

PIT Office Hours: Transcript December 3rd, 2020

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Tommy Joe Bednar: Hello everyone and welcome to our 2nd session of PIT count office hours. My name is Tommy Joe, and today we'll be focusing on using sampling to conduct the unsheltered PIT count, but before we get into the specifics of our presentation today, I do want to share and go over a couple of pieces of technical and housekeeping information for today. 1st, and foremost, we are recording today's session. I'm sure as many of you want to know the recordings, the slides, the chat, the transcript will all be available. It'll be posted to the HUD Exchange in about two to three business days. So those materials will be available. Just give us a couple of days to make them accessible and they'll be posted there. The event information can be found again on the HUD Exchange and I'll post the link and just a minute but we also want to make sure that you can hear us today. While all attendees will be initially muted, we hope that you can hear us best, and to do that, we hope that you'll join via phone. And to join via phone, go ahead and use that call in information there and that's in the chat box. Now, the way you can do that and we'll have the opportunity for you to ask questions later not only in the chat box, but if you'd like to ask your question verbally, um, you can ask it over the phone or via your computer's audio. Speaking of chat, and the fact that this is an office hours, um, we hope that you will share your questions comments and experiences with our presenters, with all of us today. And to do, so we hope you will use the chat feature. And so to open that chat feature, you'll click on the little bubble and the bottom right hand corner of your screen that looks like a chat bubble. It has the word chat next to it. Highlight it in a red box on the screen. Now, if you click that it'll open a pane on the right hand side of your screen and please send your messages to everyone in the "To" line that way all of our panelists and all the other participants can see your questions, comments and experiences today. So, again, make sure that two line it says "Everyone." When we get to the Q and A portion of our webinar today, to know that you have a question that you'd like to ask verbally, please go ahead and click on that little raise hand feature. So, in the screenshot on the screen, now highlighted in yellow, pointed to by the blue box, you'll see that there's a little hand there. If you click on that, that will virtually raise your hand so that we can see we can call on you we'll unmute you and you'll have the opportunity to ask a question. And when you're done, or if your question is already been asked by someone else, if you would just click on it again, that'll lower your hand so that we know your question's already been asked or you don't want to ask it anymore. We'll go over that one more time. And if you're joining us just via phone, to be able to raise your hand, go ahead and click star three. With that being said, um, our speakers today are going to be William Snow from the Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs at HUD, and from Abt Associates, Aubrey Sitler, Megan Henry, Larry Buron, and myself, Tommy Joe Bednar. With that, I'm going to go ahead and hand things over to William Snow to talk with us about some flexibilities that we covered briefly last time.

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William Snow: All right, looking forward to today's office hours, I'm going to go through some of this material fairly quickly, because you've already heard it, but I wanted to do quick reminders about them, so next slide please. All right. The Housing Inventory Count is where HIC is required as normal. That means all of the data elements you've collected in the past, you will collect again and report to HUD same with the sheltered Point in Time count. For the unsheltered Point in Time count, we are requiring unsheltered Point in Time counts, with the exception, or with the understanding that you have guidance given to you, that gives you extra flexibilities. We encourage you to look at those. We'll post that in the chat. We also give you the opportunity to seek an exception. The exception could be from collecting some of the data elements. So, maybe you don't want to collect on demographics, or household type, or subpopulations, if you don't want to collect on one or any of those categories, you'll need to submit an exception to me. Let's say, you don't want to do unsheltered Point in Time count at all--and I use this term "you don't want to" pretty loosely because it really is a reflection of your ability to save the count. So if you cannot safely count in your jurisdiction, and you need to seek an exception to do any of the counts, the unsheltered count, you can send me an exception request as well. So, that is available to communities that demonstrate that they, that they have need and we are granting those liberally. Right? Safety is going to come first, we want to get whatever information we can get we want you to have access to it. So, you can make planning decisions, but that will not come at the expense of those we serve, nor those of you who serve people experiencing homelessness. Next slide please. So, what are some of these flexibilities that we are talking about? First off again, safety is first thing. Right. We can't reiterate enough. A lot of people have asked us and said, are you really going to give an exception? Absolutely. We've given lots of communities exceptions from doing any of the counts and several from doing several parts of counts. So we are doing that safety. This is not a, we're not just saying it for the time that we really do prioritize it. Some of the flexibilities you have, many of you are not comfortable doing observation counts because we for years have moved away from that. We are encouraging you in the COVID context to consider whether that is the way to counts this year. So, if you can feasibly conduct a short survey. That is also an option. And when we say that, you have the option of collecting as much as you want. We would encourage you for safety reasons to consider if you're going to do a survey, limiting it to a handful of questions, ones that get at the identification of the person you're asking questions of and their homeless status. Beyond that, we don't encourage that, although we won't stop communities from doing it if they can do it safely. So, if you want to do surveys again, that's an option. Observation is also an option and a hybrid is also an approach, uh, that's acceptable with some

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caveats on how to do that. We've gotten lots of questions of, "can we do a survey in some areas and observation in others?" The short answer is yes, but you have to be intentional about how you do that. So we can talk more about it. If others continue to have questions on it happy to happy to go there. You can conduct your count over 14 days instead of over 7 days. The real reason to do that is because you have limited staff and you have a way to verify the data. So if you're going to say, "I want to count up to 14 days," that's fine. You should count on giving short surveys. If you're going to count through observation over three or four days in an area that's fairly regionalized, right. so there's not a lot of movement between the homeless population in those areas, you can do that through observation only and that's okay. Again, you need to know your own area. If you don't have a lot of movement between the area that it, it's definitely in an okay approach. You don't need to seek our, um, our approval for that. You're getting an exception unless you're not going to collect all the data elements, right? So if you're going to do that and you're only going to do a headcount, yep, you need to seek an exception. Because you're only doing a headcount, you're not giving us demographics, not giving us subpops, um, so if you're not going to do everything, you're gonna have to seek some kind of exception from us. Sampling. Today is all about sampling, so we are encouraging the use of sampling again. We know folks are less comfortable with that. We would prefer a full census if possible, but sampling is acceptable, and we encourage it for safety reasons and staff reasons from your end again messaging is really important on that. Right? We are working on messaging internally within HUD. We're happy to do what we can to support all of you in messaging that the count is not comparable to last year, in the sense of finding precise comparisons, but it should give you a sense of this year compared to last year. Are we up? Or are we down? Right? That's the main thing you need to be able to understand and actually that gets a lot of requests. I've seen, uh, folks are looking at different options, which I love the innovation here. And folks are considering, um, again, different things that are concerned that the data is not comparable. I think, even before you ask questions of me or others, you can ask the question of yourself. "Is my approach such that I have confidence to give a directional statement?" Right? "Can I be confident after doing this approach that I can at least say the count is up or down from last year?" If your approach doesn't give you enough confidence to say that, either you should consider getting a full exception, or consider another approach. So you have to have enough confidence to be able to make that again broad directional statement. Finally, we're giving you the option of using other comprehensive data sets or alternative comprehensive data sets. This we don't expect is going to be available to a lot of communities. This requires a community to have a full list, a comprehensive list of the unsheltered population in their community. Again, it can't be limited by a region within the CoC, it can't be limited by a population. It has to be reflective of the entire community, and I will require that you run that data

