PIT Count Office Hours

Topic of Focus: *Using Sampling to Conduct an Unsheltered PIT Count*
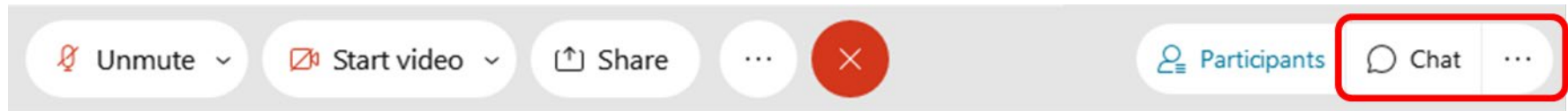
December 3, 2020

Housekeeping

- A recording of today's session, along with the slide deck and a copy of the Chat and Q&A content will be posted to the HUD Exchange within 2-3 business days

- Event information for upcoming PIT Count Office Hours, along with copies of all materials can be found here:

https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hdx/guides/pit-hic/?utm_source=HUD+Exchange+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=41d93284a8-2021_HIC_and_PIT_Count_Updates_for_CoCs_11_16&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f32b935a5f-41d93284a8-19554637#2021-pit-count-and-hic-guidance-and-training

- To join the webinar via the phone, please call in using:

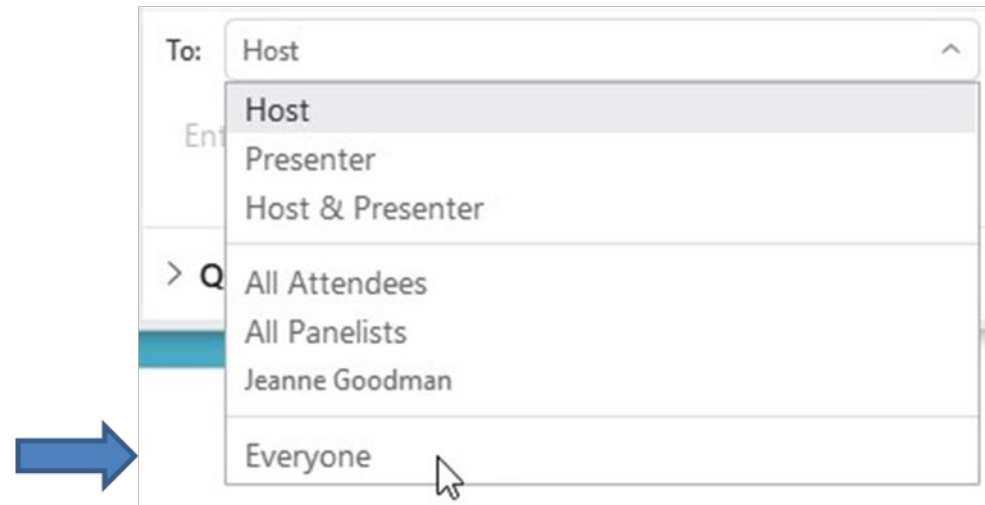   +1-415-655-0002   Access code: 178 394 7380

    (If you need to call in toll-free, call 1-855-797-9485)

Chat Feature

Select the Chat icon to make a comment or ask a question.

Be certain the To field is set to **Everyone**

Raise Hand for Questions

Locate and select the **Raise Hand** icon on the right

Speakers & Resource Advisors

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

- William Snow, Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs

Abt Associates

- Aubrey Sitler
- Meghan Henry
- Larry Buron
- Tommy Joe Bednar

2021 PIT COUNT FLEXIBILITIES

2021 HIC and PIT Count Requirements

HIC	Sheltered PIT Count	Unsheltered PIT Count
• Conduct as normal	• Conduct as normal	• Conduct based on flexibilities in guidance • CoCs can seek an exception to some or all of the unsheltered PIT count requirements

2021 Unsheltered PIT Count Flexibilities

<u>For the 2021 unsheltered PIT count, CoCs should:</u>

- Prioritize the safety of people experiencing homelessness, staff, and volunteers

<u>For the 2021 unsheltered PIT count, CoCs may:</u>

- Conduct observation-only counts or very short surveys
  - CoCs covering large geographies may conduct observation-only counts in separate areas on consecutive nights for two to four nights
- Conduct PIT count activities for up to 14 days (normally up to 7 days)
- Rely more heavily on sampling, even if that's a change from usual PIT count approach
- Use HMIS or other comprehensive datasets*

*CoCs need to get approval to do this

Resource: <u>Conducting the 2021 Unsheltered PIT Count</u>

PIT Count Exceptions that Require Permission from HUD

1. **Exception to some or all of the unsheltered PIT count requirements**

   - e.g., request to only do a head count of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, with no demographic or subpopulation data collection

   - e.g., request not to conduct an unsheltered PIT count at all in 2021

2. **Request to use an existing comprehensive dataset instead of conducting an unsheltered PIT count**

3. **Exception to counting in the last 10 days of January**

   - Note that the data submission timeline will not likely change (around end of April)

CoCs can simply make other changes to their PIT count approaches without seeking HUD approval. HUD will require CoCs to state what changes they made during the data submission process in the HDX in spring 2021.

Requesting Exceptions

CoCs that cannot conduct the full 2021 unsheltered PIT count must submit a request for an exception to William Snow (William.Snow@hud.gov) that describes:

1. Why the CoC cannot conduct a full unsheltered PIT count,

2. Whether the CoC is requesting an exception to some or all of the requirements of the unsheltered PIT count;

3. If the CoC is conducting a count, what exactly will be included in the count (e.g., a head count only);

4. Other efforts they are taking to understand the needs of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in their community.

2021 PIT COUNT & SAMPLING

New Resource on Sampling

[How to Use Sampling within a CoC to Conduct an Unsheltered Point-in-Time (PIT) Count](#)

Sampling

- Sampling is a way to account for information about a whole group of people by only collecting data about a portion of that full group.

  - Any CoC not conducting a full census count of its entire geography can use this guidance to more methodically select a sample of areas.

- A CoC could estimate the number and characteristics of all people experiencing unsheltered homelessness by counting, and potentially surveying, only some subareas of its full geography (or a "sample").

- CoCs that use a sampling approach must extrapolate for uncounted and un-surveyed areas of the full geography.

Sampling

Benefits of Sampling

- Takes less time than a full census count
- Requires fewer staff and volunteers
- Increases safety for people experiencing homelessness and staff/volunteers

Drawbacks of Sampling

- Relies on assumptions based on limited information
- May not be as precise as a full census count
- If demographics are not accounted for in developing a sampling approach, extrapolated information about demographics may not be valid

Data Collection Activities to Support a Sampling Approach

Observation-only counts produce a head count without verbal or physical interaction between people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and those conducting the PIT count.

Survey-based counts rely on surveys conducted with people to determine whether they are experiencing homelessness, and include questions on demographic information and any other information the CoC deems important for local planning purposes. Surveys can be conducted over a broader period of time because respondents can be asked questions to validate whether they experienced homelessness on the night designated for the count.

Data Collection Activities and Timeline to Support a Sampling Approach

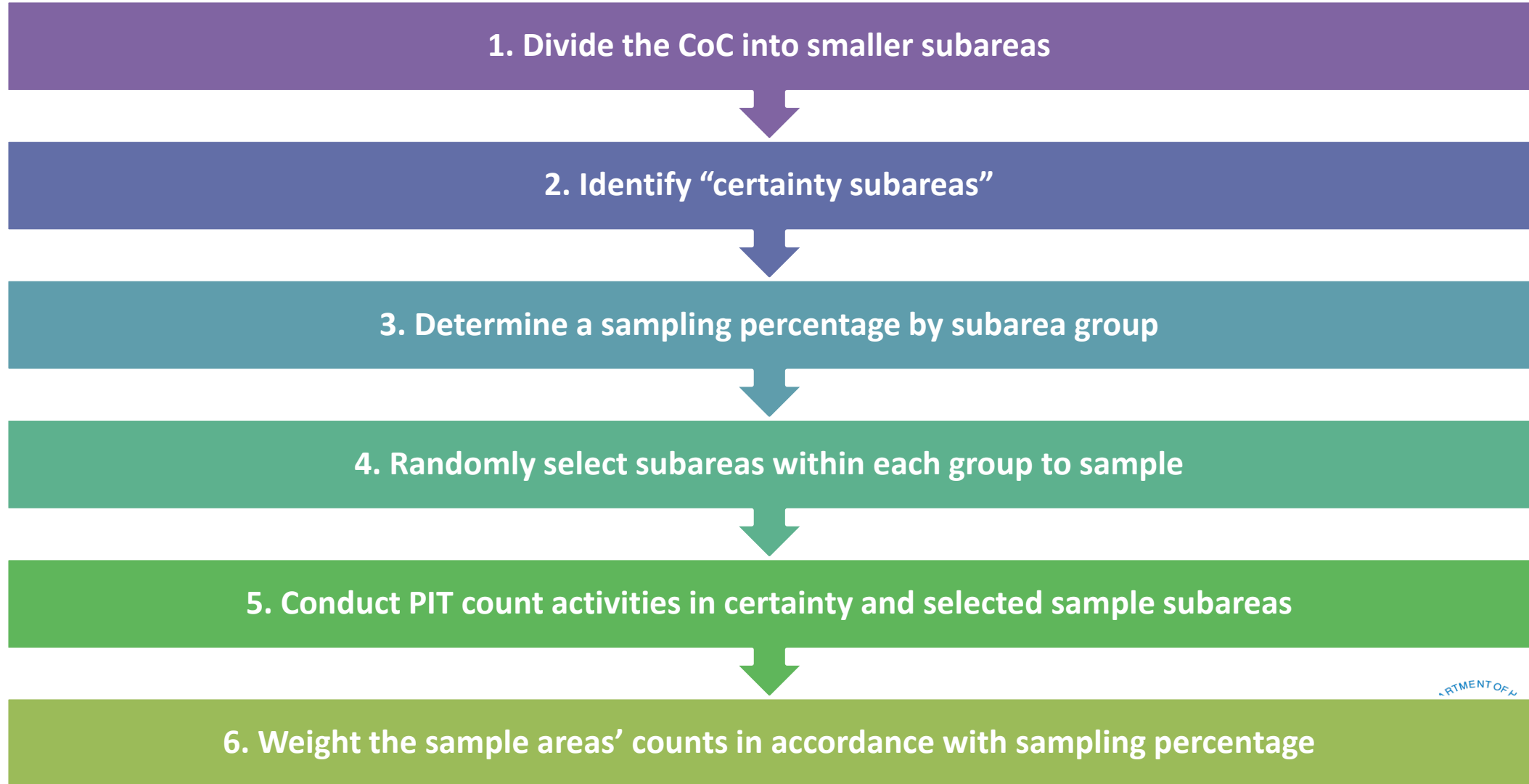|		Timing of PIT Count Activities	
		On the Night of the Count (e.g., 10pm-6am, starting on the night designated for the count)	After the Night of the Count (e.g., starting at 6am the day after the night designated for the count)
PIT Count Activities	Observations	Yes	No
	Surveys	Yes	Yes

Determining Data Collection Activities and Timeline for 2021

Guiding Questions:

- What information does the CoC want to collect during the PIT count?

- What is the current COVID-19 environment in the community?

- How much staff capacity is available to support PIT count activities, and over what time period? Does the CoC intend to recruit, train, and support volunteers in conducting any PIT count activities?

- For how many days does the CoC intend to conduct PIT count activities?

