

# 2024 Homelessness Report



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## I. Executive Summary

The Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) collected and analyzed data on releases from Minnesota Correctional Facilities (MCFs) in calendar year 2024. Between January 1 and December 31, 2024, the DOC released 4,799 individuals from MCFs, and approximately 15 percent of those releases were homeless to known or unknown locations.<sup>1</sup> This represents a continued, multi-year decline, including 128 fewer homeless releases compared to 2023. Since 2021, releases to any form of homelessness have decreased by 37 percent, and releases to homeless unknown locations have fallen by 51 percent.

Several factors are associated with this decline:

- **Housing Stability Investments:** Legislation enacted in 2023 expanded rental assistance, housing stability services, and coordination capacity. In 2024, the DOC made 860 referrals for housing support and directed approximately \$786,296 toward rental assistance and related services.
- **Improved Casework and Policy Alignment:** DOC supervision agents have updated policy language to guide case consultations, referral processes, and release planning. In 2024, DOC housing coordinators conducted on average of two case consultations a month, completed 860 referrals, and took part in the rollout of the updated Case Management Referral Process, which combines housing-related requests for resources into a single process.
- **Training and Professional Development:** The DOC updated the statewide academy curriculum and revised its release planning policy to incorporate new housing-focused priorities. In 2024, the DOC offered 20 sessions of *Agent Assignment and Release Planning Training* to 325 DOC, 169 Community Corrections Act counties (CCA), and nine County Probation Offices (CPO) staff. In addition, the DOC offered training to corrections professionals to help them with finding resources for their clients. The DOC offered *Find Your Helpers* training three times in 2024; these training opportunities included 58 DOC, 33 CCA, and 19 CPO staff.
- **Collaboration and Coordination:** Partnerships with state agencies, Tribal Nations, and community providers have expanded access to inclusive housing resources. The DOC and corrections partners are implementing multi-disciplinary transition teams (MDTs) under the Minnesota Rehabilitation and Reinvestment Act (MRRRA) to improve coordination and support individualized release plans.

Stable housing is a key factor to successful reentry and disengagement from the criminal justice system. DOC research shows strong association between housing instability and higher recidivism rates.<sup>2</sup> Housing stability is also linked to improved health outcomes and community well-being.<sup>3</sup> Addressing housing instability enhances public safety and strengthens community well-being statewide.

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<sup>1</sup> The total cost of salaries, printing, and supplies incurred in the development and preparation of this report was approximately \$9,150 (reported as required by Minn. Stat. §3.197). This report can be provided in another format upon request.

<sup>2</sup> Duwe, G. & Clark, V. (2023). The Concurrent and Predictive Validity of a Needs and Responsivity Assessment System. *Corrections: Policy, Practice and Research*, 10(1), 41–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23774657.2023.2298807>.

<sup>3</sup> Duwe, G. & Clark, V. (2023). The Concurrent and Predictive Validity of a Needs and Responsivity Assessment System. *Corrections: Policy, Practice and Research*, 10(1), 41–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23774657.2023.2298807>.

## II. Report Background

In May 2021, the Minnesota Legislature created 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, 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.

The report must include:

1. The total number of individuals released to homelessness from Minnesota Correctional Facilities (MCFs);
2. The total number of individuals released to homelessness by each MCF;
3. The total number of individuals released to homelessness by county of release;
4. The total number of individuals under supervised, intensive supervised, or conditional release following release from a MCF who reported experiencing homelessness or lack of housing stability.

## III. Definitions

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>4</sup> in 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, when people are temporarily living with friends or family because they have lost their own housing, is considered homeless if that arrangement has persisted less than one year.

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<sup>4</sup> “What is HMIS”, [What is HMIS? — Minnesota's HMIS](#)

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

- Without a home for a year or more, OR
- 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>5</sup>

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)<sup>6</sup> defines four categories of homelessness:

***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>7</sup>

***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 lacks the resources or support network needed to obtain other permanent housing.<sup>8</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

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, <https://www.hud.gov/>

<sup>7</sup> HUD Exchange, “Category 1: Literally Homeless”, [CoC and ESG Homeless Eligibility - Category 1: Literally Homeless - HUD Exchange](#)

<sup>8</sup> HUD Exchange, “Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homelessness”, [CoC and ESG Homeless Eligibility - Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homelessness - HUD Exchange](#).

- Can be expected to continue in this status for an extended period due to special needs or barriers.<sup>9</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.

## IV. Data Analysis – Method & Limitations

**Method:** The data source was the individual’s release plan information within the calendar year of 2023 from the DOC Correctional Offender Management System (COMS). The 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 data on the experience of individuals initially following their release from a Minnesota state correctional facility.

**Limitations:** This information should be considered representative rather than exact. Data reflects releases, not unique individuals, as the DOC may release some people multiple times within a year. The analysis was conducted manually, and limitations are primarily due to the outdated and transactional COMS program. The Legislature’s 2023 investment in the DOC’s data and information management systems is expected to improve accuracy and efficiency in future years. Despite these constraints, the analysis offers valuable insight into where individuals go upon release, which counties and communities experience the greatest need, and the pathways of community transition for individuals.

