

Using HMIS for Point-in-Time Counts of Homeless People

- **Benefits of Using HMIS**
 - Requires fewer resources than a non-HMIS count
 - Provides in-depth subpopulation data without repetitive client interviews
 - Reinforces the value of the HMIS and builds on existing data systems
 - Contributes to year-round HMIS participation and data quality
- **Using HMIS for Counts of Unsheltered Homeless People**
 - HMIS is ultimately a tool for gathering information about people who use services
 - Most communities will need to continue street and service-based counts; others will choose to continue unsheltered counts
- **Using HMIS for Counts of Sheltered Homeless People**
 - Able to gather count and subpopulation information
 - Key considerations:
 - Data quality
 - Data coverage (75% or above) and completeness
 - Planning to make sure information is gathered or extrapolated for each provider
 - Generally HMIS is used in combination with other data collection techniques. For example:
 - HMIS for count + surveys for subpopulation information
 - HMIS for participating providers + surveys at non-participating providers
 - If HMIS coverage is high, but not at 100% - can extrapolate for non-participating providers
- **Planning Timeline**
 - 6 months before count – Begin to assess data quality
 - Develop data quality reports (client roster report, occupancy report, missing (null) value report, report to check for duplicate records)
 - www.hmis.info - Enhancing HMIS Data Quality
 - 4 months – Decide if you can use HMIS
 - 3 months – Finalize data collection approach and continue data quality checks up to the day of the count
 - 2 weeks – Remind providers about the count and data collection
 - A few days before – Final data quality check
 - The week after the count – Assess data and follow-up with providers
 - The months following the count – Assemble and distribute findings