



Tiffany Taylor-Minor
Director of Community & Corporate Relations
(804) 343-2045 Ext. 10: Ofc.
(804) 551-0788: Cell
ttaylor-minor@homewardva.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Research Suggests More People Experiencing Homelessness for the First Time

Homeward Releases Full Data from Winter 2009 Point-in-Time Count

Richmond, VA – Homeward, the Greater Richmond region’s planning and coordinating agency for homeless services, today announced the full results from the regional winter 2009 point-in-time count of area residents experiencing homelessness. Preliminary results released in February found 1,150 people in the region experiencing homelessness during the one day count conducted this past January. Compared to last year’s count, this overall number reflects a 7.2% increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness and a 10.8% increase in the number of unsheltered individuals in the region. Specific highlights from today’s announcement include:

Economic Indicators

- Last July, 31 individuals surveyed reported experiencing a foreclosure – 21 as homeowners and 10 as renters. This January, 34 people indicated owning properties which had been foreclosed, with 22 experiencing foreclosure as renters
 - Of these, 30.8% experienced foreclosure within the past year
- 10% of people surveyed indicated they had declared bankruptcy at some point in their lives
- 1/3 of respondents had been laid off. Of those, 57.1% had been laid off within the past year
- The employment rate is lower (25.2% vs. 33.4%) among those surveyed. In addition, the number of people working full-time is lower (41.2% vs. 52.1%), and the percentage doing day labor or temp work is higher (26.4% vs. 15.0%)
- 11.6% reported that they had income from panhandling or asking strangers for money in the past year. (In January 2008, this percentage was 15.9%.)

Demand for Emergency Shelter

- 26% higher since last January

Children

- 10.9% of adults surveyed have children living with them
- *12.5% decrease in number of children currently experiencing homelessness

**In January, Homeward signed a memorandum of understanding with Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority and the Richmond Behavioral Health Authority to expedite families from area shelters into public housing with supportive case management services.*

Last Permanent Housing

- Richmond – 52.6% (January 2008, 55.6%)
- Chesterfield – 7.4% (January 2008, 6.3%)
- Henrico – 9.1% (January 2008, 9.3%)
- Hanover – 3.1% (January 2008, 1.4%)

The median length of homelessness is ~150 days, which is consistent with findings from the point-in-time count conducted in January 2008.

Full details from the winter 2009 point-in-time count can be found at www.homewardva.org.

“The results of the winter point-in-time count offered few surprises in light of the current economy,” said Kelly King Horne, Executive Director of Homeward. “We are however optimistic about positive change in the coming months due to the strategic deployment of stimulus monies into our regional service system. We have also seen proven results with our ongoing partnerships with area service providers and local governments.”

The twice yearly point-in-time count reveals a snapshot of the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single day and collects detailed information on their service usage and service needs. The data gathered during this process allows for analysis of the barriers surrounding housing stability in the region and what it would take to end homelessness.

The point-in-time count is primarily conducted in the City of Richmond and the counties of Chesterfield, Hanover and Henrico in cooperation with area social services and law enforcement agencies and emergency and transitional shelter staff. The data includes sheltered and unsheltered families, children and unaccompanied adults.

About Homeward

With more than 1,000 homeless children, single adults and families at a given point in time in Greater Richmond, Homeward is the regional catalyst to research, report and coordinate resources for people experiencing homelessness. In collaboration with regional partners in the City of Richmond and the counties of Chesterfield, Henrico, Hanover, New Kent, Powhatan, Charles City and Goochland, Homeward facilitates service provider trainings, client resource fairs, and conducts twice yearly ‘point-in-time’ counts of those at-risk and who are currently in the sheltered and unsheltered population. In 2008 Homeward launched the Ten Year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Richmond Region. For more information on Homeward, visit www.homewardva.org

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