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based on the date of your last Point in Time count. So if you conducted a count on January 25th, 2020, I am going to tell you run that data set on January 25, 2020, right? Use that date as a parameter and compare the results of that to what you submitted to HUD in your unsheltered Point in Time count submission. I'm going to be looking for some sense of confidence that that data is fairly close. Um, so just be prepared if you're thinking of going that route, that's not a bad route to go. We've approved that for a couple of communities, um, but be prepared to respond to the comprehensiveness and provide me verification that your data is actually comparable. All right, next slide please. There are only three reasons that you have to come to me. For an exception, one is if you want to do less than the full count again, a full unsheltered count includes collecting data on household types on subpopulations, and on demographics. If you plan on doing a count, that includes that again, you may be doing a sample within that and extrapolating. But if you plan on submitting those data elements to HUD, even if you change your approach, you don't need to seek an exception. Right? You may have normally done a census approach and now you're doing observation, but you're still going to submit that data to me. Yeah, you don't need an exception for that. If you're only going to submit a total headcount, or you're only going to do some of the data, maybe you're only going to do some populations, submit a request, because if you're not going to submit all the elements, you need an exception uh, granted for that. So that's exception number one. The second exception is around the data set that we talked about, the comprehensive data set. Again, be prepared for a lot of back and forth. I'm going to ask you to verify that that data. Is in fact, a comprehensive and a sufficient proxy for this year. And the 3rd, one is date. If you want to seek an exception to do an earlier or later date. That's okay. The big caveat there is, you have to be prepared to submit your data by April 30th. So if you want to do a March 30th Point in Time count date, that could be okay, you just have to be prepared to submit your data 30 days afterwards. So that's not feasible for most communities. The other factor there you should consider whether your climate and other circumstances are similar enough to January, that it's comparable that is important for us to be able to gauge. And we do encourage you to do it at the end of the month again, a lot of assistance checks are usually spent by then. So, the end of the month is an important time, but we'll consider anything you pose to us with date exceptions again. Just be prepared for us to push back and forth. If you're not if it's not at the end of the month, or if it seems really late, we just need confidence that you can submit by April 30th. All the other things that you want to do, especially if they're in that, that guidance that we posted, you have that flexibility. You don't have to come to us. You don't need to submit an email, I don't mind responding to email so that's not about like, I don't want to hear from you, it's you don't have the time to send emails back and forth to HUD. If you're switching during observation when you're collecting all the elements, do it. Don't come to us. Don't worry. We will ask you about that.

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Right? When you submit your data, you have the methodology section we're going to make it required. We want to know what you people did for your counting because this is really important. We're excited. We actually want to use this for innovation purposes and learn from you, but you will have to share what you did. So those are the three core things that require an exception. Next slide please. All right, this is what you need to provide me. It's pretty straightforward. Tell me what you're seeking the exception for. Are you doing some or all seeking inception from some? Are all, um, I need to know what exactly you're going to count if you're going to do some. And the 4th one is really important. This is not an alternate data set that you're going to submit to HUD. I've seen some confusion in emails on this. This is you saying that you have some data locally that you're going to use for local purposes to understand your unsheltered population, because if you're not doing a count of unsheltered, I'm concerned that you don't know what's going on in your community with regards to your unsheltered population. I used suspect all of you have a sense of what's going on so. I want to put that out there. This is the opportunity for you to document that. We just want to make sure they're not forgotten that they, what you're doing seems to outreach to them again. I'm, I'm confident we know this community. We're grateful for all that you do. And we're pretty confident that you have that covered, but document it for us. We need to know you're, you're looking at the population and serving them. Next slide please. All right with that. I am going to turn the time over now.

Aubrey Sitrer: Great. Thanks, William. Hi everybody. I'm happy to be here with you today. I am Aubrey Sitrer. I use she and her pronouns. I'm a provider with Abt Associates. And I'm going to talk to you all today about using sampling to conduct your unsheltered PIT count. Next slide please. For those of you that do intend to conduct unsheltered PIT counts – wherever it is on the spectrum from a head count to a full unsheltered count – you guys have heard us say on this office hours and in the last office hours that one consideration HUD is encouraging is a heavier reliance than usual on sampling. We're going to focus the first part of our call today on how to use a sampling approach to conduct your unsheltered PIT count. And the content I'm going to go through in this presentation is going to very closely mirror a new resource that was posted to HUD Exchange last week. We're going to go ahead and stick the hyperlink into the chat so that you can have it to reference now or later. Next slide please. Some of you may be wondering: What is sampling? Sampling is a way to account for information about a whole group of people while collecting data on only on a small portion of that full group. In the context of a PIT count, this means that instead of doing a full canvas of a CoC's geography, the CoC could conduct data

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collection activities in only some subareas of the CoC. Note that any CoC that will only conduct PIT count activities in part of their geography, whether it's because of the number of volunteers or staff you have or the size of the area you have to cover can use this guidance to more methodically select a sample of areas. This guidance can also be used to extrapolate data and apply weighting principles to your PIT count approach not just in 2021, but in all years that you conduct a PIT count. This presentation and guidance document may help you think through ways to improve the accuracy and the consistency of your PIT count. 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 (otherwise known as a "sample"). CoCs that use sampling need to extrapolate for uncounted and un-surveyed areas of the full geography. For a sampling approach to be most effective, every subarea or sub-region within the CoC must have a chance to be chosen as a sample site. We'll get into a little bit more of what we mean by that in a few minutes. Next slide please. There are a few key benefits and drawbacks of using sampling that CoCs should take into account if they intend to use sampling to conduct their PIT counts. Some of the benefits include that sampling takes less time than a full census count because you don't have to go conduct a full coverage count across every area in your CoC. It also requires fewer staff and volunteers – again, because you're not going to canvass every subarea in your CoC. And finally, sampling increases safety in the context of COVID-19. By covering fewer areas and using fewer volunteers/staff to conduct the count, you're inherently cutting back on the amount of contact between PIT count enumerators and people experiencing homelessness. And of course, this is critical for prioritizing safety, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the drawbacks, though, of sampling, include first, that sampling relies on assumptions that may be made on limited information– the data and information you have will inform assumptions you make about where people are experiencing homelessness and at what rates. This is going to impact how you weight your samples, and what your final PIT count looks like. And again, we're going to get more into weighting and what we mean by samples in a few slides. Second often a sampling approach is not as precise as a full census count – and what we mean by this is that nothing will ever be as precise as a full census PIT count where every single person in every part of a CoC who is experiencing homelessness is identified and counted. And finally, if demographics are not accounted for in developing a sampling approach, information that you use to extrapolate or predict the full population's demographics may not be valid. What we mean by this is if you're using a sampling approach to conduct your PIT count and expect to be able to extrapolate for demographics – such as race, gender, ethnicity, age – then demographics have to be factored into your method of sample site selection from the beginning. For example, you have to account for differences in racial and ethnic demographics across different subareas to be able to apply

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information collected about demographics in your sample sites to the broader population. Next slide please. Now, before we talk about sampling approaches, it's important to first discuss different PIT count activities and the timelines during which those activities are conducted. There are two main ways that CoCs collect data about people experiencing homelessness for purposes of the unsheltered PIT count: and those are observation-based counts and survey-based counts. As their name indicates, observation-based data collection approaches rely solely on observing or looking at someone to determine whether they are experiencing homelessness. They do not include any survey questions or verbal or physical interaction with people who may be experiencing homelessness. Observation-only counting activities can help you understand the total number of people encountered who are experiencing homelessness on a given night but are not very useful for collecting demographic information – you cannot reasonably determine someone's age, gender, race, or ethnicity just by looking at them. Likewise, observation-based approaches should only be used on the night designated for your PIT count during overnight hours (we usually recommend 10p to 6a) to ensure that you only count someone who is sleeping outdoors, and don't erroneously include people passing through or just socializing. Survey-based counts, as their name suggests, include survey questions that staff or volunteers must ask people to determine if they are experiencing homelessness. They can be conducted on the night designated for the count, or they can be conducted over a longer period of time and at any time of day or night because the survey questions themselves can validate whether someone was experiencing homelessness on the night designated for the PIT count. They can also include information about someone's demographic, household, or subpopulation characteristics, plus any other details a CoC wants to ask about for local planning purposes. Next slide please. This slide just provides a visual to reiterate when observations and surveys can take place –so, both in the context of the 2021 PIT count and in any other year – so, you want to make sure that observations are only used at nighttime and on the night designated for the PIT count because you cannot reasonably determine where someone slept on a previous night just by looking at them at a future point in time, even if it is one day or one night later. Because you can verify an interviewee's housing status, demographic information, and any relevant subpopulation data when conducting a survey, there are fewer restrictions on when you can conduct survey-based activities. Next slide please. So, if you anticipate using a sampling approach for your PIT count, or even if you are sorting through whether or not a sampling approach will be feasible for you, there are several things to consider when selecting the data collection activities and timeline you'll use. And these guiding questions can help you, and I'll talk through them a little bit. What information does your CoC want to collect during the PIT count? As I mentioned a little earlier, observation-based activities can work for getting a head count of people experiencing unsheltered

