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City of Huntington Beach Sees 35 Percent Decrease in Unsheltered Homeless Individuals According to New Point in Time Count

The City of Huntington Beach's ongoing efforts to address homelessness has led to a 35 percent decrease in unsheltered homeless individuals according to the recent Point in Time Count conducted by the County of Orange. The 35 percent drop is in comparison to the previous Point in Time Count which was conducted in 2019. In 2019, a total of 289 unsheltered individuals were counted compared to 188 unsheltered individuals in 2022.

"I am so proud of the progress Huntington Beach has made in helping our City's unsheltered homeless population. While there is still more work to be done, this decline is proof that we are on the right track and we are getting people the help and shelter that they need," said Mayor Barbara Delgleize. "The City Council remains committed to addressing the issue of homelessness within our community and I look forward to the continued decrease of the number of unsheltered homeless within our City."

The Point in Time Count is conducted by the County of Orange to determine the number of people experiencing homelessness. While the count is typically done every two years, the last unsheltered count took place in 2019. The 2020 unsheltered count was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 count took place in February 2022 with the assistance of members of the City's Homeless Task Force.

The recorded 35 percent decline in unsheltered homeless individuals is attributed to the City's numerous efforts and resources established to assist the homeless population. The City has prioritized the development of a System of Care to assist those individuals experiencing homelessness in the City of Huntington Beach; and link them to supportive services, shelter and housing. Those efforts and resources include, but are not limited to:

- **Huntington Beach Navigation Center** – Since opening in December 2020, the 174-bed (temporarily 127-beds due to COVID-19 social distancing guidelines) Center provides short-term shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness while they work on navigating housing plans to acquire a more permanent housing solution with the city's contract provider, Mercy House. The Center provides comprehensive services, such as: housing navigation, on-site physical health support, employment counseling, mental health and substance use recovery services, and transportation to support the transition from street to housing. Since opening in December 2020, the Navigation Center has provided shelter services for 325 individuals and transitioned 86 of those participants to housing. An additional 39 participants have also been matched to a housing voucher and are currently working to find permanent housing opportunities.

- **Huntington Beach (HB) Homeless Task Force** – is an eight-member task force made up of Huntington Beach Police Officers and Homeless Outreach staff. The task force conducts regular outreach to those experiencing homelessness in the city of Huntington Beach with the goal of transitioning individuals to shelter, housing, and supportive services. The HB Homeless Task Force conducted over 4,400 outreach contacts in 2021.

- **BeWellOC in Huntington Beach (HB)** – is a mobile crisis response team composed of two crisis counselors who respond to mental health crisis situations. The mobile crisis response includes driving to the location of the individual experiencing the mental health situation in home, community locations or streets; and conducting an assessment, crisis stabilization services and linkage to ongoing support services. Since beginning operations in August 2021, the BeWellOC in HB responded to nearly 1,500 calls for service.

The City's mentioned homeless solutions is a collaborative effort between the City's Homeless and Behavioral Health staff, multiple City departments, Mercy House, Mind OC and other nonprofits and faith-based organizations.