Basics of Unsheltered Point-in-Time Counts

William Snow
September 22, 2016
The HIC and PIT Count

The Housing Inventory Count (HIC) is a report that informs the homeless assistance community on the capacity to house persons who are homeless at local and national levels.

The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count provides the homeless assistance community with data needed to understand the number and characteristics of persons who are homeless at one point in time.
CoCs are responsible for planning and conducting, at least biennially, a PIT count of homeless persons within the geographic area that meets HUD’s requirements

PIT count has 2 core components:

• Sheltered
• Unsheltered
Unsheltered PIT Counts

The count can either be conducted through:

- **census methods** (i.e., physically covering the entire CoC geography) or

- **sampling methods** (i.e., counting portions of a CoC and extrapolating to create an estimate for the remainder of the geography)

It is important that the final PIT count estimate represent the entire CoC
Unsheltered PIT Count Methodologies

There are a core set of approved unsheltered PIT count methodologies.

- Night of the count – complete coverage (i.e., census)
- Night of the count – known locations
- Night of the count – random sample
- Service-based count

Selecting the method depends on several factors including:

- Available resources
- Geography size
Changes in 2017: HIC

1. DEM project type – removed
2. McKinney-Vento funding – expanded to include different funding types (not merely yes or no)
3. Recognition of VA’s GPD Transition in Place projects as an “Other Permanent Housing” (OPH) project type instead of “Transitional Housing” (TH)
4. Clarification that youth dedicated beds should include beds dedicated to both unaccompanied and parenting youth
5. New field called “Housing Type” that combined the TH Unit Type field and the scattered site field from the address section of the HIC
Changes in 2017: PIT Count

1. Gender response categories expanded to include “Don’t’ identify as male, female, or transgender”
2. Reporting chronic homelessness by household type
3. Clarifying that when reporting on chronically homeless households all members of the household should be counted (even for households with multiple adults)
2017 will be the baseline year for PIT count data for tracking progress towards ending youth homelessness

PIT count data will only be one of many important data sources for identifying homeless youth

Identifying homeless youth in the PIT count has been a challenge and we have seen communities make great progress in the past few years

Success is in building partnerships with key actors including schools, youth providers, and child welfare

Several resources for identifying homeless youth will be made available from HUD, NAEH, VoYC, NN4Y, etc.
PIT Count Resources

Primary Site for HUD’s PIT and HIC Resources:

- PIT and HIC Guides, Tools, and Webinars

A few notable resources

- Notice CPD-16-060: 2017 HIC and PIT Data Collection for CoC and ESG Programs
- Point-in-Time Count Methodology Guide
- Point-in-Time Count Implementation Tools (this site includes the Extrapolation Tool)
- Point-in-Time Survey Tools
THE WV BALANCE OF STATE CONTINUUM OF CARE

RURAL PIT COUNTING

AMANDA SISSON, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
TWITTER: @MANDYSISSON @WVCEH
WHO WE ARE

- State Coalition
- Balance of State CoC
- HMIS for Balance of State CoC
- SOAR State Lead
- ESG Rapid Re-housing and PATH Street Outreach in 22 counties
- Believers in Being Cool, Housing First, Failing, and Improving
MY PERSPECTIVE ON THE PIT

If your CoC is doing outreach, prioritization and utilizing a BNL on an on-going basis, then the PIT should be a very simple activity.
PIT COUNT – RURAL CHALLENGES

- Geography
- Area
- Not in my back yard
- Uniformity
PLANNING FOR YOUR PIT

▸ Determine **methodologies** that works for each community.
  ▸ Rural CoCs need to use a combination of Service-Based Counts, HMIS, street canvases, and BNL data to complete an accurate PIT.

▸ Design the **survey instruments**.

▸ **Train** your communities

▸ Use **HMIS**.

▸ **Analysis** after the count.
PLANNING

- Designate the PIT date early in the Fall. Set a due date for surveys to be returned.
- Ask communities to Save the Date.
- Put the onus on our CoC-funded & ESG projects to lead the charge in their communities.
- Review HUD PIT Guidance
- Plan for CoC staff to be on-site across the CoC during the PIT.
- Care packages/incentives
- Contingency plan with an alternative date!
## DATA COLLECTION METHODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sheltered</th>
<th>Unsheltered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Shelters</td>
<td>Street Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel/Motel Vouchers</td>
<td>Public places count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Housing</td>
<td>Outreach Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>Service-Based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Housing Programs</td>
<td>Screen/Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMIS</td>
<td>Combination of any of the above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHO TO INVOLVE IN COMPLETING YOUR PIT & HIC

