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PRESS ADVISORY

Code Blue Legislation May Impact Sheltered #NJCounts 2018 Homeless Numbers #NJCounts 2018 Reaches out to Homeless Families, Youth and Veterans

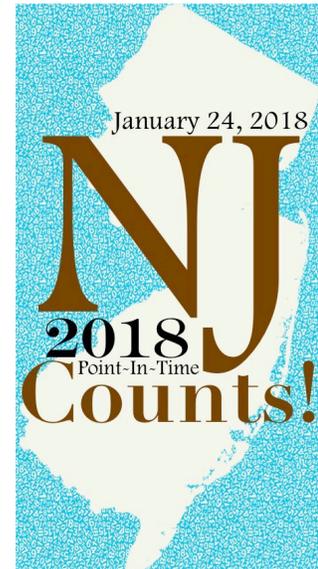
When: Wednesday, January 24, 2018 (Exact times will vary by county)

Where: Across New Jersey's twenty-one counties; Click [here](#) for individual county contacts

Who is counting: Organizations, agencies and others planning community efforts to end homelessness

January 11, 2018 - On January 24, 2018, all twenty-one New Jersey counties will participate in #NJCounts 2018 conducting a state-wide Point-In-Time Count of the sheltered and unsheltered homeless. The count's results will continue to guide efforts to end homelessness across the state.

In this year's NJCounts 2018, many factors will impact an increase or decrease from NJCounts 2017 numbers. NJCounts 2017 found 8,532 homeless men, women and children, in 6,340 households, across the state of New Jersey. This number decreased by 409 persons (4.6%) from 2016. NJCounts 2017 counted individuals who were homeless on the night of January 24, 2017. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) mandates the statewide Point-in-Time count of the homeless.



Factors that will contribute to this year's count of homeless families, youth and veterans include:

- New Jersey enacted Code Blue legislation requiring any municipality with over ten homeless individuals to provide emergency warming centers to all individuals experiencing homelessness during severe winter weather events and when temperatures are frigid,
- A shortage of rental housing driving up demand and costs,
- Failure by Congress to increase funding for the federal Housing Choice Voucher program,
- New Jersey continues to have a higher than national average rate of foreclosures; foreclosures cause many owners and renters to lose their homes, and
- Many jobs in New Jersey do not pay a living wage and jobs with living wage are leaving the state.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 165,800 people in 70,000 New Jersey households use a voucher to afford decent, privately owned housing. In 2018, New Jersey could lose 5,500 vouchers if Congress does not increase renewal funding sufficiently to cover rising rents and other costs. This loss of vouchers would worsen homelessness and housing instability among low-income residents. In July 2018, advocates plan to return to Washington, DC for a Congressional Reception to push for increased federal funding for vouchers and homeless services.

NJCounts 2018 is designed to understand the nature of New Jersey's homeless population so that limited resources can meet its needs. Volunteers seek out homeless residents in shelters, woods, under bridges, in vacant buildings and other locations where they are forced to live on January 24, 2018 because there is insufficient affordable or supportive housing available to them.

Monarch Housing Associates is coordinating this year's statewide count that is being conducted county-by-county at the local level. New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency funds NJCounts 2018.

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