



Love INC
Love In the Name of Christ

HOMELESSNESS IN AMERICA

Love In the Name of Christ ■ www.loveinc.org

For most of us, the thought of not knowing where we will sleep tonight is inconceivable. But homelessness is a reality many Americans face each day and involves people in many different situations—whether it's the underemployed single mom and her kids sleeping in an abandoned building because she can't afford to pay rent, the retired couple living out of their car because they lost their home to foreclosure, the migrant family of six "pushing in" with relatives in an overcrowded apartment because they can't find affordable housing, or the family bankrupt by their daughter's medical crisis who sleeps in a shelter at night and lives on the streets by day. Those who experience the harsh reality of a personal housing crisis find themselves and their families trapped in a relentless cycle of physical and emotional turmoil that compromises their health, ability to achieve, and sense of security and purpose.

Consider these facts:

- An estimated 3.4 million people will experience homelessness in 2009—an increase of 35 percent since December 2007.¹
- Approximately 1.5 million children are homeless in the United States every year—that's one in fifty children.²
- Approximately 1.6 million people—one in every 190 Americans—used an emergency shelter or transitional housing program between October 2007 and September 2008.³
- Between 2007 and 2008, the number of homeless persons in families grew by about 43,000—an increase of nine percent.⁴
- The leading cause of homelessness among families is lack of affordable housing, followed by poverty, unemployment, and low-paying jobs.⁵
- An estimated 15.8 million American households struggle under severe housing cost burdens, paying over 50 percent of their income toward housing. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 5.2 million of those households live in "worst case housing"—meaning they earn less than 50 percent of the area median income and/or live in severe physically inadequate housing.⁶
- Many U.S. cities have closed their waiting lists for housing assistance because of excess demand, including Des Moines, Nashville, Philadelphia, Charlotte, and Cleveland. When Portland's list re-opened in June 2008, the number of families requesting housing assistance increased by an overwhelming 672 percent.⁷
- In 2008, *RealtyTrac* reported 3,157,806 foreclosure filings (default notices, auction sales and bank repossessions)—an increase of 81 percent from 2007 and 225 percent from 2006.⁸
- Efforts to provide affordable housing have decreased substantially in recent decades, shrinking the supply of affordable rental space. Over 170,000 public units have been lost to deterioration in the past decade alone.⁹
- While 15.8 million households are eligible to receive tenant-based rental assistance, only one in nine actually receive them.¹⁰
- Families that exit shelters with a housing subsidy are 21 times more likely to remain stably housed over time than similar families exiting without a subsidy.¹¹

About Love In the Name of Christ

For more than 30 years, Love INC has been mobilizing the Church to transform lives and communities In the Name of Christ. Love INC has over 140 affiliates in 30 states, representing a network of more than 9,000 churches, 6,000 community-based organizations, and 300,000 volunteers meeting more than one million needs each year.

To find out how you can make a difference in the lives of people in need, visit www.loveinc.org.

Homelessness in America: A Fact Sheet

Reference

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- 3 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development, *The 2008 Annual Homeless Assessment Report*, July 2009, <http://www.hudhre.info/documents/4thHomelessAssessmentReport.pdf> (July 20, 2009).
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 The United States Conference of Mayors, *Hunger and Homelessness Survey, A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities, A 25-City Survey*, December 2008, pg. 13, http://usmayors.org/pressreleases/documents/hungerhomelessnessreport_121208.pdf (July 20, 2009).
- 6 National Alliance to End Homelessness, *Fact Checker: Affordable Housing Shortage*, September 2007, <http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/1658> (July 20, 2009).
- 7 The United States Conference of Mayors, *Hunger and Homelessness Survey, A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities, A 25-City Survey*, December 2008, pg. 13, http://usmayors.org/pressreleases/documents/hungerhomelessnessreport_121208.pdf (July 14, 2009).
- 8 National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, *Foreclosure Adding to Homelessness Crisis*, June 26, 2009, <http://www.nlchp.org/news.cfm?id=105> (July 20, 2009).
- 9 National Alliance to End Homelessness, *Fact Checker: Affordable Housing Shortage*, September 2007, <http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/1658> (July 20, 2009).
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 National Alliance to End Homelessness, *Fact Checker: Family Homelessness*, February 2007, <http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/1525> (July 21, 2009).