



For Immediate Release

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***2009 Indianapolis Homeless Count Released
Report Shows a 78% Increase in Family Homelessness***

INDIANAPOLIS - The Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention (Coalition) released today the 2009 Indianapolis Homeless Count Report. The count shows a 78% increase in homeless families from 2008 to 2009, and only a marginal decrease in the total number of individuals who were found and counted.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that every community receiving federal funds for programs to aid the homeless must conduct a count every two years during the last two weeks of January. Since 2007, The Coalition has performed the count annually. In January 2009, the Coalition coordinated its annual point-in-time count of homeless individuals throughout Marion County, and partnered with the Indiana University Center for Health Policy to conduct the count.

Under current HUD definitions, only those people who are living in emergency or transitional shelters or in places not fit for habitation may be counted as homeless. Current HUD rules do not allow for persons to be counted if they are “doubled-up” or living with friends or relatives. Even under that narrow definition 1,454 homeless persons were counted as homeless in our community. This number represents only 70 fewer individuals than were counted at the same time last year; however, there has been a substantial increase in the number of homeless families.

In 2008, there were a reported 120 families on the night of the count. In 2009, the number of families jumped to 213. Out of the 1,454 homeless persons counted, 41% were members of a homeless family. If individuals and families who were doubled-up were also included, the number of those experiencing homelessness in our community would be much higher.

“The overall number may have dropped slightly, but service providers keep saying their numbers and needs are rising,” said Timothy C. Joyce, the Coalition’s executive director. “From the 2009 count we can see that family homelessness has increased dramatically and it is our responsibility as a community to make sure that another family does not have to sleep in their car, the street or a friend’s couch one more night.”

The report also indicates that 25% of the people experiencing homelessness in our community are employed, while 14% are in school. The most frequently cited reasons for homelessness were loss of employment and disability or other health issues.

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On July 1, in response to the rise in family homelessness, the Coalition will host their Annual Meeting on the scope of family homelessness, the resources available for families, and what the community can do to help.

For the first time this year a summer count will take place to look at the impact weather might have on homelessness.

For a full version of the report, visit www.chipindy.org.

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The Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention is a nonprofit agency created in 1996 to advocate for homeless and near-homeless people in Indianapolis and to help organizations that serve them work together more effectively. CHIP led the Blueprint to End Homelessness planning effort and now serves as the lead agency to mobilize the community to work together to implement its recommendations.

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