

Ramsey 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 throughout the state with people 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 22, 2015.

This fact sheet highlights findings from interviews with people experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County. Wilder Research staff and trained volunteers conducted interviews 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 data tables with counts by age group, gender, and individuals versus families in Ramsey County, can be found at www.mnhomeless.org.

Homelessness in Ramsey County is up from the previous two studies

- Overall, the study found 1,787 homeless adults, youth, and children in Ramsey County. This is nearly 19% of the total count for the state (9,312), and is up 14% from 2012. (1,567).
- The 14% increase from 2012 to 2015 follows a decrease of 7% from 2009 to 2012; 2015 numbers are greater than they were in 2009 (1,685).
- The number of homeless children with their parents increased 15% from 2012 (469) to 2015 (541). Children represent 30% of the overall homeless population. Children and unaccompanied youth age 24 or younger are the group most likely to be homeless.
- 82% of homeless adults age 18 or older in Ramsey County have been in Minnesota for longer than two years.

Changes in Ramsey County vary from year to year depending on age group

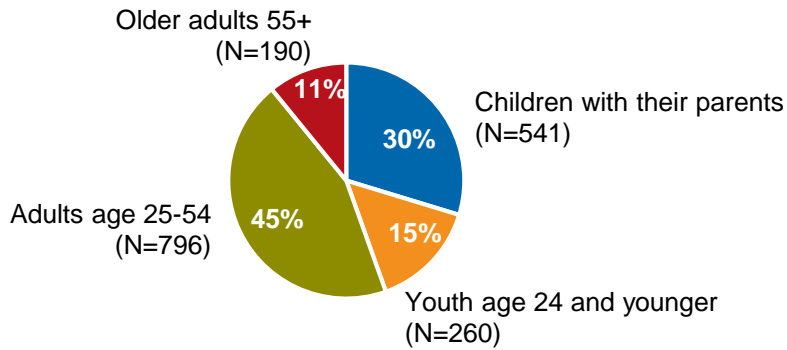
- After decreasing from 2009 to 2012, the combined number of children and unaccompanied youth (age 21 and younger) experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County is greater than in 2009. There were 732 children and unaccompanied youth (age 21 and younger) counted in 2009, 676 in 2012, and 801 in 2015.
- There was a 10 percent increase in the number of adults age 22-54 experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County from 2012 to 2015, following a decrease of 14 percent from 2009 to 2012.
- There has been a steady increase in the number of older adults experiencing homelessness (up 14% since 2012).

RAMSEY COUNTY HOMELESS NUMBERS BY STUDY YEAR, AGE GROUP, AND PERCENT CHANGE BETWEEN 2012 AND 2015

	2009 study	2012 study	2015 study	% change (2012-2015)
Children (17 and under) with parents	490	469	541	+15%
Unaccompanied minors (17 and under)	43	35	52	+49%
Young adults (18-21)	199	172	208	+21%
Adults (22-54) ^a	848	724	796	+10%
Older adults (55 and over)	105	167	190	+14%
Total	1,685^a	1,567^a	1,787^a	+14%

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

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



The number of children, youth and older adults have increased from 2009 to 2012; other age groups decrease from 2009 to 2012, but are now back to levels similar to 2009

- The number of homeless children with their parents and unaccompanied youth (age 21 and younger) in Ramsey County increased steadily since 2009. The number of homeless children was up 15 percent over 2012 levels.
- While the number of homeless older adults (age 55+) found in non-shelter locations remained about the same, the number of older adults in shelter doubled from 2009 to 2015 (81 vs. 166).
- After a decrease from 2009 to 2012, the number of parents in Ramsey County, age 21 or younger, increased to a level similar to 2009.
- While the number of homeless parents, age 22 or older, in Ramsey County shelters remained about the same between 2012 and 2015, the number of homeless parents found in non-shelter locations increased dramatically from three in 2012 to 23 in 2015.
- There was an 11 percent increase in the number of homeless adults (age 22-54) without children in Ramsey County from 2012 and 2015, but that was preceded by an 18 percent decreased between 2009 and 2012.

	2009 study	2012 study	2015 study
Parents with children on day of the survey			
Number of parents (age 21 and younger) in shelter	76	36	70
Number of parents (age 21 and younger) not in shelter	12	8	12
Number of parents (age 22+) in shelter	205	227	226
Number of parents (22+) not in shelter	4	3	23
Number of children	490	469	541
Individuals without children			
Youth (age 21 and younger) in shelter	105	114	122
Youth (age 21 and younger) not in shelter	37	49	56
Adults (age 22-54) in shelter	453	413	441
Adults (age 22-54) in not shelter	154	83	110
Older adults (55+) in shelter	81	151	166
Older adults (55+) in not shelter	18	14	20
Age not estimated ^b	50	-	-
Total	1,685^a	1,567^a	1,787^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: Ramsey County and Hennepin County

It is helpful to look at homelessness as a regional issue, since the homeless population is highly mobile. Wilder’s statewide data show differences in homeless numbers in the Twin Cities metro area versus greater Minnesota (these data tables can be found at www.mnhomeless.org). In the urban counties, there was a reverse trend in the counts of homeless people; counts in Ramsey County increased by 14 percent between 2012 and 2015, while counts in Hennepin County decreased by 15 percent. Some of the fluctuation in number of people between counties may be due to movement of homeless people as well as to the ability of outreach workers to locate people who are staying outside of the shelter system.

