

# DATA POINTS

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## 2017 One Day Count: Everybody Counts

The 2017 One Day Count was executed on the evening of Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. This annual event (daunting task) is only possible through the hard work of our partner organizations and volunteers from the community. The coordination involved in verifying programs are current with their enrollments, develop and distribute hard copy surveys, and engagement of our unsheltered community is a challenge for everyone involved. As in the past few years, it was accomplished with the help of organizations that were HMIS participating, non-HMIS participating and community outreach programs. In the last couple of years we have seen an increase in the HMIS participating agencies, so that there are very few programs that had to complete the paper surveys.

This year there was an increased focus on our most vulnerable populations, the unsheltered, and youth. The goal to get the most comprehensive count for 2017 created two new committees to assist the HMIS team. The first was the Outreach Committee. This group consisted of our local homeless experts, homeless outreach teams, and community health workers who all worked together to complete an engagement plan and draft survey for those sleeping out-of-doors on the night of the count. They suggested locations, developed expanded teams and then spent the 7 days following the ODC engaging our unsheltered community. The second was the Youth Committee. A group of individuals from our local youth programs, community colleges, and Spokane Public Schools. This group also gave input on the Unsheltered Survey, plotted a list of contact locations and contributed to the outreach effort. In an unprecedented development members of the group worked to create drop in locations for McKinney-Vento students and Spokane Public Schools' staff coordinated with *Community In Schools* to offer the survey to their clients.

In conjunction with the One Day Count CHHS staff added a needs drive to the annual One Day Count and rebranded the event as 'Everybody Counts'. The needs drive will be conducted each year as part of the annual Everybody Counts event. The needs drive originally had four drop off sites, City Hall, Downtown Spokane Partnership,

Downtown and Shadle Library Branches. Once the public found out they got behind the event. Several other community partners offered to have drop off sites and in-house drives to support the homeless community, including Providence, Spokane Fire Department and River Park Square. The proceeds from the drive were distributed to the outreach teams and shelters.

The addition of the donation drive makes the Everybody Counts event more than just about numbers, It's an opportunity to engage Spokane residents in helping our homeless community and humanizes this annual event. For those who can't appreciate how the data that's collected guides our efforts in ending homelessness in our community, a connection can be made. The data that is collected is fundamental to planning purposes, reporting to HUD, and educating the community on homelessness. HUD and many other federal providers and for grant opportunities throughout the year.

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## Thank You!!

As always, the HMIS Team would like to take a moment to recognize the hard work that you continue to do. In the first quarter of 2017, you have enrolled over **2,600 individuals** into programs throughout the Spokane Area. While this number doesn't represent the true impact that you make on our homeless community, you can be sure we appreciate all that you do.

## Outreach and Youth Take the Spotlight

In our attempt to make our One Day Count for 2017 the best it could be, we looked to our community partners for help. Many organizations participated on the two specialized committees.

The Outreach Committee was the group that worked to engage our unsheltered community. Together they reviewed the Unsheltered Survey and returned suggestions on additions that would be beneficial. Once they had accomplished that, they looked at where the outreach teams engaged people in 2016, then they plotted hot spots for an expansion of our contact radius. Specifically, they worked to get more contact in the Spokane Valley and North Spokane.

By working with the established outreach teams, the count can go smoother. They have knowledge of locations that groups tend to visit. They've already developed a rapport with their clients, so they don't have to overcome trust issues. It's important that we do our best to make the survey and count as unobtrusive as possible. Many of our chronically homeless individuals are familiar with the count at this point, but the request to do a survey is better received when someone they know is asking.

For the One Day Count the committee was responsible for coordinating the outreach teams and tracking which contact points had been visited or needed to be revisited. In coordination with the "Everybody Counts" necessities drive, they also distributed coats, hand warmers, blankets, gloves and hats to their unsheltered clients.

Another under reported population are homeless youth. To better reach them the Youth Committee was formed. Many of our youth programs answered the call to action for the One Day Count. Together they reviewed the Unsheltered Survey to see if it was applicable for youth and made recommendations. They developed an outreach plan that would include locations where the youth congregate. They also provided materials and donations for distribution to the unsheltered youth.

