

HART Weekly Update

Homeless Assistance Response Team

February 22, 2024

25

Total Active Sites

108

Total Occupants

106

Total Tents

81

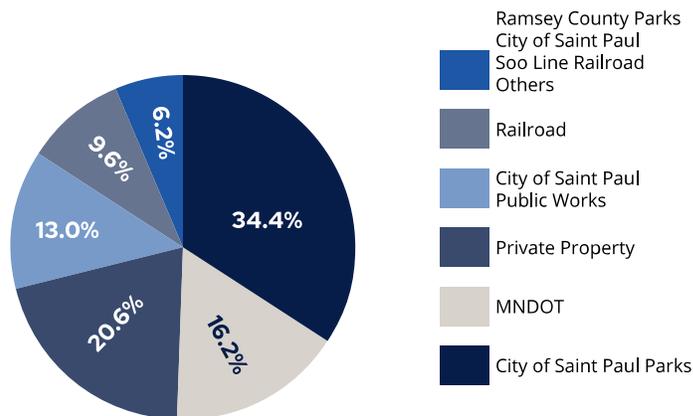
Total Male

24

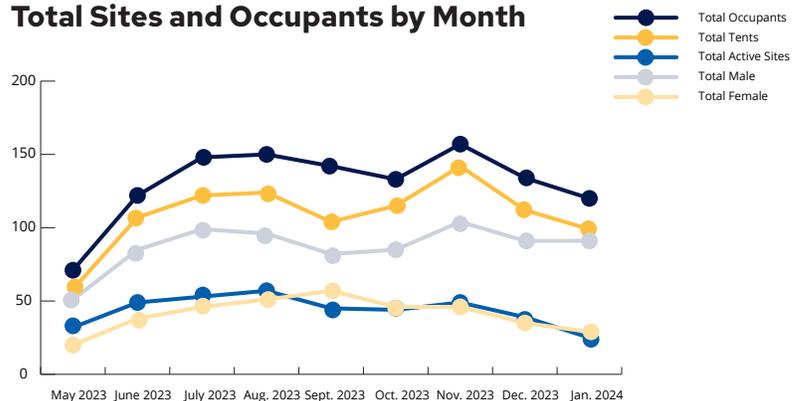
Total Female

City Data Summary

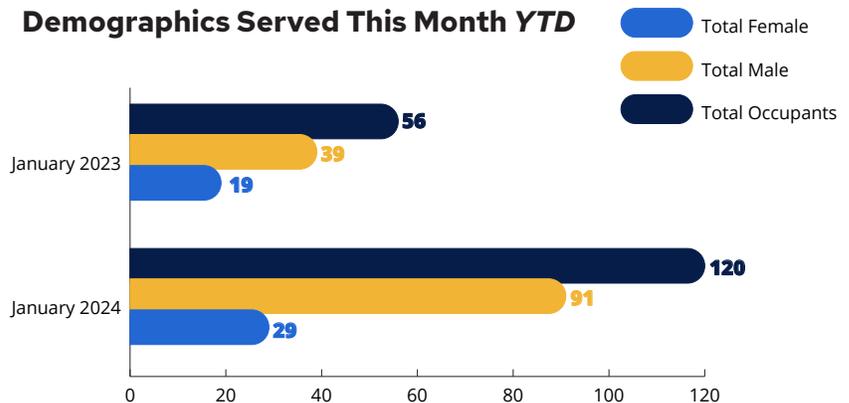
Property Owner Distribution



Total Sites and Occupants by Month



Demographics Served This Month YTD



SAINT PAUL
SAFETY & INSPECTIONS

HART Contact Information

Andrea Hinderaker, HART Program Coordinator
 Brian Ganzel, DSI Inspector II, HART
 Kahari Smith-Brewer, Outreach Worker
 Sam Stoltz, Outreach Worker

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A fond farewell to Andrea Hinderaker

From Director Wiese:

"No distance of place or lapse of time can lessen the friendship of those who are thoroughly persuaded of each other's worth." — Robert Southey

The job of the Homeless Assistance Response Team is not an easy one. Helping others navigate the network to access care, shelter, food, treatment, warmth; it's akin to detangling a ball of yarn. Curiosity, dedication, patience, and luck all play their own parts in guiding someone to the help they need in the exact moment they are ready to accept it. That is but a sliver of the work Andrea Hinderaker has done with HART.

