

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Haakon Johnson

There are an infinite amount of exceptions when it comes to reasons homelessness exists in the U.S. and what can be done to improve the situation. Throughout my research, I have been shocked by some of the statistics, individual stories, and overall stereotypes that pertain to the homeless. Thus far, the research has informed me in many ways and opened my mind.

A very interesting housing method that I came across in a USA Today article left me wondering if its housing technique is the correct approach. The free housing shelter is called "Safe Haven", and does not have any rules or requirements in regards to addiction. "At the 2-month-old Safe Haven, the first shelter of its kind in the city, there is no curfew and no requirement that residents give up alcohol or drugs in order to have a bed"(<http://www.usatoday.com/>). Though Safe Haven brings chemically dependant homeless individuals off the streets and into a bed, it still allows its occupants to carry on with their destructive behavior. Also, the "anything goes" method is more economically efficient but is not teaching the homeless a thing. All in all, this housing method left me thinking, "Is this morally wrong to give free housing with no boundaries?" Hopefully, by discussing the "Safe Haven", a discussion to whether this method is correct or not will spark.

Another aspect of my research that was quite intriguing was the correlation between the homeless and crime. In fact, the homeless are less likely to commit violent crimes against person or property, though they are more likely to commit drug or trespassing crimes (nhchc.org). I was truly surprised at this, in my mind the homeless wouldn't hesitate to commit a violent robbery, but that is just not the case.

Overall, the research performed thus far has enlightened me to the economical, medical, and moral issues that go hand in hand with homelessness. Someone needs to decide whether morals should be involved in solving the homeless problem, or if the solution should solely be economically based.

Karissa Skogg

The first step in solving the issue of homelessness is providing free housing programs. For someone living on the streets, finding affordable housing can be seemingly impossible. With today's poor economy, it is extremely hard for the homeless to be able to afford housing. If provided with free housing, the homeless would be given an opportunity to get jobs, and work their way up to affording their own housing and getting off the streets for good. Because it is so difficult for them to afford housing, free housing programs are greatly needed. It would cost more to have someone living on the streets, than it would be to provide housing for them. If every homeless person were given an opportunity for free housing, the number of homeless would decline considerably.

Funding nationwide for free housing programs for the homeless needs to be provided to help end the issue of homeless. Once provided with free housing, the homeless would be well on their way to changing their life for the better. This would give them the chance to make money and not have to worry about paying rent for somewhere to stay. Once they were on their feet enough to keep a job and save money, they would be able to afford living on their own without free housing. If all the homeless were given a chance by this free housing program, the number of homeless left on the street would decline considerably. Free housing is the first, and most important step in fighting homelessness.

Tommy Rupp

The Town Hall Meeting is going to try and cover multiple topics regarding homelessness by breaking them down into a series of select topics. The topic I have chosen is affordable housing. My research will focus on laws and financial issues concerning it as well. Starting off I would like to define homelessness or at least have the group come to a consensus. For it is different for all the types of the homeless spectrum. The conversation style I would like to create in the Town Hall Meeting is one similar to a Socratic circle in which participants keep the debate/discussion going asking-questions to others comments or ideas. I would also like to allow everyone an equal chance to speak his/hers mind on the topic(s), even if I am forced to pull people into the conversation. Further steps will include more research to back up my points and to go the extra length and research the other side of the story. Just so I can have both sides and not be spun in my research.

Gheri Osborne

Since the recent rule revision on "Refinement of income and rent determination requirements in public and assisted housing programs" within the Housing Urban Development programs that will be taking effect on March 30 2009, how much of an effect will it take on the participants?

Currently HUD is cracking down in the procedures and steps that are being followed regarding the social security and income verifications that are needed when participants apply for or receive assistance in the public and assisted housing programs. Some of the more significant changes that HUD has made their programs in the social security aspect, each participant must submit their social security number at the time of each participants recertification with the program. New household members who includes new born children or if a family member is added to the application must also provide a social security number at the time of request of assistance. If a family is unable to provide the programs with the social security numbers of all people in the household they then will be placed on the waiting list and be given a 60 day period to come up with the needed information. However if the person is homeless the program then extends the 60 day period to a 90 day period given that the homeless person may have a harder time coming up with the needed information.

Bryce Shows

The homeless epidemic has become widespread all across the United States, and has continued to grow larger since the 1980's. Homelessness is caused by several different factors such as drug and alcohol abuse, or mental illness. There are steps being taken to help aid the homeless, but more social programs need to be created in order to help minimize the spread. According to the authors of "Assertive Outreach" there are few assertive outreach programs designed to engage persons into treatment (Fisk).

Because of the diversity of the population of the homeless, it is hard to say that they all need or want help, but those who need and want help, deserve any opportunity that they may get. Providing housing to the homeless is the first step that needs to be taken. Once housing has been established, more case workers need to be made available to help the individuals make the transition from the streets into housing units.

There are several questions that can be created from this idea of creating more housing. How will this project be paid for is probably the biggest question on everyone's mind. Who is willing to take the time to help these individuals is another. Most people probably cannot afford to pay the extra money to build more housing for the homeless, but once the economy can become more stable, most people might be willing to give a little bit to the cause. The idea presented in "Million-Dollar Murray" to put the chronically homeless into a free apartment I feel is a great place to start reducing the homelessness issue. Although there are several options that can be taken, providing the homeless with more housing is the first step that should be taken.

Jacey Ritland

The chronically homeless cost the government and the citizens of the United States thousands of dollars each year. In order to lower the number of homeless and the amount of money spent on them, our society must find a solution to this problem. One possible answer is housing those on the streets while they regain control of their life. Many questions arise from this risky opportunity to helping the homeless. Will the money be worth it? Can our economy handle this? Will the homeless actually make progress? What are the regulations for obtaining an apartment? According to Colorado Coalition for the homeless finding apartments for those in need has proven to be effective (CCH). In conversation the discussion should be of the goal of this program and what steps will be necessary in the process. The steps that must be taken include; research of what cities would benefit the most, the decision of who would pay for the apartments, an outline of the requirements to be eligible to receive an apartment. The most important question is the progress made by the overall homeless efficient and beneficial enough to continue to afford housing individuals. The nation must understand the process and results that will hopefully come out of this project. This very likely might be a lengthy progress but the end results will be worth every penny and second.

Ross Flick

For the Town Hall Meeting I chose to research housing or homes for the homeless and potential solutions for the issue of homelessness. In some research that I conducted, a nonprofit group The Pine Street Inn located in Boston had helped 8,000 people in this last year through shelters, cooking meals, providing job training, and those attempting to overcome mental illness or substance-abuse problems. This organization is doing the first step in helping the homeless issue by action. The kind of conversation I would like to focus on is creating this first initiative, being able to start solutions. How can organization such as the Pine Street Inn be created in more cities? Action involving organizations such as these ones need to be taken more seriously to really start to help the issue of homelessness.