



MARYLAND
BALANCE OF STATE
CONTINUUM OF CARE

2021 Point-in-Time Count
and
Housing Inventory Count Plan

Introduction

The purpose of this plan is to ensure stakeholders are informed about how the MD-514 Maryland Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) will implement the 2021 Point in Time (PIT) Count and Housing Inventory Count.

The CoC is required by HUD to conduct, at least biennially, a point-in-time count of (1) Homeless persons who are living in a place not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans (“unsheltered”) and (2) Persons living in emergency shelters and transitional housing projects (“sheltered”). HUD requires that the count be carried out on one night in the last 10 calendar days of January (24 CFR 578.3). Additionally, the CoC is required to inventory all beds and units primarily dedicated to serving people who are homeless on the same night of the PIT Count – this is called the Housing Inventory Count.

The PIT Count is a critical source of data regarding the number and characteristics of people who are homeless in the United States and is a measure of local and national progress related to preventing and ending homelessness. Nationally, PIT data is published annually on the [HUD Exchange](#) website, which can be viewed by CoCs and the general public. PIT data is also provided during the annual Continuum of Care Program Funding Competition in addition to an annual report to Congress as part of the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR). The AHAR is used by Congress, HUD, other federal departments, and the general public to understand the nature and extent of homelessness. PIT Count data is used to assess progress on [Home Together: the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#).

Document Version History

Release Date	Notes
V1.0 – December 3, 2020	2020 Plan Approved
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PIT/HIC Planning Roles and Responsibilities

The CoC PIT Count Committee creates and approves the overarching plan for how and when the PIT Count will be conducted, the survey tool, and the strategies used to count people experiencing homelessness on a given night. Membership on the committee is open to the public and must include at least one representative from each Local Homelessness Coalition. The committee meets biweekly from October through the end of January.

Conducting a comprehensive and accurate count requires significant time and expense from many organizations and that all parties work collaboratively within their roles and responsibilities:

CoC Lead Agency Responsibilities

- Recruit membership for and facilitate PIT Count planning committee
- Draft PIT/HIC methodology plan and unsheltered survey questions in compliance with HUD requirements
- Distribute final unsheltered survey (paper or electronic version) and PIT/HIC policies to LHC representatives
- Create PIT survey site registration form
- Create PIT virtual volunteer training materials
- Provide technical assistance and support to LHCs in determining where and when they will count
- Review and approve submission of HDX PIT/HIC Report

HMIS Lead Agency Responsibilities

- Create unsheltered PIT survey in HMIS
- Create and distribute survey template to shelters and projects not participating in HMIS to obtain bed inventory and client demographic data
- Compile, analyze, and enter into HDX all data necessary to fulfill HUD reporting requirements for PIT/HIC
- Review draft HDX report for PIT/HIC with CoC's HMIS Committee prior to submission

PIT Committee/Local Homelessness Coalition Responsibilities

- Determine the hours, days, and locations for unsheltered surveys to be conducted in geographic area
- Determine volunteer needs and recruit volunteers to fill available shifts within their LHC
- Provide local survey sites with training materials, surveys, and resources needed to conduct count
- Review Housing Inventory Count program list and inform CoC Lead and HMIS Lead of any program changes and contact information for program representatives
- Review draft PIT/HIC data report for accuracy and notify CoC Lead and HMIS Lead of inaccuracies

Point-In-Time Count Methodology

CoCs are required to conduct this count in accordance with the following HUD guidance:

- [2021 Unsheltered PIT Count Guidance – Modifications & Waivers](#) (2020)
- 2021 HIC and PIT Count Data Submission Guidance (pending release, will be similar to [2020 guidance](#))
- [Notice CPD-18-08: 2019 HIC and PIT Data Collection for CoC and ESG Programs](#) (2018)
- [Point-in-Time Count Methodology Guide](#) (2015)
- [HMIS Project Setup and Inventory Changes During an Infectious Disease Outbreak](#) (2020)
- [How to Use Sampling within a CoC to Conduct an Unsheltered Point-in-Time \(PIT\) Count](#) (2020)

The CoC is required to conduct both a sheltered and unsheltered count. HUD requires that the **sheltered count** include individuals and families “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)” on the night designated for the count. HUD requires that the **unsheltered count** include individuals and families “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.”

