

# **New Bedford to conduct annual Point-in-Time Homeless Count for 2019**

The City of New Bedford will conduct its 2019 annual Point-in-Time Count of persons experiencing homelessness on Wednesday, January 30 from 2:00 p.m. until Thursday, January 31 at 2:00 p.m. (24-hour count). The Point-in-Time Count is required by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and is conducted across the nation during the last 10 days of the January.

The 2019 local Point in Time or “PIT Count” event, dubbed “Everyone Counts,” includes dozens of teams of community and agency volunteers and will kick off with a public launch. City officials will gather with the public to initiate this year’s PIT Count efforts on Wednesday, January 25 at 1:10 p.m. on the front steps of City Hall.

The Point-in-Time Count (PIT) 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 Department of Planning, 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 PIT Count is used to help measure New Bedford’s progress towards ending homelessness and to help refine and strategically focus future planning efforts toward that end. Typically the data collected through these efforts provides a reliable snapshot of both

sheltered and unsheltered individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

“The City’s Point-in-Time Count ensures that individuals and families experiencing homelessness are counted in a respectful and compassionate manner each year. This census-taking event collects important data that informs our strategic efforts, and raises awareness about the issue of homelessness in our community,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell.

Immediately following the city’s kick-off, volunteers and members of the community will reconvene at this year’s Point-in-Time Coordination Center located at Positive Action Against Chemical Addiction (PAACA) building at 360 Coggeshall Street. At 2:00 p.m., teams of volunteers will begin the 24-hour count and disperse throughout the city to survey individuals and families currently residing on the streets and in other locations not meant for human habitation within the city.

Building off the success and lessons learned from previous counts, the HSPN’s PIT Committee is holding a resource event for those experiencing homelessness at PAACA on January 30th from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Point-In-Time Count and Resource Event is an opportunity for both those within the homeless community and volunteers to interact. The PIT Resource Event is multi-faceted and includes a variety of resources, food, health services, haircuts, music and more. The PIT Resource Event is more than an opportunity to help connect those living on the streets who may not necessarily be aware of resources available to them.

The PIT Committee continues to partner with both Mobile Loaves & Fishes and Catholic Social Services’ Sister Rose Shelter in order to spread the word among those within the homeless community as to the importance of the count and when it will take place. Instead of only looking for persons experiencing homelessness, both groups have already begun encouraging those whom they serve to participate in the count, directing them to

the PIT Coordination Center and other locations throughout the city where volunteers will be stationed. It is anticipated that this approach, coupled with traditional community engagement, will produce the most accurate and robust data.

Both the successful count in 2018 and the anticipated success of this year's PIT is attributed to extensive planning, volunteer training, and the receipt of donations from the community. In preparation for the Count, the PIT Committee has held weekly planning work sessions since November to plan the overall logistics of the count, identify "hot spots", gather donation items, and recruit volunteers. As a result of these efforts, the PIT Committee has successfully recruited and trained over 70+ dedicated volunteers for the homeless count. In addition, numerous local business and organizations have graciously donated gift cards, clothing, backpacks, and other essential supplies that will either be placed in backpacks to be donated to those being counted or handed out during the course of the count.

Patrick J. Sullivan, Director of Planning, Housing and Community Development, noted that "the Point-in-Time Count provides an important one day snapshot of those experiencing homelessness in New Bedford' in a way that helps us understand both general demographics of those being counted as well as specific characteristics of those individuals and families in these situations so that we may strategically act to reduce those numbers and eventually 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](mailto:Jennifer.Clarke@newbedford-ma.gov); for more information about the approach being taken by the city's HSPN in addressing homelessness, please go to [www.nbhspn.com](http://www.nbhspn.com).