

Hennepin County: Characteristics and Trends

Of Those Experiencing Homelessness in Minnesota

Every three years, Wilder Research conducts a statewide study to better understand the prevalence, causes, circumstances, and effects of homelessness. The study includes face-to-face interviews with people throughout the state who meet the federal definition of homelessness, as well as a count of people who were homeless on a single night in late October. The most recent study was conducted on October 25, 2018.

This fact sheet highlights findings from interviews with people experiencing homelessness in Hennepin County. Interviews were conducted in emergency shelters, domestic violence shelters, transitional housing, and non-shelter locations such as encampments, hot-meal programs, and other drop-in service sites.

Additional fact sheets and reports about Minnesotans experiencing homelessness, including Hennepin County data tables with counts and characteristics by age group, gender, and shelter type can be found at www.mnhomeless.org.

Homelessness in Hennepin County is up from the 2015 study

- On October 25, 2018, there were 4,072 people experiencing homelessness in Hennepin County, up 11% from 3,665 counted in 2015. This increase follows a 15% decrease in the numbers in Hennepin County between 2012 and 2015.
- People experiencing homelessness in Hennepin County account for 40% of the state total (10,233).
- Children represent 33% of Hennepin County's overall homeless population. Children and youth age 24 or younger make up more than four in ten homeless (43%) in Hennepin County.
- 83% of homeless adults age 18 or older in Hennepin County have been in Minnesota for longer than 2 years.

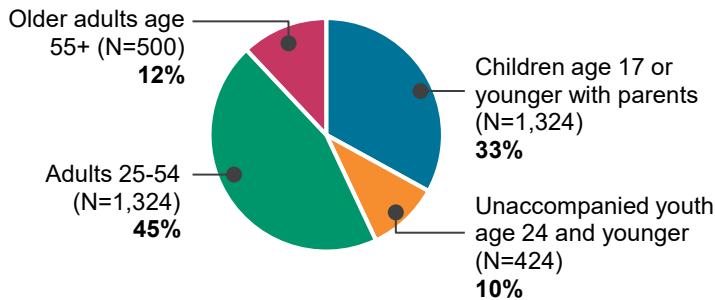
Changes in numbers counted in Hennepin County vary from year to year depending on age group

- Overall, the number of children in youth in Hennepin County remained similar to those counted in 2015 (1,748 in 2018 versus 1,772 in 2015). The number of children with parents decreasing slightly (-3%) and the number of unaccompanied youth increased (3%).
- There was a marked increase in the number of adults age 25-54 (up 22%) and older adults (up 24%) experiencing homelessness in Hennepin County from 2015 to 2018.

HENNEPIN COUNTY HOMELESS NUMBERS BY STUDY YEAR, AGE GROUP, AND PERCENT CHANGE BETWEEN 2015 AND 2018

	2015 study	2018 study	% change (2015-2018)
Children (17 and younger) with parents	1,360	1,324	-3%
Youth on their own (24 and younger)	412	424	+3%
Adults (25-54)	1,490	1,824	+22%
Older adults (55 and older)	403	500	+24%
Total	3,665	4,072	+11%

In Hennepin County, nearly half of people experiencing homelessness are children and youth



The number of children decreased while the number of older adults has increased from 2012 to 2018; other age groups are now back to levels similar to peak numbers seen in 2012

- The number of homeless children with their parents in Hennepin County decreased from 1,623 in 2012 to 1,324 in 2018. Overall, the number of homeless parents also decreased over that time period; although numbers were up for those not in shelter.
- The number of homeless older adults (age 55+) found in non-shelter locations has steadily increased since 2012 (46 in 2012, 50 in 2015, to 98 in 2018). Likewise, the number of older adults found in shelter locations increased steadily (254 in 2012, 348 in 2015, to 389 in 2018).

