



— GRAND RAPIDS AREA —

**COALITION TO END
HOMELESSNESS**

**2019 STEERING COUNCIL
ORIENTATION PACKET**

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[History of the Kent County Continuum of Care](#)

In 1982, Kent County created the Emergency Needs Task Force (ENTF), later renamed the Essential Needs Task Force, as a response to Kent County residents struggling to meet their most basic needs. The ENTF consisted of subcommittees focused on specific need areas, including the Shelter Subcommittee (later renamed Housing Subcommittee) that focused on the needs of residents who became homeless. Agencies providing homelessness services met in this committee to share information and coordinate services.

In 1987, the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act provided federal funding to the efforts of sheltering people who were homeless. In the 1994 reauthorization of the act, communities were required to submit one consolidated request for funding to the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for funding. This process became known as the [Continuum of Care \(CoC\) Program Funding Competition](#) and it takes place annually.

In order to create a community plan for this funding, providers working in homelessness needed to work together, in groups named Continuums of Care (CoCs) by HUD. The ENTF subcommittee for Housing already had a regular meeting of these same entities, so rather than recreate a group, they determined the Housing Subcommittee would function as the Kent County's Continuum of Care body that would apply for HUD Continuum of Care Program funding. This meant one group was the ENTF Housing Subcommittee and the HUD CoC, and this group also adopted the name Grand Rapids Area Coalition to End Homelessness.

In 2004, this community, along with many other CoCs across the country, undertook work to create a "Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness". This plan looked to the newest information on best practices and set forth a vision for the changes in the community; shifting from a system where homelessness was considered addressed once emergency shelter was obtained to one that determined homelessness was addressed after the individual or family was permanently housed. This shift necessitated a new system of referrals and new types of supportive services. The local ten year plan was titled the [Vision to End Homelessness](#), and through this vision, system-wide changes were implemented.

At the conclusion of this ten year period, the CoC created a new plan, a [three year strategic plan](#) focused on the steps needed to be taken to end homelessness in targeted areas. This plan was intended to be a living document, to be changed and updated as new information was learned and results of actions evaluated.

Definitions

CoC—Continuum of Care, aka, the group of service providers and community members that come together to fight to end homelessness through housing and support services

CoC Program Application—The confusing name for an application for federal funds, of which we get about \$5.5 million annually

ESG—Emergency Solutions Grant, funding that comes to our community from the State of Michigan

FMR- Fair Market Rent—The amount set annually that is the limit of how much rent can be paid through rental assistance or vouchers within programs.

HCV- Housing Choice Voucher, aka “Section 8” vouchers for a limited amount of funding provided so that a household can rent from the private rental market and not pay more than 30% of their income. These may come from the state, from Grand Rapids, Wyoming or Kent County, although the state list is the only with a homeless preference that shortens the wait time to about 3 months for households experiencing homelessness.

HMIS—Homeless Management Information System is a database that is shared among service providers to develop information on homelessness services implementation and effectiveness

HUD—Housing and Urban Development, (The Department of), the department in the federal government that regulates housing actions and requires us to meet as a CoC

MSHDA—Michigan State Housing Development Authority, the state department that regulates housing agencies and sets standards for our work

NOFA—Notice of Funding Availability, the document that explains a particular grant and how to apply, usually used with our annual grant process for CoC Program funding from HUD.

PATH—Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness, a federal grant to reach people with serious mental illness who are homeless. Pine Rest Street Reach is contracted through network180 to do this work.

PH—Permanent Housing, the goal for all entering the system and an outcome by which programs are measured, consists of having housing with a lease in the person’s name that does not require program compliance or non-standard lease requirements

PSH—Permanent Supportive Housing, a type of housing program that is part of the Housing First approach that generally consists of housing payment assistance coordinated with support service delivery, often involving mental health or substance abuse services and targeted toward chronically homeless individuals

RRH—Rapid Rehousing, a type of housing program that is part of the Housing First method that generally consists of rental assistance targeted towards homeless families with services provided as needed

SAMHSA—Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the federal agency with the mission to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America’s communities

SOAR—Social Security and Social Security Disability Insurance Outreach, Access, and Recovery, a federal effort to ensure that those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have a disability are able to quickly secure the income that they are entitled to. This effort is led through PATH grantee, Pine Rest Street Reach

SPDAT- Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool, the assessment tool CoC’s in Michigan are required to use to prioritize households for housing resources, typically done after more interaction has occurred

TH- Transitional Housing, housing that is limited in time and typically requires participation in a program.

