (similar to the 40% in 2003).

### ***Prior experiences of homelessness***

- 71% of homeless adults report that they have been homeless at least one other time in their lives.
- 53% of homeless adults have been homeless more than once in the past three years.
- In their current episode, 9% of homeless adults have been homeless for less than a month; 44% have been homeless between one month and one year; and 47% have been homeless for a year or longer.
- 10% of homeless adults report that they were in any homeless shelter or program as a child. This likely under-represents actual experiences of homelessness during childhood, because 23% say that they were 17 or younger “the very first time [they] were homeless, either with or without [their] parents.”

## **Things look different in greater Minnesota**

***Homeless adults in greater Minnesota were less likely to be using formal shelter programs than those in the metro area.***

Slightly under one-third (30%) of all homeless adults were living outside the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area in 2006. With people further apart from each other and fewer services, patterns of homelessness are different in greater Minnesota. Homeless adults are similar across the state on many measures, including education levels, ages, how long they have lived in Minnesota, and their main sources of income. On other measures, however, patterns in greater Minnesota are different. For instance, the 2006 survey shows that in greater Minnesota:

- 63% of homeless adults were White (32% in the metro region)
- 17% of homeless adults were American Indian (almost twice as high as the 9% in the metro area)

- 47% of homeless adults fit the definition of long-term homeless (57% in the metro area)
- 34% of homeless adults had children with them (29% in the metro area)
- 42% of children were in short-term, emergency arrangements (26% in the metro area)
- 61% of homeless adults had a chronic health condition (54% in the metro area)
- 28% of homeless men were veterans (22% in the metro area)
- 35% of homeless women were fleeing abuse (30% in the metro area)

With regard to use of services, homeless adults outside the metro area were substantially more likely to use food shelves and less likely to use transportation assistance, drop-in centers, free clinics or community voice mail. These and other differences are shown below.

#### SERVICES USED OR RECEIVED DURING OCTOBER

	Greater Minnesota	Metro area
Food stamps	51%	51%
Free or almost free clothes	43%	39%
Food shelves	39%	27%
Hot meal program	32%	37%
Transportation assistance	25%	44%
Drop in centers	19%	32%
Help with public benefits	17%	16%
Help finding a job	16%	19%
WIC (Women, Infants, and Children food program)	16%	10%
Outreach services	17%	15%
Free medical clinic	13%	27%
Help with legal issues	12%	15%
Free mental health clinic	8%	13%
Job training	7%	11%
Free dental clinic	5%	9%
Community voice mail	3%	14%

Homeless adults in greater Minnesota were less likely to be using formal shelter programs (61%, compared to 82% in the metro area). They were less likely to report that they had been turned away from a shelter in the last three months due to a lack of bed spaces (17%, compared to 21% in the metro area).

## ***Section II: Children and youth***

### **Children with their parents**

***Half of homeless children who are with their parents are 5 or younger. Many homeless children have behavioral or learning problems.***

#### ***Many children experience homelessness***

A total of 2,726 children were homeless with their parents in October 2006 and were documented in the study. The number in shelter programs was fewer than in 2003 (2,501 compared to 2,724), while the increased outreach effort in 2006 counted more homeless children not in formal shelters (225, compared to 138).

Besides the children who were homeless with their parents, another 1,951 were affected by a parent's homelessness but were not with that parent. Including unaccompanied youth, children were 38 percent of all homeless individuals in 2006.

#### ***Ages of homeless children***

Of the homeless children who were with their parents:

- 49% were age 5 or younger (including 13 children of unaccompanied homeless youth)
- 35% were 6 – 12 years old
- 16% were 13 – 17 years old

**Note:** The age information above is based on the 1,961 children whose parents were interviewed, and not on the 2,726 children reflected in the shelter census figures for the night of the survey.

#### ***Most homeless families did not have a father present***

- Most children were with their mother or female caretaker only (75%).
- 69% of homeless women had children age 17 or younger, and 55% had at least one child with them.
- 35% of homeless men had minor children, and 6% had at least one child with them.

## ***Children's health, nutrition, and mental health***

Among parents whose children were with them:

- 22% said that at least one of their children had an emotional or behavioral problem, about three times the rate for the overall population.
- 14% could not get needed dental care for at least one child in the past year.
- 12% had at least one child with a chronic or severe physical health problem.
- 9% said their children skipped meals in the previous month because there was not enough money to buy food.
- 8% had been unable to obtain needed health care for at least one child in the past year.
- 4% had been unable to get needed mental health care for at least one child in the past year.

Compared to 2003, slightly fewer parents reported having children with physical health problems (12% vs. 16%). Other measures were similar to those found in 2003.

## ***Education***

Among parents who had school-age children:

- 90% reported that all their school-age children attended school on the day of the survey. This is the highest percentage since the start of the Minnesota homeless survey in 1991, and is very close to the average daily attendance rate for all children in the Minneapolis Public Schools. The main reasons for children not attending that day were children's illness (30%), school not being held that day (18%), and children not yet enrolled (16%).
- 41% had at least one school-age child with learning difficulties or other school-related problems (compared to 38% in 2003).
- 19% had a child who had repeated a grade (down from 25% in 2003).
- 6% said their children had trouble going to school because of their housing situation. This was a greater problem in emergency shelters (15%), battered women's shelters (15%), and for those who had spent more time in informal shelter (11%) than for those in transitional housing (2%). Only nine adults living in unsheltered locations had children with them; of these, two reported that their housing situation interfered with their children's school attendance.

# Youth and young adults on their own

*Young people age 21 and under are some of the least visible and most vulnerable segments of persons who are homeless.*

## *How many youth and young adults are homeless?*

On any given night, an estimated 550 to 650 Minnesota youth 17 and under experience homelessness.

In addition, we estimate there are 1,300 young adults age 18 to 21 who are homeless on any given night. On October 26, 2006, 151 of these youth and 455 young adults were interviewed in shelters, other temporary housing programs, and places not intended as housing.

More young people were interviewed in 2006 than in the 2003 study – especially those who were not in shelters. This is in large part due to the efforts of outreach workers. Youth who are homeless and on their own tend to be some of the most difficult to find of those experiencing homelessness. Homeless youth are less likely than adults to stay in shelters, more often staying temporarily with friends or in places not intended for habitation. Thus they are less likely to be found in a one-night survey. Compared to homeless adults and families, homeless youth have fewer shelters available and fewer legal provisions for housing and other basic needs.

## *Who we talked with*

We talked with young people who were on their own – without their parents. For the purposes of this study and to fit with recent changes in legislations, we describe three segments of homeless persons age 21 and younger.

- **Youth** age 17 and under and not with their parents.
- **Young adults** age 18 through 21.
- **Young people** combines both groups to describe all homeless persons ages 21 and under and on their own.

