



The Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness

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MEDIA ADVISORY

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Obama officials to join local One Night Count of unsheltered homeless people

As part a special focus on “point-in-time counts” of people experiencing homelessness across the nation, U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness Deputy Director Anthony Love, and Undersecretary for Health of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Dr. Robert Petzel, will join nearly 1,000 volunteers across King County in this week’s One Night Count of unsheltered homeless people.

The annual One Night Count, scheduled for the early morning hours of Friday, January 27, will attempt to make a specific tally of unsheltered people throughout King County. The effort is organized by the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness (SKCCH) with support from the Committee to End Homelessness in King County (CEH), and dozens of local and state nonprofit and government partners. Teams of volunteers will return to historical and new count areas in Auburn, Bellevue, Bothell, Federal Way, Kent, Kenmore, Kirkland, Redmond, Renton, Seattle, Shoreline, White Center and Woodinville. The 2012 One Night Count will also collect information from select hospitals about emergency room usage, and from Metro night owl buses operating throughout the county.

When: Friday, January 27 (late night of January 26), 2:00 AM – 5:00 AM

1:45 AM – Media Check in and pairing with count teams

PLEASE CALL NICOLE MACRI IN ADVANCE IF POSSIBLE

8:00 AM – Post-count media briefing and announcement of count totals

Where/Area Locations:	On-Site Coordinator	
Seattle – Central HQ	Compass Housing Alliance 210 Alaskan Way S at S Washington St, Seattle 98104 (under the Viaduct in Pioneer Square)	Alison Eisinger, Executive Director, SKCCH
Auburn, Bellevue, Federal Way, Kent, Renton, Shoreline, University District	Various Please call Nicole Macri for information on other area headquarters where media can participate	Various

Federal focus on ending homelessness

Seattle is one of ten communities in which federal officials will participate in point-in-time counts. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) mandates point-in-time counts at least every two years for municipalities applying for federal homeless housing funds under the McKinney-Vento Act. King County received over \$20 million in McKinney-Vento funds this year.

Last month, HUD reported that on a single night in January 2011, at least 636,017 people were homeless in the U.S. The Obama Administration is the first to implement a national strategic plan to end homelessness. Entitled *Opening Doors*, this plan outlines a vision to end veterans and chronic homelessness by 2015; and to end homelessness among children, family, and youth by 2020.

Local conditions that may influence this year’s count

In 2012, the Count numbers may reflect increases in available winter-only shelter in Seattle and east King County. The cities of Kirkland, Bellevue and Redmond together with nonprofits, religious groups and community volunteers, have established winter shelters for adults and families with children. Up to 75

men and women have been sleeping in the basement of Seattle City Hall in a shelter that is open nightly October through March. Seattle's Fire Station 39, which last year was home to Nickelsville, is now a winter response shelter for adults. Special severe weather shelters prompted by last week's historic snow and ice storms were opened in Seattle, Kent, Renton, Federal Way and Auburn, and provided respite from the weather to dozens of people. These shelters are not anticipated to be open during this year's Count.

The Alaskan Way Viaduct has been part of the areas counted since the One Night Count's inception over 30 years ago. People still seek shelter under this structure and many have been displaced as a result of the heavy construction in the area, and the dismantling of a long stretch of the overpass in Fall 2011. It is not possible to state how many homeless people may have been affected by these changes on the ground, but outreach workers are uncertain to where people have moved.

WSDOT and its contractors had planned to remove people camped under what remains of the Viaduct today, Monday, January 23rd, despite the recent harsh cold, the lack of adequate notice, and the fact that people were not being offered alternative shelter. The Coalition on Homelessness has requested that WSDOT suspend plans to remove people, during the very week when local, state, and federal officials are mandated to document the unmet need for shelter and housing, The Coalition has asked to meet with state officials to address how they can mitigate the serious impact construction activities along the waterfront are having on the lives of poor and homeless people in the area.

Beyond the One Night Count: engaging volunteers in advocacy

Once the Count is concluded many volunteers have a powerful desire to take the next step, making sure that our communities have enough housing and supportive services for people who are homeless. SKCCH plans to host two workshops to engage volunteers "Beyond the One Night Count" on Saturday, February 11. In Seattle, workshops take place from 10.00 a.m. to noon at Seattle Pacific University, Student Union Building, Gazebo Room, 3307 3rd Ave W, 98119. In Kent, workshops take place from 2.00 to 4.00 p.m. at Kona Kai Coffee Company, 124 4th Ave S, Kent, 98032. On-line registration for these free hands-on workshops is found at http://www.homelessinfo.org/one_night_count/beyond_the_one_night_count.php

One Night Count background

King County has one of the nation's best-established point-in-time counts of homeless people. In January 2011, volunteers found 2,442 people surviving outside without shelter. Another 6,382 people staying in shelters and transitional housing programs throughout King County were counted, bringing the 2011 One Night Count total to 8,824. While frightening at face value, this number is understood to represent the minimum number of people affected on that night. Since 1980, SKCCH and nonprofit and government partners across King County have conducted the One Night Count in order to establish the actual number of homeless individuals and families who are sleeping outdoors, in vehicles, or in makeshift structures in our communities. On the same night, the King County's Community Services Division collects information from agencies providing shelter and transitional housing, enumerating the people using these publicly and privately funded services. Together, the "Street Count" and the "Shelter Survey" make up the One Night Count of people who are homeless in King County.

Major funding for the One Night Count is provided by the King County Committee to End Homelessness, the coalition of government, business and nonprofits responsible for implementing our community's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. The Count helps to inform progress on the Plan, provides insight into the dynamics of homelessness, and informs strategies for solving it.

The Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness (SKCCH) works collaboratively to ensure safety and survival for people who are homeless, and to end the crisis of homelessness in our region.