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homelessness but not for collecting any other information, such as demographics or subpopulation. If your CoC wants to collect data on demographics, or any of those other subpopulation pieces, or and information related to COVID-19 risks and impacts, you should consider conducting a survey rather than just an observation count. In 2021, HUD advises that CoCs only consider brief surveys to limit the length of interactions between people conducting the survey and those experiencing unsheltered homelessness reiterating what William said earlier. What is the current COVID-19 environment in the community? CoCs should rely on public health data on COVID-19 rates to inform which activities they can safely use to conduct their PIT counts. Observations involve less risk of COVID-19 exposure for people experiencing homelessness, staff, and volunteers. Observations allow for greater physical distancing and take less time to complete than surveys, which also means that fewer staff and volunteers would likely be needed overall. Since observation counts can primarily provide head counts, CoCs interested in collecting more information should consider working with local public health officials to determine whether a survey approach is feasible. And then the third question up here, 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? The human capacity available to undertake PIT count activities within a set time period (either a single night count or in service-based counts over several days) may help determine which approach is more feasible— observation-based counts or surveys. And then surveys may require additional staff or volunteers, as I said, and they will definitely require additional training to make sure that people administering those correctly and consistently. And the last question up here, for how many days does the CoC intend to conduct PIT count activities? Reiterating just one more time: observation-based PIT counts must occur at nighttime on the night designated for the PIT count, preferably between 10pm and 6am. PIT counts conducted after the night designated for the count, whether over a single day or on multiple days, must have a survey that, at a minimum, verifies where the person interviewed slept on the night designated for the count. And so, for 2021, though, there is one exception to this rule where normally observations must take place on one single night, and William alluded to this earlier and on one slide earlier -- if the CoC is counting distinct areas on consecutive nights due to their large geographic region, then you could have multiple nights in a row where you're conducting night-of observations counts. And so we're mainly thinking here about large rural areas, multi-county CoCs, Balances of State, and statewide CoCs when we're talking about this as an option. In this case, a CoC can conduct an observation-only count over multiple nights in those distinct geographies where they really don't think people move between those geographic boundaries from night to night, and so they're not crossing those county boundaries, city boundaries, whatever they might be. And they can "designate" sequential nights to the PIT count in

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those different regions. CoCs that go this route should limit their PIT count “nights” to two to four sequential days, depending on the size and number of areas in which the CoC is counting, just to reduce the likelihood of duplication. They cannot do, for example, one area on January 22 and then a second on January 30. There’s just too much time in between those, and your risk of duplication is really high, or your risk of, you know, different numbers showing up because those dates are so different is pretty high. In 2021, HUD is allowing survey-based counts to stretch up to 14 days past the night of the count to reduce the number of staff and volunteers needed at one time. CoCs do not need an exception to use either of these approaches or timeline. Next slide please. All right, we’re going to dive into our stuff to do in a sampling approach now. So, there are a few general steps that a CoC must take to develop an effective sampling approach for the unsheltered PIT count. We have divided them into six concrete steps. And I will jump into each of those in the next slides. But before I do that, I’m going to issue two caveats for you: First, these steps offer guidance mainly for conducting a total person count or head count. They do not provide guidance on accounting for demographic variation in determining household composition, demographics, or subpopulation data. Second, it would be impossible to provide explicit guidance on a granular level that would apply to every CoC nationwide on things like the best sites to select for your sample or determine a sampling percentage. And as you all know, CoCs vary considerably by geography, size, climate, population, and a number of other factors that make each of your CoCs unique. Therefore, HUD always recommends that CoCs work with local research partners, such as university faculty or students with both knowledge and expertise in statistical methods, to help refine PIT count data collection approaches, support implementation, and complete data cleaning and analysis after you’ve conducted your PIT count. Your CoC may still have questions specific to your strengths and limitations after we go through these steps to sampling. We encourage you to work through those within your CoC, with local experts, and by opening AAQs to seek out more specific guidance if you continue to have questions. Next slide please. All right. So the first step to developing a sampling approach is to divide your CoC’s geography into smaller regions – we for the purposes of communication and this guidance document are going to refer to these as “subareas.” Subareas do not all have to be the same size geographically, but they should be divided and categorized based on their predicted levels of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. When determining how to divide your CoC into subareas, consider boundaries like census tracts, zip codes, county or city lines, neighborhoods, specific streets or highways, rivers or some other locally specific markers that make the subarea easy to identify or natural to divide. CoCs should use local data and knowledge to draw boundaries around and categorize the subareas they define. A key question to consider is: how reliable is the information your CoC has on where to expect to identify people experiencing unsheltered homelessness? You could

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consider looking at last year's unsheltered PIT count results, HMIS outreach data, actively managed by-name or prioritization lists, and using the knowledge of community stakeholders in defining comparable subareas. You may also want to consider locations of amenities, such as bus stations, freeways with protected overpasses, 24-hour businesses, and parks with public restrooms when defining subareas that might be expected to have a higher presence of unsheltered homelessness. We also know that people experiencing unsheltered homelessness are not usually spread out evenly within a CoC's geography, so you could consider identifying subareas with higher expected counts, that is, high-density subareas with medium or lower expected counts, so subareas with medium-density, and subareas where unsheltered homelessness is unexpected or expected to be rare. You should also identify any areas that should be excluded entirely because they are uninhabitable. The graphic here shows an example CoC map. The 5 green subareas that you can see, that are little squares, are all meant to be high-density subareas where we expect to identify high numbers of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness; the 24 blue rectangles are meant to be medium-density subareas with fewer people experiencing unsheltered homelessness; and then the 5 light grey are subareas where we'd expect unsheltered homelessness to be rare or unlikely; and then there's 1 darker grey subarea is meant to be uninhabitable or excluded entirely – perhaps it is a swamp or a desert. Note that you could choose to define more than four categories. We are going to stick to four areas throughout this presentation, just for consistency. But if you want your sampling approach to be more granular, you could, um, come up with more categories. The basic idea is that you want to be able to randomly point to any location on a map of your community or of your CoC and have a designation for it. You want to know how it's being accounted for in your sampling approach. Next slide please. If you have a small number of subareas within your CoC that are expected to have a much higher share of persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness than the other subareas, they need to be included in the CoC's PIT count activities. These are called "certainty subareas." Certainty subareas are unique compared to the rest of your subareas, and no other sampled area of your CoC could reasonably stand in for them. Because of this, these subareas should be included in your PIT count activities, and they will only represent themselves in the PIT count results – that is, their data will not be extrapolated to other subareas. Examples of subareas that your CoC might choose to include as certainty subareas include but are not limited to: large encampments or, in predominantly rural CoCs, a town with much higher rates of unsheltered homelessness than anywhere else possibly due to the location of services. In our sample map graphic, the green area with an X is meant to show a certainty subarea. So it will be counted on its own and will not be extrapolated to other green high-density subareas; the other green high-density subareas cannot be used to extrapolate data for that particular certainty subarea, either. Next slide, please. Okay, so our third step is to determine what

