Transcript of the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Office Hours: January 2020
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Transcript by TransPerfect

AUBREY SITLER: Okay. It looks like there are still several people joining us. We're going to go ahead and get started. Welcome, everybody, to the January Point-in-Time Count Office Hours. This session is being recorded and will be posted to the HUD Exchange as soon as we're able to get it up there after today's events. Today we're going to start as we usually do with some introductions and housekeeping and then we're going to talk about the PIT count and HIC reporting and how HMIS data quality plays into that and then we're going to walk through some commonly asked PIT count and HIC AAQs that have come through the dust in the last couple of months. And then as usual, we'll end with about 45 minutes of open discussion and Q&A to answer any questions that you all have as you plan for your PIT count and as you look toward submitting your data to HUD this year. So on the call today we have William Snow from the SNAPS office at HUD and then Jules Brown and Aubrey Sitler are from ABT Associates. And we want to walk through real quick for those of you who have not joined these sessions before to just talk about how the WebEx works. So if you're having trouble connecting your audio at any point during the call if you get disconnected or anything like that if you go up to this Quick Start tab in the upper left hand corner and click Audio Conference it will give you a number of different options to connect your audio either through your computer or through a phone. There are a number of different panels and features on this WebEx. Some of them might be hidden in the view that you see right now, though. So if you hear me talk about the Q&A or the chats and you don't see those in this upper right-hand corner click that dropdown button and you can open up those different panels by clicking on their little carets to the left there and submitting any chats or any questions that you have through those features. If you're having any technical difficulties we ask that you use the chats panel and you can send it to the hosts, to the hosts and the presenters, and they can help you get that sorted and any issues with WebEx. But if you have a question you would like to ask out loud we highly encourage during these calls for people to talk out loud. You can click the hand raising function right here and we'll know that you want to talk and I can unmute you and I'll cue you up to ask whatever question you have verbally. But if you would rather submit a Q&A in written format you can do you that in the Q&A box. If you submit it through the chat we'll probably ask you to stick it in the Q&A box so be aware of that. That just helps us with being able to triage all the questions that come through in one place. You might see this cheat sheet later on if enough people have questions that we need to revisit any of these things. But also note that if you don't have a phone next to your name on the listed attendees that means that your audio is not connected with your login to the WebEx. And so we might be able to unmute you if you want to ask a question verbally. So just use the Q&A box in that instance. But now I will turn it over to William to start getting into the much more interesting content of this call.

WILLIAM SNOW: All right, thanks, Aubrey. Welcome, everyone, to the call. I'm excited that we're like a week away from any of you for doing the 2020 PIT count. A lot has happened since the last year and we just announced the 2019 counts not that long ago. So it definitely feels like we just did this and here we are doing it again. So thank you. I know it's a lot of work. We're doing our best to align several of our data strategies or data pieces as part of a larger data strategy. And so I thought it'd be helpful to kind of overview, do a quick overview of some of

the upcoming dates. The PIT count, obviously, coming up starting next week goes through the last ten days of January. Quick reminder for those who experienced disasters or last-minute emergencies we do know that that comes up. You can seek an exception to the last ten days of January with good cause. We've already done that for a few continuums and we did it last year for the crazy snowstorm that showed for many of the Midwest and we do it whenever needed. The key is to follow the instructions that are outlined in the notice which involves sending me an email with good cause and an alternative date and just know that I rarely approve dates that are very out. We don't tend to extend the date for data submission.

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So you need to make sure your date is close to the last ten days of January. Often we extend to the last ten days of February. We also like it to be in the winter months because that's when the research shows we get the most accurate or at least the largest number of people counted. So just putting that out there because I know that comes up and people get freaked out when an emergency happens and you're not ready for it and not sure if you can move your date. There is some flexibility there if needs be. We will put out updated submission guidance for you for submitting your data on the HDX. By the end of February we may even open up HDX by the end of February. But we will definitely close it on April 30th. That is our plan right now. And so look forward to that. We try to open it essentially as early as we can to CoCs who can submit early can. But April 30th seems to be about the sweet spot for some CoCs where it takes a little longer because there's a lot of data to sift through. So we'll continue likely to do a submission date on the April 30th timeline for the indefinite future. And then after that there's obviously the data cleanup process that happens. We tend to try to close that out by mid-July. Right around the time folks go the National Alliance Conference we're usually closing that process out. That will be our hope again this year maybe even a little bit sooner. So any help you can give there is great. I know there's a lot of media coverage, even more lately than there has been about the counts. You can certainly can and are releasing your PIT counts on your own timeline, but the sooner we can have our cleaned up data the more consistent it is likely to be with whatever announcement that you do based on your local data that you have. So we like to clean up as quick as possible to ensure consistency. Just a reminder for this year you hopefully know already. We don't have any changes to the PIT count requirements. That's fantastic. We like it that way. For the HIC we don't have any changes, but we had some clarification if you fall in the camp of somebody funded under the YHDP grants or the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project grants or if you received hedge funding for a joint transitional housing and rapid rehousing grant there is some updated guidance on that as well. But there's no real change to the data collection standards. So that's very, very exciting. We wanted to kick off today's call by talking a little bit about the intersection of data, especially the HIC data with another very large data collection process, which is the LSA. We know that the HIC tends to be tied pretty closely to some of the stuff that we do in the LSA. So we thought it would be helpful to go over some common pitfalls or things that we have had to come back and ask questions about later in the LSA process that are really tied to the HIC and maybe that will remove some of the questions later and make it easier for your guys. That's actually our real hope. We want to reduce the amount of back and forth for you and all of us. So that's going to be the intent of today to kind of kick us off, answer some of those questions. We'll go over some common questions we've seen in the AAQ. And then we will jump into your questions. So with that I'm going to turn the time over to Jules.

JULES BROWN: Thanks, William. Yeah. So, as William said, we just want to use this as an opportunity to kind of talk about that intersection between HMIS and all of the data submission activities that you guys do. The LSA and the SPMs obviously are coming directly out of HMIS, but a lot of you use HMIS as a starting point for your HIC or for your sheltered PIT. And so any data cleaning that you do for this activity is going to be all to your advantage in any of those other processes as they come up and vice versa. So cleaning your data is very important and every single one of these tips that I'm going to talk through today are relevant for PIT, HIC, LSA, SPMs, and any local reporting you might do that looks across enrollments so across project enrollments. And these are all general data quality tips that we hope that you guys are checking on regularly throughout the year as part of your data quality plan. If not, that's something that you can implement very readily. These are all things that you should be able to look at in your systems. And if that's something that you can't look at then you might want to talk to your vendor about validations that you can do in terms of reporting.

