

2026 Heading Home Ramsey Needs Assessment

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Executive Summary

The 2026 Needs Assessment demonstrated the current needs and gaps in the homelessness response system in Ramsey County. The assessment was retrospective, including data on the last two years. The sequential mixed methods approach ensured that perspectives and experiences were as much a part of the assessment as utilization rates or inventory counts. From this assessment, there are three major findings or takeaways.

Capacity

Throughout the assessment capacity was discussed multiple times in a variety of formats. From the analysis of current affordable housing, emergency shelter, and housing programs it is clear that the homelessness response system in Ramsey County does not have enough capacity to meet present needs. The lack of capacity is in large part due to a changing funding landscape as mentioned in Overall Question 3, Qualitative Question 1, and Generative Theme 1. The funding for programs drives capacity, thus as funding ebbs and flows, so too does the capacity of programs serving people experiencing homelessness. Available funding is tied to policy, to improve capacity, policy changes must be implemented demonstrating the prioritization of these programs for those experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County. The lack of capacity is a consistent issue in the homelessness response system, but it can be solved through prioritization, policy, and creative problem solving.

Population specific experiences and programming

In the assessment, analyses are presented by overall population and by population group. The groups used in this assessment were youth (ages 18-24), single adults, and families. By separating the analysis by group, it is clear that each has a different experience of the homelessness response system and these groups must continue receiving population specific services and programming. The experience of homelessness or housing instability is devastating. There is a myriad of physical, emotional, and mental outcomes from the trauma of homelessness. By providing population specific services, programs are able to tailor their programs and resources to the needs of the populations they serve. This specificity is crucial and throughout the assessment, it is clear that it is working. In the quantitative analysis, youth and families are shown to have different outcomes in Questions 3, 5, and 6. The difference in experience is also shown in Question 4 in the qualitative section and Generative Theme 5. These findings emphasize how the homelessness response system is experienced in Ramsey County and demonstrate the success of population specific programming. These successes do not diminish the need for additional capacity, but instead demonstrate the ability for specified funding, policy, and programs to make an impact.

Flow

The final major finding of the needs assessment is the lack of flow through the system. The people experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County are waiting longer to attain housing. Figures 1 and 2 compare the homelessness response system in 2024 and 2025, illustrating the number of people in each part of the system and the length of time between parts of the sys

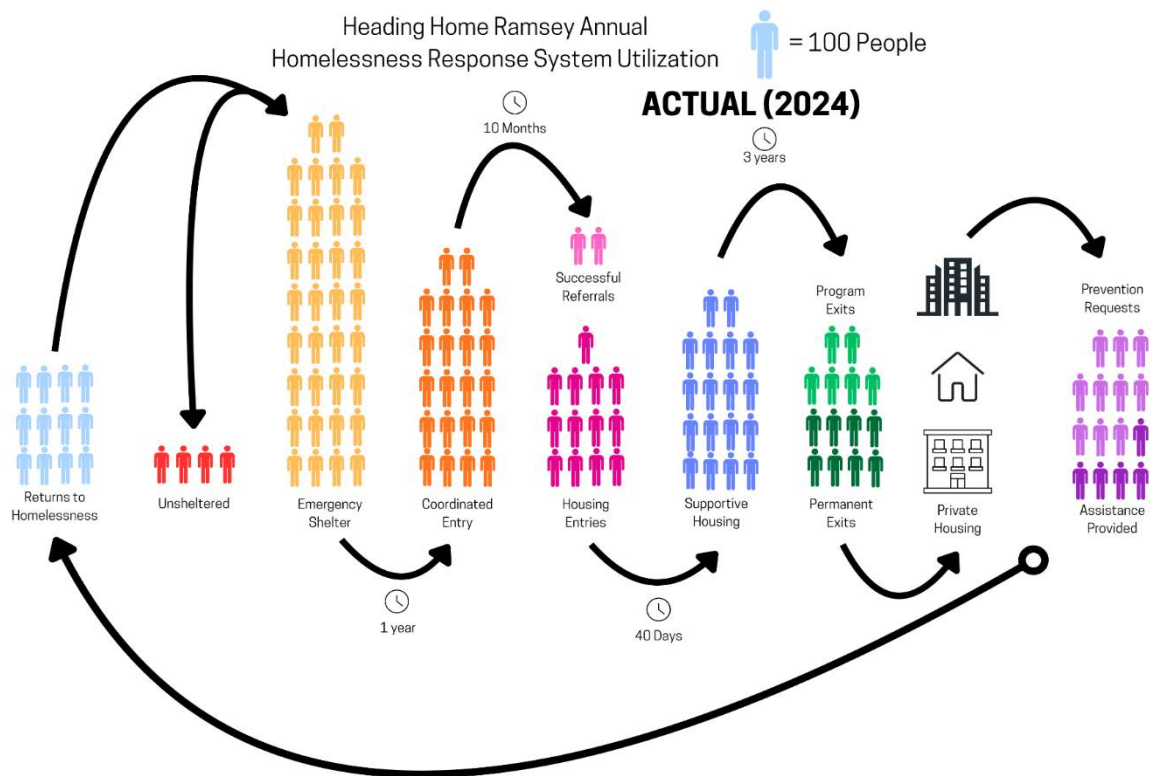


Figure 1 Homelessness Response System Flow in 2024

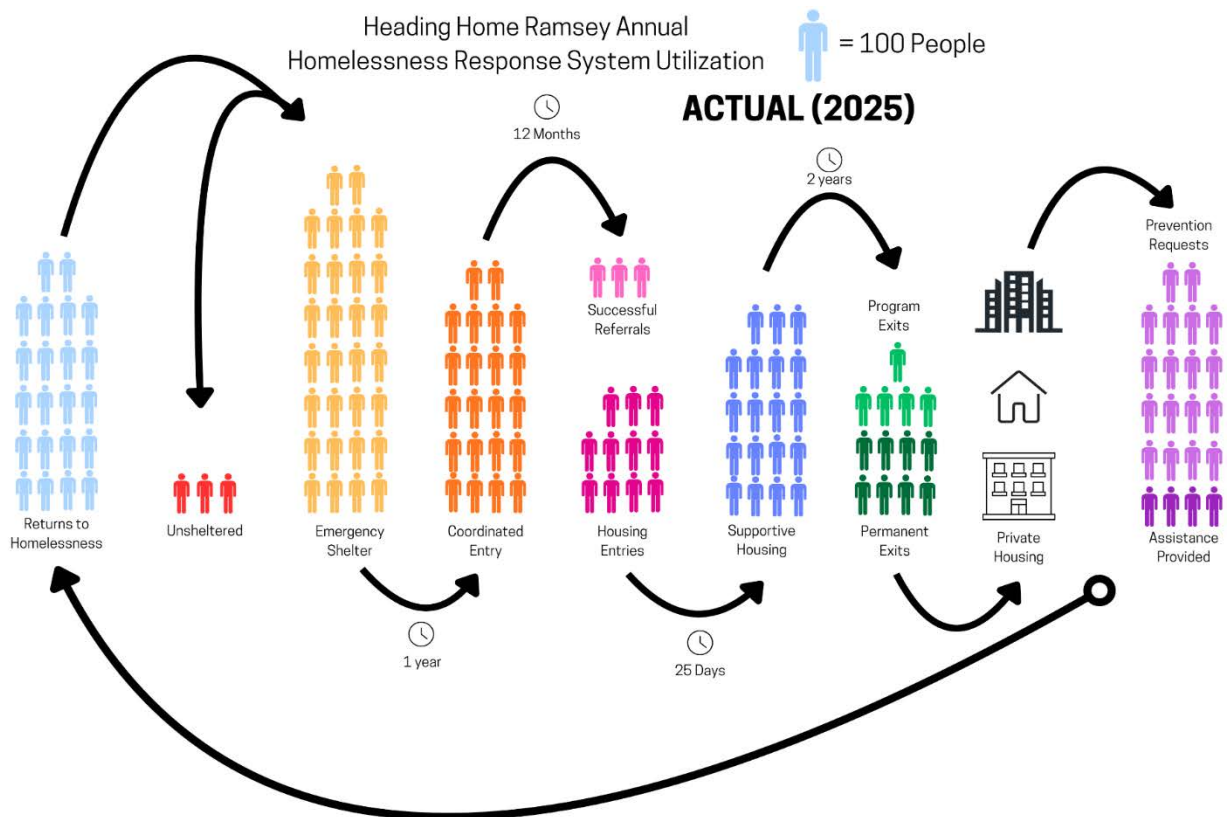


Figure 2 Homelessness Response System Flow in 2025

The major differences between the two are the increase in returns to homelessness, decrease in people who are unsheltered, increase in the coordinated entry list, decrease in permanent housing exits, and increase in those requesting homeless prevention assistance. These figures are helpful for showing the overall flow of people through the homelessness response system, from being unsheltered or living in a place not meant for human habitation to gaining private housing. Both figures have more people on the left side than the right, meaning more people waiting or in need of supportive housing programs than those in programs or exiting programs. This finding is evident throughout this assessment, again demonstrating the effect of limited capacity and need for additional housing options. In an ideal system, the figure would be flipped, with more people entering, remaining, or exiting housing programs than those in emergency shelter or on the Coordinated Entry Priority List.

Introduction

Purpose of the Assessment

This Needs Assessment was conducted from February-June 2026. The assessment fulfills the requirements outlined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) application process, which provide federal and state funding, respectively, for the homeless service projects in Ramsey County. It is also a best practice planning tool to be used in guiding investments, priorities, and decision making across all homelessness funding sources. The assessment encapsulates the ebb and flow of the homelessness response system from January 2024 – December 2025. The previous needs assessment was completed in November 2024 by members of the Housing Stability Department at Ramsey County. This report analyzes the current homeless service system or homelessness response system in Ramsey County through the Heading Home Ramsey (HHR) Continuum of Care (CoC). It serves as a best practice planning tool to guide investments, priorities, and decision making across all programs serving people experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County.

The findings of this report are intended to provide and improve understanding of the present programs and people within the homelessness response system. The homelessness response system is the network of providers and programs that assist people experiencing homelessness attain the resources and services they need to achieve housing stability. The geographic area considered in this assessment is the entirety of Ramsey County in Minnesota. The county is comprised of over 14 cities with the largest being St. Paul at around 300,000 people. To learn more about the Ramsey County Continuum of Care, including the governance structure and meeting cadence, please visit the [Heading Home Ramsey website](#).

Historical Context

This assessment was completed in 2026, with the goal of looking retrospectively at the homelessness response system during the years 2024 and 2025. During these two years, a number of local, state, and national events have affected available services and programs in Ramsey County. The historical context below covers events from December 2024 to June 30, 2026.

In the spring of 2024, the Ramsey County Housing Stability department launched the Shelter Entry and Diversion or SHED team. This team became the single point of entry for adults experiencing homelessness to find and reserve shelter beds in Ramsey County. The introduction of SHED fundamentally changed the shelter access system for single adults demonstrating need, improving efficiency, and diverting eligible singles and families from shelter. SHED became the primary way single adults find and reserve shelter beds in shelters utilizing the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The partnership between SHED and the single adult shelter providers since that time has been vital in helping Ramsey County residents access safe, dignified shelter. The addition of this partnership has ensured that both singles and families have improved accessibility to shelter.

During the summer of 2024, the HMIS administrator for Minnesota, the Institute for Community Alliances (ICA), underwent a software transition from WellSky to CaseWorthy. This transition affected every provider using HMIS and was completed over a six-month period. During this time, there was not interruption in service, but there were interruptions in data entry and likely effects to data quality in programs utilizing HMIS. The transition to CaseWorthy was community informed and led to changes in many of the data collection and data reporting processes. Since the initial transition, HMIS has now been updated in each agency and ICA has implemented replicates of crucial reports and information into CaseWorthy.

In the fall of 2024, two additional events occurred that affected the homelessness response system. The first was the move of Safe Space, a large single adult shelter, from downtown St. Paul to the Midway neighborhood (Ermon 2024; Kaul 2024). Safe Space was required to move due to the closure of a Ramsey County building and had to overcome a number of obstacles to identify and move their programming. One of these obstacles included determining a new site. The site was originally intended to be in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood, but due to neighborhood opposition, Safe Space had to determine a new place for their shelter. Thankfully, a partnership with Central Baptist Church was created and the shelter was able to move in November of 2024 (Ramsey County 2024). Upon re-opening, Safe Space had decreased their capacity from 64 beds to 25 beds and limited their intake only to women. The decrease in capacity was due to city permitting and zoning laws. A few weeks after re-opening, Model Cities was able to receive an interim use allowance tied to their lease for the following two years. Attaining the interim use allowance brought the capacity back to 64 and Safe Space began serving both men and women. As Safe Space is one of three shelters serving single adults in Ramsey County, this move and change in capacity greatly affected the community of people experiencing homelessness.

The second event that occurred in the fall of 2024 was the United States Presidential election and the election of a new Federal Administration. Although the impact of the election would not be felt until 2025, it introduced uncertainty regarding the federal policy and funding landscape in which the homelessness response system operates. These changes continued in 2025, with the start of 2025 marking significant changes in rhetoric and priorities as the new federal administration came into power.

The most impactful changes affecting the homelessness response system in 2025 included:

- Cuts to HUD staffing
- Changes in priorities and a move away from Housing First or permanent housing
- A new NOFO that placed caps on permanent housing and decreased the amount of assured funding coming to communities (Walsh 2025).

The severity and impact of these changes were unexpected. They represented a significant departure from previous priorities, significantly affecting providers and program participants. The foundation of the homelessness response system shifted. The federal funding that was previously consistent and reliable became uncertain.

In the fall of 2025, another change to state programming affected the homelessness response system. The state funded Medicaid benefit, Housing Stabilization Services (HSS), was rapidly terminated due to suspected fraud (Serres 2020; Star Tribune Staff 2025; Van Berkel 2025). The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) closed the program in October of 2025. The closure was swift and affected all providers using Housing Stabilization Services had to quickly stop services. The effect was two-fold: (1) services were no longer being provided to people in need, including those experiencing homelessness, and (2) the impact on public perception of programs (Moni & Roth 2025; Walsh 2025). Since the closure of Housing Stabilization Services and the discovery of fraudulent providers, there has been a significant shift in public trust and investment in social service programs (Herscowitz 2026). The sentiment of mistrust in social service programs is echoed locally by state political leaders and nationally from members of the Trump administration.

A change that positively impacted the homelessness response system came in the spring of 2025. A prominent family shelter provider, Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul, was able to purchase hotel property and expand their Project Home Shelter program (Interfaith Action, 2025). The expansion increased bed availability to 100 beds for families. It became operational in Fall of 2025.