2015 COUNTS BY HENNEPIN AND RAMSEY COUNTIES AND SHELTERED VS. NOT IN SHELTER

	Hennepin County in shelters	Hennepin County <u>not</u> in shelter	Total Hennepin County	Ramsey County in shelters	Ramsey County <u>not</u> in shelter	Total Ramsey County
Unaccompanied minors (17 and under)	42	13	55	35	17	52
Young adults (18-21)	166	34	200	157	51	208
Young adults (22-24)	135	22	157	80	21	101
Adults (25-54)	1,320	170	1,490	583	112	695
Older adults (55 and over)	353	50	403	170	20	190
Children (<18) with parents	1,350	10	1,360	499	42	541
Total	3,366	299	3,665	1,524	263	1,787

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

- 49% of homeless adults age 18 or older are on a waiting list for subsidized housing, with an average wait time of 12 months; another 13% were unable to get on a waiting list because it was closed.
- 30% of adults age 18 or older spent at least one night sleeping outside in the 30-day period before the study.
- The most common reasons adults left their last housing: 32% were evicted, 31% could not afford it, and 28% lost their job or had their hours cut.
- Homeless adults had a median income of \$633 during the month of the study and could afford an average of \$395 per month in rent (14% could not pay anything for rent).
- 66% of homeless adults report that they would only need an efficiency or one-bedroom apartment.

Employment rates for people experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County continue to rise after reaching a low point in 2009

Employment (adults age 18 or older)	2006	2009	2012	2015
Adults employed at the time of the survey	25%	18%	21%	32%
Adults working full time (35+ hours/week)	9%	6%	7%	14%

For youth age 24 or younger, 51 percent were employed at the time of the 2015 survey; 22 percent were working full time. These rates are higher than employment rates for homeless youth statewide.

In Ramsey County, people of color are disproportionately affected by homelessness

	Percent of HOMELESS adults age 18 or older	Percent of all Minnesota adults age 18 or older ^a	Percent of unaccompanied HOMELESS youth age 24 or younger	Percent of all Minnesota youth age 10-24 ^a
American Indian	4%	1%	7%	1%
Asian American	3%	4%	2%	6%
Black/African American	51%	5%	60%	8%
White/Caucasian	31%	85%	12%	74%
Other/Mixed race	9%	1%	16%	4%
Hispanic (any race)	9%	4%	12%	7%

^a Source: U.S. Census

About 6 in 10 homeless adults and youth in Ramsey County are experiencing long-term homelessness

Length of time homeless (adults age 18 or older)	2006	2009	2012	2015
Homeless less than 1 month	6%	6%	4%	6%
Homeless 1 year or more	55%	59%	56%	62%
Fits Federal definition of long-term homeless	35%	42%	35%	36%
Fits MN definition of long-term homeless	61%	65%	60%	66%

For youth age 24 or younger, 12 percent were homeless for less than one month and 52 percent were homeless for one year or more. Fifty-nine percent fit the MN definition of long-term homeless.

Homelessness is often preceded by childhood trauma and abuse

Adverse childhood experiences	Ramsey County adults (age 18 or older)	Ramsey County youth (age 24 or younger)
Physically abused as a child	37%	39%
Sexually abused as a child	26%	28%
Neglected as a child	19%	27%
Out-of-home placements as a child (ever for youth) ^a	35%	57%
During childhood, had a parent serve time in prison	23%	56%
Witnessed abuse as a child	47%	60%
Lived with substance abuser as a child	48%	61%
Lived with parent/guardian with mental illness	38%	44%
At least one of the above	74%	90%
Long-term health issues		
Serious mental illness	58%	53%
Chronic physical health condition	51%	66%
Substance abuse disorder	19%	10%
Evidence of traumatic brain injury	32%	20%
At least one of the above	79%	67%
Age at first homelessness	Adults	Youth
0 - 12 years old	10%	31%
13 - 17 years old	19%	40%
18 - 24 years old	26%	30%

^a Out-of-home placements include foster care, group home, and treatment facilities.

Homelessness is often preceded by childhood trauma and abuse (continued)

Violence and sexual exploitation	Ramsey County adults (age 18 or older)		Ramsey County youth (age 24 or younger)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Left last housing because of abuse by someone they lived with	32%	9%	38%	11%
Stayed in an abusive situation due to no other housing options	49%	26%	39%	14%
Physically or sexually attacked while homeless	30%	14%	24%	14%
Been sexual with someone only for the purpose of getting shelter, clothing, or food	20%	15%	18%	18%
At least one of the above	60%	41%	59%	36%

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

Chronic health conditions (adults age 18 or older)	2006	2009	2012	2015
Adults with serious mental illness ^a	52%	54%	54%	52%
Adults with chronic physical health conditions	42%	46%	51%	51%
Adults with a substance abuse disorder	25%	20%	21%	19%
Serious or chronic disability ^b	79%	79%	82%	79%

^a For consistency over time, “anxiety or panic disorder” (first asked in 2015 survey) is omitted from these trend numbers. It is included in the table at the bottom of the previous page. The diagnosis of “anxiety or panic disorder” was added in 2015.

