

Let's Make Everyone Count!

Planning for the 2011 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count

Continuums of Care (CoCs) across the country undertake community-wide efforts to collect information on the number and characteristics of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires CoCs to complete this point-in-time (PIT) count at least every two years during the last ten days of January. 2011 is a required year, and planning for conducting the count is underway.

Why is the PIT Count Important?

Collecting good data on the number, characteristics, and service needs of individuals, families, and unaccompanied children experiencing homelessness is a critical component of local homeless planning and program development. Accurate data helps communities to:

- Understand changes in trends among homeless populations;
- Adjust the types of programs and services available according to need and use resources as efficiently as possible;
- Justify requests for additional resources and/or programming modifications;
- Comply with reporting requirements from HUD, other funders, and local stakeholders;
- Raise public awareness about the issue of homelessness; and
- Measure community progress towards preventing and ending homelessness.

Nationally, the PIT count process will be used as the primary data source for federal agencies to understand homelessness trends and track progress against the goals and objectives contained in *Opening Doors*, the Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness. Additionally, the Congressionally-mandated Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) is prepared using PIT and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data.

It is critically important that homeless service providers, whether HUD-funded or not, participate in planning for and conducting the PIT count. In particular, CoCs should be sure to reach out to providers serving homeless veterans and unaccompanied children to ensure the accurate and appropriate collection of PIT data for these two subpopulations.

2011 Point-in-Time Count

In 2011, all CoCs are required to complete a PIT count of homeless people for a single night during the last 10 days in January. Conducting the PIT count outside the last 10 days of January 2011 requires the CoC to submit a waiver to HUD. Waiver requests should and be submitted via email to Michael Roanhouse, Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAPS) at michael.roanhouse@hud.gov and must include the proposed date of the count and the rationale for selecting a date outside the last 10 days of January.

The PIT data reported to HUD must include only persons who meet HUD's homeless definition (e.g., literally homeless). While some communities may choose to capture data on precariously housed persons (i.e., those staying with friends, couch surfing, etc.) for local planning purposes, this data must not be reported to HUD.

- In 2011, data from PIT counts will be the **definitive national count of homeless veterans**. For more information on what data CoCs should collect and how local Veterans Affairs (VA) and CoC staff can collaborate see [Guidance for Counting Veterans](#)
- As part of the 2011 subpopulation data collection, HUD is requiring CoCs to collect information on **unaccompanied homeless children** who are under 18 years of age (previously called unaccompanied youth). For more information on this terminology change and suggestions about how CoCs and homeless youth providers can work together on the PIT count see [Guidance for Counting Unaccompanied Homeless Children](#).
- In October 2010, HUD notified CoCs that they should collect information on **chronically homeless families** as part of the 2011 PIT count. See HUD's [October 22, 2010 listserv message](#) to review this guidance.
- CoCs can review **further guidance for the 2011 PIT count**, including details on how to report homelessness prevention participants, in [2011 Point-in-Time Count: Guidance and Reminders for Data Collection and Reporting](#).

2011 Annual Housing Inventory Count

- HUD has made important changes to collecting and reporting **2011 Housing Inventory Counts**, including bed type updates and data check recommendations prior to submission. For details CoCs should review [Instructions for Completing the 2011 Housing Inventory](#).

Resources

- **Questions about PIT or HIC?**
All PIT and HIC questions should be submitted to the [Virtual Help Desk](#) on HUD's Homelessness Resource Exchange (www.hudhre.info). To submit a question:
 1. Select HDX for the Program/System under "Your Details."
 2. Under "Question Details," select PIT or HIC for the topic and PIT or HIC for the subtopic, whichever is applicable.
- **PIT Posters**
HUD will ship posters for the National Street and Shelter Point-in-Time Count to each CoC on December 17, 2010. The posters are being printed in two sizes and will also be available for download from the HRE (www.hudhre.info) no later than December 17th.