

# 2023 Homelessness Report



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This report can be provided in another format upon request.

## I. Executive Summary

The Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) collected, reviewed, and analyzed data on releases from Minnesota Correctional Facilities between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023. In that year, there were a total of 4,791 releases from Minnesota Correctional Facilities.<sup>1</sup> **Approximately 17.5% of those releases were to homelessness, to either known or unknown locations, compared to 19% the previous calendar year. This is reflective of a continued downward trend.**<sup>2</sup>

This continued downward trend is reflective of the DOC's continued focus to:

- Understand the needs of individuals who are involved with the correctional system;
- Ensure the professionals who engage with this population have the resources and services available to prevent experiences of homelessness and support pathways to housing stability;
- Continuously collaborate with state agencies, Tribal Nations, and community partners to develop inclusive housing resources.

Stable housing is critical to successful reentry, transformational change, and disengagement with the criminal justice system. Housing stability is also a nonmedical factor that influences health outcomes.<sup>3</sup> Homelessness worsens negative health outcomes and mortality across racial and ethnic groups in the state.<sup>4</sup> In short, Housing stability is foundational for living a healthy life, stable families, and safe communities.

## II. Report Background

In May 2021, the Minnesota Legislature created new annual reporting requirements for the DOC related to homelessness and homeless releases (Laws of Minnesota 2021, Reg. Sess. Chapter 24, Section 3). [Minn. Stat. § 241.068](#),

As required by the Legislature, the Minnesota Department of Corrections is required to report on the following:

1. The total number released to homelessness from prison;
2. The total number released to homelessness by each prison;
3. The total number released to homelessness by county of release; and
4. The total number under supervised, intensive supervised, or conditional release following release from prison who reported experiencing homelessness or lack of housing stability.

<sup>1</sup> "Minnesota Department of Corrections Adult Prison Population Summary". [Minnesota Department of Corrections Adult Inmate Profile as of 01/01/2004 \(mn.gov\)](#). This number captures releases from prison as well as community-based release programs (e.g. work release) to supervised release. Because individuals can be admitted more than once each year, the above measures the total number of prison admissions, not the total number of individuals admitted to prison. Releases occurred in the following ways:

- Supervised Release/Parole 3,779 (78.9%)
- Community Programs 689 (14.4%)
- Discharge 281 (5.8%)
- Other 42 (.9%)

<sup>2</sup> "2022 Homelessness Report", Minnesota Department of Corrections, [2022 Homelessness Report \(mn.gov\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> "Social Determinants of Health", World Health Organization, [Social determinants of health \(who.int\)](#), accessed on February 12, 2024

<sup>4</sup> "Minnesota Homeless Mortality Report, 2017-2021", Minnesota Department of Health, [Minnesota Homeless Mortality Report, 2017-2021 \(state.mn.us\)](#), accessed on 7/18/2024

[subd. 2](#) requires the DOC to submit a written report to the legislature each year on a variety of data related to homelessness and releases from Minnesota state prisons.

### III. MN DOC Homeless Mitigation Plan

Minn. Stat. [§ 241.068](#) requires the DOC to develop a [homeless mitigation plan](#) to identify strategies to prevent the experience of homelessness for individuals released from prison in Minnesota. The plan was submitted to the legislature in November of 2022 and functions as the guide for how the DOC is to build upon and develop a response to the experience of homelessness and creating pathways to housing stability for people who have been incarcerated in prison. The annual homeless release report provides an opportunity to evaluate the implementation progress of the Homeless Mitigation Plan, in addition to identifying promising practices and additional strategies to reduce homelessness for individuals who leave prison.

### IV. Defining Homelessness for Corrections-Involved Individuals

The legislature recognized that clear data is central to understanding the issue of homelessness and its impact on individuals exiting prison.

The DOC developed definitions based on feedback from impacted persons and community partners. These phrases and their definitions are listed below:

***Impacted Person:*** A person involved in the corrections system within a Minnesota prison or in the community, along with their parents, caregivers, or children.

***Homeless Releases to Known Location:*** Individuals released from prison (regardless of length of time incarcerated) to a temporary living arrangement. This includes temporary housing as well as hotels and motels paid for by a community service provider or by federal, state, local and tribal governments. This does not include self-payment, as outlined in the exclusions below.

***Homeless Releases to Unknown Locations:*** Individuals released from prison (regardless of length of time incarcerated) who do not know where they will stay the night of their release. This includes, but is not limited to, release plans that identify an individual be released to the “county of commitment,” “agent’s office,” “homeless,” or an “emergency homeless shelter.”

The Homeless Management Information System<sup>5</sup> within the State of Minnesota includes many descriptions of homelessness. The State of Minnesota defines homeless as “any individual, unaccompanied youth, or family that is without a permanent place to live that is fit for human habitation.” Doubling-up is considered homeless if that arrangement has persisted less than one year.

The State of Minnesota defines an individual, unaccompanied youth, or family are determined to be “Long-Term Homeless” if they are:

- Without a home for a year or more, OR

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<sup>5</sup> “Definitions”, [Definitions — Minnesota's HMIS \(hmismn.org\)](#)

- Have at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. Any period of institutionalization (including transitional housing, prison/jail, treatment, hospitals, foster care, or refugee camps) shall be excluded when determining the length of time the household has been homeless.<sup>6</sup>

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)<sup>7</sup> defines four categories of homelessness, listed below:

***Literally Homeless:*** An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation;
- Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organization or by federal, state, and local governments); or
- Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.<sup>8</sup>

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Detailing these varying definitions is intended to illustrate the complexities of defining homelessness, especially as it pertains to the population of individuals who are incarcerated and those on correctional supervision within the state. Thus, the ***DOC leans into how this target population defines their own life experiences*** as it pertains to mitigating homelessness and experiencing housing instability.

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***Imminent Risk of Homelessness:*** An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:

- Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
- No subsequent residence has been identified; and
- The individual or family lack the resources or support network needed to obtain other permanent housing.<sup>9</sup>

***Homeless Under other Federal Statutes:*** Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless as defined above, but who:

- Are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes;
- Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement for permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application;
- Have experienced constant instability, measured by two moves or more during the past 60 days; and
- Can be expected to continue in this status for an extended period due to special needs or barriers.<sup>10</sup>

***Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence:*** An individual or family who:

- Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence;
- Has no other residence; and
- Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

<sup>6</sup> Lbid.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, [HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\) |](https://www.hud.gov/)

<sup>8</sup> "Definitions", [Definitions — Minnesota's HMIS \(hmismn.org\)](https://www.hmismn.org/)

<sup>9</sup> Lbid.

<sup>10</sup> Lbid.

## V. Data Analysis – Method & Limitations

**Method:** The source of the data was individual’s release plan information within the calendar year of 2023 from the DOC Correctional Offender Management System (COMS). The process of analysis included a line-by-line review of the release location information then cross referencing that information with case note documentation and other corrections data systems to determine the final release plan on their date of release. This process provides representative data on the experience of individuals initially following their release from prison.

**Limitations:** The information within this report is representative data and not finite granular data. The data specifically depicts “releases” as opposed to “individuals” as it is possible that one individual is released from prison more than one time in a year. It is an entirely manual process, and the most prominent limitations are created by the outdated transactional COMS data system. This is anticipated to improve given the legislature’s investment in DOC’s data and information management system following the 2023 legislative session. Even with these limitations, the analysis of this data offers insight as to where people are released, counties and communities that have the most need, and the paths people take following their release from prison.

**Release Locations Excluded from Analysis:** After the public release of past DOC Homeless Release Reports, varying stakeholders asked about certain release locations that were not included. These excluded release locations provide insight into where people go when they release from prison. Many of these locations are temporary in nature, so it can be reasonable to assume that most individuals who release from prison do not go to a permanent residence.

