

Homeless Women

Even though single women make up 30% of the homeless single adult community, resources for them are few and far between. From shelters to employment assistance, services for the homeless are geared towards men, although women have distinct needs.

- *Women need safety.* Women are much more vulnerable to physical and sexual violence on the streets. They need a safe place to stay during the day, not only at night.
- *Women need dedicated shelters.* There are not nearly enough beds for single women.
- *Women need distinct resources for employment.* Many of the women complained that agencies helping the homeless find employment focused mainly on jobs for men such as construction.

Recommendations:

Recognize that women without children still need protection.

Families absolutely need shelter space. However, single women are also worthy of dignity and protection from the streets. There should be more beds available for this demographic, and extra care should be taken by allowing them to stay the day in order to be protected.

Better educate law enforcement. Some of the women we spoke to said that they had been arrested for prostitution, while some were diverted to treatment programs. Law enforcement should be better trained to recognize survival sex and to direct women to help, not penalize them. Officers should be made aware of treatment programs available in order to better serve these citizens.

Employment training and help geared towards women. Agencies which help connect the homeless with employment should make a greater effort to find appropriate employment for women, and to be sensitive to the discrimination they may face in fields like construction. Employment training agencies, such as the Jackson Employment Center, should make sure that they are providing appropriate training to women's needs.

"In Tucson, there are more shelters for homeless men than there are for homeless women and there are men who are able to go from shelter to shelter, month by month, year by year, and never end up camping on the street, because they have that many resources available to them," she said.

"These women, the most they'll get, if they can get into one of the three other programs other than ours, they'll get about seven nights a month at the [Salvation Army](#) and if they can't get into another program, then they're back on the street until they can get back into the Sally a month later. There are not enough beds for homeless single women without children."

-Denise Milne at Sister Jose Women's Shelter, *Arizona Public Media*