FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Status of Homelessness in North Dakota

FARGO, N.D. (Dec. 18, 2018) – The North Dakota Coalition of Homeless People (NDCHP), the lead entity for the ND Continuum of Care (CoC) would like to provide clarification of recent data released by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regarding the Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) for North Dakota.

There were errors in several data points submitted to HUD and the NDCHP has been aware of those errors and has been actively working with HUD to correct them in recent weeks prior to the public release of the data.

The numbers in the AHAR, for the 2018 count do not reflect the reality of homelessness in North Dakota. NDCHP member agencies serving people experiencing homelessness across the state are currently not reporting a decrease in numbers of people being served, except among Veteran populations. “In many communities we’ve had reports of significant increases in homeless,” said Diana Hall, Board Chair, NDCHP.

Hall also said that 2018 homeless count efforts were depressed stemming from funding reductions and other challenges at State and Local Levels. “Our partners across the state do incredible work despite diminishing resources,” Hall said. “However, with less resources, outreach and data collation for this effort has become considerably more difficult.” Currently all processes and data are completed by volunteers.

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. HUD requires that CoCs count persons who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night every other year (odd numbered years), although many regions conduct the PIT annually. The 2019 PIT will be conducted the night of January 23 across North Dakota, as volunteer staffing permits.

“Doing a point in time count in January in North Dakota is always a challenge. Outreach to find people takes time and resources that are often scarce,” said Cody Schuler, FM Coalition to End Homelessness Executive Director. “It can be difficult to find unsheltered because in the cold of winter, people experiencing homelessness must seek temporary shelter to survive. This often includes situations that are very unsafe.”

“While we have, in fact, seen a significant reduction in the number of homeless Veterans across the state, in many communities we’ve had reports of increases in non-Veteran homelessness, especially among families with children,” Hall said. “Some of those increases are very significant.”

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