



PRESS RELEASE

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PHILADELPHIA TO COUNT HOMELESS NEIGHBORS

PHILADELPHIA, PA — Philadelphia will conduct a count of homeless persons on the night of January 21, 2015. The “Point in Time Count” (or PIT) has been a requirement for federal homelessness funding since 2007: in Philadelphia, in 2007 the PIT count was 6,740, and in 2014 it was 5,738 (a 15 percent decrease, even better than the 11 percent national average). The Point in Time Count is conducted in Philadelphia through the Philadelphia Continuum of Care, coordinated by the City’s Office of Supportive Housing; in partnership with more than 300 volunteers coordinated by Project HOME.

Project HOME coordinates Philadelphia’s count of all unsheltered people. On January 21, 2015, the unsheltered count will be performed by teams of trained volunteers who canvass streets across the City of Philadelphia from South Philadelphia to the Northeast. Volunteers will meet at 10:00 pm at Congregation Rodeph Shalom (615 N. Broad Street) on the night of the count to receive team and zone assignments. Using a short survey, canvassers will speak to all willing participants encountered on the streets, in subway, bus, and train stations, and other locations in order to learn more about their housing situation and characteristics, and to help place people in available housing or shelter. Reporters are welcome to ride along.

Philadelphia is connected to several national efforts to end homelessness consistent with the federal *Opening Doors Strategic Plan* (www.usich.gov/opening_doors/). The Point in Time Count is required annually by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). The results are used to evaluate homelessness reduction strategies and allocate housing and other resources.

The Count covers single adults as well as people in families staying in emergency shelter, transitional housing, temporary drop-in centers, and on the street. There is a special effort to identify people under the age of 24 who have unstable housing conditions. Youth-friendly events will be hosted January 21 through January 28, 2015 (www.vyhphila.org/2015-youth-count-philadelphia).

“The Point in Time Count is the strongest reminder we have of why we do the work we do, so I am proud to participate every year,” said Jane C.W. Vincent, Regional Administrator of HUD’s Mid-Atlantic region. “Earlier this month, New Orleans announced that it has ended all forms of veteran homelessness, and in Philadelphia, we are working hard to do the same, by identifying the scope of the need in our communities and through initiatives like the national challenge to end veteran homelessness.”

Sister Mary Scullion, Executive Director of Project HOME noted, “Our hope is to use the findings from this count to increase housing and treatment resources for homeless men and women who are today living on our streets so that they might tomorrow live in homes with appropriate support. Especially now, with unemployment and poverty high in Philadelphia, and shelters and food pantries struggling to meet increased demand, we use this tool to help advocate for resources that are strategic investments. Using the information collected through this count, Philadelphians and all Americans can recommit ourselves to ending homelessness.”

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To help someone who is homeless: Call the Philadelphia Homeless Outreach Hotline at 215-232-1984.

For information about previous PIT counts, go to: <https://www.hudexchange.info/manage-a-program/coc-homeless-populations-and-subpopulations-reports>. Information about national efforts is here: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/veteran_information/mayors_challenge/ and http://usich.gov/opening_doors/

Information is also available from <http://www.phila.gov/osh/emergencyservices> and <https://projecthome.org>.

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