

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: Community Services Consortium, Point in Time Count

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2022 Point in Time Count Reveals Projection of Homelessness In Tri-County Region

How do our local governments and service providers learn about the current and ever-changing status of homelessness in our communities so we can better address it? [Community Services Consortium](#) (CSC) helps with this by coordinating the annual [Point in Time Count](#) in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties, a federal Housing & Urban Development (HUD) requirement for every community in the country.

Understanding and examining what homelessness looks like today in comparison to Point in Time Counts from previous reporting years aids local service providers and city and county governments in determining how to make changes in funding, outreach, and programs to better support and shelter those experiencing homelessness in our communities.

CSC, and their team of street outreach volunteers from other local agencies and the community, completed the 2022 Point in Time Count of sheltered and unsheltered individuals and families in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties experiencing homelessness.

It's imperative to know the context of how the numbers were collected to understand their weight and impact. While an *exact* count is never possible due to the challenging nature and logistics of the endeavor, there was increased difficulty in tandem with other barriers this year. The federally designated timeframe for the count unpredictably took place during the January Covid Omicron surge. This posed an increased challenge as shelters are utilized for the count and were operating with decreased capacities in accordance with state guidance. Additionally, there were struggles to organize a sufficient outreach team in Lincoln County this year, leading to a lower count than past reporting in Lincoln County. Bearing all of that, the report is still the best resource for getting a crucial look into present homelessness in the tri-county region.

This year's report revealed that over 700 people are unhoused, living on the streets, in between shelters, or worse, in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties. To illustrate the gravity of that number, it is more than the total population of the City of Monroe. And given the disclaimers above, the true number is higher than the reported count.

By county, the report estimates that there are about 300 unhoused individuals in both Linn and Benton Counties, and over 130 in Lincoln. Though, as noted above, that count is less accurate than the counts in Linn and Benton Counties.

Of the 700 total unhoused individuals in the tri-county region, about 6% are reported to be Veterans. 5% include families with children, with over half being unsheltered. 30-40% of those counted reported to be “chronically homeless”, meaning they have been unhoused for at least a year, or repeatedly, often while struggling with a disabling condition such as a serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or physical disability.

“Conducting a head count of those experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are not in shelter, is an overwhelming task,” according to the regional count lead, Dina Eldridge, Housing Services Manager for CSC.

“No one truly believes that such counts are complete or comprehensive as there is no practical way to know or find every unhoused individual or family in a community, especially in rural areas like most of Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties. “ Eldridge further explained, “Homelessness is isolating and scary, and many people who are forced to sleep in their car or pitch a tent in the woods do not want other people to find them. So, we do our best to get a snapshot of the problem with the understanding that the true number is undoubtedly larger, but unknown.”

To learn more about CSC, visit their website at communityservices.us.