

2022 PIT Count Office Hours: Transcript

October 27, 2022

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Shantae Smith: Good afternoon, everyone. We will begin shortly. We are just giving some time for some folks to come on in and to take a moment. Please feel free to introduce yourselves in the chat as well. All right, good afternoon. Hello everyone. Welcome to the count office hours. My name is Shantae Smith, I am with Abt Associates and I'm going to take a couple moments going through some tech notes and then we are going to get into the content that we have for you today. Next slide please. A couple of housekeeping reminders. We are recording the office hours today and we'll post a copy of the recording, along with the slides and any content we receive through the chat box, on the HUD Exchange in a few days. If you have any issues with audio during the webinar, we encourage you to switch over from computer to phone audio at the numbers that are at the bottom of the screen. And we will also copy and paste these into the chat, should you need them, shortly. Next slide please.

2:53

Please note that there is a chat box feature. We encourage you to take a moment and ask any questions, leave any comments, and continue to please introduce yourselves as you come into this call. And just know that it is located at the bottom of your screen. We, again, just encourage you throughout the entire call to continue to use that feature to ask us questions, or ask each other questions, and we will, as presenters, also keep note of that as well. Next slide please. Please note that there's also closed captioning that is enabled for this event. To hide the captions, click the "closed captions" button on the lower left-hand side of your screen. Next slide. Another big piece of this is if you want to ask a question verbally, you would select the "participant list" icon at the bottom of the screen, and this is what it would look like. Hover your mouse next to your name and select the "raise hand" icon. Please just give us a moment as there are a lot of you and a few of us just to make sure that we are doing what we can to capture everyone who would like to ask a question verbally. And then, once we call on you, we physically will unmute you and allow you to ask your questions. Please just also remember to lower the hand once you've asked your questions, so the icon does not continue to remain raised. And for the call-in users, you can raise your hand by dialing *3 and then unmute and mute by dialing *6. Next slide please.

4:38

So, I would like to take a moment to introduce our speakers and resource advisors. Please take a moment to recognize that we are blessed to have William Snow on the call today with us from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development from the Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs. His pronouns are he/him/his and then you have a few of my colleagues here at Abt Associates: Caroline Roddey, Alyssa Andrichik, and Meghan Henry. Again, all of our pronouns are she, her, and hers. Next slide, please. So, just to note, the agenda today is to go through the anticipated changes to the 2023 HIC and PIT count, talk about some of the PIT count safety considerations, reflections on PIT counts conducted during COVID-19, the review of the sampling guidance and tools, and then rounding out our day with a Q&A. So, now I would like to pass it on over to one of our fearless leaders, William Snow.

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5:44

William Snow: Thanks so much, Shantae. I'm really excited to be here today. Thank you all. I saw Lauren Gonzales's chat saying, "I'm glad to be here." Again, that's a great introduction. It's been a rough year for all of us, right? We're coming off of covid early in the year and it hasn't really left us. We just got through two crazy NOFOs, and I know a lot of states are doing their own funding streams, and it's just a crazy time. So, just want to acknowledge that I know this year has been insane. It is interesting to kind of step back and see everything. We'll take a minute to talk a little bit about lessons learned over the last year or two from counting, but we're ready to jump into this next year's guidance just to let people know where we are, and what's going on with next year. Right now, as of yesterday, I got finalized changes to the notice. It is very small, in terms of the number of changes. The changes that we will be doing are here on the screen. We will not be changing the HIC. We only plan on changing the age categories, and that's expanding them to map to what we do in other reporting schemas. This one aligns a lot with what communities have been asking for. A lot of this is driven by as we do more work around chronic homelessness and aging. There's just a recognition that we need more information around different age groups, especially our older population. So, this is an opportunity to align. Hopefully, this helps you with your own analysis as you look at PIT data and try to map that to what's going on throughout the year. So, we're excited about the change. Again, we try to avoid changes, especially the PIT count, we know that impacts surveys and all sorts of things. But we think this one aligns with a lot of what communities have been asking for. Next slide, please.

7:47

Probably the most common question I have been seeing over the last two months is whether or not this is going to be a required year. So, a lot of folks want to know, since we used to essentially require every odd year to be required. Covid certainly through a loop and all of that, so we're leaning back towards the clarity of the regulation. The regulation says that CoCs must conduct a full count that's sheltered and unsheltered count at least every other year. So if you conducted a count in 2022 that included both the sheltered and unsheltered portion, technically you do not have to do a count in 2023. We would certainly encourage you to consider doing a count; there's a lot of value in what comes from the point-in-time counts, especially in relation to other databases. Right? And other data you have. We all know the PIT count is not the end-all-be-all in terms of data, but it is a very important data point if, for no other reason, because the value it brings in terms of our unsheltered population. As you all know as we're coming off of last week's deadline with the unsheltered NOFO, that will continue to be an emphasis is addressing the needs of our unsheltered population. The numbers have skyrocketed over the past several years. We need to find solutions to that, and we need to understand that population before we can do a whole lot. So, we want to make sure that we have that, and the PIT count is the primary way we do that. Most CoCs already conduct a full count every year. Last I counted, I believe in 2020, all but about 46 CoCs conducted a full count. That's somewhere in the 85% range. Again, we

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strongly encourage CoCs to consider doing a count in 2023 even if you did one in 2022. Next slide, please.

