

2015 Homeless Point -in-Time Count and Survey

The 2015 Homeless Point-in-Time Count (PIT) and Survey was conducted by the Orange County Commission to End Homelessness, Focus Strategies, 2-1-1 Orange County (211OC), the Orange County Health Care Agency, and OC Community Services.

Summary of Key Findings:

	2009		2011		2013		2015	
	#	% of total						
Unsheltered Homeless People	5,724	69%	4,272	62%	1,678	39%	2201	49%
Sheltered Homeless People	2,609	31%	2,667	38%	2,573	61%	2251	51%
Total Point-in-Time Count	8,333		6,939		4,251		4,452	
Change Year to Year	-1,394		-2,688		+201			
Change 2009 – 2015					-3881			
Annual Estimate	21,479		18,325		12,707		15,291	

- Utilizing a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) approved methodology, the 2015 PIT Count and Survey was conducted on the morning of January 24, 2015 and included sheltered and unsheltered counts of homeless. This was the same methodology used for the 2013 PIT Count and Survey.
- The HUD definition of homelessness for the purpose of a Point in Time homeless count includes only people who are literally homeless – living unsheltered on the streets, in a vehicle or another place not fit for human habitation or in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program.
- The Point-in-Time is a one night snapshot of *literal* homelessness as defined by HUD. Many people and families considered homeless or at risk in other arenas – including those in prison/jail, living in hotels/motels or “couch surfing” are NOT included in the HUD Point-in-Time Count.

- Based on the findings from the 2015 Orange County PIT Count and Survey, a total of 4,452 individuals are homeless on any given night. This represents an increase of roughly 5% from the 2013 PIT Count (or an increase of 201 individuals).

County	2013 PIT	2015 PIT	Difference	Percent Change 2013-2015
Los Angeles	35,524	41,174	+ 5,650	+16%
Orange	4,251	4,452	+ 201	+5%
Riverside	2,978	2,378	- 600	-20%
San Bernardino	2,321	2,149	-172	-7%
San Diego	8,879	8,742	-158	-2%
Ventura	1,674	1,417	-257	-15%

- Orange County’s homeless population is proportionally similar to the national homeless population in terms of household type: 31% of homeless people are in family households (including at least one minor child) and 69% are in adult only households.

- Orange County’s homeless sheltered and unsheltered populations are also proportionally similar to the national population: approximately forty-nine percent (49%) of homeless persons were unsheltered -- living on the streets, in vehicles or tents and fifty-one percent (51%) of homeless people counted were sheltered.

Methodology:

- In conjunction with 211OC, the Orange County Commission to End Homelessness specifically convened an Ad Hoc Committee comprised of multiple stakeholders and partners to advise on the 2015 PIT Count.
- The Ad Hoc Committee’s direction included a public places count with sampling methodology (one of two methodologies appropriate for the size and urbanization of Orange County); the integration of the survey with the count to better extrapolate characteristics of the

Combining the count and survey ensures that characteristic data is representative of the actual population counted.

85% of those surveyed were unsheltered homeless; those responses were used to generate population data.

unsheltered population; and a statistical process after the count to account for areas not visited on the morning of the count.

- The 2015 PIT Count also created a unique opportunity to engage and educate the community in collecting, analyzing, and understanding information supporting the goal of homelessness. In total, 988 people signed up as volunteers with more than 750 volunteers committed to a 2 hour training.
- 70 homeless persons and 748 homeless service providers and community volunteers were deployed from centers located in each of the 5 Supervisorial Districts of the County to conduct the street count and survey, canvassing 118 of the 184 pre-identified map areas (Hot or Warm) throughout the County including the Santa Ana Bike Trail.

Limitations of Point in Time Counts:

- There are many challenges in any homeless count, especially when implemented in a community as diverse and large as Orange County (798 square miles).
- Methodologies vary from community to community. Numbers may vary based on methodology used or changes in methodology.
- A Point-in-Time Count is just a one night “snapshot” and does not capture all those who are cycling in and out of homelessness. Not everyone becomes homeless on the same night.
- Weather can have an impact on the count. In 2013, the PIT was conducted on the third day of inclement weather. In 2015, the weather was warmer than normal, and quite windy.

Successful Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness Strategies and Key Local Initiatives:

- In recent years, Orange County has implemented policy and program changes aimed at ensuring homeless persons in Orange County are rapidly housed and that local resources are invested in programs with **proven impacts** on reducing homelessness.
- Programs in Orange County have re-tooled and shifted their focus to moving people quickly into housing. By embracing **rapid re-housing** as a strategy, the length of time that a family experiences **homelessness is shorter**, also allowing programs to serve more people.
- Over the past two years, Orange County has dramatically increased Permanent Supportive Housing for the **most vulnerable populations**, including program shifts and additional capacity including:
 - **The development** of new Permanent Supportive Housing units (83) funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA); new Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers (624), providing homeless veterans with housing and supports in permanent housing; additional housing opportunities with the Shelter Plus Care program (650) serving people who are homeless and disabled.
 - **Development of new Coordinated Entry System (CES)**, addressing the need to remove barriers to homeless for program entry, application of an assessment tool, and the creation of an Orange County bed/unit inventory system, starting with Permanent Supportive Housing units.
 - **Reallocation of HUD funds** from lesser performing Transitional Housing programs to two (2) new programs (one new Permanent Supportive Housing program and one new Rapid Rehousing program) beginning in FY2015-2016.
 - **Technical Assistance** was provided to support an application for a new \$2.5 Million Permanent Supportive Housing program in a HUD competition, helping to secure these funds for 100+ new units, beginning in FY2015-2016.