- **Releases to programs and facilities that deliver health related services.** This includes releases to Intensive Residential Treatment Services (IRTS),<sup>11</sup> customized living,<sup>12</sup> group residential settings where community-based waiver services are provided,<sup>13</sup> and hospital, assisted living or skilled nursing settings. By design, these resources meet specific health needs, and some offer temporary stays (i.e. IRTS and hospital settings). These release types provide insight into the dynamic health needs of individuals who are incarcerated in the state’s prisons, and many of the programs require that an individual be certified as disabled.
- **Releases indicating ‘self-pay’ at a motel.** Releases to motels where it was indicated that the person would pay for the stay are excluded. It can be reasonably assumed a release to a hotel or motel is indicative of housing instability as a person released from prison typically do not have a consistent income source. However, as it pertains to this report and how homelessness is defined, these releases did not meet the definition for *homeless to known and unknown locations*.
- **Substance use disorder (SUD) treatment<sup>14</sup> programs.** SUD treatment programs that have a housing service or residential component to their service delivery are temporary and not considered permanent residences. Although substance use disorders are common among the incarcerated population and connecting them to appropriate interventions is beneficial, it is likely many individuals look into these community-based resources to avoid releasing as homeless. While participating in SUD residential treatment removes the emergency issue of homelessness upon release, an individual could be anticipating homelessness at discharge or completion of treatment if no housing options are identified.

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<sup>11</sup> “Intensive Residential Treatment Services”, Minnesota Department of Human Services, [Intensive residential treatment services / Minnesota Department of Human Services \(mn.gov\)](#)

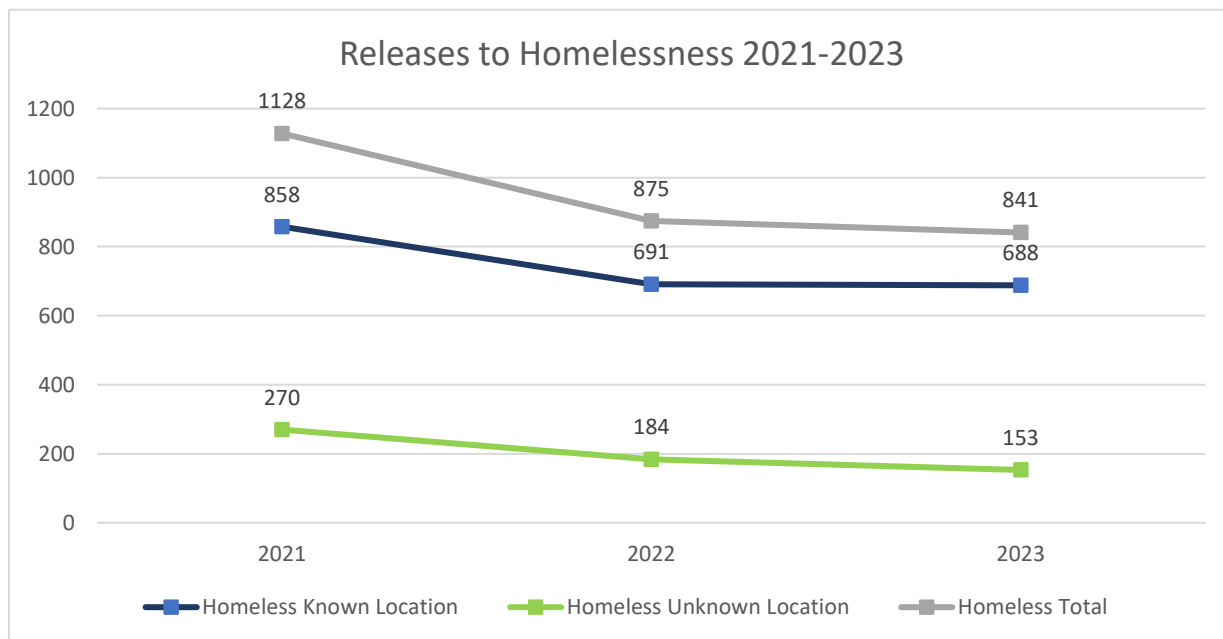
<sup>12</sup> “Customized Living (Including 24 Hour Customized Living)”, Minnesota Department of Human Services, [CBSM - Customized living \(including 24-hour customized living\) \(state.mn.us\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> “Home and Community-Based Service Waivers”, Minnesota Department of Human Services, [Home and community based service waivers / Minnesota Department of Human Services \(mn.gov\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> “Substance use disorder treatment”, Minnesota Department of Human Services, [Substance use disorder treatment / Minnesota Department of Human Services \(mn.gov\)](#)

- **Housing resources funded through Housing Support.**<sup>15</sup> The purpose of Housing Support is to “provide help for housing costs for some people at risk of institutional placement or homelessness” and eligibility is based on income/asset limitation and conditions that “limits self-sufficiency.”<sup>16</sup>
- **Releases to private residences.** A release to a private residence does not meet definitions of homeless to known or unknown locations. An important related factor – the length of time an individual is allowed to stay at the residence – could redefine this release from a situation of homelessness to known location (i.e. ‘couch-hopping’) to a more permanent residence. In the end, it can be reasonably assumed that many stays in private residences are situations of housing instability as most individuals who release from prison do not have a place of their own.
- **Releases to detainees, transfers of custody to other states or the federal government.** This exclusion includes detainees where an individual could be released from the detainer, or the detainer resolved on the same day of release or a short period of time thereafter. The current data system and lack of integration of data systems prohibits seeing the full picture of an individual’s release to the community where detainees are concerned.
- **Work release and interstate supervision releases.** Overall blanket exclusion to releases to work release program and DOC Interstate Supervision.
- **Releases at the time of termination of a sentence.** Lastly, releases of individuals who have served their complete sentence, not on correctional supervision in the community, following the termination of their sentence are not included within this analysis. It is known that some of these individuals are released to homelessness; however, they are no longer under a commitment to the Commissioner of Corrections and excluded from this report.

## VI. 2023 Homelessness Data



<sup>15</sup> “Housing Support (formerly known as Group Residential Housing)”, Minnesota Department of Human Services, [Housing Support / Minnesota Department of Human Services \(mn.gov\)](https://www.mn.gov/housing-support)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

## Milestones

The continued downward trajectory of people being released from state prisons into homelessness in Minnesota may be related to several notable milestones that occurred within 2023:

- Intentional investments through federal grant funding in culturally responsive transitional housing that support capacity building and ongoing sustainability for American Indian men and women.
- Design and implementation efforts of DOC Homeless Mitigation Plan and tracking recommendations detailed within the plan.
- The accomplishments of the 2023 legislative session, including the allocation of resources received through the Public Safety Through Stable Housing legislative package (the development of housing stabilization services, housing coordinator capacity, rental assistance, and culturally responsive transitional housing)<sup>17</sup> along with the design and implementation of resources and services funded through that allocation.
- The continued implementation of person-centered practices in the DOC.<sup>18</sup>
- The adoption of the state’s strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness – “Crossroads to Justice: Minnesota’s New Pathways to Housing, Racial and Health Justice for People Facing Homelessness.”<sup>19</sup>
- Shared learning and technical assistance through the Council of State Government’s Zero Returns to Homelessness<sup>20</sup>.
- Continued collaboration and engagement with stakeholders across the board to prevent and end homelessness and support pathways to housing stability through the connection of needed services, resources, and continued partnership with community-based resource development.

The following data is based on the analysis of addresses (or lack thereof) at the time of release for 2023. Data analysis included the manual review of release documents and other tracking systems that document requests for assistance from the DOC Community Stability team to mitigate releases to homelessness.

