



# Single Night Count of People Experiencing Homelessness

## 2023 Minnesota Homeless Study Counts Fact Sheet

Every three years,<sup>1</sup> Wilder Research conducts a one-day statewide study to better understand the prevalence of homelessness in Minnesota, as well as the circumstances of those experiencing homelessness. The most recent study took place on October 26, 2023, and included two components that captured information on that date: 1) face-to-face interviews with people who meet the [federal definition of homelessness](#), and 2) a count of people experiencing homelessness.

This report contains counts data from the 2023 Minnesota Homeless Study and Reservation Homeless Study, including those:

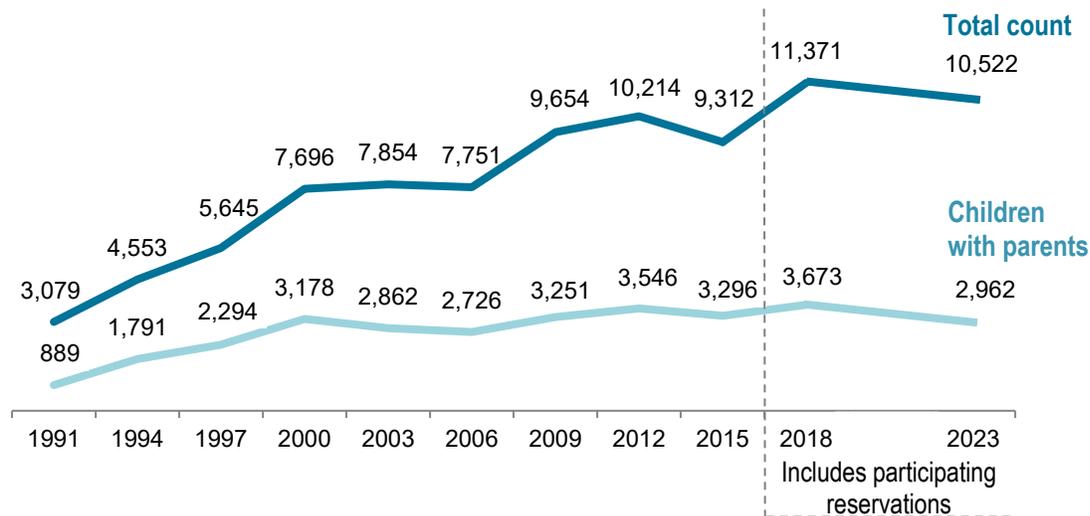
- *In shelter*: People staying in all known emergency shelters, domestic violence shelters, transitional housing sites, and hotels/motels for which they receive a voucher.
- *Not in a formal shelter*: People staying outside, on transit, or temporarily doubled up, and identified through interviews in outreach locations such as encampments and other drop-in sites.

Six tribes in Minnesota partnered with Wilder Research to conduct the 2023 Reservation Homeless Study. This study took place during a similar time period as the Minnesota Homeless Study, and honors tribal ownership of their data. With permission from participating tribes (Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, Red Lake, and White Earth), Wilder Research combined reservation counts with statewide counts to get a more complete number of people experiencing homelessness in Minnesota.

### 10,522 people experienced homelessness in Minnesota on a single night in 2023.

- Overall, this number represents a decrease of 7% since the 2018 study.
- It is important to note that this decrease masks year-over-year fluctuations in homelessness, particularly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and unprecedented funding for rental and housing assistance.

#### ONE-NIGHT STUDY COUNTS OF THE MINNESOTA HOMELESS POPULATION, 1991-2023



<sup>1</sup> The study was postponed for two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic; therefore, it has been five years since the previous study in 2018.

## Fewer children and youth are experiencing homelessness. However, the number of older adults (age 55+) experiencing homelessness has increased.