Data from this study support the observations, made by people who work with homeless youth and young adults, that both groups have similar characteristics and needs. Where differences were found, we describe them in the findings. However, where there were similarities in the responses of youth and young adults, we combine the responses of all “young people” we interviewed (both youth and young adults).

## ***Demographic characteristics***

The average age for youth on their own was 16 (19 for young adults). The youngest interviewed in 2006 was 11. Six out of 10 (60%) homeless youth are girls. For the young adults, 61 percent are female, while in the overall homeless adult population 47 percent are female. National studies show that girls are more likely to seek shelter and other services and thus be included in a one-night snapshot.

The number of homeless young people of color is disproportionately high compared to their prevalence in the general population of Minnesota youth. About two-thirds of homeless young people (66%) were Black, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, or of mixed race, compared to just 18 percent of all Minnesota youth. In the metro area, 78 percent were young people of color; in greater Minnesota, young people of color comprised 47 percent of homeless youth and young adults.

For homeless youth and young adults on their own:

- The average age they first left home was 16.
- Overall, 13% of youth and 38% of young adults had children of their own; for females, 19% of youth and 49% of young adults had children.
- The vast majority of homeless young people grew up in Minnesota (86% of youth and 67% of young adults).
- Most homeless young people grew up living with biological parents (63%), in a blended family (12%), in a foster family (6%), or in an adoptive family (5%).
- 10% of homeless young people had lived in an adoptive home at some point in their lives (14% of youth and 9% of young adults).
- Slightly over half (54%) of homeless youth and more than one-third (36%) of homeless young adults were interviewed outside of the Twin Cities in greater Minnesota.

## ***Young people's experiences with homelessness***

- Over two-thirds of youth and young adults (71%) had been homeless before.
- Almost one-third slept outside at least one night in October 2006 (29%).
- More than one-half were “doubled up” at least one night in October 2006 (51%).
- Three in 10 (30%) had stayed in an abusive situation because they did not have other housing options.

One-third of youth (33%) and 13 percent of young adults had been homeless for less than a month. Twenty-two percent of youth and 34 percent of young adults had no regular place to live for more than a year. Because the study takes place on a single day, people who are

homeless for longer periods of time have a greater chance of being interviewed compared to people who are homeless for only a short time, so these figures under-represent the number of young people who are homeless for only a short period of time.

### ***Many homeless youth and young adults come from troubled backgrounds and face multiple challenges***

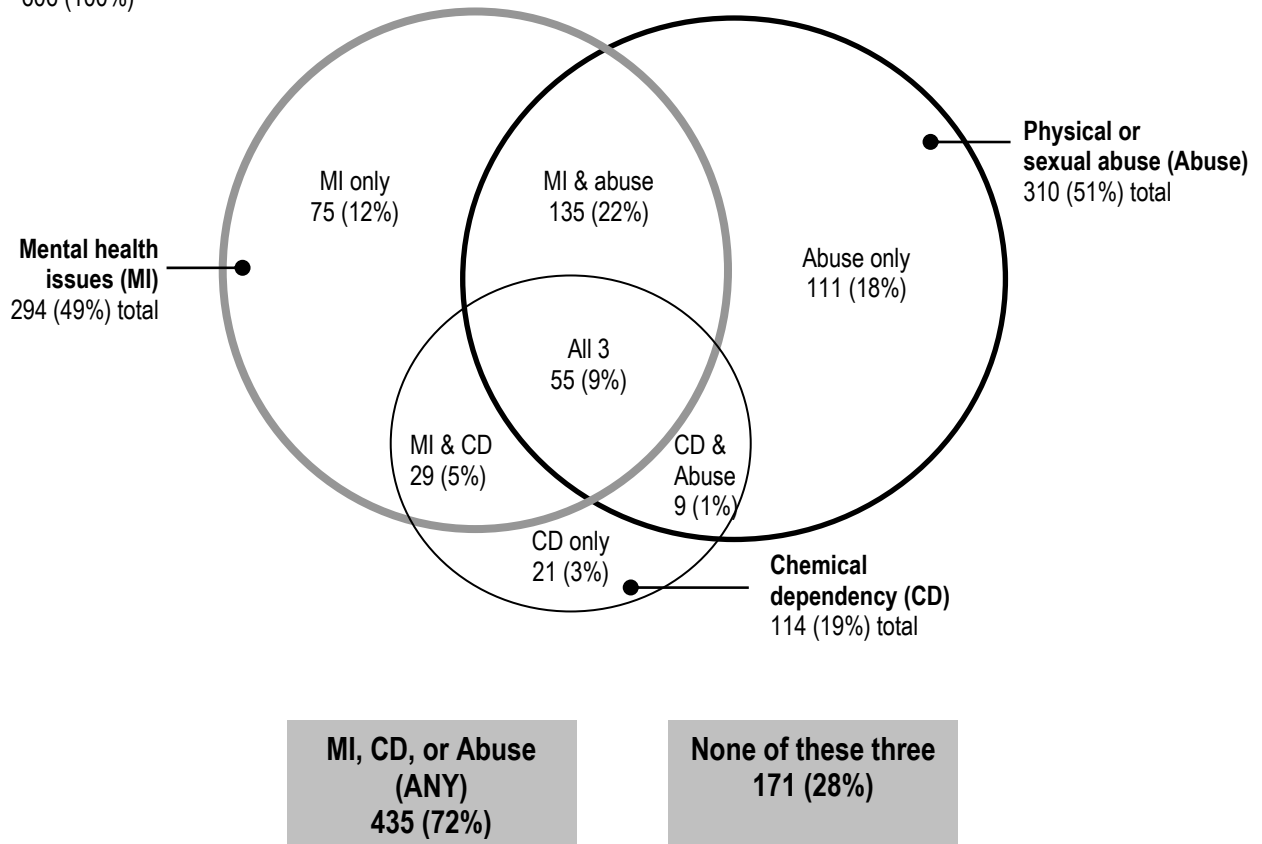
- 1 in 2 homeless young people (49%) report some type of significant mental health problem (54% of youth and 47% of young adults).
- One-third of homeless young people have considered suicide (33%) and 21 percent have attempted suicide.
- 1 out of 2 homeless young people (51%) have been physically **or** sexually mistreated. Forty-eight percent have been physically abused (53% of youth and 46% of young adults). Twenty-nine percent have been sexually abused (24% of youth and 31% of young adults). About twice as many girls as boys have been sexually abused (39% of girls and 16% of boys).
- 1 in 3 homeless young people had experienced parental neglect (34%).
- 4 in 10 homeless young people had a history of delinquency that resulted in a correctional placement (42% overall, with 34% of youth and 45% of young adults).
- Almost 1 in 5 homeless young people (18%) had been in alcohol or drug treatment (14% of youth and 20% of young adults).
- 1 out of 5 young people (21%) had problems following a head injury (17% of youth and 22% of young adults).
- 1 in 8 young people (14%) had traded sex for shelter, food, clothing, or other essentials. The proportion was slightly lower for youth 17 and younger (12% overall; 16% of girls and 5% of boys), and slightly higher for young adults (15% overall; 12% of females and 21% of males).