Andrea's real superpower is her ability to see gaps in the ecosystem and a burning passion to sew them together using every resource, funding source, partner, communication, and hour available. She likely believes this is not a superhuman strength but that's only because she knows no other way of being.

We talk about "relentless engagement" when we describe what HART is doing. What does that mean for us? We don't take no for an answer, and we'll keep showing up until we succeed. Even if it's frustrating, sometimes scary, or emotionally taxing. That's where resilience and dedication come in - they're skills that are hard to quantify and even harder to impart, but you know when you see them.

Andrea's real superpower is her ability to see gaps in the ecosystem and a burning passion to sew them together

Andrea Hinderaker was hired by the City of Saint Paul in early 2022 to develop HART in its most effective form. In the immediate wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest in the wake of George Floyd's murder, the Twin Cities faced mounting challenges, not the least of which was caring for a growing unsheltered homeless population with quickly decreasing shelter options.



Andrea accepted the challenge head-on and immediately got to work. She knew when to speed up when people wanted to slow down. She knew when to slow down when people wanted to go faster. She brought new partners to the table. She spoke about our neighbors in ways that help us recognize everyone's humanity.

This is where I envision HART's future; a future where no one is living outside, and our amazing team spends their time preventing homelessness.

This year alone, HART helped more than 70 people find permanent housing and with partner organizations, that number is well over 100. HART has also helped 4 elderly people connect with alternate housing options when their lifetime home was unsafe to live in. This is where I envision HART's future; a future where no one is living outside, and our amazing team spends their time preventing homelessness.

Andrea is leaving Saint Paul's HART but she is not leaving our ecosystem. She stitched up a gap and is heading to the next one. Though it feels as if she is leaving us, I know she is doing anything but. Her next adventure will undoubtedly bring us closer to ending unsheltered homelessness.