**Additional Release Analysis:** Since the first report in 2021, the DOC has received recurring inquiries about post-release housing outcomes. Additionally, system-involved individuals were a focus within the One Minnesota Plan’s measurable goal of Housing Stability<sup>10</sup>. This, in conjunction with the development of a new data and information management system within the DOC, led to defining releases within four distinct categories:

- Homeless – Known Location<sup>11</sup>
- Homeless – Unknown Location<sup>12</sup>
- Residential Service
- Private Residence

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> “Housing Stability”, One Minnesota Plan, <https://mn.gov/mmb/one-mn-plan/measurable-goals/housing-stability.jsp>.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> Individuals released from prison (regardless of length of time incarcerated) who does not know where he/she will stay the night of their release. This includes, but is not limited to, release plans that identify an individual be release to the “county of commitment”, “agent’s office”, “homeless” or an “emergency homeless shelter”. Access to shelters or supportive services cannot be guaranteed or reserved before the person is released from prison.

**Residential Service:** The “Residential Service” category includes permanent and temporary placements supported by a variety of funding streams and service models. These settings often include supports funded through the Minnesota Department of Human Services, housing and homeless services systems, or income assistance programs. To better capture this diversity, the DOC tracks eight subcategories:

- **Civil Commitment:** Civil commitment is a legal process through which individuals with mental illness, chemical dependency, or developmental disabilities can be mandated to receive treatment, often in custody.<sup>13</sup>
- **Group Congregate Living – Special Services:** Residences funded through Housing Supports<sup>14</sup> where other funding resources, such as waivers and long-term homeless supportive services funds, are used to fund specific services to support the needs of residents. Examples include board and lodge and customized living settings.<sup>15</sup>
- **Group Congregate Living:** Residences funded through Housing Supports.<sup>16</sup>
- **Healthcare Residential Setting:** Includes, but not limited to, Crisis Respite, assisted living<sup>17</sup>, and other residential settings that provide a nursing level of care. To receive services within these settings, individuals would need to receive a MNChoices Assessment and be approved for waiver services.<sup>18</sup>
- **Hospital:** Admission to a hospital immediately following release.
- **Transitional Housing:** Short-term and/or temporary housing as identified by the entity and/or funding resource that supports the operational costs of the housing resource. Examples include but are not limited to the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) transitional housing<sup>19</sup> and Tribal nation transitional housing programs.<sup>20</sup>
- **Treatment – Mental Health:** Short-term and/or acute treatment resources with a residential component that serves to promote and provide a pathway for stabilizing mental health concerns. An example is an Intensive Residential Treatment Service.<sup>21</sup>
- **Treatment – Substance Use Disorder:** Residential settings that focus on providing substance use disorder treatment levels of care.<sup>22</sup> Examples include, but are not limited to,

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<sup>13</sup> See Minn. Stat. ch. 253B (2024)

<sup>14</sup> “Housing programs and services”, Minnesota Department of Human Services, <https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/children-and-families/economic-assistance/housing/programs-and-services/>.

<sup>15</sup> “Customized Living (Including 24 Hour Customized Living)”, Minnesota Department of Human Services, [https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET\\_DYNAMIC\\_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=id\\_001787](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=id_001787).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> “Medical Assistance (MA) coverage for home and community based services through a waiver program”, Minnesota Department of Human Services, <https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/adults/health-care/health-care-programs/programs-and-services/ma-waiver-programs.jsp>.

<sup>19</sup> “MACV’s Housing for Veterans”, MACV Ending Veteran Homelessness, <https://www.mac-v.org/our-services/housing/>

<sup>20</sup> “Housing programs and services”, Minnesota Department of Human Services, <https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/children-and-families/economic-assistance/housing/programs-and-services/>.

<sup>21</sup> “Intensive Residential Treatment Services”, Minnesota Department of Human Services, <https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/adult-mental-health/intensive-residential-treatment-services/>.

<sup>22</sup> “Alcohol, drugs and addictions: programs and services”, Minnesota Department of Human Services, <https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/adults/health-care/alcohol-drugs-addictions/programs-and-services/>.

residential treatment, intensive outpatient treatment with lodging, and intensive outpatient treatment with room rental stipend.<sup>23</sup>

**Releases to Private Residences:** This category includes releases to a home or apartment either owned or rented by the released individual or by others. However, many arrangements are temporary or unstable – for example, “couch-hopping.” Because most individuals leaving prison do not hold leases or own homes, private residence releases often mask underlying housing instability.