^b Serious or chronic disability includes mental illness, substance abuse disorder, or other condition that limits work or activities of daily living.

For youth age 24 or younger, 53 percent reported a serious mental illness, 66 percent reported a chronic physical health condition, and 10 percent reported a substance abuse disorder.

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

Military Service (adults age 18 or older)	2006	2009	2012	2015
Served in military - Ramsey County	14%	13%	9%	8%
Men who served - Ramsey County	25%	22%	16%	14%
Women who served - Ramsey County	1%	3%	1%	1%

A snapshot of four key supportive services used by Ramsey County’s homeless population

Service use (adults age 18 or older)	2006	2009	2012	2015
MFIP ^a (past month)	19%	19%	16%	17%
SNAP / food stamps (past month)	49%	61%	68%	56%
Transportation assistance (past month)	43%	44%	51%	48%
Have medical coverage/health insurance (past month)	65%	74%	80%	75%

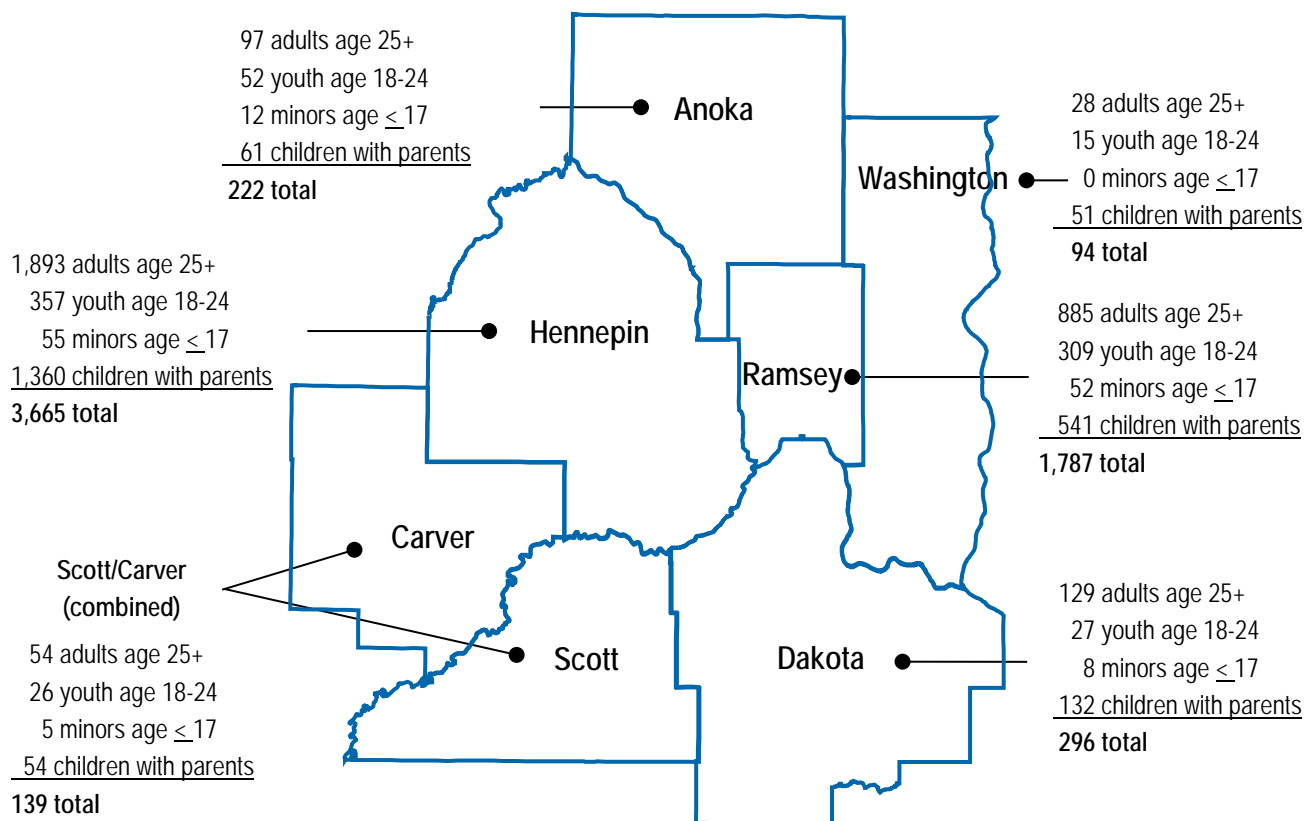
^a The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) is the Federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance welfare program administered by the State of Minnesota.

More from the homeless study

Fact sheets, detailed data tables, and methodology are available at 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 2015 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 22, 2015



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>

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

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For more information

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