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YHC PIT COUNT MEETING

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GOALS FOR TODAY

- 1.Understand the PIT count
- 2.Develop intent and scope for 2020 PIT count
- 3.Identify volunteers for a YHC Pit Count/Data
Needs Subcommittee



UNDERSTANDING THE PIT COUNT

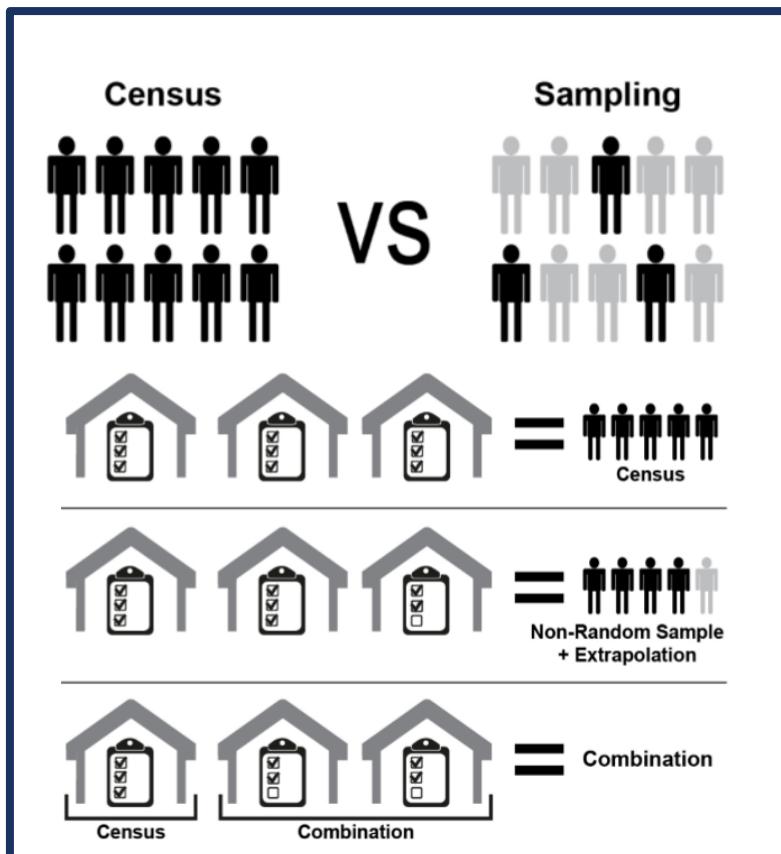
WHAT IS THE POINT IN TIME (PIT) COUNT?

- The PIT Count is a single-day snapshot that attempts to capture data on the **total number and characteristics** of individuals experiencing homelessness within the County
- This Count is a requirement from Commerce and HUD, and the reports are used at a local, state, and federal level to track trends in homelessness
- Data is collected by staff and volunteers through a survey
- The sheltered and unsheltered PIT counts must be conducted during the last 10 days in January and represent all persons experiencing homelessness who were sheltered and unsheltered on a single night during that period

WHAT INFORMATION IS GATHERED THROUGH THE PIT COUNT?

- Veteran status
- Disability status
- Age
- Unsheltered vs sheltered
- Families vs unaccompanied youth vs single adults
- Race classification
- Percentage of people originally from Yakima County
- Last address
- Gender
- Fleeing DV
- Prior night sleeping arrangement
- Chronic homelessness
- Top reasons cited as cause of homelessness
- Income and housing data
- Education completed
- Requested services

PIT COUNT APPROACHES



Census: A count of all people experiencing homelessness, or all of a distinct subset of people (i.e. households with adults and children)

Sampling: A partial count of the entire population experiencing homelessness (or a subset of the population), which is used to estimate the number and characteristics of the entire population (or a subset)

Communities may choose to combine census and sampling approaches to complete their PIT count. For example, they may conduct a census to count the total number of people experiencing homelessness, while using a random sampling approach to generate the necessary demographic information, such as gender and race.

WHO IS COUNTED?

