

NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

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Report: HUD Significantly Undercounts Homeless Population

(December 06, 2017, Washington, D.C.) – In response to the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) release of its 2017 point-in-time (PIT) count of the homeless population in the United States, the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (the Law Center) released a new report detailing problems with HUD’s methodology that result in a significant undercount of homeless Americans.

Though HUD reported nearly 554,000 homeless Americans on any given night—itsself a number that is unacceptably large—the Law Center’s report suggests this number is actually a significant undercount. The report, *Don’t Count on It: How the HUD Point-in-Time Count Underestimates the Homelessness Crisis in America*, addresses flaws in HUD’s inconsistent methodology, which particularly misses unsheltered homeless people.

“Homelessness is a national crisis, and an accurate count of people experiencing it is essential to developing and adopting policies that can truly solve the problem,” said Maria Foscarinis, founder and executive director of the Law Center. “A visual street count does not and cannot capture the number of unsheltered homeless people living out of sight, nor does it capture people living in the many outdoor locations that are not even included in the count.”

The report determines that HUD’s current methodology not only omits significant numbers of homeless people, it also leads to inaccurate comparisons and trends analyses, since it is often inconsistent between locations and between years. The Law Center offers recommendations on how HUD and communities can improve their methodology. The report also provides suggestions for how to use the numbers reported under the current methodology.

The report is available [here](#).

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The [National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty](#) (the Law Center) is the only national organization dedicated solely to using the power of the law to prevent and end homelessness. With the support of a large network of pro bono lawyers, we address the immediate and long-term needs of people who are homeless or at risk through outreach and training, advocacy, impact litigation, and public education.