



City of New Bedford  
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

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## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### **City of New Bedford and Homeless Service Providers Network to Conduct Annual Point in Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness**

**New Bedford, Massachusetts-** The City of New Bedford will be conducting its 2016 annual Point-in-Time Count of persons experiencing homelessness on Wednesday, January 27th from 2:00pm until Thursday, January 28th at 2:00pm (24-Hour Count). The Point-in-Time Count is required annually by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and conducted across the nation during the last 10 days of the January.

**Teams of volunteers and community members will gather with Mayor Jon Mitchell to officially begin the 2016 census efforts tomorrow, Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm on the front steps of City Hall.**

“With the Point-in-Time Count, our job is to make sure that all homeless individuals and families experiencing homelessness are counted in a respectful manner and that we used this census-taking event as an important means of raising awareness about the issue of homelessness in our community,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell.

The Point-in-Time Count (PIT) is conducted in New Bedford through the New Bedford Homeless Continuum of Care Network, 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 PIT count is designed to collect data on the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness on a given night. As part of the count, people living on the streets, in shelters and in transitional housing are surveyed. The information collected through the PIT Count is used to help measure New Bedford’s progress towards ending homelessness and help 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.

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 2:00pm, 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. As part of this effort, the HSPN's "PIT Committee," along with Mobile, Loaves & Fishes, will be providing hot chocolate, food, and resources to the homeless community throughout the afternoon and early evening.

This year, the PIT Committee partnered with Mobile, Loaves & Fishes and their dedicated group of volunteers 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 looking for every person experiencing homelessness, Mobile, Loaves & Fishes has already begun encouraging the homeless community to participate in the count, directing them to the Coordination Center and other locations throughout the city where volunteers are stationed. It is anticipated that this approach, coupled with traditional community engagement, will produce the most accurate data.

Both the successful count in 2015 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 50 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, notes that "the Point-in-Time Count provides an important one day snapshot of New Bedford's homeless population that helps us understand our current census of those in the midst of homelessness within the city along with specific characteristics of those individuals and families in these situations so that we may strategically act to reduce those numbers."

In the past few years, families with children, veterans, unaccompanied youth and those experiencing chronic homelessness have been identified as federal priorities and as such, New Bedford's survey forms were updated to capture specific information about these vulnerable subpopulations.

For more information about the count, please contact Joseph Maia at (508) 979-1500 or at [jose.maia@newbedford-ma.gov](mailto:jose.maia@newbedford-ma.gov); for more information about what the city's HSPN is doing about homelessness, go to [www.nbhspn.com](http://www.nbhspn.com).

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