

LAUREN DUNTON: Hello, and welcome to the Preparing for Your 2015 Housing Inventory and Point-in-Time Counts webinar. My name is Lauren Dunton. I'm from Abt Associates, and I'm going to be coordinating the logistics for the webinar today. I hope everyone can hear me okay. We expect the webinar to go about an hour, and the first half an hour will be a presentation by Mike Roanhouse and William Snow of HUD. And then we will also be answering questions during the second half of the webinar. If you could please type your questions into the question box in the Go-To webinar panel. We will be pulling your questions from those that are submitted during the webinar. Also, if you have any technical issues with the webinar, I will do my best to try to help you get those resolved. And you can put those in the chat box. So, without further ado, I'm going to introduce Mike Roanhouse at HUD, and he is going to kick off the webinar.

MIKE ROANHOUSE: Thank you, Lauren, and good afternoon, everyone. This notice, setting standards for the collection of HIC and PIT data in 2016 represents an anniversary of sorts in HUD's efforts to follow Congressional direction to HUD in 2001, to work with communities to improve data on the nature and extent of homelessness. It has been 15 years since HUD was charged by Congress to work with local jurisdictions to collect an array of data on homelessness in order to analyze patterns of use of assistance, including how people enter and accept the homeless assistance system. Working with you, the CoCs, we have set national standards for consistently measuring homelessness through a single night in January point-in-time count of street and sheltered persons. And we have built a CoC longitudinal data system through the HMIS.

This effort has been successful in getting the essential metrics for measuring homelessness, identifying relevant and important subpopulations and setting goals for addressing national and local needs. Your data has been, I think, critical in helping Congress to understand the scope of the problem and the progress that has been made in limiting and reducing homelessness through reporting to Congress on the annual homeless assessment report. We feel the homeless data has helped increase McKinney-Vento program funding in an era of retrenchment in the funding of many other programs. You have set up a standard of measurement that other federal agencies have adopted or are adopting. HUD truly appreciates the outstanding work you all have done and continue to do in meeting the Congressional direction and its expectation for better local and national data on homelessness.

Now, the notice that we're going to discuss deals with two essential components of the point-in-time count. The Housing Inventory Count is a report that informs the homeless assistance community on the capacity to house persons who are homeless at local and national levels. The Point-in-Time Count provides the homeless assistance community with data needed to understand the number and characteristics of persons who are homeless at a point-in-time. The guidance that will form the basis of the 2016 count is contained in a notice called a Notice for Housing Inventory Count and Point-in-Time Count Data Collection for the Continuum of Care Program and the Emergency Solutions Grants Program. All CoCs should review this guidance carefully. It includes information that must be collected to successfully complete the 2016 HIC and PIT count. Now, getting into the details on this particular notice of standards in guidance will be William Snow. William?

WILLIAM SNOW: All right. Thank you, Mike, and thank you, Lauren. I want to echo Mike's words. The PIT count is extremely important. We use it a lot. We hope you use it at the local level. We hope it is useful for you, and we will continue to use the PIT count to drive progress, to drive budget requests. And, more importantly, to help us end homelessness. So we think that is a goal that we all are striving for, and this is hopefully a tool that gets us closer to that mark and helps us better understand our important community. I'm going to try to zip through the slides relatively quickly. I want to cover some hot points where we tend to get lots of questions, and maybe I can address some of these before we give you guys the floor for asking questions. And, hopefully, we'll resolve some questions that way. So let's start with a discussion of the general over-arching concept of what's included in the housing inventory count or the HIC. Projects should only be included in the HIC if they have beds and units that are dedicated to serving homeless people. And what does that mean? It means those projects that have a primary intent to serve homeless persons, that verify a homeless status as parts of its eligibility determination, and the actual program clients are predominantly homeless.

So I want to pause on one point. We often get a question from communities about code blue shelters or winter shelters, whatever name they go by, whether or not they should be included. And our answer is, as long as they have nighttime accommodations and those accommodations are provided on the night of the count, yes, those should be included. We know that sometimes pieces of the dedicated concept I just read, like verifying homeless status, it kind of—it's on the line. Often the code blue shelters are trying to prevent people from having serious harm from the cold, right? They're avoiding serious health issues like hypothermia. So we would definitely include those. So, if you have a question about that, yes, please include those in your Housing Inventory Count, and you would determine where to include them in terms of whether they're year around, seasonal or overflow based on when they're open, right? If they're open all year round, they'd be year round. If they're open for a specific period, you know, January to March, that's seasonal. And, if they're open based on random concepts, right, or not open all the time, so if it hits under a certain temperature, and that's the only time it's open, that would be overflow.

