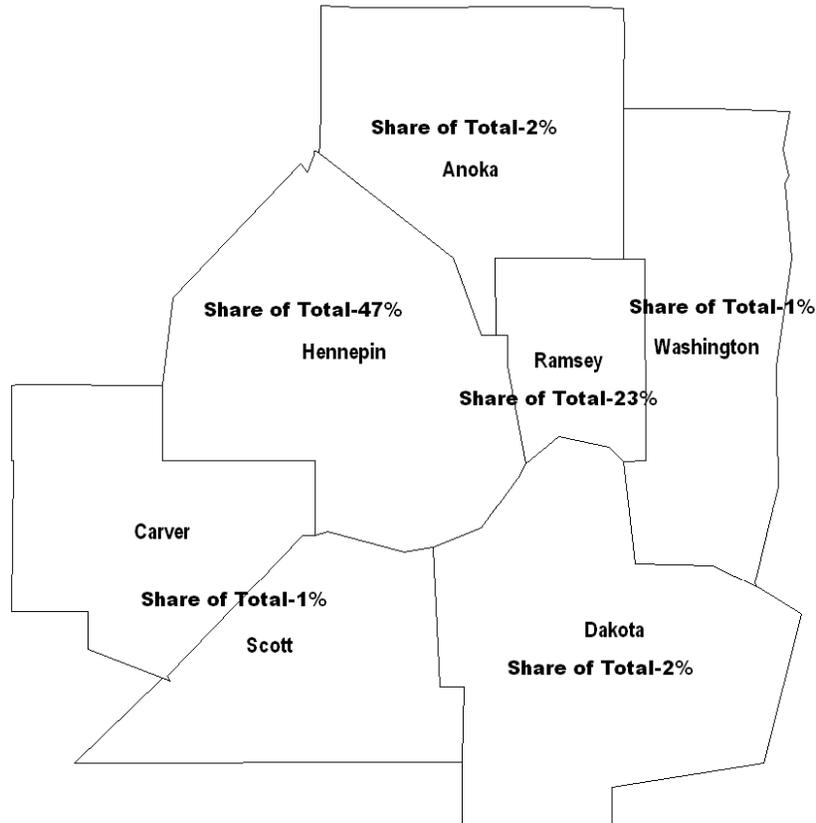


Distribution of Persons Experiencing Long-Term Homeless by County, 2003



The Statewide Survey

6.2. Housing with support service models that address the different needs of individuals, youth and families experiencing long-term homelessness

This section sets forth the principles adopted by the Working Group and identifies housing options and service choices.

Principles

The Working Group adopted the following principles to guide the selection of housing and support service models for individuals, youth and families with children experiencing long-term homelessness. These principles are vital to carrying out the goal of ending long-term homelessness of individuals, youth and families with children in Minnesota.

- Maximize choice of housing and services for families and individuals; ensure flexible housing and service options that respond to need.
- Encourage families and individuals to utilize services, but do not mandate services as a condition of tenancy in all cases.

- Utilize innovative practices that result in reduced costs and use evidence-based models for service and housing that have demonstrated positive results.
- Prioritize models that connect families and individuals in communities near public transportation and services.
- Provide the necessary housing tenancy supports to find and maintain housing, a critical service need for persons who have experienced long-term homelessness.

Housing Options and Service Choices

One of the most important principles is to maximize choice of housing and services for families and individuals and ensure flexible housing and service options that respond to need. An array of housing options must be available at the time that an individual, youth or family with children needs housing so that they may obtain the right housing type and situation to meet their needs, and not take the only available option which may not be the best option to provide ongoing housing stability. Housing and tenancy supports to find and maintain housing are necessary, but it is even more crucial that the supports are flexible to meet the needs of the individual, youth or family with children as their needs change over time. As needs fluctuate, housing and services must change to meet those needs. For a more detailed discussion, refer to Housing Options and Service Choices, Appendix at A-209.

Housing Options

Housing should be provided to individuals, youth and families through a range of options: leasing rental units, rehabilitating existing units, and developing new units. All housing must be affordable.

Types of housing include:

- scattered-site single family homes, townhouses, duplexes or apartments;
- clustered apartments;
- small single-site developments (4-12 units);
- medium single-site developments (13-30 units);
- large single-site apartment buildings (31+ units);
- single-site SRO: single room occupancy (may have shared bath and kitchen); or
- other housing types.

Housing should be provided through new construction and acquisition or rehabilitation of existing units.

The housing options for individuals, youth and families with children are the same: housing first is the primary goal for all. Additionally, a housing safe haven that is inappropriate for families with children, works well for some individuals. For some individuals who have experienced long-term homelessness for many years, outreach and engagement are key and a safe haven may be preferable as a step between the streets and permanent housing. A tiered or phased approach providing a permanent housing safe haven or service model of harm reduction may be most

appropriate to engage individuals who have mental and chemical health issues. Supportive housing works better for young adults than for unaccompanied youth who benefit from family centered housing support.¹² For families with children, providing housing first with appropriate services, including harm reduction, in some cases, is the only option that makes sense.