VI-SPDAT- Vulnerability Index/Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool, the abbreviated version of the assessment tool CoC’s in Michigan are required to use to prioritize households for housing resources, typically done at first meeting

Homeless Definition

Homelessness has been defined by HUD in four categories.

Category 1

Literally Homeless

Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning;

- i. Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation;
- ii. Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living arrangements;
- iii. Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and (i.) or (ii.) applied immediately before entering that institution.

Category 2

Imminent Risk of Homelessness

Individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence provided that:

- i. Residency will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
- ii. No subsequent residence has been identified; *and*
- iii. The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.

Category 3

Homeless Under Other Federal Statutes

Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:

- i. Are denied as homeless under other listed federal statutes;
- iii. Have not had permanent housing during the 60 days prior;
- iii. Have experienced persistent instability (2 moves or more in 60 days); *and*
- iv. Can be expected to continue in same status for an extended amount of time.

Category 4

Fleeing/Attempting to Flee DV

Any individual or family who:

- i. Is fleeing or is attempting to flee domestic violence;
- ii. Has no other residence; *and*
- iii. Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

(Updated in 2015 NOFA to include fleeing or attempting to flee human trafficking, including sex trafficking when certain conditions apply.)

[For Chronic Homeless definition and explanation click here.](#)

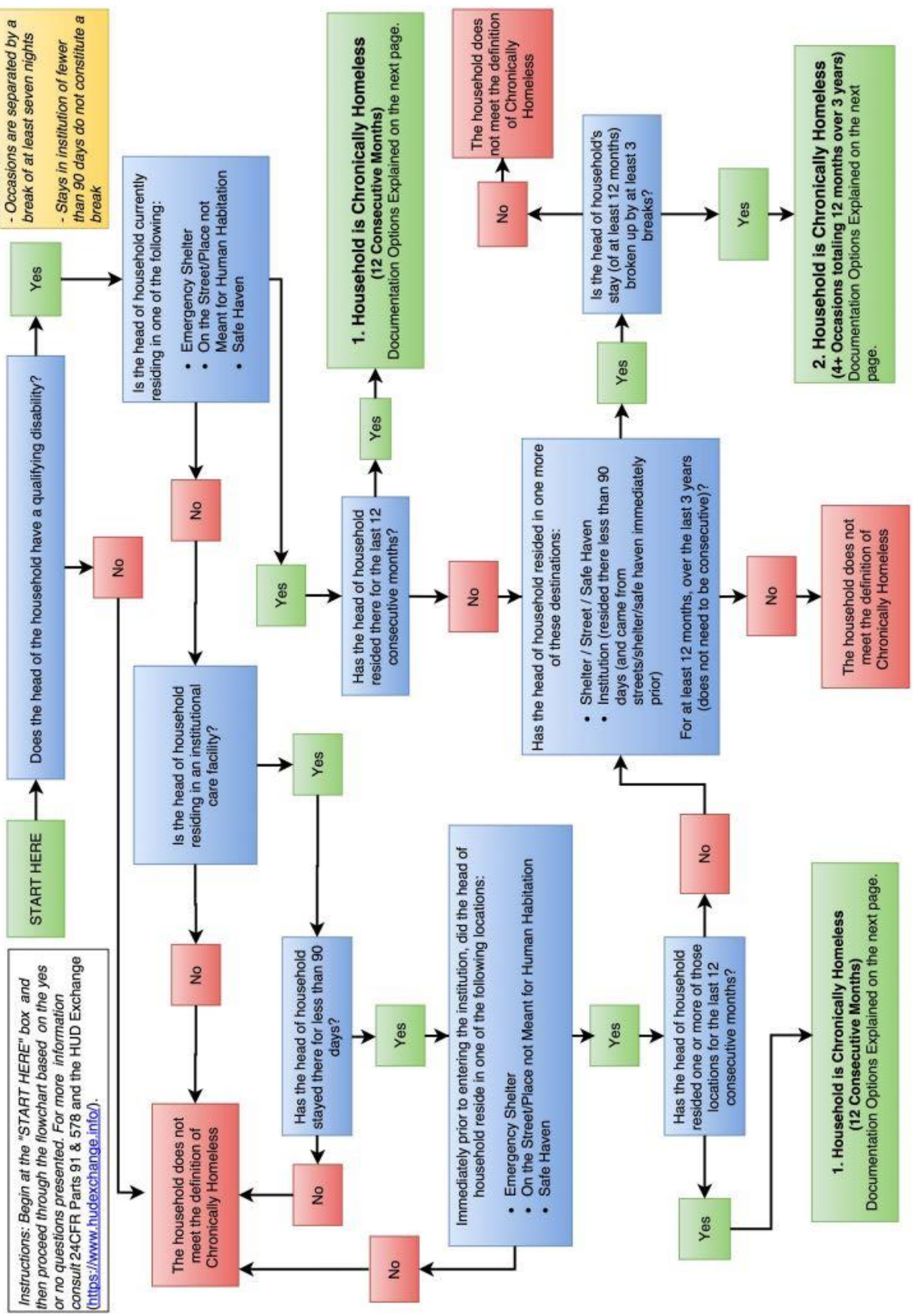
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Flowchart of HUD's Definition of Chronic Homelessness

