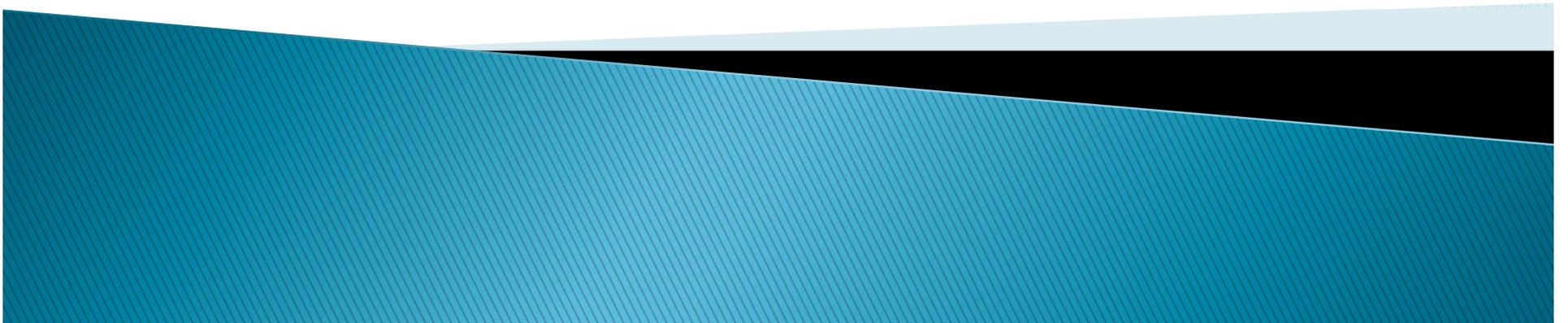


# Outreach & Sampling Methods for Youth Count! Data Collection

December 5, 2012

Lauren Dunton, Abt Associates



# The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count and the Housing Inventory Count (HIC)

- ❑ The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count provides a snapshot of the number and characteristics of persons who are homeless on a single night
- ❑ The Housing Inventory Count (HIC) reports the number of beds and units dedicated to serving homeless persons
- ❑ CoCs should work to coordinate the HIC and the PIT count and complete both counts on the same night
  - ❑ The number of sheltered persons reported in the PIT should equal the number of persons in ES, TH, and SH reported on the HIC

# Who to Include in the Count?

- ❑ Sheltered count

- ❑ Persons living in privately or publicly operated congregate shelters, transitional housing, hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or government agencies, and Safe Havens

- ❑ Unsheltered count

- ❑ Persons with a primary nighttime residence that is a public place not typically used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans



# Population Data

- Report the total number of sheltered and unsheltered persons and households for three household types:

**Households  
with at least  
one adult and  
one child**

**Households  
without  
children**

**Households  
with only  
children**

# PIT Population Data Age Categories

Households with at least one adult and one child	Sheltered		Unsheltered
	ES	TH	
Total number of households			
Total number of persons			
Number of persons (under age 18)			
Number of persons (age 18–24)			
Number of persons (over age 24)			



# PIT Population Data Age Categories

Households without children	Sheltered			Unsheltered
	ES	TH	SH	
Total number of households				
Total number of persons				
Number of persons (age 18–24)				
Number of persons (over age 24)				



# PIT Population Data Age Categories

Households with only children	Sheltered		Unsheltered
	ES	TH	
Total number of households			
Total number of one-child households			
Total number of multi-child households			
Number of children in multi-child households			



# Subpopulation Data

Subpopulation Type	Required for Sheltered Persons	Required for Unsheltered Persons
Chronically Homeless Individuals	✓	✓
Chronically Homeless Families	✓	✓
All Veterans	✓	✓
Female Veterans	✓	✓
Severely Mentally Ill	✓	✓
Chronic Substance Abuse	✓	✓
Persons with HIV/AIDS	✓	✓
Victims of Domestic Violence	<i>optional</i>	<i>optional</i>

# Methods for Counting Sheltered Homeless Youth

- ❑ Count youth in emergency shelters and transitional housing programs
  - ❑ Make sure to include all programs on CoC's housing inventory count (HIC)
  - ❑ Temporary emergency hotel/motel vouchers for homeless people
  - ❑ Faith-based providers and DV providers
  - ❑ Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) provider programs



# Methods for Counting Sheltered Homeless Youth

- ❑ Collect data using:
  - ❑ HMIS
    - ❑ Need alternative approach for including programs that don't participate in HMIS
  - ❑ Provider report or survey
  - ❑ Client-level survey using standardized instrument
- ❑ Can use a combination of approaches, but remember to de-duplicate!