Altogether, the last two years have been strenuous on the homelessness response system. The end of COVID-era funding resulted in the loss of several programs and services, affecting the variety and accessibility of programs and resources for households in need. Plus, the funding that was previously reliable from federal or state partners is now less. Due to these changes, the providers in the homelessness response system have had to determine how to do more with less or prioritize certain services over others to meet community needs. These sentiments are clear in the qualitative interviews with Key Informants, Providers, and Clients. These events have impacted the provision of services within the Heading Home Ramsey Continuum of Care and will likely continue to affect the types of services that remain available to people experiencing homelessness.

Needs Assessment Methodology

Needs assessment design

For the 2026 Heading Home Ramsey Needs Assessment, a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design was used to guide the assessment. This design uses the findings in quantitative data to guide the recruitment and collection of the qualitative data. The data used in this assessment includes surveys, reports from the homeless management information system, and in-depth interviews. Additional details and specifics on assessment methodology can be found in Appendix A.

AI use

Generative AI was not used during any part of the 2026 Needs Assessment. All data collection, analysis, and writing was completed by humans. The authors of this assessment do not give consent for any part of this document to be used in the training of generative AI.

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths

There were a few strengths to the assessment that contributed to the methodology and findings. The first was the eagerness and interest from the community of homelessness response system providers and programs. There was not a strong need to market the assessment or demonstrate its purpose as the community already had an awareness and saw the value of the assessment. The enthusiasm led to a high level of interest and participation from the methodology workgroup; community members were glad to contribute. The methodology workgroup met more often over this assessment and provided ample feedback to the system performance lead. The increase in meetings assisted with the timeliness of deliverables and adherence to the project timeline.

An additional strength of this assessment was the mixed methods approach and design. Formal qualitative data collection has now been a part of two recent needs assessments. The addition of this data provides the community with more information on the perspectives and experiences of those in our system. These perspectives are crucial in determining priorities and demonstrating the impact of changes in our system. The sequential design was another strength of this assessment as qualitative recruitment came after a quantitative survey. Thus, the recruitment for qualitative interview subjects was more targeted and reflective of the aims of the assessment.

Limitations

In addition to its strengths, this assessment had a few limitations. The first of these was the recruitment of providers or client-facing staff and clients. During recruitment for qualitative interviews, key informants were fairly responsive and available for interviews, but client-facing staff were more difficult to contact. They often had scheduling conflicts with interviewers or did not have

awareness of the needs assessment. Client-facing staff were more hesitant to be interviewed for fear of repercussions or consequences even after having questions clarified and being assured of anonymity. This demonstrates a need for sharing more information or improving messaging during the next needs assessment.

The next limitation was the size of the assessment team. In the previous assessment, all data collection and analysis was completed by the system performance lead for Heading Home Ramsey. This year, the methodology workgroup was eager to assist with data collection. The collaboration was advantageous in the development of data collection tools and became a vital part of completing the qualitative interviews. In future years, greater recruitment of either Heading Home Ramsey CoC membership or staff from the Heading Home Ramsey team is recommended to ensure that qualitative data collection is being conducted from a group with a wider breadth of life experience and identity. The smaller team and previous relationships with interviewees affect the salience of their answers to interview questions. By increasing the team and changing approach, this limitation can be overcome in the next assessment.

Overall Guiding Questions

1. What parts of our system are working and not working for providers and clients?

The homelessness response system has many parts and includes the programs, the staff, and the clients or program participants. Each part works together to end homelessness and assist people experiencing homelessness or housing instability with gaining stability. It is considered a system because there are rules or policies that programs are required to follow and an order or process for connecting someone experiencing homelessness to housing. Additional details describing the homelessness response system and its components can be found in the [2024 Needs Assessment](#).

To determine the parts that are working or not, the status quo must be compared to a standard. The standards for most of the programs in the homelessness response system come from the Department of Housing and Urban Development or HUD. There are seven system performance measures HUD uses to measure a Continuum of Care (CoC): length of time persons remain homeless, returns to homelessness, number of homeless persons, changes in income, first-time homeless, data quality, and retaining permanent housing. The homelessness response system in Ramsey County is not currently meeting four of the HUD system performance metrics. The number of people experiencing and returning to homelessness has increased year after year. More people are returning to homelessness, remaining homeless, or becoming homeless for the first time, year after year instead of less. This is in addition to an increase in the length of time someone experiences homelessness. There are likely many parts of the system that are leading to this discrepancy, in this assessment, the focus will be on the pieces that most greatly affect remaining homeless and length of time homeless: emergency shelter capacity and the coordinated entry (CE) referral system.

Presently, the number of shelter beds to support people experiencing homelessness has decreased. In 2024, shelter beds decreased for single adults when Model Cities relocated to a new location after the closure of Ramsey County's East Building. In 2024 and 2025, there were over 24,000 duplicated enrollments in shelter, which represents approximately 6,500 unique individuals. This number demonstrates the yearly need for shelter beds. Generally, the capacity for single adult beds needs to flex and shift seasonally. In response to this need, Warming Centers operated by Ramsey County Housing Stability Department have been implemented since the 2022-2023 winter season. Over the 2025-2026 season, the warming centers see an average of over 6,000 in need of a safe, warm place to stay overnight outside of the current shelter capacity. The Situation Report, which provides weekly summaries of shelter utilization and capacity, has shown routine utilization at or just below 100%.

The need for shelter beds is exacerbated in part due to the coordinated entry referral system and amount of supportive housing options available. This system is not the only way people experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County are connected with housing, but it is the way to be

referred to the housing programs that are state or federally funded. In 2024 and 2025, most referrals for housing were pending, with only 14.7% being successful in 2024 and 27.7% being successful in 2025. Table 1 shows the status change between 2024 and 2025.

Table 1. Coordinated Entry Referral Success Rates

Referral Outcome	2024	2025
Youth Housed	19	24
Single Housed	73	24
Families Housed	94	110
Total Housed	186 (14.7%)	293 (27.7%)
Youth Pending	36	44
Singles Pending	225	81
Families Pending	432	314
Total Pending	693 (54.7%)	439 (41.5%)
Youth Unsuccessful	45	44
Singles Unsuccessful	241	186
Families Unsuccessful	102	96
Total Unsuccessful	338 (30.6%)	326 (30%)

The pending status means that the coordinated entry referral team is waiting for some part of the referral process, either waiting to hear back from the provider, or waiting to connect with the person being referred. The average time from CE referral to a result (including pending) was 44 days. But the range was 539 days for referrals occurring in 2024, and 158 days for referrals occurring in 2025. This is on top of the time it takes for a person to move from being added to the priority list to receiving a referral. In 2024, it took an average of 10 months to be referred and in 2025 it took 20 months to be referred. The length of time is likely due to a number of factors, the most important being the lack of vacancies in housing units. With less vacancies, there are less units for the Coordinated Entry referral team to make referrals to, increasing the length of time people experiencing homelessness spend waiting on the priority list for a referral. The relationship between vacancies and housing program entries is further analyzed in Question 3 of the quantitative analysis section.

The parts of the Ramsey County homelessness response system that are working are the housing programs. In the Ramsey County Continuum of Care, the currently funded programs have a majority of exits going to permanent housing. When compared to all exits, over half of the exits from housing programs were to permanent housing. In this assessment, the housing programs included in the analysis were Transitional Housing (TH), Rapid Rehousing (RRH), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), Housing Support (HS), and Permanent Housing with Services (PH-S). Table 2 demonstrates housing exits and exits to permanent housing destinations. There is room for improvement, yet housing programs are showing moderate success in helping people achieve housing stability in the short-term.

Table 2. Exits to Permanent Housing

Program Type	2024 Exits	2024 Exits to Perm	2024 %	2025 Exits	2025 Exist to Perm	2025 %
Transitional Housing – Youth	31	14	45.2%	24	12	50.0%
Transitional Housing – Singles	8	5	62.5%	3	3	100%
Transitional Housing – Families	90	76	84.4%	66	47	71.2%
Total Transitional Housing	129	95	73.6%	93	62	66.7%
Rapid Rehousing – Youth	96	86	89.6%	171	149	87.1%
Rapid Rehousing – Singles	81	67	82.7%	84	70	83.3%
Rapid Rehousing – Families	229	168	73.4%	224	179	79.9%
Total Rapid Rehousing	406	321	79.1%	479	398	83.1%
Permanent Supportive Housing - Youth	19	7	36.8%	13	4	30.8%
Permanent Supportive Housing – Singles	117	57	48.7%	128	46	35.9%
Permanent Supportive Housing – Families	245	152	62.0%	189	108	57.1%
Total Permanent Supportive Housing	381	216	56.7%	330	158	47.9%
Housing Support - Youth	25	5	20.0%	33	21	63.6%
Housing Support – Singles	161	57	35.4%	150	33	22.0%
Housing Support – Families	6	3	50.0%	13	3	23.1%
Total Housing Support	192	65	33.9%	196	57	29.1%
Permanent Housing with Services – Youth	9	1	11.1%	5	3	60.0%
Permanent Housing with Services – Singles	131	59	45.0%	124	64	51.6%
Permanent Housing with Services – Families	184	114	62.0%	85	51	60.0%
Total Permanent Housing with Services	131	59	45.0%	124	64	51.6%
Grand Total	1,432	871	60.8%	1,312	793	60.4%

Another part of the Ramsey County homelessness response System that is working was discovered in the qualitative analysis: the people. In multiple interviews across interview groups, a regular response around partnerships and working together emerged. The people working in the homelessness response system in Ramsey County value each other and the work they do. As discussed in Theme 3: Joy in Success, when Key Informants were asked what they would do if they had unlimited funding, many said they would pay their staff better and expand what they are doing. The programs in Ramsey County are a strength of our system and something that is working.

2. How does identity affect the utilization and experiences of people in the Ramsey County homelessness response system?

To answer this question, an initial analysis of the population of people experiencing homelessness was conducted. The result demonstrating the identity of those experiencing homelessness can be found in Table 3.

Table 3. Demographics of those in the homelessness response system

Race and Ethnicity	2024 # of People	2024 %	2025 # of people	2025 %
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	1,128	7.3	1,071	8.5
Asian or Asian American	641	4.1	479	3.8
Black, African American, or African	7,287	46.9	6,369	50.6
Client doesn't know	14	0.1	17	0.1
Client prefers not to answer	219	1.4	194	1.5
Data not collected	532	3.4	225	1.8
Hispanic/Latina/e/o	1,967	12.7	1,026	8.2
Middle Eastern or North African	36	0.2	42	0.3
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	116	0.7	86	0.7
White	3,609	23.2	3,702	24.4

Gender	2024 # of People	2024 %	2025 # of people	2025 %
Client doesn't know	2	0.01	1	0.0
Client prefers not to answer	19	0.1	35	0.3
Culturally Specific Identity (e.g., Two-Spirit)	7	0.1	7	0.1
Data not collected	232	1.8	122	1.1
Different Identity	1	0.01	6	0.1
Man (Boy, if child)	6,848	52.3	5,805	52.8
Non-Binary	44	0.3	53	0.5
Questioning	10	0.1	6	0.1
Transgender	56	0.4	66	0.6
Woman (Girl, if child)	5,874	44.9	4,901	44.5

Age	2024 # of People	2024 %	2025 # of people	2025 %
Data Not Collected	97	0.7	29	0.5
Under 18	3,218	24.6	1,813	28.5
18-24	1,329	10.2	710	11.2
25-39	3,740	28.6	1,735	27.3
40-55	2,953	22.6	1,292	20.3
56-64	1,069	8.2	488	7.7
65 and Older	650	5.0	285	4.5

This table shows the distribution of identities in each category of people served by the Ramsey County homelessness response system. In Table 4, additional experiences of those in the homelessness response system are shown including ability, domestic violence experience, and previous living situation.

Table 4. Experience in the homelessness response system

Disability	2024 # of people	2024 %	2025 # of people	2025 %
Not answered	2,128	16.3	57	0.9
Client Doesn't Know	136	1.0	558	9.3
Client prefers not to answer	304	2.3	357	5.6
Data Not Collected	1,797	13.8	155	2.4
No Disability	5,064	38.8	3,101	48.8
Yes Disability	3,627	27.8	2,094	33.0
Disability Condition	2024 # of people	2024 %	2025 # of people	2025 %
Alcohol Use Disorder	249	6.9	163	7.8
Chronic Health Condition	353	9.7	557	26.6
Developmental Disability	495	13.6	396	18.9
Drug Use Disorder	308	8.5	242	11.6
HIV - AIDS	32	0.9	24	1.1
Mental Health Disorder	1,421	39.2	1,037	49.5
Physical Disability	427	11.8	320	15.3
Domestic Violence Experience	2024 # of people	2024 %	2025 # of people	2025 %
Data Not Collected	6,471	49.6	1,902	29.9
Client Doesn't Know	11	0.1	40	0.6
Client prefers not to answer	196	1.5	201	3.2
Data Not Collected	435	3.3	239	3.8
No	3,923	30.0	2,714	42.7
Yes	2,020	15.5	1,256	19.8
Previous Living Situation	2024 # of people	2024 %	2025 # of people	2025 %
Data Not Collected	6,334	48.5	1,889	17.3
Homeless	2,661	20.4	1,758	7.0
Institutional	228	1.7	179	7.0
Other	237	1.8	313	1.2
Permanent	2,410	18.5	1,428	5.7
Temporary	1,186	9.1	785	3.1

However, to answer how this affects utilization and experience, the qualitative data must be consulted. In interviews with participants or clients, interviewers asked how program participants felt their identity had shaped their experience in getting housing, and specifically if any needs were unmet. After reviewing the interview transcripts, participants rarely shared how their identity negatively impacted their experiences or did not completely answer the question. Instead, they repeatedly said that their needs were met, and they did not feel like their identity has shaped their experience of getting housing. While these sentiments are positive, they may not reflect the lived experiences of all people experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County. The reasoning behind the lack of robust responses to this question and ideas for changes in the next Needs Assessment are described in the Strengths and Limitations section.

3. What is the current funding landscape (which entities provide funding and to whom) and how would changes impact programs?

The funding landscape for the Ramsey County homelessness response system consists of a variety of sources including federal, state, philanthropic, and local dollars. To answer this question, both representatives of funding organizations and representatives of funded programs were consulted. The first part of defining this landscape is determining the entities involved in funding housing programs.

For public funders there are federal entities such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and state entities in Minnesota such as the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Minnesota Housing Finance Administration (MHFA). These entities provide the majority of funding for people experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County. The grants they provide are typically administered through county or municipal governments, though it may also be directly allocated. Private funding for these programs may come from philanthropic organizations such as the St. Paul Minnesota Foundation or the Pohlad Family Foundation, or from fundraising by private citizens.

The following tables show Federal and State sources. For federal sources, funding includes programs funded through calendar year 2025.

