

Nanaimo Homeless Coalition

Let's Talk About Homelessness in Nanaimo

on Tuesday, February 9, 2016



For Immediate Release

Nanaimo to Participate in the First Cross-Canada Coordinated Point-in-Time Homeless Count

Nanaimo, BC – On February 9, 2016 the Nanaimo Homeless Coalition, in association with United Way Central and Northern Vancouver Island (UWCNVI) and volunteers from the community, will conduct Nanaimo's 2016 Point-in-Time (PiT) Homeless Count.

In one day, trained volunteers will count and survey individuals who are staying in shelters, short-term housing and who are without shelter. The PiT Count will provide a "snapshot" of homelessness in Nanaimo. Nanaimo has previously piloted five counts on the number of homeless people in the past, but one has not been done in over five years.

The Nanaimo Homeless Coalition is a group that meets year-round to tackle homelessness, and is made up of local experts who work with homeless people on a regular basis, such as members from the RCMP, social workers, executive directors and the City of Nanaimo.

The PiT Count will indicate the *minimum* number of people experiencing homelessness in our community. Other forms of homelessness, such as people staying temporarily with friends and trading sex for shelter, are not typically included in a PiT Count.

The PiT Count will improve the Coalition's understanding of the needs and circumstances of the people who are affected by homelessness in our community. The survey will provide us with key data on gender, age, ethnicity and more.

Results will be made publicly available and the Coalition will use the results of the PiT Count to improve local response to homelessness. In the future, successive counts will allow us to measure progress towards our ultimate goal: ending homelessness in Nanaimo.

The Nanaimo PiT Count has received funding from Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy. During the first sixty days of 2016, individuals experiencing homelessness will be enumerated in various communities across the country. The coordinated effort will help us to create a picture of homelessness in communities across Canada.

"Previous Point-in-Time counts suggest that the number of people experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo is anywhere between 100 to 300," said John Horn, Co-Chair of the Nanaimo Homeless Coalition and Social Planner at the City of Nanaimo. "As a local government it is important that we understand not just the extent of homelessness but who is experiencing homelessness. This

Point-in-Time Count will help our community to plan effectively and improve our response to those in need.”

"I am pleased to announce that Nanaimo has decided to join the movement towards ending homelessness by participating in the first national Point-in-Time Count," said Signy Madden, Executive Director at UWCNVI.

“There has been a monumental shift in how we think about homelessness. Most importantly, there has been recognition that homelessness of any amount is unacceptable. By counting the minimum number of homeless individuals and families we have in our community, working to help the homeless.”

Information from the PiT Count will give funders such as United Way, BC Housing, the City of Nanaimo, as well as the many dedicated front line service agencies on our coalition better information on how to fund and target our efforts to end homelessness.

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