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Reviewing reporting, or in some cases where some of these things shouldn't even be possible in your system you might want to talk to your vendor about rules and validations that you can put in place in your system to prevent them from happening in the first place. And I'll mention a few of things that just shouldn't be possible but sometimes end up happening as we go through. So first one of the most important things is to identify and merge duplicate records for individual clients prior to generating systemwide reports. So the fundamental purpose of HMIS is production of an unduplicated count of people experiencing homelessness. So it's been a requirement of every version of the data standards that you have that functionality within your HMIS application to allow the HMIS lead to de-duplicate records. So if you have any questions about that functionality or how to find duplicate records either in a report or a mechanism within your system, please have your HMIS lead talk to the vendor work on that. It's very important that you actually use this functionality prior to generating system wide reports, because if folks have it -- if the same person has two different personal IDs then they're going to appear as two separate people in any of your systemwide reports. So managing the duplication issues is super important to any kind of reporting that you're going to be doing. The other thing to know, and this is particular to the LSA, but generally, I think it's something that's very important to understand, especially when you're looking across enrollment data, that you need to have valid enrollments in an HMIS for a client to actually appear in systemwide reporting. And there are some minimum requirements for what a valid enrollment is, but essentially, it's basically, the universal data elements. A few of them aren't in there. But you need to have actually entered the client into a project. The client needs to be associated with an ID, a project ID, and a household ID. You need to identify the relationship of that person to the head of household, either themselves being the head of household or another association with the head of household, and you need to identify which CoC the enrollment is taking place in along with that basic enrollment ID. So those are really important things. If those phrases aren't meaningful to you because you're not an HMIS lead or this isn't something you do just make sure that your HMIS lead understands those criteria for a basic enrollment or have them review this PowerPoint. If there's data that's not associated with an enrollment, so something happens to a client and they have some kind of activity that is registered like a bed night, but it's not tied to an enrollment in an actual project

with a start date, then that bed night isn't going to be connected to anything, and there's no way to run a report including that bed night or showing them as occupying that bed on that night. The next tip to look out for in your data quality is that, for every household ID, there must be one enrollment record and only one enrollment record where the relationship to the head of household is self. So you cannot have two self heads of household and you cannot have no heads of household basically. So you can't have more than one head of household. You can't have zero heads of household. You have to have one head of household. So those enrollments where there's a problem with that those will be identified in LSA data quality or in data quality reports, but they're not going to be included in the actual results in those reports. Thanks, Aubrey. The next tip, if you are in a project type that makes this meaningful like emergency shelters, safe haven, or transitional housing, your exit date has to be at least one day later than the entry date. The whole purpose of those projects is that you sleep there. So you have to stay there overnight. It must be at least 24 hours in theory. I mean it doesn't have to be actually 24 hours, but a night has to have passed basically.

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Otherwise those enrollments would be excluded from systemwide reporting. For rapid rehousing and PSH enrollments it's not quite the same where you have to have stayed there because sometimes in rapid rehousing you can receive assistance that doesn't necessarily equate to staying a night. So if you have a move in date and an exit date that are equal that person will be counted in rapid rehousing during the reporting period, and that's specific to the LSA, but it's just sort of a general rule that is, I think it's a little different from the other project types. But it's because of that kind of assistance that you can get in rapid housing like move in assistance where you might not actually spend the night overnight. However, clients -- so the thing to look out -- and the same is true, oh, so the same is not true, sorry, in PSH enrollment. So if your move in date is equal to your exit date if it's the same day, you move in and exit at the same time, you're not counted as housed. So PSH operates with move in date in the same way that emergency shelter, safe haven, and transitional housing operate with the entry date. So you have to have at least stayed a night in a PSH project for it to count as having been housed in PSH during that reporting period. Those things generally are more important for the LSA, but in some cases those things can be applicable for the sheltered PIT count depending on whether you're trying to identify whether a person in rapid rehousing, for example, is homeless or not homeless on the day of the count. For night-by-night emergency shelter there's an additional rule about exit date, which is that it has to be one day after the last recorded bed night. So you cannot have a bed night and then a month goes by and then you have an exit date because the person didn't stay there the night before. The exit date even if you wait 90 days to exit the person and to see if they come back to that night-by-night shelter you need to backdate the exit to the day after their last recorded bed night. So in reporting what's going to happen is it's going to create a new exit date that is the day after that last recorded bed night and then you lose any destination data that you would've recorded 90 days later because it will be reported as unknown. So always make sure you're backdating that exit date on night-by-night shelters to the day after their last recorded bed night. The sort of what goes along with that is that night-by-night emergency shelter clients need to be exited after an extended period without a bed night. It doesn't need to be an automatic function in the HMIS itself, but it needs to be a process that is put in place by continuums so that there's a clear rule around when you actually close a client out. So if you haven't seen the client

in the last 30 days, 60 days, 90 days, whatever you like, then you need to actually go ahead and create that exit, backdate it to the day after their bed night, and record a destination if you know it. Again, rules will be put in place in reporting where that sort of functionally happens, but you want to make sure that you do it directly because if you do know destination data and you record it you record it on a different day than the day after that last bed night you're going to lose out on that data. One last thing about client enrollments is that they are effectively terminated when a project stops operating. So if there's any enrollments that remain open after a project's operating end date then reporting procedures will use that operating end date as the effective exit date. So that's something where you kind of want to make sure that if you close a project down end the enrollment of the clients there. It's a little bit more nuanced if you were to have like a project transfer. But, in which case, I would suggest that you submit an AAQ around that. But generally speaking if a project stops operating the clients aren't going to be staying there anymore.

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And so exiting them and recording the destination on that date will ensure that all the data you have about that client gets captured in those reports. Okay. Then I want to switch over to talking a little bit talking not about client enrollments anymore but talking about project setup. And this is really critical for your HIC and it's also really critical for when we do the LSA and compare it to your HIC that we are really seeing some consistency there. And I just want to sort of say upfront that this is something we get asked every year. It's like, well, why don't you just stop comparing these two, the year-round data to the point-in-time data? And so the way that we import data in the LSA process from your HMIS is longitudinal. It's every project has a start date and an end date, which means that on any given date, for example, the date of your HIC, we should be able to look at your HMIS records and know which beds are in operation. And because we have that data in the LSA upload, we can, in theory, then we should be able calculate your bed inventory in the same way that you calculated it for your HIC and come to the same results. If we can check that this is true on the date of the HIC it gives us confidence in the year-round version of your inventory. So it's really important that when you if -- whether you use HMIS as a starting point for your HIC or you complete your HIC somewhere else that you set aside time to ensure that you are using that information, any updates you make to that information, and updating the actual HMIS records. The project has closed and it no longer is in your HIC. Make sure that you go into your HMIS. Close it on the date that it closed so that when you export it, it doesn't show that it's still in operation and we ask why it didn't appear on your HIC, or if something has opened in the meantime or changed the number of beds since your last HIC. Make sure that you go in and document when those changes occurred, when a project opened, etc., so that on that day of the HIC we are able to see everything that was in operation according to the HIC in the HMIS records. A couple of things that you might want to clean up in HMIS and for HIC reporting purposes dedicated beds refers to beds dedicated for a particular population group and their household members. So that's an important tip to remember. You also want to make sure that seasonal beds that you have in your inventory records have an end date. Otherwise, they're not seasonal. They're just ongoing beds. So make sure they have an end date. HMIS and the HIC both ask for the concept of units and beds and you cannot have more units than you have beds. Beds is a subset concept of units. You can have the same number. Sometimes an emergency shelter will say that they have as many units as beds or one big unit and then many beds. There's lots of sort of ways to go about that. But you cannot have more units than beds.