- CoC-funded programs/ESG-funded programs
- Churches
- Outreach workers
- County Department of Human Services offices
- Free Clinics
- Colleges and Universities
- Family Resource Networks
- Coordinated Entry sites
- HMIS Lead
- State Park officials
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaisons
WHERE TO FIND PEOPLE WHO ARE UNSHELTERED IN RURAL AREAS

- Soup kitchens
- Truck Stops
- National forests/campgrounds
- All-night diners/coffee shops
- Libraries
- Abandoned buildings and vehicles
- Rest areas
- Wal-Mart parking lot
- Local fire, police, and EMS departments
RURAL PIT

RURAL SERVICE BASED COUNTS

- People in rural areas may only be able to go into “town” once a week.

- We allow providers to continue surveying individuals and families through the end of January.

- Reference the night of the count.
The ideal time to find people is between the hours of 4:00 am and 7:00 am and between about 7:00 pm and 11:00 pm.

Go out in teams.

Designate a team leader.

Have maps of each community. Designate who is going which area prior to the night of the count.

Carry: care packages, whistle, flashlight, cell phone, “sorry we missed you cards.”
SURVEY TOOLS

- Develop Survey Tool(s) using the HUD Guidance
  - We use the VI-SPDAT
    - Incorporated the PIT enumerator questions into the VI-SPDAT
- Unsheltered Count – Survey Tool
- Sheltered Count – in HMIS
  - HIC Bed Tally Sheet for Non-HMIS providers.
The Opening Script should be read by the volunteer to the person being surveyed. This ensures that every person being surveyed is provided with consistent information throughout the many communities in our CoC. Volunteers should practice reading the script prior to going out to complete surveys with clients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of Household (Adult or Unaccompanied Youth)</th>
<th>Adult Household Member 2 (Adult or Unaccompanied Youth)</th>
<th>Adult Household Member 3 (Adult or Unaccompanied Youth)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Point in Time Reporting Information</strong></td>
<td><strong>Answer for all adults and unaccompanied youth within the household, include additional pages if necessary</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of months homeless on the street, or in emergency shelter in the past 3 years?</td>
<td>Total number of months homeless on the street, or in emergency shelter in the past 3 years?</td>
<td>Total number of months homeless on the street, or in emergency shelter in the past 3 years?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you enter the current shelter program from the streets or another emergency shelter?</td>
<td>Did you enter the current shelter program from the streets or another emergency shelter?</td>
<td>Did you enter the current shelter program from the streets or another emergency shelter?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regardless of where you stayed last night, how many times have you been on the streets or in emergency shelter in the past 3 years, including today?</td>
<td>Regardless of where you stayed last night, how many times have you been on the streets or in emergency shelter in the past 3 years, including today?</td>
<td>Regardless of where you stayed last night, how many times have you been on the streets or in emergency shelter in the past 3 years, including today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never in the past 3 years</td>
<td>Never in the past 3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Time</td>
<td>One Time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Times</td>
<td>Two Times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Times</td>
<td>Three Times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four or More Times</td>
<td>Four or More Times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States or been called to active duty in the National Guard or reserves?</td>
<td>Have you served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States or been called to active duty in the National Guard or reserves?</td>
<td>Have you served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States or been called to active duty in the National Guard or reserves?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you an adult who identifies with any of the following? Check all that apply.</td>
<td>Are you an adult who identifies with any of the following? Check all that apply.</td>
<td>Are you an adult who identifies with any of the following? Check all that apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffer from a Serious Mental Illness</td>
<td>Have a Substance Use Disorder (drugs or alcohol)</td>
<td>Have HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you currently pregnant?</td>
<td>Are you currently pregnant?</td>
<td>Are you currently pregnant?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¬ HMIS Release included.
RURAL PIT

PIT VI-SPDAT

### Minor Children

Include all children with adults and with unaccompanied youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of children under the age of 18 that are currently with the head[s] of household.</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How many children under the age of 18 are not currently with your family, but you have reason to believe they will be joining you when you get housed?</td>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Name (if D.V., use first initial)</th>
<th>Last Name (if D.V., use first initial)</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>How old?</th>
<th>Date of Birth (do not use if D.V.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR THE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD**

- If the person answers anything other than "Shelter", "Transitional Housing", or "Safe Haven", then score 1.

