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<div align="center">***#NJCounts 2020 Critical in Census Year***</div>

January 28, 2020 – On Wednesday, January 29, 2020, #NJCounts 2020, the statewide Point-in-Time count of the homeless, will take place across the state counting individuals and households who experience homelessness. Exact times of the count may vary by county. Local county press contacts are available here. Information on local NJCount events may be found here.

Local government, non-profit agencies, community advocates, volunteers and others that plan community efforts to end homelessness will conduct the counts across the state. For the seventh year, Monarch Housing Associates is coordinating the annual statewide NJCounts.

Volunteers will seek out and interview people experiencing homelessness on the night of January 28, 2020 who stayed in shelters, transitional housing programs, hotels paid for by agencies, in the woods, under bridges, in vacant buildings and at other locations where they are forced to live because there is insufficient affordable or supportive housing. On January 29, 2020, many local communities will hold Project Homelessness Connect events to connect persons experiencing homelessness with a hot meal, warm clothes, services and housing applications.

NJCounts 2019 found 8,864 homeless men, women and children, in 6,748 households, across the state of New Jersey. This 2019 number decreased by 439 persons (5%) from 2018. Statewide and individual county NJCounts 2019 reports are available here.

"At Monarch Housing Associates we are celebrating 30 years of working to ensure every person in the state has access to housing and supportive service opportunities that foster independence and choice. We are honored to assist communities across the state in organizing NJCounts for the 7th year," said Taiisa Kelly, CEO of Monarch Housing Associates which directs NJCounts 2020. "This year's count will provide an opportunity to expand our understanding of the extent of homelessness in New Jersey and better understand how we can tailor solutions to end homelessness."
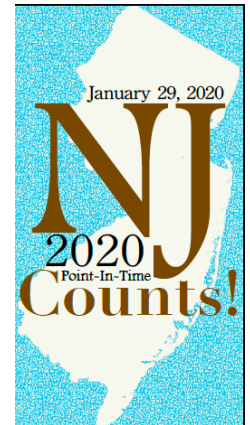
"With 2020 being a Census Year, NJCounts is especially important. While the Census Count occurs in April, the January NJCounts 2020 activities will provide an opportunity to prepare for the Census by identifying persons experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity and encouraging their participation in the Census Count. The Census helps to not only determine electoral representation, but also determines how the federal government allocates over $1 billion in funding for critical social programs and local infrastructure," said Taiisa Kelly. "If we wish to ensure New Jersey and our local communities get their fair share of federal funding, we must ensure every person in the state participates in the Census. NJCounts is part of the process of ensuring the voices and needs of our most vulnerable neighbors are heard too."

Monarch Housing expects to make the final report available in spring 2020.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) mandates the statewide Point-in-Time count of the homeless. HUD mandates that local communities conduct a sheltered count each year and additionally an unsheltered count every other year. Although, 2020 is not a mandated unsheltered count year, HUD strongly encourages communities to conduct unsheltered counts this year.

According to Monarch Housing Associates, NJCounts 2020 is critical in the context of current state and federal conversations:

- The Census Count, occurring every 10 years, helps to determine how federal funding is allocated across the country. Persons experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity are included in the "hard to count" group identified by the Census with some of the lowest response rates. NJCounts 2020 can help us ensure that NJ residents experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness fully participate in the Census by identifying locations where unsheltered persons are staying, encouraging

- participation in the Census when it comes around, and testing survey methodologies with persons experiencing housing insecurity.
- NJCounts 2020 will provide three years of analysis on racial disparities around homelessness in New Jersey. Data from 2018 and 2019 identified significant disparities along racial lines, in who experiences homelessness. NJCounts 2020 will add to the body of research on racial disparities and disproportionate experiences of homelessness. Data collected in NJCounts 2020 will expand our understanding of populations characteristics and issues of housing and service availability and access impacting experiences of homelessness.
- On April 30, 2019 Governor Murphy signed legislation creating a new State Office of Homelessness Prevention in the Department of Community Affairs. As the office gets under way over the next year, data from NJCounts will be critical to the work of this Office. NJCounts will provide data on the extent of homelessness for those who are sheltered and unsheltered, population characteristics, and service needs. While NJCounts provides only a snapshot of homelessness on a single day, it offers consistent longitudinal data on trends in homelessness over the years.
- New Jersey recently updated Code Blue legislation to require all counties to provide emergency warming centers to persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness when temperatures are below 32 degrees. NJCounts 2020 will provide information about the scope of unsheltered homelessness in each community to assist in preparation for Code Blue warming center activities.
- The NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency has developed innovative partnerships between hospitals and housing developers through the Hospital Partnership Subsidy Program. This program encourages hospitals to participate in the housing development process through the provision of financing. Hospital partners also work with developers to target the new housing to high frequency users of healthcare services who are experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness. NJCounts provides information about the service and health needs of persons experiencing homelessness that assist hospitals in identifying the scope of need in their community.

"A key factor impacting homelessness is the housing affordability crisis in New Jersey and across the country," said Kelly. According to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), in 2019, a family in New Jersey would need to earn $28.86/hour (or about $60,000 per year) to afford a two-bedroom apartment at the Fair Market Rent of $1,501/month. Although the minimum wage increased to $11/hour on January 1, 2020, this hourly wage is still far short of what is necessary to make the cost of housing affordable. This housing affordability crisis is impacting New Jersey with the state being identified as the 6th most expensive place to live in the country.

The solutions to ending homelessness include increasing the supply of affordable and supportive housing, improving access to that housing, and ensuring persons experiencing homelessness have a voice in the process. Communities across the state have been working to implement these solutions through best practices such as housing first and rapid re-housing programs. These housing programs expand the supply of affordable and supportive housing through the provision of long-term and short-term rental assistance vouchers coupled with support services tailored to individual participant needs. They work to address access to housing by eliminating barriers to program entry, such as requiring completion of treatment programs or attaining a specific level of income. These program models have helped communities across the country reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness.

For more information about Monarch Housing's work to ensure that every person has quality affordable, permanent supportive housing that fosters freedom, independence and community integration, visit http://www.monarchhousing.org