

## **The Condition**

Taken from: **American Poverty Statistics:** [www.povertyprogram.com/usapov.html](http://www.povertyprogram.com/usapov.html)

### **General Statistics:**

- \* Total Population: 300 million
- \* Life Expectancy: 77.4
- \* 12.7% live below poverty level - 37 million live below poverty level
- \* 5.6 million children are in extreme poverty. Extreme poverty means living below \$7,870 for a family of 3
- \* 11% have food insecurity
- \* 9% have no medical insurance
- \* DC has highest national poverty rate at 33%
- \* MA 9.2% poverty, Louisiana 16.7%.
- \* 8.6% of whites live in poverty; 25% of blacks.
- \* Among the 21 affluent nations of the world, the USA has the highest number of children living in poverty (18.9%), twice that of the second highest.
- \* US has largest gap between rich and poor of any industrialized nation: bottom 40% live on under \$22,000 a year with the USA having the highest number of billionaires in the world: 269.
- \* Since 2000, the number of people below the poverty line has increased by 5 million. We have 37 MILLION (population of CA) in America living below the poverty line. 3.5 million homeless - that's the entire state of OR and 1.3 million are homeless children, with 4% under the age of 5.
- \* Poorest in nation: Pine Ridge Indian Reservation - 85% unemployment, 97% poverty, life expectancy 50, teenage suicide 4 times the national average, infant mortality 5 times the national average. Many families don't have electricity, water or sewer.
- \* Of all the developed nations in the world, the United States has the largest gap between rich and poor.
- \* US ranks 21 on the human poverty list.
- \* 17.6 % of children under 18 live in poverty and the highest population of poor are children under the age of 6 where one in five lives below poverty.
- \* Single parent households make up 60% of the poor families.

### **Economics and the Homeless:**

- \* 1.3 million are homeless children and 4% under 5
- \* Half of all homeless women and children are fleeing domestic violence
- \* Families make up 33% of the homeless population
- \* Veterans account for 1/3 of our homeless in America
- \* America spends less than 1% of the federal budget on poverty.
- \* USA has \$44 trillion in reported liabilities - we are the largest debtor in the world, net operating deficit of 296 billion, 77 billion in interest to foreign creditors, including interest on the \$300 billion we borrowed from China.
- \* 45% of homeless population are single males, and of those 40% are veterans.

- \* 15-22 % of the homeless are employed.
  - \* Poverty, by the government's outdated standard is below \$20,000 for a family of 4.
  - \* A livable min. wage is around \$10 an hour.
- TODAY 12 million children live in poverty.

## **More of the Condition**

Taken from: **National Alliance to End Homelessness** [www.naeh.com](http://www.naeh.com)

### **A Snapshot of Homelessness**

According to the Alliance's most recent estimate, approximately 744,000 people are homeless on any given night.

(1) Over the course of a year, between 2.5 and 3.5 million people will experience homelessness in this country.

(2) In order to end homelessness, it is necessary to understand the needs and characteristics of the sub-populations of this large group.

The most significant sub-groups are people who experience homelessness as part of a family group and those who are single adults.

### ***Families***

Most families become homeless because they are having a housing crisis. Their primary, immediate need is for housing. Certainly they are likely to have other needs, for services and to increase their incomes. However, these needs are best met, once the family is in permanent housing—not while they are temporarily housed in shelter or transitional housing. Most homeless families get themselves back into housing as quickly as they can after they become homeless.

\* About half of the individuals who experience homelessness over the course of a year live in family units. (3)

\* About 38% of people who are homeless in the course of a year are children. (4)

\* Most people in homeless families have personal problems to overcome, but these problems are not appreciably different from those of poor, housed families. (5)

\* Services delivered in the homeless system seem to have little effect on eventual stability of these families in housing. (6)

\* Homeless families report that their major needs are for help finding a job, help finding affordable housing, and financial help to pay for housing. The services they most often receive, however, are clothing, transportation assistance, and help in getting public benefits. Only 20% of families report that they received help finding housing. (7) In cases in which a family is fleeing from a domestic violence situation or in which the head of household has been in residential treatment or detoxification for drug or alcohol abuse illness, a transitional period may be required prior to housing placement.

## ***Single Homeless People***

About half of the people who experience homelessness over the course of a year are single adults. Most enter and exit the system fairly quickly. The remainder essentially live in the homeless assistance system, or in a combination of shelters, hospitals, the streets, and jails and prisons.