2. How long has it been since you lived in permanent stable housing? ________  □ Refused

3. In the last three years, how many times have you been homeless? ________  □ Refused

**IF THE PERSON HAS EXPERIENCED 1 OR MORE CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF HOMELESSNESS, AND/OR 4+ EPISODES OF HOMELESSNESS, THEN SCORE 1.**

Full forms can be found [http://wvceh.org/hmis/pit](http://wvceh.org/hmis/pit)
HIC NON-HMIS BED TALLY SHEET

- Beds and units identified on the Bed Count Tally Sheet must be dedicated to serving homeless persons.

- Bed Tally sheet is used to set up a temporary site in HMIS for surveys for the purpose of the sheltered count.

- Bed Tally sheet gets turned in with PIT Surveys attached.
  - Missions
  - Seasonal shelters
  - HUD-VASH
  - VA-CWT
  - Hotel/Motel Vouchers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total # of beds for singles</th>
<th>Total # of beds for families (1+ adults and 1+ children)</th>
<th>Total # of units for families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Beds (persons only stay less than 180 days/6 months)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Beds (persons can stay less than 24 months/2 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal Beds: Open date _______ Close date _______</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) (Persons can stay as long as they wish, persons sign a lease or agreement and receive supportive services, disability required for entry)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Permanent Housing Projects (OHP) (Persons can stay as long as they wish, persons sign a lease or agreement and may or may not receive supportive services)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voucher Beds: Funded by an Agency or charitable funding but located in a hotel/motel and used on the night of the PIT Count.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TRAINING

- Train, train, train
  - Coordinators Training, Volunteer Training (for Coordinators to Use), HMIS training.
  - Designate a Community Organizer is the Point of Contact with the CoC.
  - CO is trained by the CoC and trains their Community Volunteers. CO returns the surveys to the CoC.
- Provide **sample forms**: Press releases, flyers, Law Enforcement and Business Notifications, Talking Points Guide
- Go out and engage communities not historically involved.
**HMIS**

- Lots of preparation for end-users.
- Sheltered count solely occurs in HMIS.
- Unsheltered surveys get entered into HMIS and fed to CoC’s BNL.
- Temporary sites for the providers turning in Bed Tally Sheets. Clients get entered in HMIS, but sites get deleted.
ANALYSIS AFTER THE COUNT

- Incorporate your efforts into your BNL and vice versa.
- Everything gets pulled from HMIS.
- Cross-reference surveys with existing BNL data.
- Set a date for communities to return the surveys or input them into HMIS.
- Follow up after the PIT Count with each County Contact for a report of each county and to verify the surveys received.
WHAT DO WE DO IF WE DON’T GET DATA

- Examine BNL data for that specific county.
- If none exists, then we make an assumption based on the following formula.

Example:

No data received from Ritchie County (population 10,449). Data received from Grant County (population 11,937)

Population of non reporting county/population of reporting county = variance in population

Variance x number reported in reporting county = number to report for NON-Reporting County.
WV BOS PIT AND HIC RESULTS

WV BoS CoC Total Beds versus Persons
2016 Point in Time Count

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Beds</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Shelter</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Housing</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid Rehousing</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Supportive Housing</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Permanent Housing</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available Beds Versus Unsheltered Homeless Persons</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend:**
- Blue bars represent beds
- Red bars represent persons
CONTACT US:

Amanda Sisson, Assistant Director
WV Coalition to End Homelessness, Inc.
PO Box 4697
Bridgeport, WV 26330
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amandasisson@wvceh.org
wvceh.org
Broward County
Point-in-Time Count Methodology

September 22, 2016
PIT Count Phases

**Phase 1: Investigate & Define**
- Best Practice Research
- Lessons Learned Review
- Committee Structure and Role Definition
- Survey Tool Review

**Phase 2: Engage & Delegate**
- Logistics Planning
- Secure Local Gov’t & Community Stakeholders’ Support
- Develop Local Media/Social Media Outreach
- Volunteer Recruitment

**Phase 3: Mobilize & Energize**
- Develop Maps and Routes
- Volunteer Training
- Team Formation
- Incentive Collection

**Phase 4: Activate & Collect**
- PIT Count
- Communication During Count
- Media/Photo-journalism
- Outreach to Homeless

**Phase 5: Analyze & Report**
- Draft Report
- Present Findings / Educate Community about Homelessness
- Volunteer Recognition
- Debrief Meeting
PIT Committee Structure

- Steering and Logistics Committee
- Volunteer Recruitment and Training Committee
- Unsheltered Logistics Committee
- Sheltered Logistics Committee
- Data Processing and HMIS Committee
- Public Communication Committee

