# Introduction to Point-in-Time (PIT) Counts

November 27, 2012

Lauren Dunton, Abt Associates

# Learning Objectives

- Review HUD standards for conducting and reporting on Point-in-Time (PIT) counts of homeless people in 2013

- Understand the basic methodologies for sheltered and unsheltered counts

- Review basic strategies for conducting counts in rural areas

# What is a Point-in-Time Count?

- A count of all homeless people in your community on a single night

- PIT data is useful to:
  - Better understand the characteristics and needs of homeless people in your community
  - Planning and program development efforts
  - Measure progress toward eliminating homelessness and to ensure accountability
  - Raise public awareness

# How Does HUD Use PIT Data?

- Data source for the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR)
  - Information reported in the AHAR is used by Congress, the administration, and the media and general public

- PIT data is published annually on HUD's website

- HUD uses PIT data to inform funding decisions
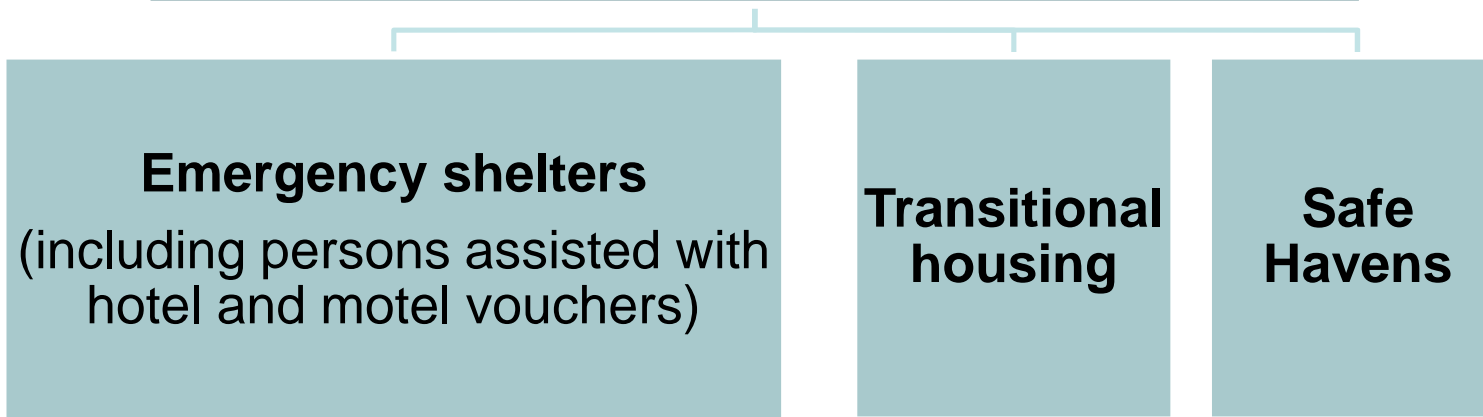
# HUD PIT Requirements

- All CoCs must conduct a PIT count during the last 10 calendar days in January
  - Sheltered counts are required annually
  - Unsheltered counts are required in odd calendar years (2013 is required)
- Both counts must be completed using statistically reliable methods approved by HUD
- CoCs are strongly encouraged to use HMIS to generate their sheltered count where possible

- All persons who meet the criteria described in paragraph 1.ii of the <u>Homeless Definition Final Rule</u>

**Sheltered homeless persons**

| **Emergency shelters** (including persons assisted with hotel and motel vouchers) | **Transitional housing** | **Safe Havens** |

COMMUNITY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT

- Include all persons who meet criteria described in paragraph 1.i of the <u>Homeless Definition Final Rule</u>

**Unsheltered homeless persons**

Primary nighttime residence is place not meant for human habitation on night of count, including: car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground

Do **not** include people residing:

- in PSH programs (including VASH)

- in locations not listed on the HIC

- temporarily with family or friends

- in their own housing unit with assistance from RRH provider program

# Population Data

- Report the total number of sheltered and unsheltered persons and households for three household types:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Households with at least one adult and one child** | **Households without children** | **Households with only children** |

# PIT Population Data Age Categories

| Households with at least one adult and one child | Sheltered | | Unsheltered |
|---|---|---|---|
| | ES | TH | |
| Total number of households | | | |
| Total number of persons | | | |
| Number of persons (under age 18) | | | |
| Number of persons (age 18-24) | | | |
| Number of persons (over age 24) | | | |

# PIT Population Data Age Categories

| Households without children | Sheltered | | | Unsheltered |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ES | TH | SH | |
| Total number of households | | | | |
| Total number of persons | | | | |
| Number of persons (age 18-24) | | | | |
| Number of persons (over age 24) | | | | |

# PIT Population Data Age Categories

| Households with only children | Sheltered | | Unsheltered |
|---|---|---|---|
| | ES | TH | |
| Total number of households | | | |
| Total number of one-child households | | | |
| Total number of multi-child households | | | |
| Number of children in multi-child households | | | |

