OR-500: Justification for using the Homeless By-Name Logic for the Annual Unsheltered Point-In-Time Count

Lane County's Continuum of Care launched the [Homeless By-Name List](#) (HBNL) in in 2019. The HBNL is generated from the data collected during the regular course of business at 30 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) participating agencies with over 200 projects. All projects collect the [Universal Data Elements (UDE)](#) and disabling condition information necessary to determine homeless status. 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 trends, inflow and outflow, and demographics of people experiencing homelessness in the county. The list helps identify the most at-risk individuals for case conferencing and intensive services including shelter and housing.

The HBNL, including the unsheltered count, is widely embraced by homeless advocates and providers as being representative of the unhoused population in Lane County.

In the past, Lane County conducted a survey-based street count and supplemented the data with information extracted from HMIS. Lane County proposes to flip the methodology by using HMIS data for the majority of the Unsheltered Count and supplementing the count with surveys collected from isolated geographic or population pockets that are not currently participating in HMIS.

Suggested Model

The suggested model is based a subset of the Homeless By-Name List[1].

The model's Universe includes all individuals who are currently living in an alternative shelter (car camps, Dusk to Dawn, over-night parking programs), sleeping at a Winter Warming site on the night of the county, and individuals who have an active project enrollment with a homeless or institutional living situation 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)
- Jail, prison or juvenile detention facility (HUD)
- Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility (HUD)

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 HP projects are excluded.

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[1] The HBNL includes people in emergency shelters while the suggested model does not. The HBNL includes all homeless persons with at least one service in the **last 90 days** (average is 65 services in 90 days). The suggested model will include people with at least one service in the **last 30 days**. Services (events and direct assistance) are tracked in HMIS and include, but are not limited to, food boxes, meals, emergency shelter stays, local bus passes, street outreach contacts, and day access center use.

- Individuals in the following Project Types who did not have a service (from any provider) within the previous 30 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)

This table shows the numbers reported in HUD Exchange using the traditional survey-based street count model:

Street Count Model		01/30/2019	01/29/2020
Emergency Shelter	+	426	455
Transitional Housing	+	106	114
Unsheltered Count	+	1633	1037
Unduplicated Count	**=**	**2165**	**1606**

This table shows the numbers for the same dates using the suggested model[2]:

Suggested Model		01/30/2019	01/29/2020
Emergency Shelter	+	426	455
Transitional Housing	+	106	114
Unsheltered Count	+	2446	2103
Unduplicated Count	**=**	**2978**	**2672**

The difference in the results between the two models is significant, but Lane County has confidence in numbers generated using the suggested model. In 2019, Security.org published a report[3] on homelessness using 2018 HUD PIT count numbers which identified Lane County (referred to as Eugene, OR in the article) as having the highest number of homeless persons per capita, 432.29 per 100,000. Although the unsheltered count numbers were already higher than other communities, the results have been frequently disputed by people working with unhoused populations. Some reasons for the Unsheltered count reporting lower numbers than expected:

- In Lane County, Street Counts have been conducted by volunteers who may not have had experience interviewing and who may have been unfamiliar with the target populations.
- Survey respondents have the option to not participate in the Street Count.
- In Lane County, the street count has been conducted during the day when unhoused people are on the move. It is difficult to identify who is and is not homeless during the day. Lane County's terrain is heavily forested which makes night time counts difficult and potentially unsafe to the volunteers collecting the surveys.

The pandemic and wildfires of 2020 provide the motivation to change the methodology used in the annual Unsheltered count. Using our HMIS data for the majority of the count would reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission to unhoused individuals and volunteers, and provide more accurate data.

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.

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[2] These numbers are from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). For the Point-in-Time count, these numbers will be supplemented with surveys from geographic areas and populations under-represented in HMIS.
[3] https://www.security.org/resources/homeless-statistics/