

The Importance of Companies Helping to Collect Data and Advocate Change for the Homeless

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Introduction:

Homelessness, a pervasive issue in our society, remains largely invisible to many. However, thousands of lives are being affected everyday because of the issue of homelessness. To help the lives of these real people, we can gather statistics and data. Gathering information helps companies and nonprofits to know what the problem is, what is causing it and how to help the issue of homelessness. However, we cannot gather this information without help. Large companies have the resources and the voice that can advocate for a change and they should use it.

The Problem:

Homelessness is not merely a lack of shelter, but a crisis that personally hurts people all over America. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), approximately 580,000 people experience homelessness on any given night in America. These numbers, however, fail to capture the full extent of the issue. There are also people experiencing homelessness that may be living in cars, staying with friends or happen to not be accounted for that night. These hidden populations make it difficult to gather data, but nevertheless it is still imperative to get the most accurate information that can help.

Gathering data is also expensive and time consuming. Many nonprofits might not have the funds to gather this information accurately and efficiently. Without proper donations and volunteers then nonprofits cannot invoke change in our society. Large companies should be donating and advocating to help these nonprofits.

The Causes:

There are many causes for homelessness that range from economic issues to mental and physical problems. There is addiction, mental illness, economic disparities, lack of affordable housing, healthcare challenges, trauma and loss. Understanding the different causes for homelessness in our society is the first step to understanding how to help. By gathering data from the homeless about how they ended up getting there, we can figure out what exactly needs to be done to fix the problem.

The Solution:

Companies and nonprofits play a pivotal role in addressing homelessness. With their resources that are able to collect the data that is necessary for change. Companies have the technology and the resources to collect this data and use it for good. By collaborating with nonprofits and government agencies, they can collect comprehensive data on homelessness. Companies also have a corporate social responsibility to help. They can help fund homeless shelters, install training programs and implement mental health services in the cities that surround them.

Some may argue that companies should not hold this responsibility. If they do not represent the homeless, then why should they try to fix it. There are so many reasons why companies should help. They have the resources that are necessary to make a change, they have the voice that can advocate for change and they hold a responsibility to the people of America to help with change.

Without the collection of data, companies would not know where to help. One Roof, a nonprofit advocacy for homelessness in central Alabama, is one example of a company collecting data to help. With their Point-in-Time Count, a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night, they are able to know where and how to offer their help.

The Point-in-Time Count gathers data like the count of homeless veterans, families, youth, race and gender. Knowing these facts can help people offer the correct solutions. This census is just one example of how data collection is imperative to make a difference.

Conclusion:

Collecting data may seem impersonal to some, but there is no way to help without the collection. Homelessness is a collective responsibility and if everyone works together, it can be changed. Companies can donate technology and resources to gather this data. They can be advocates for change. Each data point represents a person. It may seem like numbers on a computer, but there is more to it. These are people that need help. To give the correct help, we need to understand if they are male or female, have families or not, or struggle with illnesses whether than be mental or physical. Together, information can be gathered and homelessness can be changed.