

PIT Office Hours: Transcript January 12th, 2021

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Tommy Joe Bednar: Hello everyone, and welcome to the penultimate PIT count office hours for the 2021 Point in Time count. My name is Tommy Joe Bednar. I'm going to go through a few pieces of housekeeping and logistical information before we get started in earnest today. Uh, first, and foremost as I'm sure many of you will want to know today's session is being recorded and so that recording, along with the slide deck, a copy of the chat, and the questions and answers will be posted to the HUD Exchange. That'll be up in about two to three business days. So we will make those available, but give us a few days to make those accessible and post them there and all that information can be found on the HUD Exchange at the link on your screen now. We'll also provide that link during the sessions for those who want to look at any of the past recordings. While everyone is muted at the moment, we do hope that one, you can hear us to the best ability, and two that you have the opportunity to ask several questions later. So, for better audio, and, especially to ask good questions later on, we encourage you to join the webinar audio via phone number on your screen. It's just a little bit more reliable than computer audio. The computer audio works as well. That phone number is also in the chat on the right hand side of your screen now. Speaking of the chat again while everyone is muted at the moment, we hope that throughout this webinar, and towards the end, during our question and answer session, that you will ask questions, share your experiences and what's going on in your community. The first, and foremost way to do that is to use the chat box. To open the chat feature on the bottom of your screen, as shown in the screenshot below in the red box, you'll see a little chat button has a little chat bubble and the word chat. If you click on that, it'll open a pane on the right hand side of your screen with the chat box. To make sure that your comments go to all of our presenters today, and to your other attendees please make sure the To line is selected to Everyone. Again, that's Everyone, so that your questions comments and experiences will go to everyone today. When we get to the end of our session, we will have plenty of time for questions and answers. If you'd like to verbally ask a question, please go ahead and hit the little raise hand feature you can see in the bottom right hand corner of the screenshot on the screen now and on the right hand side of your screen. If you have that pane open, there's a little hand. If you click on that that will virtually raise your hand so, that we know to unmute you so that you can ask questions verbally. And if you've already asked your question, or your question has been asked by someone else, or you just no longer want to ask your question, please click it one more time to lower your hand that way we'll know your questions been asked been answered or you just don't want to ask the question anymore. With that, our presenters for today will be William Snow from the Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs. That's that for HUD. Aubrey Sitler from Abt Associates Meghan Henry from Abt Associates and myself, Tommy Joe Bednar, from Abt Associates. With that I'm going to go ahead and hand things over to William Snow. William.

William Snow: All right. Thank you very much. Looking forward to today. I realize today's the 12th. That means we're on the countdown. We have about ten days until the last ten days of January hit us. So. Pretty exciting, uh, next slide please. I want to talk about a few things today. Just what are the requirements? This is the same thing we've been sharing. It's a little bit altered now due to the memo that

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came out on January 7th, and I'll talk a little bit about that today. So. Nothing has changed with regard to the HIC. Nothing has changed with regard to sheltered PIT count requirements. They're both required. We expect every CoC to do that. No exception. No waiver. The unsheltered PIT count: there are flexibilities doing the count. Same things as we've said before, if you're going to do the counts, if you're not going to do the counts, you do have that option, you can use the waiver ability. Uh, you don't need to seek an exception starting as of January 7th, if you, uh, if you are only going to do some or if you don't want to, or if you're unable, I guess, to do the unsheltered count this year. You're able to take advantage of that waiver. You do need to send a notification to us and again we'll get to those details. Next slide, please. So, we talked about the flexibilities in the past. I want to keep them up there because I just want people to be to be reminded that those flexibilities have it changed based on the CPD memo right? Safety still is our first priority, the overall messaging that safety is the first decision that you make with the Point in Time count. With regard to 2021 in particular, the flexibilities we talked about with either doing short surveys or more observation-based, more sampling, all that still applies prior to the memo being released. We were saying, you can seek a full exception, or a partial exception. The waiver doesn't really impact that much. The same large concept is in place. We just have a few changes to the mechanism and we just want to make sure we're covering legal bases. That's actually the primary reason we're doing it, so let's jump to the next slide. So, just to bear in mind, the things that remain in terms of actions that need to be taken towards HUD, right? We still have the ability to seek a waiver from doing the unsheltered Point in Time count or a waiver to do a headcount or something less than the full count. So that's the big change here. The memo does change that. It essentially says you're seeking a waiver. You're not seeking an exception. This really only applies for those that did not do a count in 2020. I know folks have asked that early on. What, if we did a count, do we have to do anything? And our answer was. Yes, you do. That's the guidance we were given. We also do kind of the national count in odd years. So every CoC is required generally in odd years to count. All of that stuff is the piece that we got waived in the memo. So that's nice. So if you did not count in 2020, you absolutely have to take advantage of the waiver memo if you're going to not do a full count. So, if you're going to do either a partial count or no count, you still must do the waiver. If you did a count in 2020, an unsheltered count in 2020, and you want to do something less than the full count. You actually don't need to send an exception to me. You don't need to even send a waiver notification either. You actually have that ability. And so the, the memo gives us that legal cover. So we're, we're grateful for that. Two things though that you do need to bear in mind. If you want to use an alternate data set, you still have to talk to me. That has to do with, is the data you're presenting, or going to be using, valid. Does it count as a sufficient substitute for the unsheltered PIT count? So yes. Nothing changes with those, you still need to come to me and we need to go through that. If you plan on using an alternate data set, you still need to seek an exception. It's the same process as before if you are going to change the date from the last ten days of January. So nothing has changed with regard to that as well. Next slide please. So the PIT count waiver. Again, I put the question there and that people are probably really asking, why do you have to do that? Especially on January 7th. Again, the real reason is to ensure we have legal cover for those who did not do a count in 2020. This is the way to meet the legal

