Everyone Counts
Homeless Point in Time Count
Volunteer Training and Coordination
November 30th, 2010
And I quote...

To view and test the HIC, PIT, PULSE and AHAR data collection screens, go to the [HDX Sandbox](#).
The AHAR is designed to:

- Develop an estimate of the number of homeless people nationwide;
- Create a descriptive profile of homeless people;
- Understand service use patterns; and,
- Estimate the nation’s capacity to house homeless people.
AHAR Data

- **HMIS**
  - Universal data elements in HUD’s HMIS Data and Technical Standards for those who enter an emergency shelter or transitional housing program during a 12-month reporting period.
  - Now includes people served in permanent supportive housing programs and Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Programs

- **CoC Exhibit 1 applications.**
  - PIT counts of homeless populations offer a “snapshot” of homelessness on a single night in January and include estimates of the unsheltered homeless population. The annual PIT counts also provide information on the numbers of homeless people within particular subpopulations, such as people who are chronically homeless, severely mentally ill, substance abusers, veterans, unaccompanied youth, or living with HIV/AIDS.
Other Data Complete Picture

- Housing Inventory Chart
  - Emergency Shelter
  - Transitional Housing
  - HPRP Homeless Assistance (new for 2010): Safe Havens
  - Permanent Supportive Housing
- PULSE
  - Quarterly reporting to gauge effect of economy on homelessness.
  - Captures “newly homeless” which is someone who received services in the quarter but did not receive services in the prior 15 month period.
Good news/Bad news

- HUD focus on annual reporting—PIT as just a snapshot with subpopulations
- Need to push to do annual counts
Fourth biennial SC statewide count of people who are homeless!

- Background planning
- SC Methods
  - Sheltered Count
  - Unsheltered Count
    - SC Forms
    - Survey Techniques
    - Volunteer Training
- Tips
Background

- Planning committee met August-September.
- Researched other communities, reviewed lessons learned, finalized PIT methodology, developed timeline.
- Thanks to committee!
January 27th, 2011
PIT count in each county in SC
Definition
- Unduplicated one-night count or estimate of sheltered and unsheltered adults, children and youth.
- Subpopulation information.
Goals
- Meet HUD requirements for Continuum of Care (CoC) submissions.
- To understand the number and characteristics of people sleeping in shelters, on the street, or in other places not meant for human habitation.
NEW 2011

- Four day count of unsheltered homeless
- Local data entry to the extent possible
- Shorter timeframe from data collection to report
Work to Be Done: Counties reporting less than 5 people in 2009

- Abbeville
- Bamberg
- Barnwell
- Berkeley
- Calhoun
- Darlington
- Dorchester
- Edgefield
- Lancaster
- Lee
- McCormick
- Newberry
- Oconee
- Saluda
- Union
PIT Reporting Requirements

- Number of people in households without children.

- Number of people in households with at least one adult and one child. (Family)

- Number of people in households with only children. (Family) This includes only people age 17 or under, including unaccompanied youth, adolescent parents and their children, adolescent siblings, or other household configurations composed only of children.
PIT Reporting Requirements

- Subpopulation categories including counts of people (adults and families) who are chronically homeless, people with severe mental illness, chronic substance abusers, veterans sheltered and unsheltered, people with HIV/AIDS, victims of domestic violence and unaccompanied youth.

- **Chronically Homeless Person or Family.** An unaccompanied homeless individual (18 or older) with a disabling condition or a family with at least one adult member (18 or older) who has a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had at least four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years.
Ambitions for additional data

- Mainstream service experience of people who are homeless in SC
- Cost of some mainstream services used by people who are homeless
- Rural extrapolation
SOUTH CAROLINA INTEGRATED DATA SYSTEM HOUSED AT THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND STATISTICS
November 2010
- Each CoC contact 3-5 agencies in rural areas to ID where homeless receive services

December 2010
- Prep agencies for HMIS extract
- Finalize list of “known” locations
- Recruit qualified volunteers for data collection
January 2011
- Local CoCs train data collection volunteers
- 6th-HMIS test extract
- 14th-HMIS test extract sent to ORS
- 21st-ORS reports to HMIS Coordinators on data quality
- HMIS coordinators work with local agencies to improve data quality for final extract for 27th
- 27th-30th- Unsheltered Data Collection
Timeline

