

Kern Homelessness Census



TOM CLARK (LEFT) AND RICHARD KEMP (RIGHT) SURVEY LARRY ALONG THE KERN RIVERBED DURING THE KERN COUNTY HOMELESS COLLABORATIVE'S HOMELESSNESS CENSUS, JANUARY 28. PHOTO: MICHAEL FAGANS, UNITED WAY OF KERN COUNTY ©2016

Working TOGETHER we can end homelessness in Kern County

After the January 27-28, 2016 Homelessness Census 1,067 people were reported by the Kern County Homeless Collaborative (KCHC) Census Committee to be experiencing homelessness—sleeping outside, in an emergency shelter or in transitional housing. This reflects a 31% decrease since the first Census in 2007. A 20% increase (113 people) was reported since 2015. [2007-1,537; 2015-954; 2016-1,067]



The Census is a mandated effort that takes place biennially in communities who receive funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) who provides \$1.6 billion nationally towards the work of ending homelessness and \$3-\$4 million locally, each year. Due to Kern's location between the highly populated Bay Area and Los Angeles, populations are highly transitory and require an annual Census to truly measure trends in local homelessness. Known as a "Point in Time Count", the process is conducted over a 24-hour period each January, and facilitated by the KCHC. Census' have been conducted in 2007, 2009, 2012 [UNSHELTERED COUNT ONLY IN 2012], and full unsheltered and sheltered counts since 2013.

Each individual surveyed is asked "can we send someone to connect you to services?"

Due to the reported increase, advocates locally (and nationally) are exploring why numbers are up this year in many communities. Federal guidelines for the Census hinders the thoroughness of measuring homeless outcomes. Year to year variables are too numerous for an accurate comparison. (CONTINUED)

WHEN "I" IS REPLACED WITH "WE" "ILLNESS" BECOMES "WELLNESS"!

Working TOGETHER... continued

- Weather The count is required to be held before the last ten days of January. If the weather is colder or wetter, federal rules don't allow adjusting Census dates for different conditions. With warmer weather individuals could be away from camps or sites they may usually sleep at, or may have places they can do odd jobs or attend appointments.
- The fluidity of the transient population being counted is subjective on a day-to-day basis. And, if people don't want to complete the full five to seven minute survey, the count can be skewed.
- Surveying efficiency has greatly increased for a more thorough count. With each year the Census Committee and trained surveyors become more experienced and efficient in identifying people who are homeless and encouraging their participation. Thus, the ratio of error reduces.
- Kern County survey teams count from dusk to dusk. Some Southern California counties are counting from dusk to dawn, which may cause reduction rates to be skewed.

Coordinators emphasize the Census effort is not SHOTS AT TENT CITY. F a full and finite count of people who are homeless, KERN COUNTY ©2016 but rather a snapshot of a single night to gauge homeless trends and measure outcomes. Information



CLINICA SIERRA VISTA NURSE CAROLYN BOLDT PROVIDED FLU SHOTS AT TENT CITY. PHOTO: MICHAEL FAGANS, UNITED WAY OF KERN COUNTY ©2016

gathered reflects the number of those living in homelessness as defined by HUD. Of note, 56 individuals were surveyed during the Census but found to be not homeless because they stayed with friends or family. This is known by the Office Education's McKinney Vento Act to be "doubling up" which is not considered homeless by HUD. When evaluating homelessness advocates must consider those not "HUD defined homeless" and include homeless individuals who meet the US Department of Education (The McKinney Vento Act) and the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Data collected helps keep the community and advocates informed about the work of ending homelessness, as well as businesses who invest in community (e.g. affordable housing or medical care), and planning departments of local, state and federal governments (for Action, Housing Elements and Consolidated Plans).

To facilitate the massive undertaking a Census Committee works throughout the year to strategize and plan. The group has trained thousands of service providers and community volunteers over the years. On the day of the Census surveyors go to great lengths to seek out encampments and identify signs of homelessness under bridges, in alleys, on embankments and in sites that may not be recognized to the untrained eye. Day one, surveyors conduct shelter interviews in shifts starting at 4pm. Day two, beginning at 5am and ending around 4pm approximately 30 teams (of three or more) span out across Kern's 8,161 square miles to survey thousands of people:

- At emergency shelters and transitional housing programs; and
- Living in places not inhabitable by humans, such as on the street, in alleys, under bridges, in abandoned buildings, etc. Mobile teams and stationary sites help conduct the street count.

