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#NJCounts 2017 Finds Overall Homelessness Decreased

President Trump's Drastic Proposed Cuts to HUD & Medicaid Funding Jeopardizes Need to Address Chronic Homelessness in NJ

June 27, 2017 - #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 full report and county by county reports are available at this link: <https://goo.gl/a77KHE>

Local county press contacts are available at this link: <https://goo.gl/LTBzQb>. These contacts can provide additional information and details about the local county counts.

Other key findings from NJCounts 2017 as compared to NJCounts 2016 include:

- 1,092 persons, in 992 households, identified as chronically homeless, showing an increase of 259 persons (35.3%);
- 1,357 persons living unsheltered, showing a decrease of 27 persons (2%);
- 1,017 households counted as families, showing a 11% decrease in family homelessness. A family is defined as a household with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult; and
- 49 unaccompanied youth under 18 were identified in the count. This represents a 44% increase in the number of unaccompanied homeless youth households.

“While the slight decrease in homelessness in New Jersey is a positive result, the reality is that the size of the homeless population has remained relatively the same from 2016 to 2017,” said Taiisa Kelly, a senior associate at Monarch Housing Associates and head of the Ending Homelessness Team that coordinated NJCounts 2017. “The fact that the number of homeless individuals and families has not risen gives us hope. But the decrease in homelessness is within the statistical margin of error.”



On July 26, 2017, Monarch Housing Associates, almost 40 partner organizations and 350 constituents from each of New Jersey's congressional districts will travel to Washington, D.C. for a congressional reception. Individuals impacted by homelessness, advocates and policy experts will carry the message "No Cuts for Housing" pushing back against President Trump's proposed budget cuts.

"While the NJCounts 2017 data is critically important, the new numbers do not tell the whole story. We need to remind our elected officials in Washington that lives of vulnerable individuals and families lie in the balance," said Taiisa Kelly. "To end homelessness in New Jersey, it is essential that U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) resources and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Service funding including Medicaid funding is protected from the proposed cuts in President Trump's budget. HUD funding has been essential in decreasing homelessness in New Jersey. The almost 30% decrease in homelessness between 2013 and 2017 would not be possible without the critical housing and service resources made available at the federal level. This year's NJCounts results are timelier than ever. Budget cuts to vouchers and other key programs would be disastrous and cause a reverse in the progress made to date."

At the July 26 Congressional Reception, speakers will share not only the impact of homelessness in each of New Jersey's congressional district but also report on successes due to the impact of federal funding. Advocates will tell our elected officials in Washington that we are on the ground in New Jersey working to end homelessness and we need essential and continued federal resources. More details about the Congressional Reception and a link to register for the event is available at www.monarchhousing.org.

"Rising housing costs in New Jersey and across the nation put the gains made in recent years to address homelessness at risk. Now is the time we should be expanding investments in proven housing solutions to ensure that everyone has a place to call home," said Diane Yentel, President & CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC.) "Congress must not only reject President Trump's cruel budget, which would slash federal housing resources that directly combat homelessness to help pay for tax breaks for millionaires and corporations, but it should fully invest in the resources that families and communities need to thrive."

"Although we welcome any indication of a decline in homelessness, our mission is far from complete," said Deborah De Santis, President and CEO of CSH. "New Jersey, Monarch and their provider partners across the state deserve praise for embracing supportive housing, coordinated entry and other solutions proven to end and prevent homelessness. But this progress will not continue if our leaders in Washington dismantle the housing investments and services effectively changing the lives of New Jerseyans who otherwise would face a very bleak future on our streets."

Monarch Housing believes that the barriers to shortening and eliminating episodes of homelessness in New Jersey include:

- Limited access to programs that can provide stability and services to those experiencing homelessness,
- A shortage of rental housing driving up demand and costs,

- The failure by Congress to work to increase funding for the Federal Housing Choice Voucher program for fiscal year 2017 (FY2017),
- A foreclosure crisis that causes many renters and owners to lose their homes, and
- The fact that many jobs in New Jersey that do not pay a living wage.

“Unfortunately, proposed cuts in funding from the Trump administration come at a time when it is more expensive than ever for New Jersey families to afford housing,” said Taiisa Kelly.

“According to the NLIHC, to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent in New Jersey, a family needs to earn \$27.31/hour, far more than the state’s average hourly wage of \$17.86 or the \$8.44 minimum wage.”

NJ Counts 2017 was designed to understand the nature and needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in New Jersey. Volunteers sought out homeless residents in shelters and other locations where they are forced to live because there is insufficient affordable housing available to them.

To end homelessness in New Jersey, it is imperative that we know how many individuals and families need housing, what counties they are from, and their service needs and circumstances. Timely data is necessary to implement and expand on strategies that have proven to be effective in ending homelessness.

For more information about Monarch Housing Associates’ work to ensure that every person will have quality affordable, permanent supportive housing that fosters freedom, independence and community integration, visit www.monarchhousing.org.

Additional Resources:

- Policy Priorities for Ending Homelessness - <https://goo.gl/aDRfEr>
- Best Practices for Homeless Services Delivery- <https://goo.gl/4dJR7d>
- NJCounts 2017 Executive Summary - <https://goo.gl/g9nFcq>