# Subpopulation Data

| Subpopulation Type | Required for Sheltered Persons | Required for Unsheltered Persons |
|---|:---:|:---:|
| Chronically Homeless Individuals | ✓ | ✓ |
| *Chronically Homeless Families* | ✓ | ✓ |
| Persons in Chronically Homeless Families | ✓ | ✓ |
| All Veterans | ✓ | ✓ |
| *Female Veterans* | ✓ | ✓ |
| Severely Mentally Ill | ✓ | ✓ |
| Chronic Substance Abuse | ✓ | ✓ |
| Persons with HIV/AIDS | ✓ | ✓ |
| Victims of Domestic Violence | *optional* | *optional* |

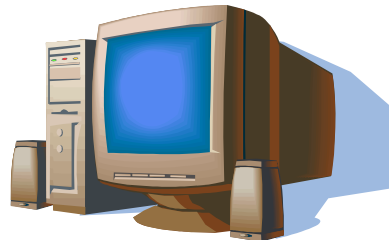# Methods for Counting Sheltered Homeless Persons in Rural Areas

- Count people in emergency shelters, safe havens, and transitional housing programs
  - All programs on CoC's housing inventory
  - Temporary emergency hotel/motel/apartment vouchers for homeless people
  - Faith-based providers and DV providers
  - VA homeless programs and certain programs for homeless youth

- Collect data using:
    - HMIS

    - Provider report or survey

    - Client-level survey using standardized instrument

- Online survey instruments can be helpful to overcome data collection challenges in large geographies with few providers

- Hold trainings to ensure that providers understand who to include in the count and how to use the survey instrument (if not using HMIS)

# Methods for Counting Unsheltered Homeless in Rural Areas

- **Street count plus interviews**
  - Complete coverage (block-by-block) and/or known locations
  - Probability sampling

- **Service-based count with interviews at non-shelter locations**
  - Interview all clients at non-shelter services (i.e. soup kitchens, healthcare centers)
  - Include outreach teams

COMMUNITY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT

- Divide large geographies with count coordinators

- Utilize a multi-day data collection effort
  - Conduct service-based count for several days
  - Need to ensure still asking about night designated for the count

- Partner with organizations that may serve homeless persons to promote the count
  - Social service organizations, mental health agencies, community centers, feeding programs, etc.

- Identify known locations prior to the night designated for the PIT count
  - Consider engaging currently or formerly homeless individuals to help identify encampment locations
  - Recruit expert volunteers such as law enforcement officials and social service staff to help identify these locations

- Publicize the PIT count in the community
  - Design and hang posters in common areas publicizing the count date
  - Alerts both the public as well as homeless persons about the upcoming count effort
- Hold trainings for staff and volunteers to ensure they understand who to count and how to use the survey instrument

# Resources

- 2013 Housing Inventory Count and Point-in Time Count: Data Collection Guidance (www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewResource&ResourceID=4697)

- A Guide to Counting Sheltered Homeless People (www.hudhre.info/documents/counting_sheltered.pdf)

- A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People (www.hudhre.info/documents/counting_unsheltered.pdf

# Questions?

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

## Homelessness Resource Exchange

Text Size A A A    HUD/TA Provider Login ▶    Share f 🐦 ✉ 🔊

[          ] GO
Advanced Search

HOME | ABOUT HRE | FIND A RESOURCE▾ | **ASK A QUESTION** | REQUEST TA▾ | LEARNING CENTER | COC/GRANTEE INFO▾ | CALENDAR | LISTSERVS

You are here: HRE Home ▶ HUD HRE Virtual Help Desk          🖨 Print Friendly Version

## HUD HRE Virtual Help Desk

Welcome to the HUD HRE Virtual Help Desk. Review the Help Desk form for the list of HUD programs and topics the Help Desk is currently accepting questions on.

Do you want to track a question that was previously submitted, provide clarification to your question, or ask a follow-up question? Enter your confirmation key in the field below and select the "Go" button. (You should have received the confirmation key in the confirmation e-mail right after you submitted the question). This will enable both you and Virtual Helpdesk staff to access your original question and answer.

Confirmation Key: [                              ]    [ Go ]

**Tips:**

- On the form below you **must select the "Program / System" option first** before entering information in the remainder of the form. If you select the "Program / System" option after entering text, the form will reset and you may lose what you entered.
- If you need help in completing this form, visit our Help document (PDF).

(* required)          Please review the HRE Virtual Help Desk Tips document to determine which Program/System to select

Program / System: *    [ -- Select one -- ▾ ]

Last Name: *    [                              ]

First Name: *    [                              ]

Name of Organization:    [                              ]

E-mail Address: *    [                              ]

Confirm E-mail: *    [                              ]

22

COMMUNITY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT