

# New Bedford to Conduct Annual Homeless Count



In January of each year, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office requires communities to count the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless to provide a basis to evaluate the nature and extent of homelessness. On Wednesday, January 29th from 2:00 p.m. to Thursday, January 30st at 2:00 p.m. the New Bedford Homeless Continuum of Care, known as the Homeless Service Providers Network (HSPN), will conduct New Bedford's annual Point-in-Time Count and survey.

The Point-in-Time Count has two components; A sheltered survey of emergency shelter and transitional housing providers that have clients staying in their programs or facilities on the night of the count and secondly, a street count of people who are homeless, without shelter and staying outside, in vehicles or in makeshift shelters. Point-in-Time Counts are conducted annually across the nation and are designed to collect data on the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness on any given night. The information collected through the Point-in-Time Count is used to help measure New

Bedford's progress towards ending homelessness.

Following a brief program on the steps of City Hall at 1:00pm tomorrow, Wednesday, January 28, 2014, outreach teams will leave from the Point-in-Time coordination center at the Sister Rose's House administrative building at 60 8th Street at 2:00pm and will visit "hotspot" locations for homeless individuals and families. Throughout the day and overnight, coordinated teams will seek out locations where people may be staying throughout the community.

Homelessness is defined by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) as a person sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation, sleeping in emergency shelters, or living in transitional housing. Chronic homelessness is defined as an individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. In 2013, there were over 338 individuals and families experiencing homelessness in New Bedford.

This year, the City has made significant efforts to conduct outreach to children and young adults that are without families and experiencing homelessness. Homeless unaccompanied youth are a rising portion of the homeless population. This year, special effort was made in partnership with New Bedford Public Schools to connect with this most vulnerable population to provide much needed services.

The Point-in-Time Committee, dedicated volunteers and organizations are instrumental in preparing and conducting a successful Homeless Count. Volunteer enumerators who encounter unsheltered persons offer to assist them in whatever way possible, either by bringing them to shelter, giving them warm clothing and a variety of gift cards donated by local businesses, and handing them a "Street Sheet," the HSPN's comprehensive resource guide to services for persons who are experiencing or threatened with homelessness.

“The Point-in-Time Count is a 24-hour snap shot of the City’s Homeless population that includes individuals, families, veterans, and those who experience a myriad of physical and mental disabilities. With this information, the City is able to fully understand the severity of the Homeless problem and develop programs and services to end homelessness,” said Community Development Coordinator, Joseph Maia

For more information about the count, contact Joseph Maia at (508) 979-1500 or at [jose.maia@newbedford-ma.gov](mailto:jose.maia@newbedford-ma.gov) .