

U.S. cities cite homelessness surge

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- U.S. cities and counties are reporting more homeless families as the deteriorating economy forces more people onto the streets, figures show.

A one-day January count of the homeless in 56 U.S. cities revealed that 35 of them reported an increase in people living on the streets while 12 of logged a drop, USA Today reported Monday.

The newspaper said that in Seattle 40 percent more people were homeless in the suburbs; in Miami, people reporting evictions quadrupled. Fifty-nine percent more people made calls to a Chicago homelessness prevention hotline, and in Los Angeles the number of people using a winter shelter program jumped from 330 families in the 2007-08 winter to 620 this year.

"The demand from families with children has increased dramatically," said Robert Hess of New York City's Department of Homeless Services.

"People who were on the edge can't hold on anymore," said Cathy ten Broeke, homelessness project coordinator in the Minneapolis area. She reported the number of families seeking shelter there went from 1,032 in 2007 to 1,251 this year, the newspaper said.

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