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percentage of each of the high/medium/low/rare groups will be sampled. There is no universal rule about how many or what percentage of subareas must be sampled for a sampling approach to be valid, but there are a couple of general principles you should follow: You want to sample as many of the “high-density” subareas as possible, so those green areas on our map, as possible. Since these are the subareas where you expect to find the highest number of people experiencing homelessness, your efforts are best invested in these places. The more of these subareas that are sampled, the more accurate your PIT count results will be. You also want to sample fewer of the medium-density and rare/unlikely subareas, but you do not want to sample so few of them that an unexpected (and possibly unrepresentative) count in one of these subareas will spoil the sampling estimate for all medium-density or rare and unlikely subareas. Next slide please. So we’re still on step three here, but we’re going to use the map as an example. So, again, we have 5 high-density subareas in green, one of which is identified to be counted as a “certainty” subarea; 24 medium-density subareas in blue; 5 subareas where unsheltered homelessness is expected to be rare in light grey; and 1 uninhabitable and therefore excluded subarea, which is a darker area on the map. Based on this CoC’s PIT count capacity for various data collection activities, and the timeline it plans to use to conduct those activities, and its local COVID-19 context, let’s just say the CoC has decided to count the certainty site plus 50 percent of the green subareas, so they will conduct a PIT count in 2 of the remaining 4 green, high-density subareas; and then 25 percent (which is 6 of the 24 blue or medium-density subareas; and none of the subareas where unsheltered homelessness is expected to be rare. By not sampling any of the light grey rare/unlikely subareas, no people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in these subareas on the night of the PIT count will be counted or accounted for. This approach assumes that there are truly no people experiencing homelessness in any of these subareas on the night of the PIT count, or, if there are, the number is so small it would not meaningfully affect the CoC’s PIT count. Conversely, the CoC could choose to sample a small percentage of the rare/unexpected subareas just to ensure a higher level of accuracy in their unsheltered PIT count. Next slide please. All right, so Step Four. Using the sampling percentages you determined in the previous step, you want to randomly select the subareas you will sample, meaning the subareas where you will go to conduct PIT count activities. This part is important – it is ideal for any of the high-, medium-, or low-density subareas to have the potential to be selected for sampling. If there are subareas where you suspect there are people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, but where you know you will not conduct PIT count activities – maybe their location is far from where it’s feasible to go in your defined timeline, or perhaps staff and volunteer capacity in that subarea is limited – removing the possibility for any of these subareas to be sampled has the potential to skew your PIT count data. It takes out the randomness of sampling assignments. We aren’t going to dive

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into how to account for those kinds of logistical concerns today, but we encourage you to work with local sampling experts or submit an AAQ if you have further questions on how to account for this. After you have randomly select your sampling subareas— so, on our sample map, once that CoC has selected 2 green subareas and 6 blue subareas – you’ll have all subareas assigned to one of these 4 groups: You will have your certainty subareas, which are the unique subareas you that you are definitely going to conduct the PIT count in, the ones you identified in Step Two. You’re going to have selected sample subareas. So within each group (your high-density groups, medium-density groups, et cetera), these are the *randomly selected* subareas consistent with the sampling percentage identified in Step Three, where you will be conducting PIT count activities. The selected subareas will be weighted to represent the subareas that are not selected for inclusion, which brings us to our next category, the unselected subareas. So these include all of the remaining subareas not were not randomly selected in your sampling process. The selected subareas, again, will be used to account for these unselected subareas when you do your weighting. And, finally, you have your excluded subareas, so the ones where you happen to have uninhabitable land, like lakes or swampland, and that are just excluded from the PIT count. Next slide please. The Fifth Step is to conduct your unsheltered PIT count activities. And this is the part where you’re actually doing observations or surveys in the subareas that you’ve identified as certainty or selected sample subareas. This includes surveys conducted after the night of the count as well as activities you conduct on the night of the count. And remember – you should not be conducting any PIT count activities (observations or surveys) in unselected or excluded subareas. Next slide please. And finally, the sixth step, final step, is to take the counts you get from your selected sample subareas and your certainty subareas, and weight them to account for your full population, based on the sampling percentages you determined in Step Three. To determine the weight of each sampled subarea, you take the inverse of the probability of being selected for the sample. So, we have an example on the screen. We’re going to bring it back to our example map, and let’s say they found the following numbers of people in each of their certainty and selected sample subareas. Let’s say they found 100 people in the certainty subarea. So those people automatically get included in the PIT count because it was a certainty subarea. Let’s say they found 130 people across two high-density subareas, and since those high-density subareas had a one in two chance of being selected, that means they’d end up counting 260 total people, because they would multiply that by two, because the inverse of one half is two, to account for the selected, for both the selected and the unselected high-density subareas. Let’s say they found 87 people across those 6 selected medium-density subareas, and those ones had a one in four or 25% chance of being selected, and so the inverse of that is four, which means they’d end up counting 348 (which is 87×4) to account for the selected and unselected high density subareas. Added together,

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that's 100 + 260 + 348, so they would include 708 total people in their PIT count. And you want to note, so they only counted 317 people while they were doing their sampling, but because of how they're weighting those people they found based on those high-density and medium density subareas, they're accounting for far more people than they actually have the capacity or spent the time counting. You can also choose to do a soft validation of your sampling assumptions and calculations, by comparing the estimate generated from your weighted calculation to the last unsheltered PIT count you completed in your CoC. And that is all for me so I'm going to turn it back over to Tommy Joe to walk us through some common questions.

Tommy Joe Bednar: All right, Aubrey, thank you so much for that presentation and working through some really dense material. We have a lot of great questions coming in, but we want to go ahead and get started as Aubrey just said with some common questions here. So I want to go ahead and start us off with one for Larry. Larry, could you provide some examples of sampling based methodologies and best practices?

Larry Buron: Yes. Hi everybody. I'm Larry Buron. Yeah, you could use simple, random sampling. And in that case, you would divide up your whole CoC community into different subareas and then just randomly select the number of areas to sample, to do the count in. However, as this presentation tried to make clear, if you have information on the where the unsheltered homeless people live, you can do better than that. And this presentation presented a method that is actually formally called stratified, random sampling. And with that, your first divide subareas, divide areas into subareas into groups, based on the level of unsheltered homelessness you expect, and then randomly sample subareas within each of these groups. So, by grouping, rather than doing simple, random sampling by grouping, you protect yourself against, simple random sampling you can get a bad sample. Like, you can get all high density, homeless areas in your sample, or you can get all low density, homeless areas in your sample, and this way by stratifying into groups like this and sampling, you're protecting yourself against that and getting a, a more accurate count. So that's why we, we think there's a lot of methods you can use, but we think this is probably the method that's the most efficient for you to use, stratified random sampling. As described.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful.

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Larry Buron: And I don't know, I did, I will step back just thinking about. So the general advice is, you know, use your knowledge of your community to make your plan to decide how to divide areas into groups. Any area you want to represent in your sample that you must, must have a chance of being selected for the sample, and as Aubrey talked about, you know, there's other ways to account for areas. You want to account for all areas in your jurisdiction, and there's some non-sampling ways we might have to account for some other areas. But that has to be done on a case by case basis. And the 3rd, piece of advice is just make any area that is crucial to an accurate count a certainty area. So, thank you.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful. Thank you for that. Larry. And again, Larry for two, I've got one more with some sort of extrapolation work to calculate the numbers for the demographics.