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requirements. So, even if you emailed me and got an exception, if you did not do it on the unsheltered count in 2020, you still have to send an email to 2021PIT@HUD.gov stating that you will be taking advantage of the, whatever waiver you're going to do, and again, we'll go over that in just a second, so I just want to put a fine point on that, though. You still must seek that waiver. If even if you got language or an email from me, allowing the exception, so that's really important. You will have a legal obligation to do the unsheltered counts if we don't get that email. That's how important that is. Let's go to the next slide please. So this is what I was kind of, just the reminder if you did a count, an unsheltered count in 2020, and you want to do something less than the full unsheltered count, you actually don't have to send anything anymore. The requirement to send an exception email is no longer valid. You don't need to do that. You're kind of off the hook in terms of notification to HUD. The big one is, if you did not do a count in 2020, you must send the notification. Otherwise, you have a legal obligation to do the count. Next slide please. So. What do you need to send to us if you are going to seek a waiver? Again, the waiver would be something either less than the full count, for the unsheltered count, or no unsheltered count at all, one of those two, you need to send that notification to 2021PIT@HUD.gov. You need to have your CoC name and number and tell us what exactly you're seeking the waiver for. If you're in this situation where you don't want to do the full unsheltered count, but you want to do more than the total headcount, what you need to do is still seek a waiver to do the headcounts. It doesn't prohibit you from collecting more data. So you can collect more. You'll even have the chance likely to submit that we're still again ironing out HDX. But our plan is to let you submit what you can so if you did more, that's fine. You can still submit. So, this is more just again about the legal requirement for if you're going to do less than the full count, but something you still need to seek that waiver notification. And again, it really only applies to those who did not do a count in 2020, so that's the big one also. This is a change. So, for the exception pieces, we've been saying, you have all sorts of flexibility and timing. Uh, that still applies actually, if we're going to change the date, it still applies if you're going to use an alternate data set. But if you are seeking a waiver under this memo, you must submit by noon, Eastern Time on January 20th. That's the legal requirement. That's what's in the memo. Uh, so again, if I don't get that notification from you by that time, I'm going to assume that you're going to meet your obligation to do an unsheltered count otherwise. So that's a pretty important one again. I keep dropping it, in terms of, you gotta do it if you didn't do a count 2020. Just because you got it here you got to know, uh, you gotta send us that notification and this date now applies. If you're in that now, I will say, just to be very clear, there are 46 CoCs that fall in that group out of 390. It's not a very large group, right? It's around 15% of CoCs did not do a 2020 count. So if you're unsure if that applies to you, you can send me an email and happy to confirm one way or the other. If I were you and you're not sure, send the email. Because you definitely want to make sure you have cover on that one. All right next slide please. All right so, again, the other things still apply. So if you're in a seeking exception to the date, you need to still give good cause. Send an email to me stating good cause, stating when you're going to change the count to. So that still applies. That's the same as in past notices. Next slide please if you want to use an alternate data set, I'm going to work under the assumption you're going to submit. Some sort of unsheltered data, obviously, if you're going to use some sort of other data set, whether

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you're going to submit all of the normal elements or some, but you plan on doing whatever it is through an alternate dataset, you need to come to me. You need to be able to prove that that is a valid alternate data set. That generally requires you running the data on the night of your last unsheltered PIT count, comparing the results to the last unsheltered PIT count data you submitted to HUD, and then checking how close the data is. Generally, we're looking at a ballpark of within 2% to 5%. Uh, the data matches within 2% to 5%. So, that's pretty important if it's outside that range. You're definitely going to have to be prepared to do some more explaining and whether that's up or down. And if you didn't have that data set in place in the past, when you did your last unsheltered count, we, there are ways to still approve that we've approved a few for communities. But you again, you just have to say why you think that the data set is valid, and just saying, because I think it is, won't work, right? You're going to have to provide some sort of reason with data showing. Yeah, these are the reasons we think it works. So. That's going to be harder if you're in that camp again, it's possible. Just be prepared for back and forth and be prepared to provide a lot of documentation up front. All right, let's go to the next slide please. Cool. That covers my concept. I'm going to turn it back to Tommy Joe.

Tommy Joe Bednar: All right, thank you so much William, for slogging through all of that. We want to go ahead and cover a few, uh, common questions that we already know, have come up or come into the AAQ desk about, uh, the new information. Um, and I think these are going to be straightforward for you William. But the first is, uh, whether there's a deadline for requesting an unsheltered PIT count exception or waiver, and can you submit an updated exception, or waiver if circumstances change in the local CoC?

William Snow: Yeah, this is a great question. So, the answer now depends. Right before we had one policy for all of it, but if you're, if you're seeking a waiver and you are one of those that did not count in 2020, yes, there is a deadline. You need to do it by January 20th, noon Eastern Time, so that that does apply if you're seeking an exception to the date or an alternate data that you're hoping to use that you can send that to me without a timeline. Right that's, generally, I expect to see them before the last ten days of January, but again, if there's an emergency there still could be a snowstorm. Right? COVID has stopped a lot of things, but it hasn't stopped the weather. So you don't know what's coming. You may need something on January 28th. Send those to me, we're going to honor those. Right? We want to help you with that. And if you've received an exceptional already, but you need to update it, yeah, just send that to me for the most part again if you counted, did an unsheltered count in 2020, you actually don't really need to send me an updated email if you choose to do less. That's okay. You can do that. You can just move forward. That waiver gives you the ability to take that action without going back to us. So I appreciate it if you notify us so that we just are aware, but you don't have to.

Tommy Joe Bednar Thank you so much William and a common recurring question we have about the purchase of PPE. Um, is that purchase of PPE for the unsheltered PIT count an eligible expense?

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William Snow: Yeah, we love that you guys are looking at this, because you should definitely take advantage of your funding on this. The CoC planning dollars are widely available, right? In terms of what you can spend money on. Um, and using that funding for PPE, as part of the unsheltered PIT count is absolutely eligible for both CoC and ESG. If you're getting street outreach funding, the answer is maybe so. If you are purchasing the PPE to deliver, or hand to those, that you're counting yes that's an outreach activity. You can pay for the PPE with that funding and provide it to those that you're asking questions too, for those who are conducting the counts, whether it be staff or volunteers, you can use ESG Admin funds to pay for PPE for them, or for your street outreach folks. If they're engaged in street outreach activities, you can use PPE for them. So if they're doing an observation count, where there again in a car counting heads, no, you can't use PPE for that. They're not engaging and street outreach activities. However, they are doing normal street outreach activities right? Getting out engaging with people offering them services. Yes, you can use both CoC and ESG street outreach dollars to pay for PPE, for your street outreach teams.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Thank you for working through the nuance on that William. Just one more common question before we move on. Um, if a CoC has already submitted an exception request to you William now, um, do they have to submit a waiver notification to the 2021PIT@HUD.gov email address?

William Snow: Yeah, great question. So this applies only to those that did not conduct a count in 2020. If you are one of those CoCs, even if you have sent me an email and received an acceptance, you still need to make sure you send an email to that 2021PIT@HUD.gov email address by January 20th at noon Eastern Time.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful. Thank you so much. We're going to go through just a couple of resources that we want to make sure we highlight what's updated and what's available. Many of these links have already been dropped into the chat by Aubrey Sitler and we'll continue to provide them periodically in the chat. And again the hyperlinks will be available to the slides once they're posted. First, and foremost of these resources is the new CPD memo on the availability of waivers for the unsheltered PIT count. That is what William has been discussing through the majority of this presentation so far. Um, the rest of the resources posted here are documents that we've shared with you before, um, including the previous conducting the 2021 unsheltered PIT count. Um, the wonderful How to Use Sampling within a CoC guide, an example of the PIT count observation form that was posted just after our last PIT webinar, or PIT count office hours, and some updates to the HMIS project set up and inventory changes. Um, as William has said, in a few of our previous PIT count office hours, the 2021 HIC and PIT count notice has not yet been released, but will be largely, not be very different from the guidance in these other documents and the guidance that's been shared verbally and in writing through AAQs and on this webinar as well.