Table 5. Federal funding in Ramsey County homeless programs

Continuum of Care funding (CoC)	# of Projects	Funding amount
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)	1	\$290,137
Coordinated Entry	5	\$702,864
Transitional Housing	3	\$321,439
Rapid Re-Housing	6	\$1,908,602
Permanent Supportive Housing	17	\$5,347,528
Total	32	\$8,570,570
Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)	# of Projects	Funding amount
Street Outreach	2	\$88,795
Shelter Operations	4	\$241,840
Prevention	2	\$81,309
Rapid Re-Housing	2	\$117,019
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)	1	\$14,693
Administration	1	\$44,080
Total	12	\$587,736
Grant Program		Funding amount
Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)		\$1,336,829
Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH)		\$232,726

The majority of federal funding goes to Permanent Supportive Housing programs in Ramsey County. For state funding, Table 6 describes the sources of funding, as well as how that funding has shifted over the last two years.

Table 6. State funding in Ramsey County homeless programs

Grant Program	2024-25	2026-27
Emergency Services Program (ESP)	\$7,825,000	\$11,526,000
Homeless Youth Act (HYA)	\$9,282,542	\$9,282,542
Safe Harbor (SH)	\$2,081,600	\$1,760,630
Shelter-Linked Mental Health Grant (SLMH)	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000
Transitional Housing Program (THP)	\$3,076,937	\$2,336,937
Homework Starts with Home (HWSH)	\$1,416,000	\$1,416,000
Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH)	\$768,316	\$955,876
FHPAP - Grantee Admin	\$359,517	\$220,825
FHPAP - Coordinated Entry	\$367,417	\$301,125
FHPAP - Street Outreach	\$301,517	\$180,675
FHPAP - Rapid Re-Housing	\$1,621,011	\$682,550
FHPAP - Prevention	\$8,446,617	\$2,629,825
Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) Total	\$11,096,079	\$4,015,000
Grand Total	\$36,646,474	\$32,392,985

Additional state programs that were not included in these funding maps include the Long Term Homeless Supportive Services Fund (LTHSSF), Housing Support (HS), Housing Trust Fund (HTF), Emergency Assistance (EA), and Emergency General Assistance (EGA). When comparing the two and their sources, it is clear that state agencies fund the majority of programs for people experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County. The funding going to programs serving specific populations demonstrates differences in funding for the three population groups referenced in this report, namely Youth (ages 18-24), Single Adults, and Families (households with one minor child). In Table 7, funding from both federal and state sources is shown by the population groups the funded programs provide services for.

Table 7. Funding by population

Population	% of Federal Dollars	% of State Dollars
Youth	10.7%	48.7%
Single Adults	29.5%	33.4%
Families	59.8%	15.2%

The trend of state agencies funding the majority of programs is also illustrated by providers and those who responded to the survey for this needs assessment. There were 34 responses, with

two respondents excluded because they do not provide services for people in Ramsey County. As Figure 3 describes, a majority of respondents were permanent housing providers and 91% have been providing programs for over 5 years.

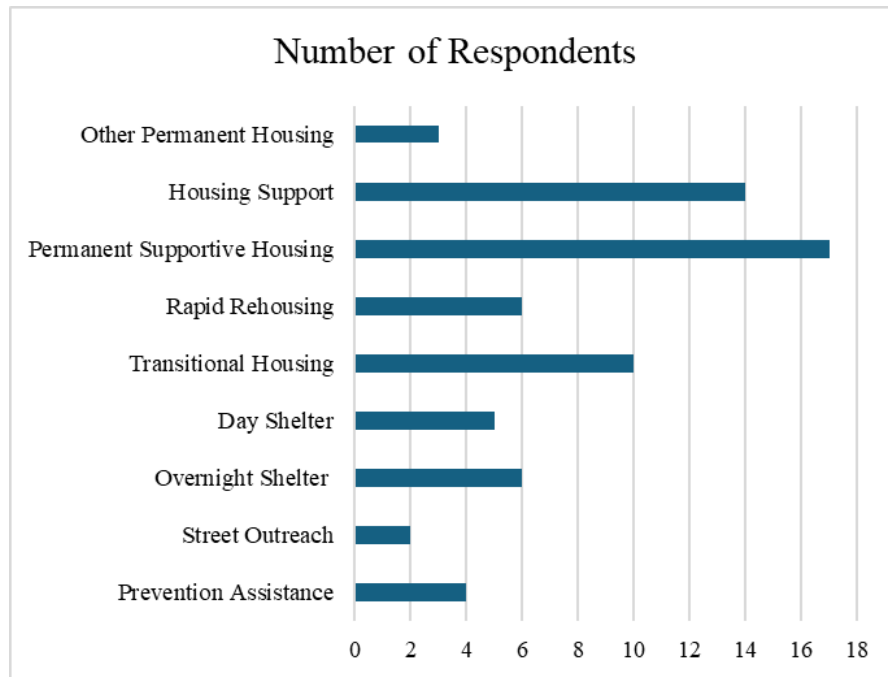


Figure 3. Programs provided by survey respondents.

For those who did not want to share specifics funding information, they were able to share generally about the funding sources for their programs. Figure 4 illustrates those responses.

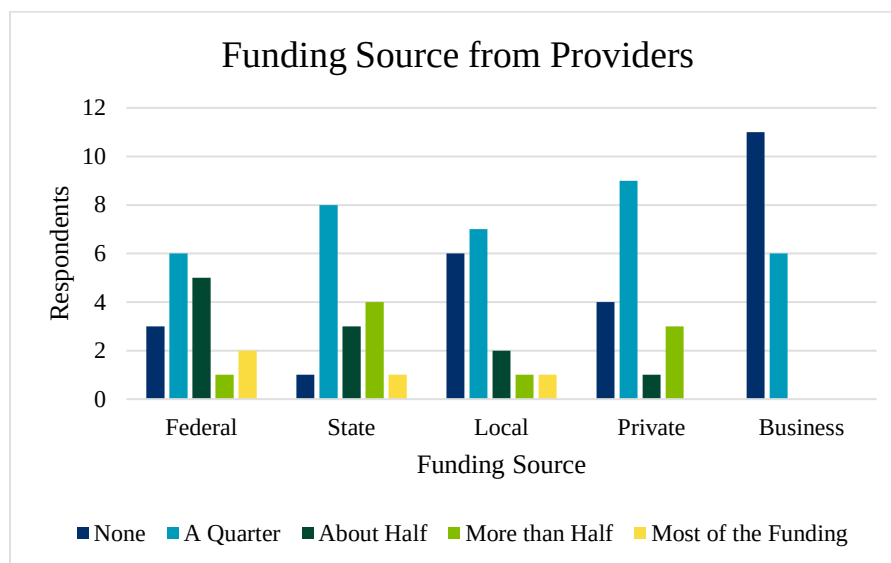


Figure 4. Funding sources for programs in Ramsey County

Figure 4 demonstrates that providers are using funding from multiple sources to sustain programs. An interesting finding is the number of programs where more than half of the program is funded using state dollars. The responses also demonstrate how funding coming from many sources is likely braided together as many respondents listed around a quarter of funding coming from multiple sources. When looking at permanent supportive housing specifically, as shown in Figure 5, the majority of funding comes from Federal or State sources.

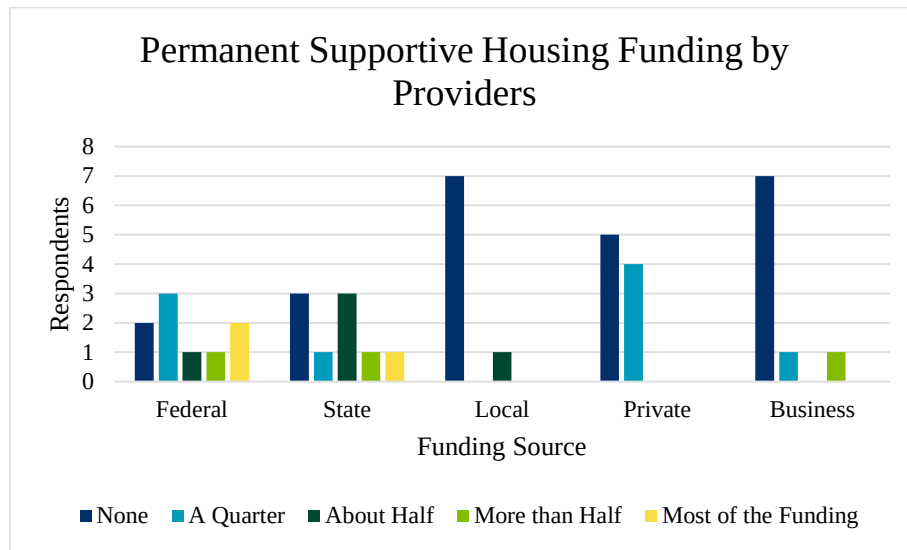


Figure 5 Permanent Supportive Housing funding sources

This demonstrates how funding and programs are affected by funding changes or policy shifts. If there are changes federally or with the state, the providers of programs in Ramsey County are impacted. This finding was further affirmed in Qualitative Theme 1. Thus, any changes to funding would greatly disturb programs as many programs depend on limited funding sources.

Quantitative Findings

1. What perpetuates homelessness or lack of stable housing in Ramsey County?

Homelessness is an economic issue

The cause of homelessness has been covered extensively in the literature (Rukmana 2020). Although numerous structural and individual factors may influence a person's ability to maintain housing stability, homelessness is fundamentally an economic issue, caused by the lack of access to safe, stable, and affordable housing. In Ramsey County, the persistence of homelessness is reflected in the increasing cost of housing, scarcity of affordable units, and wages that do not adequately support the local cost of living

For the purposes of this assessment, the cost of housing is represented by the rental cost of a one-bedroom or studio apartment, both which are considered the most affordable and accessible in most major metropolitan areas. Additionally, affordability will be defined in two different ways. The first is cost-burden, lower-case "a" affordable, or household affordability (HA) and the second is developed affordability, Affordable with a capital "A", or income-based affordability (IBA). Although they are literally the same word, these two ways of thinking about affordability are useful in determining the cost of housing for those at a lower income and what is sustainable to them over time.

Household affordability

Housing is considered affordable when it costs less than 30% of a household's monthly income. This is the affordability with a lowercase "a" or household affordability and it is also where cost-burden is calculated from. Households paying more than 30% of their monthly income in rent are considered cost-burdened and unlikely to sustain their housing long-term.

Area median income-based affordability

In housing development and construction there is also Affordable with a capital "A" or Area Median Income-Based Affordability. This refers to units built and subsidized or priced for the population making 30% or less of the area median income (AMI). The importance of this distinction is that one type of affordable is determined on the income of one household, that is affordable – lowercase "a", and the other is determined by the income of everyone in an area or capital "A," Affordable units. Thus, an Affordable unit may not be all that affordable to the households in need of it.

Comparing household affordability and area median income-based affordability

This distinction can be made in Ramsey County by comparing the average cost of housing with the cost of an affordable 1-bedroom unit at 30% AMI. The St. Paul Rental Housing Briefs produced by Housing Link (St. Paul Rental Housing Brief, 2025), show that the average rental cost for a one-bedroom apartment has remained around \$1,106/month in 2024 and 2025. For this rent to be affordable, \$1,106 would need to be no more than 30% of a household's monthly income, meaning

a household would need to earn \$3,686/month. This is equivalent to an annual net income of \$44,240 a year.

In Ramsey County, the area median income or 100% AMI in 2025 was \$92,700 ([County Income Threshold](#)). An income at 30% AMI is \$27,810. For housing to be affordable for those living at 30% AMI, the monthly rental cost would need to be less than 30% of the monthly income of someone making \$27,810. The calculations to determine this are as follows:

- The monthly income for someone at 30% AMI is \$27,810 divided by 12 or around \$2,317.50.
- Thirty percent (30%) of the monthly income (\$2,317.50) is \$695.

Thus, for monthly housing costs to be affordable for Ramsey County residents the monthly rental cost would need to be \$695. However, the average monthly housing cost in Ramsey County is not \$695, it is \$1,106. Those earning around 30% of the area median income are not able to find affordable housing. This is shown in the St. Paul Rental Housing Briefs where 0% of available units are priced at or below 30% AMI.

Income distribution and affordability

The next step is assessing household affordability, and the supply of affordable housing is examining income distribution. An annual income of \$27,810 (30% AMI) is equivalent to around \$13/hr. The minimum wage in Minnesota is \$11.41/hr, while the minimum wage in St. Paul, the largest city in Ramsey County is \$16.37 as of January 1st, 2026. If someone is making minimum wage in St. Paul, they would theoretically be able to afford an apartment with a rental cost around \$695. Though, as described above, there is no affordable housing available at this income level (St. Paul Rental Housing Brief, 2025). If the person making minimum wage was to live in an average one-bedroom unit with a rental cost of \$1,106/month, they would be spending 46% of their monthly income on their rent 16% above what would be deemed affordable. These calculations are without including income deductions from taxes or benefits.

The importance of “affordability” and “Affordability” is the relationship between the cost of housing and homelessness. For the average rental cost of a one-bedroom unit in St. Paul to be considered “affordable”, an individual would have to make around \$21/hr (Minnesota Housing Partnership, 2022). This hourly rate is currently not accessible at entry level or minimum wage jobs. For those with a fixed income, or a specific income amount that does not change over time, it is even further out of reach. Affordability is even further out of reach for those with a fixed income because their monthly income does not change as prices or the cost-of-living increases. Therefore, unless the cost of their housing is determined by their income, households with a fixed income are more likely to become cost-burdened over time as the cost of housing increases while their income does not.

The 2022 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), for Ramsey County renters making 30% AMI or less, 18,915 households (8.5% of all Ramsey County households) paid over 30% of their monthly income in rent and 15,315 households (7% of all Ramsey County households)

paid over 50% of monthly income towards rent (CHAS, 2025). This level of housing cost burden is widely recognized as unsustainable and increases the risk of housing instability and homelessness. Thus, what primarily drives homelessness is the cost of housing, the scarcity of affordable units, and the absence of a living wage that aligns with housing costs.

2. Measures for the CoC – rare, brief, non-recurring

To determine alignment with the Heading Home Ramsey Continuum of Care, this Needs Assessment includes measures of *rare*, *brief*, and *non-recurring* homelessness. In the spring of 2026, the membership of the full CoC determined the benchmarks for Rare, Brief and Non-recurring. They are as follows:

- Homelessness is rare: Less than 1% (5,523 people) of the Ramsey County population experiences homelessness.
- Homelessness is brief: A person or household experiences homelessness for 12 months or less
- Homelessness is non-recurring: Over 80% of households do not re-enter the homelessness response system

Next, data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) was used to determine if these benchmarks were met in 2024 and 2025. The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Rare, brief and non-recurring measures

Measure	2024	2025	Change
Rare			
Number of unduplicated people with either an emergency shelter or coordinated entry enrollment.	4,717	4,347	-370
Brief			
Length of time between enrollment and exit on the Coordinated Entry Priority List.	301 Days 10 Months	614 Days 20 Months	+313 +10 Months
Non-Recurring			
Number of households returning to programs within two years of program exit.	70.3%	70.0%	-0.3%

Rare

Benchmark achieved. Homelessness was considered ‘rare’ in 2024 and 2025, as less than 1% of the Ramsey County population experienced homelessness. In 2024, 0.87% of the population experienced homelessness, and in 2025, 0.80% of the population experienced homelessness.

