2019 Annual Point-In-Time (PIT) Count

Methodology

Summary

Background: Local agencies and organizations conduct a count to determine the extent of homelessness in our community. This information is used to submit the Continuum of Care grant application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Stark County receives approximately $3.1 million each year from the Continuum of Care grant to serve people who are homeless.

Unsheltered Count

Approach: To get the best count, Stark County will conduct a Housing Survey. The Housing Survey will include all HUD required PIT data points. The survey will be in paper format and electronic format.

Everyone will be asked where they stayed on January 29, 2019.

Strategies:

- **Service-Based Count:** Local agencies who serve the homeless will conduct the Housing Survey at their worksites for up to seven (7) days following the Night of the Count, from Wednesday, January 30th through Tuesday, February 5th. Volunteers will also be assigned to assist at some sites such as libraries, hot meal sites, food pantries and bus stations during this same time frame to survey individuals/families who are homeless.

- **Street Count:** Teams of volunteers, led by ICAN Housing's PATH Outreach staff and other experienced PIT volunteers will go out onto the streets on Wednesday, January 30th from 5:00 am – 7:00 am to cover known locations (where homeless people are known to congregate or sleep overnight). The Volunteer Teams will count and survey homeless people on the street. Known locations in Stark County are typically found in the cities of Canton, Massillon, and Alliance, which are jurisdictions referenced in local Consolidated Plans. One team will also address areas of the county, outside of these cities. Information regarding known locations was shared by the Homeless Navigation (Hotline) Coordinated Entry System, local homeless providers, and local street outreach staff. Police Departments, City/Village/Township Offices, zoning inspectors, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS), in both the cities and other, more rural, areas of the county are also being contacted to determine level of needed outreach in all areas of the county. Persons experiencing homelessness will be offered assistance with connecting to needed service providers and will be provided with "Blessing Bags" (donated by StarkMHAR,

OhioCAN and Goodwill) with items such as hygiene products, blankets, hats, gloves, water, granola bars, etc.

- **Youth Count:** Locations in Canton, Massillon and Alliance which are identified as sites where youth (under 25 year olds, including unaccompanied minors) may frequent will be used as the Youth PIT Count sites from Wednesday, January 30th through Friday, February 1st. Volunteers will be assigned to assist at these sites. Incentives, such as refreshments, will be given to youth as surveys are completed.

Survey: Questions on the survey determine if the individual is homeless (including chronically homeless); ask for identifiers to prevent duplicate counts; and request information to indicate veteran status, family composition, and disabling conditions. Individuals can also fill out the survey by contacting the Homeless Navigation (Hotline) at 330-452-4363.

Volunteer Training: Volunteer training will be mandatory for the 2019 PIT count. A minimum of five (5) trainings will be offered during the month of January 2019. Volunteers will select one training to attend. Training will equip volunteers with knowledge, experience and confidence regarding conducting the Housing Surveys, how to approach people and safety measures (particularly for the Street Count). Training will be offered at a variety of settings and at various times to provide more options to volunteers.

Sheltered Count

Approach: Stark County's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) will provide data for the sheltered count. Additionally, social service, faith-based and other organizations within Stark County will be contacted to obtain information about any individuals or families housed by these entities in local hotels or motels on January 29, 2018. Finally, efforts will further include a one-night overflow shelter for the night of the count based at a local church and staffed by Refuge of Hope, the local men's shelter in the county.

De-Duplication Techniques:

HMIS software is programmed to eliminate duplication by comparison of multiple data points (first name, middle initial, last name, social security number, project entry date, date of birth, etc.), HMIS staff also conduct manual checks of result sets to ensure accuracy. Information obtained from organizations not participating in HMIS is examined using the same criteria, ensuring that each individual only appears once in the final PIT count.

The methodology was developed with input from the Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) of Stark County PIT Count Committee, PIT Subcommittee(s), the Homeless Services Collaborative and via outreach to law enforcement and youth focus groups and in compliance with:

- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):** Notice CPD-17-08: 2018 HIC and PIT Data Collection for CoC and ESG Programs

- **HUD's PIT Count Methodology Guide 2014 (latest version).**