



Homelessness and Near-Homelessness on Six Minnesota American Indian Reservations

Findings from the 2015 Study

M A R C H 2 0 1 7

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About the study

This is the fourth study of homelessness on Minnesota's American Indian reservations. Nearly all interviews were conducted the week of October 22, 2015. Six of Minnesota's American Indian reservations participated in the study, all of which are Ojibwe — Red Lake, White Earth, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, Bois Forte, and Fond du Lac. This reservation study is conducted in conjunction with the statewide study of homelessness that Wilder Research has directed every three years since 1991. Counts reported here were not included in those reported as part of the 2015 Minnesota Homeless Study.

Respondents were identified by tribal housing staff and others who work with people experiencing homelessness and near-homelessness on these reservations. This study is not a comprehensive count of those experiencing homelessness on reservations, as it is difficult to find people not using shelter or services in a time- and resource-limited study that takes place across a large rural geographic area.

Special thanks go to the six tribes' governing bodies who approved their tribes' participation, as well as the tribal staff who organized outreach and recruited volunteer interviewers, and the Minnesota Department of Human Services, which has been instrumental in collaborating with the tribes on planning for the study and interviewing respondents.

Finally, we thank the men, women, and children who shared their experiences with us. In total, there were 1,400 homeless individuals counted during the study, which includes 709 respondents, as well as their significant others and their children.

Key findings

DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

This Reservation Homeless Study report includes *both* people living on Minnesota Indian Reservations who are experiencing **literal homelessness** and those experiencing **near-homelessness**. Briefly:

- **Literal homelessness** includes: staying in a shelter, transitional housing, an informal housing arrangement, or a place not intended for housing, or those who face eviction and have no other place to go, as well as some people who are temporarily staying with others (doubled up) if their situation is precarious.
- **Near-homelessness** includes: those who are temporarily staying with others (doubled up) in relatively more stable conditions.

In previous Wilder studies, “doubled up” and “near-homeless” have been used as synonyms, but this has been changed to better reflect the federal definition of homelessness. More detail on these definitions is available at the end of the report.

In many respects, the challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness and near-homelessness on reservations mirror those of the homeless population statewide. Key themes include:

- **In total, 1,400 people were counted among the homeless and near-homeless as part of the 2015 reservation study.** The 709 survey respondents were accompanied by 691 significant others and children. Of all 1,400 counted, about one-third (34%) were children accompanied by their parents.
- **Fifty-nine percent of respondents were experiencing near-homelessness, and 41 percent were experiencing literal homelessness.**
- **Three-quarters of respondents experiencing near-homelessness have been doubled up for one year or more.** Fifty-nine percent of respondents were experiencing near-homelessness at the time of the study. As in previous years, near-homelessness was often a long-term solution to homelessness: three-quarters (76%) had been doubled up for one year or more. One-quarter (26%) of those experiencing near-homelessness were in substandard housing, which is housing that lacks basic amenities such as plumbing, electricity, and/or heat.
- **Overcrowding remains a challenge.** Of all those experiencing near-homelessness, 69 percent lived in overcrowded or severely overcrowded spaces. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, only 1 percent of households nationwide are overcrowded. The standard measure for overcrowding is more than 1 person per room, and a home is considered *severely* overcrowded if it is occupied by more than 1.5 people per room. For families experiencing near-homelessness, the average number of people per room was 2.0. For all respondents experiencing near homelessness—both families and single people—the average was 1.7 per room. These findings remain relatively unchanged since 2012.

- **Employment is lower among those experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness on reservations than for those experiencing homelessness in the rest of greater Minnesota.** While employment has been increasing among the homeless population statewide, we see the opposite trend on reservations. At the time of the study, 23 percent of respondents were employed, including 13 percent working full time (35 hours or more each week). In the rest of greater Minnesota, 32 percent of people experiencing homelessness were employed, though a similar proportion (14%) worked full-time. Respondents were most likely to report becoming homeless or near-homeless due to eviction or financial reasons, including not being able to afford housing costs and/or lacking adequate employment.
- **Fifty-eight percent of respondents had a history of incarceration.** Compared to respondents experiencing homelessness statewide, respondents experiencing homelessness and near-homelessness on reservations were somewhat more likely to report time spent in a correctional facility. Of all reservation respondents, 58 percent had spent time in a correctional facility at some point in their lives, compared to 47 percent statewide and 53 percent in greater Minnesota. One-quarter of respondents (24%) with a history of incarceration exited in the 12 months prior to the survey.
- **Transportation continues to be a barrier**, both to obtaining employment and to accessing vital services such as medical treatment. Though transportation was also a challenge in other rural areas, those on reservations were less likely to say they got help with transportation: only 11 percent of reservation respondents reported receiving transportation assistance during the month prior to the survey, compared with 32 percent of respondents experiencing homelessness in greater Minnesota.
- **Sixty-one percent of respondents had a serious health condition (a chronic health condition, serious mental illness, or substance use disorder);** 29 percent of respondents reported two or more of these conditions; 7 percent reported all three.
- **Three-quarters of those experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness on reservations (75%) identified at least one adverse childhood experience.** Compared to respondents in the rest of Minnesota, reservation respondents were more likely to have experienced an out-of-home placement as a child, but less likely to have experienced physical or sexual abuse, or to have lived with a parent or guardian with mental health problems.

- **Eighteen percent said they could not afford to pay anything for housing.** Those who could pay said they would be able to pay \$300 per month, on average (median), for housing and utilities. Three-quarters of respondents said they could pay no more than \$500 per month, including one-quarter who could pay no more than \$200. In comparison, during the month of the survey, 21 percent of respondents had no income, and respondents' self-reported median income from all sources was \$400, while 21 percent of respondents had no income whatsoever. Assuming no additional income in the household, \$300 per month would be considered unaffordable by HUD standards, amounting to 75 percent of respondents' average monthly income.
- **Sixty percent of young adults interviewed lacked a high school diploma or GED.** Education was a key challenge for young adults: 60 percent of young adults interviewed (age 19-24) were without a high school diploma or GED, compared to 39 percent in greater Minnesota. Likewise, the employment rate was lower for young adults on reservations than in other areas of greater Minnesota: only 23 percent of young adults (age 19-24) interviewed on reservations were employed, compared to 36 percent in greater Minnesota.

Who are the homeless and near-homeless?

During the 2015 reservation homeless study, 709 men, women, and unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness were interviewed on the six participating reservations. In general, each respondent represents one household, for a total of 709 households. The housing situation of the respondents falls into three categories:

- **Literal homelessness:** 290 respondents, 41%
- **Near-homelessness in substandard housing:** 111 respondents, 16%
- **Near-homelessness in housing not identified as substandard:** 308 respondents, 43%

Note that these numbers are a minimum, not an estimate. It was not possible to interview every person who lacked adequate housing during the survey period, and not all of those eligible chose to participate. Hence, we know that these estimates are lower than the actual number of people or households experiencing homelessness and near-homelessness at the time of the study.

Compared to previous years, a greater proportion of respondents were experiencing literal homelessness (41% in 2015 vs. 11% in 2012). This could be attributed to a variety of reasons, including the fact that the definition of literal homelessness has been expanded to include some doubled up families, and that the shelter and transitional housing infrastructure on reservations has greatly expanded since 2012. This should be considered when comparing the data to previous years.

Of those considered to be literally homeless, 42 percent were temporarily staying with others (under special conditions; see sidebar, page 2); 32 percent were in a shelter, transitional housing unit, or about to be evicted; and 26 percent were staying in a non-regular, non-permanent place (outdoors, in a car, a vacant building, etc.).

On the day they were surveyed, all respondents were accompanied by 691 other people, which included significant others and children (Figure 1). In total, 1,400 people were counted among the homeless and near-homeless as part of the 2015 reservation study.

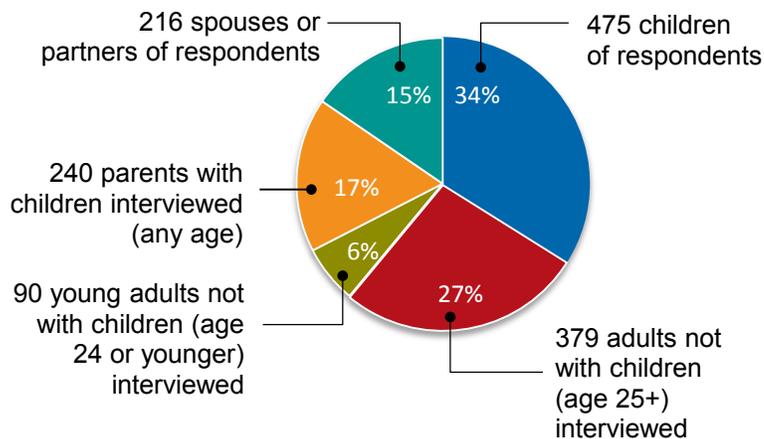
Respondents not accompanied by children

- 58% were male, 42% were female
- 25% were with a spouse or significant other
- 18% were young adults age 18-24
- 5 respondents (1%) were children age 17 or younger not accompanied by a parent (“unaccompanied minor”)
- 35% had children, but were not with their children at the time of the interview

Respondents accompanied by children

- 29% were male, 71% were female
- 40% were with a spouse or significant other
- 66 respondents (28%) were young adults age 18-24; none of the unaccompanied minors surveyed were with children
- On average, parents had 2 children with them
- Over half (52%) of all children with these parents were age 5 or younger

1. Household membership of 1,400 people experiencing homelessness and near-homelessness on Minnesota’s participating reservations, fall 2015



Demographics and tribal affiliation

Of all respondents across the six reservations, 49 percent were male and 51 percent were female. The average age was 36 years, and nearly three-quarters (71%) of those interviewed were between the ages of 22 and 50. Older adults age 55 and older comprised 9 percent of the group.