**Releases excluded from analysis:** The following types of releases are excluded from this analysis:

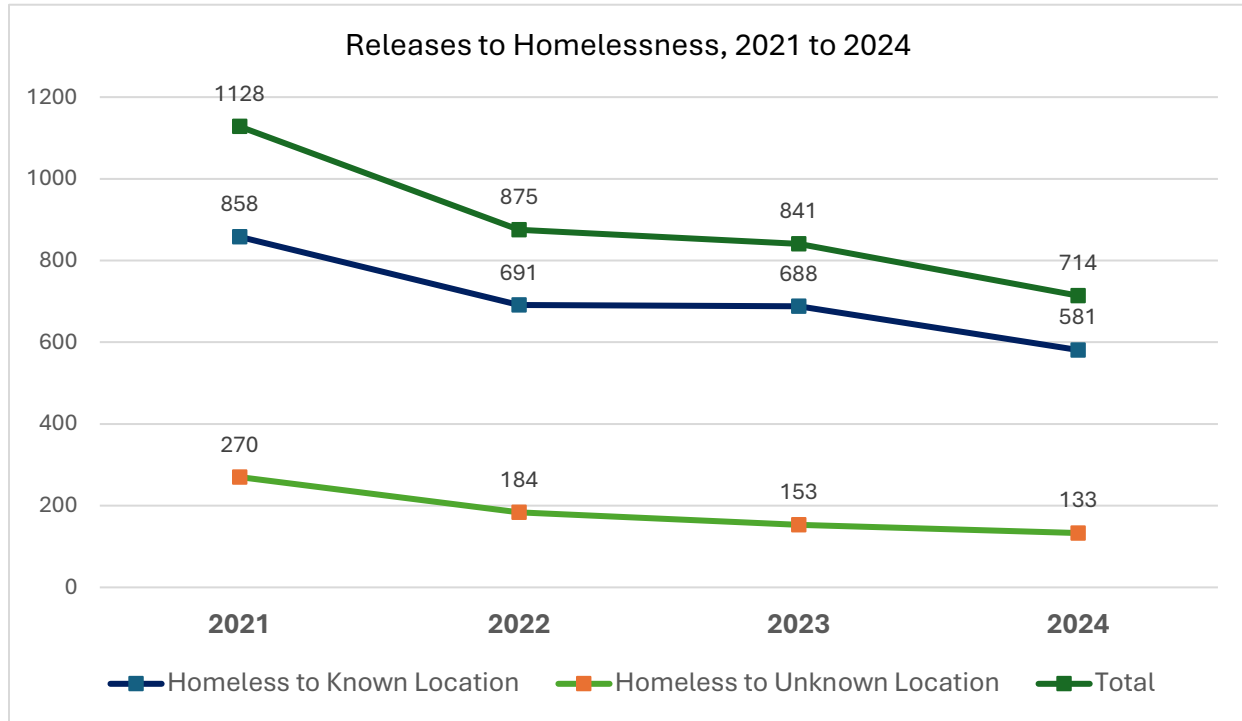
- **Releases to detainers, transfers of custody to other states or the federal government:** This exclusion includes detainers where an individual could be released from the detainer, or the detainer resolved on the same day of release or a short period of time thereafter. The current data system and lack of integration of data systems prohibits seeing the full picture of an individual’s release to the community where detainers are concerned.
- **Work release and interstate compact supervision releases:** Overall blanket exclusion to releases to work release program and DOC Interstate Supervision.
- **Releases at the time of termination of a sentence:** The analysis excludes individuals when they have completed their full sentence and are no longer under correctional supervision. While some individuals in this group are released into homelessness, they are no longer under the custody of the Commissioner of Corrections and fall outside the scope of this report.

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<sup>23</sup> Substance use disorder outpatient treatment with a room rental stipend in a MN Association for Sober Homes residence partner discontinued on August 1, 2025.



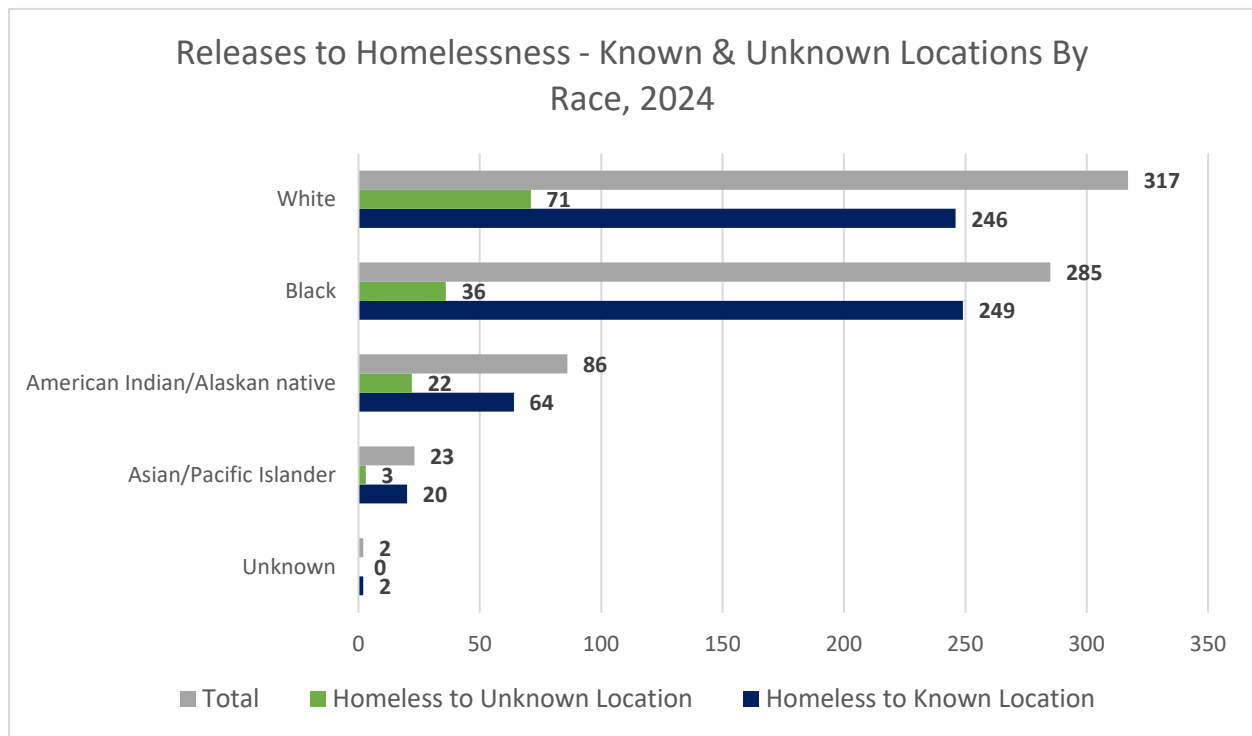
## V. 2024 Homelessness Data



### Milestones

The continued decrease in homelessness among individuals released from Minnesota state prisons in 2024 is associated with several key initiatives:

- **Legislative investments in the Community Stability Team:** This DOC team provides housing-focused support, resource navigation, and guidance to corrections professionals helping individuals in planning for release.
- **Rental assistance funding:** Legislative allocations for the DOC's rental assistance program, supplemented by agency funds, have increased housing stability options.
- **Person-centered case management:** Continued implementation of individualized, person-centered approaches within case management, programs, and services.
- **Refined release coding:** Improved methods for tracking individuals' post-release locations.



\*Individuals who identify as BIPOC make up approximately 55 percent of all homeless releases. Of the women who release as homeless, 58 percent of them identify as BIPOC.

### Releases to Homelessness, Known and Unknown Locations by Facility, 2024

| <b><i>Facility</i></b> | <b><i>Known Location</i></b> | <b><i>Unknown Location</i></b> | <b><i>Total</i></b> |
|------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>MCF-FRB</i>         | 131                          | 40                             | 171                 |
| <i>MCF-STW</i>         | 99                           | 21                             | 120                 |
| <i>MCF-SCL</i>         | 76                           | 41                             | 117                 |
| <i>MCF-LL</i>          | 80                           | 9                              | 89                  |
| <i>MCF-ML</i>          | 38                           | 8                              | 46                  |
| <i>MCF-RC</i>          | 74                           | 3                              | 77                  |
| <i>MCF-TOGO</i>        | 26                           | 0                              | 26                  |
| <i>MCF-WR</i>          | 30                           | 1                              | 31                  |
| <i>MCF-SHK</i>         | 16                           | 8                              | 24                  |
| <i>MCF-OPH</i>         | 11                           | 1                              | 12                  |
| <i>MCF-RW</i>          | 0                            | 1                              | 1                   |
| <i>Total:</i>          | 581                          | 133                            | 714                 |

Releases to Homelessness, Known and Unknown Locations – by County,  
2024

| Top 10 Counties |                                   |                                     |                      |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>County:</b>  | <b><u>Known<br/>Location:</u></b> | <b><u>Unknown<br/>Location:</u></b> | <b><u>Total:</u></b> |
| Hennepin        | 202                               | 11                                  | 213                  |
| Ramsey          | 73                                | 28                                  | 101                  |
| St. Louis       | 37                                | 12                                  | 49                   |
| Clay            | 29                                | 13                                  | 42                   |
| Stearns         | 32                                | 5                                   | 37                   |
| Olmsted         | 31                                | 2                                   | 33                   |
| Beltrami        | 17                                | 5                                   | 22                   |
| Anoka           | 20                                | 1                                   | 21                   |
| Blue Earth      | 14                                | 5                                   | 19                   |
| Polk            | 10                                | 8                                   | 18                   |
| Other Counties  |                                   |                                     |                      |
| <b>County:</b>  | <b><u>Known<br/>Location:</u></b> | <b><u>Unknown<br/>Location:</u></b> | <b><u>Total:</u></b> |
| Becker          | 5                                 | 1                                   | 6                    |
| Benton          | 4                                 | 3                                   | 7                    |
| Brown           | 1                                 | 1                                   | 2                    |
| Cass            | 5                                 | 1                                   | 6                    |
| Chippewa        | 7                                 | 3                                   | 10                   |
| Clearwater      | 1                                 | 1                                   | 2                    |
| Crow Wing       | 4                                 | 3                                   | 7                    |
| Dakota          | 3                                 | 2                                   | 5                    |
| Douglas         | 6                                 | 0                                   | 6                    |
| Fillmore        | 0                                 | 1                                   | 1                    |
| Freeborn        | 5                                 | 3                                   | 8                    |
| Goodhue         | 6                                 | 0                                   | 6                    |

|                |                                          |                                            |                      |
|----------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Hubbard        | 2                                        | 0                                          | 2                    |
| Isanti         | 1                                        | 2                                          | 3                    |
| Itasca         | 5                                        | 2                                          | 7                    |
| Kanabec        | 3                                        | 0                                          | 3                    |
| Kandiyohi      | 4                                        | 1                                          | 5                    |
| Koochiching    | 0                                        | 2                                          | 2                    |
| Lake           | 0                                        | 1                                          | 1                    |
| Lincoln        | 1                                        | 0                                          | 1                    |
| <b>County:</b> | <b><u>Known</u><br/><u>Location:</u></b> | <b><u>Unknown</u><br/><u>Location:</u></b> | <b><u>Total:</u></b> |
| Lyon           | 7                                        | 0                                          | 7                    |
| Mahnomen       | 1                                        | 0                                          | 1                    |
| Martin         | 3                                        | 0                                          | 3                    |
| McLeod         | 2                                        | 0                                          | 2                    |
| Mille Lacs     | 0                                        | 2                                          | 2                    |
| Mower          | 1                                        | 2                                          | 3                    |
| Nobles         | 9                                        | 2                                          | 11                   |
| Otter Tail     | 0                                        | 1                                          | 1                    |
| Pennington     | 1                                        | 0                                          | 1                    |
| Pine           | 0                                        | 1                                          | 1                    |
| Redwood        | 1                                        | 0                                          | 1                    |
| Rice           | 2                                        | 1                                          | 3                    |
| Roseau         | 0                                        | 1                                          | 1                    |
| Scott          | 6                                        | 1                                          | 7                    |
| Sherburne      | 1                                        | 2                                          | 3                    |
| Steele         | 3                                        | 0                                          | 3                    |
| Wadena         | 4                                        | 0                                          | 4                    |
| Waseca         | 1                                        | 0                                          | 1                    |
| Washington     | 0                                        | 1                                          | 1                    |
| Watsonwan      | 2                                        | 0                                          | 2                    |
| Wilkin         | 1                                        | 0                                          | 1                    |
| Winona         | 1                                        | 2                                          | 3                    |

