

Strive for Survival: The Increased Amount of Homeless People living in Boston



In Boston's severe winter we see homeless people walking along the street. They are dressed in thin clothes to keep warm, and striving for daily meals becomes another problem for them to survive in the extreme weather.

According to a federal report Massachusetts homelessness increased by 14 percent this year. Even though local shelters say they are struggling to keep up, Walter, a homeless person supported by one shelter, is not satisfied: "Boston just spends a lot of time focusing on things that cannot be changed." Since the problem has become more serious in Boston, citizens are concerned about people living on the streets. Thus, we interviewed both citizens and homeless in Boston to ask for their suggestions to improve the living conditions of homeless people.

Around 30% of interviewees admit that they would like to give money when the homeless ask for it, while the rest believe that by giving them money, "it only switches one's guilt but doesn't address the problem." So, the majority prefer to get them a job or donate to a shelter. Melanie, a

Boston citizen told us, “It’s always a drug and alcohol issue, and I don’t think they can use money the way that is best for them.”

This concern comes from reasons. In 2018’s research about homelessness, the increase in the number of homeless population is partially caused by hurricanes, wildfires, and other natural events. The other greater number who are homeless have personal problems like selling drugs or committing a crime.

Outside St. Francis House, one of the biggest homeless shelters in downtown Boston, a homeless named Carol shared his story to us. This is his third time to become homeless since he was arrested for selling drugs and lost his house. Till now, the man who owes his uncle 2200 dollars is still striving for finding a shelter to stay warm and keep life moving on.

One of the biggest difficulties in addressing the homeless problem is the shortage of housing. Thousands of homeless people, even those with proper subsidies like Carol, have trouble finding shelter in the state. In order to make progress, a citizen said, “we need to have more programs in the city, and in the state, even nationwide.”

Recently, there have been some methods taken in addressing the trend in the rise in homelessness. Boston proper has won public praise for offering residence to youth homelessness specifically. And the Boston region plans to build tens of thousands of new housing units at different price points before 2030. When asked for a plan about the future, one of the homeless told us, “just to strive, to keep going, and there are a lot of good programs, we need to strive for it.”