HART Contact Information

HART Weekly Update

Homeless Assistance Response Team

January 24, 2024

30

Total Active Sites

111

Total Occupants

108

Total Tents

89

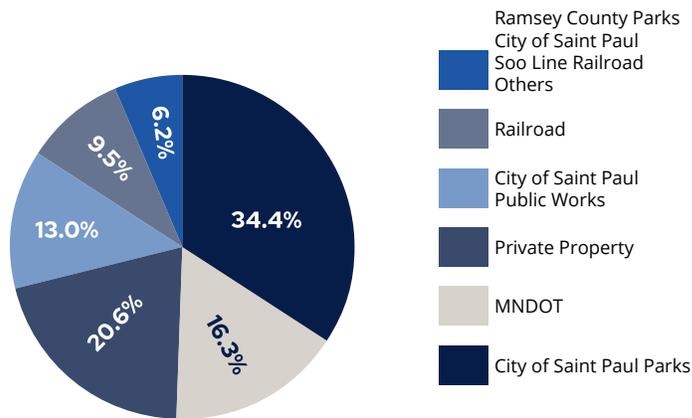
Total Male

28

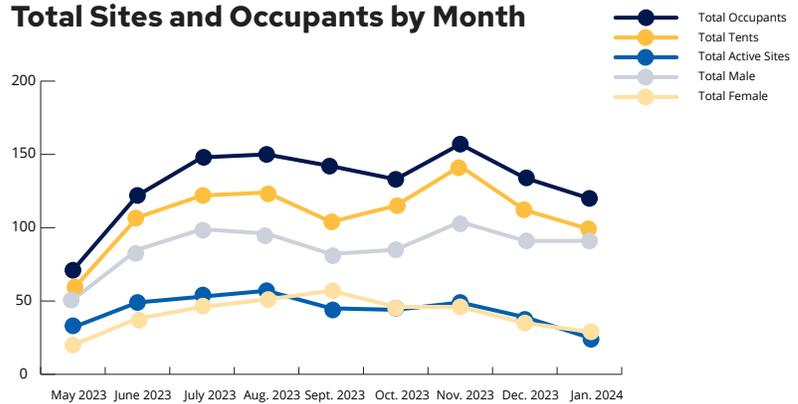
Total Female

City Data Summary

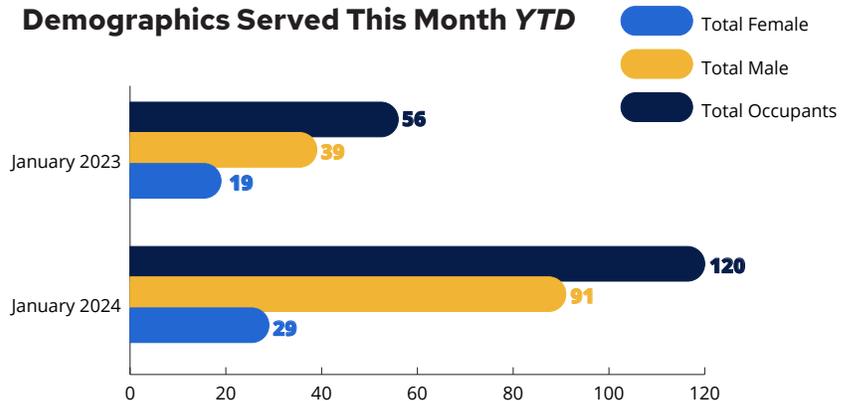
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Total Sites and Occupants by Month



Demographics Served This Month YTD



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How We All Work Together



It has been a busy week of networking and coordinating for the HART team. Even though it appears that winter is on its way out, we're teetering on some of the most complicated temperature trends. When the temps stay between the low 30's and mid 40's, people living outside are at great risk of experiencing hypothermia. This can lead to increased fire safety risks because people are so focused on quickly warming up that they make clumsy errors.

HART coordinated with Lutheran Social Services StreetWorks to secure fire extinguishers for newly constructed yurts at various sites that are already showing signs of fire damage.

While on site delivering the fire extinguishers, HART ran into Clinic 555's nurse team offering safe-use supplies to include Fentanyl and Xylazine test strips and Narcan.

Jessie Saavedra shares more about the amazing work Clinic 555 does for the community...

"Our team at the Syringe Exchange Program can see upwards of 20-30 folks a day. We provide people with clean syringes and testing supplies for Fentanyl and Xylazine. There are many times where we just listen to a person's story. Sometimes we discuss their options to stop using — we have a staff member who can help navigate a pathway into Medical Assisted Therapies. We distribute Narcan — both intramuscular and nasal. Lately we've seen many folks with new, sometimes large Xylazine wounds. We have nurses on staff that will look at a wound if a participant is willing. The nurses provide care and sometimes refer patients to the ER if the wound is severe. We also handle HIV/Hepatitis C rapid testing and some Syphilis testing as well.

"Our plan is to get our van out on a regular basis visiting encampments and provide access to our services."



Peanut, a resident dog at a site — sits by his owner's heater as outreach meet to discuss housing options.



Outreach Worker Kahari delivers one of several fire extinguishers for each recently constructed Yurt. HART and Saint Paul Fire Dept. Arson Investigator Matt Brown walked through a large encampment, assessing the increased fire risks on site and recent fire-damaged yurts. Matt shared his expertise with residents about the importance of ventilation, distance of fires from tents, and the risks of accumulated combustible materials in and around tents.

HART will now spend an entire day Friday with the camp — assisting in problem-solving the accumulation of items and proximity of combustible materials with the help of community partners, City partners and our contracted cleaning services.