\* 80% of single adult shelter users enter the homeless system only once or twice, stay just over a month, and do not return. 9% enter nearly five times a year and stay nearly two months each time. This group utilizes 18% of the system's resources. The remaining 10% enters the system just over twice a year and spends an average of 280 days per stay—virtually living in the system and utilizing nearly half its resources. (8)

\* The main types of help homeless single adults felt they needed were help finding a job, help finding affordable housing, and help paying for housing. The major types of assistance they received were clothing, transportation, and help with public benefits. Only 7% reported receiving help finding housing. (9)

There are also single homeless people who are not adults—runaway and throwaway youth. This population is of indeterminate size, and is often not included in counts of homeless people. One study that interviewed youth found that 1.6 million had an episode of homelessness lasting at least one night over the course of a year.

## **The Opportunity**

In this condition, from the ground-up, a nation-wide project of leveraged action called: **Peace requires we effectively deal with poverty...**

### **The Problem...**

Basic hygiene needs, employment and dignity for people living without homes.

### **Why It's Important...**

Volunteering “coaching” services to people living on the streets and shelters, We have learned, **the one thing that would make the biggest difference in their lives is a shower, laundry and a secure place for their belongings.** This has been verified and validated over and over by people living on the streets we continue to interview.

We will to hire, train and manage 100s - 1000s of unemployed people living on the streets, in shelters and in the emerging tent cities to build their own “Dignity Centers”. The “Centers” will have showers, lockers and laundry facilities. Strategically located throughout the community near libraries the “centers” are designed to allow for expansion upgrades (i.e. community - sports facilities). The “centers” design will also include the personal development of the people they serve so-as-to transform and transition people from homeless to self-reliance. In addition to hiring homeless people on the construction crews, we will train, manage and supervise some to manage the facilities once built. Also, as a sustainable opportunity we intend to have those interested, own and operate the centers, (perhaps through co-op structure).

## **Verification**

From [www.Oprah.com](http://www.Oprah.com) reported by Lisa Ling, National Geographic...

***“Headlines about the recession—layoffs, home foreclosures, bailout bills—are everywhere, but who are some of the people truly affected by this economic crisis?”*** *“Today, we want to try and humanize this recession,” Oprah says.*

*Journalist Lisa Ling went back to her hometown of Sacramento to investigate tent cities—makeshift shelters set up by people who have lost their homes and have nowhere to go. Sacramento is among the hardest hit areas, with an estimated 1,200 people living in tent cities, but officials say these communities are popping up all over the country and won't be going away soon.*

*Tammy is a 47-year-old who says she has been living with her husband in this tent city for a little less than a year. “My husband's job fell through,” she says. “He was a tile setter ... [but people] weren't buying houses anymore, and there was no need for tile setting. We lost our car and our home, our apartment. We lost everything we had.” Though Tammy and her husband are both actively looking for work, they say it feels impossible in this economy. “That's where we're going this morning,” she says. “To get cleaned up and go out and try to make our best appearance.”*

***The hardest part about living in a tent city is losing the everyday amenities most people take for granted, Tammy says. “Taking a shower when I want, walking into my bathroom, turning the light on. Fixing my hair and doing my makeup,” she says. “I miss looking like a girl.”***

*Jim, a widower and father of five, says he has been living in this Sacramento tent city for four months. “I worked in the construction trades pretty much all my life,” he says. “Then with the economy the way it is, everything just seemed to start going downhill.” Eventually, Jim says, he was no longer able to pay rent.*

*Obviously, living in a tent city is a huge adjustment, Jim says. “It's like learning how to live all over again.” The most prized possession to those in tent cities is water, Jim says, and his tent is stocked. “We have to walk about 3 miles round-trip just to get a bottle of water.”*

*Jim says he looks for work three to four days a week and told Lisa **he spends about 60 percent of his day trying to stay clean and look presentable. “It's not like you can get up and there's a nice hot shower and a bathroom to use.”***

*Until about a year ago, Corvin was a car salesman. His wife, Tena, drove a commercial truck but lost her job around the same time. Tena says she and her husband have been living in this tent city since then. Though they have three grown children, Tena says none of their kids know they're homeless. “I have a 35-year-old son, and he doesn't know. I call him, about once a month and on holidays, to let him know that I'm well and healthy,” she says. “He would love me anyway, but I don't want to worry him.”*

*Lisa says this is a common story among the homeless in Sacramento. “We met a number of people who have kids, but they don't want them to know,” she says. “They don't want to burden their children.”*

*Though Lisa has covered breaking news stories worldwide, she says this one hit too close to home—literally. “This was my hometown, where I spent 17 years of my life, and*

*this is being repeated all over the country," she says. "Every single person I spoke to said that over the last six months, the numbers [in tent cities] have been exploding." Tent cities are illegal in Sacramento, but Lisa says that may change soon. "So many people are seeking out shelter because all of the homeless shelters are filled beyond capacity, that they're actually thinking about legalizing tent communities, and the city is actually thinking about providing services," she says. "Surprisingly, the community has been extremely sympathetic because so many people in Sacramento have gone into foreclosure. ... The shelters say that people have actually been donating more because the attitude is 'I'd rather spend money so that people can have shelter than buy new material stuff.'"*

### **More verification**

From a blog on the internet dated May 09, 2004...

