



Underemployment and Homelessness

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Although unemployment is often cited as a major contributor to homelessness, many homeless people report having a job. (Nooe & Patterson, 2010). The problem is that these jobs do not pay enough for one to live independently (Nooe & Patterson, 2010). In 1999, The Economic Policy Institute reported that minimum wage had not kept up with economic growth (Nooe & Patterson, 2010). It was also discovered by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness that the medium monthly income for homeless individuals was around 56% below the federal poverty level (Nooe & Patterson, 2010).

There are few employment opportunities for those that do not have sufficient education or skills (Nooe & Patterson, 2010). Plant closures and relocations, an increased demand for highly educated people, and globalization have contributed to changing the labor market (Nooe & Patterson, 2010). Volatile employment patterns has been classified as a risk factor for homelessness in many studies and the longer one remains homeless, the smaller their chances of obtaining permanent employment becomes (Nooe & Patterson, 2010).

The increasing scarcity of public assistance also contributes to homelessness (Nooe & Patterson, 2010). Welfare reform in 1999 resulted in the loss of benefits for many (Nooe & Patterson, 2010). In 2004, it was found that the grant program temporary assistance to needy families

(TANF) provided single mothers with 2 children with an income at only 29% of the federal poverty level (Nooe & Patterson, 2010). The reduced benefits create additional hurdles for avoiding or overcoming homelessness.

Unemployment is no doubt a contributing factor to homelessness but not all homeless people are unemployed. Many have jobs but just don't make enough to live independently and a lack of public assistance adds to their difficulties. In a perfect world, we would all make enough for a comfortable living but this is not the case. Many of us need help just to get by. Here at T's 4 Hope, we aim to spread awareness of poverty, hunger, and the problems associated with them. We wish to inspire people to volunteer and help make a difference in their communities. If you would like to volunteer, please contact us at Ts4Hope@yahoo.com or 954-867-6765.

Roger M. Nooe & David A. Patterson (2010) The Ecology of Homelessness, *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 20:2, 105-152, DOI: 10.1080/10911350903269757