HUD requires that persons residing in the following settings on the night of the count are not included in the Point-in-Time Count:

- Persons residing in permanent housing projects,
- Persons counted in any location not listed on the HIC (e.g., staying in projects with beds/units not dedicated for persons who are homeless, such as a halfway home for ex-offenders),
- Persons temporarily staying with family or friends (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, and
- Persons residing in institutions (e.g., jails, juvenile correction facilities, foster care, hospital beds, detox centers).

The Maryland Balance of State Continuum of Care has designated January 27, 2021 as the official “night of the count.”

Sources of Data

Three sources of data will be combined to ascertain the total count, including both the sheltered count and unsheltered count. These are:

- Sheltered Count
 - Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) data from Emergency Shelter (ES), Safe Haven (SH) and Transitional Housing (TH) projects that use HMIS
 - Survey data from Emergency Shelter (ES), Safe Haven (SH) and Transitional Housing (TH) projects that do not participate in HMIS, and
- Unsheltered Count
 - Individual surveys conducted with people living in a place not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans.

Count Type	Data Source	Population Counted	Where/When Data is Collected	How Data is Collected	De-Duplication Strategy
Sheltered Count	HMIS	People residing in HMIS-participating ES, SH and TH projects	Immediately after “night of the count” (1/27/2021)	Downloaded from HMIS	FN, LN, DOB, SSN Last 4, against surveys
	Surveys	People staying in non-HMIS ES, SH and TH projects	Immediately after “night of the count” (1/27/2021)	<i>Providers fill out a project-level aggregate data survey*</i>	Assume clients did not stay in 2 shelters the same night or take a survey and report that they were unsheltered on the night of the count (small error rate)
Unsheltered Count	Surveys	People living in a place not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans	Surveys collected over 7 days (1/28/2021 – 2/3/2021) at locations where unsheltered people frequent (drop-in centers, meal programs)	HMIS survey or paper survey	FN, LN, DOB, SSN Last 4, against other surveys and against HMIS data

**The specific data collection method will be finalized pending receipt of additional information from LHC*

Sheltered Count Plan

The total sheltered count will come from a combination of data obtained directly from HMIS for participating projects, and data obtained through surveys of HMIS non-participating projects. As not all temporary housing projects in the Maryland Balance of State use HMIS, this cannot be the sole data source for a full census of the sheltered homeless population for the PIT Count. TeamHMIS will conduct the census at HMIS non-participating projects by collecting data through a project-level PIT survey. For HMIS non-participating projects that collect some but not all of the required client characteristics for the PIT Count, TeamHMIS will extrapolate for the characteristics that are collected in at least 80 percent of the clients in the CoC as a whole.

Sheltered Survey Design

The sheltered count will make use of project-level PIT data to collect HUD required data elements. In 2021, PIT data required by HUD for sheltered homelessness includes:

1. Type of project: Emergency Shelter (ES), Transitional Housing (TH), Safe Haven (SH)
2. Household Type
 - A. Persons in households with at least one adult and one child. This category includes households with one adult and at least one child under age 18.
 - B. Persons in households without children. This category includes single adults, adult couples with no children, and groups of adults.
 - C. Persons in households with only children. This category includes persons under age 18, including children in one-child households, adolescent parents (under age 18) and their children, adolescent siblings, or other household configurations composed only of children.
3. Within each household type, the total number of persons and households within each age category:

- Persons in households with at least one adult and one child:
 - The number of children under age 18;
 - The number of young adults ages 18 to 24; and
 - The number of adults over age 24.
 - Persons in households without children:
 - The number of young adults ages 18 to 24; and
 - The number of adults over age 24.
4. Gender, race, and ethnicity for all sheltered persons.
 5. Data on veterans: the total number of veteran households, the total number of veterans, the total number of persons in veteran households, and the gender, race, and ethnicity of veterans
 6. Data on youth households, including gender, race, and ethnicity for parenting youth¹ and unaccompanied youth.²
 7. Counts of adults³ in the subpopulations outlined in the chart below. Note: These terms do not directly correspond to the program requirements of HUD funding streams and must only be used for the purposes of the HIC and PIT.