Brief

Benchmark achieved in 2024, but not met in 2025, where households were homeless for more than 12 months on average. The increase in length of time may be due to a number of factors, but the primary contributor is the work done by the Ramsey County Single Adults Coordinated Entry team to review the priority list and remove people that could not be contacted. Many of these people were on the list for an extended period of time and impacted the average length of time, significantly increasing it.

Non-recurring

Homelessness was recurring in Ramsey County in 2024 and 2025 as in both years less than 80% of households did not re-enter the homelessness response system. Or, in other words more than 20% of households re-entered the homelessness response system.

3. Where do we have enough room for all of the needs in our system?

At the center of this question is the balance between demand and supply within the homelessness response system. The system's needs can be understood in three (3) parts:

- (1) Access to safe and dignified shelter,
- (2) sufficient bed and housing program capacity, and
- (3) an adequate supply of affordable housing in the community.

Analyzing each of these helps identify where the system is adequately meeting current needs and where gaps persist.

1. *Need for safe, dignified shelter*

The need for shelter beds is demonstrated by the number of nightly reservations, turnaways, shelter waitlists, and the number of unsheltered individuals in Ramsey County. After the launch of Shelter Entry, and Diversion (SHED) in 2024 created a centralized process for single adults to access shelter. SHED is responsible for reserving single adult beds at Catholic Charities Higher Ground and Model Cities Safe Space. The third Ramsey County single adult shelter location, Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities, manages shelter intake independently and does not use the Shelter Entry and Diversion team to reserve beds. In Ramsey County, Table 9 illustrates the total number of beds for each population group.

The SHED team tracks changes in the need for shelter beds and observed turn aways when all single adult shelter beds are full. Each day, the beds available are routinely filled within the first two hours of the SHED phone reservation line and in-person office opening, indicating high demand. Individuals seeking beds after capacity is reached are considered turn aways. Capacity being reached is communicated through voicemail or in-person at the St. Paul Opportunity Center (SPOC). The precise number of turn aways that occur each day is hard to determine as some may hear the voicemail and hang up or not be present in person. In 2025 and 2026, the SHED team began formally tracking the number of monthly turnaways, which are available on the Heading Home Ramsey 'Immediate Support' dashboard on the [Ramsey County Open Data Portal](#).

For families, the need for shelter can be illustrated through the family shelter waitlist, also on the Ramsey County Open Data Portal. The waitlist is updated weekly and has ranged from 25 to 60 families during 2024 and 2025. However, each household represents multiple individuals, meaning that 25 or 60 families can represent more than 200 people, as each family consists of an adult, or head of household, and one or more children. To access shelter for families, they call a separate number to be connected with the Ramsey County Family Shelter team. The team assesses needs and determines emergency placement for families staying in places not meant for human habitation. Youth ages 18-24 in need of shelter reserve a bed using the Youth Services Network (YSN), the YSN webpages show the number of beds available in real time for Youth across the seven-county metro area. The webpage has contact information for all the shelter providers for youth to call and reserve open beds.

Table 9. Shelter beds by population in Ramsey County

Population	Beds
Single Adults (Men) - Catholic Charities Higher Ground	172
Single Adults (Men) - Model Cities Safe Space	39
Single Adults (Men) - Union Gospel Mission	160
Single Adults (Men) - Total	371
Single Adults (Women) - Catholic Charities Higher Ground	60
Single Adults (Women) - Model Cities Safe Space	25
Single Adults (Women) - Total	85
Families - Catholic Charities Family Service Center	65
Families - Interfaith Action Project Home	100
Families - Ramsey County Emerald Inn	40
Families - Total	205
Youth (18-24) - LSS Metro Youth Safe House	5
Youth (18-24) - Salvation Army Booth Brown House	16
Youth (18-24) - Total	21
Minors (Under 18) - Ain Dah Yung	10
Domestic Violence/Victim Service Provider	179
Pay for Stay - Union Gospel Mission	48
Grand Total	959

The Situation Report, published weekly in Ramsey County, provides a good estimate of the number of people staying in shelter on a nightly basis. There are currently 371 shelter beds for single adult men, and 85 beds for single adult women. The average shelter utilization rate for beds from January 2024-December 2025 was 96% for Men's beds and 97% for Women's beds. During this period of time, there were weeks where utilization was at or over 100%, demonstrating the need for more single adult shelter beds. For families, the number of available beds has fluctuated as capacity has changed. In 2024 and most of 2025, the capacity for families was around 76 beds, that changed when Interfaith Action was able to open in their new location, bringing total beds to 205. This fluctuation is also due to the beds in this count that are reserved for emergency placement and not consistently available.

The need for additional beds is further demonstrated by the number of unsheltered people as measured during the annual Point-in-Time (PIT) Count. In Ramsey County, the number of unsheltered people has grown steadily following the coronavirus pandemic, the unsheltered population grew by 31% while additional resources for shelter or emergency solutions have diminished. As Figure 4 illustrates, the number of sheltered has decreased while the number of unsheltered has increased.

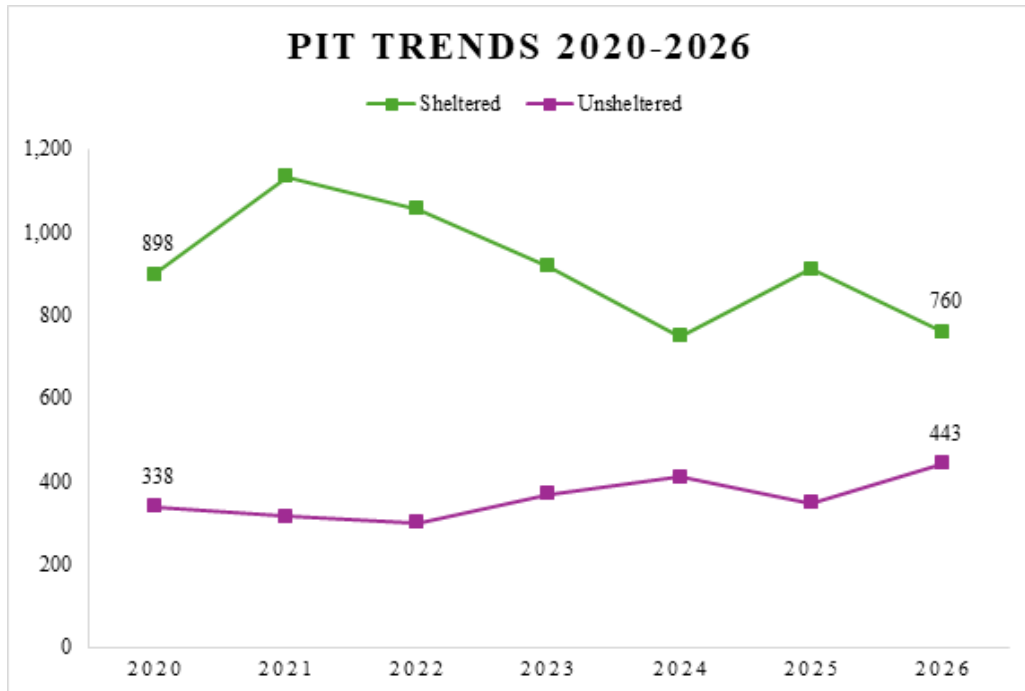


Figure 4 Point in Time Count Trends, changes in the unsheltered and sheltered population in Ramsey County

These findings demonstrate gaps in capacity of beds, but to determine the safety or dignity of people experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County shelters, there must be additional quantitative and qualitative research conducted. In this assessment, a few experiences of shelter are mentioned in Qualitative Theme 5, but a larger sample size is required to investigate the experiences and perceptions of people staying in Ramsey County Shelters. The larger sample size for qualitative interviews and emergency response data would provide enough evidence to determine if the shelter programs in Ramsey County provide program participants with a safe, dignified place to stay.

2. Need for sufficient beds and housing program vacancies

In 2024 there were a total of 5,075 beds in housing programs as a part of the homelessness response system. These programs include Transitional Housing, Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Permanent Housing with Services, and Housing Support. To learn more about the definition and differences between these programs, please [visit the 2024 Needs Assessment](#). In 2025, the total number of beds increased to 5,143, representing a 1.3% increase. The breakdown of beds by population can be found in Table 10.

Table 10. Housing beds by program and population

Program Type	2024	2025
Transitional Housing – Youth	98	54
Transitional Housing – Singles	206	90
Transitional Housing – Families	280	266
Transitional Housing – Total	584	431
Rapid Rehousing - Youth	36	77
Rapid Rehousing – Singles	44	53
Rapid Rehousing – Families	195	256
Rapid Rehousing - Total	276	386
Permanent Supportive Housing – Youth	43	67
Permanent Supportive Housing – Singles	726	745
Permanent Supportive Housing – Families	845	812
Permanent Supportive Housing - Total	1,614	1,624
Housing Support – Youth	25	57
Housing Support – Singles	1,375	1,355
Housing Support – Families	180	57
Housing Support – Total	1,580	1,469
Permanent Housing with Services – Youth	31	55
Permanent Housing with Services – Singles	255	420
Permanent Housing with Services – Families	735	758
Permanent Housing with Services – Total	1,021	1,233
Grand Total	5,075	5,143

During this period, the Coordinated Entry waitlist added an average of 2,277 people, including single adults, youth, and families, to the priority list for housing referrals. The vacancy rate may be calculated by the number of exits in each housing program per year. An exit means that a person or household is no longer in the program. When the person or household is no longer in the program, there is a vacancy or an open spot for a new person or household to enter the program. The total number of exits in 2024 was 1,432 and 1,312 in 2025. The vacancy rate then, is on average around 26%, meaning only one in four program beds are available each year. However, these rates change based on the program type. Transitional Housing (TH) and Rapid Rehousing (RRH) have a higher vacancy rate, because program duration is typically shorter, less than two

years. In contrast, permanent programs such as Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), Housing Support (HS), and Permanent Housing with Services (PH-S) have much lower vacancy rates as program duration is longer. The vacancy rates by program type can be found in Table 11.

Table 11. Housing beds by program and population

Program Type	2024 Beds	2024 Exits	2024 Vacancy Rate	2025 Beds	2025 Exits	2025 Vacancy Rate
Transitional Housing – Youth	98	31	31.6%	54	24	44.4%
Transitional Housing – Singles	206	8	3.9%	90	3	3.3%
Transitional Housing – Families	280	90	32.1%	266	66	24.8%
Transitional Housing – Total	584	129	22.1%	431	93	21.6%
Rapid Rehousing - Youth	36	96	266%	77	171	222%
Rapid Rehousing – Singles	44	81	184.1%	53	84	158.5%
Rapid Rehousing – Families	195	229	117.4%	256	224	87.5%
Rapid Rehousing - Total	276	406	147.1%	386	479	124.1%
Permanent Supportive Housing – Youth	43	19	44.2%	67	13	19.4%
Permanent Supportive Housing – Singles	726	117	16.1%	745	128	17.2%
Permanent Supportive Housing – Families	845	245	29	812	189	23.3%
Permanent Supportive Housing - Total	1,614	381	23.6%	1,624	330	20.3%
Housing Support – Youth	25	25	100%	57	33	57.9%
Housing Support – Singles	1,375	161	11.7%	1,355	150	11.1%
Housing Support – Families	180	6	3.3	57	13	22.8%
Housing Support – Total	1,580	192	12.2%	1,469	196	13.3%
Permanent Housing with Services – Youth	31	9	29%	55	5	9.1%
Permanent Housing with Services – Singles	255	131	51%	420	124	29.5%
Permanent Housing with Services – Families	735	184	25%	758	85	11.2%
Permanent Housing with Services – Total	1,021	324	32%	1,233	214	17.4%
Grand Total	5,075	1,432	28%	5,143	1,312	26%

The total number of people in need of housing or joining enrollments on the coordinated entry list is nearly double the annual vacancies. To keep up with demand or make room for all the need in our system, there would need to at least double the total number of housing program beds available in Ramsey County. In housing programs, there is not enough room for all the need in our system.

3. Need for affordable housing

An exit from homelessness is generally considered successful when a household obtains permanent housing that is both stable and affordable. This includes ensuring that low-income households are not cost-burdened. Currently, in Ramsey county there is a gap of about 15,000 units of affordable housing which represents the number of households making less than 30% AMI

that currently pay over 50% of their income towards rent (CHAS 2025). The Ramsey 2040 comprehensive plan commits to creating an additional 3,800 affordable units. In 2024, the Ramsey County Department of Community and Economic Development's annual report described supporting either the construction or preservation of 410 units of Affordable housing.

Voucher programs such as Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs), Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs), Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) and Family Reunification Vouchers (FUP) are used to make housing more affordable. These programs calculate rent based on household income, ensuring participants pay no more than 30% of their monthly income on housing costs. These programs are limited due to high demand and some vouchers time-limited, typically lasting two years or less. Increasing the quantity of vouchers available may help improve access to affordable housing but expanding the supply of Affordable or Area Median Income-based housing units and increasing wages to match the cost of living are essential to ensuring that housing is truly accessible for all residents of Ramsey County.

Conclusion

After examining the major needs of people experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County, it is clear that no part of the system has sufficient capacity to meet the overall demand. There is a need for more shelter beds, more housing program vacancies, and affordable housing to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

4. *What information is being lost or is not collected on program participants? Which types of housing are people moving between? What are their outcomes?*

Data not collected

The information that is being lost or is not collected on program participants includes a number of standard data elements. When households access shelter, street outreach, coordinated entry, and housing programs, standard data elements are entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The enrollment workflow includes around 15-20 questions that program staff work with participants or clients to enter. Each question is required to be answered as a part of the standard data elements collected, with specific questions changing based on previous answers or the program the participant is being enrolled in. Though this may seem long, the information collected at enrollment is critical for understanding the needs and experiences of people accessing services in the homelessness response system. All of the earlier information provided on demographics and experiences is informed by enrollment information. Data not collected is usually the result of discrepancies in data completion in enrollments.

The likely reason for this is the length of time staff have to ask and answer all the required questions. For instance, during shelter reservations program staff try to enroll people quickly so the person can get a bed and then move on with their day. They may choose not to ask some of the more personal questions or the client may not want to answer everything. Conversely, in a housing program, staff usually have more time to work through all the questions and are less rushed. Clients may also want to answer more questions in these settings as they are building rapport with program staff. To improve data quality, some changes have been implemented by the HMIS administrator for Ramsey County, the Institute for Community Alliances (ICA).

An example of such a change occurred with the implementation of the SHED team. Since reservations are made in advance over the phone or in person, individuals do not have to answer all of the intake questions upon arrival, and the shelter staff are not responsible for completing 20 or more enrollments each night. The SHED team in cooperation with ICA, to determine ways to improve efficiency. One recent change extended automatic program exits from 14 days to 60 days. As a result, individuals staying in a night-by-night shelter would no longer need to renew their enrollment every two weeks, instead it is updated every 60 days.

