



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**STATE OF HOMELESSNESS REPORTED IN 2015 DEMONSTRATES PROGRESS
AND WORK STILL TO BE DONE**

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO, JULY 29, 2015 – The number of people experiencing homelessness in Colorado Springs and El Paso County remained largely the same in 2015 compared with 2014, but the percentage of those who were unsheltered decreased by nearly 10 percent and the number of veterans in some form of permanent housing program increased by nearly 67 percent.

Statistics are drawn from the Point In Time and Housing Inventory Count, the most consistent measures for enumeration of homelessness in our community. The results are made available today through the 2015 Point In Time / Housing Inventory Count Report.

During the last week of January 2015, the Pikes Peak United Way in collaboration with many organizations that are part of the region's Continuum of Care worked with more than 100 volunteers to survey people staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing projects and those who were unsheltered. Additional data was collected on people in permanent supportive housing and homeless prevention projects to round out our community count.

Surveys are collected and cross-checked multiple times to avoid duplication and ensure data integrity. While assumed to be a very conservative measure, local outreach specialists and homeless clients themselves indicated that the 2015 count was the most accurate to date within data collection methods and a continually improving system. (A margin of error is not calculable because the report is not a statistical estimate, but rather a complete picture of those counted.)

For purposes of the official Point In Time count, homelessness is defined as individuals or families who do not have a permanent residence: people who live in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or in places not meant for human habitation (outdoors, campers/cars, abandoned buildings, etc.) The definition is established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

People in permanent housing and prevention programs are not considered homeless as they have stable housing with varying levels of support. We include them in the community counts to show the number of people assisted by collective and collaborative efforts. The number of unsheltered people represents the people who sought services (meals, showers, etc.) on the count day, and those with whom we were

able to connect through extensive outreach efforts. The CSPD Homeless Outreach Team and other outreach workers mapped camping and hang out locations, and volunteers canvased those locations over a several-day period.

The number of people reported in housing programs is an accurate and complete count of those supported by local, state, and federal funds on any given day, as those programs are required to report. Other privately funded programs report as well to complete the picture. A temporary decrease in transitional housing units/beds is reflected in the count, but did not cause an increase in unsheltered people. One of the biggest challenges for our community remains the disparity between the cost of housing and the income/resources available to pay for it.

By the numbers for 2015:

- The HUD PIT count for 2015 is 1,073 compared to 1,219 in 2014. If adjusted for the temporarily closed transitional housing beds, the number would have been about flat with 2014.
- The Community PIT count for 2015 is 2,107 compared to 2,142 in 2014. If adjusted similarly, the number would be higher than 2014. It still accurately reflects the additional permanent housing resources that were made available.
- The number of unsheltered people decreased from 269 to 243, and is a reflection of additional winter emergency shelter beds.
- The percent of people who were sheltered rose from 87.4% to 88.5%, reflecting the continued efforts to move people into housing.
- The percent of people in some form of stable permanent housing program continues to rise: from 35.7% in 2013, to 43.1% in 2014, to 49.1% in 2015.
- The number of chronically homeless people (unsheltered and in emergency shelters) dropped from 327 to 291.
- The number of unsheltered veterans rose from 46 to 54. This reflects the concerted outreach effort to find and engage our veterans.
- The number of veterans in some form of permanent housing program rose by 66.7% from 285 to 475.
- The unsheltered population continues to be local, with 72% from El Paso County and 83% from El Paso County or elsewhere in Colorado.
- The number of beds available across categories continues to rise, from 1,616 in 2014 to 1,719 in 2015, and utilization of the beds remains high at 93.7%.
- The winter shelters averaged 176 people each night throughout the 5 ½ month period, providing 29,479 nights of shelter.