This year we were able to engage youth in our school system that may be experiencing homelessness. Our partners at Spokane Public Schools were able to negotiate a way to administer surveys to students who were already receiving services. To help reach those who may not be involved in school based programs, our youth programs, YFA Connections CRC, VOA Crosswalk and Cup of Cool Water, opened their facilities to students who wanted to drop in and fill out a survey.

Together these two committees helped to reach the most vulnerable homeless populations. As we continue to better our approach to the ODC, this work is a strong foundation for us to build on.



## Program Spotlight:

# Hope House

Part of Data Points is to recognize excellence in our HMIS community. Volunteers of America's Hope House has effortlessly changed their utilization tracking method from an entry-exit model to a night-by-night tracking of who checks -in and out which requires a user to update their sleeping roster each night in the HMIS. Their work puts us in a great position to align and meet our reporting requirements for HUDs System Performance Measures (see our Feature Focus for more information), basically a report card on how our homeless system is doing. This also helps us to know the capacity of our homeless system on any given night, helps identify gaps in service and improve our overall homeless efforts. Hope House is our CoC's only HMIS participating single women's emergency shelter that isn't directly related to VAWA funding. They have 36 beds to support homeless women in the downtown corridor. They are always near or at capacity. Heather Thomas-Taylor, Michelle McIntosh and Stephen Miller have integrated the change into their daily processes seamlessly. Something that could have been perceived as an additional burden, they took on as a challenge. They have the most up-to-date data for their shelter. The HMIS Team would like to thank the Staff at Hope House for their hard work. We know that it can be difficult to maintain data compliance while providing much needed shelter and services to women regardless of their mental health status, chemical dependency issues or lifestyles.

## Search for Clients & Avoiding Duplicates

A gentle reminder to be sure to search for your client before you create a new record for them. We have had a rise in duplicates lately and want to make sure that everyone is taking the time to "Find Client" before you start a whole new Client ID for your clients. There are instances where the client is restricted to Organization. For newer clients that shouldn't be an issue. HMIS has an all or nothing policy on participation. If a client doesn't want their information available to the other partners, they should be entered in HMIS as anonymous. You can still restrict enrollments if you truly feel that is necessary. You may be interested to know that we have reached nearly 75000 for Client ID numbers. That is a huge number of lives that have been touched by our homeless programs in the Spokane area. We appreciate all your hard work.

# 24/7 Shelter



Spokane experienced a brutal winter this past year. Freezing temperatures and excessive snow fall created a dangerous situation for our homeless community. It was fortuitous that the 24/7 shelter system was launched on November 1, 2016. This partnership between Catholic Charities, Family Promise of Spokane, The Salvation Army, Transitions, and Volunteers of America creates shelter and services for our homeless community around the clock. Using a Housing First approach the idea for the system is to give everyone a place to get out of the weather. The 24/7 system replaces the Warming Center model that Spokane had been using. The 24/7 refers to the fact that there is shelter and access to services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The major pieces to program include House of Charity opening during the day, expanding their overnight coverage and Family Promise of Spokane creating the Open Doors program. House of Charity will now be open for the majority of the day. They will close for a short time mid-day for housekeeping. Then in addition to



their current 80 bed sleeping program and 25 Medical Respite beds, they have opened the main floor for drop in clients, throughout the night. There has been estimated numbers of up to 200 people. Family Promise of Spokane created Open Doors, a drop in day shelter for families. The facility located at Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct and is open from 7:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. They provide food, supplies, showers, computers and laundry access. The

Salvation Army has taken on sheltering homeless families. Using the facility that they previously used for the warming center, they now accept families who need overnight shelter and have branded it The Family Safe Center. Together these programs will work closely with the coordinated assessment programs for singles and families to get clients connected to longer term shelter and comprehensive services. “We know that the solution to ending homelessness starts, but does not end, with shelters,” said Dawn Kinder, Director of Community, Housing, and Human Services. “Engaging those in crisis by offering shelter and basic needs allows us to connect people to longer term housing solutions. The investment in shelters and shelter services for Spokane individuals and families continues to propel our efforts to end homelessness.”

## Annual Performance Report

First and foremost, “thank you” to all of the organizations for their hard work on their Annual Performance Reports (APR). There were unforeseen delays that impacted the projects that had close outs the first half of 2016. All of them were very patient while we waited for the reporting tool to be available to us. Then they worked quickly with the HMIS and Program teams to finalize the data for a massive reporting deadline.

