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Vermont's Annual Count of Homelessness Shows Mixed Results

Non-profits and state agencies providing services to people experiencing homelessness release new report

MONTPELIER, VT – 1,291 Vermonters were found to be literally homeless on a single night in January, an increase of 66 people, or 5%, compared to the 2017 one-day count. The [2018 Point-in-Time \(PIT\) Count Report](#), released today by the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness and the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance, shows an overall increase in homelessness. The report comes from data collected for the Annual Point-in-Time Count, an unduplicated count of persons experiencing literal homelessness on the night of January 31, 2018. The Count was organized by Vermont's two federally-recognized Continua of Care (CoC), the Chittenden County CoC and the 11 local coalitions that make up the Balance of State CoC. These networks are comprised of homeless and human service organizations, housing agencies, government agencies, health care providers, private funders, and other partners that strive to eliminate homelessness in Vermont.

“Service providers are working hard to meet the complex service needs of our homeless Vermonters. An addition of emergency shelter space in several locations not only speaks to the increase in the PIT count, it clearly speaks to the level of need – a need complicated by personal trauma, a lack of affordable housing, and a deep level of support required to access services to secure safe, permanent housing for individuals and families,” said Peter Kellerman, Co-Chair of the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness.

Additional Point-in-Time Count Findings:

- A total of 917 households were counted, an increase of 65 households, or 8%, from 2017.
- The number of unsheltered persons counted was 82, a 38% decrease from the 2017 PIT Count.
- 292 were children 18 and under, representing 23% of the entire homeless population counted. This is a slight decrease from last year, when 306 children made up 25% of the population.
- This year's count saw the lowest number of people staying in unsheltered locations in the past 8 years. 94% were in a sheltered location of homelessness, while just 6% were unsheltered.
- Approximately 40% of the persons experiencing homelessness were persons in households with at least one adult and one child; approximately 60% were in households with adults only; and approximately 0.5% were in households with children only.

“While we saw a significant increase in the number of single adults sheltered in motels in Chittenden County this year, we also saw continuing declines in the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness and the number of families experiencing homelessness,” said Margaret Bozik, Co-Chair of the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance.

Ms. Bozik went on to say, “We are pursuing the continued development and use of coordinated, real-time information through a single, comprehensive, person-specific list of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness throughout Chittenden County, with an associated assessment of service needs. We believe that with that strategy, we can facilitate people’s access to resources and be more effective in bringing together the three things it takes to get, and keep, people housed: (1) the housing itself, (2) the rental subsidy to make that housing affordable to people at the lowest income levels, and (3) the services to help people achieve housing stability.”

People who experience homelessness in Vermont face complex challenges, which include and go beyond the unaffordability of housing. The Point-in-Time Count allows local communities and state policy makers to understand the current problems of homelessness, target limited funding to appropriate housing and services, and track progress towards ending and preventing homelessness.

With lawmakers back in Montpelier for a special legislative session, the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness calls on them to increase investments in the proven state programs that can make homelessness a brief and rare occurrence for Vermonters.

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Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness:

The mission of the Coalition is to end homelessness in Vermont through sharing information, developing resources, providing a forum for decision-making and to promote decent, safe, fair, affordable shelter for all. For more information on the VCEH, visit: <http://helpingtohousevt.org/>. For the full PIT report, see: <http://helpingtohousevt.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/2018-PIT-Report-FINAL-5-30-18.pdf>.

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance

The Alliance is a coalition of individuals, organizations, and government who support our vision of a safe, decent, affordable, stable home for every person and family in Chittenden County. Its mission is to end homelessness in Chittenden County by being a forum for gathering information, building consensus, coordinating efforts, and advocating the end of homelessness through prevention, early intervention, and remediation. For more information on CCHA, visit: <http://www.cchavt.org/>.