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## BUTTE COUNTYWIDE HOMELESS CONTINUUM OF CARE

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# 2017 HOMELESS POINT IN TIME CENSUS & SURVEY REPORT

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Butte County Homeless Point In Time (PIT) study collected informational surveys from 1,983 individuals experiencing homeless on January 25, 2017. This marks an 76% increase from the 2015 PIT, and reflects the largest count captured in the county to date. Despite the significant increase, it does not suggest a complete count of those experiencing homelessness in the county, but a base number of people located during a 24-hour period, and represents only one measure of the human and housing crisis facing the county.

The Butte Countywide Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) uses PIT data to generate two reports – the HUD Report and the Census and Survey Report. The HUD Report is required by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) every other year, and includes a portion of the overall data captured for the Census and Survey Report. The HUD Report monitors progress toward ending homelessness, and determines eligibility and funding levels for certain state and federal grants. A more comprehensive picture of the data captured during the PIT is provided in the Census and Survey Report. The Census and Survey Report’s overarching goal is to help the community to better understand homelessness in their area. It is used by public officials and housing departments to meet reporting requirements and to better understand the priorities for limited public funds. Service providers use the Census and Survey Report to inform their practices, as well as to assist them in developing timely and effective housing and services. Communities access the findings to better understand local homelessness and to in develop common knowledge with their community leaders.

The community PIT offers these highlighted findings:

**HOUSEHOLDS:** The 1,983 individuals experiencing homelessness were part of 1,583 households, 85% of which were made up of adults only, another 8% were family households, and 6% were households of minor unaccompanied youth.



**COUNT BY COMMUNITY:** Chico had the highest count at 1,096 individuals, a 92% increase since 2015. Oroville had the second highest count with 713 people, an 83% increase. Paradise's count increased to 120 people, a 145% increase, and almost evenly split between Paradise and Magalia. Gridley saw a decrease of 8 people to 26, or 22% decrease.

**RESIDENCY:** The survey data shows that more than three-fourths of the adults and unaccompanied youth had lived in Butte County for more than three years, and more than half of those surveyed had lived in the county for over 10 years. Almost 80% were living in Butte County when they became homeless and nearly 90% confirmed that Butte County is their home. Those not originally from Butte County, moved to the county for reasons analogous to those **not** in a homeless situation, such as family, college, quality of life, job opportunities, etc.

**CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS:** Nearly half (47%) of the individuals (929) met the definition of chronically homeless (which is a combination of time spent homeless and the existence of a disabling condition) implying that individuals and families are remaining homeless for long periods of time, and doing so while trying to manage persistent physical, mental, and/or developmental conditions.

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION:** The capacity of local prevention and diversion services were insufficient to prevent 555 people who completed the survey from becoming homeless for the first time.

**NIGHTTIME HABITATION:** Of those surveyed, the largest number of respondents (747 people) reported spending the night of the PIT in a place not meant for human habitation, a 164% increase from 2015. Another 729 respondents stayed in programs specifically designed to house those who are homeless: 351 stayed in emergency shelters, 341 in transitional housing projects, and 37 in hotels with a subsidized voucher. There were 438 individuals doubled up with friends and family, without onsite support services and relying on community member resources for shelter. Finally, 69 people were in facilities (treatment centers, hospitals or jail) for the night, but were homeless prior to admission and with no home available to them when released.

**CAUSES:** The top two causes for homelessness in the county, according to the survey respondents, were family crisis and employment/financial problems.

**BARRIERS:** The number one barrier to permanently ending homelessness was the absence of affordable housing. The county's extremely low (1-2%) housing vacancy rate fuels the demand for housing as well as higher rents. The second highest reported barrier was lack of money to pay rent and/or a deposit.

**PUBLIC SAFETY:** According to the survey data, ordinances about sitting, lying and storing property in public places have led 181 people who completed the survey reportedly being ticketed, 80 arrested, and nearly 50 incarcerated in the past year. The county jail had 147 homeless inmates (25% of the jail occupancy) on the night of the PIT but who would otherwise be homeless. The survey data confirmed that most unhoused people have little or no encounters with law enforcement, while about 90 people had over 20 contacts.

**HEALTHCARE:** There is a growing body of evidence that housing is a healthcare need. While about 40% of residents experiencing homelessness accessed clinics and health centers, about 34% accessed hospitals that offer medical care often without payment. This financial burden to hospitals was not distributed across the homeless population but concentrated on a limited number of high frequency users; 36 people who completed the surveys reported using the hospital 12 or more times a year, and 90 people reported staying 12 or more days.

**EDUCATION:** There is a critical need for housing and food support for the growing number of homeless college students, particularly because education is often correlated with future financial stability and self-sufficiency, and may be seen as homelessness prevention. In general, unhoused residents have less education than those who are housed. Local studies by Butte College and Chico State support the local need to bolster educational housing and food support for low income students.

**INCOME & HOUSING:** For 90% of those surveyed, their income would not cover the (county median) rent, let alone typical household and family expenses.

**VETERANS:** There were 137 veterans who completed the survey, a significant increase from the 2015 count. More than half of the veterans were unsheltered and a third have a physical disability and/or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:** Three hundred people surveyed reported being a victim of domestic violence, with one third revealing they were homeless for the first time. The data showed that 40% of those identifying as a victim of domestic violence were men. Nearly half reported having Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and/or a mental health condition.

**YOUTH:** Surveys were collected from 105 minor, unaccompanied youth (UY) and from 145 Transitional Age Youth (TAY), who were 18 to 24 years old. Most of the UY (73%) were interviewed in Oroville and most of the TAY (66%) were interviewed in Chico. Twenty-five of the TAY were parents. Youth were long-term county residents, with 56% living in the county over ten years. Despite their age, 23% of the youth (10% of UY and 32% of TAY) already met the definition of chronically homeless.

The full report is available at [www.buttehomelesscoc.com](http://www.buttehomelesscoc.com)