Single Site: Single site developments work well for individuals, youth and families with children and are conducive to on-site services. Single site developments for individuals and youth may be small to provide ongoing intensive services, medium to large with the level of services to fit the needs of residents, or larger single room occupancy developments where a less intensive level of services is needed for housing stability success. Single site developments for families may be medium to large and may provide services on site or in the community.

Smaller projects are preferable from a community-building standpoint; however, larger projects are better from the standpoint of development and operating cost efficiencies. With single site supportive housing there is a service economy of scale within a safe environment where there is an opportunity to see others succeed.

Individuals and families may choose to leave the community as they stabilize, or may wish to leave the community due to issues with oversight. Individuals and families may also be resistant to change when they are otherwise ready to leave the community. As individuals and families stabilize, the reduction in services may inhibit the economy of scale; however, stabilized individuals and families may provide hope and support to others. Careful attention to the mix of residents is necessary. Services as needed could be provided on site or in the community. There will likely be difficulty in siting new single site developments.

Clustered or Scattered-Site: Scattered-site single-family homes, townhouses, duplexes or apartments and clustered apartment models also work well for individuals, youth and families with children. With scattered or clustered site units, individuals and families are prepared to function in the community, identify and access services as needed, and may remain in community as they stabilize. Some individuals, youth, and families with children prefer to live in scattered-site units. Yet, individuals and families may feel isolated. Scattered-site supportive housing may not be appropriate immediately following treatment. Service delivery to unit may be inefficient and costly. Incentives for mixed-income development projects to include supportive units are needed.

¹² Supportive Housing or transitional living programs are almost always not the answer for 12 to 16 year old unaccompanied youth experiencing long-term homelessness. Youth need families and family-centered housing support. Alternative placements should be provided by child protection services. For some 16-17 year olds, supportive housing or transitional living programs may be the best option. There is great demand for supportive housing for 18 to 22 year olds transitioning out of out-of-home placements that may be experiencing developmental disabilities due to childhood trauma from physical abuse or neglect.

Service Choices

Service choices will depend on the service needs of the individual, youth, or family with children. Services can be delivered either on-site or off-site, with the exceptions of front desk and security staffing.

There are three categories of service needs that will impact the choice of housing options:

- outreach and engagement;
- intensive services; and
- stabilization.

Services choices identified by the Working Group include, but are not limited to:

- outreach and engagement,
- housing and tenancy-related support, including access to rental assistance
- case management
- assessment
- service planning and coordination
- assistance applying for other programs and benefits
- employment
- education and training
- financial management
- chemical dependency support
- mental health and trauma-related support
- domestic abuse, violence and safety planning
- crisis planning and response
- health care, including HIV/AIDS/STD education and support
- criminal justice resolution and diversion
- transportation
- stress reduction
- recreation
- social supports

With families, there are some unique support needs:

- parenting,
- child safety,
- development,
- health and education,
- child care,
- respite, and
- reunification.

Housing Tenancy Support Services

Housing tenancy support services are those services necessary to assist a household in finding and helping them maintain suitable housing. Housing tenancy support services can include services such as a concierge-like watchful eye or front desk service that alerts supportive service providers when a tenant appears to need some additional attention.

Virtually all of the persons experiencing long-term homelessness initially will need some form of housing tenancy support services. The lack of a recent, positive rental history will need to be overcome in order for persons experiencing long-term homelessness to be housed in the private sector. Several good models for providing these services exist; these models are most often funded by the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program and the Hard-to-House tenant pilot program. These programs serve relatively small numbers of households each year and are not entitlement programs. The lack of stable funding and inadequate amounts of funding is the biggest barrier to providing these services.

~~6.3. Existing resources that may fund the models for individuals, youth and families who are experiencing long-term homelessness. Gaps in capital, operating, and service funding that affect the ability to develop supportive housing models~~

~~Capital, operating and service funding resources, gaps, and strategies to fill the gaps are discussed individually in this section.~~

~~6.3.1. Resources~~

~~A complete listing of relevant federal and state capital, operating and service funding, see the Department of Human Services, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, Department of Employment and Economic Development, and Department of Corrections Funding Catalogs is found in the Appendix at A-1, A-17, A-25 and A-45, respectively.~~

~~6.3.2. Gaps~~

Capital Costs

~~Capital costs are the costs of the “bricks and mortar” of supportive housing (including common or service space), whether new construction, acquisition, or acquisition and rehabilitation.~~

~~The gaps in capital funding are twofold. First, the demand for capital funding far exceeds the amount of funds available. Typically, in any MHFA funding round requests are four times the amount of funds available. Second, the costs of new construction of supportive housing have tended to be even higher than comparably sized affordable rental housing.~~

Operating Costs

~~Operating costs are the costs of maintaining the property (taxes, insurance, utilities, maintenance, reserves, any debt service). Operating costs may be covered by tenant rent payments or rental~~