Subpopulations Required in PIT Report to HUD

Subpopulation	Definition Created by HUD for the Purpose of the PIT Count
Chronically Homeless Households without Children (Single Adults/Multiple Adults)	<p>An individual who is 18 years of age or older and:</p> <p>A. Is homeless and lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter (Persons living in transitional housing at the time of the PIT count should not be included.); and</p> <p>B. Has been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for at least 1 year or on at least four separate occasions in the last 3 years; and</p> <p>C. (C1) Can be diagnosed with one or more of the following conditions: substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, post-traumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from brain injury, or chronic physical illness (Persons with these disabling conditions identified above must also meet the qualifications identified in the term for “disability,” e.g., “is expected to be long-continuing or indefinite duration” OR (C2) An individual with a “disability” meeting with one or more of the following conditions:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A. A physical, mental, or emotional impairment, including an impairment caused by alcohol or drug abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, or brain injury that: (1) Is expected to be long-continuing or of indefinite duration; (2) Substantially impedes the individual's ability to live independently; and (3) Could be improved by the provision of more suitable housing conditions.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">B. The disease of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or any condition arising from the etiologic agency for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV).</p>

¹ Parenting youth are defined as “youth who identify as the parent or legal guardian of one or more children who are present with or sleeping in the same place as that youth parent, where there is no person over age 24 in the household.”

² Unaccompanied youth are defined as “persons under age 25 who are not presenting or sleeping in the same place as their parent or legal guardian, including: A. single youth; B. youth couples; and C. groups of youth presenting as a household.”

³ Per HUD “Subpopulation data should be limited to adults, with the exception of persons in chronically homeless families.”

Chronically Homeless Households with at Least One Adult and One Child (Families)	A family with at least one adult head of household and at least one minor child who meets all of the criteria for a chronically homeless individual, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.
Persons in Chronically Homeless Families	(See above definition for “chronically homeless.”)
Chronically Homeless Households with Only Children	A household comprised only of children under 18 years of age and who meet all of the criteria for a chronically homeless individual.
Adults with a Serious Mental Illness	This subpopulation category of the PIT includes adults with a severe and persistent mental illness or emotional impairment that seriously limits a person's ability to live independently. Adults with SMI must also meet the qualifications identified in the term for “disability” (e.g., “is expected to be long-continuing or indefinite duration”).
Adults with a Substance Use Disorder	This subpopulation category of the PIT includes adults with a substance abuse problem (alcohol abuse, drug abuse, or both). Adults with a substance use disorder must also meet the qualifications identified in the term for “disability” (e.g., “is expected to be long-continuing or indefinite duration”).
Adults with HIV/AIDS	This subpopulation category of the PIT includes adults who have been diagnosed with AIDS and/or have tested positive for HIV.
Adult Victims of Domestic Violence (optional)	This subpopulation category of the PIT includes adults who have been victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Unsheltered Count Plan

Due to the safety and public health risks related to COVID19, HUD has authorized Continuums of Care to significantly modify their unsheltered count methodology and counting strategies, including providing the opportunity to apply to HUD for a waiver of the unsheltered count entirely.

To minimize the risk of transmission of COVID19 during the 2021 unsheltered count, the Maryland Balance of State has set the following minimum guidelines for Local Homelessness Coalitions to follow in determining where and when surveys will be conducted. LHCs may do more than the minimum requirements, such as conducting street outreach, if they can provide sufficient PPE to all clients, staff, and volunteers who participate in the PIT count.

Time Frame

The official 2021 Point in Time Count date will be January 27, 2021. LHCs will have up to 7 days after the count to identify and collect data on individuals living in an unsheltered location on January 27, 2021. LHCs will have the ability to determine the duration of the count based on local capacity and may opt to conduct the count on one day as a blitz, or over the course of several days. However, all counting efforts must conclude by February 3, 2021. LHCs may conduct all counting efforts during the usual hours that services are offered and are not required to expand the hours of operation.

Locations

PIT Count surveys will be conducted at service-based sites, including locations that provide day services, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, or any other site where those living in unsheltered situations may present during the day. LHCs will identify the locations and hours that surveys will be conducted.