6 General Steps to Develop a Sampling Approach

1. Divide the CoC into smaller subareas

2. Identify "certainty subareas"

3. Determine a sampling percentage by subarea group

4. Randomly select subareas within each group to sample

5. Conduct PIT count activities in certainty and selected sample subareas

6. Weight the sample areas' counts in accordance with sampling percentage

COMMUNITY
PLANNING
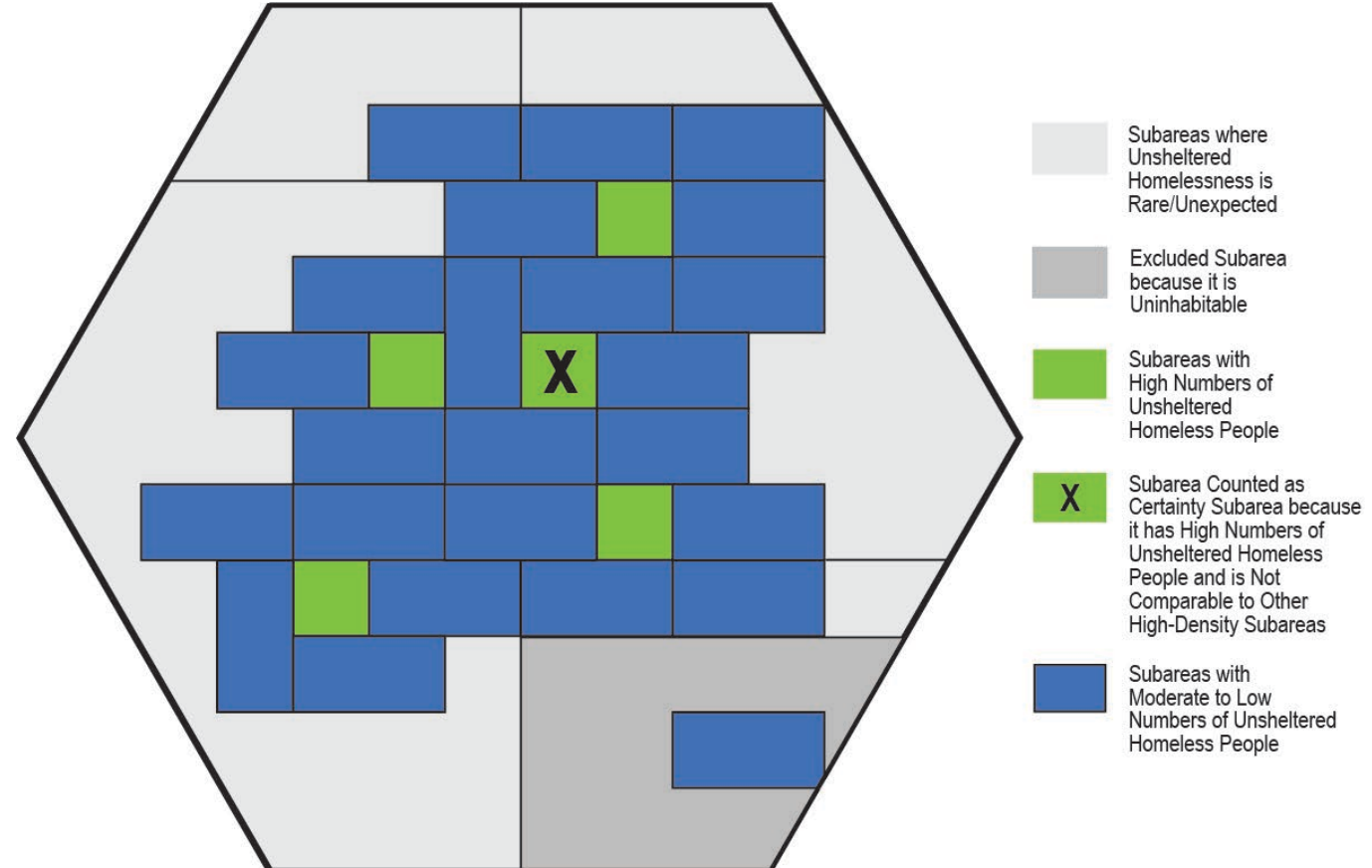&
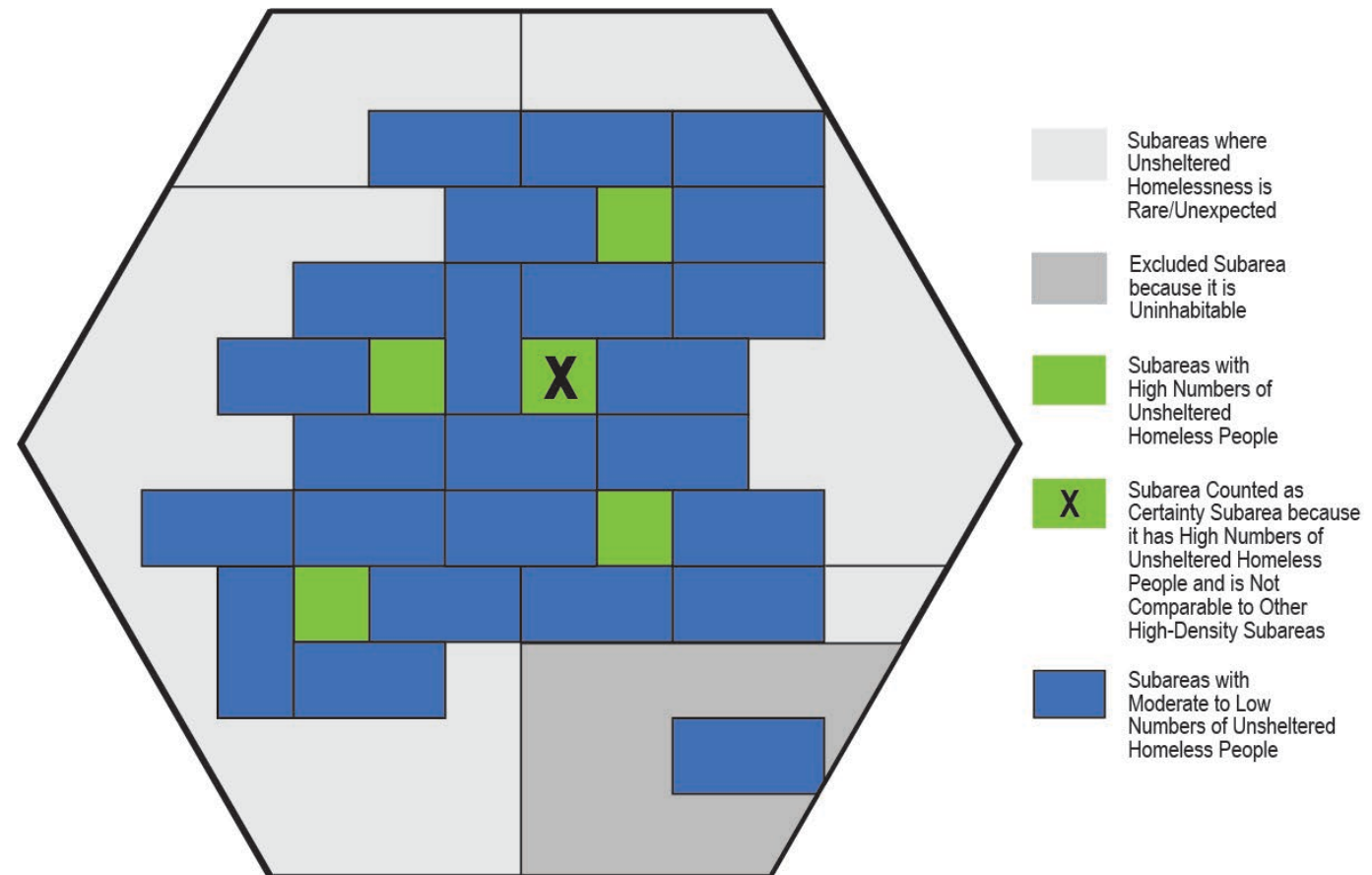DEVELOPMENT

