

# STATISTICS MEMO

## Summary of Homelessness in North Carolina's Offender Population

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### PURPOSE

We surveyed 1,816 offenders as a sample of the North Carolina offender population. There were four groups, Female Prisoners, Male Prisoners, DART-Cherry Male Probationers and Male Parolees. Due to data exclusions, there were 1,462 analyzable surveys.

### DEFINING HOMELESSNESS

The most common definition of homelessness is either an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a temporary shelter, an institution-based temporary residence, or a place not designed for a regular accommodation for human beings. The definition used in this survey was conservative: only those who lived on the streets, in an emergency shelter or in a vehicle/camper/tent/camp were considered homeless.

**HOMELESS AT SOME POINT / IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO DOC:** For the four groups, 31% said they had been homeless at some point in their lives. There were 512 offenders who reported being homeless either at some point in their lives (446) or just prior to DOC entry (66).

Homeless at some point / immediately prior to	Group
43% / 7%	Female Prisoners
33% / 7%	Male Prisoners
21% / 4%	Probationers at DART-Cherry
23% / 2%	Parolees at DART-Cherry

**FACTORS LEADING TO HOMELESSNESS:** Offenders who indicated that they had been homeless selected up to 9 factors that lead to their homelessness. The three main reported factors were:

- Drug and Alcohol Abuse 51%
- Unemployment/Lack of Money 40%
- Criminal Conviction 22%

**EXPERIENCES ONE YEAR PRIOR TO DOC:** Offenders identified events that they had experienced in the year before DOC entry. There were 24 choices. The information below shows the most frequently cited experiences by the group who had been homeless versus the 'never homeless' group. Those who have been homeless reported that they are more likely to have experienced:

- Unable to pay bills – 22% more likely
- Drug/Alcohol Abuse – 18% more likely
- Loss of Job/Benefits – 16% more likely

**EXPERIENCES IN LIFETIME:** Offenders identified events that they had experienced over their lifetime (Q12).

There were 24 choices (plus Other category). The information below shows the most frequently cited experiences by the group who had been homeless versus the ‘never homeless’ group. Those who have been homeless are more likely to have experienced:

- Unable to Pay bills – 27% more likely
- Physical Violence/Abuse – 19% more likely
- Loss of Job/Benefits – 18% more likely
- Drug/Alcohol Abuse – 16 % more likely
- Victim of Domestic Violence – 16% more likely
- Loss of Parental Rights – 13% more likely
- Child Abuse/Neglect – 13% more likely

**EMPLOYMENT:** Based upon their answers, the incidence of homelessness decreases as the percentage of offenders employed increases.

Employed	Homeless just prior to DOC	Homeless at some point	Never Homeless
Yes	34%	53%	67%
No	66%	45%	29%

**TRANSITION SERVICES:** The survey asked offenders to identify services that they think they would need when they would leave their current location. There were 20 choices (plus Other category). This table represents a rank ordering of the most frequently selected services.

Female prisoners ranked these services as needs in this descending order:

1. Medicaid/Medicare
2. 12-Step Program
3. Drug/Alcohol Treatment
4. Employment Training
5. Public/Section 8 Housing
6. Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Male probationers ranked these services as needs in this descending order:

1. 12-Step Program
2. Drug/Alcohol Treatment
3. Employment Training
4. Medicaid/Medicare
5. Vocational Rehabilitation Services
6. Mental Health Care

Male prisoners ranked these services as needs in this descending order:

1. Employment Training
2. Clothing Assistance
3. Vocational Rehabilitation Services
4. Medicaid/Medicare
5. Public/Section 8 Housing
6. Church/Charity Assistance

Male parolees ranked these services as needs in this descending order:

1. 12-Step Program
2. Drug/Alcohol Treatment
3. Employment Training
4. Vocational Rehabilitation Services
5. Clothing Assistance
6. Medicaid/Medicare
7. Legal Aid