9:44

I just want to do a couple quick reminders about safety guidance that we published through covid, but the safety guidance is applicable all the time. And technically, we haven't left covid. And we now have monkey pox, a little different issue to grapple with, but it feels like there's always going to be something and so having information around safety procedures is always good. Just some reminders around what you should do in terms of vaccination status, PPE, social distancing, engaging volunteers, and all those complicated scenarios of going out and meeting people with potential health concerns where they are on the street. So, I strongly encourage you to look at that if you haven't brushed up on it. It's a good idea to have PPE available to you and your volunteers, that's probably the biggest one. Most folks have a vaccination status by this time, but that's not true of everyone. There is certainly some guidance around what you should consider when considering vaccination status for your volunteers and for those who are conducting a count at all. A good reminder. Thanks, Alyssa, for putting HUD's Safety Guidance Document in the chat. So, if you don't have access to it already, look at Alyssa's chats and open that document up. Next slide, please.

11:13

All right, I want to take just a few minutes to talk about lessons learned from COVID-19's counting process. Most CoCs, if not all CoCs, definitely made some changes, right? Sometimes those were good. Sometimes they were not as good. I think we wouldn't be surprised if some changes didn't stick long term and others, I think you'll be happy to put behind you as well. I just wanted to reflect here. While I'm reflecting, I'd certainly encourage all of you to put in your own thoughts around things that went well; this is just observations that I'm making. You're the experts. You were out there, conducting the counts. If you saw something that went very well, feel free to put it in the chat. That may agree or disagree with what I share. I think each community had different experiences, but it is valuable to hear from peers in this process. Feel free to put your comments in the chat. So, certainly a lot of new partnerships. You've worked with your public health partners. Other folks came online through funding, like our PHAs through EHV. There are just more partnerships than we've had in the past in most CoCs. Learning how to use those partnerships is really important. Our education partners have always been important. I think we've been able to do a little more during covid in some areas and a little less than other areas. So, we're hoping that you have those relationships engaging our youth along with the rest of our homeless population. It is really important. But we strongly encourage you to consider the different partnerships you've made and how you can use those partnerships to better identify those experiencing homelessness in your area. So, lots of fun things around volunteers. Different ways folks went out. Certainly training changed. Most communities provided some sort of online option, or some sort of truncated version of your training if you didn't do it online. Many CoCs chose to engage very few

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volunteers or none at all and just used your own staff. I know I saw kind of the flip side of that as well, the struggle of your staff. Your staff have a lot to do. Our street outreach workers, our frontline staff in shelters—they're amazing. They do a lot of work; a lot has asked of them. And the PIT count is one of those things that's, again, a lot of work as well. So, it's not always feasible. Many communities said they're the best ones to help us with the count but recognize the shortness of time available to them. So, I encourage you to rethink access of volunteers, but take advantage of things like the technology. Take advantage of doing those trainings online where possible. So, a lot of a lot of positives there. I saw a lot of communities also talk about mobile apps. Many communities found both good and bad. Not everyone had positive experiences with a mobile app, and usually that's centered around user error. It is almost impossible to eliminate user error when you're using mobile applications for the first time with volunteers that have a variety of technical abilities. So, that's certainly something I would put out there. Look at it. See what app works for folks. If this is something you're considering, not all apps are made the same but again, sometimes it's more community driven and community specific than it is anything to do with an app itself. So, consider whether or not that's an option for your continuum. Again, most communities who adopted a mobile app said it was great. It cut down a lot on the back end. It gave more insight during the count, more of a real time understanding of data quality concerns. And especially where there was web connectivity, apps made things easier. There were some challenges where there wasn't connectivity. Some apps deal with that better than others, and so it's just a matter of kind of figuring out what works. But I wanted to put that out there. It was interesting to see just how many communities actually use a mobile app in this process. I was pleased to see a lot of communities leverage their HMIS data. This is something I know we would like to provide more for you—how to use your HMIS data.

15:45

We've recently had a GAO report, Government Accountability Office report, that talked about the point-in-time counts. They raised some concerns around the unsheltered count, and they were certainly important to consider. One of them is just training or providing more information around using HMIS to support your counts in terms of planning and using it to do some validation on the data you have. We think that's great. That's something that, again, we'll put some time into though not before the 2023 counts. But in the future, we'll consider resources to support you with use of HMIS. And again, a lot of times I was seeing folks just figuring out how to use street outreach staff. "We already know a certain number of people that are experiencing homelessness because of these efforts. Can we reach out to them? Can we use data if we do reach out to them?" Yes, yes, and yes. We want you to use the resources you have and certainly try to account for as many people as you can. I mentioned the heavy use of staff, especially street outreach. Again, our street outreach workers are unsung heroes that do so, so much work and they do a lot to help people experiencing homelessness. Many of them have had homeless experiences themselves and are just great to work with. So, we really appreciate the work they do and the work all of you do to help us do a good job doing this count. So, I did not have a chance

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while I was talking to look through the chat to see if folks put other thoughts, lessons learned—either good or bad—but certainly encourage you to keep doing that. With that, I believe I'm going to turn the time over to Caroline.