Most respondents had never been married (80%), while 7 percent were divorced, 5 percent were married, 5 percent were separated, and 3 percent were widowed.

About one-third (35%) of respondents had not completed high school or a GED, while 45 percent had received a high school diploma or GED but no more, and 21 percent had some college or more.

Most respondents (96%) identified themselves as American Indian, 2 percent as white, and another 2 percent as multiracial or of another group. Three percent identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin of any race. Of all respondents, 94 percent said they were enrolled tribal members, 5 percent were descendants but not enrolled, and less than 1 percent were connected to the tribe in another way, such as being in the process of determining their eligibility for tribal enrollment. Eighty-eight percent of those who were affiliated with a tribe were living there at the time of the interview.

Compared to the homeless population in other areas of Minnesota, respondents who participated in the reservation study were significantly younger the first time they experienced homelessness. The average age of respondents' first experience of homelessness was 22; in the statewide study, the average age was 28.

Four percent of respondents from the reservation study were veterans, and had served in the Army (70% of those who served), Marines (19%), or Navy (11%). Of these, 33 percent had served in a combat zone, and 42 percent reported service-related health problems. However, 18 percent of older adults (age 55+) surveyed were veterans (25% statewide).

Of all respondents, 84 percent had their last permanent residence somewhere in Minnesota, but outside of Minneapolis/Saint Paul; 13 percent said their last permanent residence was in Minneapolis or Saint Paul, and 3 percent had their last residence in another state or country. Three out of every five respondents (62%) had been living on a reservation before becoming homeless.

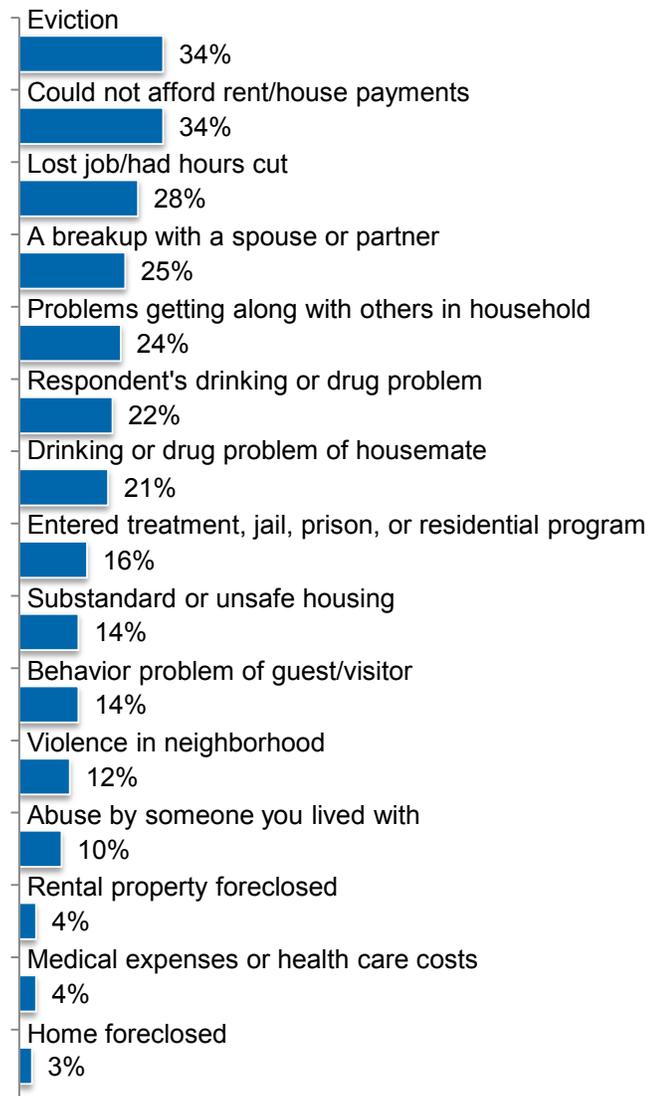
AMERICAN INDIANS DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED BY HOMELESSNESS

In Minnesota, American Indians—along with other people of color, particularly African Americans—are disproportionately affected by homelessness. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, American Indians account for 1 percent of Minnesota adults and youth, respectively. However, combining Wilder survey data from both tribal and non-tribal areas of the state, American Indians make up 12 percent of adults (age 18 or older) experiencing homelessness and 12 percent of youth (age 24 or younger) experiencing homelessness. For more information, please see the methods section.

How did respondents become homeless?

The most common reasons respondents reported becoming homeless or near-homeless due to eviction or financial reasons, including not being able to afford housing costs and/or lacking adequate employment (Figure 2). Respondents also cited relationship problems and substance use problems as common reasons for leaving their last permanent housing.

2. Reasons for leaving last permanent housing



Note: Participants could give more than one response.

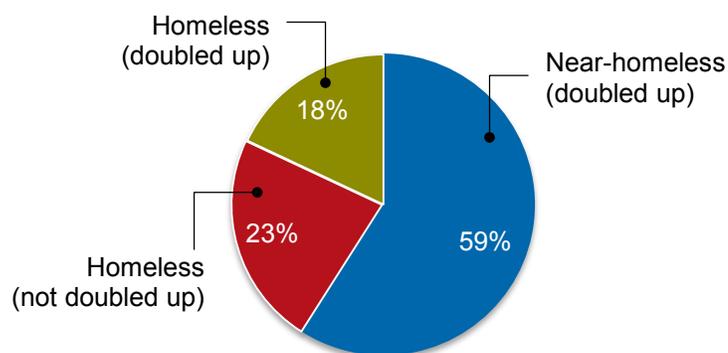
Barriers to regaining stable housing

People experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness face a variety of barriers to regaining housing. Two primary barriers are the cost of housing and the ability to afford the housing that is available. Secondary barriers include considerations that landlords use to screen for the desirability of a new tenant, including a criminal history, poor credit, and poor rental histories (such as no local rental history, court evictions/bad rental history). Forty-three percent of respondents reported at least one of these barriers was currently preventing them from securing housing. Of all respondents, 30 percent reported a financial barrier, 23 percent had a “red flag” for a background check, and 12 percent reported a lack of affordable housing. Four percent of respondents reported all three types of barriers. These three categories—primarily the financial barriers—encompass most current barriers experienced by respondents.

Near-homelessness, overcrowding, and substandard housing

Of the 709 respondents, 59 percent were individuals and families who were near-homeless, which means they were temporarily doubled up with others in relatively stable conditions (i.e., not highly mobile – see full definition at the end of the report for more information) (Figure 3). The revised federal definition of homelessness now recognizes some highly-mobile people who are doubled up as literally homeless, as shown below. For this reason, the resulting near-homeless population may face fewer challenges than the near-homeless populations in our previous reports. To best align with the federal definition, this section of the report describes those who are experiencing near-homelessness.

3. Proportion meeting the federal definition of homeless and those near-homeless, by doubled up status

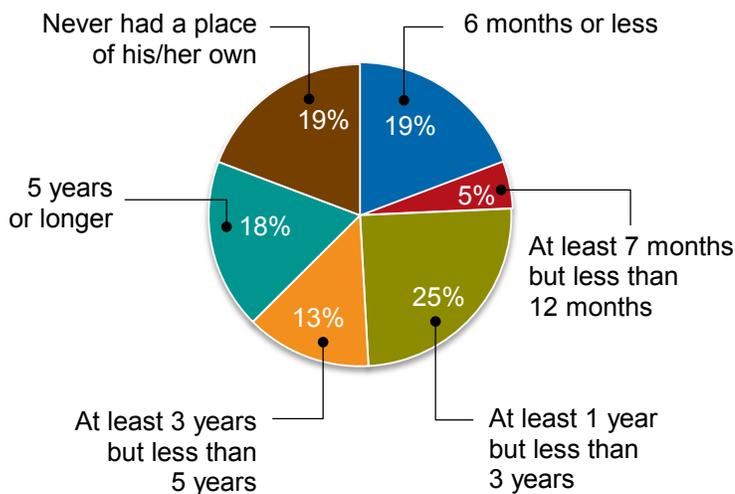


Despite the new definition, people experiencing near-homelessness may still face uncomfortable conditions, and some lack basic amenities. They also rely on multiple strategies to find shelter. During the month prior to the survey, one in five (18%) reservation respondents experiencing near-homelessness had spent at least one night in a location not intended for housing, and 4 percent had spent time in a shelter or in transitional housing.

Doubling up can be a long-term strategy for American Indians or others in rural areas struggling to find housing. Three-quarters (76%) of respondents experiencing near-homelessness had been doubled up for more than one year. These figures are nearly identical to what was found in the 2012 study (Figure 4).