HART Contact Information

HART Weekly Update

Homeless Assistance Response Team

January 18, 2024

23

Total Active Sites

120

Total Occupants

107

Total Tents

90

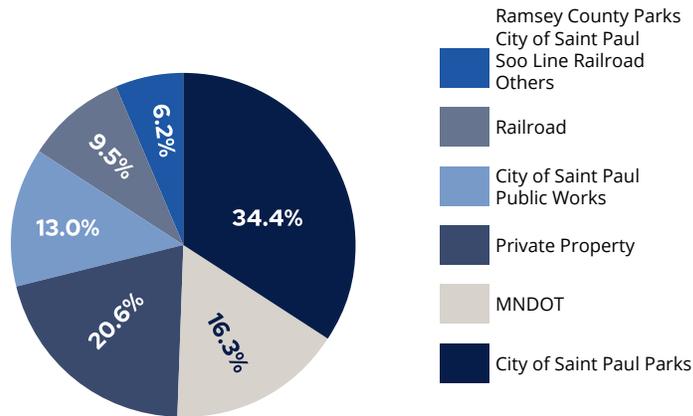
Total Male

30

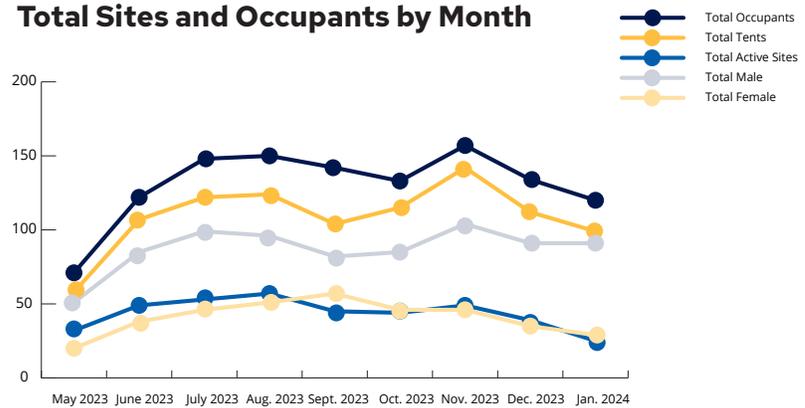
Total Female

City Data Summary

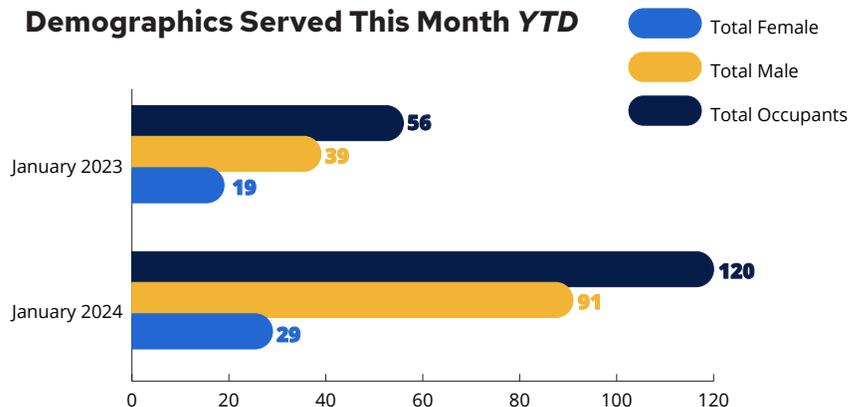
Property Owner Distribution



Total Sites and Occupants by Month



Demographics Served This Month YTD



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Winter Homeless Services: Bringing Our Neighbors In From the Cold

An excerpt from the National Coalition for the Homeless

[There are] three critically important elements to an effective regional or local approach to the prevention of injury and hypothermia:

- **Knowledge** — Accurate and timely information can be life saving for people experiencing homelessness, while a lack of information can be damaging or deadly. In many communities, elected officials and decision-makers hold and keep critical information across a broad range of public and private resources and services. Effective prevention strategies include a pre-approved plan for the gathering and dissemination of lifesaving information to all critical stakeholders, including those at risk on the streets.
- **Networking** — In cold weather, local elected officials and decision-makers are a critical first step to preventing hypothermia. Those in need must receive clear, consistent and repeated messages about the signs, symptoms and consequences of hypothermia, as well as emergency services that are being made available for them. Furthermore, the general public wants and needs to know how to help those in danger of hypothermia and what responses are most appropriate. The public also needs to know who the decisionmakers are and what decisions are being made.
- **Temporary Seasonal Shelter and Outreach** — Appropriate approaches to the level, design and schedule of prevention resources, shelter and outreach, are critical to an effective response. The level of response must be timely and measured against the imminent and emerging concern of injury and hypothermia. The design must place the human cost of injury and death front and center. And, the schedule of emergency shelters and outreach services must be developed and available based solely on sound established prevention practices.

How does the City of Saint Paul's HART team exemplify these important elements to prevention of injury and hypothermia?

Communication and Networking are key to successful interventions across the city.

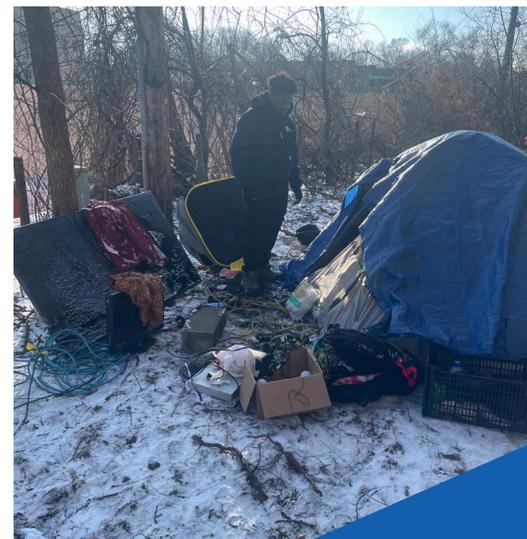
When we're all in the same space, we are challenged to understand the many different perspectives and concerns. Most importantly, we're ready to tackle the really challenging things in a respectful and organized space.

