

PIT Office Hours: Transcript **November 24th, 2020**

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Tommy Joe Bednar: Hello everyone and welcome to today's PIT count office hours where we will be focusing on the 2021 unsheltered PIT count flexibility. My name is Tommy Joe Bednar and I work at Abt Associates. I'll be covering a couple pieces of logistical and housekeeping information before we get started in earnest today. So first and foremost as I'm sure many of you want to know, um, our today's session will be recorded. And a recording will be available along with the slide deck and materials from today. That'll be posted on the HUD exchange within 2 to 3 business days. So don't fear, that will be posted there, but give us a couple of days to make that accessible and get that posted. The event information for the upcoming office hours along with all of the materials, as we do more of these office hours will be posted to the HUD exchange at the link that you can see there. Right now, all of our attendees are muted, but we hope that all of you can hear us, and we will have the opportunity for you to ask questions and have them answered verbally. The best way to hear audio and to potentially ask a question later on in our webinar is to join via phone. If he joined via phone on the phone number, that's on the screen there. That'll be a little bit better than computer audio. And that phone number is also in the chat right now. So if you go ahead and join there, you'll be able to hear us and we'll be able to hear you better. Speaking of the chat, this is an office hour session. So we hope that everyone shares experiences share comments and most of all asks questions. So please feel free to ask your questions in the chat box. To open the chat box on the bar at the bottom of your screen, there's a little button that says chat and has a little chat bubble. If you click on that, it'll open a pane on the right hand side of your screen, and that'll allow you to enter chat messages. Again, questions, experiences, comments. Please make sure that your messages are going to everyone. That should be the default "To" line, but if it's not, go ahead and change that to everyone that all of our panelists and the other attendees can see your questions and comments today. As I mentioned earlier while everyone's muted now we will have a chance for questions, including verbal questions later on. To ask a verbal question, if you'd like to do so go ahead and click on the little raise hand icon in the bottom right, hand corner of your screen or if you have the chat chat pane open, it's going to pop up halfway on your screen. That'll let us know that you want to ask the question verbally and we will unmute you and call on you to ask that question. So again, just click on the little raise hand icon and after you've had the chance to and ask a question go ahead and click it again to lower your hand. Finally, I just want to go over who will be speaking today. So we have William Snow from the Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs at HUD and then from Abt Associates we have Aubrey Sitler, Meghan Henry, Larry Buron, and myself, Tommy Joe Bednar. With that, I'm going to go ahead and hand things over to William Snow.

William Snow: All right. Thank you very much Tommy Joe, looking forward to today's call. Let me do a little bit of expectation setting here. So, we're going to talk through the guidance today. We will have time to cover some questions. I'm looking forward to your questions. The focus, so we'll talk through what we have in terms of expertise. We'll provide that from the HUD and Abt side. But I also want to invite you on the CoC side to contribute as peers. We certainly have some answers, but we definitely don't have all the answers and we would be crazy to make you think otherwise. So, we rely on peers to share what you've learned, how you're dealing with your specific situations. We have, uh, folks from

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large cities from large states, from small counties, we have folks from all over on the call and really excited about that. But again, we'll rely on you to be willing to share some of the things you're thinking through the things that you are going to do in terms of your counts. I hope you guys are willing to share some of your deep questions here.

5:00

That is also a purpose of the PIT count office hours. And with that, let's jump into some of the details. So the next slide, please. All right. Housing Inventory Count, we're going to do it like, normal. Well, like, normal is the same thing you did in 2020 and 2019 those same data collection requirements exist. Again, we'll put up notice out eventually. But don't hold your breath for that. It's not going to say anything earth shaking. It's going to focus on the reality that you're going to do. The Sheltered PIT count. Same thing. Same thing, you're going to collect everything: head count, household type, demographics, subpopulations, you're going to do it all. Unsheltered Point in Time count. Technically I'm saying you're, we're requiring a challenge this year. However, as you hopefully have seen the guidance we published provides all sorts of flexibilities. We strongly encourage you to utilize those in addition there is the option to opt out or seek an exception to doing some or an exception to doing all of the unsheltered Point in Time count. We'll touch on that again later, just to make sure folks understand that yes, you can get a full exception from the Unsheltered Point in Time count. Or some variation between that, and collecting and submitting everything. Next slide please. Okay, why are we doing it? So I've gotten this question from lots of communities. And so you see this is still one of those things that we're, we're in the middle of pandemic, right? I was excited to read about the vaccine yesterday and realizing that still feels very far away from all of us. Certainly, it'll have minimal if any impact on the Point in Time counts in January. So why are we doing it? We are trying to figure out for those who are unsheltered, what is going on. They also face the safety crisis. They face it every day. You know that better than I do. You're there, you're on the street. And if we really appreciate that there are some communities who are in the know on their unsheltered population as much as they've sheltered. And there are others who just don't have the ability to get that information. The Point in Time count is kind of this mechanism for trying to get something on that unsheltered population, we need to know not only how many are there in a general sense; Do we need to change how we're addressing their needs? That's the real question, right? Can this information yield something to help us better serve them right now? So that's our primary goal. We don't. We're not doing this just to get a headcount. I don't need a number. Uh, you don't need to check a box for HUD we really want to know, what are we doing to understand that population? And how nimble are we. Or how flexible are we to meet their needs? That's really, really important to us. I'm trying to make sure the messaging from HUD is clear on what this count looks like. And hopefully you can steal some of that messaging and use it locally. This is not a count that's going to yield a very specific answer to how many unsheltered homeless people there are in your CoC. Just the very nature of your count will be different than your historical counts. So, comparing it is going to be difficult. We know that. This will not be an apples to apples comparison. What we're asking you to do is some level of unsheltered count if you believe your community can safely do that. That gives you enough confidence to say, whether homeless or unsheltered homelessness has gone up or down. Not "has it gone up 5.3%

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or 10.8% are gone down 2.3 percent.” None of that. We're trying to just gauge directionally what's going on are there more people in the streets? Uh, have you guys been able to expand shelter enough that there are fewer people on the streets. These are the things that are important to answer for you right? It's not really for us, it's for you to do planning efforts. I will say there is a selfish aspect of this on top of it. Congress wants to know. They want to think about whether or not they should fund more things. We use the Point in Time count data heavily to respond to congressional needs. We'll make sure we use same cautions that we are now with...we don't know specifically what's going on, but generally it appears things are going up or down for these types of communities. We need to know. It's the way we get funding for all that's important. We are as kind of a side note, but for everyone to be aware of, we have developed a sample so that we can understand what's going on in certain types of communities. It's largely based on geography and looks at sheltered and unsheltered dynamics, but some of you were invited to participate. There are 82 CoCs that we invited to participate. Similar to others, you do not have to participate. This is not a HUD forcing you to participate. You can still seek an exception if you cannot safely conduct the count. However, we strongly encourage those that were invited. Weigh your options out. See if you safely can conduct some form of count. And we will use the sample, and we will use actually the data from every submission, quite frankly. Help us understand that the sample was intended to help us to have a minimum level of confidence. But the more data we get, the stronger, the message can be about what's going on in, in communities across the country. We just want to be able to send that message again to Congress who's looking at this from the funding vehicle, for you guys, as you're doing planning. It's really, really important. All right next slide. Please. All right. So what flexibility do you have? So again, safety is number one. If you can't safely conduct the counts either look to alternative data sources, which is something we'll talk about in a second, or seek an exception from conducting the count. You can conduct an observation-only count or use a very short survey. We strongly encourage you if you are going to physically conduct a count, right, you're not going to use an alternate dataset. We encourage you to strongly consider the short type of count, whether that be an observation only or a very, very short survey. We know circumstance is going to dictate that for most of you anyways. Volunteers are all but non-existent. Given COVID and your own staff, they have lots of things they are doing. The Point in Time count is, uh, above their normal duties, and so we know that as well. So try to take a load off in that way. Your sampling approaches pick what you're doing, but do minimal contact count methodologies. That's certainly what we, what we are advocating for. I've noticed there's some terminology confusion over the past couple of webinars. We've talked about this. So, I just want to quickly make a point about observation counts and headcounts and surveys. So we're saying you can seek an exception to doing a full count. The full count includes counting all people who are unsheltered, including providing their subpopulation data, their household type data and their demographic data. That's a full count. You can do something less than that. What we're advocating is to do a head count in most communities. I head count is literally how many unsheltered people are there for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. You can collect headcount results through observation or through a short survey. Both of those are ways to get at a headcount. So, when I say headcount, that's not a methodology. That's the level of data you plan on collecting and submitting to HUD. So, I just wanted to clear that up. Conducting the count we've extended the timeline from 7 days

