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FIRST NATIONWIDE ESTIMATE OF HOMELESS POPULATION IN A DECADE ANNOUNCED

Approximately 744,313 people homeless on a single night

Washington—There were 744,313 people homeless in January 2005 according to *Homelessness Counts*, the first national assessment of the number of homeless people in over a decade. The report was released today by the Homelessness Research Institute of the National Alliance to End Homelessness. This estimate, a compilation of point-in-time counts collected by local Continuums of Care, provides data on every state and community in the country. The data included in the study represent a point in time; therefore the estimate only presents a snapshot of the homelessness problem in the United States. Many more people experience homelessness over the course of the year. Despite its limitations, this estimate establishes a baseline for the nation to assess not only whether the number of homeless people is actually increasing or decreasing—something we have had little objective data on to date—but also for communities to analyze their progress, uncover trends, and to formulate solutions that address the needs of homeless people.

“A national movement to end homelessness is underway. Establishing a baseline estimate of how many homeless people there are in the nation is important to measuring progress,” said Nan Roman, President of the National Alliance to End Homelessness. “This report shows that despite some progress far too many people remain homeless in the United States. The solution to homelessness is housing. Increasing the availability of affordable housing to very low income people will prevent homelessness and will empty our nation’s shelters.”

Homelessness Counts highlights a number of staggering facts:

- 56 percent of homeless people counted were living in shelters and transitional housing and, shockingly, 44 percent were unsheltered.
- 59 percent of homeless people counted were single adults and 41 percent were people living in families.
- In total, 98,452 homeless families were counted.
- 23 percent of homeless people were reported as chronically homeless, meaning they were disabled and had been homeless for long periods of time or repeatedly.
- Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington were the states with the highest ratio of homeless people per capita.

Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA), Chair of the House Financial Services Committee, joined the National Alliance to End Homelessness in releasing the report.

Homelessness Counts compiles and analyzes data from local communities nationwide. Continuums of Care (CoCs)—the HUD devised jurisdictions that oversee homeless services—are required to count their homeless populations every other year in January. Data for every state and community, as well as an explanation of the methods used to collect the data, are included in the full report.

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The National Alliance to End Homelessness is a nonpartisan, mission-driven organization committed to preventing and ending homelessness in the United States. The Alliance is a leading voice on the issue of homelessness. The Alliance analyzes policy and develops pragmatic, cost-effective policy solutions. We work collaboratively with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to build state and local capacity, leading to stronger programs and policies that help homeless individuals and families make positive changes in their lives. We provide data and research to policymakers and elected officials in order to inform policy debates and educate the public and opinion leaders nationwide.

For more information on The National Alliance to End Homelessness, visit: www.endhomelessness.org