HART coordinator Andrea facilitates two weekly meetings of providers across the city. One meeting has continually expanded its participants and now includes downtown property managers, grassroots organizations, City and County representatives, the Minnesota Department of Health, AmeriCorps, Minnesota Community Care, Community Outreach teams, libraries, Breaking Free, shelters and day services... and so many more individuals invested in working together and learning from each other.

The meeting first came about the spring of 2020, in the early months of the pandemic and the civil unrest associated with the death of George Floyd. Saint Paul had two very large encampments at that time. It was imperative that everyone connected to them had ample knowledge and a voice in whatever strategies were implemented. Not everyone was happy with the outcome — but everyone invested was a part of the discussions.

Andrea was not working for the City at the time and remembers how important it was for community providers to have access to the information that directly affected the face-to-face interactions with our unsheltered residents — and continues to run the meeting with that framework to this day.

Temporary Seasonal Shelter options for Saint Paul — provided by Ramsey County — are available on the next page.



HART Contact Information

HART Weekly Update

Homeless Assistance Response Team

January 10, 2024

25

Total Active Sites

112

Total Occupants

98

Total Tents

80

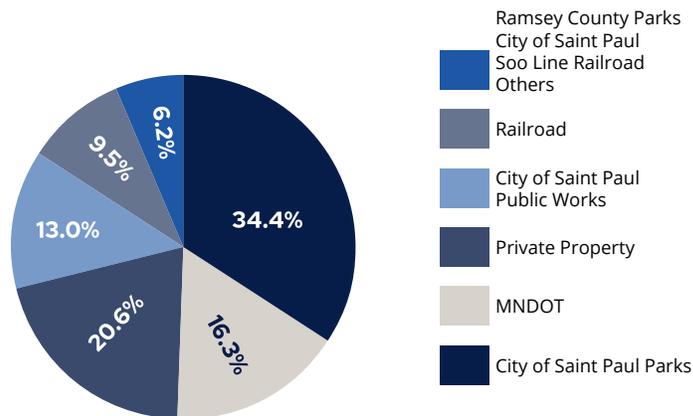
Total Male

29

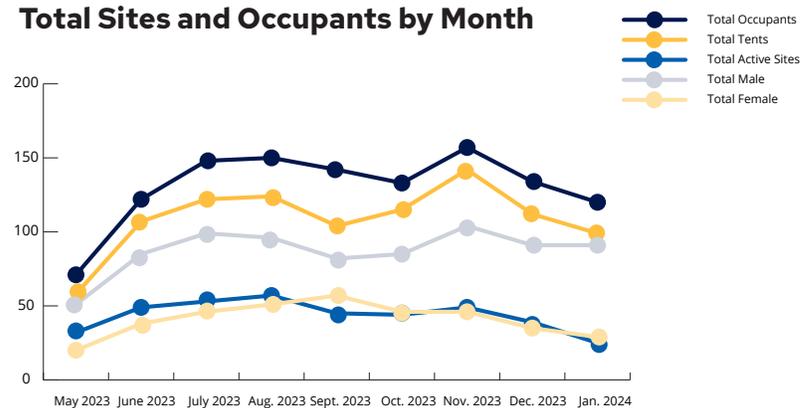
Total Female

City Data Summary

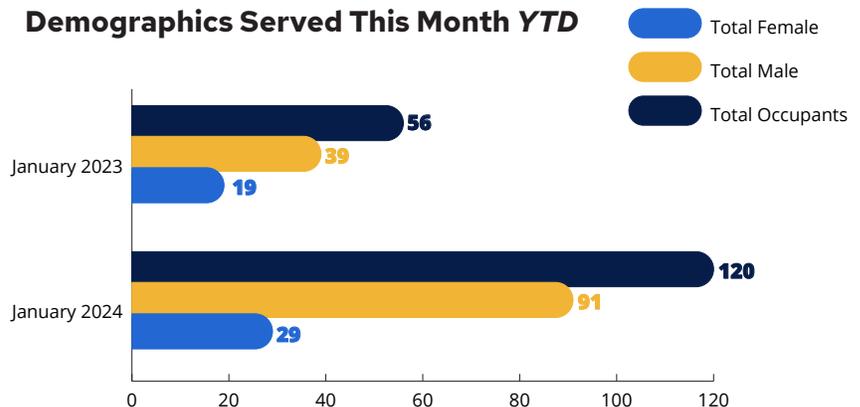
Property Owner Distribution



Total Sites and Occupants by Month



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First move of 2024

In early October, 2023, Concerned staff at Griggs Community Center called HART regarding a woman who had been sleeping in their entryway for several weeks. The staff compassionately allowed her to settle in there at night, however the community at large began to express concerns.

