

Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance

CoC Point-In-Time (PIT) Count Workgroup

September 21, 2020 | 11am - 12:00pm

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Attendees:

DJ Vincent , Chair	X	Matt McWilliams , City of Independence	X
Sara Webb , Community Action Agency	X	Julie Conn-Johnson , SKSD McKinney-Vento	X
Robin Winkle , Shangri-La		Tricia Frizzell , Community Action Agency	
Adam Mennig , Chemeketa CC		Andrew Copeland , Keizer Police Department	
Linda Strike , Community Action Agency		Wendy Roberts , SKSD Federal Programs	X
Gretchen Bennett , City of Salem	X		
Eddie Maestas , Salem Housing Authority	X	Staff:	
Benjamin Crosby , City of Keizer	X	Carla Munns , Consultant MWWHA	X
Guests			

1. Welcome and Introductions

DJ Vincent, Committee Chair

DJ Vincent welcomed guests, members, and new members approved at the September Board of Directors meeting: Julie Conn-Johnson; Andrew Copeland; Matt McWilliams; Tricia Ratliff-Frizzell; and Wendy Roberts.

Carla reviewed membership structure with the workgroup. Participant representation will ideally expand geographically as more contacts are engaged and the PIT Count approaches.

2. Workgroup Administration

- **August Meeting Minutes-** Gretchen moved to approve minutes, Eddie seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.
- **2020 PIT Count Distribution List-** The group reviewed a distribution list used for the last PIT Count. The group requested contacts be reviewed and arranged geographically so gaps in lead volunteers and representatives in the workgroup are present. Discussion took place to identify and connect with neighborhood/geographic leads from last year and ask if they are willing to participate in the same way for 2021. Needs: list of geographic leads from 2021, distribution list organized by location.
- **2020 PIT Count distribution list for shelter contacts-** The workgroup was hoping to review shelter contacts and identify staff turnover and new contacts as needed. The list was not distributed yet so the group could not review. Consensus was reached to keep this on the agenda for next month as this is crucial for filling gaps in the 2021 Count.

- **PIT Count survey-** The Human Rights Commission is considering requesting to add a question to the 2021 PIT Count survey, but nothing has formulated yet. Gretchen offered to research the 2021 HUD PIT Count surveys and any new questions or intent for collecting data.

3. Regional Hubs: 2021 PIT Count

The implementation of regional hubs was discussed for integration with street outreach and shelter counts for the 2021 Count. Considerations discussed included:

- ⇒ Regional hubs would need to consider COVID limitations. Church @ the Park could draft messaging points for successfully implementing magnet events as they've successfully continued to serve the community throughout the pandemic and wildfires.
- ⇒ What if only some areas agree to conduct an event, and other geographic areas say no? The group agreed that more hubs are better than one or none, especially given factors such as transportation, amount of people gathering, etc.
- ⇒ Discussion took place to recommend implementing a three-fold approach to surveying the homeless population for the PIT Count: street outreach, shelter surveys, and implementing regional hubs to gather and survey individuals onsite through these magnet events.
- ⇒ Gretchen made a motion to endorse recommending regional hubs to be included with shelter and street surveying to improve PIT Count efficiency and follow COVID guidelines. Eddie seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- ⇒ Next steps were discussed. Inquiring with agencies to plan and implement regional hubs is needed to determine feasibility. Then communication plans to raise awareness to let the homeless populations know of the events. The group discussed asking past resource hubs if they want to serve the population in that way again and asking additional agencies if they are willing to serve as a resource hub. Sara mentioned Jan Calvin may have a list of all shelters.
 - Sara offered to connect with Breezy to find a list of regional leads from 2020
 - Ask Jan for shelter leads and contact information
 - Determine: Where locate regional hubs; key contacts for regional hubs
 - Next Steps: Identify who will reach out to contacts to explore feasibility of implementation

4. Incentivizing participation

- The group brainstormed the use of incentives to draw people to a magnet event/regional hub or to the outreach teams to increase participation of homeless individuals in the survey, including how to communicate to, and engage with, the service population to be surveyed.
- Successful incentives at the Veterans 'Stand Down' event include boots, socks, and camping gear since it's the middle of winter and equipment is ruined by then. Boots are most important though.
- Sack lunches were distributed in 2020 Count to survey respondents via street outreach.
- What is given away depends on what is donated.
- Need clear communication for coordinating incentives being distributed to outreach teams.
- Sara offered storage space at Tanner Project on Center Street to store items ahead of time if donations are early.
- Community Action has done an incredible service to community in coordinating sack lunches and regional leads to distribute incentives. Megan began stashing donation items approximately 30-60 days in advance of 2020 PIT Count.

Next steps:

- Sara will find out who will be coordinating donation incentives and report back.

5. Communications

The 'Counting US' application was used in 2020 and was very efficient. A barrier to implementation was volunteers following through on request to attend training on the app and surveying individuals. Many did not attend, especially those volunteers who are annual helpers and already "know how to conduct the survey", but the app is different and data can be skewed if common surveying techniques are not utilized. It was noted that some data collected wasn't useful in many cases and/or surveys were turned in too late because training in advance was not a requirement of volunteering. Suggested offering training via Zoom, or a pre-recorded training, to ensure volunteers receive the training for improved data quality, understanding, and utilization of the application. Eddie offered technical support with the application logistics for training. The group discussed when to begin offering training and agreed training should be in January, roughly 1-3 weeks prior to the PIT Count.

- 6. Next Meeting Topics:** Impact of wildfires on surveys– there is a question on the PIT Count survey that asks: "are you homeless due to a natural disaster?" The group agreed with increased numbers of homeless families and individuals due to wildfires, it may be worth identifying where folks go from the fairgrounds and other evacuation centers to ensure they are included in the Count also.

Next Meeting: October 19th at 11am