You want to make sure that every emergency shelter project in your HMIS has a bed type recorded. Otherwise, you're going to get flagged in the LSA as have missing bed types. This is also relevant for the HIC. So if you're gathering that information for one purpose make sure you're documenting it in the other. There are start and end dates for both projects, the entire project, and for the inventory records within those projects. So if you have an active project but no active inventory records that's a problem. If you have inventory records that go on longer than the project—

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Exist for longer than the project itself, that's a problem. So make sure that you're start and end dates for projects and in the inventory within them make logical sense. Aubrey, you can switch to the next slide now. Some quick cleanup tips for the concept of geography. Make sure you have geocodes and ZIP codes for every project. If you have unrecognized codes, the codes are in the wrong format, the codes are outside of your CoC geography this is going to create issues for reporting. Also, you cannot have more than one of the same CoC code for a single project. So if the project operates in that CoC you only need to document that once as a CoC code. You don't need to document multiple. If you document multiple of the same CoC code just sort of data wise we don't understand what that means. If you need to split your projects up for some reason within it, you need to think of a different way to do it than using the CoC code. HMIS project participation you need to make sure that it is consistent that if you say the project does or doesn't participate in HMIS that that is reflected in the fact that you either have or don't have clients attached to that project. So if you say you don't participate in HMIS but then you have a bunch of clients in that project that doesn't make logical sense and we're going to ask questions about that. And then also be aware that almost all of the data associated with a project, all of the project descriptor data elements, the PDDEs, they get associated with the clients that are enrolled in that project. So if you're missing those PDDEs for your inventory and your project's information, you're also going to end up being missing data for the clients that are within those projects. So that's going to cause reporting issues. So it's just really another reason to make sure that you're recording all of those PDDEs accurately and completely. And then, my last little set of tips is around funding sources in inventory and funding sources in project types. Aubrey, can you move the slide ahead? So here just make sure that if you have dedicated funding sources that sort of suggest that you're going to be serving a particular client type like the VA or RHY funding then if you don't have any beds dedicated to those populations we're going to ask questions. And similarly, if you have two different funding sources in a single project that are incompatible with each other, for example, if you said that you have a CoC emergency shelter or a CoC program, for a better example, transitional housing funding and the CoC permanent supportive housing funding in the same project, that doesn't make any logical sense and we're going to ask questions. So those are some general rules. Those are really very broadly applicable to all of your HMIS management. I strongly encourage you to incorporate those into your data quality plan on an ongoing basis. Thanks. Aubrey, is this me as well?

AUBREY SITLER: Yes.
JULES BROWN: Okay. So one last thing that I will tell you is specifically about reporting RRH in the HIC. It can get really confusing because there are these four concepts about rapid rehousing and the way we talk about rapid rehousing. There's the idea of occupied RRH slots

versus available RRH slots, sort of like the capacity that you might have versus how many people are actually using them. And then both of those concepts are relevant at both -- oh, I'm not sure this slide makes any sense. But really, what the two columns should be describing is the notion -- I feel like there's a header missing or something. Maybe it got lost in the formatting. But both of those concepts are relevant at both a single point-in-time.

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And also annually or on a year-round basis. So we get that that's really confusing. And so we created this standalone document that you can link to through this link to see more information about how to understand that. And how to understand that for the HIC, you want to be reporting on occupied beds and units at a particular point-in-time, but that in the LSA, for example, we're looking at sort of a broader range of information there. I think those are all of my slides, Aubrey. I'm going to turn it back over to you to go through the other Q&A stuff.

AUBREY SITLER: Yes. Thank you, Jules. And we actually, we have a couple of questions that have come in since you've been talking that I think we're going to pause and ask verbally and discuss in real-time, if that works for you. One person has asked, "Are there any plans for a data quality report to be created that will check for these particular data issues? If not, we'll see if these just have to wait for their validation files from their LSAPA after submission?

JULES BROWN: Okay. So all of these things are really standard parts of data quality reports that you should have in your systems already. These are like checking for duplicate plans and these are pretty standard things like are your data complete. All of what I just said is basically the question, "Are your data complete?" And those kinds of data completeness reports you should already have. You can also run an LSA report at any time and look at the LSA report export, which shows you information about missing clients. And certainly, as we've talked about in other contexts, the LSA process, we're refining it so that a lot more of those errors and flags are built into the HDX at upload. But these things aren't for the LSA. I mean they're really fundamental HMIS data quality issues that you should be looking at monthly, not just for the LSA. So, no. You don't need to wait until LSA flags are in place to look and confirm that every single one of your projects in your system has all of their PDDEs complete. There's nothing about that process that requires any aspect of the LSA, running it, uploading it, or reviewing the flags in it. That is really an internal look in your own HMIS, however your system exports data about projects, so that you can look through and see are all of these required data fields actually complete. Have we filled them in? Are they accurate?

AUBREY SITLER: Thanks, Jules. There are also a number of questions coming in of people asking for clarification about our net clarification for verification again of what the bed and unit inventory should be in HMIS for rapid rehousing projects.

JULES BROWN: Yeah. I really recommend reviewing that document that we went to. It goes into all of that. Sort of like both how you record each of those four concepts in HMIS and how you report each of those concepts. It's really complicated and there's a lot of other content on this call. So I really recommend reviewing that document and then submitting an AAQ if you have questions after reviewing that.

AUBREY SITLER: Great. Thanks, Jules. And I did just send a link to everybody in the chat for how to access the PDF that Jules is referencing and that this slide refers to. So we're going to go ahead and move on from this. But if you have lingering questions after we get through some of the other contents that we have today, feel free to continue to ask these questions in our open Q&A and discussion a little bit later. So I know we had said that the next topic of conversation is some common PIT count and HIC AAQs that we have seen come through the AAQ desk in the last couple of months. William, do you want to go ahead and cover these or do you want me to ask the questions and you want to answer them?

WILLIAM SNOW: Let's have you ask them and I'll answer them. At least we'll have multiple voices that way.

AUBREY SITLER: Perfect. All right, so we've got several questions about the 2020 data standards and their impact on the HIC and the HDX 1.0.

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Which you will be using again this year to submit your PIT count and HIC data. So this first one is specifically about gender category for people who identify as transgender. So the question is that the 2019 HIC and PIT count data collection notice, which is still relevant for 2020 data collection for the PIT count, requires CoCs to report transgender as a single gender category, but the 2020 HMIS data standards break out trans-female and trans-male into two different categories. How should CoCs expect to report people identifying as transgender in the PIT count?

WILLIAM SNOW: Yep. The short answer is you're going to combine the two and then report on one category for all persons who identify as transgender in the point-in-time count.

AUBREY SITLER: Great. Thanks, William. And for those of you who are familiar with some of the tools that exist for the PIT count and the HIC, you might know that there is an HMIS data crosswalk for the PIT count. It has not yet been updated to reflect some of these issues, but it will be well before you need to go in and submit your data. So there will be crosswalks and things to help you figure out exactly which data elements need to be pulled and which need to be combined in cases like this. All right, another data standards question. The 2020 HMIS data standards include changes that seem relevant to HIC reporting in the HDX and the ones that we've gotten the most questions about are this idea that the victim service provider information is now reported at the agency level rather than the project level and data element 2.07 includes a different list of dedicated bed categories from what have previously been reported in the HIC. How will these changes impact HIC reporting?