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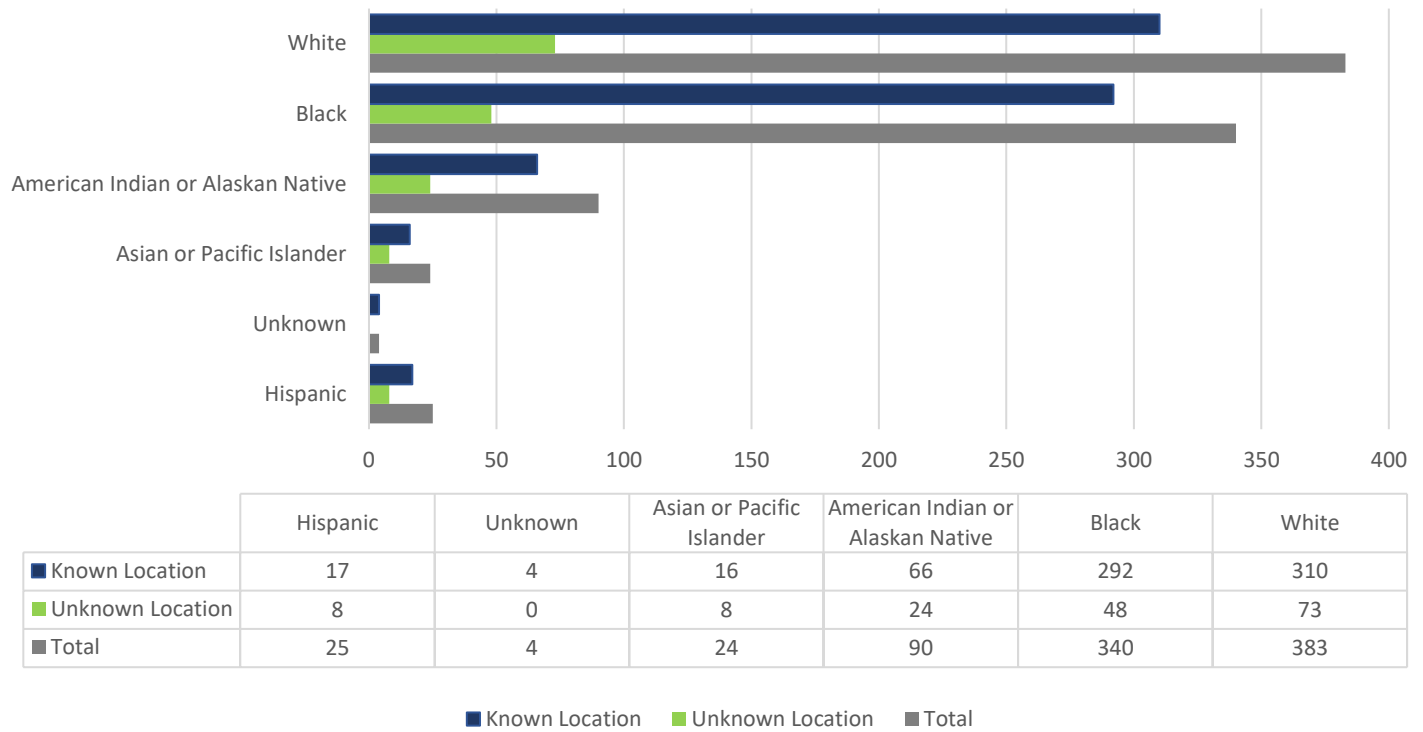
<sup>17</sup> “Legislative Information, 2023 Legislative Accomplishments”, Minnesota Department of Corrections, [Legislative Information / Department of Corrections \(mn.gov\)](#)

<sup>18</sup> “Person-Centered Practices”, Minnesota Department of Human Services, [Person-centered practices / Minnesota Department of Human Services \(mn.gov\)](#)

<sup>19</sup> “Crossroads to Justice: Minnesota’s New Pathways to Housing, Racial and Health Justice for People Facing Homelessness”, Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness, [Crossroads to Justice: Minnesota's New Pathways to Housing, Racial and Health Justice for People Facing Homelessness | Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness \(mn.gov\)](#)

<sup>20</sup> “Zero Returns to Homelessness”, Council of State Governments Justice Center, [Home - Zero Returns to Homelessness \(csgjusticecenter.org\)](#)

### Releases to Homelessness -- Known & Unknown Locations By Race & Ethnicity, 2023



\*Individuals who identify as BIPOC make up approximately 54% of all homeless releases. Of the women who release as homeless, about 26% of them identify as BIPOC.

	<u>Facility</u>	<u>Known Location</u>	<u>Unknown Location</u>	<u>Total</u>
Releases to Homelessness, Known and Unknown Locations  By Facility, 2023	MCF-FRB	158	44	202
	MCF-STW	124	21	145
	MCF-SCL	103	40	143
	MCF-LL	76	13	89
	MCF-ML	66	13	79
	MCF-RC	65	11	76
	MCF-TOGO	33	0	33
	MCF-WR	31	2	33
	MCF-SHK	19	8	27
	MCF-OPH	11	1	12
	MCF-RW	2	0	2
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>841</b>



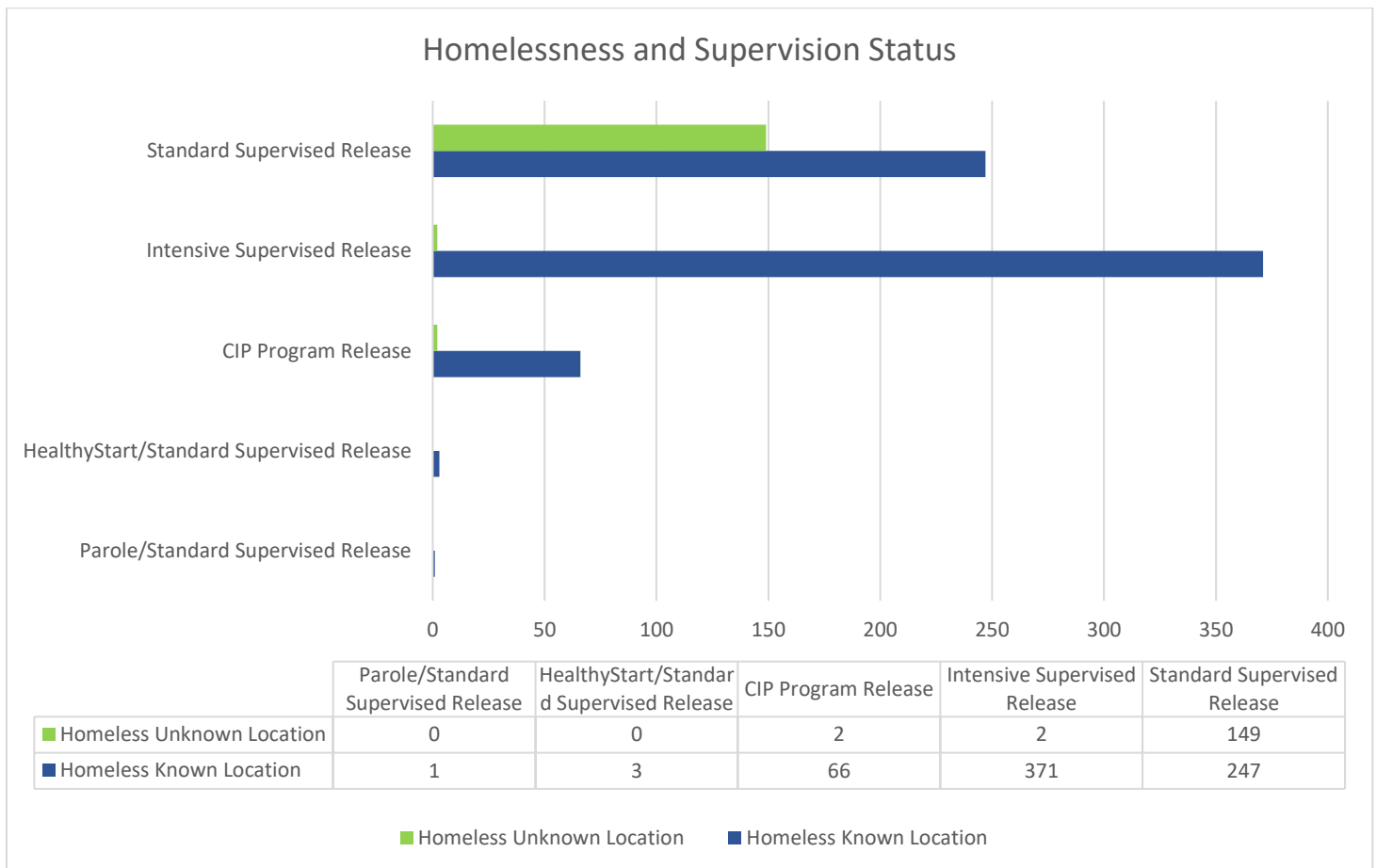
Releases to Homelessness, Known and Unknown Locations  
By County, 2023

