



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Sacramento County Point in Time (PIT) Homeless Count Shows 19% rise in homelessness**

*Increase is consistent with California and West Coast trends*

**SACRAMENTO, Calif.** – The 2019 Sacramento Homeless Point in Time (PIT) Count conducted over two nights in January indicates 5,570 persons experience homelessness on a given night, an increase of 19% countywide<sup>1</sup>. Homelessness in Sacramento County increased at a slower rate than in previous years and is in line with much of California and West Coast communities' rates of homelessness according to a report released today by Sacramento Steps Forward and authored by Sacramento State Institute for Social Research. The report also indicates rates of chronic homelessness has declined.

This year's count provides a more comprehensive and accurate snapshot of homelessness within Sacramento county and cities than in previous years. Improvements to the survey include twice the coverage area, double the count nights, record number of volunteer and community partner participation, increased efforts to identify transition age youth and families and record number of individuals surveyed.

"An overall increase in this year's Homeless Point in Time count was expected," said Lisa Bates, CEO of Sacramento Steps Forward. "We have greatly improved the count method and reach to capture a more accurate snapshot of homelessness in Sacramento County, which will help us better serve the community moving forward."

The PIT Count is conducted every two years within Sacramento County and provides the Sacramento Homeless Continuum of Care and the community with a snapshot of how many people may be experiencing homelessness on any given night. Findings include:

- 5,570 individuals experience homelessness countywide on any given night
  - 1,670 individuals sheltered (30%)
  - 3,900 individuals unsheltered (70%)
- Majority of individuals interviewed indicate they are from the Sacramento area (93%).
- Rate of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness has slightly declined since 2017 and rate of unsheltered chronic homelessness has declined as well (-7%)<sup>2</sup>.

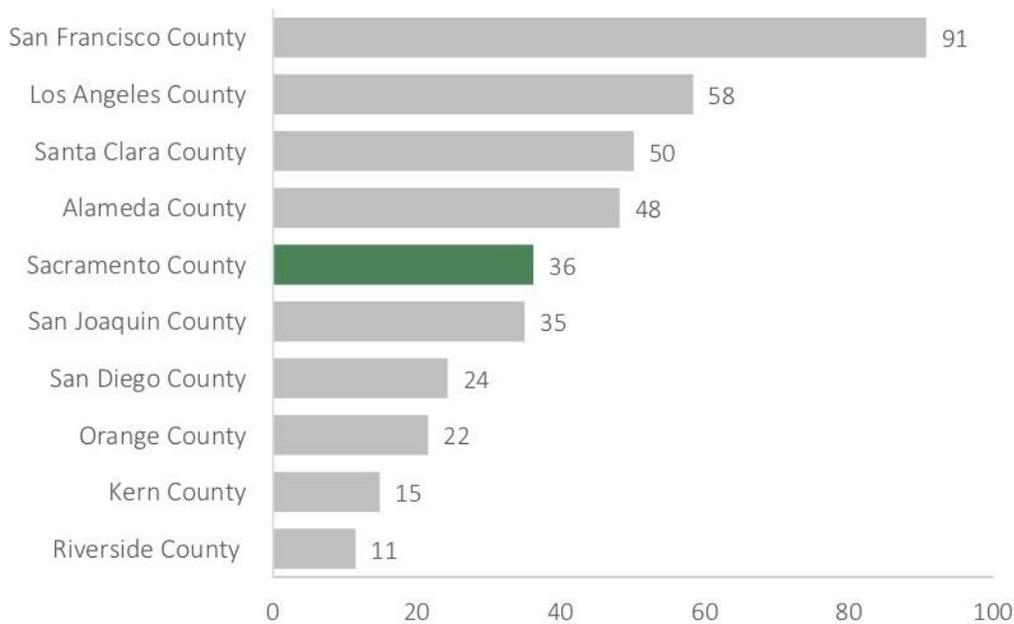
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<sup>1</sup> \*Due to increased coverage and accuracy of the 2019 count, raw numbers cannot be directly compared between 2017 and 2019. Statistical adjustments were made to allow for a real (adjusted) rate of increase.

<sup>2</sup> HUD designates individuals as chronically homeless if they have been continuously homeless for over a year; OR has had four (4) or more episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years. Individuals experiencing chronic homelessness must also have a physical, developmental or mental disability that hinders their ability to maintain gainful employment.

- The 2019 rise in homelessness reflects the continued challenges with housing affordability locally and across the state with the majority of individuals surveyed indicating access to affordable housing would help to resolve their homelessness.
- Rate of homelessness is consistent with other California communities

Per Capita (per 10K residents)



- Approximately 10,000 to 11,000 individuals experience homelessness annually.