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to 14 days. We'd encourage you to strongly consider whether for staffing reasons, you need a longer count. When you have a longer count, there are other issues that come into play, but we know many of you, again, you have a small street outreach team who is probably going to do all the work on this. And they can't do it in one night. They might not be able to do it in 3 or 4. So doing it over a 14 day period, uh, it could be fine. If you're going to do that, we have to use a survey if you're going to do it that long. And you still need to tap back to the 1st night, starting January, 21st and ending February 3rd. Please make sure to ask folks where they were sleeping on January 21st. Which is part of the reasons we don't usually encourage you to use that long period. People can't remember where they slept two week earlier often. So that's the challenge that, that you have to think through if you're going to do an observation-only count. We ask that you do that only over a very short period if you're in an area where there's lots of people who transfer in and out of the whole area. As doing it over one day is ideal, you might have to do it over 2, but we don't encourage that because duplication becomes a serious problem. If you're in an area that's geographically dispersed, not a lot of transients between areas, you certainly could consider spreading that out over a couple days. Maybe 3 to 4 days. That's absolutely acceptable. Uh, again you run some duplication risks, but if you know your population, and they don't move between areas much that it's fine to do it over a couple of days. Let's see. Sampling.. So sampling a lot of communities have moved away from sampling, they've moved to census counts, which is great. We appreciate the rigor of your counts. Uh, and we want to say it's okay to move to sampling this year. That will reduce the exposure people have to potential exposure to COVID-19. We certainly encourage that, so consider sampling. We're okay with that. You can hopefully work with a local partner. Maybe a university or state staff, or another expert to help you understand how to derive a sample that gives you again a minimum level of confidence that when you compare it, the data you get for this year, to last year, will that at least be able to tell you thumbs up thumbs down right? Which direction you're going. That's the test you need to think against when you're sampling. So it won't be perfect. That's ok. Using alternative datasets. We've had a few CoCs already seek to do this and we've accepted that. If you're going to use an alternative dataset, you need to show that it's comprehensive. You need to show that if you ran the dataset last year and compare it to the unsheltered data from last year that you derive a very similar result. Won't be perfect. I'd be surprised if it were perfect. Uh, but it should be within a very close margin. I'd say within 5% is kind of the way I've been thinking about it. So, again, if you're using a binding list, run it for January 2020, and compare that to your unsheltered Point in Time count data from 2020. See how close they are. I will ask you to do that if you don't submit it to me anyways in your email. So, I suggest that you run that beforehand and share with me the results because that's something I will be very interested in. So if you want to use another data set, you will need to seek approval for that, it's not really an exception. It's just an approval and submit that to me. Next slide, please. All right. I think an important thing that you have to know is when do I need to ask HUD something? And when do I not need to. So, this slide is intended to help guide that. When do you have to come to me? And unfortunately for you all, I am like the bottleneck on this. So. Everything is going to go through me on this one and I will review everything. I've already looked at about 35 CoCs' set of emails and approvals or not approvals or exceptions. And so we're, we're going through all of that, but these are the things that you have to come to me for. If you are going to seek to do something, that's not a full unsheltered Point

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in Time count, you need to seek an exception. So, again, if you're not going to collect demographics and you're not going to collect subpopulation data and not going to do household types you need to send me an email. Even if you say yeah, I'm going to still do a headcount. Right? Total unsheltered people, uh, still submit the exception request to me so that, so that I can approve that. The other part is, if you don't, if you cannot do an unsheltered count at all, that's included in that larger window of seeking an exception. So, submit that to me, I promise I'll respond and I've already approved some CoCs to not do a count at all. There are safety reasons for not doing it in plenty of areas. We've already approved some. Uh, the other thing is, I mentioned the comprehensive dataset, you can expect that that's probably gonna be a little more back and forth. I'm going to ask questions about how comprehensive your data is. And just be prepared to respond to that. And the last one that you're going to change the date, so you can take an exception in the last 10 days to January. We likely will not change your submission date. So, April 30, you should be prepared to submit your data on April 30. So if you want to go as late as March 31st, as long as you're going to show me that your data will be clean and ready to submit by April 30th, I will likely say, yes, so that's another thing to consider. Other things, than these 3 things, you don't need my approval. So if you normally do a census based count and you're going to move to observation-only, you don't have to seek my approval. You can go forward with that. I'm happy to answer questions, but you don't need approval to do it. So that's going to be the case with other things. Like I know. Very few of you are going to use volunteers, you don't have to seek approval for that. I know that's just the reality and you're going to have to find another way to do it if you choose to do the count. Well, I don't want you to get bogged down emailing me if you don't have to. Uh, so the last thing that you guys want to do is wait for HUD's approval to move forward on something you think is a good way to proceed. I want you to be able to do that as much as possible. So, let's move to the next slide please. If you're going to seek an approval or an exception to not submit the full count. Right to do something other than every...the normal data collection. These are the things that you need to provide to me right? Submit an email saying why you can't do it, submit included in that email a description of what exactly you're seeking an exception for. Are you going to do some form of unsheltered count or none? So be very clear with that. I need to know if you're going to do the count. What does that entail? Are you going to do only a headcount? Only a household type count or some variation in between that and the full. And then I do need to know what you're doing to collect some data on unsheltered. That is a contingency to allowing the exception. We have to understand what's happening to our unsheltered population. So, if you're going to send me an exception, I ask that you carefully consider your response that number 4 [on the slide]. I will ask you for more details if I don't see that. So, please provide information on that. All right next slide please. All right, time for a poll question. So we're just curious where we are right now with who thinks they're conducting a count or not conducting a count. So we'll give you a moment to look through that, and I'm going to peek at the chat while we do this. I know some of you, again, I've heard from 35 CoCs who either are positive that they're going to do some counts, or they're not going to do a count. And a few others who are not sure what they're going to do. So, some of you may know already, and if you're not, you're content, you're probably not on the phone. All right, we'll give you just another couple of seconds. All right. Tommy Joe. Let's see what we got. This will take just a second to pop up on the screen. Whenever that comes up, I can tell you from the emails that I've seen. About

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around 35 emailed me. I think that we've granted exceptions to not do a count for about six I want to say, and everyone else is going to do some form of count. I think there's one or two, who are still are unsure what they're going to. All right, Tommy Joe, I don't see the results. Are they up there? And I'm just not seeing it so.

Tommy Joe: It'll take just a moment, at the most. I'm sorry about that.

