



## 2009 Kansas Point-In-Time Count Shows Reduction in Homelessness

--Survey Finds 1,811 Instances of Homelessness in Kansas; 300 Fewer than 2007--

**Topeka** (June 10, 2009) - Results from the 2009 Kansas Point-In-Time (KPIT) Count show a 14% reduction in the state's homeless population. Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC) and the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS), sponsored the count. The survey, which represents only a snapshot of homelessness on any given night, found that on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009 an estimated 1,811 people in Kansas experienced literal homelessness; down from 2,111 in 2007.

Governor Mark Parkinson said the results are good news for Kansas. "Despite the economic challenges here in Kansas and across the country, we must remain committed to ensuring that no one should have to sleep on the streets or go hungry," said Parkinson. "I appreciate the work of SRS, Kansas Housing, United Way of the Plains and community-based programs throughout Kansas that are on the front lines of combating homelessness."

"The reduction in homelessness means we're making progress," said Patrick J. Hanrahan, President of United Way of the Plains which coordinated the KPIT. "However, too many Kansas families still don't have a place to call home. This year's count must inspire us to redouble our efforts to eliminate homelessness altogether."

The 2009 KPIT, made possible by a first-ever statewide alliance of government agencies, businesses and community organizations, established a baseline count of the number of people who are homeless. However, the numbers of homeless can fluctuate daily due to economic and environmental factors.

"It's difficult to find homeless families and individuals living on the streets, sleeping in abandoned houses or camping in isolated areas," said Gary Allsup, KHRC's Executive Director. "Because of that and other reasons, the point-in-time count may under-represent the total number of homeless people in Kansas."

Nearly six hundred volunteers in thirty-six Kansas counties participated in the KPIT, contacting a total of 3,235 people. The goal of the count was to increase public awareness about homelessness, leverage resources that enable service providers to properly address the needs of people experiencing homelessness, and help program administrators and policymakers identify strategies to end homeless in Kansas.

In addition to KHRC, SRS and United Way of the Plains, additional partners involved in this year's count included the Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition, the Kansas State Department of Education, the Kansas Department of Corrections, the Kansas Coalition against Sexual and Domestic Violence, the Veterans Administration, and representatives from the state's five Continua of Care.

(more)

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Conclusions from this year's count include:

- ❖ Between 2007 and 2009, Kansas had a 14.2 percent decrease in the number of people experiencing literal homelessness (2,111 people in 2007 compared to 1,811 people in 2009).
- ❖ Nearly 1 in 5 people (19.3 percent) experiencing homelessness on January 28th were children under the age of 18.
- ❖ Almost 200 people (10.8% of the 1,811) were unsheltered, staying in places not meant for human habitation such as alleyways, parks, drainage tunnels, river banks or abandoned buildings.
- ❖ Respondents ranged in age from 13 years old to 100 years old, with the mean age of 41.8 years.
- ❖ A composite of the typical respondent who was literally homeless in the KPIT was:
  - ◆ White (n = 601; 57.2 percent)
  - ◆ Not Hispanic (n = 779; 87.6 percent)
  - ◆ Male (n = 728; 63.0 percent)
- ❖ About one in three (33.7 percent) literally homeless respondents reported they had a serious mental illness. This reflects a greater percentage of persons who have a mental illness when compared to the 22.4 percent of homeless persons who had a mental illness reported in a recent National Coalition for the Homeless study (6/08).
- ❖ In each of the five Continua of Care (CoC) in Kansas, people experiencing literal homelessness reported having other people who accompanied them in their current living situation. The number of accompanying persons and the percentage of those who were children varied by CoC.
  - ◆ Johnson County CoC  
58.7 percent of the 104 accompanying people were children
  - ◆ Sedgwick County CoC  
46.2 percent of the 78 accompanying people were children
  - ◆ Shawnee County CoC  
72.7 percent of the 55 accompanying people were children
  - ◆ Wyandotte County CoC  
85.4 percent of the 48 accompanying people were children
  - ◆ Balance of State CoC  
72.3 percent of the 206 accompanying people were children

Kansas receives approximately \$7 million in Homeless Assistance Program funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) each year. HUD allocates homeless assistance grants to communities and local organizations for what's referred to as Continuum of Care (CoC) networks. Kansas has five CoC networks that provide services to the homeless across the state. HUD requires Point-in-Time counts for networks currently utilizing homeless assistance funds and for those considering applying for future HUD funds. HUD requires PIT counts to be conducted within the last seven days of January every two years.

For more information regarding the KPIT please call Delane Butler of United Way of the Plains at 316-267-1321, Ext. 4105, Catherine Couch of KHRC at 785-296-0081 or Michelle Ponce of SRS at 785-296-3271. To view the full 2009 Kansas Point-In-Time study, please visit [www.kshousingcorp.org](http://www.kshousingcorp.org).