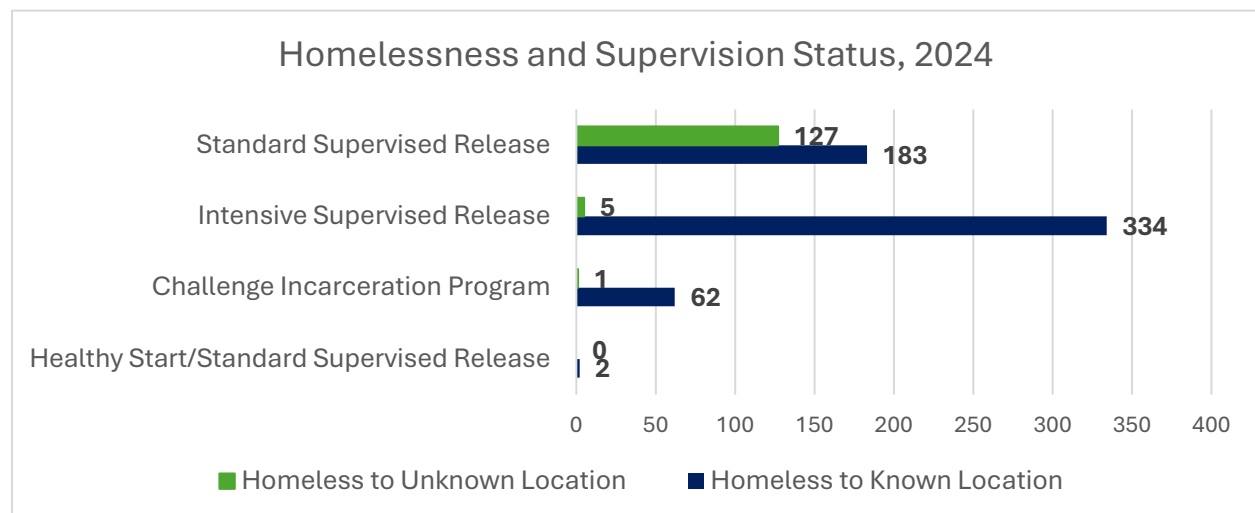
|               |            |            |            |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Wright</b> | <b>7</b>   | <b>0</b>   | <b>7</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>600</b> | <b>172</b> | <b>772</b> |

\*Counties not named within the table did not have a homeless release during 2024.

\*\*Releases to these locations do not reflect the county of commitment or the county and/or correctional entity assigned supervision for that individual.

Due to population density, Hennepin County continues to have the highest numbers of homeless releases since the reporting in 2021. However, *Releases to homeless – unknown location* reduced by almost 66 percent in Hennepin County from 2023 to 2024 and 80 percent since reporting began in 2021.

The top 10 counties with the highest *releases to homeless to known and unknown locations* comprise approximately 75 percent of all releases to homelessness and 13 percent of all releases. Approximately 24 percent 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 reduced by specifically focusing reduction efforts on the top ten counties noted above.