WILLIAM SNOW: All right, so this is a fun one. And actually, Aubrey just mentioned that we're updating the crosswalk. But the starting point is reporting on the dedicated inventory and it hasn't changed for that aspect. The victim service provider piece it will simply move to the agency level. That shouldn't impact your data collection process at the end of the day. Whereas it may when you submit it it'll just be clicking a different field in the HDX. We will provide guidance on how to do that. But, again, at this point, as you're thinking about data collection, it

should not impact what you're doing there. The crosswalk that we provide will actually walk you through all of these things. But, again, the biggest thing to note is the collection part shouldn't change. Rather there's minor things in HDX itself that will help you be able to display these small variances. But the two on the screen are the main ones to even consider. And I guess the ones we started the call with, if you're YHDP funded, that you'll be impacted as well. And also the joint transitional housing rapid housing grant, you're just changing what federal funding sources categories you're selecting. But, again, that doesn't change your data collection process. I don't think it would. Aubrey, is there more you can provide there?

AUBREY SITLER: Well, I think just on this slide so this table will appear in the data submission guidance and we'll get links to them and put them into the chat for you guys. But there is data submission guidance that we put out every single year that provides things like screenshots for how to submit your data into the HDX for the PIT count in the HIC. And this will definitely be included in there where as you're thinking about these new categories in HMIS for dedicated beds it'll tell you exactly which ones need to be added together to equal the total numbers that need to be submitted in those HIC categories. And, of course, your data liaisons will be able to help you with that in the cleaning process as well if you feel like you aren't confident in some of those dedicated bed categories after submission.

WILLIAM SNOW: Yeah. It's worth mentioning one more thing with this is HUD recognizes that not everyone uses the HMIS as kind of their baseline or even their end point for submitting the HIC. That's allowed. We're okay with that. We know that CoCs use different processes. A lot of CoCs do use the HMIS as a starting point and again sometimes as the endpoint. So that kind of begs the questions of if HMIS is being used why didn't we just follow the exact categories, but it goes back to that reality that not everyone does, and when you're selecting to import last year's HIC file within HDX you would have this disconnect.

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So we chose to keep the consistency with last year's data reporting as opposed to move to kind of separating all of these dedicated bed pieces in particular just to make it a little easier. It's easier to combine elements than it is to try to break elements apart. So we rested on that principle. And we don't at this point plan on breaking out all the dedicated bed categories within the HIC. I know it's possible that some of that may end up coming in as we do more work with the LSA. But, as of right now, we don't plan on changing the HIC for it.

AUBREY SITLER: Great. Thanks, William. And I just noticed that there's one question that came in through the chat. Again, if you guys have questions that you would like us to answer some point during this call if you could please use the Q&A instead of the chat that would be really helpful just for our triaging purposes. But there's one question that we can answer really quickly here, which is should we collect all shelters' counts of beds, units, and other information on the same day as the point-in-time count? And the answer to that is yes. All of your HIC data and point-in-time count data should be point-in-time references to the same night. I don't know if you have anything to add to that, William.

WILLIAM SNOW: No.

AUBREY SITLER: Okay. We've also got a number of questions through the AAQ on the 2020 Census and how continuums should expect to collaborate with those efforts. And so the first question that we've outlined here is what data can and should CoCs provide to regional 2020 Census immigrators?

WILLIAM SNOW: All right, so this depends a little bit on what they're asking for and what your CoC's data sharing policy is. Most of the time they're not asking for client level data, not from the conversations I've had with the Census folks. They're usually looking for contact data for the shelters or transitional housing, stuff to that effect, which is often public or if not public it's something where we don't see a privacy problem. Again, you can refer to your local privacy standards. If they ask for client level data for whatever reason, certainly look to your privacy standards to see what is allowable. That's a continuum of care specific approach. And so it's up to you. We certainly encourage you to engage with the Census. It is a heavy lift, though. We understand that. So that's something you kind of have to decide at the local level how much you'll engage. We all have an interest in accurately reflecting the total population, but especially our population within the Census. There is various funding sources that can get tied to this or where it gets looked at for the purposes of planning in the future. And so that is important that we represent our population to the best or greatest extent possible. So that's just something to remember. We have provided an organization that's working directly with the Census, the 2019 HIC file, the raw data in hopes that they don't have to come to every single CoC and approach you and say can I have that data when it's already publicly available. So we have done that. And we're working with the Census to try to get contacts for each of their local count officers. I forget their technical term. But we're trying to like get rid of all the in between communication and help people connect to the right people quickly. That being said, the contact that we're providing them is the primary contact for the CoC. So just be aware that if you have a contact that you desire the Census to engage with the primary contact should have that on hand because that's going to make life easier for both you and them. We certainly encourage engagement with the street outreach team. The Census has a couple of core parts to what it's calling the Service-Based Enumeration, but that kind of translates to our PIT count, right? It goes out to emergency shelter, transitional housing, as well as some unsheltered locations and some mobile service units. So they certainly could benefit from having access to people who are on the ground, again, street outreach workers or others who play a similar role. That's totally up to you, though. We have, again, tried to communicate with them that this is great. We value it. It's important. But also, we have a lot of people on the ground who don't have a lot of time and there's a tradeoff to everything. So we have tried to let them know that they need to be sensitive to you and your staff as they think about engaging us and we want them to.

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But you don't have infinite time available to do this. So we tried to express that. And, again, we actually have mentioned compensation and said if that's available that would be helpful. It sounds like some CoCs actually have been able to access that and it's not clear to me how they have, but I have heard that, whereas others have not. So that's something if they approach you I leave that to you at your discretion to figure out what resources you can provide, but you feel

free also to raise the fact that if you had additional resources this could be a little easier and you could provide more assistance. Let's jump to the next one, Aubrey.

AUBREY SITLER: All right, so the other 2020 Census question is, "Can we change the date of our PIT count to align with the 2020 Census activities?"

WILLIAM SNOW: So we thought a lot about this one. It's a tough call because we really do support it. At the end of the day, we decided, no, we're not going to grant exceptions, probably because it's so far out. Doing a count in March or April it would be nearly impossible to make the timeline that's needed to submit the data. So we just essentially said no straight out to all of it because we don't really have much flexibility in the data submission timeline because we also need to get the report out to Congress and others. So it's one of those things where we just don't have as much flexibility as we would like. And also, once you get into that like March, April, it is not the same season as late January. So it tends to have a different impact on the data. So we prefer to avoid things that would skew that. It would likely lead to a lower count for you. And, yeah, we're worried about that. So we don't want that to impact you. So we'll just bear that in mind. Remember that 2020 is one of those even years. So doing an unsheltered count is not required. You can choose to opt out of an unsheltered count and kind of dedicate your work to the Census count. That is okay. We're aware of that. You just should be aware of, again, your own circumstances there. The media relies heavily on the point-in-time count and they expect to get that count data every year. Even if you don't do that count, we bring forward last year's data, and they will highlight that, whatever the number is associated with your CoC. So we, again, encourage CoCs to do an unsheltered count every year, but this is a good year to kind of really think that through, depending on the level of effort you're giving to the census count.