More than 250 individuals participated in the 2016 effort, the largest number of Census workers to date.

2016 CENSUS RECAP	Adults	Adults w/ Children	Children	Total Persons	Change from Jan 2015	2015 COUNT
Metro Bakersfield—Sheltered	375	60	104	539	3%	524
Regional Sheltered	6	5	11	22	29%	17
COUNTYWIDE SHELTERED	381	65	115	561	4%	545
Metro Bakersfield - Unsheltered	417	4	4	425	51%	282
Regional Unsheltered	77	2	2	81	-36	127
COUNTYWIDE UNSHELTERED	494	6	6	506	24%	409
TOTAL METRO BAKERSFIELD TOTAL REGIONAL (RURAL)	792 83	64 7	108 13	964 103	19% -28%	810 144
2016 COUNTYWIDE TOTAL	875	71	121	1,067	12%	954
2015 COUNTYWIDE TOTAL	733	71	150	954	-4%	
2014 COUNTYWIDE TOTAL	725	89	178	992	-14%	
2013 COUNTYWIDE TOTAL	924	79	149	1,152	-20%	
2011 COUNTYWIDE TOTAL	1,220	79	140	1,439	-4%	
2009 COUNTYWIDE TOTAL	1,251	88	160	1,499	-2%	
2007 COUNTYWIDE TOTAL	1,248	97	192	1,537		

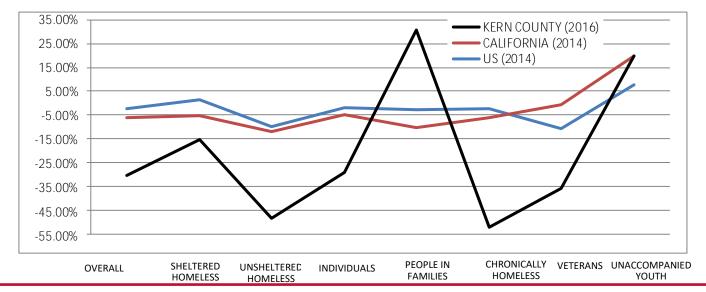
"NEVER BE AFRAID TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT. SOCIETY'S PUNISHMENTS ARE SMALL COMPARED TO THE WOUNDS WE INFLICT ON OUR SOUL WHEN WE LOOK THE OTHER WAY."

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING

PERCENTAGE OF UNSHELTERED 31% in the US 63% in California 47% in Kern 1,067 HOMELESS/ 506 UNSHELTERED

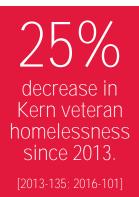
Homelessness: US, State, Kern County JANUARY 2013-JANUARY 2014

The purpose of this graph is to show the ebb and flow of Kern's Census results vs. the state and the nation.



Veteran homelessness

- · 101 homeless veterans were identified in Kern.
- · 52% were over age 55; 99 were male.



9% were

 9% were
 unsheltered in
 rural areas
 including: Taft
 [2]; and Wasco [1],
 Ridgecrest [1],
 Mojave [1],
 Lamont [1], and in
 the Kern River
 Valley [1].

 Nationally veteran

homelessness decreased 11%².

- · California veteran homelessness decreased 6%².
- Kern veteran homelessness increased 14%.
 [2015-89].

PHOTO: VETERANS FROM CALIFORNIA VETERANS ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION'S HOMELESS PROGRAM ASSEMBLE CARE PACKAGES FOR PEOPLE WHO WERE TO BE SURVEYED DURING THE CENSUS.



"IT ALWAYS SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE, UNTIL ITS DONE." Nelson Mandela

Homeless Households

Single Adults — 875 single adults were homeless

30% decrease since 2007; 19% increase since 2015 SHELTERED AND UNSHELTERED: 2007-1,248; 2015-733; 2016-875 44% more are sheltered vs unsheltered in 2016, vs 47% in 2015 2015: SHELTERED-343; UNSHELTERED-389. 2016: SHELTERED-381; UNSHELTERED-494 74% reside in metro Bakersfield RURAL KERN-83; BAKERSFIELD-792 28% increase metro Bakersfield 2015-615; 2016-792 30% decrease in rural areas 2015-118; 2016-83