All right, let's move to some of the changes. So a really big change that we found issues with last year, some areas of confusion were around rapid re-housing. So last year we asked that projects, rapid re-housing projects be included, and you would include a project if it has persons enrolled in rapid re-housing who had a residence date, so they entered into a residential move in date. And last year we asked for the project to have rental assistance as well. That created a lot of confusion that's not collected in HMIS. If you look at the data standards, it's only collected for certain programs like SSVF, but it's not required of all. So what we've done this year is we've removed that third element, and we've said rapid re-housing projects should be included if they have persons enrolled in the program. And you include those persons who are enrolled on the night of the count and those persons who have a residential move-in date. That might mean that some of these people are not currently receiving rental assistance. Some of them might be receiving services, and that's it. For the purposes of counting rapid re-housing on the HIC, that's okay. And we understand that. So hopefully this makes it easier for you guys to collect locally, but it also does represent capacity, right? These are people who were rapidly rehoused because of the rapid re-housing program, and they are still in units as a result of that. So we're comfortable including that on the housing inventory count. So I wanted to make that clear, and hopefully that helps clarify where we stand with reporting on rapid re-housing.

We made a few other tweaks. So, for chronically homeless data, historically we said just tell us the number of chronically homeless dedicated beds. This year we're going to break that out by household type, and that helps us, especially we use this data in the competitive arena. Historically, we've looked at subpopulation data in the NOFA, and, as you all probably are very familiar with, we looked at it again in 2015. And it would help us if we understood how many of those beds are dedicated to families and how many are dedicated to individuals. So that is the intent of making this change.

For once, we got rid of something. I hope that makes folks happy. We got rid of unmet need. We don't want to send the message that calculating unmet need is unimportant, but we don't think this is the place to do it. We think locally you're likely using other planning processes to understand your gaps and your needs for resources, and we encourage you to continue to find ways to understand your needs. But we won't require you to do that through the HIC process.

All right, another change is the VA-DOM beds. So, after having many discussions with our partners at the Department of Veteran's Affairs, we decided that we will no longer include DOM beds as part of the dedicated homeless inventory. The VA asked very specifically for us to treat those as residential beds. And, for that, that counts as institutional beds. And institutional beds are not included on the housing inventory, and people in those are not included in the PIT count. So we're removing the VA-DOM from the HIC requirements. And people in them are not going to be counted in the PIT count. I was informed that we made an error on Page 8 of the notice. We kept VA-DOM as a potential federal funding source that was identified. So I want to be clear that was an error and that we are not collecting on VA-DOM beds through the HIC and PIT process from here and going forward. So hopefully—for some, I know that's been an issue for HMIS data, and hopefully this will help with that as well. We removed the concept of prefixes. We used to get it for the VA-funded programs. Instead, we just created a new category, a new data collection field on federal funding sources or other federal funding sources. So you will indicate there what other federal funding sources you'll get. And that's again where the error was where we kept VA-DOM. So VA-DOM you will not report on.

And, finally, for the HIC there's one additional change. And we added a new field to help us better understand transitional housing. What we're really trying to get at is what transitional housing projects are primarily site-based or in one primary facility and how many are scattered. And that could be in two or three buildings, or it could be in many more than that. But we're just trying to get a sense of that concept of transitional housing, especially as more and more is being done with transitional housing in terms of reallocating. We want to make sure that the ones that remain are serving the right population, but also understanding the nature of that transitional housing in the first place. So this will hopefully inform that.

All right, so let's look at some of the PIT count changes. I wanted, again, just look very briefly at the framework, kind of the core stuff. For the PIT count, again, we require a PIT count every other year in the last 10 days of January. We released a methodology guide in 2014. We encourage all communities to look at that to understand the point-in-time count standards for counting. It's very important. And we strongly encourage folks to use their HMIS to derive their sheltered count. That should hopefully be the primary source. And, from what we saw from

data last year, that really was the primary source. The sheltered count includes persons who are residing in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and safe havens. If a person is not in one of these types of facilities, they are not considered sheltered on the night of the homeless count. So we just want to be clear. To be considered sheltered, you've got to be identified in one of these types of facilities.

Unsheltered, so unsheltered is everyone who's on the streets. And this is, again, the same as it has been in the past. Streets could be abandoned buildings, cars, parks, airports. So that's the unsheltered count. There are several people we don't include. This hasn't really changed from the past, so I'm going to skip to the changes for this year. I want to preface this first big one, this is the chronic change, with the statement that we're imminently releasing the new final chronic homeless definition. We expect it to come out perhaps by the end of this week. In this webinar, I will talk, again highlight the changes that are associated with that. But other aspects of the chronic definition change, things not directly associated with the count, will not be covered in this webinar. And questions to that effect I will not answer. We are going to host several webinars in the near future. And, from what I understand, they will be regional webinars that allow some question and answer as well. So I would prefer not to answer questions in this context that aren't directly related to the count. So I just want to let folks know that.

But this is big. It's exciting. For the point-in-time count process it's not easy. So I want to state that up front, because you'll say it, and I'll confirm it, but it doesn't change it. We're going to be collecting on chronically homeless according to the new definition. And, again, we recognize it is going to be a challenge. And here is the primary difference, right, there are three core components to the chronic definition. The place where they're coming from hasn't changed, right? The regulation isn't changing that. They've got to come from a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or an emergency shelter. But the length of time component is changing, right? The 12 months of continuously homeless has not changed, but a person who has been homeless with four occasions over the past three years will only be considered chronically homeless if those occasions add up to at least 12 months. Again, we know that is going to be a challenge in the PIT count. I will be very curious to see best practices around that. I will say, as well, that this will be a really big point, and we will consider this a baseline. And, again, historically, we've looked at this in our competition process. And I would not be surprised if that's something we continue to use. So I just want to flag it. This is important, and, again, challenging, but we expect you to collect on the new standard.

And the final component of the chronic definition is a disability. So, in the past, it's been a little more loose. There's the concept of a disabling condition and some very specific things spelled out. The statute certainly still stands, but we're asking for there to be a disability specifically. So those are the core pieces that reflect the change in the chronic definition and how that will impact the point-in-time count. There are a few other clarifying points on collecting on chronic that we want to add as well.

So one of those clarifying points is—sorry about that—is that we are not limiting the chronic homeless definition to people who are adults. In the past, the count guidance said that you only count adults. But we would like you, consistent actually with the statute and the regulation, to count all persons who meet the chronically homeless definition, that would include people under

the age of 18. We don't expect that to be a large number, but everyone counts. And so, if you identify them, please include them in your count. This does not mean that we're collecting on unaccompanied youth who are chronically homeless as a unique field. We're not asking for that. We're just saying that your chronic numbers should include anyone that you identify who are chronically homeless, regardless of age.

The other clarifying point there is, if a family or a household is considered chronically homeless, because at least one person meets the chronically homeless definition, you should count all persons in that household as chronically homeless. That may mean that five-year olds and seven-year olds get counted as chronically homeless. We understand that. That's part of their association with a chronic household. So that's been our standard in the past, but I don't think we've done a good job from the HUD side to clarify that. And I hope the notice and this webinar does that. We want to be sure. And that is the standard we will continue to use going forward.

All right, two more changes in the PIT that I want to cover. Transgender, so I should say that we're still trying to figure out the proper way to collect on gender, to collect data on gender. And we're not convinced even this year that it's exactly right, but we received several pieces of feedback from people in the transgender community and advocates, and they clarified that it's not helpful to break out transgender male to female and transgender female to male. So we collapsed it back to transgender. One point that we didn't add in the notice, but we likely will next year is that a best practice is to collect—when asking the gender questions, to ask it in a way where they can select multiple options, right? So male-female transgender, rather than making them mutually exclusive, allow people to identify all of the above. And that's more culturally sensitive, and that's what we would recommend. Again, we will likely make that a requirement going forward, similar to what we do with multiple race where you should, in asking the question, allow people to report on all races that they identify with. If somebody for gender selects multiple categories that include transgender, then you should report them only as transgender. So, on the data reporting side, you still will continue to report one gender per person. But we want to be clear that, in the data collection side, when asking the questions, we want to be culturally sensitive and allow people to identify with all applicable genders. So, again, that's likely something we will change going forward as a part of the notice. But we wanted to flag it for this year.

The final thing is last year we collected demographics on youth as a larger concept of parenting youth and unaccompanied youth were lumped in one demographic table. We are going to break that out. Recognize you're going to have small numbers for parenting youth. It'll be a challenge a little bit on the extrapolation side, but we feel there's some real value in understanding the demographics of each. So we're breaking that out this year.

All right, so those are the core changes. I'm going to point to our resources that are available on the HUD exchange. Mike mentioned the notice, and we talked about the Point-in-Time Count Methodology Guide. And we have several tools on the HUD exchange. There's two core resource pages on the exchange. One is called PIT count system tools or survey tools, I'm sorry, survey tools. So, if you use that in your search function on the HUD exchange and put PIT count survey tools, you'll find our model surveys. We did not update them this year. We will do so next year, we just didn't have enough time to update it per the chronic stuff, and we want to get

that right. And we recognize that they don't, the current model surveys don't have parenting youth. So we will update that for next year.

We are not offering a free mobile app this year. Many have asked that. We beta tested it. We learned important lessons. We will plan on providing a white paper on lessons learned. It's just not something that we could actually carry forward. We thought we could, but we are unable to. So I'm sorry about that. It was a nice idea. We like moving forward and the technology around when we encourage communities to experiment with technology that could improve the PIT count process. But I wanted to flag that.

There are a few other tools that are available. We have another page called the PIT count implementation tools page. So, if you throw those terms in the search bar on the HUD exchange, it'll come up with a page, and we have a recently posted PIT count planning worksheet, kind of gives a timeline, gives a checklist of sorts for communities to think through who to engage, what types of things need to be done leading up to the count and after the count. It should be a useful tool, probably more useful next year, since we got it out a little bit late, but still worth looking at for this year. And we also have the extrapolation tool available still which helps communities derive demographic data.

All right, with that, I'm going to turn the time back to Lauren. She's going to help us field the questions, and she's looking through them. You'll need to submit your questions through the chat function, and we probably won't get to all of them, but we will get to what we can. And, Lauren, I turn it back to you.

LAUREN DUNTON: Okay. Hi, William. So we had several questions kind of as you were explaining kind of how to handle the code blue beds about whether they should be counted if they're available but nobody's in them or they're not open on the night of the count, how to handle that situation. Could you clarify that?

WILLIAM SNOW: Great question. So let's start with if they're not available on the night of the count. We would say no. We only include the inventory that's available on the night of the count. If it is open on the night of the count, we would ask you to include all of the inventory it has available.

MIKE ROANHOUSE: Capacity.

WILLIAM SNOW: Yeah, we're looking at capacity.

LAUREN DUNTON: Okay, and how about if the program is open, it's a program that's open 24/7, but it doesn't provide actual beds?

WILLIAM SNOW: Oh, great question. We do know that there are some areas where people, unfortunately, are sleeping on chairs. We would ask you to count—normally we don't count the chairs, but, if people are in them using them as beds on that night, I would count them and the chair as a bed. But that's, again, only when it's overflow like that, which we know does happen, unfortunately, in lots of the country more often than we would hope.

LAUREN DUNTON: Okay. So there was a question around when you were talking about the designation of the chronic beds and splitting them up between household type, of what to do if a provider doesn't specify or that information isn't available.

WILLIAM SNOW: Good question. So we have rules in the housing inventory right now about generally how do you deal with inventory where there's kind of a mixed population and there's no kind of dedicated pattern. You can use the guidance that's in there, and there's a few different methods. You could use kind of what's the historical trend. You could look at a few things, but I would encourage you to look there. And I'm kind of flipping through my notice now to see what page we state that on. Page 11 of the notice covers that for the general beds, and you can use the same principles for the chronic dedicated beds.

LAUREN DUNTON: Okay, thanks, William. There were a few questions too around the VA-DOM program and when timing-wise it should be dropped from the homeless system. So obviously they know it's clear that [PH] communities shouldn't be included in the VA-DOM beds in the 2016 HIC and PIT. But when should they be not treated in their HMIS overall?

WILLIAM SNOW: Great question. So this is one we've tried to grapple with. So we will count them for the fiscal year 2015, right? Or, sorry—yes, 2015. So those of you who just finished your [PH] AHAR process or are in the middle of the AHAR process, you would still count them in what you're submitting right now for the 2015 AHAR, just like we counted them for the 2015 HIC and PIT. For 2016, including the PIT count process and the AHAR process, you will no longer include them. So, while we haven't said out loud an effective day, that essentially marks it at October 1, 2015. And I know this is especially significant for communities that are trying to show their progress towards ending homelessness. If that was your barrier, you can remove them from your calculation. In fact, I think the specifications that were released recently and are available on the U.S. ICH home page did not include DOM beds in the specifications for calculating the benchmarks. So that's a fun question, and hopefully that answers it and hopefully it helps folks. We know that was an area of confusion and kind of difficult, especially as they weren't participating in HMIS.

LAUREN DUNTON: William?