Larry Buron: Yeah, actually the same method of sampling works for demographics. It should be fine. So the one extra consideration, if you're doing, if you want to do demographics and not just a headcount, is that you want to take when you're dividing into those groups you want to take into account the demographic characteristics, how they vary across areas. So, for example, if, you know, you have one subarea where most of the youth homelessness congregate, then you want to make that a certainty area, if you care about the demographics of the community. And likewise, if, you know, for example, if you have in your medium density group, you know that there's some areas within that where family homelessness is more common and some areas where there, adult individual homelessness is more common. What you want to do then is maybe you want to divide that medium density group into two groups. And some sample, and take a sample randomly from each of those two groups so that you can better account for that.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful. So turning to William, um, what are some ways the communities doing headcounts have gone about accurately counting people in tents if only the tents and not the people are visible?

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William Snow: Yeah, I love this question. So, uh, it is a difficult one. We've come a long way on this. So some of the history of counting tents or cars, or RVs, are that people would go and count physical objects. Right? You count a structure, a tent, a car. In the past couple of years we have encouraged you to not do that to understand who is in those various structures. I don't think they were treated any different this year. Quite frankly, tents often are vacant, or can be vacant, especially if you have a lot in some areas. Cars are very difficult, and it's even more difficult to figure out if they're staying in their car because they have no other option, or they're waiting for work to start, or whatever the reason. So, we would encourage you to find ways to do a small sample within that. That means knocking on tents you can again. Strangely, there's some safety in this, in that you don't need to see someone, they don't need to open their door. You can ask the question through that. That obviously sounds great. In theory. Sometimes it works. Sometimes that's not feasible. Right? So you would have to figure out. Is that practical? Can we actually do that? And I would use street outreach workers to do that. Most of you are doing that anyways, given the lack of volunteers, but certainly, use street outreach workers. If you have done some of this work in the past, where you've, you've improved your work to count people living in various structures, right, tents, or again, RVs, you could possibly use a multiplier that you generated from that in the last year or so. Here's the big caveat: if you only know the number of people that were associated with things that you counted as homeless, you have a gap in that you don't know the number of cars or the number of tents that did not have people experiencing homelessness in them. That's a problem. Right? So, if out of a 100 cars, only 50 of them have people experiencing homelessness. But all the data that you have in the past is based on the 50, you can't just count all the cars. You have no idea who's in those in the cars and even how to apply your multiplier. You just don't know. So that's why you likely have to derive a sample, and your sample would have to be such that you would need to know that people who don't identify as homeless so that you can use that to modify if you're going to count a structure to get if you're going to count tents. How many of those tents don't tend to have anybody in them or somebody who's not homeless same with RVs? So, it's challenging. It's challenging in a normal year. In this context, you'd have to really think through how do you develop a sample that you have some minimal level of confidence is going to give you that information to exclude the right amount of people or structures and give you just again a rough sense of how many people are associated with that? So, hopefully, that gets at it, um, Tommy Joe.

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Tommy Joe Bednar: Absolutely William, thank you for working through that tough and very nuanced situation. I want to go ahead and move over to Aubrey and ask, what types of questions do you recommend adding to the observations or survey to add in de-duplication, and what are the strategies for avoiding de-duplicate or to avoid duplication in the observation counts? I know a lot of people were also asking this in the chat. So, a top priority question.

Aubrey Sittler: Yeah, thanks, Tommy Joe, it is top priority question, because you really do want to make sure you're not accidentally counting people more than once during your PIT count activities. So this question asks both about de-duplication in a survey and in observation based activities. So, for a survey, it's a little bit easier, because you're interacting with the person to ask them questions. So, one of the easiest ways to de-duplicate is to ask the person if someone else has surveyed them earlier in the night, or if you're doing a multi-day PIT count in the days proceeding, whenever you are surveying them, sometimes you might get a "No" from that question, even if they have been surveyed, so you want to make sure that you have more than just that question as your de-duplication question. We usually recommend asking for their name, whether it's their full name or their first name and their last initial or just their initials, if they're not willing to share their name, as well as their date of birth, or you could also ask for their age, or the year when they were born. If they don't want to give you their date of birth, those things in combination with each other are usually enough to de-duplicate. And in a normal PIT count year, you're likely also administering a survey that has a lot more information about demographics and subpopulation data. So that you would also be able to match those pieces up. But we know that this year, especially if you're just doing a headcount or if you are minimizing the demographic information that you're collecting, you might not have that level of detail collected. So, I would also recommend on a survey, having a space for whoever's doing the surveys to be able to write down their own observations about the person, any identifying information of maybe what kind of coat they're wearing. If they're wearing a coat or if they're sitting on a sleeping bag, what color is the sleeping bag; if they have a pet with them, other things like that; and then, in terms of the surveys administered on the night of the count, it's always helpful to write down exactly where you interacted with the person. So I'm not just saying, "oh, I'm on this street," but what's the intersection of the street? if it's on a bench in a park, what part of the park is it in? If it's on a bench outside of a grocery store, or outside of a train or bus station, exactly where did you interact with them? And then for an observation based count, you want to document the time that you observe the person, the exact location again with as much

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specificity as possible, um, and the identifying features of the person, like their clothing, their possessions, their pets. Again, the color of what they're wearing, or their, their possessions can really help in de-duplicating later and it's also important, I think, for observation based counts, to note whether the person was sleeping when you observe them. If they're not sleeping when you observe them, they have probably a much higher likelihood of moving throughout the period of your PIT count data collection activities. And so, I mean, yeah, the big picture for de-duplicating is, think about if you are the person responsible for looking through all of the headcount survey data that's submitted and trying to figure out if anyone was counted twice. What would help you in doing that?

Tommy Joe Bednar: Thank you so much and I think that final, it's just a great way of framing that. I want to go ahead and turn to Larry and maybe some William tag team. And maybe something different. Can a CoC use different data collection approaches in the same selected subareas? So, observations on the night of the PIT count and surveys in the days following the PIT count at service sites in the city?

Larry Buron: Oh, good, I'll start with that. Yeah, so the count, we would not we would not suggest...we would suggest using one method first for a subarea. And the reason is, if you do, do both, use both methods to count for a subarea, there's two things you have to determine in the survey. First, you have to determine, were they in that sub sampled subarea, or are there any other sample subareas? Because they have to be in one of those sample subareas to contribute to your count, given the sampling method. And second, if they were in one of the sampled subareas outside on the night of the count, where they already counted? So you have to determine if they were already counted. So that those are two challenging things find out exactly where they stayed, and how that matched with your various samples, and then trying to determine if they're already counted that night. So that's why we don't recommend it.

William Snow: Well, let me make clear to what we're talking with subarea. Because a lot of especially balances of states have wondered, "can I do an observation and a survey?" When we're saying the subarea, that's what we were talking about earlier with developing your strata, right? That's your

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subareas. So your, your low density, you may say, all my low density areas, I'm only going to do an observation and then all of my high density and my certainty sites, I'm going to be using the, the other values. The survey versus observation, right, whatever it is, just be consistent with the subareas, but you can use different methodologies. You just have to have confidence that you are not somehow catching people who are crossing the subareas, right? Like, that's the, and that's more about, you administering your volunteers, not about some homeless people we're not telling them you can't cross boundaries tonight, right? Like, that's not what we're talking about. It's you controlling your volunteers to make sure that they know very clearly their geographic boundaries and using the, the type of method that you determined as a CoC in the geography that they're in.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful. And so to the exact converse of that question, can a CoC use different data collection approaches in different selected subareas that are not within the same, but in different, selected in other areas?

Larry Buron: That's okay, and I think William just answered that question basically, by saying you can do it. And and in the situation that you would do it in is one where you don't think there's a lot of boundary crossing. So you're doing a survey based count in one area and observations headcount in another area. Um, I, yeah, so I think that's already been addressed, but I don't know, William, if you have anything else you want to add.

William Snow: No.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful, well, I'll ask William to add though, um, if full PIT count exemptions mean, not doing an unsheltered count at all?