The variables with the highest “Data Not Collected” responses in 2024 and 2025 enrollments were Domestic Violence Experience and Previous Living Situation. These two questions are sensitive and people experiencing homelessness may not want to answer them when asked by a case manager or program staff. Furthermore, the differing definitions of homelessness between the McKinney-Vento Act, HUD Data Standards, and the State of Minnesota, means that some living in precarious living situations, such as being doubled-up (staying with friends or family but not being a leaseholder) are considered homeless in some counts, and not considered homeless or unstably housed in other surveys.

Moving between housing

Moving between housing refers to households that exit one housing program and enroll in a different housing program within a year or less. Of all clients or households who exited and then enrolled in another housing program in 2024 and 2025, the majority exited from Rapid Rehousing Programs (RRH) followed by Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). The majority of programs that they then enrolled in were also RRH programs.

Rapid Rehousing programs generally provide housing navigation, case management and rental assistance for up to 24 months. Most households who left one housing program and then moved to another ended up in Rapid Rehousing programs. They were enrolled in the Rapid Rehousing programs for short periods of time, less than 6 months and sometimes as short as 1 month.

Rapid Rehousing programs don't operate with strict, uniform standards so there is added flexibility in how providers design and deliver services. The outcome of this flexibility leads to diverse outcomes in programs and the experiences of clients or households within programs. Programs are able to take an individualized approach, but there is a lack of consistency in outcomes and experiences.

5. How many clients are being served in housing programs?

The total number of beds in housing programs in the Ramsey County homelessness response system is 5,143. The total number of clients served in housing programs in 2024 was 5,003 and total number of clients served in 2025 was 5,019. Table 12 shows the number of enrollments, exits, and exits to permanent destinations for each housing program type and population in 2024 and 2025. Exits to permanent destinations includes any program exit to the following housing situations:

- Staying or living with family, permanent tenure
- Staying or living with friends, permanent tenure
- Moved from one Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) funded project to HOPWA PH
- Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy
- Rental by client, with ongoing housing subsidy
- Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy
- Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy

Table 12. 2024 Housing program inflow and outflow

Program Type	Enrollments	Exits	Exits to Permanent Housing	Length of Time for Permanent Exits (Months)
Transitional Housing – Youth	28	31	14	13
Transitional Housing – Singles	1	8	5	10
Transitional Housing – Families	107	90	76	21
Transitional Housing – Total	136	129	95	19
Rapid Rehousing - Youth	106	96	86	4.1
Rapid Rehousing – Singles	80	81	67	6.8
Rapid Rehousing – Families	186	229	168	17
Rapid Rehousing - Total	372	406	321	12
Permanent Supportive Housing – Youth	18	19	7	62
Permanent Supportive Housing – Singles	87	117	57	74
Permanent Supportive Housing – Families	208	245	152	44
Permanent Supportive Housing - Total	313	381	216	60
Housing Support – Youth	44	25	5	10
Housing Support – Singles	239	161	57	41
Housing Support – Families	20	6	3	47
Housing Support – Total	303	192	65	42
Permanent Housing with Services – Youth	8	9	1	40
Permanent Housing with Services – Singles	99	131	59	41
Permanent Housing with Services – Families	166	184	114	47
Permanent Housing with Services – Total	273	324	174	42
Grand Total	1,292	1,432	871	35

Table 13. 2025 Housing program inflow and outflow

Program Type	Enrollments	Exits	Exits to Permanent Housing	Length of Time for Permanent Exits (Months)
Transitional Housing – Youth	36	24	12	15
Transitional Housing – Singles	5	3	3	8
Transitional Housing – Families	54	66	47	20
Transitional Housing – Total	95	93	62	18
Rapid Rehousing - Youth	146	171	149	5
Rapid Rehousing – Singles	61	84	70	8
Rapid Rehousing – Families	188	224	179	19
Rapid Rehousing - Total	395	479	398	12
Permanent Supportive Housing – Youth	18	13	4	17
Permanent Supportive Housing – Singles	103	128	46	61
Permanent Supportive Housing – Families	183	189	108	32
Permanent Supportive Housing – Total	304	330	158	44
Housing Support – Youth	37	33	21	41
Housing Support – Singles	189	150	33	53
Housing Support – Families	9	13	3	32
Housing Support – Total	235	193	57	35
Permanent Housing with Services – Youth	3	5	3	41
Permanent Housing with Services – Singles	87	124	64	53
Permanent Housing with Services – Families	69	85	51	32
Permanent Housing with Services – Total	159	214	118	35
Grand Total	1,188	1,312	793	28

6. What is the relationship between programs and returns to homelessness?

The relationship between programs and a return to homelessness describes how people experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County may exit to a permanent destination but then return to a service area within two years of exit. These service areas may include emergency shelter, street outreach, or homeless prevention services. To examine this relationship, two returns to homelessness reports were generated. In 2024, all those exiting to a permanent housing destination in 2022 were reviewed to determine if they returned to services within two years of exiting a program. For example, if a household exited Permanent Supportive Housing in 2022 to a permanent destination but later enrolled in shelter in 2023 or 2024, they would be considered a person who has returned to homelessness. In other words, they were stably housed at exit but returned to homelessness or housing instability within two (2) years. For 2025, this same report was generated but for those who were exited in 2023. Taken together the reports comprise a four-year period of service use and trends in returns to homelessness.

Below, Table 14 shows the number of programs that had people exit to permanent destinations and return in 2024. Of these, emergency shelters night-by-night had the highest percentage of returns, though, that in some ways is to be expected since shelter programs are temporary and not intended to help individuals achieve long-term stability.

Table 14. 2024 Returns to homelessness – Program exited from

Program Type	Exits (%)	Returns	% of Exits Returned	Months to Return
Homeless Prevention	1,482 (45.2)	572	38.6	11
Emergency Shelter – Entry Exit	55 (16.9)	214	38.5	11
Emergency Shelter – Night-by-Night	64 (1.95)	60	93.7	1
Street Outreach	260 (7.9)	129	49.6	7
Transitional Housing	88 (2.6)	30	34.0	11
Rapid Rehousing	405 (12.4)	121	29.8	11
Permanent Housing with Services	189 (5.8)	53	28.0	10
Permanent Supportive Housing	233 (7.1)	62	26.6	12
Total	3,276	1,241	37.8	N/A

Of the housing programs in Ramsey County, people exiting from Transitional Housing had the highest percentage of returns, but the average rate for housing programs was 25%. This means that one in four people exiting to permanent destinations in Ramsey County return to homelessness or housing instability. As far as the programs people are returning to, (i.e., where they are seen again when they come back to seek services, the highest was homeless prevention followed by day shelter as shown in Table 15.

Table 15. 2024 Returns to homelessness – Program returning to

Program Type	Returning Enrollments	% of Returns
Coordinated Entry	123	9.9
Day Shelter	157	12.7
Emergency Shelter – Entry Exit	55	9.8
Emergency Shelter – Night-by-Night	64	7.5
Homeless Prevention	665	53.6
Street Outreach	81	6.5
Total	1,241	100

This indicates that those who achieve stability have difficulty sustaining it and may need additional rent support or services to stay stably housed. This is in alignment with research on rent affordability and cost burden among low-income households (Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University 2026). On average, households returned within one year of exit, meaning they were not able to stabilize beyond one year following program exit. Table 16 shows the types of households that are returning, with families being the majority of returners.

Table 16. 2024 Returns to homelessness – Family type

Family Type	Returning Enrollments	% of all Returns	% of all Population Exits
Families (Adult + Child)	695	56.0	35.6
Parenting Youth (Youth + Child)	70	5.6	33.7
Single Youth	140	11.3	50.9
Single Adult	336	27.1	41.7
Total	1,241	100	100

These trends continue in 2025 as Tables 17-19 demonstrate.

Table 17. 2025 Returns to homelessness – Program exited form

Program Type	Exits (%)	Returns	% of Exits Returned	Months to Return
Homeless Prevention	3,918 (70.5)	1,607	41.0	9
Emergency Shelter – Entry Exit	478 (8.6)	173	36.2	10
Emergency Shelter – Night-by-Night	8 (0.1)	7	87.5	7
Street Outreach	241 (4.3)	190	78.8	4
Transitional Housing	89 (1.6)	25	28.1	6
Rapid Rehousing	287 (5.2)	120	41.8	7
Permanent Housing with Services	402 (7.2)	60	14.9	8
Permanent Supportive Housing	136 (2.4)	48	35.5	9
Total	5,559	2,230	40.1	N/A

Table 18. 2025 Returns to homelessness – Program returning to

Program Type	Returning Enrollments	% of Returns
Coordinated Entry	94	4.2
Day Shelter	234	10.5
Emergency Shelter – Entry Exit	132	5.9
Emergency Shelter – Night-by-Night	51	2.3
Homeless Prevention	1,630	73.1
Street Outreach	89	4.0
Total	2,230	100

Table 19. 2025 Returns to homelessness – Family type

Family Type	Returning Enrollments	% of all Returns	% of all Population Exits
Families (Adult + Child)	1,489	66.8	38.2
Parenting Youth (Youth + Child)	137	6.1	40.5
Single Youth	164	7.4	47.4
Single Adult	435	19.5	47.1
Total	2,230	100	100

The *Returns to Homelessness* data demonstrates that housing stability is often difficult to sustain even for those who successfully exit housing programs. The rates of returns to homelessness demonstrate the need for longer-term supports and aftercare that extend beyond the typical one-year program period. In 2025, the length of time to return to homelessness decreased across programs, meaning people are experiencing shorter periods of stability before being in need of help or services again. The causes of these returns are likely many, but as the earlier discussion of housing affordability demonstrates, maintaining housing is financially burdensome for those with low incomes and more difficult to maintain long-term. These findings point to a need for expansion of longer-term rental subsidies, additional strategies to support households, or more ways to bring the cost of housing down for those most in need of it.

Qualitative introduction and methodology

Qualitative interviews were conducted with Key Informants, Providers, and Client or Households participating in housing programs. Key Informants were those from programs that are either Program Directors or managers, whereas Providers were direct service providers such as case managers. They were conducted either virtually or in-person and lasted on average around 50 minutes. Interviews were conducted by members of the Ramsey County Housing Stability Department and Needs Assessment planning group. The interview guides for interviews and an overview of the methodology can be found in Appendix A. There were a total of nine key informants, three providers, and ten client interviews for a total of 22 interview transcripts used in the analysis. All clients or people with lived experience were compensated for their time. The qualitative analysis method used in this assessment was inductive coding, where codes or sentiments are created from the interview transcripts and used to determine the generative themes. There was a total of 48 codes created in the analysis that resulted in six generative themes.

The housing situation and population of clients interviewed is shown in Table 20.

Table 20. Client populations interviewed

Family Type	Housed	Sheltered or Homeless
Families (Adult + Child)	2	1
Single Youth	2	3
Single Adult	0	2
Total	4	6

Qualitative findings

1. How are policies in funders or programs affecting the homelessness response system?

The policies in funders or programs affect the homelessness response system by determining priorities and investment. As demonstrated in Theme 1, when speaking to Key Informants, the policies mostly limited what resources providers were able to routinely offer. Some key informants talked about difficulties in determining the line for eligible costs, where others talked about funding going away and needing to find or use new funding streams.

2. How can we improve the outcomes for those with needs outside of what is currently funded?

After reviewing responses to the questions regarding resource connections and gaps, improving outcomes outside of what is currently funded is seemingly fraught. Program providers and directors discussed working to do more with less year over year and doing their best to meet current or growing needs with shrinking funding. Determining specifics for who has needs outside of what is currently funded was also difficult as there are many things that go unfunded or providers have to find creative ways to fund. In the interviews with Key Informants and Providers those were namely things like navigation services and transportation costs.

“...putting people into categories and buckets and saying, well, here's this bucket of money for this person. If you can prove that they have A, B, C, or D, fine, use our money. If not, figure out a different way, you know? We have a transportation grant, and you can't use more than \$30 per day for a specific client if it fits into tier one, two, or three. But if they do fit in there, then you can use more than \$30 a day. So just kind of the restrictions are just like, what were you thinking when you, when you did that? I mean, I'm not gonna complain because I want your money from the grant” – Key Informant 3

“I think just more tangible assistance. I wish I could provide a little bit more transportation assistance at the same time. I don't want them to be dependent on, “Hey, every time I need something, can you gimme a bus card?” You know, there's still that level of wanting to push them towards independence. But it would be nice to be able to have those things a little more frequently, a little more often” – Key Informant 6

“The needs I feel would help, I think I said this before, is past due eviction. I do a lot of negotiating too. I don't know if you do that, but I asked them for settlements. I'm like “Let's settle on this, we got a thousand dollars. You gonna take it or leave it?” Sometimes I'll be trying to <laughs> bargain with these landlords for them to settle with the client. I'm like, we got a thousand dollars. They're homeless, but I just wish there was some money or something that could help with this or something. Like, let's make some settlements to get these slates cleaned. Like they're a fresh start. Yeah, because the past is kind of hindering them. I wish there was something we could, some type of work we could do to work on the past so we can move forward.” – Provider 1

“The car needs, like the car got impounded, some car repair stuff. That's little small things. If you, I mean, like you said, we had a bucket of money and we could tap \$500 out just in case this is what that person needed to get. Is this like one means of transportation to get to and from their job? Just funding for transportation.” -Key Informant 4

As key informants and providers mentioned, a way to improve outcomes would be more diversion services or flexible funding programs, where clients receive the financial assistance, they need to pay a lease violation or fix their car so they can remain stable versus those expenses are seemingly the tip of the iceberg or start to a downward spiral that leads to homelessness in the clients or participants they work closest with.

“I think we can probably catch people earlier and give them back out... Because there's no access to money... How many guys could go back home or somewhere if they could pay \$500 a month? Half of this building has a place to go if they could afford \$500 a month...we have some people who simply need money to move through, they're simply \$500 or a thousand dollars behind. I'd be fine with whatever it is, paying that old property management off with the damages, whatever that thing is, tends to be the largest thing that leads to people remaining homeless. And that one thing can be fixed with money, it's not behavior, it's money. Those are the things that people with money don't get held back on. People with money are able to rent again because they can pay off that fee. They don't have the unpaid rent, it's those dollar amounts that keep people down longer and longer and longer. And then less money is in their hands so they can never pay off a thousand dollars because they're getting \$200 at a time.” – Key Informant 1

“I'm like, come on, let's just pay those past due rents so we can get you housed. Like, that's the whole thing. You know, they don't wanna do that sometimes. But that past due rent amount is holding a lot of people up.” – Provider 1

“So that part of our budget has, even since I've been here, gone down as our contracts aren't paying for as much of the program. We used to have like \$500 per family per year, for just like, I need a uniform, or I need a gas card. Those kinds of extras. Then that had to go down this year. So, I think, and that includes things like Bridging so they can have furniture when they move in, Ubers to get them to their interviews, all those kinds of things. That's what ends up being cut when we're reducing the budget. So that's what I'd like to do more.” – Key Informant 5

3. What are the experiences and perceptions of programs and services from direct service providers?

The experiences and perceptions of programs from direct service providers are reflected in Generative Themes 1-3:

- 1) Funding and Balance in Sustaining Programs
- 2) Navigating Resources in Complex Systems
- 3) Joy in Success.