	2012 study	2015 study	2018 study
Parents with children on day of the survey			
Number of parents in shelter	863	677	607
Number of parents not in shelter	17	10	44
Number of children	1,623	1,360	1,324
Individuals without children			
Youth (age 21 and younger) in shelter	154	160	153
Youth (age 21 and younger) not in shelter	108	41	71
Adults (age 22-54) in shelter	1,052	831	871
Adults (age 22-54) in not shelter	199	188	515
Older adults (55+) in shelter	254	348	389
Older adults (55+) in not shelter	46	50	98
Total	1,813	1,567^a	2,097^a

^a Young adults age 22-24 are included in the “adults” category so that we can compare to data collected in previous studies.

Comparing numbers: Hennepin County and Ramsey County

It is helpful to look at homelessness as a regional issue, since the homeless population is highly mobile. Wilder's statewide data tables illustrate the difference between homeless numbers in the Twin Cities metro area versus greater Minnesota; however, this fact sheet looks more specifically at Hennepin compared to Ramsey County. Between 2015 and 2018, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Hennepin and Ramsey counties are up (11% in Hennepin; 8% in Ramsey). Some fluctuations in number of people between counties may be due to movement of homeless people as well as the ability of outreach workers to locate people who are staying outside of the shelter system. However, during the 2018 study, there was an increased visibility of unsheltered homelessness (and thus our ability to interview unsheltered people) due to a large encampment in Minneapolis (Hiawatha Avenue) and smaller encampments in St. Paul (Cathedral Hill).

2018 COUNTS BY HENNEPIN AND RAMSEY COUNTIES AND SHELTERED VS. NOT IN SHELTER

	Hennepin County in shelters	Hennepin County not in shelter	Total Hennepin County	Ramsey County in shelters	Ramsey County not in shelter	Total Ramsey County
Children (17 and younger) with parents	1,261	63	1,324	571	22	593
Youth on their own (24 and younger)	285	139	424	213	51	264
Adults (25-54)	1,335	489	1,824	607	225	832
Older adults (55 and over)	400	100	500	209	29	238
Total	3,281	791	4,072	1,600	327	1,927

Availability of affordable housing is still a critical issue in Hennepin County

- 52% of homeless adults are on a waiting list for subsidized housing, with an average wait time of 15 months; another 11% were unable to get on a waiting list because it was closed.
- 44% of youth (age 24 and younger) and 40% of adults spent at least one night sleeping outside in the 30-day period before the study.
- The most common reasons adults left their last housing: 38% could not afford it, 36% were evicted, and 32% lost their job or had their hours cut.
- Homeless adults had a median income of \$535 during the month of the study. At the time of the study, fair market rent determined annually by the federal government was \$864 per month for a one-bedroom apartment in the Twin Cities.
- 67% of homeless adults report that they would only need an efficiency or one bedroom apartment.

Employment for people experiencing homelessness in Hennepin County declined slightly from a recent peak in 2015

Employment (adults age 18 or older)	2009	2012	2015	2018
Adults employed at the time of the survey	16%	21%	27%	24%
Adults working full time (35+ hours/week)	4%	6%	14%	13%

For youth age 24 or younger, 37 percent were employed at the time of the 2018 survey; 19 percent were working full time.

In Hennepin County, as in statewide, people who identify as African American, Native American or multi-racial are disproportionately affected by homelessness

	Percent of homeless adults age 18 or older	Percent of all 7-county metro adults age 18 or older ^a	Percent of unaccompanied homeless youth age 24 or younger	Percent of all 7-county metro youth age 10-24 ^a
American Indian	15%	1%	18%	1%
Asian American	2%	7%	<1%	9%
Black/African American	49%	9%	54%	13%
White/Caucasian	23%	76%	12%	62%
Multi-racial	11%	2%	16%	5%
Hispanic (any race)	8%	5%	13%	10%

^a Source: Vintage 2018 Population Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

About 6 in 10 homeless adults in Hennepin County are experiencing long-term homelessness

Length of time homeless (adults age 18 or older)	2009	2012	2015	2018
Homeless less than 1 month	6%	5%	6%	5%
Homeless 1 year or more	57%	53%	57%	63%
Fits Federal definition of long-term homeless	44%	34%	40%	43%
Fits MN definition of long-term homeless	63%	58%	62%	67%

For youth age 24 or younger, 6 percent were homeless for less than one month and 52 percent were homeless for one year or more. Sixty-one percent fit the Minnesota definition of long term homeless.

