



Wilder
Research



Homeless service use in Minnesota

*Emergency shelter and transitional
housing, federal fiscal year 2008*



AUGUST 2009



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August 2009

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Summary

Nearly 13,000 people stayed in the emergency shelter and transitional housing programs that participate in Minnesota's Homeless Management Information System during the twelve months from October 2007 to September 2008. Collectively these organizations provide about 3,400 beds per night designated for people experiencing homelessness, which is about 57 percent of the state's total capacity of approximately 6,000 emergency and transitional beds.¹

Background

This is the first in what will likely become a series of reports on the use of homeless services in Minnesota. It is important to note that this report is *not* a comprehensive report about all homelessness in Minnesota. Instead, this report focuses on usage of two housing types: time-limited emergency shelter and more service-rich transitional housing, which typically allows stays of up to two years. Additionally, much of the report is restricted to shelter stay patterns and demographic characteristics of those served by programs participating in Minnesota's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a federally-mandated but locally controlled system that collects client-level information primarily from organizations receiving certain federal and state funds.²

This report builds directly on the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's major yearly report to Congress on homelessness, the *Annual Homeless Assessment Report* (AHAR). A handful of jurisdictions in Minnesota have contributed aggregate data to the national AHAR since it began in 2005. Federal fiscal year 2008, which ran from October 2007 through September 2008, marks the first year in which every jurisdiction in Minnesota contributed at least some data to the national effort. It is also the first year in which the implementation of Minnesota's HMIS reached a level where the aggregate AHAR data submitted for the AHAR became useful for local reporting purposes.

In coming years, as participation in HMIS continues to grow, this report will improve. This initial report constitutes an important step toward informing policymakers, service providers, advocates, and others about the use of services designed to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness in Minnesota.

¹ Note that these numbers do not include emergency shelter and transitional housing programs that exclusively cater to victims of domestic violence which collectively provide over 600 beds statewide (see the appendix for additional information about domestic violence programs).

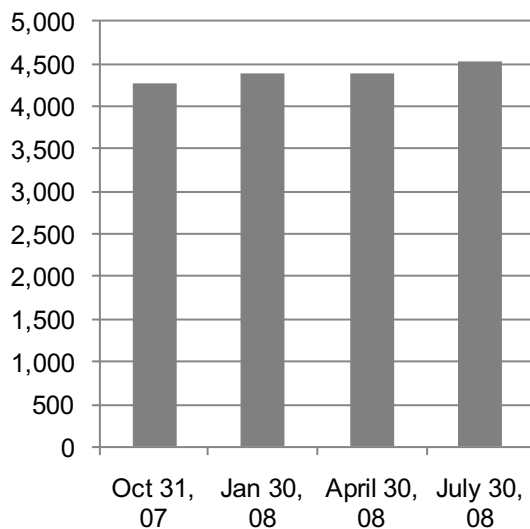
² For more on Minnesota's HMIS, see www.hmismn.org

Quarterly point-in-time counts

Parallel to the national AHAR reporting efforts we report the number of people staying in emergency shelter and transitional housing on one night in each quarter: October 31st, 2007, and January 30th, April 30th, and July 30th, 2008. These quarterly counts are based primarily on data collected in Minnesota's HMIS, supplemented by data readily available from shelters in Hennepin and Ramsey counties. Between the HMIS and supplemental data these quarterly counts include persons served in about 78 percent of the state's emergency shelter and transitional housing beds, including 74 percent of the state's emergency shelter beds, and 84 percent of the state's transitional housing beds.

Combined together, the number of persons served in these programs was fairly stable, but ranged from a low of around 4,300 in October 2007 to a high of over 4,500 in July. Although bed capacities are difficult to precisely measure, these programs collectively provide about 4,700 beds per night. Thus, among the most notable findings from this baseline study is that both emergency shelter and transitional housing were operating near full capacity throughout the year.

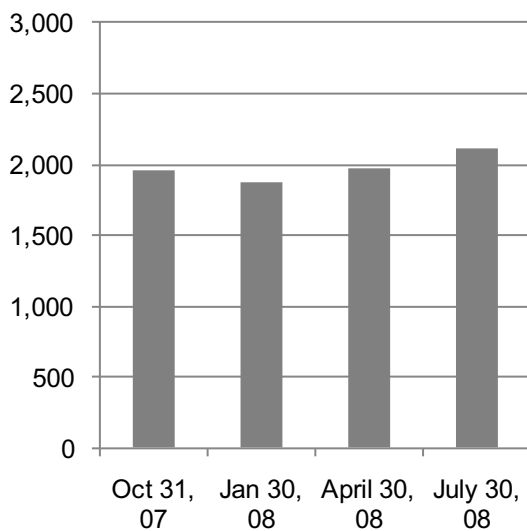
1. Persons served in either emergency shelter or transitional housing: Quarterly HMIS point-in-time counts



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008, supplemented by Hennepin County emergency shelter billing system, St. Paul's Union Gospel Mission, and the Catholic Charities Dorothy Day shelter.

The quarterly count data show a somewhat different pattern for emergency shelter as compared to transitional housing. The number of persons served in emergency shelter ranged from a low of just under 1,900 in January to a high of over 2,100 in July. Since the quarterly counts come from shelters that provide a collective fixed capacity of about 2,060 beds, it appears that shelters were at or near capacity in each quarter. In fact, emergency shelter use exceeded fixed bed capacity in July when several families were provided shelter through emergency hotel vouchers.

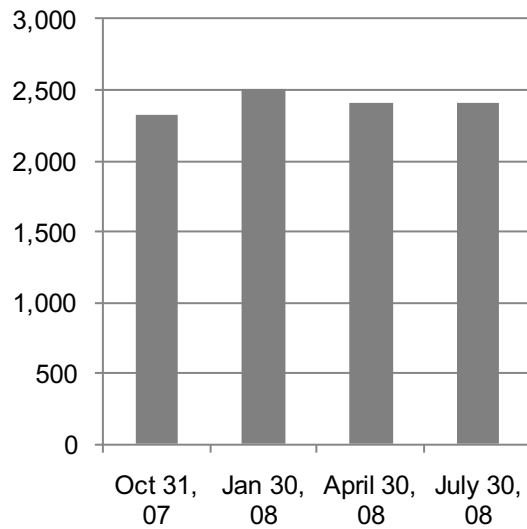
2. Persons served in emergency shelter: Quarterly HMIS point-in-time counts



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008, supplemented by Hennepin County emergency shelter billing system, St. Paul's Union Gospel Mission, and the Catholic Charities Dorothy Day shelter.

Transitional housing providers participating in HMIS were fullest in January, when they collectively provided housing to over 2,500 people. Collectively, these organizations provide approximately 2,630 beds per night, and over 90 percent of these beds were full during three of the four quarterly counts. Since transitional units can be full even when beds are not, and since units become vacant as people move in and out of programs, these data suggest that transitional programs were operating near capacity throughout the year.

3. Persons served in transitional housing: Quarterly HMIS point-in-time counts



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

Data collected over the course of the year

The AHAR reporting effort also included a more in-depth look at the number of people staying in the emergency shelter and transitional housing that participate in Minnesota's HMIS over the course of the entire 12 months, October 2007 to September 2008. As mentioned above, nearly 13,000 people stayed in these programs during federal fiscal year 2008. About 8,800 of these were served in emergency shelters throughout the state, and nearly 4,700 stayed in transitional housing. About 500 stayed in both emergency shelter and transitional housing.

The 8,800 staying in emergency shelters that participate in HMIS included:

- About 3,500 people served in families, defined as households including at least one adult and at least one minor child. This includes 1,070 families with 2,100 minor children.
- About 5,400 people served as individuals, including 270 unaccompanied youth, age 17 or younger.

Nearly 30 percent of emergency shelter beds in Minnesota were in programs participating in HMIS during federal fiscal year 2008. That level of participation does not allow us to make estimates of *all* shelter use throughout the state.

HMIS participation is higher among transitional housing providers. About 80 percent of all transitional housing beds were in programs that participated in HMIS during federal fiscal year 2008. Therefore, the number of people who stayed in HMIS-participating transitional housing programs – 4,700 – can be used to estimate the total number of people who resided in all transitional housing programs for the homeless throughout the state.

An estimated 6,000 people resided in transitional housing for the homeless in Minnesota sometime in federal fiscal year 2008. This includes:

- An estimated 4,300 people in families, defined as households including at least one adult and at least one minor child. This includes 1,360 families and 2,660 minor children.
- An estimated 1,700 people served as individuals, mainly single adults, but also including 120 youth age 17 or younger, 55 of whom were teen parents and received housing along with their children.

Lengths of stay

Families in emergency shelter and transitional housing were more likely to have a longer length of stay than individuals. The median length of stay for emergency shelter and transitional housing for families was 26 days and 183 days, respectively, compared to 15 days for emergency shelter and 119 days in transitional housing for individuals. Three-quarters of individuals staying in emergency shelter stayed a week or less while the most common length of stay for families was 1-3 months.

Demographics

The following characteristics – gender, age, race, disability and veteran status – are based on data recorded by emergency shelter and transitional housing providers participating in Minnesota’s HMIS.

Gender

Three-quarters of adults served as individuals in emergency shelter were men. Most adults served with minor children, in either emergency shelter or transitional housing were women (76% and 82%, respectively). Just over half of adults served as individuals in HMIS-participating transitional housing programs were women.

Age

The age of those served in emergency shelter and transitional housing also varied by type of housing and household status. Individuals served in emergency shelter tend to be older; over half were in the 31-50 year old range, and over 15 percent were in the 51-61 range. Adults in families who stayed in emergency shelter and transitional housing tended to be younger, with over half falling in the 18-30 category. Adults served as individuals in transitional housing tended to be older than those served in families, but younger than individuals served in emergency shelter.

The ages of children represented in Minnesota's AHAR data suggest that homeless families tend to be younger families. Roughly 55 percent of children served in families in either emergency shelter or transitional housing were 5 or younger, with most of the rest in their elementary school years. Less than 10 percent of children served in families were teen-agers. However, over 400 teenagers were served on their own in emergency shelter and transitional housing programs participating in HMIS during federal fiscal year 2008.³

Race and ethnicity

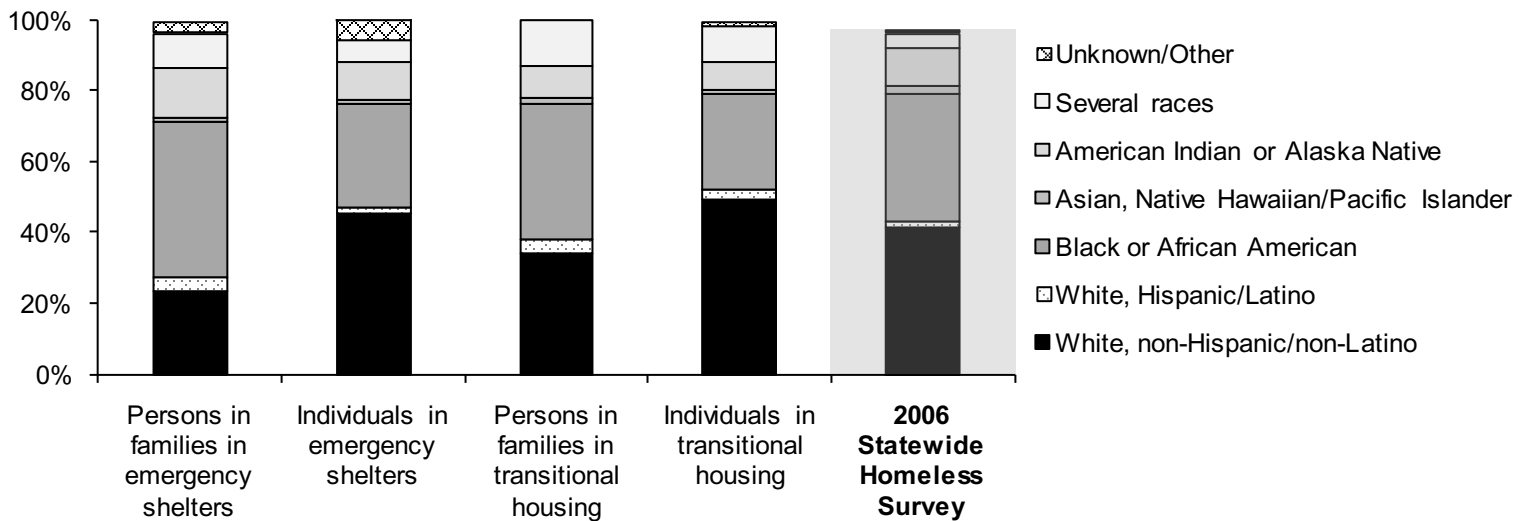
Persons of color are highly over-represented among those experiencing homelessness, both nationally and in Minnesota. Data from the emergency shelters and transitional housing programs participating in Minnesota's HMIS reflect that as well. These data also show that the race and ethnicity, like gender and age, vary by service type and household status.

Just under one-quarter of persons in families served in emergency shelter were White, as were just over one-third of persons in families served in transitional housing. African Americans were the most common racial group among persons served in families, especially in emergency shelter, where African Americans represented 44 percent of persons served. Similarly American Indians made up a greater percentage of families in emergency shelter (14%) than in transitional housing (9%).

Persons served as individuals in emergency shelter and transitional housing had a similar racial demographic, with nearly half identifying as White, nearly 30 percent identifying as African American, and approximately 10 percent as American Indian. Latinos and Asian Americans were similarly represented among families and individuals regardless of housing type, making up approximately 8 percent and 1 percent, respectively. A significant portion identified as multi-racial, ranging from 6 percent of individuals in emergency shelter to 13 percent of persons served in family transitional housing.

³ Most programs serving "unaccompanied youth" in Minnesota are not limited to teen-agers, but also serve those age 21 or younger.

4. Race and ethnicity of persons served in federal fiscal year 2008 compared with 2006 statewide survey, by housing type and family status



Sources: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008, and Wilder Research Statewide Homeless Survey.

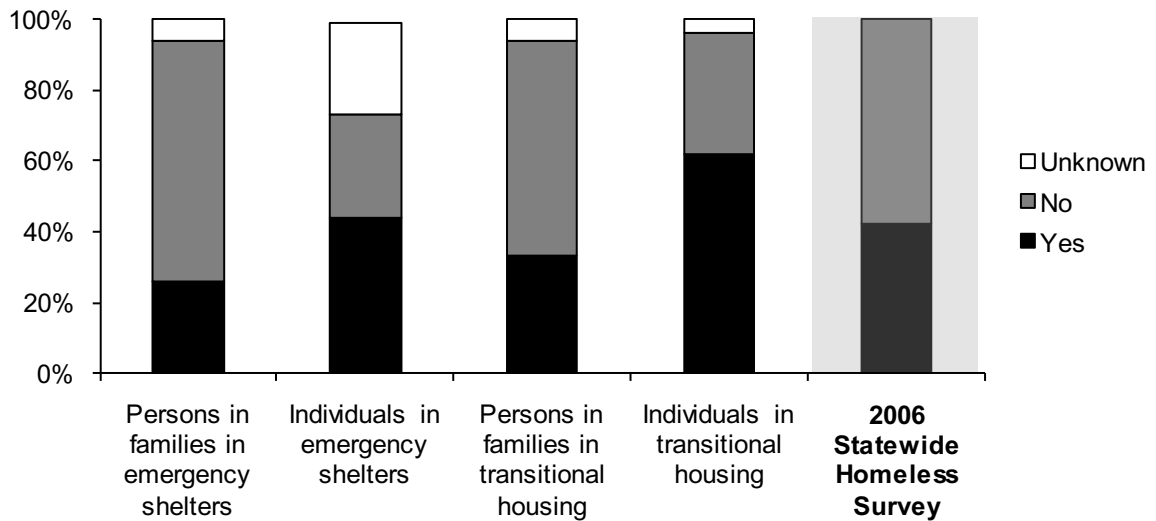
Note: The 2006 Statewide Survey is included as a point of interest but differs from the HMIS data in several important ways, including that it is collected at a single point in time rather than over the course of the year and that it includes persons surveyed in non-shelter locations as well as shelter and transitional housing programs that do not participate in Minnesota's HMIS.