<b>Top 10 Counties</b>			
<b><u>County:</u></b>	<b><u>Known Location:</u></b>	<b><u>Unknown Location:</u></b>	<b><u>Total:</u></b>
Hennepin	226	32	258
Ramsey	98	28	126
St. Louis	36	16	52
Stearns	32	6	38
Clay	27	9	36
Olmsted	32	3	35
Polk	16	10	26
Anoka	21	2	23
Dakota	16	1	17
Beltrami	14	2	16
<b>Other Counties</b>			
<b><u>County:</u></b>	<b><u>Known Location:</u></b>	<b><u>Unknown Location:</u></b>	<b><u>Total:</u></b>
Aitkin	0	1	1
Becker	8	1	9
Benton	4	0	4
Blue Earth	6	3	9
Brown	3	0	3
Carver	5	1	6
Cass	5	1	6
Chippewa	4	0	4
Chisago	0	1	1
Clearwater	2	0	2
Cook	1	0	1
Cottonwood	0	1	1
Crow Wing	6	2	8
Dodge	1	0	1
Douglas	5	0	5
Faribault	0	1	1
Freeborn	6	1	7
Goodhue	4	0	4
Hubbard	0	1	1

Isanti	2	0	2
Itasca	7	1	8
Jackson	1	0	1
Kandiyohi	6	1	7
Koochiching	1	0	1
Lac Qui Parle	1	0	1
Lyon	3	1	4
Mahnomen	4	2	6
Martin	4	0	4
McLeod	3	0	3
Meeker	2	0	2
Morrison	0	4	4
Mower	7	1	8
Nicollet	2	0	2
Nobles	4	3	7
Pine	0	1	1
Pipestone	1	0	1
Redwood	5	0	5
Renville	1	2	3
Rice	4	0	4
Rock	2	0	2
Roseau	0	1	1
Scott	7	1	8
Sherburne	5	2	7
Steele	7	3	10
Swift	0	2	2
Wadena	7	1	8
Waseca	2	1	3
Washington	4	1	5
Watonwan	1	1	2
Wilkin	1	0	1
Winona	5	0	5
Wright	9	1	10
Yellow Medicine	2	0	2
Total	<b>688</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>841</b>

The definition of “Homeless Known Location” was crafted from the lived experience of individuals who released from prison. Temporary, emergency housing and homeless resources that are inclusive to people exiting incarceration are impactful. Often these resources serve as the first steps to housing stability. Therefore, the DOC’s primary goal is to prevent and mitigate, whenever possible, releases to “Homeless-Unknown Location”. A release that was identified as “Homeless-Unknown Location” means the individual does not know where they will sleep on the night of his/her release, or the person is intending to rely on emergency shelter resources that may or may not be available.

The top ten counties with the highest releases to Homeless to Known and Unknown locations comprise approximately **75% of all releases to homelessness and 13% of all releases. Approximately 24% of these releases occur in Greater Minnesota.** Although this data is representative, it provides clear direction for the creation of accessible housing resources in specific geographic locations. **Homelessness and housing instability among those who release from Minnesota prisons would be drastically reduced by focusing reduction efforts on these top ten counties.**

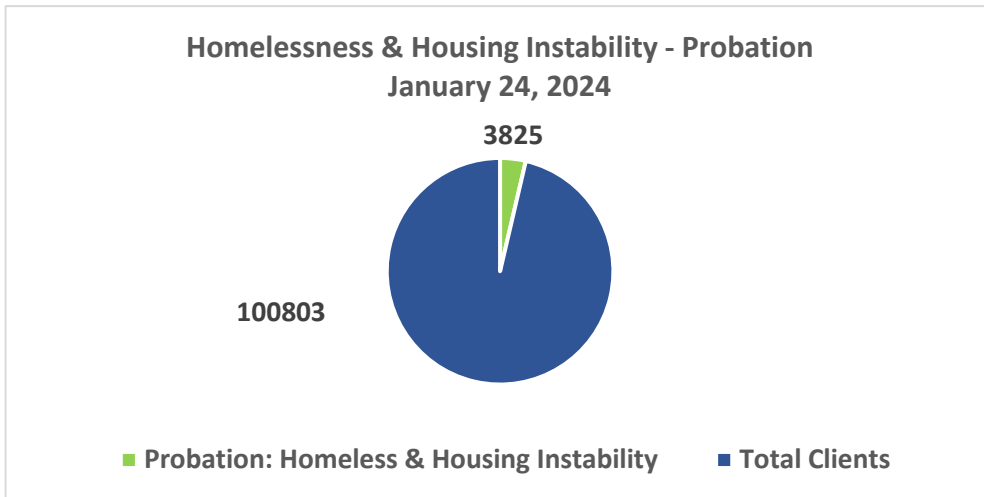


## VII. Homelessness experienced as of January 24, 2024

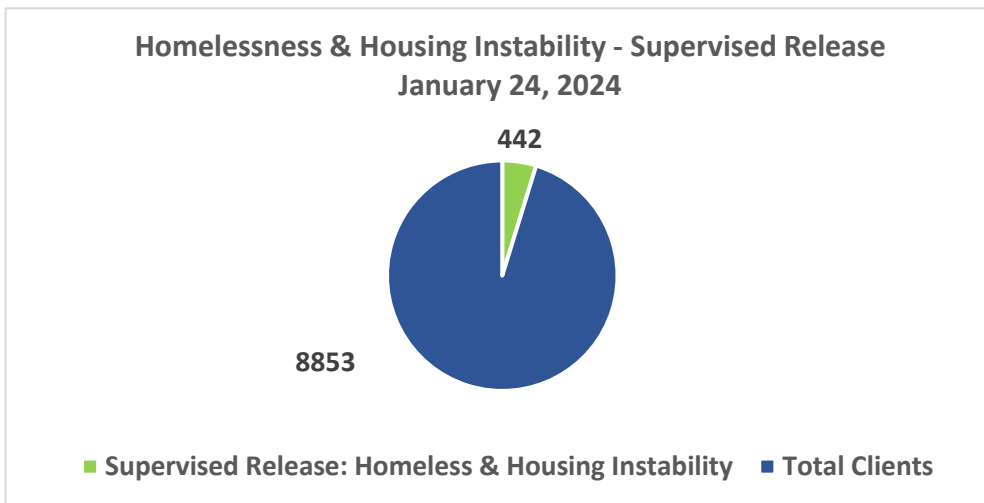
This report identifies those who experienced homelessness at the time of release from Minnesota state prisons. This information alone does not capture homelessness and housing instability experienced by corrections systems impacted persons across the state.

In 2023, approximately 89,000 individuals were on correctional supervision in the state of Minnesota.<sup>21</sup> Although Minnesota had the largest decrease in individuals on probation during 2022, it still has one of the larger populations of individuals on correctional supervision in the nation.<sup>22</sup> As such, the “Statewide Supervision System – County, Race and Gender Report” is inclusive to all three correctional service delivery systems<sup>23</sup> within the state<sup>24</sup> and illuminates the problem of homelessness and housing instability across the entirety of the corrections system in Minnesota. This report receives correctional supervision data from all three correctional supervision delivery systems for individuals on probation and supervised release<sup>25</sup>.

The following data details a ‘snapshot’ or point in time of homelessness and housing instability for individuals on probation on January 24, 2024:



**3.8% of individuals on probation** on this day were identified as experiencing homelessness and housing instability.



**5% of individuals on supervised release** on this day were identified as experiencing homelessness and housing instability.