Developing a Sampling Approach: Step 1

1. Divide the CoC's geography into smaller regions or subareas. Categorize all subareas based on predicted levels of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness:

- **High-density subareas**
- **Medium-density subareas**
- **Rare or unlikely subareas**
- **Uninhabitable or excluded subareas**

Legend:
- Subareas where Unsheltered Homelessness is Rare/Unexpected
- Excluded Subarea because it is Uninhabitable
- Subareas with High Numbers of Unsheltered Homeless People
- **X** Subarea Counted as Certainty Subarea because it has High Numbers of Unsheltered Homeless People and is Not Comparable to Other High-Density Subareas
- Subareas with Moderate to Low Numbers of Unsheltered Homeless People

Developing a Sampling Approach: Step 2

2. Identify any subareas that are so unique, they cannot be represented by any other areas. These will be called "Certainty" subareas.

Legend:
- Subareas where Unsheltered Homelessness is Rare/Unexpected
- Excluded Subarea because it is Uninhabitable
- Subareas with High Numbers of Unsheltered Homeless People
- X — Subarea Counted as Certainty Subarea because it has High Numbers of Unsheltered Homeless People and is Not Comparable to Other High-Density Subareas
- Subareas with Moderate to Low Numbers of Unsheltered Homeless People

Developing a Sampling Approach: Step 3

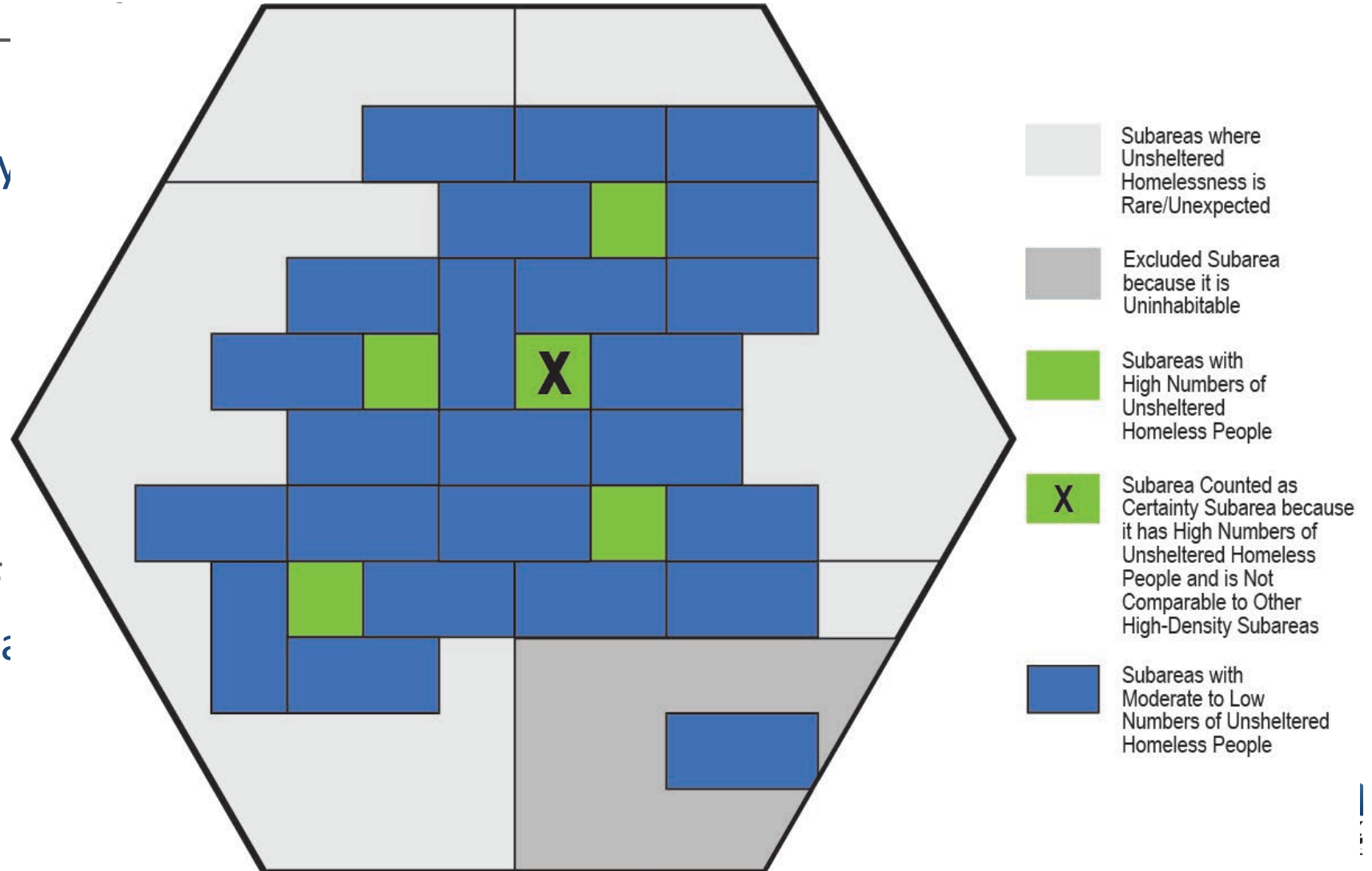3. Determine what percentage of each of the high/medium/low/rare groups will be sampled.

General principles:

- Sample as many of the "high-density" subareas as possible.
- Sample fewer of the medium-density and rare/unlikely subareas, but do not sample so few that an unexpected (and possibly unrepresentative) count in one of these subareas will spoil the sampling estimate for all medium-density or rare/unlikely subareas.