- **February 2011**
  - 1st—data entry managers meet electronically to discuss data entry protocol
  - Local CoC review /clean up forms
  - Local training on data entry
  - Data entry by local CoCs or ORS

- **March 2011**
  - 1st ALL DATA TO ORS FOR FINAL COMPILATION OF HMIS AND UNSHELTERED COUNT
Timeline

- March 2011
  - Data unduplicated
  - Data analyzed

- April 2011
  - 8th Preliminary distribution of data tables
  - 20th Final Feedback to ORS
  - 29th Final distribution of data table

- May 2011
  - DATA ready for HDX entry
HMIS; Form A

Sheltered count
For sheltered count report on people in following housing programs:

- People in emergency shelter and transitional housing including:
  - Domestic violence shelters
  - Residential programs for runaway/homeless youth
  - Motels or apartment vouchers paid for by a public or private agency because the individual or family is homeless
For sheltered count do NOT collect information on the following people:

- Formerly homeless people living in permanent supportive housing (SHP, S+C)
- Individuals who are doubled-up
- Children or youth who are temporarily residing in institutions (emergency foster care, treatment facilities)
- Adults living in mental health, chemical dependency or criminal justice facilities
- The PIT homeless person counts *should not* include persons residing in beds/units funded by HPRP as part of a Rapid Re-housing or Homelessness Prevention Program, with the exception of persons in hotel/motel voucher beds paid for with HPRP and that are included in the Emergency Shelter inventory
Sheltered Count

- IF a shelter is reliably entering individual information into HMIS, use HMIS for count data.

- IF a shelter is not using HMIS or is not entering information on individuals reliably, must complete Form A for each individual in shelter or transitional housing program.
Sheltered Count: HMIS Data Elements

- Agency
- County
- Family ID
- First Name, Last Name
- Social Security Number
- Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY)
- Gender
- Marital Status
- Primary Race
- Ethnicity (Hispanic)
- Extent of Homelessness
- Zip Code of Last Permanent Address
- City, State, and County (SC) of Place of Birth (if available)

Disabling Condition
- Serious Mental Illness – Mental Illness Problem
- Substance Abuse -- Alcohol Abuse, Drug Abuse or Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- HIV/AIDS

Subpopulation Status
- Chronic Homeless
- Severe Mental Illness
- Veterans
- HIV/AIDS
- Domestic Violence

Type of Shelter
- Emergency
- Transitional
Form A

- Used to collect data on people who are sheltered from agencies that do not participate in HMIS at all or sufficiently to secure necessary data. Use this form if there are any questions about quality of data in HMIS.

- Completed by
  - Program staff
  - Volunteer assisting program staff

- Completed from
  - Agency records
  - Interviews with residents

- Complete one form per individual homeless person or homeless family (individual/s with children or children only).

Sheltered Count: Form A
Form A

Form A: South Carolina Sheltered 2011 Count Form

1. First name:
2. Middle Initial
3. Last name:
4. SSN:
5. Date of birth (MM/DD/YYYY)

6. Gender: Male Female Transgender
7. Race: White Black/African American Asian American Indian or Alaskan Native Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Other R/ DK
8. Do you consider yourself to be Hispanic/Latino? Yes No R/ DK

9. How long have you been without a home this time?
   - One week or less
   - More than one week but less than one month
   - 1-3 Months
   - More than 3 months, but less than 1 year
   - One year or longer
   - R/ DK
10. Including this time, how many times have you been homeless in the past three years?
    - One time
    - Two times
    - Three times
    - Four or more times
    - R/ DK

11. Where was your last permanent address? City State Zip

12. City of Birth? State of Birth?

13. Have you ever received, or are you currently receiving, treatment services for any of the conditions below? Yes No
   - Mental Illness
   - Substance Abuse
   - HIV/AIDS
   - Long-Term Physical Disability
   - R/ DK