People experiencing near-homelessness are frequently in unstable arrangements, despite the fact that the new definition of “near-homelessness” omits those who are the most precariously housed. Around half (46%) of respondents experiencing near-homelessness moved two or more times during the 60 days before the survey; 4 percent had moved 10 or more times. Three-quarters (74%) were confident they could stay where they were for another month without being asked to leave, while 19 percent were unsure and 8 percent felt they could not stay where they were currently staying for another month.

4. Time spent nearly homeless



Overcrowding

Overcrowding continues to be a serious problem on Minnesota’s participating reservations. The Census Bureau considers a home overcrowded if the number of residents is greater than the number of rooms, and severely over-crowded if there are more than 1.5 residents per room. In total, 69 percent of respondents experiencing near-homelessness were in an overcrowded or severely overcrowded space. Of all respondents experiencing near-homelessness:

- 23% were living in overcrowded spaces (between more than 1 to 1.5 people per room)
- 46% were living in *severely* overcrowded spaces (more than 1.5 people per room)

In 2015, the average number of people per room was 1.7, including one space that housed 20 residents. This is similar to the 2006 and 2009 reports, where the average number of people per room was 1.5 and 1.6, respectively, and the same as the 2012 study. Families lived in more crowded conditions, with an average of 2.0 people per room, which is the same as in 2012.

Substandard housing

Substandard housing conditions are prevalent on reservations. Substandard housing is defined as housing that lacks one or more of the following: a flush toilet, electricity, central heat, or a kitchen sink and hot and cold running water. Of all respondents experiencing near-homelessness, 26 percent were living in substandard housing.

Of all respondents experiencing near-homelessness:

- 26% lacked central heat
- 6% lacked a complete kitchen (refrigerator, oven, and sink)
- 7% lacked complete plumbing (hot and cold running water, a toilet, and a bathtub)
- 1% lacked electricity

The remainder of this report includes information provided by all respondents who participated in the reservation study, not just those who were experiencing near-homelessness.

Employment and education

The remainder of this report includes information provided by all respondents who participated in the reservation study, not just those who were experiencing near-homelessness.

In total, 23 percent of reservation respondents said that they were employed at the time of the study, lower than the 32 percent of people experiencing homelessness in the rest of greater Minnesota. Income and employment problems were among the most frequently cited reasons why respondents lost their last regular or permanent housing:

- 34% lost their last housing because they could not afford rent or house payments
- 28% said that job loss or a cut in hours was a factor in losing their housing

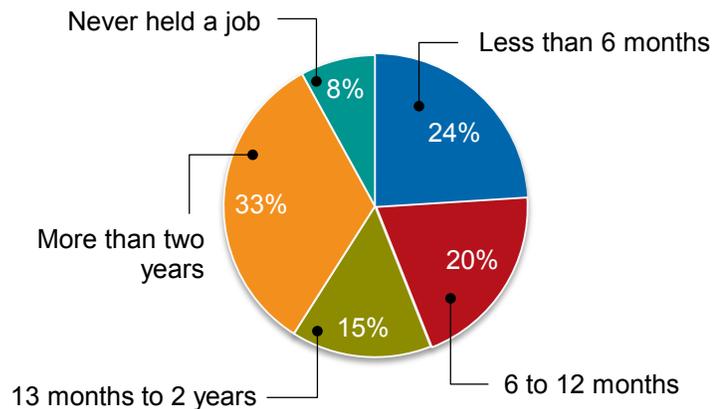
Lack of adequate income was also respondents' primary barrier to obtaining housing at the time of the survey. Three of the four most frequently named barriers were:

- Lack of a job or sufficient income – 31%
- No housing they could afford – 13%
- Criminal background – 12%
- Credit problems – 10%

Unemployment and barriers to employment

Unemployment for people experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness on Minnesota's participating reservations is both prevalent and long-lasting. At the time of the study, 77 percent of respondents were unemployed, and about half of those unemployed had been without work for more than one year (56%) (Figure 5). This was somewhat higher than in greater Minnesota, where 68 percent of adults experiencing homelessness were unemployed, and of those, 47 percent had been unemployed more than one year.

5. Length of time unemployed for unemployed respondents



Employment is often considered one of the key strategies for combatting homelessness; however, it is also important to note that some individuals may not be seeking work for valid reasons, such as age or physical health. For this reason, the two groups of unemployed respondents are separated in this analysis: those looking for work, and those who are not (i.e., out of the labor market).

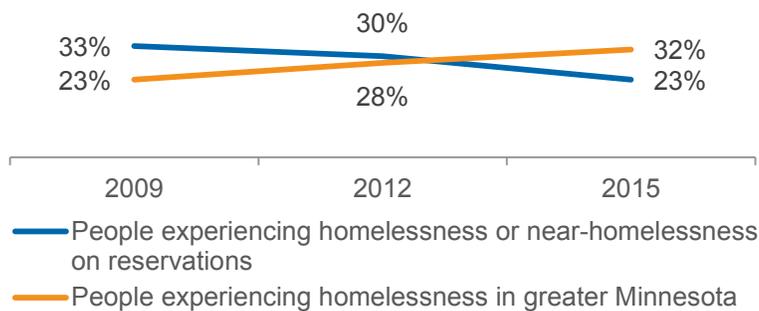
Most of the unemployed (64%) were currently looking for work. For this group, the most frequently cited barrier was transportation (60%), followed distantly by child care (22%). These two reasons were followed by a cluster of responses: employment opportunities (16%), resources needed to work or look for work (13%), housing (12%), and criminal history (12%). Resources needed to work or look for work include IDs, clothing, money, knowing who is hiring, tools, alarm clock, or phone.

Strategies to prevent homelessness among people out of the labor market may differ from those to prevent homelessness in the working population. Thirty-six percent of unemployed respondents were not seeking work. For them, physical health (37%) and transportation (35%) were the most frequently cited barriers. It is possible that these individuals might be able to re-enter the labor market if they gained access to transportation or had access to employment opportunities that accommodate their health issues.

Employment and wages

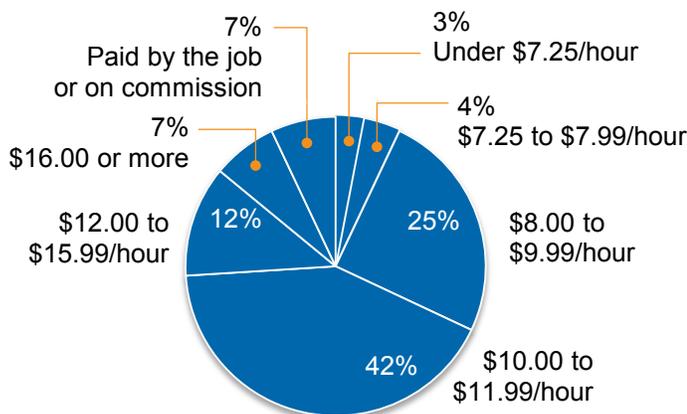
In 2015, 23 percent of respondents experiencing homelessness and near-homelessness on reservations were employed at the time the study (Figure 6). During the past three study years, employment rates among reservation respondents have been falling, while employment rates among those in greater Minnesota have been increasing. Whereas people experiencing homelessness in the rest of greater Minnesota seem to be benefitting from the economic recovery, this does not seem to be the case for those homeless on reservations.

6. Employment rate of reservation and statewide homeless study respondents, 2009-2015



Of reservation respondents who were working, 13 percent were employed full time (35 hours or more each week). Employed respondents worked an average of 33 hours each week, which suggests that many of those who were employed were working just under what we consider to be full time, or possibly working multiple part-time jobs. One-quarter of employed respondents (24%) said that they had been at their primary job for fewer than three months at the time of the survey. One-third (32%) were receiving wages of less than \$10 an hour (Figure 7).

7. Hourly wage for all employed respondents

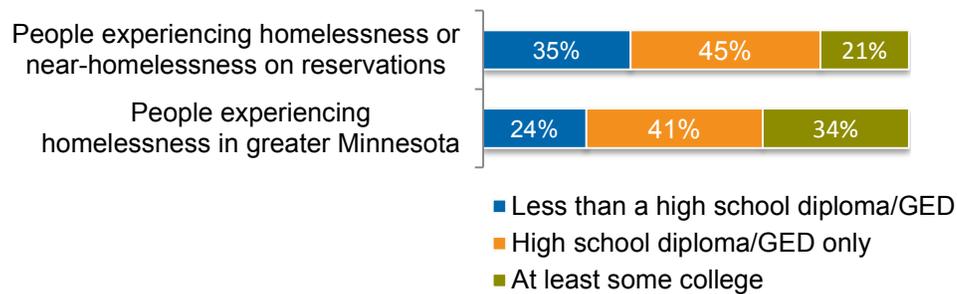


Minnesota’s Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) estimates the cost of living for each county and region of the state based on the number of people living in the household and number of working adults. Most reservation respondents earn less than what would be required to support a family. For example, DEED estimates that a single parent, working full time and supporting two children, would need to earn at least \$27 an hour to support the family, while a single person supporting only themselves would need to earn at least \$12 an hour.¹ This calculation does not necessarily apply to reservations specifically, nor does it consider the availability of housing. It can, however, be used as a general guide for sustainable wages in Minnesota.