William Snow: Oh, we have 68 saying they're looking at doing a full unsheltered count. 127, so that's about a 3rd saying, a limited. Uh, 26 saying none. And then definitely some, another 3rd or so on the undecided camp. So that's great. That's great to see what's going on there. What folks are thinking we'll talk more about this in the common questions piece, but some are concerned about the impact long term and again, we'll, we'll try to address that a little bit later. All right next slide please. So there are several things in the unsheltered guidance that we provided as considerations. Some of these things you already know. Most of them are either common sense or things you know For instance, mobile apps, this is not a new thing in the Point in Time count world. Mobile apps could be very helpful for you, though, to reduce the amount of contact you have. With your staff or volunteers that you may engage to do your count so certainly we encourage you to consider whether that's a viable option. Next slide please. There are a couple things to think about in relation to enumerators. Remote training. We have mixed feedback on remote trainings. Some communities that have done it love it. Those tend to have shorter trainings. Typically, less than 30 minutes. For those who have not had as much success, it usually is tied to longer trainings. And what they have found is the reason they don't find it successful is that the enumerators on the night of the count tend to have more problems when they've taken the online version of the training as opposed to the in person. So it's a good option to consider. You again want to think about doing it really short if you need to do it. And find ways to kind of reinforce the learning places are good. And not like, penalty based quizzes obviously if you don't get an A, you don't count, right? Obviously, we don't do that. But things that are informative. For everything they miss you provide the answer in detail. And finding ways to just be prepared to reinforce. The training in creative ways, right? Maybe that's within the survey after user within the survey. You have reminders at the bottom right? You just have to be creative about reinforcing what the learning is. Volunteers, so this is more about recognition of where we are with volunteers. I haven't talked to a community yet that hasn't expressed the concern with volunteers. Everyone has it. Some communities, I'd say most are saying volunteers are out of the question, either because they're just non-existent or because of liability reasons. Or rather there's several reasons to lay out there that you know, very well. So, we recognize that again, it's one of those things. We want to make sure we're explicit. We know that that's going to be a huge change this year. That may put you in the "I can't do a count" category and we definitely know that that's the reality that we're working on there. I worked with Health Care for the Homeless and CDC in directing some of this guidance. This is one thing that they put a little more meat on. Just some clarity around who perhaps shouldn't be involved even if they're willing. And looking at age categories and

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other risk categories. So definitely take a closer look at that. Homeless service staff, this was also more of a recognition that it's not like homeless service staff don't have anything to do these days. Shelter staff were trying to figure out, "how do I work with non-congregate shelters or? I'm halfway hotels and halfway not." Or they, too, were largely volunteer based and they're not available. So we know there are severe restrictions when it comes to access to your own normally available homeless service provider staff. So just recognizing that as well, there are some options on the funding side for this. We will talk about that little bit later. The way you use existing staff may impact whether or not you can use CoC funding, or ESG funding. So again we'll flag that a little bit later. Next slide please. PPE. Not surprising. Use PPE. It's a must. That means masks in some areas where the COVID rates are higher. If some folks are going out, CDC specifically said they prefer N95 masks. I had posed a question, "that sounds nice, but how do you get that?" Uh, in those type areas, their recommendation was to work with public health agencies. I'm supposing most of you are already doing that, or have already tried to do that, maybe not successfully. Um, for one reason or another, but we strongly encourage that partnership to be strong, uh, so that if nothing else you can access materials and get some reinforcement on your safety protocols. So the other thing is social distancing. This is one of the reasons we're encouraging the thought of observation counts. We just know staying six feet apart is a safer way to go. The more you add surveys or anything like that, obviously you have to interact a little more closely. So, I just want to put that out there. If you are going to do a short survey, it's possible for you to have a written survey or printed survey that you can hand to them. After you've gotten consent for them to fill it out and you would step back. So implementing those types of protocols may work. Obviously that's dependent on how late at night and can they read in the dark, right? There's a million variables. We'll leave that up to you to work through. We know that you're capable of doing that. A lot of it is the same as most years. COVID adds an extra fun aspect to that, though. Next slide please. All right, other health precautions, these are probably layers you may, or may not have thought about. I suspect most of you have, but I want to be explicit about it. We certainly encourage any volunteers to get testing up to 7 days before the count if testing is available. At the very least, do symptom screening. Uh, do your best to figure it out. Are anybody involved in the count, even possibly carrying COVID-19? Obviously, if they are, we want to remove them from the from the process. When you're done doing the count, we also encourage you to consider doing a follow up testing if available, or at least some simple screening system testing afterward, just to make sure. Many states now release contact tracing apps. That's a great thing to do beforehand. We strongly encourage that we encourage that, regardless of doing a PIT count. It's a good thing. You guys are on the line of fire often and you're in a precarious situation as you. uh, engage with clients, we encourage you use contact, contact tracing apps. Um, again we've mentioned working with your public health partners, we strongly strongly encourage that. Next slide. All right, you've heard an awful lot from me, you're going to hear more, but to shake it up, we're going to turn it over to Aubrey who's going to lead out on some of the common questions.

Aubrey Sitrler: Thanks, William, and I'll also say for both of you this chat and Q and A, is the liveliest that I have seen on any webinar of late. So thank you all for all these questions. We're going to get to general

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Q and A later during the session. The next few slides, though, are some of the questions that have been generally coming into William or coming in through the AAQ desk or coming in through Friday office hours and that we wanted to go ahead and kind of pitch up for you guys before we get to the general Q and A. So, the 1st question that we have, William, is “do full exceptions for the PIT count mean that you are not doing an unsheltered count at all?”

William Snow: Yep, great question. Absolutely. All right, so some communities will seek a full exception. No count. Yes, we've already approved some. I anticipate approving more.

Aubrey Sitrler: Great. Can we do the next slide please? Will CoCs be penalized for submitting and receiving exception requests for the PIT count?

William Snow: Yeah, so this is a big one, right? I think most people, if you haven't asked that already, you're at least thinking about it. Technically, I can't speak to future NOFAs. Right? Legally, I can't say what's going to be in a NOFA. However, safety is our high priority here. So I know our office is fully committed to doing everything we can to ensure that those who don't do a count because of safety reasons, or other valid reasons are not penalized for doing that. There are some provisions in the statute that look at increases or decreases in a count. Those are things we will likely seek legislative authority to waive. We don't have that authority yet. If we don't get that authority, we will ensure that the impact is very minimal so that people do not have to go into this fearing “if I seek an exception to doing a count for safety reasons, I'm going to get penalized a year or two down the road in the competition.” We don't want that. Our first priority is, you, the people you're serving, make sure you can do whatever you're going to do safely. If you can't, uh, we will do our best to make sure there is no negative impact for not doing.

Aubrey Sitrler: Thanks William. When is the deadline for CoCs to submit exception requests to the PIT count?

William Snow: Yeah, you can submit them at any time. There's kind of an implicit deadline of the last 10 days of January. However, one of the reasons we didn't post that deadline was because you don't know what's going to happen at the end of January. You may set a PIT count date for January 25th and your governor may announce on January 24th that there is a stay at home order. And you have no control over that. This is not going to be an approved activity likely. If you come to me on January, 25th or 6th or 7th and say, “look, this was the thing that happened, I didn't have control over it, but it was

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announced.” We’re going to grant you an exception, right? We’re, we’re totally going to be reasonable with you on this. And we know things are changing all the time. That means you have to be adaptable and means we have to be adaptable. So this is one of the reasons we did not set a date. We will try to be nimble and flexible with you also.

Aubrey Sitrer: Thank you for that. Can CoCs use a mix of sampling and surveys to complete their PIT count?

