



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HOMELESS SERVICES GEARS UP FOR EIGHTH ANNUAL HOPE SURVEY
AGENCY TO RECRUIT 3,000 VOLUNTEERS
TO BE CITY'S EYES AND EARS IN SURVEY OF STREET POPULATION

The Department of Homeless Services today began the countdown to the eighth annual Homeless Outreach Population Estimate (HOPE) survey on January 30, 2012. The survey estimates the number of individuals living on the streets, in parks and in other public spaces in New York City. New Yorkers are vital community partners who help survey the City's unsheltered population the night of the estimate. To register, please visit (www.nyc.gov).

Under Mayor Bloomberg, New York City in 2003 became one of the first cities in the nation to do a street survey to estimate project service needs and allocate resources for the street population while at the same time educating and engaging New Yorkers. A survey has since become a federal requirement for all cities wishing to draw down funding for homeless services provided by the McKinney-Vento Act, which the City uses to develop supportive housing; a key service model in the City's effort to reduce street homelessness. From its start with 1,000 volunteers in Manhattan only, the survey today covers all five boroughs with a record number of 2,845 volunteers last year. Identified by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a best practice method, New York City's HOPE survey is the largest of its efforts nationwide.

New York City has seen a 40 percent decline in street homelessness since 2005. The ratio of street homelessness individuals to the general population in the City – 1 to 3,087 – is one of the lowest in the country. New York City's street outreach operation has moved more than 2,700 chronically homeless individuals from the streets into transitional and permanent housing since redesign of the program in fall of 2007. With 24/7 outreach teams mobilized Citywide, specialized low threshold housing, and targeted funding to ensure that resources reach the individuals most in need, New York City is the national leader in investment in persons living on the street.

Street outreach teams' strongest partner remains the everyday New Yorker. By calling 311 when an individual on the street appears to be in need of shelter or assistance, especially during winter months, any New Yorker can dispatch a street outreach team to that person and help them move indoors from the street. These critical calls can change, or even save, a life.

Volunteering for HOPE is another way citizens can make a difference in the lives of those living on the streets. Homeless Services needs New Yorkers from every borough to assist the Agency in making the HOPE survey as effective as possible. Join Homeless Services and 3,000 of your fellow New Yorkers and help conduct the HOPE survey on January 30, 2012. For more information please call 311 or visit (www.nyc.gov).

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Contact: Heather Janik (212) 361-7973