The interviews with providers represent the smallest group of interviewees so the themes for this group are less salient compared to those of Key Informants. It was difficult to assess the unique perspectives of providers or direct service staff due to the limited number of interviews. Generally, providers are doing their best to navigate systems and meet the needs of their clients. They are able to speak to the ebb and flow of needs, and how the funding to meet these needs is decreasing. Providers are consistently trying to be creative and overcome barriers, sometimes this work results in client success, but many times it feels never-ending and weighs on the providers.

4. What are the experiences and perceptions of programs and services from clients?

The experiences and perceptions of programs from clients are described in Generative Themes 4-6:

- 4) Causes and Effects of Homelessness
- 5) Differences in Experience
- 6) Impact of Programs

For this assessment, most of the clients interviewed were not housed, and were staying in shelters or places not meant for human habitation. A breakdown of the client populations and circumstances can be found in Table 20.

The starkest difference between clients or program participants were the changes in perceptions between family clients (households with minor children) and clients who were youth or single adults. In discussing resource navigation and connection, family clients remarked at how accessible services were. They were able to get connected, feel prioritized, and receive the services they needed. All of the family program participants interviewed talked about how respected and cared for they felt in their programs. While trust and connection took time to build, families expressed feelings of relief at the time of shelter entry. In contrast, the single adults and youth interviewed were mostly still waiting to be connected. In their interviews, experiences of shelter and resource connection were less positive. They expressed concerns about the length of time needed to access housing and unfavorable shelter conditions.

Outside of these differences, clients had similar experiences with navigating the homelessness response system. Determining resources, safety, and next steps were top of mind for all participants interviewed. Of those who were housed, a key connection was often the inciting incident that got them housed. Most program participants said they heard about resources from other people experiencing homelessness around them. Some had received help from Hennepin County and Ramsey County programs and shared experiences of both.

Clients also spoke of the perception they have of themselves and how they became homeless. Many described a desire for shared respect from staff and society at large. Those who were not housed during the time of the interviews were especially aware of public perception. Clients described frustration in their experience in trying and failing to find housing options or programs; barriers felt like roadblocks blocking them from success. These participants also had a keen

awareness of the instability of funding, remarking on programs opening or closing or certain resources no longer being available.

5. How can we improve the outcomes for specific circumstances?

Similar to question two, determining the answer for this question at times is fraught. Specific circumstances are, by definition, rare. Their rarity makes consistent funding hard to find for programs. Though these circumstances are rare, they are important. In these interviews, they were similarly rarely brought up, and when asked what is most difficult to find funding for, key informants spoke to finding operating dollars to ensure staff and programs are able to function. In 2026, programs and providers do their best to be flexible under specific circumstances, working with clients to meet their variable needs. To improve the outcomes of specific circumstances, more flexible funding would be needed to enhance available services for programs and providers.

Generative Themes

Theme 1: Funding and balance in sustaining programs

A key area of interest for this assessment was determining the impact of funding on programs. Through interviews with key informants and providers, it became clear that funding affects nearly everything in the homelessness response system. This theme was generated through responses to questions about how often providers think about funding, how funding affects program offerings, and ideal funding for programs. Interviewees expressed constantly thinking about funding.

Question: How often do you think of or consider funding in the management of your programs?

“Constantly. Every day. Every single day. It is the main thing I think about constantly is money. We don't have enough - ever.” – Key Informant 1

“Every single decision that I make” – Key Informant 3

“Oh, all the time. <laughs> Constantly.” – Key Informant 5

The interviewees described the direct connection between funding and programming. Both key informants and providers expressed how funding changes played a role in the operation of programs and resources available.

“Yeah, I've never had to watch a budget so closely and I am watching this budget, like by the dollar. It used to be watched, you know, by the tens of thousands of dollars, but now it's like every dollar that is spent, I wanna know what it is because it's that close. We have to make sure that we're, you know, we're making 175 meals a day and it costs X amount of money and we, you know, we can't go over that anymore. Like, we have to be really rigid with the budget and strict, so there's no extra frills or client emergencies that we can bare financially” – Key Informant 3

“That's what I feel like has changed. Like, there's not a lot of resources that we can depend on to help 'em... I felt like there was more resources, there was money, there was more Section eight vouchers, emergency housing vouchers.” – Provider 1

“Yeah. I mean, definitely a direct connection. If we can't pay for it, we don't do it.” – Key Informant 5

“I don't want to underscore the impacts that the HUD COC funding has had. I mean, our organization, our budget is under \$5 million...But we probably, like 7% of it is federal funding. Of the federal funding, 99% of it is the HUD COC dollars that we get for supportive housing. We've been getting this funding since 2002, never had an issue, you know, submitted APRs every year, had site visits, all of that stuff. And so just everything that's happening around that has really, created so much uncertainty where we've had to not hire staff or, you know, we're working with smaller staff because we don't, because everything is so uncertain that we don't wanna kind of like bring in some of these resources that we need because we're not sure how the funding is gonna shake out. So, it

just has put a lot of stress on people that are doing more with less, because they're like, well, we get it, you know, we don't want anybody our jobs to be in jeopardy, but we also re-hire because, you know, [there are] 25 people families on a caseload versus 15.” – Key Informant 2

When asked about specific policies and their effect on funding, providers and key informants had difficulty identifying clear connections between individual funding sources and their policies. This is likely because providers receive funding from many sources. Rather, they spoke to how public or program policy generally affects the availability of funding and thus the services that can be provided.

“I don't know if this is outside looking in or inside looking in, but it feels like those shifts and changes in policy are incredibly disconnected from the on the ground work versus people that can control funding and assume that it will have certain changes or impacts in terms of whether it's waste or whether it's positive outcomes or whether it's their own statistics and understanding, but don't really get how it looks on the ground.” – Key Informant 9

“I guess the restrictions in funding and probably reporting requirements, like what they want to see or what they think success is, isn't really a definition that is even best practice anymore. So, it kind of seems a little out there. And I guess just the same, putting people into categories and buckets and saying, well, here's this bucket of money for this person. If you can prove that they have A, B, C, or D, fine, use the money. If not, figure out a different way, you know?... So, just kind of the restrictions is just like, what, what were you thinking when you did that? I mean, I'm not gonna complain 'cause I want your money from the grant. But I just wonder what they're thinking when they come up with these work plans, that is what they consider success versus what we think we can realistically do with money. Or then they pay for a staff person, but not any direct client assistance. And the direct client assistance dollars are really restrictive.” – Key Informant 3

They also spoke about the ways funding is often braided to meet housing and service needs. There is not one specific funding source that meets all of the needs for programs.

“Key Informant 8: Depends on the site. We have a lot of braided funding. Our St. Paul properties, if we're speaking specifically to Ramsey County, two of our properties have limited services funding. So, we are actively applying for grants to cover services... For our St Paul sites, funding is tight.

Key Informant 7: Yeah, I think [name redacted] nailed it. We get pretty thrifty and creative I think when it comes to funding, especially in our St. Paul sites. We've gotten creative in some ways, in sort of stretching out budgets longer term or, you know, we've been able to sometimes advocate for different contractual increases and things like that. But yeah, we definitely get creative. We make a lot of partnerships to try to extend the dollar.

Key Informant 8: We also know that those services are crucial for sustaining housing. So, that's not a hit that [organization redacted] wants to take, but I think like [housing stabilization services] was a

real opportunity for us to like, provide services to those participants, potentially get an additional case manager there to help families, help the youth. But without that we're just actively applying for grants, looking for funding opportunities and taking advantage of any opportunity that like, makes sense and is aligned with our services. Because I think that's the balance too, of not applying for funding that will stretch you beyond your means..." - Key Informant 7 and Key Informant 8

"We also try to scaffold our funding so that if one opportunity has a three-year cycle, we're applying for something a year ahead of time that will help us continue that work. And I think if those grant cycles or those grant spaces kind of more sustainably thought about continuation and what that looks like outside of that term of the grant, I think that would go a long way to a lot of service providers." – Key Informant 9

Finally, providers talked about ideals for funding or what they would desire more funding was available for. The most common response was the need for more funding for operations and staffing.

"I mean, I think that essentially the biggest thing is just operating a program. Yeah. Like you're, the cost of a program like this is the staff and the upkeep of the building. Yeah. That is the cost of the program. Would it be nice to have more, more funds to do more activities? Sure. But also, the cost of these other things are increasing at a rate that the grants aren't keeping up with." – Key Informant 6

"Oh, most funding doesn't touch the kind of administrative, you know, support." – Key Informant 2

"You know, like, again, paying people the things that aren't as shiny and fun on paper. I mean, I think they are, but <laughs> to the fundraising world, not really government contracts, but for like private foundations. They're all about like they wanna fund the cute and fun things." – Key Informant 5

"If I had unlimited funding, I'd be open like 12 hours a day, 10 to 12 hours a day. And it'd be staffed the same way in sort of a one to 10 ratio." – Key Informant 1

"I think for me personally, what I've seen maybe in the last six months or so, probably the last year, is just, obviously funding is always gonna be an answer. I'm just gonna, that is an answer. I think the other thing is just like keeping your staff level, you know, because of all those other pieces, because of all the things we've already talked about. Like, every day somebody is at the brink of burnout and like talking 'em off the ledge, talking through the situation, can we fix it? And that kind of thing. And I feel like I do that multiple times a week just to ensure everyone's okay." – Key Informant 6

Theme 2: Navigating resources in complex systems

A second key theme that emerged from interviews with Key Informants and Providers was the impact of the programs on clients and the value of resource navigation, or assisting program participants with finding available community resources, in programs. Both Key Informants and Providers interviewed talked extensively about resource navigation in describing when asked what they do in their programs for clients.

“...and then we get into ASAP matters. So ASAP is like, what are immediate needs that you might need? So those are resources again. So, because I'm a guru of resources, it makes it easy for me to navigate peoples like needs. And so, it would come up to like, 'hey, I need child support papers.' Or, 'hey, I need, food resources.' 'I need an ID, I need my birth certificate.' 'I need a car.' 'I need a job.' Anything under the sun, a lot of domestic abuse, a lot of mental health resources. Those things are always common. And then the other thing is like wellness health.” – Provider 3

“But my very first goal is when they, when they come into [workplace redacted], is to basically gather all of their vital documents for coordinated access, to make sure that, you know, help them get birth certificates, social security cards, um, you know, just those, those vital documents that they're gonna need, photo IDs, all those things to get to be housing ready” – Provider 1

“We provide access to shelters. We, right now we have a lot of youth who are in encampments, and so we help them with tents and sleeping bags and, um, food that can be taken that they take from the resource room and the food shelf so that it can be made when we're closed. They have like little burners and so we'll give them like canned foods that they can heat up. Um, we have helped people who walk in with literally nothing but the clothes on their back and we're able to find them shelter and then help with mental health, education, employment, and then into housing.” – Key Informant 3

“The idea of course, is that we're able to help fulfill those basic needs, and that over time, that relationship and trust builds to the point where that one day somebody says, okay, I'm thinking of treatment, or, I'd like to get my ID now. It is all those little things that, that are the real step that only happen when somebody's eaten and slept and felt safe.” – Key Informant 1

Through this resource navigation, barriers to housing become clear for providers and key informants.

“Interviewer: what is a reoccurring challenge?”

Provider 2: <laughs> rent's too high. That's it. You know, rent's too high. Housing stock is too low. Um, yeah.” – Provider 2

“So, like, the biggest problem we have here is childcare expenses, childcare and assistance. It is like, why does, why does this mom have three case managers? Why is it that the case managers have 50 to 60 people on the roster?” – Provider 3

“I wish I could, maybe just... hold their hand, like where maybe like vendor their rent or just help this crisis. Like, I don't see the same families over and over. Like, I've been [here] only five years and probably, you know, we see families again, the repeats, like, well, what happened? What? Like, we gotta figure out why this is happening. Why are you becoming homeless again? What happened when you got subsidized housing? So, I wish it was just more, what should I say? Like transitional, one-on-one, some more holding their hands even after they get housing.” – Provider 1

“Basically, the only two ways that we societally and systemically deal with disabilities is either your family takes care of you, or you have to enter like cataclysmic poverty to receive community supports with your disability. And then when you get to that point, so many of our folks who have disabilities who reach us have all these other barriers that were built up in the process of them reaching a point of desperation through their disability that they could then start receiving support, right? So, it's like, if we had better mechanisms to support folks with disabilities who don't have strong family supports, we may still see plenty of folks living with disabilities come into shelter, but a lot of those folks may not be coming into shelter with three evictions, huge unpaid energy bills, and things like this, right?” – Provider 2

Many of these barriers are also economic, and interviewees spoke about the need for money to ensure stable housing.

“And there are just some problems that money is the only solution for it is legitimately money is the answer. It's not, bootstraps is not the answer. We see a lot of young people who, their parents have used their social security number and ran up, you know, obscene amounts of rent debt or electricity bill debt. And so suddenly, it's like, wait, how do we get the electricity in your name because your parent owes \$11,000, you know, or whatever it may be. So, we see that a lot too.” – Key Informant 3

“Another thing is, people with income, like they have income and what their income is and what they, what they are looking for housing to affordability wise for them. It's just not it's hard. It's hard. Yeah. I got a person who came in the day before yesterday. He is homeless, but he has income. I told him I was gonna try to get him into an assisted living place. He doesn't wanna go into the assisted living place because he's saying they're gonna take all his money. All he is gonna have left is \$200. What can you do with that? And he is not the only one. I've had a few other people call me too and that's their thing. I can get him into a place, but they won't have no income to live off of. So, what do, like, what do we do? That's, that's a challenge.” – Key Informant 4

“We have a lot of relationships with landlords. We're able to connect them to, you know, work on whatever barrier it might be. If they have like a recent eviction, we've been able to piece together resources to help get that taken care of, those kinds of things.” – Key Informant 5

Theme 3: Joy in success

The final theme that emerged from Key Informant and Provider Interviews was the joy in experiencing client or program success. The impact of this success on providers and key informants was evident as both groups were proud of their programs and what they were able to accomplish for their clients.