Educational attainment

About one-third (35%) of people experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness on reservations had less than a high school diploma or GED; however, only 7 percent of unemployed respondents identified lack of education as a primary barrier to employment. Overall, educational attainment among those experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness on Minnesota’s American Indian reservations was lower than among the statewide homeless population (Figure 8).

8. Educational attainment of respondents



Note: Due to rounding, the total may not equal 100 percent.

As one may expect, respondents who had completed less schooling were less likely to be employed. However, employment rates among those with a high school diploma/GED or less were lower for reservation respondents than for those interviewed in greater Minnesota. Of reservation respondents:

- 15% with less than a high school diploma or GED were employed (26% in greater Minnesota)

¹ Average wages are based on the most conservative per-hour estimates for the Central, Northeast, and Northwest planning regions, which include all six participating reservations. For more information, visit <https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/col/>.

- 22% with only a high school diploma or GED were employed (33% in greater Minnesota)
- 41% with at least some college education were employed (36% in greater Minnesota)

Enrollment in adult education programs

Nine percent of all respondents were enrolled in adult education programs. Of those *without* a high school diploma or GED, 17 percent were enrolled in an adult education or training program; most of those enrolled in a program were in a GED program (78%), while others were in Adult Basic Education classes (17%) or other training (5%).

Education among homeless children

One in five respondents (18%) had school-age children (age 6 or older) living with them at the time of the survey. High mobility and unstable housing situations often correlate with problems for children. For parents with school-age children:

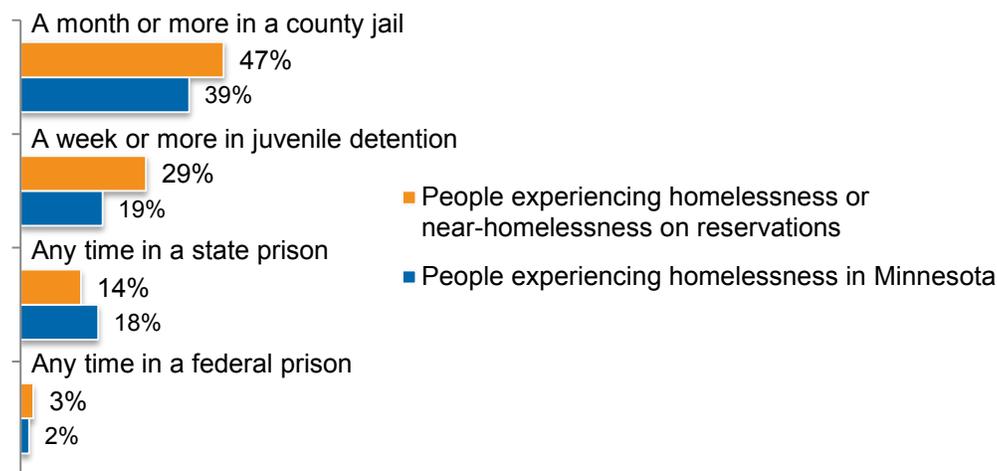
- 28% had at least one child who needed additional support at school through summer school, tutoring, or other programs (46% statewide)
- 19% had at least one child change schools due to the family's housing situation (38% statewide)
- 11% had a child who had been suspended or dismissed from school (15% statewide)
- 10% had a child who had been held back a year or more (14% statewide)

Incarceration and criminal background

A history of incarceration or criminal activity can hinder one's ability to secure both housing and employment. In this report, we define time in a correctional facility as a week or more spent in juvenile detention, a month or more in a county jail or workhouse, or any time in state or federal prison.

Fifty-eight percent of reservation respondents had spent time in a correctional facility, compared to 47 percent of adults experiencing homelessness statewide. In particular, reservation respondents had more frequently spent a month or more in a county jail or juvenile detention than those interviewed for the statewide study (Figure 9).

9. Any time spent in a correctional facility



Barriers to housing and employment

Overall, 31 percent of respondents reported that their criminal history was a barrier to securing housing or employment at the time of the survey. Likewise, there were differences in employment rates among those with and without a criminal history: only 18 percent of those with a criminal history were employed, compared with 30 percent of those who did not have a criminal history.

Exited within the past year

One-quarter of respondents (24%) with a history of incarceration exited a correctional facility in the year prior to the survey. They were more likely to report difficulty getting or keeping housing due to a criminal background (57%) compared with those who had left earlier (33%). Those who had recently left a correctional facility were more likely to

report criminal history as a barrier to employment as well (26% vs. 11% of those who exited earlier); however, there were no substantial differences with respect to employment.

Reservation and statewide respondents with a history of incarceration had similar experiences prior to and following serving their sentence. For reservation respondents who left correctional facilities during the year prior to the study:

- 67% were homeless upon entry to the correctional facility (64% statewide)
- 67% were under the supervision of a probation or parole officer upon exit (64% statewide)
- 63% did not have a stable place to live when they left the facility (67% statewide)
- 19% received help finding a place to live upon exit (23% statewide)

Health and incarceration

Compared to respondents in the rest of Minnesota, reservation respondents with a history of incarceration were less likely to report having a serious or chronic disability or mental health and chemical use problems. However, they were more likely to have been in out- or in-patient drug or alcohol treatment at some point in their lives. Of respondents with a history of incarceration:

- 74% have a serious or chronic disability (87% statewide)
- 71% have been in out- or in-patient drug or alcohol treatment (62% statewide)
- 49% have been diagnosed as mentally ill or chemically dependent within the last two years (71% statewide)
- 16% have a dual mental health and substance use diagnosis (27% statewide)

Youth affected by parental incarceration

The survey asked unaccompanied youth (age 24 and younger) experiencing homelessness and near-homelessness about parental incarceration. Of the 156 youth who were experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness on reservations:

- 61% had parents who had been incarcerated at some point (59% statewide)
- 11% had a parent who was currently incarcerated (17% statewide)

Violence and abuse

Violence and abuse often contribute to unstable housing situations, especially for women and children. This includes both recent violence and violence experienced as a child. Women respondents were more likely to experience violence or abuse than men, therefore some responses are reported separately for men and women.

Domestic violence

Fifteen percent of women and 4 percent of men were directly fleeing domestic abuse situations. Almost one-third of women (32%) and about 1 in 8 men (12%) reported having ever stayed in an abusive situation because they did not have other housing options. In the past year, 18 percent of women and 10 percent of men said that they had been in a physically abusive relationship. These rates are lower than those reported by people experiencing homelessness interviewed statewide.

Community violence

Meanwhile, 14 percent of males and 11 percent of females reported that neighborhood violence was a factor for leaving their last housing. In total, 4 percent of men and 7 percent of women reported being physically or sexually attacked or assaulted while they have been homeless. In the past year, 7 percent of respondents (both men and women) sought health care due to an injury from violence.

Violence while homeless or near-homeless

Several respondents reported entering into potentially dangerous relationships to secure housing or income. Five percent of men and 2 percent of women had engaged in a sexual relationship to secure shelter, while 1 percent of men and 2 percent of women had been encouraged to dance, strip, or pose for nude photographs for money.

Twelve percent of respondents said they had lived in a battered women's shelter at some point during their life; of these respondents, 13 percent had lived in a battered women's shelter as a child, and 92 percent had lived in one as an adult.

Childhood abuse and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)

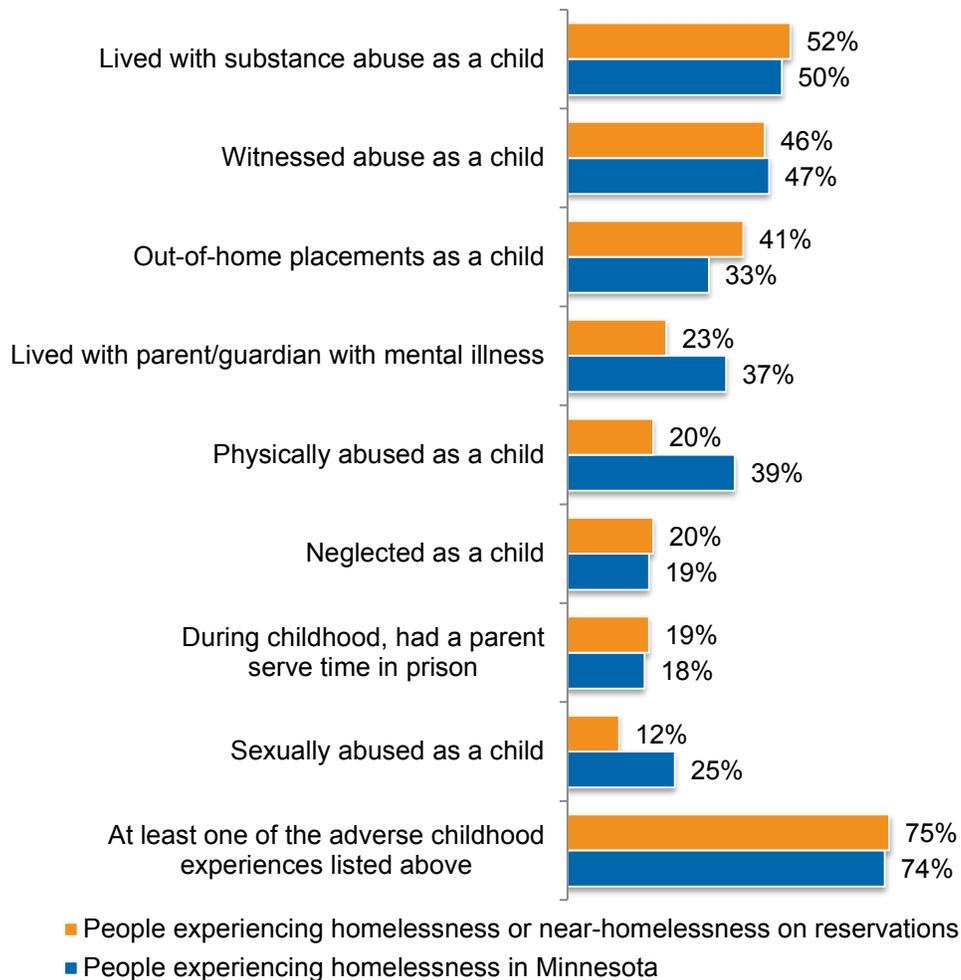
A number of respondents reported a history of abuse during childhood. As a child or youth:

