

Homelessness Factsheet



Who Is Homeless in Dane County?

According to the latest report from the City of Madison, there were 3,370 individuals receiving services in Dane County. Of this, 475 were families, 1,304 were single men, 497 were single women, and 982 were children. However, these numbers can be misleading as they only count people using shelter space in Dane County. Some people are unable to access services due to bans, threats of violence in shelter spaces, or those who have reached their shelter stay limit for the year (typically 60 nights/year).

In addition to the 3,370 individuals receiving services in Dane County, there are an additional 100-200 people who have been identified through "point and count studies" that do not use shelter services for some reason or another. This number still doesn't paint a complete picture, as there are no studies conducted for other areas of Dane County.

Additional Statistics

- About 70% of individuals facing homelessness in Dane County have lived in our community for 1-year or more
- Roughly 25% of individuals reported sleeping on the streets or in a car prior to seeking shelter services
- 21% of individuals reported having a source of income while staying in a shelter space
- 19% suffer from some sort of chronic mental health issue
- 12% reported some kind of drug or alcohol addiction
- 14% suffer from some kind of chronic health issue (non-mental health)

Racial Disparities and Homelessness

Perhaps one of the most concerning impacts of homelessness is the racial disparity present. Of the 3,400 homeless individuals using services in Dane County, the following identify as non-white:

- Families: 79% (375)
- Single Women: 52% (498)
- Single Men: 47% (1,304)

These numbers are especially troubling given that only 24.3% of all Madison residents identified as non-white in the 2010 census.

Children and Homelessness

One of the worst growing trends in homelessness is the number of children and unaccompanied minors facing these issues. According to recent reports, there are roughly 1,000 children facing homelessness in Dane County. This accounts for 30% of all people suffering from homelessness and is the second largest group of people impacted behind single men (39%).

Veterans

Another growing trend in homelessness is the number of veterans suffering from housing issues. Of the 3,400 individuals facing homelessness, roughly 10% (404 individuals) served in the military or armed forces. This number is up 150% from 2012 figures.

The problem of veteran homelessness is worse for single men than single women, with 11% of single men and 1% of single women having previously served in the military or armed forces.

Common Misconceptions

Homeless People in Madison are Mostly from Chicago and Other Cities - FALSE

Roughly 70% of individuals using shelter services have lived in Dane County for a year or more. Less than 1% of individuals reported living in Dane County for less than one month prior to seeking services.

People Choose to be Homeless. There are Housing Options Available - FALSE

The vacancy rate in Madison is currently below 2%. Of this 2%, most fall at or above market rate for rents. For comparison, the vacancy rate for the United States is roughly 8%.

There is Shelter Space Available. People Don't Need to Sleep on the Streets - FALSE

Shelter systems present a number of issues for individuals facing homelessness:

- People are typically limited to 60 nights/year
- People tend to save their 60 nights for winter months
- For every 10 people served by Dane County shelters, 4.9 are turned away
 - This adds up to 1,654 individuals turned away in 2013
- People can be banned from shelters, often without the ability to appeal, for various reasons
- Even on the coldest nights up to 40 people end up sleeping on the streets

It is the Same Group of People Facing Homelessness Year-to-Year - FALSE

Of the 3,400 people facing homelessness in Dane County, only 450 single men suffer from chronic homelessness; 95 single women; and 60 families. This accounts for less than 18% of all homeless individuals.

*Affordable Housing Needs Assessment,
Dane County and Municipalities*

== DRAFT: For Discussion and Comments ==

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Executive Summary.

This report presents data on the housing demand, housing supply, and affordable housing needs for Dane County and each of its municipalities. The report builds on and complements a number of other recent housing reports from the City of Madison, Dane County, and the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission. The focus of the report is on the affordable housing needs of lower income households, those households more likely in need of housing assistance.

Currently, over 70,000 households (over 36 percent) in Dane County live in housing which is considered “unaffordable” – spending more than 30 percent of income on housing.

The purpose of this report is to provide information and a number of alternative scenarios and analyses for municipal and county officials, developers, community members, non-profit housing providers and other partners. Specifically, this report presents a housing needs assessment for all of the municipalities in Dane County, presenting information on demographics, housing demand, housing supply, senior housing, and the affordable housing and rental stock. This report also presents a number of possible scenarios to consider future needs for affordable housing.

Unfortunately, this is a data-heavy report! Information on housing conditions are reported for every municipality. Readers should feel free to skip around and skim the data tables! Most tables contain a “table highlights” section outlining key findings.

Major findings:

- There is tremendous variety across communities in Dane County in terms of housing needs, housing supply, housing costs, and affordable housing needs;
- Although Madison has less than half of the county’s overall population, it has a disproportionate percentage of the county’s affordable housing needs for all types of families and households;
- The main rental housing affordability challenge is for very low income households (those defined as making 50 percent of area-median-income or less);
- Alternative scenarios for determining affordable housing needs gap for municipalities are presented in Section 10 and show a present need of anywhere between 7,000 and 27,000 affordable housing units needed, depending on which scenario is accepted.
- Forecasts of future affordable housing needs (Section 11) indicate that Dane County should aim to produce somewhere between 22,000 and 37,000 affordable housing units in the next 26 years, or between 854 and 1415 affordable units each year.

Additional Resources

2013 Annual Report of Homeless Persons Served in Dane County

- Compiled by Sue Wallinger, Grants Administrator, City of Madison

Affordable Housing Needs Assessment, Dane County

- Prepared by Kurt Paulsen, PhD, AICP, Associate Professor, Urban and Regional Planning, UW-Madison

Race to Equity Report

- Prepared by Wisconsin Council on Children and Families

Dane County Poverty Report

- Compiled by Greta Hansen, Task Force Chair, Dane County Task Force on Poverty