Disabilities

Providers participating in HMIS routinely report whether the adults served in their programs have a broadly defined "disabling condition." This includes long-term physical, mental, and emotional impairments, as well as AIDS or a diagnosable substance abuse disorder.

In general, adults served as individuals are more likely to be disabled than are adults served in families, and those served in transitional housing are more likely to have a disability than those served in emergency shelter. So, over 60 percent of adult individuals served in transitional housing in federal fiscal year 2008 were disabled, followed by 44 percent of adults served as singles in shelter, 33 percent of adults in transitional housing families, and 26 percent of adults in families served in emergency shelter. As a point of comparison, 41 percent of all adults experiencing homelessness, both sheltered and unsheltered, were reported as disabled in Wilder's 2006 Statewide Homeless Survey.

5. Disability status of adults served in federal fiscal year 2008 compared with 2006 statewide survey, by housing type and family status



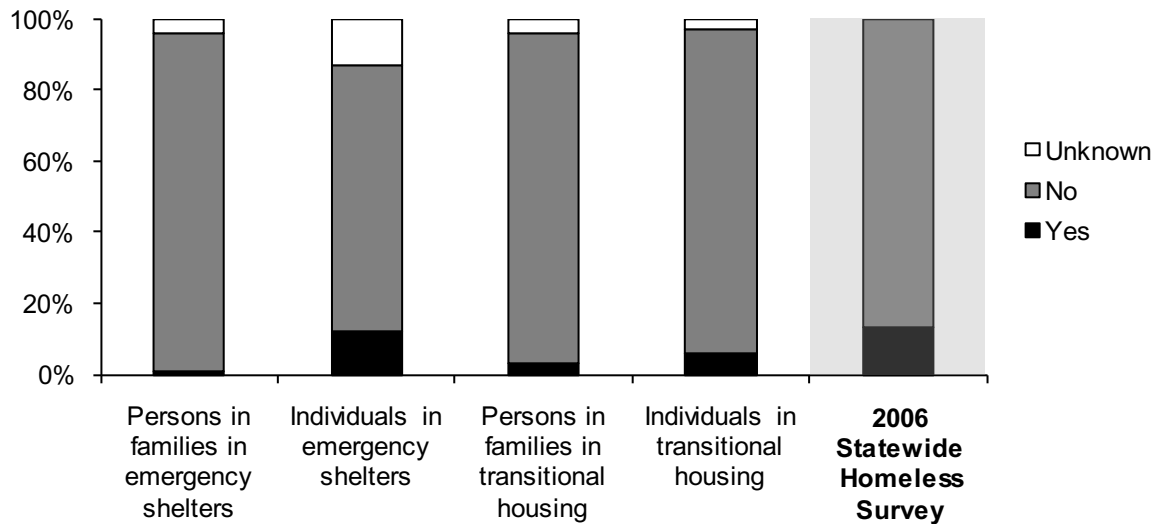
Sources: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008, and Wilder Research Statewide point-in-time homeless survey.

Note: In this graph "Yes" indicates "disabling condition" for those reported in HMIS. For the statewide survey "Yes" indicates that the respondent reported one or more physical and mental health-related conditions. Also note that The 2006 Statewide Survey is included as a point of interest but differs from the HMIS data in several important ways, including that it is collected at a single point in time rather than over the course of the year and that it includes persons surveyed in non-shelter locations as well as shelter and transitional housing programs that do not participate in Minnesota's HMIS.

Veterans

The greatest percentage of adults with veteran status was found among individuals in emergency shelter. At 12 percent, this is the same percentage of homeless adults with veteran status found in Wilder's 2006 Statewide Homeless Survey. Very few adults in families reported being a veteran.

6. Veteran status of adults served in federal fiscal year 2008 compared with 2006 statewide survey, by housing type and family status



Sources: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008, and Wilder Research Statewide point-in-time homeless survey.

Note: The 2006 Statewide Survey is included as a point of interest but differs from the HMIS data in several important ways, including that it is collected at a single point in time rather than over the course of the year and that it includes persons surveyed in non-shelter locations as well as shelter and transitional housing programs that do not participate in Minnesota's HMIS.

Next steps with the Homeless Service Use Report

Organizations throughout the state are currently collecting data that will be aggregated into tables and reported for use in the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's 5th *Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress* (AHAR). Wilder Research and Minnesota's statewide HMIS Governing Group plan to make use of that same data for a second *Homeless Service Use* report. The next report will benefit from even higher levels of participation in Minnesota's HMIS, and HUD is indicating that the report will focus more attention on homeless veterans.

The next report, which will include data from October 2008 to September 2009, may show further changes in the use of services related to the broader recession. It may also begin to reflect changes in service availability as some emergency shelter and transitional housing providers deal with recession-related cuts in state funding or loss of philanthropic support.

HUD has already indicated that the 6th AHAR, which will coincide with Minnesota's 3rd Homeless Service Use Report, will be expanded to include permanent supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness. It will also include data on those served under HUD's Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP), a federal stimulus-related program that is to provide \$20 million in additional resources over the next three years for those at experiencing homelessness or at-risk of experiencing homeless in Minnesota. We hope that both the national and local reporting efforts will contribute to the understanding of homelessness as well as the improvement of policymaking aimed at ending homelessness.

Background

This is the first in what will become a series of annual reports on the use of services by people experiencing homelessness in Minnesota. This report builds directly on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) *Annual Homeless Assessment Report* (AHAR).⁴ The AHAR is a congressionally-mandated report that seeks to better inform the nation's understanding of homelessness, and improve policymaking related to homelessness. As stated in HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan's foreword to the 2008 AHAR:

... In these times, it is especially important to have comprehensive information about people who have become homeless. This latest report will be important in informing policy decisions and developing new strategies to prevent homelessness and assure decent affordable housing for our citizens.

A primary data source for the AHAR is Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). HMIS is a federally mandated, but locally controlled database that collects information on individuals served by approximately 200 non-profit and governmental organizations that provide services to those experiencing homelessness or at-risk of experiencing homelessness. As such, HMIS is a continuous database; it collects service start- and end- dates (or program entry- and exit-dates) for individuals served throughout the year.

Minnesota has participated in the AHAR since its inception in 2005. For the first three data collection periods, however, Minnesota's participation was limited to several "sample sites" chosen by HUD to represent similar jurisdictions nationally.⁵ In the most recent data collection period – October 2007 to September 2008 – HUD made a concerted effort to expand participation beyond the sample sites. In addition, after four years of implementation, participation in Minnesota's HMIS grew to a level meeting HUD's thresholds for at least partial AHAR participation in each of Minnesota's 13 HUD-related "Continuum of Care" regions. Thus, federal fiscal year 2008 is the first year in which the aggregate AHAR data sent to HUD was also useful for local purposes here in Minnesota.

The main body of this year's report is limited to emergency shelter and transitional housing services. While several other programs participate in Minnesota's HMIS, including homeless prevention and permanent supportive housing, we currently do not

⁴ US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development (July 2009), *The 2008 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress* (currently available at <http://www.hudhre.info/documents/4thHomelessAssessmentReport.pdf>).

⁵ Minnesota's AHAR sample sites are: Northwest Hennepin County (not including Minneapolis, Bloomington, or Plymouth), Moorhead, Norman County, Rochester, City of St. Paul, and Washington County.

have the resources to analyze these data in a manner consistent with the analysis presented here. We hope to expand the report to present a more comprehensive analysis in the future, and certainly will do so as federal AHAR requirements expand to include other types of housing and services.

Limitations

This report is *not* a comprehensive report on all homelessness in Minnesota. It is limited to use of emergency shelter and transitional housing services, and most sections of the report are further limited to organizations that participate in Minnesota's Homeless Management Information System. The proportions of such programs that participate in HMIS are noted throughout the report, and are summarized in the report's appendix. Importantly, battered women's shelters are not represented in these data due to current restrictions on participating in HMIS.

Definitions

AHAR: Annual Homeless Assessment Report, HUD's annual report to Congress. The AHAR is based largely on aggregate data submitted in pre-defined table shells from HMIS across the nation. These tables are a primary source for Minnesota's Homeless Service Use Report.

Continuum of Care: HUD defines a CoC as a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness, and serves as the body through which governmental and non-profit organizations annually submit a joint application for HUD's competitive "McKinney-Vento" homeless assistance funding. Minnesota currently has 13 Continuum of Care regions, as shown in the appendix to this report.

Families: Because this report relies on the aggregate data provided for HUD's AHAR, it also relies on the way that HUD has organized households in that report, defining people as served either as part of a "family," or as an "individual." For purposes of the AHAR, HUD defines a family as a household composed of two or more related persons, at least one of whom is a child accompanied by an adult. As a result of this definition, adolescent parents and their children are considered to be individuals in this report, as are married couples with no children and other households with no minor children.

Homeless: Based on statutory language, HUD currently defines as homeless: "1) an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and 2) an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is (a) a supervised publicly or privately operated

shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), (b) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or 3) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping, accommodation for human beings.”⁶ This definition, sometimes referred to as defining “literal homelessness,” specifically excludes those who are doubled up with friends or family.

HMIS: Homeless Management Information System is a database that allows organizations that provide services to people experiencing homelessness to collect client information electronically and to produce required reports. An important characteristic of HMIS is that it centralizes data in one place so that persons served by multiple organizations can be “unduplicated,” or counted only once, in aggregate reporting. Minnesota’s HMIS is a statewide system administered by Wilder Research and overseen by a statewide Governing Group, involving approximately 200 nonprofit and governmental organizations throughout the state, most of which receive federal or state funds that require use of the system.

HUD: United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Individuals: Because this report relies on the aggregate data provided for HUD’s AHAR, it also relies on the way that HUD has organized households in that report, defining people as served either as part of a “family,” or as an “individual.” For purposes of the AHAR, HUD defines an individual as a single person served by themselves, with the exception of adolescent parents and their children, married couples with no children, and other households comprised only of adults, each of whom are counted as individuals.

Emergency shelter: HUD defines emergency shelter as any facility with overnight sleeping accommodations, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary shelter for people experiencing homelessness. The length of stay can range from one night up to as much as three or more months.

Transitional housing: HUD defines transitional housing as a project that is designed to provide housing and appropriate support services to people experiencing homelessness to facilitate movement to independent living within 24 months. Transitional housing typically includes a higher level of supportive services than emergency shelter. Transitional housing is a type of “supportive housing” and is included in the definition of homelessness due to the time limits typically imposed on its participants. The time-limited nature of transitional housing is the primary distinguishing feature between it and permanent supportive housing.

⁶ USC 42, Chapter 119.1 (www.hud.gov/homeless/definition.cfm). The federal definition of homelessness has been modified the recent HEARTH Act, but reporting procedures have to do with this new definition will not be implemented until HUD promulgates rules to implement this legislation, likely sometime in fall 2009 or winter 2010.

Methods

Readers familiar with the national *Annual Homeless Assessment Report* will find that the methods used in this report differ from the AHAR in a few ways. First, in reporting on characteristics of persons served, the national AHAR generally reports percentages that exclude missing values from the denominator. While that is an acceptable practice, we have chosen to report percentages that include missing values, and make unknown somewhat more explicit throughout this report.

Another distinction between this report and the AHAR is that while the HMIS data in the national AHAR represents *all* users of emergency shelter and transitional housing, most of the HMIS data presented here represents only those receiving services from emergency shelter and transitional housing providers that participate in Minnesota's HMIS. The research design of the national AHAR allows generalizations to be made since the research team started by establishing a nationally representative sample of jurisdictions, much like a sample of eligible voters is surveyed to make generalizations about all voters in election-year polling. Forming a similar representative sample of Minnesota for the purposes of this report is not possible, since we have far fewer jurisdictions from which a sample can be drawn.

This report does make some estimates, however. In the chapter on transitional housing and in several of the Continuum of Care tables we have estimated the number of people using all shelters or all transitional housing programs in a given region.⁷ These estimations (or, more properly, extrapolations) use the same methodology employed by HUD's research team for the national AHAR. HUD's methodology assumes that bed use patterns are the same in all programs, regardless of whether the program participates in HMIS. So if a given region has 100 beds, with 70 of those beds covered in HMIS and 30 not covered, the estimation would go as follows:

	In HMIS	Not in HMIS	Total
Beds	70	30	100
Average number of people served per night	65	?	?
Average bed utilization rate	65/70=93%	?	?
Estimated bed utilization rate	-	93%	93%
Estimated average number of people served per night	-	30 * 0.93 = 28	65+28=93

⁷ See companion report, Homeless Service Use in Minnesota: Continuum of Care regional tables, federal fiscal year 2008 (available at www.wilder.org/report.html?id=2191).

HUD makes extrapolations when bed coverage exceeds 50 percent in a given region. For this report we have done the same: when bed coverage exceeds 50 percent we present estimates, but when bed coverage in a given region is 50 percent or less, we simply report the numbers as entered into HMIS by participating programs. Bed coverage has continually improved in Minnesota's HMIS and in ensuing years we are likely to exceed the 50 percent threshold in even more regions than is the case in the current report. The maps in the appendix provide a summary of HMIS bed coverage during federal fiscal year 2008.

Other sources of information about homelessness in Minnesota

It is important to distinguish HMIS from several other sources of information concerning homelessness in Minnesota, most importantly Wilder's Statewide Homeless Survey. The statewide survey, which has been conducted every three years starting in 1991, remains the gold-standard for comprehensive information on homelessness at a single point in time in Minnesota.⁸ The statewide survey differs from the Homeless Service Use Report in several important ways:

	Statewide Homeless Survey	Homeless Service Use Report
Data collection period	Single point in time (late October), once every 3 years.	Continuously over the course of a year.
Primary data collection method	Survey (face to face interviews by volunteers).	HMIS database (typically information is collected on paper forms by caseworkers and later entered into on-line database).
Locations included	All known Emergency Shelters (including domestic violence shelters), and transitional housing programs. As many "street" locations as possible (encampments, cars, vacant buildings, etc.).	Emergency shelters and transitional housing providers participating in HMIS,* including nearly 30% of all emergency shelter beds and 80% of all transitional housing beds during federal fiscal year 2008.
Primary purpose	In-depth look at characteristics of people experiencing homelessness. (Also commonly cited for number of people experiencing homelessness.)	Volume and patterns of service usage, including demographic and household characteristics.

* In some cases we have supplemented data from HMIS with additional information, as noted throughout the report.

