

# What's Happening in St. Louis County

## St. Louis County Committee to End Homelessness

The purpose of the committee is to analyze the current homeless problem in St. Louis County and develop a comprehensive ten-year plan to end homelessness. The desired outcome is a county-wide plan, which provides clear goals and specific actions that address root causes and provides permanent solutions to guide future resource allocation in St. Louis County.

### Vision to End Homelessness

*"In 2016, the community values every individual's right to decent housing. Ensuring that all county residents are adequately housed is an investment with returns both financial and in terms of human potential. Priority is placed on providing safe, affordable, permanent housing for those in a cycle of homelessness."*

*Resources are dedicated to addressing the underlying causes of homelessness. These prevention efforts are built upon increased collaboration between the public and private sectors. The process of accessing services is streamlined into a user-friendly system. Services are delivered in a flexible, creative manner that best meet the needs of homeless persons.*

*The dignity and value of each person is recognized by providing opportunities and access to job training and education, employment, and health care. Stable housing is considered a necessary foundation to meet basic needs and allow individuals to achieve higher goals and aspirations."*



## New Permanent Support Housing Initiatives

### Perpich Apartments (Hibbing)

Conversion of a vacant school building into permanent supportive housing for homeless persons with mental illness. Occupancy for the 27-unit facility is projected for 2007.

### San Marco (Duluth)

Construction of this 70-unit facility in central Duluth for chronic alcoholics and formerly homeless people is projected to be completed in May 2007.

### Phoenix House (Duluth)

Five units of single room occupancy and 5 units with permanent supportive housing for homeless women who may also be experiencing mental illness or chemical dependency issues. Focused on serving Native American population. Facility occupancy completed by the end of September 2006.

### Memorial Park (Duluth)

Thirty-nine total units for homeless individuals of which 30 are single resident only, 1-one bedroom, 5-two bedrooms, 3-three+ bedrooms. No supportive services are provided, but there will be project-based vouchers.

### Publishing Information

This "Homeless Fact Guide" was developed and published by the St. Louis County Planning Department.

### Obtaining the Homeless Fact Guide

Copies of this "Homeless Fact Guide" can be obtained by contacting St. Louis County Planning.

(218) 725-5000  
Toll Free Minnesota 1-800-450-9777  
[www.co.st-louis.mn.us](http://www.co.st-louis.mn.us)

St. Louis County Planning Department  
100 Missabe Building  
227 West First Street  
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### Information Updates

If any information in this guide is incorrect or any additional information is needed, please contact St. Louis County Planning, 218-725-5000

Revised 9-2006  
HOMELESS-FG



# Homeless

In St. Louis County Communities



### OVERVIEW

It is difficult to measure the exact number of homeless individuals at a given point in time because it includes those in shelters, on the street, in places not meant for human habitation and those continually moving from one place to the next. Homelessness is a revolving door crisis that many people enter and exit on a regular basis.

The most recent comprehensive analysis of homelessness is the Homeless in Minnesota 2003 Report prepared by the Wilder Research Center. Information included in this brochure is primarily from the Wilder Report and the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

### CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness can be the result of many factors, including: lack of income, loss of

job, loss of housing, medical condition, mental illness, chemical dependency, poor rental history, criminal background, neglect and domestic violence. Typically homeless individuals have several factors contributing to their homelessness.

### ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

A Continuum of Care system is designed to address the critical problem of homelessness through a coordinated community-based process of identifying needs and building a system to address those needs. The approach is predicated on the understanding that homelessness is not caused merely by a lack of shelter, but involves a variety of under-

lying, unmet needs - physical, economic, and social.

St. Louis County, in cooperation with the city of Duluth, addresses homelessness through the Homeless Continuum of Care Plan. Its main components are as follows:

- Prevention
- Outreach
- Supportive Services
- Emergency Shelters
- Transitional Housing
- Permanent Supportive Housing

### PEOPLE IN NORTHEAST MINNESOTA HOMELESS SHELTERS

October 23, 2003



211 (38.8%) Children  
160 (29.4%) Women  
131 (24.1%) Men  
42 (7.7%) Youth

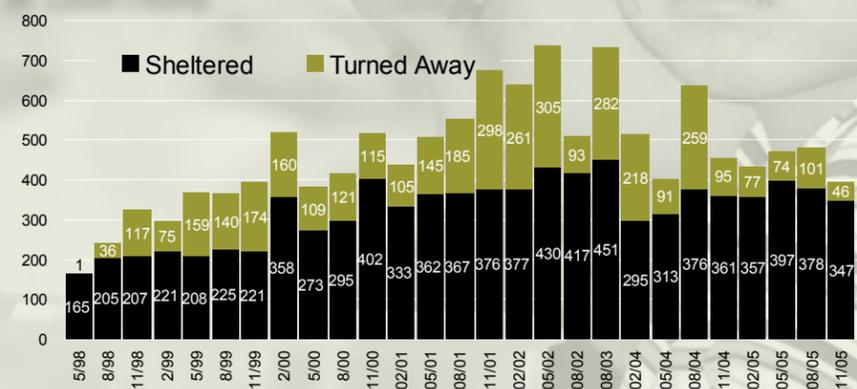
**544 Total**

*Youth and children represent nearly half of all homeless people in Northeast Minnesota.*

Source: Wilder Research Center, October 23, 2003 Survey Data

## Quarterly Shelter Numbers

St. Louis County



Source: Minnesota Department of Human Service's Office of Economic Opportunity

### NOTE:

Shelter numbers only count those seeking and using shelters.