# Considerations for Using HMIS

- ❑ Data quality
- ❑ Uses universal and program-specific HMIS data elements, as established by HUD
- ❑ Make sure information is gathered or extrapolated for each provider



# Methods for Counting Unsheltered Homeless Youth

- ❑ Street count plus interviews
  - ❑ Complete coverage (block-by-block) and/or known locations
  - ❑ Probability sampling
- ❑ Service-based count with interviews at non-shelter locations
  - ❑ Interview all clients at non-shelter services (i.e. soup kitchens, healthcare centers)
  - ❑ Include outreach teams
- ❑ Combination of street count and service-based count

# Strategies for Counting Youth

- ❑ Engage youth shelters and service organizations in planning process
- ❑ Partner with organizations that provide services to homeless youth to conduct the count
- ❑ Utilize incentives to engage youth in count process



# Strategies for Counting Youth (cont.)

- ❑ Identify known locations where youth congregate prior to the night designated for the PIT count
  - ❑ Consider engaging currently or formerly homeless youth help identify locations
  - ❑ Recruit expert volunteers such as law enforcement officials and social service staff to help identify locations
- ❑ Utilize incentives to engage youth



# Strategies for Counting Youth (cont.)

- ❑ Publicize the PIT count in the community
  - ❑ Design and hang posters in areas where youth congregate publicizing the count date
- ❑ Hold trainings for staff and volunteers to ensure they understand who to count and how to use the survey instrument



# Youth Count! 2013: Outreach and Sampling Methods for Understanding Youth Homelessness

Martha Burt, Urban Institute



Urban Institute, 2012

# Things Are Never Simple

- ❑ The term “youth” is broad, so planning a youth count requires thinking about the people you want to include, and the consequences thereof
- ❑ We’ll look at:
  - ❑ What subgroups are included in “youth”? Should a count try to include them all? If not, what are the priorities?
  - ❑ How do the subgroups you’re after influence where to look and who to get to help?
  - ❑ What do you want to know about “youth” in addition to being able to complete the HUD tables?

# What Do We Mean by “Youth”?

- ❑ The term “youth” covers a multitude of potentially quite different people
  - ❑ Street youth—those who don’t use either youth or adult shelters; any age
  - ❑ Youth using RHY programs, most likely ages 12–17
  - ❑ Youth using adult shelters, ages 17 (for moms) to 24
    - ❑ Subset: Moms with kids, most likely in adult family shelters
  - ❑ Unaccompanied youth in school
  - ❑ Justice-involved youth—in or just out of detention, re-entering from jail or prison

# What Do We Mean by “Youth”?

- ❑ Also populations defined by personal characteristics, overlapping and intersecting with location characteristics
  - ❑ Age—usually 12–24, from young teens to young adults
  - ❑ Subgroups based on gender
  - ❑ Members of racial/ethnic minorities
  - ❑ GLBT youth

# Subpopulations—Street Kids

- ❑ Where to look for street kids
  - ❑ Obviously, on the street, but which streets, and where else?
  - ❑ Issues for many street kids include the nexus of drugs, sex trade, HIV and other STD risk, and violence, so can use this information to target search locations
    - ❑ Clinics, treatment programs, law enforcement

# Subpopulations—Street Kids

- ❑ Who can help you find them—similar youth?
  - ❑ For locations, where kids congregate
  - ❑ For best times to search in the different locations
  - ❑ For advice on composition of search teams—include a youth? Include or exclude police? Include an outreach worker familiar with that location?
  - ❑ For direct contacts with youth in particular locations
  - ❑ For best approach strategies

# Subpopulations—Street Kids

- ❑ Who else can help you find them?
  - ❑ Street outreach workers from clinics, RHY programs, other homeless programs
  - ❑ Staff of youth drop-in/multi-service centers
  - ❑ HIV/AIDS and other STD clinics, primary care clinics, addictions recovery programs
  - ❑ Possibly jails, probation/parole officers, for those with arrest histories, law enforcement personnel

# Subpopulations—RHY Program Users

- ❑ Where to look for RHY Program Users
  - ❑ Obviously, in RHY programs, if we're talking about PIT counts.
  - ❑ It might also be interesting to get feedback from other parts of the youth population as to whether they ever used, use, or think of using an RHY program

