**Point-In-Time-Count**

Every year, in anticipation of the annual **Point in Time Count**, HUD releases guidance and standards regarding the data that each CoC is required to collect, compile, and report. Due to the technical nature and level of coordination required, the **Resource Committee** is recommending the overall count/planning process remain with **MaineHousing** and, as the Collaborative Applicant, **MaineHousing** retain the responsibility for creating and/or utilizing data collection tools and ensuring those tools meet the HUD **Point In Time Count** standards.

Since **MaineHousing** has the capacity (and the experience) to retain this responsibility without input from the **Resource Committee**, we also recommend **MaineHousing** be responsible for vetting, testing, and presenting any tools and/or other recommendations related to the **PIT Count**, to the **Maine Continuum of Care** as needed/applicable.

The **Homeless Response Service Hub Coordinators** are now those who are best equipped to locally coordinate volunteers, organize and facilitate trainings, raise awareness in their respective communities, and assist with local data collection as applicable and/or needed. Hub Coordinators have already made great strides in building relationships and coordinating with local partners who interface with people experiencing homelessness and/or are willing to assist with the count. Therefore, the **Resource Committee** would also like to recommend the **Unsheltered** portion of the count be overseen by the **Homeless Response Service Hub Coordinators,** in collaboration with the **Maine Continuum of Care** and **MaineHousing**.

**If the Maine Continuum of Care approves Tuesday, January 23rd, 2024, as the date for the Night of the Count, then the Resource Committee recommends that Wednesday, January 24th, 2024, Thursday, January 25th, 2024 and Friday, January 26th, 2024 be the dates approved for the Service-Based Portion of the count.**

**Methodology**

**Sheltered Count:**

The Resource Committee recommends that the Maine Continuum of Care approve a combination approach of **Census + Non-Random Sampling** (see*Appendix*). Per HUD’s PIT Count Methodology Guide:

“If some projects collect all required client characteristics, some collect only some client characteristics, and some do not collect any characteristics, then a combination of approaches may be used.” (pg.16).

HUD has three standards (*see Appendix*) for conducting a count of people who are homeless and in shelter on the night of the count. We believe this combination of approaches best fulfills these requirements as it would include:

* Complete data extracted directly via HMIS from HMIS participating agencies
* Complete data gathered via client-level surveys from non-participating agencies
* Partial data gathered via project-level survey from non-participating agencies
* Partial data gathered via project-level survey from any agency without the capacity to provide complete data

**Unsheltered Count:**

The Resource Committee recommends that the Maine Continuum of Care approve a combination approach of **Night of the Count via Known Locations + Service-Based Count** (see*Appendix*). Per HUD’s PIT Count Methodology Guide:

“The CoC may combine a known locations count on the night of the count with a service-based count approach to attempt to account for any homeless persons who might not have been identified on the night of the count…”(pg. 20).

HUD has three standards (*see Appendix*) for conducting a count of people who are homeless and unsheltered on the night of the count. We believe this combination of approaches best fulfills these requirements as it considers:

* Which geographic areas are the most important to completely cover
* How large the geographic areas are
* The resources/capacity available for fully covering those areas
* There might be people who volunteers are not likely to identify during an unsheltered count
* Other barriers that could limit the ability of volunteers to conduct interviews during the night of the count

**Appendix**

**Definitions:**

**Census Count** - an enumeration of all homeless people or a distinct subset of homeless people (e.g., households with adults and children) in CoCs. This counting approach provides a direct and complete count of all people and their characteristics, does not require any estimates, and can be used as a benchmark for future PIT counts. A census count should incorporate the entire CoCs’ geography...(pg. 11).

**Known Locations Count** - This approach identifies known locations where people who are unsheltered are located at night or sends volunteers to specific neighborhoods, blocks, census tracts, or other geographies within the CoCs to count unsheltered homeless people staying in those locations. For example, if homeless outreach teams are aware of an encampment of homeless persons under a bridge and alongside the highway, the CoCs would send volunteers to this location as part of the unsheltered count...(pg. 18).

**Night of the Count -** A count of people who are unsheltered on the night the CoC designated for its PIT count (often referred to as a “street count”). This includes counting people who are staying in public or private places not designed 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, during the period between dusk and dawn on the night designated for the PIT count, when people who are homeless are typically either in shelter or in unsheltered locations for the night…(pg. 18).

**Non-Random Sampling** - a sample that is not selected randomly, rather it is selected based on the convenience of gathering information or purposively with some other goal in mind (e.g., via shelter intake and data collection for HMIS). A non-random sample does not statistically represent the entire population, but if the non-random sample covers a large portion of the population or subpopulation believed to have similar characteristics (e.g., sheltered youth), extrapolation to derive estimates for the entire population or subpopulation is likely to be accurate. As a rule of thumb, data from a non-random sample may be used for extrapolation if reliable data exists for 80 percent or more of the clients in a given household type and project type (e.g., households without children in emergency shelters) and there is no known reason to believe that the characteristics of people included in the non-random sample are different than those who are not included…(pg.11).

**Service-Based Count** - A survey of people at various social service locations or other public or private locations to identify people who were unsheltered, but not counted, on the night of the count–either because CoCs did not use a night of the count approach or because unsheltered people were missed on the night of the count. Service-based counts may only be conducted within the 7-day period after the designated count night. Service-based counts are conducted at locations frequented by people who are homeless, including soup kitchens, day shelters, libraries, and other community locations and include interviews to determine whether people were unsheltered on the night of the count, as well as their characteristics…(pg.19).

**Standards:**