14. Have you ever been a victim of domestic violence? Yes No R/ DK

15. Have you ever served in the U.S. Military? Yes No R/ DK (not for under 18)

Household: Two or more adults together, no children under the age of 18
Family: One or more adults with one or more children under the age of 18
Individual: One adult or unaccompanied youth under the age of 18
R/ DK: Refused/Don’t Know

Privacy Statement

I interviewed __________________ (name) as a part of the HUD January 27, 2011 point-in-time homeless count. Although the interviewers did not sign a release form, I explained the following:
- That I am collecting information needed for the biannual HUD point-in-time homeless count.
- That I will ask only the questions on the form(s) provided and will document their responses only on these forms.
- That this process should not interfere, inconvenience, or put at risk the person or persons being interviewed.
- That this study will benefit the homeless population by identifying characteristics of this population.
- That the respondent can agree or refuse to participate in this interview, or place any restrictions whatsoever on both the procedures and the disposition of the material collected.
- That this material will be retained by the Budget and Control Board’s Office of Research and Statistics in a secure and confidential manner and will be used for statistical purposes only. After two (2) years, all identifying information will be destroyed.
- The interviewers consented to these actions and conditions, except for any restrictions that may be listed below:

(Interviewer’s signature) (Date) (Phone number)

Restrictions:

Mailing Deadline: March 1, 2011

Mail Forms To:
Carlos Sadler
1935 Blount Street
Columbia, SC 29020
Family number: used to associate members of a family with each other. Each family member should receive same number.

Form number: First two spaces for county codes (see reference sheet for alphabetical county code, should be inserted before copying. Last four spaces will be pre-numbered.

Agency name, date, county, contact person and shelter type (DV and emergency or TH)

Q1-Q5: Collect identifying information to unduplicate data. If refuse, collect at least shaded data. If confidentiality is issue for DV shelters, collect at a minimum, DOB.

Q6-Q8: Collect additional demographic information.

Q9-Q10: Quantify time homeless and chronic homeless question.

Q11-Q12: Identify last permanent address, city, state and county (SC) of birth.

Q15-Q17: Collect subpopulation data.
Information for Coordinators

- Provide sufficient copies to each agency at least one week in advance (can be completed ahead of time but the agency staff should be clear to **submit forms only on those who were in shelter on January 27th**).

- Include instructions for completing the form, deadlines and method of pick-up and/or delivery.

- Review the form with staff who will be completing them. Get contact information.

- Consider specialized training for particular shelters, e.g. domestic violence or families to improve reliability and accuracy of data.

- Ask those completing forms to review them for legibility, accuracy and completeness.

- **All Form As, both completed and unused forms, should be returned to coalition coordinators within 48 hours of receiving them.**
Groups of four

- One interviewer, one interviewee, and two observers
- Complete form
- Provide feedback to interviewer
- Tips?
- Questions?
Complete form A based on the following information

- Claude Jackson is a black male, born 8/6/51, who stayed at the emergency shelter on the night of January 27th. He has lived in South Carolina his whole life. Claude was living with his wife in Orangeburg, but he left two months ago when the money got tight. Claude states that this is the first time he has been homeless. He is staying at the shelter by himself since he left his wife. Claude has been on methadone for six months but has no other mental health or physical problems.

What else would you need to ask?
Example

- Also need to find
  - In what county was he born?
  - Does he consider himself to be Hispanic?
  - Is he a veteran?
Form B

Unsheltered Count
Unsheltered Count

How to count

- Interviews using Form B for everyone to be counted
  - Street
  - Service
Count

People who are literally homeless, i.e. staying in a place not meant for human habitation such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, street, woods cemeteries, structures lacking the ability to cook food, drinking water, heat, restroom, etc. on January 27\textsuperscript{th}.

Report

- Number of people identified as unsheltered on January 27th.
- *One piece of paper for everyone to be counted.*
Unsheltered Count

- Collecting same data for street and service counts; No observation counts!

