



Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless

Working to ensure everyone has a safe, decent, affordable place to call home

E F F E C T I V E P O L I C Y C A R I N G C O M M U N I T Y E M P O W E R E D I N D I V I D U A L S

Homelessness:
It's a situation
Not a person.

Effective public policy and caring communities will create an environment where homelessness is rare and dealt with quickly when it occurs.

Public policy should promote wide-ranging prevention strategies while ensuring a seamless continuum of housing and service options.

We advocate for comprehensive, flexible, and appropriate community responses that are congruous with the needs of those experiencing homelessness.

We can end homelessness.

Policy Brief: Essential Community Responses to Homelessness

Each night there are about 9,200 to 9,300 homeless Minnesotans. Nearly half are children or unaccompanied youth. Nearly 1,000 are turned away from help because of lack of resources.

The goal of homeless programs is to increase people's income, housing stability, and self-reliance over time and to assist them in appropriately transitioning into mainstream housing and services, if needed.

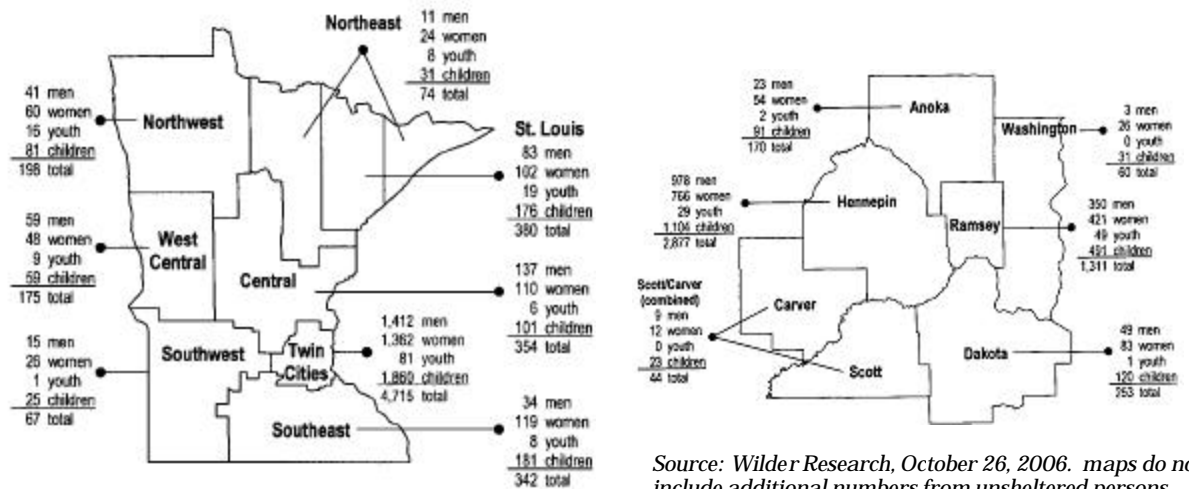
Essential Community Responses to Homelessness

Outreach (*to people living on the streets*) Connecting people experiencing homelessness with housing and services they need (e.g. street outreach, identifying eligible recipients for low-income programs) is vital for an effective plan to end homelessness. Many of those who are homeless and "living on the streets" will need intensive outreach services before they even feel ready for permanent supportive housing.

Emergency Shelter (*so people in crisis have a place to go*) Shelters are a safety net so that people in crisis can have a roof over their head if they have lost their housing. Shelters can then help individuals / households access the most appropriate assistance.

Transitional Housing (*for those who need only time-limited support*) This is time-limited supportive housing (45 days to 24 months). The goal is to re-integrate families and individuals into mainstream housing that they can afford and maintain. Services usually require working with a case manager to set and make progress on goals for family and housing stability. Participating households contribute 25-30% of their income for housing.

Permanent Supportive Housing (*for those with significant barriers to maintaining housing of their own*) Geared to households with significant barriers to mainstream housing (e.g. severe and persistent mental illness, chemical dependency, a chronic health condition), the Wilder Research Center estimates at least 4,000 units of permanent supportive housing will be needed by 2010.



Source: Wilder Research, October 26, 2006. maps do not include additional numbers from unsheltered persons.

The Need for More Resources: The State was charged with awarding \$10,325,182 in homeless program funding for SFY 2008-2009 to a variety of sheltering programs. Requests totaled \$24,985,404 from 122 agencies across the state.

The Impact of Inadequate Resources: Lacking consistent funding, the ability of programs to help people exit the homeless system as soon as possible is greatly hampered. As a result, emergency shelters are transformed from being short-term safety nets to long-term experiences. Transitional housing programs have no place to help people transition into.