17:29

Caroline Roddey: Thank you, William. Great. Next slide, please. So, now we're going to spend a little bit of time just talking about the available tools and guidance that's on the HUD Exchange regarding sampling and the sampling approach that CoCs, that you all can take, to conduct your unsheltered PIT count. As some of you may remember, if you were doing this work last year, we put out a bunch of sampling tools and sampling guidance and just want to keep making sure that we reiterate that and we explain that because it can be a sort of tough thing to navigate at first. So, just generally, we're going to do an overview today, but we will point you in the direction of all of the resources that you'll need to really learn more about the sampling. So, if you don't feel like you fully understand everything today, that's okay. The resources are out there for you. So, just starting off, what even is sampling? So, sampling is an approach that's a way to account for information about a whole group of people by only collecting data about a portion of that full group. And so when we're talking about the PIT count, specifically, the unsheltered PIT count, this means not counting every single person. It means the community estimating the number of all people experiencing unsheltered homelessness by specifically counting some sub-regions that have been identified, and then extrapolating for uncounted areas or pulling out the estimated data for other areas. So, instead of a full census count, which is when you would be conducting a count that accounts for every single person in the geographic area, the sampling approach would only go to some specific areas. And, if sampling is done accurately, both of these methods can produce accurate estimates of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. But sometimes sampling can just be an easier way to get that done. Next slide please.

19:22

So, again, sampling considerations. There are both benefits and drawbacks of sampling. One benefit is that it does require less time than a full census count and it also requires fewer staff and volunteers just because there aren't people going to every single place identified in the geography. And also, during covid and in this crazy time that we're still experiencing, it does increase safety for people experiencing homelessness as well as staff and volunteers as not as many of them have to interact on the night of the count. However, there are some drawbacks. So, it does rely on assumptions based on more limited information, and it may not be as precise as a full census count. And also, if demographics are not accounted for in developing a sampling approach, the extrapolated information, or the information that you estimate about demographics, may not be valid. So really the key thing there is ensuring that the sub-areas, or the sub regions, that you are pulling out in your community are really areas that you think will be exemplary of the total population or will highlight parts of the total population of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Next slide, please.

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20:41

So, just to get started, and again, there's more resources that we'll look at on the next slide, but just to get started, it may be helpful to identify a local research partner. Somebody, maybe at a university. Somebody who does research at the PHA or anything like that. Somebody who can really help out with the statistics and the methods; help you refine your sampling approaches, implement the sampling, and then clean and analyze the data. So really somebody that can walk through that process with you who has experience working with methods and statistics like this. And then second, and this may come after you identify a local research partner based on your needs for hiring or working with one, would be dividing the geography into smaller regions or sub areas based on the expected density or number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. So, if there's a place where you expect a high density of people experiencing homelessness, that may be a key place to go and conduct that sampling. But if there's one area where you just know based on experience, based on the work of street outreach workers and staffers, that there's nobody there—maybe max two people every once in a while—then that may be somewhere where you focus less on in order to really ensure that you're being able to spend a time where there is higher density. All right, next slide.

22:09

So here are a bunch of links, and as we've noted, we will share these slides afterwards. You can scroll up in the chat—we've posted several times the link to where you'll see the slides and the office hours recordings once this has been processed and put up on the HUD Exchange. But also, there are a bunch of sampling tools and guidance on the HUD Exchange at this point. So, first is a big guidance document that I would really recommend using as an overview that talks about how to conduct sampling overall. It provides an overview and specifically talks about using sampling to conduct an unsheltered PIT count. Specifically, the December 2020 PIT count office hours does provide more details to the guidance document, and it answers questions as well. The PIT Count Sampling Tool is an Excel based tool that will help you determine how you will actually create that sampling approach. So, using that tool will help you while you're working with the local research partner, or even just doing this in your agency. It will help you to estimate the total number of people within those geographies. That was released last year in 2021. So, the December 2021 PIT count office hours provide greater detail about what that is, and they include a walkthrough of the sampling tool itself. There's also the PIT Count Estimating Tool. So again, all of these tools are really helping you to take the data that you did gather on the night of the count, and then estimate it so that you can then complete an entire unsheltered count based on that approach. And then finally, the PIT Count Data Extrapolation Tool. This helps specifically extrapolate for demographic data within their PIT counts. That's another Excel based tool that can be really helpful if you're trying to figure out how to estimate demographics of the whole population, based on what you've gathered on the night of the PIT count. All of this is available on the HUD Exchange and Alyssa has been dropping some links in the chat. And again, this will all be available on HUD Exchange, including these slides, within the next week or two. All right, next slide.

