

# WORLD HOMELESSNESS DAY

OBSERVED ANNUALLY ON OCTOBER 10TH

In 2023, the [Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#) calculated an estimate of 650,000 homeless Americans. On October 10th, the world focuses on the topic of homelessness and the crisis of scarce housing. Many spend the day raising funds or collecting donations to later provide to local shelters and/ or charities. Homelessness is at an all-time high, and with the [new law passed by the supreme court](#), those currently in these situations are seeking immediate assistance. October 10th motivates us in the U.S. to work toward a future where we will all have a roof over our heads.



## THE STORY OF THE 'SOUP KITCHEN'

[WATCH VIDEO](#)

Communities have been providing its members with a bowl of warm broth since before the Middle Ages, especially due to how simple it is to create. Of course there is no set 'recipe' to soup, as long as you have a warmed liquid, vegetable, and meat! With histories of recessions and catastrophic events, set locations were often used to provide a food source to those suffering. 'Soup Kitchens', though they no longer only serve soup, have grown to be a major asset to low-income communities. It is believed that the first kitchens were created to feed the poor and military within Europe during the 1700s, and later spread to the US in the early 1800s. When the 1820s came around and society was changing, the locations for free meals were slowly disappearing. It was not until the Great Depression that there was a revival in soup kitchens. Along with breadlines, soup kitchens became a daily part of the life of millions during the 1930s. In fact, there are songs, books, and poems from the Great Depression that capture individual experiences with the kitchens and poverty. Today, [Emergency Food Relief Programs](#) provide food pantries and cook meals for those in need. It is estimated that between twelve and twenty-one million people each year rely on soup kitchens.

## VOLUNTEER LOCALLY!

**HOMEFRONT**

**Rescue Mission of Trenton**

**T.A.S.K.**

**Diocese of Trenton**

**Salvation Army**

**Woman's Space**

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## ART & THE STREETS

Considering the trials and tribulations those experiencing homelessness face on a daily basis, it is hard to find an emotional and mental escape. A universal language spoken by many is the language of art, a form of expression practiced by those all over the world. Art has no rights or wrongs and is not confined to a specific social class, religion, or race. Engaging in artistic expression can provide feelings of dignity and healing for those experiencing homelessness. A program by the name of Art from the Streets is taking this into consideration. The goal for AFTS is to provide supplies for those less fortunate and find opportunities for individuals to sell their work. All proceeds made from the artworks are given to the artists to help create a form of income they can eventually depend on. Programs like AFTS open doors for those in need to begin building a new life for themselves.

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## HOMELESSNESS AND OUR VETS

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When discussing the topic of homelessness, the thought of those who served is often brought into the conversation. Veterans and homelessness have always been interlinked, considering the fact that Veterans are 50% more likely to experience financial challenges compared to other Americans. Additionally, disabled veterans tend to be the main victims in these situations, followed by those suffering from mental health conditions. This can be proven through history dating back to WWI, when more than 224,000 men returned home with physical and mental disabilities. At this time, there was no set program or organization dedicated to assisting veterans, let alone those who had been hurt in war. Many first World War veterans dealt with unemployment, poor housing conditions, and insufficient medical care. This resulted in the founding of programs like the [Disabled American Veterans of the World War](#) and the [American Legion](#) to advocate for the rights of disabled veterans. The attention made from these early organizations led Congress to institute the US Veterans Bureau in 1921, which paved the way to the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#). Although the fight against Veteran homelessness is far from over, resources like those mentioned as well as the [Wounded Warrior Project](#) and [Veterans of Foreign Wars](#) can be seen as the first steps to new beginnings.

If you or someone you know is a Veteran who may be homeless or approaching homelessness, call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at (877) 4AID-VET (877-424-3838) for assistance.

## THREE TYPES

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there are different categories of homelessness that can help us better understand what it actually is. The [Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) keeps a list of definitions of homelessness to help those who work with the homeless.

Below are three of the main types of homelessness:

**Chronic:** Describes individuals who have been dealing with homelessness for at least a year — or repeatedly — while facing challenges such as a serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or physical disability. Their struggle with certain disabilities and illnesses can make it difficult to maintain housing and reliable resources.

**Episodic:** An individual who has on-and-off periods of homelessness in their life or has been homeless three times or more within the last year. Similar to chronic homelessness, many who are episodically homeless struggle with medical issues, mental illness, or substance use disorders.

**Transitional:** An individual who is homeless for a short time period because of a crisis or unfortunate event. They often enter shelters or temporary housing for a single stay. This is the [most common](#) type of homelessness.

## OTHERS OFTEN INVOLVED:

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Homelessness is experienced by people of all races and ages, unfortunately ranging from children to the elderly. This observation can represent how financially- challenging situations can affect anyone, not just one specific group in one specific place. The word 'Intersectionality' is defined as an understanding of various aspects regarding individual identities that interact to create unique experiences of privilege or oppression. Intersectionality is highly recognized in the conversation of homelessness, typically used to better understand the complexities of those experiencing homelessness and put a stop to certain stigmas.

CLICK A HEADING BELOW TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TOPICS INVOLVED IN THE CONVERSATION OF INTERSECTIONALITY:

### LGBTQ+

The LGBTQ+ community is more likely to become homeless, and once homeless, is more likely to endure discrimination and harassment. In addition, LGBTQ+ youth are often more likely to be in danger of traffickers, forcing them into survival-like behaviors since their well-being and safety are at a consistent risk.

### CHILDREN & TEENS

Children are often heavily impacted. From their education, mental and physical health, sense of security, and overall growth. Children experiencing homelessness constantly need to worry about their living situation, their belongings, family members, and safety.

### SINGLE ADULTS

Most of the people who experience being homeless are often single adults. Lack of available housing and job scarcity are typically the two main causes. With one of the toughest housing markets presently occurring, the rate of homeless singles continues to rise.

### ELDERLY

As older generations continue to grow in age and constant changes being made over the years, more and more elderly people are being pushed into homelessness. Medical debt, housing, and utilities are often main reasons for those retired or of older age to undergo homelessness.

### THOSE WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES

Mental health issues are one of the bigger issues when discussing homelessness. Some may have already had prior conditions whereas some are developed after experiencing said circumstances. PTSD and depression are two of the most common.

### D.V. SURVIVORS

Though common among men as well, Domestic violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness for women and their children. Survivors undergo different experiences, but lack of financial stability and resources for asylum seeking typically result in unsafe living situations and/ or homelessness.