## Homeless Facts: Adult Profile (St. Louis County)

This demographic data is breakout data for St. Louis County from the Wilder Research Center, "Homeless Adults and Children Minnesota Statewide Survey." [www.wilder.org/research/](http://www.wilder.org/research/)

### Race

- **53.5%** (166) White/Caucasian
- **23.9%** (74) American Indian
- **15.0%** (47) African American
- **7.6%** (24) Multi-Racial/Other

**100%**

### Place

- **80** in Emergency Shelters
- **25** in Battered Women's Shelters
- **145** in Transitional Housing
- **70** in Unknown Shelter or Street

**320 Total**

### Age

- **9.5%** (30) 18-19 Years
- **26.4%** (84) 20-29 Years
- **24.6%** (79) 30-39 Years
- **28.4%** (91) 40-49 Years
- **9.3%** (30) 50-59 Years
- **1.8%** (6) 60-69 Years

Source: Wilder Research Center, October 23, 2003 Survey Data

# About the Homeless in St. Louis County

## Children & Families

Approximately 72% of homeless women had children under the age of 17, most had at least one child when they were. 35% of the men had children under the age of 17 and 30% had at least one child with them. In Minnesota, 82% of homeless children are age 12 or under. Children are significantly impacted by homelessness, ranging from the lack of basic needs, negative impact on education and social stigma.



Homelessness disproportionately impacts communities of color. In St. Louis County, 47% of homeless adults are persons of color. This same population represents 5.1% of the total county population. It is estimated that approximately 25% of the homeless population in St. Louis County is Native American, representing only 2.1% of the general population.

The homeless population in Minnesota, including St. Louis County, are further challenged by the severe winter weather, heavy snowfall and sub-zero temperatures. Housing costs, including utilities, can represent a significant cost to low and very low-income individuals. In Duluth, rental housing costs are disproportionately high in comparison to incomes.

Over half of the homeless persons surveyed were homeless for the first time in their life and 32% have been homeless for more than a year. Almost 70% of homeless adults have lived in Minnesota for at least six years and approximately 40% have lived in Minnesota for 20 years or more. In Greater Minnesota, a homeless person is more likely to be doubled up with friends and family, or sleeping in a car or an abandoned building.

## Veterans

According to the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients, veterans represent 23% of all homeless people in America and 33% of homeless men.



## Single Adults

This group represents the largest segment of the homeless population, with nearly 80% between the ages of 20 and 49. Typically, single adults have other or a combination of factors contributing to their homelessness, including mental illness, chemical dependency, physical abuse and physical health.



## Unaccompanied Youth

In Minnesota, it is estimated there are 500-600 homeless youth on any given night. An estimated 253 children or unaccompanied youth experience homelessness in Northeastern Minnesota on any given night. In St. Louis County, it is estimated that 100 youths are sheltered nightly, with approximately another 100 who are unsheltered, on the streets, living in cars or couch hopping. It also includes youth prostituting to find somewhere to stay.



## Mentally Ill & Chemically Dependent

Approximately 41% of homeless adults reported a significant mental health problem in the past 12 months. Nearly 80% of homeless adults reported they had a serious or chronic disability (mental illness, substance abuse disorder or other disorder which limits work or activities of daily living). Approximately 40% considered themselves an alcoholic and had received treatment in an outpatient or inpatient treatment program and nearly 45% had been admitted to detox.



## Domestic Abuse

Over half of the St. Louis County youth experiencing homelessness have been physically or sexually abused. Nearly half of homeless women report that they stayed in an abusive relationship because they had no other place to live. Nearly half of homeless adults reported being physically abused as children and approximately one-third have been sexually abused.



## Services & Costs

### Homeless Definition

Homelessness is defined using the same criteria used by the United States Congress in allocating resources through the Stewart B. McKinney Act of 1987. A homeless individual is anyone who:

- Lacks a fixed, regular and adequate night-time residence, and
- Has a primary night-time residence that is a supervised, publicly or privately operated, temporary living accommodation, including emergency shelters, transitional housing, battered women's shelters; or any place not meant for human habitation.

### Medical Services



- Nearly 40% of homeless adults received emergency room care in the past 6 months averaged 2.7 visits per person
- Nearly half of homeless adults had considered suicide; of those 70% actually attempted suicide

### Education & Employment



- Of Homeless Youth
  - 69% are enrolled in school
- Of Homeless Adults
  - 80% are unemployed
  - 30% have less than a high school education
  - 48% have completed high school or a GED

### Foster Care



- One third of homeless adults had lived in a foster home at one or more times in their life

### Supportive Services



- The most common services used by homeless people include, food stamps (46%), free or almost free clothing shelves (40%), transportation (35%), hot meal programs (35%), medical care (30%), drop-in centers (30%), food shelves (28%), housing assistance programs (24%).

### Public Safety



- Non-sheltered homeless people often tax the services of local police forces. These same individuals are volatile to crimes being committed against them. The public often perceives homeless individuals on the street as a public safety issue.

### Institutional Placement



- 73% have lived in an institutional facility
- 38% have recently left a correctional facility
- 33% of those leaving other kinds of institutions did not have a stable place to live when they left