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24:23

So this slide is just, again, linking you to a bunch of general PIT count resources, and Alyssa will be dropping those in the chat again. All of these are on the HUD Exchange. They're all in the big PIT count area. But this includes the methodology guide overall for the PIT counts, so not just sampling approaches, but also the methodology considerations that you'll want to review when you're defining your approach for conducting the PIT count. It also includes office hours recordings, dating from a while back, so that you can access some of the office hours where we have talked about specific tools, like the extrapolation or sampling tools. And then the PIT count survey tool is the same kind of thing that will help you on the night of the count in terms of actually implementing the approach that you decide to take. And then finally, the HUD Exchange HDX Ask a Question, or AAQ desk, is always available. But please note, you may be aware of this as we changed it last year, that AAQ inbox will no longer answer policy questions, including those about planning for or implementing the HIC or PIT counts. So those questions should go to HICPITCount@HUD.gov. But the AAQ inbox will answer questions about technical assistance tools, like some of those identified here, or how to submit data in HDX 1.0. Next slide.

25:52

All right, so with that, we are going to move over to the question-and-answer part of the session. And just remember, if you would like to ask a question, verbally, please raise your hand and that way we will know to unmute you and you can come off of mute to ask your question. Or if you keep submitting questions in the chat, we are collecting them, and we will try to share those with William so he can respond pretty quickly. Okay. So, was there anything you wanted to say, William, before we dive into that?

26:29

Great, well, I'm going to go with a basic one that we've already seen a few times and we can cover again. If you skip the PIT count, is it required for 2023?

26:42

William Snow: All right. Great question the short answer is if you conducted a full count in 2022, you are not required to do the count in 2023. You still need to do a sheltered count, but you are not required to do the sheltered and unsheltered counts. If you fall in that camp, where it's not required, HUD will certainly still encourage you to do that. We think there's a lot of benefit from doing the unsheltered count, but that is a local decision that you get to make.

27:11

Caroline Roddey: Great, thank you. All right. Next, are the proposed HMIS changes for race and ethnicity being considered for the PIT this year?

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William Snow: And I love that question. We're very excited about the proposed changes. But no, they're not being used for the 2023 count. Those were developed with a lot of feedback from a variety of folks from stakeholders. We need more feedback. We're not going to be in a place, come January, to have anything final for folks to work with. We want to take into account the feedback you all provide us. So, no, it won't be ready for January 2023, but I'm sure we will have something later in 2023 that will impact the 2024 count.

27:57

Caroline Roddey: Thank you. So, another high level one. Is the notice out yet and when is the count scheduled for this year?

28:06

William Snow: All right, so the count is always scheduled on the same timeframe. The last 10 days in January, that's starting on January 22nd going through January 31st. We do have in the notice the allowance for exceptions to the dates if you have good cause. We're fairly liberal with that. Again, we just want to make sure that the conditions of your count would be relatively the same or similar to an end of January count. But we are certainly open to that if needed. The notice is not out, though it is finalized. We're just working on moving it through the front of bureaucracy and getting it out on the website. But it is final. It should be out in the next few days. And it will come out, I don't know if the link is there, but on the point-in-time count's page on the HUD.gov site.

28:56

Caroline Roddey: Thank you. All right, next question. There's some confusion for us initially about counting those who were sheltered by county government with ERAP funds, and whether these were sheltered or unsheltered.

29:10

William Snow: So, I can't really answer that because every state and most jurisdictions operated ERAP slightly different. So I can't imagine the scenario where ERAP would be associated with those experiencing unsheltered. The ERAP assistance I'm aware of typically is used to keep people in housing to avoid eviction. There were some instances where hotel/motel-ing was being used as a bridge, but that wasn't universal. So, without more context, it's hard to answer. But I think it would be more likely a question of should you count them at all? Or should you count them as sheltered? I probably would not see them as unsheltered.

30:00

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Caroline Roddey: All right, so can there be an option or category in the database to count people who we know are unsheltered, but not collect their demographic information and other elements on the survey due to a lack of capacity?

30:14

William Snow: No. So, the point-in-time count, one of the critical things that does is it provides the overall picture—again knowing it's an estimate, it's published as an estimate—of people experiencing homelessness and their characteristics. Extrapolation is a common part of this process. So, when you don't have the information, that's okay. Right? I would be surprised if every community got every piece of data on every person. I don't know a single community that gets every piece of data on every person. There's always some data quality issues. When you have observations, you should be using the extrapolation tool to account for how those missing data points should be conveyed to HUD. Again, use the extrapolation tool. It's a great resource to help you. And if you have questions about that or specifics on how to do extrapolation from missing data, that's a good place to send AAQ, and we can kind of walk you through what we've done there.

31:19

Caroline Roddey: So, a couple of questions about resources in general. Our team may be able to help answer some of these too. But the first question is, why aren't future office hours on the PIT office hours link on the HUD Exchange? Is there someplace else I need to go to find those features?