AUBREY SITLER: Thanks, William. We do have one quick question that I'm not sure if you'll have insight into or not. But someone has asked why can't the Census just use our PIT count numbers?

WILLIAM SNOW: That's a good question. It's partly because they don't have enough comfort with the process. So we have actually talked with Census several times about this kind of access to the data, what we do, and they just said they want to go out and do more. I actually think it's not a bad thing to have a second kind of validation source going out. It is, again, a different time of year. Their count process is different. It actually is likely to be less inclusive than what we count. They don't have a mission that says they're going to count every single person outside. If you read their Service-Based Enumeration discussion, it essentially says they're going to do their best to count in hotspots for those people living in unsheltered situations. So, again, we have more confidence that we have more, but they decided to keep that separate. I will say that we do plan on putting out a Listserv with the FAQ about what is the Service-Based Enumeration. The Census has published that and we've asked to have access to that so we can make that available to you a little more readily. We're going to wait to do that until we get a little more clarity about the relationship between the contacts. So we will hopefully send that out in the next couple weeks so you know what's going on there.

AUBREY SITLER: Great. Thanks, William. And I think this is our last common AAQ that we are highlighting before we jump into our bigger discussion. But we also have a lot of questions

about extrapolation and what extrapolation methods are required or suggested for different continuums in different contexts. So this question is, "My CoC covers a large geographic area. How can we ensure that we are conducting an accurate PIT count? Do we have to extrapolate our data if we do not have or if we do not do a complete coverage PIT count?"

WILLIAM SNOW: Good question. So I'm going to focus on that last part.

[00:50:00]

Whatever you report to HUD should be representative of your entire geography. So we do ask that you extrapolate if you are not counting your entire geography. The trick is, especially if you're a Balance of State or a very large geography, there's a lot of areas where there's nothing or no persons identified or one or two. So we have encouraged you to use what we would refer to as a stratus or stratified sample. So try to pick a couple of counties that you expect either to have zero or very few people and go out and do the count in those counties or jurisdictions and use that to do your extrapolation. Again, it may be very, very few. We would not encourage you to only count in hotspots and then extrapolate that to a very large geography where you don't think there are that many people in the rest of it. That will just result in your reporting a very high number that is likely not true. So you do have to be a little careful in your extrapolation that you're kind of doing an apples to apples comparison when you're extrapolating. Just extrapolate like areas to other like areas. We're happy to give a little more one-on-one assistance with that. We've certainly talked to several communities to talk through their methodology if they have concerns or questions about it. It's in everyone's best interest to get this right. This is tied to competitive funding every year. So it's one of those elements. So it is important to do your best. We recognize and give you some leeway when there's a methodology change. But the best thing to do is if you're not doing that now, extrapolating to cover everyone, make that extrapolation. It'll have certainly a likely increase that first year. But then as your methodology changes, sometimes improves and sometimes it digresses, but as you have a sample regime set up you're more likely to be representative. So I see a lot of communities where they'll only provide where they count still. And then they're frustrated that the next year they counted more because more jurisdictions because they had more volunteers and their PIT count went up and they were afraid of the impact in the competition. And that's, again, we can only do so much with that increase. We have some statutory requirements about how we look at that for funding. But the better thing to do is to try to avoid wild fluctuations or any fluctuations that are purely based on volunteer or county engagements by doing some extrapolation to minimize some of that volatility from different interaction with the public. Again, that's not an easy thing. So it's nice for me to say that here. But I recognize that that takes time and effort and often an extra level of expertise. If you would like some help in that, feel free to submit an AAQ. We do want to help you with that and look for resources to guide you through some of it. So it's something we feel passionately that the PIT count all of our efforts should be focusing on getting it accurate as opposed to kind of changing elements. So that's where our effort at HUD is. Let's get the most accurate count and use that data to impact people's lives who are on the street, a positive impact on people's lives on the street. So that's our intent.

AUBREY SITLER: Great. Thank you, William. And on this slide you can see there are two hyperlinks here and we can send those through the chat in just a second, but one of them is the

PIT count methodology guide. If you are not familiar with the PIT count methodology guide and you are responsible in any way, shape, or form for deciding your CoC's methodology in conducting its PIT count, I would highly recommend giving that a read. Section two covers the ideas about how to extrapolate. And then, also this data extrapolation tool, if you click that link, it just downloads the Excel file to your computer. And both of these are available on the HUD Exchange. And the extrapolation tool has a tab of explanation of how to use it as well. And, of course, we have encouraged if you are struggling with figuring out the best approach for you circumstances to submit an AAQ and we can help you think through some different ideas to help you get the most accurate PIT count possible. Okay. So we're going to move into this part of the day where we do open discussion and Q&A. I know we've got a bunch of them that have come in. We have about 35 minutes left in this call. So we will try to get through as many of them as possible. If we don't get to your question, I apologize in advance. But if it's still lingering, feel free to send in an AAQ and we'll get you a response.

[00:55:00]

Okay. So I know, William, you had answered a couple in writing earlier. And I don't know if there were any that you thought warranted a verbal discussion for the group. We'll pause and just see if you have any thoughts on that before we ask some of these other ones that haven't been answered in writing yet.

WILLIAM SNOW: Yeah. I think I'll leave those as is. If folks need more clarification, they can ask for more clarification. But it'd be nice to keep moving. There's plenty of questions there.

AUBREY SITLER: Great. Thank you. Let's see. Okay. So one person has asked, "Regarding the unsheltered survey and observing demographics of individuals who are not able to be surveyed if we have professional outreach workers who have relationships with the person in question can we rely on their knowledge to answer some of the demographic questions that are usually asked as part of the PIT count survey?"

WILLIAM SNOW: Yes. In fact, we would encourage if you have the ability to do any sort of matching with the data that you have in HMIS, you absolutely should be able to do that. There are times even where responses to surveys for people that street outreach workers know very well the responses may be a little different than what they understand. We encourage you to kind of do some of that validation. If there are discrepancies you can rely on the data that you've been collecting in HMIS. If there is a really critical discrepancy, I would encourage you to work with a street outreach worker to actually figure out what the right answer is. But this is one of those cases where we know the PIT count is not the best time to collect data. It's late at night or early in the morning. And if you have a more valid data source that you're confident in and that's usually the HMIS it could also be data from homes for your VA counterparts it is okay to rely on that.

AUBREY SITLER: Great. And I would also go a step further and say that this question kind of gets a little bit at what it means to be conducting an observational count. And I would caution people when making assumptions about things that they think they can observe as opposed to known information because an outreach worker has a relationship with somebody. I know I've

been part of point-in-time counts before we have observation forms where there's really no base for writing down why you're making assumptions about things. But, for example, someone's age, someone's gender, someone's race or ethnicity, those are not necessarily things that you can tell by just looking at somebody. So be sure to use caution in how you are making assumptions when doing an observational count. Okay. I know that we have a couple of questions in here about -- I'm sorry. Did you want to say something, William?

