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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ANNUAL COUNT PAINTS PICTURE OF HOMELESSNESS IN STANISLAUS COUNTY

Modesto, CA.: A total of 2,107 people including 207 children experienced homelessness in Stanislaus County according to new numbers from a Point-In-Time homeless count (PIT Count) conducted earlier this year. The count is up by 184 people from last year.

"This is vitally important information for our communities", stated Kathy Harwell, Director of the Stanislaus County Community Services Agency. "We now know more about the homeless and their needs which helps us deliver more efficient and effective services."

A total of 1,990 questionnaires were collected in the annual canvassing, an unduplicated count of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in both sheltered and unsheltered populations. It surpasses the count in 2019 which reported 1,923 homeless people. The majority of homeless in this year's count were found in the cities of Modesto and Turlock.

The survey data is reported to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and used to help determine the amount of funding available to the community to develop housing and supportive services for people moving from homelessness to independent living. The surveys were conducted on January 24, 2020 to help provide a snapshot of homelessness in a given community.

Volunteers for the massive project came from the Stanislaus Community System of Care which included local governments, non-profits, and homeless service providers. A total of 310 volunteers fanned out across Stanislaus County visiting emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, parks, and the outdoors where the homeless live. Each volunteer asked survey questions of the homeless and provided comfort kits with toiletries and other items to those who agreed to respond.

Among the questions asked is why they became homeless. Reasons included abuse or violence at home, unable to pay rent, and losing a job. The survey also found that 668 individuals reported that they had been in contact with a family member less than one month ago.

Among the 2020 PIT Count Findings:

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- 803 individuals slept in emergency shelters, a 21% increase from 2019
- 217 individuals slept in transitional housing, a 25% increase from 2019
- 207 households included children
- 380 individuals reported a serious mental illness while 397 reported a substance abuse disorder
- 704 individuals reported being on EBT/food stamps
- 110 veterans reported homelessness
- 80% of individuals became homeless in Stanislaus County

Point-in-Time Count information helps service providers, policy makers, funders and local government gain a better understanding of the population currently experiencing homelessness. It gives the community useful and critical data for programs, policy, and fiscal planning.

“This data shows us that people end up homeless in communities for so many different reasons,” said Jason Conway, Chair of the Stanislaus Community System of Care. “Whether they find themselves homeless because they have issues with substance abuse, mental health, because they aged out of the foster care system and have nowhere to go or for many other reasons, these are real problems that we should be seeking to address. Gathering this critical Point in Time information gives us a better understanding of the issues so that we can come up with solutions based on real data and work in effective ways toward the goal of ending homelessness.”

BACKGROUND

What is the PIT Count?

The PIT Count is a tally of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single day in January. HUD requires that Continuums of Care conduct an annual count of people experiencing homelessness who are sheltered in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night. Continuums of Care also must conduct a count of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness every other year (odd numbered years).

Who sponsored the PIT Count?

The PIT Count was sponsored and organized by the Stanislaus Community System of Care. Partner agencies included:

- Golden Valley Health Centers
- City of Hughson
- City of Modesto
- City of Newman
- City of Oakdale
- City of Patterson
- City of Riverbank
- City of Turlock
- City of Waterford
- County of Stanislaus

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