



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: December 5, 2023

11

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

**SOLICITING VOLUNTEERS FOR THE ANNUAL POINT IN TIME COUNT
(DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

The U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that Continuums of Care (CoC) conduct an annual count of homeless persons who are sheltered or unsheltered on a single night in January of each year. The Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH) brings together a wide range of community partners and volunteers to conduct the point in time count known as We all Count, throughout San Diego County. While the data collected during the Point in Time Count is used to apply for federal and state funding, the count allows us to better understand the demographics, challenges, and characteristics of those experiencing homelessness in our community.

In order to conduct this extensive survey, RTFH puts out a call to action to organizations, stakeholders and the community to assist their efforts to count as many people as possible who are experiencing homelessness. Last year, there were 171 County employees who participated in the region's Point in Time Count and helped identify 10,264 individuals living in shelters or on the streets.

Our County employees have time and time again stepped up to support our communities in times of need, especially through volunteer roles during election season and during the Point-in- Time Count. Today's action would direct the Chief Administrative Officer to establish a volunteer program to allow County employees to participate in the annual Point-in-Time Count on January 25, 2024, on paid County time.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHAIRWOMAN NORA VARGAS AND VICE-CHAIR TERRA LAWSON REMER

1. Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to establish a volunteer program to allow County employees to participate in the annual Point in Time Count on January 25, 2024,

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on paid County time and engage as needed with employee organizations to formalize the program.

2. Find that allowing County employees to volunteer to participate in the annual point-in-time count on paid County time serves a public benefit by ensuring the region's homelessness can be quantified and federal funding can be secured to support the region's homeless population.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

By allowing our County staff to participate in the annual Point in Time Count, we join our regional efforts to address homelessness in San Diego County. The Point-in-Time Count outcomes have multiple benefits and helps our region apply for federal funding as well as gives the region a better understanding of the demographics, challenges, and characteristics of those experiencing homelessness in our community. The point in time count also serves as a guiding principle for policy makers to help drive policy changes and investments to help house our unsheltered neighbors.

Establishing a program to allow County employees to participate in the annual point-in-time count on January 25, 2024, will support efforts to create effective approaches to assist those who are homeless throughout San Diego County. The count outcomes have multiple benefits, including eligibility to apply for federal and state funding in addition to enabling the region to gain a better understanding of the scope, impact, and potential solutions to address this issue. The numbers from this count are broken down into subpopulation categories, including counts of persons who are chronically homeless, veterans, youth, persons with HIV/AIDS, and victims of domestic violence. It is anticipated that this action will drive much-needed resources to residents who are disproportionality represented in the homeless system including justice-involved individuals as well as Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). In general, the incidence of BIPOC individuals experiencing homelessness mirrors the disparities found at the broader community levels. These population groups are over-represented in homelessness when compared to their proportion in the general community.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed action contributes to the County of San Diego's Sustainability Goal to engage the community and protect health and well-being. By establishing a program that allows County staff to participate in the annual Point in Time Count we engage with our most vulnerable population and will use the data collected to advocate for funding and resources to house our unsheltered neighbors.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funding associated with today's recommendation is included in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Operational Plan in various departments for existing staff time of the employees who choose to volunteer. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

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ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that Continuums of Care (CoC) conduct an annual count of homeless persons who are sheltered or unsheltered on a single night in January of each year. The Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH) brings together a wide range of community partners and volunteers to conduct the point in time count known as We all Count, throughout San Diego County. While the data collected during the Point-in-Time Count is used to apply for federal and state funding, the count allows us to better understand the demographics, challenges, and characteristics of those experiencing homelessness in our community.

In order to conduct this extensive survey, RTFH puts out a call to action to organizations, stakeholders and the community to assist their efforts to count as many as people as possible who are experiencing homelessness. Last year, there were 171 County employees who participated in the regions Point-in-Time Count and helped identify 10,264 individuals living in shelters or on the streets. This resulted in an increase of 22% in 2023, with our senior population being the fastest growing population to experience homelessness for the first time. The annual count gives regional leaders and policymakers a snapshot of the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness and helps inform future investments and policy changes.

In 2023, the RTFH reached an agreement with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to identify people living in encampments on Caltrans property. Having access to these hard-to-reach locations, allowed volunteers to interact with an additional 661 people living on Caltrans property. Without access to these sites, the Point- in-Time Count for 2023 would have reflected an undercount of our unsheltered population.

The main count will take place from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. on Thursday, January 25, 2024. Volunteers will deploy across the region in small teams, which include a trained homeless outreach worker to provide guidance and support. A mobile application will be used to record the number of homeless persons they see and collect important demographic information. There are also additional surveys being conducted as part of the count to ensure different populations are captured.

In addition to counting and surveying those who are unsheltered, the RTFH will compile a count of people who sleep in the region's homeless shelters on the night of January 25, 2024. Demographic data regarding those sheltered is derived from the region's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which is administered by the RTFH. This data, along with an assessment of the shelter bed capacity for the region, is used to evaluate the unmet needs of the homeless population in the region. Once completed, the analysis is reported to HUD and used with point-in-time count data from communities across the country to produce the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) for Congress.

It takes a community effort to conduct this annual count and as the region's safety net for our communities, we have a responsibility to ensure we are connecting with our vulnerable populations and using the data collected to leverage federal and state resources to house our

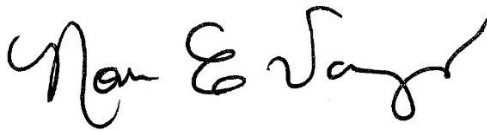
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unsheltered neighbors. Our County employees, have time and time again stepped up to support our communities in times of need, especially through volunteer roles during election season and during previous Point-in-Time Counts. Today's action would direct the Chief Administrative Officer to establish a volunteer program to allow County employees to participate in the annual Point-in-Time Count on January 25, 2024, on paid County time.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed actions support the Equity and Community Strategic Initiatives in the County of San Diego's 2023-2028 Strategic Plan, as well as the Live Well San Diego vision by increasing the awareness of the demographics of those experiencing homelessness as well as the available resources for this vulnerable population.

Respectfully submitted,



NORA VARGAS
Chairwoman, First District



TERRA LAWSON REMER
Vice-Chair, Third District

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A