On October 20th, HART outreach learned that once the temperatures began to drop, the woman was seeking warmth in the Porta Potty on site. We met with her and learned she had been sleeping in her car since 2020 until it was impounded, which was how she landed at Griggs. At 51 years of age, she was seemingly without options, until outreach stepped in.

On November 6th, right when Lighthouse Way re-opened their hotel shelter for women, a referral was made so she could get out of the cold until housing was an option. Open spaces are rare - HART outreach called every morning to check for openings. Unfortunately, it appeared that a handicap-accessible space would be hard to come by, but the shelter staff were working miracles to be sure one would open soon. Fully aware that a 51-year-old woman with disabilities was sheltering in a Porta Potty - HART secured a room at the same hotel until she was able to transition into a shelter room within days.

On December 19th, with the help of Radias Health Outreach, she was transported to an intake appointment for possible housing through Wilder.

On December 22nd, Optimism motivated HART outreach to schedule a Bridging appointment for her - knowing the first open appointment can be set pretty far out!

January 9th, 2024 — Move-in Day!!!

Great news, but it's not the end of the story. Preventing the re-occurrence of homelessness means stepping back and looking at all the reasons someone might not stay in their new home for long.

- People often move into empty apartments. Living in survival mode does not allow someone to prepare and save for furnishings — even the most basic items.
- HART provides a welcome basket that contains items such as an air mattress, bedding, a set of dishes, laundry detergent, toilet paper, hygiene items, and basic cooking supplies.
- There is often minimal (if any) notice when a unit is available, leaving little opportunity for an individual to prepare for their deposit or first month's rent.
- HART assists by reducing the stress at the time of move-in and makes sure the deposit and first month's rent is not a barrier.
- Furnishings are what often makes a space feel like a home. Moving into an empty space, though structurally better than a tent outside, is not always enough to convince a person that housing is better than living in a community with shared amenities outside, regardless of the season.
- HART partners with Bridging to make sure each person has the opportunity to "shop" for the furnishings they need to transform their new space into a new home.



