



**BROTHERS BROOKS**  
VISION 2 MISSION LLC

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### Special points of interest:

- **Homelessness in the U.S. hit a record high last year as pandemic aid ran out**
- **Study Veterans To Understand Rising Homelessness**
- **Word on the Street**

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# WE CARE NEWS!!!

**An Informative Newsletter regarding the Homeless, Stranded and Down & Out in America**

## HOMELESSNESS IN THE U.S. HIT A RECORD HIGH LAST YEAR AS PANDEMIC AID RAN OUT

Homelessness in America spiked last year, reaching a record high, according to an annual count that provides a snapshot of one night in January. The report, released today by the department of Housing and Urban development, found more than 650,000 people were living in shelters or outside in tents or cars. That's up a whopping 12% from the year before.

To advocates, it hardly comes as a surprise.

"We simply don't have enough homes that people can afford," says Jeff Olivet, executive director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. "When you combine rapidly rising rent, that it just costs more per month for people to get into a place and keep a place, you get this vicious game of musical chairs." Homelessness has been rising since 2017 in large part because of the country's massive shortage of affordable housing. There was a pause during the pandemic, and Biden administration officials say that's because of sweeping federal

aid that kept people from getting evicted. But last year, in a triple whammy, that aid started running out. Inflation spiked to its highest level in a generation, and median rent hit a record high. Research has found that where rents rise, so does homelessness. This year's big jump was driven by people who lost housing for the first time, which Biden administration officials say reflects the sharp rise in rent. The largest increase was among families, and the count also finds a significant rise among Hispanics. Nearly 40% of the unhoused are Black or African-American, and a quarter are seniors. The annual count does not include the many people who couch surf with friends or family, and who may be at high risk of ending up on the street. The surge in migrants showing up at shelters around the country likely also helped push up the numbers, says Ann Oliva, CEO of the National Alliance to End Homelessness. It's not clear how many may have been included, because back in January the volunteers conducting

the count did not ask whether someone was seeking asylum. But Oliva says homeless service providers who'd already been overwhelmed are now struggling with this added population.

"We saw it in the state of Maine, in Minneapolis, in Chicago," she says. "Our big concern is that there is a huge inflow of folks that are coming into these systems without any resources for these systems to serve them." Oliva's group wants the Biden administration to make it easier for migrants to legally work, and to have their asylum cases heard more quickly. She also says the federal government needs to provide far more rental assistance. Unlike food and healthcare, housing aid is not an entitlement, and only a quarter of people eligible for it actually receive a



## STUDY VETERANS TO UNDERSTAND RISING HOMELESSNESS

OPINION PIECE BY TOM MURPHY

Homelessness is up for the seventh year in a row, according to the latest federal homelessness data, with a total increase of 12 percent from 2022 to 2023. That is a situation that no one in this

nation should find acceptable. Signal the predictable chorus of opinions about what's causing homelessness and how to respond. Many critics will focus on the most visible manifestations of homelessness: poverty, the research others

ple who are unsheltered and those with chronic patterns of homelessness. But to truly understand what is driving the homelessness crisis, consider a population that may be overlooked in this dialogue: U.S. Military

## VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

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**Volunteers  
of America®**

## SPOT LIGHT— VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

We help 1.5 million people a year and counting. Volunteers of America is one of the nation's largest, established comprehensive human services organizations with 16,000 mission-driven professionals, dedicated to helping those in need rebuild their lives and reach their full potential. Founded in 1896, the faith-based nonprofit has programs in 46 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, serving more than 1.5 million people a year.

### Our Mission

Volunteers of America is a movement organized to reach and uplift all people and bring them to the knowledge and active service of God.

Volunteers of America, illustrating the presence of God through all that we do, serves people and communities in need and creates opportunities for people to experience the joy of serving others.

Volunteers of America measures its success in positive change in the lives of individuals and communities we serve.

### Our Vision

A world where all people in our communities live with social, emotional and physical well-being, spiritual fulfillment, justice and hope. Our work touches the mind, body, heart – and ultimately the spirit – of those we serve. Volunteers of America National Services (VOANS) serves as the Housing and Healthcare affiliate of the Volunteers of America parent organization. Incorporated in 1982, the issue of providing services in senior housing served as the catalyst for this merger of housing and healthcare activities.

