

# Mid-Willamette Homeless Initiative

2016-2017

Created by City of Salem, City of Keizer, Marion County, and Polk County

# The Homeless Crisis

- ▶ While the US homeless population has decreased over the last year, Oregon has seen an increase
- ▶ People are camping on city streets, in vacant buildings, and in parks throughout the area
- ▶ Those that we can't see are staying in vehicles, shelters, or are couch surfing
- ▶ The Salem Housing Authority's waiting list for Section 8 vouchers currently has 10,000 families that will wait 2-3 years for a home



# Who are the homeless?

People experiencing homelessness are part of our community. They're:

- ▶ Runaway and homeless youth
- ▶ Families
- ▶ Veterans
- ▶ Seniors
- ▶ Women and children
- ▶ Mentally ill and chronically homeless



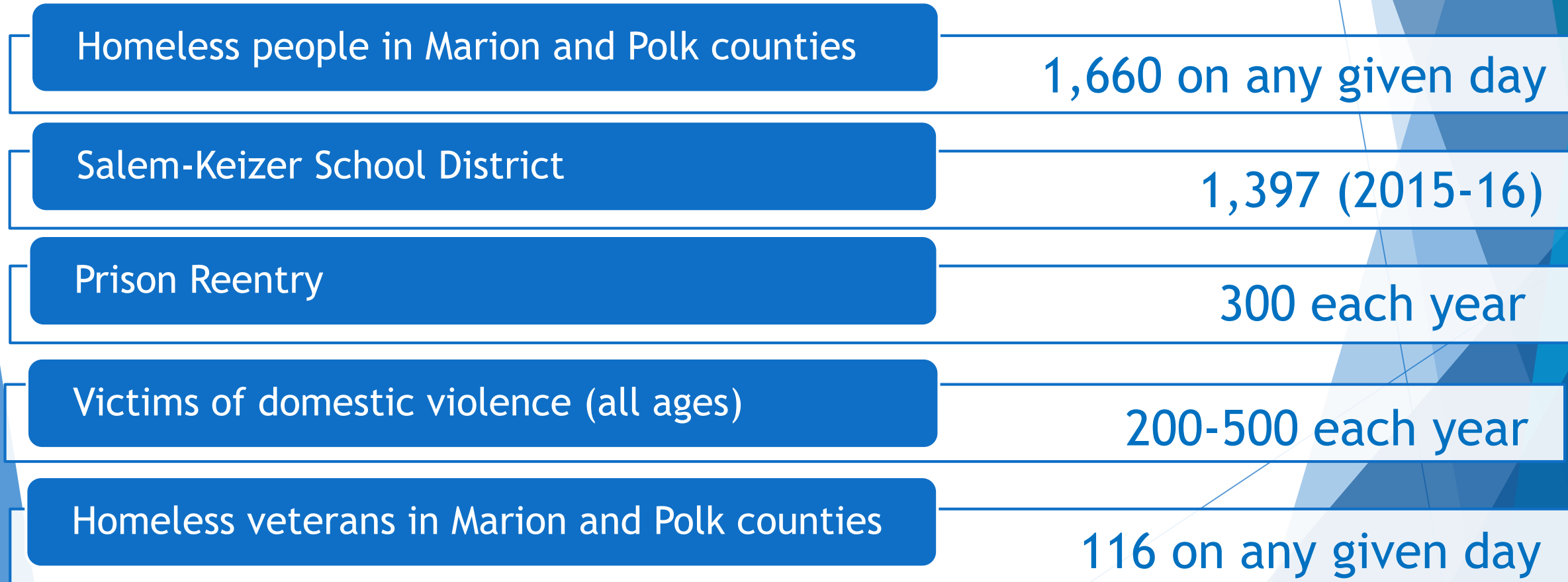
# How many people are homeless in our community?



- ▶ This is a difficult question to answer since people experiencing homelessness are vastly undercounted.
- ▶ Why?
  - Multiple databases for tracking or no tracking of homeless services
  - Duplicated numbers
  - Point-in-Time Count is just a one-day snapshot of homelessness, it does not include those doubled up or unwilling to participate
  - Homeless children are only counted when they are enrolled in school or served by a program
  - Youth (18-24) are difficult to count due to couch-surfing, being doubled up, or not knowing where they congregate
  - Many do not receive services

# How many people are homeless in our community? Here is a sampling:

*Source: A combination 2015 Point in Time Count and agency information  
(Subsets are portions of the total count)*



# Lack of Housing Capacity?

## Housing Waiting Lists

- ▶ Salem Housing Authority
  - ▶ Section 9 vouchers - 2-3 years
  - ▶ Public Housing - 1+ years
- ▶ Marion County Housing Authority
  - ▶ Section 8 vouchers - 1-2 years

Housing deficit in Salem area for  
people making less than  
\$25,000/year  
= 6,400 units



# Call to Action: The Mid-Willamette Homeless Initiative

Purpose: to identify and launch proven strategies to reduce homelessness across the region

- ▶ Chartered in February 2016
- ▶ Community Leaders
  - Social services
  - Housing
  - Public safety
  - Education
  - Business
  - Elected Officials
- ▶ Eight subcommittees
  - Affordable Housing
  - Financial
  - Focus Groups/Coalition Coordination
  - Health and Housing
  - Public Safety
  - Support Services/Education
  - Transitional Housing/Shelters
  - Veterans

# What did we learn?

- ▶ Homelessness is a complex issue
- ▶ Individuals have different needs  
*(No “one size fits all solution”)*
- ▶ What works for one target population may not work for another  
*(e.g., chronically homeless vs. youth)*
- ▶ Multiple strategies are needed to impact the diversity of problems





# Strategic Plan - Housing Capacity

- ▶ AFFORDABLE RESIDENCES
  - Increase housing capacity through developing affordable multi-family and non-traditional residences
- ▶ COUNTY/CITY REGULATIONS
  - Examine county and city codes to incentivize low-income housing development, such as allowing Accessory Dwelling Units and waiving System Development Charges
- ▶ TRANSITIONAL HOUSING/SHELTER
  - Support and add capacity to transitional housing and shelters



# Strategic Plan - Public Safety



## ▶ HARM REDUCTION

- Implement evidence-based harm reduction models, such as Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) to divert people with mental illness and addiction from jails and hospital emergency rooms

## ▶ PANHANDLING

- Promote contributions to local nonprofits rather than handing cash to panhandlers

# Strategic Plan - Special Populations

## RUNAWAY/HOMELESS YOUTH

- Prioritize runaway and homeless youth is a major focus

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS

- Support population-specific projects for victims of domestic violence

## VETERANS

- Create an affordable housing development with residential-based support services for homeless veterans

## SENIORS

- Develop housing with services for seniors, such as cleaning and maintenance

# Pivoting to Implementation

The Task Force proposes a new collaborative structure that will:

- **Oversee implementation**
- **Promote regional coordination**
- **Hold participating entities accountable**

# Implementation Structure

Shared ownership  
through a  
Memorandum of  
Collaboration

Prioritization  
of strategies

A project manager  
to oversee the  
work and support  
the commission

Commitment to  
the Common  
Structure

Periodic reports to the county  
commissions, city councils, and  
nonprofit boards of participating  
organizations

An Advisory  
Committee to  
oversee the work

Community engagement in the  
ongoing work to reduce  
homelessness in our communities

# Questions? Contact our Co-Chairs:



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