“[Client name redacted] came to us and got into the Safe Harbor program and was housed. Then addressed some mental health issues, got a job, went to school, is now out in the world working full-time, paying her own rent, doing really well. I think really success is defined not by what I think or what funders think, but really what a young person thinks. If they come here and get their needs met for a day and they’ve survived another day, that’s great. That’s success. Other people, you know, it’s getting that job or getting an education. We’ve had a lot of youth who have graduated high school and gotten their GED through us. Success for other folks is surviving another night at an encampment when they’re vulnerable.” – Key Informant 3

“Getting into a place that they stay for at least a year, getting out of that first lease without an eviction, without unpaid rent. We want them to get through the first six months, especially where we’re at, we wanna hit the metrics, right? Where all the metrics say if people hit this long in housing, they’re likely to keep it, right? For me personally, if they see out the first lease, that is a success because most of our folks come here on the back of a lease, they didn’t get through for whatever reason.” – Key Informant 2

“My most memorable experience has been a specific client of mine who was here for a very long time and was failed by the system in a lot of different ways. Just getting her into a new spot, right? Get more kind of working the back channels, finding a way to kind of like, get around all these things that have been causing challenges for her and get her into a new spot with her kids really helped stabilize them.” – Provider 2

“Well, she kept going through that same repetitive system of homelessness, the last time she went through homelessness, she met with some advocate, and they called me up. I already knew who she was. I got her into housing. But because she had been going along with this whole piece of being unstable, it became a conditional way of her thinking and way she was living. I had to do more one-on-one with her by actually going to her house like every other day to educate her. Why she couldn’t have people staying there, why she couldn’t do the certain things she was doing that would give her these violations where she would be put out. Well, she finally got it, started staying by the rules, taking care of the place and everything. One day I got a phone call from a person that told me they had some units available and it was income based; I called her and told her about it. She immediately went over there, filled out the application and we got her in. Now ever since she came back to me, she’s been stable.” – Key Informant 4

“There’s someone here at [organization name redacted], she was having issues where due to her trauma and history, like she would just get very explosive with her anger. So, she had issues with neighbors here, or she’d come down at about something she received from our property manager.

It would be explosive, and then due to my past in shelter, I was kind of like, “Oh, this is fine. I can handle this.” But it was like really kind of freaking people out around here. She also is just someone who’s louder her, her base level is like a nine. So, one time when she and I were talking, we talked about mental health, and she wanted to access services and you could tell there was like a stigma with that. I just remember like a month later, she said, to case manager more than me. It was like, ‘I thought about what you guys said, and I went, I’m checking it out.’ She’s been doing, I mean, we haven’t seen an explosive event in, I don’t know, six months or something. It’s huge. It’s huge. She’s working her butt off and she’s got, she’s doing all kinds of things. At the same time, I knew like, if you can’t get that a little under control, you could lose everything so quickly. You can get arrested, she could have been evicted if you didn’t like the neighbor thing got control. So that core stuff is just really important to have people feel not judged, you know?” – Key Informant 5

“I think one of the proudest moments I’ve felt is, is running into a client from early in my time at [program name redacted] at work, he’d moved. He’d finished out his lease and moved from their first spot back to St. Paul, and he was at work. I went in to get some oil from an auto supply shop. He was the one who greeted me at the door working there and in his new spot. I think seeing those people who get out and this was shelter, is not something that they will probably ever have to think about again, right? It’s something that served its purpose. It got them back on their feet, and now they’re thriving. Those are the moments always make you feel proud.” – Provider 2

When most key informants were asked what they would do with unlimited funding, they said they would expand their programs and keep doing the work they are doing for the Ramsey County homelessness response system.

“What I would do immediately... I would first find more landlords that I know we could work with. Find more landlords we could work with.... I would not change it. I would, only thing I wanna do is just to expand. I would not change it.” – Key Informant 4

“My mind goes to something to help improve quality of life for participants. I think that could be a lot of things, but I think that not that we don’t do a really good job of helping people obtain the things that we can, but, you know, my mind will always go to how can we help make home feel more like home? How can we help you feel more comfortable? How can we have help you have the things that you need to succeed? I don’t know if there could ever be enough funding for that, but I’d love it

My mind went to case management right away, which I think probably like goes along with that. But like, if we could have like one to 15, like a case manager with caseloads of 15, I think they’re hitting high twenties right now. With clients with such high needs, if our staff could have smaller caseloads, they could be in units more, they could do a little more of like the hands-on with more participants to hopefully just like improve that quality of life to be consistent on their goals.” – Key Informant 7 & 8

“I think we would be able to create more quick transitions into community, not having to worry about housing support caps of what we have for rate one. We would be able to help people

transition in different ways and in different types of neighborhoods. I feel like we would still need to kind of do our job of building relationships in those spaces that people move into so that they could maintain. But that would absolutely not be a worry. I think we would be able to have a greater diversity of staff within each program and I think that would really help. Because right now in certain programs you'll have three case managers or a certain amount of peer supports or a certain amount of youth case managers.” – Key Informant 9

Theme 4: Causes and effects of homelessness

The theme of *Causes and Effects of Homelessness* was drawn from interviews with participants of programs. They expressed how their episodes of homelessness began and the difficulties in attaining or re-gaining stability.

“Interviewer: How did you get, how did you get hooked up at that place? How did you get connected to [program name redacted]?”

Client: I was trafficked. I was trafficked and I needed a place to go.” – Client 7

“We're just human, like a lot of people will look at us in our situation, or you're in a shelter, so you must be this type of person. And it's like, I had a very good life before all this stuff happened to me, like I'm just a human that something went wrong, like something happened.” – Client 1

“So initially, in the beginning, like when I came home, I had, you know, like my social with my birth certificate...I had started working over at Minneapolis, real good job, not too long from when I came home. So by that time, I had the wheels rolling, you know, I was able to get going, if you will, get myself together, acquire a vehicle, I was stable. I may not have had my own place, but I had a place where I was paying, and able to do my part, so I was straight, and working that job for like a year and a half or so. During that period, my paper ID expired, and I was trying to, I went forth to get the hard copy. I couldn't because my middle name was spelled out on one form and initial another, but by then, like I said, I was working. I was already going, I was functioning... down the line when I stopped working that job things slowed down on my as far as my financial situation, instability.” – Client 2

“How much money bills are. Like paying your own bills actually takes outta your pocket <laughs>. Okay. I did not expect that at all.” – Client 10

“I would say something that was difficult with the process is not having all your documentations to get through the housing stuff. Like, so they can give you the referrals. I would say that was just probably the most difficult. But of course, [program name redacted] helped me, you know, took me to go get my ID so I could go get my stuff and oh, I would say that was the most difficult, just not having all my documentations, you know, not being fully prepared....” – Client 9

They spoke to some treatment in programs and negative experiences that affected them or their mental health.

“It just really, it was helpful for a minute but then it just got outta hand. It was like the staff, like just half the food was frozen. Like you'd go to eat lasagna for dinner and it was like frozen or, and it just wasn't, I was looking for a shelter that I could sit in, sit at all day and I have to leave at nine in the morning and then come back at five or, you know, yeah.” – Client 5

“That is, if I had to say the thing that comes to mind is I am starting to learn how to more so not stop helping people, but more so learn how to not help people as much as I do. Because I'm that person

that'll sit there and constantly help even if it's fucking me over. So I am learning to not do that, so I'm not fucking myself over.” – Client 4

“And so we found bedbugs. We said screw that. We would rather camp outside than sleep in a fucking place that has bedbugs. Yeah, because I'm sorry that isn't healthy. That's more so unhealthy and unregulated, it's only certain mats that have it apparently.” – Client 4

Finally, clients are aware of the impact of funding on programs. They described a few instances where programming stopped because of changes in funding. They expressed feeling forgotten and a desire to be seen.

“Client: It was July 31 of last year, and that was our last day of the program, and I was used to getting \$200 or \$300 a week and I got cut off.

Interviewer: Did the funding stop for the program?

Client: Well, yeah, the funding ran out...so you get frustrated sometimes,” – Client 3

“I really need to just [expletive] get a place at this point because this isn't good for me or my work. On top of that, how am I supposed to keep my job if I can't have a stable housing?” – Client 4

“Client: Because homeless people are not being prioritized right now. Like my friends, they're sleeping outside.

Interviewer: Yeah. Are they staying in like encampments or are they staying like in random places?

Client: Random places. And I'm in a shelter because they don't want me sleeping outside, so, it just needs to be changed so people like us could have a chance.” – Client 7

Theme 5: Differences in experience

The theme of *Differences in Experience* was drawn from interviews with clients. It was clear after the interviews with 10 program participants that there are differences among families, single youth, and single adults in accessing resources and program experiences. When talking about resource connection or becoming connected, family clients often spoke to how easy getting connected was or how they were prioritized in programs.

“I moved from Oklahoma to Phoenix, Arizona. We fled from Phoenix, Arizona, from domestic violence and fled from Phoenix to here. I moved from state to state, I had a housing voucher, a Section eight voucher. When I got here, we were homeless, living in our car, and I got connected to [program name redacted] and it was a wonderful experience. They welcomed us in. We had a really nice clean room, good hot meals. And I worked with [staff name redacted] who helped me find housing. They took me to different places to look for housing. They helped me pay for application fees. They were just really a really good support system in my rock on finding a good place to live.” – Client 8

“I would just say that I was calling like just a lot of people for just trying to get help and somebody referred me to, um, the 2 1 1 number and then from there, that's how I got into housing Ramsey County. I think I had to speak to somebody, like a housing worker from Ramsey County to get into the program. But as soon as, I'm like, I was homeless, like sleeping in my car and as soon as I reported that to Ramsey County, they put me on the top of the list to get into housing. So I was very appreciated for that.” – Client 9

“Personally, I think they were really good experiences. I've heard very bad horror stories with people and shelter, and like reaching out for resources, but I feel like everything kind of went very seamlessly smooth” – Client 1

In contrast, single youth and adult clients discussed their negative experiences, desire for resource connection, or the wait to be connected to resources.

“No, just because simply they have the documentation. I don't have the proper documentation. If I did, my God, I would be so far ahead right now. I wouldn't need [program name redacted].” – Client 2

“The speed, I'm not gonna lie, the speed, it took me like over a year and a half to, for my CEYS assessment. I did it the day, like the week I turned 18 and I didn't get nothing until, I didn't even get my apartment until what I was 19 about to turn 20. So yeah, <laughs> it took so long. <laughs>.” – Client 10

“Interviewer: Which resource or connection helped you the most in finding housing?

Client: Shit, none. I'm still homeless.” – Client 7

“And I've seen, I've been out there to some of the campsites and I've seen it. And it's horrible to look at how many people are down there homeless because the state can't accept the fact that the homeless is growing because they won't do nothing to fix it.” – Client 4

“I know if I had somebody like almost, well, I guess it would be a caseworker. But more of an intense caseworker, if you will, who, like, has more of the time to be more side by side with the individual while they're going through the process. Like we always have somebody downtown in the office somewhere. We could go, we could talk, they'd give us the paperwork, go here, do this, but to actually have someone on like another level who you know could almost say, “All right, we're going to set this day, I'm going to pick you up here, you know, we're going to go down her and do this.” That sort of thing, yeah, but that's me thinking out loud,” – Client 2

“Client: So I can't get an apartment, but for right now, I'm trying to get on cash assistance and I can't.

Interviewer: Is there a reason why you can't?

Client: Because the people that diagnosed me are refusing to, fill up the medical opinion form. They're just refusing. So, I can't get on it. And I tried getting on SSI too.

Interviewer: Okay. Have you talked to anybody else besides the same people? 'cause you could see different doctors too.

Client: I don't know who to go to.” – Client 7

Theme 6: Impact of programs

The theme *Impact of Programs* came from client interviews where clients expressed the ways programs have positively impacted their pathway to housing stability.

“So then that it dramatically changed for me, you know, being homeless, and living out of my car, it was all a transition, and it was all like, how do people ever even survive this type of situation? So then now that I’m here, I just feel like a little bit of solace, a little bit of peace, like my brain can rest.” – Client 1

“Interviewer: What would a I ideal program look like for you?”

Client: I think I’m in the ideal program, actually. <laughs>Yeah. Because I have almost no complaints. It’s very, very nice up here.” – Client 6

“Interviewer: what’s the most memorable part of your connection here?”

Client: I could stay out of trouble.” – Client 2

“I look towards my friends and the staff here because they, they encourage me to constantly keep going. They don’t encourage me to give up. They tell me, keep going, keep trying. If it doesn’t work, then then try something new... Truthfully, I’ve realized things about myself. Like for me, I’ve also learned to constantly persist, to keep going after the things I want. But I also, ever since coming here, I’ve learned to open up to people. I’ve learned to be myself. I learned to trust others. I’ve learned too that not all people are gonna betray me ‘cause I’m used to it. Yeah. And I’ve also learned that there are staff in places that actually really care.” – Client 4

“Interviewer: How do you feel your life has changed being a part of that program?”

Client: Yes. I feel like my life has been changed. I feel like I have a fresh start. Somewhere we’re safe to live. I feel like my privacy was very much respected and I appreciate that. I feel like my life has changed because now I know that there is a possibility to have somewhere safe to live. And there are people out there that will take you in and treat you as family, take care of you respectfully as a, you know, professional. So yeah. I feel like that, that changed me a little bit because it’s just like, I hadn’t experienced that before.” – Client 8

“I’m not gonna lie, the day that I found this place. ‘cause I was like on my last, I was pretty messed up back then, you know? So like, when I first found this place, there really was like my little ray sunshine because I didn’t have, I had no family, no friends, no nothing. I didn’t even know where I was. I was just walking around, you know, it was raining that day... It honestly has been, it’s been life changing to be honest. Helping me get back on my feet, ‘cause I didn’t even know where to start, you know?” – Client 10

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Appendices

Appendix A: Needs assessment methodology

Data sources

For the quantitative data, the Heading Home Ramsey Team collaborated with the Institute for Community Alliances (ICA) to access data in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for calendar year 2024 and 2025 to answer overall guiding questions one and two. Additional data from the Housing Court Collaborative Financial Clinic and the Ramsey County Court Administrator was used to answer quantitative guiding questions one through three. Through the quantitative analysis, specific shelter and housing programs of interest were identified for qualitative analysis. These programs included those with the highest contrast in outcomes and funding. Outcomes of interest were determined through the HUD system performance measures and Annual Performance Report. Funding determination was derived from an 11-question survey delivered to agencies providing services to people experiencing homelessness in the Ramsey Geographic area. The questions used in the survey can be found in Appendix B. Key informants, providers, and clients/participants from these programs were recruited using purposive sampling for in-depth structured interviews. This sampling method means the person conducting the assessment deliberately selected interview participants based on their knowledge, relevance, or expertise.

These interviews were designed to provide additional context for program operations, definitions of success, and the perspectives and experiences of those operating or participating in programs at the center of a changing funding landscape. Interview guides with the interview questions used in all in-depth interviews can be found in Appendices C-E. The goal of these interviews was to answer qualitative guiding questions one through three. For the provider interviews, convenience and purposive sampling was used to select participants. The organizations of interest were contacted to recruit participants via email. For the client interviews purposive sampling was used to select who to include in interview. Program participants were given a \$25 Visa Gift Card as compensation for their time. The goal of these interviews with program participants was to answer qualitative guiding questions four and five.

