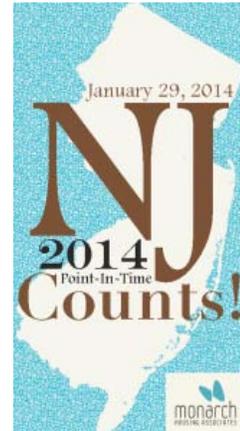


Press Release

*NJ Counts 2014 Reaches Out to Homeless Families, Youth and Veterans
Will Identify Those at Greatest Risk to Harsh Winter Weather*

January 28, 2014



Contact: Hunterdon Democrat

On January 29, 2014 Hunterdon County will join the rest of the state in participating in New Jersey Counts, the annual Point in Time (PIT) Count of the homeless.

NJ Counts is an annual count of individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness in the state of New Jersey. As Hunterdon County works to end homelessness in the County, the data gathered during this year's Count will play a large role.

Given the recent harsh and unusually cold winter weather, it is difficult to think of anyone experiencing homelessness. *Factors that will contribute to this year's count of homeless families, youth and veterans include:*

- A shortage of rental housing driving up demand and costs,
- A failure to create more affordable housing and supportive housing,
- Foreclosures causing many to lose homes,
- Shortage of jobs that pay a living wage, and
- Families and individuals still living without homes even one year after Superstorm Sandy.
- Untreated substance abuse and mental health issues

Recent figures show that homelessness is decreasing across the country. But recent cuts to funding through sequestration threaten this progress.

NJ Counts is designed to understand the nature and needs of New Jersey's homeless population and successfully meet their needs. On the night of January 29, volunteers will seek out homeless residents in shelters, woods, under bridges, in vacant buildings and other locations where they are forced to live

because there is insufficient affordable or supportive housing and/or other suitable living arrangements for them.

NJ Counts takes place during the last 10 days of January in accordance with requirements from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

While HUD mandates an annual count of sheltered homeless population and a biennial count of un-sheltered homeless populations, New Jersey employs an annual count to not only obtain consistent data about the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness, but also to understand the causes of homelessness and the service needs of those experiencing homelessness. Representatives from the Hunterdon County Department of Human Services, United Way of Hunterdon County, Family Promise, Salvation Army, The Family Success Center and HART, will be distributing winter coats, heater meals and reflective vests to homeless individuals on the day of the Point In Time Count.

Monarch Housing Associates is coordinating NJ Counts 2014. More information about Monarch Housing and NJ Counts is available at www.monarchhousing.org. Information about services available to help individuals facing homelessness in Hunterdon County can be directed to the Department of Human Services (908) 788-1253.