WILLIAM SNOW: Yep?

LAUREN DUNTON: William? Hello?

WILLIAM SNOW: Yep? Can you hear me? Can you hear me?

LAUREN DUNTON: We seem to have lost William. Somebody, please, if you can still hear me, just type in the chat box, the questions box, let me know if you can hear me.

WILLIAM SNOW: Lauren, can you hear me?

LAUREN DUNTON: Okay. So I think everyone can still hear me. William's going to drop off and try calling in again. But, in interim, I just wanted to take a moment and let you guys know that, if you're—I'm trying to answer everyone's questions in the chat box, and feed some of them to William as he's been answering them. But I know that we probably won't get through all of them, and some of them are very specific to your particular CoC. So, if you don't receive an answer as part of this training, please submit your question to the [PH] HCX ask a question function, the help desk on HUD Exchange. It really helps us out too if you're able to indicate whether it's a HIC question or a PIT question.

WILLIAM SNOW: Lauren, can you hear me?

LAUREN DUNTON: So apologies again if we don't get to your question as part of this training.

WILLIAM SNOW: Can you hear me, Lauren? She must be doing something on her side. All right, I'm not sure if folks can hear me. We're going to have Lauren drop off and call in again, and hopefully one of us, somebody will be able to hear us. We apologize for the hiccup here. Can you hear me, Lauren? All right, it sounds like we're having an issue between Lauren and I, but some can hear us. So I'm going to continue. Lauren just sent me a question. Is mental health considered a disability for chronic homeless? So that's a good question. It's one that's hard to answer, because mental health actually has a huge umbrella. What we've used in the notice, and I'm going to refer to the back of the notice where we refer to the terms, you still have to meet the needs of the disability concept which are expected to be of long, continuing, or of indefinite duration, substantially impedes the individual's ability to live independently, and could be improved by the provision of more suitable housing conditions. Those are kind of the core pieces of the disability piece. So it may and it likely does apply in mental health, but you'd have to consider again is it of long term duration and does it substantially impede. Those are kind of the two core pieces there.

Another question is is self-report okay for determining the chronic definition? Yes. So we have to be clear that counting in the point-in-time count is not the same as counting for eligibility, right? We recognize that it's not going to be perfect, and, if you're counting especially something as complicated as chronically homeless, that you may not, you may over count in some instances. You may undercount in other instances. But we would accept on a point-in-time count a self-report. But the self-report wouldn't be based on asking the question are you chronically homeless. It's based on their response to the questions of length of time and disability. And you should know where they're coming from, right? So technically where they're coming from as well. So you should be asking those three components. As a CoC you should understand are they coming from the streets, shelter, or safe haven, how long have they been on the street, and, finally, do they have a disability? So you can determine chronic status from those, and you can rely on that, even though those three components may be self-reported.

LAUREN DUNTON: William, can you hear me now?

WILLIAM SNOW: I can hear you. Can you hear me?

LAUREN DUNTON: Yes, sorry about that.

WILLIAM SNOW: No worries.

LAUREN DUNTON: Okay, so we had a question about how to count motel and hotel vouchers for the purposes of HIC.

WILLIAM SNOW: Yes, I'm not exactly sure how to answer that without more clarity. So, typically, as per our regulation, hotel/motel vouchers will be included if they are funded for homeless persons, right? We don't just knock on hotel/motel doors. But if, let's say, a charitable organization, including churches, or perhaps a county government pays for a hotel/motel for the purpose of assisting a homeless family, that can be included on the night of the count. And all persons in that household should be counted. I know there's been a question about unaccompanied youth in relation to hotel/motel. Sometimes they are with a family. It may not be their biological family, but they are with them on that night. You certainly would count them if they're also in that hotel/motel receiving homeless assistance with that other household.

LAUREN DUNTON: William, can you close the e-mail on your screen? People can't see the slides.

WILLIAM SNOW: Oh, I'm sorry. And thank you, Dan. All right, Lauren, another question?

LAUREN DUNTON: Yep, but, as a follow up to that, if you're counting the motel vouchers, do they need to be on the HIC if they're in the PIT count?

WILLIAM SNOW: Absolutely, yes. Remember that the connection between the HIC and the PIT is 100%, right? If they're not on the HIC, they can't be included in the sheltered PIT count. I actually should note too our goal is to open up the HDX early. I think we had this goal last year, and we ran into some hiccups. We're really going to try to open it up. I can't tell you how early, but we're hoping to open it up very early so you can enter in especially your HIC. I know that takes some time, but our goal is to open it up early for communities to enter as soon as they can. And the deadline will likely continue to be April 30th. Last year we extended it. We do not anticipate doing that again. April 30th is a really important timeline for us. So we'll likely stick to April 30th.