⁸ See www.wilder.org/homelessness.0.html

The Statewide Homeless Survey has grown in recent years to include companion studies, most notably including a survey of homelessness on several reservations in Minnesota. Several other sources provide information relevant to homelessness in our state, including:

HUD point-in-time “January counts.” Since 2005 HUD has required Continuum of Care regions that apply for funding under its McKinney Vento homeless assistance program – the major source of on-going federal funding for transitional and supportive housing for people who have experienced homelessness – to count the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night in late January. This count includes people housed in emergency shelters and transitional housing programs, as well as a “street count” of those found homeless in non-shelter locations. HUD requires regions to report certain demographic information for those counted in shelter programs, and encourages regions to do the same for unsheltered homeless.

The national AHAR uses the January counts to estimate homelessness at a given point in time, and make state-by-state comparisons of rates of homelessness.⁹ Generally, however, we feel that it is premature to place too much weight on such comparisons since the January counts in many regions have fluctuated too widely year-to-year to be explained by actual changes in homelessness.

The Quarterly Shelter Survey, produced by the Minnesota Department of Human Services’ Office of Economic Opportunity. This survey, which the OEO administers to coincide with Wilder’s Statewide Homeless Survey and the January point-in-time counts, asks shelters to report how many people they serve in a given night each quarter, including limited demographic information.

In addition, individual counties, programs, intermediaries, and advocacy groups commonly produce reports on homelessness, ranging from fact sheets that incorporate information from local and national sources to full-scale evaluations to test the efficacy or cost-benefit of various interventions. A noteworthy source of information about homelessness in Minnesota, including activity aimed at ending homelessness, are the several regional plans to end homelessness, which are now collaborating under the collective umbrella of “Heading Home Minnesota.”¹⁰

⁹ Also see M. William Sermons and Meghan Henry (January 2009), *Homelessness Counts: Changes in Homelessness from 2005 to 2007*, National Alliance to End Homelessness (www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2158, accessed March 22, 2009).

¹⁰ For more information, see: www.headinghomeminnesota.org/.

Number of people experiencing homelessness in Minnesota

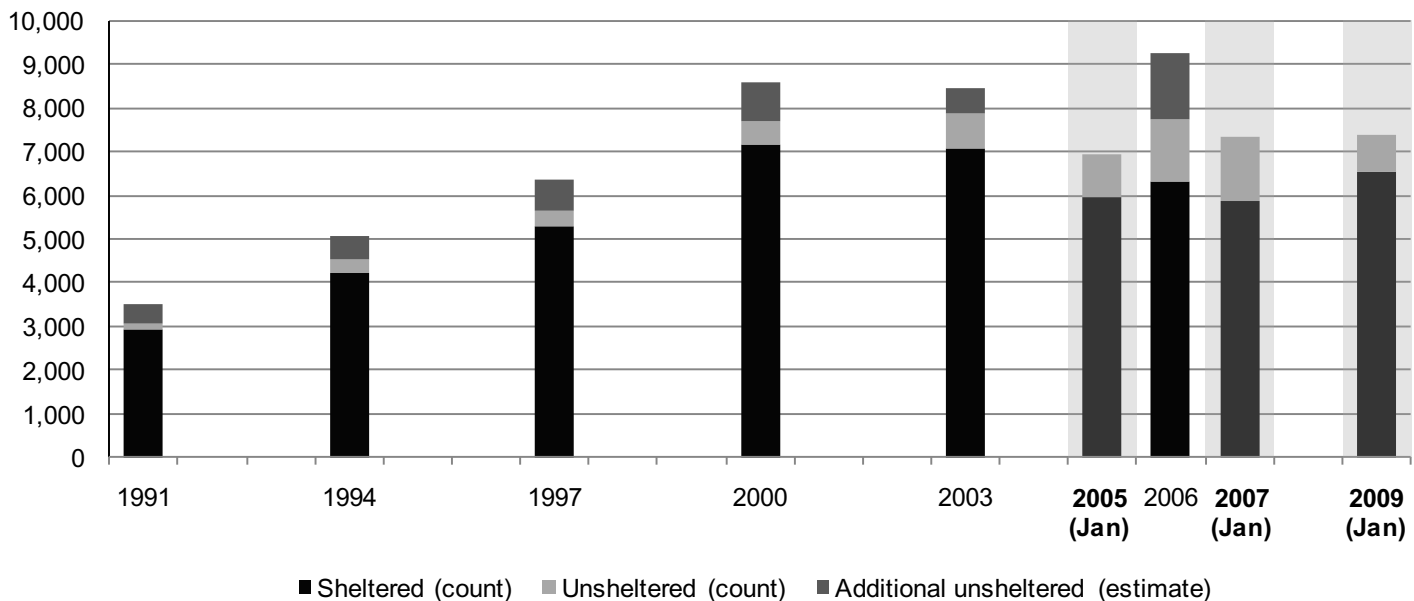
The primary function of this report is to monitor patterns in usage of services provided for people experiencing homelessness. A point of context for this report, however, concerns the broader magnitude of homelessness. While the HMIS data that are at the center of this report provide a sense of demand for available services, HMIS provides only part of the broader picture of homelessness.

A complete measure of the magnitude of homelessness requires comprehensive survey efforts that include “street counts” of people not accessing homeless services, as well as service locations that do not participate in HMIS, such as domestic violence shelters, detox centers, food shelves, and hospital emergency rooms. To systematically and comprehensively conduct such surveys requires considerable expertise and resources.

As mentioned above, Wilder Research has been conducting a statewide survey of homelessness every three years since 1991. Additionally, for the past few years Continuum of Care regions throughout the state have been conducting January counts in conjunction with their annual applications for funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

It is important to note that the January counts in particular have been improving over time, and are not yet conducted in the same way throughout the state. The January “street counts” are particularly difficult. These counts of people experiencing homelessness in places “not meant for human habitation” rely largely on volunteer surveyors. This can be difficult at any time of the year, whether in urban locations with several abandoned buildings, or in the vast stretches of rural Minnesota. The HUD-mandated timing of the survey, during the last week in January, also likely under-represents the number of people who would be found living in non-shelter locations during the spring, summer, or fall.

7. Point-in-time counts of people experiencing homelessness, 1991-2009



Source: Wilder Research Statewide Homeless Survey (conducted every three years in late October), except 2005, 2007, and 2009 which are the aggregated January Counts conducted by HUD-related "Continuum of Care" regions throughout the state.

Note: The 2009 January counts are subject to change, as they are not considered final until submitted to HUD in the 2009 application process. The graph represents known counts as of June 17, 2009.

During the 1990s Wilder's point-in-time surveys showed homelessness in Minnesota increasing from around 3,500 total individuals to over 6,000. From 2000 to 2003, the numbers leveled off around 8,500, and then increased somewhat to over 9,000 in 2007. The 2005, 2007, and 2009 January Counts, which unlike Wilder's statewide survey do not include estimates of street homelessness, show somewhat lower numbers.

The most recent January count shows a notable increase in the sheltered population, up to about 6,500, compared with about 5,900 in the two previous January counts. This remains lower than the 2000 and 2003 sheltered counts reported by Wilder, both around 7,000, but higher than the sheltered count reported by Wilder in 2006 (6,330). For context, Wilder attributed much of the drop in sheltered counts from 2003 to 2006 to a loss of transitional housing capacity, which is included in the sheltered counts due to the time-limited nature of the housing, and the accompanying increase in permanent supportive housing units designated for the homeless, which are not included in the counts.

Transitional housing

This chapter summarizes what is known about persons receiving transitional housing services in Minnesota during federal fiscal year 2008. For purposes of this report transitional housing is defined as housing that is designated for people who are homeless, with supportive services attached, and time-limited to 24 months. Transitional housing providers are self-identified by continuum of care regions throughout the state. Many are funded through the state's Transitional Housing Program, administered by the Department of Human Services' Office of Economic Opportunity, or by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Both of those funding streams require HMIS participation.

According to Continuum of Care regions throughout the state, there were nearly 3,300 beds available in the state's transitional housing programs during federal fiscal year 2008. About three-quarters of these beds – nearly 2,500 – were designated for people in families, with the remaining 800 designated for individuals.

All of the data in this chapter rely on information collected by providers participating in Minnesota's HMIS. About 80 percent of all transitional beds were "covered" in HMIS throughout federal fiscal year 2008, meaning that information on individuals residing in these beds is recorded in HMIS. Participation rates are higher for family beds (84%, or 2,100 of approximately 2,500 beds), than for individuals (67% or 530 of approximately 800 beds). HMIS participation was high throughout the state for transitional housing programs, with the exception of programs serving individuals in Anoka, Dakota, and Hennepin counties, as well as the Central Continuum of Care region (see the appendix for a summary of bed coverage by region).

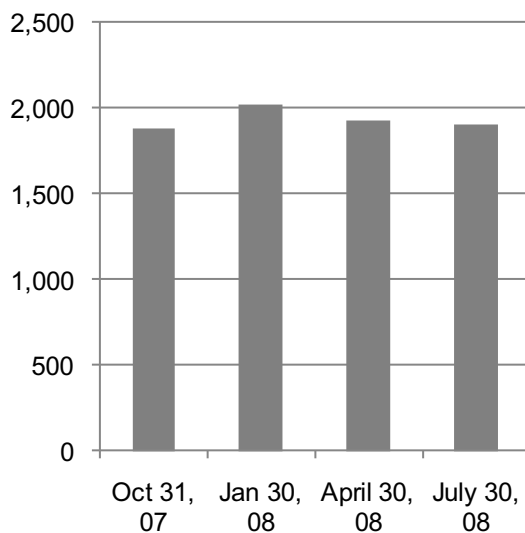
It is important to note that bed capacity is difficult to define with precision since many programs are flexible and a unit that is used for a single individual one week may be used by a mother and her two children the next. For that reason bed utilization rates are also difficult to precisely measure and are presented as approximations.

Quarterly point-in-time counts

The data in this section come from transitional providers throughout the state that participate in HMIS and do not include estimates to account for non-participating providers. According to the quarterly counts, the number of people served in transitional housing was fairly stable during the year. For families, the high point came in January 30, 2008, when transitional housing providers were collectively serving more than 2,000 persons in 630 families. At that point about 96 percent of the transitional beds represented in HMIS were occupied. The lowest point was not dramatically lower. Three months earlier, HMIS-participating providers were housing about 1,900 people in 600 families (Figure 8).

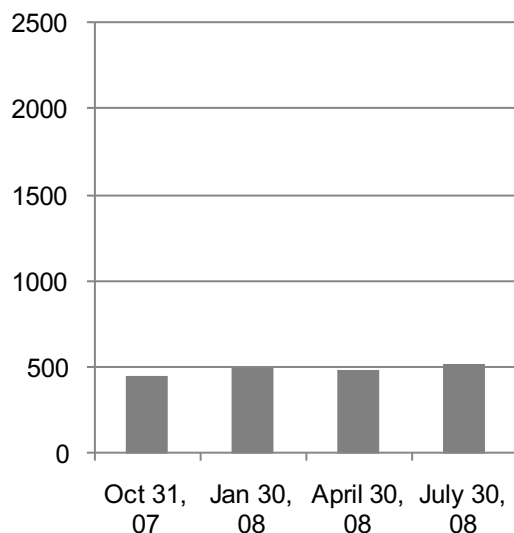
The pattern was somewhat different for individuals: the low point, fewer than 450, was also recorded in October, but the high point, over 500, was recorded in July (Figure 9). At the high point nearly all of the approximate 530 transitional beds for individuals represented in HMIS were filled.

8. Persons in families in transitional housing: Quarterly HMIS point-in-time counts



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

9. Individuals in transitional housing: Quarterly HMIS point-in-time counts



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

Data collected over the course of the year

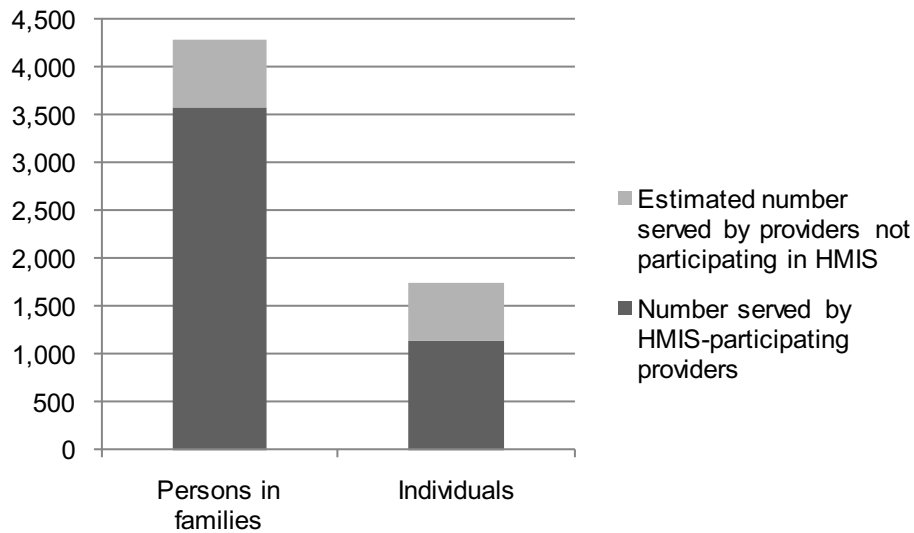
This section also relies on data collected by transitional housing providers participating in HMIS during federal fiscal year 2008. About 80 percent of the transitional beds in the state participated in HMIS throughout that time, including 84 percent of family beds and 67 percent of beds for individuals. Since the coverage levels were relatively high, we have used the count of people served in HMIS-participating transitional housing programs to estimate the number served in all programs throughout the state, using the simple extrapolation method employed in the national AHAR, and described in the first chapter of this report.

Based on the 3,600 people in families and the 1,150 individuals recorded as served during the data collection period by transitional housing providers participating in HMIS, we estimate that 6,000 people were served in all homeless-designated transitional housing throughout the state during federal fiscal year 2008. This includes:

- An estimated 4,300 people in families headed by adults, including 1,360 families and 2,660 minor children.
- An estimated 1,700 people served as individuals, mainly single adults, but also including 120 youth age 17 or younger, 55 of whom were teen parents and received housing along with their children.¹¹

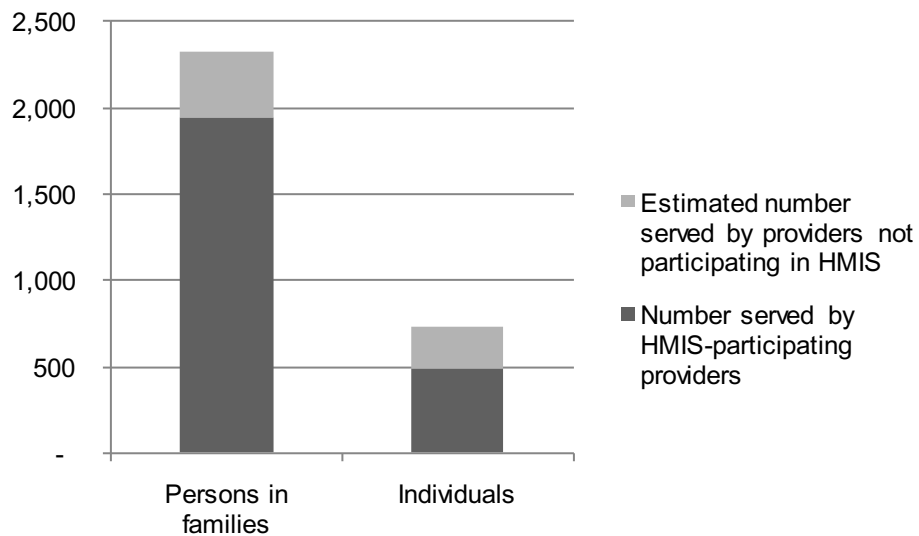
¹¹ We are not able to report on all “unaccompanied youth” by Minnesota’s predominant definition, which allows programs to serve those up to age 21, since the federal AHAR tables that underlie much of this report only provide only the broad age categories 13-17 and 18-30.