<sup>21</sup> “2023 Probation Survey”, Minnesota Department of Corrections, [Publications / Department of Corrections \(mn.gov\)](https://www.mn.gov/publications)

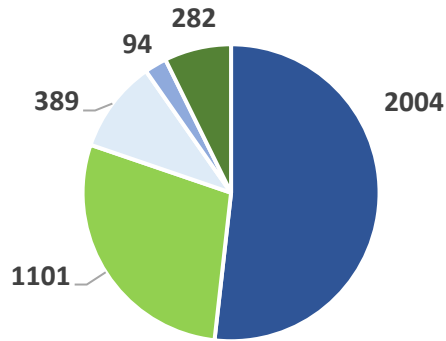
<sup>22</sup> “Probation and Parole in the United States, 2022”, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, May 2024, NCJ 308575, [Probation and Parole in the United States, 2022 \(ojp.gov\)](https://www.ojp.gov/publications)

<sup>23</sup> Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC), Community Corrections Act Agencies (CCA), and County Probation Offices (CPO)

<sup>24</sup> “Correctional Delivery Systems”, Minnesota Department of Corrections, [Correctional Delivery Systems\\_tcm1089-461952.pdf \(mn.gov\)](https://www.mn.gov/publications)

<sup>25</sup> CSTS (Correctional Service Tracking System) is the primary data management system utilized by all three correctional service delivery system. Homelessness and housing instability within this data system is defined as; *lacks a permanent place to live and/or, only allowed to stay temporarily at a residence by primary occupant, i.e. ‘couch-hopping’, and/or lives in housing that poses a risk to the health, safety, or physical well-being of its occupants, neighbors, and visitors, e.g. a garage, dish-house and/or residence without electricity or plumbing.*

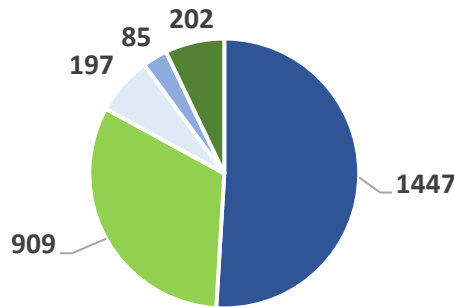
**Homelessness & Housing Instability - Probation  
January 24, 2024**



■ White ■ Black ■ Native American ■ Asian ■ Unknown

**41% of individuals on probation** who experienced homelessness or housing instability on this day identify as BIPOC. *This is a 4% reduction from the prior year.*

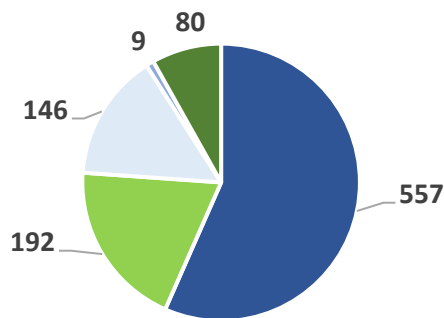
**Homelessness & Housing Instability - Probation - Men  
January 24, 2024**



■ White ■ Black ■ Native American ■ Asian ■ Unknown

**42% of men on probation** who experienced homelessness or housing instability on this day identify as BIPOC. *This is a 5% reduction from the prior year.*

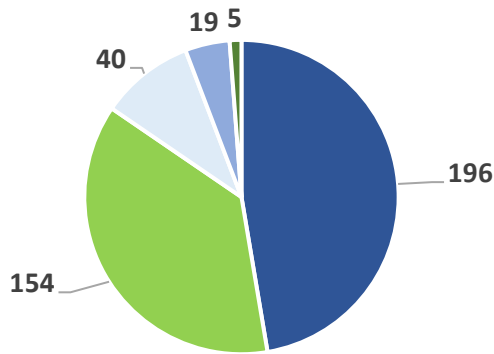
**Homelessness & Housing Instability - Probation - Women  
January 24, 2024**



■ White ■ Black ■ Native American ■ Asian ■ Unknown

**35% of women on probation** who experienced homelessness or housing instability on this day identify as BIPOC. *This is a 7% reduction from the prior year.* **Native American women** comprise less than 1% of the population in the state yet 15% of the women on probation who experience homelessness and housing instability.

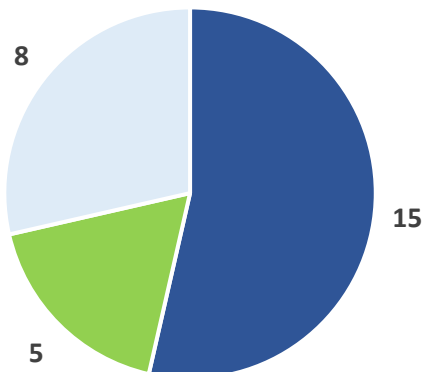
**Homelessness & Housing Instability - Supervised Release - Men**  
January 24, 2024



■ White ■ Black ■ Native American ■ Asian ■ Unknown Total

**51% of men on supervised release** who experienced homelessness or housing instability on this day identify as BIPOC. *This is a 4% increase from the year prior.*

**Homelessness & Housing Instability - Supervised Release - Women**  
January 24, 2024



■ White ■ Black ■ Native American

**46% of women on supervised release** who experienced homelessness or housing instability on this day identify as BIPOC. Although the total number of women with this experience has reduced from 34 to 28, *this is a 9% increase from the year prior.*

## VIII. Progress, Measures and Challenges to Implementation of Homeless Mitigation Plan

In May of 2021, the Minnesota Legislature, upon the request of MN DOC, created annual reporting requirements for the DOC related to homelessness and homeless releases (Laws of Minnesota 2021, Reg. Sess. Chapter 14, Section 3). [Sec. 241.068 MN Statutes](#) requires the DOC to file a written report with the legislature reporting on homelessness and releases from state prisons and develop a homeless mitigation plan for individuals released from prison in Minnesota. Beginning in 2024, the annual report is required to detail progress made under the homeless mitigation plan. This section will review the recommendations posed within the [Homelessness Mitigation Plan \(mn.gov\)](#) along with the progress, measures, and challenges to implement the DOC Homeless Mitigation Plan.

## Progress Towards the MN DOC Homeless Mitigation Plan Recommendations<sup>26</sup>

The DOC considers the DOC Homeless Mitigation Plan as the initial step to building the foundation for an effective response to homelessness and housing instability. The end goal is total elimination of homelessness experienced by individuals released from the state's prisons through a sufficient body of responsive community-based housing resources that are inclusive and accessible to all individuals who are impacted by the justice system. To that end, the Homeless Mitigation Plan included several recommendations for the DOC and Legislature. This section details progress towards those recommendations.

Process on recommendations for the Minnesota Department of Corrections:

- **Conduct equity reviews** on all DOC policies to promote consistency across the department and equitable access to transformational services and supports for staff, incarcerated people, people on correctional supervision and the public.
  - Progress:
    - Policy review process is in the final stages. It is focused on removing unnecessary barriers to access services, privileges and/or incentives and engages leaders to provide insight to how their policies and policy revisions contribute to success.
  - Measures:
    - MN DOC policies were divided into three categories:
      - **Enhanced:** Policies have been identified by MN DOC executive leadership to have significant scope, operational or policy impact and must be reviewed for potential revision by policy chairs annually;
      - **Standard:** Policies are more limited in their scope than enhanced policies and must be reviewed for potential revision by policy chairs at least once every two years; and
      - **Technical:** Policies are largely required by law or the State of Minnesota Enterprise with very little agency discretion over the policy content and must be reviewed for potential revision by policy chairs at least once every three years.
    - Policies were categorized based on their impact on the lives of the people served through the DOC and staff. As such, the review processes for each category differ.
    - Since operationalizing the new policy review process, 35 policies have been approved (11 enhanced, 16 standard, and eight technical). At present, draft language and additional changes have been proposed on an additional 23 policies. The review process on the latter is near completion.
    - The policy review process includes a requirement to obtain feedback from impacted groups (corrections systems impacted persons and families).
  - Challenges:
    - Onboarding leaders to the new review and development process and memorializing and operationalizing the process.
    - Due to lack of staffing capacity, a residual impact is inconsistency in engagement of leaders in the policy review process.
    - Engagement for purposes of information gathering and decision making is a skill. Due to lack of experience and learning opportunities, this skill needs to be fostered amongst leaders within MN DOC.