Sheltered count

- “An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals)”
- Includes persons residing in emergency shelter, Safe Haven, and transitional housing projects

Unsheltered count

- “An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground”

Not counted

- Persons counted in any location not listed on Yakima County’s Housing Inventory Count (HIC) (e.g., staying in projects with beds/units not dedicated for persons who are homeless)
- Persons residing in permanent housing (PH) programs, including persons housed using HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers
- Persons temporarily staying with family or friend (i.e., “doubled-up” or “couch surfing”)
- Persons residing in housing they rent or own (i.e., permanent housing), including persons residing in rental housing with assistance from a RRH project on the night of the count
- Persons residing in institutions (e.g., jails, juvenile correction facilities, foster care, hospital beds, detox centers)

TIMELINE OF COUNT ACTIVITIES

August

Set up PIT count subcommittee and RFP scoring committee

Determine the intent and scope of activities for the count

September/October

Publish, score, and award RFP/sole source if needed

Select a PIT count date and time

Determine methodology

Create data quality plan

Identify and confirm all sheltered and unsheltered count locations

Begin volunteer recruitment

November/December

Develop and finalize surveys

Begin soliciting donations

Determine volunteer training dates

Publicize the count

January

Week before event: conduct volunteer trainings

Conduct PIT count (during the last 10 days of January)

February/March

Tabulate data

Review data and conduct data cleaning

Share data results

QUESTIONS?

Recap:

- Point in Time Count purpose
- Demographic information collected
- Approaches: census or survey
- Who is counted: sheltered and unsheltered
- Timeline of activities

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INTENT AND SCOPE

INTENT AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES

- Depending on the resources available and the way a community conducts their count, **the PIT count can be an opportunity to meet other objectives**. While the primary intent of the PIT count is to enumerate the size and characteristics of the population of people who are homeless, the PIT count can also be used as an opportunity to conduct extensive **outreach, engagement, screening, and triage**
- In the past, Yakima County has used both **street count** and **service-based count** (including Project Homeless Connect) as strategies for the unsheltered PIT count
- Many communities **combine a street count with a service-based count**. Communities using this combined approach must use one or more methods for eliminating duplication, as well as think carefully about the timing of data collection in each type of location

STREET COUNT

- This method consist of counting people who are staying in public or private places not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including cars, parks, abandoned buildings, buses or train stations, airports, or camping grounds. Communities often select a specific time period when people who are homeless are typically either in shelter or in unsheltered locations
- The street count method incorporates two dimensions:
 1. The strategy for **covering territory** (complete coverage, known locations, or a random sample of areas); and
 2. The **intensity of data collection** (counting, interviewing, and observation). This method may be tailored to suit a community's needs by using a combination of coverage and data collection strategies and may be combined with service-based counts

STREET COUNT STRATEGIES

- There are three options for street count implementation:
 1. **Complete coverage** count
 2. **Known locations** count
 3. **Random samples** of areas count
- In suburban and rural areas, enumerators typically do not attempt to conduct a complete coverage count, though they might do so in certain areas (e.g., a large state campground). Often, suburban and rural communities focus on a **limited number of known locations** where people experiencing homelessness are believed to congregate and might conduct a **random sample count of high and low concentration areas**
- To successfully execute a street count, particular attention must be paid to:
 - Assembling a **large number of volunteers** necessary to ensure adequate coverage of the geography selected for canvassing
 - Developing **maps** for enumerators to identify the specific geography they are responsible for covering within a brief period of time (typically a few hours) to decrease the potential for double counting
 - Providing **adequate training** to volunteers on a variety of issues

STREET COUNT ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Advantages

- Can provide more coverage than service-based counts, if done thoroughly
- Does not depend on people experiencing homelessness to come to a location to be surveyed

Disadvantages

- Difficult to effectively cover ground in large, low population density Counties like Yakima
- Requires knowledge of locations where people experiencing homelessness are living unsheltered. Results can be biased towards known populations
- Very cold in the winter in Yakima! People try to find shelter

SERVICE-BASED COUNT

- The service-based counting method is based on the understanding that while many people experiencing homelessness choose not to stay in shelters, **people can and do access other community services, public facilities** (e.g., libraries), or **private establishments** (e.g., convenience stores and bookstores) that are open to the public and offer food, amenities, and respite. This method focuses on conducting interviews with users of non-shelter services and locations frequented by people who are homeless
- Service-based counts can extend beyond 1 day, since it is likely that homeless people will not access these services on a daily basis. Service based counts must not extend beyond 7 days after the community's designated count night
- Many suburban and rural communities do not have extensive homeless services. In such places, the count is usually focused on **mainstream human service agencies** that are used by both people who are and are not experiencing homelessness. These agencies could include county social service offices that provide TANF and food stamp assistance, community action agencies, health care clinics, and public housing agencies