Adults with Children — 71 adults with children were homeless 27% decrease since 2007; no change since 2015 SHELTERED AND UNSHELTERED: 2007-97; 2015-71; 2016-71 92% are sheltered vs unsheltered in 2016; vs 87% in 2015 2015: UNSHELTERED-9;SHELTERED-62. 2016: SHELTERED-65; UNSHELTERED-6 91% reside in metro Bakersfield RURAL KERN-7; BAKERSFIELD-64

> Children — 121 children were homeless 37% decrease since 2007; 19% since 2015 2007-192; 2015-150; 2016-121 95% of children are sheltered vs unsheltered in 2016; vs 93% in 2015 2016: SHELTERED-139; UNSHELTERED11; 2016: SHELTERED-115; UNSHELTERED-6 89% of children reside in metro Bakersfield RURAL KERN-13; BAKERSFIELD-108

What causes homelessness to continue and what's next?

Many factors contribute to homelessness including poverty, lack of affordable housing, job loss, mental health (and substance abuse), domestic violence and lack of health care. Kern County homeless stakeholders have been addressing these fundamental attributors aggressively. KCHC Members work diligently with individuals and families towards a "housing first" process and a life of wellness.

GOOD NEWS: In Kern County, housing vouchers are released weekly, based on a prioritization assessment tool which measures those most vulnerable who need the swiftest interaction for housing. New resources are in place for increased homelessness vouchers from grants received by Kern County Homeless Collaborative Members, through the Department of Human Services' Welfare to Work and AB74-Family Stabilization programs; and the Housing Authority of the County of Kern (seven are already prioritized voucher with another 22 applicants in progress; and 91 more families will be housed over the next 18 months). As of the end of January 2016 nearly 150 households, counted in the Census, had already received a housing connection (between being referred for a housing vouchers to pending inspection approval to move in) and are on their way to a "housing first" process to be followed by two years of case management and teamwork to help people live independent lives.

THE SYSTEM OF CARE OF KCHC MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS PROVIDES SERVICES ADDRESSING:

housing and shelter * case management * domestic violence * outreach * healthcare mental health /substance abuse * veteran housing and services * food * life skills education and employment * financial support (payees / benefit / literacy) * legal services services for people with disabilities * transportation * utilities * faith based support.

COULD THE NEWS BE BETTER? Hundreds of people become homeless each year which bears tremendous social, economic and human costs. With the recession, poor economy, increasing poverty and deep poverty, sustained high unemployment and housing costs, the following recommendations from the National Alliance to End Homelessness are focuses of the Kern County Homeless Collaborative:

- · Cost effective investment in homeless prevention;
- Proven homeless program investment and resource provisions to significantly improve the outcomes of funding;
- Continued prioritizing housing for the most vulnerable, shoring up programs that provide a safety net for the extremely poor including: housing, mental health treatment, employment and training, health care, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Supplement Security Income (SSI) for people with disabilities and vulnerable families; and
- Ensure job initiatives prioritize the most vulnerable people including those with long-term unemployment histories and/or with disabilities.

Homelessness in Kern County

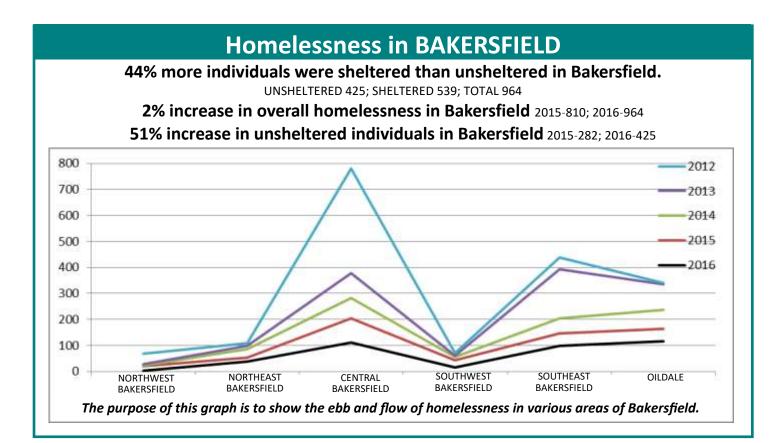
31% decrease <u>overall</u> since 2007; **12% increase from 2015.** 2007-1,537; 2015-954; 2016-1,067