10. Total number served in transitional housing over the course of federal fiscal year 2008



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

11. Average number served per night in transitional housing over the course of federal fiscal year 2008



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

On an average night in federal fiscal year 2008, transitional housing programs throughout the state served an estimated 3,000 people, including an estimated 730 individuals and another 2,300 persons served in 730 families.¹² These estimates are based on the averages observed in transitional housing programs participating in HMIS throughout the year.

Transitional housing programs that participate in HMIS throughout the state served an average of 2,400 people per night in federal fiscal year 2008, including nearly 1,950 people in over 600 families, and nearly 500 individuals (Figure 11). Given that HMIS participating transitional housing providers have a collective capacity of approximately 2,630 beds the average utilization rate for transitional housing providers in federal fiscal year 2008 was 92 percent. Utilization rates were the same for family and individual beds in Minnesota. According to HUD's Annual Homeless Assessment Report transitional housing providers were not as full in other parts of the nation. Nationally, the bed utilization rates were 78 percent for family transitional beds and 87 percent for individual beds (2008 AHAR, page 67).

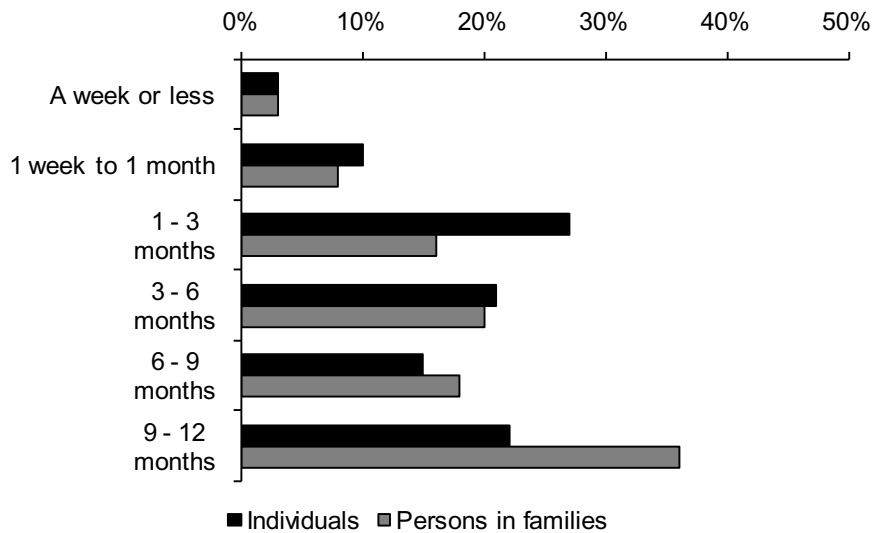
Lengths of stay and turnover rates

As defined by this report "length of stay" includes all days in transitional housing during the data collection period, regardless of whether they were all spent continuously in the same program or broken up into several stays at different providers. The lengths of stay reported here include only those stays recorded in HMIS. Note that this number is restricted to actual days in transitional housing during the data collection period and many of those served during that period have longer stays since they entered prior to October 2007 or exited after September 2008.

Families tend to stay longer in transitional housing than do individuals. According to entry and exit dates recorded in HMIS, the median length of stay for persons in families was 183 days compared to 119 days for individuals. The nationally reported lengths of stay in transitional housing were 161 days for persons in families and 107 nights for individuals (2008 AHAR, page 51).

¹² This is significantly lower than the 3,756 transitional housing residents counted on October 26, 2006, the night of Wilder's most recent Statewide Homeless Survey. The difference could be due to a number of reasons, including a loss of some transitional housing capacity due to either loss of funding or a conversion of some transitional housing capacity to "permanent" supportive housing. Note that the 3,756 reported in the 2006 survey was 20 percent less than the 4,333 reported in the 2003 survey (see www.wilder.org/download.0.html?report=1963, pages 4-5).

12. Number of days in transitional housing over the course of federal fiscal year 2008, by family status



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

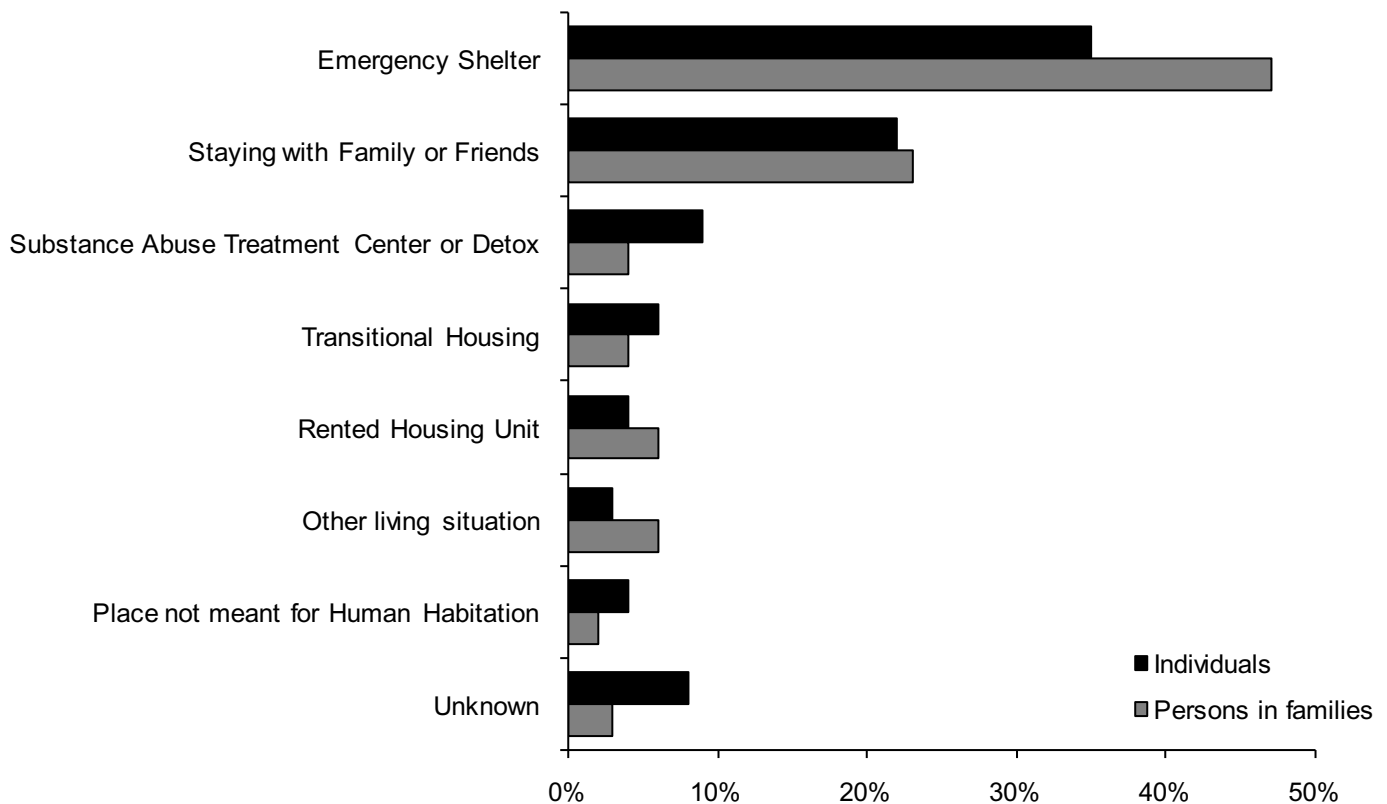
The longer stays for families translates to lower turnover rates. Turnover rates are the number of times a particular bed “turns over” to a new person. If one person exits a bed during the year and another moves in that equals a turnover rate of 2 ($2 \text{ people} \div 1 \text{ bed} = 2$). In federal fiscal year 2008 an average family transitional bed was occupied by 1.7 people, whereas an average transitional bed for individuals was occupied by 2.1. These turnover rates were virtually identical to the nation rates of 1.6 for family beds and 2.1 for individuals (2008 AHAR, page 67).

Prior living situations

The prior living situation is the place where the person seeking services stayed on the night before entering transitional housing. The majority of families and individuals living in transitional housing came from emergency shelters or from the home of friends or family. A small number of people, mostly families, came from rental housing, a motel or hotel with no voucher, or another transitional housing program. Nine percent of individuals reported entering homeless-designated transitional housing directly from substance abuse treatment or detox centers, as did 4 percent of persons served in families. Approximately as many individuals entered transitional housing directly from places not meant for human habitation (4%), as entered directly from psychiatric facilities (4%).

When asked how long they had stayed at the prior living situation, most indicated that the prior situation was unstable. Less than one-quarter of either persons in families or those served as singles had stayed at the previous night's living arrangement for more than three months.

13. Prior living situation of persons residing in transitional housing during federal fiscal year 2008, by family status



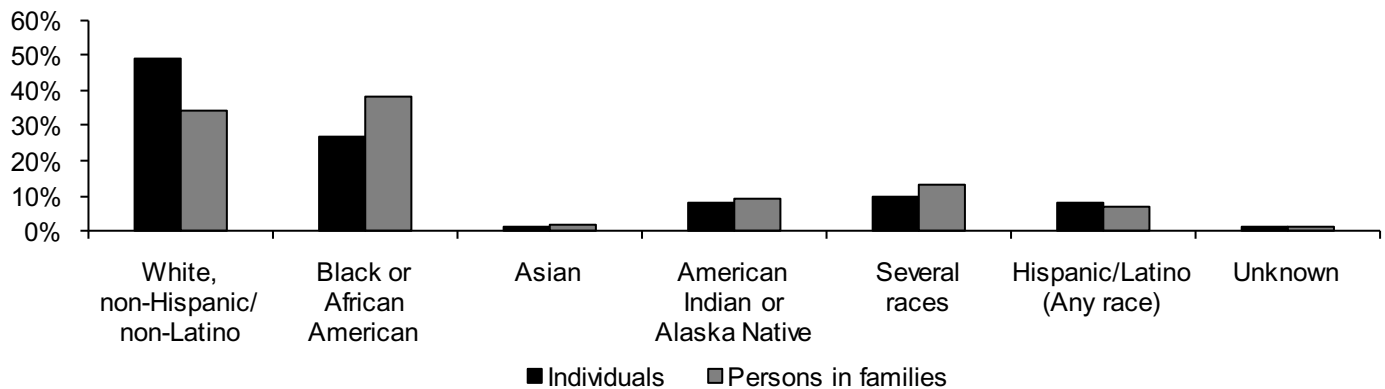
Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008. See the appendix for additional detail concerning prior living situations.

Demographics

The majority of families with children served in transitional housing were headed by females. In addition, slightly more than half of those served as individuals in transitional housing were female. Adults served in families tended to be younger than those served as individuals. Close to 60 percent of adults in families were in the 18-30 age category, compared with less than 45 percent of adult individuals. Additionally only 1 percent of the adults served in families (i.e., with minor children present) were older than 50, compared with about 15 percent of adults served as individuals.

Individuals in transitional housing were more likely to be white, while families in transitional housing were more likely to be African American. Just under 10 percent identified as American Indian and slightly fewer identified as Latino. Thirteen percent of persons in families and 10 percent of those served as individuals identified as multi-racial.

14. Race and ethnicity of persons residing in transitional housing during federal fiscal year 2008, by family

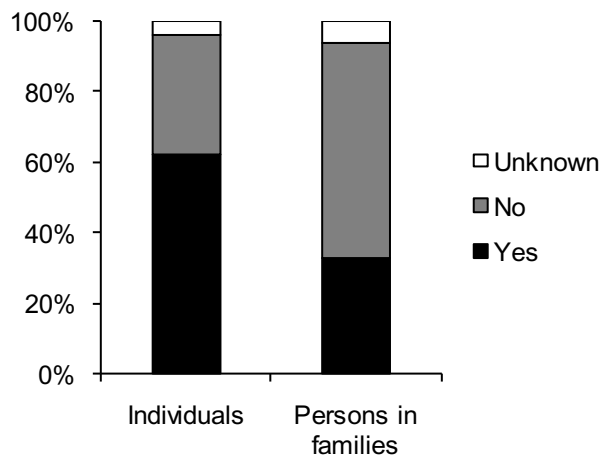


Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

Disability status

Providers participating in HMIS routinely report whether the adults served in their programs have a broadly defined “disabling condition.” This includes long-term physical, mental, and emotional impairments, as well as AIDS or a diagnosable substance abuse disorder. One-third of adults in families in transitional housing reported having a disability compared to two-thirds of individuals in transitional housing. These rates are higher than the national rates reported in the 2008 AHAR, which indicated that 13 percent of adults in families and 58 percent of adults served as individuals were disabled.¹³

15. Disability status of persons residing in transitional housing during federal fiscal year 2008, by family status



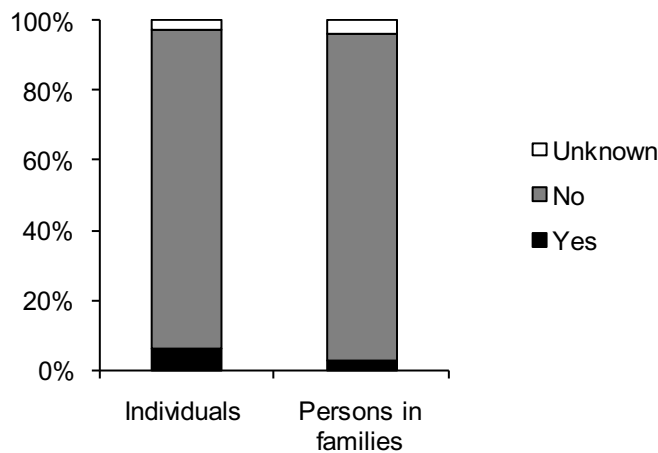
Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota’s HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

¹³ The 2008 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (accessed July 29, 2009 at www.hudhre.info/documents/4thHomelessAssessmentReport.pdf), page D-9. Note that the percentages presented here differ from those presented in the AHAR since we have re-calculated the national rates to include missing values. Disability status is reported in the AHAR as unknown for about one-quarter of all adult transitional housing residents, including nearly one-third of those in families. This is much higher than the rate of missing data reported by providers in Minnesota, as noted in the graph above.

Veteran status

Providers participating in HMIS report whether the adults served in their programs are military veterans, defined as anyone who has served in the US armed forces for at least 180 days and anyone in the reserves or National Guard who was called up to active duty. Only a small number (6%) of individuals in transitional housing and adults in families in transitional housing (3%) reported being a veteran. This sums to approximately 100 veterans served by transitional housing providers that participated in Minnesota's HMIS in federal fiscal year 2008. Nationally, a somewhat higher proportion of adults served as individuals were reported to be veterans (2008 AHAR, page D-9).