31:36

William Snow: Yeah, I love that question. It assumes that we are on top of the ball. I really appreciate it. That is not how it's operating right now. We're also reviewing all the applications that just came in over the last 2 months. So we're, at this point, trying to figure out where on the schedule that will lie. We will probably do a December office hours as well as another one in January, but those are not on the schedule yet. So, not that they're *not* going to happen, but we just have not gotten around to putting it on the books.

32:10

Caroline Roddey: Thanks. And then, I have all of the general PIT count resources from last year. Have any of those been updated or changed since the 2022 PIT?

32:20

William Snow: So the PIT count notice we just mentioned is not published yet. It will be published. We talked about in the slides today, what's going to change there. It is one change. So, all of your housing inventory stuff, that's the same. The guidance has changed really in that one area of age category. So, just update your age categories, align it with what we do for most of our other data collection. The

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AHAR part 2 in particular is a good place to look at for that. But, other than that, no, the rest of the guidance is unchanged.

32:56

Caroline Roddey: Great. So, moving on to some more technical questions. Can we count a person in a hotel paid for by SSVF during the count?

33:07

William Snow: It depends. So, I assume that you're talking around EHA, Emergency Housing Assistance, that's funded through SSVF while they're awaiting placement into a rapid rehousing. In that case, yes, those can be counted. If, for some reason, there are scenarios where people actually do rapid rehousing in hotels, that that would not count. That person would be permanently housed. And so you just have to look at the specific circumstance. But for the most part, hotel/motels associated with SSVF are part of the EHA parts of the funding, and those would be included as people who are sheltered.

33:58

Caroline Roddey: Great. So, a couple of questions about gender specifically, going back to those HMIS options. So, will there be a change in reporting gender? HMIS allows for multiple, and last year's notice didn't allow for multiple genders. And then the same question of, will the multi-select option be transferred into HDX 1.0.

34:21

William Snow: Short answer is no. This actually gets back similar to the missing data concept. So, we need unduplicated data for each person. So, this is where understanding the data collection and understanding the data reporting are important. So, for data collection purposes, you should use a multi-select option for gender identity, for race identity—that's the way you should collect the data. Just like racial identity, there's a mapping document that allows you to account for when multiple genders are selected. Do use that for reporting. That's the way that you'll determine how a person should be identified in terms of gender when you report back to HUD. So, again, there won't be a multi-select, because we wouldn't have an unduplicated number at that point, and we wouldn't be able to understand what we get. But when you use the mapping document for the purposes of submitting to us, it gives us, again, that unduplicated number by the various categories, including gender.

35:29

Caroline Roddey: All right, what is a way to use HMIS data and verifying on the back end to get a more accurate count?

35:37

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William Snow: There's lots of ways to use HMIS to on the back end. So, one of the more common ones is to look at the data that you collected, this is assuming that you have interview based data, right? So you ask people on the night of the count for some basic information so that when you do your validations on the back end, you could run a report in, for instance, of all people in street outreach for the last 30 days. Right? Say, from January 1st through January 31st. You could identify who on that list was counted, and then those who were not. You could determine whether follow up is necessary. Right? So, we have a lot of folks who...they'll identify maybe 75% of the folks who were on street outreach records, but the remaining 25% were unaccounted for. They know that because they use their HMIS data. And then their street outreach folks will reach out to them. And just at that point, they have the demographics. They have the veteran status. All they're doing is saying, "Hey, we noticed you weren't identified in the point-in-time count or when we did our count recently. Could you tell us where you were sleeping that night, or do you remember where?" Right? You can find a way to finesse the question. But, again, you just you could follow up with folks and just ask their homeless status on the night you conducted your count. Obviously, if you wait for 3 weeks to do that, you're probably going to have recall issues, so you need to do that pretty shortly after the count. Most communities have done it within that 7-day window anyways, right? They conduct count within those 7 days, they'll run the report, they'll do the quick outreach, and then they'll update. So if somebody says, "yeah, I was here. I was at this location, and I don't remember being counted," then you can include that person in your records for your unsheltered counts. Again, assuming they're in an unsheltered location.

37:37

Caroline Roddey: Thank you. All right. If our PIT count data we decided on is Monday, January 30th, can our survey efforts go into February?

37:46

William Snow: Yes. So, the rule is the 7-day window. So, if you start the night of January 30th—again, I'm assuming that's the 10 pm kind of concept—yeah, you can use the 7 days. That would take you to what, February 6th I believe. And you can do your follow up surveys through then for the purposes of inclusion, especially for what we just talked about with HMIS follow up. That's a good example of inclusion there. You could actually conduct counts all the way through there, not just validations. You certainly can count over a full week if you're using an interview-based sample approach. That tends to be very resource intensive. I don't know a ton of communities that do that, but many communities have explored doing 3 or 4 days, kind of spreading out how they use their own staff and volunteers and using, again, HMIS to help validate people are found. And if you see locations are missing or certain groups that you kind of know congregate in certain areas that weren't seen on the night of the count, you can use that 7-day window to do some more follow up.

39:01

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Caroline Roddey: All right, a couple of popular questions. So, first, for households where assistance is being paid for by one CoC, but the actual bed and unit is in another CoC, should households and scattered site housing that it's located outside of the CoC—which is funding the assistance—be counted with the CoC that is funding the assistance or in the CoC where they are physically located?