- In SC, the unsheltered count will run from January 27 to January 30\textsuperscript{th} this is a change from the 2009 to just four days for the count

- REQUIRES collection of identifying information on every individual counted
  - Sheltered AND Unsheltered
Unsheltered Count
Street Method

- Can do sweep or scan on January 27th
  - Useful in urban/downtown areas
  - Block by block

- Using survey Form B, street count does not have to be completed within 24-hour period
  - Can continue to do surveys during the day or at night for four days
Known locations
- Identify places where known to stay or congregate
- Include downtown and outlying areas

Consult with outreach workers, people who are or have been homeless, shelter and services staff, police, businesses, community development organizations, faith-based groups, housing inspectors, parks and recreation staff, others?

Review results from last count
Unsheltered Count Street Method

- Develop a list of places
- Develop guidelines for finalizing list considering
  - Safety
  - Number and experience of interviewers
- Be explicit about where interviewers should or shouldn’t go
  - Abandoned buildings
  - Private property
  - Encampments
- Record results for consistency with future counts
Recruit interviewers with particular emphasis on quality data!

- Homeless and formerly homeless people
  - Incentives?
  - Ensure shelter support around curfews, other requirements.
  - Colleges or universities

- Outreach workers
  - Mental health
  - Health care
Recruit Interviewers

- Public safety personnel
  - Know locations
  - Improve safety (Can scare off some groups)

- Others
  - Homeless coalition members
  - Front line shelter and soup kitchen workers
Unsheltered Count
Street Method

- Train EVERYONE
  - Ground rules
  - Recording information/use of forms
  - What to do in an emergency
- Provide written guidelines
- Assign interviewers in pairs or teams by experience
- Provide maps for street interviewers
- For street/night counts
  - Develop communication strategies (cell phones, central number, radios/walkie talkies)
- Provide or make sure interviewers are equipped with pencils, clip boards, forms, flashlights, identification, incentives for people they encounter (socks, blankets, food)
Unsheltered Count Service Method

- Recommended for areas that have:
  - Large geographic area that is mainly rural
  - Lower numbers of visible unsheltered homeless
  - Availability of services that are accessed by homeless population
  - Strong collaboration among service providers

- REQUIRES participation of non-shelter service providers (mainstream providers) and targeted homeless providers
  - From among those seeking services, providers and/or volunteers will identify people who have housing problems.
  - Each individual will be interviewed using Form B
  - The survey is designed to identify those who are **literally homeless on January 27th**
  - Can identify people who are precariously housed, doubled up, etc.
Unsheltered Count Service Method

Where do unsheltered homeless individuals receive assistance in your area? Identify both mainstream and targeted homeless agencies.

- DSS
- Mental Health
- DHEC
- Primary Health care
- Emergency Rooms
- Substance Abuse Services
- Parks and Recreation/Park Service

- One-Stop Employment Centers
- Food Pantries
- Soup Kitchens
- Community Service Agencies
- Law Enforcement
- Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services (PPP)
Unsheltered Count Service Method

- Get supervisor support for line workers completing forms.
- Recommend sending trained volunteers to collect data.
- Check-in with providers over course of data collection.
- Promptly collect all forms and review for completeness.
- Recognize value of provider participation.
Unsheltered Count
Form B

- From people who are seeking services, identify those for whom housing is unstable, precarious or a problem.
- Screening Question: Have you had any difficulty with housing in the past month?
- Complete Sections 1 and 2 for everyone interviewed.
- Complete Section 3 for people who are homeless.
- Must have identifying information for unduplication.
Form B: South Carolina Unsheltered 2011 Count Form

1. Where did you spend the night on January 27, 2011?
   - Outdoors (street, park, woods, under a bridge, camping, etc.)
   - Car/other vehicle
   - Structure/Building that is lacking any of the following: working ability to cook food, drinking water, heat, restroom or place to bathe
   - Abandoned building
   - Emergency Shelter (facility or voucher)
   - Transitional housing program (a program where I can stay for up to 2 years and where I receive services)
   - Jail and no home to return to
   - Hospital/Emergency and no home to return to
   - With friends or family on a temporary basis and no home of my own [ECHO ONLY]
   - At a hotel or motel I paid for and I do not have the resources to rent or own a home at this time [ECHO ONLY]
   - None of the above

2. In what SC county did you spend that night?
   If "None of the above" is checked, please STOP. No additional information is required.

