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2016 Point In Time Count: Partners Ending Homelessness announces results

Guilford County, NC – Homelessness is down in Guilford County and homelessness is up in Guilford County.

Partners Ending Homelessness (PEH) released the results of Guilford County Continuum of Care's (CoC) 2016 Point In Time Count (PITC) today. The count was conducted on January 28-30, 2016. The results show an overall increase in homelessness compared to 2015. But there are significant decreases in the areas the community has targeted. This demonstrates that a concerted focus on solutions to homelessness and the system transformation that has been occurring need to continue, grow, and expand. Rev. Mike Aiken, Chairman of the PEH and CoC Board of Directors, remarked, "Though the overall increase is disappointing, the data illustrates how a focused, strategic effort can produce significant results."

The number of chronically homeless decreased by nearly half. The survey recorded 36 individuals who met the criteria: having a disability and been living in a place not meant for human habitation, in an emergency shelter, or a safe haven for the last 12 months continuously or on at least four occasions in the last three years where those occasions cumulatively total at least 12 months. The number for this group was 75 in 2015. This has been a major focus of the community for the past two and a half years.

The number of homeless veterans declined to 66 from 81. PEH Executive Director Darryl Kosciak elaborated on these results. "CoC partners such as the Veterans Administration, The Servant Center, The Salvation Army Greensboro, Open Door Ministries and others are working to bring veteran homelessness to functional zero. There is a by-name list of every homeless veteran in Guilford County that a task group reviews weekly. Through these efforts more than 188 veterans have ended their homelessness since January 1, 2015. Of these only four have returned to the Guilford County homeless service system. The decrease is not more significant because veterans are learning of this success, move into the county, and/or make themselves known to service providers at a rate that is almost the equivalent of the number of people being housed each month."

There was also a **marked decrease in the number of unsheltered homeless individuals to 84**, down over 25% from the 2015 count of 114 and more than offsetting the 14% increase recorded from 2014. "Emergency Shelters across the CoC spent all of last year examining their shelter rules and practices. The goal was to meet HUD's standard of "Low Barrier" and open shelter doors to people who have not been able to access emergency shelters in the past. The decrease in unsheltered numbers demonstrates progress in the early stages of this implementation", said Kosciak. "The YWCA of Greensboro also opened a new Family Emergency Shelter assisting in this effort."

The PITC is a count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. HUD requires that Continuums of Care conduct an annual count of homeless persons who are staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and sleeping in a place

not meant for human habitation. The PITC captures a snapshot of homelessness on any given night and should be used more as a year-to-year comparison rather than an isolated data set for the purposes of measuring system progress.

The overall numbers for individuals experiencing homelessness increased to 721 in 2016 from 662 in 2015. Both of these numbers are significantly lower than when the Point In Time Count began in Guilford County in 2007 (1,182).

The number of **homeless households with children was also up to 56**, compared to 43 in 2015. This is similar to trends seen across the country where rising housing costs coupled with income stagnation have been identified as possible causes.

“PEH and our partners in the CoC continue to work toward the goal of making the homeless service system a process of returning to housing and not a destination,” said Kosciak. “I also think that the increased count numbers are a good reflection of the reality on the ground. Despite the efforts thus far, the larger systemic issues have not been resolved and as a result, there is more work to be done. The individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Guilford County need the entire community’s support to maintain and expand the CoC’s efforts. Additional affordable housing, donations of furniture, and financial supports to keep moving folks into housing is crucial.”

For statistical information on the Point in Time Count, contact Debbie Bailey at debbie@partnersendinghomelessness.org. To see the full results from the 2016 Point in Time Count, visit the PEH website: www.partnersendinghomelessness.org.

***Partners Ending Homelessness** leads a strong and stable system of care to end homelessness in Guilford County. The organization leads and supports a collaborative network that includes over 40 community partners working together to effectively end homelessness in Guilford County.*