



## PRESS RELEASE

### SAN BENITO COUNTY HOMELESS CENSUS REPORT

*Results Show a 26% increase in Homelessness in San Benito County*

**July 28, 2022-San Benito County, CA:** Every two years, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that all communities receiving federal funding for homelessness services conduct a Point-in-Time (PIT) Count of people experiencing homelessness. The PIT Count is the primary source of nationwide data on homelessness and identifies people living in unsheltered and sheltered settings. On January 27, 2022, San Benito County conducted the 2022 PIT Count.

To conduct the 2022 PIT Count, 20 volunteers from Community Actions Board, Community Homeless Solutions, Health and Human Services Agency, and community volunteers walked or drove routes covering the entire geography of San Benito County to count people experiencing homelessness. The County also collected information from all emergency shelters and transitional housing sites.

Despite significant investments in supportive housing for those with the highest needs and longest periods of homelessness, and emergency supports for those affected by the pandemic, overall homelessness in San Benito County increased by 26%. In 2019, there were 253 unsheltered people experiencing homelessness. In 2022, this number jumped to 357. This increase is a result of widening income inequality, high inflation, and a lack of affordable housing, which are continuing to drive individuals and families into homelessness.

Enrique Arreola, Deputy Director of Community Services and Workforce Development stated, "The increase of 26% is a more accurate count compared to the 2019 census; however, I wouldn't be surprised if the numbers are higher given the many challenges this pandemic has caused. Without the support of the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers, Community Action Board, community volunteers, Health and Human Services Agency, and the San Benito County Board of Supervisors, this census would not have happened. Thanks to all who volunteered."

The Homeless Census Executive Summary Report highlights include:

- The homeless count changed from 283 to 357 homeless individuals reflecting an increase of 75 or 26%,
- A finding that 95% of the homeless population were prior residents of San Benito County,
- A finding that 20% report they are first time homeless,

- 37% reported that financial issues (job loss, eviction...etc.) was the primary event or condition that led to homelessness,
- 6 homeless individuals reported being a veteran who have served on active duty in their lifetime,
- 12% (42) comprised of children under the age of 18;
- 28% of the homeless are employed, 42% were unable to work, 40% were looking for work.

San Benito County Health and Human Services Agency through the Community Services and Workforce Development Division continues to provide services to hundreds of homeless individuals annually through the following programs; Permanent Supportive Housing, Transitional Housing, Rapid Rehousing, Tenant Based Rental Assistance, Homeless Housing Assistance Program, Housing Support Program, Homeless Disability Advocacy Program, Project Roomkey for hotel vouchers, Winter Shelter Program, and a year-round homeless shelter operated by Community Homeless Solutions.

Supervisor Kollin Kosmicki who sits on the County's Homeless Taskforce stated, "the latest homeless census for our community underscores the severity of this crisis in our community. Reducing the homeless population is one of the most profound challenges of our time, but I have no doubt San Benito County leaders are fully committed to getting people off the streets, offering opportunities for humane living conditions, and providing services to better their lives."

The PIT Count information is used for strategic planning and program design. The PIT Count results impact funding and improve our understanding of the size and characteristics of our homeless population. The strategic goal of this region-wide effort of Monterey/San Benito County Continuum of Care (COC) is to reduce homelessness by 50% within the next five years under the Lead Me Home Plan to Reduce Homelessness 5-year Plan. A full report will be presented at the Board of Supervisors Meeting on August 9, 2022, beginning at 9:00 a.m. For Information on Homeless Services in San Benito County, call 831-637-9293.

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