



Interagency Council on Homelessness

Administrative Office

215 North D Street, San Bernardino, CA 92415-0044

Office: (909) 501-0622

Lisha B. Smith
Deputy Chief of Staff
(909) 387-4565

Lisha.Smith@bos.sbcounty.gov

April 22, 2020

Homelessness in San Bernardino County: Point-In-Time Count 2020

Findings of San Bernardino County’s annual Point-In-Time Count (PITC), which took place on Jan. 23, calls for cities and the County to recognize the recent evolution of homelessness as a human services crisis, and to work together to provide much needed services and housing.

The data collected found a 19.9% increase in the county’s homeless population compared to the 2019 count when 2,607 people were identified, compared to 3,125 this year. Of the additional 518 homeless counted, 470 are identified as unsheltered and 48 sheltered individuals are temporarily housed in shelters, motels, or through transitional housing programs.

“Our efforts to end homelessness must remain a top priority countywide,” said Vice Chair of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors Josie Gonzales, who is also chair of the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH). “Yes, these numbers are disheartening; but the Point–In-Time Count data is the realistic key to helping us adjust our strategies to combat this pervasive problem.”

“The data gives us the evidence of the actual state of homelessness and is the impetus for us to be innovative in our plans to provide the needed wraparound services and housing, while aggressively going after any and all funding available that will enable us to get individuals and families, especially those at high risk, off the streets,” said Gonzales.

“I am especially grateful to all of the cities, the H.O.P.E. Team, and the volunteers for their participation and dedication to Point-In-Time Count year after year,” added Gonzales.

For a second year, the County used the ESRI Survey 123 for ArcGIS technology to gather real-time data. Approximately 600 volunteers used targeted mapping provided by the County Sheriff’s Homeless Outreach Proactive Enforcement (H.O.P.E.) Team to identify homeless encampments, to connect with the homeless, and to conduct the online interviews.

Data sought to identify how many persons became homeless for the first time during the past 12 months, as well as those who have a life-threatening health condition, and/or had been released from jail or prison during the past 12 months. Of those 1,517 interviewed, 434 (28.6%) are first time homeless, 310 (20.4%) have a chronic health condition, and 346 (22.8%) were recently released from jail or prison.

“We have a human services crisis with some very high risk homeless populations, like our seniors. There has been a 95% increase of homeless persons age 55 and over since 2017, many of whom have life threatening health conditions,” said Kent Paxton, chair of the ICH Point-In-Time Count Committee.

“We must have long-term housing solutions for those who are most vulnerable,” added Paxton.

The collective responses to the PITC survey questions help shape 11 recommendations to end homelessness listed in the 2020 report.

1. Recognize the recent evolution of homelessness as a human services crisis, and use a wide range of such services to mitigate the primary factors that contribute to persons languishing on the streets, such as aging, dealing with life-threatening and/or terminal health conditions, and declining mental health;
2. Create a County Strike Force Team composed of several County departments working in a coordinated effort to treat the multiple factors leading to the physical and mental health decline of homeless individuals;
3. Augment the Strike Force Team through partnerships with public and private organizations, including coordination with city homeless resources and health, mental health, aging, and family and children private sector service providers;
4. Encourage each city to adopt its unsheltered homeless count numbers as a baseline number, and based upon that baseline implement the following seven recommendations:
5. Increase the number of permanent supportive housing units to meet the needs of those homeless persons with disabling conditions who were counted within the city's jurisdiction;
6. Set an annual quantifiable number of permanent supportive housing units to be developed based on the number of unsheltered chronically homeless individuals identified in the recent PITC, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and Coordinated Entry System (CES);
7. Prioritize, through the CES, the most vulnerable and frail persons who are languishing on the streets, including those with life-threatening health conditions and/or who are aging on the streets;
8. Completely align with a Housing First model and low barrier approach for chronically homeless individuals and families consistent with federal, state, and local approaches;
9. Completely align with a rapid rehousing and low barrier approach for non-chronically homeless individuals and families;
10. Align the current homeless services delivery system with a goal of ending homelessness among unaccompanied women; and
11. Increase Rapid Rehousing assistance, including a focus on households living in vehicles.

While the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requires counties to conduct a Point-In-Time Count every other year within the last 10 days of January, San Bernardino County's ICH conducts the count annually to better monitor and respond to the homeless trends and identify subpopulations that require specific attention.

San Bernardino County has been in the forefront in addressing homelessness. The Board of Supervisors created the San Bernardino County Homeless Partnership in 2007, and since the board's initiative on homeless veterans was announced in July 2016, the County has permanently housed 1,295 veterans. Since January 2017, 463 chronically homeless people with mental health issues have been housed.

A copy of the San Bernardino County 2020 Homeless Count and Subpopulation Survey Final Report accompanies this release. You can also access the Report via www.sbcounty.gov/sbchp.