Description of data collection instruments

For the 2026 Needs Assessment, four data collection instruments were created to be used for the quantitative and qualitative data collection. The first step of this process was to create a working group from Heading Home Ramsey governance and community members. This group, in collaboration with CoC staff, determined the guiding questions for the assessment, and the measures of interest. Through the recommendations of the working group, four data collection instruments were created to answer both the quantitative and qualitative guiding questions. These include an 11-question survey for providers, an interview guide for key informants, an interview guide for providers, and an interview guide for program participants or clients. The framework for the data collection instruments was developed from the HUD system performance measures, the HUD CoC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) application questions, and feedback from the

needs assessment working group. The data collection tools and guiding questions were reviewed by both the working group and the Heading Home Ramsey Staff Team for constructive feedback. Data collection tools are located in Appendices B-E.

Interview Guide Development

Three semi-structured interview guides were tailored to the populations of interest based on the guiding questions. Each guide has introductory questions and then goes on to cover experiences operating or participating in current housing programs in Ramsey County. For programs that were identified to be of interest due to the funding landscape, interview questions cover the effects of funding on program operations and services. The interview guide for Key Informants in uniquely funded programs has 15 main questions with 24 probes. The interview guide for providers in housing programs has 14 main questions with 25 probes. The interview guide for participants in housing programs has 12 main questions with 24 probes. The final copies of these interview guides are in Appendices B-E.

Data Collection Procedures

Quantitative Data

Reports provided through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for calendar year 2024 and 2025, data from the Housing Court Collaborative Financial Clinic and the Ramsey County Court Administrator were used to analyze the present state of the homelessness response system in Ramsey County. These reports include the Core Homeless Programs, CE Monitoring, Returns to Homelessness, and Financial Clinic Documents. Each of these reports included data from January 2024-December 2025.

An 11-question survey was created on Microsoft forms and distributed to providers to answer overall guiding question 3. Survey questions were informed by the 2024 Heading Home Ramsey Needs Assessment, the FY2025 NOFO, and the guiding questions developed by the working group. The survey questions were reviewed by the Heading Home Ramsey Staff Team ahead of survey distribution. The survey questions were also pre-tested by members of the working group to gauge clarity and accuracy. Purposive sampling methods were used to determine which agencies to contact for survey distribution. Surveys were distributed via email to organizations who have prevention services, emergency services, and housing programs for clients in Ramsey County. The link to the survey was activated on March 30th, 2026, and deactivated on April 10th, 2026. Providers who were initially recruited were sent a survey completion reminder seven days after the initial distribution.

Qualitative Data

During the quantitative analysis, programs of interest were identified through outcomes in the CORE HMIS Report and responses to the funding survey. A recruitment email was sent to identified programs of interest for provider and participant interviews. Interested interviewees were asked to respond and an interview time was set up with the Needs Assessment data collection team. A total of nine Key Informants, and three Providers were interviewed. A total of ten Client or Program Participants were interviewed.

Interviews took place from April 2026-May 2026, interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams and in person. The Needs Assessment data collection team asked each interviewee for verbal consent to participate in the interview and to record the interview. Each interviewee also completed a Tennessean Warning giving their consent for their data to be reviewed and used in analysis for the assessment. The team also informed interviewees that the interview was voluntary and ensured that documentation would be de-identified. Interview recordings were uploaded to a secure Microsoft SharePoint folder that could only be accessed by members of the Heading Home Ramsey Staff Team. Following this, files were then transferred to a thumb drive. After being uploaded onto a secure thumb drive all recordings were deleted from county devices. All stored data was de-identified. The team will delete all recordings by July 2026, following submission of the needs assessment presentation to the entire Heading Home Ramsey Governance.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative Data

Descriptive statistics for the parts of the homelessness response system were collected from the reports and surveys described above. Data analysis was completed in Microsoft Excel and using R-Studio. No personal protected information on clients or providers was collected or used in the analysis of this assessment. The reports were filtered to only include client interactions that had been validated by the Institute for Community Alliances (ICA). Inferential statistics were not used in this assessment. A copy of the code used in R-Studio can be made available upon request.

Qualitative Data

The analysis of qualitative data was completed through Dedoose. The transcription of in-depth interviews was completed either through Otter.ai or Rev.ai. Both software products do not use generative ai in their processing of speech audio or transcription. Transcripts were verified for accuracy of speech prior to analysis. Transcripts were reviewed, analyzed, and coded by the lead interviewer. The data was sufficiently rich and provided six salient themes. Excerpts from transcripts can be provided upon request.

Appendix B: Provider Survey

Funding Survey for Organizations

1. Are you a current provider of a program for people experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. What program types does your agency provide? Select all that apply
 - a. Prevention Assistance
 - b. Emergency Shelter (Overnight)
 - c. Day Shelter (Drop-in Center)
 - d. Transitional Housing
 - e. Rapid Rehousing
 - f. Permanent Supportive Housing
 - g. Housing Support
 - h. Other Permanent Housing

New Page for each program selected

3. How long have you been providing this program (for each program selected)?
 - a. Less than 2 years
 - b. Between 2-4 years
 - c. Over 5 years
4. What percentage of program funding for your program comes from federal grants?
 - a. 0%-25%
 - b. 25%-50%
 - c. 50%-75%
 - d. 75%-100%
5. What percentage of program funding for your program comes from state grants?
 - a. 0%-25%
 - b. 25%-50%

- c. 50%-75%
 - d. 75%-100%
6. What percentage of program funding for your program comes from local government grants?
- a. 0%-25%
 - b. 25%-50%
 - c. 50%-75%
 - d. 75%-100%
7. What percentage of program funding for your program comes from philanthropic or private funding?
- a. 0%-25%
 - b. 25%-50%
 - c. 50%-75%
 - d. 75%-100%
8. What percentage of program funding for your program comes from a revenue generating source such as a business operation?
- a. 0%-25%
 - b. 25%-50%
 - c. 50%-75%
 - d. 75%-100%

Page Break

9. Would you be comfortable participating in an interview for the 2026 Needs Assessment to determine the effects of changes in funding?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
10. If so, what is the name of the person in your organization that would be best suited to answer these questions?
11. What is their email address?

Thank you for your time!

Appendix C: Interview Guide for Key Informants

Interview Guide – Interview of Key Informants in Programs of Interest

Question Category

Good [Morning/Afternoon/Evening] I hope your day is going well! Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. We are members of Heading Home Ramsey, the Ramsey County Continuum of Care, conducting a needs assessment on provider experiences and perceptions in our CoC. This interview is to help us understand your experiences as a XXX. We will be asking you about your role, program activities, and perceptions or experiences of funding shifts. Your answers will be used to help us better understand the present state of program needs and identify areas for improvement. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary, if you need to stop at any time or end the interview early please let us know. We will be recording the conversation so we do not miss anything you say, our conversation will be completely confidential and the recordings will be destroyed following the end of our project on June 1st. Do we have your permission to begin recording?

Thank you, the recording is on, just to confirm, we have your permission to record this conversation. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Introductory Questions

1. Tell me about your current role.
 - a. *How long have you been at your organization?*
 - b. *What got you interested in the work you do?*
2. Tell me about your typical day.
 - a. *How have your daily tasks changed over time?*

Program Specifics and Activities

3. What are the different parts of your program?
 - a. *What are the participants in your program doing?*
 - b. *How does the program affect participants?*
4. What does success in the program look like to you?
 - a. *Tell me about different instances of success*
5. Tell me about an experience that made you proud as a part of this program / organization.

- a. *What are three emotions you feel regularly as a part of this program?*
- 6. What program activities or offerings are difficult to sustain?
 - a. *Describe something you wish you were able to provide clients/participants*
 - b. *In an ideal program, what would you be able to provide clients/participants?*
- 7. How have you built partnerships with other organizations?
 - a. *What made those partnerships meaningful?*
 - b. *What are the barriers to building partnerships?*

Program Funding

- 8. What is the relationship between program funding and activities/offerings for your program?
 - a. *What are the activities or offerings that are unaffected by funding?*
- 9. Can you describe your experiences with fundraising or seeking private funding?
 - a. *How has the political environment (federally, locally, within community such as NIMBY-ism) shaped these experiences?*
 - b. *What other world or local events have affected fundraising efforts?*
- 10. Tell me about how the policies in funding affect your programs
 - a. *Can you describe how policy decisions affected your funding options for programs?*
 - b. *Is there funding that you have or have not taken because it was restrictive, tell me about that experience.*
 - c. *What are some direct effects of policy in your program?*
 - d. *What are the differences between policy and practice in your program?*
- 11. How have changes in funding affected your program?
 - a. *What trade-offs do you make when funding changes?*
 - b. *How often do you think of or consider funding in the management of your programs?*
 - c. *What has been the most difficult activity, resource, or offering to find consistent funding for?*
- 12. If you had unlimited funding, how would that change your program?
 - a. *What would be the most immediate impact?*

- b. *How would that change success in your program?*

Closing Questions

13. What are three words you would use to describe your team / community?

14. How do you overcome challenges in your work?

- a. *What is a recurring challenge?*

15. What brings you joy in your work?

Is there anything about your experience that I didn't ask about that you'd like to share?

Appendix D: Interview Guide for Providers

Interview Guide – Interview of Providers from Programs of Interest

Question Category

1. Question

- a. *Probing Question (asked if the participant does not include this information in their answer)*

Good [Morning/Afternoon/Evening] I hope your day is going well! Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. We are members of the Ramsey County Continuum of Care, conducting a needs assessment on provider experiences and perceptions in our CoC. This interview is to help us understand your experiences as a XXX. We will be asking you about your role, program activities, and perceptions or experiences of funding shifts. Your answers will be used to help us better understand the present state of program needs and identify areas for improvement. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary, if you need to stop at any time or end the interview early please let us know. We will be recording the conversation so we do not miss anything you say, our conversation will be completely confidential and the recordings will be destroyed following the end of our project on June 1st. Do we have your permission to begin recording?

Thank you, the recording is on, just to confirm, we have your permission to record this conversation. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Introductory Questions

1. Tell me about your current role.
 - a. *How long have you been at your organization?*
 - b. *What got you interested in the work you do?*
2. Tell me about your typical day.
 - a. *How have your daily tasks changed over time?*

Program Specifics and Activities

3. What has your experience with your program participants been like?
 - a. *Tell me about your most memorable experience.*
 - b. *How has your work with your clients / program participants shifted over time?*
4. What are the different parts of your program?
 - a. *What are the participants in your program doing?*
 - b. *How does the program affect participants?*
5. What program activities or offerings are difficult to sustain?
 - a. *Describe something you wish you were able to provide clients/participants*
 - b. *In an ideal program, what would you be able to provide clients/participants?*

6. How have you built partnerships with other organizations?
 - a. *What made those partnerships meaningful?*
 - b. *What are the barriers to building partnerships?*
7. How do you see racism/sexism/homophobia/ableism affecting your participants?
 - a. *How has this changed over time?*
8. What does success in the program look like to you?
 - a. *What are the differences in success and failure or lack of change in your program participants?*
 - b. *How do you measure or evaluate success in your program?*
9. What are some emotions you feel regularly as a part of a team working with the participants of this program?
 - a. *How has being a part of this program affected your day to day?*
 - b. *Tell me about an experience that made you proud as a part of this program / organization.*

Partnerships and Community

10. How have you built partnerships with other organizations?
 - a. *What made those partnerships meaningful?*
 - b. *What are the barriers to building partnerships?*
 - c. *How does the way your agency provides services affect partnerships with similar organizations?*
11. What does community in this work mean to you?
 - a. *How does having a community affect the work you do?*
 - b. *How can the community of Ramsey County providers be strengthened?*
12. What would an ideal homelessness response system look like?
 - a. *What change do you feel would have the biggest impact?*
 - b. *What changes do you feel have already been made?*

Closing Questions

13. How do you overcome challenges in your work?
 - a. *What is a recurring challenge?*
14. What brings you joy in your work?
 - a. *How do you encourage others in your role or in this work?*
 - b. *Is there anything about your experience that I didn't ask about that you'd like to share?*

Appendix E: Interview Guide for Clients

Interview Guide – Interview of Participants from Programs of Interest

Question Category

1. Question

- a. *Probing Question (asked if the participant does not include this information in their answer)*

Good [Morning/Afternoon/Evening] I hope your day is going well! Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. We are members of the Ramsey County Continuum of Care, conducting a needs assessment to better understand the current services and resources available to clients / program participants. This interview is to help us understand your experiences as a XXX. This interview is to help us understand your experiences as a Client / Program participant in a housing program in Ramsey County. We will be asking you about your experiences as a client / program participant, how you were connected to housing, and your perspective on the types of services being provided. Your answers will be used to identify areas for improvement or change in the housing programs in Ramsey County. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary, if you need to stop at any time or end the interview please let us know. We will be recording the conversation so we do not miss anything you say, our conversation will be completely confidential and the recordings will be destroyed following the end of our project on June 1st. Do we have your permission to begin recording?

Thank you, the recording is on, just to confirm, we have your permission to record this conversation. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Introductory Questions

1. Tell me about where you currently live
 - a. *What has made it feel like home?*
 - b. *How has home changed for you over time?*
2. Please describe how you got connected to housing
 - a. *How did organizations help you get connected?*
 - b. *What was confusing or difficult about the process?*
 - c. *What would have changed to make it easier or faster?*

Ramsey County Questions

3. Tell me about the resources you used or were made aware of to help you get housing?
 - a. *How did you learn about these resources?*
 - b. *Which resource or connection helped you the most in gaining housing?*
 - c. *What resources do you think should be more well-known?*
 - d. *Looking back, are there resources you wish you had known about earlier?*

4. What was your experience with the organizations that helped you get housed?
 - a. *How does your experience compare to other places you've worked with?*
 - b. *What was the most memorable part of your connection?*
5. How have you been treated by the case managers and staff you work with?
 - a. *How has your treatment changed over time?*
 - b. *What do you wish case managers and staff knew about you or others like you?*
6. How do you feel your identity has shaped your experience of getting housing?
 - a. *Do you have any specific cultural practices that go unmet in current services?*
 - b. *Tell me about any organizations or services you feel you cannot access because of your identity.*

Program Questions

7. Tell me about the program you're in.
 - a. *What are the things you do as a part of the program?*
 - b. *What kind of connection do you have with program staff?*
8. How do you feel your life has changed being a part of this program?
 - a. *What has been your most memorable experience?*
 - b. *What has been an unexpected part of this program?*
 - c. *What has been the most difficult part of being in this housing program?*
9. What would an ideal program look like?
 - a. *What does success in this program mean to you?*
 - b. *How have your relationships changed in this program?*
10. If you had unlimited funding for housing, how would you use it?
 - a. *What is the most immediate change that needs to be made to make your experience better?*

Wrap-Up Questions

11. Please describe how you overcome challenges you face
 - a. *Who do you go to when there is a new challenge to overcome?*
12. Tell me about yourself in 5 years.

Is there anything about your experience that I didn't ask about that you'd like to share?