

February 15, 2022

**Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee**

Senator Warren Limmer, Chair  
3221 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Ron Latz, DFL Lead  
2215 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**House Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform Finance and Policy Division Committee**

Representative Carlos Mariani, Chair  
479 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative, Brian Johnson, Republican Lead  
243 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St Paul, MN 55155

**Subject: Annual Report on Homeless Releases as Required by Minnesota Statutes, Section 241.068, Subdivision 2**

Dear Legislators:

Minnesota Statutes, section 241.068, subdivision 2, requires that by February 15 of each year the Department of Corrections must submit a report to the legislature including a variety of data related to homelessness and releases from state correctional facilities, to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative policy and budget committees with jurisdiction over the Department.

If you have questions about this report, please contact Emily Lefholz, Legislative Director, Government and External Relations Unit, at 651-341-2385.

Sincerely,

Paul Schnell  
Commissioner

Cc: Emily Lefholz, Legislative Director

# Homelessness 2021 Legislative Report



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The total cost of salaries, printing, and supplies incurred in the development and preparation of this report was approximately \$1,516.00 (reported as required by Minn. Stat. §3.197).

This report can be provided in another format upon request.

## 2021 LEGISLATIVE REPORT ON HOMELESSNESS

### I. Background

In May 2021, the Minnesota Legislature created new annual reporting requirements for the Department of Corrections (DOC) related to homelessness and homeless releases (Laws of Minnesota 2021, Reg. Sess. Chapter 24, Section 3). [Minn. Stat. § 241.068](#), subd. 2 requires DOC to file a written report with the legislature by February 15 of each year, reporting on a variety of data related to homelessness and releases from state correctional facilities.

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

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

This new statute also requires the development of a homelessness mitigation plan for individuals released from prison in Minnesota, which will be submitted to the legislature by October 31, 2022.<sup>1</sup> This data provides foundation for DOC to evaluate data accuracy and its goals. Beginning in 2024, this annual report will also contain information detailing progress, measures, and challenges to the implementation of the homelessness mitigation plan.

### II. Homelessness and Corrections Involved Individuals

Stable housing is critical to successful reentry into Minnesota communities. When individuals are released from incarceration, access to employment, housing, positive connections in the community, and medical care and medication are directly connected to greater public safety.

The legislature recognizes that clear data is paramount to understanding the issue of homelessness and its impact on individuals exiting from Minnesota Correctional Facilities (MCFs). The definitions of homelessness themselves, as defined by the State of Minnesota, are barriers for accurately capturing the experience of homelessness for individuals exiting MCFs. For purposes of this report, DOC defines the experience of homelessness in these two ways:

- **Sheltered Homelessness**: An individual released from a MCF (regardless of length of time incarcerated) to a temporary living arrangement (including transitional housing,

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<sup>1</sup> Minn. Stat. § [241.068](#), subd. 1.

and hotels and motels paid for by a charitable organization or by federal, state, and local government programs).<sup>2</sup>

- **Unsheltered Homelessness:** An individual released from a MCF (regardless of length of time incarcerated), and it is unknown where the individual would stay the night of release. (Including, but not limited to, release plans that identify an individual released to the “county of commitment”, “agents office”, “homeless” or an emergency homeless shelter as access to this service cannot be guaranteed or reserved based on funding resources and community needs.)

**The experience of homelessness as defined by the *Homeless Management Information System*<sup>3</sup> within the State of Minnesota includes multiple categories:**

*Extent of Homelessness by Minnesota’s Definition: The State of Minnesota defines as homeless “any individual, unaccompanied youth or family that is without a permanent place to live that is fit for human habitation.” Doubling-up is considered homeless if that arrangement has persisted less than 1 year.*<sup>4</sup>

*Literally Homeless: An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:*<sup>5</sup>

1. *Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation;*
2. *Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs), OR;*
3. *Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.*

*Imminent Risk of Homelessness: An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:*<sup>6</sup>

1. *Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;*
2. *No subsequent residence has been identified; AND*

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<sup>2</sup> For individuals releasing from incarceration, this may be the first step in a person’s journey to housing stability and supporting a person during this time is a correctional and housing best practice.