- 19% of males and 21% of females were physically mistreated
- 4% of males and 20% of females were sexually mistreated

- 16% of males and 23% of females were neglected, lacking food, shelter, medical care, and/or supervision for significant periods of time

Three-quarters of reservation respondents (75%) identified at least one of the adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) included in the interview—most frequently living with substance abuse as a child (52%), witnessing abuse as a child (46%), or living in an out-of-home placement as a child (41%) (Figure 10). On several measures, reservation respondents reported similar levels of ACEs to respondents statewide. Compared to those in the rest of Minnesota, reservation respondents were more likely to have experienced an out-of-home placement as a child, but less likely to have experienced physical or sexual abuse, or to have lived with a parent or guardian with mental health problems.

10. Selected Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)



Health and well-being

People experiencing homelessness and near-homelessness face significant risks to health and well-being. Health has a significant effect on employment prospects: physical health is the most commonly cited employment barrier among those not looking for work, and the third most commonly cited among all respondents. Addiction can also contribute to homelessness: 22 percent of respondents said they left their last permanent housing due to a drinking or drug problem they had, 21 percent left due to drinking or drug problems of others in the household, and 12 percent said both contributed to leaving their last permanent housing.

Health challenges

Two of the greatest health challenges for people experiencing homelessness and near-homelessness on Minnesota's participating reservations were the lasting effects of head trauma and the prevalence of commercial tobacco use. Physical and mental disabilities are also prevalent.

Smoking and other substance use

Four out of five respondents (81%) smoked cigarettes at the time of the study, and over half (56%) of those smoked 10 or more cigarettes daily (Figure 11). This is higher than the 67 percent of adult respondents from the statewide study who reported cigarette use. It is also in stark contrast to the 14 percent of all adults in Minnesota who are current smokers, according to the Minnesota Department of Health. On average, current smokers who were experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness on Minnesota's American Indian reservations began smoking at age 15.

Compared to 2012, a larger proportion of reservation respondents reported using marijuana (8 percentage point increase) and heroin (4 percentage point increase) during the past 30 days. The latter is particularly significant in light of the nationwide and local struggle with opioid addiction. This epidemic has significantly impacted American Indian communities in Minnesota. The proportion of respondents reporting heroin use tripled between 2012 and 2015, from 2 percent to 6 percent, and the difference between 2012 and 2015 was statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$). Note that use of other opioids besides heroin, such as fentanyl, OxyContin, etc. could be captured under the prescription drug question in the survey (3 percentage point increase between 2012 and 2015). Compared to adults experiencing homelessness in other areas of the state, reservation respondents more often reported using prescription drugs not prescribed for them (13% vs. 5%) and heroin (6% vs. 1%).

11. Substance use during the past 30 days, 2012 and 2015

Substance	2012	2015
Cigarettes (not including e-cigarettes, vaporizers, or other tobacco products)	85%	81%
Marijuana	23%	31%
Alcohol (beer, wine, hard liquor)	35%	30%
Prescription or pharmaceutical drugs not intended for you	10%	13%
Meth (methamphetamines)	4%	7%
Heroin	2%	6%
Synthetic stimulants (“bath salts”)	2%	1%
Inhalants (aerosol sprays, glue, amyl nitrite, poppers)	0%	1%
Crack or cocaine	1%	0%

Note: The 2015 study included a new question about e-cigarettes and vaporizers; 6 percent of respondents reported using them.

Evidence of brain injury

Brain injuries are a significant concern among the homeless and near-homeless population on Minnesota’s American Indian reservations. One-fifth of respondents (20%) shared experiences that indicate a likely traumatic brain injury (TBI), which is defined as a head injury resulting in long-term negative effects. For most of these respondents, their head injury occurred during youth or young adulthood: 68 percent were injured before age 25, including 38 percent who were injured before age 18. Brain injuries can contribute to physical, mental, and emotional problems that prevent individuals from working or completing daily tasks. Without accurate diagnosis, these are sometimes mistaken for a mental or chemical health disorder and, hence, individuals receive treatment that is not effective.

Physical and mental disabilities

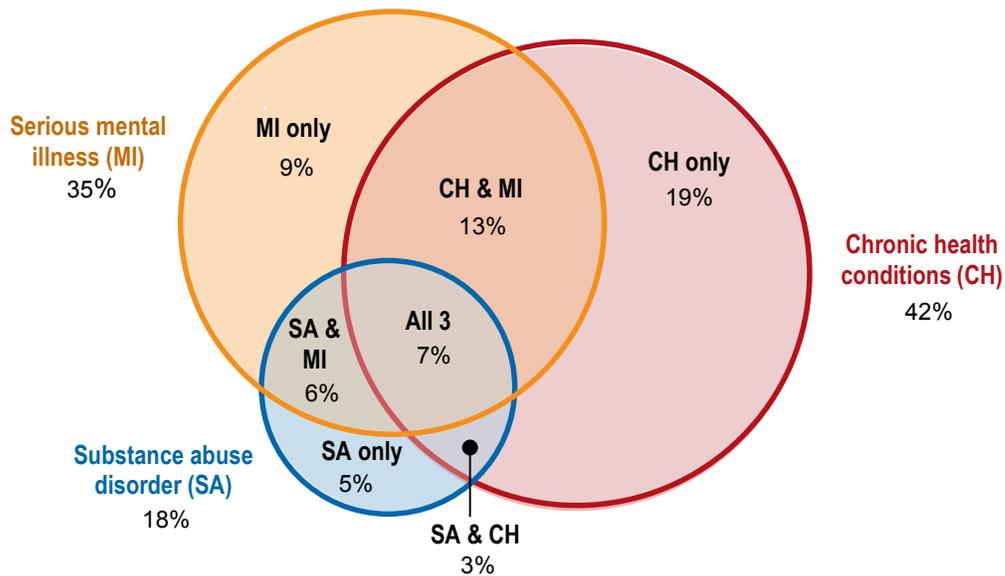
Some respondents reported having disabilities that impacted their ability to work and carry out daily activities.

- 25% had a physical, mental, or other health condition that limits the work they can do
- 18% had a cognitive disability that interferes with their daily activities
- 11% had a physical or mental health condition that makes it difficult to perform daily activities

Health issues among people experiencing homelessness and near-homelessness are characterized by high levels of co-occurrence (Figure 12). Sixty-one percent of respondents

had at least one serious health condition (chronic health condition, serious mental illness, or substance abuse disorder). Twenty-nine percent of respondents reported multiple problems; 7 percent reported all three.

12. Incidence and co-occurrence of health conditions



Chronic health conditions and substance use were the most common challenges among reservation respondents: two-thirds (67%) reported having a serious or chronic disability, and half (55%) had been in out- or in-patient drug or alcohol treatment. Compared to people experiencing literal homelessness statewide, reservation respondents were less likely to report serious or chronic disabilities, as well as mental health and substance abuse diagnoses. However, they were more likely to report ever participating in in-patient or out-patient drug or alcohol treatment.

- 67% have a serious or chronic disability (82% statewide)
- 55% have been in out- or in-patient drug or alcohol treatment (41% statewide)
- 33% have been diagnosed as mentally ill within the last two years (57% statewide)
- 12% have a dual mental health and substance use diagnosis (18% statewide)

Interaction with systems

Health care and insurance

Only 55 percent of respondents said that they had some kind of medical insurance coverage during October 2015, compared to 78 percent of people experiencing homelessness statewide. This could suggest a gap in health care access on the reservations.

Though only 55 percent were covered by insurance, 64 percent of respondents said that they regularly sought care at an Indian Health Service clinic, and 13 percent regularly sought care at a clinic that requires insurance or fees. Eighteen percent had no source of regular medical care. Only one respondent said that their primary resource for health problems was the emergency room.

More than 1 in 10 respondents (14%) said that they faced barriers to getting the health care they needed. Of those who faced a barrier to health care, 40 percent cited transportation as a barrier, and 27 percent said that they lacked money or insurance to cover the expense.

Health care needs

People who are experiencing homelessness often have significant unmet health care needs. On reservations, these needs are generally lower than among the statewide homeless population, which could be attributed to the difference in survey populations and the greater access to free and low-cost medical care for people living on reservations from Indian Health Services. However, the need for care for alcohol and drug problems was comparable for people experiencing homelessness and near-homelessness on reservations and people experiencing homelessness statewide (10% for both populations).