16. Veteran status of persons residing in transitional housing during federal fiscal year 2008, by family status



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

Emergency shelter

Emergency shelter is housing that is designated for people who have no other place to stay. Emergency shelter is intended to be short-term, and some county-funded shelters have a policy restricting stays to 30 days or less. As opposed to transitional housing, emergency shelter programs typically have fewer services and only limited case-management.

In addition to fixed, year-round beds, this report includes non-permanent emergency shelter capacity, including overflow beds and emergency hotel vouchers. The report does *not* include data from emergency shelters that exclusively serve victims of domestic violence since this type of shelter is restricted from fully participating in HMIS (see the appendix for additional information regarding domestic violence programs).

According to Continuum of Care regions throughout the state, there was a fixed, year-round capacity of about 2,720 beds available in the state's emergency shelters during federal fiscal year 2008. This does not include domestic violence shelters or temporary capacity provided through overflow or emergency hotel vouchers. About half of these beds were used to serve persons in families, while the other half were used for individuals, including fewer than 100 beds designated for unaccompanied youth, typically age 21 or younger. It is important to note that bed capacity is difficult to define with precision since many programs are flexible and a unit that is used for a single individual one week may be used by a mother and her two children the next. For that reason utilization rates are also difficult to precisely measure and are presented as approximations.

During the data collection period about 29 percent of all emergency shelter beds were "covered" in HMIS, meaning that the programs that provide the beds are participating in HMIS. Bed coverage rates are virtually identical for family and individual beds. HMIS participation rates are much lower for emergency shelter than other types of homeless services in Minnesota since fewer shelters are mandated by their funders to participate in HMIS. Some large non-mandated shelters have recently begun to participate in HMIS, and future iterations of this report will likely benefit from this increased participation.

For the quarterly point-in-time counts we were able to supplement the HMIS data with data from larger providers that currently do not participate in HMIS. These supplemental sources bring bed coverage levels to 57 percent for persons in families and about 95 percent for individuals. Unfortunately we cannot use this supplemental data in other parts of this chapter since at present we only receive aggregate numbers from these sources and are unable to unduplicate that data with the individually-identifiable data in HMIS.

Quarterly point-in-time counts

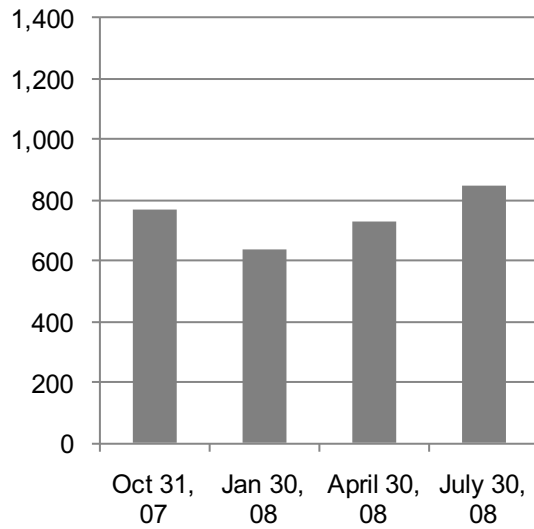
The quarterly point-in-time counts presented here are a combination of HMIS data submitted to HUD as a part of the AHAR reporting process, and supplemental data provided by the Hennepin County shelter billing system, Catholic Charities' Dorothy Day shelter in St. Paul, and the Union Gospel Mission shelter in St. Paul.¹⁴ These supplemental sources bring bed coverage levels to 57 percent (770 of about 1,360 beds statewide) for persons in families and 95 percent (1,290 of about 1,360 beds) for individuals.

The quarterly point-in-time data for persons served in families shows a different pattern than does the data for persons served as individuals. The number of persons in families served in the represented shelters varied from a low of just under 650 on January 30 to a high of 850 on July 30, 2008. This follows the tendency for more families to seek shelter in the summer months, when school is out of session and when friends and relatives may feel less obligated to provide temporary housing.

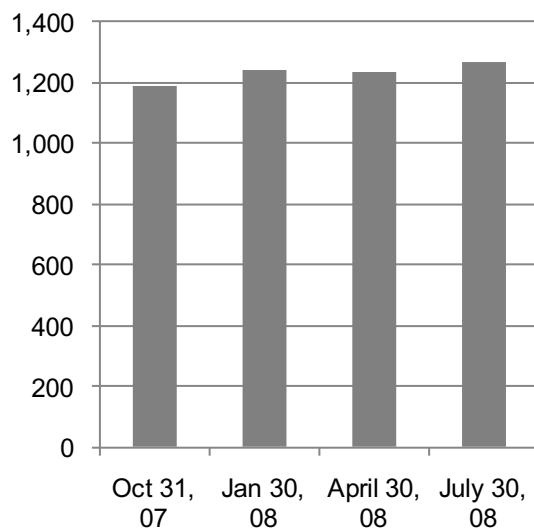
Comparatively, the quarterly point-in-time counts show that use of shelters by persons served as individuals was much more stable in federal fiscal year 2008. The counts increased somewhat throughout the year from about 1,190 in October, to about 1,240 in both January and April, and then to 1,270 in July of 2008. Given the approximate bed capacity of 1,300 included in the counts, shelters serving individuals were consistently full throughout the year.

Among the most striking findings from quarterly point-in-time counts for emergency shelter is that persons served in families actually exceeded fixed shelter bed capacity on July 30, 2008. This is largely due to Hennepin County's "right to shelter" policy. Hennepin County grants vouchers to families seeking emergency shelter when its fixed capacity shelters are full. This happened on three of the four point-in-time periods, October 31st (10 families sheltered through vouchers), April 30 (10 families), and July 30 (26 families). Even without the Hennepin County data, however, the family shelters were at full capacity in both October 2007 and July 2008, and near capacity in April 2008.

¹⁴ Data from Hennepin County's shelter billing system include the following shelters: Salvation Army Harbor Light, including Sally's Place and Safe Bay; People Serving People; Catholic Charities secure waiting and pay-for-stay shelters, and Simpson's women's shelter, as well as emergency vouchers into motels including the Francis Drake Hotel.

17. Persons in families in emergency shelter: Quarterly HMIS point-in-time counts

Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008, supplemented by Hennepin County emergency shelter billing system.

18. Individuals in emergency shelter: Quarterly HMIS point-in-time counts

Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008, supplemented by Hennepin County emergency shelter billing system, St. Paul's Union Gospel Mission, and the Catholic Charities Dorothy Day shelter.

Data collected over the course of the year

The remainder of this chapter includes data about people served by emergency shelter providers participating in Minnesota's HMIS throughout federal fiscal year 2008, which included about 29 percent of all beds for persons served in families (390 of about 1,360 beds statewide), and 30 percent of all emergency beds for persons served as individuals (400 of about 1,360 beds statewide). During the data collection period bed coverage was high in most Continuum of Care regions, with the notable exceptions of Hennepin County family shelter, and shelter for individuals in Hennepin and Ramsey counties, and the Southeast and Southwestern Minnesota continuum of care regions.¹⁵

HMIS participation rates for emergency shelters during federal fiscal year 2008 were not high enough to allow us to estimate total numbers served in shelter throughout the state from those observed in HMIS, but they do provide insights into the characteristics and stay patterns of those served in participating shelters.

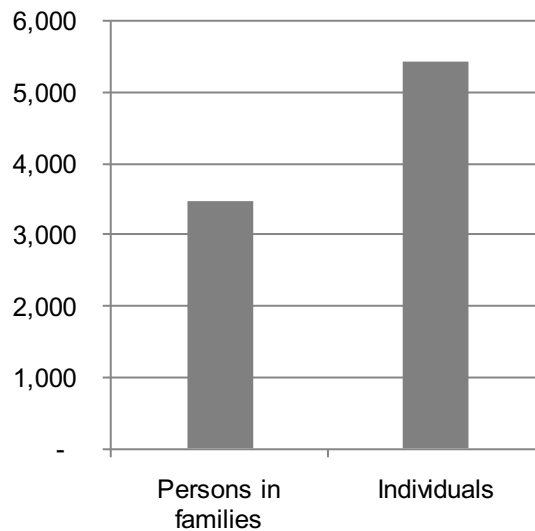
Over the course of the 12 months that ran from October 2007 to September 2008, about 8,800 people were served in emergency shelters throughout the state that participate in Minnesota's HMIS. This includes:

- 3,500 people served in families headed by adults, including 1,070 families and 2,100 minor children.
- 5,400 people served as individuals, including 270 unaccompanied youth, age 17 or younger.¹⁶

¹⁵ See the appendix for detailed information on each Continuum. Beds capacities are approximations since many shelters will accommodate either individuals or families and families can range from 2 persons to several. Additionally, these numbers do not include beds designated exclusively for victims of domestic violence.

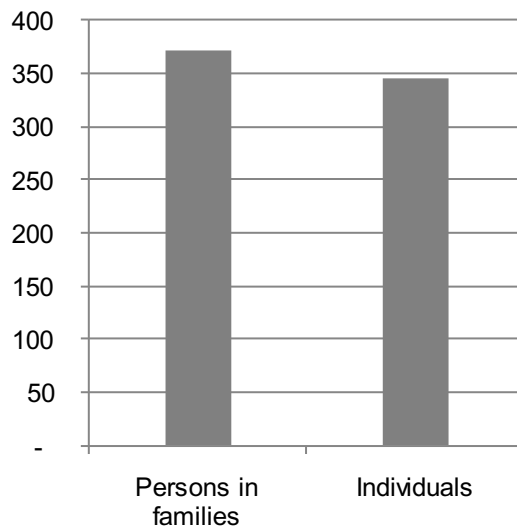
¹⁶ We are not able to report on all "unaccompanied youth" by Minnesota's predominant definition, which allows programs to serve those up to age 21, since the federal AHAR tables that underlie much of this report only provide only the broad age categories 13-17 and 18-30.

19. Total number served in emergency shelter over the course of federal fiscal year 2008



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

20. Average number served per night in emergency shelter over the course of federal fiscal year 2008



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal Year 2008.

During an average night in federal fiscal year 2008 about 370 persons in families and nearly 350 individuals stayed in the emergency shelters that participate in HMIS. Since the approximate bed capacity of HMIS participating providers was 390 for families and 400 for individuals, this means that the average bed utilization rates for HMIS participating family shelters was 95 percent and the average utilization rate for individuals was 86 percent. As a point of comparison, the national emergency shelter utilization rates reported in HUD's 2008 Annual Homeless Assessment Report were 86 percent for family beds and 94 percent for individual beds (2008 AHAR, page 67).

The 14 percent of emergency shelter beds for individuals that were vacant on the average night during federal fiscal year 2008 should not be taken to mean there is too much shelter capacity for individuals in Minnesota for two reasons. First, bed capacities are necessarily approximations that do change based on the needs currently facing shelters ("individual beds" are sometimes used to serve families and vice-versa). Second, the supplemental data provided for the quarterly counts show that shelters for individuals in Hennepin and Ramsey counties were *at least* 98 percent full on each of the four quarterly dates.

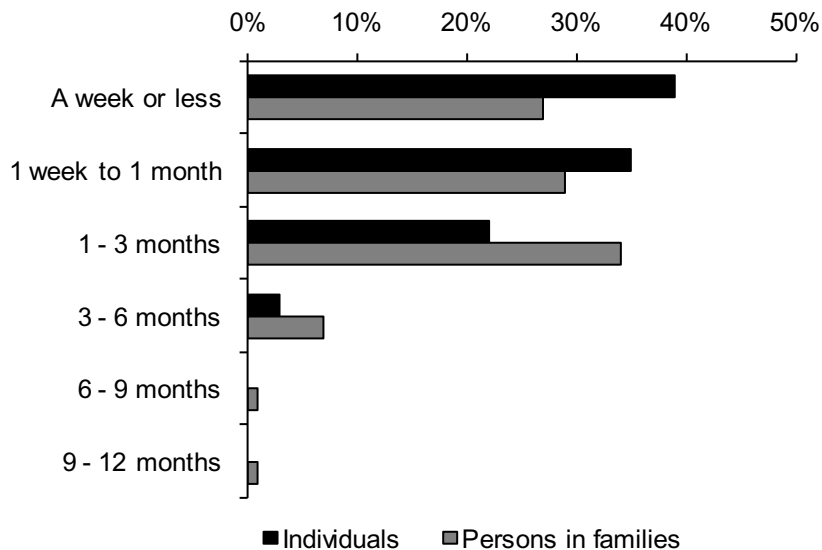
The fact that *fewer* individuals than persons in families were served on average night (Figure 20), even though *more* individuals than families were served over the course of year (Figure 19), is explained by the patterns in lengths of stay, which differ greatly between the two groups.

Lengths of stay and turnover rates

Families tend to stay longer in emergency housing than do individuals. According to entry and exit dates recorded in HMIS, the median length of stay for persons in families was 26 days compared to 15 days for individuals. Note that this number is restricted to actual days in shelter during the data collection period; many of those served during the period entered prior to October 2007 or exited after September 2008. Also while "length of stay" conceptually includes all stays in any shelter during the data collection period, practically it only includes shelters participating in Minnesota's HMIS. Nationally the median length of stay in 2008 was somewhat longer than observed in Minnesota: 30 days for persons in families and 18 days for individuals in emergency shelter (2008 AHAR, page 51).

The longer stays for families translates to lower turnover rates. In federal fiscal year 2008 an average family emergency shelter bed was occupied by 8.9 people, whereas an average emergency bed for individuals was occupied by 13.5 people. These turnover rates are higher than the nationally-reported rates of 5.0 and 8.3, reflecting the shorter average stays in the shelters participating in Minnesota's HMIS (2008 AHAR, page 67).