William Snow: So, this one is more complicated. The short answer is yes. But you got to do it in a smart way. And it depends how you do it. So I’m going to give you one likely the example that’s done all the time in PIT counts and we encourage to be done. Let’s say you’re doing a normal census, like, account or count and you’re talking with folks or you’re counting, but more likely you’re talking with people. And you see, somebody either doesn’t want to respond; maybe they burrow deeper in their sleeping bag and they just choose to not to respond; or you just can’t reach somebody, like, physically you can’t get to them. It’s, OK, to put that person down as a tally, right? Check, we saw this person, ideally, especially in normal count years. You put a little bit of a description down. Do you kind of know vaguely who you’re talking about? This is like a hybrid approach. That’s very normal conducting an interview or a sample interview space count. And then use us a tally sheet for those you can’t count or can’t do anything more than observe, and then you extrapolate the data from the surveys to count for everyone who you just observed. So, in this case, you may not even be doing demographics so it’ll make it even easier. You literally would just, uh, include them in the count. So if you’re talking about this, it’s just a way to make sure you’re touching everyone. That’s great. That’s a good thing. We encourage you. Some states have approached and said in some areas, we want to do observation and then in others we wanted to do a short survey. The short answer is you can do that. However, you need to do it in such a way that you avoid duplication. So here’s the way to approach it. If you’re going to survey in a few areas, we ask you that you seek to do that in common density areas. We’ll talk more about sampling actually, and probably all of the office hours in the future. And we encourage you to create some strata in your sampling. That means like areas. If you’re going to again, do survey in some areas. We encourage you to make those like areas. And it may not be that you’ll count in all those areas that are similar. Uh, do the ones you can, and then extrapolate to reach out to the areas that you can’t get to. And for the observations, the same counts in areas that are similar to each other, using that methodology. And then you can extrapolate to the other similar areas that you were not able to get to. That’s the thing that gets more complicated when you actually do it. So, happy to go into more depth for those who are thinking about that, uh, but that’s a very quick and dirty version of it.

Aubrey Sitrer: All right. Next question is, can CoCs send out a phone or web based survey to individuals to complete by themselves?

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William Snow: The short answer on this one is no. So, Point in Time has a certain level of validation, right? You have to know that somebody is actually homeless or seeking homeless services and have good enough reason to believe that they're homeless. So, you can't just...well, I got an example from a college or university. "Can we send it to all of our students and those who are identify as homeless would respond back?" No, you have no way to validate that. No one's in front of you. They're not seeking services. You have no way to control your sample there. We've heard similar ideas using Facebook. No, we need somebody to validate. Now, there are some variations of this that are acceptable. For those who call on your 211 or other coordinated entry lines seeking homeless services, and your call in operators discover their homeless status, can you include them? Yes, you can include that but one caveat is you need to bear that you need to figure out how to do that in relation to your other data collection. If you're collecting surveys on everyone that makes perfect sense, you should have enough information to de-duplicate. If you are doing an observation for everywhere else. I probably would not include that. Because it would interfere, there's no way to duplicate or de-duplicate the data you get from it. So just think about that, in relation to your, the rest of your methodology. The other variation on this is what, if you want to use your street outreach staff or provider staff to reach out to known homeless client. Can you do that? Yes, you'd have to figure out how that fits into your larger schema. Is that your whole count? I had some propose that. I'm not going to say, no right off the bat, but you'd have to show that that somehow captures your entire area, right? The very reason for doing the Point in Time count is because you often find folks, you normally wouldn't find otherwise so you're limiting your sample to a very narrow group of people you already know. By very definition, you're excluding the people you don't know right? So that one, we'd have to look at in relation to other things you're going to do to supplement your data. So, that's kind of the high level version of that. Again, the biggest thing here is there needs to be some way to validate that they are homeless. On the night of the counts, and usually that's done through some sort of in person observation or interview.

Aubrey Sitrer: All right, and can CoCs use HUD funding to pay for the cost associated with the 2021 unsheltered PIT count, specifically in regards to PPE and incentives and other pieces of technology?

William Snow: Yeah, I love this question. I'm going to share what I know and that's what's on the screen. I will say you can test the waters if you want to do something else and fund it. You can certainly submit an AAQ on that. I don't know the answer to that. In fact, I would recommend you send it to the AAQ Desk associated with the funding source. So if you are seeking to use continuum of care dollars to pay for some count activity. I'd actually encourage you to send that through the continuum of care desk. Because it's those SMEs that are actually going to be the ones who answer that question. I know a lot of the answers, but I definitely don't know all of the regulatory ones. On what can pay for it. These are the things we do now, though. The planning dollars are intended to help with the Point in Time count.

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Right? It's an option among what you can spend the money for that's pretty broad. It's been on all sorts of stuff. So we've seen technology. We've seen incentives for your volunteers, or for those your counting. We've seen PPE. Yes, there's a broad scope of what you can do with your CoC planning dollars. The other option, and this applies both to CoC and ESG, is your street outreach dollars. You can use street outreach if you're using street outreach staff and they're actually doing street outreach activity. So, there's 2 scenarios I want to play out here. One: if you have street outreach staff, and they're participating in an observation based count, and they don't engage any clients, but they see them from afar in their car. Not going to count. You will not be able to use our funding to do that. They have to be engaged in street outreach activity. So, in that case, you're going to need to do some short survey. They'll likely provide some sort of incentive, or at least offer access services, a normal street outreach engagement. So I want to make sure folks are clear on that. We encourage you to look at that. Consider it again, if you're using ESG-CV, you can use hazard pay for that. We know your staff are doing amazing things and this is one more thing on top. Uh, definitely encourage you to consider hazard pay. But also make sure that you're not being an observation based count. For that you're going to need to do a little bit more. You're going to have to be doing some form of engagement for that. I'll swing again, thing with the ESG and the ESG-CV talk, you also have the flexibility to use admin dollars for PPE. Uh, if you're paying for it for staff or volunteers, conducting the count. So those are the things I am sure of. Again there may be other things. We'd encourage you to ask questions to the AAQ if you want to ask more about funding options. All right, so I'm going to quickly go through a few last slides so we can jump to your questions. Again, thanks for bearing with me. Hopefully you've seen the "Conducting the Unsheltered 2021 Point in Time Count Guide." It's short, right? We're not very good at doing short documents. But that one's actually short. So please read it. Please look at flexibility and consider whether that should apply to you. We have a sample guidance documents that I want to thank our Abt team here for helping us develop that. I'm excited for that to come out. It should come out in the next couple of days-

Aubrey Sitrler: That just got posted, William, since we've been on the phone.

William Snow: Oh, so it is out. Can you put a link to that or maybe you already have, in the chat? That would be great. So, it's a little more in depth in how to do sampling. We intend to do a companion resource, a simple Excel-like spreadsheet that will help. You actually can you do your extrapolation. We know the math sometimes is intimidating, and what does extrapolating mean exactly. And what is the universe and what's my sample base and all that fun stuff? So we can't determine your strata for you. You actually have to do that locally. But we can help you do the math on it, so we'll do that eventually that one I'm not sure exactly when, but we'll release it in the coming weeks. But look at the sample guidance, it'll be the framework we use for that companion tool. Folks have asked about this PIT and unsheltered Point in Time count. For instance, how do I count non-covered shelters or hotel motels? We have guidance on that, and it's in the HMIS project set of guidance. We released with COVID early on.

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We linked to it here. The notice, as I said earlier, I don't know when it's coming out. It's working its way through the channels. I suspect it will be the delayed longer. Uh, everything you need to know is in existing documents. We do not plan on throwing any wrenches in there and changing the requirements. So please don't hesitate or, wait for that notice to come out. Next slide please. Other general resources are tier several different landing pages. We encourage you to look at those. Next slide, please. More office hours to come again, we encourage you to bring in depth questions. I will be surprised if we get to everyone's question today if we don't guess what we'll see you next week, and you can bring that question again and we'll do it again. And again. 5 times to try to get to everyone's question, you can submit AAQs. You can submit me emails, specifically, around exceptions and alternative data sources. And if you need to talk to other things, I will do my best to respond to that. All right one, quick pulse check for you, it looks like you're well versed in using the chats. So, I just want to make sure we give you a little prompt on what else to put in there. We want to make these useful for you in the next 4 PIT count office hours. Tell us what you need to hear. Please put that in the chat. We probably won't respond all that today, but we will definitely get through it before we meet again on December 3rd, and hopefully be prepared for you. All right. That's enough for our prepared stuff. Let's jump into the questions from all of you.