#### **SELECTED LIFE EXPERIENCES OF HOMELESS YOUTH 17 AND UNDER, 1991-2006**

	<b>1991</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2006</b>
Physically abused	47%	54%	42%	47%	38%	53%
Consider self chemically dependent	10%	19%	15%	13%	12%	11%
Told by a medical professional in the past 2 years that they have a significant mental health problem	Not available	Not available	23%	31%	29%	36%
Have children	16%	18%	17%	8%	16%	13%
Sexual relationship that resulted in pregnancy	32%	33%	31%	21%	26%	26%

## MULTIPLE RISK FACTORS OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Total homeless young people surveyed:  
606 (100%)



## ***Homeless young people had high rates of previous out-of-home placements***

- 70 percent of homeless youth and young adults had experienced a placement in a foster home, group home, treatment center, or correctional facility
- 2 out of 5 homeless young people had lived in a foster home (40% of youth and 37% of young adults)
- Nearly a quarter of homeless young people had lived in a facility for persons with emotional, behavioral, or mental health problems (22% of youth and 24% of young adults)
- 1 in 3 homeless young people had lived in a group home (33% of both youth and young adults)
- 1 in 3 homeless young people had been held more than a week in a juvenile corrections facility (34% of youth and 37% of young adults)
- 1 in 3 homeless young people had run away from a placement (32% of youth and 31% of young adults)

**HISTORY OF PLACEMENTS AMONG HOMELESS YOUTH 17 AND UNDER, 1991-2006**

	1991	1994	1997	2000	2003	2006
Foster care	38%	36%	38%	41%	53%	40%
Group home	22%	33%	29%	27%	29%	33%
Drug or alcohol treatment facility	15%	10%	19%	13%	13%	14%
Detention center or correctional facility	31%	34%	36%	46%	35%	34%
Any institution	Not available	61%	70%	67%	71%	70%

## ***Young people's perceptions of main factors that led to their homelessness***

The data show that homeless young people have troubled backgrounds and life experiences including high rates of placement, abuse, and mental health issues. To understand more about youth perceptions of factors that led to their homelessness, homeless young people ages 20 and younger were asked about a list of 17 different items and whether each item was either not a cause, part of the cause, or a main cause that led to their homelessness. Of the items listed in the following table, 58 percent of homeless young people report at least one as a main cause that led to their homelessness. This question was not asked of the 21-year olds.

## YOUNG PEOPLES' VIEWS OF FACTORS THAT LED TO THEIR HOMELESSNESS

	Part of the cause or a main cause	A main cause
Fighting frequently with parents or guardians	63%	32%
Someone in home they couldn't stand to be around	62%	30%
Told to leave or locked out	55%	29%
Not willing to live by parents' rules	50%	19%
Delinquent activities by the youth	38%	14%
Neglect or parents not attending to basic needs	34%	13%
Parents' use of drugs or alcohol	33%	11%
Didn't feel safe because of violence in the house	29%	14%
Home was too small for everyone to live there	25%	11%
Youth's own drug or alcohol use	25%	10%
Physical or sexual abuse by someone in the household	24%	14%
Family lost their housing	20%	11%
A parent or guardian had mental health problems	20%	10%
Left foster care or another group placement without a permanent place to live	19%	9%
Criminal activities by someone else in the household	17%	7%
Became pregnant or made someone pregnant	15%	6%
Lack of tolerance of the youth's sexual orientation or gender identity*	7%	3%

\* Of the 11% of youth who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, 44% identify lack of tolerance as at least part of the cause, including 25% who identify it as a main cause.

Seventy percent of youth and 50 percent of young adults believe that they would be allowed to return home, if they wanted to. Half of youth ages 17 and under (49%), but only 16 percent of young adults ages 18 to 20, felt that there was a chance they would live with their family again.

Only 28 percent of youth 17 and under would prefer to be in a foster home that they liked, if that were a choice, instead of remaining in their current situation.

### ***A growing proportion of homeless youth 17 and younger are enrolled in school, although many did not attend the day of the survey***

A growing percentage of homeless youth are enrolled in school, rising from 52 percent in 1994, to 73 percent in 1997 and 2000, to 84 percent in 2003, and to 89 percent in 2006. One-third of homeless youth report receiving special education services (35%).

Six in 10 homeless youth surveyed attended school the day of the survey (61% of those who had not yet graduated or received their GED). These rates are lower than the rates for children who are with their homeless parents (90% of parents surveyed said that all of their children attended school that day). The main reasons youth report for not being in school include lack of motivation to go, location or transportation issues, and illness.

### ***Comparisons to the general Minnesota youth population***

Compared to the general population of Minnesota youth, unaccompanied homeless youth were:

- Five times more likely to have been treated for drug or alcohol problems
- More than five times more likely to have been hit by a date or intimate partner
- Four times more likely to have been physically abused
- Homeless boys are twice as likely to have been sexually abused; homeless girls are four times more likely to have been sexually abused
- Four times more likely to use cigarettes or other tobacco
- Among boys, twice as likely to have attempted suicide
- Among girls, 17 times more likely to have been pregnant

### ***“Most helpful” services for homeless youth and young adults***

Among homeless young people who received services, the following services helped them most:

- Food Stamps (36%)
- Transportation assistance (34%)
- Drop-in centers (18%)
- Food shelves (17%)
- Outreach services (16%)
- WIC (14%)

Eight out of 10 homeless young people (ages 20 and younger) report that they have regular contact with a trusted adult.

## ***Section III: Specific groups of adults***

### **Long-term homelessness**

***Long-term homeless adults have high rates of disabilities.***

In Minnesota, people are considered to be experiencing long-term homelessness if they have been homeless for at least one year, or have experienced four or more episodes of homelessness in the last three years.

Looking first at the length of current homelessness, the 2006 results show that 47 percent of the adult homeless population in 2006 (2,230 adults) had been homeless for a year or longer. Adding the second part of the definition, the 2006 study finds that another 7 percent (356 adults) had been homeless less than one year currently, but had been homeless four or more times in the past three years. Added together, 54 percent of homeless adults (2,586 people) fit the Minnesota definition of long-term homeless. This number includes:

- 308 young adults age 18 to 21 (51% of this age group for whom this information is known)
- 2,278 adults age 22 or older (55% of this age group)

Numbers are less definite for minor children with their parents and for unaccompanied youth, where interviews are not weighted to a known population. The best estimates are:

- Of the 151 unaccompanied youth age 17 or younger who were interviewed, 59 (or 39%) were long-term homeless.
- Of the minor children with their parents, based on the numbers of children with the parents who were interviewed, we estimate approximately 1,207 were long-term homeless (which is 44% of the 2,726 children who were counted as homeless on the night of the study).