71% increase for <u>youth</u> (18-24) since 2015. 2015-51; 2016-87; MCKINNEY VENTO YOUTH 2015-5; 2016-1

24% increase in <u>unsheltered homeless</u>. 2015-409; 2016-506

HOMELESS PER 10K PEOPLE

US –18.3 people² California – 29.7 people² Kern County – 12 people³ Ridgecrest, CA – 9 people³ Taft/Maricopa, CA – 28 people³



"WE RISE BY LIFTING OTHERS UP." Robert Ingersoll

Rural Kern County						
RURAL SHELTERED AND UNSHELTERED	<u>CHANGE</u> FROM 2015	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2016</u> <u>SHELTERED</u>	<u>2016</u> <u>UNSHELTERED</u>
Arvin	-29%	5	7	3	0	5
Delano	-75%	4	16	57	0	4
Frazier Park	-100%	0	5	0	0	0
Kern River Valley	250%	14	4	16	0	14
Lamont	50%	3	2	1	0	3
McFarland	-14%	6	7	0	0	6
Mojave*	-98%	1	64	6	0	1
Ridgecrest	147%	25	17	26	19	6
Rosamond / California City / Boron	100%	2	1	0	0	2
Shafter / Lost Hills	20%	6	5	0	0	6
Taft / Maricopa	383%	29	6	25	3	26
Tehachapi	200%	6	2	6	0	6
Wasco	-75%	2	8	5	0	2
KERN RURAL HOMELESSNESS	-36%	103	160	129	22	81

*AT THE TIME OF THE 2015 COUNT 64 INDIVIDUALS WERE SURVEYED IN MOJAVE WHO WERE DETERMINED NOT HOMELESS PER HUD GUIDELINES. **REVISION OF ERROR IN PRINTED REPORT (REPORTED 22 SHOULD BE 6)

INCOME	# OF PEOPLE / % OF PEOPLE	% WHO ARE UNSHELTERED
Individuals were employed FIRST TIME TRACKED!	68 / 6%	25%
Receive mental health disability benefits	88 / 8%	72%
Receive physical health disability benefits	96 / 9%	51%
Had no income FIRST TIME TRACKED!	644 / 60%	56%
EDUCATION LEVELS	# OF PEOPLE / % OF PEOPLE	% WHO ARE UNSHELTERED
No high school FIRST TIME TRACKED!	47 / 4%	79%
Some high school FIRST TIME TRACKED!	236 / 22%	67%
High school graduates	315 / 30%	49%
Some college	174 / 16%	47%
Had a college degree	48 / 5%	40%
HOMELESS PRIOR TO COMING TO KERN CO.	# OF PEOPLE	% OF PEOPLE
Responded "yes" FIRST TIME TRACKED!	224	21%
Arrived with or for family FIRST TIME TRACKED!	17	2%
Sent to Kern via social services [7] or jail [7]	14	1%
Walked, biked or hitchhiked	17	2%

LAW ENFORCEMENT / SUBSTANCE	# OF PEOPLE / % OF PEOPLE	% WHO ARE UNSHELTERED
Before age 18, involved in the justice system	224 / 26%	50%
Has been arrested for substance abuse	242 / 28%	66%
Is in a substance abuse program	488 / 57%	60%
Individuals substance abuse issues	542 / 63%	61%
What substance did you, or do you regularly use?		
Alcohol	201 / 24%	60%
Marijuana	77 / 9%	74%
Cocaine / crack	49 / 6%	67%
Methamphetamines	193 / 22%	67%
Heroin	57 / 7%	88%
Prescription drugs	20 / 2%	65%
Other	14 / 2%	79%

CHRONIC ILLNESS	# OF PEOPLE / % OF PEOPLE	% WHO ARE UNSHELTERED
Valley Fever	37 / 4%	13%
ТВ	25 / 3%	68%
Hepatitis	80 / 9%	80%
HIV/AIDS	2 / .2%	50%
Diabetes FIRST TIME TRACKED!	78 / 9%	36%
Asthma FIRST TIME TRACKED!	117 / 14%	57%
Heart Disease FIRST TIME TRACKED!	55 / 57%	47%
TOTAL WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS	277 / 32%	38%

MENTAL HEALTH	# OF PEOPLE / % OF PEOPLE	% WHO ARE UNSHELTERED
Has been hospitalized for mental issues	196 / 23%	61%
Has a mental disability	238 / 28%	69%
Total who report being mentally ill	327 / 15%	46%
Currently receiving treatment	132 / 38%	65%

Gender	73% m	nale / 26% female
Ages	31%	25 to 39 40-54 55-61
Ethnicity	4.1% .2% 13% 26% .7% 66% .9% 6.6%	Black Hispanic Native American / Pacific Islander White

Length of time homeless

YR	UNSHELTERED	SHELTERED
2016	39 months	20 months
2015	40 months	17 months
2014	34 months	14 months
2013	37 months	15 months

Where did you sleep last night?