This year the APR process will be changing for FY 2015. In previous years projects were given a month to review and complete their data entry. Then the HMIS Team would review and complete a “Data Summary” then be given another month to review and address any issues. After that it was forwarded to the Program Team who completes the process, including the narrative response to any issues. The process is going to be compressed at the front end to account for the Monthly Data Reporting that all of our CoC funded projects are contractually required to do. Knowing that projects will be current with their data quality by the fifth of the month after the close of their funding cycle, there is no longer a need for the first month of project review. Projects will now get a notice two (2) weeks before the close of their funding cycle, reminding them that their APR process will begin. Within a week of the fifth of the following month, the HMIS Team will complete the Data Summary and provide it to the project contact with a notice that their review/response will be due by the end of that month. At that time, the Program Team will move forward with finalization, which could include a narrative response to any issues.

## Annual Homeless Assessment Report

### -AHAR-

The Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) is the HUD report for the U.S. Congress that provides these decision makers nationwide estimates of homelessness, including information about the demographic characteristics of our homeless community. Including the services/projects they access and our capacity for housing them. We pull the data for this report directly from HMIS for the previous year.

The 2016 AHAR was another success for our CoC. This is the second year in a row that all of the different shells that our community reported on, were accepted by HUD. How many shells being used by HUD directly impacts the NOFA. Your hard work and commitment to data quality this past year made this the least challenging year for reporting. Thank you to all of your organizations for their continued efforts.

This change is to accommodate projects that might need a little more time to finalize their responses to HUD. This is also a response to the overwhelming increase in project data quality over the last funding cycle.



## Function Focus: Data To Watch

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act has a focus on viewing our homeless response as a coordinated system of options for those people experiencing homelessness. This is in addition to looking at individual homeless assistance programs and funding sources that work independently in our community. The change to the Act requires us to measure our performance as a coordinated system (not to be confused with our Coordinated Assessment program). This, of course, is separate from our Annual Performance Reviews for specific projects.

HUD will use this data as selection criteria to award projects under future NOFAs, essentially determining how much money our community gets each year. They will review the information, determining which data elements will be the most valuable. Their evaluation won't be in a bubble, they say that they will take our specific circumstances and situations into consideration. The main message they want to impart on us is that to accurately assess our progress through these measures, we must ensure that our data is as complete and accurate as possible.

The following is a list of essential data elements that must be current in order for us to achieve a high quality report. This isn't an exclusive list. We should be making sure all data in our system is complete and correct. Many of you file monthly reports on your data quality. As we move through FY2015 the HMIS Team will be doing spot checks.

Feel free to contact the HMIS Team if you would like to develop a data quality plan. If you would like to know more about the System Performance Measures please use these links, <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/system-performance-measures/>, and <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/system-performance-measures-in-context.pdf>.

3.3	Date of Birth
3.1	Project Entry Date
3.11	Project Exit Date
3.12	Project Destination
3.17A&B	Length of Time on Street, ES, or SH
4.17	Residential Move-in Date
4.2	Income & Sources (entry, annual & exit)

## HMIS Spring 2017 Series

The new training schedule for the 2017 Spring Quarter is available online through our [HMIS website](#). This quarter we continue to offer the Basic User Training on a regular basis for new HMIS users as well as those who would like a refresher. We continue to offer trainings that will allow you to access more information from the HMIS system. Whether it's for reporting purposes, presentations or grant writing, we think you should be able to access the data you need. The Data Explorer training is designed to familiarize you with this great report generate. Learn how to pull data elements that you specifically need when you need it. For all of the CoC funded projects we have the Annual Performance Report (APR) training. There is the Housing Workspace training that shows you how to use this real time tracking tool. Using a graphical representation of your different projects you can maintain a check in list of all clients. HUD has added the System Performance Measures for CoCs, which will directly impact future funding opportunities. The Data Quality training will focus on those specific data elements and how to pull your data for review.



This quarter we offer the convenience of [registering online](#) at the HMIS website. For returning users it's a one step process, just be sure to have the name and date of the training you wish to attend. New users will need to also print out, sign and send back their New User Agreement. The schedule is subject to change with little to no notice and trainings can be canceled if the attendance threshold isn't met.

Remember, the HMIS Training Series is for you. If there are issues you want us to address, let us know. We look to you for direction on what is going to be the most useful information for your data collection and reporting needs.