



Framing the 2016 Point-in-Time data

1. The Point-In-Time count (PIT) is a survey every community in the nation is required to conduct in order to receive federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
 - a. It provides a snapshot from a single night in January of individuals and families identified as homeless who were willing to participate in the count.
 - b. It only captures people who fit the [HUD definition of homelessness](#), which doesn't include people living in motels paid for from their own pocket, couch-surfing, or who are doubled/tripled up.
 - c. PIT results provide one piece of a larger, complex puzzle to help us understand underlying causes that lead to homelessness, who is experiencing homelessness, and what is needed to address it.
2. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the state of homelessness in the region, it is necessary to look at both multiple data sources and common patterns noted by service providers.
 - a. MDHI is only required to submit selected PIT data to HUD, but chooses to make the report available more broadly to help educate and inform the community.
 - b. In the this year's report, we included [Colorado Department of Education](#) numbers, which operate under a different [definition of homelessness](#), in order to communicate a broader scope than a single data set can provide.
 - c. There is a move nationally to conduct more comprehensive, in-depth studies specific to different homeless subpopulations. For example, the [University of Chicago's Chapin Hall](#) is conducting a youth study in the City of Denver. As well, we are exploring similar opportunities for families with children in Denver Metro.
3. Data collection challenges
 - a. The PIT count for the seven county Denver Metro is a volunteer effort conducted across a large and diverse geographic area, leading to a lack of consistency in how the data is collected.
 - b. Periodically, HUD sends out new methodology for how to conduct the PIT count. These changes make it difficult to provide comparisons across the years, and may change who



can be counted. For example, some had been counted in the 2015 year under “Transitional Housing” were reclassified as “Rapid Rehousing” and no longer met the HUD homeless definition.

4. Families:

- a. The PIT family numbers do not reflect the CO Department of Education numbers nor the feedback from the service providers that work directly with people experiencing homelessness.
- b. Because the PIT count is self-reported, the results are largely dependent on what people are comfortable sharing with the volunteers conducting the survey. Stigma and fears faced by homeless families with children mean that they are not always willing to participate in the survey or don’t report children in their household.
- c. This stigma and fear also results in many homeless families remaining “hidden.” They remain in their cars, separate from each other, or find other ways to survive.
- d. This year’s report includes data from the CO Department of Education on the number of students experiencing homelessness who were identified and served in public schools, grades PK-12. These data, which are collected throughout the school year, include students who are living in motels or are doubled/tripled up (see full definition [click here](#)).

5. Limitations of Findings:

- a. Increases or decreases in the homeless population cannot be confirmed solely by considering Point in Time findings. Under the [HUD definition of homelessness](#), the PIT provides a glimpse of homelessness on one night from among the individuals who were located and willing to participate in the count.