Please note that the following data are self-reported by respondents. Of all respondents experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness on Minnesota's Indian reservations:

- 34% needed care for tooth or gum problems (52% statewide)
- 21% needed care for physical problems (39% statewide)
- 16% needed care for emotional or mental health problems (40% statewide)
- 10% needed care for alcohol or drug problems (10% statewide)

Chronic diseases

Within the 12 months preceding the survey, respondents had most commonly been told by their health care providers that they had high blood pressure (23% of reservation respondents vs. 30% statewide), diabetes (15% vs. 9% statewide), and asthma (12% vs. 20% statewide). For reservation respondents who had high blood pressure or asthma, a substantial proportion had not received treatment in the previous 12 months (21% of those for high blood pressure, 33% for asthma). Care was more common for diabetes, for which only 11 percent of respondents with this diagnosis had not received recent treatment.

Other medical conditions

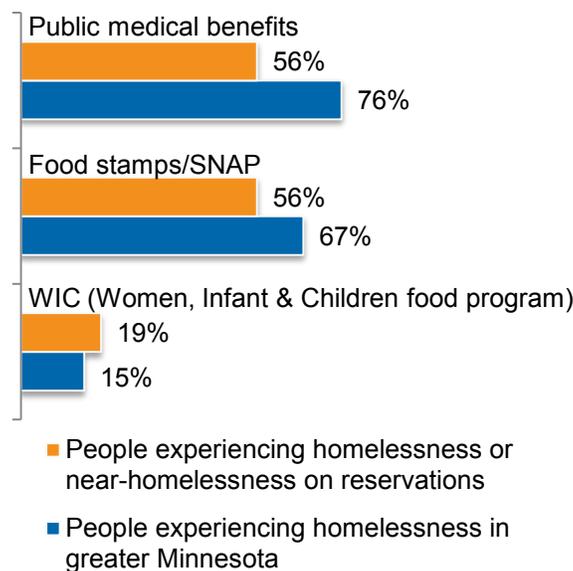
Very few respondents who were experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness reported conditions such as tuberculosis (<1% diagnosed during previous 12 months), frostbite or “trench foot” (2%), lung or other chronic respiratory problems (5%) or chronic heart or circulatory problems (7%). These percentages are less than or equal to those for respondents statewide, which may be due in part to the fact that the group on reservations includes mostly individuals who are experiencing near-homelessness rather than literal homelessness, so conditions related to exposure would be less likely.

With respect to sexually-transmitted infections, small numbers—yet significant percentages—of those with hepatitis or HIV/AIDS were left untreated. Of the 22 respondents (3%) who reported being diagnosed with hepatitis in the previous 12 months, 10 lacked treatment; counts for those with HIV/AIDS are not reported due to small numbers.

Access to services

The most frequently accessed public assistance sources for reservation respondents were public medical benefits (56%) and food stamps (56%), followed by WIC (19%) (Figure 13). Overall, people experiencing homelessness and near-homelessness on Minnesota’s participating American Indian reservations were less likely to utilize public medical benefits and food stamps than those in greater Minnesota. Since rural areas generally have lower access to services than urban areas, this section compares service use by respondents on reservations to respondents in greater Minnesota to minimize differences in access.

13. Most frequently accessed public assistance sources in the past 12 months



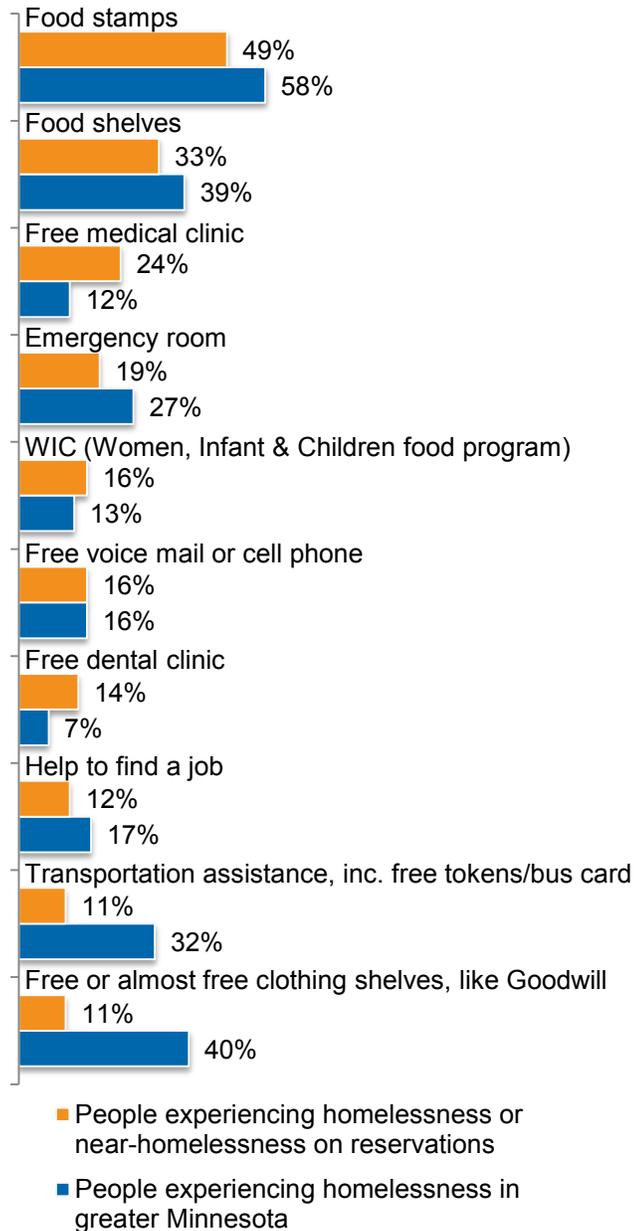
Thirteen percent of respondents said they needed assistance applying or reapplying for benefits, lower than the 24 percent of homeless respondents in greater Minnesota. Most of those needing help wanted to apply for public medical benefits (38%), food stamps (33%), Supplemental Security Income (21%), and financial assistance for housing (19%).

Services

With respect to services, respondents most often utilized food stamps (49%) and food shelves (33%) during the month prior to the study (Figure 14). In most cases, participants in the reservation study accessed fewer services than respondents in the rest of greater Minnesota, which could be due to differences in both need and access. Of note, people experiencing homelessness in non-tribal areas of greater Minnesota were nearly three

times as likely to report receiving transportation assistance compared to respondents on reservations (11% on reservations vs. 32% in greater Minnesota). Respondents named lack of transportation a key barrier to both employment and health care.

14. Services most often accessed in October 2015



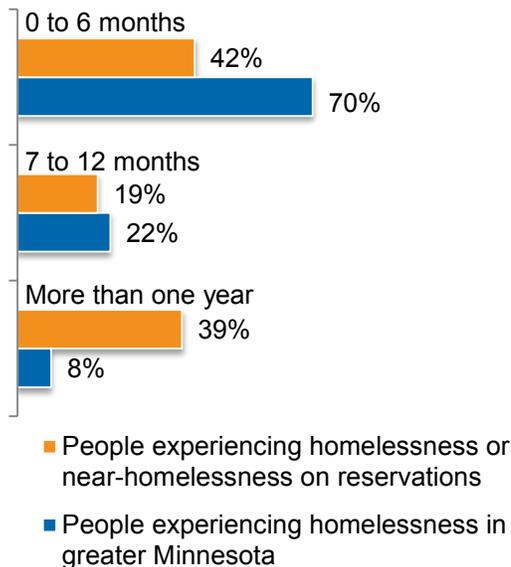
Housing affordability and access

Respondents were asked to share information about their housing needs, income, and ability to pay for rent. At the time of the study, 79 percent of respondents were looking for housing.

Access to housing support

People experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness on reservations were less likely to be on a housing waiting list, but those on the list had been waiting much longer than those in greater Minnesota. For the reservation study, 35 percent of respondents were on a waiting list for housing support, compared to 41 percent of those in greater Minnesota. Reservation respondents who were on a waiting list had been on the list much longer than most respondents in greater Minnesota: 39 percent of reservation respondents had been on the list more than one year, compared to only 8 percent of respondents in greater Minnesota (Figure 15). On average, reservation respondents had been waiting 21 months, compared to 7 months for those in greater Minnesota.

15. Time on housing support waiting list



Of those on reservations who were not on a waiting list, 10 percent were unable to sign up because the list was full or closed. By comparison, 18 percent of respondents in greater Minnesota who were not on a waiting list had been unable to get on because it was closed.

During the two years preceding the survey, 5 percent of respondents had received a housing voucher but could not find a place to accept it, which is similar to the 7 percent of respondents in greater Minnesota facing the same situation.

