

City of New Bedford announces 2022 Point-in-Time data that shows decrease in homelessness

Annual count showed lowest number of people experiencing homelessness since 2017.

City officials have released the data from this year's Point-in-Time Count, an annual citywide outreach effort that was held in February and found the lowest number of people experiencing homelessness since 2017.

The Point-in-Time Count is required by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and, usually, is conducted across the nation during the last 10 days of January. This year's count was delayed a month due to January's COVID-19 surge and instead held on Feb. 23, a date consistent with municipalities and care networks across Massachusetts.

This year's count identified a total of 370 adults or children in New Bedford experiencing homelessness, just below the 2021 total of 372 and substantially below the 2020 total (398), the 2019 total (433), and the 2018 total (398). The 2017 count identified 352 people experiencing homelessness.

A closer look at the 2022 count shows 61 people were unsheltered, 219 were in emergency shelters and 90 were in transitional housing programs. The fact that no cold weather overflow shelter was open on the night of the Point-in-Time Count due to mild weather conditions, may have shifted individuals from sheltered to unsheltered status when the count was conducted.

The Point-in-Time Count is conducted in New Bedford through

the efforts of the New Bedford homeless continuum of care, known as the Homeless Service Providers Network (HSPN). The HSPN is convened and staffed by the City's Office of Housing and Community Development.

The New Bedford PIT Count helps identify vulnerable groups by conducting surveys that provide demographic characteristics, homeless history, homeless experiences and other vital information. The census counts both sheltered and unsheltered individuals and families experiencing homelessness on a given night. The information collected through the count helps measure New Bedford's progress toward ending homelessness and helps refine and strategically focus future planning efforts.

"The City's Point-in-Time Count ensures that individuals and families experiencing homelessness are counted in a respectful and compassionate manner each year. The important data collected in the count informs our efforts to provide vital services for those who need them most," Mayor Jon Mitchell said.

Jennifer Clarke, deputy director of community development, said: "The Point-in-Time Count provides an important one-day snapshot of those experiencing homelessness in New Bedford in a way that provides clarity about both general demographics and specific characteristics of those being counted. In so doing, New Bedford strengthens its ability to articulate proactive strategies to effectively prevent and end homelessness in our city."

For more information about the count, please contact Jennifer Clarke at (508) 979-1500 or at Jennifer.Clarke@newbedford-ma.gov; for more information about the approach being taken by the city's HSPN in addressing homelessness, visit www.nbhspn.com.