At the end of this section we provide a detailed table showing the distribution of Minnesotans experiencing long-term homelessness by age group, gender, and shelter type, with further notes on how the numbers were estimated.

To compare the 2006 figures with 2003 requires adjusting the 2003 figures for slight changes in question sequence. The figures for adults who were homeless a year or longer are directly comparable, and were 43 percent (2,070 adults) in 2003. The adjusted 2003 estimate for adults who were homeless four or more times in three years is 6 percent (291 adults). This gives a total 2003 adjusted estimate of 2,361 long-term homeless adults, or 49 percent of all homeless adults in 2003.

## LONG-TERM HOMELESSNESS AMONG ADULTS

	2003 N=4,774		2006 N=4,781	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Adults homeless one year or longer	2,070	43%	2,230	47%
Adults homeless less than a year currently, but 4 or more times in the last 3 years (2003 data adjusted)	291	6%	356	7%
<b>Long-term homeless adults (2003 data adjusted)</b>	<b>2,361</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>2,586</b>	<b>54%</b>

### *Characteristics of long-term homeless adults in 2006*

Considering only adults age 18 or older in the 2006 study, three-quarters of those experiencing long-term homelessness were in shelters or transitional housing programs, and one-quarter were not using formal shelter programs. About three-fifths of those not using formal programs had spent much of October sleeping outdoors or in vehicles or abandoned buildings, and about two-fifths had spent considerable amounts of time in unstable temporary housing. Four-fifths of children who were with long-term homeless parents (970 of 1,207) were in transitional housing.

Compared to other homeless adults, the long-term homeless are slightly older on average and more likely to be male. Fewer have children with them. More of them did not finish high school, and more received special education while in school. American Indians, while a small proportion of this group, are overrepresented here compared to other homeless adults. The same proportion of the men are military veterans, but more of the long-term homeless veterans have service-related health problems.

The long-term homeless are more likely than other homeless adults to have been maltreated as children, and to have lived in some type of institutional setting. They report significantly higher incidences of virtually all types of disabilities. They are about equally likely to report having current health care coverage, but are also more likely to report having a current need to see a medical professional.

Adults experiencing long-term homelessness are equally likely to be currently employed, but work slightly fewer hours per week, and are considerably more likely to earn under \$8 an hour. Compared to other homeless adults, they are more likely to cite criminal history, mental health problems, and lack of a local rental history as current housing barriers. They use many of the same general and specialized services, but are more likely to report recent use of hot meal programs, drop-in centers, and outreach services, and more likely to cite these as the most helpful services.

**LONG-TERM HOMELESS ADULTS COMPARED TO OTHER HOMELESS ADULTS (AGE 18+)**

	Long-term N=2,586	All others N=2,194
In emergency or battered women's shelters	33%	41%
In transitional housing programs	41%	37%
Informal shelter	11%	13%
Unsheltered	15%	9%
Children with parents in transitional housing (as % of children)	81%	60%
Average age	39	36
Men	58%	47%
Has any children age 17 or younger	49%	57%
Accompanied by any children (% of those who have children)	51%	64%
Did not complete high school	28%	24%
Special education while in school	26%	21%
American Indian	13%	9%
Military veterans	14%	12%
Has a service-related health problem (% of veterans)	43%	37%
Abused or neglected as a child	48%	44%
Ever lived in a foster home	22%	17%
Ever lived in a group home	22%	14%
Ever in any treatment facility	65%	49%
Ever incarcerated	54%	40%
Serious mental illness	57%	45%
Substance abuse diagnosis	33%	21%
Dual diagnosis (mental illness and substance abuse disorder)	24%	13%
Chronic medical conditions	47%	40%
Conditions that limit work	48%	36%
Cognitive disabilities	39%	27%
Symptoms of brain injury	35%	25%
Had medical coverage during October	69%	68%
Need to see a doctor about: ... a physical health problem	45%	40%
... a mental health problem	40%	34%
... an alcohol or drug problem	17%	10%
Need to see a dentist	59%	52%
Employed	28%	28%
Work hours/week (average )	29	31
Wages of less than \$8 / hour	46%	36%
Report criminal history as a current housing barrier	25%	18%
Report mental health problems as a current housing barrier	7%	4%
Lack of local rental history as a current housing barrier	12%	8%
Used hot meal program in October	39%	32%
Used drop-in center in October	34%	21%
Used outreach services in October	19%	12%

## ***Detailed description of age, gender, and shelter arrangements of long-term homeless Minnesotans in 2006***

The figure below shows the distribution of long-term homeless people of all ages in the 2006 study, grouped by age, gender, and shelter type.

**ESTIMATED NUMBER OF LONG-TERM HOMELESS MINNESOTANS IN 2006, BY AGE GROUP, GENDER, AND SHELTER TYPE**

	Emergency and battered women's shelters	Transitional housing programs	Unsheltered & informal shelter	Total
Adult men 22 and older	607	373	386	1,366
Adult women 22 and older	201	555	156	912
Young adult males 18-21	26	28	68	122
Young adult females 18-21	27	109	50	186
Unaccompanied male youth under 18	9	1	12	22
Unaccompanied female youth under 18	16	5	16	37
Children with their parents	159 (est.)	970 (est.)	78	1,207
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,029</b>	<b>2,041</b>	<b>766</b>	<b>3,852</b>

### **What these numbers are based on:**

**Adults and young adults:** Numbers are estimates based on (a) interviews with a sample of sheltered adults, weighted to represent the known total shelter population, plus (b) unweighted interviews of homeless people not using shelters. We did not estimate numbers of non-shelter-using adults who were not interviewed.

**Unaccompanied youth:** Numbers represent only the 151 sheltered and unsheltered youth who were interviewed. We did not estimate the long-term homeless status of the remaining 55 sheltered youth who were not interviewed, or of other unaccompanied youth not in shelters who were not interviewed.

**Children with their parents:** Long-term homeless status was ascertained from parents' interviews for the 1,961 children whose parents were interviewed in shelter locations. Based on these frequencies, long-term homeless status was estimated within each shelter type for other children known (from shelter counts) to be in those shelters on the night of the study. Long-term homeless status for children with non-shelter-using parents was based on parents' interviews. We did not estimate numbers of long-term homeless children outside of shelters whose parents were not interviewed.