21. Number of days in emergency shelter over the course of federal fiscal year 2008, by family status



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

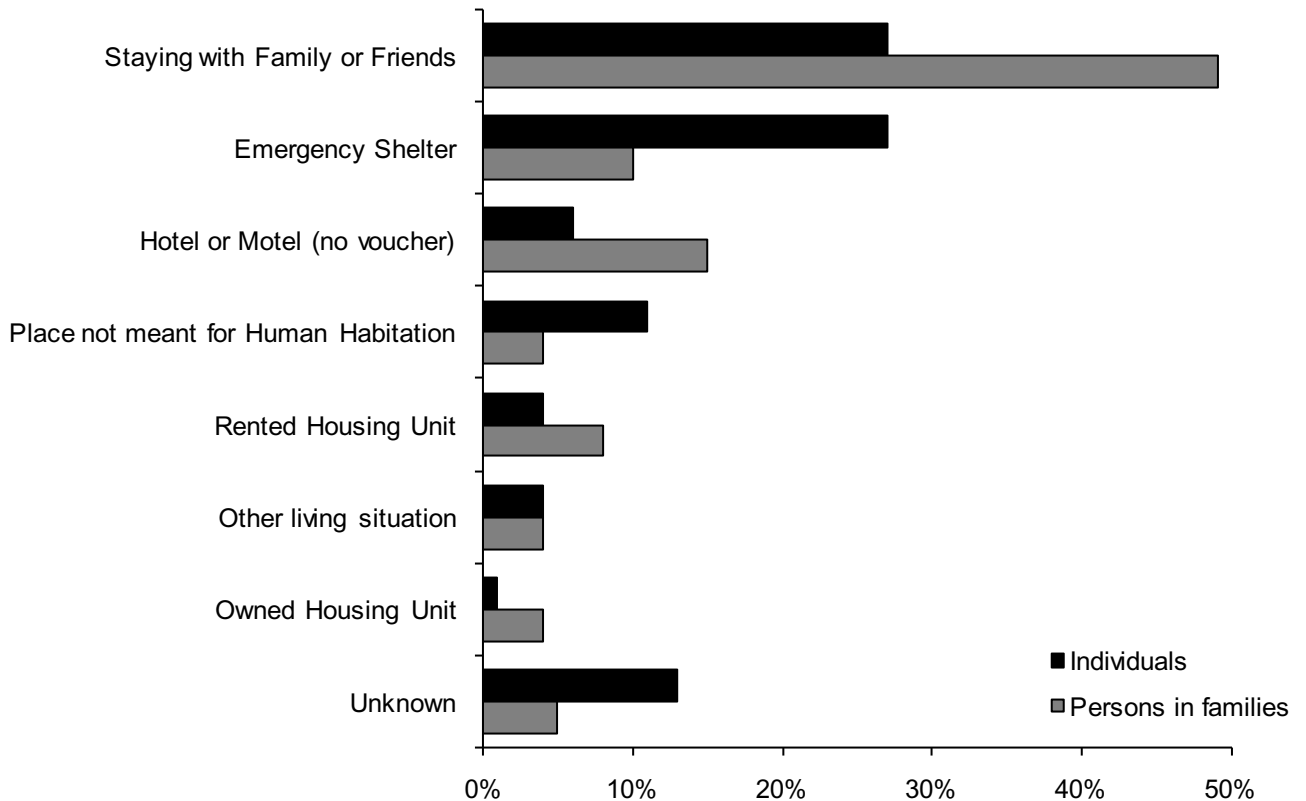
Prior living situations

The “prior living situation” is the place where the person seeking services stayed on the night before entering shelter. For persons in families staying in shelters that participate in HMIS, by far the most common prior living situation, reported by nearly 50 percent, was staying with friends or family. For individuals the most common prior living situations were staying with friends and family (27%) and emergency shelter (also 27%). The second most common prior living situation for families was a hotel (15%), while 11 percent of individuals reported spending the previous night in a place not meant for human habitation.

Perhaps relevant to the foreclosure crisis, 4 percent of families reported coming directly to shelter from a housing unit that they owned and another 8 percent indicated that they had come directly from a unit they had rented (the corresponding percentages for individuals were 1% and 4%). No families reported entering shelter from institutional settings, but 7 percent of individuals entered shelter directly from a psychiatric facility (1% or approximately 50 people), a non-psychiatric hospital (2% or approximately 100 people), a substance abuse treatment facility or detox unit (2% or approximately 100 people), or a jail, prison or juvenile detention (2% or approximately 100 people).

Not surprisingly, both families and individuals in emergency shelter tended to report little stability in the prior living situation. Nearly 40 percent of both families and individuals stayed in their previous night's living situation for one week or less, and another 30 percent had stayed three months or less.

22. Prior living situation of persons served in emergency shelter during federal fiscal year 2008, by family status



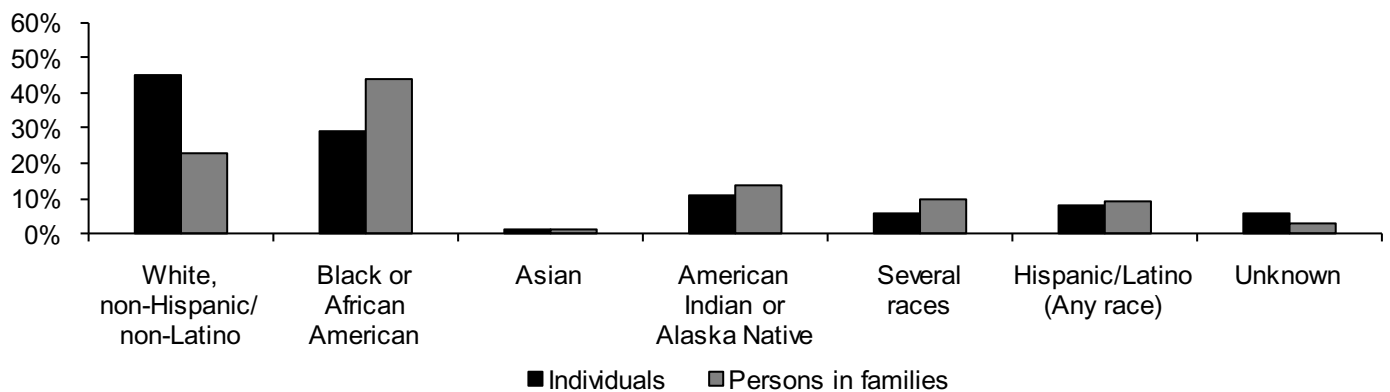
Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008. See the appendix for additional detail concerning prior living situations.

Demographics

Over three-quarters of adults in families in emergency shelter were female while the same proportion of individuals in shelter were male. Adults in families tended to be younger than adults served as individuals, with more than half of adults in families in the 18-30 year old range, compared with less than one-quarter of adults served as individuals.

The two groups also varied in terms of race and ethnicity. Almost half of persons in families were African American and less than one quarter of persons in families were white. This was reversed among persons served as individuals, where approaching half were white and fewer than one-third were African American. American Indians made up 14 percent of persons served as families and 11 percent of individuals, and Latinos made up 9 and 8 percent, respectively.

23. Race and ethnicity of persons served in emergency shelter during federal fiscal year 2008, by family status

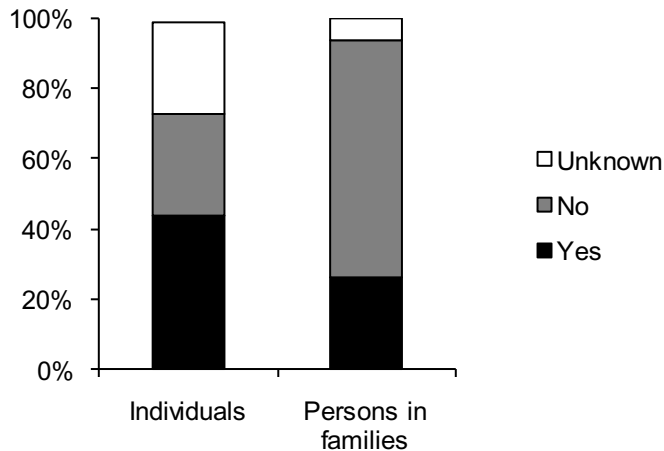


Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

Disability status

Providers participating in HMIS routinely report whether the adults served in their programs have a broadly defined “disabling condition.” This includes long-term physical, mental, and emotional impairments, as well as AIDS or a diagnosable substance abuse disorder. A greater proportion of adults served as individuals (44%) than adults served in families (26%) in emergency shelter were reported as having a disability. Disabilities were more prevalent among those served in HMIS-participating shelters in Minnesota than is the case nation-wide. The 2008 national AHAR indicates that about 13 percent of adults in families and one-third of all adults served in shelter were reported as having a disabling condition.¹⁷

24. Disability status of adults served in emergency shelter during federal fiscal year 2008, by family status



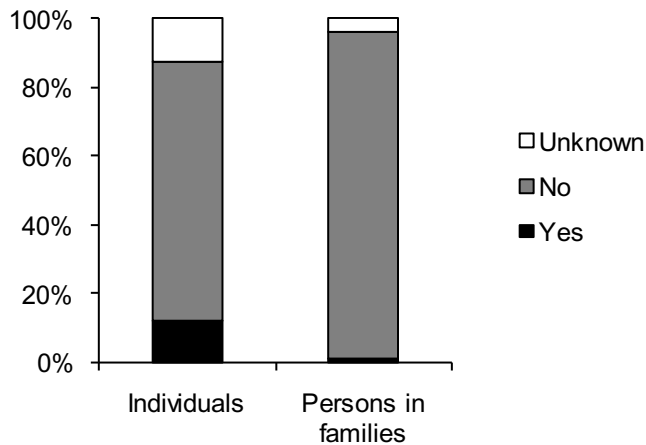
Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota’s HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

¹⁷ The 2008 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (accessed July 29, 2009 at www.hudhre.info/documents/4thHomelessAssessmentReport.pdf), page D-7. Note that the percentages presented here differ from those presented in the AHAR since we have re-calculated the national rates to include missing values. Disability status is reported in the AHAR as unknown for about one-quarter of all adult shelter users, which is similar to the proportion missing among individual adults, as noted in the graph above.

Veteran status

Providers participating in HMIS report whether the adults served in their programs are military veterans, defined as anyone who has served in the US armed forces for at least 180 days and anyone in the reserves or National Guard who was called up to active duty. A greater proportion of adult individuals in emergency shelter (12%) were reported as having veteran status, compared to adults in families (1%). Altogether this represents over 600 veterans who were served in HMIS-participating shelters in Minnesota during federal fiscal year 2008. The proportion of adults in Minnesota's HMIS-participating shelters who are veterans is virtually identical to the proportions reported in the national 2008 AHAR (page D-7).

25. Veteran status of persons served in emergency shelter during federal fiscal year 2008, by family status



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

Emergency shelter and transitional housing use, combined

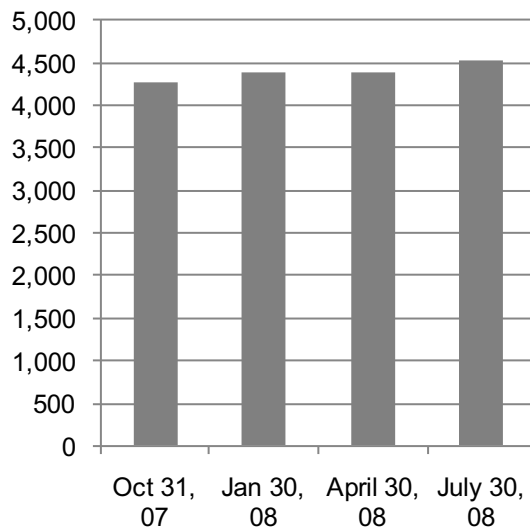
This chapter combines the data from both emergency shelter and transitional housing to give an overall picture of the use of the two types of housing included in HUD's definition of homelessness. The section on quarterly counts includes data from both HMIS and supplemental data provided by emergency shelters in Hennepin and Ramsey counties. The section on "data collected over the course of the year" relies only on information collected through the state's HMIS and does *not* include estimates for providers that did not participate in HMIS during federal fiscal year 2008. Programs that cater exclusively to the needs of domestic violence victims are not included in this report.¹⁸

Quarterly point-in-time counts

Combined together, the number of persons served in transitional housing and emergency shelter, both HMIS participating shelters and those providing supplemental data, was fairly stable, but ranged from a low of around 4,300 in October 2007 to a high of over 4,500 in July.

¹⁸ Emergency shelters and transitional housing programs that exclusively cater to victims of domestic violence collectively provide over 600 beds statewide (see the appendix for additional information about domestic violence programs).

**26. Persons served in either emergency shelter or transitional housing:
Quarterly HMIS point-in-time counts**

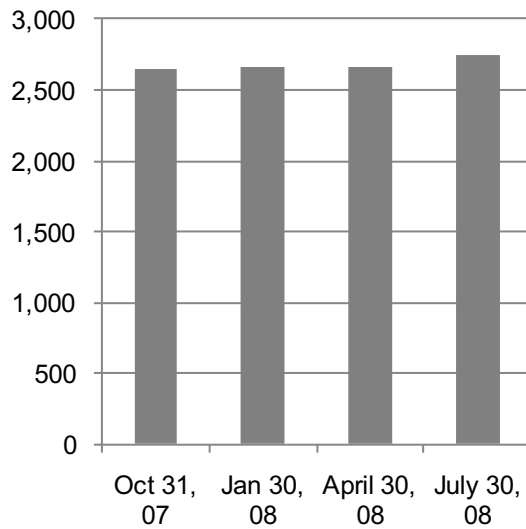


Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008, supplemented by Hennepin County emergency shelter billing system, St. Paul's Union Gospel Mission, and the Catholic Charities Dorothy Day shelter.

Looking at the quarterly counts separately for those served in families with minor children and those served as individuals, shows that the total number in each group was fairly stable throughout the year, with the high point for both groups coming in July 2008 when a total of 2,750 persons were served in families and another 1,780 were served as individuals. Note that even though the point-in-time counts of individuals are quite a bit lower than the quarterly counts for persons in families, more individuals access shelter over the course of the year than do persons in families. This is because individuals are more likely to stay in emergency shelter and many “cycle through” the homeless service system more rapidly than is the case for families.

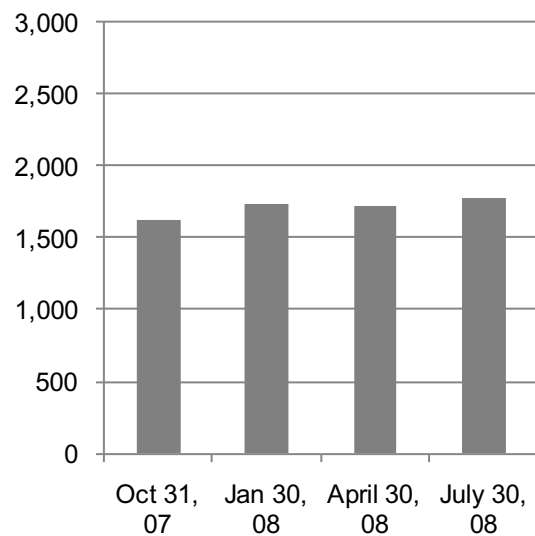
Although bed capacities are difficult to precisely measure, these programs collectively provide about 4,700 beds per night. Thus, among the most notable findings from this baseline study is that both emergency shelter and transitional housing were operating near full capacity throughout the year. Bed utilization rates were at or above 90 percent for each of the four dates, and approaching 100 percent by the end of July 2008. This high level of demand likely can be generalized to the state since the HMIS data, which cover approximately 64 percent of beds for persons in families and 43 percent of beds for individuals, has been supplemented with data from other large shelter providers to bring coverage rates up to 74 percent and 84 percent, respectively.

**27. Persons in families in either emergency shelter or transitional housing:
Quarterly HMIS point-in-time counts**



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008, supplemented by Hennepin County emergency shelter billing system.

28. Individuals in either emergency shelter or transitional housing:



Quarterly point-in-time HMIS counts

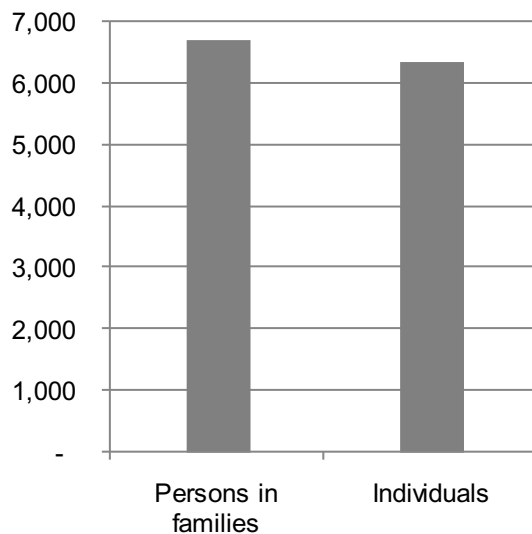
Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008, supplemented by Hennepin County emergency shelter billing system, St. Paul's Union Gospel Mission, and the Catholic Charities Dorothy Day shelter.