PHASE 1
Timeline

September
- Kickoff
- Committee formation

October
- Point location data

November
- Volunteer Recruitment

December
- Solicit donations
- Training
- The COUNT

January
- Data entry
- Data analysis

February

- Steering and Logistics meetings bi-weekly
- Subcommittee meetings 1-2 times each month (or more if needed)
Unsheltered Count Methodology

1. Complete coverage (block-by-block) – canvassing every block of a large area, like a downtown or entire city
2. Known locations – canvassing only those locations where homeless persons are known to live, sleep, and congregate
3. Non-shelter services (i.e., soup kitchens, healthcare clinics) – services that unsheltered homeless people typically use
4. Combination of the three strategies
Engaging the Public

The Point-in-Time Homeless Count
A Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a statistically reliable count of people experiencing homelessness during a 14-day period within the last 10 days of January. The count includes both sheltered homeless persons and those who are homeless and living in places not meant for human habitation.

Get Involved
In order to have an effective count, it is vital to have volunteers follow all instructions and procedures necessary for the accurate count, but they are also encouraged to keep the volunteers heading up to the count as well.

Homeless Count Survey will help quality of life for many
Volunteer Registration Site

- Contact information
- Age verification
- Confidentiality agreement
- Photo consent
- Prior participation in Count
- Volunteer training registration
- PIT count shift registration
- Team member listing
- Willingness to drive

272 volunteers registered through the site – 238 registered for training
Mapping System

- Point locations were entered into our County GIS mapping system
- Large wall maps were developed based on these points and were provided to Site Captains as a guide for volunteer distribution
- Smaller maps were developed that corresponded with the yellow blocks on the wall map
- These maps were distributed to volunteers with a spreadsheet that had an exact location for each point
Volunteer Training

• All volunteers were required to go through a training
• Individuals who had participated within the past 2 years were able to opt out of an in-person training
• On-site trainings were made available (in addition to the 3 scheduled trainings) for agencies and organizations that had more than 10 participants
• An online refresher training was made available one week prior to the count
Volunteer Visibility
A total of 29 community agencies, organizations, and universities participated...
Outreach During the Count

Be Counted!

What is the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count?
The PIT count is a county-wide count of all people (sheltered and unsheltered) that are experiencing homelessness during a 24-hour period.

What can you expect during the count?
- Count Crew
- Look for a volunteer wearing a bright GREEN shirt
- Answer a 10-15 minute survey
- Get an incentive for participating!

2016 Broward County Point-in-Time Count
January 26th-28th, 2016

HOMELESS RESOURCE GUIDE
In Partnership with Broward County’s Continuum of Care

Homeless Count Volunteer Checklist

Before Starting the Count
- Does your team have a map and route information?
- Do all members of the group have a cell phone or some method of communication?
- Is there a designated driver for the group?
- Does each member have a vehicle and_description?
- Does each member have incentives to distribute?
- Are all necessary wearing the assigned uniform for easy identification?

During the Count
- Make sure that you have filled out the grid number and point location on EACH survey (for the grid sheet not a point).
- Make sure that the participant has not already completed a survey.
- Make sure to get the participant’s written consent (they agree to conduct the HSO DA).

After the Count
- Turn in all of your surveys to the USA person listed at your regional headquarters

Contacts
Region Captain(s):
- North Region
- Central Region
- South Region

Veteran Contacts:

Team Members:
Regional Headquarter Structure

Volunteer Liaison
- Communicates with volunteers
- Distributes shirts
- Volunteer sign-in
- Distribution of volunteer bags

Site Captain
- Manages distribution of volunteers through region
- Communicates with PIT coordinator about any concerns
- Communicates with volunteer liaison about volunteer redistribution

Quality Assurance
- Checks surveys when they are returned
- Dismisses volunteers once surveys have been checked
Volunteer Recognition and Process Debrief

- A process debrief is held to discuss the successes of the count and opportunities for improvement
- Results from the volunteer and committee members

As a token of appreciation we hold a luncheon for all of our volunteers and individuals/organizations that donated to the count.
Opportunities for Improvement

• Back-up headquarters in case of an emergency

• Strategizing shifts to target meal site times

• Capping the number of volunteers for certain shifts/regions
For more information, contact:
Shira Fowlkes, MPH, Coordinator
Broward Regional Health Planning Council
sfowlkes@brhpc.org
www.browardpointintime.org