

Poverty in Idaho

A definition of poverty can be stated as, "The condition of being without adequate food and money and is officially considered to be poor and in need of help." According to recent studies, Idaho is ranked #1 in poverty rate in the nation. Why is this so and what can we do to help lower poverty?

Poverty can be diminished through jobs and colleges. However, in order to go to college, one has to be able to afford it. To be able to afford it, one has to have a job. One thing that Idaho doesn't have enough of is jobs. Communities need to realize that there are opportunities that are not being taken advantage of. For instance, take the city of Pocatello, Idaho. If the community would co-operate with the college of Idaho State University, we could have more businesses and money being brought in to benefit both.

Idaho is known as an agricultural state. We're known as the "spud capital" of the United States if not the world. But there are only a few months in a year where a person can go out and work in the fields, and about half of those jobs in the field are minimum wage. However, we do have a few industries here that are helping. Take for example INEEL or AMI. They are providing higher paying jobs for those that have the qualifications which again takes us back to getting a college education.

Some might want to go to college but are not able to because of their financial situation.

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As previously stated the majority of the jobs in Idaho are minimum wage. People have families to care for and roofs to put over their head. The sad part is that some of us cannot do it.

Many look to such programs as Health and Welfare for financial assistance, for housing, and medical needs. However, funds are being stretched too thin. Many in desperate need of assistance cannot get it because they do not qualify, or the assistance needed, is already depleted.

One way that people are receiving help is through local organizations. Organizations that devote their time and effort to seeing that people have a place to stay and or food to eat. Organizations such as Dessert Industries or Salvation Army, are constantly helping these people. Some look to shelters such as St. Vincent De Paul for food and shelter. These organizations cannot do what they do alone. There are volunteers such as Boy Scouts or the United Postal Service that collect food for these organizations enabling them to provide the services they do.

The way this should be looked at is that we have a major problem on our hands, and it can't be solved without us taking action. Our government and state officials should be asking themselves what can we do to help put a dent in the poverty rates? We should be asking ourselves the same question. The only way we can make a dent in poverty is to take action! If every person did something to help stop poverty, it could be diminished to nearly nothing in years to come.