Homelessness in Hennepin County is often preceded by childhood trauma and abuse

Adverse childhood experiences	Adults (age 18 or older)	Youth (age 24 or younger)
Physically abused as a child	38%	41%
Sexually abused as a child	23%	25%
Neglected as a child	20%	24%
During childhood, had a parent serve time in prison	18%	40%
Witnessed abuse as a child	46%	55%
Lived with substance abuser as a child	48%	55%
Lived with parent/guardian with mental illness	36%	44%
At least one of the above	68%	78%
Long-term health issues		
Serious mental illness	57%	51%
Chronic physical health condition	59%	35%
Substance abuse disorder	23%	10%
Evidence of traumatic brain injury	33%	24%
At least one of the above	81%	70%
Age at first homelessness		
0 - 12 years old	7%	21%
13 - 17 years old	17%	39%
18 - 24 years old	23%	40%

Many people experiencing homelessness in Hennepin County have experienced trauma related to their housing or homelessness; this is especially true of women

	Adults (age 18 or older)		Youth (age 24 or younger)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Violence and sexual exploitation				
Left last housing because of abuse by someone they lived with	26%	10%	23%	11%
Stayed in an abusive situation due to no other housing options	47%	24%	34%	24%
Physically or sexually attacked while homeless	27%	18%	26%	19%
Been sexual with someone only for the purpose of getting shelter, clothing, or food	22%	12%	19%	7%
At least one of the above	60%	40%	53%	37%

Physical and mental health issues are persistent among homeless adults in Hennepin County

Chronic health conditions (adults age 18 or older)	2009	2012	2015	2018
Adults with serious mental illness ^a	51%	52%	47%	56%
Adults with chronic physical health conditions ^b	51%	55%	54%	51%
Adults with a substance abuse disorder	24%	22%	18%	23%
Adults with a serious or chronic condition ^c	79%	79%	81%	84%

^a For consistency over time, "anxiety or panic disorder" (first asked in 2015 survey) is omitted from these numbers. It is included in the table on the previous page.

^b For consistency over time, "cancer" and "chronic pain" (first asked in 2018) are omitted from "physical health conditions" in this table. It is included in the table on the previous page.

^c Serious or chronic condition includes chronic health condition, mental illness, substance abuse disorder, or traumatic brain injury.

For youth age 24 or younger, 51 percent report a serious mental illness, 35 percent report a chronic physical health problem, and 10 percent report a substance abuse problem.

Eight percent of homeless adults in Hennepin County have served in the military; numbers are decreasing

Military service (adults age 18 or older in Hennepin County)	2009	2012	2015	2018
Served in military	13%	9%	9%	8%
Men who served	20%	16%	14%	13%
Women who served	2%	1%	2%	1%

A snapshot of four key supportive services used by Hennepin County's homeless population

SERVICE USE IN THE PAST MONTH (adults age 18 or older)	2009	2012	2015	2018
MFIP ^a	19%	21%	21%	15%
SNAP/food stamps	63%	69%	62%	58%
Transportation assistance	51%	54%	51%	58%
Have medical coverage/health insurance	76%	83%	79%	76%