39:28

William Snow: I hate these questions because there's not actually a great answer and over the years, we changed a little bit. The most recent guidance on this, what's in the current notice, is you follow the funding. Right? So, if the unit is paid for in CoC A, but the unit is literally or physically located in CoC B. If CoC A is paying for it, you account for the unit through CoC A. The scenario you just provided though, actually has funding streams from both CoC A and CoC B and that's what makes that complicated, right? So, you just get the fund of trying to disaggregate. I'm assuming if you know that there's two funding sources there, that you're at least talking to the other CoC. I think what's most relevant there is that they're counted in some CoC. If you have that mixed funding going on there, to be frank, we don't care a ton which one you tie it to. I'd say the higher principle again, or the one we lean back to, is follow the funding for the unit. That's probably the better way to go. But again, just work with the other CoC in that case and make sure you're not double counting, but somebody's accounting for them.

40:40

Meghan Henry: Let me make a quick question about that. So, if it's a facility-based shelter that is located in the CoC that is not paying for it, do you handle that differently? Because I think we handle facility-based shelter differently.

40:59

William Snow: Thank you yeah, that's a good clarification. I will be honest, that really shouldn't be happening for the most part, right? If you have a facility tied to a CoC, in our mindset, should be paid for and located in a single CoC. I am aware of a small handful of scenarios where that's not the case, but in that case, we do count the facility where it's located. So, it's the exception to that rule around funding. You really should count it where it's located because it's a reflection of the capacity in terms of what's in the geography. That's a great question, Megan. It's a rare exception. Again, I know of like two or three CoCs where this is the case.

41:47

Caroline Roddey: All right, so we do some paper and some mobile app, how long do we need to save the paper forms for? Or do we even need to save them once the HIC/PIT has been submitted?

42:00

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William Snow: Oh, that's a great question. So, I would say that you don't need to save them once the HIC/PIT is submitted. Of course, when getting rid of them, if you have any PII, we certainly encourage you to make sure you're following your normal privacy policies in terms of removing or getting rid of that data. So just do that carefully. But, yeah, I think as soon as your data is submitted—actually I would say not submitted but approved. I know in the cleanup process, sometimes questions are raised, and it is easier to refer back to the data that you have. Sometimes you actually need to go to some of those forms. So, wait until...it's usually by the end of July that most of the data tends to be completely cleaned up. But wait until you've had that back and forth with HUD and Abt staff before terminating the paperwork or getting rid of it.

42:56

Caroline Roddey: All right, thank you. I'm going to turn to a couple of more policy related questions. So, during the pit, when counting unsheltered individuals, if children are not with their parent at the time, they can't be counted even if they are unsheltered with their parents. Our community conducts a PIT on a weekday during the day. This leads to a serious undercount related to the youth on the street who have an unsheltered status. Is this going to change? Will we be able to count me if you are in the household but are at school during the PIT count? And then also building on that question about children and school, adults are also going to be gone at that time if they have work.

43:35

William Snow: So, I'm struggling a little with this. Partly because I would say, if you're having that kind of problem, you probably need to change your PIT count. You need to be counting at times when you're going to identify people who are in that category. Right? So, if you are counting at a time when you're not finding the people who you know are there, that's not a standards problem. That's a problem with what you're doing to engage. So, I would certainly encourage you to determine how to adjust the count in a way that allows you to account for those folks. If, for instance, a household has children at school, I don't think we have any guidance that says you cannot count those children if they're associated with the household and you know that there's no double counting of those children, or youth in this case. I would say, you actually can still count them, but I, again, have serious concerns about a count if you know a large important part of your population or a specific part of your population is not included because of the way you're conducting your count.

44:43

Caroline Roddey: All right, so I see that we have 1 hand raised from Paul. Are we able to have Paul unmuted? I think that we'll have to do that on our end.

44:59

Mariam Carlon: Can you repeat the name of the individual account?

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45:02

Caroline Roddey: Yes, Paul. And I'm sorry if I mispronounce that.

45:07

Mariam Carlon: All right, give me one second. I see him now. Paul, you should be able to speak now.

45:18

Paul: Oh, can you hear me?

45:21

Caroline Roddey: Yes. I think you may be muted again. I'm seeing it go back and forth, but I can't hear you if you're speaking now.

00:45:37

Mariam Carlon: You should be unmuted now, Paul.

45:39

Paul: Can you hear me, William? It's nice to see you again, it's been a minute. Going back to a question that was asked. So, we're in a seven-county continuum of care and say, for example, if SSVF was paying for an emergency hotel stay in a different county, serving veterans in different county, you talked about following the funds. So, would that individual be counted for the [specific] county? And what is the probability of double dipping, right? So, knowing that county has a homeless veteran and an emergency shelter, how do we avoid that double count? Or is it okay to do that?