3. First name
4. Middle initial
5. Last name
6. SSN
7. What is your date of birth? (MM/DD/YYYY)
8. Gender: [ ] Male [ ] Female [ ] Transgender
9. Race: [ ] White [ ] Black/African American [ ] Asian [ ] American Indian or Alaskan Native
   [ ] Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander [ ] Other [ ] RDK
10. Do you consider yourself to be Hispanic/Latino? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] RDK

Additional questions on back or second page.

PRIVACY STATEMENT

I interviewed [ ] name as part of the HUD January 27, 2011 point-in-time homeless count. Although the interview did not sign a written form, I explained the following:
- That I am collecting information needed for the federal HUD point-in-time homeless count.
- That I will ask only the questions on the form provided and will document their responses only on these forms.
- That this process should be unobtrusive, unobtrusive, or put at risk the person or persons being interviewed.
- That this study will benefit the homeless population by identifying characteristics of this population.
- That the information can be agreed to in order to participate in this interview, or place any restrictions whatsoever on both the procedures and the disposition of the material collected.
- That this material will be managed by the Budget and Control Board’s Office of Research and Statistics in a secure and confidential manner and will be used for statistical purposes only. After two (2) years, all identifying information will be destroyed.

The interviewees agreed to these actions and conditions, except for any restrictions that may be listed below:

[ ] Interviewer’s signature
[ ] Date
[ ] Phone number

MAIL TO:
[ ] Name
1919 Blanding Street
Columbia, SC 2901
Family number: used to associate members of a family with each other. **Each family member should receive same number.**

**Form number:** First two spaces for county codes (see reference sheet for alphabetical county code), should be inserted before copying. Last four spaces will be pre-numbered.

Identify agency if there is one (e.g. soup kitchen), date, county, interviewer and where survey completed.

Q1: Where did interviewee spend the night of January 27th?
   - (Doubled-up)

Q2: In which county did interviewee spend the night?

Q3-Q10: Identifying information for unduplication and demographic information.

Q11 – Q12: Quantify time homeless and chronic homeless question.

Q13: Identify last permanent address, SC as birth state and county.

Q14: Identify city, state and county (SC) of birth.

Q15-Q17: Collect subpopulation data.
Train providers and volunteers to complete forms.

- Explain purpose of the study.
- Emphasize definitions of homelessness as used by HUD. (Mainstream service providers may not be familiar with HUD programs and definitions).
- Consider specialized data gatherers for places like emergency rooms, jails, other institutions.
- Identify who is responsible for supporting effort and collecting forms.
- Ask those completing forms to review them for accuracy and completeness.
- Thank them for their support.
Unsheltered Count Service Method

- Do not hold forms!
- Forms B should be returned to coalition coordinators as completed. (48 hours)
- Treat forms as the confidential information they are (locked places to keep them, prompt delivery).
- Coordinators should review forms for completeness and legibility and clean up with data gatherers as much as possible.
- Most of the local coalitions will enter own data—please complete by February 28th. All data and forms to ORS by March 1st!
- If not entering own data—send cleaned forms to ORS by February 8th. (Consult with ORS)
Practice

- Groups of four
  - One interviewer, one interviewee and two observers.
  - Complete form B
  - Provide feedback to interviewer
  - Tips?
  - Questions?
Complete form B based on the following information

- Yolanda H. Peterson is a white non-Hispanic woman, born 7/17/1956 who has been sleeping on her sister’s couch for the last three days. She doesn’t think she will be able to stay for more than a month. She and her 12 year old son were evicted from her apartment in Columbia three weeks ago at which time they were living on the streets. She and her son went to stay with her sister on January 29th. She has a history of alcohol and substance abuse. She is doing better now, having been clean for 9 months and is seeing a psychiatrist at a local clinic, where she receives treatment for depression. She is not HIV positive and has never served in the military. This is the first time she has been homeless since 1970 when she left her husband because of domestic abuse.

What else would you need to ask?
Also need to find out

- In what county did she spend the night of January 27th?

- Was she born in South Carolina – if so, what county?
Interviewing Techniques and Guidelines
Structured surveys.

Short answer or forced choice response questions.
Surveys
Participant Protection

- Implied Consent Form
  - People who are being interviewed deserve to understand what they are being asked to share and how the data will be used.

