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Summary Released for 2017 Snohomish County Point-in-Time Count of Unsheltered

EVERETT, Wash., March 7, 2017 – Today Snohomish County announced the release of 2017 Point in Time Count [summary report](#) regarding unsheltered people. A full report, also including the sheltered count, will be released later this year.

The annual Point in Time (PIT) count conducted by volunteers and County staff on January 24, 2017, surveyed 515 persons in 447 households who were unsheltered at the time of the count. This represented a 9 percent increase over the number of unsheltered individuals in the 2016 count.

This year's count of unsheltered individuals showed a substantial increase in the number of chronically homeless individuals. Chronically homeless individuals are those with a disability who have been homeless continuously for at least 12 months or who on at least 4 separate occasions had a combined length of time in homelessness of at least 12 months over the last 3 years. It also showed a substantial increase in the number of individuals who had two or three disabling conditions, including mental health disorders, substance use disorders, and/or chronic medical conditions, pointing to the need of more intensive and individualized evidence-based services.

“It’s disturbing that even with our expanded efforts to prevent homelessness, more people continue to fall victim to the housing market, mental health challenges, addiction, and economic dislocation,” said Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive. “Chronic homelessness is tough to fight when affordable rental units are nearly non-existent. To relieve human suffering, we need to find innovative ways to help our fellow residents find a place to call home and get the treatment they need.”

The annual count is a key measure used to inform priorities for federal, state, and local funding and helps gauge progress toward ending homelessness for vulnerable individuals and families. The analysis and overall trends are utilized by the Snohomish County Partnership to End Homelessness to address needs and track progress toward goals to prevent, reduce, and end homelessness.

“That results for 2017 show an increase in chronically homeless individuals is of great concern to our community, and we know that there are many complicated reasons that people become homeless. But regardless of cause, we must work to reduce human suffering and provide a path forward for men, women, and children experiencing homelessness in Snohomish County. The County and our network of dedicated partner agencies have implemented numerous evidence-based strategies that are dramatically increasing the number of individuals who obtain permanent housing through our system. These strategies are also slowing the rate of growth of our current crisis toward a shared aim of reducing, and ultimately ending, homelessness in our community,” said Mary Jane Brell Vujovic, Human Services Director.

Outreach workers and navigators were able to assist a number of people during the count to begin accessing needed services, shelter, or housing. County staff wish to thank all the volunteers and agency staff who made the count possible.

You can access the preliminary report [here](#).

The **Snohomish County Human Services Department** helps all persons meet their basic needs and develop their potential by providing timely, effective human services and building community. The Housing & Community Services Division administers a wide range of programs that provide affordable housing, community development, and related services to low-income and homeless persons.

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