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William Snow: Hey, Tommy Joe, let's just jump in on that notice. So, the waiver memo is going to replace what we do with the notice. It essentially said the notice, the last notice in place, which is actually tied to the 2019 counts, still applies. Except for these waiver authorities, so you should not expect to see a notice at this point. It won't be released. It's just that that memo that now will apply and again it accepts the waiver or the notice the last time is published. So that still stands. It just gave you the ability to seek the waiver. Um, so that just to be clear on that point.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Thank you so much for that update William, and as some general PIT count resources on the PIT count and HIC landing page on the HUD Exchange also, the PIT count methodology guide all of our previous PIT count office hours, recordings, slides, chat, Q and A, and the PIT count survey tools. As I mentioned at the start of this webinar, this is our ultimate PIT count office hours for the 2021 PIT and HIC, which means we have one more on January 19th. That will be our last one for the set at 3 PM Eastern Time. That registration link is on the slide and we'll drop it in the chat for you all. And as we transition to our Q and A section of today's webinars, we would love to hear from all of you. What topics what questions would you like to see covered in that final PIT count office hours for this 2021 steps? So feel free to add those topics and questions into the chat so that we can make sure to consider covering those in the next one. With that we are going to move into question and answer. For our webinar today, I'd like to remind you that while everyone is muted at the moment we do want you to have the opportunity. If you'd like to ask a question verbally to raise your hands. Um, to do so, just click on the little hand, on the right hand side pane. If you have a question that you'd like to ask verbally, we'll call on you and unmute you to let, you know, that you can ask your question verbally. At the moment, we don't see anyone with a raised hand, so we're going to go ahead and move into a Q and A, for some of your questions that have come in through the chat. And, uh, we're going to go ahead and go to some of those. I think William, these are mostly going to go to you to start with. Um, someone just wanted to know what the exact time deadline is for submitting a waiver on January 20th. Is it noon or is it 5 PM Eastern?

William Snow: Yeah, sorry it is 5 PM. That's a good catch. 5 PM Eastern Time on January 20th. That is the correct time. Sorry about that.

Tommy Joe Bednar: No problem Thank you so much for telling us William. Um, we have another individual who's asking if the new web memo requires just notification to you, say, to be able to use waivers or do they still have to get approval for HUD to use them?

William Snow: Just notification, so that's great. You should not expect an email response back unless you're asking about, or asking a question it's again notification only and it applies immediately upon receipt so you send it January 20th at 4:49. It applies at 4:49.

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Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful. And to combine a couple of questions that we've had, and I think to talk a little bit about something that you mentioned earlier, if a CoC has already received an email, you prior to them, the new memo coming out and have received an exception request, do they need to still email via the new process to use the waiver?

William Snow: Right, so the short answer is it depends. If you fall in that camp of, you did not conduct a count in 2020, an unsheltered count in 2020, yes, you must absolutely send an email to 2021PIT@HUD.gov. If you did a count, unsheltered count in 2020, then, no, you don't actually need to take any other action.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful. Um, so, William, a little nuanced flesh-out of a potentially marginal, situational question. What happens in a CoC if the public health guidance such as a new stay at home order changes after January 20th but before the date of the CoC's Point in Time count?

William Snow: I guess the question is, what are you asking it in relation to, right? So. You, I'm guessing you're planning on conducting the count and then the stay at home order is issued, and then you don't know what to do next. So, I'm going to answer based on that. It depends what scenario you stand, and if you did a count in 2020, and you now are not sure if you're going to do a count at all in 2020 because of the stay at home order, you actually have that ability. I saw one of the questions in the chat was, hey, you were saying, we have to do a count in 2021, the memo came out and now Norm said, and the memo seems to say that you don't have to do a count in 2021. Yeah, that's what the memo altered. So, if he did a count in 2020 and something, and you were planning on doing a count anyways in 2021, but something alters the situation, a stay at home order or something else, and you say, well, I can't do the count now, you have the ability to opt out without providing notifications to us, you simply have that authority to do it again. This all applies only to the sheltered count. It does not apply to your HIC and your sheltered count.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful. So, if a CoC did not two counts in 2020, an unsheltered PIT count in 2020, and requested an exemption, a waiver, for the count in 2021, should CoCs assume that they will be required to do a full unsheltered count in 2022?

William Snow: So that's a tough question. We, I can't really speak to 2022. The way we've operated, the reason why this was so complicated this year among other things was, we essentially require a full count every other year, and we've done it in odd years that way we have a national set of data at least every other year. That's one of the reasons we kept saying, 2021's a required year. You're going to have to do it. The waiver partly clarified that. No, you're not going to have to actually for this. Are we going to require something in 2022? Likely yes, so especially if you didn't do a count right? Legally, you're, you're going to have to do a count in 2022 per the regulation, but if you do a count this year, what's going to happen in 2022? I suspect whether through NOFA incentives or other regulatory requirements. You're probably

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going to have to do it. Uh, I can't speak with certainty on that though, so you'll just kind of have to, uh, drag your heels. But if I were, you. I would definitely count on preparing for a count in 2022.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful and I just want to remind everyone on the webinar. If you would like to ask your question verbally, you can raise your hand clicking in that little hand feature. Um, in the right hand pane of the screen. And if you are on the phone, you can hit star three on your phone. If you'd like to ask your question verbally that will let us that will raise your hand in Webex. Even if you're just on your phone, or on your phone for audio so that we know that like to ask that question, verbally. At this point, we don't have any raised hands though, so we're going to return to some chat questions. And William, just to ask one more time if a CoC conducted a 2020 counts, a 2020 unsheltered PIT count, they do not need to notify that they don't plan to conduct one in 2021. Is that correct?

William Snow: That's right. Yes.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Perfect. Um, we have a question about alternative data sets. Basically, if a CoC is using an alternate data set to submit information on the unsheltered Point in Time count, if they already have an approved alternate data set from you, does the new memo and waivers affect that in any way. Is there anything that should be taken into consideration for that?

William Snow: Uh, the only thing to consider is if for whatever reason, you're not going to submit the full data set. Uh, because there are some CoCs that are using an alternate data set, but they're not collecting something like chronic. There are fewer not doing chronic status. So, if you fall in that camp, and you're doing something less than the full unsheltered data submission to HUD, then, yes, if you didn't count in 2020, but you're going to use an alternate data set in 2021, they still need to submit the waiver notification. And in that case, you would say I'm seeking a waiver to do the headcount only. Again, knowing that you could collect more than that, but that's that's the way forward is that you're going to be, um, seeking.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Perfect Thank you. All right. We have a raised hand from Daniella [Name]. Uh, Daniella you are now unmuted to ask your question.

Daniella: Thank you so much. I'm from the [State] Balance of State, and my question is for, we are doing we have many regions and each region is doing something different. They're doing a short survey, but they're also doing a headcount. Um, so my question was, when we submit the report for for the PIT, how are we going to report the, the headcounts is it's very likely that we will not have the age, and ethnicity, race as accurately as maybe using a short survey. Um, so that was my question. Thank you.