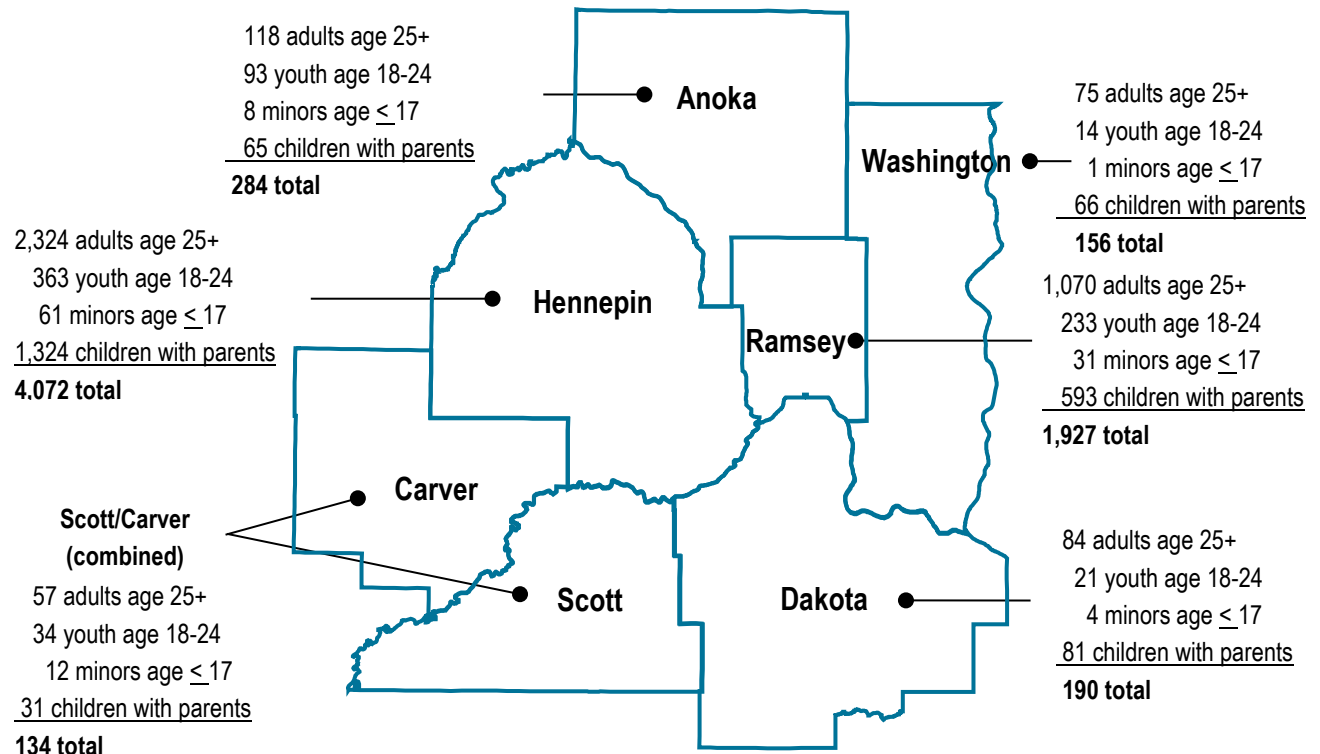
^a The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) is the Federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance welfare program administered by the State of Minnesota.

More from the homeless study

Fact sheets, detailed data tables, and methodology are available at www.mnhomeless.org. Data tables include breakdowns by geographic regions of the state, and by shelter types and gender.

Results from a companion study of homelessness on American Indian reservations conducted in October 2018 in partnership with six northern Tribes will be reported separately.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE COUNTED IN TWIN CITIES METRO AREA HOMELESS SHELTERS, TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMS, AND IN NON-SHELTER LOCATIONS BY COUNTY ON OCTOBER 25, 2018



Source: Wilder Research; data from shelter providers and homeless persons interviewed in non-shelter locations.

Note: "Minors" refers to those age 17 and younger who are on their own (not with their families)

Learn more at our website (<http://mnhomeless.org>) which includes the following:

- Counts by geographic region, Twin Cities metro area, and greater Minnesota: 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018
- Detailed data tables (for each question of the survey) by shelter setting, gender, and geographic region: 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018
- Detailed data tables (for each question of the survey) about youth (age 24 and under) and Veterans
- Reports and fact sheets: 2015 and 2018 (previous reports are at: www.wilderresearch.org)

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For more information about this report, call Wilder Research, 651-280-2700, or visit mnhomeless.org.

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