- Since 2018, there was a 19% decrease in the number of children who were homeless with their parents.
- There was a 17% decrease in the number of homeless youth (age 24 and younger) on their own without their parents.
- Older adults (age 55+) were the only age group that saw an increase over 2018 (7%). Although older adults are a growing group of people experiencing homelessness, they are still least likely to be homeless compared to their numbers in the overall population of Minnesotans.

### 2018 AND 2023 COUNTS BY AGE GROUP

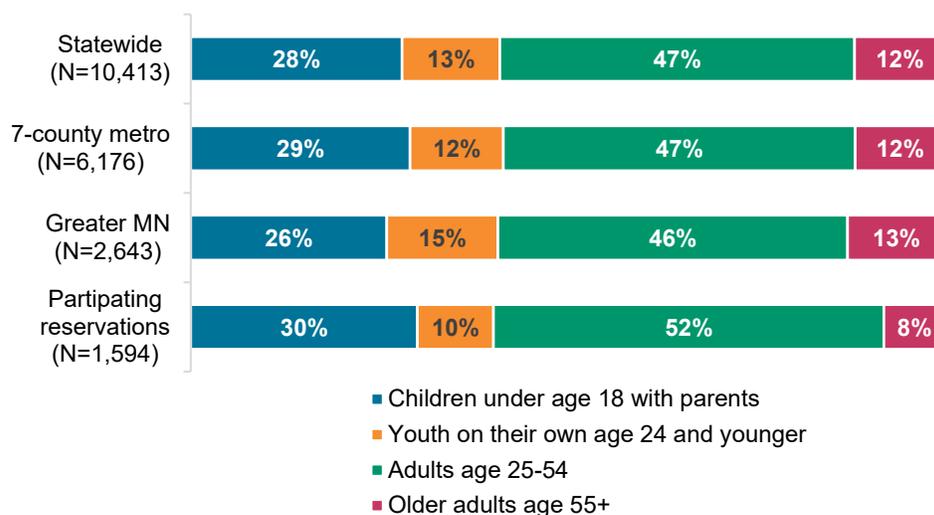
	2018 study	2023 study	% change (2018-2023)
Children under age 18 with parents	3,673	2,962	-19% ↓
Youth on their own age 24 and younger	1,587	1,315	-17% ↓
Adults age 25-54	4,934	4,932	<1% ↔
Older adults age 55+	1,129	1,204	+7% ↑
<b>Total<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>11,371</b>	<b>10,522</b>	<b>-7% ↓</b>

<sup>a</sup> Total includes the number of people who were in detox and homeless on the night of the study (N=27), as well as those people whose ages were unknown (N=82).

## Children and youth make up a sizeable proportion of the homeless population.

- Together, children and youth (age 24 and younger) account for 4 out of every 10 people experiencing homelessness.
- The age distribution of people experiencing homelessness is similar for the 7-county Twin Cities metro, greater Minnesota, and participating reservations.

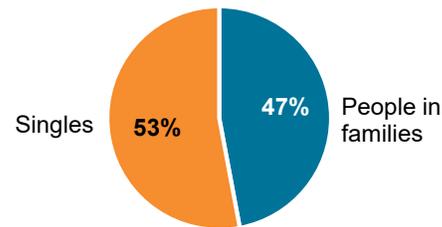
### AGES OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, BY GEOGRAPHY



## Families make up nearly half of Minnesota’s homeless population.

- People in families (with children under 18) account for 47% of people experiencing homelessness in Minnesota.
- The proportion of families is slightly higher in the Twin Cities metro (48%) than it is in greater Minnesota (41%).

