



Heartland Continuum of Care
Mayor's Taskforce on Homelessness



PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2007 Homeless Street Count Results
January 26, 2007 in Springfield, Illinois

On January 26, 2007, The Heartland Continuum of Care and the Mayor's Taskforce on Homelessness conducted a Homeless Street Count to determine the number of homeless individuals in Springfield.

The Continuum used a three prong approach as outlined below:

1. Agencies who serve the homeless population conducted surveys in their offices that day and evening. These agencies included but were not limited to, Abundant Faith, Contact Ministries, Helping Hands, MERCY Communities, PORA, Salvation Army, Fifth Street Renaissance/Sara Center, Washington Street Mission, Mental Health Center of Central Illinois and Youth Service Bureau.
2. During both mealtimes homeless individuals were surveyed at St. John's Breadline.
3. Between the hours of 9:00 pm and 12:00 am, volunteers assisted by 7 Springfield police officers, canvassed the city looking for homeless individuals.

The survey revealed **303** homeless individuals. Of the 303 individuals, 230 were adults and 73 were children. Of the 230 adults, 117 were male and 103 were female. Of the 303 individuals, 101 adults with 23 children were housed in emergency shelters, and 99 adults with 48 children were living in transitional and permanent housing programs administered by the Continuum of Care agencies. A total of 15 adults were living on the streets, 9 at the library, with the additional 6 living in abandoned houses with no utilities.

Changes from 2006 to 2007

- Decrease in the overall count from 2006 to 2007 from 382 to 303.
- Increase in chronically homeless from 2006 to 2007 from 78 to 88.
- 11 individuals surveyed at breadline were excluded from count because although they thought themselves to be homeless, they didn't fit into the definition as set by HUD
- Number of individuals utilizing emergency shelters was down
 - *This validates the presumption that the clients who are chronically homeless cannot adhere to shelter policy and choose not to access the shelter system.*

Some suggested explanations why 2007 numbers were lower than 2006.

- Springfield Housing Authority opened up their Section 8 waiting list and between July 10, 2006 and December 31, 2006, **901** vouchers were issued.
- 27 new affordable housing units were constructed
- HUD funded Permanent housing projects were funded and began accepting residents

For more information about the Continuum of Care and the Homeless Taskforce visit www.springfieldhomeless.org.

Contacts:

Brenda Johnson

Executive Director, Helping Hands
Co-Chair, Continuum of Care
Phone: 217-522-0048 or 217-744-0470

Melissa Huffstedtler

Deputy Director, Springfield Housing Authority
Co-Chair, Continuum of Care
Phone: 217-753-5764

Kathleen Wright

Executive Director, Youth Service Bureau
Secretary, Continuum of Care
Phone: 217-529-8300