OR-500: Explanation for Using Homeless By-Name List for the 2023 Annual Unsheltered Point-In-Time Count

In January 2021, Lane County's (LC) Continuum of Care shifted to a new Point-in-Time Unsheltered count methodology based on the county's Homeless By-Name List (HBNL) data. The results, while slightly higher than in previous years, were determined to be more accurate and complete by service providers, homeless advocates, other stakeholders in the community, and analysts reviewing the data. The count was likely higher in 2021 and 2022 using this method because 1) The Lane County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is comprehensive and captures most of the service transaction activity provided to people experiencing homelessness; and 2) Increased street outreach staffing and geographic coverage have resulted in more individuals engaged in services.

Unsheltered Count Year	# Unsheltered Individuals	# Sheltered (ES & TH) Individuals	# Total Homeless Individuals
2022 (new methodology)	2105	697 + 78*	2880
2021 (new methodology)	1990	282 + 45	2317
2020 (street survey)	1037	455 + 114	1606
2019 (street survey)	1633	426 + 106	2165

*Winter warming shelters were open on the night of the PIT in 2022, which resulted in a higher sheltered count than is typical

In both years, LC collected surveys from areas where it seemed most likely that the unsheltered persons were not engaged with any HMIS participating service provider. In 2021, all 45 surveyed persons were already represented in the HBNL and included in the results generated from the HMIS query. In 2022, 210 individuals were surveyed. LC staff randomly selected 50 of these individuals, and all 50 were already listed on the HBNL.

Before using the HBNL-based methodology, LC conducted survey-based street counts which were supplemented with data from HMIS. LC's HBNL methodology flips the primary source by using HMIS data for the majority of the Unsheltered Count and supplementing these data with surveys administered by outreach workers to ensure that individuals who are not already engaged in HMIS are included in the unsheltered count.

Request

Lane County is requesting permission from HUD to continue to use the HBNL-based methodology supplemented with targeted street outreach surveys for the 2023 Point in Time Unsheltered count.

About the Homeless By-Name List

Lane County HMIS launched the Homeless By-Name List (HBNL)[1] in 2019. The HBNL is generated from the data entered by HMIS-participating projects. Currently, 30 agencies participate in HMIS and enter data for approximately 230 projects. While many of these are traditional projects like Rapid Re-Housing and Street Outreach, Lane County's HMIS also encompasses other types of projects such as food pantries, meal sites, and general social services that provide basic needs including transportation vouchers, laundry facilities, and showers. Throughout the year, all projects collect the Universal Data Elements (UDE) and disabling condition information necessary to determine homeless status, and clients' housing status is updated throughout the year as individuals may move in or out of homelessness. These data are used to distinguish who, by name, will be reported as experiencing homelessness each month. In turn, this list is used to track

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[1] Data from the HBNL are aggregated and shared in a public dashboard that is updated each month.
https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/lchsd/viz/HomelessnessinLaneCountyOregon_16195399452050/IntroductiontoLaneCountysHomelessnessData

trends, inflow and outflow, and demographics of people experiencing homelessness in the county. The list also helps identify individuals most at-risk for case conferencing and intensive services, including shelter and housing.

It is important to point out that Lane County's HBNL and Coordinated Entry Central Waitlists are separate lists with distinct processes for how individuals are counted. The CE Central Waitlists are lists of heads of household (primary applicants) who have agreed to an in depth assessment and would like to be considered for a housing project referral. The assessments are entered into CE projects in HMIS and the Waitlists are generated from a report run in HMIS. The HBNL is a list of persons who are actively receiving services from *any* HMIS-participating project and are literally homeless. These 230 HMIS participating-projects include all traditional homeless service projects as well as projects assisting low-income households such as food pantries and community service centers. People on the Central Waitlists are almost always on the HBNL, but only about one-third of the people on the HBNL are listed on a Central Waitlist.

The HBNL is considered by homeless advocates, providers, and other community stakeholders to be a reliable count of the unhoused population in Lane County.

The model proposed for the PIT unsheltered count is a modified version of the Homeless By-Name List logic used in HMIS. The universe includes all individuals who are currently living in an alternative shelter (car camps, micro sites, over-night parking programs), using the services of a Homeless Day Access Center, and individuals who have any active project enrollment with a homeless prior living situation (or institutional prior living situation and were homeless prior to entering the institution) at project entry:

- Place not meant for habitation (HUD)
- Emergency shelter, incl. hotel/motel paid for w/ ES voucher, or RHY-funded Host Home shelter (HUD)
- Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility (HUD) AND were homeless prior to institutional stay
- Jail, prison or juvenile detention facility (HUD) AND were homeless prior to institutional stay
- Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility (HUD) AND were homeless prior to institutional stay

The following filters are then applied:

- Individuals who exited any project to a Temporary or Permanent housing situation within the previous 30 days are excluded.
- Individuals who are currently in an Emergency shelter, Transitional Housing or Residential project are excluded.
- Individuals who are enrolled in Permanent Housing projects with a move-in date are excluded.
  - PH - Permanent Supportive Housing (disability required for entry) (HUD)
  - PH - Rapid Re-Housing (HUD)
  - PH - Housing only (HUD)
  - PH - Housing with services (no disability required for entry) (HUD)
- Individuals who are enrolled in homelessness prevention projects are excluded.
- Individuals in the following Project Types who did not have a service (from any provider) within the previous 14 days are excluded.
  - Services Only (HUD) (Only Providers who serve mostly homeless persons are included in this category)
  - Day Shelter (HUD)
  - Street Outreach (HUD)
  - Coordinated Entry (HUD)

Outreach Survey

While our HBNL data is robust, HMIS is not an exact count of all individuals experiencing homelessness in our community. On the day of the PIT count, Lane County will use outreach workers to administer surveys in areas where individuals are less likely to have engaged in services. We are working with law enforcement, forest management, public works, and other community stakeholders to identify locations where outreach workers will ask individuals to complete a survey. Special attention will be focused on rural areas where there are fewer service providers, and community

locations where individuals may go during the day including libraries. Any unsheltered individuals who complete a survey and are not already included on our HBNL will be included in our final PIT count.

In 2020, the pandemic and wildfires of 2020 provided the motivation to change the methodology used in the annual Unsheltered count. The reliability of the numbers produced in 2021 and 2022's PIT counts motivate us to request using this methodology again. Using HMIS data for the majority of the count may reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission to unhoused individuals and volunteers, and provides more accurate and complete Unsheltered count data. It also allows us to focus our planning efforts on targeted outreach surveys and estimate how many individuals may not be included in our HBNL.

Lane County is committed to using the HBNL for planning, including resource development, and data-centered outreach to persons experiencing homelessness in the community. Using a modified HBNL for the Point-in-Time count is timely, practical and sustainable.

Submitted 2022-11-28 by
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