



For Immediate Release

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2010 INDIANAPOLIS HOMELESS COUNT UP
Federal Stimulus Dollars Focusing on Prevention Combats Homelessness in Indianapolis

INDIANAPOLIS –The overall homeless population in Indianapolis increased 2% from 2009 to 2010, the Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention (Coalition) said today.

The 2010 Indianapolis Homeless Count shows that 1,488 individuals were homeless on Jan. 21, the date on which the count was held in Indianapolis. That was up 34 individuals from January 2009.

Prevention initiatives including the stimulus funds passed by the U.S. Congress and passed on to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to implement a Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) and increased use of social services had an impact on keeping the increase in homelessness down.

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. The Coalition partnered with the Indiana University Public Policy Institute to coordinate the count and prepare a report.

Under HUD definitions, only those people who are living in emergency or transitional shelters or in places not intended for habitation may be counted as homeless. People who are “doubled-up” – living with friends or relatives – are not considered homeless and thus are not counted. Even under that narrow definition, 1,488 people were found to be experiencing homelessness in our community on a single night, including 191 families. Nearly 40% of our city’s homeless population are members of a homeless family, including 362 children under the age of 18.

This number could have been much larger if not for the HPRP. The purpose of the HPRP is to provide homelessness prevention assistance to households who would otherwise become homeless, many due to the economic crisis, and to provide assistance to rapidly re-house persons who are homeless. Since October 1, 2009, the HPRP initiatives have provided prevention and rapid re-housing assistance to 86 families comprised of 143 individuals in Indianapolis.

In addition to the HPRP, responding interventions seem to have assisted in keeping this year’s count from increasing more significantly from the previous count. Connect2Help, a nonprofit agency dedicated to facilitating connections between people who need human services and those who provide them, saw an increase in calls seeking utility assistance, rent assistance, emergency shelter, and emergency food assistance. These individuals may have become homeless without prevention services in our community in place.

“Without the HPRP we could easily assume that the number of homeless individuals, without their own pillow to lay their head on the night of the count would have been up by 143,” said Timothy C. Joyce, the

Coalition's executive director. "It's distressing to see the overall number increase, but we are very thankful the federal government stepped up to put prevention initiatives in place to make sure that number was not significantly more. This recession has been long and very hard on families and children and but for this help it could very well have been even worse."

Of the adults experiencing homelessness, 19 percent are employed, while 15 percent are attending school or vocational programs. The single greatest reason given for why an individual was experiencing homelessness was that they had lost or could not find a job.

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.