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<sup>26</sup> "Homelessness Mitigation Plan", Minnesota Department of Corrections, [Homelessness Mitigation Plan \(mn.gov\)](https://www.mn.gov/homelessness-mitigation-plan)

- **Design and implement training** of the Agent Assignment Release Planning Policy 203.018. What was learned through the engagement process for the development of the [Homeless Mitigation Plan](#) was that shifting culture and influencing organizational systems' change to homeless response and creating pathways to housing stability would require both technical and adaptive level changes. A necessary technical change was to review the Agent Assignment Release Planning Policy and provide procedural direction to corrections employees on solution-seeking in order to prevent experiences of homelessness at the time of release from Minnesota Correctional Facilities.
  - Progress:
    - On September 1, 2022, this policy was revised to include a guidance if it is identified that an individual lacks an approved residence during the release planning process. Under "Procedures" A, subdivision 6 states the following: *"If the person does not have a release option other than their assigned agent's office, within 60 days or one-third of the time remaining for short-term persons before their scheduled release date, the caseworker must initiate a conference call with the assigned agent and the person to explore homelessness mitigation options. All mitigation efforts must be documented in the Court Services Tracking System (CSTS) and the Correctional Operations Management System (COMS) including what options have been investigated and why they were not suitable or available. Efforts must include community, county or state homeless assistance options<sup>27</sup>."*
    - Training curriculum was designed through co-creation with corrections professionals who engage with and support incarcerated persons in releasing from Minnesota Correctional Facilities.
    - All staff who support and engage with individuals who are preparing to release from Minnesota Correctional Facilities will be trained in the revised policy by June 30, 2025. (The revision of this policy added a clause that requires a conversation between corrections professionals if the individual is approaching a release date and lacks a permanent residence.<sup>28</sup>)
  - Measures:
    - To date, over 275 corrections professionals (community correctional supervision, facility staff who engage with individuals who are preparing for release, to support services program staff, and leadership) have received the training on the revised policy.<sup>29</sup>
    - Trainings are scheduled through September of 2024 and a video recorded session will be created to train new staff.
    - Impact on homeless release data as shared through this report.
  - Challenges:
    - Inconsistency in interpretation of policy across the corrections service delivery system in the state.
- **Implement a Collaborative Case Consultation** process across all MCFs and Community Corrections Act Agencies. "Collaborative Case Consultation" was the title given to a solution-seeking gathering of corrections professionals to brainstorm options, services, needs, and address challenges within release planning. The

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<sup>27</sup> "Minnesota Department of Corrections Policy Manual", 203.018 – Agent Assignment and Release Planning, [Policy Manual Home Page \(mn.gov\)](#)

<sup>28</sup> Lbid.

<sup>29</sup> Training was mandatory for MN DOC staff and Community Corrections Act (CCA) agencies encouraged it. The number presented in this metric is a conservative estimate as it does not represent community corrections professionals from CCA agencies as their training records are documented outside of MN DOC.



revision of the Agent Assignment Release Planning Policy (203.018) affirmed this meeting would be required if an individual was approaching release and lacked an approved residence.

- Progress:
  - Following the prototypes detailed in the DOC Homeless Mitigation Plan, the benefits of this prototype spread organically throughout the agency. Due to virtual meeting capabilities that evolved post pandemic, what is now known as ‘staffings’ occur daily to brainstorm solutions and address challenges.
  - The implementation of training for the Agent Assignment and Release Planning Policy affirmed the requirement for this solution-seeking step in the release planning process; therefore, an implementation plan for the Collaborative Case Consultation model was never formally put into action as it organically took hold.
- Measures:
  - The metric that is referred to track the most egregious impacts of lacking approved residences for persons preparing to release from Minnesota Correctional Facilities was that of individuals who are incarcerated for lack of approved residence. It is now the common practice to arrange a ‘staffing’ where these experiences and outcomes can be avoided entirely.
  - Impact on homeless release data as shared throughout this report.
- Challenges:
  - The DOC can create processes and practices to seek solutions for challenges; however, equitable access and inclusivity to all community-based resources is outside the realm of control of the agency. For example, there are very few health focused residential settings and treatment settings that are inclusive to individuals with certain offense backgrounds and predatory offender registration requirements.
- **Implement the Self-Reported Assessment tool** across Minnesota Correctional Facilities.
  - Progress:
    - Implementation began in November 2023.
    - Data collection at intake has expanded opportunities to address housing instability needs much earlier during incarceration, not just during release planning. Outputs of the self-reported assessment tool as it pertains to housing need:

Males (1,440)	Housing Need Level		
MnSTARR Risk Level <sup>30</sup>	Low	Medium	High
Low	23% (97)	23% (99)	21% (119)
Medium	20% (83)	23% (97)	24% (138)
High	27% (114)	25% (107)	26% (147)
Very High	30% (129)	29% (121)	29% (169)
Total	100% (423)	100% (424)	100% (573)

<sup>30</sup> “Minnesota Department of Corrections: Minnesota Screening Tool Assessing Recidivism Risk 2.0, (MnSTARR 2.0), [State of Minnesota \(mn.gov\)](https://www.mn.gov)

Women (297)	Housing Need Level		
MnSTARR Risk Level	Low	Medium	High
Low	26% (21)	19% (17)	29% (36)
Medium	16% (13)	18% (16)	10% (13)
High	18% (15)	26% (23)	26% (33)
Very High	40% (33)	37% (33)	35% (44)
Total	100% (82)	100% (89)	100% (126)

- Implementation has started for multi-disciplinary teams which consists of corrections professionals and the incarcerated person. Currently, these teams meet with individuals assessed as higher risk needs (per the MnSTARR) and paths are co-created to address needs during the period of incarceration. These are spaces where issues and concerns related to housing instability can be named and strategies/solutions identified.
  - Case management and community correctional supervision collaborate with DOC Community Stability Team Housing Coordinators and have been engaged in training opportunities for Agent Assignment Release Planning Policy (203.018).
- Measures
  - Once the Self-Reported Assessment tool is fully operationalized, we will receive more descriptive data scoping outputs.
  - Impact on homeless release data as shared throughout this report.
- Challenges
  - Staffing capacity and the limitations posed by this reality is a consistent challenge.
  - Existing data management system is antiquated and not available to provide any value for an impact evaluation. As such, current efforts are focused on scoping the need and developing effective processes to address needs. As new data and information management systems are implemented to allow DOC to make business need decisions, refinement of operationalizing the self-reported assessment tool and measuring impact will become more feasible<sup>31</sup>.

Process on recommendations to the legislature (recommendations designed so that DOC can provide direct service to mitigate homelessness and support housing stability)

- Allocate Permanent Funding to the DOC for **temporary rental assistance**.
  - Progress:
    - As an existing process was already in place, this was fully implemented.
  - Measures:
    - Data on referrals for rental assistance are received and information on expenditures are tracked for purposes of planning, operations, and accountability.
      - Within fiscal year 2024 (July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 through June 30, 2024), 824 referrals were received by Housing Coordinators within the MN DOC Community Stability Team.

<sup>31</sup> “2023 Department of Corrections Legislative Accomplishments”, [DOC Legislative Accomplishments 2023\\_tcm1089-580392.pdf \(mn.gov\)](https://www.dccr.state.mn.us/legis/accomplishments/2023-tcm1089-580392.pdf)

Within these referrals, approximately 400 payments were made from this rental assistance allocation.