<sup>3</sup> The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is the required data management system for state and federal funded homeless and housing services within the State of Minnesota. Although the Minnesota Department of Corrections (MN DOC) delivers housing resources that operate similarly to established state and federal funded resources, at this time, MN DOC does not have the ability to be a HMIS user.

<sup>4</sup> “Definitions”, [Definitions — Minnesota's HMIS \(hmismn.org\)](https://www.hmismn.org), February 13, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

3. *The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.*

*Homeless Under other Federal Statutes: Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless as defined above, but who:<sup>7</sup>*

1. *Are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes;*
2. *Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application;*
3. *Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the preceding 60 days; AND*
4. *Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period due to special needs or barriers.*

DOC highlights these different definitions as a way of illustrating the challenge in providing an accurate picture of homelessness experiences for the incarcerated and supervised population of Minnesota.

### **III. 2021 Homelessness Data**

Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) operates 11 state prison facilities. In calendar year 2021, there were 4,658 total releases to supervised release.<sup>8</sup> The data analyzed for this report is from releases from Minnesota Correctional Facilities (MCFs) in calendar year 2021. **Almost 25% of total releases during 2021 were sheltered and unsheltered homeless addresses.**

DOC collected, reviewed, and analyzed data on homelessness for the time period of January 1 through December 31, 2021. The data below is based on individuals' addresses at the time of release from MCFs. The analysis of this data required professional subjective level interpretation of an experience of homelessness and is based on current data available within the present data management systems used by DOC. DOC manually reviewed the release addresses and analyzed the location in that way.

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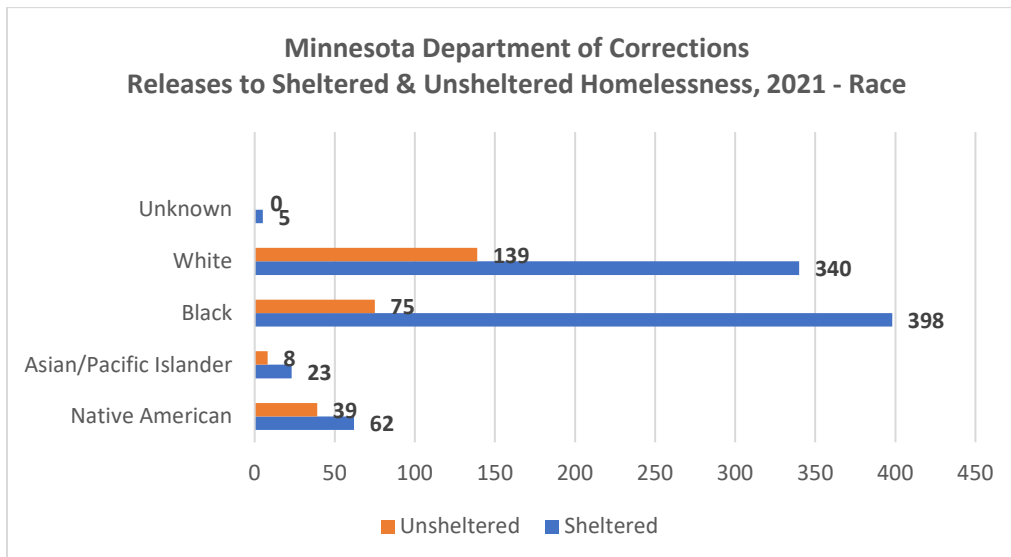
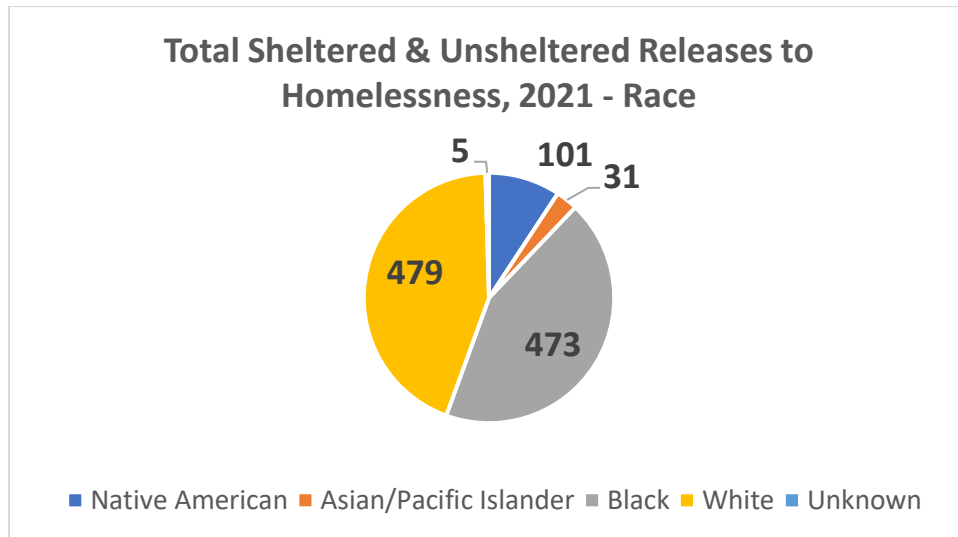
<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> This number captures releases from prison as well as community programs (e.g., work release) to supervised release. Because individuals can be released from either prison or a community program more than once in a given year, this number measures the total number of transitions to a release status, not the total number of individuals who exit a prison facility. Releases occurred in the following ways:

- Supervised Release/Parole 3,521 75.6%
- Community Programs 699 15.0%
- Discharge 278 6.0%
- Work Release - Covid 103 2.2%
- Cond Med Rel/Supv Release - Covid 8 0.2%
- Other 49 1.1%

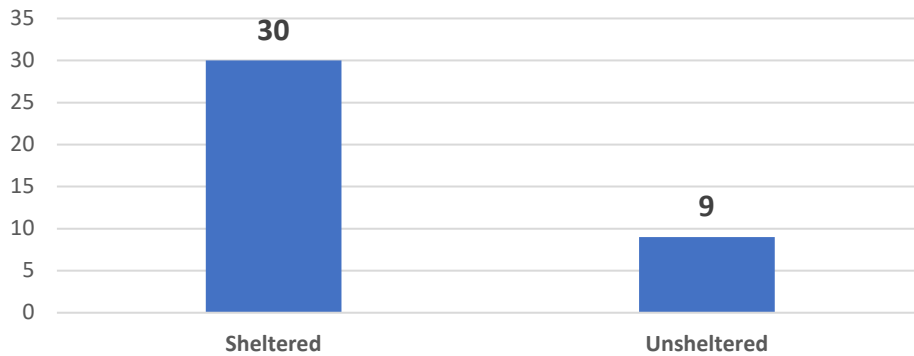
- a. The total number released to homelessness from prison, including race, ethnicity, and gender:

Sheltered & Unsheltered Releases 2021	
Unsheltered Homelessness	270
Sheltered Homelessness	858
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,128<sup>9</sup></b>

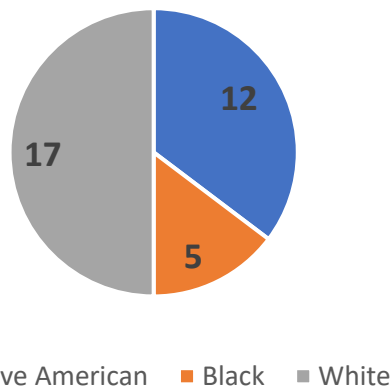


<sup>9</sup> Of these releases, 34 were individuals housed at MCF-Shakopee, DOC's only female prison facility. See tables below for further breakdown of race and gender. The gender demographics reported are not inclusive of transgender women being released from other DOC facilities.

