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EDITORS: The following is for immediate release. For further information please contact Pat Bokovitz, Director of the Chester County Department of Community Development at 610-344-6959.

January 2019 Point in Time Count Report finds lower number of people experiencing homelessness in Chester County

2019 official count reveals decrease of 24 percent in homeless numbers over past four years

WEST CHESTER, PA_ A report compiled by the Chester County Department of Community Development (DCD) and the Decade to Doorways Partnership has found that 517 people were identified as experiencing homelessness in Chester County in the early hours of January 24, 2019. This represents a decrease of 24 percent over four years in the number of people experiencing homelessness. A summary of the findings were reported by Pat Bokovitz, Director of the Chester County Department of Community Development at the Chester County Commissioners' Sunshine Meeting this week.

The Point in Time Count is a national effort mandated by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development to determine the number of people experiencing homelessness. This includes individuals and families who are residing in emergency shelters and transitional living facilities, as well as unsheltered individuals on the street or in places not meant for sleeping.

Within Chester County, the Point in Time Count is one component of understanding homelessness, and is part of *Decade to Doorways: The Community's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in Chester County*. The County has participated in the Point-in-Time Count for more than ten years.

Of the 517 individuals experiencing homelessness in the early hours of January 24, 2019, 497 men, women, and children were housed in emergency or transitional shelters. Of the 497 that were housed, 201 were veterans. The street count found 20 individuals who were unsheltered (sleeping in cars, tents or places not meant for human habitation). A majority of these individuals were found in Kennett Square.

Chester County's 2019 Point in Time Count shows a decrease in those experiencing homelessness for four consecutive years. In 2016, 682 individuals were counted; in 2017 the number was 570; and in 2018 the number dropped to 555.

Pat Bokovitz, Director of Chester County's Department of Community Development, said, "The downward trend that Chester County is seeing for those who are experiencing homelessness can be attributed to a combination of factors, all coming together because of the Decade to Doorways initiative.

"We are bringing together the work of our coordinated homeless service providers, the increase in permanent supportive housing resources, and the targeting of resources to support the most vulnerable. These efforts are bringing us even closer to Chester County's goal of ending homelessness."

In addition to the presentation of this year's Point in Time Count Report findings, an April 2nd Decade to Doorways event will kick-off the program's public awareness campaign. With the mission to end homelessness in Chester County by 2022, Commissioners Michelle Kichline, Kathi Cozzone and Terence Farrell will provide an inspiring update on Decade to Doorways' collective accomplishments. The public is encouraged to attend the event at Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center, 226 N. High Street in West Chester. Doors open at 4:30 p.m. and the presentation begins at 5:30 p.m.

For additional information on Chester County's 2019 Point in Time Count, the Decade to Doorways Partnership and homelessness in Chester County contact Gene Suski, Community Services Manager for the Chester County Department of Community Development at 610-344-6900 or go to the Decade to Doorways website at www.decadetodoorways.org.

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