



Report on Hunger and Homelessness

The United States Conference of Mayors recently released its 32nd Annual Hunger and Homelessness Survey. The survey was conducted between September 2013 and August 2014 and is a status report focusing on hunger and homelessness in 25 of America's cities.

The cities were asked for information on the extent and causes of hunger and homelessness and the emergency food assistance and homeless services they provide. The data from the cities represented many of the issues that are being faced in communities nationwide.

More than 70 percent of the cities surveyed reported an increase in requests for emergency food assistance over the past year. Among people requesting emergency food assistance, 56 percent were people in families, 38 percent were employed, 20.5 percent were elderly and seven percent were homeless.

The number of families experiencing homelessness across the survey cities increased by an average of three percent, with 43 percent of the cities reporting an increase over the last year.

The survey cities reported that, on average, 28 percent of homeless adults were severely mentally ill, 22 percent were physically disabled, 15 percent were victims of domestic violence and three percent were HIV positive. Eighteen percent of homeless adults were employed and 13 percent were veterans.

While the above numbers may seem daunting, the news is not all bad. There have been improvements over the past year.

The surveyed cities reported a nine percent average increase in the number of pounds of food distributed during the past year. All together, the cities distributed 680 million pounds of food worth more than \$624 million to hungry individuals.

On the homelessness front, all but one of the surveyed cities have been successful in obtaining HUD (Housing and Urban Development), VA (Veterans' Affairs) and other federal funds targeted at homeless veterans. Officials in 91 percent of the cities report that their efforts to target homeless veterans with these funds have been successful in reducing the number of veterans in the homeless population.

Many of the cities are confident that the VA will be able to reach its goal of eliminating veterans' homelessness by the end of 2015.

Hunger and homelessness are issues that will take time and resources to eradicate. However, according to the report, steps are being taken to move the country in the right direction.