# Homeless veterans

***1 in 4 homeless men are military veterans, and one-third of homeless veterans served in a combat zone. Homeless veterans have high rates of mental and physical health problems.***

The 2006 study identified 624 homeless veterans, including 595 men and 29 women. Overall, 1 in 8 homeless adults (13%), and 1 in 4 homeless men (24%), served in the military at some time. One-third (32%) of homeless veterans had served in a combat zone. By comparison, 21% of Minnesota men overall have ever served in the military.

## ***Who are homeless veterans?***

Almost all (95%) homeless veterans are men. While this group includes 24% of homeless men, only 1% of homeless women had served in the military. Unless otherwise stated, the descriptions given below apply only to the male veterans.

Veterans were older than non-veteran homeless men.

Homeless veterans reported childhood experiences that were less traumatic, on average, than those of non-veterans who were homeless. More veterans had at least a high school diploma or equivalent. More veterans than any other group had at least some college education. Compared to other homeless adults, fewer veterans had ever lived in an out-of-home placement or institution as a child.

## ***Physical and mental health***

Homeless male veterans are more likely than other homeless males to have considered suicide or attempted suicide. They are also more likely to have a mental illness and/or chemical dependency problem, or have a chronic health condition. Homeless veterans (especially combat veterans) are also much more likely to experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

- 47% of male combat veterans have been told by a doctor or nurse that they have PTSD, compared to
- 27% of male veterans, and
- 13% of other homeless men.
- The 2006 study identified 17 homeless veterans of the current Iraq and Afghanistan conflict. Among this group, 58% have PTSD.

## ***Barriers to housing and employment***

Homeless male veterans perceive very similar housing barriers as other homeless men. They are somewhat more likely to cite credit problems, bad rental history (including eviction), and mental illness as current barriers to housing.

Other possible housing barriers that are evident from the interviews include lack of a job, previous homelessness, mental illness, current homelessness that has lasted a year or longer, substance abuse, and a prior history of incarceration.

Compared to other homeless men, veterans are equally likely to be employed, and about the same proportion are working full-time (35 hours or more a week). The barriers to employment that unemployed veterans most often identify are generally similar to those identified by other homeless men (physical health problems, lack of transportation, mental health problems, and lack of housing), though veterans more often mention age.

From other information in the interviews we can identify other potential job barriers that they did not themselves mention, including long-term unemployment of a year or longer.

Some of these differences may be attributable to the fact that homeless male veterans are nine years older than other homeless men, on average.

### **HOMELESS MALE VETERANS COMPARED TO OTHER HOMELESS MEN**

	<b>Male veterans N=595</b>	<b>Other homeless men N=1,895</b>
Average (mean) age	48	39
Age 34 or younger	8%	31%
High school education or more	92%	71%
At least some college education	41%	23%
Ever institutionalized as a child	27%	39%
Ever considered suicide	41%	31%
Ever attempted suicide	23%	17%
Serious mental illness	60%	45%
Alcohol abuse disorder	37%	25%
Drug abuse disorder	26%	22%
Dual diagnosis (mental health and substance abuse disorder)	31%	20%
Chronic health condition	52%	41%

# HOMELESS MALE VETERANS COMPARED TO OTHER HOMELESS MEN (CONTINUED)

	Male veterans N=595	Other homeless men N=1,895
Service-related health problem (% of combat vets)	40% (54%)	(n.a.)
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (% of combat vets)	27% (46%)	13% (n.a.)
Major depression	42%	31%
Cites credit problems as a current housing barrier	29%	22%
Cites bad rental history as a current housing barrier	14%	9%
Cites mental health as a current housing barrier	10%	6%
Ever incarcerated	64%	63%
Ever homeless before	71%	72%
Homeless a year or longer now	56%	51%
Employed	27%	27%
Working full-time (35+ hr/wk)	15%	13%
Cites physical health as job barrier*	34%	27%
Cites transportation as job barrier*	30%	34%
Cites mental health as job barrier*	30%	21%
Cites lack of housing as job barrier*	23%	27%
Cites age as a job barrier*	15%	7%
Cites criminal history as job barrier*	13%	21%
Mental illness as <i>potential</i> job barrier*	65%	51%
Long-term unemployment as <i>potential</i> job barrier*	62%	55%
Alcohol or drug problem as <i>potential</i> job barrier*	40%	35%

\* Indicates numbers shown as percent of the unemployed.

## People not using the shelter system

*In greater Minnesota, fewer homeless adults are receiving shelter services.*

### *Adults not using formal shelter on the date of the study*

In the 2006 study, 1,138 homeless adults were interviewed who were not staying in any formal shelter or housing program. All of them fit the federal definition of homelessness on the night of the study. Based on answers to several different questions in the interview, we were able to determine that 567 had stayed for a considerable number of nights in October in temporary, informal shelter, and that the other 571 had stayed for a considerable number of nights in unsheltered situations. People in either of these circumstances are less often included in surveys of the homeless, because with less connection to services they are harder to locate. With considerable planning and outreach efforts from partners across the state, this year the statewide survey was able to include more of these “hidden homeless” in the study, although the evidence does not suggest that there were any more people in such circumstances in 2006 compared to 2003.

Of those not receiving shelter services, nearly half (549) were interviewed in greater Minnesota, where they were nearly 2 in 5 (39%) of all homeless people identified. By contrast, in the seven-county metropolitan area where shelter services are more available, the 589 non-shelter-using adults who were interviewed were just over 1 in 6 (18%) of homeless people identified.

### *People who had spent more time in informal shelter arrangements*

In the 2006 study, of the homeless people who were not using shelter facilities, about half (567, or 12% of all those identified as homeless in the study) had spent considerable time in October staying in “informal shelter” arrangements – in housing lacking heat, light, or running water; in their own homes but about to be evicted and with nowhere to go; or staying for short periods of time with family or friends but unable to remain and with nowhere else to go. People in this group were disproportionately from greater Minnesota and smaller towns. Compared to other homeless adults, more were currently married or living with a partner. They were younger on average.

People who had spent considerable time in informal shelter arrangements had higher rates of incarceration and use of illegal drugs. Compared to other homeless adults, fewer homeless adults in this group had ever completed high school, and more had received special education services while in school. More had spent time during childhood in foster care, and more had left a correctional facility in the previous 12 months. More had

been homeless for only a short time currently, but more of them had been homeless repeatedly. They were as likely as other homeless adults to be employed, but more of them earned under \$8 an hour, and slightly more had been laid off within the past six months.

Homeless adults who had spent considerable time in informal arrangements had about the same levels of most disabilities as other homeless adults. They reported slightly lower rates of medical coverage and more barriers to the receipt of health care. They were much more likely to report having used any illegal drug within the past 30 days, most commonly marijuana. They were also more likely than other homeless adults to have used tobacco products and alcohol in the previous 30 days.

Slightly fewer had any children under 17. Among those with any children, more reported that their children were not with them, that there was an open child protection case, or that any of their children had learning or school problems or trouble attending school because of their housing situation.

