

NEWS

FROM THE OFFICE OF

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Photo attached

Caption: San Bernardino County Supervisor Robert Lovingood joined 400 volunteers in January as part of the 2016 homeless count. Homelessness is down 12 percent in one year in San Bernardino County.



Homeless.JPG

Preliminary findings indicate 12% decrease in homelessness

San Bernardino County has seen a 12 percent decrease in homelessness during the past year, according to the results of the San Bernardino County 2016 Homeless Count and Subpopulation Survey: Executive Summary released by the San Bernardino County Homeless Partnership.

“San Bernardino County continues to make impressive progress in reducing homelessness in our County,” said Board of Supervisors Vice Chair Robert A. Lovingood. “I want to thank our dedicated County staff members and the Sheriff’s HOPE Team who, along with local nonprofits, have labored so hard on this is a difficult, heart-breaking problem. So it is encouraging to see that all of us working together are on the right track.”

This year’s count, conducted between 6 and 10 a.m. on Jan. 28, resulted in 1,887 persons counted compared to 2,140 counted in 2015. The report is available at <http://www.sbcounty.gov/dbh/SBCHP>.

Last year, the Board of Supervisors set the goal of ending veteran homelessness in San Bernardino County, and we met that goal by year's end, Lovingood said. He noted that the previous countywide survey showed an 8 percent decline in homelessness.

"Homelessness is a national tragedy," said Fifth District Supervisor and Chair of the Interagency Council on Homelessness Josie Gonzales. "We need to continue to help our disabled men and women, especially our veterans. Our County is making significant progress by implementing different state and federally funded programs. By prioritizing permanent housing we can better address the needs of our County's homeless population."

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Third District Supervisor and Chair of the Homeless Youth Task Force, James Ramos also called for continued efforts to address homelessness.

"Unfortunately, homelessness is an issue that is still very real," Chairman Ramos said. "It has an effect on many elements of our community, including the economy, education and wellness. While we understand that ending homelessness in our County is no easy task, it is imperative that we continue our resolve to prevent or reduce homelessness in our county, while providing platforms for the creation and maintenance of affordable housing for individuals and families who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness."

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requires biennial homeless counts from communities that receive HUD funding. The county's incorporated cities and towns and designated non-profit agencies worked in collaboration with the San Bernardino County Homeless Partnership to recruit approximately 400 volunteers to count and survey the county's homeless.

The preliminary findings provide a snapshot of homelessness on any given day and provide a baseline by which progress towards ending homelessness can be measured over the next few years. The nature of homelessness makes an exact count nearly impossible and numbers can vary greatly based on definitions established by funding sources and research methods. Therefore, the count process does not, nor was it intended to, convey the total number of persons experiencing homelessness in San Bernardino County throughout 2016.

In comparison to other homeless counts, such as the count employed for homeless student populations, the method used by school districts is quantified under a separate HUD definition. These differences in definitions and collection methods make for inaccurate comparisons when viewed as counts alone.

More important than the counts and information produced by various surveys is the identification of trends across all populations. It is the trend identification that sets the stage for agencies to design appropriate and well-balanced approaches to addressing the underlying causes of homelessness.

The San Bernardino County Homeless Partnership, a collaboration of public and private agencies committed to improving homeless services coordination, uses the findings of the report for future homeless resource development and planning. The findings also help to assess the progress of the San Bernardino County 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness and provide important information for updating the strategy.

Community members who want to become involved in efforts to end homelessness should contact the Department of Behavioral Health, Office of Homeless Services, at (909) 386-8297.

The San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health strives to create a County where all persons have the opportunity to enjoy optimum wellness. In doing so, the Department of Behavioral Health is supporting the community in achieving the Countywide Vision by ensuring all residents have the resources they need to provide the necessities of life to their families. Information on the Countywide Vision and the Department of Behavioral Health can be found at www.sbcounty.gov.