



# HPAC 2017 HOMELESS COUNT SUBCOMMITTEE OCTOBER 19, 2016 MEETING NOTES

## Meeting Attendees

- Isaac Blackstock, Yolo Community Care Continuum
- Phalicia Chow, Yolo Community Care Continuum
- Ryan Collins, Elica Health Centers
- Tracey Dickinson, Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency
- Bryan Golder, Fourth and Hope
- Ginger Hashimoto, Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency
- Kim Heuvelhorst, Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency
- Elaine Lytle, Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency
- Niomi Michele, Empower Yolo
- Amara Pickens, Fourth and Hope
- Joan Planell, City of Davis
- Bill Pride, Davis Community Meals
- Sergei Shkurkin, Shores of Hope
- Dan Sokolow, City of Woodland
- Nolan Sullivan, Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency

## Point-in-Time Count Overview

Tracey Dickinson explained that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires each local Continuum of Care (CoC) to plan and conduct a point-in-time (PIT) count of homeless persons within their designated service area. HUD relies on PIT data to define the nature and extent of homelessness as well as to measure progress towards ending homelessness.

Pursuant to HUD requirements, PIT counts must:

- Occur within the last 10 days in January
- Cover the CoC's entire designated service area
- Include sheltered count estimates every year
- Include unsheltered count estimates every other year (odd numbered years)
- Use only HUD approved methodologies
- Collect and report data on the following elements:
  - Household information
    - Households with at least one adult and one child
    - Households without children
    - Households with only children (under age 18)
    - Veteran households with at least one adult and one child
    - Veteran households without children
    - Unaccompanied youth households
    - Parenting youth households

- Age
- Gender
  - Female
  - Male
  - Transgender
  - Don't identify as male, female, or transgender
- Ethnicity
  - Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino
  - Hispanic/Latino
- Race
  - White
  - Black or African American
  - Asian
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - Multiple Races
- Chronically homeless status
- Veteran status
- Adults with a serious mental illness
- Adults with a substance use disorder
- Adults with HIV/AIDS
- Victims of domestic violence (optional)

Tracey also noted that there are numerous limitations when conducting a PIT count including:

- Count estimates reflect only persons identified as homeless on a single day
  - Since many people move in and out of homelessness during the course of a year, the actual number of people experiencing homelessness is likely much higher than count estimates
  - Additionally, it is nearly impossible for enumerators to identify and survey all unsheltered homeless persons, particularly individuals and families living in remote encampments
- Due to the limited scope of HUD's definitions, count estimates omit people who are:
  - Doubled up in conventional housing
  - People who are couch surfing
  - Adults living in a mental health facility, residential treatment facility, criminal justice facility, or permanent supportive housing and youth living in a residential treatment facility, emergency foster care, or detention facility

Another challenge is that improved counts reflecting higher numbers of homeless individuals and families have the potential to negatively affect the competitiveness of Yolo's annual CoC application score and therefore the amount of federal funding Yolo receives. Ultimately, the group agreed that regardless of any ramifications, Yolo will strive to conduct the most accurate count as possible.

### **Changes in 2017 HUD Guidance**

Ginger Hashimoto explained that HUD instituted three significant changes to their 2017 PIT count guidance:

1. Expanded gender identity answer options to include—"Don't identify as male, female, or transgender"

2. Changed chronic homelessness reporting to be part of the household type category rather than its own subpopulation category and clarified that if one household member qualifies as chronically homeless than the entire household counts as chronically homeless (including households comprised of multiple adults)
3. Announced HUD will be using 2017 PIT estimates as baseline data to measure local progress towards ending youth homelessness

### **Review After Action Report from 2015**

The group reviewed the After Action Report from 2015 and discussed ways to improve this year's count.

- Planning group
  - The group agreed that last year's organizational structure of having a count coordinator, a multi-disciplinary subcommittee, and four community leads for Davis, West Sacramento, Winters/rural areas, and Woodland.
  - The group discussed the importance of incentives to encourage participation and underscored the need to apply for grants, fundraise, and/or seek donations. The group liked the idea of handing out nominal gift cards and cold weather supplies such as socks, but also of hosting at least one magnet event such as a BBQ or pizza party in each city.

***ACTION ITEM: Tracey and Ginger to develop a draft budget related to PIT incentives and/or event costs, which will help the subcommittee with fundraising ideas et cetera.***

- Count schedule and framework
  - The group agreed that the multi-day approach used in 2015 worked well. However, rather than designate one day for each community, Bill Pride suggested allowing each community multiple days to complete the count. The group liked this idea, but decided to finalize schedule and framework decisions during November's meeting.
- Count day coordination and training
  - The group talked about setting parameters this year to ensure more consistency among community leads. The group talked about developing a more formal training structure for count enumerators including a mandatory training or a "train the trainer" training. While some supported this idea, others disagreed and felt the community does not have enough bandwidth to offer and/or participate in more training.
  - In addition to training, the group discussed the role of volunteers. Historically, Yolo has refrained from relying heavily on volunteer support, as the participating agencies have preferred to utilize their own staff and formerly homeless clients to conduct the count. Given the relatively small size of Yolo County, it is possible for agencies to cover the entire geography without much volunteer support. The group agreed that interested community members could offer their support in other ways besides serving as a count enumerator. However, the group decided to make this a future discussion item.
- Forms and data
  - The group acknowledged the need to better test technology if the enumerators want to utilize an app, tablets, and Wi-Fi hotspots to conduct the count. Generally, the group agreed that having paper and online versions of the count survey worked well.
- Survey questions
  - The group skipped this section of the report as they decided to save this for November's meeting.
- Unaccompanied homeless youth

- Given HUD's announcement about using 2017 youth estimates as baseline data for trend analyses, the group acknowledged the need to focus on youth. While Yolo did not apply for the same youth count grant as it did in 2015, it will incorporate many of the successful strategies and lessons learned including convening a youth-specific subcommittee.

## **Methodology**

The group made several methodological decisions, including:

- Selecting the count date of Monday, January 23, 2017
- Selecting a multi-day count timeframe for up to 7 days
- Selecting a mixed-methods approach of:
  - Complete census count
  - Known location count
  - Service-based count
  - HMIS data extrapolation

## **Stakeholders**

The group brainstormed other stakeholders not present, but who were important to engage in this year's count. Suggested partners include:

- City of Winters
- Eligibility workers
- Faith-based organizations
- Formerly homeless persons
- Law enforcement agencies
- Library branches/I See You project staff
- Local businesses
- Local colleges and universities
- Motel/hotel owners and staff
- Probation
- RISE Inc.
- Yolo County Children's Alliance
- Yolo County Office of Education
- Yolo Food Bank
- Yolo Healthy Aging Alliance

***ACTION ITEM: Tracey to contact the identified stakeholders and seek their participation in this year's count planning as well as day-of activities.***

## **Next Steps**

The group agreed to schedule the next meeting for November 17 from 3:30 to 5 p.m.