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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **PARTNERSHIP RELEASES REPORT ON HOMELESSNESS**

The number of unsheltered homeless persons in the region is falling. According to the 2011 Homeless Point-in-Time Count as prepared by the Allentown/Northeast Regional Homeless Advisory Board (RHAB) and the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Lehigh Valley Shelter Census, 33 persons were unsheltered in the region down from 49 in the 2010 Point-in-Time survey.

Representatives of the Allentown Commission to End Chronic Homelessness, Lehigh County Conference of Churches, Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley and the Lehigh Valley Coalition on Affordable Housing collaborated to release the full 2011 Homeless Point-in-Time Count at a news conference this morning in Allentown City Council Chambers.

“We’re making progress,” said Allentown Mayor Ed Pawlowski, who in 2006 requested that a task force be formed to create and implement a plan to end chronic homelessness in Allentown. “We know that we still need to do more. We must understand that as a society, the cost of getting the chronically homeless into housing is far less than the cost of their impact on the health and local law enforcement systems.”

The annual point-in-time (PIT) count of homeless persons, required by HUD, provides an unduplicated count of sheltered and unsheltered at a one day point in time. According to the report HUD and agencies across the country use this data “to guide funding and other important policy decisions related to homelessness.”

The PIT report states that there was only a slight increase in homelessness from 2010. Although homelessness is generally concentrated in the cities, urban

homelessness is stable at levels below those seen in 2009. Rural homelessness increased by 27% in three years.

There were a total of 756 sheltered and unsheltered homeless in the Continuum of Care Northeast Region comprised of a 12 county area.

- 493 (65% of Total) were in homeless families
- 256 (34% of Total) were singles without children
- 342 youth and children (45% of Total) are estimated to be among the homeless counted in this census.
- 33 (4.4% of Total) were unsheltered. The number of unsheltered homeless persons decreased 33% from 49 in 2010 to 33 in 2011.

51 persons in families facing a homeless episode were rapidly re-housed and received short term financial support and support services which may have contributed to the stabilization of urban homelessness and the reduction in domestic violence. The HPRP funding as part of the Recovery Act will reach its third year ceiling over the coming year. 48 persons were considered chronically homeless and of this total, 16 slept on the streets the evening of the PIT count. According to the report, "This represents a continuing downward trend year over year, verifying that the Ten Year Planning Process to End Chronic Homelessness is effective."

Other subpopulations include 90 (21% of Total) reported a substance abuse disorder. Substance abuse now represents the largest subpopulation, a reversal of a downward trend identified since 2007. 46 (11% of Total) report a serious mental illness, which is a 46% increase over the previous year, which is potentially linked to "pressure created along the mental health continuum with the closure of Allentown State Hospital in 2010, straining resources in the mental health community."

The Lehigh Valley Shelter Census uses data collected by nine Lehigh Valley emergency and short-term homeless shelters including the Allentown Rescue Mission, Salvation Army Beall and Linny Fowler Hospitality House, New Bethany Ministries, Safe Harbor of Easton, Sixth Street Shelter, Third Street Alliance for Women and Children, Turning Point of Lehigh Valley, Victory House of Lehigh Valley and Valley Youth House. During 2010, 2,441 men, women and children were housed in the nine shelters. 780 (32%) of the shelter residents were children and 50% of those children were age five and under.

1,661 adults were housed in shelters with 382 housed in family programs and 1,279 housed in individual programs. Of those, 675 were females and 986 were males. The age group with the largest number of residents was the group between the ages of 23-27.

To review a copy of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Lehigh Valley Shelter Census, go to: [www.caclv.org](http://www.caclv.org).

For resources and information regarding Allentown's Commission to End Chronic Homeless or to review a copy of the PIT count, go to:  
<http://www.allentownpa.gov/Community/CommissionToEndChronicHomelessnes/tabid/282/Default.aspx>

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