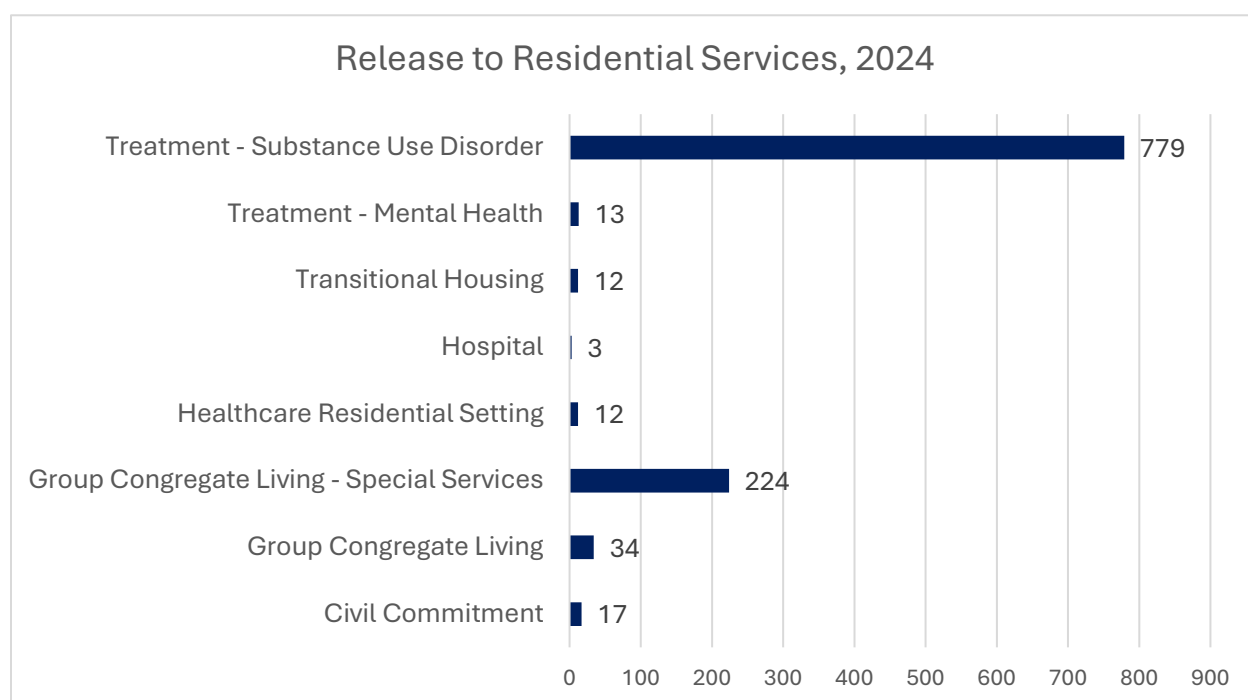


Statutory and policy requirements mandate that individuals release to “suitable and available residences”.<sup>24</sup> It not uncommon to see large numbers of individuals who participate in the

<sup>24</sup> DOC Policy 204.060, *Challenge Incarceration Program – Phase 1*; Minnesota Department of Corrections, Policy 203.018, *Agent Assignment and Release Planning*, <https://policy.doc.mn.gov/DOCPolicy/>.

Challenge Incarceration Program<sup>25</sup> (CIP) and those on Intensive Supervised Release<sup>26</sup> (ISR) experience a release to *homeless to known location*. Many individuals on ISR have long histories of criminal justice involvement, high criminogenic needs, histories of homelessness, and mental health or substance use disorders.

Though *releases to homeless known and unknown locations* are an important metric for understanding housing instability for individuals on supervised release, it's important to place these releases in the larger context of all releases. *Releases to residential services* are the second most common release location. The data below shows that the majority of people releasing to residential services do so to enter treatment for a substance use disorder. The data reflects the release status and/or location on the first night of release. Post-release pathways are rarely linear, and connection to services is critical for long-term success. Individuals releasing to these locations may face further housing instability when they are ready to transition from these services. The DOC is a partner in the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness<sup>27</sup> (MICH) and the Olmstead Subcabinet<sup>28</sup> and their corresponding strategic plans. The data below assists in showing how individuals releasing from prisons connect with community resources, shows service gaps, and serves as a catalyst for collaborative efforts to reduce barriers to stable housing.



<sup>25</sup> DOC Policy 244.17, *Challenge Incarceration Program*, <https://policy.doc.mn.gov/DOCPolicy/>; Minn. Stat. § 244.17 (2024).

<sup>26</sup> DOC Policy 620.100, *Intensive Supervised Release Supervision Standards*, <https://policy.doc.mn.gov/DOCPolicy/>.

<sup>27</sup> [The Council | Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness](#)

<sup>28</sup> [Subcabinet / Minnesota Olmstead Implementation Office](#)

## VI. Progress, Steps Taken and Challenges to the Implementation of the Homeless Mitigation Plan

The DOC views the agency's 2022 Homeless Mitigation Plan<sup>29</sup> as the foundation toward building an effective response to homelessness and housing instability within the corrections system. The DOC's goal is the elimination of *releases to homeless unknown locations*. The Homeless Mitigation Plan included several recommendations for the DOC and the Legislature. This section details progress toward those recommendations.

### Recommendations for the DOC:

#### 1. Conduct equity reviews on all DOC policies

The goal is to promote consistency across the department and equitable access to transformational services and supports for incarcerated people and people on correctional supervision.

- **Progress:** The DOC has established a policy review process, documented in DOC Policy 100.100 - Policies, Operating Procedures, and Post Orders. A primary focus is on removing unnecessary barriers for incarcerated persons to access services, privileges, and/or incentives, and to encourage leaders to provide insight into how the policies and policy revisions can contribute to success.
- **Steps Taken:**
  - The DOC policy is now organized in three categories:
    - **Enhanced:** Policies identified by DOC executive leadership that have significant scope, operational importance, or policy impact, and must be reviewed for potential revision by policy chairs at least annually.
    - **Standard:** Policies that are more limited in scope than enhanced policies. Standard policies must be reviewed by DOC for potential revision by policy chairs at least once every two years.
    - **Technical:** Policies that are largely required by law with very little agency discretion over the policy content. These policies must be reviewed for potential revision by policy chairs at least once every three years.
  - Since the implementation of the new policy review process, 105 policies have been approved (45 enhanced, 52 standard, and 8 technical). The DOC is anticipating that all enhanced category policies will have been reviewed by the end of 2025. All policies are scheduled to be reviewed under the new process by FY 2028.
  - The policy review process includes obtaining feedback from impacted groups (which often includes corrections system impacted persons and their families).

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<sup>29</sup> "Homelessness Mitigation Plan", Minnesota Department of Corrections, [https://mn.gov/doc/assets/DOC%20Homelessness%20Mitigation%20Plan\\_tcm1089-551803.pdf](https://mn.gov/doc/assets/DOC%20Homelessness%20Mitigation%20Plan_tcm1089-551803.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> "Policy Manual", Minnesota Department of Corrections. <https://policy.doc.mn.gov/DOCPolicy/>.

