

# Point In Time Homeless Count 2008 Fact Sheet

## *Results from the 24-hour count conducted on January 29-30th*

Burke County, NC. — presented data from the annual “Point In Time Count of Homeless Persons” conducted on January 29 - 30th. During that 24-hour period the count identified 148 homeless individuals (according to the definition from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD]—see below).

The annual count by the Burke County Continuum of Care Committee had extra resources this year. The number of agencies participating increased from 11 in 2007 to 25 in 2008. Additionally, some 40 volunteers assisted with the count.

HUD requires a “Point-in-Time Count of Homeless Persons” across the country. Communities need accurate data on homelessness to determine the size and scope of the homeless problem at the local level, plan services and programs appropriately to address local needs, measure progress in addressing homelessness, and measure performance of individual programs and the system as a whole. HUD needs data to understand the extent and nature of homelessness throughout the country, to make funding decisions and more.

### **Definition of “homeless” for this count:**

According to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a person is considered homeless only when he/she resides in one of the following places:

- **A sheltered homeless person resides in:**
  - An emergency shelter,
  - Transitional housing for homeless persons who originally came from the streets or emergency shelters
- **An unsheltered homeless person resides in:**
  - A place not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, or on the streets

NOTE: This definition does not include people who are “doubling up” in a home or hotel/motel, or staying with a friend.

### **Results of the January 2008 Point-in-Time Homeless Count**

- 148 people were counted as homeless
- 110 households were counted  
(lone individuals are a household and each household of multiple people counts as one household)
- Of the homeless individuals, 68% are male and 32% female
- 23% are children under 18 years old
- 10% are seriously mentally ill
- 32% have diagnosable substance use disorders
- 10% are victims of domestic violence
- 12% are veterans

**-More-**

- 2% were discharged during the previous 30 days from the criminal justice system
- 4% were discharged during the previous 30 days from the behavioral health system
- 1% were discharged during the previous 30 days from the health care system
- 3% were identified as deaf (this figure was not part of the survey but captured for local use)
- 41% of homeless people have not secured transitional housing in the county.
- 10% of homeless people in Burke County avoid shelters and survive on the streets and fit the HUD definition of chronic homeless.
- Thirteen percent (13%) of the homeless have at least one child in their direct care. Almost all these families have found their way into the shelter system. Only 1% of the homeless on the street have children with them.

#### **Variance between the 2007 and the 2008 count**

To put the 2008 homeless count total into context, one must account for the impact of the increase in agencies participating in the 2008 count. It is inaccurate to state that there are over 50 more homeless or that there has been a 38% increase in homeless people in Burke County compared to last year.

- The 2008 Count drew from 25 agencies/organizations participating and 148 were counted.
- The 2007 Count drew from 11 agencies/organizations participating and 96 were counted.

Much of the difference between the numbers counted in 2007 vs. 2008 should be attributed to the more than doubling of participating agencies and the large number of volunteers conducting the count.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The information gathered about public services usage is valuable data for determining the true cost of homelessness to a community. Further, this information will benefit agencies and local planners in developing strategic approaches for addressing the Federal and State plan to end homelessness. Due to almost certain underreporting, it is recommended that this question be examined more closely using focus groups at emergency shelters and meal sites.

The Continuum of Care consists of non-profit governmental agencies. These entities have convened to organize the Point-In-Time count for the past two years. It is recommended that this group expands its participants to include the widest possible array of agencies that provide services to the homeless and to those at risk of homelessness. It is further recommended that this group organize itself to provide a larger footprint in the homeless community. A roundtable or conference is recommended to increase community awareness and involvement.

It is the final recommendation of this report is that city and county planners work closely with non-profit helping agencies to join other cities in our state in developing a strategic plan to end homelessness in Burke County.