- Thus far in fiscal year 2025, 123 referrals have been made which has resulted in 83 payments of rental assistance<sup>32</sup>.
  - Impact on homeless release data as shared throughout this report.
- Challenges:
  - Due to limitations in current funding, staffing capacity, and the correctional service delivery system, not all individuals on correctional supervision can be served through this funding resource. Individuals on probation with Community Corrections Agencies or with County Probation Offices are not eligible to receive assistance through this resource<sup>33</sup>.
  - Overall lack of affordable housing in the state.
- Invest in **culturally specific, trauma informed housing and homeless resources and services** that are inclusive to individuals exiting jail, prison institutions, and treatment facilities.
  - Progress:
    - The 2023 legislative session brought forth investments in culturally specific transitional housing. Implementation of those legislative allocations is under way and will result in Joint Powers Agreements with a few the Tribal Nations in the state<sup>34</sup>.
    - DOC has contracted with Minnesota Management and Budget Management Analysis Division<sup>35</sup> for a developmental evaluation of the design and implementation of these housing resources, along with identification of promising practices and recommendations for continued growth. The promising practices and recommendations will be folded into the MN DOC's Housing Stability Workplan (an evolution of the foundation provided through the [Homeless Mitigation Plan](#)) and ongoing legislative reporting through this report.
  - Measures:
    - MN DOC knows that intentional investments in culturally responsive transitional housing reduces the release of BIPOC individuals to an unknown homeless location, specifically within the Native American population of individuals who have been released from the state's prisons to the community (see Appendix).
      - \$600,000 is dedicated to pass through to Tribal Nations by way of Joint Powers Agreements for the purpose of developing Culturally Responsive Transitional Housing Models.
      - The Healing House in Bemidji, Minnesota (a culturally responsive transitional housing that serves corrections systems involved Native American women) is funded through the \$250,000 that is granted to Northwest Indian Community

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<sup>32</sup>Not all referrals made to MN DOC Housing Coordinators need and/or receive rental assistance as an output of the resolution of the referral. MN DOC Housing Coordinators have connections to other housing resources that are funded through community-based service providers and other MN DOC funded housing resources. The practice followed is to connect the individual to choose the pathway that best meets the needs of the individual and is connected to the community-based network of resources to support long-term housing stability.

<sup>33</sup> "Minnesota Department of Correction Fact Sheet: Correctional Delivery Systems", [Correctional Delivery Systems tcm1089-461952.pdf \(mn.gov\)](#)

<sup>34</sup> "2023 Department of Corrections Legislative Accomplishments", Minnesota Department of Corrections, [DOC Legislative Accomplishments 2023 tcm1089-580392.pdf \(mn.gov\)](#)

<sup>35</sup> "Analytical Studies and Program Evaluation", [Analytical Studies and Program Evaluation / Management Analysis and Development - MMB \(mn.gov\)](#)

Development Center through the MN DOC Culturally Responsive Transitions Services grant<sup>36</sup>.

- Process level evaluation will be provided through the final work product within the contract evaluation.
- Outputs of the Joint Powers Agreements will be shared in future reports and will respectfully center parameters of data sovereignty.
- Impact on homeless release data as shared throughout this report.
- Challenges:
  - The investments of the 2023 legislative session were the start of important community-based developments in inclusive housing resources, but they are not enough.
  - Contracting and procurement processes, especially for the development of new resources, takes time. The design and strategic planning of these resources must be person-centered and community centered. The process to follow the technical components of procurement and contracting create delays.
- **Fund two full-time Housing Coordinators within the DOC.**
  - Progress:
    - Since an existing model for these positions was in existence and supported through a 2023 legislative allocation for one permanent full-time Housing Coordinator position, there are now two full-time Housing Coordinators on the MN DOC Community Stability Team that organizationally reside within the agency's Reentry Services unit.<sup>37</sup>
  - Measures:
    - A variety of metrics are gathered to illuminate the footprint of these professionals and the Community Stability Team at large. To name a few, referrals made, rental assistance expenditures, and a variety of measures pertaining to outreach and engagement with community partners.
      - Within fiscal year 2024 (July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 through June 30, 2024), 824 referrals were received by Housing Coordinators within the MN DOC Community Stability Team. Within these referrals, approximately 400 payments were made from this rental assistance allocation.
      - Thus far in fiscal year 2025, 123 referrals have been made which has resulted in 83 payments of rental assistance.
      - Housing Coordinators have connected with over 500 housing resources (e.g. transitional housing, room rental recovery residences, motels/hotels, supportive housing, and other private property owners). This number continues to grow on a weekly basis as new connections and relationships are developed.
    - Impact on homeless release data as shared throughout this report.
  - Challenges:
    - The development of these positions illustrates MN DOC's priority to addressing and eliminating experiences and supporting pathways to housing stability. The focus of these positions is on serving individuals who are on supervised release and the corrections professionals and community partners who engage with these individuals and their families. In addition, these professionals can serve persons on MN DOC probation; however, those

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<sup>36</sup> "Ombishkaa", NWICDC, [Ombishkaa | NWICDC](#)

<sup>37</sup> "Reentry Services and Resources", [Community Reentry and Non Profits / Department of Corrections \(mn.gov\)](#)

- County Probation Offices<sup>38</sup> and the individuals they serve are outside of the capacity of the current two positions.
- Although capacity has increased due to the development of these two positions, there remains to be a lack of inclusive community-based housing resources that will serve justice involved persons and families.
- Provide resource gap funding to **connect individuals exiting MCFs with Housing Stabilization Services Medicaid benefit.**
    - Progress:
      - An investment to design a service to support pathways to Housing Stabilization Services following a release to the community was provided within the 2023 legislative allocation “Public Safety through Housing Stability”.<sup>39</sup> As a result of engagement with multiple stakeholders (including but not limited to impacted persons, community partners and corrections professionals), these services will be named *Housing Connection Services*.
      - MN DOC is pursuing Joint Powers Agreements with Tribal Nations to develop a culturally responsive approach and the remainder of the allocated funds will be granted out to community partners who are currently Housing Stabilization Services Medicaid benefit providers within the community.
      - DOC has contracted with Minnesota Management and Budget Management Analysis Division for a developmental evaluation of the design and implementation of this service, along with identification of promising practices and recommendations for continued growth. The promising practices and recommendations will be folded into the MN DOC’s Housing Stability Workplan (an evolution of the foundation provided through the Homeless Mitigation Plan) and ongoing legislative reporting through this report.
    - Measures:
      - Process level evaluation will be provided through the final work product within the contracted evaluation.
      - Outputs of the Joint Powers Agreements will be shared in future reports and will respectfully center parameters of data sovereignty.
      - Additional metrics for measuring progress will be co-created through the design process with community partners who are contracted to this work.
      - Impact on homeless release data as shared through this report.
    - Challenges:
      - MN DOC is grateful for the investments made by the 2023 legislative session to develop out this service and other housing resources, and many of these investments were to build out operational implementation plans to new services and resources. A person-centered and community-centered approach to engagement of impacted persons, corrections professionals and community partners was a key component to the design and implementation planning process. This required time and capacity, and along with the process for procurement and contracting created delays in implementation.
  - Invest in **data systems to connect the DOC to other state and federal systems.**
    - Progress:

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<sup>38</sup> “Correctional Delivery Systems”, Minnesota Department of Corrections Fact Sheet, [Correctional Delivery Systems tcm1089-461952.pdf \(mn.gov\)](#)

<sup>39</sup> “2023 Department of Corrections Legislative Accomplishment”, Minnesota Department of Corrections, [DOC Legislative Accomplishments 2023 tcm1089-580392.pdf \(mn.gov\)](#)

- The 2023 legislative session brought forth a substantial investment to improve the outdated transactional data management system within the MN DOC. Through an appropriation of approximately \$54 million over four years, the Statewide Public Safety Data Infrastructure allocation will modernize and secure data management and analysis systems. MN DOC’s homeless response and goals to support pathways to housing stability are a focal point in the implementation of this investment.
    - Outreach to stakeholders of other correlating data management systems, the Homeless Management Information System,<sup>40</sup> have been supportive to MN DOC becoming a user of this system.
  - Measures:
    - Subsequent legislative reports will be reflective of the new ways in which MN DOC is collecting information on experiences of homelessness, interventions implemented to support pathways to housing stability, and overarchingly, the housing journey of individuals following a release from prison.
  - Challenges:
    - Although MN DOC will be able to identify the needs of incarcerated individuals who are facing housing instability and the impact of interventions, there continues to be policy barriers (both local and state), a lack of inclusive community-based resources, and affordable housing which would support long-term housing stability.

