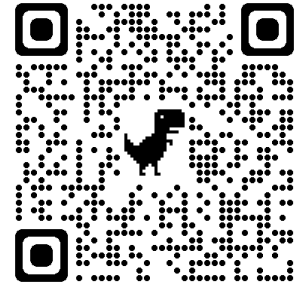


Homeless crisis grows in US



<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/videos/20240503055407000/>

People in the US have been challenged by prices that keep rising. Many are struggling to keep up. The situation has driven a surge in the number of people with nowhere to call home. NHK World's Okamura Momoka has the story.

Homelessness in the US has hit a record high. Last year the number reached more than 650,000. That's up a whopping 12% from the year before.

I've never seen anything like this in this country. I think underneath it all is working people, lower income people in the United States are not doing as good as they used to do.

When COVID first hit the US, the Vermont state government expanded its housing program to provide hotel lodging to people experiencing homelessness. But as the world began to recover from the pandemic, program requirements tightened, and many people lost their eligibility. Americans are seeing more and more families experiencing homelessness because they simply can't afford to pay the rent. In Florida, residents must earn more than \$5,000 a month to be able to rent a 2-bedroom apartment without experiencing too much financial pressure. This couple moved to Florida from North Carolina, looking for a better opportunity, but their plan went away. Now they've turned to a support group for help. They haven't been able to find an affordable place, so they have no choice but to live under the bridge.

The rising cost of housing? It sucks. The cost of living just keeps going up and the wages aren't matching with anything.

The head of an aid group is urging the government to step in.

We have to build more affordable housing and we have to build more shelter in order to help people during

this tragedy that they're going through.

Portland Oregon is known for its beautiful city scape and progressive urban development. But the growing problem of homelessness along with crime and drug use has become the top concern for residents. The number of homeless people has skyrocketed by nearly two-thirds in less than a decade. Residents have seen the city plunge into chaos and are fearful of their safety. The homeless crisis is also impacting local businesses. Marcy Landolfo used to own 2 clothing stores but was forced to close one of them.

This is where Rains PDX was located.

In less than 2 years, one of her shops was robbed 15 times, so she gave up on the business and closed it.

Some residents point to the decriminalizing of small amounts of drugs 4 years ago as a turning point. They've seen a surge in the use among homeless people and a surge in crime.

Not all drug addicts are homeless and not all homeless are drug addicts. I'm sad to say that it is not a beautiful city in many ways. Our city has suffered tremendously.

Officials are scrambling to address these issues. Comprehensive measures including treatment for people with subsidy use disorders are required in addition to more affordable and safe housing.

Source: (NHK World News)

Now discuss the questions with a partner.

1. Have you noticed an increase in the number of homeless people in Japan? What do you think is different between America and Japan?
2. What are some problems with an increasing amount of homeless people?
3. What are causes of homelessness?
4. How can officials improve the situation?
5. If you were homeless, would you live under a bridge like the couple in the video? How do you think you would try to survive?