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2025 Point-in-Time Count Shows Homelessness at Record High Despite Progress in Reducing Unsheltered Homelessness

Overall homelessness rises 7.4% to an all-time high, highlighting the urgent need for regional housing solutions and expanded prevention efforts

[Columbus, OH, May 1, 2025] — Community Shelter Board (CSB) released the results of the 2025 Point-in-Time Count today, highlighting significant challenges and encouraging progress in the community's response to homelessness. The annual count, conducted in partnership with the Columbus and Franklin County Continuum of Care, identified 2,556 individuals experiencing homelessness—a 7.4% increase over 2024. When combined with the staggering 22% rise reported in 2022, this marks the largest cumulative increase in the community's history, underscoring the escalating urgency of the homelessness crisis.

The increase was largely driven by a rise in sheltered homelessness, with the number of people staying in emergency shelters growing by 13%. Predictive modeling tells us by 2028, this region will see an increase of 16% in overall homelessness, these numbers are a direct indicator that we are trending in that direction. A trend that is not being followed is the number of people living in unsheltered conditions, PIT showed a decrease of 11%; we were expecting to see increasing trends, with an increase of 68% of those experiencing unsheltered homelessness predicted by 2028. This directional change supports newly implemented strategies and initiatives highlighting the impact of diversifying shelter options and aligning our community outreach initiatives.

"We are urgent in our action, scaling affordable housing, expanding prevention and diversion efforts, and centering our most vulnerable populations. Public, private and community organizations have collectively joined this effort committing to sustain the critical progress we have made," said Shannon TL Isom, President and CEO of Community Shelter Board. "This is not just a downtown issue or a city issue — homelessness is a regional challenge, and it demands a coordinated regional response. We will create lasting change."

Key findings from the 2025 Point-in-Time Count include:

- Single adult homelessness rose by 14%, with a 26% increase in sheltered homelessness—the largest demographic being men between the ages of 45 and 54.
- Unsheltered single adult homelessness decreased by 12%, reflecting the success of expanded outreach and warming strategies.
- Family homelessness declined by 9%, though the number of unsheltered families nearly doubled, from 5 in 2024 to 9 in 2025.

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About the Community Shelter Board

Community Shelter Board leads a coordinated, community-wide effort to make sure everyone in Columbus and Franklin County has a place to call home. With a proven model built on collaboration, accountability, and measurable results, CSB strategically invests funding from diverse sources into a network of nonprofit partners to deliver housing, shelter, and supportive services. To learn more about the Community Shelter Board, visit www.csb.org.

- Chronic homelessness dropped by 1.8%, reflecting improved access to long-term supportive housing.
- Homelessness among survivors of domestic violence fell by 31%, demonstrating the success of coordinated community efforts.
- The number of people experiencing homelessness with severe mental illness fell by 21%, a sign of improved outreach and service coordination.

The community's focused investment in winter warming centers, targeted outreach, and rapid housing interventions have successfully helped to reduce unsheltered homelessness. However, these gains remain at risk due to rising eviction rates, the looming expiration of Emergency Rental Assistance funds, and a severe shortage of deeply affordable housing. Compounding these challenges are broader economic uncertainties and potential federal policy shifts, including changes to Medicaid and Medicare.

"The Point-in-Time Count tells us two stories," said Michael Wilkos, Chair of the Franklin County and Columbus Continuum of Care. "Although we are making measurable progress in getting more people off the streets, we are still continuing to see an overall rise in homelessness, which shows that broader economic pressures—especially housing affordability—are pushing more residents into crisis. We must expand both temporary shelter and permanent housing options if we are serious about reducing homelessness on a regional scale."

To meet growing needs, CSB is calling for bold action, including:

- Community YIMBY, to expanding non-congregate family shelter capacity; and eradicating family homelessness for Franklin County.
- Developing housing for all community members to ensure upward mobility
- Creating a new model that focuses on housing as the best shelter.
- Reinstating our collective community response—business leaders and public leaders, along with community driving for scaled investment.

About the Point-in-Time Count

The annual Point-in-Time Count is a snapshot of homelessness conducted nationwide under the guidance of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This past January, more than 250 volunteers participated in the count across Columbus and Franklin County.

A copy of the full 2025 Point-in-Time Count will be available online at www.csb.org.

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