

Homelessness in Minnesota



Since 1991, Wilder Research has conducted a triennial statewide homelessness study to better understand the causes, circumstances and effects of homelessness, and to promote efforts toward permanent, affordable housing for all Minnesotans.

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. More than 1,000 volunteers conduct interviews throughout the state in shelters, transitional housing programs, drop-in service locations, and non-shelter locations such as encampments and abandoned buildings. All of those included in the study are in circumstances that meet the federal definition of homelessness.

2009 Study: Initial findings were released March 31. Counts of 2009 sheltered and unsheltered individuals by region will be available in April. An overview of study findings and specialized reports will be released throughout 2010.

There will be a major release of 2009 findings on May 25, at Wilder Research Perspectives breakfast. [Learn more.](#)

- [Documentary on Youth Homelessness](#)
- [2006 Homeless Study Reports and data tables](#)
- [2003 Homeless Study Reports and data tables](#)

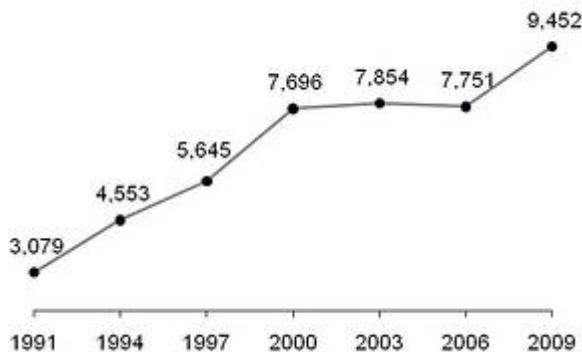
2009 initial study findings

[Download the press release](#)

After leveling off in the mid-2000s the number of homeless people in Minnesota is way up.

On October 22, 2009, 9,452 homeless adults, youth, and children were counted in shelters, transitional housing, and on the streets. This compares to 7,751 counted in 2006.

NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE IN MINNESOTA: 1991-2009



The number of homeless families with children increased 27 percent, from 1,318 in 2006 to 1,670 in 2009.

- In all, 3,251 children were counted with their parents on the night of the survey, up about 500 from 2006.
- The average age of children with their parents is 6 and a half.

The study counted 1,207 youth (age 21 and younger) on their own, up from 867 in 2006; 220 age 17 and younger; 987 age 18 through 21.

- 64% of youth have a history of being in out-of-home placements including foster care, group homes, detention, or treatment centers (down from 70% in 2006).
- 74% youth have been homeless before. On average, youth first experienced homelessness at age 15.
- 24% youth slept outside, in a car, or in an abandoned building at least one night in October.

The youngest person interviewed in the study was 12; the oldest was 83.

Numbers reflect homeless people counted or interviewed for the study. Estimates of additional numbers of homeless people not found through study outreach will be released when additional analyses are completed.

Additional findings:

Tough economic landscape has had an impact:

- 39% percent of homeless adults left their last permanent housing because of eviction, foreclosure, or failure to have their lease renewed; up from 32 percent in 2006.
- 40% of homeless adults reported a job loss or reduction in hours was a reason for the loss of their last housing; up from 31 percent in 2006
- 20% percent of homeless adults reported current employment, full or part-time, down from about 28 percent in 2006, while average hours of employment per week also dropped to 26 from 30 in 2006.
- 44% of homeless adults are on a waiting list for some form of public housing (up from 34% in 2006).

Race and place disparities persist:

- 68% of all homeless people found in the study were in metro area locations.
- Homeless adults in greater Minnesota are more than twice as likely as those in the metro area to have been found through outreach efforts (similar to previous years).
- African Americans represent about 41% of homeless adults statewide (52% in the metro area), but only about 4% of the overall Minnesota population.
- American Indians represent about 11% of homeless adults statewide but 19% of the homeless in greater Minnesota and just 1% of the overall adult Minnesota population (similar to previous years).
- Overall, people of color represent 62% of Minnesota's homeless adult population, but make up only about 13% percent of Minnesota's adult population.

Health issues play a major role:

- 46% of homeless adults had a chronic health condition during the preceding year (similar to 2006).
- 55% have a serious mental health illness (up slightly from 2006).
- 23% of homeless adults have been diagnosed with a drug or alcohol abuse disorder, a figure that has been very stable since 1991.

Veterans:

- Nearly 700 homeless adults (19% of men and 2% of women) have served in the armed services.
- Of this group, 44% report a service-related health problem and 26% have served in a combat zone.

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