Aubrey Sitrer: All right. So, keep the questions coming, we're going to get to as many of them today as we can. For those of you who have joined these sessions before, you know that we try to answer a bunch of them verbally, in part because William, and I really don't like hearing our own voices as much as we like hearing yours. So we've got 12 folks who have raised their hands in some capacity since the beginning of this call, and we're going to start by unmuting a few folks to ask their questions out loud, and then we'll go back and forth between verbal questions. And some of the ones that have been submitted through the chat and the Q and A. So I will call on people based on when they raise their hand. So, Brad [name], I don't know. I'm sorry if I just butchered your last name. You raised your hand. I'm going to unmute you. You are unmuted Brad. Brad. Did you have a question you wanted to ask us? Totally fine if the answer is no. Okay. We're going to move on to Aisha. Brad, if you did have a question, make sure you stick it in the chat and we'll try to get to it in a little bit. Aisha, I can't see your whole last name, but we're going to unmute you and you can ask your questions verbally.

William Snow: Yeah, you might want to check your own phones as well. It could be that you're muted both within Webex, and also on your phone

Aubrey Sitrer: Sorry, we're having technical issues unmuting people. This is our fault. Aisha, your last name is [spelled name]. Yeah, so that's as much as I can see in my participant pane.

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Aisha: Hello hello

Aubrey Sitler: Hey, I can hear you.

Aisha: Okay, great. Um, I was just wondering if we could have access to the list of CoCs that you guys contacted to be a representative sample. Uh, just so, yeah.

William Snow: Yeah, good question. So right now we don't have approval to release that list. We've gotten that question a couple of times. There are a couple of reasons that there's some hesitation. One is, the list might shift, right? We've, we have asked 82 communities. Some have well, most have said, yes, a few have said, they can't do it. In one case, we were able to even shift and ask another community. We may do that. We may ask a few others. Obviously the closer we get to the counts the less likely, we are to do that, but that's one reason. The other is, we don't want to discourage other communities from conducting the count. We will actually again use everyone's data that submits so you won't be excluded from the sample per se if you submit. So, we, we kind of know that that's one of those things. We don't want to disincentivize anybody. But if you are not sure if you should...if you are on the list. And again, you just need to know "am I, on the list or not?" Go ahead, and send me an email. I'm happy to respond to that. One other thing is, I don't want to send, we're careful that we don't create solicitations for you. So it's possible if you're on that list. You may get contacted from other folks who, who may have good motivations, but business motivations to contact you. That's another thing we're trying to discourage. We are not encouraging people to, people to solicit phone calls.

Aubrey Sitler: Okay. On a related question. Oops, sorry Aisha.

Aisha: I was just saying, thank you.

Aubrey Sitler: Um, thank you all for your grace, as we work through the technical issues and interrupt each other and typical web platform format. William, a similar question that we've gotten about the sample sites. Several people have asked in writing, "How did we find out if our CoC wasn't invited to be a sample site?"

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William Snow: So, I guess the short answer is because we haven't been approved to publish it. You can ask me. Send me an email, I'll respond, or you can send it to the AAQ. We'll make sure the AAQ staff have it. I'm not sure if I've even given it to you yet. I think you do have it by now. Uh, but we'll make sure that folks have it to respond to that question.

Aubrey Sittler: No, I think the question was for the folks who are in communities that have been selected as sample sites, how would they know that? Would they have gotten an email from you? Who at the CoC would have gotten an email?

William Snow: It would be your primary contact for the CoC. So, I think out of the 82, we got 9 bounce backs, and I believe the follow up email the email that it comes from Norm. So Norm Suchar would have sent the email to whoever the primary contact is.

Aubrey Sittler: Great Thank you for that. Nathaniel, we're going to mute you now to ask your question.

Nathaniel: Thanks in in our jurisdiction we recently had curfew, put on the jurisdiction for 10 P. M. Would we need to ask for exceptions to do any type of enumeration at a different time of day? And specifically, do we need exceptions to extend beyond our normal integration timeframe?

William Snow: Great question. It sounds like you're probably in California, although I think there are a couple of other states who have that curfew going on. You just need to consider how you're going to do your methodology. If you're going to do a survey, you can do a survey at all hours because that gives you the opportunity to ask people to confirm their homeless status. So, if you're doing a survey, no exception needed. Absolutely just go forward obviously use normal precautions. Right? Consider where you're going and how to ask that question and context but surveys usually are the free pass on that? If you're going to do an observation count. You probably can't do it. It's the reality during those hours, because you need to be able to count during hours when people would be sleeping. Some folks have done earlier counts, but really, any time before around 10 o'clock, you're skirting trouble there, right? Like, it's hard to know who's out because they're coming back from work or other locations that are not, they're not wandering because they're trying to figure out whether to sleep that night. So if you need an exception for that, again, that's an area where you may consider doing a full exception. If you're in those California communities, I believe your curfew is until December 21st. So, you have time to figure that out as well and get to the when do I need to submit an exception request? We know some of those

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things are moving and so you may want to just wait and kind of plan is if you're going to do it. And then if, if it turns out the curfew is extended another month, you may consider seeking full exception.

Tommy Joe Bednar: And for everyone, who's joining via phone, either for audio, or solely calling in today if you'd like to ask a question, verbally, you can hit star 3 on your phone. That's the little asterisk and then the number 3, and that'll raise your hand on the platform for us. So we can unmute you. So you can ask a question verbally again that's star 3.

Aubrey Sitrler: And it looks like there is somebody who's a call on user who just raised their hand. We're going to unmute you and you can go ahead and ask your question.

Participant: Hi everyone. I was wondering if we were going to receive the PowerPoint presentation that was presented. If we register in the event.

Aubrey Sitrler: Yeah. So we don't send them out to people who registered, but we do post them on the HUD exchange within a few days. It might take a little longer than usual because it's the holiday week. But we'll try to get that posted by early next week so that you can see the, the slide deck and the chat and the Q and A.

Participant: Perfect.

Aubrey Sitrler: And the recording of this webinar.

Participant: Okay, thank you so much. And if you can say your email, so I can send a message to see if we were one of the test sites or sample sites, that would be helpful.

William Snow: Sure. Right. So my email is William, traditional spelling, @hud.gov. And I actually, Aubrey would you mind throwing that in the chat? Or I can do that.

Aubrey Sitrler: Yeah. That'd be great if you could do that. Thank you, William.

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Participant: Thank you very much.

Aubrey Sittler: Thank you for your question. All right. Paula [name]. We're going to unmute you unless you ask your question verbally.

Paula: Thank you. I'm considering suggesting using homeless shelters. And other folks, other agencies that are entering data into HMIS and using their services that they've provided, certainly on the day of the Point in Time count. As those are people that we should count, how many days after the PIT count date, would it be acceptable to continue using those types of services, as long as those questions are asked about, were you sleeping and homeless on the start date of the count?

William Snow: Good question, Paula. So you have up to 14 days. Normal years it's up to 7 and for this, um, for the PIT count context, and for the COVID context you have up to 14 days.

Paula: Even though that would take it into February?

William Snow: Yep, yep, that's okay. Okay.

Paula: Thank you.

William Snow: Yep.

Aubrey Sittler: Great questions, man, thank you all for asking these. All right, so I'm going to turn to some of the questions that people have been writing in and then we'll come back to those of you who have raised your hand in the Webex. If you raised your hand, and already got to ask your question, if you could go ahead and click that raise hand button again, just so that we know that we don't need to call on you again that would be really helpful. But okay. So some of the written questions that have come in, about the exception, what would be an acceptable justification for opting out of the unsheltered count?

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William Snow: Great question so usually there are a couple layers. One is safety. Again, I think actually everyone has some form of safety coming into that so, uh, that's not surprising to see that in the justification also sharing where your capacity issues are. So. Typically, what I'm seeing is a combination of safety, lack of volunteers and lack of provider capacity due to other COVID-related needs and usually a shortage of street outreach. Sometimes there's no street outreach in place. Or there's a small team that's already fully tapped. So those are the types of things that I would expect to see. And again, if you submit that as part of the justification and share what you're doing to otherwise, get information about the unsheltered population, we're likely going to grant that exception. Uh, we have not rejected a request yet. Even though I've done some probing on some of them. No, one, no one's been rejected yet.

