



United Way
Toronto & York Region

Susan McIsaac
President and Chief Executive Officer

November 24, 2015

Mr. Denis Kelly
Regional Clerk
The Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket ON L3Y 6Z1

Dear Mr. Kelly

We are writing to advise you, and through you, members of Regional Council, that United Way Toronto & York Region (UWTYR) will be leading the first Point In Time (PiT) count of individuals experiencing absolute homelessness in York Region on January 20 and 21, 2016. As the Community Entity (CE) in York Region, UWTYR is responsible for administering federal funding designated for York Region for 2014-2019 through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS). The strategy includes local implementation of Housing First and a federal requirement to conduct a Point in Time count. The Housing First approach involves moving individuals experiencing chronic or episodic homelessness from the streets or homeless shelters into permanent housing.

The PiT count is an estimated snapshot of the number of homeless individuals staying in shelters or on the street in an area at one point in time. It doesn't provide a complete count of homelessness in York Region because it does not count hidden homelessness (those who are couch surfing). The count in York Region is part of the first coordinated national effort which will align timing and methodology for counts across Canada. Thirty communities across Canada are participating in the co-ordinated count, including twelve in Ontario. This will allow communities to determine the size

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and make-up of the chronic and episodic homeless populations which are the priority populations for support under Housing First.

The PiT count aligns with existing efforts by the Regional Municipality of York to track and monitor homelessness, by providing another vital tool that would allow us to address this issue. This count also aligns with the recent goal announced by the Provincial Government to end chronic homelessness in Ontario within 10 years. Short term provincial initiatives include planning to require enumeration at the local level to understand local conditions and prioritizing provincial action to reduce homelessness in four areas: youth, Aboriginal and chronic homelessness and homelessness associated with transitions from provincial institutions such as jails or hospitals.

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Information gathered through the count will be made available to The Regional Municipality of York as the service system manager for homelessness. This will assist with local service system planning and will support Council's commitment to housing stability and homelessness prevention initiatives that benefit vulnerable individuals and families.

United Way has consulted with community stakeholders including regional staff and York Regional Police, through the York Region Homelessness Community Advisory Board in preparation for the count. Trained volunteers supervised by UWYR staff will conduct the count on the evening of January 20, 2016 followed by a service count on January 21, 2016 for individuals that may have been missed.

For your information, on November 24, 2015 United Way began recruiting volunteers from-across York Region to participate in this important initiative. There are opportunities for community members in your municipalities to be part of "Count Me In", as this initiative has been titled.

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United Way is also requesting local municipalities support the PiT count by making space at community facilities available as field offices for volunteers who will be involved in the evening count on January 20, 2016. We are in the process of following up with municipal staff to explore this possibility.

We are pleased to be part of this groundbreaking nationally coordinated initiative, and our ongoing partnership with The Regional Municipality of York to support our collective efforts to address the complex issue of homelessness in our communities.

For more information, please contact:

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Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Susan McIsaac".

Susan McIsaac