The Point In Time Count survey indicates that for individuals and families experiencing homelessness

- Majority of individuals experiencing homelessness are 35 years of age or older (61%).
- 20 percent of the homeless population were families with children.
- A disproportionate number of Black and American Indian/Alaska Native people are experiencing homelessness.
- Majority of individuals surveyed have experienced homelessness for over a year (59%).

Sacramento’s localities and the Sacramento Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) have invested significantly in recent years and continue to invest and coordinate new resources to address the homelessness crisis including assisting 3,600 individuals into housing and adding 300 new shelter beds in 2018, sheltering approximately 1,300 individuals nightly, housing over 350 of the hardest to serve persons experiencing homelessness through new rehousing programs, prioritizing 600 housing choice vouchers for people experiencing homelessness and

expanding mental health and healthcare to households experiencing homelessness.

Increased local collaboration has also led to the adoption of a comprehensive Sacramento County Homeless Plan, \$19.9 million collaborative State funding plan between County, City and the CoC and \$17 million in City of Sacramento funding for increased rehousing and shelter capacity. Sacramento County and its localities have also designed programs that will quickly flex up additional re-housing assistance and shelter capacity for future State funding anticipated in 2020.

“This news is both sobering and hopeful, said Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg. “It’s sobering because the overall number of people experiencing homelessness went up 19 percent. It’s hopeful because chronic homelessness is down, especially among the unsheltered. This change shows that our strategy of targeting the most chronically homeless with services and shelter is beginning to work, and we need to take it to scale.

Under my mayorship, we have set a new direction and amassed almost \$100 million going forward to combat this crisis, which is not unique to Sacramento. Our city-county efforts have helped get 3,600 homeless people housed over the last year. In the coming months we will open hundreds of new shelter beds and target our outreach and enforcement to the city corridors where residents and business owners are directly experiencing the impact of so many people camping outdoors.

People will rightfully ask how the proportion of chronic homelessness can be down while the overall homeless numbers are going up. The answer is that we have a housing crisis. Too many people are becoming homeless because of high housing prices. Our City Council decision two weeks ago to create a \$100-million housing trust fund could not be more timely. We must follow through aggressively to put these resources to use and change these numbers.”

“Obviously, we are disappointed with the increase, but the County remains strongly committed and will continue its investment in solutions. We are in the second full year of the County Homeless Initiatives and implementing the \$44 million expansion in mental health and housing services – we are seeing good results,” said Sacramento County Board of Supervisors Chair Patrick Kennedy. “With our partners, we are implementing new sheltering, services and housing strategies identified in the comprehensive County Homeless plan adopted last December. And we just were awarded more than \$12 million for two new permanent supportive housing developments from the State’s first No Place Like Home funding round. This will result in 181 units of new permanent supportive housing in Sacramento, with 87 units set aside for individuals and families experiencing long term homelessness and who are living with a serious mental illness. It’s not without challenges, but this community’s commitment to working together to combat homelessness is firm and strong.”

“The 2019 Count significantly improved the accuracy of estimated nightly homelessness in the Sacramento community making this year’s survey a benchmark,” said Arturo Baiocchi, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Sacramento State University’s Division of Social Work. “Moving forward with future PIT counts Sacramento will be able to more effectively document and track the change in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in the community over time.”

“Addressing homelessness requires more than the \$19 million dollars in annual federal funding the CoC receives and distributes, said Sarah Bontrager, CoC Board President. “It will also require a sustained and collaborative approach across communities, funders and providers. Current and ongoing collaboration has led to the adoption of the Sacramento Homeless Plan, which focuses on system improvements and increasing efficiency for our response to homelessness. We are encouraged by new state and local resources coming in over the next few years to address the challenge before us and continue the momentum we've built.”

To read the full 2019 PIT report and view the infographic click [here](#).

For more information visit [SacramentoStepsForward.org](http://SacramentoStepsForward.org)

### **About Sacramento Homeless Continuum of Care**

The Sacramento Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) Program is required by the United States Housing and Urban Development for federal Continuum of Care funding and promotes community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. Sacramento Homeless Continuum of Care is governed by a 25-member Board that plans and coordinates funding for services and housing to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

### **About Sacramento Steps Forward**

Sacramento Steps Forward is a nonprofit organization committed to ending homelessness in our region through collaboration, innovation, and connecting people to services. Since 2012, Sacramento Steps Forward has been the lead administrative agency for Sacramento’s Homeless Continuum of Care.

### **About Sacramento State University, Institute for Social Research**

Founded in 1989, Sacramento State’s Institute for Social Research (ISR) is an interdisciplinary unit that harnesses the power of scientific research tools to address social problems. Their research and analysis expertise, learned through the hundreds of projects completed for government agencies, nonprofit organizations and the academic community, provides the region with actionable information that can inform key policies and decisions.

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