Aubrey Sitrer: All right, thank you. William. If communities opt to use the brief survey or observations-only as recommended in that document that we linked to in the chat earlier, and that was released, I think last Monday. Um, so they would instead be focusing on where the person slept and different identifiers to de-duplicate the data, that means that they would not be collecting subpopulation data. So would they need to request an exception to the full count? Or are there ways to account for subpopulations without doing the full survey that collects information about demographics and subpopulations.

William Snow: You would need to seek an exception for that and I would not try to account for. The demographics or the subpopulations in that case, it would be very hard to do that with any level of accuracy. If you're not collecting it at all during that context. But, yes, you need it's an exception and again we're granting those fairly liberally. Um, most of the time, for similar reasons, if it's not being counted at all you'd share those similar types of justifications.

Aubrey Sitrer: And is HUD approving exceptions for CoCs to collect some demographics, but not all?

William Snow: I am yet to see that request. It would be something we would consider, although that one, you'd have to be prepared to really think through and be prepared to share with us. But it's not clear to me when we would allow a circumstance for that, but again, you're on the ground, you know, your local context. So if you can justify it, we will definitely consider the justification.

Aubrey Sitrer: And can you explain what a comparable dataset is?

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William Snow: Yes.

Aubrey Sitrer: And it might have been a comprehensive data set. Maybe both comparable and comprehensive data sets?

William Snow: Yeah, thank you because I was torn on which direction we go there. So we'll touch quickly on both of those. I don't think you're talking about a comparable database, although I'll try to cover that very briefly right? That's comparable database is a database that's comparable to the homelessness management information system, or HMIS. An instance, where you would collect the same information, have the same privacy, same security, same data quality provisions as any HMIS. But it's comparable in the sense that those data or not mixed. All right you don't mix your HMIS data with your comparable data database data and that data. It's only shared in aggregate ever, so it's never mixed. And the sharing is limited as well. So, again, if that's your question, but let's get to the comprehensive data set or alternative data set. So the most common comprehensive, or alternate data set we're seeing is the binding list. The communities already have a complete binding list, but this is not a veteran binding list or a chronic binding list. This is a community binding list, and they are using that data to track everyone on a weekly, often, even up to a daily basis. So if you have that kind of database, and that's what I mean, by comprehensive it is all populations, that's when we would consider it. Some of you have strong HMIS's where you have outreach data. That is comprehensive. My experience is most CoCs don't have enough street outreach data to be able to use their HMIS to do this. That's again not true. Everywhere. Some of you do. We've already been some exceptions to that in that vein already.

Aubrey Sitrer: Great, thank you William and another quick one. Do CoCs still need to provide HUD with proof of the CoC approving the date methodology, et cetera for their PIT count?

William Snow: You won't have to provide any documentation. We actually don't normally force you to provide that documentation, but you do need to...your CoC does need to approve it in whatever way they do it right? When it doesn't have to be different. For 2021, it has to actually be the same, right? If they normally sign off during. Governing body meetings, then that's it, if they normally have the full membership. Vote on it, then you gotta do that as well if they normally relegate it to a PIT count committee and they let the PIT count committee make the decision. That's the way you do it this year.

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Aubrey Sitler: And for balance of state CoCs, or CoCs that have more than one County, or more than one city in them, do those counties have to wait for the balance of state CoC to give direct guidance on the PIT count? Or can they act individually?

William Snow: That's a tough question. So. At the end of the day you're going to have to be able to mix in with your CoC's decision. So, I would recommend not weighing in beforehand. I would recommend working through the CoC. Now, if the CoC knows it's going to do a count and is allowing some flexibility in how that's conducted within separate regions in the CoC, yeah, that's something happy to answer questions again. I want you to Cc the CoC on that, because this gets back to you like mixing methodology. We want to make sure CoCs in other counties that are like yours are in that same sample and extrapolation group. So that we aren't getting so crazy with our methodology that it actually means nothing.

Aubrey Sitler: And if within one CoC, there's for example, one community, or one County, that gets a stay at home order issued, but the others do not the last minute at the end of January, would the CoC have to ask for an exception for the entire continuum? Or could they ask for an exception just for that county?

William Snow: And that also, it's a little tough. It depends on your CoC right? If you are a 2 County CoC, that feels like that would be very difficult to do a count. If you're a balance of state and you have 50 or 60 counties, you absolutely can proceed and you would just use an extrapolation to account for that county. We'd encourage you to consider that ahead of time anyways. Right? Like, we are encouraging standpoint, it's just a lot of work already. But, yeah, if there's a last minute and there's multiple counties, and one of them can't do it extrapolate to account for them and move forward.

Aubrey Sitler: Great Thank you for that. William. Okay. There's another person on the phone who we're going to unmute. You must have hit star 3. Go ahead and ask your question.

Participant: Yes. So what is your opinion on Point in Time count phone apps? Have you seen that they're successful, or that maybe these are just a waste of time and money. We're I'm thinking about getting one this year.

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William Snow: Yep, I would actually encourage you to look at the June 2019 Point in Time count office hours we spent some time delving into people's experience with the app. Uh, from HUD's perspective, we're never allowed to recommend the vendor, but communities can say what they're using. In that office hours, several communities stated who they use, u, what different firms, and they put it even a little bit on costs in there. For what we found, most communities have found it very beneficial. It helps speed up things on the back end. It makes it easier to avoid confusion of like, when do you guys skip questions? Or even kind of like the physical filling out of forms, so we've in general found it good. We, there one or 2 communities that were small. And they said it was more work than it was worth because it was very easy to normally count and use a paper survey, so their numbers were not terribly high in terms of shelter. They were counting, I think, less than 30 people. So if you're a smaller continuum where you're not seeing a lot of unsheltered people, it may not be the thing for you, um, but if you're a larger one in particular, I definitely think it could be a cost savings and a time saving when, when you look at all the factors.

Participant: Okay, thank you. We have 23 counties, so just gathering all that data and not being able to meet in person as much. It seems to make more sense here to look at it.

William Snow: Yeah, makes sense. Yeah, thank you. You're welcome.

Aubrey Sitrer: All right. Okay, so we also have a number of questions that have come in just about general PIT count purpose. The 1st one, is, are we able to start surveys before the night of the count? So, for example, if we start a survey on the 20. And ask someone about where they will sleep on the night of the 23rd?

William Snow: No, you can take an exception to the timeframe. So, that your PIT count date is January 20. Yeah, so you shouldn't ask people where they think they're going to be sleeping in the future. That's it's just a, uh, not a good way to approach the methodology.

Aubrey Sitrer: There's also an FAQ about that, but I will post in the chat as well to give you all a little bit of context. I think the long story short with that FAQ is just people's plans can change and if you're trying to go for accuracy, then it's always important to ask about the past, as opposed to the future. Okay, so the next question that we'll ask is, if we do sampling, do we need to follow the guidance to count methodology guide?

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William Snow: You're allowed the sample in the way that you are confident is accurate. Right? The sampling guidance is the generally accepted way to do sampling. And I don't know if you're talking about the PIT count methodology guide, which was a little more simple. The one we recently released is a good one to look at. It has a little more in terms of details and examples. I'd encourage you to look at that. You have some flexibility there. If you are not sure I'm certainly willing to look at that, or you can send an AAQ, or even talk with local universities or other partners. Sampling is complicated. So, um, I'd be a little nervous from if you think that there's something that different than the guidance already, but it's possible and there's lots of ways to think through sampling. So, the short answer is you probably need to follow up with more details.

Aubrey Sittler: All right. Got two questions about youth PIT counts. Someone who said last year, we had many people in the community help with our youth PIT count. After the fact we were told that we should not have asked the schools to help. Is it true that we should not be engaging schools in our counting methods?

