



### Definitions

- **Poverty** is the condition of having very little or no money, goods or means of support. There are different causes, including changes in economy, lack of education, divorce, overpopulation, natural disasters and environmental problems such as lack of rainfall.
- The **poverty line** is the estimated minimum level of income needed to have the necessities of life like food, water and shelter. The 2016 poverty level for a family of 4 is \$24,300. [Review all U.S. poverty levels here.](#)

### Fast Facts<sup>1</sup>

- Over 43 million people are living in poverty within the U.S. and over 3 billion people in the world live on less than \$2.50 a day.
- In 2015 564,708 men, women and children were homeless in the U.S. People are living in the street, cars, shelters or transitional housing.
- Approximately 15% of the homeless population are considered to be chronically homeless, meaning they have a disability and have been homeless for a year or longer.
- The United Nations last attempted to survey global homelessness in 2005. They estimated 100 million people were homeless worldwide and 1.6 billion lacked adequate housing.

### Factors that contribute to homelessness and poverty<sup>2</sup>

- **Unemployment and limited job opportunities:** Jobs can be hard to find at times and even if some find work, they might not make enough to pay bills or afford rent.
- **Life events:** Becoming seriously ill, getting a divorce or losing a loved one can be heavy financial burdens and push people into poverty or make things worse for people already struggling financially.
- **Poor physical or mental health:** Men and women battling physical or mental issues may have challenges finding and keeping gainful employment.

### Services available

- Organizations such as [The Salvation Army](#) and some religious institutions offer various services including housing, training, counseling and meals for homeless individuals.

### Resources

- You can volunteer your time at a local homeless shelter. [Find one near you.](#)
- Learning to Give has great ready-made lesson plans on [homelessness](#) and [poverty](#).
- Help young kids understand what it's like to be homeless with [these 14 children's books](#).
- Interested in doing more? Check out our project guides for [kids](#) and [teens](#).

<sup>1</sup><http://www.endhomelessness.org/page/-/files/2016%20State%20Of%20Homelessness.pdf>

<sup>2</sup><http://nationalhomeless.org/about-homelessness/>