## IX. Conclusion

This report and findings reflect the continued downward trend of homelessness experienced by individuals following release from the state’s prisons. This continued decline is attributed to socializing the foundational focus of housing stability within the mission “*Transforming Lives for a Safer Minnesota*” of the Minnesota Department of Corrections, mindful design and implementation of services and resources in a human-centered and community-centered manner through co-creation with impacted persons and the corrections professionals, and intentional investments to disrupt disparities on BIPOC communities. The development of inclusive community-based resources and services along with the lack of affordable housing in the state continue to be a barrier to long-term housing stability. Promising and emergent practices continue to be identified, and there is more learning to be done to build out inclusive and responsive continuums of housing resources across all communities within the state. The DOC is grateful for and values the partnerships with all stakeholders connected to the work and these findings – impacted persons and families, community partners, Tribal Nations, government entities and corrections systems professionals. The DOC will continue to track and analyze data and look forward to the new data and information management system capabilities to identify new opportunities to be more responsive to the needs of impacted persons, communities, and professionals.

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<sup>40</sup> “Minnesota’s HMIS: Homeless Management Information System”, [Minnesota's HMIS \(hmismn.org\)](https://hmismn.org)

## X. Appendix

### Releases into Homelessness, Known & Unknown Locations

#### By Age, 2023

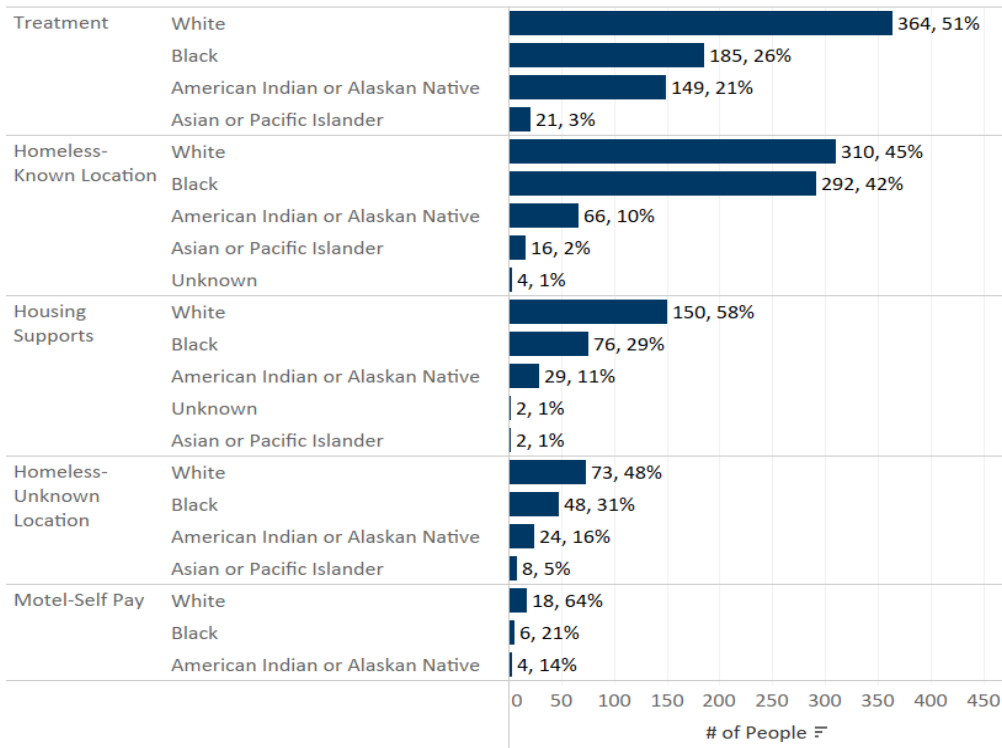
Age Group	Known Location	Unknown Location	Grand Total
Under 25	26	6	32
25-34	260	41	301
35-44	236	59	295
45-54	104	29	133
55-64	50	15	65
Over 65	12	3	15

### Releases into Homelessness, Known & Unknown Locations

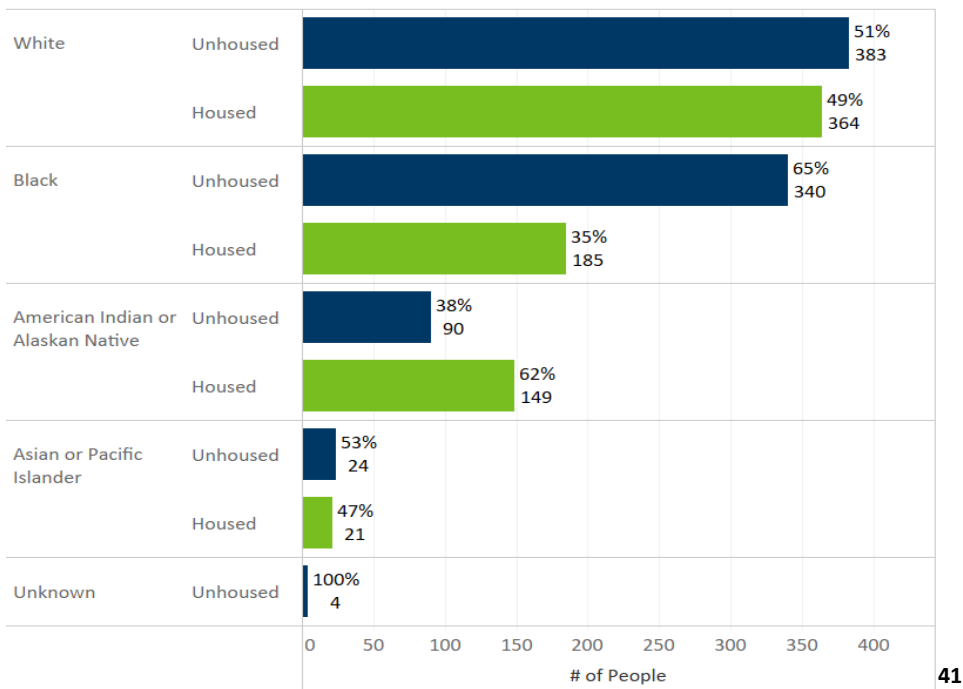
#### By Age and Race, 2023

Age Group	Race	Known Location	Unknown Location	Grand Total
Under 25	American Indian or Alaskan Native		3	3
	Asian or Pacific Islander		1	1
	Black	16	1	17
	Unknown	1		1
	White	9	1	10
25-34	American Indian or Alaskan Native	30	7	37
	Asian or Pacific Islander	6	2	8
	Black	120	17	137
	Unknown	2		2
	White	102	15	117
35-44	American Indian or Alaskan Native	21	10	31
	Asian or Pacific Islander	10	4	14
	Black	87	15	102
	White	118	30	148
45-54	American Indian or Alaskan Native	10	3	13
	Black	42	9	51
	White	52	17	69
55-64	American Indian or Alaskan Native	5		5
	Asian or Pacific Islander		1	1
	Black	24	4	28
	Unknown	1		1
	White	20	10	30
Over 65	American Indian or Alaskan Native		1	1
	Black	3	2	5
	White	9		9

## Release Location, by Race, 2023



## Disparities in Release Locations By Race, 2023



<sup>41</sup> For purposes of this graphic, “Housed” refers to a release location that includes “Homeless to Known Location” and other release locations (not including private residence). Future release analysis will include those releasing to a private residence to show a more descriptive illustration. “Unhoused” refers to release locations that are considered “Homeless to Unknown Locations”. The profound output of this graphic is to show the impact of intentional investments in culturally responsive housing resources.