#### FREQUENT INFORMAL SHELTER USERS COMPARED TO OTHER HOMELESS ADULTS

	Informal shelter users N=567	All others N=4,214
Interviewed in the metro area	46%	74%
Last housing in a town with population less than 25,000	34%	18%
Currently married or living with a partner	19%	13%
Average age	33	38
At least high school education	69%	74%
Received special education services while in school	34%	23%
Ever in foster care	27%	18%
Released from a correctional facility in the past year	33%	24%
Homeless less than 4 months currently	39%	28%
Homeless 3 or more times in the past 3 years	40%	31%
Employed	28%	28%
Of employed adults, earn less than \$8/hour	48%	41%
Of unemployed, laid off in past 6 months	15%	12%
Serious mental illness	52%	52%
Chronic health condition	43%	44%
Symptoms of brain injury	28%	31%
Health condition that limits work	36%	43%
Cognitive disabilities	33%	33%
Medical coverage in October	61%	70%
Any barriers to medical care	33%	28%

## FREQUENT INFORMAL SHELTER USERS COMPARED TO OTHER HOMELESS ADULTS (CONTINUED)

	Informal shelter users N=567	All others N=4,214
Used tobacco, last month	80%	72%
Used alcohol, last month	50%	33%
Used marijuana, last month	28%	13%
Any illegal drug, last month	32%	18%
Has any children 17 or younger	49%	53%
Has any children with them	21%	32%
Open child protection case (% of parents)	15%	10%
Any child with learning or school problems (% of parents)	48%	41%
Any child has trouble attending school because of housing situation (% of parents)	11%	6%

### *People spending more time in unsheltered locations*

On the date of the study, 571 adults who were interviewed in non-shelter locations indicated that they had spent considerable time during October staying in unsheltered locations. Three-quarters (75%) were men. Their average age of 42 was higher than the overall adult average age of 38. They were more likely than other homeless adults to have experienced a number of kinds of institutionalization, including foster care, group homes, inpatient drug treatment, halfway houses, and correctional facilities. They had longer, and more frequent, experiences of homelessness, and were more likely to have had their first such experience as a child. They were more likely to suffer from most of the kinds of disabilities covered in the survey, including conditions limiting work or activities of daily living, cognitive disabilities, brain injury, serious mental illness, and alcohol abuse disorder. They were least likely of all the groups to report that they had any children, and among those with children, most likely to report that their children were not with them.

### **Drug and alcohol use and treatment**

Alcohol use and abuse is higher among the unsheltered homeless, and they are more likely to have had treatment but less likely to have had recent treatment. Alcohol use, and a history of alcohol treatment, is a common thread among the two groups not using the shelter system. The table below compares drug or alcohol treatment history of the unsheltered homeless with those of the informally sheltered homeless as well as with homeless adults using shelter services.

- 2 in 3 (65%) of the unsheltered homeless had consumed alcohol in the last 30 days (compared to 50% of those who had stayed more in informal shelter and 28% of those in sheltered situations)

- 48% of the unsheltered homeless consider themselves alcoholic or chemically dependent (compared to 32% both of those more often in informal shelter and of those interviewed in sheltered situations)

#### DRUG OR ALCOHOL TREATMENT

	Unsheltered	Informal	Sheltered
Ever had outpatient treatment	50%	38%	36%
Of those, percent in last two years	39%	47%	54%
Ever had inpatient treatment	50%	38%	37%
Of those, percent in last two years	39%	42%	59%

#### Unsheltered women and their children

Unsheltered women are more likely to have children who are not with them, even though they are less likely to have children at all.

- 43% of unsheltered women had any children age 17 or younger (compared to 56% of those who more often used informal shelter and 75% of those in sheltered situations)
- 85% of unsheltered women with children had at least one child that was not with them (compared with 50% of those who more often used informal shelter and 31% of those in sheltered situations)
- Overall, 37% of unsheltered women had at least one child that was not with them (compared with 28% of those who more often used informal shelter and 23% of those in sheltered situations)

#### UNSHeltered ADULTS COMPARED TO OTHER HOMELESS ADULTS

	Unsheltered N=571	All others N=4,210
Men	75%	50%
Average (mean) age	42	37
Ever lived in a foster home	25%	19%
Ever lived in a group home	21%	18%
Ever inpatient drug or alcohol treatment	50%	37%
Ever in halfway house	34%	24%
Ever incarcerated	63%	45%
Homeless 5 years or longer	23%	9%
Homeless 8+ times in life	32%	18%
First homeless at age 17 or younger	29%	22%
Health condition limits work	52%	41%
Health condition limits activities of daily living	19%	14%

## UNSHELTERED ADULTS COMPARED TO OTHER HOMELESS ADULTS (CONTINUED)

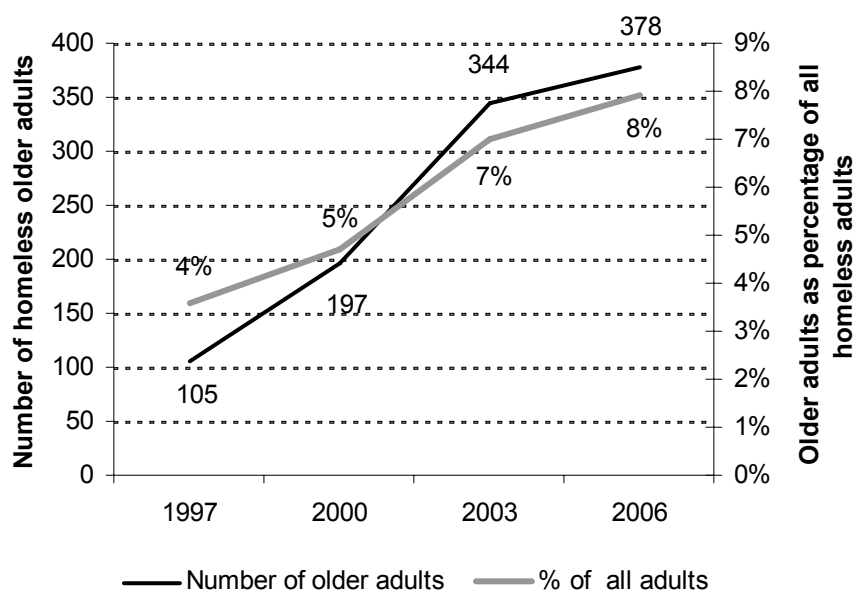
	Unsheltered N=571	All others N=4,210
Cognitive disabilities	43%	32%
Symptoms of brain injury	40%	29%
Serious mental illness	57%	51%
Diagnosed alcohol abuse disorder	33%	19%
Diagnosed drug abuse disorder	19%	19%
Has any minor children	35%	55%
Any children are with them (% of parents)	8%	61%
Used alcohol, last 30 days	65%	31%
Considers self alcoholic or chemically dependent	48%	32%

## Older adults

*Since 1997, the study has found a growing number of homeless adults age 55 or older.*

Based on the sample of sheltered and unsheltered people interviewed, approximately 375 homeless adults in 2006 were age 55 or older. The number of homeless older adults increased by 12 percent in 2006. This is the third consecutive study period that has reflected an increase in the number of older persons experiencing homelessness.

