

# Vermont Point in Time Survey of the Homeless

## January 25, 2007

### History of the Point In Time (PIT) Survey

- Why

The PIT survey was originally initiated by HUD in order to understand the nature of homelessness across the country and to provide Congress with information on services provided and the gaps in services. Now this one day count of the homeless is also used to report to Congress and the Office on Management and Budget on performance.

- What for

A single Point in Time survey is used to understand the number and characteristics of people sleeping in shelters and on the street, or in other places not meant for human habitation, and in Vermont it is being used to determine the hidden homeless who are couch surfing or doubling up.

- What it can deliver

PIT information can provide assistance in determining the size and scope of homelessness in communities across Vermont. It can also help in determining what services and programs are needed to address the need. In addition, over time it can measure our progress in addressing homelessness

### Development of the format to collect the unduplicated count and information without collecting personal identifying information?

- Who

Together the Vermont State Housing Authority, AHS Department of Health, and Data Remedies reviewed the work of the State of Maine, District of Columbia, and California. Reduction in size, format and capacity were key issues taken into consideration in the development of the format and the information being collected. Key elements of what HUD wanted and what the Vermont Homeless Coalition felt were important were incorporated into the original 2006 Point in Time Survey. Minor revisions were made to accommodate the Chittenden Homeless alliance and suggestions from Dr Martha Burt for PIT 2007.

### Other contributing agencies and individuals

- The Balance of State Continuum of Care, COTS & the Chittenden Alliance to End Homelessness, Agency of Human Services Field Directors, Vermont Housing Finance Agency, National Alliance to End Homelessness, Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs, and Dr Martha Burt of the Urban Institute have contributed to the support of PIT 2007

### No personal identifying information

- The need to provide homeless individuals and families privacy protection led to the use of a unique identifier. This option supports those who would not like to be identified, and value being counted to shed a light on the service needs in each community

### Ability to unduplicate and how this is actually accomplished

- The use of the unique identifier in the **first section** of the form not only provides an opportunity for those who prefer anonymity to be counted, but gives the opportunity to unduplicate all of those who have been counted once all of the information is gathered. By aggregating the data an unduplicated count can be achieved.

### Ability to better understand the particular needs and challenges faced by the homeless.

- The **Mid section** of the PIT Survey form is useful in assessing the particular individual needs and challenges of the homeless. In this section **checking any** of the **categories** that apply to the individual or family member below this heading **provides the information that will help determine needs and challenges** for a particular community or for the entire Balance of State or in Chittenden County.

### Ability to learn unmet need and how this is accomplished

- If you look at the **last** information collection **section** of the PIT survey form you will see the **“Gaps Analysis”** section. Just below this heading are a **list** of the **Services** (annotated numerically) that a

person or family might be seeking in a community. In addition there is a list of **Resources** annotated by letter. When a homeless family or individual are surveyed, a listing of the services they need should be filled out as well as the **Services/Resources** that they are unable to access. With this information completed a gaps analysis can be made and the unmet need determined.

### **Definitions of Key terms**

- The key definitions of terms can be found at the far right of the PIT Survey in the last component of the form

### **Key Community Stakeholders input?**

- All programs that serve homeless families and individuals in the state and community. Any staff that has the potential to encounter or outreach a homeless family or individual should be involved in the effort. For example of a very complete listing of who should be involved at the local level was developed by Kendy Skidmore for a CoC training last year
- Training for stakeholders key informants is important. The form was developed as an easy to read survey.

### **Filling in the boxes**

- The Unique ID is contained in the first 6 boxes that run across the page you or the person filling in the survey will need to ask for the information in sequence, and complete this for each individual encountered. This information is needed for each individual in a family and it is useful to keep a family on a single page of the point in time. Please list the gaps analysis for each family member or at least indicate that the need and access is the same for each member of the family
- The definitions of primary race, Ethnicity, Former Inst, Transitional housing, hidden homeless, HUD defined Homeless, HUD defined Chronically Homeless, Housing needed and Bridge Money can all be found in the right hand side of the form in a box that runs parallel to the check off and gaps analysis components.
- The next component that you will come across after the unique ID will capture information that will detail if a person is mentally ill or has

substance abuse issues or if they are dually diagnosed and have both needs.

- Where to send information after it has been gathered on the 25<sup>th</sup>  
Send all completed forms to Ms Kimberly Woolaver, Vermont State Housing Authority, 1 Prospect Street, Montpelier, Vermont.

### **Who is participating?**

- Mc Kinney –Vento Programs Nationally
- Balance of State CoC
- Chittenden Co CoC
- VCRHYP
- AHS various agency participation

### **When will we know what the results are?**

- All forms need to be returned to VSHA by February 9<sup>th</sup>.
- It is anticipated that 2-4 weeks will be required for data entry.
- 1-2 after completion of the data entry, Basic Reports that parallels the initial test/demo of this process from last year can be produced.
- The final report is anticipated for Late March 2007.

### **How to use the form most effectively?**

- Fill in Agency and County information before duplicating and distributing the form to community stakeholders is an effective means of saving time for stakeholders.
- Insuring that all information is as complete as it can be. Every participant should complete the PIT form as fully as possible unless a homeless person indicates they are uncomfortable answering any questions?

- Checking on homeless individuals you are aware of but may not see on the day of the count. This applies only if you are aware of someone that has been homeless and will remain homeless on January 25, 2007. Secure their participation and complete a form for them if you can verify that they will indeed be homeless on January 25, 2007
- Send all completed forms to the Vermont State Housing Authority by February 9, 2007.