## States With the Largest Homeless Populations

The following are the top 10 states with the highest homelessness population<sup>12</sup>:

California (171,521)  
New York (74,178)  
Florida (25,959)  
Washington (25,211)  
Texas (24,432)  
Oregon (17,959)  
Massachusetts (15,507)  
Arizona (13,553)  
Pennsylvania (12,691)

Georgia (10,689), More than half a million people experienced homelessness in the U.S., a number that has increased each year since 2016.

Since 2020, the homeless population has grown in 27 states, even doubling in some.

California, New York, Florida and Washington had the most homeless people, according to the Annual Homeless Assessment Report. The four states accounted for more than half of the nation's homeless population, with 30% of the total living in California

alone. States with the highest rates of homelessness, calculated as the number of people experiencing homelessness per 1,000 residents in the state, were

California, Vermont, Oregon and Hawaii. Washington, D.C., has a higher homelessness rate than any state, with over 6.5 people experiencing homelessness per 1,000 residents. According to the data collected by the point-in-time count national rates for homelessness among veterans, unaccompanied youth and families with children decreased significantly.

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 STUDY VETERANS TO UNDERSTAND RISING HOMELESSNESS

veterans, who—despite a rich legacy of targeted benefits and homelessness programs available to them—increasingly feel the pain of homelessness. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2023 data showed a 7.4 percent increase between 2022 and 2023, the largest increase in 12 years. If the social safety protections afforded our veterans are

are not sufficient to prevent their homelessness, imagine the challenges facing millions of Americans who lack such protections. Some will insist that this is proof that the federal government's homelessness programs are failing. But the historic data says otherwise, particularly when it comes to veteran programs. In fact, the federal government's veteran homelessness programs have a sterling track record. Veteran homelessness

has been on the decline for nine of the past 12 Point in Time counts, including a steep 11 percent decrease during the pandemic. Thanks largely to bipartisan congressional will to generously invest in and adapt veteran homelessness programs each year, veterans have seen a greater benefit than any other subpopulation experiencing homelessness.





## THE MILLIPEDE EFFECT

Several years in the making, "The Millipede Effect" has been released by Authorhouse Publishing this past January. The book lays out BBV2M LLC founder and President Rodney Brooks quest to understand the homeless, stranded and down & out. From movies to our own perceptions, it all shapes how we approach this situation. Brooks looks at Government, Civic Organizations and religion (the Church) as all play a major part in finding ways to help the plight of the homeless. These different groups

display on a daily basis their commitment to service, financial giving and voluntary work. Like the millipede with its many body parts/ compartments (government, civic, religion) and its many legs (the people driving these various groups); there are many misconceptions about those that are homeless. The book looks at those various challenges as well hear from several of those that are homeless, stranded and down & out. Brooks introduces us to his spirit filled purpose and calling in helping the homeless, stranded and down & out

as well he walks us through what the various religions say about each individual of faith and their role in being a part of the solution. The book can be ordered through [Authorhouse Publishing](http://bookstore.authorhouse.com/Products/SKU-001092211/The--Millipede-Effect.aspx) at <http://bookstore.authorhouse.com/Products/SKU-001092211/The--Millipede-Effect.aspx> or [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/) at <https://www.amazon.com/>

### Word on The Street— Law Center Statement on 12% Increase in Homelessness Point in Time results must drive housing investments, not despair

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development released the Annual Point in Time (PIT) Homeless count, showing a 70,650 person, or 12% increase in homelessness. Unfortunately, the PIT confirms what we have been saying for years: that the rent is too high for a growing number of Americans and that far too many people are just one missed paycheck or health crisis away from becoming homeless. It does not have to be this way. Homelessness is

the result of policy and budget choices that impact everything from how many houses are built to minimum wages too low to cover rent. The Law Center remains resolute in knowing that everybody needs and deserves a safe and stable place to call home. We are driven by the truth that we can solve homelessness and that, when we do, everybody is better off. Ten years ago, rates of homelessness started to decline and kept going down until 2017. We must invest in solu-

