**What You Need to Know about HUD’s PIT Count and Michigan’s HMIS Counts**

The Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) and other researchers often use data generated through HUD’s Point in Time Count of the homeless for articles on homeless trends. Michigan also publishes data based on the Statewide HMIS Project. While the two data sets overlap; they are not the same.

ICH Study data is based on a snapshot of those that are literally homeless on one night in the last week of January every year. This is called HUD’s PIT (Point in Time) Count.

1. The PIT snapshot includes a street count and a shelter count. The PIT Count can be considered a count of everyone that is literally homeless - in shelter or on the street - on one night in January. HMIS data from participating agencies is used for the sheltered side of the count, but CoCs use a variety of strategies to complete the street count, including statistical formulas and sampling for very large communities like Detroit. Historically, some variation has occurred in these strategies as CoCs have improved their processes. Comparisons over long periods of time may not be appropriate for this reason. That is, ICH, HUD or other Federal agency sometimes publish trending information about Michigan including sample points where there have been significant changes in the collection strategies.
2. HUD’s PIT Count is different than Michigan’s Annual Homeless Summary Report in the following ways:
   * Michigan’s Annual Homeless Summary Report is based on those identified as homeless reported from 600 homeless services agencies over the course of a calendar year - not a single night.
   * The PIT Count predates the HMIS and was developed as a means to estimate the homeless in the US. HUD has maintained the PIT process even though most communities now have an HMIS because not all those on the street reach out to homeless providers and in many places there is no funding for routine street outreach. In Michigan we do have funded street outreach reporting to the HMIS through the PATH Program, however we continue to use the PIT to help identify those we may have missed such as those served in DV programs. We use the “missed” rate from the PIT to help estimate the total projected homeless count published in Michigan’s Annual Report.
   * While the MI Annual Summary Report includes data on the “literally homeless,” those individuals included under HUD Category 2 Homeless (within 14 days of eviction w/written docs) are also included in the overall State count to support rural counties that have very limited shelter capacity.
   * The Homeless Count generated through HMIS in MI has been stable over time and generally aligns with national trends on HUD’s National Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) that goes to Congress. The AHAR uses the gold standard of HMIS data from all over the Nation.
3. Because the HMIS has continuous person level data, there are other counts routinely generated from the HMIS for specific purposes that are also different from HUD’s PIT.
   * + System Performance Reports that measure the success of Michigan’s provider networks in housing homeless persons.
   * Quarterly Reports on those seeking services through the “front door” of the homeless emergency services system are published and used to support needs assessment by county for sub populations.
   * Annualized Counts are completed for time periods other than the Calendar Year; are usually to allow for an annual count that is more current to the time of the data request or aligns with a grant year.
   * Cross Section counts that explain specific characteristics of the homeless such as chapters on Veterans or Youth.