Example CoC may choose to

- Certainty subarea

- 50% of other "high-density" subareas

  - *=2 of the 4 other green subareas*

- 25% of "medium-density" subareas

  - *=6 of the 24 blue areas*

- None of the "rare" subarea

Subareas where Unsheltered Homelessness is Rare/Unexpected

Excluded Subarea because it is Uninhabitable

Subareas with High Numbers of Unsheltered Homeless People

X Subarea Counted as Certainty Subarea because it has High Numbers of Unsheltered Homeless People and is Not Comparable to Other High-Density Subareas

Subareas with Moderate to Low Numbers of Unsheltered Homeless People

22

Developing a Sampling Approach: Step 4

4. Based on the sampling percentages, randomly select the subareas to be included. All subareas within the CoC will ultimately be assigned to one of the following groups:

    a. Certainty subareas

    b. Selected sample subareas

    c. Unselected subareas

    d. Excluded subareas

Developing a Sampling Approach: Step 5

5. Conduct the unsheltered PIT count within each of the certainty and selected sample subareas on the night of the PIT count

Developing a Sampling Approach: Step 6

6. Weight the counts from the selected sample subareas, in accordance with the sampling percentages.

For example:

If the CoC associated with the example map identified the following people in each certainty and sample site, they would include **708 people in their PIT count**.

Subarea Category	Summed Total # People Counted	Probability of Selection	Inverse of Probability (i.e., Weight)	Total # People to Include in PIT Count
Certainty (1 subarea)	**100**	100% (1/1)	1	100 x 1 = **100**
High-Density (2 selected subareas)	75 + 55 = **130**	50% (1/2)	2	130 x 2 = **260**
Medium-Density (6 selected subareas)	21 + 10 + 15 + 7 + 22 + 12 = **87**	25% (1/4)	4	87 x 4 = **348**
Total	*317*	--	--	*100 + 260 + 348 =* **708**

Common Questions

Can you provide examples of sampling based methodologies and best practices?

Common Questions

Would some sort of extrapolation work to calculate numbers for demographics?

Common Questions

What are some ways communities doing head counts have gone about accurately counting people in tents if only the tents, and not the people, are visible?

Common Questions

What types of questions do you recommend adding to the observation survey to aid in deduplication? Are there strategies for avoiding duplication in observation counts?

Common Questions

Can a CoC use different data collection approaches **in the same selected subareas** (e.g., observations on the night of the PIT count and surveys in the days following the PIT count at service sites in cities)?

Can a CoC use different data collection approaches **in different selected subareas** (e.g., observations on the night of the PIT count in some counties and surveys in the days following the PIT count at service sites in cities)?

Common Questions

Do full PIT count exceptions mean not doing an unsheltered count at all?

2021 Unsheltered PIT Count Resources

- [Conducting the 2021 Unsheltered PIT Count](#)
  - Guidance document that outlines the unsheltered PIT count flexibilities

- [How to Use Sampling within a CoC to Conduct an Unsheltered Point-in-Time (PIT) Count](#)

- Updates to [HMIS Project Setup and Inventory Changes](#)
  - Updated to address non-congregate shelter (NCS) and hotel/motel inventory in the HIC and for the sheltered PIT count

- 2021 HIC and PIT Count Notice: Not yet released
  - This will have very few edits and the substantive issues are addressed in the first document above
  - Timing: TBD (probably late December)

All forthcoming resources will be posted to the [2021 PIT Count and HIC Guidance and Training page](#)

General PIT Count Resources

- [PIT Count & HIC Landing Page](#) on HUD Exchange
- [PIT Count Methodology Guide](#)
- [PIT Count Office Hours Recordings](#)

More PIT Office Hours

Upcoming PIT Count Office Hours

- December 15, 2020 | 3:00-4:30pm ET

- January 12, 2021 | 3:00-4:30pm ET

- January 19, 2021 | 3:00-4:30pm ET

Registration links available here.

Pulse-Check Question

In the chat, tell us:

What do you want us to focus on during future PIT Count Office Hours sessions?

Raise Hand for Questions

Locate and select the **Raise Hand** icon on the right

Q & A