



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Homeless Leadership Coalition Releases 2018 HUD Homeless Count Data for Central Oregon**

BEND, OR -- The Homeless Leadership Coalition (HLC) released the results of the 2018 Point-in-Time Count, an annual one-night census of people experiencing homelessness - both sheltered and unsheltered - in the tri-county region. All census information is self-reported. 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 June, the HLC will issue a more comprehensive report on PIT findings. The second 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. The HLC will be scheduling local community meetings again this year around this data in the coming months. Watch for further information on these meeting.

On January 24, 2018, there were at least 787 children, women and men who experienced "literal" homelessness in Central Oregon, fortunately only a slight increase from the 2017 count, which was 778 people.

While there was a 30% decrease in the overall number of families that were unsheltered (from 238 in

2017 to 165 in 2018), there were still five times more unsheltered families than sheltered. Moreover, there was an increase in homelessness among youth (21% increase), as well as people with mental illness (36% increase) and chemical dependency (17% increase).

We are making improvements in families and veterans. Central Oregon Veterans Outreach (COVO) is ramping up their services as quickly as they can, and continues to provide a vital service to the homeless men and women who served in our armed forces.

However, the Point in Time count reported that over one-half of the veterans we counted this year were still unsheltered.

“Every community in Central Oregon is affected by homelessness,” says George Myers, HLC Coordinator. We can’t pretend that this issue will just disappear, or be solved with the current capacity of our social service agencies, and affordable housing projects. We need to decide that it is unacceptable that hundreds of children, veterans, and mentally ill are unsheltered every night. We need to do more with a united regional effort to fund and create affordable rental and supportive housing, and try innovative ideas.”

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.

To review the data summary from the January 2018 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 the HLC Coordinator, George Myers, at 612-419-6408, or HLC Co-Chairpersons, Molly Taroli at 503-730-1280 and Colleen Thomas at 541-317-3153.

**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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