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Growing appeal for help overburdens charities

United Press International
America's charities say requests for help this Christmas have tripled in some areas and many of the needy are members of the "new poor" — young people, Asian refugees and people who once were on the giving end.

The Salvation Army, long the caretaker of the poor, is already turning people away in some parts of the country.

"People who were helping us help others a year and a half ago, now are coming to us for help," officials in Wichita, Kan., said.

Carol Franks of the Dallas Salvation Army said in 12 years with the charity "I've never seen the need, demand. Demands are well beyond anyone's anticipation." Capt. Charles Williams, director of social services for the Salvation Army in Boston, said "people are hurting and they're not giving. That's going to hurt us." He also said many people who donated in the past are now looking for assistance.

"A lot of people that used to give, can't," said Sally Farenthold, head of the Kansas City Metropolitan Lutheran Ministry. "Maybe they have lost their own jobs and their working hours have been cut back. And the people who have given in the past are needing help right now."

An example is a Dallas woman, 39, who asked to remain unidentified, sleeping on the floor of a downtown Salvation Army facility with her two children. She lost her 10-year, \$503-a-week stockroom job when Braniff International declared bankruptcy in May.

"Listen, I'm just grateful I don't have to sleep in the car," she said. "At least my two kids and I have a place to stay and something to eat."

Salvation Army City Commander Maj. Roland Chambless in Tulsa said, "It would be a shock if we were unable to provide for everyone this holiday season."

Chambless' concern is reflected throughout the ranks of the Salvation Army.

"I know demands are being placed on us now that far exceed anything last year," said Maj. Leon Ferraez in Atlanta, who heads the division responsible for Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and other Southern states.

The Chicago-area Salvation Army is cutting back its services, suffering its own economic problems, while requests for assistance are up.

"We are seeing a younger client, a person who is willing to work, a person who has had more education than the traditional bum or wino or derelict we've seen in the past," said Helen Johnson, assistant director.

Wes Laws, director of development for the Salvation Army in Minneapolis, said the nature of his case load also has changed.

"There are many unemployed, lots of Asian refugees, tremendous influx of people temporarily in need. That's the hard-core poor. I don't know if you'd call them the 'new poor' or not."

In San Francisco, the Salvation Army ended its Christmas food-voucher program weeks early because the budget for the program was exhausted in two weeks.

In Wichita, Kan., Salvation Army Major Herbert Williams said, "We're having three times more applications this point than in previous years. Last year during the Christmas season, Wichita's Salvation Army post served 1,000 meals. To date, the number already reached that amount."

A Dallas official pegged increased demand at 20 percent. New York officials said demand is up 60 percent. Officials have only been able to fulfill 20 percent of the demand.

Jobless rate remains steady

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Fifty-six thousand fewer people applied for unemployment benefits during the Thanksgiving week, primarily because government offices were not open every day, the Labor Department said Thursday.

But the latest total, despite the decline, was still at the same 598,000 level it was during the survey week that helped generate the November national unemployment rate of 10.8 percent, a new post-Depression record.

The total initial claims for the week ending Nov. 27 were 598,000 — down from the previous week's 654,000.

The overall rate reported Dec. 3 showed 12 million American workers were unable to find jobs, less than half of whom are covered by unemployment insurance and included in the weekly claims figure.

The seasonally adjusted state unemployment insurance figure also does not include another 6,300 federal employees and newly discharged veterans who also applied for jobless pay for the first time during the Thanksgiving week.

Department officials said most of the more than 6 million people not covered by unemployment insurance are apparently living with their families and are being supported by spouses or relatives who still have jobs.

Thanksgiving week, which government offices closed at least one day, was the third week in four in which initial claims for benefits fell below the level of two of those weeks, the lowest since the seven-period ending Aug. 7.

The number of people already receiving benefits the week ending Nov. 20 was 391,200 to 3.9 million, the department said.

That figure also does not include another 464,700 federal employees, railroad workers and those receiving extended benefits.

There were 339,800 workers claiming certain extended benefits which were available in 10 states, down from 365,700 the previous week, the department report showed.

The 10 states with the highest rate of unemployment among people covered by benefits were: Michigan at 8 percent, West Virginia at 7.7 percent, and West Virginia at 7.2 percent for the week ending Nov. 20.

Other states with high rates were: Pennsylvania, 6.8 percent; Oregon, 6.6 percent; Alaska, 6.5 percent; Idaho, 6.3 percent; Washington, 6.2 percent; Utah, 5.8 percent; Illinois, 5.4 percent; and Mississippi at 5.3 percent.

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