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William Snow: Yes, so it is possible for you to seek a full exception to the unsheltered PIT count, meaning you will not conduct one, nor will you submit any data associated with the unsheltered PIT count. Obviously, I want to make clear that does not give you an exemption from the Housing Inventory Count, or the sheltered Point in Time count, but yes, it is possible that you will not conduct any sort of unsheltered Point in Time count nor submit any data now or later. Some people have asked that this is a postponement. It's not a postponement. It's an exception for the year. I saw a lot of questions in the chat around, "well, if I'm doing a short survey, do I still need an exception?" Yes, if you're not going to submit some element to us, let's say you collect on all the demographics. And you collect on veteran status, but you don't collect data that will allow you to determine chronic status. You still need to seek an exception. So if you're not going to submit all the data, you need to submit something to us. So again, and that could be anything, it could be, "you're submitting everything except one element." If you're not going to submit all of it, you need to seek an exception. And again, part of that is to encourage you to think through, "maybe I should collect less," right? If you can't do it all, we actually are encouraging you to do less for safety reasons. We do want to encourage that that come first. We do like that you're gonna do some sort of count. We want to encourage that as well, but do it in the in the safest manner possible.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Thank you so much William. Before we get into our full open Q and A, I just want to give a few reminders about the resources that are available on the HUD Exchange site. We've shared most of these, um, the ones that are available, um, with the exception of the Notice, which is not out at the moment. Um, so the conducting the 2021 unsheltered PIT count guidance. We'll share that again in the chat along with these other resources how to use the sampling within a COC to conduct an unsheltered Point in Time count. That is what we have mostly focused on today, and I've shared a few times in the chat. And finally, which we'll share in a moment, the updates to H.M.I.S. project set up and inventory changes largely focused on non-congregate shelter, hotel/motel inventory, Um, including for the HIC, and the sheltered PIT count. There are also the general Point in Time count resources. These can be found on the landing page. And we do have three more sessions after today. Um, those upcoming sessions will be on December 15th, January 12th, and January 19th, um, that registration link will be put in the chat and is available on the HUD Exchange. For upcoming trainings, we hope that you'll attend those to continue to ask questions and hear information. Um, as we head into our Q and A, we do want to ask, what would you like us to focus on, on future Point in Time count office hour sessions?

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Um, so if you have topics that we haven't covered that need to be covered more in depth, please add those to the chat so that we can make sure we focus our upcoming session. With that being said we're going to head into our open Q and A. Um, if you haven't already, um, if you'd like to ask a question verbally, you can go ahead again and click on that little raise hand feature and the bottom right hand corner of your screen. If you are on the phone only, or if you'd like to raise your hand on your phone so we can know which line to unmute, you can hit star three on your phone. When your questions have been asked or you no longer want to ask your question, go ahead and hit star three or click the hand again to lower your hands. And in the meantime, feel free to keep adding your questions to the chat box. We're going to go ahead and get started. We don't have anyone queued up to ask a question verbally at the moment, so we're going to go ahead and get started by asking a question. Um, if you use a multi-day approach for the headcount, what day would you use for the HIC?

William Snow: Yep. Great question. Uh, you will use the first date and I, there is a question from some folks about can you count before your PIT count dates. I didn't see it today, but I've seen that in the past. The answer is no, there's no prospective counting about where people will be sleeping or possibly sleeping. We count where people slept. So just want to make sure that's cleared.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful. Thank you so much William. And we do have our first person who wants to ask a question verbally so we're going to go ahead and unmute a call-in user with the number 626 at the beginning. So, uh, we have a call-in user with the number 626. You're now unmuted if you'd like to ask the question.

Jenny: Hi, this is Jenny from [location]. William, I'm wondering what your current turnaround is for processing those exception requests? We'll be submitting a request, but you don't have to continue planning, we'll wait for the response.

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William Snow: Yep, great question. Good to hear from you Jenny. Right now I'm turning around responses within 24 hours. So, they come fast. I will warn you that I will be out for a lot of the holidays. I'll be checking email as I can. And I will respond accordingly, but during the holiday season, it will definitely be slower. So, that's just the caveat there other than that, though, I am trying to turn those around as fast as possible. If your request is not simple as in, maybe you're asking for an alternative data set. You should just be prepared longer back-and-forth, cause, I'll probably ask some follow up questions.

Tommy Joe Bednar: All right, thank you William. We have a couple of questions about sampling, given the focus of our presentation today. We have a question asking about a CoC that has a 13 county CoC. And that 70% of those experiencing homelessness are in one county. In this sort of situation, would it be appropriate to have the 12 other counties as one subarea, and then divide the one large county where the 70% are with, uh, into additional subareas?

William Snow: So, I'll take a first crack at this, and then Larry, or Aubrey, you might want to jump in as well. My sense is that big one, you're, that's probably the one where most people, that probably should be a certainty sample. Actually it sounds like if that's where most people are congregated, you should do your best to cover the whole area to the extent possible, and you might consider treating everyone else as one subarea. But before I would make that determination, I would look at whether there's difference differences within those areas, right? If you're finding that, sounds like, they really aren't the same, but the numbers just aren't that big, you might consider having three or four that get lumped together that might have this kind of medium density. And then the remaining are in your, kind of, "I'm finding one or two people" category. It's a small, very small, very rare. You might consider that. But again, Larry or Aubrey, you might have more thoughts on that.

Larry Buron: Yeah, I mean, depending, if you can't, you can't cover the whole county where most of the people are, I think I think you're, I think that would be ideal, but if you can't, I think your plan of dividing up the county into subareas and doing a sample of that to get the county estimate makes sense. You

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can't do the whole county. And then I'm not sure what you mean about the other 12 counties in one subarea, because then you could divide them into the same, put them in the same group and have 12 subareas and sample only a few of the counties. After I would do what William said, though, is make sure you think about it. Maybe maybe there's really two different groups of subareas within those 12 counties? Maybe it's not just one, maybe there is some medium density county in there? So, you maybe want to make sure you get a representative of the medium density as well as from the low density. But I can see if your county, you can't do the whole county where most of the people are, it makes sense to divide it up, like its own sample, and then weight it up to represent that whole county. Weight up the other 12 to represent those 12 counties and add them together, if you can't do the whole county.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful. So we have someone who's asking a little bit about doing an observation count, and then using HMIS data to extrapolate demographic information about that observation count and the observed population.

William Snow: Yeah, this is an interesting question. So HMIS is a great field of data, but we have to we have to know what it gives you. So, I'm going to give you some variations on this theme. Right? So, you if. You're talking about using all of your HMIS data to derive demographic or do it in extrapolation for demographics on the observation. You probably have a problem because your sheltered folks often look different than your unsheltered. So I'm not really keen on using your broad data to extrapolate to account for those you counted in observation. However, let's say you have a street outreach population, and you have some data that you're confident in, and it is a sizable amount of data. You could certainly consider using that to extrapolate to account for, for those observed. Even there though, I do want to put the caveat out that people who present for services are willing to talk to street outreach workers. They also tend to look different than those who are in encampments that refuse street outreach workers or not, or folks who are not comfortable engaging in services. So even there, I would say, do it cautiously. In this COVID context, that might be okay to use a street outreach sample. Again, do not use your large data. I would not do that in the future, though. I would, I would certainly make sure you're, you're having data about the people you're actually counting in the communities.

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Tommy Joe Bednar: Thank you, William. And another question here that I think is probably for Aubrey, um, that's talking about a community that's used the first two letters of first name and first two letters of last name, plus the date of birth, as you used as an example earlier for de-duplication, and they're asking if that's okay in this situation to ask for full name to help aid in de-duplication?