## 2. Design and implement training of the revised release planning policy

Through the engagement process for developing the Homeless Mitigation Plan, it became clear that shifting culture, influencing organizational systems, and creating pathways to housing stability would require both technical and adaptive changes.

A necessary technical change was to review the *Agent Assignment Release Planning Policy* to provide procedural direction to corrections employees on preventing experiences of homelessness at the time of release from Minnesota Correctional Facilities.

- **Progress:** The DOC implemented the policy in 2024, and the policy is part of the corrections professionals' ongoing practice.
- **Measures:** In 2024, the DOC offered 20 sessions of Agent Assignment and Release Planning Training to 325 DOC, 169 Community Corrections Act county (CCA), and 9 County Probation Offices (CPO) staff.
- **Challenges:** As mentioned above, policies such as this require adaptive changes and a shift in the ways that agents handle release planning. While the DOC trained staff and correctional partners in the policy, release planning is complex and additional time may be needed to ensure all staff apply the policy as intended.

## 3. Implement a Collaborative Case Consultation process across all MCFs and Community Corrections Act (CCA) agencies. Collaborative Case Consultation creates opportunities for corrections professionals, involved with specific release cases, to brainstorm options, services and address challenges. This solution-seeking consultation process can be used for a variety of needs, including housing, medical, or critical mental health needs, as examples.

- **Progress:** With the rollout of the new release plan policy, the demand for case consultations has increased. Housing coordinators are often engaged in problem solving conversations with release planning professionals. The policy change affects the numbers of consultations, and the success of the consultations is captured in the data showing a reduction in homelessness. The DOC offers training to corrections professionals to aid them with finding resources for their clients, as part of Agent Academy for new staff, and as an elective for others. The Community Stability Team offered another training called *Find Your Helpers* three times in 2024 with 58 DOC staff, 33 CCA staff, and 19 CPO staff participating. The training helps professionals to find services throughout Minnesota.
- **Measures:** Housing coordinators completed an average of two case consultations each month. With momentum toward arranging consultations increasing, it is imperative that DOC staff begin tracking the numbers of these consultations. The data would assist in the identification and analysis of challenges in order to design future actions steps and responses. The team will report this measure in the 2025 report. The Community Stability Team developed a Case Management Referral Process to combine requests for housing-related resources "under one roof."



- **Challenges:** The increase in demand for case consultations is affecting the Community Stability Team’s workload. Because Minnesota lacks adequate housing resources for elderly individuals leaving incarceration, predatory offender registrants, and those with significant medical needs, cases such as these are particularly difficult. Following up on complex cases requires holding multiple meetings, engaging new partners, scheduling challenges, and more.

#### 4. Implementation of Self-Reported Assessment (SRA) across Minnesota Correctional Facilities.

- **Progress:** Implementation began in November of 2023 and is fully operational at intake for new admissions to Shakopee and St. Cloud, the state’s only intake facilities. A process is underway to have all incarcerated individuals admitted to MCFs prior to November 2023 complete an SRA to support effective case planning.
- **Measures:** The SRA and resulting *Assessment Summary Report* continues to inform housing stability needs earlier in an individual’s incarceration. The table below outlines the outputs of the assessment tool as it pertains to housing needs:

| <b>Males (1,891)</b> | <b>Housing Need Level</b> |            |            |
|----------------------|---------------------------|------------|------------|
| MnSTARR Risk Level   | Low                       | Medium     | High       |
| Low                  | 36% (201)                 | 24% (142)  | 18% (135)  |
| Medium               | 36% (198)                 | 33% (194)  | 30% (227)  |
| High                 | 18% (98)                  | 24% (138)  | 30% (225)  |
| Very High            | 11% (59)                  | 19% (108)  | 22% (166)  |
| Total                | 100% (556)                | 100% (582) | 100% (753) |

| <b>Females (664)</b> | <b>Housing Need Level</b> |            |            |
|----------------------|---------------------------|------------|------------|
| MnSTARR Risk Level   | Low                       | Medium     | High       |
| Low                  | 68% (117)                 | 58% (122)  | 42% (118)  |
| Medium               | 16% (28)                  | 23% (48)   | 25% (69)   |
| High                 | 10% (17)                  | 7% (14)    | 12% (33)   |
| Very High            | 6% (10)                   | 13% (27)   | 21% (60)   |
| Total                | 100% (172)                | 100% (212) | 100% (280) |

- **Challenges:** SRA implementation for all incarcerated individuals will take considerable time for staff to coordinate and supervise. In addition, the SRA is done on a computer, and there are limited numbers of portals and designated spaces to accomplish this task. Computers and staff will need to be reprioritized to carry out this effort.

## 5. Allocate Permanent Funding to the DOC for temporary rental assistance.

- **Progress:** The legislature allocates \$500,000 each biennium to the DOC for rental assistance. In FY24, the funding was exhausted and an additional \$286,000 was encumbered from other DOC resources. In FY25, the additional funds are no longer available.
- **Measures:** In 2024, Housing Coordinators connected with over 500 state-wide housing resources (e.g. transitional housing, room rental recovery residences, motels/hotels, supportive housing, and other private property owners). The Community Stability Team coordinated approximately 400 rental assistance payments to vendors across the state.
- **Challenges:** The decline in the number of homeless individuals may be a direct reflection of the financial investments. If budget constraints limit the availability of rental assistance, the DOC will likely see an uptick in homelessness.

