



# Media Release

October 19, 2016

## Homeward Trust and Volunteers Count Edmonton's Homeless Population

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Edmonton** – for the next 24 hours, from 7 pm Wednesday, October 19 to 7 pm Thursday, October 20, hundreds of Homeward Trust volunteers are conducting a point-in-time count of Edmonton's homeless population.

Count volunteers come from all walks of life including people with lived experience, elected officials, postsecondary students, city and provincial employees, park rangers, Edmonton police, agency outreach workers and partners, Capital City Cleanup, church groups, just to name a few. They will be working in pairs, surveying people they come across on predetermined routes as well as at shelters, drop-in centres, libraries, and public land. Volunteers will conduct the survey electronically on tablets and smart phones with paper surveys as back up.

"Ensuring we are on track to end homelessness in Edmonton is one of the reasons why conducting this count is so important," says Susan McGee, CEO of Homeward Trust. "There are many faces of homelessness in our city, and the Count allows us to understand its complexity."

The biennial count identified 2307 people without a home in 2014, down from the highest number counted in 2008.

McGee adds, "The 2014 Count found that street homelessness decreased by 30% from 2008, but there are many factors that could affect this year's point-in-time count. Alberta's economic downturn and the Fort McMurray wildfires may affect it, but so may the city's higher vacancy rates. The Count informs our ongoing efforts to end homelessness in Edmonton. We have housed and supported more than 5,500 people since 2009 through our Housing First program, and we will continue to work relentlessly to make a positive impact in our community."

This year is the first that the seven largest cities of Alberta – represented by 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness – will be conducting their point-in-time counts on the same day. The survey has also been standardized with other cities across Canada.

For more information, please contact:

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*Homeward Trust is a community based organization that provides leadership and resources toward ending homelessness in Edmonton. We fulfill our mandate by leading initiatives and programs, engaging community stakeholders and partners, conducting research, creating awareness, and funding housing and support projects.*