Housing affordability and needs

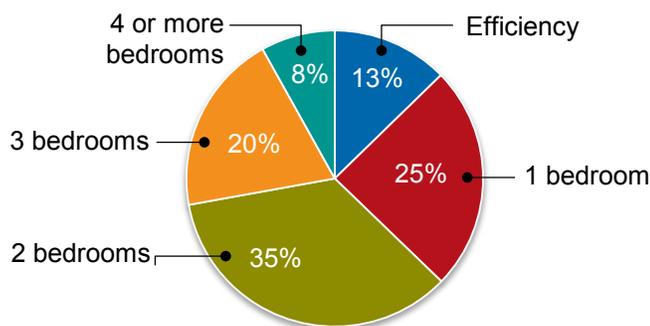
Respondents were asked how much they could afford to pay per month for rent and utilities. The median amount respondents said they could pay was \$300 per month for both rent and utilities. The median value means that, of all respondents who could pay anything for rent and utilities, half said they could pay more, and half could pay less. This amount is well below the market rate for housing anywhere in Minnesota, even for a studio apartment. At the time of the study, fair market rent for a one-bedroom apartment—which is determined annually by the federal government—was \$558 per month in greater Minnesota. However, this does not speak to the availability of housing at this price level, nor to the housing needs of the respondents.

Nearly one-fifth of respondents (18%) said they could not afford to pay anything for rent or utilities at the time of the study. Of those who could afford to pay, three-quarters of respondents said they could pay no more than \$500, including one-quarter who could pay no more than \$200.

According to HUD, households should spend no more than 30 percent of income on housing. For the month preceding the survey, respondents' median income from all sources was \$400, while 21 percent of respondents had no income. Nevertheless, respondents said they would be able to pay \$300 a month on average for housing. Assuming no additional income in the household, this rate would be considered unaffordable by HUD standards, amounting to 75 percent of respondents' average monthly income. Following these guidelines, the average respondent should spend no more than \$120 a month in rent and utilities.

Thirteen percent of respondents said their housing needs could be met by an efficiency (one-room) apartment (Figure 16). Meanwhile, more than one-quarter (28%) said they needed three or more bedrooms. Of all respondents, 15 percent said they had ever had trouble finding or keeping housing due to the size of their family. Only 5 percent reported family size as one of their primary barriers to securing housing at the time of the survey.

16. Number of bedrooms needed



Youth on their own

Young adults and unaccompanied minors (referred to collectively here as “youth”) are the least visible members of the homeless population. During the 2015 reservation study, 5 unaccompanied minors (age 17 and under) and 151 young adults (80 age 18-21 and 71 age 22-24) were interviewed. Together, this group comprises 22 percent of respondents. Of these youth, 42 percent were parents with children with them on the night of the study. Of those with children, 70 percent had one child with them, 24 percent had two children with them, and 7 percent (4 respondents) had three or four children with them on the night of the study. Of the 91 children with youth or minor parents, 86 percent were less than five years old at the time of the study.

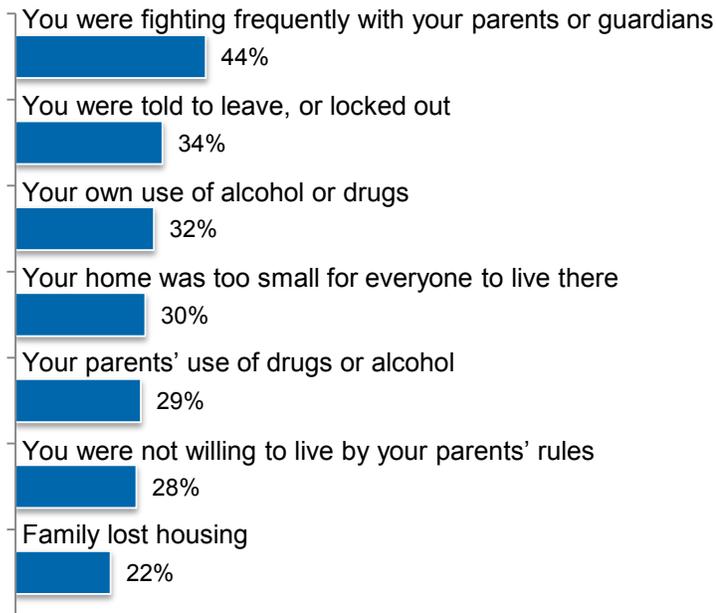
As in past years, youth more frequently reported traumatic events during childhood. The most notable of these: 37 percent of youth respondents had a parent in prison as a child, compared to 13 percent of those age 25 or older. Youth were also slightly more likely than older respondents to report that their parents/guardians had alcohol or drug use problems (56% of youth vs. 51% of adults 25+) or mental health issues (27% vs. 22%). However, they were less likely to report being physically (16% vs. 21%) or sexually mistreated as a child (7% vs. 13%). Adult and youth respondents reported similar levels of neglect (22% vs. 19%) and witnessing abuse as a child (49% vs. 45%).

Reasons for leaving home

During their interview, youth were asked about a series of factors that often contribute to homelessness, and whether each factor was a “main cause” or “part of the cause” for leaving home. Here, we describe the total percentage of youth who named each as either a “main cause” or “part of the cause.”

Most youth experiencing homelessness and near-homelessness on these reservations left home due to problems with others living there (Figure 17). They most often reported general problems such as fighting with their parents (44%). Over one-quarter (29%) said they left home because of their parents’ use of alcohol or drugs, and 32 percent because of their own use of alcohol or drugs. Other less common reasons included neglect (16%), leaving a group home or other placement with nowhere to go (11%), feeling unsafe due to violence at home (10%), physical or sexual abuse at home (8%), and lack of tolerance for sexual orientation or gender identity (3%).

17. Most frequently cited reasons for leaving home, respondents age 24 or younger



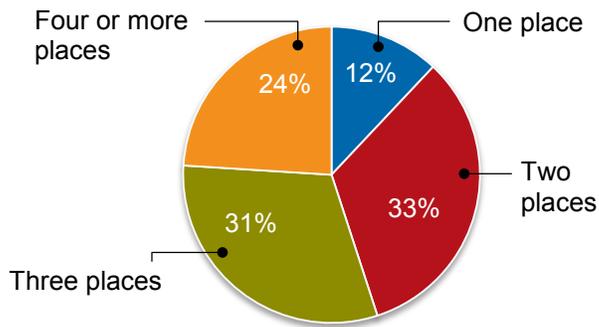
Note: Participants could give more than one response.

Living situation for youth experiencing near-homelessness

Youth and adults on participating reservations were experiencing near-homelessness at approximately the same rate. In total, 62 percent of youth (age 24 and younger) were nearly homeless, compared to 58 percent of adults (age 25+). Of these youth, 79 percent were looking for housing, and all but one (99%) would prefer their own housing if they could find or afford it. Seventy-nine percent of youth experiencing near-homelessness had been without a regular or permanent place to live for a year or more, including 60 percent who had never had a place of their own.

Of all youth surveyed, 38 percent were experiencing literal homelessness and 62 percent were near-homeless (including 46% in standard housing and 15% in substandard housing). Half of those who are considered “literally homeless” (52%) could be described as “doubled up” in precarious conditions. During the 12 months prior to the survey, half of youth experiencing near-homelessness (55%) had lived in three or more places (Figure 18).

18. Number of residences of youth experiencing near-homelessness during 12 months prior to survey



Education and employment

Though low levels of educational attainment are a problem among all those experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness on reservations, it is particularly a challenge among the young adult population.

- 60% of young adults (age 19-24) were without a high school diploma or GED (39% in greater Minnesota)
- 22% had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP, meaning they received special education services) while in school (49% in greater Minnesota)

Compared to young adults experiencing homelessness in greater Minnesota, reservation respondents were less likely to be employed, particularly if they lacked a high school diploma or GED.

- 23% of young adults (age 19-24) were employed (36% in greater Minnesota)
- 17% of young adults (age 19-24) without a high school diploma/GED were employed (32% in greater Minnesota)

Barriers to employment

For those who reported a barrier to employment, the two most commonly reported were transportation (62%) and child care (29%).

Some of the youth who participated in the reservation study were addressing this challenge by attempting to further their education. At the time of the study, 32 percent were enrolled in school or an educational program. For those who were not currently

enrolled in an education program, 34 percent were dealing with other issues or problems, and 20 percent had dropped out.

Access to services

In this group, interactions with formal services and supports remain low. Only 38 percent have a state-issued driver's license or photo ID, compared to 44 percent of adults (age 25+). During the past year, most youth relied on the following sources of information for the services they needed: relatives (63%), friends (62%), parents (55%), or significant others (44%). Relatively few received help from a professional to access services:

- 13% had been helped by a social worker
- 10% had been helped by shelter staff
- 7% had been helped by a youth worker

With respect to public assistance, 52 percent of youth experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness had received some type of public medical assistance in the past year, and 57 percent had utilized food stamps. Though 42 percent of those surveyed were parents accompanied by children, only 3 percent had accessed child care assistance.

Challenges to health and well-being

Compared to adults, youth on their own were equally likely to use food stamps (48% youth vs. 50% adults) most health-related services such as free medical (25%), dental (15%), and mental health clinics (6%) during the month prior to the study.

Compared to adults, they were less likely to utilize food shelves, free or almost free clothing shelves (5%), hot meal programs (3%), and free voicemail or cell phone services (10%), and more likely to have received WIC and help finding a job (21%).

Youth experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness often face multiple complex challenges to their health and well-being. Many had difficult childhoods: 19 percent had been physically or sexually abused as a child, and 22 percent had been neglected by their parents. Out-of-home placements were also common among this group, wherein 67 percent had lived in a foster home, a treatment facility, or juvenile detention at some point. Of all youth, 28 percent had been diagnosed with or treated for a mental illness.

