



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release: MAY 2, 2017**

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### **Homeless Leadership Coalition Releases 2017 HUD Homeless Count Data for Central Oregon: Number of People Unsheltered Climbs**

BEND, OR -- The Homeless Leadership Coalition (HLC) released the results of the 2017 Point-in-Time Count, an annual one-night census of people experiencing homelessness - both sheltered and unsheltered - in the tri-county region. The results show increases across populations, especially among people living in unsheltered conditions.

The numbers released today reflect *only* the people who meet HUD's definition of homelessness - people living in shelters, transitional housing programs, or in a place not meant for human habitation. In late May, the HLC will issue a report and hold Community Town Halls on Homelessness (schedule below) throughout the region. The report, produced in partnership with OHSU Central Oregon Research Coalition, will include additional information about people at-risk of homelessness, as well as results on access to healthcare, causes of homelessness, and other related information.

On January 25, 2017, there were 778 people who experienced "literal" homelessness in Central Oregon, a 31% increase compared to the last sheltered and unsheltered count in 2015. Increases were seen among veterans (41% increase), as well as among adults, youth, and children. There was a 35% increase in the number of people in families experiencing homelessness, with a striking number unsheltered (238), including 129 unsheltered children.

The number of people living unsheltered (ie., in cars, camping, or in other places not meant for human habitation) jumped 35% from 2015, a harsh reality for so many people during a month of record snowfall and cold temperatures. Of all the people considered literally homeless, 70% (548 people) were unsheltered. Nearly 80% of all the children who were homeless were unsheltered. This is a 30% increase in unsheltered children compared to 2015.

"The number of people living unsheltered should be a wake-up call to all Central Oregonians," urged

Cody Standiford, HLC Co-Chair. “The lack of affordable housing options in our region, exacerbated by the tight rental market, is pushing too many in our community out into the cold. We can do better. We had nearly 550 people, including 130 children, living unsheltered during this terrible winter. Many good efforts are underway to expand affordable housing options, but we need more, and more quickly. This is a crisis that we can solve, and we need everyone’s help to do it. All people, especially children, should have a safe, stable, warm home.”

As in past years, “couldn’t afford rent” was identified as the single biggest barrier to participants finding adequate housing. The second most reported answer was unemployment.

**“Community Town Halls on Homelessness”** will be held throughout the region to learn more about the PIT count results, and to discuss local implications and solutions. Those interested in learning more and in getting involved are encouraged to attend.

- La Pine: June 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 p.m. - Mid State Electric Community Room, 16755 Finley Butte Rd., La Pine
- Warm Springs: May 31<sup>st</sup> at 5:30 p.m. - Family Resource Center Conference Room, Health & Human Services Branch, Warm Springs
- Bend – June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 8:00 a.m. - Downtown Library, Brooks Room, Bend
- Prineville – TBD
- Sisters – June 5<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm - Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire Department Community Hall, 301 S. Elm St., Sisters
- Redmond – June 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. - Location TBD
- Madras – June 15<sup>th</sup> at 12pm - Madras St. Charles, Metolius Conference Room (hosted by the Faith Based Network), Madras

To review the data summary from the January 2017 count - for people who are considered “literally homeless” by HUD - or to learn how to connect with agencies and efforts in your community, visit <http://cohomeless.org/>.

For more information, please contact HLC Chairpersons, Molly Taroli at 503-730-1280 and/or Cody Standiford at 541-610-8722.

**About the Central Oregon Homeless Leadership Coalition:** The Homeless Leadership Coalition is a collaboration of community partners in Crook, Jefferson, and Deschutes counties engaging the community through education, advocacy, planning, prioritization and accountability for services to persons experiencing homelessness. HLC consists of more than 40 organizations including faith communities, shelter providers, public schools, public health, emergency services, veterans outreach, public safety, mental health, housing services, public services, private employers and community advocates. They represent a diverse group of interests, unified by a common focus: a Central Oregon where everyone has a safe, stable place to call home.

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