Instructions: Begin at the "START HERE" box and then proceed through the flowchart based on the yes or no questions presented. For more information consult 24CFR Parts 91 & 578 and the HUD Exchange (<https://www.hudexchange.info/>).

Remember:
- Occasions are separated by a break of at least seven nights
- Stays in institution of fewer than 90 days do not constitute a break



2019 Meeting Schedule

CoC Meetings

Fourth Thursdays

9:30-11am

2019

February 28

April 18 (Third Thursday)

June 27

August 22

October 24

December 12 (Second Thursday)

Meetings held at the Kroc Center, 2500 S Division, Grand Rapids, MI 49507 unless otherwise notified

Steering Council Meetings

Third Fridays

8:30-10am

2019

January 18

February 15

March 15

April 19

May 17

June 21

July 19

August 16

September 20

October 18

November 15

December 13 (Second Friday)

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Steering Council Annual Calendar

Updated January 2019

January

Steering Committee Orientation
Executive Officer Elections
Point in Time Count
Steering Committee Annual Conflict of Interest
Forms Completed

February

City of Grand Rapids Emergency Solutions Grant
Application
Strategic Plan Update

March

Data Quality Committee Report
Budget Preparation
Strategic Plan Progress Review
CoC and ESG Mid-Term Monitoring

April

LIHTC Developer Presentations to CoC (October
Round)
Point in Time Count Submitted to HUD
Budget Approval

May

ENTF Annual Meeting
Strategic Plan Annual Review
Reallocation Discussion
LIHTC Developer Presentations to Steering
(October Round)

June

Steering Council Funding Process Review
Open Call for New CoC Members
PIT Data Released
Governance Charter Recommended Changes to
CoC membership

July

NAEH Annual Conference
System Performance Measures Review
Strategic Plan Update

August

HUD CoC Program Funding Vote (Anticipated)
System Performance Measures Reported to CoC
CoC, Fiduciary, HARA MOU for ESG Execution
Strategic Plan Update

September

Data Quality Committee Report
MSHDA Emergency Solutions Grant Application
HUD CoC Program Application Due (Anticipated)
PIT Planning Begins

October

LIHTC Developer Presentations to CoC (April
Round)
Governance Charter Review, including ENT
F relationship affirmation & Fiduciary MOU
Strategic Plan Process Presented