## 6. Invest in culturally specific, trauma informed housing, resources, and services that are inclusive to individuals exiting jail, prisons, and treatment facilities.

- **Progress:** The DOC recognizes that investments in culturally responsive transitional housing increases housing options and resources for BIPOC individuals, specifically within the Native American population of individuals released from the state's prisons to the community (see Appendix). The DOC developed a Joint Powers Agreement with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (MLB) to provide housing connection services and culturally responsive housing. The Community Stability Team is meeting twice monthly with MLB to finetune the full program and referral process. The DOC continues to provide grant funding to the Northwest Indian Community Development Center (NWICDC) to support the Healing House in Bemidji and for general culturally-specific reentry services, in collaboration with supervision services.
- **Measures:** Once executed, the contract includes outcome reporting on behalf of the MLB for numbers served and service type. In FY25, the DOC dedicated \$94,000 to MLB for the development and implementation of Culturally Responsive

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<sup>31</sup> Source: DOC and Performance Unit; Duwe, G. (2024). Evaluating bias, shrinkage, and the home-field advantage: Results from a revalidation of the MnSTARR 2.0. Corrections: Policy, Practice and Research, 9(1), 20-42 <https://doi.org/10.1080/23774657.2021.2011802>.

Transitional Housing Models. The DOC grants \$250,000 annually to NWICDC, resulting in culturally response transitional and housing services to dozens of justice-involved persons.

- **Challenges:** Turnover in leadership in both the Community Stability Team and at MLB created challenges to completing the Joint Powers Agreement, requiring the DOC to recreate foundational project understanding and reestablish relationships to move planning and implementation forward. The DOC was unable to execute the Joint Powers Agreement during this reporting period.

#### **7. Fund two full-time Housing Coordinators within the DOC.**

- **Progress:** Two full-time housing coordinators support referrals, case consultations, and direct placements to combat homelessness and provide continuity of care for hard-to-serve populations, expanding the DOC's outreach to potential housing vendors.
- **Measures:** A variety of metrics showcase the work of both the Housing Coordinators and the Community Stability Team. In 2024, the team handled 860 referrals for hard to place and/or otherwise homeless clients. The team connected with over 500 state-wide housing resources (e.g. transitional housing, room rental recovery residences, motels/hotels, supportive housing, and other private property owners).
- **Challenges:** While DOC's ability for housing coordination increased with the dedicated positions, DOC and partners continue to struggle in naming inclusive community-based housing resources for justice involved persons and families. While the team cultivates relationships, every housing referral (and person) is unique, and not all resources are available throughout the state.

#### **8. Provide resource gap funding to connect individuals exiting MCFs with Housing Stabilization Services Medicaid benefit.**

- **Progress:** The legislature invested funds to design a pathway to Housing Stabilization Services for people releasing from MCFs until they can access the service through Medicaid. The DOC partnered with Tribal Nations representatives, lived experience consultants and others to develop a request for proposals (RFP) for Housing Stabilization Services (HSS) to address this gap. The DOC contracts with Minnesota Management and Budget's Management Analysis Division for an 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 become part of the DOC's Housing Stability Workplan and ongoing legislative reporting.
- **Measures:** Selection process and contracting for these services occurred outside of this reporting period and include three community vendors who are currently

Housing Stabilization Services Medicaid benefit providers and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. The 2025 report will include outputs of these contracts and the process level evaluation with MMB.

- **Challenges:** The time needed and staffing ability and the process for procurement and contracting caused delays in implementation. The DOC and partners will execute the HSS contracts in 2025.

#### **9. Invest in data systems to connect the DOC to other state and federal systems.**

- **Progress:** The 2023 legislative session provided investments to improve, secure and modernize the DOC's data management and analysis systems. The DOC's homelessness response will be included in the data management system implementation. A planned data analytics repository will provide the DOC with operationalized ongoing reporting, allowing DOC to move away from the manual efforts to create this report. The repository will also make it possible to integrate community supervision data, making it possible to visualize the entirety of the person's experience following release from prison.
- **Measures:** The Reentry Services Director takes part in the project steering committee meetings and delegates staff to each of the planning groups as subject matter experts (SMEs). One of the housing coordinators is participates in two work groups to ensure the system design captures critical housing and homelessness-related data. Until the launch of a new system in 2028, the DOC continues to use ad hoc data collection to review our progress toward goals in reducing homelessness.
- **Challenges:** With better data collection and system integration, the DOC will have ability to more accurately show the needs of incarcerated and released individuals, and the success of interventions. Regardless of the data collection, 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.

## **VII. Conclusion**

The continued decline in homelessness among individuals released from Minnesota's prisons is associated with the dedicated efforts of the DOC and the critical financial investments provided by the state legislature. These efforts emphasize evidence-based program design, collaboration with impacted individuals and corrections professionals, and strategies aimed at reducing disparities among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, contributing to measurable improvements in housing stability.

While recent trends are promising, sustained reductions in homelessness will depend on supporting and expanding the resources necessary to help individuals during and after their transition from state

custody. Achieving lasting outcomes requires sufficient funding, inclusive community-based housing resources, and ongoing support from legislative and community partners. The DOC will continue to track outcomes, identify promising practices, and leverage data and information management systems to strengthen pathways to housing stability for all individuals, families, and communities impacted by the justice system.