WILLIAM SNOW: Nope.

AUBREY SITLER: Okay. I don't know as I wasn't sure if it was you or someone else. All right, someone says, "We are a PSH project with a sister DV emergency shelter. Our PSH project HMIS is regularly reported through our partner citywide housing voucher agency. Does that mean that we do not need to report individually for our project and that our partner agency reports the project?"

WILLIAM SNOW: So I think the key here is to recognize the CoC actually has ultimate responsibility to make sure that all dedicated projects are reported. So the CoC should actually hopefully be aware of the setup for that particular circumstance and ensure that somebody takes responsibility. It's usually nicer to kind of set up upfront who would report, but often it's a case by case basis, right, like you may just have different needs and different circumstances based on the project structure or the relationship. So we defer to the CoCs on that, but we think that the CoCs should be responsible for making sure that somebody enters the appropriate project and the data associated with them.

AUBREY SITLER: Great. We have two questions about whether or not the HIC or, I'm sorry, is there a plan to replace the HIC with the LSA at some point in the future?

WILLIAM SNOW: No, not at this point. Again, they do different things. The HIC feeds into the LSA, but the HIC is something that focuses exclusively or almost exclusively on inventory. The LSA takes that inventory concept and then looks at the relationship between people using that inventory. So at this point, no.

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And I don't, quite honestly, see a change in the future, although we won't write that off as an impossibility in the future. We definitely want to explore things that will make everyone's life easier as we go forward on data collection.

AUBREY SITLER: Great. Thank you. There's somebody who is asking about DV projects in the HIC. We have an organization that runs both DV programs and non-DV programs all of which are reported on our HIC. The DV projects do not use HMIS, but projects from the non-DV programs do use HMIS. With the VSP being determined at the agency level now if we identify the DV programs as a VSP it creates issues if we report that the non-DV are reported as participating in HMIS. How should we report this incrimination on the HIC?

WILLIAM SNOW: Hmm, that's a good question. So this kind of gets at some of the pieces we walked through earlier. And I'm going to let, Aubrey, you correct me if I'm wrong. But because it's reported as at the agency level, this is one of those good places where you likely want to report those two sets of inventories separately to make sure that your non-DV project, and, again, I want to be clear here we're talking at the project level as opposed to at the individual client level, but your non-DV project and your DV project in this case it's likely better to have them separated to be clear about, well, to be clear about privacy and sharing of data for your DV population. It's just the optics if nothing else is important here and certainly the protection of the data itself. But that would be our recommendation. Aubrey, do you have more you want to say on that one?

AUBREY SITLER: There is a decision tree. We'll find it and stick the link into the chat. There's a decision tree for when the projects should be or when organizations should be listing themselves as domestic violence agencies. And if the agency as a whole, the organization as a whole does not meet that requirement, that it should not be listed as a VSP on the HIC. I don't know if Jules has anything else to add being our HMIS data standards expert on the call.

JULES BROWN: Aubrey, I think you're cutting out a bit or I'm not sure if it's just me, but—

AUBREY SITLER: Oh, sorry.

JULES BROWN: Can you repeat that? Sorry. I didn't quite catch that.

AUBREY SITLER: Can you hear me okay now?

JULES BROWN: Yes.

AUBREY SITLER: Okay. I was saying that because a victim service provider is decided at the organization level that even if a project is dedicated to serving survivors of domestic violence that it should still be reported on the organization level so that would not be how it's reported in the HIC anymore.

JULES BROWN: And the question was do I have something to add about that from me from the HMIS perspective?
AUBREY SITLER: Yes.

JULES BROWN: I don't know that I do have anything to add. There is some good guidance online around that. But you can still have beds dedicated to victims of domestic violence without actually being a victim services provider. A victim services provider is a concept of pretty clear definition. So I think it's just from an HMIS perspective I think making sure that you're really clear on that distinction and then recording accurately in HMIS and in your HIC submission which one of those things is the case is important.

AUBREY SITLER: Great. Thank you. And, of course, if you guys are having specific questions about projects in your continuum that you're not sure what to do with feel free to AAQs and we can help you sort through those once the reporting period opens up. Okay. I've

lost track of where we left off. Okay. "If an SSVF project runs primarily out of an organization located in one CoC but serves multiple CoCs and there's no physical inventory in either CoC and the moneys are not reserved for any CoC in particular, should this project be in multiple CoC's HMIS systems?" And the question cuts off. But I suspect that they also want to know should this project be on the HIC for each of these CoCs or how do you divide it up.

[01:05:00]

WILLIAM SNOW: So this is one I might lean on Jules as well because this had implications in the data standards. This year we did a little clarification about the nature of the projects, right? Are the projects physical projects as in there's a building tied to it? Are they a scattered site only? This question appears to talk more about a scattered site circumstance. To some extent, there's some flexibility at the CoC level and there's a lot of agreements or discussions across CoCs when there's one VAMC that has SSVF vouchers that cross several jurisdictions about how to set that up and whether or not data will be transferred or about whether one CoC versus another actually represents it in their HIC. We prefer if the resources are dedicated to a certain community, obviously, we would want that reported for that community. There is enough fluidity with the SSVF data that there is often some room for negotiation at the CoC level if it happens to be an allocation that crosses multiple CoCs. So we give some discretions to CoCs to ensure that at least the SSVF data is reported somewhere so that we know what resources are available. Jules, do you want to add anything more to that?

JULES BROWN: No. I think that was really -- I mean, yes, only that there was a pretty in-depth SisAdmin call on this very subject of sort of how to handle the concept of projects that cross CoC codes both for scattered site, project-based, any number of circumstances. I can't remember what date that SisAdmin call was, but if you're on the SisAdmin hub it is one of the calls from the last several months. I'd recommend reviewing that. And if you're on the SisAdmin hub and it is appropriate for your role to be on that hub, you might want to reach out to the, I don't know how you get into that hub, but submit an AAQ and we'll help you get into that list of folks who need to do that. And I think that that session really covered a lot of those concepts well. And, William, I think your summary was spot-on.

AUBREY SITLER: Great. Thanks, Jules. Okay. Someone else has asked, 'In the 2018 PIT count notice, data collection notice, they introduced inclusion of persons fleeing domestic violence. Where is this data counted in the unsheltered count?" And this person seems to be confused about whether we're counting folks fleeing DV who are already in emergency shelter or TH.