November

LIHTC Developer Presentations to Steering
(April Round)
Strategic Plan Progress Review
Staff Evaluations Initiated by Fiduciary
Strategic Plan Update

December

Steering Council elections (at CoC meeting)
Staff Evaluations Concluded by Fiduciary

Steering Council Roster

Updated December 2018

| Name | Affiliation | Email | Term Ends | Committees* |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| | The Salvation Army/HARA | | N/A | |
| Brianna Lipscomb | Youth Action Board | | N/A | Youth Action Board |
| Erin Banchoff | City of Grand Rapids | ebanchoff@grcity.us | N/A | |
| Rebecca Rynbrandt | City of Wyoming | rynbranb@wyomingmi.gov | N/A | Data Analysis |
| Susan Cervantes | Kent County | Susan.cervantes@kentcountymi.gov | N/A | |
| Veterans Action Board Member | Veterans Action Board | | N/A | Veterans Action Board |
| Casey Gordon | Kent ISD | caseygordon@kentisd.org | Dec 2019 | |
| Jeffrey King | Community Rebuilders | jking@communityrebuilders.org | Dec 2019 | |
| Karen Tjapkes | Legal Aid of West Michigan | ktjapkes@lawestmi.org | Dec 2019 | Funding Review |
| Lauren VanKeulen | 3:11 Youth Housing | lvankeulen@3-11.org | Dec 2019 | |
| Lisa Cruden | Family Promise | lisa@familypromisegr.org | Dec 2019 | |
| Tom Cottrell | YWCA | tcottrell@ywcawcmi.org | Dec 2019 | |
| Adrienne Goodstal | Mel Trotter Ministries | adrienneGoodstal@meltrotter.org | Dec 2020 | |
| Alonda Trammell | Dwelling Place | atrammell@dwellingplacegr.org | Dec 2020 | |
| Kwan McEwen | Grand Rapids Urban League | KMcEwen@grurbanleague.org | Dec 2020 | |
| Shannon Bass | Community Member | shannonmariebass@gmail.com | Dec 2020 | Outreach |
| Beverly Ryskamp | network180 | Beverly.Ryskamp@network180.org | Dec 2021 | |
| Deanna Rolffs | ICCF | drolffs@iccf.org | Dec 2021 | |
| Elizabeth Stoddard | Fair Housing Center | Estoddard@fhcwm.org | Dec 2021 | |

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| Hattie Tinney | Grand Rapids Housing Commission | htinney@grhousing.org | Dec 2021 | Nominating Committee |
| Scott Orr | Kent County DHHS | orrs1@michigan.gov | Dec 2021 | |

*Note: Only standing committees are listed above, members may also take part in ad-hoc committees or time-limited task groups. Most members have representation on multiple committees through other staff in their organization and may sit in on those committees as necessary.

THREE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS



FOUR OVERARCHING GOALS

| | |
|---|--|
| End Veteran Homelessness by the end of 2017 | End Chronic Homelessness by the end of 2018 |
| End Family and Youth Homelessness by 2020 | Lay the pathway to end all homelessness in Kent County by 2020 |

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

The steps for ending homelessness across different populations experiencing homelessness are similar. By working to accomplish the seven performance measures below and tracking our progress regularly, we can achieve a functional zero measure of homelessness across Kent County.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness | • 2015 Baseline: 2,814 people |
| Reduce the number of unsheltered people | • 2015 Baseline: 41 people |
| Reduce the length of time anyone experiences homelessness | • 2015 Baseline: 76 days |
| Reduce the number of times people experience homelessness | • 2015 Baseline: 8% Returns |
| Increase the percentage of people exiting to permanent housing | • 2015 Baseline: 95% in PSH |
| Improve the employment rate and incomes for program participants | • 2015 Baseline: 51% Increase |
| Increase the amount of housing dedicated to people experiencing chronic homelessness | • 2015 Baseline: Coming Soon |