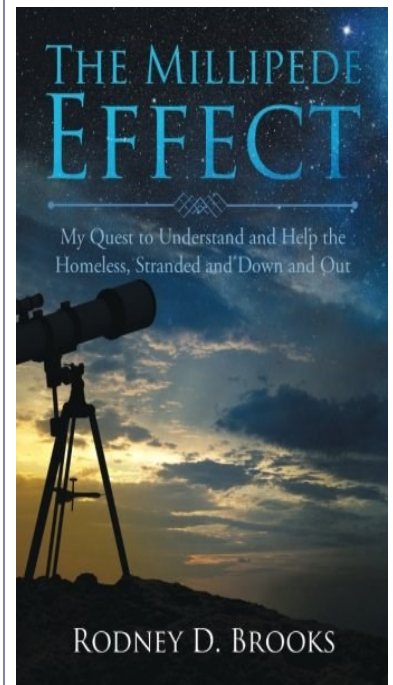
tions that have proven to work – and that are currently working for veteran homelessness (which is down by 55% since 2010). This PIT count is an opportunity for elected officials to invest in our communities and treat homelessness as a priority, not a political football. We call on Congress and the Biden administration to use the PIT results, like the actual census, to drive action and funding. We need more housing, not more blame.

### DAWN BRADLEY-FLETCHER ADDRESSES HOMELESSNESS IN NEW ORLEANS WITH INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

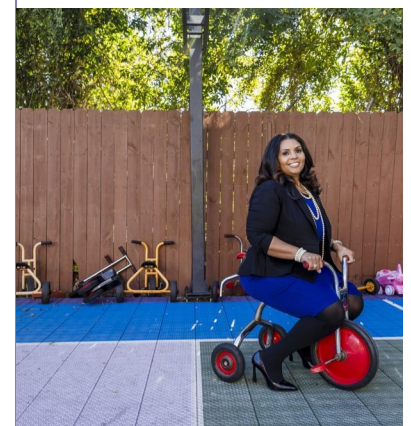
Dawn Bradley-Fletcher recognized the acute problem of homelessness in Greater New Orleans, particularly among intact families, including fathers and boys. Existing shelters often overlooked or lacked adequate facilities to accommodate these families, leaving them vulnerable and without essential support systems. Bradley-Fletcher's tenure at the New Orleans Women & Children's Shelter began in 2008 as a makeshift shelter

formed post-Hurricane Katrina. Under her leadership, the organization evolved to provide not only physical shelter but vital programs and support services as the only homeless shelter for intact families and the largest homeless shelter for women and children in the metro area. I was definitely led to this profession. I worked at Children's Hospital in a pediatric AIDS program which then became Family Advocacy Care and Education Services. In that position, I ran the Drop In Cen-

ter where I prepared meals, helped people prepare for their GED, work on computers, anything that you can think of. That job was a learning experience that I did not realize in 1995 would prepare me to work where I am today. Everything that we're doing in the shelter is empowering our residents to make it easier to overcome this adversity that they're dealing with. It's helping to build a foundation for a better future. Our ultimate goal is independent living.



**HOMELESS**  
Give them a hand  
not the boot



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*A Heritage of Excellence  
in Helping Others!!!*



***WE ARE.....***

*At BBV2M LLC our vision is to help all people excel in all aspects of life. The challenges facing the homeless, stranded and down & out is such a daunting task. There are great organizations in both the public and private sector with many wonderful people who are on the frontline in ensuring that these individuals are taken care of and have a voice. Our goal is to due our part by assistance , education and support. Although our organization was founded in 2015 our heritage stretches back over seven decades of assisting and helping others. The patri-archs of the family instilled the values and beliefs of helping others through the biblical teaching of God's word. Our goal is to be the bridge that helps those in need that are homeless, stranded and down & out get to the proper resources to assist them in their endeavors. This has been spiritually rewarding for us as we truly look to fulfill our purpose of helping others.*

**You Can Help.**



**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

James says it best "If a brother or sister is poorly clothed or lacks daily food, and one of you say to them , "Go in peace, keep warm and eat well," but does not give them what the body needs, what good is it? (James 2:15-16) Those of us who have been given the ability to practice our faith through our works should do so. The opportunity to help our brothers and sisters in need are tremendous. If you are already doing so then I salute you and ask as well as pray that you continue to do so. If you are not or have wondered how then let me give you a couple of suggestions. Your preference in helping is based how you feel in your heart assist.

There are many national and local charitable agencies that work with the homeless. Each of these organizations have a platform and plan on who and how they help those that are homeless. Most organization do take financial donations but they also look for volunteers and advocates. Your local Church or other places of worship also has various types of ministries that are deigned to help the poor and down trodden. Your local or national Wounded Warrior chapter that is designed to help our veterans who are homeless. Whatever your preference in helping; it all starts with you. Let's each do our part in 2022 and be exceptional stewards of Love!



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