Data collected over the course of the year

This section relies only on information recorded in HMIS by participating emergency shelter and transitional housing providers. Although HMIS participating providers include a total of about 3,400 of the state's combined total of over 6,000 beds, for a total bed coverage rate of 57 percent, we do *not* provide estimates of all persons served in the combined total of all the state's emergency shelter and transitional providers. This is because the bed coverage rates are lowest among the emergency shelters, and emergency shelters serve a higher volume of people than do transitional housing programs.

Altogether nearly 13,000 people stayed in emergency shelter and transitional programs that participate in HMIS during federal fiscal year 2008 (October 2007-September 2008). This included about 6,700 served in families with minor children and about 6,400 served as individuals. Nearly 200 of these were served as both a single and in a family during the reporting period.

29. Total number served in either emergency shelter or transitional housing over the course of federal fiscal year 2008



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal Year 2008.

Demographic comparisons

This section compares the characteristics of those served in shelters and transitional housing programs participating in Minnesota's HMIS during federal fiscal year 2008 with other relevant data sources. None of the comparisons is a strictly "apples to apples" comparison: the national AHAR data represents all persons served by emergency shelter and transitional housing providers nationally; the 2006 Statewide Homeless Survey is a point-in-time survey that includes persons served in domestic violence programs, as well as people found living in areas not meant for human habitation, and the general population numbers are also intended to represent a single point in time.

Comparing racial characteristics from Minnesota's HMIS data to the state's general population, it is notable that persons of color are highly over-represented among the homeless. This is especially true for African Americans, but also holds for American Indians and Latinos. Asians, on the other hand, are under-represented among those experiencing homeless in Minnesota. Comparing data from Minnesota's HMIS to the national AHAR, Minnesota appears to have much higher proportions of people identifying as American Indian and lower proportions of people identifying as Latino among those experiencing homelessness.

Data from Minnesota's HMIS shows a higher prevalence of disabilities than does the national AHAR. Despite different definitions, the rate of disabilities among those experiencing homelessness in Minnesota, whether measured in HMIS or in the Statewide Homeless Survey is far higher than in the general population.

Somewhat surprisingly veterans are only slightly over-represented among those experiencing homelessness. The national AHAR, however, observes that while veterans are less likely than non-veterans to live in poverty, they are equally as likely to become homeless (2008 AHAR, page 25). Additionally, while the general population includes World War II and Korean War-era veterans, few people in those generations experience homelessness in Minnesota. Thus it is likely that Vietnam- and later-era veterans are over-represented among those experiencing homelessness. Homeless veterans will be a special focus of the 2009 national AHAR, as well as the next version of this report.

30. Characteristics of those served in Minnesota's emergency shelters and transitional housing programs in federal fiscal year 2008, as compared with other selected data sources

	As represented in Minnesota's HMIS ^a				2008 National AHAR ^b	2006 Statewide Homeless Survey ^c	Minnesota, general population ^d
	Persons in families in Emergency Shelter	Individuals in Emergency Shelter	Persons in families in Transitional Housing	Individuals in Transitional Housing			
All persons	3,465	5,423	3,586	1,147	1.6 million	7,713	5.2 million
Race and ethnicity							
White, non-Hispanic/non-Latino	23%	45%	34%	49%	35%	41%	89%
Black or African American	44%	29%	38%	27%	39%	36%	5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	14%	11%	9%	8%	2%	11%	1%
Asian	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	4%
Several races	10%	6%	13%	10%	5%	4%	1.5%
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	9%	8%	8%	6%	19%	2%	4%
Adults	1,351	5,067	1,339	990	1.3 million	4,781	3.9 million
Disabled	26%	44%	33%	62%	31%	42%	14%
Veteran	1%	12%	3%	6%	11%	13%	11%

Sources: (a) Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008; (b) US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2008 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress; (c) Wilder Research, 2006 Statewide Homeless Survey (point-in-time); (d) US Census Bureau.

Note: National AHAR data has been re-calculated to include unknowns. Statewide Homeless Survey includes the weighted characteristics of those in emergency and transitional housing as well as the number of those interviewed in non-shelter locations (the total does not include the total 9,200-9,300 estimated to be literally homeless on the night of the survey); Census data on disabilities includes estimates for persons age 16 and older.

Appendix

Supplemental information about use of services provided by shelters exclusively serving victims of domestic violence

Maps: Number served and bed coverage by Continuum of Care region, federal fiscal year 2008

AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008, statewide¹⁹

¹⁹ For details by region, see companion report, Homeless Service Use in Minnesota: Continuum of Care regional tables, federal fiscal year 2008 (available at www.wilder.org/report.html?id=2191).

Domestic violence shelter stay data²⁰

- According to Wilder's 2006 Statewide Homeless Survey approximately one in three homeless women has experienced domestic abuse. This percentage is higher in greater Minnesota (35%) than the Twin Cities metro area (30%). In addition, 33 percent of homeless adults (45% of women and 22% of men) reported having stayed in an abusive relationship because they had nowhere else to live.

Fiscal year 2008 overview:

- The Minnesota Office of Justice currently provides funding for 27 shelters and 32 hotel/motel/safe home programs. Of the 27 shelters, 662 emergency shelter beds are available nightly. The number of beds at hotel/motel/safe home programs varies daily according to availability in the geographic area.
- In FY08, state funded emergency domestic violence shelters and hotel/motel/safe home programs sheltered 5,031 women, 4,830 children and 23 men. These domestic violence victims stayed in emergency shelters and hotel/motel/safe home programs for a total of 218,951 bed days during this period.
- The Day One[®] database system reports "real time" bed availability and services information of 49 Minnesota area domestic violence emergency shelters and safe housing programs. Of the 27 Minnesota Day One[®] participating emergency shelters in FY08, they each reported an average of 2 open beds per day.

Trends fiscal year 2003 to fiscal year 2008:

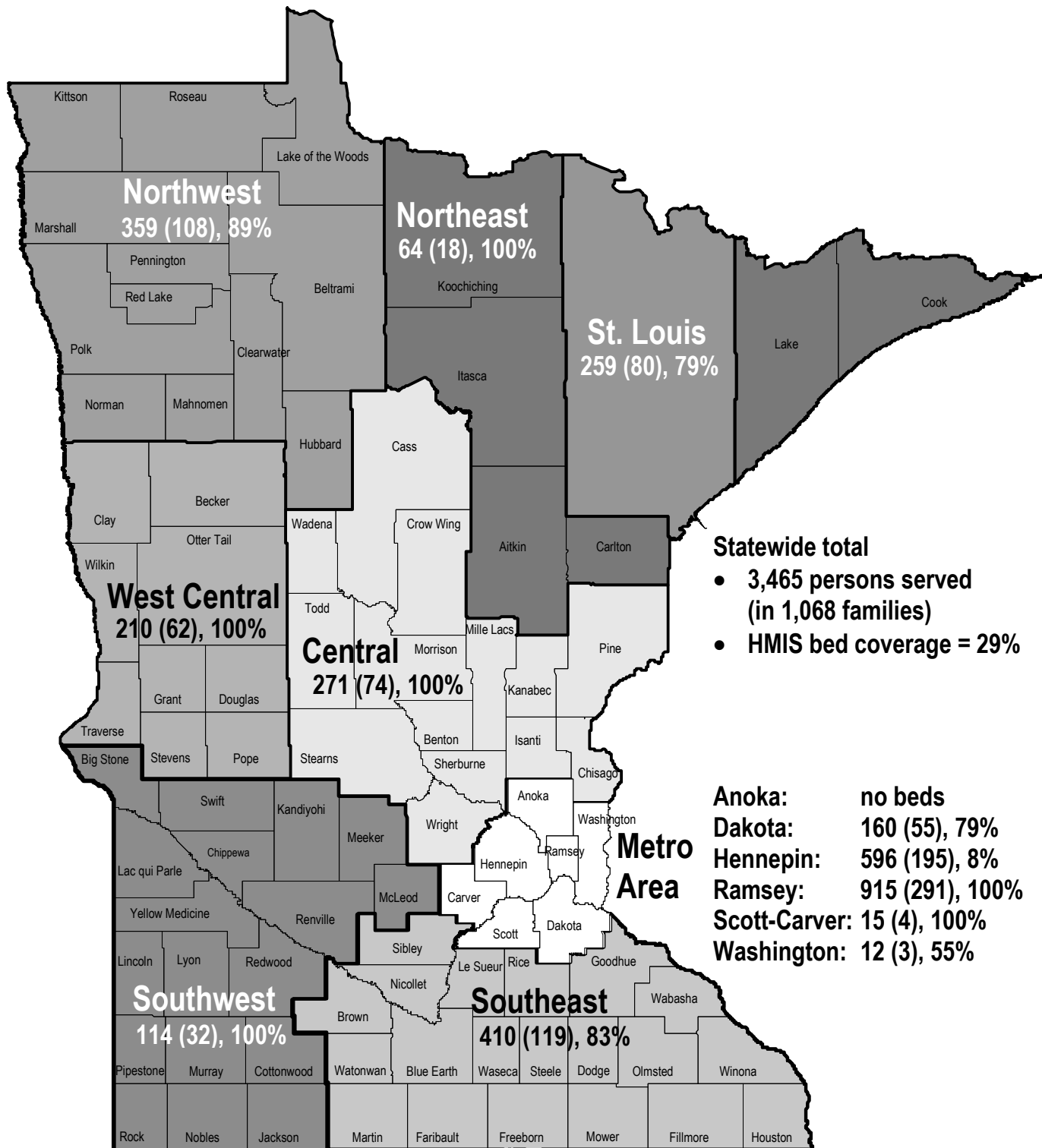
- The average length of stay at emergency shelters has increased 33.9 percent (18.3 to 24.5 days) from FY03 to FY08. In a FY08 survey of Day One[®] participating programs, 84 percent of the respondents indicated that this increase could be strongly attributed to families being unable to transition from emergency shelter due to a lack of affordable housing.
- From FY03 to FY08 the number of Day One[®] transportation vouchers provided to families relocating to shelters outside their geographic area (due to lack of available beds or for safety reasons) increased over 40 percent.
- Calls to the statewide Day One[®] Minnesota Domestic Violence Crisis Line increased 60 percent from FY03 to FY08. The line received an average of 880 calls a month in FY08.

²⁰ This summary was provided by Colleen Schmitt with Minnesota's Day One[®] Domestic Violence Crisis Line.

Number served and bed coverage by Continuum of Care region

Emergency shelter for families with minor children, federal fiscal year 2008

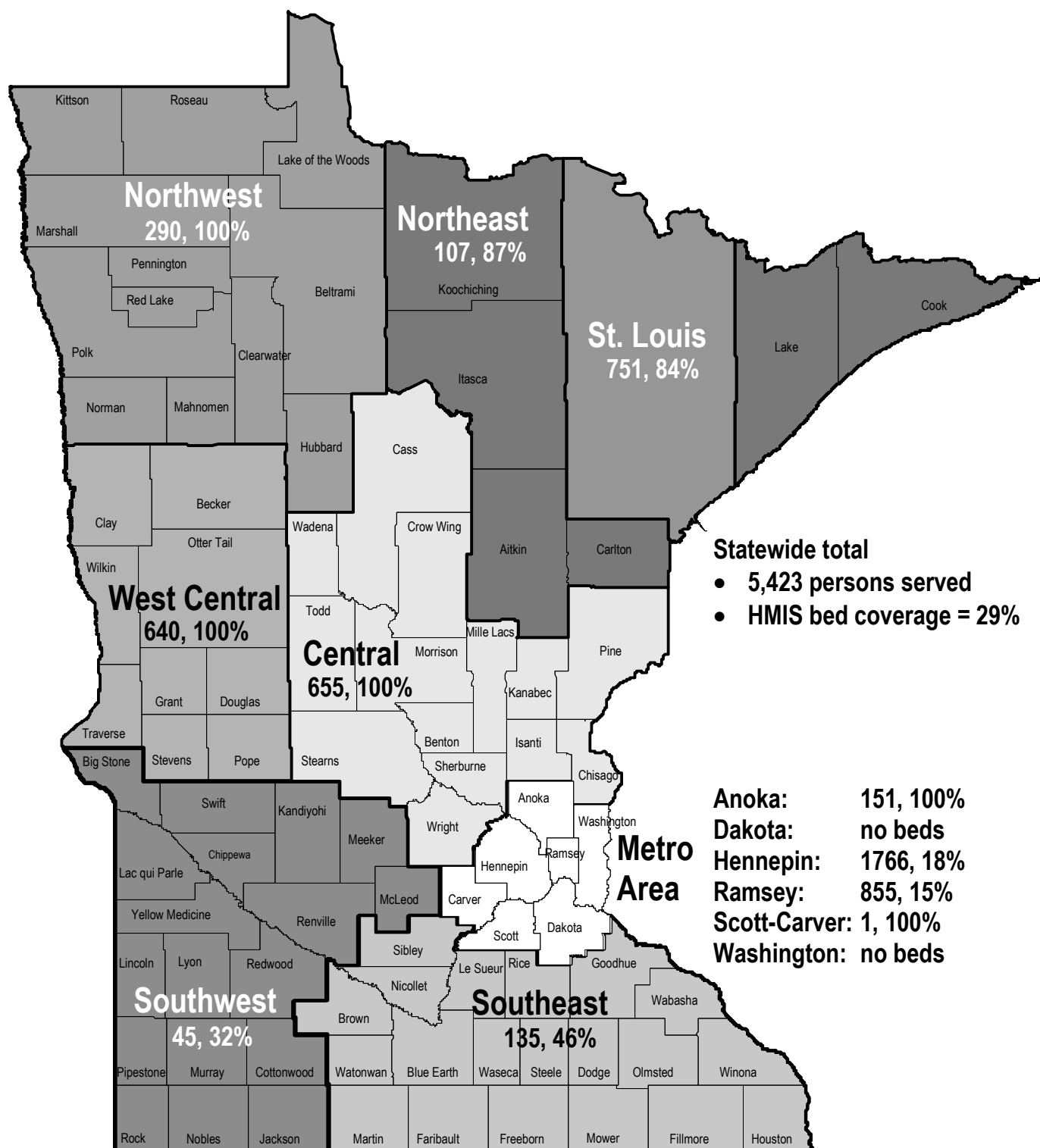
Number of persons (and families) served, and HMIS bed coverage rate (%)



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

Note: For additional details, see companion report: Homeless Service Use in Minnesota: Continuum of Care regional tables, federal fiscal year 2008 (available at www.wilder.org/report.html?id=2191).