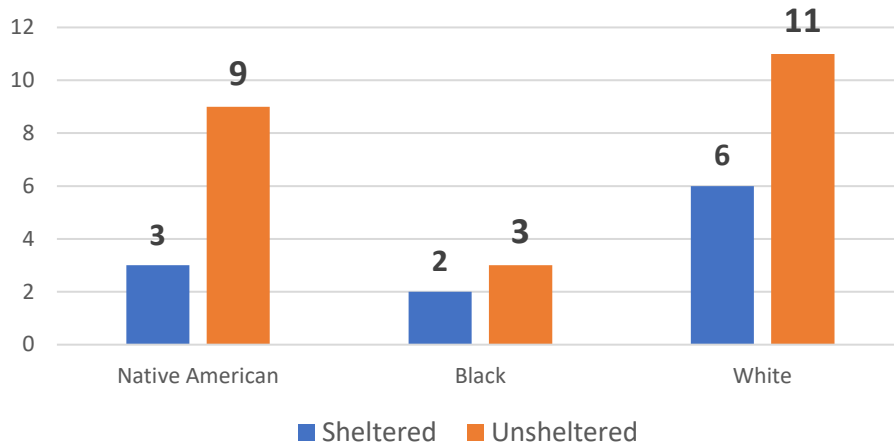
**Minnesota Department of Corrections Releases to Sheltered & Unsheltered Homelessness, 2021, Hispanic**



**Total Sheltered & Unsheltered Releases to Homelessness, Women, 2021**



**Minnesota Department of Corrections Releases to Sheltered & Unsheltered Homelessness, Women, 2021**



**b. The total number released to homelessness by each Minnesota Correctional Facility:**

Facility	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total
Faribault	160	65	225
Lino Lakes	115	42	157
Moose Lake	54	23	77
Oak Park Heights	21	4	25
Rush City	103	15	118
Red Wing	4	1	5
St. Cloud	126	76	202
Shakopee	10	24	34
Stillwater	164	38	202
Togo	29	0	29
Willow River	54	0	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>858</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>1,128</b>

**c. The total number released to homelessness by county of release:**

County <sup>10</sup>	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total
Aitkin	0	5	5
Anoka	23	10	33
Becker	4	2	6
Beltrami	8	4	12
Benton	4	2	6
Blue Earth	16	8	24
Brown	6	0	6
Carlton	0	1	1
Carver	6	2	8
Cass	4	5	9
Chippewa	4	2	6
Chisago	1	1	2
Clay	13	22	35
Cottonwood	2	2	4
Crow Wing	8	10	18
Dakota	24	10	34
Douglas	8	0	8
Fillmore	1	1	2
Freeborn	8	0	8
Goodhue	9	0	9

<sup>10</sup> Counties not listed in this table had zero homeless releases during calendar year 2021.



County <sup>10</sup>	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total
Grant	2	0	2
Hennepin	353	55	408
Houston	0	1	1
Isanti	3	0	3
Itasca	11	4	15
Kanabec	1	2	3
Kandiyohi	6	4	10
Le Sueur	1	0	1
Lyon	11	2	13
Mahnomen	4	3	7
Marshall	0	1	1
Martin	3	0	3
Mcleod	3	3	6
Meeker	1	4	5
Mille Lacs	3	2	5
Morrison	2	0	2
Mower	7	1	8
Nobles	3	3	6
Olmsted	35	1	36
Otter Tail	4	2	6
Pennington	2	1	3
Pine	1	4	5
Pipestone	1	0	1
Polk	15	18	33
Ramsey	102	30	132
Redwood	8	2	10
Renville	2	0	2
Rice	5	1	6
Rock	1	1	2
Roseau	0	1	1
Scott	5	2	7
Sherburne	1	2	3
St. Louis	31	12	43
Stearns	50	12	62
Steele	7	0	7
Stevens	1	0	1
Todd	1	0	1
Wadena	6	0	6
Waseca	0	1	1
Washington	6	5	11
Watonwan	3	0	3

County <sup>10</sup>	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total
Winona	2	3	5
Wright	6	0	6
Yellow Medicine	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,128</b>

- d. **The total number of releases under supervised, intensive supervised, or conditional release following release from prison who reported experiencing homelessness:**

Supervision Type	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total
Standard Supervised Release	293	270	563
Intensive Supervised Release	469	0	469
CIP Program Release	90	0	90
Conditional Medical Release	1	0	1
CRP Program Release	5	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>858</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>1,128</b>