Aubrey Sitrer: Yeah, I mean, that's a good question. There are plenty of CoCs that do ask for a full name. I would caution you that if you are asking for someone's full first and last name together, you should have privacy protections in place to make sure that that person's name isn't just going out and about. Because it's not accompanied by, like, a social security number or other other things like that, there's, I think probably less risk of exploitation. It's just a name. I don't know, William, if you have additional insight that you would want to add there.

William Snow: No, I, I think your response is fine because I think that, I think that gets to the, the core.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful. All right. We are going to go ahead and mute another participant to ask the question. So, [name], I apologize if I mispronounced your last name, Lloyd you are unmuted to ask the question.

Thomas: Hi, Thomas [name] from [location]. So, we are thinking of using our HMIS data from Coordinated Entry, as well as the, our street outreach projects, project has been entering data from their street outreach participants that engage with them into the HMIS. And we're thinking of trying to de-duplicate those, those lists and as well as, I'm looking at, um, figuring out, we're still thinking about how to figure out observation only counts in combination with those lists and wanted to get some feedback on that kind of approach.

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William Snow: So, it would be complicated to do that and it probably wouldn't work is the short approach. Here's the issue. Mixing data in HMIS or data, where you have identifiable information with data that does not have identifiable identifiable information, removes the ability to de-duplicate. So trying to mix HMIS data with an observation counts. It's hard to have confidence that there's no duplication or even little duplication there. I would generally say if you're going to take an approach where you want to use HMIS data, or CES data, or By-Name list data, and you want to pair it with other data collection efforts, you're likely going to need to do the short survey option so that you can find a way find a common de-identifier to ensure that you're not duplicating. I don't know, Aubrey or Larry, if there's something you'd add more to that?

Larry Buron: No, I thought I think that is the challenge is making sure you don't double count. Yeah.

Tommy Joe Bednar: All right, we're gonna turn to a few observation and survey questions here, and we have someone who is asking about the fact that observation tools we did include some demographic data in the past. Um, should all observation counts or observation tools this year include no demographic data and be solely a headcount? And if so, how does household type play in?

William Snow: I don't mind taking a stab at that. And then, Aubrey, if you want to follow up with anything. So, if you're doing an observation, it's actually almost impossible to do household types right? Because you often don't know other household members who are associated, or the, the different association. So, I would say, yeah, it's almost impossible to do it. I would discourage you also from doing demographic data by observation as well. I think if there's anything we've seen from from our experience in the past couple of years and from research, people are not as good as they think they are at properly identifying other people's gender or race or ethnicity, and again, recognizing those are characteristics that people choose to identify as in a certain way, so observing them and saying, "well, you're this," is, it's not a very sensitive way to approach it and often it's just not a safe way to go. So we would discourage you from trying to pick somebody else's race or gender and encourage you more, if you're going to do an observation, stick to the headcount. We're okay with that. You would need to seek

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an exception, but we're comfortable with that. Right? And actually, that probably will provide you an amount of safety as well. Right? It will limit contact. But if you think about it, some communities will still be tempted to compare the data they get this year to past data or future data. And again, an observation versus questions where people state their identity, you're just going to have different results and we would actually discourage you from doing anything other than a very broad comparison anyways. Right? Total headcounts. The total headcount type stuff, but to avoid a sense of perfection or sense of nuance that you're really not getting, I would just say you're safer to not try to observe demographics.

Aubrey Sitrer: Yeah, I mean, I think William, you covered pretty much all of it. Um, I will though validate that yes, we have historically said that there are ways that you could try to observe somebody's gender, for example, and that you should write down why you think, you know, like what, like, what it is about the person you observe that made you think that they were a certain gender, but that doesn't actually make sense. I think we are wholeheartedly rescinding that guidance, uh, moving forward. The people who stand to be harmed most by that are trans people and gender nonconforming, gender non-binary people. You put a lot of personal bias into it when you, when you try to determine what it means to look like a woman what it means to look like a man what it means to look trans. It just, it doesn't need to happen.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Thank you both very much for that, those sets of answers. I do want to go ahead and move on to some survey questions. I think this is probably going to be for Aubrey first. Um, could you talk a little bit more about what should be considered on a short survey, or a short interview, um, that would still fall under an exception? So what would be a short survey but would still need an exception? And what would be a shortened survey that would still fulfill all of the PIT count requirements?

Aubrey Sitrer: So it occurs to me that there may be people on this call, or who are responsible for the PIT count this year, who may have never supported the PIT count in their CoCs before. And I think the

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easiest way to understand what requires an exception is to go back to the prior Notice, and see what has historically been required for the unsheltered PIT count. All the demographic information that was required, all the household information, the population data and if you're doing anything, but that information, anything less than that information it requires an exception. So I know we've had a lot of questions in here. What does it mean to do a shortened survey? Does that mean we're still collecting all of the demographic information? If you have an exception not to collect all the demographic information, your survey should be limited just to collecting the information that HUD had told you, you have to collect for your PIT count and you have to submit to the, for your PIT count. I don't know, William, if you have a different approach to responding to that?

William Snow: No, I think we kind of touched on earlier, right? If you collect everything except one required element, you're already in the "you need an exception" camp.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful Thank you both so much. We're going to go ahead and let someone else ask a question verbally. So, Paula [name] actually, it looks like you don't have audio connected. If you connect your audio on Webex or phone, we'll be able to unmute you, um, so that you can ask a question. So you are queued up next, but we'll have to wait a minute there. Um, we'll go ahead and move to our next question from the chat, um, where someone is asking that their street outreach team keeps a list of actively unsheltered people, and they have demographic information and other PIT information on these individuals, but the list is a lot longer than their usual PIT count total for sheltered individuals. Um, does that sound like an appropriate substitute data set? I think, William, this is going to be targeted into, you.

William Snow: Yeah, it could be right. So, as long as you're able to use that to compare. It sounds like you may have done that comparison already to what you've done in the past. Yeah, it is likely an option. So you can send me an exception request email and we'll talk through it again. Be prepared in that email to show, to demonstrate that some numbers there right? If you're showing you counted 100 people on your unsheltered count in 2020 and that list has 120 on that same date, for that data set as 120 people

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on that same date of last year's PIT count, that's the stuff I'd like to see. You should be prepared to kind of answer to why it might be larger is that that's also slightly concerning. It may be just a reflection that your own PIT count process may have issues. I'll probably ask you to elaborate on that as well. I'd like to know, you know, did you omit several areas or, right? Is there something that would account for the increase in your other data set? Again, this is probably could be a good thing, at least for the data set purposes, but we want to certainly understand why, because there is a potential that you actually are duplicating your data, or there's, we just want to make sure that data set is clean also.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful. And it now looks like Paula is connected to audio. So, Paula, we're going to go ahead and unmute you so that you can ask your question.

Paula: Great. Thank you very much. We are probably going to be doing a full survey. It will probably be a combination of that along with, um, services that are being provided in open day centers and things like that in the days following the PIT count. We have a By-Name list that we try to manage very well, to make calls to regularly to ascertain whether or not folks are still homeless. Can we, I saw in the chat William that you said no online surveys but what about phone surveys?

William Snow: So, the short answer is no, with a kind of big "but" associated with it. Right? So, if you're just sending out a phone number, or an online survey to a large audience, and you'd have no sense of their current homeless status. The short answer is no. One proposal we heard was, "can we send it to our university students?" No, however, if you use data from, let's say your 211 people are seeking services, they're calling in. Can you include people from that data set? Yes. Again, if you're able to pair it with other data that can be de-identifiable or de-identify, or de-duplicated. So you could do it in that case, you could also use your street outreach staff, right? Let's say you have non street outreach staff primarily doing your PIT counts and your street outreach staff, they're confident that some folks were missed. They can reach out to to the folks that they know are unsheltered and they can ask about where they were sleeping on on the night of your count. Again, I'm assuming that you have enough de-identifiable data about, like, ways to de-identify, so you have their name, you have some, whatever

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factors you're using to de-duplicate. You have enough to do that with the data you glean from your street outreach workers. In that case, yes. So again, broad surveys, broad phone or email, no. But in that limited context, where you can use it and de-duplicate, possibly yeah, probably.