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HART Weekly Update

Homeless Assistance Response Team

January 4, 2024

25

Total Active Sites

120

Total Occupants

99

Total Tents

91

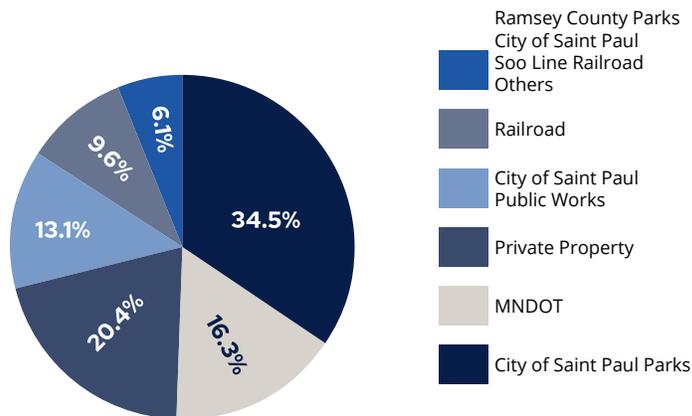
Total Male

29

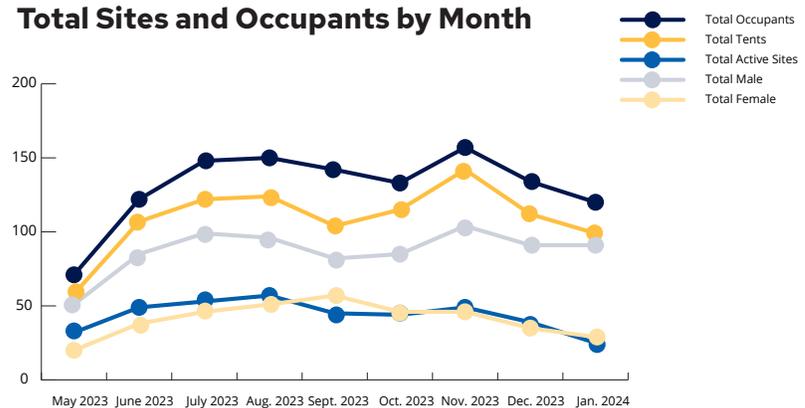
Total Female

City Data Summary

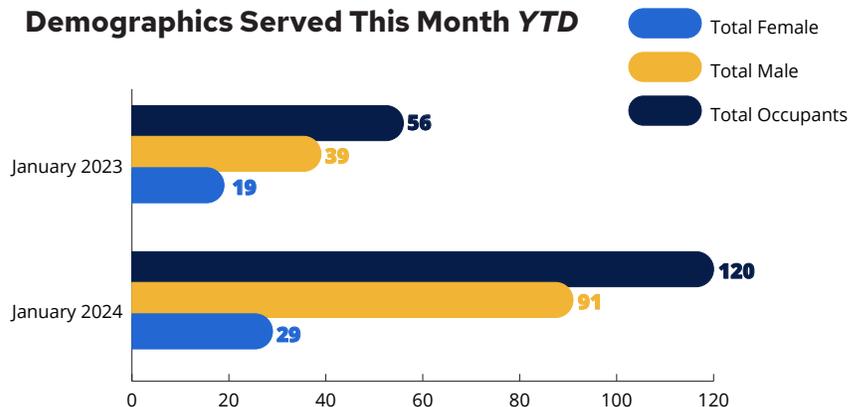
Property Owner Distribution



Total Sites and Occupants by Month



Demographics Served This Month YTD



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Balancing asset and behavior-based problem-solving

In a recent opinion piece: Chronic Homelessness is a Behavior Problem, Joseph Grenny makes a distinction between asset problems and behavior problems as they relate to homelessness. As the coordinator of HART, I read his piece both with curiosity and discomfort.

He explains that “Asset problems are those that can be solved through gifts.” In our world, an example is someone is cold so you give them a coat, or someone is evicted from an apartment and you secure temporary housing.

Behavior problems, he says, “are ones where a person’s choices create or contribute to their pain.” Say you have a math test in the morning and know you should study, but instead you spend the evening with friends. You fail the test and now need to complete remedial coursework to make up for it. There’s no asset that can be given to solve this problem.

He argues that behavior problems cannot be solved by giving assets, going on to say giving assets often perpetuates the very problem you are trying to solve.

The rub I felt reading this piece is the use of behavior and choice in the same space. I facilitate and attend a lot of trainings. I have people in my life that have suffered from addiction, continue to feel the pain of their “choice” to use and consequences that came with using “behavior.” And if I use those exact words in that sequence I am almost on the same page as Mr. Grenny.

Where we agree, however, is in the assessment that to solve an asset problem is the least complicated way to address homelessness. It’s a clean transaction, it feels good and there’s instant gratification for both parties. We see this a lot in our camps around Saint Paul, but we see the less attractive

part of asset problem-solving. We clean up thousands of food containers left behind, some broken into by area wildlife, some rotting in the hot summer sun, most resurfacing after the first spring thaw. We see the rain-soaked bags of gifted clothing and blankets hanging on fences and trees — causing the neighborhoods to grow frustrated with what appears to be disregard for the local park.

Most recently a yurt was gifted to an encampment site. It’s beautiful and was intended to create a warm, safe community gathering space. Absolutely an asset given with the best intentions. Here’s where it gets complex: people have moved into the yurt. Now it is no longer available for community gathering for the rest of the encampment, which creates a lot of tension.

As countless hours are put into solving behavioral and asset problems alike, there is a conflicting message to stop reaching for housing and support opportunities that await each individual and instead focus on staying put — outside, through the winter, in Minnesota.

I don’t have the answers to what is right or wrong when good intentions are set in motion. I myself have been a rainstorm of assets throughout my lifetime. HART works daily to keep our unsheltered neighbors focused on the possibilities, not just the short-term. When we all work together, with the help of our city and community partners, we can continue to lift people out of homelessness with dignity and respect.