- The purpose of the survey/study is to better understand the experience of homelessness so that we can improve services and report to funders to secure funding for homeless services and housing.
Before beginning any interview, the interviewer should share the following information:

- All surveys are voluntary and eligible interviewees may choose not to participate or to terminate interview before completing survey. They may also refuse to answer any individual questions.
- Participation, non participation nor any particular responses to the survey will have any impact on services being received.
The data collected are CONFIDENTIAL.

- No individual identifying information will be shared—only aggregated data will be reported.
- Interviewers must agree to keep information confidential including agreeing not to disclose information to anyone in the organization (including case managers). Only exception to disclosure is if person being interviewed presents clear danger to themselves or others.
- ORS will retain data in secure, locked keeping and will destroy all forms after 2 years.
Surveys
Participant Protection

- All of this information should be offered before the interview starts.
- The interviewer should verify that the individual is willing to participate.
- After the interview is complete, the interviewer should sign the implied consent form at the end of the survey.
- If thank you gifts are provided—do not withhold from anyone who chooses not to participate.
Survey Techniques

- Be prepared
  - Be familiar with all documents including definitions.
  - Have pens, survey forms, clipboards, incentives if applicable.
- Be professional
  - Introduce self, identify affiliation, explain purpose of the survey, share length of survey and time required (10-15 minutes), explain confidentiality, ask if the participant is willing to participate.
- Use a private space for the survey.
Survey Techniques

- Be clear
  - Speak clearly and repeat questions as necessary.
  - Ask the questions as written.
  - Ask for clarification as needed.

- Be neutral
  - Do not answer for the individual even if you know him or her.
  - Affirm but do not judge/react to answers
    - “I see, yes, ok,” NOT “Wow! That’s terrible!” or “Are you kidding?”
Survey Techniques

- Be careful
  - Do not skip questions unless instructed.
  - **Print** clearly and **legibly**.
  - Complete all sections.
  - Turn over page!
  - Review the form immediately after completing.

- Be courteous
  - Thank the individual for completing the survey.
  - Offer a thank you gift as appropriate.
Survey Techniques

- Dress appropriately.
- Be attentive.
- Answer interviewee’s questions.
- Know who to call if interviewee needs assistance.
- Know who to call if interviewee is endangered or if you see someone who is not safe.
- Be safe.
Count Volunteer Training Tips

- Schedule training that is convenient to volunteers and providers
  - Will require more than one session
  - May need to provide training on site to providers
- Provide an overview of the whole project
  - Purpose of the count
  - Their role in the big picture
- Be clear and specific
  - Provide detailed instructions regarding what you are asking them to do
  - Describe different opportunities and requirements (you want the right people in the right jobs)
  - Clearly state deadlines
  - Inform volunteers of what they will need, what you will provide (e.g. survey forms, incentives) and what they will need to provide (e.g. flashlights)
Count Volunteer Training Tips

- Organize materials (training packet)
  - Agenda
  - Training manual
  - Forms
  - Contact information for count leadership
  - Maps and assignments for street counts
  - Addresses and times for service counts

- Train on relevant definitions especially homelessness

- Make sure they are familiar with form (list of choices)

- Make sure you have contact information on all volunteers

- Have back up plans for volunteers who have emergencies
Count Volunteer Training Tips

**Safety** for street counts

- No one goes alone!

- Encourage volunteers to preview their target area. Develop communication strategies (cell phones, central number, radios/walkie talkies)

- Provide or make sure volunteers have pens, clip boards, forms, **flashlights**, identification, count identification, incentives for people they encounter (socks, blankets, food)

- Have a system for volunteers to check in at HQ (everyone should complete work by specified time, turn in forms after completing them, provide opportunity for them to review them for legibility)
More Tips

- All forms should be reviewed for legibility and completeness.
- Be sure to fill in “county” section.
- Staple or **double-side copy forms** and take care to keep multiple pages together.
- Keep forms confidential throughout process.
- Turn forms in promptly!
Share strategies

- Feedings? Mobile feedings?
- Substandard housing?
- Motel Vouchers?
- Participant incentives?
- Volunteer recruitment?