46%	Emergency shelter, transitional
	housing or sober living
.6%	Hotel paid by someone else
43%	Outdoors
3%	Abandoned building/structure
5%	Car, camper, van , motor vehicle
3%	Garage, barn, shed or yard

Discharged into homelessness

15%	Domestic violence
	11% remain unsheltered
	[ADULTS; 52 CHILDREN]

- 12% Jail/prison 32% remain unsheltered
- 2% Mental health facility 35% remain unsheltered
- 3% Hospital 46% remain unsheltered
- .9% Foster Care 100% remain unsheltered



VETERANS FROM THE CALIFORNIA VETERANS ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION PUT TOGETHER HOMELESS SURVEY TEAM SUPPLIES WITH CATHIE MORRIS, KERN COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS COORDINATOR AND KCHC CENSUS COMMITTEE MEMBER.

Single unaccompanied women

A subpopulation that has seen growth with unique challenges is "single unaccompanied women". Nationally this population accounts for one in four homeless adults; in Kern the ratio is a little higher than one in five.

- 169 women (16% of all individuals surveyed) were single and unaccompanied.[2016-1,067 TOTAL HOMELESS]
- · 61% were unsheltered. [103]
- · 8% lived in rural communities. [14]
- · 24% were homeless before coming to Kern County. [40]
- \cdot 17% were involved with the justice system before
- age 18. [29]
- · 57% were over age 40. [96]
- $\cdot\,42\%$ identified as being mentally ill. [71]

Youth homelessness

The Homeless Census is not an accurate, finite representa-

tion of all homeless youth across the nation since the subpopulation has only recently being tracked. Still, these numbers provide a snapshot to use for the future. Homeless young people do not congregate in the same areas as older homeless adults. Kern County surveyors have been trained in the specifics of surveying homeless youth since 2015.

- · Youth homelessness has increased 71% since 2015. [2015-51;2016-87]
- · 65 were male; 22 were female
- \cdot 23% qualify as "chronically homeless"
- \cdot 43% were arrested before age 18
- \cdot 42% live with mental health challenges
- \cdot 99% have either a high school diploma, some college, or are a college degree

25% of homeless individuals in the US are CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18 California 22% Kern 11%

*US, CA: 2015 / KERN 2016

· 46% are currently receiving substance abuse treatment

· 14% were homeless due to domestic violence

· 21% were homeless before they came to Kern

• 18% have been arrested for substance abuse

What People Say

Throughout the work of the Census and the day-to-day work of serving people challenged with homelessness, things people tell stories that we all can learn from:

- "I've got nothing but time." Homeless individual when asked if he had time to be surveyed.
- "We've lived two years here in the same spot. Cops used to come over and tear up our camp, but they don't mess with us anymore." Individual surveyed on the Kern Riverbed.
- "When you're homeless, it feels like somewhere there is this mysterious ball of information floating around the universe and you can't find it. I didn't know there were people who would help." Vicki, housed after being homeless since 1986.
- "By 8:30am [on the day of the Census] I was tired. It's got to be hell living out here all day and night for months, years at a time." George, Surveyor
- "It was a bit stunning to see young people arrive, homeless youth... to see them stand in line for fresh clothing and the ability to take a shower." Michael, Surveyor
- "I had a great and sad experience. I never knew how much in need they are. The Census gave me the courage to help others." Ana, Surveyor

NOW IN EMERGENCY SHELTER AFTER 20+ YEARS OF HOMELESSNESS

- One 62 year old: homeless 45 years
- Two 55-61 year olds: homeless 24 years
- Two 40-54 year olds: homeless 20 years
- One 18-24 YEAR OLD: homeless 24 years