SERVICE-BASED COUNT ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Advantages

- Access to unsheltered people experiencing homelessness who might not be found in a street count, such as people living in their cars, abandoned buildings, and other hidden locations
- Good in situations where a known location count might not be feasible due to the size or topography of the jurisdiction

Disadvantages

- Unless it is coupled with a street count, a service-based count is likely to miss unsheltered homeless people who do not use any services. Thus, HUD strongly recommends that service-based counts only be used to supplement street count approaches

PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT

- Project Homeless Connect (PHC) was an event held in both Sunnyside and Yakima that conducted the PIT count while providing services, meals, and goods to people experiencing homelessness
- Also created opportunity for businesses, universities, and community volunteers to be directly involved in helping individuals and families make significant steps towards ending their homelessness, while facilitating improved collaboration between community service agencies
- PHC goals:
 - Improving access to services and housing for homeless individuals and families
 - Engaging and increasing the collaborative involvement of homeless consumers, businesses, the non-profit community, and individual volunteers to work together to create solutions to homelessness
 - Improving the system of care by creating opportunities for collaboration and sharing of best practices among Yakima's homeless provider community
 - Leveraging private, corporate, and foundation money and in-kind support to augment city efforts to increase housing options and build service capacity for homeless individuals and families

2011 PHC SERVICES PROVIDED

- Phone Calls
- *Haircuts
- Clothing
- Baby Items
- Books for Children
- *Heath Services including:
 - Immunizations
 - Nutrition Counseling
 - Hepatitis C Screening
 - Medicaid Applications
 - Health Coverage Assistance
 - Blood Pressure Screening
- Blood Glucose
- Diabetes Screening
- Flu & Pneumonia Shots
- Hearing Screening Referral
- Pregnancy Testing
- *Dental Screening & Referral
- HIV Testing
- Clean Kits
- Prescription Assistance Discount Cards
- Vision Screening
- Reading Glasses
- *Homeless Outreach

■ Services

- Volunteer Attorney Services
- *Domestic Violence Services
- *Sexual Assault Services
- *Shelter & Housing Services
- Crisis Services
- *Veterans Outreach Services including:
 - Emergency Hotel & Food Vouchers
 - Case Management & Referral
 - Employment Services

- VA Healthcare
- Housing Assistance
- Claims Assistance
- *Financial Benefit Screening & Eligibility
- Financial Education Services
- Income Tax Return Services
- Employment Services
- *WA State ID Information & Vouchers
- Voter Registration
- Senior Services & Referral

- Homeless Youth Services
- *Chemical Dependency Services
- Alcoholic Anonymous
- *Basic Food Program
- 2-1-1
- Showers
- EPIC Headstart
- *Diabetic and cancer screening
- *Housing Authority Services

2019 PIT COUNT

- Goals:
 1. Maximize the scope of the one-day count through county-wide outreach efforts utilizing a thorough and cost-effective approach
 2. Partner with the Yakama Nation to gain a more accurate representation of who is struggling with homelessness across local communities
 3. Implement tools that will continue to assist with census efforts in future years
 4. Pursue high-quality and consistent data collection in order to begin to glean new insights from year-to-year
 5. Collect and report relevant information to inform and educate local community citizens, policy makers, and funders
- Methodology: Blend of street counts and service-based counts

FEEDBACK

What should the goals
and methodology be
for the 2020 PIT
count?

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YHC PIT COUNT/ DATA NEEDS SUBCOMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Primary focus is to oversee the process and ensure that all aspects of the count are executed according to the organizer's PIT count plan. This can include:
 - Engaging providers and volunteers in the PIT count process
 - Securing incentives (food, hygiene packs, bus passes, etc.)
 - Overseeing the sheltered and unsheltered counts
 - Monitoring the cleaning of the PIT count data
- People with the following types of professional and personal experience are often most useful in PIT count planning: shelter project staff, homeless outreach workers, researchers, and people who have experienced homelessness
- During months where PIT count planning is not needed, subcommittee will focus on data-related issues and needs
 - Housing Needs Assessment (inherited from HNY)

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

- Having robust subcommittee participation will inform whether our County will be able to do the PIT count locally this year
- Individuals interested in joining the PIT Count/Data Needs subcommittee should sign onto the sign in sheet going around. Please specify your name, and what role you are interested in playing in local PIT count efforts