William Snow: No. I love our school partners, and I want them involved there. The nuance there is, the schools need to understand what role they're playing in the PIT count. They're not providing you all of the numbers. If people are homeless on their records, A, they have FERPA issues, so they may not be able to do that anyway. And B, the definitions are different. What we encourage you to do with schools is to work with teachers or counselors or those who are willing to participate to help you understand where to count. And if they're willing to participate, they are amazing resources and we definitely would love to leverage those resources. So you can definitely use them as partners. Again, the caution is what data they share with you. If they're going to share some or partner with you on data that they already have, just be aware that they can't provide you data that has that broader education definition.

Aubrey Sittler: And a related note, for the youth PIT count, we are finding that school districts are gathering strong data. Is there a way to find a common identifier and combine our head counts at that data as well? Is there a unique way to de-duplicate? And I think the broader question here is, in any way, can school data sound as a comprehensive database that informs the PIT count?

William Snow: Yeah, I love, again, I love thinking around how to work with them. So again, because of FERPA, which I don't know what it stands for, but it's essentially the education and privacy requirements. They can't really share the data with you in anything, other than aggregate form. So, if you want to seek de-duplication options, one thing that may be available to, you. And you'd have to look at any privacy that the CoC has is, uh, sharing some form of de-identified data or sharing some form of the data with them, using them as a partner in your count. So they can partner with you to winnow out

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those who are identified on the count. They also would need to know who appears to be showing up as homeless under another, yeah, something that's not counted. So, that's just something to bear in mind, but again, our school partners are great. Some of them have been willing to call. The youth on their list and understand just on that night, "Hey, are you homeless." And they usually ask other follow up for their own purposes, but that simple "are you homeless tonight" or "you're homeless on X night," that is one way to use that educational liaison to really dig in further. Most education liaisons don't have the bandwidth to do it. I wish we had more liaisons. They're fantastic. Uh, but they're often very, very strapped and can't do that. If they can and your community please take advantage of that. That's very helpful. And again, have them ask not only were you homeless but I would be more specific to where were you sleeping on? Something that you would normally ask in a PIT count survey anyway.

Aubrey Sitrer: Great thanks for that William, and I just want to draw everyone's attention to the chat here at Henderson has put, um, a link to the NCHE data collection site, which includes a lot of information I'm partnering with schools. Thank you for setting that resource. NCHE is the National Center for homeless education. They are the Department of Education provider related to homelessness. They've got some good resources on there that might be able to help inform how you collaborate with schools for your PIT count, Steve [name], we're going to go ahead and unmute you to ask your question. Verbally looks like you have your hand up.

Steve: Yes, thank you. So I know we need to request an exception if we want to limit the questions or not get all of the traditional data elements, but I was wondering about almost like a hybrid where we, if we did an exception for limited data questions, but had the opportunity to defer to observation only if a situation became unsafe, or if we didn't have enough volunteers. Or I'm even thinking of situations where clients want to engage, but because of COVID, are hesitant to engage. And so we're unable to complete a survey.

William Snow: Thanks yeah. Good question again. That's something we see in normal, normal non-COVID years, right? The community many communities have a survey approach, but they almost have this side tally going on to allow them to count folks who don't want to be counted. You can do that in this instance as well. You would if you're going to collect data on everyone else in the survey, like, demographics, and all the rest you, you'd have to extrapolate to account for those folks who you don't have any other data on so you'd have to again make some assumptions about their demographics. You can do that. I get a little more simple approach and just do a headcount for everyone. Try to get demographics for everyone, that's totally up to you what makes the most sense, but that's an approach that that you can take. Yes.

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Steve: Okay, thank you.

Aubrey Sitrer: All right, we're going to go back to some of the written questions here. So this one comes from [state] Balance of State CoC, which covers 118 counties. A few areas are more comfortable with doing some sort of count than others. Do we have to pick just one methodology for the full area or can we do a variety of methods, including allowing some areas not to count and then figure out a way to extrapolate for those areas not counted, later?

William Snow: Yeah, so just as we spoke about earlier, the short answer is yes, but you just have to think about how you're going to do it. So the sampling guidance, we just released. Talks about certain new samples actually, you know, I hogged the air space here. Larry, Larry actually did a lot of this, and I think Larry's probably better suited to speak to this. Larry. Are you, are you okay to speak to this one?

Larry Buron: Yes. It's, it's a tough one to perfectly not count any one area, because strictly speaking, in a sampling, every area that you want to represent with the sample has to have a chance of being in the sample. So, strictly speaking, it's okay to do, like, a full count in one county to get their estimate and a sample and another county to get their estimate and then add them together. Something like that's okay, and so, while it doesn't work, strictly speaking, with the sampling rules, I think if you know a lot about that county, in terms of what other county best represents it, you can kind of do some kind of extrapolation. That's very reasonable. Anything else I need to-

William Snow: No, I think that last part is the key for folks who especially Balance of States. If you're going to challenge one type of area in a certain way, you're going to have to do it. Commonly right, so you can't just say, I have 118 counties in these 6. I want to do this way and these days without looking at the relationship, and the type of. Kind of homeless densities and the other areas, that's not the way to approach it. You need to understand what your strata are. And the strata again is just the principle of like, communities that get lumped together. So you'd have to think about how do I create some strata and use those strata to kind of say, well, "these are the ones I can count in and these ones, I cannot count in and use these ones?" You can't derive the sample and you extrapolate to count for the other ones in that strata. So it's not as simple again, as saying I think I'm going to do a different in these different counties. It has to be a little more organized than that. And it may mean you end up setting up a lot of different strata or that one is just harder to implement period or it just may mean your sample is smaller, it could mean different things, but this is the type of thing. We're happy. If this is the approach you want to take, I would encourage you to go back. Look at the communities you think you can count in and start to think start to develop your strata now and then come back in the future office hours and say, "hey, we see this based on the sites that we are confident, we can count on. How did we count for

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that now that we know where we are sure we can't go to?" So this is a starting point and you're going to have to dig in more and again, the office hours, like a continuing conversation in some ways about this.

Aubrey Sittler: Yeah, then I'll remind folks who didn't hear this earlier, our topic of focus for the next office hours, which is next Thursday on December. 3rd is going to be pretty focused on sampling the sampling document that was released while we were on this call. We put links in the chat and can stick it back in there. Larry will be back to help answer a lot of our questions. So, I've got a bunch of questions here William, about observation counts. Some of them are broader. Some of them are more specific. Let's start with a broad one. How would we conduct an observation count? What would that entail?

William Snow: Oh, wow, well, that depends totally on your community. Some people still would develop a small team, right? One or 2 street outreach workers. They would have a defined geography like a normal PIT count. They would walk that and they would again use their discretion to determine who is homeless and who is not? This is one of the reasons we don't love observation counts normally. There's a lot of discretion involved there. Uh, but there's also a case for using your street outreach workers to help do this. They have experience, we trust that experience. And they can, they can be a better gauge of who is experiencing homelessness or not. Again, this is also the case for making sure you do it in later hours or very early morning hours when it is unlikely people who are not homeless are wandering the streets, especially during COVID, so that's another thing to help you with that. One other piece, some communities are using cars. So, the geography is so large that they simply cannot walk the areas. They're using cars to drive around. What I've seen there is they typically drive to one area, walk certain parts of it. Get back in the car drive to another area they're looking in between the areas, but they tend to mix up the driving and the walking based on some known information about where people might be sleeping. But again, they couldn't possibly do it all in one night, just, or even in a handful of nights by walking so they're mixing it up with their car and walking. Those are just some very, very quick high level ways to approach an observation.