Paula: Okay. So just to clarify, what I meant by a survey was, we have our By-Name list in front of me, we pick the phone up. We call the phone number of the person, and we talk to them directly. And that I didn't need to send out anything that they would answer via text or anything like that.

William Snow: Yeah, yes, that is an okay approach again. As long as you have enough information to compare it to use the other day to you collected and and de-duplicate. Yes. That's okay. And you're.

Paula: Thank you very much.

William Snow: Yeah, thanks, Paula.

Tommy Joe Bednar: All right, so we have another question asking if there is any guidance or any threshold for determining the size of the sample that's needed in order to produce statistical, reliable count estimates? I'm going to throw that one wide open.

William Snow: That feels like a Larry or Aubrey question, you guys are probably better suited than me.

Larry Buron: There is no general advice we can give. It really depends on how much variance across the subareas. There is, but I would use a rule of thumb of ah, of, at least 25% to be a starting rule of thumb.

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Sample at least 25%. But if there's a lot of variation, like, if you know, you'd need more to get an accurate count. That's why breaking it up into the subgroups is so important because it cuts down on the variation across groups that you're sampling.

Tommy Joe Bednar: All right, so let's delve in for a in for a moment on requirements and exceptions. So, William, can you reiterate if questions for the set chronic homelessness status and veteran status are expected?

William Snow: So, technically everything is required. But the, if you're not going to collect on veterans or products, you need to seek an exception. But, again, we're going to grant exceptions liberally, so that is an okay approach. You, you just need to remember you have to submit an exception.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful and our high COVID infection rates and important factor, um, to be given an exception?

William Snow: Yes, that among other things, I think that two core areas that I put in one of the responses, was your area is COVID safe, and your area's capacity. I think those two things are in nearly every exception request that I've seen so far and appropriately so.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Great and on that note of exceptions, can you just talk once more again about? Is there a deadline for when exceptions are due? If a CoC submits an exception and something changes in a positive or negative direction and they want to take back their exception if they need to add on exceptions, if they need to change. Is there a deadline for that?

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William Snow: Yeah, great question. So there's not a posted deadline. That's intentional. Right? So, there's kind of an implicit deadline. Once you hit to the last 10 days of January, I am going to assume people who haven't heard from are doing a full count. However, whether you've submitted an exception and been granted one or whether you haven't submitted one, and something changes anyways, I, I'm going to look at the exception requests as soon as they come in. So if you send in, uh, an exception request, if you only a headcount, and you sent that request on December 20th, and then we get to January 24th when your date is supposed to come in for counting, and your governor, that morning blesses you with a stay at home order, you're not going to be able to go out, right? Send me the request. I'm going to grant, right? We're going to be reasonable about this. I'm not going to make you go out and defy your governor's orders, but this is one of the reasons that we didn't provide a date. That we want to give you a little flexibility to know that, if on whatever date you actually had asked for it, something changes drastically and you can't do it, we, we here, it's only going to grant it right? We want to be able to, to prioritize safety. Uh, the other thing to note there is, if you need to, like, expand your exception request, that's great. We have no problem with that. You may consider actually asking for the lightest exception, or I just the the biggest exception upfront. That's not a full exception. So an example I would give is if, you know, you're going to count, you're going to do some sort of count. You might just say, "can I get an exception to only do a headcount?" Then you're not going to worry later about well, "what if I changed my mind about demographics or other things?" You, you still have the ability to collect whatever you want in the PIT count space and even report it to HUD later, as long as it's within kind of the official parameters. But you can do that. Right? If we grant you an exception to a headcount, and you decide you're going to collect all demographics and you collected and do it, you're going to have a chance to do that and you'll be able to submit that. So, it may be wise to seek that broader exception if you know, you're gonna do a count, just just go all in and say, "look, we want an exception and do a headcount only and then submit more later." We'll all be pleasantly surprised if you provide more, but nobody's harmed if you don't provide more. Right? And even again there, if you need a full exception, in spite of asking for just the headcount before, for whatever reason, we'll look at it with a reasonableness, and we're likely going to grant it because I imagine all requests. Especially last minute ones are going to be tied to to safety.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful Thank you for delving into that. Larry, we've got a quick follow up question for you. Um. For when you said earlier, a minimum of 25% for trying to get to that level, first,

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statistical significance, or, for statistical extrapolation. Um, do you mean of all of the subareas, or within each group, from the subareas?

Larry Buron: Tommy Joe, was that question meant for me? I wasn't reading the chat.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Oh, not a problem Larry. I'll say it one more time. To your earlier point about trying to get to a minimum of 25%, is that 25% of all of the subareas or within each group of subareas?

Larry Buron: So, there's also a general rule that is the smaller, like, like the larger your number of subareas, percentage can go down. Like, if you only have four subareas in one of so it's within each group I'm talking about. But if you only have four subareas within a group, like, in the example are represented, I would do at least two, you know, so that's more than 25%. So 25%'s a very generic rule, but like, if you have a really you have a 1000 subareas, you don't need to do 25% because you're going to have a lot of variety in that random sample of 25%. That's going to, it's more the risk is the smaller the number you choose, you just risks that you're going to get some outlier that's going to throw off the whole estimate. So, the smaller your number of subareas, the higher the number you need to, to sample. This is definitely where your your specific situation you probably would need guidance on. So I was just trying to say, at least 25%, but higher if you have a small number of subareas, and lower, if you have a lot of subareas.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Thank you so much. And William, can you help remind everyone again, are CoC planning grant funds available to use to purchase PPE, um, for use in an unsheltered count this year?

William Snow: Yeah, you can certainly use your COC planning grants. You can use your ESG-CV grants, admin dollars if you want to pay for PPE for those counting, including volunteers or staff. You can use street outreach funds from CoC, or ESG, or ESG-CV, if your street outreach staff is actually engaged in

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street outreach activities. So, if they're doing an observation count that that's not eligible. They actually need to offer services, engage, but many of what folks you're talking about is a short survey. And you can imagine saying, "hey, I'd like to know your name or whatever identifier. Where were you sleeping last night and what can I do for that issue?" Right? Like, it's a simple engagement. You certainly can use street outreach funding to pay for that as well.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful. And then William one more for you. You've given a great explanation about comparing suitable data sets, HMIS data, um, from year over year. Can you talk a little bit more about what, so not the data set, but what component of the data set should be compared? So if the CoC is using HMIS data, um, as a proxy for their unsheltered population, should they be comparing just straight raw numbers from numbers based on household demographic alignments? What they, what should they be doing there?

William Snow: Uh, it actually depends on what data you're planning to submit to HUD. Right? So, if you're only going to submit a headcount well, then just compare the headcount. If you're going to submit demographic data, uh, you should submit, or, you should compare your demographic data. So it's solely dependent on what you're planning to submit.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful, thank you so much for that. And I know that Aubrey, I believe is put into the chat. Um, if you do have specific questions, feel free to use the, uh, AAQ desk on the HUD Exchange, and I know we're right up against the end of our time. William, do you have any comments that you'd like to close this out with today?

William Snow: Just, thank you for all you're working on. This is hard. You know, this is last minute, and I just, again, I can't reiterate enough safety is first, so if you need an exception, we're going to grant exceptions. If you're looking for a way to do it, we want to support that. We'll do all that. We can help you do it as well as possible, but we appreciate all the effort you're putting into it.

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Tommy Joe Bednar: All right with that, we will close this session. Again, we hope that you're able to join us on December 15th. And please feel free to use the HUD Exchange, ask a question desk for any your unresolved questions. Thank you all very much.