



NORA VARGAS
CHAIRWOMAN
SUPERVISOR, FIRST DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA ITEM

DATE: **October 22, 2024**

12

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 persons experiencing homelessness 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 (PITC) also known as We all Count, throughout San Diego County. While the data collected during the PITC count is used to apply for federal funding, the count allows us to better understand the demographics, challenges, and characteristics of those experiencing homelessness in our community.

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. This year, during the January 2024 Point-in-Time-Count there were over 1,700 volunteers that participated in the region's Point-in-Time-Count and helped identify 10,605 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 30, 2025, on paid County time.

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

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHAIRWOMAN NORA VARGAS

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 30, 2025, on paid County time.
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 30, 2025, 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.

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FISCAL IMPACT

Funding associated with these recommendations are included as staff time in the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Operational Plan in various departments. The funding source is based on a combination of General Purpose Revenue and program revenues. Actual cost and revenue will be determined by the classification of employees who may choose to volunteer. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

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. This year, there were 267 County employees who participated in the regions Point-in-Time Count and helped identify 10,605 individuals living in shelters or on the streets. The 2024 Point-in-Time Count found an increase of 18.2%, for those who are unsheltered, from the previous year, 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 592 people living on Caltrans property. Without access to these sites, the Point-in-Time-Count for 2024 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 30, 2025. 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.

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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 30, 2025. 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 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 30, 2025, 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 2024-2029 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nora E. Vargas", written in a cursive style.

NORA VARGAS
Supervisor, First District

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A