



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: November 2, 2021

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 homeless persons who are sheltered or unsheltered on a single night in January each year. In San Diego, the Regional Task Force on the Homeless (RTFH) leads a collaboration of community partners and volunteers in conducting this point-in-time count, better known as *WeALLCount*. Communities across the country will be conducting similar events during the last 10 days of January.

Although the figures that come out of this count are used to apply for federal funding, this survey also enables 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, persons with serious mental illness, chronic substance users, veterans, youth, persons with HIV/AIDS, and victims of domestic violence.

Each count is planned and coordinated and requires many volunteers to accurately gauge the homeless population across the San Diego region. In 2020, the last year the count was conducted, 1,782 volunteers participated in a point-in-time count through the RTFH that numbered 7,638 homeless persons in our region. More than 550 County employees participated in the event.

Thankfully, County employees have always come forward in the spirit of volunteerism, whether manning the polls during elections or in their charitable giving, which support the County's *Live Well San Diego* vision of a region that is building better health, living safely and thriving. It is our hope that County employees will once again come forward as volunteers in this effort to identify the extent of this critical issue. The count will take place from 3:45 a.m. to 8 a.m. on Thursday, January 27, 2022.

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RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHAIR NATHAN FLETCHER AND VICE CHAIR 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 27, 2022, 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 address the region's homeless population.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Establishing a volunteer program to allow County employees to participate in the annual point-in-time count on January 27, 2022, 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 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, persons with serious mental illness, chronic substance users, 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 disproportionately represented in the homeless system including justice-involved individuals as well as Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). In general, the incidence of Black, Native Americans and other persons of color experiencing homelessness mirrors the disparities found at the broader community levels. These groups are over-represented in homelessness when compared to their proportion in the general community.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funding associated with today's recommendations is included in the Chief Administrative Officer's Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Adopted Budget. The actual costs will be determined by the classification of employees who choose to volunteer. The funding source is a combination of general-purpose revenues and program revenues. 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 each year. In San Diego, the Regional Task Force on the Homeless (RTFH) leads a collaboration of community partners and volunteers in conducting this point-in-time count,

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Each count is planned and coordinated and requires many volunteers to accurately gauge the homeless population across the region. In 2020, the last year the count was conducted, 1,782 volunteers participated in a point-in-time count through the RTFH that numbered 7,638 homeless persons in our region. More than 550 County employees participated in the event.

The count will take place from 3:45 a.m. to 8 a.m. on Thursday, January 27, 2022. Adhering to County of San Diego Public Health guidance, volunteers will deploy across the region in small teams, which include a trained homeless outreach worker to provide guidance and support. A new mobile application will be used to record the number of homeless persons they see and collect important demographic information. Additional surveys will be conducted throughout the region from January 27, 2022, through January 29, 2022.

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 27, 2022. 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.

Ensuring that the County of San Diego plays a leading role in addressing homelessness is one of our top policy priorities. In April, Chair Fletcher brought forward a proposal to create a Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities. This proposal was supported unanimously by the Board. The creation of this Department showed that the County is committed to achieving a sustained focus on this complex and interconnected issue. The creation of this Department will lead to better coordination of existing and future County homelessness activities and programs and collaboration with outside partners to help vulnerable San Diegans and reduce homelessness in the region. Vice Chair Vargas serves as the Vice Chair of the Region's Continuum of Care, with the Regional Task Force on Homelessness. Her work to eradicate homelessness throughout our region is supported by this necessary count, which not only assists with funding but also helps the County and its partners understand the needs and gaps in our homeless solutions and services.

It is our intent to allow County employees the opportunity to participate in this program during paid County time. County staff will be expected to follow all existing public health and safety guidelines at the time of the count.

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We urge your support.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed actions support Building Better Health, Living Safely and Thriving initiatives in the County of San Diego's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, as well as the County's 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,



CHAIR NATHAN FLETCHER
Supervisor, Fourth District



VICE CHAIR NORA VARGAS
Supervisor, First District

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A