Emergency shelters for persons served as individuals, federal fiscal year 2008
 Number of persons served, and HMIS bed coverage rate (%)

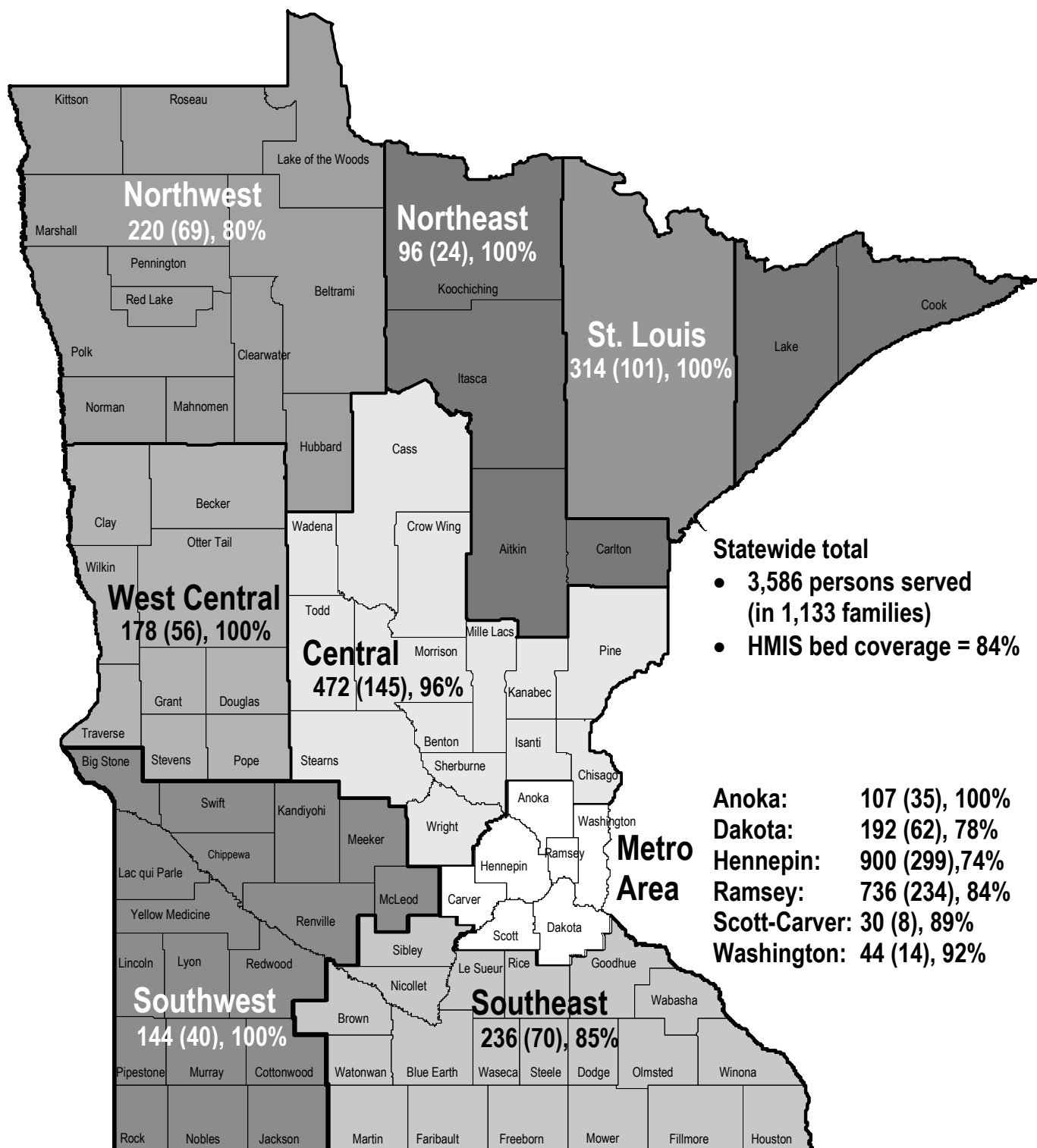


Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

Note: For additional details, see companion report: Homeless Service Use in Minnesota: Continuum of Care regional tables, federal fiscal year 2008 (available at www.wilder.org/report.html?id=2191).

Transitional housing for families with minor children, federal fiscal year 2008

Number of persons (and families) served, and HMIS bed coverage rate (%)

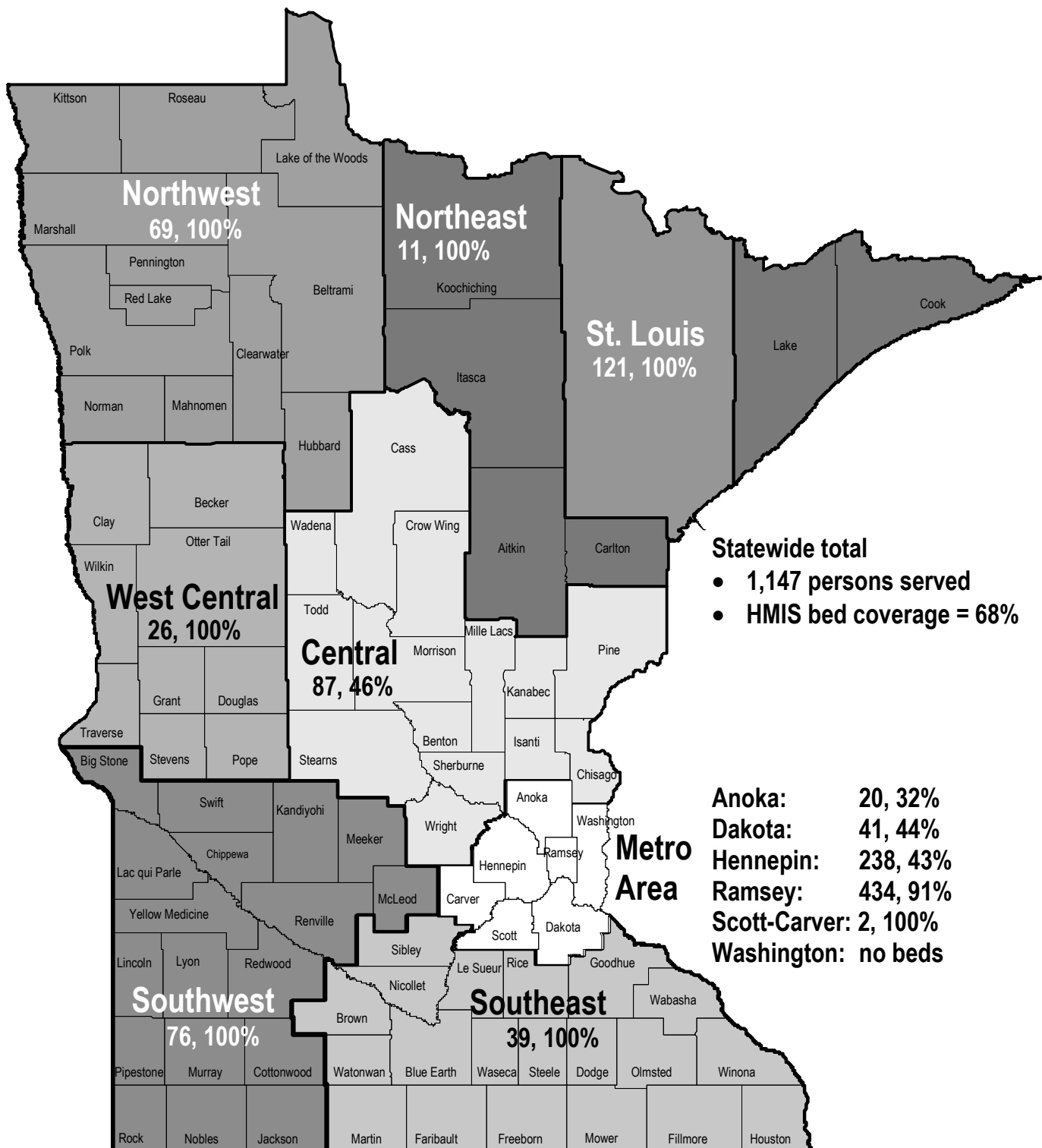


Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

Note: For additional details, see companion report: Homeless Service Use in Minnesota: Continuum of Care regional tables, federal fiscal year 2008 (available at www.wilder.org/report.html?id=2191).

Transitional housing for persons served as individuals, federal fiscal year 2008

Number of persons served, and HMIS bed coverage rate (%)



Source: Organizations participating in Minnesota's HMIS, AHAR tables for federal fiscal year 2008.

Note: For additional details, see companion report: Homeless Service Use in Minnesota: Continuum of Care regional tables, federal fiscal year 2008 (available at www.wilder.org/report.html?id=2191).

Statewide

A1. Statewide

Reporting Period: 10/1/07 - 9/30/08	Emergency Shelter – Families	Emergency Shelter – Individuals	Transitional Housing – Families	Transitional Housing – Individuals
Number of beds in HMIS (% of total beds)	391 (29%)	401 (29%)	2,094 (84%)	534 (68%)
Number of beds not in HMIS	970	960	409	266
Number of people (families) served on an average night	372 (115)	345	1,943 (616)	486
Number of people (families) served on the night of:				
Tuesday, October 31, 2007	393 (122)	316	1,875 (598)	444
Wednesday, January 30, 2008	345 (104)	339	2,020 (632)	492
Wednesday, April 30, 2008	386 (123)	350	1,932 (617)	480
Wednesday, July 30, 2008	398 (117)	377	1,900 (611)	511
Average utilization rate	95%	86%	93%	91%
Turnover rate (the average number of people to use each bed)	8.86	13.52	1.71	2.1
Median number of nights in shelter	26	15	183	119
Unduplicated number of people (families) served	3,465 (1,068)	5,423	3,586 (1,133)	1,147

Source: Minnesota's HMIS (aggregate data submitted to HUD as part of the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) project). "Number of beds" is taken from each continuum's annual Exhibit 1 application to HUD, supplemented by information received from programs during the process of assembling data for submission to HUD for the national AHAR. Bed capacities should be considered approximations, since many programs can flex actual capacity between individuals and families, and to accommodate various family sizes.

Note: Quarterly counts may not precisely sum from Continuum of Care data since statewide numbers were run from live database approximately two months after reporting at the Continuum of Care level.

Quarterly counts, including supplemental shelter data	Emergency Shelter – Families	Emergency Shelter – Individuals
Number of people (families) served on the night of:		
Tuesday, October 31, 2007	771 (229)	1,186
Wednesday, January 30, 2008	637 (194)	1,243
Wednesday, April 30, 2008	732 (241)	1,235
Wednesday, July 30, 2008	851 (267)	1,267

Source: Minnesota's HMIS (aggregate data submitted to HUD as part of the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) project), supplemented by Hennepin County emergency shelter billing system (Salvation Army Harbor Light, including Sally's Place and Safe Bay; People Serving People; Catholic Charities secure waiting and pay-for-stay shelters, and Simpson's women's shelter, as well as emergency vouchers into motels including the Francis Drake Hotel), St. Paul's Union Gospel Mission, and the Catholic Charities Dorothy Day shelter.

A2. Statewide – Demographics

Characteristics	Persons in families in Emergency Shelter	Individuals in Emergency Shelter	Persons in families in Transitional Housing	Individuals in Transitional Housing
Number of Sheltered Homeless Persons	3,465	5,423	3,586	1,147
Gender of Adults				
Female	76%	24%	82%	53%
Male	24%	76%	18%	47%
Unknown	0%	0%	0%	0%
Gender of Children				
Female	49%	55%	48%	61%
Male	51%	45%	52%	39%
Unknown	0%	0%	0%	0%
Ethnicity				
Non-Hispanic/non-Latino	90%	88%	92%	94%
Hispanic/Latino	9%	8%	8%	6%
Unknown	0%	4%	0%	0%
Race				
White, non-Hispanic/non-Latino	23%	45%	34%	49%
White, Hispanic/Latino	4%	2%	4%	3%
Black or African American	44%	29%	38%	27%
Asian	1%	1%	2%	1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	14%	11%	9%	8%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%	0%
Several races	10%	6%	13%	10%
Unknown	3%	6%	1%	1%
Age				
Under 1	7%	0%	8%	1%
1 to 5	25%	0%	25%	3%
6 to 12	20%	1%	20%	2%
13 to 17	9%	5%	9%	7%
18 to 30	21%	22%	22%	38%
31 to 50	17%	51%	15%	36%
51 to 61	1%	15%	1%	12%
62 and older	0%	2%	0%	1%
Unknown	0%	3%	0%	0%

A2. Statewide – Demographics (not extrapolated) (continued)

Characteristics	Persons in families in Emergency Shelter	Individuals in Emergency Shelter	Persons in families in Transitional Housing	Individuals in Transitional Housing
Persons by Household Size				
1 person	0%	97%	0%	89%
2 people	22%	3%	25%	8%
3 people	29%	0%	30%	2%
4 people	21%	0%	21%	1%
5 or more people	28%	0%	25%	0%
Unknown	0%	0%	0%	0%
Number of Sheltered Adults	1,351	5,067	1,339	990
Veteran (adults only)				
Yes	1%	12%	3%	6%
No	95%	75%	93%	91%
Unknown	4%	13%	4%	3%
Disabled (adults only)				
Yes	26%	44%	33%	62%
No	68%	29%	61%	34%
Unknown	6%	26%	6%	4%

A3. Statewide- Prior Living Situation

	Persons in families in Emergency Shelter	Individuals in Emergency Shelter	Persons in families in Transitional Housing	Individuals in Transitional Housing
Number of Sheltered Homeless Persons	3,465	5,423	3,586	1,147
Living Arrangement the Night before Program Entry				
Total from Homeless Situation				
Place not meant for Human Habitation	4%	11%	2%	4%
Emergency Shelter	10%	27%	47%	35%
Transitional Housing	0%	1%	4%	6%
Total from Housing Situation				
Permanent Supportive Housing	0%	0%	0%	0%
Rented Housing Unit	8%	4%	6%	4%
Owned Housing Unit	4%	1%	1%	1%
Staying with Family or Friends	49%	27%	23%	22%
Total from Institutional Settings				
Psychiatric Facility	0%	1%	0%	4%
Substance Abuse Treatment Center or Detox	0%	2%	4%	9%
Hospital (nonpsychiatric)	0%	2%	0%	0%
Jail, prison, or juvenile detention	0%	2%	0%	1%
Total from Other Situations				
Hotel or Motel (no voucher)	15%	6%	3%	2%
Foster care home	0%	1%	0%	2%
Other living situation	4%	4%	6%	3%
Unknown	5%	13%	3%	8%
Stability of Previous Night's Living Arrangements				
Stayed 1 week or less	39%	38%	15%	18%
Stayed more than 1 week, but less than a month	20%	20%	14%	20%
Stayed 1 to 3 months	11%	11%	41%	31%
Stayed more than 3 months, but less than a year	12%	8%	19%	16%
Stayed 1 year or longer	12%	7%	5%	6%
Unknown	6%	16%	5%	9%
Zip Code of Last Permanent Address (90+ days)				
Within Minnesota	61%	47%	86%	75%
Outside of Minnesota	25%	18%	0%	0%
Unknown	13%	35%	14%	25%

A4. Statewide – Length of Stay

	Persons in families in Emergency Shelter	Individuals in Emergency Shelter	Persons in families in Transitional Housing	Individuals in Transitional Housing
Length of Stay	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage
A week or less	27%	39%	3%	3%
1 week to 1 month	29%	35%	8%	10%
1 - 3 months	34%	22%	16%	27%
3 - 6 months	7%	3%	20%	21%
6 - 9 months	1%	0%	18%	15%
9 - 12 months	1%	0%	36%	22%
Unknown	0%	0%	0%	0%