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William Snow: Yeah, it's a great question. Your, it was the first question. I, there's a lot of nuance to it, so I couldn't answer it in the chat. It was the time we had. So, I'm glad you asked it first of all. I would just make sure that within each region they're being consistent, right? If, if they're doing a short survey in region 1, they should be doing a short survey more or less than all of region 1, or administering the PIT count methodology in a way that ensures that there's no duplication. So that's point number one I want to make sure is implemented, because that's really important, but each region has the ability to do things slightly differently. That's okay for your submission. You would be working on the lowest common denominator. So you don't submit by region you submit by CoC, if you have sufficient data from the regions to be able to complete the demographic data. Even if you don't have it for every region. If you're confident that you can use the existing data to extrapolate to account for the regions where you don't have it. That's approach number one that you could take. If you're not confident that you could extrapolate to account for the missing data, go to whatever that lowest common denominator is. And it might be that just a headcount. You'll just submit to HUD the total homeless people experiencing unsheltered homelessness instead of the other data. You can still use the other locally just you wouldn't submit it to HUD. Does that make sense?

Daniella: Yes, it does make sense. Thank you. My my concern was with the errors if I'm not to submit the all the demographics, but if I understand correctly, I should be able to reporting one, with what we've gathered, and if some of that headcount is not usable for the report, I can still use it locally, but not this.

William Snow: That's correct. Yeah, that's correct. And again I mentioned the extrapolation piece because, right, if you have 80% of the data, and you're missing 20%, I wouldn't throw out that 80% for that. I would actually use the extrapolation tool to cover that remaining 20%, but if you find you're missing, like you know, 80, you're missing 80% of the data. Oh, yeah. I would just exclude that data and just submit the headcount.

Daniella: Okay, perfect Thank you so much.

William Snow: Yep.

Tommy Joe Bednar: All right, if we have anyone else, who would like to ask a question verbally, um, thank you so much Daniella for being first, and for raising your hand and Webex. If anyone else would like to please feel free to raise your hand in Webex or if you're joining us only via phone to hit star three to raise your hand. It looks like we don't have anyone else with a hand raised at this moment. Um, so we'll move back to a few Q and A, and chat question. Um, William, we have, uh, an individual asking if individual agencies or providers can request a waiver even if the CoC does not?

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William Snow: No, this is all at the CoC level for the PIT count so they can request it of their CoC, and they can find a way to mitigate for that, but individually agencies cannot come to HUD seeking a waiver or an exception.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Perfect. We do have a couple more raised hands now on our participants, so we have a call-in user with the, sorry about that with starting a phone number. Six zero two, call-in user six zero two, you are now unmuted to ask your question.

Ryan: Good afternoon William. This is Ryan [Name] calling from the [State] Department of Housing. Just wanted to clarify something with you as I've been sitting in the office hours, the last couple of weeks obviously things have changed and we were just in the process of putting together our exemption request. And then we got the notification that that only the waiver was required. Now, we did do a count in 2020. Are you saying that we don't have to submit anything at all to you?

William Snow: Yep, you are covered if you did the count in 2020, when you don't need to submit. An email to me, you don't need to send me a waiver notification to 2021PIT@HUD.gov. You still can if you feel like that's something that's necessary for your own local purposes but you don't need to.

Ryan: Okay. All right. Thank you so much.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Perfect, we have another person with a hand raised who would like to ask a question. Harry [Name]. Harry [Name] you are now unmuted to ask your question.

Harry: Uh, actually my, uh, my question was already said, so I'm good. Thank you.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful, we're glad to hear that, um, if anyone else has a question to ask, feel free to raise your hand, or again, if you're on the phone, only hit star three. And if your question is already been answered by someone else, or you've had the chance to ask it and have answered, just go ahead and hit that one more time to lower your hand or hit star three again, to lower your hand. If you're on the phone only, turn back to a few of our chat questions, William, for the sheltered PIT count, is there anything that CoCs need to do differently or extra for their sheltered PIT count or just a regular sheltered PIT count this year?

William Snow: Uh, gosh, is anything regular this year, right? It is more or less a regular count. So, things just a bear in mind that may kind of put a wrinkle in because of COVID include things like temporary emergency shelter funded through ESG-CV. What do you count those as, you would count those as normal shelter. We'll have a funding source in the HIC so you can identify it as ESG-CV, but just include it as a shelter and include the people sleeping in it as those in the shelter PIT counts. I saw a question from

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Valerie, and I think there are others who have this similar question about safe sleeping sites that are not traditional shelters and don't even qualify really a temporary emergency shelter, but more like sanctioned encampments. Those will continue to be treated as unsheltered, and you will not include either the, uh, the tents or the people in them as part of the sheltered PIT count, so that one may be a little nuanced, depending on your community. So if you have further questions about well, I, I'm not sure. Is this sheltered or unsheltered? That we're happy to address the AAQ or you can even attempt here if we have time to get into nuance but we do know that there are some nuances tied to that.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful William, thank you so much for getting ahead on a couple of questions there as one quick follow up on that that's very much related. We have an individual who asked about the sheltered count, and the HIC for COVID hotels used for decompression. So, hotels use shelters for decompression because of COVID and they said that the example project for a CoC in California, how should those be treated for the HIC? And for the sheltered PIT count?

William Snow: Yeah, sorry, I should have actually covered that. That's a great one. So, A) you count them so we'll start there. Really? You should follow your HMIS project setup. That's the key here because remember the HIC is tied back to the LSA, at the end of the day. So, to make sure your data, all lines up across all of what you're going to report. You should essentially be following your HMIS project set up. Now, there is some nuance for that. For instance, if you were a 100 bed facility decompress you have 50 beds that remained in the facility, but they were spaced out, and now you have an additional 50 beds that are that are being placed in a hotel, but you're essentially had a 100 beds more or less. Many of you kept that as a single project in HMIS. That's what we told you could do. And that's a great option. You are not going to have to report those folks in the decompressed hotel building as voucher-based, and then report the other 50 at facility-based. That's just impossible for you to do without setting up a new project and we don't want you to do that. That's not worth the time. So, if it's a decompress your keeping more or less the same capacity. You're just going to report that at all one and it's going to show up as a facility based. So, we're aware that some of those nuances are going to get lost when, uh, when we have the final HIC data, we're comfortable with that. Uh, we don't want to make you go through crazy hoops just to get at some nuances. Yeah, we're we're just there's a level of comfort we have with not bringing you discomfort so that's our goal.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Well, William, on the on the note of adding one more nuance to that question, how should CoCs handle FEMA funded shelter for their sheltered PIT count and their HIC?

William Snow: Yeah, that's great. So a lot of the NCS shelters. It's shelter right? So count it as shelter. Um, and each CoC actually that looks a little different in sometimes a team has actually provided a trailer or sometimes it's probably providing hotels so just consider how they're providing it to you and report accordingly. You have some flexibility and if this should be counted as overflow or should it be counted as

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voucher or facility, we actually give you again some discretion to think through that. The key here, though, again, especially if they're going to motels and FEMA funded. Sure. That's going to be emergency shelter identified as a voucher. And that's what's going to report be reporting on the HIC. And then shelter, they'll be included in the sheltered PIT count.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful William, we had somebody who was asking if HUD will be updating the conducting the shelter 2021 PIT count document.

