



NEWS RELEASE

Board of Supervisors

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Homelessness in San Bernardino County: 2017 HUD Point-in-Time Count



SAN BERNARDINO, CA –The San Bernardino County Homeless Partnership (SBCHP) and Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) have released the preliminary findings from the 2017 annual San Bernardino County Point-in-Time count.

This annual count, required to be conducted within the last ten days of January every year, took place on January 26, 2017. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires an annual count of sheltered and unsheltered individuals in each Continuum of Care receiving federal funding to aid the homeless.

SBCHP and ICH ensure that counts are done on an annual basis to provide data for Continuum of Care planning, trends, and local changes, and as a research tool to aid in understanding need.

On January 26, 2017, San Bernardino County communities counted 1,866 homeless individuals who were staying in a shelter, transitional housing, or unsheltered according to the San Bernardino 2017 Homeless Count and Survey Final Report. The previous homeless count and subpopulation survey was completed in 2016, during which 1,887 persons were counted. In comparison, 21 fewer persons were counted in 2017, which represents a decrease of 1.1%.

“While communities across Southern California are seeing increases, some dramatic, we've stabilized our numbers here and are currently seeing continued reductions in veteran and chronic homelessness across the County,” stated ICH Chair and San Bernardino County Supervisor Josie Gonzales.

County Community Development & Housing Agency Deputy Executive Officer Dena Fuentes agrees. “The County homeless count is at a stabilization phase. I anticipate a number of communities’ Point in Time Count numbers will reveal an increase in the homeless population,” stated Fuentes.

San Bernardino County added over 500 permanent housing units between 2017 and 2016.

Of the 1,866 persons counted in 2017, 1,179 or 63.5% were unsheltered, as defined by HUD.

Of the 1,866 persons counted in 2017, 687 persons or 37% were sheltered. These 687 individuals were identified in shelters, or as recipients of motel vouchers, in transitional housing programs, or in a Safe Haven program.

“What is disheartening is the increasing population of unaccompanied homeless women. The sub-population far exceeds others including homeless youth and veterans. Even more devastating, a significant portion of the unaccompanied homeless women sub-population are chronically homeless,” stated Gonzales.



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The Count identified 299 unaccompanied homeless women on the streets or in the shelters of the County. 115 of them were categorized as chronically homeless.

"Not only our County but national data also indicate that unaccompanied women represent 1 in every 4 adults who are homeless and they are among the most susceptible to further trauma by virtue of traumatic abuse suffered in childhood and as adults," indicated Philip Mangano, former homeless czar under Presidents Bush and Obama, now working with the County on creating strategies to reduce homelessness.

"This means that we must actively prioritize this population and lay out the groundwork to remedy their plight," stated Gonzales. "Ending homelessness involves a comprehensive, communitywide effort; every community needs to do its part. But, we must first take into account everyone who makes up our communities. Great strides have been made to address the homelessness among the veteran sub-population. Over the past 20 months, 781 homeless veterans have been housed. Nevertheless, much work remains to be done as we have seen an average of anywhere between 40 and 45 new homeless veterans enter into the system every month." added Gonzales.

Out of 111 self-identified veterans in the Count, 40% indicated that they were homeless for the first time in their life.

"Permanent supportive housing such as the proposed Liberty Lane affordable housing project for homeless veterans in Redlands, help meet the needs of homeless persons with disabling conditions, be it veterans, women, or youth," said Gonzales.

"With thousands on the Housing Authority's waiting list and approximately 109,000 San Bernardino County households living below poverty level, many are at-risk of becoming homeless. Our cities need to take action and consider this when updating the housing element of their general plans. At any time a neighbor or friend can become homeless. We must be ready to assist them and help them get back on their feet," concluded Gonzales.

The preliminary report lists several recommendations to end homelessness amongst pre-identified subpopulations:

- Align the current homeless services delivery system with the national goals of ending homelessness for the following subpopulations by 2020: Chronically homeless individuals and families; Families with children under age 18; Unaccompanied youth under age 18; Veterans; Youth ages 18 – 24.
- Add unaccompanied women to the list of subpopulations listed above and align the current homeless services delivery system with a goal of ending homelessness among women by 2020.
- Set a path for ending homelessness among all homeless persons by 2020.
- Align with a Housing First model and low barrier approach for chronically homeless individuals and families.

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- Align with a rapid rehousing and low barrier approach for non-chronically homeless individuals and families.
- Encourage each city to adopt their unsheltered homeless count numbers as baseline numbers.
- Increase the Number of Permanent Supportive Housing Units.

Please see the attached 2017 San Bernardino County Homeless Count and Survey Preliminary Report for more information.

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