***"The hardest thing for homeless people is getting clean. Without a way to wash, the chance that you will get a job is next to nothing.***

*Having been homeless (by choice, I lived in my truck for a year to save money and get out of debt) **I know how hard it is to find a shower.** You can wash your clothes (laundromat), feed your face (fast food) and find some sort of shelter (overpass, box, car, etc...) without a home, **but getting cleaned up is darn hard. I was able to get a health spa membership, but most can not.***

*The vast majority of homeless people have some sort of mental problem. Nothing serious, just low I.Q., mild paranoia, depression, etc... nothing that will get them into a mental hospital or jail, but enough to keep them out of a job or a steady living arrangement. Probably not ever going to get off the streets.*

*But lots of them are just blue collar workers who had some sort of bad luck and haven't been able to find a way out of it yet. Once you're down, the climb is hard.*

***Staying clean can reduce health problems, raise self esteem and really increase the chance of employment.*** Society puts such a premium on cleanliness, and will give out condoms, clean needles, cash and food to the homeless, but **a simple shower could make a much greater difference.**

*Just take any space with drainage and water available: From an empty lot to an unused garage, and set up a series of small spaces from wire fence or other metal "security" type barrier. They should be large enough to hold a shower and have a small dry area outside it to keep clothes, etc.. in. Old sheets or other cloth can provide some privacy and a plastic tarp can surround the shower.*

*Each space should lock and some staff would need to ensure that only one person goes in at a time and provide some means of keeping a time limit. E.g. only "x" minutes of warm water and then the entire space gets sprayed down cold.*

*PVC plumbing and low water use heads. Doesn't need to be fancy.*

*Open early in the AM for people who have to take a bus to the 9-5.*

*Cheap "shower shoe" flip-flops should be required to keep down on the spread of foot disease." - James Newton,*

## **Background of Understanding for This Opportunity**

### **Peace requires we effectively deal with poverty...**

This project is designed by a \*proven methodology demonstrated and documented, with over fifty million people transforming their lives from abject poverty to self-sufficiency in the poorest of the poor regions of our world. We are allowing ourselves to be inspired by them to transform America's expressions of poverty.

### ***Strategic Planning-in-Action.***

This methodology has proven effective in transforming entire communities in some of the poorest regions of the world where people living in abject poverty have become prosperous and self-reliant on a sustainable basis. By applying this approach, together, we can create a new future for our community. The steps include:

Mobilize and build the capacities of committed indigenous leadership: The first step is to enlist the leadership of individuals of great commitment, complete integrity and the stature to access anyone in society necessary to ending hunger, homelessness and poverty. These individuals must become completely clear about, aligned with and utilizing the Strategic Planning in Action methodologies.

Bring together all sectors of society: Ending hunger, homelessness and poverty cannot be accomplished by any one organization or any one sector of society. We must bring together leadership from all key sectors business, academia, media, artists, non-profit/service organizations and government agencies building alliances for advocacy and action to empower people's self-reliant action and transform the social conditions that hold hunger, homelessness and poverty in place.

Build a shared understanding: For people to work together effectively, they must achieve a comprehensive shared understanding of the prevailing conditions, the effectiveness of existing programs and the priority areas where action is required. Bringing all the information together, and making it clear, finite and confrontable is fundamental in implementing the Strategic Planning in Action approach.

Commit to achieving a strategic intent: As a community, we must develop a powerfully articulated, unifying and achievable vision a strategic intent and clear, near-term strategic objectives appropriate to solving the problem, society-wide. We must never be content with helping a few, but rather commit ourselves to transforming conditions throughout society so that all people can build lives of dignity and self-reliance, free from poverty.

Commit to playing a strategic, catalytic role: Once people are committed to actually achieving the goal, they must then recognize the possibility of taking catalytic, high-leverage action that can affect the "big picture" - breaking bottlenecks to progress, improving existing programs, mobilizing and making better use of resources, effecting structural changes in society that can unleash the creativity and productivity of the people living in conditions of poverty.



