



Homelessness

in the United States of America

Most people in the United States have a home. You may live in a house, townhouse, or apartment. You probably have clothes, food, and a place to sleep in your home. A large number of people, however, do not have a home. In fact, on any given night, approximately 750,000 men, women, and children are homeless in the US.

A person is homeless if they have no regular and safe place to sleep. People without homes may live in shelters, at a friend's house, or many places not meant for human living, including

on the street or in an abandoned building. Some people are able to find a new home very quickly; however, some people do not have a place to live for a long time and need help finding a new home.

Explore the Internet!

The internet is full of information on many topics, including homelessness. Go online and find a new fact about homelessness to share with your classmates.

You can find more information about homelessness on the Alliance's website:

www.endhomelessness.org

Anybody can be homeless. It does not matter what color a person's skin is, what religion they practice, or how old they are; families with children, single adults, teenagers, and the elderly are all homeless. In fact, about half of the homeless people in the United States are families with children, and most of those children are the same age or younger than you.

People can be homeless for a variety of reasons. Often multiple reasons contribute to an individual's homelessness:

- In some places it costs a lot to live and there may not be enough affordable housing for everyone who doesn't make a lot of money to live in a home,
- They could have become sick or injured and lost their job and could not pay for their house anymore, and
- Particularly for families with children, they may not have enough money to pay for everything they need such as food, clothing, bills, transportation, and rent so they end up having to give up their house in order to clothe and feed their children.

Fact Checker: Statistics for Homeless Populations

Over 5 million low-income households have serious housing problems due to high housing costs, substandard housing conditions, or both.

Homeless children go hungry twice as often as other children.

Only 20 percent of homeless families report that they receive help finding housing.

43 percent of children living with homeless parents are under the age of 6.

It is estimated that between 23 and 40 percent of homeless adults are veterans.

About 600,000 families and 1.35 million children experience homelessness in the US each year, and about 50 percent of the total homeless population is a part of a family.

Ending Homelessness is Possible

Cities and states across the United States are starting to end homelessness. They are making plans and starting to move homeless people into homes. While homelessness can seem like a complex problem, there are actually very simple solutions that cities and states are already using:

Want to know more?

Read and talk about one of these books:

No Place to Be: Voices of Homeless Children by Judith Berck

Homeless by Bernard Wolf

Someplace to Go by Maria Testa and Karen Ritz

A Chance to Grow by E. Sandy Powell

A Rose for Abby by Donna Guthrie

Fly Away Home by Eve Bunting

Home edited by Michael Rosen

The Lady in the Box by Ann McGovern

- Create more houses that are not as expensive so families and individuals can afford them.
- Pay people enough money so they can pay their rent, buy food, and pay their bills.
- Give people the information and help they need to meet their daily needs.

What You Can Do

Help people meet their daily needs. Think about the things that you do every day and the things you would not be able to live without. Homeless people need many of those same things and you can help them:

- Cook a meal and deliver it to an organization that serves food to people who do not have homes.
- Find out what a homeless program in your community needs most and collect money from your friends, neighbors, and family. Then buy and deliver those items to the program.
- Collect blankets, hats, and gloves for people who are living on the street and deliver these warm items to them.
- Treat homeless people the same way you would treat people who have a home and the same way you would want to be treated.

Teach other people about homelessness, its causes and how to solve it. After reading this fact sheet you are an expert on the ways to end homelessness. Share all of this information with your family and friends.

Write your national, state, and local government representatives who make the laws that affect homeless people. Tell your representatives what you have learned about homelessness and ask them what they plan to do to help these people.

Calculate It!

There is a family with a mom, a dad, and two children living in Washington, DC. If the dad makes \$7 per hour and works 40 hours per week, how much money does he earn per week?

Assuming there are 4 weeks per month, how much money does the dad make in a month?

If it costs the family \$900 per month for a two bedroom apartment and the family has to pay \$200 in bills for water, heat, and electricity, how much money does the family spend on rent and bills together?

It costs the family \$60 per week (4 weeks per month) to buy groceries. If the family pays the above rent and utilities will the family have enough money to buy groceries to feed their children for the month?

National Alliance to End Homelessness

www.endhomelessness.org

The National Alliance to End Homelessness is a nonpartisan, mission-driven organization committed to preventing and ending homelessness in the United States.