



ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OC Sheriff Homeless Outreach Team assists with sheltering 161 people during first year of service

SANTA ANA, Ca. (January 10, 2020) – The Orange County Sheriff's Department Homeless Outreach Teams assisted with sheltering 161 people in temporary and permanent housing through various resources during their first full year of service in 2019.

The Homeless Outreach Teams consist of 25 deputies and sergeants working as Homeless Liaison Officers. The teams are dedicated and trained to recognize the need for the rapid provision of resources to the homeless community. Deputies receive additional training on recognizing and relating to those suffering from mental illness and how to connect the homeless population with available services and resources.

The Sheriff's Department's approach to homelessness is a balance of outreach and enforcement. In 2019, in addition to the 161 individuals sheltered, the Homeless Outreach Teams conducted 3,764 field interviews, made 719 arrests and issued 735 citations. As these figures do not include contacts by deputies working in a patrol capacity, the total field interviews, arrests and citations issued to homeless individuals is likely higher.

"We have been very proactive in addressing homelessness in our communities," said Orange County Sheriff Don Barnes. "We are actively engaging with individuals who are experiencing homelessness to provide outreach to those who are interested, and enforce non-status violations of law. While respecting the constitutional rights of all individuals regardless of their housing status, we are dedicated to the safety and security of our residents.

"Homelessness is a community issue. Despite hurdles such as criminal justice reform, court rulings and a lack of available housing and shelters, we will work collaboratively with cities, the County, service providers, nonprofits and the public. Ending homelessness will require us to work jointly and address root causes like mental illness and drug addiction. The Orange County Sheriff's Department will continue to take a proactive approach toward ending homelessness and its impacts."