### STEADY GROWTH IN NUMBERS OF HOMELESS OLDER ADULTS (AGE 55 OR OLDER)



The majority of this group are males. Most are white or African American. This group is only half as likely to be working compared to younger homeless adults. They are considerably more likely to be receiving income from General Assistance, Social Security old age benefits or Social Security disability insurance, or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The median incomes are higher than those of younger homeless adults.

Older homeless adults are somewhat more likely than other homeless adults to use drop-in centers and hot meal programs and slightly more likely to report chronic alcoholism. They are much more likely to report chronic health conditions that limit daily activities.

The males in this over-55-age cohort have the highest proportion of military veterans (44%). Sixty percent of this group has been homeless for a year or longer. Compared to younger homeless adults, more were staying in emergency shelters and fewer in transitional housing.

#### OLDER HOMELESS ADULTS COMPARED TO OTHER HOMELESS ADULTS

	Adults 55+ N=378	Adults 54 and under N=4,403
Men	81%	50%
White or Caucasian	49%	40%
African American	36%	36%
Employed	16%	29%
Any income from General Assistance in October 2006	35%	21%
Any income from Social Security old age benefits in October	19%	4%
Any income from Social Security Disability Insurance in Oct.	17%	6%
Any income from Supplemental Security Income (SSI) in Oct.	21%	10%
Median income in October	\$500	\$400
Used drop-in centers in October	36%	27%
Used hot meal program in October	49%	35%
Diagnosed alcohol abuse disorder	28%	20%
Consider self alcoholic or chemically dependent	36%	34%
Health condition limits activities of daily living	22%	14%
Veterans (% of men)	44%	21%
Homeless 1 year or longer	60%	46%
In emergency shelter	47%	30%
In transitional housing	28%	40%

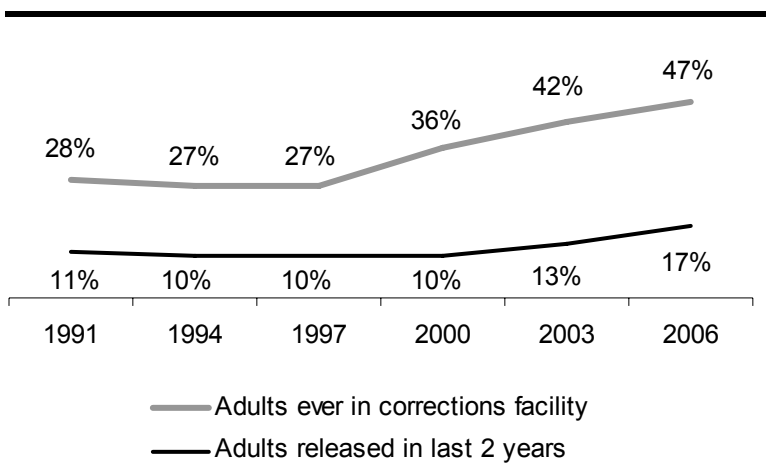
## Homeless ex-offenders

*Almost half of homeless adults have been in jail or prison at some time in their life. Seventeen percent have been released in the last two years.*

### *Growing number of homeless ex-offenders*

The 2006 study identified 2,264 homeless adult ex-offenders who had previously spent time in a prison, county jail, or juvenile detention facility. This included 1,581 men and 683 women. The percent of ex-offenders in Minnesota's homeless population has increased since the first statewide homeless study in 1991, with all of the growth occurring between 1997 and 2006.

#### RECENT RISE IN PROPORTION OF EX-OFFENDERS IN THE ADULT HOMELESS POPULATION



### *Who are homeless ex-offenders?*

In 2006, 47 percent of all homeless adults, including 63 percent of men and 30 percent of women, have been incarcerated at some time in their life. Seventy percent of all homeless ex-offenders are male. The average age for an ex-offender is 39 years old compared to 36 for homeless adults who have never been in corrections facilities. The racial and ethnic distribution of ex-offenders is very similar to the overall homeless population.

Compared to homeless non-offenders, ex-offenders were more likely to have been in foster care at some time, about twice as likely to have served in the military, and more likely to have received special education services while in school. Furthermore, homeless ex-offenders on average spent about twice as many nights in October outside or in places not intended for habitation (unsheltered).

The population of ex-offenders varies among different types of shelter arrangements and includes:

- 63% of homeless adults living in unsheltered locations
- 54% of adults in emergency shelters
- 52% of adults using informal shelter
- 39% of adults in transitional housing
- 29% of adults in battered women's shelters

Homeless ex-offenders were less likely to be employed and averaged less income in the month of October than homeless non-offenders. Of those who have children, ex-offenders were about half as likely as non-offenders to have a child or children with them. Ex-offenders were also more likely to have lived in Minnesota for more than two years.

### **Disabilities among homeless ex-offenders**

Homeless ex-offenders were more than twice as likely as non-offenders to have alcohol or chemical dependency disorders and almost twice as likely to have lived in a drug or alcohol treatment facility at some time. Ex-offenders were also more than twice as likely to have taken illegal drugs in the previous 30 days. However, chemically dependent ex-offenders were slightly less likely to have received in-patient or out-patient substance abuse treatment in the previous two years.

Homeless ex-offenders were more likely than non-offenders to have significant mental illness and twice as likely to have ever received in-patient mental health care. However, ex-offenders with mental health disorders were somewhat less likely than non-offenders with mental illness to have received in-patient or out-patient treatment in the last two years for their condition.

Ex-offenders also have considerably higher rates of cognitive disabilities and symptoms of likely traumatic brain injury.

