

## Causes of Homelessness

How many times have you passed by people sitting on the street, with a plastic glass or a small cardboard box asking for spare change? Have you ever noticed the amounts of people who have neither home, nor a job to sustain themselves? Perhaps you think it is their own fault; you might think if they wanted, they would have it all. **“Go find yourself a job” is a regular phrase homeless people hear.** However, this advice is pointless, because there are objective reasons why people lose homes and jobs, and why they cannot return to normal life.

**One of the most frequent causes of homelessness is property-destroying disasters of any kind.** It can be an earthquake (like in Japan in 2011), a hurricane (like in New Orleans), a flood or tsunami, and so on. At the same time, it can be a disaster or accident of a smaller scale, but still a significant one. Domestic fires, for example, destroy hundreds of residences annually; usually, if a brigade of firefighters does not manage to arrive on time, people suffer severe material damage. Left without a home, victims of these disasters also often lose their IDs, property documents, credit cards, cash stashes, and so on. It can take months (or even years) to renew them. And friends and relatives are not always willing or capable of helping a victim during the time he or she recuperates (IFR).

Another group of factors leading to homelessness includes unhappy marriages and their outcomes. **Divorce and abusive relationships are among the major factors of homelessness (Homeless Resource Network).** In particular, divorce can often leave one of the spouses homeless. When divorcing, former family members usually try to divide the property they acquired in marriage; in some cases, one of the spouses can find themselves deprived of any property, including a place to live in. Another possible reason for homelessness is domestic violence. Although it is usually considered that women suffer from domestic violence more than men, it is not true; as a result, a number of people of both genders prefer to live on the streets rather than stay in abusive relationships.

The institutional backgrounds of people can cause them to end up living on the streets (Shelter). **In particular, people who served in the armed forces and participated in war conflicts can suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, which can prevent them from fitting into normal life, living with their families, and so on.** As a result, they are at risk of not being able to get along with the peaceful environment around them, and end up on the streets. Another group of people who can potentially become homeless are former prisoners. A prisoner does not necessarily remain a villain after getting out of jail; moreover, such people could have committed some minor crimes, or even were unjustly convicted. Still, non-criminal citizens usually do not give them a second chance, so they often become homeless as well.

It is obvious that homelessness is caused not only by a person's unwillingness to work and sustain themselves; rather often, there exist objective factors causing people to become homeless. Among them, one should mention disasters (both natural and human-caused), divorce, abusive relationships, PTSD, and non-conducive backgrounds like being a former convict.

# Family Essay