46:19

William Snow: Okay to do that...yeah, it's a great question. So, there's a couple of things in play. One of the reasons we default to follow the funding is they're the ones who are on the hook for understanding where people are, right? They have a data collection burden requirement. That's not the case of somebody who's just staying in a jurisdiction. If that jurisdiction has no other ties to that individual, we actually have no reason to believe that they would know someone is there or what kind of assistance that they're receiving. So, I think you're fairly safe if you follow the money. The other part is, if you're not sure or you have reason to believe that the other CoC may have counted them, this is another area where just reaching out to that other CoC—my guess is if you're in that scenario, you might have a handful of folks probably not just one—and just having a conversation with them about whether or not they're accounting for them...I'd probably do that over a conference call on some kind of secured line

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where, if you're going to share information about individuals, you're still protecting the information that you have on them. But it's a really good question. Paul.

00:47:29

Paul: Yeah, it's the same CoC we just have a kind of a...at the 7-county continuum. So it's just-

47:36

William Snow: Oh, if you're talking about... So, for HUD's purposes, we don't care about subregions within a CoC. We care that you have kind of that structure in place. But for reporting, we're agnostic to that. So, it can be anywhere within your CoC and that's what's important for our purposes.

47:58

Paul: Okay, got it. Thank you so much.

48:04

Caroline Roddey: Great. I'm not seeing any other hands raised, so I'll go back to some of the questions that we have. So, can people experiencing homelessness who are in jail on the night of count be counted for unsheltered or the sheltered count?

48:17

William Snow: Oh that's good, I saw some jail questions. So I'll answer some other part of a jail question I saw—why don't we count people in jails? So, for our purposes, and this is partly a legal reason, people who are in jails are not homeless by our definition, and by many people's definition, by virtue of the fact that they're now wards of the state, or under the state responsibility. That's not really a satisfying answer in the sense that many of us know that folks will have various interactions with jails in particular, they may be in one night and not another. The point-in-time count though is tied to a single night, so we really are looking at who is experiencing homelessness on the night of the count and so we don't count anybody in jails. Because, for the purpose of accounts on that night, they're actually not experiencing homelessness. This is a good place to kind of highlight the reality that the PIT count is limited in that way. That's an okay limitation. Right? We know that it won't capture every single person throughout the year. It's supposed to highlight who's experiencing homelessness in kind of sheltered and unsheltered situations on the night of the count. Using your other data throughout the year is really, really important, right? You get a more rich picture when you're able to kind of say, "oh, for a year, we saw this many people in these types of situations." One other note is, I've seen some CoCs actually count people in jail. They don't report it to HUD, but they do it for local reporting purposes. That's not a bad idea. Right? It's a little more work because you would need to know who there does not have their own residence, doesn't have a place to stay, so that's certainly not everyone who's in the jail system. But that's a great thing to report locally. We fully support that. It doesn't meet our counting definition.

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That's okay. There's actually a lot of things that don't meet our counting definition and you can still collect on those things, report them locally, and help fill up that picture for your public and for the people that you interact with in your continuum.

50:25

Caroline Roddey: All right, so just going back to some of the changes this year for age category. So, a few questions about that. Since the age category for the PIT don't align with the HUD CoC APR, are there any thoughts to make changes to the APR report to align? And then—I'm just making sure I didn't miss one—will there be additional changes, other than AIDS, that will need to be recorded in HDX.

50:55

William Snow: That is the only change for HDX. In terms of the data that you'll be submitting, we actually will make a few changes to the methodology questions—I'll just flag that for you to be aware. Again, that's not data collection per se, just understanding your process. We will look at the Apr. I love that—I don't think I realized that we aligned it with the LSA, for instance, we aligned it with some of the other data collection, and we can look at the APR as well. That's great. We would love them all to be in alignment.

51:29

Caroline Roddey: Great. So, a question about funds being allocated nationally to conduct the PIT count. So, wire funds not allocated to conduct PIT counts, we are gathering data that informs not only the federal government but also the public. And then somebody did comment that planning funds are allowed to be used, but they are minimal.

51:51

William Snow: Yeah, this is an age-old question, right? So why is this not funded? Again, it's one of the regulatory requirements, so it is a requirement. Why is it not funded? The short answer is, I don't know why it's not funded, it is not an eligible cost under anything, except the CoC planning as a direct cost for, like, paying for an app, or the overall expenses. It's certainly eligible under the CoC planning grants, you can pay for most aspects of your point-in-time count to that, but as was noted, your planning grants are limited. You're trying to do a lot of things and often paying for CoC staff with that, which is really, really important. So just acknowledging that as a reality. There are a few things to consider though. So, if you're using street outreach staff, and they're conducting the same kind of street outreach they would in a normal engagement—so they're engaging people, they're collecting information as they would in an engagement, and they would do it the same in the PIT count and they're offering access to services—though you're doing it in the context of the point-in-time count, that's still street outreach activity and that could be paid for with outreach funding. Certainly, the CoC funding, if you have a street outreach grant, also the ESG funding, if you have a street outreach grant. So there's that aspect to consider.

