



Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program

Annual Needs Estimate

February 2024

Needs Assessment

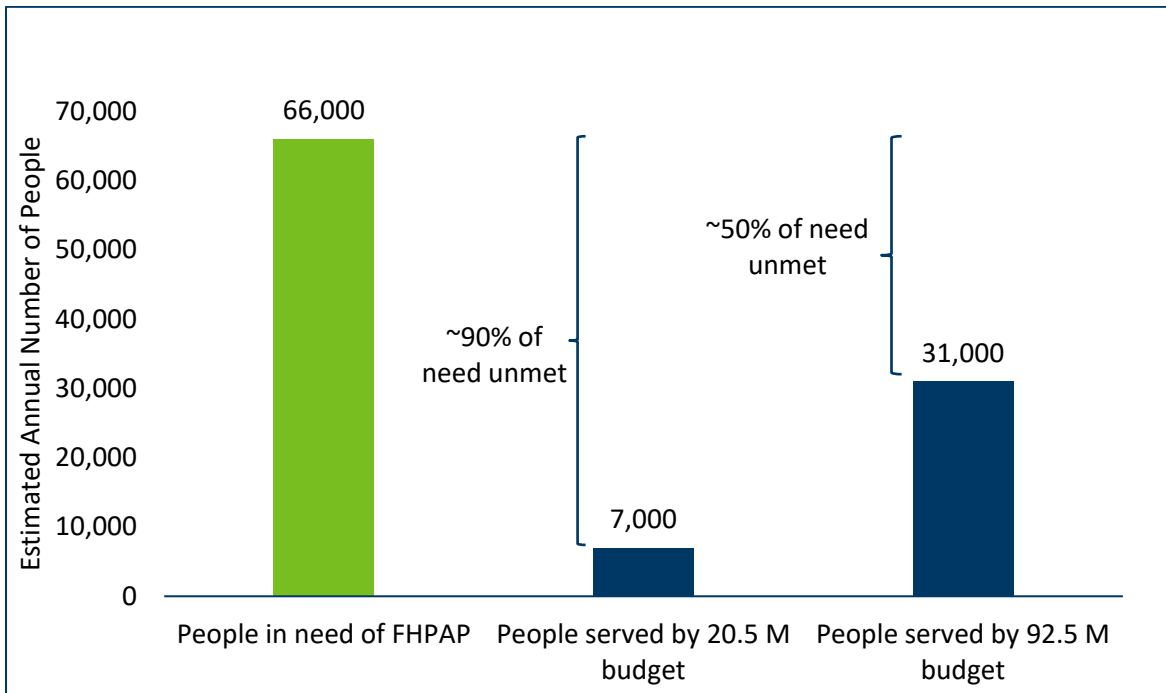
The Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP), established in 1993, provides supportive services and financial assistance to households that are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness in Minnesota.

Approximately 66,000 people annually in Minnesota need FHPAP. This includes:

- 61,000 people who are
 - living in a shelter
 - living in a place not meant for human habitation
 - unstably doubled up
- 5,000 people served by FHPAP who were at risk but avoided experiencing homelessness

With a typical \$20.5 million biennial budget, the program would only serve approximately 7,000 people annually, addressing slightly more than a tenth of total need. Even with the full \$92.5 million available in one-time funds for the 2024-2025 biennium, the program is only expected to serve approximately 31,000 people annually, less than half of the total need.

Graph 1: Service Gap for People in Need of FHPAP



Communities across Minnesota advocated for these additional funds because they have been unable to serve all the people in need of financial assistance from a housing crisis.

Identifying the exact number of people in need of FHPAP is challenging. No data source captures all people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Minnesota. Some people experiencing a housing crisis need longer-term support than FHPAP can offer.

Our estimation for the total need is a rough, ballpark estimation and is designed to identify the magnitude of the gap between available funding and need rather than a precise count of people. The estimation uses data from three sources: Wilder Research’s Minnesota Homeless Study, Department of Human Services’ (DHS) data about the living situation of people using cash and food assistance, and FHPAP program data.

Table 2: Estimated Annual Number of People in Need of FHPAP

66,000 People in Need of FHPAP		
43,000	18,000	5,000
Estimate of people experiencing homelessness in a one-year period who are appropriate for FHPAP services. Source: Wilder Study	Estimate of additional people unstably doubled up in a one-year period. Source: DHS MAXIS	People served by FHPAP who were at risk but avoided experiencing homelessness in a one-year period. Source: FHPAP program data

Wilder Research’s Minnesota Homeless Study

The Minnesota Homeless Study is a triannual point-in-time count of people experiencing homelessness on a single night in October.¹ The study includes findings from face-to-face interviews with people experiencing homelessness providing detailed information about the size and nature of homelessness in Minnesota.

Wilder uses the single night count, information from face-to-face interviews, and data from other studies to estimate the number of people experiencing homelessness throughout the year. Wilder estimates that 19,600 people experience homelessness on any given night and 50,600 people experience homelessness at some time over the course of a year. The year-long estimate is the starting point for estimating the number people who could benefit from FHPAP in Minnesota.

Wilder’s estimate overlaps with, but is not fully inclusive of, those who could benefit from FHPAP. Wilder’s count includes people who have experienced chronic homelessness with multiple episodes of

¹ More information on the Minnesota Homeless Study can be found at Wilder Research’s website: <https://www.wilder.org/mnhomeless>.

homelessness over several years. These individuals likely need more sustained support than the temporary assistance offered through FHPAP.

In addition, Wilder's data primarily captures people who fall under the federal definition of literally homeless: those who are staying in shelter or a place not meant for human habitation. Wilder's study includes a limited number of people who are unstably doubled up with friends and family who could also benefit from FHPAP assistance to prevent an episode of literal homelessness. However, the Wilder study likely underestimates the total number of people unstably doubled up who could benefit from FHPAP.

Our FHPAP need estimate removes the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness from Wilder's 2018 year-long data (the most recent published estimate). It adjusts for additional people unstably doubled up based on data DHS collects about the housing situation of people who receive cash and food assistance.

Department of Human Services MAXIS Data

DHS manages several cash and food assistance programs in Minnesota, including the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Emergency Assistance (EA), Emergency General Assistance (EGA), Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

DHS collects and tracks data on people participating in those programs in its MAXIS system. MAXIS includes data on the housing/living situation of program participants, including people who experience the federal definition of literal homelessness (staying in a shelter or place not meant for human habitation) and those who are unstably doubled up.

Our estimate of the FHPAP need expands Wilder's year-long count by including additional people who are unstably doubled up, using the MAXIS data to estimate the relative size of the unstably doubled up population. From the MAXIS data, we computed the ratio of:

- The number of people who either experienced literal homelessness or were unstably doubled up in a year
- to
- Only the number of people who experienced literal homelessness in a year

The ratio is a measure of how much bigger the expanded definition of homelessness is relative to the number of people experiencing literal homelessness in a year. Multiplying this ratio by the adjusted year-long estimation of people experiencing literal homelessness from Wilder expands the estimation to include people who are unstably doubled up.

FHPAP Program Data

While the vast majority of FHPAP participants receiving homeless prevention services avoid homelessness, not all are able to obtain or maintain stable housing after program completion. The people who could not avoid homelessness are already captured in the adjusted Wilder year-long estimate. However, program participants who avoided homelessness are part of the need and likely would have experienced homelessness without the assistance. Thus, they are added to the estimate of need.²

² The number of homeless prevention program participants added to the overall estimation of need only includes those who exited to a permanent destination and remained stably housed a year after program completion.