How the data are used

This report includes selected data from Wilder’s survey of homelessness and near-homelessness on participating Minnesota American Indian reservations. Each participating tribe receives complete data tables of their reservation-specific data, and of the aggregate data from all participating tribes. To honor and respect tribal sovereignty, each tribe is the sole owner of its own data.

Tribes use the data for policy and planning purposes. As part of a statewide initiative, the data have been used to create long-term plans for ending homelessness, as well to obtain grants and other funding. The Minnesota Tribal Collaborative to Prevent and End Homelessness is one of the primary groups contributing to this work. The Collaborative is using the data to affect change. Since it was formed in 2014, the group has worked together to combat many of the challenges identified in the study. The Collaborative consists of members from five of the participating tribes—Bois Forte, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, Red Lake, and White Earth—who meet regularly to share ideas and learn about new resources to address homelessness. Before the group was established, these tribes (and the other six tribes in Minnesota) frequently competed against one another for funding.

The Collaborative has succeeded in making several changes to address homelessness on their reservations. According to the Collaborative’s representatives, its accomplishments include:

- Conducting the reservation homeless study—the first study of its kind in the country—which other tribal communities have sought to replicate
- All Collaborative tribes are covered by plans to end homelessness
- Advocating for and securing changes to the statute language for two statewide grants—the Long-Term Support Services Dollars Grant and the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistant Program Grant—to allow tribes to act as eligible applicants
- Applying for and being awarded more than \$1 million in Long-Term Homeless Supportive Services funding to serve 184 households across the five reservations
- Collaborative members participate in several statewide workgroups and have become more engaged in their Continuum of Care regional efforts, fostering deeper relationships with providers in their communities

Definition of homelessness

The definition of homelessness used for this study is broader than the one used by the federal government (set by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)) and Wilder’s Study of Homelessness in Minnesota.

Homelessness and near-homelessness

For the reservation study, we refer to people who meet the federal definition of homelessness as experiencing literal homelessness, which includes people who live in any of the following places: a shelter, transitional housing, an informal housing arrangement, or a place not intended for housing, or those who face eviction and have no other place to live.

Two groups of “doubled-up” people (those temporarily staying with others) are also considered literally homeless under the federal definition: any individual who cannot remain where they are staying more than the next 14 days, and families who are highly mobile (have moved more than twice in the past 60 days) and include a parent with a disability or chronic health condition.

The reservation study also includes people experiencing near-homelessness: people who are doubled up in less precarious situations (i.e., those who are doubled up, but do not fit the federal definition of homelessness).

This is the first time people who are doubled up in precarious situations have been identified as “literally homeless” in a Wilder Research report; in previous years, they would have been considered “near-homeless.” This change was made to better fit the federal definition of homelessness that was updated in 2009.

Why include those experiencing near-homelessness?

This study has included doubled-up populations since it began in 2006. Doubling up is a common response to homelessness, especially in rural areas and American Indian communities, who often welcome struggling friends and family into their homes, even if the space is overcrowded.

Though doubling up is a common response to homelessness in the American Indian community, it is not a preference. Consistent with past years, this year's data show that 97 percent of respondents experiencing near-homelessness on these reservations would prefer their own housing, if only they could find and afford it.

Though we may expect those experiencing near-homelessness to be doing better than those literally homeless, we often find that the challenges and barriers they face are similar. Therefore, we feel it is appropriate to include individuals experiencing near-homelessness throughout the report, instead of reporting data separately for those homeless and near-homeless.

Methods

The reservation study was first conducted in the fall of 2006 by a group of tribal representatives, Wilder Research, and the Corporation for Supportive Housing’s Minnesota Program through the American Indian Supportive Housing Initiative. The Minnesota Department of Human Services has been instrumental in coordinating interviews for the tribes.

Each tribe organized its own plan for outreach and interviewing. Most outreach was conducted through advertisements in tribal newspapers, on tribal radio stations, and through fliers in other locations; some interviews were conducted in conjunction with existing events. Volunteers interviewed respondents at a number of different sites, including shelters and transitional housing units, community centers, schools, and some known outdoor camps and shelters.

Interviews were conducted the week of October 22, 2015. Respondents were paid an honorarium for sharing their time and experiences. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and respondents could skip questions if they preferred not to answer. This is one of the reasons that some sensitive items—especially those related to health—may be underreported. Some people experiencing homelessness on these reservations may have participated in the statewide study instead of the reservation study, based on the services they were receiving at the time of the survey. As such, this survey should be considered a minimum count of homelessness on reservations.

Percentages reported here are generally based on valid responses—that is, the denominators include everyone who answered the question, and omits those who skipped the question, refused to answer it, or said they didn’t know the answer.

Making comparisons to the statewide study of homelessness

In some places, this report compares the results of the reservation study to Wilder Research’s statewide study of homelessness in Minnesota. Note that the populations described in each report differ. Only those who meet the federal definition of homelessness are surveyed in the statewide study, whereas the reservation study also includes people experiencing near-homelessness.

To ensure the participating tribes maintain their data privacy (respect for tribal sovereignty), reservation data is NOT included in statewide datasets Wilder publishes and uses for the statewide reports. Data and reporting for the two studies are entirely separate, unless otherwise noted for special analyses. Throughout the report, comparisons to “statewide” or “greater Minnesota” data reflect homelessness in all areas of Minnesota

excluding the participating reservations. In our study, “greater Minnesota” refers to the 80 counties outside the seven-county metro area.

Weighting

For the statewide study, adult survey data are weighted (or mathematically adjusted) to better reflect the homeless population in shelter on the night of the study. Though we are not able to interview everyone experiencing homelessness, Wilder does estimate the total homeless population through its shelter census, which counts the number of men, women, and children staying in shelter statewide on the night of the study. This allows Wilder to have a reasonable population estimate for the total number of people experiencing homelessness on that night on non-tribal lands, and adjust our interview numbers to reflect the total population. For the statewide study, data for adults staying in shelter are weighted by site, gender, region, and shelter type. Survey data for adults staying in unsheltered locations and minors are not adjusted. More information is available on our website.

For the reservation study, the data are *not* weighted, because we do not have a good method for estimating the total size of the homeless population on participating reservations. Some participating reservations have a substantial shelter infrastructure, while others have no shelters. Because we lack a reliable population estimate, we cannot weight the data the way we do for the statewide study. We assume that the respondents interviewed are fairly representative of the overall population, but the number of people experiencing homelessness and near-homelessness (and counts of people reported throughout the study) are likely minimums.

American Indians disproportionately affected by homelessness

In the past, Wilder Research has used findings from its Minnesota Homeless Study—which summarizes homelessness in non-reservation areas of the state—to show that American Indians are disproportionately affected by homelessness. This has been true every year of the study, including in 2015, when American Indians accounted for 8 percent of homeless adults and 9 percent of homeless youth surveyed in non-reservation areas (Figure 19). When these statewide survey data are combined with the data from reservations, we find that American Indians accounted for at least 12 percent of homeless adults and at least 12 percent of homeless youth in Minnesota. By contrast, American Indians make up just 1 percent of the total population in the state.

19. American Indian homelessness compared to overall Minnesota population

American Indians as a percent of...	Adults (age 18 or older)	Youth (age 24 or younger)
Homeless adults/youth from the statewide study	8%	9%
Homeless adults/youth from the statewide and reservation studies combined	12%	12%
All Minnesota adults/youth ^a	1%	1%

Note: Respondents were asked to select one racial category, and were asked separately about Hispanic ethnicity. Those who report Hispanic ethnicity are not included in the racial categories. Legislation governing services for homeless youth explicitly includes youth from birth through age 24; therefore, our definition of “youth” includes young people age 18 through 24. However, those age 18 through 24 are legally adults and eligible for adult services. For this reason, the 18 through 24 age group is included in both the youth and adult findings.

^a Source: 2014 U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey. Adults include those age 18 or older; youth includes those age 10-24.

Though these percentages (12% of adults, 12% of youth) are higher than what we found in the statewide study, we believe this is a conservative estimate for a few reasons. To remain consistent with the statewide study, this calculation only includes respondents experiencing literal homelessness; those experiencing near-homelessness are not included. Likewise, we use a combined race and ethnicity variable for this calculation, which means anyone identifying as Hispanic or Latino is excluded from the American Indian category, and instead identified as Hispanic or Latino. This slightly lowers the percentage of people identifying as American Indian on reservations, as some people identify as both. On reservations, this definition decreases the proportion identifying as American Indian from 96 percent to 93 percent of adults and 92 percent to 88 percent of youth.

To calculate the final proportions, we combined weighted statewide data with the reservation data (which are unweighted). The weighting of the statewide data actually decreases the proportion of American Indians surveyed, as American Indians are disproportionately interviewed in non-shelter locations, which are not weighted in our study, as we do not know the true population of those outside of shelter.

Furthermore, we believe the reservation data to be a minimum estimate, because not all reservation residents who are experiencing homelessness could be found or would agree to be interviewed for the study. In combination, these factors ensure that this is a conservative estimate of American Indian homelessness in Minnesota.

Study funders:

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