Identify what's missing: Strategic Planning in Action is always guided by the question, What's missing? What, if provided, would allow for a breakthrough? This is very different, and far more powerful, than the more common questions, What's wrong? Why isn't it working? These latter questions tend to call forth blame and paralysis, not action and cooperation. Respecting and acknowledging the work already being done by organizations and by focusing on what's missing, we avoid duplication. Take immediate action to catalyze "what's missing" being provided. Take action first where it can succeed and produce near-term results.

Create a momentum of accomplishment: One must constantly assess and sharpen the strategy. Each accomplishment gives a new landscape: new leadership, new obstacles, new openings for catalytic action. Each failure can lead to a deeper understanding of the nature of the challenge. Creating and sustaining this campaign mentality and style of working is crucial to breaking the mind-set of resignation and unleashing the human spirit.

\*[www.thp.org](http://www.thp.org)

### ***Power of Context***

As soon as we commit to "all" people, we are confronted by our "old" ways of being. The "new" thinking required, followed by new actions, developing new habits and producing new results are to be learned and developed.

From a "systems thinking" perspective, one can see current "treatment" systems total sum, doesn't add up to "all" nor does it equal "each and every". "All-In" creates the context for systems design.

The commitment, in time, sets the schedule. The schedule is the context for the rate of change. When our commitment exceeds what has been done before, an authentic breakthrough is required. Transformational ways of being replace process. Enrollment of others, to "break" themselves open to discovering for themselves all that is possible, is the rate of growth. Our commitment is the context for action. Our strategy is the context for coordinated action.

Empowering people living in the condition of poverty to lead us out is a promise to follow. Follow-ship is not inherently passive. The committed "focus" and strategic thinking on the root cause(s) of poverty provides the context for the sustainable end of homelessness.

*All-In* is the context for being willing and able to give up who you've considered yourself to be to discover who and what you "really" are.

### ***Where "new" thinking comes from...***

Once a person can step back and listen to the chatter that is constantly occurring within their heads, it becomes possible to consider existing "outside of" and "beyond" that chatter. You become aware that this chatter is with you as you lie down to sleep and there when you awaken, providing a narrative of everything including oneself.

Identifying yourself distinctly from beyond the chatter calms and "stills" the experience of living. When one is still, fears disappear. The courage to be vulnerable is recovered.

Acceptance of facts, odds, history and 'how life really is' replace fears and judgments. Connection and being "one-with" become the natural state of existence-- immediately taking over one's experience. Primitive and fundamental habit-patterns are altered, shifting attention from reliving incidents from the past to healing them.

Being still means being calm, balanced, at-ease and in harmony with one's self, the physical universe and all living beings and things. Committed curiosity about this stillness is all that is required to begin one's inward journey toward peace.

Being at peace, from within, is critical to the design of the foundation of "self" reliant futures worth seeing, committing to, acting on and having. Prior to "going" there, we are not positioned to address the "condition" we are *All-In*.

***Needed and wanted...***

This list is in order of priority and represents six months of listening to people without homes, who are currently living on the streets and in shelters.

A shower

A locker

Laundry

Transportation

Education and vocational training

A "personal" plan

Job location and placement

Empowering people to provide what they need.

Taking the top three needs and supporting the building of adequate facilities for showering, laundry and safe storage for belongings is our first priority project.

A Dignity Center is to be built with land provided by the community, work crews of people from the homeless population, leadership and management from throughout the community along with corporate generosity, we are shovel ready and prepared to empower the ground-up development of our economy. We will continue to build these facilities throughout the community until All people in our community have access to being clean and secure with their belongings. With this phase complete, we will empower "phase II" of development. The facilities are designed to be self sustaining "green" learning centers. Phase II, will naturally include establishing businesses and services arising from needs that become apparent.

Some we can see now include:

Barbershop/hair salon

Bicycle repair and sales

Cleaning services Vending machines in the centers

Etc.

Every initiative we take will be generated from the priority of needs of the people being served at the scale required to include "all". The initiatives foster dignity, pride of ownership, hope and a sense of accomplishment.

Through video documentation and viral social marketing we will "trend" this methodology throughout the country. The momentum of the stimulus, accelerated by the accomplishment and empowered by inspired community and civic responsibility, we will "flip" and rise to our collective current occasion.



This “flip” is scheduled for landing on 12/20/2012. This promises to be the most leveraged spending use of “stimulus” money. We also offer inspired leadership beyond the last economy.  
(Pure stimulus!)

## Video

[Ignite the Vision!](#)

## Ideal Partners (potential)