PEOPLE IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AND SINGLES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

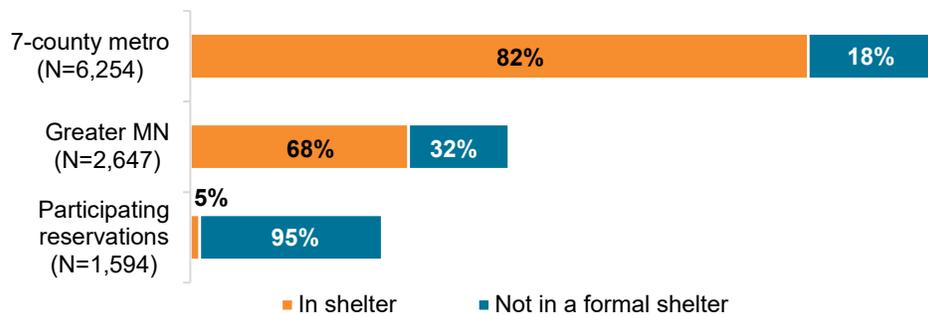


## Across the state, one-third of people experiencing homelessness are not in a formal shelter.

It is impossible to identify all people experiencing homelessness who are not in a formal shelter.<sup>2</sup> These numbers can be affected by variations in outreach efforts and the visibility of the population.

- Overall, 33% of people experiencing homelessness in Minnesota are not in a formal shelter. There was a smaller proportion of people not in a formal shelter in the Twin Cities metro (18%), compared to greater Minnesota (32%) and participating reservations (95%) where there are fewer shelters available.

PEOPLE LIVING IN SHELTER VERSUS NOT IN A FORMAL SHELTER, BY GEOGRAPHY



## What’s next?

Beginning in May 2024, Wilder will report findings from thousands of face-to-face interviews conducted throughout Minnesota, plus:

- Data tables for each interview question, for every region of the state.
- Findings from the Reservation Homeless Study.
- Specialized briefings on smaller sub-groups such as homeless youth, Veterans, older adults, families, and long-term homeless populations.

<sup>2</sup> Not in a formal shelter: People staying outside, on transit, or temporarily doubled up, and identified through interviews in outreach locations such as encampments and other drop-in sites.

## Explanation of 2023 data

The findings above are based on the 2023 Minnesota Homeless Study counts data. Counts data include: 1) a count of all shelter guests either identified through HMIS data (for shelters reporting to HMIS) or from Wilder-collected data (for shelters not reporting to HMIS), and 2) a count of all interviews conducted with people not in a formal shelter. Because a single night count and interviews can never fully identify all people experiencing homelessness who are not using shelters, the numbers represented in this fact sheet should be considered a minimum count. Please visit [mnhomeless.org](http://mnhomeless.org) for detailed statewide and regional reports which break down the counts data by shelter types, age, gender, race, and family status.

With permission from participating tribes (Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, Red Lake, and White Earth), Wilder Research combined reservation counts with the statewide counts to get a more complete number of people experiencing homelessness in Minnesota. This is the first time researchers requested permission to present this more complete count in this overall counts fact sheet (permission was granted for 2018 data after its publication). Since the first Reservation Homeless Study in 2006, data have been analyzed and aggregated separately, guided by principles of data sovereignty. Therefore, please note this change when making comparisons to pre-2018 counts.

## Additional resources on homelessness in Minnesota

Wilder's Minnesota Homeless Study is considered the most comprehensive source of descriptive information about homeless adults, youth, and children in Minnesota. It is not intended to be a complete count because no study strategy can locate all people experiencing homelessness. Other sources of information that complement our understanding of homelessness include:

- An annual January point in time (PIT) count of persons living in shelters, outdoors, and in places not meant for habitation. This count is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which includes client information compiled by all providers of federal- and state-funded emergency shelter and supportive housing programming.

Together, these sources are used nationwide to inform federal, state, and local policies to prevent and end homelessness.

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451 Lexington Parkway North  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
651-280-2700  
[www.wilderresearch.org](http://www.wilderresearch.org)

The study is an independent initiative of Wilder Research in partnership with public and private funders and in-kind support from service providers throughout the state. Study co-directors: Michelle Decker Gerrard and Rebecca Sales.

For more information about this report, call Wilder Research, 651-280-2700, or visit [mnhomeless.org](http://mnhomeless.org).

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