William Snow: So, we've debated not doing that. The struggle was that memo came out. The CPD memo came out on January 7th. The count is really a week and a half from that, right? If it's two weeks away from that, we just decided we were not going to update that, although we may still update the description where the, where the document is stored. Stating that you need to refer to the CPD memo for seeking exceptions to do partial counts, or to get an exception from doing any 2021 unsheltered count.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful Thank you, William. We have a few people asking about if their previous requests for exemptions, if they're requests for waivers and or not doing an unsheltered Point in Time count, this year will negatively impact their competition application?

William Snow: Yeah, that's probably the most popular question. We just, the short answer is I'm legally prohibited from telling you what's in a future NOFA. So I can't tell you that. What I can tell you is, our goal is to make sure that CoCs can do a count safely if you can't do account safely. If it seems strange to penalize you for doing that. So, we will do all that's in our legal power to ensure that people who do not conduct an unsheltered count, due to safety are not penalized for doing. So.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful, I just want to remind everyone again if you'd like to ask a question verbally, you can click on the raise hand feature. And if you're joining via phone for audio, you can hit star three to raise your hand noting that we don't have any other new raise hands at the moment. William, can a CoC require volunteers and I'm assuming volunteers for their PIT count, uh, to produce a negative COVID test in order to volunteer in that PIT count?

William Snow: Requirements too strong a word here. Right? So the reality is actually, you as a CoC can set policies as long as you apply them consistently to everyone participating, you have that flexibility. We certainly in our guidance said that there are certain protocols around negative testing, and asymptomatic testing prior to a count that you should apply if you want to apply that. You actually can you have that ability. I'm not sure how easy it is. You'll have to consider your state. I know I, in my state, I'm not able to just go and get a test and get results takes whatever, amount of time and so it's just not that easy. So, if you want to apply that just recognize that's probably going to winnow out a bunch of your volunteers, and if you're comfortable with that, you can proceed with that. Again. Safety is the first thing. So if that's what

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you're going to do to ensure safety, we're, we're certainly not going to stand in your way of doing that, just recognize the implications from it.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful. William, we have someone asking about ways to reduce the coverage area because of decreased volunteers during their unsheltered PIT count. Could you talk about some of their options to reduce the amount of areas that they need to cover and survey?

William Snow: Sure, so this is the fun of sampling. What I actually would refer you to is our second PIT count office hours. I believe that was December 3rd where we talked about sampling approaches. If I were you, I'd start by developing, like, groupings or a strata of the jurisdictions in your, so, if you're a big balance of state, for instance, and you have maybe 50 or 60 counties, you may want to start by saying, well, these are kind of how I would group my counties. This is the group that has a high density, whatever that means for you right? That could mean there's normally a 100 People experiencing homelessness or more in each unsheltered counts, or right. You get to make that decision, but setting up these groupings of your jurisdictions based on what makes sense you're in a large jurisdiction, like balances of state. Counties is probably good. If you're a big city, lots of coverage, county, it doesn't make sense, but you may use census tracts or other logical regions that exist. Start by determining what areas you have to count in there, what we call certainty sites right? Without counting them, you know, your count would be inaccurate figure out if you can get to them as you count you or if you cannot, you should probably consider seeking an exception to the count if you can but you can't get to everyone else just to look at what you can do and consider, how many are you, how many areas are you going to be able to go into based on each of the groupings right? If you have a grouping of 15. Are you going to be able to get to five of those? If so that's probably going to give you enough to be able to work with for extrapolation depends a little on your area. But that's that's kind of how you should make those decisions is start by designating the types of areas in your CoC and just figure out, like, do I even have something to work with you? Right? 500 areas, and I can get the five of them. Yeah, you probably don't have much to work with and you just need the full exception. You can get 30, 40, 50, and they're pretty dispersed across the different types of areas based on this. Population density yeah, you can probably set up a survey regime and and work with that. So, again, there's a lot of nuance there, and I would encourage you to look at the December 12th PIT count office hours and the sampling guidance for more direction on that.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful Thank you William. To just to confirm, should CoCs expect to hear any sort of response from the 2021PIT@HUD.gov email address if they're notifying about using waivers.

William Snow: No, uh, the notifications apply at the time that they're submitted. Again, remember the scope of that if you're seeking to do an alternate dataset, you're not going to hear from anyone from that Web site but you're actually not approved to use an alternate data set without talking to me about that. So just remember the right vehicles for us, right? If you're seeking a PIT count date exception, or you want to

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use an alternate data set those emails still have to come to me. Everything that goes into that 2021 PIT count is being looked at as notifications to the extent they meet the notification requirements. You shouldn't expect to hear back from us. So if you ask a question in there, there's a good chance. You're not going to hear back. So, I would not use that as your vehicle for asking questions. You should be using the AAQ, or you can send emails to me if you have questions.

Tommy Joe Bednar: William, if a community is only completing a headcount for their unsheltered PIT count, um, are they required to use tools such as the sample observation form in order to de-duplicate.

William Snow: That's a tough one. So, are you required to use something? Yes, right you need a place to tally and if you're doing an observation, you simply need a place to identify the people. You don't really do use the survey tools to do the de-duplication for an observation count. The de-duplication process is by virtue of how you're doing the count itself. So, if you're doing a blitz count, right? You're going out and observing people in this specific area. And you're doing that on a very strict timeline, right, from 10 PM to 2 AM that in and of itself is your de-duplicator. Right so the tool you use won't be what you use for de-duplication. You'll just use whatever data collection tool you're using to be able to tally the people identified. If they're using a survey. And that's your, and you're doing it over multiple days and possibly even daylight hours. You absolutely need to have questions in that survey. That allow you to de-duplicate and you can make the decision about what you think is sufficient to give you that de-duplication ability. Obviously that's probably like first, and last name initials. paired with something like a birth year, may even do a resubmit the piece to it, or whatever combo you think will allow you to de-duplicate that's kind of up to you, but you do need to collect sufficient data to be able to make those de-duplication decisions.

Tommy Joe Bednar: We have another question for William, and potentially for Aubrey as well. Um, someone's asking if there's flexibility on how the gender questions can be asked on a survey to implement feedback that they've received from their local LGBTQ population.

William Snow: So, I'm going to jump in here cause this is something that we we felt pretty strongly about. In fact, we're already looking at the 2022 HMIS data standards update and one of the things we're looking at is, uh, is the gender response options, so it's something we care about. We're actually looking at race and ethnicity as well. Those are important options and we want to make sure they're representative of people. So we're looking at that that doesn't stop you as a CoC from taking that feedback. HUD gives you the elements that we intentionally give you elements. You need to be able to respond to the response options that we give you and that you'll submit in HDX. But the way you ask questions, you have all sorts of flexibility and if you find that that a population again, it could be a, any kind of demographic. Is more comfortable with one set of questions over another you have that flexibility to tailor those questions. To make sure people can feel comfortable identifying appropriately with what they identify with. Aubrey, I don't know if you want to add more to that?