LHCs will be required to register the details of their 2021 PIT Count plan with DHCD when requested. The registration request will include, at a minimum: counting locations, counting hours and timeframe, primary contacts, data deduplication efforts, intended counting staff and safety considerations.

Enumerators

PIT Count surveys should be administered by existing staff throughout an LHC, for example, including staff from local shelters, street outreach and supportive service providers, where available. LHCs are not required to recruit community volunteers or develop teams to canvass the LHC geography. If volunteers are utilized, LHCs must provide sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE), such as a mask and gloves, and have adequate sanitation supplies available at all survey locations.

Data & Methodology

The 2021 unsheltered survey will include minimal data elements to limit the time that enumerators spend interacting with people experiencing homelessness, minimizing the risk of transmitting COVID19. Data will be collected via a brief survey, and individuals will be asked to provide as much information as they choose. If the client will not or cannot provide their personal information, observation-based surveys will be accepted. LHCs will need to consider methods to deduplicate client data, especially if the count is conducted over the course of multiple days.

Optional Upgrades

If an LHC has the capacity and would like to do more than the required minimum standards, they may opt to do so. Street Outreach teams or community volunteers can be used to canvas known areas where people are sleeping in unsheltered locations, outside of service-based locations. LHCs may expand hours available to conduct surveys if desired. Other plans to facilitate the count beyond the required minimum will be considered by the PIT Count Committee.

COVID19 Contingency Plan

Due to the anticipated rise in COVID19 cases throughout the winter months and increased hospitalizations, it is expected that local jurisdictions and the State of Maryland may implement new restrictions on programs, services, and safety standards – including a full “shutdown”. The PIT Count committee will monitor trends in COVID19 cases and shutdown measures up to the day of the count and reserves the right to request a full waiver for the unsheltered count from HUD.

Unsheltered Survey Design

The unsheltered survey will be administered via a *webform** that can be accessed from a tablet, smartphone, or computer. All data collected through the web survey will be ultimately stored in the HMIS database. Paper surveys will be available to enumerators as a back-up.

**The specific webform to host the survey to be determined.*

Eligible Survey Participants

Individuals and families “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” on the night designated for the count.

Survey Data Elements

Each survey will ask about the individual and their household members with whom they are experiencing homelessness. Survey questions are designed to meet the minimum HUD reporting criteria for 2021. Survey questions include:

1. Time and location of survey
2. Participant’s current living situation on the night of 1/27/2021
3. Participant and household members’ names, dates of birth, gender, race, and ethnicity

Reporting to HUD

The CoC will report data to HUD using the following household types and age category breakdowns:

1. **Persons in households with at least one adult and one child.** This category includes households with one adult and at least one child under age 18.
 - a. The number of children under age 18;
 - b. The number of young adults ages 18 to 24; and
 - c. The number of adults over age 24.
2. **Persons in households without children.** This category includes single adults, adult couples with no children, and groups of adults (including adult parents with their adult children).
 - a. The number of young adults ages 18 to 24; and
 - b. The number of adults over age 24.
3. **Persons in households with only children.** This category includes persons under age 18, including children in one-child households, adolescent parents (under age 18) and their children, adolescent siblings, or other household configurations composed only of children.

Housing Inventory Count Methodology

CoCs are required to submit this count annually in accordance with the following HUD guidance:

- [2019 HIC and PIT Data Collection for CoC and ESG Programs](#) (2018)
- 2021 HIC and PIT Count Data Submission Guidance (pending release, will be similar to [2020 guidance](#))

HUD requires that Continuums of Care conduct an annual count of people experiencing homelessness who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night. The Housing Inventory Count (HIC) is a point-in-time inventory of provider programs within a Continuum of Care that provide beds and units dedicated to serve people experiencing homelessness (and, for permanent housing projects, where homeless at entry, per the [HUD homeless definition](#)), categorized by five Program Types: Emergency Shelter; Transitional Housing; Rapid Re-housing; Safe Haven; and Permanent Supportive Housing.