## HOMELESS EX-OFFENDERS COMPARED TO NEVER-INCARCERATED HOMELESS ADULTS

	Ex-offenders N=2,264	Never incarcerated N=2,517
Men	70%	37%
White or Caucasian	42%	41%
African American	35%	37%
Employed	24%	32%
Special education services while in school	28%	20%
Military veteran	17%	9%
New to Minnesota in the last 2 years	18%	28%
Has lived in a foster home	25%	14%
Average monthly income in October	\$429	\$560
Average nights unsheltered in October	5.6	2.3
Possible traumatic brain injury	38%	23%
Cognitive disabilities	39%	28%
Parents whose child or children are with them	36%	73%
Serious or persistent mental illness	59%	45%
Ever received in-patient mental health care	27%	14%
In- or out-patient mental health treatment in last two years (of those with mental illness)	70%	77%
Diagnosed alcohol or chemical abuse disorder	40%	16%
Ever lived in drug or alcohol treatment facility	56%	23%
Took illegal drugs in the last 30 days	28%	12%
In- or out-patient drug or alcohol treatment in last two years (of those with diagnosed substance abuse disorder)	68%	72%

### *Recently released ex-offenders*

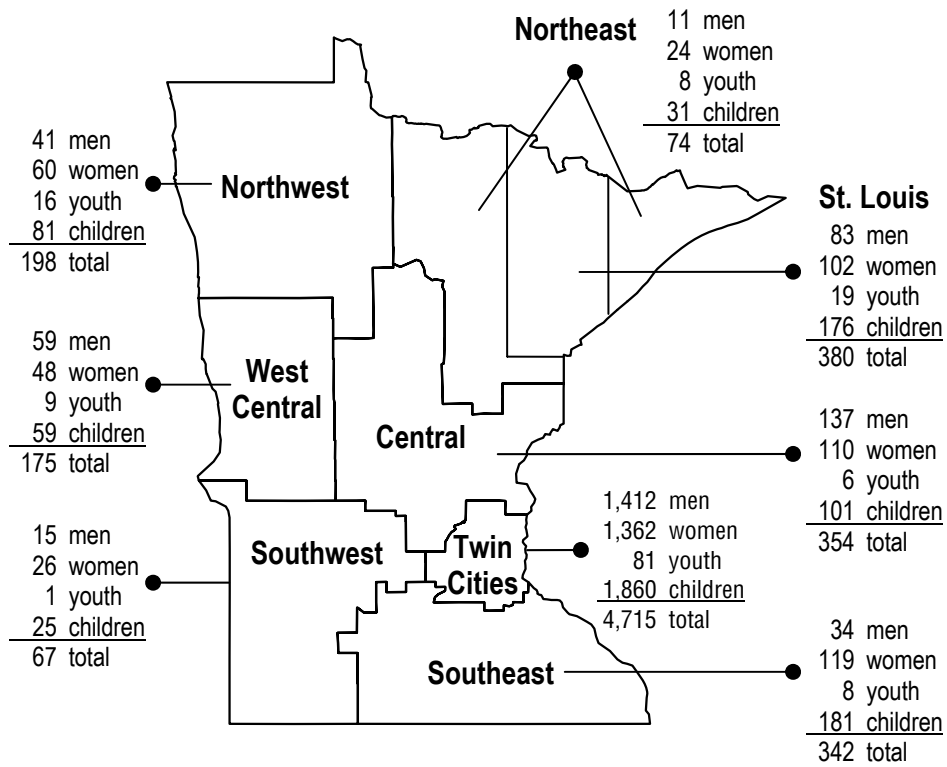
Twelve percent of homeless adults had been released from corrections facilities in the last year. Of those, most (73%) were released from county jails. A little more than 1 in 5 (22%) were released from state or federal prison and 5 percent were released from juvenile facilities. Over one-half had been homeless when they entered the correctional facility. Just over one-third had a stable place to live when they came out, and about one-quarter had received help to find housing. These proportions were very different depending on whether the person had left a juvenile detention center, county jail or workhouse, or a state or federal prison.

## PROFILE OF RECENTLY RELEASED HOMELESS EX-OFFENDERS

	Overall N=540	Prison N=122	Jail N=394	Juvenile N=24
Homeless when entering facility	<b>57%</b>	51%	61%	29%
Stable place to live at release	<b>35%</b>	47%	30%	60%
Received help finding stable housing at release	<b>24%</b>	41%	18%	42%
Under supervision of a probation or parole officer at release	<b>60%</b>	75%	55%	71%

**NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN MINNESOTA'S HOMELESS SHELTERS AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMS ON OCTOBER 26, 2006**

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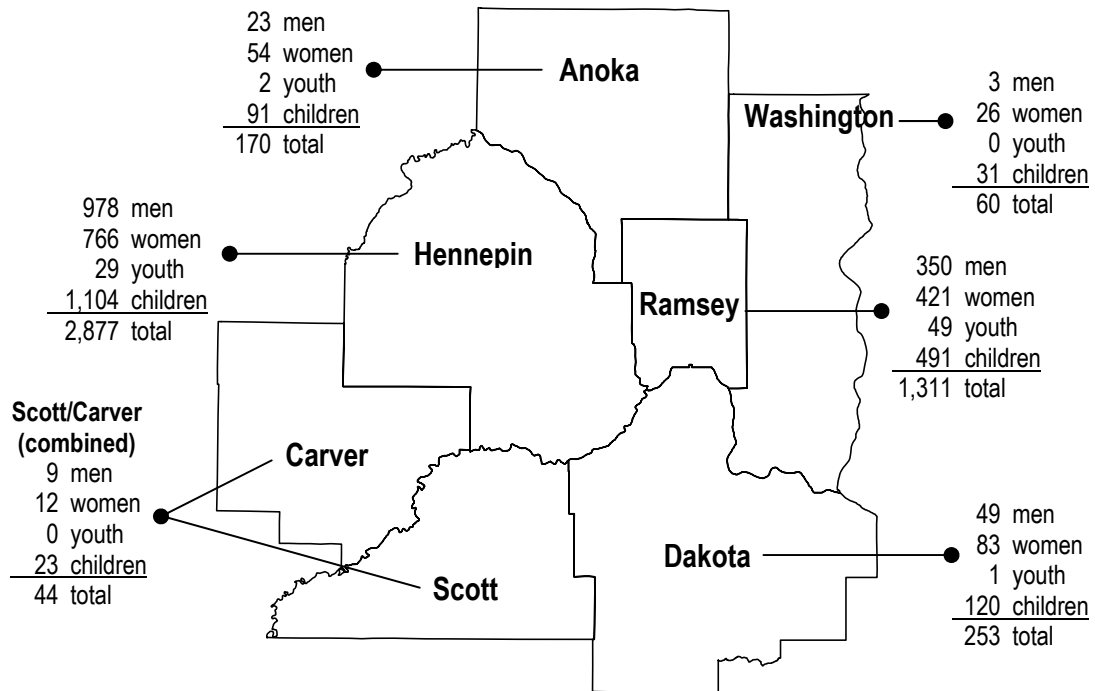


**Source:** Wilder Research; data from shelter providers.

**Note:** "Youth" refers to those age 17 and younger who are on their own (not with their families). Maps do not include additional numbers of unsheltered persons.

**NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN METRO AREA HOMELESS SHELTERS AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMS ON OCTOBER 26, 2006**

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**Source:** Wilder Research; data from shelter providers.

**Note:** "Youth" refers to those age 17 and younger who are on their own (not with their families). Maps do not include additional numbers of unsheltered persons.