HART Contact Information

HART Weekly Update

Homeless Assistance Response Team

December 14, 2023

29

Total Active Sites

123

Total Occupants

100

Total Tents

84

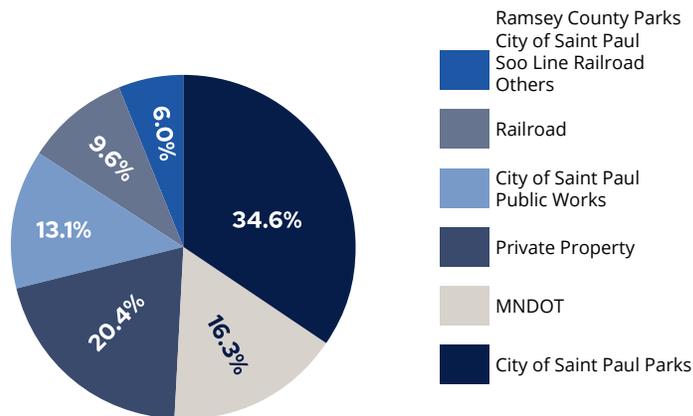
Total Male

33

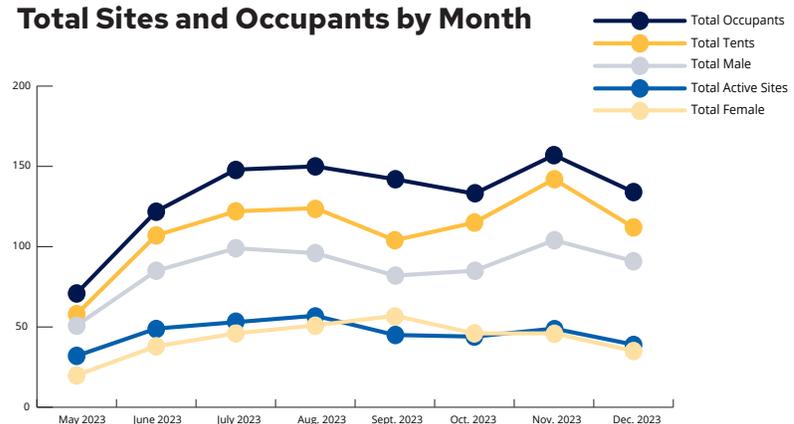
Total Female

City Data Summary

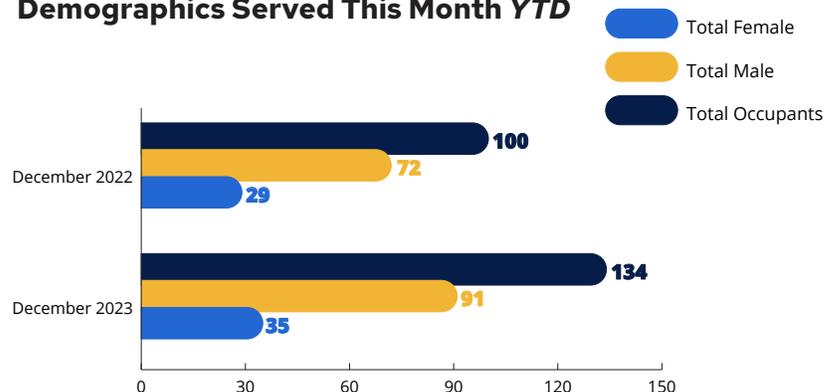
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HART secures housing for another long-term homeless individual!

To date, we've assisted over 70 individuals into housing — 59 of those moves were coordinated through the HART team alone.

2023 breakdown so far:

Month	Move ins
January	4
February	3
April	2
May	3
June	3
July	2
August	2
September	3
October	6
November	7
December	TBD

We have learned that we can look forward to more housing units becoming available in the future — but we cannot wait for them. Rapport and relentless engagement along with strong partnerships with housing providers allows for opportunities that are often overlooked in the service world.

Picture captions: The City of Saint Paul continues in their commitment to assist our unsheltered community. Keeping the camping areas clean and safe; educating on spacing and layering to reduce fire risks, clearing away trash and debris to reduce health and wellness risks. Once a regular cleaning schedule is established, residents often place their garbage in designated piles for the city to pick up — a sign of trust and a shared goal of keeping the area clean.

The skid steer is often a representation of chaos and destruction around camps. For our purposes, it allows the cleaning crew to remove large items and collections of designated trash. On more than one occasion, we have assisted individuals in moving their belongings to locations they choose with the skid steer because the volume of items is too much for a person to carry.

More often than not, we clean up vacated spots. It is not uncommon for people to leave a site and leave a lot of their belongings behind. Our crew will clean the abandoned site as soon as possible.



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