
Homelessness in america

Homelessness in America is on the rise. In any metropolitan city, there is an innumerable amount of people living on the street, on sidewalks, in parks, and in city designated tent areas. On any given night in 2017, approximately 554,000 people could be found sleeping on the street, but equivalently, many cities have made it difficult for these people by prohibiting things such as camping in public or sleeping in your own vehicle (theweek. com). Large urban cities aren't the only areas experiencing this epidemic, people without homes or a permanent place to sleep can be found in small rural areas as well. Many people go unaccounted for due to lack of consensus workers in smaller cities by the way of information. This problem goes beyond preconceived notions and prejudices against homeless people that have been around since the early 20th century. This is a nationwide problem involving more than a just a few factors and transcends prior historical assumptions about what is actually going on. This matter entails a series of complex economical and governmental issues that intertwine and cause persistent problems that lead to national crises.

According to the National Academies Press, the start of this national issue first emerged in the 1870s following the Civil war when the industrial era of America began to emerge. The railroad system allowed many men and migrants to move from town to town in search of work. This transient lifestyle led to constantly seeking work across the country and temporary stays in places such as slums that challenged the mainstream lifestyle. Transient life was often romanticized in literature by different authors idealizing the escape from a monotonous, conventional way of living, to one of independent freedom (nap. edu pg. 175).

The modern era of homelessness beginning around the 1980s brought in more issues that amplified the destitution of many Americans. The Consensus Study Report of Permanent Supportive Housing states that "gentrification of the inner city, deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill, high unemployment rate, the emergence of HIV/AIDS, and inadequate supply of affordable housing options, and deep budget cuts to the U. S. department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and social service agencies" that followed the recession are major factors of this emergence (nap. edu pg 176 change to book cite?). The corresponding factors that influenced the influx of homelessness in the 1980s are still affecting the nation today.

Currently, given the 540,000 homeless people in the U. S. , about 58,000 of those people are families with children (theweek. com). A very common misconception about homeless people is that they suffer from a drug or alcohol addiction and are consequently dangerous in some way or are more likely to commit crimes. Contrary to this misinformation, many people without a home include working families, children, college students, and individuals working for minimum wage. In order to fully understand what causes homelessness, it is crucial to acknowledge the link between poverty and becoming homeless.

The National Coalition for the Homeless states that in a 2016 study by the United States Census Bureau, about 40. 6 million people lived in poverty. Some factors that lead to the state of poverty are lack of available jobs, lack of public assistance, lack of affordable health care, domestic violence, and addiction to alcohol or drugs. It is also expressed that "many people who are addicted to alcohol and drugs never become homeless, but people who are poor and

addicted are clearly at increased risk of homelessness”. Working class people living on minimum wage who experience catastrophic isolated events regarding medical issues, traumatic life events, and family issues are at risk of becoming homeless due to a steady increased cost of living compared to their stagnant working wage. This growing gap between minimum wage and rent prices alone especially hurt people and can lead to chronic homelessness due to unassisted mental health issues, addictions, and disabilities (nationalhomeless.org). However, homelessness is not isolated to those that are chronically unemployed due to substance abuse or mental issues.

On account of the number of complex issues that are involved, city leadership may seem slow to fixing what may be considered a national crisis. Andrew Gumbel, in an article for the Guardian, calls Los Angeles the “sorriest urban scene anywhere in America”. Although the city has reconstructed the budget to allow for \$100 million per year for homeless funding, backing an initiative to raise \$1 billion for housing, and a proposal to raise sales tax that would generate \$3.5 billion for support services for the future, the number of homeless people has risen 20% in only one year (theguardian.com). In many cities like L. A., homeless camps are establishing in places like under bridges, rivers, and city designated areas. Some of these camps are even equipped with portable bathrooms and trash pickup. According to Gumbel, the increase of sales tax helped fund assistance to the homeless by providing more mental health and social workers. These people work to help find homeless people the help they need, including permanent housing. But, one of the main roadblocks in finding permanent housing for homeless people is building the actual housing in a city that is already at full capacity regarding vacancies (theguardian).

As cities square in on the housing crisis, many are met by opposition from residents. Homeless service experts are figuring where to build housing, challenging rent control rules, and opting to change building regulations to fit the need of permanent affordable housing projects (theguardian). Shelterforce.org is a publication that examines community development and they discuss many housing issues in the United States. In a series about affordable housing, Corianne Payton Scally discusses housing ideas that are met with resistance as residents of already established communities. These residents are fearful of what these affordable housing projects might bring with them including increased crime, tax burdens, traffic, school impacts, and environmental impacts. Housing planners are faced with organized protests and legal challenges from opposition. What needs to be discussed in the pros and cons of building affordable housing units relies on distinguishing stereotypical fears and actual statistics (shelterforce.org).

Homelessness in America is a problem that will only get worse before it gets better. As of 2018 the United States is reaching the peak of this epidemic. Unfortunately, the wide spread problem of homelessness depends of numerous factors that prevent it from immediate remedy. The housing crisis, minimum wage, lack of accessible healthcare, and drug issues like the opioid epidemic are major components that contribute to this major problem. Major infrastructure changes in government policies, funding for assistance programs, affordable health care accessibility, higher minimum wage, and affordable housing can help turn this problem around. On top of affording rent, one single medical incident, natural disaster, divorce, or other traumatic event can lead a person to homelessness, not just for individuals, but families as well. This issue reflects on the country in which it stands regarding the national economy and federal regul

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