#### IV. Homelessness experience as of February 13, 2022:

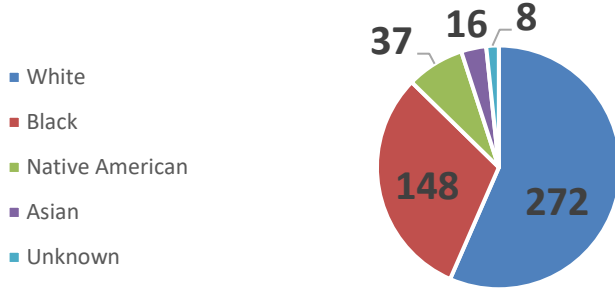
The required statutory reporting brings focus to homelessness experienced at time of release from a Minnesota Correctional Facility. This information alone does not capture homelessness and housing instability experienced by corrections system impacted persons across the state. With well over 100,000 individuals on probation, the State of Minnesota is host to one of the highest populations of individuals on this type of supervision in the nation.<sup>11</sup> As such, the *Statewide Supervision System – County, Race, and Gender Report* is inclusive to all three correctional service delivery systems<sup>12</sup> and illuminates the problem space of homelessness across the entirety of the correction system in the State of Minnesota. The report allows for disaggregation of data by race and gender which draws a greater focus to the disproportionate representation of homelessness and housing instability experienced by black, indigenous and persons of color (BIPOC). Individuals who identify as BIPOC Minnesotans are disproportionately represented within the criminal justice system, and the experience of homelessness while involved within the corrections system perpetuates and exacerbates this inequity.

<sup>11</sup> “Probation and Parole in the United States, 2017-2018”, U.S Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, August 2020, [Probation and Parole in the United States, 2017-2018 \(ojp.gov\)](https://www.ojp.gov/bjs/publications/probation-and-parole-in-the-united-states-2017-2018), February 15, 2022

<sup>12</sup> Minnesota Department of Corrections, Community Corrections Act Agencies, and County Probation Offices

## Supervised Release and Homelessness

*Statewide Supervision System - County, Race, Gender Report - Supervised Release - Men, February 13, 2022*



Homelessness, both sheltered and unsheltered, experienced by men on supervised release in the State of Minnesota on February 13, 2022.

***Approximately 42 percent identify as black, indigenous, and/or persons of color.***

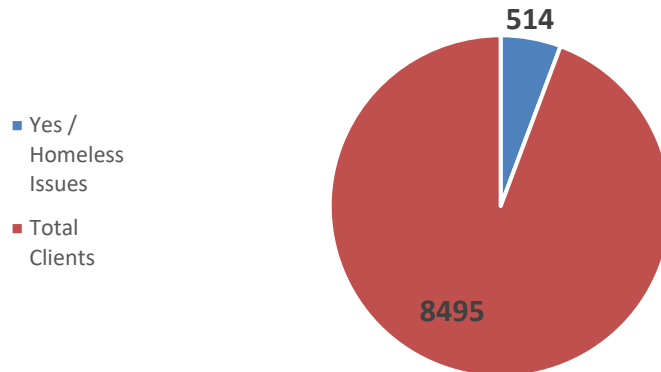
*Statewide Supervision System - County, Race, Gender Report - Supervised Release - Women, February 13, 2022*



Homeless, both sheltered and unsheltered, experience by women on supervised release in the State of Minnesota on February 13, 2022.