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Right? That would not cover, again, printing the materials, like the surveys, that would not cover using a mobile app. It wouldn't do that. You would need to use other funds—planning grant funds would work there. But consider how you're using your staff and make sure that, if you want to use funding for those staff members, it's probably okay, you just have to make sure they're actually doing the activity. So, a good example is if you have street outreach staff, but you only to conduct an observation-based count, you can't reimburse their time with CoC or ESG funding. Why? Because they're not actually engaged doing the engagement. That would not be considered an eligible activity. They're not doing the normal street outreach type activity. But again, you throw in an interview-based concept, they are engaging, they're offering services, then at that point they're doing a street outreach activity that is eligible for reimbursement. We certainly would encourage you to consider using your street outreach funding in that way.

54:18

Caroline Roddey: All right, so in terms of, counting tiny houses and pellet shelters, are those sheltered or unsheltered? And then there's also a question about warming stations, has there been any considerations changing those that are at warming stations as unsheltered instead of sheltered, given that they're run seasonally at night?

54:41

William Snow: Yeah, so for all of that, the seasonality part is not the relevant part. We have lots of seasonal shelters. We have lots of scenarios that are not shelters that could be seasonal, could be ad hoc. I think the important part is actually look at the update we did last year, the PIT Count Notice. We talked about sheds, tiny homes. There's any number of things that could fall in that category. The reality is every community is doing something slightly different. There are so many variations on that theme that there's no clear answer where I could say, "Yes. All tiny homes are sheltered or permanent housing." There's no way to make that kind of distinguishing statement. But the notice gives you some guidelines to look at in terms of determining whether or not a facility or a program would be considered unsheltered, sheltered, or housed. So, that section 4.3 of the notice, that is not changing this year, so you could pull up last year's notice and look what's in there. It would give you the right information. There are core considerations around reasonableness, health concerns, access to running water, is it in a facility that provides full coverage, in terms of physical coverage, right? There are things like that that are really the heart of the considerations. And again, we've seen warming stations that would fall under unsheltered because they're literally just in open ended tents and that's all that's provided, right? Or there might be sleeping bags, but there's no shelter overhead for instance. That for us, absent more facts, it probably would not be considered shelter. That likely would be unsheltered. You change a few facts though and you could be in the sheltered camp. The same with tiny sheds. Right? You've got 4 walls, but many of those don't have electricity, they don't have running water, they don't have any of that even on the premises. And so, would they be considered sheltered or even permanent housing?

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Again, we'd have to look more at the facts. So, I would encourage you to look at the notice. You certainly can ask questions. I answer a lot of questions like that through the HICPITCount@hud.gov email address. You can certainly email that, but I would encourage you, before you send that, to look at the notice because my immediate response is going to be "well, have you lined up your situation with the parameters in the notice?" And if you haven't, I'm not going to answer much. It'll be "go and do that, and then come back to me with what you've already recognized and kind of analyzed and then we'll talk through it."

57:19

Caroline Roddey: We only have a couple of minutes left. We may have time for a couple more questions. So one is asking, I wanted to confirm if we are allowed a 3-day count again this year.

57:37

William Snow: Again, it's a little hard to answer that without a little more information. However, if you're doing an interview-based count, yes. If you're doing an interview-based count, you can do it for up to 7 days. And that's okay. If you're doing an observation-based count, it's going to depend more on the nature of your geography. Right? To the extent you have portions of your geography that really don't have a lot of kind of transients between the jurisdictions. Likely yes, that's where we tend to approve multi-day counts that are observation based. But again, we would just need confirmation there. But again, you don't need to send an email or see confirmation if you're doing an interview-based count. That is okay, you can do that for up to 7 days after the night you kind of peg it all to.

58:27

Caroline Roddey: All right, and maybe this will be the last question. If there is no specific governance in place, is a designated HMIS lead agency required or obligated to speak or gain approval for the use of an app to conduct a count?

58:43

William Snow: Yes, all responsibility for the point-in-time count rest with the CoC, not with the HMIS lead. And so the HMIS lead is used in many communities and that's a great thing, but they are not the ones who have core responsibility. So, if an HMIS lead wants to use an app, or has ideas about even changes to the account, that's great. That certainly should be encouraged. They should absolutely go to the CoC and look at whatever process based on other governance decisions. So, there may not be a PIT count governance decision, but there should be decisions around general proposed changes for the CoC body, use that to determine how to proceed in terms of changes to the PIT count.

59:30

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Caroline Roddey: All right, so we are at time. As we've mentioned, this will all be posted on the HUD exchange, and we will work to get as many of these questions answered if possible. And please also utilize the AAQ desk the HIT/PIC inbox for additional questions. William, is there anything else you'd like to add before we hop off.

59:51

William Snow: Just a big thank you to everyone—very excited about the upcoming challenge. Looking forward to your questions, and we will do more office hours as we get closer and we'll provide more resources on communication around the PIT count both before and after, that's something we're working on now. Hopefully, that will support you in your efforts, not just conducting the count but engaging the public and what you find out. So, thank you all very much.

1:00:12

Caroline Roddey: All right. Thank you, everyone. Take care.