

# Homeless Connect To Bridge Service Gap

by Submitted by Madison County Administrator's Office  
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**EDWARDSVILLE** — Madison County is set to connect persons experiencing homeless with services and goods this month.

Madison County will hold its annual Project Homeless Connect from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Friday, Jan., 27 at River of Life Church in Alton. The program counts the number of homeless persons — men, women and children — throughout the county and provides free services.

David Kerr, Homeless Services Coordinator with Madison County Community Development, said the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requires local agencies to conduct a survey every year to determine the number of people experiencing homelessness in each jurisdiction throughout the country. The results from this annual Point in Time Count are used to help determine grant funding for Community Development and local service providers.

The Madison County Partnership to End Homelessness, which is comprised of more than 40 agencies and individuals, will provide a wide range of services to the homeless and persons experiencing a housing crisis.

“A wide variety of services will be available that day,” Kerr said. “Including access to housing and jobs, a free meal and haircuts.”

County Mental Health Program Manager J. Denise Bradley said a collaboration with community-based organizations and volunteers from across Madison County brings essential and otherwise hard to access services to people living on the streets.

“This event excels in connecting our most vulnerable to vital resources throughout Madison County in a one day, one place event,” Bradley said.

Volunteers and service providers will be present to assist in the distribution of food, beverages, and clothing. Representatives will also provide a wide-range of services that include substance abuse and mental health counseling, legal services, employment assistance and other social services.

Those attending will also have the opportunity to receive flu shots, medical exams, screenings and include other health services.

Kerr said this is the first time in three years for the event.

In 2021, the homeless population grew 2 percent compared to the previous year and those without shelter increased 22 percent, according to data from the Affordable Assisted Living Coalition Illinois.

Homelessness in rural areas often flies under the radar because it’s less visible than in urban settings.

“Most people who are homeless in rural areas are probably couch surfing, staying with friends, staying temporarily in hotels or motels or just staying in places where they can’t be seen by the general public so it’s hard to measure rural homelessness,” Kerr said.

Kerr said from the last count in 2020, there were 146 homeless persons and 40 percent were children.

Rides to the event are free. Call the Homeless Hotline at (618) 296-5300 or visit one of the following pick-up sites to get a ride for between 9 a.m. and noon.

## Transportation Schedule

### **ROUTE 1 — Salvation Army Van**

#### **Pick-up**

9:15 a.m. (12:15 p.m.) — Community Hope Center, 1201 Hope Center Lane, Cottage Hills

9:30 a.m. (12:30 p.m.) — Cartias Family Solutions, 645 Berkshire Blvd., East Alton

9:40 a.m. (12:40 p.m.) — Riverbend Family Ministries, 131 E. Ferguson Ave., Wood River

9:55 a.m. (12:55 p.m.) — Salvation Army, 525 Alby St., Alton

10:05 a.m. (1:05 p.m.) — Centerstone, 2615 Edwards St., Alton

10:15 a.m. (1:15 p.m.) — Arrive Project Homeless Event

#### **Return**

11 a.m. (1:30 p.m.) — Depart Project Homeless Event

11:10 a.m. (1:40 p.m.) — Centerstone, 2615 Edwards St., Alton

11:20 a.m. (1:50 p.m.) — Salvation Army, 525 Alby St., Alton

11:35 a.m. (2:05 p.m.) — Riverbend Family Ministries, 131 E. Ferguson Ave., Wood River

11:45 a.m. (2:15 p.m.) — Cartias Family Solutions, 645 Berkshire Blvd., East Alton

noon (2:30 p.m.) — Community Hope Center, 1201 Hope Center Lane, Cottage Hills

### **ROUTE 2 — Other Agency Van**

## **Pick-up**

9:15 a.m. (12:15 p.m.) — Main St. Community Center & Eden Church, 1003 N. Main St. Edwardsville

9:30 a.m. (12:30 p.m.) — St. John, 307 Clay, Collinsville

9:40 a.m. (12:40 p.m.) — Senior Center, 420 E. Main St., Collinsville

9:55 a.m. (12:55 p.m.) — DCFS, 1925 Madison Ave., Granite City

10:05 a.m. (1:05 p.m.) — Mainstay, 50 Northgate Industrial Dr., Madison

10:15 a.m. (1:15 p.m.) — Arrive Project Homeless Event

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For more information or to volunteer, email David R. Kerr [drkerr@madisoncountyiil.gov](mailto:drkerr@madisoncountyiil.gov)