WILLIAM SNOW: Okay. That's a good question. I don't remember us changing that one. So the standard, as of now, and I think it has been for a while, but I think we clarified it there, is around how to identify that they're fleeing. So in 2018 what we did clarify was whether when you answer if you choose to report on people who have reported that they have experienced domestic violence what does that mean they've experienced domestic violence that could mean a lot of things. So in 2018 we clarified that the intent of the question should be to find out who is currently fleeing domestic violence as in they are in this homeless situation because they are fleeing as opposed to asking whether they have ever experienced domestic violence just because

while that is actually a very import question, but in the context of the PIT we're trying to figure out with that question what caused their being homeless in that case. Was it because they're actually in a current situation where they're fleeing? The point-in-time count continues to be limited to sheltered, non-sheltered situations. So I don't want anyone to read too far into this as to saying you should be identifying persons in like doubled up situations who are fleeing domestic violence. Those persons in those situations are actually eligible for our funding through category four of our HUD homeless definition. But for the purposes of the PIT count we don't identify households in doubled up or precarious situations. But we're limiting of those persons who identify as currently fleeing domestic violence to the street emergency shelter, safe haven, and transitional housing context.

[01:10:04]

AUBREY SITLER: Thanks, William. I'll also just highlight that on, what is it, page 37 of the PIT count notice, the most recent PIT and HIC data collection notice, is the definition that we use for survivors of domestic violence and it does mention the fleeing component. And then to answer the question of where that information actually goes in your PIT count submission, these tables in the back show the full breakout of where all of these every piece of information that you're expected to report for the PIT count ends up going, and it in the special populations table, which is all so the additional homeless populations table all the way at the end, and we do ask or give you the option of submitting for emergency shelter, transitional housing, safe haven, and unsheltered. So you'll see that here.

WILLIAM SNOW: Yeah. More details on how to do that well we did use one of these Office Hours last October to talk about identifying persons or survivors of domestic violence in the PIT count context and we certainly would refer you to that. It's a good resource on how to do that in the PIT count.

AUBREY SITLER: Great. Thanks, William. Okay, another question. "Should I collect and report client data served or clients who are served in non-HMIS participating projects for the PIT count? We have two faith based shelters that are not currently participating in HMIS."
WILLIAM SNOW: Yeah, good question. So the short answer is yes. We expect each CoC to collect all data on persons who are homeless or at least account for them. There are some cases where a provider will not provide data. They choose not to for resource purposes or sometimes kind of their own personal feeling on it. And so that does happen. We do want you to account for the persons in those inventories. So the HIC and the PIT count is not limited to a funding source. It is merely identifying all persons experiencing homelessness, all inventory dedicated to persons serving homelessness. I should note that the data standards change allows for some flexibility here, even within HMIS, so that even if a project is not regularly contributing or participating in HMIS, you can do a project setup for that project, which allows you to do a more complete export from our HMIS for the HIC purposes. So that's something we would encourage you to do. I know that was one of the questions earlier in the Q&A and it's a good question. You actually have a lot of flexibility in HMIS to set up those types of projects. Someone else had asked about reporting unsheltered data in HMIS. That's something we have not required of HMIS vendors, but there are many vendors that have a kind of point-in-time count aspect to their service. So you would actually have to reach out to your vendor to see if that's something that's available and

consider, obviously, any costs associated with that. But there are many CoCs that actually try to put all of their data into HMIS, including unsheltered PIT count data to the extent that they can.

AUBREY SITLER: All right, next question is, "For the bed and unit inventory in HMIS I have received a question about a disparity between the current numbers and those reported in the grant. Could you please confirm so the bed and unit inventory should reflect the existing makeup of beds available and not what's in necessarily a grant agreement?"

WILLIAM SNOW: Absolutely. I want to be a little careful here that we're not crossing wires with the APR. We report bed and unit inventory in several different places. So I'm assuming that this is limited to the context of the HIC and the PIT. And the answer to that in that context is yes. We care about what's going on the night of the count. We have allowed a little flexibility with rapid rehousing. Obviously, rapid rehousing the data collection, I've said it in the past and I still feel so now, it is not poor or it's not good. It is a poor way to reflect what is going on in rapid rehousing. We're hoping as we do more with the LSA we'll rely more on the LSA to reflect what's going on with rapid housing. So there are CoCs that want to report their rapid rehousing inventory exists on the night of the count, even if there are zero beds available. So they would simply add the project to the HIC and report zero beds. That is acceptable.

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We know that you're using the HIC for different purposes. We want it to be as flexible as possible for you. We do need to be true to the intent of the count and that is to represent what's available on that night. But, yes. We understand that there are times you need to have that inventory, even if it's zeroed out that night, so that you can show it something that's in your larger repertoire throughout the year.

AUBREY SITLER: Thanks, William. All right, we've got a question that says, "Is it correct that we do not report info in HDX on discharges from institutions, criminal justice, hospitals, mental health, confused residential facilities, and military service?" And I'm not sure if this is a question. It says discharges. So I'm assuming we're talking about people who are no longer residing in institutions. But, William, do you want to take a crack at that? And I can add in anything else.

WILLIAM SNOW: Sure. The short answer is we don't. We don't ask about where people came from on the PIT count general, at least when it gets reported to HUD. We ask where you're sleeping the night of. HMIS certainly has more robust standards about finding out where people came from. But, again, we ask for a lot already in the PIT count. We do not require that information. But I do know that there are jurisdictions who are asking that and trying to figure out more and that has been helpful. So if that's something you're interested in, you have the flexibility as a community to collect it. I would just say be careful. The more questions you ask the higher the likelihood of survey fatigue and you'll just lose people in the count. And we ask that you focus on getting the data elements we require of you and don't lose people in collecting other things that are not required of us.

AUBREY SITLER: Great. And I'll just remind folks that in the notice in case that question or in case anybody else has questions about whether people currently living in in institutions should be counted for the PIT count we've gotten a couple of AAQs about this year. It very specifically says in section 4.2 of the notice people who must not be included in the PIT count that those who are currently in institutions are not supposed to be in the PIT count. Okay. "We have a large geography where volunteers cannot get to to conduct the PIT count. Is it possible to have a form on our website that folks can fill out?"

WILLIAM SNOW: That's a good question. We've done that a few times. The short answer is no. Partly because the PIT count has a validation aspect built into it. When that occurs if you do a form that you cannot validate in any way, you don't have any clue who's entering the data on it, you simply can't validate that. So it allows too many opportunities for error. So we have said no to that. We found that's certainly not unique. There are some or plenty of CoCs that have very vast geographies and some of which are not well connected to the rest of kind of larger cities or services. We often have found that the things like cellphone service connection are very poor, access to web services are very poor. So it turns out many of the times it's not actually very helpful anyways because those very people are the ones who don't have a way of communicating their information. This is one of the reasons we allow for a Service-Based Enumeration. So if you have a way of within seven days of the night of the count allowing for services for people who are kind of way out there and you connect with them through some sort of event you also can send street outreach workers. We've seen many communities as long as they're using a survey based enumeration so that they can indeed duplicate whatever data they get in, you can send your street outreach folks out for a couple days after the night and say, hey, checking in, were you counted on the night or did anyone kind of knock on your tent or come into the area three nights ago, and if not, then you should put their information down or confirm with them that they were unsheltered that night. But the street outreach worker can certainly document that they were homeless on that night. So we try to give a lot of flexibility for you to have some of that window to do some verification about people who are homeless, but the key to that is finding a way to de-duplicate that. You cannot do that with an observation. But you can generally do that with a survey.