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Aubrey Sittler: I would have added to begin with. Oh, sorry. Thank you. I think that's the main message that I would have added to begin with as well how you ask a question and how you submit your data are two very different things. I've seen CoCs before when they've had feedback from folks where they want way more gender categories and the HUD definition actually asked for you can ask people to identify their gender in a number of different ways and then when you're aggregating that information later to put into HDX, then you kind of manually or whatever using whatever data analysis system you're using, but then just combine those different data categories, if it makes sense for the way that you submit your data, but by all means, yes, use the information that you get from folks locally for people that lived experience to inform how you ask questions and what the possible response options are.

Tommy Joe Bednar: So, with so many different situations of communities that might be using alternative data sets, or conducting their, uh, unsheltered PIT count differently, well, a lot of communities, a lot of individuals on this webinar are asking about how HDX will be set up, or will HDX accommodate these differences. Can you speak to HDX and the data submission a little bit?

William Snow: I'll defer to Aubrey and Meghan first on that and I'm happy to follow up on anything.

Meghan Henry: Can you question one more time time again? Sorry.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Sure. So, a number of people that, because of the different situations of how they're conducting their unsheltered PIT count, or using an alternative data set, how will HDX set up to accommodate this? Or will HDX accommodate these differences and these nuances that are different from previous years?

Meghan Henry: Yes, most definitely. HDX will be removing a lot of the validations that everybody or is probably very familiar with. So then all of the other years under the unsheltered count, where we do cross checks of different populations, and whether they align with the total population, and sort of some of the demographic checks, all of those validations will likely be removed and also checks such as your unsheltered counts, having to align with your shelter account will likely be removed. So, the HDX will just accommodate all of the exceptions that HUD is granting. We'll make sure that, um, don't sort of exist when you try and report.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Okay, William, anything else you wanted to add to that.

William Snow: Uh, no, I think that sounds right?

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Tommy Joe Bednar: All right. Just didn't want to move on without you. Um, I'd like to remind everyone, uh, if you'd like to ask a question verbally, if you are on Webex to just click on the little raise hand button, if you're on the phone only or phone for audio, go ahead and hit star three star three will, uh, raise your hand if you're just joining on them. Um, William there, we have a few questions and a number of different forms. Asking for the exact language, and the notice where it says that. They're not, they are not required to conduct the 2021 unsheltered PIT count if they conducted a 2020 unsheltered PIT count?

William Snow: I don't know if I can state that here. What I would do is pair the language from, where are we? 24 CFR 578, which is our CoC reg, I think it's Section 7 is where the PIT count requirement is, uh, probably Section C, outlines, "must do it in last two days January. At least every other year," so that's kind of the starting place then the CPD memo goes over, um, it has a section in, it that reminds about that every other year requirements and then. Uh, and then goes into how you can seek waivers. So, and I know that it explicitly said and if you did it last year, you don't have to do this. That's not the way these memos get written and so it doesn't say it as clearly as folks would like, um, uh, sorry, we couldn't. We couldn't do that. That's just that's something. Our lawyers made that call on. So that is that pairing of those two citations, the memo itself. And the 578, uh, Section 7, it looks like C2 reference should give you that.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful, thank you. Um, I'd encourage people to continue adding any questions that you have, especially if there's questions on topics that we haven't covered or unique issues that we haven't covered into the chat and into the Q and A. Um, we have a few very specific HIC questions. Um, for this year, uh, the first thing, if there's an organization providing motel vouchers. I'm so sorry excuse me. Um, if there's a hotel shelters that were opened with the brand new COVID-19 funding streams, would these be brand new rows on the HIC?

William Snow: Again, it depends a little bit on how you set it up in HMIS, right? If, and again, it's really part of the decompress shelter and yes. It is new because you're using a hotel voucher, but you're actually doing the data entry based on the clients in there. Uh, as they're tied to the decompress shelter, then you're actually just going to report the decompress shelter, which shouldn't be inclusive of the beds that are in that motel voucher. If it's a brand new project, you set up in HMIS. Uh, yes, you're going to set up a new row and you're going to report that new project in that row.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful. And then if an organization providing motel vouchers, um, has veterans in some of these. Are those specific vouvher/beds considered that veteran dedicated?

William Snow: So, veteran dedicated is that concept that it's not about whether someone is in them, it's whether the beds are targeted to serve that population. So, if those beds are specifically targeted to veterans yeah, you would count it and then there's a chance that's part of the beds, not all the beds, that

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you have that flexibility to enter just the beds dedicated or targeted to. If again you have 100 bed facility and you're serving 50 veterans not because you're targeting them, but because for whatever reason, that's the population you're serving. No, you're not targeting them. You shouldn't report them as veteran dedicated beds. You will be able to report in the shelter count that they were veterans, but you would not report that they're dedicated veteran beds.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Perfect a few more HIC questions. If there's a congregate shelter with one large room and 20 beds, should that be considered as one unit? With 20 beds? Or 20 nits with 20 beds?

William Snow: So, uh, I left is this is the question I think I dealt with first when I took the PIT and HIC, I don't know, 12 or 13 years ago. And we've never really gotten an answer out of it. You actually have the flexibility to choose one of two approaches, right? You could choose, you could choose the person, or you could choose to identify it with the facility, and I believe and Meghan or Aubrey, maybe you can correct me if I'm wrong. I think we actually said for the congregate. You actually could count um, you can just count as one unit for the 20 beds. But I'll verify with you guys, if you know, if that's different.

Meghan Henry: You could do that. I don't think that that is the common practice.

William Snow: Yeah, that's helpful. Right so, while it's available, our recommendation would likely be one person per bed. One household is tied to that as well

Tommy Joe Bednar: Perfect. And we have another individual who's asking if seasonal overflow beds belong on an emergency shelter in unit inventory for the HIC.

William Snow: Absolutely. Overflow events have always been there, there's a place to identify overflow as such in the HIC. Uh, whether they're overflow beds, is that as part of an existing facility, or whether you're treating it as a separate actually have the ability to choose how you want to reflect that in the HIC. Um, but, yes, count your overflow beds. And it's more or less, if you have a set number of beds. Say, you have 50 overflow beds. And you lay all 50 overflow beds out. And they're only occupied by 45 people. You'll just have to go through the normal rules. Right? You would identify the 50 beds in the HIC. Uh, and you would put the 45 people. In the PIT count portion of the HIC, and that was, then the 45 was thrown into the sheltered PIT count as well, so just recognize often. Overflow is like, one person one bed. That's just right like, that's how most people do it. So it gets to be pretty easy. But there are some facilities that say, no, we opened this segment up every time we hit 40 or 32 degrees and so we put out 50 cots and however, many people are on the cots are then The number that are there that night. So if that's the case, you report the full beds there as well as the people sleeping in those beds. That's what is reported for the numbers.

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Tommy Joe Bednar: And William, I think you covered this a little bit at the end of that answer right there. Um, but we had someone asking for guidance and suggestions for counting or including warming shelters.