| SYSTEM-WIDE PERFORMANCE MEASURES | | | |
|--|--------|--|--|
| II. PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1: REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS Baseline: 2,147 | | | |
| Reduce the number of households experiencing first-time homelessness Baseline: 2,110 | | | |
| Goals | Part | Activity | Primary Responsibility |
| Reduce the number of persons experiencing first-time homelessness | II.1.a | Increase available eviction prevention resources. Established Baseline: TBD | Ad-Hoc Committee |
| | II.1.b | Increase available diversion resources. Established Baseline: \$0 | Diversion Team |
| Work with other systems to prevent homelessness | II.2.b | Increase system coordination between CoC and system providers serving youth (18-24), veterans, families, and chronically homeless persons. Include providers from the medical, mental health, foster care and reentry systems, as appropriate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign MOU's with community partners (e.g. discharge planning, service provision, HMIS utilization) • Increase coordination with the HARA • Expand HMIS access to meet the needs of special populations • Engage with Consumer Action Boards | Veteran, youth, family and chronic homelessness committees HMIS Admin |

Baseline data is established from the 10/1/2014 to 9/30/2015 System Performance Measures since this is when the strategic plan was developed

| III. PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2: REDUCE THE NUMBER OF UNSHELTERED HOUSEHOLDS | | | |
|--|---------|---|---|
| Baseline: 26 | | | |
| Increase exits from emergency shelter to positive housing destination | | | |
| Baseline: 487 | | | |
| Goals | Part | Activity | Primary Responsibility |
| Ensure access to shelter that meets the household's needs | III.1.a | Evaluate shelter bed utilization rates across the Continuum of Care. | D. Gore |
| | III.1.b | Evaluate unmet need for shelter access across the Continuum of Care. | HARA |
| | III.1.c | Plan and respond accordingly to unmet need or underutilization of shelter beds. | Shelter providers in conjunction with CoC |
| | III.1.d | Establish CoC service standards for low barrier shelter. | Shelter providers in conjunction with CoC |
| | III.1.e | Evaluate current data standards around entry and exits for shelter beds. | D. Gore |
| IV. PERFORMANCE MEASURE 3: REDUCE THE LENGTH OF TIME HOUSEHOLDS EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS | | | |
| Baseline (length of time homeless): 88 days (average), 51 days (median) | | | |
| Goals | Part | Activity | Primary Responsibility |
| Increase resources available for permanent housing in the community, including rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing | IV.1.a | Update the <i>Kent County Homeless Response System Analysis, Projections and Financial Model Report</i> with current data. | CoC Staff |
| | IV.1.b | Identify utilization rates and barriers to utilization of housing resources (e.g. RRH, PSH, HCV). | CoC Staff |
| | IV.1.c | Develop recommendations for short-, medium, and long-term actions that can be taken to address identified barriers to the utilization of housing resources. | Ad-hoc committee |
| | IV.1.d | Evaluate current data standards around exits with housing resources. | D. Gore |

* Baseline data is established from the 10/1/2014 to 9/30/2015 System Performance Measures since this is when the strategic plan was developed*

[CoC Program Competition](#)

Kent County currently receives approximately \$5.5M in funding from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to projects designed to end homelessness across the community. Each of these projects must apply to renew their funding each year, but must do so as a community through an entity identified to be the “Collaborative Applicant” which is currently the Heart of West Michigan United Way. Unless Bonus Projects are made available for the competition, CoCs may only request the same level of funding awarded in the previous year (cost of living increases may also have been allowed), this amount is the “Annual Renewal Demand” or ARD.

The CoC/Collaborative Applicant must complete a “consolidated application” which consists of approximately 60 pages of questions regarding the function and accomplishments of the entire community in efforts to prevent and end homelessness. HUD scores each community application submitted from across the country and ranks them by score. This score is used to determine the funding available, with higher scoring communities more likely to receive funding for all their requested projects and lowest scoring communities less likely.

The first steps a community must take after the Notice of Funding Available (NOFA) is released, are to set community priorities (if not established already) and release a local application to the community to either request renewal of previously award grant funds or for new applicants seeking to have project funding reallocated to fund their proposal. These applications must be scored and ranked by an impartial Funding Review Panel.

