



### Homelessness During This Pandemic, What is Being Done?

The lives of homeless people are no less important than the well-endowed, but are their lives being protected as they should be in a time of dangerous virality? When the pandemic began, the homelessness crisis was at a high point, and it continues to grow as more and more people lose income and livelihoods due to quarantines. Homeless people aren't able to practice social distancing, as living in packed groups, whether it be in shelters or outside, allow the virus to spread easily. So I wonder, what is being done to help this marginalized group?

Recently, Trump distributed \$3 billion in aid in order to create emergency shelters and increase testing in homeless populations. A lot of areas like hotels and community shelters are being used to expand homeless shelters too. The only problem is, these are all short-term solutions, and the well being of the growing homeless population isn't being ensured.

Some cities, along with expanding homeless shelters, are improving hygiene with the installment of portable toilets and hand-washing stations around homeless areas. Medical professionals have also begun visiting these areas to educate the population on preventing COVID-19. However, traditional homeless shelters, along with the converting of areas such as libraries into homeless shelters, are under fire as they don't provide enough distance to prevent the spread of the virus. So there are increasing initiatives calling for the use of empty hotel rooms to house the homeless to prevent the spread of the CoronaVirus. Yet despite this, the number of hotel rooms expected to be given to the homeless population are minimal as San Francisco (a city that implemented this initiative), by April 21st, has only housed about 8% of their city's entire homeless population.

The temporary and frankly lazy solutions to the homeless crisis during the pandemic just isn't enough. Homeless is rising, and, after the pandemic, what is to be done about the growing numbers? On another note, why did it take so long for this country to address the homeless population? And why did it take an entire pandemic to do so? We need to work to de-escalate the homelessness crisis, and we need to focus on helping the unendowed. But we, as people can only do so much. Our governments, whether federal or local, have to start making change, increasing funding, and focus their help on those who really need it.

Sources:

<https://www.vox.com/2020/4/21/21227629/coronavirus-homeless-covid-19-las-vegas-san-francisco>

Written by:

**Layla Nahavandi**