William Snow: Uh, yeah. Warming shelters get included generally you can look at how they're structured. Right? Some warming shelters are seasonal because they open up every November 30th, and they close April 1st every year, right? So if they're on a set schedule, you'll report them as seasonal. You'll give the dates and you'll report all the people and all the beds. Again, kind of normal rules about how you report people in beds that just outlines if your warming shelters are ad hoc or temperature driven, but again, they're not based on a normal schedule. You'll report those as overflow beds, but do include them.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful so popping back to de-duplication, William, we have a CoC that's asking about. Um, entering or cross referencing their short surveys into HMIS to assist with the de-duplication and adding information on subpopulations. Can you talk about if that allowed if that's advised and what might be the parameters around that?

William Snow: Yeah, I mean, you don't have to enter it into HMIS. That is a possibility. You actually could export your HMIS folks included and cross check that against your list again if you do that, I would probably follow the, uh, the de-identification process, but one that allows you to have a common way of, of comparing the people who are in your piece that's not HMIS, or you just use your HMIS staff and use it that way. So whether you put it into HMIS or you export into HMIS and compare it to that other data. You absolutely can use HMIS to fill in some of the blanks. Right? If, you know, some folks were identified in PIT count, you didn't weren't able to collect all the demographics, but your street outreach person has already entered all that. You definitely can do that. In fact, one approach here might be, if you're using your street outreach teams, and they know that data's there you might like, put a little tally box in your data collection form, saying street outreach verified this person is in HMIS and then you just put there enough information to be able to find them in HMIS and move on, right? Don't collect any more information. You, you don't need to do that. It's actually safer for the COVID purposes for you to, to keep moving. So that's a good approach for you. And I'd say this doesn't just apply in this COVID context, we actually strongly encourage you to use your HMIS data validation point in your normal PIT count process. It brings a level of comfort and verification. When, you know, most of you are using street outreach every year for your PIT count, and they have familiarity with folks take advantage of that. Right? Like, we want you to take advantage of that. The less work for you to do data entry, the better.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful so, William, back to you. HIC questions. If a seasonal shelter, a shelter that was a seasonal shelter has changed to operating year-round. How should that be noted for the HIC, sheltered PIT count, and/or HMIS?

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William Snow: Uh, so Meghan and Aubrey may be best to make sure I don't screw this up, but I would say the starting point is go into your into HMIS, and update your project records, reflect the change in status. If you do that, that should actually flow pretty well into all the other segments. So your HIC, you would easily be able to identify it as year around. You actually do. We'll just put all of the data on the beds in your year round section in the HIC, you would ensure for LSA purposes if you've updated your HMIS record that would flow into your, LSA information. Um, so just the key is making sure you update your HMIS project set up correctly are your project and then that should flow into the other data sets pretty well.

Tommy Joe Bednar: All right, and William should projects that aren't operating on the night of the HIC and PIT be included?

William Snow: Generally the answer's no, because this is about a more or less a Point in Time, right? So if they're not operating that night we're not going to count them for the purposes of the HIC. Evaluation and PIT count evaluation that one caveat we put with that is rapid re-housing has always been a mess our data collection in the HIC is certainly far from perfect for rapid re-housing. We have allowed continuums, especially because you often use this for other purposes and just. Submitting your HIC to HUD, you can enter a rapid re-housing with zero beds. We've only allowed it to date on rapid re-housing. It just gets really confusing to keep the other facilities on there. So that's what I would say for now. It's just rapid re-housing having you confirm if you didn't have people with rapid re-housing vouchers. That night for whatever reason, but that's been kind of an ongoing rapid re-housing project.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Perfect. Returning to some of the questions about warming shelters or warming centers. Um, what should the community do as a warming center doesn't have any beds?

William Snow: Not enter it. Perfectly straight forward.

Aubrey Sitrler: I think to add to that, though, if there's a warming shelter that was open on the night of the HIC, but they don't have any beds. The people who are technically residing there if they are not counted as sheltered, should most likely be counted? Um, as I'm sure that they're experiencing homelessness right, William?

William Snow: Yeah, so maybe definitely and I, but maybe I was distinguishing, you, you could be treating a warming shelter with no beds in one of two ways, either as a day shelter. So it's still providing services, but it's not providing lodging accommodations. If that's the case, yeah, you're not going to report that. It's a day shelter. We don't report the day shelters in the HIC. If for whatever reason they're providing housing, but they're not providing beds. That's right. They're sleeping on a floor or something. Yeah, we would count that as an unsheltered situation.

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Tommy Joe Bednar: All right. Um, so, if a community has a program such as a housing support program, um, that serves both clients. Who have been experiencing homelessness as well as those who were not experiencing homelessness but unstably housed, should that program be included on the HIC? Or should it include all beds or just those beds that require homelessness as in entry requirements?

William Snow: So, this one's complicated because the tie to LSA. So the short answer is you should not include people who are if you have, like a set number of beds that are definitely not going to people who are homeless. You shouldn't include those people or the beds associated with them. If that applies to you, you really should have two project setups is the short answer because when it comes to the LSA, you don't have a way of prorating projects when you get to the LSA. That's not an option so you'll have a different problem down the road that actually will impact your system performance measures as well. So, I would encourage you to do two project setups. In that case, just to make sure that your data lined up correctly in all of the places that you're going to be setting sending data.

Meghan Henry: To clarify, William do you mean two projects in the, in your HMIS?

William Snow: Yeah, two projects in your HMIS. Only one of those will have data that gets submitted in the HIC and in the other data sets.

Meghan Henry: That's right one will be a CoC project and the other will not.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Perfect so turning to a slightly longer and more nuanced question about unsheltered PIT count methodology. We've talked a little bit before about using a CoC by-name list and HMIS to call and talk with individuals that may be experiencing unsheltered homelessness on during the PIT counts. Um, this, uh, attendee wants to know if it's okay to use volunteers in this process. Um, and their big concern is around privacy and the data that people have chosen to share by entering in their information into HMIS, and if that's okay to share with volunteers to do this contact and calling.

William Snow: Yeah, that's a great question. So you'd have to start with actually looking at your privacy notice that's your very first thing that's going to govern. What other what gets shared with anybody so that's that's where you're going to start. Generally, I think in all the kind of back and forth we've had on this with other folks. I did not envision you using volunteers for this. Envision you're using somebody who has an existing relationship with the people that they're. Calling that way, you don't have this type of issue, right? All of the privacy stuff is covered and they should obviously be already have access for HMIS purposes, if you're going to use volunteers for that again, you're going to have to start with your privacy notice. And make sure that you have the ability to do that if your privacy notice is broad enough to allow it. Yes, they can do the calls again. I don't know that I would recommend that though, that because

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these calls are really being made as in a relationship context at that point. So I, I just wouldn't. I wouldn't recommend it because it just is odd for relationship purposes.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Perfect, um, knowing that we may, or may not have an answer for this William, we have a few people who have been asking if veterans who are staying in hotels with the SSVF EHA, emergency housing assistance, funds. Um, how they should be counted in the PIT and if they should be counted as literally homeless.