[01:20:00]

AUBREY SITLER: Great. And I would just remind folks that if you would like to verbally ask a question you can use that hand raising function on the WebEx and I can unmute you. As much as I know you guys probably love hearing just William's and my voices for an hour and a half straight, feel free to ask your own questions verbally. Okay. I'm seeing none at this moment. There's still time. But we've got one person who said, "Units are not a consistent data element. What guidance is available to documenting units for purposes of the HIC?"

WILLIAM SNOW: Hmm, that's a good question. Jules, I wonder if you can take a stab at this because, while it certainly impacts the HIC very heavily and I think is actually a lot of the work that is done, we see this play out also in the LSA context. Are you able to take a first stab at that?

JULES BROWN: I can. I don't know that I really have a whole lot to say. It's there should be fewer of them than there are beds. Beyond that I don't know that there's a whole lot of really

useful guidance. I mean we described what a unit is in the HMIS data standards. I think as long as your definition of units falls within those boundaries your definition is probably fine.

AUBREY SITLER: I mean I think the crux of this question is about the difference between site based projects and scattered site projects. There's some guidance in the notice about this. So there's a section on unit inventory. There's also a section on specifically rapid rehousing projects in section 3.3.4 on how to account for units there. So we'd recommend I think you probably review those. But, William, I don't know if you have anything more specific that you would want to highlight.

WILLIAM SNOW: No. Although I'm partly wondering if this question is not just getting at like so how do I report a unit per se, but more getting at our units are not exactly stable all year-round. It's not like I have five today and five tomorrow and five the next day. It moves around as we move to churches helping us and as we have vouchers that go in and out and we have access to shelter or hotel/motel and we don't and if that is the question that's the one where I don't have a lot to add to it because each CoC has done something different and it is hard. Again, I think that's the piece I think is probably most difficult is to try to pin down on the night of what exactly is your inventory, what does it look like. I know different CoCs have taken different approaches and I think the coordinated entry is actually helping here because as you try to do more to prioritize and match people to available units people are finding that they know a little more about their available units more often throughout the year. So I would encourage you to take advantage of whatever you can from your coordinated entry process. You might even consider making that a little more closely linked or synch it a little more so if you have kind of a regular season where you update your units because of coordinated entry try to tie your PIT count and your HIC dates to that similar season or move the season to kind of align better with that so that you can avoid some duplication of effort there. But, again, I just want to acknowledge we know that part is very, very hard and that's probably what gives a lot of consternation in the HIC process.

AUBREY SITLER: Yeah. We've got another question about units on a HIC, William, that says, "Is there any reason why the HIC only wants the number of units for households with children and not for other household types?"

WILLIAM SNOW: Yeah. That's a great question. We've dealt with this a lot. So we've toyed with doing units for individuals as well and we've kind of gone back and forth and it gets complicated just because there's some fluidity. It makes sense on a single night. But then the HMIS data sometimes makes this complicated with, well, with various moving parts. What we have done to date is when we try to figure out what's going on with units for individuals we typically count a one for one. So every unit or every bed for an individual counts as a unit. We know that's not perfect. Historical data shows that we have about 2% of our individual population is actually couples. And so it's not uncommon for them to share a single bed. So that means your units may be off because of that. And sometimes they have two beds in a single unit.

[01:25:00]

And so there are certainly some things that are lost there. But that data shows that, again, that it's a small enough number that we have not had to be overly concerned about it. But it's something we will continue to consider because the LSA has a larger focus on households and it means more to talk about units when you're talking about households. So it's something that, again, we will revisit over time.

AUBREY SITLER: Great. We've got a question about HUD-VASH vouchers. "When reporting VASH vouchers in the HIC should it be including unused vouchers so those that are not leased up or only the number of vouchers actually used on the night of the PIT count?"

WILLIAM SNOW: Hmm, that is a really tough one. We generally have said it's the vouchers that have been issued and we've tied that to especially if somebody has been issued a voucher like a client has been issued and they're searching for a unit it shows the capacity to serve that client. We've found that that generally works. So that's our current guidance. But we try to listen to communities about whether that's causing all sorts of problems. So if that is feel free to tell us so at least we can kind of take that into account. But, again, we felt like that's generally adequate and representative. We also validate whatever is submitted with the VA. So it's helpful to know the voucher allocations so that when we work with the VA to ensure we have a relatively accurate number for the VASH vouchers they can look to it and say, oh, well, this community should have 500 vouchers and we're only seeing 300. We have reached out to communities in cases where the VA said, no, there's a large enough discrepancy that this is not right. So having the allocation allows us to do that type of validation.

AUBREY SITLER: Great. Thanks, William. And for anybody who's wondering about VASH vouchers specifically, there's also a section in the notice that does talk about that and reiterates exactly what William just said, which is that continuums are supposed to count the number of VASH vouchers available regardless of whether or not the voucher is presently being used. But if that continues to be an issue, of course, we'd love to hear your AAQs to help sort through that. Let me see. Okay. So one person has asked, "If someone is counted as unsheltered during the PIT count but they are in HMIS as sheltered for that night how should we be counting them?"

WILLIAM SNOW: Oh, that's a good one. It depends a little bit on your process for collecting the data, right? There are some COCs who their hours based on their hours of counting may actually not accurately reflect. So I've seen some CoCs were counting kind of in the early evening and asking somebody where they're sleeping. If they're not abundantly clear about what that means that we're trying to figure out where they're sleeping that night then it's a problem. This is one of the reasons we ask that you don't do that type of count that if you're going to count somebody on January 22nd that you're doing that count at a time of the day where that person will already be in their situation that they'll be sleeping in that night. So, again, an early evening is very difficult to figure out that information because they may not know where they're sleeping that night. So we discourage counts that kind of happen earlier than perhaps when people are already sleeping. There's a scenario. Generally, I would actually default to the unsheltered designation because somebody has identified that person so it's a form of validation. But, again, you would need to consider when did you conduct your count and is there a reason why that might have impacted where they're sleeping. Also, it's good to look at whether or not your HMIS exit data is correct. That is one of the hardest things to get accurate, your entry/exit

data. So it is quite possible that your HMIS just needs to be updated to reflect that somebody has exited the program. This is another reason we would encourage you to start with the assumption that they were unsheltered. But go through your data and try to figure out if there's a reason why that would be inaccurate.

AUBREY SITLER: Great. I think that's great advice. And with that it occurs to me that it is already 3:30 Eastern. So we are about out of time for our call today.

[01:30:00]

I know there are still a bunch of other question, though, that people didn't get answers to during this call. Please submit AAQs. If you would like to get answers, we can get those to you as soon as possible. William, I don't know if you want to go ahead and close this out or how you want to move forward.

WILLIAM SNOW: Yep. I just want to thank everyone. I want to thank Aubrey and Jules for helping present. There's a lot of information here and trying to respond to questions can be difficult, but it's fun. We love it. We appreciate your questions. They're fantastic. And we hope we give you enough to actually be able to know what you're doing based on the responses. But happy to hear more feedback and look forward to reading AAQs and then seeing what we can do to help you to have a successful count. So thank you all very much

JULES BROWN: Thank you.

AUBREY SITLER: Okay. Thanks, everybody.