LAUREN DUNTON: Thanks, William. There is also a question about whether CoCs, what their responsibility will be this year for documenting their point-in-time count methodology.

WILLIAM SNOW: Oh, great question. So we actually are revisiting what's in the HDX about methodology. There will be some changes. A core piece that we're trying to get at, and you probably saw it in the application for those of you involved in writing up the application, we want to know if you're actually changing your methods. And we also want to know if you're changing your implementation, like improving your data quality. And sometimes those things bleed together. But, when we talk about changing your methodology, we're talking about you once use the service-based count, and now you're switching to an observation-based night of the count approach. That's a change in methodology. If you are doing more training and more

outreach, that's an improvement to data quality. That actually is not a change to the methodology itself. It's just implementing the methodology better. So we added questions in the application process this year around that. In our HDX changes, we're looking at similar types of changes. So we want to know how you're counting folks. And also we plan on finding out what percent of your data comes from various places for your sheltered count. There's a big question about how much HMIS is driving your housing inventory and sheltered information. So, in the past, we've said select all the types of sources you use for providing us your sheltered count data. But this year we'll ask what percent of your data came from this source, right, if it was 90% HMIS and 10% provider surveys, that's what you'll provide us. So we're trying to find that information out.

LAUREN DUNTON: Sorry, I missed probably most of your discussion about the chronic homelessness, but there still seem to be some questions coming in regarding the new requirement and [PH] term episode, so I don't know if you did already, but it might be helpful to walk through an example of how that would be applied or how the new definition differs from what CoCs have done in the past.

WILLIAM SNOW: So actually I am going to defer that question. That's actually going to be more appropriate for the larger chronic webinars. The main piece I will briefly touch on right now is just the idea that you're going to need to ask how long, you know, how many occasions, which is something I think many of you have been asking already, and then adding up the time across those occasions. Do they add up to 12 months? Again, that's complicated. CoCs are going to have to be creative in figuring out how to do that. But that's the idea, right? So, if they say they've only had three occasions and they're supposed to have four, you don't have to ask them, you know, well how long—what's the combined total of that time over those three occasions. But, if it's four, then you're going to want to know, well, during those four occasions, would you say you were on the street for 12 months, 11 months, and ask them the question. So, again, I probably didn't get the best example of how to do that. We'll provide you that in the future, probably not before this count, but we'll certainly touch a lot more on this change to the chronic definition in the webinars that we'll do in the coming weeks.

LAUREN DUNTON: Okay, thanks, William. There's a couple questions around point-in-time methodology. I don't know if you want me to send those your way now or if we want—that's kind of out of the scope of this particular training. But we do have some I can share if you'd like to answer those as well.

WILLIAM SNOW: Sure. Let's see what we can do on those.

LAUREN DUNTON: Okay. So there's a question about what time can the CoCs start counting on the night of the count. So when is the appropriate time to count related to the day of the count?

WILLIAM SNOW: Yeah, good question. HUD does not set the standard for that. It depends somewhat on your methodology. So, if you're doing an observation-based approach, a night of the count observation-based approach, you need to count at a time when, in your community, people are not likely to be moving from shelter to shelter or from shelter to unsheltered situation.

So we know that's not perfect, but you should have a fairly good sense of when people are more or less settled for the night. Yeah, and generally they'll actually be sleeping, but that's why it's hard to give you a specific time, because that actually varies for communities, especially those that deal with cold or really cold weather. It may vary.

LAUREN DUNTON: Okay, thanks, William. This is the end of the official slide show. This part of the presentation is just Q&A. So you're not missing any slides. There aren't any more for us to share at this point. And there have been a bunch of questions about recording. The presentation is being recorded, and it will be posted on HUD Exchange after the webinar is over, probably not for a few days. I would check early next week. I think—I mean those are the main—we've had a lot of questions around chronic, but we're going to hold off on those for now. And there have been several questions about rapid re-housing participants and whether or not they should be included in the point-in-time count.

WILLIAM SNOW: Okay, any specific question on that?

LAUREN DUNTON: Just that was it, are rapid re-housing participants included in the PIT count and how are they counted if they are.

WILLIAM SNOW: Yes, so, if they're in rapid re-housing and, again, meet the two core criteria of enrolled in a rapid re-housing program on the night of the count, and have a residential move-in date, then you do count them on the night of the count, even if they're only receiving services at that point in time in the program.

