
This place is called Skid Row In Skid Row there are roughly 3 500 homeless individuals

Purpose and Statement of the Problem

Homelessness effects many people worldwide, however I plan to narrow my research to only that which is found in America. According to Rosenheck : “estimate that 8.5 million Americans experienced homelessness between 1985 and 1990. This figure is two to three times that of previous estimates.” (Rosenheck, 1994). Although this was several years ago, the number seems to be expanding quite rapidly. Within my research of this problem, my central question will be what is the most effective way to help alleviate homelessness in America. It may be impossible to completely wipe out homelessness, but I feel the United States could possible decline these numbers significantly.

During this conversation there will be many main discussion points. I hope to provide some background information on the topic, shine some light into the problems, offer insight from an interview with a professional, and discuss what can be done to help fix this problem. As a Social Work major, this problem is very important to me. Until coming to the United States, I never really saw homeless people. In my country we have, but not like here. I have encountered several homeless persons while living in Erie. Each time I see them, I feel a great sense of empathy towards them. I want to learn all I can and then do as much for them as seemingly possible.

Homelessness can effect literally anyone and there are several reasons as to why one may find themselves in these predicaments. Generally people are not concerned with a problem unless it is effecting them first hand. Although I myself and not homeless, I feel these issues are very important and deserve to be discussed.

Background

As stated above, before moving to Erie I have never really seen homelessness. I know the basics of this topic but certainly not the severity. I understand that homelessness can be found in every single country, can happen quickly and unexpectedly, and the solution is not an easy one or possibly unsolvable. I understand that alone, I will never be able to solve this problem, but with the help of others it can be reduced and more programs to help can be introduced. I will try to educate not only myself but others alike.

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I will need to investigate a lot during this project so I can know as much as possible. By doing so I can see where the problems lie and it will help me grasp a better plan in the end. I will look to academic journals, professionals, and other faucets to obtain this necessary information. I want to know everything about the topic and become more educated.

Since each culture faces problems such as this one, it is very culturally important. Where one may live can also affect these situations as well. In some poorer countries, not much aid is given. From what I can see the United States offers several programs, however there are still millions of people still in these situations. So for whatever reason, there are either not enough programs or the information is not reaching these populations.

There are many people who will find interest in these topics. For starters anyone working in social sciences would most likely be interested for starters. Along with people or families actually going through the problem. I feel it is all of our responsibilities to help those who are less fortunate. For people of religion, this is a central theme and obligation. My intended audience surpasses my teacher and class and goes towards friends, family, and strangers alike.

I believe this is the most important topic in this period of time because there is a great need for new ideas regarding this situation. I say this because I see homeless sleeping outside each day. These people go without food, water, and shelter and that is a problem in itself. If more people do not work towards a solution more and more people will find themselves homeless. I am very invested in this problem because I would love to see the day when this is all gone. It makes me sad knowing I have more than what I need while others have absolutely nothing. My inspiration for this topic came from seeing these people in the downtown. Several times I am asked for money and it breaks my heart knowing that no matter what I give it can never be enough.

Methods

For this section I wish to include an interview I did with my advisor Dr. Baker. He has his doctite in Social Work and is currently a teacher at Gannon University. I feel if anyone knows about this topic, it is certainly him.

Have you ever worked with homeless populations? If so what were the details?

I have worked with the homeless population in Erie since 1995, over 20 years directly. My work has been primarily with New Life City Mission, Erie School District Student Assistance Program for Homeless Students, Community Shelter, Mental Health Agency, Salvation Army, and the Community of Caring?

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What age are most of these people?

The age interval is wide – from 12 to 80 years.

What programs are available for them in Erie?

There are many programs designed to help the homeless. Many provide temporary housing or shelter; access to healthcare substance abuse, and mental health services, and food. Due to the numerous problems that are associated with homelessness, individuals require more services than any one agency can provide.

How do these programs usually generate?

Funding generally comes from federal, state and local grants and community donations.

What is the best way that we can help those who are homeless and what have you found to be most effective when alleviated their situations completely?

The homeless populations are generally “invisible.” We will not alleviated the problem but we can treat the homeless with dignity, help provide education, employment training, and jobs.

What I hope to learn

The answers to this issue and not black and white, since each person’s situation is different, handling them will also be different. Each procedure should be specialized in accordance to the individual’s specific needs. I will most likely face many difficulties because I know deep down this problem will most likely not be solved. Many people have worked towards these issues, however the numbers still increase each year. I feel more effective programs and new legislation will be the only way to help effectively manage homelessness. Education will also improve these conditions in my opinion.

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