

New Bedford's 2013 Annual Point-in-Time Homeless Count

On Wednesday, January 30th from 2:00 p.m. to January 31st at 2:00pm the New Bedford Homeless Continuum of Care, known as the Homeless Service Providers Network, will conduct New Bedford's annual Point-in-Time Count and survey. The



information collected provides a reliable snap shot of unduplicated sheltered and unsheltered individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

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.

Teams of volunteers will gather on January 30, 2013 at 12:30pm in the Ashley Room of New Bedford City Hall to commence with the count and lead a procession to the Point-in-Time coordination center at the Sister Rose's House administrative building at 60 8th Street. The purpose of the procession is to raise awareness to the issue of homelessness. The volunteers will then disperse throughout the City to count homeless individuals and families currently residing on the streets and in other locations throughout the City. The count also surveys people living in shelters, transitional housing, and in other programs.

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 2012, there were over 392 individuals and families experiencing homelessness in New Bedford.

The information gleaned from the Point-in-Time Count is critical to demonstrating the need for resources, accurately measuring and identifying the needs of populations that are hardest to serve, and measuring progress toward eliminating homelessness.

Volunteer enumerators who encounter unsheltered persons will offer to assist them in whatever way possible, either by bringing them to shelter; giving them warm clothing, bus passes (generously donated by First Citizens' Federal Credit Union, BankFive, and New Bedford Credit Union), and coupons for food and drinks at McDonald's (generously donated by local franchise owners, the Winterhalter Family); or simply by 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 provides us with valuable identifiers and aids in understanding the special needs of the City's homeless population, such as those who experience mental illness and substance abuse, who are veterans, who are persons living with HIV/AIDS, who are victims of domestic violence, or are an unaccompanied child. This important information helps guide community planning efforts, including federal funding decisions for homeless programs," said Community Development Coordinator, Sandy Perez.

For more information about the count, contact Sandy Perez at 508-979-1500 or at sandra.perez@newbedford-ma.gov.