

**ADDRESS**

201 W. Capitol Street, Suite 800
Jackson, MS 39201

MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 24147
Jackson, MS 39225

PHONE

Office: (601) 960-0557
Fax: (866) 551-0916

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Homeless Agencies Plan Annual Homeless Census 2016

Number of Homeless in Mississippi Projected to Continue Decreasing with National Trends

The Mississippi Balance of State CoC (BoS), a group whose membership includes the majority of homeless service providers in Mississippi, plans to conduct a homeless census – also known as a Point in Time Count (PIT) - on January 25-29, 2016. The BoS's target area includes all of the state, excluding the Jackson Urbanized area and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development compiles these local counts of homeless persons, both at the shelter level and on the streets. HUD's analysis of these snapshot counts from more than 3,800 cities and counties found an estimated 564,708 persons were in shelters and on the streets during a one night count in January 2015. HUD's point-in-time estimate concludes that 206,286 (36%) of those counted are people in families and 358,422 (64%) are individuals. Also, 8% of the homeless adults counted (47,725) were veterans.

The BoS encourages local communities to get involved in this count by contacting agencies that provide services for the homeless in their communities. Ledger Parker, Program Manager for MUTEH Inc., the data management agency for the BoS, stated, "We work with those local agencies to collect required information and to report their data to HUD, so that any grant applicants that seek funding for a wide variety of homeless housing and service programs will have the best possible data." The BoS will be contacting agencies throughout the state to insure that the numbers truly reflect the number of homeless in Mississippi. In 2015, the homeless census showed approximately 1,983 without shelter in the one night count throughout the state of Mississippi. Many experts assert that this number may be significantly lower than reality, but recognize there is great work being done to decrease the homeless population across our nation. Homeless advocate, Kathy Garner, Former President of the Pine Belt Coalition on Homelessness, asserts, "The homeless in Mississippi are practically invisible except in larger cities. Significant stigma exists and provides a strong incentive to 'not let your homelessness show.'" These snapshot counts offer communities a powerful tool to gauge their homeless challenge and to create innovative housing solutions in response. The count will be especially important this year as we look towards contributing to the national goals of ending Veteran, chronic, child, and family homelessness.

For information on how you can help in your community, contact the BoS CoC PIT Coordinator:

Reginald Glenn
601-960-0557
rglenn@msbos.org
www.msbos.org
muteh.wordpress.com