

# How much do you really know about HOMELESSNESS?

The major cause of homelessness in the U.S. is a lack of affordable housing. People cannot find places they can afford, particularly in urban settings where homelessness is more prevalent. United Way of the Midlands organized a survey asking people about their experience of homelessness.

Here's what more than 300 people had to say.

## A frustrating life

### Homelessness is **STRESSFUL.**

The National Low Income Housing Coalition says housing is "out of reach" for people who earn minimum wage in every state in the U.S.

#### A HIGH COST



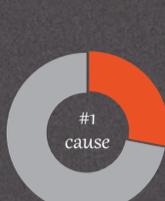
In South Carolina, someone would need to be paid **\$14.57** an hour in order to afford a two-bedroom apartment.

#### FAIR MARKET RENT



For apartments in Richland County:  
**\$656** for a 1-bedroom  
**\$778** for a 2-bedroom  
**\$1,026** for a 3-bedroom

#### JOB LOSS



Nearly **1/3** of respondents said losing a job was the main cause of their homelessness.

#### A LONG WAY UP



Research shows it's difficult for people to work their way out of homelessness. **Forty-eight percent** of respondents say it's their first time being homeless, and **46%** have been homeless for one year or longer.

#### THE CHALLENGES



**Sixty-one percent** of the homeless population surveyed said they have trouble finding a place to sleep, **55%** said they have trouble getting enough to eat and **47%** said they have trouble staying safe.

"I'm looking for housing someplace safe where a single parent can afford."



"I'm looking into a house or apartment but do not have enough money for a security deposit and first month's rent."



## An isolating life

### Homelessness is **LONELY.**

Our research showed that the respondents had very low levels of social support from family and friends.

#### FAMILY ISSUES



Almost **1/5** of respondents said they do not have a home because of family violence, divorce, a death in the family or an argument with family and friends.

#### NO HELP



**Sixty percent** said there was nothing family or friends could help them with when presented with a list of options such as: "lend you money" and "give you a place to stay."

#### UNCOMFORTABLE



Many homeless individuals feel awkward asking for help. **Twenty-eight percent** said their friends or family had too many problems of their own, and **12%** said they felt too independent.



"I would not ask someone I'm friends with to give me money or live with them. If I want to keep them, it's not proper."



"I really need some help, but I've been too ashamed to tell anyone [about my substance abuse]."

"I lived with my mother in her apartment and did odd jobs. My brothers moved my mother to a nursing home, and I became homeless."



## A resilient life

### Homelessness takes **STRENGTH.**

In spite of challenging circumstances that have led to their situations, respondents continue to fight for a better life for themselves.

#### AN ACTIVE SEARCH



**Seventy-eight percent** say they are currently looking for housing, and **50%** say they can afford to pay something for housing, just not fair market rent. The most common amount people say they can pay is **\$300 to \$400** a month.

#### JOB HUNTING



The majority of respondents are looking for jobs; **58%** are actively searching for work or a better job, and **20%** already have one.

#### FLEXIBILITY



Almost **half** of respondents would be willing to live with a roommate if someone offered them housing.

"I hope to go back to school and finish my degree."



"The shelter that I'm staying at has been instrumental in helping me find medical services, mental health services and substance abuse help. There are classes I take to better myself, and there are many opportunities to do service work."



## The solution

### What's the answer? **AFFORDABLE HOUSING.**

Help us make housing accessible to everyone by increasing the supply of affordable and supportive housing. Housing provides the foundation for life stability and success.

Everyone deserves a home.

STAY INFORMED AT: [UWAY.ORG](http://UWAY.ORG) AND [SCHOMELESS.ORG](http://SCHOMELESS.ORG).