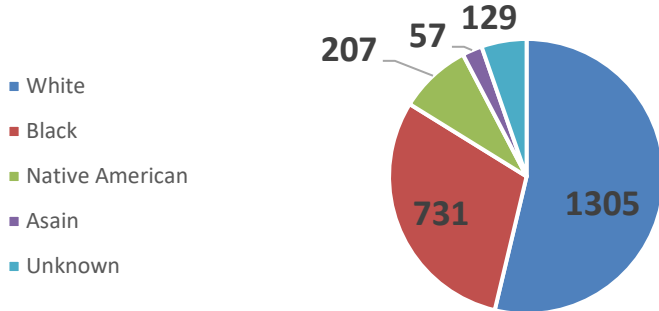
***Approximately 42 percent identify as black, indigenous and/or persons of color.***

*Statewide Supervision System - County, Race, Gender Report, Supervised Release Total, February 13, 2022*



## Probation and Homelessness

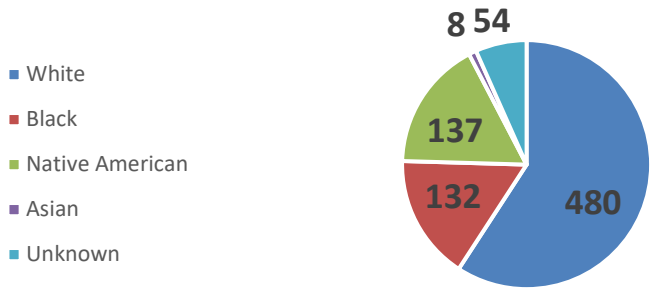
**Statewide Supervision System - County, Race, Gender  
Report, Probation, Men, February 13, 2022**



Homeless, both sheltered and unsheltered, experience by men on probation in the State of Minnesota on February 13, 2022.

***Approximately 41 percent identify as black, indigenous and/or persons of color.***

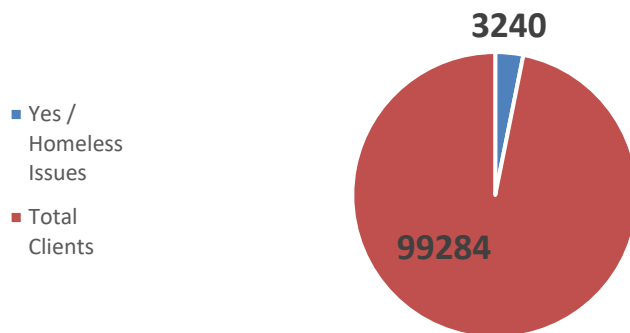
**Statewide Supervision System - County, Race, Gender  
Report, Probation, Women, February 13, 2022**



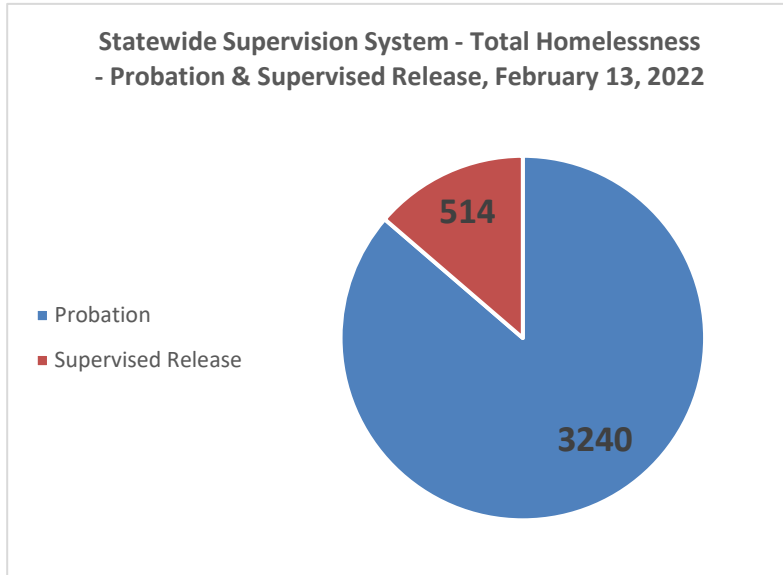
Homeless, both sheltered and unsheltered, experience by women on probation in the State of Minnesota on February 13, 2022.

***Approximately 34 percent identify as black, indigenous and/or persons of color.***

**Statewide Supervision System - County, Race, Gender  
Report, Probation Total, February 13, 2022**



## Probation and Supervised Released Totals



Homeless, both sheltered and unsheltered, experience by all individuals (total 3,754) on correctional supervision in the State of Minnesota on February 13, 2022.