William Snow: That's a great question. So we, we've been talking to the VA about this. The short answer is we're still trying to figure out, how you're going to report them. The VA has said sure report them as sheltered. The problem is it's not that easy. Based on how the data was initially collected. So if you can't disaggregate folks who are in rapid re-housing from those in that program, because they were reported in a single project, you're not actually able to say who's in shelter versus who's in rapid re-housing. So that's the piece we're still noodling through, we hope to be able to give you an answer shortly on that. But again, as you may be experiencing, because you're in that boat, that does not have a simple solution to it. So, what we want to avoid is making you set up another project. That again seems awful, we kind of are avoiding anything that makes you guys set up new projects if we can. But in this case, that might have to be how we go. So we'll continue to talk to the VA, and we'll get back to folks.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Wonderful. So, definitely stay tuned for that. I do want to remind everyone if you have a question, you'd like to ask verbally. Um, again, you can hit the raise hand button in the bottom right hand corner of your screen or if you're on the phone only or phone for audio, you can hit star three to raise your hands. We do you have another question at the moment, saying that a CoC has fewer volunteers to conduct their unsheltered PIT count. So their PIT count numbers are likely to be lower this year than in previous years. Um, do they need to justify why? That's the case in HDX?

William Snow: So, I like this question for lots of reasons. One of the big ones is, in past years has actually happened in some years for many CoCs, because volunteer basis change we would encourage you to take the opportunity now to consider, like, what your extrapolation approach should be if you use an appropriate extrapolation measure, you actually could account for those gaps. Right. So. I kind of hate this year the like, I have fewer people doing the count, which means I have fewer people counted. No, that may mean you have fewer people accounted for the purposes of your sample, but you actually could still extrapolate to account for those gaps in your counting right in your sample. So. I know that that's much easier for me to stay on this call is for you to implement in your communities when you have kind of the data in front of you. So. My short answer would be, let's start kind of longer answer I guess. Start by looking at, is there a way to account for the gap? By using sampling and extrapolation techniques if so. Do that. That's a great starting point. That's a really important starting point. If not you're, you're going to report what you're going to report. I will tell you for HUD messaging. We are definitely going to tell folks

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when we release whatever it is that we release with the 2021 data that this is not an apples to apples comparison either at the CoC level. Or, at the national level to the 2020 count, or past counts at all and it won't be a very accurate. Way to reflect what happens compared to 2022 either. Right? So they're just different ways that people are counting what you should do if you're going to do any comparison, and we'll likely do something very minimal, is just point to, do you have enough confidence in the way you're counting to be able to say your account went up or down? That's our threshold for this entire 2021 count process if you in your community are looking at your efforts. And you can't confidently say that this data reflects. Just again, a thumbs up thumbs down, we're higher or lower than last year then you should probably consider submitting an exception if you're confident, you can say yeah. Went up or down. But I have no idea by how much that's fine. Like, you're in the camp with, like, everyone else who's actually doing a count. And that's the thing we want to communicate for everyone to hear, for the public to hear, Congress to hear. There's no precision in what we're going to get in the 2021, count what we're going to get is a vague sense of is homelessness going up, or is it going down or unsheltered homelessness in different types of communities, so that's the message that I think we will use.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Perfect, thank you so much, William and you actually, uh, I think started to head off. Another question may have fully answered another question. I'm not sure if you want to add anything else. Uh, we had another attendee ask about any tips. Or any suggestions for messaging this data, when they release it and share it with their local community with their funders, with their partners. Um, about how to correctly nuance and give context to this won't be comparable to other years and what it might or might not tell them about the effects of the pandemic.

William Snow: Yeah, so what I just said, obviously applies here. Right? The big thing is this is not a precision estimate where you can compare, you know, we went up 5.3%, nobody should making it should be making statements like that. If you're not conducting a full blown PIT count and there are very, very few CoCs who are doing that. So that's certainly the starting line, but I would say this is similar to other years of PIT counts in many ways. This is the time to make the PIT about what's going on in, unsheltered homelessness right? It looks we may not know exactly how many there are, but they're clearly there, we're experiencing a pandemic and we still have at least 300 people sleeping on the streets. That's a powerful message. Right? And that's one, that you should be using as you're making, trying to influence. Those who are making vaccine prioritization decisions and other things right? It is this kind of communication. Obviously that vaccine distribution piece will hopefully be done by the time you get your results hopefully we'll have the opportunity largely to be vaccinated, but there are other decisions around funding around, especially complication of COVID use this as the opportunity to say, even if this is not a perfect count we still found this many people. Right? That's a terrible thing to be happening in winter during COVID. So that's the message that we definitely want to make sure communities here loud and clear from every level from the elected level down to the citizen base. We, we all need to be aware of that and put it as a priority to address.

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Tommy Joe Bednar: Thank you so much for adding that William. It does look like some of our, uh, unique questions are starting to dry up at this point? So I would encourage all of our attendees, if you have any remaining questions, things that haven't been asked, answered or covered to add those into the chat, or Q and A or to raise your hand by clicking on the raise hand button or star three on your phone. If you've joined audio on your phone with that, we're going to do one last check to see if we have any more questions. Well, we do that. William. Were there any notes that you want to share at this moment?

William Snow: So, I can't reiterate enough how grateful I am and we at HUD are for the efforts you're doing. Even if you're not conducting a count. Those CoCs that I've talked to, you took the time to figure out. Can I do it safely? Like, that's what we care about. We care about the people we serve and the PIT is not a torturous activity that HUD wants you to do, because we like giving you pain. It may feel that way many times, but really, we care about the people on the street. And the PIT count is often the only vehicle that we have to figure out what's going on for you at the community level and for us. And to be able to message that this is a terrible thing, and we need to address it. It's serious. But. I don't want that to overshadow that this is not easy and you guys are working through it. You're in the middle of it. You have a million different priorities. If we see this, we are so grateful for it and we want to be supportive of you. So a lot of our things that we're doing are just trying to support you as you support those folks who we need that, who can't do it for themselves for one reason, or another. So a big thank you for all of your work, and being patient with us again, things like this memo, how does that apply to these waivers or the exceptions? Some of these things we're, we're like, threading, weird, legal threads here that are odd and they don't make sense on the surface. There are things we have to do just to make sure everyone's covered and we know it create some confusion. So we're sorry about that. But again, can't, thank you enough for sticking with it being patient with us. But again, putting your priorities on serving those that really need it the most.

Tommy Joe Bednar: Thank you so much, William, it doesn't look like we had any more questions come in. Um, so as we head towards the end of this, our office hours, I do want to remind everyone that the final 2021 PIT count office hours will be on January 19th 2021 at 3 PM, Eastern Time. That registration link, uh, is available on the HUD Exchange and has been sent out via listserv or for that final office hours. If you have ideas for that, you can still drop it in the chat until this webinar is closed. And we'll still get those. William, any other parting thoughts or notes? All right. With that, thank you everyone for attending today. Aubrey Sitler has been kind enough to share that registration link into the chat that will stay there for you. And we hope that you will join us on our next PIT count office hours. And that concludes our webinar.