

Point-In-Time (PIT) Count Policy

Purpose

The Monmouth County HSC is required to conduct the Point-In-Time (PIT) Count under the regulations governing the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Continuum of Care Program. The PIT Count provides an opportunity for the Monmouth County HSC to collect information regarding the number and characteristics of people experiencing homelessness in the region. This information provides understanding about the causes of homelessness and service needs of those experiencing homelessness, and is one of the tools used in completing the community gaps analysis for the homeless system. Information from the PIT Count is used in the development of plans to address homeless issues, and is factored into annual funding priorities. In addition, the PIT Count is used in the evaluation of system performance and serves as an indication of progress in reducing homelessness in Monmouth County.

PIT Count Oversight

The Monmouth County HSC shall coordinate and implement the PIT Count through the PIT/PHC subcommittee. The PIT/PHC subcommittee shall begin preparation for the PIT Count at least four (4) months prior to the PIT Count. The committee chair shall serve as the PIT Coordinator and work with the Executive Committee and statewide PIT Advisory Council to finalize Count methodology and tools. The PIT Coordinator shall work through the PIT/PHC subcommittee to complete the following:

- Identify tasks for count preparation
- Develop timeline for completion of count activities
- Review and approve PIT survey, developing addendums (as appropriate)
- Identify community partners to involve in the planning and count events
- Manage volunteers
- Oversee training
- Manage count publicity and media outreach
- Monitor data cleaning & deduplication process
- Oversee planning and execution of all aspects of Project Homeless Connect Events (when held in conjunction with the PIT count)

The PIT/PHC Committee Chair (Coordinator) shall submit recommendations for changes in methodology and/or survey questions to the Executive Committee for approval no less than two months prior to the PIT Count date.

Timeframe

The Monmouth HSC shall conduct an annual PIT Count for both sheltered and unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness. The count shall occur in the last 10 days of January as required by HUD. The day of the count shall be selected by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJ HMFA) which oversees statewide coordination of the PIT Count.

Coverage

The PIT Count shall cover the full Monmouth County Region. All sheltering and outreach programs operating within Monmouth County shall participate in the PIT Count

Sheltered Count

The sheltered count shall be done through complete coverage of programs sheltering those experiencing homelessness. This shall include emergency shelters, agencies paying for hotel/motel placements of those experiencing homelessness, and transitional housing programs.

Unsheltered Count

The unsheltered count shall be done through canvassing all known locations within Monmouth County on the night of the count. Coverage of known locations shall be supplemented by a service based count conducted on the night of the count and up to 7 days following the night of the count. The service based count shall include identification of those experiencing homelessness through events, such as project homeless connect, outreach to soup kitchens, drop in centers, libraries, hospitals and other locations as identified by community stakeholders known to be frequented by those experiencing homelessness. The unsheltered count conducted through canvassing of known locations and service based counts shall be completed with client level data through interviewing all persons encountered using the identified survey tool.

Survey & Data Collection

The client level survey used in the data collection process for the annual PIT shall be developed by NJ HMFA. The Monmouth County HSC Executive Committee shall designate two (2) representatives to participate in the NJ HMFA Advisory Council responsible for reviewing and approving the survey. The appointed advisory council representatives must work with the PIT/PHC subcommittee to identify local concerns and/or requests related to changes in the survey and communicate these requests to the NJ HMFA Advisory Council.

The PIT/PHC committee must meet annually in the fall to review the survey tool and determine if any requests for changes or addendums for additional survey questions are necessary based on local needs. Requests for changes must be submitted to the Executive Committee for review and approval prior to sending them to the NJ HMFA Advisory Council for consideration.

For the sheltered count, where applicable, PIT Count information shall be pulled from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Emergency shelter and transitional housing programs entering information into HMIS must update data and verify accuracy no later than one week after the day of the count.

For sheltering programs not in HMIS and for the unsheltered count, agencies/volunteers must complete surveys with all persons experiencing homelessness. The PIT survey must be administered and should not be provided to individuals to fill out on their own.

The unsheltered count shall be completed through client level surveys conducted with each person encountered in known locations. The PIT/PHC committee shall work with knowledgeable community stakeholders to develop a comprehensive list of known locations to be used by outreach teams on the night of the count.

The unsheltered count based on known locations shall be supplemented by a service based count that takes place the night of the count and up to 7 days following the count. The PIT/PHC committee shall identify the service locations that will be included in the count along with the annual Project Homeless Connect Events (as applicable). The service based count will be conducted through client level surveys conducted with each person encountered.

Training

The PIT/PHC committee will be responsible for coordinating trainings for all volunteers participating in the PIT count. All volunteers administering PIT surveys must complete the PIT survey training. In addition to the PIT survey training, volunteers completing the street count must complete an outreach training.

Data Entry

PIT data must be submitted in accordance with the requirements stipulated by NJ HMFA by the established deadline. HMIS data cleaning must be completed by the deadline identified and client level surveys must be entered into SurveyMonkey. Paper copies of client level surveys must be submitted to the PIT Coordinator, or identified collector.

Data Cleaning

The PIT Coordinator shall be responsible for assisting NJ HMFA, or designated contractor, with the data cleaning process. This may include verifying data submitted, reaching out to agencies participating in the PIT count, reviewing paper copies of client surveys and making determinations about how to address data quality issues that arise.

PIT Count Publicity & Media

The PIT/PHC Committee is responsible for designating a media contact responsible for fielding questions from local media regarding the count and homelessness in the region. The PIT/PHC committee may develop talking points for media outreach and identify issues to highlight through the process. The Media Contact may prepare additional information regarding homelessness and successful initiatives for conversations with local press. The PIT/PHC committee shall work with the media contact to determine the level of outreach to local press regarding the count.