Each project recommended for funding must also complete an application to HUD on the online system known as “eSnaps”. These individual project applications are managed by the Collaborative Applicant, which is staff by the CoC Coordinator/Program Manager. They must be reviewed for completeness, accuracy and meeting HUD threshold requirements. After the requisite public posting timeframes and approval by Steering Council, the Collaborative Applicant will submit the Consolidated Application, Project Priority Listing and individual project applications to HUD by the stated deadline. Several months later, HUD will issue the funding announcements, either all at once or by top ranked project first (Tier 1) and lower ranked projects (Tier 2) and bonuses later.

The NOFA release date and application due dates change each year.

[Point in Time \(PIT\) Count](#)

Each year, on the last Wednesday in January, every community across the country receiving federal funding for homelessness is required to make a count of every person known to be experiencing homelessness on that night. The majority of the people counted on this night are those staying in shelters and transitional housing. A coordinated effort is also made to identify and count any person sleeping outdoors, in cars, or staying in locations that are otherwise unfit for human habitation.

In Kent County, this count of “unsheltered” persons evolves and improves each year. Our PIT Count coordinators have learned that using only trained professionals for the unsheltered count helps to ensure dignity and respect towards those unsheltered persons encountered. The team has also found that extensive work identifying locations and collecting demographic information beforehand makes a most efficient use of the 24 hours allotted during the count. To further use the allotted time, volunteers speak with people at God’s Kitchen and HQ the following morning to identify anyone else who may have been unsheltered the following night. For the past few years, community volunteers have contributed to the effort by creating care packs of donated items that can be given out to those approached for information.

It is important to note what the PIT Count is and is not. The PIT Count is the longest standing tool for comparing the homelessness in one community with another across the country. As the longest applying data collection tool, it is helpful for showing long term trends within a community or the country in general. The PIT Count has significant limitations in the detail of data it is able to capture. Populations typically difficult to capture in the PIT Count are families, youth, those living with HIV and undocumented immigrants. It is also hard to determine whether PIT Counts are an accurate accounting of veterans or chronically homeless individuals in the community.

Because of these limitations, the PIT Count should never be taken on its own as a picture of the scope of homelessness in any community. There are many more robust and accurate processes for giving a picture of how many people experience homelessness in the community and detail on subpopulations experiencing homelessness.

[Annual Count of Homelessness](#)

This data report is conducted at the state level using HMIS data from our community. With HMIS data, each level-up in management has a wider and more complete view of data in the system. In any participating agency, they are able to run reports in HMIS to check their own data and client outcomes. Locally, the HMIS System Administrator is able to run reports that take data input from all agencies in the community's system. At the state level, Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness (MCAH) staff are able to run reports for our community that factor in data from outside communities, such as if a consumer reported to have exited to permanent housing here showed up in an emergency shelter in Detroit. From this vantage, the reports MCAH runs on our data annually are as close to a thorough accounting of the full scope of homelessness that our community has.

MCAH releases this information to staff in the form of Excel spreadsheets. These are very data-rich but require a level of interpretation and analysis that makes them less than ideal to be shared with the general public. Staff have pulled this information from the reports to use in community presentations to describe the scope of homelessness locally.

[System Performance Measures](#)

In 2016, nationwide, System Performance Measures were finalized and first reported to HUD in the annual CoC Program Competition. These measures were created to give a holistic view of a community's work to end homelessness. While each of the seven measures focuses on a specific aspect of the work, they should be considered in conjunction with the others. For example, a community should not focus solely on reducing people's length of stay in shelter without keeping a close eye on exits to permanent housing destinations. Exits to permanent housing destinations should be thoughtfully considered alongside increases in household income and recidivism rates back into homelessness.

While there are seven measures listed, many of these measures have parts to them. Additionally, measure six is not one that is reported on by any CoCs at this time. It will only be used when CoCs are allowed to use HUD funds to serve people homeless by Category 3—homeless under other federal statutes.