



## **FIRST POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS COUNT INDICATES WIDE NEED FOR SUPPORTIVE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

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**Hartford, July 18, 2007** – The first statewide Point-In-Time Count of homeless individuals and families indicates a wide need for more supportive housing and affordable housing options to comprehensively coordinate the effort to end homelessness in Connecticut.

The count found an estimated 3,325 households experienced homelessness on the night of January 30. Of those, 2,138 single adults and nearly 392 families with minor children resided in emergency shelter or transitional programs. Almost 40 families and more than 700 single adults were living on the streets, in parks, cars, transportation terminals or other locations not intended for human habitation.

Of those homeless households that were counted in shelters or transitional programs, approximately 40% were located in New Haven and Hartford. Of those homeless households that were unsheltered – those on the streets, in cars, or living in the woods – there was greater dispersal through Connecticut communities.

The Point-in-Time Count, conducted in 12 municipalities and other strategic areas on the night of January 30, provides the most inclusive picture yet of the extent of homelessness across the state. While experts say efforts to compare the 2007 results to past estimates would be inexact, the numbers provide a baseline for future measures and are in keeping with past assumptions based on less exact sampling methods.

“This count provides detailed information that will support improved planning and targeting of resources – and will provide a baseline number of homeless persons that can be used in future years to assess our impact towards achieving the goal of ending chronic homelessness,” said Carol Walter, Executive Director of the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness.

The survey totals provided initial insights into the most effective ways to combat homelessness:

- **An estimated 961 chronically homeless<sup>1</sup> disabled individuals were found in sheltered and unsheltered locations.** Many more supportive housing units will be needed to best serve the needs of this population. Supportive housing is permanent, independent, and affordable rental housing with support services attached, and is the solution to chronic homelessness.
- **Behavioral health problems were less common among adults in families than single adults.** These families can be best served by increasing the stock of housing affordable to those at low- and very low-income levels. Housing that is safe and affordable to families would provide stability to the 797 homeless children counted with their families.
- **A quarter of homeless people are located in predominantly rural and suburban areas,** which indicates that creating more supportive housing in those areas and not solely in cities may be an effective strategy.

The study confirmed anecdotal evidence that the state's homeless population is largely consistent with the profile of homeless people across the nation: most are single adults, half of whom have behavioral health disabilities and half of whom have been homeless for at least a year. The singles are mostly male and aging. Families are younger, have much lower levels of disability and are homeless for shorter periods.

The study marked the first time that all of Connecticut's regional groups, known as continuums of care, conducted their count during the same 24-hour period. Using the same method of counting, over the past decade, continuums of care have counted homeless individuals and families as a requirement to apply for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds for homeless assistance and permanent supportive housing programs. This year's strategy helped to ensure non-duplication of people counted and resulted in greater reliability of information collected.

"A statewide count is critical to measuring the effectiveness of supportive housing and the various initiatives being mounted by the state and local communities to end homelessness," said Prof. Dennis Culhane, a University of Pennsylvania national homeless expert who is leading the research effort arising from Connecticut's statewide Point-in-Time Count. "Without a basic understanding of the dimensions of the problem, we can't know if we're making any progress – or worse, losing ground. Street

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<sup>1</sup> Individuals who have been continually homeless for a year or more or have experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years

homelessness, in particular, is very difficult to measure, but it is also one of the highest priority populations that the state seeks to assist.”

Outreach workers counted the number of people who were homeless throughout the state by surveying emergency shelters, emergency hospital rooms, the streets, abandoned buildings and the woods. The data collected includes information that relates to geographic distribution, identified service/health issues, and other factors local providers require to serve those who are homeless and apply for federal and state aid. Data analysis and the final report were completed by the Center for Urban Community Services Housing Resource Center (CUCS) and the University of Pennsylvania Center for Mental Health Policy and Services Research (UPenn CMHPSR.)

Currently, there are 3,000 units of supportive housing in existence or development across Connecticut. The Reaching Home Campaign goal is to create 10,000 new units of permanent supportive housing to end homelessness.

The Reaching Home Campaign, an initiative of the Partnership for Strong Communities, the CT Coalition to End Homelessness and the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) partnered to organize the count. The Point-In-Time Count was funded by the State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Office for Workforce Competitiveness, Department of Social Services, Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, The Melville Charitable Trust, The Community Foundation of Greater New Haven and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

For a copy of the full report, please visit [www.ctreachinghome.org](http://www.ctreachinghome.org) or call Kate Kelly, Reaching Home Campaign Manager at 860-244-0066.