Sources of Data

- Housing Inventory Count
 - Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) data from Emergency Shelter (ES), Safe Haven (SH) and Transitional Housing (TH) projects that use HMIS
 - Survey data from Emergency Shelter (ES), Safe Haven (SH) and Transitional Housing (TH) projects that do not participate in HMIS

Housing Inventory Count Plan

The HIC data will come from a combination of data obtained directly from HMIS for participating projects, and data obtained through surveys of HMIS non-participating projects. TeamHMIS will gather the data from HMIS non-participating projects through a project-level template to include unit inventory and occupancy rates for the designated date.

Point in Time & Housing Inventory Count Timeline

Timeframe	Actions
December 4, 2020	PIT Count Plan is released to LHCs and data entry/survey completion expectations are shared
December 18, 2020	LHCs notify TeamHMIS of any changes to housing inventory or program contacts
December 18, 2020	Deadline for LHCs to submit local planning information
January 15, 2021	Deadline for LHCs to register survey sites
January 20, 2021	Unsheltered PIT survey and virtual training distributed to LHCs and survey sites
January 25, 2021	TeamHMIS sends all ES, SH, TH, PH projects timeline and expectations for PIT and HIC
January 25, 2021	HIC, sheltered PIT survey and recorded training distributed to non-HMIS projects
January 28, 2021	LHCs/survey sites begin conducting unsheltered surveys (January 27 if LHC is doing "night of" street outreach)
February 3, 2021	Last day for LHCs/survey sites to conduct unsheltered survey
February 5, 2021	HIC and PIT surveys for non-HMIS projects due back to TeamHMIS
February 5, 2021	TeamHMIS pulls PIT and HIC information from HMIS-participating projects
February - March	HIC and PIT data quality review and compilation

Appendix



Unsheltered Survey

MD Balance of State CoC 2021 Point in Time Count Unsheltered Survey				
	<p><i>Your participation is strictly voluntary, and all of your responses are confidential. Your privacy will be protected and respected. If questions make you uncomfortable you do not have to answer them. Would you be willing to take a few minutes to answer some questions?</i></p>	Yes	No	Don't Know
	<p><i>Has anyone else already asked you questions about where you slept on January 27th?</i></p>	Yes*	No	Don't Know
1	<p>Local Homelessness Coalition</p>	Allegany County	Cecil County	Garrett County
	<p><i>(Select 1)</i></p>	Southern Maryland	Washington County	
2	<p>Location of Survey</p> <p><i>Please include site name and address, or other identifiers needed</i></p>			
3	<p>Where did you sleep on Wednesday, January 27, 2021</p>	Street or Sidewalk	Vehicle (Car, Van, RV, truck)	Woods/Outdoor Encampment
	<p><i>(Select 1)</i></p>	Abandoned Building	Bus/Train Station, Airport	Under Bridge/Overpass
	<p><i>* STOP: Does not meet the HUD definition for unsheltered homelessness. You may end the survey and thank the individual for their time.</i></p>	Friends/Family*	Emergency Shelter*	Transitional Housing*
		Motel/Hotel*	House/Apartment*	Jail/Hospital/Treatment Program*
4	<p>First Name</p>			Last Name
	<p>Nickname</p>			Initials
5	<p>Gender</p>	Male	Female	Transgender
	<p><i>(Select 1)</i></p>	Gender Non-Conforming		
6	<p>Race</p>	Am Indian/Alaskan	Black/African American	White
	<p><i>(Check ALL that apply)</i></p>	Asian	Hawaiian/Pac Islander	
7	<p>Ethnicity</p>	Hispanic/Latino	Non Hispanic/Non Latino	
8	<p>Date of Birth</p>			Age or Estimated Age
9	<p>Household Type on January 27, 2021</p> <p><i>(Select 1)</i></p>	HH with at least one adult and one child	HH without children	HH with only children
10	<p>Family Living w/Individual on January 27, 2021</p>	Adult 1	Child 1	Child 2
	<p><i>Name or Initials</i></p>			
	<p><i>Gender: Male, Female, Transgender, Gender Non-Conforming</i></p>			
	<p><i>DOB &/or Age</i></p>			
	<p><i>Race</i></p>			
	<p><i>Ethnicity</i></p>			