LAUREN DUNTON: Okay. And there is also a question about the new unit type for transitional housing on the HIC and whether or not that should be based purely on location or whether ownership factors into that classification as well.

WILLIAM SNOW: I'm sorry, Lauren, can you say that one again? I want to make sure I got the first part. I'm not sure I—

LAUREN DUNTON: Sure. For the transitional housing unit type that's going to be required for this year, there's a question about whether or not it should be based purely on location, so whether or not where our program is physically located versus ownership. So there was a question about whether or not if there's one project that's two different traditional housing programs, one for families, one for individuals, how should that be counted?

WILLIAM SNOW: I see, yes. It'll be based on location not ownership. And one clarification on the rapid re-housing. I want to be clear that we continue to count rapid re-housing as permanent housing. So we're not counting the people in that housing in your PIT count. But we, to identify what units you include on your HIC, you'll look at the nature of the people, right. Are they enrolled in the program? Do they have a residential move-in date? Remember, the rapid re-housing inventory really is based on the people. It's unique. It's different than all the other types of things we collect on the HIC, because it's driven by the voucher stuff. So I just wanted to be clear. They're not in the PIT count. We haven't changed that at all. We're just talking about the housing inventory count.

LAUREN DUNTON: Okay, thanks. Sorry, I'm trying to keep up with the questions. Could you—I think I wrote it to you when we were in the call, when I wasn't able to hear anyone, but did you talk about whether a mental health issue was considered a disability?

WILLIAM SNOW: Yes.

LAUREN DUNTON: Okay, sorry. And let's see what else. There was a question about the geographic coverage related to the point-in-time count and if there was anything that was learned by HUD from the 2015 count, any best practices or resources that would be available about excluding or comparing similar geography.

WILLIAM SNOW: Good question. So we're still analyzing what we got in the competition. That was one of the first times we got kind of an inflow of what communities use to determine whether to exclude areas or not. So I can't speak to it at this point, but I'm looking forward to it. What we do know is the most typical areas that get excluded are desert areas, and we're talking like extreme desert areas, really rough mountain areas that are very, very hard to reach for anybody, and then, on the total opposite side, neighborhoods that tend to be gated communities that are very wealthy and tend to have ways of barring access to the neighborhood. So those are kind of the core areas where we've seen people have excluded those types of areas from the PIT count. But we'll be looking forward to analyzing the data a little more from the competition.

LAUREN DUNTON: Thanks, William. There was also a question about VASH and whether it needs to be included in each HMIS to be counted on the HIC.

WILLIAM SNOW: Good question. So, while we like all the inventory that's included on the HIC to be included in the HMIS, we recognize that doesn't always happen. The VASH inventory absolutely should be counted in the HIC, even if it's not in HMIS. We're hoping we're moving the needle a little bit on getting folks in VA programs onto the usage of HMIS. I know there's been some movement in the last year. But I know, at the community level, everybody experiences it different. And you may still be struggling with that. So, yes, they should be included in the HIC, and hopefully we can make some movement getting into HMIS.

LAUREN DUNTON: Okay, well, I think those are all of the questions that I've seen that are appropriate for the whole group. So I don't know, William or Mike, if you have anything you want to add.

WILLIAM SNOW: Yeah, I have—

LAUREN DUNTON: -- wrapping up a few minutes early.

WILLIAM SNOW: I have one or two more, and, again, they reiterate stuff we covered last year. So we continue to get questions about a broader population of people that are not included in HUD's definition of the point-in-time, right, what we count in the point-in-time. And, often, it includes doubled up, it includes people in institutions. We would encourage people in communities to do what you think you need to do to understand your homeless population. And the PIT count can be an important vehicle for doing that. You are required to collect the HUD

requirements and submit that to us, and you can't submit the other data to us. But that doesn't mean that you can't collect it. If you feel that you are able to do so and there's value in doing it locally, we'd encourage that. And one of the biggest areas of question is our education folks. We would love it if you engage with the education folks. And it may take a little bit of time in trying to understand the best way to capture the youth data that are identified by our education liaisons. Right now it's very difficult to try to include any of that data in the PIT count. But communities are trying, and there are good practices. I would encourage folks to read the We Count California report that was released earlier this year. It has some interesting concepts around counting youth. And we'd encourage communities to look at that. Be creative, right? It's possible, if you have an education liaison who's willing to work with you and knows about their homeless youth, that you could find quick tabs, try to find easy ways for them to contact their youth without administering a full survey. That could be a text saying, "You know, where were you on the night of the count? And did you get a survey?" And if they can—sorry—and, if they can answer that, you can do that quickly through a text. But we'd encourage communities to be clever, try to find other ways to get the information. But remember that de-duplication is still a challenge. You got to find ways to do that. So I'd encourage that. Mike, do you have anything you want to add?