12 INDIVIDUALS WERE UNSHELTERED WHO REPORTED BEING HOMELESS MORE THAN 21 YEARS.

- "The biggest shocker I heard during the Census was to hear about some people living up in the trees." Jan, Census worker
- "Why can't the government give the homeless small job such as cleaning lots or painting over graffiti to help give them self-worth?" Leticia, Surveyor
- "There were moments of sadness when people told us stories about why they were homeless. I am happy and blessed to have made a difference." Daniela, Surveyor
- "In a community known for its generous nature and the bread basket mecca the situation is sad. I wish we had a week to conduct the surveys. I know we could find more people." Scott, Surveyor
- "I came away with a different perspective of homeless issues. I was shocked by the number of young
 people who were chronically homeless. It was eye opening and I will volunteer again." Alysen, First time
 Surveyor
- "I met a young man wandering the streets, alone and cold. He was wearing dirty, raggedy jeans and a short sleeved t-shirt. He was 21 and had been homeless since age 18. I wondered who had tried to help him. He is homeless but he is human." Stacey, Surveyor
- "My husband works for an agency repairing the highway. He was greatly saddened by the eviction of a homeless man who had lived, hidden, near the overpass being repaired. Then, the following week he came home angry. The same road construction was halted, the road shut down and numerous agencies were brought in at great cost. A tagged kit fox had been found in the area." Community partner
- "The experience was one of a reminder of the grace and blessings I have in not being homeless. Most heartbreaking was an 18-year-old who had been in his last year of high school when his father died and they were returned to their mother who was homeless with mental health illness." Lorraine, Surveyor
- "Volunteering for the Census brings funds to the county for these unfortunate people and that is something I can do with a little patience and a kind ear," David, Surveyor
- "The experience was enlightening, fulfilling, humbling, and sometimes emotional. It was inspirational to see volunteers with nothing but desire to do a little to help out." Harold, First time Surveyor

KCHC- Bakersfield and Kern County is The the geographical area for the local Continuum of Care (CoC). One of dozens of CoCs in California and hundreds across the United States, the Kern County Homeless Collaborative serves as the organized planning body, often referred to as "the committed to coordinating homeless CoC" prevention and addressing the challenges of homelessness. Members of the Collaborative include nonprofit and faith-based organizations, advocacy and community service groups, medical and mental health providers, and education and government agencies - all working together with Community Partners who are all are stakeholders in the work of ending homelessness. A Governing



TENT CITY Ana Vigil of Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance and the KCHC Outreach Committee Chair (left) joins KCHC Board Member and Bakersfield Burrito Project Executive Director Belinda Rickett (right) in serving an individual at what was formerly "Tent City" on Union Avenue in Bakersfield. 30% of the encampment's 30 residents were either employed or attending college. Before the city's evacuation Collaborative Members and Community Partners were able to connect 30% of residents with housing and services.

- 1. McIntyre, D., October 2014, http://247wallst.com/ economy/2014/10/31/20-of-nations-homeless-are-incalifornia/print/
- 2. The National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2014
- 3. US Census Bureau Quick Facts and 2016 Kern County Homelessness Census Bureau

Board oversees ten focus committees that strategize and work to end homelessness in Kern County. All efforts are facilitated through a community-wide data Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS, administered by Kern County Mental Health). A Coordinated Entry and Assessment Plan helps efficiently assess and prioritize housing and provide wraparound services such as:

- · Emergency shelter or affordable housing;
- · Basic needs (including benefit acquisition);
- · Physical and/or mental health care;
- · Legal and independent living support;
- · Education and/or employment opportunities; and
- · Safe discharge options from hospitals, institutions
 - and incarcerations.

For more information, to contribute time, in-kind or financial gifts, or to arrange a presentation about the work of ending homelessness, contact: <u>KERN COUNTY HOMELESS COLLABORATIVE</u> c/oUnited Way of Kern County Christine Lollar, Director of Homelessness Resources 5405 Stockdale Highway 200 Bakersfield CA 93309 661 834 2734 o 661 834 2952 f Christine.L@UWKern.org

www.KernHomeless.org Facebook: Kern County Homeless Collaborative



Let's Make EVERYONE COUNT!

THANK YOU...

...to the workers and agencies who made the Census possible! SPECIAL THANKS –2016 Census Committee, Mental Health sponsor, and in-kind donors:

Dollar General, Toys for Tots, Nestle, and The Mission at Kern County for hosting the trainings and the Census headquarters.