

## **Kentucky Housing Corporation Point-In-Time Count Special Achievement**

### **Description**

Kentucky Housing Corporation (KHC) is mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to conduct a point-in-time count of Kentucky's homeless every other year. However, to more accurately count the homeless in Kentucky, the Point-In-Time Count is conducted on a yearly basis. The count helps determine how much federal funding will be awarded from HUD for homeless programs. In addition, the count helps assess progress and provides important information for updating *Kentucky's Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness*.

Jefferson County (Louisville), Fayette County (Lexington) and the Balance of State (the other 118 Kentucky counties) submit three separate funding applications to HUD. Because of the separate funding, the three regions previously held counts independently of each other. Each region also used a different survey form and different standards to count the homeless. This made it impossible to paint a statewide picture of the homeless population.

### **When and Why it was Undertaken**

Recognizing the need for statewide data collected at the same time, with the same survey instrument, in 2007, KHC began meeting with count coordinators across the state to persuade them to conduct the 2008 count as a state instead of different regions.

KHC staff developed a new short and concise survey form that captures all the needed data and, taking HUD's requirements a step further, collects information about the precariously housed, an important population to consider when determining future housing needs for the state. The new form consists of questions that are answered by filling in a circle next to the appropriate response. When the survey form was developed, trainings were held across the state on use of the new form.

Local officials serve as important ambassadors of the count as they are able to reach the broad range of community representatives who come into contact with the homeless population. KHC made an exerted effort to reach out to these officials to garner their support of the count. Four different letters (three prior to the count and one after) were mailed for the 2008 count to almost 450 mayors and county judge-executives.

### **Results/Accomplishments**

On Thursday, January 24, 2008, from 12:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m., local time, volunteers collected over 5,500 surveys and counted 7,136 homeless individuals across the state during the Point-In-Time Count in Kentucky. KHC successfully organized the count in the Balance of State and coordinated with Louisville and Lexington to participate in the count using the same survey instrument and on the same day as the other areas.

The new survey form received positive feedback from count coordinators and staff responsible for analyzing the data. Identification numbers at the bottom of each survey allowed KHC staff to revisit surveys if there was a question about one of the answers on that survey. This feature improved the accuracy of the count.

The data collected from the count is available on the Kentucky Homeless Web site, [www.kyhomeless.org](http://www.kyhomeless.org), and was distributed in a press release, which received coverage in several media outlets across the state.

Count coordinators reported unprecedented support from officials, including mayors and representatives from U.S. Senators and Congressmen, who participated in events aimed to raise awareness of the count.

Results from the 2008 count will serve as the benchmark when determining the effectiveness of homeless programs in the state. It is also being used to update *Kentucky's Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness* and assist with regionally based methods for implementing the *Ten-Year Plan*.

### **Why It Is Meritorious**

The 2008 Point-In-Time Count is noteworthy because it was the first time the entire state participated in the count on the same day using the same survey instrument. Due to this effort, the state now has data that serves as the benchmark when measuring the success of homeless programs in the state. The coordination of these efforts was momentous and marked a new level of partnership and achievement in the state.