MIKE ROANHOUSE: Mute.

WILLIAM SNOW: Just a second.

MIKE ROANHOUSE: Can I say that?

WILLIAM SNOW: Yeah.

MIKE ROANHOUSE: Just remember again that we still, in terms of youth and the education count, we still have to follow the venues for reporting that we've set, which is people are literally living on the street or in shelters, no emergency and transitional shelters, as the notice defines. [OVERLAY] doesn't count.

WILLIAM SNOW: Right, so you still only count the HUD categories when you report to us. But, again, we would say be creative, figure out what you need locally. And you can collect other data, even if you don't report it to us. But make sure you can distinguish the data. So I think that's it from our end, Lauren, unless another question has come in.

LAUREN DUNTON: Yep, we had one more question about unmet need and whether or not communities can continue to use the unmet need guidance to inform their future point-in-time counts.

WILLIAM SNOW: Absolutely. We would not stop you from using the current or the guidance that we put out in the past, including the calculation tool. We just won't require it.

LAUREN DUNTON: Okay. I think—oh, sorry, one question about SSVF and whether SSVF should be included on the HIC as well. That was in relation to your discussion about VASH.

WILLIAM SNOW: Yes, SSVF should absolutely be included. Make sure you're only counting those who are receiving rapid re-housing instead of prevention. I think that's most of SSVF. But, regardless, SSVF and HMIS is collected separately for prevention and rapid re-housing, so only include those who qualify under rapid re-housing. But, yes, you should certainly include them.

LAUREN DUNTON: Sorry, and there's one last question around back to our first question about cold weather beds and why they would be charted as overflowing not seasonal. There seems to be some confusion about the distinction between when to count something as seasonal and when to count it as overflow.

WILLIAM SNOW: So seasonal, the definition of a seasonal bed that we use in the notice is that it is open for a set period of time, and it is often with a specific start date and a specific end date that's known ahead of time, right? And they're not available all year round. It is very typical for people, for communities to open up a shelter on December 1st and have it open until April 1st, regardless of the weather. It's possible that you'll have a beautiful 70 degree day, nobody's going to want to use it, but it's open. We would include that as a seasonal. An overflow is one that literally opens up beds on an ad hoc basis. For the winter shelters, that's usually based on a temperature. So the day that it reaches 32 degrees, it opens, but it only opens because it reached that temperature. That's just an example. I know each community that has these shelters, they have different rules for why they open a blue shelter. If they're cold areas, they often are seasonal, right? It's always below 32 degrees, and they just plan on opening it on X date and closing it on Y date. That's typical. So hopefully that adds some clarity. I know, again, it gets a little complicated.

MIKE ROANHOUSE: Maybe I can add something. What we were after when we differentiated the concept of the three different shelter types was to really try—again, we're trying to get a measure of the capacity to handle homeless people during the winter. And we knew that you have first the main line as your permanent shelters. And then in many cases communities handle a surge of demand by having the overflow in a means, throw down mats and whatever, in existing shelters as a way of handling excess demand for the permanent shelter. And then, in fact, either there are what we call seasonal shelters which the general ones, some of them may just open for a fixed period of time during the winter. Sometimes communities have what they call thermo shelters which they'll open up shelters purely based upon the temperature as William was speaking to. So it's really a gradation of sort of the quality of the communities capacity to handle on a permanent basis with permanent shelter beds. And then, when they reach a surge, it usually occurs in the winter, through using overflow in those existing shelters or actually opening up just a seasonal shelter for the surge in the winter.

LAUREN DUNTON: Okay. Thank you, Mike and William. I think that's about it as far as questions. I want to thank everyone for attending the webinar today and apologize for the technical difficulties in the middle. But we seem to have regrouped here at the end. Again, if you have additional questions, please submit them through the HDX AAQ on the HUD Exchange, and we'll do our best to get back to you as soon as we can. And, again, all this material was covered in the 2016 HIC/PIT notice which is also available on the HUD Exchange. William and Mike, anything else to add?

WILLIAM SNOW: Nope, thank you all for participating.

LAUREN DUNTON: All right, everyone have a great day. Thanks very much. Take care.
Bye.