Aubrey Sittler: Thanks William. I will also add. So there was a question also about like, what are some best practices of how you would instruct people to do an observation count? We cover some of this in the PIT count volunteer training tool kit, specifically the sample slide deck and I'm going to link to that real quick. Um, there's some explanations in those slides about some of the ways that you might train people to do an observation based form and making sure that you're asking them to fill in details about, you know, what they're seeing what the person looks like. If they can see the actual person as opposed to just a sleeping bag or a tent as well as making sure they're filling in the exact location of where they're finding them to really help with de-duplication later. So, the volunteer training toolkit is the link that I just back into the chat and it's the 2nd resource. The sample slide deck that has the most information I think about observation-based counts, and, of course, that was developed with the

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assumption that you would have a more robust volunteer training, as opposed to the one that we're encouraging for this year. But some of the information might still be relevant for you all. Another observation question, actually, no, not an observation question, a binding list question. Our binding list uses 90 days as an active timeframe. What expectations would HUD have with regards to capturing clients from the binding list within a date range, compared to a normal PIT count? I think the crux of the question is how active should our by name let's be in order for it to be not a comprehensive database?

William Snow: Yep. So this is one of the reasons I make you guys compare your data. So obviously you pick the range. You pick the date and you're going to have people who you might have seen again as much as 90 days earlier, or, or it could be 3 days earlier you're active or binding list has a variety of folks on it, you may not know exactly their current status. So this is why we asked you to compare that to your last count. I can't really answer that without that comparison because that's the thing that says, "yeah, we're pretty darn close," or "he doesn't really look like what we did for our unsheltered Point in Time count." So, send me an email, but start with doing the kind of homework of comparing your binding list, who on the date of your last Point in Time count compared to your unsheltered count numbers. If you plan on submitting demographic data well, you should compare your demographic data in your point in your binding list. If you have that. Right? Like, consider the level of data you're planning on submitting to us and do that kind of analysis because if you want to collect veteran status, you should make sure your binding list is pretty closely reflected in your unsheltered. I would not be surprised if you saw fewer veterans in your unsheltered count than you would normally expect if you kind of extrapolated upwards. From a binding list, because binding lists are very heavily focused on veterans are very heavily focused on chronic. That tends to lead to a higher or overrepresentation of them in a binding list. So it's these type things. That I want you to consider, and this is why I make you go through that exercise of comparing?

Aubrey Sittler: Thank you William. If we are completing surveys, do you recommend that we ask people a question about COVID and if it is related to the person's homelessness? If so, do you have a recommendation on how to ask this question effectively?

William Snow: Yeah, that's a great question. We toyed with that idea early on and we moved away from it mainly because of our concern about safety right? Fewer questions leads the shorter interactions, which decreases your exposure. Right now that's where we're leaning towards. Again, this may be your full time street outreach staff that you're doing then, who are doing all the work on this, and they may need this. In relation to their larger street outreach work, if that's the case, yes. Collect it. What they need to collect, I'm not sure I don't have an answer on that, but it's certainly something to consider. I actually would recommend working with your health experts. We all know if you ask, "have you been tested," that will yield some information, but many people have not been tested, but you don't really

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know at that point. But people haven't been tested. Then what do you know about their exposure at all, right? And are you moving towards a symptom based set of questions, right? Like, there's layers that you just have to consider how much information do you think you need to know? And is this the right context to do it? And it again, it may be the right staff, the right people. You might even be able to get public health workers to join you. That's unlikely given where we are with our hospital space right now, but I won't narrow it out for some of your communities. But, yeah, lots of good questions and it's hard to know the right answer because it depends a little on your local circumstance, or a lot on those circumstances.

Aubrey Sitrer: I also think this is a great opportunity to plug, I mean, obviously collaborating with local health officials as well and as said, and outreach workers who spend a lot of time interacting with folks who are unhoused and in unsheltered locations. But if you have any folks with lived experience, you collaborate with, in any of your planning effort, this is a great way to collaborate with them to understand how they would want to have that question asked for them without it being too invasive, and to make it so that they would answer it, you know, in an effective way. William, how will submitting anything but a full unsheltered PIT count affect the PIT count and HIC data submission in the HDX?

William Snow: Good question so be totally honest. We haven't nailed down all of HDX. However, what would likely happen is if you're gonna submit just a head count, we probably are just going to add a field where you can say, here's the number. Right? This is total unsheltered. Everything else will likely be just a change of validations, right? If you're going to submit household types, you have a place to do that now in HDX. But there are validation types, or, like the demographics and everything else. We probably have to just turn off some of those validations to ensure we don't get flagged. Uh, we have not finalized the how. I think our commitment is, if you're going to do it, we'll try to find a way to make it happen and I think we can do that. The stickiest one is the question I heard earlier on what, if you're going to collect only on gender or only on one set of demographics I think that one actually would make it much more difficult than other scenarios, right? If it's only household types or only subpopulations, I think that's easier to work with. Uh, only some demographics yeah, that was challenging. That's...we'll do our best to accommodate whatever whenever you guys are up to collecting. So, and I will see all those because you're gonna have to submit an exception request. So, at some point, I'm going to know the variation on all of these things that are out there.

Aubrey Sitrer: Great. Thank you for that. All right, many shelters are outsourcing to hotels and motels due to COVID-19. What guidance do you have for contacting and surveying those who are staying in hotels or motels while still being mindful of exposure risks?

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William Snow: Yep, so this all gets to even a larger question. I've seen a few questions about the HIC and the sheltered Point in Time count so I'm going to dress kind of a blanket. Set of questions around what can we do with hotel motels or non-congregate shelter. So, if the beds you're talking about in that specific question are tied to a shelter operation. You're not wondering how many people are out there. You should know that. And you should report the number of beds you're using, or you contracted to use. Right? So, the HIC we know is about your availability of beds. If you are shelter, let's say, a decompress shelter, normally you have 100 beds in your facility, you've decompressed to 50 beds. But you have a contract with a hotel. To for another 50 beds, you don't have to say in the HIC, your housing type is a hotel and split that up in any way that's tied to a normal shelter. That's decompressing. You're just going to report it as a facility based shelter. But for that, you're going to report the number of beds that are actively being used in the shelter under the decompress circumstance. So that's the 50 in this example, and you're going to use the contracted number of beds. So, if you've contracted with a hotel that 50 beds, you're going to provide the 50 beds information. What that will likely do some of you have contracted by households? Right? Well, we were for all households, you'll put them up in the shelter and the hotel. It's agreed to that. So your number will likely match the number of households that are being sheltered in the hotel, similar to rapid rehousing in many ways that way. However, some of you, you have active contract that specified units, and you could just provide number of units. You've contracted for, so, again, we don't want to throw any strange wrench in life. That HIC set up so that you have to split up a project that now is decompress and is half shelter and half hotel. If it's normally a shelter, same number of beds, submit the whole thing as normal shelter, that's fine. If you set up something different, right? You've expanded capacity and you are required to set that up as temporary emergency shelter, for instance, under ESG-CV. Well, you're going to report that as temporary emergency shelter and you'll, you'll reported that hotel motel is your housing type. And you'll provide all the beds you've contracted for, or again, if it's really based on household, a number of hospitals, you'll provide the number of...so want to be clear for temporary emergency shelter and many folks are using hotels. That's fine. Again temporary emergency shelter has to be set up as shelter, and as a separate project and existing projects, so you should be able to follow pretty closely to whatever your facility type is for that and you will count them. As shelter and homeless, both for the sheltered Point in Time out and for the purposes of the HIC. Does that cover most of the questions, Aubrey? Obviously I know there's a set of questions around that that issue.

Aubrey Sittler: There were several different HIC questions that we did not get to today. We actually only answered about a 3rd of the questions that came in throughout this session. Um, but we are past time right now, so we encourage you guys, I think, to open AAQs in the HUD exchange if you have additional questions, but we can answer it or otherwise please come back to office hours next week, and we'll keep talking through all of this stuff, but William, I'll turn to you to kind of close us out for the day.

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William Snow: All right, well, you've heard my voice too much, so thank you all very much. We look forward to hearing more from you in the next couple of rounds.