# Subpopulations—RHYC Users

- Who can help you find them?
  - Staff of RHY programs

# Subpopulations—Pregnant/Parenting

- ❑ Where to look for them?
  - ❑ Family emergency shelters
  - ❑ Transitional housing programs
  - ❑ Domestic violence programs
  - ❑ Maternity group homes

# Subpopulations—Pregnant/Parenting

- ❑ Who can help you find them?
  - ❑ Shelter staff
  - ❑ Possibly child welfare staff, if family has an open CPS case
  - ❑ TANF and other mainstream agencies that provide benefits
  - ❑ Also will be some young women in single adult shelters whose children are in foster care, where the issue is reunification

# Subpopulations—Enrolled in School

- ❑ Where to look for them?
  - ❑ Through the school system and homeless education coordinators
  - ❑ Caution is needed with respect to homeless definitions:
    - ❑ Unaccompanied youth stably housed with relatives while their parents are homeless are not homeless by HUD definitions
    - ❑ Street youth, if they are in school, are not likely to make themselves known to the coordinators

# Subpopulations—Enrolled in School

- ❑ Who can help you find them?
  - ❑ Homeless education coordinators in particular schools
  - ❑ At the entire school district level, the district's homeless education coordinator

# Subpopulations—Justice-involved

- ❑ Since the age range of youth goes up to 24, young adults in or leaving justice system institutions are a potential subpopulation because they run a high risk of homelessness upon release, or may have been homeless before incarceration
- ❑ Where to find them?
  - ❑ For PIT—in juvenile detention, jail awaiting trial, or other CJS facilities (for HUD homeless definition, have to pay attention to length of incarceration and time to release)

# Subpopulations—Justice-involved

- ❑ Who can help you find them?
  - ❑ Law enforcement
  - ❑ Probation/parole officers
  - ❑ Re-entry-focused support and transitional residential programs

# What Issues Do You Care About?

- ❑ Age—what breakouts are meaningful—HUD’s 0–17, 18–24, may not help you too much. What does your CoC need to know to plan programs?
- ❑ Refer to Core Data Elements (CDEs) in Matt Morton’s presentation for last week’s Webinar. Also
  - ❑ Does youth have a home to go back to, or not
  - ❑ Precipitating factors—the CDEs will definitely help; also, if you’re going to all the trouble of finding and interviewing youth, might as well ask them some questions about other important stuff

# Subgroup Overlaps

- ❑ To get a better sense of the dynamics of youth subgroups, use interviews to gather data about overlaps. For all subgroups, ask
  - ❑ Use CDEs to learn their demographic and other personal characteristics. Then examine similarities and differences among the groups found in different venues.
  - ❑ Which different venues have they used/inhabited?

# How to Cover the Territory

- ❑ Geography-based sampling
- ❑ Respondent-driven sampling

# Geography-based Sampling

- ❑ New York City, Los Angeles, and some other very large CoCs use block sampling strategies for their PITs—is this possible for youth?
  - ❑ Identifying certainty and noncertainty blocks is hard enough for regular PIT, how possible for youth?
- ❑ Areas of high concentration or whole CoC?
  - ❑ My understanding of homeless youth, especially street youth, is that they tend to concentrate in relatively few areas of a CoC. If this is true for yours, should you concentrate your search efforts in these areas—i.e., go only to certainty sites?

# Respondent-based Sampling

- ❑ Respondent-based sampling, sometimes called “snowball” sampling, is a technique for reaching people with pretty rare characteristics, who would not be well-represented with normal household or other common sampling techniques.
  - ❑ Injection drug users, people with HIV/AIDS
  - ❑ Some have tried for homeless youth (e.g., Baltimore)
- ❑ How it works—connections, time frames
- ❑ Would it be useful for a youth count?

# Parting Thoughts

- ❑ You're committed to doing the best youth count you can—for many of you, to improving on efforts in earlier years.
- ❑ Your thoughts and comments on your priorities, techniques, decisions, points of focus would be good to hear during this session.
- ❑ See RHYTTAC website for last week's webinar that included information on CDEs

# Additional Youth Count! Resources

## □ Webinars & resources

□ Other RHYTTAC Youth Count! Webinars

[www.rhyttac.net](http://www.rhyttac.net)

□ National Alliance to End Homelessness

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/youthcount>)

□ Family and Youth Services Bureau/ACYF/HHS:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/resource-library>

□ HUD PIT guidance:

<http://hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewResource&ResourceID=4697>

□ National Center on Homeless Education guidance on Federal Data Collection for Homeless Youth:

[http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc\\_data.php](http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_data.php)



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