

## **Homelessness Statistics and Causes**

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Everyone faces challenges in their lives. For some the challenge is having a roof over their head. Homelessness is when a person lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (Alowaimer, 2018, p.1). If the homeless sleep in a shelter designated for temporary living accommodations or in places not designated for human habitation they have to adapt to finding somewhere else to stay and that is a struggle for people cause they are never guaranteed a place to sleep or good food to eat. The people you see in the streets are not the only ones that are considered homeless but families, children, elderly, and youth that don't have the resources to reside somewhere permanently. People don't choose to live this way "Therefore, it is known that homelessness is the biggest social problem which the whole world faces in the twenty-first century" (Alowaimer, 2018, p.1).

What is the problem of homelessness in CT, and what are the factors that contribute to homelessness. In Connecticut the total homeless population is 2,905 (New Non-Congregate Shelter Guidance, N/D). Households experiencing homelessness is- 306, veterans experiencing homelessness is- 199, people experiencing chronic homelessness is- 177 (New Non-Congregate Shelter Guidance, N/D). Chronic homelessness- is used to describe people who have experienced homelessness for at least a year, while struggling with a disabling condition like mental illness, substance use disorder, or physical disability. Young adults (ages 18-24) experiencing homelessness is- 148 (New Non-Congregate Shelter Guidance, N/D). The total homelessness is set aside from the total number of homeless students in Connecticut which is 4,722 (New Non-Congregate Shelter Guidance, N/D). In CT there are homeless shelters to help people but in the state of Connecticut before going to a homeless shelter you need to call 211 which is housing

and homeless services. Which isn't always helpful because some homeless people don't have cell phones or access to a phone which makes it harder for people to get shelter.

A big factor of homelessness is poverty. Homelessness and poverty are linked due to the struggle for poor people to pay for many of life's necessities, some examples of life necessities are food, housing, childcare, healthcare, and education. Which causes some to choose which necessities are most important for many; the choice isn't housing. Housing uses up a high percentage of income (National Coalition for the Homeless, N/D). Unemployment is another factor in homelessness. Unemployment rates right now are high and everywhere is understaffed. But even if people can find work it is not a complete escape from poverty. There is also a decline in public assistance. Public Assistance- assistance programs that provide either cash assistance or in-kind benefits to individuals and families from any governmental entity, many states have not replaced welfare programs with any alternatives for families or individuals in poverty, which makes it hard for families or individuals to obtain above-poverty employment and to sustain themselves when work is not available or possible (National Coalition for the Homeless, N/D). In 2020 there were many budget cuts which resulted in many public assistance programs being cut. Programs like the ACA which would cause millions to lose health coverage, Food stamps which aren't cut completely but will be cut by 30% or 220 billion dollars over the next 10 years, Department of housing and Urban development which are being cut by 18% which includes cuts in rental assistance for low income families and many more programs (Kogan, 2019). These cuts can make it harder for the people that depend on these programs to help with certain necessities in the home.

A factor of homelessness is health. When people have health and behavioral concerns such as, severe illnesses, injury, malnutrition, depression, alcoholism, substance abuse and so much more it makes it hard to avoid poverty and homelessness. Dealing with these health issues can lead people to neglect themselves if they do not take the proper steps to get treated which causes them to fall into a cycle which is difficult to come out of. Between 20% to 25% of the homeless population are suffering from some type of mental illness that interferes with their ability to manage their daily life and prevents them from having stable relationships with others . “Among the most vulnerable and underprivileged groups in society are the homeless people who suffer from drugs, alcohol and mental disorders” (Alowaimer, 2018, p.1). Health problems are big and mainly can only be fixed with professional help like rehabilitation centers. Those centers can help someone deal with either alcoholism, substance abuse, and ect. Stopping those problems could help them become more resourceful with money and also help them keep a job.

Domestic violence is a problem for many and to get away from it many make the choice of being homeless. Women and their children are forced to run away from their homes and leave everything behind to survive. Not only women go through this but even men have been in these situations. 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have experienced some type of domestic violence by an intimate partner like slapping, pushing, shoving, and ect (Homelessness in America, N/D). This data shows another factor to why and how many people could become homeless. They run away from violence in the home either to the streets, homeless shelters, or family or friends couches.

It is important for people to really understand what homelessness is and what can be some of the causes. Learning the facts can help people understand that many don't choose being

homeless or that many don't have the choice to not be homeless. Many people that fall into homelessness were forced in some way to fall into this situation and because of the barriers it has been difficult to break the cycle. Despite all the challenges they are facing, by reaching out and providing support, and finding a way to make a difference in a person's life can be the beginning of making a change.

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